



*New International Relations*

# COMPETING METAPHORS FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

JUNGLE OR PLAYGROUND?

Riikka Kuusisto



# Competing Metaphors for International Relations

This book examines how the thinking towards international relations of political leaders, researchers, the media and the public is fundamentally metaphorical in nature: the abstract and far away constantly made concrete and familiar through the imaginative rationality of metaphors. It delves into ten competing structural metaphors: international relations as natural selection, as family dynamics, as balancing operations, as building and constructing, as games and play, as business and trade, as journeys and paths, as musical performances, as health or sickness and as puzzles and riddles. Drawing attention to the important role of metaphors in grasping this field and providing explanations for its events and motives for its actors, this study will appeal to scholars and students of International Relations and World Politics. For experts on metaphor theory or cognitive linguistics, this book will offer practical examples and speculate on the concrete consequences of adopting different metaphorical schemes.

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**Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2025  
by Routledge  
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 9781032987989 (hbk)

ISBN: 9781032998367 (pbk)

ISBN: 9781003606215 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003606215

Typeset in Sabon  
by Newgen Publishing UK

This book is dedicated to Rami and Eikka, again, always.



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# Preface and acknowledgments

This book takes another look at the same material I studied in my previous one: the explanatory stories we tell about international relations. Whereas the previous book, *International Relations Narratives: Plotting World Politics* (Routledge, 2020) analyzed stories of IR researchers and stories as wholes – the tragic, epic/romantic, comic or ironic/satirical accounts of theorists – this one is interested more widely also in practitioner accounts but focuses more narrowly on a specific cognitive tool: metaphors. Earlier, I claimed that our explanatory stories about international relations can be distinguished from each other based on features such as type of ending (sad or happy), characters or roles of actors (stable and clear or inconsistent and ambiguous), means resorted to (violent or nonviolent), manner of progression (predictable or surprising) and the general mood (pessimistic or optimistic). I demonstrated how all four basic plots are actively used in scholarly literature in the field of IR. This time, instead of examining specific works in their entirety, from the beginning to the denouement, including the whole cast, I search for metaphors – imaginative associations across realms – employed both in passing and more extensively, in short commentaries and longer scientific explanations, separately and mingled with one another.

The relationship between international relations narratives and metaphors can be viewed in several ways. On the one hand, any properly developed (theoretical or empirical) narrative is bound to rely on several metaphors to make the distant interaction of abstract entities – states in the international arena – understandable and consequential. On the other, metaphors constitute scripts of their own: at least for a moment, they order actors and events according to the logic of the particular realm brought to mind, the associations evoked by this realm – say, the logic and associations pertaining to the jungle or the playground. For example, the explanatory stories told by so-called IR realists can generally be understood as tragic narratives. Moreover, these tragedies operate with the help of a wide variety of metaphors: in realist tragedies, international relations are presented as games, as business transactions, as difficult journeys, etc., each providing an explanation and policy recommendations of its own. The study of both narratives and metaphors starts from the premise

that linguistic dimensions of (international) politics are of primary importance. Without an explanatory story – be it a classic plot structure or a metaphorical script – facts and realities of international life remain meaningless and unrelated to each other.

I first became interested in the language of international relations while pursuing a double major in IR and English Philology on the undergraduate level at the University of Helsinki. With regard to metaphors, it was quite a revelation to find out that figures of speech that I had understood along the lines of Burns's "my love is like a red red rose" might have something to do with the justification of Operation Desert Storm, as George Lakoff (1991) seemed to suggest in an intense message on the eve of the campaign. My own research on metaphors started with comparing the Western metaphors of war in the Persian Gulf and in Bosnia (Kuusisto 1998 and 1999), and a bit later, in Kosovo (Kuusisto 2002). Looking for alternatives to the rhetoric of war, I turned to the metaphors of nonviolent conflict resolution (Kuusisto 2009). Writing this book has given me a chance to look at the topic of international relations metaphors systematically starting from the metaphors themselves, and investigating the wide variety of perspectives from other spheres brought to bear in trying to understand the elusive realm of politics among nations.

Initially, I expected to find regularities of the type I found among narratives: certain options being used by certain IR traditions – liberal institutionalists as opposed to poststructuralists, for example – or politicians/media oriented in a certain way, possibly along the conservative – progressive values axis, or foreign policy hawks as opposed to doves. Based on earlier research, I also thought that some traditions or groups might use considerably fewer metaphors than others. Furthermore, I expected certain metaphors to be essentially more peaceful or aggressive than others, or more accurately, to accompany certain kinds of policies more often. At first thought, the logic of business seemed to me harsher than the logic of families, for example, and thus business transactions seemed better suited for explaining competitive or conflictual encounters, and family reunions, cooperative contexts. However, none of these expectations was borne out by evidence. I quickly found out that all research traditions and experts from all political backgrounds resorted to metaphors and that all metaphors were used across the spectrum of theorizing and practical contexts. IR feminists used metaphors as eagerly as liberalists, and poststructuralists used largely the same metaphors as peace researchers – each theorist adhering to their own style, of course. Both left- and right-wing foreign policy experts and media used a wide variety of metaphors. Especially nature, family, balancing, building, game, business and journey metaphors seemed to be everywhere. Moreover, all metaphors were used in both conflictual and cooperative contexts: I soon realized that in addition to happy families and ruthless businesses, also marital problems and trade beneficial to all were often evoked.

The disorder was obviously disappointing news vis-à-vis the possibility of neatly organizing the analysis and conclusions of this book, of separately presenting metaphors pertaining to specific issue areas, traditions or policies. However, already at the very first stage of the exercise, it showed that metaphors really are ubiquitous: international relations cannot be discussed without metaphors. It also showed that sophisticated theoretical accounts and convincing expert descriptions can be formulated while using several metaphorical scripts in the same effort. Mixing metaphors did not come across as a problem, a mistake that should or could be corrected – as many suggest – but as standard practice, as flexibility that might be taken advantage of. This was definitely good news: although specific versions of metaphors carry with them specific solutions to problems and rule out others, combining or changing metaphors is clearly possible, too.

This book has been written with both advanced undergraduate and graduate IR students in mind. Through the analysis of metaphors, it presents an overview of the field and touches on most of its essential topics, such as identifying the main actors of world politics, the agents versus structures debate, the nature of the international system, the causes of and remedies for conflict and war, the role of economic interaction, established and contested gendered and colonial practices, the logics of nationalism and security. It has also been written with colleagues in mind, to provide a fresh angle to competing attempts to describe and explain state interaction and to make us better aware of our own linguistic choices while engaged in research and teaching. Hopefully, it will also attract academic audiences in other fields, mainly Cognitive Linguistics and Media Studies. Finally, due to its relatively accessible style, the book might be able to reach non-academic audiences interested in international affairs and the language of politics.

I am grateful to Alexander Alekseev, Sonja Amadae, Adrian Blau, Jaakko Hillo, Eikka Johanson, Rami Johanson, Juri Mykkänen, Timo Pankakoski, Åsa von Schoultz, Teivo Teivainen, Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, Tuomas Ylä-Anttila, Matti Ylönen, the series editors and two anonymous reviewers – some of you gave valuable comments on the entire manuscript, others helped me improve individual chapters or clarify specific points.



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# Introduction

International relations cannot be perceived directly: we cannot see, hear, touch, taste or smell states – or most of the other actors usually identified as relevant in the context – being and doing things. Sensory experiences of actors and events and automatically ensuing inferences as to their nature and meaning, are clearly not the way to observe and understand world politics. Instead, international relations are delineated and rendered meaningful in complex interpretations, language and images, in narratives that assign familiar roles to purposeful entities and connect separate events into consequential sequences. These processes of understanding and explaining world politics, I argue, are profoundly dependent on metaphors, imaginative associations with other fields. Metaphors transfer attitudes and knowledge pertaining to one realm of life to another; they base our responses in new and challenging situations on something we feel we already comprehend and know how to deal with.

This is a book on the competing metaphors for international relations: it studies the various metaphors used by scholars and practitioners to structure and give meaning to activities in the global arena. It claims that the thinking of both foreign policy leaders and IR researchers – and the media and the general public – is fundamentally metaphorical in nature: the abstract and far away is constantly made concrete and familiar through the imaginative rationality of metaphors. Starting with the creation of the entities conventionally understood as the main actors in the field – namely, states – descriptions and explanations of the field rely on metaphors. After being brought into existence by ontological metaphors, states-as-persons are portrayed as engaging in typical human activities such as nurturing offspring and building families, balancing weights and constructing houses, playing games and doing business, treating illnesses and going on journeys, playing music and solving puzzles. By delving into these ten structural metaphors, the book demonstrates the wide range of choices available for grasping international relations. In addition to examining the usage of theorists and practitioners, it discusses the possible entailments of the metaphors: the attitudes they carry

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with them from one realm to the other, both the reactions they recommend and the ones they make seem inappropriate.

With this book I aim to accomplish several things: to promote greater awareness of the important role of metaphors, to study the logic of some of the most common metaphors for international relations, to compare the strengths and weaknesses of the competing bids and to encourage creative and flexible linguistic practices that might in turn pave the way for innovative and flexible physical action. Metaphors in international relations theory and practice have been studied by others: while the two books by Marks (2011, 2018) are the standard reference for International Relations theory, for example, *Metaphorical World Politics* edited by Beer and Landtsheer (2004) focuses on international relations practice. The work of Lakoff – my main authority on Cognitive Linguistics – also touches on metaphors in (world) politics. My contribution differs from these approaches in that it examines both the language of research and that of politicians and newspapers, and its organization stems from the metaphors themselves. I proceed metaphor by metaphor: in each case, illustrating the scope of usage, speculating on the associations possibly evoked and spelling out the potential entailments. I am less interested in the genuine motives of speakers or the provable consequences of particular usages than the logic of the metaphorical scripts. I claim no access to the truth behind the metaphors or ability to evaluate the accuracy of the metaphors vis-à-vis the real world. In my analysis, I will both refer to earlier studies of metaphors for international relations and look into noteworthy texts firsthand. Although no specific material will be exhaustively scrutinized, the book claims to present the most important and widely recognized metaphors and an overview of both theoretical and practical ways of employing them.

Part I consists of a discussion of the metaphorical foundations of the human conceptual system. Building on the work of Lakoff, Chaim Perelman and Kenneth Burke, among others, I study how metaphors both offer novel perspectives from other spheres and order our experiences into familiar categories. Metaphors render the abstract and distant more concrete and accessible. Specific metaphors carry with them specific roles for actors, specific attitudes, and denouements. With each metaphor, we highlight certain aspects of the target realm and hide others; when choosing a particular interpretative framework, we set aside alternative ones. In this book, metaphors are understood as fundamental cognitive tools that combine reason and imagination to produce new realities. Although the main interest here concerns structural or complex conceptual metaphors that organize an entire field of activities – namely, international relations – with the help of another field, also ontological metaphors are touched upon in the first part.

Part II inquires into ten competing metaphors for international relations. Starting from the premise that international relations encompass both conflictual and cooperational encounters, the analysis is not only organized by metaphor but also pays attention to the different variants of each

metaphor. Thus, it deals with violent jungles and evolutionary progress (nature metaphors), loving parents and bitter feuds (family dynamics), mechanical weighing and mental stability (balancing), sturdy fortresses and open houses (buildings), prisoners' dilemmas and buzzing playgrounds (playing games), bidding contests and fair trade (doing business), fatal sicknesses and curable diseases (treating illnesses), dead-end tracks and common paths (journeys), graceful waltzes and battle marches (musical performances), and senseless riddles and solvable enigmas (puzzles). While no metaphor dictates a specific policy choice – there is always room to maneuver – certain versions of the metaphors promote rather discouraging, even gloomy interpretations of world politics, while other associations are encouraging and hopeful regarding international activities. The conflictually oriented metaphors emphasize calculating rationality and constant struggle; they minimize the role of solidarity and learning together. The cooperational variants emphasize common goals and creativity; they minimize the role of violence and single-handed action.

Each analytical chapter begins with a sketch of the associations going together with each source domain: the aim is to unfold different things that might come to mind when thinking about the particular sphere of activities we are well acquainted with. Next, the analysis turns to actual usage: it provides illustrative examples of the metaphors in action. These examples come from discourses of a wide range of international relations experts: scholars and political leaders, commentators and analysts. The claim is that the metaphors of theorists and practitioners interact and that all speakers use the same metaphorical resources. The examples show how metaphorical thinking is omnipresent: metaphors are resorted to not only in special occasions of figurative speech and marked expressions, but also in everyday language and standard scientific contexts. Finally, the analytical chapters tease out the possible entailments of each metaphor in both its conflictual and cooperational variants. Different metaphors recommend different policies; whether their use is intentional and whether the audience pays attention to the metaphors or not, each framework makes certain reactions more natural and sensible than others. While causal connections especially in specific instances are difficult to prove, our reasoning is profoundly metaphorical in general and connected to physical action also – or maybe especially – as regards the far-away field of international relations.

The conclusion draws together the main findings by comparing the relative strengths and weaknesses of the ten structural metaphors. In turn, it summarizes what the conflictual or discouraging and the cooperational or hopeful variants of the metaphors are good at drawing attention to and explaining, and what they do not recognize and cannot account for. With the intention of promoting flexible and maximally enabling practices in international relations, the concluding remarks speak for creativity and playfulness in the use of metaphors. Mixing metaphors, it is argued, should not be regarded as a grave logical error in this context. Moreover, new metaphors

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bring with them new points of view and new solutions. Should we find it desirable, we can choose to disturb consistency – and resist the tendency of metaphorical scripts of becoming self-fulfilling prophecies – by deliberately swapping the metaphor or the version of the metaphor that seems to dominate in a specific situation for another readily available one or by coming up with a completely new metaphorical script. Especially if prevailing metaphors rigidly point towards unwanted directions, challenging them is a strategy everyone interested in the future of international relations might want to consider.

## Part I

# Imaginative rationality

In their book on the metaphors we live by, Lakoff and Johnson define the essence of metaphor as understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (1980: 5), often the less concrete in terms of the more concrete (ibid: 109). For them, metaphor is imaginative rationality, a mechanism for creating new meaning and new realities in our lives, as well as a primary mechanism for understanding (ibid: 193–196). Lakoff underlines that human reason is based on bodily experience: metaphorical projections extend bodily experiences to abstract domains (1987: 275). Each metaphor consists of a source domain, a target domain and a source-to-target-mapping (ibid: 276). Lakoff and Turner consider metaphors omnipresent and indispensable not only to our imagination but also to our reason (1989: xi). According to them, metaphors map aspects of the source domain onto the target domain, thereby producing a new understanding of the target domain. In addition to a structure of understanding – actors, relations and properties imported from the source domain – metaphors carry with them patterns of inference and criteria of evaluation (ibid: 59–65). Thus, the “life is a journey” metaphor structures life via travelers, paths and destinations, and gives advice as how to recognize and deal with the bumps on the road and the occasional dead ends. Lakoff and Johnson maintain that everyday thought is largely metaphorical and that metaphorical thought is the principal tool that makes philosophical insight possible: our most fundamental philosophical concepts such as time, events, causation, the mind, the self and morality, are multiply metaphorical (1999: 7, 133–135).

For Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971 [1958]: 371–410, Perelman, 1982 [1977]: 114–125), metaphors are condensed analogies that facilitate the development and extension of thought and serve as elements of proof and invention. For example, a complete four-term analogy like “as old age is to life, so is evening to day” can be condensed to the metaphor “the evening of life”. According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (ibid: 410), in certain regards, metaphors work even better than analogies: metaphors strengthen analogies by integrating them into everyday language. Perelman (1982 [1977]: 116) explains that in both analogy and metaphor, the theme

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(life) is clarified through the phoros (day), the unknown relationship through another more familiar one. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca specify that the phoros is typically drawn from the sphere of the senses and the theme from the spiritual sphere that cannot be known directly (ibid: 373, 381), or the phoros from daily life and the material world, and the theme from social, political or moral life (ibid: 376–377, 383).

For Burke (1969 [1945]: 503–507), the metaphor is the first of the four master tropes, a perspective on reality, a point of view carried over from one realm to the other. He defines metaphor as a tool for seeing something in terms of something else, as a dimension or angle that improves the picture of the whole. Metaphors bring out the “thisness of a that and the thatness of a this” (ibid: 503); they tell us something about one character as considered from the point of view of another character. According to Burke, the reality of a thing, pattern, situation, structure, nature, person, object, act, role, process, or event is established through a variety of perspectives or metaphors: different terms of understanding add new dimensions. The metaphorical extension usually borrows terms from the realm of the corporeal, visible and tangible to the realm of the incorporeal, invisible and intangible. Burke (1966: 488) argues that metaphors enable us to experience strikingly new combinations, thereby letting us see things in a fresh light.

This book proceeds from an understanding of metaphors along the lines presented above, relying especially on the work of Lakoff. In Part I, I will further elaborate on the nature of metaphors as imaginative rationality. In contrast to approaches where metaphors are presented as fanciful, poetic images or as deceptive devices that lead us away from reason and truth, metaphors can be viewed as important cognitive tools that clarify a complicated concept or phenomenon by importing characteristics and implications from other spheres. By so doing, metaphors highlight particular features of the thing under discussion and hide others. After discussing metaphor theory, Part I will move on to metaphors pertaining to the field of international relations. First, it will focus on the most important ontological metaphor in the field: the “states are persons” metaphor. Then, it will introduce ten widely used structural or complex conceptual metaphors for international relations: international relations as natural selection, family encounters, balancing, building, playing games, doing business, treating illnesses, journeys, musical performances and puzzles or riddles. These ten metaphors will be treated in more detail in Part II via their various variants, that is, by studying both conflictual/discouraging and cooperational/hopeful versions of these understandings of international relations.

# 1 Conceptual metaphor theory

Although metaphors are regularly seen as mere poetic illustrations or matters of secondary importance to politics, let alone science, some scholars have recognized their essential input into our understanding of ourselves and of the world around us. The latter contributions often regard metaphors as especially important in conceptualizing those spheres of life to which we have no direct physical access or personal relationship. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 3–6, 56) claim that our ordinary conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical in nature: we go through life understanding one kind of a thing, often a concept or event that is abstract or new, in terms of another, a discernible object or familiar activity. Metaphors affect our thinking and acting, and the way we define our everyday realities. Metaphors have a central role in Lakoff's and Johnson's experientialist theory of truth: by uniting reason (categorization, entailment, inference) and imagination (innovative association, feelings, intuition), metaphors provide a synthesis or the third choice between the myths of objectivism and subjectivism (*ibid*: 179–194). Lakoff and Johnson hold that truth is always relative to our conceptual system and grounded in experience. Although objective knowledge is unattainable, we are not stranded with purely subjective truths: metaphorical reasoning provides us with a rational way to rise above individual biases.

Lakoff develops his experiential realism or experientialism further by emphasizing that there need not be a contradiction between imaginative, metaphorical human rationality and the existence of a real world, objective reality (1987: xi–xvii, 259). Although we have no privileged access to the real world, this world places constraints on our concepts and helps us develop relatively stable knowledge and practical solutions to numerous everyday problems. While elaborating their own cognitive science of philosophy based embodied realism, Lakoff and Johnson affirm that knowledge is always situated, and truth depends on understanding. Yet they do not see our cognitive systems as irrational or arbitrary, quite on the contrary, and thus, according to them, also reliable knowledge is possible (1999: 94–97, 106–109, 127–129, 510–511). They reject both Anglo-American analytic philosophy and poststructuralist views, and embrace the idea that reason is

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embodied and imaginative, and that thought relies on metaphor. Lakoff and Turner stress that metaphors are primarily conceptual mappings, matters of thought, not words and language: metaphors reside first and foremost in people's minds, not on pages of text or as sounds uttered out loud (1989: 107).

Lakoff's main interest lies in basic conceptual metaphors that are part of the common conceptual apparatus shared by members of a culture (e.g. Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 15, 51). These metaphors – such as “argument is war” or “time is a resource” – are systematic, largely unconscious, automatic and widely conventionalized in language. They can be combined and extended, or used in marked and novel ways, but normally they go unnoticed, such as in expressions “she attacked every weak point in my argument” or “you should spend your time wisely”. Important concepts come with many alternative basic metaphors: for example, death can be understood as departure, winter, sleep, deliverance, or the loss of fluid (ibid: 1–26). Although there can be many basic conceptual metaphors to structure a phenomenon and these basic options can give rise to an infinite number of (conflicting) metaphorical expressions, the processes of metaphorical reasoning are not random, nor do all the expressions have a similar status. Lakoff and Johnson divide conceptual metaphors into primary and complex ones (1999: 45–73). Primary metaphors, for them, are cross-domain mappings from the sensorimotor domain to the domain of subjective experience that preserve inference from the source domain. According to Lakoff and Johnson (ibid: 45–59), we all naturally think using hundreds of primary metaphors, such as “affection is warmth”, “important is big”, “happy is up”, “difficulties are burdens”, “help is support”, “categories are containers”, “actions are motions”, “purposes are destinations”, “causes are physical forces”, “knowing is seeing” and “understanding is grasping”. Complex, everyday metaphors are built out of primary metaphors plus forms of commonplace knowledge, such as cultural models, folk theories and widely held beliefs. Lakoff and Johnson (ibid: 60–73) give “a purposeful life is a journey” as an example of a complex metaphor – built out of “purposes are destinations”, and “actions are motions” plus the cultural belief that people are supposed to have purposes in life and the fact that a long trip to a series of destinations is a journey.

In Perelman's analysis (1982 [1977]: 124–125), metaphors have a central place in human worldviews, cultures and mental constructs: by proposing a similarity between two relationships existing in different realms, they can add to our understanding of deep philosophical problems and complex phenomena. In Perelman's view, metaphors are indispensable in various domains of human reasoning: philosophic thought definitely cannot do without metaphor. By seeing analogies as links in the chain of inductive scientific reasoning, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971 [1958]: 396, 402–403) reject the idea of metaphors as imagery or mere picturesque descriptions. In Burke's (1969 [1945]: 503–504) contemplations, too, metaphors amount to much more than traditionally defined figures of speech: they have a central role in the discovery and description of “the truth”, they give “being” to things around

us. Burke advocates the older theory of realism, “poetic realism” – instead of or in addition to modern “scientific realism” – according to which things, people and events possess degrees of being in proportion to the variety of perspectives from which they can, with justice, be perceived. A new dimension of terms gives a character more being.

In their first book on the metaphors we live by, Lakoff and Johnson differentiate between orientational, ontological and structural metaphors (1980: 3–68, 147–148). By orientational metaphors, they (ibid: 21–24) refer to expressions that organize and evaluate concepts and phenomena by giving them a spatial orientation, such as up-down, in-out or front-back. In Western culture, positive associations go together with things that are up, front and in. Thus, it is not nice to be left out, to feel down or to fall back. Ontological metaphors, according to Lakoff and Johnson (ibid: 25–34), create independent entities, boundaries and substances of things where none previously existed. With the help of ontological or physical metaphors, abstract concepts and qualities receive an essence and limits, a surface to cover them and a space to occupy, i.e., they are made physically existent. After metaphorically constructing an entity, one can refer to it (“*peace* is not in sight”), quantify it (“it will take *a lot of patience*”), identify aspects of it (“we got to feel *the thrill of victory*”), make it a cause of something (“due to his *lack of moral fiber*”) or to motivate actions (“we need to guarantee *national security*”). Lakoff and Johnson claim that the most obvious ontological metaphors are those where the physical object is further specified to be a human person, a (rational) actor who can do and feel things that only people are usually thought to be capable of doing and feeling (“this *theory* explains”, “*the government* declared”). Lakoff and Turner (1989: 72) add that personification permits us to use knowledge about ourselves to maximal effect and to use insights about ourselves to help us comprehend such things as forces of nature, societal events, abstract concepts and inanimate objects.

In their early work, Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 3–9, 61–68) define structural metaphors as metaphors that allow us not only to orient concepts, to refer to and quantify them etc., but also to use one highly organized and clearly delineated concept to structure a major share of another, stranger and more contradictory concept. Through structural metaphors such as “time is money”, “love is sickness” and “argument is war”, we understand and organize our thinking, our activities, our culture and our world. We believe that we can spend, save, invest and borrow time; we feel stabbing pain in our hearts due to the treacherous nature of our beloved one; and we defend our assertions against the attacks of our opponents. As can be seen from the examples given, structural metaphors here (and specific-level metaphors of Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 80–82) come close to complex conceptual metaphors of the later Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 60–73). What is apparent from all the writings is that individual metaphors do not function alone, but instead, together with other metaphors and other cognitive devices. Moreover, metaphors can be seen as indispensable cognitive tools

with real-world consequences: time, love and argumentation cannot be seen or touched, but bosses can punish their employees for stealing company time, different therapies are offered as cures for heartaches, and strategies for argumentative counterattacks are taught by professional debate coaches. In the following analysis of international relations / IR metaphors, the main focus will be on structural or complex conceptual metaphors. In all of the examples studied, international relations will be the target domain, the abstract, remote or contested domain the structure and meaning of which are understood via the various competing source domains.

To recapitulate the ideas presented so far: metaphors amount to more than poetic decorations or linguistic ornamentation – metaphors structure real-life situations, organize our understanding of actors, and carry entailments and inferences from one realm to another. It is also important to realize that the two realms connected by metaphor are in fact separate and that their difference is a matter of kind, not merely of degree. As Lakoff and Johnson formulate it (1980: 5), the “argument is war” metaphor is not based on the fact that arguments are a subspecies of war. Neither is time inherently resourcelike (1999: 165) or love physically painful. No pre-existing similarity can be found between the two spheres of experiences and activities; making the connection via metaphor might be conventional and automatic, but the spheres as such are not somehow close to each other or naturally related. It is precisely in this respect that metaphors differ from metonymies (e.g. Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 103–104): metonymies are conceptual mappings that involve only one domain. In metonymy, one entity in a schema is taken as standing for another entity in the same schema, or for the schema as a whole, such as in the expressions “*Nixon* bombed Hanoi” (controller for controlled) or “*Wall Street* is in a panic” (place for the institution). In metonymy, unlike in metaphor, the entities are related (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 35).

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971 [1958]: 374), also, emphasize that the difference between the metaphorical realms is one in nature or in order, not simply in degree. According to them (ibid: 372–377, 381, 393), analogies and metaphors are not cases of partial identity, nor do they imply any preexisting relationship or similarity between the terms of the theme and of the phoros; metaphors are not arguments by example or illustration. In a metaphor, the theme and the phoros belong to different spheres. With the use of a metaphor, a structural resemblance is claimed to exist between the relationships in the two separate spheres, not between the spheres or the terms themselves. In addition to claiming structural equivalence, metaphors transfer value: evaluations and judgments relating to the phoros will be passed on to views of the theme, a separate domain with no automatic normative connection to the first one. Burke (1969 [1945]: 504, 506) treats the question of the distinct regions through the concept of incongruity: carrying a term over from one realm to another in order to produce a metaphor necessarily generates some degree of incongruity and discord. Without the metaphor, he maintains (1966: 488), the terms would be kept in separate

compartments of the mind. There is no automatic or permanent connection between the corporeal world and the incorporeal one; it is metaphors that create the extension. Two realms are never identical, and no number of new angles can guarantee a perfect picture of the object.

In the following, metaphors will be understood as important cognitive tools that unite different kinds of things. Most of the scholars referred to so far seem to agree on at least one more point: in addition to creating order, meaning and new realities in our lives, metaphors are restrictive and selective by nature. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 139–155) show how metaphorical reasoning always hides the aspects of the situation that do not fit the logic of the chosen association. Each metaphor highlights those aspects of the event that match its structure and progression and plays down those features that are more difficult to incorporate into the particular explanation. Especially abstract concepts, such as love (see also Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 70–72), are typically structured by more than one conceptual metaphor: love is conventionally conceptualized in terms of a journey, physical force, illness, magic, madness, union, closeness, nurturance, giving of oneself, complementary parts of a single object and heat. “Love is madness” highlights certain aspects of love – lack of control, wild passion – and while so doing suppresses other features, other types of love experiences, such as parental caring. Our central philosophical concepts – time, causation, the mind, the self and morality – are structured by multiple, and often inconsistent, metaphors (ibid: 133–334). Lakoff and Turner (1989: 18) maintain that different entailments and inferences follow from different metaphors, and that different inferences often conflict. Metaphorical understanding is always partial.

In Burke’s writings (1969 [1945]: 504), selectivity and limited scope appear to be part of the definition of metaphors: one metaphor offers one perspective, one point of view, one occasion to compare a thing with something else, one set of implications – and leaves others in the shadows. For Burke, employing the “perspective process” is a heuristic and experimental method, a tentative approach to the innumerable aspects of a character’s reality, a shift of realms producing various degrees of incoherence. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca affirm (1971 [1958]: 375–398) that each phoros highlights or emphasizes a different aspect of the theme and disregards others. The phoros can devalue or elevate the theme – a ruler’s policies may be likened to the behavior of a dog seeking to please, or the acts of an omnipotent and willful god – or it can simply pass on information by drawing a parallel between electricity and a river current, but in accepting a metaphor one always subscribes to a certain choice of aspects. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca point out (ibid: 385–393, Perelman, 1982 [1977]: 114–125) that an analogy or a metaphor appears accurate when the phoros focuses attention on those features of the theme that are considered of prime importance. Each metaphor brings to the fore different characteristics, leads to different conclusions and paves the way for different developments. Certain relationships are highlighted by a particular

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metaphor, others are left in the shadows. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain that new metaphors constantly amend and replace earlier ones since any one metaphor can only be extended so far before it breaks down or becomes inadequate.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 156–158) hold that in addition to involving alternative ways of emphasizing and suppressing, metaphors constantly affirm and reinforce their own validity. Once a certain metaphor has been accepted as an accurate description of the situation at hand, succeeding events are automatically interpreted according to its logic and reinforce its dominant position. The dominant metaphor may become a guide for future action. Alternative explanations may be marginalized and gradually begin to seem unrealistic as more and more actors and events are fitted into the dominant metaphorical plot. Metaphors not only have the power to make our experiences coherent, but they may also become self-fulfilling prophecies. Here, Lakoff and Johnson (*ibid*: 236–237) are worried about the area of politics and economics especially: political and economic metaphors hide aspects of reality like all other metaphors, but these metaphors matter more since they have more profound effects on our lives than some other metaphors, say ones communicating aesthetic experiences. According to Lakoff and Johnson (*ibid*: 157), people in power often get to impose their metaphors. The direct consequences of the “labor is a resource” (*ibid*: 236–237) or the “national strength is military force” (Chilton and Lakoff, 1995: 43) metaphors are considerable: among other things, they justify the exploitation of human beings for production purposes and make arms control efforts nonsensical.

Like Lakoff, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971 [1958]: 405–410, Perelman, 1982 [1977]: 122) pay special attention to metaphors that are not necessarily recognized as metaphors. They point out that if a metaphor becomes an ordinary manner of expression, also the conclusions it transfers seem to flow from the nature of things. Burke takes the potential political consequences of terminological choices very seriously – and elaborates more on them than Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca who focus mainly on philosophy and jurisprudence. He analyzes both the rhetoric of Hitler’s *Battle* (1984 [1939–1940]) – including the “international Jew as international devil” device – the symbolic strategies of the *Communist Manifesto* (1969 [1945]: 200–214) – including the architectural metaphor of the base/superstructure – and the symbols of capitalist America, with the “money as God” substitution in its center (1969 [1945]: 45, 108–113, 355–356). The metaphors that organize our political imagination affect our political choices and how we organize life with other people, both near and far.

## 2 Ontological foundation

### States-as-persons

Although this book focuses on structural metaphors, I will start my survey of international relations / International Relations usages by looking into a particularly significant ontological metaphor, namely, states-as-persons. Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 533–534) claim that in order for most models of foreign policy or international relations to function, nations must first be conceptualized metaphorically as people with interests. In this metaphor, health for a person often maps onto overall economic health for a nation, strength for a person maps onto military strength, and maturity for a person maps onto industrialization and capitalism. What the metaphor hides, according to Lakoff and Johnson, are for example the real people with their everyday concerns and all the forms of well-being they individually require. Similarly, Chilton and Lakoff (1995: 39–41) argue that “the state is a person” metaphor is the major metaphor that dominates thought about foreign policy and international relations. As persons, states have distinct personalities and social standing, and they enter into social relationships with other states. Chilton and Lakoff argue further that the effect of employing the state-as-person metaphor depends on one’s view of what a person generally speaking is like: whether (s)he is an isolated individual pitted against all others, a socially cooperative and responsible autonomous individual, or a member of a collective in which individual identity is secondary.

States-as-persons have effortlessly been viewed as having physical bodies for a long time. Merchant (1980: 69–76) claims that the hierarchical model of organic society was part of medieval theory already: in his 1159 *Policraticus*, John of Salisbury conceived of the commonwealth as a “person-writ-large”. The feudal imagery he relied on likened each part of the human body to a part of the hierarchical body politic: the prince was the reason, the clergy the soul, judges and governors the sense organs, the senate the heart, the keepers of the finances the stomach and intestines, the feet the farmers, craftspeople and menial workers, etc. In his 1651 *Leviathan*, Hobbes (2017: 136–208) similarly designates the sovereign as the head of the commonwealth. The soul of Hobbes’s great Leviathan is the concept of sovereignty; public ministers act as the nerves and tendons that move the limbs of the body; the money

that makes trade possible is the blood that nourishes the commonwealth. Finally, colonies, according to Hobbes, are the children of Leviathan.

In later usage, the idea of the head of state has been relied on more than references to other body parts, but general organicism has by no means disappeared. Hans Morgenthau, for example, extends the ontological metaphor when discussing the elements of national power (1973 [1948]: 103–164). Although he does not dismiss the muscle needed for successful foreign policies, he considers nonphysical elements more important: “diplomacy is the brains of national power, as national morale is its soul” (ibid: 140). Furthermore, he sees the diplomatic representatives sent to the capitals of foreign nations as the “eyes, ears, mouth and fingertips” of foreign offices (ibid: 520), foreign offices that function as “nerve centers” (ibid: 521). States – and other non-human subjects/actors of international relations – are regularly seen as beings with bodies capable of thinking and moving, talking and interacting with each other, being wise or foolish, healthy or sick. The bodies of some recently introduced international actors, such as Haraway’s cyborg (1991 [1985]) or the Frankensteinian subject of Parashar et al. (forthcoming), have been markedly artificial, yet more benign than Hobbes’s omnipotent and awe-inspiring Leviathan. The cyborg of Haraway and the Frankenstein of Parashar et al. carry positive associations: by combining features of humans and machines, they offer new forms of political subjectivity and ways of being in the world.

The feelings and emotions of states and nations have recently been recognized by many scholars as topics deserving more systematic study. Bleiker and Hutchison (2008) argue for research addressing emotions as part of state rationalities. They claim that since fear, hatred, anger, shame, empathy, compassion, pity, sympathy and other emotions clearly have to do with motivating both cooperative and conflictual behavior of individuals and communities such as states, IR scholars should diversify their sources and attune their methods accordingly. Peterson (2018: x) affirms that emotions shape the subjectivities, priorities and practices constituting “the collectivities we call states” and encourages attending to them properly. As to concrete studies of the emotions of states, Khaled and Fierke (2009) focus on humiliation and betrayal – and the possibilities of restoring dignity – in the Middle East: they show how both the Arab world and the United States have experienced humiliation at different moments in history and how this has fed political violence. Parashar (2018) demonstrates how gendered emotional language shapes the behavior of India in both the domestic and the international arenas: India has performed an array of feelings ranging from hurt and outrage to love and forgiveness. Wilkinson (2018) delves into the emasculating experience that the collapse of the Soviet Union brought about in the Russian state and its citizens: the humiliation, embarrassment, and the need to salvage honor.

Among practitioners, states-as-persons are standard usage that probably goes unnoticed as metaphorical. Both the media and political leaders regularly refer to not only people but also states as beings that feel, think and

act. For example, when commenting on the international news items of the week, *The Washington Post* informed its readers that North Korea had fired an apparent ballistic missile (Kim and Lee, 11 Jan 2022), *The Times* reported that China had rolled out a red carpet to the Gulf nations (Tang and Spencer, 10 Jan 2022) and *Le Figaro* affirmed that France had requested dialogue concerning the new European security architecture (Jaulmes, 9 Jan 2022). In recent speeches of the heads of state, Russia intended to further prioritize strengthening its strategic alliance with all the CSTO member states (President Vladimir Putin, 10 Jan 2022), Germany was ready to demonstrate exceptional solidarity during the pandemic crisis (Chancellor Angela Merkel, 8 Jul 2020), France wanted to reconstruct the foundation of international order (President Emmanuel Macron, 22 Sept 2020) and the United States sought to rally the world to action (President Joe Biden, 21 Sept 2021). Naturally, the media also refer to numerous other actors besides states and political leaders tend to emphasize also their personal initiatives, but in the arena of international relations, the presence of state-beings with their respective interests and strategies is taken for granted by most practitioners, and presumably, their audiences.

IR scholars exhibit various amounts of awareness and reflexivity vis-à-vis the states-as-persons metaphor. Usually, as with practitioners, the personification takes place in contexts where international relations “actors” or “agents” are discussed. Regardless of the stance of a scholar in the agents versus structure debate and whether (s)he recognizes other actors besides states – such as international organizations, multinational corporations/firms, classes, transnational interest groups or individuals – operating without states that are assigned interests, motives and actions is very difficult. The personification of states seems to be part of the definition of the entire field: IR is “the scientific study of interaction between sovereign states” (Wikipedia, 2021) or “the discipline that studies interactions between and among states” (Oxford Reference, 2021). It is common-sensical – instead of markedly metaphorical – to discuss “the national interests of state A”, “the negotiations between state B and state C” and “state D’s search for strategic partners”. Although it is widely recognized in research that states arrive at decisions differently from individuals and that manifestations of state moves are less simple to detect than the moves people make, for shorthand purposes in the field, states think and act as human beings do.

For many scholars associated with the realist school of IR, establishing states as person-like actors appears relatively unproblematic, an exercise that may require a couple of definitions, after which theorizing about states can proceed. Morgenthau, for example, defines a nation as “an abstraction from a number of individuals who have certain characteristics in common” (1973 [1948]: 103). He further clarifies that “a nation pursues foreign policies as a legal organization called a state” (ibid: 104). After this, explanations in *Politics Among Nations* are based on observations about state feelings, preferences, thoughts and actions: “this fear motivated Austria”, “the same

fear brought Russia to the support of Serbia” (ibid: 192), “Great Britain and the United States have had one interest in common” (ibid: 182), “Russia calculated” (ibid: 209), “Great Britain, the United States, Japan, France and Italy agreed” (ibid: 181), “Great Britain and the United States had to decide” (ibid: 182), “France aspires to such a position”, “Great Britain is no longer capable of performing this function” (ibid: 342), “Germany identified itself” (ibid: 347), “the United States was anxious”, “Great Britain solved its politico-military problems” (ibid: 388), “Germany tried to attain its goal” (ibid: 390), “the Soviet Union proposed” (ibid: 391), “Germany demanded” (ibid: 393), “France denied” (ibid: 394), “the Soviet Union has taken this conclusion seriously” (ibid: 397), “France could be certain” (ibid: 444), “Great Britain thought” (ibid: 446), “Italy occupied” (ibid: 448), “Japan invaded” (ibid: 449), and so on. The fact that “A nation as such is obviously not an empirical thing. A nation as such cannot be seen.” (ibid: 103) does not derail Morgenthau; he can still refer to them, assign motives to them and comment on their moves.

The common sense of personifying states applies not only to realists, but also to most liberal theories. Bruce Russett and John Oneal (2001: 16–17) name countries/states, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and private individuals as actors in world politics but devote most of *Triangulating Peace* to the study of states, pairs of states and groups of states. As in IR research more generally, the thoughts and behavior of great powers get special attention: the United States “insisted” (ibid: 26) and “was eager” (ibid: 28), Russia “can hope” (ibid: 285) and “has flirted” (ibid: 286), and China “will suffer” and “is destined to pose a challenge” (ibid: 287). However, the moves of lesser players are also analyzed: “Argentina and Brazil abandoned their nuclear weapons programs” (ibid: 40) and “Finland’s real quarrel was with the Soviet Union” (ibid: 93). Since Russett and Oneal claim that democracy and economic interdependence reduce the likelihood of conflict, they often compare democracies and open economies with autocracies and closed economies and present these groups of states as personified actors. According to them, democracies for example “shared similar security interests” (ibid: 111), “enjoyed relatively peaceful relations”, “avoided militarized disputes with one another” (ibid: 114), and “are more peaceful than other kinds of dyads” (ibid: 122). Russett and Oneal recount the story of the development of the interstate system with the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia as a key moment and sovereignty as a central principle, and dwell on the possibility of vicious and virtuous circles of relations, but do not problematize state-actorness as such.

While realist and liberalist theorizing tend to take the state actor’s historical evolution and leading role on the international stage for granted, Marxist and so-called critical theorists like to focus also on other (politico-economic) actors such as firms, classes and markets, and poststructuralists draw attention to the violent history of the present and the problematic consequences of conceptual choices in general. Immanuel Wallerstein (2004: 16) claims that world-systems, rather than national states, should be our units of analysis if

we want to grasp the phenomena traditionally associated with international relations. He himself operates with several actors – markets, firms, states, households, classes and status-groups (ibid: 24) – among which states still play an important role: “in this ongoing class struggle [...], the state is a central actor in shifting the allocation [of surplus-value] in one direction or the other” (ibid: 51). Moreover, Wallerstein holds (ibid: 46) that the relationship of states to firms is a key to understanding the functioning of the capitalist world-economy. Wallerstein’s states feel and act in multiple ways: they “hope to protect” their production processes and “are eager to achieve” economic development (ibid: 29); they may be “rivals” but “have a common interest” in holding together the system (ibid: 56); in addition to “providing” security services and “offering” benefits to citizens (ibid: 82–83), they “pressure” other states on behalf of their own firms (ibid: 55). Thus, Marxist analyses of international relations do not necessarily attempt to replace personified states with other leading actors, but instead, emphasize the unity of the political and economic spheres, the economic role of states and the political role of firms.

Among the scholars usually labeled poststructural, R. B. J. Walker (2003) notes with some concern that we “keep catching ourselves affirming the natural necessity of the modern polis by reproducing the sovereign state’s own self-affirming account of how it is both natural and necessary”. He considers sovereign state actors as modern productions or fixations without implying that this would make them less powerful. Quite on the contrary, according to Walker (1990), “states have managed to more or less monopolize our understanding of what political life is and where it occurs”. Walker argues that (ibid), states “make claims”, are more or less “convincing”, “engage in conflict” and are “jealous of their autonomy”. As long as we abide by the logic “written large in the language of modern states” (2003), we are stuck with the story of the international as fragmented and anarchic, as opposed to united and orderly political life within states. Although Walker discusses alternative understandings of international politics and declares that the modern polis can no longer be our only political home, his states still feel and act much as people do. As Walker (ibid) himself points out, we need to be quite humble about the limits of our capacity to imagine world politics in completely new terms, without sovereign state actors.

Alexander Wendt seems far less embarrassed about operating with personified states than Walker: he simply claims that “states are people too” (1999: 194). In his constructivist classic, *Social Theory of International Politics*, he embraces “moderate” holism/structuralism that does not exclude individualist considerations, such as the intentions of agents (1999: 96, 178, 184). In international politics, according to Wendt, the primary agents are state actors. Wendt explicitly claims that states are real, unitary actors to which we can attribute identities and intentionality (ibid: 243–244), and that states have certain core interests, namely survival, autonomy, economic well-being and collective self-esteem (ibid: 233–238). Although states obviously

cannot be “seen” (ibid: 5–6), Wendt emphasizes that states are not merely “useful fictions” or “reifications” as some postmodernists insist (ibid: 193–198). He also explicitly denies that state agency is just a “metaphor to describe what is ‘really’ the actions of individuals” (ibid: 215). He argues that states are “purposive actors with a sense of Self” (ibid: 194) and “real actors to which we can legitimately attribute anthropomorphic qualities like desires and beliefs” (ibid: 197). Although he gives personified states a central stage, in his work, systems and roles in the systems are specified less via specific actors, such as the United States and Britain, than the interaction of Egos and Alters, be they enemies, rivals or friends. In a Hobbesian culture, the Other is constituted as an actor who does not recognize the right of the Self to exist as an autonomous being (ibid: 260); in a Lockean culture, actors expect each other to act as if they recognize their sovereignty (ibid: 279); and in a Kantian culture, Ego is casting Alter in the role of friend and taking the same role for himself (ibid: 341–342). For Wendt (ibid: 372), the ideas that person-like states share with other states make all the difference.

Especially feminist scholars have noted that in our depictions of international relations, states and nations are not simply treated as people but as persons with genders: more specifically, states are often seen as men in charge of protecting nations, which are seen as women. The masculine gender identity of sovereign man / sovereign state is explored for example, in the collection of articles edited by Peterson (1992) and in the follow-up book edited by Parashar et al. (2018b). In the first volume, Christine Sylvester (1992: 155–177) shows how masculine identity is embedded in our notions of inherently and naturally free individuals, how states are often depicted as primitive “individuals”, and how both realists and liberalists rely on masculine reactive autonomy and minimal obligations in their depictions of relations among states. Walker (1992: 196–198) notes that in the male-centered universe of modern philosophy and science, women are silenced in a manner that affirms the sovereign voice of “rational man”, and that the discourse of international relations theory, too, tends to tell the story of the conquest of (female) *fortuna* by the virile (male) hero or the rational sovereign. In the second volume, Tickner (2018: 24–25) maintains that in times of crisis especially, states as masculine protectors fight for the defense of the “mother” country. Finally, True (2018: 35) explains that the gender hierarchy of international relations privileges subjects that accord with masculine, competitive, rational and autonomous attributes over subjects with feminine, caring, emotional and relational attributes. States seen as rational, powerful, dominant and “manly” are respected and allowed to “govern” weak and fragile states.

While feminist IR scholars make acute observations about the gendered discourses of mainstream IR and often focus on the level of individuals in their own analyses, they cannot operate without referring to states-as-persons either. Sylvester discusses “the contracts forged between the United States and its European allies” (1992: 167) and the way that the United States “sent

mothers to the Persian War front” (ibid: 169). Tickner observes that “the early United States and postindependence India both chose protectionist strategies” (2018: 20). True draws attention to the way in which Turkey, Australia and China “hosted the G20” (2018: 38). Somewhat like poststructuralists, feminists cannot totally escape the discourses they criticize, be it concerning the state or the international. In their work, too, states sometimes appear as people-like actors who engage in people-like activities.

When states are viewed as persons – ontologically created as human-like actors – people within states receive less attention. Their individual concerns, interests and activities do not figure prominently in explanations; neither are domestic conflicts and decision-making procedures taken extensively into account. What is typically also left out of this picture are universal interests and cosmopolitan viewpoints, phenomena and values that are not confined by state borders. Person-like states represent national unity and consistent actions of a particular political entity; they leave minority views and bureaucratic complications, as well as the problems uniting all humanity in the shadows. Person-like states as the main units to observe and advise direct the level of analysis and the objectives of the field of study towards a particular direction. Some IR specialists might embrace this perspective willingly, others with more reserve and even angst, but what should be noted is that international relations are hard to grasp without using one metaphorical representation or another and that personification of states is the dominant mode of organizing our current understanding. While state-persons as such are ubiquitous in the discourses of the field, greater variety can be found in the characterizations of these state-persons and in the depictions of the activities states are seen to engage in.

To summarize in chronological terms: the ontological metaphor first creates entities and personifies them – it gives the state actors different kinds of gendered bodies, interests and emotions – and then, the structural metaphors portraying state families, games, theater performances, business negotiations etc. organize the spectrum of things that these personified actors do. Building on – and developing further – observations presented so far, this book will now embark on exploring the spectrum of embodied state action.

### 3 Ten structural metaphors for international relations

In what follows, I will examine ten commonly used structural metaphors for international relations: international relations as nature, families, balancing, building, games, business, illnesses, journeys, music and puzzles. Since I start from the premise that international relations encompass both conflictual and cooperational encounters, I will try to capture the entire potential of each metaphor: both the variants that emphasize conflictual aspects of world politics and the cooperational variants of the same metaphors. Thus, the second part of the book will proceed metaphor by metaphor dealing with violent jungles and evolutionary progress (natural selection), loving parents and bitter feuds (family dynamics), mechanical weighing and mental stability (balancing), sturdy fortresses and open houses (buildings), prisoners' dilemmas and buzzing playgrounds (playing games), bidding contests and fair trade (doing business), fatal sicknesses and curable diseases (treating illnesses), dead-end tracks and common paths (journeys), graceful waltzes and battle marches (musical performances), and senseless riddles and solvable enigmas (puzzles). As already argued, no metaphor dictates a specific policy choice – there is always room to maneuver – but certain versions of the metaphors promote rather discouraging, or even gloomy interpretations of world politics, while other associations are encouraging and hopeful. The conflictually oriented metaphors emphasize calculating rationality and constant struggle; they minimize the role of solidarity and learning together. The cooperational variants emphasize common goals and creativity; they minimize the role of violence and single-handed actions. All metaphors affirm and reinforce their own validity: once a certain metaphor has been accepted as an accurate description of an activity, succeeding events tend to be interpreted according to its logic and reinforce its dominant position.

The choice of the ten metaphors is well justified, but not the only justifiable choice. Many of the metaphors analyzed have received attention in other studies: for example, the balance of power metaphor has been insightfully examined by Little (2007) and zero-sum games are the topic of S. M. Amadae's excellent book (2016). In addition to balancing and games, also the nature, family, building and business metaphors are often identified as

typical associations we use to understand international relations (see for example Chilton, 1996, Chilton and Lakoff, 1995, Lakoff, 2000, Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 513–568, Marks, 2011, 2018). The medical metaphor – health and sickness – has its recognized proponents (particularly Galtung 1975). International relations as journeying down a road, performing music and solving puzzles have received less explicit attention, but do not amount to completely unknown research territories either (see for example Kuusisto, 2009). To recap, the metaphors I study are commonly used – finding illustrative examples is not difficult – and to a certain extent, this has been previously noted by other scholars. However, the selection is not based on relative prominence or frequency as such; my arguments do not rest on a quantitative foundation of counting occurrences in a well-defined textual corpus. There are other interesting metaphor usages that would deserve to be carefully studied, say international relations as a hologram (Kaplan, 1994) or as a Mobius web of governance (Rosenau, 2003: 396–397). Moreover, possibilities of imagining ever new metaphorical explanations are always available; research need not always limit itself to the past, the present or the most common (for alternatives, see also Conclusion). Hence, my list of ten does not aim at exhaustiveness or prescriptiveness. However, I do claim that the metaphors under scrutiny here are both recognizable to my readers and provide a rather wide picture of the choices available for grasping international relations.

In the following chapters, I will incorporate earlier research findings into my own analysis, that is, refer to relevant studies of others whenever possible. Some of the most important works in this respect have already been mentioned, namely Marks's two volumes on the metaphors of IR theory (2011, 2018), Little's book on the balance of power metaphor (2007), and Lakoff's and Chilton's research on foreign policy metaphors (Lakoff, 2000, Chilton, 1996, Chilton and Lakoff, 1995). As regards practitioner usage, *Metaphorical World Politics* (2004) edited by Beer and Landtsheer is a major reference. My approach, however, differs from most previous research in that I am interested in both the language of scholars and that of politicians – and of commentators, reporters and analysts – and I assume constant interaction of these discourses, influences going different ways. I pay less attention to the specific motives and level of awareness of the speakers than many other researchers do. Instead, I focus on the logic of the various metaphors themselves: the associations they might evoke and the inferences they support. Throughout, I presume the presence of the general motive of making sense of international relations and examine the entailments of the competing metaphorical scripts, instead of the strategic intentions or sincerity of the people resorting to them. I am also less concerned with differences between subfields of activity, say security metaphors versus metaphors of international economy, than the general ways of framing the entire problematique – both cooperation and conflict – of international relations. Moreover, although I consider the consequences of the metaphors very real and significant, I do

not attempt to prove or measure these consequences. I study the capabilities of metaphors more than specific effects; I try to tease out their logic of operation and possible implications for action. The following analysis will hopefully make readers more aware of the *potential* consequences of metaphor choices in expert discourses – possibly including their own usage.

A final note before delving into the exercise: the analysis will not differentiate between metaphors for international relations, world politics and foreign policy. This does not imply that I consider the concepts synonymous or that I view international relations as a sum of the foreign policies of state actors, for example. The metaphors, however, for the most part, do not adhere to these boundaries or emphasize the nuances. The associations with playing games and constructing buildings work in a similar fashion and mold much the same area of activities whether it is the president formulating a foreign policy, an IR scholar writing an article or a journalist reporting on world news. Moreover, since the (terminological) boundaries are not clearly established either in practice or theorizing, opting for precise definitions here and differentiating materials based on whether they deal with international relations (narrowly understood), world politics (more broadly defined) or foreign policy (as a specific administrative field) would not result in more specific information, but often in artificial classifications and poorly founded interpretations concerning the separated usages.

## Part II

# International relations metaphors in action

This second part of the book will analyze the associations evoked and solutions prepared for by ten competing metaphorical scripts in their various variants: international relations as different kinds of nature, families, balancing, building, games, business, illnesses, journeys, music and puzzles. As indicated in the theoretical chapter, metaphors are here understood as important cognitive tools with real-life implications. In addition to transferring the logic of a better-known realm to make sense of a less-known activity, structural or complex conceptual metaphors highlight certain aspects of the activity and hide others. As they import inferences from a different sphere, they are necessarily selective and restrictive. However, metaphors are indispensable: grasping international relations “directly” in “all its forms and aspects” is simply not possible.

The examples analyzed come from the language of practitioners and theorists alike: I am interested in the metaphors both of heads of state, scholars, and various commentators. In the case of IR research, the works referred to are often, although not exclusively, classics in the Western canon. Moreover, these classics are often referred to as examples of certain established schools of theorizing: the IR traditions of realism, liberalism, Marxism, peace research, constructivism, critical theory, feminism, poststructuralism, and postcolonial/decolonial theory. The aim is not to strengthen the canon and the classifications further – although, unfortunately, this will probably also happen to a certain extent – but to capture some of the most well-known and potentially influential usages and to situate them in contexts probably already familiar to the readers of this book. Also, as concerns the metaphors of political leaders, analysts of various kinds and news reporting, the material has a Western major power bias. This derives from my personal limitations – limited ability to analyze texts in different languages, limited time and space – and the biases of what is called international relations more generally. Great power priorities have tended to dominate the agenda; the reach of Anglo-American think tanks, media corporations and certain newspapers is worldwide. The excerpts from the newspapers originate mostly from their free online versions. In the majority of cases, this means the headlines and the

leads only; in some cases, the entire online articles. These are news texts to which the general public, in principle, has access and that are read widely by people interested in world news.

Despite occasional references to common or rare usage, quantitative analysis is at no point executed. No hegemonic metaphors or their main challengers are identified; no specific textual corpus is systematically examined. In this sense, direct quotes are simply individual examples. However, I claim that the metaphors here studied are ordinary cognitive devices among experts and familiar to most Western audiences. Moreover, I claim that the examples, although time-specific, will remain relevant and recognizable for the foreseeable future. New instances of usage abound, and some political leaders cited, or conflicts referred to might be forgotten, but as illustrations of the logic of the particular metaphor, the excerpts are sufficient and not particularly time-sensitive. All the way through, the focus will be on the metaphors – their omnipresence, the competing interpretations they offer – not the speakers or texts. The assertion here is that different experts use the same metaphorical resources and that important practical consequences also derive from the logic of metaphors, not only the motives and power of the people or institutions who use them. The limitations of the study that result from adhering to English-language examples and some translations mainly from French, are on the one hand, obvious, and on the other, debatable. There is reason to believe that many ways of conceptual organizing are common to all speakers of Indo-European languages, and some metaphors might even be universal (for similarities and differences, see for example, Lakoff, 1987: 91–117, Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 150–151, Osborn, 1967).

The analysis will proceed metaphor-by-metaphor, first imagining possible associations pertaining to the metaphors, then presenting examples of the whole spectrum of usage and finally studying the entailments of the different variants for international relations, that is, the implications for action of the metaphors.

## 4 International nature

### Violent jungles and evolutionary progress

This chapter looks at the various types of nature metaphors for international relations, that is, at the wide array of explanatory scripts brought over from the natural realm of animals, plants, climate conditions and environmental trends. Some of them – like the “evolution of international norms” – sound familiar and go unmarked. Others – like “terrorist vermin” – stand out and are less common. All versions of the nature metaphor, however, structure international relations with terms pertaining to another, thoroughly different field. They help us understand international actors and events by evoking associations with jungles and gardens, morasses and orchards. While underlining “natural” aspects of international relations, they overshadow other aspects, such as mechanical balancing moves and calculative business-logic. Nature metaphors direct our interpretations and policy choices towards those common in “natural” settings. The chapter begins by outlining associations that go together with nature in its various forms. After this, examples from expert usage are provided. To conclude, the chapter speculates on the inferences drawn from nature metaphors, and their possible entailments for international action.

Nature is often understood in opposition to what it is not, for example, culture or society. Whereas culture and society are developed, organized and controlled, nature is wild, surprising and free. Nature can be harsh, even merciless, a hostile environment especially for the weak and helpless. However, nature can also be warm and loving, in the form of Mother Nature taking care of its own or a secluded retreat providing relaxation or an occasion for deep reflection. Sometimes, nature is seen as selecting the fittest; at other times, as healing most wounds and quietly restoring balance. In nature, change happens typically via evolution of the various species: modifications over generations. In the age of the Anthropocene, the impact of the human race exceeds all others and can even be seen as driving us towards a planetary catastrophe. The natural stands in contrast to the artificial, affected, constructed and complicated. Except in the case of nature that has been tamed to serve human purposes: gardens, cultivated fields and domesticated animals. Thus, the associations going together with nature cover different atmospheres and

logics: everything from the sphere of jungles and evolution to that of gardens, crops and pets.

Jungles represent the harshest nature association. In our imaginaries, jungles go together with wild and potentially dangerous animals, such as anacondas, gorillas, tigers, jaguars, lizards, frogs and bats. The typical plants – ferns, vines, orchids – are exotic, some poisonous, and even carnivorous. Nobody is safe in a jungle: animals hunt each other fiercely; plants fight for space on the ground and access to sunlight. Jungles are dark and dangerous: an attack might come from anywhere at any time by any creature. There are no rules in the jungle or put it another way: whoever is the strongest makes the rules for the moment. Large numbers of people do not live in jungles: anthropologists study the small tribes that constitute an exception, live “in harmony with nature”. We know from history that great civilizations able to carve out a space for themselves from the jungle have disappeared and the jungle has taken back its territory. In a jungle, there are no higher authorities to appeal to and persuasive argumentation plays no role when you are attacked by a savage beast. One needs to be fast, unscrupulous and powerful to survive in a jungle; constant alertness and preparing for the worst possible scenario not only make sense but constitute an absolutely necessary strategy.

Evolution as a natural process may be understood to proceed either violently – individuals or species actively being wiped out by others, like in the savage jungle – or rather peacefully – by some practices simply falling out of use, others becoming dominant, through learning from one generation to the next. Following the example of those who succeed can be considered to be a wise evolutionary strategy; from an evolutionary perspective, brute force takes you only so far, you also need wit and empathy, and often good luck. The young who are nurtured tend to prosper in later stages of development and eventually follow similar practices with their own offspring. Although many species have become extinct, many forms of life have also proven remarkably resilient and the variety of plants and animals on the planet is still amazing. Evolution does not give reasons or justifications for its practices, take a moral stand or take pity on anyone, but it has not stopped all kinds of flora and fauna, both strong and weak, moral and immoral, intelligent and unintelligent, from surviving. Evolution can never be stopped as such; nature is never finished or completed. Evolution is both directional and has surprises in store for us: it can take several paths forward.

Finally, gardening – plowing the earth, planting seeds, fertilizing, watering, weeding, admiring the flowers, harvesting the fruit – is typically seen as an activity consuming time and energy, but not being dangerous or violent as such. Insects may pester, weeds may grow, droughts may threaten, but love, caring and ingenuity, rather than counterattack with bayonets and bullets, constitute the general attitude of gardeners. Precious ends cannot be sought by crude means in delicate gardens: in order not to destroy the very plants that one cherishes, one should resist the temptation to beat pests with a spade or pour a pail of insecticide over the seedlings even in moments of despair.

Large-scale farming demands harsher methods, but still, one cannot force crops to grow and cows to produce milk or foretell all complications in the undertakings with domesticated nature. Gardening and farming demand constant vigilance but also trust: trust that nature will take care of most of the process, strangers will not steal your fruit, diseases will not kill your cattle and the climate will not turn inhospitable overnight. The friendly and caring associations that go together with pets – dogs and ponies, for example – are quite different from those accompanying the venomous snakes and wild gorillas of the jungle. However, there are additional twists with the pet metaphors, too: the dog-eat-dog world resembles the jungle.

While the prominence of nature metaphors in our understandings of international relations has been widely recognized, the different variants of the metaphor – with the different, often opposing associations and recommendations they carry – have not received proper attention. A comprehensive approach to this usage is in order since the realm of nature that is brought to clarify the activities of state-actors is described in a myriad of ways ranging from violent jungles via evolutionary progress to peaceful gardening.

Quite often, the nature metaphor transports the wisdom of a savage and surprising jungle environment to guide interstate relations. In the nature of the jungle, anarchy rules and violent death is always possible. The reference that is assumed to give the metaphor the most impressive historical backing is to Hobbes's *Leviathan* and more specifically the following passage:

Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man. [...] and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.

(Hobbes, 2017 [1651]: 102–103)

Especially so-called IR realists, both classical and structural ones (e.g. Morgenthau, 1973 [1948]: 225, 479, Waltz, 2010 [1979]: 103) cite parts of this passage when they ponder on the state of nature among states. According to Morgenthau, “All history shows that nations active in international politics are continuously preparing for, actively involved in, or recovering from organized violence in the form of war” (ibid: 40). Along the lines of Hobbes, Morgenthau notes that while domestic societies are regulated by morality, rules and laws, in international politics, such restraints are unreal, uncertain or inadequate. Again, abiding by the reasoning of Hobbes, he claims that “there can be no permanent peace without a state coextensive with the confines of the political world” (ibid: 487), a possibility clearly not in sight at the moment. Kenneth Waltz affirms that “Among states, the state of nature is a state of war” (ibid: 102). He further assumes that international-political systems “are formed and maintained on a principle of self-help that applies to

the units”, that “states seek to ensure their survival” and that “international politics is more nearly a realm in which anything goes” (ibid: 91). Waltz explains that the state of war does not mean that war constantly occurs, but that war may at any time break out. Using Hobbes’s help to explain, he emphasizes that the difference between national and international politics lies not in the occurrence of violence, but in the modes of organization for doing something about it: the international system is an anarchic self-help world (ibid: 102–104).

Offensive realist Mearsheimer (2014 [2001]) provides a more vivid description of the rules of the jungle: according to him, states “are willing to lie, cheat and use brute force if it helps them gain advantage over their rivals” (ibid: 35) and constantly “hunt for relative power” (ibid: 140). He asserts that “survival mandates aggressive behavior”, that “states are fated to clash as each competes for advantage over the others” and that “it pays to be selfish in a self-help world” (ibid: 21, xv–xvi, 33). Robert Kagan refers to the “Hobbesian vision” of the world, too (2018: 137), but does not see the entire world as a jungle, only parts of it: for Kagan, the liberal order is like a fragile garden “ever under siege from the natural forces of history, the jungle whose vines and weeds constantly threaten to overwhelm it” (ibid: 4). Kagan maintains that there are signs all around us today that “the jungle is growing back” (ibid: 10, 105) and that, for the defenders of the precarious liberal order, “pushing the jungle back from the garden” is a never-ending task (ibid: 77). Kagan underlines that the past seven decades of peace and security have been an exception, an “abnormal era” (ibid: 127), and that authoritarianism may be a more stable condition of human existence (ibid: 147).

The jungle version of the nature metaphor can be interpreted to encompass animal metaphors easily recognizable to the public at large (see for example Chilton and Lakoff, 1995, Lung, 2018, or Marks, 2011: 128–132): the Russian bear, the American eagle, the Chinese dragon, the Indian tiger/elephant, the French rooster, the English bulldog etc. The moves of these animals are often predicted and interpreted in terms of their most characteristic feature as defined by folklore understanding: bears are aggressive and clumsy, roosters nervous and arrogant, and bulldogs tenacious and sturdy. Sometimes, the metaphorical animals come in pairs – such as hawks and doves – or are presented in terms of a larger group, such as predators and parasites. These state-animals often meet each other in cartoons and posters – sometimes in the wilderness, sometimes in the farmyard – and in colloquial allusions, stories and jokes. Depending on the situation, the animals can either coexist peacefully or be intent on devouring each other. In the metaphorical animal world, human beings are seldom present: the animals are left to deal with each other, to figure out problems without outside intervention or higher authority. The rules they might negotiate amongst themselves are uncertain and often based on the “might makes right” principle. Even when passing as mere shorthand, animal metaphors carry interpretations and expectations, as illustrated by an excerpt from *Le Monde* (Brice Pedroletti,

29 June 2023): “Vietnam, the small dragon, who dreams of being an economic alternative to China”.

Studies of war rhetoric have shown that in times of violent confrontation, the enemy is often depicted as a certain type of animal. Zur (1991) claims that dehumanized enemies come as snakes and rats, for example. Zur explains that killing (noxious) animals is more acceptable than slaughtering other people. Ivie has analyzed how the British were portrayed as beasts of prey – sharks and tigers – in 1812 in the prowar discourse of the Republicans and President Madison (1982) and how President Reagan described the Soviets/communists as animals – snakes and wolves, for example – and a natural menace during the Cold War (1984, 1990). According to Ivie, images of savagery have been abundant in American justifications for war (1980, 2004). Simon Harrison (2014) studies the “war is hunting” metaphor specifically in the context of trophy-taking of the British, French, German, South African, Australian and US militaries, but he also analyzes the general projection of cultural models from one social context to the other, from the hunting of animals to warfare. Marks (2011: 143–146) draws attention to the fact that the story of a particular hunting instance, that of Jean Jacques Rousseau’s stag hunt, has become a metaphorical expression of the social contract. As is often the case, the metaphor can be interpreted in many ways: the hunter who leaves the group in pursuit of a hare can be interpreted either as a defector (realist self-help à la Waltz) or as a person committed to feeding his family every day (feminist perspective à la Rebecca Grant). Regardless of the lesson drawn from the metaphor, in the sphere of international relations, the stag hunters map onto states and the game is something that they all desire.

Speculations concerning state death and the grim destiny of weak states go smoothly together with the framework of violent natural surroundings. In a matter of fact manner, Waltz remarks that whether states “live, prosper, or die depends on their own efforts” (2010 [1979]: 91), but he also notes that “the death rate among states is remarkably low” (ibid: 95). Mearsheimer claims that “the fortunes of all states [...] are determined primarily by the decisions and actions of those with the greatest capability” (2014 [2001]: 5). However, he adds that even great powers are not safe from potential destruction: they are not just competitors, but “potentially deadly enemies” (ibid: 33). He emphasizes constant fear and suspicion as characteristics of great power relations (ibid: 32, 42–43). Wendt is considerably more optimistic: he points out that in the present mainly Lockean, at places Kantian system of anarchy, the “death rate” of states is almost nil, small states are “thriving” (1999: 279), and it often is in the interest of states to trust each other. Fazal (2004) argues that, historically, especially buffer states are “vulnerable to being coerced out of existence”: they “are significantly more likely to die” than non-buffer states. On the bright side, however, according to Fazal’s study, violent death (conquest and occupation) virtually ceased after 1945, and the relationship between power and state survival is tenuous (ibid). Regardless of the probability, when states live in a jungle, the possibility of death is always there.

Suffering and violent death can result from “natural causes” also in the natural catastrophe version of the metaphor. In this context, it is not the other state animals in the jungle or the hunter coming from the outside, but the inanimate forces of nature that do the damage. When international violence and wars are viewed as destructive floods, earthquakes, forest fires or volcanic eruptions, they become something that nobody can prepare adequately for or halt at will. Natural catastrophes strike indiscriminately; they are fierce and unreasoning. Kuusisto (1998) argues that the leaders of the Western major powers tend to frame especially conflicts they decide to watch from a distance as natural catastrophes: vis-à-vis the civil war in Bosnia, for example, Secretary of State Christopher talked about the “flames of conflict” that could become “an underground fire that could later erupt and become all-consuming” (10 Feb 1993); Prime Minister Major recounted the story of how “Yugoslavia erupted” and noted that “in the past few days, fighting flared up again in Tusla” (29 March 1995); and Foreign Minister Alain Juppé referred to the “centers of fire” that were threatening to “set ablaze entire Bosnia” (12 April 1994). The proper way to react was to deliver emergency aid, not to fight the volcano or to blame anyone in particular.

In addition to the potentially violent jungle or natural catastrophe version, the nature metaphor also comes in an evolutionary progress version. While the metaphorical jungle typically allows only the fittest to survive through daily struggle, natural evolution can also happen without continuous bloodshed or the wiping out of states, as it seems to do in the metaphors of many liberal IR theorists. Francis Fukuyama uses the metaphor of evolution repeatedly to describe international relations and claims that we are witnessing a “universal evolution” in the direction of liberal democracy (1992: xii, 48, 67, 71, 121). In his opinion, even though the evolution has included violent struggles, the final victory is more of the VCR – based on attractive power – than that of the sword. Russett and Oneal (2001) habitually refer to evolutionary processes in their work affirming the claims made by Immanuel Kant in his *Perpetual Peace* already in 1795: for example, they talk about how democratic practices and institutions have “evolved over time” (ibid: 45), how the emergence of a Kantian subsystem of states has contributed to “evolutionary development” (ibid: 180) and how autocracies are “decaying” (ibid: 70), basically becoming obsolete. These liberal theorists do not deny the historical significance of certain wars, but at the present moment, they consider international relations as governed by rules and moral practices that spread since following them delivers various kinds of benefits.

Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) study such positive processes, namely the “evolution” of international norms related to women’s rights and laws of war and outline the typical stages of the norm “life cycle”. They approach international relations from a social constructivist perspective. Wendt, while laying out the general view of social constructivism on processes of structural change, examines the “evolution” of the international system from various perspectives. He admits that both “natural and cultural

selection mechanisms” may have been at work in the evolution of state identities, but in the end, privileges cultural selection over natural selection (1999: 336). He claims that state identities are formed by imitation and social learning, that self-interest dominates only in a particular culture and will die out if not sustained by practice (ibid: 368–369). Change is not easy, but “cognitive evolution” within the “species” of states has happened, affirms Wendt (ibid: 319).

A pioneer of peace research, Kenneth Boulding, in an optimistic manner, frequently resorts to the metaphor of evolution: according to him, “peace is seen as the normal and proper state of humanity, pushing the evolutionary process toward the fulfillment of the biological potential of the human race” (1978: 88). Although Boulding claims to be describing the natural process of evolution that is not free of violence, his metaphors paint a picture quite different from that of the Hobbesian state of nature:

In evolution, there are no sure things. [...] The quest for peace must be part of an evolutionary process. It will suffer endless reversals and disappointments. What is important is that it has a direction in terms of human embetterment. [...] Evil when detected is rejected; good when detected is not. It is this asymmetry which gives evolution a direction, a time’s arrow. In our own time, the arrow points clearly and unequivocally toward peace.

(Boulding, 1978: 122)

As Hobbes is the classic reference of the proponents of the jungle variant of the nature metaphor, Kant’s visions often form the basis of more optimistic interpretations of natural international developments. Kant, as such, explicitly agreed with the idea that the state of nature is “a state of war”, that is, “the constant threat of hostilities” (2006 [1795]: 72). However, from this premise he proceeded to perpetual peace: “what *guarantees* perpetual peace is nothing less than the great artist *nature* (*natura daedala rerum*).” (emphasis original) (ibid: 85). In his reasoning, harmony comes about through discord: “through war, she [nature] has compelled them [human beings] to enter into more or less legal relations with one another” (ibid: 87). Kant continues: “Nature wills irresistibly that right ultimately attains supreme authority” (ibid: 91), “nature unites, by means of mutual self-interest, peoples” and “states find themselves forced [...] to promote a noble peace [...] just as if they were therefore members of a lasting alliance” (ibid: 92). Hobbes, although widely evoked by IR scholars, was mainly concerned with domestic politics; Kant, while dealing with an international reality quite different from today’s, explicitly outlines principles that states should follow in relations with each other.

Starting from peaceful premises, gardening or growing crops can be used as a metaphor for dealing with the nature of international relations. Certain activists committed to the cause of non-violence have perfected the use of the garden metaphor. Mahatma Gandhi refers to the “crop of Satyagraha” and

suggests that “just as the seedlings are likely to be lost among weeds if the latter are not plucked out, so also will weeds of violence keep growing unless we keep the land free of them” (1968b [1917]: 46). Albert Luthuli upholds that “the values which we cherish can only develop to the full in a climate of peace and equality where brotherhood is respected” (1993c [1958]: 124). In these scripts, gardeners and farmers try to optimize the conditions for certain plants to grow and keep others from spreading. The atmosphere even in times of trouble is relatively tranquil – as is natural for the stories of advocates of non-violent resistance.

However, not only avowed pacifists, but also the commanders-in-chief of mighty armies resort to analogies with peaceful gardening in certain situations. According to Kuusisto (2009), the leaders of the Western major powers – when dealing amicably with friends or addressing problems they want to take care of via negotiations – are ready to approach international relations as a realm where things flourish and are nurtured. President George W. Bush promised that “commerce, trade, opportunity and hope will all flourish with the completion of the Doha Round” (31 March 2007); Foreign Secretary Jack Straw claimed that “civil society, politicians, parties, and the media in the Middle East are crying out for nurture and support”, “the Middle East seeks to build a culture in which democracy can flourish” (10 March 2005); and Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner described the relationship between France and China as “close and fruitful”, as “flourishing” and as the “fruit of political will going back a long way” (31 Oct 2007). Anne-Marie Slaughter (2017: 191–192) recounts how former Secretary of State George Schultz described diplomacy as the work of diligently cultivating and tending relationships with other nations.

Russett and Oneal refer to the possibility of peace being “rooted” and the “roots of peace” (2001: 29, 79). Cynthia Enloe discusses actors “nurturing” alliances and ideas falling on “fertile ground” (2014 [1989]: 32, 94). In a similar manner, Morgenthau speculates on the “roots” of ideas – such as attitudes towards power politics, modern nationalism and universal morality – directing international relations (1973 [1948]: 36, 106, 266); he also brings up the “moral climate” of international relations (*ibid*: 256) and outlines rules that can possibly give peace-preserving diplomacy a chance to “grow” (*ibid*: 540). Andrew Linklater comments on the signs of structural “decay” of the existing international system of exclusions (1998: 22) and the “erosion” of sovereign state powers (*ibid*: 9, 30, 191); he claims that “modern states have contained the seeds of their own eventual destruction” (*ibid*: 218). Moreover, he is unable to locate a likely “breeding-ground” for the re-emergence of the totalizing project (*ibid*: 181). Consequently, Linklater looks forward to the peaceful transformation of the international society.

Gandhi advises that the weeds of violence should be picked out “with compassion” (1968b [1917]: 46), but not all gardening advice is equally serene. According to Kagan, democracy sometimes needs to be “nurtured and supported” (*ibid*: 61) with rather heavy measures. His liberal order, the

“garden that needs constant tending” (2018: 163) is “forever threatened by the forces of nature” (ibid: 9). Kagan holds a pessimistic view of existence in the jungle-garden interface (2018: 162) and emphasizes that it is impossible to wield power, even in the best of causes, “with clean hands”, that “killing is killing, no matter how virtuous the objective” (ibid: 77). Dean Acheson, Secretary of State in the Truman administration, quite aggressively recommended dealing in due time with the potential “rotten apple” – namely, Greece – that might infect the whole “barrel” of apples: first, countries like Iran, Egypt and France, and then others in Africa, Asia and Europe (Slater, 1987). President Joe Biden (21 Feb 2023) expressed his admiration for the people of Ukraine “who continue still to root out Kremlin’s efforts to corrupt, coerce and control”. Also from the feminist perspective, the gardening of international relations / International Relations is not necessarily peaceful. Runyan (1992) explores how anthropomorphic, androcentric and racist metaphors of “nature” have been instrumental in the construction of the modern, Western state. She claims that whether the state has been viewed as continuous with nature or as juxtaposed to nature, its metaphysics has read order, unity and intolerance of difference into both nature and the body politic. Generally, things defined as “natural” – animals, women, people of color – have been suppressed and exploited by the white, Western man and his state. Thus, Runyan recommends exiting from this cultivated “garden” that is unfit for living things.

As demonstrated, the international relations as nature metaphor is used in a wide variety of ways by theorists and practitioners. Differences start already with interpretations of the classic references of the metaphors. Campbell (1992: 61–66) claims that most realists, when drawing conclusions from Hobbes’s state of nature, transfer his understanding of individuals within a state to the realm of relations between states. Campbell, however, emphasizes that for Hobbes, there was both a qualitative and a quantitative difference between the two realms. He asserts that Hobbes did not see international relations as pervasive conflict, a jungle, but instead as resembling international society. Walker (1992: 186) agrees that Hobbes clearly understood that states are not like individuals: they are less vulnerable to violence, and they are unequal to each other. Walker claims that Hobbes’s account of the state of war is reconcilable with the modern state system having regularized, even institutionalized, forms of cooperative accommodation.

Concerning the evolution of international relations, too, different interpretations have been presented and studied. Lakoff (1996: 204–205, 2000, Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 557–561) distinguishes between the one that sees evolution as the survival of the fittest and the one that looks at the process as the survival of the best-nurtured. In the first version – advocated by foreign policy hawks and domestic policy conservatives (often the same people) – the strongest animal wins a violent fight. In the second version – preferred by foreign policy doves and domestic policy liberals/progressives (again, often the same individuals) – survival is the result of being loved, cared for, helped,

allowed to make mistakes, to learn. Marks (2011: 187, 191) notes that in IR theory, the metaphor of evolution is a way of conceptualizing change, and that in the modern era, biological and organic metaphors dominate over mechanistic ones. He studies (ibid: 69–79) the evolution metaphors of George Modelski and Kasimierz Poznanski, Andrew Farkas, Ann Florini, Robert Axelrod, and the Constructivist paradigm. Marks observes that evolution can function as a bidirectional metaphor: from biological processes to social/state behavior and then back again.

Runyan (1992) explores how the views of relationships among the natural world, political authority and social organization have changed over time: she concludes that an organic view has given way to more mechanistic renderings. According to her, since Hobbes, nature is no longer the site of order, but of disorder that has to be balanced or tamed. In principle, there are alternatives to the dichotomous frameworks – usages calling either for respect for “the natural order” of things or for the imposition of order on “the wild nature”, both leading to problematic policies – but in practice the hold of the harmony-hierarchy dualism over our understandings is strong. Runyan, however, finds some exceptions: Haraway’s “nature as Coyote or Trickster” and “cyborg as the political being”, and the “fractious holism” of ecofeminists such as Jane Bennett. Thus, nature can also be viewed open-endedly as a field of chance, ambiguity, irregularity and partiality, a realm explaining and promoting connections that need not rest on one or the other, hierarchy or harmony.

Nature metaphors transfer the logic of nature – living organisms, biological processes, weather conditions – to the field of international relations, but the logic and interpretative framework come in vastly divergent versions. Nature metaphors can make sense of both conflictual and cooperational encounters among states, and maybe more importantly, direct both violent and nonviolent responses to challenges in the future. The solutions offered by the ruthless jungle metaphor are quite different from those recommended by the peaceful gardening associations; different characteristics of actors and aspects of interstate activities are highlighted and hidden. To conclude this chapter, I will sketch the entailments of both the cooperational/hopeful and the conflictual/discouraging versions of international relations as nature. The implications for action of these variants are far from uniform, but very real: just as we tend to approach aggressive tigers, agitated horses and playful lapdogs in different ways, we deal differently with states assumed to be naturally prone to violence or naturally peaceful. Certain strategies seem reasonable on the one hand, and completely ridiculous on the other, depending on whether one is operating in a permanent state of war or witnessing the evolution of liberal democracy.

The conflictual variants of the nature metaphor – survival of the fittest, aggressively cultivated gardens – tend to highlight interstate competition and self-help and downplay win-win situations and negotiated solutions to shared problems. In the jungle of international relations, or while fighting back the

jungle of authoritarianism, it makes sense to move fast and decisively. It is not only naïve, but potentially deadly, to trust any other actor: obviously, never the adversary, but also friendly nations, even alliance partners, may let you down when push comes to shove. Even pausing to think for too long may be suicidal: quick decisions are to be preferred over assessing the situation from all possible angles. The fact that we have not witnessed direct, violent confrontations among great powers in some time does not mean that a major war could not break out any day. Power politics has not disappeared anywhere: small and weak countries are permanently at risk, but poorly prepared superpowers might perish, too, so maintaining capable armies is essential for all states. Moreover, taking care of the weeds of the international garden – terrorist groups, for example – does not amount to a single operation, but an exercise that has to be repeated ever so often. Constant suspicion and vigilance, demonstrations of resolve and force are recommendable strategies when the state of international nature is war; in a Hobbesian world, appearing weak or indeterminate makes you easy prey.

The cooperational variants of the nature metaphor – the evolution of international norms, and flourishing systems of collective security – tend to emphasize common values and interests and overshadow problems of communication and trust, and occurrences of savagery. In the evolving world community or among the countries that nurture peace and democracy, it makes sense to let things develop the way they are developing, according to their natural course. Constant fretting is not necessary; virtuous cycles of peaceful interaction are likely to prosper in the prevailing climate. Interstate relations have become progressively less violent: the Kantian subsystem of states is growing, and only very few states adhere to primitive practices. Peace is natural: most states live in peace most of the time. War is an exception that will hopefully die out with further stages of evolution. As to the still savage actors or geographic locations, the policy of carrots rather than that of sticks is to be chosen: even brutal dictators may react to positive stimuli. States have a natural instinct to survive: they are likely to avoid self-destructive courses of action and adapt to new environments. Cultivating community is a foreign policy strategy superior to all others: states, too, reap what they sow in international relations.

For these conflictual and cooperational scripts to be evoked, the nature metaphor does not need to be spelled out fully or mentioned in a manner that attracts special attention. The source domain of nature is widely known and frequently used to explain activities from other spheres. References to flourishing and decaying, to evolving and perishing, to cultivating and prowling may be made automatically or developed with the purpose of supporting a specific policy choice. The intentions of the speaker do not affect the functioning of the script. Finally, there is of course no way to know for sure or to prove beyond doubt how a particular metaphor works in a particular instance. Here, as in human sciences more generally, causal connections can be established only speculatively. However, when studying

actors whose cognitive systems are based on metaphorical reasoning, speculating about metaphors seems like the way forward. Being aware of the typical associations and possible entailments for action that go together with alternative metaphors helps us understand the choices made in a particular context. The different variants of the nature metaphor establish either a discouraging or a hopeful atmosphere in the field of international relations: both attitudes, as divergent as they are, can be seen as natural. Whether one goes for the savage jungle, or the delicate garden determines which foreign policy strategies make sense and what kind of theorizing passes as sound.

## 5 International families

### Loving parents and bitter feuds

This chapter looks at the various types of family metaphors for international relations, that is, at the many different kinds of explanatory scripts brought over from the family realm of parents and children, spouses and siblings, relatives and neighbors. Some of them – like the “EU family” – are regularly used and pass unnoticed. Others – like the “rape of Ukraine” – are rare and attract attention. All versions of the family metaphor, however, structure international relations with terms employed in another, totally separate field. They help us understand international actors and events by evoking associations with family encounters, marriages and child-raising. As they emphasize the aspects of international relations that are easy to grasp via the logic of a social family setting, they play down other aspects, such as apparent effects of mechanical or natural forces. Family metaphors direct our considerations and policy choices towards those common in “family circles”. The chapter begins by outlining associations that go together with families in their numerous variants. Then, examples of expert usages are provided. To conclude, the chapter speculates on the inferences drawn from family metaphors, and their possible entailments for international action.

Despite what Tolstoy claims, not only unhappy, but also happy families come in various forms: they are not all alike. Associations that go together with families cover nuclear families and extended families, traditional and unconventional types of families, new and old family ties – arrangements that may succeed or fail in diverse ways. The family metaphor is closely related to the nature metaphor: both transfer the logic of living organisms to the field that they explain, often a field dealing with entities whose physical existence, let alone behavioral traits or forms of social organization, are not obvious. While nature as a source domain operates with all species, families are primarily seen as units of human beings who have a specific but essentially contested human nature. The family metaphor generates certain roles: mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, children and stepchildren, aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins, family friends and neighbors are all characters that we might expect to find in families or in close contact with them. Almost everywhere, the family sphere is one of reproduction,

nurture and relaxation. Although we hope, and possibly by default assume, that life in families is peaceful and supportive of healthy practices, everybody knows that domestic violence is a serious problem, that serene appearances can really deceive and that neighbors are sometimes incredibly annoying.

Ideally, families are happy: family members love and respect each other, spouses and siblings stand on an equal footing, and generations learn from one another. Young children need a caregiver in order to survive and develop into well-balanced individuals and functioning members of society. Usually, it is the parents who nurture children; in many cultures, children are also supposed to look after their elderly parents. Most people appreciate the sharing of responsibilities and feelings that takes place within families: both the giving and the taking, even the self-sacrifice sometimes involved. In happy family homes, there is a safe and comfortable place for each member. Spouses may enjoy sex in privacy, children can play alone or with each other, and occasionally neighbors and friends are invited over to have a good time. Many of us adults would like to have a family with whom to relax and recover from the stress at work and busy social calendars. In the happy family context, the people around you know you intimately and accept you as you are; you can be yourself and count on the support of others. Close family ties result in obligations stronger than any others: blood is said to be thicker than water. Families have their own ways of doing things, their particular traditions and stories. Loving families pass on not only genes and material possessions, but also wisdom and a unique sense of togetherness.

In addition to love and care, families may be associated with long-standing abuse and bitter feuds. Behind the closed doors and heavy curtains of unhappy homes, terrible things may happen: the very people who are supposed to take care of you and protect you can torture you both mentally and physically without anybody noticing. Dark family secrets and painful childhood memories might affect you all through your seemingly satisfactory life. Even in less tragic cases, the atmosphere in the family might be tense or unpredictable: you might head almost anywhere else than the dysfunctional family circle to relax and have fun. Some family relationships are clearly based on unequal power: parents are entitled to special privileges vis-à-vis their underage children, and children may become the legal guardians of their incapacitated parents. Others may involve complicated power struggles among seeming equals: strongly differing opinions about the status of certain family members, the family decision making procedures, the fair division of household chores, or the customary ways of doing things in the family. Following family traditions may become a burden; only a few might remember what the original idea behind the cumbersome practice was. Close-knit families may result in tight social control and a hostile attitude towards outsiders. In associations pertaining to mafia families, obligations deriving from blood ties often have nothing joyful about them.

By extension, what applies to the family metaphor may also apply to the bigger unit of community or society. Community/society members often

believe in a common history and common interests, in mutual caring and responsibilities towards each other, in special ties and in the primacy of non-violent means of interaction. Communities/societies may be small or large, close-knit or loosely organized, seemingly harmonious or openly quarrelsome. While the existence of some seems obvious and eternal, the logic and future of others appears mysterious especially to outsiders. Communities/societies have different kinds of missions, interaction styles and roles for their members. Some rely on central control, efficient administration and carefully planned activities; others are based on dealing with situations as they arrive or coming up with projects by members who feel concerned or interested. In communities/societies, much like in families, leaders may be regarded as father or mother figures and some members may be judged to exhibit immature or childish behavior that has to be disciplined. Despite the variety, all associations going together with families/communities/societies evoke something more than mere results of coexistence in time and space, simply constituting a (biological or mechanical) system. In families/communities/societies, at least some feelings of togetherness, and common projects and rules, are expected.

Our understanding of international relations is often structured by family metaphors. Some scholars and practitioners seem to employ family metaphors without special reflection; others elaborate on their choice and particular manner of usage. As already demonstrated (see Chapter 2), the families and societies of international relations are usually seen to be composed of state members who feel and act much like people do. However, these units of social organization are deemed to take a wide variety of forms and allow for different kinds of roles: some political leaders seem keen to adopt a motherly role for their nation, some state families appear to operate according to a paternalistic logic; certain analysts see an anarchic society of states, others talk about different kinds of security communities; some international unions are presented as models of free convergence, others as forced marriages on the verge of break-up. The family/community metaphor deserves to be studied in all its variety, mapping all its possible implications for action.

Starting from the bigger unit of community: Karl Deutsch et al. (1957), in their project aimed at eliminating war as a social institution, operate with this metaphor and place their hope on security communities. They define these communities as “communities into which men organize themselves” (ibid: 4) – a security-community is “a group of people which has become integrated” (ibid: 5) – but in practice, they refer to security-communities as potentially existing also between countries. For example, according to Deutsch et al., a pluralistic security-community exists between the United States and Canada. In a security-community, there is “real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically” (ibid). Accordingly, “if the entire world were integrated as a security-community, wars would automatically be eliminated” (ibid). Since Deutsch et al., the idea of security communities has established itself in IR, and Western Europe

has become the primary example of a security community where “mutual military fears are absent” (Wæver, 1998: 69). The contributors to *Security Communities* (Adler and Barnett, 1998a: 9–15) find that the concept sheds light on processes even in some contexts where a group of states is not a security community, such as the OSCE, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the ASEAN or South America. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (1998b: 9–15) sketch the entire field of IR theorizing via the divide between the “logic of anarchy” and the “logic of community”.

Bull (1995 [1977]), with his “anarchical society” maneuvers somewhere in the middle ground of the field: he considers the comparison of “alternative utopias” – utopias such as the entire states system becoming a pluralistic security community – “an arbitrary and sterile exercise” (ibid: 275), but firmly posits that there is order in world politics. In Bull’s view (ibid: 13), a society of states or international society (instead of a mere system) exists since states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, conceive themselves as bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another and share in the working of common institutions. Bull (ibid: 49) emphasizes that the reality of the element of international society does not exclude the reality of the elements of state of war and transnational divisions. Thus, the society is anarchical and the order it provides is precarious and imperfect (ibid: 50). In IR literature, the loosest associations of states-people seem to be referred to as systems; then come societies, communities and families. Monnet (1955), on the practitioner level, was sensitive to the distinction, too: “what is important [...] is to decide that we will never return to be a society of nations and that we are moving towards a United States of Europe”. Envisioning the future of the European Coal and Steel Community, he sees the United States growing in number – “I do not think that the United States of Europe should limit itself to our six countries” – and finding solutions to more and more common problems.

Moving on to the smaller unit of families: Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff, 1996: 65–140, 2000, Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 311–325) have investigated the scope and variations of the family metaphor in the US context. According to their analyses, there is a major divide between two American family models and their policy entailments: the strict father family and the nurturant parent family. This divide is at play also in the evolution metaphors discussed in the previous chapter. Strict father families are geared toward developing strong, morally upright children capable of facing the dangerous world: fathers have authority, mothers have day-to-day responsibility of running the household. Nurturant parent families derive meaning from mutual interaction and care: parents ward off external evils, children become responsible and self-reliant through being cared for and respected and through caring for others. Thus, claims Lakoff (2000), the family of nations or the world community is understood in radically different ways in the United States: as in need of discipline and firm leadership (by the morally superior US) or as capable of and entitled to democratic decision-making (with all mature countries

participating). Lakoff maintains that the dominant US understanding of relations with other countries operates with friendly and hostile neighbors, industrialized grown-ups and developing children, unruly rogue nations and regional police forces such as NATO.

As both Chilton and Lakoff (1995) and Marks (2011: 192–193) note, the conception of human nature – of the practitioners and theorists – lies at the bottom of the conception of the essential qualities of states and the basic character of state interaction. Since Tickner (1992: 127–144) starts from the assumption that human beings strive both for attachment and community and for independence and physical strength, she believes that international relations, too, encompass all these aspirations and activities. She refuses to separate the sphere of reproduction and maintenance, caring and responsibility – often seen as private, domestic and feminine – from the traditionally public, international and masculine sphere of competition and survival. Moreover, affirms Tickner, since the international is not limited to “high politics”, this should not be the sole focus of IR either. Being a feminist IR scholar, she sees the concerns of individuals and families as political and internationally relevant. In this vein of thinking, international relations can be a family matter in several ways: people and states should be understood as having similar basic needs and interests, and these needs and interests should be seen to cover all aspects of life, including not only (gendered) military security but also for example (gendered) economic and ecological security.

Unlike Tickner, Morgenthau sees human nature as essentially power-seeking as expressed in statements like “we assume that statesmen think and act in terms interest defined as power, and the evidence of history bears that assumption out” (1973 [1948]: 5), “the desire to attain a maximum of power is universal” (ibid: 208) and “International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power” (ibid: 27). Morgenthau – as a “human nature” realist, instead of a “structural” realist – believes that the world, including the laws of politics, is the result of forces inherent in the human nature (ibid: 3). Consequently, accepting human nature “as it actually is”, without “wishful thinking” (ibid: 4), is of primary importance for theorizing. However, Morgenthau’s view does not stand in as complete contrast to Tickner’s as one might believe at first glance. Although definitely not an optimist with great faith in a happy ending, he emphasizes that people and nations struggle not only for power but also for peace. He claims that “peace has become the prime concern of all nations” (ibid: 24) and that “people everywhere are anxious to free themselves from the threat of war” (ibid: 323). Tragically, at the moment, national sovereignty and nationalistic universalism pose major obstacles to the realization of world peace, but the basic human desire is there; as a rule, people do not want to resort to violence. According to Morgenthau, nationalism destroyed the formerly vibrant international society (ibid: 248), but not the possibility of one: world peace can in principle be realized through diplomatic efforts to build, first an international society, then a world community, and finally, a world state (ibid: 487, 513, 517).

While Tickner and Morgenthau do not elaborate on the family/community metaphor in international relations as such, other IR scholars have examined it explicitly. Brysk et al. (2002) use the insights of feminist analysis to study the functioning of the family metaphor in the context of identity-based post-colonial relations. They claim that the metaphor adopted during colonial times to justify European parental dominance still organizes the views that the Spanish, the French and the British have of their interests in their respective family spheres. According to Brysk et al., the family metaphor constructs post-colonial relationships as domestic, paternalistic and dedicated to cultural reproduction. The Spanish, French and British families all have their specific features and styles: France maintains the highest level of structural dependence and plays a unique role in military intervention; Spain emphasizes aid and diplomacy and intertwines language and religion; and Britain offers higher trade preferences and promotes its legal, educational and athletic cultures. All of these families have also changed since colonial times, and the metaphor has adapted to the changing circumstances: the patriarch is no longer dominant in the way he formerly was, and the children are now independent adults, observe Brysk et al. We know from general history that, in some colonial cases, the parent state was officially succeeded by a trusteeship or tutelage arrangement where the League of Nations or the UN temporarily acted as the adult in charge.

The EU is regularly understood as a family by both theorists and practitioners of international relations. According to Hülse (2006), the German “EU as a family” metaphor evokes a relationship among brothers, and at least officially, a non-hierarchical one. The EU does not have a patriarch/matriarch with a unique responsibility for steering the family, and deciding what is best for the family. In line with this interpretation, President Emmanuel Macron (10 Dec 2021) referred to Germany and France as “two countries walking hand in hand”, cooperating closely, but neither taking the leading role. President Joe Biden (12 July 2023) saw particularly warm EU family ties among the Baltic states: he praised the way Lithuania, “together with your brothers and sisters in Estonia and Latvia”, had helped end the era of division in Europe. The EU – also on the metaphorical level – is a *sui generis* family: not as close as federal arrangements such as the United States, but much closer than any intergovernmental organization. Although the EU is recognized as a very special case, families of states have also been identified outside Europe and in earlier epochs. Mukoyama (2023) refers to the domains with linear borders in Edo Japan as the “Eastern cousins” of European sovereign states. Aissaoui (2019) detects international family relations already in pre-modern times: in the ancient Near East during the second millennium BCE, state treaties were divided into parity, non-parity and vassal treaties with corresponding metaphorical forms of address: brother or father and son.

As mentioned also earlier in connection with the ontological states-are-persons metaphor (Chapter 2), in international relations, states are often seen as men in charge of protecting nations seen as women, that is, our

understandings of the field are personified and gendered. When the structural international relations-as-family encounters metaphor is used, these gendered characters receive specific realizations and behave in family member-like ways. For example, Mother Russia regularly personifies the Russian nation in the discourse of Russian politicians and the media, and there are yearly state celebrations in Russia to honor veterans and the army personnel on the Defense of the Fatherland Day on 23 February. President Vladimir Putin referred to both “our Motherland” and “our Fatherland” when, in a paternalistic tone, explaining to the Russian people what the “special military operation” to demilitarize Ukraine was all about (President Putin, 24 Feb 2022). Wilkinson (2018: 105–121) claims that in the 2000s, masculinity has become the defining characteristic of the Russian state. Under Putin, the Russian state has not just been remasculinized after the humiliation of the 1990s, but has actually become hypermasculine. In Parashar’s analysis (2018), India is a postcolonial state rejecting colonial emasculation/feminization and reclaiming masculinity on the one hand and evoking a nurturing narrative that emphasizes the state’s maternal instincts on the other. Thus, in the war between the state and Maoist guerrillas, India performs both the masculinist emotions of outrage, hurt, aggression and domination, and the maternal instincts of protection, forgiveness, love and sacrifice. In the official narrative, Mother India is willing to embrace her prodigal Maoist children if they repent properly; if not, she will punish them to the extreme, that is, wipe them out.

Mother Russia (*Matushka Rossiya*) and Mother India (*Bharat Mata*) are by definition “motherly”: looking out for their children, ready for self-sacrifice, and resilient. Marianne – the national personification of the French Republic – is a young (virginal) female figure, just like the Finnish *Suomi-neito*, pure and brave, fragile and strong at the same time. The US Uncle Sam, although not defined through a nuclear family role, is a figure of authority, an elderly man. John Bull, *Deutscher Michel* and *Bay Ganyo* – male figures representing the United Kingdom, Germany and Bulgaria respectively – are, in notable contrast to Uncle Sam (and the women figures), not particularly noble, wise or courageous, but instead, represent the matter-of-fact, country-dwelling, easy-going everyman. Like the national animals discussed in the previous chapter on nature metaphors, these personified states/nations engage in international relations as verbal references in political speeches and as textual tools, but even more so as visual representations, often cartoon figures in the media, and supposedly as images in people’s minds. Thus, the national personifications may meet each other, react to each other’s suggestions, make threats, quarrel, attempt to seduce and sometimes unite. They are less prominent in official speeches of heads of state or research contributions of scholars, but they reinforce other types of family and community metaphors of international relations, the more professional or serious ones.

Both great powers with an undeniable colonial past and small nations with a markedly peaceful self-understanding have been criticized for paternalizing

ethnic minorities within the country and certain next-door neighbors. The way that the United States has treated its populations of color is rather well documented, but also the seemingly inoffensive and egalitarian Finns have a record of dealing with the Sami people as “children of the nature” (Toivanen, 2003), in need of schooling and being looked after more generally. The French have been accused of treating the Belgians as children or little brothers, just as the Finnish people of a similar attitude towards the Estonians. These paternal/fraternal attitudes are often, although not always, recognizable to the people concerned, and they have been documented in several studies. According to Vaughan (1995), in the editorial discourse of four newspapers – *The New York Times*, *Jerusalem Post*, *An-Nahar* and *Al-Fajr* – on the 1982 Lebanon crisis, the paternal United States tried to guide the recalcitrant Israeli son into better behavior. The Lebanese and the Palestinians were portrayed as orphans abandoned by their Arab family when they were most in need.

Gavriely-Nuri (2013: 71–75) describes how the metaphor of war-is-women’s work was used in Israeli political discourse to normalize war in the context of the Second Lebanon War in 2006. In this discourse, Israel had to “run after” Lebanon’s “unruly child”, namely Hezbollah, to “take care of” Hezbollah and to “cleanse” the south of Lebanon. Shimko (2004) observes how US presidents have referred to Central and South America as “our backyard”, suggesting private ownership and paternalistic supervision of the children playing there. Also in Shapiro’s view (1988: 100, 113, 122), the dominant US foreign policy discourse, echoing texts by Alvarado and Las Casas, depicts Central America as a less-than-equal and not-yet-perfected object: as a little brother of the US subject/self. Campbell (1992: 223–243) elaborates on the US foreign policy representations of the Japanese, child-like being among the most frequently ascribed. Even below children in independence and capabilities come the toys of children: “puppet regimes” is a metaphor frequently employed in international relations to denote total absence of sovereignty.

Although efforts to understand international relations via references to fatherly, motherly and childish activities abound, the family terminology itself is not always straightforward with respect to gender: as demonstrated, motherlands and fatherlands appear in the same explanations, and in Romance languages, *patria* has feminine gender, resulting in gender-wise mixed connotations such as “la mère patrie” (French) or “la Madre Patria” (Spanish). Often, it is not clear whether it is the father or the mother doing the disciplining, or who exactly the children are. The family activities and roles for states – both the happy moments and the problems, the central characters and the more distant members – however, borrow their logic from a sphere we know well: that of ordinary encounters between human beings living in families and communities. Like a proper father or mother steers human children, the (head of) state steers the nation, and the leading states or great powers steer other countries – countries either geographically close to them,

belonging to the group of like-minded countries, constituting former enemies in need of re-education or even all the rest of the countries in the world.

Sometimes, in order to create families, states get married or form official unions. These unions, like those of people, may end in break-ups or divorces. State unions, unlike most marriages of people, may involve more than two parties. Linklater (1998) uses the metaphor of making and breaking matches to describe international relations on the level of theoretical principles. Linklater wishes to promote a conception of dialogue in which universality is “wedded to” multiculturalism (ibid: 90); he wants to “divorce” greater universality and respect for difference from notions of inevitable unilinear progress and historical finality (ibid); he looks forward to citizenship being “uncoupled” from the sovereign state (ibid: 204); and he is eager to perfect the mechanisms for “wooing” the consent of others in the context of cosmopolitan citizenship (ibid: 183). On the state practice level, states marry each other to form political, economic or military alliances. Waltz (2010 [1979]: 165) expands on the wooing framework when discussing the uncertainty of state alignments: “Flexibility of alignment means both that the country one is wooing may prefer another suitor and that one’s present alliance partner may defect.” He continues by claiming that states will need to look like “attractive partners” for alliances to form in the first place; then, “satisfying a present partner” is something that states must do to take care of the alliance (ibid). During the courting, “suitors alter their appearance and adapt their behavior to increase their eligibility” (ibid). To illustrate, Waltz uses the “wooing of France and Russia” (ibid: 166) as an example: according to him, ever since the Napoleonic Wars, many had believed that the “Republican” and the “Cossack” could never be “engaged, let alone contract a marriage”; the “wooing” was nevertheless “consummated” in the alliance of 1894 and duly produced the Triple Entente as its “progeny”. Waltz’s usage receives attention also in Chilton’s book on security metaphors (1996: 112–113). Military alliances, especially, need to be based on the principle of fidelity in order to be satisfying and to last: states joining their defense systems are supposed to stand beside each other through thick and thin.

The economic and political marriage that has attracted most attention since its initiation is definitely that of the European Union. Starting from the first sentence of the preamble to the Treaty of Rome, the determination has been to build “an ever-closer union” among the peoples of Europe and their countries. In her State of the Union address of 2021, Ursula von der Leyen (2021) reaffirmed the ideals and values of the founders and gave a positive evaluation of the marriage: “imperfect as it might be, our Union is both beautifully unique and uniquely beautiful”. In her study of the metaphors used in Bulgarian newspapers to conceptualize the country’s EU accession, Curticepean (2011) elaborates on the “journey” and “family”. She shows (ibid: 124) how the family metaphor was used in expressions such as Bulgaria “becoming part of the European family”, “returning to the family of European nations” and “rejoining the family of European

democracies”. According to her (ibid: 124–126), family relationships are associated with love, commitments and responsibilities; they operate with issues such as marriage, courtship, engagement, wedding, divorce, partners and relatives. In the depictions of the Bulgarian press, Bulgaria was happy to (re)join the union where it definitely belonged, and the EU was happy to have a new like-minded partner. Integration theorists especially of the liberal intergovernmentalist type, such as Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig (2009: 84), see the EU not as a passionate love affair or an alliance of soulmates, but as a constitutional agreement resulting from rational state action – preference formation, bargaining, institutionalization – yet amounting to an epochal achievement, a “mature” and “stable” union of states. In their portrayal, the EU is a match in the end convenient for everyone, something close to a happy arranged marriage.

For a long time, the United Kingdom had a very difficult time in this mature union, a tension that culminated with Brexit. Prime Minister David Cameron thought that by facing the problems head-on, he could make the marriage work. He acknowledged that both parties were unhappy: “we are seeing this frustration with the EU very dramatically in Britain” and “I know that the United Kingdom is sometimes seen as an argumentative and rather strong-minded member of the family of European nations.” (23 Jan 2013). Before the referendum, he still believed in couples counseling, maybe an open marriage: “I want a relationship between Britain and the EU that keeps us in it.” and “we believe in a flexible union of free member states” (ibid). After the referendum, while getting out had become the priority – “Out of the EU, out of ever closer union, free to do things differently” (21 May 2019) – Prime Minister Theresa May still wanted the break-up to be amicable “I continue to believe that the best way to make a success of Brexit is to negotiate a good exit deal with the EU as the basis of a new deep and special partnership for the future” (ibid). Even Prime Minister Boris Johnson, a firm critic of the EU and the way the divorce process was handled by his predecessors, officially, wanted to remain friends: “Not because we want to detract from anything done by our EU friends – of course not. We want this to be the beginning of a new era of friendly cooperation between the EU and an energetic Britain” (31 Jan 2020). Through studying data from various media sources published close before and after the Brexit vote, Đurović and Silaški (2018) demonstrate how the married partners metaphor scenario structured the Brexit discourse: the Britain–EU relationship was characterized, for example, as a rocky marriage, a messy divorce very hard on the children and a shotgun divorce. Scripts operating with families and marriages – the European family, the family of nations, the marriage of convenience, the divorce – are among the metaphors also Charteris-Black (2019) identifies as the metaphors of Brexit.

No matter how unhappy the United Kingdom was in the EU marriage, almost everybody agrees that it originally joined the union of its own free will and was not grossly misled by its prospective partners. Especially after an unamicable breakup, other state marriages have been judged as forced

unions – or unions based on false promises – to begin with, as was the case with the Soviet Union after 1991 and Yugoslavia after 1992. These divorces were very painful and messy, and left some parties bitter and vengeful. Wars in former Yugoslavia lasted for years, and particularly Russia apparently felt deserted and betrayed in the divorce settlement still in 2022. The breakup of Czechoslovakia in 1992–1993 via the Velvet Divorce, especially in comparison, was easy, and the parties even succeeded in dividing their joint possessions in a more or less equitable way. Each case is unique, and different generations hold on to different primary examples. The Anschluss of Austria to Germany in 1938 happened officially by mutual consent, but many people doubted the levelheadedness of the Austrians. Thus, although the dissolution of the union happened quickly in 1945, the Allied countries deemed it necessary to watch over the situation closely for ten years and, in the treaty that reestablished sovereignty in 1955, to make sure that the Austrians would not be tempted to reunite with their wartime partner. The separation of East and West Germany in 1949 – the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic – was an uneasy split originating from the occupation zones of 1945. By 1990, the world community had again come to believe and accept that the East and West Germans belonged together, that their separation had been a historical peculiarity, an arrangement not meant to last. Boulding (1978: 62, 116) seemed to believe in a fundamental union of all state actors: he recommended “marriage counseling” in the form of diplomacy not only to the international system in general, but also to the United States and the Soviet Union, the Cold War couple.

In addition to marriage and divorce – publicly recognized, official family interactions – in expert discourses on international relations, states are involved in purely carnal activities, usually viewed as private and spontaneous. Cohn (1987) has studied the gendered metaphors of defense intellectuals: the phallic imagery and promise of sexual domination that weapons (of mass destruction) suggest. In this world of strategic thinking, masculine sexuality connected to arms races and wars is both deadly serious and domesticated. “Big Sticks”, “vertical erector launchers”, “deep penetration”, “penetration aids”, “protracted versus spasm attacks” and “nuclear virgins” underline the competitive or coercive aspects, while “Oppenheimer’s baby”, “marrying up” weapons systems and “delivering” “reentry vehicles” on a “bus” sound harmless and bland. “Clean bombs” and “collateral damage” are, according to Cohn, a way of gaining metaphorical mastery over the unmasterable, the horrors of war. Zur (1991) claims that enemies can be “dehumanized” (sic) not only by referring to them as animals, but also by giving them specific female characteristics. He notes how, in visual propaganda material, Beirut/Lebanon has been portrayed as a seductive woman whose large breasts conceal highly explosive hand grenades, war as a whore seducing young boys to her charms and terrorism as an emasculating female. Moreover, the nuclear arms policies of Gorbachev’s Soviet Union, and the surprising invitations to

reduce armaments, were, according to Zur, associated with female seduction tactics.

Transferring the sphere of sex between people to the intercourse of states readily interprets invasion of one country by another as rape. President Joe Biden speculated about the threat of a “Russian assault into Ukraine” already before it happened since, in his view, Russia was “poised to go much further” (22 Feb 2022); and right after the attack, he condemned “Russia’s naked aggression against Ukraine”, the “brutal assault”, the “tanks and troops rolling in”, the “great pain” unleashed by Putin, Putin’s “going into Ukraine” (24 Feb 2022). The assault was considered especially indecent because President Putin was “endangering the lives of countless citizens of Ukraine – Russia’s sister nation” (Chancellor Scholz, 25 Feb 2022). In President Vladimir Putin’s official understanding (21 Feb 2022), the situation was indeed a family matter, but in a quite different way: the people of Ukraine were “relatives, people bound by blood, by family ties”, now unfortunately living in an artificial, separate construction designed by Lenin. In his discourse, there was no attempted rape of Ukraine by Russia, but instead, the crime consisted of the NATO plans to strike “deeply” into Russian territory from Ukrainian soil, US ballistic missiles being, according to Putin, “like a knife to the throat” of Russia. In time of trouble, even nations further away evoked family ties: “the people of the United Kingdom stand with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters in the face of this unjustifiable assault on your homeland” (Prime Minister Boris Johnson, 25 Feb 2022).

From a more theoretical angle, Sjoberg (2014) – understanding states as having gender roles (ibid: 109) – uses the idea of rape and pregnancy to illustrate the problematics of state decisions regarding phenomena (partly) outside their control (ibid: 106). She starts from the observation (of feminist political theory) that people may have some obligations despite not having assumed them voluntarily – such as the choices of a woman who is pregnant from rape – and extends it to the realm of states living in a situation of constrained autonomy. The rapidly warming global environment, for example, cannot be controlled by individual states: they are all affected and have to choose policies, but they are not equally responsible, and they cannot cancel the original deeds. Elshtain (1995 [1987]: 221–225) draws a parallel between the experiences of a warrior, the potential life-taker, and those of a mother, the life and care-giver *par excellence*, and employs it in explaining interstate war. Both the Good Soldier and the Good Mother go through personal, profoundly physical trials having to do with duty and guilt, protecting and preserving. The roles are intertwined: mothers nurture and raise soldiers, soldiers protect mothers and children, only mothers know what bearing children feels like, and only soldiers share the camaraderie of battlefields. According to Elshtain, both of these roles are needed to make wars meaningful; without them, interstate wars would make no sense. Enloe (2014 [1989]: 29–31), also, emphasizes the relevance of family and gender roles vis-à-vis wars between states: in the “dangerous world”, men

(the natural protectors) go “out there” to protect the women (in need of protection), to make sure that the women are safe “at home”. Thus, family contracts, activities and feelings structure both motivations and explanations of international behavior in very concrete contexts.

Family metaphors transfer the logic of families – human interaction and communities of people – to the field of international relations, but again, the logic and interpretative framework come in many versions. Just like nature metaphors, family metaphors make sense of both cooperational and conflictual encounters among states and suggest both nonviolent and violent responses to challenges ahead. Happy families with loving parents deal with misbehaving children quite differently from dysfunctional families with abusive parents; different characteristics of states and aspects of their interaction are highlighted and hidden by the contrasting scripts. To conclude this chapter, I will lay out some of the entailments of both the cooperational/hopeful and conflictual/discouraging versions of international relations as families or communities. The variants have concrete implications for action: be it people or states, the solutions we offer to parties in a consensual union are different from the advice we give in the case of a forced marriage. We expect different things from our mischievous and irresponsible little brothers than from the wise and powerful patriarch of the family; we approach great powers with nuclear weapons and permanent Security Council seats differently from the rogue members of international society.

The cooperational variants of the family metaphor – families where members love, support and care for each other – tend to highlight converging state interests, common goals and the primacy of nonviolent means of conflict resolution and play down the role of force and fundamental differences among states. International societies and families of nations, and especially security communities and unions of states, are usually expected to share certain values and respect certain rules, trust each other even in crisis, work together to solve their problems, and look after their childish or feeble members. The United Nations as a state family is the largest extended model that exists, while the European Union is possibly the most close-knit. NATO countries form a community highly committed to each other in a particular issue area, namely defense. In this line of metaphorical thinking, disagreements among family members are not necessarily alarming – everybody needs to vent oneself occasionally, misunderstandings happen – and they are to be handled first and foremost in the family circle, patiently and peacefully. Developing countries need to be given time and assistance to grow and become mature family members. Old patriarchs, be it former colonial masters or great powers in decline, are better checked with gentle humor and ingenious resistance than a violent rebellion of the rising generation. Happy families also have traditions for dealing with dangers coming from outside the community; for most of the time, members of secure communities can relax.

The conflictual variants of the family metaphor – state unions on the verge of breakup, bossy big brother states, abusive colonial patriarchs, longstanding feuds between ideologically opposed families of nations, restless international neighborhoods – tend to emphasize deeply engraved grievances, power struggles and violent traditions, and overshadow mundane routines and interests shared by the whole humankind or world community. The unhappy international family is torn apart by tensions within and constantly on the lookout to defend itself against hostile neighbors. Self-proclaimed heads of households, often great powers, interfere with activities that should not concern them in any way, and try to control all family members, even ones possibly aspiring after neutrality. Old colonial traumas may prevent international cooperation even when both parties would benefit from it; the developing and rogue members of the world community are forever stuck with the role, never taken seriously or treated as equals; state unions become prisons where partners may be miserable despite the idyllic, post-Westphalian appearance. These frames of interpretation support a gloomy view of the field: they speak for resignation in the face of age-old, violent state traditions or for harsh disciplinary measures to correct the behavior of unruly states behaving in a disobedient or childish fashion. Changing the dynamics of dysfunctional families is difficult: the weak tend to adapt, the strong hold on to power, and new rules come about only through a violent overturning of the old order.

Sometimes, the family script is evoked by elaborate usage; at others, only by individual references to couples and unions, marriages and divorces, mother/father countries, brotherly/sisterly relations, mature/immature behavior, courting and seduction, penetration and rape. Whether spelled out or not, or deliberately employed by the speaker or not, the family metaphor transfers the familiar sphere of household activities and special human ties to explain and give meaning to the abstract and distant sphere of international relations. The audience understands the metaphorical explanation and may expect further measures that are in line with the script. If the international family or community is likened to a happy household, the audience assumes that mutual trust, cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution are the rule. If the field is explained by resorting to the framework of abusive parents and bitter feuds, what is to be anticipated are manifestations of deep traumas, violent clashes and constant power struggles. The choice of the variant of a family may affect both concrete foreign policy moves and research on these moves; the facts as such can usually be fitted into several versions of each metaphorical script.

## 6 International balancing

### Mechanical weighing and mental stability

This chapter looks at the various types of balancing metaphors for international relations, that is, at the broad spectrum of explanatory scripts brought over from the realm of balancing operations, weights and scales. Some of them – like the “balance of power” – are standard explanations discussed by many experts. Others – like the “tipping point of normative change” – are more noticeable and less widely used. All versions of the balancing metaphor, however, structure international relations with terms connected to another, totally separate field. They help us understand international actors and events by evoking associations with science laboratories and weigh stations, bookkeeping and mental poise exercises. While highlighting the quantifiable and commensurable aspects of international relations, they set aside other aspects, such as abstract principles and bonds of loyalty that are sometimes presented as state motives. Balancing metaphors direct our interpretations and policy choices towards those common in measuring and weighing situations. The chapter begins by outlining associations that go together with balancing in its various forms. After this, examples from expert usage are provided. To conclude, the chapter speculates on the inferences drawn from balancing metaphors, and their possible entailments for international action.

The primary image we have of a balance is probably that of an instrument for weighing, maybe one with a central pivot, a beam and two scales. Balances such as this – and other mechanical ones like the balance (wheel) of an old-fashioned watch – are associated with precise measurements and movements, careful regulation of the process and elimination of disturbing outside factors, be they natural or human. We believe that we are observing balance also when we admire massive arch bridges or sailing boats able to stay upright and on course; we can confidently walk over a balanced bridge or step onboard a balanced boat. Balanced constructions are often aesthetically pleasing: our eyes rest on well-proportioned objects. Natural balances, in general, should not be disturbed. One tends to hope for a healthy balance with the bank. In addition to physical objects, mechanical apparatuses and financial assets, balances can also refer to the field of human activities and psychological processes: states of mind of individuals,

group dynamics or decision-making procedures. People can be balanced or unbalanced: levelheaded and coherent in their actions or eccentric and easily distracted. In group work, different personalities, experiences and viewpoints ideally complement and balance each other, but they may also cause constant disputes, wavering or vacillation. The representation of opposite interests in democratic systems produces fair and well-balanced outcomes – or steers policies from one extreme to another, failing to reach any sort of equilibrium or stability. Balanced argumentation considers many different stances and weighs problems from a variety of angles. Again – as with nature and families – the source domain of the balancing metaphor is multifaceted, that is, it comes in various versions, carrying associations from both strictly mechanical and psychologically governed fields.

The purpose of the age-old mechanical apparatus for weighing is to deliver reliable information about objects in the physical world: balances tell us about tangible qualities of things, measure them, and enable exact comparisons between them. When a balance is reached, the scales are equal, the elements on both sides have the same mass. We tend to assume that balances should be accurate, and to ensure this, we try to minimize interfering forces, such as, say the wind swaying the scales or someone accidentally leaning on the balance. Correct behavior in the context of balancing is not to tamper with the scales. Also, in the context of determining mass, if a balance is not reached, the operation has gone wrong, we do not get the result we were looking for because the apparatus is broken or of the wrong size, for example. The functioning of a balance is straightforward: anybody observing the process understands what is taking place and when the outcome can be determined. Balanced archways do not fall upon the people walking under them however delicate they may seem. Balanced sailing boats will endure stormy seas and high speed; they do not easily tip over. Accountants hope to balance the books. In the field of international economy, countries may look for a favorable balance of trade. Generally, mechanical balancing is a serious, no-nonsense exercise dealing with exact weights and measures, or concrete financial issues, specific sums of money.

A mental balance/imbalance, on the other hand, is difficult to observe, define or measure – and yet a psychological shape and a possible cause of actions that most people recognize. We talk about losing and regaining one's balance, about striking a balance and tipping the scales also in situations where states of mind, human decisions and rational assessments, not physical forces, are concerned. Balances of a mental type can be sought, for example, between work and leisure, between pressures from the outside and being true to your innermost self, between feelings of love and hatred, between aspiring for wealth and happiness, etc. These pursuits or feelings can be balanced either one against the other, possible excesses cancelling each other out, or brought to work together, to form the pieces of a stable whole or an equilibrium. Well-balanced people are sensible and do not have many emotional problems; they are at ease with themselves, with other people and with the

world. Unbalanced people, in contrast, go for too much of something or can never decide; they are constantly angry, frustrated or bitter. Stable personalities are considered easier to deal with than volatile ones. The justice system seeks a balance between a case's support and opposition, evidence and counterevidence, or between truth and fairness. In parliamentary debates, too, controversial issues are ideally considered from all possible points of view; important decisions and policy choices merit proper *pro et contra* argumentation, careful weighing of the pros and cons.

Whether balancing is mechanical, rational, emotional or aesthetic, it operates with scales and balances, weighing and stabilizing, symmetry and equipoise. Both physical and mental balancing require comparing things and finding some standards of measurement. Although most balancing operations may not be violent as such, they may be either cooperational or conflictual: aimed at achieving a balance together or balancing against an opponent's moves. In the same situation, some participants may desire to hold the balance while others wish to tip it. Definitions of the optimal balance may differ, as may the views on who is responsible for or entitled to conducting the balancing operation. While imbalance has negative connotations, a completely new kind of balance may be a positive goal. The basic idea of weights and counterweights is understandable to both adults and children and recognized across cultures. The realm where people weigh and balance objects, arguments and feelings can effortlessly be used to make sense of other realms and actors.

Balancing metaphors play an important role in our understanding of international relations. Both theorists and practitioners resort to this structural explanation, especially by referring to the balance of power among state actors. In fact, in his book on this particular metaphor, Little (2007: 3) maintains that the balance of power enjoys a special status in IR: it is one of the most enduring concepts and the most widely cited theory in contemporary literature. Wolfers (1962: 117–131) reported earlier already on at least four theoretical stances on balances of power defined as equilibriums on an evenly balanced scale, that is, four different ways to view the merits of international equilibriums and the processes by which these equilibriums can be established, preserved or upset. Marks (2011: 165, 187, 191) claims that whereas IR scholars use the biological metaphor of evolution to conceptualize change, the mechanical balance of power metaphor stands for the enduring qualities of the international system. He asserts that balance of power serves as a master theoretical principle of realist IR theory (2018: 13) and that since the idea of mechanical balancing is frequently transferred to the field of Economics, it also figures prominently in International Political Economy (ibid: 31–32). Chilton and Lakoff (1995) affirm that the balance of power metaphor defines the actors as physical objects exerting force in a force field: typically, it gives international relations a scientific air and removes any notion of human will. However, not everybody resorting to the metaphor refers to the same type of balancing as the source domain. In usage, the logic

of operation may be borrowed from spheres as varied as measurement via exact weights and scales, recording financial operations, striving for mental stability, steering sailing boats or searching for aesthetic pleasure. The rest of this chapter will study these different variants of the balancing metaphor in action: the scripts they constitute, and the recommendations they carry.

As already mentioned, Little (2007) has conducted thorough research into the balance of power metaphor used by scholars in the field of IR. According to him (*ibid*: 52), the balance of power is a simple, but extremely effective and universally applicable metaphor that transforms an agency-based concept of power into a structural concept. Little examines the distinctive ways in which four major texts in the field – Morgenthau’s *Politics Among Nations*, Bull’s *The Anarchical Society*, Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics* and Mearsheimer’s *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* – operate with balance of power metaphors, myths and models. He (*ibid*), too, notes that instead of constituting a single metaphor with an unequivocal view on how to maintain a stable state system, the balance of power comes in different forms, exists as divergent sets of metaphors. Not only is power an essentially contested and multifaceted concept (*ibid*: 36–37), but also balance can refer to several things: weighing scales, double-entry book-keeping, an arch, a (social) body, or harmony in music, for example (*ibid*: 40–44, 66–68). Little (*ibid*: 52, 86–87) claims that whereas weighing scales promote the idea of an adversarial balance of power – “forces balanced one against the other” – arches and bodies promote the idea of an associational balance of power: “all parts are needed to uphold the structure” or “cooperation produces stability/equilibrium”. Theoretical models can work with either type of metaphor and accompanying myth of political equilibrium or conflate ideas from different narratives.

Theorists in the realist tradition have indeed defined the balance of power in many ways, for example: as “the actual distribution of military assets among the great powers in the system” (Mearsheimer, 2014 [2001]: 413), “the distinctively political theory of international politics” (Waltz 2010 [1979]: 117) or “the necessary outgrowth of power politics” (Morgenthau, 1973 [1948]: 167). While Mearsheimer (*ibid*: 334–338, 346) and Waltz (*ibid*: 161–193) speak for the balanced bipolar system as the most stable and peaceful one, Morgenthau (*ibid*: 165–221, 338–354) favors multipolarity. Waltz (*ibid*: 121–125) asserts that in an anarchic order based on self-help, if the units wish to survive, balances of power recurrently form. Mearsheimer (*ibid*: 139) explains that balancing and buck-passing are the principal strategies that great powers use to prevent aggressors from upsetting the balance of power. Morgenthau (*ibid*: 327–354, 442–443) is deeply disappointed with the “new balance of power” that, unlike the Concert of Europe orchestrated by brilliant diplomatists of the time, is inflexible and unable to check the new, terrible force of nationalistic universalism. Little emphasizes that both Morgenthau and Waltz combine a mechanistic view with an associational version of the balance of power: via this concept, Morgenthau analyses both

the drive for hegemony of great powers and their diplomatic efforts to maintain an equilibrium (Little, 2007: 92–93, 125–127); and Waltz, although focusing mainly on competitive processes, also reveals the potential for cooperation or “management” through socialization, especially in the bipolar, possibly also the unipolar world (*ibid.*: 167–172, 211–212). According to Little (*ibid.*: 86, 214), Mearsheimer, however, does not consider the just equilibrium system; his entire theory rests on states striving wherever and whenever possible to tip the adversarial balance of power in their own favor.

In addition to realists, also English School theorists find the balance of power metaphor analytically useful in explaining international relations. Bull (1995 [1977]: 97), following Vattel, defines the balance of power as “a state of affairs such that no one power is in a position where it is preponderant and can lay down the law to others”. Bull (*ibid.*: 97–112) distinguishes between various kinds of balances of power: simple and complex, general and local, dominant and subordinate, subjective and objective, fortuitous and contrived. He claims that in contemporary international politics, there exists “a general balance of power, whose basis is the Soviet-American relationship of mutual deterrence” (*ibid.*: 250). This balance takes the form of a complex balance where at least China, possibly Japan and a combination of Western European powers, in addition to the United States and the Soviet Union, should be counted as great powers (*ibid.*: 97–98, 107–108). According to Bull (*ibid.*: 220–222, 250), the fact that neither the need for this balance, nor its terms, such as the special position accorded to great powers, have been explicitly discussed or agreed upon does not make it less real or stable. The balance of power makes it possible for other institutions contributing to international order – diplomacy, war, international law, great power management – to operate (*ibid.*: 102), and despite being unjust, this order sustained by the great powers enjoys a wide measure of support throughout international society (*ibid.*: 221). Little (2007: 130–132, 163–164) interprets Bull’s theorizing through the distinction that Bull draws between an international system and an international society. In the absence of an international society, only fortuitous balances of power may form, but when the system is mediated by an international society, contrived balances embracing two different dynamics emerge: an associational/institutional dynamic related to the society and an adversarial dynamic linked to the system.

Although among IR scholars, the balance of power metaphor manifests itself especially in the usage of theorists associated with realism, also liberal visions include speculations about balancing. Russett and Oneal (2001: 107–109, 154, 172) claim that the Kantian variables – democracy, economic interdependence and membership in international organizations – often have more explanatory power *vis-à-vis* international peace/conflict than the realist ones – geographic distance, balance of power and alliances – but they seek to combine the perspectives (*ibid.*: 90), not replace one with the other. For Russett and Oneal, the balance of power is far from irrelevant *vis-à-vis* understanding international relations: among other things, state actors

are interested in each other's relative weight and location on the balance. Coming closer to the association with arches and bridges, Russett and Oneal (ibid: 71) argue that democracy may be the "keystone" of international peace. Fukuyama, in contrast to Russett and Oneal, explicitly denies that realist descriptions and prescriptions have general relevance any longer (1992: 253). According to him, balancing made sense in the Cold War years (ibid: 247–250), but now, power politics prevails only among states that are not liberal democracies (ibid: 276) and in the dealings of posthistorical states with the historical world (ibid: 279). In Fukuyama's view, balancing is (fortunately) less and less important; the logic adheres to fewer and fewer contexts. In his liberal democratic world, states have no reason to be worried about each other's military might: it poses a threat to neither the actors nor the system that has reached its final stage of development.

In his analysis of the European Union, Wæver (1998) presents the balance of power as the contrary of desirable conditions of existence and positive explanations. According to Wæver, peace in Europe can in principle be explained by either "community logic" or "balance of power" and other realist explanations (ibid: 70, 74); luckily, he finds that the security community explanation is strong. Moreover, "the best-trying method of peace provision in history" is identified in opposition to the metaphor in question: "that a region does not have a balance of power among competing powers, but a clear though far from all-dominant center" (ibid: 100). In many theories, the balance of power appears almost as the synonym of being war-ridden (ibid: 89–90). In this line of thinking, balancing requires resorting to force more often than not. It is in many ways the alternative solution to negotiating – being flexible and peaceful – and definitely the logic of operation we want to avoid. Since the EU is presented as the model of cooperation in international relations, with all its problems still a revolutionary invention, referring to "old" balance of power mechanisms in connection to it is deemed inappropriate.

However, there are scholars who do not have a negative view of balancing to begin with and who see it in action also in cooperative contexts. Even many theorists of European integration operate with balances and equilibriums: they encourage us to understand the EU as an interaction between fixed units that continuously seek mutual trade-offs. Drulák (2006) claims that especially liberal intergovernmentalists such as Moravcsik reserve a central role for equilibriums. In Moravcsik's work, rational and unitary state actors achieve equilibrium through a Nash bargaining solution: great powers engage in intergovernmental negotiations and devise international institutions to ensure compliance with their agreements. In these explanations, balancing is not a practice to be condemned or a logic becoming extinct, but a standard way of treating diverging interests and achieving mutually acceptable solutions. States with similar views on the goals and means of integration habitually group together to face the opposite side. Carefully weighing the advantages and the disadvantages of a policy is not immoral or

unnatural in itself: it helps state actors reach wise decisions and come up with arrangements they can live with for a long time.

In his social constructivist treatment of the balance of power, Wendt (1999: 284–285, 300–310) distinguishes between the way that the principle operates in the Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian cultures: in a Hobbesian system, states balance if they must; in a Lockean system, balancing is a source of order; and in a Kantian system, balancing is replaced by collective security. Like anarchy, in Wendt's treatment, balancing has no intrinsic and timeless logic; it changes in time, together with the changing systemic roles. Wendt (*ibid*: 339–340) acknowledges that accounting for change is a challenge for constructivists who generally view cultures as rather stable. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 894) explicitly address the problem of explaining change in international practices: interestingly from the point of view of the metaphor under discussion here, they claim that norm shifts are to the ideational or constructivist theorists what changes in the balance of power are to the realist. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, system transformation is brought about by idea/norm shifts that typically move through three stages: first, norms emerge; then, they become broadly accepted; and finally, they are internalized. The first two stages are divided by a “tipping point” at which “a critical mass” of relevant state actors adopts the norm (*ibid*: 895). Although Finnemore and Sikkink (*ibid*: 901) emphasize that states are not equal when it comes to “normative weight”, they report that norm tipping rarely occurs before one-third of the total states in the system adopt the norm. Thus, in their model, both masses and numbers should be considered. Finnemore and Sikkink resort to a mechanical/physical variant of the balancing metaphor in order to clarify complex societal processes dependent on human decision-making: they make the abstract concrete and the uncertain calculable.

Sometimes, the balancing metaphor is employed to demonstrate that the things being compared are not commensurable, even through transformation operations and rough estimates; that placing them on scales yields no meaningful results. Tarak Barkawi notes that while often in the past, assessments of the military balance of power made some sense and motivated the policies of states (2006: 100–101), regarding the War on Terror, thinking in terms of relative power does not take the political leader or the analyst very far (*ibid*: 131). When there is a major difference in the kinds of power of the opposing parties – when one side possesses conventional military strength and the other has the power to strike fear into ordinary citizens' lives, when each side's ideas and messages appeal to different audiences – “measuring up” the situation becomes difficult. The objection to the metaphor and the way of thinking it carries along may be more pragmatic than moral: measuring and balancing are not banned as remnants of unethical power political thinking, but deemed useless in an unruly, passion-driven, violent world. Conversely, understandings via balancing may be seen as presenting international relations as overly rational or mechanical – instead of dependent on chance and human agency.

Even theorists who do not reserve a special role for the balancing metaphor in their explanatory models use the metaphor in relatively unmarked contexts. Boulding employs the balancing logic vis-à-vis structures such as stable/unstable peace/war and refers to “a seesaw” between war weariness and war proneness (ibid: 100). Enloe writes about international media companies “weighing” the risks of dismissing women as international actors (2014 [1989]: 20) and about British and American military commanders “weighing” the advantages and disadvantages of military marriages for the effectiveness of the armed forces (ibid: 142). Moreover, she analyzes the gendered differences between, and the gendered roles played by, “light” and “heavy” industries in international trade (ibid: 282–289). Shepherd (2008: 163) criticizes the way the signifier of “balance” – or “gender balance” – sought after by the UNSCR 1325 and related documents seeks numerical equality and quantifiable indicators in a context of gendered politics and organizational logics that cannot be put in numbers. Several times, Campbell notes that the identities of states are not “stable” (1992: 9, 11, 196) or “settled” (ibid: 48, 86), and he refers to representations of danger as reproducing the “logic of stability” (ibid: 93). Hansen (2006: 212) suggests that even powerful discursive structures have the potential for “destabilization” and being resisted. Regardless of their specific approach, IR scholars both recognize, and promote or criticize various practices of weighing and balancing, stabilizing and destabilizing, in the field they study.

As Little (2007: 10, 25) affirms, there are ubiquitous references to the balance of power not only in IR research, but also throughout media discourses and popular culture; in fact, it is referred to in every conceivable social setting. Little himself (ibid: 74–84) analyzes both a Renaissance example, namely Francesco Guicciardini’s *History of Italy*, and two more recent practitioner texts: Winston Churchill’s Iron Curtain Speech from 1946 and President George W. Bush’s Introduction to the 2002 *National Security Strategy*. While Guicciardini is arguing (counterfactually) for a balance of power to maintain the independence of Italian city-states – he acknowledges both cooperational and adversarial motives – Churchill officially rejects traditional balance of power thinking and Bush wishes to rehabilitate the terminology in a novel way. Little underlines that the usage is to be understood in the context of the political purposes in each case. Guicciardini was lamenting over lost opportunities; Churchill hoped to engage a power-politics-weary United States in the building of a “Temple of Peace” in Europe; and Bush signaled that the United States was not willing or able to fight terrorism alone, without the help of other great powers. The balance of power metaphor served all these purposes: it functioned in complex myth-making processes and supported models for dealing with the future, had an important role in maintaining the state system.

Also today, heads of state routinely refer to balances and equilibriums. Often, balancing has to do with military or security issues: President Vladimir Putin (24 Feb 2022) reiterated his disappointment with the way “those who

declared themselves the winners of the Cold War” dealt with the weakening and breaking apart of the Soviet Union: “We lost confidence for only one moment, but it was enough to disrupt the balance of forces in the world.” President Joe Biden (2 March 2022), by contrast, believed that the United States and its allies had a long record of acting responsibly, in a stabilizing manner: “That’s why the NATO Alliance was created: to secure peace and stability in Europe after World War Two.” President Emmanuel Macron (2 March 2022) blamed Russia for a destabilizing war against Ukraine: “The equilibriums of our continent, like several aspects of our daily lives, have already been overturned by this war [...] our Europe will be shaken up.” Sometimes, other issue areas besides international security are approached via balancing: Prime Minister Boris Johnson (22 Sept 2021) talked about the environment: “we need to restore the natural balance. [...] We started this industrial revolution in Britain: we were the first to send the great puffs of acrid smoke to the heavens on a scale to derange the natural order.” For Macron (19 Jan 2022), the EU constituted an exemplary balance of good things, “a balance between freedom and solidarity, tradition and progress”, being a “real balancing power”. In all these examples, balances are regarded as proper states of affairs and disturbing the balance is something to be condemned. Biden, Johnson and Macron (in the latter example) seem to be praising or advocating cooperation to produce a balance, while Putin and Macron (in the first excerpt) point at an adversary responsible for upsetting the balance.

The media, too, often refer to weighing and balancing in different contexts ranging from mechanical measurements via bookkeeping to symbolically arching bridges. As if commenting on the position of scales, *Le Figaro* assessed “the weight” of the German industry to be great (Armelle Bohineust, 28 April 2022), and *The New York Times* reported on China trying “to strike a delicate balance” in its foreign policies (Bokat-Lindell, 24 Feb 2022), the United States having “struck a delicate diplomatic balance” through the “one China” policy (Bokat-Lindell, 15 Feb 2023) and the EU “weighing” new penalties against Russia (Frost, 7 Apr 2022). The latter newspaper also claimed that “binary accounting of us-versus-them” characterized most of the post-World War II era (Frost, 25 April 2022) – the bookkeeping reference here was explicitly to geopolitics and definitely metaphorical, not pertaining to international trade where transactions are quantified more concretely. *The Guardian* speculated on the possibility of Prime Minister Johnson acting as a “diplomatic bridge builder” (Wintour, 7 April 2022). According to the analysis, a bridge was needed between Germany and Poland, but the building task involved far more than simple calculations and measurements: it demanded delicate skills, as well as an exceptional sense of balance and harmony. Again, in the media as well as in the statements of political leaders, balanced states of being are preferred over imbalances, but the usage bears witness to the appreciation of both mechanical and symbolic balancing efforts, maybe artistry over automatic – too machine-like, insensitive – reactions. Finally, as

the exception that proves the rule, occasionally balances or too stable situations are viewed as problematic: *Le Monde* (Macek and Subotić, 19 June 2023) saw the “stabilocracies” of the Western Balkans as a challenge for EU enlargement.

To conclude: balancing metaphors transfer the logic of balances – weighing apparatuses, mental equilibriums, delicate arch bridges – to the field of international relations, but the logic is composed of several variants. The interpretative framework of balances can make sense of both conflicts and cooperation among states and suggest both violent and peaceful means of dealing with problems encountered in state interaction. While comparing the masses of two physical objects is a straightforward, mechanical exercise delivering an exact result, there is no one way to achieve a balance of mind or to determine from the outside that it has been achieved. Some imbalances demand to be addressed immediately and forcefully – as when a boat is about to capsize – while others can provide aesthetic pleasure, such as a painting with deliberately wrong proportions. Spiritual balances have to do with something deeply personal and unique, whereas the weights used on balance scales should be the same for everyone. Comparisons with mechanical balancing operations suggest rational, uniform and automatic responses to international incidents; they tend to hide case-specific features, the role of emotions and the uncertain consequences of human actions. Bringing in the framework of mental or aesthetic balancing operations emphasizes the importance of creativity, introspection and feelings in world politics; and in turn, downplays the need for exact calculations and decisive physical action.

The cooperational variants of the balancing metaphor – ones including joint efforts to balance for an equilibrium, to achieve harmony, to find the elements that will keep a structure stable – tend to emphasize that states can, and often do, work together for common goals. Divergent economic and security interests are routinely negotiated into an agreement that is satisfactory to all parties, and institutions are devised to ensure compliance with these agreements. In line with the metaphor, it is wise to carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of a specific foreign policy before adopting the policy. The metaphor highlights that states that have managed to accumulate normative weight can convince other states to follow their commendable example. Once a critical mass of countries has assembled, new positive norms – such as women’s suffrage and laws of war – may reach a tipping point and cascade through the international community. Cooperational balancing may benefit everyone: ensuring a gender balance in a peacebuilding project probably produces better results than a design based on narrow viewpoints and limited experiences; disturbing the natural balance has had global effects, but there is a chance that the balance might be restored by universal efforts. Diplomatic bridge building may solve international disputes; stability allows for long-term plans for the whole world community.

The conflictual variants of the balancing metaphor – ones portraying violent events upsetting the balance, or stability at the expense of freedom or

justice – tend to underline the need for constant military vigilance and the abundance of unpleasant trade-offs that states are faced with in the international arena. These conflictual balances are formed primarily against an aggressor or a threatening development, not everybody together for the common good. The balance of power based on mutual deterrence is a frequently employed script based on this type of logic, and so are arms races, multilateral sanctions and enlarging military alliances. The metaphor highlights the constant possibility of war breaking out in interstate relations, the need to calculate and prepare for worst-case scenarios and the fact that compromises between opposing sides are not always possible. Conflictual balancing works in a hostile environment where force needs to be countered with force and destabilizing moves met with resolve. According to this logic, stability often cannot be negotiated, but must be imposed, and peaceful policies sometimes must be abandoned. Necessary damages have to be weighed against positive results, and unbalanced actors, such as rogue states, totalitarian regimes and terrorists, kept in check. In counterbalancing an aggressor, states ideally are not swayed by emotions since this might threaten the accuracy of the procedure.

For these cooperational and conflictual balancing scripts to be evoked, the references to balancing, weighing and stabilizing may be either frequent and detailed or rare and elusive. Although there is no way to prove how exactly the metaphor functions – the level of awareness of the speaker, the effect on the audience – there is plenty of evidence witnessing both the general importance of metaphors as cognitive tools and the frequent usage of this specific metaphor in the sphere of international relations by both theorists and practitioners. Moreover, the source domain being familiar to everyone – whether we regularly weigh things or not, we know how balances work, and what balancing means – the activities are easy to relate to by various audiences. Again, the abstract and faraway field of state interaction is made understandable with the help of a simple and concrete activity. The balancing metaphor directs interpretations, attitudes and actions, but the directions vary according to the variant of the metaphor. The model of cooperating to achieve an equilibrium speaks for patient and creative diplomacy, while the framework of countering a threat to a vital balance recommends forceful measures stripped of all emotions and ethical considerations. The contingency or multitude of options is in itself a positive thing: there is plenty of room for choice in international relations balancing as very little is determined before we decide on the details of the script.

## 7 International building

### Sturdy fortresses and open houses

This chapter looks at the various types of building metaphors for international relations, that is, at the wide variety of explanatory scripts brought over from the building realm of construction sites, assembly lines and apartment blocks. Some of them – like the “security architecture of Europe” – are inconspicuous and common. Others – like the “Temple of Freedom” – stand out as rare usages. All versions of the building metaphor, however, structure international relations with terms pertaining to another, thoroughly different field. They help us understand international actors and events by evoking associations with houses, walls and factories. While drawing attention to the constructed aspects of international relations, they overlook natural and social aspects. Building metaphors direct our interpretations and policy choices towards those common in contexts where inanimate objects are assembled and dismantled. The chapter begins by outlining associations that go together with building and buildings in their various forms. Then, examples from expert usage are provided. To conclude, the chapter speculates on the inferences drawn from building metaphors, and their possible entailments for international action.

Building and constructing are primarily physical activities that produce concrete objects such as houses, factories, fortresses, walls, machines and vehicles. Tools used for building include hammers and saws, cement mixers and excavators, screwdrivers and tweezers. The archetypical building is probably a construction with a base, four walls and a roof. Everyone has experience of building bigger or smaller things – not necessarily houses and cars, but maybe sandcastles, Lego buildings, huts, rafts or model airplanes – and almost everyone lives in a building. Proper buildings are usually designed by architects and engineers and erected by professional construction workers. Building houses requires making careful calculations, laying solid foundations, using the right kind of building materials, and working diligently to realize the plan. Keystones are crucial for arches; cornerstones and ridgepoles are particularly important elements of houses. Building happens through joining materials together, by making parts into a whole. Some constructions provide people with shelter – provide them a place in which to spend time peacefully,

possibly a home – while others keep threatening people and objects out, like brick walls and bunkers do. Buildings are not only constructed, but they may also be repaired, and in the end, deconstructed – torn down, demolished – when they are old and no longer serve their purpose. Thus, the associations that go together with building and buildings are manifold: they range from safe spaces and open houses to prisons and bulwarks, from wobbly shacks to impenetrable fortifications, from joint constructive efforts to violent destruction.

Sometimes, the robustness of the building is its main defining characteristic. These sturdy constructions can stand up to natural forces: wind and rain, extreme temperatures, even earthquakes. Many people like to see their homes as strongholds of a sort: family refuges from the tumultuous world outside, places where only friends may visit. One is entitled to take a lot of pride in building a durable home for one's family by one's own hands – a unique, private, secure dwelling – since this takes a lot of work and dedication. A proper reason is needed for entering office buildings, hospitals, courthouses, schools, city halls, ministries, presidential palaces and army barracks. The purpose of fortresses is even more clearly to protect the people inside and to keep strangers outside. Fortresses are fashioned to appear resilient and threatening; they are built with the assumption that someone might try to attack. Delays, sloppiness or fooling around in any building process is normally not appreciated; constructing a house, a fortress or a barricade is a serious and important project. Sturdy buildings – be they secure private homes, public edifices, impressive company headquarters or majestic monuments – are not supposed to rock or shake. When they are penetrated or fall down, we should suspect serious trouble, such as forced entry, a major mistake in the construction process, a natural catastrophe or a revolution.

In contrast to constructions signaling sturdiness and exclusion, we can also find more inviting or less pompous buildings that are supposed to be freely entered into, shared by all, and used by the general public. All visitors are welcome to open houses; community centers provide spaces for a large variety of activities; and jointly owned properties do not belong to just one person or family. Often, open multiple-purpose buildings are designed from the very beginning to attract and engage; on average, they may be less monumental or awe-inspiring simply via their architecture than official administrative buildings or buildings that house private enterprises. Some constructions are user-friendly to the extent that their walls can be moved around or their proportions adjusted according to the particular need. The concept of modular houses is based on the idea of light components and easy assembling. Very few constructions are supposed to fall apart as such, but in some cases, that happening is not serious: sandcastles are regularly washed to the sea, snow castles are prone to melt and tree houses may rot without any drama. Communal living arrangements suit people who are happy to share certain spaces in apartment buildings or houses. Occasionally even serious architects play with rules and conventions: they create structures that

seem on the verge of tipping over or houses that have windows and doors in the wrong places. Children as builders tend to be anarchists: they may use building blocks to construct the most fantastic houses or spaceships and then smash these creations without blinking an eye.

Most associations adhering to construction and building activities have to do with concrete goals, patient work, joint efforts and expert design. Houses, monuments and vehicles as finished products are supposed to serve a specific purpose and to endure regular use, even in exceptionally harsh conditions. Physical building joins things together in an organized fashion, unites materials into a composite whole. In less concrete ways, scientists construct elaborate theorems, attorneys build cases for judges and juries to examine, and politicians tear down each other's claims. Urban building projects necessitate coordination and cooperation; fortresses and bastions assume enemies "out there"; demolition reduces houses to heaps of rubble. In the field of international relations, both practitioners and theorists constantly present state actors and activities in terms of building, constructing, and destructing or deconstructing. These usages will be explored in what follows.

Chilton and Lakoff (1995) find that foreign policy discourse in both the United States and elsewhere is filled with house metaphors. The house can refer either to the territory of one state or to a bigger community, such as the European house. Chilton and Lakoff claim that Bismarck already conceptualized his project of unifying Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the help of this metaphor; during the Cold War period, "domestic" affairs, "backyards", "windows of vulnerability" and protective "roofs" were frequently used in US foreign policy explanations. They also touch on – and Chilton (1996: 264–286) later thoroughly analyzes – Mikhail Gorbachev's "common European house" metaphor. This metaphor failed to gain ground in Western Europe – possibly due to the different types of source images that houses culturally are associated with, that is, the Soviet communal tenement block versus the one-family owner-occupied house of the American, British, French, and German contexts. Instead of embracing the common house metaphor, the West steered by the United States, affirm Chilton and Lakoff, opted for the related, but distinct and more abstract "security architecture" metaphor. Chilton (*ibid*: 357–402) argues that whereas the common house emphasized collective responsibility and a (completely new or loosely CSCE founded) common structure, the architecture metaphor relied firmly on a NATO basis and the US as the authoritative architect. He (*ibid*: 423) emphasizes that while the containment schema seems to be an integral part of all post-WWII security conceptions, Gorbachev's variant of the house metaphor was in many ways opposed to George Bush's architectural vision: it focused on cooperation rather than competition, commonality rather than difference, and relative permeability rather than enclosure.

Other scholars – notably Ivie (for example 1984, 1990) – have focused on the metaphors of the Cold War and identified some prominent building images. In addition to President Ronald Reagan's "window of vulnerability" – the one

that had “opened” and needed to be “closed” – Shimko (2004, also 1994) has studied Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s “iron curtain”. Churchill claimed that an impermeable curtain had descended across the center of Europe and divided East from West. Windows and curtains, much like doorsteps, backyards and neighborhoods, can also be analyzed as concepts pertaining to the family metaphor (see Chapter 5): some usages play up the human factor, the people living in houses, while others stress the container aspect, the walls, roofs and closed-off spaces. Moreover, the idea of Europe as a house lives on in metaphors explaining the European Union. Curticepan (2011: 199–204), in her thesis on Bulgarian EU accession discourses, notes how walls, doors, gates and a fortress were frequently referred to. In political cartoons depicting Bulgaria’s “journey” into the EU, the country was sometimes peeking on the other side of the wall or facing a locked gate; the door to the EU was seen as closed, as left ajar and as finally being opened; the EU fortress was difficult to enter. Hülse (2006) studies EU enlargement metaphors from the perspective of a country already inside the fortress, namely Germany. In the German discourse of the 1990s, prospective members were considered through at least two building frames: “entry into a house” and “homecoming”. In the metaphorical explanations presented in parliamentary debates, the Central and Eastern Europeans, for example “wanted home” to Europe and “knocked on the door”. Hülse, also, notes a similarity between the logic of building metaphors and the logic that applies to families living in houses or homes.

In her study of the press reports of two summit meetings dealing with issues of security in 1990, Thornborrow (1993) finds differences between the way security and Europe itself are conceptualized metaphorically in French and English. In English, she claims, security and Europe are primarily fixed structures, whereas in French, security is seen as a system or a process and Europe as something being constantly built. Despite the difference in emphasis or nuances, both languages and newspapers in both countries employ the general building framework: structures, foundations, pillars and architecture. In the EU context, pillars also have an officially fixed reference: the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 created the European Union as a single body of “three pillars”. The pillars consisted of the European Communities, Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters (earlier: Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs). Between 1993 and 2009, these pillars were seen as the three policy areas that the EU was involved in; in 2009, with the Treaty of Lisbon, the pillar structure was replaced by a merged “legal personality” for the Union (on the ontological metaphor of states as persons, see Chapter 2).

Also, in the 2020s, the use of the building metaphor is widespread among international relations practitioners. The metaphor, like other structural or complex conceptual metaphors, appears in various types of contexts: more often than not, building, constructing and reconstruction are seen to take place in (positive) cooperative settings, whereas demolishing, destruction and deconstruction appear to adhere to (condemnable) competition and conflicts.

President Emmanuel Macron praised French efforts to “build” peace and the Europe of today and tomorrow, to “construct” a more powerful and sovereign Europe and to “reconstruct” Ukraine (9 May 2022a). He, on the other hand, condemned the “destruction” caused by the Russian invasion (5 May 2022) and Russia’s efforts to “deconstruct” and falsify history (19 March 2022). Prime Minister Boris Johnson affirmed that we cannot allow the threat of Russian aggression to change the “security architecture” of Europe (19 Feb 2022). President Joe Biden agreed with the alarming metaphorical analysis of the situation in Ukraine in the spring of 2022: the Russian president had sought to shake the “very foundations” of the free world (1 March 2022). Luckily, NATO still stood as “the bulwark of global security and stability” (Biden, 12 July 2023). According to the Western leaders, Russia’s military campaign was destructive not only vis-à-vis the factories, hospitals and homes that were physically hit, but also in relation to the principles of international law and foundations of world order. Similarly, their own efforts were constructive not only as regards concrete rebuilding of Ukraine, but also in presenting just and durable solutions, upholding law and order. Logically, especially leaders of countries satisfied with their position in the prevailing system tend to want to keep power structures erect. For them, building on existing foundations and enduring relationships is a safe strategy; proceeding according to the familiar blueprint is the preferred option unless a specific need to redraw the plan arises.

The media, also, often portray building activities and existing constructions as something positive and changes to the status quo as threatening and ill-advised. *Deutsche Welle* declared already before the beginning of armed hostilities that Ukraine was not just about Ukraine: the conflict might lead to a renegotiation of the entire “security architecture” of Europe (Martin Gak, 6 Feb 2022), clearly a negative development. It was worried about a war “at the gates of Europe” and about Russia’s endeavors to “destabilize” Western democracies. Moreover, the EU is still today understood as a house/home by international relations commentators. *The Washington Post* analyzed claims concerning European doors: opening and shutting “the door” for Putin’s aggression and the “doors” to the EU that Ukraine was unable to find (Ishaan Tharoor, 10 July 2023). *Le Monde* observed that the Balkan countries were getting impatient in the EU “anteroom” and that EU countries had opened the “door for Kiev” halfway (Virginie Malingre, 29 June 2023). According to the media, Western great powers are not the only big builders on the world scene. *Financial Times* claimed that China, too, was involved in a significant construction effort: “Beijing builds coalition to counter US influence” (Hille, 28 May 2022). This news article studied the Chinese president’s attempts to counter Washington-led “blocs” with his Global Security Initiative, to “consolidate” a third camp of countries not willing to side either with the US or Russia. Moreover, although generally more intent on being constructive than tearing down, also Western leaders sometimes believe that old orders deserve to be demolished, and buildings forcefully entered into. President Emmanuel

Macron, for example, wanted to initiate a “rupture” with previous French – African relations, to reform the “foundations” of CFA franc governance and to break the “locks” stopping a new way of thinking from emerging (16 Feb 2022). Apparently, in the President’s view, the familiar position as the cornerstone of Francafrique was getting too burdensome for France.

The patient, constructive work of nonviolence is often seen as a building project by activists involved in the project (see Kuusisto, 2009). Luthuli talked about the “architects of the Union of South Africa”, about “building up a true South African culture” and about the “best political framework” (Luthuli, 1993b [1954], 1993c [1958] and 1993a [1953]). He claimed that South Africa was qualified to demand the great powers that they “build a world community which will stand as a lasting monument” to the millions of men and women who had given their lives so that others may live in happiness and peace (1993d [1961]). Gandhi (1999 [1928]) affirmed that building the “Temple of Freedom requires the patient, intelligent and constructive efforts” of tens of thousands of men and women, young and old. Whether the product is a house, a monument or a temple – a political system, a world community or an international order – the building in these descriptions is a collective, creative, peaceful and worthwhile activity. Ideally, nations and states opting for building do not solve their disagreements by resorting to force. Building in good faith and on a solid basis is in the interest of all constructors.

In addition to activists, heads-of-state and the media, also scholars employ building metaphors when giving meaning to events on the world scene. Marks (2011: 30, 36–44, 55–58, 64–69) maintains that IR theorizing generally speaking needs to take a stand on how international relations are constructed – how structures are formed in the original emptiness of anarchy, how systems of states are built – and that the relationship between agent and structure is one of the key concerns of the IR canon. According to Marks (*ibid*: 186–188), structure is among the central metaphors that define traditions of international relations thinking: competing perspectives have different views on structure à la structural versus classical realism or constructivism versus rational choice. Thus, building metaphors are not a mere decorative element of IR language, but an essential ingredient of explaining and understanding. The scholar’s view of international relations structures and constructs directs the research project both in terms of questions asked and of answers given. While avoiding building metaphors as such is difficult, the particular role of the building associations varies according to different traditions and individual scholars.

Building metaphors figure prominently in the tradition of peace research: after all, peacebuilding is one of the central concepts in the field. Peacebuilding is usually defined as something more profound and broader than mere statebuilding or nationbuilding (see for example Ramsbotham et al., 2011: 198–245). Peacebuilding is a long-term normative goal: it aims to overcome structural and cultural violence, the contradictions that lie at the root of a conflict (*ibid*: 32, 199). Instead of focusing, in a top-down

manner, on institutions, peacebuilding is human security-oriented or works from below (ibid: 245). Boulding makes a list of the seven “planks” of a peace policy “platform” (1978: 109–122) and compares the ability of a system of peace to resist phase change to an “engineering problem” where building materials need to be tested for their strength, their endurance under strain (ibid: 32–66). Galtung (1996: 2) develops the concept of “structural violence”, that is, “indirect violence that comes from the social structure itself”, and as the two main forms of structural violence, he names repression and exploitation. Luckily, according to Galtung, not only is the world filled with structural violence, but there are also “peace structures” (1975: 140), and all “structures are modifiable” through human action (ibid: 146). He discusses international plans to “build” peace that are “based on” different concepts (ibid: 32–39), the conditions of peace that are “built into” a system (ibid: 148–149), “solidifying” peace (ibid: 164), “a window” between two peace alternatives (ibid: 90) and the “building” of self-reliance, self-respect and self-sufficiency (ibid: 100).

IR realists and liberalists, too, observe and analyze buildings and constructs. As might be expected, structural realists or neorealists are more interested in structures than classical realists relying on human nature in their explanations. However, also Morgenthau (1973 [1948]) emphasizes the importance of the threefold revolution in the “political structure of the world” (ibid: 24) – bipolarity, mutually incompatible ideologies and nuclear weapons being the new context of action – and mourns the collapse of the “common roof of shared values and universal standards of action”, the collapse that destroyed “the common habitat of the nations of the world” (ibid: 336–337). He also resorts to expressions such as trade “barriers” (ibid: 33), the “groundwork” for international institutions (ibid: 33) and the continental “citadel” of the United States (ibid: 24). Waltz (2010 [1979]) gives structure a causal role: “structures cause actions” (ibid: 107), “structures account for some recurrent aspects of the behavior of states and for certain repeated and enduring patterns” (ibid: 116–117). For Waltz (ibid: 88, 116), structure comes in two basic variants: domestic systems are centralized and hierarchic, and international systems are decentralized and anarchic. “Structural constraints” cannot be wished away or avoided no matter how well actors understand them (ibid: 109), since “the only remedy for a strong structural effect is a structural change” (ibid: 111), a development that is currently not in sight (ibid: 204). In practice, according to Waltz, the anarchic structure of international relations accounts for a system of self-help where survival is the primary concern of all states.

Also, among liberalists, employing building metaphors is common. Russett and Oneal refer to “extensive institutional structures as the Europeans have now built” (2001: 29) and to the “construction of a thick web of international institutions” (ibid: 26). They study the “foundation” of international peace (ibid: 29, 271) or the “basis” for a more peaceful world (ibid: 30), emphasize the importance of removing all economic “barriers” (ibid: 26, 30) and claim

that peace among democracies is overdetermined, that is, explainable by both cultural and “structural” mechanisms (ibid: 53). Although Fukuyama’s theorizing primarily utilizes the road and evolution metaphors, also buildings figure in his explanations. He asserts that “the universal and homogenous state that appears at the end of history can thus be seen as resting on the twin pillars of economics and recognition” (1992: 204). Moreover, he notes as evidence of the waning role of thymotic passions that Alexandre Kojève, his favorite interpreter of Hegel’s teachings, was content to serve as an ordinary builder, a common bureaucrat in the “construction of the final home for the last man”, the European Union (ibid: 311). Finally, Fukuyama is happy to conclude that “there are no true barbarians at the gates” (ibid: 88) – thus, the liberal democratic home is safe.

Linklater, too, operates with terms adhering to building projects. Like many other IR scholars interested in ontological and epistemological issues, he examines “foundationalism” and “anti-foundationalism” (e.g. 1998: 62–79); he writes about “reconstructing” political community, the state and historical materialism (ibid: 45, 44, 111); he refers to “new state structures” (ibid: 147); he notes how one of the central “pillars” of bounded communities has been removed (ibid: 217); and he rejoices over the “building” of wider frameworks of cooperation (ibid: 177–178) and the fact that some human beings are “constructing” themselves as world citizens as well as national citizens (ibid: 179). While anti-foundationalism as a philosophical stance is appealing to many scholars – convincing cases have been made for rejecting appeals to a basic ground of knowledge in either pure experience or pure reason – in practice, operating without any foundations or some relatively firm beliefs is difficult. Anti-foundationalist projects focus not on achieving context-free truths, but on studying beliefs and practices as historically contingent constructs. As regards IR, from this perspective, even the seemingly most natural actors and most common actions in the international arena are historical creations. According to post-foundationalist researchers of different strands, basic concepts and purported causal links vacillate; there is no absolute certainty in the world or in science.

Cox (1981) formulates his critical theory around frameworks of action or “historical structures”. These structures are comprised of three interacting forces – material capabilities, ideas and institutions – and they constitute the context in which action takes place. He applies the method of historical structures to three interrelated spheres of activity – social forces, states and world orders – and argues that at each historical moment, both “dominant/hegemonic structures” and structures countering the prevailing order can be found. Consequently, also world orders should be studied as a succession of dominant and emergent “rival structures”. Wallerstein, like Cox, is more interested in change and alternatives than in solving the problems of the present world-system, the capitalist world-economy. He claims (2004: 76, 89) that the system is in crisis and that we are facing a historical choice concerning the kind of new system that will be “constructed” in its place.

For him (*ibid*: 21–22), both actors and “structures” are products in a process, and time and space are constantly evolving “constructed realities”. Wallerstein (*ibid*) believes that actors are both free and inhabitants of the most constraining of all buildings, prisons: “To the extent that we each analyze our social prisons, we liberate ourselves from their constraints to the extent that we can be liberated.”

Feminist IR scholars, too, often operate with buildings and construction activities when describing the world they study. Tickner (1992: 132–133) claims that striving for attachment and community is as much a part of human nature as is the desire for independence, and thus also the political and economic behavior of states should be viewed as naturally including an aspect of “building community”. In other words, “community building” is not an aberration but simply another dimension of international behavior (*ibid*). Moreover, Tickner (*ibid*: 142) urges the discipline to give up its oppressive practices and to “construct” a more secure world. Enloe (2014 [1989]) uses the metaphor both in the more common forms – such as construct/construction (*ibid*: xxiii, 352, 354), building (*ibid*: 88) or structure (*ibid*: 91) – and in some more original expressions, such as “pillar” of national and international patriarchy (*ibid*: 25) / of US national security (*ibid*: 147) / of worker exploitation (*ibid*: 342), “bedrock” of British imperial success (*ibid*: 101), “bulwark” of today’s militarized international political relations (*ibid*: 7), “pyramid” of autonomy (*ibid*: 323) and “cementing” masculine political privilege (*ibid*: 121). Parashar et al. (2018a), also, make sense of the gendered world of states by resorting to building metaphors: they refer to the “construction” of states and gender regimes (*ibid*: 2, 11), to “international structures” (*ibid*: 6), to “patriarchal structures” (*ibid*: 2, 9), to the “foundational structures” of the state system (*ibid*), to the “ontological foundations” of gendered states (*ibid*: 10) and to the “building” of states, nations and identities (*ibid*: 7, 9). It appears that seeing things in terms of building is also essential to feminist understandings of international relations.

The most systematic users of the building or construction metaphors in the field of IR, however, might be the constructivists who place their central tenets on this metaphor. Constructivists propose that social ideas and interpretations help to construct and give meaning to material reality, more specifically, that state identities and interests are constituted in interaction among states. For Wendt (1992), “social threats are constructed, not natural”, “worlds of power are socially constructed” and “building” new role identities is possible. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) elaborate on the “social construction” of norms or norm “building”: they discuss the organizational “platforms” from which norm promoters act, the “thresholds” in the process and the “construction of cognitive frames”. According to Barry Buzan et al., since securitization is intersubjectively and socially “constructed” (1998: 31), the task of the analyst is to investigate the processes of “constructing” a shared understanding of threats (*ibid*: 26). In this Copenhagen School tradition, security issues are not only “constructed”, but they may also

be “deconstructed” (ibid: 33). Although for Buzan et al. there is nothing necessary or automatic about any particular “construction” (ibid: 28), they pay attention to how the socially constituted is often “sedimented” as a “structure” and becomes relatively “stable” as a practice (ibid: 35). Marks (2011: 74–78), too, pays special attention to the construction metaphors of the constructivists. Moreover, he notes that the constructivist paradigm mixes mechanistic building terminology, “construction”, with biological images, “evolution”.

When it comes to tearing down constructions, it is the deconstructivists or poststructuralists who are at the forefront. They find the “dominant discursive constructions” contingent and political, in need of being identified, problematized and challenged (Shepherd, 2008: 32). They believe that “nothing is finally stable”: there are no “secure grounds”, no “final structures”; they are interested in “clashes of historical practices that impose or resist structure” and in multiple interpretations which “deconstruct and displace one another” (Ashley, 1987). They claim, for example, that the putative “pillars” of our political imaginary have been “demolished” (Campbell, 1992: vii), that conventional political discourse and its self-presentations need to be “deconstructed” (ibid: 8) and that there are no “foundations” prior to or outside of the constantly ongoing constitution of identity via difference (ibid). They are dissatisfied with what the “constitution” of the Enlightenment project has brought about, with what Western rationalism is “based on” (Gregory, 1989: xiii); they want to make strange “socially constructed facts” (ibid: xiv) and to “deconstruct the structuring” of paired concepts (ibid: xvi). Their “organizing strategy” (sic) is to “deconstruct or denaturalize”, their form of intellectual activity, the “deconstructive process” (Der Derian, 1989: 4). Both constructivists and poststructuralists are interested in the practices of building the international scene. The latter group, however, finds these practices more problematic, often violent, and thus wishes to take part in the demolition of the resulting international structures. Interestingly, however, even some of the researchers eagerly engaging in deconstructive critique are aware of – and feel uneasy with – the negative connotation of deconstruction; after the deconstructive exercise, they see a need to “reconstitute” certain aspects or elements of international life (Connolly, 1989: 336–337) or to shift to “a positive or reconstructive stance” (Williams and Krause, 1997: xii).

Building metaphors transfer the logic of buildings – concrete human-made artifacts and their construction efforts – to the field of international relations, but the logic comes in different variants, suggesting different types of interpretations and reactions. Building metaphors can make sense of cooperative encounters where nonviolent means are primary: here, the association might be to collective building projects and open houses that rely on smooth communication, careful coordination, teamwork and goodwill. Building metaphors can also give meaning to activities that might be associated with conflicts and require resorting to force, such as in the case of constructing

sturdy fortresses against aggressive enemies or demolishing old buildings to make space for new ones. Some buildings encourage active engagement and creative solutions, while others recommend sticking to the blueprint and letting be: modular houses are easy to assemble, modify and disassemble, but stone castles are meticulously designed and built to stand for centuries exactly as they are. Houses can be either inviting or exclusive: one should not enter a private yard, but one is welcome to the festival tent and the shared living room. To conclude this chapter, I will outline some of the entailments of both the cooperational/hopeful versions of building explanations in international relations and of the more conflictual/discouraging construction associations, that is, the variety of proper responses.

The cooperational variants of the building metaphor – joint construction projects and shared apartments – tend to emphasize the importance of common goals and patient progression and to speak against hasty moves and personal motivations. Building a new world order after a specific watershed moment – such as the end of the Cold War or the 9/11 attacks – may be envisioned as a collective, ongoing project to which all constructive and creative contributions are welcome. The Common European House was to be free of the old divisions and ossified ways of thinking; the EU could possibly be a new kind of home for all European nations. The ethos of peacebuilding missions is hopeful: laying secure foundations for peaceful interaction takes time but is feasible, societies can be reconstructed, and political systems redesigned. Ambitious architects may aim at building a temple of freedom or constructing the final home for the last man; less ambitious ones simply try to make sure that the cornerstones of security are in place and that the required amount of policy pillars have been attended to. International relations as constructive building excludes wayward behavior and violent means: they are not only unethical, but also counterproductive for the project with a common, concrete goal. As construction teams consist of experts in different fields, building secure international structures allows for different kinds of state roles. In designing and erecting complex edifices, communication and coordination are not a distant dream, but a normal practice.

The conflictual variants of the building metaphor – massive walls at frontiers and demolition projects – underline the solid nature of existing constructions and the force needed to bring them down. These metaphors hide the importance of creativity and the possibility of peaceful change. According to this logic, in an unstable international environment where powerful states have destructive motives, reliable security architectures cannot be drawn by brainstorming wild ideas. For example, in the Western context, many believe that a NATO foundation with the United States acting as the main architect has a proven record of success. This structure survived the freezing climate and the occasional violent storms of Cold War; there are no significant flaws in the design, no cracks on the walls, and no problems with the quality of materials. Since there is no certainty that the barbarians will not be at the gates, the home of democracy and freedom needs to be vigilantly

defended from outside attacks. When the iron curtain divided Europe, the quarreling parties each took care of their backyards and tried to make sure that windows of vulnerability did not open. In a more relaxed climate, the important structures still need to be maintained, as the circumstances may change quickly. Economic barriers are generally considered as wrong types of international constructions. Some applicant countries see the EU as a fortress. The oppressive political structures and malfunctioning economic systems of the world deserve to be bulldozed, but the process is messy, prompting some engineering experts to recommend renovation instead of demolition.

Building metaphors have structured and given meaning to international relations for a very long time; both practitioners and theorists employ building references so often that they go largely unnoticed. However, this does not mean that the metaphor is less important, maybe on the contrary: precisely because building in its different forms seems such a natural way to conceptualize activities in world politics, the interpretations and recommendations the metaphor carries with it might not be taken notice of. It is important to realize that buildings may either close off or invite in; buildings come as both sturdy fortresses and open houses. Moreover, the fortress variant of the building metaphor speaks for the opposite policy than the open house variant: fortresses need to be buttressed and defended, while anybody is welcome to an open house. With the building metaphor, abstract and far-away actors and events become familiar and understandable. The proper attitude and correct response to international relations are determined by the particular version of the metaphorical script: whereas all holes in protective walls need to be fixed, comfortable homes need plenty of windows to bring in light, and poorly constructed buildings need to be completely demolished. None of the versions bears automatic resemblance to state interaction, but all can be put to use in the context, and all have potentially far-reaching consequences.

## 8 International games

### Prisoners' dilemmas and buzzing playgrounds

This chapter looks at the various types of game metaphors for international relations, that is, at the great number of explanatory scripts brought over from the game and playing realms of competitors and actors, sports fields and theater stages, gambling dens and playgrounds. Some of them – like “arms races” – are widely used and unobtrusive. Others – like being “the last domino” – are used less often and immediately recognized as metaphors. All versions of the game metaphor, however, structure international relations with terms employed in another, totally separate field. They help us understand international actors and events by evoking associations with pawns, scripts and roles. While underlining the episodic and exciting aspects of international relations, they disregard other aspects, such as ordinary routines and long-standing processes. Game metaphors direct our considerations and policy choices towards those common in playing contexts. The chapter begins by outlining associations that go together with games of different kinds. After this, examples of expert usages are provided. To conclude, the chapter speculates on the inferences drawn from game metaphors, as well as their possible entailments for international action.

People play recreational games of various kinds throughout their lives: tag and hide-and-seek mainly as children, video games typically as teenagers, card and board games at any age. Sports games give both individual athletes and teams a chance to demonstrate their physical and mental strength and compete against each other. Playing can also take place on a stage where actors follow a prewritten script or in the form of role-plays where improvisation is an essential ingredient of the project. Associations that go together with games and playing are often cheerful and lighthearted and include the idea of voluntarily following certain rules. Hopscotch, solitaire and amateur swimming races are supposed to be fun. Playing chess or poker, on the other hand, is usually a contemplative pursuit; these games require strategic skills and cunning in addition to giving pleasure. Sports may be far from frolicking, too: winning may be hugely important to some competitors and, notably, the Olympic Games have become intertwined with superpower politics. Ordinarily, playing games stands in opposition to being serious, and

games are typically diversions instead of main occupations of people. Things that happen on a theater stage or while larping are not real or true. Once more, the source domain of the game metaphor covers a wide range of activities: from peaceful and innocent recreation via calculative moves and illicit gambling to fierce battles for the gold medal.

Buzzing playgrounds are the prototypical setting for harmless children's games. Images that come to mind involve running, climbing and jumping, laughing, singing and being excited in a positive manner. Children also play at home, either alone or together with their siblings and friends. We believe that children learn both basic academic and social skills through playing games of different types: how to read, write and count; how to concentrate, follow rules, take turns, cooperate, win and lose. Practicing a sport keeps you healthy and fit and is a pastime available to everyone: by using a little imagination and being flexible, soccer, baseball and basketball can be played almost anywhere with minimal equipment and verbal games demand no material resources at all. Success in an athletic competition usually requires talent, practice and determination; it enhances one's self-esteem and/or is good for the team spirit. People often like watching sports regardless of whether they have sports hobbies themselves; the thrill of the game encompasses the audience, and witnessing a perfect performance is rewarding. In a theater, actors generally interpret the texts of playwrights; they strive to excel in their performances somewhat like athletes do, and again, the spectators enjoy the experience of putting aside mundane routines for a moment. There are many games and versions of playing where winning is not an issue at all, or where the whole group of players wins – or loses – together, as while trying to solve an imaginary mystery or escape from a locked room.

In addition to games that are harmless, fun and rule-bound, there are dangerous, illegal and reckless games. Here, the associations evoke secret gambling dens, forbidden dogfights and senseless games of chicken or Russian roulette where players may get hurt or even die for no reason. Winning in these games often has more to do with luck or nerve than skill or fitness. In reckless games, the stakes are improper and the enjoyment one might get is generally considered an addiction or psychological disorder, something socially looked down upon if not outright unlawful. Reckless games are not sportsmanlike, entertaining, or healthy; their players are not entitled to wide respect or admiration. Negative associations adhere also to playing against the rules or cheating in respectable games. Honest players do not want to play against sly ones; all audiences appreciate fair play. Winning a title by resorting to dishonorable means is much worse than losing a game. In fact, losing a tough game despite doing one's very best may grant the loser more admiration and popularity than the winner receives.

Yet another group of associations goes together with fiercely competitive games – ones that come across neither as harmless fun nor as dangerously reckless, but as something symbolically extremely important to the participants and the audience. Professional athletes may spend years training

for a specific event; some competitions are organized only once in four years; certain games determine the destiny of the players for a long time in the future. Often, it is the games of adults – say, the FIFA World Cup or major poker tournaments – that are regarded as serious business, also because significant sums of money may be involved. But important victories and defeats – and ruthless matches with bullies – can also take place in children’s sandboxes and neighborhood parks. Fiercely competitive games are usually zero-sum games: one person or group can win only by causing another person or group to lose, that is, cooperation is against the very logic of the game. Nevertheless, there are different attitudes one can take towards zero-sum games such as poker, chess, or bridge; they do not automatically lead to hostility and bitterness. Even most conflict games are played without resorting to violence; the issue of winning or losing can be taken lightly or grievously. Sometimes, however, games become excessively significant: success means everything to the players; they seem to be fighting for their lives.

Whether games are cooperational or conflictual, the associations they carry include players and spectators, rules and moves, equipment and arenas, victories and defeats. Games constitute a specific non-routine pastime; their world is familiar almost to everyone yet removed from the basic necessities of daily life. The game metaphor transfers the logic of games – the participants, the objectives, the atmosphere – to make sense of another realm. Both theorists and practitioners of international relations have made extensive use of the game metaphor when explaining the activities of state actors. While structuring the field according to a specific logic – that of games – directs understandings and responses in a specific way and excludes certain interpretations, the metaphor also allows for significant variation: the recommendations that apply to children’s playgrounds differ from those that seem natural in a chess tournament. I will now turn to practical examples, the variety of usages.

Several scholars have noted – often with sorrow – that the noncooperational version of the game metaphor seems to be dominant in the field of IR theorizing. Amadae (2016) claims that noncooperational games à la game theory commodify all values, ignore respect for others, disregard commitment not to harm and, by definition, render cooperation irrational. Unfortunately, according to Amadae, game theory has become ubiquitous: the preferred means to describe, enact and explain purposive agency in numerous areas of life, including international relations. In noncooperational game models, every actor will likely cheat, free-ride and seek self-gain by threatening to harm others even when cooperation is a (sensible and ethical) option (*ibid*: xxix). Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 513–548, Lakoff, 1999) explicate the metaphorical structure of game-theoretical models of rational action in considerable detail: they lay out the process by which pure mathematics is interpreted by at least three levels of metaphors to serve as the justification of a very specific morality and the “rationality” of profit maximization. They, too, see problems in using this mathematical theory outside mathematics: human

reason is far richer than game theory recognizes. Hurwitz (1989) affirms that the assumption that people are perspicacious, self-interested decision-makers is neither generally validated nor accepted by people themselves. He asserts that the Prisoner's Dilemma, specifically, is a fiction of political realism, not an objective technical problem.

All students of IR are familiar with certain games that are presented as the foundational metaphors for international relations by many scholars: Chicken, Stag Hunt and Prisoner's Dilemma. These games are seen to model different situations and problems: Chicken is a deterrence game, Stag Hunt a coordination/assurance game and Prisoner's Dilemma a cooperation game. In Chicken, two drivers drive directly towards each other, trying to make the other driver swerve; a crash will most probably kill them both, but swerving means that you are a coward. In Stag Hunt, hunters can either coordinate their action in order to get a stag or go after a hare on their own; each would be better off with a stag, but the strength of commitments to the joint plan being uncertain, defecting might give each a small reward faster or more likely. In Prisoner's Dilemma, two prisoners are interrogated separately: if both stay silent, the mutual outcome is optimal (both get a light sentence for a lesser crime or even go free in some versions of the game), while implicating the other can either give you a high payoff (if the other prisoner stays silent) or have you end up with a heavy sentence (if both snitch on each other). Here, in the absence of a prior agreement, solidarity and/or communication, the dominant incentive is said to be implicating the other, although cooperating might be a better option (for both). All these games can be introduced through different variants, leading to different kinds of calculations, strategies and potential outcomes. The Prisoner's Dilemma, for example, has been presented slightly differently by R. Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa (1957: 94–102), Schelling (1960: 98, 213–215), Rapoport (1960: 173–177), Jervis (1978), Hurwitz (1989), Donnelly (2000: 19–23), Marks (2011: 138–143) and Amadae (2016: 24–61).

As Der Derian (1998) and Marks (2001, 2011) have demonstrated, the prison metaphor not only discourages solidarity and joint projects among states, but also presents a caricatured image of prison life; the metaphor rests on assumptions of behavior that actual inmates do not recognize and rules that they do not follow. Instead of operating with clear-cut calculations, automatic mistrust and communication lockdown, the prison context typically exhibits complex networks of relationships, codes of silence and rituals of honor. Pre-scripted stories and early analyses of who is likely to snitch are the norm in prisons, and not taking this into account is bound to produce unreliable prognoses of action. Der Derian and Marks claim that instead of assisting with empirical studies of human interaction, the Prisoners' Dilemma might conjure, all on its own, a basic problem for IR. While the game among prisoners has been criticized for misinterpreting the logic of the source domain, the story of the Stag Hunt – as already discussed in connection with the international relations as nature metaphor (Chapter 4) – can be interpreted in two

opposite ways, supporting two logics of action. Namely, Grant (1991: 14–16) draws a lesson competing with the established one: going after the hare, not sticking together with the stag hunters, is not necessarily a defection but instead a reflection of the commitment of the hunter to feed his family every day, in however small way, with however small game.

Luce and Raiffa, in their *Games and Decisions* (1957), discuss both noncooperative and cooperative games and are well aware of the limitations of game theory especially concerning the latter type of games. They (*ibid*: 115) seem to concur with the assessment that complex social, economic and political problems should be treated in the cooperative context and note that the present state of game theory does not produce a realistic formal analysis of cooperative games even when the overall game is divided into small parcels. As to achievements in the field, Luce and Raiffa have more to report on research on zero-sum two-person games where maximizing personal utility defined as material payoffs is the objective of both players (*ibid*: 54–55). Their presentation makes clear that game theory can be thought to model only situations where preplay discussions and agreements are prohibited; in other cases, the simplified analysis can shed only “dim and unreliable” light on certain aspects of the real problem (*ibid*: 114–115). However, game theory language in itself – linear utility functions, payoff matrixes, pure strategies – and especially game theory outcomes represented as concrete monetary returns might be appealing to many scholars and the general public due merely to the mathematical-sounding reasoning they rely on and precisely to the simple answers they provide. Also, Luce and Raiffa explicitly hope (*ibid*) that analogical reasoning (between contexts where game theory actually works and complex cooperative contexts), despite its significant limitations, might help grasp strategic and communication challenges of international diplomacy.

Schelling’s game theory classic, *The Strategy of Conflict* (1960), studies the basic game logics of deterrence, coordination and cooperation, while emphasizing the importance of varying contexts for each. Schelling does not propose that strategies of conflict are easy to predict – and mathematics, for him, is not the answer for social scientists (*ibid*: 10) – but he does engage in the development of “the retarded science of international strategy” by “reorienting” traditional game theory, that is, extending it, enlarging its scope (*ibid*: 83). Schelling focuses on “rational, conscious, artful kind of behavior” and conflicts as “contests where participants are trying to win” (*ibid*: 3), but assumes that in international relations, there are both common and conflicting interests, mutual dependence as well as opposition, different kinds of rationalities (*ibid*: 4, 13–17). Much like Luce and Raiffa, Schelling believes that international relations often have to do with situations where claimants have common interests in reaching mutually advantageous outcomes, that is, cooperation games are common, if not the rule, in the international realm. He is also humble concerning the wider applicability of results achieved in the zero-sum, “pure conflict” context. As already noted, not all international relations experts who rely on game theory are equally subtle and humble.

Rapoport, in a third canonical text, *Fights, Games, and Debates* (1960), presents these three struggles as the prototypes of the three types of conflicts possible. In fights, the object is to harm, destroy, subdue or drive away the opponent (ibid: 9). In a game, the object is to outwit the opponent. In games, participants are rational, have certain interests and do their best; in games, potentialities and evaluations of alternative outcomes must be taken into account (ibid: 9–10). In debates, the objective is to convince your opponent, to make him see things as you see them (ibid: 11). Rapoport underlines that no simple framework is adequate for dealing with such a complex class of phenomena as human conflict; he defines his objective along the lines of “bringing our ignorance to our attention” by acquainting us with several limited frameworks (ibid: 359). While discussing the framework of games, he utilizes examples from actual board games such as checkers and chess as well as the thought experiment already mentioned, namely, Prisoner’s Dilemma. With regard to the latter, he confirms that perfectly “rational” considerations can lead to disaster (ibid: 173). As to critiques of game theory, he agrees with many of Schelling’s arguments (ibid: 226–242). According to Rapoport, game theory tends to ignore the role of communication and falsely assumes that human beings can assign an interval utility scale to any set of outcomes. He both shows – with the help of the case of Othello and Desdemona – how difficult it is to apply game theory to human affairs and claims that it can still stimulate us to think about conflict in useful ways. In other words, operating with concepts such as rationality, players, zero-sum and non-zero-sum games, transferable and non-transferable utilities, strategic maneuvers and payoff matrixes can help us understand some situations better. It is clear that Rapoport is interested in understanding human conflicts of all kinds, from those between chess players to that underlying the arms race between the superpowers, and that he finds games to be a good analytical tool in international contexts.

Conflictual games are an important conceptual tool, especially for many IR realists such as Mearsheimer and Waltz. While balancing (power) and weighing (strategies) are Mearsheimer’s main metaphors for explaining international relations, he also uses zero-sum games – specifically competitions and races – to make world politics understandable. According to Mearsheimer, “states compete for power” and “great powers compete among themselves”; thus, we need to “learn about the nature of that competition”, to understand “what states are competing for” (2014 [2001]: 13). Mearsheimer claims that “states that initiate wars often win” (ibid: 233) and that the “nuclear arms race” showed that great powers look for opportunities to shift the balance of power in their favor (ibid: 232). Great powers do not behave aggressively because they have an inner drive to dominate, but because they have to seek more power if they “want to maximize their odds for survival” (ibid: 21). Terminology from both winning or losing races and gambling is abundant. Mearsheimer underlines that states should not be viewed as good or bad – neither do their economic or political systems explain their behavior – but

simply as “rational actors” who think strategically about how to survive (ibid: 15, 31), much like chess players speculate about sacrificing chess pieces and try to checkmate the opponent’s king. States cannot avoid the types of power games Mearsheimer envisions, nor can the ending to the competition be negotiated in a way that would benefit all players and leave everybody happy.

As to specific games in the realm of human recreation, Mearsheimer refers to billiards (ibid: 11, 18): in this context, states are like billiard balls that move on a table according to laws of physics and the set logic of the game, not dictated by their culture, domestic politics or feelings of any kind. While Mearsheimer believes that the billiard ball model helps understand international politics, the first scholar to use the metaphor, Wolfers (1962: 19–24), is skeptical of the idea of billiard ball states. According to him, this picture of a stage where states – as closed, impermeable, sovereign units separated from all other states – interact with each other is “obviously not an accurate portrait” (ibid: 19). Wolfers analyzes several possible “deviations” from this model and notes that many of them in practice facilitate the operation and increase the influence of other actors than states. Nevertheless, in practitioner usage, the metaphor appears to have enduring explanatory appeal, as demonstrated by President Biden (1 Nov 2021b): “I do apologize for the fact that the United States, in the last administration, pulled out of the Paris Accords and put us sort of behind the eight ball a little bit”. His assumption was that the metaphor clarified the international situation to his audience.

As already discussed, structures (buildings) and balances are metaphors that Waltz uses abundantly in his theory of international politics. However, he also resorts to games as explanations. In fact, he uses the metaphor in several versions, including the fiercely competitive sports variant and the theater variant: “Winston Churchill observed that the British-German naval race promised disaster *and* that Britain had no realistic choice other than to run it” (2010 [1979]: 110), “States set the scene in which they [...] stage their dramas” (ibid: 94). He directly refers to the Prisoner’s Dilemma as an explanation (ibid: 109) and generally opts for the noncooperational/conflictual variant of games: “The game one has to win is defined by the structure that determines the kind of player who is likely to prosper” (ibid: 92). For Waltz, international politics is a “competitive realm” (e.g. ibid: 127) where the occurrence of violence is natural. Although the structure of the international system – anarchy – is more important than the choices of the actors – their rationality/irrationality, their stupidity/cleverness, their ill/goodwill, their constancy/inconstancy (ibid: 110, 118) – actors are “doomed” (ibid: 108) or “trapped” (ibid: 110) to play the game of small decisions in order to survive, to run the disastrous race, to act on the violent stage.

The most aggressive and violent game that can be depicted on the international scene is war. The “war as a game” metaphor has been recognized and studied in the usage of political practitioners at different times. The Cold War was widely framed as a game: both hard-liners and peace advocates

referred to games, races, plays, cards, competitions, pawns and teams. Ivie (1987) has identified this metaphor in the rhetoric of Henry Wallace, a Cold War “idealist”. Wallace spoke in terms of card games, children’s games and sports games: he claimed that while the United States had several powerful “cards”, Russia only had “two cards”; he urged the United States to stop “playing with matches” and start “playing ball with the Russians”. Shimko (1994, 2004) lists games/races as one of the central metaphors of US power and claims that it was frequently used during the Cold War.

Lakoff and Chilton (1995) discuss the Cold War metaphor of a decades-long “arms race” between the United States and the Soviet Union and point out that President Bill Clinton continued to talk about “a new kind of race” in the post – Cold War world. Moreover, they note that in the United States, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War were depicted as boxing matches à la “fighting with one hand tied behind your back” and delivering “a knockout punch” respectively. In the Gulf, President George W. Bush also used the gambling metaphor of “a poker game” (ibid). Shapiro (1989b) studies the sport/war intertext – or the “sportification” of our understanding of international conflict – through various examples starting from the British fighting the Germans in World War I in football terms and finishing with Zbigniew Brzezinski’s “two-nation contest” of the Cold War. Herbeck (2004) analyzes how Operation Desert Storm was placed in a football game context by US media and politicians.

Kuusisto (1998, 2002) studies the way parties to a conflict tend to describe their own moves in terms of participating in a wholesome sports contest and those of the adversary as playing a sly game. Both in the Persian Gulf against Saddam Hussein in 1991 and in Kosovo against Slobodan Milošević in 1999, the coalition headed by the major Western countries was well-trained and played cautiously and fair-and-square, while the opponent was in poor shape and involved in high-risk gambling and cheating. The leaders of the Western major powers talked about “stakes”, “tracks”, “goals”, “innings”, “the long haul”, “a bluff”, “the gamble”, being “short of breath” and having “muscle and reach”. Although the game metaphor structured the moves of both parties and many of the same concepts were used in their descriptions, official Western statements made it clear that the players had little in common when it came to the style of play, the tactics, and the objectives. Gavriely-Nuri (2013: 77–79) recognizes the sports metaphor as one of the metaphors used in normalizing war to the Israelis. She claims that in the media coverage of the Second Lebanon War, for example, sports metaphors portrayed war as a competitive, thrilling and positive event, a normal pastime, and gave the Israeli military vs. Hezbollah struggle the appearance of a fair fight between equal opponents.

Several scholars have discovered that a specific game, namely dominos, was resorted to in order to make individual Cold War incidents part of a bigger, and dangerous, game. Slater (1987) maintains that since the emergence of the United States as a global power following World War II, the “domino theory”

was at the heart of American foreign policy in the Third World. He explains the logic in the following way: a communist victory in any small country can set in motion a chain of communist takeovers nearby, and the fall of regional dominos can in turn undermine the strategic position of the United States in world politics. (See also Rosati and Campbell, 2004.) Like Slater, Shimko (1994, 2004) recognizes President Eisenhower as the first leader to employ the metaphor in the mid-1950s vis-à-vis South Vietnam. Later, documents Slater (*ibid*), the metaphor was applied to justify US interventions in Chile and Angola in the 1970s and the Reagan administration's policies in Central America in the 1980s. President Ronald Reagan explicitly explained the position of the United States in the game: "We are the last domino." (*ibid*). The idea of the United States as a domino nicely demonstrates the versatile nature of the game metaphor in international relations: states can be seen as either the objects of play – dominos or chessmen, for example – or the subjects of play who move the material objects on the table or the board, as the chess or domino players (for more on the object vs. player aspect, see Fierke, 2002).

Slaughter recognizes the game metaphor as the dominant metaphor for international relations – according to her, both statesmen and foreign policy experts have been taught to view the world as a chessboard (2017: 5–7) and these chess players are still firmly in control (*ibid*: 221) – but she herself advocates widening the perspective, using the twin optics of the chessboard and the web together. Instead of merely analyzing the decisions of powerful states and anticipating rival states' reactions in an endless game of strategic advantage (competition, conflict), we should also seek to understand cooperation and connections, that is, see the networks and webs relevant in world politics. While the chessboard remains accurate much of the time, asserts Slaughter, it obscures another equally important landscape, the web of networks (*ibid*: 10). Slaughter explains that while chess players are rational profit maximizers, they play to win, the primary desire of networkers is to belong and connect – and that the range of humanity includes every possible combination of selfishness and sociability (*ibid*: 69–71). *Homo economicus* and *homo sociologicus* respond to quite different incentives, and we should take into account both, not choose one over the other (*ibid*: 70–71). Slaughter further specifies (*ibid*: 114) that the Prisoner's Dilemma behavior only applies to situations where the players do not know each other and cannot communicate – by no means the only starting point in international relations. Using another explicitly metaphorical explanatory framework, Slaughter (2012) suggests that we should understand today's interconnected world not solely as a "billiard ball world" but increasingly as a networked, horizontal, web-like "Lego world".

As regards the other end of the continuum – cheerful playing among parties who have known each other for a long time – examples of usage are also easy to find. Some theorists clearly imagine cooperational games while depicting international relations. A text contemporary to those of Luce and Raiffa, Schelling and Rapoport, C. A. W. Manning's *The Nature*

of *International Society* (1962: 112–113, 132, 165), portrays countries in a situation where they come up with “the game of let’s play sovereign states”. In Manning’s metaphor, countries are compared to children who play a game simply because they want to have fun or to (adult) players on a football field. According to Manning, as football players generally obey the referee, states usually play according to the rules of international law – this is embedded in the nature of international society. Manning (ibid: 151–152) extends the idea of states playing also to the context of plays on theater stages where following the script is a natural cooperative way to proceed. In the games Manning describes, lying, cheating and making threats seem totally out of place; trusting other players is not a risk, but on the contrary, the only logical way to behave. At the rehearsal of *As You Like It*, it would be absurd to start reciting one of Macbeth’s monologues; in a soccer game, you do not suddenly grab the ball into your hands and leave the field. Manning’s cooperational game metaphor suggests that states playing together nicely is the natural situation. As to practitioners, Prime Minister Boris Johnson (1 Nov 2021) encouraged Britain to play its part well, to get good reviews in the international climate drama: “We are now coming center stage before a vast and uncountable audience of posterity and we must not fluff our lines or miss our cue.”

Enloe (2000 [1989]: 11) affirms that for international politics to function smoothly, the actors need to “play their parts”; she focuses on people as actors and the gender aspect of the roles. According to her (ibid: 13), the “international political arena” is traditionally seen as a place for men and the rare women “who can successfully play at being men”. However, the leading roles of men need the support of “traditional feminine roles” (ibid: 14). Although the audience tends not to see the women who play their part in running world politics, they would soon notice if the women exited the various stages: “The risk-taking banker needs the conscientious seamstress to hold his world together”, claims Enloe (ibid: 160). The framework of children playing games shares features with other metaphors for international relations, for example, the children of a particular family (family metaphor, see Chapter 5) playing on a seesaw (balancing metaphor, see Chapter 6) in the backyard (building metaphor, see Chapter 7). Enloe notes that similar femininity-wielding masculinized contests take place both on the playground and in international nuclear politics (2014 [1989]: 31). Goldstein and Petehouse (1997) study two strategic response patterns of states – reciprocity and “bullying” – to better understand both the conflict in Bosnia in 1992–1995 and international cooperation generally. In these explanations, the playground setting – seesaws, children’s contests, bullies – is used to shed light on the international relations context.

As discussed earlier (Chapter 2), most of the structural metaphors for international relations are founded on the ontological metaphor of states-as-persons. In the theater version of the game metaphor, this “personness” is in special focus: states are persons on a stage, intensely observed theater

actors. Despite its important consequences, the practice of referring to “state actors” is so commonplace that one seldom reflects on the accompanying logic of roles, stages, theaters, directors, scripts and audiences. There are some important exceptions, however, such as IR role theories. A classic study that explicitly concentrates on roles played by states is Holsti’s (1970) article on national role conceptions of states in the foreign policy context. Holsti defines “national role performance” as the general foreign policy behavior of governments, that is, according to him, individual foreign policy actions amount to attempts to “enact national role conceptions”. Moreover, the international system for Holsti can be conceived as “a particular distribution of various national role conceptions at any given time”. Through examining 972 sources derived primarily from 1965–1967, he finds evidence of seventeen role conceptions, everything from “bastion of revolution-liberator” and “regional leader” to “active independent” and “protectee”. He discovers that states can adopt different roles in different contexts – say, vis-à-vis a particular ally, the regional subsystem and the system as a whole – typically 4,6 roles per country. Later research (see e.g. Harnisch et al., 2011) has continued to explore the possibilities of applying role theory in IR and provided interesting case studies of both particular state roles and the role conceptions of international organizations such as NATO and the EU.

While examples both of depicting “pure conflict” games between states and of friendly assumptions behind international playing metaphors are plentiful, many usages are ambiguous as to whether the game referred to is cooperational or noncooperational, that is, they allow for various sets of entailments. Being ubiquitous, the game metaphor often goes unnoticed, and its specific recommendations may remain open – yet with the presumption that all parties concerned understand what the game references roughly mean, how they are to be interpreted in the context. For example, Adler’s (1998: 126, 151) reference to the OSCE’s “track record” is rather neutral: it does competitively evaluate the organization’s performance, but the organization is not placed in an elimination game with others, more within the context of personal goals and efforts to reach them. On the other hand, it may also be the point of the theorist or practitioner, by resorting to the game metaphor, to emphasize the multitude of choices available, the openness of the situation, and the diverse possibilities that the actors or players have. In this case, the flexibility and open-endedness of games is precisely the characteristic that is transferred to the realm of international relations games.

A prime example of entailments left open is Wendt’s social constructivist work. Wendt (1999: 246–312) explains the different logics of anarchy, his main theoretical tenet, via actors and roles: the roles at the core of the Hobbesian, the Lockean and the Kantian cultures are respectively those of the enemy, the rival and the friend. When actors – both the Self and the Other – operate on the same principle and role expectation, the system or culture is reproduced; if enough actors change their behavior, structural change is possible (ibid: 340). The idea of acting or playing structures Wendt’s

explanation without dictating whether the play is a peaceful comedy or a violent tragedy: the anarchic international stage can accommodate various types of performances. Not adhering to the Western theatrical canon, however, all of the actors on a particular stage of Wendt's usually play the same role. Notably, it is not the heroes against the villains, but comic protagonists interacting amicably, competitors all trying to win or brutes picking fights with each other. In a similarly open manner, Russett and Oneal (2001: 303) leave the "major role" that the United States has to "play" unspecified: the United States has several options, but it needs to take into account other actors, both states and international organizations. Poststructuralists, claims Hansen (2017: 166), tend to deconstruct "the role that the state plays" in world politics as well as in the academic field of IR. Again, the idea is that the role given to the state or states is important, but that it has no predetermined content or self-evident nature.

As already suggested, game metaphors in media usage are omnipresent; thus, both conflictual and cooperational variants abound also in recent usage. While covering the Danish referendum on the abolition of the defense opt-out, *Libération* (1 June 2022) referred to the "game of European defense policy" and to "one more domino effect" of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. *Le Monde* (Pedroletti, 29 June 2023) noted that Vietnam was playing "the card of globalization" with great enthusiasm. *Deutsche Welle* (Gak, 6 Feb 2022) speculated about whether President Putin is "a gambler" or not, assessed that Finland has generally been a cautious "player" in a very sensitive "geopolitical theater", observed that the "stakes" over the Ukraine crisis are high and declared that the US is still the only reliable leading "actor". *The New York Times* (Wolfe and Nierenberg, 4 Nov 2022) explained the "stakes" at COP27, named the "winners and losers" of the Ethiopian peace agreement, and turned the "spotlight" on Africa. The same newspaper covered "Germany's prospects as a major military player", "the jump" in German military spending and the defense-spending "goal" Germany has long "undershot" (Frost, 25 Jan 2023) and reported on the major air exercise "staged" by the NATO members (Frost, 13 June 2023). *The Guardian* (Archie Bland, 13 Oct 2022) tried to determine whether Saudi Arabia was making a "bet" on Russia, and if so, deemed that this bet amounted to "backing the wrong horse". In these excerpts, too, gambling seems to be the framework to interpret the moves of reckless states, while players, actors and theaters can be applied to many types of games, also positive and productive ones.

Game metaphors transfer the logic of games and playing and acting – competing, winning and losing, having fun and excelling, watching the stage or arena – to the field of international relations, but as there are many types of games, there are many types of logics, and thus many types of interpretations to apply and guidelines to follow. The framework of games can make sense of fierce competitions, risky decisions, complicated calculations, intense teamwork or carefree interactions. Whereas sprinters waiting for the Olympic starting pistol to be fired do not plan a common strategy, teammates are

expected to do so ahead of each game. Children playing hide and seek usually manage without anybody getting hurt, but an unchecked schoolyard bully can ruin the games and happiness of many pupils. When watching a Shakespeare performance on stage, the audience usually knows what will happen next and expects to enjoy the experience. Gamblers often enjoy the excitement of the game in the beginning but might get addicted and start to play with stakes that are much too high. Some variants of the game metaphor assume a friendly atmosphere and encourage cooperation, while others assume a clear conflict of interests and prepare for a nasty battle. To conclude, I will tease out some of the entailments of both the conflictual and the cooperational versions of this explanatory frame.

Conflictual variants of the game metaphor – zero-sum games, once-in-a-lifetime races, high-risk gambling – tend to draw attention to the dangerous and uncertain aspects of international relations. If an arms control decision is presented as a classical Prisoner's Dilemma, agreement among states will become unlikely. It will be deduced that honest diplomatic communication is impossible and earlier promises – be they explicit treaties or tacit understandings – will not hold. In a gambling context where the stakes are enormous, most responsible governments want to play it safe, and not trust foreign countries. If states believe to be in a race against each other, it would be foolish and unsportsmanlike to stop running as fast as possible, to pause to think and discuss the situation with the other contestants, to disappoint the domestic audience. When an international encounter is portrayed as a competition where only one player can win, cooperational and piecemeal solutions are easily disregarded as unsuitable or utopistic. Following the logic of conflictual games, states do wisely when they train their skills, keep a suspicious eye on the moves of their adversaries, seek victory and celebrate success. No state wants to be left out of prestigious and interesting international games; likewise, nobody wants to be a sucker or a sissy. Especially games among nuclear powers may be nerve-wracking, but the excitement can be presented as fun, and the international audience is used to quite aggressive moves.

Cooperational variants of the game metaphor – children playing in a sandbox, soccer teams playing well together, actors performing a play on a theater stage – evoke an atmosphere of friendship and lightheartedness, admirable coordination and reliable scripts. By now, countries basically know how to play the game of sovereign states: they are familiar with the rules, and they understand that gross digressions will ruin the game for everyone. Among members of the EU or the NATO team, looking for a common policy and united response is the norm even in difficult situations, and the attitude often produces results. Great powers can be assumed to understand each other's world political roles and thus capable of choosing a script that is both realistic and desirable: one in character with the specific actors and leading to a de-escalation of the conflict and a peaceful denouement, if they so wish. Interpretations introducing the logic of cooperational games encourage trust

and negotiations, making plans in advance and coming up with various strategies to reach the goal. In cheerful international games, winning is not always the most important thing; sometimes you play simply for the sake of the interaction, to strengthen mutual bonds, or to achieve a victory for a shared cause, such as the global environment or human security. The cooperational game framework makes unilateral and violent moves improper and senseless: rogue states cannot expect to win in the end by breaking international norms; their victories are momentary and shameful.

Sometimes, the game script is developed in detail by international relations theorists and practitioners; in many instances, it is evoked through the use of individual terms, such as “players”, “actors”, “roles”, “goals” or “stages”. As with the other metaphors, it is impossible to determine the exact power of this explanatory framework, but there is reason to believe that the way of framing makes a difference; cognitive frames guide physical action. Games transport international relations to a realm of a pastime, a diversion from reality: although winning in a sports competition or a game of chess might be important – you might rejoice at “destroying” your opponent – people are not expected to die while playing games on boards or soccer fields, even less so in playground disputes. Using the game metaphor both limits the choices of the speaker and guides the expectations of the audience – we assume and expect certain things in the context of games – and leaves many things open. The great variety of games and playing – everything from hopscotch to poker, from relay races to theater performances – makes it possible to play the game of international relations in several, both fiercely competitive and essentially cooperative ways.

## 9 International business

### Bidding contests and fair trade

This chapter looks at the various types of business metaphors for international relations, that is, at the broad spectrum of explanatory scripts brought over from the realm of marketplaces and stock markets, grocery stores and garage sales. Some of them – like the “pacific benefits of democracy” – go unmarked and form the basis of well-known theories. Others – like “wholesale ethnic slaughter” – are noticeable and less common. All versions of the business metaphor, however, structure international relations with terms employed in another, thoroughly different field. They help us understand international actors and events by evoking associations with buying and selling material goods. While stressing quantifiable and rational aspects of international relations, they dismiss ideational factors and irrational behavior. Business metaphors direct our interpretations and policy choices toward those common in business settings. The chapter begins by outlining associations that go together with business transactions in their numerous variants. Then, examples from expert usage are provided. To conclude, the chapter speculates on the inferences drawn from business metaphors, and their possible entailments for international action.

Buying and selling, investing and seeking profit, determining values and setting prices are considered basic business or commercial activities in capitalist societies. Associations and contexts going together with business activities range from stock exchanges to outdoor marketplaces, from careful calculations to frantic bidding contests, from ruthless ways of making as much money as possible to ideas of corporate social responsibility and fair trade. Generally, business transactions involve some type of cost-benefit analyses in terms of numbers. Moreover, the assumption is that there are regularities – even laws – that reflect or govern the moves of business actors. Economic theories are clearly not as reliable as theories in natural sciences, but they often claim to possess more sophistication and explanatory power than theories of international relations, for example. Relatedly, economic facts are sometimes presented as counterarguments to wishful political thinking. In the realm of business, few moves are made at random, gaining something (concrete), and often, gaining more than others gain, is understood as the driving motive.

Business associations are sometimes similar to game associations: both fields may operate with stakes, competitors and calculated moves – within the so-called rational choice framework, that is.

When you buy something, you are normally entitled to get your money's worth and to inspect the quality of the merchandise. Calculations of profitability dictate moves in commerce, and every businessperson knows that certain necessary expenses go together with large transactions. Because prices fluctuate, finding the best time to make a deal is crucial, and one should constantly keep an eye on one's competitors. In harsh business competition, one has to be able to determine the value of the commodity accurately, estimate the risks involved, and monitor wider economic trends. Some profits can be cashed easily, while with others, one has to wait patiently before enjoying them to the full. The world of business or the economy is routinely seen as separate from politics and especially democratic decision-making; free trade, unhindered by cumbersome (participatory/parliamentary/ judiciary) procedures, is the ideal of rational action. Also, business logic may run against moral or ethical considerations and social concerns. In business, self-serving calculative moves are admired, not frowned upon. Likewise, thinking in terms of material rewards is the normal way to do business. Naturally, the particular business context makes a difference as to associations and expectations. With a street vendor, you are expected to haggle, but in a department store, the prices marked on price tags usually hold, they have been negotiated in advance. In bidding contests, in order to beat each other, buyers voluntarily pay more than the initial price, but as little as they can. This is also a general supposition in business: consumers or buyers seek low prices, minimal expenses for themselves, while producers and sellers look for maximum profit, the highest possible price.

While many, along the lines of Milton Friedman, believe that the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits, to make money for its owners, some businesses have seen it wise to adopt practices termed corporate social responsibility, namely, to also aim at positive environmental and social impacts on the community. Similarly, fair trade endeavors to help producers in developing countries to achieve sustainable and equitable trade relationships, to ensure that specific standards are met in the production and supply of a product or ingredient. Cooperatives look for profit but differ from traditional businesses: they are member-owned and usually democratically controlled, and they employ their profits to provide services or goods to benefit the community of their member-owners. Finally, buying and selling can happen purely for the purpose of directing the money raised to a third party or a collective cause, say a school in need of resources or valuable scientific activities; these non-profit businesses are also known as non-business entities. In all these cooperational versions of business, activities are generally seen as profiting everyone concerned and not greatly harming anyone. The parties to various cooperational transactions ideally do not have to constantly watch out for being cheated or exploited, or fear that, in the process,

someone else is. Ideally, they can buy, sell, and invest with a clear conscience, even for a noble cause, such as saving the planet.

Regardless of the specific variant of the framework – fierce conflicts of interest among competing firms or between consumers and producers, or peaceful cooperatives working for the common good of everyone who wants to join the enterprise, or anything in between – associations adhering to business have to do with trade and commerce, prices and costs, deals and payments. When used in explanations for international relations, business metaphors convey a business mode of thinking and acting to another realm, that of world politics. While the situations of investors trying to calculate profits and losses adhering to a particular venture, and of governments assessing the pros and cons of engaging in an armed conflict or a climate treaty might be similar in some respects, they are very different in others. Business terminology on the whole highlights material aspects of events and phenomena, and downplays non-material values and non-material rewards, and codes of action based on identity or social role. Whether borne out by actual business practices or not, market logic is widely understood to work most smoothly without political guidance or ethical aspirations. The variety of usages of the business metaphor by international relations theorists and practitioners will be explored in what follows.

In IR theorizing, the business metaphor – like all metaphors discussed so far – is used across the traditions. Both realist and liberalist scholars, for example, resort to terminology borrowed from markets and monetary cost–benefit analyses. Waltz (2010 [1979]: 89) makes his use of metaphor explicit and justifies the usage in the following way: “I shall answer [...] through analogy with microeconomic theory. [...] Reasoning by analogy is permissible where different domains are structurally similar”. He proceeds (ibid: 89–91) by taking states as the self-interested persons and firms of microeconomic theory, and the international system as the market, the structure that constrains actors from taking certain actions and disposes them toward taking others. As noted earlier, Waltz strongly believes in structural explanations: the assumption that the international system is anarchic and operates on the principle of self-help of the units is, in his opinion, useful in the construction of theory. Lakoff (2000) has studied the “states are firms” metaphor both generally as belonging to the same rational actor metaphor system as the game metaphor and specifically in the case of Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics*. Lakoff opens up the firms and markets logic by specifying that in it, large states are dominating firms, a position in the international system is a market share, sovereignty is economic independence, power is expected returns and wars are price wars. Through the business metaphor, causal actions in the field of international relations are portrayed as commercial transactions.

Morgenthau (1973 [1948]: 530–548) resorts to the business metaphor especially when discussing the practice of international diplomacy, that is, the procedures on which he pins his hope for maintaining orderly and

peaceful relations among sovereign states struggling for power. In his description of typical negotiations, actors “bargain”, “haggle” and “horse-trade” (ibid: 531), and for him, traditional diplomacy like this “used to transact the business of state” better than modern, public diplomacy does (ibid: 532). Just as “in a free market no seller will carry on public negotiations with a buyer”, nations are put to a disadvantage by publicity demands (ibid: 531–532). Morgenthau (ibid: 532) asks his readers to consider how nations could be expected to be “able and willing to do what no private individual would think of doing”, to negotiate in public. Bull (1995 [1977]: 156–177) does not regard the change in the character of diplomacy as a problem as such. For him, the traditional mechanism is well-adapted to fulfill its basic functions, namely communication, negotiation, information, minimization of friction, and symbolizing the existence of the society of states, even in a context vastly different from its early years. Despite this difference of opinion, Bull talks about diplomacy in terms much like Morgenthau’s; he (ibid: 159) defines multilateral diplomacy as “the conduct of business among three or more states seeking to resolve an issue together” and refers to particular issues that are treated via diplomacy as particular “pieces of business” or “items of business”.

Mearsheimer, while taking a strongly skeptical view on the possible merits of any kind of diplomacy (e.g. 2014 [2001]: 11, 184, 189, 342), also uses business terminology in describing state interaction and foreign policy preferences. In fact, he (ibid: 2) seems to make the business metaphor his primary framework for understanding the entire field: “[t]he sad fact is that international politics has always been a ruthless and dangerous business, and it is likely to remain that way”. Cost – benefit analyses are, for Mearsheimer (ibid: 21), the way states approach each other: “[...] states look for opportunities to gain power at the expense of rivals, and to take advantage of those situations when the benefits outweigh the costs”. In his study, Mearsheimer compares, for example, the net prices of different strategies for gaining power: he argues that conquest can “pay” (ibid: 147), and that states contemplating aggression invariably weigh its “expected costs and benefits” (ibid: 148), that a state can gain power “at a rival’s expense” by threatening to use military force and that blackmail may achieve its goals “without bloody costs” (ibid: 152). Mearsheimer presents war, blackmail, “bait and bleed” and “bloodletting” as strategy options with price tags and extends the logic of business calculations to the use of nuclear weapons. He – luckily for the world – concludes that great powers in a world of mutual assured destruction are likely to be cautious, but he bases his conclusion on the business skills of states more than on any other explanatory framework or moral imperative of some kind.

IR liberalists are traditionally interested in the economy and especially the possibilities of economic cooperation: they are prone to believe that “free” international trade is beneficial to both individual states and the system as a whole. Business terminology seems like a natural fit for

their theorizing, and it is indeed often resorted to both when discussing economic interstate relations directly and when speculating about political causes and effects. Russett and Oneal (2001: 154–155) find empirical support for the “pacific benefits of trade” or liberal peace. According to them, the total trade-to-GDP ratio of states indicates the “costs”, also indirect ones, states associate with the use of force (ibid: 137). In addition to the positive consequences of open economies and numerous trade activities, Russett and Oneal study democratic peace or the theory that democracies seldom go to war against each other. They summarize also this claim with cost–benefit terminology: “Leaders of democracies typically experience high political costs from fighting wars – always from losing them, and often despite winning them. These domestic costs of war make the use of force less attractive to democratic leaders.” (ibid: 54). They lay out the various mechanisms through which democracy promotes cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution internationally and, in the end, repeat that democracies are sensitive to the “human and material costs” of violent conflict (ibid: 79) or the “costs of war” (ibid: 273). Finally, Russett and Oneal discover that membership in international organizations, too, has “pacific benefits” for states (ibid: 195). Thus, in *Triangulating Peace*, they find support for the explanatory power of all three Kantian variables – and use business logic to explain state behavior in each case: trade, democracy and international organizations all have pacific payoffs and wars are costly for liberal and internationally active democracies in many ways.

Doyle (1997: 205–311) studies different varieties of liberalism through canonical examples: human rights-based liberal institutionalism à la Locke and Bentham, commercial pacifism à la Smith and Schumpeter, and liberal internationalism à la Kant. From his presentation, too, it becomes apparent that liberalists have employed business logic and cost–benefit analyses from early on. Doyle (ibid: 226) describes Jeremy Bentham as “a calculator of pleasures and pains” as regards international cooperation. He also claims that Adam Smith comprehensively articulated the view that “war does not pay for commercial manufacturing societies”, and that war for these nations is “very costly” (ibid: 238). Moreover, Doyle (ibid: 279) notes that Kant sees the motive of “calculated advantage” as one of the guarantees of perpetual peace, among other possibly more noble aspirations. Although operating in terms of economic-sounding calculation is something that applies to most liberal theorists, Doyle recognizes plenty of nuances in their argumentation and major differences, for example, between right-wing liberals and liberals on the left. While Bentham and Schumpeter “portray the state as a simple rational agent of property rights or as a firm ready for entrepreneurial capture” (ibid: 208), Kant’s republics not only share “commercial interests”, but also operate on the basis of feelings, such as sadness, caution, prudence, respect, hospitality, suspicion and restraint (ibid: 279–284).

To summarize the observations so far: while IR realists are prone to believe that cost–benefit analyses regarding the use of force are in order in every new

situation, according to liberalist theorists, in some contexts, we can rely on well-established calculations. Liberalists believe that liberal states or people living in liberal states are fundamentally against war (against one another) for a good reason, based on economic sense. Liberal states have realized that amongst themselves, both the costs of war and the payoffs of peace are always great. From a constructivist perspective, such as Wendt's (1999: 316–317), it is vitally important not just to calculate stable preferences whenever in doubt about action but also to understand what is “at stake” at any given moment. Wendt explains that more is going on in state interaction than the adjustment of behavior to “price”, that is, states simply trying to get what they want in accordance with their previously determined (material) interests. According to him, states interacting with each other are also trying to sustain their identities, the conceptions of Self and Other, which generate interests and wants to begin with. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 898), too, pay attention to the various kinds of “costs” of action: calculations based on interests are useful if they take into account non-material or even other-regarding preferences, motives connected to reputation, conformity and altruism, for example. Finnemore and Sikkink (*ibid*: 911) explicitly combine the favorite metaphor of the constructivists with the business metaphor: according to them, “processes of social construction and strategic bargaining are deeply intertwined”.

While the IR theorists mentioned so far seem to take no moral stand as to the business logic of international relations, Enloe (2014 [1989]: 124) clearly disapproves of many existing practices: “A dozen new patriarchal nation-states may make the international bargaining table a bit more crowded, but this will not change the international game being played at the table.” Enloe criticizes nationalism springing from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope. The quote also shows how metaphors can be mixed: “the international bargaining table” evokes associations with both playing games and doing business, and in the previous sentence, Enloe claims that patriarchal nationalist movements are “likely to produce just one more actor in an untransformed international arena” (*ibid*: 123–124), that is, resorts to a theater or sports metaphor. Sjoberg (2014: 108), in a similarly critical vein, suggests that one of the interest groups served by a state's war-making is the group “invested” in the traditional gender order of a war-fighting state or group. This interest group is likely to defend its investment: not to let go of the traditional order that produces violent practices. In his postcolonial critique, Barkawi (2006), too, expresses his disapproval of the predominant logic of international relations. In complete opposition to liberalist theories, he starts from the premise that war was necessary to initiate free trade, and that war is often the outcome of processes set in motion by the expansion of free trade. When laying out the gloomy rationalities behind the War on Terror, he refers to the global “circulation” of people, goods and ideas (*ibid*: 132), to “valuable” concessions (*ibid*: 129), to “counterproductive” policies (*ibid*: 155), to the “utility” of the Israel-Palestine

conflict (ibid: 159), to attempts to “discredit” certain weapons (ibid: 155) and to state “sponsorship” of terror (ibid: 158).

Although poststructural IR scholars are possibly less likely to employ rational choice-sounding business logic in their explanations, they cannot entirely avoid this conceptual framework either. Shapiro (1989a: 17) abides by Foucault’s idea of the discursive “economies” of language: that statements can be “evaluated” as political “resources”, that discourses are “assets”. Campbell (1992: 4–6) refers to our ineluctable “debt” to interpretation, and relies on discursive economies as well: in this framework, “investments” can be made in certain interpretations, “dividends” can be drawn by those “interests” that have made the “investments”, representations are “taxed” when they confront new and ambiguous circumstances, etc. Walker praises the aesthetic “economy” of the sovereign state’s self-affirming story (2003) and discusses the “trade-off” between freedom and necessity that states point to when claiming to offer security to the inhabitants of the small and fragile planet (1990). Shepherd talks about the discursive “purchase” of security on the reproduction of the international (2008: 74) and suggests that UNSCR 1325 and the Secretary-General’s Reports mandated by the Resolution might be “accountable” for the violent reproduction of gender through discursive violence (ibid: 106). Even when the discursive realm is portrayed as the main location of international relations, the business framework of trading, assets, investments, dividends, debts, purchases and taxes is employed to make sense of the relevant activities.

Not only theorists but also practitioners – leaders deciding on the foreign policies of their countries, journalists reporting on international relations – use the business metaphor in their discourses. President Joe Biden framed Russia’s moves in terms of paying a price both before and after the war in Ukraine had started, that is, both before and after President Vladimir Putin’s decision to (try to) purchase the commodity: “if Russia takes military action [...] they will have chosen war, and they will pay a steep price for doing so” (18 Feb 2022), “But while he [Putin] may make gains on the battlefield, he will pay a continuing high price over the long run.” (1 March 2022). In more peaceful contexts, he emphasized how “advancing the status of women and girls is an investment in the success of democracies” (10 Dec 2021), and how, in Northern Ireland, “[t]he dividends of peace are all around us” (12 April 2023). Prime Minister Boris Johnson used exactly the same logic vis-à-vis President Putin: he assured his listeners that the Western alliance had made it clear that it would “exact a forbidding price for any Russian incursion into Ukraine” (25 Jan 2022). Moreover, he explained that dialogue and deterrence were the two “sides of the coin” of the strategy of the Western alliance and how “we cannot bargain away the vision of a Europe whole and free” (ibid). Finally, President Emmanuel Macron referred to the same business transaction, but approached it from the point of view of the European buyers: “From now on, our Europe [...] will have to accept to pay the price of peace, of freedom, of democracy” (2 March 2022). In addition

to accepting the payer's role for Europe concerning its own security, he acknowledged a wider and more abstract responsibility: "let us never forget our debt to the UN" (20 Sept 2022).

Presenting foreign policy choices regarding war and peace in economic terms has been a common practice for heads of state for a long time. As demonstrated by Kuusisto (1998), the leaders of the major Western powers followed the logic of the business metaphor in the Persian Gulf after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990: they sought to assure their audiences that investing in the freedom of Kuwait would bring both immediate payoffs and long-term stability to the international (market) scene, that the costs of not interfering were bound to be higher than the price of involvement and that it was in the interest of the rest of the world to prove that Saddam Hussein had calculated wrong, that in fact, he could not get Kuwait cheap. In 1999, Operation Allied Force in Kosovo was justified by drawing a parallel between armed conflict and standard commercial activities (see Kuusisto, 2002). In the official rhetoric of the United States, Britain, and France, meticulous accounts of dollars, pounds and francs were made; the audience was repeatedly assured that President Slobodan Milošević would have to pay the full price for his transactions; speculations were made as to whether the time was ripe for dealing on a peace settlement; and outside actors were given credit for their contributions (ibid). Business terminology manifested itself in expressions such as "wholesale ethnic slaughter", "paying a higher price for instability", "investing wisely in defense", "dealing with old and new threats", "offering a fair deal to the Albanians and to Belgrade", "investing enormous effort and time", "paying the price in heavy damages" and "expensive in terms of men" (ibid). Gavriely-Nuri (2013: 79–80) counts "war as business" as one of the war-normalizing metaphors in the context of the Second Lebanon War in 2006. Ivie (1987) notes how Henry Wallace relied on the negative associations going together with business and money – callosity and greed – in his descriptions of the Cold War as "social and moral bankruptcy" and "ruthless profiteering".

The media make both cooperational and conflictual world politics understandable through business terminology every day. *The New York Times* covered both the details of the "peace deal" proposed for Ethiopia – especially, the difficulties of "selling" it to the people of the Tigray region – and the UN "climate deals", especially the "stakes" at COP27 (Wolfe and Nierenberg, 4 Nov 2022). *The Guardian* devoted several articles to the "security deal" between China and Solomon Islands (Lyons and Wickham, 20 April 2022, Lyons, 28 April 2022, Hurst, 29 April 2022). Before the outbreak of full-scale hostilities, *Deutsche Welle* not only speculated about the price of various Western policies vis-à-vis Russian pressure on Ukraine, but also assessed that so far, Moscow had gotten off cheap: "To date, Moscow has paid only a negligible price for the invasion of Crimea, for the operation in the Donbass, for [...] Abkhazia and South Ossetia, for [...] eastern Moldova" (Gak, 6 Feb 2022). On a more general level, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reminded its

readers that, at the moment, the United States sees itself as “dealing” with two world powers, China and Russia (Sattar, 6 April 2022).

Chilton and Lakoff (1995), already point to the tendency of both theorists and practitioners to combine economic theory and game theory in the metaphorical representation of international relations. Thinking and talking in terms of commercial cost–benefit analysis, in their view, derives prestige from the “rationalist” conception of a person/state as a self-interest maximizer. Whether the calculations concern buying and selling, investing, betting or moves in a game of chess, the logic involves strategic rationality and instrumental values. Business and games are often understood similarly by resorting to a highly competitive framework. However, cooperational versions of these metaphors – fair play and fair trade – exist alongside the predatory ones, and they, too, display similarities. Being calculative for a good cause or just to play the game of sovereign states are also seen as a possible course of action, and in these collaborative frameworks, making ethically motivated choices, seeking common goals and opting for teamwork are rational ways for states to behave. Both in business and games, honoring rules and agreements and showing respect to other participants involved in the project might be considered the norm, not the exception. There are many ways to deal with other world powers, engage in international transactions and pay a price for foreign policies – and the expressions as such do not always carry information about the version of business in question. One needs the context to deduce the particular attitude and recommendation – and any metaphor can be developed in various directions. When President Vladimir Putin accused the NATO countries – mainly the United States – of conducting politics as “a dirty business”, he made sure his disapproval came through, whereas the tone he applied to describing the “tremendous cost” of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany was clearly respectful, even acclamatory (24 Feb 2022). According to President Putin, having to “deal with” Sweden and Finland did not arouse any strong emotions in Russia, and their NATO membership was “their business” (29 June 2022). International relations as a business can thus proceed insidiously, heroically, or in a neutral manner, and even a single speaker can employ different variants quite flexibly.

Regardless of the specific variant, business metaphors transfer the logic of business – buying and selling, capital and commerce, stock markets and profits – also to the field of non-economic international relations. Through the business metaphor, states can be seen to buy and sell goods and services in a cooperational environment where prices are agreed on rather amicably, where the parties to the transactions respect each other, and where trade itself is seen as beneficial to the system. Business metaphors can also make sense of conflictual encounters among fiercely competing states each of whom is looking solely after the interests of its shareholders, its own nationals. Some variants encourage ruthless individualistic calculations, while others point towards jointly negotiated solutions. In a bidding contest, one does not share all information and business plans, while failing to do so would be silly in

the context of organizing a fundraiser together. In certain high-risk ventures, large and quick profits constitute the main goal and reward. In long-term investments, one is usually ready to wait patiently while the markets go up and down several times before cashing in. Since proper responses to international problems and sensible foreign policies depend not only on the choice of the structural metaphor, but also on the particular version of the metaphor, I shall now turn to the entailments of the conflictual and cooperational versions separately. Thus, to conclude, I shall first elaborate on the possible consequences of understanding international relations as fierce economic competition and then as essentially fair trade.

The conflictual variants of the business metaphor – competitive bidding, stock exchanges, unique investment opportunities – emphasize commodification, self-interest, instrumental rationality and zero-sum situations in international relations, and downplay goodwill, shared interests, common goals and reputational motives. If states are firms and the international system is a market, competing for the biggest share of the profits is indeed a structurally determined predicament. If diplomacy is bargaining, haggling and horse-trading, it better be conducted out of public sight, in as much secrecy as possible. If foreign policies – including waging war, blackmailing, “bait and bleed” and “bloodletting” – can be assessed in terms of expected costs and benefits, states should naturally always try to extract the most profitable deal. Business logic should determine the moves of state-firms. In a highly competitive business setting, state actors are entitled to get angry, if one of them does not pay the full price or attempts to get something for free. On the other hand, also paying too high a price is not recommended. Wise investors are admired, and dirty business tricks are officially frowned upon, although ruthless dealers also project a certain aura of adventure and enticing danger. The “free” market abhors political “meddling”, such as restrictions imposed by democratically elected national bodies or intergovernmental organizations, and all major changes in the system. The state actors who have emerged as major powers within a particular international (economic) order have a vested interest in its stability and basic rules of operation.

The cooperational variants of the business metaphor – fair trade, democratic cooperatives, non-profit businesses, corporations aiming at social responsibility – underline the mutually beneficial possibilities inherent in international relations and attach less importance to state greed and incentives to cheat. In the cooperational business framework, democracy, trade and membership in international organizations have pacific payoffs for all states, not only the most active parties in the operations. Moreover, the costs of war can be understood to be morally and politically so huge as not to enter into rational calculations. However, what state calculations may take into account in cooperational contexts are non-material or even other-regarding preferences: the reputation of being a beacon of democracy, an unbiased mediator or a generous donor of development aid, for example. In a framework like this, states may be held accountable for human rights

violations and made to pay for disregarding international law and treaties. Likewise, states may be willing to invest in international arrangements that strengthen peace and security, and unwilling to bargain away a vision of the future they hold dear. The fact that state actors may be seeking the best deal for themselves does not rule out the possibility that they generally respect others and wish to be seen as reliable business partners. In an international environment where cooperation and trust are the way of state business, it is not only immoral but strategically unwise to break deals.

International relations are regularly understood in terms of business by both theorists and practitioners. Sometimes, the potential of the business metaphor is exploited to the full with several consecutive references to the costs of policies, the rewards of investments and the likelihood of enduring deals. More often, the business metaphor is employed in passing, probably without much contemplation, as part of regular parlance – and in this ordinary usage, the metaphor might be more powerful. If cost–benefit analyses of world political moves pass as an unmarked language of interpretation, the way of thinking has been deeply engraved. The exact consequences of structuring international relations as a business – of seeing states involved in buying security, dealing out aid, paying for treaties, and investing in organizations – are impossible to prove, but the metaphor definitely brings the abstract and far-away into the realm of the concrete and every day. While only a few people have personal experiences of “doing” international relations, most of us (must) think about money every day. All adults have estimated the proper price for a particular piece of merchandise and pondered over the fairness of deals. Most probably, they have both been happy about good purchases and felt cheated in some transactions. In every version, the business metaphor brings along a distinct business way of thinking and proper responses to international challenges: alternative policies should be assessed in terms of expenses and pay-offs.

# 10 International illnesses

## Fatal sicknesses and curable diseases

This chapter looks at the various types of illness metaphors for international relations, that is, at the wide array of explanatory scripts brought over from the realm of consultations with doctors and operations in hospitals. Some of them – like the “remedies for war” – are used often and attract little attention. Others – like “great state autism” – are used seldom and catch our ears. All versions of the illness metaphor, however, structure international relations with terms employed in another, totally separate field. They help us understand international actors and events by evoking associations with blisters and chicken poxes, band-aids and antibiotics, school nurses and virologists. As they emphasize aspects of international relations that easily fit the diagnosis-prognosis-cure approach, they play down enduring features and perennial problems. Illness metaphors direct our considerations and policy choices toward those common in situations where the health of a human patient is assessed. The chapter begins by outlining associations that go together with health care of different kinds. Then, examples of expert usages are provided. To conclude, the chapter speculates on the inferences drawn from illness metaphors, as well as their possible entailments for international action.

Being healthy or sick is a state we associate basically with every living organism, including ourselves. Although the dichotomy simplifies matters – seldom is anyone all sick nor all healthy – it is easy to understand in principle and works well as a practical guideline: people generally speaking want to be healthy both physically and mentally and they try to avoid sicknesses, injuries and accidents that jeopardize their health. Illnesses and injuries come in various forms: from scratches and broken bones to measles, mumps and chicken pox; from common colds to pandemics; from cancers and heart attacks to muscular dystrophies and schizophrenia. Some seem to appear from out of the blue; others are probably hereditary, clearly self-inflicted, or seasonal. Moreover, diseases and injuries vary according to the seriousness of the threat they pose: some disorders heal by themselves or even go totally unnoticed, some need treatment by various medications and therapies, and some are incurable. Especially in the contemporary Western world, health

and sickness are associated with certain professions and fields of science, notably doctors and medicine. Doctors examine patients, give diagnoses and prognoses, and prescribe treatments. The field of medicine works with tests and monitoring: viruses can be found by using sophisticated techniques, inflammation levels are meticulously checked, and drugs should be dispensed in exact doses. Thus, the source domain of the illness metaphor covers a wide variety of conditions and states: everything from mild flus and minor bruises to lethal diseases and complicated syndromes demanding extensive treatment.

Despite healthy living habits, effective vaccinations and due attention, all people sometimes get sick and hurt themselves. On the bright side, most diseases are curable, and most injuries heal. Exposing yourself to bacteria and sicknesses can even be good for you: your resistance grows stronger; you might become immune. Modern medicine has developed remedies for numerous diseases that were previously deadly. Alongside modern drugs and aggressive treatments such as radiation and surgeries, traditional cures and palliative care are found suitable and administered in specific circumstances. Getting over many sicknesses simply demands rest, possibly anti-inflammatory tablets, as well as staying hydrated. As a rule, cuts should be cleaned with running water or a disinfectant and then not tampered with; human skin has marvelous abilities to regenerate. If symptoms get more severe or a wound becomes inflamed, consulting a doctor is recommended. Doctors examine patients with instruments ranging from simple stethoscopes to powerful MRI machines. Treatments are ideally case-specific: drugs should attack only harmful cells, not all people can tolerate all medications, recovery may be fast or slow. Today, even some heart surgeries can be conducted by guiding a catheter to the heart through a small incision in the groin, in a minimally invasive manner. Blood transfusions and kidney transplants are everyday procedures. Due to advances in medicine, the quality of life of many people has increased tremendously; also, people can live longer and longer. Everybody aspires for health, and physicians are usually highly respected professionals.

Unfortunately, some sicknesses are fatal, and deadly accidents may happen even in the safest of surroundings. Due to the lack of political will more than the lack of existing ways to prevent or treat, many people still die too early of banal diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea, measles, tuberculosis or malaria. Some drugs are hugely expensive and not covered by any insurance. Multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's still cannot be cured, neither can cancers always be stopped from spreading. Chemotherapy may work only for so long, and some patients may be too weak for radiation. Also, the side effects of drugs may be worse than the original disease. Sometimes, the cause of a disease is not identified in time, and misdiagnoses can lead to wrong treatments. Mental conditions may be especially elusive: the difference between normal and abnormal, healthy and sick, may vary greatly in time and according to the context. Before a vaccination is developed, a new rapidly spreading

pandemic may kill millions of people around the world. Some diseases are highly contagious; some start doing severe damage before any symptoms can be detected. Victims of natural catastrophes such as earthquakes or tsunamis may die in a second, before anybody has time to react. Despite humanitarian treaties, both enemy soldiers and civilian victims of war can be denied medical aid. Not all doctors are equally competent and sometimes there are errors in peer-reviewed medical studies. Finally, despite all the excellence in medicine, all living organisms eventually die of some disease or malfunction – people often hope this to be reported as old age.

Whether illnesses and injuries are curable or fatal – flus and bruises, or gangrenes and cancers – they carry with them certain ways of thinking and acting, certain frameworks of interpretation and resolution. Questions relating to health and sickness are approached in terms of diagnoses and prognoses, cures and treatments, operations and rehabilitation. Associations with ailments and pain, medical experts and laboratories, drugs and bedrest, recovery and convalescence periods go together with illnesses. Understandably, everybody wants to get rid of a sickness or a painful condition, and seeking help from professionals is a befitting solution in this context. Sometimes, one needs patience while waiting for test results or when trying out various drugs. In urgent cases, bold decisions and swift action are needed. In order to cure the disease or save the victim of an accident, one might have to accept aggressive treatments and radical procedures. We understand doctors as being guided by some version of the Hippocratic Oath: they should help the sick whenever possible and abstain from intentional wrong-doing and harm. In their professional duties, doctors and nurses can be trusted with personal secrets, and their work enjoys special protection even in extreme situations and locations, such as war zones. Often illnesses are nobody's fault in particular, whereas curing them is in everybody's interest. Both theorists and practitioners of international relations frequently make use of medical associations, that is, they apply the illness metaphor in their descriptions, explanations and recommendations concerning the activities of states. This usage will be explored in what follows.

Peace research is the tradition that has probably developed the illness or injury metaphor furthest in the context of explaining international relations. From very early on, Galtung (1975: 152–157, 167–187, 299–304; see also 1996: 1–8, 24–34) has used this metaphor explicitly to define the entire field of study. According to him, peace and peace research are like health and medical science. Neither scholarly activity is value-neutral: medicine is committed to seeking health instead of sickness, and peace research takes a stand for peace against violence. When physicians or peace researchers approach sickness or violence, they attempt first to establish a diagnosis of what has gone wrong, then to make a prognosis of how the condition is likely to develop if unattended and finally to draw up a therapy to ensure the best possible result available through an intervention. As various forms of sickness demand different kinds of treatments, there are various causes of violence and

types of violent conflict that need to be approached with different methods. Peace research, like medical science, involves not only doing research, but also teaching the profession and acting in the field; both are applied sciences. Analyses of existing data and producing scientific publications should be complemented by educating future professionals and the general public, and by treating the suffering. Medicine applies information produced by research in Anatomy, Physiology and Psychology, for example, Peace Theory benefits from insights in Development Theory, Political Science and Economics, among other disciplines. Doctors, nurses and peace specialists, according to Galtung (1975: 230–243, 371), should all work in the service of mankind, not particular (national) interests or passions. In fact, since Galtung frequently traces the origin of both direct and structural violence to state actors (*ibid*: 287), in his analyses, the interests of peace research often confront those of state actors and should take precedence.

Boulding concentrates on peace defined in a narrower sense than Galtung defines it – he mainly studies peace as the absence of war (1978: 6) – but agrees with the idea that war and unmanaged conflicts are “pathologies” (*ibid*: 5). According to Boulding, “peace is the normal and proper state of humanity” (*ibid*: 88). Onto the list of pathologies of the international system, he adds the war industry (*ibid*: 89), and claims this industry “breeds itself in a monstrous symbiosis” since the armed forces of two opposed countries are the principal supporters of each other – and their victims are their own civilians. Although Boulding (*ibid*: 30) is relatively content with the overall ratio of productive versus war-related activities in the world, he expresses concern about the “cancerous” expansion of human efforts focusing on destruction. He maintains that it is in the field of non-conflict that the mainstream of the human race goes on existing – for most of the time, most people in most countries still work and produce, buy and sell, learn, think, worship, love and procreate – but the international system as a whole has not reached stable peace yet. To increase the likelihood that the system will be able to resist strain towards more war, he has a practical recipe: his modest seven-plank peace policy.

While other theorists might be less elaborate than Galtung or less colorful than Boulding in their explanations, they resort to the illness metaphor, too. Russett and Oneal (2001: 82–85), in their analysis of the causes of war, claim to use the same methods that medical scientists use to understand the causes of disease. They see similarities especially in the epidemiological aspect of research: using statistical methods to uncover why some individuals in a large population contract a disease and others do not. According to them, both in medical and political science, predictions are probabilistic and theories incomplete: political scientists can provide only partial, tentative conclusions about what countries can do to avoid violent conflict. As discussed earlier, they argue that democracies that are actively involved in international trade and organizations have good chances of avoiding war – just like quitting smoking, going on a healthy diet and getting off the couch can cut a person’s

risk of having a heart attack. Thus, for them, (expanded) democracy, trade and IGO membership are “remedies” for war (ibid: 127). This constitutes positive news to states, since it means that they themselves can affect their health: while states can do very little about the variables emphasized by the realists – geography, for example – they can choose to perform better on the Kantian variables. According to Russett and Oneal (ibid: 63), “democracy helps inoculate a country against overt interventions”. Regarding differences between the study of international relations and medicine, they (ibid: 82) mention that while all individual human beings eventually die, some fortunate and wisely governed nations may avoid war indefinitely. Within this explanatory framework, states not only have good chances of steering clear of illnesses, but they may potentially live forever.

Another liberalist scholar, Fukuyama (1992: 252–253) is also interested in the “health” of the “patient”, that is, liberal democracy. In opposition to realist diagnoses, he asserts that the patient is essentially healthy, that the disease for which it was treated – war among nations – no longer exists on a worrisome scale. Like a doctor who finds that the cancer has been forced into remission no longer prescribes agonizing chemotherapy, analysts of world politics should give up their pessimistic descriptions and aggressive prescriptions of policy that no longer fit reality. Continuing with the aggressive therapy now is not only useless, but harmful. Fukuyama also suggests (ibid: 329) that past wars might have made liberal democracy “healthier”: “a short and decisive war every generation or so” can have positive effects on “character and community”. Fighting the “diseases” of Stalinism and fascism/nazism (ibid: 129), thus, made liberal democracy stronger. According to reasoning like this, states/people need meaningful activities to keep them from becoming bored, from lashing out at others simply to feel active and important. Luckily for world peace, in Fukuyama’s view, not only fighting wars, but also excelling in science or sports provides outlets for passions and excess energy.

Realist diagnoses, prognoses and therapies differ from liberalist ones in many respects. As pointed out already, realists tend to be pessimistic with regard to the situation at the moment: according to Mearsheimer (2014 [2001]: 35), for example, “peace is not likely to break out in this world”. For Mearsheimer (ibid: 147–155), “bloodletting”, “bait and bleed” and war are strategies for gaining power among others, not pathologies of the international system. Morgenthau, also, frequently uses sickness terminology: for him, the balance of power is an “outgrowth of the struggle of power” (1973 [1948]: 187) and the fragmentation of the formerly cohesive international society is a “symptom of the profound change” of politics among nations (ibid: 250). He considers in turn the various “remedies for international anarchy and war” (ibid: 434) – disarmament, collective security, an international police force, judicial settlement, intergovernmental organizations – that have been put forth by others at certain moments in history – and finds them unreliable in solving the general problem of international order and peace. Morgenthau refers to the “congenital infirmities”

of the Holy Alliance (ibid: 440) and ponders on the possibilities of “reviving” diplomacy (ibid: 530), the instrument on which he builds his feeble hope of permanent peace. Waltz, too, discusses the causes of war and imperialism in terms of “curing” and “symptoms” (2010 [1979]: 36–37), but rejects explanations and solutions adhering to national or lower levels: the structure of the system is the determining factor, not the democratic/non-democratic nature of the regime or the diplomatic efforts of states. According to Waltz, a bipolar system is the most stable one, but it does not guarantee peace: in the anarchic structure, all sorts of states have fought wars and are likely to do so in the foreseeable future.

Peace researchers, liberalists and realists all sometimes seem to regard violence or war as a sickness that might infect state actors or the international system, and peace as something to be sought after much in the way that people seek health and longevity. Although not all theorists or traditions elaborate on the illness framework of explanation, they are bound to use the metaphor in passing: Bull (1995 [1977]: 273) maintains that war is “endemic” in the system of states and refers to “remedies” that have been put forth; Enloe (2014 [1989]: 147) comments on a certain “epidemic” of violent practices; Linklater (1998: 17) believes that no region of the world is “immune” to a particular type of politics; Barkawi (2006: 165) is concerned that the predominant vision of the enemy is “a recipe” for continued escalation of the War on Terror.

Not only theorists but also practitioners in the field of international relations often see war as a disease. Ivie (1987) demonstrates how Henry Wallace, J. William Fulbright and Helen Caldicott – three Cold War “idealists” – all described the Cold War in terms of sickness. In relatively clinical evaluations, they deemed the world to be “afflicted”, “desperately sick” or “mentally ill”. At more passionate moments, they used terms such as “obsessed”, “psychotic” and “suicidal”, “rot”, “paranoia” and “killing animus”, or “mad lust”, “mental masturbation” and “missile envy”. As to appropriate therapies, Caldicott, for example, suggested that just like the terminally ill patient brought into the emergency room, the terminally ill planet must be admitted to the intensive care unit and treated with loving care if it were to have a chance of surviving. She tended to see the madness more as an American problem (or herself primarily as America’s therapist); according to Caldicott, America needed a psychiatrist to become appropriately passionate about the world’s survival. Based on the analysis of the argumentation of mainly Western politicians, Galtung (1989) recommended understanding the Cold War as an exercise in autism: the clumsy interaction of two self-absorbed systems unable to deal with evidence from the outside world or to engage in actual, responsive communication. The parties to the nuclear security debate in the 1960s and 1970s were referred to by the acronyms MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction, liberal position) and NUTS (Nuclear Utilization Targeting Selection, offensive realist position) – the terms

conveying an assessment of the general craziness of international relations or its study at the time (for the actual debate, see Amadae, 2016).

Medical metaphors abound not only in descriptions of the general international pathology of war but also in descriptions of the enemy in a particular war. Ivie (1990: 72) claims that the nation's adversary is often characterized as a germ infecting the body politic or a plague upon the liberty of humankind. His analysis (1999) of the Truman Doctrine Speech of 1947 shows how metaphors of disease converged with images of fire and flood: the free world could not let Greece and Turkey, the infected patients, collapse; the pestilence of communism, the "red fever", had to be halted. Slater (1987), among others, picks out President Reagan's interpretation of communism as cancer: unless aggressively stopped, the "malignancy" would "spread" and become "a mortal threat to the entire New World". Shimko (2004) expands on the Cold War comparison of communism to a disease: different administrations using terms such as "infected/infection", "diseased tissue" and "malignant parasite". He continues by identifying the reaction to the disease that was considered proper: making potentially vulnerable countries in the third world as "resistant" as possible and "inoculating" the West against the "disease of appeasement". Chilton and Lakoff (1995) study these same usages and emphasize that communism as a disease had both domestic and international aspects: Senator McCarthy, for example, wanted both to stop the "contagion" from spreading from one country to another and to "purge" the American body-politic. In addition to communism being defined as a cancer, according to Chilton and Lakoff, the Soviet Union was depicted as mentally deranged, a patient in whose treatment the straitjacket of containment made sense.

The end of the Cold War did not constitute an ending to illness metaphors in international relations practice. Bronwen Dalton et al (2016) find that in Australian media coverage, North Korea is regularly depicted as a psychopath – unpredictable, irrational and ruthless – which in their view effectively rules out creative, positive conflict management possibilities. Iranian academics and leaders seem to construct their "others" – the United States, Israel and Arab countries – as "madmen" and "crazy ghosts", as "tumors" and "foreign molecules" (Masoudi, 2019). Campbell (1992: 92–100) argues that danger in foreign policy is frequently represented in terms of dirt or disease: whereas the self is normal, healthy and civilized, the other is pathological, sick and barbaric. The infected others, notes Campbell, may change over time – the European and American discourse has given this role for example to East Europeans, Jews, blacks, Africans, Arabs, Asians, communists and terrorists – but their function remains the same: they support the image of our healthiness.

As to terrorism as a disease, Manjikian (2008) differentiates between usages before and after 9/11. Before the 2001 attacks against the United States, she claims, terrorism was primarily compared to a cancer; after, to a virus. Both

versions rely on a dichotomy between healthy and competent states on the one hand and sick and incompetent states on the other. In the cancer version, rogue states act as rogue cells, hiding in an otherwise healthy body-politic, doing damage from within. In the virus version, failed states often function as breeding grounds for terrorism that then spreads outwards and infects other countries. In both versions, medical treatment against the patient's will and forceful intervention by the doctor may be needed. Manjikian asserts that labeling a state as failed – sick, contagious – infantilizes and feminizes the state, rendering it a subject of outside study and theorizing, dependent on a healthier, non-failed state for diagnosis, analysis and cure. References to terrorist “cells” are common parlance both among experts and the general public; whether they are malignant cancer cells dividing continually to become a huge tumor, possibly spreading from one part of the organism to another via metastases, or cells attacked by a virus that multiplies in one organism and is then carried over to others who in turn infect others and so on, these cells are clearly to be isolated, removed or destroyed.

Many medical metaphors are not precise as to the type of disease referred to in the source domain: the foreign policy problem or enemy is simply “a disease” or “a pathology”. While terrorist cells and the cancer of communism evoke physical illnesses and cures directed at the body, terms such as obsessed, mad, paranoid or autistic point to mental problems and psychiatry. Campbell (1992: 94–96) notes that similarly to the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century process chronicled by Foucault, whereby medicine reoriented its principal focus from “the healthy” to “the normal”, foreign policy now increasingly searches not only for diseases, but also for abnormalities (in other actors). In other words, states are preoccupied not just with pathologies of health/illness, but also with pathologies of deviance and social hygiene. The attitude is hostile to difference and change; pathological constants promote conservative values. Christian (2018) expresses his concern about all international relations metaphors that perpetuate ableism. For example, references to autistic states and foreign policy elites – China's “great state autism”, Japan's “autistic insensitivity to its neighbors”, the “collective autism” of US foreign policies in the Middle East – besides promoting certain treatments, reinforce outdated, contested and misleading stereotypes concerning autism. When a state is deemed to be “crippled” by war, “blind” to reality or “deaf” to warnings, the result is not only a negative portrayal of the state in question but of all people with disabilities.

The foreign, war and enemies in wars can thus be framed in terms of sickness, either physical or mental. However, also the completely opposite view and metaphorical structuring is possible: war can be seen as a remedy. Especially if the international disease is dangerous and spreads fast, aggressive interventions may be deemed to be in order. “Surgical strikes” probably constitute the prime example of usage like this: countries keen to emphasize the swiftness, high precision and minimal collateral damage of specific military “operations” of theirs label their aggressive moves as surgical. India

even celebrates Surgical Strike Day in memory of a particular strike against Pakistani soldiers in Kashmir in 2016. Gavriely-Nuri (2013) shows how the “war is medicine” metaphor was employed to normalize the Second Lebanon War to the Israelis: the Hezbollah was named a “disease”, a “cancer” and a “deadly virus” that IDF commanders and soldiers, as physicians, needed to “isolate”, “demolish” or “purify” with violent force. She also points out that Israeli leadership frequently uses the concept of “surgical strikes” to win the hearts and minds of the Israeli public and to answer international criticism directed against the destruction of civilian property and infrastructure in Southern Lebanon. As noted earlier by Campbell (1992: 96–97), the concepts of the military and the medical professions seem to be intertwined: in the military bombardment of cancer cells, the cancer cells are metaphorical, while in the medical version, the bombardment is.

As already discussed in the context of the ontological states-are-persons metaphor, a person-state deemed healthy and strong generally ranks high in comparisons of gross national income and military force (see Chilton and Lakoff, 1995). Manjikian (2008) adds that whereas control over resources and economic productivity are seen as making a state healthy and strong, certain other dimensions – such as national unity, spiritual well-being or the ability to provide daycare or health care for citizens of the state – are often not part of the definition. The hegemonic definition privileges states of the global north and reinforces the status of the current system. As one of the most shameful examples of ensuring the health of a body-politic, Chilton and Lakoff (*ibid*) name “ethnic cleansing”. Again – as in the case of “surgical strikes” – many practical applications of this metaphor are unfortunately available for study, including the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide. Also in former Yugoslavia, there were efforts to “purge” the territories of the new states by murder or removal of “foreign bodies” defined by ethnic group. Campbell (1998: 162, 165, 209, 221) affirms that during the disintegration of the country, the brutal “cleansing” was conducted by the local chauvinistic leaders, especially Serb leaders, but continues by pointing out that, in the end, the international community went along with the idea: multiculturalism was rejected, the “ethnic cleansing of Bosnia” was the Dayton solution, too. In the context of international relations, keeping yourself clean and helping others to cleanse unsanitary areas of germs may have dire consequences.

Biomedical metaphors structure thinking about the health of nations also before any illness or wound has been detected, in the prevention discourse. Rodehau-Noack (2021) finds that in the discourse of international organizations and commissions, the cataclysmic notion in which war is likened to an epidemic or plague – a remnant of a barbaric past, set to disappear in the civilizing process – has given way to a risk factor notion that represents war as a techno-scientific problem that can be monitored, managed and pre-empted. In this context of medical risk-thinking, war and armed conflict can be addressed through careful research, calculation and planning. According to Rodehau-Noack, the UN, the World Bank and the Carnegie

Commission, for example, have recently engaged in systematic searching for factors that endanger and promote the health of states, and the studies that they have ordered have come to the overall conclusion that resilient political institutions and an active civil society constitute a healthy immune system for a state. To better understand violence – “that is like a fever in a human body” – and to react properly to early symptoms – “like a healthy immune system mounts a quick, targeted response to a pathogen” – these organizations have recommended and implemented bureaucratic practices such as performance assessments, indicator monitoring and audits of government policies. In this approach, larger structural and systemic conditions of international relations are less important than the personal choices and lifestyle habits – governance and statecraft strategies – of individual states.

In longer discourses – scientific monographs, research articles, political speeches and official documents – the illness or injury metaphor applied to international relations is sometimes developed quite extensively. In many instances, especially in short news reports or quick interviews, the metaphor manifests itself in individual references. For example, while discussing the situation in Ukraine, *Libération* identified Russian veto power in the Security Council as the source of the “impotence” or the “paralysis” of the United Nations (Philippe Coste et al., 5 April 2022). President Volodymyr Zelensky assessed the condition of the organization by looking at its founding document and was greatly saddened: according to him, the UN Charter was “being violated” literally from the first article onwards (5 April 2022). *The New York Times* noted that President Joe Biden seemed determined to “cripple” Russia (David E. Sanger et al., 28-29 May 2022). Based on an earlier speech of the President, this was a justifiable conclusion: he avowed that the free world would “inflict pain on” Russia, to “choke” Russia’s access to technology “sapping” its economic strength and adding “squeeze” on the Russian economy (President Biden, 1 March 2022).

In the opinion of the Western media, Russia suffered also from endogenous diseases: *Le Monde* (Paris, 28 June 2023) detected new signs of President Vladimir Putin’s “sclerosis of power”. Focusing on another patient, it saw Kaliningrad as a “thorn in the foot of NATO” (Tétart et al., 13 May 2022). President Emmanuel Macron (7 Nov 2019) had earlier already made a much more worrisome diagnosis: he judged the same organization to be “brain dead”. According to him (19 Jan 2022), Europe also had heart problems: the Western Balkans, “in the heart of the European continent”, bore “scars”. Prime Minister Boris Johnson wanted to keep Ukraine free of “malign influences” (1 Feb 2022) and Afghanistan from ever again becoming an “incubator for terrorism” (6 Sept 2021). President Vladimir Putin (21 Feb 2022) was heavily critical of all “operations” like this – ones led by the United States and its allies after the collapse of the Soviet Union – according to him, the result has been “bloody, non-healing wounds” and the curse of international terrorism and extremism, the exact opposite of what the doctor promised.

Illness metaphors transfer the logic of diseases and injuries, patients and doctors, symptoms and treatments to the field of international relations, but the logic comes in different variants. Some variants speak for happy endings – easy remedies to common colds, quick recoveries from minor bruises – while others prepare the ground for tragic decisions and aggressive interventions, or even acceptance of permanent loss due to a fatal condition. Cooperational versions of the illness framework position state actors and peace researchers on the same team of medical experts carefully monitoring the general health of the system and looking for case-specific cures for different still-remaining forms of international disorders, violence and suffering. Conflictual versions, on the other hand, set competing know-all world doctors frantically searching for malignant cells, abnormal behavior and infected areas around the globe; the consent of individual patients subjected to treatment is of secondary importance if the deadly virus threatens to infect the whole international community. In the case of the flu, surgical operations make no sense. In the case of a stroke, trying to consult the victim makes no sense. International trade as a remedy for war should be actively encouraged if it is found to be effective and terrorist cells cannot be negotiated with. Since the entailments of the illness metaphor vary according to the type of disease or injury, the concluding paragraphs of this chapter will study the possible consequences of adopting the cooperational and conflictual versions separately.

The cooperational variants of the illness metaphor – specialists looking after the health of the international community, war as a unanimously identified malfunction of the system – emphasize the common goals of humanity and scientific or technical solutions to its problems. War may be presented as a disease so horrendous that its prevention or cure should bring together actors with otherwise radically differing interests. Moreover, if a particular foreign policy is identified as a medicine, it not only acquires a positive meaning, but also becomes apolitical, a science-based, clinical reaction to important events or grave situations in the realm of international relations. Since medicine is generally seen to be working for the good of the patient, the motives for even forceful interventions to stop a disease – for example an authoritarian ideology or terrorism – from spreading are assumed to be pure. The cooperational illness metaphors tend to downplay not only the violence of some cures that have been chosen by experts – say, military interventions, economic shock therapies, redesigning political systems from scratch – but also the conflicting diagnoses and the multitude of medications in principle available. It is hard to categorically object to collective action designed to make the sick healthy again and to improve the condition of the entire population.

The conflictual variants of the illness metaphor – specialists disagreeing about the diagnosis, prognosis and/or cure, rogue doctors acting on their own, patients hostile to any kind of treatment – underline the uncertain and ineffective aspects of international relations. War and violence can be regarded as the disease itself or as symptoms of an underlying condition, such

as poverty, inequality, greed or grievance. In case of disagreement about the fundamental problem, the suggested therapies may be in direct opposition to each other – say, assistance or sanctions, more interaction or severing ties altogether, negotiations or surgical strikes. Not all actors who aspire to the role of international physicians adhere to ethical principles that go together with the role, such as refraining from the use of aggressive, new medicines that might make the situation worse – at least against the will of the patient. Some patients continuously argue with doctors (without any particular reason), and in some cases, patients may (rightfully) point out that they are not deranged, but that they simply have chosen an unorthodox lifestyle or do not wish to be cured. Conflictual illness metaphors tend to hide the accomplishments of modern research as a cooperative effort, the severity of certain conditions plaguing the international system and the possibility of good intentions and even altruism of (many) state actors. Fighting about the best cure may paralyze all action.

Regardless of the variant of the illness metaphor, its use medicalizes problems in international relations. Instead of being solved for example in the context of political negotiations involving differing interests and values, and possibly democratic decisions, contentious issues appear to wait for clinical research and technical cures chosen by experts. Moreover, illness metaphors usually direct attention to the pathology of the individual state at a certain moment instead of considering whether the entire system might be sick, or whether there is something wrong with the way international relations normally operates. In general, the illness metaphors encourage action to cure diseases: in the face of viruses spreading or wounds becoming infected, even resorting to experimental medicines is better than standing still. Illness metaphors also perpetuate ableism: celebrating the healthy and strong as opposed to the weak and disabled. However, the illness metaphor – like all metaphors examined so far – also allows for flexibility in international relations: a better diagnosis may alter the therapy, and a new medicine may suddenly work. Symptoms, examinations and operations go together with both fatal sicknesses and curable diseases, the basic metaphorical framework leaves room for both aggressive interventions and gentle therapies. These opportunities can be – and are being – taken advantage of by both theorists and practitioners of international relations.

# 11 International journeys

## Dead-end tracks and common paths

This chapter looks at the various types of journey metaphors for international relations, that is, at the many different kinds of explanatory scripts brought over from the realm of hiking, road trips and seafaring. Some of them – like “paths to peace” – are conventional and helpful in diverse situations. Others – like “trapping Russia in a quagmire” – are conspicuous and less often found useful. All versions of the journey metaphor, however, structure international relations with terms pertaining to another, totally separate field. They help us understand international actors and events by evoking associations with moving in space: traveling for business or for pleasure, searching for the right road, and avoiding obstacles along the way. While drawing attention to the intentional and directional aspects of international relations, they overshadow haphazard aspects as well as actors and problems that stay put. Journey metaphors direct our interpretations and policy choices toward those common when driving cars or orientating in a forest. The chapter begins by outlining associations that go together with traveling in its various forms. Then, examples of expert usages are provided. To conclude, the chapter speculates on the inferences drawn from journey metaphors, and their possible entailments for international action.

People go on journeys to get from one place to another, to see the world, to meet other people. When we embark on a journey, we move along a road, path or track – or possibly a waterway or through the skies on an airplane. The paths may be well-trodden or unfamiliar; we may be on a business trip or traveling for pleasure; there might be obstacles on the way, or the passage may proceed smoothly. Being on the road may constitute a pleasure in itself: keeping on the move makes you feel active. If you are in trouble, you might have to hit the road. Walking down the road may in itself also be a political message: marching is a common way to demonstrate for or against a cause. Sometimes, journeys seem endless: the travelers might get lost or there may be deliberate efforts to sidetrack them. On the other hand, they may also find a shortcut and reach their destination ahead of time. Cars move faster on major highways than on gravel or dirt roads. Rural roads are often in poor condition – bumpy and muddy – but driving through a city center

during rush hour may be excruciating, too. Hiking trips take fearless trekkers to mountains and ravines, rapids and waterfalls, duckboards across swamps and shaky suspension bridges. Some people, on their journeys, leave roads and trails altogether; they may head off the map. Traveling and journeys are usually associated with direction and a destination: roads lead somewhere, we want to reach an interesting new place, get to work or return home. The source domain of the journey metaphor covers both positive and negative experiences: sharing the road or coming to a dead end.

Positive associations go together with journeys for a noble purpose, holiday traveling and making your way to your loved ones, for example. A pilgrim travels in search of new meaning about their self, others, nature or a higher good. Holiday trips take you away from work and routine, to relax with friends or family. After having been away for a long time, many of us long to get back home, to our nearest and dearest, or the peace and quiet of our private abode. Deciding to take the same path together with someone indicates a shared project and commitment. Roads can be promises or opportunities, possibly ways out, ways forward. Taking a walk in the woods might restore your mental balance and marching for peace might catch the attention of the foreign policy decision-makers. Walking is better for your health, but taking the car gets you to your destination faster and allows you to carry luggage. The free circulation of goods, services and people may be defined as the goal of political and economic integration. Traveling may be a nice adventure or a way of getting to understand other people's lives and viewpoints better. Roads and railroads facilitate movement and keep your direction. Journeying can give you purpose and be fun – in the extreme version, it is greater than life: *navigare necesse est, vivere non est necesse*. Although many of the achievements of early European explorers have been discredited for good reasons, traveling to faraway lands still holds an air of adventure and discovery, and personal odysseys sound exciting.

Negative associations adhering to journeys include getting lost, being forced to go and facing trouble along the way. Even in GPS times, occasionally you take the wrong turn, lose your way or go around in circles. Many people have to leave their homes because their living conditions have plummeted due to war or famine, for example. Sometimes, you hate to take to the road again – if you are happy where you are, you might want to stay put. Traveling sales representatives miss their children; people denied refugee status may be returned to horrible conditions. Everybody has an experience of a trip that has not gone according to plan: traffic jams, delays at airports, accidents, difficulties with finding a resting place and other complications along the road tend to be a rule, not an exception. Car engines may break down, boats leak, and trains collide with each other. Too much walking in new shoes gives you blisters, being forced to sit for the duration of an inter-continental flight gives you back pain, not getting proper meals and sleep destroys your rhythm. Traveling can wear you out not only physically but also mentally: worrying about timetables and connecting flights, the situation

back home, the upcoming business negotiations or the size of your carbon footprint may be very stressful. Wandering around without a purpose or being constantly on the road, not having a permanent residence, are regarded with suspicion by the majority that has settled down. Border controls and customs procedures take time. What seemed like a small hill on the map may turn out to be a mountain in reality and the road you planned to take may have flooded away. Journeys may seem never-ending, and your traveling companions may get on your nerves.

Whether nice experiences or ordeals – joint efforts to reach the destination or seemingly endless quarreling about the best course to take – journeys involve starting points and termini, purposeful movement in space and changing locations, direction and stops, travelers and means of transport. Paths, roads, tracks and trails go together with journeys, so do travel companions, people who stay behind and others who wait at the journey's end. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 14–21) point out in their discussion on orientational metaphors, in the Western culture at least, moving forward is considered to be something positive, while moving backward often means defeat or giving up. Moreover, staying permanently in one place indicates stagnation and a lack of imagination, while getting around something means success in dealing with a problem. Going straight is usually better than taking a zigzag course, and people look for upward mobility instead of things going downhill. Journeys – both as painful struggles and unifying missions, as swift progress, getting stuck or retreating – are used to make international relations understandable. I will now turn to these usages by theorists and practitioners, identifying them in both cooperational and conflictual contexts.

In the context of IR theorizing, the journey metaphor is ubiquitous: it is employed across the spectrum of traditions from the mainstream to alternative approaches, from the classics to the latest contributions. Many roads traveled by states seem to lead to nice places, while other roads are murkier and other destinations less pleasant. Fukuyama (1992) endorses the idea of “directional history” (ibid: e.g., 81, 89, 130) and writes about the “path toward full economic modernity” (ibid: 97), “steps towards democratization” (ibid: 112), “paving the way toward market economics” (ibid: 120), “the road that Nietzsche takes” (ibid: 313) and the “one journey and one destination” of states (ibid: 339). As pointed out earlier, he believes that we can steer clear of the Nietzschean road, and progress on the Hegelian path. Russett and Oneal (2001) refer for example to “a major step in a journey away from authoritarianism” (ibid: 32) and claim that there is no compelling evidence to support a “go slow” policy toward democratization in Eastern Europe or elsewhere (ibid: 122). Motion and direction are indicated also in their frequent references to “steps/moving/movement” toward democracy or peace (ibid: 28–32). They, too, are confident that obstacles along the way to a more peaceful world can be surmounted.

Based on his analysis, Wendt reaches the conclusion that the history of international politics with respect to structural changes will be

“unidirectional”: the international system has clearly progressed or moved “higher”, and the future will not be worse than the past (1999: 312). He argues that even if there is no guarantee that cultural time in international politics will “move forward”, it will not “move backward”. In the state system as in other systems, “path dependency” plays a major role: not only is the future of the system shaped by “the path” it took in the past, but the option of “turning around in the chosen path is closed off” (ibid). He resorts to the metaphor of paths and journeys also when referring to “three different pathways by which the same structure can be produced” (ibid: 250) or “three pathways by which cultures can be realized” (ibid: 310): coercion, self-interest and legitimacy. To finish off his assessment of the historical journey of states, Wendt speculates whether it is inevitable that anarchies will “move” from Hobbesian to Lockean to Kantian structures (ibid: 311) – and comes to the conclusion that even though there is no necessity or absolute guarantee, it is likely that incentives for progressive change will overcome human weaknesses and the countervailing incentives to maintain the status quo. Later (2003) he has even argued teleologically for a more specific stand – namely, the inevitability of a world state. Wendt’s proposition is based on an analysis of “the macro-structure of all pathways” that channel the international system’s development toward an inevitable end-state.

Two pioneers of peace research, Galtung and Boulding, utilize the road metaphor abundantly and, on the whole, seem confident about the journey. Already in his early writings, Galtung refers to “points of departure” of peace thinking (1975: 90, 110), humanity’s tendencies in various “directions”, including “in the direction of peace” (ibid: 147–148), “the peaceful roads to peace” and “the non-warlike roads to peace” (ibid: 73). Later, when outlining “roads to peace”, he comes up with a precise, but demanding map, that of “the eightfold path” (1996: 2–3) that encourages “moving ahead” on all dimensions simultaneously: promoting both negative and positive peace while tackling all forms of violence, whether political, military, economic or cultural. Boulding writes about the different “steps” in a peace policy (1978: 113–114) and about societies “following courses” of different kinds: “starting out” very much alike, but then “moving” in different “directions”, either peaceable or militaristic (ibid: 54). According to Boulding, there may even be “cyclical movement” between “high” and “low” peace strengths, as with the case of Germany in history (ibid). In a more colorful instance, he explains that “war is a kind of automobile accident of the international system” (ibid: 22): probable eventually, predictable to a certain extent, but with a strong random element.

Peace activists interested in understanding peace and war profoundly – people like Gandhi, Luthuli, or Martin Luther King Jr. – regularly resort to the metaphor of the road, path or journey when structuring their own nonviolent projects. Gandhi, Luthuli and King approached conflicts and problems as bypaths, bends, obstacles and delays of various kinds. (See also Kuusisto, 2009.) Gandhi (1968a [1907]: 8) claimed that it was not enough

to “follow the trodden path”, that “we ought to follow the path which we know to be true, whether it is familiar or unfamiliar to us”. Luthuli (1993d [1961]: 139–142) explained that he had chosen “the path of nonviolence” or “the path of disciplined resistance” of his own volition and identified efforts to “sidetrack us from the democratic road”. King (1992 [1966]: 127–132) was convinced that “nonviolence offers the only road to freedom for my people”, and that his people had put the country “on the move” against the enemies of poverty, slums and inadequate education. He went on to affirm that “marching feet announce that time has come for a given idea”. Here he alluded to the fact that marching down the road was also a concrete strategy of the movement he was one of the leaders of. Whereas the civil rights movement marched for example in 1955–1956 in Alabama to boycott segregated busses and in 1965 from Selma to Montgomery, Gandhi and his followers marched in 1930 already from Ahmedabad to Dandi to break the law by making salt. In 1960, being unable to participate in the actual marches due to his confinement, Luthuli joined the walking protest against the pass system symbolically, by publicly burning his pass. The Long March marked the beginning of Mao Zedong’s ascent to power, and for Jews especially, Moses became a major prophet in great measure through leading his people on the march out of Egypt to the promised land. Metaphorical marching thus goes well together with actual movement down the road, but while describing international relations in terms of journeys, most analysts do not refer to particular physical activities of people, but instead, to states being on the move.

Bull (1995 [1977]: 223–308) considers “alternative paths to world order” and maintains that the system of sovereign states still provides a viable one. For Morgenthau (1973 [1948]: 323), on the contrary, state sovereignty is the fundamental problem: in his view, national sovereignty is “the main stumbling block” that has vitiated all attempts at restraining the struggle for power. He is terrified of nationalistic universalism and where it might lead to in the nuclear world, that is, the prospect of total war. For Morgenthau, “the road to international peace” (ibid: 546) is diplomacy: the peace-preserving and community-building processes of diplomacy are needed to build a world state which in turn is a necessary requirement for permanent peace. According to him, for the people at large, there is nothing spectacular, fascinating or inspiring about this road, but the metaphorical picture Morgenthau (ibid) draws of the task of the foreign policy leader is nevertheless quite vivid: he must perform the highest feat of statesmanship, “trimming his sails to the winds of popular passion while using them to carry the ship of state to the port of good foreign policy, on however roundabout and zigzag course”. As already noted, offensive realists such as Mearsheimer hold an opposite view of diplomacy: it is a tool only for the weak, those statesmen who lack formidable armies (Mearsheimer, 2001: e.g., 183–189), not least because the “rules of the road” in diplomacy keep changing (ibid: 343), making progress a matter of chance. In a more defense-oriented manner than Mearsheimer

and in less expressive terms than Morgenthau, Waltz (2010 [1979]: 210) is worried about the “leaky world boat”.

In her feminist analysis of international politics, Enloe (2014 [1989]) examines not only events and actors traditionally considered important, such as “steps” in nationalist battles (ibid: 115–117), but also less customary topics, like the role of “Victorian lady travelers” and modern stewardesses, the international gendered politics of tourism (ibid: 37–82). She claims that various aspects of the tourism industry should not be of marginal interest to IR scholars, but instead, studied carefully as part of the gendered machinery that keeps world politics running smoothly. Sylvester (2002), in a unique manner, turns the traveling metaphor – and the idea of an unfinished journey – into the methodology of her research. Sylvester contrasts her approach with the tourist’s gaze on the “other”; she aspires for empathy that does not overdub what others speak (ibid: 119), and that does not necessarily even involve physical moving about (ibid: 303). For Sylvester, world-traveling means moving inter “the very low and common, where IR would rather not go, and the high and mighty realms of war and peace conferences, European currency negotiations, diplomatic visions, strategic thinking” (ibid: 284). World-traveling is “moving across centers and peripheries instead of encouraging one-way travel to a fictitiously fixed nation of identity” (ibid: 303), “a mobile identity” (ibid) that makes the universality illusion obvious (ibid: 304), a type of nomadism that does not symbolically annihilate otherness through claimed solidarity with the other (ibid). She refers to Enloe as another world-traveler (ibid: 85). As many other IR scholars, Sylvester and Enloe are interested in studying direction, paths and destinations in international relations, but the travelers they focus on – for example, traveling identities and traveling diplomatic wives who “also grease the wheels of the international arms trade” (Enloe, 2014 [1989]: 188) – stand apart from the default option of traveling states.

The grand journeys, different paths and final destinations of international relations may appear not only as explanations woven into individual theories but also as ideas guiding the collective efforts of scholars. Already the titles of certain edited volumes in the field bear witness to the point: *Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer?* (Elman, 1997) and *Journeys through Conflict: Narratives and Lessons* (Alker et al., 2001), for example, are structured around the idea of traveling in a specific direction. In the former, the contributors set out to test the democratic peace thesis according to which democracies never or rarely fight wars with each other – and end up being skeptical about the purported connection. In the latter, the effort focuses on the development of conflict early warning systems, that is, on preventing violent or deadly conflicts through gathering and analyzing large amounts of information about the ways conflicts and crises have progressed in the past and about (successful) interventions into conflicts. Peace is the desired outcome, the destination that very few object to in principle, and the preferred route is one that avoids violent conflicts. The travel guides in both cases are

well aware that the trip will be neither easy nor well-charted, but they deem the mission possible. For the sake of humanity, they must believe in the possibility of reaching the goal or at least finding nicer paths to wander along.

IR scholars discuss not only paths to peace and war – and the vehicles that might take states to the desired destination or a dead end – but also roads towards other (related, more specific) destinations, such as security communities or integration. Deutsch et al. (1957: e.g., 70, 79, 121, 200) study “the paths” or “the pathways” toward pluralistic and amalgamated security communities particularly in the North Atlantic area. They find “a wide variety of pathways” in the same direction: “steps can be taken toward any or all the essential conditions at any time” (ibid: 121), “progress toward integration of both kinds can be made gradually among the same pathway” (ibid: 163). They also conclude that a pluralistic security community is sometimes a stopover on the way to an amalgamated security community, but not the other way around: whatever promotes pluralism also facilitates amalgamation, but an attempt at abrupt amalgamation could severely hamper pluralistic integration (ibid: 200). The contributors to *Security Communities* (Adler and Barnett, 1998a) are interested in pluralistic security communities all over the world, also in places where none have traditionally been thought to exist. They believe in “path-dependency” and propose “a pathway” that derives from Deutsch’s observations (ibid: 49). They, too, emphasize that the “origins and paths” of security communities vary considerably; yet they propose a conceptualization of the mechanisms and conditions by which security communities develop, a three-phase “pathway” forward, and of the processes associated with the disintegration of security communities, steps in the reverse direction (ibid: 48–59).

In the context of EU research, federalists, (neo)functionalists and (liberal) intergovernmentalists have all resorted to journey terminology. Monnet (1953) already justified strong institutions by claiming that Europe should “keep step”, “keep pace” or be “in step” with the “rapidly progressing” modern world. Haas (1967) believed functionalism was the way to integrate a region; functionalism, according to him, relies on gradualism and “indirection”, “small steps” without a grand plan, “step by step” decisions, “going forward haltingly”, commitment to “pragmatic steps”. Moravcsik (1991) bases his explanation of successful EU integration steps, such as the approval of the Single European Act, on state representatives bargaining and protecting sovereignty: all heads of government departing from the same “starting point”, but different countries subsequently taking different “roads”, some engaging in “shuttle diplomacy”, others being threatened by “two-track” decision-making, etc. Even discourse analytical studies of EU integration may apply the explanatory framework of a journey or path – and promote the idea of several possible paths: according to Wæver, “for a specific country, there will be a certain number of structural routes” regarding a policy for Europe (2002: 40). EU scholars generally study either states’ journeys towards EU membership or the journey that the EU is on;

accordingly, the EU can figure both as a destination and a traveler in the explanations.

As regards the usage of international relations practitioners, Drulák (2006) highlights the importance of the motion metaphor for both EU leaders and scholars as apparent in expressions such as “new steps”, “leaps forward”, “acceleration of integration” and “slowing down the train” used by both groups. According to him, especially neofunctionalist researchers such as Haas use this metaphor, and it was also the most widespread metaphor in the 74 speeches of the highest political leaders of the EU member and candidate countries from the early 2000s analyzed by Drulák. In his study of German Bundestag debates between 1990 and 2000, Hülse (2006) finds that EU membership is often imagined as the end point of a path: enlargement can be understood, among other things, as a homecoming or finding a path. Hülse illustrates the usage with excerpts such as “the Central and Eastern Europeans [...] want home to Europe”, “Prague, Warsaw and Budapest, Sofia and Bucharest returned [...] to where they always belonged: to the one indivisible Europe”, “the European train” and “an overtaking lane for the faster countries”. Curticepan (2011) affirms that the motion/journey metaphor is the master metaphor in the EU accession discourses of the former communist countries. She focuses her attention on political cartoons on Bulgaria’s EU accession in major Bulgarian newspapers between April 2004 and October 2005 and during the first half of 2009. According to Curticepan, the journey metaphor predictably emerges as the dominant trope (ibid: 47): Bulgaria is depicted as walking down the EU road and sitting in the EU waiting room, as being in the Balkan boat with the EU in the horizon and in a car or a train or an ox-drawn cart headed towards the EU, as peeking over the EU fence or through the EU keyhole. In all these cases, the journey metaphor structures events and gives roles to the various actors – roles as (fellow) travelers, gatekeepers and traffic police, for example.

Heads of state structure their descriptions and explanations of – and solutions for – international relations with the help of the journey metaphor in very different kinds of situations. Kuusisto (2009) studies the journey metaphor in the foreign policy rhetoric of the Western major powers and finds that US, British and French leaders use journeying to frame their mundane conflict resolution strategies: they treat problems as obstacles along the road but trust their closest travel companions. To lift the spirits of the nation, President Joe Biden informed the joint session of Congress that America was “on the move again”, that America was “ready for takeoff” and “leading the world again” (29 April 2021). With some challenges, such as stopping climate change, everyone’s contribution was required, and an “all-hands-on-deck effort” was needed (1 Nov 2021a). An hour before the UK officially left the EU, Prime Minister Boris Johnson assured the nation that his job was to take the country “forward”, “whatever the bumps on the road ahead” (31 Jan 2020). Regarding climate change, he elaborated on “the world’s path to net zero”: there is “still enough time to put on the brakes” (30 Sept

2021), or in terms of different means of transport, “to give the lifeboat for humanity [...] a mighty shove into the water” (1 Nov 2021). Speaking at a conference on the future of Europe, President Emmanuel Macron referred to numerous roads: “roads of peace”, the “road of efficiency and simplicity”, the “democratic road”; he even defined being European as “not leaving anyone at the side of the road” (9 May 2022a). In reference to past traveling accomplishments, he claimed that during the pandemic, Europe had “kept a steady hand on the rudder” (19 Jan 2022). In a joint statement on the risks posed to international security by Iran’s escalating nuclear program, Presidents Biden and Macron, Prime Minister Johnson and Chancellor Merkel expressed their concern over Iran’s “provocative nuclear steps” and urged Iran to “change course” (Biden et al., 30 Oct 2021). While journeying and being on the road generally evoke rather peaceful settings, some foreign policy roads are clearly bumpier than others, some steps dangerous and some journeyers not trustworthy.

The most dangerous paths in international relations lead through terrains that are known to be threatening and treacherous from previous experience. Beer and G. Robert Boynton (2004) looked at the discourse about Cambodia in a US Senate subcommittee hearing in early 1990. Here, the search for the best policy was framed in terms of finding a path through a minefield. In their rhetoric on the Bosnian civil war in 1992–1995, Western leaders compared the area to a swamp or a morass. US Secretary of State Warren Christopher explained that “obviously, any intervention in such a morass must be carefully considered” (19 May 1993). British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind affirmed that “sending more British troops to Bosnia could have the result of bogging us further down in the Balkan morass” (31 May 1995). French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas described Yugoslavia as having “plunged into great chaos” (23 July 1992). The most famous quagmire especially in the US foreign policy memory is definitely Vietnam, the place that US troops unsuspectingly entered into, got stuck in and sunk deeper and deeper down into. Minefields and morasses are deceptive: a path through them might seem beautiful and quiet until the very moment you are blown up or swallowed down. Since false steps are deadly, wandering around minefields and morasses is best to be avoided altogether no matter how alluring the will-o’-the-wisps calling for engagement on the ground might be.

Contemporary media usage of the journey metaphor, also, is widespread and diverse: reporters and columnists discuss the same international journeys and paths that political leaders and researchers do, and their discourse relies on similar logic. When discussing US sanctions against Russia, *The Washington Post* referred to “steps” and “moves” (Stein and Hudson, 6 April 2022). Interested in the same topic, *The New York Times* speculated why Ukraine’s allies had not “gone further” and suggested that “one diplomatic avenue left for Biden to pursue runs through China” (Bokat-Lindell, 24 Feb 2022). *The Guardian* assessed that “the US and its Nato allies have walked a careful line so far” and that they were, in fact, trying “to trap

Russia in a quagmire” (Safi and Yusuf, 3 June 2022). It also defined Kherson as “Moscow’s only major foothold in that region of the country” (Nimo Omer, 11 Nov 2022) and believed that the Nato membership of Finland and Sweden would “pave the way” for increased troop presence in the Nordic region (12 May 2022).

Related to traveling in basically friendly contexts, *Le Figaro* studied “the path” opened to Britain by Brexit and judged that Britain was not yet “sailing in full sail”, “taking to the high seas” (Philippe Gélie, 24 Oct 2021). Estimating the chances of the EU reaching its climate and energy targets, *Le Monde* decided that the EU was still “on the rails” (Audrey Garric and Perrine Mouterde, 26 June 2023). *The New York Times* appreciated President Biden’s efforts to press Britain to negotiate an end to the “impasse with Brussels” (Frost, 28 Feb 2023) – especially important since Europe appeared to be “a continent on autopilot”, the EU grappling with “how to navigate tensions” between states (Frost, 27 Feb 2023). Newspaper coverage of both wars and international cooperation can be structured in terms of paths and steps, quagmires and footholds, sailing and being on the rails – each version of the journey metaphor coming with specific connotations and entailments, as well as having some features in common with all journeys.

Journey metaphors transfer the logic of physical traveling from one place to another – of roads and paths, walking and driving, catching trains and consulting maps – to the field of international relations. The interpretative framework of journeys can account for both cooperation and conflicts among states and suggest various kinds of means for addressing problems in international relations. Pilgrims regard each other in a manner very different from the attitude of rush-hour drivers racing to make it through the traffic lights. The atmosphere on military marches is distinct from the ethos typical to demonstrations for peace. The purpose of daily commuting is not the same as the reasons for going on a holiday trip. Going back home for a person who has been denied asylum is nothing like going back home for a business traveler. With the version of the metaphor, change the mood, the roles of actors, the available means and the sensible things to do. In some journeying contexts, cooperation is a natural way forward; in others, competition is the rule and conflicts are likely. To conclude, I will outline some of the entailments both of cooperational or “happy traveling” frameworks and of conflictual or “stressful traveling” explanations of international relations.

The cooperational variants of the journey metaphor – common paths and joint expeditions, shared missions and reciprocal visits, family trips and healthy walks – emphasize the peaceful potential of international relations, the shared interests of states and the harmless if not outright positive nature of many activities on the world scene. Roadmaps for reconstruction give the parties to a conflict useful directions; steps toward democratization are to be encouraged; the eightfold path to peace should definitely be taken. Moreover, keeping pace with the world and taking the diplomatic avenue

sound like good ideas. Framing international politics as moving forward together overshadows competing state interests and differences concerning where the world is – or should be – headed to. On a path to peace, one is supposed to be ready to endure some hardships; noble destinations make it seem petty to quarrel about details or to come up with an alternative goal. Not getting on board the common project calls for an explanation. The crew and passengers of Spaceship Earth need to work together if they love their fragile craft. International journeys may be rewarding in many ways: fellow travelers on trips for business and pleasure learn more not only about each other but also about themselves.

The conflictual variants of the journey metaphor – racing frantically to get to the destination, being pursued by a hostile agent, facing obstacles on the road, running into a dead end – underline the competitive aspects of international relations and the various difficulties states might encounter even when agreeing on the goal they want to reach. State sovereignty as a stumbling block on the way to world peace is not easily done away with. If the rules of the road of diplomacy keep changing, taking that road is not only unpredictable in its consequences, but plain suicidal in a self-help world. Missing the EU train is definitely unfortunate for prospective applicant countries, but slowing down the train of integration may be the preferred strategy of some member states. Provocative nuclear steps must be stopped – possibly even by forceful means. Steering clear of the Balkan morass made excellent sense to Western leaders in the early 1990s – as does trapping Russia in a quagmire in Ukraine in the early 2020's. Explaining international relations in the framework of arduous journeys downplays the many things states agree about and the advantages of state cooperation. Bumpy roads seldom seem inviting, and it is natural to feel discouraged from searching for a path through a minefield. If the main road taken by sovereign states seems to lead to disaster, choosing to divert to your very own path or trying to find a shortcut to an alternative destination become attractive options.

Sometimes, international relations theorists and practitioners elaborate on the roads embarked on by different states or the international community; at other times, they evoke the journey metaphor only in passing. Sometimes, they clearly talk about dangerous paths and painful travel experiences; at others, they appear to refer to uplifting or even joyful voyages. As there are proper and improper ways to behave on holiday trips, there are expectations and responses that go together with being in a traffic jam or a sinking ship. Regardless of the variant, journey metaphors turn state action into physical movements forwards and backwards, up and down, straight ahead or around in circles. Since positive associations usually go together with unswerving motion forward and up, policy decisions defined to constitute such motion have better chances of being approved than policies that come across as retreat, going down or wavering. Through the journey metaphor, the abstract and faraway activities of states become concrete and directional,

something that everyone can relate to and knows something about. As with other metaphors for international relations, it is impossible to prove causal connections or to measure the effects of specific associations, but especially in the lack of direct access to this field and these phenomena, different metaphors with accompanying entailments are *the* explanatory frameworks we have.

## 12 International music

### Graceful waltzes and battle marches

This chapter looks at the various types of music metaphors for international relations, that is, at the wide variety of explanatory scripts brought over from the artistic realm of singing, dancing and playing instruments. Some of them – like “concerted action” – sound familiar and pass unnoticed. Others – like “the international minuet” – are rare and attract attention. All versions of the music metaphor, however, structure international relations with terms connected to another, thoroughly different field. They help us understand international actors and events by evoking associations with concert halls and jazz clubs, ballets and operas. While highlighting the choreographed/orchestrated and leisurely aspects of international relations, they set aside unplanned and chaotic aspects. Music metaphors direct our considerations and policy choices toward those common in the context of artistic performances. The chapter begins by outlining associations that go together with music of different kinds. After this, examples of expert usages are provided. To conclude, the chapter speculates on the inferences drawn from music metaphors, and their possible entailments for international action.

Music resides primarily in the world of creative activities, art and self-expression. Classical composers may create lengthy and complex symphonies and operas; waltzes and polonaises are intended primarily for dance; jazz musicians often rely on improvisation and unique solutions; rock music regularly consists of relatively simple rhythms and repetitive structure. Orchestras perform in concert halls; soloists may give recitals in more intimate locations; ballroom dances are staged in sports facilities and pavilions; bands play in clubs, restaurants and bars. Music festivals may gather tens of thousands of people to listen and groove; when you sing in the shower, you usually expect nobody to hear. Music also accompanies our activities as a background in a variety of settings: shopping malls and dentists’ waiting rooms, gyms and airplanes, elevators and public buildings. Depending on the context, the purpose may be to energize or to calm down, to make you buy more things or to make you relax. In a church, you may expect to hear religious music: liturgical music and hymns. While watching a military parade, you listen to military music: fanfares and marches. Around a campfire, songs of

camaraderie and repeat-after-me songs are the rule. Babies fall asleep to lullabies; shift workers, especially, may regularly have to rely on the wake-up tune of their mobile phone to get up. Making sure that a band or an orchestra plays well together – or that a choir sings in tune – requires discipline and endless repetition. Musical performances, however, are generally meant to sound effortless. Instruments and voices ideally complement each other. In exceptional cases, artists deliberately aim to shock with discord and loud noises. Although music itself does not hurt or kill, music can be associated both with harmonious interaction and calls for battle.

Usually, music goes together with cooperational or peaceful contexts. People listen to music in numerous mundane situations: while driving their cars, while jogging, while working in the office or doing their chores at home. In these instances, music gives a beat to your activity or diversion from it. On the other hand, music – like art in general – can lift you above the mundane, and make you forget your ordinary situation and concerns. For a while, you get to be somewhere else, possibly to take part in a collective experience that you will cherish all your life. Despite of – or due to – the hard work behind a beautiful performance, concerts are meant to be pleasant for both the performers and audiences. Playing an instrument or singing can be either a private pleasure or a public event, either social or competitive, either a soothing or an exciting pursuit. Dancing to music, likewise, can take many forms ranging from pole and ballet dancing to square and line dancing. Music is often associated with having fun (with others) – with something voluntary, enjoyable, and satisfying. Music may relieve stress or help you meditate; music may make you jump up and down in your kitchen or grab a partner to the floor in a nightclub. Although different cultures produce very different kinds of music, music is in many ways a universal language: it may connect people who cannot communicate with words.

Sometimes, music is associated with conflict and competition. For centuries, music has been employed in battle both to intimidate the enemy and to assist your own troops: to organize and time actions, to encourage for battle. Patriotic marching songs prepare soldiers and nations for great sacrifices and bloodshed. Music torture is a form of psychological warfare. Whereas ballroom dancing music is typically played with violins, flutes and the piano, military music goes together with drums, trumpets and bagpipes. War dances may be ferocious; depression-era dance marathons often had nothing joyful about them; drill musicians have been accused of glorifying violence. Music can be used to express rage or to irritate people. Blasting out your stereo might give you temporary stress relief but infuriate your neighbors; when placed on hold yet again, music designed to soothe can actually increase your frustration; the new release being played on every radio channel can drive you crazy. Missing a note is embarrassing for an opera singer; in an orchestra performance, wrong notes may lead to dissonance or even cacophony. Differing musical tastes can lead to fights; sophisticated singing competitions may involve immense drama behind the scenes; performing in a professional

orchestral audition may be nerve-wracking. Sometimes, in less exciting yet unpleasant circumstances, you simply get tired of listening to music and long for silence. Dancing with the same partner all night may become boring, as may rehearsing a particular stanza over and over before a performance.

Music is associated with melodies and tunes, rhythm and tempo, singing and dancing, composers and musicians, performances and audiences. In some form, music is present in every culture we know of; everyone has experiences of listening to music, and if not performing in the narrow sense of the word, then at least humming or drumming to music produced by others. Orchestras need instruments, scores and conductors. It takes two to tango – both with positive and negative connotations. While efforts to coordinate and ensure harmony may be the rule, also improvisation goes well together with music. Throughout history, music has called people both to the dance floor and to battle. In the discourses of both international relations theorists and practitioners, the music metaphor transfers the logic of playing instruments, singing and dancing to the field of world politics, to explain the interactions of states. I will now turn to this usage in both cooperational and conflictual contexts.

As was the case with the metaphors already discussed, also many music metaphors are so commonplace that using them does not stand out as resorting to metaphorical language in international relations: talk about orchestrating peace negotiations, playing along with a country or producing discord among allies passes as ordinary language in the context. However, instead of rendering a metaphor unimportant, going unmarked may increase its power to frame understandings and interpretations. Morgenthau (1973 [1948]) applies the music metaphor both in habitual and ingenious ways. As to established explanations of state interaction, and more specifically cooperation, Morgenthau (*ibid*: 442–443) approves of the “Concert of Europe” one: according to him, the “Concert of Europe” – through ad hoc conferences and the efforts of brilliant diplomatists and statesmen – was most successful in preserving general peace during the ninety years of its existence. Morgenthau points out that during this time, until the outbreak of the First World War, the great powers met whenever the international situation seemed to demand “concerted” action. Treaty-based solutions like the Holy Alliance, the League of Nations or the United Nations, in his view, are less flexible and thus less effective. Although he makes no explicit comment, he might have appreciated also the particular format of “the Dancing Congress” – the Congress of Vienna – that gave birth to the Concert of Europe. He certainly valued the community-building practices of the European aristocratic society in general (*ibid*: 242–245). Morgenthau also discusses the conditions in which national interests can meet “in harmony” (*ibid*: 277), the conditions for establishing “permanent harmony” (*ibid*: 33) and praises the “traditional instruments” of diplomacy, that is, techniques of persuasion, negotiation and pressure (*ibid*: 546). As the major problem in politics among nations, he identifies “international discord and war” (*ibid*: 33).

Whereas Morgenthau's ideal multipolar world encourages the formation of new ensembles and the creative use of various instruments, advocates of a bipolar solution, such as Waltz or Mearsheimer, are content with minimal variation whether it comes to the players or the music. To his relief, Waltz (2010 [1979]: 209) concludes that "the concerting of effort" is not often required in international security matters, that prevention or control, rather than coordination for positive accomplishment, is important in the existing – stable – system. Some twenty years later, after a major international change of tune, Mearsheimer (2014 [2001]: xvii, 335, 338, 344–346) clearly believes that unbalanced multipolarity might encourage a potential hegemon – a wannabe soloist in the post – Cold War era – to try its luck and start a war. Since intense competition among great powers is a perennial fact, optimism and moralism concerning new types of ways to play are unwarranted. By resorting to the music metaphor, Mearsheimer claims, for example, that states are "attuned" to relative rather than absolute gains (*ibid*: 52) and that there is "harmony" between the wealth and power of states (*ibid*: 46). Despite their differing stances on many issues, all three realist theorists emphasize that in the international system as we know it, no great maestro conducts and disciplines the orchestra of states: in established IR language, the structure is anarchic.

Especially poststructural scholars have been interested in deconstructing the traditional role of the state and the traditional understanding of the state system in world politics and in the academic field (Hansen, 2017: 166–168). Poststructuralists claim that IR theory in general and the realist tradition in particular are prone to reproduce the highly problematic inside – outside dichotomy in international relations: inside states, they place community, justice, cooperation and peace; in the international realm, anarchy, power, self-help and war. For example, Walker (1990) elaborates on the reproduction of these binary oppositions and other established rituals of debate. Ashley (1987), too, suggests that the reproduction of the capitalist world order by realist power politics rests on skillful deployments of rituals of power. According to him, these rituals of power enable agents "to orchestrate diverse fields of action", to maintain the given order of domination. In a more hopeful tone, Linklater (1998) makes a moral case for new forms of political community and a cosmopolitan ethic. While doing this, he, too, criticizes the stark realist contrast between the peaceful security of domestic politics and the violent anarchy of international relations (*ibid*: 3). He also notes (*ibid*: 196) how states make use of this dichotomy between "domestic social harmony and international discord" in constructing and maintaining totalizing and exclusionary identities. Critical IR voices thus maintain that the discord – harmony dichotomy may not only greatly simplify descriptions but also support violent policies.

In his description of international surroundings, Shapiro (2002) employs a metaphor that circumvents the discord – harmony dichotomy but evokes a melancholy musical atmosphere. He elaborates on the "partition blues"

experienced by people lost in the complex zones of exclusion of nation-states. According to him, “the voices of the displaced people [...] sing the blues, rather than amplifying the [Nietzschean] noise of the state”. He advocates a “blues epistemology” and “a politics of blues”: transcending partition and geopolitics, sharing an aesthetic practice, focusing on lived experience. In a world where blues is the background music, many people feel sad and alone. Their personal experiences do not adhere to official state-centered identities; they might not have a nation-state to protect them; their conception of time seems to differ from the linear progression of state narratives. Although “blues [...] provides a counternarrative to the war story developed by macho men” – consolation music of sorts, maybe even music of resistance – its chances of affecting or silencing the “noise” produced by states are rather dim.

In his much earlier theoretical contribution to the field, Wolfers (1962) chooses to study international politics explicitly in the framework of both “discord and collaboration”, adopting this dichotomy as the title of his collection of essays, and often resorts to the music metaphor to clarify particular points. To begin with, he claims (*ibid*: xiii) that statesmen – although they themselves may insist otherwise – seldom “play it by ear”, but instead, rely on theories of some sort when practicing statecraft. He discusses at length (*ibid*: 181–204) whether the two “instruments” of traditional alliances and pacts on the one hand and of collective security on the other can work “in harmony” with each other and concludes that despite clashes between the commitments resulting from each, neither foreign policy instrument should be abandoned. Wolfers is worried that modifications in the “tenor” of United States policy (*ibid*: 203) might be perceived in the wrong way and undermine the position of the United Nations and the cause of world peace. Finally, he studies the numerous obstacles to “concerted action” (*ibid*: 208) but remains adamant in his defense of the policy of “going it with others”. Despite acknowledging the existence of dissonant voices even among allies – let alone what he calls the neutral and neutralist countries – Wolfers argues that the United States should act as the leader of the mixed and unruly choir of non-Communist countries.

In IR contexts, states are seen primarily as orchestrators of security matters. However, some scholars also bring up their leading role in international political economy: neoliberal states provide the framework in which “free markets” operate (see e.g., Wallerstein, 2004: 28–32, Barkawi, 2006: 5–11). Along these lines, True (2015) explains that neoliberalism does not involve less state but more “state orchestration” of the kinds of activity that are feasible and appropriate for market and public institutions to engage in. Moreover, True argues that both the security state and the neoliberal state are legitimated through specific types of gender relations. To shed light on the gendered forms of power in international politics, Enloe (2014 [1989]), too, resorts to the music metaphor. She compares international relations to a dance: they “all are dancing an intricate international minuet” (*ibid*: 8).

Among the “dancers” she includes (*ibid*: 7-8) not only state leaders, but also the motley crew of the woman tourist and the chambermaid, the film star, her studio owners, the banana company executives, the American housewife, and contemporary YouTube enthusiasts, the male soldier, the brothel owner and the woman working as a prostitute. She asserts that the “minuet” has gendered causes and gendered consequences, and remarks that the less recognized “dancers” are not in a position to “call the tune” (*ibid*: 8). In her typical style, Enloe evokes both happy or light-hearted and somber associations in the same passage: on the one hand, dancing a minuet is usually a joyful pastime, on the other, her description makes clear that this minuet rests on unequal power relations, maybe even brute force.

Boulding (1978), too, makes use of the dance explanation: his context is peace research, and his dancers are social forces. According to him, war and peace are part of the “vast Shiva’s dance of the universe” (*ibid*: 47). Boulding emphasizes that in this “dance”, everything has multiple causes and multiple effects; in his view, attempts to identify the sole cause of anything are doomed to frustration. Boulding’s international dance appears to be less rhythmical – and more mystical – than Enloe’s international minuet. The divine cosmic dancer manifesting the interplay of eternal energies such as creation, destruction and preservation calls to mind an incense-filled temple rather than a dance hall. The great variety in music structuring peace activities is apparent also in the way King closes his famous “I Have a Dream” speech with references both to symphonies, national anthems and negro spirituals. He hopes that “we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood”, that “freedom will ring from every mountain side” and that “we will be able to sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, ‘Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last’” (King, 1992 [1963]: 105–106). As in the case of journey metaphors, in the peace movement, singing refers to both physical and symbolic activities – conflicts being replaced by unity, a particular song being sung by peace activists – which might add to the power of the explanatory framework.

Moreover, the choir variety of the music metaphor is employed by feminist scholars such as Tickner and Elshtain. Tickner claims that in order to understand the workings of international relations, we need to study the experiences of all individuals regardless of race, culture, class or gender – to be sensitive to their “multiple voices” (1992: 16). Elshtain (1995 [1987]) believes that our dreams of peace are too often captured by “perfect harmony” (*ibid*: 254). To replace these images of ongoing blissfulness, to understand peace and war better, she recommends letting go of this dream and listening to the “polyphonic chorus of female voices whose disparate melodies are discernible sounds” (*ibid*: 232). Feminist choir metaphors – as opposed to the more traditional ones – often depict also individual people, not only states, as members of the international choir. As a result, feminist choirs are naturally even more polyphonic than, say, the UN choir, the NATO choir or the EU choir. What

unites the various choirs, however, is the assumption that they are committed to producing some sort of music together. It has been suggested that feminist analyses of power, too, have certain distinctive features: these analyses look not only at the potential use of coercive “instruments”, but also at the power of persuasion, and they portray especially female power as shared rather than assertive (see Tickner 1992: 65). Tickner (*ibid*) subscribes to Hannah Arendt’s definition of power as the human ability to act “in concert”.

Political and economic integration projects are often justified in musical terms – harmony, concert – not only at the time of their conception but also with each new phase or issue area where cooperation is extended. Monnet (1953) believed that in wars with one another, the countries of Europe had damaged themselves and held their people back from general progress in the world: it was time to bring Europe back “in harmony with the rest of the world”. Since the creation of the early common institutions intended for raising European living standards and maintaining peace and stability, “harmonization of law” has brought about common norms for numerous activities across the internal market. Consistency of laws, regulations, standards and practices is officially aimed at facilitating free trade and protecting EU citizens. Although the rationale for many projects stems from internal concerns – making things better for the musicians of the EU band, helping it play better together – the external rationale still exists, too. In his State of the Union address to the European Parliament, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker (2018), affirmed that “in the concert of nations, Europe’s voice must ring clear in order to be heard” and that “Europe diplomacy must be conducted in the singular”. Juncker emphasized that there was a strong demand for a unified and consistent Europe throughout the world. In less solemn contexts, such as the Bulgarian political cartoons studied by Curticepean (2011: 253–254), the dignified EU anthem can be combined with a colorful orchestra where every musician seems to be playing in his very own style. Variation need not be a threat; it can also make the orchestra more relatable.

Smith (2004) develops the music metaphor in an original manner: he studies the way in which IR theory helped to “sing into existence” the world that led to the events of 11 September 2001. He attributes this metaphorical variant to the practice of Australian Aboriginal people who, during their period of dreamtime, sing their world into existence. Smith claims that IR theory is involved in constructing the world it studies – in supporting specific social forces, in taking sides on major ethical and political questions – and thus complicit also in terrorist acts and in the violence in the world in general. As problematic IR practices, he lists for example focusing on the state as the unit of analysis, drawing a sharp distinction between the inside and the outside of a state, leaving out ethnicity and gender from the main theories and concentrating on interstate wars as the main type of conflict in the world. Smith’s critique of the discipline’s established practices is quite harsh; the music metaphor, however, somewhat softens the blow. “Singing a world

into existence” sounds less aggressive and harmful than, say, winning a war over explanations, outbidding the academic competitors or constructing the strongest theoretical fortress. Singing the world into existence clearly has narrative appeal: besides the Australian Aboriginals and Smith, also J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis have made their leading characters create the world by singing. The central character of the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, Väinämöinen, is known for his singing and kantele playing. Most likely, epic poetry all around the world has been passed on from generation to generation through the oral tradition – chanting or singing. In this framework, IR singers become participants in an age-old creative tradition without which the international would have no history.

Like the metaphorical scripts already discussed, the music metaphor, too, is constantly employed by international relations practitioners in addition to theorists and expert commentators. President Emmanuel Macron emphasized the importance of the “French voice” being heard in easing the tensions in the world (7 Feb 2022); he referred to “music, our European hymns”, as the universal language of reconciliation (9 May 2022); he was convinced that the EU had acted “*in concerto*” (19 Jan 2022); he assured his audience that France was respected in the “concert” of nations (31 Dec 2021). Prime Minister Boris Johnson, too, was interested in joint performances: he wanted “to concert” British green commitments with the environmental efforts of the United States, France and the EU (15 Nov 2021) and was happy to report that Britain would, “in concert with our allies” agree on economic sanctions against Russia (24 Feb 2022). When addressing the UN General Assembly for the first time as the US president, President Joe Biden was attuned to international concerns: he claimed to hear a “chorus of voices across languages and continents”, a common cry for dignity (21 Sept 2021). A year later, from the same podium, he underlined that 141 nations had “unequivocally” condemned Russia’s war against Ukraine and stated his belief that democracy remains humanity’s greatest “instrument” to address the challenges of our time (21 Sept 2022). For all three leaders, music and concerts seemed to be something positive that nations should aspire to; they expected their audiences to understand and appreciate the importance of harmonious voices.

The media habitually resort to the music metaphor both in passing and in an elaborate manner, often probably without specific intention, but sometimes clearly to emphasize a particular aspect of an event. When reporting on the visit of the Turkish president to Kiev, *Libération* claimed rather ornately that President Tayyip Erdogan had made the trip in an effort to “play music of his own” in the “discordant international concert” (Stéphane Siohan, 4 Feb 2022). Without developing the metaphor further, *Le Figaro* presented arguments for and against the allegation that the private military company Wagner had “orchestrated” a maneuver in Mali (Nicolas Barotte, 28 April 2022). *The Guardian*, in an unmarked manner, assessed that it would be a real achievement to persuade Poland and Germany to act more “in concert” (Wintour, 7 April 2022). More inventively and conspicuously, it observed

that the Biden administration had started “trumpeting” its role in training Ukrainian soldiers (Safi and Yusuf, 3 June 2022). Later, it noted that Prime Minister Keir Starmer had embarked on a charm offensive to Brussels: he endeavored to reset the UK – EU relationship, to “set the tone” for future interaction, to keep the “positive mood music” playing (Heather Stewart, 3 Oct 2024). *The New York Times* evoked both concerts and dance performances when covering great power politics: it analyzed Russia’s “orchestrations” at the UN Security Council (Frost, 6 April 2023) and the “meticulously choreographed” visit of the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, to Moscow (Frost, 21 March 2023). Neither production appeared to get a very positive review in this newspaper. Anxiously, it also identified announcements that might be a “prelude” to a Ukrainian withdrawal from Bakhmut (Frost, 14 Feb 2023). Before a NATO summit, *The Washington Post* (Missy Ryan et al., 9 July 2023) gave the audience instructions as how to interpret the upcoming show: it sought to clarify what might be underlying “Erdogan’s dance on Sweden”.

The music metaphor transfers the logic of singing and dancing – operas and marches, bands and choirs, dance halls and clubs, performances and audiences, rehearsals and reviews – to the field of international relations, but the logic comes in different variants, encouraging either cooperational or conflictual interpretations and responses. The framework of music can make sense of states acting in concert and dancing to the same rhythm. Beautiful art is usually not produced by force or ordering around; it is free and voluntary. Learning to play an instrument or sing together in harmony takes time and patience. You are not supposed to interrupt a carefully prepared symphony performance or disturb the singer in the middle of a recital. Music may bring immense joy both to the artist and the audience. However, the music framework can also evoke less pleasant experiences: practicing in tears for hours on end, competing in vain for a place in the prestigious orchestra, calling the troops on both sides to a fierce battle. When these latter contexts are applied, the international mood becomes tense and the actors become each other’s rivals or enemies. Sometimes, both amateurs and professional artists are simply pushed too hard and give up; a cacophonous performance may hurt your ears; audience members may boo and hiss or leave the concert. Whereas the cooperational version speaks for nonviolent policies and perseverance, the conflictual variant makes it natural to try to win over observers and give harsh feedback to competitors. To conclude, I will have a closer look at both types of entailments in the international setting.

The cooperational variants of the music metaphor – composers, directors and players all contributing to the same musical performance – emphasize the common goals of states and the possibility of reaching these goals if every state masters their part, keeps in tune and gives others the chance of expressing themselves. Along these lines, since some statesmen of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Europe still knew how to use the traditional instruments of diplomacy, the Dancing Congress was a prelude to the success of the Concert

of Europe. Moreover, with patience, the leader of the NATO choir may be able to convince all members to sing along before an important summit performance in the 2020s. Even without a leader, during its existence, the polyphonic EU choir has achieved great things, such as supranational citizenship. Sometimes, standard performances by the EU suffice, and audiences may even appreciate improvisation by creative – or sympathetic or funny – soloists as long as they remain committed to the ensemble. Humanity has managed to act in concert to avert a nuclear war, to create common norms and institutions and to widen the scope of international ethics; there is no reason to believe that it will not be able to come up with concerted solutions to world problems also in the future. If presidents and prime ministers can hear the chorus of voices across languages and continents, they might be moved to act on behalf of other motives besides national interests and power politics.

The conflictual variants of the music metaphor – singing competitions, music torture, war dances – underline the aggressive features of world politics and the possibilities of international discord even among players of the same instruments in the same performance. The concerting of international effort in security matters especially is very difficult; strong players may be programmed to compete for the position of a hegemon in the orchestra. While domestic music is more or less harmonious, in international music, dissonance is the rule, and not all states even want to play in tune with others. Besides aspiring soloists, there are some dancers who have been forced on the stage: not everyone is happy to dance the international minuet to the music directed by others. The world of music is a world of power relations, too, and not always a pleasure to the eye or ear. Moreover, the blame for this lies not only with megalomaniac superpowers or ruthless dictators, but with everyone who participates in singing our world into existence: plays along by accepting and reproducing its violent practices from day to day. When a battle call has been sounded, it makes no sense to negotiate any longer. There is no room to improvise or change the rhythm in a meticulously choreographed performance. Making one mistake in an orchestral audition may determine the future of the player. The audience may lose trust in an ensemble that has never played well together, be it a chamber orchestra, an intergovernmental organization or a military alliance.

Regardless of the version, music and dance are creative, artistic activities that people come across mostly voluntarily. When employed as descriptions and explanations of international relations by practitioners and theorists, music metaphors make state activities interesting pastimes, grand performances or background accompaniment. Music metaphors transport roles and attitudes from a different sphere to make sense of the sphere of world politics, its modes of cooperation and types of conflict. In the sphere of music, not even the aggressive variants usually involve physical violence or death. In the sphere of music, playing together often has no other purpose than having fun or producing beauty for everyone to enjoy. When we understand international

relations as music, we tend to expect delicate use of musical instruments, acts in concert and new orchestrations – not, say, sledgehammering, bidding contests and jungle scenes. We see directors working with choirs and dance partners learning to waltz. As with other metaphors, the intentions of the speakers and the effects on audiences are difficult to discern, but it is quite possible that in the absence of direct experiences of interstate maneuvers, even an allusion to a familiar activity may call forth an elaborate frame of interpretation with accompanying proper responses.

# 13 International puzzles

## Senseless riddles and solvable enigmas

This chapter looks at the various types of puzzle metaphors for international relations, that is, at the great number of explanatory scripts brought over from the realm of solving riddles and connecting jigsaw pieces to each other. Some of them – like the search for a “pattern behind the foreign policy moves” of a state – are conventional and attract little attention. Others – like “the basic paradox of sovereignty” – are conspicuous and used less often. All versions of the puzzle metaphor, however, structure international relations with terms employed in another, thoroughly different field. They help us understand international actors and events by evoking associations with children trying to assemble an image or adults enjoying a social game involving an imaginary murder mystery. While stressing the intriguing, brain-twisting aspects of international relations, they overlook serious problems and physical aspects. Puzzle metaphors direct our interpretations and policy choices toward those common in the context of connecting dots to reveal a picture. The chapter begins by outlining associations that go together with different kinds of puzzles. Then, examples from expert usage are provided. To conclude, the chapter speculates on the inferences drawn from puzzle metaphors, and their possible entailments for international action.

In the minds of many people, puzzles consist of interlocking pieces made of wood or cardboard – called blanks/holes/female and tabs/knobs/male by the technically savvy – that are assembled to produce a predesigned image. These jigsaw puzzles are intended for both children and adults: completing them is supposed to be fun and develop our visuospatial abilities and fine motor skills. Jigsaw puzzles come in a variety of sizes: for very young children, 4 to 9 large pieces are standard, the ones marketed for adults start from approximately 500 pieces, and the biggest commercially available ones have tens of thousands of pieces. Crossword puzzles and Rubik’s cubes are also counted as puzzles. Moreover, riddles – questions or statements that require ingenuity in ascertaining their answer or meaning – are mental puzzles, and enigmas – whether people, words or things – are types of puzzles, too. Logical dilemmas give you two possibilities neither of which seems acceptable. Riddles and enigmas are by definition hard to understand, explain or

solve, but once you succeed, you get additional pleasure from the difficulty of the task. Some people seem to talk in riddles; enigmatic people have a confusing mixture of qualities that seem to be in opposition to each other; we refer to things we cannot fully understand, such as theories of relativity, as enigmas. Usually, solving puzzles is a leisurely activity – something we enjoy and look forward to, possibly together with friends or family – but your boss might not appreciate an enigmatic report, and getting a riddle for an answer when in a hurry with your question might make you despair. Thus, the associations that go together with puzzles are manifold: they range from children's toys to problems in quantum physics, from entertaining hobbies to deeply frustrating problems.

We come across puzzles we can figure out – riddles with correct answers available, solvable enigmas – every day. At first glance, something seems mysterious, but once we give the problem some thought, things make sense. Originally, we might have missed some information that was available or clues that we should have noticed; the obscure can be clarified with a little effort. Numerous people get satisfaction from completing the crossword puzzle – or sudoku or word search – of their preferred newspaper every day. Brainteasers can keep both children and adults occupied during a long journey in the car – and engaging in the exercise requires neither a pen, paper nor an internet connection. Riddles often work in several languages and across times, as the one posed by the Sphinx to Oedipus demonstrates. Sometimes puzzles occupy your hands and let your thoughts run free as when friends gather around a jigsaw puzzle to pass the evening. In a similar setting, it might be fun to compete over who assembles the three-dimensional wooden puzzle fastest. Solving an imaginary murder mystery might be a team-building activity during a company outing. Enigmatic people may be more interesting than ones who seem to be completely consistent in all their qualities and actions. If nature held no mysteries, there would be fewer scenes for ordinary people to observe in awe and fewer projects for scientists to engage in. Puzzles save us from boredom and activate our problem-solving skills. Puzzles may test anything from physical dexterity to logical thinking; solving them may require highly specific expert knowledge or letting your mind run free like a child's; some puzzles play with words, while others need no words at all.

Sometimes, we are faced with puzzles that exceed our capabilities: senseless riddles, and complete mysteries. These puzzles do not necessarily bring joy to people. A person who, instead of giving a straight answer, always seems to answer with a riddle is irritating. Not everybody has the ability or time to concentrate on a huge jigsaw puzzle portraying an image of an endless flowerbed. Likewise, not everybody can master even a simple sudoku or twist their brain in a way that solves riddles. Failing miserably in a social mystery game may be humiliating for the entire team. Sometimes, there really is a piece missing from the puzzle, or an accidental mistake in the wording of a brainteaser. Or somebody might intentionally try to ruin your efforts and spoil the fun. Sometimes, the answer to a mystery is so unlikely that nobody

can deduce it. When solving the enigma facing us – say, how to stop global warming – determines the destiny of mankind, the project becomes deadly serious, quite different from a lighthearted pastime. Some puzzles simply cannot be solved no matter how hard we try, and in situations like this, one may feel desperation, distress, helplessness or rage. No matter how hard the puzzle, however, it cannot be solved by force: pounding the pieces with a hammer to make them lock into each other simply does not work.

Whether puzzles are fun or nerve-racking, solvable or seemingly impossible to figure out, the associations they evoke have to do with difficult problems and ingenious answers, stretching your mental powers in some extraordinary way. Puzzles, riddles and enigmas refuse the standard explanation and the obvious solution. Although in most cases, there is an idea that a clarification, some hidden rationale, can be found, one can never be quite certain about this. Working with riddles often requires not only hard thinking but also thinking outside the box. Solving a mystery deserves special recognition; congratulations are in order. When brought to bear on the field on international relations, puzzle metaphors explain state actions as solving puzzles or the entire field as a puzzle to be solved. I will now turn to examples of how the puzzle metaphor is used by international relations theorists and practitioners.

IR realists – who might be described as problem-solvers as opposed to critical theorists to begin with (see Cox, 1981) – unsurprisingly, tend to see the puzzles of international relations as something that can be solved. Waltz (2010 [1979]) begins his effort to explain international relations by discussing the meaning of theory and the ways to construct and test theories of international politics. Although he sees serious defects in many existing theories and lays out demanding requirements for theories in general – theories need to explain, not simply accurately describe (ibid: 1–17) – he is confident as to having been able to construct a systems theory of international politics (ibid: 123). He identifies many puzzles: the “puzzles” of seeming facts and apparent associations (ibid: 4), “puzzling” connections of things and events and the “dilemma” concerning the precedence of knowledge over theory or theory over knowledge (ibid: 8), the “puzzling” relations between theory and observation, or between theory and fact (ibid: 11). For Waltz, both induction and deduction are indispensable in the construction of theory, but without the emergence of a creative idea, there is no theory (ibid). In the end, he claims to have met the challenge: his balance-of-power theory explains international politics. According to Waltz (ibid: 123–128), states form balances of power whether or not they wish to and states balance power rather than maximize it. As already pointed out, Mearsheimer’s theory of offensive realism (2014 [2001]) advances a competing explanation: great powers are always searching for opportunities to gain power over their rivals, with hegemony as their final goal (ibid: 29). Mearsheimer is equally confident about the explanatory power of his theory – he claims to show both the compelling

logic behind the theory and to test it against the historical record (ibid) – and he, too, starts from an attempt to shed light on “puzzles” (ibid: 6).

Although Morgenthau bases his explanations on forces inherent in human nature (1973 [1948]: 3, 17) – the strive for power mainly – not the structure of the system, and has little faith in the ability of the scientific man to meet the challenge of power politics (1946: 222–223) – to get his message through – he shares Waltz’s and Mearsheimer’s belief in the explanatory power of IR theory as such: according to him, there exists “an objective and universally valid truth about matters political” and this truth is accessible to human reason (1973 [1948]: xi). Morgenthau refers to puzzling evidence – the ambiguity of historical events, uncertainties, and complexities (ibid: 18–23) – but maintains that the principles of international politics can be discovered. In thinking like this, the puzzles of international relations can be solved by science, and possibly, the answers communicated to the public and the foreign policy decision-makers. Whether state leaders choose to take heed of research-based advice is another matter. While Morgenthau is not very hopeful about stopping “the two giants eyeing each other with watchful suspicion”, both preparing to strike the first blow (ibid: 353), Waltz is pleased to observe that Americans are now maintaining the bipolar system and working within it (2010 [1979]: 203). Finally Mearsheimer, also to his satisfaction, claims that the United States is acting in the (multipolar) international system according to the dictates of realist logic (2014 [2001]: 25). Mearsheimer, however, believes that the logic – regardless of our informed understanding of it – is (rather) likely to lead us to war (ibid: 395).

The dismal prognosis that states can end up in conflict not only due to actual offensive moves but also due to interpreting each other’s defensive moves as offensive – and despite being well aware of this danger of misinterpretation – is regularly referred to as the “security dilemma” in international relations. As mentioned, Mearsheimer believes that “little can be done to ameliorate the security dilemma as long as states operate in anarchy” (2014 [2001]: 36), while Waltz is, in comparison, more optimistic: “two can deal with the dilemma better than three or more” (2010 [1979]: 187). Booth and Wheeler (2008) study the security dilemma in detail. They define the security dilemma as a strategic predicament consisting of two levels: a dilemma of interpretation and a dilemma of response (ibid: 4). According to them, when state leaders resolve their dilemma of response in a manner that creates a spiral of mutual hostility, when neither wanted it, a “security paradox” has developed (ibid: 5). Booth and Wheeler do not regard negative outcomes of the security dilemma unavoidable: a dilemma can also have positive outcomes, as illustrated by the end of the Cold War. They focus on the scope for agency and find major IR contributions pointing not only at fatalist, but also at mitigator and transcender logic. As the most influential work in transcender logic, they define Kant’s *Perpetual Peace* (ibid: 17), and as twentieth century representatives, for example, theories of collective security, functionalism,

security communities, world government and universal anarchism (ibid: 171–257). They themselves believe (ibid: 296) that while the security dilemma cannot ultimately be escaped, it can be transcended.

Liberalist IR scholars – a tradition coming across as transcendents and problem-solvers – are indeed optimistic not only about the potential of science to solve the puzzles of world politics and about the lessons of science being heard, but also about the chances of peace in international relations. According to Russett and Oneal (2001: 272), the chances of peace are good and probably better than at any time in history. They formulate their research project as solving the puzzle of peace, or more accurately, as refining the solutions offered so far: as integrating the explanations of economic interdependence and membership in international organizations into the explanation of democracy reducing conflict. They wish to bring “the pieces together and integrate them”, to work with the “auxiliary puzzles” of the democratic peace theory (ibid: 47). They refer to “the most prominent puzzle” (ibid: 49), solving “another puzzle” (ibid: 51), “the pieces of the puzzle” (52), and “the domestic conflict – foreign conflict puzzle” (ibid: 68). In the end, they claim to be able to confirm statistically what was proposed already in 1795: the Kantian variables provide important pacific benefits (ibid: 236). Fukuyama, too, starts off from a puzzling situation. Since World War II, the world as a whole has moved in an unexpected direction: things have gotten better (Fukuyama, 1992:12). Fukuyama’s research question concerns the possibility of Universal History: whether it is possible that history has actually come to an end, whether the modern world is completely satisfied with liberal democracy. Certainly, to the surprise of many, he comes to the conclusion that this is, in fact, the case: even man’s desire for recognition, the only real challenge, seems to have been channeled into other activities than waging war (ibid: 336–337).

Despite adopting a positivist epistemology – as a scientific realist, he firmly believes that IR theory can get at a deep structure (1999: 49) – Wendt takes a rather relaxed attitude towards some apparent dichotomies, contradictions and surprises. For example, he combines his positivist epistemology with an idealist and holistic ontology. Moreover, his idealist approach is built on rump materialism (ibid: 96), and his holism is built on rump individualism (ibid: 178). He claims that the rationalist model can be taken to be a special case of the constructivist model (ibid: 336) and, undaunted by the seeming incommensurability, he identifies the common referent object and defining qualities of the Weberian-Pluralist-Marxist essential state (ibid: 199). Regarding deep structures, the different cultures of anarchy, Wendt notes that even the highly conflictual anarchy, the Hobbesian one, is based on shared ideas (ibid: 260). He tells his readers (ibid: 7) that his book is animated by a “puzzle”: finding out what is currently wrong with the state-centric IR theory project and coming up with a solution of his own. In his theorizing, Wendt both locates riddles and solves them: he finds problems with seemingly excellent solutions and reveals consistency in apparent incoherence. For

example, he observes that Buzan et al. draw a “seemingly natural” conclusion but finds a mistake in their thinking (ibid: 253). Also, he maintains that at first glance, Waltz’s choice is surprising, but that the “anomaly” disappears if we consider the specifics (ibid: 101). He locates various intellectual “traps” in which different IR theorists – Neoliberalists, Marxists – have been caught (ibid: 136–137). In *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt is more interested in the ontological brain twisters that form the foundation of explaining state interactions than the moves of particular states at a particular time. Consequently, he starts with a thorough treatment of second-order social theories and only then moves on to substantive theorizing concerning the international system – and even in this domain-specific part, rests on a high level of abstraction and generality.

Peace research often prioritizes the opposite: concrete, case-specific analyses and recommendations. Galtung, for example, in his research founded on the illness/medicine metaphor (see Chapter 10 or Galtung 1975: 167–187, 1996: 1–8, 24–34), starts from the assumption that diagnoses, prognosis and therapies always need to consider the particular symptoms and causes. Moreover, research or attempts to generalize should be complemented by peace action, that is, participation of different kinds (Galtung 1975: 367–379). Galtung’s solutions – the jigsaw puzzles that he assembles – often have an impressive number of pieces: his typology of peace thinking, for example, organizes 35 different versions according to the level of analysis, type of system, etc. (ibid: 75). He describes the project as abstracting “from the confusing reality of facts and/or ideas until a pattern emerges” (ibid: 47). In Galtung’s view, not only pieces of explanations ideally fall into place to form a complete image, but also activities of nations, groups and people are brought together in positive relationships. The puzzle he hopes to see completed portrays a world system of “interlocking, positive relationships with a high conflict-solving potential” (ibid: 74). With the puzzle metaphor, too, Boulding (1978) is less systematic. He presents some of the main problems he approaches by using this framework – for example, whether we can break the vicious cycle of enemy creation is, according to him, “a real puzzler” (ibid: 18) – but his answers are not quite as detailed as Galtung’s. Boulding understands detecting the “patterns” of the system as his business (ibid: 31). And in the end, he claims that benign dynamic processes, too, can be fostered and accelerated by policy that he then sets out to outline (ibid: 93). However, Boulding does not apologize for propounding a “piecemeal” view (ibid: 107): even with his sturdy-sounding seven-plank solution he is modestly looking for “an almost half-conscious peace policy” (ibid: 109), not a perfect delineation.

Gandhi is even more modest regarding his own problem-solving ability. When reflecting on his views about taking up arms, he first states that he, personally, would rather risk the gallows than take part in military operations, but then adds that he might still vote for the military training of those who wish to take it (1999 [1928]: 343). Although he points towards a solution

to the riddle – it is not possible to make a society or a person nonviolent by compulsion, people should be allowed to make choices regarding their own lives – he emphasizes that it “still does not solve the riddle”. Moreover, Gandhi demonstrates a very relaxed attitude towards consistency in general. He (1960: 219–220) explains that even though he has searched for Truth for his entire life, he has never made a fetish of consistency. He directs his friends who observe inconsistencies in his writings to take the latest version “unless of course they prefer the old” (*ibid*). Citing Emerson, he affirms that foolish consistency is the “hobgoblin of little minds” (*ibid*: 228) – something that devoted problem-solvers might have difficulties accepting. Having to admit your inability to solve a puzzle is often considered humiliating; openly making fun of your own weakness and of what others may think about it is rare indeed. Gandhi, however, embraces the role of the wise fool, suggesting ingenious solutions, and readily admitting fallibility. Finally, even when pressured for an authoritative view on a burning problem, Gandhi (1989 [1925]: 189) argues for time to deliberate: according to him, the “Hindu-Muslim tangle” that seems hopeless at the moment needs to be left aside for a while and then approached anew, with a cooled temper and fresh ideas. Gandhi emphasizes that this does not mean that he has despaired of a solution as such.

Feminists are often weary of the “recognizable and limited IR puzzles” (Sylvester, 2002: 303) that experts in the field are supposed to work on; thus, they go for other problems and methods. Sjoberg (2014) sets out to study how different war and conflict would look like if gender were mainstreamed in observation and analysis of them, to take all the “pieces of the puzzle of analyzing war and conflict” and to put them together (*ibid*: 18). In the process, she comments, among other things, on the mainstream understandings of the origins of World War I – explanations operating with strategic balances, survival and the advantages of the offensive – but opts for the way feminist scholars “have put this puzzle together” (*ibid*: 102), that is, for paying attention to the role of masculinized honor and protection. When assessing her accomplishments, Sjoberg is rather satisfied with sketching better scholarly practices, but leaves her readers with “the (perhaps unsolvable) puzzle” (*ibid*: 171) of how understanding the gendered dimensions of war and conflict might change the practices of policy-makers, the agents who plan and execute war-making and war-fighting. There are many occasions when feminist scholars can find little satisfaction in solving even a difficult puzzle or riddle of international relations. For example, Enloe (2014 [1989]: 100–101) studies “the riddle of two contradictory sets of colonial policies” of the British in India – improving some rights of Indian women, while enacting other laws that suppressed them – and finds an answer that makes things clear. According to Enloe, British masculinized imperialism was not a crusade to abolish male domination of women but a crusade to establish European masculinized rule over the men in Asian and African societies. Her analysis resolves the mystery but gives no special reason for joy.

Poststructuralists, too, find puzzling features in state practices – political community and sovereignty figuring among the most interesting ones. As already discussed, Ashley (1987) studies the reproduction of world capitalist relations and claims that these relations cannot be adequately understood without reference to the realist rituals of power that enable agents to maintain the given order of domination. As one of the “crucial puzzles”, he presents the community of realist power politics or the “puzzle of social will formation on a global scale”. Analyzing the system-reproducing role of realist power politics is challenging due to the enigmatic nature of the object under scrutiny: no supreme knowledge, no official political decision-making roles, no conscious intentionality can be pinpointed behind the hugely powerful practices. Walker (2003), while studying sovereignty, claims to face a similar problem: sovereignty eludes definitions, it is not a thing but a highly variable practice, a historical production, a problem and a response to a problem. He notes that attempts to unpack the concept lead to becoming “increasingly puzzled” about it. In addition to the general puzzle, “the basic paradox of sovereignty”, he names several subpuzzles: the “puzzle” of relating the macrosovereignty of the state with the microsovereignty of individuals and the “puzzle” of the binary internal/external discourses about the limits of political possibility, for example. Among other topics, Connolly (1989) focuses on the “enigma of otherness”. He insists that every “code of paradox” cannot be converted into a “code of coherence”: in sixteenth century encounters between the Old World and the New World, as in contemporary encounters with external others and radical difference within, neither conquest nor conversion properly engages the enigma. We need to accept that pertinent lessons may be indirect and contestable, and that they contain “riddles within them”. It seems that poststructuralists are more fascinated by finding puzzles than solving them: locating problematic power in seemingly simple state practices, unraveling tensions behind seemingly smooth international operations and emphasizing the limits of our understanding, rather than providing explanations that stand up to rigorous empirical testing.

Once again, not only theorists – the problem-solving ones and the ones who look for riddles that defy explanation – but also practitioners and the media constantly resort to the same metaphor, here puzzles, in the context of international relations. *Le Figaro* estimated that a consensus on a minor energy-related issue was not enough “to glue together again the pieces of the European puzzle” that had disassembled during the war in Ukraine (Lasserre, 31 May 2022). *The New York Times*, like most other observers, found the attempted mutiny in Russia in June 2023 hard to understand: it reported on the deepening of the “Wagner mystery” (Frost, 7 July 2023). Making the opposite claim, *The Guardian* asserted that the logic behind another purported riddle was easy to decipher: the Solomons–China security agreement was not “an unforeseen surprise” as many seemed to think, but reflected a “pattern”, it resembled “previous security surprises” in other Pacific island countries (Keen, 29 April 2022). Usually, the media are keen

to solve puzzles – the *Figaro* article cited above appeared in a section of the newspaper fittingly titled *Decoding* – but sometimes, following a mystery deepening before it is resolved is also captivating. Some mysteries may seem almost too terrible to be figured out at all. *Politico Magazine* observed that 24 February 2022 brought “an abrupt and horrifying answer to the mystery that had absorbed the world for months” – yes, President Putin did really intend to start a war – but added that “another far graver mystery” had been posed: what did Putin really want, where were the limits of his goals? (25 Feb 2022). To shed some light on Putin’s enigmatic goals, *Politico* reached out to a range of experts who shared their educated guesses.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson (22 Feb 2022) discussed the very same puzzle in his oral statement to the House of Commons: he assumed that his audience was “struggling to understand or contemplate” how, in the year 2022, calmly plotting the destruction of a peaceful country was possible. Moreover, he described President Vladimir Putin’s justifications as “absurd and even mystical”. At the Munich security conference, President Emmanuel Macron (17 Feb 2023) reminded his audience that in addition to dealing with the war, they needed to solve another, related puzzle, that of peace: he claimed that “our dilemma” was that no durable peace on the continent could be achieved without including Russia in the process. This could be challenging indeed after the long and bitter hostilities. On the more hopeful end of the spectrum, President Joe Biden repeatedly demonstrated great optimism as to challenges in world politics. Speaking at the COP27 climate change conference in Egypt (11 Nov 2022), he admitted that the “challenges we face are great” but assured his audience that “our capacity is greater than the challenges”. When addressing the Canadian parliament (24 March 2023), he went as far as to claim that the possibilities were “limitless”, that we are living in “an age of possibilities”. Explanations of the same world situation – its challenges and dilemmas – range from mystical to solemn or encouraging. Not one of the leaders believed the international problems at hand were easy to solve but there was variation in the level of confidence of the problem-solvers.

On the one hand, great power leaders want to present themselves as being able to deal with the puzzles, riddles and enigmas that international relations present. On the other hand, a situation described as a true brain twister may give them the possibility to confess doubt and relative impotence. Especially if the challenge is generally recognized as great, hesitation is not only acceptable but may also be a sign of prudence and wisdom. For example, when commenting on a difficult hostage situation, President Nicolas Sarkozy (25 Sept 2007) could admit that he did not know whether his move would work or not and add: “but who here can say that one should not try?”. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw (24 March 2004), when explaining why he trusted the word of Colonel Gaddafi, admitted that his reasoning “may sound strange” but that he had his reasons. When faced with rogue actors, also established ones must sometimes think outside the box, to try new solutions, to risk failure. Moreover, the world audience might even be suspicious of too

easy-sounding answers to long-lasting riddles – like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – and problems manifesting themselves in several different locations – like international terrorism.

Puzzle metaphors transfer the logic of puzzles – problems to be solved by mental powers and possibly fine motor skills – to the field of international relations. The logic and interpretative framework, however, come in various versions and thus support different kinds of reactions. The cooperational and hopeful versions of the puzzle metaphor portray states or scholars working together to solve difficult international problems: everyone contributing, offering ideas, using both their logical skills and their imagination to figure out answers. The conflictual and gloomy versions of the puzzle metaphor present senseless riddles of state behavior and completely overwhelming global problems. Whereas deciphering strange messages, explaining enigmatic behavior or clearing up messy situations give both state leaders, foreign correspondents and IR theorists great pleasure, persistent mysteries and actors behaving in totally irrational ways cause frustration. Neither Rubik's cubes or crossword puzzles can be solved by brute force, but your attitude towards the task depends on whether you are engaging in it leisurely on your sofa, together with a friend or in a competition against others. Whether an international problem is framed as a potentially rewarding brainteaser, or an eternal dilemma makes all the difference as to the appropriate way of acting. To conclude the chapter, I will discuss the entailments of the cooperational and potentially rewarding and the conflictual and often nerve-racking versions of the puzzle metaphor in turn.

The cooperational versions of the puzzle metaphor – friends around a jigsaw puzzle, riddles for the road trip – emphasize common goals of states and theorists, and both rational and imaginative solutions to international problems. In the hopeful variant, giving up or getting angry are not to be recommended; on the contrary, it makes sense to persevere and stay confident. Under this umbrella, in the context of theories, explaining international relations is possible: puzzling connections can be sorted out, regularities discerned, laws established, and the reasons behind the laws clarified. Research traditions previously seen as holding opposite views can be reconciled. Regarding state practice, ways to avoid conflict in the system – or move toward a Kantian culture of anarchy or completely satisfying liberal democracy – can be outlined. The security dilemma can be transcended. Complex typologies of peace thinking can be assembled and made use of. Moreover, in this version, foreign policy leaders are given time to reach the right decision, they may try out new approaches to untangle international knots and they are allowed to make mistakes, to learn from failed attempts. It is quite alright to try negotiating with the opponent, for example, and if that does not work, to try something else. In the lighthearted version of the metaphor, foolish consistency should not restrain creative and daring riddle-solving. The assumption is that if we approach the conundrum with patience, inventiveness and trust, an answer will emerge.

The conflictual or stressful versions of the puzzle metaphor – senseless riddles, complete mysteries – underline the magnitude and complexity of international problems and the difficulties in finding any logic behind state actions. Negative outcomes of the security dilemma are unavoidable. Some crises seem inevitable, some conflicts eternal and some state leaders irrational. For example, stopping global warming would require enormous efforts, and it might be too late already. The Middle East and the Balkans are known to be powder kegs. Ethnic conflicts seem to defy normal logic. Likewise, authoritarian heads of state do not necessarily think and act as democratic leaders do – their motives and reactions are difficult to apprehend. Alternatively, in the gloomy version, the picture that emerges may be so ugly that one would prefer not to see it after all. The multipolar world is heading towards (nuclear) war between the great powers. British masculinized imperialism established European rule over men in Asian and African societies, and masculinized honor and protection still lead to wars around the globe. World capitalist relations and violently sovereign states are reproduced by powerful rituals and discourses. If solving puzzles gives us this kind of information, we would have been happier without engaging in the exercise to begin with. In the context of IR theories, there might be no criteria that help us judge between competing truth claims, that give us the correct answer to the riddle. Research might reveal new problems instead of solving the ones we are already painfully aware of. Foreign policy decision-makers do not automatically pay heed to research results even when the scientific community is unanimous, when the puzzle has been assembled by experts.

In the explanatory frameworks of both theorists and practitioners, the puzzles of international relations have to do with problems such as war and violence, sovereignty and community, trade and the environment. Regardless of the variant of explanation, the puzzle metaphor gives the problem a special status: it is more demanding, more tricky, and less frequent than ordinary issues on the agenda. When solving a puzzle, you are allowed to hesitate, to take your time, to experiment with solutions. If you succeed, you deserve recognition and praise. Both international relations theorists and practitioners undoubtedly enjoy praise – and especially in the case of practitioners pressed for immediate answers, they may also appreciate the time to contemplate, to weigh different policy options accorded by the metaphor. Moreover, while failing to assemble a puzzle may be annoying, even socially humiliating, working with puzzles is normally a pastime, not something deadly serious. Solvable mysteries carry with them a set of appropriate attitudes and correct responses different from that of senseless riddles, but both versions of the puzzle framework may guide our thinking about international relations. The exact way in which this happens – and the amount of power that the frameworks hold – is impossible to determine, but in the absence of nonmetaphorical access to international relations, varieties of metaphorical reasoning constitute our choices and are thus something worth paying attention to.

# Conclusion

To conclude the book, I will draw together the findings of the preceding analysis by comparing the relative strengths and weaknesses of the ten structural metaphors for international relations, that is, I will approach the metaphors discussed in Part Two as competing bids to explain the roles and moves of state actors. Since this work is based on the claim that we have no direct access to or understanding of international relations – that we are dependent on metaphors all the way through – no attempt will be made to uncover “the reality behind the metaphors”. Neither will individual metaphors be assessed with regards to their truthfulness or accuracy. Moreover, I will not take a stand for or against particular metaphors; the purpose of the exercise is not to find “the best” or “the worst” metaphor for international relations. Instead, I will outline what the different metaphors – or, more precisely, the different variants of the ten metaphors – highlight and hide, emphasize and downplay. Some versions of the metaphors under scrutiny portray the realm of international relations as essentially cooperational, occasionally even harmonious, while other versions see international relations as mainly conflictual, often violent. Some encourage a hopeful attitude towards the future, while others are discouraging as to chances of progress and peace. Competition, conflict, detached calculation and/or dismal prognoses are the rule in the context of violent jungles, bitter feuds, mechanical weighing, sturdy fortresses, prisoners’ dilemmas, bidding contests, fatal sicknesses, dead-end tracks, battle marches and senseless riddles. Cooperation, negotiation, care and/or trust are natural in the spheres of evolutionary progress, loving families, mental well-being, open houses, buzzing playgrounds, fair trade, curable diseases, common paths, graceful waltzes and solvable enigmas.

The conflictual or discouraging variants of the ten metaphors – international relations as natural selection, as family dynamics, as balancing, as building, as playing games, as doing business, as treating illnesses, as journeys, as musical performances and as puzzles – can be observed in descriptions and interpretations where states are seen to compete against each other in zero-sum situations or to face insurmountable obstacles. For example, in the jungle realm, states constantly “hunt for relative power” and always present

“potentially deadly enemies” to each other (Mearsheimer, 2014 [2001]: 140, 33). Accordingly, foreign policies sometimes need to “push the jungle back from the garden” (Kagan, 2018: 77), to exterminate the “vermin” (see e.g. Zur, 1991; Ivie, 1984). In the dysfunctional family of nations, “little brothers” may suffer from the civilizing mission of great powers who picture themselves as responsible for perfecting their immature kin for example in Central America (see Shapiro, 1988), and unhappy spouses may seek a redefinition of the “relationship”, a “flexible union” (Cameron, 23 Jan 2013) or even divorce, as Brexit illustrated. The “balanced bipolar system” was stable and peaceful (Waltz, 2010 [1979]: 161–193) mainly from the point of view of the great powers; some of the Cold War “balancing moves” were quite violent from the perspective of small states and peripheral regions. During EU accession negotiations, Bulgarians often saw “the common European home” they aspired to enter as a fortress or a house with sturdy walls, locked doors and gates hard to find (see Curticepan, 2011: 199–204). In the logic of “game theory”, states are “rational” only if they cheat, free-ride and seek self-gain always when possible (see Amadae, 2016). “Billiard ball states” are by definition closed, impermeable, sovereign units separated from all other states (Wolfers, 1962: 19–24); in a billiard world, collisions are not only natural, but eagerly pursued.

In the context of bidding contests, diplomacy is understood as “bargaining”, “haggling” or “horse-trading” (Morgenthau, 1948 [1973]: 531). Moreover, wars may be evaluated in terms of costs and benefits, evident in expressions such as “paying the price in heavy damages” and “expensive in terms of men” (see Kuusisto, 2002). In the terminology of fatal sicknesses, competing ideologies and foreign enemies become for example “diseased tissue” and “malignant parasites” that need to be surgically removed, and stopped from spreading (see e.g. Shimko, 2004). Hopeless international journeys are presented for example as trying to find “paths through the minefield” of Cambodia (Beer and Boynton, 2004) or wandering accidentally to “the morass” of the Balkans (Rifkind, 31 May 1995). The realm of music makes sense of conflictual state interactions in observations such as one concerning President Erdogan’s moves regarding new NATO members: they were interpreted as an attempt to “play music of his own” in the “discordant international concert” (Siohan in *Libération*, 4 Feb 2022). The grim riddles of foreign policy, like “the paradox of sovereignty” (Walker, 2003) or “the enigma of otherness” (Connolly, 1989), may remain unsolved, or, such as in the case of seemingly contradictory colonial practices, have discouraging answers going back to the workings of masculinized imperialism (see Enloe, 2014 [1989]: 100–101). These conflictual variants of the metaphors highlight competitive, calculating and violent aspects of international relations; they are good at explaining the importance of self-help and survival, the constancy of power struggles. These versions play down instances of cooperation and solidarity, and opportunities for mutual gain; they do not recognize the importance of international norms or institutions, or states learning together.

The cooperational or hopeful versions of the ten metaphors are found in reports and explanations where states are viewed as working together to reach common goals or participating in mutually rewarding projects. For example, descriptions of a “universal evolution” in the direction of liberal democracy (Fukuyama, 1992: 121) and the “evolutionary development” of the state system towards reduced likelihood of violent conflict (Russett and Oneal, 2001: 180) rely on a positive view of the natural environment. In this framework, diplomacy is the work of diligently “cultivating and tending relationships with other nations” (see Slaughter, 2017: 191–192). The “EU family” is officially a non-hierarchical one (see Hülse, 2006), and states accustomed to seeing themselves as loving colonial “fathers” want to appear interested in the well-being of their children even after the severance of formal ties (see Brysk et al., 2002). In the positive balancing context, new norms proceed towards wide international acceptance through being adopted by “a critical mass” of relevant state actors, via a “tipping point” (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). In the international realm of cooperational building projects, “peacebuilding” is the preferred solution for conflicts (see Ramsbotham et al., 2011: 198–245) and political community may be “reconstructed” in a manner that widens moral boundaries, increases respect for cultural differences and strengthens commitments to the reduction of material inequalities (Linklater, 1998: 45). Sometimes, states are envisioned as playing games of a cheerful type, such as “children’s games”, rule-guided “ball games” or “drama” plays in calm theaters (Manning, 1962: 132, 112, 152). In the Kantian culture of anarchy, most state actors have adopted the “role” of friend (Wendt, 1999: 298); their play is based on mutual trust.

The claim concerning the “pacific benefits” of democracy is often hailed as one of the few statistically proven IR theorems; also participating in international trade and organizations can be seen as having “pacific payoffs” for all states (Russett and Oneal, 2001), thus amounting to rewarding business to everyone. In the realm of gratifying illness metaphors, peace research has designed numerous “therapies” for treating the “disease” of violence, or more accurately, the different causes of violent conflict (see Galtung, 1975: 170–172, 1996: 1–4). Not only peace researchers, but also peace activists, IR realists and news media have set out to study pleasant journeys: “paths to peace” (Elman, 1997), “the path of nonviolence” (Luthuli, 1993d [1961]: 139), “the road to international peace” (Morgenthau, 1948 [1973]: 546) and “diplomatic avenues” (Bokat-Lindell in *The New York Times*, 24 Feb 2022). Harmonious musical metaphors are employed in situations where nations, or allies at least, act “in concert” (President Macron, 31 Dec 2021; Prime Minister Johnson, 24 Feb 2022); sometimes even “a chorus of voices across languages and continents” can be heard (President Biden, 21 Sept 2021). “Problem-solving theorists” are motivated by the practical puzzles of international relations (see Cox, 1981). In a similar vein, journalists are proud to engage in tasks such as answering the “Wagner mystery” (Frost in *The New York Times*, 7 July 2023) and finding the “pattern” behind China’s

security agreements with the Pacific island countries (Keen in *The Guardian*, 29 Apr 2022). These cooperational variants of the metaphors highlight progressive and peaceful aspects of international relations; they are good at explaining the numerous mutual interests of states and the importance of patience, compromise and creativity in achieving common goals. These versions play down conflicting objectives of state actors and situations where forceful, single-handed measures are deemed necessary; they do not recognize the importance of constantly preparing for the worst international scenario.

In terms of policy choices, the conflictual variants recommend investments in arms and defense forces, always prioritizing national interests and resorting to unilateral action when required. In the “Hobbesian” world of “every man against every man”, arms races and wars are natural, and the reigning atmosphere is that of fear and urgency. In a “Kantian” world where “nature wills irresistibly that right ultimately attains supreme authority”, the mood is quite different, more trusting and calmer: peaceful activities are the rule, wars an aberration. The cooperational variants recommend promoting international institutions, engaging in trade and diplomacy, and finding multi-lateral solutions to violent conflicts. While the competition between the two groups of explanations is bound to remain unsolved – they probably both sound plausible to many people in different contexts, they both are used by the very same experts – both of these groups of metaphorical scripts affirm and reinforce their own validity and have concrete consequences. It makes a big difference, for example, whether the disagreements between states that are framed by the game metaphor are approached as gambling games or children’s games: in the first option, moves are understood as raising the stakes, calling out bluffs and maintaining a poker face, in the second, as finding novel ways to interpret the basic rules of play among actors who know each other and want to spend time together. Likewise, when the efforts of intergovernmental organizations are explained with reference to the realm of music, we may expect either untiring practice to achieve harmony among different voices or inevitable cacophony that provides pleasure to nobody. While the competitive association may be primary in the case of games and the cooperational one might come to mind first in the context of music, both versions are readily available and regularly exploited. Thus, while we are prisoners of metaphors vis-à-vis international relations, we are not prisoners of a particular metaphor, nor specific versions of the metaphors.

One of the main aims of this book is to promote greater awareness of the important role of metaphors in our understanding of international relations; the task is hopefully accomplished in the preceding chapters demonstrating the ubiquitous and manifold presence of metaphors in the usage of international relations theorists and practitioners describing and explaining the field. The other central aim is to encourage creative and flexible linguistic practices that might in turn encourage innovative and flexible policies. By teasing out the different possibilities inherent in the metaphors and by recommending their ingenious application one can pave the way to less rigid physical action, that

is, less constrained and intransigent international relations. Thus, I argue that while consistency and coherence may be ideal in the field of formal logic, in international relations, mixing metaphors should be practiced and appreciated. The possibilities inherent in metaphors for international relations are almost unlimited – everything from international relations as bitter feuds to international relations as balanced constructions, from international relations as ridden with malignant cells to international relations as common paths towards a brighter future – and they should be exploited to the full. There are always multiple ways to frame international actors and events, and since no one version is automatic and natural, there are always choices involved, be they intentional or unconscious. These choices should be carefully considered but also played with: locking into a particular usage that seems fitting at one moment may stop us from seeing other options, alternative ways to interpret the realm of the international. Especially since metaphorical frameworks have a tendency of turning into self-fulfilling prophecies, we might do wisely in trying different versions, looking for yet another way to grasp an ambiguous situation. By engaging in the “perspective process” à la Burke (see Chapter 1 or Burke, 1969 [1945]: 503–507), we might be able to improve the picture of the whole, to add dimensions, to give international relations “more being”.

Also, the other way around: if we want to see a particular future, we need to find the metaphors that make it understandable and available. Metaphors do not, of course, construct physical worlds all by themselves. But without them, physical action remains meaningless, without purpose or direction, mere motion – difficult to plan, execute and evaluate. We also need to challenge metaphorical scripts that seem to point to unwanted directions: if we oppose, say, the interpretation of war as business as usual, we might decide to avoid the competitive business framework in a conflictual context to begin with. Likewise, if we are trying to avoid paralysis in the face of a problem, we might want to go with the problem-solving version, instead of the inexplicable mystery version. If an individual metaphor has established itself as the standard way to see a particular situation, we can develop it in the way we prefer. For example, support for postcolonial family ties can be justified through tradition, care and mutual support available in happy families, while opposition may point at the reality of dysfunctionalities, belittling and domestic violence. Developing the familiar or generally accepted metaphor also saves the theorist or practitioner from losing face: one does not need to admit a grave mistake or total failure, to completely give up a specific framework for understanding and explaining, but instead, one can try merely to turn it towards a new direction by using another variant. The common path may become bumpier than expected or the travelers might need to take a break. The old building may need to be demolished to give room for a new, more sturdy, and beautiful, house built together. Traveling and building may be presented as sound recommendations even with the occurrence of some unexpected developments.

The abundant and multiform usage studied in this book shows how all schools of theorists and practitioners in different positions resort to metaphors while trying to grasp international relations and clarify the field to others. Whether they recognize or accept it themselves or not – despite using metaphors abundantly, they might reject them as nonscientific or as pertaining to the world of poetry – they are masters of metaphors. Furthermore, although individuals or certain traditions may have their favorite metaphors – as witnessed earlier, the constructivists and poststructuralists regularly operate with building/constructing and deconstructing/demolishing, and so on – adhering to a single framework is rare, if not impossible. While Waltz, for example, explicitly speaks for the usefulness of the business metaphor in understanding the moves of states, he employs – in passing at least – almost every other metaphor examined in this study, too. Although an individual metaphor can be developed through different variants and illuminate many aspects of a phenomenon, stubbornly keeping to a single one eventually becomes ridiculous. At some moment, extending the one and only framework starts to seem strange or forced. Even if one favors constructivist explanations – like Wendt, for example – one may refer to “cognitive evolution” in the sphere of international relations or study the “pathways” by which cultures can be realized, resort to the nature and journey metaphors.

Many metaphors for international relations go back as far as the present state system, or even farther. John of Salisbury, already, conceived of the commonwealth as a “person-writ-large” (see Chapter 2 or Merchant, 1980: 69–76), and Guicciardini’s *History of Italy* operates with balances of power (see Chapter 6 or Little, 2007: 74–84). Familiar usages probably carry special authority – they seem natural – but the audience may appreciate also novel or unconventional usages, such as “the international minuet” (Enloe, 2014 [1989]: 8) or “vast Shiva’s dance of the universe” (Boulding, 1978: 47). Coming up with new structural metaphors is basically easy: the characteristics and activities of people (and other animals) serve as a vast source domain for viewing states-as-people. Some of these new inventions might even point towards arguably better – more nuanced, more flexible, more analytical, more compassionate – ways to understand international actors and activities. People not only interact with nature, form families, balance weights, construct edifices, play games, do business, fall sick, go on journeys, perform music and solve puzzles, but also, say, consume food and beverages, worship gods, dream and have nightmares, paint pictures and perform tricks in circuses. All these pursuits could be utilized in bringing light to the international context. Some of these explanatory frameworks might be found interesting and helpful; they might stick. Others might be deemed too experimental and unconventional; they might be quickly forgotten. It is worth noting, however, that understanding states as people who form unions and are infected with diseases – common usages at the moment – is no more automatic or true than talking in terms of their indigestion, spiritual experiences or summersaults. All these metaphorical frameworks can help us

understand a distant and complex realm – international relations – via relatively simple everyday activities of people.

Finally, in addition to the possibility of coming up with novel structural or complex conceptual metaphors for international relations – like the ones just sketched – in principle, we also have room to imagine vis-à-vis the basic ontological metaphor of states-are-people. States could also be seen as atoms, chemical elements, planets, plants, ghosts, aliens, deities, etc. Interactions of states would then become chemical reactions, gravitational movements, lianas climbing trees or divine comedies. Most probably, someone has experimented with some of these already. Or one can substitute states as the human-like main actors in international relations with other metaphorical actors such as discourses, classes or firms (see Chapter 2). In practice, this has been done for example, by poststructuralist scholars who regularly see discourses as producing (international) power, Marxist scholars who accord agency to (international) classes, or scholars of global political economy who see the decisions of multinational corporations as fundamentally important (for international relations). In these realms, capitalists and workers may haggle over terms and conditions of global production, and firms enter into relationships and unions that may be either acceptable or against competition legislation. Despite the existence of these ontological alternatives, I argue that challenging the ontological metaphor is more difficult in practice than coming up with new structural metaphors. The disposition to understand the international realm in terms of people-like state actors is so deeply embedded in our imaginations that we keep repeating the practice even when we specifically try not to. Thus, even in the descriptions and explanations where other actors play an international role, states are usually included among the cast. Again, it is useful to remember that human-like states are as difficult to observe directly via sensory evidence as planet-like states or global firms as actors. Although the former has a more established cognitive status in international relations than the latter two, the existence and actions of all three rely on metaphors.

Although there might be some limits to what we can imagine vis-à-vis the international realm, the variety of metaphorical usages analyzed in this book demonstrates that very little is predetermined or set in stone. International events and actors can be understood and interpreted through many frameworks all of which carry their specific entailments and assumptions concerning appropriate reactions. Ultimately, we have a choice between the violent jungle and the buzzing playground, that is, whether we decide to see the moves of state actors in the context of savage animals or playful children. Moreover, although the first realm is usually understood as violent and the second as joyful, both realms encompass both conflictual and cooperational behavior. The daily activities in a jungle consist of a lot of nurturing and searching for mutually beneficial arrangements, and in playgrounds, bullies often must be dealt with. However, there is a difference between what one expects in the context of aggressive animals and aggressive children: in jungles,

deadly battles frequently take place, but no matter how difficult the situation among children at a playground, nobody expects to see daily bloodbaths. Contemplations like this might be useful when approaching the distant and elusive realm of international relations; it makes a difference which possibly self-fulfilling metaphorical framework is adopted in each situation, be the first impression of the situation conflictual or cooperational.

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