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Summary of Ch. 6, *Man, the State, and War*, by Kenneth N. Waltz

In chapter 6 of *Man, the State, and War*, Kenneth Waltz describes international politics as a realm of international anarchy. In developing this characterization, Waltz turns to the philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau as the intellectual precursor of the anarchical view of international relations, and distinguishes Rousseau's view of things from the philosophies of Spinoza and Kant, whose theories lead to competing views of international relations on Waltz's account.

Waltz writes that anarchy is characterized by a lack of "automatic harmony." States are free to use force to attain their goals; the fact that each state may use force is a factor which influences the policies of each state (p. 160).

Before presenting Rousseau's thought, Waltz presents a helpful review of Spinoza and Kant. Spinoza, says Waltz, maintains that the root of conflict is human imperfection. Humans have a tendency to let passion overwhelm reason, and hence engage in conflicts when they otherwise should cooperate. Following Spinoza, writes Waltz, ". . .The end of conflict must depend on the reform of man" (p. 162).

Kant, writes Waltz, agrees with Spinoza that humans often obey passion over reason, and hence are prone to fight one another. But while Spinoza locates this proclivity to war as a more or less permanent defect of human nature, Kant envisions the potential for "perpetual peace" among states through the establishment of a voluntary system of international law, which would be obeyed by states who have learned the lessons of history and hence see it in their best interest to obey.

Rousseau's philosophy begins by critiquing a common assumption of various political philosophies such as Hobbes—that human beings once existed in a state of nature in which their pride and envy created a situation of perpetual conflict and instability. Rousseau (along with Baron de Montesquieu) turns this Hobbesian assumption on its head by making the point that the vices of pride of envy are products of society and do not exist in human beings antecedent to the establishment of society. Rather, on Rousseau's view, humans are by nature weak and therefore hesitant to enter into conflicts. Only in society do they develop warlike vices.

The Rousseauian turn poses a challenge for those who argue, like Spinoza, that human nature is the cause of war. If humans are originally good, as Rousseau would have it, then where does conflict come from? Why would humans ever leave the peaceful state of nature?

Rousseau's answer, writes Waltz, is that conflict emerges from situations in which humans are forced to cooperate. He illustrates this point with a story. Five hungry men are forced to cooperate to hunt a stag for food. While the success of the project depends on each man performing his role, each has a strong incentive to "cheat" should a plump hare come scampering by during the course of the hunt. As Waltz puts it, "In cooperative action, even where all agree on the goal and have an equal interest in the project, one cannot rely on others" (p. 169). Conflict emerges from the requisite that the hunters have to rely on one another, not necessarily from any innate defect in human nature. The moral improvement of humankind, as recommended by both Spinoza and Kant (though in different ways) would not necessarily spell the end of war in a Rousseauian schema, as Rousseau identifies conflict potential as the product of any imperative to cooperate.

Rousseau's second important contribution to a theory of international relations is, argues Waltz, the clarification that states, not individuals are the primary actors in international politics. Individuals don't have personal quarrels with members of opposing countries during war; rather, they fight each other precisely because they are members of opposing *states*. Waltz concedes that both Spinoza and Kant also understand this basic point (p. 181). However, Rousseau's key contribution is to understand that conflict among states is a permanent feature of international politics. While Kant argues that states might be morally improved to resist the urge to go to war against one another, Rousseau claims that since a state always represents a particular will, even the best-governed state risks fighting an unjust war, from the standpoint of the entire system of states (this point is indeed an extension of the stag-hunt example: without an overarching authority to compel the stag-hunters, the hunt always risks dissolution in spite of the best intentions of the hunters).

Waltz concludes by arguing that for Rousseau, only a change in the "structure" of international politics could bring about an end to war. In particular, what Rousseau has in mind is the eradication of the anarchic nature of the world stage via the establishment of a universal government. Waltz rejects this measure (how could one ensure that such a government would always have sufficient force to obey its law?) but nevertheless recognizes the importance of Rousseau's theoretical insights to a structural theory of international relations.