

On the Unity of Idealism and Realism in the Political Thoughts of Kant and Aron

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Abstract: This paper highlights the necessity to reconcile idealism and realism in the political thoughts of Immanuel Kant and Raymond Aron as a condition of possibility for perpetual peace. This is because even if wars were supposed to be a step to peace, then the world has known enough wars that should have given rise to peace. Instead of asking for more wars to seek peace, we have to use the lessons learned from previous wars. In this quest for peace, the interpretations of Kant's and Aron's views as extreme idealism and extreme realism respectively is counter-productive because with the former, even if peace is the goal, the unsociable sociability of human nature gives rise to antagonism which conditions us to seek better ways of living with each other; while with the latter, even if power relations are a reality in international politics, we cannot ignore moral values, the quest of which justifies the existence of theories of international relations which become null and void if they glorify power relations for their own sake. Hence, the unity of political idealism and realism is posed as an antidote to the shadow and reality of war so as to help the international community to move from the state of nature to the "universal republic" or "stateless" world.

Keywords: Kant, Aron, idealism, realism, perpetual peace

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Introduction

That the world needs peace is almost a truism illustrated by continuous human efforts to obtain perpetual peace even if the said human efforts may not always yield the fruits aimed at exactly the way humans would have loved it. If the quest for peace is not just the goal of an idealist but also and above all that of a realist, then it is important to see how the realist is not a fanatic of descriptive analyses of bloody political situations as they are but one who moves from such descriptions to make prescriptions and predictions about improved outcomes when old failed methods are revised. If the quest for peace is not just an idealistic goal, then even the political idealist cannot ignore the practical obstacles that have made peace ventures unsuccessful in the past and in the present. In this case it is important to show how Kant, hitherto considered as an extreme political idealist is actually an idealist with realistic considerations on the political situation of his time and our time and whose views are betrayed by the interpretation on strict

idealistic lines especially when idealism is naively considered as a perfect situation that might never exist in reality and only ends in the mind of the author. In the same way, when Raymond Aron is considered as an extreme realist, there is a risky closeness to Machiavelli which Aron himself did not want when he sets out to build his theory of international relations. The idea, here, is not to show that it is impossible to diametrically oppose the two authors on strictly idealistic and realistic lines; it is more about proving that their convergence is as relevant as their divergence or even more relevant than their divergence when the quest for peace becomes more important than seeking to make some authors idealists and others realists at all costs. In this paper, we argue that the nearly ignored convergence of views between the two authors is actually the theoretical step that becomes a condition of possibility for perpetual peace when war is always around the corner.

I. Why Kant is not an “Extreme” Idealist

Because political idealism generally considers the necessity of moral values in political decisions and practices, the naïve interpretation of idealism as a painting of a perfect situation that does not exist and may never exist has gained grounds. This has had a negative effect on the interpretation of Kant’s theory of politics especially on the quest for perpetual peace in a world that has known wars in the past and in the present that is never far away from potential and real wars. This means that an idealist seems to be so disconnected from the political reality that he may not see the actual immoral and amoral practices that characterize the arena of politics. He ends up being a daydreamer in a space in which the reality is more important than our holy wishes. This is not exactly the case with Kant whose idealism cannot be considered “extreme” or radical or absolute because it is mixed with elements of realism.

On the other hand, political realism is considered as that theory which downplays the role of morality in state and inter-state actions and policies thereby laying more emphasis on power relations and the eternal quest for selfish interests in immoral and amoral conditions. This has given rise to considerations that make political theorizing look like a game of bloody descriptive analyses of beliefs and actions that never change and are only re-invented to find more ways to downplay morality or to only pretend to respect moral principles while in reality respecting the game of power and interest in inter-state relations on the international scene. From this angle, Kant does not seem to be a realist as his emphasis on the need for the moral foundation of politics implies that he might have failed to see the ‘realistic’ power relations that characterize the political scene in partial or complete indifference to morality or in sheer immorality even when the state actors pretend to hide behind the smokescreen of morality to do evil in the quest for state interest that knows no permanent friends nor permanent enemies.

Immanuel Kant is not an extreme idealist if we consider that he does not go daydreaming as if the world could just be a safe haven of peace when the moral foundation is laid for political action. Kant actually admits the reality of wars in the past and in the present but does not want us to make the present endeavors look like efforts to prepare for a future state of war. That is why he declares in *Perpetual Peace* that that “No peace settlement which secretly reserves issues for a future war shall be considered valid.”¹ A peace settlement comes after a war and this implies that in everything we do, we should always try to make war a thing of the past such that even if it happens to be part of our present, our current efforts should be to prepare a future void of war. This is not exactly the same thing as painting a perfect picture of a situation that does not exist and may never exist. If we firmly believe that peace will never be a reality then there is no need for peace treaties and successive world organizations created to keep the peace after the wars. Hence, with Kant, it is safer to say that even if war is a reality peace has to be the goal than to assume that humans are contented in immoral and amoral politics because political realism is the order of the day.

We might make reservations about the reality of perpetual peace but we all know that peace has been a reality at least at a temporary level in some areas though the world may never have completely known perpetual peace or peace in all places for all times. Considering that we cannot completely know how the situation will be for all times, perpetual peace is a goal that can only be proven to have been achieved in the present by the moments of peace that we create for the current generation and the possibilities of

peace that we create for the future. It is unfair to judge or actually misjudge an author as an extreme idealistic daydreamer just because he is paving the way for future possibilities of peace in the world. When such an author admits the reality of war without making it the goal of politics, he is somewhere midway between realism or idealism; he is idealistic in a realistic way or realistic in an idealistic way. This is because the goal of a moral foundation as a guarantee of peace in politics may have actually been achieved as a temporary moment especially in a peace settlement after hostilities; but this does not guarantee the perpetual peace as a reality of the future because a theorist cannot completely decipher the future; he can only make projections from current situations.

Even in the midst of a real war, Kant still thinks that “No state shall allow itself such hostilities in wartime as would make mutual trust in a future period of peace impossible.”² If we have to glorify war just so we can be considered as realists, then realism does no good to politics save that of descriptive analyses that can only go down in the records as history. If we have to consider that the current bloody situation is as a result of mistakes that can be corrected in the present and for the future, then perpetual peace is to be a product of both realism and idealism. Even when an author considers the reality of war and immoral and amoral practices that characterise the political arena, nothing stops the author from seeking ways and means to make the situation better which still does not make him a day-dreamer; it actually makes him a thinker who wants to put his thoughts at the service of humanity to better the human condition. If this were not the case, then wars would have been avenues of complete annihilation of humanity or self-extermination which makes theorising a vain endeavour. One does not need to be an extreme realist to be relevant in political theorising and one does not need to seek to avoid the idealism tag to be relevant. One needs to embrace elements of the two hitherto considered opposing camps as Kant did in order to move from the bloody reality of the past and of the present to build a peaceful reality for the future.

When Kant justifies the necessity for a republican constitution in which the state is ruled by a citizen with the power to vote, the absence of such a constitution implies that the ruler is the owner of the state who can go to war using any flimsy excuse and without considerations for the effects on the citizens of the state since he does not consider himself as a citizen but as the owner of the state. This is the sad reality of our day that Kant highlights to condemn and seek alternatives for a better future for humanity. If refusing to admit the reality of bloody situations is the charge used by realists against idealists, then Kant is even more idealistic than the supposed realists themselves. On the other hand, if we can prove that Aron gives consideration to moral values which is what realists are supposed to undermine, then we would have proven that Aron may even be more idealistic than the supposed idealists against whom his theory is often opposed from the naïve interpretative angle. With Kant, any ruler considered to be the owner of the state “can therefore decide on war for the most trifling reasons, as if it were a kind of pleasure party. Any justification of it that is necessary for the sake of decency he can leave without concern to the diplomatic corps who are always only too ready with their services.”³ Writing about such rule is supposed to make Kant a realist but that does not prevent the author from moving from this situation to propose an alternative of a republican constitution that makes the ruler a citizen representing other citizens in the decision-making process of the state and not the owner of the state. When you are sent to represent someone, you do not own the institution in which you are merely supposed to exercise representative powers for the sake of the people who delegated you.

Before re-uniting Kant with Aron, it is important to note an important view of Kant who wanted to avoid a situation whereby we have “[...] the heads of state, who can never get enough of war, or [...] philosophers who dream the sweet dream of perpetual peace.”⁴ In the place of the heads of state, we can put realists or authors who think that power relations and the game of interest are all that matters in political leadership. In the place of philosophers we can put idealists who think that perpetual peace is possible but fail to consider the immoral and amoral obstacles of politics that continuously prevent such a possibility from becoming a reality. Kant actually wants all idealists and realists to unite their efforts towards peace. Kant is aware of the vain diametrical opposition of realism and idealism and which opposition only serves to animate the gallery while the situation on the ground demands more of

collaboration than a vain war of words. While real wars are fought on the ground, political theorizing should not be a mere continuation of war in words with the aim of opposing schools of thought for the sake of opposing and to animate eternal debates in academic circles without ever coming to a compromise that can have a real impact on the situation on the ground. It is possible to say that even if wars were meant to be a step towards peace, then the world has had enough wars that should have given rise to peace already. If peace is not yet a reality and if perpetual peace is only a “sweet dream” then the worst thing we can do is to prolong the vain opposition between idealism and realism, instead of looking for common grounds between the two as a way of teaching by example the kind of compromise we expect in real life when states and individuals have almost irreconcilable differences.

II. Why Raymond Aron is not an Extreme Realist

Many interpreters are quick to point out the “realistic” lines in Aron’s theory to the detriment of the equally important idealistic lines that make his theory as balanced as that of Kant and that actually unites the two authors in their common quest for perpetual peace in the midst of seemingly perpetual wars. Raymond Aron plays along the lines of both idealism and realism because he admits the vain pursuit day-dreaming goals of idealism but does not eliminate the need for moral values in political action which, even if it is characterized by power relations, cannot be allowed to be reduced to solely a game of power relations. In the words of Raymond Aron, “[On] whether the so-called idealistic doctrines of absolute pacifism have not become the only form of prudence I conclude that fortunately or not, this is not at all the case: in the shadow of the thermonuclear apocalypse, [...] statesmen or simple citizens must act according to prudence, without the illusion or the hope of absolute security.”⁵ We can replace or add to the nuclear threat the reality of terrorism today used as a weapon by the weak to make their voices heard by the holders of power. When acts of terrorism are not just perpetrated by anarchists, then they must be considered justly as an expression of grievances amidst the frustrations that come from power relations that reduce the masses to beggars in their own states. While the hope for absolute peace may be a daydream, the need for prudence implies that the virtues still have a role to play especially in an arena full of caprices by actors who pretend to play by the rules but actually use power relations to go against all brandished rules. If Aron wanted to be seen as an extreme realist like Machiavelli, he would have glorified power relations without giving any room for virtue to regulate political action. If such were the case, there would have even been no need for theorising on situations that we cannot improve on.

To be fair with Aron, we need to avoid considering him as a consequentialist to whom the end would justify the means. We also need to avoid the moral skepticism often associated with his theory by naïve interpretations that ignore the moral norms he highlights so as to focus exclusively on power relations which are part and parcel of the political reality. Above all, we need to avoid considering Aron as a mere realist or an extreme realist just so we can prove that moral values have no role to play in politics. Trine M. Kjeldahl thinks that “[...] in his guidance of responsible politicians Aron also refers to norms and values beyond the immediate political situation.”⁶ The fact that power relations are part of what can now be considered as a political game does not mean that moral values are useless in political endeavours. From the reality of politicians hiding behind the smokescreen of morality even when they want to do evil, we can note that everyone knows the importance of such values. The decision to stick to such values is not often taken but prior to war and especially after the devastating effects of war, everyone appeals to these moral values to seek peace settlements that can help us to avoid future wars. This means that despite the reality of power relations, despite the reality of war, no one wants to make war a lifestyle for state and inter-state actors as such a lifestyle can only sow seeds for extermination of the human race especially in the nuclear era of Aron which the author dreaded.

Like Kant, Aron admits rationality in human nature but does not see human history to be governed by the same kind of rationality that is known to characterize human nature. Given that the supposed rational human beings are the same actors in history, it becomes clear that humans do not always exercise their gift of reason in the historical reality that is characterized by many wars and other situations of conflicts that put to question the supposed emergence of man from the state of nature to the civil society. Aron

thinks that this process has not yet been completed for if that were the case we would not need a theory of international relations to make it happen. This also amounts to admitting that any theory of international relations is supposed to seek peace in the midst of conflicts and not to glorify the conflicts that undermine human rationality. In *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*, Aron makes it clear that “It is reasonable for the great powers not to wage a war to the death, but if the philosophers have often defined man as a reasonable being, they have rarely asserted with the same assurance that human history deserved the same epithet.”⁷ The task of a theorist be him a realist or an idealist is not to describe these bloody historical realities and be contented in them but to seek ways to improve on the situation for the good of humanity. Given that the historical actors are rational human beings, despite the reality of power relations, war is not the ultimate goal of politics. If war is seen as a means to an end and if that end is peace, then we have had enough wars that should have led to peace. Since Aron thinks that the process has not yet been completed, it is not about seeking more wars to make peace a possibility but learning the lessons from the wars of the past so as to make the present and the future a symbol of the lessons learned and used to improve the human condition.

The test of the applicability of values is felt even in the active phase of war when two neighboring states can fight each other in an actual battle while still making provision for continuous collaboration in other spheres of life especially commerce. Except in cases of embargo when a country imposes trade restrictions with another state, the reality of war has never really stopped individuals of warring states from collaborating with each other in other aspects of life that are not destroyed by war. This justifies Aron’s point that because “[...] war is not an end in itself, military victory is not the goal in itself. Commerce between nations does not cease the day guns begin to speak; the belligerent phase takes its place in a continuity of relations always controlled by the collectivities’ intentions toward each other.”⁸ This is because despite the reality of war, humans know that they still need each other in one way or the other. This is also a manifestation of rationality in the midst of the irrationality of war. This proves that the rational element in humans is never completely defeated by the reality of war and that humans still seek higher values even when their animalistic instinct to war is leading them to take up weapons against each other. At this level, the author is actually striking a balance between realism and idealism. We cannot fight wars for the sake of the wars themselves. At the same time we cannot completely discard the reality of war. We cannot also assume that the rational element in human nature will always lead to absolute security for mankind. At the same time, this rational element is never completely subdued by war. We seem to live in the dialectics of peace and war whereby wars create conditions of peace but peace on the other hand seems to create further avenues for misunderstandings to arise that lead to more wars. In this dialectics of peace and war, if the moment of war is a “realistic” phenomenon, then the alternating moment of peace is an “idealistic phenomenon.”

The difficulty arises when we seek perpetual peace or lasting peace for humans in all places at all times. Even if this looks like a daydream, given the impossibility of completely predicting the future, we can say that all the temporary moments of peace that we have had in the past are supposed to add up in our era to our generation’s contribution to building perpetual peace for future generations. In the quest for perpetual peace, with Aron we need to avoid the limitation of theorising to the extremes of idealism and realism. In the words of Ariane Chebel d’Appollonia “Aron, however, dismissed theories of [International Relations] that reduced international politics to a struggle for power, as well as any theory of “national interest.” Realism became unrealistic, he argued, when its proponents ignored reality’s complexities.”⁹ Naïve or extreme realism actually adopts a simplistic view of reality as characterized by superficial power relations whereas the power relations actually manifest mankind’s struggle with moral values whose necessity he knows but which he finds difficult to apply in the competitive arena of international relations that creates conditions of mutual distrust and mutual exploitation and manipulation of states by other states. It is actually a sign that mankind knows that mutual collaboration and trust are important but struggles to apply it concretely for the good of the various states on the international scene.

The reality of power relations is an illustration of men whose rationality is weakened by appetites which they seek to tame. Even when they do not completely succeed to tame these appetites as in extreme cases

that lead to war, the aftermath of war and the return to the moral values in the quest for peace settlements prove that mankind ultimately seeks moral values in political actions even if extreme realists do not admit it until the world is pushed to the wall of the devastations of war. In the words of Ariane Chebel d'Appolonia: "Furthermore, 'the external behavior of states is not determined by the ratio of forces alone' [...]. A 'true realism' should acknowledge that 'even in the relations between states, respect for ideas, aspirations to higher values and concern for obligations have been manifested' [...]. Aron thus actually balanced a Machiavellian analysis of [International Relations] with a Kantian approach based on his philosophical conception of history."¹⁰ However, claiming that Aron seeks a balance between Machiavelli and Kant implies that Kant himself is interpreted as an extreme idealist which is not exactly true as we have argued in the previous subsection of this paper. However, the view implies that Aron is more Kantian than those who consider him an extreme realist may have assumed. That is why uniting the views of the two authors in the quest for perpetual peace is justified by the unity of political realism and idealism as well as the need to re-orientate the dialectics of peace and war towards more possibilities for the prolongation of temporary moments of peace.

III. The Unity of Realism and Idealism in the Quest for Perpetual Peace

The reference to Machiavelli becomes almost inevitable when one considers what Kant and Aron wanted to avoid as a wrong picture of realism that makes the world a bloody place of wars without end. Though Aron distanced himself from Machiavelli, he acknowledged the reality of power relations in the political arena. Though Kant was nowhere near Machiavelli's conception of immoral and amoral politics, Kant acknowledged the "unsociable sociability"¹¹ of human nature which means that antagonism between humans is the tool used by nature to bring humans to the table to discuss with each other on how to live better in a civil society ruled by laws to go beyond the changing fortunes of time when ruled by human whims and caprices. While Kant saw antagonism as a step to peace and while Aron saw power relations as a reality that needs to be tamed by human rationality, Machiavelli glorified power relations for the sake of power relations and only ended up creating conditions favourable for bloody relations in the state. According to Machiavelli, "[...] it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity. [...] if everything is considered carefully, it will be found that something which looks like virtue, if followed, would be his ruin; whilst something else, which looks like vice, yet followed brings him security and prosperity."¹² This is the glorification of immoral and amoral politics that cannot give room for perpetual peace as war is used as a permanent tool to keep the prince in power no matter what else is happening to the citizens and no matter what else is happening to the rest of the world. This is when the ruler is actually the owner of the state and not a representative of the people as Kant considers political rule in his idea of republicanism.

With Immanuel Kant and Raymond Aron, we need to unite the goals of realism and idealism towards perpetual peace even if perpetual peace to us is more of a prolongation of moments of peace between wars than a certainty of lasting peace without moments of war. Granting the reality of wars that we have had in our history, if we go by the precepts of Kant, the wars should have given rise to peace. If the wars have not yet given rise to perpetual peace, it is because we should not even have considered peace to be "perpetual" as if there were temporary peace. The end of hostilities means that if we do not make provision for future hostilities, then the peace we have is actually perpetual peace and we do not need to add the adjective "perpetual" to "peace" when the end of war does not give room for future wars. In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant holds that "No peace settlement which secretly reserves issues for a future war shall be considered valid. For such a treaty would represent a mere cease-fire, a postponement of hostilities, and not peace. For peace signifies the end to all hostilities, and even merely adding the adjective perpetual to the term renders it a suspicious-looking pleonasm."¹³ This implies that the power relations or unsociability that gives rise to war should condition humans, after seeing the devastation of war, to make peace deals in such a way as to avoid future wars. If we merely postpone hostilities to another day, then we are not working for peace but for permanent war interspersed by temporary moments of "peace" which are actually moments of preparation for more wars. Hence, if we use the term "peace" appropriately, then end of a conflict should lead to peace as perpetual peace and not peace as a

ceasefire. Therefore, perpetual peace is achieved when we prolong peace after conflicts and not when we assume that it is a far-fetched dream.

The quest for peace settlements after conflicts proves the unity of realism and idealism because the role of values comes to play in peace settlements when we actually express regret for the choice to go to war when peace was an option. Aron admits the reality of war in inter-state relations or what he calls “the shadow of war”: “Inter-state relations present one original feature which distinguishes them from all other social relations: they take place within the shadow of war, or, to use a more rigorous expression, relations among states involve, in essence, the alternatives of war and peace.”¹⁴ The quest for perpetual peace in the unity of idealism and realism is about eliminating the “shadow of war” in international relations. This is difficult to realize because “the art of politics teaches men to live in peace within collectivities, while it teaches collectivities to live in either peace or war. States have not emerged, in their mutual relations, from the state of nature. There would be no further theory of international relations if they had.”¹⁵ This boils down to working towards the realization of an international “civil society” that will permit the international community to move away from the “international state of nature” whereby states arm for war and claim to look for peace. The process that is supposed to have taken place within the states such that man should move from the state of nature to the civil society has not yet occurred at the international level. This means that Kant’s “unsociability” is what still reigns at the international level and this antagonism is supposed to take the inter-state relations to a state of sociability in a “world republic” or a “universal state” where international laws will put an end to all real and potential conflicts between states.

Kant and Aron agree, beyond idealistic and realistic lines, that peace is supposed to be perpetual and wars are only temporary moments of interruption of peace. This is contrary to the seemingly popular consideration of realism as a glorification of permanent wars. While Kant sees antagonism as a step towards better modes of collaboration between humans, Aron thinks that “The more severe wars become, the more men aspire to security.”¹⁶ This implies that wars interrupted peace and men have to return to peace which is supposed to be the normal phenomenon. If we go strictly by idealistic and realistic lines, we cannot get to this conception because the extreme realist will only see peace as a temporary step towards more wars while the extreme idealist will dream of an absolute state of peace that will never know war. Even if the “shadow of war” is always looming around us, the shadow cannot be allowed to be transformed into a real object. Even if peace reigns when war is an option, the option must not become a reality if the states of the world tame their selfish desires instead of waiting for the devastating effects of war to start doing what would have been done so that war should not even erupt. Even if we choose to go to war, we will still come back to talk peace and regret the choice to go to war. The war actually shows our struggle with sociability and unsociability. With education and a world governing body that can suppress the international state of nature, we can consider peace as a more permanent phenomenon than the temporary situation we see today. If peace were already a permanent deal there would have been no need for a theory of international relations as Raymond Aron rightly notes. This means that it is absurd to theorize on international relations to glorify war even if war is a reality. Theorists of international relations actually write to propose ways and means to avoid wars despite the shadow of war around us. whether we consider them as idealists or realists, the ultimate goal is peace which unites idealism and realism.

To reinforce the unity of idealism and realism, Immanuel Kant denies the traditional politics and morality. This is because theorists of immoral and amoral politics give the wrong impression that engaging in politics means doing evil as part of the requirements of politics. In such a case, morality can no longer be considered as the foundation of politics. Consequently, the theory that is supposed to give rise to the practice would have been discarded in favour of the practice which is impossible. In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant makes it clear that “[...] there can be no quarrel between politics, as the practical science of right, and morals, which is also a science of right, but theoretical. That is, theory cannot come into conflict with practice.”¹⁷ Theory gives rise to practice. Even if the situation on the ground does not correspond to the theory, we can adjust the theory not to suit and accept the wrong situation on the

ground but to re-orientate the situation on the ground towards the ultimate goal of politics which is peace. "For, in that case, we would need to understand under the term "ethics" or "morals" a universal doctrine of expediency, or, in other words, a theory of precepts which may guide us in choosing the best means for attaining ends calculated for our advantage. This is to deny that a science of morals exists.¹⁸ If politics can be practiced in the absence of morality then morality itself would not exist. It is not about proving that morality exists but can be undermined by politicians at the quest for selfish interests; it is about showing that if politics cannot be an application of morality then morality would not exist at all.

If Raymond Aron were the kind of realist that he is assumed to be then he would not have admitted the place of higher values in the practice of politics. It is more meaningful to admit that morality exists but is not always in line with what selfish politicians do than to claim that it does not exist at all. In the same line of thought, it is more logical to think that politicians acknowledge the role of morality but choose to do the wrong things only to return to morality later than to assume that they can survive completely in the absence of morality or in complete indifference to morality. The unity of idealism and realism in politics is about the return to the real place of values in a world in which the practice of immoral and amoral politics has shown its limitations in the numerous wars that the world has known and which have not yet given rise to peace. Rather than hope that we need more wars to work for peace, we can say that we have had enough wars that should make us work for peace without seeking to be considered as absolute realists or absolute idealists. Such extreme considerations not only prevent us from seeing the bigger picture of the complex reality but also and above all prevent us from putting in the necessary efforts to get to peace which is actually perpetual peace when peace deals are not just temporary moments of respite from war so as to return to war later but actual moment during which belligerents put an end to a current war and also put an end to all future wars. Such little efforts actually constitute the building blocks of perpetual peace which is not a dream but a reality built from personal and collective everyday endeavours.

CONCLUSION

Our goal in this paper had to do with seeking ways to build perpetual peace from a unity of idealism and realism in the political thoughts of Immanuel Kant and Raymond Aron when all efforts to consider the former as an extreme idealist and the latter as an extreme realist prove futile in a world that still lives not only in the shadow of war but in the reality of war between states and even in intra-state conflicts between rival groups within the same state. In such situations that require urgent measures to seek for peace, political theorists cannot be contented in the vain game of knowing who a true idealist is and who a true realist is. The glorification of the opposition between idealism and realism is as detrimental to the search for peace as the extreme realist's glorification of bloody situations as part and parcel of politics without seeking ways to change the situation for the better. Given that Kant and Aron are separated by a century, we have argued that their views are closer to each other than the century that separates them because what is considered as Kant's idealism gives consideration to the immoral and amoral practices of politics in the unsociable sociability of human nature while what is considered as Aron's realism gives consideration to moral values without which any theory of international relations cannot be considered as one. In the unity of idealism and realism, we have argued that we have more chances of obtaining perpetual peace when we consider peace treaties not as temporary moments of peace but as a permanent end to hostilities such that peace can always be perpetual without the need to add the adjective. If not then we will keep on with the cycle of the dialectics of peace and war which makes the world an unsafe place for all.

Given that standing armies scare states to make secret alliances with one another to prepare for war while claiming to work for peace, we have also argued that the transition from the state of nature to the civil society has to be extrapolated to the international community that still seems to live in the state of nature as one state is a potential threat to another. To make the conditions favourable for a "stateless world" or a universal republic, any political theory worthy of the names must propose ways and means to mitigate and put an end to conflicts that lead to wars at the international level even if civil wars are also a concern as they easily escalate to inter-state wars when factions within the same state start seeking support from

other states. In all our considerations, as far as Immanuel Kant and Raymond Aron are concerned, considering one as an idealist and the other as a realist is counter-productive in the quest for perpetual peace as such simplistic views can only animate the gallery in a world in which theories by philosophers are supposed to help us improve on the human condition. Uniting idealism and realism in the views of Immanuel Kant and Raymond Aron is thus considered as a step towards the realization of the aim of perpetual peace when philosophers have to be change-makers of their time.

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