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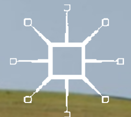
KONSTANTINOS KOSTAGIANNIS

REALIST THOUGHT AND THE NATION-STATE

Power Politics in the Age of Nationalism



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Konstantinos Kostagiannis

Realist Thought and the Nation-State

Power Politics in the Age of Nationalism

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Στη Ρούλα και τον Θανάση
Ευχαριστώ για όλα

Series Editor Foreword

As Editors of the Palgrave Macmillan History of International Thought series, we aim to publish the highest quality research on the intellectual, conceptual, and disciplinary history of International Relations. The books in the series assess the contribution that individual writers—academics, publicists, and other significant figures—have made to the development of thinking on international relations. Central to this task is the historical reconstruction and interpretation that recovers the intellectual and social milieu within which these authors were writing. Previous volumes in the series have traced the course of traditions, their shifting grounds, or common questions, exploring heretofore neglected pathways of international theory and providing new insight and refreshed context for established approaches such as realism and liberalism. We hope that the series will consolidate the historiographical turn that has taken place within academic International Relations with the growth of interest in understanding both the disciplinary history of the field and the history of international thought. A critical concern of the series is the institutional and intellectual development of the study of international relations as an academic pursuit. The series is expressly pluralist and as such open to both critical and traditional work, work that presents historical reconstruction or an interpretation of the past, as well as genealogical studies that account for the possibilities and constraints of present-day theories. The series is interdisciplinary in outlook, embracing contributions from International Relations, International History, Political Theory, Sociology, and Law.

We are looking to publish manuscripts that explore the mutually constitutive triangle of international relations, theory, and history. We take this to mean at the very least an appreciation of the importance of history in the theory of international relations, of theory in the history of international relations, and also of international relations in the history of international thought. In this last case, we hope that the series can become more broadly intercultural, increasingly including scholarship from outside Europe and North America as well as delving into the non-Western context of the development of international relations theory, since we believe that too much disciplinary history mirrors the Eurocentric character of our field.

Konstantinos Kostagiannis' intellectual history of four seminal realist thinkers is a valuable contribution to the debate on the history and theory of realism in International Relations. The historiographical turn has, in part, contributed to a renewed interest in exploring the roots of realist theory. As Duncan Bell and others have recognized, we now have a much deeper and nuanced understanding of realism compared to the caricatured depictions of the past. Rather than a timeless tradition of essential thinkers stretching from Athens to the present, we now have a variety of studies of specific scholars that display the sophisticated and amorphous nature of those often identified with the so-called realist tradition. The new literature on realism has even contributed to a questioning of whether there is a singular realist tradition. Kostagiannis engages with the realist tradition by considering E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, John Herz, and John Mearsheimer as members of this illustrious tradition. He justifies their inclusion by making it quite clear that each of these four members of the realist tradition are united by the attention they all placed on the central concepts of power and the nation-state.

Although Kostagiannis makes a strong case for examining the relationship between the concepts of power and the nation-state in realist thinking across the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, he at the same time recognizes that the four scholars he is examining did not all agree on the meaning of these two central concepts. This is especially the case with power, for although all realists consider the primacy of power they also have very different understandings of this central concept. Kostagiannis argues that power is an elusive and contested concept in realist writings. He displays great care in unpacking the respective understandings that Carr, Morgenthau, Herz, and Mearsheimer have of power. Kostagiannis argues that the centrality of power is of profound importance for understanding their respective conceptions of the nation-state and its ideological corollary,

nationalism. In other words, he argues that there is a powerful interrelation of the concepts of power and the nation-state, and much of the meaning of the latter depends on getting the lasting concept of power correct.

Kostagiannis' project is one of intellectual history whereby he traces the evolution of the interrelation between the notions of power and nation-state in realist thought. He pursues this project in a historiographically self-conscious manner. He makes the argument that both text and context matter. In this manner, Kostagiannis considers the intellectual background of each thinker he examines as well as the historical context of the period they were working. What emerges is a sophisticated account of realist theory via the writings of Carr, Morgenthau, Herz, and Mearsheimer. This is facilitated by a concerted focus on two enduring concepts: power and the nation-state. In the difficult and tumultuous period that we are currently living through, a new and engaging book on realism could not be more timely.

Preface

This book's origins can be traced back to October 2001 when, as a first-year undergraduate student at Panteion University, I enrolled for a course on the history of the Balkans offered by Marilena Koppa. This was the first time, I believe, when it clearly occurred to me that the national history in which I had been schooled for more than a decade of primary and secondary education was not a mere collection of objective facts. This grand narrative was revealed to be only *one* amongst several—and often competing—interpretations of the shared past of the peoples inhabiting this small peninsula. From that moment, I became interested in the study of nationalism and its myths, as well as its impact on international politics. I had the chance to get a better idea of the latter through the courses on Greco-Turkish relations and protection of minorities which were taught by Angelos Syrigos. As part of these courses we visited the minorities on both sides of the border and thus got a first—even if no doubt incomplete—impression of the impact of nationalism on their lives.

The interest in realism would only come after the completion of my undergraduate studies. During my undergraduate years, my view of realism did not diverge much from its textbook representation as a state-centric and essentially conservative approach. E.H. Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis* made quite an impression on me in that it did not exactly fit the idea I had about realism, but it was, I thought, an exception. It was when I started a master's degree at the University of Edinburgh that my view of realism would change. There, I had the chance to attend Seán Molloy's classes on international relations theory. Seán's emphasis on the study of original texts,

rather than their textbook representations, triggered my interest in classical realists and their scepticism towards nationalism. Seán became my supervisor for the doctoral thesis which formed the basis for the book at hand. He has been a knowledgeable mentor whose encouragement and support has been essential not only for the completion of my thesis and the work towards this book, but also for my overall academic development. His generous advice and friendship throughout those years have been invaluable.

I am also indebted to Vassilis Paipais for his insightful commentary on my work, and especially on Morgenthau, as well as his patient advice. I am thankful to Juliet Kaarbo, Richard Ned Lebow, and Andrew Neal who engaged in-depth with the thesis which led to this book, and provided me with extensive and thought-provoking commentary. This book has also benefited at various stages from the feedback and suggestions of Dan Kenealy, Lucian Ashworth, Xavier Guillaume, Jan Eichhorn, Nikos Sotirakopoulos, Assem Dandashly, and Hylke Dijkstra. The participants of the Politics and Culture in Europe research day at Maastricht University, where I presented an early version of this book, offered valuable comments, as did the participants of workshops and conferences where I previously presented parts of the work. The department of political science at Maastricht University has my gratitude for offering a reduction of teaching load for the academic year 2016–2017, which allowed me to spend more time on the book. My fellow inhabitants of the offices I shared at the universities of Edinburgh and Maastricht have my gratitude for creating a pleasant working environment.

I am thankful to the editors of the *Palgrave Macmillan History of International Thought* series, Brian Schmidt and David Long, for offering me the opportunity to publish my book as part of the series and for kindly providing the foreword. The anonymous reviewer offered insightful remarks and suggestions. Chris Robinson provided helpful guidance in the early stages of the book. I am thankful to Carol Ross as well as Namami Ghosh and Manjula Sridhar for their assistance in copyediting the book. Any remaining mistakes, needless to say, are my own. Special thanks should go to John Stegner, who dealt with all my questions and requests promptly and patiently and to Rijo George for his assistance during the production of the book.

The beginning and completion of this project would have been impossible without the support of my family. My parents, Thanassis and Roula, to whom this work is dedicated, have always been there for me and supported me in all my choices. They have my deepest gratitude for all the patience

they have shown in the last three decades. I would also like to thank my brother Panagiotis for being a refreshing influence and for taking interest in my work. Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Pigi Chroni, whom I met in the second year of my doctoral studies—and who patiently went through the references of the book to spot any mistakes that might have slipped my attention. I am grateful for all the kindness that you have shown me in these years and feel especially privileged to have you by my side.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

It was in 1999, one decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall, that Colin Gray attempted to defend realism against emerging tendencies in international theory, and in so doing made special reference to the enduring legacy of the realist tradition. Such a tradition, and more specifically classical realism, he claimed, might have looked unattractive amidst the optimism which prevailed in the wake of the Cold War. This, however, did not necessarily make it any less accurate: "Much that is apparently boring and old-fashioned happens also to be true, or true enough."[1] It is the eternal truths of realism, he claimed, that can guide students of international relations in their effort to avoid confusing what is ephemeral with what is lasting.[2] In this book, I seek to elucidate the interrelation of two concepts central to realism, one of them ephemeral, and the other one lasting. The lasting concept is that of power, while the ephemeral one is the nation-state. But why, one might wonder, is this interrelation between power and the nation-state one that is worth elucidating in the first place?

As I hope to establish through the pages of this introduction, the centrality of the concept of power in realism can offer a starting point to fruitfully trace the evolution of realist thought on the nation-state and its ideological corollary, nationalism. With the second decade of the twenty-first century ending, it becomes increasingly clear that the optimistic context against which Gray voiced his spirited defence of realism has all but disappeared. Far from being spent forces, the nation-state and nationalism have displayed considerable resilience in the face of globalisation and

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regional integration. The ghosts of nationalism have even displayed a resurgence in some places which until recently were thought to have put them to rest. The relative neglect with which the phenomenon of nationalism has been met in the domain of International Relations (IR) is, therefore, no longer tenable.[3] At the same time, realism, the theory that is commonly associated most closely with the state in textbooks, seems to also have weathered the challenges raised against it and remains one of the key theories of international relations, especially in the bleaker post-9/11 world.[4]

Approaching Nations, Nation-States, and Nationalism

I have already used terms such as "nation-state" and "nationalism" whose meaning is not universally agreed. I also attached the epithet "ephemeral" to the nation-state. This too is a claim that is not self-evident. I will therefore start my discussion with a brief exposition of the way I understand those key concepts in the present book. The definition of key terms like "nation" and "nationalism", the understanding of their nature, the establishment of the relationship between them, and the question of whether they are distinctly modern phenomena have all been central concerns in the study of nationalism as a distinct field of academic enquiry.[5] Despite some early works in the first half of the twentieth century, a "fully fledged literature on nationalism" took a while to develop and interest in the subject intensified only in the 1960s and 1970s, triggered by decolonisation and the resulting proliferation of states.[6] There is now an extensive literature on nationalism but, as is often the case with social sciences, "there are no neat definitions of the key concepts".[7]

One of the most vivid debates in the literature of nations and nationalism is the one concerning the novelty of the phenomena. The dominant approach is without doubt that of modernism, which claims that nations and nationalism are inextricably linked to the advent of modernity.[8] The opposite view, the one advanced by ethnosymbolists, emphasises the cultural continuities between the age of nationalism and previous times, and questions the depth of the rift between traditional and modern societies.[9] Ethnosymbolists are correct to point out the—often neglected by modernists—usage of pre-existing cultural material by nationalism. It would be a mistake, however, to underestimate the qualitative difference between traditional and modern societies.[10] The "natural" communities, fixed social roles, and certainty that characterised traditional societies are replaced by the fluidity, social mobility, and uncertainty of modern societies. This transition

engenders the need for a new form of collectivity, one that manages to both transcend traditional collectivities and integrate them. The modern ideology of nationalism, by appropriating the past as a national past and projecting the nation on a continuum of past, present, and future, tries to address this challenge.[11] Ultimately, therefore, it is not the pre-existing cultural material per se that matters but the way it is appropriated by modern societies.[12] As Ernest Gellner noted, it is irrelevant whether a nation has a genuine "navel" that connects it to the past or whether it must invent one: what matters is "the need for navels engendered by modernity".[13]

Nationalism, then, is a distinctly modern phenomenon. When it comes to defining it, one can start from the concept of a modern ideology broadly understood as a system of ideas offering both explanatory statements about the world and prescriptions about how it ought to be. The feature distinguishing modern ideology from its traditional counterpart is that it does not seek its explanations outside social reality, and is therefore secular rather than metaphysical.[14] Nationalism as an ideology thus contains both descriptive and prescriptive elements: the world is divided into distinct nations, loyalty to them should trump all other loyalties, and nations should be politically independent.[15] The core elements of the nationalist doctrine are also evident in the way nations imagine themselves, as discussed in Benedict Anderson's widely cited definition. The nation, he explains, can be understood as an "imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign".[16] Each member of such an "imagined community" will never meet in person all its other members, but still recognises them as such. The nation is imagined as "limited" since "no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind", and as "sovereign" because as a concept it emerged at the time of collapse of the dynastic realm, when pluralism was replacing universalism and the sovereign state was transforming into a symbol of freedom.[17]

This latter element of sovereignty that a nation aspires to brings in a final and important distinction, that between the nation and the state. The two concepts have been used interchangeably for some time, but are different as the former refers to the cultural and the latter to the political realm.[18] Nationalism, as Gellner nicely put it, might claim that the two are destined for each other, but nations and states are contingencies and in reality "not the *same* contingency".[19] The very coining of the term "nation-state" therefore, as Walker Connor correctly suggested, "illustrated an appreciation of the vital differences" between the two. As such, the term "was designed to describe a territorial-political unit (a state) whose borders coincided or nearly

coincided with the territorial distribution of a national group".[20] Such a definition, however, if strictly applied would fail to fit the bill for most existing states. I am therefore proposing to take a somewhat more flexible approach to the term here, one that understands the nation-state as a distinctly modern manifestation of the sovereign state, associated with nationalism as its legitimising principle.[21]

Approaching Realism(s)

When John Mearsheimer responded to his critics in an article titled "The More Isms the Better", he most probably did not have in mind more *real*-isms.[22] Recent scholarship by realists and about realists abounds and there is now a marked proliferation of realisms. Apart from the traditional categories of "classical" and "structural" realisms, the debate between "defensive" and "offensive" realists within the latter camp, or the introduction of "neoclassical" realism, there is a continuing process of invention and reinvention of new categories of realism.[23] As a result, the same realist can be now classified under several, often overlapping, subcategories of realism.[24] Fortunately, the number of realist labels has not so far exceeded the number of realists available for categorisation. The necessity to somehow deal with what Robert Gilpin, rather modestly, described as the "richness" of realist tradition has triggered two main responses.[25]

Both reactions can be traced back to the period following the publication of Kenneth Waltz's seminal *Theory of International Politics* and his self-professed break with "classical realism".[26] One response was to try and distil a set of core assumptions, common to all realists, which can form the basis of a coherent realist tradition while glossing over the existing tensions.[27] Various efforts to approach realism as a paradigm fall within this category. The number of core assumptions identified might vary from just one, namely power optimisation in the model forwarded by Bahman Fozouni, to several as displayed in the efforts of John Vasquez, Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, Robert Keohane, and others.[28]

The second response was originally identified with early criticisms of neorealism such as the ones coming from Richard Ashley and R.B.J. Walker, who emphasised the differences between the two schools and, at least initially, represented a minority position.[29] Robert Cox, for instance, attempted to recover a historicist realist tradition as represented by E.H. Carr and explore its affinities to critical theory as opposed to the gradual transformation of American realism to what he called a "problem-solving

theory".[30] Walker highlighted the tensions inherent in realism by focusing on the distinction between historicism and structuralism and in a similar fashion Ashley advocated a return to some of the insights offered by classical realists as part of a model that "would more than surpass neorealism".[31]

This tendency was continued in the early 2000s by a number of authors that Brent Steele described as "reflexive realists".[32] What unites authors like Anthony Lang, Richard Ned Lebow, and Michael Williams is their attempt to shift focus from the explanatory theories offered by neorealism or neoclassical realism and recover "classical realist principles of agency, prudence, and the recognition of limitations".[33] One could add here the various efforts in recent scholarship that aim at recovering important aspects of the thought of classical realists, often in direct opposition to the main premises that are represented by contemporary realists. Revisionist historiography is not limited to realism but the latter is singled out as its main beneficiary.[34] Some of those efforts concentrated on reinvestigating neglected insights in the works of realists that by now are considered as classics. The renewed interest in realists like E.H. Carr, Hans J. Morgenthau, and John Herz is an example of such efforts.[35] Others are focused on recovering the contribution of classical realists in the study of specific themes. Here William Scheuerman's work on realist visions of global reform and Seán Molloy's challenge of the paradigmatic reading of realism come readily to mind.[36] Finally, there are collective efforts that combine both approaches.[37]

Revisionist scholarship on realism certainly managed to reinterpret realism as "a sophisticated, albeit amorphous body of political thought", as Duncan Bell claims, but the recovery of this complexity comes at a cost.[38] If realism is indeed as amorphous as recent efforts have demonstrated and there are "nearly as many realisms as realist protagonists", as Guzzini would have it, then the question arises whether it makes any sense to continue applying the label at all.[39] Indeed, some authors seem to believe that realism is in fact *too* rich for its own good. The general label "realism", they posit, obscures so many differences that it would be preferable to abandon it altogether or use its categories very cautiously and only as starting points.[40] How are we then to approach realism?

The main argument in support of a paradigmatic reading of realism is that "realism has become just one box in the typologies of the Inter-Paradigm Debate".[41] As such, realism must be clearly demarcated to be kept distinct from competing paradigms.[42] This position is unsatisfactory.

Guzzini's claim that "all classical realists have travelled on institutionalist or constructivism-inspired terrain" is indicative of the problems associated with efforts to define realism so narrowly.[43] The problem with this statement is not primarily that Guzzini, anachronistically, caught the classical realists trespassing on "enemy territory". For the classical realists, themselves, given the comparative novelty of constructivism and institutionalism in IR, such a claim would have little meaning. The main problem is, rather, the implications of such narrow definitions for any meaningful engagement with IR theory.

Narrowing down realism to only a few core assumptions can only aggravate the academic tribalism that is often deplored.[44] David Lake aptly summarised some of the pathologies associated with such an approach. In their effort to identify "easily recognisable schools", he claims, IR scholars have to reduce subtlety and oversimplify; the need to innovate encourages them to take extremist positions; they mistake traditions for theories and try to pit them against each other; they are partial to evidence that supports their own theories; and finally, they strive for intellectual hegemony.[45] While Lake paints a particularly bleak and somewhat exaggerated image, his remark that such tendencies "transform research traditions into insular 'sects' that eschew explanation in favour of theology" is revealing of the implications of such an oversimplification for the sake of paradigmatic rigidity.[46] The result of such a process is a division of the discipline into warring tribes that often talk past each other.[47]

A second, and related, problem is the encouragement of the tendency to caricature traditions one is critical of. This applies to all traditions, and realists for their part are not innocent of the practice as revisionist scholarship on the first debate demonstrated.[48] There are, of course, practical reasons for the tendency to caricature, especially given the broad scope of the discipline and the available literature. As Scheuerman observes, "critics of realism have made things too easy for themselves by embracing a simplistic and occasionally caricatured interpretation".[49] Given the amount of existing literature illustrating the diversity of realist tradition, however, such a position is untenable. Scheuerman is thus right to claim that, despite its obvious practical merits, the replication of conventional wisdom is unsatisfactory for "anyone who is committed to intellectual integrity".[50]

For these reasons, I will try to engage with realists on their own merits rather than subsuming them to a preconceived set of assumptions. That said, I am also sceptical of the extreme manifestation of this way of approaching realism—that is, the claim that the label is meaningless and it

might be better to dispense with it altogether. In their paradigmatic manifestation "isms" have certainly been problematic but they still facilitated intellectual debate about theoretical assumptions and commitments.[51] One does not need to return to the rigidity of a paradigm to salvage the utility of general labels such as "realism". I instead propose to approach realism here under a framework which allows for the use of the term whilst keeping intact the diversity of the authors who belong to the school. This framework is "family resemblance".

In one of the responses to Legro and Moravcsik's complaints about the degeneration of the realist paradigm, Gunther Hellman remarked that what realist scholars share is not a set of assumptions, but *family resemblances* as defined by Ludwig Wittgenstein.[52] For Wittgenstein, family resemblance does not require a predetermined set of similarities since the latter can "crop up and disappear". Similarities form a "complicated network" and are "overlapping and criss-crossing". If one succumbs to the temptation of drawing a boundary for the term one tries to define, it can only be valid for "that special purpose" for which the definition was designed and corresponds to.[53] As such, family resemblance can be employed to signify that "*individuality and similarity* can be thought of as useful surrogates for *generality and identity*".[54] Some authors have already applied the concept to realism in an effort to transcend the limits of a paradigmatic version.[55] The flexibility inherent in such an approach allows for a study of different realists which does not try to marginalise aspects of their thought that do not fit with preconceived sets of assumptions. Furthermore, it allows for the reoccurrence of core themes without having to limit them conceptually.

Power and the Nation-State in Realist Thought

Even within the approach which tries to distil core assumptions from realism, the identification of such assumptions varies from author to author. The examination of the core assumptions collected in paradigmatic readings of realism reveals that power is central to all of them and state-centrism to most.[56] As such, both concepts are considered central for the realist intellectual agenda for most of the relevant literature. In this part I claim that the concepts themselves are often theorised insufficiently in an effort to fit realism into a paradigmatic reading, and I examine how revisionist literature has contributed in forming a more nuanced perspective. I look first at the notion of power, since this is present in virtually all secondary readings of realism, before engaging with the assumption of state-centrism.

The concept of power has been associated with realism in IR for so long that it is often interpreted as the exclusive domain of realism.[57] For some commentators it is precisely this centrality of power that accounts for the very "continuity of the realist tradition".[58] Identifying power as the key element of realism poses, however, a problem for the coherence of the tradition due to the indeterminacy of the concept. Power is an essentially contested concept and, while Ringmar's insistence that IR scholars are particularly prone to displaying a poor understanding of it based on intuition might have some merit, one must not jump at the conclusion that other fields of political science have decisively managed to tackle the elusiveness of power.[59] A second problem arises with placing power alone at the core of realism. Despite some authors' lamentations that realism's monopolisation of power is preventing other scholars from developing alternative discourses of power, the focus on power is not exclusive to realism.[60] As such, having not only an elusive concept at its core but also not uniquely so can bring to question the distinctiveness and coherence of realism as a tradition.

The elusiveness of the concept of power often goes unnoticed in debates about its role in realist thought. Most of the debate about realist conceptions of power, and indeed most paradigmatic representations, focuses on the repetition of the idea that realists approach power in terms of material capabilities, with a particular emphasis on military capabilities.[61] Furthermore, it is often associated with Robert Dahl's famous formulation that "*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do".[62] Indeed, if one summarises realist conceptualisations of power as "the ability of states to use material resources to get others to do what they otherwise would not", as Barnett and Duvall do, the connection between realism and Dahl's formulation seems natural.[63] Whilst the connection of realism to Dahl is somewhat inaccurate and should not be overstated, the temptation to narrow down the concept of power in realism is understandable.[64] In fact, some realists themselves have often contributed to this entrenchment by favouring conceptualisations of power that focus exclusively on material capabilities and their accurate measurement.[65]

The diversity of realist conceptualisations of power, however, has not gone entirely unnoticed. Brian Schmidt, for instance, cautioned against conceiving realist conceptualisations of power in a monolithic way that does not do justice to the diversity of the tradition.[66] Molloy discussed the different conceptualisations of power in classical realists to demonstrate that they do not fit the paradigmatic reading of realism and that power is not

for all realists analogous to money or synonymous to coercion.[67] And even within the body of literature which claims that the dominant role of realist conceptualisations of power should be challenged, it is recognised that realists' views on power often transcend the narrow interpretations normally attributed to them.[68]

The second assumption commonly associated with realism is state-centrism. Bell correctly observed that regardless of distinctions between classical or structural realism, the school "is routinely defined in terms of its state-centrism".[69] Indeed, one point often raised by critics of realism is its tendency to take states as given.[70] This is not to assume that realists ignore the variety of forms that political units can take throughout history. As Waltz himself and several commentators of realism acknowledge, units can take various forms ranging from empires or city-states to modern states, but they are "like units" in that they diachronically perform similar functions due to the external constraints imposed on them by anarchy.[71] As such, realism's alleged state-centrism could be better defined as group-centrism as Gilpin suggests.[72] Of course, this preposition can also be challenged to the extent that it assumes that all units will behave in the same way under a condition (anarchy) that is presumed to be static. Much of the conversation about realism and the state has thus been concentrated around questions about the validity of such a generalisation and whether it is capable of effectively accounting for structural change.[73] Under this light, the criticism of realist state-centrism can be reformulated more realistically to the criticism that realists tend to anachronistically universalise the experience of the modern state.

The alleged state-centrism of realism has gained some attention in revisionist literature. Works by revisionist scholars contributed significantly in recovering classical realist visions of the state, thereby challenging the dominant approach. Molloy identified incompatibilities between conceptions of the state as displayed in the works of Carr and Morgenthau and the paradigmatic reading of state-centrism.[74] Scheuerman engaged with a wide range of classical realist authors in order to demonstrate that not only were they sceptical about the nation-state but also embraced the prospect of global reform.[75] Bell observed that even for contemporary realists the state should not be a core concept. What follows from assumptions of anarchy and power, he claims, is not necessarily state-centrism but, rather, sovereignty-centrism.[76] To these efforts one can add the pioneering work of John M. Hobson who tried to transfer the "second state debate" from sociology to IR. Through his distinction between the domestic agential

power of the state and its international agential power he offers an alternative angle of the way the state is approached in realism. More specifically, he claims that there is a sharp distinction between neorealists, who grant the state very high domestic agential power but none internationally; and classical realists, who see domestic agential power as varying and allow the state sufficient international agential power. This allows classical realism to engage more seriously with the state whereas neorealism marginalises it.[77]

Both power and the state have, therefore, been the subjects of extensive discussion in the literature about realism, both in its conventional variant and in the efforts of revisionist scholars. By demonstrating the mostly peripheral importance of state-centrism, revisionist scholarship has helped demonstrate that Barry Buzan was right in claiming that it is power that is probably the most persistent theme in realism. The precise relationship between those two concepts, however, has not been directly addressed. At the most basic level, Buzan's claim that the state is important for realism insofar as it "is the dominant wielder of power in the international system" summarises the most obvious connection between the two concepts.[78] Power can be understood as something that states possess and can exercise "over" other states. Supremacy in terms of power accumulation can lead to state adaptation which mostly accounts for transformations in the form of political units.[79] This view, however, presupposes a conception of power in terms of capabilities as represented by the conventional view of realism.

The connection becomes much less clear when one considers the diversity of realist conceptualisations of power. Hobson's work, while persuasively making the case for different levels of international agential power of the state between classical and structural realism, does not focus on the conceptualisations of power underpinning the theories of the realists he discusses.[80] Molloy recovered the complexity of realist visions of both power and the state but his primary focus is to demonstrate the difficulty of accommodating realism within a paradigm and as such does not deal with the connection between the two extensively.[81] The most detailed account of classical realism and the nation-state comes from the work of Scheuerman. Not only does he focus on the nation-state specifically (rather than the "state" in general), but he also identifies the importance of power both for the successes and for the expected downfall of the nation-state, in the work of classical realist authors.[82] Scheuerman is mostly concerned with demonstrating what classical realism has to offer in terms of discussions in cosmopolitan theory and the potential of a world state. As such, while he elucidates aspects of the connection between power and the nation-state, he

does so without focusing on the variety of realist conceptualisations of power. Secondly, given the focal point of global reformism in his work, he does not examine any structural realists since their scepticism towards the latter is grounded on a presumed perpetuity of international anarchy. The connection between power and the nation-state thus remains largely implicit or unidirectional in existing literature.

The Book at Hand: A Project of Intellectual History

In this book, I employ the diverse conceptualisations of power found in realist authors as my starting point. The recovery of realist conceptualisations of power is, I claim, an essential prerequisite if one aims to understand how different realists have approached the nation-state. This book is, then, a project of intellectual history which traces the evolution of the interrelation between the notions of power and the nation-state in realist thought. I focus on four key realists who are also representative of the development from classical to structural realism. In the following lines, I outline my approach to intellectual history and explain why I preferred to focus on individual realist authors.

In one of his early engagements with the problem of intellectual history, Quentin Skinner identified two conflicting methods for approaching the history of ideas and found them both wanting. On the one hand, the historian of ideas can focus solely on the *text* itself in an effort to identify universal meanings regardless of the historical or social context of its production. Conversely, an approach which focuses on the *context* of a text's production, be it historical, social, or cultural, places more importance on that context than on the text itself.[83] The problem with intellectual history, however, lies with the dualism inherent in ideas. Ideas can be "abstract and universal" but at the same time, when uttered by a particular thinker they also become "a specific occurrence which has a spatio-temporal location and a social context".[84] While philosophers are interested in the first aspect of ideas and historians in the second, the intellectual historian is in the unenviable position of having to identify the *via media* between the two.[85]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, efforts to identify an ideal balance or provide the "right" methodology for engaging with intellectual history, including Skinner's own contextualism, have not been conclusive.[86] The attempt to adopt the "right" methodology might, as Kenneth Minogue's overview reveals, be problematic in that it commits the intellectual historian to a philosophical background that is not necessarily helpful in addressing the question set.[87]

This, however, does not mean that the insights gained through such debates should be ignored. The most honest position seems to me to be one advocated in recent overviews of the debate: that "either a pure universalism or a pure contextualism" should be rejected in favour of the middle ground which allows for a more pluralistic view of politics.[88] As such, any effort to engage in intellectual history should be able to take into account both the text and its context.[89]

I will thus consider both the intellectual background of each realist and the context of the period in which they produced their work. I do not of course claim to offer the only valid reading of the authors I am about to discuss. When interpreting a text the reader "inevitably contributes something to a text that affects what he or she gets out of it".[90] The realists examined here can be said to present a less acute problem than the one discussed by David Welch, namely, that Thucydides is separated by modern IR scholars not only by time but also by belonging to a different interpretative community, but the core of the issue remains. While it is impossible for the reader to extract the precise meaning of the text they study, awareness of this limitation can help the reader to at least try to minimise the projection of their own ideas upon the author under examination.[91]

The first aspect of the book thus entails a close examination of the original writings and their background to recover the writers' perspective. Such an examination, however, does not merely aim to reconstruct neglected aspects of the realists' works. It also aims at critically evaluating them and identifying their merits but also their limits, and their potential contribution to current debates about power and the nation-state. For that purpose, engagement with the secondary literature on those authors is as important as the attention accorded to the original texts. The approach followed in that context does not differ significantly from the "explicit reliance upon the exercise of judgement" and the "scientifically imperfect process of perception or intuition" that characterised what Hedley Bull once described as the "classical approach".[92]

I have not yet, however, explained why I decided to examine realism through a set of representative thinkers. I have already discussed why, given the limitations of paradigmatic approaches, an engagement with a catch-all and oversimplified version of realism is to be rejected. Other ways to offer a narrative of the discipline are "great debates" and the study of classic texts. The first are problematic in that they are often historically inaccurate. The second, based as it is on the study of individual texts, can only offer snapshots of the development of the discipline and is not applicable to a

project of intellectual history that is focused on the development of the interplay between two key concepts.[93] As such the only option left is to follow the fourth strategy of engaging with individual authors rather than paradigms or particular texts. This too is an imperfect approach since it is "particularly predisposed to hagiography".[94] It is the only approach, however, that can be followed if one is to both keep the idea of a realist tradition, even if in the broad sense previously outlined, and be attentive to the diversity of that tradition. Furthermore, the problem of bias can be at least somewhat mitigated through critical engagement with the original texts as well as by considering critical debates in secondary literature. In the following part I will explain which realists I selected and why preferred them over other, sometimes more obvious, choices.

Four Seminal Realists

Before explaining my selection of four seminal realists, it is worth discussing why I decided to discuss only four of them. Lucian Ashworth outlined succinctly the limits of a maximalist endeavour which would entail the study of a wide range of authors. Such an effort, he claims, "would give only a cursory understanding of the various authors, while leaving no room for discussing the influences on, and the contexts of, these authors".[95] Since my aim is to recover the evolution of realist thought on the nation-state in the past 70 years, the only way of allowing an in-depth engagement with the topic is to restrict the range of realist authors discussed. Such a restriction is also in line with the previously outlined premise that engagement with intellectual history presupposes that adequate attention is paid to both the texts and their context. Having established that in-depth engagement with a limited range of authors is preferable to superficial engagement with a wide range of authors, at least for a project of intellectual history, the question of *which* authors needs to be addressed.

A set of three criteria was employed to identify the specific authors to engage with. Similarly to the effort undertaken by Ashworth, the first criterion is that the combination of their writings can reveal the development of realism.[96] As such, the authors selected should belong to different strands of realism and be representative of different stages in its development. The second criterion is one of importance. The realists under examination should be important figures who had considerable influence on the development of the tradition. Attributes such as "importance" or "influence" of a certain author, however, are neither self-evident nor static in

time. There are of course, realist authors whose status as seminal is demonstrated by the profound impact of their work on the discipline as well as from the continuous engagement with such work and the general acknowledgement of that work as groundbreaking in the literature. There are, however, others who, despite being neglected in contemporary discussions, have been influential in earlier periods or have contributed key ideas that then attained a life of their own in the discipline's vernacular.[97] A final, third, criterion was employed in light of the effort to engage critically with the thought of realists. The way they applied their theories to empirical cases is not only indicative of the context in which those theories were developed, but can also help reveal inconsistencies, flaws, or strengths that an engagement with theoretical premises alone could not consider. As such, the third criterion employed was whether realists applied their theory extensively in order to either understand the policies of specific states or influence them (or most commonly, both).

The authors I selected for this book are E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, John Herz, and John Mearsheimer. The importance of the first two needs little justification. They have been described as "towering figures" in realism and their work still triggers vivid debates.[98] Mearsheimer is one of the most important contemporary realists and his *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* is often considered as a classic in the field.[99] The case of Herz is probably the least straightforward. Until recently, he was a relatively neglected figure who did not get the same attention as Carr and Morgenthau in the revival of classical realism.[100] As such, he is often described as a secondary figure.[101] There is, however, indication of a tendency to reconsider Herz's importance for the field and recover his insights regarding various, and often unexpected, aspects of international politics.[102] In addition to the renewed interest in Herz in recent literature, his importance for the purposes of the present project is twofold. First, like all aforementioned realists, Herz placed particular emphasis on understanding the nature of the nation-state as part of one of his most influential works.[103] Second, despite being approached as a classical realist, Herz was less sceptical than other mid-century realists as regards the turn to systems theory, and was willing to embrace some of its aspects. He can thus be understood as encapsulating a moment of transition between classical and structural realism, sharing elements with both worlds.

Perhaps the most obvious omission is the exclusion of Waltz. Booth claimed in 2009 that Waltz was "the discipline's commanding theorist of the past half-century" and with this comment he certainly captured

the sentiment of many more IR scholars.[104] The reason for this exclusion is that Waltz subscribed to a strict methodological commitment which presupposed the analytical separation between a theory of international politics and foreign policy. This is not to claim, as is often assumed, that he neglected the latter; it has been demonstrated that this was clearly not the case.[105] It is, rather, Waltz's insistence that the same theory cannot account for *both* and that one needs two different theories which is problematic for the purposes of this project.[106] Due to this position, Waltz self-consciously lacked the unified framework that the other realists examined here employed in order to examine the policies pursued by certain countries. Of course the fact that Waltz is not the subject of a separate chapter does not imply that he can be overlooked. His impact on the study of international relations is such that this would have been impossible. He rather assumes the role that Ashworth assigned to "the other protagonists" in his own project of intellectual history, namely, that they "appear, but in supporting roles that underscore their connections to both the background events and the main characters".[107] Waltz is indeed in the background both in the shift from classical to structural realism and in the discussion of Mearsheimer's offensive realism.

Outline of the Book

The book is divided into four main chapters, one for each of the realist authors. The sequence of chapters is intended to track the development of realism from its early formulation by Carr to Mearsheimer's variant of structural realism. The pattern followed corresponds broadly to the actual sequence in which the most important works of the authors under examination appeared, with Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis* appearing in 1939, Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* in 1948, Herz's *Political Realism and Political Idealism* in 1951, and Mearsheimer's *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* in 2001. It would have been, however, misleading to base the organisation of the chapters solely on such a periodisation. With the partial exception of Mearsheimer, who belongs to the present generation of realists, all three remaining thinkers were intellectually active for roughly the same period, that is, the middle of the twentieth century.[108]

Even if one excludes Carr, who both made his debut earlier and then shifted his focus to history, the careers of Morgenthau and Herz were largely overlapping. It is in their case that the focal point of the book as a project of intellectual history plays a crucial role. While Morgenthau can be

solidly placed within the traditional approach to international politics and he vocally opposed the behavioural revolution, Herz was more open to new approaches. As explained already, he can be better understood as a transitional figure between classical and structural realism. Consequently, even though Herz was a contemporary of Morgenthau, I decided to examine his work after that of the two classical realists. In this way, his work serves as a bridging point between early realists and Mearsheimer. It must be clarified here that this order of authors, despite revealing some tendencies, does not imply a linear progression.[109] Despite, for instance, a gradual transition from inductive and historical to more deductive approaches, the same trajectory is not evident when it comes to the central concepts discussed. As such, this quasi-chronological ordering of authors does not necessarily imply that in every aspect of the examined realists' thought there was a clear progression to a predetermined endpoint.

Each chapter is organised into four main sections. In the first section, I offer some information on the intellectual background and influences of each author in order to put his work in context. Then, I proceed to examine the role of power in his ontological and epistemological assumptions. The second section examines the author's conceptualisations of power, its nature, and the role it is expected to perform in his theory, as well as its limits. In the third section, I examine the connection of said conceptualisation of power to the concept of the nation-state. Finally, in the fourth section I demonstrate how the realists under examination applied their theory to analyse past or present foreign policies of specific nation-states.

In the first chapter, I discuss the multifaceted and flexible conceptualisation of power in the works of Carr and how it led to an account that views the development of the nation-state through the interplay between domestic and international factors. I examine how his historical work on the Soviet Union exemplified the practical application of his theory. In the second chapter, I discuss Morgenthau's view of power as a psychological relationship and how he projected the *animus dominandi* to the collective level to account for the nation-state. The empirical element comprises the application of his theory retrospectively to Germany during the two world wars and to American foreign policy during the second half of the twentieth century. In the third chapter Herz is examined as a transitional realist between classical and structural realism. I examine his understanding of power as a protean concept and its interplay with his account of the territorial state. The empirical aspect focuses on his engagement with

the foreign policies of Germany and the United States. In the fourth chapter, I examine the role of power and the nation-state in Mearsheimer's offensive realism. His engagement with the foreign policy of the United States is employed in order to illustrate both the consistency and the limits of his theory. Finally, the conclusion discusses the implications of the book for realism, and the conduct of realist foreign policy in an age of nationalism.

Notes

1. Colin Gray, "Clausewitz Rules, OK? The Future Is the Past: With GPS," *Review of International Studies* 25, Special Issue (Dec 1999): p. 182.
2. Ibid. p. 164.
3. Apart from the occasional article reminding students of international politics that questions of nations and nationalism should not be neglected there is not, as Stullerova explains, "an established niche area for those working on IR and nationalism". Kamila Stullerova, "In the Footsteps of Karl Deutsch: On Nationalism, Self-Determination and International Relations," *International Relations* 28, no. 3 (2014): pp. 320–322. See also the discussion by Martin Griffiths and Michael Sullivan, "Nationalism and International Relations Theory," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 43, no. 1 (1997): pp. 53–66. There is, however, a notable exception: James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
4. For a recent discussion of the problems associated with the often simplistic textbook representations of "realism" and "liberalism" see Lucian Ashworth, *A History of International Thought: From the Origins of the Modern State to Academic International Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2014).
5. There is a goodly amount of work discussing the development of the study of nationalism, as well as the key authors, debates, and theories. See indicatively: Umut Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); David McCrone, *The Sociology of Nationalism: Tomorrow's Ancestors* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002); Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2005); Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Duckworth, 1983).
6. Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism*, p. 3.
7. McCrone, *Sociology of Nationalism*, p. 3.

8. Özkırımlı, *Theories of nationalism*, pp. 72–142.
9. Ibid. pp. 143–168.
10. For an interesting critical summary of the debate see McCrone, *Sociology of Nationalism*, pp. 10–16.
11. Pantelis Lekkas, *Playing with Time: Nationalism and Modernity* (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2001) (in Greek), pp. 12–17, pp. 54–87. In so doing, it also manages to somehow salvage the idea of immortality from the decline of the religious certainties of traditional societies. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), pp. 9–12.
12. One can add here the historically conditioned character of the usage of the terms "nation" and "nationalism" themselves. Whilst the word "nation" is indeed very old, it is only recently that it came to acquire its contemporary meaning. The term "nationalism" first appeared in 1789. Pantelis Lekkas, *Nationalist Ideology: Five Working Hypotheses in Historical Sociology* (Athens: Katarti, 1996) (in Greek), pp. 73–96; Kenneth R. Minogue, *Nationalism* (London: Batsford, 1967), pp. 8–11; Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 14–18; Eugene Kamenka, "Political Nationalism—The Evolution of the Idea," in *Nationalism: the Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, ed. Eugene Kamenka (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 4.
13. Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), p. 101.
14. Lekkas, *Nationalist Ideology*, pp. 25–72.
15. John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 2–3. Breuilly adapted the somewhat more numerous propositions offered by Anthony Smith: Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), p. 25. The last element of political independence is also implied in Gellner's onalism as a principle "which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent": Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 1.
16. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.
17. Ibid. pp. 6–7.
18. McCrone, *Sociology of Nationalism*, pp. 85–97.
19. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 6.
20. Walker Connor, "A Nation Is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group is a…," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1, no. 4 (1978): p. 382.
21. The way I employ "nation-state" is therefore akin to the term "national state" that has been proposed by Smith as a more neutral term to describe states that are legitimised by nationalism, possess a measure of integration,

but are not necessarily culturally homogenous. Given the wide usage of the term "nation-state", I opted for employing it in this broader sense rather than replacing it with the otherwise more accurate "national state". Smith, *Nationalism*, pp. 16–18.

22. Mearsheimer was of course referring to -isms such as institutionalism and constructivism: John Mearsheimer, "The More Isms the Better," *International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2005): pp. 354–359.
23. Seán Molloy, *The Hidden History of Realism: a Genealogy of Power Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 149–150. The term "neoclassical realism" was introduced by Gideon Rose in a review of works by Randall Schweller, Fareed Zakaria, William Wohlforth, and others to describe a variant of structural realism which integrates intervening variables at the domestic level. Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): pp. 144–172; for a summary of offensive vs. defensive realism see Jeffrey Taliaferro, "Security Seeking Under Anarchy," *International Security* 25, No. 3 (2000): pp. 128–161. Stephen Brooks attempted to introduce the label "postclassical realism" in 1997 which, however, has not gained significant traction. Stephen Brooks, "Dueling Realisms," *International Organisation* 51, no. 3 (1997): pp. 445–477.
24. Indicatively, Carr apart from a "classical realist" is also a "critical realist" for Babik and Falk, a "progressive realist" for Scheuerman, and a "utopian realist" for Howe.
25. Robert Gilpin, "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism," in *Neorealism and its Critics,* ed. Robert Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 301–321.
26. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979). For the differences between his variant of realism and classical realism see Kenneth Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (1990): *passim.*
27. Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little, *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 2–5.
28. For Fozouni, the key tenet of realism as derived from Morgenthau's work is the claim that "power optimisation is the *only* (i.e., a necessary and sufficient) determinant of international political behaviour": Bahman Fozouni, "Confutation of Political Realism," *International Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1995): p. 481. Vasquez, based also on Morgenthau, identifies nation-state-centrism, the distinction between domestic and international politics, and the identification of international politics as the domain of struggle for power and peace as the three main assumptions of the realist paradigm: John Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics: From Classical Realism to Neotraditionalism*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 52–59; John Vasquez, "The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative Vs Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition," *The American Political Science Review* 91, no. 4 (1997): p. 899. In response to the latter, despite emphasising the diversity in realism that Vasquez neglects, Walt also identifies some key assumptions that all realists subscribe to, namely, state-centrism, international anarchy, and the centrality of power. Stephen Walt, "The Progressive Power of Realism," *The American Political Science Review* 91, no. 4 (1997): pp. 932–933. Keohane's three realist fundamental assumptions are like Walt's but he substitutes anarchy for the rationality assumption. Robert Keohane, "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond," in *Neorealism and its Critics,* ed. Keohane, pp. 163–170. Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman also identify three "first principles" of realism: group-centrism, an understanding of politics as a domain of "perpetual struggle [...] under conditions of general scarcity and uncertainty", and the centrality of power as a means for groups to achieve their goals. Jeffrey Taliaferro, Steven Lobell, and Norrin Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy,* ed. Steven E. Lobell et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 14–15. Legro and Moravcsik offer a version of the realist paradigm that comprises three core assumptions: rational, unitary political units in anarchy; fixed and conflictual state goals; and primacy of material capabilities. Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (1999): pp. 9–18. For a critical evaluation of paradigmatic approaches to realism see Molloy, *Hidden History*, pp. 15–34. For the responses to the argument proposed by Legro and Moravcsik see Peter Feaver et al. "Brother, Can You Spare Me a Paradigm? (Or Was Anybody ever a Realist?)," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): pp. 165–193.

29. Buzan et al., *The Logic of anarchy*, pp. 3–5; John M. Hobson, *The State and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 45.
30. Robert Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," in *Neorealism and its Critics,* ed. Keohane, pp. 204–254.
31. Richard Ashley, "The Poverty of Neorealism," *Neorealism and its Critics,* ed. Keohane, p. 297; Richard Ashley, "Political Realism and Human Interests," *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1981): pp. 204–236; Rob B. J. Walker, "Realism, Change, and International Political Theory," *International Studies Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (1987): pp. 65–86.

32. Brent J. Steele, "'Eavesdropping on Honoured Ghosts': From Classical to Reflexive Realism," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 10, no. 3 (2007): pp. 291–292.
33. Ibid. p. 273.
34. Duncan Bell, "Writing the World: Disciplinary History and Beyond," *International Affairs* 85, no. 1 (2009): pp. 6–8.
35. For works on Carr and Herz, Ibid: p. 7; fn 16. For Morgenthau see indicatively Michael C. Williams, ed. *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); William E. Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).
36. William E. Scheuerman, *The Realist Case for Global Reform* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011); Molloy, *Hidden History*.
37. Duncan Bell, ed. *Political Thought and International Relations: Variations on a Realist Theme* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). For a more recent attempt see the relevant special issue in *International Politics*: Hartmut Behr and Seán Molloy, eds. "Realism Reconsidered: New Contexts and Critiques," *International Politics* 50, no. 6 (2013).
38. Bell, "Writing the World," p. 7.
39. Stefano Guzzini, *Power, Realism and Constructivism* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 111.
40. William E. Scheuerman, "The (Classical) Realist Vision of Global Reform," *International Theory* 2, no. 2 (2010): pp. 246–282.
41. Stefano Guzzini, "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 10, no. 4 (2004): p. 537.
42. Idem. Also in Legro and Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," pp. 48–53.
43. Guzzini, "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations," p. 544.
44. See indicatively: David Lake, "Why 'isms' Are Evil: Theory, Epistemology, and Academic Sects as Impediments to Understanding and Progress," *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2011): pp. 465–480; also Ken Booth's introduction in John Mearsheimer et al., "Roundtable: The Battle Rages On," *International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2005): p. 337.
45. Lake, "Why 'isms' Are Evil," pp. 467–471.
46. Ibid. p. 468.
47. Mearsheimer et al., "Roundtable: The Battle Rages On," p. 337.
48. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform*, pp. 3–4; for the myth of the first debate see Peter Wilson, "The Myth of the 'First Great Debate?,'" *Review of International Studies* 24, special issue (1998): pp. 1–15; Lucian Ashworth, "Did the Realist-Idealist Great Debate Really Happen? a

Revisionist History of International Relations," *International Relations* 16, no. 2 (2002): pp. 33–51; and more recently Brian Schmidt, "Introduction," in *International Relations and the First Great Debate,* ed. Brian Schmidt (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 1–15 and Peter Wilson, "Where Are We Now in the Debate About the First Great Debate?," in *International Relations and the First Great Debate*, ed. Schmidt, pp. 133–151. Guzzini, despite advocating a narrow definition of realism, recognises that such an approach might be criticised for being "consciously skewed in favour of realism's critiques". See Guzzini, "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations," p. 537.

49. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform*, p. 4.
50. Idem.
51. Jackson and Nexon for instance observed that "Participants may have overplayed [...] claims about incommensurability, but their debates made clear that different theoretical and analytical commitments can generate different conclusions about world politics" and added that critics of "isms" often "tend to obscure the degree to which their own commitments are far from neutral when it comes to studying world politics". Patrick Thaddeus Jackson and Daniel Nexon, "International Theory in a Post-Paradigmatic Era: From Substantive Wagers to Scientific Ontologies," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): pp. 545–547. See also Henry Nau, "No Alternative to 'isms'," *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2011): pp. 487–491.
52. Feaver et al. "Brother, Can You Spare Me a Paradigm?," p. 173.
53. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), paragraphs 65–69.
54. Feaver et al. "Brother, Can You Spare Me a Paradigm?," p. 173.
55. Idem. Also in: Duncan Bell, "Introduction: Under an Empty Sky—Realism and Political Theory," in *Political Thought and International Relations*, ed. Bell, p. 3; Michael C. Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 16; and particularly Jones' paraphrase of Wittgenstein's passage on games to account for realism: Charles Jones, *E.H. Carr and International Relations: A Duty to Lie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 5–6; p. 6, fn 8.
56. From the paradigmatic readings outlined above it is only Fouzouni who singles out power optimisation as the core realist assumption whereas all other views include state-centrism in one form or another.
57. Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall, "Power in International Politics," *International Organization* 59, no. 1 (2005): p. 40; Felix Berenskoetter, "Thinking About Power," in *Power in World Politics*, eds. Felix Berenskoetter and Michael J. Williams (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 1.

58. Barry Buzan, "The Timeless Wisdom of Realism?," in *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, eds. Steve Smith et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 51; also see Molloy's claim that the emphasis on power is perhaps the only thing that the paradigmatic reading of realism got right. Molloy, *Hidden History*, pp. 145–147; Michael Williams too claims that "power is central to any understanding of realism": Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations*, p. 6.
59. For power as an essentially contested concept see Steven Lukes, "Power and the Battle for Hearts and Minds: On the Bluntness of Soft Power," in *Power in World Politics*, eds. Berenskoetter and Williams, p. 83. Since Dahl's attempt to define power, the inadequacy of previous efforts to capture the elusive character of power is best demonstrated by the continuous addition of "faces" to the concept. See Robert A. Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* 2, no. 3 (1957): pp. 201–215; Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," *The American Political Science Review* 56, no. 4 (1962): pp. 947–952; Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Peter Digeser, "The Fourth Face of Power," *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (1992): pp. 977–1007. Yet the concept remains controversial and elusive. Lukes attributes the controversy around power to the fact that it is a "primitive" concept—that is, a concept whose analysis would involve the utilisation of other also controversial concepts: Lukes, "Power and the Battle for Hearts and Minds," p. 93. For Ringmar's claim that IR scholars possess poor understandings of power see Erik Ringmar, "Empowerment Among Nations: a Sociological Perspective," in *Power in World Politics*, eds. Berenskoetter and Williams, p. 190.
60. For the complaint that domination by realist conceptions of power hindered the development of alternatives see indicatively: Berenskoetter, "Thinking About Power," p. 1; Barnett and Duvall, "Power in International Politics," pp. 40–42. There are, however, other approaches to international relations that are centred around power. Buzan mentions feminism and Marxism as other schools that focus on power: Buzan, "The Timeless Wisdom of Realism?," p. 51. Power, albeit in its productive rather than coercive function, is also of cardinal importance for poststructuralism: Andrew Neal, "Michael Foucault," in *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, eds. Jenny Edkins and Nick Vaughan-Williams (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 161–170; Jennifer Sterling-Folker and Rosemary E. Shinko, "Discourses of Power: Traversing the Realist-Postmodern Divide," in *Power in World Politics*, eds. Berenskoetter and Williams, pp. 244–264.
61. Barnett and Duvall, "Power in International Politics," p. 40; Legro and Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," pp. 16–18; David Baldwin,

"Power and International Relations," in *Handbook of International Relations,* eds. Walter Carlsnaes et al. (London: Sage, 2013): *passim*; Guzzini, "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations," pp. 535–538.

62. Dahl, "The Concept of Power," pp. 202–203.
63. Barnett and Duvall, "Power in International Politics," p. 40, pp. 49–51; Berenskoetter, "Thinking About Power," p. 47; Ringmar, "Empowerment Among Nations," pp. 190–191.
64. Baldwin in particular has contrasted the realist "elements-of-power" approach to the relational one forwarded by Dahl: Baldwin, "Power and International Relations," *passim*. While realists such as Mearsheimer have rejected Dahl's conceptualisation, there are those who claim *contra* Baldwin that realists are in fact attentive to the relational aspects of power. Sterling-Folker and Shinko, "Discourses of Power: Traversing the Realist-Postmodern Divide," p. 263: fn. 3; also Schmidt's claim that different realists can subscribe to either one of the broad approaches Baldwin outlined or both: Brian Schmidt, "Realist Conceptions of Power," in *Power in World Politics*, eds. Berenskoetter and Williams, *passim*.
65. This is revealed by the debate about the fungibility of power between realists and their critics. For a summary see Guzzini, "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations," pp. 537–544; for a more detailed overview: David Baldwin, "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends versus Old Tendencies," *World Politics* 31, no. 2 (1979): pp. 161–194. Realists who are more prone to emphasise the measurability of power derive the analogy largely from the construction of neorealism as a theory of international relations based on microeconomics. See Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," *passim*; and *infra* under Chap. 5 for Mearsheimer who also employs the analogy.
66. Schmidt, "Realist Conceptions of Power," pp. 43–63.
67. Molloy, *Hidden History,* pp. 29–34.
68. See, for instance, Barnett and Duvall's comments on E.H. Carr's realism and the comment of Guzzini on classical realists in general: Barnett and Duvall, "Power in International Politics," pp. 66–69; Guzzini, "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations," p. 544.
69. Bell, "Under an Empty Sky," p. 10.
70. See indicatively: Griffiths and Sullivan, "Nationalism and International Relations Theory," pp. 53–66; Ashley, "The Poverty of Neorealism," pp. 268–273. Also, the discussion in: Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform*, p. 39.
71. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics,* pp. 93–97; see also Legro and Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," pp. 12–13; for Mearsheimer's similar take on states see *infra* Chap. 5.

72. Giplin, “The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism,” pp. 313–318.
73. See the excellent summary in Barry Buzan and Richard Little, “Waltz and World History: The Paradox of Parsimony,” *International Relations* 23, no. 3 (2009): pp. 446–463; also Georg Sørensen, “‘Big and Important Things’ in IR: Structural Realism and the Neglect of Changes in Statehood,” *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): pp. 223–239; John Gerald Ruggie, “Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis,” in *Neorealism and its Critics,* ed. Keohane, *passim*.
74. Molloy, *Hidden History*, pp. 139–143.
75. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* in particular Chaps. 2 and 3.
76. For Bell the state *became* so important for contemporary realism because of its increased prominence, which led to its conflation with sovereignty in the relevant literature. Duncan Bell, “Anarchy, Power and Death: Contemporary Political Realism as Ideology,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 7, no. 2 (2002): pp. 230–234. He repeated a similar point when addressing state-centrism in classical realism, concluding that “realism is not theoretically committed to any particular type of political association”. Bell, “Under an Empty Sky,” pp. 10–11; p. 10.
77. Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, pp. 1–14, pp. 17–63.
78. Buzan, “The Timeless Wisdom of Realism?,” p. 51.
79. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 73–78, 127–128.
80. Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, pp. 17–63.
81. Molloy, *Hidden History, passim*.
82. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform, passim* but in particular pp. 39–97.
83. Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): pp. 3–53; for a discussion of the applicability of Skinner’s framework in the study of international relations see Gerard Holden, “Who Contextualizes the Contextualizers? Disciplinary History and the Discourse About the IR Discourse,” *Review of International Studies* 28, no. 2 (2002): pp. 253–270.
84. Kenneth R. Minogue, “Methods in Intellectual History: Quentin Skinner’s Foundations,” *Philosophy* 56, no. 218 (1981): p. 544.
85. Idem.
86. Duncan Bell, “International Relations: the Dawn of a Historiographical Turn?,” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 3, no. 1 (2001): p. 116.
87. He summarises his views as follows: “Even if he merely flips a coin in order to choose between these and other forms of methodological salvation being marketed, the historian will find that he has taken on board a cargo of philosophical theory on whose validity—not easily testable—his work as a

historian will be dangerously dependent." Minogue, "Methods in Intellectual History," p. 546; pp. 544–549.

88. Stephanie Lawson, "Political Studies and the Contextual Turn: A Methodological/Normative Critique," *Political Studies* 56, no. 3 (2008): p. 586.
89. Bell, "The Dawn of a Historiographical Turn?," p. 116.
90. David A. Welch, "Why International Relations Theorists Should Stop Reading Thucydides," *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2003): p. 312.
91. Ibid. pp. 308–312.
92. Hedley Bull, "International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach," *World Politics* 18, no. 3 (1966): p. 361.
93. Henrik Bliddal, Casper Sylvest, and Peter Wilson, "Introduction," in *Classics of International Relations: Essays in Criticism and Appreciation*, eds. Henrik Bliddal et al. (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 6–7.
94. Ibid. p. 6.
95. Lucian Ashworth, *Creating International Studies: Angell, Mitrany and the Liberal Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p. 7.
96. Ibid. p. 8. Ashworth applies this method to liberal internationalism.
97. Perhaps the typology of classics developed by Bliddal et al., despite being designed for texts, has some applicability to the authors of such texts too. For instance, their "undisputed classic" would describe the first element of the discussion presented here whereas the "overlooked classic" corresponds to the latter. Bliddal et al., "Introduction," pp. 4–5.
98. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* p. 5.
99. Brian Schmidt, "A Modest Realist in a Tragic World: John J. Mearsheimer's *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*," in *Classics of international relations,* eds. Bliddal et al., *passim.*
100. A notable exception was the special issue dedicated to John Herz in *International Relations*: Jana Puglierin, ed. "A Universalist in Dark Times: John H. Herz, 1908–2005," *International Relations* 22, no. 4, (2008): pp. 403–528.
101. As Scheuerman put it, Herz is a "relatively neglected today but widely respected at midcentury figure". Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* p. 6.
102. See, for example, Scheuerman's emphasis on Herz's work on technology and social acceleration: William E. Scheuerman, "Realism and the Critique of Technology," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 22, no. 4 (2009): pp. 563–584.
103. Casper Sylvest, "The Conditions and Consequences of Globality: John H. Herz's *International Politics in the Atomic Age,*" in *Classics of international relations,* eds. Bliddal et al., *passim.*

104. The statement belongs to the introduction of a two-part special issue dedicated to the work of Kenneth Waltz in *International Relations*. Ken Booth, "Introduction," *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): p. 180.
105. Michael C. Williams, "Waltz, Realism and Democracy," *International Relations* 23, no. 3 (2009): pp. 328–340.
106. Kenneth Waltz, "International Politics is Not Foreign Policy," *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996): pp. 54–57. Others are not persuaded. Waltz's article was in fact penned as a response to a claim to the contrary by Colin Elman. See Colin Elman, "Horses for Courses: Why Not Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy?," *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996): pp. 7–53; Colin Elman, "Cause, Effect, and Consistency: A Response to Kenneth Waltz," *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996): pp. 58–61; also the discussion in: Brian Rathbun, "A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): pp. 294–321.
107. Ashworth, *Creating International Studies*, p. 8.
108. Mearsheimer is only a "partial" exception because his early career overlapped with the late careers of Morgenthau and Herz, especially Herz.
109. I am here in agreement with the caveat of Williams in a similar project: "I am most certainly not arguing that they represent a linear progression in which each successive thinker incorporates and supersedes preceding ideas." Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations*, p. 16.

CHAPTER 2

The Three Facets of Power and the Nation-State in the Realism of E. H. Carr

Introduction

Carr was once described as a "modern renaissance man" with an immense range of interests and an enduring legacy as an international relations theorist, a historian, a biographer, and a journalist—and a controversial one at that.[1] When it comes to his contribution to international relations theory, the discussion is often focused on his *Twenty Years' Crisis* or—in the case of more detailed studies—on his writings until 1951.[2] After that, Carr is considered as lost for international relations, since he then started working on his *History of Soviet Russia* which occupied him for the next three decades of his life. The neglect of this and other relevant works of Carr by international relations scholars is hardly surprising. For the Soviet Union is no more, and Carr's preoccupation with it as an agent of change now seems irrelevant.[3] Yet when read with one eye fixed on Carr's assumptions about international politics, this later work reveals a considerable level of consistency with respect to his understanding of international relations and the cardinal factor that power represents, for domestic and international politics alike.[4] Themes that are so familiar to students of international relations—such as the dialectics of power and morality and their uneasy compromise, as well as the role of ideologies and purposeful thinking—underpin Carr's historical work just as they underpin his early work in international relations.

In the first part of this chapter, I explore the role of power in Carr's theory of international relations. First, I discuss the philosophical

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K. Kostagiannis, *Realist Thought and the Nation-State*, The Palgrave Macmillan History of International Thought,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-59629-7_2

background of his work. There the figures of Karl Marx and Karl Mannheim are of prominent importance. Carr embraced the sociology of knowledge developed by Mannheim and integrated it into his peculiar dialectics of power and morality. This move placed power at the heart of Carr's epistemological and ontological assumptions. In the second part I explore Carr's conceptualisation of power, its nature, and its role. I claim that, rather than representing a weakness of his theory, his fuzzy and multifaceted conceptualisation of power allows for considerable flexibility by considering both material and ideational aspects of power. I also explore the role of morality as a factor that mediates power but is ultimately conditioned upon it.

In the third part I examine the way Carr employed his understanding of power in order to explain the rise, development, and eventual decline, as he saw it, of the nation-state. The nation-state emerges from this analysis as a political entity which reflects the interplay of all facets of power both internationally and domestically. Carr's historically nuanced account of the nation-state and its transformations is solidly based upon his conceptualisation of power and his views on the conditionality of thought. His views about the political and moral bankruptcy of the nation-state and the need to transcend it are also based on that framework. Finally, I examine the *History of Soviet Russia* and the other works of Carr on the Soviet Union under the light of the preceding analysis. I claim that the struggle between the formal ideology of the Soviet Union and the realities of world politics, as well as the uneasy steps to address the question of nationalism, represents for Carr a clear manifestation of the complexities of politics and the uneasy compromise between the forces of power and morality.

Carr's Theory of International Relations

The Philosophical Foundations of Carr's Approach

E. H. Carr has attained an "iconic status" in the discipline of international relations.[5] The devastating onslaught against idealism he supposedly delivered with the publication of his *Twenty Years' Crisis* during the first Great Debate of the discipline probably played some role in achieving that status. Recent scholarship might have questioned both the existence of the debate itself and the devastation it caused on Carr's targets, but his work retains its attraction to scholars of international relations and is the subject of renewed interest.[6] As a result of this continued interest, the somewhat inconspicuous

philosophical foundations of Carr's theory of international relations have been uncovered to a sufficient extent.[7] From the beginning Carr was an eclectic scholar, but two figures were prominent in his thought: Mannheim and Marx.[8]

Mannheim's sociology of knowledge is of crucial importance for understanding Carr's philosophy. More than once, Carr recognised the influence of Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* on his own work.[9] For Charles Jones, Carr's debt to Mannheim was substantial, extending not only to the rhetorical structure of the *Twenty Years' Crisis* but also, and even more so, to methodology. The conditionality of thought which is so prevalent in Carr's criticism of the utopians and is employed effectively to unmask the rationalisation by the powers that be of their own position is a concept he borrowed from Mannheim.[10] The critical technique of the sociology of knowledge was then twisted and displayed as the "realist" extreme opposite to "utopia", which allowed Carr to present his own position as representing the middle ground between the two.[11] There is no doubt that Carr's dialectical system was a tool that had powerful rhetorical effect. But it was much more than that.

The identification of the sociology of knowledge with extreme realism reveals a deeper concern. For Carr consistent realism leads to sterility and should be balanced, thus necessitating the uneasy compromise between reality and utopia.[12] Similarly, the sociology of thought might be irreplaceable in "unmasking" absolutes, but unless it proposes a "sort of middle ground" it is at risk of degrading to an "intolerably negative relativism".[13] Carr's identification of the sociology of knowledge with the one extreme of his theory is not merely part of a rhetorical device. It rather indicates his acute awareness of the further implications of the consistent application of the method—that is, the omnipresent risk of relativism. The question is thus to find a new "standard of value", and as Carr examined the two possible answers that Mannheim gave—"a nakedly pragmatical belief in power" and a "supra-temporal Reason"—he ironically echoed the criticisms his own approach received.[14] Carr thus delegated the sociology of knowledge to the one extreme of his dialectics because he was fully aware of the implications of its consistent application.

Carr found in his dialectical system a mode of analysis that was to underpin his work regardless of whether he wrote about international relations, the philosophy of history, or the history of the Soviet Union. In historical works such as his *History of Soviet Russia*, Carr was also interested in the interaction of reality and utopia, and the possible compromises

between them. And it is in *What Is History?* that Carr employed a set of dialectical opposites in approaching historiography and once more suggested a middle approach.[15] Perhaps unsurprisingly, as when dealing with international relations, he also evoked the criticism of creating "false oppositions".[16] The application of this mode of thought to international relations constitutes, as Molloy demonstrated, the basis for a "positive theory of IR".[17] Indeed, Carr's efforts to make sense of international relations and change in the works that followed the *Twenty Years' Crisis* were constantly informed by his anxiety to suggest ways of overcoming the antithesis between the forces of morality and power.[18]

As such, Carr's dialectics can be understood through his preference for an inductive methodology which allowed him to eclectically borrow elements from different perspectives in order to tackle concrete problems without resorting to deductive reasoning. A dialectical scheme such as the one he employed was an essential vehicle for that flexibility.[19] Given Carr's eclecticism, his dialectics is influenced by but not strictly modelled after Marx or Hegel. Carr might have authored a biography of Marx and he was positively inclined towards socialism, but he was no Marxist.[20] His fascination was not with Marx the prophet of social transformation, but with Marx the innovator in the development of tools to "uncover the sources of social behaviour" and to dissect historical processes.[21] As such, the dialectics of Carr lacked the teleological aspect and sense of direction expressed in Marxian dialectics.[22] His was therefore an eclectic dialectical system which "employed aspects of Hegelian, Marxist, and Jamesian methodologies, with a Freudian twist".[23]

At the heart thus of Carr's theory lie on the one hand the application of the sociology of thought in order to unmask the conditionality of purported absolutes, and on the other hand a dialectical scheme which attempts to identify compromises to practical problems in an effort to correct the sterility of the former approach. Both elements are of crucial importance for understanding the role played by power in Carr's philosophical assumptions.

Power in Carr's Epistemology and Ontology

The sociology of knowledge employed by Carr placed power at the core of his epistemology. What Carr heralded as one of the major achievements of realism was its capacity to expose "the relative and pragmatic character of thought itself".[24] On the one hand, thought is relative because it is

conditioned by circumstances of time and space, as well as by the interests of the thinker.[25] On the other hand, thought is also pragmatic because it advances the thinker's purposes. This is a quality of thought that is relatively easy to spot in others, but rather difficult to discern in oneself.[26] The aim of the realist should be to use "the weapon of the relativity of thought" to undermine the whole utopian structure and thus reveal that purportedly moral absolutes are in fact mere self-serving rationalisations of the dominant groups which allow them to maintain this dominance.[27] The process of thinking, therefore, but also morality as the outcome of that process, are anchored to underlying realities of power whose exposure is the responsibility of the realist scholar.[28]

This position has important ramifications for Carr's theory. Mannheim was worried about the potential of the sociology of knowledge to transform politics into "a chaotic contest in annihilating opponents' utopias" and attempted to insulate its study by attributing a special role of apolitical detachment to intellectuals.[29] Carr, however, was not convinced by this line of argument as he believed that analytical impartiality vanishes from the very moment the intellectual decides to actively participate in political debates.[30] For Carr the neat separation of purpose and analysis, whilst essential for the advancement of natural sciences, is unattainable in political science. Unlike facts in the domain of natural science, political facts can be changed if enough people are persuaded that such a change would be desirable.[31] The character of political science thus is always purposive, and the dual role of the political scientist is both to reveal the underlying realities of power and to try and "anticipate the ideal balance between utopia and reality".[32]

The second implication is that the conditionality of thought (and thus of morality) upon power necessarily allocates to morality a secondary place in Carr's dialectics. His is a peculiar dialectics of power and morality, or reality and utopia, and the uneasy but essential compromise between them that lies at the heart of sound political thought.[33] Whilst politics cannot be reduced to power alone, it always requires power nevertheless. What differentiates an administrative from a political issue is that the latter involves a conflict of power.[34] Morality, as the second element of Carr's dialectical system, is also essential for politics and plays a moderating role in relation to power. Yet the only way for morality to succeed in that role is for it to be adequately grounded on "some hegemony of power".[35] Morality remains the weak part of the equation in such an understanding of international politics, always dependent upon power and even more relative in international

politics than it is in domestic.[36] Power, consequently, plays a central role for both the epistemological and the ontological foundations of Carr's work. The unequal relationship between power and morality in Carr's dialectics, however, makes his theory vulnerable to charges of relativism. In the following part of the chapter, after examining the nature of power in Carr's theory of international relations, I will address the question of its connection to morality and relativism in more detail.

Carr's Conceptualisation of Power

The Multifaceted Nature of Power

For Carr the importance of power stems from the "dual character of political society" which is based on two "conflicting aspects of human nature", namely self-assertion and solidarity. As a result, politics is always going to be in flux and the best outcome one could hope for would be a precarious compromise between power and morality.[37] This part of Carr's work encapsulates assumptions about human nature that form an integral part of his broader dialectical scheme.[38] Such assumptions have been interpreted as offering evidence for Carr's predominantly realist orientation and his similarity to other classical realists like Morgenthau.[39] While Carr did indeed ground his approach on some general observations about how human societies operate, the connection with Morgenthau, and other classical realists for that matter, should not be overstated.

Carr was not particularly concerned with exploring the *animus dominandi* as an anthropological condition, and would have been at odds with Morgenthau's preference for the insulation of different spheres of human activity for analytical purposes. For Carr any effort to study man in isolation from society and the abstraction of the *homo politicus* as someone who pursues power alone is a meaningless exercise.[40] This insistence to engage with all aspects of politics at the same time, and his tendency to favour power over morality in his dialectics, certainly made him vulnerable to Morgenthau's criticism that he lacked a "transcendent point of view from which [. . .] to appraise the phenomenon of power".[41] At the same time, however, his emphasis on the study of man as a social being allowed him to avoid the determinism often associated with realist visions that are grounded on assumptions about human nature.

For Carr individual and society are mutually constitutive and this means that such an "elusive entity" as human nature can only with difficulty be

understood in terms other than "as a historical phenomenon shaped by prevailing social conditions and conventions".[42] As such, it should be borne in mind that when Carr grounded his approach to politics on human nature, this represented the bare minimum of empirical observation about how societies operate diachronically. His is a notion of human nature that is flexible and unfixed.[43] As such, as Charles Jones pointed out when examining his indebtedness to Mannheim, Carr differed significantly from "continuity realists" like Hans Morgenthau and Herbert Butterfield and their ahistorical perspectives of human nature.[44]

Carr, then, grounded power loosely in a human nature which is malleable. His conceptualisation of power itself is equally flexible. He never offered an explicit definition of power as such and thus the closest his reader can get to his ideas about the essence of power is his analysis of its three facets in the *Twenty Years' Crisis*. Drawing from and adapting Bertrand Russell, Carr presented three facets of power in international politics: military power, economic power, and power over opinion.[45] In the few lines preceding his analysis of these facets he offered crucial information of his understanding of power. First, "power is in its essence an indivisible whole": the three manifestations of power are thus employed "for purposes of discussion" and are "closely interdependent".[46] As he maintained when elaborating on each form of power, none of them can exist without the others.

Carr went to great pains to dispel the identification of power with military might. By insisting on the indivisibility of power he maintained that it is an illusion to separate economics from politics.[47] So far, the distance between Carr and contemporary structural realists who tend to conceptualise power in terms of (preferably measurable) material capabilities does not look that great.[48] It was, however, in discussing the third facet of power that Carr went beyond his successors. Power over opinion, he claimed, "is not less essential for political purposes" than the other two forms of power.[49] Power over opinion is inextricably woven into the other two forms of power and follows them closely. An ideology of international character thus remains ultimately impotent unless connected to national power, and therefore propaganda is ineffective until it establishes clear linkages with national military and economic power.[50]

There is, however, a limitation of power over opinion that is of crucial importance. In contrast to military and economic power, when engaging with ideational power we have to "remember that we are dealing no longer with purely material factors, but with the thoughts and feelings of human

beings".[51] Apart from the obvious issue of the potential discrepancy between facts and propaganda, which deems futile any propaganda that does not correspond at least to an extent to reality, it is the fact that human beings "in the long run reject the doctrine that might makes right" which imposes the most significant challenge to power over opinion.[52] The need for national propaganda to be camouflaged in the form of international ideologies with broader appeal is for Carr the ultimate manifestation of this limitation.[53] Power over opinion, then, is the facet of power where it meets, and is limited by, morality.

It must be clarified here that, given the focus of Carr in the *Twenty Years' Crisis*, he examined primarily the importance of power for international politics. It is not difficult to imagine that the three forms of power operating at the international level can also be applied to domestic politics with slight modifications, like substituting for military power the coercive functions of the state. In fact, prior to examining power in the international domain Carr focused on the nature of politics, where his main theme was the domestic society and the coercion exercised by the state. Even when dealing with the international level, he easily shifted from examples derived from domestic politics to similar ones in international affairs.[54] As will be shown subsequently, despite the differences between the domestic and the international levels and the inapplicability of domestic analogy, for Carr the two are closely interrelated and when examined historically their distinction becomes blurry.[55]

In a generally well-informed review of Carr's notion of power, Hirst claims that the three facets of power discussed above are limited in that they solely concentrate on a "capacity-outcome" conception of power. Such a conception is agent-centric, quantifies power, identifies capacities post hoc through outcomes and, finally, is largely outdated.[56] While it is accurate that in the discussion of the three facets Carr emphasised their importance for national policies, his understanding of power was broader than that. For instance his conception of international law as a meeting point of power and ethics and as a function of the community of nations, despite anchoring law to politics, is not easily reducible to a capacity-outcome view.[57] As Barnett and Duvall have shown in their taxonomy of power, Carr did not only see the compulsive traits of power. He was also attentive to its institutional, structural, and even discursive facets.[58] As will be discussed in the third part of the chapter, the three facets of power offered by Carr cannot be reduced to an agent-centric "capacity-outcome" view that artificially separates developments in international politics from those at the domestic level.

Power, Morality, and Change

Despite identifying power as the most important factor in international relations, Carr was sceptical of any political endeavour founded on power alone. Thus, in his *Twenty Years' Crisis* after demolishing the utopian structure, Carr turned against the realist sterility which contradicts the very nature of politics as the field of the struggle and precarious reconciliation of the forces of reality and utopia.[59] Given, however, the primacy of power in his theory, there remains the question of where Carr could look for the utopian element that could complement realism. For several of his commentators, Carr had nowhere to turn because of his moral relativism.

The unequal relation between power and morality has been debated ever since *Twenty Years' Crisis* was published. This was an issue that occupied several of the first responses to the book raised by some of the "utopians" Carr offended.[60] The main characteristics, however, of much of the discussion to follow Carr and his notion of power were foreshadowed by Morgenthau with his review of Carr's works on international politics. Morgenthau, after celebrating Carr's efficacy in demolishing the utopian structure of the nineteenth century, described his effort to synthesise power and morality as the "Odyssey of a mind which has discovered the phenomenon of power and longs to transcend it".[61] For Morgenthau, Carr failed to offer a satisfactory synthesis due to his relativistic conception of morality, which led him back to power. Lacking a transcendent moral standard, Carr ultimately becomes a "utopian of power".[62] Much of the ensuing debate which surrounded Carr's approach to power has been limited to examining whether Carr was a relativist or not. Those favourably disposed towards Carr tend to advocate that he never fully succumbed to relativism, whereas those not so favourably disposed tend to repeat the verdict of relativism.[63]

Even in this more realistic of his works, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, Carr compromised his relativism, as Wilson has shown, by accepting that on occasion the interests of the dominant group *do* coincide with those of the community as a whole and that, although never being too elaborate about it, he did "smuggle ethical foundations" into his work.[64] This view is partially supported by Carr's later works on history. When discussing the role of the historian Carr claimed that "his aims and purpose will ultimately be derived from values which have their source outside history".[65] There is then a set of abstract ideas that one can refer to and that may constitute "indispensable categories of thought".[66] They, however, not only represent the bare minimum but also—and perhaps more importantly—are empty

shells lacking a predetermined meaning. Meaning is only given to them through their translation to concrete policies that are inevitably conditioned by space and time.[67] For Carr, thus, rather than looking in vain for extra-historical standards with which to pass judgement on societies or historical phenomena, it is much more meaningful to approach them "in their relation to one another".[68] Such views reveal, as Scheuerman claims, that Carr was perhaps more attentive to the complexities of modern morality than his critics who were fixated on traditionalist notions of ethics. At the same time, however, due to this attentiveness he often failed to ask "tough moral questions".[69]

As such, Carr's mere recognition of the existence of an objective morality cannot provide sufficient grounds to conclusively absolve him of relativism.[70] When combined with his views about progress and change, however, it adds credence to the view that his relativism was at least somewhat qualified. Carr believed firmly in progress—not in a teleological sense that would imply an uninterrupted line towards an end outside history but in "the progressive development of human potentialities".[71] He saw progress as involving the "transmission of acquired skills" through subsequent generations and as a process heading "towards goals which can be defined only as we advance towards them" in a history with no clear end in sight.[72] This belief that even in times that look desperate there are always going to be "new forces and movements" under the surface so that humanity still progresses was Carr's own "unverifiable Utopia".[73] It is this optimistic side, as evidenced in his belief that humanity was gradually moving towards genuine mass democracy combined with his awareness of the risks of relativism, which according to Howe signified that far from being a relativist himself, Carr actually possessed an "evolutionary theory of moral progress".[74]

This emancipatory aspect of Carr's thought has found favour amongst scholars who often refer to his moral project in order to display his affinity with critical theory.[75] Such scholars, however, as Babík correctly observed, tend to overcorrect towards the direction of critical theory.[76] Carr's pragmatism should not be overlooked when dealing with his moral project because it is precisely the realist side of his approach that can determine *which* moral purposes are worth pursuing at any given time. The ends towards which humanity strives arise within history, "not from some source outside it".[77] As such, the task of the politician lies not only with identifying which end is "morally or theoretically desirable" but also which part of this moral purpose is politically feasible through the direction of "the forces which exist in the world".[78] And, given the purposeful nature of political

thought, the task of the political thinker is to point towards the direction where power and morality can be uneasily and temporarily reconciled.

This is precisely what Carr set out to do with the works that followed the publication of the *Twenty Years' Crisis*. It is in these works, starting with *Conditions of Peace*, that the dialectical scheme of Carr fully materialised through the advocacy of "systemic transformation through power to achieve a moral end".[79] Carr's complex views about historical development, the interplay between power and morality, the attempt to strike workable compromises between the two, and the dependence of values on conditions of space and time are all on display in the way he tried to understand, and ultimately transcend, the nation-state.

Power and the Rise and Fall of the Nation-State

Power and the Transformations of the Nation-State

From early on Carr displayed keen interest in the phenomenon of nationalism and its relation to power. Despite an initial sympathy for self-determination when his "liberal principles were still intact", he soon developed a deep-rooted scepticism about the role of nationalism in international politics.[80] This scepticism was to become a constant feature of his analysis of nationalism.[81] Writing under the pseudonym John Hallett whilst still working for the Foreign Office in 1933, Carr cast doubts not only on the viability of nationalism but also on the compatibility of its premises with the very survival of civilisation.[82] Neither can one easily miss the irony with which he adorned the displays of nationalist symbolism in his travelogue of Warsaw, when, for example, he concluded after encountering a statue of Chopin that "a certain mutual antipathy can be detected between patriotism and taste".[83] His main concern regarding the nation-state, however, was not the questionable aesthetic value of its symbolism, but its equally questionable potential to survive as the main unit of power in the future.[84] Carr touched upon this problem in the thirties and returned to it in the last pages of the *Twenty Years' Crisis* where he considered problems such as the optimum size of units of power, the historically conditioned character of national states, and the tendency towards integration—problems which are clearly anticipating the arguments that followed in his subsequent work.[85]

Indeed, amidst the Second World War, Carr went on to publish two other major contributions to international relations, *Conditions of Peace* and *Nationalism and After*. His account in those works is attentive not only to

international factors but also to developments at the domestic level—or to follow Evans, it transplants the same core assumptions into a different level of analysis.[86] In dividing modern international relations into "three partly overlapping periods, marked by widely differing views of the nation as a political entity", Carr provided a systematic account of the transformations of the post-medieval state.[87] This transformation was displayed in terms of the interplay between the three facets of power both domestically and internationally, but also through the closely associated prevailing ideas and notions of international morality. In the first period, the modern nation-state gradually emerged from the ruins of the "medieval unity of empire and church".[88] Political power was centralised to the person of the monarch and economic power, in the form of mercantilism, worked alongside it to consolidate the nation-state through imposing uniformity domestically and expanding its markets through war externally. The purpose of these policies was "to augment the power of the state" but at the same time they were consistent *national* policies, for the nation was still identified with its rulers.[89]

The second period, starting from the end of the Congress of Vienna and lasting until the outbreak of the Great War, was characterised by a remarkable compromise between political nationalism and economic internationalism. Political power passed to the middle classes and the tendency of the previous period "in asserting the claim of the nation to statehood" was further intensified. At the same time laissez-faire economics, based on the expansion of the pie associated with industrial production, replaced mercantilism as the dominant credo. The level of economic interdependence achieved, however, lay for Carr not with the infallibility of liberalism but with British economic and political supremacy throughout the nineteenth century. It was the opening of the British market and the concentration of financial services in London that allowed this delicate system to operate in a relatively impartial manner which obscured the close interconnection between political and economic power.[90]

It is with this second period that the element of ideational power became increasingly important. The passing of political power domestically to the middle classes signified a crucial transition that Carr called the "democratisation" of the nation. At the level of ideas, the identification of the nation with the "people" gave nations a "popular connotation" and the personification of the nation replaced the person of the monarch in international relations as a necessary convenience. This move, according to Carr, was of profound psychological importance since henceforth human traits

and behaviours were to be collectively attributed to nations.[91] As long as the fragile compromise of the nineteenth century persisted, however, the implications of this transition were not fully felt. When British economic and political supremacy crumbled, the system which was founded upon it started disintegrating.[92] The new nationalism of the twentieth century would operate against an entirely new background.

The nation-state of the second period, serving the aspirations of the middle classes, could comfortably be accommodated with economic interdependence through its limited functions and the artificial separation of political from economic aspirations.[93] The transition from middle-class democracy to mass democracy, or the "socialisation" of the nation, brought about a radical transformation of its character. The newly founded political power of the masses meant that their economic considerations such as social welfare gained in prominence.[94] As such, the third period was characterised by the alliance between nationalism and socialism which re-established the unity between politics and economics. The main prerogative was now the welfare of the members of the nation-state and the augmentation of its power, and the world economy of the second period was replaced by the increasingly protectionist national economies of the *interbellum*.[95] Internationally, an idea which originated in Western Europe expanded globally through the proliferation of independent nation-states as a result of the application of the principle of self-determination and the benefits expected in terms of economic nationalism and industrialisation.[96]

In Carr's account of nationalism, thus, the concept of the nation changed to reflect shifting access to political power domestically, but at the same time was in close interplay with international power as witnessed by the elaborate system maintained under British supremacy. His analysis also reveals the increasing importance of ideational power in the form of nationalism and its impact on the international system and the moral edifice it supported. Any sense of international community that existed during the first two periods was based on a common framework shared between sovereigns initially, and middle classes later. In the age of socialised nations and exclusive nationalism, however, this framework vanished.[97] Henceforth the wars between nation-states were characterised by an unprecedented ferocity since the target was now the whole nation. The purpose of war was also transformed to a means of securing economic benefits for the victor and inflicting economic pressure on the defeated. Finally, the very way in which modern democratically accountable statesmen conducted and understood their

obligations had changed, the ultimate obligation being towards one's own people and not towards an international society.[98]

What emerged from that "climax" of nationalism, then, was an ideology that gradually became so powerful as to undermine the foundations of international morality and ultimately determine the way that power itself was understood and employed. This final phase in the development of nationalism illustrates the implications of both the indivisibility of power and the continuous interaction between its different facets. The description of propaganda in the *Twenty Years' Crisis* as a modern weapon, and the prerequisites for its effective use, bears remarkable resemblance to the social setting of the third period of nationalism. Although power over opinion is old enough in itself, its impact in modern politics depends upon the increase in political participation that mass democracy allowed.[99] Yet this characteristic is only peculiar to the modern nation-state after its third period, and thus historically conditioned. At least one manifestation of power, then, is in fact determined in its present and particularly potent form by nationalism, demonstrating the power that an idea that becomes entrenched can convey. This is not to assume that a successful ideology can indeed substitute for power in its complexity. For the value of Carr's insistence on the indivisibility of power is precisely that the other two forms of power impose restraints on the operation of the third. This allowed him to make the claim that the burdens imposed on the modern nation-state by developments in the fields of military and economic power would eventually signal the end of the age of nationalism.

Moving Beyond the Nation-State

For Carr no political unit is to be conceived as a category outside history; and neither are the forms of political organisation. "The structure of society at any given time and place", he claimed, "as well as the prevailing theories and beliefs about it, are largely governed by the way in which the material needs of the society are met".[100] The question is, ultimately, whether a form of social organisation can meet those needs. In Carr's view the nation-state was increasingly incapable of so doing. He believed there was a clear tendency in the fields of military and economic power that would eventually make the nation-state, and particularly a small one, incapable of performing its main functions.[101] Matched with the moral bankruptcy of nationalism, these tendencies created for Carr the necessity to contemplate ways of transcending the nation-state.

Mechanised warfare demanded the backing of enormous industrial capabilities, in which small nation-states could not hope to follow the great powers. Even though small nations still stood a chance to play a role in the outcome of confrontations as late as the Great War, by 1940 their resistance had "no more than a nuisance value".[102] The option of neutrality was also closed, since the great powers realised that it was more convenient to violate it than to give their opponents a possible advantage. Small states, in response, tended to surrender their neutrality voluntarily by relying more and more on the military capabilities of great powers to ensure their defence.[103] As for the limitations imposed by economic power, Carr claimed it played a more important role than military power, even though its importance was often neglected due to the outdated belief that the nineteenth-century division between politics and economics was natural. He emphasised the point that at a time when modern industrial conditions in fact deemed concentrations of economic power inevitable, the world was becoming politically even more fragmented, thus accumulating economic problems and insecurity. Put simply, the small nation-state could no longer provide the level of prosperity expected by its population.[104]

Carr, like other mid-century realists, observed a paradox in that the world was becoming even more politically fragmented while the realities of power rendered the nation-state obsolete.[105] For Carr the problem lay with the application of Wilsonian principles in the aftermath of the Great War. By applying the principle of self-determination uncritically, the peacemakers created a whole number of small independent nation-states at the exact moment when the independence of small units was becoming more nominal than real. Here the conditionality of thought that Carr employed in his analysis is of crucial importance. For the identification of the principle of self-determination with that of nationality, although corresponding to the circumstances prevailing in Western Europe where the two were identical, was completely irrelevant to the situation in lands hitherto ruled by multinational empires. The main error thus of the peacemakers was their failure to realise that a moral principle becomes inapplicable when regarded as absolute and isolated from the political context which created it.[106] The transplantation of nationalism to "new and unfamiliar soils", where the European traditions could no longer limit it to the same extent, had catastrophic consequences.[107]

For Carr, however, the moral challenge facing nationalism was not limited to its inapplicability to societies outside of its birthplace. There was a more fundamental issue at stake. Insofar as nationalism in its climax

signified the “exaltation of the nation over the individual as an end in itself”, it was morally problematic.[108] Rights such as freedom and equality could only be meaningful, according to Carr, for individuals and could only be approached as metaphors, and dangerous ones at that, when applied to nation-states.[109] As some commentators have noted, Carr indeed overlapped with critical theory in his quest to discover a new moral framework upon which a new international society could be built.[110] Yet to claim, like Hobson does, that in his effort to transcend the nation-state Carr “ascribed a full autonomy to global moral norms”, and that it was the “realities of global morality rather than global power” that would shape the new international order, is to underplay the significance of both his realism and the dialectics of power and morality.[111]

Even in his most ambitious blueprints, Carr’s emphasis on the centrality of power never vanished. What partially triggered the moral attack on nationalism, he claimed, was precisely the failure of the nation-state to adequately provide for the security and welfare of its citizens.[112] The forces, then, which brought about the nation-state in its socialised form were still active; what had changed was the capacity of the nation-state to address their demands.[113] In his quest to identify ways to meet those demands, Carr embraced functionalism as the way forward. But his was not functionalism with a global reach, as advocated by Mitrany.[114] He cautioned against the “sentimental and empty universalism” implied in a world state and gravitated towards regionalism which he deemed more “practical and workable”.[115] His preference for regional integration stemmed from his belief that the realities of power would ultimately determine the form of the unit of organisation to replace the nation-state, in the same way they had previously conditioned the development of the latter.[116]

Carr’s “Showcase” of Realism: The Soviet Union

Carr and the History of the Soviet Union: Some Preliminary Remarks

Russia played a cardinal role in Carr’s intellectual development even before he became interested in the historical significance of the Bolshevik Revolution. It was his involvement with nineteenth-century Russian literature during his career as a diplomat that made him attentive to the relativity of thought and the challenge towards the liberal moral framework that originated from those “outside the charmed circle”.[117] According to his autobiographical sketch, his interest shifted to what was happening in Russia

with its entry into the Second World War and the dramatic change from the impotence of 1917.[118] The outcome of Carr's involvement with the Soviet Union was a massive work, not restricted to the several volumes of his *History* but including several other essays and books.

In a period as polarised as the Cold War, Carr's mode of thought and his insistence to avoid moral judgements when writing history gained him several criticisms. A notable and often repeated criticism was that his determinist view of history resulted in his siding with the victors.[119] Carr certainly once claimed that "what was, is right" but this does not automatically imply that his determinism was unqualified.[120] Carr was not an ardent determinist and this becomes apparent in his handling of determinism in *What Is History?*.[121] What he was sceptical of was the theoretically conceivable (but ultimately unhelpful for a historian) engagement with what might have been if things had taken another course, especially with respect to recent events.[122] Haslam's description of this attitude as a "deep-seated fatalism" closely related to Carr's brand of realism is therefore more fitting.[123]

Carr's attitude towards the Soviet Union changed through time—naturally, according to his own standards of historiography.[124] Davies, who collaborated with him in the writing of the *Foundations of Planned Economy*, described Carr's changing attitudes towards the Soviet Union as attitudes which eventually crystallised in the general assessment of "a great achievement and a historical turning-point" from 1941 on.[125] This is not to assume, as several critics have done, that Carr viewed the Soviet Union as offering an alternative to Western capitalism which the West should emulate. Despite his faith in planned economy as expressed in *The New Society,* Carr was aware of the peculiarity of the Russian case and faced the Soviet achievements rather as a challenge that the Western world ought to answer.[126] As some of his commentators had already noticed, the motive behind his interest in the Soviet Union was not the projection of the Soviet experiment as a successful utopia. He rather, and similarly to his previous endeavours, saw the Soviet Union as a showcase of the necessary blending of utopia and reality in politics, as demonstrated by a state that gradually abandoned its initial revolutionary rhetoric and became normalised.[127] In the following sections I focus on the traces of Carr's peculiar realism with respect to the development of the Soviet Union and its attitude towards nationalism.

Utopia and Reality: The Soviet Union and the World

After capturing power, the initial impulse of the Bolsheviks with respect to foreign affairs was to treat their condition as the first step to a world revolution. Thus, their first moves were the issuing of the "peace decree" and the publication of the secret treaties concluded by the previous government, thereby intending to demonstrate both their contempt towards traditional diplomacy and their self-image as a force substituting class divisions for national ones. Since the decree failed to evoke any reaction in Western governments, it gave way to a foreign policy that Carr saw as "dual and in some respects self-contradictory", that is, the simultaneous effort to negotiate with capitalist governments and thus ensure the survival of the Soviet state *and* overthrow them and spread the revolution.[128] The tendency towards normalisation can be traced back to that first period when the instinct of survival forced the Bolsheviks to contemplate a series of ideological concessions such as maintaining the authority of the state and behaving as one.[129] Yet the adjustment to the realities of international politics was a very gradual process and at the first stages the Soviet Union suffered the consequences of its dual policy.

The first test case appeared within the first year of the establishment of the new regime. The first priority of the Bolsheviks was to conclude peace with Germany and although an armistice was signed at Brest-Litovsk as early as December 1917, the Soviets stalled while waiting for the German proletariat to rise. After some weeks of negotiations the German generals, unimpressed by Trotsky's formula of "no peace no war", resumed operations and advanced towards Petrograd. Facing elimination, the new regime finally accepted terms even harsher than those initially proposed and peace was secured in February 1918. This failure, however, increased the feeling of vulnerability and helplessness of the new regime and resulted in a hasty rebuilding of a tactical army that ideally ought to have been abolished.[130] Relations with Germany represent a classical example of the dual policy followed by the Soviet Union. In the aftermath of Brest-Litovsk the Bolsheviks found themselves negotiating with the German government and at the same time inciting revolutionary activity to overthrow it, a contradiction only obscured by the increasing ineffectiveness of German authorities during the collapse of 1918. Bolsheviks saw Germany through a "haze of ideological preconceptions" and heavily misjudged its politics. Yet only a year after the failed communist rising of 1919 in Germany, Lenin could speak of a natural alliance between the latter and Russia.[131]

An explicit demonstration of the gradual normalisation of the Soviet government is given by the way Carr approached the Comintern. The Comintern had already attracted Carr's attention in the 1930s as evidenced by some of his early works after his appointment at Aberystwyth.[132] This attention was retained undiminished until the time of his death, with two of his works on the subject published posthumously.[133] Through Carr's various engagements with the Comintern, the reader observes the gradual fading of an organisation initially aiming at coordinating the various communist parties towards the expected world revolution.[134] This initial aim was pursued in the first years of the new regime, when Lenin and the early Bolshevik leadership considered the survival of the Soviet Union as inseparable from the success of the world revolution.[135] The world revolution was not forthcoming, but despite this, the new regime survived. Having reached its peak of activity between 1919 and 1924, the Comintern was now detrimental to the establishment of—essential for reconstruction—relations with the capitalist countries.[136] As the Soviet Union entered the 1930s with the doctrine of "socialism in one country" already consolidated, the prospect of world revolution was not only distant but also increasingly annoying for the Soviet leadership. The introduction by Hitler of "an ideological foreign policy based on anti-communism" allowed the Soviet Union to resurrect the Comintern and employ it against Germany, hence transforming the organisation from an embarrassment to an asset.[137] Thus, the Comintern, after its seventh congress in 1935, was already simply identifying its aims with the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.[138] Carr's overview of the Spanish Civil War is indicative of the new tendency. A party with a marginal—if any—role before the war, the Spanish Communist Party, gained gradually in importance and participation in government because of the increasing dependency of the Spanish republican government upon Soviet aid. This process, for Carr, "seemed to have less and less to do with communism"; communism was now employed as a façade for the forwarding of the Soviet foreign policy.[139]

This is not to assume that the Soviet regime could ever entirely abandon its aspirations for world revolution. Carr observed that from such an early stage as the allied intervention, the ideological element of world revolution in Soviet foreign policy was intensified yet informed by "the interest of national self-preservation".[140] For Carr, this precarious balance, although gradually leaning towards the side of normalisation, would never stop haunting Soviet politics. He thus described the dilemma faced by the Soviet leadership during the Sino-Soviet schism as the persistent original dilemma between beliefs in international socialism and national interest, ultimately

between revolutionary principles and reality.[141] Consequently, Carr viewed the Soviet Union as an exemplification of the constant interaction between the forces of utopia and reality that is the very "stuff of politics". The balance between the ideal and the institution will always be an uneasy one, as the Soviet case demonstrated.[142]

Ideologies and Power: Communism and Nationalism

The leadership of the Soviet Union, then, from quite early on had to adapt to the realities of power in order to ensure its survival. What is also of particular interest, given Carr's approach to ideational power, is the interplay between the ideologies of communism and nationalism in Soviet policy. The Marxist programme which was officially embraced by the Bolsheviks upon their ascendance to power aimed at achieving international socialism and was thus incompatible with nationalism. It would therefore require a great deal of ideological flexibility to reconcile the two competing ideologies. The way that the Soviet doctrine of self-determination was developed by Lenin to reconcile the nationalism which was emerging from the ruins of a formerly multinational empire with the socialism of the Bolshevik programme is an indicative example of the necessary blending of utopia with reality in Carr's thought.[143]

Despite the variety of nationalities it encompassed, prerevolutionary Russia offered limited opportunities for active national agitation. Local elites—as the most likely bearers of nationalism—not only enjoyed a privileged position within the Russian administration, but Tsarist authority also protected them from the revolutionary potential of their respective peoples. The disintegration of this centralised system which followed the revolution allowed for the removal of the fabric of common interests that hitherto had held the periphery anchored to the centre. The case of a permanent breakup like in Austria-Hungary was averted, according to Carr, due to two peculiarities of Russia. The first was the predominance of the Great Russian population vis-à-vis the other nationalities; the second was the summoning of nationalism as a force eventually reinforcing bolshevism. Carr credited this paradoxical achievement to Lenin who "recognised the revolutionary factors in nationalism, and had foreseen that the only safe course would be to welcome and harness the torrent".[144] Thus, by developing a "conditional and dynamic" doctrine of self-determination allowing for secession, the Bolsheviks could go through the civil war with considerable advantages over their "White" opponents. Russian patriotism

was easily evoked against forces supported by foreign powers, and the connection of nationalism with social reform resulted in the support of the agricultural population whose nationalism was mainly characterised by economic grievances. The "Whites" on the contrary represented the old Russian tradition, not only hostile to social reforms but also to concessions towards nationalities. Hence the Bolsheviks by way of recognising the right to secede in a period when no one had the power to keep the state united, proved to be more flexible and capable of "making a virtue of a necessity" than their opponents.[145]

The description of the process of disintegration and reintegration of the Russian Empire is presented in a way that echoes the assumptions Carr outlined in his previous works on nationalism. Thus, the success of each nationalism is viewed as dependent upon its roots and social base and, equally importantly, upon the regional power setting. Poland and Finland are presented as the only two nations that possessed from the outset a native ruling class capable of both leading the national movement and running the nation once independence was gained. Furthermore, they both enjoyed substantial German support in their early steps and thus their forceful reintegration into the Soviet Union was precluded.[146] Ukraine and White Russia on the contrary accounted for a quite different story. In the first, the nationalism of the peasantry, which constituted the majority of the populace, maintained mainly anti-Jewish and anti-Polish characteristics. Furthermore, economic interdependence with Russia was much closer than in the cases of Finland or Poland. As a result, the national movement of Ukraine was mainly evoked by a small group of intellectuals without broad popular support, and was never consolidated. Its leaders, when faced with pressure from Petrograd, turned first to the French, then to the Germans, and finally to the Poles for support. This final move was to remove any popular support that remained for the national movement, since it evoked hostility towards Polish landowners. Bolshevik rule was thus re-established by 1921.[147] The brief survival of the Transcaucasian Republics until 1920, suggested Carr, was maintained only with foreign support which allowed them to fill the power vacuum left by the collapse of Russia. Once that support was withdrawn, however, the Soviet Union was quick to re-establish control over them.[148]

What one can infer from Carr's account is the close interdependence between the eventual success of a nationalist endeavour and the realities of domestic and international power. He observed that the Bolshevik regimes established in several of the republics after their secession would not be able

to succeed without the support of Moscow. But so did their opponents. The ultimate issue was thus not one of independence but whether the dependence would be on Moscow or on a western capital.[149] The underlying argument here is the same as in the *Conditions of Peace* and *Nationalism and After,* although clearer since illuminated by practical examples. The realities of power and its regional distribution imposed limits to the independence of small units, to the extent of determining their very survival qua independent units. Furthermore, the principle of self-determination had for Carr a very limited applicability in regions east of Vienna, and was contingent upon the existence of a set of preconditions that were similar to those in Western Europe. When, for example, the Soviet Union developed its own variant of nationalism, Carr was hesitant to liken it to the exclusivist nationalism of the third period and preferred instead to approach it as a qualitatively different phenomenon.[150]

Concluding Remarks

Power, then, informed Carr's assumptions about what constitutes the "political", and thus can be traced in almost all his works including those that are classified as historical. It is the fact that power lies at the core of Carr's methodology and his epistemological and ontological assumptions which allows it to underpin consistently such a diverse set of works. The implicit, multifaceted, and elusive conceptualisation of power that Carr developed in the *Twenty Years' Crisis* is an important factor for this consistency. The three facets of power, distinct from each other yet inescapably woven into each other, allowed Carr to employ his conceptualisation in order to investigate complicated social phenomena such as ideologies, whose analysis would not fit in a conventional understanding of power in terms of material capabilities. This flexibility allowed him to offer a compelling account of the historical development of the nation-state.

His was an account that saw the nation-state emerging in the wake of the collapse of the medieval order and transforming gradually to adapt to new political and economic conditions. The main factor behind the transformations of the nation-state was the interplay between domestic and international power. The strength of Carr's approach was that he realised that the nation-state was not a static entity. Its character changed to reflect the increased access to political power of new social strata until it encompassed the whole of society. The same was also true of economics, with the nation-state transforming to adapt to new economic conditions and to accommodate the demands of those

who wielded political power. Nationalism, as the ideological corollary of the nation-state, also transformed to reflect changes in the field of power. Yet ideas have a power of their own and as long as they keep corresponding to the underlying social conditions this power is going to be potent.

Carr's views on the conditionality of thought and morality allowed him to see the nation-state as a historically and geographically conditioned entity. He, however, never saw power as the only factor that determines political life, although probably he saw it as the most important. He approached nationalism as an ideology that attempted to strike a balance between power *and* morality, but such a balance can only be precarious. When realities in the field of international power challenged the defensibility of the nation-state both economically and politically, nationalism too, Carr thought, would become bankrupt. Its moral bankruptcy had already been demonstrated when in its third phase it eliminated any surviving notion of international morality. This belief led Carr, consistently with his insistence that a compromise between power and morality is an essential condition for sound political life, to contemplate ways to realistically transcend the nation-state.

Given his belief that sound political thought lay in providing a blueprint for balancing, albeit temporarily and uneasily, reality and utopia, it is no surprise that Carr always tried to identify possible solutions. Of course, diagnosing is always easier than prescribing a treatment and as Haslam correctly noted Carr was often "too eager to prescribe".[151] It is under the lens of the balance between the irreconcilable forces of utopia and reality that Carr's *History of Soviet Russia* remains particularly important for international relations theory. For it clearly displays the process of normalisation a revolutionary power has to undergo if it hopes to survive, while struggling to retain something of the utopia that gave rise to it. The experiment that Carr hoped might suggest possible ways out of the crisis, or challenge the Western world to find new ways out, failed. Carr's volumes, however, remain as an excellent demonstration of his understanding of power and its functions, the restraints it imposes on ideals, and the compromises reached in order to accommodate the ideal with reality.

NOTES

1. Michael Cox, "Will the Real E.H. Carr Please Stand Up?," *International Affairs* 75, no. 3 (1999): p. 645.
2. The year of publication of his *New Society*, which marks his shift of interest from international politics to history. For Wilson, despite the existence of

prior efforts that approached Carr's work as a whole, it was Hedley Bull's influential article that "did much to compound the view [. . .] that Carr's contribution to international relations begins and ends with *The Twenty Years' Crisis*". Peter Wilson, "Radicalism for a Conservative Purpose: The Peculiar Realism of E. H. Carr," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 1 (2001): p. 125; Hedley Bull, "The Twenty Years' Crisis Thirty Years On," *International Journal* 24, no. 4 (1969): pp. 625–638.

3. Cox, "Will the Real E.H. Carr Please Stand Up?": pp. 652–653; Michael Cox, "E.H. Carr and the Crisis of Twentieth-Century Liberalism: Reflections and Lessons," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38, no. 3 (2010): pp. 523–533.
4. The overlap between the *Twenty Years' Crisis* and his work as a historian of the Soviet Union has not gone entirely unnoticed. See David Freeland Duke, "Edward Hallett Carr: Historical Realism and the Liberal Tradition," *Past Imperfect* 2 (1993): pp. 123–136 and, more recently, Keith Smith, "The Realism that Did Not Speak Its Name: EH Carr's Diplomatic Histories of the Twenty Years' Crisis," *Review of International Studies* 43, no. 3 (2017): pp. 475–493.
5. Seán Molloy, "Dialectics and Transformation: Exploring The International Theory of E. H. Carr," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (2003): p. 279.
6. For a comprehensive discussion of recent scholarship on Carr see the excellent preface written by Cox for the new edition of the *Twenty Years' Crisis*: Michael Cox, "A New Preface from Michael Cox" in E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: Reissued with a new Preface from Michael Cox* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. ix–xxi. I have already discussed the myth of the first debate in the Introduction. This is not to suggest that Carr's broadside against utopianism had no impact on the discipline whatsoever, but rather that this impact was felt later, during the 1940s and beyond when "the 'utopian' label became a professional kiss of death". Ken Booth, "Security in Anarchy: Utopian Realism in Theory and Practice," *International Affairs* 67, no. 3 (1991): pp. 531–532.
7. When it comes to the inconspicuous character of his foundations, Carr displayed a "powerful, though unobtrusive, command of modern philosophy": Molloy, "Dialectics and Transformation," p. 281.
8. As Wilson noted, the first author to identify those influences was Whittle Johnston: Wilson, "Radicalism for a Conservative Purpose," pp. 125–126; Whittle Johnston, "E. H. Carr's Theory of International Relations: A Critique," *The Journal of Politics* 29, no. 4 (1967): pp. 861–884.
9. See E.H. Carr, "An Autobiography," in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal,* ed. Michael Cox (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. xvii; and E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis: an Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p. cvii.

10. Charles Jones, "Carr, Mannheim, and a Post-positivist Science of International Relations," *Political Studies* XLV, (1997): p. 236.
11. Ibid. pp. 236–239.
12. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 9–10.
13. E. H. Carr, "Karl Mannheim," (1953) in E. H. Carr, *From Napoleon to Stalin and Other Essays* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 177–183; similar ideas are discussed in E. H. Carr, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (London: Macmillan, 1947), pp. 92–97.
14. Carr, "Karl Mannheim," pp. 181–183; Tim Dunne, "Theories as Weapons: EH Carr and International Relations," in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Cox, p. 225.
15. E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Penguin, 1987), *passim*.
16. Anders Stephanson, "The Lessons of *What is History?*," in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Cox, p. 287.
17. Molloy, *Hidden History*, pp. 55–57.
18. *Conditions of Peace* (1942), *Nationalism and After* (1945) and *The New Society* (1951) were all works intended both to analyse the international context and to prescribe ways to resolve the contradiction between the forces of reality and utopia.
19. Molloy, *Hidden History*, pp. 52–57.
20. A good overview is offered by Ticktin. Carr, he claims, was an honest student of Marx but one whose understanding of Marxism was limited: Hillel Ticktin, "E.H. Carr, the Cold War and the Soviet Union" in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Cox, pp. 152–154. Carr published a biography of Marx in 1934, but he certainly was not happy with the outcome, later calling it "a foolish enterprise" Carr, "An Autobiography," pp. xvii–xviii; as Jonathan Haslam remarks, the outcome was in fact less significant than "the impact of the research on the author": Jonathan Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity: E. H. Carr, 1892–1982* (London: Verso, 1999), pp. 53–54.
21. E. H. Carr, "The Left Today: An Interview," (1978) in Carr, *From Napoleon to Stalin*, pp. 270–271; Carr, "An Autobiography," pp. xxi–xxii.
22. Andrew Linklater, "E. H. Carr, Nationalism and the Future of the Sovereign State," in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Cox, pp. 240–241; Molloy, *Hidden History*, p. 56.
23. Molloy, *Hidden History*, p. 56.
24. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 65.
25. Ibid. pp. 65–68.
26. Ibid. pp. 68–71.
27. Ibid. pp. 68–75.
28. Daniel Kenealy and Konstantinos Kostagiannis, "Realist Visions of European Union: E.H. Carr and Integration," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 41, no. 2 (2013): pp. 231–232.

29. Ido Oren, "The Unrealism of Contemporary Realism: The Tension between Realist Theory and realists' Practice," *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 2, (2009): p. 294, pp. 294–296.
30. Idem.
31. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 4–6.
32. Kenealy and Kostagiannis, "Realist Visions," p. 232.
33. Carr emphasised the essential compromise between power and morality as the basis of sound politics repeatedly in the book. See indicatively: Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis,* p. 10, 11, 84–88. For the dialectics of utopia and reality in Carr see Molloy, *Hidden History*, pp. 55–57 and Jones, *A Duty to Lie*, pp. 54–60.
34. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 97.
35. Ibid. pp. 135–153.
36. Molloy observes that Carr recognised the existence of an objective morality but also considered it to be inconceivable, and he rightly reminds us of Carr's distinction between individual morality and that of group-persons like the state: Seán Molloy, "Hans J. Morgenthau Versus E. H. Carr: Conflicting Conceptions of Ethics in Realism," in *Political Thought and International Relations,* ed. Bell, pp. 87–90. The unequal relationship between power and morality in Carr's dialectics has gained ample attention in the literature: Paul Rich, "E. H. Carr and the Quest for Moral Revolution in International Relations," in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Cox, p. 212; Molloy, *Hidden History,* p. 57; Kenealy and Kostagiannis, "Realist Visions," p. 231; Seán Molloy, "Pragmatism, Realism and the Ethics of Crisis and Transformation in International Relations," *International Theory* 6, no. 3 (2014): pp. 459–463; Konstantinos Kostagiannis, "E.H. Carr's Dialectics of Utopia and Reality," in *Edinburgh Companion to Political Realism*, eds. Robert Schuett and Miles Hollingworth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).
37. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 91–96.
38. Molloy, *Hidden History*, p. 57; Alan Chong, "Lessons in International Communication: Carr, Angell and Lippmann on Human Nature, Public Opinion and Leadership," *Review of International Studies* 33, no. 4 (2007), pp. 620–621; Robert Schuett, *Political realism, Freud, and Human Nature in International Relations: the Resurrection of the Realist Man* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 38.
39. See for example Molloy, *Hidden History,* p. 57; Thomas J. Johnson, "The Idea of Power Politics: The Sophistic Foundations of Realism," in *Roots of Realism*, ed. Benjamin Frankel (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 235–236.
40. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 91–92.
41. Hans Morgenthau, "The Political Science of E. H. Carr," *World Politics* 1, no. 1 (1948): p. 134.

42. Carr, *What is History?*, p. 33.
43. I explore Carr's conception of human nature in more detail in Kostagiannis, "E.H. Carr's Dialectics of Utopia and Reality".
44. Jones, *A Duty to Lie*, pp. 132–133.
45. For a recent engagement with Russell and his connection to realism see Casper Sylvest, "Russell's Realist Radicalism," *The International History Review* 35, no. 5 (2014): pp. 876–893; the adaptation of Russell's conceptualisation of power by E. H. Carr is traced here: Paul Hirst, "The Eighty Years' Crisis, 1919–1999—Power," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 5 (1998): pp. 133–148. There is an interesting overlap between the three facets of power discussed by Carr and Michael Mann's military, ideological, and economic power. Mann's sources of power are, however, much more explicitly and extensively explained and he adds a further, fourth source of power, which he terms "political power" and relates to "regulations and coercion centrally administered and territorially bounded". Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Vol. I: A History of Power from the Beginning to 1760 AD* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 26; pp. 22–33. I am thankful to Daniel Kenealy for pointing out the similarity to me.
46. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 102.
47. Ibid. pp. 102–120.
48. Schmidt, "Realist Conceptions of Power," pp. 52–60.
49. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 120.
50. Ibid. pp. 120–130.
51. Ibid. p. 129; For a more detailed account of the role of emotions in Carr see Seán Molloy, "Spinoza, Carr, and the Ethics of *The Twenty Years' Crisis*," *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 2 (2013): pp. 264–265.
52. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 130.
53. Ibid. pp. 128–130.
54. Ibid. pp. 91–95; pp. 97–102.
55. For the inapplicability of the domestic analogy in Carr see Graham Evans, "E. H. Carr and International Relations," *British Journal of International Studies* 1, no. 2 (1975): pp. 86–87.
56. Hirst, "The Eighty Years' Crisis, 1919–1999—Power," p. 133; pp. 138–148. Interestingly, and tellingly for Carr's complex views, he raised William Fox's criticism for exactly the opposite reasons, i.e., that his notion of power implies a total disregard of agency, thus forcing states to adapt to external circumstances. William Fox, "E. H. Carr and Political Realism: Vision and Revision," *Review of International Studies* 11, no. 1 (1985): p. 6.
57. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 159–167.

58. While Carr's "explicit discussion of power was largely limited to its multiple instruments [. . .] that could be used to overcome resistance", for Barnett and Duvall he was also aware of the ability of international institutions to "institutionalise the interests of the powerful and work against those of the weak". He also, due to his indebtedness to Marx, identified the role of dominant ideologies in indoctrinating states which then could more easily "submit to their own domination". Finally, due to his indebtedness to Mannheim, he was aware of discursive aspects of power in the establishment of "acceptable practices and goals". Barnett and Duvall, "Power in International Politics," pp. 68–69.
59. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 87–88.
60. Peter Wilson, "Carr and his Early Critics: Responses to the *Twenty Years' Crisis,* 1939–46," in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal,* ed. Cox, pp. 181–193.
61. Morgenthau, "The Political Science of E. H. Carr," p. 129.
62. Ibid. pp. 133–134.
63. For a sympathetic account see Paul Howe, "The Utopian Realism of E.H. Carr," *Review of International Studies* 20, no. 3 (1994): pp. 277–297. For accounts that subscribe to the view that Carr indeed succumbed to relativism see: Bull, "The Twenty Years' Crisis Thirty Years On," pp. 628–630; Johnston, "E.H. Carr's Theory of International Relations," p. 884. Also, Michael Smith as quoted in Howe, describes Carr's realism as an "agnostic relativism of power" in Howe, "Utopian realism," p. 278.
64. Wilson, "Carr and his Early Critics," pp. 187–189. For Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis* as the work that leans most on realism see his autobiographical sketch where he described the realism displayed in the book as "harsh". Carr, "An Autobiography," p. xix.
65. E. H. Carr, *The New Society* (London: Macmillan, 1951), p. 18.
66. Carr, *What is History?*, p. 82.
67. Carr, *The New Society,* p. 18; also in Carr, *Soviet Impact*, pp. 92–97; Carr, *What is History?,* pp. 75–84.
68. Carr, *What is History?*, p. 83.
69. Scheuerman claims that, despite the "philosophical demerits" of the traditional notions of morality they embraced, Morgenthau and Niebuhr due to their commitment to transcendental moral standards were immune "against some of the most disturbing political illusions of the last century" in a way Carr was not. Scheuerman here has in mind Carr's advocacy of appeasement and his enthusiasm for the Soviet Union. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* pp. 25–27.
70. Molloy, "Hans J. Morgenthau Versus E.H. Carr," pp. 89–90.
71. Carr, *What is History?*, p. 119.

72. Ibid. pp. 109–132; Carr, *The New Society,* pp. 116–118; see also the discussion in Amelia Heath, "E.H. Carr: Approaches to Understanding Experience and Knowledge," *Global Discourse: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Current Affairs and Applied Contemporary Thought* 1, no. 1 (2010): pp. 43–46.
73. Carr, "An autobiography," p. xxi.
74. Howe, "Utopian Realism," pp. 284–287. Similarly, Jenkins ascertains that the epistemological scepticism often attributed to Carr with respect to historical studies is ultimately unattainable due to his belief in progress. Keith Jenkins, *On 'What is History?' From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 44–52.
75. See Andrew Linklater, "The Transformation of Political Community: E. H. Carr, Critical Theory and International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 23, no. 3 (1997): pp. 321–338; Linklater, "E.H. Carr, Nationalism and the Future of the Sovereign State," pp. 234–257; Hobson, *The State and International Relations,* pp. 59–61; Richard Falk, "The Critical Realist Tradition and the Demystification of Interstate Power: E. H. Carr, Hedley Bull and Robert W. Cox," in *Innovation and Transformation in International Studies,* eds. Stephen Gill and James H. Mittelman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), *passim.*
76. Milan Babík, "Realism as Critical Theory: The International Thought of E. H. Carr," *International Studies Review* 15, no. 4 (2013): pp. 499–514.
77. Carr, *What is History?,* p. 119.
78. Ibid. p. 128.
79. Molloy, *Hidden History,* p. 163; fn. 30.
80. For the quoted passage see Carr, "An Autobiography," p. xvi. Jonathan Haslam offers a nice overview of Carr's support for the independence of the newly formed Eastern European states in the aftermath of the First World War. He also notes his increasing misgivings about their behaviour, especially that of Poland, towards their minorities or neighbouring states: Haslam, *Vices of Integrity*, pp. 26–34. This scepticism towards nationalism was a gradual process that developed together with Carr's increased disillusionment with liberalism, and was certainly completed before the advent of Hitler to power in Germany. See Kaarel Piirimäe, "Liberals and Nationalism: EH Carr, Walter Lippmann and the Baltic States from 1918 to 1944," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 48, no. 2 (2017): pp. 188–203.; also: Jones, *A Duty to Lie*, p. 23; pp. 26–28, and Cox, "Carr and the Crisis of Twentieth-Century Liberalism," p. 527.
81. Jones, *A Duty to Lie*, p. 23.
82. John Hallett [E. H. Carr], "Nationalism: the World's Bane," *The Fortnightly Review* 133 (New Series), January–June 1933: pp. 694–702.

83. John Hallett [E. H. Carr], "Warsaw Re-visited," *The Fortnightly Review* 134 (New Series), July–December 1933: p. 729.
84. Although Carr used the terms "nation-state" and "nation" interchangeably, he was particularly attentive to their differences. In *Conditions of Peace* he made special reference to the confusion between the two. The state, he maintained, is the "unit of political power" while the nation is a community of people, and the view that the two should coincide emerged only in the wake of the French Revolution. E. H. Carr, *Conditions of Peace* (London: Macmillan, 1942), p. 39. In his later *Nationalism and After* he repeated a similar observation, while adding some of the diverse definitions of the 'nation' in different parts of the world. He observed, however, that "since the 16th or 17th century 'nation' [...] has been the most natural word throughout Western Europe for the major political unit" and as such he often employed it to mean "nation-state". E.H. Carr, *Nationalism and After* (London: Macmillan, 1945), pp. 1–2.
85. Hallett, "Nationalism: the World's Bane"; Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis,* pp. 209–213. In the preface to the Second Edition Carr, claimed that subsequent developments "have added point" to these concluding reflections and suggested that the reader consult his future work on the subject, since he had accepted the nation-state as the main unit "too readily" in the *Twenty Years' Crisis.* Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. cvi. See also the illuminating discussion by Michael Cox about the changes Carr made to his discussion of nationalism between the first and the second edition: Michael Cox, "From the First to the Second Editions of *The Twenty Years' Crisis:* A Case of Self-censorship?" in Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. lxxii–lxxxii.
86. Evans, "E. H. Carr and International Relations," pp. 79–87.
87. Carr, *Nationalism and After,* p. 1.
88. Ibid. p. 2.
89. Ibid. pp. 2–6.
90. Ibid. pp. 6–17.
91. Ibid. pp. 7–11.
92. Ibid. p. 17.
93. Ibid. p. 21.
94. Ibid. pp. 16–19.
95. Ibid. pp. 21–24.
96. Ibid. pp. 24–26.
97. Here Carr returned to an issue he had already raised in 1939, namely, the shift in the type of expectations placed on diplomats with the advent of democracy. Diplomats in the age of democracies are no longer expected to merely serve their country, but in so doing to demonstrate that they are "serving humanity at large". The ensuing "identification of national with universal interests" results in the transformation of conflicts arising from

divergent interests into Manichean clashes between Good and Evil. E. H. Carr, "Honour Among Nations," *The Fortnightly* 145 (New Series), January–June 1939: pp. 489–492; see also the discussion about democracy and foreign policy in: E. H. Carr, *Britain: A Study of Foreign Policy From the Versailles Treaty to the Outbreak of War* (London: Longmans Green, 1939), pp. 8–19.

98. Carr, *Nationalism and After*, pp. 26–34.
99. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis,* pp. 120–122. Carr added more about the contemporary form of propaganda as an instrument of foreign policy in his later *Soviet Impact*. There he maintained that although propaganda "in the broad sense" is not new, its organised use is a result of the First World War: Carr, *Soviet Impact*, p. 71.
100. Carr, *The New Society*, p. 19.
101. The emphasis on economic power had already appeared in his 1933 "Nationalism the World's Bane".
102. Carr, *Conditions of Peace*, p. 53.
103. Ibid. pp. 50–56.
104. Ibid. pp. 56–60. Scheuerman spots an interesting, albeit superficial parallel with Hayek in Carr's criticism of economic nationalism. The similarities stop in this criticism though, since Carr believed that the resurrection of nineteenth-century liberalism was an illusion, and was sympathetic to socialism. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* pp. 55–58.
105. I discuss similar arguments by Herz and Morgenthau in the following two chapters. Scheuerman offers an overview drawing from a more extensive sample of realists. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* pp. 54–66.
106. Carr, *Conditions of Peace*, pp. 38–48. Carr's argument here can help clarify the discussion about his Eurocentrism. Hobson, for example, claims that the "ultimate irony" for Carr was that by "conflating intra-European politics with the universal" in his account of nationalism, he echoed the utopians he challenged in his early work. John M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760–2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 193. There is, however, no irony here. Carr's account of nationalism was self-consciously Eurocentric *precisely* because he considered the phenomenon to be geographically and historically conditioned. His account of nationalism never purported to lay claims to universality, as Hobson suggests, because he considered it incompatible even to realities in the east part of Europe (let alone the rest of the world). Ernest Gellner, who drew on Carr in developing his own theory of nationalism, was aware of that conditionality and modified it by applying an additional layer of "time-zones" to his own model. Ernest Gellner, "Nationalism Reconsidered and E. H. Carr," *Review of International Studies* 18, no. 4 (1992): pp. 285–293; Ernest

Gellner, *Nationalism*, pp. 37–58. This is not to suggest that this Eurocentrism did not cause any problems for Carr's analysis. As Smith noted, probably it was partially to blame for Carr's failure to anticipate the wave of anti-colonial nationalisms that followed soon after the publication of his work: Anthony D. Smith, "Nationalism and the Historians," in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (London: Verso, 1996): p. 183.

107. Carr, *Nationalism and After*, p. 32.
108. Ibid. pp. 32–34.
109. Ibid. pp. 38–51.
110. Hobson, *The State and International Relations,* pp. 59–61.
111. Ibid. pp. 59–61. Falk's analysis, despite also exploring the connections with critical theory, is much more attentive to Carr's realist side: Falk, "The Critical Realist Tradition," pp. 45–49. Cox is therefore correct to maintain that Carr "remained, as much a 'problem-solving' scholar as he ever was a 'critical' one": Cox, "Carr and the Crisis of Twentieth-Century Liberalism," p. 525.
112. Carr, *Nationalism and After*, p. 38.
113. Ibid. pp. 46–47.
114. I discuss Carr's functionalism and European integration elsewhere: Kenealy and Kostagiannis, "Realist Visions," pp. 233–242; a very interesting discussion of Carr's functionalism and its connection to Mitrany with whose work he was most likely familiar is offered in: Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* pp. 76–81.
115. Carr, *Nationalism and After*, pp. 44–45.
116. Ibid. p. 51; pp. 51–60.
117. Carr, "An Autobiography," pp. xvi–xvii; also in Kuniyuki Nishimura, "E. H. Carr, Dostoevsky, and the Problem of Irrationality in Modern Europe," *International Relations* 25, no. 1 (2011): pp. 45–64.
118. Carr, "An Autobiography," pp. xvi–xx.
119. Isaiah Berlin criticised Carr for his "view of history as the story of the big battalions, and of progress as being whatever those in power will in fact achieve", a criticism repeated by Trevor-Roper. See Haslam, *Vices of Integrity,* pp. 200–204.
120. For the quoted passage see Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 64.
121. Carr, *What is History?*, pp. 91–108.
122. He summarised his criticism, especially about contemporary history, as follows: "The trouble about contemporary history is that people remember the time when all the options were still open." Ibid, pp. 96–98.
123. Jonathan Haslam, "E.H. Carr and the History of Soviet Russia," *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 4 (1983): pp. 1023–1024; see also the excellent discussion by Duke who makes a similar argument: Duke, "Historical Realism and the Liberal Tradition," *passim.*

124. See his *What Is History?* whence the quote "two books cannot be written by the same historian," Carr, *What is History?*, pp. 34–42.
125. R. W. Davies, "Carr's Changing Views of the Soviet Union," in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal,* ed. Cox, pp. 102–107.
126. For planned economy see: Carr, *The New Society,* pp. 19–39; for the Soviet experience as a challenge towards the Western world to change see the concluding paragraph of: Carr, *Soviet Impact,* pp. 115–116.
127. Michael Cox, "E. H. Carr and Isaac Deutscher: a Very 'Special Relationship'," in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal,* ed. Cox, p. 127; also in Haslam, *Vices of Integrity*, p. 144.
128. E.H. Carr, *A History of Soviet Russia: The Bolshevik Revolution,* Vol. 3, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), pp. 21–33.
129. Ibid. p. 32.
130. All three elements of the sentence constitute ideological concessions. The army as an institution of the old regime should be abolished in accordance to the Marxist doctrine; the militia that would replace it should be recruited voluntarily; and, finally, the recruitment of members of the old officer corps did not correspond to the ideal of a "class army". Ibid. pp. 69–78.
131. E. H. Carr, *German–Soviet Relations 1919–1939* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1951), pp. 25–47.
132. His 1938 "The Twilight of the Comintern" foreshadowed his later work on the Comintern: E. H. Carr, "The Twilight of the Comintern," *The Fortnightly* 142 (New Series), January–June 1938: pp. 137–148; see also a passing mention in the *Twenty Years' Crisis* as an exemplification of the close association between national power and international propaganda: Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 124–125.
133. Apart from discussions in his multivolume *History,* some of Carr's last works like *The Twilight of the Comintern* and *The Comintern and the Spanish Civil War* are explicitly focused on the Comintern. A very interesting recent account of those two later works can be found in Smith, "The Realism that Did Not Speak Its Name," *passim*.
134. This is where my analysis departs from that of Smith who emphasises the discontinuity in Carr's thought: Smith, "The Realism that Did Not Speak Its Name," especially pp. 483–492. Carr's treatment of the Comintern, I believe, was consistent and there is not much that differentiates his 1938 article from the posthumously published book bearing the same title.
135. Carr, "Twilight of the Comintern," p. 138.
136. Ibid. pp. 139–140.
137. The rhetoric of the organisation was this time not directed against "capitalism" but against "fascism" and "imperialism", the latter being, however, reserved only for the policies of Germany, Italy, and Japan and not those of

the Western European states whose alliance the Soviet Union was courting at the time. Ibid. pp. 141–142.

138. Ibid. 142–143; E.H. Carr, *The Twilight of the Cominern* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), pp. 403–427. In a 1952 review Carr claimed that given that the Third International was effectively "a partnership between a single victorious party and a bevy of unsuccessful [...] aspirants for power", it was only a matter of time before the former became identified with Soviet power. E.H. Carr, "The Third International," (1952) in Carr, *From Napoleon to Stalin,* p. 90.
139. E.H. Carr, *The Comintern and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 66–85. His treatment of the same subject during the war itself was similar. Then, he advised the British government not to side with the Soviet Union and France lest it antagonise unnecessarily the dissatisfied powers. The Soviet Union at this stage, and especially after the expulsion of Trotsky, was for Carr clearly behaving as a normal state, and a satisfied one at that. E.H. Carr, "Europe and the Spanish War," *The Fortnightly* 141 (New Series), January–June 1937: pp. 25–34.
140. Carr, *History of Soviet Russia,* Vol. 3, p. 98.
141. E. H. Carr, "Unfinished Revolution," in E. H. Carr, *1917: Before and After* (London: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 174–175.
142. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis,* pp. 88–95.
143. For Deutscher, Carr was somewhat overstating the case for Lenin's realism. In an otherwise favourable review of Carr's work on the Soviet Union, Deutscher observed that Carr was too eager to appreciate Lenin the statesman rather than Lenin the revolutionary, reserving only "condescending irony" for the latter: Isaac Deutscher, *Heretics and Renegades, and Other Essays* (London: Cape 1969), pp. 91–110.
144. Carr, *History of Soviet Russia,* Vol. 1, p. 263.
145. Ibid. pp. 259–281.
146. German support proved more decisive in the case of Finland—where a civil war erupted between Bolshevik-backed social democrats and the government—and helped consolidate "the bourgeois regime in Finland": Ibid. pp. 292–295.
147. Ibid. pp. 295–312.
148. Ibid. p. 350.
149. Ibid. p. 273.
150. See, for instance, the discussion in *Nationalism and After* where he claimed that none of the victorious powers was "nationalist in the old sense": Carr, *Nationalism and After*, p. 36. Soviet nationalism, he claimed later, always professed to differ "on the ground that it is built up on the brotherhood of the many nations and races composing the Soviet Union". Although Carr here seemed too willing to take the Soviets' word for it, his criticism of

western nationalism as resting "on the unspoken assumption of the superior right of the white man" and his warning for the resonance of the Soviet appeal with anti-colonial movements seems rather fair. Carr, *Soviet Impact*, pp. 100–101. Carr was not entirely consistent on the question of the novelty of Soviet nationalism. Indeed, his discussion of Stalin after the latter died, credited him with resurrecting "the *Russian* national tradition" (emphasis added). E.H. Carr, "Stalin," *Soviet Studies* 5, no. 1 (1952): pp. 3–4.

151. Jonathan Haslam, "Carr's Search for Meaning," in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Cox, p. 26.

CHAPTER 3

Hans Morgenthau's Realism: Power as the Nemesis of the Nation-State

Introduction

Hans Morgenthau has probably enjoyed the lion's share in the revival of classical realism in revisionist literature.[1] In this chapter I focus on the role played by power in Morgenthau's approach to politics as tragedy, and its connection to the nation-state. I begin by putting Morgenthau's theory of international relations into the context of the critique of rationalism that he first launched with *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics*. There is a tendency in recent literature to uncover Morgenthau's hidden motivations and intellectual roots, which the author apparently camouflaged appropriately to make his ideas appealing to his new audience after he settled in America.[2] While mindful of such contributions, I will here primarily approach Morgenthau on his own terms, not least because hidden motives are rather hard to verify. Morgenthau's eclecticism allowed him to draw from a broad range of sources to create his version of realism. From this range, the pre-rationalist thought which Morgenthau described as encapsulating the "eternal truths" of politics is of cardinal importance. Firstly, it provides him with a clear distinction between different spheres of human activity, exemplified by the distinction between the transcendental and the actual that is central for his moral project. Secondly, it offers Morgenthau the core assumptions he employed about the nature of man and politics, namely, the awareness of the tragic element in human nature and the recognition that power politics is an inalienable element of social life. The association of power with human

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nature forms the core of Morgenthau's ontology and underpins his proclamation that interest defined as power is the "timeless key concept" in politics. Power has, however, a role to play in his epistemology too. It is its identification as the "central concept" of politics which helps delineate the borders of the field and establish the autonomy of politics.

In the second part of the chapter, I examine the functions performed by Morgenthau's definition of power as a psychological relationship before moving to the limitations of power. For Morgenthau, unlimited power drives are prevented not only due to the mediating role of morality, but also due to power itself, and particularly the operation of the balance of power. The latter is not understood in solely a mechanistic way but rather as a concept that requires a common moral framework, such as that of the nineteenth century, to be effective. It was the disintegration of this framework in the age of nationalism that posed a significant burden on elements that had traditionally limited power.

In the third part, thus, I claim that although mindful of the limitations and the historical character of the nation-state, and despite his assumption that the nation-state was becoming obsolete, Morgenthau was faced with a dead end since the state is expected to cover important functions in his theory. Firstly, it provides the framework through which the *animus dominandi* is transferred from the individual to the collective level. Secondly, it provides Morgenthau with the concept around which to anchor his notions of interest and power. The role of nationalism as the ideological corollary of the nation-state permeates the fields of power and morality. I conclude this part with a discussion of the limits imposed upon the nation-state and nationalism by power in general and by power in the nuclear age—which led Morgenthau to start contemplating the idea of a world state. Finally, I examine the application of Morgenthau's approach in the case of the foreign policies of Germany in the first half of the twentieth century and that of the United States during the Cold War.

Morgenthau's Theory of International Relations

A Critique of Rationalist Philosophy

With *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics* Morgenthau launched a fierce criticism against the rationalist philosophy of the last three centuries and its fundamental assumptions. He claimed rationalism, as the backbone of modern political thought, to be fundamentally flawed.[3] It is flawed

ontologically since "rationalism has misunderstood the nature of man, the nature of the social world, and the nature of reason itself".[4] It is also flawed epistemologically, since its blind belief in the scientific approach offers neither a full understanding of nor a remedy for the problems of the social world. The anthropological assumptions of rationalism suggest that reason can be used to understand both man and the world and thus bridge the gap between knowledge and action.[5] This assumption has profound implications, for it presupposes a false identification of natural and social worlds under reason in the form of causality. The outcome was the modelling of social sciences after the more advanced natural sciences, emulating their methods. Morgenthau treated the result as one of failure not only because the social world is essentially different from the natural world, but also because even in the natural sciences the previously accepted degree of certainty was gradually undermined.[6] Morgenthau's issue with rationalism was thus that its "scientific dogmatism" failed to grasp the real attributes of human nature, a sentiment he shared with contemporary American realists or even with some non-American non-realists like Michael Oakeshott.[7]

Liberal international relations theory, as the modern embodiment of rationalism, suffers from the same vices. By combining the experience of its domestic success and the philosophy of rationalism, liberalism approaches international politics through the domestic analogy. Thus, international politics is no longer seen as a domain defined by the struggle for survival and power as was the case in pre-rationalist systems of thought. Since states are modelled after individuals in domestic politics, international relations are to be governed by the same rationalist principles. The predominance of economics and trade over politics and the harmony of interests over the struggle for power leads to a system of thought that negates politics and replaces political conflicts with mere technical issues.[8]

Yet, rationalism is not only flawed philosophically. It also displays a lack of historical perspective. Even if rationalism's philosophical premises are not flawed per se, they do not correspond to the experience of contemporary politics. Taken as they are out of their original historical context and treated as eternal truths, they are ultimately irrelevant to reality. Thus, a philosophy originating in the clash between the rising middle classes and the feudal state, and mirroring the interests of the former, continues to inform a world that has long since departed from this setting.[9] In the resulting question of where modernity should find inspiration to overcome the deficiencies of rationalism, Morgenthau turned to the pre-rationalist philosophies, which he often contrasted to rationalist assumptions.[10]

The Return to Pre-modern Verities: Politics as Tragedy

According to Morgenthau's verdict, the liberals have been "forgetful of the historic relativity of all political thought".[11] Yet for Morgenthau, not *all* political thought was to be treated as historically relative.[12] For political science presupposes the "existence and accessibility of objective general truth", and the continued relevance of classical texts demonstrates their ability to transcend their historical context and express that truth.[13] Morgenthau, thus, while denying universality to liberal values, was anxious to dispel any notion of relativism such as the one he criticised Carr for displaying.[14] Hence, in his quest to identify the eternal truths of politics, Morgenthau turned to the wisdom of pre-rationalist philosophy, a philosophy he often invoked to challenge rationalism. This attachment to pre-rationalism is neither superficial nor, as Christoph Frei suggests, a mere act of camouflaging his real philosophical roots.[15]

Pre-rationalism is, on the one hand, employed to demonstrate the clear distinction between different spheres of human activity. Liberalism conflates politics, ethics, and science, implying that a political action is ethically justified insofar as it follows a scientific solution. By contrast, pre-rationalist philosophy treats the convergence of politics and ethics as a goal to be reached through virtue.[16] What is more important, the moral criticism of politics in pre-rationalism relies on a clearly conceived and distinct notion of ethics. Thus, it denies the moral value of power politics without denying the existence of power politics altogether as does liberalism.[17] This very distinction between the transcendent and the actual, which can never be overcome due to human imperfection, is philosophically rooted in Plato and Aristotle.[18] Said notions of distinct ethics and virtue, along with the principle of prudence that will be familiar to his readers, are explicit demonstrations of the impact on Morgenthau of the pre-rationalist tradition.[19]

On the other hand, it is with respect to the very nature of both man and politics that this philosophy offers the eternal verities Morgenthau sought. The first truth of pre-rationalist philosophy is the awareness of the tragic element in human nature. The understanding of the existence of irreconcilable forces like evil and good, reason and passion, peace and war, and the inconclusive struggle between them; the experience of transformation of good intentions into evil deeds; and the glaring gap between man's understanding and the enigmas of the world are all experiences that manifest the tragic element in human nature.[20] This emphasis on tragedy is for some

scholars inspired by Nietzsche.[21] Yet, as I have argued elsewhere in more detail, this position is problematic because it underestimates the extent to which Morgenthau's work displayed affinity with both the form and, more crucially, the ethics of pre-modern approaches to tragedy.[22]

The second truth, also manifesting the tragic element of human nature and deriving from this very nature, regards the nature of politics. Power politics is an irreducible element of social life, rooted in the lust for power, which is inherent in all human beings. Therefore, power is inseparable from politics, the latter being essentially always power politics.[23] This prevalence of power and its association with human nature not only derives from the tragic element of that nature but also reinforces it, since each human being is both "the exponent and victim of that force".[24] This final contribution of the pre-rationalist mode of thought is, for Morgenthau, the point where the re-interpretation of politics should begin. It also forms the core around which his own assumptions about the nature of politics are crystallised.

Ontology, Epistemology, and Power

Inspired by the pre-rationalist tradition, but also drawing eclectically from a variety of modern sources, Morgenthau understood power in terms of human nature.[25] The central anthropological assumption that informs this understanding is that the lust for power or the *animus dominandi* is an inalienable element of human nature.[26] The lust for power, thus, is an existential condition of human beings, generated by their futile efforts to overcome their loneliness since love is unable to succeed in that goal. The tragic element of human existence is that power is equally powerless in accomplishing that goal.[27] This inability of the urge to dominate to be satisfied reflects the limits of the human experience. As is the case with other spheres of human activity like ethics, where human beings are able to recognise good but are unable to achieve it in its totality, so human imperfectability foils the achievement of omnipotence.[28] It is this imperfectability, deriving from what Bell calls Morgenthau's "metaphysical" and "theological claims" about human nature, that dooms the power drives of men to frustration.[29] What reinforces this tragic element is the evilness of all politics—for every political action is rooted in the inherent lust for power and selfishness of human beings. Thus, the political man is eventually trapped in a precarious balance between the opposing but inescapable "perennial poles" of evil and ethics.[30] The inescapability of the urge

to dominate plays in Morgenthau's theory a significant role with respect both to his ontological and to his epistemological assumptions.

Firstly, he considered power and especially the concept of interest defined in terms of power to be the main characteristic of domestic and international politics alike.[31] The fact that interest defined as power is the timeless key concept of politics, "an objective category which is universally valid", does not, however, imply that its meaning is "fixed once and for all". Different circumstances lead to different attitudes to power in various periods in history. Political science, while demonstrating the central role of power, is to adapt its emphasis accordingly.[32] Given his explicit renunciation of the scientific approach and his agreement with Weber for that matter, Morgenthau's claim to objectivity seems paradoxical. He overcame the value-determinacy problem raised by Weber by means of modifying Schmitt's notion of "the political" so as to incorporate his anthropological assumption. If the essence of politics is reduced to a simple, elemental in human nature urge, then there is at least one value that all statesmen share: the choice between survival or peril.[33]

Secondly, power offers political science with the "central concept" that is essential to delineate the borders of the field and establish its independence. Morgenthau employed the analogy with economics and its central concept of "interest defined as wealth" to describe the similar functions of "interest defined as power" for political science.[34] The autonomy of the political sphere is an important analytical tool Morgenthau borrowed from Weber. As such, it serves the methodological purpose of distinguishing different spheres of human activities as ideal types that can in turn be analysed in isolation.[35]

This central concept has, however, profound epistemological implications beyond the mere independence of the political sphere. It also provides political science with "a rational outline" of politics, having distinguished the timeless features of politics apart from the circumstantial. This enables not only the comprehensive understanding of political action irrespective of historical or geographical conditions but also offers a stepping stone for meaningful political action.[36] Far from thus being just a mere analytical convenience, the identification of power with the central concept of an autonomous political sphere fulfils an important role in the normative side of Morgenthau's theory. It is thus also a "moral and political project".[37]

Finally, power, lying at the core of Morgenthau's political philosophy allows for a better understanding of his notion of rationality. Despite the ferocity of his attack against rationalism Morgenthau maintained that the

faculties of reason are essential for sound politics. Although Morgenthau's early writings were influenced by anti-enlightenment figures, their impact is often exaggerated and the process of his intellectual development neglected.[38] Hence, his attack on rationalism does not imply an embrace of irrationality.[39] For Morgenthau reason is indispensable for politics insofar as it ameliorates the destructiveness of power, yet this reason is not the scientific one of rationalism.[40] It is reason in the form of political intuition rather than the deductive reason of positivism that has the primacy. It is this intuition of the platonic philosopher-king that allows for the reintroduction of reason into politics by reconnecting the transcendental to the actual in line with Morgenthau's metaphysics.[41]

Morgenthau's Conceptualisation of Power

Power in International Politics: Its Nature and Role

Morgenthau's analysis of international politics is founded upon a definition of power as a form of "psychological relationship". Power can thus be defined as "control over the minds and actions" of others.[42] Since the concept of power is treated as being dependent upon the political and cultural context, it might entail *any* social relationship, insofar as it establishes or maintains that control.[43] The spectrum, therefore, of power may cover all the range of possible relationships between physical violence and love.[44] The fact, however, that power might approximate physical violence does not imply that it can be identified with it. For political power is essentially a psychological relationship. Armed strength may indeed be the most important element of political power as long as it remains a potentiality. When the threat of the use of force in international politics materialises, we are no longer in the domain of political power but in that of military power as naked force.[45] This emphasis on the psychological character of power helps also to distinguish the essence of power from its elements. The latter represent merely the components of national power; and while ideally they should be added in any assessment of relative power, such a calculation is impossible.[46] The way Morgenthau thus approached power presupposes a clear distinction between political and military power. A further distinction is that between power and influence, the first being founded upon compulsion and the latter upon persuasion.[47] Thus, both the psychological element and that of compulsion are central in Morgenthau's understanding of power.

Unlike Carr who offered an inexplicit conceptualisation, Morgenthau was more attentive to defining power. His concept, however, maintained some fuzziness despite the important functions it performed in his theory.[48] Williams correctly observes that in Morgenthau's theory "power and interest are actually remarkably flexible and indeterminate concepts".[49] This conception of power allows for the establishment of politics as an "indeterminate sphere", whose limitless nature encompasses both destructive and creative possibilities. At the very same time, the clear distinction between "power as defining the political" and other forms of power helps insulate the political sphere from other social spheres and their respective notions of interest and power.[50] Finally, the exclusion of violence from his notion of power is essential for insulating the political sphere from its most dangerous potential, the intrusion of physical violence.[51]

Consequently, the struggle for power plays a central role in Morgenthau's political theory since its existence is the enabling factor for an action to be considered as "political".[52] Power might be sought after to achieve various objectives and, in this sense, it is a "means to the nation's ends". Since it is selected as the appropriate means, however, power also becomes an end in itself, at least temporarily.[53] Based on the concept of the struggle of power as defining politics, Morgenthau claimed that "all political phenomena can be reduced to one of three basic types".[54] Having defined the nature of political power and isolated its role in politics Morgenthau then proceeded to employ this role to support a threefold typology of policies. It should be noted that, despite the somewhat misleading language in *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau's typology is not intended to apply to international politics alone, but instead encapsulates an independent logic of political power.[55]

Since a "political policy" that would imply an abdication from power is out of question, the three patterns of policies are the following. Firstly, a policy of the status quo is one that aims at maintaining power. The party that advocates such a policy aims at keeping the distribution of power as it is, with only minor adjustments that do not affect the relative strength of the parties involved.[56] Secondly, a policy of imperialism is one that aims at increasing power and thus altering the existing distribution of power. For Morgenthau, it should be noted, "imperialism" is a catch-all concept that aims at describing *any* policy whose purpose is to overthrow the existing balance of power. Thus, this policy includes not only empire-building but also policies that aim at local preponderance.[57] Finally, the policy of prestige is one that aims at displaying power, a policy that

might be pursued in itself but most commonly has the objective of supporting either of the two previous policies.[58]

Order and Chaos: Limitations of Power

The assumption that power constitutes the core of politics has far-reaching implications. Followed without qualifications, this assumption would ultimately imply that international relations correspond to a state of complete anarchy and unlimited power drives.[59] Aspirations towards power are thus restrained in two partially overlapping ways: the first lies within the domain of power and is the mechanism of the balance of power, and the second is the role of those elements inherently opposed to power such as morality and law.

The balance of power is for Morgenthau a necessary corollary of any social order which encompasses several autonomous units.[60] As such, it is bound to also operate in an international system comprising independent political units. The binary purpose of all equilibria is "to maintain the stability of the system without destroying the multiplicity of the elements comprising it".[61] International society cannot be different since its main elements are multiple and mutually antagonistic nations that struggle for power.[62] The operational principle of the balance of power is that every time the equilibrium is threatened by a nation or group of nations, other nations will try to restore it. Thus, the system is inherently unstable and precarious, since the relative power of the parts is not fixed.[63] Another feature of the power of states that jeopardises the normal functioning of the balance of power is its immeasurability.[64] Statesmen should be able to calculate the power of friends and foes alike in order for the balance to operate effectively, yet this is virtually impossible.[65]

Although Morgenthau's vocabulary gives an occasionally scientific guise to the balance of power, for the concept to be workable it must also rest on an equally important "moral consensus".[66] For its cardinal role in most realist approaches cannot be justified in terms of its explanatory force alone. As Bell explains, the concept is not essential for the "core-determining structure of realism" and power politics are certainly imaginable without balancing. The concept can instead be treated as a "peripheral" one, a prescription to avert the "mortal dangers" that an unqualified quest for power would bring to pass.[67] As such, the function of the balance of power is dependent not only upon the capability of the parties involved to exercise it,

but also on whether the dominant moral system of any given historical period is one which can accommodate its exercise.

This assumption seems to be at odds with Morgenthau's mechanistic vocabulary of the balance of power. Yet this contradiction can be overcome if one considers the fact that Morgenthau, as noted by Little, in fact incorporated two different but interconnected dynamics of balance of power in his system. The first dynamic is the one which stems from balance of power as a universal phenomenon that is an inalienable element of a pluralistic society, and includes the aforementioned perils. Even that dynamic cannot be treated as a principle of engineering but rather as an ideal type in the Weberian sense.[68] The second dynamic is related to the "self-conscious attempts to 'regulate and restrain' the power drives" thus minimising their potentially catastrophic escalation.[69] It is mainly this second dynamic, thus, that by embodying a normative prerogative can limit significantly the dangers of an unmitigated quest for power.

Indeed, the fact that the balance of power was more successful in the previous centuries than in the twentieth is attributed by Morgenthau to the parallel operation of a universal moral code that institutionalised such a balance.[70] The moral consensus between the European states of the eighteenth century and the sense that they belonged to the same community allowed them to develop restraints and establish rules in the conduct of politics that preserved "the overall stability of the European republic".[71] Even the mechanistic vocabulary of the period, borrowed from the natural sciences and intended to give to the balance of power a rationalist outlook, became internalised. Despite being only a "serviceable metaphor", as Molloy puts it, the balance of power became associated with qualities it never actually possessed, thus obscuring how essential a common moral framework was for its operation.[72]

Morality, Morgenthau claimed, plays an important role in international politics (albeit one that should not be overestimated), since the revolt of the human mind against power is "as universal as the aspiration for power itself".[73] Moral values thus limit the extremities of power politics, since they prevent statesmen from considering some means and ends as less ethically justifiable than others.[74] The model period for Morgenthau was that of aristocratic rule in Europe, when the balance of power operated at its full effectiveness. At that time, diplomats and statesmen shared a universal moral code that imposed rules for political action.[75] The dual shift from aristocratic to democratic responsibility, and from universal ethical

standards to those prescribed by nationalism, would have a profound impact on the restraining role of morality.

Power, the Nation-State, and Nationalism

The Nation-State as the Current Mode of Political Organisation

Concepts such as "national interest" or "national power" are central in Morgenthau's understanding of international politics. As such, before engaging with the relation between power and the nation-state in his thought it is important to clarify how he approached the "nation". Throughout his works Morgenthau used the terms "nation" and "nation-state" interchangeably without always drawing a clear distinction between the two. This is not to suggest that Morgenthau was negligent of the differences between a state and a nation, but rather—and similarly to Carr for that matter—that he conceived the two as identical only insofar as the age of nationalism is concerned.[76] The nation-state performs two main functions in Morgenthau's theory, both of which are important in order to connect power to international relations.

The first important function of the nation-state, for Morgenthau, is the bridging of the central concept of the lust for power with international politics. For the *animus dominandi* is an anthropological assumption meant to describe an inalienable element of human nature, and thus in principle is applicable only to individuals. It is essential then to identify a process by which the longing for power is transferred from the individual to the collectivity, in this case the nation-state.[77] Societies have developed a whole array of rules and institutions which constrain the power drives of individuals either through channelling them to activities that are harmless for society or through their suppression. Thus, only a small fraction of the population wields power, with its "great mass" reduced to being the object of power.[78] The way for those frustrated individual power drives to find satisfaction, as explained by Morgenthau in one of his passages where the influence of Freud is most evident, is to be projected at the international level where they are identified "with the power drives of the nation".[79] This identification is not only accepted, but also actively encouraged, and even glorified, by society.[80] Modern societies especially, with their particularistic ethics, give a moral guise to such an identification. And what has "magnified enormously the frustration of individual power drives" in modernity is the increased marginalisation and insecurity of the individual as well as the

"atomization of Western society in general".[81] This relationship is crucial for understanding the increased ferocity so characteristic of modern foreign policies as, for Morgenthau, the emotional intensity of identification with the nation is clearly proportional to the instability of a society and the insecurity of its members.[82]

The second function is that the nation-state, as the main form of political organisation, provides Morgenthau with the concept to which he can anchor in a comprehensible way his core concepts of power and interest. Yet the fact that the nation-state is currently the central political conglomeration around which power and interest revolve does not imply that it is either "the last word in politics" or an eternal category outside history. For Morgenthau interest is indeed the timeless essence of politics but its connection to the nation is a product of history, as is the nation-state itself. Thus, for as long as the nation-state remains the prevalent mode of political organisation, it is *national* interest that counts.[83] Consequently, it is the notion of "interest defined as power" that occupies the cardinal role in Morgenthau's theory, the national character of this interest being historically conditioned.

Despite these reservations, the way Morgenthau chose to employ the nation-state as a means for bringing his core concepts to the foreground reveals some problems with his approach. Morgenthau's approach is philosophically grounded on a distinction between the transcendental and the actual.[84] When he claimed that abstract universal moral principles are not applicable to the actions of states before they are "given concrete content and have been related to political situations by society", Morgenthau seemingly assigned the national interest with the function of giving concrete meaning to transcendental moral principles as noted by Pin-Fat.[85] The result, she claims, is that the nation-state is turned into a "mystical entity that has alchemical powers of transmuting the transcendent into the actual".[86] Pin-Fat is somewhat exaggerating the case, as Morgenthau was quite sensitive to the issue of the historical conditionality of the nation-state.[87] Her criticism, however, reveals a more general ambiguity in Morgenthau's thought, one which tied his notion of morality to the political unit.[88]

Power, Morality, and Nationalism

Nationalism, as the ideological corollary of the nation-state, plays a significant role in modern politics for Morgenthau. First, it influences significantly

the perception of national character, which is one of the main elements of national power. Second, it has a disintegrating effect on international morality.[89] The eternal category of politics is, however, power and as such even nationalism and the nation-state are ultimately imperilled by modern developments in its domain.

Morgenthau clustered together several components of national power ranging from geography, resources, and industrial capacity to human factors both quantitative and qualitative.[90] Of the latter, it is “national morale” and “national character”, he claimed, that “stand out both for their elusiveness” from the perspective of rational calculation “and for their permanent and often decisive influence” in determining how much a nation weighs “into the scales of international politics”.[91] Morgenthau considered the existence of a national character that differentiates nations qualitatively as an “incontestable” fact, and he also considered such national character resilient to change. This essentialist view, which allowed Morgenthau to draw parallels between the *furor teutonicus* of the time of Tacitus and the ferocity of the Wehrmacht, is—needless to say—not as incontestable as he thought it to be.[92] For Morgenthau, national character might be resilient to change but is also elusive, and this poses significant problems for the rational calculation of national power. When nationalism enters the picture the situation deteriorates further. Nationalism commits a fallacy of single factor by explaining national power predominantly in terms of national character. In so doing, it leads to the blind worship of national character and the “overestimation of the qualities of one’s own nation”.[93]

The most important role, however, that nationalism plays in international politics can be found in its corruption of universal morality. Morgenthau’s moral critique of nationalism was concentrated against the “universalistic” nationalism of the twentieth century rather than the “liberal” nationalism of the nineteenth.[94] For Morgenthau, the emergence of nationalism after the French Revolution was not problematic per se. The aim of liberal nationalism of the nineteenth century, which he saw in a more positive light, was to liberate nations from alien domination. The same rights were recognised for all nations and, consequently, “there was room for as many nationalisms as there were nations” which wanted a state of their own.[95] The French Revolution signalled the merger of individual and collective liberty, and associated democracy with nationalism. In the eyes of liberal nationalists, therefore, the advancement of nationalism could only lead to a better and more just world order.[96] “There could be no enmity”, it seemed, “among free nations who were united in a solidarity of individual

and collective self-interest against the enemies of anybody's freedom".[97] This was not, however, how things were to unfold in the twentieth century.

The new nationalism which became dominant on the eve of the Second World War was qualitatively different from the old one. The only thing the two shared was the focus on the nation as "the ultimate point of reference for political loyalties and actions".[98] This "nationalistic universalism", alongside the replacement of aristocratic responsibility by the democratic version, led to a "far-reaching dissolution" of the moral code which had limited foreign policy from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.[99] Once nationalism was triumphant, its spirit, contrary to the hopes of its liberal advocates, proved to be not one of universalism and humanitarianism but one of particularism and exclusion.[100] The supranational ethical standards that had characterised aristocratic diplomacy stood no chance against the moral pressure which modern nation-states can exert on their members.[101] At the same time, however, human beings remain too attached to the notion of universal morality to abandon it with ease. Their way out of this dilemma is to pour their "national ethics into the now almost empty bottle of universal ethics" and claim universal recognition for the moral standards of their nation.[102] The culmination of this process is the transformation of nationalism into a political religion which leads nations to face each other in the international scene with crusading fervour.[103] Such a moral code cannot limit in any meaningful way the foreign policy of the nation. On the contrary, instead of restraining the struggle for power it can amplify it, to sometimes terrifying proportions.[104] Nationalism has a similar impact on another safeguard against the struggle for power, public opinion. World public opinion can only operate under the universal moral standards that nationalism deprived it of, and thus when nations appeal to the public opinion they make appeal to something non-existent.[105]

The distinction between a good variant of nationalism and a bad one, which is employed here by Morgenthau, has been—and remains—one of the most persistent themes in the study of nationalism and had indeed already appeared in the nineteenth century.[106] At the time Morgenthau was writing, it had already been adapted by Hans Kohn to his influential distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism.[107] Morgenthau's critique, which isolates only the modern variant of nationalism as representing a profound threat for international morality, is also revealing of his scepticism about the role of democracy in the rational formation of national interest. The fact that Morgenthau was at odds with democracy was spotted early by Oakeshott, but it was in the case of mass democracy and its close association

with nationalism that he saw the greatest risk.[108] The parallels with Carr's association of nationalism with mass democracy in the age of the "socialised nation" are clear here. Unlike Carr's approach, however, for Morgenthau the rise of nationalistic universalism is not associated with developments in economic power and the demands for welfare.

Nationalism thus presented modern man with a formidable challenge since it distorted the view of power, it undermined the functions of the balance of power, and it incapacitated the restrictive role morality had always played vis-à-vis power politics. Morgenthau's moral critique of nationalism is compelling and appeared much earlier than his critique of the viability of the nation-state in terms of power. Yet at the same time his notion of morality is bound to the state, which he perceived as the sole remaining guardian of a moral space in a world now lacking a universal moral standard.[109] Thus, the only option remaining to Morgenthau appeared to be nostalgia for an older, more orderly world.

Indeed, for a period in his intellectual life Morgenthau, like Schmitt, appears to have oriented himself backward, looking to an era that had all but disappeared.[110] Lacking any optimism about the prospects of modern international morality, he called repeatedly for a return to something akin to the aristocratic diplomacy of early modern Europe, and its concomitant balance of power.[111] Despite his apparent difficulty in disassociating himself from this idealised past, it would be a mistake to assume that Morgenthau's views remained unchanged, when his career was to span decades of evolving insight.[112] Hence Morgenthau's insights in the 1960s can hardly be described as backward-looking given his favourable treatment of Mitrany's functionalism and the "qualified optimism" that characterised his contemplation of a world state in the time of nuclear warfare, as will be discussed next.[113]

Power as the Nemesis of the Nation-State

Notwithstanding the peculiar relation between nationalism and power and the latter's glorification by the former, the shifting realities of the second half of the twentieth century led Morgenthau to the assumption that both nationalism and the nation-state had had their day. As I will explain in this part, Morgenthau came to believe that—while nationalism is checked by power in any case—the nuclear age would render nation-states obsolete.

The way power checks nationalism in general becomes evident through what Louis Snyder summarised as Morgenthau's "A–B–C paradox".[114]

Taken to its logical conclusion, nationalism becomes a mechanism for splintering political units into disconnected shards, and will thus lead to infinitely finer groupings. The disintegration of the old European empires in the aftermath of the Great War offers a first-rate example. If the principle of nationalism was evoked by the nations that emerged from that disintegration, nothing was to stop populations *within* those nations from invoking the principle in turn, and so on in a process of further fragmentation. Morgenthau here presented a problem similar to that discussed by Gellner in his seminal study on nationalism, namely, that the number of potential nationalisms exceeds by far the number of available viable states to accommodate them.[115] Which factor, then, prevents this tendency for further disintegration? Working against it is not any logic of nationalism itself, but the competing arrangements of power and interests both within and between nations.[116] Power thus plays an important role in limiting nationalism's potential for a chain reaction that would lead to continuously shrinking states.

This equilibrium between nationalism's push towards anarchy and the countering work of power, however, becomes redundant with the advent of the nuclear age. With the development of nuclear weapons the viability of the nation-state itself is brought into question. The potential deployment of such weapons renders the nation-state incapable of performing its most basic protective functions.[117] Given these irreversible changes in technology and the concurrent economic trends, Morgenthau saw the need for a new sort of political structure better suited to address such challenges. He was reaching past the nation-state to a supranational unit. A mere shift in scale from nationalism at the level of the nation-state to that of a regional conglomeration would not suffice. He therefore thought necessary both the transcending of the nation-state and the devising of a new ordering principle that would supersede the anarchic propensity of nationalism.[118]

This shifting attitude reveals how Morgenthau's initially conservative view that looked nostalgically to the revival of the old diplomacy of his model period was gradually replaced by an embrace of the possibility of change.[119] That shift did not happen instantaneously: Morgenthau struggled with the nuclear dilemma throughout the Cold War and did not always suggest the same way around it. By the early 1960s, however, he was already gravitating towards advocacy of a world state.[120] Morgenthau's thought certainly displayed inconsistencies due to his effort to maintain public relevance, but also due to the radical change signalled by the advent of nuclear weapons.[121] At the same time, however, one should not overlook

the continuity in his scepticism about the nation-state. He highlighted the moral shortcomings of the nation-state and its particularistic morality from an early stage with the publication of *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics*.[122] And his advocacy of a world state as the way to secure humanity's survival was certainly, as I have discussed elsewhere more extensively, in agreement with his minimalistic ethics of necessity.[123]

Tragedies That Were and Tragedies That Might Be: Germany and the United States

Preliminary Remarks: Morgenthau in Transit from Germany to America

Like several other émigré scholars who played an important role in the early years of realism in the United States, Morgenthau was a German Jew fleeing the rise of Nazism.[124] This traumatic experience had a significant impact on the development of his ideas, as did the encounter with an intellectual environment very different from the one he was accustomed to in Europe. Whether it was his German background or his experience in the United States that played a greater role in shaping Morgenthau's thought is still debated, but he clearly managed to synthesise insights from both in his theoretical reflections.[125] He also discussed the foreign policies of those two countries; he frequently referred to Germany's historical experiences and in some cases used them as a cautionary tale for his adopted home.[126] It was the foreign policy of the United States, however, that was to receive most of his attention for the better part of three decades. In his effort to engage with and influence this policy, Morgenthau would find himself eventually transformed from "would-be insider to critical outsider".[127]

Unlike Carr, Morgenthau never attempted to find a medium ground between the soviet system and liberal democracy. His preference for his adopted country over its Cold War rival was unequivocal. He certainly had his misgivings about American politics, but at the same time he saw several of its attributes, including its social setting, in a positive light. Morgenthau often made positive references to the "national greatness" of the United States and even appealed to American exceptionalism, albeit not uncritically.[128] Consequently, for Morgenthau, it was imperative to defend "an imperfect American civilization from the threat of an even worse Soviet one".[129] The importance for Morgenthau of influencing the foreign policy

of the United States should not be underestimated. Indeed, as Craig has shown, when the dilemma between public relevance and philosophical consistency arose, Morgenthau tended to resolve it in favour of the former.[130] Not that Morgenthau always managed to have a decisive influence in the shape that foreign policy eventually took. In his efforts to "speak truth to power" he often found himself a dissident, fundamentally at odds with the path American foreign policy was taking.[131] He was, nonetheless, a deeply interested participant in the foreign policy of his adopted country, and over the course of the years endeavoured to apply his realism to its workings. It is to the impact of realism on his reflections on both his native and his adopted homeland that I now turn.

Rationalism's Encounter with Power Politics

Morgenthau's thinking about the limits of the enlightenment can be illustrated with reference to his account of the rise of Nazism in Germany as well as his engagement with the political landscape he found in the United States. In a passage echoing his *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics* Morgenthau discussed the tragedy of the German Jews.[132] With their majority belonging to the middle classes they embraced not only the philosophy and institutions of liberalism, but also its fundamental flaws. Consequently, they failed to realise—similarly to the liberals in *Scientific Man*—that their emancipation was a result of the rise of the middle class and that the liberal philosophy did not represent eternal verities but was dependent upon the predominance of that class. When thus the middle class in Germany collapsed in the aftermath of the First World War, they could not grasp the profound social implications, namely, the rise of Nazism.[133]

The rise of Nazism could only be understood for Morgenthau as a reaction to the "economic, social and moral collapse of the German middle classes".[134] The radicalisation of the former middle classes did not follow the Marxist assumptions of an embrace of communism, which for Morgenthau was a political philosophy that shared the same rational outline with liberalism.[135] What emerged from the demise of Weimar Germany was, instead, a political doctrine that represented the negation of this rational outline and indeed of the very traditions of Western civilisation. In contrast to liberalism and communism that were coherent political philosophies matching the aspirations of particular social groups (middle and working classes, respectively), Nazism tried to appeal to all groups and thus lacked coherence. This incoherence, however, mattered little as Nazism was not a

political philosophy in the traditional sense of a rational system. Quite the contrary, it was "essentially anti-intellectualist and irrationalist".[136] As such, its claims demanded acceptance through authority and precluded critical scrutiny: it was, in short, more of a political religion.[137]

The sharp contrast with rationalism is also pronounced in Nazism's attitude towards power. If rationalism erred in its deprecation of the role of power, Nazism moved to the opposite extreme by worshiping power.[138] This move had dire consequences both domestically and internationally. As discussed earlier, for Morgenthau all modern societies suppress the individual power drives of their members and encourage their projection to the nation-state through the Freudian defence mechanisms of identification and displacement. The rise of Nazism was an extreme manifestation of this phenomenon. The factors that Morgenthau blamed for the increase in the intensity of identification with the nation, such as personal insecurity and social disintegration, were in Germany on the eve of Nazism "more highly developed than anywhere else".[139] Through the racial doctrine it espoused, Nazism eliminated the distinction between domestic and international politics and provided the newly proletarised lower middle classes with "lower races to look down upon and foreign enemies to feel superior to and conquer".[140] The consequences were disastrous. Its moral compass broken, Germany surrendered unreservedly to the immanence of power and embarked on a quest for power that knew no restraints either domestically or internationally. The immediate outcome was the fall of Germany, a fall that demonstrated most clearly the crucial importance of moral constraints, and especially of prudence, in limiting the power drives of nations.[141]

It is no coincidence that Morgenthau penned *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics* within the first decade of his settlement in the United States. At this stage in his career, he was going through "a deep cultural shock from his move from Europe to the United States and was still haunted by the trauma of his European experiences".[142] The book represented an effort to challenge the same positivism Morgenthau had previously encountered in Weimar Germany and which he considered partially responsible for the political apathy that contributed—amongst other things—to the rise of Nazism.[143] The problem of rationalism's misreading of the nature of politics was accentuated by American exceptionality. The fact that the rise of the middle classes was almost unchallenged in America led to the identification of power politics with aristocracy and the fallacy of treating power politics as a "historical accident". For Morgenthau, there was no other country in the Western world more strongly convinced of the feasibility of a foreign policy

devoid of the struggle for power than the United States.[144] There was indeed a "historical accident" at play for Morgenthau, but it was hardly the identification of politics with power. The accident in question was instead the historical context underlying the uniqueness of the United States. The first aspect of this accident was the great distance separating America from European politics, and the second the fact that the United States expanded without opposition throughout the nineteenth century. This dual accident was then artificially disassociated from the circumstances that gave rise to it and misidentified as some sort of "destiny".[145] Such a misreading aggravated the risks facing foreign policy in an age of nation-states, as I discuss next.

The Perils of Nationalistic Universalism

As we have already seen, Morgenthau distinguished between two variants of nationalism: a benign, liberal one and one that was aggressive and bore the traits of a political religion, which he called "nationalistic universalism". It was the latter with its moral blindness and lack of restraint that posed the biggest threat for international politics. To begin with, and consistently with Morgenthau's "tragic vision of politics", nationalistic universalism attains a self-defeating quality and threatens the foreign policies of the states that succumb to such a toxic ideology.[146] The quintessential example Morgenthau employed to illustrate this case was Germany. The fall of Germany twice in the span of three decades was in part attributed by Morgenthau to a "fatal weakness of the German national character", namely, the lack of moderation.[147] The war efforts of both Wilhelm II and Hitler were characterised by this lack of moderation which failed to appreciate what was possible and what was not, and thus led to the destruction of German power.[148] The muddy waters of "national character" aside, for Morgenthau the case of Germany in the Second World War was also a typical—if not *the* archetypical—example of nationalistic universalism. In no other moment in modern history, he claimed, was the suffocation of the individual within the state and the resulting identification with the nation as complete as it was in Nazi Germany. And nowhere else had it been so forcefully translated into international aggression.[149] And yet, for Morgenthau, the difference between Nazism and the nationalism displayed by other great powers was not one of kind but one of intensity.[150] As the world was entering the Cold War, Morgenthau feared that the two emerging superpowers were far from immune from nationalistic universalism themselves.

The United States was in a better starting position as its increased social mobility allowed for improvements in the lot of the masses and thus tended to mitigate the intensity of identification with the nation. There were, however, worrying tendencies like the increased external insecurity and atomisation of societies which for Morgenthau could only strengthen such an identification.[151] The danger was further aggravated by an American exceptionalism that imbued the foreign policy of the United States with a very strong moralistic tone. The problem with such a tendency was that it made American foreign policy prone to succumbing to nationalistic universalism. Echoing his account in the "Twilight of International Morality", Morgenthau highlighted the risks of appealing to universal moral principles when formulating foreign policy. Given that international society is less integrated than the domestic one, such principles cannot have a concrete meaning: either they are too ambiguous to guide political action or they merely represent the projection of particularistic values as universal ones. There was thus a real danger in the context of the Cold War for the United States' foreign policy to degenerate into a moral crusade that aspired to impose the same (that is, its own) moral standards upon humankind.[152]

When it came to the foe of the United States in this confrontation, Morgenthau was somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, he suggested that the Soviet Union was *more* vulnerable to nationalistic universalism than the United States as its population faced more frustrations and insecurities and as such was more likely to identify with the nation more intensely.[153] He also clearly treated bolshevism as a political religion with the aim of reshaping the world according to its own philosophy and way of life. The result was a rift in the Western civilisation between two opposing world-views, which also coincided with a political conflict between two competing superpowers.[154] On the other hand, Morgenthau's portrayal of the Soviet Union and its foreign policy did not match the image of an ideologically driven state. For Morgenthau, the leadership of the Soviet Union was not motivated by the desire to spread communism throughout the world. The ideology of communism was rather employed as a rationalisation for an imperialist foreign policy.[155] As Cox has accurately pointed out, except for an alarmist interlude in the late 1950s, Morgenthau believed that Washington was not faced with "a state led by revolutionary dreamers" but with a state whose leadership seemed to know—and follow—the lessons of realism quite well.[156]

The main task therefore for policymakers in the United States was to accurately discern what the competition with the Soviet Union was truly

about. This was no easy task and Morgenthau feared that some distinctively American patterns of thought would inhibit its completion. The tendency of the public in the United States to interpret foreign affairs in moral terms that either idealised or demonised external actors, combined with a tendency to take Russian propaganda too seriously and with the ambiguity of the concept of communism itself, made the disentanglement of Russian imperialism from communism rather difficult.[157] And the risk emanating from the failure to appraise the situation correctly would be no other than the degeneration of American foreign policy into crusading nationalism.[158] Morgenthau saw the potential for the United States to succumb to the fallacies of nationalism, and frequently castigated policymakers for falling prey to such fallacies through their embrace of a misguided belief in American omnipotence in conjunction with underestimation of the Soviet Union.[159]

The elevation of anti-communism to the dominant objective of American foreign policy meant for Morgenthau that policymakers were more often than not failing in their appreciation of the real issue at stake.[160] "There was a time, not much more than a decade ago", he noted in the early 1970s, "when we took the communist dogma much more seriously as a guide to policy than did, for instance, Stalin."[161] For Morgenthau several of the mistakes of the foreign policy of the United States, including the disastrous war in Vietnam—which he fiercely opposed—were the result of an inability to distinguish between different kinds of communism.[162] There was a crucial difference, Morgenthau insisted, between communism as representing Russian imperialism and communism as an anti-colonial movement.[163] The former ought to be confronted as it directly challenged the national interests of the United States, but this was not necessarily the case with the latter. What was then needed, he claimed, was a differential approach which would allow the evaluation of different types of communism according to their impact on the national interest of the United States.[164] Morgenthau's engagement with the foreign policy of the United States was thus underpinned by an effort to support the "ideological decontamination of foreign policy" and thus avert the descent into crusading nationalism which threatened to undo American power.[165]

Concluding Remarks

The main objective of this chapter was to uncover the importance of power in Morgenthau's theory of international relations. The centrality of power in his work is inseparable from an understanding of politics as tragedy which

follows from a critique of rationalism as being unable to trace the essence of the nature of human beings or politics. Based on the anthropological assumption of a lust for power and the tragedy of its inescapability, Morgenthau placed power at the core of his theory. Drawing thus eclectically from a wide range of both "pre-rationalist" and modern sources, Morgenthau developed a conceptualisation of power that is explicit and narrow and therefore constitutes *and* insulates the political sphere. As such, power permeates his theory both ontologically and epistemologically. Morgenthau formed a strict analytical framework within which he placed power as the core of politics which is separated by other spheres of human activity like morality. This approach contrasts that of Carr with his different theoretical background and dialectical understanding of politics.

The different backgrounds of Carr and Morgenthau account largely for their significant differences in approaching the nation-state as the main "unit" of power in modernity and nationalism as its ideological corollary. Carr's wide range of interests paired with his flexible conceptualisation of power allowed him to offer a nuanced understanding of the nation-state and its development in terms of shifts in the domestic and international distribution of power. Morgenthau's account, on the other hand, is less elaborate and mainly intuitive since he never focused on the historical development of the nation-state or paid attention to its careful conceptualisation for that matter. Furthermore, the state plays a central role in Morgenthau's effort to translate his *animus dominandi* to international politics meaningfully and in overcoming the division between the transcendental and the actual. Carr's flexible understanding of a power that is disassociated from human nature and his dialectical view of politics (as opposed to Morgenthau's distinct spheres of human activity) allowed him to avoid such shortcomings. Yet despite their profound differences there are also striking similarities to be found in the two realists' approaches of the nation-state.

First and foremost, neither of them treated the nation-state as an objective category outside history. Nor did they see the nation-state as an ossified, eternal "power unit". Morgenthau's tragedy was that his intuitive understanding of the nation and his restrictive methodology did not allow him to elaborate adequately on its historical development and thus effectively disassociate a historically conditioned notion from a theory that purported to capture timeless elements of politics. This, however, does not imply that Morgenthau was not mindful of the limitations power imposed on the nation-state and nationalism as its ideological corollary. In fact, he too identified the nation-state as an unfixed manifestation of power. And,

despite holding very different assumptions from Carr about morality, he too was acutely aware of the risk posed by any notion of international society which is anchored to the premises of nationalism.

Notes

1. For an excellent recent summary of this literature see Felix Rösch, *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent in Morgenthau's Worldview* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 1–16.
2. This applies particularly to thinkers like Nietzsche and Schmitt; it has been assumed that Morgenthau would have faced some discomfort in admitting his indebtedness to them.
3. Morgenthau considered rationalism as underpinning both liberalism and Marxism, and thus both camps of the Cold War, despite their differences, shared—and suffered from—the same flawed philosophical background. Thus, when Morgenthau was referring to the dilemmas facing the scientific man, his criticism was directed not only at the Western world but was instead a universal critique of modernity. This is particularly apparent in Hans Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master?* (New York: New American Library), 1972, p. 4. See also the discussion in Rösch, *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent*, p. 32.
4. Hans Morgenthau, *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 5.
5. Ibid. pp. 122–123.
6. Ibid. pp. 122–136; In *Science: Servant or Master?* Morgenthau added to his criticism of modern science the moral shortcoming of failing to attain meaning by either of the two historically available options: relation to transcendental values or immanent justification. Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master?*, pp. 11–24.
7. Interestingly, although Oakeshott agreed with Morgenthau's verdict of rationalism, he considered Morgenthau's views as a mirror image of that same rationalism. If rationalism erroneously saw a bright future, Morgenthau committed a similar error by looking nostalgically backwards. Nicholas Rengger, "Realism, Tragedy, and the Anti-Pelagian Imagination in International Political Thought," in *Realism Reconsidered*, ed. Williams, *passim*. For the common "theologico-political" and anti-rationalist background of several of the early American realists see Nicolas Guilhot, "American Katechon: When Political Theology Became International Relations Theory," *Constellations* 17, no. 2 (2010): pp. 225–253.
8. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics,* pp. 70–121.
9. Ibid. pp. 19–40.

10. Although Morgenthau often invoked the pre-rationalist tradition in *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics* it is in his *Science: Servant or Master?* that he employed pre-rationalism and discussed extensively the "shock of wonderment" which reveals the limits of human experience but can also form the basis for meaningful science. Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master?*, pp. 24–34.
11. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics,* p. 20.
12. Philosophies representing "eternal verities" can guide theory and practice irrespectively of time—and although rationalism is not one of them, "there have been philosophies which were at least partly of this kind". Ibid. pp. 4–5.
13. Hans Morgenthau, *Dilemmas of Politics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 36.
14. Seán Molloy, "Aristotle, Epicurus, Morgenthau and the Political Ethics of the Lesser Evil," *Journal of International Political Theory* 5, no. 1 (2009): pp. 96–98. Haslam provides a nice overview of this anxiety of Morgenthau, who was "extremely sensitive to being labelled a one-dimensional believer in power", and attributes the intensity of his attack on Carr to an effort to "extricate himself from the position" his recently published *Politics Among Nations* had put him in. Jonathan Haslam, *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations Since Machiavelli* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 199–200. After all, Morgenthau's own debt to Mannheim was not insignificant, and he certainly also struggled with the issue of relativism and how to overcome it: Rösch, *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent*, pp. 87–96; for the struggle with relativism see also Vibeke Schou Tjalve, *Realist Strategies of Republican Peace: Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and the Politics of Patriotic Dissent* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 101–102.
15. Frei, perhaps too eager to trace Morgenthau's thought back to Nietzsche, claims that the use of pre-rationalism merely cloaks ideas he borrowed from Nietzsche in a language acceptable for the American audience, given the latter's hostility to Nietzsche. See Christoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2001), p. 189. The same line of argument is also followed by Neacsu: Mihaela Neacsu, *Hans J. Morgenthau's Theory of International Relations: Disenchantment and Re-Enchantment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 50–56. Morgenthau's eclecticism allowed him to accommodate both pre-rationalism and modern criticisms to rationalism in his approach, as will be shown in this section.
16. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics* pp. 35–40.
17. Ibid. pp. 42–46.

18. Véronique Pin-Fat, "The Metaphysics of the National Interest and the 'Mysticism' of the Nation-State: Reading Hans J. Morgenthau," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 2 (2005): pp. 217–236.
19. Frei correctly points out that although influenced by the analytical faculties and iconoclasm of Nietzsche, Morgenthau refused to follow the normative connotations of his philosophy. Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography,* pp. 107–108. Morgenthau drew eclectically from a corpus of classical sources for his ethical projects. Lang demonstrates the Aristotelian implications of his notion of prudence, and the aristocratic universal morality he nostalgically recalled when lamenting the collapse of international morality in the age of nationalism. See Anthony F. Lang, "Morgenthau, Agency, and Aristotle," in *Realism Reconsidered,* ed. Williams, pp. 26–33. The importance of Aristotle is also prominent in Molloy's analysis: Molloy, "Aristotle, Epicurus, Morgenthau," *passim.* For the impact of the Judaeo-Christian tradition see Benjamin M. Mollov, *Power and Transcendence: Hans Morgenthau and the Jewish Experience* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002), pp. 15–75 and Alastair JH. Murray, "The Moral Politics of Hans Morgenthau," *The Review of Politics* 58, no. 1 (1996): pp. 81–107.
20. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics,* pp. 205–208. In his review of the book Oakeshott challenged Morgenthau's decision to treat tragedy as a category not of art but of life: Michael Oakeshott, "Scientific Politics," *Cambridge Journal* 1, (1948): p. 356. In his reply, Morgenthau conceded some points to Oakeshott, but tragedy was not one of them. The "contrast between duty and ability is", he maintained, "a quality of existence, not a creation of art": Hans Morgenthau, letter to Oakeshott, 22 May 1948. This exchange has gained some attention in the relevant literature: Rengger, "Realism, Tragedy, and the Anti-Pelagian Imagination in International Political Thought," *passim*; Richard Ned Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests and Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 308; Konstantinos Kostagiannis, "Hans Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," *International History Review* 36, no. 3, (2014): p. 513.
21. Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography,* p. 187. Gismondi's examination of realist notions of tragedy relies heavily on Frei's claims for the section on Morgenthau. Mark Gismondi, "Tragedy, Realism and Post-modernity: *Kulturpessimismus* in the Theories of Max Weber, E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, and Henry Kissinger," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 15, no. 3 (2004): pp. 435–463.
22. Kostagiannis, "Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," pp. 514–515. Ethics played a prominent role in the way Morgenthau employed tragedy. One need not go much further than his justification for advocating the ethics of the lesser evil when discussing the relationship

between evil and politics. The dilemma is not between enacting good or evil, as the tragic quality of political action is precisely that it always involves evil-doing, but of being as good as one can be by choosing the lesser evil. See Hans Morgenthau, "The Evil of Politics and the Ethics of Evil," *Ethics* 56, no. 1 (1945): p. 18; Molloy, "Aristotle, Epicurus, Morgenthau," *passim*. This position is, of course, not without its problems. Morgenthau's favouring of the lesser evil can, for example, potentially lead to legitimisation of evil-doing and consequently to the weakening of an actor's resistance to evil. His discussion of an actor's "moral courage" in knowing that every political action entails evil-doing but acting nonetheless, is prone to leading to this type of "moral narcissism" whereby actors feel *more* heroic the eviler they act. See Douglas Klusmeyer, "Beyond Tragedy: Hannah Arendt and Hans Morgenthau on Responsibility, Evil and Political Ethics," *International Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2009): pp. 343–347. For the differences with Nietzsche see also Scheuermann, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond*, pp. 40–69 and particularly fn 11; for Morgenthau's familiarity with the relevant classical texts see Richard Ned Lebow, "The Ancient Greeks and Modern Realism: Ethics, Persuasion, and Power," in *Political Thought and International Relations*, ed. Bell, *passim*. The association of tragedy with moral lessons is met with scepticism by some authors. See, for example, Euben's complaint that this is "too much the product of Aristotelian and Christian moralising" in which Morgenthau also participated: Peter Euben, "The Tragedy of Tragedy," in *Tragedy and International Relations*, eds. Toni Erskine and Richard Lebow (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 86–92.

23. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics,* pp. 9–10, pp. 215–219.
24. Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master?,* p. 31.
25. Weber, Nietzsche, and Freud are three of the most important modern figures who influenced Morgenthau's approach to power. Rösch, *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent,* p. 49.
26. Of course, here Pichler is right to comment that "Morgenthau delivers no proof for his anthropological statement". Hans-Karl Pichler, "The Godfathers of 'Truth': Max Weber and Carl Schmitt in Morgenthau's Theory of Power Politics," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 2 (1998): p 196. For a recent effort to ground realism on human nature understood differently from Morgenthau in terms of sociobiology, see Bradley A. Thayer, "Bringing in Darwin: Evolutionary Theory, Realism, and International Politics," *International Security* 25, no. 2 (2010): pp. 124–151; and the reaction to this article: Duncan Bell, Paul K. MacDonald, and Bradley A. Thayer. "Start the Evolution Without Us," *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001): pp. 187–198. For a comprehensive discussion of the serious problems associated with such attempts see indicatively: Duncan

Bell, "Beware of False Prophets: Biology, Human Nature and the Future of International Relations Theory," *International Affairs* 82, no. 3 (2006): pp. 493–510; Vassilios Paipais, "First Image Revisited: Human Nature, Original Sin and International Relations," *Journal of International Relations and Development,* (advance online publication), 2016: pp. 2–7.

27. Hans Morgenthau, "Love and Power," *Commentary* 33, no. 3 (1962): pp. 250–251.
28. Pin-Fat nicely summarises this as the "imperfectability thesis". Pin-Fat, "The Metaphysics of the National Interest," pp. 221–224.
29. Bell, "Anarchy, Power and Death," pp. 221–239: p. 228. As such, the lust for power stems from a particular vision of human nature. For Ulrik Petersen Morgenthau's concept of power is better understood as akin to Nietzsche's "Will to Power" which should be treated as "ontologically prior to any definition of human nature and self". Ulrik Enemark Petersen, "Breathing Nietzsche's Air: New Reflections on Morgenthau's Concepts of Power and Human Nature," *Alternatives* 24, no. 1 (1999): pp. 83–118. Although there are certainly elements of Nietzsche's approach in Morgenthau's understanding of power, especially where he approaches it as a drive to meaning (I am indebted to Vassilis Paipais for helping me clarify this aspect), it seems that Petersen is exaggerating his case as Morgenthau *also* operated with a notion of human nature. Rösch's analysis is of importance here, as he establishes that Morgenthau employed a dual conception of power, and whilst relying on Nietzsche for his normative concept of power, other influences are more prominent for his empirical concept. See Rösch, *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent*, pp. 54–63. It must be noted here that Morgenthau's notion of human nature is pluralistic and incorporates different and often conflicting elements. Thus, the lust for power might be the central aspect of Morgenthau's vision of "political man" but the latter is meant to be an abstraction such as the "moral man" that might be meaningful for analytical purposes but does not imply, as Cozette remarks correctly, that human nature is reducible "to this [the lust for power] impulse". Murielle Cozette, "What Lies Ahead: Classical Realism on the Future of International Relations," *International Studies Review* 10, no. 4 (2008): pp. 667–679.
30. Morgenthau, "Evil of Politics," pp. 1–18.
31. Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), p. 35.
32. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. 4–9; also in Morgenthau, *Dilemmas of Politics,* p. 38.
33. Pichler, "The Godfathers of 'Truth'," pp. 190–192.
34. Morgenthau, *Dilemmas of Politics,* pp. 38–40.

35. Michael C. Williams, “Why Ideas Matter in International Relations: Hans Morgenthau, Classical Realism, and the Moral Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 58, no. 4 (2004): p. 641.
36. Morgenthau, *Dilemmas of Politics,* pp. 38–39.
37. Williams, “Why Ideas Matter in International Relations,” pp. 650–653. Morgenthau’s conception of the political is similar to that of Hannah Arendt. See Felix Rösch, “Realism as Social Criticism: The Thinking Partnership of Hannah Arendt and Hans Morgenthau,” *International Politics* 50, no. 6 (2013): pp. 821–823.
38. William E. Scheuerman, “A Theoretical Missed Opportunity? Hans J. Morgenthau as Critical Realist,” in *Political Thought and International Relations,* ed. Bell, *passim.*
39. In his final years, however, Morgenthau was disillusioned by the failure of policymakers to pursue rationally the national interest. This led him to reconsider his theory and examine the possibilities of an irrational theory of international relations or a theory of misunderstanding. David Fromkin, “Remembering Hans Morgenthau,” *World Policy Journal* 10, no. 3 (1993): pp. 81–88.
40. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man* vs. *Power Politics,* pp. 9–10. In his critique of *Scientific Man* Oakeshott identified the confusion between “scientific enquiry” and “scientism” as well as between “reason” and “rationalism” as “fatal to the argument”, since it conveys the false impression that Morgenthau opposes reason in general and not merely rationalism. In his letter to Oakeshott Morgenthau admitted the validity of that critique. Oakeshott, “Scientific Politics,” pp. 354–355; Morgenthau, letter to Oakeshott, 22 May 1948.
41. Pin-Fat, “The Metaphysics of the National Interest,” pp. 230–231.
42. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* p. 28.
43. Ibid. p. 9.
44. Although love is considered as the opposite of power, for Morgenthau they both try to address man’s existential loneliness and contain elements of each other. As a result each relationship may be corrupted by the other. See Morgenthau, “Love and Power,” pp. 247–251.
45. This claim, present in both *The Concept of the Political* and *Politics Among Nations*, is also repeated in “The Commitments of Political Science,” (1958): “Thus, when the times conceive power in military terms, it [political science] must call attention to the variety of factors [. . .] and, more particularly, to the subtle psychological relation”. Hans Morgenthau, *Politics in the Twentieth Century: The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1962), p. 47; Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 29; Hans Morgenthau, *The Concept of the Political* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 119.

46. Baldwin classified Morgenthau in the "elements of power" approach according to which "it was possible to add up the various elements [...] in order to calculate the power distribution" and which conflates capabilities with power. Baldwin, "Power and International Relations," pp. 274–277. Morgenthau's list of elements of power indeed includes some elements that are relatively stable such as geography, resources, level of industrialisation, and military preparedness. But he also included what he called "human factors" such as population, national character, morale, quality of government, and diplomacy. The latter are much more elusive than material capabilities and Morgenthau claimed that the task of evaluation is ultimately "incapable of achievement". The best statesmen can hope for is to commit fewer mistakes in the evaluation than their opponents. As such, Morgenthau did not assume that elements of power can be added up accurately, let alone substituted for power. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. 112–154.
47. Other distinctions drawn by Morgenthau but between different forms of power concern usable versus unusable and legitimate versus illegitimate power. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. 29–30.
48. For Jervis, the concept of power was very important to Morgenthau but he "never analysed it with the care and sophistication it deserved". Robert Jervis, "Hans Morgenthau, Realism, and the Scientific Study of International Politics," *Social Research* 61, no. 4 (1994): pp. 856–857. Recent studies have demonstrated that Morgenthau initially employed a somewhat more sophisticated dual distinction of power in his earlier writings in French and German, but that he failed to transfer the distinction in the works he published in English. See Hartmut Behr and Felix Rösch, "Introduction," in Morgenthau, *The Concept of the Political*, pp. 1–79: pp. 47–49; Felix Rösch, "Pouvoir, Puissance, and Politics: Hans Morgenthau's Dualistic Concept of Power?," *Review of International Studies* 40, no. 2 (2014): pp. 349–365; Hartmut Behr, "Scientific Man vs. Power Politics: A Pamphlet and Its Author between Two Academic Cultures," *Ethics & International Affairs* 30, no. 1 (2016): pp. 36–37.
49. Williams, "Why Ideas Matter in International Relations," p. 638.
50. For the distinction between political and non-political power see Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master?,* pp. 30–34.
51. Williams, "Why Ideas Matter in International Relations," pp. 639–649.
52. Morgenthau, *The Concept of the Political*, p. 106.
53. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. 27–28.
54. Ibid. pp. 40–41.
55. In *Science: Servant or Master?* Morgenthau discussed how science can be manipulated to serve the "powers that be—public *and private* [emphasis added] in acquiring, defending, and demonstrating power". Morgenthau,

Science: Servant or Master?, p. 14; see also the discussion in Morgenthau, *The Concept of the Political*, p. 107, pp. 118–120.
56. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. 40–44.
57. Ibid. pp. 45–72.
58. Ibid. pp. 73–87.
59. Ibid. p. 225.
60. An interesting point about the function of the balance of power *beyond* politics can be found in Williams's interpretation about the role it plays in maintaining the independence of different social spheres—including that of politics—in Morgenthau's theory. See Williams, "Why Ideas Matter in International Relations," pp. 651–652.
61. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. 167–169.
62. Ibid. p. 172.
63. Ibid. pp. 172–177.
64. The immeasurability of power also features prominently in Guzzini's critique as one of the main weaknesses of realism. Guzzini, "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations," pp. 533–568.
65. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. 202–213.
66. Seán Molloy, "'Cautious Politics': Morgenthau and Hume's Critiques of the Balance of Power," *International Politics* 50, no. 6 (2013): p. 779. Williams also persuasively explains how, given Morgenthau's philosophical background, the balance of power is only effective if treated as "a principled strategy, not a mechanistic process." Williams, "Why Ideas Matter in International Relations," pp. 649–653.
67. Bell, "Anarchy, Power and Death," p. 229.
68. Turner rightly mentions that Morgenthau's theoretical constructions do not predict unconditionally as scientific laws would, but rather represent causal processes. See Stephen P. Turner, "Hans J. Morgenthau and the Legacy of Max Weber," in *Political Thought and International Relations,* ed. Bell, p. 74.
69. Richard Little, "The Balance of Power in *Politics Among Nations,*" in *Realism Reconsidered,* ed. Williams, pp. 138–141.
70. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 213–217.
71. Little, "The Balance of Power in *Politics Among Nations*," pp. 140–141.
72. Molloy, *Hidden History of Realism*, pp. 90–92.
73. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* p. 225.
74. Hans Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," *Ethics* 58, no. 2 (1948): pp. 79–80.
75. Ibid. pp. 88–99.
76. Morgenthau's account of the "nation" is a rather intuitive one and less sophisticated than that offered by Carr. The "nation" is thus understood as "an abstraction from a number of individuals who have certain

characteristics in common". The "state", as related to the "nation", is understood in legalistic terms as "a legal organisation [...] whose agents act as representatives of the nation in international affairs". Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. 103–104; for the domestic functions of the state Morgenthau, echoing Weber, claimed that it is "the legal order that determines the conditions under which society may employ its monopoly of organised violence". Ibid. pp. 485–487.

77. This projection of the *animus dominandi* allows Morgenthau to also examine the political unit through the lens of tragedy, as I discuss elsewhere. Kostagiannis, "Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," pp. 516–517.
78. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 104.
79. Ibid. pp. 103–106. Schuett connected the mechanism of projection that Morgenthau discussed to the Freudian defence mechanism of "displacement" and "identification": Schuett, *Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature*, pp. 32–34.
80. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 105.
81. Ibid. p. 106. See also the excellent discussions in: Williams, "Why Ideas Matter in International Relations," pp. 650–651; and Rösch, *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent*, pp. 21–48; pp. 109–116.
82. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 108–110.
83. Hans Morgenthau, "The Problem of the National Interest," (1952) in Morgenthau, *The Decline of Democratic Politics,* pp. 92–93.
84. Pin-Fat, "The Metaphysics of the National Interest," pp. 220–231; Vassilios Paipais, "Between Politics and the Political: Reading Hans J. Morgenthau's Double Critique of Depoliticization," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 42, no. 2 (2014): 369–373.
85. Morgenthau, "The Problem of the National Interest," p. 106.
86. Pin-Fat, "The Metaphysics of the National Interest," pp. 232–236.
87. "When the national state has been replaced by another mode of organization", he claimed, "foreign policy must then protect the interest in survival of that new organization." Morgenthau, "The Problem of the National Interest," p. 93.
88. This is not to suggest that Morgenthau remained static in his views of the national interest. In fact, in his later years he embraced an expanded notion of the national interest that could "serve as the basis for a new moral universalism". Seán Molloy, "Morgenthau and the Ethics of Realism," in *Handbook on Ethics in International Relations*, eds. Brent Steele and Eric Heinze (Abingdon: Routledge, forthcoming 2018).
89. I also discuss those two aspects in relation to the tragedy of the nation-state in: Kostagiannis, "Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," pp. 517–518.

90. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. 112–149.
91. Ibid. p. 128.
92. For the example by Morgenthau: ibid. pp. 128–130. It should be noted here that the concept of "national character" was already declining when Morgenthau employed it. See Stephanie Lawson, *Culture and Context in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 131–136.
93. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, pp. 160–162.
94. Hans Morgenthau, "World Politics in the Mid-Twentieth Century," *The Review of Politics* 10, no. 4 (1948): pp. 154–173.
95. Ibid. p. 155; Hans Morgenthau, "Nationalism," (1957) in Morgenthau, *The Decline of Democratic Politics*, pp. 181–195.
96. Morgenthau, "Nationalism," pp. 182–184.
97. Ibid. p. 182.
98. Ibid. p. 187.
99. Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," p. 88.
100. Ibid. p. 94.
101. Ibid. pp. 95–96.
102. Ibid. p. 96.
103. Morgenthau, "Nationalism," p. 187; Morgenthau, "Twilight of International Morality," pp. 96–99.
104. Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," p. 99.
105. Ibid. pp. 262–267.
106. For David Brown it can be traced back to Marx, and from there, through Meinecke, to Hans Kohn. David Brown, "Are There Good and Bad Nationalisms?," *Nations and Nationalism* 5, no. 2 (1999): pp. 284–285.
107. Given the somewhat inconsistent referencing practices of the time, it is difficult to identify the precise source of the distinction Morgenthau employed, even though it is clear that the main ideas behind it had been around by the mid-forties. Morgenthau certainly read the work of Kohn, and described it on one occasion as "monumental". Kohn's distinction, however, had a strong geographical dimension with civic nationalism being associated with the West and ethnic with the East, whereas for Morgenthau a chronological transition seems to be more important. There were indeed chronological typologies of nationalism around at the time, notably by Carlton Hayes and E.H. Carr, with which Morgenthau was also familiar. No such typology was binary, however, which leads me to the tentative assumption that Morgenthau offered an eclectic mix of the various approaches to nationalism that were available at the time. For the literature on nationalism that Morgenthau consulted, his book reviews during the forties as well as the references of the first edition of *Politics Among Nations* are illuminating: Hans Morgenthau, "Review of Book: *Nationalities and National Minorities*, by Oscar I. Janowsky," *Harvard Law Review* 59, no.

2 (1945): pp. 301–304; Hans Morgenthau, "Review of Book: *Nationality in History and Politics*, by Frederick Hertz," *Journal of Political Economy* 54, no. 6 (1946): p. 568 (for the quote about Kohn); Morgenthau, "The Political Science of E. H. Carr,"; Hans Morgenthau, "Review of Book: *Modern Nationalism and Religion*, by Salo Wittmayer Baron," *Ethics* 59, no. 2 (1949): pp. 147–148; Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1948), pp. 477–478 (it should be noted that all other references to *Politics Among Nations* in the present book refer to the fifth edition). Apart from Carr whom I discussed extensively in the previous chapter, the two other major works discussed here are by Hayes and Kohn: Carlton J. Hayes, *Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1931); Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005). For a good introduction to Kohn's work see Craig Cahloun, "Introduction to the Transaction edition," in Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, pp. ix–l.

108. In his review Oakeshott observed that Morgenthau, influenced by the continental European experience, erroneously believed that "parliamentary institutions were the offspring of rationalist policies". Oakeshott, "Scientific Politics," p. 357; for a detailed account of the anti-democratic element in Morgenthau's thought see Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond*, pp. 176–179. For a different reading of Morgenthau's critique of modern nationalism as a masked critique of secularism in the trail of Schmitt see Guilhot, "American Katechon," pp. 240–243.
109. Pichler, "The godfathers of 'truth'," p. 198; Tarak Barkawi, "Strategy as a Vocation: Weber, Morgenthau and Modern Strategic Studies," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 2 (1998): p. 176.
110. Chris Brown, "'The Twilight of International Morality'? Hans J. Morgenthau and Carl Schmitt on the End of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*," in *Realism Reconsidered*, ed. Williams, *passim*.
111. William E. Scheuerman, "Carl Schmitt and Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond," in *Realism Reconsidered,* ed. Williams, pp. 78–80.
112. Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond,* p. 3; Kostagiannis, "Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," p. 523.
113. Brown, "'The Twilight of International Morality'?," pp. 56–59. For Scheuerman Morgenthau never managed to "think creatively enough about the possibility of a novel global order because he carried too much Schmittian intellectual baggage": Scheuerman, "Carl Schmitt and Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond," p. 79. For the various stages in Morgenthau's career and his evolving views see the excellent discussions in: Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond*; Campbell Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr,*

Morgenthau, and Waltz (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 54–73; pp. 93–109. For Morgenthau's favourable view towards functionalism see Hans Morgenthau, "Introduction," in David Mitrany, *A Working Peace System* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966), pp. 7–11.

114. The paradox emerges when nation B, in order to secure its survival, evokes the principles of nationalism against A *and* at the same time denies them to C. See Louis L. Snyder, *The New Nationalism* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), pp. 17–20; Morgenthau, "Nationalism," pp. 184–185.
115. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 42–48; for a discussion of the same problem connected to Morgenthau's arguments see Snyder, *New Nationalism*, pp. 19–20.
116. Morgenthau, "Nationalism," pp. 184–185.
117. Ibid. pp. 189–190.
118. See Hans Morgenthau, "Government and Private Enterprise," (1964) in Hans Morgenthau, *Truth and Power: Essays of a Decade, 1960–1970* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970), pp. 276–278; also see "The Political Problems of Polyethnic states," (1961) in Hans Morgenthau, *Politics in the Twentieth Century: The Restoration of American Politics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 1962, pp. 342–347.
119. Molloy, *Hidden History,* pp. 96–97.
120. See the extensive discussions in Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, pp. 93–116; Campbell Craig, "Hans Morgenthau and the World State Revisited," in *Realism Reconsidered,* ed. Williams, *passim*; Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond*, pp. 135–164. For some of the problems with Morgenthau's view of the world state see James P. Speer, "Hans Morgenthau and the World State," *World Politics* 20, no. 2 (1968): pp. 207–227; Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond*, pp. 156–158; Craig, "Hans Morgenthau and the World State Revisited," pp. 210–213.
121. Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, pp. 54–73.
122. William E. Scheuermann, "Was Morgenthau a Realist? Revisiting *Scientific Man* Vs. *Power Politics*," *Constellations* 14, no. 4, (2007): pp. 524–527.
123. Kostagiannis, "Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," p. 524. See also the discussions in Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, pp. 107–109; Cozette, "What Lies Ahead: Classical Realism on the Future of International Relations," pp. 673–674. For the ethics of necessity see Molloy, "Hans. J. Morgenthau Versus E.H. Carr," pp. 83–104.
124. Richard Ned Lebow, "German Jews and American Realism," *Constellations* 18, no. 4, (2011): pp. 545–566. See also the discussion in: Felix Rösch, "Introduction," in *Émigré Scholars and the Genesis of International*

Relations, ed. Felix Rösch (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), *passim*.

125. Lebow, "German Jews and American Realism," pp. 555–560.
126. Kostagiannis, "Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," p. 520.
127. Michael Cox, "Hans J. Morgenthau, Realism, and the Rise and Fall of the Cold War," in *Realism Reconsidered,* ed. Williams, p. 169.
128. Michael C. Williams, "Morgenthau Now: Neoconservatism, National Greatness, and Realism," in *Realism Reconsidered*, ed. Williams, pp. 229–231.
129. Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, p. 68.
130. Ibid. pp. 93–116.
131. See indicatively: Hans Morgenthau, "Truth and Power: The Intellectuals and the Johnson Administration," *The New Republic* 155, (1966): pp. 8–14; Tjalve, *Realist Strategies of Republican Peace*, pp. 109–119; Rösch, *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent*, pp. 107–142.
132. See also Mollov, *Power and Transcendence,* pp. 92–96.
133. Hans Morgenthau, "The Tragedy of German-Jewish Liberalism," (1961) in Morgenthau, *The Decline of Democratic Politics,* pp. 247–256.
134. Ibid. p. 250.
135. Hans Morgenthau, "Naziism," (1946) in Morgenthau, *The Decline of Democratic Politics,* pp. 227–240; p. 227.
136. Ibid. p. 228.
137. Ibid. p. 228.
138. Kostagiannis, "Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," p. 519.
139. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 108–109.
140. Ibid. p. 109; Morgenthau, "The Tragedy of German-Jewish Liberalism," p. 254; Morgenthau, "Naziism," pp. 235–236; Hans Morgenthau, "National Socialist Doctrine of World Organisation," (1941) in Morgenthau, *The Decline of Democratic Politics,* pp. 241–246.
141. I explore this in much more detail in Kostagiannis, "Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," pp. 518–520.
142. Behr, "A Pamphlet and Its Author," p. 34.
143. Ibid. pp. 33–35; Tjalve, *Realist Strategies of Republican Peace*, p. 109.
144. Hans Morgenthau, *American Foreign Policy: A Critical Examination* (London: Methuen & Co, 1952), p. 13.
145. Ibid. pp. 7–13.
146. The term is borrowed from Lebow's seminal work: Lebow, *Tragic Vision of Politics.*
147. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 134.
148. Ibid. p. 134.
149. Ibid. p. 110.
150. Ibid. p. 110.

151. Ibid. pp. 110–111.
152. Morgenthau, *American Foreign Policy*, pp. 7–37.
153. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 110–111.
154. Hans Morgenthau, “The Fortieth Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution,” (1957) in Hans Morgenthau, *Politics in the Twentieth Century: The Impasse of American Politics,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1962), pp. 139–142; Morgenthau, *American Foreign Policy,* pp. 62–63.
155. Morgenthau, *American Foreign Policy,* pp. 69–80; Morgenthau, “The Fortieth Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution,” p. 142.
156. Cox, “Morgenthau and the Rise and Fall of the Cold War,” pp. 176–177.
157. Morgenthau, *American Foreign Policy,* pp. 69–81.
158. Morgenthau, “Nationalism,” pp. 187–188; Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* p. 329.
159. Morgenthau, *American Foreign Policy,* pp. 128–132, pp. 164–189; Hans Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (London: Pall Mall 1969), pp. 15–19. See also indicatively Morgenthau’s commentary on reactions to the first nuclear test in the Soviet Union in 1949 or to the doctrine of “American paramountcy” in the 1960s: Morgenthau, “The Conquest of the United States by Germany,” pp. 152–167; Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States,* pp. 15–29. I discuss those more extensively in: Kostagiannis, “Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State,” pp. 520–523.
160. Hans Morgenthau, “The Impotence of American Power,” *Commentary,* 36, no. 5 (1963): pp. 384–386.
161. Hans Morgenthau, “Changes and Chances in American-Soviet Relations,” *Foreign Affairs* 49, no. 3 (1971): p. 431.
162. Hans Morgenthau, “The Pathology of American Power,” *International Security* 1, no. 3 (1977): p. 9. Morgenthau’s opposition to the war in Vietnam has gained ample attention in relevant literature: William Bain, “Deconfusing Morgenthau: Moral Inquiry and Classical Realism Reconsidered,” *Review of International Studies* 26, no. 3 (2000): pp. 445–464; Cox, “Morgenthau and the rise and fall of the Cold War,” pp. 181–185; Douglas B. Klusmeyer, “Death of the Statesman as Tragic Hero: Hans Morgenthau on the Vietnam War,” *Ethics & International Affairs* 30, no. 1 (2016): pp. 63–71; Ellen Glaser Rafshoon, “A Realist’s Moral Opposition to War,” *Peace & Change* 26, no. 1 (2001): pp. 55–77; Stefano Recchia, “Restraining Imperial Hubris: The Ethical Bases of Realist International Relations Theory,” *Constellations* 14, no. 4 (2007): pp. 531–556; Jennifer W. See, “A Prophet Without Honor: Hans Morgenthau and the War in Vietnam, 1955–1965,” *Pacific Historical Review* 70, no. 3 (2001): pp. 419–448; Louis B. Zimmer, *The Vietnam War Debate: Hans J. Morgenthau and the Attempt to Halt the Drift into*

Disaster (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2011); Lorenzo Zambernardi, "The Impotence of Power: Morgenthau's Critique of American Intervention in Vietnam," *Review of International Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): pp. 1335–1356.

163. Morgenthau, *American Foreign Policy*, pp. 78–81.
164. Morgenthau, "The Pathology of American Power," pp. 8–10.
165. See, for example, his discussion of the impact of "ideological blinders" on the past foreign policies of both superpowers in a piece written during a period of reduced tensions between the two: Morgenthau, "Changes and Chances in American-Soviet Relations," *passim*. For Morgenthau, the risk moral crusading posed to American power was fatal and, especially in the context of Vietnam, he often connected it to *hubris* and the disastrous Sicilian expedition: See, "Prophet Without Honor," pp. 434–441; Cox, "Morgenthau and the Rise and Fall of the Cold War," pp. 181–185; Kostagiannis, "Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," pp. 522–523.

CHAPTER 4

John Herz and Realism's Moment of Transition

Introduction

I begin this chapter with an examination of John Herz's approach to international politics. Mindful of the limits of both traditional and positivist approaches, he favoured the median way of the study of structures and systems. At the same time, however, his analysis was more flexible than that of neorealists. As such, Herz can be approached as a realist who cannot be placed comfortably within either classical or structural realism.[1] His efforts to make sense of international politics revolved around the concept for which he is—rightly—most known, the security dilemma. Ontologically, Herz approached power as rooted to the security dilemma. By grounding power on a social condition, he avoided some of the pitfalls usually associated with conceptualisations of power deriving from human nature. Epistemologically, Herz's encounter with the two ideo-typical reactions of the human mind to the realisation of the dilemma, namely, realism and idealism, led him to an attempted synthesis of the two. The resulting "realist liberalism" comprises an effort to utilise the knowledge attained by realism about the centrality of the security and power dilemma, while avoiding the fatalism implied in such a realisation.

In the second part, I discuss the nature and role of power in his theory. By conceiving power broadly as the possession of means of security or the perception of such a possession, Herz offered a broad account of power

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K. Kostagiannis, *Realist Thought and the Nation-State*, The Palgrave Macmillan History of International Thought,
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which can accommodate the different needs resulting from different historical settings. The importance he attributed to the impact of technological developments is indicative of this malleability since what counted as strength in the pre-atomic age could become a liability in the atomic age. As such, for Herz power, while maintaining its essence, needs constant re-evaluation and redefinition. While he dismissed the naivety of the idealist belief that one can get rid of the struggle for power once and for all, he also castigated the extreme realism that degenerates to an apology of power politics. Herz refused to subscribe to the most pessimistic reading of the security dilemma, and focused on awareness of its existence as the first step in a conscious effort to mitigate the struggle for power. It is under this light that he examined the importance of the balance of power in the classical international system.

In the third part I examine the interrelation between power and the nation-state. For Herz the form a political unit takes depends on its capacity to address the security dilemma. Herz exposed the relationship between power and the form of the political unit as a dialogical one. On the one hand, technological developments make available new weapons that render existing political units vulnerable and might lead to their replacement. The territorial state, for example, emerged as the new unit of impermeability after the gunpowder revolution. On the other hand, however, the very way power is understood and employed in international relations changes as soon as the new structure is established. Given his emphasis on military technology it is no surprise that Herz was particularly alarmed by the development of nuclear weapons, to the extent that for a period he anticipated the demise of the territorial state. His worst fears, however, did not materialise, and territorial states survived. Herz modified his account by somewhat de-emphasising military power and integrating more elements in the functions performed by the nation-state. In so doing, I believe, he offered a more accurate image of the condition of the nation-state. Finally, I examine how the main tenets of Herz's theory are displayed in his analysis of Nazi Germany and the United States. Herz approached Nazism as the exemplification of the extreme, power-glorifying realism that sound politics must try to avoid. Such realism is indifferent to any efforts of accommodation. It is exactly this realism that ought to be avoided in the context of the Cold War. Herz genuinely believed that mutual fear could be mitigated by common effort. His approach to American foreign policy was thus characterised by an effort to raise awareness of the security dilemma on the other side so that conscious efforts could be made for its mitigation.

Herz's Theory of International Relations

Herz and International Relations: Intellectual Curiosity and Methodological Pluralism

One of the most recognisable characteristics of Herz was what Karis described as an extraordinary breadth and depth of academic interests, indicative of which was his early habit of attending classes in a variety of faculties thanks to the free tuition of universities in Germany.[2] This example was but an early demonstration of an intellectual curiosity that was to stay with Herz for the better part of half a century. Most accounts of Herz's career in the relevant literature offer vivid illustrations of his intellectual odyssey right from its beginnings when he studied international law with Kelsen, through his engagement with international relations and comparative politics, to his plea for establishing an interdisciplinary field of "survival research" in his final years.[3]

As a result of his broad reach, in his works on international politics Herz was always willing to take seriously and engage with fields as diverse as—to name but a few—zoology, psychology, social anthropology, international law, criminology, and Lorenz's studies on aggression. Such a breadth of interests, however, was not without its risks. While reviewing the *Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics* Thompson claimed that one of the main reasons preventing Herz from being considered a first-rank scholar in international relations was precisely the fact that he did not "devote himself unreservedly" to the field.[4] This diversity, nonetheless, clearly contributed to both the richness of his insights and his characteristic methodological pluralism.

Given this immense diversity of interests, then, it is no wonder that Herz demonstrated a remarkable openness in his approach to international politics, of which his methodological pluralism is indicative. A peculiar trait of this pluralism was Herz's attempt to synthesise his German intellectual heritage of a theoretical and historical tradition with the empirical and pragmatic political science that he encountered in America.[5] In formulating his own approach Herz actively sought to take the best elements from both worlds.[6] As such Lebow is right to observe that although Herz never wrote about the Greeks, he had the mindset of one, at least as regards his preference for the "middle way".[7] Although Lebow has in mind here the median way between realism and idealism, his comment is also applicable to Herz's methodology. His position in the debate between traditionalism and positivism is indicative of this approach.

In *International Politics in the Atomic Age* Herz briefly contrasted two opposite extreme approaches on methodology, clarifying he was dealing with them as ideal types that do not appear frequently in their pure form, and found them both wanting.[8] The "abstract" approach, in its effort to generalise and deduce patterns, is at risk of reducing international relations to "typology or phenomenology".[9] Further risks are associated with its "scientific" incarnation that Herz examined in his later work. He was thus also sceptical of the scientific approach to international relations, which in neglecting that political science is problem-oriented expends itself in accumulating and analysing data for its own sake. The results of such an approach are often trivial or irrelevant and do not always add more to our understanding of a concrete situation than the intuition offered by traditionalists.[10] Traditionalists on the other hand, are more appreciative of the special historical, cultural, and other particular characteristics of each concrete case, but as a result tend to err in the opposite direction. In the universe of the "overconcrete" or "historical" approach, generalisation is impossible since international politics is conceived as a continuous "flux of changing concrete situations" where "everything [...] is always new and incomparable, and nothing whatsoever repeats itself".[11] For Herz this position is also unsatisfying since any meaningful study of international politics must be able to attain at least some level of generalisation.

What for Herz constitutes the middle way of engaging theoretically with situations that might be in flux but are stable enough so as not to represent merely "fleeting events" is the study of structures and systems.[12] He was thus much closer to Waltz's structural realism than were other classical realists, a point he also made when he claimed that their approaches are not incompatible, in response to Ashley's interpretation of his work.[13] Yet he was not willing to accept the structural approach unconditionally. For Herz, theoretical model-building is valid insofar as its models are "distillates from life" rather than "products of abstract speculation", an assertion that would place him at odds with Waltz's heavily deductive approach.[14] A further caveat is the risk of ossification of the approach, whereupon the student of international relations views structures and systems as static when in fact they are constantly changing. Apart from the obvious danger in terms of a theory's validity, when parallels are drawn between dissimilar situations and are used to infer standards of action the results can be "deadly". Constant re-evaluation of the framework is therefore essential if a structural approach is to be workable.[15]

Herz's methodological pluralism, his openness to interdisciplinary approaches, and his preference for the middle way between different epistemological positions informed consistently his efforts to make sense of international relations. More than any other realist perhaps, Herz concentrated his efforts around a reccurring problem that he struggled with from early on and that was to form the core of his political philosophy. This problem was, as Karis reminds us, his "obsession" with survival: "His most influential concept, the 'security dilemma', was defined in answer to the question, 'why have we been slaughtering each other on end?'" he notes by quoting Herz's autobiography, which tellingly is titled *Vom Überleben*—"of survival".[16]

Survival in an Irrational World: The Ontology of the "Security and Power Dilemma"

Herz believed we inhabit an irrational world that is home to a fundamental antagonism between the need for cooperation and the inescapability of conflict.[17] Both elements are central to Herz's ontological assumptions about social life. On the one hand, human beings are fully aware that their survival depends upon fellow human beings. On the other hand, awareness of their vulnerability vis-à-vis the very same persons they rely upon for their survival gives rise to mistrust and hostility.[18] This paradox of cooperation and conflict, both equally necessary for survival, gives rise to the security dilemma.

Faced then with a constant threat to their survival, human beings—or groups for that matter—are locked in a perpetual struggle to attain more power as a means of security. Where the "dilemmatic" element of the concept enters is that this effort creates insecurity to others who in turn embark upon a similar effort to accumulate power.[19] What makes the security dilemma such a core concept for Herz's ontology is the perpetual character and the inescapability implied in it once the process is initiated. Once human competition for security begins, a vicious circle is entered whereby full security, while never fully attainable, increases the necessity for further accumulation of power.[20] The centrality then of power in Herz's ontology depends upon its role as a means of overcoming the security dilemma.

By competing for and securing power individuals or groups are merely trying to address this perennial problem. Although representing only one of

the possible reactions to the security dilemma, power plays so important a role in Herz's theory of international politics, that he often did not distinguish between the two and instead referred to them collectively as the "security and power dilemma". That said, Herz was not willing to ascribe to power properties of a *pass-partout* which could unlock all secrets of social life. Indeed, he was very cautious not to base his theory of international politics upon such "unproved" and "metaphysical" foundations as assumptions about human nature.[21] Here the contrast with Morgenthau is glaring, and Herz identified the *animus dominandi* as one of the main weaknesses of the former's theory.[22] He made sure to clarify his own position time and again: "The condition that concerns us", he maintained, "is not an anthropological or biological, but a social one".[23] Consequently there can be no "innate power instinct" as such: the quest for power simply stems from the instinct of self-preservation that is activated by the security dilemma.[24]

By removing the power drive from the rather flimsy and unverifiable foundations of human nature and founding it upon a social condition, Herz succeeded not only in covering his "ontological flanks" so to speak, but also in disassociating realism from a fatalistic worldview.[25] As Sylvest correctly points out, social structures might be solid but they are not as unchangeable as human nature.[26] Such a move thus implies far more increased possibilities of accommodation and understanding between competing powers.[27] It also allows for the occasional prevalence of power-alien elements such as economic interests or moral and religious circumstances, which Herz interestingly calls "a-political", in the formulation and execution of policies "from time to time".[28] It does not, however, imply a complete marginalisation of power in his theory of international relations.

After the qualification that power does not a priori define international relations for Herz is taken into account, one must still arrive at the conclusion that it retains an important role for his realism. Thus the fact that "power, in modern international relations, has been the ultimate means of deciding issues" becomes an inevitable outcome from the moment power "has entered the field at all".[29] The account here is evolutionary: power competition among states marginalises power-alien considerations in the same way economic motivations marginalise non-economic ones domestically.[30] Herz implied a historical transition whereby power gained significantly in importance for international politics. The importance he ascribed to the specific notion of power that arises from the territorial character of the modern state, that is, national power, gives a clear indication of when that transition occurred. It was national power that enabled nations to assert

themselves against the world and that "*became* the chief instrument of so-called power politics".[31]

Hence the centrality of power in Herz's ontology is conditional upon an understanding that firstly it stems from the main theme, which is the "security dilemma", and, secondly that its character and role shift according to the historical context. This conditionality by no means reduces its importance, however, since for Herz as long as the international system is based upon territorial units, the compulsion it exerts upon them means that not one of them can abandon power politics in favour of other considerations without increasing its vulnerability and thus reducing its chances of survival.[32]

On Epistemology: The "Security Dilemma" and Political Thought

If power, through its close connection to the security dilemma, plays an important role in Herz's ontology, through the very same connection it plays an equally important role in his epistemology. For Herz, it is the very irrationality of the world and its apparent conflict with human reason that gives rise to all political thought.[33] Thus he anchored the two ideo-typical theories of political realism and political idealism to the reaction of the human mind to the realisation of the "security and power dilemma".

For Herz the conventional distinction between political idealism and political realism as representative systems of "what ought to be" versus "what is", respectively, is unsatisfactory.[34] Instead, he understands both approaches as two extreme attitudes towards the security and power dilemma. On the one hand, political realism recognises the implications of this basic condition and understands politics as "fundamentally determined by the struggle for power".[35] Although this is an ontological statement it has important epistemological implications. Having identified the centrality of power, political realism then often falls prey to a single-factor fallacy and disregards all other factors that might be at work alongside or *against* power.[36]

Political idealism, on the other hand, is ultimately unsatisfied by the mere examination of the political phenomena that derive from the security and power dilemma.[37] It seeks to transcend them and connect the ideal with reality either by claiming the potential for future realisation of the ideal or by claiming that the ideal is actually being realised in the present.[38] In the first case, political idealism fulfils a revolutionary function whereby it rationalises the interests of the oppressed groups. In the latter, it idealises the status quo

and justifies the predominance of the powers that be.[39] Here the similarities with the conditionality of thought discussed by Carr are striking, and certainly Herz was aware of the work of Mannheim.[40]

Another commonality with Carr is Herz's preferred type of political thought, which he called "realist liberalism". Very much like the dialectics of utopia and reality in Carr, Herz's own approach is trying to synthesise the best elements of the two worlds.[41] Sound political thought should aim to avoid both the naivety of idealism and the fatalism of realism. As such, the epistemology of "realist liberalism" should be firmly based on the "utilisation, without compromise or euphemism, of any and all knowledge of political realism".[42] Realist observations of the security and power element in human societies constitute the "facts", the hard ground upon which political thought can be built. They also delineate the limits of the attainable by highlighting the restraints imposed by those facts upon human action.[43] At the same time, ethical guidance can only be given by accepting the main advantage of political idealism, namely, the "realisation [...] that man can act".[44]

Realist liberalism then does not represent a mere combination of elements from political idealism and political realism. More importantly, it represents the dialectical synthesis that follows from the "thesis" of the first and its contradiction by the "antithesis" of the second.[45] This synthesis lies also at the basis of Herz's notion of rationality in a world that is, as already noted, far from rational. Herz understood idealist rationalism not merely as a belief in "reason" but rather as a blind belief in the reconcilability of the opposing instincts of pity and survival. Since, however, for Herz rationality is not inherent in the world, sound political thought should begin with the assumption that "rationality is morality to be aimed at".[46] The recognition of rationalism as a normative rather than epistemological position should be matched by the acceptance of the "realist facts" as the raw material which creates the preconditions for whatever rationality can be attainable.[47]

Herz's Conceptualisation of Power

The Protean Nature of Power in International Relations

Given the primacy of the security dilemma in Herz's theory of international relations, it follows that whatever importance power holds in such a theory can only be derivative. As such, his conceptualisation of power is anchored

to the security dilemma. Having rejected the assumptions about an innate power drive in human nature, Herz treated the struggle for power as a means to satisfy the need for security, thereby paving the way for contemporary realism. Power then, to begin with, is to be understood as the possession of means of living and of weapons that can be used to safeguard one's own life and secure the possession of said means.[48] This intimate connection between power and security is echoed in his later assessment of the "power of protection" as the main source of legitimacy for any given political unit.[49] The closest that he offered to a notion of the essence of power is its broad understanding as the possession of means of protection, or the perception of such possession.

The latter relates to the importance he attributed to the subjective element of power in line with what Sylvest calls Herz's "perspectivism" or—anachronistically—constructivism.[50] Writing three decades after the publication of *Political Realism and Political Idealism* Herz described power as "the most fundamental but also most elusive of realist concepts".[51] One element of this elusiveness that concerned Herz right from the beginning was the importance of non-material forms of power, namely, prestige. He made sure to include the subjective element of prestige alongside the otherwise brief and basic formulation of power he offered in his earlier work. There, he described the element of prestige as equally important to those of military and economic power, since its possession "confers power upon its possessor", irrespective of the fact that it might not reflect actual power.[52] Morgenthau too paid attention to the same element, while cautioning on the perils of not only downplaying but also overplaying one's own power through prestige policy.[53]

Herz's conceptualisation of power, however, is not exhausted in its understanding as material capabilities or even in the perception of the existence or lack thereof. For him the importance of the subjective element goes beyond its role in the calculation—or miscalculation as the case might be—of power. It affects the very core of our understanding of power itself. Unlike geography, population, or the armed forces of a nation-state that are verifiable "givens", its power cannot be treated as such because the estimation of this power is totally dependent upon the actor's interpretation. That power and power relations thus are understood as givens is a result of actors' or observers' perceptions of reality.[54] In fact, Herz claimed, power is a metaphor and as such it is "in the eyes of the beholder".[55] And the vision of the beholder differs "according to historical memories or cultural or social traditions".[56]

This final statement is revealing of one of the main characteristics of Herz's notion of power: the components of power cannot be conceived to be independent of conditions of space and time. This, as stated already, applies to the subjective element of power. Herz, indeed, claimed that prestige or image-making gained so much in importance during the Cold War compared to previous eras that it came to account for fully "half of 'power politics'".[57] It also applies to the material or objective element of power. For Herz the traditional notion of power could be used as a standard of comparison between different units because it was "measurable, to some extent, graded, and calculable".[58] The elements of national power in this traditional understanding could be "added up" to allow for an estimate of the cumulative power of a nation-state. They do not differ much from those presented by Morgenthau for the same purpose and include "size, location, configuration of territory, quantitative and qualitative aspects of population, economic and above all industrial development, and [. . .] military strength, actual as well as potential".[59]

This measurability of power, however, resulted from the particular historical setting that gave birth to the classical international system. Power, in its current understanding as capabilities, is but a derivative concept that takes its meaning from the underlying structure of territoriality. It is only through this structure which established the modern state as the main impenetrable unit that "these capabilities can be made use of in international politics".[60] Once this structure withered away, as Herz believed to be the case with the rise of bipolarity and the development of thermonuclear weapons, the very concept of power would be bound to lose its traditional meaning.[61] While before the development of the new weapons it still seemed reasonable to understand power as "something radiating from one centre [. . .] until it finds an equilibrium with that of similar geographically anchored units" as per Russell, in the atomic age power could bypass the hard shell of the territorial unit and destroy power "from centre to centre".[62] As such, the development of the new weapons represented a far more radical change than the emergence of bipolarity because at its heart lay a paradoxical condition: power, both traditional and atomic, would become at the same time both an asset and a liability. Possession of traditional factors of power such as the level of industrialisation or location, as well as nuclear weapons themselves, would render their holder more vulnerable than with their absence, and power would become synonymous with impotence.[63] The implication for the concept of power itself, as traditionally understood, would be an urgent need for its redefinition since it would now be rendered meaningless.

Similarly to Morgenthau, Herz displayed scepticism about the prospects of humanity's survival in the face of developments in nuclear warfare. To be fair to him, however, writing in the late 1950s he was merely trying to capture the uncertainty of a transitional age and outline prospects for the future. As such, his assessment that with the development of nuclear weapons power equals impotence belongs to the sphere not of prediction but of identification of tendencies that might or *might not* materialise. After reviewing extensively the risks involved in conceptions of deterrence at the time, he concluded that the main characteristic of the transitional period was an unprecedented uncertainty that rendered any redefinition of concepts almost impossible. For him the only meaningful way to approach international structure and politics would be to accept the precarious coexistence of two contradictory realities: on the one hand the traditional or "preatomic" power relations whereby old concepts partially retain their validity and on the other hand the "constellation in which permeability [...] is the underlying condition".[64] The paradoxical outcome is a situation in which power is "'measurable' and 'comparable', and no longer measurable and absolute, all at the same time".[65]

Despite being merely the outline of a tendency, Herz's approach to power in this case provides us with a good indication on his view of the concept as essentially protean in its character. Nuclear weapons aside, the emergence of bipolarity offered for Herz a clear example of how historical development calls for a constant re-evaluation of central concepts. Paraphrasing Marx, Herz emphasised time and again that developments at the level of international relations "constitute a superstructure over the developments of the means of *destruction*".[66] Herz had always been concerned with the impact of technological developments on international politics and human survival generally, as recent works by Sylvest and Scheuerman demonstrate.[67] He emphasised particularly the role of military technology when accounting for changes in the international system.[68] His analysis on the emergence of the territorial state in place of the medieval unit thus was centred on the role of gunpowder, and his assertion that the prospects were bleak for the nation-state was equally based on the developments that rendered permeable the hard shell of nation-states.[69] As a consequence—and notwithstanding the nuclear weapons that render the measurability of power "doubtful as such"—the increased complexity and sheer number of factors to be taken into account when calculating power has increased so much and so rapidly during modernity that any effort to calculate power is even more complex than it used to be. This increasing

uncertainty which followed rapid technological developments, with the addition of the subjective element of power, made the measurability of power in the bipolar world precarious.[70]

Here Herz's realism lies somewhere between classical realism and neorealism. For even though the essence of power as the bare minimum of means of security remains unchanged in Herz's theory, the same does not apply to the *form* of power. The latter is in constant flux throughout history and reflects changes in the international system. This fluidity of both power and the international system distinguishes Herz's approach from later incarnations of structural realism despite their similarities. For Herz power cannot be fungible because it does not possess the same external traits at any given time. Yet for neorealism, trying to model a theory of international relations after microeconomics, power is expected to play the role of money and thus be fungible, at least to some extent.[71] The important difference is not one of degree: despite the differences between various neorealists they would agree with Herz that to measure power accurately is a daunting endeavour.[72] The main difference is rather a qualitative one: Herz's power is in flux and in need of constant re-evaluation, in line with his warning of the risk of ossification associated with structural approaches. Hence, whereas for neorealism power is something static, for Herz's variant of realism this is not the case.

The Role (and Limits) of Power in Politics

For Herz, then, so long as the security dilemma is not resolved, power is going to lie at the core of politics. The fatal problem with political idealism is, as mentioned already, the belief that the struggle for power can be abandoned in favour of a new, ideal order. The identification of power as a means of overcoming the security dilemma meant for Herz that those who attempt to abandon the struggle for power unilaterally increase their vulnerability vis-à-vis others.[73] Whenever thus an idealist project manages to overcome a pre-existing order, its success is going to be short-lived. For in conditions of insecurity and struggle for power, the only way it can survive is on a power basis.[74] As a result, once new rules and institutions are in place, they are doomed to be corrupted by those very phenomena they sought to overcome. This is the tragedy of idealism and Herz noted that history is riddled with abortive efforts to create a better world, the examples of the French and Russian revolutions being typical of how an internationalist movement degenerates to self-serving national policies.[75]

Realist cynicism is born out of disillusionment with the fate of such efforts, but it does not fare any better in addressing the problems of social life. While political realism can understand the constraints the security and power dilemma imposes on human action better than idealism can, it "fails to gain the minds of men for any length of time".[76] At best, realism simply neglects everything apart from power considerations and becomes fatalistic; at worst it glorifies power and its paraphernalia such as war, aggressive nationalism, and imperialism.[77] Herz realised that in the field of international relations the observations of realism carry more weight than in domestic politics because of the prevailing conditions of international anarchy. Here, the refuge of an overarching authority that might control the power of the dominant members of the group is absent as are the various institutionalised checks and balances of domestic politics.[78] The logical conclusion of such a realisation would be that the struggle for power in international relations is endless and unchecked, a conclusion often arrived at by structural realists of the offensive variant.[79] For Herz, however, this view is not justified by historical experience. Despite differences with domestic politics, international anarchy has not always been unconditional, the struggle for power has often been limited, and the security dilemma mitigated.[80]

In his early formulation of realist liberalism Herz opted for the minimalist mediating factor of the balance of power and its modified variant of collective security. He recognised the existence of other mitigating factors such as international law or ideologies of unity but was very sceptical about their potential to inform realist liberalism in the context of modern international relations.[81] A self-conscious system of balance of power, like the one that flourished in Europe until the nineteenth century, was based on the belief of those participating in it that they shared an interest in maintaining a system comprising a plurality of political units. Such a system represented for Herz a middle way between "individualism" and the "general interest" of preventing a single power from dominating the system.[82] With the advent of bipolarity Herz came to believe this system could no longer perform its limiting functions, as will be discussed in the following section. Yet one particular aspect of his analysis remained crucial for his understanding of efforts to mitigate power competition: his treatment of the balance of power as a conscious effort, informed by an understanding of a general interest.

In periods of history when the balance of power was almost an accidental outcome of the existence of a system comprising multiple units, like that of

the ancient Greek city-states or of the Hellenistic kingdoms, units succumbed to an "undiluted 'power and security dilemma'" and thus failed to "break the vicious circle and to pursue any policy of mitigation and restraint, relying instead on the pure principles of power politics in the narrower sense".[83] The lack of realisation that the maintenance of a pluralist system guaranteed the continued survival of its units eventually led to the inability to check Rome and avert its hegemony.[84] And, conversely, awareness of the fact that there is a common interest in sustaining a system that allows for the coexistence of independent units permits the security dilemma to at least be alleviated through conscious effort.

It is this aspect of Herz's thought that for Wheeler distinguishes his notion of the security dilemma from the more pessimistic one forwarded by Butterfield, namely, the belief that by comprehending its dynamics, actors "can act upon this knowledge to promote mutual security".[85] In an era when the two superpowers faced each other with unprecedented suspicion and with the survival of humanity at risk, his plea to policymakers to approach the nature of the conflict in a detached way, realise the true nature of the conflict and the common interests in avoiding nuclear war, and to "put oneself into the other's place" aimed at offering a way to mediate the security dilemma.[86] As mentioned in the previous section, the centrality of power for Herz lay with its importance as a means of addressing the security dilemma. As such, the limitation of the struggle for power ultimately relies on how successful efforts to mitigate the security dilemma are going to be. Herz often displayed a "guarded optimism", to borrow Stirk's expression, towards the possibility of somewhat mitigating the security dilemma through a combination of conscious effort and technological developments.[87]

Power, Technology, and the Nation-State

The Nation-State as the Unit of Power

In his quasi-autobiographical introduction to the *Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics,* Herz reflected on his main objectives in his early engagement with international politics. One of the issues that troubled him was why the security and power dilemma played such a prominent role in the relations between units that were "in their respective historical setting [...] the highest ones, that is, not subordinate to any higher authority".[88] The second issue was related to the character of those units: "What accounts

in history for the emergence of the great variety of units which are, in different periods, the highest ones?"[89] From the very way the questions are framed some first conclusions about the way he tried to tackle the problem can be inferred. Herz was going to approach the nation-state as a "unit" of security, and he was going to approach it as a *historical* unit.[90]

For Herz the formation of political units results from the effort to strike a compromise between the two opposing forces of cooperation and insecurity in human societies. Human beings, he noted, feel more secure in groups, and particularly so in groups that appear as "natural". Competition within the group does not disappear totally but there is at least a degree of solidarity especially when the security of the group is threatened by other groups. As such, the tendency of human beings to organise themselves in social groups cannot eradicate the struggle for survival which is now projected at the level of the group.[91] Here, despite their differences in what constitutes the roots of the struggle for power, Herz employed a similar mechanism of projection to Morgenthau.[92] The same condition applies to all groups but in the particular case of the state it becomes much more acute due to fact that, being the highest unit, it "cannot rely on any higher authority" for purposes of security.[93]

The form of the political unit is determined primarily by its capacity to offer protection to its members, both internally and externally.[94] What allowed nation-states to perform this function, and what thus for Herz constituted the main underlying structure of the modern international system, was "territoriality". It was the organisation of the state on a territorial basis with "impermeable", defensible boundaries that turned it into the basic political unit.[95] Herz's account of the evolution of the territorial unit is a historical one. As when examining power, his main focus was on technological development and in particular the development of military technology. In his account, the territorial state emerged in the aftermath of the "gunpowder revolution" and from the rubble of the previous "unit of impermeability", the medieval castle, which had become vulnerable and unable to fulfil its protective function any longer.[96] Technological progress, then, determines what sort of political unit will emerge next by rendering previous forms of organisation indefensible and thus obsolete. This can be illustrated clearly by the factors that Herz considered more important for explaining the transition to the modern international system.

In the medieval setting, the combination of a common set of values and the lack of destructive weapons provided for the minimum of internal and external security essential for the survival of the system.[97] The medieval

system, however, was challenged by the collapse of the previous moral order and the emergence of new weapons. In Herz's variant of "strategic determinism", major revolutions in military technology can challenge the whole "'superstructure' of economic, social, and political relationships" by undermining the foundations of the "units of protection", and certainly the gunpowder revolution was one of these.[98] The collapse of the medieval order was followed by a period of insecurity and turmoil which was characterised by internal and external conflict amongst the various units. The character of the new units to emerge was not predetermined but would depend on the outcome of this conflict.

It was thus a question of which of the rulers engaged in the conflict could most effectively exploit this newly acquired military power and how far could they extend their control through the use of such power.[99] Here the ability to employ the new technological means for the dual purpose of internal pacification and external protection proved crucial. The rulers of the emerging territorial states were able to accomplish the first task by employing power in order to remove the last remnants of feudal power and dissolve the obsolete units of impermeability such as castles and fortified cities domestically.[100] At the same time, lining the borders with fortifications, controlled and manned by the centralised government, formed the new "hard shell" of the territorial unit which afforded it increased protection from external interference.[101] The two processes developed in parallel and reinforced each other: external forces that would otherwise aid some of the pockets of resistance found it increasingly difficult to do so due to the newly formed hard shell.[102] By the end of the seventeenth century the territorial unit had been consolidated as the main political unit. Power, then, mostly military but also economic—through the increased ability of the territorial rulers to fund their efforts through the newly emerged money economy instead of relying on their vassals[103]—played a major role in forging the territorial unit.

The relation between power and the nature of the political unit, however, is not one-directional. In Herz's approach they exist in a dialogical relationship that is determined by their close connection to the question of security and how it is best addressed in a given historical setting. Where the dialogical element becomes apparent is in the changing conception of power *after* the territorial unit is established as the main form of political organisation. Herz observed that the use of concepts such as "power" or "sovereignty" often obscures the fact that they are intimately related to territoriality and are in fact derivative of it.[104] As mentioned in the previous

part, for his variant of structuralism territoriality is the underlying structure and once it is consolidated, the form of power and the very way its functions in international politics are understood is bound to change. The main change the emergence of the territorial state brought to power was through the process of centralisation.

In contrast to the pre-modern system where power was "diffused among various power-holders with jurisdiction over the one and same group of people", power was now centrally organised and had become measurable.[105] This particular understanding of power could not be employed in international relations without reference to "something pre-existing, namely, the territorial state itself".[106] In an international system where international anarchy "has not always been complete", the establishment of the territorial unit, largely immune from external interference, is the factor which granted power an increased role.[107] For it was only through the purposeful use of power, after the collapse of medieval unity, that international anarchy could be mitigated to some extent. The balance of power as a conscious attempt to prevent hegemony from materialising, as exemplified in the classical modern system, was significantly different from the coincidental balance of power in bygone ages. What differentiated it was a combination of material conditions, such as an adequate number of great powers of similar capabilities and the existence of an insular holder of the balance, and dynastic diplomacy.[108] The latter, free from "'power-alien' influences, could devote itself to balancing policies as to a cool and detached game of chess".[109]

This close interaction between territoriality and the newly found power of the territorial state is on display in Herz's account of the institutions associated with the modern international system. His account of the development of the concept of sovereignty is one of conflict between empire and territorial rulers resolved in favour of the latter due to their ability to employ power to pacify and defend their domains.[110] Similarly, the substitution of modern international law for "natural law" is examined as an attempt to regulate relations between sovereign nations, which reflect the underlying structure of territoriality.[111] The principle of legitimacy, as well as the nationalism that followed it and that further contributed in stabilising the system, both required the defensible units established by territoriality in order to flourish.[112]

Even the community character of the European system with its principles of limited war and non-conquest was tied to the territorial character of the units. Despite the fact that this community was restricted to the continent of

Europe itself while allowing European powers to pursue imperialistic goals overseas, its essence was not merely ideological for Herz. He noticed that the impermissibility of conquest was extended beyond Europe as soon as territoriality expanded and similar, impermeable units were formed elsewhere.[113]

Consequently, in Herz's theory it is not only power that is in flux due to changing conditions, as mentioned in the previous part, but also the international system itself as well as its underlying structure and its units. In the case of the modern international system, it is the very structure of territoriality that for Herz gave it its peculiar characteristics. The success of the territorial state lay in its ability to offer a satisfactory answer to the question of security. Political units, however, are always historical units, replaced by other forms of organisation when they can no longer perform their basic functions. Herz, often by drawing parallels to how previous political units gradually disappeared, was sceptical about the potential of the modern state in the twentieth century.

The Demise of the Territorial State?

When discussing Herz's account of the challenges facing the nation-state and its foundation of territoriality, it should be borne in mind that Herz returned to the question of the nation-state several times in the course of his career, often reconsidering or reframing earlier assertions. As such, a degree of inconsistency is to be expected, especially given the fact that his area of interests expanded significantly in the decades that followed, to encompass a notion of security that incorporated environmental factors, welfare, demographics, and development. What remained constant in his analysis of the nation-state, however, was its binary conceptualisation as a unit of protection and cooperation. It is with respect to those closely interconnected themes that the core of his examination of the limits of the nation-state can be exposed.

Given the emphasis that Herz placed on developments in—mainly military—technology for the emergence of the territorial state as the unit of protection, it is no surprise that in his early engagement with the nation-state it was this particular field that attracted his attention. His account of the "demise" of the territorial state was mainly focused on developments that were undermining its foundations of territoriality and the impermeability associated with it.[114] Similarly to Carr, he examined a series of factors that from the nineteenth century on increasingly allowed for the

impermeability of the territorial states to be bypassed. The development of economic warfare and the increased effectiveness of blockades, ideological penetration, and air warfare were all factors that, although not decisive in the two world wars, enabled competing units to penetrate each other's hard shell in a way that was impossible under the classical system.[115] By the First World War it was becoming apparent that small nation-states were increasingly incapable of defending themselves and in the aftermath of the Second World War even some of the great powers "*qua* territorial states, were on the way to becoming obsolete".[116]

Despite the importance of those challenges, however, territoriality could still be salvaged. Surprisingly for a realist, Herz saw collective security in a positive light despite the abortive effort of the League of Nations. In an era when the balance of power was disrupted and territorial states were becoming increasingly vulnerable, a system of collective security appeared to him a plausible solution and Herz oriented some of his early efforts in proposing ways to make it workable.[117] The organisation of the post-war world on the basis of bipolarity, characterised by an ideological split between the two sides and the existence of nuclear weapons, signified for Herz the loss of whatever hopes there might have been for a genuine collective security system.[118] The very rise of bipolarity, however, could also be interpreted as an effort to safeguard territoriality by extending the hard shell of defensibility to the level of the bloc. Bipolarity was seen by Herz as representing the culmination of tendencies of extending the territorial state to ameliorate the effects of economic interdependence and the increased vulnerability to military technology.[119] The most radical challenge to the territorial system thus lay not with the rise of bipolarity but with the development of nuclear warfare which happened to coincide with it.

Although initially not overly alarmist about the role of nuclear weapons, Herz came by the late 1950s to believe that their development signified a revolution with potentially similar consequences for the nation-state as the gunpowder revolution had had for the medieval unit of protection.[120] Whereas under bipolarity old concepts of power and sovereignty needed to be readjusted in order to be maintained, the nuclear revolution signalled the need for their radical reinvention since it undermined their very foundation of territoriality. The problem was not only that the hard shell of the states could now be penetrated vertically with much more destructive means than previously. A much graver implication was that nuclear weapons could potentially signal the obliteration of the dialogical relationship between power and territoriality and its replacement by a paradox. Instead of

conferring security to its holder, power in this arrangement created vulnerability.[121] The outcome is the transition from the mitigated security dilemma of the classical system to the unmitigated and absolute security dilemma of the bipolar world.[122]

Considering the fact that power, and nuclear power in particular, could no longer play its protective function, Herz proposed a short-term "holding operation" plan based on mutual accommodation of the superpowers and advocated a "realistic universalist" approach as a long-term goal based on the common interest of all humanity in survival.[123] The latter would for the first time override national interests and power competition which could serve the territorial states well but proved unable to provide any protection in face of nuclear annihilation.[124] Such an approach would involve nation-states realising the primacy of their common interest in survival and either delegating their nuclear weapons to a supranational authority or dismantling them. This in turn would allow them to regain part of their protective functions and continue to exist as territorial units, albeit no longer as "ultimate units of control".[125]

For this universalism to stand any chance, however, nation-states ought to abandon particularistic values that traditionally worked against it, namely, what Herz called "exclusivist nationalism".[126] The necessity of such a move despite the resistance to be expected was, at least for Herz, clear and it relied on the way he understood the connection between allegiance to a political unit and the protective functions this unit could accomplish.[127] Since the nation-state could no longer offer the minimum of protection required, continued attachment to nationalism was merely an exercise in futility. Paradoxically, for the nation-state to survive it ought to abandon its ideological corollary. A decade later, Herz had to return to the question of the nation-state in an effort to address its apparent resilience and a series of trends that were moving in exactly the opposite direction from universalism towards a "new territoriality".[128]

The first factor that contributed to this outcome lay with the "unavailability of force" in the bipolar world. The superpowers proved to be more interested in maintaining their spheres of influence and the status quo and, despite not relinquishing their nuclear weapons, they kept them only as a final resort. The result was not only that nuclear power became "unavailable", so too did conventional power due to the risk of escalation.[129] Ironically, this stabilisation was in part due to the fact that some of the ideas Herz discussed in his earlier plan for a "holding operation" actually materialised.[130] The shortcoming of his long-term outline lay with

the fact that "holding operation" was a necessary but not sufficient condition for universalism. In reality, when the risk of a nuclear holocaust moved to the background, nation-states did not feel particularly compelled to contemplate more radical solutions.

Operating parallel to the developments in the field of power were other forces that contributed to the retrenchment of nation-states. Old-style empires, founded upon imperialistic policies that aimed at securing self-sufficiency and established on the basis of military superiority and the absence of nationalism among the colonised people, were by then crumbling. This development was brought about by a combination of technological developments, which rendered reliance on raw materials less important for survival, and the rise of nationalism in the former colonies.[131] Through the close association of legitimacy with the fulfilment of the main functions of the state and the impact of technological development, Herz managed to provide an interesting account of the qualitative difference between defensive nationalism and the aggressive version that preceded it. Nationalism proved very effective in marshalling the power of the nation when faced with an existential threat. The cases of Israel and Vietnam demonstrated its potency even when faced with superior power. At the same time, however, it could not be employed for purposes of conquest, firstly, because it would meet fierce resistance from a hostile and equally nationalistic population, and, secondly, because through modernisation and economic development the protective functions of a unit could be more easily fulfilled without the need for territorial expansion.[132]

For Herz, then, the nation-state had secured its existence and retained its position as the main political unit "providing group identity, protection and welfare".[133] Herz of course was mindful that not all new nation-states were well-placed to fulfil their main functions.[134] He was also mindful of the fact that despite its survival, the nation-state could not return to the territoriality of old. The reason he talked about a "new territoriality" was the perpetuation of what he initially conceived as a transitional stage, that is, the coexistence of permeability and impenetrability.[135] This permeability was referring not only to nuclear weapons or air power but also to the newly available means of indirect penetration that technology facilitated. Additionally, states had to "assert themselves in an environment of vastly and rapidly increasing technological, economic, and general interrelationships of a shrinking world".[136] This reformulation of his position on the nation-state may appear as inconsistent with his classical work on territoriality. By de-emphasising the role of military power, however, Herz managed to offer

a more nuanced account of the nation-state and the challenges it faced, but that still remained close to his broad conceptualisation of power outlined in the previous part.

Realist Liberalism and Foreign Affairs: Nazi Germany and the United States

Herz never produced a monograph on the history of a single nation in the way Carr did, or an extensive commentary like Morgenthau's engagement with American foreign policy. Having been uprooted from Germany due to the rise of Nazism and never fully assimilated in the American intellectual tradition, he remained at odds with both worlds. Yet, as Puglierin notes, this distance allowed him to approach both his native homeland and his adopted one in a detached and critical way.[137] In his engagement with German and American politics the main threads of his thought are on display: the need to balance between and avoid the excesses of extreme realism and idealism, and the necessity of conscious effort to mitigate the security dilemma.

From the beginning of his career Herz tried to make sense of Nazism and its implications for domestic and international politics. On the one hand, his study of Nazi doctrines of international law alerted Herz to the limitations of Kelsen's theory of pure law and contributed to his shift towards a more politically oriented interpretation of international law.[138] On the other hand, however, the gradual evolution of those doctrines from the initial "natural law" theory when Germany was in need of reasserting legal parity with the rest of European powers to the "racial law" corresponding to the era of assimilation of territories with German population signified for Herz something more than the mere manipulation of law as a justification for German foreign policy. The tendency in the development of German international law was for him clear, and nodded to the eventual prevalence of a view which would maintain only the "realistic parts of the theory" and achieve consistency with Nazi worldviews in embracing a dogma which accounts for the very negation of international law and its replacement by continuous conflict.[139] Here Herz, like Morgenthau for that matter, had in mind the extreme realism that goes beyond the realisation of the role of power to its glorification, a realism that was exemplified by Nazi Germany.[140]

Herz later confirmed these insights and broadened them to cover every aspect of life in Nazi Germany. Faced with economic and social problems

similar to those of other Western societies, Nazism opted for the "easy solution" of "always cutting the Gordian knot": in essence the solution amounted to non-solution but mere evasion of the problem by relapsing to pre-civilisational means of resolution through force.[141] From the series of contradictions that Herz examined alongside their resolution by Nazism in terms of naked power, perhaps the most relevant to the question of the nation-state is that of international order. At a time when the territorial state was faced with increasing interdependence the main problem was the reconciliation of the need for integration with the maintenance of cultural autonomy. The two opposite answers in post-war Germany were either extreme nationalism or pacifist internationalism, and Nazism by initially posing as a champion of anti-imperialism and equality among nations seemingly accommodated both. In reality, however, as its racial doctrine had implied from early on, Nazism demonstrated contempt for all traditional aspects of international politics that had been used to limit the struggle for power. In a world composed according to Nazism of "superior" and "inferior" races the only option with which other powers were left was either continuous struggle or acceptance of Nazi domination.[142]

For Herz, the quest had always been to avoid precisely this extreme realism and the ensuing unlimited struggle for power. In the conditions of the Cold War with its two superpowers "armed with conflicting ideologies and annihilating weapons", this quest was to become imperative.[143] His efforts to propose ways to mitigate the security dilemma in such a setting (such as the plan for "holding operation" discussed in the previous section), so as to ensure human survival, constantly informed his engagement with American foreign policy for the duration of the Cold War (and beyond). The main problem with détente, which Herz advocated as a means to limit the insecurity on both sides of the conflict, was that it superficially resembled the very appeasement that had failed to prevent the Second World War. Herz's answer to the problem is particularly interesting since, contrary to Carr and due to the closer attention he paid to Nazism, he had fully realised the risk posed by Hitler and was in no need of learning the "lessons of Munich".[144]

After outlining his plan for "holding operation" Herz had to defend it by means of dispelling the parallels between appeasement and détente. The world of the Cold War, he maintained, was essentially different than Europe in the 1930s; and the Soviet Union unlike Nazi Germany was a power more interested in maintaining the status quo. For Herz, the charges of appeasement levelled by extremists on both sides posed a greater risk to international

security than the actual steps taken by the two superpowers for mutual accommodation.[145] The situation was aggravated by the increased importance of the security dilemma in conditions of ideological polarisation. Writing in the early 1970s he observed that the almost symmetrical views of the other side as expansionist, advocated by extremists, were misleading, and that it was actually more possible that both sides were "defensive-minded". The way he chose to illustrate this statement was crucial. By presenting the Soviet viewpoint he asked whether by expanding to Eastern Europe, a "much invaded country" was seeing this expansion as merely the establishment of a defensive zone "particularly when the Americans engaged in what looked to them as encirclement".[146] Here Herz was actively trying to raise awareness of the security dilemma and its implications and to persuade his audience to pause and "put themselves in the other fellow's shoes"—or more precisely "in Moscow's shoes".[147] Having realised the implications of the security dilemma the two superpowers could actively try to mitigate it through détente.

It was with this mitigation of the security dilemma through conscious effort in mind that Herz was particularly critical of the disregard for international law often to be found in American policies. In a series of letters to the editor of the *New York Times*, he made the case that "more or less clandestine operations" like those orchestrated by American intelligence services in order to undermine or remove unfriendly governments were in violation of the most basic rules of modern international law.[148] The rules Herz had in mind were those creating the framework for a minimum of coexistence between territorial states, namely, the "inviolability of their territories in peacetime and of non-interference".[149] Of course during the Cold War this attitude still entailed the risk of escalation in a crisis and eventually nuclear annihilation, as Herz claimed when discussing the invasion of Grenada.[150] For him, however, the problem was more fundamental. In a time when international cooperation and mutual understanding was increasingly essential for survival given the global problems now facing humanity, the United States seemed to be moving closer to unilateral policies.

Herz thus maintained his criticism of post-Cold War American policy in terms of disregarding international law and institutions and abstaining from cooperation in facing environmental challenges.[151] He, moreover, saw American policy as unenlightened in terms of traditional security concerns. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States as the only remaining superpower no longer faced any credible threat to its security.

This new environment allowed in principle for the possibility of taking steps to alleviate the security dilemma of other powers, but this never materialised. On the contrary, American foreign policy was characterised by a series of decisions that intensified the security dilemma in others. This attitude culminated in the "war on terror" during the Bush administration which turned several countries into potential targets for pre-emptive strikes. Herz, however, observed that the tendency was clear even in earlier decisions such as the maintenance of NATO despite its apparent uselessness in the new environment and the choice to expand it eastwards which further intensified the security dilemma of Russia.[152] Such an orientation, for Herz, signified a return to the same extreme realism he was so desperately trying to avert by devising realist liberalism in the first place.

Concluding Remarks

Herz's attempt to appraise power and the nation-state is founded upon the central role the security dilemma plays in his theory. It is the security dilemma that lies at the root of the struggle for power. Herz here differs from both Carr and Morgenthau. In contrast to Carr who merely observed that power is there, Herz tried to ground his account of power somewhere. In contrast to Morgenthau, he picked a social condition instead of an anthropological one as the main cause for the struggle for power. When it comes to his conceptualisation of power, his identification of elements of power is reminiscent of that offered by Morgenthau. His understanding of power and its role, however, as being in flux and his emphasis on the need to constantly redefine is much more radical than not only Morgenthau's but also Carr's flexible conceptualisation.

Herz, like Carr and Morgenthau, saw the nation-state as a historically conditioned political unit whose existence is closely connected to power. His account of revolutions in military technology and their impact on the defensive functions of the state is far more detailed than those offered by the other two realists examined so far. It represents, however, one of the main weaknesses of his approach in that he tended to overemphasise this single factor. By taking into account factors such as the potency of nationalism and the need of the nation-state to provide for the welfare of its citizens Herz's later revisiting of the nation-state is more nuanced than his initial account. He also moved closer to Carr's interpretation that incorporated all the aforementioned aspects, albeit with a more basic discussion of military power. Since Herz's reformulation aimed at accounting for the survival of

the nation-state, the discussion of the elements that contributed to its resilience are better framed than in Carr who believed it to be on its way out. The two accounts can be largely seen as complementary.

Herz, while conventionally classified as a classical realist, could more accurately be described as a transitional figure who belonged to both the classical and the structural realist worlds. His adamant removal of power from human nature, the emphasis on the security dilemma as a social condition, and his appreciation of structural approaches are all elements that connect him to structural realism, and in particular the defensive realism of Waltz. At the same time, however, his insistence on the constant re-evaluation of concepts, and the perception that systems and structures are in constant flux, does not allow for his classification as a structural realist either. Perhaps the most telling characteristic of his approach that distinguishes him from structural realists and offensive realists in particular is his refusal to subscribe to the most pessimistic implications of the security dilemma. His insistence on what constitutes sound political thought, and the need to balance reality and utopia—a similarity with Carr that was promptly noted in the relevant literature—allowed him to contemplate and actively promote ways to mitigate the security dilemma. Mearsheimer, as will be discussed subsequently, followed the security dilemma to its most pessimistic implications, as would have the ideo-typical realism that Herz tried to avoid.

Notes

1. I discuss differences and similarities between Herz and both forms of realism throughout the chapter. In most of the secondary literature Herz is approached as a classical realist. A point similar to the one I develop in this chapter is raised by Schuett. He claims that, despite being closer to classical realism, Herz's contribution of the concept of the security dilemma, which became the "foundational conceptual framework for subsequent generations of realists", makes him the "perfect entrée into post-classical realism". Schuett, *Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature,* p. 53.
2. Thomas Karis, "A Life of Passionate Scholarship," *International Relations* 22, no. 4, (2008): p. 407.
3. All the following articles contain longer or shorter intellectual biographies of John Herz: Karis "A Life of Passionate Scholarship"; Jana Puglierin "Towards Being a 'Traveler between All Worlds'," *International Relations* 22, no. 4 (2008): pp. 419–425; Peter Stirk, "John H. Herz: Realism and

the Fragility of the International Order," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 2 (2005): pp. 285–306; Christian Hacke and Jana Puglierin, "John H. Herz: Balancing Utopia and Reality," *International Relations* 21, no. 3 (2007): pp. 367–382. For the early Herz, Kelsen and international law see Peter Stirk, "John H. Herz and the International Law of the Third Reich," *International Relations* 22, no. 4 (2008): pp. 427–440. For the plea to establish a new field of "survival research" see John Herz, "On Human Survival: Reflections on Survival Research and Survival Policies," *World Futures* 59, no. 3–4 (2003): pp. 135–143; and Kennedy Graham, "'Survival Research' and the 'Planetary Interest': Carrying Forward the Thoughts of John Herz," *International Relations* 22, no. 4 (2008): pp. 457–472.

4. Kenneth W. Thompson, "Review: The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 73, no. 3 (1979): pp. 941–942.
5. Puglierin, "Towards Being a 'Traveler between All Worlds'," pp. 419–423.
6. Ibid. p. 422.
7. Richard Ned Lebow, "Identity and International Relations," *International Relations,* 22, no. 4 (2008): p. 473. Lebow is not entirely right to claim that Herz never wrote about the Greeks. See indicatively John Herz, "Prologue as Epilogue: Aristotle's Dream" (1973) in John Herz, *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics* (New York: David McKay, 1976), pp. 303–307.
8. John Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 5–12.
9. Ibid. p. 6.
10. John Herz, "Relevancies and Irrelevancies in the Study of International Relations," *Polity* 4, no. 1 (1971): pp. 26–37.
11. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age,* p. 6.
12. Ibid. p. 7.
13. See Ashley, "Political Realism and Human Interests," pp. 204–236; John Herz, "[Political Realism and Human Interests]: Comment," *International Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 2, (1981): pp. 239–240. The contrast between this attitude and Morgenthau's dismissive comments about similar approaches and their emphasis on methodology is glaring. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. ix–x.
14. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age,* p. 8; although induction was not discarded completely by Waltz, he thought it more suitable for testing hypotheses and laws rather than theories. In fact, he thought that although both induction and deduction are indispensable for theory formation, realism was *too* close to induction whereas neorealism was leaning more towards deduction. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 7–11; Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," p. 33.

15. Ibid. p. 9. For an illustration of how wrong parallels can be drawn from superficially similar but essentially different cases see Herz's own contribution on the discussion about détente in the 1970s: John Herz, "Détente and Appeasement from a Political Scientist's Vantage Point" (1974) in Herz, *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics*, pp. 279–289.
16. Karis, "A Life of Passionate Scholarship," p. 408; Stirk mentions the connection between Herz's academic interest and the title of his autobiography and points to a biographical connection too: the fact that Herz's own survival as a German Jew was threatened during the Nazi regime. See Stirk, "Realism and the Fragility of the International Order," p. 287.
17. John Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism: A Study in Theories and Realities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 16.
18. Ibid. pp. 3–5.
19. John Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 2, no. 2, (1950): pp. 157–158.
20. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* p. 24.
21. Herz, "[Political Realism and Human Interests]: Comment," p. 239.
22. John Herz, "Reflections on Hans Morgenthau's Political Realism," *American Foreign Policy Newsletter* 7, no. 1 (1984): p. 7.
23. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* p. 3.
24. Ibid. p. 4.
25. Scheuerman, however, observes that the divide between Herz and Morgenthau was "occasionally blurred" by the former's "allusions to fundamental psychological propensities". Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* p. 34. Schuett, quoting Wolfers, claims that Herz's theory also included assumptions about human nature, albeit different assumptions that make "people look less vicious": Schuett, *Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature,* p. 57.
26. Casper Sylvest, "John H. Herz and the Resurrection of Classical Realism," *International Relations* 22, no. 4, (2008): p. 448. Indeed, as will be discussed in subsequent parts, Herz often contemplated the possibility of either mitigating or overcoming the security dilemma. He was also well aware about what an approach founded upon a social condition implied when displaying scepticism about grounding territoriality to a biological instinct. If competition for resources is conscious—as opposed to instinctive—then political units will not be eternally bound to fight each other. John Herz, "The Territorial State Revisited: Reflections on the Future of the Nation-State," *Polity* 1, no. 1 (1968): pp. 30–32.
27. Herz, "Reflections on Hans Morgenthau's Political Realism," p. 7.
28. John Herz, "Power Politics and World Organization," *The American Political Science Review* 36, no. 6 (1942): p. 1040.
29. Ibid. pp. 1939–1940.

30. Ibid. p. 1040.
31. John Herz, “International Politics and the Nuclear Dilemma” (1962) in Herz, *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics,* pp. 124–147: p. 128 (emphasis is added). Of course, that does not imply that power appeared out of nowhere: “Power considerations have always ruled the ‘international’ relationships of whatever units constituted the basic units.” Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* p. 76. The transition is one of intensity and not one from power-alien to power-centred considerations.
32. Herz, “Power Politics and World Organization,” p. 1040.
33. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* p. 16.
34. Ibid. pp. 17–18.
35. Ibid. pp. 24–25.
36. Ibid. pp. 24–30.
37. Ibid. p. 31.
38. Ibid. p. 33.
39. Ibid. pp. 36–39.
40. Ibid. p. 144.
41. The similarity has not gone unnoticed in secondary literature. See Hacke and Puglierin, “John H. Herz: Balancing Utopia and Reality,” p. 377; Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* pp. 37–38. Jones also spots this similarity and interprets it as an employment of the same rhetorical “trick” by both authors in order to manipulate their readership: Jones, *A Duty to Lie*, p. 12. Booth despite discussing the commonalities also notes that Herz was less sceptical than Carr as regarded the prospects of finding a middle way between realism and idealism: Ken Booth, “Navigating the ‘Absolute Novum’: John H. Herz’s Political Realism and Political Idealism,” *International Relations* 22, no. 4 (2008): pp. 520–521.
42. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* pp. 132–133.
43. Ibid. pp. 131–133.
44. Ibid. p. 132.
45. Ibid. pp. 132–133, p. 146.
46. Ibid. pp. 127–128.
47. Ibid. p. 128.
48. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism*, p. 5.
49. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, p. 41.
50. Sylvest, “Herz and the Resurrection of Classical Realism,” pp. 449–451.
51. John Herz, “Political Realism Revisited,” *International Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1981): p. 186.
52. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* pp. 5–6.
53. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* pp. 73–87.
54. Herz, “Realism Revisited,” p. 184.
55. Ibid. p. 186.

56. Ibid. p. 185.
57. Ibid. p. 187.
58. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, pp. 41–42.
59. Ibid. p. 170.
60. Ibid. p. 49.
61. Here Herz's concerns run parallel to those of Morgenthau who displayed similar thoughts about the radical departure signified by the development of nuclear weapons. For the similarities and differences see William Scheuerman, "Realists Against the Nation-State," *Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems* 20, (2011): pp. 97–103; Scheuerman, "Realism and the Critique of Technology," pp. 563–584.
62. John Herz, "Rise and Demise of the Territorial State," *World Politics* 9, no. 4 (1957): p. 489.
63. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, pp. 168–172.
64. Ibid. pp. 221–223.
65. Ibid. p. 222.
66. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* p. 200 (emphasis in the original); also repeated in Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, p. 233 and John Herz, "Technology, Ethics and International Relations" (1974) in Herz, *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics*, p. 290.
67. Herz prepared in the 1960s a manuscript under the title *International Politics in the Technological Age*, and although it never saw publication, some parts of it found their way into a later collection of articles: John Herz, "The Civilisational Process and its Reversal" in *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics,* pp. 195–225. See the excellent discussions in Scheuerman, "Realism and the Critique of Technology," pp. 569–582 and Casper Sylvest, "Technology and Global Politics: The Modern Experiences of Bertrand Russell and John H. Herz," *The International History Review* 35, no. 1 (2013): pp. 121–142. Scheuerman focuses mostly on Herz's account of social acceleration and its contemporary relevance. As such the emphasis is mostly on negative aspects of technology. Herz, however, displayed—on occasion—some optimism too, especially when discussing the prospects of technology to provide the means of overcoming the perennial security dilemma. See, for instance, the concluding remarks in Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism* and Herz, "Territorial State Revisited".
68. "The very nature of the prevailing unit [. . .] depended on military technology" Herz, "Technology, Ethics, and International Relations," p. 291.
69. Herz, "Rise and Demise of Territorial State," pp. 476–489.
70. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, pp. 143–146.
71. Kenneth Waltz, "Reflections on Theory of International Politics: A Response to my Critics," in *Neorealism and its Critics,* ed. Keohane, p. 333.

72. For a brief overview of different conceptions of power in structural realism see Brian Schmidt, "Competing Realist Conceptions of Power," *Millennium—Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): pp. 536–542.
73. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* p. 24.
74. Ibid. p. 169.
75. Ibid. p. 27; pp. 65–102.
76. Ibid. p. 126.
77. Ibid. p. 203; pp. 24–30.
78. Ibid. pp. 200–203; John Herz, "Introduction" in *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics,* pp. 1–56; p. 9.
79. Wheeler observes that it is such a reading of the security dilemma, for which Herz's early formulations are partly responsible, that "led John Mearsheimer to claim Herz as a progenitor of the theory of offensive realism". Nicholas Wheeler, "'To Put Oneself into the Other Fellow's Place': John Herz, the Security Dilemma and the Nuclear Age," *International Relations* 22, no. 4 (2008): p. 494. For Herz himself, however, such a position was representative of the ideo-typical political realism he was trying to overcome with his realist liberalism. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* p. 203. A similar point is raised by Scheuerman who claims that the mere existence of the security dilemma is not sufficient reason for Herz to reject outright "idealism". Statesmen who are able to understand its logic can mitigate the security dilemma. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* pp. 35–37.
80. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* pp. 203–204; Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, p. 235.
81. Ibid. pp. 204–205. For a detailed account of Herz's gradual disillusionment with international law, despite him beginning his career as a disciple of Kelsen, see Casper Sylvest, "Realism and International Law: The Challenge of John H. Herz," *International Theory* 2, no. 3 (2010): pp. 410–445.
82. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism*, pp. 207–208.
83. Ibid. pp. 208–210.
84. Ibid. p. 210.
85. Wheeler, "'To Put Oneself into the Other Fellow's Place'," p. 495.
86. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age,* pp. 249–250.
87. For Herz's guarded optimism see Stirk, "Realism and the fragility of the international order", p. 287; for the help of technology in attenuating the security dilemma by reducing scarcity of resources through modernization see Herz, "Territorial State Revisited," p. 32.
88. Herz, "Introduction," p. 9.
89. Ibid. p. 12.
90. Despite his affinity with structural realism, Herz was aware of the limits of treating the political unit as a billiard ball. He was critical of the variant of

realism that advocated the primacy of foreign policy because it neglected the fact that "'units' of power [...] are usually not coherent groups, but units based on internal power relationships". Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* p. 28.

91. Ibid. pp. 10–13.
92. Roots of the problem are different but the outcome is the same. The condition is projected to the level of the group. Schuett notices some parallels with Freudian defence mechanisms such as identification, similar to those he attributed to Morgenthau. Schuett, *Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature,* pp. 53–59.
93. Herz, "Introduction," p. 10; Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, pp. 231–233.
94. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, pp. 40–41.
95. Ibid. pp. 49–75.
96. Ibid. pp. 43–48.
97. Ibid. p. 45.
98. Herz mentions that it was not his intention to "indulge in a 'strategic determinism'" in Herz, *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics*, p. 13; Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age,* pp. 45–46.
99. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, p. 46.
100. Ibid. pp. 47, 57.
101. Ibid. pp. 43–61.
102. Ibid. p. 51.
103. Ibid. p. 45.
104. Ibid. p. 49.
105. Ibid. p. 58.
106. Ibid. p. 49.
107. For Herz international relations, or put more accurately, relations between units national or otherwise, are characterised by anarchy but very rarely is this anarchy unmitigated, translating to unlimited conflict. The geographical separation of self-sufficient units in the distant past or the existence of overarching ideologies of unity are used as examples of such mitigation of conflict. The establishment, however, of "larger and more interrelated" power units will of necessity relegate law, ideologies, or other power-alien considerations to only secondary importance. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* pp. 203–205.
108. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, p. 65; Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* pp. 207–221.
109. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, p. 65.
110. Ibid. pp. 51–57.
111. Ibid. pp. 58–61.
112. Ibid. pp. 73–75.

113. Ibid. pp. 66–70.
114. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age,* p. 96; Herz, "Rise and Demise of Territorial State," *passim*; Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism*, pp. 235–238. In his *Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics* Herz discussed his account of the "demise" of the nation-state, clarifying that whereas some readers assumed that with this term he predicted "the impending disappearance of the nation-state", such was not his intention. Herz, "Introduction," pp. 16–17.
115. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age,* pp. 96–108.
116. Ibid. pp. 98–99; p. 107.
117. See, for instance, his outline in Herz, "Power Politics," pp. 1043–1051.
118. Collective security's effectiveness was determined by the existence of a plurality of territorial units without any commitments towards other powers in the form of alliances. It was thus to be a refinement of the balance of power, albeit organised on a legalistic basis. For Herz this system was still workable in the interwar period, but states came to realise its necessity only "when the preconditions for a genuine collective security system had vanished". Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age,* p. 93; pp. 76–95.
119. Ibid. pp. 111–166.
120. For his initial and somehow ambiguous position on nuclear revolution see the conclusions in Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism.*
121. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age,* pp. 167–223.
122. Ibid. pp. 231–243.
123. Ibid. pp. 244–357.
124. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, p. 310; also when discussing similar notions in Morgenthau: "The choice is [...] between various kinds of national destruction, on the one hand, and survival through temporary accommodation and eventual prevalence of moral-political universalism, on the other." Ibid. p. 335.
125. Ibid. pp. 338–349; the loss of status as "ultimate units of control" would come not only through the voluntary abandonment of national nuclear arsenals but also because of the delegation of powers to supranational functional agencies that would address several of the global issues that the states were no longer able to solve alone. At this point Herz was already concerned with issues such as demographic explosion, scarcity of resources, and the inability of nations to provide economic welfare to their populations. Ibid. pp. 314–320; pp. 341–342. For a discussion of Herz's views on functionalism vis-à-vis those of other realists see Scheuerman, "The (Classical) Realist Vision of Global Reform," pp. 264–268.
126. Herz's reading of nationalism was very close to Morgenthau's. Like the latter's distinction between liberal and universalistic nationalism, Herz too distinguished between two types of nationalism, namely, idealist and

integral nationalism. Here, by "exclusivist nationalism" he refers to the same "nationalistic universalism" as Morgenthau. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, p. 339; for the distinction between idealist versus integral nationalism as an exemplification of what happens to an idealist movement when it meets facts see Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism*, pp. 65–102.

127. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, pp. 340–344; also his discussion in John Herz, "Legitimacy: Can We Retrieve It?" *Comparative Politics* 10, no. 3 (1978), *passim*.
128. Herz, "Territorial State Revisited," pp. 11–34.
129. Ibid. pp. 18–22.
130. The short-term solutions he outlined in *International Politics in the Atomic Age* proved very close to the ones that were actually followed: delimitation of spheres and non-intervention in each other's sphere, limitation of ideological antagonism, and the avoidance of a major war became constant, rather than temporary as Herz believed, characteristics of the Cold War. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, pp. 244–299; pp. 302–305.
131. Herz, "Territorial State Revisited," pp. 15–18.
132. Ibid. pp. 13–15; p. 22; pp. 31–32.
133. Ibid. p. 34.
134. He often raised doubts about the viability of the "artificial" states that followed the dismantling of old colonial empires in terms of both legitimacy and their capacity to modernise. For a reconsideration of the importance of modernisation in decreasing dependency see Herz, "Introduction," pp. 18–19.
135. See Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age*, pp. 221–223.
136. Herz, "Territorial State Revisited," p. 23; for indirect penetration see ibid. pp. 26–30.
137. Puglierin, "Towards Being a 'Traveler between All Worlds'," p. 423.
138. Stirk, "John H. Herz and the International Law of the Third Reich," pp. 427–440; Sylvest, "Realism and International Law," pp. 426–432; Herz, "Introduction," pp. 5–7.
139. John Herz, "The National Socialist Doctrine of International Law and the Problems of International Organisation," *Political Science Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (1939): pp. 553–554.
140. See, for instance, his discussion on Schmitt's one-sided realism: John Herz, "Looking at Carl Schmitt from the Vantage Point of the 1990s," *Interpretation* 19, no. 3 (1992): pp. 307–314.
141. John Herz, "Alternative Proposals to Democracy: Naziism," *The Journal of Negro Education* 10, no. 3 (1941): p. 354.
142. Ibid. pp. 359–361.
143. Herz, "Introduction," p. 12.

144. Stirk, "Herz and the International law of the Third Reich," pp. 428–429; Carr, in his autobiographical sketch admitted that being preoccupied with the horrors of the Soviet Union, he was caught off guard about the real risks posed by Hitler. Carr, "An Autobiography," pp. xviii–xix.
145. John Herz, "The Relevancy and Irrelevancy of Appeasement" (1964) in Herz, *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics*, pp. 148–171.
146. Herz, "Détente and Appeasement," p. 283.
147. John Herz, "Foreign Policy in the Framework of an Open-Society Bloc," *American Foreign Policy Newsletter* 5, no. 4 (1982): p. 3.
148. John Herz, "Iran-Contra Hearings May Help to Cleanse Foreign Relations" (1987, 14 June) in *The New York Times*.
149. John Herz, "The President's Error on Covert Action" (1983, 26 October) in *New York Times*. Also in Herz, "Iran-Contra Hearings," and John Herz, "U.S. Must Join World in the Rule of Law" (1988, 23 April) in *The New York Times*.
150. John Herz, "International Law Bent Beyond Recognition" (1983, 24 November) in *New York Times*. When discussing the necessity of awareness about the horrors of nuclear war a decade later, Herz claimed that "Since Reagan became president, policies have not reflected a sense of awareness." Herz, "On Human Survival," p. 137.
151. John Herz, "Reflections on My Century," *International Journal of Applied Economics and Econometrics* 10, no. 1 (2002): pp. 155–162; John Herz, "The Security Dilemma in International Relations: Background and Present Problems," *International Relations* 17, no. 4 (2003): pp. 412–416.
152. Herz, "The Security Dilemma in International Relations," pp. 412–416. A similar line of argument was also followed by Waltz: Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): pp. 5–41.

CHAPTER 5

Nationalism and the Nation-State in Structural Realism: John Mearsheimer's Offensive Realism

Introduction

If Herz represented a transitional version of realism which displayed elements of both traditional and structural approaches, with the emergence of Waltz's neorealism the transition to a purely structural theory of international relations was completed. In his effort to create a parsimonious and elegant structural theory, however, Waltz had to "retreat from the real", as Molloy put it, and he disassociated his theory from foreign policy which would need a separate theory.[1] John Mearsheimer's offensive realism represents an attempt to overcome the gap between international structure and foreign policy by providing a unifying framework which claims to be able to account for state behaviour while preserving the main features of Waltz's structural approach.

In the first part of the chapter, I examine the foundations of Mearsheimer's approach. He remains generally faithful to the structural framework developed by Waltz but he draws different conclusions from it. Where Waltz saw security maximisers, Mearsheimer sees power maximisers. He further modifies the framework to include a rational actor assumption which he claims is enabling him to transcend the gap between foreign policy and international structure. As regards Mearsheimer's faithfulness to structural realism, it has profound implications on the role power plays in his theory. Epistemologically, his theory is neatly separated from power in a way alien to the reflexivity displayed by realists examined thus far. Ontologically, power remains of paramount importance but since it is expected to play a role analogous to

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money its conceptualisation must be narrow. Mearsheimer's claim that his modification of structural realism can help to account for state behaviour and can be employed to both predict and prescribe creates a significant tension in his theory. This tension underlies Mearsheimer's efforts to engage with the foreign policy of the United States.

In the second part of this chapter I explore Mearsheimer's conceptualisation of power. This is particularly narrow, as one would expect from the function power is expected to perform in his theory. More specifically, his notion of power is reduced strictly to material capabilities of which military power, and land power in particular, are deemed to be the most important. When it comes to the limits of power, offensive realism's image of states striving to achieve hegemony becomes significantly watered down. Apart from structural constraints and nuclear weapons, Mearsheimer introduces the stopping power of water as a qualifier of offensive realism. The result is a moderated version of offensive realism wherein great powers become satisfied when attaining regional hegemony.

Mearsheimer's engagement with the nation-state is examined in the third part. Despite treating the modern state as a billiard ball, he is attentive to the historical developments that brought about its emergence. The primary focus is on the role of military power. Mearsheimer, however, also attributes to nationalism an important role in the establishment and expansion of the nation-state. In this part, therefore, I also examine how his approach to nationalism tries to strike a balance between being a structural theory and a phenomenon that, being ideological in nature and belonging to the domestic domain, should lie outside the scope of said theory. The third part ends with a discussion of Mearsheimer's thoughts on the prospects of the nation-state and the possibility of taming nationalism. Finally, I critically assess Mearsheimer's approach as illustrated by his analysis of American foreign policy. I examine his analysis of that policy until the end of Cold War and his efforts to project its trajectory to the future, as well as his engagement, as a public intellectual, in the debates about its formulation after his predictions failed to materialise.

Mearsheimer's Theory of International Relations

Foundations of Offensive Realism

There is a marked difference between John Mearsheimer's philosophical background and that of the classical realists and Herz examined in the previous chapters. While the aforementioned realists occasionally commented

on each other's works and exchanged views, the formulation of their respective variants of realism was by and large independent from each other. Mearsheimer, belonging to a later—the third according to Vasquez—generation of realists, is both aware of and has engaged with the work of classical realists as well as that of the founding father of neorealism, Kenneth Waltz.[2] As such, his variant of realism is primarily founded upon earlier realists, in contrast to the variety of intellectual backgrounds that influenced the realists examined so far.

Mearsheimer's early career was in the US military and he obtained his first degree from West Point in 1970. Before leaving in 1975, he had already spent a decade in the service of the military, a decade which was concurrent with the Vietnam War. This experience played a crucial role in the formation of Mearsheimer's views on American foreign policy towards the developing world and his scepticism towards adventurism there, his early thinking about the use of military force, as well as a better grasp of the role militaries play in contemporary societies.[3] Before turning his attention to international relations theory Mearsheimer published works on strategy with a particular emphasis on deterrence.[4] Although he initially did not self-identify as a realist, Mearsheimer soon became one and he unreservedly lists Kenneth Waltz as the most important realist to have influenced him.[5] Mearsheimer developed his own variant of realism, offensive realism, gradually with its definitive statement being *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Elements of his theory, however, were already visible in earlier works.[6] Mearsheimer's offensive realism superficially appears as a synthesis of the theoretical framework developed by Waltz and the logical conclusions of "classical" realism.[7] He agrees with the starting assumptions of Waltz and as such he is clear that his theory is a structural one, very much like Waltz's neorealism.[8]

Where he disagrees with Waltz, however, is in the conclusions he draws from said assumptions and most importantly the answer to the question of whether states act as power or as security maximisers. He believes contra Waltz that states seek to increase their power and traces his claim back to Morgenthau's variant of classical realism. More precisely, Mearsheimer's reading of classical realism is one according to which states are inherently aggressive, since they are "naturally endowed with Type A personalities".[9] Consistent with such a reading, Morgenthau is classified as an offensive realist since the *animus dominandi* is interpreted to be automatically applicable to states.[10] Despite being in agreement, however, with what he considers to be the logical conclusions of classical realism, Mearsheimer does not subscribe to an explanation that is founded upon assumptions about human nature.[11]

While disagreeing with the "benign world" of Waltz's defensive realism Mearsheimer remains attached to the former's theoretical framework.[12] He makes, however, a significant modification to this framework in that he is willing to engage with the historical record in an effort to validate his theory. The structural theory of Waltz was intended as a highly abstract theory that shied away from accounting for foreign policy, which needed a separate theory. As a result, those defensive realists drawing on Waltz and aiming at offering comprehensive accounts of state behaviour, like Snyder and Van Evera, had to develop a "unit-level component" to supplement their theories of international relations.[13] Despite also drawing heavily on Waltz's neorealism, Mearsheimer is willing to apply his theory to real-world problems without feeling obligated to develop a separate theory to account for unit-level factors. He sets out to achieve the unity between systemic and unit-level analysis by introducing an assumption of rationality to his theoretical framework.

The major differentiation then of Mearsheimer's framework from that of Waltz and his followers is the inclusion of state rationality as the fifth and final of his "bedrock assumptions".[14] Such an addition, he claims, allows realist theories to account not only for outcomes but also for state behaviour. By delegating misguided calculations to the level of the exceptional, such a realist theory would not need a separate theory of foreign policy to account for state behaviour. Instead, domestic considerations would have little if any role in influencing the making of foreign policy. The remaining few cases where "domestic pathologies lead states to act in suboptimal ways" can be explained away as anomalies to the theory.[15]

Of course a side effect of such a choice, that Mearsheimer is fully aware of and critics have been quick to exploit, is the fact that his theory becomes vulnerable to criticisms both in its own terms and for its verifiability vis-à-vis the historical record, a problem that Waltz never had to face.[16] In summary, Mearsheimer's realism is influenced profoundly by this core theoretical commitment to structural realism and its modification to include the rational actor assumption. The way this framework affects the conceptualisation of power in Mearsheimer's realism will be examined first through the examination of his epistemology and then through the ensuing ontological assumptions.

Power Vacuum: Mearsheimer's Epistemology

Mearsheimer has indicated that he has a preference for elegant and simple theories and he believes realism to be such a theory.[17] Theories, he maintains, are essential tools for simplifying complex realities. In fact, the more

complex the reality one tries to comprehend is, the greater the need for a "mental map" which helps to simplify it by isolating the most important forces at play.[18] As such, theories are of necessity simplifications of reality whose explanatory power is restricted by the fact that some of the omitted factors can occasionally influence state behaviour. A few such "anomalies", however, constitute part of the "price to pay for simplifying reality" and should not pose a significant problem to a theory's overall credibility. Of course, when a theory faces too many anomalies then its foundations are undermined since it cannot adequately explain reality.[19]

This interpretation of theory as a mental map of reality which should then be verified in the "laboratory" of the real world represents an epistemological commitment to positivism that resonates little with the approaches discussed so far.[20] The notion of power has been central for those realists' epistemological assumptions, whether through the importance of the sociology of knowledge in Carr, the separation of spheres for analytical purposes in Morgenthau, or the fundamental motivation behind political thought in Herz. Mearsheimer, despite his scepticism towards a particular brand of positivism that he calls "simplistic hypothesis testing", remains committed to a positivist methodology according to which a theory should comprise clearly defined variables and the examination of the causal connection between them, and should be ultimately falsifiable.[21] Such a theory is epistemologically impenetrable to power and as a result is missing not only part of the complexity of the phenomenon of power, but also the self-awareness that previous realists carried.

This disassociation of power from realist epistemology means that it is no longer possible for the observer to be mindful of, and as a result also guarded about, the ways in which different aspects of power influence the very process of theorising. By claiming objectivity, as Barkin points out, the contemporary realist analyst is deviating from the classical realist call for reflexivity and succumbs to exactly the same fallacy that Morgenthau attributed to idealism in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*.[22] Barkin is correct in that sense to conclude that classical realism "to the extent that it explicitly won the first debate, implicitly lost the second".[23] In Mearsheimer's positivist epistemology power does not enter the field of theory formation at all. The theorist has to develop a set of clear and sound assumptions, define their key concepts, and identify causal mechanisms. The theory can then be tested against the facts and "yield unambiguous predictions".[24]

A sound theory then is one that at the same time is able to describe, predict, and prescribe.[25] There is, however, an important problem with this

purported unity between prediction and prescription. As several authors have noted, contemporary realists, including Mearsheimer, are often at odds with the policies followed by American administrations and do not hesitate to express their opposition to them in an effort to influence the public discourse.[26] Yet their effort to influence policy is fundamentally opposed to their positivist epistemology which presupposes a neat separation between object and subject of analysis.[27] The problem with Mearsheimer's theory then is that it cannot overcome the incompatibility between predictive and prescriptive approaches. The former, being pattern-focused and based on self-replicating systems, leave no space for agency and "serve to obviate politics" while the latter, being problem-focused, emphasise contingency and the resulting necessity to be prudent both when making policy recommendations *and* when analysing power.[28] This reflexivity, so characteristic of classical realism, cannot be reconciled with an approach that claims to be predictive.[29] In such a theory of international relations, power is of necessity restricted to the sphere of ontology, where it is expected to play the role of currency.

On Power and Ontology: A Currency for International Relations?

For Mearsheimer, as for all other realists examined, power "lies at the heart of international politics".[30] *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* is structured around questions regarding this key concept and deriving from the epistemological commitments mentioned above. More specifically, for Mearsheimer a theory that has isolated power as its central concept must be able to explain why states seek power in the first place and how much power they want. Furthermore, it must be able to define power clearly and to offer a list of indicators that can be measured to rank individual states and estimate the distribution of power between them. Finally, a clear definition of power is required for the patterns of state behaviour to be more easily identified.[31]

Consistent with his epistemological commitment to structural realism, Mearsheimer founds his theory on a set of bedrock assumptions. Despite being formed deductively, those assumptions differ from Waltz's efforts in one important aspect. Whereas for Waltz the bedrock assumptions of a theory are of necessity radical simplifications which convey "a false impression of the world", Mearsheimer rejects this approach.[32] For him theories should be based on sound assumptions that offer "reasonably accurate representations" of important factors for international politics.[33] Apart

from the assumption of state rationality that has already been mentioned, Mearsheimer's set of assumptions comprises the following: international anarchy, possession of offensive capabilities by states, uncertainty of intentions, and survival as the main motivation of states.[34]

Although if treated in isolation these assumptions do not explain why states seek to maximise power, their combination, Mearsheimer maintains, makes a persuasive case for why great powers will struggle for power and aim for hegemony.[35] As regards the first part of the argument—that is, the reasons why states seek power in the first place—Mearsheimer's logic does not differ significantly from that of other structural realists. The possession of offensive capabilities by states, combined with uncertainty about other states' intentions, and the existence of international anarchy, means that states fear each other and try to accumulate power to ensure their survival.[36] The identification of fear as the main factor behind states' motivation to strive for power is a plausible conclusion that can be logically drawn by the combination of Mearsheimer's bedrock assumptions. To claim, as Pashakhanlou does, that the centrality of fear amounts to the introduction of a "psychological unit-level variable" which undermines his theory, would be to put too fine a point to a narrow understanding of fear which Mearsheimer does not seem to share.[37] The answer, however, that Mearsheimer provides to the question of how much power states want is more controversial.

Despite beginning from a set of assumptions that are very similar to those entertained by defensive realists, Mearsheimer reaches the exactly opposite conclusion.[38] For him, given the extremely high stakes in competition between states, the uncertainty over other states' intentions, and the unpredictability of future developments in the distribution of power, states can only behave as relative power maximisers.[39] The discrepancy thus between offensive and defensive realism, as Snyder correctly observes, is not attributable to disagreements about the constraints imposed by the international system as one would expect from structural theories, but to different interpretations of a "unit-level factor", that is, the amount of security states seek.[40] Snyder is further correct to point out that Mearsheimer's marshalling of Herz's formulation of the security dilemma as reflecting "the basic logic of offensive realism" and as implying that "the best defence is a good offence" is misplaced.[41] The problem with Mearsheimer's reading of the security dilemma is not only that Herz understood its implications differently. It is also that since in Mearsheimer's theory all states are "revisionist and believe (correctly) that others are too",

there is no room left for any effort to address hypothetical threats and thus the "dilemmatic" element of the security dilemma is eliminated.[42]

The final role that power plays in Mearsheimer's ontology is related to the importance he attributes to its accurate definition and measurement. Building on the analogy with economics, he claims that power is the equivalent of money in the realm of international politics: "Power is the currency of great-power politics and states compete for it among themselves."[43] The analogy to money implies that in the same way that utility maximisation is "expressed and measured in terms of money" so is "the national interest (security) [. . .] in terms of (relative) power".[44] The necessity to treat power like money stems from the expectation that power can be used as an indicator that can be measured and that allows states to be ranked.[45] Mearsheimer's notion of power resonates well with such a view. The development of "good indicators of power" is important for the accurate appreciation of "the power levels of individual states".[46] With such tools in hand the observer may then perform ranking operations to determine whether states qualify as great powers. Identification of the great powers, and especially their number, can in turn be utilised to assess the distribution of power and polarity of the system.[47]

Mearsheimer's Conceptualisation of Power

The Nature of Power

Since power is expected to play the role of currency in Mearsheimer's theory, it has to be measurable and as such a narrow definition of the concept is warranted. He thus proceeds to approach power in terms of material capabilities, or "tangible assets [. . .] that each great power controls".[48] Mearsheimer is echoing—albeit distantly—Carr's facets of power when he distinguishes between two forms of power that are interconnected but cannot be equated.[49] He differs, however, from Carr in some important aspects, the first of which is that he establishes a clear hierarchy between the two forms of power. It is military power that counts most in Mearsheimer's theory, and among its various ingredients it is land power that is of paramount importance.[50] The reason why naval, aerial, or even nuclear power can only play a supplementary role is that land forces are indispensable for "conquering and controlling land, which is the supreme political objective in a world of territorial states".[51] This overemphasis on military might and particularly land power, despite being logically solid, offers little if any

flexibility when dealing with other forms of exercising power or power maximisation beyond the scope of territorial conquest, as Toft correctly observes.[52]

The second form of power, latent power, "refers to the socio-economic ingredients that go into building military power".[53] Among the various elements of latent power Mearsheimer distinguishes population size and wealth as being the most important. And since a large population is a necessary but not sufficient condition for generating significant amounts of wealth, Mearsheimer opts for using "wealth alone to measure potential power".[54] Given that whatever importance latent power holds is conditional upon its ability to be translated to military power, Mearsheimer rejects indicators of wealth such as the GNP which might be misleading.[55] Instead, he emphasises the importance of identifying indicators that can capture "a state's mobilisable wealth and its level of technological development".[56] Here Mearsheimer makes a point that recalls Herz, regarding the role of historical conditions in the measurement of power.[57]

A second important difference with Carr's facets of power is that Mearsheimer does not allow for ideational power in his formula. For him, any realist conceptualisation of power must of necessity emphasise its material aspects. Ideologies are indeed included in the list of non-security goals that states can pursue insofar as they do not require the state to act against its national interest, that is, the pursuit of relative power.[58] Mearsheimer clarified that non-material aspects of power are of no consequence for his version of realism, when challenged by Ken Booth on the grounds that several of his "idealists" were actually attentive to the role of power.[59] In his response to Booth's commentary, Mearsheimer maintained that authors who focus primarily on the power of ideas differ "fundamentally [...] from how realists understand this concept. Realists focus mainly on material power, be it economic or military [...]".[60] This position is unsurprising given the function that power is expected to play in his theory of international relations and the necessity for it to be measurable.

The function of power as currency also explains Mearsheimer's inclination to favour a "traditional" power-as-capabilities approach to more recent developments in the discussion about power such as Dahl's notion of power as being relational.[61] This is not to suggest that he neglects such discussions. When appraising power and its role, Mearsheimer begins with a discussion of the distinction between power-as-outcomes and power-as-capabilities approaches. He disagrees with approaches that conflate assets with outcomes since the two are qualitatively different: the former only cover

material capabilities and the latter add to the equation non-material factors that often affect outcomes.[62] For Mearsheimer power cannot be equated with outcomes.

Firstly, an outcome-centred approach would deem any effort "to assess the balance of power before a conflict" futile because the assessment could be performed only *after* the conflict was resolved in one way or another.[63] If this were the case, it would pose significant problems for any theory of international relations based on the assumption of the state as a rational actor, such as Mearsheimer's. Secondly, he raises the point that a conceptualisation of power based on outcomes would imply that the side that prevails in any given conflict is always the most powerful one. This is, however, not always the case, as demonstrated by, for example, the defeat of the United States in Vietnam and that of Napoleonic France in Russia. Finally, since power represents means and outcomes ends, their identification would deem any distinction between means and ends meaningless.[64]

Limits of Power

Given that Mearsheimer's states can be secure only when they have attained hegemony, his vision of international politics seems superficially to be one of continuous and unlimited competition between states. Yet, as Snyder correctly points out, the implications of his theory are watered down if one takes into account the various qualifiers that he integrates into it.[65] What limits the quest for power in offensive realism, however, is not morality as in the case of classical realists. Morality does not play a prominent role in Mearsheimer's theory.[66] It can—and should—only be taken into consideration when a state has the luxury to do so, namely, when it does not conflict with "balance-of-power logic".[67] The fact that it is often employed to justify a selected foreign policy is considered by Mearsheimer as convenient masking of realistically formed policies.[68] With morality taken out of the equation, what remains to moderate the quest for power is mainly structural and geopolitical forces.

Although in Mearsheimer's theory states have, in principle, no motivation to limit their quest for power they are not "mindless aggressors" striving endlessly to dominate the system.[69] The states in his theory in addition to being power maximisers are also rational calculators and as such they soon figure out that their behaviour should match their capabilities lest they find themselves in a position worse than the one they began in. As a result states calculate carefully the perceived costs and benefits of

every action and pursue it only if the latter outweigh the former.[70] The degree of moderation they show is therefore the result of an accurate (to the extent possible) evaluation of the external constraints imposed on their quest for power.

The first such constraint comes from the international system itself and more specifically from the distribution of power. Its importance lies with the way it influences the levels of fear and balancing behaviour. The more asymmetries there are in the distribution of power, the more unstable a system is, and the more great powers fear each other. Mearsheimer ranks possible systems from the more stable bipolar system to the most unstable, the unbalanced multipolar system, with balanced multipolarity somewhere in between.[71] The reading of the distribution of power can help states to modify their behaviour accordingly and anticipate whether other states are more likely to balance or pass the buck. An accurate reading thus should be enough in most cases to persuade a potential hegemon that the costs of attempting to dominate the system are far greater than the slim chances of success.

The expected counterbalancing that any such potential hegemon will face from worried great powers is further aggravated by an important geopolitical factor. The predominance of land power in Mearsheimer's theory means that in order for such power to be employed effectively, a state should be able to project it when necessary. For Mearsheimer, this prospect is severely limited by the stopping power of large bodies of water that hinder the capacity of great powers to attack each other with land forces.[72] The inclusion of a geopolitical variable helps Mearsheimer to better account for cases of insular powers as well as the operation of regional systems that could otherwise be treated as anomalies to his theory, but at the cost of making his overall theoretical framework somewhat more blurry.[73]

The final limitation to a power achieving hegemony is nuclear weapons. Mearsheimer sets a high threshold for hegemony: a power that attains this position must in essence be "the only great power in the system" with any other powers being unable to seriously challenge it.[74] In the age of nuclear weapons, because of their immense destructive capability, attaining hegemony would require the dominant state in the system to establish a clear advantage either by monopolising the possession of nuclear weapons or by establishing a refined defence system that would neutralise an opponent's arsenal. Given, however, that such a development is unlikely, Mearsheimer believes that effectively no global hegemony is attainable.[75]

Consequently, the best result one state can hope to achieve is regional hegemony and maintenance of this position by preventing other regional hegemons from emerging.[76] The latter point is, however, as Layne noted, logically problematic. If regional hegemony is the best possible position attainable *and* the stopping power of water prevents global hegemony from materialising, then a regional hegemon should not be seriously worried about a peer emerging in another region of the world since the stopping power of water would also apply to them.[77]

Power and the Formation of the Nation-State

Nationalism and the Nation-State in Offensive Realism

Mearsheimer's view of the state comes very close to the one offered by Legro and Moravcsik in their paradigmatic reading of realism.[78] Since his theory is a structural one, the domestic setting of each particular state is of no significant consequence for its behaviour. As such, states cannot be meaningfully differentiated by anything other than their relative power, at least for the purposes of a theory of international relations. "In essence", maintains Mearsheimer, "great powers are like billiard balls that vary only in size."[79] As happens often with billiard balls, their direction and their collisions are determined by factors other than themselves. In the case of Mearsheimer's billiard balls the external factor that compels states to act in a specific way is international anarchy. It follows that in his version of realism it is not the state that is the central element. What realism requires, he maintains, is not the state itself but the existence of international anarchy. As long as the structure of the international system is anarchic it will impose constraints upon whichever political unit happens to be the prevalent form of political organisation in any given period.[80]

It is clear then that when Mearsheimer approaches the states as the main actors in international relations he does not engage with the notion of the state as encompassing an eternal category outside history. Although the idea that the main political units change throughout history is present in earlier works, Mearsheimer started placing particular attention on the emergence of the modern state in recent, and largely still ongoing, research.[81] In his recent work he pays attention to the transition from a "stateless" Europe in the fifteenth century, to the emergence of the dynastic state and its eventual replacement by the nation-state.[82] Mearsheimer cites Charles Tilly approvingly and attributes the prevalence of the state as a form of political

organisation to its superiority over the other political units of the time. Consistently with the core assumptions of offensive realism about power, the crucial advantage for the emerging state was provided by its efficiency in translating latent to military power vis-à-vis the various alternative units such as the city-states of Italy.[83] As a result the prevalence of the state in Europe was largely determined by its competence "on the battlefield".[84] Here, Mearsheimer's narrative does not differ significantly from that of other realists as regards the interplay between power and the emergence of the modern state, and bears a particular resemblance to Herz's emphasis on military power and the rise of the territorial state.

Power politics thus is the first of the "two main driving forces" which led to the establishment of the modern state system. The second one, surprisingly for a structural theory, is nationalism.[85] For Mearsheimer, the dynastic state might well have been more effective than its competitors in marshalling power, but it did not enjoy the loyalty of its population. When nationalism came to the forefront, however, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, the allegiance of the population to the state could be marshalled and employed as a "huge force multiplier". The success of France's national armies quickly led its neighbours to adopt nationalism themselves and by "the early twentieth century, every state in Europe was effectively a nation-state".[86] Mearsheimer's narrative here is based solidly on the predominance of military power and the idea of state socialisation. States adapt to new circumstances and adopt successful behaviour in order to improve their odds of survival.[87] This view of nationalism is common amongst neorealist theorists who provided accounts of the phenomenon and on whose works Mearsheimer draws, such as Posen and Van Evera.[88] As Kadercan correctly observes, however, such a linear interpretation fails to explain why states, instead of happily embracing such a handy power multiplier, actually tried to strangle nationalism in its cradle.[89]

There is, however, a further problem—or, more accurately, two interconnected problems—with the importance Mearsheimer attributes to nationalism. Nationalism is a phenomenon of ideological nature, and Mearsheimer recognises it as such.[90] The fact then that he singles it out as one of the crucial factors that led to the prevalence of the nation-state might prove problematic for his theory. First, the importance attributed to nationalism would imply the introduction of an ideational element of power in a theory whose understanding of power is claimed to be materialistic. Second, an ideology is of necessity a factor that influences states at the domestic level

and as such it should not be able to alter state behaviour significantly. In the following section, I evaluate the way in which Mearsheimer addresses those challenges.

Nationalism and Power Politics

Since Mearsheimer has repeatedly treated nationalism as an ideology and claims that the "nation-state system is largely the product of the inter-play between nationalism and power politics",[91] the first problem that needs to be addressed is whether by granting such an important role to nationalism he undermines his explicitly materialistic theory by reintroducing an element of ideational power. After all, not only has he excluded the power of ideas from his framework but he approaches ideologies in general as non-security goals that are lower in the hierarchy of state goals than survival. This point has been made by critics of Mearsheimer who claim that he is not faithful to the model he developed, in maintaining the importance of nationalism, that is, of an ideology.[92]

Yet for Mearsheimer, nationalism is not *any* ideology. When he discusses the hierarchy of state goals he makes special reference to goals that are complementary to the pursuit of power and tellingly lists national unification amongst them.[93] As long as an ideology is compatible with the premises of offensive realism, there is no problem with a state pursuing it. And in Mearsheimer's view, as his later engagement with the topic demonstrated, nationalism is the ideology *par excellence* in terms of compatibility with realism. This compatibility is attributed by Mearsheimer to the fact that nationalism and realism share core assumptions at the foundational level, namely, that they are both particularistic and both focused on the state and survival.[94] The marriage of the state to the nation in the late eighteenth century had profound implications for both. Those nations that were associated with a state by the time of the transition to popular sovereignty had to worry about the survival of their respective state since the fates of the two were now interwoven. And those that did not possess their own state acquired a powerful incentive to aspire to one, to ensure their survival.[95]

The reason for nations' preference for their own state is explained by the impact of nationalism in the functioning of a state. Drawing from relevant literature in the field of nationalism studies, Mearsheimer observes that the nation-state is much more intrusive than its predecessor as regards the lives of its members. The process of cultural homogenisation, while making sense for the nation-state for both economic and military reasons, poses a fatal

threat to minority nations.[96] As Gellner put it in a similar argument, even "urban, commercialised and literate" minorities that would otherwise thrive in conditions of modernity have a particularly strong incentive to want their own political unit as they "are destined for ethnic cleansing" if they do not.[97] The risk of assimilation or even annihilation is then for Mearsheimer what triggered nations to have a strong preference for their own state and also led to the expansion of the nation-state globally through the process of decolonisation.[98]

Mearsheimer seems to approach in a similar fashion the second potential problem, the importance he attributes to nationalism as a domestic force in an otherwise structural theory. The problem is aptly summarised by Oren who, when discussing the conflict between prediction and prescription in Mearsheimer's approach, claims that Mearsheimer introduces an "error term" in his theory. The error term is a factor excluded from the theory—here, domestic politics—that occasionally accounts for foreign policy. In such situations the realist scholar should "expose the error and try to minimise it".[99] What is empirically problematic about Mearsheimer's approach is, for Oren, the fact that the domestic "error term" seems to be accounting for the rule rather than the anomalies in American foreign policy.[100] Mearsheimer for his part certainly approached nationalism as a domestic factor in one of his early engagements with international relations theory, in the immediate wake of the Cold War. There he claimed that domestic factors are not of equal importance to structural constraints in explaining the stability of post-1945 Europe. And the most important of such factors, "hyper-nationalism", was by and large a consequence of security competition rather than its cause.[101] Writing a decade later, despite adding the qualifier that domestic factors limit the ability of offensive realism—or any structural theory for that matter—to accurately predict in detail when and how often conflict will occur, he maintained their secondary importance. Focusing on structural factors alone, he claimed, "should tell us a lot about the origins of great-power war".[102]

His treatment of nationalism as a domestic factor notwithstanding, Mearsheimer's approach to nationalism can get him beyond the "error term" as a result of the close interconnectedness he identifies between it and realism. There is certainly a degree of compatibility between nationalism, as Mearsheimer approaches it, and his variant of realism. After all, his treatment of nationalism as a power multiplier can easily be, at least in theory, accommodated with his approach to power as material capabilities. Employing nationalism allows states not only to build mass armies but also to mobilise their citizens to maintain such armies and provide them with

resources. Even the non-material aspect of the increased motivation and thus reliability displayed by national armies can be accommodated in Mearsheimer's existing notion of power since he allows for a qualitative element in assessing military forces.[103]

The main problem with Mearsheimer's approach to nationalism is therefore not one of logical consistency as the incorporation of nationalism does not undermine the main logic of his theory. Mearsheimer, however, goes beyond this interpretation of nationalism and attributes to it even more importance, and in so doing he seems to be dealing with nationalism as an ad hoc qualifier of offensive realism. After discussing the interplay between power politics and nationalism in his most recent engagement with the topic, Mearsheimer moves on to discuss the ways in which nationalism has impacted upon "aspects of international politics that are of central importance to realism's intellectual agenda".[104] In so doing, he is awarding to nationalism a transformative role which is inconsistent with the function it could possibly perform in a structural theory. When discussing the impact of nationalism on the character of war, Mearsheimer observes that conflicts between states in the age of nationalism tend to escalate quickly to the absolute form described by Clausewitz, in contrast to the limited war that dominated the early modern European system. With a limited war to attain limited aims being out of the question, states have less of an incentive to start one. Furthermore, nationalism makes it now very difficult "for the victor to occupy the vanquished state".[105] Ironically here, despite his disregard for ideational power, Mearsheimer seems to be more attentive than Carr to the potency of nationalism as an ideology when faced with opponents who possess superior power.[106] Despite his bias towards land power, Mearsheimer's account alongside Herz's modified views are better than earlier realists' efforts at capturing the resilience of nationalism when employed for defensive purposes as well as its limits when marshalled for offence. This conclusion, however, would mean that conquest does not after all pay as much as Mearsheimer originally assumed, or at least not in the age of nationalism.[107]

Of course offensive realism is a general theory that cannot be expected to illuminate everything and Mearsheimer is clear that often non-structural factors influence state behaviour. For the theory to operate smoothly, however, these anomalies should be rare exceptions. Yet there is hardly an instance in which Mearsheimer, when engaging with foreign affairs, has not cautioned against—and most likely rightly so—attempts to engage in social engineering abroad, or in conquest, on the grounds of the resistance to be

expected from nationalism.[108] Furthermore, when discussing the possibility of transcending the state, Mearsheimer is connecting its survival in the foreseeable future to the appeal of nationalism and its glorification of the state.[109] In claiming that nationalism not only influences the likelihood of war alongside structural factors, but also that it is connected to the resilience of the state as a form of political organisation, Mearsheimer does eventually allow a non-structural factor to further qualify the main premises of offensive realism.

Taming the Nation-State?

From the preceding discussion it is clear that Mearsheimer does not display the same deep-rooted scepticism towards nationalism as his mid-twentieth century predecessors. Neither does he share the same anxiety so typical of Herz and Morgenthau about the future survival of not only the nation-state but also humanity itself in the face of nuclear weapons. The nation-state seems to have weathered some of the challenges that earlier generations of realists anticipated and, for Mearsheimer, it does not seem to be going anywhere in the foreseeable future. As a result, he does not try to devise a blueprint for transcending the nation-state as earlier realists did. For Mearsheimer, the key question is not how to go beyond the nation-state but how to tame it for the period in which it is going to remain the dominant form of political organisation.

In his evaluation of nationalism, Mearsheimer approaches the phenomenon macro-historically. Although in the short term nationalism—and the dissolution of multinational states and irredentism that come with it—increases instability and the likelihood of war, in the long term it can increase the prospects of peace. Since nationalism makes the success of conquest less likely, the more "pure nation-states" there are the less likely they are to fight over minorities or attempt to conquer each other.[110] His commentary during the conflicts in the Balkans, where Mearsheimer suggested redrawing borders and transferring populations so that homogeneous entities are created, makes clear that this idea had been with him long before it was crystallised theoretically.[111] What Carr once deplored as the "mass sacrifice of human beings to the idol of nationalism" is for Mearsheimer a necessary evil in order to avoid further conflict.[112]

This rather benign view of nationalism bears a superficial resemblance to the liberal nationalism of the nineteenth century discussed by Carr, Morgenthau, and Herz. Mearsheimer, however, unlike liberal nationalists, is

aware of the darker side of nationalism, or "ugly hyper-nationalism" as he prefers to call it. This form of nationalism, similarly to Morgenthau's nationalistic universalism, is born out of the belief that other nations "are both inferior and threatening".[113] For him, however, hyper-nationalism does not represent a distinct phase in the development of nationalism but rather a possible transformation of benign nationalism. Mearsheimer identifies security concerns and the resulting sense of vulnerability as one of the main reasons behind the emergence of hyper-nationalism. An additional reason is the tendency of governments to cultivate nationalism in an effort to marshal support for their security policies.[114] The risks of hyper-nationalism, however, are not sufficient reason for Mearsheimer to contemplate ways to go beyond nationalism and the nation-state.

As regards the state, he does not believe that the present or foreseeable developments in the field of power are threatening its existence. Even if the state is replaced by another entity in the future, there will be no significant difference in their behaviour as long as the international system remains anarchic. The only development in the international system that could possibly challenge the explanatory power of realism is, for Mearsheimer, the establishment of a hierarchical system.[115] When it comes to nationalism, despite his generally positive view of the phenomenon, Mearsheimer believes that some moderation is required in order to limit the possibility of its degeneration to hyper-nationalism. Back in 1990 he suggested two ways to achieve that end. His first suggestion on the moderation of nationalism is one that resonates well with his theory. The development of small professional armies and reliance on "high-technology military organisations", such as those that normally accompany the acquisition of nuclear weapons, should be able to reduce the need for mass armies and the cultivation of nationalist sentiments associated with them.[116]

The second proposal was somewhat more ambitious since it involved nothing less than the "teaching of honest national history" on the part of the elites.[117] What remained unaddressed in this proposal was why, given the emphasis Mearsheimer places on nationalism as a power multiplier, governing elites would voluntarily dispense with such a useful tool. In his later work Mearsheimer seems to be retreating from this suggestion when he claims that although nationalism is a potent force and "a major cause of war", its myths are of only secondary if not tertiary importance. It is foreign policy behaviour that causes nationalist myths and not the other way around.[118] As such, elites can still safely engage in nationalist myth-making without risking too much. This reversal, however, appears strange given the

emphasis that Mearsheimer places even in his recent work on how nationalist myths help nation-states forge identities and motivate their citizens to make sacrifices.[119]

Mearsheimer and American Foreign Policy

US Foreign Policy Until 1989: A Showcase for Offensive Realism?

According to the premises of offensive realism outlined in the previous sections, the ideal American policy should be one of establishing regional hegemony in the Western Hemisphere and then, since global hegemony is unattainable, making sure that no other regional hegemon emerges by acting as an offshore balancer. For Mearsheimer, this is the course that the United States followed up to the end of the Cold War. His engagement with this period demonstrates clearly not only how he approaches the workings of the international system but also how he understands the interplay between domestic factors and nationalism.

For Mearsheimer, after its establishment and for the duration of the nineteenth century the United States acted according to the theory of offensive realism and attempted to establish regional hegemony. It pursued this aim by following consistently two interconnected policies: on the one hand it sought to expand territorially and on the other it tried to limit the influence of European powers in the Western Hemisphere.[120] For Mearsheimer, there was no need for the United States to occupy the whole of North America for security reasons, since Canada and Mexico were not powerful enough to pose a serious threat. The fact that the United States restrained from attempting to assimilate those states is explained by Mearsheimer in terms of the difficulties that nationalism puts in the way of conquest.[121] After the United States achieved hegemony in the Western Hemisphere its main purpose, according to offensive realism, would be to ensure that no neighbouring state formed an alliance with an overseas great power, as well as working to prevent regional hegemons from emerging in other parts of the world.

Although in its initial decades the United States had no power to implement the Monroe Doctrine, the European colonial empires were dissolved due to the disintegrating influence of nationalism. Further efforts by European powers to intervene in America, such as French and German involvement in Mexico or the Soviet alliance with Cuba, were met with hostility by the United States and every effort was made to contain them.[122]

As regards the role of the United States as an offshore balancer, Mearsheimer believes that in that case too US practice vindicates his theory. Although inclined to pass the buck to local powers to balance against a potential hegemon, the United States did not hesitate to actively intervene when the local powers proved insufficient to this purpose. As such, the United States intervened in Europe when the entente powers failed to check Germany in the First World War, again in the Second World War for the same reasons, and once more during the Cold War since no European power could check the Soviet Union. Similarly, in Asia, the United States tried to first prevent Japan from gaining hegemony when a Soviet Union defeat at the hands of Germany was a distinct possibility, and subsequently to contain the Soviet Union after no significant power was left to check it.[123]

Mearsheimer's overview of the foreign policy of the United States for the better part of the past two centuries as being essentially realistic contrasts with the views of mid-twentieth century realists. Realists such as Morgenthau and Kennan were often critical of what they considered to be the surrender of American foreign policy to idealism.[124] Mearsheimer accepts that the society of the United States is characterised by a "deep-seated sense of optimism and moralism".[125] He thinks, however, that the real influence liberal principles had on American foreign policy rarely went beyond rhetoric. He thus disagrees with Kennan's criticism and claims that there is a marked gap between liberal rhetoric and realist practices in American foreign policy. What might occasionally obscure the gap is that realist policies do not always conflict with liberal values and as such can easily be explained away by reference to moral principles alone. And when there is conflict between the pursued policies and liberal values, "spin doctors" can be trusted to invent a story which rationalises the policy.[126]

Of course, Mearsheimer's engagement with the historical record and his claim that it vindicates his theory can be—and has been—challenged on various grounds. One of the most common challenges to Mearsheimer's engagement with American foreign policy, and one that was raised quite early, relates to his insistence that the United States has not tried and will not try to reach towards global hegemony. Layne raised the issue in his review of *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Although he agrees with Mearsheimer that the United States *should* try to be an offshore balancer, he claims that it actually entertained hegemonic aspirations even before the end of the Second World War and that the foundations for American primacy were laid already from the 1950s before it was actually achieved in 1990.[127]

As will be discussed in the following section, Mearsheimer in his later engagements with the topic came closer to Layne's position that the United States is enjoying primacy in the current international system. The reverse point, that the United States has underused its power for the better part of the twentieth century, was raised by May.[128]

Competing interpretations of historical periods are unlikely to pose a serious threat to any engagement with history that does not seriously distort the historical record. When it comes to his commentary on ongoing debates about American foreign policy, however, Mearsheimer's approach faces more challenges. It is one thing to claim retrospectively that a theory can account for state behaviour in the past and it is quite another to claim that it can accurately predict future behaviour. Mearsheimer claimed both for offensive realism and as a result his engagement with post-Cold War American foreign policy found his predictions to be at odds with the policies that were actually followed. In his effort to offer advice on such issues Mearsheimer found himself much closer to the classical realists' arguments about the perils of moral crusading and the influence of domestic factors than his structural approach would comfortably allow.

After the Cold War: The Conflict Between Prediction and Prescription

In the decade following the end of the Cold War, Mearsheimer examined the likely courses of American foreign policy for the years to come. He concluded that the most likely scenario would be for the United States to replicate the approach it had followed in the past, that of an offshore balancer. Given that the threat of the Soviet Union was now gone, Mearsheimer expected the United States to gradually withdraw from both Europe and Asia, and pass the buck to the great powers of those regions in the hope that they would balance each other.[129] If regional powers failed to follow through and a potential regional hegemon emerged amongst them, then the United States would be expected to intervene to prevent that power from dominating the regional system. As such, the more significant worry for the United States seemed to be China's economic rise, which—if continued unchecked—would lead to the accumulation of unprecedented latent power.[130] The alternative of pursuing global hegemony seemed to Mearsheimer to be out of the question: there was "hardly any evidence", he claimed in the final pages of *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* "that the United States is about to take a stab at establishing global hegemony".[131] In the years that followed

the publication of the book, Mearsheimer found himself claiming that this is precisely what the United States has ended up doing.

One year after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Mearsheimer wrote an article about the Bush administration's response and noted some disturbing developments. In its anxiety to make the United States secure again, he claimed, the administration seemed to be contemplating a quest for global hegemony. He warned that an effort to use American military might to forge an empire, even if a benign one, would not only be unrealistic but also more likely to aggravate the risk of terrorism. He was particularly critical of any attempt to remove unfriendly governments abroad and promote democracy, and warned that nationalism and the difficulties of social engineering are huge impediments for such efforts.[132] This line of argument was repeated consistently by Mearsheimer as the United States was preparing to invade Iraq. He insisted time and again that the war was unnecessary since Iraq lacked the capability to pursue regional aspirations and even if it did make the attempt, it could be easily contained.[133] He also tried to expose what he considered as the militant Wilsonianism of neoconservatives, a mixture of idealism and a blind belief in power, which neglected the difficulties imposed by nationalism on efforts to impose friendly political systems on other countries.[134] In his criticism of the pursued policy he was not alone. Indeed, most prominent realists also opposed the war in Iraq.[135]

Mearsheimer's persistent opposition to the war in Iraq, as well as his analysis thereof, is revealing of the tension between prediction and prescription outlined in the first part of this chapter. His advice is consistent with what his theory would require the United States to do, but the foreign policy the country followed is at variance with that theory.[136] Neither was the war in Iraq an isolated case that could be claimed as an anomaly. As Mearsheimer noted in 2011, since the end of the Cold War, the United States found itself in war "two out of every three years" by pursuing the erroneous policy of making the most of the "unipolar moment" to embark on an imperial project and export democracy.[137] This policy, which found the United States entangled in prolonged and largely unwinnable conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, was not restricted to neoconservatives. Mearsheimer believes that the quest for global domination was also pursued, albeit more cautiously, by the Clinton administration. And he identified the same tendency for "liberal imperialism" or "liberal hegemony" in the policies of Obama's administration. Despite some positive comments on the deal with Iran about its nuclear weapons, Mearsheimer considers the foreign policy pursued by Obama as fundamentally misguided. The direct

involvement of the United States in Libya, as well as the subtler involvement in Syria, and the effort to integrate Ukraine with the West despite Russian concerns of encirclement, are all for Mearsheimer worrying signals of a foreign policy that is still attuned towards social engineering and the spreading of liberal values.[138]

For Mearsheimer the policymakers in Washington can still afford to act foolishly in the international arena because the United States enjoys an unprecedented predominance which is unlikely to be challenged in the near future.[139] As such, when he is chastising the *hubris* of the "indispensable nation",[140] he is not doing so with the sense of urgency that characterised earlier realists during the fierce competition of the Cold War. In fact, for Mearsheimer, even considering the potential for extreme human and economic costs, the biggest risk from American folly is not losing its position in the world but rather the undermining of democracy at home.[141] Mearsheimer identified lying, and in particular fearmongering, as particularly perilous for domestic policy since it reveals a disturbing contempt for the public on the part of leadership, which can easily spill over to national issues.[142] This is for Mearsheimer part of a broader issue: in its quest for global hegemony, and by remaining constantly in a state of war or in anticipation of war, the United States is gradually becoming a "national-security state". Such a development, he claims, erodes the inherent checks and balances that were built into American democracy and challenges the very principles that lie at the core of liberal order.[143] In that respect, Mearsheimer's efforts appear—to an extent—similar to Williams's reading of mid-twentieth century realism as an effort to insulate rather than undermine American liberalism.[144]

As such, for Mearsheimer, the primacy of the United States allows it to behave in a strategically unwise way without risking much, at least in terms of the balance of power. This primacy, however, does not explain why the United States does not simply return to offshore balancing as Mearsheimer's theory predicts. In trying to explain this behaviour Mearsheimer developed arguments that invariably focus on domestic factors. Be it the influence of the Israel Lobby, the ideology of elites, or their inability to select the right strategy from the toolkit, Mearsheimer's explanation is based on developments within the United States itself rather than systemic constraints.[145] Of course, the past 25 years might be one of those anomalies that offensive realism cannot explain adequately, albeit a rather long one. In the meanwhile, however, Mearsheimer's insightful commentary on the interplay between American foreign policy and domestic factors seems to be doing justice to Snyder's call to abandon parsimony in order to reclaim realism.[146]

Concluding Remarks

Mearsheimer's offensive realism represents an effort to reconnect Waltz's structural theory to reality by accounting for foreign policy while maintaining intact the core assumptions and parsimony of the theory. Consistently with such an approach, Mearsheimer offers a clearly stated and narrow definition of power which is expected to perform the role of currency in international relations. Compared to the realists examined so far, he offers the most rigid conceptualisation of power. This clarity is also evident in his account of the emergence of the nation-state, which is predominantly focused on the impact of military power. Nationalism, the ideological corollary of the nation-state, can be accommodated with such an approach inasmuch as it is dealt with as a power multiplier.

Yet the balance that Mearsheimer attempts to form between his structural theory, the development of the nation-states, and the role of nationalism remains uneasy. Through his writings nationalism not only acquires a transformative role in the international system, it is also identified as a key factor behind the survival of the state in the foreseeable future and as a limiting factor to the premise of offensive realism that conquest generally pays. Nationalism then appears to be moderating the implications of his theory in a way that a non-structural force should not be able to. Neither is nationalism the only qualifier that Mearsheimer integrates into his theory. Beyond the stopping power of water that played a moderating role even in the initial formulation of the theory, Mearsheimer's engagement with American foreign policy as a public intellectual seems to be increasingly taking into account domestic factors such as pressure groups, ideological commitments, or miscalculations.

It is this engagement of Mearsheimer with American foreign policy that is most illustrative of the tension between prediction and prescription in his theory. In his effort to influence the policy of the United States and change its direction, Mearsheimer echoed the criticisms raised by mid-century realists. Back in 1990, Waltz warned that the addition of "elements of practical importance" would signify the relapse from neorealism to realism: "The rich variety and wondrous complexity of international life would be reclaimed at the price of extinguishing theory".[147] In his effort to understand why the United States actually followed policies not accounted for by his model, Mearsheimer had to take seriously non-structural factors and in so doing recovered some of the wondrous complexity that was lost with the advent of Waltz's neorealism.

Notes

1. Molloy, *Hidden History*, pp. 115–129. For an overview of Waltz's realism and some of the fundamental criticisms it faced, *Neorealism and Its Critics* remains indispensable: Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics.*
2. For Vasquez early realists include Carr and Morgenthau and the second-generation neorealists such as Waltz and Gilpin. Vasquez, *Power of Power Politics,* p. 2; Mearsheimer offers accounts of his early engagement with international relations and the authors that influenced him in John Mearsheimer, "Conversations in International Relations: Interview with John. J. Mearsheimer (Part I)," *International Relations* 20, no. 1 (2006): pp. 107–109 and in John Mearsheimer, "Power as the Currency of International Relations, Disciplining US Foreign Policy, and Being an Independent Variable," interview with *Theory Talks*, 2012, accessed from http://www.theory-talks.org/2012/06/theory-talk-49.html, p. 3.
3. John Mearsheimer, "Through the Realist Lens. Conversation with John Mearsheimer," interview by Harry Kreisler for the *Conversations with History* series, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 8 April 2002; Mearsheimer, "Power as the Currency of International Relations"; Andrew Bacevich and John Mearsheimer, "Bacevich and Mearsheimer on U.S. Policy in the Middle East," interview by Derek Davison for *LobeLog*, 18 January 2017, accessed from https://lobelog.com/bacevich-and-mearsheimer-on-u-s-policy-in-the-middle-east/
4. His first monographs were a book about conventional deterrence and a critical biography of the British strategist Liddell Hart. John Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); John Mearsheimer, *Liddell Hart and the Weight of History* (London: Brassey's, 1988).
5. Mearsheimer, "Conversations in International Relations (Part I)," p. 109.
6. According to Peter Toft, they are traceable back to the late 1980s and in particular his critical biography of Liddell Hart. Peter Toft, "John J. Mearsheimer: an Offensive Realist Between Geopolitics and Power," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 8, no. 4 (2005): p. 382. Mearsheimer confirms this when he states that the decision to write *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* and present his own realist theory dated back to the late 1980s. Mearsheimer, "Power as the Currency," p. 3.
7. It should be noted here that when speaking of "classical realism" or "human nature realism" Mearsheimer has in mind mainly Morgenthau. Other realists such as Carr and Kennan, who are often classified under the same grouping, are not included in his account since "they do not offer

their own theory of international politics". John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), pp. 18–19.

8. Mearsheimer, "Conversations in International Relations (Part I)," p. 110; Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 21.
9. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 17–22; p. 21.
10. For the claim that for Morgenthau the lust for power is hardwired in states see Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 19. For Morgenthau as an offensive realist see John Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1995): p. 12 f. 27.
11. Mearsheimer, "Conversations in International Relations (Part I)," p. 110.
12. As Molloy points out, Mearsheimer's reformulation of realism "possesses the language of classical Realism but is still dependent upon Neorealist categories for 'theoretical' validation". Molloy, *Hidden History of Realism,* p. 132.
13. John Mearsheimer, "Realists as Idealists," *Security Studies* 20, no. 3 (2011): p. 426.
14. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 31.
15. John Mearsheimer, "Reckless States and Realism," *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): pp. 244–246.
16. See, for instance, his comment that "In effect, Waltz has created an escape hatch in his theory that mine does not have" in Mearsheimer, "Conversations in International Relations (Part I)," p. 112. Theoretical challenges to Mearsheimer are discussed throughout the present and the following section. As regards his engagement with the historical record, Snyder suggested that Mearsheimer's selection of case studies consisted of "as aggressive a collection of states as could be imagined" leave his theory vulnerable to "a suspicion of selection bias". Glenn Snyder, "Mearsheimer's World—Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay," *International Security* 27, no. 1 (2002): p. 161. An edited volume on history and neorealism has sought to engage with the historical record in order to challenge realists' claims that their theories are vindicated by history. Despite some of the contributors' tendency to engage with a catch-all realism that is often reduced to the power maxims of the Melian dialogue, the volume includes some insightful engagement with the cases that Mearsheimer covered in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* as well as cases that he omitted. Schroeder examined the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in an effort to demonstrate that both struggle for power *and* a quest for order stemmed from the structure of anarchy and that it would be fallacious to concentrate only on the former: Paul Schroeder, "Not Even in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Power and Order in the Early

Modern Era," in *History and Neorealism*, eds. Ernest May et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). As regards the cases that Mearsheimer omitted, Samuel Williamson examined the case of Austria-Hungary before the Great War and claimed that without taking into account the domestic situation, the steps taken towards the war could not be fully accounted for, and even if it were so then defensive realism seemed to offer a more plausible explanation for Austro-Hungarian foreign policy than Mearsheimer's theory: Samuel Williamson, "Austria-Hungary and the Coming of the First World War," in *History and Neorealism,* eds. May et al. Apart from the essays that discussed US foreign policy and which I will discuss later, contributions by Steiner, Ferguson, Welch Larson and Shevchenko, and Haslam in the same volume engage with great powers that Mearsheimer discussed like Nazi Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. The policy of Japan seems to be particularly troubling for Mearsheimer since as an insular state it should be expected to act as an offshore balancer. Its case is discussed in Michael Barnhart, "Domestic Politics, Interservice Impasse, and Japan's Decisions for War," in *History and Neorealism,* eds. May et al.; Jonathan Haslam, "John Mearsheimer's 'Elementary Geometry of Power': Euclidean Moment or an Intellectual Blind Alley?," in *History and Neorealism,* eds. May et al., pp. 324–325; Toft, "Offensive Realist Between Geopolitics and Power," p. 395.
17. Mearsheimer, "Conversations in International Relations (Part I)," p. 107.
18. John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "Leaving Theory Behind: Why Simplistic Hypothesis Testing is Bad for International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): p. 435.
19. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 10–11. The role of anomalies, or "error terms" as Oren describes them, becomes problematic for Mearsheimer according to critics, because they occur often enough to undermine the theory's soundness. See Oren, "Unrealism of Contemporary Realism," pp. 288–289. For a collection of such anomalies and a very good, albeit somewhat combative, overall criticism of Mearsheimer's theory that parallels Oren's in some respects see also Haslam, "John Mearsheimer's 'Elementary Geometry of Power'," *passim.*
20. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* p. 8.
21. On the variant of positivism to which Mearsheimer subscribes as well as the main characteristics of theory and theory-testing see Mearsheimer and Walt, "Leaving Theory Behind," pp. 431–435.
22. Samuel Barkin, "Realism, Prediction, and Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 3 (2009): pp. 233–246.
23. Ibid. p. 237.
24. Mearsheimer and Walt, "Leaving Theory Behind," p. 432.
25. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 8–12.

26. Oren, "Unrealism of Contemporary Realism," pp. 283–290; Barkin, "Realism, Prediction, and Foreign Policy," pp. 233–246; Rodger A. Payne, "Neorealists as Critical Theorists: The Purpose of Foreign Policy Debate," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 3 (2007): pp. 503–514.
27. This separation would mean not only that prediction alone would make prescription unnecessary but also that prescription is meaningless since the observer's wishes cannot influence the object of their analysis. See Oren, "Unrealism of Contemporary Realism," pp. 286–290.
28. Barkin, "Realism, Prediction, and Foreign Policy," pp. 237–242.
29. Ibid. pp. 242–245.
30. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 55.
31. Ibid. pp. 12–14.
32. Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," p. 27.
33. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 30. Mearsheimer further clarifies his position on why theories should be based on realistic assumptions when favouring the epistemology of scientific realism over that of instrumentalism: Mearsheimer and Walt, "Leaving Theory Behind," pp. 432–434.
34. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 30–32.
35. Ibid. pp. 29–30.
36. Ibid. pp. 32, 42–43.
37. Pashakhanlou understands fear as an emotion and claims that its use would be incompatible with a "materialist and systemic theory" such as offensive realism. Arash Heydarian Pashakhanlou, "Back to the Drawing Board: A Critique of Offensive Realism," *International Relations* 27, no. 2 (2013): p. 207. Given, however, the fact that Mearsheimer assumes state rationality and often uses the term "fear" to signify "worry" it would be fallacious to assume that he understands fear so narrowly. Besides, a "scared" state would still have to rationally evaluate the situation and formulate its policy accordingly without being compelled to respond in the instinctive manner implied by Pashakhanlou's psychological reading of fear. For a more nuanced discussion of fear in realism see Neta Crawford, "Human Nature and World Politics: Rethinking 'Man'," *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): pp. 271–288.
38. Snyder, "Mearsheimer's World," p. 154; Toft, "Offensive Realist Between Geopolitics and Power," p. 390.
39. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 32–35.
40. Snyder, "Mearsheimer's World," pp. 154–155.
41. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 35, 36.
42. Snyder "Mearsheimer's World," pp. 155–156. Booth and Wheeler raise a similar point when they claim that "Mearsheimer replaced any dilemma of interpretation with a rule of fatalism, and abolished any dilemma of

response by a rule of offensive potential": Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 35.

43. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 12.
44. Guzzini, "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations," p. 539.
45. Ibid. pp. 537–540.
46. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 12.
47. Ibid. p. 12.
48. Ibid. p. 55, p. 57.
49. Ibid. p. 55.
50. Ibid. pp. 55–56.
51. Ibid. p. 86; pp. 83–114, 128–133. This view is hardly surprising given that Mearsheimer claims that conquest actually pays and helps augment the aggressor's power: Ibid. pp. 148–151. Also in Snyder, "Mearsheimer's World," p. 153. It should be noted, however, that in later works Mearsheimer, although maintaining that conquest generally pays, adds a qualifier about the age of nationalism. This I discuss in more detail later.
52. Toft traces Mearsheimer's "preoccupation with military power and especially with land power" to his earlier engagement with strategy and deterrence. Toft, "Offensive Realist Between Geopolitics and Power," p. 384.
53. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 55.
54. Ibid. pp. 60–62.
55. For Mearsheimer wealth forms the foundations of military power but cannot always be translated neatly to it. The reasons for what he calls the "gap between latent and military power" are diminishing returns, differences in efficiency, and differences in the type of military forces that each great power chooses to develop with the wealth available. Ibid. pp. 67–82.
56. Ibid. p. 62.
57. It must be noted, however, that Mearsheimer's proposition is anchored on the assumption that power is ultimately measurable and that the observer should modify their indicators according to the historical context. Herz's views, as mentioned already, are more radical in that he believes the very measurability of power to be historically conditioned.
58. According to Mearsheimer, states do occasionally pursue such goals but "offensive realism has little to say about them"—unless of course their pursuit conflicts with "balance-of-power logic" in which case it is trumped by security considerations. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 46.

59. Booth's comment was part of his contribution to the discussion about Mearsheimer's 2004 Carr Memorial Lecture. Ken Booth, "Offensive Realists, Tolerant Realists and Real Realists," *International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2005): pp. 350–354.
60. Mearsheimer, "The More Isms the Better," p. 356.
61. According to Baldwin, who strongly supports Dahl's view of power, the shift from traditional "elements of national power" approaches that understood power as a "property concept" to approaches understanding it as a relational one, as advocated by Dahl, "constituted a revolution in power analysis". Baldwin, "Power and International Relations," pp. 274–275.
62. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 58.
63. Ibid. p. 60.
64. Ibid. pp. 57–60.
65. Snyder, "Mearsheimer's World," p. 153.
66. Realism is a "fundamentally amoral theory" as he claimed in his *Theory Talks* interview in 2012: Mearsheimer, "Power as the Currency," p. 8.
67. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 47. Mearsheimer offered a further elaboration on this idea in his Carr Memorial Lecture. There, in a rather simplistic reading of Carr's dialectics, he claims that Carr might have been exaggerating the conflict between morality and power given the fact that states sometimes can pursue both goals simultaneously. Additionally, moral goals might be pursued when they are not seriously affecting the logic of realism. But when the two are in conflict, power considerations will trump everything else. John Mearsheimer, "E.H Carr vs Idealism," *International Relations* 19, no. 2, (2005): pp. 142–143.
68. Ibid: 143; Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 25–27. Such lies, employed when there is a contrast between liberal values and realist policies, or "liberal lies", are considered by Mearsheimer relatively harmless compared to fearmongering and strategic cover-ups that can seriously misfire. John Mearsheimer, *Why Leaders Lie: The Truth About Lying in International Politics* (London: Duckworth Overlook, 2011), pp. 81–86, p. 101.
69. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 37.
70. Ibid. pp. 37–40.
71. Ibid. pp. 337–347.
72. Ibid. pp. 114–128.
73. Toft claims that with the introduction of location Mearsheimer creates an ambiguity in the levels of analysis that makes his theory very hard to challenge on his own terms: "Only if the theory fails at both the regional and system-wide level is the theory in serious trouble." A connected problem is that due to the lack of a hierarchy between location and the distribution of power "both variables can individually account for the empirical

outcomes" and as such location can supplement the distribution of power for cases that would otherwise be "obvious anomalies". Toft, "Offensive realist between geopolitics and power," pp. 393–394. While Toft is right that this modification allows Mearsheimer more flexibility, his second argument contradicts his own claim in the same article that "although location plays an important role [...] this variable is wholly subordinate to the structural balance of power variable since different power constellations determine the impact of location". Ibid. p. 389. In fact, the latter claim seems to be closer to Mearsheimer's position since he deals with the stopping power of water as being important only when facing a defending great power, and one that is not distracted for that matter. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 114–119.

74. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 40.
75. Ibid. pp. 128–133 and pp. 224–232 where he claims that despite the unlikelihood of attaining nuclear superiority, great powers will still try to attain it.
76. Ibid. pp. 41–42.
77. Christopher Layne, "The 'Poster Child for Offensive Realism': America as a Global Hegemon," *Security Studies* 12, no. 2 (2002): pp. 126–127.
78. Legro and Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," pp. 12–13.
79. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 18.
80. Ibid. p. 365.
81. Apart from the *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* mentioned already, Mearsheimer examined in his earlier "False Promise" article how feudal political units behaved vis-à-vis realist assumptions. Even though his main focus was to make the case for realism being a timeless theory, it is clear from his discussion that he was mindful of the various macro-historical transformations of political units. See Mearsheimer, "False Promise of International Institutions," pp. 44–46. More recently, Mearsheimer presented a paper at the *Yale Workshop for International Relations* in which he engages with realism and nationalism. The paper represents his "preliminary thinking on the subject" and is cited here with the author's permission: John Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins: Nationalism and Realism," Prepared for Yale Workshop of International Relations, 5 May 2011. Accessed, 03 May 2017. Available from mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/recent.html
82. Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins," pp. 15–16.
83. Ibid. pp. 17–18.
84. Ibid. p. 17; see also indicatively the more extensive discussion by Tilly: Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1990* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 76–84.
85. Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins," p. 16.

86. Here, Mearsheimer's account of the transition from dynastic to popular sovereignty parallels Carr's account of the phases of nationalism, especially since the emergence of popular sovereignty is connected to both increased political power domestically and increase in loyalty for the population. Ibid. pp. 9–10, 18–19. Mearsheimer, however, does not connect the evolution of nationalism to that of democracy in the same way Carr did. In fact, in a later comment on Kennan he claims that "total wars had little to do with democracy and much to do with nationalism". John Mearsheimer, "Introduction," in George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy,* (extended ed.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. xxxix. A further difference with Carr, and Gellner for that matter, is that Mearsheimer is not attentive to the differences between Western and Eastern Europe.
87. Mearsheimer is generally in agreement with Waltz's views on state socialisation to successful practices, but he extends such practices beyond balancing to include successful offensive behaviour and innovation. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 166–167.
88. Burak Kadercan, "Military Competition and the Emergence of Nationalism: Putting the Logic of Political Survival into Historical Context," *International Studies Review* 14, no. 3 (2012): pp. 402–406. See also Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (1993): pp. 27–47; Barry Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (1993): pp. 80–124; Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and war," *International Security* 18, no. 4 (1994): pp. 5–39.
89. Kadercan, "Military Competition and the Emergence of Nationalism," p. 406.
90. Indicatively, Mearsheimer refers to nationalism as an ideology, and indeed as "the most powerful ideology" in Mearsheimer, "Introduction," p. xxxix. Also in Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 365; Mearsheimer, *Why Leaders Lie,* pp. 100–101.
91. Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins," p. 23.
92. See, for instance, Richard Little, "Turning Back the Clock: Mearsheimer Resurrects the First Great Debate," *International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2005): p. 343; Pashakhanlou, "Back to the Drawing Board," pp. 210–211.
93. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 46.
94. Mearsheimer "Kissing Cousins," p. 4.
95. Ibid. p. 10.
96. Ibid. pp. 20–23.
97. Gellner, *Nationalism*, pp. 35–36.
98. Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins," pp. 20–23.
99. Oren, "Unrealism of Contemporary Realism," p. 288.

100. Here Oren is not talking about nationalism but about domestic factors generally. Ibid. pp. 288–289.
101. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future," p. 12; pp. 20–21.
102. Interestingly, the domestic factor employed as an example in this case was, again, nationalism. See Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 334–336.
103. Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins," pp. 23–24; Mearsheimer, *Why Leaders Lie,* pp. 69–80; for the indicators of measuring power see Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 133–135.
104. Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins," p. 23.
105. Citing, however, the example of the Nazis' exploitation of conquered territories Mearsheimer claims that "occupation can succeed under special circumstances". Ibid. p. 30.
106. Mearsheimer's account is similar to Herz's discussion of the potency of defensive nationalism. The similarity is remarkable and is in sharp contrast with early engagements in both Carr and Herz regarding the vulnerability of nation-states in the face of superior economic and military power as well as new forms of warfare such as aerial bombardment or economic blockades.
107. This is a noteworthy modification compared to the previous engagement with the subject in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. There he mentions nationalism in passing as a potential obstacle for conquest but the discussion that follows does not address it in detail. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 148–152, p. 488. Rosecrance, however, in his review of the book anticipated the potential implications of such a position when he claimed that "the 'stopping power' of modern nationalism [...] may be greater than the water barrier". Richard N. Rosecrance, "War and Peace," *World Politics* 55, no. 1 (2002): p. 148.
108. He summarised his views on the subject when commenting on American efforts to attempt social engineering in the twenty-first century: "Washington seems to have an uncanny ability to take a bad situation and make it worse." John Mearsheimer, "America Unhinged," *The National Interest,* no. 129 (2014): p. 22.
109. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 365–366.
110. Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins," pp. 31–32.
111. He proposed, for instance, a three-way partition of Bosnia in several opinion pieces in the *New York Times* during the 1990s: John Mearsheimer, "Shrink Bosnia to Save It," *The New York Times,* 31 March 1993; John Mearsheimer and Stephen Van Evera, "Hateful Neighbours," *The New York Times,* 24 September 1996; John Mearsheimer, "The Only Exit From Bosnia," *The New York Times,* 7 October 1997. Similarly, he proposed that Kosovo be granted independence from Serbia before the

war, in John Mearsheimer, "A Peace Agreement That's Bound to Fail," *The New York Times,* 19 October 1998. He returned to the same topic in 1999 and proposed a partition of Kosovo with Serbia maintaining the North and the rest gaining independence, suggesting that this should also be the formula to be followed in neighbouring Macedonia in case the ethnic conflict in that country persisted: John Mearsheimer and Stephen Van Evera, "Redraw the Map, Stop the Killing," *The New York Times,* 19 April 1999. All opinion pieces are available through the author's website: http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pub-affairs.html

112. Carr, *Nationalism and After,* p. 34.
113. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future," p. 21.
114. Ibid. pp. 20–21, pp. 25–26.
115. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 363–366.
116. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future," p. 21.
117. Ibid. p. 56.
118. Mearsheimer, *Why Leaders Lie,* pp. 100–101.
119. In *Why Leaders Lie,* Mearsheimer seems to be suggesting that nationalist myth-making is intensified *after* wars or violent state formation, and mostly for whitewashing. Ibid. pp. 69–80. As such, the "rhetoric of nationalism is tailored to suit the behaviour of states, which is driven largely by other calculations". Ibid. p. 100. This of course is in clear contradiction to his statement in "Kissing Cousins" where he claims that in trying to motivate their public, elites will "portray the adversary as the epitome of evil" which in turn "makes it almost impossible to negotiate an end to a war short of total victory". Mearsheimer, "Kissing Cousins," p. 28. Here Mearsheimer is attributing to myth-making the ability to change the character of wars between nation-states, and approaches it as an inalienable part of nationalism rather than one of its insignificant paraphernalia.
120. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 238–249.
121. Ibid. p. 244 and in particular: fn 18, p. 488.
122. Ibid. p. 249.
123. Ibid. pp. 252–261.
124. Mearsheimer discusses extensively Kennan's views in: Mearsheimer, "Introduction," pp. xxiii–xxxiii.
125. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 22–25.
126. Ibid. pp. 25–27; Mearsheimer, "Introduction," pp. xxvii–xli.
127. Layne, "The Poster Child of Offensive Realism," pp. 135–158.
128. Ernest May, "The United States' Underuse of Military Power," in *History and Neorealism,* eds. May et al., *passim.*
129. This point was repeated in several publications in the 1990s and early 2000s. See indicatively: John Mearsheimer, "The Future of America's Continental Commitment," in *No End To Alliance: The United States*

and Western Europe, ed. Geir Lundestad (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), *passim*; John Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 5 (2001): pp. 46–61; Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* pp. 380–386.

130. For an early discussion of China as a potential regional hegemon in Asia see Mearsheimer, "Future of American Pacifier," pp. 53–56. Mearsheimer returned to the theme with: John Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History* 105, no. 690 (2006): pp. 160–162, and John Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no. 4 (2010): pp. 381–396.
131. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* p. 382. For Mearsheimer, despite being by far the most powerful state in the system after the Cold War, the United States was not a global hegemon and was unlikely to become one even if it wanted to, because it did not have the capacity to project power across the oceans. Ibid. p. 381; also in Mearsheimer, "The Future of America's Continental Commitment," *passim.*
132. John Mearsheimer, "Hearts and Minds," *The National Interest*, no. 69 (2002): pp. 13–16.
133. John Mearsheimer et al., "War with Iraq Is Not in America's National Interest," in *New York Times* (paid advertisement), 26 September, 2002; John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, no. 134 (2003): pp. 50–59; John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "Keeping Saddam Hussein in a Box," *New York Times*, 2 February, 2003.
134. Mearsheimer drew parallels with Morgenthau's opposition to the Vietnam War and claimed that had the latter been still alive, he too would have opposed the war in Iraq. Mearsheimer's engagement with the strand of neoconservatism that focuses on the superiority of American military power and assumes that states will tend to bandwagon is particularly important, since some commentators have conflated realism's emphasis on power with the condoning of such policies. John Mearsheimer, "Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War: Realism Versus Neo-Conservatism," opendemocracy.com, 2005, available through the author's webpage: http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/all-pubs.html. For an example of an author misidentifying the "war on terror" and the invasion of Iraq as a realist endeavour see Paul Rogers, "Missing the Point," *International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2005): pp. 337–340. Similarly, despite recognising that Mearsheimer has a strong preference for offshore balancing, May, drawing from an identification of realism with the power maxims of the Melian dialogue, claimed that after the end of the Cold War and including the war in Iraq the United States behaved "as hard realism would have predicted". May, "The United States' Underuse of Military Power," p. 244.

135. Excellent summaries of their arguments are provided in the following works: Mark Lacy, "A History of Violence: Mearsheimer and Walt's Writings from 'An Unnecessary War' to the 'Israel Lobby' Controversy," *Geopolitics* 13, no. 1 (2008): pp. 100–119; Brian Schmidt and Michael C. Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," in *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): pp. 191–220.
136. Toft summarised the discrepancy succinctly when, in 2005, he commented that "although Mearsheimer's policy advice was undoubtedly correct in most people's view today, US foreign policy seems not to conform to the dictates of offensive realism and anomalies [...] are mounting by the day". Toft, "Offensive Realist Between Geopolitics and Power," p. 400.
137. John Mearsheimer, "Imperial by Design," *The National Interest,* no. 111 (2011): pp. 16–34.
138. Idem. Also, more recently: Mearsheimer, "America Unhinged," pp. 9–30; John Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (2014): pp. 77–89; John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Case for Offshore Balancing," *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 4 (2016): pp. 70–83.
139. Mearsheimer, "America Unhinged," p. 23.
140. Mearsheimer, "Introduction," pp. xxiii–xxviii.
141. Mearsheimer, "America Unhinged," pp. 23–29.
142. Mearsheimer, *Why Leaders Lie,* pp. 94–96; Mearsheimer, "America Unhinged," pp. 25–26.
143. Mearsheimer, "America Unhinged," pp. 25–29.
144. The parallel should not be overstated since early realists had a dual aim of protecting liberalism from the perils of "rationalist liberalism in the guise of facile pluralism [...] or naïve scientism and rationalism". Michael C. Williams, "In the Beginning: The International Relations Enlightenment and the Ends of International Relations Theory," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): p. 655. Mearsheimer not only subscribes to the scientism that earlier realists opposed, but also does not seem particularly concerned with the legacy of the Enlightenment. The parallel is thus valid only with respect to Mearsheimer's concern about the deterioration of liberalism domestically as a consequence of liberal crusading internationally.
145. Mearsheimer's controversial engagement with the Israel Lobby merits particular attention here. His collaboration with Walt on the subject produced several articles and a monograph. See indicatively: John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," *Middle East Policy* 13, no. 3 (2006): pp. 29–87 and John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007). In their engagement with

the subject Mearsheimer and Walt claim that Israel transformed from being a strategic asset during the Cold War to a strategic liability after the latter's end. They isolate the influence of the Israel Lobby, a clearly domestic parameter, as the main reason for the continuing support of Israel by the United States, a support they also associate with American adventurism in the Middle East. Lacy commented that the shift of attention from neoconservative self-deception to foreign penetration as exemplified in Mearsheimer's engagement with the Israel Lobby represented an effort to postpone "an interrogation of the domestic, internal problems of democracy and war". Lacy, "A History of Violence," *passim;* quote in p. 104. Given Mearsheimer's return to those issues in later works, Lacy's concern seems to have been unwarranted.

146. Snyder, after commenting that Mearsheimer sacrifices too much on the altar of parsimony, suggested a couple of modifications to the power maximisation assumption that could make his theory "more plausible". Either Mearsheimer could water down the hypothesis by a "marginal utility calculation" or maintain it as an ideal type, a "point of departure for more 'realistic' estimates". Snyder, "Mearsheimer's World," p. 172. Oren too points towards ideal types as a way for Mearsheimer to overcome the gap between prediction and prescription in his theory, even though he believes they too are problematic: Oren, "Unrealism of Contemporary Realism," pp. 290–294.
147. Waltz, "Realist thought and neorealist theory," p. 32.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion: Power Politics in the Age of Nationalism

In the preceding chapters of the book, I attempted to expose the development of realist theorisation about the nation-state through a series of snapshots. In the remaining pages, I turn to the main implications of this discussion for realist efforts to understand the nation-state and nationalism. In the first part, I examine the gradual impoverishment of realist conceptions of power and claim that the transition to neorealism left realist thought with an emaciated concept of power that has little analytical purchase. As such, as I discuss in the second part, contemporary realism is ill-equipped to approach the complexity of the phenomena of the nation-state and nationalism. Finally, I explore the implications of the methodologies embraced by most contemporary realists. I claim that the reflexive methodologies of classical realism are a better guide for engaging with foreign policy in the age of nationalism.

A Gradual Impoverishment of Realist Conceptions of Power

The centrality of power in the ontology of realism would seem to be the only element which the paradigmatic reading of realism got right.[1] Regardless of whether power-seeking is grounded on anthropological assumptions or on a social condition such as the security dilemma, power remains at the core of any realist ontology. Despite this similarity, which signifies the bare

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minimum of agreement between realists, there is considerable variation in realist conceptualisations of power. In fact, of the realists I have discussed, none offers a vision of power, its nature, and its functions that is identical to another's. This diversity has been noted in existing literature on realism. Schmidt, for instance, took it seriously when he classified different realist conceptualisations of power in the three broad categories of classical, structural, and modified realism.[2] What this book has revealed, despite its limited scope of four key authors, is that even a careful categorisation such as Schmidt's is bound to be imperfect. Even between realists belonging to the same broad category there are significant differences. Both Carr and Morgenthau are usually treated as classical realists, but they did not both ground their analysis of power on human nature, as is commonly assumed.[3] The same applies to realists who subscribe to systemic approaches. Herz and Mearsheimer explicitly reject assumptions about human nature and anchor power to the security dilemma, but their conceptions of power as well as the role it is expected to perform in their theories are at variance with each other.

Most existing accounts of power in realism focus on its ontological assumptions. By considering the role of power in realist epistemology, I offer a synthesis of such accounts with works from authors who emphasise the importance of power in realist methodology. Such authors have already demonstrated the advantages of classical realist epistemology vis-à-vis its scientific counterpart in neorealism, especially given the former's attentiveness to power and its influence on the process of theorising.[4] The role awarded to power in realist epistemology seems to be organically connected to the conception of power with which each realist starts. As such, Carr's indeterminate and broad conceptualisation of power, with its overlap with post-structural interpretations, permeates every aspect of his theory of international relations. The centrality of the sociology of knowledge is indicative of an understanding of power that is attentive to its complexities and signifies self-awareness on behalf of the theorist. In a similar fashion, Herz's approach to power as being an essentially protean concept and in a state of constant flux is connected to an epistemology according to which the theorist must be able to appraise power at any given moment and at the same time try to devise attainable compromises between power and power-alien considerations.

Morgenthau did not share the explicitly dialectical framework of Carr and Herz and represented one of the early efforts to analytically isolate the concept of power. In his effort to clearly define power and its elements, Morgenthau offered a narrower and less flexible conceptualisation than Carr

or Herz. Yet despite his similarity to later efforts to narrow down the concept of power, Morgenthau's epistemological choice rather than signifying a step towards positivism demonstrated a conscious effort to insulate the political sphere from the intrusion of violence. It was only with the adoption of positivism by realists that the concept of power became restricted to the sphere of ontology. Mearsheimer's positivist epistemology displays little reflexivity and as such cannot account for any influence the theorist can possibly play in the formation of foreign policy.

The primacy of power is indeed the core tenet of realism. Yet power means different things to different realists and performs different functions in their theories. The transition from a broad and multifaceted vision of power which permeates realism both ontologically and epistemologically to a narrow conception of power as measurable material capabilities which can only perform the role of currency in a heavily deductive theory is by no means a linear one. Classical realists like Morgenthau, for instance, might be closer to the latter than transitional figures like Herz. It is only with the explicit and unreserved embrace of a scientific approach to politics that the full implications of this transition can be felt. This transition left realism with a more easily manageable concept of power, but also one which is crippled and devoid of much of its analytical purchase. This becomes evident in the way those different conceptions of power are employed to understand the nation-state, a subject to which I turn in the following part.

The Interplay Between Power and the Nation-State

Recent efforts to recover the insights of classical realists have effectively dissociated those realists from their alleged state-centrism.[5] My discussion of realist approaches to the nation-state through the lens of power confirms this previous research, and in particular Scheuerman's overview.[6] Changes in the domestic and international distribution of power played a crucial role in bringing about the nation-state in the narratives offered by Carr, Morgenthau, and Herz. Such changes in the middle of the twentieth century also led these realists to assume that the nation-state would no longer be able to perform its main functions and should give way to other forms of political organisation.[7] Scheuerman, however, is only concerned with classical realists. Mearsheimer, while not sharing the mid-century realists' scepticism about the prospects of the nation-state, shares their view that it was developments in the field of power that paved the way for the emergence and predominance of the nation-state. The nation-state, then, due to its

dependence upon the ontologically central concept of power, is for all realists an unfixed manifestation of power.

This does not imply, however, that the relationship between the two concepts is the same for all realists. Scheuerman is primarily concerned with "progressive realists" and their efforts to transcend the nation-state. As such, he tends to group them together and provides an account of the relation between the nation-state and power which emphasises their similarities rather than their differences.[8] In fact, realists produced a variety of approaches to the interplay between power and the nation-state, ranging all the way from a unit of protection in military terms to broad accounts that include the interaction between military, economic, and ideational factors both domestically and internationally. Approaches to the nation-state that are backed by more flexible conceptualisations of power are in a better position to account for both the emergence of the nation-state and the characteristics that differentiate it from previous forms of political organisation.

In the heavily deductive model of Mearsheimer it is international anarchy that creates the preconditions for the behaviour of the political units. These units, being essentially treated as billiard balls that can only react to external constraints, can vary in form but are always expected to behave in the same way. In such a model, power can only account for variation between different historical units in terms of their different capabilities. Thus, whatever characteristic differentiates the nation-state from preceding forms of organisation—like, say, the ideology of nationalism—needs to be subsumed to such a conception of power and be understood as a force multiplier. Mearsheimer largely follows this path but not entirely consistently. For he eventually approaches nationalism as a phenomenon that can not only transform the international system but also influence the very odds of survival of the nation-state. As such, he is more attentive to ideational power than his theoretical framework would allow.

This uneasy, even contradictory in places, relationship between the key concepts of power and the nation-state is less pronounced or even absent in the rest of the realists, who possessed broader conceptions of power and whose notion of power was not as strictly analytically separated from the nation-state. Despite also departing from a relatively narrow conceptualisation of power, Morgenthau managed to partially overcome this analytical separation by organically connecting the political unit to power through the mechanism of projection of the *animus dominandi*. Furthermore, by having a distinct notion of ethics he produced a narrative of nationalism that could account for the qualitative differences between the

nation-state and the units that preceded it. Similarly, Herz, despite on occasion sharing with Mearsheimer an emphasis on the role of military power and military technology in the development of political units as well as favouring a structural approach, offered a more nuanced account because of his reliance on a protean notion of power. For Herz, power might have influenced the emergence of the territorial state, but, after the latter prevailed, the very way power was organised and understood also changed. This flexible framework allowed Herz to account for variation both in the behaviour of different historical units and in the implications of international anarchy at any given period.

For Mearsheimer, Morgenthau, and Herz, nationalism as the ideological corollary of the nation-state operates mainly in two forms, one benign and defensive and one aggressive, and the prevalence of each form might or might not be associated with a given historical period.[9] It is in the realism of Carr, however, that the intimate connection between nationalism as an ideology and the concept of power is more carefully explored, and he was supported in this quest by a flexible and broad conception of power. The most important aspects of such a conception were his insistence that power is multifaceted but also indivisible on the one hand and that it is in a dialectical relation with morality on the other. As such, Carr could produce an account of the nation-state that, although attentive to the protective functions performed by the political unit, is not reducible to their operation alone. By looking at the developments in political power both domestically and internationally, he understood the establishment of the nation-state and its transformation through the interplay of the two. By approaching the nation-state in an evolutionary fashion and connecting nationalism to both power and morality, he provided a nuanced account of the development of the phenomenon and its impact on international and domestic politics.

It is thus Carr's conceptualisation of power, with its remarkable flexibility, that offers the richer background for a distinctively realist perspective on the nation-state and nationalism. Such an approach of course cannot substitute for and is not superior to the wide range of research that has been already conducted on the nation-state by scholars whose focus it is to study the state and nationalism. When it comes to international relations and realism in particular, however, Carr's nuanced approach can form a good starting point that can move realism beyond the subordination of nationalism to a materialistic notion of power and its reduction to a force multiplier, as recent commentators have complained.[10] Despite its premature assumptions about the future of the nation-state, and the teleological tendency of

its analysis, such a framework can provide a vision of the nation-state and nationalism that integrates both domestic and international factors and as such carries more analytical purchase than the structural approaches that dominate contemporary realism.

Realist Foreign Policy in a World of Nation-States

It must have become evident from my discussion so far that—as some of the commentators on realism have already suspected—the claims of scientific enquiry that most contemporary realists subscribe to create for realists more problems than they solve. This methodological commitment is characteristic not only of structural realism, but also of neoclassical realism despite the latter's departure from an exclusive focus on systemic factors and its introduction of unit-level intervening variables.[11] As such, I hope that the argument presented here can add to the existing calls for a return to the more reflexive epistemologies displayed by classical realists.[12] This point is underscored by the way key realists engaged with the foreign policies followed by great powers.

It is Mearsheimer's theory that faces the most significant challenges when it comes to practical application. The main reason for those problems lies with the fact that his ontology is often at odds with his epistemological commitment to positivism. Not only when he tries to prescribe policies that are at variance with the policies actually pursued, as Barkin and Oren have observed, but also when he is trying to make sense of the nation-state and nationalism by expanding his ontological assumptions, Mearsheimer has to go beyond his epistemology.[13] By contrast, the ontological and epistemological assumptions of classical realists operate more harmoniously. This is not to suggest that the tendencies they outlined and the predictions they made always materialised. Carr, for example, was notoriously wrong in most of his predictions.[14] But his analysis could be comfortably accommodated within the framework of purposeful thinking that for Carr characterises all political science, and resonated well with the necessity for the political scientist to propose uneasy compromises between reality and utopia. In a similar fashion, Morgenthau's warnings against the risks of *hubris* resonated well with his insistence that sound political thought entails speaking "truth to power". Herz's effort to make sense of international politics was characterised by a concern about the security dilemma that permeated both the ontology and the epistemology of his theory. As such, when he

proposed policies that could consciously alleviate the security dilemma he was not acting at variance with his epistemological commitments.

This harmony between epistemology and ontology is all the more important in an age when the nation-state remains the main form of political organisation, given the particularistic morality of the nation-state. Barkin touched upon the crucial importance of such a factor in his call for more reflexivity in contemporary realism, when he claimed that recognition of the fact that there are no universal moral standards allowed realists to "reflect on how foreign policy is likely to look through the eyes of relevant others".[15] The classical realists discussed here challenged this particularistic morality of the nation-state and identified it as the main culprit behind the "horrors of the twentieth century".[16] Said horrors led mid-century realists to contemplate ways to transcend the nation-state and to embrace more or less ambitious blueprints of global transformation. There is certainly something to be said for the need for cosmopolitanism to engage with such views.[17] At the same time, however, the question remains: what is to be done with foreign policy in a world still comprising states organised on the premise of nationalism?

Here, I believe, classical realism still has distinct advantages. By not artificially disassociating morality from their theories of international politics, as Mearsheimer does, classical realists demonstrated an acute awareness of the importance of different worldviews in the formulation of foreign policy. At one level, this of course implies engagement with relevant "others" and an effort to better understand their perspective. At another level, however, it also implies better self-awareness. In this sense, Carr's call from the eve of the Second World War still resonates today: it is more pressing, he claimed, to try and understand ourselves than to try and understand others, as a decrease in self-awareness necessarily leads to "an increase in national self-righteousness".[18] The task for self-awareness in foreign policy is indeed more pressing, as it is always remarkably easier to look at somebody else's national myths or claims of national rights with a critical eye than one's own. It is also a task that is infinitely more difficult to achieve in the age of nationalism. The ideology of nationalism in its very essence requires an external audience, that is, the conflict with other nationalisms.[19] This inherently conflictual element where nationalisms challenge each other with "similar claims and homologous arguments" cannot be effectively resolved by unmasking specific national myths. It would instead require the questioning of the very process of nationalist myth-making.[20] Given how entrenched such a process is in contemporary societies, the

success of the task for self-awareness in foreign policy can only be partial. It is, nonetheless, as classical realists were only too aware, one task worth undertaking.

Conclusion

The primacy of power in realist theorising is of profound importance for understanding realist conceptions of the nation-state. In all the realists I examined here, the nation-state is understood as a manifestation of power that is unfixed in time. The success of each realist theory in accounting for the emergence of the nation-state, and its characteristics, largely depends on its underlying conceptualisation of power. As such, flexible and multifaceted conceptualisations of power offer a better base for a nuanced account of the nation-state. Neorealist formulations of power, in contrast, while offering a more manageable concept of power, lack in analytical purchase. This leads to the paradoxical situation where contemporary realists can draw from a much wider specialised literature on nationalism than was available to their predecessors, but at the same time are prevented by their narrow framework from making effective use of the full range of this literature.

Future realist scholarship will certainly benefit from returning to the reflexivity and richness of insights displayed in earlier realists. Perhaps the most encouraging development in that direction comes from contemporary realists themselves. In his effort to engage with foreign policy and to understand nationalism, Mearsheimer had to at least partially compromise the narrow framework of his structural theory. In so doing, he might have added some additional anomalies to his theory but at the same time he recovered some of the nuance and attentiveness to complexity that earlier realists displayed. This move, I believe, is in the right direction. It is through the recovery of classical realist insights on the complexity of power and its intricate relation with the nation-state and nationalism that contemporary realists can strengthen and complement their approaches.

Notes

1. Molloy, *Hidden History of Realism*, pp. 145–147.
2. Schmidt, "Realist Conceptions of Power," *passim*. Molloy too, in the same section as above, provided a discussion of the variety of realist notions of power: Molloy, *Hidden History of Realism*, pp. 145–147.

3. The view that classical realism relates the struggle for power to human nature while structural realism distances itself from such assumptions is widespread. See Schmidt, "Realist Conceptions of Power," p. 50.
4. Oren, "Unrealism of Contemporary Realism," *passim;* Barkin, "Realism, Prediction, and Foreign Policy," *passim.*
5. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* pp. 39–66; Molloy, *Hidden History of Realism,* pp. 139–143.
6. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* pp. 39–66.
7. This scepticism towards nationalism and its prospects displayed by mid-century realists was also common in the early stages of the academic study of nationalism. Attempts at typologies offered in the interbellum or during the immediate aftermath of the Second World War often shared a characteristic "moralistic tone" which sought to distinguish good from bad variants of nationalism or to present a teleological, progressive account of the phenomenon: Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism*, pp. 31–39. See also the historical overview of the debates on nationalism and their political and historical context as well as the backgrounds of the participants offered in: Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory*, pp. 62–158. For an insightful account of the reasons why, despite the unfavourable climate in the wake of the Second World War, the nation-state proved obstinate, the discussion by Hoffmann remains indispensable. With the use of force no longer a viable option in the nuclear age, the "most pressing incentive" for agglomeration of states disappears and voluntary unification is the only option left. "What a nation-state cannot provide alone", he noted, "it can still provide through means far less drastic than hara-kiri." Stanley Hoffmann, "Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe," *Daedalus* 95, no. 3 (1966): p. 866.
8. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* pp. 39–97.
9. Such a binary distinction is also quite prevalent in the study of nationalism. The dichotomy between civic (or political) and ethnic (or cultural) nationalisms, the former being benign and the latter not so benign, is probably "the most far-reaching distinction in the field", as put in a recent overview of the key debates: Umut Özkırımlı, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 22–26. It is also a distinction facing some serious criticisms. The root of the problem is that the distinction is too readily associated with a set of other, supposedly homologous oppositions. As such, civic nationalism is Western, liberal, peaceful, forward-looking, and voluntarist, whereas ethnic nationalism is Eastern, illiberal, bellicose, backward-looking, and exclusivist. From this, a series of problems follows. First, as Brown noted, not only do most real nationalisms not neatly match those ideal types and usually contain elements of both, but also both types of nationalism employ a similar symbolism and mythology. Second, in practice civic nationalism can lead—and has often

led—to authoritarianism whereas ethnic nationalism through its association with minority rights can also take occasionally benign forms. Finally, the distinction implies that one type of nationalism is more defensible than the other in moral terms. This element of moral evaluation, as Calhoun correctly noted, allows too much complacency for "self-declared civic nationalists" who can then decry the evils produced by "ethnic nationalists from whom they are surely deeply different". Calhoun, "Introduction," pp. xli–xlii. The other two critical insights are a combination of the following excellent discussions: Brown, "Are There Good and Bad nationalisms?," pp. 282–288; Calhoun, "Introduction," *passim*; Özkırımlı, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism*, pp. 24–25.

10. Kadercan, "Military Competition and the Emergence of Nationalism," *passim*.
11. See the extensive discussion in Taliaferro et al., "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," pp. 13–23.
12. Barkin, "Realism, Prediction, and Foreign Policy," pp. 242–245. See also the discussion by Steele in: Steele, "Eavesdropping on Honoured Ghosts," pp. 275–292; Brent Steele, "Twenty-First Century Realism: The Past Is in Our Present," *International Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2009): pp. 352–357.
13. Oren, "Unrealism of Contemporary Realism," passim; Barkin, "Realism, Prediction, and Foreign Policy," passim.
14. The policy of appeasement he supported failed to deliver peaceful change, the nation-state proved resilient, and the Soviet Union which he studied for decades imploded a few years after his death. I discuss those shortcomings more extensively in: Kostagiannis, "E.H. Carr's Dialectics of Utopia and Reality," pp. 8–12.
15. Barkin, "Realism, Prediction, and Foreign Policy," p. 244.
16. Bell, "Introduction," p. 7.
17. Scheuerman, *Realist Case for Global Reform,* pp. 98–168.
18. Carr, "Honour Among Nations," pp. 498–499.
19. Lekkas, *Playing with Time*, pp. 77–82, p. 106.
20. Something which is, of course, extremely difficult given the key functions nationalism plays for the cohesion of modern societies. As Lekkas correctly observes, therefore, battling nationalisms can only challenge each other on the *results* of nationalist myth-making, and in so doing they reinforce the underlying process itself. As such, they perpetually remain in a condition of mutuality. Ibid. pp. 106–108. Both Carr and Morgenthau were acutely aware of this difficulty when presenting the image of modern nationalist masses waving their idols and particularistic moralities in each other's faces. Carr, "Honour Among Nations," pp. 489–500; Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," pp. 98–99.

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