Realism, Idealism and International Politics

A reinterpretation

Martin Griffiths

ROUTLEDGE

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London and New York

First published 1992
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002.

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue reference for this book is
available from the British Library.

ISBN 0-203-16216-1 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-203-16219-6 (Adobe eReader Format)
ISBN 0-415-06971-8 (Print Edition)

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
Griffiths, Martin, 1961–
Realism, idealism, and international politics: a
reinterpretation/by Martin Griffiths.
p. cm.
Based on the author's thesis (doctoral)—University
of British Columbia.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-415-06971-8
1. International relations. 2. Morgenthau, Hans
Joachim, 1904–. I. Title.
JX1391.G76 1992
327–dc20 91–47982
CIP

To Pippa and Larry
R.I.P.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

The Anglo-American discipline of International Relations has been based on two fundamental assumptions. First, that there is a basic distinction between 'domestic' and 'international' forms of governance; second, that it is possible to derive broad explanations of long-term patterns of state behaviour from this distinction. Together, these metatheoretical assumptions form the core of the 'Realist' tradition in the field. Whatever their other differences, and there are many, all 'Realists' share a common premise; that the realm of state behaviour is sufficient unto itself for the purposes of explanation and normative justification. 'Realism' conjures up a grim image of international politics. Within the territorial boundaries of the formally sovereign state, politics is an activity of potential moral progress through the social construction of constitutional government. Beyond the exclusionary borders of sovereign presence, politics is essentially the realm of survival rather than progress. Necessity, not freedom, is the appropriate (realistic) starting-point for understanding international politics. A precarious form of order through the balance of power, not justice, is the best we can hope for in the international anarchy, an asocial realm of continual struggles for power and security among states. In the post-war era, Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz are the two main theorists associated with this approach to the study of international politics.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, this book argues that realism (with a small r) is not a meaningless term in common parlance, nor is it redundant and necessarily rhetorical as an attribute of thought about international politics. I argue that it has been inappropriately applied to the work of these two grand theorists whose approach does not merit the label. Instead, I conclude that they are more appropriately characterized as political idealists. In contrast to

Morgenthau and Waltz, whose work suffers from the shortcomings of (in Morgenthau's case) nostalgic idealism and (in Waltz's case) complacent idealism, I argue that a modified version of what is often (wrongly) referred to as the 'Grotian' approach to international politics is more deserving of the label 'political realism'.

I have incurred many debts, both intellectual and personal, in the writing of this book, which began as a doctoral dissertation at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. I would like to acknowledge, with particular gratitude, the following people: Robert Berki, for providing the initial inspiration; Kal Holsti, who supervised the thesis on which this book is based, and who allowed me the freedom to roam far and wide in search of political realism; Mark Zacher, whose personal and academic support never wavered, despite my own doubts; and Bob Jackson, for his consistently careful reading of the text and generous advice for improving it. Among those who gave up their time to discuss and debate the arguments put forward in this book, I would like also to thank John Ruggie, Bill Brugger, and Stuart Robinson. Thanks also to Flinders University for enabling me to present a paper based on this book to the 1991 International Studies Association Annual Conference.

On a more personal note, to Kylie, a special thank you for putting up with me for the last year. Finally, to my parents, who made it all possible.

1

INTRODUCTION

> I incline to think that the illusions of a truly human heart, whose zeal takes all things as possible, are to be preferred to that sour and repellent reason whose indifference to the public good is always the chief obstacle to every endeavour to promote it.
>
> Jean-Jacques Rousseau

> The meaning of a word is its use in a language.
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein

INTRODUCTION

This book defends realism in the study of international politics. In the academic discipline of International Relations, whose nomenclature indicates a scope of inquiry not confined to politics among formally equal (but substantively unequal) sovereign states, the term realism has been severed from its association with ordinary usage and is now attributed to a particular school of thought, according to which international politics is an essentially asocial realm of conflict and perpetual struggles for security and power among states in an allegedly 'anarchical' environment. When writers in the field use the term Realism with a large R, as James points out, 'it is the school which is being referred to, not the quality of its work'.[1] To avoid any misunderstanding from the outset, this book does not defend what James calls large-R-Realism as a school of thought. Instead, and contrary to conventional wisdom, this book argues that small-r-realism, or just realism, is not a meaningless term in general common parlance, nor is it redundant as a particular attribute of thought about international politics.

The argument that follows is based explicitly on the interpretation of the meaning of the terms political realism and political idealism contained in Robert Berki's *On Political Realism*.[2] (All page references in this and the next chapter refer to this book.) I simply apply his interpretation of these vague and contentious terms to the study of international politics. Consistent with, and constrained by the logic of ordinary usage, Berki argues that realism is an attribute of thought which presupposes reality or experience as a dialectical interplay between necessity (the abstraction of constraints) and freedom (the abstraction of opportunities to transcend those constraints). The substantive content, identity and dynamic of these abstractions in international politics need not detain us at this point. In contrast, he argues that idealism proceeds from the ontological denial of this presupposition, and thus the reification of either necessity or freedom. These abstractions are then imposed upon political practice leading to an evaluative or commendatory stance of nostalgia, complacency, or revolution (which Berki calls the idealism of imagination), depending on which abstraction is privileged. Thus there are different forms of idealism. Consequently, Rousseau's dichotomy is revealed as false, based on a mistaken assumption that realism and idealism occupy two poles or extremes which permit no further synthesis. The false dichotomy between realism and idealism is endlessly repeated in the field of international relations, particularly by those writers who profess to be realists themselves. It is starkly illustrated by Hans Morgenthau, who unhelpfully saw the entire history of modern political thought from the Enlightenment onwards as a simple Manichean contest between realists and idealists.[3]

This book, then, attempts to begin rescuing realism from the self-styled 'Realists of International Relations'. Its method is blatantly deconstructivist, but its goal is to rehabilitate terms whose main function up to now has been polemical. 'What deconstructivist thinkers "deconstruct" is the structuring of paired concepts as inevitably opposed and as opposed in a zero-sum relation…[they aim] to remove the hierarchy and to undo the pairing'.[4] Labels matter in predisposing us to think in certain ways about international politics, and what passes for Realism in the academic study of International Relations is not realistic.

Based on Berki's conceptual analysis of the meaning and relationship between political realism and political idealism, the following chapters develop the argument by engaging in a critical

analysis of three 'grand theorists' of international politics—Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, and Hedley Bull. Although the first two writers are arguably the most famous exemplars of Realism as a school of thought, my reason for choosing them does not rest on such an assumption. I share Gilpin's argument that one cannot attack an entire alleged school or tradition of thought by merely picking on particular writers that are assumed by the critic to represent the weaknesses of an entire tradition.[5] Indeed, one of the difficulties of treating Realism as a clear-cut school of thought is that its representatives differ vastly in the way they use the assumptions which are said to define the school in the first place! This is because the discipline of International Relations is socially constructed. Its identity (which may well be contested between schools) is not fixed and immune either from the subject-matter it seeks to explain or from changes in thought about the social sciences in general. For these reasons there is not even a derivative consensus on how to define Realism beyond a few broad assumptions about the importance of states as actors, the institutionally anarchic environment within which states coexist, and hence the importance of power as the master variable to explain broad patterns of states' interaction. At this level of generality, Realism is simply a set of assumptions about the world rather than a particular theory, let alone anything so pretentious as a scientific paradigm. Of course, there have been many attempts to define Realism more rigorously and narrowly so that it may be compared to and evaluated against competing schools of thought. The problem with this is that both the identification of competing schools as well as the criteria to evaluate them are themselves socially constructed. On the one hand, an historical examination of Realism (loosely defined) facilitates a detailed examination of different writers, and sensitizes one to the variety of arguments within a tradition of speculation about international politics. The drawback of this approach is the lack of criteria to determine who to include in (and thereby exclude from) such a survey. On the other hand, a 'competing schools of thought' approach may be helpful for drawing rough boundaries, but the criteria for identification and evaluation are themselves contentious issues. How one understands and evaluates Realism in International Relations depends a great deal on whether one views it as a philosophical disposition, a scientific paradigm, a mere framework of analysis, a testable explanatory theory of international politics, or an ideology of great power conservatism.[6]

For these reasons, my selection of Morgenthau and Waltz is only tangentially based on their status as paradigmatic Realists in International Relations. Rather, these two writers are selected on the basis of Berki's distinction between the idealism of nostalgia (to which I will add a variant called the idealism of complacency) and the idealism of imagination, realism being understood as the synthetic transcendence of each. Morgenthau and Waltz are idealists, or so I will claim. As a counterpoint to these writers, Morgenthau representing nostalgic idealism and Waltz representing a form of complacent idealism, I have selected Hedley Bull's work as a closer approximation to the interpretation of realism defended in this book. My goal is simply to demonstrate through a dialectical argument (in the Socratic sense) of exegesis and critique, the heuristic and evaluative utility of Berki's interpretation of political realism and political idealism. These terms are not meaningless, yet at the same time their meaning is not immediately obvious, even though they are part of common parlance and everyday discourse.

MEANING AND LANGUAGE

Robert Berki is not directly concerned either with international politics or international political theory, which is perhaps one reason why his argument has been ignored by students of international relations. He provides a conceptual analysis of the terms realism and idealism whose departure point is ordinary usage. His goal is to arrive, by reflecting on what is normally meant when we employ these terms, at a better understanding of what, in Feinberg's words, 'we had better mean if we are to communicate effectively, avoid paradox, and achieve general coherence'.[7] By appropriating Berki's interpretation and applying his categories to international political theory, the (common) sense in which the terms realism and idealism will be used in this study is consistent with how they were intended to be interpreted by those responsible for the terms' introduction and popularization (obfuscation is closer to the mark) in the discipline of International Relations. As Smith puts it, 'as opposed to utopians, idealists, optimists, and reformists of every stripe, realists say that they accept and understand the world as it is; this understanding provides the foundation [or rather, rhetorical claim] for all their ideas'.[8] E.H.Carr identifies realism with 'the impact of thinking upon wishing which, in the development of a science, follows the breakdown of its first visionary projects, and marks the end of its

specifically utopian period'.[9] Hans Morgenthau, who has been described as the 'Pope' of Realism in International Relations,[10] presents his theory of international politics by proclaiming it to be concerned 'with human nature as it actually is, and with the historic processes as they actually take place…which tries to understand international politics as it actually is and as it ought to be in view of its intrinsic nature'.[11] John Herz reiterates this common-sense understanding when he argues that realism and idealism apply to 'those who behave according to "real," that is, existing givens, and those who engage in wishful thinking'.[12] One could fill pages with vague and unreflective phrases similar to these. The important point is that their authors identify the terms with ordinary usage, but take for granted the self-evident meaning of the terms, instead of asking themselves what they are obliged to think when they use them. All too often, realism is treated merely as a synonym for accuracy. This is a category mistake, as I will demonstrate below.

Berki also begins with ordinary usage, defining realism tautologically as:

> the mode of conduct of a person who is said to be a 'realist', and a realist is one whose actions are 'realistic' … [which] means being adequate in one's understanding of and relationship (active and passive) to reality. Adequacy connotes 'goodness' in a circumscribed sense, as sufficiency, competence, ability to get on, utilize possibilities.
>
> (Berki, 1981, p. 3)

His goal is to transform this tautology, or analytic term (i.e. one that is true by definition, such as 'a triangle has three sides') into a synthetic term with substantive content. Only by doing this can realism begin to fulfil its approbatory or commendatory function as an attribute of thought without its application becoming arbitrary and polemical.

As Kratochwil points out in the following passage, in which I have substituted the word 'realism' for 'good':

> the commendatory function…stays the same despite a great variety of meanings conveyed by the second function, the descriptive meaning. It is the descriptive meaning, however, that supplies the reasons by virtue of which we call something [realistic]; and to that extent, the commendatory function of

> [realism] is…restricted by the appropriateness of the reasons supplied in the descriptive meaning.[13]

Giving and justifying 'appropriate reasons' is thus prior to, and necessary for the term 'realism' to be used in a commendatory manner. In the absence of any presentation and defence of their descriptive meanings (i.e. what we are obliged to think by the logic of ordinary usage), the terms realism and idealism can only function, as Quincy Wright wearily noted in 1952, as 'propaganda terms':

> according to which everyone sought to commend whatever policy he favoured by calling it 'realistic'. The terms do not… throw light on the policies, institutions, personalities, or theories which they are used to qualify but only on the attitudes toward them of the speaker and, it is hoped, of the listener. From this usage we learn that in the past two decades political propagandists have regarded 'realism' as a plus term and 'idealism' as a minus term.[14]

Clearly, before these vague and highly charged terms can be applied, as attributes of thought, to theories of international politics, their descriptive meaning must be explicated independently of such thought.

As Moorhead Wright has pointed out, 'we cannot formulate and express real meaning without the use of words, so that language in large part structures our thinking about the nature of things'.[15] The dependence of meaning upon language requires us to take the latter (at least initially) as our departure point, rather than simply assume we know what realism and idealism mean in ordinary usage. Although political science, as Oppenheim notes, 'cannot effectively use the language of everyday life as it stands', he argues that the only way to adapt ordinary discourse for analytic purposes, is to 'make explicit the rules governing the use of its concepts, sharpen the criteria of their application, reduce their vagueness… and hence sometimes modify their meaning'.[16] There is no other way to proceed if realism in the theory and practice of international politics is, as Berki puts it, 'the realism of everyday life expressed in a certain area of practical experience' (p. 2). This is the methodological approach—the logic of analysis, if you will—that Berki employs, which is consistent with the semantic rules or guidelines so effectively used by David Baldwin in his analysis of the

concept of interdependence in international relations. As he notes: 'I am aware that some would deny the worth of such an undertaking and dismiss it as "mere semantics" or "pure logomachy". The advancement of knowledge, however, depends on the ability of scholars to communicate with one another; and clear concepts seem to help'.[17] This book echoes Baldwin's sentiments.

At first sight, to claim that realism and idealism generate their own criteria of descriptive meaning sounds distinctly odd, a counter-intuitive inversion of common sense rather than its corollary. Suppose a man throws himself off a tall building and dies on the street below. Without any knowledge of why he did it, one could not appraise his behaviour in terms of its realism or idealism. If he thought that by flapping his arms in the air he would fly like a bird, we would call him an idealist. On the other hand, suppose he was being chased by a gang of thugs intent on torturing him to death, he understood this, and reasoned that his chances of surviving were higher if he jumped than if he simply begged for mercy. In this context we would call him a realist. If so, then before the terms can be used, surely we must know something about the context. Moreover, one might add that the context is always subject to change. What is idealistic today may be realistic tomorrow with the invention of, say, anti-gravity belts. Change the context of what is possible, and the terms realism and idealism must change also. The application of the terms is always contextual, but contexts are important primarily in delimiting the scope or application of what Kratochwil calls the descriptive meaning of concepts. In the context of no context, the distinction between realism and idealism rests on abstract criteria whose application (i.e. scope and content) must be justified in situational terms. None the less, these criteria presuppose two key conditions about the situations to which they apply. First is the existence of choice under constraint. Agents are not free to opt out of a decision, but have some freedom of movement within the constraints of the situation. Second, and equally important, is the limited knowledge available concerning the strengths of the constraints. All that can be assumed is that the latter cannot be wished away, but neither are they so fixed as to determine the appropriate response.

Chapter 2 presents the essential elements of Berki's analysis, which provides the framework or shell which the following chapters fill with the yolk of grand theory. Berki provides the abstract criteria for the descriptive meaning of terms whose contextual application

will be generated through the cumulative critique of Morgenthau (Chapter 4), Waltz (Chapter 6), and Bull (Chapter 8). From what has been said thus far, it bears repeating that realism, as it is defended here, does not refer to a stipulatively defined school of thought, doctrine, paradigm, or historical tradition of speculation. By returning to common parlance, consistent with the intent (if not achievement) of writers such as Carr, Herz, Morgenthau, and Kennan, the purpose of this short book is to rehabilitate the use of terms that have been abandoned through their association with, in Inis Claude's words, 'polemics that made the old "Realist-Idealist Debate" less edifying than it ought to have been'.[18] I simply want to reclaim these terms from the partisans of the early post-war era for whom they served merely as vehicles for approval and approbium. According to the argument of this study, neither realism nor idealism is embodied in the writing of any particular scholar, ancient or modern (or even post-modern!), from which one can extract an unambiguous statement of its constitutive characteristics and implications for international political theory. Realism and idealism, as they are employed here, are relative terms, not absolute dichotomies. They are related to each other in a 'more or less' manner along a continuum. Furthermore, as will become clear in the next chapter, as abstract ideal-types they do not occupy opposite poles of this continuum. This being the case, realism and idealism are not dichotomous (either/or) attributes of thought. Thus their attribution to particular writers will always be contested and must be argued for.

THE DUALITY OF INTERNATIONAL THEORY

Before launching into an exegesis of Berki's analysis, it is important to introduce the context which will be employed in invoking his interpretation of realism and idealism as attributes of thought. I will do this by distinguishing between two dimensions of what Holsti calls 'grand theory' in international relations. This will clarify the reasons for, and the manner in which I will focus on, particular grand theories to illustrate the ways in which these dimensions interact.

According to Holsti, the term 'grand theory' refers to those macro-level attempts to map the terrain of international politics, whose authors 'have sought to formulate an original approach to the field, and have had as their objective the description and explanation

of state actions and interactions'.[19] Elsewhere, Holsti distinguishes between works such as these and middle-level theories which are concerned with examining specific phenomena in international politics and the conduct of foreign policy. At this less abstract level, 'theory serves primarily as a source of hypotheses to be tested, rather than as a device for organizing the field'.[20] Grand theories, as the term suggests, are distinguished by the scope and abstraction of their subject-matter. They are not concerned with specific phenomena or discrete patterns of behaviour such as diplomatic crises or arms races, nor are they examinations of historical events. Instead, their 'dependent variable', if you will, is plural rather than singular; in Hoffmann's words, 'the political phenomena deriving from the fragmentation of the world into separate political units'.[21] Each of the three writers examined in this study shares a basic assumption regarding the scope and domain of their subject-matter—the locus of international politics—despite their considerable differences regarding its nature. They all agree that 'international politics' takes place in a distinctly structured political milieu, whose formal characteristics have not fundamentally changed since the collapse of the medieval system, symbolized by the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648. In short, they are all members of what Holsti calls the 'classical tradition' of international theory, according to which:

> the proper focus of [international relations] is the causes of war and the conditions of peace/security/order; the main units of analysis are the diplomatic-military behaviours of the only essential actors, states; and states operate in a system characterized by anarchy, the lack of central authority.[22]

Two interdependent dimensions of international political theory can be identified and analytically distinguished from one another. I will call these dimensions ontology (or deep description) and evaluation (or prescription),[23] Together, these dimensions provide the organizing conceptual categories which I will use both to structure the exegesis and critique of the three grand theorists examined in this study, as well as to delimit and specify the nature of realism as an attribute or disposition of thought. They correspond to the descriptive and commendatory functions of concepts noted above.

The first dimension provides a context of discovery, and refers to a theorist's underlying metatheoretical assumptions regarding the essence of international politics as a distinct domain of political

practice. These assumptions or presuppositions denote what Ford has called one's basic beliefs about the constitutive nature of social and political reality. These beliefs 'are our most fundamental thoughts about the ultimate nature, or "essence" of things. They are what philosophers call ontological assumptions'.[24] It is these assumptions or beliefs which provide the basis for identifying and describing international politics as a distinct domain of social reality. They provide what Aron calls an initial conceptualization, a substantive definition of the subject-matter and its parameters. As he points out:

> Whether one speaks the language of the philosophers and evokes the state of nature between states, or the language of sociologists, and whether one evokes the system constituted by state, superstate, or substate actor, one will discover at one moment or another the characteristics of the diplomatic field or the interstate system.[25]

According to Dessler, in the context of international political theory:

> ontology refers to the concrete referents of an explanatory discourse. A theory's ontology consists of the real-world structures (things, entities) and processes posited by the theory and invoked in the theory's explanations…it should be stressed that an ontology is a structured set of entities. It consists not only of certain designated kinds of things but also of connections or relations between them.[26]

The ontological dimension of grand theory establishes presuppositionally the area, or conceptual space within which 'international politics' operates. The purpose of Chapters 3, 5 and 7 is to reconstruct or reveal the assumptions informing each writer's theoretical approach to his subject-matter.

The second dimension denotes the implications of international political theory for evaluating or prescribing institutional arrangements and principles of conduct with regard to or within the parameters of international politics.

The rationale for analytically distinguishing between these dimensions of international theory inheres in the meaning of realism as being adequate in one's understanding of and relationship (active and passive) to 'reality'. The above dimensions thus correspond to the formal characteristics of realism as a synthetic term. Elaborating

on or explicating its meaning requires persuasive answers to two core questions. First, what is the essence of international politics as a 'distinct domain?' This is an ontological or descriptive question in the deepest sense. Second, what does it mean to be 'realistic' in our relationship to international politics as a distinct domain of practical experience? This is an evaluative question, whose answer is logically dependent upon how one answers the first question, which provides the basis for evaluating or advocating structural reforms and principles of conduct deemed to be realizable. The importance of both the distinction and relationship between ontology and what he calls advocacy has been noted by the philosopher Charles Taylor in the context of political theory:

> On the one hand, they are distinct, in the sense that taking a position on one does not force your hand on the other. On the other hand, they are not completely independent, in that the stand one takes on the ontological level can be part of the essential background of the view one advocates…taking an ontological position does not amount to advocating something; but at the same time, the ontological does help to define the options which it is meaningful to support by advocacy. This latter connection explains how ontological theses can be far from innocent.[27]

Thus the two dimensions of international theory correspond to those of realism as a holistic or multi-dimensional term. This must be emphasized in order to rebuff Herz's offhand and confusing remark that 'strictly speaking, the terms "realism" and "idealism" should not be applied to theories. Theory is either correct or incorrect, depending on how it analyses what happens in politics, but perhaps it is permissible to call a correct analysis a realistic one'.[28] This comment illustrates how little thought Herz has given to what he is talking about. If it is the case that clear and uncontested criteria are available to distinguish between correct and incorrect theories, then it would not be permissible, although in any case it would be totally redundant, to characterize the former as realistic and the latter as idealistic. By conflating 'correct' with 'realistic', Herz robs the latter term of all relevance, let alone distinct meaning. However, it is simply not the case that clear criteria are available to make the above distinction with regard to grand theories of international politics. For they do not stand in relation to practice (although their authors may

claim that this is the case) as mere instruments to understand a given and unproblematic 'reality', which is exactly why realism and idealism are both meaningful as well as contestable terms.[29] The attribution of the term 'realistic' presupposes a relationship between theory and practice which, as Terence Ball correctly notes, 'is not a contingent and instrumental one but is, rather, a conceptual and constitutive relation between belief and actions'.[30] The generic and appropriately vague term 'grand theory' permits a wide variety of intellectual enterprises within its ambit. As we shall see, each of the writers considered in this thesis conceives of his enterprise in a different manner, hence theory as truth (Morgenthau), science (Waltz), and tradition (Bull). As Gunnel has pointed out, there can be no Archimedean definition of the meaning or status (as forms of knowledge) of grand theory stipulated independently of what 'grand theorists' do:

> To describe, explain, or evaluate something is to appeal, at least implicitly, to an articulation of what kind of thing it is. This, quite simply, is what I mean by 'theory'. This is the way 'theory' should be used in talking about any mode of inquiry. Theory is embedded in substantive claims. To say this is not to derive a definition of 'theory' from some preferred epistemology, but to make a descriptive claim about the practice of inquiry…[grand theories] do not explain anything. That is, they are not instruments for understanding given objects. They indicate what is to be explained and provide the criteria of explanation.[31]

It is a grave error simply to assume, rather than to argue for and justify, the availability of a standard set of epistemological criteria by which to evaluate from some allegedly privileged vantage-point (for example, doctrines borrowed from the philosophy of the natural sciences) competing theories of international politics. What is to count as an adequate explanation in this field cannot be divorced from substantive conceptions of the subject-matter to be 'explained'.[32]

In the social sciences, description logically precedes explanation, and this requires an exercise of interpretive reason rather than an unreflective appeal to some 'objective' reality independent of its intersubjective constitution by the actors involved.[33] Thus before one can debate the criteria of adequacy to be employed in understanding

international political phenomena, one must begin by explicating the latter as the dependent variable (i.e. the ensemble of practices to which theory addresses itself *qua explanans*). As Spegele points out:

> it is only on the basis of a discursive argument leading to some sort of consensus concerning what [international politics] is that we shall be able to arrive at any intelligible methodological prescriptions about how, ideally, it should be studied. In this respect ontology [what we take to be real] precedes epistemology [theories of knowledge about reality].[34]

Grand theories are primarily interpretive constructs. They delimit and identify international politics as a distinct domain of political action, for example, as a naked power struggle between self-contained states, or as a highly structured system, or as a nascent and tenuous society, to invoke the three images suggested by the respective scholars examined in this thesis. A central task of the following study is to examine critically, and, if implicit, bring to light the logic of these interpretations of international politics, which are necessarily pitched at a high level of metaphysical abstraction.

CONCLUSION

Political realism, if the term is to retain any connection with ordinary language and thus serve its dual function as a descriptive and commendatory attribute of thought about international politics, must be explicated in synthetic, multidimensional terms. In this introductory chapter, in a brief and summary fashion, I have identified these dimensions as description and evaluation or prescription. These dimensions correspond to those of grand theories of international politics, which are primarily interpretive constructs, positing international politics as a distinct process of interaction among states in a condition of structural anarchy. Three grand theorists are presented for examination, two of whom are universally acknowledged to embody and express a realist approach to international politics through their work, despite the dissensus surrounding the status of 'Realism' as a school of thought. The next chapter provides a summary of Berki's analysis, which will then be applied to the three theorists to be examined here. On the basis of this analysis, I will argue that Morgenthau and Waltz are not realists, but that their work expresses two forms of idealism. Morgenthau's

work reflects a nostalgic idealism. He reifies the past, presenting European diplomatic statecraft of the early nineteenth century as the ideal against which he evaluates post-1945 international politics and the conduct of American foreign policy. Waltz, in contrast, reifies the post-war bipolar system as the best guarantee for maintaining order in international politics. Neither of these writers succeeds in defending his position. Their work is characterized by severe self-contradictions, both within their description of the essence of the subject-matter, and between their ontological presuppositions and their evaluative judgements. As we shall see in the next chapter, pin-pointing such contradictions is an essential precondition before applying the term idealism as an attribute of political consciousness. Having revealed the shortcomings of these phoney realists, I will argue that Hedley Bull's work reflects a closer approximation to the meaning of political realism as spelled out in the next chapter. To anticipate the argument, realism is an attribute of thought which recognizes reality as heterogeneous and self-contradictory rather than unitary and static. Prescriptively, realism avoids the evaluative stances of nostalgia, complacency, and revolution (or utopianism), each of which reifies an autonomous abstract referent for reality.

2

A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Realism versus idealisms

> We cannot discover what is meaningful to us by means of a presuppositionless investigation of empirical data. Rather, perception of its meaningfulness is a presupposition of its becoming a direct object of investigation.
>
> Max Weber

INTRODUCTION

Faced with the question 'what is reality?' one is sorely tempted to give up on the search for realism. Thankfully, the nature of reality as such is a philosophical question which is no barrier to the explication of political realism and political idealism. First, the referent for political realism is not the nature of reality as a metaphysical whole. As Mannheim notes:

> inasmuch as man is a creature living primarily in history and society, the 'existence' that surrounds him is never 'existence as such', but is always a concrete historical form of social existence…a functioning social order, which does not exist only in the imagination of certain individuals but according to which people really act.[1]

This recognition permits us to insulate first-order judgements regarding the real from the critique of philosophical foundationalism.[2] In philosophy, it should be noted, realism and idealism have somewhat crude designated meanings regarding material (matter) and ideational (mind) conceptions of reality as such. It is important to be aware of the distinction between realism

as it is used in philosophy and Realism as a school of thought in international relations. As Caedel has recently noted:

> a militarist inspired by a Hegelian conception of the state which must expand to fulfil its own destiny is clearly a realist as the term is conventionally used in International Relations, [but] he would be classified in orthodox philosophical terminology as an idealist.[3]

Second, as was emphasized in the previous chapter, the descriptive meaning of political realism is to be explicated from the departure point of ordinary usage. Berki is concerned with what we are obliged to think when we resort to these terms as attributes of conduct and their accompanying viewpoints, not what we may freely speculate about from the comfort of the proverbial armchair. The corollary of this is that common sense cannot be refuted by philosophy, which transcends the accepted spatio-temporal framework of everyday life and practical experience, of which international politics is a part. This is not to say that philosophical answers to the question, 'what is reality?' are irrelevant to my concerns. It is simply to assert that philosophers cannot have the last say on the subject. Recall that the synonym for realism is not accuracy, but adequacy. To be realistic is not to be correct, just as idealists are not wrong. In an important sense, realism can only be understood in terms of idealism. As we shall see, realists need idealists, although idealists do not need realists.

This chapter provides a summary of Berki's conceptual analysis, supplementing his arguments with illustrations drawn from the discipline of International Relations, which provides a framework of analysis or set of criteria for examining and contrasting the writers to be discussed in subsequent chapters. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first two sections summarize Berki's analysis of the two dimensions of realism, namely, description and prescription (or alternatively, ontology and advocacy). The third section then extrapolates the main characteristics of idealism, which may take two main forms, nostalgia (the evaluative reification of the past), and imagination (the reification of the future, a characteristic of chiliastic thought). In differentiating Morgenthau from Waltz, a variant of nostalgic idealism is complacent idealism (the reification of the present). Berki does not do this, but nostalgia and complacency should be kept apart. Political realism, argues Berki, is the conceptual middle in a continuum whose opposite ideal-type poles are occupied by these two forms of idealism.

REALITY: HETEROGENEITY VERSUS HOMOGENEITY

The first step in explicating realism is to go beyond the tautology of its adjectival form to identify the referent for the real in ordinary usage. This, Berki argues, is not singular but plural, and that their relationship is a dialectical one. The first point is dictated by the logic of the appeal to realism as an adequate relationship to reality. What are we obliged to recognize by this appeal?

> Being 'adequate' to reality is without doubt a good thing, to be approved. But it is not to be unreservedly praised or extolled. Why? Because being adequate to reality means being 'inadequate' to something else…? What can there be which is not reality? Something to be called 'ideal?' But is the 'ideal' to be considered unreal? This would be very strange indeed, and the charge that the realistic person is inadequate to an unreal 'ideal' realm rings hollow and pointless. The 'ideal', if it is to have any relevance and any effect, must also be considered 'real'. So then is it meaningful to assert that the realistic person's conduct is adequate to reality in one way or sense, and inadequate in another way or sense? But if we thus distinguish between ways or senses (or appearances, aspects, manifestations) of reality itself, then we are already on the way towards accepting the ambiguity or disunity or internal discrepancy of reality.
>
> (Berki, 1981, p. 4.)

Berki distinguishes between three such aspects or referents for reality to be found in ordinary usage, which are differentiated from one another in terms of their depth and profundity. These referents are immediacy, necessity, and essence or truth, substitute terms for 'the real' in ordinary usage, each of which cannot exhaust the nature of reality *qua* practice. The latter, as indicated by the above passage, is the site of a dialectical interplay between the constraints of necessity and the opportunities to realize emancipatory human purposes, essences or ideals, as will become clear as the argument proceeds. The inadequacy of each as an autonomous referent is revealed in the corresponding form of appropriate evaluative stance attached to each referent: namely, opportunism (immediacy), resignation (necessity), and revolution (essentialism). As we shall see, depending on which referent is

privileged as 'the real', a cry for realism in action can lead in diametrically opposed directions!

REALITY AS IMMEDIACY

This referent denotes the exigencies and contingencies of everyday life. 'Reality is "down-to-earth" …a world of limited possibilities, a welter of immediate desires, fulfilments and frustration' (p. 7). At this level of immediacy, the conduct of statesmen as actors is, by definition, untheorizable, the realm of what Machiavelli calls Fortuna. In terms of understanding, at least initially, one reaches for the newspaper or switches on the television. There is no sharp dichotomy between description and explanation, no objective reality independent of the perceptions and actions of the actors involved. In a world constituted thus, understanding means empathizing with the ascertainable motives of those whose behaviour we seek to make sense of. As Charles Reynolds put it: 'We thus return to the historical form of explanation that finds its focus in the reasoning of the political actors in terms of surviving or available evidence'.[4] But this is a narrative of the past and present with no lessons for the future. 'What happens but once', as the novelist Milan Kundera writes, 'might as well not have happened at all. History is as light as individual human life, unbearably light, light as a feather, as dust swirling into the air, as whatever is will no longer exist tomorrow'.[5] The general character of international politics, in an existential sense, is constituted by imaginative human responses to the world. Every event is unique, unpredictable, and contingent. Reality *qua* immediacy is a continuous and dynamic process of becoming. International politics is the sum of what governments do. What matters, as Haas puts it, 'is process. The actors' perceptions of reality result in policies that shape events; these effects create a new reality whose impact will then be perceived all over again, ad infinitum'.[6] International politics, described in these terms, is given in a conventional rather than a natural sense. In Herz's words, 'it results from the perceptual and conceptual structures that actors bestow on the world'.[7]

It is this referent that Kenneth Minogue has in mind in his somewhat polemical attack on what he calls 'epiphenomenalism' in political studies, a sustained gripe against Marxists, behaviouralists, and any other potential 'ists' who seeks to explain political reality as a necessary outcome of some environmental feature via an

explanatory structure consisting of initial conditions and general laws of behaviour. 'The reality of politics', he declares, 'is such that whoever engages in it walks through a snowscape perilously. At each step, the ground under his feet may give way; but equally, he must at times make wild leaps onto places that seem unpromising but will sometimes prove to have the solidity of ice'.[8]

Yet this referent cannot lead to a practical relationship to politics that can reasonably be called adequate, since realism in terms of conduct becomes synonymous with mere opportunism and sheer expedience, a matter of 'what you can…get away with', as Minogue himself concedes. Berki illustrates the inadequacy of opportunism as the hallmark of political realism by noting the pitfalls or fallacies associated with 'success' as its sole criterion. This is a meaningless notion in the absence of any discussion of the value or purpose of action, or the constraints within which action is undertaken, both factors presupposing the relevance of other referents for political practice. After all, 'an action performed is a successful action, simply because it is a completed action' (p. 11). Success may be ephemeral, circumscribed, semblematic, and unpredictable. The fallacy of ephemeral success is that of a completed action which has no regard for its long-term consequences. For example, Argentina 'successfully' invaded the Falkland Islands in April 1982, only to surrender them back to the British within three months, followed by the collapse of the military regime in Buenos Aires. General Galtieri and his tyrannical junta were a group of opportunists, but by no stretch of the imagination could one call them realists. Closely related, the fallacy of circumscribed success refers to that of action undertaken by those whose aim clearly went beyond their achievement. The semblance of success refers to the achievement of power with no ulterior purpose, where the 'art of the possible' degenerates into a path of least resistance. In this sense, opportunism reveals itself as the inverse caricature of realism, whereby 'the opportunist simply melts into reality… becomes an expression of it, rather than its active maker. He does not have success, but success has him as a slave' (p. 12). Finally, success is always a retrospective judgement due to the unpredictability of action. This makes success a highly unreliable guide as the criterion by which to attribute realism to those who succeed on any terms and at any price (for example, the North Vietnamese were spectacularly successful in their prolonged war against the United States, when they were fighting against appalling odds). Yet one would not reasonably attribute

realism to Ho Chi Minh and his government in their single-minded pursuit of a united communist state prior to its achievement.

Thus the first referent, immediacy, is found wanting. Indeed, on its own, it is meaningless. This does not, however, mean that it is irrelevant. Minogue and others remind us of the limits to theory in light of the vicissitudes of immediacy and fortuna.

REALITY AS NECESSITY

The second referent for the real as revealed by ordinary usage is that of necessity. 'Accommodation and adequacy are not achieved in respect of a world that is merely immediate. Reality is that which lies beyond…our reach…the realm of hard necessities' (p. 7). At this level, reality is neither the creation of mind nor is it mediated by our perception of it. Otherwise, it would not be, in an important sense, 'real'. Now the realm of immediacy, with its short-term contingencies of flux and change, fades into the background as mere appearance, giving way to a world of forces beyond the control of politicians, which they must conform to regardless of their wishes. Invoking the analogy of the theatre, suspension of disbelief ceases when it is understood that the actors are behaving in accordance with a script, and performing in a drama over whose plot and resolution they have no control. According to this referent, international politics is best described in mechanical rather than organic terms. States can be conceived as hard-shelled billiard balls; their movements (note: not conduct, which presupposes choice) observed and described independently of the actual motives, reasons and purposes of those nominally responsible for the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Regular patterns of behaviour may result from the interaction of states (now conceived in material terms) over time. These patterns may be expressed as laws between variables of an objectified reality when subject to specifiable initial conditions.

Consequently, the appropriate epistemological stance consistent with a reality characterized by these ontological properties is a positivistic one. No distinction is necessary between the natural and social sciences in terms of methodology. As Rosenau boldly proclaims:

> As a focus of study, the nation-state is no different from the atom or the single cell organism. Its patterns of behaviour,

> idiosyncratic traits, and internal structure are as amenable to the process of formulating and testing hypotheses as are the characteristics of the electron or the molecule… In terms of science-as-method, [physics and foreign policy analysis] are essentially the same.[9]

There is, according to this view, a profound dichotomy between description and explanation. The former involves the amassing of data (observed 'facts' categorized according to specifiable criteria of selection) and their processing into variables via stipulative operationalization. For example, the balance of power may be described and empirically measured as the 'distribution of capabilities'. Once this is done, various tests—mainly statistical—may be performed on the data in search of correlations between variables, either to test deductive hypotheses or to discover them through a process of induction. The ultimate aim is to uncover the laws which govern or determine state behaviour.

If this is reality, then realism in action is inaction (i.e. resignation in face of the inevitable and unchangeable, whatever that may be). In the study of international politics, of course, this is often identified with the elements of power and competition among states in a self-help system, although it also characterizes dogmatic neo-Marxist world-systems theorists for whom 'superstructural' patterns of international politics are themselves determined by the underlying dynamics of capitalism. In contrast to the idealist, who according to the first referent could be described as a dreamer, now he appears as that man who threw himself off a tall building thinking he would fly, a fanatic who 'charges forward, unmindful of inexorable necessity limiting his sphere of action [and continuing] his reveries in a wakeful state', (p. 8).

Yet, just as the incoherence of immediacy as the sole referent for reality is partially corrected, but also negated, by this referent, the inadequacy of fatalism also reveals the insufficiency or partiality of necessity as the referent for the real. For if determinism is true, then this precludes all purposive action. The art of the possible, as Berki notes, 'can never be ascertained without probing the defences of the impossible' (p. 19). Furthermore, 'the view that the real is necessary signifies knowledge of the real, and knowledge cannot simply be a mark of inferiority…if we know that the real is necessary, then this

knowledge…makes us equal to reality, and at most it makes us superior' (p. 9).

REALITY AS TRUTH: THE PRIMACY OF TRANSCENDENTAL MEANING

The third referent, or constitutive context of meaning, is absolute essence, or what Berki somewhat misleadingly calls 'Truth'. It should be understood that 'Truth' as Berki uses the term refers to the essence of reality, not the epistemological status or validity of propositions about reality, whether empirical or normative. 'Here the real is seen to reside not in the positively existing, in actual institutions and relationships, but in a more concealed realm that itself accounts for the existence of politics. Reality is Truth and to find the Truth about politics one must go beyond politics' (p. 9). This underlying or essential 'Truth' may be expressed as an overriding ideal or transcendental purpose of political practice, such as Kant's idea of perpetual peace resulting from a civil union of mankind. The purpose of political philosophy, according to Leo Strauss, is to discover the nature of the good life:

> Political philosophy [is] the attempt to replace opinion about the nature of political things by knowledge of the nature of political things [which are] subject to approval and disapproval, to choice and rejection, to praise and blame…. To judge soundly one must know the true standards. If political philosophy wishes to do justice to its subject-matter, it must strive for genuine knowledge of these standards. Political philosophy is the attempt truly to know both the nature of political things and the right, or good, political order.[10]

Thus, in contrast to the first level, at which the real is contingent, or the second at which it denotes necessity, the third referent refers to the 'true' political order within which these master ideals—peace, justice, and the good life for mankind as a whole—may be achieved.

One way of conceiving the real as essence (or Truth) is to consider the relationship between the three referents in terms of their reification in the history of metaphysics as a branch of philosophy. Subjective idealism is the view that no distinction exists between appearance and reality. According to this view, closely associated with the work of Descartes, we can only have direct access to our

own minds rather than anything else that may exist. In the context of Cartesian dualism—the thesis of separation between mind and matter-philosophical idealists hold that reality is confined to mental representations, and since we do not have direct access to the body or matter (the object of such representation), the only reality which we have any justification in assuming is those ideas, the appearances themselves. Philosophical realism, in contrast, is the thesis that there is an objective reality independent of our minds, and that what philosophical idealists call reality is only appearance, or representations (which may be true or false) of what really exists. In short, philosophical idealism and realism both start with Cartesian dualism, but 'resolve' the antinomy by fleeing to opposite extremes. The philosophical distinction between these two metaphysical positions reflect two totally incompatible attempts to sidestep the elemental ambiguity of reality by denying it. This is done by forcing a choice between two dichotomous options:

> The key ontological question, classically posed, is whether the mind controls the body [or] the body controls the mind…. If all of reality is basically matter (that is, material substances of one kind or another), then the body is dominant over the mind and attitudes are reducible to material substances…. If ideas and perceptions are the irreducible components of reality, then mind dominates body and material substances have no independent role to play in a causal system.[11]

The third aspect of 'reality' (the word), Truth with a capital T, has also been reified in the history of philosophy, beginning of course with Plato. Transcendental philosophical idealism is so-called because it transcends Cartesian dualism in asserting the power of reason to grasp a pure realm of Being, above and beyond the realm of the senses or appearance—the realm that Cartesian dualism divides into the component elements of mind and matter. Plato consigned both these elements to the so-called sensible world, and ascribed ontological primacy to the more pure realm of Being (or Form), the object of knowledge as opposed to belief. What Parekh calls (simply!) 'the hierarchical dualism of transcendental idealism' creates:

> an unbridgable gap between experience and reality in the sense that the world in which we live is not real, and the real world

> is not one in which we can live, and generates a profound feeling of world- and self-alienation. Since the world of appearances is regarded as unreal, it is deemed incapable of lasting satisfaction. One yearns to live permanently in the world of Being.[12]

The equivalent of what Berki calls Truth in political theory is, as Strauss puts it, knowledge of the good life or the ideal state. Since international politics takes place between states, Martin Wight has argued that no international theory of this kind exists. It is a theory of survival rather than progress, the good life to be (potentially) fulfilled within states as opposed to a global state. Progress, or the pursuit of emancipatory human interests, such as justice, can only take place within the territorial and institutional parameters of the separate state.[13] The latter, however, is an historical phenomenon which arose from the ashes of western Christendom and the collapse of the political authority of Rome in medieval Europe. There is no a priori reason why the contemporary states system will likewise not succumb to history, to be replaced by a new global order. Wight points out that there has always existed a tradition of thought (which he calls revolutionism) whose adherents subscribe to a Platonic conception of a world-society of mankind, whose division in the sensible world of appearance is an aberration. International politics, according to this referent, is epiphenomenal. The experience of separate states is derivative, and the conditions of its maintenance must be evaluated against the moral yardstick of the human interests of mankind and world order—a postulated purposive association of individuals rather than nominal entities whose morality, as Jackson points out, is reciprocal and commutative.[14] But the mechanisms through which international order is sustained may be inimical to the interests of mankind as a whole. If one of the traditional instruments for sustaining this order, war, was to be waged with nuclear weapons, the dysfunctional dynamics of the states system would be revealed in a particularly graphic manner.

The third, and ultimate, referent provides an interpretation of 'realism' *qua* evaluation that transcends the prior two levels. First, it negates realism at the second level while presupposing it. Logically, 'the view that the "real" is necessary signifies knowledge of the real, and knowledge cannot simply be a mark of inferiority' (p. 9). In other words, knowledge implies the power to change reality in light of transcendent goals and purposes. Second, the third level

simultaneously rehabilitates the first level, although this time accentuating and releasing from constraints the scope of opportunities. Now 'the practical world appears as virtually unlimited, an infinite and massive receptacle of human designs, and "adequacy" to it as self-conscious power and unremitting self-assertion'. Consequently, at the level of transcendental meaning, the dichotomy between 'realism' and 'idealism' maybe expressed as follows:

> The realist is the knower and informed actor, the brave person who defies necessity and eliminates obstacles. The idealist is not the dreamer or the fanatic, but the dupe who acquiesces meekly in being led, being hemmed in by circumstances outside.
>
> (Berki, 1981, p. 9)

THE DIALECTICAL NATURE OF REALITY

Having distinguished between three broad referents for 'the real', and having shown the inadequacy or partiality of each through the form of 'realism' it leads to, Berki then argues that reality *qua* practice or immediacy is the site of the interpenetration between the latter two referents. Immediacy ('international politics') is a dynamic realm of tension between necessity (the abstraction of constraints) and essence (the abstraction of freedom to pursue and realize transcendent ideals or goals or purposes). The latter referents are aspects of the whole, each of which can only be understood by reference to its opposed (but presupposed) counterpart. Reality, for practical purposes, must be understood as heterogeneous, not homogeneous, self-contradictory and hence dialectical. As Deising explains:

> concepts are dialectically related when the elaboration of one draws attention to the other as an opposed concept that has been implicitly denied or excluded by the first; when one discovers [discovery here understood as an active process of thinking rather than a passive acknowledgement of what is 'there'] that the opposite concept is required (presupposed) for the validity and applicability of the first.[15]

A good example of this is Hegel's famous illustration of the relational contradiction between masters and slaves. The logical

contradiction of a master is a 'not-master' who may or may not be a slave. However, masters and slaves are relational opposites, each a contradiction, in a substantive sense, of the other. A dialectical view of the world therefore arises from the presupposition that 'reality *qua* practice' is self-contradictory. Political realism is the conscious awareness of this heterogeneity as a given; political idealism, in turn, is the denial of such heterogeneity, presupposing the autonomy and reification of its ontological referent—either necessity or freedom, one-sided abstractions which are then superimposed upon immediacy. But as Berki points out, 'neither necessity nor freedom make sense on their own, and they cannot be neatly separated and assigned to distinct modes of experience and knowledge. They both presuppose each other' (p. 96). For Berki, Hegelian logic is transferred from history to the realm of ontological presupposition, or phenomenal belief shorn of a transcendental telos.

FROM DESCRIPTION TO PRESCRIPTION

The presupposition of interpenetration (note: not interdependence, which denotes a relationship between that which is separate but linked) between necessity and freedom can be elucidated by noting its implications for realism as an attribute of conduct. Berki characterizes this in terms of moderation. Realism is the recognition of and respect for limits in terms of ends and the means to achieve them. Realism is neither the glorification or dumb surrender to the abstraction of necessity, nor is it the celebration of freedom to realize putative transcendent purposes. Necessity and freedom are abstractions, practice the dynamic site of their mutual penetration.

On the one hand, freedom permeates necessity in the form of morality or self-determination:

> A person cannot be free if he is 'determined', whether the putative determinant be defined in terms of political oppression or instinctual impulse. But he cannot be called free either if he is to be seen as completely undetermined; pure indeterminacy is just as impossible to entertain in practical thought as complete determination. So freedom, correctly understood, can only mean self-determination or, in other words, the mutual interpenetration of determination by indeterminacy (the person being, as it were, lifted out of the world of forces oppressing him) and indeterminacy by determination (the person, by his

> will, purpose, conscious act or whatever, arrests the chaotic void which the complete lack of determination would place him in).
>
> (Berki, 1981, p. 76)

This is rather a difficult passage to digest quickly, and repays careful study. Berki is saying that unless the realm of freedom is to mean more than simply indeterminacy, or the absence of constraints (i.e. freedom from), then it must be construed, as Quentin Skinner has recently argued, not just as an 'opportunity' concept but also as an 'exercise' concept (freedom to).[16] To be completely undetermined and without normative guide-lines is not to be free in any meaningful sense. Thus the ultimately open-ended nature of freedom discloses not just an abstract possibility of subjectively desired or preferred states of affairs, but also the 'necessity' of action informed by moral commands:

> Change and action with a view to improvement are not only possible, but morally obligatory in politics…this is what recognition of the reality of resistance means: unless we understand resistance as resistance and obstacles as obstacles, we are not realists, but conservative defenders of Realpolitik. The proper understanding of 'resistance', that is to say, implies that we should continually seek to overcome it…the constraint or necessity of morality is what makes us 'free', actively and relevantly, in the midst of the conceptual realm of necessity confronting us in the reality of practice.
>
> (Berki, 1981, pp. 27, 152)

Morality presupposes human choice, but also limits and channels the realm of freedom towards certain ends (the good life) and away from others (the bad life), whatever these ends may be. The realm of freedom is synonymous with the realm of morality, and this realm permeates the realm of necessity. Nothing in politics has to be accepted in a natural sense, only in a practical (or 'realistic') sense. A corollary of this understanding is the necessity of societal moral guide-lines which enable positive freedom. On this account, rights and obligations are simply two sides of the same coin. Freedom requires both the absence of natural constraints and the presence of social ones. The former enables choice, a requirement of negative liberty. The latter provides the values by which choices among

alternative courses of conduct may be exercised, a requirement of positive freedom. Based on this distinction, one could argue that the role of empirical theory is to identify and measure the natural constraints that bind. The role of normative theory (or political theory in a classical sense) is to articulate and expand the social and moral constraints that liberate. As Brandom puts it, this difference between the realm of nature (fact, description, cause) and the realm of freedom (norm, evaluation, practice) should not be construed as an ontological difference:

> The real distinction is between two ways of treating someone's behaviour. According to this line of thought, we treat someone as free insofar as we consider him subject to the norms inherent in the social practices conformity to which is the criterion of membership in our community. He is free insofar as he is one of us. Insofar as we cope with him in terms of the causes which objectively constrain him, rather than the norms which constrain him via our practices, we treat him as an object, and unfree.[17]

Thus the old question, 'what is politics for?' encourages the search for and articulation of ideals and moral standards to evaluate social institutions and practices. On the other hand, the question, 'what can politics do?' tempers the design of ideal arrangements desirable in themselves by reminding us of the necessity for explaining how the world as it is may be brought to conform to these arrangements. As Nagel points out, 'any political theory which is not utopian must bring these two types of justification together'.[18]

Thus the realist also understands that the realm of freedom which permits and indeed demands purposeful action is no 'isolated, sublime heaven of good "intentions" or an unsullied world of supreme human "reason" or a metaphysical guarantee of a bright, perfect, infinite "future" that embodies the complete realization of our free will…set by the consciousness of morality'.[19] For just as freedom penetrates necessity in the form of self-determination and morality, necessity (or the notion of given constraints) penetrates the realm of freedom, restraining it from total realization. The realist, remember, accepts the dialectical heterogeneity of politics as a given, whose ontological characteristics will not disappear at some future date. Necessity restrains freedom in two main ways.

First, for practical purposes, the realm of freedom is limited in terms of its content by what the English philosopher Michael Oakeshott, in his brilliant essay on political education, calls its 'intimation' in existing practice. He argues that ideologies, or sets of abstract principles regarding appropriate ends to be pursued within a given complex of political organization, have the same relation to practice as a scientific hypothesis to the activity of being a scientist, or between a cookery book and the activity of cooking. Oakeshott argues that:

> Political enterprises, ends to be pursued, the arrangements to be established cannot be premeditated in advance of a manner of attending to the arrangements of a society; what we do, and moreover what we want to do, is the creature of how we are accustomed to conduct our affairs…[Thus] freedom which can be pursued is not an independently premeditated 'ideal' or a dream; like a scientific hypothesis, it is something which is already intimated in a concrete manner of behaving.[20]

Berki makes exactly the same point in equating realism with moderation and the (practical) recognition of the limits of what is possible:

> To get from A to B the nature of A has to be taken into consideration, and furthermore the nature of B cannot be conceived as being wholly different from that of A. If it were that radically different, then we could never reach it and could never even conceive it. From which it follows that the concrete ends of political action must always be limited, circumscribed ends…the basic and irreducible discrepancy between what is intended and what is attained must be recognized to exist and expected to go on existing.
>
> (Berki, 1981, p. 28)

Second, the realm of freedom is itself differentiated. Despite Leo Strauss's modesty about the purpose of political philosophy and 'the true' nature of the good life, there is of course no consensus on its substantive meaning or content. The realm of freedom and morality is itself heterogeneous, manifested in competing philosophical formulations and ideological movements. Not only is there incommensurability between systems of belief and across cultures

and communities, but even when agreement exists regarding the meaning of values within a community, conflict arises as to their relative importance. Courses of action designed to enhance certain values may impede others, and this requires trade-offs as well as an enforcement mechanism to insure implementation. As Van Dyke observes, 'values do not all fit on the same means-ends chain. Rather, different sorts of values…belong on different chains, some of which are likely to intersect…where a conflict exists, a choice is likely to have to be made'.[21] Thus the heterogeneity of the realm of freedom, reflected in disagreement over the meaning of its content and between values whose pursuit may be injurious to the pursuit of other values, implies that, for the realist, not only must ends be limited but also the means to achieve them:

> Political means in the realist perspective must be fashioned so as to combat the 'resistance' of forces that hinder ideals, which means to enter the game that is played imperfectly in politics, with imperfect rules. The promised land lies perpetually over the horizon, and imagined means which derive their meaning and value from this promised land are unsuitable.
>
> (Berki, 1981, p. 29)

REALISM VERSUS IDEALISMS: NOSTALGIA, COMPLACENCY AND IMAGINATION

Political realism, then, both descriptively and prescriptively, eschews any posited dichotomy between necessity and freedom as autonomous referents for political reality and the basis for action and its evaluation. Consistent with this understanding, based on the conventions of ordinary usage and common sense, Berki then discusses the concomitant meaning of political idealism, which he argues is not singular but plural. It may take the forms of nostalgia and imagination, although I will add complacency as a variant of nostalgia. These forms differ with regard to the referent they select as 'autonomous' and also 'privileged'. The main characteristics of idealism *per se* are its rejection of dialectical heterogeneity and the reification of the abstracted referent. Idealism is the striving after unitary understanding, which presupposes the autonomy of either referent not as a dimension of political reality, but as its essence. This can be achieved only by abstracting from the dialectical heterogeneity of practice and then proceeding to label the abstracted

referent 'real' and the unabstracted remainder somehow 'unreal'. The result is a descriptive and prescriptive (or cognitive and moral) dualism, whereby the unabstracted dimension of politics is condemned unless it can be harnessed to preserve and sustain the autonomy of the privileged referent. Idealism is the attempt to reify either necessity or freedom, and is not confined to the reification of the latter. This is important, since it enables a distinction to be made between forms of idealist thinking, depending on which referent is selected as the point of departure. In the history of international relations, political idealism or utopianism is commonly associated with what, in Berki's terms, may be called the idealism of imagination. He contrasts this with the idealism of nostalgia, a phrase that, as this book will demonstrate, nicely fits the first of the two 'realists' in international theory to be considered in this study. Political realism, properly understood, is 'the synthetic unity of these…partial approximations':

> The relationship which gives rise to the stance of Realpolitik is an idealism that is revealed as the attempted idealization of the past [in the context of this study, I will argue, Hans Morgenthau] and the present [Kenneth Waltz, whom I will label as a complacent idealist], the assertion of the supreme value of a 'political' realm with its own rules, laws, moral commands and law-enforcement through power. I shall call this partial arrest the idealism of nostalgia. And the relationship to reality whose typical expression is [utopianism] receives its seeming coherence through its idealization of a future, the value placed in an abstract possibility of eliminating a pernicious and contingent present and building instead a world that is proper to man's 'natural' being. The term I propose to use in characterizing this position is the idealism of imagination.
>
> (Berki, 1981, pp. 30–1)

Nostalgia and imagination, argues Berki, are the two main deviations from realism in thought and action. Nostalgic idealism is so-called because through its reification of necessity as the dominant referent for reality, it finds itself either reifying the existing status quo (which I will refer to as complacency rather than nostalgia) or, if this status quo is itself dominated in practice by imaginative idealism, arguing that 'the "good" can and ought to be created only by returning to

some not very distant relevant past experience [and] that the "imperfection" of the present is revealed in comparing it with a given past standard' (p. 199). These distinguishable evaluative and prescriptive positions are held, respectively, I will argue, by Kenneth Waltz and Hans Morgenthau. Morgenthau is the more 'nostalgic' of the two, trying to combat what he interpreted as the pernicious effects of imaginative idealism in inter-war international theory and the conduct of American foreign policy. As we shall see, Morgenthau reifies the past in the form of nineteenth-century European diplomacy as the best hope for international order and stability in post-1945 international politics. In contrast, Kenneth Waltz reified the status quo of a world dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union as the best guarantee for international stability. While Morgenthau's work resonates with the urgency of a writer on some kind of self-appointed mission to educate the New World to the 'harsh realities' of international politics, Waltz's work fairly oozes with complacency as he seeks to justify the perpetuation of an allegedly bipolar and static status quo. In contrast, imaginative idealism reifies the realm of freedom over necessity, and radical structural and procedural change (indeed a reinvention of politics) is the only form of 'realism' that makes any sense to imaginative idealists. For them, the heterogeneity of international politics, while it may characterize this world, need not and will not sully their preferred world, whose allegedly unproblematic desirability, based on the transparent 'real interests' or 'basic needs' of mankind as a posited purposive community, somehow endows it with the authority of a Kantian moral imperative.

Political realism, argues Berki, is the middle way between these opposed attributes of thought, whose dichotomous prescriptive stances conceal a shared disregard for the dialectical heterogeneity of international politics. There is in fact no need to regurgitate in detail Berki's analysis of the nature of these two forms of idealism for the benefit of students of International Relations. They need only turn to the second chapter of E.H.Carr's classic work in the field, *The Twenty Years' Crisis,*[22] which has been described as 'undoubtedly the best formulation of the issues that separate the realist and idealist, or utopian modes of analysis'.[23] The judgement may be correct, the labels are all wrong. Carr should not have couched his argument in terms of 'reality' and 'utopia' and therefore 'realism' and 'idealism'. Instead, his posited dichotomy refers to the split between nostalgic and imaginative idealism. By conducting his discussion of the issues

dividing political 'realism' and political 'idealism' within such a sharp dichotomy, Carr fails to transcend it because he cannot give voice to any transcendent position which is, in fact, what he wants to do, but does not know how. For Carr:

> The antithesis of utopia and reality—a balance always swinging towards and away from equilibrium and never completely attaining it—is a fundamental antithesis revealing itself in many forms of thought. The two methods of approach—the inclination to ignore what was and what is in contemplation of what should be, and the inclination to deduce what should be from what was and what is—determine opposite attitudes towards every political problem.[24]

This antithesis, he argues, can be analogously identified with a series of dichotomies which he posits as free will versus determinism, the relation between theory and practice, the intellectual versus the bureaucrat, and the relationship between ethics and politics. The antinomy between what Berki calls necessity and freedom is collapsed by Carr into an apparent dichotomy of 'power' and 'morality', which he ultimately concedes is subordinate to and dependent on 'power' to have any effect. Carr is a reluctant 'realist' even though he seems to think that 'realism' is not very realistic.[25] At times he suggests the possibility of a transcendent viewpoint which surely deserves the label of realism. For example:

> Immature thought is predominantly purposive and utopian. Thought which rejects purpose altogether is the thought of old age. Mature thought combines purpose with observation and analysis. Utopia and reality are thus the two facets of political science. Sound political thought and sound political life will be found only where both have their place.[26]

Yet Carr fails to deliver the goods, despite these and many other suggestive passages of a dialectical insight whose implications for international political theory completely escape their author. Thus, despite his observation that the 'constant interaction of irreconcilable forces is the stuff of politics', the use of the term 'irreconcilable' flatly contradicts his manifestly 'realistic' statements about 'sound' and 'mature' political thought and practice. Because, as Walker notes, Carr 'is unable to establish how it is possible to have both

elements in any of his pairs of polarities',[27] the implied potential for transcendence is frustratingly defeated by Carr's metaphysical presupposition that 'the two elements—utopia and reality—belong to two different planes which can never meet'.[28] Given this presupposition, the *via media* is impossible to achieve. 'Realism' and 'idealism' are both unsound doctrines, and each is a 'corrective' to the other. But they cannot, according to Carr, be transcended in thought. All one can do, it seems, is see-saw between them, using the strengths of each to attack the other when one of them appears to be getting the upper hand in informing international diplomacy and the conduct of great-power foreign policy. Carr's book is still regarded as a 'classic' in the discipline of International Relations, and rightly so. However, it is high time that Carr's dichotomy between what he mislabelled as 'realism' and 'idealism' was transcended, and, with no little help from Berki, it is the modest goal of this study at least to begin that task.

CONCLUSION

The central question remains. What characterization, or theoretical approach to 'international politics' deserves the attribute of realism? I will argue that the perspective provided by Hedley Bull, informed by the insights of his mentor, the English historian Martin Wight, provides powerful clues as to how one can realistically think about international politics as a distinct (note: not autonomous) realm of social reality among states. But before this is done, first it is necessary to withdraw the label from Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz, arguably the most influential 'Realists' in international political theory in the post-war era. These two writers, I will argue, are political idealists. Their shared descriptions of international politics, albeit deductively arrived at via very different intellectual routes, and the prescriptive and evaluative stances that flow from them, are woefully inadequate to the complexity of the subject-matter. Thus far, I have been discussing the descriptive meaning of the terms political realism and political idealism in quite abstract terms, dipping into international relations for illustrative reasons only. Having constructed a broad set of criteria for distinguishing between these terms, now it is time to apply them.

3

HANS MORGENTHAU

Theory as truth

INTRODUCTION

The upshot of the last chapter is that realism is the descriptive attribute of thought and action which presupposes that international politics has to be grasped as 'dynamic [and] self-contradictory, with inexorable oppositions but also pointers to limited improvement'.[1] Whether this is possible, and just how one might theorize about the subject on the basis of this premise is a task left to Chapter 8, in which I argue that Hedley Bull's perspective on international order provides a starting point for conceptualizing international politics in a realistic manner. In contrast, idealism:

> signifies an attempt to simplify political reality with a view to gaining a unitary, seemingly coherent picture; this endeavour involves the necessity of abstracting from political reality, and also the tendency to remain arrested in one's own abstraction, reading this as the whole…but this cannot be done. The nature of reality can only be grasped dialectically, as a self-contradiction in the subject—thereby, and only thereby, we escape self-contradiction in the explanation offered.[2]

In the next chapter, I will argue that Hans Morgenthau, allegedly the 'Pope' of Realism in International Relations,[3] is better characterized as a nostalgic idealist. I will demonstrate this by highlighting fundamental contradictions in his description of international politics, and between this description and his nostalgic reification—in the prescriptive dimension of his work—of what one writer has recently called 'the golden age of international diplomacy—the restrained power politics of the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries…when the subtle manoeuvres of the balance of power and the rules governing that system were held in respect'.[4] This characterization is entirely consistent with Berki's use of the term nostalgia to refer 'to a writer's moral and valuational anchorage in some definite, well-known and not too remote historical experience, an abstracted form of past political reality. It is this past or nostalgic concentration which is distinctive about the kind of idealism we are discussing here: what is held up for admiration…is something that has already happened in the past'.[5] These contradictions are the result of Morgenthau's complete failure to grasp the dialectic of international politics within a static image of the subject as a struggle for power among states, which vastly exaggerates the dominance of necessity over freedom. Yet Morgenthau fails to justify this description, despite his attempt to construct an allegedly 'empirical' theory based upon it. Before demonstrating this, the present chapter simply prepares the groundwork for the subsequent critique to be undertaken in Chapter 4. Chapter 3 is divided into three sections. The first section traces the logic behind Morgenthau's basic premise that international politics is a realm of necessity—a struggle for power among atomistically conceived and asocial states. The next section presents the main elements of *Politics Among Nations*.[6] (All page references in this and the next chapter refer to this book.) Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the central prescriptive implications of Morgenthau's avowedly 'empirical' theory.

THE AUTONOMY OF POWER IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

As the leading political theorist among the self-styled 'realists' in the early post-war years, Hans Morgenthau was committed to destroying the intellectual basis of what he called 'rational liberalism', and condemning its alleged consequences for mainstream thought and practice about international politics and the conduct of western great-power diplomacy throughout the inter-war period.[7] Given the relative inexperience of the United States in international diplomacy, its cultural antipathy towards the concentration of executive political power, and the consequent difficulty of insulating American foreign policy from domestic pressures, Morgenthau tried, in the words of Stanley Hoffmann, 'to educate the heathen, not merely…joust with his fellow literati'.[8]

Morgenthau was also a self-proclaimed rebel, and a political and academic outsider. Hence his views on what 'realism' means and entails, both in terms of international political theory as well as American diplomatic practice, is sufficiently at odds with other post-war 'realists' (e.g. John Herz, E.H.Carr, Reinhold Neibuhr, and George Kennan) to cast grave doubt on the analytical or descriptive utility of the term as a way of characterizing a particular school of thought in anything other than rather vague terms.[9] Nevertheless, although much of Morgenthau's work is obviously a product of its era, his views on the 'essence' of international politics, the role and nature of theory in understanding it, and American foreign policy remained essentially unaltered until his death in July 1980.[10] Apart from changes arising out of the need to keep factually up to date, his *Politics Among Nations* remained substantially unaltered over five editions from 1948 to 1978. Indeed, one reason for Morgenthau's decline in the field was his refusal to change with the times, either politically or intellectually. After the publication of *In Defence of The National Interest,* in 1951, Morgenthau turned his attention to contemporary issues of American foreign policy, including its growing involvement in Vietnam, which he opposed from the outset. Although he continued to write voluminously until his death, he directed his views increasingly towards the general public rather than the academic world, and was not theoretically innovative.[11]

Morgenthau is distinguished by his explicit attempt to construct a grand theory of international politics on the generic principles or tenets of what he calls 'the philosophy of political realism' (p. 4). His first book represents his most systematic exposition of such a philosophy, and is therefore essential to understanding his views on the relationship between this philosophy and international political theory. In Morgenthau's view, 'the relations between nations are not essentially different from the relations between individuals; they are only relations between individuals on a wider scale'.[12] Thus in order to understand the behaviour of states it is necessary to begin with individual behaviour as the explanation. However, even if one accepts the heroic assumption that the domestic and international contexts of social and institutional 'relations' are subordinate determinants of state behaviour (necessary to posit an essential isomorphism between man and state), on what basis can one justify a particular characterization of 'human nature'?

As the dispute between Hobbes and Rousseau demonstrates, the problem cannot be empirically resolved by invoking the image or logical construct of man in a 'state of nature', for the simple reason that the state of nature is an historical fiction, and its invocation an exercise of imaginative reconstruction. For example, Hobbes' defence of an all-powerful Leviathan rests on an ambivalent view of the sources of chaos in its absence. These are traced to the interaction between, on the one hand, human passion (anger, greed, ambition) and, on the other, a condition of resource scarcity which promotes competition and rivalry among men to satisfy their basic needs. Social order therefore depends on the establishment, via a contract, of a supreme authority which can enforce peace.[13] In contrast, Rousseau posits a very different state of nature, characterized by human compassion and abundance rather than scarcity. For him, violence is the result of inequality and interdependence, a condition that accompanies the transition from a state of nature to a *de facto* civil society. Thus, for Hobbes, the state is necessary to ensure peace, defined as the absence of violence. For Rousseau, this positive function is outweighed by the inability of the state to tackle the roots of violence. These different conceptions of life in a state of nature lead to contrasting implications for peace between states. Hobbes is relatively optimistic, arguing that because of the structural dissimilarity between international politics and relations between individuals in a postulated state of nature, the possibility of peaceful coexistence among states is greater due to their enhanced capabilities for self-defence. Rousseau argues the opposite case, seeing the possibilities for inter-state violence arising from inequality and interdependence magnified on a global scale, accentuated by its greater scope and intensity.[14] As the extreme differences between these two philosophers illustrate, the appeal to a mythical state of nature neither facilitates distinguishing between the determinants of individual motivation nor guarantees a consistent image of international politics.

Given Morgenthau's dogmatic insistence on the importance of understanding human nature as a precondition to analysing relations among states, how does he resolve the problem? First, he invokes a metaphysical and religious conception of 'fallen man' which apparently avoids the ambiguity of Hobbes by fiat. Morgenthau simply asserts that all politics is a struggle for power because political man is innately a selfish creature with an insatiable urge to dominate others. Man is necessarily evil.[15] However, this does not

resolve the problem. It simply avoids it. Second, therefore, he justifies this rather bold metaphysical proposition by its heuristic power, both in revealing the intellectual poverty of the nineteenth-century liberal belief in progress, based on an optimistic view of man, and in providing the basis for a full-blown grand theory of international politics. The latter, although derived from 'realist' principles, the context of discovery, does not, or so it seems, depend upon a subjective agreement with those principles for its validity. Instead, Morgenthau justifies his theoretical framework on empirical and pragmatic grounds:

> A scientific theory has the purpose of bringing order and meaning to a mass of phenomena which without it would remain disconnected and unintelligible. Thus, a scientific theory must meet the dual test of experience and reason. Do the facts as they actually are lend themselves to the interpretation that the theory has put upon them, and do the conclusions at which the theory arrives follow with logical necessity from its premises? In short, is the theory consistent with the facts and within itself?[16]

Morgenthau's uniquely pessimistic brand of 'realism' appeals to scientific 'reason', not to discover the truth about politics, but to confirm a truth already established through experience, mediated by religion, art, and philosophical introspection.[17] The latter determines the metaphysical questions reason must grapple with. It supplies the transcendental meaning and purpose of empirical enquiry, which is the tool, not the master, of metaphysical speculation. Furthermore, a scientific theory can only imperfectly approximate the irrational reality of political practice. Politics, he wrote, 'must be understood through reason, yet it is not in reason that it finds its model'.[18]

Human nature, according to Morgenthau's metaphysic, has three dimensions; biological, rational, and spiritual.[19] In practice, all three combine to determine human behaviour, and Morgenthau explicitly adopts a pluralistic view of man, which recognizes the influence of his ethical and rational dimensions. How, then, does Morgenthau justify his exclusive focus on the 'will-to-power' as the defining characteristic of politics, distinguishing it from economics (the rational pursuit of wealth), religion (the spiritual realm of morality), and law? The answer lies in his belief that politics (and by implication, law, religion, economics, and so on) is an autonomous

sphere of social life, in which success is ultimately dependent on the use of power to dominate others. Consequently, morality and reason are both subordinate instruments in this particular arena, which is defined by the centrality of a universal *animus dominandi:*

> To the degree in which the essence and aim of politics is power over man, politics is evil; for it is to this degree that it degrades man to a means for other men. It follows that the prototype of this corruption is to be found on the political scene. For here the *animus dominandi* is not merely blended with dominant aims of a different kind but is the very essence of the intention, the very life-blood of the action, the constitutive principle of politics as a distinct sphere of human activity. Politics is a struggle for power over men, and whatever its ultimate aim may be, power is its immediate goal and the modes of acquiring, maintaining, and demonstrating it determine the techniques of political action.[20]

As a result, Morgenthau argues that reason and morality are merely instruments for attaining and justifying power. Reason serves to choose between conflicting impulses or goals that represent the stakes in a particular power struggle. It also selects the most appropriate means to achieve predetermined ends, and to harmonize conflicting means with those ends. Nevertheless, reason is like a light which:

> is carried by the irrational forces of interest and emotion to where those forces want it to move, regardless of what the inner logic of abstract reason would require. To trust in reason pure and simple is to leave the field to the stronger irrational forces which reason will serve.[21]

Finally, Morgenthau distinguishes between a transcendent morality and a culturally specific set of ethical rules. The former, whose source is never explained but presumably derives from Christian ethics, rules out the use of certain means to achieve and maintain power (for example, genocide), whilst the latter justifies and legitimizes others within a system of 'norms, mores and laws', in ascending order of effectiveness. Because politics is a realm of perpetual conflict, in which my gain is your loss, there is an absolute contradiction between the 'laws' of politics and ethical

norms. They apply to two different and autonomous spheres of social life. Thus whereas 'nonpolitical action is ever exposed to corruption by selfishness and lust for power, this corruption is inherent in the very nature of the political act'.[22]

Morgenthau's idea of political autonomy is very important to understand, because it modifies his avowedly pluralistic view of human nature quite radically, and reveals the tragedy of politics, which arises from man's inevitable failure to reconcile 'the rules of the political art' with ethics and morality. As Good points out, Morgenthau's tragic vision is more Greek than Biblical, because the element of human will is absent, and this clearly distinguishes his philosophical outlook from other 'realists' such as Neibuhr, Kennan, Herz and Carr.[23] Although man can recognize his own sinfulness, he can never, as a political actor, avoid it. It is an inescapable necessity, which 'only an act of grace or salvation in another world is able to overcome'.[24]

These beliefs about an enduring human nature and political autonomy provide the basis for Morgenthau's critique of nineteenth-century international liberalism, and its Kantian assumptions concerning the underlying harmony of interests among men. Peace through law and international organization, the spread of education, trade, constitutional government, the virtue of public opinion—Morgenthau argues that all these and other reforms are destined to fail because they represent a mistaken western faith in the universalization of liberal values.

Morgenthau's basis for positing international politics as a realm of continuity and necessity invokes a contextual dimension to political autonomy in addition to its substantive elements, thus revealing as naive the possibility of domesticating international politics (for example, through such means as disarmament, trade, and international parliamentary bodies) without a radical structural transformation of the states system *per se*. The international context in which politics takes place is structurally distinct from its domestic counterpart, and this accounts for the continuity of international politics as an arena of power politics in its purest form. Within the territorial boundaries of the state, the struggle for power is mitigated through suprasectional loyalties, constitutional arrangements, and generally accepted rules of the game. These both disguise and direct the struggle for power toward competing conceptions of the good life. The coercive power of the state, combined with a network of social norms and community bonds, such as a shared language and

history, distinguishes the context of domestic politics as a realm of potential progress. In contrast, all these factors are much weaker internationally. Here, not only is the 'will-to-power' allowed virtually free reign, it is accentuated by the multiplicity of states, whose individual sovereignty elevates each as the secular pinnacle of political and moral authority. As a result:

> continuity in foreign policy is not a matter of choice but a necessity; for it derives from (factors) which no government is able to control but which it can neglect only at the risk of failure…consequently, the question of war and peace is decided in consideration of these permanent factors, regardless of the form of government…and its domestic policies. Nations are 'peace-loving' under certain conditions and are warlike under others, and it is not the form of government or domestic policies which make them so.[25]

According to Morgenthau, not only do 'liberal utopians' (a generic term that he employs somewhat indiscriminately to denigrate anyone who does not subscribe to his philosophical outlook) misunderstand the nature of man, they also misunderstand the implications of the structural dichotomy between domestic and international politics. Whilst these differences do not refute the essential point that all politics is a struggle for power, the distinctive characteristics of international politics require it to be understood on its own terms. The concept of power, suitably embodied in an empirical theory that reveals the essential dynamics of its subject-matter, is sufficient to meet that requirement, whereas in domestic politics it is only necessary. The absence of international government, which precludes the replication of mitigating restraints on the domestic struggle for power, facilitates the construction of such a theory, which can then delineate the recurring patterns of political outcomes resulting from the power struggle, and specify the conditions under which they occur.[26]

POLITICS AMONG NATIONS

The epistemological basis of Morgenthau's theoretical perspective—his context of discovery—is his commitment to what he calls 'a store of objective, general truths' about man and politics that are valid regardless of time and space.[27] However, although these truths

are objective, they cannot be discovered inductively and are not directly empirically verifiable. Instead, the justification for believing that they exist is the allegedly timeless and static quality of human nature, and hence the relevance of classical political thought concerning the implications of man's nature for the establishment and maintenance of social order. 'If it were otherwise', argues Morgenthau, 'how could we not only understand, but also appreciate, the political insights of a Jeremiah, a Kautilya, a Plato, a Bodin, or a Hobbes?'[28] The common element uniting all these thinkers lies in their effort to transcend the limitations of their respective historical and political contexts to reflect on the perennial problems of government, regardless of their contextual manifestation. Of course, it is impossible to effect such a complete transcendence, since, being human, political theorists are always products of the society they wish both to understand and participate in. Consequently, 'the truth of political science is always a partial truth'.[29] The result is a dilemma, which cannot be resolved, only coped with by adopting a certain intellectual and political attitude towards politics to minimize the distortions that inevitably prevent the 'truth' from being either understood or applied.

Intellectually, Morgenthau argues that the academic theorist must maintain a metaphysical commitment to an architechtonic conception of politics, whose context of discovery lies in understanding the ultimate determinant of behaviour, man himself. This has to be metaphysical, because although politics is rooted in 'objective laws', one cannot discover them simply by inducing them from observing behaviour, and then correlating the measurable facts of political life. What facts are relevant? What are we supposed to measure and correlate? Most importantly, how are we to distinguish between the similarities and differences between historical events, when each is conditioned by a unique social and political context? As we have seen, the concept of power, derived from such a metaphysical conception, establishes the autonomy of all politics, whose behavioural implications are accentuated, rather than determined by, the structural context of action between states. Power, as an end in itself, is the basic determinant of state behaviour. The structure of international politics provides the spatial and temporal context in which the historical patterns of activity resulting from the struggle for power between states takes place. The tasks for a theory of international politics are to determine and classify these patterns, and to specify the trans-historical conditions

under which they are likely to occur, change, or cease altogether. The fact that such patterns exist, and can be discovered beneath the contingent elements of historical practice, make a theory, as opposed to a narrative history, possible. Morgenthau argues that the difference between theory and history is simply one of form rather than substance:

> The historian presents his theory in the form of a historical recital using the historic sequence of events as demonstration of his theory. The theoretician, dispensing with the historical recital, makes the theory explicit and uses historic facts in bits and pieces to demonstrate his theory.[30]

Thus the possibility of empirical theory presupposes the existence of some historical continuity in international politics, which Morgenthau explains by referring back to his pluralistic conception of human nature. Power provides the springboard of action, whilst reason (or rationality) determines both the proximate goals for which states compete, as well as the means to achieve those goals. In any particular situation, the possible courses of action, and therefore the possibilities for rational choice between them, are likely to be quite limited. The function of reason is to guide the use and purpose of power through the 'chaos of social contingencies', distinguishing the possible from the desired, and marshalling all available resources in a prudent selection and pursuit of interests 'defined in terms of power':

> The element of irrationality, insecurity, and chance lies in the necessity of choice among several possibilities multiplied by a great number of systems of multiple choice. [Yet] the social world is not devoid of a measure of rationality if approached with the modest expectations of a circumspect theory…the empirical political world presents theory as well as practice with a limited number of rational choices.[31]

Thus for Morgenthau, empirical theory, metaphysical speculation and the study of history are interdependent. Theory must originate in a 'philosophical' reflection of man and society. This provides the central concept for political analysis, which must then be applied to a particular sphere of action, whose specific characteristics determine the extent to which power is restrained, both by other

facets of human nature (for example, morality), and the institutional context in which the struggle for power takes place. Although the concept of power is based on objective laws of human nature, these laws are deductive and cannot be tested directly. Instead, the dynamic interplay between power and reason by a multiplicity of states leads to identifiable patterns of international activity, which can be explicitly classified in a theoretically rigorous manner, delineating the broad conditions under which they will apply. To discover these patterns requires a deep understanding and sensitivity towards the specific details of historical practice. The contingencies of history mean that theoretical propositions concerning international politics are inherently tentative, and cannot possibly achieve the certainty and predictive power of their counterparts in the natural sciences.

For Morgenthau, then, international political theory is the link between philosophy and history. The former is an important, if not the sole, source of insights into the fundamental nature of politics, which provides the conceptual tools out of which theoretical propositions can be deduced. The testing-ground for evaluating such propositions lies in historical practice, whose recurrent pat terns testify to the possibility of theoretical systematization. Although such patterns can be uncovered without the aid of an explicit theory, the latter is essential to distil the relevance and meaning of history for contemporary political practice. Morgenthau's epistemological commitment to a metaphysical 'truth' about human nature enables him to discover the 'static essence' of political practice beneath its dynamic fluctuations over time. The conceptual simplicity or monism of the power view is, in turn, allegedly redeemed by what Liska calls 'the requirement of a compensatingly circuitous application, employing the broadest setting in geopolitical space and historical time'.[32] As Morgenthau recognizes, history is always in flux, and its outcomes cannot be predicted with any certainty. On each historical occasion, the number of 'rational' outcomes is limited, but the eventual result can never be explained as a necessary outcome of something else. The logic of human history is fundamentally different from the logic of nature, and cannot be comprehended with intellectual tools that are at odds with the intractible nature of their subjectmatter. Thus what Morgenthau calls the 'rules' of the political 'art' are necessarily subject to the concrete circumstances of time and place, requiring 'the wisdom and moral strength of the statesman' rather than 'the rationality of the

engineer'.[33] Beyond a certain point, then, political reality cannot be understood with the aid of any explanatory structure.

Having outlined Morgenthau's beliefs in the nature of man, political autonomy and the distinctiveness of international politics, I will now describe the basic elements of his subsequent theory as developed in *Politics Among Nations*. As indicated in the previous section, Morgenthau believes that an empirical theory of international politics is made possible both by the role of power in delimiting the scope and nature of international politics, and the recurrent patterns of activity among states that the struggle for power produces throughout history. Since science—'the attempt to make experience conscious in reason in a theoretically systematic way'[34]—employs reason to comprehend an irrational reality, a theory has to confine itself to constructing a rational map, or outline of political practice. This will distil those elements of international politics which, though contingent in time and place, 'follow each other with a certain regularity and are subject to a certain order'.[35] Power, it should be noted, is not simply a key to distinguish between politics and other modes of human interaction, but also to distinguish between various kinds of activity that states engage in internationally. Accordingly:

> many such activities are normally undertaken without any consideration of power, nor do they normally affect the power of the nation undertaking them. Many legal, economic, humanitarian, and cultural activities are of this kind. Thus a nation is not normally engaged in international politics when it concludes an extradition treaty with another nation, when it exchanges goods and services…and when it promotes the distribution of cultural achievements throughout the world.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 30)

Furthermore, although a theory of international politics is equally applicable to all states, it is only directly concerned with the behaviour of the most powerful in generating propositions about the international system. This is simply because not all states have enough power to affect the functioning of the system. Only the most powerful states determine the character of international politics at any one time, the rest being unable, by themselves, to participate actively. Since Morgenthau is not concerned with the logic of the historical process by which the hierarchy of states changes over

time, he merely mentions, in parenthesis, this dynamic quality of international politics. By confining his attention to the instrumental use of power as a policy tool, and limiting his analysis to the contribution of different internal sources of power to the implementation of strategic policy, that 'dynamic quality' is excluded from the theory at the outset.

Instead, on the basis of his proposition that all states seek to maximize their power, Morgenthau argues that all foreign policies tend to conform to and reflect one of three patterns of activity: defending the status quo and maintaining an overall distribution of power; imperialism and trying to change the status quo; or prestige, which involves impressing other nations with the extent of one's power (p. 42). In practice, the policy of prestige is almost always subsumed under the others, and used to support them. Otherwise, diplomatic and military prestige is the last resort of an insecure state, to boost public morale and impress other nations—Italy under Mussolini being the paradigmatic example of such a policy.

Morgenthau then outlines the conditions that determine which policy will be pursued, the proximate goals they are aimed at, the methods by which these goals can be pursued, and the appropriate policies to counteract them (pp. 42–76). For some reason, these all seem to boil down to three alternatives. Thus imperialism is likely to take place when a state anticipates victory in war, exploiting its opponent's temporary weakness, or when a state has just lost a war, seeking to recover its former status, or when there exist weak states whose domination is 'attractive and accessible to a strong state' (p. 58). Similarly, the latter's objective may be world empire, continental hegemony, or simply local predominance in a given region. Finally, the methods of imperialism are military, economic, and cultural. Each of these conditions, goals and methods is discussed at length, amply illustrated with historical examples, and the whole discussion is explicitly designed to help formulate an 'intelligent' foreign policy that correctly distinguishes between the two types of policy, and implements the appropriate response. Appeasement, for example, is the proper response to a policy of the status quo, since the latter may be upheld through compromise and negotiation which seeks 'adjustments' within the overall balance of power. Against a policy of imperialism, however, it is disastrous, for it only feeds the ambitions of the aggressor, which cannot be appeased short of war. Instead, containment is the appropriate

response, tailored to the specific forms and goals of the policy it is designed to frustrate.

As Morgenthau often points out, it is not easy to make such a distinction, for three reasons (again). First, power cannot be reduced to those factors susceptible to quantitative measurement. For in addition to such stable elements as geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, population, size, military preparedness and so on, important human elements such as quality of leadership, national morale, and character have to be taken into account. Since power is a relative concept, its evaluation must compare the strength of each of these factors across time and space. Ultimately, therefore, it 'is an ideal task and, hence, incapable of achievement' (p. 158). Indeed, Morgenthau objects to any attempts to reduce the task to quantitative proportions, arguing that such techniques as geopolitics and military evaluations are prone to 'the fallacy of the single factor'. Ultimately, the estimation of a nation's power rests on an educated hunch, aided by a creative imagination (p. 164).

Second, international politics is dynamic, and policies can rapidly switch from being defensive to imperialistic and vice versa, as the external conditions that gave rise to the initial policy themselves change. Thus a state may go to war for purely defensive purposes, but as victory approaches and opportunities for imperialism present themselves, it will cease to support the status quo and attempt to expand its area of control. Obversely, a frustrated state, unable to secure its goals within the status quo, can also become imperialistic because it is unable to achieve its original objectives within a given distribution of power, as Germany discovered after 1918. Moreover, if a status quo state incorrectly diagnoses the nature of the challenge, and responds inappropriately, it may call forth the very threat that its initial response was designed to prevent. Consequently, 'the policies engendered by mutual fear appear to provide empirical evidence for the correctness of the original assumption' (p. 73).

Third, the danger of misperception, aggravated by the difficulties inherent in evaluating the distribution of power, is heightened by the increasing tendency, in the context of modern nationalism, to resort to ideology as a justification and disguise of a state's true policy. Although this is less likely in a case of a state protecting the status quo, which by its very existence acquires a certain moral legitimacy, supported by law and the absence of war, the latter are still disguises of the true nature of international

politics. In the case of imperialism, which always has the 'burden of proof in justifying change, ideology plays a more important and explicit role in disguising state policy. Seeing through these 'disguises' and 'justifications' is an important task for statesmen and students alike, since ideology can distort one's perception of the meaning of other states' behaviour, and thereby corrupt the 'rational' determination of state interests in light of its objectives and the availability of resources to achieve them.

Despite all the above difficulties in distinguishing between status quo and imperialistic policies—which, to his credit, Morgenthau does not seek to avoid—the outcome of the perpetual struggle for power among states at the international level is the balance of power. As we shall see in the next chapter, although Morgenthau uses this phrase in a very loose manner, he generally means 'an actual state of affairs in which power is distributed among several nations with approximate equality' (p. 173). Such an outcome is apparently 'inevitable' when each state strives to maximize its power in a context of structural anarchy. Although, as a constitutive principle of social equilibrium, it operates in domestic politics, it does so within a framework of constitutional structures that maintain its stability without the use of force. Internationally, it is inherently unstable, because such restraining factors are much weaker here. Instead, it is maintained by a countervailing network of pressures among states, whose respective leaders may vary in their appreciation of its existence. For although it is an 'inevitable' outcome of power politics, its stability is a function of the ability and willingness of statesmen to first, recognize that it exists, and then to work within the constraints that it imposes on their freedom of action. This is particularly important in the post-1945 international system, whose stability is threatened by structural changes that have made the new balance of power much more difficult to manipulate than in the past.

First, the number of states participating in the predominant balance has declined from its heyday in the eighteenth century. In the past, when peace depended upon a stable balance among five or six great powers in Europe, the loose alliance structure among them induced caution and prudence in the foreign policy of each. The uncertainty engendered by this situation did not, of course, ensure peace, but it at least allowed some scope for diplomatic compromise, and limited both the scale of violence and the purposes for which it was used. After the Second World War, a multipolar balance was

replaced by a global bipolar one. Morgenthau believes that this has robbed diplomacy of a necessary flexibility, and escalated the risk of war through miscalculation. The new balance of power has become a zero-sum game, in which a marginal shift in power could lead to war, either through opportunism or frustration.

Second, a pivotal role in the European system was played by Great Britain, which acted as the neutral 'arbiter' in continental conflicts, and whose power was sufficient for it to uphold a relatively equal distribution of power on the continent of Europe. Britain's power was based on its colonial empire, backed up by a large navy, and its political and geographical isolation from successive European territorial conflicts enabled it to prevent any one state from achieving regional hegemony in Europe. In the post-war 'two bloc' system, no state or group of states is powerful enough to play such a role.

Third, territorial compensations are no longer available as a means to maintain the preponderant balance of power. Explicitly recognized by the Treaty of Utrecht, which ended the war of the Spanish Succession in 1713, the division of colonies and lesser units in Europe among rival European powers was an important technique for negotiating concessions and trade-offs in European diplomacy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The loss of a colonial frontier has robbed the great powers of the ability to compensate each other by arbitrarily dividing and expanding their colonial empires.

Fourth, the technology of transport, communications, and war has been drastically changed by the industrial revolution. Morgenthau portrays the twentieth century as an era of 'total mechanization, total war, and total dominion' (p. 383). The exponential increase in the coercive capabilities available to the superpowers, not just to conquer other states but to maintain control over them, creates in turn the will to do so. Although the struggle for power is kept within barely tolerable bounds by the mutual deterrence provided by nuclear weapons, Morgenthau has no faith in their ability to maintain peace in such an unstable world. One cannot rely on strategies of nuclear deterrence, with their inherent tendency to justify ever-increasing numbers of weapons on the basis of worst-case analysis. Since weapons are not the source of instability, neither are they a cure. Their control is predicated on the stability of nuclear technology in maintaining a condition of mutual deterrence. As Morgenthau recognizes, that stability is unlikely to persist as long as

such a condition is underpinned by strategies based on the rational utility of such weapons in the event of war (pp. 414–16).[36]

All these structural changes have radically transformed the international system as it has expanded from Europe to encompass the globe, and Morgenthau is extremely pessimistic in evaluating the likelihood of peaceful coexistence between the superpowers:

> Total war waged by total populations for total stakes under the conditions of the contemporary balance of power may end in world dominion or in world destruction or both… the revolutions of our age have this in common. They support and strengthen each other and move in the same direction—that of global conflagration. Such are the prospects that overshadow world politics in the second half of the twentieth century.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, pp. 386–7)

However, Morgenthau does not completely despair, although he devotes long chapters to the futility of international law, public opinion, disarmament, the United Nations, and a world state as alternative paths to peace. Given his metaphysical beliefs in man, and the centrality of power in international politics, he condemns all attempts either to avoid the roots of the problem to tackle its symptoms, or to discover answers outside the existing framework of the states system. Such attempts are worse than useless—they lead to cynicism and despair by embracing solutions that have no chance of ever being implemented.

FROM DESCRIPTION TO PRESCRIPTION: THE REJUVENATION OF STATECRAFT

Instead, Morgenthau argues that the new balance of power 'contains in itself the potentialities of unheard-of good as well as for unprecedented evil' (p. 363).[37] The key to realizing the former lies in rejuvenating diplomacy to moderate the destructive tendencies inherent in the new situation. That task is both more difficult and yet more essential than ever before, and Morgenthau concludes each edition of *Politics Among Nations* with a brief analysis of the difficulties and a general set of prescriptions both for alleviating these and for conducting a revived Strategy of accommodation' in the post-war era.

Five factors are responsible for the decline of diplomacy since the First World War, all of which are concomitant with the structural changes briefly referred to above. First, the development of modern communications enables leaders to negotiate directly with each other, bypassing their overseas representatives to conduct 'shuttle' diplomacy. Consequently, the experience and accumulated wisdom of a permanent diplomatic corps are wasted. Second, the public image of diplomacy has been badly affected by the experience of the First World War, when much of the responsibility for that conflict was attributed to secret agreements, the details of which 'the watchful eyes of a peaceloving public' were kept ignorant. Third, and as a consequence, diplomacy is conducted within pseudo-parliamentary forums, in full public glare, where outcomes are ratified by voting procedures in accordance with the particular constitution of the organization. Fourth, the two superpowers are 'newcomers' to diplomacy, inexperienced in manipulating 'that intricate and subtle machinery by which traditional diplomacy had given protection and furtherance to the national interest' (p. 539). Finally, diplomacy cannot flourish in the context of a bipolar cold war, in which relations between the superpowers take the form of a zero-sum game, and each defines its national interest in 'inflexible opposition' to compromise and the search for common interests.

Despite all these difficulties, the absence of a viable alternative demands the reinvigoration of a constructive diplomacy to discover and expand such interests. However, beyond some rather vague and general strictures, Morgenthau provides no concrete suggestions as to what these are or how they may be achieved. Each edition of *Politics Among Nations* thus ends on a sombre but ambivalent note. Its diagnosis is uniformly grim, but, providing the implications of its theoretical analysis are heeded by those responsible for the conduct of American foreign policy, the prospects for peace can be significantly enhanced.

Morgenthau justifies a prescriptive dimension to his theoretical approach by arguing that truth and power can never be reconciled in political practice, because of man's psychological need to justify his behaviour in non-political terms. The human mind, he argues:

> cannot bear to look the truth of politics in the face. It must disguise, belittle and embelish the truth—the more so, the more the individual is actively involved in the processes of

> politics, and particularly in those of international politics. For only by deceiving himself about the nature of politics and the role he plays on the political scene is man able to live contentedly as a political animal with himself and his fellow men.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 15)

This conflict, it should be remembered, is part of the 'inevitable tragedy' of politics, and cannot be avoided unless and until 'the philosophers and the kings, the men of wisdom and the men of action, become one'.[38] Until that happens, the goals of the theoretician and the politician are incompatible, and are therefore bound to clash.

However, the extent to which they are incompatible depends upon two factors which are susceptible to human will and intervention, and impose certain duties upon both the theoretician and the political actor. On the one hand, the theorist must not compromise with his intellectual duty to search for the truth, however personally and socially unpleasant this may turn out to be. According to Morgenthau, it is bound to be a lonely and alienating experience, for in order to minimize an ethnocentric bias which can never be completely transcended, as well as the societal and professional pressures that determine 'the objects, results and methods' of theoretical research, the theorist has to risk becoming unpopular and generally disliked. Nevertheless, one of the most important functions of a theory is 'to sit in continuous judgement upon political man and society, measuring their truth, which is in good part a social convention, by its own'.[39]

On the other hand, Morgenthau makes an important distinction between the mere politician and the statesman. The former is an opportunist; he is concerned to take the path of least resistance in politics. His aim is never further than the next election. Maintaining support by pandering to public opinion, the politician is less concerned with questions of purpose than means and techniques. His promises are mere rhetoric, his behaviour erratic. In complete contrast, 'the decision of the statesman…is a commitment to action. It is a commitment to a particular action that precludes all other courses of action. It is a decision taken in the face of the unknown and the unknowable'.[40] The distinction between them is that while the politician is simply an opportunist, the statesman acts on the basis of an intuitive understanding of the 'tragic dilemmas' of

foreign policy. In Morgenthau's view, the great statesmen of the past, such as Richelieu, Bismark, and Churchill, all achieved greatness in their conduct of foreign affairs by approaching them with a rational and conscious, if inarticulate, 'general conception of foreign policy'—a grand strategy based on their accurate understanding (i.e. a theory) of the essential nature and dynamics of international politics.

The conflict between truth and power is therefore dependent upon the extent to which the theorist is committed to the former, and the degree to which the statesman, cognisant of the truth, manages to reconcile the domestic requirements of success with the demands of power politics. Statesmanship inheres in the attempt to achieve the impossible ideal—to combine the role of king and philosopher. The prescriptive role of theory lies in explaining the general principles of a rational foreign policy so that the politician-cum-statesman can apply them in practice. Morgenthau uses the metaphors of a painted portrait and a photograph to illuminate this relationship between theory and practice:

> Political realism wants the photographic picture of the political world to resemble as much as possible its painted portrait. Aware of the inevitable gap between good—that is, rational—foreign policy and foreign policy as it actually is, realism maintains not only that theory must focus upon the rational elements of political reality, but also that foreign policy ought to be rational.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 8)

The concept that Morgenthau uses to perform this dual function of explanation and prescription is the national interest, which he applies as a critical tool to evaluate and prescribe for American foreign policy. As an analytical tool, it contains two elements. The first is a logical requirement of national survival, the protection of a state's physical, political and cultural identity against encroachments by other nations.[41] This element is relatively stable and its substantive content most easily identifiable under the threat of invasion and war. The second element is variable and its content debatable. It is a residual category of goals shaped by 'the cross-currents of personalities, public opinion, sectional interests, [and] partisan politics'.[42] The task of diplomacy is to determine, in any concrete situation, the

relationship between these two elements, always ensuring the primacy of the essential element, and finding a harmonious balance between objectives and resources, costs and benefits. The role of statesmanship is to perform this task in as 'rational' a manner as possible under pressures from sub-national, other-national, and supra-national interests, whose supporters may attempt to 'usurp' and 'corrupt' the national interest by identifying it with their own preferences.

The danger of usurpation is particularly acute in the United States, whose foreign policy rarely reflects the kind of statesmanship and rationality that Morgenthau espouses. In the contemporary international system, when stability and peace depend on the revival of traditional diplomacy under conditions of unprecedented difficulty, it is vitally important that American leaders heed the prescriptive implications of Morgenthau's theoretical analysis, and he devotes most of his post-theoretical writing to exposing the underlying reasons for America's failure to think in terms of power politics, and to cogent analyses of the challenges it faced and how they should be dealt with in particular situations. Much of this literature is concerned less with the external difficulties facing the United States than with critically condemning its continual failure to rid itself of many deep-seated illusions about international politics:

> The main handicaps that American foreign policy must overcome…are not to be found in the challenges confronting it from outside. They lie in certain deeply ingrained habits of thought, and preconceptions as to the nature of foreign policy.[43]

Generally, Morgenthau argues that American foreign policy is continually plagued by four main flaws (legalism, utopianism, sentimentalism, and neo-isolationism) that are rooted in a typical American tendency to conceive of its actions in 'non-political, moralistic terms'.[44] Morgenthau explains this in terms of the United States' unique geographical, historical and ideological separation from the European balance of power throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Geographically, the United States has been protected from European conflicts by the Atlantic Ocean, which ensured its security without a conscious involvement in European politics. Although the security afforded by this natural barrier was

now over, due to rapid developments in communications and military technology, the United States had come to believe that it was literally a 'New World' and immune from the sources of conflict and war that it attributed to Europe—aristocratic 'tyranny', colonialism, secret diplomacy and so on. Morgenthau argues that the absence of these vices is an historical accident, which ended as soon as the United States became a powerful and united nation-state, having reached the limits of its internal territorial expansion at the close of the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, Americans still conceive of their national identity and purpose in exceptional terms, even though the conditions on which their flattering self-image is based no longer apply. Because it represents a unique experiment in constitutional democracy, the United States too often attributes its good luck to its inherent superiority over other nations as the ideal state. Consequently, it tends to believe that the solutions to war and conflict lie in the universalization of American values and political institutions, particularly the rule of law based on democratic self-determination.

As a result, the United States misunderstands both the nature of its own foreign policy as well as that of other states. However, Morgenthau is decidedly ambiguous as to the practical consequences of the 'intellectual errors' with which American policymakers approach international politics. On the one hand, he argues that these consequences are predominantly perceptual rather than substantive. Thus 'we have acted on the international scene, as all nations must, in power-political terms; but we have tended to conceive of our actions in non-political, moralistic terms'.[45] On the other hand, Morgenthau divides the history of American foreign policy into three distinct periods. The first lasted from 1775–1785, covering the initial period of American independence, when it faced direct military threats from France and Britain. He calls this period 'realistic' because, under George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, the demands of the national interest were both recognised and acted upon (i.e. to prevent either power from achieving European hegemony). The second period lasted from 1785–1902, and Morgenthau calls it 'ideological' because it was increasingly characterized by 'moralism' in terms of thought and rhetoric, but, in terms of action, the requirements of the national interest (the maintenance of hemispheric dominance against European powers) were still

adhered to. However, the third period, lasting from 1902–1945 is 'moralistic' because it reflects a tendency 'to think and act in terms of moral principle'.[46] This inconsistency recurs throughout *In Defence of the National Interest,* and is nicely illustrated in his treatment of President Wilson, who, in Morgenthau's eyes, encapsulates the errors and flaws in America's attitude to foreign policy. For although Wilson was eventually correct in declaring war on Germany in 1917, he totally misled the American people with regard to the purposes and consequences of US involvement in the war. According to Morgenthau, these purposes were straightforward—to prevent Germany from conquering Europe. Instead, Wilson insisted on justifying America's entry in wholly moralistic terms, hoping to end war for all time, and to replace the European balance of power with a set of legal and parliamentary procedures, based on American-inspired principles of self-determination, public diplomacy, and collective security through the League of Nations. His policies, particularly at the Versailles Peace Conference, 'had politically disastrous effects, for which there is no precedent in the history of mankind'.[47] However, only a page before this sweeping statement, Morgenthau explains America's entry into the First World War in the following terms; 'it was only the objective force of the national interest, which no rational man could escape, that imposed the source of America's mortal danger upon [Wilson] as the object of his moral indignation'.[48]

Since the source, nature and significance of this ambiguity will be explored in the next chapter, I will not pursue it here. Suffice it to say at this point that Hans Morgenthau is somewhat ambiguous in his treatment of the national interest as both an analytical guide to what all states invariably do, and as a prescriptive guide for what the United States should do in international affairs. Nevertheless, the prescriptive dimension of Morgenthau's international political theory arises from the unprecedented dangers of the new bipolar balance, which can only be minimized by a constructive diplomacy by the superpowers. Unfortunately, the United States is illequipped to revive traditional diplomatic statecraft, mainly because of its leaders' 'defective intellectual equipment' in making foreign policy. In his role as custodian of the truth, Morgenthau interprets his mission as an educational one—to alert his new homeland to the uncomfortable realities of international politics, which can no longer be avoided as they have been in the past. Thus the prescriptive function of his

theoretical analysis is to shatter certain distinctively American misconceptions of the nature of foreign policy, including its own—and to thereby lay the basis for a more 'rational' foreign policy that will at least confront its complex challenges with some intellectual clarity.

4

HANS MORGENTHAU

A critical analysis

> Do I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself. I am large. I contain multitudes.
>
> Walt Whitman

INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights fundamental logical contradictions in Morgenthau's description of international politics, and between this description and his prescriptive views. These contradictions are not accidental. They are a direct product of Morgenthau's nostalgic idealism and his concomitant failure to grasp the dialectical heterogeneity of international politics. As Berki points out, idealism is:

> [primarily] the striving after unitary understanding. Secondly, since unitary understanding involves abstraction, idealism amounts to the assertion of a dualism, the abstracted [in this context, necessity in the form of a posited struggle for power] and the unabstracted [the realm of freedom and morality which Morgenthau both separates from power and subordinates to it]. Now the third feature of political idealism is its resultant, and entirely 'logical' self-contradiction…the unabstracted part of political reality keeps on intruding into the ideal picture of the idealist writer; his abstraction is never left in peace, but is constantly disturbed, assailed as it were from the outside. What is one whole cannot be kept apart except at the price of distortion.[1]

Consequently, the line between explanation and prescription is always blurred in Morgenthau's work.

This chapter is divided into two parts. First, I will describe the distortions and contradictions in Morgenthau's attempt to explain international politics in terms of a struggle for power among states. I will then describe the related contradictions arising out of his claim that his theoretical approach could be used to evaluate and prescribe for American foreign policy. Before proceeding, two caveats. First, Morgenthau's work has been subject to a great deal of critical analysis throughout the post-war period.[2] My purpose is simply to highlight the internal incoherence and self-contradictory nature of his views, not to speculate about their origins in biographical terms, let alone attempt to resolve the contradictions discussed below. Second, when criticizing Morgenthau's evaluations of and prescriptions for American foreign policy, I am not concerned with their intuitive appeal or cogent insight, but with the basis on which he defends and justifies them. These are separate issues. I will argue that Morgenthau can neither explain contemporary American foreign policy in terms of his theory, nor can he logically derive his prescriptions from it. Therefore, despite his characterization of American foreign policy as 'pathological', as a theoretician, Morgenthau is not much help, either in diagnosing its roots or providing a cure, both of which are the main purposes of *Politics Among Nations*.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AS POWER POLITICS

This section highlights three sets of self-contradictions: within Morgenthau's description of international politics; in the logic of his argument according to which the subject-matter is conceptualized as a struggle for power (the context of discovery); and in the way Morgenthau defends his views as realistic ones (the context of justification).

Morgenthau's oft-quoted and somewhat blunt assertions that international politics is a continual struggle for power presupposes that the goal of each state is to maximize its power, either as an end in itself or as a means to an end. 'The aspiration for power being the distinguishing element of international politics…international politics is of necessity power politics…nations must actually aim not at a balance—that is, equality of power, but a superiority in their own behalf. And since no nation can forsee how large its miscalculation will turn out to be, all nations must ultimately seek the maximum of power…the desire to attain a maximum of power is universal' (pp.

35 and 215). The theory outlined in *Politics Among Nations* leads one to expect that all states will expand their power, given sufficient capabilities and opportunities to do so. This prediction is based on the second principle of Morgenthau's interpretation of 'political realism', according to which 'statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power, and the evidence of history bears that assumption out' (p. 5).

Unfortunately, this is not the case even according to Morgenthau's own interpretation of the Evidence of history' and the 'facts as they really are'. A glaring contradiction exists between the dogmatism of his fundamental idealist premise (which privileges necessity in the form of power) and Morgenthau's own distinction between status quo and imperialist states and policies. This distinction is based on a contradictory principle, which is that the extent to which international politics is a struggle for power is dependent on the degree of (in)compatibility of state interests. The struggle for power is not therefore given, but is variable. Whether or not, and to what extent and under what conditions, states seek power then becomes a matter of empirical and historical study to discover the determinants of state interests. According to the distinction between status quo and imperialism, as Vasquez rightly points out, 'power politics is not so much an explanation as a description of one type of behavior found in the global political system [which] itself must be explained; it does not explain'.[3]

Although in a footnote Morgenthau claims that his distinction is 'exclusively concerned with the actual character of the policies pursued and not with the motives of those who pursue them' (p. 43), his text flatly contradicts this claim. Referring to the policy of the status quo, it 'seeks to keep power' and 'aims at the maintenance of the distribution'. In contrast, imperialism 'seeks to increase power' and 'aims at the overthrow of the status quo, at a reversal of the power relations between two or more nations' (p. 49). Commenting on these distinctions in the work of Morgenthau as well as many other so-called 'realists', Wolfers notes that their introduction 'robs [the] theory of the determinate and predictive character that seemed to give the pure power hypothesis its peculiar value. It can now no longer be said of the actual world…that a power vacuum cannot exist for any length of time'.[4]

Wolfers' analogy of a burning house is apposite here. According to Morgenthau's theory, international politics is like a house on fire with only one exit. Given the necessities of survival and minimal

assumptions about human nature, one does not need to know much about the inhabitants of the house to predict their behaviour. On the other hand, his distinction between the behaviour of status quo and imperialist states suggests that the house is not always on fire and several exits are available to the inhabitant. Furthermore, since these distinctions ultimately rest upon what states 'seek' to do (i.e. intentions rather than a combination of capabilities and opportunities), not only do they contradict the power maximization assumption, they render the application of the attributes 'status quo' and 'imperialist' a matter of subjective judgement. As Morgenthau himself concedes, it is impossible to identify which states belong in what category merely by observing their behaviour, even if objective criteria for the relative measurement of state power were available, which they are not. After all, 'not every foreign policy aiming at an increase in power is necessarily a manifestation of imperialism. A policy seeking only adjustment, leaving the essence of power relations intact still operates within the general framework of the status quo' (p. 49). Moreover, how would one go about distinguishing between the various goals of imperialism which could be local predominance, continental hegemony, or world empire (although why these three categories exhaust the objectives of imperialism is somewhat unclear—Morgenthau has an eccentric tendency to think in terms of threes all the time)? Again, the power maximization assumption is contradicted by the diversity of policies that can be pursued by imperialist states, which can be limited 'either by those set by the power of resistance of the prospective victims or…by the localized aims of the imperial power itself (p. 59). Notwithstanding Morgenthau's impressive and extensive use of historical examples to demonstrate the continuity of patterns of behaviour in international politics over time, he provides no criteria, or procedural rules of evidence, for their selection and categorization.

In light of all the additional difficulties discussed in the last chapter regarding the problems of detecting whether, and to what extent, individual states are status quo or imperialist, it is interesting to observe Morgenthau's own views on, for example, whether the Soviet Union is an imperialistic state, in which case appeasement is counter-productive, or whether it is a status quo state, in which case containment is counter-productive. The answer is that *Politics Among Nations* provides little guidance, for the simple reason that Morgenthau offers no criteria as to how one can evaluate Soviet

goals, and therefore deal with Moscow in a 'realistic' manner. Indeed, Morgenthau is extremely ambiguous as to the role of such factors as ideology, leadership, military power, national character, and many others in determining Soviet foreign policy at any one time.[5] Consequently, in spite of his warning against single-factor analysis, Morgenthau engages in precisely this kind of exercise. To briefly illustrate this, I will focus on his often contradictory statements concerning the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy.[6] Depending on which of his many articles one happens to read, Morgenthau can appear both as an arch conservative, exhorting the United States to build up its military forces and negotiate 'from strength' (Morgenthau believed that the United States consistently underestimated Soviet power), or as a moderate liberal, complaining about the American tendency to equate communist ideology with Soviet power, and failing to draw subtle distinctions between, for example, Russian imperialism in Europe and revolutionary nationalism in Asia.

Concerning the role of communist ideology as both a rationalization and a component part of Soviet power, Morgenthau argued that it performed both these functions at different times. For example, under Stalin, ideology was only a propaganda weapon to fulfil and legitimize traditional Russian interests, in particular, a dominant sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Thus the west should have negotiated a territorial settlement at Yalta in 1945, instead of 'idealistically' trying to influence the domestic structure of East European governments.[7] Under Stalin, argued Morgenthau, communism merely provided 'a new instrument with which to support traditional interests'. In contrast, under Khrushchev's rule, it took on a different role, 'creating new interests'. Thus for Khrushchev, 'Marxism-Leninism was the embodiment of unquestioned truth'.[8] In 1959, when Eisenhower was preparing to meet Khrushchev, Morgenthau advised against negotiations, claiming that the United States would be bargaining from a position of weakness.[9] Of course, Morgenthau's change of mind is not necessarily inconsistent. He may very well be correct in his comparison of the role of ideology under these two Soviet leaders. However, the basis on which he offers his evaluation is completely at odds with the theoretical treatment of ideology in *Politics Among Nations,* where it is argued that ideology functions solely to legitimize or rationalize pre-existing national interests, not create them. One could literally fill volumes documenting how inconsistent

Morgenthau is in his treatment of ideology and its relationship with power, but the underlying point is that *Politics Among Nations* contains little guidance as to how one can distinguish between the two, and therefore how to detect and counter an imperialistic policy, or even to distinguish between policies of imperialism and the status quo. As Morgenthau himself admits, it is only in retrospect that one can assess the correct nature of Soviet goals,[10] even though this corrects his modest belief that he understands international politics better than politicians themselves, and that his theory can provide a prospective guide to the future, rather than a retrospective evaluation of the past.

The power maximization assumption is also contradicted by Morgenthau's treatment of the way the balance of power functions in international politics to maintain social equilibrium and peace, which his theory treats as a condition of mere stalemate and mutual deterrence. Despite his (again self-contradictory) statement that 'the aspiration for power on the part of several nations, each trying either to maintain or overthrow the status quo, leads of necessity to…the balance of power and to policies that aim at preserving it' (p. 173). There is absolutely nothing 'necessary' about these policies. Morgenthau concedes as much in his discussion of the classical European balance of power system in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

> Before the balance of power could impose its restraints upon the power aspirations of nations through the mechanical interplay of opposing forces, the competing nations had first to restrain themselves by accepting the system of the balance of power as the common framework of their endeavours…. It is this consensus—of common moral standards and a common civilization as well as of common interests—that kept in check the limitless desire for power, potentially inherent, as we know, in all imperialisms, and prevented it from becoming an actuality…. Such a consensus prevailed from 1648 to 1772 and from 1815–1933.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, pp. 226–7)

This concession to the importance of self-restraint, and the image of the balance of power as an international institution or convention dependent for its effects upon the legitimacy of an existing status quo, agreement among states regarding its existence and the criteria

for measuring it, suggests that the dichotomy between domestic and international politics is also a variable rather than a 'given' static condition. The above passage, and the section of the text from which it is taken, totally contradict the atomistic and asocial image of international politics conveyed by clashing billiard balls, according to which states are completely separate from one another, with no communal ties or common interests to blunt their egotistical quest for power.

Clearly, then, Morgenthau's description of international politics is self-contradictory. His assertions regarding the autonomy of the subject as a struggle for power is contradicted by the basis for his own distinction between types of states in the international system, as well as his discussion of the balance of power.[11] The source of these contradictions lies in Morgenthau's political idealism, and his distorted reification of the abstraction of necessity in the form of a struggle for power.

Similar contradictions also characterize the logic of Morgenthau's argument which leads him to conceptualize international politics in such a distorted manner. Is it based on metaphysical assumptions about the 'irrational' domination of human nature by a lust for power, or is it based upon empirical assumptions about the anarchical system within which states relate to one another? There is no simple answer to this. Morgenthau contradicts himself by holding to both these sources at different times. On the one hand, as was argued in the last chapter, human nature would seem to be the source of the power maximization assumption, on the basis of his assertion that relations between nations are 'only relations between individuals on a wider scale', and that the entire social world is merely 'a projection of human nature onto the collective plane, being but man writ large…social forces are the product of human nature in action'.[12] Indeed, Morgenthau's first principle of political realism unambiguously states that all politics 'are governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature' (p. 4). Statements such as these have been interpreted by some scholars as indications of a 'levels of analysis' problem in Morgenthau's writing. He is often accused of committing the ecological fallacy in reverse and hence guilty of psychologism—the analysis of individual behaviour used uncritically to explain group behaviour.[13] The most sustained, and possibly self-serving, argument along these lines is made by Waltz, who classifies Morgenthau, along with Spinoza, St Augustine, and Niebuhr, as a 'first-image pessimist'.[14] According to Waltz, apart

from explaining 'the necessary imperfections of all social and political forms', a static human nature cannot explain differences in political outcomes. For example, one cannot explain both war and peace by arguing that man is wicked. A number of other critics have disputed Morgenthau's views regarding human nature, thus attempting to undermine his theory at its most basic level.[15]

These criticisms, although valid in themselves, are sometimes based on the mistaken assumption that the logic of Morgenthau's argument travels in one direction from premises about human nature to conclusions about the nature of international politics. Thus Waltz tells us that Morgenthau 'explains political behaviour [as] the undeniable and inevitable product of a…fixed nature of man'.[16] Similarly Peter Gellman, in his recent analysis, claims that for Morgenthau, the struggle for power among states 'is located essentially in human nature, and only then in the conditions of international affairs'.[17] It is not as simple as this. Waltz, Gellmann and others have distorted Morgenthau's logic by presenting it as coherent, even though mistaken, when it is not coherent and is in fact self-contradictory. As I emphasized in the last chapter, Morgenthau's views on human nature are not at all dogmatic and unidimensional. They are pluralistic and even dialectical—realistic views, if you will. What is idealistic is Morgenthau's assumption that political man can be abstracted from real man to provide a realistic view of international politics which reifies one part of human nature. Consider this passage from Morgenthau's sixth principle of political realism, which directly contradicts Waltz and Gellmann, as well as Morgenthau himself and his statements about the social world being 'man writ large':

> The realist defence of the autonomy of the political sphere against its subversion by other modes of thought does not imply disregard for the existence and importance of these other modes of thought. It rather implies that each should be assigned its proper sphere and function. Political realism is based on a pluralistic conception of human nature. Real man is a composite of 'economic man', 'political man', 'religious man', etc. A man who was nothing but 'political man' would be a beast, for he would be completely lacking in moral restraints. A man who was nothing but 'moral man' would be a fool, for he would be completely lacking in prudence.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 14)

Later on he claims that 'the relative strength [of the different facets of human nature] is dependent upon social conditions that may favour one drive and tend to repress another, or that may withhold social approval from certain manifestations of these drives while they encourage others' (p. 37). Thus, the logic of Morgenthau's 'context of discovery' is itself self-contradictory. Sometimes he does indeed seem to derive the struggle for power from pessimistic premises about the ubiquity of man's instinct for domination and aggression. On the other hand, the only basis for abstracting political man from a pluralistic conception of human nature depends upon prior assumptions about the social conditions of international politics. These assumptions, despite the dogmatism with which they are asserted, are themselves contradictory, as demonstrated earlier. Thus, if one reads Morgenthau carefully, despite his rhetoric about the importance of human nature, the logic of his presuppositions about the essence of international politics has nothing to do with human nature. On the contrary, it is Morgenthau's power monism and unidimensional view of international politics that is really the basis for his reification of political man, an idealist distortion of real man.

Before examining related contradictions between Morgenthau's descriptive and prescriptive views, one should also note stark self-contradictions in the way Morgenthau justifies his views in terms of their 'realism', and these manifest themselves in his distorted attitude toward the relationship between 'theory' and 'truth'. Frohock's somewhat dated distinction between two different conceptions of the relationship between theory and practice is still helpful in disentangling these contradictions:

> Theories have been viewed…either as a description of reality, or as an instrument to order experience. The descriptive view is the older view, and it amounts to the assertion that theories are factual statements…which are either true of false. The instrumental position is that theories do not make truth claims about the world, but are frameworks which make the world meaningful.[18]

In the last chapter, it appeared that Morgenthau adopts the instrumental view, hence the analogy of theory as a map. It is 'a tool for understanding [whose purpose] is to bring order and meaning to a mass of phenomena which without it would remain disconnected and unintelligible'.[19] According to the instrumental view, there can

presumably be many competing theories of international politics, which view its reality in different ways. Each in itself is neither true nor false, only more or less useful in organizing knowledge. Theoretical utility is, in turn, a function of their explanatory power, which can be evaluated according to criteria such as internal logical consistency, empirical verification of operational propositions and hypotheses derived from the theory, parsimony and so on. On this basis, theories contribute towards knowledge of the truth indirectly.[20] In *Politics Among Nations,* Morgenthau initially seems to support this view, and its consequences for theoretical evaluation. However, elsewhere, he defines a scientific (note: not normative or philosophical) theory as a 'system of empirically verifiable, general truths, sought for their own sake. This definition sets theory apart from…philosophic knowledge [which] may be, but is not necessarily, empirically verifiable'.[21]

Hence for Morgenthau, realism is a particular philosophical outlook or approach to international politics which is also more 'realistic' than any of its competitors.[22] He could then argue that to criticize his approach as overly pessimistic is 'completely without significance for any theoretical discussion…the only question that counts is whether you are right or wrong'.[23] Morgenthau seems to be arguing that as a philosophy, or set of principles, his 'realism' is true but empirically unverifiable. In other words, one can agree or disagree with these principles, but that is a subjective matter. However, when realism is transformed into a 'scientific' or empirical theory, agreement is no longer a matter of opinion. Consequently, to cling to opposing principles is unrealistic, idealistic, and naive. By connating realism with accuracy, Morgenthau commits the elemental category mistake identified in Chapter 1.

However, this argument undercuts his avowedly instrumental conception of theory. As Spegele points out:

> if Morgenthau is sincere in arguing that theories are merely 'maps' that are neither true nor false, the upshot of his position is that while realism can only make propositional claims about world politics which are contingent, and also unpredictable, it can nonetheless take up a unified, Archimedean point outside the world in terms of which anti-realist viewpoints can be examined and found wanting.[24]

To resolve the contradiction, Morgenthau would have to argue either that his philosophy of realism consists of a set of beliefs that are

neither true nor false (but then he would have to justify the label 'realism' that is attributed to them, and this he does not do), or commit himself to a descriptive conception of theory, according to which the facts of international politics permit a single valid interpretation, namely, his own. As it is, Morgenthau does neither. Instead, he directly contradicts his initial commitment to *Politics Among Nations* as an empirical theory, to be tested against the facts and the evidence of history. For in addition to being a neutral instrument for understanding actual political practice, Morgenthau also invokes the metaphors of a painted portrait and a photograph to illustrate the relationship between theory and practice. 'Political realism wants the photographic picture of the political world to resemble as much as possible its painted portrait. Aware of the inevitable gap between good—that is, rational—foreign policy and foreign policy as it actually is, political realism maintains not only that theory must focus upon the rational elements of political reality, but also that foreign policy ought to be rational' (p. 8). Thus, Morgenthau simultaneously claims that *Politics Among Nations* is an empirical theory, to be tested against the facts, but also that 'it is no argument against the theory presented here that actual foreign policy does not and cannot live up to it'. Why on earth not?

> That argument misunderstands the intentions of this book, which is to present not an indiscriminate description of political reality, but a rational theory of international politics. Far from being invalidated by the fact that, for instance, a perfect balance of power policy will scarcely be found in reality, it assumes that reality, being deficient in this respect, must be understood and evaluated as an approximation to an ideal system of balance of power.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 8)

Thus, Morgenthau claims that *Politics Among Nations* is only a 'rational' theory of international politics, or rather, it is an empirical theory which presents only the 'rational essence to be found in experience, without the contingent deviations from rationality that are also found in experience' (p. 7). The rational essence is the abstraction of necessity whose substance is power in the context of international politics. Everything else is abstracted out of Morgenthau's painted portrait. So, despite his appeal to political practice to support the theory, only policies that, according to

Morgenthau, are rational, will confirm it. Of course, in the absence of any conceptual analysis of what rationality means, the logic is circular. If there are policies that do not conform to Morgenthau's propositions, it is because they are irrational, not because the theory is fundamentally inadequate and idealistic. As he explains, policies that may be 'systematically irrational' are not covered by the theory, and therefore cannot be used to confirm it. Morgenthau believes that one example of systematic irrationality is the American war in Indo-China. Policies such as this really need to be explained in terms of a theory of irrational international politics:

> The conduct of the Indochina war by the United States suggests that possibility. It is a question worth looking into whether modern psychology and psychiatry have provided us with the conceptual tools which would enable us to construct, as it were, a counter-theory of irrational politics, a kind of pathology of international politics.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 7)

This distinction between rational and irrational foreign policies demonstrates the hollowness of Morgenthau's claim that his theory is empirical, to be tested against 'the facts as they actually are'. By claiming that irrational policies fall outside the scope of the theory without providing any criteria for making the distinction, the theory is impossible to confirm or refute. In short, it is not an empirical theory. As Kratochwil points out, although not in reference to Morgenthau:

> theories are heuristically fruitful only if they explain actual phenomena. To declare a plurality of cases instances of irrational behaviour is hardly illuminating, since the causes of irrationality need to be explained in order to understand politics as it actually occurs.[25]

EXPLANATION VERSUS PRESCRIPTION

In this section, I will describe the contradictions arising out of Morgenthau's claim that his theory could be used to evaluate and prescribe for American foreign policy. From the previous section, it is clear that Morgenthau's attempt, as Lichtheim puts it, to accord his views 'a privileged ontological status which renders them

immune to the flux of time and circumstance' does not succeed.[26] In fact, Morgenthau's theory is a very poor guide to explaining contemporary state behaviour, and although he hoped that it might lay the intellectual foundations for a more sound American foreign policy which would be more realistic in terms of its own national interests as well as that of other states, the opposite is true.[27] It is highly ironic that despite Morgenthau's consistently harsh judgements of the United States, his theoretical framework has been condemned for providing a rationale for America's global containment policy and its strategy of confrontation with the Soviet Union. Hoffmann aptly sums up the charge of many critics in the following passage:

> What the leaders looked for once the Cold War started, was some intellectual compass, which would serve multiple functions; excise isolationism, and justify a permanent and global involvement in world affairs; rationalize the accumulation of power, the techniques of intervention, and the methods of containment; explain to a public of idealists why international politics does not have much leeway for pure good will, and indeed besmirches purity; appease the frustrations of the bellicose by showing why unlimited force or extremism on behalf of liberty was no virtue; Realism…provided what was necessary.[28]

The first set of contradictions inheres in Morgenthau's attempt to evaluate and prescribe for American foreign policy on the basis of a 'scientific' theory whose determinism suggests that any prescriptions are unnecessary and superfluous. The tension between free will and determinism, or choice and fate, cannot be reconciled within a philosophy of history that accounts for the alleged continuity of international politics in terms of a static set of immutable laws, or 'elemental truths'. For if international politics is indeed governed by such laws, which function in spite of historical change and their recognition by those whose behaviour they explain, it should not matter whether statesmen recognize these laws or not. On the other hand, if their application depends on their prior recognition and conscious embodiment in rational policy-making, they are not empirical laws at all, and therefore cannot be invoked as part of a metatheoretical *deus ex machina* determining either state behaviour or patterns of activity arising from such behaviour. In other words, if

international politics is governed by iron laws, it should not be necessary to exhort American leaders to abide by them. If it is necessary to do so, these laws cannot be invoked as the basis of evaluation and prescription.

A second set of contradictions arises from Morgenthau's attempt, at least in *Politics Among Nations,* to reconcile a grand strategy of accommodation between the superpowers as status quo states with his characterization of the Cold War as analogous to the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the Napoleonic wars at the turn of the eighteenth century. Although Morgenthau condemns as idealistic any paths to world peace which ignore the 'realities' of contemporary international politics, his preferred solution, in light of his own pessimistic analysis of the new balance of power, is little more than a counsel of despair, or as Hoffmann aptly puts it, a 'reactionary utopia'.[29] Its application rests upon conditions that allegedly no longer exist, and whose resuscitation is predicated both on the reification of eighteenth-and nineteenth-century European diplomacy, and its replication in contemporary world politics. The former is illustrated by the manner in which Morgenthau nostalgically rues the passing of European hegemony, aristocratic statesmanship, transnational cultural values and norms among ruling elites, and the vestiges of western Christendom, that moderated the struggle for power in this period, i.e. from 1648 to 1792, and to a lesser extent, from 1815 to 1933.

> This intellectual and moral unity [provided] the foundations, upon which the balance of power reposes and makes its beneficial operations possible.
>
> This consensus grew in the intellectual and moral climate of the age…reacting upon the power relations, [and] strengthening the tendencies toward moderation and equilibrium.
>
> This consensus—both child and father, as it were, of common moral standards and a common civilization as well as of common interest—kept in check the limitless desire for power, and prevented it from becoming a political actuality…international politics became indeed an aristocratic pastime, a sport for princes, all recognizing the same rules of the game and playing for the same limited stakes.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, pp. 225–7)

As a result of the technological and political changes identified in the last chapter, the post-war era, which Morgenthau starkly portrays as an era of 'nationalistic universalism', 'ideological fanaticism', and so on:

> has dealt the final, fatal blow to that social system of international intercourse within which for almost three centuries nations lived together in constant rivalry, yet under the common roof of shared values and universal standards of action. Beneath the ruins of that roof lies buried the mechanism that kept the walls of that house of nations standing: the balance of power.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 347)

However, if this is the case, on what basis is a strategy of accommodation possible? If there are no common interests left, if all the transnational or societal bonds have been severed, and the technological and political conditions that account for international moderation and peaceful coexistence no longer exist, Morgenthau's strategy is doomed from the outset. However, rather than trying to formulate proposals consistent with contemporary re ality, Morgenthau is content merely to condemn it, bemoaning the gap between an idealized past and an irrational present. To some extent he realizes this, but fails to deal with the contradiction in a sufficiently serious manner. On the one hand, he admits that under contemporary conditions the nation-state is obsolescent and that world peace and order require a world state to prevent the struggle for power from ending in a nuclear holocaust (pp. 499 and 529). However, because such a goal is out of the question in the short-term, he suggests that perhaps a revived diplomacy might pave the way toward this 'necessary' goal. Furthermore, although Morgenthau explicitly recognizes that his solutions 'presuppose the existence of an integrated international society which actually does not exist', he hopes that the 'accommodating techniques of diplomacy' may bring about such an international society (p. 560).

A third set of contradictions, closely related to the second, exists between Morgenthau's prescriptions and the basic postulates of his theory of political 'realism', for he combines an (allegedly) Hobbesian image of naked competition between states with an attempt to endorse voluntary restraints and mutual moderation among them. The theory, which explains international politics in

terms of the absence of any transnational bonds between states, is intended to support prescriptions which presume the existence of such bonds beneath the surface appearance of ideological and military confrontation. The theory, as we have seen, conceptualizes international politics in terms of conflict and as a zero-sum game. Morgenthau's preferred strategy of accommodation, on the other hand, reifies an historical period when, as Hoffmann observes, 'the world's state of nature was most Lockean or Humean, and Mr. Morgenthau's views of human nature most unjustified'.[30] As a guide to the present, therefore, the theory supports exactly the kind of confrontational foreign policy that Morgenthau so violently objects to. The simplification of international politics in terms of a deterministic pressure model, which distinguishes between status quo and imperialism solely in terms of the external power relationships between states, and completely ignores all other determinants of foreign policy, as well as the forces that change it, legitimizes an expansionist interpretation of the national interest. If interest is defined in terms of power, and if international politics, by definition, is a ceaseless struggle for power, then rationality or prudence becomes a technical exercise in expanding one's power to the limits of one's resources. The prescription is implicit in the premise. Of course, Morgenthau does not really mean this, since his advocacy for a revived diplomacy rests on the assumption that compromise, or appeasement, is the only solution to what he calls 'the specter of a cataclysmic war'. However, such a solution presupposes that both sides are committed to the maintenance of the existing status quo.

A final set of contradictions exists between Morgenthau's attempt to present the national interest, not only as an instrumental guide to successful or rational foreign policies, but also as morally preferable to the attempt to define state goals according to abstract moral principles. As we saw in the last chapter, Morgenthau argues that morality in foreign policy consists of a Weberian ethics of responsibility rather than conviction. Defining the national interest in terms of power, he argues, 'saves us from moral excess and political folly':

> For if we look at all nations, our own included, as political entities pursuing their respective interests defined in terms of power, we are able to do justice to all of them…in a dual sense: we are able to judge other nations as we judge our own and…are then capable of pursuing policies that respect the

> interests of other nations, while protecting and promoting those of our own. Moderation in policy cannot fail to reflect the moderation of moral judgement.
>
> (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 11)

It is important to understand Morgenthau's position on this point, for he is not claiming that morality has no place in foreign policy, or that the latter should be devoid of any normative content and considerations of justice. All he is arguing is that political ideals cannot be superimposed upon power politics in the belief that, by doing so, one can transcend the laws which govern international politics. Instead, given the absence of any transnational moral and legal restraints to moderate the international jungle, the national interest can only be protected if it is defined in an exclusive, selfish manner. Paradoxically, however, the practical results of bowing to necessity are ethically superior to the imposition of abstract ideals. For the latter will not only fail to protect the state—the ultimate guarantor of domestic security, which in turn is a precondition for any arguments concerning the good life—but such ideals cannot be realized in the absence of an integrated international society. Failing to recognize this will only result either in disillusionment, or political folly—the imposition of one's moral values on other states through the use of force.

Unfortunately, as the inconclusive debate over this matter demonstrated in the early 1950s, unless Morgenthau can show how the national interest can be objectively defined in the absence of any knowledge concerning how states define their goals, or what those goals are, the distinction between 'real' and 'ideal' is not absolute, but relative.[31] As we have seen, Morgenthau has no theoretical basis on which to justify his dogmatic arguments concerning the immutable reality of international politics. Consequently, he cannot specify the 'necessary' content of the national interest, and gives no reason why its interpretation in terms of power should lead to international moderation, particularly in the contemporary era. As many critics have pointed out, Morgenthau's conception of an ethics of responsiblity, in light of his metaphysical assumptions, is little more than a success philosophy, in which might makes right.[32] This is also a result of Morgenthau's ontological idealism, and his subordination of the realm of freedom to that of necessity in the form of power. Thus, despite his claim that 'political realism' is 'aware of the ineluctable tension between the moral command and the requirements for successful

political action' (p. 10), this tension is resolved by arguing, as Berki writes in his critique of Machiavelli, that:

> it is 'necessary' to exempt the exercise of power itself from moral restraints. It is morality that depends on power for its existence, and not the other way round. Power prefaces morality and morality presupposes power, morality has no longer a character of 'necessity', but is revealed as contingent upon relations that only power can create and maintain. Thus, power achieves its own character as morality, it becomes indirectly moral.[33]

Yet such a position destroys the ineluctable tension between power and morality, which cannot be maintained on this basis. Instead, it requires a recognition that:

> power and morality are in truth interdependent aspects of political reality, opposites which interpenetrate. Without power morality cannot be practised, cannot become real. But without morality, the exercise of power is immoral…[thus] this exercise presupposes that power be employed in order to create conditions for moral life—in the absence of this presupposition, or in conscious denial of it, power ceases to be a truly synthetic term and becomes…an agency which acts so as to preserve a state of chaos and disorder.[34]

CONCLUSION

In these two chapters, I have pursued two broad goals. The first was to provide a broad reconstruction of Morgenthau's views concerning the nature of international politics and their embodiment in his major theoretical work, *Politics Among Nations*. The second was to reveal the essential incoherence and self-contradictory nature of those views. The source of these contradictions is Morgenthau's political idealism, and his reification of necessity in the form of power. Far from deserving the attribute of classical realism, Morgenthau is a nostalgic idealist.

5

KENNETH WALTZ

Theory as science

INTRODUCTION

In 1979 Kenneth Waltz published his *Theory of International Politics,* which has subsequently generated a substantial and often acrimonious debate, primarily among American scholars.[1] (All page references in this and the next chapter refer to this book). Comparisons between Waltz and Morgenthau are often drawn, and the ungainly term 'neorealism' or 'structural realism' has been attributed to Waltz's work to indicate a partial continuation with the so-called 'classical realism' of Morgenthau. For example, Banks notes that 'the single most widely read contribution to neo-realism has been the advanced text by Waltz, establishing him…as the paradigmatic successor to Morgenthau'.[2] In the next chapter, I will argue that Waltz is better understood and characterized in terms of his complacent idealism, as opposed to the nostalgic idealism of Morgenthau. For whereas Morgenthau reifies the past, Waltz reifies the present. Like his paradigmatic predecessor, Waltz presents international politics as a realm of necessity and power politics. 'Among states, the state of nature is a state of war' (p. 102). Unlike Morgenthau, however, Waltz claims to deduce the nature of international politics exclusively from certain structural properties of the anarchical environment within which states coexist, rather than from any assumptions about man, or power-maximization premises about states. Unlike Morgenthau, Waltz is also far more committed to a purely instrumental view of the relationship between theory and practice, which, as I will show, is dependent upon and merely conceals his politically idealistic presuppositions about the subject-matter to be explained. There is a

close, if unarticulated, link between Waltz's positivistic interpretation of theory as a mode of discourse, and his ontological conceptualization of international politics in what Ruggie calls 'ultra-Durkheimian' terms.[3] In Waltz's eyes, the social facticity of the international political structure, as a pre-given, albeit unobservable determinant of state behaviour and outcomes arising from states' interaction within this structure, requires what he calls a systemic approach as opposed to one which is analytic or reductionist (i.e. examining the attributes and interactions of two variables while others are kept constant). As Waltz rightly points out, 'one must adopt an approach that is appropriate to the subject-matter' (p. 13). Unfortunately, his is not.

This chapter is divided into four sections. First, I will briefly describe Waltz's views regarding the autonomous nature of international politics as a realm of theoretical inquiry, according to which he postulates anarchy as part of a generative structure, constraining and encouraging states to behave in important ways, regardless of their leaders' motives, avowed goals, or domestic state-society relations. The second section focuses more narrowly on the substantive arguments contained in *Theory,* and Waltz's claims concerning the nature, extent and significance of economic interdependence, the stability of the contemporary bipolar system, and the potential for great power management of the system as a whole. The third section explores the relationship between his underlying ontological premises concerning both states and the international political structure (his context of discovery) and his views regarding theory construction and evaluation (his context of justification). Unlike Morgenthau, who fails to separate them, Waltz is much more rigorous in adhering to an instrumental conception of empirical theory, appealing to what he calls 'philosophy-of-science standards' to legitimize his substantive arguments. Finally, the chapter concludes with a delineation of the prescriptive dimension of Waltz's avowedly empirical theory, or rather, its conspicuous absence. Again, unlike Morgenthau, who believes that international political theory should play a major role in judging the substantive rationality of American foreign policy and in providing a policy relevant road map (or 'painted portrait') which the former should conform to, Waltz makes no explicitly prescriptive judgements. Instead, although he argues that explanation is a necessary precondition for purposeful action, theoretical inquiry is a politically neutral and value-free activity. Furthermore, given his rigid

distinction between international political theory and foreign policy analysis, the former cannot evaluate and prescribe for the latter. 'The problem' he concludes, 'is not to say how to manage the world, including its great powers, but to say how the possibility that great powers will constructively manage international affairs varies as systems change' (p. 210).

ANARCHY AS STRUCTURE: STRUCTURE AS SELECTOR

Hans Morgenthau believes that international politics is essentially a struggle for power among states. He justifies this presupposition by appealing to an a priori human nature, whose behavioural irrationality will be allowed free reign unless it is actively constrained, and the most effective, although insufficient restraint, is the existence of countervailing power. In domestic society, Morgenthau's ideal state (rarely to be found in the real world) enjoys a legitimate monopoly of violence. The latent, but ever-present threat of punishment, backed up by law and a network of societal norms, provides a basis for domestic order and stability. Internationally, similar constraints on the use of force are much weaker. In this context, order depends on the mechanism of the balance of power among states. However, as we have seen, Morgenthau is ambivalent, not only in his definition of the balance of power and its empirical referents, but how it functions to maintain order among states. Sometimes Morgenthau argues that it is an automatic mechanism; sometimes he argues that its benefits require the most powerful states to maintain the status quo and accept, explicitly or implicitly, the existence of common interests which ought to be reflected in their national interests. Waltz believes that Morgenthau and other 'earlier realists…thought of…anarchy simply as setting problems for statesmen different from those to be coped with internally and as altering standards of appropriate behaviour'.[4] He claims that insufficient attention was and is paid to the external context of state action as an autonomous determinant of state behaviour.

The purpose of *Theory* is to correct this ubiquitous error of 'reductionism', which tries to explain the main dynamics of international politics by reference to the attributes of and relationships among states, by focusing exclusively on the autonomy of the structural component of the international political system as a

whole. The need for a systemic perspective arises from the commonsense idea that the variety of outcomes, such as war and imperialism, is not matched by the variety of agents and relations between them:

> Where similarity of outcomes prevails despite changes in the agents that seem to produce them, one is led to suspect that analytic approaches will fail. Something works as a constraint on the agents or is interposed between them and the actions and outcomes their actions contribute to. In international politics, systems-level forces seem to be at work.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 39)

To bring off what Waltz modestly calls a Copernican revolution in international political theory, it is necessary to conceive of the international political system as being composed of two related but distinct component parts—a political structure and a set of interacting units, which are states. As Wendt points out, Waltz assumes that states generate the structure through their mutual interaction, and this presupposes that they are the elemental and unproblematic constitutive units of the system.[5] The second component of the system is its structure, which is formed by the interaction of states in the system. However, once formed, the structure influences the behaviour of states, and therefore outcomes, by constraining states from undertaking certain policies and disposing them towards others. In order to determine what kind of behaviour is encouraged by the structure, and how much of that behaviour is accounted for by the structure and how much is accounted for by unit-level phenomena, 'definitions of structure must omit the attributes and the relations of units. Only by doing so can one distinguish changes of structure from changes that take place within it' (p. 40). Waltz then defines the international politi cal structure by three formal and positional criteria, which specify how states are arranged within the system:

> Everything else is omitted. Concern for tradition and culture, analysis of the character and personality of political actors, consideration of the conflictive and accommodative processes of politics, description of the making and execution of policy…they are omitted because we want to figure out the expected effects of structure on process and of process on

> structure. That can be done only if structure and process are distinctly defined.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 82)

These three criteria define both domestic and international political structures. However, because of the structural specificity of international politics, only two of them are necessary at the international level.

The first criterion is the principle of arrangement by which the system's parts relate to one another. Domestic systems are hierarchical; the international system is anarchical, a self-help system. 'None is entitled to command; none is required to obey…authority quickly reduces to a particular expression of capability' (p. 80). The second criterion is functional differentiation between the units in the system, which simply denotes how the subordinate parts within a structure relate to one another in terms of the tasks they must perform. Given the differences between domestic and international politics arising from the hierarchy of authority relations within states and its absence between them, it follows that while the first is characterized by specialization, integration and an extensive division of labour, the second is characterized by its obverse. International politics is a realm of duplication and functional undifferentiation, arising from multiple sovereignty among its member states. The third criterion is the distribution of capabilities among its component parts. 'States are alike in the tasks they face, though not in their abilities to perform them' (p. 96). The empirical referent for this theoretical concept is the number of great powers who dominate the system. Given the small number of states which have enjoyed great power status since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, and Waltz suggests that no more than eight have been consequential, international politics 'can be studied in terms of the logic of small number systems' (p. 131).

This threefold definition of political structures is reduced to two in international politics. The second component (functional differentiation) is constant over time, and because its implications can be inferred from the first criterion (anarchy), it drops out as an independent variable at the international level. Before looking at Waltz's substantive arguments arising from his spare definition of the international political structure, it is important to understand how Waltz conceptualizes the meaning of structure as an independent determinant of behaviour, and the processes through which the

structure constrains and disposes that behaviour. First, the structure is not an agent. Only states are agents in the system. Structure merely designates what Waltz calls a set of constraining conditions. It is a selector of behaviour rather than a concrete actor, or a 'compensating device' analogous to the human liver or a progressive income tax system. However, although it fulfils similar functions to these natural and human devices, it cannot be seen, examined, and observed directly. Instead, its closest analogy is Adam Smith's freely formed economic market, which shapes the behaviour of firms by rewarding certain patterns of behaviour and punishing others. The indirect process by which structures work their effects is twofold; 'through socialization of the actors and [in international politics] competition among them' (p. 74). Waltz illustrates the ubiquity of these processes by metaphorically referring to the behaviour of individuals when grouped together in crowds, the behaviour of firms in the economic marketplace, and the socialization of teenagers to the norms and values of their peers at school. All these examples illustrate how, 'in spontaneous and informal ways, societies establish norms of behavior' (p. 75).

Having established his own definition of structure as a determinant of behaviour independently of 'the characteristics of units [i.e. states]…and their interactions' (p. 79), Waltz goes on to infer how each component part of the structure shapes state behaviour and outcomes in international politics. From the first, anarchy, he explains the continuity of state behaviour despite procedural, unit-level changes in the domestic, political, economic, and ideological characteristics of states. 'The enduring anarchic character of international politics accounts for the striking sameness in the quality of international life through the millenia…patterns recur, events repeat themselves endlessly' (p. 66). Within a system whose distribution of capabilities (i.e. the number of great powers) is stable, anarchy is a constant condition that explains continuity, not change. By explain, Waltz merely means 'to say why patterns of behaviour recur; why events repeat themselves, including events that none or few of the actors may like' (p. 69). The expected effects of anarchy are both economic and political.

Economically, anarchy limits the division of labour between states, and explains the absence of international integration. As a result, the mutual gains to states that would arise if the law of comparative advantage operated across borders are not achieved. Above and before all else, states seek to survive as sovereign

autonomous units. Consequently, although all might benefit through a greater international division of labour, the survival motive in an environment of extreme inequality between states compels each to be more concerned with the distribution of future gains than their absolute level. 'In a self-help system, considerations of security subordinate economic gains to political interest' (p. 107). Not only does each state worry about the distribution of possible gains arising out of greater specialization, it also worries 'lest it become dependent on others through [co-operation]' (p. 106). Dependence and vulnerability go hand in hand. In a self-help system, states want to control what they depend on, protect their sovereignty and independence, and not rely on the goodwill and amity of other states for their security. Of course, in practice some co-operation does take place. There is also something of an international division of labour among states. In reality, Waltz admits that all societies are mixed. In reality, the distinction between domestic hierarchy and international anarchy is blurred. Elements of the former characterize parts of the latter, and vice versa. However, the distinction is not meant to be descriptively accurate, but theoretically useful. The aim of theory is to explain, not describe. Therefore, although states co-operate on an increasingly wide and complex range of issues, the nature of those issues and the extent of co-operation within them are both limited by the condition of anarchy, and the concomitant need for each state to protect its security, autonomy, and control.

> Hierarchic elements within international structures limit and restrain the exercise of sovereignty, but only in ways strongly conditioned by the anarchy of the larger system. The anarchy of that order strongly affects the likelihood of cooperation, the extent of arms agreements, and the jurisdiction of international organizations.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 115)

The military and strategic effects of anarchy can be summed up in one phrase—the balance of power. 'If there is any distinctively political theory of international politics, balance of power theory is it' (p. 117). Waltz seems to cut through all the ambiguities and contradictions that hamper Morgenthau's treatment of this hoary concept. On the theoretical assumption that states are unitary actors 'who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination' in a condition in which

two or more states co-exist, balances of power will recurrently form between them. Thus, 'balance-of-power politics prevail whenever two, and only two, requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive' (p. 121). This theory, which is derived from the structure of anarchy and merely assumes that states wish to survive as autonomous entities, rather than maximize their power, makes no appeal to internationally accepted rules of the game, state rationality, elite farsightedness, or other 'reductionist' errors. 'The theory says simply that if some do relatively well, others will emulate them or fall by the wayside' (p. 118). Waltz argues that the attribution of behavioural patterns to motives and domestic political or economic systems is unnecessary and irrelevant. To justify this, he once again invokes the analogy of freely-formed economic markets:

> In a purely competitive economy, everyone's striving to make
>
> a profit drives the profit rate downward. Let the competition continue long enough under static conditions, and everyone's profit rate will be zero. To infer from that result that everyone, or anyone, is seeking to minimize profit, and that the competitors must adopt that goal as a rule for the system to work, would be absurd.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 120)

In Waltz's view, the process of power balancing is an unintended consequence arising from the constraints of the system's structure. Its operation only requires two rival states, who maintain the equilibrium through enhancing their own domestic capabilities. With three or more states dominating the system, the balancing process becomes more complex, in which external means, such as alliances, are added to and/or compensate for internal strengthening. Two points are worth emphasizing about Waltz's discussion of the balance of power.

First, the validity of the theory depends on its ability to explain and predict a broad range of behavioural patterns. Thus, the assumptions which Waltz makes about the interests, survival motives, and unitary nature of states do not themselves have to be empirically accurate. Waltz recognizes that, in fact, states are not unitary actors. However, he argues that these are the only necessary assumptions in a systemic theory that tries to explain behaviour as a result of structural conditions rather than states' foreign policies. Thus, not all

states may even wish to survive, or undertake policies designed to ensure their survival. Of course, this is highly unlikely, since the latent ubiquity of force makes it difficult to break out of the competitive cycle. From a theoretical point of view, however, as long as most states, including the most powerful, conform to the dictates of anarchy and engage in power-balancing behaviour, the assumptions are valid ones.

Second, Waltz points out that, given his strict distinction between levels of analysis, his theory only explains the expected impact of structure on systemic behaviour, not policy-making processes. Although structure causes behaviour through its impact on such processes (which function as intervening variables), Waltz's theory does not explain just how specific states will respond to structural conditions in particular historical circumstances. After all, international political systems are composed of two interacting elements—the structure and the interacting states which constitute the structure. Structural constraints and incentives may sometimes be outweighed by unit-level incentives and constraints. Furthermore, the theory explains similarity of behaviour, not differences:

> The theory explains why a certain similarity of behaviour is expected from similarly situated states. The expected behaviour is similar, not identical. To explain the expected differences in national responses, a theory would have to show how the different internal structures of states affect their external policies and actions.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 122)

Given these limits to the theory, how should one go about testing it? In good Popperian style, Waltz rejects successive confirmation of hypotheses derived from the theory. These do not prove its validity, since there may be historical or future exceptions which may confound it. However, Waltz also rejects strict falsification criteria, since the theory only gives rise to expectations which are somewhat general and indeterminate. Although he does not himself undertake these tasks in any systematic fashion, Waltz endorses two procedures. First, tests may proceed by examining structurally comparable, although not necessarily isomorphic, realms of activity in, say, economics, sociology and other non-political fields. 'Structural theories gain plausibility if similarities of behaviour are observed across realms that are different in substance but similar in structure, and if differences of

behaviour are observed where realms are similar in substance but different in structure' (p. 122). Comparing the structural characteristics of different realms is especially helpful for the discipline of International Relations, which, according to Waltz, has such a paucity of 'good' empirical theory. In his view, classical microeconomic theory is a particularly appropriate candidate for such a role. Not only is Adam Smith's free market apparently structurally similar to the international political system, microeconomic theory is also well developed. Reasoning by analogy is helpful where one can move from a domain for which theory is well developed to one where it is not. Reasoning by analogy is permissible where different domains are structurally similar' (p. 89). Second, given the problematic nature of the behaviour which can be inferred from the theory, and therefore the inapplicability of strict falsification, Waltz suggests that we should apply what he calls hard confirmatory tests. These refer to outcomes which are consistent with hypotheses drawn from the theory, but which are also contrary to the professed interests and wishes of the states concerned. Unlike Morgenthau, who illustrates his so-called universal laws of the balance of power by reference to eighteenth-century diplomatic statecraft, Waltz rejects this period. The absence of deep ideological cleavages between the monarchical and aristocratic European elites in this system made possible a flexible process of alliance formation and change. Waltz suggests that the Franco-Russian alliance of 1894 is a better example, since it was formed by two previously antagonistic states in response to the alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1879. Other examples would be the 1939 Nazi-Soviet pact, and the Grand Alliance between the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union in 1942. These are all good hard confirmatory tests because they are examples which support a hypothesis—the recurrent formation of balances of power—drawn from a deductive theory. Another hypothesis is that states tend to imitate the behaviour of their rivals, which is borne out by the gradual subordination of ideology to national interest in twentieth-century Soviet foreign policy, and the Anglo-German naval arms race at the turn of this century.

FEW IS BETTER THAN MANY, AND TWO IS BEST OF ALL

Anarchy explains a continuity of behaviour (i.e. power balancing) despite unit-level changes and processes. It leads to testable

hypotheses concerning the extent and nature of inter-state co-operation over a range of issue-areas, and the balance of power as a process. Having dealt with anarchy, which is constant over time, Waltz moves on to consider the other structural component of international political systems, the distribution of capabilities. Whilst anarchy explains recurring patterns of behaviour over time, the distribution of capabilities changes across systems, not within them. Indeed, since both anarchy and states do not change, the number of great powers is the only systemic component in the theory that varies. Waltz does not explicitly explain why it varies (i.e. the rise and fall of great powers over time); he is only interested in the consequences of its variation. In particular, he compares the stability of different systems, defining stability as structural endurance and the absence of system-wide wars among the great powers. 'For the sake of stability, peacefulness, and the management of collective affairs, should we prefer some such number [of great powers] as ten, or five, or what?' (p. 161). To answer this question, Waltz proceeds in two steps.

First, and once again by analogy with microeconomic theory, Waltz compares the stability of different oligopolistic markets. His main contention is that 'economic stability increases as oligopolistic sectors narrow' (p. 134). In this context, stability does not mean peace, merely structural continuity in the number of principle firms. There are a number of reasons why greater oligopoly promotes stability as continuity, and Waltz specifies these by reference to a large body of microeconomic theory. They all substantiate his argument that, for the purpose of systemic continuity, a market dominated by a few large firms is to be preferred to one in which many small firms compete. Of course, he also recognizes that there is a tension between the stability of the market and the efficiency of its products. What benefits firms does not necessarily benefit consumers. Stability is often inversely related to efficiency, product quality, and low prices for consumers. However, 'international political systems are judged more by the fate of the units than by the quantity and quality of their products…what is deplored economically is just what is wanted politically' (p. 138).

Second, having argued that inequality among states is to be preferred to equality, Waltz tries to be more precise in specifying the optimum number of dominant states in the system. Before doing this, he devotes a large section to the 'interdependence' debate in the United States. Attacking those who believe that economic

interdependence is on the increase, as well as those who welcome this trend on the assumption that increased trade and inter-state contacts reduce the risk of war, Waltz argues that such claims confuse process with structure, and ignore the extent to which the former is subordinate to the latter. He argues that the political significance of interdependence in the system as a whole is unrelated to the level of sensitivity between particular groups or dyads of states, and among specific economic and financial sectors. The political importance of economic interdependence lies in the extent to which states are vulnerable to changes in these sectors originating overseas. As Baldwin points out, the idea of mutual vulnerability is much closer to the conventional usage of the term interdependence.[6] According to Waltz, the international political system as a whole is less interdependent in the post-war era than in previous systems because the superpowers are relatively invulnerable to dramatic changes in global economic factors such as the supply and price of raw materials, agricultural and manufactured goods.

The reasoning is simple. States are interdependent 'if the costs of breaking their relations or of reducing their exchanges are about equal for each of them' (p. 143). These costs vary in proportion to the amount of trade as a percentage of GNP, and the ease of substitution between suppliers of essential imports and export markets. Interdependence is therefore a relation among equals. In the system as a whole, it varies with the distribution of capabilities. The contemporary bipolar system is one of extreme inequality between the superpowers and other states. As the number of great powers declines, their size increases. Concomitantly, they are less dependent on trade with other state than vice versa. From a systemic perspective, interdependence in the present system is lower than ever before. Although Waltz recognizes that it has increased somewhat since 1945, this is only to be expected given the destruction which the war caused to international trade and the industrial capacity of Western Europe and Japan. Not only is Waltz convinced that systemic interdependence is low, he also argues that this is a good thing. In contrast to domestic society, where specialization and the division of labour takes place within a framework of central control, international politics is a self-help system. As a result, given the unequal distribution of capabilities, rising vulnerability among states increases the likelihood of conflict among them. Echoing Rousseau, 'close interdependence means closeness of contact and raises the prospect of occasional conflict…interdependent states whose

relations remain unregulated must experience conflict and will occasionally fall into violence. If interdependence grows at a pace that exceeds the development of central control, then interdependence hastens the occasion for war' (p. 138).

However, although Waltz's views on interdependence emphasize the virtues of inequality in the system, he argues that the optimum number of great powers cannot be discovered simply by noting that interdependence varies with the relative size of states, for size does not correlate precisely with numbers. For example, if Western Europe were to unite politically and China was to emerge with a modern economy, both would be highly self-sufficient. The system would then be composed of four great powers, relatively equal in size. Interdependence would remain low in the system as a whole, even though a bipolar system had become a multipolar one. The reason why two, and only two, great powers is the optimum number is strategic, not economic. In this context, stability is defined as peace, or the absence of war among the great powers. In complete contrast to Morgenthau, who believes that contemporary bipolarity is the most unstable balance of power, Waltz claims the opposite.

This claim rests upon his argument that the balance of power operates differently in multipolar and bipolar systems. In the former, the politics of power are external. States rely on alliances to maintain their security. Alliances are formed on the basis of certain common interests among their members to ward off a common threat. However, such a system is inherently unstable, because 'there are too many powers to permit any of them to draw clear and fixed lines between allies and adversaries and too few to keep the effects of defection low' (p. 168). Thus, no state can be completely sure who is more threatening to whom. Military interdependence forces each state to subordinate its national interests to maintain the co-operation of its alliance partners. However, by doing so it may be dragged into war against its wishes. 'One's allies may edge toward the opposing camp'. Among a small group of militarily interdependent states, there is always a danger of miscalculation and defection between alliance partners, both of which may drag all the states into conflict. Waltz illustrates all these drawbacks by focusing on the alliance diplomacy in the years before the First World War. In contrast, Waltz argues that, in a bipolar system, military interdependence is low. The inequality between the superpowers and everyone else, including their alliance partners, compels each of them to maintain the balance by relying on their own devices. The United States and the Soviet

Union do not depend on anyone else to protect themselves. Consequently:

> Internal balancing is more reliable and precise than external balancing. States are less likely to misjudge their relative strengths than they are to misjudge the strength and reliability of opposing coalitions. Rather than making states properly cautious and forwarding the chances of peace, uncertainty and miscalculation cause wars. In a bipolar world uncertainty lessens and calculations are easier to make.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 168)

In the present system, defection among allies is less likely to lead to war through miscalculation. The loss of China to both superpowers has not altered the central balance. Similarly, the French withdrawal from NATO in 1966 was annoying, but not drastic. The rigidity of alliances in a bipolar world allows greater strategic flexibility by the superpowers. Miscalculation is minimized, both by the clarity of threats and the self-reliant means with which each superpower must develop a strategy to cope with these threats. Furthermore, in a bipolar system, the rivalry between the two superpowers is global in geographical scope and comprehensive across all issue-areas.

> Not just military preparation but also economic growth and technological development become matters of intense and constant concern. Self-dependence of parties, clarity of dangers, certainty about who has to face them: these are the characteristics of great-power politics in a bipolar world.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, pp. 171–2)

As a result, Waltz argues that the post-war bipolar system is preferable to multipolarity. When reduced to two superpowers, it seems, the balancing process culminates in a stable outcome. The dangers to peace in this bipolar system arise from two sources—overreaction and nuclear competition. The absence of geographical peripheries in the Cold War means that 'anything that happens anywhere is potentially of concern to [the United States and the Soviet Union]' (p. 171). The Korean war, the Cuban missile crisis, Vietnam—these and many other examples demonstrate the dangers of overreaction in a bipolar world. Which is worse, miscalculation of the central balance leading to war, or overreaction? Waltz claims the

former, since the above examples illustrate that overreaction 'is the lesser evil since it costs only money and the fighting of limited wars' (p. 172). Moreover, although Waltz acknowledges the dangers of overreaction, he argues that as the superpowers become socialized to the system, they have also become more conservative and less inclined to overreact to the threats posed by the other. Rhetoric aside, the superpowers have learned to co-exist as adversarial partners in global hegemony. Mutual animosity has gradually given way to a cautious and everfragile recognition that they have certain common interests. These have been formally recognized in the shape of arms-control talks, implicit sphere-of-influence agreements, and mutual acknowledgement of the limits to their rivalry in the Third World. Consequently, in comparison to multipolar systems, the contemporary bipolar system is relatively stable, encouraging the superpowers 'to act in ways better than their characters may lead one to expect' (p. 176).

As far as the ever-present threat posed by nuclear weapons, Waltz is much more optimistic than Morgenthau ever was. Whilst Morgenthau laments the spiralling arms race and the move towards war-fighting military strategies involving these weapons, Waltz does not regard these tendencies with undue alarm. On the contrary, he argues that the leaders of the superpowers are not oblivious to these dangers either:

> It is highly important, indeed useful, to think in 'cataclysmic terms', to live in dread of all-out war, and to base military calculations on the forces needed for the ultimate but unlikely crisis. That the United States does so, and the Soviet Union apparently does too, makes the cataclysm less likely to occur.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 186)

As long as mutual nuclear deterrence rests on the existence of secure second-strike forces available to both sides, and Waltz sees no prospect of their being made technologically redundant, the irrationality of nuclear war ensures that the security dilemma will not result in the use of force. The condition of bipolar deterrence encourages caution on both sides, despite the economic costs of the arms race, and the catastrophic consequences if these weapons were ever to be used in war. However, given the stability of deterrence, 'military forces are most useful and least costly if they are priced only in money and not also in blood' (p. 187).

Finally, Waltz turns to the management of international affairs, which embodies global issues and problems that transcend territorial boundaries. These require inter-state co-operation if they are to be solved. However, apart from identifying some of these problems, which Waltz calls the four p's—proliferation, pollution, poverty, and population—he has very little to say in substantive terms.[7] Instead, he confines his attention to the likelihood of their being coped with in the contemporary system. Given the condition of anarchy, attempts to manage transnational problems through international organizations and supranational agencies will only be marginally successful. 'Great tasks can be accomplished only by agents of great capability', i.e. states (p. 169). However, sovereign states invariably place their national interests above international ones. Nevertheless, in a bipolar system, the superpowers will be more interested in maintaining the system, and their hegemony within it, than in transforming it. When each defines its interests in global terms, they have an incentive to maintain global order and to provide for the defence and stability of other states within their spheres of influence. The provision of collective goods—such as peace, regional defence, and a stable political framework for the expansion of world trade and economic development—is undertaken by the superpowers, who pay disproportionate costs for their provision. In particular, the United States has been responsible for the establishment and institutionalization of global management in a wide variety of economic, financial and social issue-areas. In comparison with domestic society, co-ordination among states to solve common problems will always be small and incremental. Without the support and leadership provided by the great powers, and the United States in particular, it would be even smaller. 'If the leading power does not lead, the others cannot follow. All nations may be in the same leaky world boat, but one of them wields the biggest dipper' (p. 210).

LAWS, THEORIES, AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE: THE VITAL TRIANGLE

Spegele has called Waltz a 'concessional realist', in contrast to Hans Morgenthau, a 'common-sense realist'. The former 'are still realists in the sense that they conceive international politics within the framework of sovereign states often in adversary relations with one another, but they concede the validity of many

of the methodological claims of scientific empiricism'.[8] Waltz adopts an instrumental conception of empirical theory. Unlike Morgenthau, however, he is far more consistent and explicitly self-conscious in stating the epistemological basis on which this conception rests, and its methodological and normative implications for international political theory as an empirical enterprise or mode of discourse. As we have seen, Morgenthau, despite his nominal commitment to instrumentalism, is inconsistent. In contrast, Waltz devotes an entire chapter of his book to the nature and role of theory as a purely instrumental tool, where he carefully distinguishes between laws and theories as qualitatively distinct kinds of knowledge.

First, laws are 'observational propositions…which establish relations between variables'—i.e., if a, then b. Laws are absolute if the relations are invariant, and probabilistic if not—i.e., if a, then b with probability x. Waltz points out that a law 'is based not simply on a relation that has been found, but one that has been found repeatedly' (p. 1). In contrast to laws, which describe relations between phenomena, theories explain these relations. Laws and correlations do not explain anything, and their inductive accumulation cannot, by themselves, result in theory. 'Facts do not speak for themselves', and empirical associations 'never contain or conclusively suggest their own explanation' (p. 4). A theory explains laws and provides an indispensable link between facts and propositions expressing probabilistic relations between these facts. A theory is 'a picture, mentally formed, of the organization of a bounded realm or domain of activity…and of the connections among its parts' (p. 8).

Second, unlike Morgenthau, Waltz maintains that theories do not describe reality or make truth-claims. Instead, they simplify reality by artificially isolating certain factors and forces from a multitude of innumerable possible factors that may be relevant to account for a specific range of behaviour, and by aggregating disparate elements according to specified theoretical criteria. The ultimate aim is 'to find the central tendency among a confusion of tendencies, to seek the propelling principle [and] to seek the essential factors' (p. 10). Since theories are distinct from the reality they seek to explain, one cannot distinguish between true and false theories. 'If truth is the question, we are in the realm of law, not of theory' (p. 9). Theories are always underdetermined by the data, and may be overturned and made redundant by better theories. The

criteria for evaluating competing theories are not in terms of their truth or falsity, but their explanatory utility. This, in turn, is a function of their ability to generate testable hypotheses whose terms are operational. Theories should specify the empirical referents for the concepts contained in their deductive hypotheses, and they should also specify how variables are associated within these hypotheses. Theories themselves cannot be tested directly, only indirectly through the hypotheses they generate. Finally, tests must be geared to the nature and scope of the hypotheses, not the other way round. 'Rigorous testing of vague theory is an exercise in the use of methods rather than a useful effort to test theory' (p. 16). As we have seen, Waltz objects to strict falsification as inappropriate to the nature and scope of hypotheses generated by his particular theory.

Having distinguished between facts as parts of reality, laws as consistent associations between two or more facts when expressed as 'concepts that vary', and theories as explanations of these associations, Waltz explains how one makes the transition from facts and laws to theories. The answer is slightly mysterious. 'The longest process of painful trial and error will not lead to the construction of a theory until…a brilliant intuition flashes, a creative idea emerges'. These 'will convey a sense of the unobservable relations of things. They will be about connections and causes by which sense is made of things observed' (p. 9). The contrast with Morgenthau could not be more stark. Morgenthau has very strong views on the source and nature of his brilliant intuitions, and he rarely keeps them to himself. Waltz is relatively silent on his context of discovery, saying merely that 'I was most influenced by economists and anthropologists; specifically microeconomic theory and by Emile Durkheim'.[9] From the former, Waltz discovers the structural isomorphism between international politics and economic markets. From Durkheim he borrows the notion of social facticity and structural causes. However, although Waltz has nothing to say about the role of philosophy in his contemporary work, he has spoken on this subject in the past. Writing in 1957, he concedes a particularly important role to the ideas of political philosophers on the central questions of international political theory, albeit primarily to prepare the way for systematic empirical theory.[10] That role is twofold.

First, a familiarity with the writings of Hobbes, Rousseau and others suggests important 'clues to be gained…variety of

insights…hypotheses to be discovered'.[11] Of course, this is not just true of political philosophy. It is simply to claim that knowledge and ideas may profitably be picked up from past thinkers, be they philosophers, historians, statesmen, or poets. There is no suggestion that great minds have a monopoly of truth, only that in so far as they have devoted a great deal of time and intellectual energy to serious thought about perennial problems of government, it is useful to familiarize oneself with their ideas.

Second, and far more importantly, in so far as political philosophers have reflected on issues that are of direct concern to modern political scientists, and since empirical theory is dependent on good ideas, a critical examination of political philosophy is invaluable in providing inspiration for these ideas. The particular value of political philosophy is that, although it has traditionally been concerned with order and justice in domestic society, some of its major figures have also been concerned with the central questions of empirical international political theory; namely, the causes of war and the conditions for peace. A systematic examination of how the nature and etiology of war has been conceptualized by past thinkers provides a useful inventory or typology of analyses concerning the causes and solutions to war. Thus:

> The most direct route to understanding the writings of philosophers is to seek out the questions they were attempting to answer. I would suggest that posing a central question and ordering systematically the different answers that can be given to it is the most direct route to the construction of international political theory.[12]

Notice that Waltz does not equate such systematic ordering with theory construction *per se*. They are separate intellectual and chronological activities. Abstract speculation without subsequently rigorous theory construction is 'sterile'. On the other hand, mindless data gathering and the pursuit of theory through induction 'can easily produce either chaos or a pseudo-scientific scholasticism'. Thus, Waltz holds that political philosophy, as well as its systematic examination, is not itself empirical theory in the sense that it meets philosophy-of-science criteria for valid explanatory claims. Nevertheless, it may provide useful clues for the kind of inspiration necessary, although not sufficient, for empirical theory construction.

In 1954, almost a quarter-century before *Theory* appeared, Waltz published his doctoral dissertation, which has become justly famous as a classic in the field. It is a perfect exemplar in the systematic exploitation of political philosophy that Waltz advocates as the most direct route to international political theory.[13] In it, Waltz examines different answers given, not just by philosophers, but statesmen, historians, behavioural scientists, liberals, socialists and many others, to the question, 'what causes war?' He reveals that the answers can be broadly classified into three groups or 'images'—the nature of man, the domestic economic and political systems of states, and the anarchical environment in which states co-exist without a supreme authority above them.

Having classified a bewildering array of often contradictory answers into these three images of war, Waltz concludes that, by themselves, each of these images is inadequate. 'Emphasising one image frequently distorts, though it seldom [implicitly] excludes the other two'.[14] In light of the conceptualization of anarchy contained in *Theory,* in which it is part of a theoretical concept of structure which Waltz accords a privileged status as an independent cause of war, it is important to understand how this differs from the treatment of anarchy in the earlier work (i.e. before Waltz's discovery of social facticity). Here, Waltz distinguishes between what he calls 'efficient' or proximate and immediate causes, and 'permissive' conditions. The first two images are essential if one is to explain particular wars:

> If [states] fight against each other it will be for reasons especially defined for the occasion by each of them…these immediate causes are contained in the first and second images. Variations in [these images] are important, indeed crucial, in the making and breaking of periods of peace.[15]

In contrast, anarchy is a permissive context for the waging of war. Thus, as a generic framework for approaching the problem of war, anarchy tells us that 'wars occur because there is nothing to prevent them'.[16] In other words, in the absence of a world government, the possibility that force may be used to settle inter-state conflicts is always present, regardless of the economic and political systems which characterize the domestic systems of states. However, by itself, even though it is the best starting point, the third image is about as helpful an explanation of war as the first image. Anarchy and human nature are constant. War is not. Neither

is very useful in explaining variations in the incidence of war and peace over time and between different kinds of states. In 1954, Waltz concludes:

> The third image describes the framework of world politics, but without the first and second images there can be no knowledge of the forces that determine policy; the first and second images describe the forces in world politics, but without the third image it is impossible to assess their importance or predict their results.[17]

By the standards of *Theory,* the Waltz of the 1950s is a reductionist, because he fails to see how anarchy, by itself merely a descriptive term, when understood as part of a distinct international political structure, a theoretical concept, explains some extremely important forces which shape foreign policy behaviour and international outcomes.[18] According to Waltz's epistemological positivism, anarchy as a descriptive term is different from anarchy when understood as part of an organizational concept. The latter is a theoretical assumption, and assumptions are 'nonfactual'. Waltz instructs us to 'think of physics in this regard', and to move away from reality in order to explain it:

> Imagining that mass concentrates at a point, inventing genes, mesons, and neutrinos, positing a national interest: These are examples of common assumptions…theorists create their assumptions. Whether or not they are acceptable depends on the merit of the scientific structure of which they are a part.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 10)

Clearly, then, Waltz's attitude to the contribution of political philosophy to empirical theory is radically different from Morgenthau's, despite the latter's nominal commitment to theory as an instrumental tool or map. Morgenthau believes that international political theory provides a key link between philosophy and historical practice. Unfortunately, whilst he has a great deal to say about his metaphysical beliefs concerning the elemental truths of human nature as reflected in the works of selected 'classical realists' such as Hobbes and Machiavelli, he fails to reconcile his ontological predispositions with his superficially instrumental conception of empirical theory. Not so with Waltz, who rejects that there are any a

priori necessary truths concerning international politics, metaphysical or otherwise. For Waltz, empirical theory also provides a link between philosophy and historical practice, not by confirming any fundamental truths about politics and the human condition, but by turning good ideas into useful and valid knowledge by conforming to methodological criteria laid down in the philosophy of science. By postulating systemic structure as an independent determinant of outcomes, one can construct an empirical systemic theory of international politics that respects its autonomy, and need not resort to reductionism, or explanations of the 'inside-out variety' that are so ubiquitous in the discipline.

DESCRIPTION AND PRESCRIPTION

This final section describes the relationship between Waltz's descriptive and prescriptive views, and his reluctance to draw any explicit prescriptive lessons from his theory. It should be noted that nowhere does Waltz object to theorists engaging in prescriptive analysis. On the contrary:

> The urge to explain is not born of the idle curiosity alone. It is also produced by the desire to control, or at least to know if control is possible, rather than merely to predict…. Because a law does not say why a particular association holds, it does not tell us whether we can exercise control and how one might go about doing so. For the latter purposes we need a theory.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 6)

Thus, empirical theory is not merely an instrument by which to explain an external reality, it is also an essential tool for orienting political practice within this reality. Nevertheless, Waltz holds that these are separate and independent functions. Although the urge to explain, say, war, is obviously inspired by a desire to avoid undertaking actions that may result in war, the process of explanation should not be distorted by the emotional desire for peace. By conforming to rigorous methodological rules of inference and evidence, theory *qua* theory (or 'explanation') is a politically neutral and uncommitted activity. Just how the theorist comes up with his brilliant ideas is irrelevant to the validity of his subsequent explanations. Protected by the shield of 'philosophy-of-science' standards, the latter proclaiming the unity of science as a logical and

rational enterprise, the theorist need not (although he may) apply his theory to practical problems of public policy. According to Waltz's epistemological conception of empirical theory, objectivity is a function of explanatory utility. Of course, this is far from Morgenthau's idea that it requires a personal commitment to 'the truth' which, given society's disinclination to face 'reality' and recognize the 'necessary evil' of human nature, compels the theorist to become a radical and somewhat lonely social critic.

However, by distinguishing between explanation and prescription as two different activities, Waltz also limits the form in which prescriptive advice may be given, and the role of the theorist in giving it. Regarding form, empirical theory cannot support normative evaluations of political conduct because it is confined to making 'is' claims—as opposed to normative, or 'ought', judgements. As a neutral and 'scientific' enterprise, empirical theory is not concerned with the morality of foreign policy, and thus the theorist cannot, *qua* theorist, comment on the morality of the policies and outcomes which he is trying to explain. Consequently, regarding the role of empirical theory, it is confined to providing useful information to enhance the efficiency of means in achieving pre-given ends. In other words, in so far as policies are formulated on the basis of certain propositions concerning both the cause of the problems such policies are designed to alleviate, as well as the likely effects of those policies or the assumed causes, empirical theory can assist in improving the instrumental rationality of foreign policy. As Keohane points out:

> The realist theory of the balance of power, discussed by Waltz, could have alerted American policymakers in the 1950s to the likelihood of an eventual Sino-Soviet split. Realist maxims would have counseled the United States to make an alliance, or at least an accommodation, when feasible, with the weaker Chinese.[19]

Waltz's instrumentalism therefore leads to a prescriptively utilitarian perspective concerning the practical relevance of international political theory for the conduct of foreign policy. Unlike Morgenthau, who firmly holds that 'no study of politics can be disinterested in the sense that it is able to divorce knowledge from action and pursue knowledge for its own sake',[20] Waltz argues that it is imperative to divorce theory from practice in order to both explain

the latter and prescribe for it. He claims that all too many scholars fail to recognize that in order to explain reality, it is necessary to depart from it. His criticism of Stanley Hoffmann could well apply to Morgenthau, and illustrates clearly their differences on this score:

> Hoffmann has not developed a theory but instead has displayed a strong commitment to a particular intellectual approach. His commitment to the reality of the international system and his conviction that statesmen must 'see' the system correctly in order to act effectively have helped to make his writing vivid. The sensitivity of perception and the sharpness of insight are impressive, but any glimmerings of theory remain crude and confused.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 49)

Waltz draws no prescriptive lessons at the end of his theory. This is so for two reasons. First, there are no lessons that can be drawn from a theory whose unit of analysis functions independently of the goals and ambitions of states. Structures intercede between intentions and outcomes, so there is little point in trying to counter structural causes by altering the behaviour of particular units, (i.e. states):

> So long as one leaves the structure unaffected it is not possible for changes in the intentions and the actions of particular actors to produce desirable outcomes or to avoid undesirable ones…the only remedies for strong structural effects are structural changes.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 108)

Waltz does not claim that structures cannot be changed, either through transforming the principle of organization or the distribution of capabilities. However, the second reason why Waltz derives no policy-relevant 'maxims', as Keohane calls them, is that he is quite content with the present bipolar system for the purposes of systemic stability and peace, as well as the global management of collective transnational problems classified under what he calls the four p's. The likelihood that the system will be constructively managed under duopolistic hegemony, compared to alternative systemic possibilities, is relatively high. Indeed, the longer it lasts, the maturation of bipolarity only increases the possibilities of inter-state co-operation, subordinating ideology to interest within and between the

superpowers, and permitting them to show greater concern for the maintenance of the system, thus reducing the chances of mutual overreaction or miscalculation. As Waltz observes: 'the United States and the Soviet Union have increasingly shown that they have learnt to behave as sensible duopolists should—moderating the intensity of their competition and cooperating at times to mutual advantage' (p. 203).

According to Waltz, this maturation is simply a result of the superpowers becoming socialized to the system. It is not dependent, as Morgenthau and Hoffmann maintain, on the leaders of these states 'seeing the system correctly in order to act effectively'.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter has simply been one of exegesis, in which I have described the main arguments contained in *Theory* and how those arguments depend upon an ontological context of discovery which postulates systemic structure as an independent variable in determining important international outcomes. I have also argued that Waltz's approach embodies a distinct perspective regarding the practical role of theory, both in interpreting or explaining political practice and permitting a strictly circumscribed role for the derivation of instrumentally prescriptive 'maxims' for the conduct of foreign policy. Given the expansive scope of the theory, the generality of the hypotheses which it generates, and its highly abstract level of analysis, one cannot derive any specific maxims from reading Waltz, but this is not his primary goal. His main aim is to provide an empirical theory of international politics that is appropriate to its subject-matter, to avoid the 'reductionism' that he believes is so erroniously ubiquitous among scholars regardless of their methodological predispositions, and to compare the stability of different international political systems. In complete contrast to Morgenthau, he concludes that the contemporary bipolar system is characterized by a comparatively low level of economic and military interdependence, and that the hegemony of the superpowers both enhances international stability and provides the best political framework for the constructive management of international affairs.

6

KENNETH WALTZ

A critical analysis

> The professing atheist who genuflects at every cross, may after all be giving a sincere account of his conscious beliefs, but he is not providing an accurate statement of the principles which govern his actions.
>
> (Thomas A.Spragens, Jr)

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will argue that *Theory,* despite its scientific pretensions (indeed, to some extent because of them), expresses a form of complacent idealism. It is an ambitious but unsuccessful attempt to validate Waltz's underlying beliefs about international politics by aspiring to 'philosophy-of-science' standards. Consequently, he makes no effort to defend these beliefs on their own terms. Instead, he argues that the autonomy of international politics requires one to separate one's levels of analysis, whose blurring has been 'the major impediment to the development of theories about international politics' (p. 78). That it is possible to do this, and to explain particular patterns of state behaviour from causes at the systemic level depends upon the existence of an autonomous determining structure at this level. Waltz's postulation of the international political structure as an independent cause of behaviour permits him, or so he thinks, to sever links between levels, and to construct an empirical theory based on firm scientific principles. Systems-level forces thus function independently of their recognition by state actors, the agents whose behaviour apparently testifies to the hidden presence of such forces. Socialization to the system is assumed by Waltz to be unproblematic. Thus, what Ashley calls

Waltz's 'structural turn' secures both the autonomy of his subject-matter, and the adoption of a formal methodological approach appropriate to explain that subject-matter. As he points out, '[the] appeal to objective structures, which are said to dispose and limit practices among states (most especially, the anarchic structure of the modern states system)…cut through the subjectivist veils and dark metaphysics of classical realist thought. Dispensing with the normatively laden metaphysics of fallen man, they seem to root realist power politics…securely in the scientifically defensible terrain of objective necessity'.[1] In this context, to explain means to conform to the standards of natural science ('think of physics!').

Unfortunately, to misquote a well-known phrase, the result is a device, invented by Waltz, for avoiding that dangerous subject, international politics, without achieving science. For despite his nominal defence of the autonomy of international politics, Waltz's Janus-faced commitment to systems-level forces (i.e. the international political structure) as external social facts and to 'philosophy-of-science standards' undermines the autonomy of his subject-matter by reducing it to the logic of microeconomics. As a result, *Theory* is epiphenomenal and therefore reductionist. As Minogue points out, 'Epiphenomenalism consists in treating political events as essentially the outcome of some environing structure which is itself explicable in terms of scientific laws (though we have not 'as yet' attained any precise understanding of these laws). Political reality is thus treated as reducible to something else'.[2]

The argument will proceed in three stages. First, I will examine the internal incoherence and contradictory manner in which Waltz invokes 'the' philosophy of natural science in his formal presentation of the nature and role of empirical theory. In this section, I will argue that there is a profound ambiguity in the logic of Waltz's arguments. This stems from his attempt to reconcile his belief in international politics as an autonomous domain with the requirements of scientific logic. It is essential to critically examine this attempt which, in fact, conceals Waltz's complacent political idealism. The second section focuses on the main substantive arguments contained in *Theory,* which presuppose an ontological conceptualization of international politics as an abstracted realm of necessity. Indeed, Waltz's entire discussion of the structural outcomes allegedly associated with anarchy discloses a remarkable if unacknowledged affinity with the views of Morgenthau regarding the essence of his subject-matter. In this section, I will also examine

Waltz's arguments regarding reductionism. According to Waltz, this has two dimensions, which I will call 'horizontal' and 'vertical'. Horizontal reductionism refers to theories that attempt to explain international politics in terms of other disciplines, such as psychology or anthropology. Vertical reductionism refers to what Waltz calls 'analytical' theories which attempt to explain outcomes at the international-political level by focusing on unit-level factors such as the nature of states and relations between them. In Waltz's view, the two kinds of 'errors' are linked, in that the inability of 'nonpolitical theories…to provide reliable explanations and predictions' is directly related to their authors' failure to avoid vertical reductionism and recognize the structural specificity of international politics as a distinct domain. In the following passage, he explicitly links the two kinds of reductionism:

> Essential to the reductionist approach, then, is that the whole shall be known through the study of its parts [vertical reduction]. It also often happens that the [vertical] reductionist finds himself using the methods of other disciplines in order to apprehend his own subject-matter [horizontal reduction]…in our field, the [horizontal] reductionist urge must derive more from failures [according to 'scientific' standards] of work done at the international-political level than from the successes of other possibly pertinent disciplines.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, pp. 18–19)

Unfortunately, as we shall see, Waltz commits the very errors he roundly condemns in others, both by reducing international politics to the assumed logic of microeconomics, and by resorting to *ad hoc* vertical reductionism and reintroducing unit-level factors in order to explain just how structures affect behaviour both within and between bipolar and multipolar international systems. This, in turn, results from his failure to show how structural and unit-level forces interact within systems. In Waltz's framework, the direction of causation is all one-way, resulting in a deterministic portrayal of states in a drama over which they have neither control nor responsibility. As Buzan notes, 'Waltz effectively appropriates the whole content of the system level for his own narrow definition of structure'.[3]

The third and final section examines the implications of all this for Waltz's allegedly 'problem-solving' theory. Here, I will argue

that Waltz's arguments regarding the virtues of contemporary bipolarity are both unsupported by the theory (in fact, the theory contradicts them), and rest on extremely contentious evaluative judgements regarding the enlightened maturation of the superpowers and the stability of nuclear deterrence. Waltz, I will conclude, is a complacent idealist.

SCIENCE VERSUS INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Consider the following two quotations. The first is from Landau, who unreservedly advocates the methodological unity of science, and therefore the subordination of empirical political theory to the rules of 'proper' scientific method:

> The scientific situation, as ideally described and understood, seeks a special type of knowledge, which is both defined and warranted by its own system of rules. There are rules which cover the constitution of theory and those which sanction the admission of a proposition into the corpus of a science; there are rules of deductive inference, of induction, of observation, of adequate solutions, of purity of method. These are rules of procedure, maxims of correct scientific conduct, which the scientist must strive to abide by. The scientific situation thus legislates its own due-process clause—a 'due process of inquiry'.[4]

Now consider how Waltz appropriates Landau's argument:

> Students of international politics use the term 'theory' freely, often to cover any work that departs from mere description and seldom to refer only to work that meets philosophy-of-science standards…one must choose an approach that is appropriate to the subject-matter. The rules by which one's inquiry proceeds varies from one approach to another. 'Due process of inquiry', as Martin Landau has said, requires one to follow the logic and procedures that one's methodology prescribes.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 13)

In light of what Landau actually has said, the above passage illuminates a fundamental contradiction between Waltz's epistemological commitment to the 'ideal' of science, which he

believes to be revealed in the philosophy of science, and his commitment to the autonomy of his subject-matter, international politics. Waltz seems to believe that one can be faithful to both, and construct an 'empirical' theory of international politics, 'a depiction of the organization of a realm and of the connections among its parts' (p. 8), that is in no way prevented by its subject-matter from meeting what Spegele aptly refers to as the Great Standards in the Sky for scientific theorizing.[5] Unfortunately, one cannot coherently invoke 'the' philosophy of science as some kind of licensing authority providing standards for theory construction and evaluation, and then argue that such standards or rules are a function of approach (i.e., are not rules, but decisions and choices).[6] For this is to concede Ryle's argument that 'efficient practice precedes the theory of it; methodologies presuppose the application of the methods; of the critical investigation of which they are the products'.[7] In contrast, Landau is consistent, even if mistaken, and therefore cannot be implicated in a contradiction of Waltz's own making. For whilst Landau uncritically endorses the view that science 'as ideally described'—itself an oxymoron—proceeds according to a fixed set of methodological rules, and that theories of politics must conform to such rules in order to enjoy scientific status, Waltz misquotes Landau to support his contradictory view that, despite the subordination of rules to approach, theories of international politics should still conform to 'philosophy-of-science standards'.

Even if one grants that a theory of international politics should conform to these standards, and that an explanation of international politics is no different, in form and logic, from an explanation of natural as opposed to human and social phenomena, then in principle this amounts to a denial of its autonomy. To argue otherwise, one would have to deny the homogeneity of knowledge because of the heterogeneity of matter. For if 'explanations' are not dependent on one's conceptualization of the subject-matter to be explained, how can one also defend the thesis of contextual autonomy? To put it another way, if 'political' does not in any way constrain 'science', then there is no resource for defending politics against science. This point is well made by Sartori, who identifies a permanent existential tension between the two:

> The scientific urge…makes the autonomy of politics questionable. The treatment affects the object. If science is the

> how, this how vaporizes the what. This leads, in the end, to the disappearance of what is political, to taking politics out of politics. There is nothing paradoxical in this development. On the contrary, it is in the logic of [science] to do away with whatever is refractory to its treatment…at one extreme, we have science eating up politics; at the other extreme, we have politics eating up science…it is the task of the political theorist to be on the alert and shun both extremes.[8]

The tension arising from Waltz's simultaneous commitment to the 'rules' of scientific method and to the autonomy of his subject-matter pervades his opening chapter, in which he attempts to clarify the meaning and relationship between theories, laws, hypotheses and facts. It can be illustrated by focusing on three central issues which Waltz fails to deal with in a consistent and coherent manner. These are: the cognitive status of these terms and how they relate to one another; the tension between the instrumental and constitutive role of theory *vis-à-vis* 'international politics', and the criteria for evaluating theoretical utility.

First, Waltz posits a qualitative distinction between theories and facts, which are linked by hypotheses and laws. The latter can be discovered inductively, because they are little more than systematic descriptions of a given political reality. Thus, laws are 'facts of observation' which can be discovered, whereas theories must be constructed. The only difference between a hypothesis and a law is the degree of probability or consistency with which postulated associations co-vary, although Waltz fails to specify at what point a hypothesis becomes a law, since he also applies the term 'law' to both invariant and probabilistic ('law-like') correlations. Nevertheless, the whole idea of theories as mere instruments is based on a prior uninterpreted and accessible 'given' reality, which can be systematically described in terms of raw data, and a body of correlative associations between them, which can be expressed as hypotheses and laws. Thus, 'if truth is the question, we are in the realm of law, not theory' (p. 9).

On the other hand, Waltz also claims that 'laws establish relations between variables, variables being concepts that can take different values' (p. 1). He also warns against the search for theory through data collection and statistical manipulation, for this adopts 'the profoundly unscientific view that everything that varies is a variable. Without…theory, we cannot say which data, how

formulated, are to be accepted as evidence for or against hypotheses' (pp. 16–17). The data of international politics, it now seems, do not float around in the nebulous realm of observation. Instead, the data have to be interpreted in some meaningful fashion, and then classified to fit concepts before associations between them can be 'discovered'. Waltz goes on to concede that theories, which within his positivistic epistemology are only useful instruments to explain a given reality, also 'construct a reality', which 'is itself an elaborate conception constructed and reconstructed throughout the ages. [It] emerges from our selection and organization of materials that are available in infinite quantity' (p. 5). Waltz also argues that hypotheses, which he initially claims can be inductively constructed and tested, can also be deductively derived from theories. Indeed, he openly contradicts his claims regarding induction when, invoking Thomas Kuhn, he goes on to say that 'changes of theory produce changes in the meaning of terms, both theoretical and factual ones' (p. 12). But Kuhn argues, not that adherents to competing theories within what he calls scientific paradigms 'see' different facts, but that competing paradigms (or world-views) offer incommensurable conceptualizations of the fundamental entities which constitute the subject-matter to be explained. Although Kuhn's concept of a scientific paradigm is a contested one, and his entire thesis concerning their establishment, evolution, and replacement in the history of natural science is still a matter of continuing controversy among scientific philosophers, he argues, not that observation and experience play no legitimate role in restricting the range of scientific belief, but that 'they cannot alone determine a particular body of such belief. An apparently arbitrary element…is always a formative ingredient of such beliefs'.[9] Despite his summary reference to Kuhn, Waltz makes no mention of such beliefs, or what paradigms may consist of in the study of international politics. Instead, he relegates them to the context of discovery, a private realm of 'brilliant intuitions' and 'creative ideas'. As Ashley rightly points out:

> There is no allowance for questioning the background intersubjective understandings that permit the theorist to arrive at just this 'brilliant intuition', the background language of experience through which his 'creative idea' is communicable to others, [that] permit the theorist and others to agree on the

> facts in need of explaining. The theory, if it is to be regarded as anything more than the personally meaningful nonsense of a lunatic, depends upon such intersubjective preunderstandings.[10]

In light of this confusion over the cognitive status of facts, laws and theories, it is not at all clear what role theories play as explanations. Although Waltz strenuously tries to distinguish between their role as mere instruments to understand a given reality and as constituent frameworks which identify the essential characteristics of their subject-matter, the two roles are confused and conflated in his discussion. The result is that he commits himself to an incoherent and self-contradictory view that theories are useful fictions. In their role as mere tools, Waltz assumes that they are somehow dispensible in describing international politics. Conversely, in so far as they are useful, it must be because they claim to be, and are accepted as, true.

The 'fuzziness' which pervades Waltz's discussion of the nature and role of empirical theory has severe implications for his procedures for evaluating the utility of theoretical frameworks. On the one hand, he appears to support the methodological falsificationist approach which holds that theories can only be evaluated positively in so far as their deductive hypotheses fail to be falsified according to 'distinct and demanding' tests. On the other hand, he does not endorse Popper's argument that such tests be independent of the phenomena the theory is trying to explain, for he also holds that confirmation is as legitimate as falsification. As Spegele points out, this transforms evaluation from the application of metatheoretical 'rules' to a matter of partially subjective and inductive choice on the part of the theorist, according to which 'a set of methodological rules becomes a set of maxims which [one] decides to follow'.[11]

A good example of this is Waltz's endorsement of what he calls hard confirmation tests in supporting his deductive assertions concerning the balance of power as a consequence of anarchy. According to the theory, the 'recurrent' formation of balances of power can be explained without recourse to reductionist explanations. However, there are two problems with this hypothesis.

First, it is not clear in what form distinct and demanding tests can be applied to a theory which recognizes the indeterminacy of state behaviour, the interaction within systems between unit-level and structural forces, and the fact that expectations derived from the

latter may be frustrated because of that interaction. Waltz himself confesses that 'I would be surprised if many sorts of unit-level changes did not alter system outcomes' and that 'neither structure nor units determine outcomes. Each affects the other'.[12] If this is the case, then there are no critical empirical tests which can falsify the theory. As Kratochwil remarks, these concessions render Waltz's diluted version of methodological falsification extremely problematic.

> When observed and predicted results coincide, the hypothesis is corroborated; when they diverge, [it] can be immunized from criticism by arguing that the prediction was only probabilistic. The problem of 'refutation' then becomes largely one of practice, when a given set of scientists no longer feels comfortable with a standard explanation, and therefore rejects the hypothesis.[13]

Waltz seems to recognize this when he concedes that 'the rigour and complication of [distinct and demanding] tests must be geared to the precision or to the generality of [one's] expectations' (p. 16). If this is the case, and given Waltz's recognition of the interdependence between theories and facts, then the ritualistic invocation of 'philosophy-of-science standards' as the metatheoretical arbiter of competing theories of international politics is far less important than the supplementary norms or field-dependent logics which in practice determine the 'success' of theoretical offerings in this field. As Prager rightly points out, 'field-invariant logic closely bound up with the hypothetico-deductive inference warrant, pales in significance to the contribution made by field-dependent logics. This means that what is to count as a sound persuasive argument within a field of inquiry is something about which philosophers of science, *qua* philosophers, can have little to say, inasmuch as the role of '"the" scientific method in empirical explanations may be relatively slight'.[14]

The second problem with Waltz's arguments regarding the utility of hard confirmatory tests is that, in carrying them out, one must contradict the manner in which expectations are derived from the theory. Recall that the theory explains the balance-of-power process from an independently established antecedent condition (anarchy), and therefore does not require any recourse to a reductionist interpretation of the motives, reasons or perceptions of the decision-

makers involved in the predicted behaviour. However, when it comes to testing hypotheses derived from such a deductive theory, Waltz relies on such explanations to account for the behaviour. Unfortunately, this makes the process dependent upon the actors' situational perceptions of the external constraints which compel them to behave in ways that, for internal reasons, they would prefer not to. As Keohane notes, the examples which Waltz does use to support his theory are not selected 'by examining a universe of cases, in all of which states would prefer not to conform to [the hypothesis], and asking how often they nevertheless do conform. Instead, he is looking only at [cases] chosen because they are consistent with the theory'.[15] In fact, the examples which Waltz believes do support his theory can be explained very easily in straightforward reductionist terms. For example, the alliance between France and Russia in 1894 can be explained as a response to the perceived threat posed by Austro-Hungary and Germany through their alliance in 1879. Similarly, the American rearmament after the Second World War can be explained in terms of its perception of the threat posed by the Soviet Union, and vice versa. The formation of balances, regardless of whether they are desired by states, cannot be explained by the condition of anarchy as an independent variable, because balances do not recurrently form, and states do not necessarily emulate the successful policies of others.[16] Whether they do or not depends on who these 'significant others' are (i.e. whether they are rivals, threats or otherwise). One cannot, therefore, avoid reductionist accounts of state behaviour in order to explain why balancing characterizes particular groups or pairs of states at particular historical periods, and these explanations must be couched, not in terms of independent antecedent conditions which precede and determine their behaviour, but by recourse to motivational and situational accounts of that behaviour. In this regard, Stephen Walt has recently argued that balance-of-power theory is something of a misnomer. In his excellent historical examination of alliance formation, he concludes that 'balance-of-threat' theory more accurately describes the basic dynamics of alliance formation.[17] The distribution of threats is historically contingent, and cannot be deduced from the mere number of great powers in the international system.

Having examined a number of ambiguities and contradictions inherent in Waltz's attempt to reconcile his positivistic understanding of the rules of scientific methodology with the autonomy of his subject-matter, one should finally note the irony of

his invocation of the philosophy of natural science as a licensing authority or methodological guidebook for theory construction and evaluation. Notwithstanding the absence of any justification for subordinating explanations of international politics to the logic of natural science, Waltz also uncritically assumes that the philosophy of natural science is an authoritative source of systematic explications of that logic. However, over the last 25 years there has been a sustained, and contentious, series of debates within this discipline, whose repercussions continue to reverberate through parasitic fields within social science that have uncritically relied on positivist reconstructions of scientific logic in their zeal to replicate the simplicity and explanatory power of Newtonian physics.[18] Without regurgitating a complex and contentious story, the philosophy of natural science has reflected two interrelated trends which render problematic any appeals to this discipline in search of the proper rules of 'the scientific method'. Of course, both these trends were accelerated by the profound impact of Kuhn's work, from which Waltz quotes to support a view of the nature, role and evaluation of empirical theory which Kuhn himself does not subscribe to.

First, there has been a marked shift away from an exclusive concern with explicating the formal logic of scientific theories towards a much greater interest in the evolutionary pragmatics of scientific practice. As a result, the division between the philosophy of science and the history of science has eroded considerably.

Second, as more attention has been paid to the manner in which the natural sciences have historically evolved, the positivist and acontextual explications of scientific 'logic' have been considerably undermined, both as descriptively adequate representations of normal science, and as prescriptive guidelines or standards. Abraham Kaplan usefully distinguishes between such reconstructed logics and what he calls a 'logic-in-use'. The former refers to the elaboration of Landau's ideal-type rules according to some ideal of the ultimate meaning of science. The latter refers to the methodological procedures deemed appropriate by a community of scientists in analyzing their particular subject-matter.[19]

Consequently, there has been a growing concern, both within the philosophy of natural science as well as within the social sciences, for what Kaplan calls the autonomy of inquiry, according to which 'the various sciences, taken together, are not colonies subject to the governance of [a single] logic, methodology, the philosophy of

science, or any other discipline whatsoever, but are, and of right ought to be, free and independent'.[20] However, Waltz seems to be unaware of what Bernstein has called the 'restructuring' of social and political theory.[21] Instead, he presents a view of the nature and goals of empirical theory that has not merely been severely compromised within the philosophy of natural science, but hotly debated within political science as well. Unfortunately, Waltz does not clarify what he means by 'the' philosophy of science. His discussion of theory construction in his opening chapter is therefore inevitably confused, because although he occasionally refers to selected scientific philosophers, he ignores differences between them as well as the context in which their work must be understood. Since that context is the philosophy of natural science, their relevance to the study of international politics cannot be taken for granted, but must be justified and argued for.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AS POWER POLITICS: MORGENTHAU *REDUX*

The preceding discussion paves the way for a critical examination of Waltz's substantive understanding of the domain of his inquiry, international politics. Notwithstanding the ubiquitous references to Durkheim, and the concomitant need to grasp the holistic quality of international politics, this ontological understanding, like Morgenthau's, is both asocial and thoroughly atomistic.[22] Recall from the last chapter how Waltz distinguishes between political philosophy and empirical political theory as modes of thought and analysis. He argues that once the former has been 'mined' for good ideas, or logically coherent clues with which to go on and construct deductive chains of reasoning which link testable hypotheses to independent variables within a systemic framework, one can dispense with the metaphysical props (such as Morgenthau's lengthy discussions of human nature) that should not, and need not, play any role in evaluating the utility of scientific theories. In the context of international political theory, the key to achieving this is to recognize that large-scale patterns of state behaviour and systemic outcomes like war can be accounted for in terms of the statics of the system (i.e. its structure) itself. Consequently, the 'system is its own best explanation' (p. 78). Yet consider the following passage, which contains selected sentences and phrases scattered throughout *Theory*. Placed side by side, they disclose an ontological conceptualization

that, in Waltz's view, is constitutive of international politics and, therefore, defines the substantive domain of inquiry in advance:

> The enduring anarchic character accounts for the striking sameness in the quality of life through the millenia…whatever elements of authority emerge internationally are barely once removed from the capability that provides the foundation for the appearance of those elements…authority quickly reduces to a particular expression of capability… whether [states] live, prosper or die depends on their own efforts…international politics is a realm in which anything goes…among states the state of nature is a state of war… among men as among states…the state of nature is associated with the occurrence of violence. National politics is the realm of authority, of administration, and of law. International politics is the realm of power, of struggle, and of accommodation. The international realm is pre-eminently a political one. In international politics force serves, not as the *ultima ratio,* but indeed as a first and constant one…the inequality of states, though it provides no guarantee, at least makes peace and stability possible.[23]

Taken together, such statements portray a stark image of international politics which is strikingly similar to the one outlined by Morgenthau over 40 years ago. The phrases could almost have been lifted straight out of *Politics Among Nations*. They are neither empirical observations nor theoretical assumptions which may or may not be 'useful' for constructing a theory about international politics. On the contrary, they are definitive assertions concerning the existential reality of politics among states in a self-help (or more accurately, help-yourself) system. Their taken-for-granted truth enables Waltz to define order in terms of subordination of the weak by the strong, an unfortunate necessity of the international jungle. It follows that the most successful states are the most self-sufficient, and least dependent on others, since, by definition, dependence means vulnerability, and, therefore, 'requires' states to enhance their power (means) even though they only seek survival (end). It is, without doubt, a grim and uniformly pessimistic picture. But its validity depends on whether one accepts Waltz's underlying asocial beliefs about international politics and thus the source of order in it. Why so? For the simple reason that, as I

argued in the critique of Morgenthau, these assertions cannot logically be derived from the mere absence of international government and the structural anarchy which Waltz rightly claims is the defining condition in which international politics takes place. Moreover, these assertions are all about processes, not structures, and therefore contradict Waltz's repeated insistence that the two be kept distinct. However, the alleged 'recurrent' process of the balance of power can only be inferred from structural anarchy if the latter precludes any other means of achieving security or autonomy short of power struggles on the part of individual states. Of course, Waltz claims that anarchy and hierarchy are ideal types, recognizing that international authority structures do exist, but both the source and impact of what today are known as 'regimes' are dependent upon and hostage to prior distributions of capability and force. As Ashley notes: 'there is no form of sociality, no intersubjective…consensual basis, prior to or constitutive of individual actors [states] or their private ends'.[24] In sum, whatever Waltz's claims concerning the need to separate one's levels of analysis and begin with the international political system as one's unit of analysis, *Theory* is squarely based on a set of idealistic beliefs concerning international politics that are no different from those of *Politics Among Nations*. With regard to their context of discovery, Morgenthau and Waltz are indistinguishable. The only difference between them is that while Morgenthau openly discusses his (problematic) views on human nature and his adoption of the (equally problematic) philosophy of 'realism', Waltz hides his convictions behind the protective smokescreens of science and systems-level forces as external social facts.

Having discussed the former in the first section, I now turn to the manner in which Waltz explains the origins, nature and impact of the latter, paying particular attention to the two dimensions of reductionism identified at the beginning of this chapter.

Waltz's systems are composed of interacting structures and units. A truly systemic theory would presumably show how this interaction takes place within and between systems, and what expectations can be derived concerning state behaviour and international outcomes associated with that behaviour. Unfortunately, Waltz does not do this. Instead of developing a systemic theory of international politics, he constructs what should properly be understood as a structural theory, because he tries to explain the outcomes that interest him solely by reference to variations in the two relevant components of structure—

namely, anarchy and the distribution of capabilities across states. The second component of systems (i.e. the units) drops out along with the second component of structures, functional differentiation. This is because Waltz believes that one can infer expectations about a selected range of state behaviour from the remaining characteristics of structures alone, because structures are not just environmental conditions but also causes of state behaviour. They are, in short, independent social facts. Furthermore, given the alleged structural isomorphism between international political structures and domestic economic or market structures, one can reason by analogy across structurally similar realms.

The justification for treating political structures in this manner proceeds in two steps. First, Waltz argues that because individuals behave differently when in groups, group behaviour cannot be explained in terms of the psychological characteristics of the individuals who collectively constitute such groups. Rather, quoting Gustav Le Bon, Waltz argues that groups possess 'collective minds' which, in turn, 'socialize' individuals into conforming with group norms of behaviour. Just how this remarkable transformation occurs—of groups from being collections of individuals to independent entities—is not discussed. Socialization merely occurs in 'spontaneous and informal ways'. One would have thought, given the importance which Durkheim's sociological premise plays in Waltz's theory, that he would pay close attention to the process by which these collective minds acquire an independent status at a systemic level of reality. Logically, there is no reason why one should leap from the observation that people behave differently when alone than when in groups, to the conclusion that social facts have any reality over and above the individuals which comprise them. Of course, this is not to deny that social reality is external to individuals, and that we are all constrained and affected by the 'objective' situations in which we find ourselves. However, as Papineau has pointed out in his critique of Durkheim's sociological premise, just because social behaviour 'might not be reducible to what the people would be like on their own, this does not show [it] cannot be reduced to what the people are like in the situations they actually are in'.[25] In the same vein, Berger and Luckmann, in their classic sociological treatise which seeks to synthesize the antithetical approaches of Durkheim and Weber, emphasize the dialectical process of socialization between man and his social environment:

> Despite the objectivity that marks the social world in human experience, it does not thereby acquire an ontological status apart from the human activity that produced it…the relationship between man, the producer, and the social world, his product, is and remains a dialectical one. That is, man… and his social world interact with each other. Externalization and objectivication are moments in a continuing dialectical process. Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product.[26]

It is precisely this dialectical understanding which is absent from Waltz's theory, which leads him to commit the opposite error of vertical reductionism, i.e. the fallacy of reification, defined by Levy as 'the confusion of analytic structures with concrete [albeit unobservable] structures'.[27] Thus, the subtle but important and unjustifiable conceptual shift whereby structures as sets of constraining conditions become primary causes and independent variables, whose impact on behaviour is achieved through Socialization', depends on our uncritical acquiescence to the initial Durkheimian premise.

In the context of international politics, the justification for conceiving of the international political structure as a similar social fact, or systemic force, conflates vertical reductionism with mere overgeneralization. Recall that Waltz's entire argument that systems-level (i.e. structural) forces 'must' be at work, rests on his observation that unit-level factors do not covary with international political outcomes. However, this observation does not necessarily mean that reductionism is a fallacy, and that analytic approaches must give way to systemic ones simply because 'different states have produced similar as well as different outcomes, and similar states have produced different as well as similar outcomes' (p. 37). All this demonstrates is that one must limit the scope of reductionist theories to the phenomena one is trying to explain. As Morton Kaplan points out:

> A theory that differentiates types of states and then explains the imperialistic behaviour of each in principle could be both correct and reductionist in Waltz's sense. [For example] Fascist Italy may invade Ethiopia for reasons of internal regime prestige when other states need it to constrain a hegemonial

> power, but may not risk such behaviour when they do not need it.[28]

Waltz thus confuses vertical reductionism with mere overgeneralization. This failure to establish the structural autonomy of political 'systems-lever forces calls into question the propriety of reasoning by analogy, and inferring outcomes associated with multipolar and bipolar systems from the structural characteristics of domestic economic markets. Not only does this contradict Waltz's opposition to horizontal reductionism, leading to what Ashley describes as logical economism',[29] but it results in a simplistic and deterministic attempt to fit international politics into an analytic framework that is inappropriate for three basic reasons.

First, according to Waltz's three-part definition of structure, domestic economic markets are not structurally isomorphic with the international political structure. Recall from the last chapter how Waltz contrasts domestic and international political structures in terms of the distinction between hierarchy and anarchy, and therefore between functional differentiation (hence specialization and integration) and functional undifferentiation (hence duplication and interdependence). The second component drops out at the international-political level because of anarchy, but stays in at the domestic level, because of hierarchy. Indeed, he explicitly declares at one point that 'all economies work within orders that are politically contrived and maintained. One cannot understand an economy or explain its workings without consideration of the rules that are politically laid down' (p. 141). As Kratochwil points out, domestic economic specialization and market exchange cannot take place and flourish without 'the common acceptance of the convention of money, the protection of property rights, and the institutions of promising and contracting, which are governed by rules'.[30] These rules, or practices, are constitutive of the market as an economic system, or an 'anarchic' institution. Apparently, Waltz does not believe that any such constitutive rules or conventions exist at the international-political level, nor, despite the above declaration, does he accord them much significance at the domestic economic level when he claims that 'a decentralized economy [like the international political system] is individualist in origin, spontaneously generated, and unintended' (p. 91).

Second, as many scholars have pointed out, power and money are not functionally equivalent mediums of exchange. Whereas money is

fungible and provides a common numerical index of value for an enormous variety of goods and services, power is relatively infungible, and therefore cannot be aggregated in terms of capabilities which can then be reduced to and measured in terms of the number of great powers in the system. Instead, it requires disaggregation within what Baldwin calls a 'policy-contingency framework'. As he remarks: 'in discussing power as a type of causation, it is essential to specify or at least imply who is influencing whom with respect to what; both scope and domain must be specified or implied'.[31]

Third, although many microeconomic outcomes can indeed be deduced from the assumption that firms tend to maximize profits, since those that fail to do so will, as Waltz puts it, 'fall by the wayside', there is a world of difference between a behavioural and a motivational assumption, which is nicely spelled out by Barry in the following passage:

> Either you say that firms do in fact tend to maximize profits, in which case your hypothesis turns purely on output, pricing, etc., and cannot be refuted by any motivational or decision-making evidence, or you say that firms…seek to maximize profits, in which case you are committed to retract if motivational and decision-making evidence goes against you. What you cannot properly do is try to get the best of both worlds by prefacing the second hypothesis with an 'as if', explaining that this can be refuted only by the sort of evidence that would refute the first hypothesis, and not by the sort of evidence that would refute the second, but not the first.[32]

Each of these three reasons critically undermines the manner in which Waltz tries to explain the stability of the contemporary international system as an outcome of bipolarity.

First, as we have seen, providing one accepts Waltz's ontological predisposition to define order in terms of power, and therefore peace is the stepchild of deterrence, then it follows one will also accept his argument that the likelihood of peace varies along a continuum ranging from one violent extreme (equality) to the other (hierarchy). The latter is apparently ruled out in international politics because 'the game of power politics, if played really hard, presses the players into two rival camps' (p. 167). Thus, a transformation of the contemporary international system can only take place either through

a change in its ordering principle, which would require a world government, or through the emergence of a third great power, such as a united Europe. Since bipolarity is logically the most hierarchical system possible in an anarchical world, it follows that we should prefer bipolarity. However, given the structural dissimilarity between domestic economic systems and international-political ones, the alleged absence of any restraints on the continuing balance of power (other than rational prudence) severely weakens Waltz's conclusion that the dominance of two superpowers provides a stable resting place. Once one abandons the idea that international political structures are ontological social facts, the question of just how socialization takes place among states (as opposed to between states and postulated structures) remains wide open. Furthermore, invoking the analogy of the market-place forces one to re-examine Waltz's underlying Hobbesian image of international politics as a state of war, and inquire into the social structure of the states system as a rule-governed domain or anarchical institution.[33] Waltz cannot do this within his basic presuppositions regarding the nature and consequences of structural anarchy.

Second, the relative infungibility of capabilities *vis-à-vis* money raises problems in measuring their distribution in terms of the numbers of great powers, since it is extremely difficult to identify the point at which a state qualifies for great power status. To be sure, the number of great powers has always been low, so some rough estimates can be made. However, far greater precision is required when Waltz places so much emphasis on the unique qualities associated with bipolarity. As he points out, 'the advantages of subtracting a few and arriving at two are decisive' (p. 192). Even if, for the sake of argument, one grants that the contemporary system is bipolar, and has been since 1945, one cannot infer expectations regarding its stability which ignore objective and perceived changes in the distribution of power between the superpowers themselves. Simply because the United States and the Soviet Union are both more powerful than everyone else, it does not follow that they are equally as powerful as each other, and that mutual restraint will therefore follow. This has profound implications for Waltz's argument that the shift to bipolarity is decisive because uncertainty decreases and calculations regarding the source of threats are easier to make. This depends largely on whether American and Soviet policy-makers agree with Waltz and behave accordingly. Ironically, *Theory* was

published only a year before the election of an American president who, obviously not having read it, launched a one-trillion-dollar military expansion and presided over an alarming decline in superpower relations in the (woefully mistaken!) conviction that American power was rapidly declining relative to the Soviet Union.

Interestingly enough, in the midst of the Vietnam war in 1967, Waltz did not hold his present view that the distribution of power between the Soviet Union and the United States was relatively equal in a bipolar system. Then, he argued that shifts in the distribution of power between the superpowers were critical in determining whether external constraints predominated over domestically generated ambitions in encouraging prudential caution or 'overreaction' in American foreign policy. Consequently, he attributed the American war in Vietnam to the growing imbalance in the bipolar distribution of power in favour of the United States, arguing that:

> national impulses shape foreign policy with lesser constraint than prevails when power is more evenly balanced…if the restraints of international politics press less closely, the question of internal restraint looms ever larger. To study the politics of peace, then, requires examination of domestic politics, especially the politics of the powerful.[34]

Thus, it is not necessarily the case that, in a bipolar system, caution results from the predominance of external constraints, or that one can compare the stability of multipolar and bipolar systems by uncritically deriving expectations about international politics simply by comparing economic markets characterized by perfect competition and oligopoly. For if the dominance of the superpowers tells us nothing about the distribution of capabilities between them, and if, as Waltz recognized in 1967, perceived and actual changes in the latter are important in accounting for the strength of systemic forces on foreign policy-making, the explanatory pay-off in manipulating mere numbers shrinks correspondingly.

Finally, the implications of Barry's distinction between behavioural and motivational assumptions can be examined in the context of Waltz's assumption that states seek to survive. Although he recognizes that state goals vary from this bare minimum to world domination, this is far less important than its underdetermination of the logic of balance-of-power theory, and the fact that the evolutionary principle of markets does not apply to the international

political system. As Waltz concedes, 'the death rate for states is remarkably low' (p. 95).

Regarding underdetermination, Keohane has pointed out that despite Waltz's explicit rejection of assuming rationality on the part of state élites, he requires it both in order to explain the recurrent formation of balances and for the virtues of bipolarity over multipolarity—i.e. the increased precision and reliability in evaluating the source of external threats and the internal requirements to meet them, to manifest themselves.[35] More importantly, the key behavioural difference between states and firms is that whilst the latter's survival is based on their importance in the market-place—permitting Waltz to say that whether they live, prosper, or die depends on their own efforts—this evolutionary principle does not apply to states which, as Waltz himself admits, tend to survive regardless of their ability to play the game of power politics.

> Who is likely to be around 100 years from now—the United States, the Soviet Union, France, Thailand, or Uganda? Or Ford, IBM, Shell, Unilever, and Massey-Ferguson? I would bet on the states, perhaps even on Uganda.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 95)

But why? This prediction is an anomaly given the basis on which Waltz justifies making the assumption that if states do not seek to survive, they will 'die'. If the ability to generate domestic capabilities and engage in skilful diplomacy is not essential for states to survive, unlike firms which must make profits or go under, what is it about states that permits Waltz to distinguish them from all other international actors and say that 'I define international political structures in terms of states?' (p. 94) He argues that the reason for treating them as 'like units', regardless of their capabilities, is their functional undifferentiation. But this is the result of anarchy, and therefore drops out as an independent variable at the international level. 'Anarchy', he writes, 'entails relations of co-ordination among a system's units, and that implies their sameness' (p. 93). The language is confusing. There is a substantial difference between logical entailment and implication; nevertheless, one can assume he means the former given his spare definition of the international political structure. But if this is the case, Waltz cannot coherently argue that structural anarchy causes

states to be 'like units', if their very sameness is the reason why they co-exist in an environment characterized by structural anarchy. There must be something else that enables Waltz to identify states as a discrete category of political actors. It cannot be the self-help system, because Waltz also argues that markets are self-help systems, but this does not entail the 'sameness' of firms which, as he recognizes, are functionally differentiated. What, then, is the defining characteristic of states?

> To call states 'like units' is to say that each state is like all other states in being an autonomous political unit. It is another way of saying that states are sovereign…to say that a state is sovereign means that it decides for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, pp. 95–6)

This is not what sovereignty means, although sovereignty is indeed a valid reason for treating states as 'like units'. For sovereign statehood, not anarchy, is the fundamental ordering principle of the international political system, but this principle, as Jackson has argued, is a legal and constitutional one.[36] It is therefore categorical, not behavioural and contingent. Thus, for Waltz to assume that states 'seek' to survive is a category mistake. Sovereign states cannot be treated as abstract individuals with desires, motives, or goals. Moreover, the appeal to sovereignty as the basis for categorizing states undermines Waltz's atomistic beliefs concerning the existential reality of 'international politics', because, as Vincent observes, 'part of the very definition of the state presupposes the separate existence of other national states'.[37] In short, sovereign statehood, which Waltz implicitly relies on in order to define international political structures in terms of states, contradicts his idealistic commitment to the state of nature. Sovereign states, by definition, are not in one. As Stankiewicz has pointed out: 'the existence of state sovereignty demolishes the basis of the hypothetical state of nature, for the ceaseless hunger for "power after power" is then eliminated and necessary restraints imposed'.[38] Thus, Waltz, through his implicit reliance on the institution of sovereign statehood to differentiate states as international political agents, undercuts both the basis on which his entire theory rests, and destroys the logic by which he subsequently tries to separate his levels of analysis. For that logic, which derives the external structure of international politics from

'given' characteristics of states and their asocial mode of association (power politics), cannot coherently account for the very ordering principle which defines them as 'like units'. As Wendt argues, taking states for granted in this manner and attributing them with motives for behaviour, even by assumption, amounts to a *de facto* supposition that:

> sovereignty, and therefore the state, exist prior to the structure of the state system as a prestructural property of ontologically primitive state actors. In other words, states are assumed to be already differentiated and constituted as autonomous, sovereign subjects before they come together to form the 'market' that is the structure of the international system.[39]

EXPLANATION VERSUS PRESCRIPTION: LEGITIMIZING THE STATUS QUO

Thus, far I have focused on some debilitating contradictions within Waltz's description of international politics. This final section considers the implications of these contradictions for the prescriptive dimensions of *Theory* as a 'problem-solving' approach, i.e. as 'a guide to help solve the problems posed within the terms of the particular perspective which was the point of departure'.[40] Waltz's defence of the contemporary system is based on his avowedly theoretical' argument that bipolarity/duopoly promotes systemic peace and stability. Whether or not the post-1945 bipolar system does this, however, is quite another matter. Waltz believes that the perpetuation of peace is relatively high in this era compared to past eras, and that its stability is reinforced by nuclear weapons and the gradual maturation of the superpowers, which have become increasingly restrained in their mutual relations. Rhetoric aside, he argues that they have become socialized to the system, and show greater interest in conserving their hegemonic status than in transforming the system to conform to their domestically generated ideologies. He appeals to this conformity in arguing that, in a system characterized by such high inequality, the constructive management of global affairs is facilitated by the prudential incentives which encourage the superpowers, particularly the United States, to pay disproportionate costs to solve common international economic, social, and environmental problems.

Before criticizing this unjustifiably complacent evaluation of the stability of contemporary bipolarity, it is only fair to point out that Waltz never argues that bipolarity guarantees that its alleged virtues will manifest themselves. He simply argues that the 'pressures' of bipolarity 'strongly encourage' the kind of behaviour that justifies his optimism. Furthermore, given the generality, or rather, vagueness, of the theory's explanatory scope as a systemic analysis, it should also be noted that Waltz refrains from offering any specific maxims for the conduct of American foreign policy. Of course, it would be rather foolish for him to do so, since, to borrow Minogue's apt phrase regarding structural explanations in general, Waltz has 'taken up a vantage point so far above the terrain so as to obliterate the details needed by the traveller'.[41] Nevertheless, given the overall analytic thrust of *Theory,* there is no question that, as Miller observes, 'it serves as a legitimation of the bipolar lens through which the [Reagan] administration focussed on the outside world'.[42] I will illustrate how contentious some of his evaluations are regarding nuclear deterrence and the 'maturation' of the superpowers.

First, one should note an important ambiguity in Waltz's use of the term 'stability', which refers both to the durability of the system as well as to the absence of war among its dominant members. As Ruggie points out, confusion arises because 'either bipolarity [in terms of peace] or multipolarity [in terms of durability] comes out being more stable, depending on the definition'.[43] Nevertheless, Waltz is correct in observing that the contemporary system has been remarkably peaceful, at least between the superpowers. The question is, why? Waltz's answer is ambiguous. He believes that the factors encouraging stability have been, first, bipolarity—a systemic force—and second, nuclear weapons—a unit-level force. One could, of course, waste a great deal of time trying to distinguish between these factors and deciding which was more important. However, in the absence of any counter-factual evidence, such a debate would be inconclusive and probably not worth while undertaking. Reasoning by analogy from microeconomics is not much help either, since the second meaning of stability (peace) is completely irrelevant in domestic economic markets! Waltz thus hedges his bets, arguing that both factors are important, although he believes that nuclear weapons merely reinforce the constraints of bipolarity. It is obviously impossible to test his argument empirically, but we can examine it in terms of its internal coherence. Unfortunately, there is a fundamental

contradiction in the logic by which Waltz invokes bipolarity and nuclear deterrence as mutually supportive constraints.

Recall that, in opposition to liberal economic arguments stressing the growing interdependence between states, Waltz argues that the politically pertinent definition of this term is vulnerability, or mutual dependence. Economically, he argues that it tends to diminish as the number of great powers declines. It follows that bipolarity is a good thing, since close interdependence 'means closeness of contact and raises the prospects of occasional conflict…if [it] grows at a pace that exceeds the development of central control, then interdependence hastens the occasion for war' (p. 138). Bipolarity, therefore, promotes stability. This is also true in the security domain, for, in a bipolar world, 'military interdependence declines even more sharply than economic interdependence' (p. 168). Consequently, security threats are clearly identified, capabilities are easily assessed and responded to by 'internal strengthening', and reliance on external allies for protection is reduced. In short, 'uncertainties lessen and calculations are easier to make' (p. 168).

Presumably Waltz is referring to some hypothetical bipolar world other than the present one, because he argues that the virtues of nuclear weapons lie in the fact that they 'make the cost of war seem frighteningly high and thus discourage states from starting any wars'. This is because nuclear weapons 'enable one state to punish another state severely without first defeating it', whilst deterring nuclear first strikes with invulnerable second-strike forces. The logic of this argument rests on the fact that the superpowers are mutually vulnerable to debilitating second-strike retaliations from each other. In short, they are completely interdependent in the security sphere, thus totally contradicting the logic by which Waltz defends bipolarity.

Despite this outright contradiction in Waltz's use of the term interdependence, one can still argue that there is nothing wrong with his substantive argument linking deterrence and stability, which rests on his belief that so long as the condition of mutual deterrence remains, neither side will 'rationally' begin a full-scale war. Thus:

> it is highly important, indeed useful, to think in 'cataclysmic terms', to live in dread of all-out war, and to base military calculations on the forces needed for the ultimate but unlikely crisis. That the United States does so, and that the Soviet

> Union apparently does too, makes the cataclysm less likely to occur.
>
> (Waltz, 1979, p. 186)

Against those who 'naively' question the 'utility' of the American nuclear establishment, Waltz invokes the analogy of a powerful police force, arguing that force is most useful when it is not actually resorted to, and therefore to question the utility of nuclear weapons 'amounts to saying that the police force that seldom if ever employs violence is weak' (p. 185). Nuclear weapons are therefore highly useful, for the fact that they exist works against the possibility that they will ever be used. 'Nuclear weapons', he stoutly declares, 'deter nuclear weapons; they also serve to limit escalation' (p. 188).

There are (at the very least) three basic problems with his argument. First, the analogy between the non-usability of nuclear weapons and the power of the police conflates coercion with authority and legitimacy. Nuclear states deter others, if they do at all, through the threat of retaliation. A 'powerful' police force need not resort to force in an 'ordered' society, with what Waltz refers to as a 'competent and respected government', for the simple reason that it is competent and respected, and therefore need not rule through fear and coercion of its citizens. The analogy may hold if Waltz is referring to the 'police' in, say, El Salvador, but not in states such as Canada, whose citizens do not generally obey the law out of fear of instant execution.

Second, Waltz commits a surprisingly basic error in conflating deterrence as an active strategy and as a passive condition arising out of the fact that such weapons exist, both sides possess them in abundance, and each is vulnerable to debilitating retribution if it launches an all-out nuclear first strike. Waltz may be correct in believing that both sides are deterred by this situation from rationally starting a full-scale war. However, this does not mean that the superpowers are devising strategies for this 'cataclysmic' but unlikely event, or that their strategies and the technological capabilities to support them may not undermine the balance of terror which Waltz idealistically and complacently describes as 'indestructible'.[44] To put it politely, Waltz is somewhat naive himself if he thinks either side is pursuing a strategy of minimal deterrence against the 'ultimate' crisis, or that the arms race is simply an action-reaction phenomenon. If nuclear deterrence is so stable, why does he think the superpowers have so many weapons, and do not share his

optimism? Furthermore, since they obviously do not, what does he think that they are 'rationally' trying to deter?

Third, Waltz's statement that nuclear weapons deter nuclear weapons, as well as 'escalation' (from what? to what?) assumes that they are active agents, rather than passive instruments of governments. Since deterrence is a psychological relationship, nuclear weapons cannot 'do' anything but explode after being launched by individuals on the order of governments. Governments deter, not things. As for his point regarding escalation, it is not clear whether he means that a strategy of minimal deterrence deters escalation, or whether, as both superpowers have assumed throughout the cold war, deterring escalation requires a counterforce or flexible response capability. If the former, he is in a small minority. If the latter, this is hardly planning for the 'cataclysmic' event, and therefore contradicts his claims regarding the stability of the balance of terror.

This is not the place to engage in a lengthy regurgitation of the well-known problems associated with rational-deterrence theories, which have engaged the minds of nuclear strategists for years. Suffice it to say that Waltz's simplistic statements regarding the stability of nuclear deterrence gloss over extremely contentious and complex issues in nuclear strategy, which cannot possibly be adequately dealt with in such a superficial manner.

Turning to Waltz's brief discussions concerning the 'maturation' of the superpowers and the potential for self-interested constructive management, I will confine myself to making two short points. First, given his failure to develop a truly systemic theory, Waltz's examples of restraint in superpower diplomacy do not demonstrate that each side is becoming 'unambiguously' socialized to bipolarity. All his discussion demonstrates is that in certain ways the superpowers have indeed learned to become more moderate in their dealings with one another. The important questions raised by this trend, however, cannot by answered by reference to systems-level forces. Waltz has not explained how such learning has taken place, or examined any of the dynamics of their diplomatic and strategic interaction. Stranded at the level of the system, he is unable to explore the dynamics of superpower relations, which have hardly reflected the kind of 'unambiguous' improvement which Waltz's logical economism would lead one to expect.

Second, given Waltz's failure to differentiate between the impact of bipolarity and the condition of nuclear deterrence, one can just as

plausibly argue that peace has been preserved by the latter rather than the former. If so, the complacency arising from Waltz's view that bipolarity is 'increasingly solid' is not only unfounded, but may be counterproductive. After all, in so far as it claims to be useful, a 'problem-solving' theory that fails to diagnose any major problems, is not only misleading but downright dangerous.

CONCLUSION

As with Morgenthau, this critical chapter has highlighted some fundamental contradictions within and between the descriptive and evaluative dimensions of Waltz's attempt to construct a 'structural realist' theory of international politics. Despite Waltz's appeal to scientific rigour, and his presentation of *Theory* as a mere instrument to understand an external and objective reality, this appeal conceals and presupposes an interpretation of international politics as a realm of necessity and power politics which is very similar to Morgenthau's. It is his ontological beliefs which explain Waltz's conceptualization of stability in terms of bipolar hegemony, the most hierarchical distribution of capabilities possible in an anarchic world. In turn, although Waltz's defence of this arrangement is perfectly understandable given his idealistic presuppositions, the basis on which he defends bipolarity totally contradicts his theoretical treatment of interdependence. Ultimately, therefore, it rests on some extremely dubious articles of faith concerning the stability of a precarious condition of nuclear deterrence, and the 'mellowing' of superpower rivalry. Thus, Waltz deserves to be labelled as a complacent idealist, as opposed to the nostalgic idealism of his illustrious paradigmatic predecessor.

7

HEDLEY BULL

Theory as tradition

INTRODUCTION

Avoiding both the dark metaphysics of a static human nature as well as the structural determinism of 'systemic forces', Hedley Bull's theoretical focus is what he calls the element of international society, and its importance in maintaining order among states. He argues that in practice, this societal element co-exists and competes with 'the element of war and struggles for power [and] the element of transnational society, cutting across the divisions among states'.[1] The element of society, and thus international order, are variables rather than constants. Each element is part of the complex reality of international politics, whose future 'is liable to be richer in its possibilities than our categories for theorizing about it can comprehend'.[2] Nevertheless, although he constantly warns against the danger of discovering a unity in thought that conceals and distorts a heterogenous reality, Bull classifies his own perspective as part of a 'Grotian tradition' of international thought, as opposed to 'realism' (exemplified by Hobbes), or transcendental 'idealism' (exemplified by Kant). He is particularly concerned to maintain this tradition in an era when its underlying assumptions are threatened by the global expansion of contemporary international society from its European base, and the ideological and cultural rifts between east and west, north and south.

Prescriptively, Bull neither aspires to value-freedom like Waltz, nor is he concerned to instruct decision-makers in the policy requirements of the national interest, like Morgenthau. Instead, by explicating the theory and practice of international society, Bull

argues that maintaining international order depends on the ability and willingness of states, particularly the great powers, to recognize and act upon their shared interests in upholding and extending the fragile complex of rules and practices, or 'institutions', on which order rests. In turn, order provides a necessary framework within which broader questions of morality and justice may be raised and dealt with in an incremental manner. However, towards the end of his life, Bull became increasingly disenchanted with the United States and the Soviet Union, dubbing them the 'great irresponsibles'.[3]

This chapter describes in some more detail each of these dimensions of Bull's approach to international political theory, and the connections among them. The first section summarizes the main argument of *The Anarchical Society,* his most well-known and systematic attempt to deal with 'a large and complex subject simply by thinking it through' (p. x). All page references in this and the next chapter refer to this book. The second section focuses more narrowly on what I call Bull's ontological pluralism, and his attempt to define his Grotian perspective as a *via media* between Realism and Idealism as schools (or traditions) of thought. His refusal to transcend these competing traditions of thought testifies to the intellectual influence of the English historian Martin Wight, his former colleague and mentor.[4] The third section summarizes Bull's main charges against American behaviouralism and its alleged betrayal of the classical tradition, and the final section briefly notes the prescriptive implications of Bull's work.

THE ANARCHICAL SOCIETY

The problematique of this study is the maintenance of order in international politics, order in general being defined as 'a pattern of activity that sustains elementary, primary or universal goals of social life' (p. 5). These goals are threefold, and apply to both domestic and international society: security for its members against arbitrary violence; ensuring that contracts and agreements will be adhered to; and a system for protecting property rights. Since some consensus on the value of these goals is necessary for a society to exist, they are constitutive rather than instrumental. Bull's definition of order is purposive, emphasizing intersubjective agreement regarding the inherent value attached to these goals, shared to some degree by all members of society.

Bull then distinguishes between domestic and international society according to the latter's unique membership and structural environment: namely, states in a condition of anarchy. Although the above goals are constitutive of social life in general, international society pursues the additional goals of preserving the sovereign-states system as the prevailing form of political organization, maintaining the independence and territorial sovereignty of its members, and peace as the normal condition of co-existence among them. International order is thus a pattern of activity that sustains these primary goals of international society. Bull differentiates the terms system and society in order to ground the meaning of the latter in terms of the shared expectations and background understandings of its members. Thus:

> where states are in regular contact with one another, and where in addition there is interaction between them sufficient to make the behaviour of each a necessary element in the calculations of the other, then we may speak of their forming a system.
>
> (Bull, 1977, p. 10)

In contrast to this atomistic conception of a system, devoid of any social cohesion, a society of states exists when

> a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values…conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions.
>
> (Bull, 1977, p. 13)

There are three component and interrelated parts to this definition. The common interests are the aforementioned goals of international society. Common values refer to one basis on which perceptions and interpretations of interests may be shared by states, thereby facilitating communication and understanding. But it is not the only one. Bull argues that although some common values, in the form of transnational religious and cultural homogeneity, have characterized past international societies (e.g. Western Christendom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, European political culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), he holds that the cultural and religious diversity of the contemporary global international society does not render it meaningless. For a sense of common interests

'may be the consequence of fear [or] it may derive from a rational calculation that the limitations necessary to sustain elementary goals of social life must be reciprocal' (p. 54).

The second component part, rules, are the means which provide guidance as to appropriate principles of conduct consistent with the goals of international society. Bull distinguishes between three complexes of rules according to their substantive scope: those that affirm and reinforce the primacy of the states system and identify states as the sole members of international society; those that specify the minimum conditions of co-existence among them (i.e. restricting violence, enabling contracts to be engaged in, and affirming state property rights); and those regulating co-operation among states in various issue areas. Although many of these rules are embodied in and enjoy the backing of international law, Bull does not concern himself with their precise status, arguing that they:

> may have the status of international law, or moral rules, of custom or established practice, or they may be merely operational rules or 'rules of the game', worked out without formal agreement or even without verbal communication. It is not uncommon for a rule to emerge first as an operational rule, then to become established practice, then to attain the status of a moral principle and finally to be incorporated in a legal convention.
>
> (Bull, 1977, p. 67)

Unlike domestic society, wherein state institutions formally make, communicate, administer, interpret, enforce, and protect its rules, all these functions are carried out by the members of international society, states. Here, there are no supranational organizations endowed with a legitimate monopoly of force, and hence to authoritatively perform analogous functions regarding the 'rules' of international society. In organizational terms, states are its only institutions. However, in so far as international society is more than the sum of its members and patterns of short-term strategic interaction among self-interested players, Bull argues that there must be a number of analogous 'institutions' which help to fulfil similar functions as the state *vis-à-vis* civil society. He refers to these as 'a set of habits and practices shaped towards the realization of common goals' (p. 74).

According to Bull, the main institutions of international society which express this 'element of collaboration' in maintaining order among states are fivefold: the balance of power, international law, diplomacy, the managerial system of the great powers, and war. The main body of *The Anarchical Society* describes these institutions and their contribution to international order, both historically and in the contemporary global international society. For analytical purposes, each is examined separately, although the functions they fulfil in relation to order often overlap and sometimes contradict one another. Before briefly illustrating this, it is important to understand two fundamental points about Bull's discussion of the goals of international society, and the subsequent antinomies involved in treating these five phenomena as 'institutions'.

First, the elemental goals of international society are neither symbiotic, nor are they of equal value to international society. They are arranged hierarchically. Bull argues that peace is subordinate to preserving the territorial and political independence of states, which in turn is subordinate to the preservation of the states system as the prevailing form of universal political organization. The maintenance of one goal may well conflict with one another.

Second, he emphasizes throughout his work that he is only interested in these phenomena in relation to the societal element of international politics, and the problematique of order. Each can be regarded as an institution only in so far as it contributes to the latter rather than undermining it. Thus, war may be a threat to order as well as contributing towards it. The great powers may uphold order as well as promote disorder. A 'fortuitous' balance of power emerging momentarily in a terminal struggle for power, and therefore lacking any element of contrivance, is not part of the broader institution, and so on. Bull points out that he is not engaged in a structural-functionalist kind of analysis, according to which international society exists above and apart from its members. As he continually emphasizes: 'the element of international society is real, but the element of a state of war and of transnational loyalties are real also, and to reify the first element, or to speak as if it annulled the second and third, is an illusion' (p. 51).

Rather than regurgitate or attempt to simplify a dense account of these institutions, replete with rigorous definitions, multiple distinctions, and systematic explications of their ambivalent contribution to international order, I will confine myself briefly to illustrating the above points with reference to each of them.

The balance of power, defined as a state of affairs such that no one power is preponderant and can lay down the law to others, is the primary institution of international society. Throughout the system, a general balance has preserved it from being transformed into a universal empire. Local balances have served the second goal by preserving the independence of some states, and both have provided the conditions in which the other institutions can operate. However, the balance of power has not served the function of peace. On the contrary, preserving the balance often requires the use of force. Similarly, the second goal is not served when states are partitioned and their territorial and political sovereignty violated in the interests of the dominant balance among the great powers. Finally, maintaining the balance often requires contravening international laws, even though it is a precondition for the latter to function at all.

International law, a body of formal rules regarded by states to have the status of law, and therefore providing authoritative principles of conduct to which states are obliged to abide by, contributes to order indirectly. Its functions are to identify the constitutional principles of international society, state the basic rules of co-existence and co-operation, and help mobilize compliance with these rules. However, international law may hinder measures to maintain international order. As indicated above, it often conflicts with measures required to maintain the balance of power by, for example, outlawing preventive war, intervention, and requiring sanctions against aggression. It may also hinder international order by promoting and reflecting various kinds of international (as opposed to interstate), human or cosmopolitan justice, and extending its scope to non-state actors and issues previously held to belong to the sphere of domestic jurisdiction.

Diplomacy, 'the conduct of relations between states…by official agents and by peaceful means' (p. 162), also fulfils indirect functions in international society. Diplomatic practice symbolizes the existence of international society since it presupposes the reciprocal acceptance by states of its rules and conventions. Practically, it facilitates communication, the negotiation of treaties and other agreements, intelligence gathering, and what Bull calls the minimization of 'friction' among states arising from misperception, prejudice and misunderstanding. Like Morgenthau, Bull notes the decline of diplomacy in fulfilling these practical functions in the twentieth century, indicating 'a wider decline in the conditions of international order'. However, he also notes that the widespread

acceptance of diplomatic conventions throughout the world testifies to the continual importance of its symbolic function in an era when 'states are more numerous, more deeply divided and less unambiguously participants in a common culture' (p. 183).

War, or organized violence waged by sovereign states, presents the greatest dangers to international society, since it threatens to transform it into 'a state of pure enmity'. Thus, the institutions of law and diplomacy are designed to contain the threat to and conduct of war within acceptable limits. Nevertheless, Bull argues that war itself is an institution of international society in so far as it provides a means of preserving the balance of power, enforcing certain international laws pertaining to the legal rights of self-defence, and even to promote just change in a realm which lacks effective mechanisms of peaceful change. Thus, war has a dual aspect, representing 'a threat to be limited and contained; on the other hand, an instrumentality to be harnessed to international society's purposes' (p. 198). The balance between these aspects varies over time depending on the technology of war, and the strength of the other institutions of international society. Today, Bull argues that nuclear weapons have made war a greater threat to international society than ever before, overriding its contribution to international order.

The final institution which Bull examines is that of the great powers, a term that implies 'the existence of a club with a rule of membership' (p. 200). These are states at the front rank in terms of military strength, recognized to have certain rights and duties regarding international peace and security. Thus, they are accorded privileged status in organizations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization. They contribute to international order not just by their sheer strength, but by pursuing particular policies *vis-à-vis* each other, and to international society as a whole. The former include preservation of the general balance of power, avoiding crises and controlling them when they occur (rather than exploiting them for unilateral advantage), and by containing and limiting wars with one another. The latter involves maintaining their regional predominance within their spheres of influence, recognizing the legitimacy of each other's spheres of influence, and sometimes undertaking joint action to sustain their societal status and achieve their common interests through cooperation.

Bull's examination of these institutions of international society and their contribution to international order precedes an extended

discussion of alternative paths towards world order, which Bull defines as 'those patterns of human activity that sustain the elementary or primary goals of mankind as a whole' (p. 20). These are the constitutive goals of social life on a global scale, excluding the specific goals of international society. Bull argues that world order:

> is more fundamental and primordial than international order because the ultimate units of the great society of all mankind are not states (or nations, tribes, empires, classes or parties) but individual human beings, which are permanent and indestructible in a sense in which groupings of them of this or that sort are not. This is the moment for international relations, but the question of world order arises whatever the political or social structure of the globe…it is necessary to state…that if any value attaches to order in world politics, it is order among mankind which we must treat as being of primary value, not order within the society of states. If international order does have value, this can only be because it is instrumental to the goal of order in human society as a whole.
>
> (Bull, 1977, p. 22)

Of course, at present the states system is the only global international system. But Bull points out that this has not been the case in the past, nor need it persist for the indefinite future. This should not be lost sight of simply because the present system is global.

Bull then critically examines various blueprints that have been put forward by those who believe that the international system is radically dysfunctional and should be transformed. He also investigates the possibility that, regardless of what should replace it as a preferable arrangement to achieve world order, the present system is undergoing radical change, evidence for which may be found in trends such as regional integration, transnationalism and interdependence, domestic disintegration, and technological unification. All of these represent anomalies, or 'awkward fits' for the classical theory of international relations, which is stubbornly state-centric.

Bull's discussion of both these matters reflects a certain ambivalence. On the one hand, he is sharply critical of those who mistake passing trends for historical turning points, pointing out

that what some scholars treat as radically new departures in international politics are not new at all. For example, the view that states are being eclipsed by non-state actors like multinational corporations is given extremely short shrift, which Bull illustrates using religious and economic examples from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth. Furthermore, he holds that the states system is remarkably resilient to change, and can readily absorb apparent challenges to its hegemony. Thus, regional integration, which is sometimes viewed as a potential source of systemic transformation, has not only failed to dilute the force of nationalism, but its logical result is simply fewer and bigger states. Conversely, domestic disintegration is often the result of secessionist groups demanding national self-determination, and their legal and political recognition in the form of sovereignty and territorial autonomy.

Yet whilst Bull is sharply critical, both of exhortations regarding the necessity of change and premature diagnoses of its immanence, he is by no means dismissive of their underlying normative concerns. In a chapter on the tensions between order and various conceptions of justice in international politics, Bull readily concedes that 'the institutions and mechanisms which sustain international order…especially when they are working properly, necessarily violate ordinary notions of justice' (p. 91). The value of international order, and the goals it protects and maintains among states, are ultimately derivative. World order, however contested such an abstract concept may be, must be the moral yardstick by which one evaluates the states system. However, Bull also holds that international order is not totally antithetical to world order, in so far as some kind of political order is a prerequisite for achieving notions of individual, cosmopolitan or distributive justice.[5] In the absence of a world state, and thus no consensus on the meaning and political requisites for attaining world order among mankind, the states system is the only existing basis within which some consensus on issues relevant to world order may be approximated without violent change. Furthermore:

> Any regime that provides order in world politics will need to appease demands for just change, at least to some degree, if it is to endure; and thus an enlightened pursuit of the goal of order will take account also of the goal of justice. Likewise the demand for just change will need to take account of the goal of

> order; for it is only if the changes…can be incorporated in some regime that provides order, that they can be made secure.
> (Bull, 1977, p. 95)

Thus, although contemporary international society necessarily fails to provide any potential for achieving notions of justice that may be pursued within domestic societies, it remains the only viable mechanism through which these ideals may be even partially attained. The fact that international society recognizes the legitimacy of raising issues of human rights, economic redistribution, racial equality, and so on testifies to some consensus on the need to deal with matters transcending national boundaries to encompass mankind as a whole. It also raises the possibility that if some consensus on issues of world order can be reached within the constraints imposed by the states system, it may serve to uphold international order rather than undermine it.

Bull's text thus ends on an ambivalent note. In his view, this simply reflects the dynamic tension between the three 'elements' whose interplay is constantly frustrating attempts to capture the reality of international politics within one 'image' or tradition of international thought. The essential nature of the subject-matter eludes each, which belie their claims to exhaustiveness by attempting to subsume the whole of international political reality into one of its parts.

THE HETEROGENEITY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

As I pointed out earlier, Bull's approach to international political theory is heavily indebted to the influence of the English historian Martin Wight. Before examining what I call Bull's ontological pluralism as the basis of his overall approach, it is important to recognize what both scholars meant by the nature and scope of 'international theory', and thus the kind of discourse in which these competing traditions must be understood.

According to Wight, 'the most fundamental question you can ask in international theory is, what is international society?, just as the central question in political theory is, what is a state?'[6] This assertion rests on his belief that 'if political theory is the tradition of speculation about the state, then international theory may be supposed to be a tradition of speculation about the society of states, or the family of nations, or

the international community'.[7] Bull poses exactly the same question, from which flow a series of subsidiary inquiries that characterize what he calls a 'classical approach' to international politics:

> For example, does the collectivity of sovereign states constitute a political society or system, or does it not? If we can speak of a society of sovereign states, does it presuppose a common culture or civilization? What is the place of war in international society? Is all private use of force anathema to society's working, or are there just wars which it may tolerate or even require? Does a member state of international society enjoy a right of intervention in the internal affairs of another, and if so, under what circumstances? Are sovereign states the sole members of international society, or does it ultimately consist of individual human beings, whose rights and duties override those of the entities who act in their name?[8]

Having posed the central ontological question for international theory, Wight argues that the latter 'is marked, not only by paucity but also by intellectual and moral poverty'.[9] The reason for this is double-edged. On the one hand, western political theorists have traditionally focused almost exclusively on the state as the site of progress and the 'consummation of political experience'. On the other hand, Wight also notes:

> a kind of recalcitrance of international politics to being theorized about. The reason for this is that the theorizing has to be done in the language of political theory and law. But this is appropriate to man's control of his social life…international theory is the theory of survival.[10]

Thus, there is no self-contained body of international theory as Wight conceives it. Instead, he distinguishes between three very broad historical traditions of thought, 'as embodied in and handed down by writers and statesmen'. Before briefly looking at these in terms of how and why they answer the central question of international theory, it should be noted that Wight is extremely careful to emphasize just how broadly his typology is constructed in order to cover and simplify a vast range of philosophical, legal, and historical literature, as well as to codify an analogous range of political practice:

> If we speak of each of these three types of international theory as patterns of thought we approach them from a philosophical standpoint. We shall be likely to note the…logical coherence of the complex of thought and how acceptance of any one unit-idea is likely to entail logically most of the others, so that the whole is capable of being a system of political philosophy. If we speak of them as traditions of thought… we are likely to notice illogicalities and discontinuities because exigencies of political life often override logic. We shall find all kinds of intermediate positions.[11]

With this caveat firmly stated, Wight goes on to describe the distinguishing characteristics of what he dubs the three R's—Realism, Rationalism, and Revolutionism—in terms of how and why they answer the central question.

At one extreme is Realism. According to this tradition, international society is a contradiction in terms. In the absence of a contract between states, they are in a pre-societal state of nature. As between individuals, this is a state of war. Wedded to Hobbesian assumptions, this tradition views international politics as a zerosum struggle for power, and peace as the fragile outcome of mutual insecurity and existential deterrence. The state is the highest form of political authority, and its interests preclude embodying any consideration for those of other states, apart from that dictated by prudence and the rational pursuit of egoistic self-interest in a hostile environment. International politics is the perpetual realm of violence, survival and strategic necessity.

At the opposite extreme lies Revolutionism, a tradition whose classical forbears are Dante and Kant. This tradition teleologically posits an international society of mankind, prevented from its full realization by the epiphenomenal states system, whose pathological dynamics are contrary to the real interests of the true members of that society. Conceding Realism's scepticism regarding an international society of states, the Realist tradition of thought is wedded to a perfectionist view of man in a historically contingent process of struggle towards the *civitas maxima*. Rather than surrendering to, or morally glorifying, the necessities of survival in a self-help system, Revolutionists demand that it be radically revised. 'Hence the belief, common in varying degrees to the Huguenots, the Jacobins, Mazzini, President Wilson and the Communists, that the whole of diplomatic history has groaned and travailed until now, and

that the community of mankind, like the kingdom of God… is at hand'.[12]

As these illustrations demonstrate, neither the precise political arrangement of the future, nor the means of transforming the present one, are determined a priori. There are as many different routes to salvation as there are justifications for its necessity. What unites revolutionists of every stripe is their rejection of the existing political system and their demand for its radical overhaul.

The Rationalist tradition lies between these two extremes, and is defined against them. Informed by the metaphysics of Locke and Hume rather than Hobbes or Kant, adherents to this tradition argue that the precontractual state of nature is neither substantively chaotic nor blissful, and that both the above schools err by postulating man as an atomistic creature, whose social behaviour is determined by a static and asocial 'nature'. Instead, man must be understood as a social animal, in continual interaction with others. Forms of social life are best understood by tracing the historical evolution of their customs and norms. As articulated and codified through authoritative societal institutions of governance, these provide the principles of conduct through which societies are regulated by the reciprocal rights and obligations of their constituent members.

Thus, the absence of a world state, and the co-existence of a plurality of sovereign states, does not condemn international politics to a state of war and render meaningless the notion of an international society. Nor is it a barrier to social and economic intercourse among its members. However, it must be understood as a unique society, whose autonomy severely weakens appeals to the 'domestic analogy' in understanding its basic characteristics and dynamics.

Wight's trialectic of international thought is extremely eclectic, not simply because of his refusal to delineate these 'traditions' with any philosophical and analytic precision, but also because of his deep personal reluctance either to transcend them, or to locate his own views within the broad parameters of any single one. In his view, none of them can claim a monopoly of the truth, which reflects the interplay between the elements of international political practice which each tradition uses as evidence for the validity of its underlying postulates: namely, structural anarchy, habitual intercourse, and transnational moral solidarity. 'When I scrutinize my own psyche', he once wrote, 'I seem to find all these three ways of thought within me'.[13]

Hedley Bull openly appropriates Wight's categories in *The Anarchical Society* and elsewhere, although he uses different labels to identify them, tying each tradition to the work of a particular political and legal theorist who best exemplifies each one—Hobbes, Kant, and the seventeenth-century legal theorist, Hugo Grotius. Although Bull also refuses to transcend or analytically arbitrate between these alleged paradigms of international political theory, he locates his own work within the Grotian tradition.

Bearing in mind that Wight's trialectic is painted with such broad strokes, and that it serves, as Porter puts it, like 'the arranging of the stars in constellations…for the convenience of the observer',[14] it should be noted that Bull's positing of a Grotian tradition does not mean that there is a direct correspondence or lineage between Grotius and Bull. On the contrary. Bull himself explores the tensions in Grotius' writing concerning the sources of obligation underlying international law and morality, which are a blend of medieval natural law, Christian divine law, and human (or volitional) law. Comparing Grotius with his more positivistic successors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Bull notes a whole series of ambiguities in the work of Grotius due to the latter's attempt to retain and apply the vestiges of universalism in an era of rapid and confusing historical change.[15] Thus, although Bull often talks of a Grotian tradition' of international thought, it is neither explicitly indebted to the work of Grotius, nor is it immune from adaptation and revision in light of the evolution of the international society whose practices it seeks to understand. Bull argues that the reason for attributing the intellectual origins of this tradition to Grotius is simply the latter's seminal role in encouraging 'the conception of international society as a unique society…that is fully defined only by the writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'.[16] Such a society was not yet in place when Grotius sought to justify limits on the resort to and use of force by sovereign princes, discover sources of obligation on which international law could be based, and delimit the latter's scope regarding its subjects of jurisdiction. Thus, it is not surprising that Grotius failed to perceive the uniqueness of this nascent society, and that his work is infused with what Bull calls solidarist assumptions that are more characteristic of the Kantian tradition. This manifests itself in his appeal to natural and divine law as a source of obligation in international law, to extend the latter's scope so as to legislate legitimate reasons for the resort to force as well as to regulate its use in war, and the broader ambiguity regarding the constituent members

of international society. In Bull's view, the resultant tensions in Grotius' work are the result of two factors—the fact that this legal theorist was writing at a time when the European states system was embryonic, and his related reluctance to dispense with the intellectual tools more applicable to a bygone era.

Bull himself is more sympathetic to the pluralist and positivist strand of the Grotian tradition, which dispenses with the solidarist assumptions of the natural law school, and which recognizes the limitations of the domestic analogy in seeking to explicate the distinctive features of a society of states. Distinguishing between Grotius and those whom he calls twentieth-century 'neo-Grotians', Bull notes that for Grotius himself, 'the terminology of a universal state is what is still normal, and the language of international relations can be spoken only with an effort. The neo-Grotians, however, have three more centuries of the theory and practice of international society behind them'.[17]

According to Bull, the Grotian tradition has moved away from its predominantly normative origins in international legal thought towards a broader empirical focus on the political dimensions of international society. This evolution parallels the development of international society itself as it has expanded from its European base to embrace the globe. Its expansion, concomitant secularization, and growing cultural and ideological heterogeneity required similar adaptations and revisions in the theory of international society. This increasingly reflected changes in international political practice rather than attempting to change or evaluate state conduct according to universalist doctrines more befitting the Kantian tradition.

Thus, international legal thought shed its theological and philosophical roots in natural and divine law to become more positivistic and pluralistic; customary practice and consent succeeded right reason and theological consensus in determining the sources of obligation in international law. Similarly, sovereign statehood became the sole criterion of membership in international society, rather than other political entities 'such as Oriental kingdoms, Islamic emirates or African chieftaincies' (p. 34). Justwar doctrines declined as the resort to war came to be recognized as the monopoly of the state, a political decision not subject to legal adjudication. As the sources and scope of international law became more circumscribed, more attention was paid to other mechanisms central to the maintenance of order among states, such as the principle of the balance of power, the special role of the great powers, and other

institutions. Thus, neither the idea, nor the reality of international society is immune from historical change and conditioning, although the relationship between them has been reversed.

In sum, Bull's ontological approach to international politics is pluralistic, appropriating Wight's three traditions as metatheoretical paradigms of international thought and practice. However, unlike Wight, Bull identifies his own work as an extension of the Grotian tradition, notwithstanding his admission that this focuses on only one element of the reality of international politics.[18] Furthermore, although these traditions constitute 'what the central explanations of international phenomena have been in the past, and what the main positions are that may be taken up in controversies about international conduct', they are not static, but dynamic, requiring reformulation and restatement 'in relation to changing circumstances, and…in the changing idiom of the times'.[19]

TRADITION VERSUS SCIENCE

Given his interpretation of international theory as the analogue of traditional political theory, and his characterization of the classical approach as one 'that derives from philosophy, history, and law', it is not surprising that Bull adopts an extremely negative view of what he refers to, and concedes to represent, as an alternative and anti-classical 'scientific approach'. In his 1966 article, in which the contrast between these approaches takes the form of a predominantly transatlantic dispute between British and American academics, he argues that all too many of the latter 'aspire to a theory of international relations whose propositions are based either upon logical or mathematical proof, or upon strict, empirical procedures of verification'.[20] In so far as this is inspired by a desire to emulate the cumulative growth of knowledge in some of the natural sciences as well as certain disciplines within social science, on the assumption that the logic of explanation applies regardless of the subject-matter, Bull argues that this represents a 'false path' to theory, appeals to which 'we should remain resolutely deaf'.[21]

It is important to understand that Bull's distinction between tradition and science, and his claim that the latter is a threat to the former when its proponents seek to dispense with tradition as so much speculative 'wisdom literature', is firmly rooted in his fundamental beliefs regarding the 'reality' of international politics as an essentially contested and heterogenous realm of human practice.

This necessarily precludes the application of scientific methodological procedures in answering the questions central to theory as he conceived of it. As he points out in light of the series of questions constitutive of the classical tradition:

> Some of these are at least in part moral questions, which cannot by their very nature be given any sort of objective answer, and which can only be probed, clarified, reformulated, and tentatively answered from some arbitrary standpoint, according to the method of philosophy. Others of them are empirical questions, but of so elusive a nature that any answer we provide to them will leave some things unsaid, will be no more than an item in a conversation that has yet to be concluded.[22]

This direct relationship between Bull's substantive understanding of international politics, and hence the nature of theory as an open-ended and multifarious mode of discourse, is important to grasp. Unlike some participants in the methodological debate of the 1960s, Bull is definitely not interested in engaging in an argument with his American opponents over their interpretation of the scientific enterprise. Bull has no pretentions to be a philosopher of science, nor (unlike Waltz, whom Bull wrongly places in the 'traditionalist' camp) does he refer to any authorities in this field to back up any of his arguments. Instead, conceding the mantle of science to his American counterparts, he simply doubts the relevance of their approach to the core concerns of international political theory as he and Wight understand it. Furthermore, he argues that they 'have forsworn the means of coming directly to grips with them' because of 'the congenital inability of the scientific approach to deal with the crux of the subject while yet remaining true to its own terms'.[23] There are two basic reasons for this.

First, Bull continually emphasizes the autonomy of international politics as a realm of volition rather than determination according to any given laws of behaviour. Thus, a detailed knowledge of international, and especially diplomatic, history is essential in order to appreciate the constraints on the scope of empirical generalization in this field. It sensitizes the scholar, both to the temporal and spatial singularity of historical political situations, which can never be reduced to mere 'cases or illustrations of one or another general proposition', as well as the historical contingency of theorizing itself.

Thus, 'an understanding of the historical conditions out of which a theory grows, or to which it is a response, provides vital materials for the criticism of that theory, and for the theorist himself, provides the correction of self-knowledge'.[24]

Bull believes that neither of these points is sufficiently appreciated by those wishing to discover a coherent structure of general empirical propositions 'that is comprehensive and not merely partial, and that would gain acceptance not merely as a theory but as the theory of international relations'.[25] Such ambitions constitute a regressive abandonment of traditional sources and dimensions of theory as well as its alienation from its subject-matter. In turn, this results in an undue emphasis on technique, methodology, and a fetish for quantification that Bull regards as a deplorable distortion of academic priorities.

Second, he argues that the scientific approach rests on a naive assumption that theory and practice are separate and dichotomous. It posits the latter as an unproblematic and theoretically untainted realm of observable behaviour, which can therefore be classified, measured and divided up into variables. The role of theory is then to discover the direction and strength of their relationship, explaining the latter in terms of antecedent conditions plus laws of behaviour. In turn, practice becomes the arbiter of theoretical evaluation, the source of support or falsification for empirical hypotheses derived from or giving rise to theory, 'a timeless language of definitions and axioms, logical deductions and extrapolations, assertions of causal connections, ascertainments of general law'.[26]

Bull also emphatically rejects the assumed dichotomy between a private theoretical context of discovery and a public and verifiable context of justification, according to which the instrumental value of more or less 'useful' theoretical propositions is judged purely by their fit with a 'given' political reality. Rather, he stresses the way in which theory and practice overlap and dynamically influence each other.

On the one hand, the reality of international politics is not independent of our ideas about it, even at the level of description and observation. More important, nor is it independent of the intersubjective understandings and intentions of the actors whose conduct constitutes the subject-matter of the discipline. Whereas the scientific approach may be appropriate for explaining the determined behaviour of states within a larger system, the traditional approach is necessary to interpret the conduct of states

within an historical society of their own making. As Nardin has recently pointed out in his attempt to ressurrect the concept of international society, conduct should be understood 'as an activity of thinking agents (the quality of whose thought may be excellent or poor) responding to an understood (or misunderstood) situation, in accordance with (or violation of) various practices, rules, or maxims of conduct'.[27]

Since these practices, institutions and rules are themselves informed by theoretical ideas regarding the content and scope of appropriate conduct, political practice, or the 'facts' of international politics, are fundamentally theory-dependent. As we have seen, Wight's three traditions embody both theory and practice in so far as they reflect political actors' self-understandings regarding the world around them and the constraints and opportunities for change within it. Each tradition is partly constitutive of the subject-matter, rendering comprehensible and meaningful an inherently problematic and heterogenous 'reality'. This means that all theories are necessarily partial, and do not function merely as optional and instrumental heuristic devices, as suggested by the ubiquitous metaphors of 'tools' or 'maps'.

On the other hand, as traditions of international thought, they are also rooted in very different metaphysical conceptions of human nature, society, and political morality. The scientific approach, in contrast, divorces empirical and normative theorizing. Furthermore, it subordinates the latter to the former by equating 'values' with non-cognitive and subjective preferences, hoping to resolve conflicts between them by translating them into what Singer calls 'the more tractable form of predictive conflicts', and thereby bridging the gap between the empirical and the normative from the empirical side. That is, as scientific knowledge progressively cumulates toward a firm foundation of theoretically integrated propositions, 'the better our predictions will be, and, therefore, the fewer policy disagreements we will have'.[28] Of course, Bull regards this as hopelessly idealistic. He vehemently rejects the linear view of progressive scientific development in this discipline, arguing instead that a more likely future is that the discipline 'will remain indefinitely in the philosophical stage of constant debate about fundamentals; [and] that the works of the new scientific theorists will take their place alongside earlier works as partial and uncertain guides to an essentially intractable subject'.[29]

Having summed up Bull's attack on American behaviouralism, I will conclude this section by briefly commenting on the relationship between substance and method in Bull's own work. In his recent testimonial to Bull, Hoffmann describes his approach as one of 'Weberian humanism'.[30] Given his rejection of all kinds of structural-functional analysis, and his focus on international society in terms of the evolving intersubjective practices and norms of conduct shared by states, Bull analyses the latter from an historical perspective, in an attempt to empathize with the perspectives of the actors involved.[31]

Consequently, his theoretical concepts never stray too far from the meaning they have in the practical and dynamic world of diplomatic discourse. Whereas the scientific approach requires a radical separation between the language of theory and practice, in which the meaning of theoretical concepts is fixed by stipulation, deductively linked to empirical hypotheses via operationalization, Bull's work reflects a more hermeneutic method of explication or, in Geertz's terms, 'thick description'.[32] Thus, the concept of a great power, although it is used by Bull in an empirical way to demarcate certain states from others, is never defined exclusively by reference to observable and measurable material indices. Its meaning is infused with normative significance which not only presupposes a broader discourse of social interaction, but also embodies and endows the actors so defined with particular rights and duties *vis-à-vis* other states. Thus, identifying a class of states with such a status is an inherently problematic and ambiguous exercise. Similarly, the concept of the balance of power cannot be shorn of its ambiguity by operational stipulation without distorting its meaning and role in diplomatic history. For it is not just an existential condition, but also a principle of conduct, a societal institution, a goal to be maintained. One can, and Bull does, differentiate between different meanings and types of balance in order to clarify this ubiquitous and confusing phrase, but not in order to arrive at a fixed and final definition.

What emerges from reading Bull's work is an approach to international politics that makes no attempt to transcend its complexity and retreat, either into bold assertions regarding its essential and underlying dynamics, or the construction and manipulation of elegant models abstracted from and imposed upon a recalcitrant subject-matter. He speaks out against these temptations often enough, and never claims to be particularly theoretically

innovative. In his view, theorizing ranges along a continuum. At a minimum, it involves criticism ('identifying, formulating, refining, and questioning…general assumptions on which everyday discussion of international politics proceeds'). At the opposite extreme it involves ambitious attempts 'to erect a firm structure of knowledge'.[33] Sceptical of the latter, which he is content to leave to others, Bull is content to maintain a tradition of thought which, for all its ambiguity in steering a middle path between two identifiable extremes, may be more faithful to what Wight calls 'the intractable anomalies and anfractuosities of international experience' than either of them.[34]

EXPLANATION AND PRESCRIPTION

Finally, this section briefly explores the prescriptive dimension of Bull's theoretical approach, which derives from the symbiotic relationship he posits between order and international society. Before commenting on this, it should be pointed out that Bull regards the prescriptive role of theory as subordinate to its primary function, which is to enhance our understanding of international politics, incuding its normative aspects. He argues that the latter have been largely ignored in post-war theorizing. This is due both to the dominant influence of Realism, which treats values and ideals as epiphenomenal, 'explaining them by reference to the conditions out of which they arise and the ulterior purposes they serve', and the positivist bias in the discipline toward explanatory theories rather than normative ones. In 1969, reviewing the contemporary relevance of E.H.Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis,* Bull concludes by arguing that 'the time has come to restore the moral or normative element to a more central place in the study of international relations…by recognizing the role actually played by values…and the legitimacy of raising questions about them in consequent questions of policy'.[35]

Interestingly enough, however, Bull himself never engages in any attempt at normative theory *per se,* claiming that unlike order, the meaning of justice in world politics is inherently subjective. Therefore, he offers no 'private vision of what just conduct would be, [or] any philosophical analysis of the criteria for recognizing it' (p. 78). Although he devotes some of his work to elaborating on various notions of justice that have been put forward by others and embodied in demands for just change

(particularly by Third World states), and examines their compatibility with the maintenance of international order, he refrains from endorsing any of them.[36] As Hoffmann notes, Bull is generally critical of moral generalization, both 'because of the complexity of concrete situations and because of the very real difficulty of the choices faced by statesmen'.[37]

Consequently, unlike Morgenthau, for whom the purpose of theory is to instruct 'rational' statesmen in the moral and political requirements of the national interest, or Waltz, for whom its social function is confined to enhancing the efficiency of means to achieve pre-given ends dictated by the dynamics of the international system, Bull is far more reticent and modest. He never claims that his approach constitutes a comprehensive explanation of the underlying causes of state behaviour which can lead to policy-relevant prescriptions regarding either the detailed goals of foreign policy, or the means by which it might achieve any given goals. Indeed, he holds that 'the search for conclusions that can be represented as "solutions" or "practical advice" is a corrupting element in the contemporary study of world politics, which properly understood is an intellectual activity and not a practical one' (pp. 319–20). Furthermore, although he concedes that his perspective represents an implicit defence of the states system, and therefore could be construed as containing certain recommendations, Bull points out that it focuses on only one element of international politics, whose value derives from the contribution which the order sustained by international society contributes to world order in general. Since Bull also admits that he has no idea of what the latter involves, 'to make recommendations on the basis of an examination of human goals as incomplete as that provided in the present study would be unwarranted' (p. 319).

Nevertheless, given his contention that international order is a prerequisite for entertaining any broader ambitions regarding world order, it is clear that Bull does value the former, if only for instrumental reasons. The prescriptive aspects of his approach stem from his analysis of the contemporary decline of international society, and the sources of that decline. On the one hand, Bull identifies a whole series of factors that have contributed to the erosion of the institutions of international society in the twentieth century. Some of these are broad historical trends which are beyond the immediate control of individual states. These include the global expansion of

international society and the concomitant lack of any transnational cultural homogeneity 'that can provide [it] with the kind of underpinning enjoyed by smaller international societies of the past' (p. 317); the enfranchizement of many new states in the Third World, and their revolt against western economic and political domination; and the deep ideological cleavages between the great powers arising from their radically incompatible economic and political systems.

It is with regard to the last of these factors that the prescriptive and evaluative dimension of Bull's approach is most evident. For of all the institutions of international society, only the great powers are also agents and actors in international politics. Indeed, it could be argued, although Bull himself never goes this far, that if the great powers do not fulfil the roles which Bull attributes to them, then none of the other institutions can function to prevent the collapse of international society. Toward the end of his life, Bull became increasingly critical of the superpowers in this regard, arguing that their conduct in the late 1970s and early 1980s had negated their claims, carefully nurtured during the period of *détente* from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, 'to be regarded by others as responsible managers of…international society as a whole'.[38] Neither in conducting their relationship with one another, nor with the rest of the world, had they shown much awareness of their mutual responsibilities ('duties') towards maintaining international order, despite the growing difficulties in doing so, as well as the fact that it was in their long-term self-interest.

Two brief points are worth mentioning about Bull's criticisms. First, in contrast to some analyses of the breakdown in *détente,* and the growing fragility of the post-war economic and political order which the United States had constructed in the late 1940s and early 1950s, he places far more emphasis on idiosyncratic political factors than on long-term structural changes in the international system. Thus, although he makes passing references to the relative decline of American power *vis-à-vis* Europe and Japan, and the continued stagnation of the Soviet economy, the thrust of his criticisms is towards the short-sighted reaction of the political leaders of the superpowers to their domestic and foreign problems. In particular, he reserves his strongest criticisms for the United States, which:

> through its belligerent statements and preparations for renewed military intervention, its policies evidently fashioned to express moods rather than to achieve results, its inability to withstand domestic forces of chauvinism and greed, has done much to undermine its own position as the leader of the West and to accentuate the ugliness of the face it turns towards the Third World.[39]

Although one can regard such comments as overly polemical, they do reflect Bull's belief that in so far as the political leadership of the superpowers possess a margin of choice in the conduct of their states' foreign policy, it is incumbent on them to embody greater concern for the requirements of international order than at present. The latter is not served when they continue to engage in a ruinous arms race, escalate their ideological differences, and attempt to upset the balance of power between them by seeking superiority.

Second, Bull draws no explicit and specific policy recommendations to reverse the decline in international order that he diagnoses today. Instead, he pitches his remarks at an extremely abstract level, urging a return to some kind of superpower *détente,* increased economic and financial co-operation among western industrialized states, more independence for Europe within NATO, and continued efforts to preserve the Third World's stake in the international system.

CONCLUSION

As with Morgenthau and Waltz, this chapter has provided a summary of Hedley Bull's approach to international political theory, in which I have described the nature and links between its descriptive and prescriptive dimensions. Unlike the previous scholars examined in this thesis, Bull's work is distinctive in its sustained focus on international society, and in stressing the historical customs and practices which help to maintain order within it. In turn, this choice of focus derives from Bull's attempt to maintain the Grotian tradition of international theory, which he portrays and defends against the extremes of 'Hobbesian realism' and 'Kantian idealism'. The third section linked Bull's defence of the classical tradition to his ontological pluralism regarding the heterogenous and contested nature of international politics, as well as the nature of international

political theory. Finally, a brief summary of the prescriptive implications of Bull's approach linked these to his concern for the decline in contemporary international order, and his belief that the superpowers, in so far as they inherited the status of traditional great powers, were not exercising their political responsibilities as custodians of international order.

8

HEDLEY BULL

A critical analysis

> The story is sometimes told of the man who was lost somewhere in Scotland, and asked a farmer if he could tell him the way to Edinburgh. 'Oh sir', the farmer replied, 'if I were you, I shouldn't start from here'.
>
> Hedley Bull

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this study, I suggested that Hedley Bull's approach to studying international politics is a closer approximation to the 'ideal' type of political realism outlined in Chapter 2 than that of either Morgenthau or Waltz. Closer, but not close enough. It is true that his attempts to steer a theoretical path between the opposing pulls of separatism and universalism merits the attribution of realism to describe the attempt. Bull's recognition of the essentially contested realm of international politics, whose dialectical forces cannot be safely contained within the intellectual parameters of a single 'tradition of thought' is realistic enough. Bull is sensitive to the dialectic between the abstractions of necessity and freedom that cannot be suspended merely by appealing to the autonomy of relations among states lacking a central Leviathan. Prescriptively, Bull avoids the characteristic forms of idealism which are nostalgia, complacency and utopianism (or imaginative idealism). If Berki were to apply his analysis to international political theory, I think he would also select Bull's approach as a good starting-point. But not, it must be said, without some qualifications. What I have somewhat clumsily called Bull's ontological pluralism is not quite the same as a presupposition

of ontological heterogeneity. In this chapter, I want to show that Bull's approach suffers from certain grave shortcomings due to his failure to transcend Martin Wight's trialectic of international thought and to go beyond it rather than merely orienting himself within it. Of course, Bull himself does not defend his allegedly 'Grotian' perspective as the embodiment of realism in thought about international politics. But it can be conceived as the transcendental point of view, both descriptively and prescriptively, from which to judge the opposed and idealistic deviations and distortions of, on the one hand, a mislabelled 'realism' (the reification of necessity) and on the other, 'revolutionism' (the reification of 'Truth' and freedom). In this short chapter, I will argue that this redescription of Martin Wight's 'traditions' is not merely a semantic exercise. It has two important implications. First, it establishes Bull's perspective—realism—as the transcendental point of view from which to judge the idealist deviations on either side of it. Bull himself does not present his perspective in this way, and, as I will demonstrate, his failure to do this is the source of some major weaknesses in his analysis. Second, it contributes to an understanding of international society as a synthetic concept which presupposes a dialectic relationship between states and what Wendt has recently called the 'social structure' of the states sytem.[1] As Bhaskar puts it: 'society is not the unconditioned creation of human agency (voluntarism), but neither does it exist independently of it (reification). And individual action neither completely determines (individualism) nor is completely determined by (determinism) social forms'.[2] The prescriptive dimension of Bull's realism is made possible by this ontological presupposition.[3] In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is simply realistic to start with this presupposition.

OLD BOTTLES, NEW WINE

Nostalgia and complacency are the prescriptive manifestations, or evaluative stances, of idealism based on necessity as the dominant referent for reality in international politics. Conversely, utopianism (or 'wishful thinking') unconstrained by necessity is the manifestation of idealism based on putative 'Truth' (or essence) as the dominant referent. In contrast, political realism is the transcendental attribute of thought and conduct based on the presupposition that international politics is not a unitary whole, but is instead dynamic and heterogenous. For the realist, this is a given. Furthermore, realism is the acceptance both of the possibility and

morality of purposive action toward the achievement of ideals. On the other hand, realism also denotes the acceptance of the proposition that action cannot change the fundamental nature or identity of reality. Thus, it must be limited, both in terms of the ends to be achieved, and the means to achieve them. Descriptively, then, realism is an attribute of thought which is 'adequate' to the subject-matter. Adequate political understanding is 'the recognition of the reality of contradiction in the subject-matter; only by this recognition can understanding escape being partial, abstract, and thus self-contradictory itself'.[4] Thought which languishes in nostalgia or complacency is not realistic; neither is revolutionary action designed to resolve the dialectic between necessity and freedom through the reinvention of politics and the creation of a new world. Imaginative idealists, as Waltz remarks in his retort to criticisms of his work by 'critical' theorists, 'would transcend the world as it is; meanwhile we have to live in it'.[5] True enough. But living does not mean—unless one is almost dead—that we have to surrender to the abstraction of necessity which is the hallmark of conservative thought. Political realism is the attribute of thought and conduct which strives for maturity, avoiding, in Berki's terms, both the youthful exuberance of imaginative idealism as well as the senility of nostalgia and complacency. These forms of political idealism are ideological deviations from realism, stranded at the level of belief and failing to become wisdom. Realism, as Berki understands it and as Bull unconsciously embodies it, accepts the world 'as it is', with 'the all-important proviso that the present be seen as dynamic and self-contradictory, and not a tranquil, harmonious whole'. This same complexity confronts idealists, but their reaction is different. 'Complexity, contradiction and "paradox" for idealism is…only the starting-point, but not the explanatory principle to be discovered, it is only the "problem", but not the solution'.[6] The idealist reifies abstractions from practice and imposes them back on to it. The realist also must think in abstract terms in order to simplify reality. This must be so, otherwise the term realism could not be attributed to grand theory which, as Buzan rightly notes: 'is nothing more than an abstract construct imposed on a selected body of things, events, and processes'.[7] The word 'imposed' in this context is a critical one. As I have repeatedly emphasized, grand theories of international politics are cognitive instruments, but they are not mere instruments to understand a given unproblematic 'reality' out there in the world of experience and dumb brute facts. What Gertrude Stein once said

of California can also be said of international politics. 'There is no "there", there'. Morgenthau, Waltz and Bull have articulated different constitutive maps of the subject-matter, which this study has differentiated in terms of their realism and idealism, not whether they are right or wrong. There is no 'correct' theory of international politics, either to be discovered in the library or waiting to be written. As Gunnel has argued: 'what is "out there" is a function of theory, at least in an epistemological sense, and it is fruitless to search for a transtheoretical datum and language in which what is "out there" can be represented'.[8] One can certainly, as this book has done, try to evaluate a theory in terms of its own pretensions and internal consistency. One can ask, 'does it make sense?' or even 'is it realistic?' but not 'is it true?'

It follows, therefore, that the student of international politics cannot avoid studying major writers in this field in order to arrive at an orientation, a starting-point which is both descriptive and prescriptive (paradigmatic, if one must resort to this much-abused term), toward a subject whose core remains inter-state relations. This is much more difficult today in what Holsti has called the 'dividing discipline' of International Relations. 'Fragmentation, overspecialization, and a loss of normative concerns are academic consequences of a field which has lost its bearings'.[9] To the extent that it is conceded that international politics between states is a distinct (although not autonomous) realm of social reality, then the nature of international politics and how one conceptualizes 'it' is of paramount importance. One therefore cannot avoid difficult questions of ontology, which revolve precisely around this issue. Nor, in engaging in such a preparatory exercise, can one simply adopt Karl Popper's view that 'the initial stage, the act of conceiving or inventing a theory, seems to me neither to call for logical analysis nor to be susceptible of it. [It] is irrelevant to the logical analysis of scientific knowledge'.[10] In the social sciences, and in particular the writing of the three writers whose work has been presented in the preceding chapters, the context of discovery and the context of justification of grand theory cannot be so easily separated. But this does not mean that denying the possibility of Archimedian objectivity allows relativism in through the back door in appraising essentially contested conceptualizations of international politics, which after all is what grand theories are. There is a big difference between recognizing what Mannheim calls 'an irreducible residue of evaluation inherent in the structure of all thought',[11] and simply

preaching relativism as a consequence. Hence the purpose of this attempt to resuscitate the terms realism and idealism.

In this study, I have characterized Morgenthau and Waltz as idealists, not realists. Their work is tainted, respectively, by nostalgia and complacency. In their fundamental assumptions about international politics, both reify the abstraction of necessity over freedom. Prescriptively, Morgenthau lives in the past, hoping that it might be revived despite his barely disguised contempt for the immaturity of the superpowers as fit to continue European traditions of diplomatic statecraft. Waltz, in contrast, reifies the present (circa 1979), finding comfort in the mere fact that a bipolar system, regardless of the nature and relationship between the states that dominate it, is apparently the best guarantee of stability in an anarchical world.

Of the three writers, Bull comes closest to meeting the descriptive attributes of realism. His metatheoretical presuppositions about the subject-matter recognize its self-contradictory and heterogenous nature. Prescriptively, he neither reifies the abstraction of necessity—a counsel of cold comfort—nor does he reify that of freedom. Instead, he steers a middle path between these forms of idealism which are present in practice and codified in thought by the extreme formulations which occupy each side of Martin Wight's trialectic. Now this *via media,* as Forsyth grumbles, defines itself only:

> by rejecting each extreme. To the 'Realists' it said that moral restraints both did and should apply to states. To the 'Universalists' it said that the political world of states need not be shunned or overturned. It was a kind of double negative rather than something positive.[12]

Exactly. As Berki concludes:

> political realism contains at best only negative injunctions… its task is not to prescribe clear-cut political programmes, but to infuse political consciousness, to endeavour to make it less inadequate to reality, to provide an unstated preface to ideology, and thus perhaps to make dead-ends and U-turns a less frequent occurrence.[13]

Bull's theoretical perspective is not, and cannot pretend to be, value-free. The relationship between theory and practice embodied in his

perspective is akin to that between a referee (the 'Grotian' theorist) and a game of football. It is both impartial and partial at the same time:

> The referee is by definition 'impartial' as to the particular merits of opposing teams in so far as they have no direct bearing on the game itself…[this] impartiality as between two competing teams is not absolute, but relative impartiality: the referee's principle of conduct, as it is usually expressed by him at the beginning of a contest, is 'may the better team win'. Impartiality means therefore partiality in favour of the 'better' team, when 'better' is understood in terms of more successful action beyond, but still in terms of, the mere rules of the game. In other words, the impartial referee is and must be partial towards the rules of the game; he cannot be neutral as between observance and flouting of these rules. Otherwise there would be no contest, no game, and no possibility of relative impartiality either.[14]

Hedley Bull, I have argued, is a realist. How does this description of his perspective differ from his own characterization of it as 'Grotian?' What is the point of the substitution of terms? The answer is that it facilitates a way out of the relativism that is implied in Bull's refusal to transcend Wight's trialectic of traditions of international thought, so as to defend the *via media* as the intellectual synthesis of thesis ('realism') and antithesis ('revolutionism'). Unfortunately, as Bull himself once conceded, 'I was always hoping to transcend [Wight's typology] but never able to escape from it'.[15] Consequently, Bull attempts to legitimize his own perspective by presenting it as intellectually more persuasive than either 'Hobbesian realism' or 'Kantian idealism'—which it is—but he also claims in a relativistic fashion that each tradition focuses on only one element of international politics. Thus, he implies that each tradition, despite its pretentious holism (therefore one must choose between them) captures a third of the reality of international politics, or perhaps all of international politics one-third of the time (therefore one does not have to choose between them). By merely aligning himself within Wight's typology, Bull ends up contradicting himself by having to present his own perspective as simultaneously holistic and partial:

> The particular international activity which, on the Grotian view, best typifies international activity as a whole is neither war between states, nor horizontal conflict cutting across the boundaries of states, but trade—or, more generally, economic and social intercourse between one country and another
>
> (Bull, 1977, p. 27)

Since Bull's idea of international society is also purposive, dependent on the extent to which the goals of society are accepted by states and reflected in their behaviour, the validity of the idea is always subject to challenge and falsification by political practice because the idea of international society can never transcend the reality of international politics. Instead, like a small boat lost at sea in a storm, its very existence is contingent on the severity of the environment:

> The idea of 'international society' has a basis in reality that is sometimes precarious but has at no stage disappeared. Great wars that engulf the states system as a whole strain the credibility of the idea, and cause thinkers and statesmen to turn to Hobbesian interpretations and solutions, but they are followed by periods of peace. Ideological conflicts in which states and factions within them are ranged on opposite sides sometimes lead to a denial of the idea of international society by both sides, and lend confirmation to Kantian interpretations, but they are followed by accommodations in which the idea reappears.
>
> (Bull, 1977, p. 42)

Such an ignominious fate is the direct consequence of Bull's attempt to align himself within the parameters of Wight's categories. The owl of Minerva is permanently grounded.

There is also a problem with Bull's attempt to link each tradition to a particular political philosopher. This is a neat move, since it enables Bull to discredit 'Hobbesian realism' by arguing that international politics does not entirely resemble a Hobbesian state of nature, thereby permitting Bull to distinguish between 'realism' and his allegedly 'Grotian' perspective. Notwithstanding the dubious validity of such a move as sufficient to assess the credentials of a tradition, it is not at all clear why Hobbes should be selected as the exemplar of the 'realist paradigm'.

However, given the selection of Hobbes, it is extremely difficult to see why Hoffmann praises Bull because he allegedly:

> refuted Hobbes by using some of Hobbes's own arguments, so as to explain why the state of war between nations was more bearable than the state of war between individuals, and why there was therefore no need for a universal Leviathan (the state's ability to protect the industry of its subjects, the lesser vulnerability of the state compared to the naked individual because of its greater power, the unevenness of states compared to the puny equality of individuals in the state of nature).[16]

How does one 'refute' Hobbes by agreeing with him? As is well known, Hobbes had very little to say about relations among states, so what Bull takes to be a Hobbesian description of international politics hardly squares with Hobbes' own refusal to extend the logic of the state of nature among men to states. As Navari points out in her excellent critique of loose talk regarding a 'Hobbesian tradition' of International Relations:

> Hobbes' rights, laws, and states of nature are not primarily descriptions of states of affairs, and it is more a mark of ignorance of Hobbes' thought than philosophical proximity to suppose that they are intended as such. They are logical constructs. The state of nature is a label which pertains to a certain condition—that condition in which there is no instituted sovereign. Any condition which displays that characteristic is a 'state of nature' by Hobbes' criteria, be it among a group of children quarrelling over marbles…or sovereigns who have no sovereign among them; and they are all alike in the logical sense of Hobbes' meaning. But if they are all, logically, states of nature, their characteristics differ quite radically and if we set out to describe them we would depict them quite differently. If Hobbes believed that men in nature and states in nature were logically the same, he did not, indeed by any extension of his thought he could not, believe that they were descriptively the same. Indeed, by the instituting of the contract itself, they display quite different characteristics.[17]

In fact, Bull does not refute the implications of Hobbes' theory of the state when applied to international politics. On the contrary, he

endorses them by arguing that states are not in a pre-contractual state of nature. In this regard, Navari's distinction between Hobbes' rights and laws of nature is particulary interesting. The former refer to the kind of behaviour one might expect from an individual in the state of nature, where 'we may expect a man to defend his life and interests to the hilt. We may expect him to use force, sequester his neighbours' property, call right what is might'.[18] The latter refers to the precepts of reason that would lead such an individual to escape this awful condition, and consent to the institutionalization of the sovereign:

> The first law…is that 'every man, ought to endeavour peace'; the second, that a man be 'contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would all men against himself'; third, that men perform their covenants; fourth, fifth and sixth, that they be grateful, accommodating, pardoning…it would appear that 'Hobbesian prudentialism' in the 'Hobbesian tradition' must count Hobbes among the morally naive.[19]

These laws of nature bear a striking resemblance to Bull's alleged social goals—life, truth, and property. In short, Bull is completely wrong to argue that a Hobbesian analysis describes international politics as a state of war, and is therefore opposed to his inaptly named 'Grotian' perspective, which, as we saw in the last chapter, bears little resemblance to the actual writing of Grotius himself. The implication of Hobbes' theory of the state is that international politics among sovereigns represents what Vincent calls a 'world-in-between' the raw state of nature and the Leviathan, and that this world, 'where the state of nature is modified by the laws of nature…closely resembles the reality of international politics, [which] are characterized by co-operation as well as conflict'.[20] Both Navari and Vincent conclude that this makes Hobbes the real exemplar of the 'rationalist' tradition, although neither of them feels comfortable with Wight's idiosyncratic typology. As Vincent argues, when taken too literally, it simply results in 'treating great thinkers like parcels at the post office'.[21] Nevertheless, it is fair to say that in his portrayal of Hobbesian realpolitik, Bull is attacking a stereotype.

The purpose of redescribing Bull as a realist, and therefore his perspective as a synthesis of the two opposed 'traditions' of thought against which it defines itself, can now be spelled out. First, it avoids the problems of linking each tradition to any

particular philosopher, always a problematic exercise which both distorts what Hobbes, Grotius and Kant actually wrote and imposes more intellectual coherence to the ancestral lineage of each tradition than it can possibly bear. Second, and far more importantly, it facilitates a distinction between the idea of international society and international political practice so that the validity of the former is not dependent on the vicissitudes of the latter. One must distinguish between the posited existence of international society and its strength, and this Bull does not do. Instead, he conflates order as an empirically dynamic state of affairs or pattern of activity within the existing international political system, with order as a notional attribute by which to evaluate the states system as a whole *vis-à-vis* alternative institutional structures. At the outset of *The Anarchical Society,* he writes that 'I am thinking of order as a quality that may or may not obtain in international politics at any one time or place, or that may be present to a greater or lesser degree; order as opposed to disorder' (p. xi). Well, which? Is order a quality (co-existent with international society) or a quantity? As a variable dependent on the strength of international society, order is not logically opposed to disorder unless these represent extreme 'patterns of activity' on a continuum ranging from perfect order to chaos. Logically extrapolating from Bull's definition of international order, the former would be a situation in which all states co-exist in peace, and successfully maintain the common goals of all social life as they apply to inter-state relations, i.e. their monopoly of legitimate violence (or authority) *vis-à-vis* other actors, and rules regarding the resort to and conduct of war, the keeping of promises, and the territorial and political rights and obligations of sovereign statehood. In contrast, chaos would resemble life in Hobbes' state of nature, 'a state of war of all against all, an arena in which each state is pitted against every other' (p. 24). Between these two extremes, the amount of order varies across two dimensions. At the level of the international system, it varies over time. Within the system at any one period of time, it varies over different parts of the system. Order has a temporal and a spatial dimension. Thus, the social element, or strength of international society, refers to an empirically dynamic variable in international politics, which 'shares the stage with the elements of war or conflict, and the element of human community, [thus] the working of the rules and institutions of international society have to be seen in relation to

these other two elements, as well as in relation to international society' (p. 319). Consequently, 'in different historical phases of the states system, in different geographical theatres of its operation, and [even!] in the policies of different states and statesmen, one of these three elements may predominate over the others' (p. 41).

On the other hand, Bull also uses the term the 'international society', not as an element within the system, but in contrast to it. An international society is a more highly developed form of system, containing common rules of conduct, and 'institutions' based on states' perceptions of common interests. As an attribute, Bull argues that the modern international system as a whole is also a society, and has been since at least the First World War, by which time 'a universal international society of states clearly existed which covered the whole world'.[22] Thus, Bull is ambiguous in treating order and society, both as variables within as well as attributes of the international system.

However, once one distinguishes between the existence of international society and its strength, variation in the latter does not invalidate the former as a constitutive characteristic of international politics. As Mayall points out:

> what would clearly invalidate it is…the absence of any common standards for comprehending or evaluating [relations among states]. The world of international relations often seems menacing and out of control but it is not as incomprehensible as all that.[23]

As long as there are states, the anarchical society remains very much in place, despite variations in its strength. Changes in the latter, from the transcendental perspective of realism, do not legitimize the descriptive interpretations of 'Hobbesian' or 'Kantian' perspectives, for these both deny the existence of international *society per se,* and the irreducible social character of international politics. Both these forms of idealism characterize relations among states as anarchical, delimiting society either within state boundaries ('realism') or within a putative world state with planetary frontiers ('revolutionism'). Each errs in failing to understand the institutional basis of international politics. As Navari points out:

> is not there something very odd about the 'state of nature' which constitutes international relations—namely, the fact that

> it did not always exist? The fact that it was an established state of nature which emerged out of something that went before? …The notion of the state as a billiard ball is a convention. It was instituted. That condition of affairs is maintained by other conventions, such as non-intervention and recognition which were also instituted. To say simply that the space between is 'empty' is not true. It is 'empty' in the sense that the state is for certain purposes a billiard ball. But the space is full of the convention which maintains that image. It is also lull of the convention that human societies must become states for certain purposes.[24]

Exactly. Thus when Bull's perspective is redescribed as a synthetic perspective, it becomes possible to begin thinking systematically about the determinants of variations in the strength of international society over time and space without engaging in a 'paradigm-shift'. It also becomes possible to conceptualize the struggle for power not as a natural condition, but as a possible outcome 'when the lack of commonly accepted conventions do not prevent the degeneration of a conflict of interest into a power struggle'.[25] Thus the constitutive rules of international society both constrain state behaviour as well as empower states to engage in meaningful behaviour. However, although Bull defines order and society in a tautological manner based on a purposive conception of international society, a better 'fit' with international reality is the conception provided by Terry Nardin. Bull's idea of a society of states is overly indebted to the 'domestic analogy'. Yet it is still possible to retain the idea without assuming shared purposes on the part of states. Nardin offers an alternative and far more persuasive interpretation of the idea as a practical association, arguing that it:

> is not a purposive association constituted by a joint wish on the part of all states to pursue certain ends in concert. It is, rather, an association of independent and diverse political communities, each devoted to its own ends and its own conception of the good…the common good of this inclusive community resides not in the ends that some, or at times even most, of its members may wish collectively to pursue but in the values of justice, peace, security, and co-existence, which can only be enjoyed through participation in a common body of authoritative practices.[26]

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued that the valid insights of Bull's approach to international politics are poorly served by his failure to escape the truncated boundaries of Wight's paradigms of international thought. The shortcomings of his inappropriately labelled 'Grotian' perspective are a consequence of treating Wight's categories, in Jones's words, 'as stopping points, not starting points'.[27] Bull's implicit preference for Grotius over Machiavelli or Kant is not matched by an explicit defence of his approach as something more than a partial focus on merely one element of international politics. The result is a blurring of the distinction between 'Hobbesian realism' and 'Neo-Grotianism' in so far as the validity of international society as an idea is not dependent on its use in explaining political practice when the latter appears to fit alternative images and explanations. However, when the middle way is understood as the synthetic transcendence of the two extremes on either side of it, Bull's perspective can simply be defended as being more realistic than either of them.

9

CONCLUSIONS

> It is not a source of error that in the visual picture of an object…we can…get only a perspectivistic view. The problem is not how we might arrive at a non-perspectivistic picture but how, by juxtaposing the various points of view, each perspective may be recognized as such and thereby a new level of objectivity attained. Thus, we come to the point where the false ideal of a detached, impersonal point of view must be replaced by…an essentially human point of view which is, within the limits of a human perspective, constantly striving to enlarge itself.
>
> Karl Mannheim

This passage from Mannheim's famous *book Ideology and Utopia* is an apt summation of the argument of this book, consistent with Berki's interpretation of the meaning of realism and which, with a few reservations, I attribute to the work of Hedley Bull. Along his suggested continuum of theoretical activity, between criticism and construction, this short book has engaged in a minimalist exercise in search of a theoretical perspective or orientation towards international politics. It began with a deep dissatisfaction over the idiosyncratic manner in which a seemingly simple word—realism—has been torn from its roots in ordinary usage and common sense and indiscriminately stipulated to mean almost anything one wants it to mean. Consequently, the term has lost whatever utility it once might have had as a term of attribution to ways of thinking about international politics. Of course, the value of Berki's explication, rooted in a presupposition of the interdependence between language and meaning, lies in the manner of its appropriation to the critical

analysis of the three 'grand theorists' examined above. To what extent this appropriation has succeeded, the reader must judge. Whether such an exercise is useful or not in traversing the intellectual thickets of grand theory and the 'great debates' that have defined the evolution of International Relations as an academic discipline, depends on the importance of the substantive questions it generates about the subject-matter. The purpose of this book has been, as stated in the introduction, heuristic—to raise substantive and interesting questions about international politics. Sometimes, it seems that all too many scholars in this discipline have forgotten the purpose of theoretical debate, which is surely to enhance our understanding of the subject-matter. Theoretical discussion and criticism is supposed to be a means to an end, not an end in itself. Whatever the fate of the 'inter-paradigm' debate will be, in the 'real' world international politics will still be 'there' as long as nation-states and assorted variants of nation-states remain the central actors on the field of play. Given the epistemological presupposition that 'seeing is a theory-laden undertaking',[1] orienting oneself within a theoretical perspective is not just useful, it is inevitable. The question is whether one does this in an explicit manner, or chooses arbitrarily depending on the prevailing winds of academic consensus. When these are blowing in opposite directions, one could do worse than pick realism as a guide. Not Realism, whatever that is; just plain realism. This is the attribute of thought which presupposes that reality is the dialectical interplay between necessity and freedom, constraints and opportunities. There is nothing unique about international politics that can be invoked to deny the relevance of this presupposition to understanding the contested space between states. Yet it is explicitly denied by the nostalgic and complacent political idealism of Morgenthau and Waltz. Both these writers reify necessity in the form of power politics, yet they contradict themselves and fail to maintain the purity of their one-sided abstractions. Each implicitly affirms what he begins by explicitly denying, which is the irreducibly social nature of his subject-matter. Morgenthau does this in distinguishing between policies of the status quo and imperialism, and through his appeal to the reactionary utopia of the nineteenthcentury Concert of Europe. This is the yardstick he uses to evaluate American foreign policy, and which he erects as the normative standard of restrained conduct to which the superpowers ought to aspire. In strictly theoretical terms, his defence of the autonomy of international politics is groundless. Neither by

appealing to human nature nor to structural anarchy, and he does both, can he justify the dogmatism of his 'principles of political realism', let alone provide any convincing reasons why they should be commended as such.

Waltz's complacent idealism fares little better than Morgenthau's nostalgia, despite his attempt to conform to the scientific rigours of theoretical construction. The appeal to 'philosophy of science standards', by which he means epistemological positivism, is made possible by a prior presupposition or basic belief about the essence of international politics. Like Morgenthau, Waltz portrays it as thoroughly atomistic and asocial, populated by 'possessive individuals', to use Macpherson's memorable phrase.[2] As with Morgenthau, the shortcomings of Waltz's analysis stem from an implicit rejection of his model via a postulated process of socialization linking states to the structure of the system. As Dessler argues, Waltz implicitly introduces rules through the back door in order to show how the structure works its effects, but they are 'theoretically suppressed' by his purely 'positional ontology'.[3] Ruggie has also drawn attention to this in his more partial critique of Waltz. He notes the absence of both a determinant and a dimension of change in Waltz's definition of systemic structure, because Waltz's framework ignores the institutional basis of international politics which differentiates (i.e. separates) states in terms of the legal and constitutional principle of sovereignty.[4] For Waltz, sovereignty is a unit-level characteristic, but Ruggie rightly points out that it is a central part of the 'social formation' of the states system. Not only is Waltz's explanation self-contradictory, the evaluative dimension of *Theory of International Politics*—which reifies contemporary (although rapidly receding) bipolarity as the most stable international system—contradicts expectations consistent with the theory when applied to the strategic realm. Waltz's complacency presupposes an unproblematic process of socialization between the superpowers based on hope rather than theoretical rigour.

Hedley Bull, I have argued, avoides the sterility of nostalgia and complacency without fleeing to the opposite extreme, the idealism of imagination, more commonly known as 'utopianism' in International Relations. However, his defence of the 'Grotian' perspective is a weak one, and his failure to transcend Wight's trialectic leads him perilously close to advocating intellectual relativism. The attribution of realism to his approach, albeit with some qualification, establishes it as the transcendental point of view *vis-à-vis* nostalgic and imaginary idealism.

In advocating a rule-based paradigm for the study of international politics, it will be readily conceded that the argument of this book has travelled an unconventional and somewhat circuitous route. In defence, it should be recognized that the issues raised by this argument are difficult to broach within the parameters of any of the 'great debates' so familiar to professional students of International Relations. Unfortunately, as Walker notes, the discipline of International Relations 'is a field that has shown a distinct penchant for framing its concepts within very sharp dichotomies'.[5] The story of the evolution of the discipline is often told through a ritualistic regurgitation of 'great debates', in which lines of demarcation between scholars and schools of thought are often crudely drawn and insensitive to possible synthesis.[6] In the 1930s and 1940s, the field was apparently split between 'realists' and 'idealists', in which these terms functioned merely as rhetorical labels. In the 1960s, the second so-called 'great debate' pitted 'science' against 'tradition'. And, of course, in recent years the field has been divided between advocates of competing 'paradigms'. However, although these debates maybe separated from one another in time, the issues raised in them cannot be dealt with so easily. Epistemo logical debates about competing methodologies, as Ruggie and Kratochwil have recently argued, cannot be fruitfully conducted independently of more fundamental arguments about the nature of the subject-matter.[7] Of course, the relationship between description, explanation and values is an extremely complex one, and the argument of this study has merely skimmed the surface of their interconnections. However, one virtue of employing Berki is that he provides a framework of analysis that at least permits one to begin orienting oneself within the divided discipline of International Relations, and to raise questions that are all too often prematurely foreclosed in contemporary theoretical discourse. His conceptual analysis allows one to engage critically and constructively with the work of figures who have struggled to understand the peculiar status of politics among states. My argument has been largely critical towards Morgenthau and Waltz, but I have not attempted a mere wrecking operation on the work of these scholars. After all, one should not expect to stand on the shoulders of giants without causing them at least some discomfort.

Finally, it bears repeating that realism as a metatheoretical attribute cannot be applied directly to specific issues in international politics. To the reader who wonders about the relevance of realism

for specific issues such as the debt crisis or arms control, there is little he or she will glean from this study. This is because the categories of necessity and freedom employed here are too broad to operationalize at an empirical level.

At the beginning of this book I set myself a limited goal—to rehabilitate the terms realism and idealism as useful concepts in the analysis of international theory, and to remove the label of realism from the school of thought with which it is conventionally associated. Of course, as was mentioned in the opening chapter, specifying the context is an essential prerequisite for the commendatory function of realism as an attribute of political consciousness, and in this book that context is articulated in Martin Wight's enduring patterns of international thought. Their recurrence over time in different idioms testifies to their validity as points of reference for applying the abstract criteria developed in Chapter 2. Redefining the relationship between these patterns may not strike the reader as all that innovative. It is not. But at least it avoids the relativism of Wight and Bull without replacing it with a spurious search for epistemological foundations which themselves presuppose much deeper beliefs about the world.[8] Moreover, it is extremely doubtful whether these beliefs can be confirmed or confounded by some future definitive grand theory of international politics. The study of international politics within the classical tradition offers little prospect for systematic theory builders. The assumptions on which that tradition rests—the centrality of states as agents, the distinction between domestic and international, and the presumption of anarchy—are too crude and limiting for developing comprehensive explanations of state behaviour.[9] None the less, the presumption of international society as the glue which institutionalizes a semblance of legitimate international governance gives one hope in the absence of knowledge.

NOTES

1 INTRODUCTION

1 A.James, 'The realism of realism: the state and the study of international relations', *Review of International Studies,* July 1989, vol. 15, no. 3, p. 215.
2 R.N.Berki, *On Political Realism,* London, J.M.Dent & Sons, 1981.
3 H.J.Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* 5th edn revised, New York, Alfred A.Knopf, 1978, p. 3.
4 D.U.Gregory, in J.Der Derian and M.J.Shapiro, eds, *International/ Intertextual Relations,* Massachusetts, Lexington Books, 1989, p. xxi.
5 R.G.Gilpin, 'The richness of the tradition of political realism', in R.O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and its Critics,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 301–21.
6 For good examples of these alternatives, see the following: R.D. Mckinlay and R.Little, *Global Problems and World Order,* London, Frances Pinter, 1986; M.J.Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger,* Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1986; J.A. Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics,* New York, Rutgers University Press, 1983; P.R.Viotti and M.V.Kauppi, eds, *International Relations Theory,* New York, Macmillan, 1987. The many different interpretations of Realism that are available could provide enough material for a book-length treatment of the social construction of International Relations.
7 J.Feinberg, *Social Philosophy,* Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1973, p. 2.
8 M.J.Smith, op. cit., p. 1.
9 E.H.Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, L*ondon, Macmillan, 1946, p. 10.
10 S.Hoffmann, 'Realism and its discontents', *Atlantic Monthly,* November 1985, vol. 256, no. 5, pp. 131–6.
11 H.J.Morgenthau, op. cit., pp. 4, 15.
12 J.H.Herz, 'Political realism revisited', *International Studies Quarterly,* June 1981, vol. 25, no. 2, p. 183.
13 F.V.Kratochwil, 'On the notion of "interest" in international relations', *International Organization,* Winter 1982, vol. 36, no. 2, p. 7.
14 Q.Wright, 'Realism and idealism in international politics', *World Politics,* October 1952, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 116–29. For similar cries of exasperation

regarding the arbitrary use of these terms, see: R.W. Tucker, 'Professor Morgenthau's theory of political realism', *American Political Science Review,* March 1952, vol. 46, no. 1; R.L.Rothstein, 'On the costs of realism', *Political Science Quarterly,* Autumn 1972, vol. 87, no. 3, pp. 347–62.

15 M.Wright, 'The problem of meaning in international thought', in M. Donelan, ed., *The Reason of States,* London, Allen & Unwin, 1978, p. 92.

16 F.E.Oppenheim, 'The language of political inquiry, problems of clarification', in F.I.Greenstein and N.W.Polsby, eds, *Handbook of Political Science,* vol. I, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1975, p. 283.

17 D.A.Baldwin, 'Interdependence and power, a conceptual analysis', *International Organization,* Autumn 1980, vol. 34, no. 4, p. 472.

18 I.J.Claude, Jr., 'Comment', *International Studies Quarterly,* June 1981, vol. 25, no. 2, p. 198.

19 K.J.Holsti, 'Retreat from utopia, international relations theory, 1945–1970', *Canadian Journal of Political Science,* June 1971, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 165.

20 K.J.Holsti, *International Politics, A Framework For Analysis,* fourth edn, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1983, p. 9.

21 S.Hoffmann, *The State of War,* New York, Frederick A.Prager, 1965, p. 15. Holsti's distinction between grand and middle-level theory is equivalent to what Garnett calls general and partial theory, the former providing conceptual 'maps' or organizational and holistic perspectives on the subject-matter. He notes that these two types of theory are written by and appeal to quite different intellectual personalities: in Isaiah Berlin's terms, hedgehogs and foxes. The hedgehog is the general theorist who seeks a unified vision of international politics. He is interested in the shape and nature of the forest, not the trees. The fox, on the other hand, is the partial theorist more interested in the trees. He is concerned with details and specifics rather than big ideas and organizing gestalts. This book looks at three hedgehogs who have tried to see the subject 'whole'. See John C.Garnett, *Commonsense and The Theory of International Politics,* London, Macmillan, 1984, ch. 2.

22 K.J.Holsti, *The Dividing Discipline,* Boston, Mass., Allen & Unwin, 1985, p. 10.

23 As Sigler has neatly expressed it, what is real, and what do we do. J.Sigler, 'The concept of neutrality in international relations theory', paper given at the Conference on Canada and Military Neutrality, College militaire royal, St-Jean, Quebec, April 1987.

24 J.Ford, *Paradigms and Fairy Tales,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, p. 16.

25 R.Aron, 'Theory and theories in international relations, a conceptual analysis', in N.D.Palmer, ed., *A Design For International Relations Research: Scope, Theory, Methods, and Relevance,* Philadelphia, Penn., American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1970, p. 56.

26 D.Dessler, 'What's at stake in the agent-structure debate?' *International Organization,* Summer 1989, vol. 43, no. 3, p. 445.
27 C.Taylor, 'Cross-purposes: the liberal-communitarian debate', in N.L. Rosenblum, ed., *Liberalism and the Moral Life,* Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 160.
28 Herz, op. cit.
29 Berki makes this point by contrasting natural with social science

> The 'realistic' physicist or biologist is simply the good physicist or biologist; even better, he is the physicist or biologist, with no further qualification or adjectival characterization required and, indeed, permitted. This is because—and there can be no other reason—the 'reality' which we assume to be the subject-matter of the physicist we assume also to be an untroubled, coherent kind of reality, whether it is thought to be material or otherwise. The relationship to this reality is consequently also an untroubled one, it connotes adequacy without the ambiguity which [exists] in the area of everyday conduct which also includes politics. In the latter case 'reality', whatever other features it may also have, is inherently problematic.
>
> (Berki, op. cit., p. 5)

30 T.Ball, 'Contradiction and critique in political theory', in John S.Nelson, ed., *What Should Political Theory Be Now*? Albany, NY, University of New York Press, 1987, p. 128.
31 J.Gunnell, 'In search of the political object, beyond methodology and transcendentalism', in Nelson, op. cit., p. 34.
32 On this point, see: P.F.Kress, 'Against epistemology, apostate musings', *Journal of Politics,* May 1979, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 526–42; M.E.Kirn, 'Behaviouralism, post-behaviouralism, and the philosophy of science, two houses, one plague', *The Review of Politics,* January 1977, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 82–102; J.D.Moon, 'The logic of political inquiry; a synthesis of opposed perspectives', in F.I.Greenstein and N.W.Polsby, eds, *Handbook of Political Science, vol.* I, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1975, pp. 131–228; W.C.Havard, 'The philosophical underpinnings of the contemporary controversy in American political science', Ch. 3 of W. C.Havard, *The Recovery of Political Theory,* Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1984, pp. 54–80; P.H.Mclanson, *Political Science and Political Knowledge,* Washington, DC, Public Affairs Press, 1975.
33 Interpretation can be defined as an attempt 'to make sense of an object of study. This object…is confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory in one way or another. The interpretation aims to bring to light an underlying coherence or sense', C.Taylor, 'Interpretation and the sciences of man', *Review of Metaphysics,* September 1971, vol. 25., no. 3, p. 3.
34 R.D.Spegele, 'From the incoherence of systems theory to a philosophy of international relations', *Review of Politics,* October 1982, vol. 44, no. 4, p. 584.

2 A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS: REALISM VERSUS IDEALISMS

1 K.Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia,* New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1936, pp. 193–4.
2 On the relationship between common sense and philosophy, see M.F. Burnyeat, 'The sceptic in his time and place', in R.Rorty, J.B. Schneewind and Q.Skinner, eds, *Philosophy in History,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 225–54.
3 M.Caedel, *Thinking About Peace and War,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 15.
4 C.Reynolds, 'Deterrence', *Review of International Studies,* January 1989, vol. 15, no. 1, p. 74. See also C.Reynolds, *Theory and Explanation in International Politics,* London, Martin Robertson, 1973, Ch. 4.
5 M.Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being,* New York, Harper & Row, 1984, p. 223.
6 E.B.Haas, 'Words can hurt you: or, who said what to whom about regimes', *International Organization,* Spring 1982, vol. 36, no. 2, p. 241.
7 J.H.Herz, 'Political realism revisited', *International Studies Quarterly,* June 1981, vol. 25, no. 2, p. 185.
8 K.R.Minogue, 'Epiphenomenalism in politics, the quest for political reality', *Political Studies,* December 1972, vol. 20, no. 4, p. 465.
9 J.N.Rosenau, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy,* London, Frances Pinter, 1980, p. 32.
10 L.Strauss, 'What is political philosophy? the problem of political philosophy', in H.Eulau, ed., *Behaviouralism in Political Science,* New York, Atherton Press, 1969, p. 95.
11 M.Haas, 'Metaphysics of paradigms in political science', *The Review of Politics,* Fall 1986, vol. 48, no. 4, p. 523. The history of the struggle between philosophical realism and idealism is a long and complex one. For an accessible and inspiring introduction to the issues at stake, see W.Barrett, *Death of The Soul,* New York, Doubleday, 1986.
12 B.Parekh, 'Does traditional philosophy rest on a mistake?' *Political Studies,* Summer 1979, vol. 27, no. 2, p. 297. For an excellent, and accessible, analysis of these schools of ontology, see D.W.Hamlyn, *Metaphysics,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.
13 M.Wight, 'Why is there no international theory?' in H.Butterfield and M.Wight, eds, *Diplomatic Investigations,* Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1966, pp. 17–34.
14 R.H.Jackson, 'Inverted rationalism, Martin Wight, international theory and the good life', paper given at the joint meeting of the International Studies Association and the British International Studies Association London, April 1989; for a condensed survey of the evolution of this tradition, see K.J.Holsti, *The Dividing Discipline,* Boston, Allen & Unwin, 1985, Ch. 3.
15 P.Diesing, *Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences,* Chicago, Aldine, 1971, p. 212.

16 See Q.Skinner, 'The idea of negative liberty, philosophical and historical perspectives', in R.Rorty *et al*., eds, *Philosophy in History,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 193–224.
17 R.Brandom, 'Freedom and constraint by norms', in Robert Hollinger, *ed., Hermeneutics and Praxis,* Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
18 Thomas Nagel, 'What makes a political theory utopian?' *Social Research,* Winter 1989, vol. 56, no. 4, p. 904.
19 Ibid., p. 152.
20 M.Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics,* New York, Basic Books, 1962, pp. 120–1.
21 V.Van Dyke, 'Values and interests', *American Political Science Review,* September 1962, vol. 56, no. 3, p. 568.
22 E.H.Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis,* London, Macmillan, 1946.
23 R.B.J.Walker, 'Political theory and the transformation of world politics', World Order Studies Program Occasional Paper No. 8, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 24.
24 Carr, op. cit., p. 11.
25 'Consistent realism excludes four things which appear to be essential ingredients of all effective political thinking, a finite goal, an emotional appeal, a right of moral judgement, and a ground for action', Carr, op. cit., p. 89. In short, the realm of freedom.
26 Carr, op. cit., p. 10.
27 Walker, op. cit., p. 27.
28 Carr, op. cit., p. 93.

3 HANS MORGENTHAU: THEORY AS TRUTH

1 R.N.Berki, *On Political Realism,* London, J.M.Dent & Sons, 1981, p. 256.
2 Ibid., pp. 228, 194.
3 S.Hoffmann, 'Realism and its discontents', *Atlantic Monthly,* November, 1985, vol. 256, no. 5, pp. 131–6.
4 J.W.Nobel, 'Morgenthau's theory and practice: a response to Peter Gellman', *Review of International Studies,* July 1989, vol. 15, no. 3, p. 266.
5 Berki, p. 199.
6 H.J.Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* fifth edn, revised, New York, Alfred A.Knopf, 1978.
7 It should be pointed out that Morgenthau arrived at his most important ideas on the nature of international politics during the 1930s. For an interesting analysis of the evolution of his pre-war writing, see N. Amstrup, 'The early Morgenthau: a comment on the intellectual origins of realism', *Co-operation and Conflict,* 1978, vol. 13, pp. 163–75.
8 S.Hoffmann, 'An American social science: international relations', *Daedalus,* Summer, 1977, vol. 106, no.3, p. 44.
9 As Gellman has recently put it, beyond a shared purpose among these and other scholars to repudiate 'unfounded hopes for a new world [in

Berki's terms, imaginative idealism]…the diversity of theoretical pricritics among "Realists" limits the utility of realism as a word that can either describe or enlighten', P.Gellman, 'Hans J.Morgenthau and the legacy of political realism', *Review of International Studies,* October 1988, vol. 14, no. 4, p. 248. Whilst I agree with the first part of this judgement, this study is obviously undertaken in the belief that the second part is unfounded. For an incisive comparison between Carr, Kennan, Niebuhr and Morgenthau, see M.J.Smith, *Realist Thought From Weber to Kissinger,* Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1986.

10 For example, one of the last scholarly events Morgenthau attended was a session of the International Studies Association convention in Los Angeles. It was entitled 'Political realism revisited' and Morgenthau's opening remark was 'Why revisited? I never left it'. See J.Herz, 'Political realism revisited', *International Studies Quarterly,* June, 1981, vol.25, no.2, p. 182.

11 Morgenthau's articles have been published in three volumes by the University of Chicago Press (1962), entitled *The Decline of Democratic Politics, The Impasse of American Foreign Policy,* and *The Restoration of American Politics*.

12 H.J.Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1946, p. 43. Consequently, 'a theory of international politics is but a specific instance of a general theory of politics', applied to one spatial domain. See Morgenthau's 'The nature and limits of a theory of international relations', in W.T.R.Fox, ed., *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations,* Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1959, p. 15.

13 The initial ambivalence is reflected in Hobbes' prescriptions for social order. As several commentators have observed, Hobbes believed that a monopoly of force, though necessary, was not sufficient to maintain order. He also stressed the educative role of the state in changing human nature. For particularly good analyses of this point, see Donald W. Hanson, 'Thomas Hobbes's highway to peace', *International Organization,* Spring 1984 vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 329–54, and C.D.Tarleton, 'The creation and maintenance of government: a neglected dimension of leviathan', *Political Studies,* Autumn 1978, vol.26, no.3, pp. 307–27.

14 For an excellent comparison between these two philosophers, see S. Hoffmann, *The State of War,* New York, Praeger, 1965, pp. 56–77.

15 Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*…, pp. 196–202.

16 H.J.Morgenthau, 'The purpose of political science', in J.C. Charlesworth, ed., *A Design For Political Science,* Philadelphia, American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1966, p. 63.

17 Thus, 'no quantitative extension of scientific knowledge can solve the perennial problems which art, religion and philosophy attempt to answer', Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*…, p. 123. Exactly the same argument is made in one of his last books, where he argues that 'all knowledge is justified by a meaning that transcends it'. See H.J.Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master*? New York, New American Library, 1972, p. 9.

18 Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*…, p. 10.
19 Ibid., p. 5.
20 Ibid., p. 195.
21 Ibid., p. 155.
22 Ibid., p. 196.
23 See R.C.Good, 'The national interest and political realism: Niebuhr's "debate" with Morgenthau and Kennan', *Journal of Politics,* November 1960, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 597–619. See also M.J.Smith, op. cit., pp. 201–13.
24 Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*…, p. 204.
25 Ibid., p. 66.
26 In this section, I have avoided categorizing Morgenthau's views on the logic of power politics in terms of levels of analysis'. Morgenthau simply cannot be categorized neatly within a typology of causes located at the 'level' of the individual, the state, and the international political system. In fact, he straddles all three.
27 H.J.Morgenthau, 'The commitments of political science', in Morgenthau, *The Decline of Democratic Politics,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962, p. 45.
28 H.J.Morgenthau, 'The nature and limits of a theory of international relations', in W.T.R.Fox, ed., *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations,* Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1959, p. 19.
29 Ibid., p. 21.
30 Ibid., p. 25.
31 Morgenthau, 'The purpose of political science', in J.C.Charlesworth, p. 65.
32 G.Liska, 'Morgenthau vs. Machiavelli', in K.Thompson and R.J.Myers, eds, *Truth And Tragedy,* New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1984, p. 105.
33 Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*…, p. 10.
34 Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master*?, p. 1.
35 Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*…, p. 149.
36 See also H.J.Morgenthau, 'The four paradoxes of nuclear strategy', *American Political Science Review,* March, 1964, vol. 58, no. 1, pp. 20–9.
37 See also H.J.Morgenthau, 'World politics in the mid-twentieth century', *Review of Politics,* April, 1948, vol. 10, no.2, pp. 154–73.
38 Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master*?, p. 45.
39 Morgenthau, 'The purpose of political science', in J.C.Charlesworth, op. cit., p. 72.
40 H.J.Morgenthau, *Truth and Power,* London, Pall Mall Press, 1970, p. 146.
41 H.J.Morgenthau, 'The problem of the national interest', in Morgenthau, *The Decline of Democratic Politics,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962, p. 94.
42 Ibid.
43 H.J.Morgenthau, *In Defence of The National Interest,* New York, Alfred Knopf, 1951, p. 91.
44 Ibid., p. 7.

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., p. 13.
47 Ibid., p. 26.
48 Ibid., p. 25.

4 HANS MORGENTHAU: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1 Berki, R.N., *On Political Realism,* London, J.M.Dent & Sons, 1981, pp. 195–6.
2 Much of this is directed towards 'realism' as a particular orientation, or normative predisposition towards the theory and practice of international politics. However, it should be noted that Morgenthau never claimed to speak for other scholars, and his definition of 'realism' is significantly different from the way this word is used by, for example, Herz and Carr. Indeed, Morgenthau was extremely critical of Carr's attempt to synthesize 'realism' and 'utopianism'. See: J.Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951; E.H.Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis,* London, Macmillan, 1946. For Morgenthau's critique of Carr, see his 'The surrender to the immanence of power: E.H.Carr', in Morgenthau, *The Restoration of American Politics,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962, pp. 36–44. For a comprehensive and largely sympathetic treatment of Morgenthau's contribution to International Relations, see G.Russell, *Hans Morgenthau and the Ethics of American Statecraft,* Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1990.
3 J.A.Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics,* New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1983, p. 216.
4 A.Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration,* Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962, p. 86.
5 This is clearly demonstrated by R.W.Tucker, 'Professor Morgenthau's theory of political realism', *American Political Science Review,* March 1952, vol. 46, pp. 214–24.
6 For a similar analysis of Morgenthau's tendency to derive Soviet intentions from its military capabilities, see M.J.Smith, *Realist Thought From Weber to Kissinger,* Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1986, pp. 147–58.
7 L.C.Gardner, A.Schlesinger, Jr., and H.J.Morgenthau, *The Origins Of The Cold War,* Waltham: Mass., Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970, pp. 79–105 and 119–22.
8 H.J.Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy For The United States,* New York, Praeger, 1969, p. 56.
9 'Communism is convinced that it will inherit the world after it has buried us, and we refuse to be buried or to concede the inheritance. All foreign policies of the Soviet Union serve the ultimate end of assuring the triumph of communism over the Western way of life (as all Western foreign policies seek to forestall that triumph), and that belief will not yield to a negotiated settlement', H.J.Morgenthau, 'What the big two can, and can't, negotiate', in Morgenthau *The Restoration of American Politics,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962, p. 316.

10 Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy For The United States,* p. 61.
11 On Morgenthau's ambiguous use of the term 'balance of power' see I. J.Claude, *Power And International Relations,* New York, Random House, 1962, pp. 25–37; see also E.B.Haas, 'The balance of power: prescription, concept, or propaganda?' *World Politics,* July 1953, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 442–78. On the logical inconsistency and empirical vacuity of Morgenthau's theory, see: B.Wasserman, 'The scientific pretensions of Professor Morgenthau's theory of power politics', *Australian Outlook,* March 1959, vol.13, no.l, pp. 55–70; R.W.Tucker, 'Professor Morgenthau's theory of political realism', *American Political Science Review,* March 1952, vol. 46, no. 1, pp. 214–24.
12 H.J.Morgenthau, 'The purpose of political science', in J.C. Charlesworth, ed., *A Design For Political Science: Scope, Objectives, and Methods* (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1966), pp. 63–79.
13 J.David Singer, 'The levels-of-analysis problem in international relations', in K.Knorr and S.Verba, eds, *The International System,* Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1961, pp. 81–2.
14 K.N.Waltz, *Man, The State, and War,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1959, pp. 165–70.
15 W.T.R.Fox, 'The reconciliation of the desirable and the possible', *The American Scholar,* Spring, 1949, vol. 18, no. 2, p. 213; P.Robertson, 'A new Machiavelli', *New Republic,* May 31, 1954, pp. 19–20; B.Moore, Jr., *American Sociological Review,* April, 1949, vol. 14, no.2, p. 327; N.J. *Padelford, Political Science Quarterly,* June 1949, vol. 64, no. 2, p. 291; J.David Singer, in N.D.Palmer, ed., *A Design for International Relations Research,* Philadelphia, American Academy of Political And Social Science, 1970, p. 160; S.Smith, 'War and human nature' in I.Forbes and S.Smith, eds, *Politics and Human Nature,* London, Frances Pinter, 1983, pp. 164–70.
16 Waltz, op. cit., p. 27.
17 P.Gellman, 'Hans J.Morgenthau and the legacy of political realism', *Review of International Studies,* October 1988, vol. 14, no. 4, p. 253.
18 F.M.Frohock, *The Nature of Political Inquiry,* Homewood, Ill., Dorsey, 1967, p. 7.
19 H.J.Morgenthau, 'Power as a political concept', in R.Young, ed., *Approaches To The Study Of Politics,* Evanston, Ill., Northwestern University Press, 1958, p. 73.
20 It should be pointed out that such a conception leaves open the question of whether theories can or should be inductive or deductive, a distinction that, in practice, is difficult to maintain.
21 H.J.Morgenthau, *The Decline of Democratic Politics,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962, p. 43.
22 At the beginning of *Politics Among Nations,* Morgenthau uses the terms theory and philosophy interchangeably: 'This theoretical concern with human nature as it actually is…has earned for the theory presented here the name of Realism. What are [its] tenets? No systematic exposition of the philosophy of political realism can be attempted here…' (p. 4).
23 H.J.Morgenthau, 'The purpose of political science', in J.Charlesworth, *A Design for Political Science,* p. 133; see also Morgenthau, 'About

cynicism, perfectionism, and realism in international affairs', in Morgenthau, *The Decline Of Democratic Politics,* pp. 127–30.

24 R.D.Spegele, 'Three forms of political realism', *Political Studies,* June 1987, vol. 35, no. 2, p. 192.

25 F.Kratochwil, 'On the notion of "interest" in international relations', *International Organization,* Winter 1982, vol. 36, no. 1, p. 28.

26 G.Lichtheim, *The Concept of Ideology and Other Essays,* New York, Vintage, 1967, p. 142.

27 See also R.J.Barnet, *The Roots of War,* New York, Atheneum, 1972, p. 65; C.Lasch, *The World of Nations,* New York, Knopf, 1973, p. 208; R. L.Rothstein, 'On the costs of realism', *Political Science Quarterly,* 1972, vol. 87, no. 3, pp. 347–62; R.W.Mansbach and Y.H.Ferguson, 'Values and paradigm change: the elusive quest for international relations theory', in P.R.Viotti and M.V.Kauppi, eds, *International Relations Theory,* New York, Macmillan, 1987, pp. 554–76.

28 S.H.Hoffmann, 'An American social science: international relations', *Daedalus,* Summer 1977, vol. 106, no. 3, pp. 47–8.

29 S.H.Hoffmann, *Contemporary Theory In International Relations,* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1960, p. 35.

30 Ibid., p. 37.

31 Morgenthau's idea that the national interest could be defined in isolation from consideration of American ideals spawned a massive, and inevitably inconclusive, debate in the 1950s. For good discussions on this debate, which revealed just how value-laden the term is, even in Morgenthau's hands. See: P.Seabury, *Power, Freedom, and Diplomacy,* New York, Random House, 1963, Ch. 4; T.I.Cook and M.Moos, *Power Through Purpose,* Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1954; G.L.Kirk, 'In search of the national interest', *World Politics,* October, 1952, vol. 5, no.1, pp. 110–16; R.E.Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1953; V.Van Dyke, 'Values and interests', *American Political Science Review,* September 1962, vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 567–77; Q.Wright, 'Realism and idealism in international politics', *World Politics,* October 1952, vol. 5, no.1, pp. 116–29; W.R.Schilling, 'The clarification of ends', *World Politics* July 1956, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 566–79.

32 See R.C.Good, 'The national interest and political realism: Niebuhr's "debate" with Morgenthau and Kennan', *Journal of Politics,* November 1960, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 597–619; S.H.Hoffmann, 'Notes on the limits of realism', *Social Research,* Winter 1981, vol. 48, no. 4, pp. 653–9. See also: Tucker, op. cit.; Wright, op. cit.; and Schilling, op. cit.

33 Berki, op. cit., pp. 61.

34 Ibid., p. 62.

5 KENNETH WALTZ: THEORY AS SCIENCE

1 K.N.Waltz, *Theory of International Politics,* Reading: Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1979. See also R.O.Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1986.

2 M.Banks, 'The inter-paradigm debate', in M.Light and A.J.R.Groom, eds, *International Relations: A Handbook of Current Theory,* London, Frances Pinter, 1985, p. 14. See also: R.K.Ashley, 'Political realism and human interests', *International Studies Quarterly,* June 1981, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 204–36; R.O.Keohane, 'Theory of world politics: structural realism and beyond', in Keohane, op. cit., pp. 158–203. Waltz himself has conceded that his aim was 'to develop a more rigorous theory than earlier realists had done'. See K.N.Waltz, 'Reflections on *Theory of International Politics:* a response to my critics', in Keohane, op. cit., p. 322.
3 J.G.Ruggie, 'Continuity and transformation in the world polity', in Keohane, op. cit., pp. 131–58.
4 Waltz, 'Reflections…', in Keohane, op. cit., p. 336.
5 A.E.Wendt, 'The agent-structure problem in international relations theory', *International Organization,* Summer 1987, vol. 41, no.3, pp. 335–71.
6 D.A.Baldwin, 'Interdependence and power: a conceptual analysis', *International Organization,* Autumn 1980, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 471–506.
7 However, elsewhere Waltz has argued that the horizontal spread of nuclear weapons does not undermine bipolarity and reinforces international stability by replicating deterrence among a larger group of states. See his 'The spread of nuclear weapons: more may be better', *Adelphi Paper 171,* London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981.
8 R.D.Spegele, 'Three forms of political realism', *Political Studies,* Summer 1987, vol. 35, no.2, p. 195.
9 Waltz, 'Reflections…', op. cit., p. 339.
10 K.N.Waltz, 'Political philosophy and the study of international relations', in W.T.R.Fox, ed., *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations,* Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 1959, pp. 51–69.
11 Ibid., p. 52.
12 Ibid., p. 62.
13 K.N.Waltz, *Man, The State, and War,* 2nd edn, New York, Columbia University Press, 1954.
14 Ibid, p. 227.
15 Ibid., p. 232.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., p. 238.
18 In 1965, Waltz still did not believe that a purely systemic theory was possible. 'The character of an international system depends upon the number of great states that exist, the capabilities with which they are endowed, the ambitions they may entertain, and the nature of relations among them. Variations in these factors, which are central in any theory of international politics, determine the stability of the international equilibrium', K.N.Waltz, 'Contention and management in international relations', *World Politics,* July 1965, vol. 17, no.4, p. 720.
19 R.O.Keohane, 'Realism, neorealism, and the study of world politics', in Keohane, op. cit., pp. 2–3.
20 H.J.Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* 5th edn rev., New York, Alfred Knopf, 1978, p. 23.

6 KENNETH WALTZ: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1 R.K.Ashley, 'The poverty of neorealism', *International Organization,* Spring 1984, vol. 38, no. 2, p. 233.
2 K.R.Minogue, 'Epiphenomenalism in politics: the quest for political reality', *Political Studies,* December 1972, vol. 20, no. 4, p. 466.
3 B.Buzan, 'Systems, structures and units: reconstructing Waltz's theory of international politics', paper given at the annual conference of the British/International Studies Association, London, March 1989, p. 5.
4 M.Landau, *Political Theory And Political Science,* New York, Macmillan, 1972, p. 221.
5 R.D.Spegele, 'Deconstructing methodological falsificationism in international relations', *American Political Science Review,* March 1980, vol. 74, no. 1, p. 107.
6 As Beardsley points out, 'because every "scientific" discipline deals with a subject-matter that is different in some key respects from that of other disciplines, each must develop…methodological standards that are to a significant degree unique to that discipline. No discipline can rely solely on a straight-forward application of a general philosophy-of-science doctrine. This conclusion would follow even if there were only one defensible doctrine which of course is not the case, and even if the would-be appliers thoroughly understood the doctrine they are attempting to apply which many political scientists do not', P.L.Beardsley, *Redefining Rigor, Ideology and Statistics in Political Inquiry,* London, Sage, 1980, p. 39.
7 G.Ryle, *The Concept of Mind,* London, Hutchinson, 1949, p. 30.
8 G.Sartori, 'Philosophy, theory, and science of politics', *Political Theory,* May 1974, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 157.
9 T.S.Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970, p. 4. For a good introduction to the debates sparked off by Kuhn's work, which illustrates the substantive differences between Popper, Kuhn, and Lakatos which Waltz ignores, see I.Lakatos and A.Musgrave, eds, *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970.
10 R.K.Ashley, 'Political realism and human interests', *International Studies Quarterly,* June 1981, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 216–17.
11 R.D.Spegele, op. cit., p. 119.
12 K.N.Waltz, 'Reflections on *Theory of International Politics:* a response to my critics', in Keohane, *Neorealism and the Critics,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 327.
13 F.V.Kratochwil, 'Errors have their advantage', *International Organization,* Spring 1984, vol. 38, no. 2, p. 314.
14 C.A.L.Prager, 'Taking theory for granted in international politics', *Political Studies,* March 1978, vol. 26, no. 1, p. 19.
15 R.O.Keohane, 'Theory of world politics; structural realism and beyond', in Keohane, op. cit., p. 172.
16 This point is emphasized and amply illustrated by Rosecrance in his review of *Theory.* See R.Rosecrance, 'International theory revisited', *International Organization,* Autumn 1981, vol. 35, no. 4, pp. 691–713.

17 S.M.Walt, *The Origins of Alliances,* Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1987.
18 With regard to American political science in general, this argument has been systematically developed by Gunnell. See J.G.Gunnell, *Philosophy, Science, and Political Inquiry,* Morristown, NJ, General Learning Press, 1975. He illustrates the dependency of 'behavioural agendas' for political science on the philosophy-of-science doctrines of logical positivism and logical empiricism, whose tenets regarding the qualitative distinctions between facts and theories, empirical and normative, discovery and justification, philosophy and science, description and explanation and many others have become almost conventional wisdom for many political scientists, even as they were being fundamentally re-examined in the philosophy of science itself.
19 A.Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry,* San Francisco, Chandler, 1964, p. 8
20 Ibid., p. 3.
21 R.J.Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory,* New York, Harcourt Brace, 1976. However, the title is misleading. For although Bernstein provides a thorough overview of the epistemological differences between positivism, language analysis, phenomenology, and so-called critical theory, thereby clarifying the scope and nature of the methodological anarchy that pervades the field, there is precious little evidence of much constructive discourse between the various schools.
22 As Buzan puts it, Waltz 'heavily discounts the authority and organizational dimensions of international politics', Buzan, op. cit., p. 16.
23 Waltz, *Theory*…, pp. 66, 88, 91, 102, 113, 132.
24 R.K.Ashley, 'The poverty of neorealism', p. 245.
25 D.Papineau, *For Science in The Social Sciences,* London, Macmillan, 1978, p. 12. As he emphasizes: 'it is important to remember that what is at issue is not just whether social facts exist, but whether they exist in addition to facts about collections of individuals', p. 47.
26 P.L.Berger and T.Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality,* New York, Doubleday, 1967, p. 61.
27 M.J.Levy, Jr., 'Does it matter if he's naked?' in K.Knorr and J.N.Rosenau, eds, *Contending Approaches To International Politics,* Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1969, p. 98.
28 M.A.Kaplan, *Towards Professionalism in International Theory,* New York, Free Press, 1978, p. 11.
29 'Logical economism is the reduction of the practical interpretative framework of political action to the framework of economic action, the reduction of the logic of politics to the logic of economics'. R.K.Ashley, 'Three modes of economism', *International Studies Quarterly,* December 1983, vol. 27, no. 4, p. 472.
30 F.V.Kratochwil, 'Norms and values: rethinking the domestic analogy', *Ethics and International Affairs,* 1987, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 137.
31 D.A.Baldwin, 'Power analysis and world politics: new trends versus old tendencies', in K.Knorr, ed., *Power, Strategy, and Security,* Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1983, p. 5.

32 B.Barry, 'On analogy', *Political Studies,* Spring 1975, vol. 23, no. 2, p. 97.
33 However, one should note the important distinction between what Jackson calls constitutive and instrumental rules: 'Constitutive rules define the game, whereas instrumental rules are maxims derived from experience which contribute to winning play'. See R.H.Jackson, 'Quasi-states, dual regimes, and neoclassical theory: international jurisprudence and the third 'world', *International Organization,* Autumn 1987, vol. 41, no. 4, p. 522.
34 K.N.Waltz, 'The politics of peace', *International Studies Quarterly,* September 1967, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 202, 207.
35 Keohane, op. cit., p. 173.
36 R.H.Jackson, 'Civil science: a rule-based paradigm for comparative government', paper given at the annual conference of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 3–6 September 1987.
37 A.J.Vincent, 'The Hegelian state and international politics', *Review of International Studies,* 1983, vol. 9, p. 193.
38 W.J.Stankiewicz, *Aspects of Political Theory,* London, Macmillan, 1976, p. 94. However, the word 'imposed' is inappropriate. It is more apt to say that necessary restraints are accepted and institutionalized. As Ashley puts it: 'the modern concept of sovereignty designates the collectively recognized competence of entities subject to international law and superior to municipal law. It thus involves not only the possession of self and the exclusion of others but also the limitation of self in the respect of others, for its authority presupposes the recognition of others who, perforce of their recognition, agree to be so excluded'. R.K.Ashley, 'The poverty of neorealism', p. 272.
39 A.Wendt, 'The social structure of the state system and the production of north-south conflict', paper given at the annual conference of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 3–6 September 1987, p. 26.
40 R.W.Cox, 'Social forces, states and world orders: beyond international relations theory', in Keohane, op. cit., p. 207. Waltz has accepted this characterization of his theory, which is somewhat ironic since, within the terms of his perspective, it is difficult to see what problems *Theory* contributes to solving.
41 K.R.Minogue, op. cit., p. 465.
42 A.J.Miller, 'Bipolar perspectives: international theory and the future of the state', *International Journal,* Summer 1984, vol. 39, no. 3, p. 661.
43 J.G.Ruggie, 'Continuity and transformation in the world polity: toward a neorealist synthesis', in Keohane, op. cit., p. 154.
44 See K.N.Waltz, 'The spread of nuclear weapons: more may be better', *Adelphi Paper No. 171,* London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981. Elsewhere, I have examined the relationship between deterrence as a condition and as a strategy, where I argue that the former is being dangerously undermined as a result of numerous 'sub-systemic' factors which fuel the nuclear arms race, particularly in the United States. See M.Griffiths, 'A dying creed: the erosion of deterrence in American nuclear strategy', *Millenium, Journal of International Studies,* Summer 1986, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 223–51.

7 HEDLEY BULL: THEORY AS TRADITION

1 H.Bull, *The Anarchical Society,* London, Macmillan, 1977, p. 41.
2 H.Bull, 'Society and anarchy in international relations', in H.Butterfield and M.Wight, eds, *Diplomatic Investigations,* Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1966, p. 40.
3 H.Bull, 'The great irresponsibles? The United States, the Soviet Union, and world order', *International Journal,* Summer 1980, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 437–47. See also Bull, 'The international anarchy in the 1980s', *Australian Outlook,* December 1983, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 127–31.
4 In the preface to *The Anarchical Society,* Bull writes that Wight 'first demonstrated to me that International Relations could be made a subject, and whose work in this field…stands out like Roman masonry in a London suburb'. See also his introduction to M.Wight, *Systems of States,* Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1977; and 'Martin Wight and the theory of international relations', *British Journal of International Studies,* Summer 1976, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 101–16.
5 As Vincent puts it, the priority that Bull gives to order over justice reflects 'the minimal endorsement of the doctrine that authority must reside somewhere if order is to obtain anywhere', R.J.Vincent, 'Hedley Bull and order in international politics', *Millenium, Journal of International Affairs,* Summer 1988, vol. 17, no. 2, p. 210.
6 M.Wight, 'An anatomy of international thought', *Review of International Studies,* July 1987, vol 13, no. 3, p. 222.
7 M.Wight, 'Why is there no international theory?' in Butterfield and Wight, eds, op. cit., p. 18.
8 H.Bull, 'International theory: the case for a classical approach', in K. Knorr and J.N.Rosenau, eds, *Contending Approaches to International Politics,* Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1969, p. 27.
9 Wight, 'Why is there no international theory?', p. 20.
10 Ibid., p. 33.
11 Wight, 'An anatomy of international thought', p. 226.
12 Wight, 'Western values in international relations', in Butterfield and Wight, op. cit., p. 94.
13 Wight, 'An anatomy of international thought', p. 227.
14 B.Porter, 'Patterns of thought and practice: Martin Wight's international theory', in M.Donelan, ed., *The Reason of States,* London, Allen & Unwin, 1978, p. 71.
15 See H.Bull, 'The Grotian conception of international society', in Butterfield and Wight, op. cit., pp. 51–73.
16 Ibid., p. 66.
17 Ibid.
18 As Keenes has recently expressed it, 'each [paradigm] expresses the world as a more or less distinctive, yet not exclusive, political space. The form of politics or of political space created by each paradigm expresses historical phenomena and therefore each is layered over the other. They overlap in time', E.Keenes, 'Paradigms and international relations: bringing the politics back in', paper given at the annual meeting of the

Canadian Political Science Association, Windsor, Ontario, June 1988, p. 2.

19 H.Bull, 'The theory of international politics 1919–1969', in B.Porter, ed., *The Aberystwyth Papers: International Politics 1919–1969,* London, Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 51.
20 Bull, 'International theory: the case for a classical approach', p. 21.
21 Ibid., p. 38.
22 Ibid., p. 26.
23 Ibid., p. 28.
24 Bull, 'The theory of international politics 1919–1969', p. 32.
25 Ibid., p. 33.
26 Ibid., p. 34.
27 T.Nardin, *Law, Morality, and the Relations of States,* Princeton, New Jersey., Princeton University Press, 1985, p. 32.
28 J.David Singer, 'The incomplete theorist: insight without evidence', in Knorr and Rosenau, op. cit., pp. 66–7.
29 Bull, 'International theory; the case for a classical approach', p. 30.
30 S.Hoffmann, 'Hedley Bull and his contribution to international relations', *International Affairs,* Spring 1986, vol. 62, no. 2, p. 182.
31 For example, see H.Bull, 'The emergence of a universal international society', in H.Bull and A.Watson, eds, *The Expansion of International Society,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 117–27.
32 C.Geertz, 'Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture', Chapter 1 of Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures,* New York, Basic Books, 1973.
33 Bull, 'The theory of international politics 1919–1969', p. 32.
34 See Wight, 'Western values in international relations', p. 96.
35 H.Bull, 'The *Twenty Years' Crisis* thirty years on', *International Journal,* August 1969, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 632–3.
36 See, for example, H.Bull, *Justice in International Relations,* Hagey Lectures, 12–13 October 1983, Waterloo, Ont., University of Waterloo, 1984.
37 Hoffmann, 'Hedley Bull and his contribution to international relations', p. 184.
38 Bull, 'The great irresponsibles? The United States, the Soviet Union, and world order', p. 437.
39 Ibid., p. 447.

8 HEDLEY BULL: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1 A.E.Wendt, 'The agent-structure problem in international relations theory', *International Organization,* Summer 1987, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 335–70.
2 R.Bhaskar, 'Emergence, explanation, and emancipation', in P.Secord, ed., *Explaining Human Behaviour,* Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1982, p. 286.
3 David Dessler provides an excellent conceptual analysis of the relationship between states and the 'social structure' of the states system.

As he points out: 'rules are not concrete girders constraining action but, instead, are media through which action becomes possible and which action itself reproduces and transforms. Action is constrained and enabled by rules; the rules are the outcome as well as the medium of that action', David Dessler, 'What's at stake in the agent-structure debate?' *International Organization,* Summer 1989, vol. 43, no. 3, p. 467.

4 R.N.Berki, *On Political Realism,* London, J.M.Dent & Sons, 1981, p. 265.
5 K.N.Waltz, 'Reflections on *Theory of International Politics,* a response to my critics', in R.O.Keohane, *Neorealism and Its Critics,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 338.
6 Berki, op. cit., p. 199.
7 B.Buzan, 'Systems, structures and units: reconstructing Waltz's theory of international politics', paper given at the British/International Studies Association Conference London, March 1989, p. 7.
8 J.G.Gunnell, *Philosophy, Science, and Political Inquiry,* Morristown, New Jersey, General Learning Press, 1975, p. 217.
9 K.J.Holsti, *The Dividing Discipline,* Boston, Allen & Unwin, 1985, p. 140.
10 K.Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery,* London, Hutchinson & Co., 1972, p. 31.
11 K.Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia,* New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1936, p. 100.
12 M.Forsyth, 'The classical theory of international relations', *Political Studies,* September 1978, vol. 26, no. 3, p. 413.
13 Berki, op. cit., pp. 268–9.
14 Ibid., pp. 97–8.
15 H.Bull, 'Martin Wight and the theory of international relations', *British Journal of International Studies,* Summer 1976, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 101.
16 S.Hoffmann, 'Hedley Bull and his contribution to international relations', *International Affairs,* Spring 1986, vol. 62, no. 2, pp. 185–6.
17 C.Navari, 'Hobbes and the "Hobbesian tradition" in international thought', *Millennium, Journal of International Studies,* Autumn 1982, vol. 11, no. 3, p. 204.
18 Ibid., p. 206.
19 Ibid.
20 R.J.Vincent, 'The Hobbesian tradition in twentieth century international thought', *Millenium, Journal of International Studies,* Summer 1981, vol. 10, no. 2, p. 96. See also M.Forsyth, 'Thomas Hobbes and the external relations of states', *British Journal of International Studies,* October 1979, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 196–209.
21 Ibid.
22 H.Bull, 'The emergence of a universal international society', in H.Bull and A.Watson, eds, *The Expansion of International Society,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 123. As Roy Jones pointedly asks, 'Nazi Germany and Britain participated jointly in the institution of war, and Nazi Germany throughout observed some of the rules of international law, which, occasionally, Britain transgressed. Were they both members or non-members of international society? Or is

membership of this "club" a variable, some member-states visiting it more frequently than others?' R.E.Jones, 'The English school of international relations: a case for closure', *Review of International Studies,* September 1981, vol. 7, no. 4, p. 4.

23 J.Mayall, 'International society and international theory', in M.Donelan, ed., *The Reason of States,* London, Allen & Unwin, 1978, p. 123.

24 C.Navari, 'Knowledge, the state and the state of nature', in Donelan, op. cit., p. 119.

25 F.V.Kratochwil, 'The Humean perspective on international relations', *Occasional Paper no. 9,* World Order Studies Program, Princeton University, June 1981, p. 19. For a fascinating attempt to explain the rise and fall of the Cold War in this fashion, see also F.V.Kratochwil, *International Order and Foreign Policy,* Boulder, Colo., Westview Press, 1978.

26 T.Nardin, *Law, Morality, and the Nature of States,* Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1985, p. 19.

27 Jones, op. cit., p. 10.

9 CONCLUSIONS

1 N.R.Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery, An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1958, p. 19.

2 C.B.Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1962.

3 D.Dessler, 'What's at stake in the agent-structure debate?' *International Organization,* Summer 1989, vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 441–74.

4 J.G.Ruggie, 'Continuity and transformation in the world polity', in R.O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and its Critics,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 131–57.

5 R.B.J.Walker, 'Realism, change, and international political theory', *International Studies Quarterly,* March 1987, vol. 31, no. 1, p. 69.

6 There are many recent books and articles which describe the evolution of the field in this manner. For illustrative examples, see: R.Maghroori and B.Ramberg, eds, *Globalism Versus Realism: International Relations Third Debate,* Boulder, Colo., Westview Press, 1982; J.A.Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics,* New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1983; P.R.Viotti and M.V.Kauppi, eds, *International Relations Theory,* New York, Macmillan, 1987; M.Banks, 'The evolution of international relations theory', in M.Banks, ed., *Conflict in World Society,* Brighton, Wheatsheaf Books, 1984, pp. 3–22; S.Smith, 'The development of international relations as a social science', *Millenium, Journal of International Studies,* Summer 1987, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 189–206.

7 J.G.Ruggie and F.V.Kratochwil, 'International organization: a state of the art on an art of the state', *International Organization,* Autumn 1986, vol. 40, no. 4, especially pp. 763–75. On the epistemological implications of rule-based explanations, see also F.V.Kratochwil, 'Regimes, interpretation and the "science" of politics: a reappraisal', *Millenium,*

Journal of International Studies, Summer 1988, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 263–84.

8 On this point, I am indebted to R.Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature,* New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1979.

9 See Y.H.Ferguson and R.W.Mansbach, *The Elusive Quest, Theory and International Politics,* Columbia, South Carolina, University of South Carolina, 1988.

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INDEX