

A MEGA THAUMADZEIN
IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:
THE MARRIAGE OF MORGENTHAU AND THE POSTMODERNS
IN POLITICAL PRACTICE

By

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Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
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ABSTRACT

The field of international relations has been inundated with at least three 'great debates regarding the theory and practice of relations between states. The most recent debate centres upon the seemingly adverse theoretical perspectives of realism and postmodernism. As proponents of each viewpoint fail to comprehend the inherent consideration of political ethics within each theoretical perspective, they ultimately fail to recognize the possible existence of similarities in their positions. A comparative analysis of the works of Hans Morgenthau and a number of postmodernists such as David Campbell demonstrates both the existence of such similarities, and the potential implications for the practice of international politics.

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Given the unexpected difficulties of the last two months, I could not have completed this thesis without the support of a number of important people. My parents, once again, offered me love, support and understanding when I was most in need. In so doing they have demonstrated the true meaning of an ethic of responsibility. For that I am forever grateful.

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Introduction

Within the field of international relations, political realism has been understood and accepted as the delineation of the role of reason, national interest, and power in international political activity. As a result, critics of realism have pronounced that realism is synonymous with all that is apparently unethical, or evil, in the political sphere. Everything from the proliferation of western political rhetoric and nuclear arms to third world poverty has been considered to be an attribute or implication of realist thought. The existence of this relationship has encouraged the idea that both political realism, and its purported creator Hans Morgenthau, are ethically barren.

This thesis demonstrates that, in fact, Morgenthau's work represents an extensive and intense, albeit a frequently implicit, consideration of political ethics in relations between nations. Not only does it represent much more than a mere formula for maintaining an ethically questionable *status quo*, it, in fact, represents a stinging criticism of the practices of international politics in the post World War II era. While much of this criticism is inherent in his considerations of American foreign policy, it is avoided, or overlooked, by most theorists for two reasons. First, in interpreting his work as being demonstrative of a preference for the 'here and now' of international relations, many theorists simply assumed that this apparent preference was synonymous with approval of *status quo* politics. Second, in avoiding the possibility that this interpretation was flawed, several subsequent theorists attempted to substantiate it by emphasizing Morgenthau's glaring criticism of moralizing and political idealism.

These interpretations, however, are called into question when a comprehensive analysis of Morgenthau's work is undertaken. Not only do the critical and normative aspects of Morgenthau's thoughts on ethics and morals in international politics become evident, so does the possibility of some significant philosophical similarities with postmodernist thought. Given the current and predominant interpretation of postmodern political thought that suggests that postmodernists are compelled to prefer political action which is nihilistic, and the generally accepted depiction of Morgenthau as an ethical sham, this association would seem to suggest that both realists and postmodernists must be either amoral or immoral. On the contrary, however, both Morgenthau and post-modernists share an overwhelming concern with political ethics in relations between nations, and the cornerstone of ethical behaviour for both lies in the notion of responsibility.

Given the recent debate within the field of International Relations regarding the relative worth of both realist and postmodernist thinking, the delineation of the existence of such similarities in the respective bodies of thought is likely to prove contentious. The purpose in doing so, however, is neither to promote the continuation of increasingly divisive arguments, nor to achieve an ultimate reconciliation of opposing points of view. Rather, the purpose is to suggest that in attempting to make a difference in the conduct of political actors in the international context, political theorists instead have created differences in political thought and action which are more apparent than real. This has inhibited rather than enhanced both the understanding and practice of international politics.

As such, it is clear that both theory and practice are in need of an appreciation of similarity as well as actual difference in political behaviour if the understanding of international relations is to be enhanced. The delineation of similarities will occur in four steps which include an examination of the extant interpretations of Morgenthau's work, an alternative and more comprehensive analysis of his work, a similar analysis of the ethical

components of some postmodernist political thought, and an overall comparison between the methodological preferences, philosophical underpinnings and practical implications of each body of work.

Chapter One will offer an overview of the secondary literature relating to Morgenthau. For the most part, a large number of the interpretations which are included stem from those theorists who recognize the ethical component of Morgenthau's work. In focusing attention on this aspect of interpretations, the diverse portrayals of Morgenthau's thought have simply stressed an apparent preference for either power politics at the international level or, conversely, a Judeo-Christian oriented political ethic. These interpretations are shown to be either more reflective of the ontological perspectives of the interpreters than of Morgenthau, or the result of a restricted use of primary sources, almost exclusively *Politics Among Nations*.

Chapter Two offers an analysis of Morgenthau's work which is based on a broad range of his theoretical and practical writings. Essentially, the methodological and philosophical influences in Morgenthau's consideration of political ethics, and the consequent implications for foreign policy are examined. The analysis demonstrates that rather than being ambiguous or incoherent in his consideration of ethics, as many have claimed, Morgenthau could be described more appropriately as a complicated and supple thinker. Behaviour in the political context of international relations, to Morgenthau, was a reflection of human behaviour in interpersonal relationships. As such ethical behaviour in international politics is a reflection of the moral behaviour, or ideals, of the individual in personal politics. From this perspective Morgenthau saw ethics and morals as ideals for human behaviour in public and private situations respectively. However, because of the restrictions of human nature, both the individual and the political actor are unable to act in this ideal fashion, and as a result Morgenthau promotes instead the notion of responsible or prudent behaviour for the political actor.

Chapter Three examines the attempts of some postmodernist scholars, such as Campbell to undertake a 're-framing' of political ethics in the discipline and practice of international relations based on the work of the modern philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas sees responsibility as a heteronomous, or pre-original, condition which pre-dates political organization. Some postmodernist scholars contend that this understanding of responsibility encourages the idea of responsibility unencumbered by restrictive national boundaries, while Morgenthau's conception of responsibility is territorially limited, and therefore ultimately unethical. Aside from being a tenuous distinction at best, this view appears to overlook an obvious and important component of understanding political ethics. Given that most postmodern theorists recognize that relations between states are a significant, if limiting, aspect of international politics, ethical behaviour in practice must acknowledge the reality of territorial boundaries even if ethical behaviour in theory can address the possibility of a de-limited responsibility. As such, if Levinas's consideration of an ethic of responsibility were applied to a specific foreign policy issue, the recommended behaviour from an ethical perspective would bear a striking resemblance to Morgenthau's position on the same issue.

Chapter Four discerns the nature of the relationship between the postmodern concern with the philosophical aspects of responsibility and Morgenthau's emphasis on political practice. In the examination of political practice in the international context, it is evident that the underlying philosophical perspectives of the political actor determine, to a large extent, his or her behaviour and opinions. It can also be argued then, that the encouragement of responsibility in political action from a philosophical standpoint will, of necessity, eventually result in a political practice which would mirror those insights. However, just as Morgenthau recognized, there is a current division between political theory and practice only because political theory is more a portrait, than a photograph, of political practice. In other words, Morgenthau acknowledged that current theoretical

contentions regarding international politics reflected, or attempted to encourage, ideal political practice while acknowledging reality.

The common ground shared by Morgenthau and the postmodernists appears to be a similar concern regarding the nature of replication and change in political reality. As a result they advocate, in somewhat distinctive ways, a common preference for political action which emphasizes a responsibility to, and for, human suffering. In effect then, in attempting to establish a distinct political ethic of responsibility, the postmodernists have unintentionally, but seemingly inevitably, re-affirmed Morgenthau's understanding of political ethics.

Chapter 1

Interpretations of Morgenthau

Within the field of international relations Morgenthau's work is generally interpreted as the theoretical beginning of American political realism. As such these interpretations attempt to address a number of different aspects regarding his conception of international political practice. A number of them emphasize and endorse the practical implications of his theory of international relations. For the most part, this literature demonstrates an appreciative view of either realist political theory or empirical analyses of foreign policy, and gives little, if any, explicit consideration of political ethics. Several other interpretations, however, object to the reality of power and the role of the state in Morgenthau's theory and understanding of international politics. In so doing they either assume, or attempt to demonstrate, Morgenthau's dismissal of behaviour on the part of state actors which is moral in reality. Regardless, a somewhat smaller number of interpretations attempt to discern the underlying philosophical components of his theory of international relations, as well as his conception of political ethics. Interestingly, several generations of international relations theorists have accorded Morgenthau the distinction of being the 'godfather' of American realism. Although the title has been used in both a pejorative and laudatory manner, it has become a truism which is seldom questioned within the field.

One of the earliest interpretations of Morgenthau's work characterizes it as being illustrative of the "new realistic approach" which is singularly preoccupied with considerations of power to the exclusion of moral concerns.¹ Tucker claims that this

¹Robert W. Tucker, "Professor Morgenthau's Theory of Political 'Realism'" in *The*

exclusion results in Morgenthau's Realist theory of international relations being essentially meaningless. That is, if all relations between state actors can be defined in terms of power and interests, then there is no way to explain or understand diverse political action. For Tucker, these differences can be explained by examining the role of moral influences in foreign policy decisions.

According to Tucker, moral influences determine the means by which states resolve conflicts of interest in the international context.² Ostensibly, because moral principles affect the subjective evaluation of objective facts, they have a primary, if implicit, influence on political action. In Tucker's reading, Morgenthau not only fails to recognize this influence, but in fact opposes it. His contention that "Morgenthau's concept of moral obligation amounts to the statement that men ought, that is, are morally obliged, to behave as they actually do behave" suggests that, from his perspective, Morgenthau was confident that states are *ipso facto* moral, and therefore, beyond moral criticisms.³ Interestingly, Tucker's concludes his interpretation with the acknowledgment that Morgenthau's "entire argument can logically lead to different consequences".⁴

Unfortunately, however, later criticisms by a number of critical theorists appear to have accepted Tucker's judgment that American political realism, as enunciated by Morgenthau, is morally dysfunctional and ethically barren. In fact, Hare and Joynt offer a later reading of Morgenthau's political ethics which posits that Morgenthau advocated a return to the "essentially amoral character of diplomacy".⁵ Although the authors address Morgenthau's criticism of 'importing' morality into international relations, and his claims

American Political Science Review (46:1) 1952, pp.214-215.

²*Ibid.*, p.219.

³*Ibid.*, p.221.

⁴*Ibid.*, p.224.

⁵J.E. Hare and Carey B. Joynt, *Ethics and International Affairs* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982, pp.39-40.

regarding the 'tragic' nature of the relationship between politics and ethics, they are not receptive to the possibility that Morgenthau makes a distinction between the concepts of morals and ethics.

Waltz credits Morgenthau with being "foremost among traditional realists".⁶ Apparently, given Morgenthau's contention that the *animus dominandi* is inherent in human nature, both man and his political actions are ultimately less than ideal, and as a result, ultimately evil. In a similar vein, Gellman classifies Morgenthau as a realist because his work is, in essence, a repudiation of idealism. Apparently, according to Gellman, Morgenthau considered the idea of predictability in political action as being idealistic in that it overlooked the essential characteristic of human nature which reflected a lust for power.⁷ The notion of a controllable social world, which stems from the predominant role of the natural sciences in Enlightenment thought, is apparently problematized by the influence of passion in political action. Morgenthau's acknowledgment of the existence of *animus dominandi*, according to Waltz, suggests that because humans are, in effect, tainted by this trait, they inevitably eschew notions of moral idealism. Gellman simply re-affirms this position by asserting that Morgenthau extended his opposition to idealism to include scientific idealism, or in other words, the idea of a completely knowable and predictable world, which is, apparently, enhanced by the application of a particular set of morals.

Based on these interpretations, Morgenthau is understood in negative terms. In other words, these theorists define Morgenthau by that which he opposes. As such, questions of morals or ethics are restricted either to the realm of the unknowable, or the domain of the actual practice of foreign policy. For Waltz it appears that because ethics,

⁶Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory" in *Conflict after the Cold War* Richard K. Betts (ed.), New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1994, p.88-89.

⁷Peter Gellman, "Hans J. Morgenthau and the Legacy of Political Realism" in *Review of International Studies* 14, (1988), p.248.

like social influences, are beyond the sphere of social science, they are therefore unknowable, and should not be addressed in theories of international relations. Gellman, on the other hand, considers political ethics to be synonymous with the actions of the state. Simply put, if Morgenthau objected to the application of moralism to the foreign policy decision making process, he must have concluded that foreign policy without moralist emphasis was ethical. The question which presents itself at this point is whether or not Morgenthau did see morals and ethics as being synonymous concepts in international politics, and if so, was the application of either or both to international political action ultimately rejected. However, it is possible to contend that both theorists may have chosen only to acknowledge those elements of Morgenthau's thoughts that substantiated their own *a priori* assumptions and beliefs regarding the role of morals and ethics in international relations.

Hollis and Smith, essentially relying on *Politics Among Nations*, also contend that Morgenthau repudiates idealism. Although Gellman makes this assertion as well, there is a seemingly notable difference in these positions. While Gellman interprets Morgenthau as repudiating scientific idealism, or the notion of gaining ultimate knowledge, Hollis and Smith both view Morgenthau as rejecting the idealism of universal moral principles.⁸

While Hollis and Smith acknowledge that Morgenthau does not "always advocate a scientific approach", he has been and can be appropriately characterized as a scientific realist because *Politics Among Nations* apparently promotes such an approach, and "is the book which made him a major figure in the discipline".⁹ Evidently, even though Morgenthau was a prolific author for four decades with a major philosophical treatise to his credit, this one text, popularized by an increasingly complicated and scientific strategic

⁸Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991, p.23.

⁹*Ibid.*, p.23.

culture, should serve as the definitive source for understanding, not only Morgenthau, but political realism as well.

Interestingly, according to Hollis and Smith, Morgenthau's attempt to elevate international relations to a science is indicative of his rejection of universal moral principles. Clearly, the implication here is that social scientific inquiry is not compatible with moral restrictions or ethical perceptions. In other words, a scientific study of relations between nations eliminates any consideration of morality or political ethics. From this perspective, it seems apparent that although Gellman, and Hollis and Smith have adopted different views regarding the nature of Morgenthau's rejection of idealism, they agree on the place Morgenthau accords to morality in the study of international relations. That is, because morality is subordinate to the political, the state as the pre-eminent political actor in the current context must, of necessity, shape and define moral behaviour.

Yet another interpretation depicts Morgenthau's work as being axiomatic, and ultimately, a "diplomat's manual of statecraft".¹⁰ Once again, relying heavily on *Politics Among Nations* and earlier interpretations of Morgenthau, Rosenberg asserts that axiomatic realism is the result of Morgenthau's promotion of scientific methodology in the analysis of international relations. Rosenberg claims that Morgenthau's theory attempts to facilitate the "positivist goal of prediction" by developing a tautological, that is unfalsifiable, argument.¹¹ Assuming that the 'positivist goal' referred to here is that of demonstration and explanation through the use of scientific methodology, there is some possibility that Rosenberg might be ill-informed regarding the nature of both the methodology and its goals.¹² For Rosenberg, Morgenthau's depiction of an influential human nature also

¹⁰Justin Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society. A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Relations* London: Verso, 1994, pp.15-16.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p.18.

¹²D.C. Phillips, *The Social Scientist's Bestiary* Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1992, p.104.

facilitates the scientific, or positivist, goal of empirically observing historical continuities. Simply put, he contends that Morgenthau's conception of human nature as a one-way bio-psychological drive facilitates the possibility of the continued existence and observation of similarly limited political actions throughout human history.

Following this line of reasoning, the reified state is also subject to the limitations of these bio-psychological drives. As such, the state becomes little more than a power maximizing political entity, scarcely affected by cultural and moral influences.¹³ From this perspective, only tangible military and defence factors would have significant influence upon the actions of the state. After offering this interpretation of Morgenthau's theory, Rosenberg concludes that Morgenthau has simply developed a tautological argument which allows him to claim an axiomatic status for political realism. The axiom, apparently, is reflected in Morgenthau's attempt to establish an "objective law of politics", a rational ideal of political action which can be ascertained by registering the 'distorting' influences of irrational factors, as well as normative perceptions of political action.¹⁴ If, in fact, Morgenthau does attempt such a monumental undertaking, this would certainly lend significant credence to Rosenberg's argument that his theory is axiomatic. However, if his theoretical endeavours were more limited, then Rosenberg's argument appears to re-affirm the conclusions of Immanuel Kant in pointing out that judgments of another's work frequently reflect the judge's "habitual train of thought" rather than the essence of the

The author succinctly describes the nature and goal of the scientific method as "... the identification and clarification of problems, the formulation of tentative solutions, and the practical (or theoretical) testing of these and the elimination of those that are not successful in resolving the original problem."

¹³Rosenberg, *op.cit.*, p.17.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p.22.

original author's work.¹⁵ In other words, Rosenberg's perception of a tautological argument in Morgenthau's work is perhaps the result of similar tendencies in his own work.

Rosenberg's interpretation of Morgenthau's theory is clearly pieced together from a patchwork reading of *Politics Among Nations*. For example, he contends that Morgenthau's claim that, "a nation is not normally engaged in international politics when it concludes an extradition treaty with another nation, when it exchanges goods and services with other nations" is indicative of a tautological argument in that it implies that states are only "doing politics" when military and security matters are involved.¹⁶ This single claim, plucked from a long and explicit delineation of power politics in the international sphere, does appear to substantiate, at least minimally, Rosenberg's argument. In the same sub-chapter, however, Morgenthau states that it is necessary to distinguish between "economic policies that are undertaken for their own sake", and those that are undertaken as a means to the end of controlling the policies of another nation" so that the "probable effect of these policies upon the power of the nation" can be ascertained.¹⁷

It would appear that Rosenberg has employed Morgenthau's recognition of the existence of different types of international political action out of context as the basis for his own unfalsifiable argument. Clearly, if Rosenberg's contention that 'doing politics' is the equivalent of a singular concern with defence issues derives from Morgenthau's claim that trade and extradition treaties can be simply ends in themselves, then there are obviously no means by which Rosenberg's claim can be disputed. In other words, although Morgenthau makes clear that the defining issue regarding political action at any level is

¹⁵Immanuel Kant, "On the Common Saying: 'This may be true in theory, but it does not apply in practice', in *Kant's Political Writings* Hans Reiss, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p.371.

¹⁶Rosenberg, *op.cit.*, p.19.

¹⁷Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973, pp.32-33.

power and control, and not definitive policy-relevant categories, Rosenberg overlooks the assertion, and instead employs a partial quote to confirm his *a priori* assumptions.

Interestingly, in acknowledging the use of *Politics Among Nations* as the quintessential source for interpreting Morgenthau's work, Nobel suggests that many theorists have overlooked Morgenthau's concern with morality in international politics. He contends that because Morgenthau viewed 20th century international politics as controlled by passion rather than reason, he attempted to construct a theory which allowed reason only to moderate the influence of passion or irrationality in political action. For Nobel, such an attempt is equivalent to a "plea for the restoration" of moral requirements in politics.¹⁸ He employs Morgenthau's recognition of the moral consensus which influenced 19th century European balance of power politics as being suggestive of a preference for the existence of a contemporary morality as well. However, since there is no common cultural basis for a moral consensus in relations between nations in the current context, the 'new' morality would, of necessity, be a reflection of reason's influence resulting in similar notions of moderation and prudence by individual states. Although Nobel's interpretation begs the question of who, or what, is to determine the parameters of reason, and completely avoids any consideration of human nature or criticisms of rationalist philosophy, it does appear to demonstrate that Morgenthau presented some concern with the absence of morality in contemporary political action, as well as a potential source for its creation and application.

An earlier interpretation of Morgenthau's work by Michael Joseph Smith similarly acknowledges Morgenthau's consideration of morality. Like Gellman, Smith sees Morgenthau as favouring the state as the co-coordinator of the national interest, and

¹⁸Jaap W. Nobel, "Morgenthau's Struggle with Power: The Theory of Power Politics and the Cold War" in *Review of International Studies* 21, (1995), p.65.

therefore the pre-eminent moral agent in relations between nations.¹⁹ As such, Smith contends, Morgenthau's theory appears to be representative of an "Hegelian conception of the state as the ultimate source of morality."²⁰ He suggests, in accordance with Wolfers, that because the national interest is ultimately determined by the beliefs, values, and ethical notions of individuals who are state representatives it simply cannot be the result of a rational or objective process.²¹ In accordance with this line of reasoning, Morgenthau's insistence on the rational core of national interest suggests that this could only be possible if individual rationality resulted from shared beliefs and values. As a result, Smith implies that state actors create the moral component of the national interest, through irrational, or emotional, perspectives rather than rational processes. Given this reality, Smith concludes his interpretation with the acknowledgment that while the state may be the pre-eminent political actor by way of its irrational determination of the national interest, this does not give rise to political actions which are necessarily moral in nature.²²

Interestingly, Morgenthau's apparent recognition of the influence of passion in political action became sufficient grounds for scholarly excommunication from the school of political realism. Griffiths, in fact, contends that Morgenthau's normative aspirations contradict those of Bull and Berki, and, as such he is more a 'nostalgic idealist' than a political realist. The thrust of the argument, which is based on Berki's insights, is that Morgenthau's conception of an identifiable human nature at work in an autonomous

¹⁹Michael Joseph Smith, "Hans Morgenthau and the American National Interest in the Early Cold War Years" in *Social Research* 48:4, (1981), pp.782-3.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p.778. Although Morgenthau declared in a personal interview with Smith that "Hegel was the farthest thing from my mind", Smith continues to trace Morgenthau's treatment of the concept of the national interest to Hegel's conception of the state as the pre-eminent moral actor in the political context.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp.783-4.

²²*Ibid.*, p.784.

political sphere fails to appreciate the "dialectical heterogeneity of international politics" which is apparently inherent in Bull's work.²³

Putting aside the question of whether or not Griffiths has interpreted Bull correctly, Griffiths appears to assume that because Morgenthau saw the political actions of 19th century European states with each other as being essentially based on similar beliefs and common cultural influences, they were consequently ethical in nature. Given that Morgenthau 'wished' for the current heterogeneity of international political action to return to, or be replaced by, such common beliefs and similar cultural influences, Griffiths contends that he was idealistic. If one has examined Nobel's earlier interpretation, it appears that Griffiths has, perhaps unintentionally, overlooked the more subtle aspects of Morgenthau's thought regarding the unique characteristics of international politics which centre around the role of reason, rather than 'wishful thinking' in determining the presence or effects of morality in politics.

For Griffiths, in fact, Morgenthau's description of an identifiable and influential human nature actually inhibits the occasion for moral or ethical practices in political action. Apparently, Morgenthau's conception of "fallen man ... [and his] ... insatiable urge to dominate" denies a place for freedom of choice, and therefore, any sense of 'right conduct'.²⁴ Apparently, according to Griffiths, while Morgenthau's nostalgia for the international relations of the 19th century is obvious, his conception of human nature actually prevented similar political actions to occur in the current context. According to Griffiths, the existence of such an influential human nature limits Morgenthau's ability to acknowledge or expose the role of freedom in political action. In consequence,

²³Martin Griffiths, *Realism, Idealism & International Politics A Reinterpretation* London: Routledge, 1992, pp.59-60.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p.38.

Morgenthau also fails to reveal, or value, the dynamic nature of international relations in the current context.

Although, Griffiths does not develop the consequences of these apparent failures from an ethical perspective, he does suggest that a behaviourally limiting human nature limits, to some extent, the possibility of contextual variety in human activities. From this perspective, it appears that Morgenthau is suggesting that, given man's basic nature, both past and current relations between nations are, or should be, based on the acceptance of an international political ethic. However, if human behaviour is pre-determined by the existence of an influential basic nature, then ethics, or 'right conduct' in action, must be similarly fixed and foreordained. As such, according to Griffiths, if an international political ethic existed in the past, Morgenthau asserts that a similar ethic exists in the current context. While Griffiths's argument that seemingly fated behaviour forswears the possibility of a dynamic political world, and therefore reflexive notions of acceptable behaviour, given Smith's and Nobel's interpretations, Morgenthau's work may not serve as an adequate source of evidence for this assumption.

Despite Griffiths's self-proclaimed realist tendencies, his concern with pre-determination and fixity is shared by some postmodern scholars. George contends that Morgenthau's work displays a notable Weberian influence. As such, it re-affirms the value of employing a scientific method in understanding international relations, which ultimately provides the political practitioner with an account of the 'real world' of power politics.²⁵ From a methodological perspective, George credits Morgenthau with being both a

²⁵Jim George, *Discourses of Global Politics* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1994, pp.91-92.

"classical hermeneuticist and hard-nosed positivist".²⁶ This implies, of course, that Morgenthau was, in fact, the consummate methodological synthesizer thereby denying the possibility of recognizing or interpreting the dissonant information which apparently stems from different methodologies. Given that any theory or method of inquiry which promotes the exclusion of 'dissonant information' must also advocate, either implicitly or explicitly, a particular notion of 'right conduct, Morgenthau must also have ruled out the acceptability of dissonant political actions.

George's concern lies in the 'fact' that such a theory "is simply a means to a pre-given end" which, for the realist, is to provide a photograph of reality in theory.²⁷ Ostensibly then, this photograph would also present the political practitioner with an appropriate representation of political ethics. For George, Western solutions to Third World problems are notable reflections of Morgenthau's, as well as the realist's, brand of international political ethics. These solutions apparently involve the application of Western political development, and economic and industrial modernization models to the Third World, thereby demonstrating little concern for either cultural diversity, or human suffering.²⁸ In consequence, George considers this practice to be unethical. More importantly, he suggests that realist promoters of the scientific method, such as Morgenthau, are to blame for these circumstances. Based on this perspective, George denounces realism as an ethical sham, which demands exposure.²⁹

Whether or not George's perspective regarding the implications of realist's, as well as Morgenthau's, thought is valid, his interpretation of Morgenthau as the penultimate

²⁶*Ibid.*, p.92.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p.94.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp.95-98.

²⁹Jim George, "Realist Ethics', International Relations and Post-Modernism: Thinking Beyond the Egoism-Anarchy Thematic" in *Millenium Journal of International Studies* (24:2) p.195.

scientific synthesizer appears also to be based on an apparently scattered reading of *Politics Among Nations*, and earlier interpretations. These interpretations are, for the most part, either those of social scientists such as Keohane and Waltz, or of critical theorists such as Hoffman and Vasquez. Given their already established theoretical preferences, their works appear to be clearly polemical by either applauding or castigating Morgenthau's effort to analyze and categorize international relations at a theoretical level. George's reliance upon these theorists, as well as his somewhat limited reading of Morgenthau, results in a seemingly pre-determined interpretation, and an inherent closure to the possibility of recognizing the place of political ethics in Morgenthau's work.

While it is clear that a number of theorists have addressed, to some degree, Morgenthau's consideration of morality and political ethics, the work of William Bluhm offers the earliest comprehensive treatment of these aspects of his work. Given that Bluhm's understanding of Morgenthau is not generally cited within other interpretations of Morgenthau in the discipline of international relations, it appears as though his understanding may be relatively unique. Morgenthau, in Bluhm's reading, adopts an "Augustinian approach" to international politics in his depiction of political realism.³⁰ According to Bluhm, Morgenthau's criticism of rationalist philosophy, because it accords to reason a place of exclusive pre-eminence in political activity, is reminiscent of St. Augustine's criticism of the classic rationalism of Plato and Aristotle. Bluhm also contends that Morgenthau's promotion of the national interest and the balance of power is also similar to St. Augustine's claim that "temporal societies that order can proceed from *any* kind of common interest; it need not be community based on the highest

³⁰William Bluhm, *Theories of the Political System* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965, p.177. It should be noted that Bluhm was a student of Morgenthau's in both a theoretical and literal sense.

values possible".³¹ In other words, both the national interest and the balance of power are notable examples of particular common interests. Simply put, according to Bluhm, both Morgenthau and St Augustine appear to agree that order and peace can be achieved by means other than reason or the pacifistic ideals espoused in Christian thought. Despite this rather notable association with the moral and ethical thoughts of St. Augustine, in his concluding remarks, Bluhm acknowledges that "it does not seem necessary that one be committed to Judaeo-Christian theology to accept the principles of realist political theory. Many of the basic assumptions of the realists, ... are shared by skeptics and materialists, such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and Friedrich Nietzsche."³² This additional, and somewhat surprising association also appears, perhaps understandably, to have been overlooked in subsequent interpretations of Morgenthau's work by international relations theorists.

In a much later interpretation, Rosenthal introduces the notion of responsibility into Morgenthau's consideration of political ethics. While Rosenthal attributes this particular development in realist theory to the advent of the nuclear age, he also associates it with the work of Max Weber. According to Rosenthal, Weber saw "two standards of morality".³³ Religious ideals constituted one standard, and politics constituted the other. Although it appears, from this interpretation of Weber, that Morgenthau held with the dichotomous nature of political action and moral behaviour, it could also be suggested that Weber, as well as Morgenthau, were actually addressing the distinction between moral precepts and common interests and values. Nonetheless, according to Rosenthal, Weber considered the morality of the political standard to be founded on responsibility, rather than ideals, and

³¹*Ibid.*, p.183.

³²*Ibid.*, pp.186-187.

³³Joel H. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991, pp.42-43.

that any analysis of political action demanded the maintenance of such a distinction. Similarly, Rosenthal contends that, for Morgenthau, political action, and most notably foreign policy decisions, based on responsibility encouraged a process of continual criticism and restrictions of power, as well as a search for consensus regarding basic values in political action.³⁴

While Rosenthal is supportive of Morgenthau's attempt to delineate the nature of a political ethic, Hoffman, sees Morgenthau's efforts, like Weber's, as being territorially bound. For Hoffman, this 'limitation' is essentially unethical in that it perpetuates the idea of the "permanence and inevitability of violent conflict in an anarchical milieu deprived of common central power and almost devoid of common values."³⁵ The apparently consequent development of a 'new' body of critical literature attempts to overcome this rather notable shortcoming of realism by offering a political ethic which emphasizes cultural diversity, democratic political behaviour, and moral awareness.³⁶ Yet, upon closer examination, this offering, however well-intentioned, appears to reflect a regression in the development of an internationally recognized moral consensus. For example, Hoffman's contention that "ethics cannot hope to establish a nirvana of a world government in the short run; it can aim only at moralizing state behaviour" re-introduces the notion of a definitive universal moral code. By either realist or critical standards, this would represent a regressive move in international relations. When this contention and Morgenthau's caution that when

³⁴*Ibid.*, p.51.

³⁵Stanley Hoffman, "The Political Ethics of International Relations" in *Ethics and International Affairs* Joel H. Rosenthal ed., Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1995, p.25.

³⁶*Ibid.*, pp.30-35.

"moral rules operate within the consciences of individual men ... Where responsibility for government is widely distributed among a great number of individuals with different conceptions as to what is morally required in international affairs, or with no such conception at all, international morality as an effective system of restraints upon international policy becomes impossible".³⁷

are placed in juxtaposition, Hoffman's perspective appears to suggest that 'moralizing' state behaviour may, in fact, lead to the eradication of a universal morality.

The most recent interpretation of Morgenthau's consideration of ethics develops the relationship between Morgenthau and the Augustinian approach which was first advanced by Bluhm in the early 1960s. Murray denounces those interpretations of Morgenthau which attempt to characterize his work as morally bankrupt by recognizing that he addressed the great moral issues in a serious, if sometimes ambiguous, manner. Although he acknowledges and supports Morgenthau's association of politics and ethics, as do Bluhm and Rosenthal, Murray contends that this relationship is rooted in the "conventional debates about morality, [which] are rooted in traditional Judeo-Christian approaches to political ethics"³⁸ Murray's essential point is that because Morgenthau does not fall into the Machiavellian-Hobbesian ethical categories, and because he recognizes the importance of the transcendent in human actions, he is, therefore, promoting the Decalogue as the foundational element of his ethical considerations.³⁹ Apparently, the Burkean and Weberian elements recognized by Bluhm, Rosenthal and Hoffman, only serve to more clearly articulate the Augustinian approach.

The obvious difficulty with Murray's approach is that it implies a singular and almost evolutionary relationship between the Judeo-Christian moral precepts that are

³⁷Morgenthau, *op.cit.*, pp.247-248.

³⁸A.H.J. Murray, "The Moral Politics of Hans Morgenthau" in *The Review of Politics* (58:1) 1996, p.83.

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp.84-87.

defined in the Decalogue, all subsequent considerations of ethical behaviour, and Morgenthau's understanding of international political ethics. While the Decalogue does represent the basis for the eventual development of Judeo-Christian moral codes, it should be noted that, according to Bluhm, St. Augustine promoted the notion that the 'common interest' which coalesced temporal societies need not be of the 'highest values'. The highest values in the Augustinian approach would obviously have been Judeo-Christian moral precepts, whereas simple common interest could refer to not only common 'desires', but common understandings of right conduct, or ethics, as well.

Given that there are apparent similarities in the moral teachings of the great religions, there are also differences which cannot be dismissed. For example, North American aboriginal spiritual tradition embraces the concept of egalitarian, horizontally structured societies, whereas the Hindu and Judeo-Christian religious traditions adhere to a concept of social hierarchy. Apparently, these fundamental differences affect the moral and ethical perspectives of those involved. Murray's contention that Morgenthau's delineation of the role of morals or ethics in political action is reflective of the influence of biblical moral codes, limits the possibility of alternate, and perhaps more momentous, influences. Although Murray's interpretation recognizes Morgenthau's ethical concerns, it constructs a foundation for them which is dubious at best.

The most rewarding reading of Morgenthau's ethical considerations is contained in Jervis's insightful, albeit brief, foray into this aspect of Morgenthau's work. Jervis contends that in emphasizing Morgenthau's conceptualization of power and the national interest, most theorists have omitted a range of factors that he considered vital to any understanding of international politics. He further asserts that for the most part theorists contrast their views on the ethics of international relations with "what they take to be Morgenthau's

without understanding the latter".⁴⁰ For Jervis, Morgenthau's emphasis on the *animus dominandi* does not imply a necessary dismissal of moral concerns, but rather an insistence that to be of some substance in political action, morality required a contextual setting which recognized the existence of power. These insights offer an opening to an alternative interpretation of Morgenthau's consideration of ethics which is not limited to the moral codes of Judeo-Christian theology, or the perfectionist ethics of rationalist philosophy. Although Jervis limits Morgenthau's idea of an ethic of responsibility to the statesman's responsibility to the state, it can be argued that if Morgenthau saw relations between nations as relations between individuals writ large, then his notion of the statesman's responsibility would include a responsibility to the nation, that is the people governed by the state, and not simply a responsibility to a political structure which had been reified.

Conclusion

Although Michael Smith and Nobel both acknowledge that Morgenthau addresses issues of morality and political ethics in some manner, and both contend that Morgenthau assigns the role of rational or irrational creator and adjudicator of these concerns to the state, neither appears to address Morgenthau's consideration of the implications of this state of affairs. For example, Nobel's promotion of the morality of rational foreign policy clearly assumes that Morgenthau gave reason a somewhat dominant role in foreign policy decision making. Similarly, Smith's contention that irrational, and therefore unknowable, forces determine the nature of the national interest, as well as the role, or existence, of morality in foreign policy considerations appears to avoid any possibility that Morgenthau may have also seen reason's fundamental influence in these areas. The failure of these

⁴⁰Robert Jervis, "Hans Morgenthau, Realism, and the Scientific Study of International Politics" in *Social Research* (61:4), 1994, p. 867.

theorists, among others, to address certain aspects of Morgenthau's work in a comprehensive manner appears to promote the placement of international political ethics in an ethereal nether-world. Importantly, however, theorists such as Bluhm, Murray, and Jervis have attempted to examine Morgenthau's consideration of ethics in international relations.

Regardless of the apparent diversity of these views on Morgenthau's viewpoints, they share two common features. The choice of *Politics Among Nations* as the preferred primary source is the feature most common to all interpretations. While interpreting a particular text adequately and sincerely is inherently problematic, attempting a similar interpretation of a body of work is obviously a more arduous task. Moreover, the whole endeavour, however, becomes an exercise in futility when only a small part of the extant work is examined. In choosing a particular text from among a large pool of possible primary sources, theorists invariably, and inevitably, make selective choices regarding the best evidence to support pre-conceived notions about the author's insights rather than reveal the substance of the author's thoughts. Given their preferred use of a common source, it follows that the diverse nature of the subsequent interpretations is, in large measure, the result of the *a priori* conceptions of the interpreter rather than the perspective of the author.

In consequence of this common preference of primary source material, most interpretations appear to share a common inability to allow for any possible distinction between ethics and morals in political action in Morgenthau's work. For some, previously held understandings of either Morgenthau or traditional political theory do not include any consideration of political ethics. For others, Morgenthau's critique of moralizing foreign policy and promotion of the national interest reflects either a lack of moral concern, or conversely, it reflects a belief in the state as the necessary and pre-eminent moral actor. Yet, there are still others who, in making only occasional references to *Scientific Man vs.*

Power Politics, interpret Morgenthau's delineation of the reality of perfectionist ethics as being synonymous with a whole-hearted acceptance, or rejection, of Christian-Augustinian morals. From the most terse treatment of Morgenthau's ethics to the most substantial, morals and ethics are used interchangeably in both a linguistic and conceptual sense. This practice is clearly the result of the use of limited primary sources, and it culminates in a disparate group of interpretations that label Morgenthau's complex and subtle understanding of political ethics as being either incoherent or ambiguous.

The number and diversity of these readings seems to suggest that unless Morgenthau did actually lapse into incoherent rantings, he simply did not undertake a clear, or frequent, delineation of the underpinnings of his thoughts. Subsequent, and often more recent, theorists appear to have made few attempts to investigate this possibility, and as a result, the assertion that Morgenthau is ambiguous or incoherent is allowed to stand, essentially unchallenged. Classical and modern political theorists, including Kant, Burke and Carr, have acknowledged that all authors risk and suffer the same misinterpretations of their work. Given that Morgenthau communicated in English about the nature of the international system in the nuclear era, and the associated need for prudent non-provocative political action, the existence of diverse and persistent misinterpretations of Morgenthau, especially by international relations theorists, seems particularly egregious. While a number of theorists, with either malice or mere ignorance, will insist upon the inherent value of diversity in understanding international relations theory and ethics, it should be noted that if such diversity is to be of some value to both the discipline and practice of international relations, it should be a reflection of a comprehensive analysis of most of Morgenthau's political considerations.

Chapter 2
Morgenthau
International Politics in the 20th Century

Almost without exception theorists have cited Morgenthau's apparent complexity and lack of clarity as roadblocks to reconciling his seemingly diverse positions on foreign policy issues. Nobel has cited five reasons for the profusion of conflicting interpretations of Morgenthau's work including an unfamiliarity with Morgenthau's method on the part of the reader, his "loose use of very large concepts", apparent "inconsistencies" in his work, the evolutionary or developmental nature of his work, and an overall preference for *Politics Among Nations* as the quintessential source for understanding Morgenthau.⁴¹ Overall, Nobel's assertions appear accurate and account for most interpretations of Morgenthau's work.

Many of the misunderstandings and the inconsistencies can be overcome with the recognition that throughout his work Morgenthau favoured the use of critical rationalism in understanding international relations. Further, it should be noted, that such an approach does not necessarily lend itself to the coherent development of thought when employed by a single individual in either one or many texts. In short, since critical rationalism is neither completely deconstructive nor entirely normative in nature or intent, its employment within the body of one individual's work may create apparent contradiction and inconsistency. According to Karl Popper, critical rationalism in the area of either speculative philosophy or political theory is simply a method by which truth is sought through a critical search for

⁴¹Nobel, *op.cit.*, pp.261-62.

error.⁴² When such a methodology is employed and only a small segment of the work is examined, linear, or logical, development is not necessarily apparent. Given that the method involves the presentation of a "problem-situation and its underlying assumptions, and ... the various possible ways of resolving it", both contradiction and ambiguity seem to be apparent.⁴³ Ultimately, the critical search for error in Morgenthau's work results in seemingly continuous contradiction and ambiguity. However, it should be noted that the appearance of these elements does not necessarily suggest the weakness of the theory. As Popper argued, the use of critical rationalism only assumes the continuing possibility, rather than the necessity, of both.

Morgenthau's clearly stated objective to "bring order and meaning to a mass of phenomena which without it would remain disconnected and unintelligible" is consistent with the method of critical rationalism, and it has given rise to a series of criticisms of his work.⁴⁴ Rosenberg's claim that Morgenthau's work is axiomatic and tautological is foremost among them.⁴⁵ For Rosenberg, Morgenthau's ideal was the possibility of ensuring accurate political prediction. As such, according to Rosenberg, Morgenthau's theory of relations between states merely reflects Morgenthau's views that because all of these relations are power oriented there are a limited number of ways in which they may be conducted. Hence, not only are power-oriented international relations axiomatic, but the related theory must be, therefore, tautological as well. However, if Morgenthau's objective was to 'bring order' to a mass of detail, as he claimed, then his theory of international

⁴²Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* New York: Routledge (5th ed.), 1989, p.26.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p.200.

⁴⁴Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* New York: Knopf, 1973 (5th ed.), p.x.

⁴⁵Rosenberg, *op.cit.*, p.15. It should be remembered, however, that if a theory is to be axiomatic, it should ultimately serve to direct the practitioner toward some objective, some ideal, or at least much better condition.

relations appears to be only methodologically axiomatic, rather than tautological. In short, although Morgenthau believes that international relations are essentially power-oriented, his theory seeks only to demonstrate the means by which individual nations can become preeminent, or successful, in those relations. The theory is not tautological because it does concede that nations do not always adhere to the 'preeminent' strategy. Ultimately, it serves as a guide for 'how' to understand relations between nations, rather than 'what' to think about international relations. In other words, Morgenthau's normative goal is to deconstruct the political rhetoric of foreign policy, and his methodology provides an axiom for how this might be accomplished. The development of such an axiom is not necessarily synonymous with positing the existence of an ultimately ideal state of international relations.

Despite Morgenthau's clearly stated intention, the critical method by which he fulfills it appears to have been overlooked or misinterpreted by Rosenberg and others. As such, it is difficult to imagine how critical methodology can amount to an essentially tautological exercise. It is, perhaps, possible that Rosenberg assumes that any argument which is not dialectical in nature must, of necessity, be tautological. Given that dialectical reasoning demands the existence of a thesis, and the concomitant development of an antithesis, the inevitable contradictions which exist between thesis and antithesis are ultimately reconciled by the production of a synthesis which incorporates elements of both.⁴⁶ Thus, the problem at hand is solved. According to Popper, such a method is useful in many respects, but strict adherence to it encourages the belief that all contradiction can be eradicated, and as a result all problems, social as well as scientific, can be resolved.⁴⁷ In direct opposition to the dialectical method, however, critical rationalism,

⁴⁶Popper, *op.cit.*, p.313.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, pp.314-17.

accepts the existence of contradiction and ambiguity, thereby making no attempt to offer lasting solutions to social, scientific, or political problems.⁴⁸ In fact, it is the continued and obvious existence of some degree of contradiction and ambiguity which ultimately facilitates change.

Given that Morgenthau's goal was to bring order to the understanding of relations between nations, it does appear ironic that he accepted persistent contradiction and ambiguity. However, it is important to note that while he readily accepted the existence of uncertainty and complexity, and acknowledged that no theory of international relations could dismiss these obviously essential elements present in all political activity, he also attempted to discern similarities in international behaviour.⁴⁹ In so doing it appears that he acknowledged the simultaneous existence of both contradiction and similarity in political behaviour. It is important to note, however, that the acceptance of both inherent contradiction and persistent similarity in political action does not necessarily constitute tautological reasoning. Admittedly, given that tautological reasoning demands that the theoretician cannot possibly falsify his theory despite the existence of several contradictions, because the theory includes the existence of contradictions as an element of potential similarity, it would appear that, in fact, Morgenthau's theory is tautological. However, what appears as inherent contradiction in Morgenthau's theory could be just as accurately described as a process of balancing between the various aspects of human nature. Interestingly, the balancing of aspects of human nature also encourages the persistent similarities of political action that Morgenthau favours. If Morgenthau

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p.26. It should be noted that while Morgenthau recognizes the existence of contradiction while employing this method, Karl Popper sees this method as recognizing the impossibility of ultimate solutions, rather than the existence of undeniable contradiction and ambiguity.

⁴⁹Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations, op.cit.*, p.21.

recognized the difficulty in accepting what appears to be contradiction in his theoretical delineation, he appears simply to have accepted Montaigne's claim that "no event and no shape is entirely like another, so also is there none entirely different from another", and assumed that this created a dynamism in human affairs which could not be eradicated.⁵⁰ In consequence of that acceptance Morgenthau consistently struggled to expose both historical similarities and contextual differences in theory as well as in practice.

Interestingly, Griffiths, like Rosenberg, also asserts that Morgenthau has an ideal in mind when considering the practice of international relations. Rosenberg asserts that Morgenthau's ideal is predictability, and Griffiths contends that his ideal is an actual political state similar to that of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries.⁵¹ While their contentions are superficially distinct, they are, in fact, somewhat the same. Bearing in mind Morgenthau's uncharacteristically clear assertion in the preface to the 2nd edition of *Politics Among Nations*, that he intends only to launch a "frontal attack" against false conceptions of foreign policy, it is difficult to assert that Morgenthau was equally intent to demonstrate his notion of ideal political action in the form of foreign policy.⁵² Considering that the nature of ideals can be assumed only when a 'frontal attack' on reality is undertaken within a particular piece of work, it is therefore rather troublesome to come up with the an exact notion of Morgenthau's conception of the ideal political situation. However, both predictability and replication of past political states reflect a similar point of view. Simply put, replication facilitates prediction.

Yet, Griffiths contention that Morgenthau "nostalgically rues the passing" of 18th and 19th century aristocratic diplomacy, suggests that the practice of a similar style of

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p.18.

⁵¹Griffiths, *op.cit.*, p.35.

⁵²Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, p.xiii.

international politics in the 20th century is the ideal for Morgenthau.⁵³ What Griffiths overlooks, however, is that while Morgenthau might have been attracted to the existence of the 'aristocratic political ethics' of the time, he recognized that such an international political ethic is not feasible, or possible, in the late 20th century.⁵⁴ His use of critical rationalism simply demonstrated that if modern international relations were to be understood, analysts had to recognize that the universal moral claims of modern foreign policy became suspect when the conditions conducive to the existence of international ethics no longer existed.⁵⁵

Yet, if Morgenthau had no 'ideal' state of international politics in mind when he developed his theory of international relations, and if in fact, he saw political realism as being synonymous with the repudiation of idealism, then it seems possible that his work did indeed reflect the moral delinquency that George has suggested.⁵⁶ Interestingly, Morgenthau appears to have anticipated the charge when he acknowledged that theorists who "seek the truth hidden beneath these veils of ideology ... [are] suspect of being indifferent to all truth and morality."⁵⁷ While Morgenthau does not promote the existence or possibility of an ideal political state, or the existence of a universal code of political ethics in the current context, this does not imply that he therefore must have necessarily favoured an amoral *status quo* in perpetuity. An alternative explanation for Morgenthau's refusal to stipulate an ideal universal political ethic is that he believed a critical examination of international politics revealed its absence, its impossibility, and ultimately its

⁵³Griffiths, *op.cit.*, p.72.

⁵⁴Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, pp.250-52.

⁵⁵It should be noted that, for Morgenthau, the international 'aristocratic political ethics' which existed in 18th and 19th century Europe stemmed from common moral backgrounds. In the current context, according to Morgenthau, there is no 'real' common moral background for the majority of states.

⁵⁶Jim George, "Realist 'Ethics', International Relations and Post-Modernism: Thinking Beyond the Egoism-Anarchy Thematic" *op.cit.*, pp.195-56.

⁵⁷Hans Morgenthau, "The Commitments of a Theory of International Politics" in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, p.60.

undesirability in the current context. In effect, Morgenthau recognized that 18th and 19th century Europe had a 'universally' ideal and accepted notion of international political behaviour only because of the existence of common cultural and religious views of conduct. It should be noted that Morgenthau also realized that while current relations between states exist on a global or universal basis, the same cannot be said regarding the existence of common cultural and religious backgrounds. Hence, no ideal ethic of political action is universally accepted.

Any understanding of Morgenthau's views regarding the role of morals and ethics in international relations requires some consideration of the broad range of his work. His later works appear to possess a conceptual clarity that is not as evident in his early works. As a result, several theorists have suggested that his work has a developmental or evolutionary style which most of his detractors miss. Admittedly, a cursory reading of the broad range of Morgenthau's work does appear to confirm this notion. However, a more comprehensive reading of the broad range of Morgenthau's work suggests that rather than being evolutionary, all of his works are based on the enduring and underlying philosophical tenets that are within his earliest writings. It is worthy of some note that Morgenthau actually acknowledged as much by claiming that the realist school of international political theory believed only that the world, imperfect as it was, was the result of "forces inherent in human nature"; the "ever temporary balancing of interests", as well as the ensuing system of "checks and balances" which ultimately served as the principles for understanding international politics.⁵⁸ Interestingly, throughout his work, Morgenthau demonstrated these underlying philosophical tenets, and appreciated contextuality in his analysis of foreign policy issues and actions.

⁵⁸Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, p.3-4. See also *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946, pp.2-6.

Consequently, in order to appreciate the relationship between the various concepts employed in Morgenthau's guide to the critical analysis of foreign policy and how they conjoin to provide the analyst with the means to detect particular conceptions of foreign policy, it is necessary to examine Morgenthau's underlying philosophical positions. The basis of all Morgenthau's assumptions can be found in his conception of human nature, which he develops in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*. However, and unfortunately, because his primary objective here appears to be to demonstrate the poverty of rationalist philosophy in addressing the experiences of the modern world and 'quieting' human confusion, there is no obvious attempt to develop systematically his own philosophical assumptions. As such, for those theorists who do include this text in their analyses of Morgenthau, he appears to be a vehement, simple, and therefore unnecessarily complicated, critic of liberalism. As a result, not all theorists acknowledge the importance of human nature in his work, and those that do so, interpret its relationship to political practice in diverse and often contradictory ways.

Given Morgenthau's failure to undertake such a development, theorists such as George and Griffiths have suggested that the idea of an influential human nature is introduced merely to supply a convenient and irrefutable foundation for his views on the theory and practice of international relations. In other words, they contend that positing the existence of such an ultimately metaphysical condition as a specific human nature introduces the idea of 'necessity' in political action, as well as the concomitant circumscription of 'freedom'. While there can be no definitive response to the charge, it is possible to discern Morgenthau's understanding of the influential nature of human nature in international politics. More importantly, the relationship can and does provide the model by which realistic foreign policy and 'false conceptions of foreign policy' can be detected and exposed.

Human Nature

For many, human nature is understood or interpreted as the definitive and apparently consistent description of human behaviour over time. Any concept which demands or implies such consistency and accuracy limits, or denies, the possibility of improvement and change in the human condition. From this perspective, human nature is often seriously criticized as being an inherently flawed concept. However, it is important to note that not all theorists and philosophers understand human nature as being supportive of circumscription in human action. For some, the basic nature of man is the fundamental basis of philosophy, rather than the restrictive feature of all human activity. Without doubt, Morgenthau's understanding of human nature falls within this category.

In the Augustinian perception of human nature, however, man's rational actions are continually compromised, and often overwhelmed by base desires such as lust and power. Consequently, human activity is persistently limited by the inability of reason to overcome passion.⁵⁹ From this perspective man is fundamentally flawed, although not necessarily evil, and in need of assistance from an external force to improve his behaviour. The Hobbesian perception of human nature similarly sees man as being predominantly governed by passions, or those appetites which reflect the inner involuntary biological motions.⁶⁰ Thus passionate man is man in a state of nature. Unrestricted by a developed and cultivated sense of reason, man's actions in this state are directed toward self-preservation and self-interest. From the Hobbesian perspective then, human nature is also of a dual character; composed of passion and reason, with the former dominating. As a result man's actions are restricted in that there is little room for the improvement of his

⁵⁹Ernest L. Fortin, "St. Augustine" in *History of Political Philosophy* Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (eds.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, p.183.

⁶⁰Thomas Hobbes, "Leviathan" in *Classics of Western Philosophy* Steven M. Cahn (ed.), Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1977, p.457.

circumstances without the intervention of an external moral source, which, according to Hobbes, can be found in the state rather than God.⁶¹ As such both St. Augustine and Hobbes see human nature as consisting of only two elements which demands an external moral source to ensure the improvement of human behaviour.

In effect, both Augustinian and Hobbesian conceptions of human nature suggest that man's actions are limited in that they are dominated, and perhaps governed, by passion alone. As a result, they are therefore doomed to perpetual repetition without the external moral influence of either God, for St. Augustine, or the state for Hobbes. However, in apparent contrast to these fixed conceptions of human nature, Aristotle's consideration of the nature of man appears remarkably fluid. In other words, while man is both body and soul, the soul is comprised of reason and passion, or non-reason. The passionate aspect of the soul encompasses, apparently, both emotion and desire, as well as judgment. However, whereas man's rational capabilities may be developed through "explicit instruction", his potential emotional capacities, as well as his potential for judgment are developed through habit, or action.⁶² Thus it is through the individual's own repetitious actions and social customs that emotion and judgment are developed. Simply put, Aristotle appears to concede that improvement in man's actions and conditions does not require the intervention and application of a transcendental or externally based moral code. Obviously, the most striking difference between Aristotle's conception of the nature of man, and those of Augustine and Hobbes is that in Aristotle's view man is not in need of an external source to provide a code for judging action. In short, while man may be flawed, he possesses the potential for his own redemption.

⁶¹Laurence Berns, "Thomas Hobbes", *History of Political Philosophy*, *op.cit.* p.399.

⁶²Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1966, p.64.

In some regards, Morgenthau's conception of human nature demonstrates a similar fluidity.⁶³ Like Aristotle, Morgenthau recognizes man's multi-dimensional nature. For Morgenthau, however, the dimensions consist of biological, rational and spiritual elements.⁶⁴ Based on this basic nature, Morgenthau delineates the relationship between it and political activity which is apparently reflective of both external influences and freedom. It is, as well, on the basis of this relationship that Morgenthau acknowledges and accounts for life's being in "constant flux" and permanent transition, despite the existence of an influential human nature.⁶⁵

Although Morgenthau lists, clearly and concisely, what he considers to be the constituent elements of man's basic nature, the main emphasis of his work appears to be directed toward the rational element. At first glance, the biological component of human nature appears to receive little more than an 'honourable mention' in Morgenthau's considerations. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes obvious that the biological component is, in fact, the cornerstone of Morgenthau's conception of human nature. However, because he addresses it initially, and in an uncharacteristically simple manner, it appears, at first glance, as a state which is seemingly pre-original to man's basic nature rather than another dimension of it.

Morgenthau sums up the biological dimension of man in rather succinct terms. Man, according to Morgenthau, is a "creature which, being conscious of itself, has lost its animal innocence and security".⁶⁶ This view seems to suggest that he equates self-

⁶³It should be noted that while a cursory and limited reading of Aristotle and Morgenthau does provide some evidence for conceptual similarity which warrants further investigation, such a detailed comparison cannot be undertaken within the confines of this thesis.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p.5.

⁶⁵Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *op.cit.*, 1946, p.7.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p.144. Morgenthau makes reference to the relationship between man's physical consciousness, or 'mind', and what he experiences in the natural and social world.

awareness with a physical state of being. Consciousness then, as a physical state, appears to define the human condition. If this is the case, then it can be assumed that consciousness serves, for Morgenthau, as the biological aspect of human nature. Moreover, evolutionary development aside, Morgenthau appears to envision this state as being relatively constant over the course of history. This is not to suggest, however, that Morgenthau demeans its importance in any way. On the contrary, it is the very fact of its permanence that shapes Morgenthau's conception of human nature. In fact, for Morgenthau, man's history is actually "the story of insecurity"; an insecurity "rooted" in man's consciousness.⁶⁷

If self-consciousness is the biological dimension of human nature, then insecurity appears to be the addendum of that nature which ultimately defines the human condition for Morgenthau. In fact, according to Morgenthau, man's awareness of his "partial and ultimately illusory control" over the social world, that is to ensure his own security, is the *mega thaumazein* of man.⁶⁸ The shock of this realization of the seemingly inevitable contradiction between the desire for security and the inability to provide it, feeds on man's intellectual and moral experiences. The realization of this insecure state removes man, according to Morgenthau, from animal innocence, and propels him toward a life lived in the "anticipation of impending doom", and in a perpetual struggle to recapture a sense of security.⁶⁹ Significantly, these experiences are consistent with the other two dimensions of Morgenthau's conception of human nature.⁷⁰ In essence then, the rational and spiritual

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p.1.

⁶⁸Hans Morgenthau, "The Intellectual and Moral Dilemma of Politics" in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, p.7. Morgenthau translates *mega thaumazein* as 'great wonderment'. This great wonderment, or 'shock of incongruity' is according to Aristotle, the beginning of philosophy.

⁶⁹Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *op.cit.*, p.1.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p.8.

dimensions of man's nature reflect and confirm the fundamental contradiction of his physical experience. In short, if the fundamental contradiction of the biological element of human nature involves the inability to achieve security, then it appears obvious that the fundamental contradiction of the rational and spiritual dimensions includes man's inability to ensure his security, rationally or spiritually. From this perspective, the biological or physical dimension of man's nature is the cornerstone of the human condition, and as a result, its addendum, insecurity, serves as the foundational element in all human action. In fact, as Morgenthau discusses the rational and spiritual dimensions of human nature, this particular addendum is frequently manifested by contestation. Simply put, the presence of passion within the rational dimension, and valuation within the spiritual dimension demonstrates the effect of persistent insecurity.

It is at this point of man's existence in the social world that Morgenthau introduces politically active man. It is also the context in which Morgenthau introduces the concept of balance, in relation to the rational and spiritual dimensions of man.⁷¹ In some interpretations of his works, such as Rosenberg's, the idea of balance appears to be confused with a preference for the dialectic reasoning. Apparently, the dialectic in Morgenthau's work concerns the battle between reason, that is rational political activity, and morality or ethics. The remaining aspect of the dialectic involves the synthesis of political rationale and ethics, with the latter subservient to the former. However, the concept of balancing should be distinguished from dialectical reasoning. Where the latter attempts to reconcile contradiction, the former accepts, and in fact, employs contradiction to maintain the balancing process. From this perspective, it is evident that Morgenthau's

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p.218. Although there are many examples which could be cited, one that is particularly obvious and emphatic is Morgenthau's reference to a quote from Goethe which suggests that instead of trying to improve men and their circumstances, "one ought to accept the evils, as it were, as raw materials and then seek to counterbalance them."

understanding of the relationship between rational action and the influence of irrationality, or passion, does not employ dialectical reasoning. In fact, Morgenthau admits that life itself is 'tragic' specifically because of the existence of "unresolvable discord, contradictions, and conflict which are inherent in the nature of things."⁷² Not only does such unresolvable discord present itself in man's awareness of his insecurity; this state cannot be overcome through the eradication of contradiction in the form of universal moral ideals.

While insecurity appears to be coincidental with man's isolated state and consequent loneliness, it is the *animus dominandi*, or the lust for power, as well as the longing for love, which appear to be coincidental with man's existence in the social world. Morgenthau's assertion then that "man is born to seek power" should be considered in this context. However, while Morgenthau considers the search for both love and power as the "ineluctable outgrowth of human nature", it is the search for power which defines the political world.⁷³ Power, manifested in "the desire to maintain the range of one's own person with regard to others", seems to be the basis for Morgenthau's assertion regarding the reality of power politics.⁷⁴ Apparently, because all political action is, in effect, individual action writ large, and power is the manifestation of an individual's search for security, the search for power in the public, or political, realm is inevitable. In other words, power manifests itself in the search to ensure the security of the individual, the state, or the international system.

Given power's relational nature, it is obviously not readily fungible. This appears to be problematic for some theorists, and as a result, Morgenthau's understanding of the role of power in human affairs is often interpreted as being one of the dimensions of human

⁷²*Ibid.*, pp.205-7.

⁷³Hans Morgenthau, "Love and Power" in *The Restoration of American Politics* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, pp.7-8.

⁷⁴Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *op.cit.*, pp.192-6.

nature. Clearly, this is not Morgenthau's understanding. The *animus dominandi*, like insecurity, is an addendum of man's physical state. As such it is a persistent and integral aspect of all of his activities, and could, without restriction, culminate in a "demoniac and frantic striving for ever more power".⁷⁵ Obviously, if Morgenthau saw such a struggle as the *sine qua non* of international politics, no further delineation of his theory of international relations would be required, or even possible. However, his subsequent delineation of a theory of international relations seems to suggest that Morgenthau recognized the existence of limiting influences on the lust for power. It is in this context that Morgenthau addresses the rational and spiritual dimensions of human nature.

For Morgenthau, the rational dimension of man's nature consists of both reason and emotion, or 'irrationality'. For Morgenthau, irrationality is *a priori* to reason, and 'extends its reign' over reason to justify its goals.⁷⁶ Yet, Morgenthau also contends, in a seemingly contradictory fashion, that reason acts as a 'handmaiden' to passion by exercising some control over it.⁷⁷ Unfortunately, Morgenthau never fully explains this apparent contradiction, and, in fact, goes on to assert rather bluntly that reason exercises "permanent control" over irrational tendencies.⁷⁸ This last assertion seems to suggest that reason should be given pride of place in understanding political man. Given his general concerns with rationalist philosophy, such assertions encourage charges of inconsistency and contradiction in his thinking.

However, upon closer consideration Morgenthau is not as inconsistent as might first be apparent. Both reason and irrationality, or passion, act as counterbalances. In essence while reason exercises some control over passions, it is the irrational forces of interest and

⁷⁵Morgenthau, "Love and Power", *op.cit.*, p.13.

⁷⁶Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *op.cit.*, pp.154-5.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, p.156.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p.157.

emotion which propel reason toward its objective.⁷⁹ Thus it is these same forces which direct the actions of man in the social or political world.⁸⁰ This would seem to suggest that Morgenthau concurred with Augustine's and Hobbes's view of man's flawed character.⁸¹ However, for Morgenthau, it is the spiritual dimension which mediates, or balances the influences of either passion or reason.

The spiritual dimension of man is reflected in man's inherent capacity both to judge and value the social world as well as his existence within it.⁸² In his capacity to judge then man becomes a moralist, and as such, he must judge his own actions, as well as those of others. Given that the *animus dominandi* is inherent to the human condition, man is also compelled to sit in judgment of the lust for power. If its existence is inevitable, as Morgenthau has demonstrated, then moral man, lacking the ability to eradicate the *animus dominandi*, must justify it and limit its means. As such, "morality ... is superimposed upon [politics], limiting the choice of ends and means ...".⁸³ It is from this belief in man's inherent capacity to judge that Morgenthau contends that the relationship between political action and moral evaluation is dynamic and perennial.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p.155.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, pp.153-4. It should be noted here that for Aristotle, at least according to MacIntyre, the terms 'political' and 'social' are interchangeable. Morgenthau's discussion of the role of 'irrationality' in political action, suggests that Morgenthau also sees political action as action in the public or social world.

⁸¹Murray, *op.cit.*, pp.83-88. In fact, Murray's interpretation of Morgenthau's ethical considerations places Morgenthau generally within the Judeo-Christian approach to political ethics, and specifically within the Augustinian approach. However, the important point which Murray and others seem to have overlooked is that, unlike Augustine and Hobbes, Morgenthau does not look to an external source to mediate the passionate influences of man.

⁸²Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *op.cit.*, p.168.

⁸³Hans Morgenthau, "The Moral Dilemma of Political Action" in *The Decline of Democratic Politics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, p.325.

Morgenthau's conception of human nature is in many ways a critical response to the basic assumptions of rationalist philosophy. Fostered by the Enlightenment, rationalist philosophy engendered a false sense of security in man; allowing him to believe that the social world which he created could be understood and controlled. Moreover, such control allowed him to transcend death through creative, if not physical, immortality.⁸⁴ In effect, it eradicated the tension between reason and the passionate forces by giving reason pride of place in man's basic nature, and denying the existence of the spiritual aspect of man in its entirety. In so doing, this philosophy encouraged an idealistic perception of man's ability to know and control the social world. It is from this perspective that Morgenthau levels his most stinging criticism of liberalism. According to Morgenthau, this devotion to rational philosophy and idealism have left man bereft of the necessary tools to ensure his security.⁸⁵ With this false sense of having achieved the ultimate end, that is immortality, man entered the nuclear era seemingly unaware of his own basic inner insecurity, and unprepared to develop new means of achieving security in a nuclear world.

Ultimately then, Morgenthau suggests that because the self-conscious state leads to man's awareness of death and a concomitant sense of insecurity, man must struggle, in perpetuity, to ensure his security and to transcend, or at least avoid death. While the destructive capability of nuclear technology makes this task even more problematic, Morgenthau recognized that security could be enhanced through a better understanding of the practice of international politics which considered the mediating influences of both reason and moral judgment. If this understanding was to enhance security, Morgenthau insisted that it be divested of the scientific and ethical idealisms which had cloaked much of

⁸⁴Hans Morgenthau, "Death in the Nuclear Age" in *The Restoration of American Politics* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, p.20.

⁸⁵Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *op.cit.*, pp.5-13.

20th century foreign and security policy, and that it should instead be representative of man's basic nature.

Morgenthau's perennial search for the repeating patterns in human affairs was consistent with his belief in the existence of an element of similarity in all things. These repeating patterns in international politics were, for Morgenthau, the result of the influences of man's basic nature, and from Morgenthau's perspective a 'true' conception of the political relations between nations recognized and responded to those influences

Political and Moral Man

For Morgenthau, man's three-dimensional nature had at least two important implications. Simply put, his basic nature resulted in his being, inevitably, both a political and moral creature.⁸⁶ As a result, all human actions appear compelled to reflect both implications. In so doing, man also recognizes the biological, rational, and spiritual dimensions of his basic nature. However, Morgenthau asserts that because man cannot achieve a reconciliation, or perfect balance, of either the aspects, or their implications, in his actions, he must be prepared to accept his propensity to accept and live with actions which are less than perfect. In other words man must be prepared to accept his ability to commit evil. Evil, in this case, should not be understood or conceived of as being the same as 'evil' in the traditional sense. Traditionally, evil is equated with the absence of good. According to Morgenthau, evil is, to put it rather simply, less than ideal action. In other words, in the realm of thought, man can have the best of intentions to benefit others and perhaps even himself, but once pure thought is translated into action, it "becomes an independent force creating changes, provoking actions, colliding with other forces which

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p.168.

the actor may or may not have foreseen".⁸⁷ If man can admit to, and accept, the inevitability of committing less than ideal action, he can reconcile himself to the perpetual struggle to 'strike a precarious balance' between the hope of ideal action and the existence, in reality, of evil. In so doing, Morgenthau contends, man can also accept the necessity of moral judgment in all action. It is then that man will forego the creation of universalist ethics, and forsake the idea of his own divinity. Man, in other words, must be prepared to accept that he is not capable of divine understanding or action. Instead he must accept that while the tension between reason and passion may drive the political actor to seek power to ensure his security in some manner, his inherent spirituality compels him to judge, and therefore alter or justify a particular course of action.

A paradox exists in all human action in that it is governed, to some extent, by both the *animus dominandi* and the normative systems which seek to control it.⁸⁸ These systems are somewhat distinct according to place and time, but in modern societies they consist of a mixture of ethics, mores, and laws.⁸⁹ According to Morgenthau, while ethics, mores and laws may all define certain activities as being in opposition to their commands, they differ with regard to the means of sanction or punishment employed in those instances. Problems arise, however, when within such a normative system, different rules of conduct conflict. For example, within the current international system, the use of force between states is severely circumscribed, yet at the same time, the use of force within states is neither limited nor addressed by international standards, despite the potential negative effects on the international system which might accompany the use of such force. Thus while in one instance, the limited use of force is condoned by international law, in the other

⁸⁷Hans Morgenthau, "The Evil of Politics and the Ethics of Evil" in *Ethics* (56:1) October, 1945, p.11.

⁸⁸Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, p.225.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p.226.

instance no law seems to apply. The conflict between these rules of conduct, and others like them, are reflected within various foreign policy objectives. Given man's inherent spirituality, he is compelled to judge these objectives, and the normative systems which underlie them. The issue for Morgenthau though, is not just one of judging normative systems or particular foreign policy objectives, but of bringing to the forefront the notion that because of man's compellance to judge his actions, he is simultaneously compelled to justify his actions. As such, examining foreign policy demands an awareness of normative systems, and the lengths to which states are prepared to go in order to have these policies appear to be in compliance with either religious or culturally relevant normative systems.

As a political and moral, or in other words, as a balancing and judging creature, man has created, in the past, two ethics of political practice. In other words, man has created two notions of 'right' political conduct over time. The first, in recognizing the differences between the ideal and real worlds, emphasized the need to act 'ideally' in order to overcome evil in the real world. The other, doubting the possibility of creating an ideal world, sought only to manage the social world with respect to the rights of political authority and an assumed social contract. From the advent of the Christian era to the dawn of the Enlightenment, political ethics moved between these two apparent extremes. The development of rationalist philosophy associated with the Enlightenment, however, built a normative system whereby the greatest good could be recognized and achieved through the rights of man rather than rights of the sovereign ruler. Morgenthau's views on international political ethics begins with his assessment of the implications of such a normative system on the conduct of foreign policy in the modern context.

Morgenthau recognized that truth was, to some extent, contextual, but he also believed that such truths were based on underlying principles which remained the same

over time.⁹⁰ His conception of human nature, and the consequent *animus dominandi* form the basis of these underlying principles. However, it is important to remember that these principles are not, in Morgenthau's view, defined and static concepts. Although human nature and the lust for power may direct political action, they do not, according to Morgenthau, specifically define it. In other words each dimension of human nature, as well as each of its addendums of insecurity and *animus dominandi* are balanced by some other aspect. Rationalist philosophy, and the normative systems which eventually developed from it, do not, according to Morgenthau reflect either man's three-dimensional nature, the inherent forces associated with this nature, or the dynamic between them.

As a result, addressing Morgenthau's understanding of right conduct in current international politics, most theorists contend that his considerations either support or deny the Judeo-Christian moral tradition, rather than reflect man's basic nature. For those that see Morgenthau's ethical position as being supportive of the Judeo-Christian tradition, they appear to assume that the spiritual dimension of man is synonymous with the existence of moral codes and normative systems which have external origins. For those that deny the Judeo-Christian relationship in Morgenthau's consideration of ethics, they appear to assume that Morgenthau promotes an amoral political ethic which they contend is similar in nature to Machiavelli's considerations. Both Judeo-Christian ethics and Machiavellian political ethics are extremes which Morgenthau does not support. This is not to suggest that either of these notions of political ethics are necessarily 'extreme' in nature, but rather that Morgenthau's consideration of political ethics at the international level remains somewhere between them, without synthesizing their individual elements. It would seem then that from Morgenthau's perspective, true foreign policy should demand only a simple correspondence between rhetoric and reality in foreign policy objectives. In other words,

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p.xi.

true foreign policy should only reflect, and therefore respect, man's basic nature, as well as its addendums.

As such, for Morgenthau, notions of right conduct in the political sphere had to reflect reality. That is, normative systems had to recognize the existence of uncertainty and evil in all human actions. If his reflections on the political ethics which endured in European balance of power politics are considered from this perspective, then it becomes apparent that Morgenthau holds this era in high regard only insofar as the European powers, because of shared political and cultural backgrounds, were capable of reducing the uncertain outcomes, and overall degree of 'evil', of political actions. Simply put, shared backgrounds and understandings of 'right' political conduct facilitated the necessary balancing of insecurity and *animus dominandi*, which are the addendums of human nature. Yet in spite of this high regard, Morgenthau does not demand that current international politics attempt the same synthesis of notions of right conduct of politics. The possibility of such an eventuality occurring in the late 20th century is, for Morgenthau, seriously contested.

According to Morgenthau, the economic and military imperialism of earlier times has been replaced by modern cultural imperialism on a universal scale. Although the earlier types of imperialism gave rise to a set of unforeseen problems, these problems did not essentially disrupt the power relations of European nations, because of the existence of a common international political ethic. However, while cultural imperialism also gives rise to sets of unforeseen outcomes, it also seeks to conquer and control the minds of men "as an instrument for changing the power relations between two nations"⁹¹ In so doing it

⁹¹*Ibid.*, p.61. Interestingly, in citing National Socialism and the Communist International as the preeminent, and unsuccessful, examples of this type of imperialism in the first part of the 20th century, Morgenthau concedes that, if successful, the victory of this type of imperialism would have been more complete and more stable than any in history.

fundamentally affects international relations on a universal scale. As such, for Morgenthau, the foreign policy which is associated with recent cultural imperialism is the primary example of foreign policy which fails to acknowledge publicly human nature or its addendums.

In the current context however, the potential for the success of cultural imperialism seems extremely probable. Given that military imperialism is increasingly circumscribed at the international level, cultural imperialism, in seeking to conquer the minds rather than the territory or wealth of men, appears to be the only viable policy option for either maintaining or opposing the status quo.⁹² According to Morgenthau, because cultural imperialism is so appropriate and necessary, and yet so repugnant, in the modern context its true face is never presented in foreign policy. Consequently, modern foreign policy is presented as being anti-imperialistic which ultimately augments the belief of national societies in the 'justice of one's own cause'.⁹³ The end result of this belief is an increasing sense of moral legitimacy which ultimately gives rise to nationalistic feelings which are cloaked in the tenets of universal humanitarianism.⁹⁴ It is the widespread public support of such guises which serves to increase nationalistic attitudes, and the belief in the permanence

⁹²Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Understanding International Conflicts* New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1993, pp.133-138. To some extent Morgenthau's conception of cultural imperialism is similar to Nye's contention that the foreign policies of individual nations vary in the levels of coercive power which they employ. Given that "the norm of nonintervention"(p.138) is frequently sought, Nye appears to favour the use of foreign policies which are 'softer' in nature, such as political rhetoric and economic aid.

⁹³Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, p.96.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, p.98. A case in point, for Morgenthau, is the Cold War disarmament movement. Given that no nuclear capable state prefers to settle disputes by military means, such protestations of peaceful intentions conceal the real objectives of foreign policy. The widespread support for apparently peaceful objects brings an inevitable support to the concealed foreign policy objective. To some extent Morgenthau's contestation of the existence and rise of false notions of universal humanitarianism is similar to Carr's objection to the reality of an harmony of interests at the international level.

and absoluteness of the codes of political ethics associated with these states. This, for Morgenthau, is nationalistic universalism, and its predominance in the modern context makes the realization of a truly universal political ethic an impossibility. Its existence also makes the detection of real foreign policy objectives extremely difficult.

Given that this type of nationalism claims the right of one nation-state "to impose its valuations and standards of action upon all other nations", it is consistent with the policies of cultural imperialism whereby a nation-state offers a hidden "Messianic promise of salvation for all mankind", in attempting to control the minds of men.⁹⁵ Although Morgenthau looks at these ideas through the lens of the Cold War, the post-Cold War environment offers enhanced opportunities for the promotion of the policies of cultural imperialism, and the political ethics of nationalistic universalism. While both international environments are characterized by a reluctance to use military force as an instrument of foreign policy, current political situations enhance the opportunities for the promotion of nationalistic universalism. The development of advanced communication technologies, the proliferation of political rhetoric, and the collapse of Cold War ideological tensions makes it possible for all states, not just the superpowers, to promote these policies, as well as a nationally fashioned ethic for 'universal' or international politics. Morgenthau's depiction of cultural imperialism and nationalistic universalism serve as the basis for his understanding of true and false conceptions of foreign policy. To put it simply, a true conception of foreign policy involves a recognition of the national interest, while a false conception of foreign policy 'moralizes' state actions so that they may be accepted by the general populace. Simply put, true foreign policy reflects the dimensions of human nature, while false foreign policy attempts to make the moral and value judgments of individual nations an international, or universal, political ethic. In order to appreciate Morgenthau's

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p.331.

understanding of the differences between the two types of foreign policy, and the implications of their implementation, it is necessary to look at the development of each, and their 'face' in late 20th century international politics.

The development of false conceptions of foreign policy began, according to Morgenthau, with the advent of the Enlightenment and rationalist philosophy. This philosophical system established reason as the defining, if not the sole, characteristic of man. In so doing it initiated a normative system in which 'successful' political activity became the equivalent of 'ethical' political activity. As such, rather than reflecting inherent spirituality in judgments of political activity, man's judgments were defined by and reflected the methods of rational political activity. Such a normative system suggests a belief in perfectionism. In other words a normative system which suggests that it is possible to understand and control all political activity, and the effects of that activity, assumes that man is both omniscient and omnipotent.

Of course, along with rationalist philosophy, the Enlightenment also saw the advent of the modern nation-state and international system. This particular combination, according to Morgenthau, shaped modern political activity. The state, as the reification of perfectly rational man, became the 'manifestation of morality on earth'. It could, in other words, mediate conflict in human affairs by applying rationally deliberated ethical codes which were designed to reflect the 'greatest good'. From this point, according to Morgenthau, man's judgment of political action reflected the superior moral position of the state, and as a result, state policies eventually assumed an aura of moral superiority. However, the aura was more apparent than real. Simply put, state policies required moral justification. Morgenthau terms this type of normative system, which is associated with rationalist philosophy, as 'utilitarian' or 'perfectionist' ethics, and it bears the brunt of Morgenthau's criticism.

In modern international politics utilitarian ethics are characterized by 'moralistic' foreign policy. According to Morgenthau, in the Western context, traditional Judeo-Christian ethics are still an integral part of the social world. Domestic normative systems reflect its tenets, and violations of these tenets are sanctioned in some way. However, at the international level, Morgenthau contends, it is difficult to act in accordance with such a normative system because not only does it demand adherence to ideals which are essentially transcendental in nature, but there is no effective, or ultimate, means of sanction which does not threaten the overall stability of the system.⁹⁶ As such, Morgenthau suggests that rather than advocating an international political ethic which is founded on either transcendental or rational ideals, the normative system for international political activity should reflect the national interest.

Before continuing, it should be noted that Morgenthau's conception of the national interest is based on some, perhaps unique, assumptions. In the private context, Morgenthau concedes that individuals may have a moral right to say "*fiat justitia, pereat mundus*", however, in the public or political context, the state does not have the right to make the same statement on behalf of those in its care.⁹⁷ In other words, the social contract does not extend itself to those limits. Hence, the state must act prudently, or with some regard to the consequences of its actions. Prudent political action was, for Morgenthau, action undertaken in complete awareness of an ultimately uncertain outcome. It was, in essence, twofold; involving an initial acceptance of the absence of no 'riskless middle ground', and an eventual decision to commit to a specific action despite the inherent uncertainties.⁹⁸ To act prudentially is to cross the Rubicon in relative, not complete,

⁹⁶Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *op.cit.*, pp.169-73.

⁹⁷Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, p.10. According to Morgenthau the translation is 'Let justice be done, even if the world perish'.

⁹⁸Hans Morgenthau, "The Difference Between the Politician and the Statesman" in *The*

ignorance. The broad expanse of Morgenthau's foreign policy analysis is consistent with this assertion.

Interestingly, Morgenthau's views of prudential action seem to suggest that the state acts in its own best interests, and Morgenthau does concede that states do, in fact, act according to their own interests. However, what is important to recognize in Morgenthau's work, and what most theorists have failed to acknowledge, is the uniqueness of Morgenthau's conception of the national interest. For most, the national interest is synonymous with the survival and the interests of the state itself. For Morgenthau, however, the national interest is coterminous with the interests and survival of the nation. That is, it is synonymous with the survival of particular communities of individuals which, in the modern context, have been identified as 'national societies'. Not only is self-preservation the "first duty of a nation" in order to ensure the life and liberty of its inhabitants, but self-preservation enhances the ability of future generations, as well as other societies to preserve their identities.⁹⁹ This represents, according to Morgenthau, the 'hard core' of the national interest in which the "physical, political, and cultural entity which we call a nation" must be protected against encroachments.¹⁰⁰

Morgenthau's views on realistic foreign policy are rooted in his criticism of nationalistic universalism which characterizes the modern international system. Nationalistic universalism pretends the existence of a universal political ethic. According to Morgenthau, however, an international or universal political ethic cannot exist because in

Restoration of American Politics Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, p.103.

⁹⁹Hans Morgenthau, *In Defence of the National Interest* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951, pp.15-18. In these pages Morgenthau cites liberally the views of Alexander Hamilton with regard to American neutrality in the Revolutionary Wars in Europe. He labels the Hamiltonian conception of foreign policy as the "Realistic" period in American foreign policy analysis.

¹⁰⁰Hans Morgenthau, "The Problem of the National Interest" in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, p.91.

the current context its existence would threaten the ability of national or state actors to act prudentially, or responsibly, toward those in its care. In other words, given the propensity of states to engage in moralistic foreign policy whereby particular national codes of right conduct are assumed to be universal in their applicability, other, less powerful, states would be forced to act in accordance with particular national ethics which may not be in the best interests of their national societies.

For the most part Morgenthau's criticism of nationalistic universalism reflects his concern with the reality of balance both in man's basic nature as well as in political action. Foreign policies which are established based on the pretense of a universal political ethic do not, according to Morgenthau, recognize the reality of either diversity or balance in international relations. Given the persistent desire for security and presence of insecurity in man's nature and condition, Morgenthau views balancing of contradiction as an inevitable component of all human action. Simply put, if foreign policies are to serve the interests of a particular nation, they must do so by attempting to balance the interests of their own nation with the potentially diverse interests of other nations.

Conclusion

Morgenthau was, according to Kenneth Thompson, committed to the accomplishment of two tasks during his lifetime.¹⁰¹ One was to understand international politics, and the other was to discern a philosophy of international politics. The tasks are obviously formidable ones, and whether or not any intellectual could accomplish both in one lifetime is open to question. While his political philosophy, as first delineated in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, is often subtle and intriguing, it is, at the same time,

¹⁰¹Kenneth Thompson, "Philosophy and Politics: The Two Commitments of Hans J. Morgenthau" in *Truth and Tragedy* Kenneth Thompson and Robert J. Myers eds., New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Books, 1984, p.21.

often complicated and excessively detailed. His frequent citation of authors as diverse as Aristotle, Burke, and Stephen Leacock to clarify a burgeoning and complicated point, add further difficulties to interpreting his philosophy in a systematic way. Strangely enough, the same criticisms have been made of post-modern theorists. Nonetheless, with some perseverance and imagination it is possible, in both instances, to detect at least the outline of a political philosophy which is more eclectic than unique.

Morgenthau's political philosophy is based on his deceptively simple conception of human nature. At first blush, it appears, as many of his critics have suggested, that man's three-dimensional human nature is a metaphysical tautology which brooks no sense of freedom or diversity. Yet, a more thoughtful consideration of the concept applied to the broad expanse of his work suggests that Morgenthau's conception of human nature was much more complicated. The *animus dominandi*, the awareness of insecurity, as well as the concepts of prudence and judgment all serve to remove Morgenthau's conception of human nature from a metaphysical tautology to the recognition of a paradoxical human aporia. Suggesting the possibility of a 'paradoxical human aporia' requires some intellectual independence. Understanding and describing such a condition, however, requires not only intellectual independence, but courage as well.

Essentially, the condition entails the existence of a human condition where contradiction in its entirety cannot be overcome. Morgenthau's understanding of the role of power, insecurity and judgment within human nature create, in effect, a condition characterized by the existence of perennial contradiction. Given that morality, or moral judgment, affects power through sanction, approval, and justification, man's awareness of fundamental insecurity is continually confirmed, and at the same time placated. There is, obviously, no simple way to delineate such a dynamic condition. Still, according to Morgenthau, "the need for such understanding has become paramount in an age in which

the nation, deeming itself intellectually and morally self-sufficient, threatens civilization and the human race itself with extinction."¹⁰¹

The concern with developing such an understanding is, however, not unique to Morgenthau. Post-modern theorists claim similar concerns. Given that self-proclaimed Realists and Post-modernists are adamant in their philosophical, theoretical and methodological opposition to each other, one wonders which of them offers a more effective and clear understanding of this apparently overriding concern. The post-modern interest in political ethics provides an interesting place to begin.

¹⁰¹Hans Morgenthau, "The Commitments of a Theory of International Politics" in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, pp.60-1.

Chapter 3
The Postmodern 'Re-thinking'
of International Politics

It is difficult, if not impossible, to define postmodernism as a specific body of thought. Like realism, it can be associated with numerous disciplines, and within each the appellation means something slightly different. Nonetheless, disciplinary distinctions notwithstanding, postmodern thought is essentially deconstructivist thought. It is generally linked to or associated with the rich and complicated thinking of Continental philosophers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, and Foucault. Given that postmodernist thought within disciplines as diverse as architecture, linguistics, art and film, history, and literature is based, in some manner, on the work of these individuals, it is, perhaps, not surprising that the criticisms of post-modernist thought in each of the disciplines is similar as well.

Generally speaking, the works of these philosophers are considered to be complex criticisms of liberal values and rationalist philosophy. Contemporary works, which are based on the insights of such philosophers are often considered to be abstract in the extreme, linguistically impenetrable, and ultimately of little value in addressing the practical issues of ordinary life and disciplinary dilemmas. The critical attitude employed by post-modern theorists, in combination with this seemingly obtuse literary style, has resulted in postmodern thought being seen as a fundamental aspect of social, political and disciplinary upheaval. Accordingly, traditional thinkers in the various disciplines see postmodernist thought as being ultimately nihilistic. Questions of legitimacy aside, this criticism has significant implications for the discipline of politics in both theory and practice. In essence, if postmodern deconstructivist thought does, in fact, encourage the destruction of stability as traditional thinkers have suggested, then its application within the discipline of

international politics could be catastrophic for political stability. The work of the majority of postmodernist thinkers in international relations reflects an effort to reduce this concern, although the success of that effort has yet to be realized.

Overall, however, postmodernists continue to espouse the idea that deconstructing the basic principles which undergird the current theory and practice of international politics is predominantly an exercise in attempting to understand the development of notions of ethics, or 'right' conduct politically. They contend that calling the fundamental principles into question, as well as their potential abandonment, facilitates an enhanced understanding of order, justice and the practice of democracy in the global context.¹⁰² Simply put, postmoderns appear to contend that employing deconstructive thought in political analysis facilitates the possibility of demonstrating 'good' and 'bad' political acts. As such, much of the postmodernist literature in international relations concerns itself with deconstructing the rhetoric in theory and foreign policy by exposing the basic principle upon which the theory and practice of international politics is founded.

According to most postmoderns, it is the principle of sovereignty which has created "mechanisms of domination and closure" which limits political practice.¹⁰³ As a result, international politics has become limited in that political acts are determined and restricted, in several ways, by the construction of sovereign identities. These identities ostensibly create a certain type of political activity where individuals are encouraged to respond and relate to each other as members of a collective, rather than as individual human beings. The implication here, of course, is that this kind of political practice is inherently unethical

¹⁰²David Campbell, *Politics Without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993, p.91.

¹⁰³Molly Cochran, "Postmodernism, Ethics and International Relations" in *Review of International Studies* (21), 1995, p.237.

because it views humans not as individuals, or ends in themselves, but rather as members of influential groups, or as 'means' rather than as 'ends'.

As a result, in keeping with its critical heritage, postmodernist international relations literature is compelled to demonstrate that not only is the traditional theory and practice of international politics identity politics *par excellence*, but that alternative, and more humane, modes of political behaviour are possible. As with Morgenthau's work, any understanding of the modalities of the overall project must be based on an appreciation of the underlying methodology, and philosophy, as well as their implications for foreign policy analysis. To the extent that all narratives and approaches reflect methodological and philosophical preferences, these preferences should be examined and used as the 'lens' through which the individual work is interpreted. Describing postmodern methodologies with any degree of specificity is somewhat problematic, because they appear to have a dual focus. In fact, according to Haldane, the critical method of postmoderns seeks to both de-construct and re-construct a unified theory.¹⁰⁴ As a result, it becomes as necessary to examine postmodern methodologies and philosophical preferences to enhance interpretation as it was to dissect the works of Morgenthau

However, in spite of this potentially dualistic critical methodology there are some similarities in postmodern international relations literature. According to Molly Cochran, despite methodological variations, the similarities in postmodern works demonstrate a number of common themes.¹⁰⁵ The appearance of these themes suggests that these theorists may hold certain philosophical predispositions in common. Once again, however, despite the existence of similarities, there are notable differences in these

¹⁰⁴John Haldane, "Cultural Theory, Philosophy and the Study of Human Affairs: Hot Heads and Cold Feet" in *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences*, Joe Doherty et al, eds., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992, p.179.

¹⁰⁵Molly Cochran, *op.cit.*, p.238.

philosophical predispositions. The differences have major implications for the analysis of international politics.

Most importantly, if theory and practice are to be at all related in the political context, as postmoderns suggest, then it is imperative that one examine the instances where this occurs for postmoderns. Postmodern analyses of the ethics of foreign policy decisions provide such an opportunity. Indeed, according to Der Derian, an intertextual examination of international relations, that is an examination of its theoretical and practical components, facilitates a sober consideration of what is, and is not, possible in future global political activity.¹⁰⁶ In short, postmodern analyses of foreign policy address normative concerns by employing a certain methodology in order to reflect underlying philosophical components.

Postmodern Methodologies

Postmodern methodologies have been described as being, genealogical, discursive analysis, and 'anti-methodic' in nature, to mention a few. Regardless, the common purpose of all is to undertake an analysis of the discourse within the traditional literature of the discipline. Generally speaking, postmoderns claim that traditional interpretations favour, or 'privilege' metaphysical positions, which ultimately encourages totalitarian thought and practice. The concern with metaphysical thinking originates, according to Bernstein, with the Heideggerian attack of metaphysical humanism, and it continues to 'cast a shadow' over all subsequent postmodern thought.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶James Der Derian, "The Boundaries of Knowledge and Power in International Relations" in *International/Intertextual Relations Postmodern Readings in World Politics* James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro (eds.), Lexington: Lexington Books, 1989, p.8.

¹⁰⁷Richard Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992, p.4.

As such, the subsequent methodology appears to be one which emphasizes the "bits and pieces", rather than totalities.¹⁰⁹ Simply put, if traditional hermeneuticist or scientific methodologies endeavour to see the 'whole picture' or the 'general trend', then postmodern methodologies emphasize the historically contingent person or event. Ostensibly, such a methodology deconstructs the totalizing concepts and over-arching principles of modernity, and reveals the illusory nature of their value in addressing any aspect of the human condition.¹¹⁰ This refusal to synthesize, or assimilate particular events into the single causal nexus, makes postmodern methodologies difficult to assess from either a quantitative or qualitative perspective. Nevertheless, the deconstructive, or genealogical, method does appear to facilitate a different approach to international politics which raises some important issues.

For many opponents of postmodernist thought this methodology 'privileges' the individual, the unique, and the 'alternative narrative'. Some of these elements limit, in some way notions of identity, and consensus building within political communities. As a result, such ultimately relativistic thought is considered by many to be socially and politically destructive. Critics, then, are prepared to admit that while postmodernist thought may have heuristic, or possibly even some social value in other disciplines, in the realm of politics it is inherently dangerous, and specifically to be avoided because it encourages disorder and instability. The postmodernist response to this criticism inevitably includes the contention that, in reality, it is the 'creation' of consensus, and the consequent dismissal of 'alterity', in a collective environment which leads to violence in human interaction, and ultimately, to an increasingly unstable world. From this perspective, the rift between modern and postmodern approaches appears to be absolute and irreconcilable.

¹⁰⁹Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* Oxford: Blackwell, 1993, p.1.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, p.3.

However, just as superficial readings of Morgenthau's work do not recognize its inherent complexity and integrity, neither do such readings, or several of the prevalent criticisms, do justice to the variety and value of postmodernist thought. The deconstructivist approach within international relations attempts to understand political activity on a global basis. This tends to be accomplished by adopting a 'two-pronged', or relational, approach to political activity. On the one hand, political activity is addressed from a multi-level perspective; that is relations between and within states are seen in relation to each other. On the other hand, political relations between individual representatives of states are also examined. Simply put, the postmodern discussion appears to emphasize and appreciate the "Other and Otherness" in its entirety.¹¹⁰ In comprehending this 'otherness', the method of postmodernists attempts to understand not so much individual human or political entities, but rather the ways in which they interact. It is this relational context which defines, in large measure, the method of many postmodernists from Nietzsche to Ashley.¹¹¹

In an attempt to explain the relational emphasis of deconstruction Derrida makes the claim that deconstruction is essentially an enigma in that it is not a methodology in the traditional sense of providing a method of understanding or judgment.¹¹² Critchley clarifies, or explains, this view by noting that the process of deconstruction is directed toward the interpretation of original texts, as well as the exposition of the consequent "blind

¹¹⁰Daniel Warner, "Levinas, Buber and the Concept of Otherness in International Relations: A Reply to David Campbell" in *Millenium Journal of International Studies* (25:1), 1996, p.112.

¹¹¹Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo* New York: Vintage Books, 1989, pp.16-17.

See also, Richard K. Ashley, "The Poverty of Neorealism" in *Neorealism and its Critics* Robert Keohane (ed.), 1987, pp. 255-259.

¹¹²Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction Derrida and Levinas* Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, pp.21-2.

spots or ellipses" in secondary interpretations.¹¹³ It appears obvious from these explanations that postmodernists at least attempt to affirm that texts, as well as political issues and events, and individuals are historically contingent 'signatures', which should be recognized, but not necessarily judged or valued. Unfortunately, this particular assertion opens postmodernist thought to much criticism because it appears to be resisting the role of judgment and value in the overall intersubjective condition.

However, the deconstructive approach is not only concerned with the creative forces of particular signatures, but with what is 'between' them as well. It is, in other words, concerned with the intersubjective condition. As such, deconstruction demands both a 'situating' of the work in a spacio-temporal context, and an understanding of the underlying background, and reflexive influences which affected not only the creation of the work, the individual or the event, but interpretations of it as well. It is essential to note that this involves a 'taking apart' or investigating of that which is being considered, rather than its destruction.¹¹⁴ However, and unfortunately, this dismantling process is so complicated and incessant that one might even be tempted to say that it does, in fact, approach the status of 'anti-method'. As such, its unique nature, and apparent strength appear to have become its ultimate weakness.

In fact, because the process is endless, most texts emphasize the need to avoid ultimate judgment by stressing the presence and value of continual interpretation. Interestingly, Rengger and Hoffman have identified the postmodern approach to international relations as being one of 'radical' interpretivism because interpretation "is all there is".¹¹⁵ Admittedly, the approach does appear to be hermeneutical in the extreme. In

¹¹³*Ibid.*, p.23.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp.22-6.

¹¹⁵Nick Rengger and Mark Hoffman, "Modernity, Postmodernism, and International Relations" in *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992,

fact, postmoderns encourage interpretation with the suggestion that the ultimate individual judgment of the reader regarding events and individuals should be avoided. However, if one searches beyond the superficial text of many of these works, it is readily apparent that interpretation is, instead, limited by the seemingly inevitable presence of such judgment. When this is acknowledged by postmodernists, rather than being understood as being determinative of the actual, and ultimate, causal nexus in political activity, its presence is understood as being a reflection of inevitable historical contingency, and therefore of limited value.¹¹⁶ In fact, Campbell argues that while the deconstructive method demands a large measure of interpretation in order to discover and appreciate the uniqueness of any given text, it also demands that the interpreter resist the temptation to invoke his own ontological perspectives on the text which is being investigated.¹¹⁷ In essence, this suggests that while interpretation is always limited by judgment, the fact that all individual judgment is, in essence, a 'signature' of historical contingency, it should not be encouraged. Campbell's understanding of the overall value of individual judgment is, it would seem, accurate and appropriate. However, and unfortunately, because it is of limited value and not to be encouraged or relied upon, Campbell suggests that the ethics of future global politics should reflect something less 'historically contingent', and, perhaps more humane.

The postmodern deconstructive approach assumes that not only are knowledge and practice both influential in the process of 'becoming', it insists that each must be interpreted as being 'in relation' to the other; neither knowledge or practice exists in isolation from the other. As such, there is an implicit suggestion that this approach mediates between the

p.134.

¹¹⁶Michael Shapiro, "Textualizing Global Politics" in *International/Intertextual Relations*, *op.cit.*, pp.18-21.

¹¹⁷David Campbell, "The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics After the End of Philosophy" in *Alternatives* (19), 1994, p.457-9.

particular event, and potential universalities which underpin such events.¹¹⁹ Simply put, postmodern approaches interpret the nature of associations and relationships, including the relationship between theory and practice. Generally speaking, in keeping with the intertextual perspective, postmoderns see theory as practice. Nonetheless, postmodern interpretations of international relations appear to reflect some rather significant philosophical differences.

While all postmodern interpretations suggest some normative concerns, either implicitly or explicitly, there are those which appear to demand a unity of theory and practice that approaches the proposition of a utopian state of affairs. In these interpretations there appears to be little recognition of the limiting nature of historical contingency in individual events. As a result, theory *as* practice becomes a means to resolve practical dispute. A case in point is the contention that international politics should be practised along the lines of a 'dialectical competence model'. This model or theory ostensibly accounts for the "emergence, reproduction, and possible transformation of a world-dominant public political apparatus".¹²⁰ This 'public political apparatus' apparently involves political action in accordance with an awareness of the social, economic, and environmental circumstances which produce political conditions. If the goal is to understand the political condition in its entirety so that the statesman may act effectively in accordance with that knowledge, then it is difficult to imagine a more universal, and ultimately idealist theory or practice of international relations. When compared to Walker's contentions regarding the theory and practice of global politics, Ashley's and Walker's

¹¹⁹Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p.24-5. This understanding of hermeneutics is, according to Bernstein, that of Hans-Georg Gadamer, and it relies heavily on the Aristotelian conception of *phronesis* and *praxis*. Simply put, knowledge and practice are essential elements of 'becoming'.

¹²⁰Ashley, *op.cit.*, p.294.

similar deconstructivist approaches have created decidedly different outcomes.¹²⁰ More importantly, however, such a comparison suggests to many that those postmodern approaches which do not yield such idealistic outcomes must be nihilistic. Once again, however, a broader and more comprehensive reading of the literature at hand suggests that rather than being either nihilistic or idealistic, many postmodern interpretations of international relations represent attempts to repel both extremes. Their success in this endeavour is determined, at least to some extent, by the underlying philosophical predispositions of individual theorists.

Certain philosophical precepts appear throughout the work of many postmodern theorists. Admittedly, this is not always done in an explicit manner. Nonetheless, these precepts do become evident, and appear to develop along two streams. It should be noted that these should not necessarily be considered as opposing streams. In fact, in many aspects they often appear remarkably similar, yet there is sufficient divergence to demonstrate that they pose different possibilities for the practice of international politics. The remainder of this chapter will examine these two philosophical streams, and the postmodern analyses of ethics in foreign policy which rely on their insights.

Philosophical Influences

As in other disciplines, postmodern theorists in international relations have been largely influenced by Continental literary deconstruction. Given that deconstruction of the literary text is concerned with recognizing and understanding the influential creative components of the text, postmodern international relations theorists have attempted to discern the creative components of both the theory and practice of international politics.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, pp.294-297.

See also, R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp.174-79.

That is, they attempt to discover not only the spacio-temporal contexts of particular theories and practices, but the principles upon which they are founded as well. While this interest in intertextuality has created new vantage points for political analysis, it has also given rise to new arguments regarding long standing normative concerns.¹²² These arguments are philosophically oriented and centre around the issue of right conduct, or ethics, in global politics.

Despite the profusion of 'text' on the subject however, the postmodern consideration of political ethics remains ambiguous. Insofar as it does not promote a specific code of 'right conduct' in either the private or public realm, it appears torn between concern for the individual and the universal. It should be noted, however, that because the deconstructive approach employed by postmoderns attempts to emphasize the reality of relations between the particular and the universal, or in other words, the intersubjective condition, it is perhaps unavoidable that each postmodern text displays a preference, or concern for, either the particular or the universal, rather than their relationship when the intersubjective condition is described.

However, given that postmoderns contend that this relationship serves as the beginning of all notions of political ethics they do include it in their analysis. Interestingly, it is upon this common foundation of the intersubjective condition that the two streams of thought regarding ethics have come into being in postmodern thought. These streams reflect the insights of two continental philosophers who are cited only occasionally by postmodern theorists within the discipline. Both Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Buber share a concern with nature of the relationship between self and other, and develop the

¹²²Shapiro, "Textualizing Gobal Politics" in *International/Intertextual Relations, op.cit.*, p. 11. Shapiro defines 'intertextualizing' as a way of understanding how human creations are produced in response to "previous works ... and the codes of other conventions governing them."

notion of responsibility in that relationship which is particularly applicable to international, or global, politics. Nonetheless, each philosopher's delineation of that relationship has some significantly distinct implications for understanding the ethics of that level of politics. Simply put, it becomes obvious that postmodern theorists who favour one of these interpretations do succeed in suggesting alternate intersubjective conditions. In so doing, however, they inevitably encourage, rather than limit, the individual judgments of the reader regarding the associated ethics of international politics.

In attempting to develop an understanding of the work of Levinas and Buber, two differences become evident. The first is the difference in literary style, and the second is the emphasis on either the self or the other in the intersubjective condition. At first glance, the former appears to be an almost trite observation. However, if one is to understand theory *as practice*, as postmoderns contend, then the theory should at least be intelligible. In other words, given that postmoderns contend that Realist and Marxist theories have been transformed in actuality into essentially unethical identity politics, it is difficult to make the argument that political practice could become more ethical in the future with the articulation of incomprehensible theories.

As a student of Heidegger, Levinas develops and expresses his thoughts with an interwoven pictorial vocabulary. Buber, a student of Dilthey, expresses his ideas using a vocabulary which is more emotive than pictorial, or as Smith suggests, his language is "practical and ... down to earth".¹²² At first glance, this difference may seem irrelevant, but given the abstract nature of 'right conduct' when considered from any but a legalistic perspective, the difference becomes more important. As many have noted, ethics, or notions of right conduct, demand the existence of common values and norms based on

¹²²Ronald Gregor Smith, "Translator's Introduction" in Martin Buber's *Between Man and Man* London: Collins, 1974, p.12.

shared perspectives which develop from the existence of common religious, social or political identities. While the use of imagery in communication often facilitates common perceptions, it can also exacerbate existing differences if all observers interpret the image differently given their diverse identities. To the extent that literary style mediates the author's message, its clarity is fundamental to the overall postmodern political project of "learning to be at home in homelessness".¹²³

The point can be made more clearly by examining the way in which both philosophers address the intersubjective condition. For Levinas, the 'meeting' between self and other is a kind of "stellar space existing independently of the two terms which it separates".¹²⁴ While the image of an independent 'stellar space' conveys some sense of how Levinas conceives of the intersubjective condition which ultimately coincides with his understanding of heteronomous responsibility, it does little to clarify how the 'two terms', self and other, relate to each other. In fact, one could argue that conceiving of the intersubjective condition in terms of stellar space suggests that the condition is essentially a vacuum which is ultimately unaffected by the relationship of self to other. If that is the case, then it is difficult to situate political ethics in the realm of human activity.

For Buber, the intersubjective condition is essentially a region of interaction between humans. It is a region where the "action and passion of two or more men" is synthesized not into a unified and meaningful whole, but rather into a momentary recognition of primal unity where in "the crystallization of an instant ... we me[e]t in a feeling of coessentiality".¹²⁵ While Buber's description of the intersubjective is obviously

¹²³Stephen K. White, *Political Theory and Postmodernism* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.7. For clarification purposes, the phrase refers to the ability to be 'comfortable' with the absence of group identity, and to thereby act in a more 'ethical' fashion.

¹²⁴Warner, *op.cit.*, p.114.

¹²⁵Paul Mendes-Flohr, *From Mysticism to Dialogue Martin Buber's Transformation of*

abstract it does appear to give the interpreter a more clear understanding of what the condition encompasses. That is, for Buber, it is not so much an existent and empty space as a region where persons interact in their recognition of each other. While one could argue that, in fact, Levinas and Buber are both referring to the same thing, albeit in different ways with greater or lesser degrees of clarity, some postmodern theorists have cited such descriptions as being reflective of the fundamental, and crucial, distinctions between them.

If this is the case, then it would appear that different literary styles reflect not only the diverse perspectives of various authors, but also contribute to the generation of new or 'unintentional' outcomes. Given that possibility, examining the literary style seems as important as undertaking a methodological analyses. The point to be made beyond this possibility, however, is that because Levinas communicates in a way which facilitates the 'alternative' interpretation, postmodern international relations theorists who rely upon his insights have developed a plethora of interpretations regarding the practice of political ethics. As a result, not only do critics of postmodern interpretations see added opportunities to criticize the incomprehensibility of postmodernist thought, but the nature and practice of political ethics also becomes incomprehensible for political actors. As White has suggested, the problem of how to communicate intelligibly 'across borders' without forcing one side to capitulate to the linguistic demands of the other is at the root of understanding the postmodern re-thinking of political ethics.¹²⁶

Regardless of the complex stylistic difference between Levinas and Buber, the second notable difference in their philosophies has more significant implications for

German Social Thought Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989, pp.39 and 58. Mendes-Flohr takes this description of the 'interhuman' or *das Zwischenmenschliche* from Buber's editorial preface to *Die Gesellschaft*, as well as from lectures.

¹²⁶White, *op.cit.*, pp.14-19.

international relations theory and the application of an associated political ethic. The inherent preference for either self or other in their philosophies has become a fundamentally problematic issue in postmodernist thought. In Levinas's development of the concept of heteronomous responsibility he portrays a clear preference for the other in the form of the universal, rather than individual human or national identities. However, Buber's elaboration of *I-thou*, and *I-it* relationships affirms the existence of particular human and national identities which must be addressed.

Generally speaking the postmodern conception of responsibility is best understood as the ability to respond, or *response-ability*, rather than as obligation to act in a pre-determined manner. For Levinas, not only is this ability to respond based on the radical interdependence of the intersubjective condition, but more importantly, this responding to the other is pre-original. That is, it is heteronomous in that it is not associated with a particular set of obligations or rules of behaviour for particular identities of any level. According to Campbell, recognizing and accepting this type of responsibility means understanding "*that "we" are always already ethically situated; making judgments about conduct, therefore, depends less on what sort of rules are invoked as regulations, and more on how the interdependence of our relations with others are appreciated.*"¹²⁷ In other words, since this conceptualization of responsibility places responding to the 'other' at the very core of human activity, there is, apparently, no escape from its demands. Interestingly, at least according to Campbell, there is also no escape from 'making judgments about conduct'. As such, it appears that postmodern theorists who employ this concept to re-think political ethics are advocating a universal behaviour. That is, a human condition where every individual is continually alert to both the presence as well as the 'call'

¹²⁷Campbell, *Politics Without Principle, op.cit.*, p.93. The emphasis is in the original text.

of the 'other', and therefore in a perpetual state of readiness to act in response. The implications for international political practice are obviously significant, and will be examined later in the chapter.

Significantly, while it appears that postmoderns such as Campbell are promoting a universal ethic, it should be noted that this is not synonymous with promoting a universal moral code. Levinas contends that while ethics is "the extreme sensitivity of one subjectivity to another", morality can be understood as a behavioural code which is governed by the pre-original existence of responsibility to the 'other'.¹²⁸ In other words, given this distinction, it appears as though Levinas is recognizing, although not necessarily approving of, the existence of culturally relevant behavioural norms, or in other words, particular identities. Although postmoderns do note the distinction, as well as its implications, the promotion of a universal ethic, rather than a universal moral code, could still be interpreted as an idealistic, even utopian, project. Levinas's obvious preference for the universal ethic of heteronomous responsibility is obviously synonymous with a preference for the other rather than self.

Levinas's conception of heteronomous responsibility as an ethic of, or for, political action is based on his understanding of the relationship between the self and the 'other'. In this relationship, the ego, the self-consciousness, is continually put into question by the existence of an 'other' which is pre-original to the self.¹²⁹ According to Warner, Levinas considers the pre-natal condition as the original, and defining, relationship in which responsibility to the 'other' exists prior to knowledge of the self, or conceptualization of a particular identity.¹³⁰ For Levinas, this relationship appears to be the pre-eminent, and

¹²⁸Campbell, "The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics After the End of Philosophy", *op.cit.*, p.467.

¹²⁹Critchley, *op.cit.*, p.4.

¹³⁰Warner, *op.cit.*, p.115.

one could argue, 'ideal' ethical relationship. From this perspective, the 'stellar space' of the intersubjective condition can be occupied only by responsibility to the 'other'. Positing such a relationship as ethical suggests that only relationships where the 'other' is recognized and responded to, prior to any recognition of the self, can be considered ethical. In other words, ethical political activity is equated with the subjection, if not the eradication, of the self to the other.¹³² While this may, or may not, be an ideal for action in the political sphere, Levinas's failure to explicate the means by which the conception of 'self' can be eradicated or at least minimized, propels the whole notion of an heteronomous responsibility to the 'other' which is based on an ostensibly ideal pre-natal condition to the realm of utopia. Simply put, without further explication, the concept demands that cognizant individuals reproduce the pre-natal state in order to act ethically. The suggestion is both impossible and ridiculous. Consequently, it seems that even those postmoderns who incorporate Levinas's insights into their analyses of foreign policy see a need to 'supplement' his work.¹³³

Although Campbell and Critchley use the works of Derrida, and his insistence on persistent deconstruction, to achieve this supplementation, Daniel Warner utilizes the insights of Martin Buber. To a large extent, the variation within the postmodernist 're-thinking' of international political ethics can be associated with this choice. Levinas's insights for the most part inform the idealist aspect of this body of thought, the work of Martin Buber, however, appears to influence a more pragmatic understanding of political ethics. In Buber's work, the intersubjective condition, and responsibility are shaped by

¹³²Fabio Ciaramelli, "Levinas's Ethical Discourse Between Individuation and Universality" in *Re-Reading Levinas* Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley eds., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p.99. Ciaramelli attributes this position to Maurice Blanchot.

¹³³See both Campbell in "The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: ...", *op.cit.*, and Critchley in *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, *op.cit.*.

movement between the *I-thou* and *I-it* relationships of individual identities. As a result, because of this movement, Campbell finds Buber's work lacking in understanding the value of heteronomous responsibility.¹³³ Warner, however, has undertaken the application of Buber's thinking to political ethics because of the possibility of such movement.¹³⁴

The distinction between *I-thou* and *I-it* relationships is important when considering Buber's conception of responsibility in the 'interhuman'. The interhuman, for Buber, is communication rather than a space where events occur. It is, in essence, the moment in which 'we recognize, often in silence and solitude, our coessentiality'. For Buber, this sort of communication occurs, not when individuals are communicating by means of the senses, but when an individual 'releases the reserve' in himself; that is, he allows the 'other' accessibility to his 'self'.¹³⁵ Simply put, 'allowing accessibility to one's self' suggests that a particular self, with a somewhat unique identity, allows the other, with another identity, to come to understand him. It is this kind of dialogue, or communication, which characterizes the *I-thou* relationship, and most importantly, it appears to be both rare and fleeting. While this description of the interhuman suggests that, for Buber, it is an ideal state, his recognition of the rare occurrence of this type of dialogue suggests that, in reality, other types of communication exist.

The *I-thou* word pair describes a relationship in which the association or connection between self and 'other' is recognized as inherent and inevitable. In this relationship, Buber contends, we experience an "undivided unity" which has its roots in the "original pre-biographical unity and ... that it is hidden unchanged beneath all biographical change, all

¹³³David Campbell, "The Politics of Radical Interdependence: A Rejoinder to Daniel Warner" in *Millenium Journal of International Studies* (25:1), 1996, p.134-5.

¹³⁴Warner, *op.cit.*, p.115.

¹³⁵Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* London: Collins, 1974, p.20.

development and complication of the soul."¹³⁶ To some extent, Buber's *I-thou* relationship is similar to Levinas's understanding of the original, pre-natal relationship. However, where Levinas suggests that this relationship can or should be reproduced because it is the original ethical relationship, Buber recognizes that, for the most part, *I-thou* relationships are restricted by 'being-in-the-world', or, in effect, by man's perception of his own isolation, or insecurity.¹³⁷

Interestingly, it is this seemingly inherent perception of insecurity which moves man toward developing *I-it* relationships. Such relationships, based on the perceived subject-object schism, are characterized by the tendency to see the 'other' as a means rather than an end in itself. Warner argues that while Levinas also recognizes the existence of this sort of relationship, unlike Buber, he sees its existence as inhibitive to ethical political practice.¹³⁸ In other words, for Levinas, because *I-it* relationships deny the possibility of acting in recognition of one's heteronomous responsibility to the 'other', they should be transformed into *I-thou* relationships, and maintained as such. Buber, on the other hand, acknowledges the possibility of movement between these two types of relationships. The acknowledgment is significant in that movement between the ostensibly ideal *I-thou* relationship, and the less than ideal *I-it* relationship necessitates a more flexible notion of responsible action than the one put forward by Levinas. For example, if a relationship, be it one between individual people or nations, is an *I-it* relationship where each sees the 'other' as a closed and unknowable entity which must be manipulated in order to maintain the identity of the self, responsible action in either realm is interpreted from a strategic perspective of offense and defence. By the same token, if a relationship is an *I-thou* relationship in which each sees the other as an open and accessible entity which can be

¹³⁶*Ibid.*, p.43.

¹³⁷Warner, *op.cit.*, pp.115-19.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, p.115.

understood and appreciated for its 'otherness', then 'response-ability' becomes relatively simple, and uncomplicated. Simply put, because of the degree of inherent understanding which exists between individuals, responses are both appropriate and possible. As such, if relationships can oscillate between recognizing the ideal concept of heteronomous responsibility, and the less than ideal concept of insecurity, then while responsible action may not be entirely consistent, the ideal form is at least somewhat attainable in reality.

Buber suggests that responsible action should be considered in view of "lived life" rather than with a view toward the "ought" which is not grounded in reality.¹³⁹ Interestingly, where Levinas contends that an ethic of responsibility demands vigilance in detecting the presence and call of the 'other', Buber contends that "the whole apparatus of our civilization is necessary to preserve men from this attentiveness and its consequences".¹⁴⁰ Because vigilance would demand persistent awareness, and potentially yield inevitable response, the individual would have no time to interpret or understand. As such, Buber suggests that while responsible action demands response or involvement, it must be attenuated by the circumstances of reality. Buber concedes that while such attenuation obviously circumscribes full and ideal 'response-ability', we can only attempt such 'stammering' responses given the inability to communicate and relate in a complete and absolute manner.¹⁴¹

Given Buber's claim of movement between the two types of relationships, it appears obvious that normative influences have directed much of his thinking. However, it also suggests that there is an attempt to allow those influences to be affected by the situations of the real world. By acknowledging the existence of the concept of insecurity, as well as the associated need for strategic defence from the other, he recognizes both real

¹³⁹Buber, *op.cit.*, p.34.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p.34.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp.34-5.

political conditions and the possibility of the occasional existence of the ideal. On the other hand, Levinas's preference for human relationships which reflect the concept of heteronomous responsibility suggests a preference for an intersubjective condition which is essentially ideal. As such postmodern idealism could be more appropriately described as utopianism rather than mere normative emphasis. Where this occurs, traditional political analysts and actors merely dismiss the entire body of work as having no practical import.¹⁴² Given that traditional international relations theorists have not explored the implications of the practical application of heteronomous responsibility in international politics, it would appear that its import has been dismissed. Buber's practical emphasis, on the other hand, enhances the potential political utility of his philosophy.

These diverse conceptions of responsibility and ethical action have significant implications for the practice of international relations. Most postmodern analyses of foreign policy appear to be undertaken with the Levinasian perspective of responsibility in mind. As such, some go so far as to bear the stamp of utopianism, and as a result tend to be dismissed by traditional, as well as some postmodernist, analysts. However, an analysis which is undertaken from a Buberian vantage point succeeds in having some practical, rather than mere heuristic value. Given that most postmodern literature in international relations focuses on the deconstruction of traditional interpretations of political ethics, this difference is difficult to detect. Once again, however, in going beyond a superficial reading of these texts it becomes apparent that, occasionally, despite philosophical differences, similar suggestions for foreign policy are made.

¹⁴²Haldane, *op.cit.*, pp.213-14.

A Postmodern 'Ethic' for Foreign Policy

Postmoderns generally begin their consideration of right conduct in international relations with their perception of the traditional conception of ethics in this area. After the 'deconstruction' of the dominant traditional understanding, most texts include a rather severe, if less than fully developed, criticism of the implementation of current foreign policy decisions. It is only after the deconstructive and critical processes have been addressed that postmodern theorists offer an alternative understanding of the 'problem' of ethics and international relations. The solutions to this problem which are offered are seemingly vague. The absence of a specific method for, or the nature of improvement is, however, consistent with the Derridian emphasis on continuous deconstruction.

As a result, their major concern lies with the implied fundamentalism of sovereignty in modern international relations literature. According to Walker and Campbell, among others, this view of sovereignty has fostered a dichotomous sense of 'ethics' and 'international relations', where ethics are a set of rules and norms which are, or should be, applied to a particular type of political action.¹⁴³ Each body of thought, in this view, is founded on some basic principle which, when in opposition to some other founding principle, results in action which is consistent with either, but not both of the founding principles. To some extent, this argument attempts to explain the number and nature of threats to national and international stability which currently exist. In other words, by exposing the reality of conflicting underlying principles, it is possible to suggest that the original concepts or activities which they reflected and supported are, in fact, threatened and destroyed.¹⁴⁴ As a result, increased instability becomes inevitable.

¹⁴³R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.50.

¹⁴⁴Bauman, *op.cit.*, p.133.

The two founding principles of international relations and ethics are sovereignty and moral traditions or practices, respectively. In keeping with the deconstructive method, postmoderns generally attempt to discover, to varying degrees, the 'genealogy' of these principles. Sovereignty, according to Camilleri, shaped by the social and economic circumstances of sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, continues to direct political activity as well as political theory even though modern circumstances are obviously much different.¹⁴⁶ In other words, while they concede that the concept of sovereignty has an obvious historical logic, they question whether the same logic should be used to maintain and justify the concept in the current context. Simply put, because any principle which contests the possibility of political action which reflects heteronomous responsibility is essentially less than ideal, it should, in the current context, be examined, and perhaps abandoned. As such, postmodernists, such as Campbell, prefer that political action not reflect any particular enduring foundational principle, but instead be 'deterritorialized' to reflect the current context. Given the ostensibly 'soft borders' of the developing global village, postmodernists generally contend that the autonomous action associated with the principle of sovereignty is not only problematic, and less than ideal, but actually prohibitive to ethical politics.

A similar concern regarding the value of action founded on a limited historical logic informs Campbell's consideration of ethics. For Campbell, the existence of specific moral codes not only informs the current perception of ethics, but distorts its true nature as well.¹⁴⁷ The traditional understanding of ethics sees an association between ethics and morals, where ethics are merely morals writ large. In these interpretations, ethics are

¹⁴⁶Joseph A. Camilleri, "Rethinking Sovereignty in a Shrinking, Fragmented World" in *Contending Sovereignties: Redefining Political Community* R.B.J.Walker and Saul H. Mendlovitz (eds.) Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishing Co., 1990, p.14-15.

¹⁴⁷Campbell, *Politics Without Principle*, *op.cit.*, p.81.

synonymous with the moral positions of St. Augustine, and Machiavelli, as well as other culturally relevant texts, and have come to be associated with a certain set of political norms and rules.¹⁴⁸ Campbell goes on to say that given this association, traditional theorists now see these rules as the only foundation for universal ethics. It is on this interpretation of the nature of ethics, in which ethics and moral codes are synonymous, that most political theorists object to the possibility of a universal ethic for political action. While postmodernists also object to such an ethic, they do so only insofar as the objection reflects this particular understanding of ethics. When ethics are conceived of in a different light, however, a universal ethic becomes more plausible and more acceptable. Simply put, postmodernists posit their understanding of the traditional perceptions of ethics and international relations in order to deconstruct these positions and demonstrate their inadequacy in addressing issues of global concern.

Having, to some extent, deconstructed the traditional dichotomous view of ethics and international relations, postmodern theorists then delineate an alternative understanding of the subject. Rather than offering an alternative ethic by which international relations can be understood and judged, they put forward an ethic *of* global politics, which enables actors to respond to each other in a non rule-oriented manner.¹⁴⁹ The distinction between the political ethics of modernity and a postmodern ethic of political action revolves around the universal application of rules which are founded on principles which only have limited spacio-temporal relevance. Given that political ethics in the current context appear to emphasize the responsibility *for* political action, which is associated with sovereignty and

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, pp.81-82.

¹⁴⁹Daniel Warner, *An Ethic of Responsibility in International Relations* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991, p.6. Warner insists that while looking at ethics 'and' international relations implies an intersection with an implied choice of acting either politically or ethically, looking at an ethic 'of' international relations implies the existence of some common ground where it is possible to act both politically and ethically.

nationally relevant moral codes, rather than a responsibility *to* the universal 'other', their spacio-temporal relevance is now contested. In order to insure the latter, however, postmoderns suggest that political action must be "firmly and unequivocally located in the politico-normative terms of everyday life."¹⁵⁰ They are, in essence, demanding that current political action be completely reflective of the softening social and economic borders associated with the developing global village. Such action would, apparently, recognize the 'other' as the 'everyday life' of individual human beings, which not only enhances the concept of heteronomous responsibility, but more importantly, it facilitates the softening of political borders as well. Ostensibly softening of the political boundaries is considered to be coincidental with moving away from sovereignty as the foundational principle of global politics.

Interestingly, both Campbell and George rely on the philosophy of Levinas to develop and support these contentions. In keeping with Levinas, both share the notion that ethics in international relations should be conceptualized along the lines of action which acknowledges the self *as* other.¹⁵¹ Seeing 'self as other' is consistent with Levinas's understanding of heteronomous responsibility where the presence of the 'other' precedes self-identity. Political action which is undertaken "in light of our responsibility to the other" is then always and already ethical.¹⁵² Both Campbell and George acknowledge that such a reconceptualization amounts to an eventual sea-change in human affairs. Consequently, they assert that this can be achieved only by the deconstruction of sovereignty as the foundational principle which determines and limits political action in the current context.

¹⁵⁰George, "Realist Ethics, International Relations and Postmodernism: Thinking Beyond the Egoism-Anarchy Thematic", *op.cit.*, p.207.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, p.210.

¹⁵²Campbell, "The Politics of Radical Interdependence: A Rejoinder to Daniel Warner", *op.cit.*, p.141.

Campbell, more than most postmodern theorists, offers some concrete examples of both the deconstruction of sovereignty as well as the application and implications of political action based on the notion of heteronomous responsibility. For example, he suggests that responsible action in Bosnia involves supporting a re-articulation of the concept of sovereignty and its effects.¹⁵³ Such a re-articulation involves recognizing that "sovereignty and identity (associated with the state) results in violence".¹⁵⁴ This recognition would, according to Campbell, lead to settlements which will, unlike the Dayton agreement, not "foment the conditions for future violence".¹⁵⁵ Unfortunately, Campbell fails to outline what this alternative, peace-provoking settlement might look like. Without such a delineation it is difficult to judge the implications of such a settlement, and therefore impossible to judge whether or not these implications would respect the idea of heteronomous responsibility. More importantly, Campbell's failure, or oversight, allows critics to call such thinking 'utopian'. Just as importantly, that criticism limits the potential for the practical application of this concept by political actors. Ultimately, postmodern interpretations which fail to give accounts of practical applications and implications of suggested alternatives, become responsible for the failure of their own efforts and objectives.

Although postmodernists do not recognize in any explicit fashion that when employed as the basis for right conduct in global politics the concept of heteronomous responsibility becomes an alternative foundational principle, it does, in fact become the fundamental principle of international relations. Interestingly, and possibly in consequence, Campbell eventually deconstructs the concept from the 'practical' perspective of moving beyond the sovereignty problematic, which obviously includes the concept of

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, p.140.

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p.140.

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p.141.

heteronomous responsibility, to the "antisystematic philosophy of the everyday and ordinary"¹⁵⁶. At first glance, such a philosophy sounds incredibly similar to Levinas's concept of heteronomous responsibility. In fact, Campbell contends that it reveals the "nonself-sufficiency" of the self.¹⁵⁷ However, because, this revelation is based on the existence of self-consciousness, and the presence of an 'other', it can also be related to something much more basic. Campbell contends that it is the existence of self-consciousness, the other, and consequent nonself-sufficiency which give rise to the need for a philosophical anthropology "where the other plays a decisive role", and becomes the "fundamental principle" upon which political action should be built.¹⁵⁸ Campbell sees this reality as confirming the importance of political action which responds to the 'everyday life' of humans, rather than states. If this is so, then it appears as though it would be the result of the existence of the most fundamental aspect of human nature, which is a consciousness of the self, which is rooted in human biology, rather than in the pre-natal state of heteronomous responsibility.

Interestingly, as Warner relies upon the work of Buber to inform his understanding of an ethic of responsibility for global politics, he also emphasizes the relationship between self and other. He suggests that given the two types of relationships that form the intersubjective condition, there must be two forms of responsibility which reflect this reality. In other words, in light of the fact that *I-it* relationships, which are less than ideal, exist in the private realm, the notion of responsible action in this context must also be reconceptualized. For Warner any conception of an ethic for political action which does

¹⁵⁶David Campbell, "Political Prosaics, Transversal Politics, and the Anarchical World" in *Challenging Boundaries: global flows, territorial identities* Michael J. Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (eds.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. p.20.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p.21.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p.22.

not reflect a similar reality only encourages a continuation of the traditional separation of ethics *and* international relations.¹⁵⁹ Unfortunately, like Campbell, Warner fails to demonstrate how his notion of responsible action in either *I-thou* or *I-it* relationships might be applied, or what the implications of its application might be. Given the overall difficulty of moving from philosophical abstractness to appropriate political action, the difficulty in developing the details of response-ability can be understood, if not appreciated. The failure, however, is recognized and explained by Warner's ready acknowledgment that while he has not developed the modalities of such a conception of responsibility, the development of such details is fundamental to the eventual success of the postmodern ethical project.

Conclusion

Admittedly, the postmodern project is not completed. Nonetheless, it could be argued that Warner's insistence on the limiting of philosophical discourse, and engagement in practical analysis offers the most potential for doing so. Warner states that his goal is to show that "responsibility as responsiveness is an imperative, just as is the dialogue about the limits of the responsiveness."¹⁶⁰ This is the key difference between the postmodern adherents of Levinas and those of Buber.

Followers of Levinas's way of thinking seem committed not only to 'no borders', but, more importantly, to 'no impossibilities'. From this perspective it appears that the ideal intersubjective condition, based on the acceptance of heteronomous responsibility in political action, is achievable. As a result, because the practice of international politics is instead based on the concept of sovereignty, postmoderns generally judge it to be unethical.

¹⁵⁹Warner, "Levinas, Buber and the Concept of Otherness in International Relations: A Reply to David Campbell", *op.cit.*, p.128.

¹⁶⁰Warner, *An Ethic of Responsibility in International Relations*, *op.cit.* p.128.

Followers of Buber, on the other hand, recognize the need to limit, although not deny, the possibility of ideal action in global politics.

The choice between the philosophies of Levinas and Buber implies that perhaps postmoderns are only methodologically similar to each other. As well, it suggests that they are, to a large extent, both methodologically and philosophically distinct from other theorists within the discipline of international relations. It is possible to suggest, however, that these distinctions are not entirely appropriate. In other words, although postmoderns employ the deconstructive method, it usually reflects the often unique normative emphasis of the author. More importantly, although realist, neo-realist, and complex-interdependence theorists do not cite the philosophies of Levinas and Buber explicitly, philosophical similarities do exist between some traditional theorists and some postmoderns. While many traditional and postmodern theorists might contest the possibility, a comparative analysis of the work of Morgenthau and some postmodernists demonstrates the existence of such similarity.

Chapter 4
'Everything Old is New Again'
An Ethic for Global Politics

Postmodern texts are often difficult to understand not so much because of the use of exclusionary 'jargon', but because it is employed within complex sentence structures. One might consider the following suggestion for an alternative, and more inclusive understanding, of the constituent elements of global politics as being typical of postmodern modes of expression.

"The challenge for a mode of representation adequate to our postmodern time is therefore to articulate an understanding of world politics attuned to the need to move beyond the sovereignty problematic, with its focus on geopolitical segmentarity, settled subjects, and economistic power, that appreciates the significance of flows, networks, webs, and the identity formations located therein but does not resort simply to the addition of another level of analysis or of more agents to the picture."¹⁵⁹

It seems apparent that the author is simply suggesting that a deconstructive analysis of political action would enhance understanding of current political conditions. However, the use of terms such as 'sovereignty problematic' and 'geopolitical segmentarity' invite simplistic, and perhaps unsophisticated, interpretations by uninitiated readers. In order to circumvent such a possibility, postmodern authors often attempt to clarify the point by placing the terms within complex sentences which are designed to offer contextual

¹⁵⁹Campbell, "Political Prosaics, Transversal Politics, and the Anarchical World", *op.cit.*, p.19.

explanations. For the most part, they appear to be relatively successful in this endeavour in that the reader eventually comprehends the meaning of the jargon. More importantly, with repeated exposure, the jargon becomes something like a language of expertise, to a rather limited group of individuals, which ultimately facilitates the rapid communication of complicated and rather abstract concepts.

Morgenthau, on the other hand, is often difficult to comprehend because of his promotion of seemingly contradictory viewpoints. For example, in *Politics Among Nations* Morgenthau advocates the position that the national interest serves as the basis for sound foreign policy.¹⁶⁰ In apparent contradiction to this suggestion, he asserts that foreign policies which reflect the interests of "nationalistic universalism" within the modern state are propagandistic, have ill-understood implications, and are ultimately dangerous.¹⁶¹ The contradiction is, however, more apparent than real given Morgenthau's contention that because reality is deficient in its ability to imitate the ideal, it must be "understood and evaluated as an approximation to" the ideal.¹⁶² Thus, while the ideal basis of foreign policy is the national interest, in reality foreign policy based on the national interest should be tempered against some judgment regarding the goals of the state, and the implications of its actions. Simply put, the explanation which postmoderns attempt in a sentence or paragraph, Morgenthau offers piecemeal, throughout the body of one or more texts. In either case, discovering the message buried within such methodologies is frustrating and tiresome, but it is not the impossible task that many have claimed.

To some extent, the significant differences in linguistic and literary styles between Morgenthau and various postmodern theorists problematizes any comparative analysis. In spite of the fact that both appear to represent completely different styles of communication,

¹⁶⁰Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, pp. 144-45.

¹⁶¹*Ibid.*, pp. 331-33.

¹⁶²*Ibid.*, p.8.

they have been similarly criticized as being complicated, ambiguous, and occasionally as being incoherent. Nonetheless, the reading given to the works of Morgenthau and the postmoderns in international relations in the previous chapters posits that, despite stylistic and methodological differences, many of the messages, which persistence discovers in these works, are strikingly similar, if not identical. This claim is attenuated, however, by the recognition that because a complete and comprehensive analysis of the broad range of postmodernist texts is beyond the scope of this thesis, and as a result, has not been undertaken, it is only possible to identify the similarities which exist in a limited number of areas. Given this limitation, to claim the existence of more than a only a certain number of similarities would be to posit a fallacy of the grandest sort; an interpretive error which is common to both postmodern and traditional theorists when they assert theoretical distinctions and similarities.

In the process of deconstructing traditional thought, postmodernists frequently assume that 'a traditionalist is a traditionalist is a traditionalist', professing similar ontologies and philosophical assumptions. For example, George includes such diverse thinkers as Machiavelli, Weber and Morgenthau in the traditional, or Realist, category. This is probably the dominant perception within the discipline, even though it completely overlooks the fact that most political theory is constructed in response to the particular spatio-temporal conditions of reality, and therefore, must reflect some inherent differences.¹⁶³ Likewise, Campbell claims that the 'national interest' is actually a code word for 'reason of state'.¹⁶⁴ Such an interpretation recognizes no distinction between the notions of state, and nation-state which are evident when comparing the works of

¹⁶³Walker, *Inside Outside / International Relations op.cit.*, p.5.

¹⁶⁴Campbell, *Politics Without Principle, op.cit.*, p.81.

Machiavelli and Morgenthau. Such generalizations lead to the claim that all traditional philosophy and political theory is based on the presence of 'totalizing' concepts. It should be noted however, that the dominance of totalizing concepts in traditional thought can be explained just as easily by the postmodern tendency to offer a consistent and 'totalizing' interpretation of traditional theory.

Traditional theorists make a similar mistake, and just as frequently, when interpreting postmodernist works in the field. In fact, Pauline Rosenau admits that she pays little attention to "the differences within post-modernism itself ... fascinating though these may be" because all postmodernists are essentially synonymous in their skepticism.¹⁶⁵ In other words, a common, and seemingly radical, methodology, obliterates all distinction. What Rosenau assumes in this assertion is that because deconstruction demands incessant query and interpretation, it cannot offer any conclusions. As a result, because no positions are ever asserted, there are no distinctions of significance within postmodernist thought. Rosenau's claim completely overlooks the fact that while postmodern theorists may not engage in offering firm conclusions, or specific alternatives regarding political action, their works do reflect different concerns. For example, while theorists such as Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil are concerned with the relationship between various concepts of 'culture' and identity politics, Campbell's works reflect a concern with the relationship between military and political intervention and the politics of identity, and Bradley Klein's work emphasizes his concern with the value of alliance politics in the emerging global community. The existence of such a variety of concerns increases the possibility for alternative, and perhaps conflicting, suggestions for political action. Such a possibility has significant implications for political practice.

¹⁶⁵Pauline Rosenau, "Once Again Into the Fray: International Relations Confronts the Humanities" in *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* (19:1), 1990, p.85.

Given this proclivity to assume, generalize, or 'totalize' within the field, it seems especially important to be acutely attuned to the possibility of fundamental differences between and within particular bodies of thought. However, if one is to be concerned with the existence of fundamental rather than superficial difference, one must be prepared to address the underlying ontological and philosophical preferences of individual theorists. It is in the examination of this aspect of various bodies of work, that fundamental differences, and significantly, fundamental similarities present themselves. If theoretical debates within the discipline are to be refined and clarified, the current fascination with the 'novelty of novelty' to be overcome, and a concomitant emphasis on theory *as* practice, or on the association of theory and practice developed, then the recognition of uniqueness and similarity in both theory and practice is crucial. As a point of interest, both Morgenthau and Der Derian demand such a recognition.¹⁶⁶

It should be noted that while an examination of the underlying philosophical assumptions of various theorists reveals the fundamental differences and similarities between them, it is within the analysis of political practice that these theoretical differences and similarities become crystallized. Attempting such an analysis is somewhat problematic when examining postmodern works because of the paucity of analyses of particular political events. Yet where specific issues of foreign policy are examined in any detail they provide sufficient evidence for differences within postmodern thought, and more importantly, they also point to some notable similarities between postmoderns and Morgenthau.

Although the remainder of this chapter will examine the methodological and philosophical similarities in the work of Morgenthau and the postmoderns, the main

¹⁶⁶Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, p.18.

See also James Der Derian, "The Boundaries of Knowledge and Power in International Relations" *op.cit.*, pp. 5-7.

emphasis of the analysis will be concerned with a comparison of their respective positions regarding ethics in the case of military intervention, and their respective suggestions of an alternative ethic for international relations. Morgenthau's position regarding American involvement in Vietnam, and Campbell's position regarding Western (read American) involvement in the Gulf War and the Yugoslavian crisis, it will be argued, reflect similar criticisms of national actions, as well as similar normative concerns. However, and unfortunately, the analysis of their respective suggestions regarding the modalities of an alternative ethic of responsibility in international relations is somewhat limited. The postmodern reluctance to put forward the specifications for alternative political action is rooted in their use of the deconstructive method of analysis. Nonetheless, despite the reluctance to encourage or engage in new totalitarianisms, some postmodern preferences for alternative action can be inferred from their criticisms of current policies of intervention.

Methods of Criticism

Both Morgenthau and postmodernists employ criticism in their respective analyses of political theory and practice. The subsequent analyses which are undertaken are based on the criticism of reason's pride of place in Western philosophy since the Enlightenment. While the criticism is similar, it is developed by different means. Morgenthau critiques the rationalist philosophy which grew out of the Enlightenment by delineating its effects on the contemporary practice of international diplomacy. Postmodernists, on the other hand, criticize Enlightenment philosophy by examining its effects on the lives of individuals, in the modern context.

Morgenthau's use of critical rationalism in exposing the shortcomings of rationalist philosophy is undoubtedly more simple. It takes the form of a discussion where opposing positions are juxtaposed within the text. In employing this method in *Scientific Man vs.*

Power Politics, Morgenthau initially describes and criticizes the contemporary effects of rationalist philosophy on international political practice, and then with no attendant explanation he appears to confirm and approve of such a philosophy by expounding a philosophy of human nature into which reason has been incorporated. Consequently, if one is unaware of, or unable to discern, Morgenthau's methodology, he does appear to be incoherent. To offer initially a significant criticism of the celebration of reason in rationalist philosophy, and then endeavour to give reason a somewhat dominant position in his own philosophy of human nature suggests, to a number of critics, that he either favours the role of reason, or is somewhat confused. The use of critical rationalism, however, allows Morgenthau to incorporate descriptions of the realities of the political implications of rationalist philosophy, normative concerns, and the existence of reason into a relatively coherent understanding of how reform can be enacted. Interestingly, the closing chapters of both *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* and *Politics Among Nations* reflect Morgenthau's views on enacting political reform at the international level.

The deconstructive approach of postmoderns emphasizes intertextuality, and is consequently much more complex. Such an approach calls into question the creative aspects of particular events or ideas. In *Inside/Outside: International Relations*, Walker investigates the development of traditional international relations theory by examining the intellectual and political formative influences of individual traditional theorists. By examining the intertextual influences in the thoughts of specific individuals, he is able to demonstrate, or at least argue plausibly, that traditional political theory is more reflective of "historically specific understanding" than any persistent political reality.¹⁶⁷ In so doing, he makes a credible case for questioning the applicability of traditional theory in the current international political environment.

¹⁶⁷Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations*, *op.cit.* p.5.

Nonetheless, in spite of the varying degrees of complexity in these methodologies, and the disparate emphases of political practice and political theory, both attempt to confirm similar underlying philosophical assumptions and normative concerns. For example, in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* Morgenthau is unequivocal in his criticism of the dominance of reason in rationalist philosophy. His assertion that rationalist philosophy is "the philosophy against which [the] book is written" is buttressed by his delineation of the four conclusions of this philosophy.¹⁶⁸ According to Morgenthau, rationalist philosophy assumes that "rationally right and ethically good are identical"; that "rationally right action is of necessity the successful one"; that education leads to the "rationally right, hence, good and successful"; and that the "laws of reason ... are universal in their application".¹⁶⁹ The remainder of the book, and one could argue, all of Morgenthau's subsequent work is concerned with demonstrating the poverty of such a philosophy in understanding or positively influencing political action at the international level.

Ashley and Walker also dispute the primacy of reason with their assertion that postmodern inquiry facilitates the presentation of examples which question the "strategic art" associated with the primacy of reason and individualism.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, Walker asserts with uncharacteristic simplicity, that the deconstructive method of postmoderns is used to dispute the "guarantees of Reason".¹⁷¹ Simply put, both Morgenthau and the postmoderns contest rationalist philosophy. While they develop their arguments with varying degrees of complexity by examining different areas of international politics, the critical methods that they employ reflect a similar underlying philosophical concern.

¹⁶⁸Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *op.cit.*, p.10.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p.13.

¹⁷⁰Richard K. Ashley and R.B.J. Walker, "Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies" in *International Studies Quarterly*, (34:3), Sept., 1990, p.375.

¹⁷¹Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations*, *op.cit.*, p.7.

Postmoderns such as Campbell and George claim that by questioning the existence of man's "will to reason", and positing instead the existence of a "will to power", political theory and practice can expose the negative implications of rationalist philosophy, and perhaps effect reform which will serve to include that which has been excluded in past political practice.¹⁷² Morgenthau also notes the existence of a will to power. He contends that rationalist philosophy, manifested as liberalism, associated overt power relationships in the political sphere with a 'lust for domination' which needed to be repudiated.¹⁷³ Both Morgenthau and the postmoderns concur regarding the place of power in political action. Admittedly, they eventually investigate this inherent force by different means, but overall they appear to agree that rationalist philosophy and liberalism considered overt power relationships as contradicting man's will to reason, while covert power relationships, in economics for example, which were more manageable and more efficient, reflected and reinforced man's will to reason.

These criticisms inform both methodologies and reflect underlying philosophical assumptions about the nature of human activity in either the private or public sphere. While postmoderns appear to be more concerned with the latter in the form of the intersubjective condition, and Morgenthau's philosophy of human nature reflects an understanding of the former, it seems apparent that it is only in addressing both that it is possible to comprehend ethical action in the political realm. Despite these apparently opposing emphases, both Morgenthau and the postmoderns do, in fact, address the nature of man, as well as his relation to the other.

¹⁷²Jim George and David Campbell, "Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference: Critical Social Theory and International Relations" in *International Studies Quarterly* (34:3), Sept., 1990, p.280.

¹⁷³Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *op.cit.*, pp.41-6.

Common Philosophical Anthropology

Philosophical anthropology is, according to Buber, the study of the "being of man".¹⁷⁴ It was elaborated in the works of the French philosopher, Malbranche, in the late sixteenth century, and then again, and much more forcefully, in the works of Immanuel Kant a century later. However, their insights resulted neither in a complete 'doctrine of man', or even a comprehensive understanding of why man acts. Buber contends that this is the result of a failure to conceive of man as a complete or whole being.¹⁷⁵ In other words, their works fail to appreciate that because man is both a 'self' and an 'other', he has both an atomistic and relational existence in the world. If all philosophical thought represents an attempt to understand man's activities in the world, including his use of reason and judgment, then this would seem to suggest that all political analysis also represents an attempt to understand man's activities, but only within the political realm. By extension then it should be possible to understand man's activities in an even more limited sphere such as international, or global, politics.

The goal of both Morgenthau and the postmoderns is to understand man's activities in the international arena. Notably, both recognize, although in some instances very reluctantly, that man's nature as well as his relationships with the 'other' in the intersubjective condition, must be confronted. Furthermore, in recognizing this need, both emphasize that the basis of an 'ideal' intersubjective condition, and therefore international relations, is the conception of 'self as other', or to put it more plainly, to see man as an end in himself rather than as a means to one's own ends. It is important to note, however, that

¹⁷⁴Buber, *Between Man and Man*, *op.cit.*, p.149.

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p.150-2. Interestingly, Buber contends that Heidegger's work represents an attempt to 'complete' the study in that his focus is not understanding man as a 'self', but instead it attempts to understand man's relation to the 'other'; in effect his 'being in the world'.

this similarity in their philosophical and normative concerns does not necessitate either an identical analysis of political action, or identical suggestions for alternative actions. As the last section of this chapter will demonstrate, Morgenthau and postmoderns suggest policy options for state actors which are often different, but occasionally the same. A point worth making, however, is that where different policies are suggested it appears to be the result of the reliance upon preferred methodologies, and not due to some lack of insight or inherent amorality.

If one were to examine only postmodern interpretations of international relations, and then proceed to compare various elements of these works with the insights of Morgenthau, the differences would be more apparent than the similarities. The most striking would be the distinctions in their methodological approaches. However, even if these differences are exposed as being more apparent than real, or perhaps as being more superficial than substantial, there would still be ample evidence for negative comparison.

For example, Morgenthau claims that political theory must attempt "bring order and meaning" to political conditions and events.¹⁷⁸ Postmodernists such as Walker, contend, however, that political theory is little more than a reflection of "an historically specific account of the nature, location and possibilities of political identity and community."¹⁷⁹ Morgenthau's assertion that theory brings order and meaning, and the postmodern claim that theory is merely a description, or historically contingent accounting of political conditions, appear to demonstrate entirely different understandings of the overall meaning of political theory and activity.

However, if one investigates beyond a rather limited interpretation of these texts, and begins to examine instead their philosophical assumptions and sources, the apparent

¹⁷⁸Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, p.3.

¹⁷⁹Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations*, *op.cit.*, p.15.

differences are in fact less than substantial. In reference to the example just cited, Morgenthau also contends that theorizing in international relations is problematic because it is aware of, and concerned with, historical contingency, and therefore it must 'get down' to the "fundamentals that are revealed only by the correlation of recent events with the more distant past and the perennial qualities of human nature underlying both."¹⁷⁸ Walker also recognizes the need to limit the emphasis of historical contingency because it leads to a fascination with and search for novelty where there is none, and ultimately overlooks the possibility of continuity.¹⁷⁹ Simply put, both Morgenthau and postmoderns, such as Walker, recognize that both continuity and contingency inform political theory. The methodology of postmoderns simply demands, however, that they deconstruct continuity as, or when, it is detected.

Not to favour Morgenthau's understanding of theory, but it does seem necessary to 'get down' to drawing correlations if one is to demonstrate even the possibility of continuity and similarity in political action or political analysis. These correlations can be found in the philosophical assumptions of Morgenthau and the postmoderns. It should be noted, however, that the task is not as straightforward as it might first appear. Morgenthau, on one hand, develops a particular philosophy of human nature which implicitly informs all of his insights regarding international politics, including the ethics of such action. For the most part, those postmoderns who do address the philosophical assumptions which inform their insights, only make explicit reference to those which justify their methodology by suggesting that it is inherently ethical. They appear somewhat reluctant to admit that 'traditional' philosophical thought has also informed their normative concerns. The notable exception to this situation can be found in the works of Campbell, Warner,

¹⁷⁸Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.* p.17.

¹⁷⁹Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations*, *op.cit.*, p.18.

and to a lesser extent, George. All make explicit reference to the philosophical insights of either Emmanuel Levinas or Martin Buber as being influential in their conception of the ethics of global politics. Given these tendencies, drawing correlations demands that Morgenthau's philosophy be compared with that of both Levinas and Buber.

According to Campbell, the philosophy of Levinas emphasizes the 'radical interdependence' of the intersubjective condition.¹⁸⁰ George explains this radical interdependence by claiming that "we are all Others somewhere to someone".¹⁸¹ This would seem to suggest that man is more an 'other' than a mere "knowing, self-conscious actor", as traditional Kantian philosophy appears to suggest.¹⁸² Notwithstanding the veracity of the Kantian interpretation, these postmoderns seem to suggest that, at least according to Levinas, political action should be understood from the perspective of the intersubjective condition rather than from a simple subjective perspective. In other words, political action reflects man 'in relation' to man, not just man acting in isolation.

Warner, however, appears to agree with Buber's contention that because man is simultaneously a 'self' and an 'other', his actions must be understood from both an atomistic and relational perspective. Simply put, understanding, and criticizing the political action of man must include not only a recognition or appreciation of his 'everyday and ordinary' experiences, as Campbell has suggested, it also requires some appreciation of his capabilities and limitations. From this perspective, the judgment of political action, and the eventual development or reform of an ethic of international politics, is lengthy and complex.

¹⁸⁰Campbell, *Politics Without Principle*, *op.cit.*, p.92.

¹⁸¹George, "Realist 'Ethics', International Relations and Post-modernism: Thinking Beyond the Egoism-Anarchy Thematic", *op.cit.*, p.210.

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, p.209.

At first glance, Morgenthau's consideration of the ethics of international politics seems to reflect an opposing viewpoint. His contention that all political action is influenced by man's basic nature suggests that man's actions reflect a particular model of the 'self', rather than reflecting man's relation with another 'self'. However, this interpretation does not do justice to Morgenthau's conception of human nature. Man's nature, consisting of biological, rational and spiritual dimensions makes man more than a knowing and self-conscious entity, acting in accordance with only reason and self-awareness. While Morgenthau would concur with postmodernists, and perhaps traditionalists, in seeing man as both knowing, or rational, and self-conscious, or affected by the physical state of being conscious, he would further stipulate that man is also a spiritual entity.

In asserting the spiritual dimension of man's nature, Morgenthau is also asserting, albeit implicitly, the existence of man's fundamental relationship to something which is beyond his 'self'. If the spiritual dimension of man is manifested in his inherent capacity to judge, as Morgenthau has suggested, then two conditions must be extant for this capacity to be inherent in man. The first is that something must exist which can be judged. The second pre-condition for judgment is the recognition of an ideal. Ostensibly, if something exists which can be judged, that judgment must be based on some criteria. That criteria, according to Spinoza, is some *a priori* notion of the ideal.¹⁸³ Presumably, the first condition can be met within the confines of 'self'; that is man could conceivably judge himself even if he existed in isolation from any 'other'. The second condition, however, demands the existence of that which is beyond the 'self'. Whether the ideal has been

¹⁸³MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, *op.cit.*, p.140. It should be noted that this is MacIntyre's interpretation of Spinoza's views on the nature of judgment. While it may not necessarily be consistent with Spinoza's actual beliefs, MacIntyre appears to have no argument with the assertion.

informed by some transcendental element, or by some process of socialization, it involves a recognition of that which is more than the 'self', and therefore external to it.¹⁸⁴

In contending that man's judgment of his own actions and those of others is based on his existence in the world, Morgenthau demonstrates an implicit recognition that judgment, the manifestation of man's spirituality, is made in accordance with his 'being in the world'.¹⁸⁵ For Morgenthau then, man's spirituality is to be found in his recognition of his relationship with, or connection to, the 'other'. Simply put, for Morgenthau, it is because man is 'in the world', that he is always related to the 'other', and as a result he is cognizant of the existence of that which is more than 'self'. It would seem then Morgenthau, Levinas and Buber concur in their views regarding how political action, and hence political man should be considered, which is in relation to the other rather than in isolation from the other. Given that all recognize the importance of the intersubjective condition, it is this recognition which provides them the basis for judgment when it is compared to a particular form of ideal political action.

For Levinas, the ideal intersubjective condition is, and the real condition should be, one in which there is no self/other dichotomy. In other words, rather than the intersubjective condition reflecting the relationship between self and other, this condition reflects a conception of self as other. Levinas contends, according to Peperzak, that the evidence for this assertion can be found in the everyday reality of "another facing me".¹⁸⁶ Campbell asserts that in this face-to-face encounter Levinas introduces the notion of associating "phenomenological intelligibility", in the form of the presence of the other, with

¹⁸⁴It should be noted that while Morgenthau never makes explicit reference to either the source or existence of this ideal, his concern with political action seems to infer that society, which includes religious influences, rather than divine guidance informs man's judgment.

¹⁸⁵Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *op.cit.*, p.168.

¹⁸⁶Adrian Peperzak, *To the Other* West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1993, p.19.

ethical responsibility.¹⁸⁷ Simply put, recognition of the presence of the other, is accompanied by responsibility to and for its presence. From this basis Levinas describes the intersubjective condition in ethical terms in the form of pre-original, or heteronomous responsibility. It should be noted, that although Levinas emphasizes the ethical nature of the intersubjective, and its Hebraic roots, he does not discount the importance of the Hellenic emphasis on the existence of the individual in the world. He only contends, somewhat acrimoniously, that concern with the existence of the individual alone, without some notion of responsibility to the other, leads to the possibility of unlimited and reasoned evil.¹⁸⁸ Consequently, man must accept some notion of ethical behaviour based on the ideal of responsibility for the existence of the 'face', or alterity, of the other. By supplementing the Hellenic tradition with the ethical concerns of the Hebraic tradition, Levinas not only infers that the former is lacking, but more importantly he implies that recognition of the latter moves man's relationship with the other towards the ideal. From this position, according to Warner, Levinas can accept no relationship, no intersubjective condition, which is less than the ideal as ethical.¹⁸⁹ Campbell, however, asserts that not only is Levinas cognizant of the existence of a less than ideal intersubjective condition, he is explaining both the nature of its creation, as well as a potential means to encourage the creation of an ideal intersubjective condition.

Buber, also acknowledges the reality of a less than ideal intersubjective condition. However, despite the fact that relationships between individual humans and nation-states are predominantly *I-it* in nature, Buber does concede that *I-thou* relationships between

¹⁸⁷Campbell, "The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics After the End of Philosophy" *op.cit.*, p.459.

¹⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p.458.

¹⁸⁹Warner, "Levinas, Buber and the Concept of Otherness in International Relations: A Reply to David Campbell" *op.cit.*, pp.114-16.

either are possible, yet rare. According to Warner, given this possibility, international or global political actions should attempt to know and understand the 'other' through the concept of response-ability. That is, the political action of individual political entities should recognize and respond to the needs, or call, of other political entities, as well as to its own strategic interests. The basis for this contention is, apparently, Buber's delineation of man's atomistic and relational existence. As such, Warner appears to recognize both the less than ideal character of international political action, and the possibility of developing political action which is more closely related to the ideal of an *I-thou* relationship where the individuals recognize the notion of heteronomous responsibility in their actions. Like Buber, however, he does not assert that complete achievement of this ideal is possible in the political context.

For Morgenthau, man's existence in the social world, and by extension in the political sphere, is fundamentally shaped by his awareness of his own insecurity. This assertion appears to place Morgenthau well within Levinas's conception of the Hellenic tradition of emphasizing the existence of the individual. Yet Morgenthau, like Buber and Levinas, asserts that the individual is, and should be, responsible for the other. Unlike Levinas, however, Morgenthau does not assert that this responsibility is pre-original. For Morgenthau, responsibility is associated with identity. In other words, while the ideal intersubjective condition may, in fact, be a replication of the pre-natal relationship where the presence of the other precedes identity, Morgenthau contends that in reality, or at least within the reality of the political sphere, it is identity which informs notions of responsibility. The political actor is concerned then not with his individual existence in the world, rather he is concerned with the existence of those with whom he identifies, or represents. In the current context, the political actor identifies with and represents the "physical, political, and cultural entity" which is the nation. As such, while Morgenthau recognizes an ideal where politics at the global level reflects the existence and interests of

an integrated supranational society rather than the interests of national societies, he insists that such a society does not yet exist, and political action must reflect this reality if it is to have any hope of moving toward the ideal.¹⁹⁰ To some extent, Morgenthau's delineation of responsible political action in the current context is strikingly similar to Buber's description of the existence of *I-it* relationships in the current intersubjective condition.

Although Levinas appears to focus almost exclusively on the existence of the ideal relationship in reality, he still sees the state as a key component of this relationship. According to Campbell, Levinas regards the state as the "highest achievement in the lives of western peoples".¹⁹¹ Levinas bases this assertion on the entry of a third party, or another 'other', to the face-to-face encounter. It is at this point that the political actor is faced with the dilemma of competing responsibilities, and it is in this regard that the state becomes the arbiter of competing responsibilities. A case in point, for Levinas, is the massacre of Palestinian refugees at Chatila and Sabra by Israeli forces. Apparently, when the other "attacks another neighbor, or treats him unjustly, what can you do?"¹⁹² Simply put, a state must determine which of the others is wrong and which is right, and respond accordingly. Consequently, where the state fails to arbitrate competing responsibilities successfully, it must be contested in the "name of our ethical responsibility to the other".¹⁹³ In other words if the state fails to respond to events in a successful manner it can and should be challenged. Interestingly, in the analysis of political practice at the international level it appears that Levinas, like Morgenthau and Buber, not only accepts but values the

¹⁹⁰Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, pp.548-50.

¹⁹¹Campbell, "The Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics After the End of Philosophy" *op.cit.*, p.466.

¹⁹²*Ibid.*, p.466.

¹⁹³*Ibid.*, p.467.

role of the state as defender and protector of the interests of the 'physical, political and cultural entity which is called a nation'.

This is an issue of some concern for postmodern international relations theorists. Given that deconstruction has exposed the inability of any sovereign entity, including the state, to act in an ethical fashion in the overall intersubjective condition, any assertion that the state can and does act with some notion of response-ability to the other must be called into question. Campbell calls Morgenthau's promotion of the national interest as an example of ethical foreign policy into question by claiming that it is a "clear instance of the *coup de force*" which asserts the fundamental and permanent nature of the state, ostensibly giving rise to a political ethic in which only the needs of the state are considered. Interestingly, however, when he recognizes in Levinas's assessment of Israeli foreign policy the same tendency to enlist the national interest as the basis of an ethical foreign policy decision he does not label it as an example of traditional theory's *coup de force*. Campbell draws on Levinas, and claims instead that given "the extreme sensitivity of one subjectivity to another" that is ethics, undergoes a "hardening of the skin" in the political sphere, this sensitivity is, of necessity, sometimes limited. It would seem that defending the national interest is justified only when it occurs as a result of the existence of pernicious ethical sclerosis. Campbell concludes his analysis of Levinas's conception of responsibility and its implications for political practice by 'supplementing' Levinas's work with that of Derrida

Given this somewhat embarrassing realization, Campbell suggests in a more recent work, that the understanding and analysis of ethical political practice should reflect a "*philosophical anthropology of everyday life on a global scale*".¹⁹⁴ Ostensibly, 'everyday

¹⁹⁴Campbell, "Political Prosaics, Transversal Politics, and the Anarchical World" *op.cit.*, p.24.

life' is not merely the day-to-day life of individuals, but rather it is a "transversal site of contestations", where the struggles of states, multinational organizations and individuals consistently challenge notions of secure borders and identity politics.¹⁹⁵ This is unquestionably yet another postmodern call to once again invoke Derrida, and the by now tired reminder of the ethical nature of deconstruction, which ultimately serves to limit the possibility of a straightforward and comprehensive analysis of foreign policy.¹⁹⁶

In the final analysis, Buber, Morgenthau and Levinas promote political practice at the international level which recognizes and acts in accordance with responsibility. Furthermore, each sees such an ethic of responsibility in international political action as either representing or promoting the ideal intersubjective condition. As a result, a comparative analysis of Campbell's assessment of American intervention in the Gulf War, and the former Yugoslavia, which rely upon either the philosophy of Levinas, or a philosophy which can be related to Buber's, and Morgenthau's views of American intervention in Vietnam could, potentially, yield similar results. Moreover, given the possibility of interpreting Morgenthau's conception of human nature as an attempt to develop philosophical anthropology, in the Buberian sense, Campbell's interest in the concept of philosophical anthropology presents an interesting and related possibility. Simply put, if apparently different methodological and philosophical preferences culminate in similar suggestions for the practice of foreign policy, as is the case with Levinas and Morgenthau, then it is possible to suggest that Morgenthau and Campbell share similar conceptions of ideal foreign policy objectives.

¹⁹⁵*Ibid.*, pp.23-24.

¹⁹⁶Campbell's recent promotion of the insights of the Russian literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin who stresses, among other things, the 'heteroglossia', or discordant voices, of life, seems to reflect Campbell's reluctance to continue his employment of the philosophic insights of Levinas to assess critically particular foreign policy events.

If this is the case, it would appear to lend some validity to Montaigne's contention that there is 'some similarity in all things'. Admittedly, Morgenthau would contend that the similarity was the result of the fact that because "the world is politically organized into nations, the national interest is indeed the last word in politics", while Campbell would argue that the developing global village has already begun to contest the political authority of the state, as well as the concept of national interest.¹⁹⁷ Regardless, their understanding of ideal foreign policy remains similar. Significantly, however, their views on how such an ideal might be achieved appear to be notably different.

An 'Ethos' of Intervention and Non-Intervention

It should be noted from the outset that neither Morgenthau nor Campbell see ethics, political or otherwise, as a set of rules to insure right conduct. Rather they both conceive of ethics as an *ethos*, or way of thinking. Morgenthau claims that ethics, understood in this manner, consists of "shared convictions and common values".¹⁹⁸ Campbell maintains that because man is "always already ethically situated", an *ethos*, or way of thinking, about something 'always and already' exists, whether that thinking is based on common convictions, common experience or more realistically, for Campbell, on man's being-in-the-world.¹⁹⁹ This 'always and already' ethic, however, is not necessarily obvious to analysts and practitioners of international relations, because of the limits of traditional thinking which has conceived of man as a sovereign, and isolated, entity. Still,

¹⁹⁷Hans Morgenthau, "'Another Great Debate': The National Interest of the United States" in *The American Political Science Review* (46:4) Dec., 1952, p.972.

¹⁹⁸Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, pp.540-8. These pages include Morgenthau's nine rules for diplomacy which, he claims, might provide the basic 'shared convictions and common values' upon which a world community and global political ethic must be founded.

¹⁹⁹Campbell, "The Politics of Radical Interdependence: A Rejoinder to Daniel Warner" *op.cit.*, p.131.

according to Campbell, an obvious *ethos* of global political action is emerging, and it is emerging because this traditional thinking regarding the thought and practice of international relations is being deconstructed. Thus, the emerging ethic of global politics is a reflection of the conditions of the post-Cold War era where all borders, theoretical and territorial, are being contested, which has resulted in man's claim to refugee status on a global scale.²⁰⁰ Contentions of this emerging ethic are, for Campbell, both normative and descriptive statements.

Morgenthau, on the other hand, argues that a world community is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for an *ethos* to exist regarding international relations, and more specifically regarding political and military intervention.²⁰¹ Given that the world continues to be divided into territorial political units, Morgenthau insists that these units continue to act with some recognition of their distinct identities and interests. In other words, states, as distinct though not unique political units, act with some recognition of their individual national interests. For Morgenthau, as with Campbell, this is both a normative and descriptive statement. That is, not only is this a description of how relations between states are conducted, but more importantly, this is how they should be conducted. The reason for Morgenthau's implied normative emphasis, however, is not that which it is assumed to be by his critics; that is, maintenance of the status quo. According to Morgenthau, states should act in this fashion because, in so doing they can, using the tools of diplomacy, facilitate the "radical transformation of the existing international society of sovereign nations into a supranational community of individuals."²⁰² Such a community

²⁰⁰Campbell, "Political Prosaics, Transversal Politics, and the Anarchical World" *op.cit.*, p.19.

²⁰¹Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.* p.497.

²⁰²*Ibid.*, p.482.

would presumably reflect, or at least come closer to reflecting, the ideal intersubjective condition, where man is considered to be an end in himself rather than a means to an end.

In comparing the two positions of Campbell and Morgenthau, there appears to be a number of similarities. They both demonstrate normative concerns. For Campbell, it is the hope that political actors can respond to the contestation of borders which is currently underway, and in so doing move toward a world where concern for the Other, rather than the self, or state, informs global politics. For Morgenthau, it is the hope that political actors will employ diplomatic, rather than military, tools to insure their interests, and in so doing move toward a less contested world. Campbell, it would seem, attaches value to contestation, whereas Morgenthau appears to seek its mitigation. Campbell, consequently, has no strategy for ensuring peaceful relations. Presumably, once political actors begin responding to the deconstructing nature of the post-Cold War era, concern for the Other, and thus peaceful coexistence, will follow of its own accord. As a result, he offers no means by which to arrive at a global ethic for political action as one is either natural or already apparent. From this perspective, humankind appears to have already stumbled upon the means of realizing an ideal intersubjective condition, and therefore no alternative plan is necessary in order to achieve this goal.

Unlike Campbell, Morgenthau, sees conflict, which is an inevitable associate of contestation, in a negative light. The existence of conflict, according to Morgenthau, carries with it the inherent danger of escalating hostilities. Given the unique dangers of existence in a nuclear environment, contestation, conflict and escalating hostilities are ultimately counter-productive to the creation of a world community of individuals. As a result, strategies are necessary to prevent conflict, thereby ensuring peaceful coexistence. Morgenthau eventually offers a particular means by which the international community can move toward the more ideal situation where an ethic of responsibility to the Other, rather than the nation, might exist. However, he remains adamant that these means can be found

within the current notions of national interest and diplomacy. Obviously, Morgenthau and Campbell have the same goal in mind. The methods of accomplishing that goal are, however, somewhat distinct. These distinctions have significant implications for political practice, and most notably in the area of intervention.

At first glance, theoretical differences in how an ethic of global politics can or should be achieved appears to have serious implications for all foreign policy decisions. Interestingly, if only the theoretical and philosophical aspects of international relations are addressed this seems to be confirmed. While Campbell and Morgenthau do seem to prefer understanding the theoretical aspect of international politics, they do offer analyses of American foreign policy decisions which focus on military intervention. For both, the military intervention of states in foreign political crises has serious implications for the development of a universal political ethic of responsibility.

For Campbell, contestation of the political authority of the state is often understandable and acceptable. Contestation of such authority is, according to most postmoderns, representative of the need to challenge the principle of sovereignty. Given that, for many, sovereignty is equivalent to autonomous political action, not only are challenges to the concept often justifiable, more importantly, support of the concept is ultimately unethical.²⁰³ It is from this perspective that Campbell examines American intervention and leadership in the Gulf War, and eventual intervention in the former Yugoslavia.

In *Politics Without Principle* Campbell offers a detailed analysis of the political, economic and military situations in Iraq, Kuwait, and the United States which resulted in military intervention. Generally speaking, he contends that each of these states acted in response to perceived threats to their national interest. The national interest, however, is

²⁰³Campbell, *Politics Without Principle*, *op.cit.*, pp.81-2.

not simply the protection of national territory. According to Campbell, the postmodern world of deterritorialization is the result of technological advances in communications, economics, and weaponry.²⁰⁴ Given that these advances allow political actors to have influences beyond national territories, the concept of state sovereignty is called into question. His criticism of American "tin-cup diplomacy" and military intervention is based on his contention that both were undertaken to defend the sovereignty of Kuwait.²⁰⁵ However, given that Kuwait responded to the Iraqi threat by taking advantage of the technological advances in economics and communications, it appeared to acknowledge, according to Campbell, the contestation of its territorial sovereignty. As a result, when the American government claimed that Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm were undertaken to reclaim Kuwait's territory and sovereignty, military intervention rather than responsibility to the 'other' was displayed as the ethic for international politics.

Given that the other in this case was, for Campbell, comprised of the individual soldiers and citizens of Iraq and Kuwait, rather than the government of either country, American military intervention and diplomacy in support of sovereignty is presented as being unethical. Campbell suggests that given the deterritorialization associated with technological advancements, moving the practice of international politics from military intervention to responsibility to individual others amounts to a "practical strategy to live with less anxiety, insecurity, and fear ...".²⁰⁶ He explains this 'practical strategy' by acknowledging that while the United States and its allies were appropriate in opposing the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Americans could have chosen to admit diplomatically, and perhaps publicly, that American foreign policy in the previous decade had caused a number

²⁰⁴*Ibid.*, pp.84-87.

²⁰⁵*Ibid.*, p.83.

²⁰⁶*Ibid.*, p.93. James Der Derian makes this statement in "Videographic War" in *Alphabet City*, 1991.

of military and economic problems for both countries.²⁰⁷ If American acceptance of this responsibility would have facilitated the withdrawal of Iraqi military forces during the five month period of diplomatic interaction, Americans may have been able to recognize the need and value of heteronomous responsibility as the ethic of global political action.

Overall, for Campbell, Americans have attached a "moral certitude" to the concept of defending national sovereignty rather than the acceptance of responsibility for the results of its policies of the past.²⁰⁸ In order to overcome this kind of foreign policy, he suggests that states should seek to engage in political acts which affirm life. As such, foreign policy would be sensitive to the existence of ambiguity and contingency in global politics, and refrain from developing military solutions to address the crises of other states. According to Campbell, "[R]esponding to the economic deprivation and political persecution of refugees by ... deploying military forces on multilateral humanitarian missions under multinational command" would facilitate the development of a universal ethic of responsibility to the other.²⁰⁹ Surprisingly, Campbell approves of the continued existence of military forces. However, given that the only role to which he acknowledges they can be assigned is humanitarian missions, he appears to assume that no other role will present itself in the future of global politics.

American intervention in the former Yugoslavia, however, suggests that although Campbell sees diplomatic activity which is cognizant of ambiguity and contingency as facilitating the establishment of an ethic of responsibility to the other, he severely criticizes American diplomatic actions in resolving the Yugoslavian crisis. Apparently, according to Campbell, much of the current crisis has resulted from the social and political problems which are associated with a growing demand for political independence in essentially

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*, p.94.

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*, p.93.

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*, p.99.

nationalistic communities.²¹⁰ However, because multiculturalism has existed within these communities for centuries and a number of individuals do not object to its continued existence, political actors, both local and foreign, fear that such a reality would threaten the possibility of autonomous political action by the new states. According to Campbell, a number of American political actors contend that the long existence of multiculturalism is often considered to be the dominant reason for the current "playing out of ancient and entrenched animosities" in several nations.²¹¹ In consequence, the Clinton administration has "deliberately shifted its characterization of the conflict so as to justify its relative inaction".²¹² In so doing, the administration has supported the concept of sovereignty and autonomous political action rather than the call of the 'other' in its development of the Dayton Accord and the deployment of NATO forces to enforce it.

Generally speaking, Campbell's criticism of the military and diplomatic aspects of American foreign policy are based on his contention that they are developed and enforced to support the 'moral certitude' attached to the concept of national sovereignty, both domestically and abroad. As such, American foreign policy does not appear to seek to 'affirm life', and as a result it does not view heteronomous responsibility as an actual or possible ethic for global politics. Morgenthau's criticism of American intervention in Vietnam similarly contests continued support of the inherent 'moralism' of military intervention. Admittedly, the linguistic differences between the two theorists problematizes drawing further similarities. Regardless of the differences, it does become obvious that

²¹⁰David Campbell, "Violent Performances: Identity, Sovereignty, Responsibility" in *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (eds.), Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996, p.172. According to Campbell, during the Cold War "the communist leaderships did not suppress nationalistic identifications, but rather enshrined and used them for the futherance of their authority."

²¹¹*Ibid.*, p.172.

²¹²*Ibid.*, p.173.

while Campbell criticizes the continued support of the moral certitude attached to the concept of national sovereignty, Morgenthau criticized the moralism that was attached to military operations which were undertaken to in fact support a supposed national interest. While both opposed the tendency of political actors to 'moralize', they appear to have contrasting views regarding the basis of that tendency. A closer examination, however, suggests something rather different.

For Morgenthau international politics reflect the struggles for power by individual nations. He admits that although all individuals, including political actors, may seek to ensure freedom and security because of religious or philosophic ideals, this is accomplished because of the ideals' own "inner force, ... divine intervention, or through the natural development of human affairs".²¹³ However, when the achievement of these goals is attempted through international politics, power is used to do so. Power is apparently employed through three types of foreign policy development which include support of the current balance of power in the international system, imperialism, and prestigious actions. Although each of these influence different aspects of domestic and foreign policy they are similar in one respect. Given that they may either increase or decrease the overall power of the nation, they ultimately effect the essence of all political action which is the idea of interest. In other words, whether foreign policies seek to support the concept of sovereignty and current, or reformed, political situations, they reflect some conception of the interests of the 'physical, social and cultural' entity known as the nation.²¹⁴

With this particular perception of the relationship between power, an addendum of human nature, and the national interest Morgenthau criticizes American military intervention in Vietnam. Essentially, given that national power, can be enhanced by

²¹³Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op.cit.*, p.27.

²¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp.8-9.

political actions of prestige, Morgenthau demands that political actors should attempt to insure that foreign policy decisions, especially those involving military deployment, should be consistent with both national capabilities and the interests of the nation. Overall he contends that military intervention in Vietnam was consistent with neither. Given that Diem's early government was totalitarian and repressive in many respects, there was no overall public support for military attacks on northern territories. As a result, hostilities eventually developed into guerrilla warfare, and American military intervention in such a crisis threatened its own interests and ignored its capabilities.²¹⁵

The development of guerrilla warfare tactics by the Viet Cong was devastating for American foreign policy objectives for two reasons. Given that guerrillas emerge suddenly, conduct "hit-and-run" operations, and quickly return to the general population, fewer individuals are required to insure successful operations. As a result, American military doctrine demanded that "ten soldiers were necessary to contain one guerrilla".²¹⁶ This assumption demanded that the government of either South Vietnam or the United States would be forced into increasing military deployment. However, given the lack of overall public support for the government by the South Vietnamese, and the availability of American military and economic resources, the seemingly necessary increase in military deployment was undertaken by the Americans. Morgenthau also contends that once the increases were initiated the American government attempted to justify these actions to Americans by expounding their moral nature. Simply put, increasing the deployment of American soldiers to South Vietnam was moral because it was necessary to prevent the

²¹⁵Hans Morgenthau, *Vietnam and the United States* Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1965, p.24, pp.40-1, p.19-20.

²¹⁶John M. Newman, *JFK and Vietnam* New York: Warner Books Inc., 1992, pp.116-17.

spread of communism.²¹⁷ In the final analysis, these political actions regarding military intervention appeared to have threatened American capabilities and national interest, which seems to have demonstrated that military resources and economic interests were the primary components of the national interest, which state representatives should protect. However, it should be noted that while Morgenthau acknowledged that the national interest was comprised of different components over time, it was, in fact, representative of the needs, or call, of the individuals of the nation-state. As a result, if state representatives failed to recognize or act in the national interest, they, in effect, failed to accept their responsibility to the other as the basis of political action.

In the analysis of American foreign policy regarding military intervention both Campbell and Morgenthau emphasize the lack of, and need for, political action which is conducted in accord with an ethic of responsibility. For Morgenthau, it is responsibility to the needs of individuals within the nation-state. For Campbell, based on his interest in recent international and intra-national conflicts, it is responsibility to victims or those who suffer as a result of some policy a state may enact. As a result of these views, Morgenthau analyzes foreign policy from the perspective of its service or benefit to the national interest, while Campbell's focus points to the many instances of human, political, and socio-economic damage which has resulted from traditional foreign policy options which reflect the national interest. Postmodernists have argued that such perspectives demonstrate the ethical paucity in most foreign policies, and contemporary international relations. However, rather than merely demonstrating any existent ethical flaws, the postmodern advancement of the concept of heteronomous responsibility also suggests that if current political actors cannot act with regard to responsibility to the other of national origin, they might be equally unable to act with responsibility to the universal other.

²¹⁷Morgenthau, *Vietnam and the United States*, *op.cit.*, p.84.

Conclusion

Both Morgenthau and Campbell are compelled to address the current status of a global political ethic which is not rule-oriented. Simply put, Morgenthau asserts that none currently exists, but one is possible, if the national interest continues to be defended through diplomatic, rather than military, means. Campbell asserts that a global ethic of deterritorialization exists which can be enhanced through further theoretical and practical deconstruction which may result, ultimately, in the practice of deterritorialized responsibility. It seems then that Morgenthau is positing the advent of the ideal by way of limited responsibility and limited intervention, while Campbell is contending the advent of the ideal by way of unlimited responsibility and the elimination of military intervention. Once again their goals appear to be the same in that both acknowledge that the creation of an international or global political ethic is possible, only their methods are different.

In examining their criticisms of American policy regarding political and military intervention in foreign conflicts, these opposing strategies become apparent. Although they appear to be opposing suggestions for foreign policy options, when investigated, they criticize and promote many of the same foreign policy choices. The reason for this similarity, it could be argued, is that while the state may be in the process of being deconstructed as an autonomous actor, it, as opposed to all other actors and contestors of the state, is still invested with political and military authority. Consequently, from either a realist or postmodernist perspective, the actions of the state must be emphasized if the achievement of ideal political ethics is possible.

To some extent, Campbell acknowledges the continued existence of this authority in his critique of American involvement in the Gulf War, but appears to assume that it is being forcefully and continually contested by the global forces of territorial deconstruction. In promoting an ethic of responsibility to the national interest Morgenthau views intervention, as opposed to defence, as being inherently unethical. That is, it usually

contravenes the national interest. As the inevitable consequence of the growth and continued existence of both the nation and the state, the national interest according to Morgenthau is actually the interests of the nation, not the state. The state, as primary political actor, acts in the interests of that which gives it authority, which is the 'political and cultural entity called the nation'. Campbell, citing the transversal contestations to the concept of the state, sees the national interest as a principle appropriate for an era long since past. In keeping with that notion of an archaic principle, Campbell contends that the term national interest was, and still is, synonymous with the interests of the state. As a result, political action is only responsible to the state, rather than the universal other.

Despite Campbell's fundamental misinterpretation of Morgenthau's conception of national interest, Morgenthau and Campbell do share a common conception of ideal political action. Given the methodological and stylistic differences between them, however, it is, without doubt, incredibly difficult to recognize or designate any similarities at first glance. The discipline of international relations seems to have been inundated by the same type of problem throughout its rather short history. Apparently, both theorists and students of international relations are either naturally opposed to certain methods and styles, or are coerced into developing such opposition.

Whether both or either of these assumptions is accurate, they are equally irrelevant. The basic problem for the discipline is that such favouritism, natural or developed, encourages theoretical misinterpretations, as well as a reluctance to incorporate empirical analyses of foreign policy into understanding the practice and ethics of international relations. As a result of these weaknesses, or failures, the discipline has become involved in the current 'great debate' between postmoderns and realists. While such debates may be the inevitable result of intradisciplinary differences, an abundance of imagined differences appears to turn the existence of differences into dilemmas.

The common ground shared by Morgenthau and Campbell regarding political ethics is that in the current context they are less than ideal. Given that both have stated that ideal political action should promote and replicate peace, thereby affirming life rather than institutions, both agree that some degree of reform to political reality is fundamental. Nonetheless, postmodern as well as realist theorists have failed to see these similarities. That reality is unfortunate for both the discipline and practice of international relations. In further developing, albeit unintentionally, Morgenthau's conception of a political ethic where responsibility to individuals is ideal, postmodernists have endeavoured to encourage the application of interdisciplinary thought and critical philosophies. While they have successfully done so, they have simultaneously encouraged intradisciplinary dissent and division, and failed to appreciate the critical aspects of political philosophy. Similarly, in being reluctant to investigate postmodern perceptions of the current ethic of international relations, traditional theorists have also succeeded in failing to illustrate the existence of similarities in postmodern and traditional conceptions of political ethics which may encourage a more comprehensive understanding of the ethics of both current and future international relations.

The presence of both approaches have encouraged and resulted in the increase and approval of theoretical discourse within the discipline, which appears to emphasize the existence of difference, rather than patterns of similarity, in the practice and perception of international politics. As a result, when attempting to construct foreign and defence policy, political actors are compelled to either confront or ignore the overall dilemma. Given that they often appear to choose the latter, perhaps the exposition of similarity would be of eventual, and occasional, benefit to both the theory and practice of international relations.

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