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**POLITICAL REALISM, FREUD, AND HUMAN NATURE
IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Robert Schütt

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Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Durham
School of Government and International Affairs

2009



18 SEP 2009

ABSTRACT

Political realism has enjoyed a renaissance in International Relations (IR). Recent studies have provided insightful accounts of its timeless virtues and philosophical depth. Although the concept of human nature has long been the philosophical basis of realism, it has now become a largely discredited idea. The thesis, *Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature in International Relations*, provides an important re-examination of the concept of human nature in realist international-political theory with special reference to one of the truly consequential figures of Western thought: Sigmund Freud. The thesis questions whether human nature is really dead and also asks whether human nature ought to be dead. Examining a variety of theorists from Morgenthau to Mearsheimer commonly invoked as classical and post-classical realism's foremost proponents, the thesis shows that contemporary realism has not eliminated the concept of human nature from its study of world politics. Further, the thesis offers a powerful argument for the necessity of a sophisticated theory of human nature within realism, seeing Freud as offering the most appropriate starting point. This study will interest IR theorists and historians of international thought as well as Freud scholars.

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not previously been accepted for any degree and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any degree. It is the result of my own research. Sources are acknowledged and a bibliography is appended.

Parts of Chapter 2 have been published as:

Robert Schuett. (2007). Freudian Roots of Political Realism: the Importance of Sigmund Freud to Hans J. Morgenthau's Theory of International Power Politics. *History of the Human Sciences*, 20(4):53-78.

Robert Schuett. (In press). Classical Realism, Freud, and Human Nature in International Relations. *History of the Human Sciences*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Schuett', written in a cursive style.

Durham City, 2009, Robert Schütt

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my two doctoral supervisors, John Williams and Peter Stirk. Throughout, they have provided me with a stimulative climate, personal and academic freedom allowing me to pursue different things at different times, and with adamant support and invaluable advice. I cannot thank John and Peter enough.

The last few years in England have been consequential. One of the many pleasures has been getting to know scholars whom I probably would have never met, had I not decided doing graduate studies. I wish to single out Chuck Beitz, Chris Brown, Anoush Ehteshami, James Good, Clemens Jabloner, Kurt Leube, Sebastiano Maffettone, Stephen P. Turner, Michael C. Williams, and Klaus Zeleny. Without implicating them in my argument, I thank them for their support and advice at various stages.

I wish to thank my parents, Manfred and Ilona Schütt, for their continuing and generous support. I also thank my parents-in-law, Josef and Marianne Hitzenberger, for their share of support. Further, I wish to acknowledge Jenny Sadgrove, Harry Rowe, Wolfgang Schmidbauer, and John Switzer for providing help at difficult times.

Yet I do owe my biggest debts of gratitude to my wife, Susanne. I will be forever grateful for Susanne's support, advice, tolerance, humour, and optimism throughout the last several years at Durham and the last decade. Without Susanne, I probably would have never written this thesis.

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POLITICAL REALISM AND THE STRANGE DEATH OF HUMAN NATURE

International relations may be the ‘realm of recurrence and repetition’ (Wight 1966:26). Yet something fundamental has changed in the realm of realist international-political theory. I mean the almost dichotomous division of realism into two camps: classical realism/neorealism (Keohane 1986c), human nature realism/structural realism (Mearsheimer 2001), or evil realism/tragic realism (Spiras 1996). I will refer to this ideal-typical division as classical realism/post-classical realism. It signifies a profound rift that runs down the middle of realism. On the one hand, there are the Morgenthauians/Niebuhrans grounding the origins and necessities of *Realpolitik* in an *animus dominandi* or in human sinfulness. On the other hand, there are post-classical realists such as John Herz (1951) and Kenneth Waltz (1979) arguing that it is irrelevant whether human nature is good/bad, social/asocial, or peaceful/aggressive, for the security dilemma inherent in an anarchical international environment makes the Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes* a primary fact of the relations among separate political communities. Save for a few exceptions, post-classical realism’s socio-structural or third-image approach has eclipsed the human nature/psychological or first-image approach of classical realism. Few disagree that realism ‘got rid of the first image’ (Guzzini 1998:127).

This thesis challenges the view that post-classical realist international political thought has no basis in underlying conceptions of human nature. Is human nature really as dead as post-classicals would have us believe? I will argue it is not dead. My argument that post-classical realism still relies on largely hidden assumptions about human nature naturally leads to the second main research question. If human nature is not dead, should we purify realism from the tutelage of human nature? Or should we bring ‘back’ the concept of human nature to the centre of realist international-political theorising? I will argue that human nature ought not to be dead.

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This thesis is not only concerned with the past and present of the concept of human nature (is-question) as well as with its future role in realism (ought-question). My theoretical concern with the past, present, and future of the concept of human nature in realism is tied to one of the truly consequential thinkers of Western thought: Sigmund Freud, a terribly understudied figure in International Relations (IR). In light of its scope, analyses, and arguments, this thesis is a study at the intersection of political theory and IR. It concerns one of the most fascinating but most controversial political philosophies of international relations (realism) in relation to one of the most fascinating but equally controversial politico-theoretical concepts (human nature) with special reference to one of the most fascinating thinkers of Western thought (Freud).

I will now expand on the two research questions—Is Human Nature Dead? Ought Human Nature to be Dead?—as well as on this thesis's special reference to Freud. In the subsequent section, I will provide an outline of the structure, methods, and arguments.

Is human nature dead? Ought it to be dead? Where's Freud?

We have reasons to doubt that human nature is really dead in contemporary realism. From the viewpoint of the history of realism, the division of realism along the human-nature/international-structure line seems questionable. For much too long have realists based their international-political theories upon certain conceptions of human nature. In fact, not only realists have used assumptions about human nature as philosophical backdrop. As Martin Wight (1991:25) noted aptly: 'All political theory presupposes some kind of theory about human nature, some basic anthropological theory' (see also Pennock & Chapman 1977; Forbes & Smith 1981; Berry 1986). But realists have been—across the millennia—particularly drawn to the concept of human nature. They have been quite overt about these assumptions. We can agree with Roger Spegele's (1996:129) observation that the fact that realists have been 'traditionally committed to some concept of human nature will hardly come as a surprise to international relationists familiar with the writings of

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Thucydides, St Augustine, Machiavelli, and Hobbes, or of such modern realists as Morgenthau, Butterfield, Niebuhr, and Isaiah Berlin' (see also Smith 1986; Forde 1992; Tellis 1996; Doyle 1997; Boucher 1998; Donnelly 2000; Clinton 2007b).

The ancient and intimate relationship between realism and the concept of human nature, however, has been disturbed. Post-classical realists have kept repeating that human nature is an irrelevant concept. The turn away from realism's concern with human nature is predominantly one of Kenneth Waltz's accomplishments (or mistakes). Both his *Man, the State, and War* (2001[1959]) and *Theory of International Politics* (1979) have helped to silence Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style realism which was already ailing due to the 'behavioral revolt' of the 1950s/60s (Vasquez 1998:39). Over the course of a few decades, evil realism got replaced by tragedy realism (Spiras 1996). But the implications of post-classical realism's move away from the concept of human nature towards the concepts of the security dilemma and international structure have been more profound than the quarrels about different 'images' would suggest.

Post-classical realism's move away from human nature has implied a significant shift in terms of the philosophical basis of realism. Gone were the times when realists readily agreed with Morgenthau's (1967[1948]) dictum that 'Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature' (4). What used to be the genuine 'political realism' is now being dismissed as the playing field of a handful of antiquated so-called 'human nature realists' (Mearsheimer 2001) or 'biological realists' (Donnelly 2000). What used to be one of the main ingredients, if not *the* main ingredient, of any genuine realist international-political theory, the concept of human nature has become an essentially discredited notion (Waltz 1979:117; Keohane 1986b:164-165; Shimko 1992; Frankel 1996a:xiv-xviii; Tellis 1996:51ff.; Mearsheimer 2001:17-18; Donnelly 2000:7-8; Schweller 2003:325-329; Dunne & Schmidt 2005:172-176).

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But it seems strange that a meagre half-century of post-classical realism really ‘got rid’ of a concept which had been *the* philosophical backdrop of realism for more than two millennia. To hypothesise that human nature is not really dead seems not wide of the mark. Leading post-classical realists do engage in ‘human nature talk’. None other than the ‘father of structural realism’ (Schweller 1998:2) confessed some intellectual ties to Niebuhrian assumptions about human nature. Waltz (1986) admitted that

The influence behind my preference [balanced-power] is partly Immanuel Kant and partly Reinhold Niebuhr. Kant feared that a world government would stifle liberty, become a terrible despotism, and in the end collapses into chaos. Niebuhr drew the conclusion from his *dim view of human nature* that domestically and internationally the ends of security and decency are served better by balanced than by concentrated power. I distrust hegemonic power, whoever may wield it, because it is so easily misused. (341, italics added)

Preferring a balanced-power system over a hegemonic system is a matter of politico-theoretical taste. But what shall we make of the fact that Waltz brings in human nature when he needs a justification for a fundamental normative proposition?

Other post-classicals also turn to human nature when it seems expedient. Neoclassical realist Randall Schweller (1999) argued that

no one really believes that the ‘haves’ will voluntarily hand over their riches to the ‘have-nots’. There is no historical precedent for such altruism on a global scale, and, no matter how much we all communicate with each other in the future, *I cannot imagine that human nature will change so dramatically in my lifetime.* (148, italics added)

Again are we being presented with a human nature-driven line of argument—by someone who is said to have contributed to realism’s move away from the concern with human nature. It indicates that the concept of human nature is not as dead in contemporary realist discourses of international relations as post-classicals have claimed.

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Waltz and Schweller, however, are not some high-profile statistical outliers among post-classical realists. This has been the argument of a recent book-length study. Annette Freyberg-Inan (2004) has shown that post-classicals still make assumptions about human nature and that these assumptions are constitutive of their respective international-political theories. It is an impressive study that demonstrates how realists have conceptualised human nature across the millennia. It marks a substantial contribution to our understanding of realism. For it is correct when she writes that ‘Given the vast amount of material published that employs, defends, or criticises realist theory, it is striking how few authors ever even address the psychological foundations of realism’ (4n.32). Still, her account of classical and post-classical realist assumptions about human nature must be taken with a pinch of salt for two reasons.

First, the analysis of individual realists seems, at times, superficial. This can be explained by the large quantity of realists under analysis, which implies sacrificing analytical depth for breadth, but this does not exempt from criticism. Waltz is, for instance, quoted for holding the view that ‘our miseries are ineluctably the product of our natures. The root of all evil is man, and thus he is himself the root of the specific evil, war’ (73). This is misleading. Waltz is merely referring to first image pessimists such as St. Augustine and Niebuhr. This raises the second problem. The work is a damning indictment of both realist conceptions of human nature as well as of the whole tradition of realism. Realists across the millennia, critics have said, have been biased in favour of ‘destructive’ aspects of human nature; and this bias has helped stifling the chances for peaceful coexistence (Freyberg-Inan 2004, 2006). But what does ‘destructive’ mean? Unless the human nature question is being raised anew, the assumptions about human nature of both classical and post-classical realists will continue to be subject to what Mearsheimer (2001:23) rightly called ‘realism bashing’. Even more so, if realists continue to remain agnostic *vis-à-vis* the concept of human nature.

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The *causa* Freud also requires us to raise the human nature question. We know that 20th-century classical realists built their international-political theories on certain conceptions of human nature; and we may believe that post-classical realists still rely on assumptions about human nature. Against this background, it seems not too hypothetical that the nature and intellectual origins of some of these realists' assumptions about human nature are of Freudian provenance. Such a line of enquiry has not been taken up yet. Surely, due to increasing interest in our disciplinary history, increasing awareness of the fruitful relationship between political theory and IR, and increasing dissatisfaction with Waltzian-style structural realism, we have seen a recent renaissance of interest in classical realism. Morgenthau has received most attention (Lebow 2003; Mazur 2004; Hacke *et al.* 2005; Williams 2005; Mazur 2006; Russell 2007; Shilliam 2007; Williams 2007; Cozette 2008; Scheuerman 2009), followed by Herz (Stirk 2005; Hacke & Puglierin 2007; Booth & Wheeler 2008; Puglierin 2008) and Niebuhr (Elie 2007; McKeogh 2007; Thompson 2007; Lovin 2008). This renewed engagement has impressively shown that these realists help illuminate a wide range of analytical and moral/ethical dilemmas that occupy the minds of post-9/11 IR theorists and foreign-policy makers.

Yet this otherwise insightful literature has left gaps. It has not looked into the intellectual relationships between realists and Freud. To remain with realism's 'group leader' (Rosenthal 1991:12), the literature devoted to Morgenthau's intellectual family-tree is impressive. Recent studies have shown how Morgenthau's realism was influenced by thinkers such as Aristotle (Lang 2007a), Hans Kelsen (Koskenniemi 2006), Abraham Lincoln (Ferrell 2006), Reinhold Niebuhr (Shinn 2004), Friedrich Nietzsche (Frei 2001), Carl Schmitt (Scheuerman 2007a), Hugo Sinzheimer (Scheuerman 2008a), the Sophists (Johnson 1996), and Max Weber (Turner & Mazur in press). I do not question these trajectories, but I hypothesise that Freud, too, had influenced Morgenthau.

It seems puzzling but perhaps understandable why Freud has escaped much attention. Every now and then, Freud has cropped up in the context of a potential

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Morgenthau/Freud connection; often with regard to Morgenthau's unpublished German 1930 manuscript 'Über die Herkunft des Politischen aus dem Wesen des Menschen [On the Derivation of the Political from the Nature of Man]' (see Frei 2001; Koskenniemi 2001:448-449; Lebow 2003:291-292; Molloy 2004:16; Scheuerman 2009:37-38). But this has not led to any substantial commentary, partly because of Morgenthau's own Freud verdict. Morgenthau (1978) admitted that he toyed with Freudian concepts but that he soon realised 'the impossibility of accounting for the complexities and varieties of political experience with the simplicities of a reductionist theory' (67). Why then bother about Freud? Because some Freudian traces may have survived.

It seems unlikely that a thinker like Morgenthau, who was steeped in the tradition of German and Continental thought (Honig 1996), shows no intellectual ties to Freud. The same applies to several other classical and post-classical realists. I, therefore, hypothesise not only that the concept of human nature is not dead in contemporary realism but also that the assumptions about human nature of these realists may be—to varying degrees of explicitness and consciousness—of Freudian provenance. The literature backs such hypothesis. Although scattered, cursory, and brief, it has been pointed out that there may be some Freudian elements in the international-political theories of E.H. Carr (Johnston 1967:878), John Herz (Ashley 1981:226), George F. Kennan (Costigliola 1997:1323; Christenson 1986:350n.17), Walter Lippmann (Steel 1980), Carl Schmitt (Carty 1995), and also Max Weber (McIntosh 1970; Strong 1987). This thesis examines in greater depth such potential links to Freud.

This thesis's special focus on Freud requires us to dwell a bit further on what seems a strange neglect of Freud in our discipline. It seems unthinkable that 20th-century classical realists as well as post-classicals have had no intellectual ties to the creator of psychoanalysis. These realists have been born, raised, educated and worked in the 'Freudian century' (Thurschwell 2000:1) or 'era of Freud' (Elliott 1998a:3). Despite the continuing Freud controversies (Zaretsky 2004:323-344; Gomez 2005), few disagree that Freud has

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had an ‘enormous impact on Western culture in the twentieth century’ (Billington 1998:ix). And, in allusion to the (in)famous 1993 *Time* cover story, ‘Is Freud dead?’ (Gray *et al.*), we can say that Freud is not dead.

Freud may be not dead, but he is terribly understudied in IR. This puts us in a puzzling situation *vis-à-vis* other disciplines. Freud’s impact has been enormous across the sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities. Comparable with Darwin and Marx, Freud’s intellectual and cultural impact was already two decades after his death virtually ‘beyond description’ (Kazin 1957:13). To the present day, Freud’s ontogenetic and phylogenetic insights continue to ‘pervade our intellectual life and culture, and influence our everyday thinking about ourselves, others and the world in which we live’ (Elliott 1998a:2). It is not wide of the mark to claim that ‘No one thinker of the twentieth century...has so impregnated contemporary consciousness, permeating every facet of economic, social, and intellectual life’ (Johnston 2000[1972]:399-400). Save IR, Freud has provoked major controversies and debates in virtually all academic subjects. Freud has been debated, celebrated, and ridiculed by anthropologists (Wallace 1983), art/literary/film theorists (Kaplan 1998), economists (Goodwin 2000), historians (Gay 1998), legal theorists (Ehrenzweig 1971), philosophers (Ricoeur 1970; Wollheim & Hopkins 1982), philosophers of science (Grünbaum 1984), moral philosophers/ethicists (Wallwork 1991), sociologists (Elliott 2004; Manning 2005), and by theologians (Homans 1970). These engagements with Freud have led to the emergence of fascinating sub-disciplines such as psycho-analytic sociology (Bocock 1977), psycho-analytic jurisprudence (Ehrenzweig 1971), psychohistory/psychobiography (Erikson 1958), and a psycho-analytic approach to international relations (Volkan 2004).

Yet Freud is not a figure of the margins. He may be in IR (unjustified as it is) but not in other disciplines, including disciplines closely related to IR such as political science, economics, jurisprudence, and sociology. The impact of Freud has been deep and wide. We know that one of the most ‘eminent of political scientists’ (Eulau & Zlomke 1999:76)

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was one of the earliest importers of Freud to American political theory (Sunshine 1993). Harold D. Lasswell based his (international-) political theorising upon Freudian assumptions about human nature (Birnbach 1962:156-176) and recognised that the ‘spectacular and influential nature of Freud’s work...is of more general application to practical problems of political research and political practice than is usually understood’ (Lasswell 1951[1930]:17-18). In economics, John Maynard Keynes made extensive use of Freudian insights, although in a largely concealed manner as Keynes knew that professional economists were not showing a too great overt appreciation *vis-à-vis* Freud in these times (Winslow 1986; Winslow 1989). Unlike Keynes, the great Hans Kelsen concerned himself overtly with Freud’s individual and group psychology (Kelsen 1924). We now know that the founder of the Viennese school of law was both intellectually and personally attracted to Freud (Jablonek 1998).

Talcott Parsons also drew from Freud (Elliott 2004:22; Manning 2005:96-116). One of the most influential sociologists (Goddard & Nexon 2005:15), Parsons was completely aware of Freud’s significance. He recognised that Freud is one of the ‘great founders of modern social science theory’ (Parsons & Shils 1962[1951]:52) and he once rhetorically asked whether ‘the sociologist can do without the insights of psychoanalysis’ (Parsons 1962[1950]:62). To paraphrase Parsons: No, sociologists couldn’t. Freud has become a central part of the ‘culture of sociology’. As Immanuel Wallerstein, protagonist of structuralist world-systems theory (Wallerstein 2004), observed only recently:

Freud has in fact been well incorporated into the culture of sociology. Freud’s topology of the psyche—the id, ego and superego—has long been something we use to provide the intervening variables that explain how it is that Durkheim’s social facts are internalized inside individual consciousnesses. We may not all use Freud’s exact language, but the basic idea is there. In a sense, Freud’s psychology is part of our collective assumptions. (1999:9)

This suggests that Freud is perhaps also part of realism’s collective assumptions.

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Freud's impact has been profound. The psycho-analytical conception of human nature has transformed modern science and social sciences and demanded new methodological and psychological foundations (Ruitenbeek 1962; Taylor 1979; Rosenberg 2008; Weinert 2009). Likewise, Freud has left his marks in contemporary social and political thought (Rieff 1959; Johnston 1965; Roazen 1969; Abramson 1984; Anderson 1993; Drassinower 2003). We do find Freudians among liberals, Marxists, conservatives, feminists, postmodernists, and—strangely enough—also among fascists (Roazen 2003). In light of Freud's omnipresence in Western society, culture, and thought, the neglect of Freud in IR seems puzzling. It is hard to believe that there are no intellectual links between realists and Freud in matters human nature. The *causa* Freud, therefore, is a promising reference point regarding the wider question of whether human nature is really dead in contemporary realism.

This raises this thesis's second research question: Ought the concept of human nature to be dead in contemporary realism? It is the natural follow-up question of the is-question. Based on my reading of a variety of realists commonly invoked as classical realism's and post-classical realism's foremost proponents, I will argue that the concept of human nature is by no means dead in contemporary realism. I will also argue that these assumptions are not only constitutive of these realists' respective international-political theories but also that these assumptions are—to varying degrees of depths and explicitness—of Freudian provenance. Yet, regardless of whether these realists' intellectual sub-structures are Freudian or not, the is-question raises a series of other questions. If human nature is not dead, we must ask where realism should go from there. Should we aim for realist international-political theories that are purified of the concept of human nature?

Or should we, rather than attempting to perfect the Waltzians, recognise the impossibility and/or undesirability of theorising the international-political without an explicit conception of human nature? Were those attempts by post-classicals to get rid of

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human nature sensible in the first place? Is it possible to detach the international-political from human nature? Should we overtly and proactively defend the concept of human nature as a central component of realism? Regardless of whether the ought-question is being answered in the positive or negative, the result will have important implications about the future of realism, about its philosophical basis, about its nature, and about how we understand realism. It will also impact on wider IR theory. I will answer the ought-question in the negative. The concept of human nature ought not to be dead. The politico-philosophical basis for realism must be: human nature or, as I will refer to it, the concept of the Realist Man.

This brings us back to Freud. My argument for the continuing significance of the concept of human nature in contemporary realism and for the intimate relationship between realist international-political theorising and the concept of human nature raises a further question. If the Realist Man ought to be the sole politico-philosophical basis of realism, what is a useful conception of the Realist Man? In this regard, Freud offers a most appropriate starting point. Freud is not a genuine political philosopher but his concerns, writings, and themes have gone beyond the usual enquiries of a neurologist. For instance, in *Totem and Taboo* (1913), Freud has presented us with a social contract theory-style explanation of the origins of political communities. Freud was not heavily concerned with archetypical politico-philosophical concepts such as justice and legitimacy, but he was fascinated with the intricacies of the psychological ‘sources of social order’ (Rieff 1959:222).

Freud has been useful to social/political theorists, and he may be of use to realists, too. First and foremost, there is his theory of human nature (on Freud's life and work, see Jones 1953-57; Marcuse 1956; Roazen 1975; Gay 1988; Roth 1998; Elliott 1998b; Merlino *et al.* 2008). Freud's theory is not merely a conception of human nature. It is a genuine and profound theory of human nature, a theory that involves a theory of civilisation and the human condition. As Herbert Marcuse (1972[1955]) aptly remarked: Freud developed ‘a

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“psycho-logy” in the strict sense. With this theory, Freud placed himself in the great tradition of philosophy and under philosophical criteria’ (25).

The ‘great unriddler of human enigmas’ (Gay 1988:4) went beyond studying mental processes and treating mental disorders. Freud sought to demystify some of the most perplexing problems of humankind such as the nature and origins of political communities, morality, religion, social order, conflict and war, and civilisational development. Besides his clinical-medical work, Freud has presented us with a psychology of primitive cultures in *Totem and Taboo* (1913); of religion in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) and *The Future of an Illusion* (1927); of group formation and group behaviour in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921); of war in ‘Thoughts for the Times on War and Death’ (1915b) and ‘Why War?’ (1933b); and of civilisation in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). Particularly the latter remains one ‘of the most distinctive statement[s] in the philosophy of existence and civilization’ (Nelson 1957:8).

This does not imply that Freud is uncontroversial, but it suggests that Freud is an appropriate starting point *vis-à-vis* realism’s search for a human nature foundation. True, Freud’s theory of human nature, which explains human behaviour in terms of biological-instinctual dynamics (ego-instinct/sexual-instinct; *Eros/Thanatos*), economic-instinctual dynamics (unpleasure-pleasure principle, seek pleasure/avoid pain), and structural-instinctual dynamics (id/ego/super-ego; pleasure principle/reality principle/morality principle), has been condemned as biologist-reductionist (for systematic introductions, see Freud 1916-17a, 1933a, 1940). Freud’s proclamation that ‘the ego is not master in its own house’ (1917:143) has earned him the reputation of being a biologically reductionist fatalist. Freud’s psychological/socio-philosophical axiom that ‘there are present in all men destructive, and therefore anti-social and anti-cultural, trends’ (1927:7) has been criticised by progressivists.

Yet it is exactly Freud’s (peculiar) scepticism *vis-à-vis* human nature why Freudian Man is an appropriate candidate for providing realism with a suitable human nature sub-

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structure. The political philosophy of realism has never believed in purely Kantian *animalia rationabilia*. Instead, it has emphasised across the millennia that we must always reckon with the often harsh socio-political implications of humans' profound flaws and irrationalities (see Boucher 1998; Donnelly 2000; Doyle 1997; Smith 1986; Tellis 1996; Clinton 2007b; Forde 1992; Loriaux 1992; Frankel 1996b). Martin Wight already hinted briefly at a Freud/realism connection (1991:25) and Abraham Kaplan (1957a) noted that Freud is 'possibly the most thoroughgoing realist in western thought' (224). Freud may yield rewarding results when it comes to realism and the human nature question.

This brings this section to a final point. I have dwelled on Freud, on his significance in Western thought, and on his impact across the sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities as part of a rhetorical strategy that illuminates how understudied Freud is in IR. My concern with Freud *vis-à-vis* this thesis's two main research questions aims at raising the profile of Freud. It seems simply awkward that Waltz mentions Freud in *Man, the State, and War*—after all, a powerful critique of dozens of political philosophers, behaviouralists, sociologists, historians, and psychologists—merely in three footnotes and one epigraph (2001[1959]:69, 71, 187). Surely, Freud has received explicit attention occasionally (Forbes 1984; Elshtain 1989; Bloom 1990; Coker 1994; Gammon 2008), often in connection with his 1933 essay 'Why War?', but this has not led to a wider and more in-depth engagement with Freud's psychology and social philosophy in IR. To the contrary, the semi-prominent status of Freud's Einstein letter might have been a Pyrrhic victory. For it is often deemed as being 'in many ways peculiarly unsatisfying' (Forbes 1984:16). Such criticism may not be entirely mistaken. Freud's 'Why War?' letter is surely not his most intriguing piece. In fact, Freud confessed that he was bored with this letter exchange and that he was not expecting a Nobel Peace Prize for this 'sterile so-called discussion with Einstein' (quoted in Jones 1957:187). In Freud's defence, though, IR scholars must recognise that Freud's *œuvre* fills 24 volumes (Freud 1953-74; 18 vols. in

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the original German, Freud 1940-52). Freud's significance and usefulness for international-political theory can hardly be judged on the basis of a 13-page letter.

With the intellectual scenery of the strange death of the concept of human nature and the strange neglect of Freud in realism and IR being laid out, I will now provide a chapter outline.

The thesis: Plan, method, structure

In light of the strange death of the concept of human nature in realism, I question whether human nature is really dead. I will argue it is not. This raises the question: Ought human nature to be dead? I will answer that it ought not to be dead. The arguments will unfold along the thesis's two-part structure; this helps to separate the is-question (Chapters 2 and 3) from the ought-question (Chapters 4 and 5). In Chapter 6, 'The "Resurrection" of the Realist Man, Freud, and Human Nature', I will conclude that we must bring 'back' the Realist Man into realism; that we must bring 'back' Freud into realism; and that we must bring 'back' Freud and the concept of human nature into IR.

I begin my examination of the is-question with a re-reading of several leading 20th-century classical realists. In Chapter 2, 'Classical Realism on Human Nature and Freud', I examine how five truly consequential classical realists have conceptualised human nature. Specifically, I look at Hans J. Morgenthau, George F. Kennan, Walter Lippmann, E.H. Carr, and Reinhold Niebuhr. These five thinkers do not exhaust the list of leading 20th-century classical realists. Such a list would perhaps include Raymond Aron, Isaiah Berlin, Herbert Butterfield, Carl Schmitt, Georg Schwarzenberger, Max Weber, Martin Wight, and Arnold Wolfers (Thompson 1980; Smith 1986). Yet a selection must be made, a balance between analytical depth and breadth be struck. All five realists chosen are, to borrow Kenneth Thompson's (1980) phrase, 'masters' of international-political theory and were influential in the theory and practise of international politics.

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Morgenthau was perhaps ‘the most distinguished and articulate exponent of political realism in the twentieth century’ (Tellis 1996:39; on Morgenthau, see Williams 2007). Kennan earned his reputation as the creator of containment policy and is regarded as the US foreign service’s ‘most highly esteemed scholar and shaper of foreign policy’ (Guldin 2004:13-14; on Kennan, see Lukacs 2007). Lippmann was the realism-turned co-author of Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the ‘most influential American journalist ever’ (Pierce 2008:ix; on Lippmann, see Syed 1963). Carr’s *The Twenty Years’ Crisis* (2001[1939]) ranks among ‘the three most influential realist works of the twentieth century’ (Mearsheimer 2001:14; on Carr, see Johnston 2007). Last not least, Niebuhr was not without justification called realism’s ‘father’ (Kennan, famously quoted in Thompson 1972[1960]:23) and ‘the greatest living political philosopher of America’ (Morgenthau, quoted in Merkley 1975:viii; on Niebuhr, see Thompson 2007).

These five thinkers represent the intellectual broadness and richness of 20th-century classical realism (Smith 1986). Based on my successive readings, I argue that their conceptions of human nature are—to varying degrees of depths and explicitness—Freudian or that they show striking similarities to Freudian psychology. This argument has two implications. First, it rescues these realists from widespread criticisms concerning their assumptions about human nature. Secondly, it demonstrates that these realists cannot be taken without their human nature baggage, a point all too often forgotten in the recent renaissance of classical realism.

Yet what happened to this human nature baggage? This is the underlying question of Chapter 3, ‘The Hidden Human Nature Assumptions of Post-Classical Realism’. Based on the hypothesis that human nature is not dead in post-classical realism, I examine various post-classical realists and uncover hidden assumptions about human nature. I explore John Herz’s realist liberalism, Morton A. Kaplan’s systemic-scientific realism, Kenneth N. Waltz’s defensive structural realism, John J. Mearsheimer’s offensive structural realism, and neoclassical realism. This is not an exhaustive list of post-classical realisms. But,

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likewise, a selection must be made. These post-classicals have been among the most outspoken critics of Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style realism.

Herz is one of the most fascinating international-political theorists. His concept of the security dilemma has considerably helped a new generation of realists (largely from the US) to 'systematize political realism into a rigorous, deductive systemic theory of international politics' (Keohane 1986a:15; on Herz, see Stirk 2005). Kaplan, a somewhat enigmatic figure, spearheaded the post-classical realists' scientific revolution (on Kaplan, see Tellis 1996:51-66). Waltz's work represents a distinctive turning point in the evolution of realism in that the 'fountainhead of an egoist, evil, human nature as the causal source of all political action—a watermark of traditional realism—now disappears' (Tellis 1996:88-89; on Waltz, see Little 2007a:167-212). Mearsheimer's *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001) is widely seen as 'the definitive work on offensive realism' (Schweller 2003:328n52; on Mearsheimer, see Little 2007a:213-248). Last but not least, neoclassical realism is post-classical realism's latest invention (see Rathbun 2008).

Despite these post-classical realists' overt preference for the concept of the international structure over the concept of human nature, my examination shows that assumptions about human nature are still being made. Despite their 'human nature lie' and the fact that these realists prove to be much less reflective about the concept of human nature than the classicals, I still defend these post-classicals against unwarranted human nature criticism. Yet, despite all defense, post-classical realism has led contemporary realism into a serious theoretical *cul-de-sac*. This has forced contemporary realism to ask again a question that was thought answered long ago: ought human nature to be dead?

The is-question answered, the focus of the thesis will then shift to the ought-question. This implies two ideal-typical solutions to the human nature problem. Either we purify realism from the tutelage of human nature, or we pro-actively defend the concept of human nature as the philosophical basis of realism. In the two chapters of Part II, 'Ought Human Nature to be Dead?', I argue in favour of Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style realism.

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Chapter 4, 'Human Nature Criticism and its Vices', marks the first step of the argument for a central role of the concept of human nature in realism. Its analytical-argumentative strategy is essentially negative. Based on a critical engagement with the main forms of human nature criticisms, I conclude that we must take the concerns of the human nature critics with a pinch of salt. Their critical arguments against the admissibility of the concept of human nature in the realm of the political and international-political are too weak to pose a threat to human nature-sympathetic Morgenthauian/Niebuhran realists.

I present what is being referred to as the six sins of the concept of human nature. These six sins represent the most common and powerful concerns that are raised against the application of the concept of human nature in matters social, philosophical, and political. These six sins represent a truly powerful critique of the concept of human nature but those sympathetic to human nature must not be deterred. Human nature critics often fail to recognise the hidden complexities of assumptions about human nature. True, some have sinned when handling the concept of human nature, but human nature critics have failed to produce convincing arguments why human nature-theorising *per se* is as evil as they claim. Further, according to the argument of the hidden omnipresence of human nature, human nature criticism is virtually meaningless, for these human nature-critical philosophies, theories, and *Weltanschauungen* are also based upon certain sets of assumptions about human nature. It appears impossible to construct international-political theories that have no basis whatsoever in underlying human nature conceptions.

This helps to take the wind out of the human nature critics' sails, but it is not a fully satisfying answer to the ought-question. Human nature criticisms may be flawed and we may be human nature sinners. Yet this does not lead to the conclusion that we *ought* to make human nature the central concept again in realist international-political theorising. The analytical-negative argumentative strategy, therefore, must be complemented by a positive set of arguments in favour of the concept of human nature.

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In Chapter 5, ‘The Virtues of Freudian Human Nature’, I provide such pro-active arguments and make the case for Freud. A Freudian conception of human nature helps to solve several problems associated with contemporary realist international-political theorising. I provide realism with a human nature background theory that explains and legitimises the realist *Weltanschauung* and its analytical and normative claims.

I argue that Freud has three virtues for realism. First, Freudian human nature helps realists to demystify their defining themes, principles, and concepts. Freudian Man helps to resolve into their individual-psychological elements many of post-classical realism’s anthropomorphological projections and hypostatisations. Secondly, Freud’s conception of human nature helps realists understand the underlying psychological mechanics of group formation and internal and external group behaviour *vis-à-vis* other political communities. Freud explains the link between human nature and the nature of the political community and offers realists a powerful statement of the nature and inner workings of the (international) human condition and international relations. Thirdly, Freud’s human nature conception serves as a timeless reminder for realists never to expect too much but also not too less from human nature. Freudian Man helps realists to define both the possibilities and limits of international relations and to manoeuvre steadfastly between reality and utopia.

Over the course of four chapters, I will have argued that the concept of human nature is not dead in realism and that Freud has—to varying degrees—influenced the assumptions about human nature of leading classical and post-classical realists. I will have also argued that the concept of human nature ought not to be dead in realism and that Freud ought to play a major role in the process of re-transforming and re-configuring realism along Morgenthauian/Niebuhrrian lines. The implications for contemporary realism as well as contemporary IR are manifold.

In Chapter 6, ‘The “Resurrection” of the Realist Man, Freud, and Human Nature’, I discuss what I regard as the three main tasks that derive from the fact that not only the Realist Man but also Freud and the concept of human nature have never been really dead

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and ought never to be dead. First, we must bring the Realist Man 'back' into realism and help make it again the philosophical backdrop of realist international-political theorising. Secondly, we must bring Freud 'back' into realism and study further his potential intellectual impact and the virtues of his psychology and social/political philosophy. Finally, we must bring Freud and the concept of human nature 'back' into IR. Contemporary IR must engage more thoroughly with one of the most intriguing thinkers, both from a historical but also politico-theoretical viewpoint. As regards the concept of human nature, I suggest that we become both less dismissive and more sincere and reflective *vis-à-vis* the concept of human nature in IR.

CLASSICAL REALISM ON HUMAN NATURE AND FREUD

Introduction

Hans J. Morgenthau's analytical and normative international-political theory is based upon a distinctive conception of human nature. Morgenthauian Man is possessed by an *animus dominandi*, a will to power that inclines him to dominate fellow Men. It is neither a perfectible saint nor a Kantian *animal rationabile*. Consequently, Morgenthau has continually warned us of too much faith in Man's moral capacities. With such scepticism towards Man in the social, political, and international-political sphere, Morgenthau has placed himself firmly in the realist tradition, which has, despite all its diversity and different degrees of pessimism/optimism, always be genuinely wary of the natural Man, the Man of the passions (Meyer 2000 provides an insightful exegesis of Western thought's conceptualisations of the passions). In this regard, Morgenthau has been joined by fellow 20th-century classical realists George F. Kennan, Walter Lippmann, E.H. Carr, and Reinhold Niebuhr. They never bought into the Rousseauian assumption of the pre-societal noble savage. Michael J. Smith (1986) hit the nail on its head when he argued that such a 'treatment of human nature, reaching back to Thucydides, informs every facet of realist analysis' (219).

Yet the almost symbiotic relationship between realism and sceptical assumptions about human nature has always provoked criticism. Virtually the entirety of IR theorists from the liberal, Marxist, feminist, and postmodern camp have criticised Morgenthau's and other classical realists' conceptions of human nature. Realist assumptions about human nature have been denounced by critics as being a universal, fixed, and flawed, being deduced from some mythical Fall or other metaphysical speculation. One of these critics argued recently that realists were biased towards destructive assumptions about human nature, portraying Man as an anti-social, fearful, self-interested, and power-driven animal; that these assumptions were false, because scientifically untenable; that realists'

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pessimistic views about human nature had sinister effects on theory construction and foreign-policy making; and, finally, that these assumptions about human nature cause policies of distrust, promote paranoia, increase the probability of international violence, and stifle chances for peaceful coexistence (Freyberg-Inan 2004, 2006).

But realists, too, became increasingly wary of Morgenthau's postulation of an *animus dominandi* or of Niebuhr's Augustinian-style Man. John H. Herz was among the first who argued against the underlying philosophy of a human nature-driven Morgenthauian/Niebuhrian realism and made clear that

Whether man is 'by nature' peaceful and cooperative, or aggressive or domineering, is not the question. The condition that concerns us here is not an anthropological or biological, but a social one. It is his uncertainty and anxiety as to his neighbors' intentions that places man in this basic dilemma, and makes the 'homo homini lupus' a primary fact of the social life of man. (Herz, 1951:3)

Herz's socio-structural reasoning that states are trapped in what he called the 'security dilemma' had a profound impact on subsequent generations of predominantly U.S. realists, particularly on the formulation of structural realism (neorealism) as epitomised by the international-political theories of Waltz (1979) and Mearsheimer (2001). The notion that the vicious circle of security and power accumulation among states does not stem from an innate urge for power but rather from the social fact that states must provide for their own security in an anarchical environment has allowed these structural realists a comfortable opt-out from the internecine scientific and philosophical debates about whether Man is good/bad, perfectible/improvable, fact/fiction, or naturalistic/socially constructed.

Neoclassical realists have done likewise. Although they have incorporated first- and second-image (intervening) variables, they have remained committed to the concept of international structure (third image) (Schweller, 2006). Human nature or biological realists, also wary of socio-structural explanations of international politics but also

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sceptical of metaphysical speculations, have turned to biology and the neurosciences to buttress their claims (Thayer, 2004; Rosen, 2005). Human nature-based classical realism had to endure harsh attacks. One critic argued, for instance, that Morgenthau ‘had some rather unflattering and unsophisticated views of human nature, and an embarrassing habit of parading them as the philosophical basis of Realism’ (Rosenberg, 1990:292). These are damning indictments from both within and without realist circles.

The critics’ claims are, however, not always justified. The stakes are high in the controversy surrounding classical realists’ assumptions about human nature. Most of these critics are not only challenging the underlying assumptions about human nature but are attacking the whole body of political realism that has based its analytical and normative international-political theory on calculations about human nature since its birth in ancient Greece (Doyle 1997; Frankel 1996b). It is essential to revisit the assumptions about human nature of classical realism. Morgenthau is of prime interest, but this chapter also examines Kennan, Lippmann, Carr, and Niebuhr. I will focus on these five classical realists’ assumptions about human nature paying special attention to potentially Freudian elements.

Based on my successive readings of each realist, this chapter argues that their conceptions of human nature are—to varying degrees of depths and explicitness—of Freudian provenance or show striking similarities to Freudian psychology. This has profound implications. First, the widespread criticisms from both within and without realist circles against classical realist assumptions about human nature are misleading. Neither are these assumptions unsophisticated, nor are they merely metaphysical speculations. Secondly, this reinterpretation of classical realists’ assumptions about human nature helps us to understand that any (re-)engagement with these classical realists and/or the whole political philosophy of realism is necessarily accompanied by taking up a particular set of assumptions about human nature. One cannot take classical realism without its human nature baggage.

Morgenthau and the animus dominandi

No other 20th-century classical realist (save perhaps Niebuhr) is as outspoken and candid about the intimate relationship between the concept of human nature and realism as Morgenthau. In fact, Morgenthau considers human nature to be the philosophical starting point of his realism and political realism in general. Both famous and infamous has become his first principle of realism as laid out in *Politics among Nations* that 'Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature' (1967[1948]:4). Dividing the history of (international-) political theory into two camps, Morgenthau argues that while idealists believe in the 'essential goodness' and 'infinite malleability' of human nature, realists presume that the world is 'the result of forces inherent in human nature', and he, therefore, warns us that we must not work against but always with these 'forces' (3). For having too much faith in a human nature driven by primordial forces is, to use Herbert Butterfield's (1949:47) words, not only 'a recent heresy' but also 'a very disastrous one'.

Despite the central role of human nature in realism, Morgenthau remains, however, rather vague in *Politics among Nations* about the actual content of his assumptions about human nature. Morgenthau (1967[1948]) merely says—without any further or deeper substantiation—that Man is driven by 'elemental bio-psychological drives', i.e. the drives 'to live, to propagate, and to dominate' (31). Further, Morgenthau makes no direct or overt references to Freud. This is unsatisfactory on two accounts. First, because it does not reflect properly the significance of the concept of human nature *vis-à-vis* his realism. Secondly, because it does not reflect the significance of *Freudian* human nature *vis-à-vis* Morgenthau's realism. To remedy these two defects, this section takes a wider focus. In order to receive a fuller picture of Morgenthau's conception of human nature, his *Politics among Nations* must be read alongside Morgenthau's *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (1946), the earlier and neglected 1930 manuscript 'On the Derivation of the Political from

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the Nature of Man' (henceforth: 'Freud-Script'), and his Commentary essay 'Love and Power' (1962b). Such a reading reveals the Freudian dimension of Morgenthauian Man.

The perhaps most fruitful starting point for any study of Morgenthau's conception of human nature is *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, his fundamental and controversial critique of the prevailing (largely Anglo-American) wisdom of the time and its belief in behavioural scientism, liberal Enlightenment rationalism, pacifism, and a largely optimistic view of human nature (for a recent reinterpretation of *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, see Scheuerman 2007b; an impressive 300-years history of the notion of human nature in American thought is provided by Curti 1980). It is in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* where the (in)famous *animus dominandi* does appear. Morgenthau argues that Man is not only truly selfish but is also possessed by a lust for power, an *animus dominandi*. The selfishness of Man refers to the natural concern of human beings to preserve their life. It involves Man's striving and yearning for food, shelter, and physical security. As a result of such selfishness, Morgenthau (1946) argues, 'individual egotisms, all equally legitimate, confront each other' and Man is, therefore, confronted by a Hobbesian *homo homini lupus* situation (164). The societal consequences of Man's inclination to selfish behaviour may be harsh. But it would be misleading to read some form of selfishness into the primordial desire as seen by Morgenthau—for instance, to lead a 'comfortable life' (Freyberg-Inan 2004:93) (which is normatively of entirely different order)—because Man is not so much concerned with luxury or any other surplus value but rather with the preservation of his life. Man is selfish in that he wants—above all else—to live.

Morgenthau's second assumption about human nature, i.e. that Man is driven by an *animus dominandi*, is both more complex and more controversial. Even fellow realists misunderstand Morgenthau. They are not convinced and do not believe Morgenthau's 'simple assumption' (or what they deem as a simple assumption) that 'states are led by human beings who have a "will to power" hardwired into them at birth' (Mearsheimer

2001:19). The *animus dominandi* must be seen as being distinct from Man's inner selfishness and constitutes an independent motivational force. As Morgenthau (1946:165) argues: the will-to-power 'concerns itself not with the individual's survival but with his position among his fellows once his survival has been secured'. The *animus dominandi* inclines Man to the pro-active yearning and striving for power, power after power. In other words: Man lusts for power; and the fact that Man is a power-seeker is an 'all permeating fact which is of the very essence of human existence' (1962[1947]:312). It is argued in the following that the *animus dominandi* is neither an unfounded chimera by Morgenthau nor an irrelevant ingredient of his international-political theory, but that it is, instead, one possible manifestation of Freud's *Eros* instinct and is central to Morgenthau's realism. This interpretation takes its starting point in the 1930 'Freud-Script', which was Morgenthau's unpublished attempt to derive the nature of the Political from a Freudian human nature. Largely unknown and presently only available in an archival version, the 100-page script was written by the young Morgenthau while still in Frankfurt in 1930, in his formative years between his doctorate (1929) and *Habilitation* (1934). Despite Morgenthau's (1978) autobiographical claim that this script is unsatisfactory, it is an important document because Morgenthau has re-used parts of it in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Frei 2001). The labels might have changed, but the assumptions about human nature of both works are largely identical—and, above all, of Freudian provenance.

Morgenthau suggests in the 'Freud-Script' that Man is driven by two instincts: the instinct of self-preservation and the instinct of self-assertion. This dualistic instinct structure corresponds to that of *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* which contains an instinct of selfishness and an *animus dominandi*, respectively. The instinct of self-preservation of the 'Freud-Script' is rather straightforward and describes Man's longing for physical survival. This primordial desire to live (and avoid, basically, death) is largely self-centred or inward-driven (though it has, obviously, social consequences), whereas the instinct of self-assertion is outward-driven. This distinct instinct directs itself to others, to

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fellow Men. It urges Man to demonstrate his abilities and powers. By nature, Man seeks to assert himself in his environment—by whatever means at his disposal: this ranges from impressing the other sex, to expressing himself and impressing others through arts and sciences, to participating in sports contests and any other physical and cognitive competition, to the heroic marching through the fields of war. For only by these or any other means can Man be aware of himself and recognise his place in the cosmos among fellow Men, can he experience and feel what it truly means to live and to be alive (Morgenthau 1930:5-6).

This dualistic instinct configuration of Morgenthau that distinguishes between an instinct of self-preservation and an instinct of self-assertion follows essentially the early instinct theory of Freud whose clinical observations and metapsychological theories led him to presume the existence of two instincts: an ego-instinct and sexual-instinct. Morgenthau's instinct of self-preservation follows Freud's ego-instinct, which is again rather uncomplicated. It represents Man's primordial desire for physical survival. Morgenthau's second instinct—the instinct of self-assertion—follows what Freud called the sexual-instinct, which is not biologically confined to the reproductive organs but includes rather a Platonic notion of love, too. This instinct directs itself towards other human beings or any other objects deemed worthy of love/sex. Perhaps most succinctly, Freud (1930:117) referred to the ego-instinct and sexual-instinct as hunger and love, respectively: 'I took as my starting-point a saying of poet-philosopher, Schiller, that "hunger and love are what moves the world"'. Morgenthau follows Freud when he writes in the 'Freud-Script' that

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If the striving for the preservation of one's life [i.e. instinct of self-preservation] arises from a deficiency, it is, figuratively speaking, a child of hunger—it seeks to compensate for a lack of energy. Analogously, the effort to make good a surplus of energy seeking a release finds, again speaking metaphorically, in love one of its most characteristic expressions. The appearance of love corresponds both in the narrower physiological sense as well as in the more comprehensive meaning of *Eros* to the striving to prove oneself [i.e. instinct of self-assertion]. (Morgenthau 1930:4-5)

The fact that Morgenthau's assumptions about human nature of the 'Freud-Script' are of Freudian provenance, i.e. that the instinct of self-preservation and the instinct of self-assertion follow Freud's early instinct theory of an ego-instinct and sexual-instinct, suggests that Morgenthau's instinct theory of *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* distinguishing between the primordial inclination to selfishness and the *animus dominandi* has its roots in Freudian psychology. For it has already been shown that Morgenthau has kept his instinct theory largely intact between the 1930 'Freud-Script' and the 1946 *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, only changing the respective labels. Whether Morgenthau calls it selfishness or instinct of self-preservation, what lies under the primordial desire to live and avoid death is, ultimately, Freud's ego-instinct.

The second part of Morgenthau's assumptions about human nature—the *animus dominandi*—is equally Freudian. It is a product in nature and origin of Freud's sexual-instinct. In the 'Freud-Script', Morgenthau (1930) follows Freud insofar as it is argued that the objects in which the instinct of self-assertion can find gratification are manifold. Here, he adopts from Freud the possibility for the instinct to direct itself towards various objects (25-26). This object-based and psychic-determinist character of how instincts yearn for gratification as well as the deeply social nature of both Freud's sexual-instinct as well as Morgenthau's *animus dominandi* helps us to shed light on the Freudian dimension of the *animus dominandi*. In line with realism's ancient and self-defining emphasis on such human irrationalities as power, honour, glory, etc., Morgenthau stresses Man's desire to

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dominate fellow Men: dominating fellow Men brings Man the maximum of instinctual satisfaction (43). This implies, of course, that Man needs, and is reliant on the existence of, social relationships. For otherwise, Man in pure isolation would not be able to find the much needed gratification of the instinct of self-assertion—who is there to impress and to dominate in the life of the solitary and autarchic Rousseauian noble savage? Therefore, the *animus dominandi* is perhaps best considered as one of the most important manifestations or outlets of the instinct of self-assertion. This, however, makes then, in Morgenthau's system of human nature, the *animus dominandi*—because the instinct of self-assertion has already been identified as Freudian—an important manifestation or outlet of Freud's sexual-instinct. Thus, it is not only the desire to live and avoid death (selfishness, instinct of self-preservation) that is of Freudian provenance, but it is also Morgenthau's (in)famous *animus dominandi* (instinct of self-assertion) of *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* that has its roots in Freud's early instinct theory. From a history of political thought perspective, the fact that Morgenthau's assumptions about human nature seem fairly heavily influenced by Freud's theory of human nature is significant in its own right, largely because such an intellectual relationship has long been suspected but never really understood or made explicit. It improves our understanding of Morgenthau, the most important classical-realist international-political theorist of the 20th century. But perhaps even more importantly, it improves, as is now shown, our understanding of Morgenthau's *Man of Politics among Nations* and the individual- and socio-psychological processes and mechanisms by which the *animus dominandi* of Man turns into some sort of collective *animus dominandi* that drives and governs political communities *vis-à-vis* others in the international sphere.

In *Politics among Nations*, Morgenthau speaks neither from an instinct of self-preservation and instinct of self-assertion as in the 'Freud-Script', nor from Man's selfishness and the *animus dominandi* as in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*. This is rather confusing. Instead, he refers to three bio-psychological drives: namely, the drives to live, to propagate, and to dominate. This confusion, however, can be remedied, because the

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new language signifies merely a change in rhetoric rather than a change in substance. What Morgenthau now calls the drive to live is merely another label for the instinct of self-preservation and Man's selfishness. It designates or perhaps intentionally conceals Freud's ego-instinct that seeks to embrace and prolong life and seeks to avoid death. Likewise, the drives to propagate and to dominate, too, are neither Christian-realist Niebuhrian, nor Nietzschean, nor mere metaphysical speculation. Just as Man's drive to live is rooted in Freud's ego-instinct, the drives to propagate and to dominate—which is actually the *animus dominandi* by another name—are manifestations of Freud's sexual-instinct or *Eros*. (To avoid potential confusion regarding *Eros*: in his early instinct theory of 1910, Freud distinguished between an ego-instinct and sexual-instinct, the latter of which Freud called *Eros*; in his later (third and last) instinct theory as developed in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud (1920) merged the ego-instinct and sexual-instinct into one instinct, namely *Eros*, and presumed the existence of the (in)famous death drive (*Thanatos*), i.e. the eternal biological-instinctual antagonist of *Eros*.)

Thus, Morgenthau's *animus dominandi* is not, as critics of both realist and non-realist persuasion often claim, a child of God or the devil or of any other myth. Rather, Man's longing for power and assertion is a child of Freud's *Eros*. This may seem odd, for why should power or the wish to dominate others be in any meaningful way connected to *Eros* or love. But it surely is if *Eros* is rightly recognised in its transcended meaning of sex/love. As Freud (1930:122) has shown, the aim of *Eros* is to 'combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind'. Yet what sounds like the assumption of the genuine and peaceful brotherhood of humankind has a darker element to it: namely, Man's yearning for power. Power is intimately connected with *Eros* insofar as Man's desire to gratify the sexual-instinct goes hand in hand, as Freud (1915a) has argued, with Man's 'urge for mastery', for power is but a 'primitive form of striving for...the sexual object' (139). To put it shortly: *Eros* dictates Man to unite; power is its main means.

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On that score, Morgenthau agrees with Freud. In his 1962 *Commentary* article, 'Love and Power', Morgenthau argues that 'Power and love are organically connected' (247). Both drives share an essentially similar aim in that they both seek to combine human individuals into relationships, i.e. in that they both incline Man to enter relationships with his fellows. The only difference between these two pertains to the means. While love seeks these relationships through 'spontaneous mutuality', power seeks to combine fellow Men via 'unilateral imposition' (247-248). Paraphrasing Clausewitz here helps us to illuminate the distinction between the means of love and power as well as the function of the *animus dominandi* fairly well: the *animus dominandi* is the continuation of Man's longing for love by other means. But although both love and power long for uniting Man with other Men, human unions based solely upon power or unilateral imposition are of different depth and quality compared to those based upon love or spontaneous mutuality. The former relationships are rather inferior, genuinely flawed, unstable and will eventually become not more than rather primitive master-servant relationships. Ideally, Morgenthau (1962b) argues, the 'power of the master is founded not upon the master's threats and promises but upon the subject's love for the master' (249). This, however, is hardly achievable in pure form. Therefore, Man—by birth a potential master—seeks to compensate for the lack of the potential subjects' love for him by an accumulation of ever-increasing power. Man's yearning for gaining and keeping power after power over fellow Men will, of course, never secure him love in the sense of *Eros*. Unable to secure all or portions of love for himself, Man is almost destined for frustration.

Based on such Freudian instinctual configuration, Morgenthau argues that any search for power is ultimately and essentially a 'fruitless search for love'; that any power relationship is ultimately and essentially 'a frustrated relationship of love' (250). Surely, the fact that Morgenthau presumes the existence of an *animus dominandi* does not make him a human nature optimist, for the yearning for power—in Weberian terms the 'probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his

own will despite resistance' (Weber 1947[1915]:139)—is not a very reassuring character trait, particularly when it is of primordial nature. But one must not, on the other hand, gloss over the fact that Morgenthau's understanding of power and the *animus dominandi* is intimately intertwined with Man's longing for love, because it is exactly this perhaps paradoxical inner relationship that makes the *animus dominandi* such a central, puzzling, and lasting element of the human condition. For even if it was possible to completely eradicate or ameliorate to a minimum level all the security concerns that derive from Morgenthauian Man's instinct of self-preservation or selfishness, the longing for power, which is a longing for love (*Eros*) really, would remain virtually unaffected by changing economic, political, security, and social circumstances. Thus, Morgenthau's *animus dominandi* is neither metaphysical and embarrassing, nor is it the product of some form of inherent human violent aggressiveness or of pure self-interest. Instead, the will to power derives from Man's deeply social nature, from Freud's sexual-instinct or *Eros*. Just as power cannot be meaningfully dissociated or separated from love and *Eros*, Morgenthau's instinct theory of *Politics among Nations* (and his international-political theory as a whole) discriminating between three bio-psychological drives—namely, to live as well as to propagate and to dominate—must be seen against the backdrop of Freud's early instinct theory distinguishing between an ego-instinct and a sexual-instinct (*Eros*), respectively.

We can identify further significant traces of a Freudian dimension in Morgenthau's assumptions about human nature in *Politics among Nations*. These pertain to some of the most central claims of his classical-realist international-political theory, including Morgenthau's assumption of an universal struggle for power among nations. Morgenthau (1967[1948]:25) argues that 'international politics...is a struggle for power'. Political communities, he says, have three different ideal-typical policies at their disposal that they can pursue. They either seek to keep power (policy of the status quo), or they seek to increase power (policy of imperialism), or they seek to demonstrate power (policy of prestige). Regardless, however, of which policy is being pursued, the power struggle

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among nations—rooted, ultimately, in human nature, particularly in Man's *animus dominandi*—is in itself 'universal in time and space' (31). But Morgenthau's argument about how the power-seeking behaviour and nature of political communities derive from the power-seeking behaviour and nature of Man has often been misunderstood, partly because the Freudian dimension of Morgenthauian Man has been overlooked thus far.

How does Morgenthau derive his assumption about the eternal power-struggle among political communities from the *animus dominandi*? I argue that Morgenthau's reasoning proceeds in essentially two steps. First, he follows Freud's recognition of one of the most profound facts of the human condition, namely, the existence of an inherent and deep antagonism between Man and society, a dilemma which roots in Man's structural-instinctual dynamics. And then, secondly, Morgenthau employs two of Freud's defense mechanisms—displacement and identification—which provide the transmission belt that allows Morgenthau to translate Man's *animus dominandi* into the thirst for power of political communities *vis-à-vis* others in the international sphere.

Morgenthauian Man has to pay a very hefty price in order to gratify his instinctual desire to enter human relationships, to combine with other Men, and to belong to a group. For civilisation (as Freud calls it) or societies or human relationships or groups require from Man to forego or sacrifice his psyche's biological, economical, and structural yearning for instinctual satisfaction. Or put the other way round: the nature of societies demand the renunciation of their members' instincts—Man cannot do, act, behave as he wishes, for the demands society puts upon him are too great. Morgenthau (1967[1948]) recognises quite clearly that Man is being confronted with a 'network of rules of conduct and institutional devices for controlling individual power drives' which either 'divert individual power drives into channels where they cannot endanger society' or 'they weaken them or suppress them altogether' (98). The consequences are simple but extremely harsh. These societal devices (laws, cultural norms) do not only force Man to suppress his power drives but they also work against the laws of human nature—namely:

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Man cannot (must not) satisfy his instincts. Yet Morgenthau's Man (his ego) is capable of seeking other channels in which he may find instinctual gratification. Thus, Morgenthau argues, Man might project those instincts unsatisfied onto, for instance, competitive examinations, sports contests, social clubs, fraternal organisations, and so forth (98). This suffices to unearth Morgenthau's further debts to Freud's theory of human nature (and society).

Morgenthau follows one of Freud's central psychologically-grounded arguments which the latter has most forcefully laid out in one of the 20th-century's masterpieces on the human condition, *Civilization and its Discontents*. There, Freud (1930) argues that there exists an irreconcilable and inherent antagonism between the demands of Man's pleasure principle for instinct gratification on one hand, and society's inherent repressive and over-arching demands for instinct renunciation on the other (96). Morgenthau agrees with Freud that Man is essentially trapped in a dilemma. Man longs for instinct satisfaction, but *Eros* demands love and uniting with fellow Men, which requires at least a minimum compliance with social norms that help erect and control the society of Men. He also agrees with Freud that Man is to a large degree an anti-social and anti-cultural being, a view that is based on the inherent and instinctual incompatibility between Man and civilisation. This does not mean or imply that Man is a purely self-interested *homo oeconomicus*-style rational machine that seeks to maximise its own share of material gains and utility, but merely that Man's instinctual dynamics are not completely compatible with societal requirements.

This essential fact of the human condition, i.e. the profound antagonism between Man and civilisation, bears quite heavily upon the international struggle for power, peace, and prestige. In order to make this argumentative connection between the domestic and the international sphere, Morgenthau continues to draw from Freudian insights. Morgenthau does not only recognise this profoundly antagonistic character of the human condition, but also refers to 'channels' into which Man's unsatisfied instincts can possibly be diverted.

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Yet what Morgenthau innocuously calls ‘channels’ represent, in fact, his adherence to Freudian defense mechanisms (displacement, identification), which in turn presupposes Freud’s tripartite structural theory of the psyche (id, ego, super-ego).

As laid out in ‘The Ego and the Id’, Freud (1923a) presumes that Man’s mental apparatus can be seen in terms of various structural-instinctual dynamics played out by essentially three different agents. The id remains unconscious and follows the unpleasure-pleasure principle; it contains Man’s passions and instincts. The super-ego is Man’s conscience and contains internalised norms as shaped by parental and societal prohibitions; it follows the morality principle and punishes Man through feelings of guilt in cases of non-compliance with its demands. Thus, the id is in perennial conflict with the super-ego. To keep these two powerful forces in a healthy balance, the ego—the conscious ego that follows the reality principle—employs a variety of defense mechanisms. The ego brokers between the demands of the instinctual id and the demands of the societal super-ego by employing a variety of coping strategies of which the most significant and common are repression, displacement, denial, projection, reaction formation, intellectualisation, rationalisation, and sublimation. Through these defense mechanisms, the ego aims at reducing the tensions caused by instinct suppression (Freud 1966[1936]). Thus, when Morgenthau suggests ‘channels’ into which Man’s unsatisfied instincts can be diverted, he not only adopts Freud’s structural theory of the psyche but also his theory of defense mechanisms. More specifically, Morgenthau uses displacement, a defense mechanism that allows Man to redirect his id-impulses which conflict with societal norms (super-ego) to outlets (‘channels’ according to Morgenthau) that are conform with such norms.

Yet to link Man’s *animus dominandi* to the power-drives of political communities, i.e. to link the broad behavioural patterns of political communities to the *animus dominandi* in that the latter—ultimately, human nature—provides the actual and philosophical origins of state-behaviour and international-political outcomes, Morgenthau uses another of Freud’s defense mechanisms, that of identification. Morgenthau suggests a

few channels in which the *animus dominandi*, which must be suppressed within the societal context, might find gratification, i.e. sport, arts, science. But he singles out one very distinctive channel: the sphere beyond the political community's boundary, the international sphere. Since Man can hardly satisfy his instinct's within the society's boundaries, Men do, Morgenthau argues, 'project those unsatisfied aspirations onto the international scene', for there they 'find vicarious satisfaction in identification with the power drives of the nation'; as Morgenthau (1967[1948]) continues: the 'power our representatives wield on the international scene becomes our own, and the frustrations we experience within the national community are compensated for by the vicarious enjoyment of the power of the nation' (98-99). What Morgenthau here refers to as 'frustrations' and what he presents as one of the cornerstones of his realism—namely, the rooting of the power-drive of political communities in the *animus dominandi* of Men—is, however, essentially Freudian reasoning based on a distinctive psycho-analytic conception of human nature.

Freud has argued that as a member of a group such as families, castes, states, nations, or any other social-institutional regime, Man can never act according to and can never comply with the imperatives of the pleasure principle as dictated by the id. But in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud (1921) has shown how Man's ego seeks a solution to this seemingly eternal dilemma: namely, identification, i.e. by means of the unification with the object of pleasure or the subject who is capable of acting out such suppressed instincts. What is forbidden by societal norms and cultural values for individual Man to pursue, might possibly be pursued as a nation/political community or by its representatives because there are no effective societal restrictions on the international sphere since international law and a shared morality is rather weak. Yet since Man cannot but long for instinctual satisfaction, Freud has shown the individual and social-psychological processes by which Man identifies himself with the group-leader, e.g. the powerful statesman, in order to overcome his frustrations and partake in the power,

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prestige, and glory that the nation and the political community's leader wield in the international sphere. Via the process of identification, Man receives a share in the power of the nation and consequently becomes powerful himself, thereby finding compensation for the lack of instinctual satisfaction within society. The ego brokers the seemingly perfect arrangement between the instinctual id and the societal super-ego in that Man represses his instincts domestically by means of his capacity to act them out internationally.

It is, then, such psychological and socio-philosophical background of predominantly Freudian assumptions about human nature against which Morgenthau sees international politics taking place. Man's psychological makeup and instinctual dynamics certainly cannot explain—not to mention, predict—why political community A has attacked its neighbour B at a certain time. But it can help explain the broader patterns of world politics which are, to quote Morgenthau's (1967[1948]:4) first principle of realism, once again but the manifestations of 'objective laws that have their roots in human nature'. One of the most central parts—if not *the* central part—of such 'objective laws' is the inherent and profound antagonism between Man and civilisation which is rooted, ultimately, in Man's distinctive instinctual dynamics. It is these instinctual dynamics, taken together with social circumstances (which are, however, in turn merely the product of other instinctual dynamics), which provide, as Morgenthau makes clear in *Politics among Nations*, the 'explanation for the increasing ferocity with which foreign policies are pursued in modern times'; and he continues his (broadly Freudian) argument which is worth quoting at length:

The growing insecurity of the individual in Western societies, especially in the lower strata, and the atomization of Western society in general have magnified enormously the frustration of individual power drives. This, in turn, has given rise to an increased desire for compensatory identification with the collective national aspirations for power. (100)

Thus, all political phenomena can eventually and ultimately be traced back to the nature of Man. Surely, Freud is not the single intellectual influence upon Morgenthau's realism.

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However, that he stood under the influence of Freud in some significant aspects of his realist argument about world politics can hardly be wished away.

My interpretation that central claims of Morgenthau's realism have their roots in Freudian assumptions about human nature seems also not too surprising when seen from another perspective. Even from a merely biographical perspective, it is noticeable that Morgenthau had close links to Freud-friendly intellectuals and intellectual circles throughout his life. Early in his career, Morgenthau worked with social-democratic lawyer Hugo Sinzheimer in liberal-minded 1930s Frankfurt where Freud was in high regard (Scheuerman 2008a). After Frankfurt, he went (fled) to Geneva. There Morgenthau stood under the influence of social-democratic lawyer and legal philosopher Hans Kelsen from whom he obtained his *Habilitation* and who would not only become his life-long mentor but who had also both close personal and intellectual ties to Freud (Jabloner 1998). And, then later in life, already in New York, Morgenthau became friend and mentor of psychoanalyst Ethel Spector Person, who taught him, as Morgenthau's colleague John Stoessinger (2004:145) remembers, 'a great deal about Sigmund Freud and those who stood upon his shoulders' (see Morgenthau & Person 1978; Person 2004 for her personal recollection of Morgenthau).

Freud's theory of human nature accompanied Morgenthau from the cradle to the grave of his intellectual life, which led to the infusion of Freudian assumptions about human nature and insights into two of Morgenthau's *magna opera*—*Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* and *Politics among Nations*—and, more broadly, to his classical-realist international political theory.

The 'cracked vessel' of Kennan

Consistent with classical realism, George F. Kennan's analytical and normative realism is based upon two core elements—the emphasis on the forces of nationalism and human nature. International conflicts are mainly the product of nationalist sentiments among

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political communities; and these sentiments are mainly driven and reinforced by group psychological processes that have their origins in the nature of Man. We know that Kennan toyed with psycho-analysis throughout his life. In 1942, he lectured American officials in Germany proposing to ‘psychoanalyze’ the Soviet Union; and two years later, Kennan sought out Freud’s daughter, Anna, in London (Costigliola 1997:1323). Kennan’s preoccupation with psycho-analysis seems to have had a lasting impact on how he conceptualised human nature. I argue that his assumptions about human nature—as formulated in *Around the Cragged Hill: A Personal and Political Philosophy* (Kennan 1993), a work that condenses his international-political theory—reveal some striking similarities with Freud’s theory of human nature.

As classical realist, Kennan knows—in contradistinction to Waltzian/Mearsheimerian structural realists—that any international-political theory must use a theory of human nature as its starting-point (1993:17-36). Kennan’s Man is a ‘cracked vessel’ that is driven by two primary impulses and that is entangled in profound and existential struggles on two fronts: both within his own self and *vis-à-vis* other Men. As Kennan writes: ‘Man, to the degree that he tries to shape his behaviour to the requirements of civilisation, is unquestionably a cracked vessel. His nature is the scene of a never-ending and never quite resolvable conflict between two very profound impulses’ (17). Kennan’s metaphor of Man being a ‘cracked vessel’ signifies a potential intellectual proximity to Freudian-style assumptions about human nature. Indeed, intellectual links between Kennan and his ‘cracked vessel’ and Freud and his psycho-analytic Man can be established, albeit without raising the point unnecessarily too far, for it is not argued that Kennan’s Man is Freudian Man or that Freud was a direct and/or the sole intellectual influence upon Kennan.

Like Freud, Kennan recognises and identifies quite clearly Man’s profound discomfort as member of civilised society or political community. Kennan emphasises this

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essential fact of the human condition throughout his discussion of human nature, and it is worth quoting at length. The ‘psychic makeup’ of the cracked vessel, he argues, is

the scene for the interplay of contradictions between the primitive nature of his innate impulses and the more refined demands of civilized life, contradictions that destroy the unity and integrity of his undertakings, confuse his efforts, place limits on his possibilities for achievement, and often cause one part of his personality to be the enemy of another. (27)

Here, Kennan is in broad agreement with Freud’s socio-philosophical argument of *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930:96) that Man’s impulses are irreconcilable with civilisation. Man is confronted, to use Kennan’s (1993) words, with the profound conflict ‘between what the individual actually is and what the interests of civilisation would ideally require him to be’ (27). This profound antagonism would, however, not exist and remain to be irreconcilable if Man was not driven by two conflicting impulses that drag him in essentially two different directions. On one hand, Kennan’s Man is driven by the need to preserve himself and by ‘self-regard, self-love, egotism, or whatever one wishes to call it’ (20). But, on the other side, Kennan recognises that Man is also a compassionate ‘social animal’ that wishes to comply with societal demands (23). Such is Kennan’s conception of Man’s instinctual structure; and regardless of whether Kennan was inspired directly by Freud, the similarities between Kennan’s ‘cracked vessel’ and Freud’s early instinct theory, which distinguishes between Man’s ego-instinct (self-preservation, self-regard) and sexual-instinct (other-regard), respectively, which are both aiming for immediate gratification, are nonetheless striking.

Based on that instinctual structuring of Man, however, Kennan is, just as Freud was, deeply aware of the dilemma that neither the pure renunciation nor the pure gratification of the instincts is realistically feasible and desirable. But Kennan also recognises that some ‘people do better or worse in contending’ with these contradicting instinctual demands (28). In Freudian terms, Kennan means—thereby perhaps implicitly adopting Freud’s

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structural theory of the psyche—that the egos of some Men are capable of balancing more effectively the demands of the unconscious id *vis-à-vis* the demands of the semi-unconscious super-ego than are other Men, but that, ultimately, we all do make use of defense mechanisms however successful we may be in employing these coping strategies. Yet, unconscious motivations always lurk in the back of the psyche; and to those Men who think that their egos are (apparently) balancing the instinctual demands fairly well, Kennan delivers a warning message:

One would do well not to be too easily misled by those impressive displays of a total personal autonomy. There are few who have not, at one time or another, had to do battle with the little troublemaker[s]; and if there is at the moment no outward evidence of its being a factor in their lives, don't worry: you may be sure it has been there in the past, or soon will be. (29)

Like Freud, Kennan recognises that Man must permanently and prudently reckon and grapple with the amazing depths of his soul, the (sometimes ugly) battle-ground for profoundly conflictual instincts and impulses—this not only for individual-psychological reasons or concerns of inner well-being, but also because virtually the entirety of social and (international-) political phenomena have, ultimately, their origins in Man's dualistic instinctual makeup. This includes one of the most powerful forces and profound problems of international relations: nationalism.

For Kennan, as for virtually all classical realists as well as for Freud, the force of nationalism, one of the most constitutive problems of international relations exacerbating the Schmittian us/them problématique that haunts contemporary normative international-political theory, finds its origins not so much in socio-structuralist laws but rather in laws that have their roots in human nature. Kennan (1993) argues that nationalist sentiments are the consequent and powerful forces of a 'universal need for people to feel themselves a part of something larger than themselves, and larger than just the family' (74). Such universal need to affiliate with fellow Men and to be a member of a group or a political

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community is, as he says, a 'natural need' (78). Kennan's Man is a deeply social animal, a Man which may be described as some sort of Aristotelian *zoon politikon*, who cannot thrive except in a social context but with a Freudian spin to it.

First, even though the family constitutes Man's initial and primary social group, the aim of Man's instinctual configuration is such that it (*Eros*) seeks to combine individuals into ever larger units (Freud, 1930:99,122). Secondly, this drive to affiliate is like a natural programme inbuilt into human nature in that Man's inclination and disposition to group formation is an 'inherited deposit from the phylogenesis of the human libido' (Freud, 1921:143). And, thirdly, Kennan seems to share the group psychological views of Freud, as formulated in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), that emphasise the impact of inner-group identification processes on the internal and external behaviour of groups and political communities. To Kennan, nationalism is 'the greatest emotional-political force of the age' (1993:76-77), but he does not consider all forms of nationalisms as equally problematic. Kennan distinguishes two forms: patriotism *versus* romantic nationalism (77-81). Although both are rooted in Man's social nature, it is only the latter that constitutes a 'pathological form' of nationalism, quite sadly a 'mass emotional exaltation to which millions of people...appear to be highly susceptible' (78).

The reason why Man is highly susceptible to aggressive forms of nationalism is rooted in Man's dualistic instinctual structure. It roots, ultimately, in Man's inclination to self-regard or self-love on the one hand, and in his social predispositions to affiliate with fellow Men, on the other. The perennial conflict of antagonistic drives within Man's self finds its outlet on the international scene caused by large-scale, Freudian-style processes of 'collective self-identification' (77) in political communities. Frustrated by his impotence, Man is capable of establishing and fuelling his self-regard by being/becoming a member of a nation. It is the nation that provides him with the necessary 'reassurance as to his own worth'; in addition, by receiving a share of and indulging in the glory of the nation, to

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which Man has become emotionally attached, Man cannot only compensate for his frustrations but can also satisfy his natural need to affiliate with other Men (79).

Against the background of such a conception of the nature of Man, i.e. assumptions about human nature that represent some striking resemblances to Freud's individual and group psychology, Kennan has formulated the profound scepticism *vis-à-vis* two (international-) political projects. The first concerns the role of the state. Kennan argues that the idea of the abolishment or retreat of the state—or any other Weberian-style form of political community—pertains more to wishful thinking rather than to a realist(ic) assessment of the human condition and international-political life. Though he shares the hope that 'these exaggerated concepts of national dignity and these excesses of collective self-admiration decline' in the not too distant future, the state will, Kennan argues, remain the 'central entity' around which the struggle for power and peace takes place (81). Kennan's second scepticism, which also comes directly from his assumptions about human nature, concerns Marxist (international-) political theory. Its philosophical and practical attempts that call for a major overhaul of the international-political status quo seem ill-founded to Kennan, for Marxists do not recognise that 'a measure of tragedy is built into the very existence of the human individual' and that this 'is not to be overcome by even the most drastic human interventions into the economic or social relationships among individuals' (36). On that point, Kennan also agrees with Freud, who argued against Marxism on many occasions (Freud 1927, 1930). Freud once confessed that he was a half-Bolshevist: a patient told him that the Bolshevik revolution would initially bring chaos and misery but then an ever-lasting period of universal peace and prosperity—to which Freud replied dryly that he 'believed the first half' (quoted in Jones 1957:17). More seriously, like Kennan (and so many other classical realists), Freud derived such scepticism from the nature of Man and argued that

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the *psychological* premises on which the system is based are an *untenable illusion*. In abolishing private property we deprive the human love of aggression of one of its instruments, certainly a strong one, though certainly not the strongest; but we have in no way altered the differences in power and influence which are misused by aggressiveness, nor have we altered anything in its *nature*. Aggressiveness was not created by property. (1930:113 (italics added))

Kennan's 'cracked vessel' constitutes not only a rich and well-constructed conception of Man, which is, in fact, rather a statement about the human condition, but also that the 'cracked vessel' shares many similarities with Freudian Man. This seems to have been forgotten among a large section of contemporary realists obsessed with philosophy of science and quantitative-statistical analyses of world politics who, however, still identify Kennan as one of their intellectual realist forefathers. But such implication is misleading, for Kennan (and all the other classical realists) approached world politics rather differently.

This can also be seen when looking at one of the most controversial yet important foreign-policy documents of the 20th-century—i.e. the (in)famous Mr. X article based on Kennan's long telegram, 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct' (1947)—where Kennan argues for the political strategy of containment *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union. There, Kennan derives his policy-strategic conclusion from rather different yet perhaps much more revealing and fruitful theoretical premises and methodological approaches. Rather than having purely focussed on changing structures in the international system, Kennan draws from earlier results that derived from his attempts to psycho-analyse the political personality of the Soviet Union. Applying Freudian developmental psychology to the Soviet Union, Kennan explored the 'childhood of the Russian people', the phase of 'adolescent Russia', identified its regression, and diagnosed that the Soviet Union and its government suffered from a profound 'mental pathology' (Costigliola, 1997:1323). Kennan complements this result with another psycho-analytical theory. He argues that the Russian revolutionary

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movements 'found in Marxist theory a highly convenient rationalisation for their own instinctive desires' which include the 'yearning for power', a 'phenomenon as old as human nature itself' (Kennan, 1947:567). Based on his (psycho-)analysis of the Soviet Union, Kennan argues that too much faith in negotiations is unwarranted and that the U.S. government should implement a 'policy of firm containment' (581).

That Kennan's realism is, ultimately, based on Freudian-style assumptions about human nature is unfortunately often overlooked.

Lippmann on infantilism and nationalism

This brings the analysis of the assumptions about human nature of classical realists to Walter Lippmann, who had both personal and intellectual links to Freud. Lippmann knew Freud; they met at a meeting of the Psychoanalytic Society in Vienna, and he was fascinated by him. As Lippmann wrote, 'I cannot help feeling that for his illumination, for his steadiness and brilliancy of mind, he may rank among the greatest who have contributed to thought' (1915:10). This fascination with Freud and psycho-analysis led to Lippmann's path-breaking *Preface to Politics* (2005[1913]) and it reached such dimensions that Harold Laski once lamented that he wished that 'Walter Lippmann would forget Freud for a little, just a little' (quoted in Steel 1980:173). But Lippmann did not forget Freud. Rather, together with Harold D. Lasswell, he became one of the prime importers of Freud to American political thought (Roazen 2003).

Lippmann emphasises the theoretical and practical significance of human nature in international politics throughout his work, and Lippmann's *Man* shows striking similarities to Freudian *Man*. Lippmann's classical realism is based on two core elements: nationalism and *Man*. International conflicts are driven by nationalist sentiments, and these potentially explosive sentiments one holds in favour of one's own political community and in inverse sympathy *vis-à-vis* others are driven by the laws of group psychology that are rooted in the nature of *Man* (Lippmann 2005[1913], 2008[1915]). Lippmann's assumptions about

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human nature resemble Freud's Man. Lippmann's Man is driven by primary impulses: he yearns for pleasure and instinctual satisfaction. These immature drives soon lead to intra-individual and inter-individual conflicts. Not only is each Man the psychological battleground of his own antagonistic drives. But on a societal level, too, the rivalling and profoundly antagonistic instinctual demands interact with the instinctual demands of fellow Men. This allows both for cooperation but also causes conflict. The nature of Man, Lippmann (2005[1913]) argues quite concisely, is 'a rather shocking affair if you come to it with ordinary romantic optimism' (47); and Lippmann, therefore, urges us to come to terms with human nature as it is, not as we wish our nature to be. In this regard, Lippmann's *Preface to Politics* is intended as a wake-up call for the political class that it must initiate a major overhaul of human regimes and political institutions. These reforms must not be based upon idealistic-romantic conceptions, Lippmann argues, but on brute facts about Man. Lippmann seems to have derived these facts from Freud. He acknowledges that 'The impetus of Freud is perhaps the greatest advance ever made towards the understanding and control of human character' (80).

Against this background, Lippmann faults the 'taboo philosophers' in *Preface to Politics* on two accounts. First, that they have considered the drives of Man as being essentially evil, and, secondly, that they have permanently and relentlessly sought to outlaw these lusts by which Man is driven. In the wake of his Freudian leanings, Lippmann disagrees energetically with such a socio- and politico-philosophical standpoint and argues instead that 'the energies of the soul' are 'neither good nor bad themselves'; rather than 'tabooing our impulses, we must redirect them'; rather than 'trying to crush badness', he argues, 'we must turn the power behind it to good account' (54-55). Here, Lippmann seems to have found comfort in Freud's socio-philosophical presumption of an inherent and profound antagonism between Man and society, but also in Freud's concept of sublimation, a defense mechanism that allows Man to transform 'evil' instincts into 'approved' forms of behaviour. Man is capable of becoming ever more-and-more liberated

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from the instinctual demands placed upon him. In *Preface to Morals*, Lippmann (1929) argues that Man must continually attempt to become as liberated as possible from his passions. Success or failure in this struggle against his own instincts will determine whether Man will be able to lead the good humanistic life or not.

The critical phase in that struggle, Lippmann argues, thereby agreeing with Freud, is 'the passage from childhood to maturity' (183). Infantile Man, he writes, does merely as he pleases. But mature Man is capable of revising most, if not all, of his 'desires in the light of an understanding of reality' (180). To Lippmann, Man therefore ought to make it one of his prime goals to develop successfully from infantile to mature Man. He ought to yearn to reach full maturity, where, in Freudian terms, the reality principle replaces the pleasure principle and where reason (ego) provides a healthy balance between personal desires (id) and societal demands (super-ego). This psycho-analytic developmental perspective of Man, which, as will be shown below, underlies much of his international-political theory, derives from Lippmann's reading of Freud and Sandor Ferenczi, one of Freud's closest disciples (176-179). A large proportion of the psychological concepts Lippmann uses in his works, including those on international relations, relate back to Freud's theory of the unconscious as it is laid out in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud's groundwork which Lippmann studied carefully and whose impact he compared with Darwin's *Origin of Species* (Steel, 1980:46).

From these Freudian assumptions about human nature Lippmann deduces the origins of nationalism and how these sentiments arise in political communities, how and in what disguises they are being acted out in the international sphere. Nationalism, Lippmann (2008[1915]) argues, is rooted in the instinctual configuration of Man and represents one of their most basic outlets. From an etymological viewpoint, nationality derives from *natio*, from birth. Without being apologetic, though, Lippmann emphasises that one's own nationality means much more to Man than the sober-minded legal-technical acknowledgement of being physically born in this or that country would suggest.

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Nationality reaches beyond the mere holding of a certain citizenship and passport. Instead, to the mass of Men, Lippmann argues, nationality signifies and represents the first loyalties, profound impressions, and earliest associations of Men. Nationality and national sentiments are, as Lippmann writes,

a cluster of primitive feelings, absorbed into a man and rooted within him long before conscious education begins. The house, the street, the meadow and hill upon which he first opened his eyes the reactions to family and strangers which remain as types of his loves and hates, the earliest sounds which brought fear and pleasure—these are the stuff out of which nationality is made.
(60)

That Men hold such irrational feelings towards their nation, that they indulge in such national sentiments, that nationality is such a powerful force within them, is but a mirror image of Men's instinctual struggles within them and *vis-à-vis* fellow Men. It is such grounding of these national sentiments that makes them such a powerful force in the relations among political communities, whether they be tribes, states, nations, or empires. 'This union with the sources of one's birth is', Lippmann argues, 'the most powerful factor in all politics' (70). For Men's nationality and sensibility or emotionality towards their own political community comes more or less directly from the 'deepest sources' and is the 'essence of our being which defines us against the background of the world' (66-67).

Lippmann uses the early instinct theory of Freud and the concept of identification. When Lippmann argues that nationalistic or patriotic sentiments represent nothing but Men's primordial 'desire to have, to hold, to increase, to fortify whatever can be identified with our earliest hates and loves' (70), he seems to suggest that nationalism and patriotism are merely the outlets that help gratifying the sexual-instinct which allow Men to satisfy their infantile desires. Part of these infantile desires is omnipotence, and by means of identifying with others, particularly with large groups and their leaders (that are usually perceived as immensely powerful), the mass of Men are capable of realising their desires. For Man 'feels instinctively that his own importance is associated with the importance of

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his group' (69); or more succinctly: 'if the nationality to which we belong is honored, we feel honored' (68). In their most intense and extreme forms, such feelings of nationality are even capable of transforming a 'group of people into one super-person' where 'the group lives' and where individual Man is 'lost in its greater glory' (69). Indulging in nationalist and patriotic sentiments towards Man's own and *vis-à-vis* other political communities provides, however, not only the necessary instinctual satisfaction as required by Man's sexual-instinct, but also that of the ego-instinct, which longs essentially for self-preservation. The sensations and symbolisms of nationalism and patriotism are not only capable of providing Man with some of the enjoyments of his early infancy, namely, feelings of omnipotence, but also with one very profound and primordial desire: security. As Lippmann writes in Freudian vein: 'we love the security where we were born' (61). Nationalist and patriotic sentiments do provide such feelings of security and help satisfy Man's survival instinct.

It is such a conception of human nature against which Lippmann's realism ought to be understood. Lippmann, for the very same reasons as Morgenthau and Kennan, warns of nationalism as one of the most powerful forces in the relations among nations. We are being confronted with group psychological forces that have, ultimately, their roots in the nature of Man, stemming from an antagonistic instinctual makeup that leaves Man torn apart between his instinctual demands and the requirements of civilisation. Nationalism represents one of the most primitive, widespread, and popular (in the truest sense of the word) outlets in international relations in the eternal struggle of the instincts.

The discussion of international trade by Lippmann confirms this. It further demonstrates how parts of Lippmann's international-political theory have been shaped by Freudian assumptions about human nature. Lippmann (2008[1915]) argues—a point still worth remembering to-day—that it is almost futile to try to neatly disentangle economic interests from patriotic or nationalistic sentiments. *Contra* the *homo oeconomicus* hypothesis, Man is not a one-dimensional actor driven by purely self-interested and

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economic motives, but is rather a multi-contoured human being whose wants and needs are merely transformed (sublimated) infantile desires. As Lippmann argues in Freudian fashion, 'the doll house turns into a suburban villa, the dolls are the babies, the leader of the gang becomes president of the chamber of commerce' (73).

Business and trade, both nationally and internationally, must therefore, according to Lippmann, be seen in a different light. Both economic activities are intimately connected with the deepest (irrational) desires of Man. Consequently, international business and trade issues are intrinsically intertwined with matters of national prestige, i.e. mass sentiments that have their roots in the instinctual structures of Men. International trade and (inter)national prestige motives reinforce each other, and the 'export of bicycles or steel rails is no longer the cold-blooded thing it looks like in statistical reports of commerce' (76). Surely, trade, does serve economic and material interests, but it serves instinctual interests, too. It is the latter element that is the cause of so much of the problems on the international sphere. For the inherent emotionalisation of international commerce means that 'when trade is attacked, we are attacked' and matters of international trade are, therefore, often turning into some sort of 'sporting event with loaded weapons' (76-77). Allegedly purely materialistic international commerce and also, of course, some forms of economic patriotisms can quite easily transform into an aggressive nationalism, particularly in times of crises where we can usually witness 'a swift retreat into our [instinctual] origins' (61).

Lippmann's warning seems as trivial as profound and, in any case, timeless. National sentiments cause distrust and hate *vis-à-vis* 'them' beyond the borders. 'Them' are portrayed and seen as potential enemies of 'us', of one's own national identity. National autarchy is, therefore, often the prime value; and the nature and roots of nationalism accentuate aggressive foreign-policies.

This then leads eventually to conflicts, crises, and, potentially, wars. When it comes to these, Lippmann warns, in a passage similar to Freud's argument in 'Thoughts for the

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Times on War and Death' (1915b), that Man's loyalty to his nation is so deep, strong, and powerful that it seems to 'survive the breakage of everything else' (2008[1915]:62). When his nation is under pressure or attack, Man feels emotionally and physically insecure, his life endangered, and he reacts to this existential threat by virtually 'disintegrat[ing] into an animal' (62). Yet even if there are no existential physical threats, international relations are plagued by instability and conflicts. For since international trade issues are intrinsically intertwined with patriotic and nationalistic sentiments, Lippmann argues that 'specific disputes over specific trade opportunities become the testing points of national pride' (81).

By all means should contemporary international-political theorists and foreign-policy makers, therefore, constantly be reminded of Lippmann's timeless warning that just as we are often (irrationally) prepared to fight emotionally and financially costly lawsuits for rather trivial sums of money, international relations remains the realm where we are constantly being faced with actors that 'will risk war to score a diplomatic victory' (81). That political communities broadly follow such behavioural patterns; and that, like in Morgenthau's and Kennan's case, almost the entirety of Lippmann's classical realism has its roots in profound assumptions about human nature, which show, moreover, striking similarities to Freud's theory of human nature, serves as a fruitful and timeless reminder and warning in a post-classical realist era, where international actors are seen as black-boxes or billiard balls.

Carr on human nature and Freud

The international-political theory of E.H. Carr is an interesting case when it comes to the question of potentially Freudian-style assumptions about human nature. For it is the widely held view among those interested in Carr's fascinating and peculiar realism that he is a thinker without an underlying conception of human nature at all, be it Freudian or of any other provenance (exceptions are Smith 1986; Chong 2007).

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But this is even intuitively hard to believe, given one of the fundamental truisms of political thought: namely, that, to use again Martin Wight's (1991:25) words, 'All political theory presupposes some kind of theory about human nature, some basic anthropological theory' (also Forbes & Smith 1981; Pennock & Chapman 1977). Surely, Carr (like other classical realists) knows all too well that the study of international relations requires its own concepts and methodologies. He makes clear in his inaugural lecture that he does not 'conceive it to be any part of the function of the Wilson Professor to...practise psycho-analysis' although he does not doubt that Freud had 'profoundly influenced modern thought' or 'deny that...psychological maladjustments...are contributory causes of war' (1936:846-847). Yet this does not necessarily imply that Carr's realism is not based on assumptions about human nature.

First and foremost, the international-political theory of Carr is based upon a particular conception of Man. Already in the early pages of his *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (2001[1939]), a classic text on international relations, Carr makes clear that one of the reasons why utopians have failed is precisely because they have made 'unverified assumptions about human behaviour' (7). This does, of course, not say specifically what his assumptions are, but his disagreement with utopian thinkers tells us that Carr certainly does have a view about the nature of Man. In this regard, it does not seem too speculative to suggest that Carr sought, and worked with, a theory of human nature that corresponds to one of his central international-politico-theoretical tenets, i.e. the balancing of utopia and reality. Carr's Man may also bear some traces of Freud's psychology. For although Carr's biography says relatively little about any thorough links to Freud, we do know that the young Carr 'had read Freud' and that 'this had had a dramatic effect on his awareness of the subconscious world' (Haslam 2000:46). This preoccupation has obviously led Carr to acknowledge and defend some of Freud's achievements.

True, Carr mentions Freud only once in *The Twenty Year's Crisis*—quotes from Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) (see Carr, 2001[1939]:85)—but he has always

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overtly acknowledged Freud's significance for Western thought. This is not an insignificant fact, for the history of thought (be it economic, social, political, etc.) has known many candidates who were intrigued by Freud but did not dare to admit this publicly (e.g. John Maynard Keynes). Thus, although Carr has been warning his contemporaries not to take everything that Freud wrote as 'gospel' (2000[1980]:xxi), he recognises Freud's achievements in meaningful comparisons: Like Marx, Freud, the 'great thinker', has 'added a fresh dimension to reason' (1961:133); and like Darwin, Carr writes, Freud 'helped to mould the climate of political opinion' (1951:72). Carr does not doubt that Freud had dramatically changed 'the way in which we look at the world' (2000[1980]:xxi). In his classic Trevelyan lectures, Carr (1961) singles out two of Freud's major impacts. The first concerns theorists' and scientists' need for greater reflexivity. Freud has encouraged us, Carr says, to question ourselves, our historical backgrounds, our choosing of topics, and our selection and interpretation of facts; Freud reconfirmed that the scientist 'has no excuse to think of himself as a detached individual standing outside society and outside history' (135). The second achievement of Freud, a somewhat negative or disillusioning achievement, concerns the nature and role of motives. Freud's theory of human nature, Carr sees correctly, 'has driven the last nail into the coffin of the ancient illusion that the motives from which men allege or believe themselves to have acted are in fact adequate to explain their actions' (134).

Yet as if that is not enough recognition for a truly great thinker, Carr goes on to publicly jump to Freud's defense against two misleading charges, which are unfortunately still widespread today. First, Carr raises the problem of the biological Freud, for Freud's theory of human nature has become under increasingly harsh attacks by Marxists, who have deplored Freud's (allegedly) purely individualistic and ahistorical viewpoint and who have denounced him as a mere liberal-bourgeois reactionary. Here, Carr disagrees by rightfully declaring that most of these Marxist charges brought against Freudian Man are 'valid only in part against Freud himself' (133). Regarding a related theme, Carr is even

firmer in his defense of Freud. The argument that Freud had enlarged the notion of the irrational in human affairs, Carr makes unequivocally clear, is ‘totally false’. For such criticism ‘rests on a crude confusion between recognition of the irrational element in human behaviour and a cult of the irrational’ (133).

Rather than blaming Freud, Carr rightly interprets the cult of the irrational as a deep-seated, ultra-conservative pessimism—which, however, ‘does not stem from Freud’ (134). Freud is not the high-priest of the irrational but a rationalist scientist, who opened up the irrational to rational enquiry and who helped us to increase our reflective ability to understand and control ourselves and our environment. This, Carr argues, represents not a conservative but a ‘revolutionary and progressive achievement’ (134). Against this broadly Freud-friendly background of Carr, it seems well possible that Freud has provided at least some sort of small impetus for Carr’s intellectual outlook. Indeed, Carr (1951) sounds like Freud when he writes:

To unmask the irrational by stripping from it its hypocritical fig-leaf of false reason is a salutary and necessary task. But this does not entail a panic flight from reason into the anti-rationalism of Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky or into the irrationalism of Nietzsche; on the contrary, it is an essential part of the movement towards understanding and overcoming the irrational. Reason is an imperfect instrument: it is good to recognize and study its imperfections. (106)

This brings the discussion now back to Carr’s assumptions about human nature as they appear in his international-political theory.

We do get a further impression of how important assumptions about human nature are for Carr’s realism by going back to *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*. There, again in the early pages, Carr (2001[1939]) introduces the antithesis of utopia and reality, whose overcoming constitutes one of the main pillars of his classical realism, by elaborating on several dichotomies: theory/practice, intellectual/bureaucrat, left/right, ethics/politics. But Carr begins the discussion of the utopia/reality problem of international relations with yet

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another and perhaps most daring theme of humankind, namely, that of free will *versus* determinism, a timeless problem which dates back to recorded human history and which is, after all, one of human nature. Utopians, Carr says, are Kantian voluntarists who believe that Men can change the course of history by acts of free will. They are capable of conquering nature, which includes conquering human nature. Realists, on the other hand, are said to believe in natural laws. They have approached both human history and Man in terms of rather strict causalities.

Carr finds both of these ideal-typical *Weltanschauungen* wanting, for the 'characteristic vice of the utopian is naivety; of the realist, sterility' (12). International-political theorists must, therefore, Carr suggests, avoid both naivety and sterility. This, however, requires the careful balancing of utopia and reality, which, in turn, requires us to find a middle-ground between the pure free will optimism and the pure determinist pessimism. It is only such a balancing act that will lead, Carr argues, to 'healthy thought' and 'healthy human action' (11). Here, Carr's yearning for the middle-ground suggests two things. First, that Carr's realism requires a conception of human nature that is neither purely voluntarist nor purely determinist. Secondly, Carr's language, i.e. that he speaks explicitly of 'healthy' thought and 'healthy' action, perhaps reveals some psycho-analytical substructures to his thinking, for his statement seems to imply that failed balancing acts would lead consequentially to pathological thoughts and pathological human actions. Such reasoning, in turn, is certainly broadly compatible or consistent with Freud's argument or the underlying rationale of psycho-analytic psychology, namely, that a continual imbalance between instinctual satisfaction (which determinism requires) and instinctual renunciation (which voluntarism can provide) causes Men to suffer fierce psychological pathologies. Indeed, Carr's assumptions about human nature do seem to appear as being at least somewhat reminiscent of Freudian Man.

Carr conceptualises human nature in the same way as he conceptualises his international-political theory. Or, the other way round, which seems more logical as

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(international-) political theory usually follows a certain conception of Man: he broadly conceptualises his realism according to his assumptions about human nature, namely, as a predominantly antagonistic affair. On one hand, Carr's Man is egoistical and has a will to assert himself among his fellow Men. Yet, on the other (more benign) side, Carr's Man displays signs of sociability, including a desire to co-operate with others. Such a conception of human nature transcends time and place. In 'every society', Carr argues, 'these two qualities can be seen at work' (2001[1939]:95) which make the human condition a complex and challenging one. For the state, or any other group or political community, is essentially 'built up out of these two conflicting aspects of human nature' (96).

Failing to recognise such Janus-faced psychic makeup of Man is likely to lead, as Carr reminds his readers, to disastrous results. Utopians, who want to wish away the egoistical side of Man and who prefer to hide behind an admirable but ultimately unrealistic belief in Man's earnest moral capacities, will achieve nothing. But crude realists, who have often been ridiculing Man's altruistic side to the (almost shameful) breaking point and who view all political action in the light of universal egoisms and power considerations, are 'just as wide of the mark' (97). It is one of the basic premises of Carr's international-political theory to warn utopians and realists alike that they must not fall prey to too simple conceptions of human nature. Carr argues that although politics—either on the domestic or international plane—is inherently bound up with power considerations, the 'homo politicus who pursues nothing but power is as unreal a myth as the homo oeconomicus who pursues nothing but gain' (97). Thus, like Morgenthau, Kennan and Lippmann—and Freud, too—Carr rejects crude one-dimensionality, be it on positive or negative terms, when it comes to Man and, instead, emphasises the multifaceted nature of Man.

Human nature is essentially characterised by a deep-seated Freudian-style antagonism. We always must reckon with the egoistical instincts of Man, but we must also

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not overlook that Man cannot dispense with fellow Men or any affiliation to any group. For Man is, as Carr argues, only capable of thriving in a social context (95). The affiliation with groups or political communities such as states ensures that Man's more anti-social instincts are being tamed. Group norms regulate the relations among their members. These relations are, therefore, mostly peaceful and follow a more or less commonly shared morality. Relations among groups, including international relations, are, however, significantly different in nature. States remain largely hostile *vis-à-vis* each other and display only very few signs of a shared morality. Carr explains this paradox of peaceful societal relations but hostile inter-societal relations in a way which is similar to Freudian group psychology and which seems, after discussing Morgenthau, Kennan, and Lippmann, only all too familiar.

Man ascribes a different set of moral principles to the state than he does to himself and his societal fellows. Yet he does not only not demand the state's adherence to the same moral principles, Carr argues, but he 'expects' from the state 'certain kinds of behaviour which he would definitely regard as immoral in the individual' (159). This essentially derives from Man's ever-present yearning for self-assertion, which leaves him only two options. The first is to become so powerful that he is capable of leading the group according to his own ends. This is, however, unrealistic. Man is, therefore, only left with the option of accepting his particular place in the order of things. But even if he does that, he can still be powerful, for he can still find 'compensation for his own lack of power to assert himself in the vicarious self-assertion of the group' (159). This psychological mechanism is reminiscent of Freud. Carr's Man is capable of overcoming his frustrations by means of projection and identification. As Carr argues: 'If we cannot win ourselves, we want our side to win. Loyalty to the group comes to be regarded as a cardinal virtue of the individual' (159).

In this light, then, it seems unquestionable that Carr's realism is based upon some profound assumptions about human nature. Further, Carr's assumptions about human

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nature show striking similarities to that of Morgenthau, Kennan, and Lippmann—but also to that of Freud.

Niebuhr's struggle with Freud

The same applies to Reinhold Niebuhr's assumptions about human nature. Niebuhr's Man, too, shows some similarities to Freudian Man. It should be pointed out, however, that this section does not argue that Niebuhrian Man is based upon Freud. For Niebuhrian Man is, after all, quite clearly some sort of Augustinian-style Christian realist Man (Niebuhr 1941, 1943; Elie 2007; McKeogh 2007) that corresponds to Niebuhr's Christian realist (international-) political theory (Niebuhr 1953; Morgenthau 1962a; Thompson 1975; Lovin 2008).

I merely suggest that there are similarities between Niebuhrian Man and Freudian Man. This is not a trivial point. For it helps clarifying and elucidating the intellectual substructure of classical realism in a potentially interesting and fruitful way: namely, to conceive of the assumptions about human nature of several leading 20th-century classical realists in broadly Freudian terms. It was insightfully argued by Michael J. Smith (1986:130) that some of the most important classical realists, including Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, and Carr, merely adopted Niebuhr's Christian realist assumptions about human nature but secularised them to make them fit for their forms of realism. I will, however, now show that Niebuhr's assumption about human nature are in some ways similar to Freud's. This further supports my argument that Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, and Carr did not so much secularise Niebuhr but rather used Freudian human nature. Revisiting Niebuhr's intellectual struggle with Freud is a significant endeavour. It gains further legitimacy in light of Paul Tillich's (1967:50) remark 'that it is [im]possible...to elaborate a Christian doctrine of man...without using the immense material brought forth by depth psychology'.

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Niebuhr had great interest in Freud. He comments on him on a number of occasions (Niebuhr 1941, 1956, 1957, 2001[1932]). Freud was both his ally and enemy. On one hand, Niebuhr is convinced of the medical side of psycho-analysis:

The position of Sigmund Freud as one of the great scientific innovators of our era is now generally acknowledged. The therapeutic efficacy of his disciplines and discoveries has been amply proved. By laying bare the intricate mechanism of the self's inner debate with itself, and its labyrinthian depths below the level of consciousness, he enlarged or indeed created new methods of healing "mental" diseases. (1957:255)

On the other hand, though, Niebuhr finds Freud's theory of human nature wanting. In *Nature and Destiny of Man*, Niebuhr (1941) argues, in light of his biblical-hebraic perspective, that Freudian human nature is too simple, too biological, too Nietzschean.

Dividing the history of human nature ideas into classical, Biblical, and modern perspectives, Niebuhr places Freud in the modern camp. But Niebuhr interprets Freud not as a modern rationalist but sees him as a Nietzschean-Rousseauian romanticist. Romanticists, Niebuhr argues, have traditionally emphasised Man's affinity to nature, and they have made a crucial mistake. For they 'ascribe to the realm of the biological and the organic what is clearly a compound of nature and spirit, of biological impulse and rational and spiritual freedom' (42). As Niebuhr continues: 'In this interpretation of human vitalities in purely biological terms, Freudian psychology is in perfect accord with romanticism' (44). Moreover, Niebuhr condemns Freud as an ultra-pessimist. In reference to Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* (surely no optimistic thesis on Man and the human condition), Niebuhr faults Freud for following a form of Nietzschean nihilism on the basis that Freud would neither deny disciplinary necessities of political communities or civilisation nor find a cure for Man's neurotic aberrations that originate in these necessities. Alongside liberalism, Marxism, and fascism, Niebuhr criticises 'Freudianism' as essentially not being capable of presenting satisfactory answers and solutions *vis-à-vis* the problems it has discovered and as being unable to 'understand the paradox of human

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creativity and destructiveness' (55). As Niebuhr has it, Freudianism is one of modernity's blind alleys—it is a 'cul-de-sac of pessimism' that 'despairs not of a particular civilization or culture but of civilization itself' (55-56).

Thus, Niebuhr recognises Freudian psycho-analysis's medical-therapeutic achievements and results but also shows an incredulity towards Freud's theory of human nature and human condition. Against such background, Niebuhr argues that in matters social and (international-) political, the Christian doctrine of original sin proves to be a far better starting-point than Freud. In his essay on Freud, 'Human Creativity and Self-Concern in Freud's Thought' (1957), Niebuhr writes that Freud does deserve much credit: First, because he has provided us with 'the first scientific realist account of human behaviour'; secondly, because he has broken radically with the Renaissance and Enlightenment optimism that had discredited the Christian doctrine of original sin as being too pessimistic, dogmatic, and mythical; and, thirdly, because he has 'shattered' the 'simple mind-body dualism' of much of Western thought as well as the Kantian notion of an 'intelligible and sensible self' (256).

Yet, ultimately, Niebuhr argues, Freud fails. For even though one must acknowledge Freud's 'therapeutic efficacy', Freud suffers from 'political irrelevance' (261). The problem rests, according to Niebuhr, with Freud's structural theory of the psyche, which he thinks to be seriously flawed. For it does not distinguish clearly and sharply enough between the ego and the id. Niebuhr rejects the Freudian self as some sort of 'id-ego', because it represents an 'ego, which is bedevilled, not by organised and coherent ambitions in conflict with other interests and ambitions, but with the anarchy of passions within and below the level of selfhood' (264). Thus, to Niebuhr, the Freudian ego is too close to nature, to the instincts, to infantile desires; and while the ego relates too much to the pleasure principle of the id, the super-ego relates too much to societal demands and necessities. Consequently, Niebuhr considers Freud's conception of Man's ego as too weak, i.e. as a psychic entity to which Freud has ascribed too little agency in that it is

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being straitjacketed between society (super-ego) and nature (id). It is such form of Freudian naturalism, or, more specifically, the misconstruction of a too bounded ego by Freud, that makes Freud's psychology, according to Niebuhr (in stark contrast to the Biblical Man and the doctrine of original sin), a rather useless theory of Man for social and (international-) political theory (264-265).

Niebuhr's reading is a harsh reading of Freud—and a potentially awkward one, too. It seems rather odd that Niebuhr writes that Freud's theory of Man is essentially unfit for social and (international-) political theory and that he therefore discarded it. The history of social and (international-) political theory surely does show that quite many social and (international-) political theorists—an enumeration would certainly include the Frankfurt School theorists as well as consequential thinkers such as Talcott Parsons, Harold D. Lasswell, and Hans Kelsen—stood under direct and positive influence of Freud's theory of human nature. Further, Niebuhr's critique of Freudian Man seems also unjustified in the light of the later Niebuhr's appreciation of neo-Freudian psycho-analytic psychology or neo-Freudian Man (Irwin 1975; Halliwell 2005). Niebuhr reviews some of the neo-Freudians already in *Nature and Destiny of Man* (1941:45n.1) and does so again later in his Freud essay. There, Niebuhr (1957) argues that part of the innovation of the neo-Freudians, such as Harry Stack Sullivan, Karen Horney, and Erich Fromm, *vis-à-vis* Freud's original description of Man had been that they 'have sought to correct what was regarded as a too purely "biological" approach of Freud' by means of opening up Man's self to historical and cultural influences (266). The price to pay was, according to Niebuhr, however, high. It cost the neo-Freudians to eliminate 'the virtue of the Freud concept of the universality of the self-seeking or pleasure seeking inclination of the self' (267).

But Niebuhr seems to have misread the neo-Freudians—including Freud himself. Among the various neo-Freudian thinkers, Niebuhr was particularly interested in Erik Erikson. Eriksonian ego-psychology, Niebuhr argues, corrects the crude and unhistorical biologism of Freud in that it ascribes to the ego a much greater autonomy from both nature

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(id) and society (super-ego) than Freud. This greater autonomy of the Eriksonian ego or such form of human agency helps to make the self more historical and, therefore, relevant for social and (international-) political theory. On this point, however, Niebuhr may have misunderstood the neo-Freudians, perhaps the result of what John Irwin (1975) calls Niebuhr's 'personalized' and 'politicalized' reading of Freud.

Niebuhr is certainly correct that Erikson's ego-psychology does put lots of emphasis on the question of autonomy of the ego (as do other neo-Freudians, too, as well as Adorno and Marcuse). The problem with Niebuhr's interpretation is, however, that he seems to suggest a dividing line between the biological Freudians and the cultural neo-Freudians which just does not exist in such strictness and which is, therefore, unwarranted. For neither is Freud as biological (and, therefore, allegedly unhistorical and socially and (international-) politically irrelevant) as Niebuhr argues, nor are the neo-Freudians as cultural (and self-transcendent and historical and, therefore, allegedly relevant) as he obviously wishes them to be. Niebuhr fails to recognise that Freud was, so to speak, the very first neo-Freudian. Likewise, he fails to see that the neo-Freudians do not merely substitute culture for nature but that they rather seek to integrate both. Coming back specifically to Erikson, even an Eriksonian ego can not and, more importantly, does not entirely negate both nature and the nature of the id (Irwin, 1975:247-248).

That Niebuhr may have at least partially misread both Freud and the neo-Freudians regarding a very crucial issue, i.e. that of human agency, seems, however, of great significance for our understanding of the intellectual substructure of some key figures of classical realism. Surely, neither Niebuhr's recognition of the value of Freudian psychoanalytic therapy nor his positive interest in the neo-Freudians and the Eriksonian ego-psychology make Niebuhr something like a Freudian or neo-Freudian, respectively. Niebuhr remains, after all, a Christian realist who bases his thought largely on the Christian doctrine of the original sin. But there are trajectories in his thought about the nature of Man and the human condition that seem broadly similar to or compatible with

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Freudian lines of argument. This can be seen in Niebuhr's recognition of psycho-analysis as an effective treatment method. It would be hard to explain how one can believe in psycho-analytic psychology without thereby adopting at least a broadly Freudian human nature perspective. The similarities with Freud can also be seen in Niebuhr's assumption of and agreement with broadly neo-Freudian perspectives.

Further, we know from his classic venture into (international-) political theory, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (2001[1932]), that Niebuhr read Freud, Jung, and Adler very early. There, we do find a very interesting passage which condenses in two sentences a line of thought to which other classical realists such as Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, and Carr also adhere. As Niebuhr argues, 'The man in the street, with his lust for power and prestige thwarted by his own limitations and the necessities of social life, projects his ego upon his nation and indulges his anarchic lusts vicariously'; this almost invariably leads to the tragic result that the 'nation is at one and the same time a check upon, and a final vent for, the expression of individual egoism' (93).

Such analysis by Niebuhr of how Man's will to power and will to assertion as well as Man's deeply felt sense of impotence will result, ultimately, in more or less problematic group-behavioural patterns on the national and, therefore, international level might well be explained in terms of Freudian individual and group psychology. Surely, Freud was not the only thinker arguing openly that it is mainly repressed egoistical, power- and recognition-related motives that cause the international dilemma. Niebuhr, for instance, has made such an argument based on his Christian realist assumptions about human nature; and Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, and Carr have also broadly followed such argumentative lineage. But Freud was one of the first who explored the roots of the problem in greater depth by secular scientific means. The international dilemma is largely the result of repressed human instincts which cause, by means of the individual and group psychological processes of identification and projection, political communities to behave *vis-à-vis* other communities in ways that seem fairly unimaginable in a domestic context.

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This suggests that it is possible to—broadly yet superficially—substitute Niebuhr for Freud (and vice versa). It is not unlikely that several of 20th-century classical realists have not so much used secularised Niebuhrian assumptions about human nature but instead (consciously or not) Freudian assumptions about the nature of Man. This does not include Niebuhr himself, but it may include the assumptions of Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, and Carr, whose Freudian provenance was already demonstrated.

Conclusion

Paying special reference to Freudian psychology, I have argued that both friends and foes of realism must revisit and look carefully at the assumptions about human nature that underlie the international-political theories of five consequential and timely 20th-century thinkers. Based on my analysis, I draw the conclusion that some of the widespread criticisms which have been put forth against the assumptions about human nature of 20th-century classical realism seem to be misleading, if not wrong. Defending these classical realists is important in its own right, but it becomes almost a duty in the context of increasing attacks against their assumptions about human nature and the recent renaissance of classical realism.

To begin with the increasing pressure put upon classical realism's assumptions about human nature, we must remember the fact that these classical realists have used a conception of Man as a starting-point for their analytical and normative forays into international relations has always been controversial. Waltz warned and criticised international-political theorists for committing the 'error of psychologism: the analysis of individual behavior used uncritically to explain group phenomena' (2001[1959]:28). Soon thereafter, Morgenthauian/Niebuhrian-style realism was almost dead and structural realist international-political theories such as Mearsheimer's influential offensive realism (2001) were gaining influence in the field. Yet realism's critics have also taken their shots. Critics argued that realist assumptions about human nature were wrong, embarrassing, and biased

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in favour of destructive anthropologies; that they were scientifically untenable; that they portrayed Man as anti-social, fearful, self-interested, and power-driven; that realists' pessimistic human nature views had sinister effects on theory construction and foreign-policy making; and, finally, that these assumptions about human nature were causing policies of distrust, promoting paranoia, increasing the probability of international violence, and stifling chances for peaceful coexistence. This is strong criticism which has not only been directed against classical realists but has also helped diminishing the standing of each of these realists as well as of classical realism itself.

Such criticism must, however, be countered. The argument that these classical realists' assumptions about human nature are unsophisticated reflections on Man made by pessimists seems grossly unjustified. These realists are not indulging in naïve-romantic perspectives about Man and the human condition; to paraphrase Lippmann again, the nature of Man can be a 'shocking affair'. It is also perhaps legitimate to criticise that Carr, for instance, has not made his assumptions about human nature more explicit. Save for Niebuhr, all of these realists should have said more about their views on Man in appropriate places helping to avoid the impression that they are trying to hide some sort of illegitimate influx of assumptions about human nature, particularly in light of these assumptions' constitutive roles as starting-points for their respective international-political theory. But once one engages with these realists' assumptions in greater depth, the high degree of knowledge and reflectivity of Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, Carr, and Niebuhr *vis-à-vis* the nature of Man and underlying individual and group psychological processes constitutive of the human condition emerges quite clearly.

It is worth remembering that these realists do clearly not portray Man as a merely physiological-biological animal that is only driven by power motives. All five classical realists have constantly remind and warn international-political theorists and foreign-policy makers about human hubris and Man's inclination to assert himself *vis-à-vis* his fellows. But they were knowledgeable and reflective enough not to commit the error of

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one-dimensionality when it comes to the nature of Man. Upon closer inspection, critics must recognise that these realists surely emphasise Man's longing for assertion, prestige, and power, but that they equally recognise that such character traits do merely represent a few aspects of Man among several others such as that Man is a deeply social creature partly driven by instinctual needs to affiliate with others.

Further, these realists do not portray Man as a fixed, purely biologically-determined animal whose nature must lead to fatalistic pessimism. They are aware of the individual-psychological and social/political tensions that stem from the eternal struggle between Man's instincts and his fragile ego, between some form of slight biological determinism and ego autonomy. Surely, Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, Carr, and Niebuhr believe in a universal Man that transcends time and place, and they do reject idealistic notions of complete malleability towards perfection. They are, after all, political realists. But these realists' assumptions about human nature do not imply any form of crude naturalistic determinism. All five realists, and especially Niebuhr and Carr, have wrestled with this issue and made clear that Man's ego does have a certain degree of autonomy from the unconscious demands of the instinctual id and the societal super-ego. Man may not be entirely perfectible, but these realists recognise some elements of improvability. Neither Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, Carr nor Niebuhr are biased in favour of purely destructive or aggressive aspects of Man. Their assumptions about human nature have not led them to become high-priests of fatalism but rather to become high-priests of (political) realism.

This raises a second point of criticism in need of refutation. Save Niebuhr, who never attempted to hide his Christian realist background, Morgenthau, Kennan, Carr, and, to a lesser extent, Lippmann were not very outspoken in terms of their assumptions about the nature of Man. The same applies to the intellectual origin of their assumptions. This has led many IR theorists to believe that these realists' assumptions about human nature are merely speculations or introspections. This chapter's analysis of their assumptions

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about human nature, taken together with its special reference to Freudian psychology, helps to rescue these realists from the charge of metaphysical speculations. Regardless of whether Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, or Carr (Niebuhr is exempted in light of his undoubted Augustinian-style Christian view of Man) were directly influenced by Freud's Man or whether we can see 'merely' some striking similarities, the analogies between these realists' assumptions and Freud's theory of Man make it hard for critics to simply dismiss their human nature thoughts as metaphysical ideas.

True, the scientific credentials of Freud have always been disputed. Well known is Popper's verdict that psycho-analysis is some form of pseudoscience (1963:34-35) or Eysenck's claim that psycho-analysis is a myth (1961; the major critical voice remains Grünbaum 1984; 2007). But we must also point towards Popper's misreading of Freud (Grant & Harari 2005) or to neuroscientists who now use neuroimaging techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging and positron emission tomography to explore the neural bases of psycho-analytical theories and concepts (Kandel 2005; Kaplan-Solms & Solms 2002). This helps us to understand that despite all legitimate criticism, Freud's theory of Man cannot be shrugged off as a myth or speculation. This raises again the point of crudeness. Even Freud's critics concede that Freud not only revolutionised our understanding of mental life, ourselves, others, and the world around us, but that he provided us with extraordinarily coherent theories about unconscious psychological processes, the structure of the psyche, instinct configurations, and the irrationality of human motivation. It is noteworthy for those who seem to be too critical of these realists' assumptions about human nature that Nobel laureate Eric Kandel (1999) reminded us only ten years ago that Freud's 'psychoanalysis still represents the most coherent and intellectually satisfying view of the mind' (505). Thus, to denounce these realists' assumptions about human nature as unsophisticated and embarrassing seems misleading.

Yet revisiting the assumptions about human nature of these classical realists has been timely and significant in two further related ways. The first concerns the recent

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renaissance of classical realism. Whenever we turn to these thinkers for help or inspiration in our dealings *vis-à-vis* some contemporary foreign-policy or international relations issues, we must never forget the human nature baggage that they are carrying. These five classical realists cannot be taken without all their human nature content. Doing otherwise would be oversimplifying their thought, which would then result in the meaninglessness of their answers to the problems and issues we asked them for.

Secondly, the realist tradition is a philosophy with many breaks in its intellectual trajectory, but there are also some continuities. An essential part of that continuity is that classical realists had been committed to a certain conception of human nature as the starting-point of their respective international-political theory for over two centuries when Waltz appeared on the scene and attempted to drag realism away from human nature towards the concept of international structure. The philosophy of science may agree with such a turn of events, but classical realists cannot. For post-classical realism (if it deserves to be called realism) has robbed realism its core intellectual and philosophical content. Classical realists, the true or genuine realists, such as Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, Carr, and Niebuhr, have known what has been beautifully noted recently by Paul Elie (quoted in Isola 2007): realism is not 'merely pragmatism or enlightened self-interest' but derives 'from a grand conception of human nature in history that leads to tough conclusions about what's possible in politics'.

Has post-classical realism forgotten about the intimate politico-theoretical relationship between political realism and the concept of human nature?

THE HIDDEN HUMAN NATURE ASSUMPTIONS OF POST-CLASSICAL REALISM

Introduction

The last chapter was devoted to classical realism, this chapter deals with post-classical realism. Its nature, structure, and arguments must be seen against the background of the move away from the concern with human nature towards the concern with billiard balls. The transformation from a Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style realism to post-classical realism was the outcome of an increasing dissatisfaction with the former's reliance on what was seen by the post-classical realists as unscientific or crude human nature speculations. Post-classicals set out to supersede the older realism with a newer and more scientific realism without human nature.

Yet, is the concept of human nature really as dead as post-classical realists would have us believe in light of their socio-structural but anti-human nature rhetoric? What happened to the partly Freudian-style human nature baggage of the classicals? This chapter deals with some of the most significant post-classicals. The analysis includes the realist liberalism of John Herz, the systemic-scientific realism of Morton A. Kaplan, the two main structural realist theories, i.e. the defensive variant of Kenneth N. Waltz as well as John J. Mearsheimer's offensive realism, and, last but not least, the latest innovation of post-classical realism, neoclassical realism. Based on my reading, this chapter concludes that the post-classical realist endeavour must be seriously reconsidered. It draws three conclusions.

First, these post-classicals have not been able to free their respective international-political theories from assumptions about human nature. The concept of human nature is not as dead as these post-classicals have claimed. To the contrary, assumptions about human nature still play a central role in these post-classical realisms. Secondly, despite these post-classicals' apparent 'human nature lie', a closer look at their hidden assumptions about human nature suggests that these post-classical realists must be

defended. They must be rescued from some of the charges committed to destroying these post-classicals' assumptions about human nature and their international-political thought. Thirdly, although these post-classicals' assumptions about human nature can be defended, their assumptions are by no means as reflective and profound as those of the classical. This is one of the factors that helps understand the politico-theoretical *cul-de-sac* of the post-classical realist project. It reinforces the need to begin looking for potentially fruitful ways as to how to deal with the concept of human nature in contemporary realism.

Herz and the psychological origins of the security dilemma

John H. Herz's realist liberalism can be regarded as one of the spearheads of post-classical realism. He is perhaps even its creator. Putting Herz in the post-classical realist camp may raise two objections. The first would argue that Herz is known and appreciated as a Kelsen-educated German-Jewish émigré who was, against the backdrop of two world wars and realist politico-philosophical convictions, part of a wider post-World War II group of realist thinkers, including Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, Carr, and Niebuhr, that sought to warn policy-makers against their idealistic, utopian, and legalistic mood. The second objection would point to Herz's European-style realist liberalism and argue that it has received much attention and appreciation recently precisely because it distances itself from Morgenthauian/Niebuhrian human nature theorising, but it is also far too distant from contemporary American-style realisms *à la* Waltz or Mearsheimer (Ashley 1981; Stirk 2005; Hacke & Puglierin 2007; Puglierin 2008).

These are certainly valid points, which are not questioned. To guard against potential misunderstandings, Herz's intellectual project is surely much closer to classical realism than to Waltzian post-classical realism. Yet still, Herz's realist liberalism represents the perfect *entrée* into the world of post-classical international-political theory. For its intellectual, methodological, and politico-theoretical heart—the concept of the security dilemma—has eventually become the foundational conceptual framework upon

which subsequent generations of post-classical realists have constructed their international-political theories. Both Waltz's defensive structural realism and Mearsheimer's offensive structural realism draw explicitly from Herz's concept of the security dilemma (Waltz 1979:187; Mearsheimer 2001:35-36; see also Jervis 1978; Glaser 1997; Booth & Wheeler 2008).

Post-classical international-political theorists have been attracted to, or perhaps have been seduced by, the concept of the security dilemma. First, because the security dilemma logic seems to allow an opt-out from the Morgenthauian/Niebuhran human nature theorising, which runs not only counter to the strictures of much of contemporary philosophy of the social sciences but also fits ill with the Anglo-American liberal intellectual heritage (Shimko 1992). Secondly, because the Herzian logic seems to allow an opt-out from all sorts of speculations about human nature—why bother about the nature and behaviour of Man when we can see a virtuously simple sociological logic at work? As Herz explains in *Political Realism and Political Idealism*: Whenever any actors (be they Men, groups, or states) are being faced with structurally anarchical conditions, they will be quick in realising that they must provide for their own security against external attacks, for there is, to use Mearsheimer's (2001) succinct analogy, 'no higher authority to come to their rescue when they dial 911' (33). Being aware of their profoundly insecure situation, actors seek to acquire the necessary capabilities. Yet even if power is merely sought for largely defensive purposes, i.e. to find and assure security against external attacks, any increases in power pose a threat to the security of other actors, for anarchy dictates that actors seek relative shares of capabilities. This leads then, however, to the vicious circle of security and power competition among the actors; and, in the international realm, we may therefore be able to refer to this situation as some sort of Hobbesian international state of nature or international *homo homini lupus* situation (Herz 1951:3).

This surely is a wonderful socio-structural explanation of some basic patterns of world politics which claims that it is not the *animus dominandi*, a human drive, that

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inclines actors to seek ever more power, but it is the anarchical structure that forces actors to acquire power after power. But it is, nevertheless, a half-truth. For the conceptualisation of international politics in terms of the security dilemma, too, presumes, as this section argues, certain assumptions about human nature, i.e. assumptions that show, moreover, some striking similarities to Freud's theory of human nature. In other words: Regardless of Herz's (1951) insinuation that 'the condition that concerns us here is not an anthropological or biological, but a social one' (3); and regardless of the number of post-classical realists who have built their post-classical realist projects upon such Herzian foundations, the concept of the security dilemma is infused with assumptions about human nature. In fact, it seems somewhat remarkable that this has been overlooked or neglected by post-classical realist followers of Herz. For a cursory look into Herz's *Political Realism and Political Idealism* would suggest that the concept of the security dilemma is hardly conceivable without the concept of human nature: rather illuminatingly, the first chapter bears the title 'Psychological Bases'.

My argument is that these psychological bases are reminiscent of Freudian psychology and social philosophy. Before dwelling on these psychological origins of the security dilemma, however, I wish to come back briefly to the Morgenthau/Herz dividing line of contemporary realism. For such a distinction that runs along the axes human nature/structure or psychology/sociology, respectively, is rather superficial, if not entirely misleading. Just as Morgenthau, who posited that Man is driven both by selfishness and an *animus dominandi*, has recognised that the universal struggle for power and peace among nations roots ultimately in anthropological traits but receives its actual form and force by historical circumstances, so must Herz (and his post-classical followers) likewise recognise that international politics cannot be explained by allegedly purely sociological concepts such as the security dilemma but must presuppose assumptions about human nature such as fear and the urge for survival (Osgood & Tucker 1967:256n.11). Arnold Wolfers has argued along similar lines (1962[1951]) and shown where the genuine disagreement really

lies: both make assumptions about human nature, but the Herzians do make ‘statesmen and people look less vicious than the animus dominandi theory’, for what Herz’s security dilemma theory does is merely to ‘substitute tragedy for evil and to replace the “mad Caesar”...with the “hysterical Caesar” who, haunted by fear, pursues the will-o’-the-whisp of absolute security’ (84).

The argument that that the distinction between Morgenthauian/Niebuhran-style classical realism and Herzian-style post-classical realism pertains to diverging underlying assumptions about human nature rather than to diverging underlying philosophical bases of their respective international-political theories opens up fruitful lines of enquiries. This is true not only *vis-à-vis* Herz himself, but in fact *vis-à-vis* all those who have followed his intellectual lead emphasising the concept of the security dilemma. Hence, what is the nature of post-classical realism’s assumptions about human nature? And what are their intellectual origins? Does its nature and origin differ from that of the classical?

The literature tells us that Herz’s Man derives largely from Hobbes (Wolfers 1962[1951]:84n.5; Koskenniemi 2001:467). An alternative intellectual lineage is said to be Edmund Burke (Herz 1959:234n4; Stirk 2005:306n134). I present, however, a different reading and suggest that Herzian Man may perhaps be fruitfully conceived *vis-à-vis* a broadly Freudian psychological understanding. This seems not wide of the mark. Richard Ashley (1981) has pointed out, albeit cautiously and without greater elaboration, that Herz’s Man appears as being ‘somewhat reminiscent of an “idealized” Freud’ (226). In addition, we know that Herz was a student and *protégée* of Hans Kelsen, who had intellectual and personal ties to Freud. More importantly, however, we know from Herz’s own admissions in his autobiography, *Vom Überleben* [Of Survival] (1984:89), that he stood under the broader influence of the group psychologies of both Gustave LeBon (1896) and also Freud (1921), though Herz may owe slightly more to LeBon than to Freud. These are fruitful starting points, but what does Herz say about Man?

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Man, as Herz sees it in *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (1951), is a through-and-through ambivalent being that has a dualistic instinctual-psychological make-up. On the one hand, Man is driven by an instinct of self-preservation which inclines him to yearn for power. The possession of power is the only means available to ensure a degree of security against potential violent death inflicted by fellow Men. It causes the vicious and dynamic cycle of intense security and power competition among Men (4). But, on the other hand, there is also a more benign side. Man is a thoroughly compassionate being who possesses a 'basic feeling of pity...provoked by the observance of the suffering of another human being' (6). Such a dualistic-style instinctual structure is obviously wide-spread among realists given that classical realists have conceptualised human nature and its externalised effects along broadly similar lines, namely conflict *versus* cooperation *versus* conflict and so forth. Like that of the classical realists, the way Herz conceives of Man and his existence seems broadly compatible with Freud's early instinct theory, which posits an ego-instinct (survival) and sexual-instinct (*Eros*). The former pushes Man into conflict, the latter demands cooperation. Man is caught in the middle. If Herzian Man was a purely self-interested survival seeker, a pure *homo homini lupus* situation would immediately arise.

Yet such condition will not materialise. For Man is equally driven by pity and compassion. This more benign side does, however, by no means imply the reign of psychological peace and tranquillity. The instinctual antagonism and ambivalence cannot be wished away and transcends time and place. Instead, Man suffers. Herzian Man is perhaps a constant sufferer. The ever-present 'necessity for acting counter to what one's basic feeling bids one do must thus lead to an awareness of discrepancy and a feeling of uneasiness'—and rather illuminatingly, particularly in the context of a potentially Freudian backdrop of Herzian assumptions about human nature, Herz has referred to these feelings of uneasiness, which stem from the struggle between the antagonistic instincts, 'bad conscience' and 'guilt' (7). Herz does not depict Man as being a purely rational security seeker. To the contrary, Herz recognises as a matter of fact that Man 'is not usually born or

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reared as a coolly calculating being' (6). Rather than being a *homo oeconomicus*, Herz's Man is a predominantly instinctual and emotion-driven Man, i.e. a sufferer who suffers from his distinctive instinctual-psychological structuring. As Herz, congenial to Freud, argues: the 'individual human soul is itself usually the theatre of divergent and often antagonistic trends and traits which fight each other, frequently without result, until death intervenes to settle the issue or leave it forever unsettled' (8).

This intra-psychic struggle, however, does not remain confined to Man's psyche. Its effects are rather being externalised. Herz argues that it is a basic fact of existence that Man 'is born into a world of fundamental antagonism' (7). The human condition is one of intense struggles. These struggles derive, ultimately, from the nature of Man. It is, in fact, the dualistic and largely antagonistic instinctual-psychological structure of Man that causes not only fierce intra-psychic tensions but also affects the relations among Men and *vis-à-vis* their outer social environment (7-8). Herz reminds us insightfully of the social dynamic of Man's instinctual-psychological configuration. Specifically, Herz considers it a brutal yet nonetheless basic and profound fact of the human condition that Man is 'at the same time foe and friend to his fellow man, and that social co-operation and social struggle seem to go hand in hand, and to be equally necessary' (3). It is the background of such a conception of Man (which seems, moreover, not all too distant from classical realist assumptions about human nature) against which Herz warns us that we must not mistake group solidarity or 'common social action of men' for some sort of genuine human sociality. For these social facts, he argues, do 'merely reflect the transfer of the survival struggle to the higher level' (11-12).

This transfer from Man to the higher level follows a psychological logic which seems all too familiar by now. Herz explains it by arguing that it is the natural inclination of Man to identify or associate himself with the concerns and interests of ever larger and larger social entities, beginning from the familial nucleus over certain social groups to, ultimately, nations. Similarly to the classical realists (save Niebuhr), Herz's argument

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seems to borrow here from one of the Freudian defense mechanisms—identification. He argues that Man, an essentially impotent, anxious, guilt-driven creature, finds his share of security in a profoundly insecure environment by means of identifying with either more powerful Men or more powerful social entities such as nations. Likewise, and again akin to classical realists, Herz recognises the overarching social force of entities such as nations, which may otherwise be characterised by atomistic social structures, in times of crises. As Herz argues:

Competition for security and power goes on all the time among the individuals and groups that comprise a nation; but a man may identify his own interests with that of the nation to which he belongs if it is a question of defending his country as an entirety against threats deriving from competing nations, or if it is a question of increasing its power and influence against other nations. (12)

If Herz's instinctual-psychological assumptions about Man are taken together with how he sees them being played out in the various social spheres, including the anarchical environment of the relations between nations, it seems misleading, if not mistaken, to conceive of Herz's concept of the security dilemma purely in sociological terms or from the viewpoint of a sociological top-down perspective.

Instead, a picture of Herz's post-classical realism emerges, which is by no means purely structural-sociological. It is rather as laden with assumptions about human nature as are Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style classical realist international-political theories. The concept of the security dilemma, whether *vis-à-vis* intra-group relations or inter-group relations, does not derive from anarchical structures but from a set of assumptions about human nature. It cannot be otherwise. How else would Herz (or any other post-classical realist) be capable of explaining why such an anarchical international environment has arisen in the first place and why anarchy is such a powerful and profound element in human history? Anarchy can reinforce anarchy, but anarchy cannot cause anarchy—only

Man can cause anarchy. The roots of the security dilemma must, therefore, ultimately be found in human nature.

In this light, a picture of Herzian Man emerges that shares not only some similarities with that of the classical realists, but also with Freudian Man. Compared with the classicals, Herz is certainly not as outspoken about the nature of Man, but the concept of human nature is certainly as significant for his international-political theory as for the Morgenthauians/Niebuhrrians. In this regard, I will briefly come back to Herz's usage of the Freudian notion of guilt. Herz argued that the eternal conflict between the survival instinct and the urge for compassion results necessarily in strong feelings of profound guilt. He also remarked briefly that he does not overtly concern himself with the psychological mechanisms which lead to Man's feelings of guilt. But, most interestingly, Herz writes in *Political Realism and Political Idealism* that he is concerned with Man's 'types of reactions' to the complexities of guilt (8ff). With this, Herz has, in fact, elevated human psychology or the concept of human nature to the very centre of international-political theory. He seems to suggest that the various different international-political theories that have been put forth in the history of political thought do merely represent or mirror various different intellectual efforts to essentially cope with one of the most universal and profound of all human sentiments: the guilt that haunts Man.

Herz is, however, not the sole post-classical whose international-political theory is based upon fundamental assumptions about human nature.

The anthropomorphised international system of Kaplan

Putting Herz in the post-classical realist camp required some brief explanation. This does not apply to Morton A. Kaplan, a prolific writer in the philosophy and science of international politics and a pro-active intellectual heavyweight in IR's traditionalist *versus* science debate (Kaplan 1966, 2005[1969]). Kaplan's *System and Process in International Politics* (1957b) has been correctly considered one of the five major theoretical advances

in the history of realism (Tellis 1996:4). Kaplan's hyper-scientific post-classical realism has, however, failed to live up to its promise. It is infused with assumptions about human nature, i.e. Freudian-style assumptions about human nature.

This argument must be seen against the background that Kaplan has been part of a wider American intellectual movement which is, to a very large extent, responsible why Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style realism was largely wiped off IR's intellectual map. The increasing aversion of these post-classicals to human nature-based international-political theorising *à la* Morgenthau and Niebuhr is intimately connected with the behavioural revolution that swept through American political science departments in the 1950s and 60s. Triggered by a profound dissatisfaction with the then-prevailing modes of enquiry, research techniques, and research methods, this revolt was a confrontation between two different methodological approaches: traditionalism or classical approach *versus* scientism. This intellectual quarrel was initially spearheaded by English-school theorist Hedley Bull (see Bull 1966) and post-classical realist Kaplan, respectively.

Kaplan was a major driving force in the move towards a more scientific and rigorous methodological approach in the study of world politics which helped the apparent exclusion of the concept of human nature. *Contra* the classicals, Kaplan argued that international-political theorists must pay considerable attention to the philosophy of sciences; ought to adopt theories and conceptual frameworks from physics and the social sciences; should apply mathematical and statistical analyses; need to focus on proper methods of data collection; and must ask what the nature of a theory actually is (Kaplan 1966, 2005[1969]; Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff 1990:542-543; Vasquez 1998:40). Against this philosophy of science background, Kaplan sought to construct a realism that he thought would be methodologically far superior to what realism had to offer at a time when Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations* had still been the definitive work for students of international relations. In this regard, Kaplan's *System and Process in International Politics* was a 'pathbreaking work'—first, because it provided the theoretical foundation

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upon which Waltz could later build his systemic-structural realism (Tellis 1996:51, 66) and, secondly, because Kaplan attempted to design a realism which, as Robert Keohane (1986a) pointed out, did not rely any longer 'on the nature of human beings to account for discord and cooperation in world politics, but focused instead on the competitive, anarchic nature of world politics as a whole' (13). The latter of these two virtues should, however, be taken with a pinch of salt.

Despite all systemic-scientific rhetoric, Kaplan's post-classical realism has not abandoned the age-old practice of making assumptions about human nature in international-political theory. In the wake of the groundbreaking works of Viennese biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) and also British psychiatrist W. Ross Ashby (1956), Kaplan brought general-systems theory to the study of world politics and transformed the then-prevalent methodological-investigative strategies. While classical realists approached international politics analytically, Kaplan adopts the method of the general-systems theorists and conceives relations among nations synthetically, i.e. to 'go beyond the parts and understand how complex systems are organised and how they operate as a whole' (Tellis 1996:53). In this light, the basic approach of *System and Process in International Politics* is, according to Kaplan (1966), 'fairly simple'. For, *contra* Morgenthau, who discerns general patterns and principles of international politics, Kaplan's theory is concerned with explaining variations:

If the number, type, and behavior of nations differ over time, and if their military capabilities, their economic assets, and their information also vary over time, then there is some likely interconnection between these elements such that different structural and behavioral systems can be discerned to operate in different periods of history. (8)

Instead of focusing on the nature, attributes, and behaviour of units—Man or states—Kaplan reverses the logic. He first models certain international-political systems, and in a second step he then utilises these models in order 'to deduce what the characteristic

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behavior of the parts must be if the system itself was to be maintained in a certain operating state' (Tellis 1996: 55). Kaplan provides us with a theoretical framework which formulates hypotheses that are 'intended to express the types of actions which must characterize the system if it is to remain in equilibrium rather than to predict that any individual action will be of such a character' (Kaplan 1957:2).

Yet this has not prevented Kaplan from consciously or unconsciously smuggling in assumptions about human nature, i.e. Freudian-style assumptions about human nature. We can see these hidden assumptions quite clearly when we turn to Kaplan's equally hidden motivational assumptions about states. In *System and Process in International Politics*, Kaplan examines no less than six actual or potential international-political systems: balance-of-power system, loose-bipolar system, tight-bipolar system, universal system, hierarchical system, and unit-veto system. The first two of these systems are somewhat idealised portrayals of Western 18th/19th-century and post-World War II international politics, respectively. The latter four international-political systems are purely hypothetical (1957:21-53). Kaplan focuses on the balance-of-power system and posits six 'essential rules', which are said to 'describe the characteristic behavior of the actors' (23) and keep the system in equilibrium. These six rules are:

- 1) Act to increase capabilities but negotiate rather than fight. 2) Fight rather than pass up an opportunity to increase capabilities.
- 3) Stop fighting rather than eliminate an essential national actor.
- 4) Act to oppose any coalition or single actor which tends to assume a position of predominance with respect to the rest of the system.
- 5) Act to constrain actors who subscribe to supranational organizing principles.
- 6) Permit defeated or constrained essential national actors to re-enter the system as acceptable role partners or act to bring some previously inessential actor within the essential actor classification. Treat all essential actors as acceptable role partners (1957:23).

These six rules as they are formulated by Kaplan have, however, come under heavy criticism. No other than fellow post-classical realist Waltz has presented us with an

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insightful yet devastating critique of Kaplan's international-political theory. Waltz's critique will help unveil some of Kaplan's hidden assumptions about human nature.

The essential flaw, according to Waltz, rests with Kaplan's assumption of these six essential rules. Waltz points out a theoretical problem which he lays bare by means of reformulating them. As Waltz argues, the six rules are, actually, merely three:

- A. Act as cheaply as possible to increase capabilities (Kaplan's 1 and 2).
- B. Protect yourself against others acting according to rule A (Kaplan's 4 and 5).
- C. Act to maintain the number of units essential to the system (Kaplan's 3 and 6). (Waltz 1979:52)

Based on this reformulation, Waltz (1979) virtually demonstrates how Kaplan smuggles in state motivational assumptions which pre-determine the outcome of the interactions among states. Waltz faults Kaplan for turning a 'dependent variable into an independent one' (52) and for still working within the confines of Morgenthauian-style analytical reasoning even though his 'vocabulary, borrowed from general-systems theory, has obscured this' (63). Waltz faults Kaplan for smuggling in essentially three motivational assumptions: First (A), that states are power-maximisers. Secondly (B), that states are security-maximisers. And, thirdly (C), that states are compassionate in the sense that they do not drive other states into death (52).

Yet, regardless of whether we agree with the nature and origins of these three state motivational assumptions or whether we find them tenable, these assumptions ultimately represent a reflection and implicit endorsement of a particular conception of Man. In fact, Waltz's revelation that Kaplan obviously conceptualises states not only as power-maximisers but also considers states as relentlessly yearning for the maximum of security and as being essentially compassionate creatures, provides us with one of the keys to understanding the hidden assumptions about human nature in Kaplan's allegedly post-

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classical-style international-political theory. For the use of anthropomorphisms, i.e. the attribution of human motivations, characteristics, or behaviour to inanimate objects such as the state implies 'to treat as known what the properties of the human are' (Johnson 1998:551). A picture-perfect example of anthropomorphisms has been provided recently by Robert Kagan (2008:80): 'Nations are not calculating machines. They have the attributes of the humans who create and live in them, the intangible and immeasurable human qualities of love, hate, ambition, fear, honor, shame...' (on the use of anthropomorphisms in IR, see Escudé 1997:23-46; Jackson 2004; Lomas 2005; Wendt 2005).

This implies then, however, that Kaplan obviously presumes Man to be not only driven by both power and also security concerns, but that he also conceives of Man as being essentially compassionate. This demonstrates the great significance of the concept of human nature for Kaplan's international-political theory. For were his beliefs about the nature of Man significantly different from those assumptions about human nature as these obviously are, Kaplan would presume a set of 'essential rules' that looked significantly different and he would, therefore, not be capable of explaining state behaviour in a balance-of-power system. In short: without his underlying assumptions about human nature, his systemic-scientific theory would collapse.

Besides Kaplan's conceptualisation of the six essential rules and state motivational assumptions, we can, however, identify another element in his purportedly human nature-free realism that illustrates the high degree to which his realism is infused with assumptions about human nature, namely, Kaplan's concept of the international system. This will also reveal that these assumptions are of Freudian provenance. Somewhat in the wake of Waltz's criticism, Ashley Tellis (1996) raised yet another problematic issue *vis-à-vis* Kaplan's realism. It relates to a very profound question: Why is it that states which comprise the balance-of-power system would feel committed to play by the six essential rules that are said to maintain the system's equilibrium? Kaplan resolves this tricky

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problem with a somewhat animistic trick, namely by 'reifying the universe anthropomorphically, that is, treating what is essentially a hypothetical construct for purposes of explanation as a true natural entity, a system "invested with purpose, instincts and something akin to reason"' (62). Certainly, Kaplan leaves us in no doubts about his theory's holistic—and, again, essentially anthropomorphological—aspect:

The needs of a system are set by the structure of the system. The objectives of a system are set by its needs in its environment as it understands that environment. The objectives of a system are values for the system. The objectives which, in fact, would satisfy the needs of the system are valuable for the system. (Kaplan 1957:149)

Kaplan conceptualises the concept of the international system as an essentially quasi-human entity. He truly anthropomorphises the international system. Analysing Kaplan's conception of this quasi-human entity will help us to understand the nature and intellectual origins of Kaplan's Man.

The extent to which Kaplan anthropomorphises the concept of the international system and its sub-systems (states) is remarkable, as is the extent to which he anthropomorphises the international system along Freudian lines. Kaplan argues that all systems, whether personality systems, social systems, or political systems, are constantly being confronted with changing conditions within ever changing environments. This applies to the international-political system, too. Facing these imponderables, the international system employs various regulatory processes by which it 'attempts to maintain or to preserve its identity over time' (89). In a highly interesting spin to his systemic-scientific international-political theory, Kaplan claims that all these different systems are being regulated by essentially identical mechanisms or regulatory processes. This not enough, Kaplan also makes explicitly clear that these mechanisms, which are also used by the international system, are 'analogs of those used by the individual personality system' (97); that 'various psychological mechanisms are isomorphic with mechanisms

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manifested in the behavior of social organizations' (253); and, last but not least, that any 'system is motivated as truly as an individual human being' (254). Kaplan really could not have been more explicit and revealing about the centrality of the concept of human nature within his theory.

Yet, as if Kaplan's anthropomorphisation of the concept of the international system was not remarkable enough—one must not forget that he constructed his broadly anti-traditional and pro-scientist international-political theory partly in reaction to Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style realism—we cannot but be astonished that Kaplan's 'mechanisms of regulations' are, in fact, various defense mechanisms taken from Freud's psychology. Just as Freud argued that Man's ego employs various defense mechanisms when being unable to find instinctual satisfaction, Kaplan argues that the international system when being unable to satisfy its needs due to environmental constraints makes use of a variety of coping strategies. These include not only the Freudian defense mechanisms of sublimation and displacement, but also repression, projection, introjection, identification, and isolation (253-270).

Picking two illustrative examples of how these defense mechanism are being played out in the international system, Kaplan argues that the 'Japanese assimilation of American political institutions after the close of the war illustrates introjective behavior' in that 'some goals or values of another system are adopted to ward off some threat to the first system' (264). Secondly, Kaplan points out that the substitution of the production of consumer goods for both capital and/or military goods constitutes a form of displacement in that the original 'activity is blocked and the regulatory capacity previously assigned to it is [even if only temporarily] diverted to some other activity' (258-259). Since the theory of defense mechanism presupposes, or is an outgrowth of, the psycho-analytic theory of the mind, Kaplan's usage of Freudian defense mechanisms implies that he broadly works within the framework of Freud's structural theory of the mind, where the ego employs

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various defense mechanisms in order to soften the effects of the perennial struggle between the instinctual id and the societal super-ego.

We can, however, not only see that Kaplan's systemic-scientific realism relies quite heavily on profound assumptions about human nature and that these assumptions are Freudian in nature by means of deconstructing his state motivational assumptions (power, security, compassion) and his conception of the international system (humanised, defense mechanisms) but also by referring to Kaplan's use of psycho-analytic terminology throughout *System and Process of International Politics*. Further, Kaplan's Freudian-style beliefs about the nature of Man are also recognisable when turning to his brief but explicit, powerful, and revealing remarks about Man. Worth quoting at length, Kaplan argues that Man is

torn between two sets of sometimes conflicting needs which he must in some way reconcile...The very stuff of tragedy occurs when vital needs of the particular individual are in irreconcilable conflict with the needs of society...If a particular man represses his most psychological or biological needs, his regulatory mechanisms will become pathological. If he neglects basic social needs, he destroys his identity as an actor in society. (279-280)

Here, Kaplan recognises two basic facts regarding the existence of Man. First, that Man is caught in the middle of severe instinctual-psychological struggles between biological drives on the one hand and social necessities and requirements on the other. And, secondly, Man's ego must become powerful and as autonomous from unconscious demands as possible so that it can successfully navigate him carefully through this essential battle of the drives which are an ever-present factor in the human condition. Man's ego must devise and use various coping strategies which are capable of gratifying rather evenly both the id and the super-ego, for otherwise Man will likely suffer from neurotic disorders. This is, indeed, Freudian.

Kaplan's post-classical realist intellectual project has failed when it comes to the question of the concept of human nature. He set out to move beyond Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style classical realist international-political theories and to end these theories' reliance on (allegedly) unreliable and unscientific notions of human nature. But just like the classical realists, as well as Herz, Kaplan presents us with a realist international-political theory that is infused with Freudian-style assumptions about human nature. This adds weight to Waltz's remark that Kaplan's theory was broadly Morgenthauian cloaked in general-systems theory language.

Yet, has Waltz succeeded in moving beyond human nature-based international-political theorising where Herz and Kaplan failed?

Waltz's structural realism and its conception of human nature

Kenneth N. Waltz's defensive structural realism is perhaps the most interesting case when it comes to the question whether the concept of human nature is dead in post-classical realism. In analogy to Morgenthau, Waltz has been, as Randall Schweller (1998) rightly noted, the 'father of structural realism' (2). With the ascent of Waltz, i.e. his now classic works *Man, the State, and War* (2001 [1959]) and *Theory of International Politics* (1979), the human nature-based theorising of the classicals has received its harshest critic. Waltz and his heirs argue that the nature of how the international system is structured determines the general patterns of state behaviour. The concept of structure has replaced the concept of Man. This section argues, however, that Waltz's structural realism is still infused with, and based upon a, certain set of assumptions about human nature. It reveals some actual and potential points of contacts between Waltz and Freud, albeit without claiming that the assumptions about human nature of Waltz are, in fact, necessarily consciously derived from Freud.

My argument must be seen against the background of post-classical realism's *raison d'être* to move realism beyond its traditional politico-philosophical roots: human nature.

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First to the rhetoric of Waltz—and then to the reality. Waltz has argued forcefully throughout the decades that international politics cannot be sufficiently explained by making references to the nature of Man (or the nature of states). Rather, international outcomes must be deduced from the nature of the international-political system. In *Man, the State, and War* (2001 [1959]), a pathbreaking work which introduced the levels-of-analysis problem in IR and provided an analytical framework for IR theories (for alternative frameworks, see Smith 1995), Waltz presents us with the ‘three images’. Waltz lumps together first-image theorists who hypothesise the causes of war in the individual or Man, such as Morgenthau, Niebuhr, Spinoza, and St. Augustine (16-41); second-image theorists who ascribe explanatory power to attributes of states, i.e. liberals and Marxists (80-158); and, last but not least, third-image theorists, such as Rousseau and Thucydides, who argue that neither the nature of Man nor attributes of the state, but rather the constraining and permissive effects of the international-political system cause the historical occurrences of war (159-186). Waltz’s conclusion is unambiguous. The first image fails, for it amounts to nothing more than ‘the simple statement that man’s nature is such that sometimes he fights and sometimes he does not’ (29). The second image is equally flawed, for political history has proven that both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ states have been fighting wars (122). Instead, Waltz argues for the third image and introduces the division of labour between theories of foreign policy and theories of international politics. As he argues: ‘The third image describes the framework of world politics, but without the first and second images there can be no knowledge of the forces that determine policy’ (238).

It is against such human nature sceptical background that Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics* (1979) constructs a quasi-economic, parsimonious, systemic-structural, and, above all, human nature-free post-classical realist theory of international politics. Reiterating the fallacies and weak points of both first and second image explanations, which he now lumps together as mere ‘reductionist theories’, Waltz argues that ‘we are led to suspect that reductionist explanations of international politics are

insufficient and that analytic approaches must give way to systemic ones' (37, 18-37). What may be interpreted as Waltz's problem with, or disdain for, the concept of human nature in international-political theory, it seems noteworthy that, in contrast to his earlier *Man, the State, and War*, Waltz does not even mention first image theories. Waltz then goes on to tear apart the systemic international-political theories of Richard Rosecrance (1963), Stanley Hoffmann (1959; 1965), and, in particular, Morton A. Kaplan (1957b) who he charges with being, ultimately, blatantly reductionist, too. To gain theoretical advance and progress, Waltz (1979) argues that a true and genuine systems approach to international politics can only be successful 'if structural effects are clearly defined and displayed' (58, 38-59).

This does not require international-political theorists to engage in acts of speculations about the nature of Man. It rather requires that the concept of the structure of the international-political system be neatly defined and clearly conceptualised. Waltz argues that the structures of political systems, whether national or international, are to be defined along three dimensions or layers. First, the ordering principle. Structural questions are, Waltz writes, 'questions about the arrangement of the parts of the system' (88). While units are hierarchically arranged in domestic-political systems, the ordering principle in international-political systems is markedly different, namely: anarchic. 'Formally, each is the equal of all the others. None is entitled to command; none is required to obey' (88, 88-93). Waltz treats the ordering principle as a quasi-constant variable. The second dimension of the international-political system's structure, i.e. the character of the units, derives from the ordering principle. While hierarchic ordering principles imply the functional differentiation of the system's units, the units of the international-political system cannot be differentiated according to their functions. The ordering principle of anarchy 'entails relations of coordination among system's units, and that implies their sameness'; Waltz argues that as 'long as anarchy endures, states remain like units' (93). States differ politically, economically, culturally, but they all face the same task in an anarchical

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international setting: to provide for their own security. Therefore, international structures vary, argues Waltz, only 'through a change of organizing principle or, failing that, through variations in the capabilities of units' (93, 93-97). This, then, leaves only the distribution of capabilities among the international-political system's units as the (one) independent variable. The following picture of Waltz's human nature-freed structural realism emerges.

The international-political system is anarchically ordered. States are like-units because they must perform similar functions, i.e. defending themselves against external threats. States are distinguished solely 'by their greater or lesser capabilities for performing similar tasks', and since history has shown the effects of distinctions of capabilities between great powers and small states, Waltz (1979) discriminates 'between international-political systems only according to the number of their great powers' (97). Capabilities are thought of in terms of power; and what seems like a unit-level, reductionist variable is, in fact, a structural variable. Waltz is not interested in the capabilities of the units in isolation but with the distribution of capabilities or power within the whole of the international-political system. The third layer that defines an international-political structure is a 'system-wide concept', and following the analogy with economic theory, which greatly influenced Waltz's international-political theory (1979; 1986:339; 1990:21-24; 1998:384), Waltz (1979) declares: 'Market structure is defined by counting firms; international-political structure, by counting states' (98-99). Where economic theory predicts economic outcomes based on market structures (monopolistic, oligopolistic, polypolistic, as Weberian ideal-types), Waltz's post-classical realism predicts international outcomes based on the structures of international-political systems: unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar. Waltz's theory is elegant, parsimonious, non-reductionist, and systemic-structural. The concept of human nature is replaced by the concept of the international structure.

So much for the rhetoric. A renewed analysis suggests that Waltz's structural realism is infused quite heavily with assumptions about human nature. We get a first and

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thorough impression by looking at Waltz's assumptions about the motives of states. Jack Donnelly (2000) has convincingly shown that, contrary to Waltz's own admissions of abstracting from any state motives (such as a state *animus dominandi*), his structural neorealism is, in fact, being built upon a very fundamental state-motivational assumption—namely: survival. As Waltz writes: 'I built structural theory on the assumption that survival is the goal of states' (1997:913); states are 'unitary actors with a single motive—the wish to survive' (1996:54); 'I assume that states seek to ensure their survival' (1979:91). Clearly, Waltz does not explicitly ascribe the survival motive to the nature of Man.

But all forms of anthropomorphological language provide the reader of Waltz's structural realism with an insight into the assumptions about human nature that are in-built in his international-political theory. Waltzian Man seems to be a survival-seeker. This is substantially not a very controversial proposition. From the viewpoint of a certain degree of sensitivity towards anthropomorphisms, however, it is remarkable when Waltz (1979) argues that states are 'unitary actors who, at a minimum seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination' (118). Or, furthermore, when he (1993) writes about the need for recognition and pride:

Yet when a country receives less attention and respect and gets its way less often than it feels it should, international inhibitions about be-coming a great power are likely to turn into public criticisms of the government for not taking its proper place in the world. Pride knows no nationality (66).

Waltz is not only apparently contradicting himself twice. In a first instance, Waltz does make unit-level assumptions (survival motive); and, secondly, Waltz does make more than one unit-level assumption (survival, plus domination, pride), which provoked Jack Donnelly (2000) to speak of neorealism's 'structural dodge' (51). But Waltz appears to put forth a view of human nature which seems fairly reminiscent of Morgenthau's conception of human nature.

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On the one hand, Waltzian Man wants to preserve his life. This derives from the survival motive. On the other hand, however, Waltzian Man also seems to be driven by more acquisitive motives, namely, by drives for universal domination as well as for recognition and pride. This, in turn, represents the universal trait which Morgenthau calls the *animus dominandi* or the drive to self-assertion. Thus, like most of the classical realists, but Morgenthau in particular, Waltz does not only allow for some rather substantial assumptions about human nature, which exert a constitutive influence on his analytical and normative international-political theory, but Waltz seems, moreover, to conceive of Man as being driven by two primary impulses: the drive to self-preservation and the drive to self-assertion. Waltz's structural realism bears the traces of a dualistic drive structure which seems to square fairly well within the assumptions about human nature of earlier realists. This seems remarkable for two reasons. First, because Waltz has gone to great length in *Man, the State, and War* and *Theory of International Politics* to disconnect international-political theory from the tutelage of human nature. Secondly, because Waltz (2001 [1959]) denounces Morgenthau's assumption of an universal *animus dominandi* as being a mere normative assertion which 'one may accept or reject according to his inclination' (37).

Waltz is no optimist when it comes to human nature. But it seems questionable that Waltz is, as Piki Ish-Shalom (2006:454-460) argues, a thorough human nature conservative. Further, it seems misleading to argue that Waltz follows in Augustinian footsteps, as Freyberg-Inan (2004:10,73) does by referring to Waltz's (2001 [1959]) words that 'our miseries are ineluctably the product of our natures. The root of all evil is man, and thus he is himself the root of the specific evil, war' (3). Here, Waltz merely summarises the position of first-image pessimists and it can, therefore, not be inferred that Waltz is an Augustinian on the human nature question.

It seems too far-fetched to conceive Waltz as an Augustinian or to place him firmly in the genuinely conservative camp, partially because Waltz simply seems to be too

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unreflective on the human nature issue. But we can discern some points of contact with what he termed first-image pessimists. Waltz (1986) reveals frankly that behind his distrust of hegemonic power and preference for balanced power lies Niebuhr's 'dim view of human nature' (341). Waltz is, however, fairly revealing—albeit more implicitly—about his human nature leanings in his treatment of first-image theorists in *Man, the State, and War*. There, Waltz (2001 [1959]) shows that he is deeply aware of 'man's passion and irrationality' (36). *Contra* first-image optimists, he acknowledges that first-image pessimists 'have expertly dismantled the air castles of the optimists' (39). Waltz credits the first-image pessimists for providing 'a valuable warning, all too frequently ignored in modern history, against expecting too much from the application of reason to social and political problems' (40). This does, of course, not automatically turn Waltz into an Augustinian or ultra-conservative. But it certainly helps make the point that Waltz has not successfully finished the project of disconnecting the concern with human nature from the study of international politics. It helps further understand that it is not too wide of the mark to suggest that Waltz's assumptions about the nature of Man—however unreflective these may appear to be—do broadly and nicely fit with the assumptions of those classical and post-classical realists discussed thus far. Waltzian Man wants to preserve his life and seeks to assert himself *vis-à-vis* his fellows, mainly by means of striving for domination, recognition, and pride.

This raises the question whether there are any implicit or explicit intellectual links between Waltz's allegedly human nature-purified post-classical realism and Freud's theory of human nature. According to my reading, it seems far-fetched to speak of such an intellectual influence comparable with the intellectual relationships between Freud and the classical and post-classical realists presented thus far. But, nevertheless, we can see some points of contact between Waltz and Freud. The argument that Freud's theory of human nature plays at least some role in Waltz's international-political theory may seem, *prima facie*, peculiar. For Waltz quotes and refers to Freud only rarely. He does not even mention

Freud in *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Waltz refers to him only once in *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics* (1967:309), and quotes Freud only in three footnotes and in one epigraph in *Man, the State, and War* (2001 [1959]:69, 71, 187).

Yet, quantity of quotations and references is not a reliable indicator of a potential intellectual influence, however large or small such influence or resemblances may be. This requires, therefore, an analytical account of Waltz's comments on Freud. It reveals that Waltz seems to turn to Freud for argumentative assistance regarding three timeless international-political themes.

The first issue concerns the widely-held belief that authoritarian governments do enjoy a strategic and profound advantage over its democratic counterparts when it comes to the political task of formulating and executing foreign-policies. In *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics* (1967), this belief is rejected as mere myth. Though Waltz rejects this widespread hypothesis on many grounds, one of his main arguments against it seems particularly interesting. For it is purely psychological. Waltz (1967) argues that it is a popular myth that authoritarian governments and their rulers or leaders are capable of, or perhaps better equipped, to ensure the unity of (foreign) policy, because 'the ruler is prey to the ills of the mind, perhaps the more so as his power approaches the absolute'—this, Waltz argues, is a basic fact of the human condition, a psychological fact which is now fully known with the 'advent of Freud' (309).

Waltz makes further use of Freudian insights when it comes to the question of the feasibility of how to reduce international conflicts and violence according to the logic of first image-optimists. Waltz makes clear that he finds the analytical and prescriptive accounts of the causes of war as well as the causes of, and preconditions for, peace of most of the first-image psychologists wanting and weak. First image-optimists, Waltz (2001 [1959]) argues, are 'naïve' (43) and 'idle dreamers' (76). Even if it was possible to eradicate, reduce, or divert the more aggressive of the human drives through either some effective large-scale and global-wide forms of humanistic education or through altering

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socio-economic and political injustices around the globe, it would, Waltz argues, 'take generations before our efforts would affect the course of international relations' (70). In order to strengthen his argument, Waltz quotes from Freud's 'Why War?' where Freud (1933b) warned us that the philosophical and practical socio-political strategy of waiting or hoping for Man to go through significant alterations of his psycho-instinctual configuration would remind him of the 'ugly picture, of mills which grind so slowly that, before the flour is ready, men are dead of hunger' (213; quoted in Waltz (2001[1959]: 71n65).

Yet, thirdly, it is on another occasion in *Man, the State, and War* where Waltz's explicit usage of Freud is not only most eminent but also perhaps most striking and revealing. Waltz's scepticism of first and second image explanations of international politics and normative ideas in this regard is well-known. Equally well-known is one of the central tenets of his structural post-classical realism: that we must never fail to recognise that as long as the structural condition of international anarchy prevails, states must always be prepared to use military force in order to protect themselves and to help prevent the occurrence of war (187, 238). In other words: however the nature of Man or the nature of states may actually be—if there is anarchy, prepare for conflict. Waltz quotes, once again, from Freud's 'Why War?' and uses him as the epigraph of the chapter which does not deal with the first image but, rather, with the implications of the third image (see 2001[1959]:187). Freud (1933b) appears with his argument that 'so long as there are nations and empires, each prepared callously to exterminate its rival, all alike must be equipped for war' (214).

I have presented these three points of contact between Waltz and Freud for three reasons. First, to demonstrate that, like all the other classical and post-classical realists discussed here, Waltz, too, has obviously read and used Freud in his international-political theory, even though to a significantly lesser degree. Secondly, to show that, even though the Waltz-Freud connection is significantly thinner than previous realists' intellectual relationships with Freud, Freud seems to be part of Waltz's intellectual assumptions about

the nature of Man and its consequences and limitations *vis-à-vis* the international domain. And, thirdly, to set the stage for putting forth a more speculative argument. The argument in question, which concludes this section, is that Waltz's whole intellectual project may have been the—conscious or unconscious—consequences of an underlying Freudian understanding of Man.

The starting point is a genuine sense of slight puzzlement that Waltz does not give pride of place to one of the most important thinkers of Western civilisation in his *Man, the State, and War*, a classic work that discusses and tears apart dozens of first-image theorists, mostly philosophers, psychologists, and behaviouralists. One reason for such omission may be that Waltz simply forgot about Freud; another that Waltz found Freud unworthy of discussion. Both reasons seem unlikely. Waltz has surely read and has surely used Freud. This points to an alternative reason. Rather than loathing Freud, Waltz may have built his post-classical realism against the background of the ascent of Freud. True, Waltz does not discuss Freud in the first-image chapters of *Man, the State, and War* nor anywhere else. This suggests a potential indifference of Waltz towards Freud. But this seems questionable. First, because Waltz draws from Freud on other significant occasions. Secondly, Waltz possibly knew that Freud simply does not fit the picture that Waltz attempts to paint of the 'naïve' and 'dreaming' first-image optimists. Waltz may not have been capable of doing otherwise than not discussing Freud, for Freud actually seems to have been one of the most valuable intellectual allies in Waltz's endeavour to move realism away from the first image to the third image. It seems as though Freud is a particularly powerful ally for Waltz in that it is none other than Freud whose assumptions about human nature triggered the Waltzian conclusion that the first and second image approach may be a dead end for international-political theorists.

Waltz conceptualises Man as an essentially passionate and irrational creature. Man has, Waltz (1990) argues, not only 'many motives' (27), but Man is, moreover, largely determined by an essentially dualistic drive structure. Man lives largely by the drive to

self-preservation and the drive to self-assertion. Surely, Waltz may have been influenced regarding these assumptions by a number of sources. But, based on the aforementioned points of contacts between him and Freud, it is not unlikely that one of the sources is Freud. Yet, be that as it may for now, for the significance of the assumptions about human nature derives from their consequences. It is the 'assumption of a fixed human nature, in terms of which all else must be understood', Waltz (2001 [1959]) argues, that makes it imperative 'to shift attention *away* from human nature' (41 (original emphasis)). It seems that it is exactly his assumption about the largely irrational nature of Man that leads Waltz (1979:68-69) to realise the following dilemma: 'How can a theory of international politics, which has to comprehend behavior that is indeterminate, possibly be constructed?'

This question is, ultimately, a question of the locus of rationality. The logic of Waltz on this point is, in its essence, the logic of Freud's structural theory of psyche. Like Freud, Waltz derives the rationality of the actors from the nature of the structures, i.e. from the structural conditions that constrain the behaviour of the actors exposed to such structure. Waltz (1979) argues that the structural constraints do affect unit behaviour—whether in international politics or 'in societies of all sorts' (74)—through, essentially, two mechanisms: through socialisation and competition. These two 'pervasive' and 'fundamental processes' (74) exert a powerful and constraining influence upon the actors in that they must 'accommodate their ways to the socially most acceptable and successful practices'(77). In light of Waltz's line of argument, we can see that Waltz's notion of rationality is not attached to the actor. Actors may act rationally without being rational. Waltz's logic does neither imply nor presume some sort of nicely calculating and utility-maximising *homo oeconomicus*, but it simply presumes that some actors, however irrational they may be, are capable of coping more effectively with the constraints of the overarching structure than others (76-77).

This allows us, then, to re-consider Waltz's socio-structural endeavour. We can approach it from a perhaps peculiar perspective: from Freudian psychology. Without

claiming that Waltz consciously borrowed from Freud, it seems striking how similar Waltz's structural logic and Freud's structural theory of the psyche are. The primary difference is that it is raised to a different level. Just as Freud argues that the rationality of both Man as well as the group does not and cannot be derived from a bundle of irrational drives (id), Waltz seems in line with Freud that some significant top-down influences must be at work. These influences are powerful or constraining enough to make both Man as well as the group rational. Just as Freud argues that those incapable of properly adapting to the demands of the super-ego are going to be punished by the system (cultural norms), Waltz argues that the international-political system is going to punish those states that do not comply with the prevailing international-political principles. The punishment of the Freudian system involves feelings of guilt and neuroses. In Waltz's theory, the sanctions are war and death. The forms of punishment are different; the general logic of constraining influences is the same.

The result is that, upon closer inspection, Waltz's post-classical realism is infused with assumptions about human nature and that these assumptions of self-preservation, self-assertion (in the forms of recognition and pride), and irrationality are a central ingredient of an allegedly human nature-purified international-political theory. As regards the question of a Freudian intellectual influence upon Waltz, this case seems more ambiguous than the cases of earlier classical and post-classical realists. We can discern, contextualise, and comprehend several points of contacts between Waltz and Freud, but the case for some sort of profound intellectual influence comparable to other realists can hardly be made. Waltz appears too unreflective on the conception of human nature.

Offensive structural realism: Mearsheimer and human nature

John J. Mearsheimer is equally hostile to the concept of human nature in realism. But digging a little more deeply, we see that Mearsheimer, too, cannot escape relying on some rather profound assumptions about human nature. As was the case with Waltz, these

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assumptions seem to be much less reflective than those of the classicals and of Herz and Kaplan.

Mearsheimer's realism (2001) is both Morgenthauian and Waltzian. He argues that 'great powers seek to maximize their share of world power' with 'hegemony as their final goal'(29). At the same time, Mearsheimer's offensive realism is Waltzian in that the locus of the power drive of states is the nature or prevailing structure of the international system. Mearsheimer argues that 'Structural factors such as anarchy and the distribution of power...are what matter most for explaining international politics'; offensive structural realism 'pays little attention to individuals or domestic political considerations such as ideology' and 'tends to treat states like black boxes or billiard balls' (10-11). On the other hand, however, Mearsheimer (2002) argues on one occasion that 'the aim of states is to be the biggest and baddest dude on the block. Because if you're the biggest and baddest dude on the block, then it is highly unlikely that any other state will challenge you, simply because you're so powerful' (2). This raises the question whether Mearsheimer's words are merely the result of some innocent and colloquial language. Or, alternatively, whether Mearsheimer's post-classical realism is also infused with some anthropomorphological projections and/or direct assumptions about human nature. This section argues that Mearsheimer's structural realism does bear traces of assumptions about human nature, albeit these assumptions can hardly be traced to any intellectual source.

Mearsheimer is silent regarding the appropriate place of the concept of human nature in international-political theory. Unlike Waltz, Mearsheimer barely scratches the surface of this complex issue, perhaps reckoning that Waltz had already said all there was to say. In any case, despite his impressive presentation of offensive structural realism, Mearsheimer's remarks about the role of the concept of human nature are rather meagre. Mearsheimer (2001) acknowledges the variety of contemporary realist international-political theories and presents us with his own broad typology. He distinguishes between his own offensive structural realism, Waltz's defensive structural realism, and—what he,

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misleadingly, labels—human nature realism (which stands largely synonymously for classical realism). This latter version of realism, Mearsheimer argues, has its roots largely in Morgenthau. Recognising its influence from the late 1940s to the late 1970s, human nature realism is, according to Mearsheimer, ‘based on the simple assumptions that states are led by human beings who have a “will to power” hardwired into them at birth’ (19).

Mearsheimer is sceptical of the international-political theory of Morgenthau. It is not so much the question for how much power states seek; here, he agrees with Morgenthau. But it is the question why states do want power that causes so much of the disagreement with so-called human nature realists. This disagreement seems to involve the concept of human nature. Offensive structural realism ‘reject[s] Morgenthau’s claim that states are naturally endowed with type A personalities’ (Mearsheimer 2001:21). It seems striking how Mearsheimer can seriously lump together Morgenthauian Man and Type A personalities—as if Morgenthau’s assumption of a Freudian-style theory of human nature has got anything to do with what psychologists unearthed as heart-disease prone individuals displaying behavioral patterns of extreme ambition, competitiveness, impatience, anger, and hostility (Friedman & Rosenman 1974). This carelessness may only further prove how unreflective post-classicals, including Mearsheimer, have become *vis-à-vis* the concept of human nature, especially when it comes to understanding how classical realists approached and used different conceptions of human nature. But Mearsheimer’s sloppiness on that point leads to a very significant question. Based on Mearsheimer’s brief treatment of Morgenthau’s assumptions about human nature (however misunderstood these are), we may wonder whether Mearsheimer’s move to the structure is the result of a profound disagreement with Morgenthauian classical realists over human nature. This seems, *prima facie*, to be the case, but it is, ultimately, wrong. For Mearsheimer’s realism is built upon assumptions about human nature that fit in the overall realist picture.

As with all post-classicals, the tension in Mearsheimer’s realism arises from its claim to be a structural international-political theory. The independent variable is the

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distribution of capabilities across the international system. Mearsheimer (2001) argues that the 'structure of the international system, not the particular characteristics of individual great powers, causes them to think and act offensively and to seek hegemony' (53). This signifies not only the main difference between offensive structural realism and its Waltzian-style defensive counterpart, but also the potential pseudo-structuralism of Mearsheimer's allegedly human nature-freed international-political theory. Mearsheimer agrees with Randall Schweller (1996) that defensive realism suffers from a 'status-quo bias'. This is a major rift between offensive and defensive realists. It pertains not only to the empirical-analytical but also to the normative realm. Jeffrey Taliaferro (2000-01) points out quite rightly that, given their analytical differences, offensive and defensive realists draw very different theoretical and policy conclusions when it comes to the question of the feasibility of mutually beneficial patterns of cooperation among states in an anarchic world and 'generate radically different prescriptions for military doctrine, foreign economic policy, military intervention, and crisis management' (130).

Despite these analytical and normative differences, Mearsheimerian and Waltzian realism do enjoy a rather intimate *tête-à-tête* regarding the locus of explaining international-political outcomes. Mearsheimer (2007) argues that 'For structural realists, human nature [and 'particular characteristics of individual great powers'] has little to do with why states want power. Instead, it is the structure or architecture of the international system that forces states to pursue power' (72; also Mearsheimer 1994-95:9n20; 2001:10, 17, 21). This helps understand my allegation that Mearsheimer's realism may be a theoretical *cul-de-sac*. In light of defensive structural realism, it seems rather peculiar as to why allegedly like-units would display rather different behavioural patterns when being exposed to similar structural anarchical conditions. It seems odd why state A would long for a considerable amount of power while state B would seek the largest share of power possible when both are subject to essentially the same structural environment. This seeming paradox can only be explained by examining the theoretical assumptions inbuilt

into Mearsheimer's realism. Since these assumptions must be unit-level assumptions, it can be shown that Mearsheimer's international-political theory is, despite different claims, infused with assumptions about human nature.

The allegedly structural realism of Mearsheimer is based upon profound theoretical assumptions. That great powers seek hegemony (rather than the status quo or appropriate shares or surpluses of power) derives from, as Mearsheimer (2001) argues, 'five assumptions about the international system' (29). In addition, Mearsheimer places a central value on these assumptions. 'Sound theories', he argues, 'are based on sound assumptions' (30), by which he means that they provide a 'reasonably accurate representation of...life in the international system' (30). These two self-declared facts help provide a first glimpse of how significant and foundational these assumptions are. For even though Mearsheimer's explicitness about these assumptions is to be valued, Mearsheimer is misleading in so far as only one of these assumptions is of a structural nature.

Mearsheimer's first assumption is that the international-political system is ordered anarchically. Mearsheimer (2001) calls this the '911 problem' (32). Anarchy does not imply constant chaos, disorder or war but merely the absence of a centralised international authority. This assumption does not by itself reveal much about potentially hidden assumptions about human nature. But this changes if we look more closely at how he assesses the future of anarchy. In short, Mearsheimer sees a bright future for anarchy. Mearsheimer argues that 'both nationalism and the existing states in western Europe appear to be alive and well' (366). Even if states were to disappear from our maps, other political entities such as city-states, cults, empires, tribes, gangs, or feudal principalities would emerge as the primary units of the international system (365). The European Union, too, often hailed as role model how states are capable of transferring their legal, economic, and cultural loyalties to larger governmental institutions beyond their boundaries, merely reflects, as Mearsheimer argues, the dynamics of the security and balance-of-power logic in an anarchical world. For such transformation of political communities results less from

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transformed human consciousnesses but simply from artificially suppressed security and balance-of-power concerns thanks to America's role as the European pacifier (366; also Mearsheimer 1990). Mearsheimer argues without hesitation: 'anarchy looks like it will be with us for a long time' (365). The first and primary reason for this is nationalism and national sentiments. This reveals the first facet of Mearsheimer's assumptions about human nature. For if the group, whether in the form of tribes, city-states, or nation-states, seems to be an almost natural entity in human history, this means that Mearsheimer is obviously holding the view that Man is a group animal. More specifically, Mearsheimerian Man seems to be a deeply sociable creature that longs for group but he is rather unsociable *vis-à-vis* members of the out-group. In light of all aforementioned classical and post-classical realist assumptions about human nature, such conception of human nature is only all too familiar.

Mearsheimer's offensive structural realism, however, displays further assumptions about human nature. These can be unearthed by examining the other 'bedrock assumptions' of his theory (30). Like Waltz, Mearsheimer emphasises that states seek, above all, to survive in the international-political system. Survival, as Mearsheimer (2001) argues, is 'the primary goal of great powers' (31). States 'seek to maintain their territorial integrity and the autonomy of their domestic political order' (31, also 46-48). This is tantamount to saying that the primary goal of Man is to preserve his life. Presuming an innate drive to self-preservation is a significant assumption about human nature. For although Mearsheimer argues that states 'can and do pursue other goals, of course', they do make survival and, therefore, security 'their most important objective' (31). But the fact that Mearsheimerian Man seems to be a group animal and that Man is driven by concerns for his self-preservation does not explain sufficiently the causes of the intense security competition among states. Mearsheimer, therefore, adds two further assumptions: thirdly, that great powers 'inherently possess some offensive military capabilities' (30) and, fourthly, that states can 'never be certain about other states' intentions' (31).



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The third assumption appears almost ultra-pessimistic though it is not entirely unjustified. Mearsheimer (2001) argues that states, regardless of their actual capabilities in terms of military, technology, or economic power, cannot avoid possessing offensive or aggressive capabilities. Mearsheimer does not merely refer to the basic but timeless argument that every weapon, even if designed for defensive purposes, could be used for offensive endeavours. Rather, Mearsheimer raises this point to the, in the true sense of the word, 'naked' level. He argues that even if there were no weapons, Men 'could still use their feet and hands to attack the population of another state'—an argument to which he somewhat menacingly adds: 'After all, for every neck, there are two hands to choke it' (31). It would be, however, misleading to conclude that Mearsheimer proposes a conception of Man that considers human beings as inherently violent. Mearsheimer argues explicitly that in order to arrive at a picture of world affairs where great powers compete offensively for power, all of the five assumptions must be cumulatively present (29).

Still, we cannot gloss over the fact that Mearsheimer argues that Man is not a saint. This raises Mearsheimer's fourth assumption: that states continually worry about the intentions of other states. Mearsheimer (2001) argues that

no state can be sure that another state will not use its offensive military capability to attack the first state. This is not to say that states have necessarily hostile intentions. Indeed, all of the states in the system may be reliably benign, but it is impossible to be sure of that judgment because intentions are impossible to divine with 100 percent certainty. There are many possible causes of aggression, and no state can be sure that another state is not motivated by one of them. (31)

This seems confusing. It now appears that Mearsheimer suggests that the international-political dilemma is primarily one of interpreting each others' intentions. Mearsheimer argues that unveiling the real intentions of other actors is hardly possible. But Mearsheimer recognises that this sort of uncertainty-dilemma alone cannot sufficiently explain why the international-political system displays broad patterns of offensive realist

state-behaviour. He therefore makes yet another significant—hidden and often overlooked—assumption. Mearsheimer concedes that the problem lies with the nature of the states. States may be treated as billiard balls, but they are problematic political entities made up of problematic individuals.

Mearsheimer concedes that besides strategic security concerns, non-security factors play a significant role in world politics. He argues that ‘Security concerns alone cannot cause great powers to act aggressively. The possibility that at least one state might be motivated by non-security calculations is a necessary condition for offensive realism’ (2001:31n8). Mearsheimer (1994-95:20) raises two non-security motivations. One is economical, the other psychological. Regarding the former, Mearsheimer approves the argument of strategic trade theorists that states must assist domestic firms in gaining comparative competitive advantages over foreign firms to ensure national economic prosperity. The second non-security reason why Mearsheimer finds liberal institutionalist theories about absolute gains unpersuasive relates to the nature of Man. He argues that we must recognise ‘a psychological logic, which portrays individuals as caring about how well they do (or their state does) in a cooperative agreement, not for material reasons, but because it is human nature to compare one’s progress with that of others’ (20). From that perspective, it will come as no surprise that Mearsheimer does, indeed, raise the question of human nature in *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Mearsheimer could not be more explicit about his general view of Man when he quotes Herbert Butterfield’s well-known argument that ‘Wars would hardly be likely to occur if all men were Christian saints’ (quoted in Mearsheimer 2001:31n8).

This brings us to the fifth assumption. It concerns the question of rationality. Mearsheimer (2001) argues that ‘great powers are rational actors’; states ‘think strategically’, they ‘consider the preferences of other states and how their own behavior is likely to affect the behavior of those other states, and how the behavior of those other states is likely to affect their own strategy for survival’ (31). At first sight, this seems to

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contradict his other claim regarding the intentions of states, i.e. that intentions 'can change quickly, so a state's intentions can be benign one day and hostile the next' (31). But it does not. Like other realists, Mearsheimer does not portray the state as a soberly-minded and purely rationally calculating *homo oeconomicus*. Instead, Mearsheimer seems to follow the somewhat thin notion of rationality of Waltz's international-political theory that sees the rationality of actors not as an innate quality of political entities but rather as the consequence of the (anarchical) structure of the international-political system. It is the international-political system, Mearsheimer (1995) argues, which 'forces states to behave according to the dictates of realism, or risk destruction' (91). Mearsheimer treats states as rational actors—and, at the same time, he does not. States are rational but not really. For although they may act rationally, they do so because the nature of the international-political system taught them so in order to avoid death. Mearsheimer does not presume a bottom-up notion of rationality. His notion is a top-down rationality that pulls states in the direction of maximising power. This shows that Mearsheimer is incapable of avoiding profound unit-level assumptions, i.e. assumptions that are all related, either explicitly or implicitly, to the nature of Man.

Mearsheimer's Man seems to fit nicely with how classical and post-classical realists have conceptualised human nature. Above all, Man is a group animal and wants to preserve his life. This does not preclude other motives. Indeed, Man has many motives. Securing survival remains Man's primary concern and it is this drive to self-preservation that causes the profound fear of death. As Mearsheimer (2001) writes succinctly: 'Great powers fear each other' (32). This profound fear leads to the perennial longing for the maximum amount of power. Consequently, Mearsheimer does not allow for much change in world politics. This suggests that there must be some sort of residue of assumptions about human nature that is so profound that it works against the idea of transformation. This residue seems to lie in Mearsheimer's arguments that nationalism is a quasi-constant

in world affairs and that we have to reckon with a problematic Man that is driven by concerns of self-preservation.

Mearsheimer may be right in his claims about the nature of Man. His views sit well with realism. Yet still, given that Mearsheimer claims to have written a structural realism which does not rely on assumptions about human nature and given that these assumptions are profoundly significant in that they provide the theoretical backdrop against which the actual theory is built, Mearsheimer should have been more explicit and outspoken regarding his assumptions about human nature. Unfortunately, these assumptions are unreflective and do not allow for any conclusion regarding their intellectual source.

The longing for prestige: Neoclassical realism and its human nature

This section concerns itself with neoclassical realism. It represents the latest theoretical development of realism. Neoclassical realism sees itself as the legitimate heir to classical realism and represents the outgrowth of a generation of realists who have become increasingly dissatisfied with Waltzian-style accounts of international politics.

Neoclassical realists retain the emphasis of structural realists on international-political anarchy, balance-of-power considerations, and systemic constraints. But they argue that any empirical analysis of international politics must not leave aside the significance of both first image and second image variables. Although neoclassical realists conceptualise the international-political system as the realm where ‘flesh-and-blood officials actually make foreign policy decisions’ (Taliaferro 2006:40) and although they consider the relations among nations as, to use Schweller’s (2003) words, merely ‘politics writ large’ (347), neoclassical realism differs significantly from its classical realist ancestors. Neoclassical realists would not presume a distinct conception of human nature as their starting point when theorising about international politics.

This, however, does not imply that neoclassical realism has been purified of the concept of human nature. Neoclassical realism is infused with assumptions about the

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nature of Man. These assumptions are not only broadly akin to the assumptions of the classical and post-classical, but they are, moreover, quite fundamental to neoclassical international-political theory. This can be shown by examining more closely one of the core concepts of neoclassical realism: prestige.

The notion that the relations among nations are not only characterised as a profound struggle for power and security as well as peace, but that international politics is equally a struggle for prestige is not the invention of the neoclassical realists. The longing for prestige has been a classical realist cornerstone since the birth of realism. Whether we look at Thucydides and his motivational (human nature) assumptions of the relentless striving for security, self-interest, and honour; or at Machiavelli's triad of (human nature) assumptions of security, liberty, and glory; or at Hobbes's tripartite (human nature) motivational scheme of competition, diffidence, and glory—we can identify clearly one particular and recurrent theme that seems to have been an underlying motivational (human nature) assumptions: namely, the prestige motive or, specifically, the 'individual or collective desire for public recognition of eminence as an end in itself' (Markey 1999:126).

The prestige motive has not only been of great concern to these realist political philosophers. 20th-century classical realists, too, recognise that the longing for prestige is an inherent and significant force in international politics. Morgenthau (1967[1948]) notes rightly that 'Actually, the policy of prestige, however exaggerated and absurd its uses may have been at times, is as intrinsic an element of the relations between nations as the desire for prestige is of the relations between individuals' (69). Man is driven to pocket as much prestige and reputation as possible, longs for the tribute which fellow Men may pay to him in light of his own moral goodness, educational intelligence, and physiological/psychological force or power. And so are states. The main purpose of the policy of prestige is, following the same internal logic yet raised to a different level, to 'impress other nations with the power one's own nation actually possesses, or with the

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power it believes, or wants the other nations to believe, it possesses' (70). In the wake of classical realism, neoclassical realism also recognises the force of the prestige motive among the actors of the international-political system.

Against the background of neoclassical realism's general uneasiness *vis-à-vis* purely structural accounts of international politics, these neoclassical realists fault structural realism regarding a crucial theme: namely, the role and nature of state-motivational assumptions. Waltz had said that he built his defensive structural realism on the single unit-level assumption that states want to survive. In a critical reply, however, Randall Schweller (1996) points out that there is no direct causal pathway that would link the supposed survival motive with the intense security competition among states. He argues that 'What triggers security dilemmas under anarchy is the possibility of predatory states existing among the ranks of the units the system comprises. Anarchy and self-preservation alone are not sufficient to explain the war of all against all' (91). The point is that these so-called predatory states are, obviously, not only driven by brute security concerns but that they equally have and follow revisionist or non-security goals. Thus, Schweller argues that structural realists, who conceptualise the state as mere security maximiser, fail to recognise that states often behave aggressively towards each other not because of the dictates of the security dilemma but because of non-security dilemma related matters such as simple greed, longing for cultural hegemony, interpretations of divine right, following a manifest destiny, and striving for revenge (115).

Such neoclassical realist line of argument is not original. The idea that states are merely security maximisers has never had many followers. The recognition of the neoclassical realists that states are both security maximisers but that they are also driven by expansionist non-security aims has been prominent. It is reminiscent of the general classification put forth by several classical realists who distinguish between status-quo powers and imperialistic powers (Morgenthau 1967[1948]), between status-quo states and revolutionary states (Kissinger 1964), between status-quo states and revisionist states

(Wolfers 1962[1959]), or between 'haves' and 'have-nots' (Carr 2001[1939]). These state typologies, as well as the fact that neoclassical realists seem to recognise the significance of state-motivational assumptions, are part and parcel of the task of unearthing and identifying potentially hidden assumptions about human nature in neoclassical realism. For these state-motivational assumptions seem to suggest that neoclassical realists share an understanding with classical realists that states are largely irrational entities. This, in turn, reveals a great deal about their understanding of human nature.

Compared with Waltz's state-motivational assumptions, neoclassicals have a different but perhaps much more realistic conception of states. The state seems to be a largely irrational entity, one that places a high value and significance on matters of prestige. Randall Schweller (1996) argues convincingly that Waltz's insistent defensive-realist assumption that states would not strive for any additional increments or shares of power and profit as soon as they realise such behaviour would compromise their security situation, is unconvincing. The point of criticism is that Waltz does, in fact, privilege security concerns over power maximising concerns. Such an assumption contradicts the historical record:

History is replete with examples of states whose first concern was to maximize...their power; who risked their security to improve, not maintain, their positions in the system. Alexander the Great, Rome, the Arabs in the seventh and eighth centuries, Charles V, Philip II, Napoleon I, and Hitler all lusted for universal empire and waged all-or-nothing, apocalyptic wars to attain it. (107)

This argument is significant. Schweller (1996) suggests that both in the theory and practice of international politics, we must reckon with 'very hungry states' that are, just as 'terminally ill patients' often are, very willing to 'take great risk—even if losing the gamble means extinction—to improve their condition, which they consider intolerable' (107).

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Yet the condition which states do often consider intolerable and which they, therefore, seek to change by whatever means possible is not necessarily a predominantly material condition such as the lack of security or the lack of a prospering economy. Instead, the path of revisionism is often related to the distribution of prestige among the actors of the international-political system. Gilpin (1981) argues that the international-political system is partly governed by a 'hierarchy of prestige' (30) and that 'prestige, rather than power, is the everyday currency of international relations' (31). States that have their share of prestige recognised by others do enjoy a greater amount of international bargaining and power leverage compared to those that can lay little claim to hold any significant amount of prestige. Thus, it is the ensuing hierarchy of prestige that leads to dynamic and often dangerous international-political processes because the actual and potential order of the international-political system is now at stake. It is the discrepancy between the actual hierarchy of prestige among states and the actual distribution of military and economic power within the international-political system which can, as Gilpin points out, cause the governance or order of the current international-political system 'to break down as perceptions catch up with realities of power' (33).

Neoclassical realists would largely agree with Gilpin's take on the role of prestige in international politics. But we must, nevertheless, recognise a significant distinction which helps us to understand the nature of the hidden assumptions about human nature of the neoclassicals. In light of Gilpin's account of the prestige motive, Markey (1999) has pointed out quite rightly that Gilpin's understanding of prestige in international politics is somewhat 'instrumental' (126n2), for Gilpin seems to suggest, to use Markey's words, that 'states pursue prestige so as to demonstrate their power rather than as an end in itself' (128). But neoclassical realists have, in the wake of their classical realist ancestors, a very different understanding of the notion of prestige as a driving force in international politics.

Neoclassical realists recognise that states do not long for prestige as merely a means to an end (e.g. security), but, rather, as an end itself. This is an important distinction, for it

demonstrates that the state, as neoclassicals have it, is not the mere, cold-blooded security and power maximiser, but, instead, a somewhat irrational entity, which sometimes acts against all the reasonable dictates of the international-political system. This tells us a great deal about the obvious supposed existence and nature of the neoclassical Man. According to neoclassical realists, it is simply a historical fact of international-political life that states are not only driven by security concerns but that they are—equally, if not often even to a greater degree—driven by concerns relating to their prestige. In other words: like Men, states do long not only for security but also for recognition and respect (Markey 1999; Schweller 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2001; Taliaferro 2001, 2004, 2006; Wohlforth 1993). This continual pursuit of prestige is, as Markey (1999) argues always relative, perpetual, social, and, last but not least, irrational. It is relative in that the pursuit of prestige among states is a zero-sum game (157); it is perpetual in that the ‘thirst for prestige’ is essentially limitless (158); and it is social or socially constructed in that the drive for prestige comes in varying degrees of rigour (161).

Yet, above all, the longing and thirst for prestige is, predominantly, irrational. Just as Man strives for prestige *vis-à-vis* his fellows and often displays patterns of behaviour which appear, from a material rationalist standpoint, entirely irrational in that he is sometimes even tempted to compromise on his primordial drive to live by means of consciously choosing death, the behaviour and actions of states are often similarly difficult to grasp—particularly when states follow strategies that run counter to any sensible and prudent politico-economical risk or net-loss/gain assessments (Markey 1999:159, 166). Here, as regards the theme of largely irrational actions of states, Schweller (1996) makes essentially the same point and argues convincingly that the purely structural and security-based explanations of much of structural realism fail badly when international-political theorists and foreign-policy makers have to deal with, for instance, the Iran-Iraq crisis of the 1980s:

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Iran fought not for survival but for total victory in a Holy War against the infidels. In the eyes of Shi'ite fundamentalists, God demands Holy Wars and, in such wars, sanctions the gratification of aggression without guilt. Since the infidel, too, benefits from his own death, war is not only a blessing for the world and all nations: it is a form of cultural therapy. (107-108)

Surely, Schweller's example of Ayatollah Khomeini, whose decision to continue fighting against Iraq in 1985 when chances for victory were extremely thin, does not perfectly capture the problem of prestige in international politics, for this conflict has also been fought over long-standing religious-theological rivalry. But the longing for prestige, i.e. for recognition and respect, rarely appears in complete isolation. In any case, the significance of this Khomeini example derives from the fact that perhaps most outside observer would agree that, from a strictly rational point of view, Khomeini's decision to fight on was rather nonsensical, if not irrational, in light of the hard facts. But besides the fact that Schweller, too, recognises the problem for international-political theorists and foreign-policy makers that we must reckon with states that appear to be essentially irrational in their behaviour, it is striking to see how neoclassicals incorporate what structural realists would call 'reductionist' arguments, which in turn, reveal a great deal about their hidden assumptions about human nature.

In order to rationalise a seemingly irrational decision by Khomeini to continue fighting in light of a rather unpromising situation or, more, generally to rationalise the whole notion of war, Schweller (1996:108n61) turns to psycho-analytic material. Specifically, he turns to psycho-analyst Vamik Volkan's insightful book, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies* (Volkan 1988), which argues that war is some sort of collective therapy. Yet by doing so, Schweller makes, implicitly or explicitly, particular assumptions about human nature. For the fact that war is to be seen as a form of group psychological therapy (and not merely as the rational Clausewitzian continuation of politics by other means due to structural balance-of-power constraints) is based on the assumption that Man is almost of necessity inclined to define as enemies those Men belonging to the out-group.

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Such group psychological dynamics are based on a particular set of psycho-analytic assumptions about the nature of Man, which, in turn, relate back to Freud (Volkan 1988; also Volkan 2004; Volkan *et al.* 1990; Volkan *et al.* 1991).

This does not imply that neoclassical realists are hidden Freudians. They may be or they may not; it is, in any case, hard to decipher. As in the case of Waltz and Mearsheimer, these post-classical realists have presented us with intriguing international-political theories. But when it comes to the concept of human nature, neoclassical realists appear to be a rather unreflective group of international-political theorists, whose claims to be legitimate heirs to classical realists seem questionable. Despite their unreflectiveness (which is particularly apparent in comparison with the classical realists), a picture of the neoclassical Man emerges.

Neoclassical Man is not a one-dimensional creature that merely seeks survival. The drive to self-preservation is, of course, a significant motivational assumption about human nature. Yet, alone, it cannot entirely explain why states often behave rather differently than the Waltzian defensive structural realist logic would suggest. Expansionist state behaviour cannot derive from a mere survival concern. Instead, both states and Men are driven by multiple motivational forces. As Schweller (1996) notes: 'The general point is that interests, values, ideology, and strategic beliefs are...just as important as imbalances of power or threat in determining how states choose sides and why they wage war' (108). These interests, values, ideologies, and beliefs are, however, not always of purely materialistic rational origin. On the contrary, they derive from a mixture of concerns for security and concerns regarding honour and glory as well as prestige, recognition, and respect. But prestige, i.e. the drive for collective recognition, is conceptually not too far wide of the mark of what Morgenthau refers to as the instinct of self-assertion. As was the case with the classical realists, the fact that states place such a high value on prestige is, ultimately, the result of assumed instinctual configurations which explain not only why Man longs for security and assertion (prestige, recognition, honour, glory) but also why

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these concerns are then raised to a different level, the level of the state. Once again, it all is rooted in Man, in the nature of Man.

It can be argued, then, that the neoclassical Man fits rather nicely with how classical and post-classical realists have conceptualised human nature. All in all, neoclassical Man is neither a utility maximising *homo oeconomicus* nor inherently aggressive or sadistic. Instead, neoclassical realists portray Man as driven both by concerns for his own self-preservation and, at the same time, by concerns for prestige or self-assertion. They seem to recognise that Man's inclination to survival is not sacrosanct and is often overridden by impulse discharges that seem, *prima facie*, irrational. This is a significant turn of events. The notion of the Waltzian Man, who is a somewhat sober-minded security maximiser, has been left behind. Instead, neoclassicals returned to a more realist(ic) set of assumptions about human nature more akin to what the classical realists had said about the nature of Man long ago.

Conclusion

In the wake of reinterpreting the assumptions about human nature of several leading classical, my reading of the post-classicals suggests that we must seriously reconsider their intellectual project(s). This implies both criticism and sympathetic defense. First, these post-classicals are infused with assumptions about human nature. Secondly, despite their 'human nature lie', these post-classicals can be defended against some human nature-related criticism. Thirdly, one cannot but be struck by these post-classicals' degree of unreflectiveness *vis-à-vis* the concept of human nature. This has helped to put contemporary realism into a rather unpleasant politico-theoretical situation.

The post-classical realist project to free realism from the tutelage of the concept of human nature has failed. All of the most prominent post-classicals possess such a conception. Virtually all post-classicals smuggle in some assumptions about the nature of Man. This is odd, particularly given that these post-classicals have blamed and denounced

the classicals as if they were a bunch of pre-scientific and crude *pseudo*-international-political storytellers—let us recall Waltz who once said rather snappishly that ‘what Morgenthau did was translate [Friedrich] Meinecke from German to English’ (Waltz 1998:386).

Post-classical realism is still dominated by underlying assumptions about human nature. These assumptions are, as was the case with some of the classicals, partly inspired by Freudian psychology. Despite all their intellectual, politico-theoretical, and philosophy-of-science efforts, post-classical realists fail to live up to their promise to leave behind the days of Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style theorising about world politics. This is true of Herz’s realist liberalism. Herz does not present us with an international-political theory where it is irrelevant whether Man is naturally peaceful or cooperative or aggressive or domineering. Herz does make his arguments by means of the concept of the security dilemma, which is, *prima facie*, a predominantly socio-structural concept. But if one takes a closer look, it is easily recognisable that Herz cannot avoid making assumptions about the nature of Man. Without human nature, he cannot explain the existence and dynamics of the security dilemma, both societal and international, in the first place. The security dilemma does not derive from *extra*-human international-political structures but rather from the nature of Man. If Herzian Man was not some sort of Freudian-style ambivalent group animal that is driven by both self-preservation and other-regard, the international-political scene could not be explained in terms of a dynamic and profound cycle of intense security and power competition among the actors.

The systemic-scientific international-political theory of Kaplan, too, cannot avoid making assumptions about the nature of Man. Kaplan smuggles in a set of state-motivational assumptions (power maximising, security maximising, compassion) which are, after all, assumptions about the nature of Man. Besides, Kaplan anthropomorphises the concept of the international-political system and ascribes to it human qualities. These are taken from Freud. Freud does now begin to fall out of the picture among post-classicals.

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The concept of human nature, however, does not. The defensive structural realism of Waltz does equally work with profound state-motivational assumptions. Taken together with his other, though rare, thin, and indirect, comments about the nature of Man, a picture emerges of a Waltzian international-political theory which is by no means freed from the concept of human nature. The picture emerges of a Waltzian Man who, not entirely unlike Morgenthau's Man, is far from being a *homo oeconomicus*-style creature. Instead, it is driven predominantly by both self-preservation as well as self-assertion (recognition, pride).

Mearsheimer's realism is also built upon assumptions about human nature. Mearsheimerian Man is a group animal that places utmost value on his longing for self-preservation and is not only more fearful than Waltz's but also strives somewhat frantically for the maximum share of power. If not in terms of modified assumptions about the nature of Man, Mearsheimer could not explain why state A longs for a reasonable amount of power but state B for a maximum share of power, given that they are both exposed to the same international-political structural conditions. The neoclassical Man fits with how both classical and post-classical realists conceptualise the nature of Man. Part of the neoclassical assumption about human nature is that Man is neither a mere utility maximiser nor inherently sadistic or violent but an irrational creature concerned with self-preservation and also prestige (self-assertion) *vis-à-vis* his fellows.

These post-classical realists reveal profound assumptions about human nature. Their international-political theories make use of assumptions about the nature of Man which are not essentially the same as those made by the classical. But they also make assumptions which, they argue, would and should not appear in realism any longer. Despite their 'human nature lie', these post-classicals must be rescued from some of the charges that have been brought against them by critics outside of realism. Similar counterarguments that already saved most of the classical realists apply—even though, to a lesser degree—

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when it comes to the assumptions about human nature of post-classical realists. The popular charges by critics must be refuted as false attacks.

The common charge that post-classicals share a tendency to overemphasise Man's longing for power after power seems misleading. Power does play an important role. These realists surely emphasise that Man does seek power, either as means to an overarching end (survival) or in the form of a profound longing for prestige, which comes very close to the classical realism-style innate drive to self-assertion. One must not overlook, however, that all these realists, from Herz to the neoclassicals, do share an understanding of human nature which does not consider Man to be some sort of *homo oeconomicus*-style one-dimensional Lasswellian *homo politicus* who seeks nothing but power. Instead, all these realists (and Herz in particular) share the view that Man is driven by a great variety of physiological-psychological forces which are, moreover, often inherently conflictual *vis-à-vis* each other. Prominent among those forces is the innate inclination to affiliate with fellow Men and form and enter groups. This ultimately leads to the in-group/out-group dynamics of much of international relations.

The second prominent criticism also needs qualification. Post-classicals are being confronted with the charge that they rely on an image of Man that is utterly oversimplified and unsophisticated. This is only partially correct. We should discriminate carefully between the earlier and later post-classicals. When we look at Mearsheimer, part of the criticism is not entirely unjustified. What he offers us is, in comparison with the classical realists, an extremely thin account of human nature which does not really go much beyond the mere quoting of Butterfield's assertion that Man has never been a saint. The critics must not lump together Mearsheimer with Herz or Kaplan. In contrast to the later post-classical realists, Herz and Kaplan are very reflective when it came to the nature of Man and the human condition. Herz, in particular, offers us a fairly lengthy treatment of the psychological bases of the security dilemma, i.e. of the assumptions about human nature that inform his international-political theory. In this sense, Herz's approach is reminiscent

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of how classicals approached international-political theorising. No other post-classical realist is as careful, open, and reflective *vis-à-vis* the nature of Man as is Herz.

The need for discriminating between the earlier and later post-classical realists is also warranted when it comes to the charge that these realists' assumptions about human nature are not only one-dimensional but also the product of purely metaphysical speculations. All these post-classicals make assumptions about the nature of Man that infuse their respective international-political theories. Yet only the assumptions of Herz and Kaplan can be considered as being attributable to an intellectual source. This source is Freudian psychology and it helps to defend them from the charge of metaphysical speculation. This changes when we turn to Waltz, Mearsheimer, and the neoclassicals. Their assumptions about human nature are much harder, if not impossible, to defend. Their assumptions about the nature of Man seem to appear to be too implicit, too scattered, too unsystematic. This raises and helps understand the third implication of this chapter's reading of post-classical realism.

Several leading post-classical realist international-political theories are built upon some very profound assumptions about the nature of Man. These post-classicals' assumptions about human nature have become increasingly unreflective. But this must not distract our attention away from recognising one very fundamental dilemma of post-classical realism. This has put the whole of contemporary realism in a somewhat awkward politico-theoretical position: namely, that post-classical realists have allowed themselves to smuggle in assumptions about human nature against the background of their explicit politico-theoretical aim to free realism from the Morgenthauian/Niebuhrrian tutelage of human nature. The profound failure of post-classical realism means that the concept of human nature is not dead in contemporary realism. This may delight those who have always been critical of realism. The fact that contemporary realism is still heavily reliant upon assumptions about human nature provides them with easy politico-theoretical ammunition helping them repeat the same old intellectual story of how mistaken realism is

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to draw the wrong politico-theoretical conclusions from false human nature premises about human nature.

We must deal with contemporary realism's theoretical *cul-de-sac* and must, therefore, focus on the natural follow-up question that derives from the results and arguments of the two preceding chapters. I reinterpreted the assumptions about human nature of classical realism. I unearthed the largely hidden assumptions about human nature of post-classical realism. I defended both classical and post-classical realist assumptions about human nature against what I regard as unwarranted criticism. Taking together my readings of classical and post-classical realists, I argued that the concept of human nature is alive and kicking in contemporary realism. This raises the normative follow-up question: if human nature is not dead, *ought* it to be dead?

HUMAN NATURE CRITICISM AND ITS VICES

Introduction

The analytical and argumentative focus of the thesis now shifts to the ought-question. The preceding two chapters argued that the concept of human nature is not dead. Regardless of whether we examine classical realism or post-classical realism, these realists make use of profound assumptions about human nature. Based on my reading, emphasising the intellectual influence of Freudian psychology upon these realists, I have defended both classical as well as post-classical realists against unsubstantiated criticism.

Unearthing the ‘human nature lie’ of the post-classicals has helped to bring to light some profound tensions between its rhetoric and the reality. It helped to put contemporary realism in a potentially uncomfortable intellectual position *vis-à-vis* its critics. This is an unsatisfactory state of affairs and raises a question which the post-classical realists thought they had already decided in the negative a long time ago. Does realism require the concept of human nature?

The question whether the concept of human nature ought to be dead in realism is significant in its own right. But it turns into a pressing concern if we consider the nature and implications of the widespread neglect of the human nature baggage of classical realism as well as the ‘human nature lie’ of the post-classical realists. This is the broader context against which the analyses and arguments of the next two chapters must be seen. Specifically, realism has manoeuvred itself into a position where it must now choose sides between two Weberian ideal-typical politico-theoretical positions. Either realists re-design their international-political theories in such a way that they do not rely any longer on certain assumptions about human nature. This implies purifying realism of the concept of human nature and transforming it into a purely structural-sociological or truly post-classical realist body of international-political theories.

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The ideal-typical alternative is that realists consider carefully the option of re-constructing their respective international-political theories in a way which proactively allows for the incorporation and foundational importance of profound assumptions about the nature of Man. This would infuse realism with more rather than less assumptions about human nature and take it back to classical realism-style international-political theory. Both the present chapter, 'Human Nature Criticism and its Vices', as well as Chapter 5, 'The Virtues of Freudian Human Nature', present powerful arguments in favour of the human nature-friendly alternative.

This chapter marks the first step towards the overarching argument that the concept of human nature ought not to be dead in realism. I argue that there is nothing inherently wrong in applying the concept of human nature to international-political theorising. In contrast to the next chapter, the argument presented is largely of negative analytical-argumentative nature. It accomplishes its task by means of criticising those critical of human nature. This requires an analytical account of the various sets of criticism that have been levelled against the admissibility of the concept of human nature in (international-) political theory. To this end, I present, in the next section, what I refer to as the six sins of human nature. These sins have been among the most powerful arguments against the concept of human nature.

Yet this does not imply that human nature-sympathetic international-political theorists must agree with these human nature critics. I argue that these six sins of human nature must be taken with a pinch of salt. Most of the concerns of the human nature critics are perfectly legitimate. But their criticisms are far too weak and unconvincing to be really capable of deciding the ought-question. The subsequent section is concerned with critiquing the human nature critics. I argue that much of human nature criticism is unconvincing because it fails to recognise the hidden complexities of the concept of human nature in the realm of the (international-) political. This complexity does not allow the critics to decide the human nature question.

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I then continue with the task of critiquing the critics and take issue with what is referred to as the hidden omnipresence of human nature. I argue that virtually all human nature-critical *Weltanschauungen* are also based upon some conceptions about the nature of Man. Thus, in light of the six sins of human nature which are subjected to increasing criticism, this chapter concludes that current human nature criticism cannot decide the ought-question against the human nature-sympathetics and that it looks as though it is impossible to construct international-political theories purified of the concept of human nature. This is a first step in the right direction. I will, however, also point out that in order to decide the ought-question in favour of the concept of human nature, additional arguments are required.

The six sins of human nature

This section deals with the criticism of the concept of human nature in political thought, whether domestic or international. It identifies and presents what may be regarded as the six most powerful sins of the concept of human nature. This is a necessary task. First, because the resulting criticism will provide the analytical backdrop against which the next two sections will present what are considered to be the most striking vices of such human nature criticism. Secondly, because international-political theorists have not really devoted much attention to the allegedly negative and problematic dimension of the concept of human nature. On the one hand, it was not really an issue that had received a great deal of attention in the pre-Herzian/Waltzian era, for regardless how far we go back in the history of realist (international-) political theory, the concept of human nature was some sort of quasi-natural element of realist international-political theorising since ancient Greece. And, on the other hand, the concept of human nature was not a question of great concern among post-classical realists either. For when Herz and Waltz began to move realism away from human nature towards a structural-sociological mode of reasoning, the following generations of post-classical realists seem to have all too readily accepted the

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rather thin arguments against human nature that were brought forward. In the wake of this rising anti-human nature mood of the early days of post-classical realism, it seems that these realists have embarked on their projects of constructing (allegedly) human nature-purified international-political theories without any greater reflection about the functions, virtues, and vices of what they considered to be an antiquated concept of a bygone pre-scientific era.

This is, however, a highly unsatisfactory state of affairs. For the neglect of the concept of human nature has stifled a proper debate as to whether assumptions about human nature ought to be made or be admissible in realism. That such debate seems more pressing than ever before, given the continuing omnipresence of assumptions about human nature in realism, has been pointed out above. Such debate has been avoided thus far. Yet this does not mean that any argument in favour of the concept of human nature in realist international-political theorising is a straightforward matter. For despite the absence of any thorough engagement with the concept of human nature, any argument which seems to be *pro* human nature seems to be on the defensive from the very beginning and arouses all sorts of suspicions. And even though these Pavlovian hostile reactions can be shown to be, ultimately, simply unfounded and unjustified, the question whether realism ought to be based upon some profound assumptions about the nature of Man must be approached against the background of a predominantly hostile intellectual scenery.

This widespread scepticism against the concept of human nature, then, dictates or predetermines the analytical and argumentative approach for answering the ought-question. It seems that the initial, essential task of any argument that calls for a positive and proactive role for assumptions about human nature in realism must be to come to terms with the sets of criticisms, suspicions, and even fears which have been raised against the marriage of human nature and (international-) political theory. This requires an analytical account of such human nature criticism. While the next two sections are devoted to the task of jumping to the defense of the concept of human nature by carrying out the

appropriate counter-criticisms, the remainder of this section is concerned with identifying such sets of criticisms of the concept of human nature (there are surprisingly few books devoted to the concept of human nature in matters political, but useful are Pennock & Chapman 1977; Forbes & Smith 1981; Berry 1986; Budziszewski 1986; Jörke 2005; Thies 2007).

Human nature critics almost always point out that the theories or conceptions of human nature which are used in (international-) political theories are often simply too unscientific and, consequently, futile as the philosophical starting point for the respective (international-) political theory. This sort of standard criticism—i.e. the critique of metaphysical speculation—is a prominent argumentative weapon often used by natural and life scientists. It is often raised against both social-scientific and humanistic-philosophical (international-) political theories, and the metaphysical speculation argument is enjoying ever greater popularity in light of the ascent of the neurosciences.

The critics' line of the argument is, in fact, fairly straightforward. What do we gain, these critics say, from turning, let's say, to Rousseau's philosophy of history (1997[1755]: part I)? Why ought we to care in the 21st century when an 18th-century Rousseau tells us that Man is driven by *amour-propre*? Where is the scientific evidence that *amour-propre* was really the product of the historical loss of self-sufficiency? Or that savage man wandered the forests alone and nourished himself; was without any foresight, curiosity, education, reason, nor any contact; was completely independent and only concerned with his self-preservation; envisioned only the most basic needs, showed pity and compassion for the sufferings of others and had no desire to harm them whatsoever? These critics deny that such Rousseauian account of Man and his history counts as a proper theory of human nature; at the most, they may regard it as interesting generalisations about the nature of Man which are based largely on observation and introspection—not more, not less. The same criticism would apply to Aristotle and his essentialist view of Man as a *zoon politikon*, to arbitrarily pick another landmark of Western philosophy.

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Quite naturally perhaps, contemporary natural and life scientists are fairly sceptical when philosophers and (international-) political theorists establish analytical and/or normative links to something as complex as the nature of Man. This form of profound scepticism towards, or outright rejection of, what is deemed to be purely metaphysical speculations has received a great impetus from the philosophy of the Vienna Circle. According to its 1929 manifesto, 'The Scientific Conception of the World: The Vienna Circle' (n.A. 1973[1929]), the members of the Vienna Circle called for a scientific world-conception that aims at 'removing the metaphysical and theological debris of millennia' (317); their empiricism and positivism rejects classical metaphysics and 'knows no unconditionally valid knowledge derived from pure reason, no "synthetic judgments a priori" or of the kind that lie at the basis of Kantian epistemology and even more of all pre- and post-Kantian ontology and metaphysics' (308). Herbert Feigl, one of the protagonists, has summed up the Vienna Circle's position quite well when he wrote that we 'were deeply imbued with the conviction that we had found a "philosophy to end all philosophies"' (Feigl 1981[1969]:57).

The project of the 'philosophy to end all philosophies' does help understand the contemporary wariness against the alleged human nature speculations of philosophers, theologians, and (international-) political theorists such as Morgenthau or Niebuhr. True, we can see that there is much disagreement within these contemporary and predominantly anti-metaphysical, empiricist-positivist, natural-scientific circles of natural and life scientists. Debates are ongoing whether the question of the nature of Man may be best answered by focusing on genes, molecules, or neurons, i.e. the various approaches of the biological, physical, and neurosciences, respectively. But still, in light of their anxiety of too much metaphysical speculation when it comes to the nature of Man, these critics are united in their strong opposition against, for instance, Rousseauian or Aristotelian-style philosophical approaches to human nature.

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The same scepticism has been applied to most of the classical realists, too. As shown above, critics of both non-realist and post-classical realists provenance have been all too ready to raise the accusation that these classical realist assumptions about human nature are too vague and too speculative. On that point, Niebuhr and Morgenthau have suffered the most. Steve Smith (1981) has argued that Morgenthau ‘merely asserts [his theory of Man] as correct’ (167). Scott Burchill (2001) writes that ‘Morgenthau’s realism was based on *a priori* assumptions about human nature’ (82). Realists, too, have faulted Niebuhr and Morgenthau for relying less on science and more on theology and metaphysics, respectively (Thayer 2000:125). In light of these alleged shortcomings, these realists have either turned to Darwinian-biological evolutionary theory (Thayer 2004) or to the neurosciences (Rosen 2005) in search of a more scientific grounding of the realist analysis and understanding of world politics. I defended several of the leading classical and post-classical realist international-political theories against such charge in the two previous chapters, but the argumentative strategy of these critics remains a powerful force to be reckoned with when it comes to the question of the admissibility and significance of the concept of human nature in (international)political thought.

While the metaphysical speculation argument takes issue with what is regarded as the more or less antiquated human nature wisdom of Western philosophy and calls for a more rigorous and scientific approach to the nature of Man, the second major criticism against the analytical and normative usage of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory—i.e. the charge of ideological mystification—represents a much more radical attack. We can certainly agree with J. Roland Pennock (1977) that ‘as long as men have speculated about the nature of politics, it has been common to relate it to the nature of man’ and that although different thinkers ‘focused upon the differences among kinds of human nature, whether of gold, of silver, or of bronze’, there was hardly any dispute that one could identify a ‘common substratum’ (1). This has, however, changed dramatically. Largely thanks to the ascent of postmodern thought and its

ideological mystification argument, the focus of the human nature debate has been shifted away from the question of whether Man is, to use Pennock's metaphor, of gold, silver, or bronze, towards more prior and basic questions. Is there something like a human nature at all, a 'common substratum'? Is it really sensible to talk about and use the concept of human nature? Postmodern theorists answer these questions in the negative.

This form of radical criticism must be seen against the nature of the Enlightenment project. The thinkers of the Enlightenment, in particular, argued that transcendental political and social principles must, ultimately, be based on a sound knowledge of the nature of Man. In other words: the wider intellectual project was based on the dictum that the sound conception of human nature provides the sound foundation for sound (international-) political theory. Hence, in light of what Jean-François Lyotard (2001[1979]) called postmodern theorists' 'incredulity toward metanarratives' (xxiv), it comes as no big surprise that these postmodernists are deeply suspicious *vis-à-vis* universal theories of human nature which claim to provide the foundation for (international-) political theorising and *vis-à-vis* the very idea of a nature of Man.

These postmodernists do not see the concept of human nature as a mere philosophical basis for (international-) political theorising. Instead, they present the fierce counter-argument that 'under the guise of a benevolent concern for the good of all humankind, the real purpose of the human nature myth is to impose one particular set of male Eurocentric values on to the rest of the world' (Wells & McFadden 2006:2). As Michel Foucault (1977) argues in Nietzschean manner that 'nothing in man, not even his body, is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men' (153). Thus, neither can postmodernists see or recognise a common and universal substratum of Man, nor can they allow the (Westernised) concept of human nature to become the basis for (international-) political theory. The argument advanced by Richard Rorty *contra* the foundationalist philosophers such as Plato, Aquinas, or Kant, is of similar origin and radicalism. Rorty (1998b) recognises as one of the most 'important

intellectual advance[s]' of 20th century philosophy that 'we are much less inclined than our ancestors were to take "theories of human nature" seriously' and that 'we are much less inclined to pose the ontological question "What *are* we?"'. For, as he argues, 'we have come to see that the main lesson of both history and anthropology is our extraordinary malleability'; as a result, we were 'coming to think of ourselves as the flexible, protean, self-shaping animal rather than as the rational animal or the cruel animal' (169-170).

The postmodern criticism against the advocates of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory is, to some extent, shared by feminist theorists. Like postmodern thought, feminism has become an increasingly rich and diverse body of thought. However, feminist theorists share a strong sense of opposition against naturalistic theories of gender differences (Levitas 1981:116-117). Based upon such common core, feminists fiercely reject—albeit not necessarily from a postmodern point of view and with varying degrees of radicalism—what they conceive as a dangerous conservative ethnocentric Western white male universalism. Feminists criticise this dangerous form of androcentric human nature universalism which is characteristic, as they readily point out, of so much of contemporary international-political theory, particularly of realism (Tickner & Sjoberg 2007). On the whole, then, feminist thought shares the conviction with postmodern theorists that there is no such thing as a transcendental nature of Man. They argue that the assumption of such a theory of human nature represents nothing but a 'damaging form of ideological mystification' (Wells & McFadden 2006:2) as well as an attempt by the powerful to silence dissident voices, be it philosophical-theoretical or practical-political. For there seems to be no easier line of argument or easier excuse than referring to, or hiding behind, the nature of Man in light of all earthly evils, injustices, and wrongdoings.

Equally hostile and powerful arguments against the foundational role of assumptions about human nature in the domain of the (international-) political are raised by a third group of human nature critics. Representing the third sin of the concept of human nature,

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these critics put forth what may be called the dogmatic ahistoricism argument. Their critical argument against the concept of human nature is rather straightforward. Even if it was possible, in light of the aforementioned two major sets of criticisms, to unearth and identify the ultimate essence of humans and their physiological-psychological makeup to a sufficiently high degree of certainty, such a theory would, nevertheless, be more or less worthless. For although it would provide us with a theory of the *nature* of Man, such a theory would not be capable of answering whether the wide range of actions of Man are, ultimately, purely determined by such *nature*. Put differently: these critics argue that Man is a thoroughly historical creature which is shaped by the currently prevailing modes of production and social-environmental circumstances.

This line of argument has its roots in Marxian historical materialism. It is not only an extremely powerful argumentative strategy, but it has risen to exceptional prominence and popularity among students of human nature (life sciences), social scientists, and social and (international-) political theorists, particularly since the late 1960s. The question of the degree to which Man is a purely natural animal or is capable of being nurtured—as embodied in the nature-nurture or naturalist-culturalist debate—has become a central component to the culture wars and has stirred up much controversy. It lurks in the background of virtually all contemporary social and political issues, whether we talk about the nature and prospects of international politics, the educational system, or the criminal justice system. The nature-nurture controversy has helped to unearth—often entirely justified—that the purely naturalist position is often insufficient as it fails to recognise how history and historico-material constraints have shaped the course of human and social life. Further, it has helped to show that pure naturalists are often inclined towards conservative social and (international-) political theory. Feminist theorists have traditionally been very active and loud voices in the nature-nurture debate, but so, too, have been the neo-Marxist critical theorists of the Frankfurt School.

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The criticism of the concept of human nature *vis-à-vis* social and (international-) political theory draws from a crucial notion of Karl Marx. Often seen as some sort of ‘optimistic’ conception of Man (as opposed to the ‘pessimistic’ conception of conservatism as well as realism), Marx conceives Man as an essentially *social* creature. This is part and parcel of Marxian materialistic philosophy of history and must be seen in light of Marx’s anti-naturalistic argument. Put forth forcefully in the sixth thesis of the *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx (1994[1845]-b) argues that ‘the essence of man is no abstraction inhering in each single individual’ but that in ‘its actuality it is the ensemble of social relationships’ (100). Marx strictly denies the idea of a universal, transcendent *nature* or essence of Man. Instead, he argues, that what may appear as instinctively or naturally or biologically is, in fact, largely socially determined. Thus, human conduct is, therefore, not only contingent from society to society and from epoch to epoch, but it is, moreover, and most importantly: principally alterable. As Marx (2005[1847]) famously proclaims: ‘the whole of history is nothing but a continual transformation of human nature’ (160).

In light of Marx’s groundwork, culturalists have, therefore, begun to argue quite fiercely that societal conditions and societal malfunctions must not be deduced directly from something like a fixed human nature. Rather, human, social, and, of course, international-political conduct must always be seen and interpreted against their respective historical contexts as well as their structural and material conditions in which these conducts take place. As Adam Ferguson (1809[1767]) writes felicitously: ‘nations stumble upon establishments, which are indeed the result of human action, but not the execution of any human design’ (199). Reversing this logic or denying the essential foundations of Marxian philosophy of history has, according to Horkheimer and Habermas, dramatic—and conservative—effects.

Writing in the wake of earlier warnings against the blind naturalisation of Man (see, e.g., Lukács 1968[1923]:83-222), Horkheimer also criticises the widespread and essentially ahistorical approach towards Man and his human condition of much

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contemporary philosophy and social and (international-) political theory. Concerned with its social and political effects, in his 'Bemerkungen zur philosophischen Anthropologie' [Notes on philosophical anthropology], Horkheimer (1988[1935]) argues forcefully that these ahistorical interpretations of Man are simply intellectual misconstructions. These are dangerous misconstructions, for they help to stifle social and (international-) political progress. 'The attempt to comprehend men as fixed or nascent entity is vain', he writes, for 'the human character is engulfed in the course of history'. Against such human nature sceptical background, Horkheimer demands that the age-old and almost knee-jerk reaction against any possible alteration of historical structure and processes 'must, at last, be silenced' (275 (my translations)).

Habermas fully agrees with Horkheimer's criticism of the conservative inclinations and consequences of much of human nature-based social and (international-) political theory. He also thinks that human nature-based theorising often confuses causes and effects. Yet Habermas emphasises another significant point of concern. In his essay 'Philosophische Anthropologie' [Philosophical anthropology], Habermas (1973[1958]) raises the problem of the inherent element of structural power of theories and assumptions about human nature. If these theories and assumptions continue to put so much emphasis on the allegedly fixed, constant and universal, then these human nature theorists will continue to produce nothing but some sort of sorry (international-) political theory that will be nothing more than a rather simple 'dogma with political consequences, which is so much the worse, where it appears with the claim of being a value-free science' (108 (my translation)). According to Habermas, we must always remind ourselves that it is not only Man who is a historical creature. Our theories, conceptions, and assumptions about Man, too, are historical, in the sense that these have emanated from particular historical conditions which, in turn, represent a particular set of historical interests (110). If we do not recognise the historical element of human nature-based theorising, we simply

perpetuate the existing; we perpetuate the existing, based upon wrong premises, namely, the assumption of a universal concept of human nature.

Such argument by the neo-Marxian critical theorists from the Frankfurt School, i.e. the dogmatic ahistoricism argument, which is almost as radical as that of the postmodernists, brings us to the fourth prominent objection *vis-à-vis* the concept of human nature in (international-) political theory. This fourth sin of human nature—the argument of objectified determinist essentialism—is largely put forth by existential philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. It represents, in many respects, a radicalisation of the criticism of postmodernists as well as neo-Marxists. On the other hand, however, its line of argument is the complete converse of the metaphysical speculation argument. This latter criticism by most of the natural and life scientists stated that the assumptions about human nature of much of (international-) political theory are often simply too vague. They argued that the only reliable sources in relation to the nature of Man are provided by the biological, physical, and neurosciences and that (international-) political theorists should turn to these sciences rather than relying on theological speculations, philosophical observations or introspections. For this would put their respective (international-) political theories upon firmer, because more scientific, grounds. On that point, existentialists disagree.

Existentialists are opposed to the corresponding claims by these natural and life scientists to scientific objectivity and universalism as well as to their methodological approach. Existentialists claim that the sciences treat Man as a mere object of study. This largely external and objectified approach towards Man, they argue, is wrong, for it has degrading effects. Humans are considered to be just too complex. What defines us as humans can, therefore, not be comprehended through the mere technicalised study of outer and physiological characteristics. Instead, our defining features must be sought within each of us. This suggested turn from the external to the internal perspective comes side by side with the existentialists' strong belief in Man's complexity, subjectivity, and, ultimately, freedom from any form of physiological and psychological determinism. The existential

philosophy of Sartre is a case in point here. Even though both Martin Heidegger (1962[1927]) as well as Hannah Arendt (1958) have made similarly strong claims as regards the essentially anti-essential 'nature' of Man, it is Sartre 'who gives the now "classic" argument here' (Berry 1986:122). Largely *contra* the Platonic-Aristotelian essentialist conception of human nature, Sartre argues that there is no such thing as an objectified nature of Man. It is, therefore, virtually meaningless to speak of theories of human nature. Man simply has no essence. As Sartre (1975[1946]) says: 'man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards' (349).

According to Sartre and the existentialists, we cannot say that Man is of gold, silver, or bronze. Such statements are entirely meaningless, for 'Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself' (349). This represents, then, perhaps, the most radical of all human nature criticisms. Man is neither solely driven by his 'nature', nor can the nature of Man ever be an excuse for the darker sides of human and social existence. For Man is essentially and in the strongest possible sense: free. Man is free from nature. Neither can we identify any universal givens, nor recognise any universal *oughts* or wants. It is worth quoting Sartre (1975[1946]) at length here:

Man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that he is thrown into this world he is responsible for everything he does. The existentialist does not believe in the power of passion. He will never regard a grand passion as a destructive torrent upon which a man is swept into certain actions as by fate, and which, therefore, is an excuse for them. He thinks that man is responsible for his passion. (353)

Thus, in the wake of the postmodernists as well as the neo-Marxian critical theorists, the existentialists also display an utmost sense of scepticism towards the concept of human nature, especially in the realm of the social and (international-) political. But their criticism—the objectified determinist essentialism argument—is perhaps more radical, because it does not only reject the Platonian-Aristotelian essentialist human nature

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viewpoint but also the crude and apologetic determinism of much conservative (international-) political theory. Further, when it comes to the question of Man, existentialists are characterised by being deeply imbued with a profound belief in the freedom of Man, i.e. the freedom from nature and the freedom from God.

This brings us to the last two critical arguments against the application of the concept of human nature in (international-) political theory which now complete the list of the six sins of human nature—to, fifth, the naturalistic fallacy argument and to, sixth, the rationalistic fallacy argument. These two sets of criticisms sit, so to speak, on top of all other criticisms. For regardless of whether we argue from a scientist, postmodern, feminist, neo-Marxian, or existentialist standpoint, all those sceptical of the concept of human nature may subscribe to these fallacies in order to keep the concept of human nature as far away as possible from (international-) political theorising.

The first of these two criticisms—the naturalistic fallacy (or *is-ought*-fallacy)—goes back to David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* (1948[1739-40]) as well as to G.E. Moore, who actually coined the term in his *Principia Ethica* (1993[1903]). It is, however, Hume who provides us with the very first description of this fallacy. It is worth quoting Hume in full length here, for his argument has become a truly consequential statement in Western philosophy. In fact, it has become one of the cornerstones of much of Kant's and post-Kantian moral philosophy. As Hume (1948[1739-40]) famously argues:

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In every system of morality which I have hitherto met with, I have always remarked that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a god, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surprised to find that instead of the usual copulations of propositions *is* and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought* or *ought not*. This change is imperceptible, but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this *ought* or *ought not* expresses some new relation or affirmation, it is necessary that it should be observed and explained; and at the same time that a reason should be given for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others which are entirely different from it.

(43)

The point that Hume raises, which also relates significantly to the concept of human nature in (international-) political theory, is rather straightforward. The basic argument is that even though it is often done, it is logically inadmissible to deduce an *ought*-proposition from an *is*-premise. For instance, the historical denial of universal suffrage (an *ought*) cannot be justified by, or deduced from, making any references to the biological or physical inequalities between the genders (the *is*). Or, in terms of international relations, the fact that Man *is* a Hobbesian *lupus* does by no means imply that we *ought* to act according to Hobbes's classical description of the state of nature as being a *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Consequently, if we strictly follow the naturalistic fallacy argument of Hume and Moore, this implies that any politico-theoretical or politico-practical *ought*-propositions that have been made on the basis of some set of *is*-facts regarding the nature of Man are futile and meaningless. It would not make any difference at all, if we were even capable of showing that these *is*-claims are both epistemologically and ontologically valid. For an *ought* cannot derive from an *is*, regardless how valid the *is*-fact may be.

The naturalistic fallacy provides some sort of handy argumentative help when it comes to the human nature question. It does not need to engage with some of the most pressing questions regarding the concept of human nature, such as the nature-nurture

debate, because it can simply dismiss the concept of human nature on these grounds. More or less the same applies to the last but not least major point of criticism. The rationalistic fallacy argument represents an equally strong point of attack, but it, too, does not need to get involved too much with the tricky questions surrounding the nature of Man. Instead, it provides the ultimate argumentative bludgeon. It accuses human nature theorists of giving us merely *post-hoc* rationalisations in light of their respective (international-) political theories.

This line of argumentative strategy has often been used to tear apart social contract theories. Social contract-based (international-) political theory always follows more or less the same argumentative structure, i.e. follows what Wolfgang Kersting (1992) has rightly called, the ‘argumentative triad’ (144). The nature of the political community is being deduced from a particular nature and type of social contract, which is, in turn, being deduced from a particular assumption about a state of nature. But this state of nature is, in turn, being deduced from a particular set of assumptions about human nature. And if we add to that triad the international dimension, i.e. if we add to that triad that as, for instance, in Hobbes’s case, the nature and limits of the international system are being deduced from the political communities which inhabit the system, it will become clear that more often than not, international-political theory, be it of Hobbesian provenance or not, derives—ultimately—from merely one major but controversial source: the nature of Man.

These rationalistic fallacy critics, however, argue now that those human nature theorists, be it social contract theorists or others, do not actually deduce their respective (international-) political theory from assumptions about the nature of Man. Rather, these critics accuse those theorists that they manufacture their assumptions about the nature of Man according to their respective desired (international-) politico-theoretical outcome. In other words: adherents of the rationalistic fallacy argument point out what they regard as some form of inadmissible logical circularity. They accuse the human nature theorists of not choosing their respective theories or conceptions of Man according to epistemological

or ontological criteria and validity but, instead, merely according to what may work best in order to ensure the desired outcome and ensure politico-theoretical coherence and compatibility.

Yet, we may ask then: How would these critics know whether human nature theorists merely make use of some *post-hoc* rationalisations? Don't they commit similar sins? Don't they also use the concept of human nature? These questions and points of scepticism towards the rationalistic fallacy argument signify the end of this section but also the analytical task of the next. For such critical counter-questions must be raised *vis-à-vis* the rationalist fallacy argument. But, surely, critical questions must also be raised *vis-à-vis* the entire catalogue of the six sins of human nature. Whether it be the scientists' metaphysical speculation argument, the postmodern and feminist charge of ideological mystification, the neo-Marxian critical theorist criticism of dogmatic ahistoricism, the existentialist objectified determinist essentialism argument, or, lastly, the concerns over the naturalistic as well as rationalistic fallacies—the human nature critics have raised and voiced exceptionally harsh sets of criticisms against the concept of human nature in (international-) political theory. These are the six major critical philosophical and politico-theoretical hurdles that any argument in favour of a positive role of assumptions about human nature in international-political theory must reckon with—and must be capable to overcome. In the next two sections, I will argue that this is possible.

Critiquing the critics I: The hidden complexity of human nature

Thanks to these powerful sets of criticisms (the six sins of human nature), arguments in favour of the concept of human nature in (international-) political theory have been largely on the defensive. The fierce scientific and philosophical exchanges in the nature-nurture or naturalist-culturalist debate provide ample proof (Pinker 2002). This anti-human nature mood also affected the fate of classical realism. Morgenthau and Niebuhr in particular had eventually come under increasing pressure, not only from rival philosophical and politico-

theoretical positions, especially from the various strands of critical theory, but also from Waltzian-style post-classical realism. Of course, against the background of such a mood of the age, arguments such as Morgenthau's (1967[1948]) that 'Human nature, in which the laws of politics have their roots, has not changed since the classical philosophies of China, India, and Greece endeavoured to discover these laws' (4) have been met with great scepticism.

Such human nature arguments have come to be regarded as increasingly anachronistic in a post-Watsonian era, which put strong analytical emphasis and normative preference of culture over nature and where the (in)famous words of John B. Watson (1998[1924]), the father of behaviourism, have become a central argumentative component of the culturalists' psychological and socio-political manifesto:

Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select—doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and, yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors. (82)

As a consequence, Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style international-political theory began to lose its appeal. Partly because of its (alleged) conservative implications. Partly because of the deep suspicions *vis-à-vis* any natural or purely biological conceptions of human nature, i.e. concerns that have seemed quite legitimate in light of both the eugenicist experiments of many Western European countries and, above all, given the horrendous eugenicist Nazi policies of Hitler Germany. As Wells and McFadden (2006) succinctly point out: these widespread and thorough concerns have meant that scientific investigations into the nature of Man had been declining in the post-World War II years, for 'Behavioural biologists retreated into the forest to study chimpanzees, ants, or monkeys, and the field of study of human behaviour was left to anthropologists and sociologists' (15).

Quite naturally, neither sociologists nor anthropologists have been big fans of the concept of human nature. Sociologists have, naturally, favoured sociological explanations for human behaviour. They have always warned against crude psychologism; and much of contemporary sociology, such as the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, has been emphasising societal effects upon human actions. Likewise, anthropologists have turned to structural explanations, too, and were, moreover, joined by behavioural psychologists close to Watson and radical behaviourist B.F. Skinner (1957; 1976[1948]), who, as Pennock (1977) points out, ‘provided abundant evidence of human variety, feeding the mouths of both ethical and political relativism’ and helped create an intellectual climate where ‘nurture has taken over’ (8). It comes, therefore, hardly as a surprise that human nature-based classical realism eventually fell out of the picture, particularly if we take into consideration the wider cultural-societal and socio-political climate of the 1970s, i.e. the aftermath of the unpopular Vietnam War, the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, and the oil shock (Mearsheimer 2001:19n32). Thus, shifting moods in both theory and practice has led to a situation, where, as Peter Corning (1977) rightly remarks, ‘the mere mention of the term “human nature” evokes deep suspicion in some circles’ (20)—this still applies today.

Yet these Pavlovian hostile reactions towards the concept of human nature in the realm of (international-) political theory are not always justified. It is the task of this and the next section to defend the concept of human nature in light of its alleged sinister nature and effects. In this section, I argue that whether we emphasise the vices of assumptions about human nature over the virtues (or *vice versa*) depends largely on how we conceptualise the politico-theoretical relationship between assumptions about human nature and (international-) political theories. More specifically, I argue that the potential strength and validity or weakness and fallibility of the six sins of assumptions about human nature derive, in the first instance, from largely two questions: First, from the significance or place-value that is ascribed to these assumptions about human nature

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within (international-) political theories. Secondly, from the specific understanding and meaning of the very term human nature. This will help understand that the concept of human nature is a complex affair but defensible.

To begin with the first question, the degree of significance or place-value which may be ascribed to assumptions about human nature within (international-) political theories has not only been different across the various (international-) political theories but also been contested. Still, despite these differences, the history of Western (political) philosophy has shown four ideal-typical approaches when it comes to the significance or place-value question. The first group comprises some of the most influential 20th-century existentialists, neo-Marxian critical theorists, and postmodern philosophers, such as Heidegger and Sartre, Horkheimer and Habermas, and Foucault and Rorty, respectively. As mentioned above, they have argued fiercely that any intimate relationship between the concept of human nature and social and (international-) political theory is, for various reasons, meaningless, damaging, and dangerous—the fear of ideological mystification looms particular large—and must, therefore, be avoided.

Exactly the opposite opinion has been held by several of the most important Western philosophers. 18th-century philosophy, in particular, was attracted to the concept of human nature. Both the study and usage of the concept of human nature had become, as Edward Keene (2005) points out, ‘such a hallmark of eighteenth-century thinking about politics and society that it almost seems to have been impossible for a scholar in that period to try and analyse anything without first saying what “human nature” was’ (138, see also 134-159). Here, Hume, the political realist (Lang 2007b), is a case in point. Hume argues for a science of Man which, he wishes, should become the single foundational source for *all* scientific and philosophical subjects, including (international-) political theory (Hume 1948[1739-40], 2000[1748], 1985[1758]; also Biro 1993). Hume’s position is perhaps rather extreme and may seem (unfortunately) anachronistic today, but it was also held by Ludwig Feuerbach, who, in his *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (1986[1843]),

argued for a 'new philosophy' that 'makes man—with the inclusion of nature as the foundation of man—the unique, universal and highest object of philosophy' and that 'makes anthropology, with the inclusion of physiology, the universal science' (§54:70). Feuerbach emphasised that 'Art, religion, philosophy, and science are only manifestations or revelations of the true human essence' (§55:70).

In light of these polar politico-theoretical positions, we must, however, not forget that international-political theorists may follow two other approaches when it comes to the question of the concept of human nature. The history of (political) philosophy has shown that in-between these two ideal-typical poles—i.e. 20th-century anti-human nature *versus* Humean-style human nature theorising—two middle-positions do exist. The first of these more moderate approaches is perhaps best represented by Kant. Theorising about the social and (international-) political must not be grounded solely in this or that conception of Man. On the other hand, though, it is recognised that we cannot wholly dispense with making references to human nature either. Leo Strauss (1989) rightly remarks that with the ascent of Kant 'reason replaces nature' (92). Kant almost radicalised the belief in reason and rejected any conceptions of morality that is grounded in natural law, the pursuit of happiness, or religion. As Kant (2002[1785]) argues, 'it is clear that all moral concepts have their seat and origin in reason completely a priori' (II.xx). But, despite the widely professed Kantian autonomy from nature, one must not forget Kant's great interest in human nature (see his anthropology lectures, Kant 2006[1798]). Nor must we disregard that Kant put great emphasis on the question of the nature of Man in matters politico-philosophical (including the relations among nations) and how it works as the backdrop for both possibilities but also dangers and limits. Well-known—but often, unfortunately, neglected—are his politico-anthropological remarks in particularly the ninth propositions of his 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose' (1991[1784]). There Kant argues that Man's 'unsocial sociability' is 'obviously rooted in human nature' (IV:44) and puts forth the famous *crooked timber* thesis: 'Nothing straight can be

constructed from such warped wood as that which man is made of' (VI:46). Hegel with his philosophy of spirit and history is another spearhead of such group of (political) philosophers who, like Kant, have drawn some inferences from, and have taken into account, certain assumptions about human nature but have, however, not allowed, at the same time, their (international-) political theory to become a slave of the concept of human nature.

The adherents of the second middle-position are equally less extreme than the almost radical views on each of the poles. But in contrast to the Kantian or Hegelian human nature position, these (international-) political theorists have argued that assumptions about human nature must certainly be a constitutive or central component of any (international-) political theory. Hobbes's (international-) political theory is perhaps an archetypical exemplar. Like Kant, Hobbes not only pays full attention to human nature, as his *De Homine* (1972[1658]), which probably represents his fullest views on the subject, suggests. Moreover, Hobbes was forced by his own methodological-philosophical premises to make Man the central concern of his whole (international-) political theory. Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1996[1651]) is a case in point. *Contra* the then-prevailing Aristotelian natural explanations, Hobbes sought to manufacture the ideal and proper state by means of applying the Galilean resolutio-compositive method, i.e. by resolving the political association into its components, which are, ultimately, the individuals. Influenced by the then-prevailing natural science revolution on the Continent and believing that a thing is best known from its constituting parts, Hobbes argued that it is imperative to analyse or resolve the whole into its components, then reveal the nature and causes of its properties and relations among them, and, once the causes and relations are discovered, recompose the parts into a whole (xlvi:458). As Hobbes writes: 'to describe the Nature of this Artificiall man [commonwealth], I will consider First, the *Matter* thereof, and the *Artificer*; both which is *Man*' (introduction:10).

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These four ideal-typical politico-theoretical responses to the significance or place-value question have, unfortunately, often been overlooked when the human nature question *vis-à-vis* (international-) political theory is being raised. This has led to rather unreflective criticism. Either critics have lumped together all human nature-sympathetic (international-) political theorists and confronted them with the six sins of human nature. Or, alternatively, showing at least some sense of greater reflectivity, critics have discriminated between these various human nature positions and have established a respective and seemingly straightforward hierarchy of criticism according to the following logic: the less human nature, the better; the more human nature, the worse the sins. Consequently, existentialists, critical theorists, and postmodernists, who all share the conviction that assumptions about human nature are useless, dangerous, and wholly dispensable, are the politico-theoretical angels. Those like Hume and Feuerbach, who have argued that the concept of human nature is central to any meaningful and serious (international-) political theory, are the politico-theoretical devils. And the two more moderate positions sandwiched in-between the angels and the devils are criticised according to their respective degrees of significance and centrality of the concept of human nature.

But that would be far too simple. The power and validity of the criticism towards the usage of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory is also dependent on the question how the concept of human nature is being conceptualised. In other words: the criticisms, suspicions, and fears levelled against assumptions about human nature must take into consideration what is actually meant by 'human nature'. Surely, the history of (international-) political theory has shown that the concept of human nature is a malleable and flexible concept. But still, we can establish some sort of ideal-typical order.

In this regard, we must carefully distinguish between two dimensions. The first concerns the fact that Western (international-) political theorists have spoken of human nature in terms of either its actuality or, alternatively, its potentiality. Some, as Hobbes,

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Burke, or also Freud, have thought of and used human nature in a descriptive sense. They have attempted to reveal the recurring and essential about human nature. Their respective (international-) political theories must be read in terms of their human nature conceptions which, they believed, are empirical descriptions of what human beings actually are like in the sense of what the entirety of humankind can be shown to have in common, either in terms of instincts or drives, interests, or needs. Others, such as Marx and critical theorists (especially Marcuse) have, instead, focused on Man's potentialities. In contradistinction, they have used in their respective (international-) political theories what they believed Man may ideally become, either in terms of capacities or possibilities (Chapman 1977:295-297; Duncan 1981:6; Gaus 2000:60-66). On this first level, speaking of human nature can thus either refer to the actuality or the potentiality of the nature of Man.

There is, however, a second dimension to how the concept of human nature has traditionally been used. This second level refers broadly to the free-will *versus* determinism problem. Bhikuk Parekh (1997) brings the variety of the meanings of human nature to the point:

Some...take a mechanical (whereas others take a teleological) view of nature. For some what is natural must be unchanging; others think that it can be modified within certain limits. For some, again, to say that a particular tendency is natural to human beings is to say that it determines them to behave in a relevant way. Others take a weaker view of nature and think that the tendency in question only disposes or inclines them to behave in a certain manner. (15)

There is nothing to add, save that it is vital that we distinguish carefully between (international-) political theories that are based upon rather deterministic assumptions about human nature and between those that may presuppose a nature of Man which allows for a great autonomy from the instincts and passions.

This, then, signifies that we must be careful or on alert *vis-à-vis* much human nature criticism. From a purely descriptive point of view, the history of philosophy and

(international-) political theory has revealed a great variety of different understandings and meanings of the concept of human nature. Some have referred to the actuality of Man, others to his potentialities. By the same token, some think of human nature in terms of some sort of purely bio-physiological action determinism. Others have assumed certain instincts or drives and passions, but still have believed in a greater degree of autonomy of the rational. Thus, if we now add the question of the significance of place-value of the concept of human nature to the present question of how the concept of human nature is conceptualised, our approach towards the question of the (in)admissibility of the concept of human nature in (international-) political theory may begin to change. It may not change to the point where we deny the validity of some of the human nature criticisms but it may change our attitude towards the need of a renewed debate within international-political theory as regards the concept of human nature. It may become more sympathetic for at least two reasons.

First, because it should be obvious that if one were to test the entirety of the history of Western (international-) political theory for its respective assumptions about human nature, the result could be presented as a rather huge tableau or multi-dimensional matrix which runs along three axes—namely: first, the degree of significance or place-value of human nature; secondly, the first level of human nature conception, i.e. actuality *versus* potentiality; thirdly, its second level, i.e. the degree of determinism *versus* free-will. Such a matrix would reveal that (international-) political theorists have used assumptions about human nature in immensely different ways and styles as well as with immensely different politico-theoretical foci and aims.

Secondly, these multifaceted occurrences of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory imply, in turn, that international-political theorists, whether critical, neutral or agnostic on human nature, ought to be attentive *vis-à-vis* much human nature criticism. For some sort of one-size-fits-all human nature criticism will most likely start from wrong premises and will, consequently, most likely produce unwarranted

results. Such a matrix does not yet exist; and respective research into the most important classical and contemporary international-political theories would surely produce extremely interesting results. This lies, of course, beyond the research tasks and questions of the present thesis. Yet still, I have emphasised that we must recognise the different degrees of place-values of assumptions about human nature as well as the different first- and second-level conceptualisations of the concept of human nature, for it provides a fruitful analytical background against which the six sins of human nature can be tested. In other words, it furthers my argument of this chapter that some of the alleged sins of human nature must be taken with a pinch of salt—partly because, as this section argues, the concept of human nature proves to be a much more complex affair when applied in (international-) political theory than often allowed for by the critics.

The naturalistic fallacy or *is-ought*-fallacy is a case in point. Even though it is often part of the crusade against the concept of human nature, it is a rather weak point of criticism and, ultimately, incapable of deciding the ought-question in the negative direction. The first reason is that the proposition that an *ought* cannot have any basis whatsoever in an *is*-premise—which implies in the domain of the international-political that we must not draw any politico-theoretical *ought*-conclusions from *is*-facts about the nature of Man, regardless of how valid these *is*-claims may be epistemologically and ontologically—is by no means uncontroversial. John Searle (1969) developed the counter-concept of the ‘naturalistic fallacy fallacy [sic]’ which Searle claims to be the ‘fallacy of supposing that it is logically impossible for any set of statements of the kind usually called descriptive to entail a statement of the kind usually called evaluative’ (132, see 132-136; also Rand 1964; Anderson 1974; Kolnai 1980). But even if we continued to adhere to the *is-ought* fallacy, found it convincing, and appreciated its concerns (as this thesis does), its use as a politico-theoretical weapon against assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory would still be rather limited. For the *is-ought*-fallacy may surely be capable of hitting its target on occasions, but it cannot provide any convincing

argument against the usage of assumptions about human nature in international-political theories *per se*. This can be derived from the *causa* Hume.

On the one hand, Hume is the intellectual father of the *is-ought* fallacy. But, on the other hand, Hume is, as mentioned earlier, the spearhead of a philosophical position that has argued that the science of Man or the concept of human nature ought to be the single foundational source for all the sciences and philosophies, including (international-) political theory. Hume's view belongs to the most extreme view with regard to the significance and place-value of assumptions about human nature. There is no doubt that Hume's conception of Man and the politico-theoretical significance he ascribes to assumptions about human nature has been anathema to those (such as neo-Marxian critical theorists and postmodernists) who have wished to free (international-) political theory from the concept of human nature. As Hume (2000[1748]) writes:

Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. (64)

Perhaps equally controversial in the eyes of the human nature critics, Hume (1985[1758]) argues that Man's essentially self-interested nature must necessarily lead to the 'political maxim, that every man must be supposed a knave' (42). These are strong claims, surely not to everybody's liking.

But it does not really matter how good or bad, realistic or idealistic, naturalist or culturalist, optimist or pessimist, determinist or autonomous the assumptions about human nature of Hume may be. The fact that Hume is the father of the *is-ought* fallacy but also, at the same time, one of Western philosophy's leading spokespersons arguing for the strongest possible role for human nature in (political) philosophy demonstrates simply but

forcefully that there is no quasi-automatic philosophical or logical linkage between the Humean fallacy and the use of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory. Surely, if proponents of assumptions about human nature do commit the *is-ought* sin (and, for the sake of completeness, Hume is believed to have done so (Sturgeon 2001)), the criticism of committing the *is-ought* fallacy certainly discredit those (international-) political theories that base the *ought* on the *is*. But it can certainly not discredit the entire politico-theoretical position, which considers the usage of assumptions about human nature as being *a priori* fruitful, essential, and indispensable, *per se*. The *is-ought* fallacy argument can certainly catch those that have fallen prey to it, but it can, of course, not unreflectively be applied to all human nature-informed (international-) political theories: namely, not to those that strictly distinguish between a human nature-based *is* and an politico-philosophical *ought*. Consequently, the *is-ought*-fallacy argument seems overrated and ineffective; and it can, therefore, safely be discarded.

Still, I will continue picking on the popular *is-ought* fallacy, particularly by turning very briefly to Kant and then Kelsen. This seems entirely justified as these two illuminating figures signify and help understand another point of criticism to be levelled against those sceptical and critical of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory: namely, that these critics themselves are, like the post-classical realists, not as human nature-freed as they would have us believe. As argued above, together with Hegel but *contra* Hume and Feuerbach, Kant belongs to those who argue that the concept of human nature is a necessary, even though rather peripheral, *additivum* to (international-) political theory. Yet, in the wake of Hume, Kant is, at the same time, one of the perhaps most fervent advocates of a strict separation between the *is* and the *ought*. Thus, Kant is just another example that the *is-ought*-fallacy argument does not necessarily imply that one has to pursue a hostile position with regards to assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory.

The same applies to Hans Kelsen. Kant's radicalism regarding the *is-ought* question finds its equivalent in the neo-Kantian legal and state philosophy of Kelsen (see Kelsen 1967[1934]; 1999[1945]; Klug 1964). Founder of the Viennese school of law, Kelsen presents us with a pure science of law. His pure theory of law and state is a theory of positive law and attempts, as Kelsen (1934:477) says, to 'answer the question, What is the law? but not the question, What ought it to be?' At the same time, Kelsen's pure theory of law and state attempted to purify jurisprudence from all 'foreign elements' such as psychology, sociology, biology, and ethics. Though Kelsen (1967[1934]) acknowledges that one might be somewhat seduced to incorporate all these elements into a theory of law since all these disciplines 'deal with subject matters that are closely connected with law' (1), Kelsen, nevertheless, argues that

The Pure Theory of Law undertakes to delimit the cognition of law against these disciplines, not because it ignores or denies the connection, but because it wishes to avoid uncritical mixture of methodologically different disciplines (methodological syncretism) which obscures the essence of the science of law and obliterates the limits imposed upon it by the nature of its subject matter. (1)

All well and good. The pure theory of law's object of cognition is the norm, an *ought*-proposition. The law (and the state) is a system of norms, where norms are 'the meaning of acts of will that are directed toward the conduct of others' and that only 'human acts of will' and not the will of God or any natural law qualify as 'legal norms' (Kelsen 1986[1964]:111). But one must not overlook that that even though Kelsen's pure theory of law and state is freed from any anthropological or psychological grounding, this does not imply that Kelsen dispensed with making assumption about the nature of Man in his thought, namely, to be more precise, in his: (international-) political theory.

Kelsen must not only be read from a jurisprudential angle. This would be a significant undervaluation of Kelsen's *œuvre* and do injustice to one of the greatest democracy theorists, particularly to his political theory of pluralist democracy (see Kelsen

1955; 1957; also Dreier 1990). It is, however, exactly this political theory of democracy that is, ultimately, based upon some rather profound assumptions about the nature of Man. Though usually considered an idealist (Bull 1986), Kelsen thinks of politics largely in terms of power and the struggle for power. Like Nietzsche, Freud, and Weber as well as other political realists such as Morgenthau, Kelsen recognises that Man, his behaviour, political actions, and the (international-) political itself cannot be understood without the element of power in human relations. Like these realists, Kelsen knows that the ubiquitous struggle for power cannot be dissociated, ultimately, from the nature of Man, which he largely understands in terms of drives (Ooyen 2003:§4).

At least on two occasions in his criticisms of Marxism (Kelsen 1920, 1923) Kelsen argues that we must not neglect the fact that we are being confronted with indestructible drives that fuel Man's desire to dominate his fellows and that it is not capitalism that corrupts Man but that capitalism is merely the outgrowth of an inherently conflictual drive-structure that wishes to gratify its desires and interests. The fact that Kelsen stood under the heavy influence of Freud—both personal but also intellectual (Kelsen 1922; Jabloner 1998)—only adds to the picture of a Kelsen whose political thought is not only based upon some profound recognition of power realism but also upon an overt conception of Man which emphasises a Freudian-style irrational drive-structure. Thus, none other than Kelsen, a neo-Kantian *par excellence* who is also an adherent to the *is-ought* fallacy, did not refrain from the use of assumptions about human nature. Again, there is no automatic connection between the Humean fallacy and the use of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory.

I have, however, put some emphasis on Kelsen predominantly for a different reason: namely, because Kelsen does not only help put the naturalistic (or *is-ought*) fallacy argument in its proper perspective, but he proves to be an elegant bridge to the question of the next section. Coming back to Kelsen's assumptions about human nature, one may respond and argue that Kelsen's case is a peculiar one. One could argue that we must

carefully distinguish between Kelsen's purified legal and state philosophy, which refrains from presuming assumptions about human nature, and Kelsen's (international-) political theory, which is based upon some profound (Freudian-style) assumptions about human nature. Indeed, such an argument could not be more legitimate or correct. But I did not raise the *causa* Kelsen in order to denounce Kelsen's pure theory of law and state or to re-interpret it as being grounded upon a certain conception of human nature. Far from it; I have raised and brought Kelsen into the discussion exactly because of this apparent dualistic treatment of the concept of human nature. The very same Kelsen, whose elegant and truly consequential pure theory of law and state, which has proved to be so utterly sceptical of and fiercely unwilling to allow any form of human nature reasoning into matters legal, obviously skipped his reservations against the influx of assumptions about human nature as soon as it got to matters (international-) political. This tells us that it may somehow be impossible or unavoidable to theorise about the (international-) political without using the concept of human nature and without presupposing certain assumptions about the nature of Man.

I will now argue that this seems to be the case.

Critiquing the critics II: The hidden omnipresence of human nature

This section continues with the task of critiquing the human nature critics. I argue that, although it may not be truly impossible, it seems *virtually* impossible to theorise the international-political without any underlying conception of human nature.

If Kant, the great apostle of human autonomy from nature as well as the *a priori*, cannot but recognise the natural unsocial sociability and crookedness of Man; if Kelsen, the great apostle of the purification of law from all foreign elements, including natural law and human nature, cannot but recognise in his (international-) political theory that Man is driven by certain Freudian-style instincts which aim for the gratification of power interests; and if Kant and Kelsen, both great apostles of the strict separation of the *is* and

the *ought*, do use the concept of human nature as part of their respective (international-) political theory, then, the hypothesis that some of the fervent critics of the concept of human nature in (international-) political theory may also not have been capable of avoiding such assumptions about human nature seems not too wide of the mark. This line of enquiry will lead to the argument that neither neo-Marxian critical theorists, nor post-modernists, nor feminists are as human nature-purified as they would have us believe. This implies that these human nature critics are caught in essentially the same traps which they have set for the human nature-sinners, including realists.

I begin with neo-Marxian critical theorists. They have argued fiercely that Man is a historical creature shaped by prevailing modes of production and social circumstances. They have criticised purely naturalistic explanations, and their dogmatic ahistoricism argument has also been levelled against the assumptions about human nature of realists. Their human nature criticism provokes, however, a three-fold response. First, the assumptions about human nature of realism are not of necessity ahistorical. Here, Rousseau—the realist (Hoffmann & Fidler 1991; Doyle 1997)—is a case in point. In fact, Rousseau faulted the then-prevailing conceptions of human nature proclaimed by both realists and non-realists, but he took greatest offence at Hobbes's account of Man. As Rousseau (1997[1755]) argued: 'all of them, continually speaking of need, greed, oppression, desires, and pride transferred to the state of Nature ideas they had taken from society; They spoke of Savage Man and depicted Civil man' (Exordium:132). In complete contradistinction to Hobbes's *bellum omnium contra omnes* and Machiavelli's state of licence, Rousseau portrays the state of nature as more benign. He argues that the non-societal state of nature was, in fact, 'the most conducive to Peace and the best suited to Mankind' (part I:151) because Man's increasing self-love (*amour-propre*)—i.e. the relational sentiment that 'inspires men with all the evils they do one another' (Rousseau's Notes, n. xv)—is not an inherent characteristic of pre-societal Man. Instead, savage Man, Rousseau argues, enjoyed environmental circumstances where physical inequalities did not

matter. Roaming through the woods, the noble savage possessed neither foresight, curiosity, education, nor reason; he was completely independent, only concerned with his self-preservation, showed pity, compassion towards the suffering of his fellow savages, and had no desire to harm them. Savage man was a noble man and was by *nature* peaceful but, obviously, malleable (part. I); and based on that (historicist) conception of human nature, Rousseau's (international-) political theory carries with it one very important message succinctly put in his *Confessions* (1918[c. 1770]): 'Madmen! know that all your evils proceed from yourselves!' (bk. viii:280).

The example of Rousseau signifies and raises, then, a second and third reason why the neo-Marxian dogmatic ahistoricism argument requires some qualification. A historical materialist conception of politics and society does not imply that no assumptions about human nature are being made. On this point, Marx himself is revealing. Surely, Marxian Man differs from the classical and post-classical realist Man. But upon closer inspection, it seems unquestionable that Marxian (international-) political theory is as profoundly informed by assumptions about human nature as is realism or, as will be argued below, any other international-political theory. True, Marx (1994[1845]-a) faults the human nature essentialists, particularly Feuerbach, that they speak of 'Man' rather than 'real historical men' (113). True, Marx presents us with a methodological approach which requires we start from 'real premises', namely, of 'men, not in any fantastic isolation and fixation, but in their real, empirically perceptible process of development under certain conditions' (112). It is also true that Marx's thinking is characterised by the following general credo: 'Do not let us go back to a fictitious primordial condition...Such a primordial condition explains nothing; it merely pushes the question away into a grey nebulous distance' (Marx 1986[1844]:36-37).

But this does not save Marx from criticism. His arguments do not, and must not, belie the fact that we can identify a universal and fixed nature of Man in Marx's thought. In fact, Ian Forbes (1981) points out that Marx never claimed that 'human nature did not

exist' (25). Be that as it may; the significant point is that Marxian Man bears, of course, *natural* characteristics. These surface in Marx's writings, as Norman Geras (1983) unearthed, under the disguise of 'natural needs', 'physically indispensable means of subsistence', and 'physical needs'; and these essential or natural needs, which are constitutive elements of Marxian Man's socio-historical existence, are no fewer than:

Food, clothing, shelter, fuel, rest and sleep; hygiene, 'healthy maintenance of the body', fresh air and sunlight; intellectual requirements, social intercourse, sexual needs in so far as they are presupposed by 'relations between the sexes'; the needs of support specific to infancy, old age and incapacity, and the need for a safe and healthy working environment ('space, light, air and protection against the dangerous or the unhealthy concomitants of the production process'—otherwise the 'five senses...pay the penalty'). (83; also on Marxian Man, see Fromm 1961; Sève 1978; Sayers 1998)

Further, in this wake, we must not forget that, together with Aristotle, Marx represents 'the pole of political thought which assumes that man is naturally social' (Masters 1977:91). Thus, Marx's conception of human nature may not be Hobbesian. But being even somewhat reminiscent of Rousseau's philosophy of history where the conventional Hobbesian logic of a warlike state of nature *vis-à-vis* a peaceful state of society is essentially reversed, it can hardly be denied that Marx, too, used the concept of human nature, presumed certain assumptions about the nature of Man, and derived these assumptions from, and modelled these around, his prior ideas about the *nature* of Man.

Yet Marx is not an isolated case. It does not surprise us that neo-Marxian critical theorists, who have been so sceptical *vis-à-vis* the admissibility of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory, could also not avoid the concept of human nature. In fact, it was the amalgamation of Marx and Freud which has become one of the constitutive philosophical and methodological cornerstones of neo-Marxian critical theorists. But what other element lies behind this philosophical mixture of Marx/Freud

than the amalgamation of Marxian historical materialism and Freudian *human nature*? We know that since the early days of the Frankfurt School, Horkheimer has, as Martin Jay (1973) points out, argued 'for the urgency of a psychological supplement to Marxist theory' (100). We also know that such psychological supplement was provided by Freud's psycho-analytic theory of Man. As Horkheimer made clear in a letter to Leo Löwenthal who had requested advice on how to respond to the question about the Institute of Social Research's attitude towards Freud:

I think you should be simply positive. We really are deeply indebted to Freud and his first collaborators. His thought is one of the *Bildungsmächte* [foundation stones] [*sic*] without which our own philosophy would not be what it is. I have anew realized his grandeur during the last weeks. (quoted in Jay 1973:102)

Thus, be it Horkheimer, Adorno, Fromm, Pollack, Löwenthal, Marcuse, or second generation critical theorists such as Habermas—all of these neo-Marxian critical theorists have shown to have more or less strong intellectual links to Freudian socio-political but also to his psycho-analytic-psychological thought. Though Marcuse turned to Freud relatively late (Arato & Gebhardt 1978:388-389), he somewhat spearheads these theorists. His *Eros and Civilisation* (1972[1955]) still represents one of the most intriguing yet controversial interpretation of Freud to date.

I do not wish to imply, however, that there has been a consensus among these neo-Marxian critical theorists as to how they should read and go about Freud; or that these theorists' intellectual relationships to Freud have been unproblematic, uncontroversial, or set in stone. This would not be correct. For the historiography of the Frankfurt School has shown that sharpest debates were being fought over Freud. These disputes have helped to divide the Frankfurt School into orthodox Freudians, such as Marcuse, and revisionist Freudians, such as Fromm, and led, eventually, even to the split with Fromm (Jay 1973:86-112; Geoghegan 1981; Wiggershaus 1994:265-273; Stirk 2000:76-92). I am adding these Freud quarrels here, for they help underscore the argument that neo-Marxian critical

theorists, too, use as assumptions about human nature in their respective (international-) political theories. They cannot fully escape the natural-instinctual Man. They have not only consciously chosen Freud's theory of human nature as one of their philosophical cornerstones. They have also, by turning to Freud, taken aboard the biological Freud, i.e. a theory of Man which, ultimately, puts great emphasis on the biological-physiological make-up of Man. But if we add to this all the disputes, debates, twists and turns as regards Freud and human psychology that have taken place, we must re-consider these neo-Marxian critical theorists. It not only demonstrates just how significant and central the theme of human nature has actually been to their (international-) political theories. But it also reveals how misleading and iniquitous their criticism of the concept of human nature is. As the old proverb by George Herbert goes: 'Whose house is of glasse, must not throw stones at one another!'

The same line of criticism applies to postmodernists, feminists, and existentialists. Their human nature critical arguments—particularly their ideological mystification and objectified determinist essentialism argument, both representing the most radical attacks on the positive role of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory—must be revised significantly. They have also not succeeded where others have failed: namely, to purify (international-) political theory from the concept of human nature.

To begin with the postmodernists and existentialists, Rorty and Sartre have proved to be loud voices in the philosophical and politico-theoretical struggle of human nature critics against the concept of human nature. But upon closer analysis, both Rorty's pragmatism and Sartre's existentialism cannot escape the legitimate allegation that they presuppose certain assumptions about human nature. In Sartre's case, we can see this in his later works where he moved into a Marxist historical materialist direction and put more and more emphasis on the importance of both the physiological and psychological needs that humans have (Rose 2003; Stevenson & Haberman 2004:192-195). In Rorty's case (the same argument also applies to Sartre), we can see this embedded in his idea that we are

extraordinarily malleable and free human beings. Even if this anti-determinist stance was correct, it would not rescue him, for Man could not be malleable and free if it was not apparently assumed that nature has allowed for such malleability and freedom in the first place. Both pragmatist and existentialist thought eschew the very term 'human nature' but in both cases, the concept of human nature 'is dispensed with in name only' and 'the concept remains' (Berry 1986:122-131). As with neo-Marxian critical theorists, it is not the question whether the whole system of Rorty's pragmatism or Sartre's existentialism is convincing. The important point is that both cannot avoid making assumptions about human nature.

On that score, feminists also fail. True, as with all philosophical *Weltanschauungen*, there is not *one* feminism, but a diverse body of theoretical positions which are somewhat bound together by an overarching shared theme. Yet, it is now known that virtually all forms of contemporary feminist (international-) political theory—be it liberal feminism, traditional Marxist feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, constructivist feminism, feminist poststructuralism, or postcolonial feminism—follow a politico-theoretical pattern of thought comparable to other (international-) political theories such as realism. Feminists themselves have identified the conceptions of human nature that underlie their respective theories. They have traced how these assumptions interact with their criticism of really-existing societies and how these assumptions inform their demand for social and political change (Levitas 1981; Jaggar 1983; Cahill 1997). These assumptions about human nature are, naturally, of a broader feminist-philosophical provenance. Humans are less naturalistic than socially-constructed. They may be, but, again: the assumption of malleability represents, ultimately, not more and not less than an assumption about the nature of human beings.

In light of these counter-criticisms offered thus far, I wish to emphasise that my argumentative strategy *vis-à-vis* neo-Marxian critical theorists, postmodernists, existentialists, and feminists regarding the question of assumptions about human nature in

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international-political theory does by no means intend to make a mockery of these major and consequential strands of Western philosophy. I do presume—when it comes to the question of human nature—that any reasonable mind agrees with Rorty (1999) that ‘notions like “the homosexual” and “the Negro” and “the female” are best seen not as inevitable classifications of human beings but rather as inventions that have done more harm than good’. It seems unquestionable that Rorty is both empirically and normatively absolutely right.

It seems, however, equally unquestionable that these critics have—despite being so overtly critical of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory—not been capable of avoiding fundamental assumptions about the nature of Man. Instead, these human nature critics have let these assumptions profoundly inform their respective (international-) political theories. It is, of course, true that these theorists do prefer historicism over ahistoricism, prefer culture or nurture over nature, and prefer free-will over strict determinism. But, as was pointed out above, the conception of human nature is not fixed to purely naturalistic-determinist theories about Man. Rather, when we speak of human nature, we may refer to both historicist and cultural or environmentalist accounts of Man as well as to purely and crudely biological-physiological human nature theories. Yet even if one were to reply and demonstrate that these human nature critics did not really talk about ‘human nature’ in the crude sense, but have, instead, referred merely to some sort of theory of the ‘human being’ which emphasises the cultural over the natural; and that to accuse these critics of adhering to the concept of human nature is, therefore, merely the result of an ingenious rhetorical hocus-pocus over the meaning of a term—even this could not seriously challenge, damage, or change the argument that these critics, too, have made fundamental assumptions about the nature of Man.

I presume that no serious person who has written on the subject of the nature of Man has ever denied that environmental or cultural circumstances shape Man and his human and social relations throughout his historical existence. Thus, the crucial debate revolves

around the question of the respective degrees of Man's autonomy from his primordial nature. Some allow for greater autonomy, others for less. But we can not, and must not, deny or forget that there is, ultimately, always a *nature* to be reckoned with. As renowned experimental psychologist Pinker (2002) argues: 'culture is crucial, but culture could not exist without mental faculties that allows humans to create and learn culture to begin with' (viii-ix). In other words: it, ultimately, all comes down to nature. There simply cannot exist purely cultural or historicist or environmentalist conceptions of Man which are not, ultimately, grounded in nature. Theories and assumptions about human nature are, ultimately, always and of necessity theories and assumptions about the biological-physiological nature of Man. Needless to say, this applies to classical realist and post-classical realist as well as to neo-Marxian critical theorist, postmodern, existentialist, and feminist (or any other philosophical or politico-theoretical) assumptions about human nature; this applies regardless of the varying degrees of human malleability, perfectibility, improvability these respective theories may presume. Thus, any assumption or statement about Man and his behaviour, about his human and social existence is, ultimately, an assumption or statement about the *nature* of Man.

The implications of the argument that some of the fiercest and most outspoken critics of assumptions about human nature in (international-) political theory have also made extensive use of the concept of human nature are far-reaching. First, the argument adds to the view that it is impossible to construct (international-) political theories that can do without assumptions about human nature. Consequently, it further underscores the importance of the question whether the concept of human nature ought to be dead in realism. The same applies to the second and perhaps more immediate implication of so-called human nature-critical but human nature-infused philosophies and (international-) political theories. Human nature critics are now being confronted with the same traps and criticisms that they laid out for their allegedly human nature-obsessed opponents, i.e. for the human nature sinners to which particularly classical realists have often been added.

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The second implication is rather harsh. It is a real gift to those more sympathetic to the idea of human nature in international-political theory. It means that neo-Marxian critical theorists, postmodernists, existentialists, and also feminists will have to face the charge that their sets of criticisms are virtually worthless. The fact that these human nature critics are, so to speak, also human nature sinners puts the 'older' and more 'prominent' generation of human nature sinners—among them the classical realists—in the comfortable position of raising two straightforward arguments. First, that it seems not immediately clear why the human nature critics' allegedly human nature-purified (international-) political theories should in any significant ways be intellectually and methodologically superior, given that they, too, make use of the concept of human nature. And, secondly, that is not immediately clear why the six sins of human nature should not equally apply to these human nature critics. This does by no means imply that classical realism-inspired international-political theorists should gloss over all the sets of criticisms. They should certainly not, for the concept of human nature remains a complex concept that requires great care. But they must proactively turn the tables on the human nature critics. They have all the legitimacy to press hard the human nature critics and demand thorough explanations from them as to why they believe that they have not fallen prey to the six sins of human nature. How can the human nature critics prove that they do not commit the crime of the rationalistic fallacy? Do their assumptions about human nature not also serve politico-theoretical as well as practical-political interests and purposes? Do they not also presuppose a universalistic conception of Man, be it a Marxian *homo faber* or Rorty's flexible, protean, self-shaping animal? Why is their universalism unproblematic? How do they know that Man is of gold and not of bronze? How can they epistemologically disentangle the natural from the cultural? And so forth.

Such questions would form a long list. But these questions must be addressed. And, leaving aside the question of the burden of proof—does it lie with those pro-actively presuming assumptions about human nature or with those discontented with the

concept?—these critical questions must ideally be addressed by both parties. We are now being faced with a situation where assumptions about human nature are still being made in international-political theory and where these assumptions exert a powerful influence on various international-political theories, but where, at the same time, the concept of human nature and its nature, function, role, effects, and complexity does, by no means, receive the appropriate attention from contemporary IR theorists. Further, this situation is characterised by the fact that the concept of human nature surfaces when it seems expedient, for it is thought to provide the effective means to help execute the final argumentative stab in the back of a disliked theory: namely, by claiming that the relevant set of assumptions about human nature in question is simply wrong. Unless one is content with such hollow pseudo debates—where often one accuses the other of being either too rosy or too fatalistic when it comes to human nature—which hamper the progress and utility of international-political theories, some delicate questions as regards the concept of human nature in international-political theory must be raised and debated.

The alternative to raising the human nature question anew and to putting it back to the centre of contemporary international-political theory would be the immediate pursuance of another intellectual-scientific project, perhaps best entitled as ‘perfecting the Waltzians’. The renewed task would be to construct an international-political theory that is truly purified from any implicit or explicit assumptions about human nature. This would imply that questions regarding the concept of human nature could be neglected and that we could focus on counting missiles, tracing international cash flows, unearthing foreign-policy ideologies, etc. Surely, the present debate has shown that international-political theorists have perhaps the means of enjoying a certain autonomy from assumptions about human nature; international-political theories can perhaps ascribe different degrees of significance or place-values to the concept of human nature; and they can perhaps capitalise on the flexibility and malleability of how human nature is conceptualised, which

allows the concept of human nature to appear as unimportant as possible. Yet, neglecting or discarding the human nature question seems intellectually short-sighted.

We may never be able to get rid of the human nature question, because we may never be able to get rid of the concept of human nature. Hence, the same sort of problems, questions, and discontents will surface over and over again. This relates back to a concern raised earlier. The apparent failure of both post-classicals as well as the various human nature critics to present us with human nature-freed (international-) political theories suggests that the project of perfecting post-classical realism will most likely end in failure. Regardless of how cleverly IR theorists may approach the concept of human nature, it seems virtually impossible to theorise the international-political without making any explicit or implicit references to the nature of Man.

Conclusion

The six sins of human nature are incapable of deciding whether human nature ought to be dead—neither in the affirmative (nor in the negative). No matter whether we use these human nature criticisms in their entirety or pick out several single points of concern, the human nature question cannot be definitively answered. It may be entirely justified to decry potentially crude forms of determinist biologism in the sphere of the (international-) political or legitimate to decry the deduction of a politico-theoretical *ought* from a human nature-*is*. Surely, these arguments can be used to tear apart individual international-political theories, whether of realist or any other provenance, that have fallen prey to these sins. Yet these individual concerns, or even if the whole six-fold package of human nature concerns were legitimately applicable, do not elevate the human nature critics into a position from which they can succeed in wiping the concept of human nature off the intellectual map of contemporary international-political theory. The concept is too complex. Critics cannot lump together the entirety of (realist) international-political theories and declare the concept of human nature irrelevant.

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The six sins of the concept human nature in international-political theory are of great significance in their own right, but these criticisms cannot pose a serious threat to those in favour of assumptions about human nature in (realist) international-political theory. We must not forget the sheer omnipresence of assumptions about human nature in their own *Weltanschauungen* and theories. This leaves the current pursuit of an answer to the ought-question at the following: it seems that we are all human nature sinners.

Classical realists, particularly Morgenthau and Niebuhr but also Kennan, Carr, and Lippmann, have pro-actively and almost habitually amalgamated assumptions about human nature with international-political theorising. Post-classical realists have tried to purify (international-) political theory from the concept of human nature, but they have failed. And so have the human nature critics. We may conclude it is impossible to theorise the (international-) political without making some profound assumptions about the nature of Man. It seems, then, that we are being left with the concept of human nature until some IR theorists will have figured out how to get rid of the tutelage of human nature.

Such intellectual attitude *vis-à-vis* the concept of human nature is, however, too defensive and too passive; and the ought-question remains largely unanswered. The fact that most of the human nature criticism seems problematic does not necessarily lead to the positive argument that we must bring back to realism a particular and explicit conception of human nature. But what does?

In light of this question, the next chapter's title reveals both its analytical task but also its argument: 'The Virtues of Freudian Human Nature'.

THE VIRTUES OF FREUDIAN HUMAN NATURE

Introduction

If human nature is not dead, ought it to be dead? The ought-question entails two ideal-typical politico-theoretical options. One is purifying realism of the concept of human nature (perfecting the Waltzians). The other is pro-actively defending a central role of the concept of human nature in realism (resurrecting the classicals and human nature). The preceding chapter has marked the start of my politico-theoretical *plaidoyer* for the human nature-friendly position. I unearthed the flaws and vices of much of human nature criticism and argued that the six-fold set of human nature sins put forth by the human nature critics is not capable of providing convincing evidence and arguments that the concept of human nature must not be used in theories of the international-political.

To answer the ought-question, we require a set of positive arguments in favour of the concept of human nature in realism. This chapter provides these arguments which are intimately tied to a specific conception of human nature. It deals not so much with the question whether we need the concept of human nature in realist international-political thought (we know that we cannot avoid making assumptions about human nature), but rather with the question which particular conception of human nature is suitable for political realism and why.

I argue for the positive role of a distinctively Freudian conception of human nature in political realism. Freudian human nature helps to solve several problems associated with many classical and contemporary forms of realist international-political theory. Bringing contemporary realism back to its original roots by providing political realism with a suitable intellectual substructure or philosophical anthropology, Freud helps contemporary realists to explain and legitimise more thoroughly their distinctive conception of the world or *Weltanschauung*.

We should turn to Freud because his conception of human nature has three main virtues for political realism. First, as the next section argues, Freudian human nature helps us to demystify the defining themes, principles, and concepts of political realism. Freudian Man helps to resolve into their individual-psychological elements many of post-classical realism's anthropomorphological projections and hypostatisations. Secondly, as I argue in the subsequent section, Freud's conception of human nature helps us to understand the underlying psychological mechanics of group formation and internal and external group behaviour *vis-à-vis* other political communities. Capable of explaining the link between the nature of Man and the nature of the political community, Freud offers us a nicely developed and powerful statement of the nature and inner workings of the (international) human condition and international relations. And, thirdly, in this chapter's last section, I argue that the human nature conception of Freud serves as a useful and constant reminder for political realists never to expect too much but also not too little from Man. Freudian Man helps us to define the possibilities and limits of international relations, to manoeuvre consciously and steadfastly between reality and utopia.

Freudian human nature and the demystification of political realism

Political realism has always been a fascinating body of international-political thought as well as been controversial. Michael Williams (2005) hits the nail on its head:

To some, being a Realist represents the height of wisdom: the mark of a clear-sighted ability to understand the world the way it is, a willingness to confront the dynamics of power and interest that are held to govern world politics. To others, Realism is a mark of failure: morally obtuse and historically anachronistic, it represents a lack of political understanding and imagination that is misleading at best, pernicious and destructive at worst. (1)

To this tension between realism and its critics, we must add the internal tension between the Morgenthauian/Niebuhrrian classical realists and the Waltzian/Mearsheimerian post-classical realists. Taking the external and internal tensions together, we cannot but

recognise that contemporary realist international-political thought is, despite its continuing status as one of the most powerful *Weltanschauungen* in IR, being attacked on many fronts.

Here, Freud comes in again. It is one of the main virtues of Freud that his conception of human nature helps contemporary realism to tackle and solve several of its main analytical and normative problems. Turning to Freud helps to demystify and strengthen realism, for Freudian Man helps us to explain several principles, themes and concepts that have hitherto been either poorly explained or not explained at all. Freud's conception of Man provides realists with a suitable and powerful human nature basis or anthropological intellectual substructure. Freudian Man provides realism with a suitable and powerful reference point for what will be called a human nature background theory for the realist *Weltanschauung*.

Of all the problems and mysteries currently associated with contemporary realism, the most significant theme where Freud can help us relates to much post-classical realism's, particularly Waltzian/Mearsheimerian structural realism's, superficial treatment of what realism considers to be the primary unit of international relations (theory), the state: Specifically, the concept of Freudian Man helps us to move beyond much post-classical realism's unwillingness to open the 'black box' as well as its related inability to explain the sources of state-motivational assumptions by means of deconstructing and resolving unexplained and/or anthropomorphised social wholes such as the state into their human-psychological elements. Such a deconstructive and resolute move, which is part and parcel of Freud's own wider scientific, demystifying and unravelling Enlightenment conception of the world, is a significant and mandatory step for contemporary realists, both from a methodological and politico-theoretical viewpoint.

The main problem of post-classical realism in form of Waltzian/Mearsheimerian structural realism is its tendency to crudely simplify and/or anthropomorphise crucial concepts. As a consequence, post-classical realists' move away from the concept of Man

meant a crude simplification of the nature of international relations, which, in turns, has had negative implications for its ability to explain and predict international-political outcomes and foreign-policy behaviour. To avoid the concerns with human nature, Kaplan turned to general systems-theory and anthropomorphised the international system. Waltz was dissatisfied with what he saw as the naïve inductivist empiricism of earlier realists and turned to the concept of the international-political structure. To some, this has made Waltz a 'realist giant' (Mearsheimer 2001) and 'king of thought in IR theory' (Mearsheimer 2006[2004]:109; also Mouritzen 1997). Others argued that this new form of political realism—the neorealism of Waltz/Mearsheimer—is a largely hollow realism, an 'orrery of errors' (Ashley 1986:267) or a 'parody of science' (Lebow 2007:53). For various reasons, Waltzian neorealism has been 'shot at, embellished, misunderstood, and caricatured' (Buzan *et al.* 1993:6) and its criticism has become almost a 'cottage industry' (Sullivan 2005).

But criticism is justified. Waltzian/Mearsheimerian-style realism cannot any longer hide behind methodological arguments that the explicit presupposition of a conception of human nature would reveal a rather antiquated and almost pre-scientific understanding of what the nature of a proper international-political theory was. In fact, the contrary is the case. Freudian Man is helpful in what Markus Fischer (1996) identified as the problem of the 'missing microfoundation'. A significant part of the problem is Waltz's concept and conception of international-political structure. Constituting a major theoretical element of his structural realism, Waltz (1979) argued that

International-political systems, like economic markets, are formed by the coaction of self-regarding units. International structures are defined in terms of the primary political units of an era...Structures emerge from the coexistence of states. No state intends to participate in the formation of a structure by which it and others will be constrained. (91)

To this elevation of the concept of international-political structure towards the centre of his theoretical endeavour, Waltz adds as a mere theoretical assumption that states want to survive. Taking the concept of international-political structure and the state-survival assumption together, Waltz argues that this would suffice and allow international-political theorists to deduce, explain and predict now some general patterns of world politics. Broadly inspired by Durkheimian anthropology and economic theory (Waltz 1986:339, 1990), Waltz explicitly constructs the concept of international-political structure akin to the concept of market structure in economics and endowed it with immense explanatory power. Waltz's underlying logic is that changes within the international-political structure cause changes of international-political outcomes and foreign-policy behaviour; and changes of the international-political structure may even cause radical or unforeseen changes in international relations (and make his theory obsolete) (Waltz 2000).

Though nicely constructed, Waltz endows, however, the international-political structure with too much theoretical significance and explanatory power. The problem is that his structural realism is based largely upon the abstract concept of the international-political structure with the added help of yet another abstract concept, namely, the political unit (state) and its survival-motive. This is highly problematic, partly because it is theoretically inconsistent when compared with its role model, economic theory, which is based on a distinctive conception of human nature, mostly the *homo oeconomicus* (Sen 1977; Nitsch 1990, 1991). The legitimate objection is that Waltz created, as Fischer (1996) correctly argues, a 'theory without a microfoundation' (273). Rather than relying almost solely on the hollow concept of international-political structure and relegating the concept of the state to the black box by merely assuming that states seek survival (Waltz 1986: 331; my Waltz section above), Waltz should have abided by economic theory which explains the nature and general behavioural patterns of firms in a market by making fundamental assumptions about the nature of Man. *Mutatis mutandis*, then, Waltz should have 'generate[d] political units from assumptions about the elementary properties and

propensities of individuals' to make sure that structural realism is not 'vulnerable to critics who argue from first principles' (Fischer 1996:273). Such critics dissatisfied with structural realism's reliance on unexplained and anthropomorphised concepts and mere state-motivational assumptions are plentiful and include not only critical theorists of international relations but also, of course, classical-style realists. But as my Freudian human nature background theory will demonstrate *en détail* below, Freudian Man is a suitable and powerful reference point for providing such a microfoundation for contemporary realism.

Freud provides us, however, not only with a proper microfoundation but the concept of Freudian Man helps realism to explain and legitimise its state-centric approach to international relations. This signifies a second, related problem of Waltzian/Mearsheimerian-style realism where Freud is useful. In a truly massive essay on the development of political realism, Ashley Tellis (1996) shows how Kaplan and Waltz have shifted realism from a 'historically based and inductively justified set of explanations' towards 'a more abstract and deductively systematized body of causal hypotheses' (51). The implications of the Kaplanian/Waltzian project have been positive and negative. Positive because of increasing reflectivity *vis-à-vis* philosophy of science, theory building and its testing, but negative because Waltzian/Mearsheimerian structural realism is based upon abstract social wholes rather than upon 'acting individuals as the theoretical primates' (90). As Mearsheimer (2007) readily concedes: 'Structural realists treat states as if they were black boxes' (72). This is crudely insufficient. For any meaningful legitimation and defense of these social wholes—states—as realism's prime analytical and normative units in the study of international politics cannot and must not be based any longer, as Tellis (1996:92) rightly argues, on either mere affirmation (Gilpin 1986:304-305), mere assumption (Waltz 1986:338-339), or mere historical empiricism (Waltz 1979:93-95). Instead, realism must defend the 'privileged entitative and explanatory status' of the state which can 'only be based on a deduction generated from

the solely visible unit of all social reality, namely, the individual' (92); or, as I argue, the Freudian Man.

Such a theoretical defense is a laborious but imperative and fruitful task. It implies, to use Tellis's (1994:92) succinct words, 'standing Waltz's methodological approach on its head' (for his attempt, see Tellis 1994). But realism must provide this defense and must be based on a proper microfoundation. This will enable realists to counter those arguing from first principles and to make realism internally more coherent. Further, contemporary realism will be able to explain some of the basic but hitherto strangely neglected international phenomena. A proper, explicit conception of human nature will help realists to look inside the black box, the political community, thereby helping to explain, among other things, why

it is necessary for political authority to be organized in mutually exclusive units such as city-states, empires, and nations; why a structural condition of anarchy must exist among such units; and why they tend to pursue certain ends, ranging from mere preservation to world domination. (Fischer 1996:273-274)

A Freudian conception of Man helps us to bring contemporary realism back to its roots, to defend it against legitimate criticisms that it follows pseudo-analogies with economic theory, and to emancipate it from relying solely on pseudo-scientific rhetorical, theoretical, historical and anthropomorphological assumptions and claims.

To the methodological imperative to bring contemporary realism back to its classical-style roots, we must add the politico-theoretical. This is an important argument, for post-classical realism's move to pseudo-structural concepts such as the security dilemma have meant a creeping neglect and depreciation of the genuine roots of political realism. Freud helps realists to regain confidence in human nature-based international-political theorising. Freudian Man provides a secure and powerful conception of human nature to help contemporary realists to both re-invent and demystify the realist *Weltanschauung*. Re-inventing and demystifying political realism are closely related tasks,

but I deal with them separately. My argument is that political realism requires an explicit conception of human nature. My specific argument is that Freudian Man is a suitable candidate for realist international-political theory in the form of a human nature background theory. But such Freudian Man-based intellectual substructure, which helps demystify and explain several key concepts and themes of both realism as well as international relations, cannot be constructed without offering an explicit understanding of political realism. This, then, implies the next two related tasks. First, to explicate the nature of what I call the Freudian human nature background theory of political realism. Secondly, to explicate what I consider to be the nature of political realism.

Political realism requires an explicit conception of human nature. It requires a distinctively Freudian human nature background theory (henceforth: background theory or Freudian background theory). The central element of such a background theory is the concept of the 'Realist Man' (term taken from Tellis 1994, 1996); so to speak, the Freudian Realist Man. As it is common practice since Waltz's description of international-political theory in terms of the three images to associate the concept of human nature with the first image (on the level-of-analysis problem, see Waltz 2001[1959]:102-120; Wight 2006), it is vital to clearly distinguish between first image theories and my Freudian background theory. It is not a first image theory in the Waltzian sense. Throughout this thesis and at the risk of being accused for using masculine language, I have persistently and consciously spoken of 'Man' rather than 'individual'. This was done not because of a wish to perpetuate gendered language in IR theory, but rather to distinguish clearly between the classical-style politico-theoretical realm and the post-classical-style politico-scientific realm. 'Man' belongs to the former, the 'individual' to the latter. The Morgenthauians/Niebuhrrians have spoken of 'Man', political psychologists are concerned with 'individuals' (Cashman 1993:14-76).

The Freudian background theory is not a first image theory of diplomatic historians and political psychologists. It does not seek to establish causal laws that link the Hitlers or

Stalins as independent variables to foreign policy behaviour or international-political outcomes and does not—and does not seek to—qualify as a social-scientific first image theory, albeit Freudian Man may well be a suitable base for the development of such first image theories (a review of the scientific first image is provided by Levy 2003). Further, my Freudian background theory is not *the* background theory. I have not shied away from confessing my Freudian leanings throughout this thesis, but it goes without saying that we can imagine as many background theories as there are human nature conceptions that fit with political realism. A human nature background theory is indispensable; a *Freudian* background theory is merely one possibility, though a particularly powerful possibility. This, then, helps to explain what the nature of my Freudian background is. Based on Freudian Man, it provides the much-needed philosophical backdrop or underpinning for actual social-scientific realist theories of international politics. Somewhat akin to a Freudian-based philosophical anthropology, the Freudian background theory of realism provides realists with an intellectual and theoretical substructure that helps them to demystify, legitimise, and explain several key concepts and themes of their *Weltanschauung*.

Developing and explicating the Freudian background theory is important but not a trivial endeavour. Freudian Man surely is a suitable conception of human nature for realism but such a statement presupposes not only a sympathetic understanding of Freud but also a certain conception of the nature of political realism. For how else could Freud and realist international-political theorising be brought together and Freudian Man help to explain key tenets of political realism?

The last few decades have seen a massive proliferation of, so to speak, various realisms. We must distinguish between lots of realisms—between traditional/scientific realism (Tellis 1996), classical/modern/20th-century realism (Donnelly 1992; Forde 1992), human nature/defensive/offensive realism (Mearsheimer 2001), complex/fundamentalist/structuralist/constitutionalist realism (Doyle 1997),

structural/biological/radical/strong/hedged realism (Donnelly 2000), and evil/tragic/hybrid realism (Spirtas 1996). Further, we are offered structural realism (Buzan *et al.* 1993), evaluative realism (Spegele 1996), wilful realism (Williams 2005), reflexive realism (Steele 2007), empirical realism (Boucher 1998), contingent realism (Glaser 1996), specific and generalist realism (Rosecrance 2001), aggressive realism (Snyder 1991:11-12) as well as neoclassical realism (Schweller 2003). Another typology of realism distinguishes between hawkish/dovish realism, pessimistic/optimistic realism, second-image/third-image realism, structural/human nature realism, and amoral/moral realism (Frankel 1996a); and, following Jeffrey Taliaferro (2000-01:135), we should divide realism in offensive structural realism (Mearsheimer 2001; Gilpin 1981), defensive structural realism (Waltz 1979; Copeland 2000), offensive neoclassical realism (Zakaria 1998; Wohlforth 1993), defensive neoclassical realism (Christensen 1997; Brown *et al.* 2004).

Realism has become a diverse and pluralist enterprise. This is not *per se* problematic, perhaps even to be welcomed. As Schweller (2003) correctly points out: 'After all, cumulative knowledge is the *sine qua non* of scientific progress' (315). But the fragmentation of the contemporary realist theory landscape also poses problems and Glenn Snyder (2002) rightly asked rhetorically whether it is 'time to end the proliferation of labels and theories in the realist camp and add up what we all have in common' (173). Hence, what is the specific nature and what is the common, the common core, of political realism?

The Freudian background theory applies to the following notion of political realism. Freudian Man helps us to demystify, legitimise, and explain realist international-political theorising thus defined. First and foremost, the Freudian background theory applies to political realism conceived as a *Weltanschauung*. This follows the suggestion of Smith (1986), who has shown 'the breadth of its vision' (226). This is generally synonymous with realism conceived as 'intellectual construct' (Frankel 1996a:ix), 'philosophical

position' (Gilpin 1996:6), 'interpretative framework' (Keohane 1986a:7), 'general approach to international politics' (Lynn-Jones & Miller 1995:ix), 'school of thought' (Morgenthau 1967[1948]:3-4), and 'theoretical tradition' (Walt 1998:31), but *Weltanschauung* emphasises elegantly that political realism is perhaps best understood as a specific world outlook or general conceptualisation of the world based on distinctive beliefs, values, and assumptions that 'instil the world with significance, and facilitate the transition from thought to action' (Scruton 2007:733). Specifically, and more substantively from a politico-theoretical point of view, I believe that the realist *Weltanschauung* defines itself broadly along four interrelated basic principles.

The first—and most fundamental—basic principle concerns realism's politico-theoretical dictum that all analytical and normative dimensions of international-political life or the (international) human condition have their roots in the nature of Man. The contribution of my Freudian background theory will be that it helps to make explicit and explain the source of the political by means of a distinctive conception of human nature. This principle, though essential to political realism since its birth, is often neglected, forgotten, or wished away. It is, therefore, even more important to explain and remind realists of its nature. Realists of any provenance must not forget that political realism is a *Weltanschauung* that conceives the nature of international relations in terms of the political, the concept of power. True, the relations among nations can be approached from a variety of different ontological, methodological, and epistemological perspectives (Wright 1955; Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff 1990; Booth & Smith 1995; Smith 1996; Walt 1998; Baylis & Smith 2005; Sterling-Folker 2006b; Dunne *et al.* 2007). Chris Brown (2001) puts it nicely: International Relations is first and foremost 'the study of "international relations"' (1).

But political realism is a specific approach to international relations. Realists analyse and theorise international relations not in terms of the economic or legal or

religious or cultural, but in terms of the political and power. As Morgenthau (1967[1948]) argues:

The main signpost that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. This concept...sets politics as an autonomous sphere of action and understanding apart from other spheres, such as economics (understood in terms of interest defined as wealth), ethics, aesthetics, or religion. Without it...we could not distinguish between political and nonpolitical facts. (5)

Post-classical realists seem to agree. Mearsheimer (2007) explicitly and succinctly points out that 'Realists believe that power is the currency of international politics' (72). Hence, every realist theory of international politics is a theory of international relations, but not every IR theory is an international-political theory. Realists are usually not concerned with economical, legal, sociological, psychological, or historical approaches to international relations but with a distinctively *political* approach.

This explains why political realism bases—and cannot but base—its *Weltanschauung* about international relations on Man, the Realist Man. Morgenthau's international-political theory is not a crude *animus dominandi*-based first image theory in the Waltzian sense. Rather, it is a very 'subtle and complex' balance-of-power theory (Little 2007b:137, 2007a:chap. 4) and recognises that the distinction between a political theory and an international-political theory is merely analytical rather than substantively justified. Morgenthau (1959) shows that a 'theory of international politics is but a specific instance of a general theory of politics' and that 'What is true of the latter is, *mutatis mutandis*, also true of the former' (16). This means that any genuine political theory, whether domestic or international, concerns itself ultimately with essentially the same universal human and social phenomenon: namely, the 'striving for a share of power or for influence on the distribution of power' (Weber 1994[1919]:311). This preoccupation with power, in turn, implies that political realism presupposes a distinctive causal-analytical locus in which the drive for power or a share of power is sourced.

Chapter 5

This source is not the international-political structure, but it can only be Man. On that score, the genuine political realism—not the post-classical parody—is more than explicit and revealing. Morgenthau (1930) argues insightfully that ‘Any attempt to comprehend the nature of the Political must begin with a fundamental awareness: the nature of the Political is, as to its source, object, and purpose, bound to the nature of Man’ (1). The object and conveyor of the political is only Man, while the beehive (‘state of the bees’) is not in any meaningful sense political. Morgenthau makes clear that the political ‘acquires its force and purpose exclusively from the nature of Man’ (1). That the political and international-political roots, ultimately, in the nature of Man does, of course, not deny or neglect the intrinsically social nature of all political.

The Political is a social concept. Its nature derives from the soul of Man but is not confined to the intra-psychic sphere, as are, for instance, the Ethical or the Religious which can possibly unfold their nature within the isolated soul of Man only. True, according to its conceptual nature, the Political requires, in order to exist as Political, the reaching-out from the depths of the isolated soul and the linking-up with an object that lies outside the conveyor’s soul and that is, with conceptual necessity, the soul of another Man. (Morgenthau 1930:2)

Freudian Man will help contemporary realists to understand why the political, in form of the drive to power, has its source in the nature of Man as well as why the political ‘belongs to the sphere of the real-existing interpersonal human associations’ (4). Further, Freud will help to explain the individual and group psychological processes or underlying mechanics why the social nature of the political turns the international sphere into the realm of potentially endless struggles for power and peace.

Realism’s grounding of the international-political in the nature of Man signifies not only the second basic principle of political realism but also one of its major problems, the assumption/explanation dilemma. The second principle concerns what political realism considers to be the three building blocks of its analytical understanding of international

relations. These are, paraphrasing Waltz: Man, the state, and war. Of these three, the Realist Man is the most significant, for it provides the philosophical basis for explaining both the nature and behaviour of political communities as well as the seemingly inevitability of conflictual international relations. In line with the philosophy of methodological individualism that characterises the pre-Waltzian/Mearsheimerian, genuine political realism (Smith 1986; Tellis 1996), Morgenthau (1930) argues forcefully that

We have...no other access to the knowledge of...social facts or social structures than through Man: for the political as well as the social is experienced by Man only—it would not exist without Man, just as society itself would not exist without Man—and all actualities which we call political lead to the soul of Man as conveyor of the political. Only through the knowledge of its nature can we come to the knowledge of the nature of the political. (4)

Hence, realism requires a detailed understanding of the nature of Man, a conception of the Realist Man.

I presume that Robert Gilpin's account of human nature, which forms part of his brief but widely cited discussion about the three core assumptions or building blocks of political realism (Gilpin 1986:304-305 as the basis for the following discussion of realism's building blocks), is not wide of the mark. He argued that the striving for power and securing of security are two major motivational impulses that characterise political life; and though Man does, of course, value other objectives in life such as beauty, truth, and goodness, political realism believes that these goals lose meaning and significance unless security is achieved. This seems a fair description of human nature. But it is nonetheless problematic. For these character traits are merely assumed and not properly sourced, evidenced, and explained. This makes such human nature conception rather vulnerable. As part of a human nature background theory, Freudian Man is able to help realism to explain rather than assume the nature of the Realist Man. Much the same applies to the other two building blocks: political community and international conflicts.

Political realism emphasises the perennial forces of nationalism and group loyalties. The Realist Man is not the purely individualistic and self-concerned Man of much liberal political and social thought, but rather some sort of crowd animal that can thrive only in an political or social context. Man's loyalties present themselves in the form of concentric circles that begin with the familial nucleus and almost always end at the tribal group, city-state, or, today, the (nation-)state. The visible and problematic units that analytically and normatively characterise world affairs are not individuals but political communities. Ultimately based on Man's group loyalty, these political communities enter the international arena. They want to push through their rational and often irrational interests *vis-à-vis* other political communities and want to prevail by using all effective means available, mostly and ultimately the determined use of power and force based on interests. The relations among sovereign political communities are conflictual; anarchy is an essential feature of the international system; justice and morality beyond borders are often secondary aims. This seems, again, a fair description of international affairs from a realist standpoint. But realism faces again the assumption/explanation dilemma. How is this bleak view of international relations not merely assumed but properly explained with, and deduced from, the Realist Man?

Freud can help realism to explain and demystify its emphasis on an intimate human nature/political connection, its conception of the nature of Man, and its underlying logic of the triadic and symbiotic relationship between conflictual Man, conflictual political communities, and conflictual international affairs. Moreover, Freudian Man can help us to demystify, explain and legitimise two further basic principles of the realist *Weltanschauung*, all of which relate to the question: what are the limits of international relations? One of these basic principles concerns the role of morality. Genuine political realism is not, and never has been, indifferent to the moral problems and dimensions of international affairs. Particularly the classicals such as Morgenthau and Niebuhr have shown that political realism is not so much a technical science but rather an ethics or

almost moral philosophy of international relations (Morgenthau 1967[1948], 1945, 1946, 1984; Niebuhr 2001[1932]; also Lebow 2003; Russell 2007; Molloy 2009).

Closely related to the morality principle is another basic principle of realism, the neutrality or ideology-critical principle. Realism is in itself politically neutral and a 'broad church' (Buzan 1996:62). Morgenthau adopted the ideology-critical element of his political realism largely from Kelsen's construction of the pure theory of law and state (Morgenthau 1971). More broadly, realism shows a genuine and deep-seated scepticism of purely ideological foreign-policies and contains an ideology-critical dimension (Payne 2007; Cozette 2008; Behr & Heath 2009). Hence, even though unfortunately often done, realism must not automatically associate itself with or be associated with any kind of political ideology. This applies particularly *vis-à-vis* conservative-leaning ideologies. Realism's *Weltanschauung*, which contains a strong belief in engagement and diplomacy, makes realism and the conservative as well as neoconservative right a rather awkward pair (Gelb 2008; Muravchik & Walt 2008; Schmidt & Williams 2008). This neutrality or ideology-critical element, which makes realism broadly compatible with both the left and the right (on some sort of left or critical realism, see Scheuerman 2008b; Osborn 2009), means that the realist *Weltanschauung* is, *per se*, neither naïvely progressivist nor fatalistically pessimist. Its conception of the world and international relations is characterised by a deep commitment to prudence which is compatible with some forms of elitism and streaks of idealist optimism. Naturally, then, if everything does ultimately root in the nature of Man, realism must be able to explain how their idealist realism or optimist prudence derives from their conception of the Realist Man. Freudian Man helps realists to explain more thoroughly why their particular world outlook is justified.

'Man, state, war': Freud and the human nature of international relations

According to its first and most fundamental principle, the realist *Weltanschauung* believes that the ultimate source of all earthly evil (and good) is to be found in the nature of Man.

This includes the nature of all social facts as well as the nature of international relations. In a first step, Freud helps realism to explain and legitimise its analytical and normative primacy of the Realist Man as part of its theorising the nature, internal mechanics, and external behaviour of political communities in international relations.

In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), Freud helps realists to understand the superficiality of structural-sociological modes of thought (following citations on pp. 69-71). Freud's methodological individualism reveals itself in his often cited assertion that 'individual psychology...is at the same time social psychology [and sociology] as well'. To Freud, individual psychology is the science which concerns 'individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses'; it is concerned largely with the individual's psycho-physiological, instinctual make-up. This does, however, not mean, Freud warns us, that we can conceive of Man in pure isolation. Psycho-analytical psychology has shown that in Man's 'mental life' other individuals are 'invariably involved'. Whether those involved are parents, brothers, sisters or other objects of love, all these resulting relations are 'social phenomena' that are formed by individuals that come under the influence of, and 'become enormously important' to, each other. The important question is: how should we approach, explain, and understand these resulting social relations, social phenomena, and social facts?

The answer may be put thus: just as we cannot explain the nature and behaviour of Man without recourse to his relations to his fellow Men, we cannot explain the nature of social relations and phenomena as well as the behaviour of social facts such as political communities without recourse to Man's psycho-physiological nature. Freud criticises structuralist social or group psychology for committing a fundamental mistake: namely, 'to leave these relations [of individual Man to parents, brothers, sisters, objects of love, etc.] on one side and to isolate as the subject of inquiry the influencing of an individual by a large number of people simultaneously'. These social or group psychologists from Gustave

LeBon (1896) through Wilfred Trotter (1919) to William McDougall (1920), renowned thinkers that are still influential today (Waltz explicitly draws from LeBon's concept of the group mind (see Waltz 1979:75)), have treated Man falsely as an isolated member-individual of a race, nation, caste, profession, institution, or any other organised group. Such black-box-style thinking has led them to assume the existence of a 'special instinct that is not further reducible', i.e. some sort of 'social instinct', 'herd instinct', or 'group mind'.

Freud's group psychology helps realists to guard against the dangers of falling prey to structural modes of thought, anthropomorphological projections, and hypostatisations of political communities. Freud agreed with many of his contemporaries that internal and external group behaviour is 'basically irrational' (Birnbach 1962:27). Yet Freud did not stop at what he considered to be the almost obvious. Further, he did not accept the then-contemporary and still widespread thesis 'that in a crowd there comes into being a new and single mind differing from the minds of the individuals composing it' (Rieff 1959:231). Freud also asked what it is that holds groups together, but he did so acknowledging that the only reality there is in the social world is Man. The group does not possess an instinct, only Man does. Freudian Man is the product of Freud's methodological individualism which is so archetypical of his psycho-analytic psychological and social/political theory. As Freud (1935) argues:

I perceived ever more clearly that the events of human history, the interactions between human nature, cultural developments and the precipitates of primaeval experiences...are no more than a reflection of the dynamic conflicts between the ego, the id and the super-ego, which psychoanalysis studies in the individual—are they very same processes repeated upon a wider stage. (72)

Freud studied all social phenomena and social facts such as groups through their parts, through the human psyche. Realists should draw from Freud's approach, for his Freudian Man helps realism to explain the nature and internal and external behaviour of political

communities without relying on mere assumptions about some sort of anthropomorphised or hypostasised group instinct.

International relations cannot be explained without recourse to the nature of Man. Realism requires, therefore, a proper conception of the Realist Man. My specific claim as regards the necessity of a human nature background theory for the realist *Weltanschauung* is that Freudian Man is the ideal source of a realist human nature of international relations which helps to explain the underlying mechanics of why political communities are being formed, how political communities are internally being structured, and why relations among separate political communities are inherently problematic. Since we cannot understand Man without recourse to the inner instinctual motivations and environmental/societal pressures; and since we cannot understand the nature and behaviour of political communities without recourse to the inner and outer urges and pressures that Man is facing, the explication of the Freudian human nature of international relations is presented in terms of explaining the nature and behaviour of political communities. This approach is also justified because, even though Man forms the sole philosophical basis of all analytical and normative realist international-political theorising, the political community or group or state is the main, and most problematic, actor in international relations.

Realism believes that international-political life revolves mainly around groups or political communities. On what basis, other than the historical record (we have seen tribes, feudal principalities, states, nations-states, empires (Holsti 2004:29)), can realism explain the primacy of the political community both in the past, present, and the future of international relations? Based on Freudian Man, Freud offers realism a proper explanation of why political communities are formed and what holds them together that is far superior and more realist(ic) than the often usual reliance on *homo oeconomicus*-based models of rational self-interest. At the same time, Freud offers realism a powerful and timeless statement on the burdens of civilisation and the (international) human condition.

Chapter 5

Freudian Man is to a large degree, but not exclusively, a natural security seeker. One of the major stimuli to form groups can be explained by Man's natural inclination to avoid pain. In terms of Freud's metapsychology, the pleasure principle (or unpleasure-pleasure principle and unpleasure principle) explains and sees the mental processes and general behavioural patterns of Man from the economic viewpoint. Being as fundamental to Freudian Man as the duality of instincts (dynamic viewpoint) and motivational (un)consciousness (structural viewpoint), Freud has shown that our mental processes must be understood in terms of the fact that we relentlessly 'strive towards gaining pleasure' or, *vice versa*, that 'psychical activity draws back from any event which might arouse unpleasure' (1911:219). A defining and natural characteristic of Freudian Man is that he seeks pleasure and seeks to avoid pain. As Freud argues in *Civilization and its Discontents*:

What do they demand of life and wish to achieve in it?...They strive after happiness; they want to become happy and to remain so. This endeavour has two sides, a positive and a negative aim. It aims, on the one hand, at an absence of pain and unpleasure, and, on the other hand, at the experiencing of strong feelings of pleasure...As we see, what decides the purpose of life is simply the programme of the pleasure principle. This principle dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the start. (1930:76)

The underlying reasons why Man is a security seeker or why he seeks to avoid pain/suffering are both of physiological and social nature. They derive from essentially three directions: from 'our own body', from the 'external world', and from 'our relations to other men' (77). It is the mix of these three ever-present and imminent sources of suffering and pain that helps to explain why the human condition and international relations must not be seen romantically.

The first source of suffering is his bodily *physis*. Though his mind and body are 'doomed to decay and dissolution' (77), i.e. doomed to physiological and psychological sickness and eventually irrevocable death, Man seeks, nonetheless, as much protection as is possible. A life in pure isolation would even further reduce the chances for sustaining a

healthy body. This source of pain is a significant motivational force as the fear of physiological decay and death is a major constant in Man's mental life, although it is perhaps the most implicit stimulus of Man's inclination to form and enter groups.

By contrast, the second major source of suffering—Nature—is one of the most explicit and imminent impetuses. Throughout the ages, Man has feared Mother Nature because it 'may rage against us with overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction' (77). True, the threats, pains, and sufferings that derive from the third source, i.e. Man's relations *vis-à-vis* other Men, are perhaps the most profound and greatest in comparison. The most obvious shield of protection would, therefore, be to live in pure isolation, to live somewhat akin to Rousseau's pre-societal noble savage. But we know that this would be both unwise and virtually impossible. Even if not based on pure *a priori* reason, the unpredictable nature of Nature dictates each single Man to cooperate with his fellows. Despite all scientific, economic, and social progress through the ages, isolated Man has remained more or less powerless against Nature's darker aspects such as natural disasters, climate changes, diseases, famines, and epidemics. Only collective behaviour, concerted actions, and the use of science make it perhaps never possible but at least a possibility to 'attack nature and subjecting her to the human will' (77). From a more economic perspective but still related to the dictates of Nature, scarcity or necessity (*Ananke*) also drives Man into cooperative behaviour and division of labour. Human society is significantly motivated by 'economic' reasoning because it simply 'does not possess enough provisions to keep its members alive unless they work' (Freud 1916-17b:312). When it comes to Man's socialisation with others, Freud is very clear about its 'actual *raison d'être*', which is 'to defend us against nature' (Freud 1927:15).

Equally if not more imperative is, however, the defense and protection against the third source of pain and suffering: Man's relations to his fellow Men. The fear of decay and death inflicted by other Men represents perhaps the strongest motivational reason to form groups and enter communal relationships. In this regard, Freud's conception of

human nature, human condition, and history of civilisation seems fairly reminiscent of Hobbesian-style social contract thought—the characteristic and main underlying feature of which is the transformation of individual violence/force into communal violence/force by means of common consent. The pre-civilisational state of nature depicted by Freud comes close to Hobbes's description of the natural state in the *Leviathan* as a 'condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man' (1996[1651]: chap. Xiii, 89). It was argued by Freud (1933b) that the universal principle of human history in this regard is essentially three-fold. First, Man has always decided conflicts of interests by the use of violence. Secondly, Man has followed the rules of the 'whole animal kingdom, from which men have no business to exclude themselves'. Thirdly, the means of violence have changed during the course of history: from pure physical muscular strength over the usage of tools and weapons to the use of intellectual superiority (204).

But the underlying, essential fact of civilisation remains. Despite all change and progress in social practices, we still have to deal with the nature of Man which is such that we must not wish it away. Freud (1930) forcefully reminds us that Man is not a gentle and soft creature. Men are viciously aggressive and

their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and kill him. *Homo homini lupus*. Who, in the face of all his experience of life and history, will have the courage to dispute this assertion? (111)

Freud's view of human nature and the human condition, which is peppered with some Hobbesian rhetoric, is certainly not saintly and fits, therefore, nicely with the realist *Weltanschauung*.

Both his account of the state of nature—i.e. the state of fear of suffering and pain—and also Freud's argument of the exit of the unpleasant state of nature follows broadly the

Hobbesian logic. The intimate, physiologically and socially-caused fear of pain and suffering drives Man into cooperative forms of social organisation. Based on the fear of others, the Hobbesian notion that ‘the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest’ (Hobbes 1996[1651]: chap Xiii, 87), and reinforced by the fear of physiological decay, Nature and *Ananke*, savage Man recognised the ‘dangers and uselessness of these struggles’ which led him to enter into a mutual agreement with his fellow Men—Men entered into some ‘sort of social contract’ (Freud 1939:82). Over the course of the civilisational process, the state of nature—the realm of the purely physical muscular violence, power, and brute force of the one or few strongest—had been replaced by right, law, and the power of the many (also Freud 1930, 1933b). Despite all civilisational progress and societal virtues, the contract between Men that created political communities meant severe interferences with the nature of Freudian Man. With the underlying logic still relevant today, being a member of a political community means to us both security and protection as well as overarching societal pressure to live contrary to our instinctual dictates of seeking pleasure, instinct renunciation, and being subjected to group-wide, powerful and essentially constraining institutions.

This helps realism to understand one of the many major facets of human nature as it plays itself out in the societal sphere. True, Man is not only driven by concerns for his well-being as well as for status and a proper place among his fellows to achieve the former. Man is not only driven by security and power, respectively. Like realists, Freud knows that Men across time and space do also value and seek beauty, cleanliness and order (Freud 1930:92ff.). But these latter traits are merely secondary or civilisational goals that have arisen as some sort of by-products from the necessities of forming political communities. The preservation of his own life and the accumulation of the means to achieve such security are the two main motivational forces of Man. Since these motivational forces can, however, not be gratified in pure isolation, Man is almost automatically drawn towards forming and entering political communities. As strange as it

may seem, despite his fears of his fellows, Man needs fellow Men just like the fish does need the water.

The significance of Freudian Man for the realist *Weltanschauung* derives, however, also from the fact that Freud is not merely some sort of Viennese neo-Hobbesian. This is not only a largely undisputed qualification (Rieff 1959; Wallwork 1991; Drassinower 2003), but it is, indeed, a highly significant qualification. It helps realism to get a much more multifaceted account of human nature. This, in turn, helps realists to understand and explain the primacy of political communities in social and political reality and, further, why political communities remain most likely the primary units of international relations to which irrational loyalties, sympathies, and emotions are attached. From Freud, realists learn that Man is not merely the self-interested, security-driven, and quasi-rational creature that exhibits an enlightened, rational, self-interested and limited commitment to the Leviathan or any other form of historicised political community. Rather, Freudian Man is an instinct-driven and instinctively libidinal creature. This provides a useful human nature foundation as it helps to explain the intricacies of the inner-workings of groups that determine their often hostile outward behaviour *vis-à-vis* other political communities. In this regard, Freud (1930) makes clear that 'In consequence of this primary mutual hostility of human beings, civilized society is perpetually threatened with disintegration. The interest of work in common would not hold it together; instinctual passions are stronger than reasonable interests' (112). Thus, besides Man's fear of pain and suffering inflicted by Nature, by scarcity, and by the aggressiveness of other Men, there must be other forces at work that drive Man into political communities. This force is *Eros*.

The primacy, nature, and behaviour of political communities in international relations cannot be understood without the *Eros* instinct. *Eros* represents another human nature-based major impetus to form and enter groups. There is no doubt that Man's wish to avoid pain and suffering is an important and constant driving force behind civilisation and group formation, but it is not the strongest. For Man is, above all, a pleasure seeking

creature. Though a major motivational force, Freudian Man is not merely 'content to aim at an avoidance of unpleasure' (Freud 1930:82), but Man yearns for positive fulfilment of pleasure and happiness, too. Driven by *Eros*, Freudian Man gains most pleasure from 'the way of life which makes love the centre of everything, which looks for all satisfaction in loving and being loved' (82). Since the longing for love and being loved cannot, however, be achieved in a state of pure isolation, Man cannot but work relentlessly towards forming groups and entering some forms of group relations. The first stable and most formative group of Men is the family (99), but the underlying purpose of *Eros* is 'to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity; the unity of mankind' (122). From a political realist perspective characterised largely but not exclusively by the wider formula 'Man, state, war', to speak of a unity of mankind must seem somewhat awkward. But thus is Freud's psycho-analytical presumption. *Eros*, the instinct of life, joins the forces that result from Man's fear of pain and suffering and inclines Man to erect and enter groups and political communities. Group formation, as Freud argues, is 'an inherited deposit from the phylogenesis of the human libido' (1921:143).

The Freudian human nature traits of fear, security, aggressiveness, and power seem of hardly any dispute when raised *vis-à-vis* the realist *Weltanschauung*. Yet proposing Freud's theory of Man as a useful human nature background theory for political realism may still seem puzzling. For the Freudian presumption of a love-instinct or *Eros*, which is said to drive Man into ever larger groups, may seem entirely incompatible *vis-à-vis* a political philosophy that emphasises perennial power and security competition among Men and political communities regardless of time and space. Such viewpoint is, however, wrong. As is known and recognised by most classical realists, the fact that international affairs have, in fact, been so vicious, complicated, and often irrational cannot be derived from, or explained by, assuming a nicely-calculating *homo oeconomicus* or *homo politicus* that merely seeks to maximise utility or power, respectively. Rather, to arrive at such

unpleasant international outcomes, Man must be equipped with motivational traits that are more irrational. These traits are Man's longing for prestige, recognition, and above all: love.

In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud provides realism with an astute metaphor for Freudian Man. Men are reminiscent of porcupines. Taken from Schopenhauer's famous parable, it accurately captures the inner tensions of Man *vis-à-vis* fellow Men:

A company of porcupines crowded themselves very close together one cold winter's day so as to profit by one another's warmth and so save themselves from being frozen to death. But soon they felt one another's quills, which induced them to separate again. And now, when the need for warmth brought them nearer together again, the second evil arose once more. So that they were driven backwards and forwards from one trouble to the other, until they had discovered a mean distance at which they could most tolerably exist. (quoted in Freud 1921:101n.1; also Schopenhauer 2000[1851]:651-652)

That Freud mentioned Schopenhauer's porcupine is hardly astonishing. Freud's whole theory of Man and civilisation is built around the inherent inner and social ambivalence of Man. Regardless of whether we refer to our social relations within families, marriages, friendships, businesses, associations, large-scale institutions such as the state, or whatever other social phenomena or social facts there are, Freud showed that all these relationships contain sediments of attraction but also 'feelings of aversion and hostility' (Freud 1921:101), that they contain ambivalences within but also beyond their borders. The resulting tragedy is that social and political efforts to remedy the attraction/aversion tension prevalent particularly in political communities imply almost invariably that tensions and struggles with those outside the in-group ('them') are being reinforced and made worse.

This attraction/aversion tension, which is fundamental to Freudian Man and helps realism to explain the nature and tragedy of the human condition and international relations, has its source in Man's essentially dualistic instinct structure; and so has the universal but often subtle hostility or aggression that political communities display *vis-à-vis* others. It is exactly the virtue of Freud for realists that literally all cultural, social, and political phenomena can be explained by recourse to Man. According to Freud's early instinct theory, Man is driven both by ego-libidinal drives—the ego-instinct—as well as by object-libidinal drives, i.e. the sexual-instinct (or *Eros*). These two instincts are in a perennial and fierce battle. *Eros* provides the major impetus for Man to long for the group, but the ego-instinct, which is, first and foremost, being concerned with pure self-preservation, inclines Man to stay away or withdraw from groups. Later in life, Freud merged ego-instinct and sexual-instinct into *Eros* because both instinct are essentially libidinal instincts; the only difference between these two is that the former pertains to the self (self-love, ego-libido) and the latter to others (other-love, object-libido). Reinforced by the pleasure-principle which inclines Man to form and enter groups in order to avoid pain and suffering, the reality of social life is that Man is being dragged constantly—like the porcupine—in two almost diagonally-different directions.

Freudian Man must cope with a constant back and forth from fellow Man. This essential fact of human existence is also reinforced by another of Freud's instincts: the (in)famous *Thanatos* or death-instinct. According to the latest of Freud's instinct theories, Man's psycho-physiological structure must be seen as a perennial and inescapable conflict between *Eros*, i.e. the amalgamation of ego-libidinal drives (ego-instinct) and object-libidinal drives (sexual-instinct), and *Thanatos*. Freud (1930) argues that 'the meaning of the evolution of civilization is no longer obscure...It must present the struggle between *Eros* and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species' (122). While *Eros* aims for life and love, *Thanatos* inclines Man to hate, aggression, death. The aim of *Thanatos* is to 'provide the ego with the

satisfaction of its vital needs [self-preservation] and with control over nature' (121). Thus are the instinctual origins of Man's primordial ambivalence or attraction/aversion tension *vis-à-vis* fellow Man.

Since being rooted in the nature of Man, it is now the depressing—but perhaps realist(ic)—fact of the human condition that Man's attraction/aversion tension *vis-à-vis* fellow Men can never be completely resolved. It can only be ameliorated. But even the proper balancing of the conflicting instinctual demands by the ego may merely lead to what the realist *Weltanschauung* considers an almost universal and problematic phenomenon of international relations: namely, that Man gives much of his loyalty to his political community and that, therefore, the relations between political communities are essentially and inherently conflictual. *Eros* demands unity with fellow Men. At the same time, Man wants to satisfy his ego-instincts (or the demands of *Thanatos*). These latter demands are truly powerful, for Man is not only a primordial security-seeker but also a primordial power-seeker. Freud shows that the history of Man's psychosexual development is the history of yearning for pleasure and power. The child is 'polymorphously perverse' and virtually every object represents a source for pleasure. Yet the child is also a power-seeker, for only power provides the necessary means to annex and indulge in these respective objects of pleasure. Soon, however, the child's yearning for pleasure and power comes to an abrupt halt. This does not happen voluntarily; and it is the transformation from the pleasure principle to the reality principle which explains much of our international-political dilemmas.

The essential fact of life is that, on one hand, Man's libidinal drives seek pure gratification of pleasure. On the other hand, however, an essential fear of death, of Nature, and of other Men as well as socio-economical necessity (*Ananke*) requires from Man to cooperate with his fellows. This means that Man must adapt his instinctual demands in light of that reality. Though Freudian Man is a largely instinct and pleasure-driven creature, Man's ego representing the conscious reality principle assumes great

responsibility. It seeks to balance the instinctual demands that arise from the ego-instincts of the id, which represents the pleasure-principle, with the requirements of *Ananke* and also the demands of *Eros*. This act of balancing and managing the attraction/aversion tension comes, however, at big costs. For it requires of Man substantial instinctual renunciation. '[I]t is impossible to overlook the extent', Freud (1930) argues

to which civilization is built up upon a renunciation of instinct, how much it presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction...of powerful instincts. This 'cultural frustration' dominates the large field of social relationships between human beings...it is the cause of the hostility against which all civilizations have to struggle. (97)

This equation of civilisation and instinct renunciation is one of Freud's most important social and political philosophical tenets; and it is of utmost significance to the realist *Weltanschauung*. For it helps realists to explain why forming and entering political communities is both the solution to Man's existential dilemmas but, at the same time, the cause of the primacy of political communities in international relations as well as the cause of much international tragedy.

The primacy of political communities derives from the fact that the group is not only the enemy of Man but also his saviour. The political community is of such significance to Man because it helps him to solve some of his instinctual-based existential problems. Erecting and entering political communities provides Man with the much-needed means to gratify the societal demands of Man's *Eros* but also with the protective demands inherent in Man resulting from the potential pains and sufferings inflicted by outside human and environmental dangers. Further, political communities help Man to cope with the attraction/aversion tension. The underlying basic mechanic is explained by Freud's defense mechanism of identification which represents one of the earliest expressions of emotional ties with libidinal objects such as the father in the Oedipus Complex. The little boy who is attracted to his mother but aware that the father stands in his way 'will exhibit a special

interest in his father; he would like to grow like him and be like him, and take his place everywhere' (Freud 1921:105). Since the father is too powerful, he knows that he will never actually and fully possess the mother. What the ego, therefore, does is trying to satisfy the id's demands for the mother by another and perhaps more implicit or indirect means: namely, by means of identifying with the father, i.e. the object that is actually capable of possessing the mother, the boy's original but unreachable source of pleasure.

The same underlying logic applies to the nature of political communities and explains why the political community is not only the ameliorative solution to Man's attraction/aversion dilemma but also the underlying cause that international relations are inherently conflictual. Regardless of whether we deal with families, artificial groups such as corporations, army, the Church or political communities, the inner mechanisms of these groups are essentially similar, for all social facts—both their nature and behaviour—relate back to Man's dualistic instinct structure. Man knows that he both deplores and needs the group. To him, the group stands for security and instinctual satisfaction as well as for instinctual renunciation. On a larger scale than the family, then, the ameliorative strategy of Man's ego means to identify with some fellow Men and erect a group. It is characterised by the fact that a 'number of individuals...have put one and the same object in the place of their ego ideal [super-ego] and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego' (Freud 1921:116). In the social and political context, Men form political communities led by some leader. The group and its leader help Man to compensate for the loss of instinctual satisfaction and power that the group took necessarily away. For now-impotent Man feels, after all, not that much restricted. Being now a member of a political community, being one among 'us', Man retains some profound feelings of omnipotence because he partakes psychologically in the power of the object of the group members' shared libido. In political communities, the actual or perceived libidinal object is usually the leader or statesman. Identifying with the leader of a nation, Man feels as he has a share in the power of the nation. Man feels powerful. Hence, despite actually transferring power

to a higher level, he thinks, feels, and enjoys that entering political community does not compromise his own instinctual demands for pleasure, power, and security.

Such is the virtue of political communities for the instinctual life of Man as a means to ameliorate the attraction/aversion tension. But we must not neglect or forget the other side of the coin. The strategy of Man's ego to achieve a reduction of the attraction/aversion tension through the conscious use of the defense mechanism of identification can only succeed where there are present other outlets for all the repressed instincts. The political community cannot allow too much satisfaction of the darker and hostile instincts of Man. This would mean to risk its own dissolution and destruction as libidinal ties among its members would be jettisoned or cut off. Hence, the necessary outlet is to be found in the realm between political communities. The individual and collective yearning for power, pleasure, and security as well as profound feelings of hostility and aversion are displaced onto the international sphere. This is hardly a matter of much choice because Man's instincts must find their gratification. The *Eros* instinct remains within the in-group, but the love-harming instincts are directed to the out-group, to foreign nations, to 'them'. As Freud (1930) argues succinctly: 'It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness' (114). Therefore, international relations have always been and will most likely remain essentially conflictual.

It is one of the many virtues of Freud that he provides the realist *Weltanschauung* with a well-developed conception of human nature that does explain and not merely assume that Man is a problematic and conflictual creature, that political communities are problematic and conflictual entities, and that international relations are inherently problematic and conflictual. Freud helps to explain via deductive logic why Man is the root cause of the tragedy of the international human condition. Being the root element of a human nature background theory for realism, Freudian Man provides a powerful account of the underlying human nature of international relations.

Further, Freudian human nature is useful for realism as it helps, as the next section argues, to explain and shed light on the questions of potential progress and immanent limits of international relations. Freudian Man helps realists to balance prudently their concerns for, and beliefs in, the reality and the utopia of international relations.

Freudian human nature and the balancing of reality and utopia

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the concept of human nature is and ought to be the sole philosophical basis when theorising international relations. This applies particularly to political realism, a *Weltanschauung* that should turn to Freudian Man in its inevitable search for a proper explanatory human nature foundation. My argument ascribes to any conception of human nature a great deal of theoretical power as it functions as the analytical and normative backdrop against which international relations are approached. This means, in turn, that the respective conception of human nature in question must be a powerful conception. Freudian Man is a powerful conception as it is based on a powerful theory of human nature.

Freudian Man helps realism to explain the underlying logic of the international human condition and its limits. Even more so, because Freud provides us with a strong human nature foundation in the sense that it is widely recognised and accepted. It goes without saying that this does not mean that realists ought to indulge in Freud worshipping and adopt all of Freud's concepts and theories without some degree of natural scepticism. Nor must realists turn merely to Freud when it comes to analytical and normative matters of international relations. Freud is, despite his great range and depths of interest in matters psychological and cultural, not a genuine scholar and thinker of international relations. Yet Freud's conception of human nature is certainly comprehensive and elegant, and realists can use it, following Mearsheimer's (2001:11) metaphor of his offensive realist theory of great power politics, as a 'powerful flashlight in a dark room': Freud cannot illuminate every nook and cranny realists deal with, but what Freudian Man can provide is being an

excellent tool that helps navigating through the darkness of analytical and normative questions and dilemmas of international relations.

Freud is, of course, not uncontroversial, but we must not forget that Freudian Man is not the Man of pure speculation and religious or other mythical belief systems. Rather, Freudian Man is, so to speak, a scientific Man, for Freud's theory of human nature stems from scientific investigation based on medical-therapeutic work with clinical patients. This makes the defense of Freud fairly easy and realists can broadly capitalise on the scientific origins of Freudian Man. Explaining the underlying logic and tragedy of international relations as well as legitimising a particular world outlook against the backdrop of Freudian Man, realism draws from a conception of human nature that has come to be the most consequential and defining theory of Man of our age. It is not that the rise of neuroscience made Freud obsolete. As Nobel laureate neuroscientist Eric Kandel (1999) reminded us only recently, quoting him again: 'psychoanalysis still represents the most coherent and intellectually satisfying view of the mind' (505).

We can defend Freud, however, also from the opposite angle. Realists who do not wish to rely on the scientific credentials of Freud for proving the latter's strengths can turn to the other Freud, the philosopher Freud. If it was accepted that Freud's theory of human nature is not a scientific but rather a philosophical account of Man, then, realists could use the relevant philosophical argument to defend Freud. Rorty (1998a) makes a valid point when he argues that it is 'a mistake to ask Freud for scientific evidence...Plato didn't have evidence for dividing up the soul in three parts, Aristotle didn't have evidence for making all sorts of distinctions which we still take as perfectly commonsensible' (3). This does not imply that Freud is uncontroversial or that a distinctively Freudian human nature background theory is immune against criticism, or that he provides us with the Truth regarding the nature and behaviour of Man and political communities in international relations. It means, however, that realism does not need to rely any longer on the assumptions about human nature of a Thucydides, St. Augustine, Hobbes, or Machiavelli,

antiquated as these theories of Man are, making them easy targets for effective criticism. Instead, realism can furnish itself with a much stronger human nature foundation when it comes to the question of its own theoretical explanatory substructure—namely: Freudian Man.

A further virtue of Freud is that, based on such human nature foundation, Freudian Man helps realists to explain and legitimise two of realism's major normative claims. These are realism's elitism and rejection of moral universalism. The first concerns what has been called realism's neutrality principle, the second its morality principle; but both concern, ultimately, realism's ability to steer prudently between the two ideal-typical poles of international-political thought that set the boundaries regarding the prospects and limits of international relations and inform the wider or specific programme of actual political action: realism/idealism, reality/utopia, or optimism/pessimism.

Despite much and insightful efforts to reinterpret some key realist thinkers and to make them appear in a new and more non-realist light, it remains a defining feature of the realist *Weltanschauung* that it shows profound scepticism regarding the prospects of a major transformation of international relations. The realist logic is rather straightforward: a problematic Man leads to problematic political communities leads to problematic international affairs. Since it is important to understand realism's normative claims and their source, I briefly recapitulate the Freudian human nature of international relations. Man is a tension-ridden and ambivalent creature. The pleasure principle dictates to seek pleasure and to avoid pain. The gratification of instinctual demands is his *raison d'être*. Being polymorphously perverse, Man's satisfaction of the ego-instincts (self-preservation or ego-libido) and *Eros* (object-libido) reinforces the yearning for power and security, both individually and collectively. Fear of nature and *Eros* drive Man into groups and political communities, but the ego-instincts work relentlessly against group formation because the group demands instinct renunciation. Metaphored as a Schopenhauerian porcupine, Man is constantly and instinctually driven towards the community but also away from it.

Chapter 5

This attraction/aversion tension is an essential element of the human condition that can perhaps never be resolved entirely. It can be ameliorated, though, by the ego's employment of a particular defense mechanism. By identifying with other members of the community and its leader, Man is capable of repressing his ego-instincts within the community and gives his full loyalty (love) to it. But the problem is that the individually repressed ego-instincts, which are now being concentrated in the hands of the community or its leader(s), still exist. These collectivised instincts continue to aim for gratification. Yet since these hostile ego-instincts would threaten the libidinal ties within the community, these unsatisfied instincts are turned to the out-groups and cause, therefore, conflictual relations among separate political communities. According to the realist *Weltanschauung*, the international human condition is, ultimately, rooted in the Realist Man. More specifically, it has its source in the nature of Man whose instinctual structure is such that he is inherently being faced with profound tensions that can never be fully resolved but only ameliorated: pleasure/pain, ego-instincts/sexual-instincts, *Eros/Thanatos*, id/super-ego, pleasure principle/reality principle, or attraction/aversion. Men struggle on three levels: on the intimate, on the societal, and on the international. Seen in this light, realists have rightly agreed with Gilpin (1986:304) when he pointed to Hobbes's (in)famous dictum: 'it's a jungle out there'.

In light of the Freudian conceptions of human nature, political communities, and international 'jungle', the natural and important question for realists has always been how effective and proper foreign-policy based on the concept of the national interest can be formulated and conducted. Aware of the irrationalities of the masses, realists have answered this question in a somewhat elitist manner. The masses must be kept away as far as possible from the levers of foreign-policy and international relations. The classicals were rather explicit on this point. Kennan confessed to have an 'extreme dislike of all masses' (1993:82). Lippmann's elitism led him to argue that a naïve democratic-idealist belief in the 'omnipotent, sovereign citizen' is as unrealistic and unattainable as for 'a

fat man to try to be a ballet dancer' (1993[1925]:29). Upholding the standard distinction between the enlightened intellectual and the emotive man in the street, Carr also pointed to the 'limited capacity of the elephant for aviation' (1936:854). And in the same vein, Niebuhr criticised that 'collective man always tends to be morally complacent, self-righteous' (2008[1952]:169; also 2001[1932]). This form of democratic elitism—the thorough 'elitist bias' (Ferguson & Mansbach 2008)—is characteristic of both classical and post-classical realists (Rosenthal 1991:chap. 4; Ish-Shalom 2006).

Morgenthau was particularly afraid of the man in the street and the influx of public opinion on the conduct of foreign-policy making. His belief in, and reliance on, the statesman and diplomacy as the effective means to maintain peace and order and avoid war and chaos can be directly traced back to his sceptical view of the masses. In *Politics among Nations*, Morgenthau (1967[1948]) makes the concern with public opinion a primary concern. He argues that is one of the nine essential rules of diplomacy that 'The government is the leader of public opinion, not its slave' (547). That he presents this dictum as the ninth and final rule is no coincidence because Morgenthau is aware that the rational, good, and responsible conduct of foreign-policy required is hardly achievable if statesmen 'do not keep this principle constantly in mind' (547). The reality of political life is that the masses are particularly wary of making sober judgments and compromises and that statesmen often give in to popular pressures. It is, therefore, the task of the statesman 'to strike a prudent balance' between the demands of good foreign-policy and the demands of the masses. As Morgenthau writes succinctly: 'In one word, he must lead' (548). The statesman must lead and become the *dompteur* of the masses, for the man in the street follows his own and often primitive patterns of thought. Distinguishing archetypically between ordinary man and enlightened man, Morgenthau argues in classic elitist fashion:

Chapter 5

The popular mind, unaware of the fine distinctions of the statesman's thinking, reasons more often than not in the simple moralistic and legalistic terms of absolute good and absolute evil. The statesman must take the long view, proceeding slowly and by detours, paying with small losses for great advantage; he must be able to temporize, to compromise, to bide his time. The popular mind wants quick results; it will sacrifice tomorrow's real benefit for today's apparent advantage. (142)

When it comes to the role of the masses and public opinion in the realm of foreign-policy and international relations, realism can certainly not hide its elitist attitude.

But realism must not even hide the elitist foreign-policy dimension of its *Weltanschauung*, for there are many good reasons as to why realists are cautious and prudent *vis-à-vis* the masses. Freudian Man helps realism to explain and legitimise such caution and prudence. It is one of Freud's virtues to have provided a more subtle understanding of political communities. The formation of groups cannot be solely explained by the motive of self-interest. Rather, we must not neglect the forces of libidinal ties that hold masses together. The positive side of *Eros* is that it may eventually lead us to the world-state as it seeks to bind ever more Men together, but the negative and more problematic side is one of imminent and permanent practical-political concern. For where the libidinal ties of the *Eros* are stronger than the motives of self-interest, then, we do not deal with the rational but politics must always reckon that it takes place firmly in the realm of individual and collective irrationality. Freud did not hold Man in high regard; as he (in)famously said: 'I have found little that is "good" about human beings on the whole. In my experience most of them are trash' (quoted in Roazen 1969:245).

Freud's somewhat depreciatory view of Man and general elitism is mostly explained by what he saw is the nature of the masses. Man longs for the group; and this helps to tame some of his instincts which makes political communities possible, but it does not lift Man from his instinctual structure and make him a more enlightened, less instinctual-driven and less irrational creature. The id does not disappear, but it merely submerges in the group.

These psychodynamics lead the 'horde' to socially and politically unhealthy forms of collective regression which, then, more often than not, lead, in turn, to mere 'mass madness' (Ulman & Abse 1983:650). Freud's group psychology serves as a useful reminder for realists that 'when individuals come together in a group all their inhibitions fall away and all the cruel, brutal and destructive instincts, which lie dormant in individuals as relics of a primitive epoch, are stirred up to find free gratification' (Freud 1921:70). Man undergoes psychological transformations by becoming a member of the mass but we must not forget that 'The apparently new characteristics which he then displays are in fact the manifestations of [the] unconscious, in which all that is evil in the human mind is contained as a predisposition' (101). Based on a distinct conception of human nature, Freud helps explain the more unpleasant features of collective Man which are 'irrationality, intolerance, illogical type of thinking, and...deterioration in moral standards and behaviour' (Jones 1957:362). To this, we may add what realism also fears, namely, collective feelings of moral superiority *vis-à-vis* 'them'.

Hence, the important theoretical and practical-political question is what should be done in light of such collectively regressed Men and such groups which remind Freud of the 'revival of the primal horde' (1921:123). The realist *Weltanschauung*, aware of the dark sides of mass dynamics, believes in the enlightened, rational diplomat and statesman. Directly stemming from his individual and group psychological insights, Freud also sees good leadership as the main means to keep the masses at bay. In plain language, Freud divides society into essentially two parts: the leaders and the led (Freud 1933b:213). The following passage from *The Future of an Illusion*, worth quoting at full length, sums up nicely why Freud relies heavily on the concept of strong leadership:

It is just as impossible to do without control of the mass by a minority as it is to dispense with coercion in the work of civilization. For masses are lazy and unintelligent; they have no love for instinctual renunciation, and they are not to be convinced by argument of its inevitability; and the individuals composing them support one another in giving free rein to their indiscipline. It is only through the influence of individuals who can set an example and whom masses recognize as their leaders that they can be induced to perform the work and undergo the renunciations on which the existence of civilization depends. All is well if these leaders are persons who possess superior insight into the necessities of life and who have risen to the height of mastering their instinctual wishes. But there is a danger that in order not to lose their influence they may give way to the mass more than it gives way to them, and it therefore seems necessary that they shall be independent of the mass by having means to power at their disposal. (Freud 1927:7-8)

Freud did not concern himself too much with the psychology of leaders, save perhaps in the psychological study of President Wilson whom he deplored for his 'insincerity, unreliability and tendency to deny the truth' (Freud & Bullitt 1967:xii). But since collective Man is in an almost hypnotic state of mind and regresses into the Man of the primal horde, Freud sees the leader of the mass in terms of being its primal father or its *hypnotiseur*. As Freud argues:

He, at the very beginning of the history of mankind, was the "superman" whom Nietzsche only expected from the future. Even today the members of a group stand in need of the illusion that they are equally and justly loved by their leader; but the leader himself need love no one else, he may be of a masterful nature, absolutely narcissistic, self-confident and independent. (Freud 1921:123)

In fact, deeply aware of the individual and collective irrationalities of Man in the street, Freud's faith in the 'horde leader' went as far as to make him argue that throughout human history 'breakthroughs to a higher and more rational cultural system had been initiated by

outstanding individuals who devoted themselves to a higher purpose and managed to mesmerize the masses to do the same' (Brunner 2001[1995]:168). On occasions, Freud appears to be too elitist, but being broadly consistent with the realist *Weltanschauung*, Freud helps realists to explain and legitimise why the democratisation of policy-making as regards international relations—after all a 'matter of life and death'(Keohane 1986a:1)—must be taken with a pinch of salt. Public opinion is often, as realism fears, too irrational, emotive, shortsighted, manipulable, moralistic, and too uncompromising.

These features of collective Man reinforce, then, another of political realism's major fears; put more positively: reinforce one of their major normative claims. This is their fear of moral universalism and tough stance against moral crusading. Though it has often been painted as such, the realist *Weltanschauung* is not amoral *vis-à-vis* international-political action and has always wrestled with the complex issue of moving international politics and foreign-policy beyond the dictates of crudely all-justifying expediency. As Morgenthau (1967[1948]) once lamented: 'I am still being accused of indifference to the moral problem in spite of abundance evidence...to the contrary' (x). Much has been written on the subject of the ethics of political realism showing that various realists have used various philosophical and ethical-theoretical bases in their respective international-political thought (Russell 1990; Rosenthal 1991; Wrightson 1996; Murray 1997; Lebow 2003; Russell 2007; Bell 2008; Molloy 2009). But it can safely be presumed that the ethics of political realism cannot be detached from the concept of the national interest. Morgenthau (1951) puts the political as well as moral imperative of the national interest nicely when he writes:

Above all, remember always that it is not only a political necessity but also a moral duty for a nation to follow in its dealing with other nations but one guiding star, one standard for thought, one rule for action: *the national interest*. (242)

Further, the realist *Weltanschauung* can be placed securely in the larger context of a Weberian-style ethics of responsibility (Smith 1986; Williams 2005).

The same applies to one of the most interesting theoretical, moral, and practical-political timeless challenges of international relations, namely, the question of moral universalism and moral crusading. Morgenthau (1967[1948]:323) reminds us that mid-20th-century world politics was haunted by a powerful moral force which he calls ‘nationalistic universalism’. 19th-century nationalism wanted, Morgenthau writes, ‘one nation in one state and nothing else’; nationalistic universalism, however, has claimed ‘for one nation and one state the right to impose its own valuations and standards of action upon all the other nations’ (323). Not much has changed since. Save perhaps in Europe—if at all—tribes, states, and nations remain people’s moral reference points; and IR scholars and foreign-policy makers are no less confronted with the political, economical, social, and moral/ethical dilemmas of small-state nationalism and great-power nationalistic universalism than they were. Hence, in light of recent Western democracy-promoting crusading in Iraq (Schmidt & Williams 2008), the ‘return of history’ (Kagan 2008), premature proclamations of the ‘end of history’ (Fukuyama 2002[1992]) and of *foedus pacificum*-style politico-philosophical reflections about ‘laws of peoples’ (Rawls 1999), David Clinton (2007a) has rightly argued that the continual warning of Morgenthau—and other realists from the classical to post-classical as Mearsheimer (2005)—not ‘to take the interests of our own group and make them into the moral law of the universe was never more timely’ (252).

Freudian Man helps realism to explain and legitimise the sort of international moral relativism of the realist *Weltanschauung*. It is not the case that Freudian Man, because driven by certain instincts, is *per se* an immoral Man. To the contrary, Freudian Man does act morally and ‘psycho-analysis has never said a word in favour of unfettering instincts that would injure our community’ (Freud 1923b:219). But the much more important question is what the source of Man’s morality is and why this source is essentially incommensurate with the idea of a universal moral order, whether religious or secular, to which states or policy-makers could adhere. For Freud, morality is essentially synonymous

with the super-ego and authority; moral development is essentially a part of the child's psychosexual development. Men's sense of right/wrong and moral *ought* derives merely from what they had been taught by their parents as well as other early influences including wider sets of cultural socialisations. By means of identification—because the child fears the loss of love inflicted when instinctual urges are not renounced—their 'injunctions and prohibitions', Freud (1923a) argues, become and 'remain powerful in the ego ideal and continue, in form of conscience, to exercise moral censorship' (37).

The implications of Freud's moral psychology are important in more than one respect. First, in a narrower sense, it guards us against religious-driven moral universalism. Based on his moral psychology, taken together with his critical psycho-analysis of religion (Freud 1927), Freud tells us that the presumption of 'a moral world order', as upheld by religious belief systems, is merely a 'pious illusion' (taken from Roazen 1969:126). Arguing entirely antithetical to theological and natural law accounts of individual and collective morality and in line with his general approach to socio-cultural and political phenomena, Freud argues that we need to resolve into its psychological components—and look beyond—the superficialities of the prevailing moral orders. This will lift the veil off much of prevailing and supposedly God-given morality and help us to understand the 'purely human origin of all the regulations and precepts of civilization' (1927:42). Further, putting the belief in God aside implied that 'these commandments and laws would lose their rigidity and unchangeableness' and that 'People could understand that they are made, not so much to rule them as...to serve their interests' (42). The same applies to secular universal moral orders such as Kant's deontological *a priori* ethics. This means, then, in a wider sense, that the super-egos of Men are to a large extent contingent upon time and space. Further, it means that these moral codes do merely reflect the sanctioned moral obligations that have been put in place because they are vital to ensure individual and collective survival and cohabitation; this includes *Ananke*. And, lastly, we may consider Man as a creature that is not so much immoral as it is driven by an ego which, informed by

the contingent demands of the super-ego, seeks 'obtaining rewards and avoiding external punishments and internal guilt' (Wallwork 1991:222; on Freud's moral psychology, see also Deigh 1996). The crux is, then, that even though Freudian Man, particular the collective Freudian Man of the masses, is susceptible to moral and nationalistic universalism, the moral development and moral psychology of Freudian Man does not justify a moral-universalist political ethics. Although Freud's conception of human nature is universalist, Freudian Man is particularist-historicist—so are 'Freudian' political communities. Realists are right to focus on respective conceptions of the national interest and maintain a strong cultural and international-moral relativist stance.

Despite the virtues of Freudian Man for realism to help explain the more realist(ic) and tragic dimension of international relations as it unfolds across time and space, Freud's theory of human nature helps realists to stay clear from falling prey to irrationalism and fatalism. If we take optimism to mean that 'reality is good, society basically harmonious' (Waltz 2001[1959]:19), then, realism is not an optimistic *Weltanschauung*. The belief in teleological and automatic progress is regarded as misleading and dangerous; so are the genuine peace projects envisaged by such consequential thinkers as Abbé de Saint-Pierre (2002[1713]), Kant (1991[1795]), and Rawls (1999). Realists' scepticism derives from their underlying assumptions about human nature. Realism is 'particularly sharp-eyed in seeing the self-interest and hypocrisy that lie behind all human (and therefore all collective) actions. Pride and self interest have not been cleansed from human behavior' (Clinton 2007a:252). Or, as Morgenthau (1967[1948]) argued much earlier, realism 'believes that the world, imperfect as it is from the rational point of view, is the result from forces inherent in human nature' (3). Realism knows that the international-political cannot be severed from the concept of human nature—i.e. from some constants or absolutes—and that it therefore must not lose sight of the inherent limitations of international relations.

But nor must realism lose sight of the utopia of international relations or, perhaps better, the reasonably possible. Realism is, *per definitionem*, neither power-apologetic nor

fatalist. A major overhaul of the basic patterns of international relations may never materialise, but piecemeal improvement is possible. As Max Weber (1994[1919]) famously argued:

Politics means slow, strong drilling through hard boards, with a combination of passion and a sense of judgement. It is of course entirely correct, and a fact confirmed by all historical experience, that what is possible would never have been achieved if, in this world, people had not repeatedly reached for the impossible. (369).

The realist perspective on the nature, implications, and limits of politics is in line with Freud's perspective on the human condition. Freud, too, is neither optimist nor fatalist, his scepticism hardly contested. Yet Freud does not indulge in pessimistic irrationalism and fatalism. This may seem surprising given Freud's instinctual theory of Man; he often emphasised 'the strict determination of mental events' (1923c:236) or 'the illusion of Free Will' (1919:236). Still, Freud is not the high-priest of the irrational and/or unconscious determinism (an excellent discussion along these lines is provided by Wallwork 1991:49-100). Freud is a strict psychic determinist, but this does not imply a belief in uniform chains of mental causation and mental and behavioural outcomes. It merely means that all mental activities and events are *caused*; they are caused by nature or Man's physiology. Even the ego—the authority of reason or the reality principle—is part of Man's nature or physiology.

Yet this does not mean that the ego has no degree of autonomy from the instinctual demands of the id. This is, of course, highly significant, both on an individual and collective level. The medical efforts of psycho-analytical psychotherapy aim at healing mental and emotional illnesses and diseases. Its methods and techniques have liberating effects and the main goal is to strengthen the ego *vis-à-vis* the unconscious id and semi-unconscious super-ego demands. The *raison d'être* of psycho-analysis is straightforward: 'Where id was, there ego shall be' (Freud 1933a:80). This signifies Freud's belief in the

potentiality of human change. As Michael Nicholson (1981) puts it: the ‘basic feature of the psychoanalytic viewpoint [is] that people are changeable’ (113). The ego is not the mere slave of the id but ought to be its master; a healthy and mature ego does potentially possess enough power to keep the id at bay. The means of the ego are manifold: ‘by gaining control over the demands of the instincts, by deciding whether they are to be allowed satisfaction, by postponing that satisfaction to times and circumstances favourable in the external world or by suppressing their excitations entirely’ (Freud 1940:146).

Yet there are limits. Freud’s ego autonomy must not be interpreted in a Kantian light. The ego cannot free itself entirely from instincts, emotions, and desires. It cannot follow the pure *a priori* reasonable. As Freud (1917) argues:

You [the ego] over-estimated your strength when you thought you could treat your sexual [and ego] instincts as you liked and could utterly ignore their intentions. The result is that they have rebelled and have taken their own obscure paths to escape this suppression...How they have achieved this, and the paths which they have taken, have not come to your knowledge. All you have learned is the *outcome* of their work—the symptom which you experience as suffering. Thus you do not recognize it as a derivative of your own rejected instincts and do not know that it is a substitutive satisfaction of them. (142)

Surely, the ego or ego autonomy has its limits *vis-à-vis* the instincts. Freudian Man is, therefore, perhaps best conceived as some sort of ‘middle way between the British empiricist-utilitarian view that freedom is the absence of external coercion in the realization of desires and the contrasting Kantian conception of freedom as absolute moral autonomy’ (Wallwork 1991:88-89).

This middle-position between a Kantian and an utilitarian self is, however, a virtue. Freudian Man helps prevent realism from committing two fallacies—naivety and fatalism. As regards naivety, realist must not forget that Man bears within his instinctual structure the possibility of change and progress. At the same time, realists must not forget that both

change and progress are neither easily nor promptly achievable. In a passage in 'Why War?', worth quoting at length, Freud (1933b) argues that human nature

makes it easy for us to find a formula for *indirect* methods of combating war. ...the most obvious plan will be to bring *Eros*...into play...Anything that encourages the growth of emotional ties between men must operate against war. These ties may be of two kinds. In the first place they may be relations resembling those towards a loved object...The second kind of emotional tie is by means of identification. Whatever leads men to share important interests produces this community of feeling, these identifications...

The ideal condition of things would of course be a community of men who had subordinated their instinctual life to the dictatorship of reason. Nothing else could unite men so completely and so tenaciously, even if there were not emotional ties between them. But in all probability that is a Utopian expectation. No doubt the other indirect methods of preventing war are more practicable, though they promise no rapid success. An unpleasant picture comes to one's mind of mills that grind so slowly that people may starve before they get their flour. (212-213)

Freud is surely not an overly optimistic and naïve thinker.

But nor is he a fatalist. In fact, Freud's virtue for realism is the ambivalence. Freudian Man is a universal psycho-physiological instinct creature that is also to some certain extent malleable, changeable, and improvable. Freud's conception of human nature allows for change and progress, even though these may come only iteratively and extremely slowly. Freudian Man is, therefore, incommensurable with a—merely allegedly—realist international-political theory that represents or risks becoming a '*historicism of stasis*...that freezes the political institutions of the current world order' (Ashley 1986:289). Realism is abundantly aware of human imperfection, but it does not lose sight of the 'hope that reason may one day gain greater control over passions' (Gilpin 1986:321). Freudian Man helps realists explain and understand that their hope is both a

realist as well as a realistic hope and that they must work unceasingly towards its realisation. As Freud (1927) describes Man's eternal struggle between reason and instincts:

We may insist as often as we like that man's intellect is powerless in comparison with his instinctual life, and we may be right in this. Nevertheless, there is something peculiar about this weakness. The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest till it has gained a hearing. (53)

Without compromising the emphasis on human imperfection, scepticism, and fear of naivety, Freudian Man helps realism to ensure that their *Weltanschauung* will always oscillate healthily between the ideal-typical poles of reality and utopia. Realism is realistic about the inherent intricacies of the international human condition, but it is not pessimistic fatalist. In Weberian language, then, Freudian Man is both the reason why international politics necessitates the slow and strong drilling through hard boards but it is also the reason why it is worth drilling with a combination of both passion and pragmatic judgement.

Conclusion

I argued that Freudian Man provides realism with a powerful human nature foundation. This argument *pro* Freudian Man was the last element of a chain of arguments that sought to answer this thesis's second main research question whether human nature ought to be dead in realism. The preceding chapter pursued a largely negative analytical-argumentative strategy. The present chapter changed the perspective, though not the argument. Identifying positive arguments *vis-à-vis* the concept of human nature in realism, I argued that human nature ought not to be dead. More specifically, Freudian human nature ought not to be dead. Freudian Man provides realism with a strong and much-needed intellectual explanatory substructure that helps explain, illuminate, and legitimise in greater depth the realist *Weltanschauung*.

Freudian Man helps to bring back realism to its classical variant, the genuine realism. Contemporary realists must recognise the fact that the intimate relationship between the concept of human nature and the political does apply, *mutatis mutandis*, also *vis-à-vis* the international-political. The Waltzians/Mearsheimerians may correctly discriminate analytically politics within borders from politics beyond borders. This, however, must not imply that the nature and origins of the political pertaining to the international domain is different to the political pertaining to the domestic sphere. An international-*political* theory remains—after all—a *political* theory, a political theory of international relations. We cannot meaningfully sever the international-political from human nature. Structural realists are right that recurrent international-political outcomes and repetitive foreign-policy behaviours cannot sufficiently be explained by recourse to the personalities and childhoods of statesmen. But they are wrong when they imply that the root cause why political communities yearn for power is the international system's anarchical structure and not the nature of Man.

Freud helps us to understand that the international anarchical structure comprising sovereign political communities is not so much the root cause for the international-political. Rather, it is merely the reflection of a universalised human nature that ultimately causes not only the formation and spatial separation of political communities in friends/enemies or us/them but also these communities' yearning for power in the first place. This does not necessarily imply a rejection or devaluation of structural realism. Its parsimony and locus of independent variables surely has its virtues. The profound problem begins, however, when post-classicals argue that the international-political and the longing for power are caused by the international structure and that we must distinguish between a structural realism and some sort of human nature or biological realism. Analytical-empiricist realists that place the independent variable at the level of the individual can surely coexist side-by-side with structuralists emphasising the structural level. Yet the realist *Weltanschauung*—the philosophical home of these various analytical-empiricist

scientific theories—cannot be divided into a structural and a human nature camp. Realism is *per se* ‘human nature realism’. It is based upon the concept of human nature. Every *realist* international-political theory is ‘human nature realism’ (a tautology, indeed) or it is nothing.

Structural realism cannot avoid the concept of human nature. Not only because it was shown how infused it is with hidden assumptions about human nature but also because it requires a proper human nature microfoundation comparable to that of the *homo oeconomicus* in economic theory. Being part of a philosophy of international politics with a strong methodological individualist heritage that has always argued from first principles, structural realism cannot continue to rely on unreflective assumptions of social wholes such as the state. Instead, it must provide itself with a proper human nature foundation from which it can deduce the necessity of the existence of political communities as well as their conflictual relations *vis-à-vis* others. This forces structural realism to engage with the intricacies of the concept of human nature, a theme it thought dead long ago.

Based on the central concept of the Realist Man, the realist *Weltanschauung* requires a politico-theoretical human nature-based background theory. This background theory is not a scientific Waltzian first image theory of diplomatic historians or political psychologists. Rather, it provides actual scientific realist international-political theories with a philosophical human-nature backdrop, i.e. with a theoretical explanatory substructure that helps realism to explain rather than merely assume its major analytical and normative claims. Based on Freudian Man, the Freudian background theory helps demystifying the realist *Weltanschauung* and resolve into their individual-psychological elements what otherwise appear to be either mere assumptions or mere anthropomorphological projections and hypostatisations.

Freudian Man helps realism not only to explain why the international human condition is rooted in Man’s tension-ridden instinctual structure. Further, Freud’s theory of human nature illuminates by means of deductive reasoning why a conflictual nature of

Man must of necessity lead to a conflictual nature of political communities which, in turn, must lead of necessity to inherently conflictual international relations. The scepticism of realism *vis-à-vis* the prospects for large-scale changes and transformations of international relations as well as Kantian-style peace plans is, therefore, to be derived directly from the nature and behaviour of Freudian Man. The same applies to realism's elitism in foreign-policy, fear of the masses and public opinion as well as realism's international moral-relativist stance.

Freudian Man provides realism with a powerful human nature foundation also regarding the questions of naïvety, fatalism, and the balancing of utopia and reality in international relations. Freud's theory of Man helps realists not to forget that the nature of Man must not lead to pessimistic fatalism. We must not be naïve optimists, but piecemeal improvement of Man and collective Man is possible. The main signpost remains—and ought to remain—the concept of the national interest, but our social and political dealings *vis-à-vis* others must not be based on the crude assumptions that all Men are purely self-interested, destructive and entirely irrational creatures that enjoy being slaves of their instincts. Based on Freudian Man, there is neither room for naïvety nor for crude human nature and power apologetism. It is, then, another virtue that although Freud's theory of human nature is not uncontroversial or immune against attacks, it is Freud who has profoundly defined our age and how we think of ourselves and others. Realism can capitalise on this powerful source. Freudian Man provides a powerful intellectual explanatory substructure for the realist *Weltanschauung* and is insofar a strong human nature foundation as it takes much more effort to attack realism as regards its human nature foundation when these are Freudian compared to when realism continues to rely on Thucydidean, Augustinian, Hobbesian, Machiavellian, or—in the worst case—on entirely unidentifiable and unreflective assumptions about human nature.

The virtues of Freudian Man for realism are plentiful and thus are the virtues of the concept of human nature. The implications for realism as well as for IR are plentiful, too.

THE 'RESURRECTION' OF THE REALIST MAN, FREUD, AND HUMAN NATURE

In a recent Morgenthau *Festschrift*, John Herz recalled how Morgenthau began his invited presentation on the given theme 'Political Realism Revisited' at the ISA 1980 annual conference by saying wittily: 'Revisited? I never left it' (quoted in Herz 2005:25). True, Morgenthau never left realism—and, accordingly, he never left the concept of human nature or his profound concern with Man and the human condition. It is no mere coincidence that the essay on the derivation of the political from the nature of Man (Morgenthau 1930) is one of his earliest and the essay on the roots of narcissism (Morgenthau & Person 1978) one of his last works. Still, when Morgenthau died, genuine realism died, the genuine and profound concern with Man in realist international-political theory died.

This does, however, not imply that the concept of human nature has really died. As I argued in this thesis, the concept of human nature may have been considered dead, but it is still haunting us (is-question); and it is haunting us, indeed, in many different ways (ought-question). Thus, to paraphrase Morgenthau: 'Human Nature Revisited?—We never left it!' But what does it mean that we never left one of international-political theory's most ancient but most controversial concepts? It means that we must deal with what I see as the overarching implication of my thesis's arguments: namely, the 'resurrection' of the concept of human nature (resurrection in inverted commas, for it was never really dead). In the following three concluding sections, I will discuss what I see such 'resurrection' requires realism and wider IR to embark on. First, that we bring the Realist Man 'back' into realism. Secondly, that we bring Freud 'back' into realism. And, last not least, that we bring 'back' both Freud and the concept of human nature into wider contemporary IR.

Bringing the Realist Man 'back' in

The two main research questions of this thesis—Is human nature dead? Ought human nature to be dead?—took their starting point in what I described in the introduction as the strange death of human nature in realism. There, I presented some preliminary evidence that suggested that post-Morgenthauian/Niebuhrian realists may not be as purified of assumptions about human nature as they would have themselves and others believe. I also hypothesised that the assumptions about human nature of several leading 20th-century classical realists may require substantial reinterpretation along Freudian lines. In light of these two hypotheses, I presented my own readings of classical realist and post-classical realist-international-political theory, respectively, and came to the conclusion that the concept of human nature is not dead in contemporary realist international-political theorising. This conclusion was important in its own right.

But the is-question naturally led the thesis to consider another question. For if the concept of human nature is not dead, what ought to be done—ought the concept of human nature be dead? On the basis of a critique of the human nature critics and of presenting pro-active arguments in favour of human nature, the conclusion was that the concept of human nature ought not to be dead in contemporary realism. Contemporary realism must bring 'back' human nature. The Realist Man must be recognised and appreciated as a core concern and core concept by realists. This is not so much a question of individual choice but of profound necessity: the necessity to protect and perfect the realist *Weltanschauung*.

The post-classical realist intellectual project has failed. There are several reasons for its failure (see Keohane 1986c; Dunne *et al.* 2007). This thesis has identified one—the hypocritical approach *vis-à-vis* the Realist Man. My criticism concerns the blatant neglect of the concept of the Realist Man taken together with the continuing but hidden relevance of the concept of human nature. We must recognise that several leading post-classical realists are, despite their claims to the contrary, heavily infused with assumptions about human nature. They share not only the conviction that the concept of human nature is some

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sort of antiquated relict of the pre-Herzian/Waltzian era. They also share what has been referred to as their 'human nature lie'—attempting to substitute the concept of international-political structure for the concept of human nature but still falling back on certain hidden assumptions about the nature of Man.

But the fact that this human nature lie by the post-classical realists has been uncovered cannot fully satisfy Morgenthauian/Niebuhran-inspired realists. These post-classicals and their assumptions about human nature can be defended against some largely unwarranted points of criticism, but one must still be alarmed in view of these post-classicals' degree of unreflectiveness when it comes to matters of human nature. Their unreflectiveness seems striking in comparison to the way how the classical have approached the concept of the Realist Man and used assumptions about the nature of Man in their respective international-political theories. Thus, contemporary realists, both of classical and post-classical provenance, are being faced with a rather unpleasant intellectual situation. With the concept of human nature still being a largely discredited idea, not only the classical remain easy prey, but the post-classical realists, too, are now in the focus of attention by those realism critics seeking to identify and criticise hidden assumptions about human nature as well as realism as a whole.

The problem is that contemporary realism will most likely continue facing such a hostile situation, unless both classical and post-classical realists are doing their respective intellectual and argumentative share to re-discover and re-consider the concept of human nature as one of the most foundational concerns and concepts of realism. They must help to bring 'back' the Realist Man. This will help protect and perfect realism.

Perhaps the heaviest burden must be shouldered by post-classicals. This seems fair, for they were the ones who set out to raise realism to an allegedly more sophisticated level. The Waltzs and Mearsheimers have kept repeating over and over again that mere 'interpretations' and 'explanations' of international relations are 'plentiful' but that 'theories are scarce' (Waltz 1998:386; also Mearsheimer 2001:18). Such post-classical

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mantra has always been directed against the classicals implying that the latter were merely offering us some sort of bedtime reading regarding international politics—but honestly: who would we recommend if one was looking for an explanation of the genuine nature of international politics? Morgenthau or Waltz; Carr or Kaplan; Niebuhr or Mearsheimer? Part of the quarrel between the classicals and the post-classicals had been the concept of the Realist Man.

The failure to get rid of assumptions about human nature sets the first intellectual homework for post-classical realism. They must accept that they cannot any longer wish away the concept of human nature. Too many post-classical realist international-political theories have been caught having smuggled in some fundamental assumptions about human nature without which these theories would internally collapse. The task for post-classicals is, therefore, to provide their respective theories with a proper human nature foundation that is comparable to how economic theory is based upon a human nature microfoundation. Post-classical realists cannot any longer rely on unexplained and unreflective assumptions upon which their respective international-political theories are currently being built. Their assumptions about individual-psychological and social facts may even be correct, but they must explicate these assumptions in more detail, explain where these assumptions come from, and present us with the proper argumentative deduction as to how such assumptions as state-survival relate, ultimately, back to the nature of Man. These post-classical realists must pro-actively bring 'back' in the concept of the Realist Man and make it the genuine philosophical foundation upon which their respective international-political theories are being constructed. Otherwise, post-classical realism will not only remain defenceless *vis-à-vis* those who are (rightly) discontent with their human nature lie and methodological flaws, but will also remain a largely deficient body of realist international-political theory—one that may have nothing to do with genuine realism.

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By contrast, the Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style realists have never had any reservations about the concept of human nature. Instead, they have perfectly understood what I see ought now to be their main task: namely, to pro-actively argue that realism is inherently intertwined with the concept of the Realist Man. Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style realists must preach and defend what is not controversial among historians of Western (international-) political theory: that virtually every political theory has been founded upon a certain conception of human nature. Across the millennia, (international-) political theorists have used Man as the starting points for their forays into the world of freedom and oppression, human and social (in)justice, violence, war, and peace.

The human nature-sceptics must be reminded that the intimate relationship between the political and human nature applies, *mutatis mutandis*, also *vis-à-vis* the international-political. There may be all sorts of good reasons to analytically distinguish carefully between a theory concerned with the domestic and a theory concerned with the international (until someone presents us with a comprehensive general theory of politics that comprises both spheres). But this must not lead to the separation of the concept of human nature from the international-political. Post-classical realists must be reminded that the nature and origins of the political pertaining to the domestic are by no means different to the nature and origins of the political pertaining to the international. Be it voting cards or tanks, the underlying object of interest is not only the same—the political (and power)—but it has its roots in the same source: the Realist Man. Since post-classical realists seem to have forgotten about the triadic intimate relationship between realism, the political, and the (international-) political, it is naturally the task of the Morgenthauians/Niebuhr-style realists to argue for and defend the Realist Man as the ‘new’ age-old core concept or philosophical basis of realism.

Bringing Freud 'back' into political realism

Based on my readings of Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, Carr, and Niebuhr, I argued that their respective conceptions of Man are to varying degrees of explicitness and depths of Freudian provenance. With respect to the post-classical realists, I argued that with the exceptions of Herz and Kaplan, who also seem to have been influenced by Freudian psychology, the hidden assumptions about human nature of Waltz, Mearsheimer, and the neoclassicals are too unreflective to allow a conclusion regarding their intellectual sources. My interpretation of these realists along Freudian lines is open for debate. That is legitimate and to be valued, for how else would there be scientific progress? The fear is, however, that a healthy debate about respective assumptions about human nature may not materialise, unless contemporary realists begin to engage more pro-actively with the concept of human nature and scrutinise more thoroughly the nature and origins of their respective assumptions about human nature.

The imperative task for contemporary realists to engage more consciously with their own overt and covert assumptions about human nature is related to the *causa* Freud. In this thesis, I have been concerned with the concept of human nature *vis-à-vis* 20th-century classical as well as contemporary post-classical realism with special reference to one of the truly consequential figures of Western thought. I wondered about the seemingly strange fact that Freud has been such a ubiquitous figure of influence and of theoretical concern in virtually all subjects across the sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities on the one hand, but that Freud seems to be a terribly neglected and under-studied figure in IR. I hypothesised that Freud might be helpful both in terms of the *is*-question and the *ought*-question. I argued that several classical and post-classicals have been influenced by Freudian psychology, but I also argued that when it comes to the question of a sophisticated theory of human nature for realism, Freud's theory of Man seems to offer a most appropriate starting point. I argued that the philosophy of realism requires a politico-

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theoretical human nature-based background theory and I presented a distinctively Freudian background theory.

Based on this thesis's special reference to Freud, the conclusion must not be, however, to close the *causa* Freud/realism but rather to engage in greater depth with Freud's psychology and social/political philosophy. Realism scholars should explore further Freud's potential impact and expand the analytical focus. We must ask whether other 20th-century classical realists as well as contemporary post-classicals have also been influenced by Freudian assumptions about human nature. I examined Morgenthau, Kennan, Lippmann, Carr, Niebuhr as well as Herz, Kaplan, Waltz, Mearsheimer, and the neoclassicals. We must also examine the nature and origins of the assumptions about human nature of the likes of Aron, Berlin, Butterfield, Schmitt, Schwarzenberger, Wight, Weber as well as of the Gilpins, Copelands, Wohlforths, or Zakarias. If these assumptions are not Freudian, we will know what has taken the place of Freud and can then enquire into the reasons why Freud fell out of the picture. Given Freud's impact, it is, however, likely that we find more Freudian realists or some Freudian traces. In this regard, we can build on varying sources that have already shown the nature of the intellectual relationships between Freud and Berlin (Esman 2000), Freud and Schmitt (Carty 1995), Freud and Weber (McIntosh 1970; Strong 1987). Upon further exploration, we may then wonder whether 20th-century realism may perhaps be seen as the politico-philosophical mirror image or implication of the Freudian Man and the Freudian revolution. This brings me to second theme of further research that should be pursued.

I argued for a distinctively Freudian background theory for the realist *Weltanschauung*. Freud's theory of Man offers a most appropriate starting point for such a background theory for realism—mostly because Freudian Man is a powerful and strong human nature foundation. It helps realists to explain, demystify and also legitimise the core principles and concepts of their *Weltanschauung*. Rather than relying on mere assumptions or principles on how the nature and behaviour of Man reinforces the hostile behaviour of

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political communities *vis-à-vis* their counterparts on the world stage, Freudian Man helps explain the underlying individual and social psychological mechanics and dynamics that make the relations among nations perhaps an endless struggle for power and peace. From Freudian Man, realists can deduce their healthy scepticism of a too open conduct of foreign-policy, their fear of moral crusading, and their notion of international moral relativism. At the same time, Freudian Man helps prevent realists falling prey to the ills of pessimistic fatalism and helps retain the belief in both rational foreign-policy conduct as well as in piecemeal progress in international relations.

Freud is certainly not immune to attacks and what I presented here as the Freudian background theory is certainly not the 'full' Freud. As I mentioned before, Freud's *œuvre* fills 24 volumes (Freud 1953-74; 18 vols. in the original German, Freud 1940-52) and this thesis was not so much a thesis on Freud than it was a thesis on realism and the human nature question, albeit with a special reference to Freud. This thesis has sought to help raise the low profile of Freud in realism and contemporary IR. It has hopefully achieved such a task by arguing how important Freud has been among realists (is-question) and how useful Freud still is for realism (ought-question).

This can be, however, merely a first step of a hopefully much more thorough engagement with Freud. Political theorists have long recognised the virtues as well as the vices of Freud (see the book-length studies by Rieff 1959; Johnston 1965; Roazen 1969; Abramson 1984; Anderson 1993; Drassinower 2003). But political theorists of international relations and IR theorists have been unduly neglecting Freud's psychology and social/political philosophy. This does injustice to one of our most important thinkers. Further, scholars of international relations are cutting themselves off from the insights of one of the most profound psychological traditions that could, otherwise, help them illuminate, explain and understand in more depth several of the most important issues and timeless themes of international relations. Even if we do not agree with Freud's own social and (international-) political thought and do not agree with his own conclusions that he

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derived from his own psychology, we should study Freudian Man thoroughly. It provides a powerful foundation upon which we can address—from a classical realist-style perspective—the question of the nature and origins of political communities, the prevalence and dangers of nationalism, and the ubiquity of aggression, violence and war in international relations. Further, Freudian Man can help us to explain the psychological nature and origins of power, legitimacy, ethics, human agency and human progress in international relations.

Particularly for Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style realists, who wish to continue to approach the timeless dilemmas of international relations with recourse to the dilemmas of Man and the human condition because of their awareness that the relations among nations are but a subtle yet brutal reflection of the nature of Man, Freud provides an insightful account of the intimate triadic relationship between Man, the human condition, and the international struggle for power and peace. As part of an analytical and explanatory endeavour, Freud can help these realists to strengthen their case that international politics is, ultimately, merely the politics of the nature of Man writ large. And, as part of the normative and ethical endeavour, Freud can help these realists to strengthen their case as to what is possible in international politics and what is not. Such a lengthy study and treatment of Freud's theory of Man and civilisation *vis-à-vis* the realist *Weltanschauung* that is devoted solely to these questions and themes of the international-political remains to be embarked on.

Bringing Freud and human nature 'back' into International Relations

Though this thesis established an intellectual connection between Freud and realism; though I argued for the virtues of such Freud/realism connection, I concede without hesitation that a thinker of the calibre of Freud and his theory of Man cannot solely be hijacked by, or straitjacketed into, realist international-political thought. Whether we sympathise with Freud's psychology and social/political philosophy or are critical of it;

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whether we see Freud—to use Peter Gay’s (1988:xvi) words—as a ‘genius, founder, master, a giant among the makers of the modern mind’ or as an ‘autocrat, plagiarist, fabulist, the most consummate of charlatans’ (this thesis has placed itself broadly in the former camp), there can be hardly any doubt that Freud has been one of the prime shapers of our age when it comes to the nature of Man and his human condition. Several leading realists have recognised Freud’s achievements.

But liberals, Marxists, and conservatives have also valued and used Freud’s ontogenetic and phylogenetic insights. We know that Freud’s psycho-analytical psychology has influenced diverse thinkers such as Kelsen, Lasswell, Keynes, and Parsons, to name only a few. We know that we cannot really understand modern social sciences and their (meta-)theories without Freud. We also know that both Frankfurt School-inspired critical theory as well as post-modern theories have been drawing from Freudian psycho-analysis. It seems, therefore, vital to widen the analytical focus and explore in greater depth the potential influence of Freud in other theoretical traditions of the study of international relations since we can reasonably expect that quite a number of thinkers and scholars of international relations have built—consciously or unconsciously, implicitly or explicitly—their respective analytical research and normative thinking upon Freudian foundations.

Such an endeavour will surely face obstacles. First and foremost because not many of those who have drawn from Freudian ideas have admitted openly the Freudian portions of their analytical or normative research (a recent exception is Gammon 2008). The real problem will be that, since Freud’s theory of Man is such a pervasive part of our ‘collective assumptions’ about the social and political world (Elliott 1998a:2; Wallerstein 1999:9; Merlino *et al.* 2008), Freudian Man lurks secretly and quietly in the back of much international-political theorising without Freud ever been explicitly mentioned. It is, however, exactly these often hidden Freudian themes, traces or residues that we must attempt to excavate. This will help us to determine in more depth and from various

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different scientific-theoretical, ontological, methodological, and epistemological perspectives the continuing relevance and politico-theoretical implications of Freudian Man for the study of international relations.

The wider and more in-depth theoretical concern with Freud can, however, merely represent the specific instance of a much wider and more in-depth theoretical concern with the concept and conceptions of human nature among contemporary thinkers and scholars of international relations. In this thesis, I argued that the concept of human nature is not and ought not to be dead in contemporary realism of international relations. Yet this does not imply that the question of the role, origins, and nature of assumptions about human nature must merely become again the core concern of a handful of Morgenthauian/Niebuhr-style theorists of international relations. Rather, the concept of human nature must become again one of the core concerns of literally every single scholar of international relations. We must deal with it properly regardless of to what particular *Weltanschauung* and level of analysis we belong.

The main task of theorists of international relations remains to describe, to explain, and to predict foreign-policy behaviour and international-political outcomes. Further, we must not forget to examine and theorise the normative-ethical dimension of the relations among nations that include their relentless search for power, security, prosperity, prestige, and peace. But we must also not forget what lies underneath our analytical and particularly normative international-political theorising—namely, particular conceptions of human nature. The classical realists did know that Man is the ultimate source of all evil and tragedy in the social and political world but that Man is also the only bearer of all potential progress in international relations setting the prospects and limits. The post-classical realists have thought that they can theorise the international-political without any recourse to assumptions about human nature. They have failed badly, for they have done exactly just that. Likewise, those critical of the concept of human nature in (international-) political theory, those who argued vigorously against the analytical and moral vicissitudes

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of assumptions about human nature, these *Weltanschauungen* have dispensed with the term 'human nature' only and continue assuming certain characteristics, behavioural traits, and perfectibility ideas.

The task is, therefore, that not only realists but contemporary IR theorists ask anew the analytical (is) and normative (ought) human nature questions. We can doubt that the concept of human nature is really as dead and irrelevant as we came to believe. And even if human nature-based theorising was completely eradicated from the study of international relations, the death of the concept of human nature would not enlighten but deprive our understanding of international politics. The 'resurrection' of the Realist Man in contemporary realism, the failures and weaknesses of human nature criticism, and the seeming omnipresence of assumptions about human nature throughout the history of much of Western (international-) political thought lead us to believe that however vague and hidden they may be, particular ideas of the nature, behaviour, and perfectibility of Man inform every facet of our theorising of the international-political. These assumptions about human nature must be discussed and their relative significance to the respective claims assessed.

This theoretical concern with the concept of human nature concerns the whole theoretical spectrum of the study of international relations. It concerns realists. It concerns those thinkers and scholars that work broadly in the allegedly human nature-critical *Weltanschauungen* such as Marxian, postmodern, and feminist IR theory. Last but not least, the re-engagement with assumptions about human nature is equally pressing with respect to the liberal, English school, and constructivist tradition. Criticism has been levelled at the realists regarding their alleged human nature vices (Freyberg-Inan 2004); human nature discussions, particularly regarding sociobiology, have cropped up (Goldstein 1987; Bell 2006); human nature-based theological and Augustinian-inspired approaches to international relations are still attractive (Loriaux 1992; Stevenson 2007; Elshtain 2008a, 2008b), as are theories of international relations based on ancient Greek theories of human

motives (Lebow 2008); the broader patterns of assumptions about human nature of realist, liberal, and constructivist IR theory have been briefly examined (Freyberg-Inan 2004:162-168); and a recent enquiry into the return of human nature in IR theory has been made (Freyberg-Inan 2006; Hall 2006; Mercer 2006; Sterling-Folker 2006a). This body of literature is to be commended. But despite the fact that assumptions about human nature are still being made, and despite all evidence that the question of the admissibility of assumptions about human nature ought still be an important matter of concern in the study of international relations, the concept of human nature is still being neglected widely among contemporary theorists and scholars of international relations.

This neglect is, however, a fundamental mistake. It has helped to make appear contemporary analytical and normative theorising of international relations as exactly what the post-Morgenthauians/Niebuhrrians wanted to avoid when they embarked on cleansing international-political theories from assumptions about human nature: namely, some sort of myth. *Contra* the post-classical realists and the human nature critics, the problem is not that we make assumptions about human nature and that these assumptions function as the philosophical backdrop against which we ultimately attune, adjust and judge our theorising of foreign-policy behaviour and international-political outcomes. We must use the concept of human nature—however depressing or utopian it may be conceptualised—as the ultimate reference point and ultimate test against which particularly normative international-political theories are to be judged. The concept of human nature helps us to guard against building castles in the air. At the same time, only a full and frank dealing with the concept of human nature helps us to guard against turning the nature of Man into an outright ‘cliché’ which

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can grease the wheels of a failing argument, polish the buttons of ignorance, and evoke pride or shame at the will of the orator. Why is there war? 'Human nature.' Why were you unfaithful to your wife? 'Human nature.' Why do we do anything? 'Human nature'. There is no easier explanation, no easier excuse. (Budziszewski 1986:18)

The concept of human nature is powerful, perhaps even dangerously powerful and has often been dangerously misused.

But, still, the problem is not that we make assumptions about human nature. We cannot avoid making them. We know how leading, guiding and determining assumptions about human nature are when theorising the international-political. The real problem is that we often do not know, do not recognise, are not fully aware, or are kept in the dark of what nature and origins these assumptions about human nature inbuilt in our international-political theories are. We are not able to assess the soundness of international-political conclusions put forth by theorists and scholars of international relations, for we do not get to the bottom of all the sources on which these have been based.

This problem can, however, be easily rectified. We must explore in greater depth and in wider breadth the underlying assumptions about human nature of contemporary IR theories. Most likely, and despite all nuances, it would bring about a familiar ideal-typical picture. International-political optimism derives from human nature optimism; international-political pessimism derives from human nature pessimism. But, be that as it may. We must lay the cards on the table when it comes to the question of the nature and origins of assumptions about human nature and how they inform our international-political theorising.

Regardless of whether we work with psycho-analytical, theological, sociobiological, neuroscientific or any other set of assumptions about human nature, we must present, explain, and justify them. Surely, the subject matter of our field, the issues it is being dealt with, and the potential implications of IR research has helped turning theorising about the

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international-political into an often emotional and ideology-driven endeavour. But we must not forget about the nature and culture of science (*Wissenschaft*). Science is the domain, as Kelsen (1957[1952]) once put it aptly, of truth and sincerity. We, therefore, literally owe each other, regardless of how fierce the theoretical differences may be, to be truthful and sincere regarding all our assumptions and beliefs—assumptions and beliefs about human nature—that we pour into our theories of international relations. We also owe it, however, to ourselves. We must bear in mind the dictum that ‘The student of politics must, consciously or unconsciously, form a conception of human nature, and [that] the less conscious he is of his conception the more likely is he to be dominated by it’ (Wallas 1948[1908]:38). The scientific dictate of truth and sincerity requires from us to seek the highest possible degree of reflectiveness *vis-à-vis* ourselves and *vis-à-vis* the nature and origins of the facts, data, and methodologies we use. Butterfield (1949) warned succinctly that ‘the blindest of all the blind are those who are unable to examine their own presuppositions, and blithely imagine therefore that they do not possess any’ (46). We must not be blind to our assumptions regarding the perhaps most perplexing question of humankind—the nature of Man. Instead, we must face and make explicit our assumptions about human nature, regardless of how pessimist-fatalist or utopian our individual or collective pictures of Man may be.

The contemporary study of international relations should remedy its *agnosia* and peculiar renunciation of the concept of human nature. We should appreciate its inevitability and its virtues and display a greater interest in, and reflectiveness for, the role, nature, and origins of assumptions about human nature.

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