

H-Diplo | ISSF

Roundtable, Volume IX, No. 10 (2017)



A production of H-Diplo with the journals *Security Studies*, *International Security*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, and the International Studies Association's Security Studies Section (ISSS).

issforum.org

H-Diplo/ISSF Editors: **Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse**

H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable and Web/Production Editor: **George Fujii**

Commissioned by **Thomas Maddux**

Felix Rösch. *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent in Morgenthau's Worldview*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-137-40109-0 (hardcover, \$105.00).

Published on **9 January 2017**

Shortlink: tiny.cc/ISSF-Roundtable-9-10

Permalink: <http://issforum.org/roundtables/9-10-morgenthau>

PDF URL: <http://issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-Roundtable-9-10.pdf>

Contents

Introduction by Richard New Lebow, King's College, London.....	2
Review by Richard Beardsworth, University of Aberystwyth	5
Review by Seán Molloy, University of Kent	10
Author's Response by Felix Rösch, Coventry University	15

Introduction by Richard New Lebow, King's College, London

In the last fifteen years classical realism has not only become an accepted paradigm but has largely supplanted neorealism. Like all paradigms, it seeks legitimacy by claiming canonical thinkers as its founders. Ancient Greek historian Thucydides and German émigré Hans Morgenthau have been critical in this regard. Post-Cold War interest in Morgenthau transcends his relationship to classical realism. It was motivated first and foremost in my opinion by the desire to produce a sophisticated alternative to neorealism that recognized the importance of agency and context; the cultural as well as material basis of power; the advantages to actors and international society alike, of foreign policies that used ethically acceptable means to pursue ethically acceptable ends; and the normative role of theory in fostering a transformation of international relations.

Mike Williams observes, and Felix Rösch concurs, that three other factors have led IR theorists to Morgenthau.¹ First is the recognition that international relations, in theory and practice, is historically situated and that there is accordingly a need to recapture and familiarize ourselves with these pasts. Second is the commitment to explore and build closer connections between international relations and political theory. This in turn is motivated by recognition that political theory focuses attention on big normative questions, as should international relations theory. Finally, we are witnessing yet another wave of disenchantment with positivism and the behavioral revolution. German sociologist Max Weber, a major influence on Morgenthau, was at the forefront of the first wave. Morgenthau was a leading, and somewhat isolated figure in the discipline, in the second wave. So not unreasonably, contemporary scholars opposed to positivism have turned to both Weber and Morgenthau for ideas and support in their critiques and quests to build or strengthen alternatives.

Scholars disagree about the extent to which Morgenthau's German experiences shaped his worldview and approach to international relations. Rösch argues for their primacy and continuity. He recognizes that there are multiple ways of understanding Morgenthau; not without reason he has been read as tragic, willful, reflexive, republican, progressive, liberal, religious, critical, and constructivist. Rösch emphasizes his humanistic character, goals and mode of thought. He does so by drawing on Morgenthau's writings, political commitments and contemporary descriptions of his intellect and character. By humanist, he means someone who pursues an anti-foundationalist approach to modernity, who accepts the contestability of all moral and political beliefs, and is not only willing, but compelled to question his own. This Weberian commitment was wed to the Aristotelian belief that people only fulfill their human potential through engagement in public life.

Morgenthau shared his humanism with other Weimar intellectuals, among them Hugo Sinzheimer, for whom he clerked in Frankfurt, and Arendt, his colleague at the University of Chicago. Rösch is unambiguous that this shared *Weltanschauung* developed in Weimar Germany and was a response to political, economic, and social developments. He devotes the first chapter of his book to documenting Morgenthau's diagnosis and concern for the ill effects of ideology on the conduct of political life. Rösch's account of Morgenthau's early writings in the chapter that follows further elaborates his claim. Later chapters build on this foundation to

¹ Michael Williams, "Introduction," *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans J. Morgenthau in International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1-17.

interrogate and account for Morgenthau's ontological and epistemological orientations, his ambivalent and evolving understanding of modernity, and his critique of American foreign policy.

The two reviews offer favorable judgments on the book. In the words of Richard Beardsworth "it is a deeply read, ambitious, and combative re-evaluation of Morgenthau." He nevertheless dissents from Rösch's account of Morgenthau as a critical "marginal," whose thought and professional life drew on and reflected his alienation. Rather, he reads Morgenthau's formulation of the national interest in the 1940s and 1950s as fundamentally conservative. Neither is Beardsworth persuaded by Rösch's claim that Morgenthau should be considered a critical humanist. In his judgment, such categorization makes it more difficult to understand the critical nature of Morgenthau's conceptual innovations and their relationship to his political commitments. Beardsworth also faults Rösch for giving insufficient textual validation for his interpretation of power as *puissance* in lieu of *pouvoir*.

Seán Molloy compares Rösch's book to Christoph Frei's intellectual biography of Morgenthau.² Both works benefit from extensive archival research and study of Morgenthau's unpublished manuscripts and correspondence. He approves of Rösch's attempt to demonstrate the early development and persistence of Morgenthau's critique of the technologization of society. He also agrees that Morgenthau's critique of modernity has come to dominate modern International Relations theory.

Molloy accepts Rösch's argument that Morgenthau developed his version of realism by reference to a fundamental *humanitas* that he used as a counterpoint to positivism's dehumanization of International Relations. This alienation gave Morgenthau an epistemological perspective and a critical ethos that are central to his work as a whole and differentiate him American Realists with whom he is frequently compared. Molloy also approves of the way in which Rösch draws out Morgenthau's distinction between *pouvoir* and *puissance*: politics as the reflection of elemental, existential conflict, and politics as the pursuit of interests achieved by judgment.

Molloy contends that Rösch's project is open to some criticism. The sources he draws on reveal little that about Morgenthau's intellectual development and political activities not already in the works of Frei and William Scheuerman.³ He also questions Rösch's claim that Morgenthau remained a Central-European thinker during his many decades in the United States.

Participants:

Felix Rösch is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Coventry University. He co-edits the *Global Political Thinkers* series with Palgrave Macmillan and he has published on IR-theories and popular culture in journals like *Review of International Studies*, *Ethics & International Affairs*, and *Politics*. Apart from his interest in classical realism, émigré scholarship, and popular culture, he has begun working on questions of

² Christoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography* (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, 2001).

³ William E. Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

subjectivity and communication across borders in the context of trans-cultural political theory with a focus on Japanese political thought.

Richard Ned Lebow is Professor of International Political Theory in the War Studies Department of King's College London, Bye-Fellow of Pembroke College, University of Cambridge and the James O. Freedman Presidential Professor (Emeritus) of Government at Dartmouth College. His most recent books are *Return of the Theorists: Dialogues with Dead Thinkers*, coedited with Peer Schouten and Hidemi Suganami, and *National Identifications and International Relations* (Cambridge, 2016). His edited *Max Weber and International Relations* will be published by Cambridge in 2017. In December 2015, he completed fifty years of university teaching.

Richard Beardsworth holds currently a chair in international theory in the Department of International Politics, University of Aberystwyth. He is also university director of ethics. Previous research was in critical theory with monographs on *Derrida and the Political* (Routledge, 1996) and *Nietzsche* (Les Belles Lettres, 1998). With a period in university administration and international public policy, his research of the last ten years has focused on political vision in the discipline of International Relations, especially with the monograph *Cosmopolitanism and International Relations Theory* (Polity, 2011). He is presently co-editing a volume on *The State and Cosmopolitan Responsibilities* and writing a book-length manuscript entitled *Political Responsibility in a Globalized, Fragmented World*. Bringing together concerns in international security, political theory, international ethics, and global policy the latter rehearses a conception of responsible political leadership towards transnational non-territorial threats.

Seán Molloy is Reader in International Relations at the University of Kent. He is the author of *The Hidden History of Realism: A Genealogy of Power Politics* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2006) and several articles on IR theory. He has worked previously at the universities of Sussex, Glasgow and Edinburgh. His current work explores two themes: the political-theological dimensions of Kant's treatment of international politics, and the development of ethical perspectives within twentieth century Realism.

Review by Richard Beardsworth, University of Aberystwyth

Power, Knowledge and Dissent in Morgenthau's Worldview comes towards the end of a good line of books and articles over the last fifteen years that have untied the tenets of 'classical realism' from the legacies of structural realism and neorealism. Reevaluation of the leading figure of 'classical' realism, Hans Morgenthau, has constituted the major part of this untying (compare, among others, recent works of Richard Ned Lebow, Seán Molloy, William Scheuerman, Vibeke Schou Tjalve, and Michael Williams¹). While an international theorist and not a Morgenthau scholar, I consider Felix Rösch's historical and theoretical argument for a sustained Morgenthau "worldview (*Weltanschauung*)" (11) to add to this reevaluation in three ways. First, it maintains that this worldview—shaped by European cultural and political events from the founding of the Wilhelmine empire to the end of the Weimar Republic (1870-1933)—did not change with Morgenthau's post-1937 integration into American theoretical and practical politics. Second, and consequently, Morgenthau always remained a critical "marginal" (9), working from his own lived experiences of "alienation" (5) in order to foster a reflective politics of humanity (against, in rough order, the ideologies of fascism, communism, nationalism, and liberal legalism and moralism). Third, Morgenthau's work, from its beginnings in Weimar Germany to its end in post-Vietnam America, constitutes a broad critique—epistemological, ontological and political—of the "depoliticizing" tendencies (12) of scientific and technological modernity and offers future work in the discipline of International Relations (henceforth IR) a way of engaging with the "de-politicization" of post-democratic societies (156-158).

As should be clear from this three-point summary of the book's revisionist particularity, *Power, Knowledge and Dissent* is a deeply read, condensed, and ambitious thesis. It bestrides intellectual history, continental philosophy, political theory, sociology, and international-relations theory in order to make the overall claim from underneath the positivist wrappings of mainstream American IR that Morgenthau should be best considered a critical humanist. The argument is compelling, but not entirely convincing. In the following comments, I will briefly consider Rösch's analysis of Morgenthau's 'worldview,' consider his consequent treatment of three organizing concepts in his work ('the political,' 'power,' and 'interest') and then outline some reservations. My focus leaves much in the book to one side (particularly a strong chapter on epistemology). I hope nevertheless that this focus leads to important questions for debate.

To look at Morgenthau's political realism as a worldview is, for Rösch (using Mannheim), to see it as "a conscious creation of a lifeworld and not the result of a passive knowledge imposition, as it captures how people see the world, desire the world, construct the world, and engage with it" (11). This worldview, fashioned, in particular, by the European crises of the first thirty-five years of the twentieth century, is concerned with the de-humanizing potential of scientific and technical modernity, the ontological insecurity of individualization, the clamor of ideology to repair this insecurity (nationalism, fascism, communism), and

¹ Richard Ned Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests and Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Seán Molloy, *The Hidden History of Realism: A Genealogy of Power Politics* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); William Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009) and William Scheuerman, *The Realist Case for Global Reform* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011); Vibeke Schou Tjalve, *Realist Strategies of Republican Peace*. (London: Palgrave, 2008); Michael Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) and Michael Williams, (ed.) *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). This is not a comprehensive list.

the consequent de-politicization of politics (if, as Rösch argues Morgenthau does, one understands the political as a space of reflective self-determination and agency). For Rösch, these concerns (*qua* worldview) informed the way in which Morgenthau approached the political throughout his life. To set up Morgenthau, consequently, as a father of American International Relations (IR) realism boxes Morgenthau's thinking into a reductionist set of categories and ways of thought that specifically drain away the fundamentally critical nature of his conceptual innovations and political commitments as an engaged scholar.

The argument is made in the consequent parts of the book by foregrounding three aspects of this debt to the early twentieth-century Central European tradition of humanism: Morgenthau's ontology (49-74), his epistemology (75-106) and his conception of political agency (107-142). Rather than consider these three aspects directly, I will discuss from this triadic framework how Morgenthau's major conceptions of politics--power, interest, and the concept of the political in general—should be understood. I turn first to the concept of power.

In contrast to structural realism, Rösch strongly affirms the fact that Morgenthau's concept of power is rooted in the psychology of human nature. Kenneth Waltz placed Morgenthau's psychologism in *Man, the State and War*² under his first image: world politics understood through the lens of human nature. For Rösch, this move misunderstands Morgenthau's ontology of power because there are *two* concepts of power at work in it: one empirical, one normative. Without consideration of this dual conception of power, the critical thrust of Morgenthau's thought is necessarily lost. This conception is rooted in Morgenthau's original worldview. The *animus dominandi* conception of power that most identify with Morgenthau—power as the will to increase and as domination over (see *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*³)—is opposed throughout his work by an understanding of power as creative self-relation: that is, as the forging of a common life-world released from external imposition (for the detail of the argument, see 50-61). The first conception is, on the one hand, empirical and essentially negative: it is derived from the observation of power dynamics. The second is, on the other hand, normative and positive: it is the very foundation of progressive politics. From this ontological perspective Morgenthau's canonical work *Power among Nations*—for many, the founding text of American political realism—does not present a realist theory of power in world politics, but an account of how power presently works in a world governed through states and national identity.⁴ Indeed, for Rösch, if I understand him correctly (as there as conflicting analyses of this work in the book), *Politics among Nations* constitutes a 'counter-ideology' to both fascism and communism given its first writing after World War II and its textbook re-editions during the Cold War (56, 96, and 153). Morgenthau never sought to translate his dual conception of power into English despite the empirico-normative distinctions in his German and French writings between *Macht* and *Kraft* and between *pouvoir* and *puissance* (150). As a result, the argument goes, the critical, dissenting nature of Morgenthau's work was lost, at least until his civic engagement with the tragic *hubris* of American foreign policy in the Vietnam War.

² Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954).

³ Hans Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946).

⁴ Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (seventh edition, New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006).

The same argument is made with regard to the concept of ‘interest,’ and here I will go more quickly and link it fairly immediately to Morgenthau’s general concept of ‘the political.’ In the second edition of *Politics among Nations* power is notoriously defined through the concept of interest. “Realism,” Morgenthau wrote in the new introduction, ‘Six Principles of Political Realism,’ “assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category that is universally valid.”⁵ Determined in its meaning, however, by time and place, interest is a universal governing principle of politics, the content of which is historically contingent. The key concept to be understood for Morgenthau in the twentieth century is therefore that of national interest. Here Rösch is emphatic. Morgenthau’s writings in the forties and fifties (together with the continual re-edition of *Politics among Nations*) do not, as does most IR realism, reify the concept of national interest into one of security. Rather, it rehearses it in terms of capacity, welfare, legal order and cultural and political value. The historically contingent concept of interest as ‘national interest’ becomes therefore—Rösch suggests with particular regard to *Politics among Nations*—an epistemological tool to bring ‘divergent interests into a rational order’ in pursuit of a common good and to reflect upon foreign policy (134, 154). Consequently, for Morgenthau, national interest is not just about both empirical power and empirical theory; it mobilizes within itself the normative understanding of power by being aligned with a common good (61-62, 66), one which anti-positivist theory untangles. From out of that common good a lifeworld can be fostered.

It is precisely here that Rösch situates Morgenthau’s concept of the political. Reaching back to his 1933 essay “La notion du ‘politique’,”⁶ he argues that inter-national political space is not just a tragic forum of conflicting wills to power, for Morgenthau, but also, and much more importantly, a process within which potentially conflicting life-interests are shaped into common goals, both nationally and internationally. As Rösch argues, this shaping always required, for Morgenthau, in distinction to the same basic thought of the political philosopher Hannah Arendt, statecraft and prudence (73, 108, 136). When American foreign policy lost that prudence with its dogmatic liberal aim to dominate communism in South-East Asia, Morgenthau could not fail to revert to a marginal critic of the American establishment. For his unchanging conception of the political had been betrayed by the American state.

To reinterpret Morgenthau today in these terms is not only to revise political realism and open it up to more critical traditions of thought and action. It is also, for Rösch, to offer critical reflection in the discipline of IR on the ‘depoliticization’ of western democracies (72, 131, 146) that remain under the sway of techno-scientific modernity and to advance, against liberal modernity’s dehumanizing aspects, epistemological and conceptual tools that promote ‘global democratic citizenship’ (11, 61, 156). This, for the author, is the ultimate interest of reevaluating in a *comprehensive* manner Morgenthau’s life and work.

As I said in my introductory paragraph, this thesis is a deeply read, ambitious, and combative re-evaluation of Morgenthau’s work and of this work’s import to the future of IR. It is well worth reading for this ambition: with regard to our understandings of political realism, in particular, and political vision in international

⁵ Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (second ed., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 10.

⁶ This short treatise has been recently edited by Hartmut Behr and Felix Rösch as *The Concept of the Political*, Hans Morgenthau, *The Concept of the Political*, Translated Maeva Vidal (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

theory, more generally. My reservations regarding it come in two forms: one theoretical, the other historical (although both dovetail).

The argument for a comprehensive ‘Central-European-inspired’ ontology of power that has an empirical and a normative dimension throughout Morgenthau’s work appears overplayed. For this argument even to begin to work appropriately, it would be important for Rösch to establish how the opposition between the two concepts of power are united in Morgenthau’s European writings of the thirties. However, the book never actually presents a written argument by Morgenthau to this effect. It offers instead a series of interpretations of Morgenthau’s early understanding of power that brings together the ideas of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, of the founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud, and of Hannah Arendt, and from out of which the normative, non-ideological concept of power emerges (see, for example, two constructions to this effect on pages 50-56 and 110-115). I therefore fail to see Morgenthau’s explicit signature on this concept in its European formation and would maintain, with others, that Morgenthau’s quasi-Aristotelian conception of politics remains, at the level of explicit articulation, a later evolution in his work. I suspect consequently that Rösch’s embedding of Morgenthau’s general ontology of power in the Central European tradition of critical humanism is a critical interpretative move on his part regarding Morgenthau rather than an elucidation of Morgenthau’s own ‘émigré’ itinerary.

The suspicion is, for me, confirmed in the detail of the book’s textual criticism. For example (and this is only one among several), in a general argument at the end of the book pitched against the dehumanizing effects of techno-scientific modernity in contemporary democracies, Rösch alludes to Morgenthau’s conclusion in the 1933 essay “La notion du politique” that “this dehumanization essentially depoliticizes (*dépolitise*) politics because it disempowers people” (157). However, the argument in “La notion du politique” appears more to concern the depoliticizing nature of international law (a theme immediately carried forward into his argument for political realism in America in the 1940s). Not one word is uttered in the essay’s conclusion or in the text as a whole about ‘dehumanization.’ I am not being a textual ‘positivist’ for the sake of it; nor do I wish to be ungenerous. It would simply make much more sense for Rösch to argue that, informed by a German critical tradition, his interpretation of Morgenthau is creative and combative in order, precisely, to foreground and further tensions in Morgenthau’s IR work. To argue, however, that Morgenthau had a sustained ontology of power throughout his life and work due to his Central European education and experiences ends up dissolving the very theoretical and practical tensions that are of interest.

In this regard Campbell Craig’s historical argument in his *Glimmer of a New Leviathan* (together with his writings on classical realism since) that Morgenthau was, in essence, a conservative thinker in the late 1940s to early 1950s remains important.⁷ Morgenthau’s conception of the national interest was specifically an attempt to forge, in the first period of the Cold War, a coherent American foreign policy based on a single organizing concept (in distinction to the diverse moral, legal, and political concerns of liberal internationalism). For Morgenthau the national interest certainly covered more than biological survival (many interpreters of Morgenthau, including Rösch, note this); but if he opted gradually during the late 1950s and thereafter for world government, it was precisely because the concept of national interest had to yield in his opinion to human interest given the existential threat following the thermonuclear revolution. Morgenthau’s use of concepts changed, in other words, in relation to events. To make, as Rösch’s strong interpretation does, his

⁷ See Campbell Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau and Waltz* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 54-73, especially 59-61.

writings of the 1940s and 1950s as critical as those of the 1960s and as critically humanist as those of the 60s and 70s loses, for me, an essential part of Morgenthau's mindset: his theorizing was driven by emergent international problems. When these problems changed, so did the nature of his reflection on power and interest.

My overall sense, therefore, of Rösch's interpretation of Morgenthau is that he telescopes Morgenthau's life and work and projects back upon earlier stages of his thought concepts that only came to maturity, for Morgenthau at least, in the 1960s: specifically—after his engagement with the thermonuclear condition—in his response to American engagement in South-East Asia. These concepts, together with their methodological use, are, of course, indebted to Central European political thought, and mainstream American realism effectively bulldozed this debt together with this debt's potential to open up links between political realism and critical theorizing. On these points Rösch's book has rendered us an important service. But this is not the same thing as saying that Morgenthau's humanist education and alienating experiences in Europe controlled the direction of these conceptions from the beginning. To say so, with due respect to Rösch's considerable archival research, takes the argument too far the other (critical, marginal, Frankfurt-school) way.

In sum, *Power, Knowledge and Dissent in Morgenthau's Worldview* presents an ambitious thesis that advances on several fronts both recent revisions of classical realism and current attempts to open political realism to other traditions of thought that are more critical of international politics. Its comprehensive argument that Morgenthau's work holds a 'worldview' throughout is combative and polemical. By overplaying its hand, it nevertheless begs too many theoretical, textual and historical questions to be convincing. That said, it is an exemplary demonstration of intellectual creativity in IR scholarship. It is a pity, for this reader at least, that the author does not assume this creativity as such.

Review by Seán Molloy, University of Kent

In this short but dense book, Felix Rösch attempts to reconfigure the legacy of Hans J. Morgenthau in International Relations (IR) theory. Stressing the importance of Morgenthau's early intellectual development in Weimar Germany, and the effects of Morgenthau's double exile, first from Germany, and then from Spain to the U.S., Rösch identifies Morgenthau as a thinker who consistently found himself on the outside of whichever society in which he resided. A central claim of Rösch's book is that this alienation gave Morgenthau both an epistemological perspective and a critical ethos that are central to his work as a whole and that mark him out from those American Realists with whom he is often equated. Rösch successfully navigates the thought of a figure whose work changed in nature as he progressed from a would-be Mandarin intellectual in Weimar Germany to a leading opponent of the Vietnam War in 1960s America, effectively highlighting what changed and what remained consistent as this life journey took Morgenthau from Coburg to New York via Madrid and Chicago.

Felix Rösch has written a book of many strengths. In a manner similar to Christoph Frei's intellectual biography of Morgenthau, Rösch's work benefits from extensive archival research undertaken at the Library of Congress and in other archives in which Morgenthau's unpublished manuscripts, correspondence, etc., are stored.¹ This research adds insight and depth to our understanding of Morgenthau's work – in particular the persistence of themes such as the critique of the technologisation of society and politics explored in unpublished works of the 1920s and 30s that found expression in later works like *Science: Servant or Master*.² Rösch also builds on work exploring the extent to which Morgenthau's work can be viewed as a critique of modernity and the forms of thought that have come to dominate modern International Relations theory.³ Rösch's originality in this endeavour is to highlight the extent to which Morgenthau's dissatisfaction and concern about modern modes of thought revolved around his fear that the primary effect of this epistemological orientation would lead to the dehumanisation of the social sphere. Rösch argues that Morgenthau developed his version of Realism by reference to a fundamental *humanitas* as a counterpoint to positivism's dehumanisation of International Relations. Rösch's deployment of the French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* (18) is particularly useful and compelling in that it permits him to structure the work into three primary sections: ontology, in which Rösch explores Morgenthau's work through the concepts of disenchantment and counter-ideology; epistemology, in which Rösch argues that Morgenthau's alienation became the lens through which he understood theory and theorisation, and finally, political agency in the form of dissent.

For Rösch, Morgenthau's primary ontological concern was with the ill-effects of ideology on the conduct of political life. Drawing on the German sociologist Max Weber, Rösch argues that Morgenthau viewed modernity as particularly prey to disenchantment, leaving the population vulnerable to the appeal of ideology. Right-wing ideology, represented by the prominent German legal theorist Carl Schmitt and Left-wing

¹ Christoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001).

² Hans J. Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master* (New York: New American Library, 1972).

³ See for example my characterization of Morgenthau as a contramodern thinker in chapters 2 and 4 of Seán Molloy, *Hidden History of Realism: A Genealogy of Power Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

ideology, represented by Morgenthau's friend and patron, Hans Kelsen, represented two varieties of thought that clouded political reality and distorted social reality. Against these ideological postures, Morgenthau opposed a 'life philosophy' derived from Nietzsche that was designed to pierce the ideological pretensions of both Conservatism and Socialism. The distinction between the concepts of the political held by Schmitt and Morgenthau is particularly important in these ontological terms: for Schmitt, politics devolved to the distinction between friend and enemy, whereas for Morgenthau the political should be understood as the identification of interests. To take a radical and critical stand against these prevailing ideologies was important for Morgenthau, as the Right-wing ideology in particular exacerbated pre-existing human drives of self-preservation and self-assertion in an age when the old values that had restrained these drives in the past were in abeyance. The tragic condition for Morgenthau was not limited to art, but rather was a feature of human existence.⁴ Modernity, Rösch seems to suggest, represented for Morgenthau humanity *in extremis*, stripped of its veneers of morality and naked in its ambition for domination.

The distinction between politics as the reflection of elemental, existential conflict and politics as the pursuit of interest achieved by judgment allows Rösch to develop his most important contribution to our understanding of Morgenthau: the distinction in his thought between *pouvoir* and *puissance* as aspects of power. Drawing on unpublished material and Morgenthau's early works in French such as *La Réalité des Normes*, Rösch argues that Morgenthau identifies *pouvoir* as a negative, empirical concept of power in the form of the *animus dominandi*, "the lust for the domination of people (54)."⁵ According to Rösch, Morgenthau's commitment to rigorously analyse power in its empirical forms has led commentators such as Tarak Barkawi, Hans-Karl Pichler, and Stephen Turner to misidentify Morgenthau as an apologist for power exercised without restraint.⁶ What these critics of Morgenthau have missed is Morgenthau's positive concept of power, *puissance*, which for Rösch is a normative concept of power that, when properly understood, can serve to restrain *pouvoir*. In an age corrupted by totalitarian ideology, *puissance* can deflect humans in their political pursuits away from domination of their neighbours and toward their specific national interests. It is in this sense, according to Rösch, that national interest is a concept designed by Morgenthau to avoid the greater damage caused by totalising ideologies rooted in race, class, etc. The concept of national interest, and shared wider interests (most especially avoiding nuclear annihilation), led Morgenthau, in Rösch's reading, to the concept of the ideals of world state (probably unachievable) and world community (a more achievable object derived from that of the world state).

Rösch is no less assiduous in his investigation of epistemology as he is in his efforts regarding Morgenthau's ontology. His primary task in this section is to deny the commonplace assumption that Morgenthau was either a positivist or a proto-positivist theorist of IR. Picking his way carefully through the relevant texts,

⁴ In his treatment of the tragic Rösch might have profited from a greater engagement with Richard Ned Lebow's *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Order, and Interests* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁵ Hans J. Morgenthau, *La réalité des normes, en particulier des normes du droit international* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1934).

⁶ Tarak Barkawi, "Strategy as a Vocation: Weber, Morgenthau and Modern Strategic Studies," *Review of International Studies* 24:2 (April 1998): 159-184; Hans-Karl Pichler, "The Godfathers of 'Truth': Max Weber and Carl Schmitt in Morgenthau's Theory of Power Politics," *Review of International Studies* 24:2 (April 1998): 185-200; Stephen P. Turner, "Hans J. Morgenthau and the Legacy of Max Weber," in Duncan Bell, ed., *Political Thought and International Relations. Variations on a Realist Theme* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 63-82.

Rösch demonstrates that this misunderstanding revolves around Morgenthau's use of certain terms, e.g., 'rational' and 'objective' that give the impression to the English reader that Morgenthau was engaged in an exercise akin to, or derived from, the natural sciences. Having spent several months trying to understand the shift from the avowedly anti-positivist and science-sceptical *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics* to the more neutral, if not science-friendly, tone of *Politics Among Nations*, I can sympathise with the effort that Rösch expends in unpacking important distinctions like that between rationalism and rationality in Morgenthau's work and what exactly Morgenthau means by the word objective.⁷ For Rösch, Morgenthau claims that objective truth "can be established, although not in the absolute sense, but only for the specific moment in time and space out of which knowledge was created. This is the case because contingent criteria of rightness and wrongness are employed by people during the process of constructing knowledge. Truth, therefore, has to be put into relation with its specific context. In doing so, claims of absoluteness can be brought forward, as they find acceptance in its particularity (93)."

The double-edged truth of science mirrors the two concepts of power in Morgenthau's ontology. Rösch identifies the similarities between the analysis of science of Morgenthau and his friend and 'thinking partner,' the German emigré scholar Hannah Arendt. Science elevates *Homo Faber* (the human being as maker of society) with the prospect that through it, he might become *Homo Deus*, 'the maker of worlds,' but simultaneously offers the alternative prospect of species realisation in the unattractive guise of *animal laborans*, an entity deprived of significance or meaning. It is 'the loneliness' of *animal laborans*, (Shakespeare's 'unaccommodated man' in *King Lear*), that opens the door to ideology, as mankind searches for meaning after the death of God. The pat answers and bogus claims of universality made by ideology makemankind hubristic and prone to Messianic mentalities that substitute projections for reality instead of serving as the basis for critique of reality itself. The remedy for this epistemological (and ultimately moral) blindness for both Arendt and Morgenthau, according to Rösch, is the adoption of "hermeneutically and context sensitive methods" (113), to counter "idealist ideology's lack of self-reflection and critique" (123).

The Vietnam War and Morgenthau's opposition to it provide the perfect example of both the political effects of the decline of liberal philosophy into idealist ideology and the efforts of Morgenthau to offer a critique of both that ideology and its catastrophic impact on the American body politic. Convinced of the disaster that would ensue from entanglement in the Vietnam civil war, Morgenthau counselled early against escalation. This opposition to the government line, which was informed by a 'whizz-kid' generation in thrall to positivist modes of thought, cost Morgenthau dearly in terms of his employment and his professional standing. No longer wanted at the University of Chicago, divorced, and blocked in his application for the presidency of the American Political Science Association (APSA), toward the end of his life Morgenthau once again had to embrace a form of exile in his first American home of New York. Employed at the City University of New

⁷ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press Midway Reprint Series, 1974); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th ed. revised (New York: Knopf, 1978). Seán Molloy, "Truth, Power, Theory: Hans Morgenthau's Formulation of Realism," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 15:1 (March 2004): 1-34. Seán Molloy, *The Hidden History of Realism: A Genealogy of Power Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2006). I attributed the difficulty to a linguistic problem, i.e. that there is no precise equivalent for certain words in German in English, e.g., *geisteswissenschaften*, or that have different meanings or connotations, e.g., 'objective.'

York and finally at the New School for Social Research, Morgenthau continued to practice what he saw as one of the primary functions of theory, the dissident activity of speaking truth to power.

Although impressive in terms of offering a clear and consistent account of Morgenthau's *oeuvre*, Rösch's project is open to some criticism. First, despite his archival forays, it is not easy to identify anything original in his efforts to uncover contextual details. There is little contained herein on Morgenthau's life and development as a thinker that a reader of Frei's intellectual biography, and/or Scheuerman's recent monograph, or Louis B. Zimmer's recent work on Morgenthau's involvement in the anti-war movement, would not have known already.⁸ There is also a sense in which the argument that Morgenthau remained a Central-European thinker during his long sojourn in America is merely asserted rather than argued convincingly. As Rösch admits (171) once in America, Morgenthau refused to use German in correspondence with friends and professional acquaintances. This refusal does not speak of an emigrant whose orientation remained fixed upon *Mitteleuropa*. Morgenthau's persistent engagement with the domestic and international politics of his new country and his identification with America (even when critical of it) rather speaks of someone determined to embrace his new surroundings and to identify with his new home. By putting forth a static reading of Morgenthau as a European thinker, Rösch's book has missed the opportunity to explore fully the tensions at the heart of the *American* Morgenthau's *weltanschauung*, and despite the obvious influence of the former on the latter, it is this *American* theorist of IR who continues to exert an intellectual fascination on successive generations rather than the somewhat minor legal theorist of the German *interbellum*.

More investigation of what seems evidence of shrewdness on Morgenthau's behalf would offset the impression of naïveté that Rösch's presentation occasionally conveys. How did this émigré scholar climb the ladder of American academia as adroitly as he did? Naïfs are rarely as successful as Morgenthau, who was quite adept at representing his work in *Politics among Nations* in an ambiguous manner that left itself open to the proto-positivist or pro-science reading that accounts for its remarkable success with its target audience. One does not conclude that this ambiguity was entirely accidental, but rather that Morgenthau knew exactly how to write within his new environment. In a similar vein, Rösch is too anxious to stress Morgenthau's alienation and estrangement. Morgenthau after all rose to become Albert A. Michelson Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, one of America's most prestigious seats of learning, held visiting professorships at Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Princeton, and other leading institutions, was a consultant to the U.S. Department of Defense and a contender for the presidency of APSA: hardly the marginalised track record of a serial outsider.

The key issue is one of context. Rösch emphasises the specifically European context of Morgenthau's intellectual development in the 1920s and 1930s to such an extent that he neglects to acknowledge that the majority of Morgenthau's career played out in a different academic culture and an intellectual discipline distinct from that of the legal theory in which he was trained in Germany. The European Morgenthau is significant only in terms of his minor contribution to the jurisprudence of international law; it is the 'American' Morgenthau who continues to exert an influence on the discipline of IR. If context is as important as Rösch claims, then the context of Morgenthau's 'rise' to pre-eminence in America in the 1950s, and perhaps even more so the personal and political turbulence that affected him so much in the 1960s, requires

⁸ William E. Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009); Louis B. Zimmer, *The Vietnam War Debate: Hans J. Morgenthau and the Attempt to Halt the Drift into Disaster* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2011).

quite as much investigation as that of the 1930s. Finally, in terms of context, while the reasons and circumstances that led to Morgenthau's departure from Chicago are fairly clear, the forces and personalities that led to his relocation to New York, first at City College and then the New School for Social Research, remain opaque. Why did Morgenthau reject a senior position at American University (149), but accept one at City College? Given the importance of his radical work of the 1970s which was conducted in his final home, and was quite different in scope and tone from that undertaken in the 1960s, the personalities and wider contextual political and intellectual influences that shaped this final act of what was both a European *and* an American life require more investigation and illumination.

Felix Rösch has written a valuable book on a key figure of IR theory. His deployment of archival research and sophisticated analytical frameworks deepens (if it does not quite extend) our knowledge of Morgenthau's work. The pivotal distinction between *pouvoir* and *puissance* and the argument that Morgenthau deployed his own alienation (although its influence might be overstated) as an epistemological resource are of lasting benefit to a discipline that only recently has begun to adopt a historically reflective attitude to its past. Morgenthau offered, and continues to offer, a series of penetrating insights and provocations that IR in its rush to mischaracterise his thought has only just begun to engage with properly. By treating Morgenthau's legacy with such patent seriousness and care, Felix Rösch has done a great service to those successors of Morgenthau who would like IR to remain, or to return to, the condition of being a human science.

Author's Response by Felix Rösch, Coventry University

If memory serves me right, Hannah Arendt, the German-born American political theorist famous for her coverage of the Eichmann Trial, once put her curiosity for life into the words 'I want to understand.' My curiosity to understand how people live together, particularly when they have different socio-cultural backgrounds, was similarly triggered by an early experience in which I expressed my disappointment of not knowing by using the same words. When I did, however, it was certainly in a less dignified manner than I imagine Arendt doing so. As long as I can remember, studying the past has been my natural starting point for understanding the present. Indeed, to this day, I believe a thorough understanding of historical events is required if we want to understand the present, because, after all, these events contributed to the world we are living in today. This is not to say that a comprehensive understanding of the past would ever be attainable. Rather, studying the past is always guided by the present and as such influences the way we give meaning to the past.

What drew me to studying the life and work of Hans Morgenthau, like Arendt a German émigré scholar, who is widely regarded as the 'founding father' of realism in International Relations, was therefore not the ambition to uncover the 'true' Morgenthau, although it seems that still today, fifteen years after Christoph Frei's ground-breaking biography,¹ many characterizations of Morgenthau are driven by a political agenda, rather than a scholarly quest for truth. By contrast, my interest in Morgenthau stems from two very different factors. First, although this is not a major reason, it is still worth noting that exploring the life of the only modern-day rabbi in my hometown during my high school years nurtured an interest in local Jewish history in me. Morgenthau grew up in Coburg, a town at the Northern edge of Bavaria, which is not too far away from mine. Second, Morgenthau had a life-long concern about the effect of modernity on humans, how it potentially negatively affected societies, leading to a depolitization and causing the downfall of democracies. This concern that Morgenthau shared with many other émigrés scholars drew me to him, as it is a concern that also drives my work. Giving the potential of Brexit, the rise of nationalist, right-wings parties throughout Europe and beyond, and the neoliberalization of every-day life, I believe that increasing our understanding about the effects of modernity will become even more important in the years to come.

Hence, my interest in Morgenthau lies less in what he is usually associated with in the discipline, often summarized in concepts like balance of power and the national interest. *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent in Morgenthau's Worldview* is my attempt to investigate further the sociocritical elements in his work, which I have identified as dehumanization, ideologization, and technologization. In their reviews, Richard Beardsworth and Seán Molloy stress that while my endeavor is not without benefits, it also has some shortcomings with which I deal in the following response.

Since Richard Ned Lebow's *The Tragic Vision of Politics*,² it is firmly established that an element of tragedy is also at the very heart of Morgenthau's work. Many contributions followed suit, of which I would rate the ones of Douglas Klusmeyer and Konstantinos Kostagiannis as the most important, both confirming and

¹ Christoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau. An Intellectual Biography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001).

² Richard Ned Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

adding on to Lebow's initial discussion.³ Given my specific interest in Morgenthau, perhaps I did not elaborate on the tragic element in his work as much as I probably should have. However, Morgenthau is for me not a tragic thinker in the sense that he would have been conservative or that humans would have to succumb to a path-dependency in their lives.⁴ To discuss this point further, I recently looked deeper into Morgenthau's concept of tragedy in a piece for an *Ethics & International Affairs* roundtable on *Morgenthau in America*.⁵ In this piece, I focused on an unpublished manuscript in which Morgenthau gave thought to the purpose of science (*Wissenschaft*), demonstrating that only through contemplation would people be able to reestablish values in their efforts to counter the effects of modernity. However, for most people the task of self-reflection is daunting, as their commonly held assumptions might be challenged. For Morgenthau, this is because people are created in the "image of God," and thus they have a "vision of perfection" and try to attain it.⁶ Realizing that perfection is impossible, Morgenthau, relying on the Hungarian-born sociologist Karl Mannheim, argued that most people in the end give up striving for it altogether. They even try to avoid situations of being alone, because, following Morgenthau, "being imperfect and striving toward perfection, man ought not to be alone. For while the companionship of others cannot make him perfect, it can supplement his imperfection and give him the illusion of being perfect."⁷ Living in collectivity, people therefore develop ideologies with the purpose of providing a coherent narrative that enables them to conceal the full scope of human meaninglessness. This is not to say that ideologies are deliberate attempts to create an illusion of reality and to purposefully disorient people. Rather, they are the product of frenzied, collective processes in order to provide ontological security.

Another question is how a scholar like Morgenthau can be classified as marginalized. Molloy rightfully stresses that he had an exceptional career in the United States, working in some of the most prestigious universities and, at least during the Vietnam War, Morgenthau was also a public figure, appearing regularly on television. In comparison to some other émigré scholars, such as Gustav Ichheiser, Max Wertheimer, or Wilhelm Reich, who sometimes had very tragic fates,⁸ Morgenthau indeed had a "brilliant career," to use Frei's words.⁹ This might have had something to do with the fact that he had already left Germany in the early 1930s for Switzerland, to pursue his post-doctoral degree, and later went to Spain to take up his first full-time academic

³ Douglas Klusmeyer, "Beyond Tragedy: Hannah Arendt and Hans Morgenthau on Responsibility, Evil and Political Ethics," *International Studies Review* 11:2 (2009): 332-351 and Konstantinos Kostagiannis, "Hans Morgenthau and the Tragedy of the Nation-State," *International History Review* 36:3 (2014): 513-529.

⁴ See for example, Daniel Levine, "Why Hans Morgenthau Was Not a Critical Theorist (and Why Contemporary IR Realists Should Care)," *International Relations* 27:1 (2013): 95-118.

⁵ Felix Rösch, "Crisis, Values, and the Purpose of Science: Hans Morgenthau in Europe," *Ethics & International Affairs* 30:1 (2016): 23-31.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷ Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Significance of Being Alone," n.d., 2 (Leo Baeck Institute Archives, Hans Morgenthau Collection, Container 4, Folder 6).

⁸ Richard Ned Lebow, "German Jews and American Realism," *Constellations* 18:4 (2011): 545-566.

⁹ Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 74.

post. Hence, unlike some other émigré scholars, Morgenthau was already adapted to a life outside of Germany, which might have helped him to settle in the United States. Another factor for his success was certainly luck, as is so often the case in life. Who knows what would have happened to Morgenthau, if the American political scientist Quincy Wright had not accepted the position at the Department of State in Washington and Morgenthau had not had the chance to replace him temporarily in Chicago? Would he have risen to international acclaim, working from a tiny office that used to have a very different purpose, as an international lawyer in the Midwest? The reason why I characterize Morgenthau as a marginalized scholar is related to the misunderstanding of his work.¹⁰ For decades, Morgenthau has been praised and more often criticized for what he was clearly not: a positivist scholar embracing a belligerent worldview. It still surprises me how he could end up with this image, given his many writings, private correspondence, and public appearances particularly during the Vietnam War, in which he clearly spoke against this form of scholarship. Still today, the textbook-knowledge that links classical realism to neo-realism is widely accepted in the discipline, despite the revival of classical realism, in which many contributions demonstrate the exact opposite.¹¹

This seeming connection of classical realism and neo-realism brings me to the last criticism of *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent in Morgenthau's Worldview*. Certainly, Morgenthau's thought was highly affected by the experiences he made throughout his life, most notably the rise of fascism in Europe, the Shoah, and his forced emigration to the U.S. There, he encountered a lifestyle that must have been very different than the one that he had experienced in Europe. However, the scope of Morgenthau's work cannot be understood comprehensively if it is not put within the context in which it originated, and that was the Weimar Republic. It is true that his relationship with Central Europe and Germany in particular remained ambivalent (that is the very term he used in an interview with Munich-based newspaper *Abendzeitung*),¹² as he, at least to my knowledge, never wrote in German again, but at the same time, for example, he repeatedly taught at the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies and he even asked his European Ph.D. students to supply him with delicatessen goods from the Old Continent. Looking at his work from a longitudinal perspective demonstrates that he repeatedly came back to the same issues. These he identified as "perennial problems,"¹³ and are found in his earliest unpublished manuscripts from Germany and Switzerland all the way to his last monograph *Science: Servant or Master?* In fact, the points that Morgenthau discusses in the first part of this book are similar to points he raised in the manuscript that I have discussed in more detail in my recent piece for *Ethics & International Affairs*. Although the topics that Morgenthau worked on during his life-time changed repeatedly, ranging from Gustav Stresemann, Weimar Republic's long-standing Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the League of Nations, to the state of political science in the U.S. and the Vietnam War, the fundamental questions that Morgenthau was concerned about and that I have identified as social-criticism in the form of

¹⁰ See for example: William Bain, "Deconfusing Morgenthau: moral inquiry and classical realism reconsidered," *Review of International Studies* 26:3 (2000): 445-464 and Hartmut Behr and Amelia Heath, "Misreading in IR theory and ideology critique: Morgenthau, Waltz and neo-realism," *Review of International Studies* 35:2 (2009): 327-349.

¹¹ For reasons, why this might be the case see Michael C. Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹² *Abendzeitung* (1951), 13th March, 2 (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Container 178).

¹³ Hans J. Morgenthau, "Reflections on the state of political science," *Review of Politics* 17:4 (1955), 434.

dehumanization, ideologization, and technologization never changed dramatically. I largely agree therefore with John Herz who wrote that Morgenthau “never went much beyond what he had basically said and formulated” during his time in Europe.¹⁴

While *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent in Morgenthau's Worldview* is certainly not able to present the “complete Morgenthau,” and Beardsworth and Molloy are right to stress its shortcomings, I still hope it entices readers so that next time they pass by Morgenthau’s books in the library, they blow the dust from *Science: Servant or Master?*, the three volumes of *Politics in the Twentieth Century*, or *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*.¹⁵ Morgenthau’s works, despite being polemical at times, provide an intellectual breathing space in which we can rethink our modern societies.

¹⁴ John Herz, “Letter to the Morgenthau Conference,” in Christian Hacke, Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, and Kai M. Schellhorn, eds., *The Heritage, Challenge, and Future of Realism: In Memoriam Hans J. Morgenthau (1904-1980)* (Göttingen: V&R, 2005), 25.

¹⁵ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946); *Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); *Science: Servant or Master?* (New York: New American Library, 1972).