H-**Diplo** ROUNDTABLE XXI-7

Contents

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The Realism of the Ancients Compared with That of the Moderns

Over the past ten years, revived debates on realism have generated one of the most fertile, and promising, bodies of literature in contemporary political theory.[1] Though empirically accurate, this statement might sound historically counter-intuitive, and thus invites some clarifications. A time-honored vision of politics, the realist approach to human affairs can in fact claim a distinguished pedigree that stretches back to the very beginnings of historical political theory.

Despite their differences in focus, methodologies, and ideological connotations, the heterogeneous family of realists has a common ancestry in the work of Thucydides (though rival interpretations exist about the specific nature of Thucydidean realism[2]). Raymond Geuss, one of the most prominent and influential advocates of a new realism in the early twenty-first century, along with Bernard Williams, famously followed Friedrich Nietzsche in describing the Greek historian as the anti-Plato, for his belief that the world could *not* be "cognitively accessible [...] without remainder," "make sense" from a moral perspective, satisfy "some basic, rational human desires or interests," be shaped by the power of human reason, and thus be conducive to human happiness.[3] In this account, Thucydides's children similarly understood the potential of a philosophical

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[1] The literature over the years has become extensive and keeps growing at a fast pace. Among the monographs: Matt Sleat, *Liberal Realism. A Realist Theory of Liberal Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); William E. Scheuerman, *The Realist Case for Global Reform* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011). Among the edited volumes are Duncan Bell, ed., *Political Thought and International Relations. Variations on a Realist Theme* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Jonathan Floyd and Marc Stears, eds., *Political Philosophy vs. History?: Contextualism and Real Politics in Contemporary Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Matt Sleat, *Politics Recovered. Realist Thought in Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Rahul Sagar and Andrew Sabl, eds., *Realism in Political Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2018); Robert Schuett and Miles Hollingworth, eds., *The Edinburgh Companion to Political Realism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018). Among the special issues are Richard North, ed., *Political Realism*, *European Journal of Political Theory* 9:4 (2010); Andrew Sabl and Rahul Sagar, eds., *Realism*, *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 20:3 (2017). Among the most representative stand-alone articles are: Elizabeth Frazer, "What is Real in Political Philosophy?," *Contemporary Political Theory* 9:4 (2010): 490-507; Michael Freeden, "Interpretative realism and prescriptive realism," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 17:1 (2012), 1-11; Karuna Mantena, "Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Nonviolence," *American Political Science Review* 106:2 (2012), 455-470; Katrina Forrester, "Judith Shklar, Bernard Williams and political realism," *European Journal of Political Theory* 11:3 (2012): 247-272; Mark Philp, "Realism without Illusions," *Political Theory* 40:5 (2012): 629-649; David Runciman, "What is Realistic Political Philosophy?," *Metaphilosophy* 43:1-2 (2012): 58-70; Enzo Rossi, "Justice, Legitimacy, and (Normative) Authority for Political Realists," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 15:2 (2012): 149-164; William Scheuerman, "The Realist Revival in Political Philosophy, or: Why New is Not Always Improved," *International Politics* 50:6 (2013): 798-814; Enzo Rossi and Matt Sleat, "Realism in Normative Political Theory," *Philosophy Compass* 9:10 (2013): 689-701; Elizabeth Frazer, "Including the Uncountable: The Realism of Feminist Politics," *Juncture* 21:4 (2015): 315-318; Matt Sleat, "Realism, Liberalism and Non-Ideal Theory or, Are There Two Ways to Do Realistic Political Theory?," *Political Studies* 64:1 (2016): 27-41; Alison McQueen, "Political Realism and Moral Corruption," *European Journal of Political Theory* (2016); Joshua L. Cherniss, "An Ethos of Politics between Realism and Idealism," *Journal of Politics* 78:3 (2016): 705-718; Lorna Finlayson, "With Radicals Like These, Who Needs Conservatives? Doom, gloom, and realism in political theory," *European Journal of Political Theory* 16:3 (2017): 264-282; David Runciman, "Political Theory and Real Politics in the Age of the Internet," *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 25:1 (2017), 3-21.

[2] Rival interpretations exist about the specific nature of Thucydidean realism: see, among others, Michael Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 41-48; David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations. From Thucydides to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 67-89; Richard Ned Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics. Ethics, Interests, and Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 65-167.

[3] Raymond Geuss, *Outside Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 223-225. Other important works contemporary realists often turn to include Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); see the

approach to the world that does not seek to eradicate, but acknowledges, and even champions, the irreducible plurality of views and the resulting 'fact' of disagreement.

When the *Melian Dialogue* and the broader canvas of the *History of the Peloponnesian War* are not interpreted as the archetype of realism, the historical credentials of this tradition remain equally robust. According to some, Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes epitomize, in the early-modern era, a vision of domestic and inter-state politics that is, at once, skeptical, relational, and power-centered.[4] Contrary to the common wisdom, which tends to equate *Realpolitik* with *Machtpolitik* and thus to present realism as a fetishization of power, scholars who emphasize the early-modern (rather than ancient) component in the genetic makeup of realism draw attention to a basic grammatical mistake in the syntax of realist politics. Acknowledging the centrality of power does not entail celebrating violence or cynically embracing the law of the strongest. Quite the contrary, it is the precondition to channel and minimize the destructive potential of power and its pervasiveness in politics. Stressing the limits of human reason, the role that social interactions play in forging and transforming the self, and the ambiguity of power as both productive and destructive, represents, in this account, the core of a legacy that travelled across the centuries—from the plague of factional strife among Italian city-states to the internecine wars *religionis causa* in sixteenth-century Europe at the dawn of the Westphalian system, and beyond.

However, 'the life and times' of realism—if we re-adapt a famous phrase by C. B. Macpherson[5]—are much richer, and more intense, than what narratives stressing the Thucydidean and/or Westphalian moments might suggest. It is in the late nineteenth century and then, most radically, throughout the twentieth century, that the perfect storm caused by the simultaneous democratization and bureaucratization of politics, the nefarious overlap between industrial warfare and genocidal totalitarianisms, the development of nuclear weapons, and the ever-looming threat of a global cataclysm in the wake of compulsive technological progress, breathed new life into the realist tradition. From Karl Marx to Friedrich Nietzsche, from Max Weber to Sigmund Freud, from Hans Kelsen to Carl Schmitt (in the domain of philosophical, political, and legal thought) and, simultaneously, from E. H. Carr to Hans Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr (the schoolmasters of "classical realism" in the field of international relations)[6], modern realists witnessed the crisis of the marriage between sovereignty and the modern territorial state that the Westphalian model had celebrated. Running through their work is the perception, at times devastating, of the inability to tame new forms of disorder through the conceptual language of modernity. Schmitt's international writings in the aftermath of WWII, exploring and theorizing the emergence of a "new nomos of the earth" at the twilight of the *jus publicum Europaeum*, exemplify the sense of disorientation and

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essays by Bernard Williams in Geoffrey Hawthorn, ed., *In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[4] Jonathan Haslam, *No Virtue like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations since Machiavelli* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 432-457; Michael Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7.

[5] Crawford Brough Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

[6] For historical accounts of modern realism exploring some of the work of these authors, see, among others, Michael J. Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986); Joel Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists: Political Realism, Responsible Power, and American Culture in the Nuclear Age* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986); Craig Campbell, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and Waltz* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Vibeke S. Tjalve, *Realist Strategies of Republican Peace: Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and the Politics of Patriotic Dissent* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008).

disenchantment that is common currency among the protagonist of this third, major phase in the historical trajectory of realism.[7]

Either in the form of a loosely identifiable school of thought or simply as a methodological and philosophical posture, realism has always had its acolytes, as if its canonical texts could be the repository of a timeless wisdom about human nature and the nature of politics. Hence the question: what is distinctively new about the renaissance of realism in early twenty-first century political theory?

A Bridge over the Abyss

As Matt Sleat illustrates in the excellent introduction to the volume he recently edited (so far, the most comprehensive attempt to map the landscape of contemporary realist thought)[8], the rejuvenation of realism in the present has set an alternative to the prevailing way of theorizing the nature and tasks of political philosophy for the past five decades. Ever since the publication of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971), Anglophone political theorists have in fact made justice the compass of their work, progressively turning the subfield into a sort of moral philosophy and thus losing sight of other important dimensions of political reality. The tendency to privilege "the circumstances of justice" as "the normal conditions under which human cooperation is both possible and necessary"[9] and the related propensity to neglect the "circumstances of politics" have been pointed out by many scholars over the years. Examples include Jeremy Waldron's famous critique of the supposedly democratic character of judicial review at the turn of the century, Richard Bellamy's republican defense of political (vs. legal) constitutionalism, and, more recently, Waldron's call for a "political" (versus moral) political theory examining the institutions and mechanisms through which democratic citizens orchestrate their disagreement over issues of common concern.[10] Virtually all debates among Anglo-American theorists over the past few decades, one could even argue,

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[7] In many of his post-war writings, Schmitt – the former "Kronjurist" of the Nazi regime (at least until late 1936), portrayed himself as a man "defeated by history." After his release from the Nuremberg prison for war criminals and unable to return to an academic career as a result of the *Berufsverbot* against former Nazis, he resettled in his birthplace in Plettenberg. He renamed it "San Casciano" as a tribute to the Tuscan village where Machiavelli, dismissed from all public offices after the breakdown of the Florentine republic and the return of the Medici in 1512, spent his final years. Often described as the 'twentieth-century Hobbes'—an author whose thought unquestionably lay at the core of his work and to which he devoted a controversial book in 1938 [*The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes. Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)] – Schmitt rather liked to think of himself as the 20th-century Machiavelli, sharing with the author of *The Prince* the ostracism from public life (and sometimes as the 20th-century Tocqueville, unable to contain the universalism of liberal democracy). He remained in Plettenberg from 1947 until his death in 1985 but continued to have significant influence even during his retirement from the public eye. On Schmitt's private years, see, most recently, Christian Linder, "Carl Schmitt in Plettenberg," in Jens Meierhenrich and Oliver Simons, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 147-170; on Schmitt's reading of Hobbes, see John McCormick, "Teaching in Vain: Carl Schmitt, Thomas Hobbes, and the Theory of the Sovereign State," *infra*, 269-290; on Schmitt's interpretation of Machiavelli, see Carlo Galli, "Schmitt and Machiavelli," in Galli, ed., *Janus's Gaze. Essays on Carl Schmitt* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 58-77. Finally, on Schmitt's apocalyptic reading of Tocqueville, see Carl Schmitt, "Historiographia in Nuce: Alexis De Tocqueville (August 1946)," in Id., *Ex Captivitate Salus. Experiences, 1945-1947*, eds. Andreas Kalyvas and Federico Finchelstein (Cambridge: Polity, 2017); Anäis Camus and Tristan Storme, "Schmitt and Tocqueville on the Future of the Political in Democratic Times," *The Review of Politics* 74:4 (2012): 659-684; and Enzo Traverso, "Confronting Defeat: Carl Schmitt Between the Victors and the Vanquished," *History and Theory* 56:3 (2017): 370-378.

[8] Matt Sleat, "Politics Recovered – on the Revival of Realism in Contemporary Political Theory. Introduction," in Sleat, ed., *Politics Recovered. Realist Thought in Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 1-25.

[9] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 126-130.

[10] Jeremy Waldron, *Law and Disagreement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Waldron *The Dignity of Legislation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); R. Bellamy, *Political Constitutionalism. A Republican Defense of the Constitutionality of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Waldron, "*Political* Political Theory: An Inaugural Lecture," *Journal of*

have stemmed from a profound critique of the overly idealist approach to politics championed by Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, and their disciples.

And yet, realism is not simply a countermovement, a negative ideology living parasitically on the very philosophical structure it seeks to dismantle. In the article that is conventionally read as the manifesto of contemporary realist thought, William Galston surveys a composite body of work to unearth the core assumptions of a "coherent and formidable" alternative to the "high liberalism" of Rawls and Dworkin.[11] Among such axioms, special emphasis is given to the attempt to prioritize what is practically possible over what is ideally desirable; a concern with the role of passions and emotions in politics; the appreciation of conflict (both of values and interests) as constitutive of the political world we inhabit; a defense of the role of institutions in hosting, channeling, and re-orienting political disagreement; overall, a conception of politics as a distinctive domain of action whose rules differ, and thus cannot descend from, morality.[12]

Thinking through and beyond Galston, Sleat has warned against the temptation to cast realism and normative political theory as mutually exclusive. Far from renouncing any normative ambition, realists are simply critical of a form of prescriptive theorizing that depoliticizes politics and, by doing so, ends up envisioning a public sphere that will never be. "This means"—Sleat explain drawing explicitly on Waldron—"that we should not aim to develop philosophical accounts in which fundamental aspects of politics are either absent or can, through philosophical argument, be rationalized away."[13] Contemporary realists aim at worldly wisdom, at a political philosophy that prides itself on being 'realistic' precisely because keeps its eyes wide open on the complexities, contingencies, and contradictions of real-world politics and the constraints that all the above places on the range of our actions and the attainability of our ideals.[14]

Bernard Williams's concern with the "basic legitimation demand" is testament to the place that normativity has under the realist sky.[15] His insistence on the solution to the "first" political question (i.e., how to guarantee security, mutual trust, and the conditions for cooperation) being "acceptable" by those who, at once, benefit from and are constrained by it proves that description and prescription are not antithetical; rather, the former is prior to, and determines, the latter. By doing so, contemporary realism manages to remain equidistant from the excesses of both Hobbes and Rawls. Without fetishizing

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Political Philosophy 21:1 (2013), 1-23; Waldron, *Political Political Theory. Essays on Institutions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

[11] William Galston, "Realism in Political Theory," *European Journal of Political Theory* 9:4 (2010): 385-411, here 385-386.

[12] Alison McQueen, "Political Realism and Moral Corruption," *European Journal of Political Theory*, online first (2016): 1-21, offers an alternative, and partially overlapping, outline of the realist thought as a "family of approaches to the study, practice, and normative evaluation of politics" pivoting around four core assumptions: the distinctive and contextual study of the political world; the emphasis on conflict, disagreement, and power as essential features of politics; the rejection of any utopian, idealist, or moralist approach to political phenomena overlooking the first two assumptions; and the reconsideration of the unquestioned primacy of justice in the array of political values (1-2).

[13] Sleat, "Politics Recovered," 8.

[14] The antithesis between ideals and reality is at the core of an influential trend in contemporary democratic theory and political science, which follows early twentieth-century elite theorists Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, and Robert Michels in demystifying the fiction of popular sovereignty and revealing the inescapably oligarchic dimension of democratic politics. Emphasizing the epistemic limitations of voters, this trend has also called into question the procedural hegemony of elections as a means for selecting the political ruling class in modern representative democracy. See, among the most important contributions, Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), and Jason Brennan, *Against Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[15] I owe this consideration to Sleat, "Politics Recovered," 5, with reference to Williams, *In the Beginning Was the Deed*.

either order or justice, it rejects absolutist claims that champion one at the expense of the other and draws attention to legitimacy as the prime mover of a theory of politics that is, simultaneously, realist and normative. This nuanced approach to its Hobbesian heritage, together with the constructive critique of Kant's (and Rawls's neo-Kantian) verdict that "if justice perishes, then it is no longer worthwhile for men to live upon the earth,"[16] allows realists to navigate the waters of human political interactions without fear (of what might happen in case justice vanishes) or illusions (that security and order will last forever). This, if there is one, is the true miracle of contemporary political realism.

Nevertheless, in the current revival of realist thought, scholars have almost unanimously embraced a normative and/or methodological approach and privileged the work of recent authors (especially Williams and Geuss). As a result, there is a surprising dearth of contributions with a historical focus. Accounts of the competing visions of realism that have developed across the centuries in the history of political thought, international relations or, since the early twentieth century, in democratic theory are, with a few notable exceptions,[17] limited in number and narrow in scope. Moreover, it is pervasive in the existing literature on realism a piecemeal approach that champions the hyper-specialization of debates within sub-subfields and thus fragments the study of texts, concepts, and problems that would otherwise be, and should be, a collective, pluralistic, and intersectional enterprise.

For this reason and many others, Alison McQueen's *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* represents an important, much-needed, and long-awaited contribution.

McQueen's Project, Between History and Theory

McQueen draws attention to the proliferation of apocalyptic claims in the American political arena over the past decades and frames it within a *long durée* scenario that reveals how politicians and statesmen have always deliberately flirted with a catastrophic imaginary. From Abraham Lincoln's critique of slavery to Theodore Roosevelt's speech in Chicago the night before the 1912 convention of the Republican party; from Ronald Reagan alluding to an imminent destruction of the planet in the nuclear age to George W. Bush's framing of the War on Terror within God's planned direction of history: "apocalypticism," as McQueen calls it, has been a pervasive feature of American—especially Republican—politics, long before Donald Trump's rhetoric during his first presidential campaign. At the same time, it is not only politicians who did and do evoke cataclysmal scenarios. Environmentalists, past and present, have often described dreadful circumstances, before climate change became part of our daily lives. Cold-War nuclear experts were as confident as contemporary activists that the end of the world was far from a remote possibility, and often resorted to religious references to make their warnings even more powerful. Defining the "apocalyptic imaginary" and its multiple manifestations are, on McQueen's account in the second chapter of her book, five elements: the emphasis on the imminence of the apocalypse (a vibrant legacy of the early Christian tradition); its representation as a cataclysmic event both producing a "creative destruction" and inaugurating a new world; its description as an event that marks a break with a previous evil, either real or perceived; its being a moment of rupture in the supposedly linear unfolding of history; and its disclosing a revelation about both the past and the future (57-59).

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[16] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), lxii.

[17] Beside the important volume edited by Bell and some of the contributions already mentioned (see *supra*, n. 1, 2, 4), cfr. William E. Scheuerman, "Was Morgenthau a Realist? Revisiting *Scientific Man Vs. Power Politics*," *Constellations* 14:4 (2007): 506-530; Id., *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009); Joshua L. Cherniss, "Between Realism and Utopianism: The Political Ethics of Moderation," in Id., *A Mind and its Time: The Development of Isaiah Berlin's Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 112-130 Joel Alden Schlosser, "Herodotean Realism," *Political Theory*, 42: 3 (2014), 239-261; Samantha Ashenden and Andreas Hess, eds., *Between Utopia and Realism. The Political Thought of Judith N. Shklar* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 2019); Karuna Mantena, ed., *Means and Ends: Rethinking Political Realism* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, forthcoming); Ead., *Gandhi's Realism: Means and Ends in Politics* (forthcoming).

What lies beneath the eschatological visions of our age? What ties them together and sets them apart from similar visions of the past? These are the questions at the core of McQueen's project, which started as a doctoral dissertation at Cornell[18] when post-9/11 debates were still pervasive at American and international levels and eventually turned into an imaginative book theorizing and historicizing the apocalyptic tropes that, years later, continue to resonate so significantly in contemporary public discourse.

Prompting the contextual and transhistorical perspective of the book is the continuity the author captures between two equally critical junctures in the political history of the U.S. over the past one hundred years and their strikingly similar hegemonic narratives of a world on the verge of catastrophe. Most arguments that major international security scholars outlined against America's military intervention in Iraq after al-Qaeda's attacks echoed ideas and critiques that an earlier generation of realists had articulated against President Woodrow Wilson's project in the aftermath of the First World War. The emphasis on questions of strategy and security; the appeal to national and international interests; the critique of a Manichean worldview, with its evoked crusade against the enemies of freedom: these are some of the antidotes that a distinguished group of realist thinkers—from Carr to Morgenthau up to John Mearsheimer[19]—envisioned vis-à-vis a teleological philosophy of history equating the ultimate triumph of democracy with American global hegemony. Political realism—this is the starting point of McQueen's enterprise—has managed to contain, intellectually and politically, the apocalyptic drift of both Wilsonian liberal internationalism and the neo-conservative interventionism championed by the Bush administration. Accordingly, considering more thoroughly the relationship between realist texts and their apocalyptic contexts can throw new light on the complex, ambiguous, and still undertheorized dynamic that connects eschatological visions to the realist responses they generated.

Like the volume edited by Duncan Bell exactly ten years ago,[20] McQueen's book questions the division of labor between international relations and political theory that has become conventional in the wake of the Behavioral Revolution. It revisits and reconnects the work of three authors whose ideas figure prominently in the canon of Western political realism and yet have been seldom dissected, and even more rarely compared, through an apocalyptic prism[21]: Machiavelli (1469-1527), Hobbes (1588-1679), and Morgenthau (1904-1980). Despite the different historical, political, and geographical contexts in which they operated, they similarly developed their realism in reaction to thriving prophecies about an imminent end of the world. In chapters 3 through 5—i.e., the core of the book—McQueen thoroughly examines the ideas of Girolamo

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[18] Titled *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* (committee members: Susan Buck-Morss, Jason Frank, John M. Najemy, Peter J. Katzenstein), it received the Leo Strauss Award for the best dissertation in political philosophy by the American Political Science Association in 2012.

[19] See, for example, Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946); Id., *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1948); Id., *In Defense of the National Interests: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Knopf, 1951); Id., *The Restoration of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Id., *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

[20] See *supra* n. 1.

[21] McQueen (9, n. 31) mentions the partial exception of John Pocock, who did touch on Machiavelli and Hobbes's apocalypticism: see John G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 83-113 (in a chapter explicitly titled "From Bruni to Savonarola: Fortune, Venice, and Apocalypse") and Id., "Times, History, and Eschatology," in John H. Elliott and Helmut G. Koenigsberger, eds., *The Diversity of History: Essays in Honour of Sir Herbert Butterfield*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 149-198. Surprisingly, *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* makes no reference to Athanasios Moulakis's *Republican Realism in Renaissance Florence* (Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, 1998): though it focuses primarily on Guicciardini (rather than Machiavelli), it is one of the first, and most explicit, attempts to explore the realist dimension of late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Florentine constitutionalism.

Savonarola, who urged for a spiritual and political renewal of late-fifteenth century Florence; the apocalyptic expectations prospering in England from the late-sixteenth century up through the English Civil War and beyond; and the political-theological imaginary of post-war America after the horror of Nazi-Fascism, the hecatomb of the Holocaust, and the persistent threat of a nuclear Armageddon.[22] She contextualizes and unpacks these three constellations of ideas, fears, and hopes along their historical trajectories and reveals how they surfaced, either explicitly or implicitly, in some of the most important works of the three authors: Machiavelli's *The Prince* (especially its final chapter) and, later on, *Discourses on Livy*; Hobbes's *De Cive* and, even more evidently, *Leviathan* (his most scriptural and eschatological writing); and Morgenthau's postwar publications (1946-1951), particularly *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, *Politics Among Nations*, and *In Defense of the National Interest*.

The findings that McQueen reveals to her readers are unexpected and have far-reaching implications for the overall understanding of three authors' ideas, both on their own grounds and within the broader horizon of realist political theory, past and present. While it is common wisdom that realism is antithetical to, and thus immune from, any form of apocalypticism, she unveils two modalities in which, throughout the history of political thought, these two -isms have interacted and mutually influenced their own internal principles.

The former—rejection—describes a deliberate shift away from any eschatological expectation; entails a cyclical vision of political time against the linearity of history that most prophetic imaginaries presuppose; and, by stressing the perishability of any political artifact, it works as a reminder of the fatal, even tragic, powerlessness of human actors. The latter—redirection—appropriates same of the conceptual pillars of the eschatological construction and rearranges them according to a new logic, with the purpose of "fight[ing] apocalypse *with apocalypse*" (14). In other words, it strategically draws on the emotional repertoire activated by prophecies, religious and secular, to legitimize new institutions that promise the miracle of stability, security, peace, and order.

Taken together and examined both synchronically and diachronically, the writings of the authors under consideration reveal their resort to either one of the two approaches or—even more surprisingly—to both. Through a careful analysis of the texts and a solid grasp of the intellectual, political, and institutional history to which they belong, McQueen detects evidence of the "rejection" method in Machiavelli's later work (*Discourses*) and in the early Morgenthau (especially in the final chapters of *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*); on the other hand, she finds an indication of the re-directional approach in Hobbes and in the later Morgenthau (with reference to his writings on nuclear weapons).

In McQueen's account, three are the main contributions that make reconnecting realist texts to their apocalyptic contexts a project worth pursuing. First, it alerts readers and scholars to elements of canonical works that might otherwise go unnoticed. This is certainly the case of the scriptural considerations meticulously articulated by Hobbes in the last two books of *Leviathan*, which have traditionally been taken to share little ground with the political arguments of the first two books. As McQueen shows, elaborating on an initial intuition by John Pocock,[23] the first and the second halves of Hobbes's most famous work are equal in length and deeply connected, with the theological part "redirecting" the apocalyptic anxieties of the English Civil War and offering "a deflationary Christian eschatology" (144) that puts the power of *katéchon* (and thus the postponement of the *éschaton*) back into the sovereign's hands. Second, an apocalyptic reading of realist thinkers has the potential to suggest new interpretations of their work. McQueen provides an example of this hermeneutical exercise by

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[22] A thorough intellectual history of American political thought and social sciences in the aftermath of WWII (absent from McQueen's bibliography) is Ira Katznelson's, *Desolation and Enlightenment. Political Knowledge after Total War, Totalitarianism, and the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

[23] In chapter 4 of her book (106, n. 3), McQueen recalls three major exceptions to scholars' tendency to neglect the second two books of *Leviathan*: Pocock, "Times, History, and Eschatology"; Aloysius P. Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and Kinch Hoekstra, "Disarming the Prophets; Thomas Hobbes and Predictive Power," *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia* 59:1 (2004): 97-153.

throwing light on the "Savonarolan moment" of Machiavelli's thought and interpreting the final chapter of *The Prince*—"Exhortatio ad Capessendam Italiam in Libertatem a Barbaris Vindicandam"—as a call for a prophet rather than a virtuous prince.[24] Finally, it allows to study important texts in the canon of political realism as templates—conceptual, rhetorical, and normative—to theorize the promises, perils, and ethics of apocalypticism today.

The Four Reviews of Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times: *An Overview of their Arguments*

This symposium draws on the expertise of a distinguished group of scholars, both junior and senior, in historical political theory and international relations. By doing so, it replicates the interdisciplinary dialogue that the book exemplifies and encourages. It also shows how different methodologies and research questions can come together and illuminate each other, revealing the merits of an approach to political theory that is, at once, evaluative, explanatory, and historical.[25]

Joshua L. Cherniss's essay is the most extensive. In praising McQueen's original contribution to the analysis of political realism, which he calls "a rough beast […] neither quite a philosophy, nor an ideology, nor a unified tradition," he articulates his comments around three main thematic clusters: the normative texture of apocalypticism; its historical trajectory and nuances in the context of the Cold War; and the distinctive strategic responses to apocalyptic visions that the book selects and explores.

First, Cherniss highlights the ambiguities of the "apocalyptic imaginary." Precisely because, like realism, apocalypticism, too, is neither a theory nor a philosophy, it is difficult to fully capture the role it ascribes to human agency, critical thought, and political action (beside the mere articulation of prophecies). This question has powerful implications, both normative and practical, for the way it maps onto possible, and partially competing, conceptions of apocalyptic visions, as either predictions of what will happen or conjectures about what may happen.

Second, as an expert in twentieth-century political ideologies, Cherniss is sensitive to McQueen's reading of apocalyptic thought in the aftermath of the Second World War. More specifically, he throws light on "an odd omission" in the narrative of chapter 5—i.e., Communist apocalypticism—which, as he recalls, shaped significantly the intellectual and political climate of the Cold War and represented an interesting example of how realists of a certain kind might feel attracted to apocalyptic visions. Through and beyond McQueen, he points at the work of Carr (a unique combination of utopianism and realism) to demonstrate the promising and intriguing interplay between the announced transcendence of reality and the acceptance of its very messiness. He stresses Morgenthau's characterization of liberal apocalypticism as being equally

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[24] See especially McQueen, Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times, 84-96. Privileging an apocalyptic reading, McQueen's work makes an original contribution to Machiavelli scholarship vis-à-vis both its traditional and more recent 'schools of thought' (the Skinnerian, the Straussian, the 'plebeian') and the wave of monographs published over the past few years in the concomitant fields of historical political theory, intellectual history, and the history of political thought. See, for example, Alissa M. Ardito, *Machiavelli and the Modern State:* The Prince, the Discourses on Livy, *and the Extended Territorial Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Erica Benner, *Be Like the Fox: Machiavelli's Lifelong Quest for Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2017); Yves Winter, *Machiavelli and the Orders of Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Michelle T. Clarke, *Machiavelli's Florentine Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Gabriele Pedullà, *Machiavelli in Tumult.* The Discourses on Livy *and the Origins of Political Conflictualism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Ronald J. Schmidt Jr., *Reading Politics with Machiavelli* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); John P. McCormick, *Reading Machiavelli. Scandalous Books, Suspect Engagements and the Virtue of Populist Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); and Alessandro Campi, *Machiavelli and Political Conspiracies: The Struggle for Power in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2019). For a recent reassessment of Machiavelli's work and thought across different interpretations and conceptual approaches, see David Johnston, Nadia Urbinati, Camila Vergara, eds., *Machiavelli on Liberty and Conflict* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[25] For a recent example of this approach (in the field of democratic theory), see Josiah Ober, *Demopolis. Democracy before Liberalism in Theory and Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

dangerous as Communism and Fascism to ask whether it might be an echo of Schmitt's critique of liberal ideology. He also questions McQueen's reading of some "re-directional" approaches to apocalypticism. He references the report commissioned by President Dwight Eisenhower's National Security Council or, more recently, former Vice President Al Gore's documentary on climate change—two examples of "a very American spirit of can-do optimism […] distant from Morgenthau's Teutonic anxiety"—to emphasize a realist strategy that does not simply "fight apocalypse with apocalypse" but seeks to "re-describe" apocalypse as an opportunity more than a threat. In these re-descriptions of an imminent end of the world, and the space for human agency and practical change that they disclose, he finds resources, as well as limits, worth attending to in the context of contemporary debates.

Finally, Cherniss asks whether the two responses to apocalypse that McQueen highlights—rejection and redirection—are as neatly distinguished as she suggests. He mentions some liberal-realist contemporaries of Morgenthau—Niebuhr, Raymond Aron, Isaiah Berlin—to make two claims: a tragic understanding of history does not necessarily entail a cyclical vision of the historical process; focusing on the cultivation of an ethos of the self might be a more effective strategy to master, especially in the present age, "the art of living through catastrophe."

Konstantinos Kostagiannis summarizes the main tenets, and major innovations, of McQueen's book within the existing literature on realism. In the second part of the essay, he mentions two flaws that, on his account, do not allow the book to reach its full potential. First, he argues that the author's main train of thought sometimes derails, adding little to the overall argument: he references the many pages of chapter 3 where McQueen reconstructs Machiavelli's ideas about Savonarola, or the parts of chapter 5 where she explores possible analogies between Schmitt and Morgenthau (referring to, as Kostagiannis notes, the former's *The Concept of the Political* but never mentioning the latter's work with the same title). Second, he claims that McQueen does not fully succeed at her attempt to connect the history of political thought to the history of international relations; her "ambition of intersectionality," perhaps, falls prey to her professional training as a historical political theorist, resulting in a conversation between her two fields of interest and expertise that is "rather one-sided." Kostagiannis mentions the absence of a systematic engagement, in the second last chapter of the book, with the IR literature on Morgenthau (especially about his vision of ethics and tragedy) to support this claim. Nevertheless, he concludes by reiterating the important step forward that McQueen makes in promoting a research agenda that sits promisingly at the intersection of the history of political thought and international relations and emphasizes the historical dimension of the latter.

Richard Ned Lebow's critical comments focus on McQueen's chapter on twentieth-century apocalypticism. He contests two main arguments in particular: on the one hand, what could be called her "two Morgenthaus thesis" revolving around the idea of a radical change in his approach to the apocalyptic imaginary; on the other, what could be called her "Morgenthau problem," centered upon the tension that she sees between Morgenthau's credentials as a realist (including his tragic vision of politics and history) and his appreciation for a supranational response to nuclear threats. Let me briefly address both issues in turn.

Unlike McQueen, Lebow emphasizes the persistence of a tragic worldview in Morgenthau's thought across the decades and thus rejects the idea of a shift, in his writings, from a rejectionist to a re-directional approach to catastrophe. He also draws attention to the strategic choices that Morgenthau made in terms of sources and rhetoric (including resorting to an apocalyptic language) to appeal more effectively to an American audience. By doing so, Lebow cautions against potentially misleading interpretations: the presence of eschatological images in Morgenthau's writings does not automatically entail the presence of an apocalyptic vision of politics in his thought; it simply reveals his attempt to select the best conceptual repertoire for the contingent audience he is writing for.

Regarding how to "square" Morgenthau's tragic vision with his support to an international political project, Lebow's suggestion is twofold. He recommends embracing a broader understanding of tragedy, a concept that—he argues—McQueen defines "too narrowly." He also recalls the revisions from within that Morgenthau made to the traditional realist repertoire in order to adapt its core principles to a radically new context. In particular, Morgenthau rephrased the balance of power theory in supranational terms, and resorted to an apocalyptic imaginary, precisely to fight the threat of a single actor

with unlimited, and unmatched, nuclear power. Only by amending the assumption that realism is necessarily state-centric and thus antithetical to any supra-state (and not simply inter-state) project, is it possible to capture the ambition—and the tragic dimension—of Morgenthau's postwar vision.

Finally, Michael C. Williams describes McQueen's book as "superb," "compelling," "important and innovative." However, he has two concerns. First, he partially questions her account of Saint Paul as a "primarily stabilizing figure" (in his words) within the Christian tradition and its attempt to "neutralize the political threat of apocalypticism" (in her words, 47). Second—and more importantly—he emphasizes the connection between the individual and the universal side of any apocalyptic vision. A catastrophe, in fact, evokes at the same time the idea of a double destruction: that of a specific portion of mankind and that of the entire world. In contemporary politics, those who play the most with the apocalyptic imaginary—populist, nationalistic, xenophobic, and even fundamentalist movements and leaders—deliberately stress the specific, contingent dimension of the apocalypse. It is the decline of the West, the end of European civilization, or the eroded hegemony of a given culture or religion in definite areas of the globe that is presented as the tragic, catastrophic outcome signaling the end of a world worth living in. Hence Williams's powerful questions to McQueen: what role, if any, can a realist vision of politics have in the age of many (particular) apocalypses, and how does the proliferation of announced catastrophes (real or imaginary) affect the nature, ideas, and strategies, of political realism in the present?

McQueen's reply offers compelling answers to her readers and critics. She revisits the core argument of the book through the prism of their questions; clarifies aspects of her textual interpretations; adds nuance to her historical claims; and elucidates the salience that the partially overlapping trajectories of realism and apocalypticism—two inherently plural traditions— retain in the political and institutional milieu of contemporary America. As McQueen recalls, she started thinking about her doctoral project when American politics was imbued with apocalyptic rhetoric; wrote most of her dissertation during the first Obama Administration, when cataclysmic visions seemed to fade away; and she prepared the manuscript for publication when the 2016 U.S. Presidential campaign witnessed the return of an eschatological language on both sides of the political spectrum. "It is never a good sign," McQueen admits, "when a book about the apocalypse speaks to our time." And yet, through her work, she proves that strong political theory dissertations do not simply offer original treatments of texts, contexts, and traditions from the past. They also theorize problems that haunt us in the present and, by doing so, offer a compass for the future.

Conclusion

The four essays of this symposium reveal close and careful readings of the book. The reviewers' appreciation of its arguments and structure is genuine; their questions and critiques are enlightening and thoroughly articulated. Altogether, the contributions of Cherniss, Kostagiannis, Lebow, and Williams give voice to the many, potential other books that the reader can hear breathing throughout the pages of *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* and that, perhaps, are waiting to start a life on their own. This is true for any monograph that breaks new ground, and McQueen's is no exception.

Participants:

Alison McQueen is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Stanford University. She works on religion in early modern political thought, the history of International Relations thought, and political realism. She is the author of *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* (Cambridge University Press, 2018) and is currently finishing a book on Thomas Hobbes and religion, provisionally titled "Absolving God: The Scriptural Politics of Thomas Hobbes."

David Ragazzoni is completing a Ph.D. in Political Theory at Columbia University, New York, where he also teaches as a Graduate Preceptor in the Core Curriculum. He earned his previous degrees (including an Italian doctorate) in the History of Political Philosophy and last year received Italy's National Scientific Qualification as Associate Professor in the two fields of Political Philosophy and History of Philosophy. Many of the themes/authors discussed in this roundtable are at the core

of his dissertation ("The Ancestry of Parties. Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and the Politics of Taking Sides in Pre-Electoral Republics") and of the three-day workshop *Political Realism and Democratic Theory: 20th-century visions, 21st-Century Challenges* that he organized within Mancept Workshops in Political Theory 2019.

Joshua L. Cherniss is an Assistant Professor of Government at Georgetown University, studying and teaching political theory and the history of political thought. He is the author of *A Mind and its Time: The Development of Isaiah Berlin's Political Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2013) and co-editor (with Steven B. Smith) of *The Cambridge Companion to Isaiah Berlin* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). His articles and chapters on Berlin, Reinhold Niebuhr, Max Weber, and others have appeared in *The Edinburgh Companion to Political Realism* (2018), the *Review of Politics*, the *Journal of Politics*, *The Tocqueville Review*, and elsewhere. He is at work on a book about liberalism, anti-liberalism, and debates over political ethics in twentieth-century political thought.

Konstantinos Kostagiannis is a Lecturer in International Relations at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration and a Visiting Researcher at the University of the Peloponnese. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh. He is the author of *Realist Thought and the Nation-state* (2017).

Richard Ned Lebow is professor of international political theory in the War Studies department of King's College London and Bye-Fellow of Pembroke College, University of Cambridge. His most recent books are *The Rise and Fall of Political Orders* (Cambridge University Press, 2018) and *Max Weber and International Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Michael C. Williams is Professor in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Ottawa in Canada. He is the author of *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 2015). His recent publications include "International Relations in the Age of the Image," *International Studies Quarterly* (2018); his current research focuses on the rise of radical conservatism and international order and includes, with Jean-Francois Drolet, "Radical Conservatism and Global Order," *International Theory* 10:3 (2018): 285-313, and "America First: Paleoconservatism and the Ideological Struggle for the American Right," *Journal of Political Ideologies* (forthcoming).

REVIEW BY JOSHUA CHERNISS, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Alison McQueen has done something remarkable: she has offered a model of thinking calmly and clearly about apocalypse. She has also made a seminal contribution to our thinking about the history of "political realism" and the interplay of religious and secular concepts and categories in modern political thought, and she has advanced, in the "apocalyptic imaginary" (53ff) a useful conceptual tool that can be applied further. In this reflection on her book, I want to first consider this broader conceptual contribution, before looking more closely at—and raising some questions about—her treatment of the interplay of 'realism' and 'apocalypticism' in twentieth century political thought.

While McQueen's book is largely a contribution to the history of political thought, and to the analysis of that rough beast (neither quite a philosophy, nor an ideology, nor a unified tradition) we call political realism, it is also engaged, if mostly obliquely, with the normative political questions raised by our own apocalyptic times and imaginings. Accordingly, I will briefly consider McQueen's evaluation of the dangers and advantages of what she identifies as the two main types of response to apocalypticism to which 'realists' have been drawn. These are a tragic *rejection* of apocalypse, which seeks to chasten apocalyptic hopes and fears by re-describing human history in terms of a cyclical (or never-ending) process of conflict which never culminates in a final rapture or redemption; and a *redirection* which seeks to use the fear of apocalypse's horrors to discourage enthusiasm for the redemption that apocalyptics promise.

I.

McQueen has made important contributions in analyzing and disaggregating political realism, a much-debated term, which encompasses many meanings.[26] She is concerned here with the ways in which political realism has been shaped by its encounters with apocalyptic thinking (or 'apocalypticism'). She characterizes this latter tendency through the conceptual tool of an "imaginary"—that is, a "set of meanings, symbols, values, narratives, and representations of the world through which people imagine," and find meaning in, their existence (52).[27] The "apocalyptic imaginary" is defined by several "[c]entral structural elements" which McQueen identifies (57-9). These are: 1) the claim that the apocalypse is *imminent* and that it represents 2) a *cataclysm* which is also a form of *creative* destruction, which will cleanse and renew the world; this will 3) bring an end to some great evil that has burdened human history, and thus 4) represents a moment of *rupture* in history. In affirming justice and vanquishing evil, apocalypse also 5) reveals the *meaning* of history, allowing us to properly understand, at last, all that has come before.

That the apocalyptic imaginary is thus defined not only by images and stories, but also a certain conception of history, is central. Not the least of the contributions of McQueen's theorization of the "apocalyptic imaginary" is the way in which it highlights the centrality of perceptions of history, and suggests ways in which these can have normative and political implications.

But an 'imaginary' is not a theory or philosophy: and as a vision of history, the "apocalyptic imaginary" that McQueen presents is marked by a number of obscurities and tensions. One concerns the role of human agency. To the extent that

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[26] See McQueen, "Political Realism and the Realist 'Tradition,'" in Andrew Sabl and Rahul Sagar. eds., *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 20:3 (2017): 291-305; McQueen, "The Case for Kinship: Political Realism and Classical Realism," in Matt Sleat, ed. *Politics Recovered: Realist Thought in Theory and Practice* (Columbia University Press, 2018). For an agenda-setting characterization of "realism" in recent political theory see William Galston, "Realism in political theory," *European Journal of Political Theory* 9:4 (2010): 385-411, as well as the other essays in the special issue edited by Sabl and Sagar and the volume edited by Sleat cited above.

[27] McQueen is quoting Chiara Bottici here.

apocalyptic thought involves *prophecy*—a narrative of history which claims to identify direction and meaning in the morass of events, and even to foretell the outcome—what role does it assign to human deliberation and action? Do apocalyptic visions rule out the probabilism and agnosticism about the future that follow if we make room for a significant degree of human agency? Or, if apocalyptic visions are warnings about what *may* be, rather than previsions of what *will* be (to borrow a distinction from that great philosopher Charles Dickens),[28] can they claim to reveal the deep underlying meaning of history as a whole?

There is also an ambiguity in the idea of historical "rupture": it is unclear whether this necessarily involves the 'end of history,' or merely a radical break within it. Both of these points are relevant to McQueen's discussion of apocalypticism in post-World War II thought, to which I now turn.

<div align="center">II.</div>

McQueen's account of the apocalyptic imaginary in the mid-twentieth century— which centers on the prominent "realist" theory of international relations Hans Morgenthau, but encompasses fascinating discussions of apocalyptic motifs in Nazi thought, in perceptions of the Holocaust and of nuclear war, and of American responses to the Cold War nuclear arms-race—is extremely rich, and mostly convincing. I was, however, puzzled by the scant attention paid here—and in the book as a whole—to Marxism, aside from a few passing remarks (see, for example, 58). This is an odd omission, first, because Communist apocalypticism played a crucial role in shaping the apocalyptic atmosphere of Cold War thought—and the strongly apocalyptic tendency within *interwar* thought, with which (in the case of Nazism) McQueen is also concerned. Second, Communism exemplifies the complex interplay of apocalypticism and realism, suggesting that, while apocalypticism is, as McQueen is apt to stress, a problem for realists, there may also be an attraction between *a certain strand* of realism and apocalypticism. McQueen acknowledges this when, drawing on the British historian and scholar of international relations E. H. Carr, she suggests that realists may be susceptible to apocalypticism because realism is simply too bleak to be sustained (195). Carr's own case suggests a further connection: for those disposed to *both* realism and utopianism (as Carr was), apocalypticism is appealing because it promises the eventual transcendence of the reality of human conflict and sinfulness (utopia) *through* the workings of that very conflict and sinfulness (realism). In Communism, Carr—and others—found a combination of ruthless practicality and redemptive faith that satisfied mixed 'realist' and 'utopian' dispositions.

While Marxism is largely absent, McQueen's discussion of Morgenthau highlights his opposition to *liberal* apocalypticism, which is equated with the other "nationalistic universalisms" of Communism and Fascism (170).[29] While McQueen points out that Morgenthau was an unreliable or eccentric historian, she does not question his characterization of liberalism as utopian-apocalyptic. But nor does she really confirm it (the only apocalyptic liberal cited is U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, who is not exactly an exemplar of Cold War liberalism). This raises the question of why Morgenthau focused on *this* target. Perhaps this reflects an enduring debt to the German legal theorist (and "crown jurist of the Third Reich") Carl Schmitt (whose views of liberalism should be treated with some trepidation—to put it mildly). Or perhaps he thought it was more urgent to warn against liberal utopianism and Manicheanism when writing for an audience which was inclined to be hostile to Communist illusions, and susceptible to liberal ones.

Another puzzle concerns how well the vision of apocalypse to which McQueen claims Morgenthau turned fits the model of the "apocalyptic imaginary." Is an "apocalypse without redemption or renewal" (178)—an apocalypse "deprived of meaning" (187)—such as the one that Morgenthau sketched, really still an *apocalypse*, given that a major feature of apocalypse is that it

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[28] Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1858), 90.

[29] Here McQueen is quoting Morgenthau, "World Politics in the Mid-Twentieth Century," *Review of Politics* 10:2 (1948): 154-73, at 156.

invests human history with meaning? Can imaginaries oriented around the project of theodicy (including secularized 'theodicies' such as Marxism) be equated with those that depict apocalypse, or history generally, as devoid of redemption?

Morgenthau's warnings may, however, be *more* truly apocalyptic than some of what McQueen identifies as examples of a dangerous nuclear apocalypticism. They in fact seem more like denials of apocalypse that deliberately downplay the extent to which a nuclear war would represent a "rupture" in history and instead stress continuity. Indeed, many of the responses that McQueen depicts as examples of a strategy of apocalyptic "redirection" seem less like attempts to "fight apocalypse with apocalypse" than attempts to *redescribe* apocalypse, portraying it not as "a novel threat … [but] a novel opportunity," which opens the door to "the unprecedented 'moral and political transformation' required for a world community" (188). These redescriptions (for example, the passages from a report commissioned by the Eisenhower National Security Council (NSC), and former Vice President Al Gore's 2006 documentary film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, quoted at 160 and 202 respectively) stress possibilities not only for continuity, but human *agency,* which creates problems for the avowedly prophetic quality of apocalyptic visions; is human free-will compatible with a vision that sees history tending towards a defining cataclysmic end?

The statements from the Eisenhower NSC and Gore express a very American spirit of can-do optimism, one which is distant from Morgenthau's Teutonic anxiety. Yet, as McQueen strikingly reveals, Morgenthau also sought to re-frame the nuclear threat as an opportunity, which might give rise to a new international society. Indeed, she writes, for Morgenthau "utopia had become a necessity" (191). Morgenthau's later responses to the threat of nuclear war thus seem to waver between a tendency to "cast nuclear apocalypse as a *certain future*," (201, emphasis added), and a hopeful rejection of apocalyptic prophecy in favor of a tempered faith in human agency. Both of these responses, which now present themselves to those confronting climate change, just as they presented themselves to Morgenthau and others concerned with nuclear war, have their advantages and disadvantages. The former can combat wishful thinking or evasion, but might also breed panic, resignation, despair—not what is needed for cool deliberation or determined action. The latter might motivate politicians—or ordinary citizens—to work to bring about positive change; but it might also offer a false sense of hope which encourages the adoption of unrealistic expectations or goals.

III.

What of the strategies of response to apocalypse that McQueen posits as being available to realists: rejection and redirection? Both, McQueen suggests, may negatively affect judgment and motivation. Of the two, she portrays redirection as more motivationally galvanizing; and while the fears and hopes it inspires may distort judgment, it may also attune judgment to recognition of *novel* threats and possibilities. Yet, as McQueen notes, it is not clear that redirection will necessarily have such motivational benefits: it may foster pathologies not only of fanaticism (which distorts judgment) but resignation or despair (which saps motivation).

On the other hand, it is not clear that the strategy of tragic rejection poses the dangers for *judgment* that McQueen suggests, even if, in motivational terms, I think she is right to worry that a refusal to accept that either utter destruction or ultimate redemption as historical possibilities may foster defeatism and/or complacency. According to McQueen, tragic rejection "opposes an apocalyptic certainty about the direction of history with a cyclical understanding of political time … [It] emphasizes the ease with which virtuous actions can produce terrible consequences, insists on the limits to effective political action, and warns of the impossibility of final and enduring political settlements" (13-14). But there is a difference, and tension, between opposing certainty about the direction of history, and asserting a cyclical philosophy of history; it is not obvious that a 'tragic' response *must* follow Niccolò Machiavelli and the early Morgenthau in affirming the latter.

Indeed, the evidence from Morgenthau's own intellectual context suggests that it need not. Such contemporaries as the American theologian and public intellectual Reinhold Niebuhr, the French columnist, sociologist, philosopher, and scholar of international relations Raymond Aron, and the British philosopher and historian of ideas Isaiah Berlin shared many of the features of thought that characterized Morgenthau's "tragic turn" as it is depicted by McQueen: ethical pluralism and emphasis on irresolvable moral conflict, rejection of utopian ambition and "hybris" and insistence on *limits*, and emphasis

on unintended consequences. None of them affirmed a cyclical view of history; indeed, Aron and Berlin vehemently denied that history followed *any* regular, preordained pattern. Thus shorn of a cyclical view of history, a tragic perspective need not rule out the possibility of—or blind us to—novelty. Furthermore, while tragedy involves a chastened view of human agency, it need not preclude agency—and thus need not foster hopeless resignation or irresponsible acceptance.

There remain two other problems with the tragic response that McQueen emphasizes, and one which she mentions it briefly. First, tragic *modesty* may be inhibiting and even paralyzing when it comes to taking needed action. Second, tragedy may be too emotionally burdensome, inhibiting human flourishing both by being emotionally difficult or draining, and by fostering certain dispositions which may be contrary to other dispositions that are necessary for flourishing (199). Finally, tragedy may foster "a *hardening of the heart*" (199), desensitizing or inuring us to suffering which is taken to be inevitable and irremediable.

But, as we have seen, apocalypticism may also be inhibiting and even paralyzing, if it causes despair—or eager anticipation—in the expectation of inevitable catastrophe. It too can inhibit flourishing—not only by inspiring terror, but also by instilling dispositions that are contrary to genuine flourishing. And by rendering suffering inevitable, and also meaningful and redemptive, in relation to an apocalyptic end, it also can lead to a hardening of heart. So "redirection" seems not to be a preferable alternative to tragedy on these grounds.

Perhaps Machiavelli, with his assertion of a tragic cyclicism; Hobbes, with his attempt at a redirection of the apocalyptic power of fear; and Morgenthau, with his swing from a version of tragic rejection emphasizing cyclical continuity to a version of redirection torn between doom and utopia, are not the best models for thinking about how realists (and the rest of us) should cultivate "the art of living through catastrophe" (205). Perhaps others offer more useful guidance. And maybe in thinking about this "art of living" we should focus not just on 'strategies' such as redirection or rejection, but on practices of the self, the cultivation of certain dispositions or a certain ethos, which might prevent the use of possible strategies from going awry. But this is to indulge in the critics' vice of calling for a book that the author did not write (and that the critic would). As it is, we must be very grateful for the riches and illumination of the book that McQueen has given us.

Review by Konstantinos Kostagiannis, Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration

Discourses of a looming apocalypse do not readily come to mind when contemplating twenty-first century politics. As Alison McQueen correctly points in the introduction to her book, we normally view apocalyptic believers as marginal people, who at best retreat from the real world in anticipation of its end, and at worst violently try to bring about such an end. Apocalyptic beliefs, however, are more common than this, and in both their religious and secular forms often infiltrate the highest echelons of power (1-6). With *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times,* McQueen explores the ambiguous encounters of classical realists with said beliefs. The crux of the book's argument is that, despite what one would expect of them, classical realists are not merely dismissive of the apocalyptic imaginary. Instead, when faced with apocalypticism, they engage with it, and they respond to it by either *rejecting* it or by *redirecting* it. Those two responses are methodically traced in the writings of three seminal realists who lived in times rife with apocalyptic expectations: Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and Hans Morgenthau.

The main argument starts by tracing the apocalyptic worldview to the Judeo-Christian tradition. In her discussion of the book of Daniel and the Revelation of John, McQueen explains how the apocalyptic worldview emerged as an effort to give meaning to major political crises of the time. Those crises raised an important question for Jews and early Christians. How can one understand the suffering of the elect (be that Israelites or early Christians) at the hands of the powers that be (be that Antiochus IV or the Roman Emperor) without delegitimising God? The response of the apocalyptic worldview is that the forces of evil have temporarily taken over the world. God, however, will reassert his control, put an end to this world, and create a new one devoid of evil. All of this is imminent: "any day now" the believers "will witness the closure of history" (23-40). The apocalyptic worldview is, McQueen shows, deeply political. It casts sovereign power as "a beast" which is antithetical to the divine order; it retrospectively gives meaning to contingent political events; and it promises an imminent end to that contingency. The world that is promised is one devoid of "difference, conflict, and moral complexity"; it is "a world without politics" (40-42). Such a worldview is potentially radical, containing as it does the possibility of rousing violent enthusiasms. What is more, apocalyptic expectations are not limited to religious individuals or groups. McQueen - in what is probably the only dense part in an otherwise most readable book - invites us to consider the apocalypse as an "imaginary," as a way of making sense of the world. An imaginary comprises images, symbols, narratives, and meanings through which societies imagine the world and their place within it (51-59). Such an understanding of apocalypse can then encompass not only religious but also secular manifestations of the imaginary such as climate change or nuclear war.

The rest of the book is dedicated to realist encounters with the apocalyptic imaginary. Machiavelli, the first realist McQueen considers, lived during the Italian Wars, a period marked by political turmoil and foreign interventions. This situation offered fertile ground for the blooming of prophecy throughout Italy, and Machiavelli's native Florence was no exception. The last decade of the fifteenth century witnessed the rise and fall of Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola and his attempt to turn Florence, which was cast as an "elect nation," into a "site of apocalyptic rebirth" (64-79). Machiavelli himself, claims McQueen, was not immune to the apocalyptic imaginary. She sees the last chapter of the *Prince,* which invokes the plight of Italy and calls for a redemptive prince, as a clear manifestation of the impact of the imaginary on Machiavelli. If, however, Machiavelli flirted with apocalypse, this was no lasting affair. In his later *Discourses,* he instead turned to the first of the two possible realist responses to the apocalypse i.e. rejection. He did so by embracing a tragic worldview which recognised the limitations of what political action can achieve. Political problems recur throughout history, and "resist final settlement" (100). Even if such a settlement were possible, it might come at too high a price. And yet, Machiavelli never fully abandoned hope of a perpetual republic. The "captivating promise of the Savonarolan moment" after all "once imagined, cannot easily be forgotten" (97-103).

Hobbes's encounter with the apocalypse led to a different response, that of redirection. The English apocalyptic imaginary was rooted on the relatively moderate protestant apocalypticism of the Marian exiles during the sixteenth century. The authors of those works were wary of apocalyptic enthusiasm. Yet it was those very works which formed the basis of the radical puritan apocalypticism of the English Civil War a few decades later. This apocalypticism challenged sovereign power

directly (108-119). The *Leviathan,* Hobbes's "most scriptural and most eschatological" work, attempted to tame the apocalyptic imaginary and return it to the hands of sovereign power (119-122). McQueen argues that Hobbes's strategy was two-pronged. On the one hand, Hobbes went to great lengths to reveal prophets as false ones and to challenge their claims of an imminent apocalypse. He also attempted to correct, through some "scriptural juggling," the imbalance between the prophet, who threatened eternal damnation, and the sovereign, whose sanction could only be mortal death. Once the field was levelled, Hobbes presented his secular apocalypse. He cast the state of nature as a moment of chaos, an "uncreation" which undid the achievements of the commonwealth. From such a catastrophe the Leviathan would emerge, putting an end to the rule of chaos and offering earthly salvation. Christ could offer salvation in the end of days, but here and now, "in this world, the Leviathan state is our only savior" (119-144).

The book then fast-forwards to the twentieth century, one which lacked the overtly religious apocalypticism of McQueen's previous two examples, but which was not devoid of apocalyptic images and narratives. From the apocalyptic hallucinations of Nazism, to the lived apocalypse of the Holocaust, and the potential self-inflicted apocalypse of nuclear war, the twentieth century was rife with apocalyptic narratives, experiences, and images (149-162). In his encounter with the apocalyptic imaginary, Morgenthau in turn adopted both realist responses. From the late 1940s until the early 1960s, faced with the apocalyptic challenge posed by "political religions" like Soviet Communism and American liberal internationalism, Morgenthau turned to tragedy.[30] By invoking the limits of political action and the ethics of the lesser evil, Morgenthau tried to propose an alternative to the apocalypticism of political religions (162-177).

This response, however, was soon to change. The problem with a tragic worldview, McQueen reminds us, is that it is incapable of addressing novelty. The advent of the nuclear age was one such novelty. Morgenthau took more than a decade to accept its implications but when he finally did he shifted to a strategy of redirection. By inviting his audience to imagine "a nuclear apocalypse without worldly redemption" he sought to dispel what he thought were the dangerous illusions of those like strategist Herman Kahn who contemplated optimistic scenarios about the aftermath of a nuclear war (183). Like Hobbes before him, Morgenthau redirected the apocalyptic imaginary. He presented his audience with the apocalypse of "nuclear annihilation in order to prevent it" (178-190). Morgenthau's solution was none other than the world state that he previously had thought impossible. This shift in Morgenthau's work has not gone unnoticed in relevant literature, and McQueen offers a novel and welcome angle of looking at it that can complement existing discussions.[31] The book concludes by evaluating the two realist strategies and summarising their main strengths and weaknesses.

Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times is a work with many merits. McQueen's book discusses a subject that has received little attention, at least insofar as the field of IR is concerned, and it makes a persuasive case for its relevance to politics. The author combines an attentive reading of realist texts with a close examination of the apocalyptic context in which they were produced. McQueen offers fascinating accounts of the prevalence of the apocalyptic imaginary in different societies throughout time. These accounts are backed by a variety of textual and non-textual evidence that help to vividly present the apocalyptic imaginary. This is a well-crafted argument which does not suffer from serious flaws. It has, however, or at least so it seems to this reviewer, two weaknesses that prevent it from reaching its full potential.

First, there are two parts of the book where the line of argument seems to offer little to forward the claim the author is trying to support. One such instance is the discussion about Machiavelli's views on Savonarola (9-84). This discussion is not only inconclusive but also, as McQueen recognises at its culmination, of only marginal utility to the argument: "Whatever Machiavelli's position on the friar, there are textual resonances" with the apocalyptic imaginary of the Savonarola moment

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[30] The other political religion of the twentieth century, and certainly the most characteristic example of nationalistic universalism, German Nazism, was already a spent force by that time.

[31] See indicatively the excellent discussions in: Campbell Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and Waltz* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 54-73 and 93-109; William E. Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 101-164.

(84). Similarly, the author dedicates sizable parts of Chapter 5 to exploring the possible parallels between Morgenthau's argument and that of jurist Carl Schmitt. The relationship between the two is rather overstated. This emphasis on Schmitt also occasionally undermines the focus on Morgenthau's own views. It was, for example, somewhat surprising to read a chapter dedicated to the thought of Morgenthau where Schmitt's *Concept of the Political* is cited more than once, but Morgenthau's own work with the same title is not.[32]

The second shortcoming of the book is that it does not fully succeed in its ambition of intersectionality. McQueen situates her work at "the intersection of the history of political thought and the history of international relations thought" (15). As she remarks, political theorists tend to focus on Machiavelli and Hobbes, and IR thinkers on Morgenthau. McQueen here refers to a broader issue in realist literature wherein political theorists and IR scholars, while preoccupied with the same issues and approaching them in a similar manner, seem to be occupying "two parallel universes".[33] The book thus comes as a welcome response to calls for the two fields to engage with each other more.[34] In McQueen's own words it is an attempt to work "across the boundaries between these two fields" and in so doing to "bring these thinkers into productive conversation" (15). The book is indeed a positive step in achieving this productive conversation. As someone whose field of expertise lies with IR, this reviewer found much to commend in the book.

The conversation between the two fields as it unfolds in the book, however, is rather one-sided. The chapter on Morgenthau would be an ideal place for this conversation, as he is the thinker who is normally neglected by political theorists. To be sure, McQueen engages with key relevant works by IR scholars in her reading of Morgenthau.[35] On occasion, however, her discussion misses the treatment of the topic she discusses in IR literature. This is especially the case in the account of Morgenthau's ethics and their position in his tragic worldview where the discussion is mostly focused on a close reading of Morgenthau and the exploration of the connections of his work with that of Schmitt (167-171 and 176-177). Given that Morgenthau's ethics and his views on tragedy have attracted significant attention in IR literature, McQueen's account would have benefited greatly from more engagement with this literature.[36] If the book aspired to bring political theory and international theory into a productive dialogue, then one would expect to hear a bit more from the latter.

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[32] The English translation of Morgenthau's 1933 *Concept of the Political* was published in 2012 with an excellent introduction by Hartmut Behr and Felix Rösch. As Behr and Rösch mention in their introduction, this 1933 piece is "the only time Morgenthau ever substantially dealt with Schmitt" and this work makes clear that he "deplored Schmitt's understanding of the political on moral and conceptual grounds". See Hartmut Behr and Felix Rösch, "Introduction" in Hans Morgenthau, *The Concept of the Political* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 3-79: 4-32.

[33] William E. Scheuerman, "The realist revival in political philosophy, or: Why new is not always improved," *International Politics* 50:6 (2013): 798-814, 798.

[34] Duncan Bell, "Political realism and international relations," *Philosophy Compass* 12:2 (2017): e12403; Alison McQueen "The case for Kinship: Classical realism and political realism," in *Politics Recovered: Realist Thought in Theory and Practice*, ed. Matt Sleat (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), ch. 10; Scheuerman, "The realist revival in political philosophy"

[35] There are two major works on Morgenthau, however, that would have allowed McQueen to further nuance her main argument: Felix Rösch, *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent in Morgenthau's Worldview* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) and Benjamin M. Mollov, *Power and Transcendence: Hans J. Morgenthau and the Jewish Experience* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002).

[36] See indicatively: William Bain, "Deconfusing Morgenthau: Moral Inquiry and Classical Realism Reconsidered," *Review of International Studies* 26:3 (2000): 445-464; Stefano Recchia, "Restraining Imperial Hubris: The Ethical Bases of Realist International Relations Theory," *Constellations* 14:4 (2007): 531-556; Douglas Klusmeyer, "Beyond Tragedy: Hannah Arendt and Hans Morgenthau on Responsibility, Evil and Political Ethics," *International Studies Review* 11:2 (2009): 343-347; Seán Molloy, "Hans J. Morgenthau Versus E. H. Carr: Conflicting Conceptions of Ethics in Realism," in *Political Thought and International Relations: Variations on a Realist Theme*, ed. Duncan Bell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 87-90; Seán Molloy, "Aristotle, Epicurus, Morgenthau and the Political Ethics of the Lesser Evil," *Journal of International Political Theory* 5:1 (2009): 96-98; Hartmut Behr and Felix Rösch, "The Ethics of Anti-

To summarise, *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* is a compelling work which adds to our understanding of the allure and pitfalls of the apocalyptic imaginary in the past six centuries. It is also a work that makes a persuasive case for the continuing resonance the imaginary has in our secularised times. Despite not fully achieving its intersectional potential, this book is a valuable contribution to the literature and will be of interest to political theorists, historians of ideas, and IR scholars.

Hubris in the Political Philosophy of International Relations: Hans J. Morgenthau" in Jodok Troy, ed., *Religion and the Realist Tradition: From Political Theology to International Relations Theory and Back* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014): 111-128.

REVIEW BY RICHARD NED LEBOW, KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

Alison McQueen juxtaposes apocalyptic theories and politics with those of realism. Realists oppose apocalypticism but have adopted their rhetoric toward this end. McQueen describes the Judeo-Christian roots of apocalyptic thinking and the later tensions between it and realism. Her vehicle is a close reading of Niccoló Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and Hans J. Morgenthau, foundational thinkers of what we have come to call realism. All three wrote during or after tumultuous events—the French invasion of Italy, the Spanish Armada and English Civil War, World War II and the Holocaust—that inspired apocalyptic visions and political projects.

Realism and apocalypticism are opposing world views. The former, in its religious and secular manifestations, invokes a teleology to make the frightening present explicable. It holds out the seductive promise of alleviating or removing conflict by means of a new order, but one that can only be achieved after much violence and suffering. The transformation it envisages promises an end to politics. Realists see the world as largely unchanging or cyclical in its evolution. They are inclined toward a tragic view of life that considers promises of transformation and escape from conflict as illusory and dangerous. They direct their attention to what they consider practical means of minimizing the consequences of conflict.

Apocalypticism has broad appeal in eras marked by fear and suffering. However, the very characteristics that make it appealing render it dangerous and unstable. Realists pick up on these problems but their tragic view of life offers little emotional support and may make people feel more vulnerable. Realism avoids the excesses of apocalypticism but can stand in the way of meaningful change and become an ideology in defense of the status quo. American support of authoritarian regimes during the Cold War and de facto acceptance of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe might be cited in evidence.

Political Realism is interesting because each of these world views offers a vantage point from which to understand, evaluate, and critique the other. The pairing of apocalypticism and tragedy is particularly interesting in this regard. So too is the argument, which I find compelling, that key realists over the centuries have adopted apocalyptic rhetoric to oppose apocalyptic projects, a version of fighting fire with fire. It invariably involves them in contradictions that McQueen thinks are difficult to resolve.

McQueen opens with a short introduction that defines what she means by apocalypticism, succinctly spells out the central argument of the book, and justifies her choice of realists. This is followed by a chapter on the Book of Daniel and Book of Revelation, key apocalyptic texts. She distils the essence of apocalyptic thinking and argues that these books and their themes have constituted a resource for Western thinkers and politicians in times of crisis. She describes efforts by Paul and Augustine of Hippo to limit and contain apocalyptic thinking and concludes by showing how apocalyptic thinking transcended theology and literature to become an important political imaginary.

Three subsequent chapters on Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Morgenthau show how these thinkers recognized the appeal and power of the apocalyptic imaginary, opposed apocalyptic thinking and political projects, but adopted apocalyptic rhetoric to do this. All three thinkers, she contends, at some point succumbed to apocalyptic thinking in order to confront an age of catastrophe. The chapters are informative, well-argued, and engage relevant literature.

I want to focus my remarks on the more recent of her thinkers: Hans J. Morgenthau. There was undeniably a change in his thinking about nuclear weapons and political change, and so too his turn to apocalyptic rhetoric. I think it wrong, however, to argue that Morgenthau underwent a fundamental change in his world view. He retained his tragic view of life and politics, which was deeply ingrained and goes at least as far back as his close engagement with Nietzsche and Weber in the early 1920s. The fact that he utilized apocalyptic rhetoric—and this is true of Machiavelli and Hobbes as well—does not mean that he adopted an apocalyptic view of politics, it just means that he chose to use language that he believed his intended audience would find compelling. As Morgenthau scholars have noted, he downplayed his reliance on Kant and Weber and the language of German idealism for the opposite reason; he was convinced they would turn off American readers.

McQueen finds it difficult to square Morgenthau's endorsement of supranational projects in order to address the twin threats of nuclear weapons and environmental degradation with a tragic view of politics. This depends on one's conception of tragedy, and McQueen defines it narrowly. She rightly associates tragedy with the belief that well-meaning actions, especially those with sweeping goals, can have counterproductive and even catastrophic consequences. For this reason, she contends, realists tend to oppose grand projects as unrealistic. Morgenthau did go against the grain in this regard but it was not necessary for him to give up his tragic vision to do so.

Classical realists consider great powers to be their own worst enemies. They are not infrequently led by hubris to act in ways that are self-defeating. The worst fear of classical realists is an arrogant and ambitious leader with a powerful military arsenal—a threat most readers will recognize. They favor constraints on such leaders and states and are strong supporters of the balance of power. Morgenthau confronted novel circumstances, as he belatedly came to recognize. Bipolarity, nuclear weapons, and a seemingly Manichean struggle between opposing social systems were transforming the practice of international relations and making it less stable and more war prone, and in an era when all-out war had become unimaginably costly. He hoped that the balance of power might still prove useful, but not in the manner assumed by traditional balance of power theorists. By reframing the Cold War as a traditional power struggle he hoped to remove much of the ideology and emotions associated with it and hoped that this would have a restraining effect on the United States. Given the extreme nature of the threat he was also more willing than before to support an international political transformation. The European project suggested that such transformations were possible, but only with popular backing. Morgenthau turned to apocalyptic rhetoric in an effort to generate support for supranational control over nuclear weapons, which he might have regarded as a variant of supranational control in Western Europe over coal and iron.

McQueen argues that American liberals were equally drawn to apocalyptic visions. They invested the struggle for capitalism and democracy with apocalyptic significance. They believed the world-wide triumph of democracy and capitalism to be inevitable and blamed the delay or absence of progress on a combination of obsolete institutions, irrationality, and rogue states. There is some truth to this claim, but it applies only to some liberals. Oddly, McQueen ignores the far greater conservative flirtation with apocalypticism. Throughout the Cold War conservatives and their Christian evangelical allies defined Communism as an absolute evil, equated Communist leaders with devil, and together, were the impetus for a world-wide crusade against it. Due to their success in framing the conflict this way, at least in American, Morgenthau felt he had little choice but to fight the apocalyptic project with apocalyptic language about its likely consequences and cost.

Political Realism is remarkably error free. However, Morgenthau did not emigrate to the United States in 1933. Rather, he left Switzerland for Spain. When the Spanish Civil War began, he and his wife Irma travelled around Europe seeking visas to enter the United States, which they entered in 1937.

This is an original, well-informed and carefully argued book whose thesis is fundamentally sound. It constitutes a useful, even important, contribution to international political theory.

REVIEW BY MICHAEL C. WILLIAMS, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

The revival of interest in political realism over the past decade and a half is one of the most interesting, in many ways surprising, and—to my eyes at least—positive developments in recent political theory and international political thought. After decades of being caricatured as an intellectual wasteland standing in the path of sophisticated and innovative philosophic and political enquiry, realism has emerged as a fulcrum for some of the most engaged work taking place in the history of ideas, political theory, and the fertile nexus between political thought and International Relations theory - domains too long held separate.[37]

Alison McQueen's *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* stands as an important and innovative example of this work at its best. Taking as her cue the continuing rhetorical use and power of apocalyptic themes in political life, she demonstrates persuasively how apocalyptic ideas continue to have vital if generally underappreciated impacts in the realist 'tradition.' Apocalyptic politics seem on the surface to be the antithesis of political realism's sober, often disenchanted, vision. Yet in a series of compelling studies McQueen shows the paradoxical ways that Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and Hans J Morgenthau, not only attempted to blunt the impact of certain kinds of apocalyptic politics in the name of political realism, but also how they turned positively toward apocalyptic ideas, recognizing their affective power and appropriating them to confront pressing dangers—a complex strategy of "rejection and redirection" (192) that represents a key if neglected part of political realism. Thus, in an incisive reading of Hobbes, she shows how the great theorist of Leviathan sought to deflate the politically destabilizing claims of apocalyptic Christian eschatology while still drawing on some of its themes to buttress sovereign power and the peace he was sure depended on it. Similarly, in a particularly revealing assessment of Morgenthau's realism, she shows how the doyen of the field of International Relations came to realize the inadequacy of realism's "tragic" stress on the inescapability of power politics in the face of nuclear apocalypse. The paradoxical result, as she compellingly shows, was Morgenthau's adoption of an apocalyptic spectre of global of nuclear destruction that attempted to jolt political understanding and action, and to foster moves beyond an increasingly dangerous states-system and toward new forms of global order.

These accounts of Hobbes and Morgenthau, as well as her subtle study of Machiavelli, demonstrate the rich and still not fully tapped potential of realist thought as well as McQueen's superb ability to draw out that potential and bring it to contemporary relevance. As with any study of this breadth and ambition, of course, it is possible to find quibbles. The treatment of Saint Paul as a primarily stabilizing figure within Christian thought, for example, struck me as rather one-sided given his continuing potential to act also, in Tertullian's memorable phrase, as the 'patron saint of heretics.'[38] But these are for the most part minor issues in a rich and powerful account. To get at what I think is a more important question that is opened but not addressed by *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* requires doing what a reviewer really should never do, but that I propose to do anyway; that is, to ask whether the particular rendering of apocalypse that is the focus of this wonderful book is really capable of addressing some of the most powerful forms of apocalyptic politics in recent and contemporary history.

McQueen's rendering of the apocalypse is one that is both personal and universal. The apocalypse represents the end of our lives as individuals and the end of the world as a whole. Following as it does from Christian eschatology, this connection is unavoidable. And, as noted above, McQueen develops it with great insight, including showing the continuing presence of apocalyptic rhetoric and images in anti-nuclear and apocalyptic environmental movements. Yet it seems to me that focusing on this kind of universal apocalypse and apocalyptic politics is, paradoxically, too narrow. Notwithstanding the influence of contemporary anti-nuclear and environmental movements, is it not what we might call the 'particular apocalypse'—the

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[37] For instance, Raymond Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Richard Ned Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Matt Sleat, *Liberal Realism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

[38] See Mark Lilla, *The Shipwrecked Mind: On Political Reaction* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2016), 87-104.

destruction of a nation, a people, or even a culture or civilization - that is today's dominant and most powerful form? Here, the legacy of the apocalyptic politics that marks Machiavelli's famous "Exhortation to liberate Italy from the barbarians" in the concluding chapter to *The Prince*[39] take on a meaning that is quite different than McQueen suggests. For it is not the future of humanity that concerns the great Florentine in these passages: it is a concern with the fate of *Italy*. Italy, not humanity (or at least not humanity directly) requires salvation and must be rescued from destruction by the barbarians. The rhetoric and the images certainly draw on apocalyptic lineages, but it is the particular apocalypse that matters most.

This may well remain true today. Spenglerian declarations of the decline of the West (and their increasing popularity on the political Right); assertions by some in Putin's Russia about the country's historic responsibility to save Christian and European "civilization" from liberal decadence; and strident claims by the French New Right (and others) that the existence of France as a culture, people, or nation is in mortal danger from immigration, are all frequently variations on the particular apocalypse—as, of course, are a range of religious fundamentalisms that follow the same basic tropes.[40] McQueen's focus on apocalyptic politics illuminates crucial aspects of these ideas and movements, but surely their dynamics, forms, and implications differ—often quite radically—from the visions of a universal apocalypse that she so insightfully addresses? And if this is the case, what does it mean to be a political realist in the times of the 'particular' apocalypse?

Raising these questions takes us some distance from the specific concerns of *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times*, and they do not in any way depreciate the power and value of the analysis that the book presents. Indeed they point to both the richness of realist thinking and McQueen's ability to open new insights within it. Apocalyptic politics are, as Alison McQueen compellingly shows, unlikely to fade from political life. In fact, they may well present even greater challenges for a politically realistic response than this superb book suggests.

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[39] Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, edited by Quentin Skinner and Russell Prince (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 121-23.

[40] For overviews in a very wide literature: Charles Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow: The Rise of Russia's New Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); Mark Lilla, "Two Roads for the French New Right", *New York Review of Books*, 20 December, 2018; Jean-Francois Drolet and Michael C Williams, "Radical Conservatism and Global Order", *International Theory* 10:3 (2018): 285-313.

Response by Alison McQueen, Stanford University

I t is never a good sign when a book about the apocalypse speaks to our time. *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* examines how Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), and Hans Morgenthau (1904-1980) responded to hopes and fears about the end of the world. While the focus of the book is historical, my motivation for writing it was unapologetically contemporary. I began thinking about apocalyptic rhetoric during the United States-led 'War on Terror,' when the language of scourge and redemption were everywhere. I wrote most of it during the Obama years, when apocalyptic rhetoric was in retreat. I even entertained the possibility that the argument was now a safely historical one. It was a comforting thought.

As I readied the book for publication, apocalyptic rhetoric exploded back on to the American political scene with the 2016 Presidential election. Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton told America: "I'm the last thing standing between you and the apocalypse."[41] Donald Trump cast America's problems in apocalyptic terms. "Our country is going to hell," he said.[42] Economic collapse, infrastructure disintegration, costly foreign entanglements, and "radical Islamic terrorists" added up to imminent doom. "If we don't get tough, and if we don't get smart, and fast we're not going to have a country anymore."[43] If Americans listened to him, he could save them—our "problems can all be fixed, but…only by me."[44] The last two years have brought more of the same rhetoric in the United States and around the world.

Each news cycle brings opportunities to see the arguments in *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* with fresh eyes. The astute responses from Joshua Cherniss, Konstantinos Kostagiannis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Michael Williams have firmly pushed my thinking along. Each has raised productive questions. I am especially grateful to David Ragazzoni for his thoughtful and careful introduction to the roundtable. I thank all of the participants for their generosity and the time and they took with my book.

The questions that Cherniss, Lebow, Kostagiannis, and Williams raise concern the book's overarching argument and its treatment of specific thinkers, especially Morgenthau. I will start with the more general questions before moving on to the more specific ones.

There are two sets of questions about the book's overarching argument. Appropriately enough, they are questions about the two warring worldviews in the book—apocalypse and tragedy. Cherniss wonders whether I have overstretched the concept of apocalypse. He notes that, on the one hand, I have used it to describe Morgenthau's vision of a nuclear doomsday—a final and inevitable end, without redemption. But is an apocalypse without redemption really an apocalypse at all? On the other hand, I have also used it to describe the nuclear optimism that Morgenthau was fighting—visions that included life (at least for some) after an all-out nuclear war—and not a bad life at that. Is an apocalypse that stresses continuity and human agency really an apocalypse at all?

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[41] Hillary Clinton, as quoted in Mark Leibovich, " 'I'm the Last Thing Standing Between You and the Apocalypse': The final weeks of Hillary Clinton's cautious—and surprisingly risky—campaign," *New York Times Magazine*, 11 October 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/16/magazine/hillary-clinton-campaign-final-weeks.html.

[42] "Transcript of the New Hampshire GOP Debate, Annotated," *Washington Post*, 6 February 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/02/06/transcript-of-the-feb-6-gop-debate-annotated/.

[43] "Read Trump's Speech on the Orlando Shooting," *Time*, 13 June 2016, http://time.com/4367120/orlando-shooting-donald-trump-transcript/.

[44] "Full Transcript: Donald Trump NYC Speech on Stakes of the Election," *POLITICO*, 22 June 2016, https://www.politico.com/story/2016/06/transcript-trump-speech-on-the-stakes-of-the-election-224654.

Our answers to these questions will depend on whether we think the concept of apocalypse ought strictly to encompass the paradigmatic case—the end of the world described in the Book of Revelation—or whether it should also include the fuller range of possibilities in the Judeo-Christian tradition and beyond. Within the Judeo-Christian tradition, visions of the end of the world tended to vary across multiple dimensions, including visions of the post-apocalyptic world and the place of human agency.[45] We did not have to wait for the advent of thermonuclear weapons to see apocalypses without redemption and doomsdays wrought by human agency.

For example, in Renaissance Florence the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola varied his apocalyptic visions along these exact dimensions. At first, he denied Florentines the possibility of redemption, warning of an apocalypse that would reduce the city to "turpitude and blood and a den of robbers." Later, he promised that Florence would emerge from its apocalyptic tribulations as a New Jerusalem, redeemed and purified. Sometimes he cast the apocalypse as inevitable, promising that God would come "with the sword of tribulations—and soon!" Other times, Savonarola cast himself and repentant Florentines as agents of the apocalyptic transformation (64-71). And he did all of this by drawing on the apocalyptic rhetoric and imagery of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Given this pluralism within the tradition, it is hardly surprising that the reigning definition of an apocalypse in the field of Biblical Studies is a definition made by committee.[46] Ambivalence about the possibility of redemption and the potential for human agency have been there from the beginning.

Williams asks whether the universal conception of the apocalypse that the book builds in its second chapter captures the most powerful forms of apocalypticism today. Apart from apocalyptic worries about climate change and all-out nuclear war—two threats which promise to end the world as we know it—most looming apocalypses are particular, not universal. They are expectations about the end of a nation, of the West, or of civilization. I have two responses here. First, if we care about contemporary relevance, a concept of apocalypse that captures the two biggest threats to human life on earth is not faring too badly. But the focus of *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* is primarily historical. If its guiding concept of apocalypse does not capture the book's historical cases, that would be a problem.

This leads to my second response. Williams is entirely right that most apocalyptic thinking is particular. Savonarola warned of the end of Florence. Radical English Puritans warned of the end of England and the end of Protestantism. However, apocalypticists, like the rest of us, tend to universalize the particular. They are only human, after all. For Savonarola and England's radical Puritans, particular circumstances took on universal significance. Their communities would become the battlegrounds of humanity and the shining beacons of redemption when the dust had settled. And so it was for the author of the Book of Revelation, who universalized the particular trauma of Roman imperial rule and turned it into an account of the end of the world. This tension between the particular and the universal lies at the heart of apocalyptic thinking.

So much for apocalypse. What of tragedy? Cherniss thinks I have been too hard on the tragic worldview, while Lebow thinks I define it too narrowly. I will focus on Cherniss's argument here and address Lebow's below in the context of Morgenthau's thinking. Tragedy is the worldview to which Machiavelli and Morgenthau turned in order to oppose the apocalypticism of their times. While apocalypticism presents us with certainty about good and evil and the direction of history, tragedy urges us to humility. While apocalypticism promises an end to politics, tragedy calls us back to the difficult work of politics, though without any guarantee (or even hope) of success. This difficult work is, as Max Weber aptly put it, "the slow boring through hard boards."[47] It is not a romantic view of politics, to be sure. But politics rarely lends itself to romance and this is

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[45] For overviews of the range of possibilities, see: John J. Collins, "Towards the Morphology of a Genre: Introduction," *Semeia* 14 (1979): 1-20; Richard Landes, *Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of Millennial Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein (eds.), *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism* (New York: Continuum, 2003).

[46] Collins, "Morphology of a Genre."

[47] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. HH. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 2009), 128.

perhaps for the best. Toward the end of the book, I argue that in most cases, tragedy is an appropriate response to apocalypticism. But we ought to acknowledge its risks.

And these risks, as Cherniss nicely puts it, come in the form of risks to judgment and risks to motivation. Insofar as the tragic worldview relies on a cyclical conception of political time, it leaves us ill-equipped to recognize and confront instances of radical novelty—like the thermonuclear revolution that Morgenthau was trying to wrap his head around and the threat of climate change today. This is the risk to judgment. Cherniss hypothesizes that a cyclical conception of time is a recurrent—but not a necessary—feature of the tragic worldview. Perhaps there are variants of the view that escape this risk to judgment. And Cherniss gestures at some of the most compelling ones. If he is right, so much the better for tragedy.

But I am more worried about the motivational risks. And here, it is the other features of the tragic worldview that pose a problem. Tragedy views the world as resistant to progress, as unresponsive to virtuous intentions, as capricious in its rewards for goodness. It is a hard worldview to hold without a hardening of the heart. It invites us to confront the limits of political action—to acknowledge that our actions will always escape our intentions and that mastery of politics is elusive. Heroes may see all of this and still manage to act. Machiavelli and Morgenthau celebrated the tragic statesmen who were able to do this. But what of the rest of us? Faced with such a worldview, it is easy to become politically paralyzed. And this fact, I think, helps to make sense of why political realism is often accused of being status quo-justifying, even while many of its most ardent twentieth-adherents were radicals and progressives.[48] A chastened politics of limits has a way of normalizing injustice by making us doubt our ability to do anything about it.

The rest of the responses to *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* concern the book's treatment of specific thinkers. Williams suggests that I offer a one-sided interpretation of (St.) Paul by emphasizing his insistence on political stability in the face of apocalypticism. Let me complicate this by adding that we may actually be dealing with two "Pauls." First, there is the more apocalyptically-minded Paul of 1 Thessalonians. Biblical scholars think that this book was written by the historical Paul. He tells his readers that the Second Coming is imminent but that it will come as a surprise, "like a thief in the night" (1 Thess 5:2). This apocalyptic message seems to have caused some disorder in Thessalonica, which occasioned a second epistle. While it is attributed to Paul, the authorship of this second letter is disputed.[49] Its author encourages the Thessalonians to resume their normal activities and defers the apocalypse by listing all of the events that must precede it. There is obviously a tension between the two letters. The first encourages apocalyptic expectations; the second tries to moderate them. So, Williams is entirely right that the Pauline tradition is complex. But it is nonetheless true, as I argue in the book, that this tradition is a resource for Christian attempts to contain the apocalypse. (St.) Augustine saw this potential clearly as he attempted to neutralize Christianity's most politically dangerous prophecy.

Kostagiannis thinks that the discussion of Machiavelli's relationship with Savonarola is inconclusive. Here, he seemingly mistakes an argument in the alternative[50] for an inconclusive argument. The book makes two claims about Machiavelli's relationship with Savonarola. First, the textual evidence does not support the view of many scholars that Machiavelli held an entirely negative view of Savonarola. Second, *even if* Machiavelli did hold an entirely negative view, he may still have been

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[48] Alison McQueen, "Political Realism and Moral Corruption," *European Journal of Political Theory* [Online First] (2016), https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885116664825.

[49] See David G. Horrell, "Introduction to 2 Thessalonians" in Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2080-2081.

[50] An argument in the alternative offers multiple claims in support of a single conclusion. Used frequently in legal rhetoric, the strategy also has a sound philosophical pedigree. For example, it is used by the Laws when addressing Socrates in Plato's *Crito* and by John Locke in his argument against Robert Filmer in the *First Treatise of Government*.

influenced by Savonarolan apocalypticism. The textual resonances between their works support this claim. While only the second claim is needed to support the conclusion, the case is even stronger if one accepts both claims.

The remaining questions are all about the book's treatment of Hans Morgenthau.[51] Lebow interprets the book as suggesting that Morgenthau underwent a fundamental change in his worldview, away from tragedy and toward apocalypse, and is unpersuaded. As he argues, the tragic worldview was well-engrained in Morgenthau's thinking. It is more plausible to read his apocalyptic writings on the nuclear threat as a strategic choice to "use language that [Morgenthau] believed his intended audience would find compelling." Lebow suspects that the reason that I think Morgenthau had to turn away from the tragic worldview in order to advocate for the ambitious global schemes to combat the nuclear threat is that I define tragedy too narrowly. It was possible, Lebow argues, to advocate for such schemes whilst still holding a tragic worldview.

I have two responses here. First, Lebow is entirely right when he interprets me as saying that Morgenthau took a turn away from the tragic worldview in the early 1960s. However, I do not argue that he embraced an apocalyptic *worldview*. Instead, I argue that he embraced an apocalyptic *strategy* of redirection, using apocalyptic language to prevent an all-out nuclear war. So, Lebow and I agree that Morgenthau's use of apocalyptic language was strategic. Second, I am intrigued by Lebow's suggestion that it was possible for Morgenthau to embrace ambitious global reform from within a tragic worldview. Like Cherniss, Lebow suspects that there are variants of the tragic worldview that can confront radically novel threats like nuclear weapons head on. If Cherniss is right that a cyclical view of time is not a necessary feature of the tragic worldview, then nothing prevents tragedy from adapting to radical novelty. The added interpretive burden, which has not yet been met, is to show that Morgenthau thought this too.

Kostagiannis has two concerns about the book's treatment of Morgenthau. First, he argues that the book overstates Morgenthau's connection to German legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt. As he does not provide examples or evidence of overstatement, his claim is difficult to assess. He may have in mind the real methodological challenges involved in establishing the degree of Schmitt's influence. As I note in the book, Morgenthau seems to have "thought it prudent to conceal the German sources of his ideas in postwar America" (163, n. 62). As Christoph Frei has shown, Morgenthau's research assistants at the University of Chicago were tasked with finding Anglo-American substitutes for German sources like Schmitt.[52] When citational debts are concealed in this way, establishing influence is hard. It is possible to see influence where there is none. The only way to avoid this pitfall is to closely compare the relevant texts, as a number of excellent Morgenthau scholars have done.[53] This is also the strategy I use to show the resonances between the two thinkers' political theological arguments and histories of the modern internal system. Given these textual similarities, the burden falls on the skeptic to show either that Schmitt and Morgenthau were influenced by a common source, or that Morgenthau developed

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[51] Richard Ned Lebow has noticed an error in my report of Morgenthau's movements in the 1930s. Lebow is entirely correct. Morgenthau left Germany for Switzerland in 1932, then went on to Spain and did not arrive in the United States until 1937. While I regret this error, I am pleased to report that I got the timeline right in my entry on Morgenthau in the Garrett Brown, Iain McLean, and Alistair McMillan, *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations*, 4th edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[52] As Lebow notes in his response, Morgenthau obscured his debts to Nietzsche and Weber in a similar way. See Christoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 110-1; Christoph Frei, "Politics Among Nations: A Book for America," in Cornelia Navari, ed., *Hans J. Morgenthau and the American Experience* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 55-74.

[53] See, for instance: Chris Brown, "'The Twilight of International Morality'? Hans J. Morgenthau and Carl Schmitt on the End of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*," in Michael C. Williams, ed., *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 42-61; Nicolas Guilhot, "American *Katechon*: When Political Theology Became International Relations Theory," *Constellations* 17:2 (2010), 224-253; Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 413-509; William E. Scheuerman, "Carl Schmitt and Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond," in Williams, ed., *Realism Reconsidered,* 62-92.

Schmittian arguments independently (despite having been a close reader of Schmitt), or that Morgenthau was influenced by someone else who happened to have arguments eerily similar to those of Schmitt.

Second, Kostagianis thinks that the book's treatment of Morgenthau would have been stronger had it engaged more with the International Relations literature on his ethics and his tragic worldview. Kostagianis cites a terrific sample of this literature.[54] It is hard to know how to respond to this suggestion without knowing more about how Kostagianis thinks that engagement with this work would have changed the argument I make about Morgenthau. Criticisms of this kind are most persuasive when they can show that incorporating additional sources would have led the author to a different conclusion. To my mind, many of these sources would simply offer further support for the book's claims about Morgenthau's tragic worldview,[55] the limits of this worldview,[56] his worries about the dangers of hubris,[57] his suspicion of American liberal internationalism,[58] his early objections to a world state,[59] his morality of the lesser evil,[60] his close connection to Hannah Arendt,[61] and his concerns about the displacement of politics.[62] While I am grateful for this additional support, I am not convinced that my argument requires it.

Lebow and Cherniss each wonder why the book's chapter on Morgenthau focuses so much on the American liberal flirtation with apocalypticism, and not enough on conservative, Marxist, and fascist uses of doomsday rhetoric. The answer is that this, for better or worse, was Morgenthau's focus. He saw American liberal internationalism as an apocalyptic political religion. As Cherniss recognizes, this raises an interesting interpretive question. Why did Morgenthau focus so much of his critical attention American liberal internationalism? Surely, if one were really concerned about apocalyptic political religions, one would focus on Marxism or fascism. They seem to fit the mold of apocalyptic political religions far better than

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[54] William Bain, "Deconfusing Morgenthau: Moral Inquiry and Classical Realism Reconsidered," *Review of International Studies* 26:3 (2000): 445-464; Stefano Recchia, "Restraining Imperial Hubris: The Ethical Bases of Realist International Relations Theory," *Constellations* 14:4 (2007): 531-556; Douglas Klusmeyer, "Beyond Tragedy: Hannah Arendt and Hans Morgenthau on Responsibility, Evil and Political Ethics," *International Studies Review* 11:2 (2009): 343-347; Seán Molloy, "Hans J. Morgenthau Versus E. H. Carr: Conflicting Conceptions of Ethics in Realism," Duncan Bell, ed., *Political Thought and International Relations: Variations on a Realist Theme* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 87-90; Seán Molloy, "Aristotle, Epicurus, Morgenthau and the Political Ethics of the Lesser Evil," *Journal of International Political Theory* 5:1 (2009): 96-98; Hartmut Behr and Felix Rösch, "The Ethics of Anti-Hubris in the Political Philosophy of International Relations: Hans J. Morgenthau" in Jodok Troy, ed., *Religion and the Realist Tradition: From Political Theology to International Relations Theory and Back* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014): 111-128.

[55] Bain, "Deconfusing Morgenthau"; Recchia, "Restraining Imperial Hubris"; Klusmeyer, "Beyond Tragedy"; Molloy, "Hans J. Morgenthau Versus E.H. Carr"; Molloy, "Aristotle, Epicurus, Morgenthau"; Behr and Rösch, "The Ethics of Anti-Hubris."

[56] Klusmeyer, "Beyond Tragedy."

[57] Recchia, "Restraining Imperial Hubris"; Molloy, "Hans J. Morgenthau Versus E.H. Carr"; Molloy, "Aristotle, Epicurus, Morgenthau"; Behr and Rösch, "The Ethics of Anti-Hubris."

[58] Bain, "Deconfusing Morgenthau"; Recchia, "Restraining Imperial Hubris."

[59] Recchia, "Restraining Imperial Hubris."

[60] Recchia, "Restraining Imperial Hubris"; Molloy, "Hans J. Morgenthau Versus E.H. Carr"; Molloy, "Aristotle, Epicurus, Morgenthau."

[61] Klusmeyer, "Beyond Tragedy."

[62] Behr and Rösch, "The Ethics of Anti-Hubris."

postwar liberalism. It is certainly true that, in an eccentric way that is typical mid-century political realism,[63] Morgenthau was preoccupied with President Woodrow Wilson and his particular brand of aggressive liberal internationalism—the kind of liberalism that promised a "final and culminating battle for human liberty."[64] As Cherniss points out, there are intellectual and biographical reasons why Morgenthau focuses his critical attention here. His intellectual debt to Schmitt is perhaps the most important. And Morgenthau may have had practical reasons to focus on liberalism—the indigenous strain of thought in his adoptive home—because he saw more clearly than most both its deep appeal and its darkest dangers.

But I think that Morgenthau was less off-the-mark than Cherniss suggests. Even if the apocalyptic imaginary did not haunt Cold War liberal *intellectuals* in the way did their interwar counterparts, there was plenty of apocalypticism around in the political discourse of postwar America—from Truman onward. Lebow is right that a lot of this rhetoric came from Christian conservatives. But I rather suspect that quite a few anti-Communist liberals could have agreed with Senator Joseph McCarthy that America was "engaged in a final, all-out battle" with Communism,[65] even if they would have agreed with him on little else. The apocalyptic enthusiasm for creative destruction—for the convenient cataclysms that allow us to make the world anew—that so troubled Morgenthau would soon rear its head again in the shock-doctrine neoliberalism of the 1970's and 1980's and the neoconservatism that came so quickly on its heels.[66] Paradoxically, in looking backward to Wilson, Morgenthau may have been ahead of his time. This was the fate of many a prophet before him and no doubt will be of many more to come.

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[63] E.H. Carr was likewise focused on Wilson. However, this makes somewhat more sense, given that Carr was writing in the interwar period.

[64] Woodrow Wilson, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress on the Conditions of Peace," The American Presidency Project, 8 January 1918, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=65405.

[65] Joseph McCarthy, "Enemies Within" speech, Wheeling, West Virginia, 9 February 1950, http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6456.

[66] Naomi Klein, *Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2008).