

**POLITICAL SCIENCE: STUCK BETWEEN TWO CULTURES? THE
DIVIDE IS ABOUT THE QUESTIONS, NOT THE ANSWERS.**

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Realism is considered a lame duck by many scholars of international relations. Interdependence may have replaced power politics; the globalized digitized era may have made the sovereign nation-state arcane; and the lone state actor that plays such a significant role in realism's literature has become impotent in the twenty-first century and has been replaced by millions of single activists who can now, from behind their computers, play a role in world politics.¹ Besides, many of the predictions made by realists and neorealists over the last forty years have been falsified or contradicted.² This paper is less interested in proving whether or not realism, as a paradigm, is degenerative or no longer efficient; it is more interested in understanding realism and the trends that have developed to explain or apply the paradigm.

Realism is as much a philosophy as it is a paradigm of world politics from which empirical explanations and predictions have been developed. To divorce it of its philosophic element is to miss the core of the theory. While a discussion of specific characteristics of realism—such as alliances or balances of power—need not necessarily highlight philosophic objectives, in the context of a comprehensive discussion of whether or not realism is a failed paradigm, its philosophic element is of great significance.

Morgenthau was the icon of realism in the middle of the twentieth century. He was at heart a philosopher and never lost sight of philosophy as a means to understand the human condition. His assumptions about world politics were bleak, no doubt, but his philosophy gave him tools to understand the beauty of the human condition amidst the inevitable tragedy of

¹ James N. Rosenau, Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity (New Jersey: Princeton U P, 1990).

² John A. Vasquez, "The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Nontraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (Dec. 1997) pg. 899-912. Also, see Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Principles of International Relations: People's Power, Preferences, and Perceptions, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press) pg. 456-458.

political life. Some of Morgenthau's ideas will be explored below. More important than Morgenthau, however, are the scholars that took his ideas and ran with them. Henry Kissinger took his *realpolitik* philosophy, explored some elements of it and adapted others. Many of Morgenthau's themes reappear in Kissinger's work. Kissinger continued the philosophy of realism.

Kenneth Waltz, in contrast, took the system aspect of Morgenthau's theory, and developed it into a systematic theory. Waltz took Morgenthau's ideas about balance of power and reworked it into a law of politics:³ "Balance-of-power politics prevail whenever two, and only two, requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive." Waltz's reworking of the theory attracted a great deal of attention and several scholars undertook to empirically test his predictions.

The discussion on realism and its possible demise or rebirth, leads us to these two scholars: Kissinger and Waltz. Some claim that Kissinger is a realist much like Morgenthau himself where Waltz is a neorealist, a structural realist, who brought the empirical method to political science. Vasquez says:⁴ "His (Waltz's) influence on those who study security questions within international relations in what may be called a neotraditional (i.e., quantitative) manner is without equal." This realist v. neorealist categorization is not incorrect (see table 1); it is indeed the case that Kissinger is a realist who favors traditional methodology and Waltz is a neorealist who favors neotraditional methodology. This division, however, obscures more than it clarifies. The division confirms a distinction without explaining why and how it occurred.

³ Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Relations, Pg. 121.

⁴ Vasquez 902.

Table 1: Initial comparison of Kissinger and Waltz

	Kissinger	Waltz
Paradigm	Realist	Neo-realist
Outlook (on sources of knowledge)	Traditional: law, history, and philosophy	Modern: Use of scientific method; emphasis on empiricism.
Methodology	Varied; no real method.	Formal abstract model
Internal/External validity	External	Internal

Table 1 highlights some of the differences but offers no insight as to why and how this developed. When observing the factors (i.e., paradigm, outlook, methodology, and validity) one wonders: are these factors independent and loosely aligned, or are they interdependent belonging to a greater whole, clustering around a nucleus. If the factors oblige to the latter rather than the former and are interdependent, then one seeks to find the nucleus or center of it. One is tempted to point to METHODOLOGY as the uniting feature, but this is not the case; even if both theorists used the same methods, their theories would still be fundamentally different.

METHODOLOGY is a causal factor but it is not the first one; it too has an antecedent. The antecedent is what is referred to here as OUTLOOK. This is where each one finds the “source of knowledge”. Kissinger finds the source of political knowledge in law, history and philosophy, whereas Waltz finds the source in economics theory and empirical evidence.⁵ OUTLOOK, however, while significant, is still not the source of the difference, for there are times when Waltz uses history and philosophy; and there is no reason why Kissinger (and others who use the traditional approach) should not use empirical evidence to strengthen their theories.

⁵ His first book, *War, the State and Man* (Columbia University Press; Revised edition, 2001) was more traditional than his second book, *Theory of International Politics* (McGraw-Hill, 1979). The second volume still uses some philosophy and history but most of his theories are based on principles of economics.

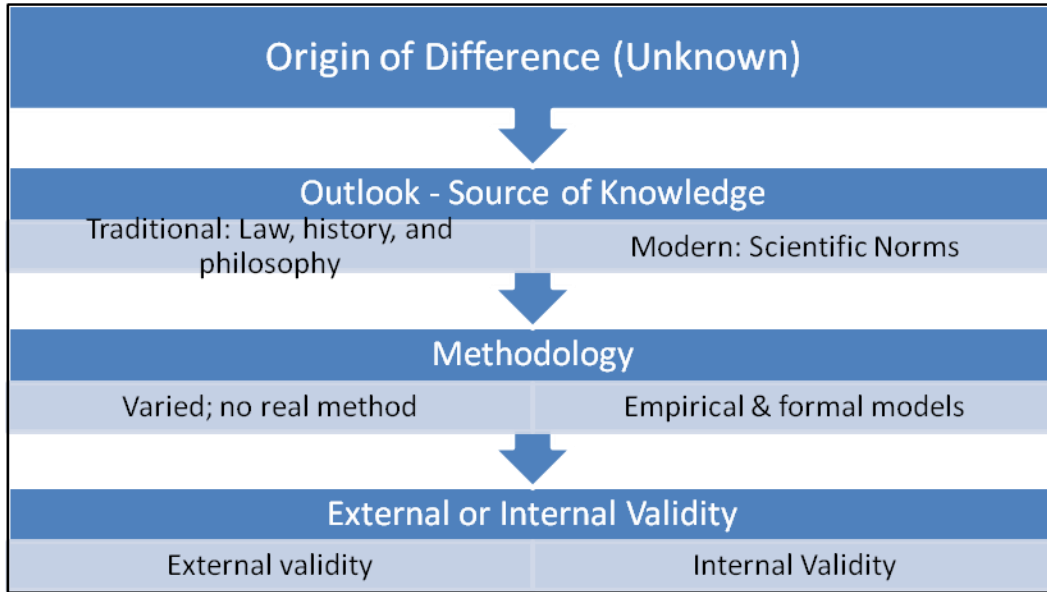


Figure 1: Causal chain of theory-building (HK is left pane; KW is right pane)

Thus, we are left with the unanswered question of what is the “core” that unites the varied distinctions. If we find the origin of the difference, we will better understand the nature of the difference. Before suggesting an answer, it is necessary to address an unstated question that may have occurred to the reader. The reader might wonder: Is it relevant? What is the relevance of analyzing the core of the differences between two leading scholars of realism?

It is relevant because scholars of IR are currently searching for a theory or frame with which to conceptualize the post cold war era. The dynamics of the twenty-first century are so overwhelming that scholars tend to either debunk realism, debunk paradigm altogether, or endeavor to reframe international relations in its entirety. James Rosenau is one such scholar who is attempting to reframe international relations.

At an annual International Studies Association (ISA) meeting in March 2000, James Rosenau was asked to speak on a “millennial reflection panel” and discuss the progress and future of the field of International Relations (IR). Rosenau introduced his comments by

acknowledging the tremendous growth that IR had experienced in the last half-century. In many ways, however, IR might be losing its focal point, he said. The ongoing debates about the intra and inter-paradigmatic divisions within the field now appeared to be a diversion from the real issues. Rosenau said that he left mainstream IR, “out of a conviction that change has left us so far in arrears that we need to focus our energies on assessing substantive dynamics rather than evaluating our colleagues, their theories, and their standards.”⁶ The endless discussions over whether a given thought process belonged to the pattern of liberals or realists became tiresome to Rosenau. He said: “To articulate such concerns struck me as needless ritual that diverted valuable time and space from focusing on what was transpiring outside academia in what students call ‘the real world.’”⁷

Rosenau may not be the outlier that he considers himself to be. He is essentially advocating for a return to what political science has been since the days of Thucydides, Plato, and Machiavelli. While one may be tempted to dismiss this approach as “traditional” or “classical” and therefore “unscientific”, this distinction may be too hasty. Rosenau may yet turn out to be one of the most empirically inclined of today’s scholars; after all, his focus is on external political events rather than on internal and abstract academic debates.

Rosenau believes that the current era is fundamentally different than the ones that preceded it. In his volume Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity, Rosenau struggles with conveying the magnitude of the changes that have occurred and that are still occurring due to the turbulence of globalization. The turbulence is the result of technological breakthroughs, authority crises, consensus breakdowns, revolutionary upheavals, generational

⁶ James N. Rosenau, “The Globalization of Globalization,” Critical Perspectives in International Studies: Millennial Reflections on International Studies, eds. Michael Brecher and Frank P. Harvey (Michigan: The U of M Press, 2002) 127.

⁷ Rosenau (2002) 127.

conflicts, and general uncertainty. These changes are so profound that they are upsetting all the patterns and theoretical conceptions that scholars of IR have developed. In this vein, Rosenau writes: “To assert that the lessons of history are becoming obscure is to presume that the changes are so thoroughgoing as to render obsolete the rules and procedures by which politics are conducted, thereby leaving observers without any paradigms or theories that adequately explain the course of events.”⁸

Observations of this nature justify the enterprise of analyzing the essential difference between the theories of Kissinger and Waltz and with it, the different paths that realism has taken. Examining the assumptions that underlie each theory’s style will perhaps open new pathways for theorists of political science.



The thesis explored in this paper is: The divergence of the theories (Kissinger v. Waltz) is linked to the historical division between philosophy and science. Each discipline emerged from certain norms and established certain norms; these norms developed into a culture of sorts: the culture of Humanities versus the culture of Science.

The two trajectories—philosophy and science—have been following related but separate courses since the Greek era. Although they sometimes overlap, these two disciplines have fundamental differences. Kissinger’s theories are based on philosophy, specifically Kantian metaphysics. Waltz’s theories, in contrast, are based on the norms and values of science. Like two planets, each of these theorists follows a particular orbit. Each has particular norms as well as particular estimates of progress.

⁸ James N. Rosenau, Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity (New Jersey: Princeton U P, 1990) pg. 5.

The dividing feature of these disciplines appears at the very outset of any scholarly undertaking; it is the questions they ask. Typically, most branches of philosophy ask about what *ought to be* whereas most branches of science ask about what *is*. Kissinger, like Morgenthau, asks how international relations ought to be. He suggests that there *should* be a statesman who represents the people, one who embodies their individuality and free will in an anarchic world governed by determinism. There *should* be balance of power, Kissinger says, because it will lead nations to feel relatively secure, making conflict less inviting. Scholars who ask questions about *what ought to be* are not anti-science or opponents of the scientific method. The scientific method, in fact, may aid them in answering the questions they pose. As such, it is the questions they ask which set them at odds with the scientific community in political science, not the methods.

Waltz, in keeping with the scientific trajectory, asks about what *is*. What *is* the structure of the international system? What *are* its dynamics? What universal laws can describe it? Waltz and other neorealist are asking an entirely different set of questions. They may begin with a general question such as: What is the cause of war? How and why do states form alliances? Do democratic governments lead to an absence of war? After posing the initial question, however, the subsequent questions focus more on evaluating the methods the theorist used when suggesting an answer. Consequently, when examining political science journals, one finds less discussion on the substantive questions of war and peace and more on the procedural aspects of the theory itself.

The difference between the Kissinger-style theorists and the Waltz-style theorist is not about the methods; it is about the questions that they ask. The nature of the question is linked to the generally established division between philosophy and science.

Table 2: Revised chart of Kissinger v. Waltz

	Kissinger	Waltz
Assumptions/Paradigm	Realist	Neo-realist
Outlook (on sources of knowledge)	Traditional: law, history, and philosophy	Modern: Use of scientific method; emphasis on empiricism.
Methodology	Varied; no real method.	Formal abstract model
Validity	External	Internal
Trajectory	Philosophy	Science
Goal	To theorize about what <i>ought to be</i> .	To empirically discover what <i>is</i> .

The following paper will explore this argument. Part II will discuss the difference between science and philosophy. Part III will then discuss the how the differences between science and philosophy approach impact the study of political science as political science falls somewhere in between the two. Subsequently, Part IV will explore the work of Kissinger and Part V will explore the work of Waltz. Part V will conclude by reemphasizing the importance of spending more time formulating pertinent and relevant questions. The answer, no matter how sophisticated in terms of its methodology, is only as good as the question it aspires to answer.

CHAPTER 2: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

A. Introduction

One can suggest that science answers questions about tangible phenomenon whereas philosophy tackles universal questions which cannot be made tangible and which therefore cannot be observed, measured, classified, proven, or disproven. Philosophical questions include: Do humans have souls? Is there a divine being? Is there free choice? Do ghosts exist? These questions do not (yet) have tangible substances. In this vein, a contemporary philosopher says:⁹ “We can define philosophical questions as questions that involve conceptual analysis and that require for their solution more than observation and experimentation. Philosophical questions are ‘open questions’ in the sense that we cannot predict what would constitute a satisfactory answer to them. No scientific procedure can produce a quick answer to philosophical questions.”

Scholars who have attempted to define exactly what distinguishes philosophy from science have found the endeavor to be exceedingly difficult. Science includes many sub-fields, each with its own content to evaluate and its own methods. Philosophy similarly, includes several branches. As such, making broad generalizations is risky. It is easier to establish what the differences *are not* rather than what they *are*. In his volume Science and Philosophy: Past and Present, Derek Gjertsen evaluates the validity of several suggested differences.¹⁰ He begins with the claim that science is associated with empiricism.

Roger Scruton says that science “is the realm of empirical investigation; it stems from the attempt to understand the world as we perceive it, to predict and explain observable events and to formulate the laws of nature.”¹¹ Gjertsen says that the claim about “the realm of empirical investigation” is not a valid claim. Many fields in the behavioral sciences use empirical methods

⁹ Rauhut 8-9.

¹⁰ Derek Gjertsen, Science and Philosophy: Past and Present, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989) pg. 18.

¹¹ Cited in Gjersten, 18.

whereas physicists often do not. In terms of predictions, once again, the claim is not valid. Prediction is not an act that is reserved for scientists alone; gamblers, astrologers, and stock brokers similarly use prediction.¹² Thus, the distinguishing characteristic between science and other disciplines is not the fact that science is empirically inclined and uses predictions.

Second, some claim that the philosophers spend much of their time engaged in speculation about irrelevant subjects while the scientists spend their time in their labs actively engaged in solving real-life problems. This perception, Gjertsen says, is mistaken as well. First, there are many theoretical scientists who are largely involved in developing ideas abstractly. Second, on the philosophy front, scholars working with subjects, arguably, derived from philosophy—history, political science, law, and sociology—spend much of their time actively gathering data. Machiavelli is an example of a political philosopher who based his ideas on the very concrete dynamics of Florentine politics. Consequently, one cannot state that the difference between philosophers and scientists is that one is actively engaging with tangible material whereas the other is engaging abstractly with abstract material.¹³

Third, Russell (Mysticism and Logic, 1953) claimed that scientists are concerned with domain-specific laws whereas the philosopher is concerned with establishing universal laws. This position harks back to Aristotle who defined philosophy as being the science of universals, referring to concepts such as the role of causation, the nature of thought, existence, good and evil, natural rights, etc. Once again, upon scrutiny it becomes evident that this distinction is not valid. Many scientists are concerned with general propositions and just as many non-scientists

¹² Gjertsen 20.

¹³ Gjertsen 20-23.

are concerned with domain-specific laws. For instance, the laws of motion, gravity, and time are most certainly general in scope and the philosophy of theology is domain-specific.¹⁴

Fourth, it has been observed that philosophers and scientists relate to time differently. Many claim that philosophers and other scholars involved in the humanities cherish their past and make constant reference to it in the course of developing their ideas. Scientists, in contrast, are not terribly interested in their past. A scientist, once discredited, is of little value. This theme appears frequently throughout this paper as it seems to be of special relevance to a discussion on the philosophy of politics, which is more anchored to time than some of the other disciplines. Gjertsen acknowledges that though this distinction is fairly accurate, it is not true across the board and therefore cannot be considered a legitimate difference between philosophy and science.¹⁵

A final alleged difference explored by Gjertsen is the one raised by Peter Medawar in his volume The Art of the Soluble (1969). Medawar states that science seeks solutions that are definite and agreed upon. Ask twelve scientists what is Einstein's most famous equation and all will answer $E = mc^2$. Ask twelve social scientists how to reduce the rate of unemployment and there will be twelve different answers. Gjertsen finds that Medawar's thesis is composed of the following three claims:

1. Science, unlike philosophy, aims to solve problems.
2. Science, unlike philosophy, often succeeds at solving these problems.
3. The solutions discovered are widely accepted by other scientists.

Gjertsen then discusses each claim in turn and finds each one not to be valid. Regarding #1, Gjertsen finds that scientists are not only devoted to solving problems; they are involved in

¹⁴ Gjertsen 24-25.

¹⁵ Gjertsen 27-28.

many others aspects of scholarship. They collect, catalogue, and classify data; they calculate, tabulate, measure, describe, compare, and so on and so forth. Similarly, philosophy is not a stranger to the concept of solving problems. In terms of #2, success in the natural sciences is a tricky term. All of yesterday's successes are considered errors in light of today's discoveries. In terms of #3, one need only open a current natural science journal to realize how dubious the consensus often is. Discoveries of past days, like that of Einstein's theory of relativity, are accepted across the board; but new discoveries are typically met with resistance. In fact, when Einstein initially proposed his theory, it was not accepted. Thus, Medawar's proposition that science is the art of the soluble is not as true as he would like it to be.¹⁶

What then is the difference between science and philosophy? Science is too wide a concept to be able to conform to a single set of criteria. Some branches of science are distinctly empirical whereas others are more speculative. Sometimes science and philosophy appear to be worlds apart conceptually; at other times, they overlap. Consequently, this paper will resist the urge to state a clear definite difference between science and the humanities and instead attempt a qualitative, rather than factual, discussion of the differences.

B. The Two Cultures

1. Snow's Thesis

In The Two Cultures: and the Scientific Revolution, C.P. Snow, a scientist and writer, confronted a growing rift in the academic community between the scientists and the non-scientists. Although he received his doctoral degree in Physics from Cambridge University, Snow's intellectual interests were not limited to science alone; he was in addition a writer who met regularly with other literary intellectuals. Snow's constant transitioning from the company

¹⁶ Gjertsen 30-50.

of scientists to the company of literary intellectuals allowed him to observe their differences. As such, he developed the following thesis:¹⁷ “In our society (that is, advanced Western society) we have lost even the pretense of a common culture. Persons educated with the greatest intensity we know can no longer communicate with each other on the plane of their major intellectual interest. This is serious for our creative, intellectual, and above all, our normal lives.”

Snow found that the first culture, the scientists, were optimistic about the future but strangely illiterate when it came to the past. Their optimism in the future made them less likely to accept fate as a controlling factor. Their insistence on precision sometimes made them impatient with entities that could not be ordered and even contributed to shallowness. Their insistence on accuracy came at the cost of imagination.¹⁸ Snow noted that scientists tended to have little interest in tradition, literature, history, etc. Snow recalls the astonishing answer he received when he once asked a scientist about the books he liked to read. The scientist “replied firmly and confidently: ‘Books? I prefer to use my books as tools.’ It was very hard not to let my mind wander—what sort of tools would a book make? Perhaps a hammer? A primitive digging instrument?”¹⁹

The second culture, the literary non-scientists, were well versed in the past—classics, literature, history and poetry—but were perhaps too much focused on what *was* rather than on what *will be*. Because of their emphasis on the past or on continuous universal aspects of the human condition, they appeared indifferent to change and to the promises of the future. Because of this, the non-science intellectuals remained largely uninformed about scientific developments. Snow found this ignorance unfortunate, because science contains elements of beauty and poetry

¹⁷ Snow 60.

¹⁸ Dietrich Shroerer, “The Two Cultures: Science and Humanities,” Philosophy and Science: The Wide Range of Interaction, Frederick E. Mosedale, Ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1979) pg. 423-424.

¹⁹ C. P. Snow, The Two Cultures: and A Second Look (London: Cambridge U Press, 1964) pg. 13.

that would delight the non-scientist if he only examined it. Yet, when Snow asked a non-scientist if he knew the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the response was negative. Snow was shocked. “I was asking something which is about the scientific equivalent of: *Have you ever read a work of Shakespeare’s?*”²⁰

It is important to identify which disciplines are classified as “science” and which are characterized as “non-science”. According to Shroerer, the science culture includes scientists, engineers, and technologists of all kinds. The humanities culture includes philosophy, art, literature and “those endeavors that aim to form a complete Man.”²¹ Some commentators suggested a third culture: a culture that is concerned with society and the individuals within society and that is composed of sociologists, political scientists, economists, and psychologists. Without establishing that third culture, however, the four disciplines mentioned above fall somewhere in between the two cultures and are open to join either one. This can lead to tremendous miscommunication within the discipline. Two sociologists, allegedly joined by their profession, can belong to different cultures which according to Snow are “hostile” to each other. This indeed is the case with political science. It is one discipline which is split by two sub-cultures, one modeled after the sciences and the other modeled after the humanities.

Snow’s lecture was published and translated in several languages. It struck a chord. People related to the distinction. Snow received criticism, compliments, insults, and many questions. Two of the questions are discussed briefly below.

2. Is “culture” the correct term?

²⁰ Snow 15.

²¹ Shroerer 422.

The word “culture” disturbed some readers. Culture, Snow says, has been used by anthropologists to mean:²² “a group of persons living in the same environment, linked by common habits, common assumptions, and a common way of life.” This is the interpretation Snow had in mind.

The term “culture” implies that a group of people are socialized to behave and think in a specific manner. It is a qualitative term that is hard to define because it exists more as an idea than as a reality. In other words, if a social scientist were to research a group of Manhattan’s young professionals, Mississippi’s farmers, Chicago’s PhD students, and Hollywood’s stars, there would be some definite patterns of behaviors, speech, and thought that would distinguish each group from the other. Yet, one could not conclude that each group was completely homogenous in behavior, thought, and speech. The imaginary “glue” that seems to hold each group together is somewhat mysterious. Were the stars born into stardom or did they become socialized into it? Were Chicago’s PhD’s born intellectuals or did ten years in a university setting socialize them into an intellectual life? The “glue” that eventually links people of similar tastes and habits together is called “culture”. As such, Snow’s choice of the word “culture” seems appropriate because it captures not only the factual existence of two separate groups—scientists and non-scientists—but the mystery of the divide as well.

This mystery is an important element of the conversation between scientists and philosophers (or non-scientists). When Morgenthau, Thompson, Kissinger are said to associate with philosophy versus science, and Waltz, Mearshiemer, and Singer are said to be associated with science, one means this in a loose sense. The science group has common norms and goals; the traditional group has another set of common norms and goals. It is a mystery how these “groups” developed. It is as much a matter of conscious choice as that of natural inclination.

²² Snow 64.

Snow says about the scientists:²³ “I would say that they had the future naturally in their bones.” Similarly, Morgenthau believes that the political actor acts on a sixth sense. He says:²⁴ “Political wisdom, understood as sound political judgment, cannot be learned; it is a gift of nature, like the gift of artistic creativity or literary style or eloquence or force of personality.”

3. *Is Snow taking the gap too far?*

The initial gap was widened into polarization by misunderstandings that became hostility. The scientists view the humanists and non-science intellectuals as inefficient and unnecessary because they do not solve current problems but discuss past problems. The humanities culture, in contrast, is hostile to the scientists because some of their advancements are detrimental to humanity and the human conditions. “The humanists see no sense of social responsibility in the scientists and consider them reprehensible for this lack.”²⁵

The polarization is relevant when it equals either communication or miscommunication. Snow believes that communication between the two cultures is essential because the scientists often inform the decision-makers and if the decision-makers cannot comprehend the information or know how to evaluate the advice given, it has serious political implications. “In a time when science is determining much of our destiny, that is, whether we live or die, it is dangerous in the most practical terms. Scientists can give bad advice and decision-makers can’t know whether it is good or bad.”²⁶

The humanities are important because, prior to any type of scientific discovery, thought and language must exist. Philosophy gave humankind the gift of thought; language and literature

²³ Snow 10.

²⁴ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master?* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1972) pg. 45.

²⁵ Shroerer 424.

²⁶ Snow 98.

gave it words. New types of thoughts and new elements of language are constantly being added, modified, and changed along with the migrations and developments of society. Consequently, the humanities are the foundation from which scientific theories can be built. Without this foundation, science would falter.

William A. Earle, a philosopher, complements this defense of humanities by adding a passionate claim of the subjectivism of the human life and its need to be studied subjectively.

C. Human Life: Science or Philosophy?

Science is said to be knowledge; but what then is philosophy? Is it not knowledge as well, even if it is not accumulated through observation and experimentation? This line of reasoning leads Earle to ask two pointed questions: 1) What can philosophy do that science cannot do? 2) Can science exist independently or is it always a sub-category of philosophy?

Philosophy is interested primarily, not in all forms of life, but in human life. And in exploring human life, philosophy seeks not to classify external characteristics, such as biology, or even sociology and psychology, but the subjective part of human life, the living part of human life. In this vein, Earle says:²⁷

But human life so considered is that which is closest to us in every way: since it is our life, we are speaking about ourselves, and speaking about not so much about what may or may not know about nature, but about what we have done and what we are to do, what we choose, what consent to, what revolt against; instead of a purportedly value-free discourse in “law-like” sentences about what is inherently not ourselves, it is at least in effort, the attempt to gain whatever clarification might be gained about a certain perpetual problem: *how to live*.

²⁷ William A. Earle, “Science and the Philosophy of Science cannot Examine Life as It Is Lived,” Philosophy and Science: The Wide Range of Interaction, Frederick E. Mosedale, Ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1979) pg. 173.

Earle's goal is lofty; to analyze human life and living without the constraints of methods and laws. Earle knows that this type of understanding is not typically considered "knowledge" and objects to that norm. He says: "But the capturing of the term "knowledge" by science does have the disastrous effect of leaving us with no term to characterize that philosophy which is not science except as empty emotion, attitude or posturing."²⁸ While one can perhaps say that philosophy is wisdom, but that does not answer for the term "knowledge" not being associated with philosophy; wisdom surely includes "knowing".

There is one domain that is reserved for philosophy. The domain of our lives is not the domain of science; it is not revealed by observation and experimentation; it is not the substance from which objective and value-free theories are spawned. Earle maintains that this one area is restricted to science. The methods of scientists are simply inappropriate, as are their goals. Only philosophy can highlight the subtleties of human existence in a manner that is clear and meaningful.

Science cannot study humans in their present form of living because first, in terms of observation, it cannot be done. The experiences and perceptions of one individual can never be fully "observed" by another. Furthermore, one cannot observe oneself objectively either. The experiences and perceptions are not objects; they are reflexes. "Hence it is false to say that we experience our experiences or that we perceive our perceptions; we are indeed aware of performing these acts, but not by either experience or perception."²⁹

Furthermore, the human behavior cannot be captured by a theory because it is always active and never static; it is always becoming; it is always in flight from yesterday en route to tomorrow. How can a theory capture this ephemeral nature of the mind and spirit of humans?

²⁸ Earle 174.

²⁹ Earle 175.

One can attempt to do so but it is a futile attempt. One can formulate a theory that since Mr. X has done Y on Friday for thirty-five years, it is likely that Mr. X will do Y again this Friday. While this is a perfectly valid prediction, Mr. X has the choice to not do Y this Friday—if only out of spite that his actions were canonized into a theory.

A better method for studying the fact that Mr. X does Y every Friday is by asking him for an explanation. By explaining himself and his actions, his motives and his rationale, readers can learn something either significant or trivial about another human, similarly seeking to lead a meaningful life. Although Mr. X's explanation is likely to be subjective, personal, and value-laden, Earle believes that these factors give it value. One cannot learn about life from cold statistics and impersonal scientific statements about human nature. The human existence is so complex; it is characterized by freedom, choice, value, and individuality. How then can a theory developed through observation and experimentation, modeled after the natural sciences, capture its essence?

In his volume Explanations and Human Activity, A. R. Louch confronts a slightly different question: Can one study politics without an element of morality? He then establishes that explaining human action is in essence a moral activity. When explaining human actions, we are justifying the act for its necessity, motives, purpose, incentive, etc. It is at heart a moral explanation. Because of the character of explaining human actions, Louch believes that there is no way to create legitimate generalizations; human actions require ad hoc explanations, explanations which include the reasons why the acts were done.³⁰

Louch says further than explanation devoid of “the purpose” element is fundamentally lacking. He knows that is going against the grain of academic norms, but risks the

³⁰ A. R. Louch, “Human Conduct Requires Ad Hoc Explanations,” Philosophy and Science: The Wide Range of Interaction. Ed. Frederick E. Mosedale. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., (1979) pg. 281-285.

consequences. He says:³¹ “Behavioral scientists are forced into a mistaken view of their subject-matter as a result of their preoccupation with a method they take to be necessary to any respectable inquiry.”

Ernest Nagel finds their account (i.e., Earle and Louch) too extreme. Is all of human life subjective? Are there no aspects of it that are open to interpretations by the principles of logic? In The Structure of Science Nagel explores how social science can be evaluated by logic and science. While he agrees that much of it is indeed subjective, he finds aspects of it objective and open to the scientific method. It need not be exclusively subjective, he says.³² There are aspects of the human experience which are so personal and distinct that unless one has experienced the mental state oneself, one would be unable to write about it scientifically. There are many aspects of the human condition, however, which are shared and over time become predictable. The certainty in the predication may not be as strong as predictions in the natural sciences but that does not mean that the process of observation and the forming of logical propositions and predication is completely inapplicable to the social sciences.³³

Nagel’s observation is significant because it highlights an important concept. Even if one were to agree with Earle’s position that human life is strictly the domain of philosophy because of its subjectivity, one need not become a nihilist. One need not jump to the conclusion that: “as such, nothing can be known with any degree of certainty.” While respecting the depth and complexity of a human, one can still study the aspects of human life which are amenable to study. Max Weber, the example Nagel suggests, illuminated a possible solution as to why

³¹ Louch 285.

³² Ernest Nagel, “Social Science Defended,” Philosophy and Science: The Wide Range of Interaction, Frederick E. Mosedale, Ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., (1979) pg. 287-293.

³³ Nagel 291.

certain pockets of society are more industrial and driven toward wealth than others. This observation was both systematic and logical.

In other words, humanity and society are too complex to allow study that will yield the results of the natural sciences; that is no justification for not studying the human condition at all. The difference is simply one in perspective. Allow the material at hand—society—to direct how and what problems to study; then, use the necessary tools to solve the problems. If the scientific method can aid in the process, by all means use it. If scientific methods will not lead to a solution or to a better understanding of the problems, try other tools. There is a famous quote attributed to Abraham Maslow: “If you only have a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail.” Just because the scientific method is a good “hammer” (i.e., it is good at solving problems), it still does not mean that every social problem is a “nail.”

CHAPTER 3: POLITICS & SCIENCE ACCORDING TO MORGENTHAU

A. The Role of Science in the Human Dimension

Science, says Morgenthau, is a double-edged sword. It has brought us electricity, railroads, and many other advances. It has created an entirely new world, but some elements of freedom were lost in the process. It used to be that a despot or autocrat had limits to his atrocities; now, science has given the tyrant technological tools which can be used for advancing totalitarianism rather than progress.³⁴ It used to be that a tyrant only controlled the geographic area for which he was sovereign; now, an individual, with or without sovereignty, can wreak damage on a universal level. These facts illustrate that science, in and of itself, is not synonymous with “progress”.

This leads to a question: What is the role of science in the human scheme? The shoemaker knows his job, as does the doctor, the accountant, and the chef. But does the scientist know his job? Morgenthau relates that in Classical times, science was valued for its own sake. It was common among the thinkers of the time to prize pure knowledge above applied knowledge. In modern times, that is no longer the case. Science is used to predict and produce. It is valued more as the means to an end than as an end in itself.

This can be understood by thinking of the differences between a soldier and a statesman. A soldier prizes victory for its own sake whereas the statesman prizes victory for its political applications. To the soldier, victory is an end in itself; to the statesman, victory is the means to an end. The statesman evaluates the victory in light of something beyond it—its political meaning. In much the same way, knowledge is evaluated by the meaning it contributes, by something that transcends it.

³⁴ Morgenthau (1972) 3.

The concept meaning can be dismissed as wholly incompatible with the goals of science or it can be raised as a guiding principle like a mast on a ship. If meaning becomes a directing force then science is understood differently. It is no longer concerned only with progressing independent of the direction, but it is now bound to follow a course. In this conception of science, the able scientist is one who, though inundated with data, is still able to determine what to know, what to observe, and what to produce. This choice is critical; knowledge that is not worth knowing is a waste of time and resources. The scientist without a compass will lack the ability to choose prudently. Morgenthau says that the choice of selection is a moral question. He writes:³⁵

Who is able to make the intellectual distinction between what is true and what is false is smart. If he is able to know no more, he is likely to err even when he knows, for he does not know which knowledge is necessary and which can be dispensed with. What makes the true scholar of him is the moral strength to raise the question of the meaning of knowledge itself and to answer it by searching not for knowledge of any kind, but for the knowledge that is worth knowing.

Science that has no moral compass cannot help mankind progress. It may, in fact, accomplish the opposite and become an agent of destruction. Material progress has damaged the natural environment significantly, has produced a wasteful generation, and has brought the world to the brink of nuclear disaster. Science has shown that it cannot necessarily make life better; it cannot be a source of meaning to mankind.

This occurred, in part, because science lost sight of its own need to answer to something beyond itself. It made itself the highest in the hierarchy of knowledge and freed itself from any need to accommodate, let alone serve, moral values. Earle, as mentioned above, similarly believed that science could not examine or direct human life, but Morgenthau believes that

³⁵ Morgenthau (1972) 11.

perhaps it could if it only understood its place. Without the need to answer to anything or anyone, science can become merely a tool for those in power. The party or person in power conspires to staff his office with scientists and then promulgates his own ideology with the alleged support of science.

The scientist might object and claim that the discipline establishes norms and regulations and science is uncomfortable with using “meaning” as a compass for directing its progress. This is where Earle’s proposition can offer insight; he believed that ultimately all of science was depended on philosophy. He said: “Philosophy is the king of the humanities not a hand-maiden of the sciences.” Morgenthau corroborates this position by harking back to the Classical era during which “wonder” was considered the root of all knowledge. Socrates said: “Wonder is the feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder.”³⁶ Aristotle said, similarly: “It is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at the first began to philosophize.”³⁷ The wonder in the classical context meant that man confronted his deepest self and the great unknowns.

Morgenthau finds that there are two basic haunting unknowns that plague mankind. One is the empirical mystery which flows from nature. One feels helpless in the face of the unexpected dangers of the night, be it from man or beast; one similarly fears hurricanes, tsunamis, storms and floods. The second mystery is philosophic or existential and comes from within man himself. He realizes that he does not know what he is or wants. He wants so much but does not know what it is. These two threats are at the root of what is called wonder. Why? Why is it so? True science attempts to supply answers to these fundamental unknowns. In each era, these threats take on different forms, and in each era science is called upon to dispel the fear

³⁶ from Theaetetus by Plato

³⁷ from Metaphysics by Aristotle

and master the conditions. In terms of the former, the threats from nature, science has succeeded magnificently. In terms of the latter, however, the existential threats, science has been less than successful. The following section explores why.

B. Politics and Science

Morgenthau was the first American to develop a systematic approach to studying politics, the system of realism. Although he based his work on past political science theory, he was the first to apply it to American political dynamics. Morgenthau believed that relying on science exclusively to solve world problems was a mistake. Throughout his career, he suggested several reasons for this.

1. Much of what occurs in history and politics is the result of accidents. There is no way to predict accidents.
2. Politics is an art, not a science.
3. Science problems can be solved once in the wake of a big discovery and then the solution stands until challenged. Political problems have to be solved each time anew.³⁸
4. Science misunderstands the nature of man. Man is driven by biological and spiritual needs as well as rational ones. Because man is not governed by reason alone, one cannot discover universal laws by relying on reason exclusively.

The phrase “science of politics” is an oxymoron. Morgenthau explains that this is the case because “(t)heory and practice as ideal types approach the empirical world in entirely

³⁸ L. C. Green, rev. *Scientific Man v. Power Politics*, by Hans J. Morgenthau, *The Modern Law Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Jan., 1948), pp. 109-110, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1090101>>.

different modes: theory tries to understand the empirical world by observing it and without changing it; practice tries to interfere in the political world in order to change it.”³⁹

Action is a human trademark. It is mankind’s way of overcoming threats to its existence. Theoretical knowledge, while edifying, cannot accomplish any change directly. The smallest act is therefore more significant than the loftiest thought. A science of politics deals with these two opposing modes, thought and action, each one capable of eclipsing the other. Of the two, Morgenthau believes that action is superior to thought. He says this because he finds that anyone who theorized about politics confronted the inherent contradiction and yearned to emerge from the citadel of thought and *do* something. Politics, after all, is the active mode, not the theory mode.

Theory is typically written when frustrated statesmen or intellectuals feel incapable of making a change. Plato and Aristotle wrote because they were unable to avert the demise of the Athenian state. Augustine wrote because he was unable to stop the collapse of the Roman Empire. Machiavelli wrote because he wanted to prevent Italy’s political decay. Hobbes and Locke wrote in the heat of the English Revolution. Montesquieu and Rousseau wrote during the early stages of the decline of France’s monarchy. Kant, Hegel and Fichte wrote during the political changes of the eighteenth century. The theories of Marxism and liberalism which emerged in the nineteenth century were responses to the social inequalities that became apparent in that era. Theory cannot change the course of events but it can console the frustrated actor or offer a defense for the actor’s perceived ineptness.

Hedley Bull makes reference to the superiority of action when discussing Kissinger. Professors do not typically make good politicians, Hedley says, although they wish they were. Kissinger should therefore be appreciated for his attempt to bridge the gap between academia

³⁹ Morgenthau (1972) 34.

and politics although he sometimes failed miserably. Bull says: “It has often seemed to me that the career of this extraordinary man—who, in stepping so effortlessly into the world of high policy-making, acted out the secret dreams of countless academic experts on international relations—has provided a very unfortunate example to a profession whose business is after all, with thinking, not with doing.”⁴⁰

One can object to dismissing thought in politics as secondary to action by suggesting that theory, if properly proposed, can aid the actor by offering an analysis of costs and benefits, cataloguing possible options, and evaluating means versus ends. Morgenthau claims that while knowledge of this kind (“functional knowledge”) is certainly helpful, it is not necessary. It would be considered necessary if political success was contingent on this knowledge; in other words, political failure could have been averted if only this knowledge had been known. But this is hardly the case.

Morgenthau concedes that theoretical knowledge can help if it is complemented by factual intelligence about what exactly is occurring in the enemy camp. These two together, however, are still insufficient. “What political action requires and what it most often lacks is not only theoretical and factual knowledge but the moral will to do, in view of the available theoretical and factual knowledge, what needs to be done.”⁴¹ The moral will, as discussed above, comes not from the theoretical or factual knowledge but from something that transcends the knowledge, the compass, the meaning. Political theory and knowledge is valuable only if it has that normative element—a purpose. There can be a trove of political theory but on its own it is of little value; it will take the will of an actor to utilize it and make it relevant

⁴⁰ Hedley Bull, “Kissinger: The Primacy of Geopolitics.” *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 56, No. 3. (Summer, 1980), pp. 484-487.

⁴¹ Morgenthau (1972) 41.

Finally, Morgenthau says, success is hinged on a pinch of wisdom. Wisdom is something hard to describe; it is an actor's art for detecting political motives and needs. While this gift can be honed by years of study and practice, it cannot be acquired by years of study and practice. "Political wisdom, understood as sound political judgment cannot be learned; it is a gift of nature, like the gift of artistic creativity or literary style or eloquence or force of personality."⁴² Political success is best assured when wisdom and action are unified. Plato's concept of philosopher-kings is still relevant. An ideal leader is one who is a philosopher ("man of wisdom") and a king ("man of action").⁴³

Scientific inquiries of late have been attempting to find what is "political knowledge" but has tried to strip it of all meaning in the process and thereby has lost its path. Students of political science have sensed that it is hollow and they have turned to dogmatic activism as a means to change the world or, alternately, they have created a fictitious reality in which their irrelevant theory can be relevant. This state of affairs is a dystopia of sorts. Instead of science helping mankind progress in a proactive way, science has made man reactive. Individuals feel powerless. Their knowledge is not helping and they cannot discern why. Knowledge was supposed to be the secret weapon; is it not? Morgenthau says:⁴⁴

Thus it appears as though science has no answer to the specific question our period of history poses. The indiscriminate accumulation of knowledge does not help us orient ourselves in a meaningful way, and this very inability to make meaningful distinctions makes science the slave rather than the master of its subject, and man the victim rather than the beneficiary of knowledge.

⁴² Morgenthau (1972) 45.

⁴³ Morgenthau (1972) 45.

⁴⁴ Morgenthau (1972) 47.

Science, in other words, cannot succeed, if it does not answer to something transcendent, to philosophy. Morgenthau's critics have highlighted what his theory lacks. Kenneth Waltz, in reviewing Morgenthau's Dilemmas of Politics (1958), observes a lack of clarity. While the volume is rich with theory and insight, it lacks a concrete action plan. In this volume, Morgenthau discusses the importance of power as a directive force in international relations. He claims that if one used power as a compass, one can rationally understand the actions of states. Waltz finds this theory inadequate.⁴⁵ He asks: Is this theory adequate? If adequate, is the term "rationality" used appropriately?

Waltz highlights an additional problem. He finds that Morgenthau's theory alternates between the descriptive and the persuasive.⁴⁶ Is this how politics is or how politics ought to be? Certain phenomena can be approached descriptively, such as the nature of power and how it impacts people. Other phenomena, such as how human nature responds, cannot be described with the same confidence. Thus it becomes persuasive. Waltz states that the discussion of human nature and its motives is a separate discussion, more appropriate for a psychologist or philosopher than for a political scientist. He writes about Morgenthau's theory:⁴⁷ "It is not that something has been omitted but rather that the parts of his system—the volitional and the determined, the attention paid to political conditions and the emphasis paid on human nature and individual actors—are in uneasy juxtaposition."

It is not surprising that when Waltz developed his own theory of international relations, it remedied these difficulties by clearly delineating which factors were based on the system (i.e. the structure of international relations) and which were the result of human nature.

⁴⁵ Kenneth Waltz, rev. of Dilemmas of Politics, by Hans J. Morgenthau, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Jun., 1959) pp. 529-532 < <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1952163>>.

⁴⁶ Waltz (1959) 531.

⁴⁷ Waltz (1959) 531.

Earnest Nagel, a Columbia professor and noted scholar in the philosophy of science, is a harsher critic of Morgenthau and suggests that Morgenthau does not understand the natural sciences and therefore dismisses their methods.⁴⁸ In the volume Scientific Man versus Power Politics, Morgenthau establishes that the modern “scientific man” is unable to meet the challenges of negotiating the territory of world politics. His emphasis on facts and figures limits him. Decoding the dynamics of international relations requires insight, intuition and other “higher powers” as described above. Nagel deconstructs this lofty idea. If the statesman is not relying on facts and figures, what is he relying upon? Some notions that can never be objectively evaluated? The concept of “higher powers” is disturbing to Nagel. He says:⁴⁹ “For to accept an insight simply because it claims to be a higher wisdom, is to declare out of bounds the demand for a critical appraisal of policies arrived at by such insights.”

Nagel believes that Morgenthau is confusing two elements of political inquiry. One is the *source* of political wisdom which Morgenthau attributes to insight and intuition. The second is the question of how this knowledge—or any knowledge—can be warranted. The scientific method offers ways to evaluate the validity and adequacy of an empirical claim. The scientific method is not concerned with the origin of a theory, creative or otherwise, because it cannot be evaluated. Nagel says about Morgenthau:⁵⁰ “His emphasis is on intuition and insight as *sources* of political wisdom, and he appears to think proponents of scientific method wish to exclude artistic and religious experiences as contexts on which inspiration and belief may rise.” These two elements have to be separated because their function is different. In the literature on methods in science, there are few (if any) conditions on the origin of theories; there are, however, many

⁴⁸ Earnest Nagel, rev. of Scientific Man versus Power Politics by Hans J. Morgenthau, *The Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 5 (May, 1947) pp. 906-909 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/792967>>.

⁴⁹ Nagel (1947) 908.

⁵⁰ Nagel (1947) 909.

conditions, on the verification of theories. Therefore, Nagel concludes:⁵¹ “Until Mr. Morgenthau recognizes this difference between questions of validity and of origin, he will be fighting with wind-mills.”

The distinction highlighted by Nagel—questions of origin and validity—is consistent with an earlier distinction between philosophy and science. Philosophy is more concerned with origins than validity whereas science is more concerned with validity than with origins. It appears that following Morgenthau, some scholars took the “origins-philosophical” element and developed their own explanation of realism. Other scholars took the “validity-science” element and developed ways of verifying realism’s claims.

C. History versus Political Science

Political science is currently composed of two cultures. Political scientists are aware of the competing claims of each culture and attempt to discern their place between them. Jack S. Levy suggests that the idiographic/nomothetic distinction, originally coined by 19th century German theorist Wilhelm Windelband based on Kantian philosophy, can aid scholars in understanding the difference between political scientists and historians. The terms idiographic and nomothetic refer to two ways of approaching knowledge. The idiographic model seeks to understand unique events whereas the nomothetic model seeks to understand general events. Nomothetic is based on what Kant described as a tendency to generalize, and is expressed in the natural sciences. It describes the effort to derive laws that explain objective phenomena. Idiographic is based on what Kant described as a tendency to specify, and is expressed in the humanities. It describes the effort to understand the meaning of contingent, accidental, and often subjective phenomena.

⁵¹ Nagel (1947) 909.

Levy believes that political science joined the natural scientists in developing a nomothetic model whereas historians have continued using the idiographic model in the tradition of the humanities. While Levy agrees that neither group is monolithic, he nonetheless finds that political scientists tend to sweep away small facts and aim at discerning patterns; they seek to form general laws, and they are less interested in individual events than they are in the relationship between events. Historians, in contrast, focus more on describing and evaluating single events and are reluctant to form unwarranted generalizations.⁵²

With this idiographic versus nomothetic frame, Levy explains some of the persistent differences between the historians and political scientists in their study of international relations. Like the present author, Levy believed that the debate between the proponents and opponents of the scientific method in political science was linked to some greater division, either epistemological or ideological. Levy writes:⁵³ “In this chapter, I develop this argument to show that the idiographic/nomothetic distinction underlies many of the other criteria that scholars have advanced to identify differences between the disciplines [...] Because the idiographic/nomothetic distinction subsumes these other criteria,⁵⁴ it is far more useful than any single criterion, and provides a comprehensive and powerful framework for analyzing the differences between the disciplines.”

The present author finds that Snow’s “two cultures” argument cited above provides a better understanding of all these criteria including Levy’s and additionally offers a better understanding of why the distinctions occur. That said, Levy’s analysis summarizes some of the

⁵² Jack S. Levy, “Explaining Events and Developing Theories: History, Political Science, and the Analysis of International Relations,” Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations, Eds. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001) pg. 41.

⁵³ Levy 41.

⁵⁴ The criteria referred to are: the value and importance of parsimonious explanations, primary sources, prediction, covering laws, and scope conditions.

key differences between the historians and political scientists in a succinct way. The issues he addresses are the concern with parsimony, the difference between emphasizing primary or secondary sources, the role of predictions and policy implications, the value of general laws, and scope limits.

1. Parsimony and Robust Theories

On the issue of parsimony, Levy says that political science scholars prefer theories which explain more variables with fewer assumptions. The historians, in contrast, prefer “total explanations” which account for all the variables and evaluate multiple causes.⁵⁵ Robert Jervis explains that parsimony,” does not have to mean monocausality or even simplicity, although sometimes it does. Rather, it refers to a favorable ratio between the explanatory factors deployed and the range of behavior explained.”⁵⁶ Jervis acknowledges that parsimony involves a tradeoff. It prefers giving up on complete exploration at the cost of explaining a greater range of factors. A theory that explains a lot is called a “robust theory” and is the gold standard of theories.

Why is political science so concerned with parsimony? First, based on the principle of Occam’s Razor, it is simpler and more convenient. The theory ought to be less complicating than the reality it seeks to explain. Second, Jervis says, parsimony is based on a claim about the world. Parsimonious theories are more likely to be correct because, according to physics, the world is composed of simple fundamental principles.⁵⁷ Historians are not convinced that their

⁵⁵ Levy 15.

⁵⁶ Robert Jervis, “International History and International Politics: Why are They Studied Differently?” Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations, Eds. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001) pg. 390.

⁵⁷ Jervis 390.

material is analogous to the material of physics and are not prepared to exchange thorough explanations for parsimonious, incomplete theories.

In political science, on account of theory there is often a gap between description and explanation. This gap would go against the grain of the historian's work; although historians certainly make use of theories, their craft is essentially centered on explanation.⁵⁸

2. Primary and Secondary Sources

The historians, with their emphasis on capturing a given era or event fully and as exactly as possible, rely heavily on primary sources. The political scientists, in contrast, rely on secondary sources, especially when it comes to historical literature. Their goal is to form general laws based on the data; it is not to get involved in the accuracy of the data itself. Levy admits the problem of selection bias but suggests that scholars from both disciplines review their work with colleagues who will point out a selection bias if they find one.⁵⁹

3. Predictions and Policy Implications

Levy then discusses the issue of predictions and policy implications. The historians, he says, are less concerned with prediction and policy implications. They study history for its own sake, not because of its relationship to the present or future.⁶⁰ As discussed above, one of the characteristics Snow observed among the scientists was their optimism about the future and their impatience with the past. The political scientists described by Levy are clearly not terribly concerned with their past and prefer to emphasize the present and future.

⁵⁸ Jervis 396.

⁵⁹ Levy 59-61.

⁶⁰ Levy 61.

4. *Universal Laws*

Levy asks: Can there be universal laws that remain true for all space and time? Historians usually take the positions that events are contingent rather than universal. Political scientists, on the other hand, believe that universal laws are possible. Jervis says they believe this can be done because:⁶¹ “(P)olitical scientists often assume that people and states behave quite consistently.” This assumption is very risky. Human behavior is inconsistent in the best of times, let alone in times of war and uncertainty. Historians, says Jervis, seem to have accepted the inconsistencies of humankind as an inevitable part of life. The political scientists, however, are stuck. They assume rationality and a degree of consistency; under those conditions, inconsistencies do not easily find a place.

5. *Scope Limits*

Assuming that it is not the case that “the sky’s the limit” what then is the limit to the human capacity to know? Does one exist? Historians limit their generalizations based on temporal and spatial criteria, to the confines of a given era or location. Political scientists limit their generalization to the analytical scope of their theory, to the assumptions which underpin their theory.⁶² A final factor raised by Levy is that of “the logic of discovery and the logic of confirmation” which refers to the construction of theories versus the validation of theories. When historians use theory they sometimes over-theorize and do not empirically substantiate their arguments. Validating their claims is not as important in their scholarship as it is in the

⁶¹ Jervis 396.

⁶² Levy 66.

scholarship of political science. Today's academic political science programs train their students to create theoretical generalizations and arguments which can be verified by empirical data.⁶³

Levy's detailed list of distinctions sounds vaguely familiar. Morgenthau's "scientific man" is similar to Levy's category of "political scientists". Morgenthau's "scientific man" believes in universal laws, in the importance of facts and figures, and in the power of science. Morgenthau's "more-than-scientific-man", in contrast, studies the past extensively for clues, does not rely on universal laws because human motives are too complex to be made into laws. Additionally, he knows that each event can be unique and therefore draws on his powers of intuition to discern the "writing on the wall" of his era. Morgenthau's more-than-scientific-man is, in Levy's analysis, more historian than political scientist. In fact, Morgenthau himself would be a historian.

More correctly, the distinction Levy draws so comprehensively between the historians and the political scientists is not really about these two disciplines; it is about the two cultures and about the fact that political science falls somewhere in between the two cultures and is still trying to find its place. Take note of the "tradeoffs" that the political scientists described by Levy have to ascribe to. One, parsimony is valued, although Levy agrees that it comes at a steep cost. Furthermore, parsimony is based on a principle of physics that likely does not even apply to the social sciences (i.e., that parsimonious explanations are more likely to be true because the universe is composed of fundamental, simple principles). Two, political scientists assume that states and individuals act consistently although Jervis acknowledges that it is actually the case that inconsistency is closer to the truth; but there is no way for the political scientists to study inconsistent behavior.

⁶³ Levy 79-80.

In exchange for these perhaps dubious assumptions, the political scientists demand rigor in their scholarship and seek empirical verification for their theories. They set the bar high. The question, therefore, remains: Is the tradeoff worth it?

CHAPTER 4: HENRY KISSINGER AND A PHILOSOPHY OF POLITICS

A. Classifying Kissinger

Waltz is easily classified. He classifies himself as a neo-realist, as a theorist in search of abstract laws of political science. Kissinger is more difficult to classify. Kissinger eschews classification and has enjoyed remaining free of the constraints of categories. Upon reflection, it appears appropriate to allow Kissinger the freedom he desires and to resist the urge to find a category for him. Rosenau, though not nearly as iconoclastic, similarly felt himself to be breaking out of the current norms of the field. Fortunately for both, they are in good company. The history of philosophy and science has seen many such characters; there have been many creative minds who have refused to comply with the scientific norms of their day because they found the norms arbitrary and unnecessarily limiting. While on some occasions, scientists and philosophers have resisted new trends because of a stubborn refusal to accept a new paradigm shift, that phenomenon is not at play here.

The French poet, dramatist, historian, and philosopher Voltaire, François Marie Arouet de (1694-1778), an icon of the Enlightenment, is a good example of a thinker who detested systems of all kinds. This idea was most fully developed in his philosophical novel, Candide, which literally means “Optimism”.⁶⁴ Some say, however, that Candide is a satire not on Optimism, but on systems in general.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Candide is a critical satire of abstract philosophical systems, specifically **Leibnizian optimism**. This theory was developed by Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, Baron von (1646-1716), a German Philosopher, and was condensed into the following formula “all’s for the best in this best of all possible worlds.” This optimism was based on pre-determinism, that everything happened for a purpose and was part of a causal chain that would lead to the best because it is the divine plan. Voltaire, an empiricist and deist, rejected this view strongly because the human experience, filled with its burdens and tragedies, gives no evidence to support this illusionary optimism. For more on **Leibnizian optimism**, read...

⁶⁵ Roger Pearson, Introduction and translation, Candide and other Stories, By Voltaire (Oxford: Oxford U press, 1990) xix.

Voltaire named his novel “Candide” which means white, pure. One ought to approach knowledge in a “candide” way. The facts themselves should communicate without the background noise of dogma and beliefs. In Voltaire’s philosophy, one ought to reason inductively rather than deductively. Roger Pearson, the translator of Candide, writes in his introduction.⁶⁶

...Optimism is discredited not so much (and certainly not only) because its tenets are shown to be implausible in the light of the evidence, but essentially because it is a system. As such, it is as inhuman and as dangerous as all the other systems which are ruthlessly satirized in the story: the military system, the Church system, the colonial system, the caste system, and indeed the system of logic itself.

Another commentator writes:⁶⁷ “Voltaire has a profound distrust of doctrine; he loathes abstract reasoning and theorizing, whether Leibnizian optimism or Manichean⁶⁸ pessimism. He believes in empiricism, the doctrine that all knowledge comes from our sensory experience.”

Voltaire finished his novel in much the same way that Rosenau concludes his speech. When all the characters of the novel have finished their journeys, both literally and figuratively, the main character Candide says: "Let us cultivate our garden" (instead of speculating on unanswerable problems). This expresses succinctly Voltaire's practical philosophy of common sense. Rosenau similarly expressed the futility of the endless debates and instead advocated focusing on the actual problems in international relations. He too wants to “cultivate the garden”.

⁶⁶ Pearson xxv.

⁶⁷ John W. Campbell, The Book of Great Books: A Guide to 100 World Classics (New York: Fall River Press, 2000) 114.

⁶⁸ Manichaeism, religion founded by Mani (c.216—c.276), believed in a simple dualist philosophy in which there was an ongoing conflict between the realm of God, represented by light and by spiritual enlightenment, and the realm of Satan, symbolized by darkness and by the world of material things. God, although good, was in continuous tension with the evil of Satan. Humans were thought to be the representatives of this conflict. Humans are created of matter, Satan’s material, and yet were infused with divine light. (From: The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. Copyright © 2006 Columbia University Press.)

Voltaire's thought is full of wit, wisdom, and curious clarity. Unfortunately, it lacks consistency. Although Voltaire opposed all systems, he still promoted the inductive method and empiricism. Are those not systems as well? Inevitably, theories of this nature are violated some of the time because they are so broad. A small system is easy to keep consistent while a broad one is more likely to include contradictions.

Paul Feyerabend, author of Against Method and several other volumes, is a more recent iconoclast. He earned the title "the worst enemy of science" for his sacrilegious remarks about progress in science.⁶⁹ Feyerabend was one of four philosophers who challenged the traditional notions of scientific progress. The other three were Karl R. Popper, Imre Lakatos, and Thomas S. Kuhn. Feyerabend was in a category of his own on account of the radical nature of his ideas. He believed that the history of science was not based on logic; in fact, more often than not, scientists clung to their theories for subjective and diverse reasons. Logic hardly mattered. The pursuit of science according to Feyerabend was deeply personal, innately subjective. To establish objective standards, consequently, went against the grain of scientific discovery and would lead to a loss of innovative theories. Feyerabend writes about this in "Consolations for the Specialist":⁷⁰

More than one social scientist has pointed out to me that now at last he had learned how to turn his field into a 'science'—by which of course he meant that he had learned how to *improve* it. The recipe, according to these people, is to restrict criticism, to reduce the number of comprehensive theories to one, and to create a normal science that has this one theory as its paradigm. Students must be prevented from speculating along different lines and the more restless colleagues must be made to conform and 'to do serious work'.

⁶⁹ Horgan, Paul. "Paul K. Feyerabend: The Worst Enemy of Science." Scientific American (May 1993) pg. 36-37.

⁷⁰ Paul Feyerabend, "Consolations for the Specialist," Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, Eds. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1974, c1970) pg. 198.

Feyerabend finds Kuhn's theory of paradigm shifts to be lacking on several accounts; it is the period of "normal science", however, that Feyerabend finds particularly offensive. The above passage makes reference to "normal science" in this context. More will be said below about how each of the four theorists mentioned above—Popper, Lakatos, Kuhn, and Feyerabend—contributed to the discussion on defining progress in science and then developing a method for measuring progress. For the present it is suffice to say that Feyerabend was committed to scientific progress but believed that progress was contingent on allowing people to freely explore and question. He says: "We want a methodology and a set of institutions which enable us to lose as little as possible of what we are capable of doing and which force us as little as possible to deviate from our natural inclinations."⁷¹

Kissinger shares many of the same attitudes as Feyerabend. While one can hardly make a category titled "iconoclasts" considering the inherent oxymoron in such a classification, one can perhaps suggest a loose confederation between individuals like Voltaire, Feyerabend, and Kissinger. These individuals abhor conventions and systems. They follow their own inclinations and contribute enormously to their field but never by following the exact norms. They find that norms obstruct progress and stifle creativity. Historian Paul Johnson offers a potent remark in this vein:⁷² "The worst of all despotism is the heartless tyranny of ideas."

Having thus typified Kissinger without quite classifying him, his philosophy of science can be discussed.

B. Kissinger's Historicism

⁷¹ Feyerabend 210

⁷² Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1988) pg. 342.

While an undergraduate at Harvard, Kissinger wrote a thesis on the meaning of history. Through the process of completing his research, he developed his own viewpoint. Kissinger's historicism concentrates on the following intertwined problems: The problem of man's freedom versus determinism and the problem of the meaning of history.

Is history predetermined or does man have freedom to change it and shape it? Looking back at history, there is a contradiction. We claim that history was destined and yet, men and women throughout the ages act as if their choices matter. Kissinger gives the analogy of a person at the start of his life. At that point, he believes that all avenues are open to him. Yet, each time he commits himself to a course, several other courses close. Later, he looks back at his life and he sees that everything was path dependent. If so, did he choose his course in life or was he led to it?

Kissinger explores the second question: What is the meaning of history? Is it a collection of random events in need of meaning? Or, conversely, does it have its own inherent meaning independent of human interpretation? Spengler and Toynbee see history as cyclical rather than progressive. The center of history is civilization, versus economics (Marxist approach) or ideas (Hegelian approach). Each civilization goes through a period of birth, maturity, decline, and eventually death. Kissinger rejects these perspectives because they seem too deterministic; Kissinger wants his political actors to have more freedom.⁷³ He believed that despite the inevitable decline, the human actor could rise above destiny and fill it with a meaning all his own.

Kissinger resolves these complex problems by proposing a Kantian approach. First, Kissinger adapts the analysis of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) on the mind-body relationship. According to Kant, human beings can only know reality through the mind. This is plausible

⁷³ Cleva, Chap. 2.

because according to Kant's philosophical idealism⁷⁴ there are two categories of reality: (1) *Phenomenal* – the world of objects that can be known through the tools of time, space, causality, and other constructs of the mind. (2) *Noumenal* – the level of reality that cannot be known through the constructs of the mind. Consequently, according to Kant, we only know reality through the tools of the mind. Without the mind, reality remains inaccessible. Each person is free to create his own reality on this level. Therein lays his freedom.⁷⁵

In terms of history, history as a “noumenal,” as a thing in itself, is unknown to us. We are simply unable to conceptualize history in its pure form, devoid of the artificial tools of time, space, and causality. Consequently, when debating the issue of historical determinism and free choice, we must be aware that according to Kantian Idealism, we will never know the true concept, or Idea, of history. We will only know history based on how we perceive it in our minds.

Kissinger emphasizes this last point significantly in his writing. History happens in our minds; in other words, our minds lend meaning to history. The forces of history create change, but humankind lends meaning to the change. In this way, despite the predetermined forces of history, man is still free to create his own meaning.

In this regard, Kissinger brings to mind the historical thought of Collingwood. Robin George Collingwood (1889 –1943), an idealist, was a British philosopher and historian. In his volume, The Idea of History, Collingwood claims that thought is the fundamental concept in historical inquiry. There is the “outside” of the event and the “inside” of the event. They are understood in context of each other. Unlike natural phenomena that can be understood by an

⁷⁴ Kantian idealism can be defined as follows: Knowing that a goodly part of the entity of an object as we know it is created by the forms of perception and understanding. Additionally, being aware that we know the object as what it is once it is transformed into an idea; what it is before being so transformed we cannot know. (Durant, Will. The Story of Philosophy. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005. p. 207.)

⁷⁵ Cleva 00.

objective observer who looks at the specimen, history can never be understood that way. The historian cannot look *at* history but must look *through* it.⁷⁶

Cause for the historian is found in the thoughts of the people who caused the event. The historian will only access those thoughts by putting himself in the mindset of that individual. That means that ultimately, all of history is the reenactment of the event in the historian's mind. Because thought is the main ingredient of history according to Collingwood, history is primarily concerned with human affairs and the human actor. The human is the only animal who uses his thought to influence his conduct.⁷⁷

Kissinger's historical thought is closely linked to Collingwood's philosophy but differs in subtle ways. Kissinger believes that there is an ongoing tension between necessity and freedom. This tension is evident throughout all of his. Life will happen, according to Kissinger, as it must, but we live it by the choices we make. History is *known* in retrospect by its inevitable patterns, but it is *understood* by its uniqueness. The uniqueness is the spiritual awareness which the thinking person adds to the inevitable. Kissinger accepts Collingwood's perception of "inside knowledge" and "outside knowledge" but does not see it as a reconciliation. Instead, Kissinger accepts the two forms of historical knowledge as the co-existence of two opposing propositions. This co-existence is present in the life of nations just as it is present in the life of individuals. We, as individuals, know that we will eventually die and yet we conduct our lives as if life was permanent. We long for permanence while we know that our lives are fleeting and the longing will remain unfulfilled. In much the same way, nations come and go, leaders rise and fall, and nonetheless, nations act as if permanence were viable.

⁷⁶ Collingwood, The Idea of History, ed. Patrick Gardiner. Pg. 00.

⁷⁷ Collingwood 00.

It is not imperative, according to Kissinger, that the contradiction (of Free Will versus Determinism) is reconciled. After all, according to the Hegelian dialectic, contradiction is positive because it evolves into a superior form of knowledge. In the same manner, Kissinger suggests the following synthesis: although we cannot understand the forces of life and the individual's place in it through *conceptualization*, we can know it through *intuition*—sort of feeling it. In this way, Kissinger rejects both pure determinism and pure free will and resorts to a combination of both. Like Morgenthau, Kissinger places great value on intuition.

C. From History to International Relations

Kissinger believes that successful foreign policy is dependent upon one's awareness of history. Awareness is the key word, because as described above, history is about how one conceptualizes it. A leader or statesman must study history because the thoughts of previous political actors cannot be studied in any other manner. It is not an objective truth that can be found elsewhere but can only be found in the context of time and place.

The very nature of international relations means that it must be studied historically. Man and nature, according to Kissinger, are fundamentally different, and must be studied differently. Mankind's "rules" are constantly changing. The ambitions and desires of mankind change over time and those transitions can only be known by studying history. In each era, the statesman or leader creates the "inside" story of history by his choices. History is thus in a perpetual state of becoming; it is being constantly formed by the choices of the leaders.

The great powers are not merely great powers in the material sense, but also have moral and spiritual strength. This strength is unique and related to the state's history and experience.

Those experiences shape the identity of the state and lead to the development of different philosophies and different ideas about international relations.

To achieve this goal, there are two types of leaders. First, there is the prophet. The main job of the prophet-leader is to understand his era. Each age, according to Kissinger, has its own dynamics and its own forces and the leader, much like a prophet, must sense the path of history and guide his nation through those changes. The second leader is the statesman. The statesman must act within the boundaries of time and space, and he or she is therefore limited by those constraints.

The leader, both prophet and statesman, must be attuned to the domestic structure of the nation-state. The institutions of the domestic structure often go through the aging process, not physiologically, but by the loss of creativity. The original values and creativity of the state become codified into institutions and the institutions continue to exist by rote and protocol. Then, when a crisis occurs, the nation-state responds by rote and no longer thinks of a creative resolution. The leader must be aware of this tendency and ensure that the domestic structure has vitality and never loses its creativity. This is essential because the state is unable to function competitively in the international arena when the domestic structure has stagnated. Kissinger's nation-state is a living entity and its individual actor is the soul of the nation-state and acts as its spokesman in international affairs. Kissinger loads the state with meaning while Waltz strips away any meaning that might have been.

In summary, history happens to humanity but humanity identifies history by giving it meaning. As mankind splits off into distinct societal units, and each wants to impose its own meaning, conflict develops. The leaders of the societal units play out the conflict. The conflict can be tragic and ironic. One nation, or bloc of nations, will triumph while the opposing nation,

or bloc of nations, will lose. A statesman, like a prophet, has to sense these things intuitively. In this manner, Kissinger writes:⁷⁸ “Statesmen often share the fate of prophets, that they are without honor in their own country, that they always have a difficult time in legitimizing their programs domestically, and that their greatness is usually apparent only in retrospect when their intuition has become experience.”

Sometimes the leader creates only to find, years later at the culmination of his efforts, that it was all meaningless. This is inevitable because while nations work out the meaning of their state and their era, there is an element of pre-determinism hedging a path of its own, independent of all human efforts. That pre-determined element, however, belongs to the realm of Ideas and is inaccessible to the human; for by the time it is accessed by the human thinker, who must first download it into the software of the human mind, into the language of human thought, it will no longer be the *noumenal* (the thing in itself), but the *phenomenal* (the thing as it appears to us). Knowing that inevitable and infinite unknowing, the leader is even more compelled—almost obligated—to exercise the freewill afforded to him. And the best way to do that is to infuse history with *his* meaning, with the flavor of *his* people.

These fundamental themes are the blueprints of all of Kissinger’s later work. In this context, the analysis of the Congress of Vienna and his emphasis of the role of the statesman fall into place. Kissinger’s distaste for the bureaucracy, his belief in the single star actor, the grandeur afforded to the leader, the frustrated tension that hovers over his literature—all of these factors blend into the themes that compose his worldview. It additionally explains why he objected so much to the use of the scientific approach in political science. Kissinger writes:⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Kissinger, *A World Restored* pg. 329.

⁷⁹ Henry Kissinger, *APSR* 1956. pg 266

If the international situation could be constructed like a mathematical axiom, powers would consider themselves as factors in a balance and arrange their adjustments to achieve a perfect equilibrium between the forces of aggression and the forces of resistance. But an exact balance is impossible [...] because while powers may appear to outsiders as factors in a security arrangement, they appear domestically as expressions of a historical arrangement. No power will submit to a settlement, however well-balanced and however “secure” which seems to deny a vision of itself.

Kissinger’s realism is based on brute reality with all its inconsistencies and surprises. His theories will, therefore, fail any test established to examine the durability of a theory; and not surprisingly, the fact that his theories do not meet the criteria or standards of good research, is of no consequence to Kissinger. In fact, it is irrelevant. Real life theories *should* fail any form of theoretical testing because they are trying to approximate reality, not theory.

Kissinger encouraged leaders in the United States to frequently pause and evaluate their policies and strategies. When a historical shift occurs, he explains, the inattentive leaders are left behind. For instance, after the Napoleonic wars, Metternich—diplomat of Austria—failed to recognize that Napoleon had given the masses the dream of nationalism and, therefore, Austria would have to change its methods of governing if it wanted to remain in power. Similarly, after Hiroshima, the United States failed to assimilate how nuclear weapons changed the nature of international security and how defense strategies would have to be reconciled to the nuclear age.⁸⁰ Kissinger believes that scientific theories and laws of political science are actually harmful because instead of encouraging creative thinking and creative diplomacy, scientific theories create the illusion of a static universe when it is, in reality, extremely active.

D. Kissinger on the Congress of Vienna

⁸⁰ Henry Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, 00.

Kissinger's doctoral thesis focuses on the era following the French revolution of 1789 and the subsequent Napoleonic wars (1803-15). Kissinger chose this era because he found it to be similar to the twentieth century world order after World War II. First, Hitler, like Napoleon, had goals that were revolutionary and therefore unsustainable; second, both eras experienced a technological transition in warfare; and last, both eras sought to establish a peace settlement among the victorious allies based on accepted principles of legitimacy.⁸¹ Kissinger's thesis was eventually published as A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace 1812-1822. Kissinger studied the post-Napoleonic era to learn about the tactics and experiences of statesmen so that he could adapt them for his own age.

1. The Prophet and the Statesman

As discussed above, Kissinger identifies two types of leaders: the prophet and the statesman. The prophet has a vision that is timeless and mystical; it is not yet bound to the intricacies of real life politics. He sees ahead of his time and therefore does not agree with his fellow diplomats. The statesman is down-to-earth and hates the prophet's vision which is impossible to implement without compromise. The prophet, in turn, hates the compromise of the statesman. The two types cannot see eye to eye and their relationship is usually one of enmity.

Kissinger sees the prophet-statesman relationship as essentially being a conflict between "organization" and "inspiration". Inspiration is personal. One relates the self to the policy. It is timeless and speaks of greatness. Organization, in contrast, is about restraint and discipline. The statesman must do what is "right" versus what he desires. The "organization" is bound by the

⁸¹ Henry Kissinger, A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace 1812-1822, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973) Chap. 1.

time and when the needs of a time are mediocre, the corresponding policy must be mediocre as well.⁸²

In his discussion of the statesmen at the Concert of Vienna, Kissinger sees Tsar Alexander as the Prophet and Metternich and Castlereagh as statesmen. Of the two statesmen, Castlereagh emerges as the real hero of the Vienna Settlement.⁸³ He was crucial to the Concert of Europe in two ways. First, unlike most of Britain, who wanted only to contain France and end their European involvement there, Castlereagh understood that Britain could no longer keep its isolationist approach and would have to engage with all of the European powers in order to maintain stability. To this end, he suggested the conference system that was, unfortunately, a premature vision and lasted only seven years. His idea would be incarnated after World War I in the form of the League of Nations, but in 1815 it went against the grain of popular British sentiment. Second, though Prussia and the allies wanted to take harsh revenge on France, Castlereagh insisted on small reparations. He wanted France to be satisfied with the terms of the peace so that it would not seek revenge.

Castlereagh is both statesman and prophet. Britain ignored Castlereagh's vision of a concert system with Europe. The British parliament wanted to contain France and have no other involvement with Europe. Castlereagh ended up committing suicide and being replaced by Lord Canning, his rival from past days. Metternich, the second statesman, was perhaps the shrewdest of the group but also the most tragic. Metternich's objective was simple: To delay the demise of Austria. There was an inherent contradiction in the reality of Austria in 1815. The multinational Hapsburg Empire and nationalism were simply incompatible. Metternich, who was originally a professor in politics, had many schemes to offer; yet, he could not fix the main problem—the

⁸² Kissinger, *A World Restored*, pg. 317.

⁸³ Graubard

contradiction. Metternich understood the nature of the problem and, therefore, he despaired the soonest. Curiously, his domestic solution was devoid of any creative machinations that so characterized his foreign dealings. His solution was simple: nationalism had to be outlawed.

Metternich's approach was entirely negative in nature and transformed Austria into a brutal police state. Kissinger claims that Metternich's approach was both too harsh and too conservative. He did not engage the forces of history, but on the contrary, he tried to defy them for as long as possible. Rather than fight the inevitable, Kissinger believes that Metternich should have been more creative and found ways to work along with the spirit of the times.⁸⁴ A.J.P. Taylor is kinder to Metternich. He believes that Metternich—no matter how capable or intuitive—could not have saved Austria.⁸⁵ Many have suggested that Kissinger hoped to be the Metternich of the twentieth century, but a thorough reading of his text will show this claim to be untrue. Kissinger might have admired Metternich for his keen understanding, but ultimately Metternich symbolizes the tragedy of a statesman's life, not the glory.

Curiously, the dreamy Tsar Alexander is given the role of prophet. According to Kissinger, Tsar Alexander had a dream of free nationalist republics blossoming throughout Europe but the international order could not sustain his mystical vision. It is hard to discern which role Kissinger favors. When he refers to Metternich as a "realist" and to Metternich's opponents as mere "visionaries,"⁸⁶ he seems to favor the former whereas in other passages, the prophet seems to be favored. Consider the following statement:⁸⁷ "Statesmen create; ordinary leaders consume. The ordinary leader is satisfied with ameliorating the environment, not transforming it; a statesman must be a visionary and an educator."

⁸⁴ Graubard 00.

⁸⁵ Taylor 00.

⁸⁶ Kissinger, *A World Restored*, Chap. 2

⁸⁷ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, Chap. 4.

2. *Revolutionary and Conservative States*

When there are no shared principles among states, it is impossible to form any agreement or alliance. This occurs when a state is revolutionary. A revolutionary state does not base its policies on any principle within the existing order; rather, it wants to uproot the existing order and replace it with an opposing order or with no order at all.⁸⁸ Napoleon I was such a leader and Metternich recognized this. Metternich knew that no policy would satisfy Napoleon because

Napoleon's goals were limitless and without any forms of legitimacy. Metternich says that one should never trust a revolutionary power. They want everything so they end up with nothing.⁸⁹ Britain, in contrast, was a *conservative state*; it had clear objectives and they were limited and attainable.

Initially, Kissinger considered the Soviet Union and China to be revolutionary powers. When writing *A World Restored*, Kissinger notes the difficulty in communicating with rival powers who shared no principles with the United States; later, however, he formed policies of détente with the Soviet Union and the PRC. Hoffman writes about this and asks:⁹⁰ Why, once in power, did Kissinger go against his own philosophy? Why did he suddenly find it possible to negotiate with a revolutionary power? One answer could be that Kissinger sensed the desperation of the Soviet Union and felt that he had an opening into their closed ideology. What had not been viable in 1950 was perhaps becoming viable in 1970.

⁸⁸ Kissinger, *A World Restored*, pg. 2

⁸⁹ Graubard, Chap. 2

⁹⁰ Hoffman 00.

Kissinger explains that while the conservative state is concerned with *duty*, the revolutionary state is concerned with *loyalty*.⁹¹ The loyalty is usually linked to a form of group identity, like nationalism or fascism. This difference further complicates the process of negotiating between the two types; they are basically speaking two different languages.

3. *The Conservative Statesman*

Kissinger likely found Metternich so fascinating because he was such an able character and yet such a fantastic failure. In the end, after thirty-nine years of service, he was driven out of office and Austria did not survive. In 1954, Kissinger published an article for the *American Political Science Review* discussing the problem of the conservative statesman in a revolutionary era. Does conservatism mean maintaining the status quo even when it takes brutality and suppression to maintain it? Conservatism, Kissinger says, is really an approach that is only viable before a revolution occurs. When a revolution has succeeded in overturning the existing order, conservatism has already failed. It finds itself in a catch-22: If it attempts to quell the revolution and insists on the old order, it is most likely fighting a losing battle; if, however, it accepts the new form of legitimacy, it is going against its own core beliefs. Though one might suggest communication and compromise, Kissinger explains that this is easier said than done. The two positions are antithetical to each other. How does one find a medium between two opposing positions? Kissinger writes:⁹²

Once the existing legitimacy has been challenged, no real discourse between the contenders is possible any longer, for they cease to speak the same language. It is not the

⁹¹ Graubard, Chap. 2

⁹² Henry Kissinger, "The Conservative Dilemma: Reflections on the Political Thought of Metternich." *The American Political Science Review*, 48.4 (Dec. 1954). Pg. 1017.

adjustment of differences within a political system which is now at issue, but the political system itself. Henceforth, stability and reform, liberty and authority, come to appear as antithetical, and political contests turn doctrinal instead of empirical. When there is no consensus on what is considered “legitimate,” no basis for agreement exists.

Kissinger’s insight is stunning. In it, one hears the dilemma of the United States in 1954 and its inability to communicate with the Soviet Union. Kissinger understood that the two superpowers would not be able to find common legitimacy because each was coming from its own political order—one conservative and one revolutionary—and there was no common ground between them and not a single peg to hang a consensus on. Kissinger concludes his analysis with tremendous clarity but without a resolution to the problem. And it was also the final symbolization of the conservative dilemma: that it is the task of the conservative not to defeat but to forestall revolutions, that a society which cannot *prevent* a revolution, the disintegration of whose values has been demonstrated by the *fact* of revolution, will not be able to defeat it by conservative means, that order once shattered can be restored only by the experience of chaos.⁹³

It is unclear from this passage how a statesman ought to deal with a post-revolution domestic order. And though Kissinger was unable to comfortably resolve this problem in the world of theory, he nonetheless believed that Metternich should have done *something*, rather than resign to the inevitable.

E. Key Elements of Kissinger’s Statecraft

If Kissinger had a system, it would be the interplay between diplomacy, military strategy, and domestic politics. He often claimed that some of the failures of the United States policies were linked to the failure to appreciate the interconnectedness of these three elements.⁹⁴ In his

⁹³ Kissinger, *APSR* 1954, pg. 1030

⁹⁴ Graubard chap. 1.

political philosophy, the ideas of power, equilibrium, legitimacy, diplomacy, and choice merge together. Each concept will be explained briefly.

1. The Definition of Power

Kissinger believes that power is the currency of world politics but his definition of power is different than that of the classical realists or the neorealists. Kissinger sees power as a composite of the following:⁹⁵ A) An understanding of the prevailing political and strategic situation. B) Internal support for specific policies. C) Relations with other nations—allied, enemy, or neutral. D) A leader who achieves the policies that were decided upon.

In current political journals, there is an ongoing discussion about the power versus security issue. Classical realism has claimed that in the anarchy of the international arena, states are compelled to seek military and economic power. Neorealism has softened and qualified this claim. States, it claims, are like-units and therefore essentially seek security and power is, therefore, only a means to the end of security.⁹⁶ As usual, Kissinger's ideas lie on the fringes. Once again, he belongs to neither camp. In his perspective, power is not an end in itself and it cannot exclusively serve as the means to achieve security. The method for achieving security is equilibrium.⁹⁷ And power, as defined above, can assist a state in reaching that equilibrium.

2. Equilibrium: General and Special

⁹⁵ Graubard 00.

⁹⁶ Stephen M. Walt, "The Progressive Power of Realism," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 4. (Dec., 1997) 931-935.

⁹⁷ Cleva 00.

States need power to create stability. Kissinger says that there are two kinds of equilibrium. *General equilibrium* is based on generic principles of balance of power. *Special equilibrium* is based on the historical relationship between states. Knowing history is imperative. Likewise, it is important to know the current identity of the state.

Equilibrium is based on principles of legitimacy. Kissinger does not clearly identify these principles because they change for each era. Additionally, usually these principles are left unstated. Hoffman criticizes Kissinger for establishing such a vague definition of legitimacy, but in context of Kissinger's political philosophy, it is evident why the definition must be vague. It is fluid, changing, merging with the times, and varying with the issues at stake.

3. *Limited War and Total War*

The discussion of revolutionary states versus reactionary states is related to another salient point. It is related to the difference of limited objectives versus absolutist objectives and the accompanying choice of *limited war* versus *total war*. When a nation endeavors to attain absolute security, it implies hegemony; it further implies a lack of legitimacy which usually culminates in a total war. Absolute desires are dangerous, Kissinger warns. He finds that American policy-makers favor absolutist language at times and he therefore reminds them that such desires will destroy the good name of the United States. Absolutist objectives imply that the United States will not reckon with the other great nations.

The policy of Massive Retaliation, according to Kissinger, reflected such an all-or-nothing approach.⁹⁸ Limited war, in Kissinger's political philosophy, is more favorable. It implies that a nation seeks security but will recognize that the other great nations want the same.

⁹⁸ Graubard, Chap. 3

Kissinger notes that since the development of nuclear weapons, absolute war and absolute victory are no longer possible; therefore, the strategy of limited war becomes vital. A world superpower must be able to impose its will and limited war can help it achieve just that.

Kissinger emphasizes that a limited war is fundamentally different than a total war; it is not simply a smaller total war. It is, additionally, more of a political act than a military one. The limited war is characterized by a specific objective; it aims to convince its rival to relent on one issue. It seeks to influence its rival, but not to destroy it. Naturally, it is easier to use a limited war effectively when there is some form of shared legitimacy between the states in question.

Outcomes, are another question to consider. There are three possible outcomes to a limited war: (1) Limited victory. (2) Limited defeat. (3) Stalemate. When discussing limited war, a nation has to be convinced that all three options are preferable to an all-out-war. To make sure that the rival nation understands the objectives of the limited war and does not mistake it for the first steps in a total war, diplomacy is needed.⁹⁹

4. Diplomacy and Foreign Policy

According to Kissinger, the foreign policy of the United States in the past years has been either teleological or psychiatric. During the cold war, however, that had to change. There were several transitions occurring which demanded a new kind of foreign policy. First, there was the transition of the United States from single hegemon in a unipolar world to a great power in a multipolar world. Second, there was the transition from conventional warfare to nuclear warfare. Kissinger finds that the changes demanded a new conception of foreign policy. It is evident, he

⁹⁹ Graubard, pg. 80

says, that there is no single policy that will make every nation happy; therefore, he believes that stability is the way to go.

Stability, he says, is the only moral norm which should be invoked; it is a neutral principle and it does not favor any nation over another.¹⁰⁰ The objective of a foreign policy is to maintain stability, not to bring peace. Peace usually relies on principles of ideology and morality and those cannot be universal. Morality should never guide a foreign policy. It is related to fundamentalism and absolutism.

The United States, according to Kissinger, should have two aspects to its foreign policy, one positive and one negative.¹⁰¹ Positive: The United States must cooperate with other nations. Negative: The United States must not let any other power become strong enough to threaten it.

Kissinger feels that the United States is confused and thinks that the purpose of diplomacy is to make peace while the purpose of war is to bring victory. The strategy of containment, Kissinger says, was based on the erroneous assumption that war and diplomacy occur in neat and organized stages. He cites Secretary Acheson who stated during the McArthur hearings that:¹⁰² "...what we must do is to create situations of strength; we must build strength; and if we create that strength, then I think that the whole situation in the world begins to change...with that change there comes a difference in the negotiating positions of the various parties..." Kissinger claims that this division is erroneous: diplomacy and war work in tandem. They are both tools to accomplish the objectives of the nation.¹⁰³

The diplomat is of extreme importance in Kissinger's thought. Because of the great subtlety in Kissinger's thought, there has to be a forum or voice for explaining the subtlety. The

¹⁰⁰ Cleva

¹⁰¹ Kissinger, "We Live in an Age of Transition", 1995

¹⁰² Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, pg. 30.

¹⁰³ Graubard Chap. 3

diplomat, furthermore, makes the critical choice which gives meaning to the diplomat's nation and to history. Bad or good, those choices direct the forces of history. When Truman authorized the bombing of Hiroshima, that choice made history. When President Bush declared war on Iraq, he made a similar choice. It is self-understood that the single diplomat of Kissinger's writing is not a single character in real life. Kissinger's "statesman" becomes all the agents and policy makers who are communicating with other nations—allied, rival, or neutral—on behalf of the United States. Kissinger's public life and his eventual inability to juggle all the tasks related to the defense and security of a superpower illustrates why the metaphysical statesman can no longer be manifest in one person.

5. Kissinger's System

Kissinger is good at synthesizing as both Bull and Morgenthau suggest, and he brings a great deal of clarity to some enduring topics in world politics: diplomacy, equilibrium, military strategy, and nuclear weapons transition. Table 3 presents a basic model of the questions Kissinger's statesman asks when deciding a diplomatic action.

Kissinger's System for Decision-Making A Question-and-Answer Model		
Stage One	Conditions of Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the trend of my era? ▪ What is the balance? ▪ What does my intuition tell me about conditions in the international world?
Stage Two	Conditions of State - Rival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the state in question a revolutionary state or a legitimate state? ▪ What is its history? ▪ What is its vision of itself? ▪ Will it be open to diplomacy?
Stage Three	Conditions of State - Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the status of my state? ▪ What is its identity of itself? ▪ Is it in tune with the trends of the time?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will it accept a diplomatic option? Military option? ▪ What is the best way to communicate my intended foreign policy to my country?
Stage Four	Conditions of Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What military support is needed to support this foreign policy? ▪ Is it defense or offense? ▪ Is it covert action or open action? ▪ Is it nuclear or conventional? ▪ What military course will be <u>the most effective</u> for this policy?
Stage Five	The Diplomat and the Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Based on all of the above, what foreign policy choice is most viable? ▪ Does my choice include the conditions of my rival state, the conditions of my own state, the needs of the current era, and the capability of our military? ▪ How can I ensure that all the branches of my government—military, defense, and diplomats—are all working in harmony with the same objectives?

Table 3: A Decision-Making Q&A Model synthesizing Kissinger's thought.

F. The Critique: Hoffman, Bull, and Morgenthau

Legend has it that Kissinger and Hoffmann made a formidable pair. Both worked at Harvard simultaneously and both were distinguished by their thick European accents and brilliant, agile minds. And that was where the similarities ended. Besides disagreeing on the basic paradigm of international relations—liberalism versus realism—each approached their data differently. In Primacy or World Order: American Foreign Policy since the Cold War, Hoffman offers a searing critique of Kissinger's objectives during his reign as National Security Advisor and during his years as Secretary-of-State for President Nixon and President Ford. The account is exacting because it comes from someone who knew Kissinger well and saw first-hand how he conducted his affairs. Nonetheless, all that said, Hoffman seems to misunderstand Kissinger's

theoretical trajectory. Its strength is its weakness; when a theory is based on metaphysics, “intuition”, and “unstated legitimacy”, there is a necessary vagueness.

Hoffmann begins his critique by pointing out the above-mentioned element: Kissinger’s vague language. For instance, Hoffmann wonders, what exactly is implied by passages such as the following: “order once shattered can be restored only by the experience of chaos.” What exactly is the “experience of chaos”? Hoffman cites other passages regarding “legitimacy” where the definition is similarly too vague to be applied.

Hoffmann additionally asks about Kissinger’s change of heart during détente. If the Soviet Union had been categorized as a revolutionary power, one with whom discussion with a legitimate order such as the United States was all but impossible, how then did negotiations suddenly become possible in 1972?¹⁰⁴

Hoffmann’s third point is targeted at the heart of Kissinger’s theory—his notion of stability. Hoffmann claims that a stable world is composed of three things:¹⁰⁵ 1) Stable, confident partners that trust each other. 2) Relations between the major powers based on treaties and not on personal friendships. 3) Nations interact through international institutions.

Based on these criteria, Hoffmann criticizes Kissinger’s secrecy and his disregard of the bureaucracy and the institutions—both intergovernmental and non-governmental. Such individuality cannot bring the stability that Hoffmann envisions. Hoffmann is aware that ventures such as détente and SALT talks may demand an element of secrecy and skill, but he believes that it was Kissinger’s personal style that gave his statecraft its distinct flourish, not the nature of the venture at hand. It was Kissinger’s “psychological gifts, his talent for patient

¹⁰⁴ Hoffman, *Primacy or World Order*, pg. 00

¹⁰⁵ Hoffman 00

persuasion, his art of making the interlocutor share his concern and empathize with his plight,”¹⁰⁶ that characterized Kissinger’s statecraft. With regard to his diplomatic efforts, Kissinger consulted with only a select few elites and, consequently, alienated many individuals in both the state and defense departments. Kissinger, Hoffmann says: “...always preferred to be a lone actor moving above, and capable of darting in and out of, the heavy and intricate structure of American institutions—a gifted individual for whom it was always easier to serve other individuals through close ties of loyalty and service (...) than to serve bureaucratic or other establishments.”¹⁰⁷

In the end, Hoffmann recounts, Kissinger undertook too many responsibilities and was then unable to complete all of them successfully. Hoffmann stands out because, despite his disregard of Kissinger as a policy-maker, he still takes the time to review the main themes of Kissinger’s political philosophy. In fact, Hoffmann often conveys Kissinger’s ideas with more charm and articulation than the original.

Hedley Bull, a European political science scholar, admired Kissinger. He understood that Kissinger’s framework for politics was European. He never fully adapted to an American mindset. As such, Bull says that probably the biggest flaw in Kissinger’s statecraft was his own inability to communicate his vision to his contemporaries. This miscommunication was not the result of Kissinger’s personality quirks and methods of secrecy, as Hoffman suggests; it occurred, Bull says, “because of his lack of feeling for American history and institutions, his inability to invoke American precedents and concepts in place of Metternich and the [European] balance of power.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Hoffman 50

¹⁰⁷ Hoffman 52.

¹⁰⁸ Bull 487.

Morgenthau admired the cohesion that Kissinger brought to the concepts of foreign and military policy. To intellectuals, Morgenthau explains, war is something evil and uncommon which occurs when things are out of rhythm; war, therefore, must be abolished. It follows then that the military, in this perspective, is an independent enterprise with the sole objective of achieving a quick, efficient, and total victory. Kissinger's volume on nuclear weapons, Morgenthau says, challenged this position, which was fairly standard after World War II. According to Kissinger, Morgenthau writes:¹⁰⁹

Military strategy is an instrument to achieve [...] political purposes and it is no more a self-sufficient technical enterprise than diplomacy, propaganda, and foreign aid. Military strategy is not simply the commitment of all available instruments of military technology for maximum effect. Rather it is the judicious adaptation of what is technologically possible to what is politically desirable and tolerable.



Kissinger asks a range of questions about the human condition. He asks about the role of history, the role of determinism, and the role of the statesman. He asks about reasonable foreign policy goals and about the tradeoff between the consistency of bureaucracy and the creativity of intuition. Kissinger wonders about the meaning of politics and why individuals are engaged in this relentless power struggle. His questions are philosophical, metaphysical, analytical and sometimes unstintingly practical. These are the types of questions that leaders of people have been asking since the beginning of time.

¹⁰⁹ Morgenthau, Hans J. "Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy: Review." The American Political Science Review, Vol. 52, No. 3. (Sep., 1958), pp. 842-844.

CHAPTER 5: KENNETH WALTZ AND A SCIENCE OF POLITICS

Kenneth Neal Waltz (1924-), of the University of California, Berkeley, is the founder of structural realism. In addition to his new approach to realism, Waltz was part of the revolution with regard to the use of theory in the soft sciences. Whereas Kissinger favored history and philosophy, Waltz favored scientific laws; whereas Kissinger emphasizes the unique, Waltz favored the universal.

Waltz believes that the resistance toward “theories” and “laws” amongst social scientists, who are concerned that theories deny the role of accident and specifics in the history of humankind, stems from the fact that they misunderstand the role of theory. First, he claims, a theory looks to units’ divergent factors by focusing on the one uniting factor combining them. Second, because all fields of the social sciences overlap and all topics relate, the “theory isolates one realm from all others in order to deal with it intellectually.”¹¹⁰ Reality, in actuality, is unknown; there is no purpose in worshipping reality for its own sake. A subject from real life can be studied most meaningfully when it is artificially isolated, simplified, and generalized.

A. Waltz’s System of International Relations

It is evident that Waltz’s objectives are different than those of both Morgenthau and Kissinger.

Objective One: To Form Objective Laws

Waltz desires to create a number of causal laws with the hope that those causal laws will be applied to make broad generalities and predictions about the international arena. He, therefore, draws a strong correlation between the independent firms that are constrained by the

¹¹⁰ Kenneth N. Waltz, “The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory,” Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 18 (1988) 615.

free market, and the individual states that are similarly constrained by the anarchic system. Both are governed by a general and single cause.

Waltz believes that the resistance toward “theories” and “laws” amongst social scientists, who are concerned that theories deny the role of accident and specifics in the history of mankind, stems from the fact that they misunderstand the role of theory. First, he claims, a theory looks to units’ divergent factors by focusing on the one uniting factor combining them. Second, although all fields of the social sciences overlap and all topics relate, the “theory isolates one realm from all others in order to deal with it intellectually.”¹¹¹

In this vein, Waltz begins Theory of International Politics by establishing the difference between a theory and a law. A law, he says, is something that has been proven to occur systematically, such as:

- If a, then b.
- If a, then b with a probability of x.

Theories are designed to explain laws, says Waltz, and laws remain true for all time while the theories that explain them come and go.¹¹² From the very beginning, Waltz establishes the universal nature of his work and his ambitions to create laws versus theories.

Objective II: To Form Abstract Laws that can Lead to Generalizations and Predictions

Waltz states that the causal laws created by the economists, and the causal laws that he hopes to create, are not intended to be taken literally. For instance, consider the following laws that Waltz mentions with regard to the economy: “If the money demand for a commodity rises, then so will its price. If price rises, then so will profits. If profit rises, then capital will be

¹¹¹ Kenneth N. Waltz, “The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory,” Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 18 (1988) 615.

¹¹² Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Relations (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1979) 6.

attracted and production will increase. If production increases, then price will fall to the level that returns profits to the producers of the commodity at the prevailing rate.”¹¹³

These laws, Waltz says, are not empirical; “they do not reflect the actual day-to-day realities of economic affairs.”¹¹⁴ After all, there are many external factors that must be taken into account. Nonetheless, it creates a good abstraction that can be used to make loose generalizations and predictions.

Objective III: The Rejection of Laws Based Exclusively on the Actions of Individuals

Waltz rejects Kissinger’s philosophy. He likens Kissinger’s philosophy to behaviorism and finds that both give human agency an excess ability to influence or cause changes in reality. Waltz believes that this approach is erroneous because it does not take the international structure into consideration. Waltz claims that there is no logical way to deduce the outcome of a political strategy by the behavior of the states and state actors exclusively. All too often, the efforts of the state actor are thwarted. There is clearly an additional casual agent. Waltz writes: “In order to take Morgenthau, Kissinger, Levy, and the rest seriously, we would have to believe that no important causes intervene between the aims of the states and the results their actions produce. In the history of international relations, however, results achieved seldom correspond to the intentions of actors.”¹¹⁵

Waltz makes no attempt to synthesize the idea of human agency and structural agency. He gives a great deal of credence to the constraints of the system and very little credence to the possibility of significant human ability to make changes in the international arena. Waltz then asks a loaded question and then only responds to it with ambiguity. Is the structure the *only*

¹¹³ Waltz (1979), 91.

¹¹⁴ Waltz (1979), 89

¹¹⁵ Waltz (1979), 65

causal agent? To this he answers: no, it is not the only causal agent.¹¹⁶ How then, Waltz asks further, can one know the difference between the causes that stem from the structure versus the causes that stem from the other two images? The distinction, he answers, can only be known by comparison. If the factor under consideration remains constant, it must stem from the structure. If it varies, in contrast, it must then stem from alternative causal agents. Thus, Waltz concludes, structural causes are expressed by continuities amongst states whereas non-structural causes are expressed by differences between states.¹¹⁷

Objective IV: To Create a Structural Theory of Realism

Waltz identifies two types of theories: reductionism and systemic. To someone using the reductionist approach, the whole is known only through the study of the parts.¹¹⁸ The systemic approach is different and is characterized by two distinct features. First, it is not analytic; meaning, it does not understand the whole by looking at the parts and how the parts interact with the whole. Second, it finds explanations on the political-international level. The organizations and patterns of the whole are the crucial element.

A systemic theory, Waltz says, is abstract and is intended to remain abstract. For this reason, the theory must not account for any specifics such as the behavior of actors or the ideology or economy of the unit.¹¹⁹ Kissinger's states are unique units with layers of identity whereas Waltz's states are blank abstract units which are all alike. This approach, at first glance, seems to be counterintuitive: How can a theory of international relations be useful if it is divested of the behavior of individual actors and the individual states? Waltz answers that this is

¹¹⁶ Waltz (1979), 87

¹¹⁷ Waltz (1979), 88

¹¹⁸ Waltz (1979), 18.

¹¹⁹ Waltz (1979), 80

precisely the point of what his theory is attempting to remedy. The reductionist theorists, he says, who find causation in the individual behavior or state actions, soon discover that certain patterns recur while the actors change. How do those actors explain the constancy? The unexplained constancy makes it evident that the present theories are insufficient.¹²⁰ There has to be a theory that accounts for that something else that is clearly abstract and yet, seems capable of restraining the actors and units. Waltz finds this something else in the international system.

The objective of a systemic theory of international relations is to add something to a non-systemic theory. Specifically:

- a) It should be able to predict the durability of a system at any given time.
- b) It should be able to show how the units influence the international structure and how the structure, in turn, influences the interacting units.¹²¹

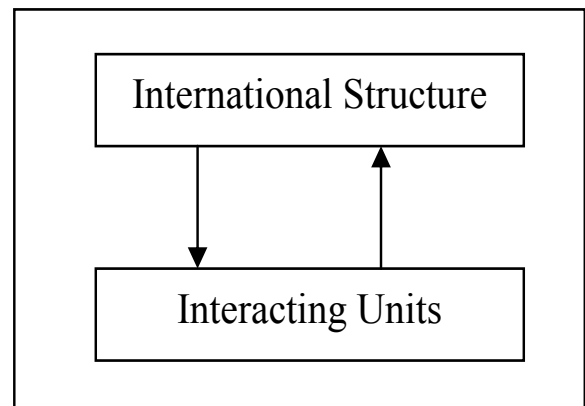


Figure 1: Mutual causality

- c) An international system must be one that differs from other social systems such as social, economic, ideological, and others.¹²²

The systemic theory, Waltz cautions, must not be mistaken for a theory of interacting parts. The whole, or the structure, must be acknowledged as an actor in its own right; it is not simply a collection of parts that cannot add anything to the parts.¹²³ Waltz mentions three other theorists who endeavored to create a systemic theory but failed to do so because in the theory

¹²⁰ Waltz (1979), 65

¹²¹ Waltz (1979), 72.

¹²² Waltz (1979), 79.

¹²³ Waltz (1979), 40.

that each created, the structure was not considered to have agency. Without agency, it is insignificant.

Consider the accompanying diagram, figure 1, which Waltz uses to convey, on the most simplistic and fundamental level, what a systemic theory must include: mutual causality between the system and the interacting units. With these objectives, Waltz establishes his structural theory of international relations. It is parsimonious, reflects the status-quo, and creates the following law: Nations who want to remain secure under the anarchic conditions of the international arena will naturally balance power. Just as nature abhors a void, the international system abhors imbalances.¹²⁴

B. The Critique

Waltz's study achieved great acclaim and earned both compliments and criticisms. Many structural scholars have accepted his basic outline of the international structure but have attempted to make up for its parsimony, its lack of appreciating the differences amongst states and its seeming apathy toward foreign policy.

1. Interests are Not Specified

In the analogy of the market and the international market, there is a discrepancy. Both begin with the premise that the participating units are interested exclusively in serving their own interests. In the marketplace, it is evident that it is profit that is of primary interest to the firms. In the international system, in contrast, the "interests" are not as clear. Although it is generally accepted by realist thinkers that the participating states will aspire to power and security, how this power will be expressed, however, remains unknown. The knowledge that the states will

¹²⁴ Waltz (1979) 00.

pursues their own interests exclusively does not in any way empower theorists to make predictions. Some states equate power with economic goals while other states equate power with ideology. These variances in the expression of power makes Waltz's objective of creating causal laws highly unlikely.

Thus, we find that Waltz's description of what the states look like in the international systems, "like-units," and what they seek, "security," has little relation to reality and, therefore, has little to offer a statesman or diplomat in foreign policy. Waltz, actually, defends himself against this attack and explains that just as a theory of the marketplace will not be able to offer prescriptions for each participating firm, similarly, a theory explaining the international structure and how its parts interact, will not be able to offer foreign policy suggestions. Waltz is theorizing about the structure, whereas, "a theory about foreign policy is a theory at the national level."¹²⁵

2. Status-Quo States versus Revisionist States

Waltz and neorealists regard the states in the international states as essentially identical units that are mostly concerned with security versus power. This view "redeems" realism from the condemnation it earned from suggesting that states seek power as an end in itself. Now, according to neo-realism, this proposition is softened; instead, it suggests that states seek power to achieve security. Although this sounds nice at first glance, it turns out to be problematic. If all states are identical status-quo powers, then what factors from within the state will compel movement?

Randall L. Schweller objects to Waltz's static view of the world. He claims that it is commonly the unhappy states, the revisionist states, which are the catalyst for the disruptions of

¹²⁵ Waltz (1998), 619.

power balances.¹²⁶ Although it is true that when threatened by the growing power of a hegemon, states will form alliances to balance the power, that is not the only motive for forming alliances. Sometimes states will form alliances for economic or political gain. This type of alliance is what Waltz calls “bandwagoning” and claims it does not happen very often. Schweller, however, based on empirical data, states: “My argument is straightforward: Unthreatened revisionist states (those overlooked by Walt and Waltzian realists) often bandwagon with the stronger revisionist state or coalition for opportunistic reasons.”¹²⁷

Waltz dismisses Schweller’s argument as belonging to a different research program, to traditional realism. Schweller’s argument, Waltz says, is consistent with those of Morgenthau; both find that states seek power as an end in itself and not as a means to maintain security.¹²⁸

Stephen M. Walt, a disciple of Waltz, investigated the question of balancing by studying the alliance patterns of the Middle East during the years 1955-1979. He found that during this era states balanced against *threat* rather than against *power*. The United States was the unparalleled power, and yet it drew together a huge alliance. This was the case because the threat of the USSR was more of a security concern than the power of the United States.¹²⁹ Vasquez finds Walt’s conclusion to be an anomalous finding and a “falsification” of Waltz’s theory.

3. Multipolarity or Bipolarity?

There is an ongoing debate about which world system is more stable, bipolar or multipolar. Waltz and neorealists believe that bipolarity is more stable because there are only two major powers, and this leads to less uncertainty. In a multipolar world, they claim, there are

¹²⁶ Schweller, 928.

¹²⁷ Schweller 928.

¹²⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, “Evaluating Theories,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (Dec., 1997), pp. 915.

¹²⁹ Vasquez 904.

several leaders, all attempting to progress militarily and financially, and the result of these conditions is uncertainty for all nations.

De Mesquita highlights a problem with this position. Even assuming that it is true that a bipolar world order produces less uncertainty and a multipolar world produces more uncertainty; how can one logically extend that argument to matters of stability? There is no way of predicting how states will react to the certainty or uncertainty. It is indeed possible that during a bipolar era states will keep the status quo and it will indeed be a stable era. It is just as probable, however, that the states will find the era of certainty an ideal time for opportunism. Consequently, de Mesquita asks, how can Waltz and other neorealists claim that certainty equals stability and uncertainty equals non-stability?¹³⁰ In fact, Karl Deutsch and J. David Singer (1964) took the opposite position and claimed that multipolarity with its uncertainty led to greater stability because all nations were cautious and alert.

4. Change over Time

Both classical realists and structural realists believe that the factors which compose the anarchic international system are such that they remain constant over time. For classical realists, it is human nature which remains constant; for structural realists, it is the constraints of the anarchic system which remain constant. Critics object to the static approach of realism, claiming that realism does not explain the influence of change over time.¹³¹

Waltz's theory is a product of the Cold War. Many aspects of it remain relevant for all time but its applicability is slowly diminishing. The challenges of the digital era are not directly related to the international structure. Since World War I, there has not been another major war

¹³⁰ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita 440.

¹³¹ Lake 776.

but civil wars have increased. From 1946 to 2001, there have been 225 armed conflicts, of which 163 remained internal conflicts whereas the remaining 32 included military assistance from other nations.¹³² Easy access to weapons has greatly increased the number and severity of casualties. Civil wars weaken the economy of the involved nations and leads to new problems of displaced people and refugees. Most important, however, is the fact that the civil wars greatly impact the international arena in its link to terrorism.

Terrorism has always been present but it has become more prevalent since World War II and especially since the 1970s. The attacks of 9-11 were the initiation of a new era and terrorism has been on the rise ever since. Its expansion is closely related to the civil wars which provide little islands of chaos for the terrorists to exploit.¹³³ The general breakdown of law and order during a civil war allows terrorists to operate freely; thus, unhindered, they can recruit, train, and form organizations. The demoralizations and despair that often accompany civil wars leads civilians to accept the terrorists in their midst. Sometimes, the terrorists offer to help one side of the civil war by punishing the other side or by assisting the civilians with basic needs. In this manner, the civil wars empower the terrorists who then challenge—without distinction—individuals, tribal groups, nation-states, and world powers. The War on Terror is part of a new era or cycle. Conflict is not occurring on the Great Powers level but in small pockets on a global level. Waltz's theory might no longer be relevant.

C. Is Realism Degenerating?

¹³² Heo, Uk and Karl DeRouen, Jr. ed. Civil Wars of the World: Major Conflicts Since WWII, Vol. 1. (California: ABC-CLIO, 2007) pg. 2.

¹³³ Heo, Uk and Karl DeRouen, Jr. Pg. 13-14

In a provocative article for the *American Political Science Review*, Vasquez argued that the research compiled by the students and colleagues of Waltz with the objective of empirically proving his structural theory, actually exposed the fact that realism is degenerating. Vasquez was evaluating realism with the criteria established by Imre Lakatos, an influential scholar in both the philosophy of mathematics and the philosophy of science. Lakatos, along with several other scholars such as Popper and Kuhn, expounded on the concept of progress. The questions they endeavored to answer included the following: 1) What causes old theories to be rejected in favor of new theories? Is it rationality or sociological and political factors? 2) How can we assess progress? How do we know if a given theory is progressive or not progressive?

Lakatos believed that science was, by and large, progressive and that theory transitions were based on rationality. He found that during every period of time, scholars worked within a given research program. The research program had a *hard core*, a set of assumptions or hypotheses which were unchallenged. It additionally had a *protective belt* which surrounded the *hard core* and consisted of auxiliary theories. While the hard core remained constant, the theories within the *protective belt* were regularly being tested, amended, improved, or rejected.¹³⁴

In terms of evaluating research programs, Lakatos distinguished between *progressive* research programs and *degenerating* research programs. A research program is *progressive* to the degree to which it accomplishes the discovery of new phenomena. A research program is *degenerating* to the degree to which it fails to accomplish the discovery of new phenomena; or it is *degenerating* if it accomplishes new discoveries but they are contradictory. In general,

¹³⁴ Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, Eds., Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1974, c1970) pg. 00.

research program A is preferable to competing research program B if either A is more progressive than B or is degenerating less than B.¹³⁵

It is in this Lakatosian context that Vasquez proclaims the degenerating quality of realism. The criteria he uses to evaluate the alleged degeneration are such that one believes that the phenomena being discussed are relatively stable. In other words, the debate over the progressive nature of science seems to include the assumption that while the science is progressing and the methods are becoming more sophisticated, the material is not progressing, at least not at the same speed as the scientific discoveries. Breakthroughs in physics and biology, for instance, assume that the makeup of the atmosphere and the fundamentals of life are unchanging (or at least not changing immediately and drastically). The theories of physics and biology, therefore, can steadily approach the truth. The dynamics of politics, however, are changing at a fantastic speed; yesterday's political theories—or at least the strategies—are fast becoming outdated. The question of Lakatosian “progress” is therefore ironic and somewhat wistful. Political scientists wish that their phenomena stayed steady long enough to allow for the development of a robust research programs.



Take note of the questions that Waltz and his critics ask. They do not wonder whether political theories are helpful, relevant, or meaningful. Such questions are too qualitative in nature and too wide in scope. Instead, Waltz and other neorealists ask exacting questions: Do Waltz's observations about the role of the structure constitute a law or a new understanding of realism?

¹³⁵ Lakatos 00.

Is Waltz's theory consistent with dataset X? What about dataset Y from another set of countries? Are the findings that are contrary to Waltz's thesis a symptom of realism's degeneration? These questions seem far removed from the nuts and bolts of international politics.

CHAPTER 6: REALISM RECONSIDERED

In Politics Among Nations, Morgenthau outlines six principles which guide this political realism: 1) There are objective laws that govern politics, rooted in human nature. 2) The main force driving international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. 3) This key concept is universally valid and objective, but does not have the same meaning fixed once and for all. 4) Political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action. 5) Political realism refuses to equate the moral principles of any given nation or time with the overall moral laws that govern the universe. 6) Political realism maintains a separation and integrity of intellectual substance, while recognizing other frameworks and the inter-relatedness of politics with other fields.

Morgenthau's six principles include a strong emphasis on moral action and as described above, on moral will. Morgenthau believes that politics cannot be studied without reference to morality as a guiding principle. Levy, in his comparison between political scientists and historians, disagrees. He observes that historians believe that part of their job is to educate the public and consequently, their work can be value-driven. Political scientists, in contrast, prefer objectivity.¹³⁶ Kissinger established that the only moral norm in international relations is stability. His general political science philosophy, however, is rich with moral concepts such as the role of nations in the scope of time and history.

Morality is the difference between the work of Kissinger and the work of Waltz. Morality implies asking questions in the form of *what ought to be*; the absence of morality, the position used in the natural sciences, implies questions asked in the form of *what is*. Political science falls in between the two cultures. It is not a natural science but it is not either an entirely abstract pursuit such as literature and philosophy. Its subjects are individuals, nations, and systems.

¹³⁶ Jervis 399.

Some of these subjects can be evaluated empirically; some of them cannot be. Political science will always be in a state of tension between the two cultures. It cannot veer too far into either culture without losing sight of its goals.

Realism may be degenerating; it may be no longer applicable but those issues are not being explored here. What is important here is realism's contribution. Realism, the oldest tradition of political philosophy, taught Western civilization which questions to ask about politics. Its questions included people, states, and morality. It taught both Kissinger and Waltz which questions to ask.

The balance of power is a major theme in realism. Morgenthau discussed it a great deal as did both Kissinger and Waltz. In Morgenthau's work, the struggle is attributed to the inherent lust for power which is deeply rooted in the human psyche. According to Morgenthau, this aspect of human nature is a fact of life which must be managed. If left unmanaged, the dormant savagery may emerge and the conditions of Hobbes' state of nature then become a reality. Balancing power is one way of keeping the collective lust for power under control.

In Kissinger's work, the concept of power is given a philosophical interpretation. The nations are struggling for power because it is their only way of expressing their identity. Balancing is an ideal way of maintaining order, Kissinger says, but because he includes the notion of existential identity, there is the additional emphasis on diplomacy and statesmanship. Kissinger's directives are therefore not as clear as Morgenthau's. Kissinger's philosophy, though interesting, does little to reveal a practical course of action. Kissinger is perhaps too deeply rooted in the philosophy culture.

Waltz, in contrast, is too deeply rooted in the science culture. He takes the idea of balancing power and transforms it into a law. Much of the empirical works following the

publication of his theory indicate that the law may be flawed. Laws of this nature are not edifying; much like Kissinger's philosophy, it tells little of what a political actor ought to do when faced with international power struggles. As Schweller suggest, it tells only about the status-quo.

Kissinger's questions are potent and relevant. Waltz's answers are clear and well reasoned. Both of their theories reveal the tensions of a discipline that is stuck between two cultures, belonging to aspects of both yet belonging fully to neither.

This paper concludes with suggesting a greater emphasis on questions; specifically, on the role that they play in directing the course of a research venture. There is a great deal of emphasis on what methods to use or not use when answering questions, but there is not enough of an emphasis on what types of questions to ask. Rosenau is advocating another type of questioning. He is looking at the globalized world and asking: What do I see? What dynamics are at play? What needs to be done? How can I conceptualize these complex dynamics in such a manner that I can deal with them appropriately? Rosenau's questions are more philosophical at this point than scientific. His next step, however, will be scientific. He will ask himself: What methods can I use to best evaluate this problem? Good methodology is crucial for developing good answers. Good questions, however, come first.

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ABSTRACT**POLITICAL SCIENCE: STUCK BETWEEN TWO CULTURES? THE DIVIDE IS ABOUT THE QUESTIONS, NOT THE ANSWERS.**

by

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The academic debate between the realists and neo-realists has lasted several decades. This thesis intends to reframe the nature of the debate and show that it not a substantive debate about power, risk, and the role of the system; rather, it is a debate about what *form* a discussion about power, risk and the role of the system should take. It is a debate about how one ought to approach the study of world politics, whether as a science which is studied empirically or as a philosophy that is studied normatively.

Henry Kissinger is the last of the realists and proposed studying world politics normatively. Waltz, in contrast, is the first of the neo-realists and proposed studying political science empirically as a science. This paper will compare the two thinkers and show that their dispute is not about the nuts and bolts of world politics but about something much more fundamental. The divergence of the theories (Kissinger v. Waltz) is linked to the historical division between philosophy and science. Each discipline emerged from certain norms and established certain norms; these norms developed into a culture of sorts: the culture of Humanities versus the culture of Science.

The two trajectories—philosophy and science—have been following related but separate courses since the Greek era. Although they sometimes overlap, these two disciplines have fundamental differences. Kissinger's theories are based on philosophy, specifically Kantian metaphysics. Waltz's

theories, in contrast, are based on the norms and values of science. Like two planets, each of these theorists follows a particular orbit.

The dividing feature of these disciplines appears at the very outset of any scholarly undertaking; it is the questions they ask. Typically, most branches of philosophy ask about what *ought to be* whereas most branches of science ask about what *is*. Kissinger, like Morgenthau, asks how international relations ought to be. Waltz, in keeping with the scientific trajectory, asks about what is. What is the structure of the international system? What are its dynamics? What universal laws can describe it? Waltz and other neorealists are asking an entirely different set of questions. This is the beginning of the divide and leads to different research results.

It is evident that the debate between the realists and neo-realists is not about world politics. It is about how to approach a research problem, what questions to ask, and what tools to use when answering the questions.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

My interest in political science began when I spent a year studying in Israel in 2001. The political conflict there opened many questions for me about politics in general and world politics in particular. I received a B.A. in Political Science in May 2007 from Wayne State University. I graduated *cum laude*. I began Wayne State's graduate program in Political Science in September 2007 with a concentration in world politics. This thesis is the culmination of my studies. It reflects my understanding of today's academic debates in world politics. Upon completion of my graduate work, I began my training as a lawyer at Wayne State University Law School. I am scheduled to receive my J.D. in May 2012. I hope to blend my studies of political science and law and continue to contribute to both academic fields.