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The Human Condition of Politics: considering the Legacy of Hans J. Morgenthau for International Relations

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Abstract

Classical realism and Morgenthau in particular have recently experienced a revived interest in IR. The evolving debate has helped to contextualise and reconstruct Morgenthau's thought which until now had been misrepresented in structural realist and early post-structuralist interpretations. However, despite all of its achievements, we have yet to draw more attention to Morgenthau's contribution to contemporary IR-theory. To contribute to the closing of this research gap this article considers a set of questions which Morgenthau himself asked at the beginning of his career as its conceptual framework. It is argued that Morgenthau was particularly concerned with the de-humanisation of socio-political life in modern democracies evoked through processes of ideologisation, technologisation, and scientification, which he countered by focusing on a re-introduction of the human factor to politics. This demonstrates that Morgenthau's work is a rich source for IR-theory because his intellectual agenda was driven by concerns similar to what we find in post-structuralism.

Keywords

De-humanisation, De-politicisation, Hans J. Morgenthau, International Political Theory, Power, Political Realism

The debate on Hans Morgenthau in the context of realism has demonstrated through a contextualisation and more comprehensive reading that his *Weltanschauung* was far more eclectic than structural realism and early post-structuralism led students of International Relations (IR) to believe.¹ It would be impossible to do justice here to all the achievements of this debate and therefore this article will refrain from selective name-dropping. Currently, this debate is intensifying as scholars investigate to what extent Morgenthau's thought can make a contribution to contemporary IR-theory. This inquisitive step is indispensable, as Ian Hall (2011: 49) rightfully contends: '[r]ealism is best understood not as a perennial mode of international thought ..., but as a particular, twentieth-century response to a particular set of events.' In order to demonstrate that realism is still significant, despite its particularity, William Scheuerman (2011) recently argued that it is an important corrective for cosmopolitanism; however, it was Richard Lebow (2003) who initiated this research interest by showing that Morgenthau considered humans to be in a tragic state. Despite the human urge for certainty, Lebow argues that order is no more than an expression of the momentum of particular human interaction and consequently any attempt to permanently master the social life-world is in vain. Lebow's exploration of the realist insistence on human tragedy encourages further development of the various ontological and primarily epistemological links between 'wilful' (Williams 2005) or 'progressive' (Scheuerman 2011) realism and *any* other IR-theory which is orientated towards the human, for example post-structuralism or critical theory.

Advancing the research agenda outlined by Lebow, this article argues that the central aspect of Morgenthau's *Weltanschauung* is the human condition of politics. This entails an epistemological aspect because for Morgenthau politics is created through human interaction. Only when people congregate to pursue their interests in the form of a dialogue did Morgenthau speak of politics. Consequently, he did not conceptualise politics as a system, but rather saw it as fluid whilst its temporality and spatiality have to be acknowledged. Furthermore, the human condition of politics entails a normative aspect. For Morgenthau, human tragedy was caused less by the fact that humans will never be able to control their life-world than the fact that in modern democracies attempts to do so were made that threatened to abolish such dialogues and eventually politics altogether.

In the examination of this central aspect of Morgenthau's *Weltanschauung*, this article will paraphrase questions that have prompted Morgenthau's 1933 study *La Notion du Politique*.

These questions not only lend themselves as a conceptual framework, but also provide evidence that the concepts this article deals with are neither selectively chosen, nor insignificant to Morgenthau's *Weltanschauung*.² Rather, he engaged with them throughout his career. Certainly, a focus on Morgenthau's European writings bears the risk of being unable to demonstrate the centrality for Morgenthau of the human condition of politics, but a comprehensive analysis of his *œuvre* demonstrates that Morgenthau showed a striking continuity of thought throughout his life, despite its numerous caesura. The most forceful evidence of this has been provided by Morgenthau himself in the preface to his final monograph *Science: Servant or Master?* (1972: XXI) in which he noted that its first part was based on his manuscript *Über den Sinn der Wissenschaft in dieser Zeit und über die Bestimmung des Menschen* (On the Meaning of Scholarship in this Time and on Human Destiny) written in 1934.

The first of the questions considered by Morgenthau revolves around the construction of society. This, called sociation (*Vergesellschaftung*) by Georg Simmel (1908: 5), had gained for Morgenthau (1976) such momentum in modern democracies that it led to de-humanisation through three reifications: ideologisation, technologisation, and scientification³. The second question Morgenthau elaborated upon stresses the consequences modern democracies face due to de-humanisation. It is argued that Morgenthau was concerned with this ill-balanced sociation favouring the structure, and that he believed it had led to a de-politicisation of the social realm that could eventually threaten the existence of democracies altogether. Finally, it is demonstrated that Morgenthau provided with the human condition of politics not only a normative corrective for modern democracies, but was also concerned about its empirical feasibility. In order to counter this de-humanisation and subsequent de-politicisation, Morgenthau proposed the national interest as an epistemological tool in order to ensure the political and scholarship as dissidence in order to restore the political. Due to practical concerns, this discussion cannot assess their feasibility; however, in the conclusion an outlook for further engagement with Morgenthau will be provided.

De-humanisation in modern democracies

In his own time, Morgenthau was not the only scholar arguing that modern sociation had become imbalanced through the removal of spatial and temporal particularities of social life in favour of structural consolidations. This process, which is termed de-humanisation here,

was criticised by a group of European émigré scholars and their like-minded American peers such as Kenneth Thompson and William Fox in their attempt to establish an IR-theory to counter the dominance of positivism. Morgenthau noted that he was 'inclined to think that the recently fashionable types of research such as systems theory, game theory, and behaviouralism will decline because of their sterility which is now increasingly being recognised' (HJM 9).⁴ Still, as Nicolas Guilhot's (2008: 282) term for this group, 'separationist movement', indicates, IR remained deeply enmeshed with governmental institutions that kept the discipline to be 'driven by demand' (Kahler 1997: 22) and did not allow scholars to fundamentally divert from the beaten tracks.

That this revival did not occur during Morgenthau's lifetime is explained in Stanley Hoffmann (1977: 42-3) and Ekkehart Krippendorff's (1989: 31-3) assessment of IR as an American discipline. In their view, the USA had had little experience with the typical conflicts that had influenced politics in Europe, and positivism seemed to be an appropriate means to satisfy America's liberal democratic zeal. Recently, Seán Molloy (2003: 72) came to a similar conclusion, arguing that '[w]ithout a tradition of international involvement, the Americans were forced to rely on the Enlightenment ideology of reason and its 19th century successor, positivistic science, as the key to effective, rational practice in international relations.'

Consequently, Morgenthau gradually became out-dated and marginalised⁵ in IR as evidenced in the circumstances of his retirement from the University of Chicago in 1971. A commentary in the student newspaper, *Chicago Maroon*, indicates that Morgenthau would have liked to stay at the university despite having reached the official retirement age (HJM 86). However, this request was turned down, which demonstrates Morgenthau's declining academic standing. This gradual academic marginalisation caused Morgenthau resentment, which is why he turned down an offer from the American University in April 1970 to become dean of their School of International Service pointing out that there were times he would have been honoured to accept, but that these times had passed (HJM 5).

Morgenthau's academic marginalisation is not merely a tragic episode in the life of a scholar, but it is a symbol for the de-humanisation of social life at large. This article will demonstrate that this marginalisation was unjustified, that he, along with other émigré scholars, was ahead of his time in the discipline, and that the influence of the German intellectual tradition on (international) political theorising in the 20th century (Shilliam, 2009; Bell 2009: 7; Guilhot 2011: 9-10) is also of particular importance in the 21st century. This will be accom-

plished through the exploration of Morgenthau's reasoning of the removal of the human factor whilst analogies to current scholarship will also be developed. This de-humanisation occurred in the course of the 20th century because nation-states, as the major actors in international relations, had an interest in maintaining the *status quo*. As a result, structural consolidations transformed the individual's role from that of creator of social life to its mere executor because the insight that the human 'cosmos [is] in flux' (Mannheim 1985: 65) had vanished from his/her mind. To Morgenthau (1950a), de-humanisation became so extensive that it affected international politics as well as the discipline. In Morgenthau's (1969: 13) view, the climax of de-humanisation occurred during the Vietnam War, when its success was measured through "body counts". Killing humans became the quantifiable end through which the implementation of foreign policy strategies could be scientifically assessed. Three forms of reification in particular led to this de-humanisation: ideologisation, technologisation, and scientification.

Ideologisation. While Morgenthau was particularly concerned about nationalism, he remained sceptical about the promises of *any* ideology. At the beginning of his career, Morgenthau (1930c) pursued psychological enquiries into the ideological causes of the First World War. He concluded that the cultural crisis at the *fin de siècle* had shattered traditional forms of masculinity and that nationalism had risen due to its promise to resurrect the male identity. This experience with nationalism fortified his distrust in ideologies and explains why Morgenthau understood *Politics Among Nations* 'as a temporary and historically caused counter-ideology to the ideologies of the 20th century' (Behr 2010: 138) rather than a theory of international politics. Subsequently, Morgenthau returned to the consequences of ideologies for humans and argued that the ideological takeover of reality would cause two interconnected, de-humanising problems.

First, Morgenthau (1960a) argued that ideologies promote creative mediocrity. Humans are not able to fully utilise all of their creative abilities within ideological frameworks, as they are established to create a discourse of legitimacy for the current political order. People yield to the temptation of ideologies because they furnish them, in their yearning to give meaning to the social world and establish their identity within it, with the 'ontological security' (Giddens 1984: 375) that allows them to do so. Therefore, the retention of social structures is a vital expression of this legitimacy and security. An alteration of these structures

through the creative abilities of humans would mean that people are threatened with the loss of their ontological security due to changes in the reification of their thought which in turn undermines the ideological legitimacy. Consequently, the creative abilities of humans are relegated to supporting the ideologised reality by constraining them into a bureaucratic order in which alternative realities are suppressed. Morgenthau's criticism is similar here to Jenny Edkins's (1999: 142) exhortation in her assessment of the post-structuralist movement that IR-theorists should render visible 'the contingent, provisional nature' of political order.

Second, Morgenthau also asserted that ideologies promote intellectual mediocrity because conflicting *Weltanschauungen* challenge the political order and cannot be tolerated. Morgenthau's criticism of ideologies indicates the implications of the concepts of inclusion and exclusion (Nassehi 2004) as discussed in sociological discourses. Paul Hirst (2001: 53) noted that nationalism operates on dichotomous perceptions of otherness to create homogeneity within a nation-state, allowing a particular group to uphold the political order by monopolising narratives of reality. In fact, Hirst's assessment is an apt one for any ideological system. Anyone who challenges these narratives through his/her beliefs, knowledge, or even existence has to be excluded. This exclusion may range from criminalisation to expulsion and even extinction, as was the case under fascism and communism. Morgenthau observed this firsthand at a soirée in Munich in 1935 hosted by the jurist Karl Neumeyer at which the other guests remained largely indifferent to the news of the execution of a befriended Jewish lawyer (Postscript 1984: 363-4). That evening showed Morgenthau (1947: 10, 1971: 620) that it requires an *Übermensch* in the form of encyclopaedic knowledge, virtue, and wisdom to surpass dichotomous thinking and re-establish the political.

Technologisation. Morgenthau (1973) also criticised modern democracies for their technological penetration of social life, which he saw as causing two further de-humanising effects. First, the technological interlocking of social life leads to increased complexities. Although technological advancements accelerate individualisation in modern democracies as people acquire abilities to transcend spatial and temporal restrictions in order to participate in numerous forms of sociation, technologisation also requires people to meticulously structure their lives in a regulatory framework, such as a timetable, as the sociologist Hartmut Rosa (2005: 97-100) recently emphasised. However, due to the acceleration of social life, the sus-

ceptibility of these regulatory frameworks is high. In cases of dysfunction, social life not only loses its synchronicity, but also comes to a standstill altogether. As Morgenthau (1960a, 1972) argued in accordance with Hannah Arendt (1953: 323, 1958), people are turned from a *homo faber* into an *animal laborans* not only in labour terms, but their socio-political life-worlds are also constrained by various technological requirements.

Second, technologisation allows for the mass-production of consumer goods which in modern democracies compensate for the loss of identity. This is the case because the common realms of identity-creation – politics and economy – have been de-humanised. People, albeit being a *zoon politikon* as Morgenthau agreed with Aristotle (Lang 2004), cannot get involved as critical citizens because their drive to prove themselves (*Bewährungstrieb*)⁶ is suppressed. Modern marketing strategies seize this yearning for identity by focusing on the ‘shop-window quality of things’ (Simmel 1997: 257) to create a frantic and constant urge to consume commodities as a replacement for identity. For Morgenthau (1960a: 69, 1960b: 215, 1972: 23) (again in agreement with Arendt), this not only creates a ‘society of waste,’ but also reifies identity.

Scientification. The final aspect Morgenthau repeatedly criticised about modern democracies is the scientification of politics. Like other émigré scholars, such as Eric Voegelin (HJM 60), he was sceptical of the promises of the application of natural science methods to politics. Still, as the common usage of the term political *science* suggests, this “separationist movement” – to which Morgenthau can be attributed – unsuccessfully opposed the positivistic dominance. The rising Cold War solicited ideological reifications and politics was asked to provide the scientific credentials for this *status quo*. Contrary to Leonard White and other members of Chicago’s ‘Merriam fraction’ (Postscript 1984: 370), who encouraged this scientification for the advancement of American liberalism (Jütersonke 2010: 131-5), Morgenthau (1944: 176, 1949: 1) was suspicious of the epistemological value of such positivistic-structuralist approaches to politics because they do not concede a vital role to the human. Rather than focusing on the creative abilities of humans to act together and create a compromise through alignment of interests, as Morgenthau suggested in his work, structuralist approaches often promote a belligerent outlook of the world. In these approaches, the nation-state is considered as an ‘organismic’ (Waltz 1954: 178) unit that attempts to survive in an anarchical structure. This unquestioned acceptance of ontological assumptions causes

a reification of politics. Eventually, due to this scientification, political science in general and IR in particular omitted the distinction between the analytical and the normative. From the analytical assumption of anarchy, normative conclusions and measures were derived in order to secure one's survival. However, these conclusions were not phrased in normative terms, but presented as a logical reasoning from which foreign policy guidelines were produced (Behr 2010: 206-7).

The political, normative power, and the de-politicisation of politics

To understand the empirical effects of this de-humanisation on modern democracies, i.e. the de-politicisation of politics, we have to first address Morgenthau's concept of the political and the relevance of power for it.

As Morgenthau encapsulated all that it takes to understand the concept of the political, let us first recall his well-known definition from *Politics Among Nations*. At the beginning of this textbook Morgenthau (1985: 5) defined 'international politics [as] the concept of interest defined in terms of power.' In order to disentangle this definition of the political, and it is of no relevance here if the domestic or international scene is addressed, we have to turn to his doctoral dissertation from 1929 in which Morgenthau offered his first substantial elaboration of this concept. There, he argued that the political has no fixed substance; rather it is a quality, colouring (*Färbung*), or tone (*tonalité*) as referred to four years later (Morgenthau 1933: 32). 'A question which is of political nature today can be bereft of any political meaning tomorrow' (Morgenthau 1929: 67; my translation). This means that the political occurs when humans pursue their interests through a dialogue. Any issue or substance can become political if people take an increased interest in it. Morgenthau operated on the assumption that this pursuit of interests in collectivity is part of human nature, as he elaborated in an unpublished manuscript on the *Derivation of the Political from the Nature of Man* in 1930 (HJM 151). It is part of human nature because it is only through this pursuit that involved parties can assure themselves of their own strengths and capabilities and thereby derive meaning about their own self. This, what Morgenthau perceived to be a natural collective pursuit of interests, eventually provides people with power.

Morgenthau's concept of power is contested in IR, partly because of his failure to distinguish between his empirical and normative concepts of power following his forced migration to the USA. We have no concrete evidence as to why Morgenthau did not define his

concepts as sharply in his English writings as he did in his German and French ones. One reason might have been the unfavourable climate towards Germany during and shortly after the Second World War, which caused Morgenthau to separate himself from his past. According to Lebow (2003: 219), a former student of Morgenthau, we know that 'questions about his German past were taboo.' A second reason was presumably the shift of interest from purely theoretical studies towards works with a greater focus on contemporary policy issues (Guzzini 1998: 24).⁷ Still, this does not settle the question of why Morgenthau did not attempt to improve the clarity of his concepts, particularly as he had realised this problem early. To Michael Oakeshott Morgenthau wrote in 1948

that my attempts to make clear the distinctions between rationalism and rational inquiry, scientism and science, were in vain. I think I was fully aware of the importance and difficulty of these distinctions when I wrote the book, and it is now obvious to me that I have failed in the task to make my meaning clear (HJM 44).

Although this question is central to the contextualisation of his *Weltanschauung*, it can be left unaddressed in this article as we have the opportunity to turn to his early writings where Morgenthau (1930a: 9, 1933: 43, 1934: 33) meticulously distinguished between power (*Macht, pouvoir*) understood as empirical power and puissance (*Kraft*) understood as normative power. Whereas Morgenthau regarded the former as the capacity of one or more people to dominate others psychologically and/or physically – a definition espoused by Sigmund Freud and Max Weber (Williams 2004; Schuett 2007; Neacsu 2010) –, it is the latter form of power that he argued as constituting the political realm. In pursuit of their interests, people come together, exchange their ideas in a cognitive process, which Morgenthau (1933: 73) termed 'discussion', and thereby act altogether to create a society that is committed to the common good. In this sense, Morgenthau's notion of the political goes beyond post-structuralist accounts if we follow Edkins's assessment. According to her, post-structuralism argues that the political has 'to do with the establishment of that very social order which sets out a particular, historically specific account of what counts as politics' (Edkins 1999: 2) and is therefore the *moment* when a new political order is created, regardless of what this new order looks like. Hence, there is uncertainty among its creators about the final objectification of this order, but it is also a moment of openness characterised by a

dispute among them as they all attempt to reify their social and political ideals (Edkins 1999: 7-9). For Morgenthau, the political is not a moment, but – evoking Simmel’s notion of socialisation – a constant and collective *process* through which the changing interests of people find their expression. As a vital outlet, Morgenthau argued that this process had to be actively preserved.

Having established the centrality of the political for modern democracies, the empirical result of the de-humanisation caused by the ideological, technological, and scientific reification can now be assessed. As Morgenthau (1933: 87) remarked in the conclusion of *La Notion du Politique*, this de-humanisation essentially de-politicises (*dépolitisé*) politics because it disempowers people.

For Morgenthau, de-politicisation occurred because the political was eliminated from politics. The pursuit of people’s interests expressed in scrutiny or criticism became considered as a menace to the institutionalised political *status quo* rather than its constitutive factor (Morgenthau 1952a). Its questioning seemed at times threatening, when the dominant liberal ideology in modern democracies was challenged, as happened during the McCarthy-Era in the USA during the late 1940s and 1950s, and at times unqualified as the de-humanisation of modern democracies led to a hubris of thought. Ideologically, the narrative of freedom instilled the urge to maintain the *status quo* because living in the “Free World” had to be safeguarded from the atrocities of the “Eastern Bloc”, but also because political science itself pioneered this hubris. By not distinguishing between analytical and normative elements in their approaches, normative assumptions were presented as logical reasoning and their foreign policy advice veered more towards parameters than guidelines. Therefore, criticism seemed unqualified if not preposterous and humans could only resort to apathy or violence to express criticism (Morgenthau 1974: 16-17). According to Morgenthau, this is what had happened during the student protests in the 1960s:

What the students revolt against in the universities is what they are revolting against in the world at large. That world, thoroughly secularized and dedicated to the production of consumer goods and weapons of mass destruction, has lost its meaning ... That world is also thoroughly mechanized and bureaucratized. Thus it diminishes the individual who must rely on others rather than himself for the satisfaction of his

wants, from the necessities of life to his spiritual and philosophical longings (HJM 43; 1968a: 9).

Being unable to critically discuss existential questions about the society students lived in, in particular the definition of a common good, they had to resort to violence to make themselves heard. Therefore, politics in modern democracies was reduced to its institutions – it was reified, so to speak – but the political, hence the quality or colouring of issues, was eliminated from politics.

The national interest as an epistemological tool to ensure the political

In order to confront this elimination of the political in modern democracies, Morgenthau (1950b, 1951, 1952a) introduced his understanding of the national interest into American political discourses beginning in the late 1940s. In essence, he had it already developed in *La Notion du Politique* in which he distinguished between political tensions and legal-political disputes (*différends*). Morgenthau's national interest is a concept that in its diversity and quantifiable inconceivability repeatedly led to misunderstandings among practitioners and academics alike because, as Michael Smith (1986: 110) remarked, '[h]ow one defines the national interest depends on the values he espouses and the way he ranks them' (similar: Scheurman 2009: 85). Furthermore, despite its terminology, the national interest is not restricted to the nation-state, but is applicable to any sociation.

Given Morgenthau's concept of the political as previously discussed, it becomes clear that Lebow (2003: 245) is correct in his assessment of the national interest as a 'fluid concept.' Morgenthau considered it to be an epistemological tool with which to bring the various potentially divergent interests into a 'rational order' (Morgenthau 1952b: 976). As noted by Véronique Pin-Fat (2005: 232), this rationality would be achieved through a hierarchisation of interests in a society, beginning from the ones that secure survival. Therefore, the national interest was understood as a flexible concept with which to consider the antagonism of interests⁸, adapt to changes in these interests, and ensure through their classification that all of them are appreciated in the definition and pursuit of the common good. Morgenthau was convinced that outbreaks of violence could be minimised through the pursuance of the national interest, as all interests could be pursued and would be considered according to their puissance, i.e. public support.

This demonstrates that for a concept like the national interest to work effectively in the sense that the political is ensured, particular people with strong qualities, such as those Morgenthau had found in Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, are required to create a rational order. In his American writings, Morgenthau employed the notion of the statesman to identify these qualities, but he shaped the conviction that strong political leadership is necessary in a democracy to facilitate the expression of the antagonism of interests already in his earliest German writings. Morgenthau (1930b) had found an example of such a statesman in the late German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gustav Stresemann, whom he recognised as the 'creator' (*Schöpfer*) of German foreign politics. Stresemann had peacefully reintroduced Germany into the community of states. According to Morgenthau, Stresemann and other politicians that he held in high esteem, such as Abraham Lincoln and Dean Acheson, had offered the particular human quality of wisdom. As he remarked in some of his latest writings:

[w]isdom is the gift of intuition, and political wisdom is the gift to grasp intuitively the quality of diverse interests and power in the present and future and the impact of different actions upon them. Political wisdom, understood as sound political judgement, cannot be learned; it is a gift of nature ... As such, it can be deepened and developed by example, experience, and study (Morgenthau 1971: 620, 1972: 45).

Although Morgenthau considered wisdom to be a "gift of nature", it was nonetheless based on values that could be acquired. According to Anthony Lang (2007: 29), these values are closely related to Aristotle's ideal of a virtuous person who is characterised through prudent demeanour, courage, and sound judgement on the basis of knowledge and experience. Due to Morgenthau's personal experiences as a Jew in an anti-Semitic society and being a 'double exile' (HJM 22), a fourth feature can be added here to wisdom: alienation (Neacsu 2010: 104). Since Morgenthau (1945: 18) always regarded politics as a choice among evils, he believed that the task of a politician was to 'choose the lesser evil.' Alienation enables him/her to do so because it provides the politician in combination with a profound education with the ability to compare and weigh the importance of interests due to an unbiased political judgement. Wisdom was therefore a concept for Morgenthau to bring the human factor back into politics as it was directly opposed to positivistic attempts to socially plan the world.

Rather than hoping to make the world its subject through the establishment of social laws by presenting 'a series of hypothetical possibilities, each of which may occur under certain conditions and which of them will occur is anybody's guess' (Morgenthau 1944: 176, 1949: 1), wisdom allows the politician to react to the dynamics of interests *and* to act by pursuing those that best suit the public. Thus, through wisdom the politician can be like Caesar, a leader willing 'to cross the Rubicon not knowing how deep and turbulent the river is, or what he will find on the other side' (Morgenthau 1962: 103). To remain in Morgenthau's diction, wisdom does not remove insecurity, but it provides the certainty that crossing the river is the best solution for all.

Scholarship as dissidence: the restoration of the political

With the national interest, Morgenthau provided practitioners with a concept to ensure the political, but it cannot restore it. Instead, Morgenthau entrusted this task to his own sodality. For Morgenthau, scholarship had an obligation to counter the tendency towards dehumanisation and guide people to attempt the restoration of the political. He insisted that scholarship has to make dissidence its guiding principle as also Muriel Cozette emphasises. She contends that Morgenthau argued for a scholarship that agitates as the 'conscience of time', providing a '*corrective*' (Cozette 2008: 11-12; original emphasis) for politics. Equally, Vibeke Schou Tjalve (2008: 9) identified Morgenthau's quest as an 'embedded ... dissent' demonstrating the importance Morgenthau placed on scholarship. With his understanding of the role of scholarship, Morgenthau foreshadowed current discourses in critical IR-theory. One of the latest contributions to this discourse on the role of scholarship was provided by Brent Steele who referred to Michel Foucault's *parrhesia*. A scholar ought to say '... what is true because he *knows* that it *is* true, and he *knows* that it is true because it is really true' (Foucault, in Steele 2010: 50; original emphasis). Steele informs his readers that truth in this sense is intersubjective as it is constructed in dialogue and pragmatic as this intersubjectivity occurs within a specific time and space. Furthermore, *parrhesia* is for Steele (2010: 51) primarily directed towards the academic field as a critique of the power-relations that influence the construction and implementation of knowledge.

Arguing that Morgenthau considered scholarship as dissidence propagates a similar understanding of truth. Morgenthau did not claim universalism in the sense of being in the possession of absolute knowledge that only has to be passed on to other people. He did not

even consider scholars to be able to reach the condition of Karl Mannheim's "free-floating intelligentsia" (Morgenthau 1984: 14) as nobody could in his/her political thinking transcend the limits of one's own perspective. However, Morgenthau's argumentation goes beyond Steele. Scholarship meant for Morgenthau, and this is evidenced in his countless civic engagements, not to restrict oneself to the academic field, but to act in the public sphere. Steele (2010: 53) expresses the well-considered caveat that the scholar might lose the ability to "speak truth to power" in the public realm due to its different knowledge-power relations. However, Morgenthau was well aware of this problem (Lebow 2003: 247-8). In order to avoid it, he proposed that scholars act in this realm in accordance with Socratic maieutics. He attempted to decipher political interests of people by establishing a dialogue with them and thereby creating a forum in which the political can re-evolve, rather than telling people "the truth". Scholars have to act as facilitators of the political through which people can transcend the de-humanisation of modern democracies by succouring them to become critical citizens in the form of what Arendt (1978: 65-6) called 'conscious pariah'; this would free them in their thoughts and actions from ideological, technological, and scientific constraints, thereby allowing them to contribute again (in an act of '*amor mundi*' (Young-Bruehl 1982: 324)) to the creation of their life-world.

However, attempting to persuade others of their human capacities and challenge vested interests by acting as a critical corrective of contemporary de-humanising forms of sociation causes discomfort among contemporaries by questioning their habitual ways of thinking. Eventually, the scholar even has to expect negative personal consequences (Morgenthau 1955: 446-7) as also Steele (2010: 58) highlights. Records of negative personal consequences for Morgenthau are numerous. Several of his political efforts were torpedoed because his understanding of scholarship was not well received at the height of the Cold War, when critical thinking that questioned the foundations of common beliefs was considered a threat to society. This is evidenced in the consequences he faced for encouraging Germany to accept the Oder-Neisse-border with Poland in 1961 and criticising the USA for its intervention in Indochina. For example, in "the week" section of the *National Review* from 15 June 1965, we read that 'Professor Hans Morgenthau's hyperactive role as a protester against our policy in Vietnam is embarrassing many of his friends, and may even be embarrassing to himself, who is not used to the kind of self-exposure he is submitting to or to the company he finds himself keeping' (HJM 20).

Apart from personal attacks, his career also suffered. After criticising the American government over the Vietnam War, Morgenthau was never again appointed as a consultant to any governmental department and his candidature for the presidency of the American Political Science Association in 1970 was impeded (Lebow 2003: 240; Cozette 2008: 17; HJM 4). The correspondence between Arendt and Mary McCarthy (1995: 217) indicates that Morgenthau was affected by such disrepute. After publishing *We are Deluding Ourselves in Vietnam* in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1965, the journalist Joseph Alsop called Morgenthau's stance 'pompous ignorance.' However, if one is able to consider Morgenthau's arguments more thoroughly, one is left astonished. In one such moment, Walter Lippmann is recorded to have said: 'How curious you [Morgenthau] are misunderstood. You are the most moral thinker I know' (Quoted after: Thompson 1980-1: 197).

Social sciences in general and IR in particular did not live up to Morgenthau's expectations as evidenced in the "Quiz Show Scandal" of 1959. The scandal revolved around Charles Van Doren, a scholar at Columbia University, who participated in a popular game show that was later found to be fraudulent (Cozette 2008: 15). This told Morgenthau that even in his sodality, scholars were not always committed to truth in all conscience and it was for this reason that Morgenthau reacted to this scandal so furiously. For similar reasons, he would also accuse Carl Schmitt of lacking the necessary 'geistig-seelische Zentrum' (spiritual-moral centre) (Morgenthau 1932). Van Doren had breached this commitment to truth, and Morgenthau (1959: 17, 1960b: 344) believed that a scholar like Van Doren was 'not so much the corruptor of the code by which he is supposed to live as its destroyer.' Furthermore, IR acted not as a critical corrective of the political *status quo*, but through its positivisation even contributed to modern de-humanisation. Morgenthau (1966b: 73) believed that IR 'retreat[s] into the trivial, the formal, the methodological, the purely theoretical, the remotely historical – in short the politically irrelevant' rather than discussing politically relevant issues that concern the well-being and interests of people. Since it did not consider the processual character of human existence, Morgenthau believed that IR faced the same problem as (international) law had during the interwar-period. It became sterile and eventually created a systemic outlook on the world in which the human was no longer considered. Problems or conflicts in the political realm became issues of structural constraints in which remedy would be sought through technological measures and social planning (Morgenthau 1932, 1966b). However, despite the shattering of his hopes for scholarship as dissidence, Morgen-

thau did not argue to retreat to academia, but only insisted more fervently on the assertion of scholars in the public realm, as it is only then that IR could claim significance.

Conclusion

The objective of this article was to demonstrate that Morgenthau's thought offers an epistemological and normative refinement for contemporary IR-theory. The marginalisation Morgenthau experienced enabled him to develop a unique way of thinking with regard to the intellectual 'interaction ritual chains' (Collins 1998: 29) of German humanities of the late 19th and early 20th centuries of which the implications for IR-theory have yet to be fully appreciated. To this end, emphasis has been placed on the human condition of politics and the eventual re-humanisation of modern democracies as the guiding principle of Morgenthau's *Weltanschauung* and his legacy for contemporary IR-theory. The fundamental respect for human beings (Scheuerman 2011: 100) and arguing for the possibility to exhaust their abilities inspired Morgenthau and should continue to inspire us today. To illustrate this epistemological and normative refinement, the concluding section of this article considers the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster after the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. A Morgenthauian inspired IR-theory would have dismissed Japanese energy policy for preventing a public debate as the antagonism of interests was suppressed. Similar to governmental reactions in the European Union to the ongoing financial crisis, Japanese policy decisions were declared to be "without alternative."⁹ Energy policy was not discussed in terms of alternatives or reduction of energy consumption, but as a scientific problem to be solved in order to secure Japan's energy consumption. This suppression was intensified through an indoctrination of the public by the electric utility industry using various means of lobbying and/or advertising and the iconisation of nuclear energy in popular culture through anime characters such as Astro Boy (*Tetsuwan Atomu*). The Japanese government even steered the public semiosis by employing a positively connoted term for nuclear in terms of energy (*genshi ryoku*) and a negatively connoted one for weaponry (*kaku heki*). This dehumanisation through the ideologisation, technologisation, and scientification of Japanese energy policy had dramatic consequences for the population. In a country with limited habitable space, an entire area was radioactively contaminated and the effects for the people's health will only become apparent in the years to come. Epistemologically, this implies that scholars are not intended to tell people "the truth" as scientifically deduced through grand

theories. Knowledge is only created by humans through dialogue for and in a particular temporal and spatial context. Therefore, scholarship for Morgenthau was intended to critically reflect the knowledge-power relations that shape social life-worlds. His contribution seems humble, but we should not overestimate ourselves. It requires the willingness and ability to self-reflect and in such action the danger of ostracism looms large.

Furthermore, Morgenthau's human condition of politics also comprises a normative implication to IR-theory as it does not separate the political from politics. This separation occurs when the political is conceived as being merely the moment of the establishment of a new political order, i.e. politics. It would subject the latter to positivistic institutionalism and restrict itself to a critical examination of politics while the political would be uncritically appraised as the moment of change, regardless of its content. A Morgenthauian inspired scholarship, by contrast, reminds IR-scholars to put the focus on the main factor of their trade: the human. This human factor is characterised for Morgenthau in the political as it is this dynamic and constant realm where people act together to create their life-world by competing for the assertion and eventual alignment of their interests. Consequently, analysing modern democracies cannot only imply for IR-theory to critically assess the provisional nature *of* politics, but especially *within* politics. Conceptualising the political like Morgenthau intends to stabilise modern democracies as it seeks ways to restore and ensure the political within politics. With his understanding of the national interest Morgenthau conceived a concept which was designed to achieve the latter. In the case of Japan, this would have meant that politicians would have laid emphasis on the perpetuation of a public dialogue in which all interests regarding nuclear energy could have been voiced. Furthermore, Morgenthau's normativity particularly expresses itself in the re-politicising ability he afforded to scholarship. To induce conditions for people to empower themselves through establishing such a dialogue, Morgenthau wanted to draw the public's attention to dehumanising developments in modern democracies.

Therefore, a Morgenthauian inspired scholarship is an addition to current discourses in IR-theory as it searches for ways to engage with the public. The feasibility of Morgenthau's solution was not assessed herein, but it is noted that he developed a way through which public engagement could take place. Whatever we make of Morgenthau's solutions for the re-politicisation of social life, IR-theory cannot restrict itself to the academic field due to the danger of having to succumb to public knowledge-power relations. Instead, it must look for

ways to reduce this danger and assist in ensuring that current trends of re-politicisation, such as a growing critical stance towards nuclear energy in Japan or the mass-demonstrations in Israel and the USA for more social equality, do not turn into violence as was the case in the suburbs of Paris and London.

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¹ Examples are: Tickner (1991), Keohane (1993), or George (1995).

² Taking up Morgenthau's questions from 1933 has not only conceptual implications, but also methodological ones. Introducing the concept of *Weltanschauung* was deliberate because Morgenthau's work cannot be separated from his life. In agreement with Henry Kissinger (1980: 14) and Smith (1986: 226), it is argued that Morgenthau's life was his work and his work his life. Classifying his *Weltanschauung* as a theory would fall short of aptly depicting this processual character. To visualise this processuality the German term is used rather than the more static world-view. Methodologically, this implies that we cannot analyse Morgenthau in isolation because this de-contextualised and/or selective reading may lead to misinterpretations of his major concepts as has occurred in the past. In order to solve this problem, this article follows a panoptical approach to Morgenthau's work as it enables IR-scholars to understand his concepts in consideration of the contexts of their creation and employment and in relation to linguistic conventions at that time (Kosselleck 2010: 56-76). This is the case because the intellectual background rests upon these conventions as they 'form the universe of all potentially meaningful expressions at specific time in a specific culture' (Muslow and Mahler 2010: 10; my translation) upon which it will be possible to put Morgenthau's concepts into and relate them to the history of ideas. Therefore, to avoid screening Morgenthau's concepts through the lenses of 21st century IR-theory, a comprehensive reading of Morgenthau's published work was executed, analogies were drawn from Morgenthau's work to other scholars active at that time and culture, and comprehensive archival work was undertaken to examine his unpublished studies and correspondence.

³ This term is borrowed from Hartmut Behr (2010) who argues that scientification signifies the process of firmly grounding positivism as the only viable framework for IR-theorising.

⁴ HJM stands for the Hans J. Morgenthau Archive at the Library of Congress. The number indicates the respective container.

⁵ The term marginalisation refers to Morgenthau's status as a marginal man in Robert Park's sense: 'fate has condemned [Morgenthau] to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic, cultures' (Park, in: Golovensky 1952: 334). Using this understanding of marginalisation does not mean that Morgenthau did not have a brilliant academic career, but the differences in the epistemological traditions in the USA and Continental Europe led to an interpretation of Morgenthau's work that was merely a crude caricature.

⁶ Robert Schuett (2007: 59) uses the term 'the instinct of self-assertion' to translate *Bewahrungstrieb*. However, translating it as the drive to prove oneself is closer to the German meaning and Morgenthau (1974: 16) also translated it this way.

⁷ A linguistic explanation is that – other than in German or French – the term "power" in English entails empirical and normative components because power can be used to describe any human effort to achieve a specific end (Geuss 2008: 27).

⁸ The author owes this expression to Hartmut Behr.

⁹ The German chancellor Angela Merkel has used the term "without alternative" (*alternativlos*) while arguing for financial aid to Greece on 2 May 2010.

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