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Abstract: Political realism remains a powerful theoretical framework for thinking about international relations, including the war on terrorism. For Morgenthau and other realists, foreign policy is a matter of national interest defined in terms of power. Some writers view this tenet as weakening, if not severing, realism's link with morality. I take up the contrary view that morality is embedded in realist thought, as well as the possibility of realism being thinly and thickly moralised depending on the moral psychology of the agents. I argue that a prima facie case can be made within a thinly moralised realism for a relatively weak ally like Bosnia to enter the war on terrorism. An inflationary model of morality, however, explains how the moral horror of genocide in an ally's past may lead to a thickened moralised realism such that allied policy-makers question their country's entry into the war.

Keywords: political realism; war on terrorism; Hans J. Morgenthau; inflationary model of morality; terrorist qua fanatic; Bosnia; thinly and thickly moralised realism; moral temptation; empathy.

> Politics is a craft or skill, and ought precisely *not* to be analysed...as the mastery of a set of principles or theories. This does not imply that political agents do not use theories. Rather, part of their skill depends on being able to choose skilfully which models of reality to use in a certain context, and to take account of ways in which various theories are limited and ways in which they are useful or fail. The successful exercise of this skill is often called "political judgement".
>
> —Raymond Geuss[1]

> To say that one should replace knowledge by hope is to say much the same thing: that one should stop worrying about whether one has been imaginative enough to think up interesting alternatives to one's present beliefs.
>
> —Richard Rorty[2]

I Preliminary Considerations

It is true that the neo-conservative movement was ready and able to set the parameters of the debate concerning the war on terrorism soon after 9/11. Some realists eventually sided with the administration's policy of invading Iraq, but many opposed the invasion on a number of grounds (Schmidt and Williams 2008: 201-209). Even so, by the time the debate had ended, the realists proved to be unsuccessful in their attempt to prevent the invasion. Perhaps those who were dismissive of realist objections now wish they had been more constrained in their optimism. Since 2003, practically everything that could go wrong in this war has gone wrong. The deteriorating situation in Iraq, and this after seven long years of fighting, shows the neo-conservative case to have been somewhat flawed, thereby allowing for a resurgence of realism. This resurgence would not have been all that pronounced were it not for one persistent feature of realism: it constitutes 'a continuing reference point against which competing positions [e.g., neo-conservativism] consistently define themselves and a conceptual and rhetorical fulcrum around which both analytic and political debates revolve' (Williams 2005: 1). So political realism remains a powerful theoretical framework for thinking about international relations in general and the war on terrorism in particular.

Giving a definite description of this outlook is another matter, however. Even without the distortions, including caricatures, that realists often complain of as being offered up by their critics, realism still suffers from its own diversity or, as Stanley Hoffman refers to it, 'its elasticity and indeterminateness' (Hoffmann 1998: 59).[3] There may be as many variations of realism as there are realists. Nonetheless, a thematic analysis of the literature suggests that there are strands that overlap one another and serve to link these variations or, better yet, that link bundles of variations that go by the names of 'classical', 'neo-realist', and 'neo-classical realist'. It is these strands that continue to be used by theorists and policy-makers to justify a wide range of policy decisions. One such strand is the view that nation-state actors are involved in a struggle for power: hence, the realist tenet that foreign policy is a matter of national interest defined in terms of power.

Some realists and non-realists alike say more than that, however. They go one step further in their characterisation of realism by arguing that its stress on national interest and power weakens, if not severs, its link with morality. It is no wonder that some talk of 'realism's moral blindness', to use a phrase from David Campbell and Michael Shapiro (1999: ix). George Kennan, a realist and an architect of United States cold war policy, expressed such a view when he identified the primary obligation of government with the '*interests* of the national society it represents', which for him meant 'those of its military security, the integrity of its political life and the well-being of its people', interests that are neither morally good nor bad (Kennan 1985/86: 206). Marshall Cohen, a critic of realism, came to the same conclusion—that realism is 'amoral'—when he wrote that realists 'argue that international relations must be viewed under the category of power and that the conduct of nations is, and should be, guided and judged exclusively by the amoral requirements of the national interest' (Cohen 1985: 4). Finally, the influential political theorist Charles Beitz is blunt about this 'blindness' when he insists that one of the core principles of realism is 'that moral judgements have no place in discussions of inter-affairs or foreign policy' (1979: 15). Simply put, there is no place for morality in realism, including within its central notion of the national interest.

Yet it would be wrong to simply make the case for national interest at all costs, as if moral virtues or principles played no part in the realist vision. On the contrary, there is a compelling case to be made for including the moral virtue of prudence, as well as various moral principles within political realism. Indeed, classical realists like Hans J. Morgenthau (2001; 1970; 1967; 1958; 1951), E.H. Carr (1964), and Reinhold Niebuhr (1932), as well as neo-realists like John Mearsheimer (2001), Kenneth Waltz (1979), and Joel Rosenthal (1995; 1991), can be read as having argued for the embeddedness of morality in realist thought: that a moralised realism *is* the presence of a substantive moral base.[4]

It should be noted that while this debate is all about *finding morality within the theory of realism* expressed in the works of Morgenthau and others, there has been a trend towards *finding foreign policy within morality* expressed in the works of a number of theorists and policy-makers who have made reference to what has come to be known as ethical foreign policy, On this view, human rights are

prioritised in the decision-making of Western foreign policy-makers. As David Chandler astutely notes, there has been a 'shift from pursuing narrow interests in foreign policy to focusing on human rights questions in areas where Western states have little economic or geostrategic interest' (2007: 53).[5] This shift appears in discussions of both armed humanitarian intervention and foreign aid allocation, but can be equally applied to an analysis of the war on terrorism (Chandler and Heins 2007: 3). Although the prioritisation of human rights may suggest a turn from realism to the utopianism of idealism or the absolutism of moralism, it need not be understood as such. Broadening the war on terrorism debate to include human rights issues may simply mean that realism, as circumscribed by national interest defined in terms of power, can be moralised, and that it can be thinly moralised, as well as thickly moralised, depending on the moral psychology that is at work among the policy-makers. So the underlying mechanism of this shift does not so much involve a coherent set of realist tenets and the logical implications of those principles as it does the moral psychology of the foreign policy-makers.

Those who content themselves with scholastic substitutes for explanatory mechanisms, who immerse themselves in exegesis and thematic analysis of the works of prominent realists to the exclusion of all else, will continue to provide finer and finer discriminations within the conceptual landscape of realism while foregoing the value of moral psychology (á la moral agency) in rethinking the connection between moralised realism and the war on terrorism. Rather than contribute to more of the same, this essay ventures to discuss this connection within the context of moral agency or the exercise of the internal powers, capacities, and motivations though which an individual becomes a being who makes moral judgements and who actively intervenes in events (Barnes 2000: 25).[6]

The question now becomes: how might moral psychology improve our understanding of the relationship between the moralisation of realism and the war on terrorism? One way is by clarifying the conditions under which allies of the U.S. could argue for or against joining the war on terrorism while remaining within the realist camp. Of the two scenarios, the latter is by far the more interesting, for it may turn out that the political realism that justifies one country's war on terrorism may be part of a moment of 'moral temptation' experienced by the leadership of another country. In this situation the politically expedient policy clashes with the moral horror of the country's past such that the allied leadership is unsure whether to order its

country's entry into and full participation in the war. It is not simply a matter of the leaders of one country making one moral judgement and the leaders of another country making a different judgement. Rather it has much to do with the moral psychology (or the determinants of moral judgement and behaviour) that is at work for each group of decision-makers.

Apologists for realism may be tempted to pass off talk of moral agency and moral temptation as pure drivel, for they may find it hard to believe that the moment of moral temptation would ever arise, given the tremendous suffering inflicted by a terrorist act such as 9/11, as well as the fact that terrorism in the guise of Jihadism is a global phenomenon forcing many countries to form vast alliances to protect themselves from terrorist attack. Why would there even be a question of not joining the fight, since embarking on a policy that downplays terrorism as a security threat is tantamount to 'national suicide' and the demise of democracy (Morgenthau 1951: 35-36).

Of course, the apologists may react even further by saying that the mistake made by those who find explanatory power in the notion of moral temptation is that they disregard the role of prudence and expediency in politics. The classical realist and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr makes the case thus: 'political tasks require a shrewd admixture of principle and expediency, of loyalty to general standards of justice and adjustment to actual power'.[7] This would supposedly apply even to those leaders whose people have recently experienced the moral horror of genocide. The realist presumption is that allies should behave in a politically expedient way—e.g., they should come to one another's aid in times of crisis (like a war on terrorism) because it will prove to be beneficial to each of them even if this is understood in terms of an interest in global peace and order. Or, in realist parlance, it is in their national interest, defined in terms of power, to do so.

Take 9/11 as a case in point. For a country to experience attacks such as those that took place on September 11, 2001 in New York City and Washington, D.C. would surely count as 'times of crisis' of the worst kind. In the case of 9/11, then, we are led to believe that allies of the United States, including Bosnia, ought to join the fight against terrorism without question. However, this strong realist conclusion seems to take for granted that no interest peculiar to an ally like Bosnia could override the American imperative to engage in the fight against terrorism. Indeed, how could any ally have such an interest given that not engaging in the war on terrorism is tantamount to 'national suicide and the demise of democracy'?

There are a number of questions that this presumption immediately raises. Is it, for instance, true that the presumption holds even though it is at odds with the quite reasonable injunction to respect the interests of other nations? I say reasonable because it could easily be read as a Kantian-like duty to respect the consciously conceived national interests and dignity of allied leaders who disagree with aspects of American foreign policy (Coady 2008: 45). Even if it were true that such duty to respect and not to manipulate is questionable from a strict Kantian perspective, is it possible for the duty to garner support from the realist tenet that American power and goodness [and wisdom] are limited, thereby allowing for at least the possibility of 'consciously conceived national interests' that are contrary to American interests (Hulsman and Lieven 2005: 38; 42)?[8] If such interests are possible, can they be made actual for allied policy-makers through a process whereby the demand to join the war is overridden by some other duty that is peculiar to their country's historical and moral contingency? These questions are obviously interrelated.

In what follows, I contend not only that the presumed obligation placed on our allies to enter the war on terrorism can be overridden by a duty unique to their own situation, but that the perception of their situation that leads to this duty can be explained through an empirically informed theory of moral psychology, like the inflationary model of morality formulated by Arne Johan Vetlesen (1994). As I see it, policy-makers may experience moral temptation, a moment in which they as moral agents are tempted to be prudent and to decide in favour of joining the fight, yet face the morally praise-worthy choice of an alternative to fighting, at least fighting in the way that is asked of them.[9] The prudent way is said to be in the line of least resistance, so that it is much more desirable than the praise-worthy choice. Nonetheless, that which is praise-worthy can be chosen by an 'effort of the will' triggered by an empathic response toward the Other. This enables a person to act contrary to the felt balance of desire, and to achieve the higher end despite the fact that there is less desire for it. In the case of Bosnia, it is an experiential situation that provides policy-makers with the opportunity to move from a thinly moralised realism dominated by prudence and expediency to one thickened by the moral horror of genocide and ethnic cleansing and the subsequent realisation of the need for reconciliation in order to build a stable and lasting peace within its borders, and perhaps elsewhere in the world. Prudence and expediency may triumph, but there is a moment for an alternative to be contemplated and chosen.

After presenting reasonable definitions of terrorism, the terrorist qua fanatic, and the war on terrorism, I describe what a war on terrorism means for two countries, one of which is the powerful architect of the war, while the other is an ally that has the means to contribute to the war, and argue that a prima facie case can be made within a thinly moralised realism for the ally to enter the war and engage in a wide range of actions in support of it. Finally, I argue that an inflationary model of morality helps us to understand why the situation becomes blurred when the ally is a country like Bosnia, one that has recently suffered from years of moral horror like genocide and ethnic cleansing. It is in countries with such a past that the justification for certain actions in support of a war on terrorism may be overridden because moral perception allows the seeing of certain events as being morally relevant, which in turn leads to moral judgements that oppose a country's going to war on terrorism. It is through a thickened moralised political realism that allied policy-makers may reconsider engaging in the war on terrorism in any way at all. What this entails is a serious shift in the locus of moral significance from preventing the worst from happening from without through the prosecution of a war to preventing the perpetuation of the worst from happening from within.

II Terrorism, the Terrorist qua Fanatic, and the War on Terrorism

Before I attempt to show how thinly and thickly moralised realisms may lead to different consequences for policy-makers of powerful and not so powerful countries that are fighting a war on terrorism, I need to give some account of what I mean by the terms 'terrorism', 'the terrorist qua fanatic', and 'war on terrorism'. Unfortunately, there is no consensus on these definitional questions. Moreover, no definition of terrorism can possibly cover all the types of terrorism that have appeared during the past two centuries. Yet I will answer them in ways that will facilitate a discussion of the moralisation of realism.

First, what is meant by 'terrorism'? Or, more to the point, what are we saying of an act when we say that it is a terrorist act? In this essay a terrorist act will be defined as an act of violence or a threat to use violence against noncombatants for the purpose of exacting revenge, intimidating, or otherwise instilling fear to advance a political or social agenda.[10] Since terror is used by both state actors (viz., to

advance perceived national interests) and non-state actors (viz., in opposition to the state), this definition covers both state terrorism and anti-state terrorism, though it is the latter that is addressed in this essay. Acts of terrorism can range from the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that result in the loss of thousands of innocent lives to the detonation of a roadside bomb (IED, Improvised Explosive Device) that kills a single person. No matter the number of causalities, the aim is to exact revenge, intimidate or instill fear in a population primarily composed of noncombatants. In short, the principle of discrimination and noncombatant immunity, which requires every reasonable effort to discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate (those not engaged in harming) targets, is in constant danger of being violated by the terrorist (Orend 2006: 106-107).

Second, who is the terrorist? The moral philosophers Jonathan E. Adler and R.M. Hare have contributed to our conceptual understanding of the terrorist qua fanatic. Adler makes it clear that when we say that a person is a fanatic, we mean that she is more than an individual who is willing to pursue actions—including terrorism—that violate most peoples' moral sensibilities. Understood as a thinking being, fanatic describes a far richer individual, one who possesses an intellectual dimension that involves putting forth arguments intended to persuade others to share her commitments (Adler 2007: 266). Ordinarily the use of persuasive arguments is seen as eminently praiseworthy, if for no other reason than it signifies a person's willingness to communicate her position and to make it vulnerable to critical assessment. In the case of the fanatic, however, it is conceivable, if not inevitable, that she will never admit to such vulnerability even though her argument *is* exposed to real challenge and perhaps even refutation. The source of this inability, or unwillingness, to be open to reasoned interaction is found in an even more conspicuous aspect of this intellectual dimension: the reduction or absence of commonplace self-restraints on fanatical reasoning itself. Manoeuvering her favoured beliefs to keep them exempt from criticism takes centre stage. Being so convinced of her cause as just, the fanatic is aptly described as self-righteous, intolerant, excessively certain, and zealous. No wonder Adler is not very optimistic about the subversion of fanaticism through the use of counter-argument, as well as the fanatic's outright rejection of terrorism.

Hare acknowledges this epistemic difficulty, yet does so in a more nuanced way that allows for a constructive defense against the spread of fanaticism and, thus, terrorism. First, Hare counterposes the fanatic with the utilitarian, thus defining the fanatic as one who possesses moral opinions that are divergent from those of the utilitarian. Far from being amoral, the fanatic in this regard can be seen as a moraliser, one who is lacking in the areas of self-awareness and the breadth of understanding of others' situations, and is associated with a delusional sense of moral superiority (Coady 2008: 17). Then Hare distinguishes the more numerous impure from the pure or true fanatic insofar as the former's moral opinions stray from the utilitarian's because she is 'unable or unwilling to engage in ... critical thinking', which is understood as a 'refusal or inability to face facts or to think clearly, or for other reasons' (Hare 1981: 170). So if we imagine a continuum of how strictly people hold to commonplace self-restraints on belief construction and maintenance, and the two ends refer to the absence of such self-restraints and the maximisation of said restraints, then the impure fanatic would be positioned at the former end. Clearly, this is what Adler has in mind. Whereas the impure fanatic is far removed from the critical thinker extraordinaire, Hare situates the pure fanatic in close proximity to the critical thinker. This he does by defining the pure fanatic as 'someone who ... [is] able and willing to think critically, but somehow survived the ordeal still holding moral opinions different from those of the utilitarian' (Hare 1981: 171). This positioning is spurious, however. For if what Hare means by the 'critical thinking' of the pure fanatic is that she has the capacity for argumentation, but simply lacks the commonplace self-restraints on reasoning, then the pure fanatic is much closer to her impure cousin as Hare leads us to believe. Having said this, it seems only correct for Hare to view the pure fanatic with some trepidation. Hare is worried, for he writes:

> If there are people so wedded to some fanatical ideal that they are able to imagine, in their full vividness, the sufferings of the persecuted, and who can still prescribe universally that this persecution should go on in the service of their ideals, even if it were they themselves who had to suffer thus, then they will remain unshaken by any argument that I have been able to discover (Hare 1963: 184).

Almost three decades later, Hare solidifies the connection between the fanatic and the terrorist, while being adamant about closing off the possibility of thoughtful and reasoned decisions that are mutually persuasive. For Hare, the solution was self-evident, if a bit problematic.

> The fanatical terrorist is a person who attaches so much importance to some ideal, that he is prepared to prescribe that he himself should be

> murdered, kidnapped, tortured, etc., if it were necessary in order to advance the cause which he has embraced...Of course most terrorists are not as clear-thinking as is required in order to engage in the sort of argument we have been having. They have an extremely selective view of the facts; they do not pay much attention to the facts on which we have been relying, such as the suffering that they are inflicting on others, and the rather dubious and over-optimistic nature of their own predictions. They give play to particular emotions to an extent which makes them incapable of logical thought. The philosopher cannot say anything that will help further an argument with such people; for he can only reason, and they will not. The argument will have to shift, instead, to the much more difficult moral question of what measures society can legitimately take in order to protect innocent people against them (Hare 1989: 39; 43-44).

Yet his earlier work sensibly gives us hope in countering the fanatic and, hence, the terrorist. So how can these passages be made compatible with each other? The key to dealing with fanatics is to 'separate from the true fanatics, whose ideals really are proof against the ordeal by imagination and the facts, those who support them merely because they are thoughtless and insensitive [i.e., impure fanatics]' (Hare 1963: 184). On this view, if it were possible for the impure fanatics to be dealt with through the use of 'powerful arguments', and if pure fanatics only get their power over others (the impure fanatics) as a result of 'confused thinking', i.e., 'by concealing facts and spreading falsehoods; by arousing passions which will cloud the sympathetic imagination—in short by all the familiar methods of propaganda', then the fanatics as a whole will succumb to a divide and conquer strategy (Hare 1963: 185). And as long as we understand his later work as referring only to the impure fanatic, then moral philosophy's ability to immunise the masses against the power of propaganda will also inoculate them against the fanatic (and, thus, reduce the ranks of the terrorist qua fanatic).

Finally, what can be said about 'war on terrorism'? At some point the leaders of a country that is victimised by repeated terrorist attacks are unable or unwilling to continue playing the role of the victim and will declare 'war on the terrorists'. Engaging in a full-blown offensive, complete with armoured columns, helicopter gunships, and large troop deployments may not be enough. Sometimes a country's political leaders resort to language that gives them wide latitude in the prosecution of a war, including the supplementation of strict rules of law enforcement with war rules that condone the detention or even the killing of suspects without due process. Such a switch from one set of rules to the other surely has no political boundaries. Without a clear distinction between what is permissible during peacetime and what can be condoned during wartime, leaders worldwide could attempt to justify a wide range of actions by such a switch.

Perhaps one of the most striking examples of tampering with this distinction can be found in how the Bush administration handled the cases of Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen, and Ali Saleh Kahlah al-Marri, a Qatar national studying in the U.S. War rules were invoked in both cases to label the men 'enemy combatants', allowing the U.S. government to circumvent ordinary constitutional protections and subject these men to indefinite military confinement. Although those who manage the war may speak only of the supposed benefits of such tampering, Kenneth Roth, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, contends in his essay 'The Law of War in the War on Terror', that the Bush administration's meddling with this distinction has had potentially devastating results.[11]

> Errors, common enough to ordinary criminal investigations, are all the more likely when a government relies on the kind of murky intelligence that drives many terrorist investigations. If law-enforcement rules are used, a mistaken arrest can be rectified at trial. But if war rules apply, the government is never obliged to prove a suspect's guilt. Instead, a supposed terrorist can be held for however long it takes to win the "war" against terrorism. And the consequences of error are even graver if the supposed combatant is killed... (Roth 2005: 307).

Not surprisingly, the same rules have also been applied by the Bush administration in cases outside the United States, including Bosnia. In October 2001, the U.S. sought the surrender of six Algerian-born men with Bosnian citizenship, in part because the six were suspected Al-Qaeda terrorists.[12] Although the administration did secure the detention of these men through the application of law-enforcement rules, it resorted to war rules once the Supreme Court of the Federation of BiH ordered the suspects' release for lack of evidence. The court's decision to free the detainees did not prevent others within the Bosnian government from complying with a U.S. request to release the suspects into their custody. The suspects, known as the Algerian Group, were subsequently transferred to the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba for detention and interrogation (Roth 2005: 306).[13]

Defining terrorism and the terrorist in this way, and sketching the case of the Algerian Group to show the wide latitude that can be given to a war on terrorism suggests that morality plays a key role in all of

this; morality not only being routinely violated by the terrorist, but also serving as the terrorist's ultimate nemesis. Some may contend that realism necessarily works against the terrorist in justifying countries' entry in the war on terrorism. On this view, a thinly moralised realism does just that. However, a more thickly moralised realism may more closely reflect the historical and moral contingency of less powerful countries, thereby allowing the leadership of those countries to follow a more self-serving national interest and, thus, a foreign policy that excludes entering the war on terrorism.

III Thinly Moralised Political Realism and the War on Terrorism

Before addressing what a war on terrorism would look like from a political realist perspective, we must first understand political realism.[14] Although so-called neo-realism has become prevalent as the result of the works of Mearsheimer (2001) and Waltz (1979), their work is a response to the classical form of this school of thought which assumes that statespersons and diplomats formulate and conduct policy in terms of national interest defined as power. However, if we are to place the war on terrorism into the realist framework, we need to understand how morality and realism are related to each other because war of any kind is the object of moral judgement and analysis. Of those who have dealt with morality and national interest, it is realism's principal architect, Morgenthau, who made the most decisive statements on the topic. He took great effort to distinguish political realism from its rival political idealism and what Morgenthau took to be idealism's principal defect—political moralising. His work is also an especially apt beginning point because much of the debate between realism and idealism since his time has been motivated by his view and response to it.

As Greg Russell insightfully points out in *Hans J. Morgenthau and the Ethics of American Statecraft*, it is a widely-held assumption that Morgenthau's realism is Hobbesian in nature: morality has no decisive role to play in how state conduct is determined (Russell 1990: 160). Morgenthau's discussion of the state, interest, and power led some of his commentators and critics to this assumption when he wrote that 'there is neither morality nor law outside the state' (1958: 253-54). Several years later he was much more explicit in this view when he wrote in the opening paragraph of his chapter on the Middle East in *Truth and Power*:

> The actions of states are determined not by moral principles and legal commitments but by considerations of interest and power. Moral principles and legal commitments may be invoked to justify a policy arrived at on other grounds, as in the case of Vietnam; they may strengthen or weaken, depending upon the particular situation, the determination with which a certain policy is pursued; but they do not determine the choice among different courses of action. A rational discussion of the Middle Eastern crisis must start with this basic fact, however unpalatable to our moral sensibilities and law-abiding preferences (Morgenthau 1970: 382).

Of course, if we take these passages at face value, then perhaps Robert G. Gilpin's depiction of the realist assumption of 'the primacy in all political life of power and security in human motivation' is readily applicable to Morgenthau's realism (Gilpin 1986: 305). At best, we could say that Morgenthau's realism subordinates morality to power and security or, at worst, that his view 'epitomises the European legacy of *realpolitik*, with its intrinsic denial of ethical constraints upon the statesman' (Russell 1990: 148).

However, these words of Morgenthau's do not capture the breadth and complexity of his thinking. In fact, those who focus on them to the exclusion of other passages mistakenly support the view that morality must be detached from power in order for power to retain the centrality that it does within politics in general and international relations in particular. But this simply is not the case; Morgenthau's realism is much more sophisticated and nuanced than his detractors believe it to be. Anything but a confirmed 'amoral realist', Morgenthau's realism involves a tension between, on the one hand, acknowledging that the basis of morality, and its intimate connection with power, is a natural part of the human condition and, on the other hand, maintaining that the scope and efficacy of morality within international relations are subject to limits, though these limits may not be as strict as one might expect, thus making realism a close cousin to idealism. There are numerous passages within his corpus that support this alternative view, a view taken up, at least in part, by a number of writers, including Duncan Bell (2009), Anthony F. Lang, Jr. (2007), Richard N. Lebow (2003), Seán Molloy (2006; 2009), and Michael C. Williams (2005).

Morality and Power within the Human Condition

Whether we see Morgenthau as an Aristotelian (Lang), a deontologist (Lebow), a consequentialist (á la Williams willful Realism), or as

someone who proposed a 'transcendent ethics' (Molloy), all these perspectives are compatible with the claim that the origin of morality is found within the human condition. In other words, morality is 'natural'. Such a view is found most strikingly in Morgenthau's short 1962 essay 'Love and Power'. Here Morgenthau writes that man is a unique being insofar as 'only man is capable of loneliness' (1962b: 247). It is this quality of human existence, this existential void, that man must fill, and it is through the longing for love and the lust for power that man tries to escape his loneliness. So loneliness is the root of both love and power. Unfortunately, pure love, which humans can possess only within a concatenation of moments, is a rare experience because power corrupts, thus leading to the 'inevitable frustration of love' (1962b: 248). With the demise of love comes a lust for power, a substitute for love. But here again, man is damned, for 'the acquisition of power only begets the desire for more' (1962b: 250). Although Morgenthau does not refer to power in terms of evil in 'Love and Power', he does identify 'power as the domination of man by man' (1962b: 247), and this he connected to evil in his 1945 essay 'The Evil of Politics and the Ethics of Evil' when he wrote that 'to the degree in which the essence and aim of politics is power over man, politics is evil; for it is to this degree that it degrades man to a means for other men' (Morgenthau 1945: 14).[15] And so our everyday life is not the only arena for the 'ubiquity of evil',[16] for there is 'enduring presence of evil in all political action' (Morgenthau 1945: 17). Morgenthau insists that the antinomy between the lust for power and the denial of this lust as a 'universal ethical norm' cannot be resolved because each pole is part of the human nature of man.[17] So with evil at every turn, but facing the ever-present need to decide what to do, Morgenthau seems to be of the view that man naturally accedes to his intuitions and selects a consequentialist decision-making procedure:

> Political ethics is indeed the ethics of doing evil. While it condemns politics as the domain of evil *par excellence*, it must reconcile itself to the enduring presence of evil in all political action. Its last resort, then, is the endeavor to choose, since evil there must be, among several possible actions the one that is least evil (Morgenthau 1945: 17).[18]

For Morgenthau, then, power and morality have their origin within the human condition. Consequently, it does not make sense to think of morality as separate from politics in general and international relations in particular since power is at the heart of politics. But what

about the scope and efficacy of moral principles (or norms) as they relate to international relations?

The Scope and Efficacy of Moral Principles

Of these issues, it is an examination of the scope of moral principles that is the easier of the two to conduct because it simply involves a search for de facto universal and absolute moral principles, and the existence of such principles is evidenced by there being someone who accepts them as legitimate. In this case, that someone is Hans Morgenthau. We are not seeking a Kantian deduction or demonstration of the legitimacy of the concept of universal and absolute moral principle. That would be a very different matter, and one that would require an a priori argument by Morgenthau. The goal here, on the other hand, is much simpler—to find Morgenthau having *acknowledged* that there are such principles. So where do we find textual evidence of universal and absolute moral principles within Morgenthau's corpus? One place where we find Morgenthau sounding like an idealist is in *In Defense of the National Interest* where he writes that '[u]niversal moral principles, such as justice or equality, are capable of guiding political action only to the extent that they have been given concrete content and have been related to political situations by society' (1951: 34). This is a clear acknowledgment on Morgenthau's part of the existence of such principles, though he attaches a rather important stipulation as to their application in the world, a point that will be examined below. Although Morgenthau does not define 'universal', it is reasonable to understand the term in a conventional way; that is, to say a principle is universal is to mean that the principle applies to everyone or every group, which in this case means every nation. So the principles of justice and equality as such cover every nation: they are universal.

But are these moral principles also absolute? I believe this is more difficult to determine in the absence of an explicit claim to that effect. However, I think it is reasonable to believe that he thought these principles were both universal and absolute per se. Why? It is based on the relationship between the notion of absoluteness and the stipulation of applicability. Again, Morgenthau does not define 'absolute'. But if we take the conventional view once again, then to say a moral principle is absolute means that the principle 'must be given precedence over all other competing' principles (Churchill 2006: 49). Other ways of

saying the same thing include that their 'prohibitions hold come what may', which amounts to a certain 'moral inflexibility' (Coady 2008: 43) and that they express 'some things that ought *never* (i.e., under any circumstances or conditions) to be done to any human being or some things that ought *always* (under all conditions) to be done for every human being' (Perry 1998: 88).[19] This understanding of absoluteness seems to fit nicely with his stipulation of applicability if we take the latter as a constraining force on the scope of moral principles. That is to say, regardless of their universality and absoluteness as principles in moral space, these principles bear out their scope only in their capacity (or efficacy) to guide conduct and, in this case, to guide foreign policy. As I read Morgenthau, however, the universal and absolute principles of justice and equality can only guide if they become concretised, but in the process of becoming concretised, these principles lose their qualities of universality and absoluteness. Given that his stipulation suggests a constraint on the scope of those principles, it applies to both universality and absoluteness. Assuming not only their universality but their absoluteness, then, seems to be in keeping with the function of his stipulation of applicability and how we ordinarily understand scope.

Are there other places within Morgenthau's work that suggest universal and absolute moral principles? I believe so. Let me briefly indicate their presence in two discussions. First, Morgenthau explicitly refers to the denial of the lust for power as a 'universal ethical norm'; thus, this denial norm 'applies to everyone'. Is it absolute as well? Insofar as the denial is less of an operational norm wielded by persons as agents and more of a reference to the primal spark of morality itself, something that is embedded in the human condition, it appears to be not only universal, but also absolute. But given that it is more or less a fact about the human condition, a condition that both realists and idealists share, this instance of a universal and absolute moral principle is not very interesting. Second, Mogenthau's reference of the 'first principle' of political ethics—the principle of the least evil—appears to be another instance of such a moral principle, especially if it is understood as an intuitive response to the metaphysical fact that we face evil at every turn within the human condition. This principle is different from the denial norm insofar as the former is consequentialist; however, it is a principle that is even more connected to Morgenthau's stipulation of applicability. This is because the principle can only acquire its complete meaning and application (efficacy) within a particular context: when national interest circumscribes the weighing of consequences or perspectives (prudence) and when proportion is taken into account (moderation); in other words, when something akin to Aristotelian practical wisdom is the handmaiden of national interest (Molloy 2009: 95). So it is reasonable to portray the principle of the least evil as both universal and absolute.

What all this means is that Morgenthau the realist is in agreement with the idealist insofar as moral principles are: (1) standards by which international relations can be judged; and (2) these principles are sometimes recognised to be universal and absolute. But the similarity ends here. It must be remembered that Morgenthau is insistent on distinguishing political realism from political idealism. The idealist or moralist would have us believe in the antithesis of the national interest and moral principles within foreign policy. According to the idealist, the formulation and implementation of foreign policy is to be driven by a set of moral absolutes; such policy is not intended to conform with the national interest but rather with what are considered to be abstract, universal, and absolute moral principles such as justice, equality, and liberty. Their universal and absolute scope make them the sole standards by which international relations are to be judged.

But granting morality such an exalted status within international relations is what makes Morgenthau question idealism in the first place, for he thought universal and absolute principles were 'appropriate only in an already perfect moral world where nobody wants what could infringe upon anybody else's wants' (Morgenthau 1974: 168). These principles would suffice in the perfect world. Why wouldn't they, given that it is perfect? But that is not the world in which we live. To apply them 'indiscriminately without regard to time and place' in our imperfect world, insists Morgenthau, would be to inflict upon ourselves a form of political myopia, blinding us to the machinations of power politics with, no doubt, devastating results.

Yet it is surely not the morality within idealism that Morgenthau is reacting against and that he wishes to exorcise from the theory and practice of international affairs. Rather it is the presence of *moralism* within idealism, i.e., the 'tendency to make one moral value supreme and to apply it indiscriminately without regard to time and place' that Morgenthau finds unacceptable (Coady 2008: 14). In a revealing passage describing the idealist's antithesis, Morgenthau, the political realist, writes:

> The equation of political moralising with morality and of political realism with immorality is itself untenable. The choice is not between moral prin-

ciples and the national interest, devoid of moral dignity, but between one set of moral principles divorced from political reality, and another set of moral principles derived from political reality (Morgenthau 1951: 33).[20]

It is this moralism or 'moral perversion' that lies at the heart of Morgenthau's disillusionment with idealism (Morgenthau 1951: 33). It is reflected in the perverse nature of this antithesis insofar as 'a foreign policy guided by universal [and absolute] moral principles, by definition relegating the national interest to the background, is…a policy of national suicide, actual or potential' (Morgenthau 1951: 35). And to engage in such a policy, claims Morgenthau, is to act immorally, particularly when there are neither universal and absolute moral principles *capable of guiding the state in their very abstractness* nor supranational enforcement agencies that can look after the interests of particular nations. The crisis occurs because statespersons and diplomats attempt to guide foreign policy with such principles to the exclusion of national interest. But they need not act in this way. To prevent this disaster from occurring in an imperfect world, then, not only must statespersons and diplomats employ a morality that takes into account the complexities of political reality within moral judgements, but the making of those judgements must require a far more robust morality that is up for the task. This is exactly what Morgenthau has in mind for realism. Not only is the machinery of morality more diverse (there are a number of important moral principles like justice and liberty, but also virtues such as prudence and moderation, as well as the concept of the national interest), but context (the political, economic, and social realities of the situation) is very important. Contrary to idealism, then, moral principles are neither the sole standards by which international relations are judged nor are they standards that can be effective without some sort of concretisation or connectedness to a particular time and place.

These facets represent important strands within Morgenthau's 'dynamic realism'. Even though moral principles become more nuanced through concretisation, the configurations of variables that are at work in political situations are numerous, if not limitless. The problem for universality and absoluteness (and abstractness) is that these principles and political situations are situated within societies that have their own histories and causal networks that constrain universality and absoluteness, and thus their applicability. The more one prudently concretises and makes a moral principle suitable for application, the less abstract (or more particular) it becomes. Once this

occurs, the moral principle is no longer universal and absolute, thus making it unable to take precedence over all other principles. At some point, one starts to question whether moral principles can ever apply to all human beings and to all situations, regardless of what society they belong to. Perhaps this is what ultimately distinguishes realism from idealism; the efficacy of moral principles is furthered by increasing concretisation, making the principles cover a narrower field of situations. But this is how we need to proceed, according to Morgenthau, because anything that works against the very existence of national communities, and thus order and morality as we know it, must be resisted on moral grounds. This is the political reality that binds rather than severs national interest and morality, and that brings to the forefront the moral virtue of prudence that is at the heart of Morgenthau's realism.

Thinly Moralised Realism and the War on Terrorism

While Morgenthau is not himself advocating political realism qua 'moralism' or the view that conventional moral norms are the *sole* standards by which international relations are to be judged, I think it is clear that the sorts of considerations that he takes to be relevant to the scope and efficacy of moral principles represent nothing less than morality's embeddedness in realist thought. However, the result is a realism that is thinly moralised,[21] one in which the moral constraints are rather 'timid' such that much will be allowed in achieving power and security in the name of national interest.

How can this be so? Remember that it is imperative for national interest not to be relegated to the background of a foreign policy. That amounts to national suicide and that is immoral. The importance of national interest, however, is made more pronounced by Morgenthau's realism insofar as those interests are safeguarded in a rational foreign policy. The need for a rational foreign policy follows, for Morgenthau, because it is only a rational foreign policy that complies with the moral precepts of prudence and the political requirement of success by minimising risks and maximising benefits (Morgenthau 1967: 7). And what is gauged in terms of risks and benefits is none other than the national interest, which is protected from idealism's moralising by the virtue of prudence, which Morgenthau finds to be the standard for all virtues political and moral (Morgenthau 1958: 84). In effect, morality does not arise in politics unless prudence, as

well as moderation, operates to insure that the political consequences of actions are acknowledged.

What is interesting about prudence, as well as moderation, is that it casts realism as exhibiting a particular moral theory, that is, a consequentialist approach as opposed to a non-consequentialist (such as Kant's deontological theory or W.D. Ross's intuitionist theory) one.[22] The former approach to moral theorising possesses a criterion of rightness that is specified in terms of what an action (or a practice) brings or is expected to bring about. So the consequentialist looks to the overall difference that a particular action will make (or is expected to make) to the world. It is the consequences and not the motive of the action or the intrinsic nature of the action that is morally relevant to the action's rightness or wrongness. Indeed, this stress on a consequentialist ethic is viewed by Morgenthau as being at the very heart of realism, for he tells us that

> [r]ealism...considers prudence—the weighing of consequences of alternative political actions—to be the supreme virtue of politics. Ethics in the abstract judges action by its conforming with the moral law, political ethics judges action by its political consequences (Morgenthau 1954: 10).[23]

Viewing prudence in this way places Morgenthau in opposition to those who believe that prudence is only about strict self-interest, and hence hostile to morality because morality is exclusively other-regarding.[24] Such a view is questionable on at least two counts: (1) figures within the history of ethics, including Socrates and Kant, conceived of morality as possessing some aspects that were fundamentally self-regarding (Louden 1992: 13-26); and (2) there is also a history of taking prudence as being a part of morality (think Aristotle and practical wisdom) even in its strictest sense.

But we should not sell prudence short by simply limiting it to the 'weighing of consequences' or to think of prudence as 'the ability to make morally responsible decisions in international politics' as if that tells the whole story (Molloy 2009: 95).[25] Prudence (a focus on perspective), and moderation (a focus of proportion), are moral virtues within realism and they combine to do an enormous amount of work. Part of this work includes the concretisation of moral principles, noted in the aforementioned section. It is through this process that principles become particular, connected to a particular time and place, and thereby suitable for application. It also involves the 'realistic appreciation in the exercise of practical judgement', which covers a variety of concerns,

including not downplaying the horrors of war and not overly narrowing the criterion of success when considering even the best of motivated wars, concerns that are taken into account 'in order to counterbalance the concern with moral principles and high moral values' (Coady 2008: 22; 35).[26] In sum, what is important for Morgenthau is that moral principles such as justice, equality, and liberty are *regulated* by prudence in the name of national interest and that this regulatory feature is understood in terms of the consequences of actions and policies.[27]

Where does this leave us with respect to countries whose leadership subscribes to a thinly moralised realist foreign policy and who face a war on terrorism? Take the case of Country A, the powerful architect of a war on terrorism, whose leadership cites winning this war to be one of its country's national interests, n_A. Such a decision could easily reflect the realist's rational foreign policy insofar as it minimises risks and maximises benefits as a result of prudence and political success, reducing the influence of the vast array of moral principles. Furthermore, suppose that winning the war requires a country that is an ally of Country A and that has the means to contribute to the war, Country B, to *transform* n_A into one of its own national interests, n_B. It is not enough to say of n (the war on terrorism must be won) that it is 'numerically identical' simply because it is a part of each country's national interest. Instead, a transformational process is involved because for n to be a national interest of a country requires it to fit into a 'web of interests' that are shaped by, and cannot be understood apart from, a set of political, economic, social, and military factors that are relational in nature and thus unique to each country. Consequently, $n_A \neq n_B$, but rather $n_A \rightarrow n_B$ (where '$\rightarrow$' designates the transformational process).[28] In other words, n acquires an instantiated identity when it *becomes* a national interest of a particular country, n_A. What does it mean to say that Country B is a loyal ally such that $n_A \rightarrow n_B$? Assuming that countries act on that which they deem to be in their national interest, this process means that Country B will join the war on terrorism. And Country B does so not because of n_A, but because of n_B (though without n_A there would be no n_B). In this case, even a 'thinly moralised' realism leads Country B to come to the aid of Country A because both countries possess leaders who find it prudent and expedient to defeat the terrorists (n_A and n_B). Defeating the terrorists is taken to be a good, which seems natural, given the evils of terrorism.

However, is joining a war on terrorism an absolute or unconditional requirement for Country B and the other allies of Country A?

Is joining the war the sort of thing that ought always, under all conditions, to be done by every ally of Country A that subscribes to a thinly moralised realist foreign policy? The leadership and theorists of Country A may believe so, particularly if they evidence strong nationalist sentiments that exhibit a chauvinism toward their own values and policies. It cannot be denied that there is forcefulness behind making others' interests one's own in times of crisis, especially when the sort of crisis being reacted to recognises no political or geographic boundaries. Terrorism is just such a crisis. Admittedly, for the leadership of Bosnia or any other country to choose neutrality in such matters may ultimately spell disaster for their country when terrorism itself is globalised. But from the perspective of Country B, the answer would surely be not, since national interests are 'webbed' interests that are particular to countries; and these may include interests that are peculiar to their country's historical and moral contingency. This becomes clearer once we enter into the world of real countries possessing real interests, as is the case with Bosnia.

IV The Thickening of Political Realism

In the previous section, prudence was finally described as having a regulatory function over moral principles in the name of the national interest. But there is an additional meaning of prudence that is compatible with regulation. As the ethicist W.D. Falk does not allow us to forget, 'not everything done for oneself is done for reasons of prudence' (Falk 1963: 34). (And I would add, not everything done for others is done for reasons other than prudence.) Moral agents can act for themselves in many ways, prudence being just one of those ways. 'To act prudently is to play it safe, for near-certain gains at small risks. But some good things one cannot get in this way. To get them at all one has to gamble, taking a risk of not getting them even so, or of coming to harm in the process' (Falk 1963: 34). So too in the realm of foreign policy. Yet calling a policy reckless does not tell us what risk has been taken, nor that we should be distancing ourselves from it. Indeed, risks can take many forms: some may see a risky policy if it calls for a more extensive conception of national interest (one that includes the protection of human rights), if it is less dismissive of those moral principles (like justice and equality) that prudence attempts to regulate; or if it is limited by the extent to which a national interest that includes the reconciliation among its own peoples takes

precedence over foreign engagements. A less than prudent foreign policy can occur in these ways.

It is evident, then, that our choices are not limited to either a thinly moralised realism that is governed by the tandem of national interest and prudence or political moralism that conforms policy to moral principles at the cost of national interest. So what other choice is available that provides a denser moral terrain? Given all of Morgenthau's talk of the regulation of moral principles, we might conclude that there is no support in his corpus for such an alternative. Indeed, the allowance for moral concerns to override prudence or to act as limiting conditions for accepted national interests defined in terms of power would necessarily undermine Morgenthau's entire politico-ethical framework, thereby creating a paradox. However, a number of passages within his corpus make such a paradox obvious. In the beginning pages of 'The Twilight of International Morality', Morgenthau sets out to temper his realism against the exaggerated influence of national interest on international politics by recognising that universal and absolute moral principles are in fact *at work* in the world, thereby casting his lot for a morally thicker realism. Morgenthau acknowledges that there are limits to what mid-twentieth century statespersons and diplomats are willing to do. As he remarks,

> [t]hey refuse to consider certain ends and to use certain means, either altogether or under certain conditions, not because of considerations of expediency in the light of which a certain policy appears to be impractical or unwise, but by virtue of certain moral rules of conduct which interpose an absolute barrier against a certain policy and which do not permit it to be considered at all from the point of view of expediency....Their restraining function is most obvious and most effective in so far as the sacredness of human life in times of peace is concerned (Morgenthau 1948: 80).

This is followed by a passage that can be taken as a rallying point for realists that recognise that there are even limits, albeit few, to national interest:

> A foreign policy, however, which does not admit mass extermination as a means to its end imposes upon itself this limitation,...by virtue of an absolute moral principle the violation of which no consideration of national advantage can justify. A foreign policy of this kind, therefore, actually sacrifices the national interest where its consistent pursuit would necessitate the violation of an ethical principle, such as the prohibition of