

IV.1

Neo-Realism and the 'Scientific'158 of International Political Theory

Whereas the English School proponents and their idea of an international society struggled with the question of what principles constitute and how to construct cooperation among states and finally failed in envisioning state-transcending, universal notions (as discussed in the previous chapter¹⁵⁹), mainstream inter-national political theory in the twentieth century epitomized in neo-realism (or 'structural realism' as Waltz initially termed it) and neo-liberalism abandoned the idea of unity among states. Particularism triumphs, and both the ontology and the epistemology of twentieth-century IR mainstream solidity and lift the particularistic entity of the nation state as ultimate reference for political theory and practice. Ontologically, this enhancement of particularism manifests in the notions of nationalism, patriotism, and the 'national interest'; epistemologically, the particularizing neo-realist/neo-liberal assumption of 'anarchy' and the confusion between an analytical and normative dimension of political theorizing, based on the self-belief of nonnormative theorizing and the scientificity of international political theory according to a natural science model – or, to put it differently, the reification of politics – are liable for the 'triumph of particularism'. This ontological and epistemological abandonment of unity (see below Chapter IV.1.1) results in a theoretical logic of the inevitability of conflict and war among states (see below Chapter IV.1.2). War and conflict indeed come to be seen as the normality of inter-national politics; the Clausewitzian dictum of *war as a continuation of politics* becomes redeemed and axiomized in the theoretical mainstream of twentieth-century IR. The particularistic dogma does not allow any other conclusions, and conceptualizations of inter-national politics following this dogma are restricted to engineering mechanisms to mitigate the circumstances under which war might break out, they cannot, however, move beyond the intrinsic 'reality' of war and conflict inherent in its solipsistic theorizing.

1. Solipsistic ontology and epistemology

The ontological notions of nationalism, particularism, and 'national interest' stand at the beginning of Waltz's oeuvre theorizing international politics in *Man, the State and War* (1954). In this early work, Waltz discusses different authors from the history of political thought. It is noteworthy that Waltz understood himself (still) as a 'realist' when he wrote *Man, the State and War*. However, analyzing especially his interpretation of Rousseau reveals a coherent line of thought throughout his oeuvre which reaches from this earlier work into *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Waltz might not have been fully conscious of this coherence, and writing in the 1950s he certainly did not arrange and coin his later arguments. Nevertheless, this continuity exposes his (and neo-realism's) fundamental ontological focus on nationalism and patriotism.

Discussing Rousseau, Waltz particularly emphasizes the notion that under the conditions of advanced civilization, a powerful state has to exist in order to govern the people because human beings were not able to live together peacefully on their own. In addition to that understanding, two additional thoughts derived from Rousseau become crucial for the development of Waltz's (neo-) realist concept. First, he posits that it is not useful to examine domestic structures for the analysis of foreign policy because there were no causal relations between the domestic and the inter-national. Second, and based on that idea of foreign politics as an autonomous segment of the state, Waltz argues that the nation-state has to be understood as an acting unit. Both thoughts are not self-evident and thus Waltz poses two questions in order to develop his idea of the state as an acting unit: 'Just how is it [the rational will of everyone] tied up with everyone else's?' (Waltz, 1954, p. 170). And: 'Clearly states recognize no common superior, *but can they be described as acting units?*' (ibid., p. 173; emphasis mine). How does Waltz address these questions?

In answering these questions, Waltz supposes a questionable distinction between an empirical and a normative state in Rousseau, arguing that the unity of the state would be achieved as soon as the terms and conditions were guaranteed under which a/the 'general will' (ibid., p. 174) would manifest itself and amalgamate the empirical and the normative dimensions of the state. Thus, for Waltz, the existence, and eventually the political implementation, of Rousseau's *volonté générale* is the precondition of the unity of the state as an 'acting unit'. However, the separation of Rousseau's concept of the state into an empirical and a normative dimension is not convincing. To investigate this argument and to reveal the weakness of Waltz's discussion, Rousseau's construction of sovereignty must be taken into account. This reveals that, according to Rousseau, the normative and the empirical are ontologically identical and can never be separate(d) as Waltz posits. Rousseau develops this concept of the political body in Chapter 7 – 'The

sovereign' – of his *Contract Social*. There, Rousseau constructs the sovereign as the political body which is constituted by the entire population and only as such can be regarded as the body politic. It follows from this principle of identity (or sameness) between the sovereign and the entire population that the sovereign cannot be bound by, or subordinate to, anyone except himself. Whenever the sovereign acts, it thus establishes and manifests, simultaneously and perpetually, the supreme power *as well as* the (entire) population's will. Resulting from this substantively identical construction between the governed and the government as indistinguishable, the seemingly paradoxical formulation arises in Rousseau that the 'sovereign, by the mere fact that it is, is always everything it ought to be' (Rousseau, 1997, p. 52). Rousseau's identification of the people as the political body, its empirical will (*volonté de tous*), and the highest power of the state (*volonté générale* or *the Sovereign*) does not allow the separation of an empirical and normative concept of the state, as Waltz claims.

Because of this separation, Waltz mistakenly uses Rousseau to speculate for the *empirical* conditions to accomplish the/a unity of the state which it *should* have. This speculation, though, does not exist in Rousseau due to the absoluteness of the state, normatively and empirically. Rousseau's 'state' does comprise this unity always and *a priori* in itself. In the two empirical examples where Rousseau applies his theory of the *Social Contract* to concrete political and cultural circumstances, namely, Poland and Corsica, he comes upon the unity of the people already as a pre-political (namely ethnic) condition on which the political body and political order could be based. At least in those cases where Rousseau applies his theory, it is seen that neither the theoretical nor the empirical questions of his normative understanding of state realization manifest as serious matters of concern – 'the state always is what it ought to be'.¹⁶⁰ It appears that Waltz is not aware of this substantively identical construction in Rousseau. Because he separates a normative and empirical notion of the state, he finds himself in the position of having to develop a solution as to how this identity can be accomplished for the state to perform as an acting unit.

Nevertheless, how does Waltz answer this question? Ironically, he refers to Rousseau's comments on patriotism. This recourse is also questionable because Waltz assigns patriotism the status of a situation or condition of the state, which has yet to be accomplished and created, while Rousseau is very clear that patriotism exists *a priori* according to his concept of the state which fundamentally rests upon the unity of the people. More importantly, as seen above, this unity is regarded by Rousseau as granted prior to the political through ethnic and now patriotic homogeneity. The problem actually existing in Rousseau is not the question of how to *accomplish* the unity of the people in the first place; rather the problem is how to *preserve* it under the conditions of daily political life, individual wills, and factions which would harm the initial unity of the political body. Waltz, nevertheless,

bases his outlook on Rousseau's notion of patriotism as something which has to be fabricated. This represents not only a second misinterpretation of Rousseau by Waltz, but also a fundamental and far-reaching contradiction in Waltz's theory itself.

Waltz refers to Rousseau's *Political Economy* (1997) where Rousseau speaks about the education of children. Specifically, he refers to Rousseau's claim that children have to earn their living while they would deserve special treatment not because they long for it, but because they would physically or mentally need it. He also speaks about the duty of children to be obedient. From these Rousseauan ideas on education, which Waltz perceives as an ideal grounding of a political organic whole, he concludes:

In such a state, conflict is eliminated and unity is achieved because... equality prevents the development of those partial interests so fatal to the unity of the state (and because) the inculcation of public feeling imparts to the citizen a spirit of devotion to the welfare of the whole. The will of the state is the general will; there is no problem of disunity and conflict.

Furthermore, and immediately without additional consideration, he adds: 'In studying international relations it is convenient to speak of states as acting units' (1954, p. 175).

In addition to Waltz's misinterpretation of patriotism as something which has to be created, his interpretation appears dubious in respect to Rousseau's use of the term *political economy* in affiliation with the affairs of private administration (which is derived from the Greek term '*oikos*' and notably disassociated with public and political affairs). Contrary to Rousseau's own explanations, Waltz understands Rousseau's writings on economy as incrementally political in nature. Interestingly, Rousseau writes in passages just before the ones Waltz quotes that only the private is based on *government*, the public, by contrast, on *agreement*. 'I invite my readers also clearly to distinguish *public economy*... which I call *government*, from the supreme authority, which I call *sovereignty*' (1997, p. 6). Regardless of the fact that Waltz seemingly disregarded this plea, what is of further interest (and has significant political-ideological implications for Waltz's theory) is his reference to patriotism regarding the unity of the state to create this unity politically. How exactly does Waltz understand 'patriotism'? He writes in *Man, the State and War*: 'The existence of group patriotism... gets fused with the idea of nationality. There we have the immensely important fact of modern nationalism' (1954, p. 176).

Due to an historical analogy of the church for which people would have sacrificed their lives, Waltz notices and *demand*s a comparable devotion of the people for the state. Thereby, a shapeless mass would transform into a common political body: 'The centripetal force of nationalism may itself explain why states can be thought of as units' (*ibid.*, p. 177). But Waltz

proceeds, arguing even more contradictorily to Rousseau, that a state could also achieve such a unity through mere force and power rather than through socialization or a sense of spiritual devotion among the people. Waltz concedes that this solution would not be ideal, but may be sufficient in order to establish a state, which would speak with 'one voice' in external relations and would come to assert itself authoritatively in the domestic realm.

Under the circumstance that patriotism does not exist to a degree where the whole population would sacrifice itself for the sake of the state, Waltz's demand for patriotism reduces a people's political role to mere acquiescence with a government's decisions. Furthermore, it reduces the relation between the government and the people to stark authoritarianism. His commitment to, and his understanding of, democracy seem fundamentally at risk. Authoritarianism, he argues, might be necessary from time to time and acceptable to gain the consent and support of the entire population to go to war – a support whose demand seems to be the ideological intent and objective of his Rousseau-interpretation (on this point, see also Hoffmann, 1963; Hoffmann and Filder, 1991). Finally Waltz writes, 'One state makes war on another state' (Waltz, 1954, p. 179; emphasis mine). From this construction, the popular neo-realist paradigm of the primacy of foreign policy and its distinct rationality has been propagated. This paradigm is construed in neo-realism from the argument that there is no substantial relation between domestic and foreign policy, such as Waltz argues in the beginning of *Man, the State and War*. However, this paradigm should be called into question because it appears to be a fundamental contradiction in Waltz, who indeed conceptualizes an incremental (and authoritarian) relation between both foreign policy and domestic affairs.

Particularism in Waltz does not only manifest ontologically, but also in the epistemology of structural realism (and neo-realism). This becomes obvious when scrutinizing his understanding of theory and of what theory provides, drawing together his long-standing views on this from *Man, the State and War* (1954), to *Theory of International Politics* (1979), and finally to his article on 'Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory' (1990). During this time span of some 40 years, Waltz advanced the same understanding of the theory of international politics, and it is this basic understanding plus its inherent logic which evolved from these principles and founded an epistemology of particularism. This epistemology does not merely back up the particularistic ontology of neo-realism but rather it requires and determines its political outlook. It can be argued that this epistemology forecloses and hence does not allow conceptualization and thinking about the world in any way other than in a particularistic (and bellicose) one. Thus, we face as the basis of twentieth-century mainstream IR a manner of thinking which produces a view of international politics and concepts, subconcepts, typologies, and practical axioms which not only divides and disperses the world into particularistic units, (assuming that *there is something in common*

which then can be decomposed), but whose fundamental intellectual originator is the particularized individual unit, which is self-sufficient, does not need anything apart and beyond itself, and is, in Hegelian language, *for and in itself*. And indeed, the legacies of Hegelian inter-national political thinking, in combination with nineteenth-century national historiography and geopolitical thinking, manifest the ontological fundamentals of neo-realist theory; or, to put it differently, neo-realism does *not* find its roots and predecessors in a 'realist' tradition in international political thought, but in nineteenth-century ontologies of particularism, foremost stemming from Hegelian philosophy, which were becoming interfused with twentieth-century scientism.

At the basis of Waltz's theory construction is the idea of anarchy among states which is being derived in *Man, the State and War* from ostensibly similar patterns in Thucydides (1954, p. 159) and particularly Rousseau (1954, p. 165; see also above). About anarchy we read:

In anarchy there is no automatic harmony... A state will use force to attain its goals if, after assessing the prospects for success, it values those goals more than it values the pleasures of peace. Because each state is the final judge of its own cause, any state may at any time use force to implement its policies. Because any state at any time use force, all states must constantly be ready to either counter force with force or to pay the costs of weakness. (1954, p. 160)

It is also in this early writing that we read about 'states as the acting units' (1954, p. 175); it is, however, not before his *Theory of International Politics* and 'Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory' that the epistemological status of anarchy becomes eluded and hence developed into more than some assertion dubiously derived from political thought. First of all, it might be important to acknowledge that Waltz radicalizes his view on anarchy and notes:

Among states, the state of nature is a state of war. This is meant not in the sense that war constantly occurs but in the sense that, with each state deciding for itself whether or not to use force, war may at any time break out... Among men as states, anarchy, or the absence of government, is associated with the occurrence of violence. (1979, p. 102)

Whereas anarchy was thought of as no 'automatic harmony' in Waltz's early writings, it then became construed as a 'state of war'; despite this radicalization, both images suggest that we can observe or at least that we know or have heard of some situation resembling such a state of affairs. One might argue to encounter a first contradiction in Waltz when he then reveals the true nature of the image of anarchy (and of the logic which concludes from it). In chapter I of *Theory of International Politics*, 'Laws and

Theories', he presents his general concept of theory,¹⁶¹ and he concludes from this discussion that 'theories contain theoretical (nonfactual) assumptions' (1979, p. 20), a proposition which he repeats several times throughout this book as, for example, in chapter VI: 'A theory contains at least one theoretical assumption. Such assumptions are not factual. One therefore one cannot legitimately ask if they are true, but only if they are useful' (pp. 117-18); and 'A theory contains assumptions that are theoretical, not factual' (p. 119). These epistemological propositions are confusing for all social scientists who think that there is, or should be, some kind of relation between 'experience' and theory (in the sense of humanities and social sciences as *Erfahrungswissenschaften* in the wider sense), and Waltz spent most of his academic work after the publication of *Theory of International Politics* explaining what he actually meant. One of these attempts was the 1990 article 'Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory' where he delivered more information on this rationalistic and scientific idea of theory:

Theory is artifice. A theory is an intellectual construction... The challenge is to bring theory to bear on facts in ways that permit explanation and prediction... Theory cannot be fashioned from the answers to... factual questions... An assumption or a set of assumptions is [therefore] necessary. In making assumptions about men's (or states') motivations, the world must be drastically simplified; subtleties must be rudely pushed aside, and reality must be grossly distorted. Descriptions strive for accuracy, assumptions are brazenly false. The assumptions on which theories are built are radical simplifications of the world and are useful only because they are such. Any radical simplification conveys a false picture of the world... International structures are defined, first, by the ordering principle of the system, in our case anarchy, and second, by the distribution of capabilities across units. (1990, pp. 22, 23, 27, 29)

This is highly interesting and relevant for getting a grasp of Waltzian and neo-realist particularism for two reasons: First, once we realize that anarchy is one of the assumptions which fundamentally underlies (his) theory, the question seems not to be whether anarchy really exists in international politics. Second, this is important because of the logical consequences of the epistemological features of anarchy, which are inherent in its character as an assumption. When Waltz talks about anarchy, we would be mistaken to ask whether anarchy really exists and if state relations are indeed historically and contemporarily anarchic. This is not what Waltz is interested in, and his approach is totally a-historic and unempirical.¹⁶² As he clearly states several times, anarchy is to be understood as one, and perhaps as the most fundamental, of his assumptions and not as a factual or empirical characteristic of international politics.¹⁶³ As such, however, it creates many severe consequences.

One of these consequences lies in an answer to the question asking what Waltz has in mind when he is talking about the *usefulness* of his assumption (and its nonfactuality) as the criterion by which assumption should be evaluated. I will argue that the criterion of usefulness of the assumption of anarchy in Waltz is its delivery of political strategies for US foreign policy and that hence his criterion is thoroughly ideological (see below in Chapter IV.1.2). Another consequence is the immunization of this theoretical understanding against any form of criticism. Because anarchy is understood 'just' as an assumption, and as such as neutral and value-free, which is as possible, though not necessarily as plausible, as any other assumption, the only rationale for assuming anarchy as the structure of the inter-national system as well as for buying, or not, into it is its 'usefulness'. By declaring the main pillar of his theory an assumption, which does not contain any statement about political reality, Waltz immunizes his theory against criticism, not acknowledging that assuming anarchy not only leads to a set of serious consequences, but also is ignorant of the fact that it is based on a certain ontology of the world. This is finally why the assumption of anarchy is not neutral or value-free. Waltz's statement that '(critics) of neorealist theory fail to understand that a theory is not a statement about everything that is important in international political life, but rather a necessary slender explanatory construct' (1990, p. 32) is emblematic of this kind of ignorance.¹⁶⁴

Finally, a third consequence – which becomes endorsed by Waltz's immunization against criticism because it contributes to its theoretical cementation – is the particularism and solipsism of this epistemology itself, which necessarily creates dualisms and dichotomies, not only between neorealist theorists and those critical of it, but between the political entities themselves about which neo-realism theorizes. Because the epistemological starting point of this theoretical endeavour is the 'impregnable' assumption of anarchy construed as the permanent likelihood of war, each state is moved in insurmountable (qua the consequential logic inherent in the initial assumption) opposition to every other state, and not just in parts of it, but in total as complete entities. The assumption of anarchy does not allow us to see anything but endless dualisms, and it enforces this vision upon each theorizing about international politics – while at the same time declaring criticism as illegitimate and ostracizing different epistemologies as either backward (this happened to 'realist thought', according to Waltz embodied in Morgenthau; see critically in this regard also the use of the term *amatuirish* in Kahler, 1997) or not useful (according to the criterion of 'usefulness'; see above). This epistemology and, even more, its inherent theoretical consequences concluded from 'anarchy' are bound to a theoretical and political worldview in which conflict and actual war are not only inevitable, but also appear to be the norm and ordinary elements of politics, as does preparation for war, such as armament, applying all means possible, such as nuclear armament. Here, not only is the Clausewitzian theorem of

'war as a continuation of politics' fully realized, but also the particularization of inter-national politics in both ontological (as seen above) and epistemological terms could not be more stark – and problematic.¹⁶⁵

This problematic with regard to neo-realism consists of three aspects: the *inevitability* of conflict and war is one aspect (see Chapter IV.1.2); the criterion of the usefulness of the assumption of anarchy and the respective theoretical constructs following from this assumption, which can, and have been, utilized ideologically, is another (see Chapter IV.1.2); and what is called the reification problem is a third problematic aspect involved in this kind of theorizing. Although I will discuss the reification problem as a second rationale explaining misreadings in IR (see also below in IV.1.2), I will also discuss the reification problem here.

Waltz developed his theory of structural realism in *Theory of International Politics* (1979) and confirmed his main thoughts, now under the rubric of neo-realism in 'Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory' (1990), emphasizing in this article that he modelled his approach after rationalist economic theory. His attempt to rationalize international politics according to the positivist ontology and epistemology of economy falls in line with the general climate in social sciences and political science after World War II, which aimed to overcome – according to these beliefs – the shortfalls of normative and 'unsystematic' theorizing, which had been widely declared responsible for the totalitarian movements of the twentieth century and discredited as arbitrary due to the nonverifiability of norms. With respect to political science, the most prominent attempts beyond IR to erect academia on scientific pillars have been undertaken probably by Gabriel A. Almond and Sydney Verba and David Easton in the context of comparative political research and the political culture approach, respectively.¹⁶⁶

Whatever might be the merits and shortfalls of positivist theory drafted after a rationalistic philosophy of science (as manifest in economy and as largely derived from a Popperian epistemology and a Weberian idea, though narrowly construed [see Ringer, 1997], of value-freeness, or neutrality, and the application of these ideas to social science), it appears that the deliberate exclusion of normative theorizing, or the belief to do so and to be able to do so at all, produced not only the (ostensible) elimination of norms from 'own', in our case, neo-realist, thinking, but also generated a kind of blindness towards, or a likewise deliberate exclusion of, normative thinking in reading and receiving *other* theories. Consequently, the normative dimensions in the history of political thought, foremost in the writings of those selected heroic figures of a 'realist' tradition – namely, Thucydides, Hobbes, Machiavelli, and finally Morgenthau – not only did not, and *could* not, appear on the radar of neo-realist theory reception, but the normativeness of neo-realists' own assumption of anarchy itself was not acknowledged. 'Anarchy' was seen by Waltz as 'just' an assumption and as such as normatively 'innocent' in three ways. First, it was seen as innocent in the

sense explained above with reference to the creation of an inclusionary and exclusionary divide of and within academia along the line of buying into, or not, this assumption. Second, it was seen as innocent in epistemological terms as being a value-neutral starting point for theorizing, and because it was construed as such a value-neutral and nonfactual assumption, the belief was that it restrained itself from any kind of judgment about reality. Third, it was seen as politically neutral because the political consequences and imperatives from the assumption of anarchy were regarded as merely logical and nonnormative conclusions while, however, they are highly politicized by both depicting a system of inter-national politics in which conflict is inevitable and concluding the necessity, and hence imperatives and norms, for states to constantly prepare and be prepared for conflict and war. All three beliefs seem, however, inappropriate and somewhat naïve. The divide of academia and the immunization of neo-realist theory against criticism have been discussed above; the belief in its own value-neutrality and the naivety towards its own political conclusions reason another argument which targets the problem of reification.¹⁶⁷

The problem of reification arises in neo-realism, as it arises in all kind of theorizing when and because the analytical vocabulary – which in Waltz is his assumption of anarchy – is equated and not set apart from the normative vocabulary – which in Waltz relates to the logic of self-help, power politics, and the theorem of balance of power. The analytical – and it is of minor importance whether this is an assumption or based upon empirical analysis – namely, anarchy, is used in Waltz to derive directly conclusions about what must and ought to be done, namely, politics of self-help, accumulating, if necessary, power, and proceeding balance-of-power politics against the perennial risks of being attacked in a system of anarchy. Thus, the analytical is becoming reified as, and with, the normative. The normative, however, does not appear as such. It even has been explicitly excluded, and therefore, what is indeed normative appears as mere 'logical' conclusions.¹⁶⁸

The analytical assumption of anarchy thus generates highly politicized and normative tenets about what is to be done to act in a political reality, which itself is nothing but the product and result of the analytical and of an assumption. The reifying problem describes and consists of exactly this cycle of equation which, in addition to this, constructs a self-fulfilling prophecy: when acting according to the imperatives of anarchy which are derived from the assumption that the international system is anarchical, anarchy and with it the problem of particularism are reproduced again and again. The unanswerable quandary in neo-realism (as well as of the so-called 'agent-structure' problem in IR in general; see Wendt, 1987; for a critical perspective of this theory-practice problem, see also Bourdieu, 1977, 1990) about the question of whether the 'structure' of international politics precedes states' behaviour or whether the structure of international politics is produced and reproduced by states' behaviour, is emblematic of the

reification problem and the self-fulfilling prophetic character of neo-realism and its epistemology (see more on this in Chapter IV.2.2).

2. The inevitability of conflict

As mentioned above, the assumption of anarchy, embedded in rationalistic epistemology, initiates a chain reaction of ostensible 'logical' consequences. As shown, the assumption itself is not value-free and neutral because it sits on a certain, namely, particularistic vision of the inter-national. Much less, however, are these consequences politically neutral because they are not only seen and operated as practical guidelines and imperatives for foreign policy, but they also constitute a substantial view of the inter-national according to which conflict is inevitable, war is ever-possible, and the preparation and eventual conduct of war is existential. The inevitability of conflict thus expands into an inevitability of violence through the permanent (necessities of) self-affirmation and 'defence' inherent in the statist logic of particularity.

The logical consequences initiated by the assumption of anarchy include the neo-realist theorems of survival, the international system as a self-help system, mutual mistrust, security maximization and balance of power. The latter can, but need not, encompass policies of power maximization. Paradoxically, this chain, which has an incremental power legitimizing inclination, is regarded as something objective because it emerges, and seems to be derivable logically and free of contradictions according to economist rationality, from an ostensibly neutral starting point, namely, that of the assumption of anarchy. The paradigm of scientific theorizing – value-free assumptions, their logical consequences, and contradiction-free conclusions – leads to the chimera of innocent theorizing, which is innocent because it offers 'objective' policy advice. This belief as well as the development of the theorems of survival, self-help, power maximization if necessary, and balance of power are the main topics in chapters V and VI of Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, and his support of these theorems as essential, general, and ubiquitously applicable characteristics of any kind of politics and political actors, and not just for modern states as functionally similar units, is communicated in (one of) his retrospective explanations of his *Theory of International Politics* as follows:

Neorealists see states like units; each state is like all other states in being an autonomous political unit. ... The logic of anarchy obtains whether the system is composed of tribes, nations, oligopolistic firms, or street gangs. (1990, p. 37)

This logic, as we see here, is believed to be resistant against spatiotemporal shifts and transformations, a logic which again corresponds to, and results

from, the (erroneous) idea that an assumption, even if thought of and intended as nonfactual, would and could operate without an ontology, or at least an ontological underpinning. Waltz posits: 'Changes in the industrial and military technology available to states, for example, may change the character of systems but do not change the theory by which their operation is explained' (ibid.).

It can be summarized that the scientification of international political theory in structural (or neo-) realism, including its particularistic ontology and epistemology, caused an outlook in the twentieth-century mainstream of the discipline of IR for which conflict, war, the permanent preparation for war, and violence have become the normal *and* the norm (very interesting and instructive here the early criticism of von Elbe, 1939).¹⁶⁹ Any other imagination of the inter-national appeared to be scientifically illogical, at times nonacademic, amateurish, and naïve, and proponents talking about alternative imaginations such as peace and nonviolence degenerated into becoming stigmatized as 'idealistic'. Withal, the category 'idealistic' is nothing else but a result of academic identity politics constructing a residual category of intellectual opposition and otherness into which everything else that does not abide by the same forms of knowledge construction can be marginalized and pushed aside. Interestingly, and this aspect will be taken up again below when discussing neo-realism from an ideology-critical perspective, the 'spiritual brother in arms' of neo-realism, namely, neo-liberalism, accepted the ontology and epistemology of neo-realism while merely emphasizing an additional set of actors and institutionalized possibilities of inter-national cooperation. The emergence of IR theory, at least during the second half of the twentieth century, is hence to be understood not only as situated in (as Walker rightfully observes; 1993), but as an immediate practice of the modern sovereign state and the manifestation of its particularistic ideology during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁷⁰ In this sense of sharing neo-realist ontology and epistemology, it is further instructive for our understanding of the discipline of IR in the twentieth century and its intellectual style that the misreadings of international political thought identified in Waltz have been unanimously carried on by the subsequent schools of IR, represented by Robert O. Keohane, Stephen Nye, Stephen Krasner, and others, including Alexander Wendt.

Talking of misreadings requires, at this point, some further methodological clarifications. First, the remark already noted in the Introduction applies here, too, namely, that by revealing misreadings, I do not claim to present the only valid interpretation of those authors nor do I claim to know what they 'really' meant. The notion of misreading is rather based on a compare-and-contrast approach that carefully analyzes original texts and identifies obvious discrepancies and contradictions. As such, this approach puts forward a slightly different understanding than the one expressed by Linklater (1990). Whereas Linklater seems to see the alternative of (the claim

of) authenticity primarily in exploring the normative potentials of a text, and thereby to assume the existence of a much wider variety of appropriate interpretations of a text which were, at the same time, much 'closer' to the text than narrow claims of authenticity, my approach of identifying misreadings is less direct about what the meanings and normative potentials of a text are (which again limits the multiplicity of meanings). At the same time, I am more definite in denying the validity of *certain* interpretations by methods of cautious reading, historical and philosophical contextualization, terminological and linguistic comparison (where possible), application of interdisciplinary knowledge, and cross-referencing within an author's oeuvre whereby a certain interpretation/certain interpretations can be exhibited as incomplete, superficial, false, selective, misstated, idiosyncratic, and/or ideological. In this regard, an important differentiation has to be made in the case of Morgenthau (which shall be considered in the next chapter) between his thinking and the *effects* of his thinking on the discipline of IR: the latter focuses on his reception in IR and his reading by IR scholars, and thus emphasizes what has been made of him; the first concentrates on the elaboration of his thinking according to careful hermeneutic text interpretation. Concentrating on 'misreadings' draws together both aspects by comparing 'what has been made of him' (or his effects on the discipline) with the elaboration of his thinking, displaying discrepancies and contradictions between both – which does not claim authenticity, but compares clear statements, implications, and (somewhat according to Linklater's meaning) normative consequences of his writings with how they have been received, used by, and affected the discipline's mainstream.

IV.2

'Misreadings' in IR: Reassessing Morgenthau, Ideology Critique, and the Reification Problem

Mainstream IR teaches not only that Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes had established a realist tradition in international political thought, but, too, that Hans J. Morgenthau plays a role as a distinctive precursor of neo-realism. These identifications are not only supposed to ensure the positions of neo-realism by referencing 'heroic figures' of the discipline (in a wider sense), but they serve for the deduction and explanation of central neo-realist theorems. I will argue that Waltz and the emerging neo-realist mainstream misread Morgenthau and not only constructed a long-standing 'realist' tradition by 'rewriting history' (according to Kahler, 1997, p. 23), but further to this posited an immediate 'realist' – neo-realist unity by declaring neo-realism to be the scientific successor of realist thought amounting and represented in Morgenthau (see foremost Waltz, 1990). This section identifies the statement of a 'realist' – neo-realist unity as a misreading of Morgenthau by the IR mainstream and attempts to reassess the work of Morgenthau and identify this misreading as one contemporary example of the same types of misreadings discussed in Parts I and II with regard to the history of international political thought. The reassessment of Morgenthau in the light of Waltzian and IR mainstream constructions holds that, contrary to the assumption that both Morgenthau's 'realism' and neo-realism could be understood as grand theories, they are deeply rooted in the historical context of twentieth-century inter-national politics. According to this understanding, the following perspective develops: 'realism' in Morgenthau and neo-realism reflect a certain conception of international politics, both in practical and disciplinary terms, during a certain historical phase and are therefore transient modes of thinking (on this point see also Guzzini, 1998, p. ix).¹⁷¹ Although this interpretation corresponds with Morgenthau's self-understanding of theory in general and of his 'realism' in particular (see below), this interpretation contradicts neo-realism's self-understanding¹⁷² (see more on this topic in Chapter IV.2.2).

This argument of misreadings will now be examined based on two considerations which try to provide explanations of why the misreadings occurred. These explanations will put forward the argument that the reasons for neo-realist and neo-liberalist misreadings can be found in an ideological rationalization of the discipline of IR as well as in the epistemological problem of the reification of the political. The first consideration shall focus on an examination of processes and conditions of knowledge production that have led to the hegemony of neo-realist and neo-liberalist tenets in IR, that is, an ideology-critical approach. I shall hypothesize that these misreadings are purposefully created ideological constructions¹⁷³ to provide concepts for and to legitimize US power politics during the Cold War.¹⁷⁴ The second consideration relates back to epistemological discussions above (in Chapter IV.1.1) on the scientificity of international political theory and identifies the neglect of the normative dimension in those authors who are said to embody a 'realist' tradition. This neglect, which is due to the neo-realist scientific reification of the political – or, to put it differently, due to the identification of the analytical with the normative – and which again explains why the normative dimension of the authors captured and misread (Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Morgenthau) is not just an ideologically motivated neglect but, in addition to this, an epistemologically reasoned inability to see and recognize normativity in one's own theorizing as well as in other theories. This circumstance has massive impacts on the question of universal/universalistic and particularistic thinking.

1. The 'realism' – neo-realism 'unity'

In the centre of an ostensible 'realism' – neo-realism unity, as put forward by neo-realism irrespective of neo-realism's attempt to overcome and at the same time improve particularly the 'political thought' of Morgenthau (see Waltz, 1990), we identify the neo-realist and IR mainstream understanding of Morgenthau's 'realism' as a grand theory of IR, based on the erroneous assumption that he advocates anarchy as a general pattern of international politics. Both tenets of IR mainstream – that Morgenthau proposes and advocates international politics as anarchic and that his realism represents a grand theory of IR – can be traced as dubitable interpretations of his theory. Against these assumptions, I notice an ideological reduction of Morgenthau's positions, generalizing his views mainly from *Politics Among Nations* to general statements about theory. What we know from Morgenthau himself, however, is that he understood *Politics Among Nations* as a temporary and historically caused counter-ideology to the ideologies of the twentieth century (see Preface, *Politics Among Nations*, several editions). He did not at all understand it as a theory of international politics.

With regard to Morgenthau, the 'misreading' interpretation is complex because his arguments relevant for this discussion are spread throughout

his oeuvre. Furthermore, eventual contradictions, or at least debatable complexities, seem to exist in his thoughts which require careful interpretation and cross-referenced reading. Morgenthau appears to be a problem-oriented author (whereas Waltz tried to depict himself as a systematic and stringent thinker, which becomes most evident in Waltz, 1990). This problem-oriented way of Morgenthau's thinking and the resulting complexities of his writing might have contributed to the misreadings in that some of his statements provoke idiosyncratic interpretations of his 'realism' when not understood in light of the bigger picture of all his theorizing.

However because this kind of contextualization appears to be absent in the IR mainstream, a canonized knowledge solidified in the discipline regarding the understanding of Morgenthau – which interestingly is not only accepted by those who call themselves realists (or neo-realists), but ironically also by most of those who oppose 'realism'. Although this canon emerged and became anchored in the discipline, crucial writings of Morgenthau were marginalized,¹⁷⁵ selective reading and quoting of his work became the academic standard, and his protests against being misunderstood were widely ignored.¹⁷⁶ Taking Morgenthau's overall oeuvre into account, however, it seems very clear that he understood his own writings as historically contingent, a standpoint which does not allow any sort of canonization and generalizations of his thoughts. Additionally, he revised major parts of his early writings during the 1970s due to transformations in world politics – another example of his problem-oriented thinking – while the revisions of major arguments from *Politics Among Nations* were again widely neglected in IR.

As the most prominent example of these misreading, it seems to have become a matter of course that anarchy would be a basic assumption of Morgenthau's 'realist' theory to characterize international politics. Robert Jervis may serve as just one example in the IR debate in the United States; the most widely read and credited example in this regard might be, however, Keohane (Keohane, 1983; see Jervis, 1976). Both authors associate the metaphor of anarchy unrestrictedly with Morgenthau. According to these common and powerful interpretations, anarchy appears to be a basic concept of Morgenthau's 'realism'. Although this may be true for Waltz, it is not the case for Morgenthau. As far as I see, the term *anarchy* is mentioned in *Politics Among Nations* only three times; and when Morgenthau refers to it, it is in a critical disassociation. What is more, as we read in *Politics Among Nations*:

If the motivations behind the struggle for power and the mechanisms through which it operates were all that needed to be known about international politics, the international scene would indeed resemble the state of nature described by Hobbes as a 'war of every man against every man' ... In such a world the weak would be at the mercy of the strong. (Morgenthau, 1954, p. 205)

And:

Writers have put forward moral precepts that statesmen and diplomats ought to take to heart in order to make relations between nations more peaceful and less anarchic, such as the keeping of promises, trust in the other's word, fair dealing, respect for international law, protection of minorities, repudiation of war as an instrument of national policy ... If we ask ourselves what statesmen and diplomats are capable of doing to further the power objectives of their respective nations and what they actually do, we realize that they do less than they probably could and less than they actually did in other periods of history. (ibid., p. 210)

These statements indicate that international politics could be more pernicious than it actually is, were it not for the moral restrictions and precepts that are at work (see especially chapter 5 in the 1973 edition of *Politics Among Nations*). Apart from that, the term *anarchy* is neither to be found as an empirical feature of international politics in Morgenthau nor as a theme in his 'Six principles of political realism'. Therefore, it is unclear why these misperceptions came into being and have been accepted as canonical narratives. However, there is no doubt that anarchy is the basic assumption of neo-realism. This becomes clear in Waltz's 1954 edition of *Man, the State and War*, where he interprets Rousseau and Hobbes, an interpretation for which he received heavy criticism by Morgenthau (1962a). Furthermore, as Morgenthau noted, a 'thorough misunderstanding of the nature of political theory and its relationship to empirical research' would exist with regard to any anarchical interpretation of international politics referring to the history of political thought (1962a, p. 29).

Referring to the question how, if at all, the metaphor of anarchy features in Morgenthau's thinking, it should be recognized that he views morality and international law as regulatives of international/inter-national politics, though both are less developed and weaker than he thinks they should be. Although it is not to be doubted that Morgenthau assumes that nation-states are power-oriented actors ('power understood as interests'), he argues for the grounding of foreign policy and international politics in morality, international law, and respective universal ethics. This indicates a clear rejection of anarchy (as a historical-empirical *and* analytical metaphor): a rejection which is founded on historical studies and on normative grounds. Not only does Morgenthau demand that restraints of national politics through ethics and international law are necessary for the conduct of any kind of cooperative, diplomatic, and peaceable international and foreign policy, but he also argues against empirical positivism and deductive-nomological reasoning, contrary to the method advanced by Waltz.¹⁷⁷ According to Morgenthau, empirical positivism and deductive-nomological reasoning are insensitive to historical contextualization and normative theory (Morgenthau, 1962a).

Indeed, Morgenthau supports a method of historic-political hermeneutics. We read:

I have argued...against the analogy between the social and the natural sciences...I...must state...dogmatically that the object of the social sciences is man, not as product of nature but as both the creature and the creator of history in and through which his individuality and freedom of choice manifest themselves. To make susceptibility to quantitative measurement the yardstick of the scientific character of the social sciences...is to deprive these sciences of that very orientation which is adequate to the understanding of their subject matter. (1962b, p. 27)¹⁷⁸

And some pages later in the same article, Morgenthau unmistakably argues for the normative formation and grounding of any (international) political theory: 'It is only within... a philosophical framework that an empirical framework of political inquiry can have meaning and that empirical inquiry can become fruitful' (1962b, pp. 31, 64).

But what, according to Morgenthau, characterizes a theory of international politics based on a 'philosophical framework'? He explains his theoretical outlook in an essay first published in 1959 (here 1962c), in which he outlines a variety of topics of a theory of international politics. This essay is a much more appropriate source for his theoretical view on international politics than *Politics Among Nations*. Morgenthau explains his view on what an international theory must provide, namely, answers to concerns such as morality in inter-national politics, the decentralization of international law, the acceptance/nonacceptance of international organizations, democratic control of external politics, and the prospects of diplomacy (1962c, p. 56).

It would be an oversimplification to admit and accept, and for Morgenthau himself too positivistic and too superficial to profess, that morality is weak that international law is simply not strong enough; that international organizations play a minor role; that foreign policy is just not democratically controlled; and that all this is because of the dominance of the nation-state and the real-political (*realpolitische*) pursuit of its interests. On the contrary, he incisively criticizes national power politics and supports international law, exactly in order to overcome a world divided into nation-states.¹⁷⁹ In the 1954 edition of *Politics Among Nations*, he emphasizes the importance of the United Nations with a distinct normative tendency for a world-state model and states:

The deterioration of international morality which has occurred in recent years with regard to the protection of life is only a special instance of a general and...much more far reaching dissolution of an ethical system that in the past imposed its restraints upon the day-by-day operations of foreign policy but does so no longer. Two factors have brought about this

dissolution: the substitution of democratic for aristocratic responsibility in foreign affairs and the substitution of nationalistic standards of action for universal ones.¹⁸⁰

Morgenthau's second argument regarding these 'two factors' criticizes the nation-state and perceives this mode of political order as a historical and geographical contingent and transient pattern that has emerged from European modernity as a distinct organization of politics. In a world of nation-states in which morality became particularized and universal ethics became supplanted by national mores, an effective system of international ethics, he argues, would no longer be possible. Such national mores would paradoxically be accompanied by the claim of each nation-state, which is indeed nothing more than a particular historical entity, to represent universal values. Thus, ideological competition and warfare of these particularized units about their moral standards would constitute a genuine conflict pattern of inter-national politics in modernity.¹⁸¹ He writes that

Instead of the universality of an ethics to which all nations adhere, we end up with the particularity of national ethics which claims the right to...universal recognition. There are then as many ethical codes claiming universality as there are politically dynamic nations...The moral code of one nation flings the challenge of its universal claim into the face of another, which reciprocates in kind...; for the mutual accommodation of conflicting claims, possible or legitimate within a common framework of moral standards, amounts to surrender when the moral standards themselves are the stakes of the conflict. Thus the stage is set for a contest among nations. (1954, p. 230)¹⁸²

Because Morgenthau also suggests practical imperatives for national power politics (see *Politics Among Nations*, chapters I to III), the question arises of what constitutes his 'realism'. To answer this question, we have to refer to his fundamental assessment of the *status of theory*:

The practical function of a theory of international relations has this in common with all political theory that it depends very much upon the political environment within which the theory operates. In other words, political thinking is...*standortgebunden*, that is to say, it is tied to a particular social situation...It is developed out of the concrete political problems of the day.¹⁸³

If we apply this fundamental epistemological position of Morgenthau to his own oeuvre, there is only one possible conclusion, namely, to understand Morgenthau's own writings as also *standortgebunden*, that is, politically and historically contingent.¹⁸⁴ Consequently, there are no assumptions in Morgenthau about permanent, unchangeable structures or patterns of

international politics besides the general assumption that politics is a struggle for power. Apart from that, however, theory according to Morgenthau depends on historic-political conditions and practical orientations¹⁸⁵ and must therefore always be perceived as a *concession* to the current political and social circumstances in which the author writes. Applied to Morgenthau, this means that his theory and his practical postulates are concessions towards 'his' reality. His 'realism' is therefore to be considered as *standortgebunden* in the historical and political context of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century world of nation-states and not to be mistaken for his theoretical outlook on international politics *per se*. As such, the meaning of the term *realism* in Morgenthau implies epistemologically nothing more than the theoretical acknowledgement of the socio-politically contingent character of history, and the practical recognition of certain, if temporary, historical conditions and subsequent ways of acting under these conditions.¹⁸⁶ 'Realism' and its practical imperatives are a concession towards the specific historic reality of a world made up by nation-states. Thus, claiming general theoretical validity based on the assumption of some eternal, unchangeable structure of international politics is for Morgenthau not only an epistemological anathema, but furthermore would represent academic hubris and simplification. The only 'realist' element in Morgenthau is the recognition of certain historical realities that qualify theorems and practical imperatives as *standortgebunden* (and thus as incongruent with any kind of 'dogma'), and that might eventually turn power politics into a necessary, if temporary, means of international politics (as fighting National Socialism and Stalinism and the necessity to develop respective counter-ideologies as mentioned in his Preface to several editions of *Politics Among Nations*). In addition to this, the following quotation from 'The Limits of Historical Justice' (reprinted in *Power and Truth*, 1970a, pp. 68–83) is very instructive in exactly that sense:

Like the balance of power, alliances, arms race, political and military rivalries and conflicts, and the rest of 'power politics', spheres of influence are the ineluctable byproduct of the interplay of interests in a society of sovereign nations. If you want to rid the world of... 'power politics', you must transform that society of sovereign nations into a supranational one, whose sovereign government can set effective limits to the expansionism of the nations composing it. Spheres of influence is one of the symptoms of the disease... and it is at best futile and at worst mischievous to try to extirpate the symptom while leaving the cause unattended. (p. 80)¹⁸⁷

I cannot agree, therefore, with IR mainstream views, which might be exemplified by Robert Gilpin's categorization of Morgenthau's theory as a 'grand' or 'general theory of international politics' (Gilpin, 1981, pp. 39–40). The sort of narratives told about Morgenthau should therefore be identified as simplifications of, and superficialities towards, Morgenthau's historically

sensitive, hermeneutical, and normative theorizing. In his article 'Common Sense and Theories', Morgenthau expresses his criticism of what he calls 'new theories', a criticism which can be read as a disapproval of his reception by then-mainstream IR. He writes:

The new theories, insofar as they are new in more than terminology, are in truth not so much theories as dogmas. They do not so much try to reflect reality as it actually is as to superimpose upon a recalcitrant reality a theoretical scheme that satisfies the desire for thorough rationalization... This rational model is a utopia that reflects the desires of theoreticians but not the real physical world, dominated as that world is by the principle of indeterminacy, and predictable as it is... only by way of statistical probability. (1970a, pp. 242, 243, 245)¹⁸⁸

In practical terms, *Standortgebundenheit* means that Morgenthau's historic view is directed towards the nation-state of the nineteenth century, the two World Wars of the twentieth century – both caused by bellicose, imperialistic, and hubristic nationalism – and the emergence of the Cold War. As he stated, '(all) political phenomena [of this period of history] can be reduced to one of the three basic types... either to keep power, to increase power, or to demonstrate power' (1954, p. 36; also p. 41). If one considers these historical disasters on the basis of his analysis and criticism of the nation-state and of its conflict-enforcing endogenous dynamics, then this statement appears to be a 'realist' and real-political concession to the historically contingent conflict structures of nineteenth- and twentieth-century inter-national politics. Morgenthau notes:

The contemporary connection between interest and the national state is a product of history, and is therefore bound to disappear in the course of history. The same observations apply to the concept of power. Its content and the manner of its use are determined by the political and cultural environment... The realist is persuaded that this transformation can be achieved only through the workmanlike manipulation of the perennial forces that have shaped the past as they will the future. (1954, pp. 8–9)

Such a contingent and context-specific concession, however, is the core of Morgenthau's (understanding of) 'realism' – and the only reason, *why* it can be called 'realist' at all. What is more, this concession requires indeed a sharp distinction between the desirable and the possible' (1954, p. 7). The rationality of foreign policy is hence only to be found in a supplementary concession, namely, to try everything possible 'under contemporary conditions' (1954, p. 52) to acknowledge the opposing powers between nation-states and to conduct an inter-national balance of power politics. In addition to his epistemological credo that political theory and theoretically derived imperatives for

political agency are qualified by transient historical contexts, he declines the applicability of the concept of balance of power for the Cold War, given new historical circumstances caused by nuclear weapons and the possibility of an endless nuclear arms race (see Morgenthau 1952, 1970a, 1970b). We learn that political, legal, and ethical principles can and should prevail over power politics and are not at all, as neo-realists argue, marginal in inter-national politics, although these principles have to be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place' (Morgenthau, 1954, p. 9).

The results from this discussion can be summarized and further developed as follows: Morgenthau's theory of international politics cannot be understood as a general or 'grand' theory. This outlook would require some form of structuralist theorizing which is, however, foreign to Morgenthau; indeed, he criticizes such an understanding of social science theory in general and IR in particular. And very opposite to any notion of anarchy, Morgenthau sees politics and conflicts among nations as a historical contingent and transient phenomenon and generally promotes a normative framework for (international/inter-national) political theory and practice, which transcends the particular nation-state and which should assemble and socialize nation-states under a common supranational framework. His conceptualization of morality/ethics and international law is a clear manifestation in this regard. Furthermore, it remains an open question why neo-realists (and their critics) hold the link of Morgenthau with anarchy and with what are supposed to be 'realist' tenets. Opposite to these tenets, 'realism' in Morgenthau has to be understood as a historically contingent way of thinking which intends to provide answers to distinct historical circumstances of world politics. The time of Morgenthau was a time of ideologies and of hubristic and apocalyptic national power politics. Reacting to these challenges creates, and perpetuates, his support of power politics. Apart from that, however, Morgenthau's normative demands aim at the creation of international law and organizations as well as at the strengthening of supranational ethics. Thus, according to Morgenthau, any conduct of international politics is and has to be 'realist' (only) insofar as it acknowledges contingent historical circumstances and develops respective practical imperatives. He explicitly expressed this political ambition in the editions of *Politics Among Nations* published after 1948. Considering the notion of ideology, he writes:

The nation that dispensed with ideologies and frankly stated that it wanted power and would, therefore, oppose similar aspirations of other nations, would at once find itself at a great, perhaps decisive, disadvantage in the struggle for power. That frank admission would, on the other hand, unite the other nations in fierce resistance to a foreign policy so unequivocally stated and would thereby compel the nation pursuing it to employ more power than would otherwise be necessary. (1963, p. 82)

Ideology, or counter-ideology, is therefore necessary and justified against the horrors of totalitarianism and fascism as well as against the naive policies of appeasement.

This book was indeed, and could be nothing else but, a frontal attack... [Morgenthau addresses here the appeasement policy towards Hitler and the 'democratic-peace'-vision of Woodrow Wilson as well as the Fascist and Stalinist ideologies]. It had to be as radical on the side of its philosophy as had been the errors on the other side. With that battle largely won, the polemical purpose can give way to the consolidation of a position that no longer needs to be attained, but only to be defended and adapted to new experiences. (ibid., vii)

2. Explaining misreadings: Ideology critique and the reification of 'the' political

The following discussion on the question of why those misreadings and the manipulation of Morgenthau (and others) occurred finds two answers: the first answer draws on the theory of ideology critique by Karl Mannheim and hypothesizes the reason for misreadings in mechanisms of ideological knowledge production; the second answer refers to the epistemology of twentieth-century mainstream IR as discussed above (Chapter IV.1.1) and relates to the problem of an identification of the analytical with the normative. The first answer will be discussed now, the second thereafter.

Mannheim speaks of ideology as both a product of a distorted *Weltanschauung* and the process of distortion itself.¹⁸⁹ To Mannheim, ideology represents a process of epistemological enquiry and identity interpretation that leads to the eventual formation of more than just individual views of the world, but to the world view of an entire social group (totalizing world view). Therefore, ideology in a Mannheimian sense is a dialectic process as it is constructed at individual levels but also reflects the world-view of a whole group. Accordingly, the process of ideology, intertwined with epistemology, becomes distorted as it shifts from a particular to a total conception. This dialectical cycle of knowledge and knowledge production, where particular ideas come to dominate an entire social group, might lead eventually to the replacement of formerly dominant epistemologies within society by a new epistemology.¹⁹⁰ The Mannheimian definition used here is that of a totalizing world-view which is formed and perpetuated both consciously and unconsciously as part of a process of knowledge formation. This definition is crucial to this attempt to explain the reasons for diverse IR misreading and consists of the two tasks of identifying elements of neo-realist thought that can be illustrated as an ideological worldview (which typologically corresponds to a pejorative ideology critique¹⁹¹) and to consider hegemonic (ideological) processes that have led to the dominance of

neo-realism during the Cold War and post-Cold War era (which represents a morphological study of ideology or of 'processes of distortion'; on this typology see Freedon, 1996; Freedon et al., 2006).

Although the concept of ideology is widely and controversially debated,¹⁹² I think that the Mannheimian notion is most suitable to this study for four reasons: first, it allows us to draw upon Morgenthau's arguments that the *praxis* of politics is a process of ideology and counter-ideology formation (as can most clearly be seen in his *Politics Among Nations*). Second, the use of the 'classical' definition of ideology locates this attempt within the context of an existing critical body of IR literature. Authors such as Justin Rosenberg also argue that neo-realism, as a 'deterministic construction of political reality which entails a series of hidden propositions and symptomatic silences' is an ideology (Rosenberg, 1994, p. 30; also Kahler, 1997). Third, a Mannheimian understanding of ideology conceptually clarifies the argument that the formation of 'paradigms' in academia (as neo-realism in IR is widely understood) can be conceived as an ideological process. Thomas Kuhn coined the term *paradigm* to refer to a process of meta-theoretical positivist refinements within academia similar to the process described by Mannheim as ideology. Olé Waever, reflecting Kuhn's definition, writes that a 'paradigm contains within it a fundamental view of the world, and its assumptions act as lenses through which that world is perceived... paradigms are intrinsic to the social functioning of a scientific community' (Waever, 1996, p. 159). Like Mannheim's ideology, paradigms are created out of conflicts between individuals with different epistemological beliefs, especially in times of crisis. This process sets up a cycle of knowledge production and protection. The particular elements of theory elaborated by individuals are eventually generalized, distorted, adopted, and refuted by an entire group (or the mainstream of a discipline) to form a totalizing *Weltanschauung*. Similarly, as Waever maintains in reference to 'paradigm', 'participants can only be brought to accept such a framework by a process similar to conversion, not by rational argument' (*ibid.*, pp. 159–60).

The distinction between 'ideology' and 'paradigm' is not just a (unnecessary) terminological sham (i.e., if one might think they are conceptually identical). The dismissal of the term *ideology* as an introspective analytical concept for a genealogical study of an academic discipline and its replacement by the concept of paradigm (see, for example, Buzan, 1996; Mansbach and Vasquez, 1981), borrowed and incorporated into IR from the natural sciences, occurs simultaneously with the scientific and positivistic transformation of IR in the context of the so-called second debate, that is, when the misreadings analyzed here occur. Thereby a substantive loss of inner-disciplinary self-criticism occurs because 'paradigms' – including their production and protection of knowledge through its canonization and dogmatization as well as including their leaning towards political power and their overemphasis on practicable and problem-solving knowledge – have

become received as something necessary, desirable, and value-neutral for a 'proper' academic discipline. Contributing to (reviving) self-criticism in IR, I emphasize, and intend to tackle, the self-reflexivity shortfall of the concept of 'paradigm'.

Finally, the use of Mannheim's definition of ideology is complementary to a historicist tradition of political thought which I deem necessary to the study of IR, especially because this tradition contests the positivistic methodology of the IR mainstream that provides the intellectual framework for the misreadings analyzed here. It is my contention that the historicist tradition, including many authors labelled 'classical realists' by neo-realism and IR mainstream (such as Morgenthau; but also E. H. Carr), represents a school of thought that considers worldviews to be a product of specific historical, social, and political circumstances rather than putting forward structuralist postulates regarding an objective 'reality' of the world. Hence, a historicist tradition of international political theory is, in a Mannheimian sense, an ideology critique in itself.

Morgenthau perceived the 1940s as a time of ideological battle and power politics between liberal, democratic politics, represented foremost by the United States and the United Kingdom, and National Socialism and Stalinism. With the advent of nuclear weapons and the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, he revised the position he held during the Second World War and advocated the strengthening of the United Nations and international law, which was exactly his position in his early writings. But the battle continued, and the neo-realist production of ideologies relied upon misunderstood 'realist' assumptions in order to conceptualize, promote, and strengthen national power politics, now with new targets and against a new enemy (the Soviet Union and communism). The gravity and idiosyncrasy of the above analyzed misreadings, including the biased selectivity of their readings of other authors, seem comprehensible only as an attempt to formulate and justify a new political ideology, namely that of US foreign policy during the Cold War. This effort is accompanied by an ideologization of political thought, which seems to have become so influential and manifest in the disciplinary canon that – with a few exceptions – even the critics of neo-realism have not uncovered these misreadings, but instead have perpetuated them. This is probably the reason why some of those misreadings have found their way into most of our up-to-date textbooks and introductions.¹⁹³

Indeed, a plethora of neo-realists became cooks in the 'kitchen of power' (Hoffmann, 1977). The initial Morgenthauian idea of a temporary political counter-ideology against the apocalypses of nationalism and fascist and Stalinist ideology (from his *Politics Among Nations*) has been developed into a self-contained *ideology of 'national interest'*, which has separated the theorems of (Morgenthau's) 'realism' from its original understanding of historical contingency. In an emerging epoch of

scientism when political science in general and IR in particular have borrowed their epistemologies from positivistic natural sciences and economy (Waltz is an outstanding example of this; see above in Chapter IV.1), 'realist' (though falsely) and neo-realist theorems have become perceived as scientific laws in order to deduce axioms for political conduct as well as strategic predictions of future developments. Waltz's perception of patriotism complements this observation: The rationality of the state, which domestically acts in case of doubt as an authoritarian power, state and homogenizes political differences, dictates to oppress opinions, movements and individuals opposing *the* national interest. Foreign policy elites have come to define political rationality in their interest and to protect those interests as some objective *raison d'état*. The domestic production of political homogeneity occurs through instruments of the power state, like media control. An apt example can be seen in the historical defence of national interests in maintaining the Cold War rationale or the run up to a specific war.¹⁹⁴

This background is described and criticized by Miles Kahler when he argues that since the Cold War, neo-realism had the tendency to take the ideological coloration of its political (American) environment. According to Kahler, there was a veritable infrastructural explosion of IR under the paradigm of realism in the 1930s, 1950s, and 1960s as well as of neo-realism during the Cold War, especially in the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. Governments announced an increased demand for foreign and security policy concepts. Kahler additionally observes the tendency that 'realist' and neo-realist approaches gained (and continue to gain) importance during times of international crises and the perception of instabilities. He calls these 'events-driven' and 'demands-driven periods' (1997, pp. 22–3) which influenced the development of the discipline in the United States to a great extent.¹⁹⁵ The institutional, political, and departmental links between the development of IR and 'demands' and 'events-driven' factors of that development can be further examined from the perspective of an ideology critique by scrutinizing processes of knowledge production and protection.¹⁹⁶

According to Mannheim (and Morgenthau), each theory/ideology is characterized and influenced by the political, historical, and cultural context of its author. A proper understanding of each theory can only be accomplished when elaborating its *Standortgebundenheit* by investigating its historic and cultural location (see above in this chapter). Mannheim further argues that such an elaboration has to be a critical historiographic study of political thoughts affecting the author as well as an historical analysis of the author's structural context, that is, his or her institutional (including professional bodies, universities, and publishers) and biographical circumstances. A historiographic study of political thought related to neo-realism and IR mainstream was presented here in Parts I, II, and III; an additional

ideology-critical analysis in Mannheim's sense can be connected hereto. This analysis would explore the structural contexts of 'realism' and neo-realism and emphasize the 'systematic centers' (Mannheim, 1984, p. 205) of these schools of thought and their research agendas (very interesting here Oren, 2003). Mannheim writes: 'Assuming a dynamic conception of truth, a sociology of knowledge focuses on the ontological and epistemological modes of thought and knowledge typical for a certain era and emphasizes on their genealogical and transient character'.¹⁹⁷

Mannheim further argues that the intellectual 'locations' of theories/ideologies have to be related to the authors' sociopolitical 'locations' in order to understand and to disclose not only different antagonistic interests, but even entire political worldviews and their normative implications (totalizing *Weltanschauungen*, also, *Weltvollungen*). Such an analysis would elaborate the original and systematic centers of thoughts, including their emergence and the way they have been excavated, used and eventually newly contextualized by posterity. Thus, only when the history of thought is substituted by an historical analysis of the dynamics and transience of the socio-political and epistemological structures in which certain modes of knowledge and thought are embedded, a critical analysis and survey of political worldviews can be accomplished' (Mannheim, 1984, p. 205; translation mine). Such an approach would involve biographical studies on the intellectual and sociopolitical environment of representatives of 'realism' and neo-realism as well as their disciples. This would further include uncovering their peer relations within universities as well as cross-relations to funding bodies, governments, and publishers (or, as Mannheim notes, 'to mutually related world views and their ontological and epistemological underpinnings with the socio-political environment of their representatives'; Mannheim, 1984, p. 209 [translation mine]).¹⁹⁸

A second answer to the question why the IR mainstream misreadings and consequently the neo-realist/neo-liberal 'rewriting of the history' of political thought occurred can be found in the reification problem as discussed above (in Chapter IV.1.1). The possible identification and equation of the analytical and the normative not only caused a great deal of naivety and blindness towards the (normative) construction and consequences of IR's own theories, but also a disregard of the normative dimensions in other theories. In addition to this, through the collapse of the normative and the analytical into one undistinguished package and vision, two epistemological lines of theory and theorizing, which are at least heuristically different, merge into one *defmans* of what the political nature of the international (as the *definandum*) is supposed to be. This essentializing view of the political/the international cannot distinguish (anymore) between an analysis of what is seen as reality, a hypothesis about it, or some form of hypothetical images of it, and a (normative) theoretical construction, which intends to manage or to overcome these images, which would aim to establish and negotiate

some form of alternative imagination or which would be able to criticize these images. All it can do is to affirm and reaffirm a perpetual identity between *definiens* and *definandum* (or *explians* and *explandum*), including respective political strategies of affirmation and reaffirmation, like a sweat-mill reiteration that anarchy is the structure is anarchy is the structure is anarchy is self-help is power is the structure is anarchy – and to declare this *perpetuum mobile* of security dilemmas and fear production as something fragile and precious with which to accommodate, however, we are said to have no choice. This reification likewise depoliticizes the international by essentially foreclosing alternative imaginations and optionality – at least as long as we are inclined to understand (and I tend to do so) politics as the creation of alternatives and the attempt to guarantee, and eventually to stabilize, conditions which allow such possibility for alternatives and optionalities.

With regard to the history of international political thought, the problem of misreadings and the creation of IR as a Cold War academic discipline, including the production of IR-'relevant' knowledge, the reification problem means that some authors of this history have become (unjustifiably) included while others have (likewise unjustifiably) been excluded. This inclusion and exclusion occurred on two levels. The first and most obvious one is due to a superficial selection and expedient simplification of single sentences and paragraphs of seemingly appropriate texts in order to bolster, depending on the reified interest, neo-realist tenets of power politics or neo-liberal tenets of international cooperation (like Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Morgenthau from a neo-realist perspective, or Grotius and Kant from a more liberal perspective) while others, where such modular components cannot be found, were excluded from the canon of 'IR theorists', again depending on the reified interest (like Cicero, Augustine, Aquinas, and las Casas from a neo-realist perspective, and Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes as 'bad guys' from a more liberal perspective). The second level representing 'why and 'where' these inclusions/exclusions occurred makes the first level possible because this kind of selection seems workable from the view of both neo-realism and neo-liberalism. This level is related to the (self-induced) invisibility (or intangibility) and consequent neglect of the normative theorizing of authors like Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Morgenthau or of the very ambivalent character of authors such as Kant (but also Augustine, Aquinas, and las Casas) – normative dimensions and ambivalences in which each of the cherry-picked sentences and thoughts as well as the oeuvre of respective authors in general have to be contextualized and situated. By such an interpretive practice of contextualization and situation, the canonizations and confinement of single authors into familiar categories of IR and streamlined readings of international political thought – foremost into the categories of 'idealism' and 'realism', but also into anachronistic subcategories of the inter-national (see my initial

doubts in endnote 3) – appear to be unsustainable and reveal themselves to be selective readings and ideologically motivated misreadings.

Reminiscing about the heroic figures of 'realism'/neo-realism – Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Morgenthau – and the necessity of shifting them out of the category of a realism, the reification problem precludes the tangibility of the influences of Aristotelian ethics and of universal law as well as cultural sensibility in Thucydides; the emphasis on *virtu* republicanism in Machiavelli; the sensitively constructed relation between legitimacy, security, and sovereignty/authority in Hobbes; and the aspects of normative legal philosophy as well as of the sensitive relation between morality/ethics and power in Morgenthau (not alone of his incisive criticism of positivist political science). Last but not least, it removes the sense of the significance of some kind of universal and/or universalistic conceptualizations of international politics and foreign policy orientation which exists in all these philosophies alongside contingent affirmations of interest politics. With regard to Grotius and Kant (but Cicero and the Christian authors also could be included here and indeed appear sometimes in the background), the reification problem precludes the view for at least ambivalences in their affirmation of interest and principled power politics which exist alongside clear visions of universalisms and universalities operating as the unifying assumption in a field of cultural, religious, and political diversity.¹⁹⁹

In such a perspective, it seems as if the differentiation and establishment of the discipline of IR from neighbouring disciplines in the humanities and social sciences in the first half of the last century was itself an *ideological undertaking* which relates to nineteenth-century national imperialisms and the genesis of the modern nation-state as a powerful concept of political order which holds its ground martially. Contrary to that impact of the nation-state and nationalism on IR, external relations of political entities stretching from antiquity through to the end of the eighteenth century were thought of in the context of a comprehensive understanding of political order, justifying (or condemning) foreign politics on ethical grounds and in the context of universal and/or universalistic legal and political principles.²⁰⁰