The poverty of neorealism

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> The theory of knowledge is a dimension of political theory because the specifically symbolic power to impose the principles of the construction of reality—in particular, social reality—is a major dimension of political power.
>
> *Pierre Bourdieu*

> It is a dangerous thing to be a Machiavelli. It is a disastrous thing to be a Machiavelli without *virtù*.
>
> *Hans Morgenthau*

Almost six years ago, E. P. Thompson fixed his critical sights across the English Channel and let fly with a lengthy polemic entitled *The Poverty of Theory*.[1] Thompson's immediate target was Louis Althusser. His strategic objective was to rebut the emergent Continental orthodoxy that Althusser championed: structural Marxism, a self-consciously scientific perspective aiming to employ Marxian categories within a structuralist framework to produce theoretical knowledge of the objective structures of capitalist reality.

The charges Thompson hurled defy brief summary, but some key themes can be quickly recalled. Althusser and the structuralists, Thompson con-

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1. E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978). See also Perry Anderson's rejoinder, *Arguments within English Marxism* (London: New Left Books, 1980).

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tended, were guilty of an egregiously selective, hopelessly one-sided representation of the Marxian legacy they claimed to carry forward. In the name of science, Althusser had purged the legacy of its rich dialectical content while imposing a deadening ahistorical finality upon categories stolen from Marx's work. To produce this backhanded hagiography, Thompson charged, Althusser had superimposed a positivist understanding of science upon Marx even as he claimed to surpass the limits of positivism. What is worse, his structural Marxism had to ignore the historical context of Marx's work, subordinate the dialectical "Young Marx" to the objectivist "Mature Marx" of the *Grundrisse*, cast disrespect on old Engels, "the clown," and systematically forget much of the Marxist literature since Marx, including Lenin. In Thompson's view, this reading of Marx produced a mechanistic theory of capitalist society—a machine-like model comprised of self-contained, complete entities or parts connected, activated, and synchronized by all manner of apparatuses. It was, Thompson complained, "an orrery of errors."[2]

Thompson's attack was by no means a plea for fidelity to Marx's original texts. Rather, it was primarily concerned with restoring a respect for practice in history. In Thompson's view, structural Marxism had abolished the role of practice in the constitution of history, including the historical making of social structures. It had produced an ahistorical and depoliticized understanding of politics in which women and men are the objects, but not the makers, of their circumstances. Ultimately, it presented a totalitarian project, a totalizing antihistorical structure, which defeats the Marxian project for change by replicating the positivist tendency to universalize and naturalize the given order.

Repeated in the context of current European and Latin American social theory, non-Marxist as well as Marxist, Thompson's assault might today seem anachronistic. The fortress he attacked is already in ruins. In Europe, at least, the unquestioned intellectual paramountcy of structuralism has seen its day. True, European social theory remains very much indebted to structuralist thought—that set of principles and problematics differently reflected in, say, Saussure's linguistics, Durkheim's sociology, Levi-Strauss's cultural anthropology, or Piaget's developmental psychology. Yet today, that debt is honored not by uncritical adherence to structuralist principles but by the poststructuralist questioning of their limits.

On this side of the Atlantic, however, the themes of Thompson's attack are still worth recalling. For just as the dominance of structuralist thought is waning elsewhere, North American theorists of international and comparative politics claim to be at last escaping the limits of what Piaget called "atomistic empiricism." Just as the United States' position of hegemony in

2. Also called a "planetarium," an orrery is a mechanical device used to illustrate with balls of various sizes the relative motions and positions of the bodies in a solar system. It takes its name from Charles Boyle, the Earl of Orrery, for whom one was made.

the world economy is called into question, North American theorists of international relations are proudly proclaiming their own belated "structuralist turn." The proponents of this North American structuralism include some of the last two generations' most distinguished and productive theorists of international relations and comparative politics: Kenneth Waltz, Robert Keohane, Stephen Krasner, Robert Gilpin, Robert Tucker, George Modelski, and Charles Kindleberger, among many others. The movement they represent is known by many names: modern realism, new realism, and structural realism, to name a few. Let us call it "neorealism."[3]

Like Althusser and other proponents of structural Marxism, North American proponents of neorealism claim to carry forward a rich intellectual tradition of long standing. The neorealist typically defines his or her heritage, as the name implies, in the Europe-born tradition of "classical realism"—the tradition associated in the United States with Morgenthau, Niebuhr, Herz, and Kissinger. Like Althusser's structuralism, too, neorealist structuralism claims to surpass its predecessors by offering a "truly scientific" rendering of its subject matter—an objective, theoretical rendering, which breaks radically with its predecessors' allegedly commonsensical, subjectivist, atomistic, and empiricist understandings. Like Althusser's structuralism, neorealism claims to grasp a structural totality that constrains, disposes, and finally limits political practice. Like Althusser's structuralism, neorealism has achieved consensus about the categories defining the dominant structures of the totality examined: in the case of neorealism, these categories refer not to social classes and the arenas and instruments of class struggle but to modern states, their struggles for hegemony, and the instruments by which and arenas in which they wage it. And like Althusser's structural Marxism, neorealism has very quickly become a dominant orthodoxy. In France of the late 1960s and 1970s, Althusserian structuralism provided the pivotal text upon which the intellectual development of a generation of radical philosophers would turn. In the United States of the 1980s, neorealism and its structural theory of hegemony frames the measured discourse and ritual of a generation of graduate students in international politics.

It is time for another polemic. Setting my sights on neorealist structuralism, I offer an argument whose main themes closely parallel Thompson's attack on structural Marxism. I want to challenge not individual neorealists but

3. In speaking of a "neorealism movement," it is necessary to confront several issues. First, the name "neorealism" is not universally recognized by those I am calling neorealists. Some no doubt assume that their work reflects no larger movement or trend they themselves did not consciously set into motion; they thus reject the application of general labels to their own work. Second, I recognize that the scholars here regarded as neorealist have many serious differences and quarrels among themselves. Third, I stress that my treatment here is with respect to the structure of an overall movement in its context and not the expressed pronouncements or conscious intentions of individual scholars whose work sometimes may, and sometimes may not, contribute to that movement.

the neorealist movement *as a whole*.[4] Like Thompson's critique, my argument has both negative and positive aspects: both its critical attack and its implications for an approach that would do better. In spirit with Thompson, let me phrase key themes of that critique in deliberately exaggerated terms.

On the negative side, I shall contend that neorealism is itself an "orrery of errors," a self-enclosed, self-affirming joining of statist, utilitarian, positivist, and structuralist commitments. Although it claims to side with the victors in two American revolutions—the realist revolution against idealism, and the scientific revolution against traditionalism—it in fact betrays both. It betrays the former's commitment to political autonomy by reducing political practice to an economic logic, and it neuters the critical faculties of the latter by swallowing methodological rules that render science a purely technical enterprise. From realism it learns only an interest in power, from science it takes only an interest in expanding the reach of control, and from this selective borrowing it creates a theoretical perspective that parades the possibility of a rational power that need never acknowledge power's limits. What emerges is a positivist structuralism that treats the given order as the natural order, limits rather than expands political discourse, negates or trivializes the significance of variety across time and place, subordinates all practice to an interest in control, bows to the ideal of a social power beyond responsibility, and thereby deprives political interaction of those practical capacities which make social learning and creative change possible. What emerges is an ideology that anticipates, legitimizes, and orients a totalitarian project of global proportions: the rationalization of global politics.[5]

On the positive side, I shall suggest that theoretical alternatives are not exhausted by the false choice between neorealism's "progressive" structuralism and a "regression" to atomistic, behavioralist, or, in Waltz's terms, "reductionist" perspectives on international politics. This dichotomy of wholes and parts, often invoked by neorealist orthodoxy, obscures another cleavage of at least equal importance. This is a cleavage that pits early structuralist "compliance models" of action and social reality (physicalistic models as seen in early Durkheim, for instance) against dialectical "competence models" (as seen in poststructuralist thought over the last few decades).[6] Against the

4. As discussed here, neorealism is not just an amalgam of individual scholars' traits or opinions, nor is it the lowest common denominator among them. Rather, my contentions are with respect to neorealism as a collective movement or project emerging in a shared context, having shared principles of practice, and observing certain background understandings and norms that participants mutually accept as unproblematic and that limit and orient the questions raised, the answers warranted, and the conduct of discourse among neorealists—this regardless of the fact that the participants may not be conscious of (may merely take for granted the universal truth of) the norms and understandings integrating them as one movement. In Waltz's now well-known terminology, mine is a systemic, not a reductionist, account of the neorealist system.

5. The term "totalitarian" is, to say the least, provocative. As seen below, my usage is consistent with that of Hans Morgenthau.

6. This is John O'Neill's terminology. The distinction will be elaborated below.

neorealist tendency to march triumphantly backward to compliance models of the 19th century, I shall be suggesting that the rudiments of an alternative competence model of international politics, a model more responsive to contemporary arguments in social theory, are already present in classical realist scholarship. Drawing especially upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu, I shall suggest that a *dialectical* competence model would allow us to grasp all that neorealism can claim to comprehend while also recovering from classical realism those insights into political practice which neorealism threatens to purge. Such a model, fully developed, would reinstate the theoretical role of practice. It would sharpen the depiction of the current world crisis, including dilemmas of hegemonic leadership. And it would shed light on the role and limits of knowledge, including neorealism, in the production, rationalization, and possible transformation of the current order.

A critique of this breadth necessarily finds its inspiration in several quarters. In addition to Thompson, I should single out two poststructuralist sources, one French and one German. The French source of inspiration, as indicated, is primarily Bourdieu's dialectical *Outline of a Theory of Practice*.[7] The German source of inspiration is the critical theory of Jürgen Habermas and, more distantly, the whole tradition of the Frankfurt School.[8] Habermas's theme of the "scientization of politics" is more than faintly echoed in my critique of neorealism. His diagnosis of a "legitimation crisis" in advanced capitalist society complements my discussion of the historical conditions of neorealist orthodoxy.[9]

At the same time, the studied parochialism of American international political discourse would make it too easy to deploy alien concepts from European social theory to outflank, pummel, and overwhelm that discourse. Such a strategy would be self-defeating given my intentions. My arguments here, intentionally phrased in provocative terms, are like warning shots, meant to provoke a discussion, not destroy an alleged enemy. Thus, I feel an obligation to present my position in "familiar" terms, that is, in a way that makes reference to the collective experiences of North American students

7. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). See also Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. and trans. by Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon, 1980); Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977); Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972); and Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Pantheon, 1970).

8. Jürgen Habermas, *Towards a Rational Society*, trans. by Jeremy J. Shapiro (London: Heinemann, 1971); Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, trans. by John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974); Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979).

9. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (London: Heinemann, 1976). Of course, the figures cited can hardly be said to occupy one school; in fact, there are very sharp differences among them. Thompson, for instance, would be among the last to align happily with Foucault, "Althusser's former student"; Habermas's rationalism would set him apart from Bourdieu. On the theme of the "economization" of politics, see also Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

of international relations. As it turns out, this is not so hard to do. For those experiences are not nearly so impoverished as the keepers of neorealist lore would make them seem.

1. The lore of neorealism

Every great scholarly movement has its own lore, its own collectively recalled creation myths, its ritualized understandings of the titanic struggles fought and challenges still to be overcome in establishing and maintaining its paramountcy. The importance of this lore must not be underestimated: to a very considerable degree, the solidarity of a movement depends upon the members' abilities to recount this lore and locate their every practice in its terms. Small wonder, therefore, that rites of passage, such as oral qualifying examinations, put so much stress on the student's ability to offer a satisfying reconstruction of the movement's lore and to identify the ongoing struggles that the student, in turn, will continue to wage. Two generations ago, aspiring North American students of international relations had to show themselves ready to continue classical realism's noble war against an entrenched American idealism. A generation ago, they had to internalize another lore: they had to sing the battle hymns of behavioral science triumphant against traditionalism. Today, thanks to the emergence of a neorealist orthodoxy, students must prepare themselves to retell and carry forward yet another lore.

a. The triumph of scientific realism

The lore of neorealism might be retold in several ways, and each telling might stress different heroes, but a central theme is likely to remain the same. Neorealism, according to this theme, is a progressive scientific redemption of classical realist scholarship. It serves the interests of classical realism under new and challenging circumstances and as advantaged by a clearer grasp of objective science's demands and potentialities. As such, neorealism is twice blessed. It is heir to and carries forward both of the great revolutions that preceded it: realism against idealism, and science against traditionalist thought.

A fuller recounting of the lore would begin by diagnosing some lapses in the classical realist scholarship of, say, Morgenthau, Kissinger, and Herz. In neorealist eyes, and for reasons considered below, these and other classical realists were quite correct in their emphasis on power, national interest, and the historically effective political agency of the state. Unfortunately, when held up to modern *scientific* standards of theory, these classical realist scholars seemed to fall woefully short. Four lapses in the classical heritage might be stressed.

First, classical realist concepts, arguments, and knowledge claims might

be said to be too fuzzy, too slippery, too resistant to consistent operational formulation, and, in application, too dependent upon the artful sensitivity of the historically minded and context-sensitive scholar. Somehow, classical realist concepts and knowledge claims never quite ascend to Popper's "third world of objective knowledge," because classical realists hold that the truth of these concepts and claims is to be found only through the situation-bound interpretations of the analyst or statesman.[10]

Second, and closely related, classical realists might be said to distinguish insufficiently between subjective and objective aspects of international political life, thereby undermining the building of theory. Such a concern is to be found, for example, in Waltz's complaints about Morgenthau's and Kissinger's understandings of the international system. They are, for Waltz, "reductionist" because they tend to accord to the "attribute" of actors' subjective perceptions an important role in constituting and reproducing the "system." They thereby deny the system a life of its own as an objective social fact to be grasped by theory.[11]

Third, it might be claimed that, in Gilpin's words, classical realist scholarship "is not well grounded in social theory."[12] For all its strengths, classical realism could be claimed to exhibit a lamentable lack of learning from the insights of economics, psychology, or sociology.

The fourth lapse, however, is the most salient from the neorealist point of view, for it marks both a failure of realist nerve and a point of considerable vulnerability in the defense of a key realist principle: the principle of "the autonomy of the political sphere." Classical realists limited themselves to the domain of political-military relations, where balance of power could be granted the status of a core concept. As a result, realism was naive with respect to economic processes and relations; it left them to the power-blind eyes of liberal interdependence thinkers and the questioning eyes of radical theorists of dependency and imperialism. As neorealists see it, this was not just a matter of rivalry between scholarly paradigms. Since economic processes and relations have definite power-political ramifications over the longer term, and since these same processes are badly described by reference to balance-of-power logics, classical realism's blindness with respect to economics had several related effects: it situated interstate politics in a reactive "superstructural" pose vis-à-vis economic dynamics, rendered classical realism incapable

10. Karl Popper, "On the Theory of Objective Mind," and "Epistemology without a Knowing Subject," in *Objective Knowledge* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972). As Morgenthau says again and again, the application of every universalizing formulation "must be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place." Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th ed. (New York: Knopf, 1978), p. 8.

11. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), pp. 62–64.

12. Robert Gilpin, "Political Change and International Theory" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York, 3–6 September 1981), p. 3.

of grasping political-economic dilemmas, and limited realism's capacity to guide state practice amidst these dilemmas. Given all of this, and given a period of world economic crisis that increasingly calls into question states' capacities to justify themselves as managers of economic dysfunctions, realism was in danger of failing in one of its foremost functions: as a framework that could be deployed to legitimize and orient the state.

This situation and the neorealist response can be phrased in more definite terms. In a period of world economic crisis, welling transnationalist outcries against the limits of the realist vision, and evidently politicized developments that realism could not comprehend, the classical realist tradition and its key concepts suffered a crisis of legitimacy, especially in the United States. Sensing this crisis, a number of American scholars, most of whom are relatively young and very few of whom are steeped in the classic tradition, more or less independently undertook to respond in a distinctly American fashion; that is, *scientifically*.[13] They set out to develop and historically to corroborate scientific theories that would portray or assume a fixed structure of international anarchy;[14] trim away the balance-of-power concept's scientifically inscrutable ideological connotations; reduce balance of power's scientific status to that of a systemic property or a situational logic undertaken by rational, calculating, self-interested states; and, most importantly, disclose the power-political struggle for hegemony behind the economic dynamics that liberal and radical analysts had too often falsely treated in isolation from interstate politics.[15] More than that, they set out to construct theories that would lay bare the structural relations—the causal connections between means and ends—that give form to the dynamics of hegemonic rise and decline and in light of which a hegemon might orient its efforts both to secure its hegemony and to preserve cooperative economic and ecological regimes. Political-economic order follows from the concentration of political-economic power, say these theories. Power begets order. Order requires power. The realist emphasis on the role of state power had been saved.

13. As I shall indicate below, neorealism holds to a very definite, highly restrictive model of social science.

14. A few neorealists are extremely hostile to the use of the *word* anarchy (e.g., as used in Waltz's work), even though they accept the absence of central rule (Waltz's definition of anarchy) as a hard-core assumption. George Modelski takes "world leadership" as his "central concept." Thus, he writes, "we make it clear that we do not regard the modern world as some sort of anarchical society. To the contrary, our analysis clarifies the principles of order and authority that have governed that world for the past half millennium and that, while familiar to historians in each particular instance, have not been previously put together in quite this manner and have been generally unfamiliar to students of international relations. Anarchy could be in the eye of the beholder." Modelski, "Long Cycles and the Strategy of U.S. International Economic Policy," in William P. Avery and David P. Rapkin, eds., *America in a Changing World Political Economy* (New York: Longman, 1982), p. 99.

15. Again, neorealists differ, and the words they choose to use is one of the differences. One might speak of order, another of stability, and still another of leadership. The word "hegemony" itself is certainly in some dispute, even though all agree that hegemony (whatever one chooses to call it) follows from power or the distribution of the attributes of power.

According to neorealist lore, this rescue of realist power politics was by no means a paltry act. It was, if anything, heroic. For it depended, above all, upon one bold move: a move of cunning and daring against stiff odds and in opposition to the mass of sedimented social-scientific habits. In order to bring science to bear in saving and extending realism, neorealists had first to escape the limits of logical atomism, then prevailing among "scientific" approaches to the study of international relations. To do this, they adopted a critical stance with respect to "reductionist" arguments, arguments that would reduce "systems" to the interactions among distinct parts. In their place, neorealists erected what have come to be called "systemic," "holistic," or "structuralist" arguments.

For the neorealist rescue of realist power politics, this structuralist move was decisive. By appeal to objective structures, which are said to dispose and limit practices among states (most especially, the anarchic structure of the modern states system), neorealists seemed to cut through the subjectivist veils and dark metaphysics of classical realist thought. Dispensing with the normatively laden metaphysics of fallen man, they seemed to root realist power politics, including concepts of power and national interest, securely in the scientifically defensible terrain of objective necessity. Thus rooted, realist power politics could be scientifically defended against modernist and radical critics. Without necessarily denying such tendencies as economic interdependence or uneven development, neorealists could argue that power-political structures would refract and limit the effects of these tendencies in ways securing the structures themselves.

Such is the stuff of legends. Even in neorealist lore, to be sure, this revolutionary structuralist turn is only part of neorealism's story. The graduate student going through neorealist rites of passage would have to grasp a good deal more. As will become clear later, the aspiring student would also have to come to grips with neorealist perspectives on international collaboration and the role of regimes, on the role and limits of ideology, and on the dynamics of hegemonic succession and "system change." Most of all, he or she would have to demonstrate an ability to interpret state practices in neorealist terms, which is to say as calculating, "economically" rational behaviors under constraints. Still, it is the structuralist turn that is decisive, the sine qua non of neorealism's triumph. Let us take a closer look at this vaunted structuralist aspect.

b. The structuralist promise

As John Ruggie has been among the first to point out, the promise of neorealism, like the promise of Immanuel Wallerstein's world systems perspective, is in very large measure attributable to its structuralist aspect.[16]

16. John G. Ruggie, "Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis," *World Politics* 35 (January 1983), especially pp. 261–64.

Ruggie is right. There are indeed certain isomorphisms between aspects of neorealist argument and elements of structuralist argument (as seen in the work of, say, Saussure, Durkheim, Lévi-Strauss, and Althusser). Noting the isomorphisms, one can let neorealism bask in the reflected glory of yesteryear's structuralist triumphs in fields such as linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. One can say that structuralism's successes in other fields suggest neorealism's promise for the study of international relations.[17]

At the risk of oversimplification, it is possible to abstract a number of more or less continuous "elements" of structuralist thought. Five of these elements—overlapping aspects, really—are especially important for my present purposes. They suggest some of the parallels between neorealist argument and structuralist argument in general.

1. Wherever it has emerged, structuralist argument has taken form in reaction against phenomenological knowledge and speculative, evolutionary thought.[18] Structuralist thought breaks radically with the former because of phenomenology's debt to a conscious subjectivity that, in structuralist eyes, is always suspect. It poses precisely the question that phenomenological knowledge excludes: how is this familiar apprehension of the given order, and hence the community itself, possible? Structuralism also breaks with speculative, evolutionary thought, regarding it as nothing more than the "other side" of phenomenology. Evolutionary thought too often fails to see that what pretends to promise change is but an expression of continuity in the deeper order of things.

2. Structuralist argument aims to construct the objective relations (linguistic, economic, political, or social) that structure practice and representations of practice, including primary knowledge of the familiar world.[19] Human conduct, including human beings' own understandings, is interpreted as *surface* practice generated by a deeper, independently existing logic or structure. In striving to comprehend this deeper logic, structuralism breaks with individualist perspectives on social subjectivity, as in the Cartesian *cogito*. In the same stroke, it attempts to transcend the subject/object dualism. For structuralism, to simplify, social consciousness is not "transparent to itself." It is generated by a deep social intersubjectivity—linguistic rules, for example—which is itself regarded as the objective structure of society. In Paul Ricoeur's words, "Structuralism is predicated on a Kantian rather than a Freudian

17. See Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975); Edith Kurzweil, *The Age of Structuralism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), especially chap. 1; Paul Ricoeur, "Structure and Hermeneutics," and "Structure, Word, Event," in *Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1974); and Miriam Glucksman, *Structuralist Analysis in Contemporary Social Thought* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).

18. Giddens, *Central Problems*, p. 9.

19. Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 3.

unconscious, on structural imperatives that constitute the logical geography of mind."[20]

3. Thus, structuralism shifts toward the interpretation of practice from a social, totalizing, or "systemic" point of view. Ferdinand de Saussure's distinction between speech and language (*parole et langue*) is paradigmatic; what concerned him was not speech per se but the logical conditions of its intelligibility (an inherently social or "systemic" concern).[21] What concerns structuralists in general is not practice per se but the logical conditions that account for the significance and signification of practice within a community (again, a social or "systemic" relation). Saussure located his logical preconditions for the intelligibility of speech in language: speech becomes the product of language. Structuralists in general locate their explanations in deep social structures: practice becomes the product of structure. For Saussure, language contained possible speech, that is, speech that will be understood within the language community. For structuralists more generally, structure is a system of constitutive rules "which do not regulate behavior so much as create the possibility of particular forms of behavior."

4. Consistent with its totalizing inclinations, structuralism presupposes not only the priority of structure over practice but also the "absolute predominance of the whole over the parts."[22] Structuralists emphasize the "system" not only in contrast to but also as *constitutive of* the elements that compose it. The overall structure exists autonomously, independent of the parts or actors, and the identities of the constituent elements are attributed not to intrinsic qualities or contents of the elements themselves but to the differentiation among them supplied or determined by the overall structure. Thus, the units have no identity independent of the structural whole. Saussure's position is again exemplary: "In language," he wrote, "there are only differences. . . . [A] difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without *positive* terms."[23]

5. In their treatments of time and change, structuralist arguments tend to presuppose an absolute distinction between synchronic (static) and diachronic (dynamic) viewpoints, and they tend to accentuate the one-way dependence of diachrony (dynamics) upon synchrony (statics).[24] Change, for the structuralist, is always to be grasped in the context of a model of structure—an elaborated model whose elements are taken to be fixed and immutable in the face of the changes it conditions and limits.

Cursory though it is, this listing suggests some obvious correspondences

20. Ricoeur, "Structure and Hermeneutics," p. 79.
21. Bourdieu, *Outline*, pp. 23–24.
22. Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 266.
23. Quoted in Giddens, *Central Problems*, p. 12.
24. Ibid., p. 46.

between neorealist argument and some of the fundamentals of structuralism. Consider the first "element": neorealism's criticism of classical realism's subjectivist tendencies (the tendencies of Morgenthau and Kissinger, among others, to adopt the posture of an ethnomethodologist of a diplomatic community) closely parallels structuralism's reaction against phenomenological knowledge. The neorealist reaction to the writings of transnationalists and modernists similarly parallels structuralism's attitude with respect to speculative, evolutionary thought. The shallow analysis behind such writings, neorealists tend to feel, mistakes the ephemeral for the eternal and too eagerly seizes upon epiphenomenal change as evidence of system change.

The second, third, and fourth "elements" are equally suggestive of parallels. It might be argued, for example, that the central importance of Waltz's well-known work lies in its attempt to realize these "elements" for the study of international politics. Waltz's argument against "attribute theories" and on behalf of "systemic" theories might seem to locate the proper object of theory not in "parts," and not in external relations among them, but in independently existing objective "wholes," which, as ordering and orienting properties of a system, constitute parts and generate relations among them. His argument clearly adopts a totalizing stance in that he focuses not on explaining the variety of foreign-policy behavior per se (such behavior remains indeterminate) but on uncovering the objective structures that determine the significance of practice within the context of an overall system. And while Waltz allows that there may be considerable variety among "actors," only those forms of differentiation significant within the overall structure, namely distributions of capabilities, are of concern to his theory.

Finally, the fifth "element" of structuralist argument, having to do with time and change, finds expression in neorealism: Robert Gilpin's recent *War and Change in World Politics* offers one example, George Modelski's important "long-cycle" argument another.[25] Indeed, the preoccupation with cycles of hegemonic rise and decline would seem near-perfectly to illustrate the structuralist tendency to emphasize synchrony over diachrony. As in structuralist thought, dynamics of change are of concern to neorealists primarily insofar as their structural determinants can be theoretically grasped.

In view of these isomorphisms, it is easy to see why neorealism might be viewed as a "welcome antidote" to the "prevailing superficiality" of much international relations discourse. If nothing else, neorealists, like Wallersteinians, have illustrated that scientific international relations discourse can entertain structuralist arguments, can transcend empiricist fixations, and can in principle escape the limits of logical atomism. At least, research programs now purport to try. In turn, the field is encouraged to recognize that reality

25. Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); George Modelski, "The Long-Cycle of Global Politics and the Nation-State," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (April 1978), pp. 214–35.

is not all "on the surface," that it has, or might have, depth levels, that an adequate social or political analysis cannot be reduced to a concatenation of commonsense appearances, and that one can look for a unity behind and generating evident differences. Herein is the neorealist promise.

If neorealism is to bathe in the glow of structuralist accomplishments, however, it must also be prepared to suffer criticisms as to structuralism's limits. Above all, such critiques stress the troubling consequences of structuralism's tendency to "put at a distance, to objectify, to separate out from the personal equation of the investigator the structure of an institution, a myth, a rite."[26] In trying to avoid "the shop-girl's web of subjectivity" or "the swamps of experience," to use Lévi-Strauss's words, structuralists adopt a posture that denies the role of practice in the making and possible transformation of social order. In part, of course, such critiques are animated by revulsion at structuralism's "scandalous anti-humanism."[27] But in part, also, they are animated by a concern for the disastrous consequences for political theory and the possibly dangerous consequences for political practice. An adequate critique of neorealism must develop these themes.

2. The structure of neorealist structuralism: an orrery of errors

I am, however, a step or two ahead of myself. I have so far spoken only of the neorealist lore, including the structuralist promise neorealism often purports to bear. I have tried to assay that promise by drawing out parallels between neorealist argument and the now classic positions of structuralism. Still, such comparisons are more than a trifle misleading. For there is at once more and less to neorealism than might be inferred from its isomorphisms with structuralist argument. There is *more* to neorealism in that it exhibits three further commitments: statist, utilitarian, and positivist. There is *less* to neorealism in that, thanks to the priority given to these commitments, neorealist "structuralism" takes a shallow, physicalistic form—a form that exacerbates the dangers while negating the promise of structuralism.

Within neorealism, I suggest, structuralism, statism, utilitarianism, and positivism are bound together in machine-like, self-enclosing unity. This machine-like joining of commitments appears as if designed to defy criticism or to draw all opposition into its own self-centered arc. Herein is neorealism's answer to Althusser's "orrery"—an orrery of errors. Far from questioning commonsense appearances, the neorealist orrery hypostatizes them. Far from expanding international political discourse, the neorealist orrery excludes all standpoints that would expose the limits of the given order of things. Before

26. Ricoeur, as quoted in Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, eds., *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 10–11.
27. Giddens, *Central Problems*, p. 38.

returning to the matter of neorealist "structuralism," let me take up each of the other elements of this orrery—neorealism's statist, utilitarian, and positivist commitments—in turn.

a. Statism

Neorealism is bound to the state. Neorealist theory is "state centric" or "statist," as Krasner has labeled the position.[28] It offers a "state-as-actor" model of the world. So long as one proposes to be understood among neorealists, one must work within this model. At a minimum, this means that for purposes of theory, one must view the state as an entity capable of having certain objectives or interests and of deciding among and deploying alternative means in their service. Thus, for purposes of theory, the state must be treated as an unproblematic unity: an entity whose existence, boundaries, identifying structures, constituencies, legitimations, interests, and capacities to make self-regarding decisions can be treated as given, independent of transnational class and human interests, and undisputed (except, perhaps, by other states). In all of these respects, the state is regarded as the stuff of theorists' unexamined assumptions—a matter upon which theorists will consensually agree, and not as a problematic relation whose consensual acceptance needs explanation. The proposition that the state might be *essentially* problematic or contested is excluded from neorealist theory. Indeed, neorealist theory is prepared to acknowledge problems of the state only to the extent that the state itself, within the framework of its own legitimations, might be prepared to recognize problems and mobilize resources toward their solution.

True, individual neorealists sometimes allow that the theoretical commitment to the state-as-actor construct involves a distortion of sorts. Waltz, for instance, writes that he "can freely admit that states are in fact not unitary, purposive actors."[29] Gilpin can acknowledge that, "strictly speaking, states, as such, have no interests, or what economists call 'utility functions,' nor do bureaucracies, interest groups, or so-called transnational actors, for that matter." He can even go on to say that "the state may be conceived as a coalition of coalitions whose objectives and interests result from the powers and bargaining among the several coalitions comprising the larger society and political elite."[30] And Keohane, as coauthor of *Power and Interdependence*, can certainly recognize that the conditions of "complex interdependence," including the fact of transnational and transgovernmental relations, fall well short of the "realist" assumption that states are "coherent units" with sharp boundaries separating them from their external environments.[31]

28. See Stephen D. Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

29. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 91.

30. Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 18.

31. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), especially chap. 2.

The issue, however, is the theoretical discourse of neorealism as a movement, not the protective clauses that individual neorealists deploy to preempt or deflect criticisms of that discourse's limits. Once one enters this theoretical discourse among neorealists, the state-as-actor model needs no defense. It stands without challenge. Like Waltz, one simply *assumes* that states have the status of unitary actors.[32] Or, like Gilpin, one refuses to be deterred by the mountainous inconsistencies between the state as a coalition of coalitions (presumably in opposition to the losing coalitions against which the winning coalition is formed) and the state as a provider of public goods, protector of citizens' welfare, and solver of the free-rider problem in the name of winners and losers alike. Knowing that the "objectives and foreign policies of states are determined primarily by the interests of their dominant members or ruling coalitions,"[33] one nonetheless simply joins the victors in proclaiming the state a singular actor with a unified set of objectives in the name of the collective good. This proclamation is the starting point of theoretical discourse, one of the unexamined assumptions from which theoretical discourse proceeds.

In short, the state-as-actor assumption is a metaphysical commitment prior to science and exempted from scientific criticism. Despite neorealism's much ballyhooed emphasis on the role of hard falsifying tests as the measure of theoretical progress, neorealism immunizes its statist commitments from any form of falsification. Excluded, for instance, is the historically testable hypothesis that the state-as-actor construct might be not a first-order given of international political life but part of a historical justificatory framework by which dominant coalitions legitimize and secure consent for their precarious conditions of rule.

Two implications of this "state-centricity," itself an ontological principle of neorealist theorizing, deserve emphasis. The first is obvious. As a framework for the interpretation of international politics, neorealist theory cannot accord recognition to—it cannot even comprehend—those global collectivist concepts that are irreducible to logical combinations of state-bounded relations. In other words, global collectivist concepts—concepts of transnational class relations, say, or the interests of humankind—can be granted an objective status only to the extent that they can be interpreted as *aggregations* of relations and interests having logically and historically prior roots within state-bounded societies. Much as the "individual" is a prism through which methodological individualists comprehend collectivist concepts as aggregations of individual wants, needs, beliefs, and actions, so also does the neorealist refract all global collectivist concepts through the prism of the state.[34] Im-

32. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 91.

33. Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 19.

34. Popper understands methodological individualism as the principle that "all social phenomena, and especially the functioning of all social institutions, should always be understood as resulting from the decisions, actions, attitudes, etc. of human individuals. . . . [W]e should never be satisfied by an explanation in terms of so-called 'collectives.' " Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1966), p. 98. Taking states as the living individuals of international life, neorealist statism is understandable in analogous terms.

portantly, this means that neorealist theory implicitly takes a side amidst contending political interests. Whatever the personal commitments of individual neorealists might be, neorealist theory allies with, accords recognition to, and gives expression to those class and sectoral interests (the apexes of Waltz's domestic hierarchies or Gilpin's victorious coalitions of coalitions) that are actually or potentially congruent with state interests and legitimations. It implicitly opposes and denies recognition to those class and human interests which cannot be reduced to concatenations of state interests or transnational coalitions of domestic interests.

The second implication takes longer to spell out, for it relates to neorealist "structuralism"—the neorealist position with respect to structures of the international system. Reflecting on the fourth element of structuralist argument presented above, one might expect the neorealist to accord to the structure of the international system an identity independent of the parts or units (states-as-actors in this case); the identities of the units would be supplied via differentiation. The neorealist orrery disappoints these expectations, however. For the neorealist, the state is *ontologically prior* to the international system. The system's structure is produced by defining states as individual unities and *then* by noting properties that emerge when several such unities are brought into mutual reference. For the neorealist, it is impossible to describe international structures without first fashioning a concept of the state-as-actor.

The proper analogy, as Waltz points out, is classical economic theory—microtheory, not macrotheory. As Waltz puts it, "International-political systems, like economic markets, are formed by the coaction of self-regarding units." They "are individualist in origin, spontaneously generated, and unintended."[35] Other neorealists would agree. Gilpin, for example, follows economists Robert Mundell and Alexander Swoboda in defining a system as "an aggregation of diverse entities united by regular interaction according to a form of control."[36] He then names states as "the principal entities or actors," and he asserts that control over or governance of the international system is a function of three factors, all of which are understood to have their logical and historical roots in the capabilities, interests, and interactions of states: the distribution of power among states, the hierarchy of prestige among states, and rights and rules that have their "primary foundation . . . in the power and interests of the dominant groups or states in a social system."[37] For Gilpin, as for other neorealists, the structure of international politics, far from being an autonomous and absolute whole that expresses itself in the constitution of acting units, is an emergent property produced by the joining of units having a prior existence.

35. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 91.

36. Robert A. Mundell and Alexander K. Swoboda, eds., *Monetary Problems in the International Economy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 343; Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 26.

37. Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 25.

Ruggie's recent review of Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* brings this point home by diagnosing a lapse in Waltz's "structuralism." Informed by structuralist literatures, Ruggie considers the three analytical components (or "depth levels") of Waltz's political structure—organizational principle, differentiation of units, and concentration or diffusion of capabilities—and pinpoints what he takes to be a problem:

> . . . [A] dimension of change is missing from Waltz's model. It is missing because he drops the second analytical component of political structure, differentiation of units, when discussing international systems. And he drops this component as a result of giving an infelicitous interpretation to the sociological term "differentiation," taking it to mean that which denotes *differences* rather than that which denotes *separateness*.[38]

The alleged problem, in other words, is that Waltz has misunderstood the structuralist position on identity and difference (the fourth element presented above). Ruggie moves to put it right by restoring the second "depth level" of political structure, now as principles of differentiation that tell us "on what basis" acting units are individuated. Specifically, he contends that there are contrasting medieval and modern variants of the second depth level of structure: a "heteronomous" institutional framework for the medieval versus the modern institutional framework of "sovereignty." Ruggie's argument is important. From a genuine structuralist point of view, it is indispensable.

Ruggie introduces his argument as a contribution to a "neo-realist synthesis," it is true, and he couches it in an extremely generous interpretation of Waltz's theory. By posing and trying to repair the problem of differentiation in Waltz's theory, however, Ruggie indirectly issues what is so far the strongest critique of the structuralist pretensions in Waltz's neorealism. By posing the problem of differentiation from a structuralist standpoint, Ruggie invites us to wonder why neorealists, most especially Waltz, had not considered the problem before. The answer is simple: neorealism is statist before it is structuralist. From a neorealist point of view, Ruggie's argument is simply superfluous because it treats as problematic, and hence in need of a structural accounting, what neorealists insist on treating as unproblematic—the identity of the state.

In neorealist eyes, there is nothing "infelicitous" about Waltz's interpretation of differentiation. When Waltz takes differentiation to refer to specification of the "functions performed by differentiated units," he is giving the only interpretation possible from a neorealist standpoint.[39] There is no need to decide the basis upon which units are individuated, because the essential individuality of states is already taken for granted. It is embedded in a definition of sovereignty that neorealists accord to states independent

38. Ruggie, "Continuity and Transformation," pp. 273–74, emphasis in original.
39. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 93.

of the system. For Waltz, "To say that a state is sovereign means that it decides for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems." For Gilpin, "The state is sovereign in that it must answer to no higher authority in the international sphere."[40] Whether it be one state in the lone isolation of universal dominion or many interacting, the definition is the same.

Ruggie's critique of Waltz has a familiar ring. His position vis-à-vis Waltz is not unlike the critique of "utilitarian individualism" in the work of Durkheim, upon whom Ruggie draws. "The clincher in Durkheim's argument," writes John O'Neill, "is his demonstration that modern individualism so far from creating industrial society presupposes its differentiation of the sociopsychic space which creates the concepts of personality and autonomy."[41] The clincher in Ruggie's argument is his attempt to show that the sovereign state, so far from creating modern international society, presupposes international society's production of the sociopolitical space within which sovereignty could flourish as the modern concept of international political identity and liberty.

b. Utilitarianism

The aptness of the analogy is no accident. For if neorealism's first commitment is to statism, its second commitment is to a utilitarian perspective on action, social order, and institutional change. By utilitarianism, I do not mean the moral philosophy often associated with Bentham and Mill—a philosophy that holds, for example, that the proper measure of the moral worth of acts and policies is to be found in the value of their consequences. My usage of the term is broader, much more in the sociological sense employed by Durkheim, Polanyi, Parsons, and, more recently, Brian Barry, Charles Camic, and Michael Hechter.[42] As these people have made clear, sociological and utilitarian positions stand sharply opposed. As Camic argues, modern sociology emerged as the critique of utilitarianism.[43] Still, the utilitarian position has refused to die. Indeed, the utilitarian perspective—first outlined by Hobbes and Mandeville, evolving through the classical political economists, and finding more recent expression in the writings of von Mises and Hayek—has "been making steady inroads into the territory that sociology had tra-

40. Ibid., p. 96; Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 17.

41. John O'Neill, "The Hobbesian Problem in Marx and Parsons," in O'Neill, *Sociology as a Skin Trade* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 195–96.

42. See Brian Barry, *Sociologists, Economists, and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937); Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (1944; rpt. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), and *The Livelihood of Man* (New York: Academic Press, 1977); Charles Camic, "The Utilitarians Revisited," *American Journal of Sociology* 85, 3 (1979), pp. 516–50; and Michael Hechter, "Karl Polanyi's Social Theory: A Critique," *Politics & Society* 10, 4 (1981), pp. 399–429.

43. Camic, "Utilitarians Revisited."

ditionally staked out as its own." Today it finds expression in the form of microeconomic theories of politics, game theory, exchange theory, and rational choice theory. Today, Hechter can argue that, "if current social science can boast anything remotely resembling a paradigm, then utilitarianism is its leading candidate."[44] Neorealism shares in the "paradigm."

Broadly construed, utilitarianism is characterized by its individualist and rationalist premises. Its individualism stipulates the theoretical primacy of individual actors rather than of social collectives. The individual acting unit is taken to be essentially private. It exists prior to and independent of larger social institutions and is understood as the autonomous generator of its own ends. Social reality is understood as made up of many such individual actors, inhabiting a world characterized by scarcity—a world in which not all goals can be equally realized and, hence, choices have to be made. Utilitarian rationalism defines rationality in means-ends or instrumental terms: efficient action in the service of established ends whose value or truth is properly the province of the individual actor and cannot be held to account in public terms. Economic rationality is the archetype, the ideal form. What Weber called "substantive rationality" or Habermas called "practical reason" (both of which can pass judgment on ends as well as means) are excluded from the utilitarian notion of rationality. Indeed, insofar as substantive rationality and practical reason presuppose normative structures transcending and irreducible to individual wants and needs, the utilitarian would hold them to be scientifically indefensible metaphysical notions.

Upon these premises, utilitarians found their theories of action, interaction, order, and change. Utilitarian theories of *action* hold that actors behave rationally, in the narrow instrumentalist sense. Actors strive to serve their intrinsic (biologically or psychologically produced) desires or ends in the most efficient means possible. Social *interaction* is interpretable, by direct extension, as instrumental coaction or exchange among individual actors, each party regarded as an external object or instrument in the eyes of the rationally acting other. Utilitarian theories also hold that, at base, *social order* is a derivative relation. It derives entirely from equilibria (dynamic or static, stable or unstable) in the instrumental relations and mutual expectations among rational egoistic individuals. Social institutions are taken to be the consequence of the regularization of mutual expectations. As for its theory of *institutional change*, utilitarianism proposes that changes occur spontaneously, as a consequence of relative changes in the competing demands and capabilities of individual actors. Social order being a consequence of instrumental relations among individual actors, changes in actors' interests and means give rise to demands for change and, among other things, new coalitions.

It is important to add that such modes of action, interaction, order, and

44. Hechter, "Karl Polanyi's Social Theory," p. 399.

change are deemed intrinsically objective, in need of neither normative defense nor historical accounting. Their realization in practice, while not always to be observed historically, is taken to be an essential, objective, and progressive tendency of history. It follows that, for the utilitarian, modes of action following the logic of economic rationality are inherently objective. The existence of an economy whose actors obey this form of rationality is interpreted as a realization of universal and objective truths existing independent of any social-normative basis. Hence, for the utilitarian, the market presents itself as an ideal model of rational, objective action, interaction, order, and change—a framework for the interpretation of political as well as economic life.

Neorealism approaches the international system from a utilitarian point of view. The major difference, of course, stems from the neorealist's statism. For the neorealist, states are the rational individual actors whose interests and calculating actions and coactions give form and moment to the international system. Such a position could easily provoke lengthy critical analysis. For present purposes, I shall confine myself to a brief, two-step commentary.

The first step is simply to note that the utilitarian model is indeed the effective model of international politics in neorealist research programs. This is not to say that neorealists systematically exclude insights or hypotheses from other points of view. Among neorealism's noteworthy traits is an unexcelled eclecticism: many neorealists will *use* an argument, a clause, a phrase from almost any source if it suits their purposes.[45] The point, rather, is that utilitarian premises together with statist commitments establish the anchoring "purposes" that all these borrowings serve. To use Imre Lakatos's familiar terminology, utilitarian statism is the "hard core" of the neorealist "scientific research programme." Around this hard core, neorealists develop a "protective belt" of "auxiliary hypotheses" derived from many sources.[46]

This claim, which goes to the orienting structure or "grammar" of neorealist practice, cannot be demonstrated in a few pages. Two examples will have to suffice. The first is the neorealist treatment of power. In neorealism, there is no concept of social power behind or constitutive of states and their interests. Rather, power is generally regarded in terms of capabilities that are said to be distributed, possessed, and potentially used *among* states-as-actors. They are said to exist independent of the actors' knowing or will. They are regarded as finally collapsible, in principle, into a unique, objective measure of a singular systemic distribution (as if there were one uniquely true point of view from which the distribution could be measured). Waltz puts it this way: "To be politically pertinent, power has to be defined in

45. What are we to make of a structuralism, for example, that deploys both Adam Smith and Emile Durkheim for its authorities without once stopping to consider the contrarieties between the two?

46. Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

terms of the distribution of capabilities [among agents or actors]; the extent of one's power cannot be inferred from the results one may or may not get. . . . [A]n agent is powerful to the extent that he affects others more than they affect him."[47] Gilpin's understanding is not dissimilar. Power, he writes, "refers simply to the military, economic, and technological capabilities of states." As he is quick to add, "This definition obviously leaves out important and intangible elements that affect outcomes of political actions, such as public morale, qualities of leadership, and situational factors. It also excludes what E. H. Carr called 'power over opinion.' These psychological and frequently incalculable aspects of power and international relations are more closely associated with the concept of prestige. . . ."[48] Such understandings of power are rooted in a utilitarian understanding of international society: an understanding in which (a) there exists no form of sociality, no intersubjective consensual basis, prior to or constitutive of individual actors or their private ends, and hence (b) the *essential* determinants of actors' relative effects on one another will be found in the capabilities they respectively control. Only within such a conception could one believe, as Waltz believes, that "power provides the means of maintaining one's autonomy." Only within such a framework is one inclined to join Gilpin in reducing matters of morale, leadership, and power over opinion to "psychological" factors.

The second is the neorealist conception of international order. For the neorealist, there are no rules, norms, mutual expectations, or principles of practice prior to or independent of actors, their essential ends, and their capabilities. In the last analysis, if not immediately, the evolution of all rules follows from the regularization and breakdown of mutual expectations in accordance with the vectoring of power and interest among states-as-actors. It follows that for the neorealist, a world of a multiplicity of actors having relatively equal power is a formula for chaos. The potentiality for order increases as the hierarchical concentration of power steepens. For Waltz, who is concerned lest the envisioned concentration reduce to a single dominant state, thereby overturning the fundamental organizational principle of international politics, the optimal concentration is with two states. For other neorealists, who somehow manage to ignore Waltz's concerns while citing his "structuralist" authority, the condition of maximal order is a hierarchy centering power within the grasp of a singular hegemon, a state, in Keohane and Nye's words, that is "powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing interstate relations, and willing to do so."[49] Even in the analysis

47. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 192.

48. Gilpin, *War and Change*, pp. 13–14.

49. Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, chap. 3. See also Robert O. Keohane, "The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Regimes, 1967–1977," in Ole R. Holsti, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alexander George, eds., *Change in the International System* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980); and Keohane, "Hegemonic Leadership and U.S. Foreign Economic Policy in the 'Long Decade' of the 1950s," in Avery and Rapkin, *America in a Changing World.*

of international regimes, this emphasis persists. As Krasner puts it, "The most common proposition [among neorealists] is that hegemonic distributions of power lead to stable, open economic regimes because it is in the interest of a hegemonic state to pursue such a policy and because the hegemon has the resources to provide the collective goods needed to make such a system function effectively."[50] In short, neorealism regards international order entirely as a derivative relation. Deriving from the rational coactions of individual actors, order is taken to be finally dependent upon their respective interests and relative means of influencing one another.[51]

The second step in this two-step commentary is to consider some of the objections with which neorealism, as an instance of utilitarian thought, must contend. Three established criticisms of utilitarian thought, all centering on the utilitarian conception of order, deserve mention. As will be seen, the objections suggest a contradiction in neorealist thought, one that threatens to fracture the statist pillars of neorealist international political theory.

The three objections can be briefly summarized. The first objection has its roots in sociology. It is found in Talcott Parsons's diagnosis (informed by Durkheim and Weber) of the so-called Hobbesian problem: in the absence of a framework of norms consensually accepted by its members, it might be possible momentarily to establish an orderly social aggregate (a "social contract," for example) among instrumentally rational individuals. Except under conditions of absolute stasis, however, it cannot be maintained. The second objection to the utilitarian conception of order is developed within the utilitarian framework itself. This is Mancur Olson's critique.[52] As aptly summarized by Hechter:

> Rational self-interested actors will not join large organizations to pursue collective goods when they can reap the benefit of other people's activ-

50. Stephen D. Krasner, "Regimes and the Limits of Realism: Regimes as Autonomous Variables," *International Organization* 36 (Spring 1982), p. 499. Krasner in this paper demonstrates that he is among the most open-minded and criticism-conscious of neorealists. He explores the limits of neorealism; in fact, he goes right to the brink of undermining its statist props altogether. Exploring various relationships between regimes, state interests, political capabilities, and state practices, he comes close to raising the possibility that regimes (principles, norms, and procedures that have some autonomy from the vectoring of state behaviors) might be *constitutive* of states and their interests.

51. I am careful in my wording here, because neorealists, like most utilitarian thinkers, are slippery about the position they in fact take regarding rational action and the production of order. In a recent review of Mancur Olson's *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), Brian Barry makes a similar point. He notes that Olson could be offering a "monocausal explanation," a primus inter pares explanation, or an explanation in terms of a factor that is not always the most important but that will always emerge on top when other factors are not too strong (which is not saying much). Barry says that he is "not at all clear what position Mancur Olson himself wants to take." Barry, "Some Questions About Explanation," *International Studies Quarterly* 27 (March 1983). Considering the same three possibilities in neorealist explanations of order, I am not at all sure what position neorealists mean to take.

52. See Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

> ity to pursue those ends. This means that the rational actor in the utilitarian model will always be a free rider whenever given the opportunity. Thus, according to utilitarian behavioral premises, social organization is unlikely to arise even among those individuals who have a strong personal interest in reaping the benefits that such organization provides.[53]

The third objection, and no doubt the most important, is Marx's. Anticipating the broad outlines of both Parsons's and Olson's arguments, Marx went beyond them to try to draw out what utilitarians must presuppose if they are to hold to their "contractarian" (i.e., instrumentalist or exchange-based) understandings of order in society. Marx argued convincingly that the myth of the contract, put into practice, depends upon a dominant class's ability to externalize the costs of keeping promises onto a class that lacks the freedom to contract; the Hobbesian "state of war" is thus held in check through one-sided power in a "class war."[54] Utilitarian order thus presupposes class relations (and associated political, legal, and institutional relations), which its conscious individualist premises prohibit it from confronting, comprehending, or explaining.

How do neorealists deal with these objections? The answer, quite simply, is that they finesse them. In a bold stroke, neorealism embraces these objections as articles of faith. Turning problems of utilitarian analysis into virtues, neorealism redefines the Hobbesian problem of order as an "ordering principle" of international politics. Struggles for power among states become the normal process of orderly change and succession. The free-rider problem among states becomes a global "sociological" legitimation for hegemonic states, whose private interests define the public "good" and whose preponderant capabilities see to it that more "good" gets done. As for the Marxian critique, it is accepted, albeit with a twist. It is accepted not as global class analysis per se but in the idea that order among the great powers, the great *states*, is ever dependent on the perpetuation of a hierarchy of domination among great and small states. Inequality, Waltz says, has its virtues. Order is among them.[55]

One has to have some grudging admiration for theorists who would make such a move. They must have enormous courage, and not just because such positions expose neorealists to a lot of self-righteous moralizing. Neorealists must be courageous because their attempt to finesse objections to utilitarian accounts of order involves a bluff of sorts. It counts on our failure to notice that, at a certain moment in making their move, neorealists are suspended in thin idealist air.

That moment comes when, conceding objections to utilitarian accounts,

53. Hechter, "Karl Polanyi's Social Theory," p. 403, note 6.
54. O'Neill, "The Hobbesian Problem."
55. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 131–32.

the neorealist embraces them to describe international order *among states* at the "level" of the international system. The rhetorical force of this concession, ironically, is to divert the critic of utilitarian conceptions of order into momentary complicity with the neorealist's own statism, a statism that would collapse on its face if the critic were to raise the same objections at the level of the state. That is to say, the neorealist counts on our being so awestruck by the Hobbesian and free-rider dilemmas we confront at the "international level" that we shall join in neglecting the same dilemmas at the level of the state. The neorealist counts on our failure to notice that the objections accepted at the level of the international system can equally well be turned against the metaphysical prop upon which depends the reification of an international political system analytically distinguishable from domestic and transnational relations: the conception of the state-as-actor.

The neorealist move is, in short, a sleight of hand. For despite its statism, neorealism can produce no theory of the state capable of satisfying the state-as-actor premises of its international political theory. On the contrary, by adopting a utilitarian theory of action, order, and change, neorealists implicitly give the lie to their *idée fixe*, the ideal of the state-as-actor upon which their distinction among "levels" and their whole theory of international politics depend.

c. Positivism

I am being unfair. To suggest, as I have, that neorealists play a trick of sorts is to imply some kind of intentional duping of an innocent audience. This is surely wrong. It is wrong because neorealists are as much victims as perpetrators. And it is wrong because, in truth, the bedazzled audience is far from innocent. We already share complicity in the illusion. Neither neorealists nor we, the fawning audience, can imagine seeing the world in any other way.

Why should this be so? Why, for example, is it so difficult to see that the utilitarian perspective neorealists embrace at the "international level" undermines the state-as-actor notion upon which their whole theoretical edifice, including the distinction between levels, depends? The history of utilitarian thought is, after all, largely the story of philosophical *opposition* to the "personalist" concept of state required by neorealism's international political theory. In part, surely, this refusal to see is due to the blinding light of the halo surrounding the state in neorealist thought. But in part, too, this blindness is due to the third commitment of the neorealist orrery. Neorealist theory is theory of, by, and for positivists. It secures instantaneous recognition, I want to suggest, because it merely projects onto the plane of explicit theory certain metatheoretical commitments that have long been implicit in the habits of positivist method. It tells us what, hidden in our method, we have known all along.

Born in struggle, "positivism" is of course a disputed term. Many American political scientists are unaware of its rich currents of meaning in recent European, Latin American, and North American sociology, philosophy, and anthropology. Many trivialize and thus evade the term by misequating positivism with "mindless number crunching," brute empiricism, inductivist logic, or narrow logical positivism of the Vienna Circle. And the term has suffered at the hands of a number of silly or naive radicals who, having encountered Lenin's indictment, use the term as a synonym for regime-supporting scholarship or bourgeois social science. Many of these radicals are positivists themselves.[56]

At the very minimum, positivism means two complementary things. In its most general meaning, positivism refers to the so-called "received model" of *natural* science.[57] At the same time, and apropos the subject-object, man-nature dualisms implicit in this "received model," one can follow Michel Foucault in distinguishing positivist from eschatological discourse. For eschatological discourse (evident in phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and some hermeneutical sciences) the objective truth of the discourse lies within and is produced by the discourse itself. By contrast, for positivist discourse, with its naturalistic bias, the truth of discourse lies in the external object.[58]

In general, positivist discourse holds to four expectations. The first is that scientific knowledge aims to grasp a reality that exists in accord with certain fixed structural or causal relations which are independent of human subjectivity (hence their objectivity) and internally harmonious or contradiction-free (as if authored from a single point of view). The second is that science seeks to formulate technically useful knowledge, knowledge that enhances human capacities to make predictions, orient efficient action, and exert control

56. I hold that *all* social science aspiring to theory has a positivist aspect in the sense given below. This is true of Hegel, Marx, Lenin, Bourdieu, Foucault, Morgenthau, Alker, and me. Following Bourdieu, even dialectical knowledge *contains* the objectivistic, the positivistic. As I use the term here, however, a movement is "positivist" if it appears to be a one-dimensional positivism. The issue is not the purging of positivism—the positivist moment is an inescapable moment of all inquiry—but the realization of a more adequate "two-dimensional" or dialectical perspective by bringing the positivist moment into unceasing critical tension with the practical moment such that each side ever problematizes the other. Valuable readings on the subject of positivism and its limits include Gerard Radnitzky, *Contemporary Schools of Metascience*, 3d enl. ed. (Chicago: Regnery, 1973); Richard Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Political and Social Theory* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976); the first chapter of Michael J. Shapiro, *Language and Political Understanding* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Hayward R. Alker Jr., "Logic, Dialectics, Politics: Some Recent Controversies," in Alker, ed., *Dialectical Logics for the Political Sciences*, vol. 7 of the Poznan Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1982); and Theodore W. Adorno et al., *The Positivism Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. by G. Adey and D. Frisby (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1976).

In my present discussion, I am especially concerned with that strain, still predominant in Anglo-American sociology, anchored in Weberian solutions to the problem of human subjectivity and meaning in a naturalistic social science.

57. Giddens, *Central Problems*, p. 257.

58. Foucault, *The Order of Things*.

in the service of given human values. The third is that sought-after knowledge is value-neutral. The fourth, consistent with the first three, holds that the truth of claims and concepts is to be tested by their correspondence to a field of external experience as read via (problematic) instruments or interpretative rules.[59]

When one turns to positive *social* science, at least one other expectation needs to be added to the list. This is the expectation that "the phenomena of human subjectivity . . . do not offer any particular barriers to the treatment of social conduct as an 'object' on a par with objects in the natural world."[60] Obviously, this is a most troublesome expectation. Making good on it requires overcoming a double problem inherent in human subjectivity. On the one side, human subjectivity raises a problem from the perspective of social actors: the problem of meaningful, value-laden social action. On the other side, there is a problem from the analyst's point of view: the analyst's own norms, values, and understandings potentially negate the analyst's ability to detach himself or herself from the social world, to treat it, on a par with nature, as an external, objective, "dumb generality." Positivist social science has had to "solve" this double problem.

As it turns out, the "solutions" are worth a few moments of our time. For it is in these solutions that we encounter the *social-theoretical* commitments embedded within dominant conceptions of social science itself. In particular, I have in mind positivist solutions to the problem of human subjectivity anchored in an unquestioned commitment to the objective, historical force of instrumental or technical rationality. Let me briefly describe this commitment and then consider its role in "solutions" to the dual problem of subjectivity in positivist social science. As I shall indicate, the result is a metatheoretical outlook implicit in positivist method, which circumscribes scientific criticism and limits the range of theories about society that can be scientifically entertained. As I shall also suggest, these limits establish among positivists an uncritical receptivity to neorealists' conceptions of the international system.

Again, the commitment in question is a commitment to the essential objectivity of technical rationality. According to this (typically unspoken) commitment, which also appears at the center of utilitarian thought, means-ends rationality is inherently objective, value-neutral, void of normative or substantive content. Technical rationality is said to inhabit the domain of the "is" rather than the domain of the "ought," and hence its truth requires no normative defense. Indeed, as exemplified by Max Weber's resignation to the world historical "rationalization" of all modes of life, technical rationality is taken to be a *necessary* progressive force in history. Rationalization

59. Anthony Giddens, ed., *Positivism and Sociology* (London: Heinemann, 1974), chap. 1. Compare with the list in Alker, "Logic, Dialectics, Politics."

60. Giddens, *Positivism and Sociology*, p. 4.

involves the breaking down of traditional limits and the progressive absorption of all institutions of life within a mode of thought that aims to reduce all aspects of human action to matters of purposive-rational action—efficiency in the service of pregiven ends. For Weber, this tendency was inexorable, its outcome inevitable: the "iron cage" of a totally bureaucratized life.[61] Science, committed to the objectivity of technical reason, is on the side of this necessary historical tendency. It is at the leading edge.

Immediately one can see that this commitment replicates in a novel way the classical justification of positivist science as a critical, even revolutionary force, a force that demystifies all forms of romanticism, dispenses with atavistic myth, and establishes the "end of ideology." What may be harder to see, especially for positivists, is that this commitment ties positivism to an ideology of its own. It endorses a metahistorical faith in scientific-technical progress that positivist science itself cannot question. Insofar as the commitment affords "solutions" to the dual problem of human subjectivity, it justifies itself in its own technical terms, enriching the theoretical content of positivist method qua political ideology. Having mentioned Weber's position as exemplary, it is appropriate to consider the role of this commitment in Weber's own (now conventional) solutions to the two sides of the problem.

In Weber, the first side of the problem, the side concerned with the meaningful character of social action, could be reduced to this: how can there be a naturalistic social science, one that produces objective knowledge capable of calculating and predicting social outcomes, given that human action is necessarily "subjective" in character? Weber confronted this problem in the specific context of the German historical school.[62] Authors like Roscher and Knies had concluded that, given the subjective quality of human action, human action is not calculable or predictable in the same way that one might calculate or predict events in the natural world. In this sense, they concluded, human action has an "irrational" quality.[63] In Weber's view, this conflation of "subjectivism" and "irrationalism" presented a serious obstacle to the reconciliation of naturalism and sociological and historical method. He thus set out the classic synthesis to which much of modern positivist social science is indebted.

Premised on the inherent objectivity of technical rationality, the synthesis was this: if we abstract and regard as objectively given an agent's substantively

61. See Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. and trans. by H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 44–45. See also Herbert Marcuse, "Industrialization and Capitalism in the Work of Max Weber," in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968); Jürgen Habermas, "Technology and Science as Ideology," in *Towards a Rational Society*; and Anthony Giddens, *Politics and Sociology in the Thought of Max Weber* (London: Macmillan, 1972).

62. Giddens, *Positivism and Sociology*, p. 5.

63. Max Weber, "Roscher und Knies und das Irrationalitätsproblem," in *Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr), pp. 127–37, and translated as "Subjectivism and Determinism," in Giddens, *Positivism and Sociology*, pp. 23–31.

empty logic of technical reason, then in interpreting the agent's action we can assume that, from this objective standpoint, society will appear to the individual agent as a subjectless set of external constraints, a *meaningless* second nature. We shall then be able to say that meaning enters society primarily through the autonomously generated ends of individual acting agents: meaningful action is merely *motivated* action. With that, we have our objective, naturalistic social science. For with knowledge of an agent's pregiven ends and "meaningless" social constraints, "meaningful" and "rational" subjective relations become calculable, predictable, and susceptible to causal accounts.[64]

For most North American theorists of international and comparative politics, Weber's solution is a "methodological principle" whose obviousness precludes any need for justification. Yet as recollection of the Weberian moment makes clear, the methodological principle implicit in this solution restricts us to a particular conception of society. We may call this conception an *actor model.* Upon commencing any analysis of a social system, the habit-born principle predisposes the positivist to identify the irreducible actors whose rational decisions will mediate the entry of meaning into social reality. Thanks to this "principle," the committed positivist knows almost "instinctively" that all explanations of social action must ultimately come to rest with the interpretation of some frozen set of actors, their values and their ends. All analysis comes to rest with actors who are capable of exercising technical rationality; whose ends, values, and boundaries separating one another are taken to be given and independent of communication and interaction among the several; who accordingly must appear to one another, individually and in aggregates, as external constraints; and who must relate to one another, in the last analysis, in strictly instrumental terms.[65]

Weber's solution to the *second side* of the problem of human subjectivity is equally important. The problem, seen from the second side, is the possible confounding of scientific detachment and objectivity owing to the fact that the social scientist's own norms, values, and understandings implicate him or her in the social world examined. As Weber recognized, even one's categories of analysis and the meanings one attaches to them depend upon normative commitments that bind one to the social world. All knowledge has its socially rooted presuppositions.

Weber's solution to this second side of the problem is also anchored in a commitment to the essential objectivity of technical rationality. The solution

64. See ibid.

65. I am saying not that the predisposition toward actor models reflects conscious conformity to a norm, but that social scientists do not conceive of the principle because it is so faithfully observed that, in general, social scientists cannot conceive of thinking about the world in any other ways. The principle at once exhausts and limits the span of active social reasoning. My thinking regarding the irresistible tug of "actor models" is largely sparked by a conversation with Robert North, although I do not know that he would agree with my characterization of this predisposition as methodologically rooted.

involves radicalizing the separation between the process by which the validity of scientific concepts and knowledge claims may be scientifically decided and the process by which scientists take interest in, generate, or come to recognize as meaningful their concepts and knowledge claims. In Weber's view, social scientific discourse would center on the former process—a process whose objectivity would be assured because it could and should be monopolized by the logic of technical rationality. It would concentrate on issues decidable within technical rationality's own inherently objective terms.[66]

Thus, while individual scientists' norms, values, and socially established understandings may help decide the direction in which the scientific beacon will cast its light, science *as an enterprise* cannot pass judgment on the truth of values, ethics, ends, or understandings, including those at work in scientists' choices of what to study. Scientific discourse cannot critically examine the meaning structures at work in and accounting for scientists' mutual recognition of the concepts they deploy. Scientific discourse can speak decisively only to the efficiency of means. In sum, science *as an enterprise* preserves its objectivity by excluding from its terrain all questions that cannot be formulated and solved within the allegedly objective logic of technical rationality.

This solution, like the first, is now widely taken for granted as one of science's delimiting features. Like the first, too, it buttresses the commitment of positivist science to an actor model. It does so primarily by limiting the range of scientific criticism. In particular, it excludes discussion of forms of social consensus that might themselves be value-laden, that might be historically contingent and susceptible to change, and that might nonetheless coordinate human practices and distributions of resources in ways that produce and accord recognition to the consensually recognized actors (including their boundaries and ends) which positivists take as the irreducible elements of analyses.

Taken together, then, the two solutions establish a methodological predisposition that is anything but neutral with respect to social ordering possibilities. On the contrary, they implicate and profoundly limit the range of possibilities that theory can contemplate if it is to find acceptance as objective, scientific theory. Even before the first self-consciously theoretical word passes anyone's lips, a theoretical picture worth a thousand words is already etched in the minds of positivist speakers and hearers. Born of long practice conforming to the solutions just described, this picture, a kind of scheme, orders and limits expectations about what explicit theoretical discourse can do and say. In particular, it commits scientific discourse to an "actor model" of social reality—a model within which science itself is incapable of questioning the historical *constitution* of social actors, cannot question their ends, but can only advise them as to the efficiency of means.

Here in this theory-masked-as-method we find a partial explanation of

66. See Shapiro, *Language and Political Understanding*, pp. 5–6.

the ease with which neorealists are able to delude themselves as well as us, their admiring audience. Despite the contradiction between neorealists' utilitarian conception of politics and their statist commitments, neorealists are able to perpetuate the state-as-actor illusion in their conception of the international system. They are able to do so because, as positivists, we are methodologically predisposed to look for precisely the kind of model they "reveal." Without an actor model, we somehow sense, we shall lack any scientific point of entry into a *meaningful understanding* of the international system; the system will appear to us, we worry, as a meaningless swirl of "disembodied forces." They are further able to do so because, as positivists, we join them in excluding from the realm of proper scientific discourse precisely those modes of criticism that would allow us to unmask the move for what it is. At the very moment we begin to question this state-as-actor conception, we are given to feel that we have stumbled beyond the legitimate grounds of science, into the realm of personal ethics, values, loyalties, or ends. We are given to feel that our complaints have no scientific standing. And so, as scientists, we swallow our questions. We adopt the posture of Waltz's utter detachment, Gilpin's fatalism, Krasner's wonderment, or Keohane's Weberian resignation with respect to the powers that be. We might not like it, we say, but this is the world that is. As scientists, we think we cannot say otherwise.

d. Structuralism

There is more to the story of neorealism's success than this, however. As noted earlier, the decisive moment in neorealism's triumph was its celebrated structuralist turn. As also noted, this structuralist turn would appear to hold out a promise for a deepening of international political discourse. Now, having examined the other three aspects of the neorealist orrery, we can return at last to neorealist structuralism and consider once again its attractions. We can listen as it explodes the one-time limits of international political discourse. We can look to see how it penetrates beneath commonsense appearances of the given order. We can sift through the arguments to find the many ways in which this structuralism transcends the confines of utilitarianism, statism, and positivism—perhaps enriching them by disclosing their deeper historical significance. We can listen, look, and sift some more. And what do we find? Disappointment, primarily.

The reason is now beginning to become clear: neorealists slide all too easily between two concepts of the whole, one structuralist in the sense described earlier and one atomist and physicalist. The structuralist posits the possibility of a structural whole—a deep social subjectivity—having an autonomous existence independent of, prior to, and constitutive of the elements. From a structuralist point of view, a structural whole cannot be described by starting with the parts as abstract, already defined entities, taking note of their external

joining, and describing emergent properties among them. The standpoint of the structural whole affords the only objective perspective. By contrast, the atomist conception describes the whole precisely in terms of the external joinings of the elements, including emergent properties produced by the joinings and potentially limiting further movement or relations among the elements. Clearly, in this conception, the whole has no existence independent of the parts taken together. But it may be possible that, from the point of view of any one part (a point of view that remains legitimate within an atomistic perspective), the whole may exist independent of that part or its possible movements. From this standpoint, the standpoint of the single part, the whole is an external physical relation—a "second nature" to be dealt with, in the last analysis, only physically or instrumentally. It cannot be otherwise, for no prior intersubjective unity joins part and whole.[67]

Neorealism has managed to conflate these two concepts of the whole. Consider the one position, the misnamed "sociological position," that many neorealists take to be exemplary: Waltz's position. As noted earlier, Waltz understands "international structure" not as a deep, internal relation prior to and constitutive of social actors but as an external joining of states-as-actors who have precisely the boundaries, ends, and self-understandings that theorists accord to them on the basis of unexamined common sense. In turn—and here is the coup—Waltz grants this structure a life of its own independent of the parts, the states-as-actors; and he shows in countless ways how this structure limits and disposes action on the part of states such that, on balance, the structure is reproduced and actors are drawn into conformity with its requisites. But how is the independence of this structural whole established? It is not established independent of the parts taken together, for it is never anything more than the logical consequence of the parts taken together. Nor is it established by anchoring it in any deep intersubjective structure of the state-systemic whole. Indeed, Waltz systematically purges from the realist legacy all hints that subjective relations might be, in his terminology, "systemic"; true to Waltz's atomism, all subjective relations are interpreted as psychological relations, and propositions that refer to them are thus banished as "reductionist."

Rather, Waltz establishes the independence of the structured whole from the idealized point of view of the lone, isolated state-as-actor, which cannot alone alter the whole and cannot rely on others to aid it in bringing about change in the whole's deepest structures. We are encouraged to glimpse and authenticate the independence of this structure, in other words, from the standpoint of a frozen abstraction: the point of view of the single state-as-actor, or the points of view of any number of states-as-actors, one at a time. These, though, are precisely the states-as-actors (or, more correctly, this is the same fixed, abstract state-as-actor category) with which the theorist began.

67. See Ollman, *Alienation*, Appendix 2.

The autonomy of the neorealist whole is established precisely from the hypostatized point of view of the idealized parts whose appearances as independent entities provided the starting point of the analysis, the basic material, the props without which the whole physical structure could never have been erected. From start to finish, we never escape or penetrate these appearances. From start to finish, Waltz's is an atomistic conception of the international system.

At the same time, once neorealists do arrive at their physicalistic notion of structure, they do attribute to it some of the qualities of structure in structuralist thought. Neorealists do tend to grant to the international political system "absolute predominance over the parts." In neorealism, as in structuralism, diachrony is subordinated to synchrony, and change is interpretable solely within the fixed logic of the system. And neorealists, like structuralists, do tend to regard the structure that they describe in the singular. Thus, as noted earlier, there *are* definite isomorphisms between aspects of neorealist thought and structuralist principles.

This, however, is no compliment. For what it means is that neorealism gives us the worst of two worlds. In neorealism we have atomism's superficiality combined with structuralism's closure such that, once we are drawn into the neorealist circle, we are condemned to circulate entirely at the surface level of appearances. And what an idealist circle it is! What we have in neorealism's so-called structuralism is the commonsense idealism of the powerful, projected onto the whole in a way that at once necessitates and forgives that power. It is the statist idealism developed from the point of view of the one state (or, more properly, the dominant coalition) that can afford the illusion that it is a finished state-as-actor because, for a time, it is positioned such that the whole world pays the price of its illusions.

With apologies to E. P. Thompson, I would suggest that there is a certain "snake-like" quality to neorealist structuralism. The head of the snake is an unreflective state-as-actor, which knows itself only to rely on itself and which will not recognize its own limits or dependence upon the world beyond its skin. It slithers around hissing "self-help" and projecting its own unreflectivity onto the world. Finding its own unreflectiveness clearly reflected in others, it gets its own tail into its mouth, and the system is thus defined. Asked to describe the system so defined, the snake says that it reproduces itself, and it swallows more of its tail. What, though, of the values or norms of this system? The values and norms, the snake answers, are those that reflect the power and interests of the powerful and interested. What, then, of power? The snake—or what is left of it, for it is now a wriggling knot—has an answer for this, too. Power is rooted in those capabilities which provide a basis for the state-as-actor's autonomy. And what of autonomy? In a final gulp, the snake answers. Autonomy is the state-as-actor's privilege of not having to

reflect because the whole world bends to its unreflected projections of itself. "Plop! The snake has disappeared into total theoretical vacuity."[68]

As Thompson says of another structuralism: "It is, of course, a highly conservative vacuity; what is governs what is whose first function is to preserve the integrity of is-ness; what dominates has the functional imperative of preserving its own dominance." Thompson's words are apt. Neorealist structuralism lends itself wonderfully well to becoming an apologia for the status quo, an excuse for domination, and "an invective against 'utopian' and 'maladjusted' heretics" who would question the givenness of the dominant order.[69]

In *The Poverty of Historicism*, Karl Popper concerned himself with the totalitarian implications of certain progressivist versions of structuralism to which he gave the label "historicism."[70] What we find in neorealist structuralism is a *historicism of stasis*. It is a historicism that freezes the political institutions of the current world order while at the same time rendering absolute the autonomy of technical rationality as the organon of social progress to which all aspects of this order, including states-as-actors, must bow. It is a historicism that almost perfectly mirrors Hans Morgenthau's understanding of the "totalitarian state of mind."[71]

> . . . Whereas perfectionism creates an abstract ideal to which it tries to elevate political life through force or exhortation or reform, totalitarianism, that is, the totalitarian state of mind, identifies the ideal with the facts of political life. What is, is good because it is, and power is to the totalitarian not only a fact of social life with which one must come to terms but also the ultimate standard for judging human affairs and the ideal source of all human values. He says "Yes" to his lust for power, and he recognizes no transcendent standard, no spiritual concept which

68. Thompson, *Poverty of Theory*, p. 77.
69. Ibid., pp. 77, 73.
70. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961).
71. So dangerous is the term that I must once again hasten to stress that I am addressing the logic of the neorealist movement as expressed in its theories and not the consciously held values, intentions, or ideals of individual neorealists. I readily stipulate that Krasner, Gilpin, Keohane, Waltz, and other neorealists are not champions of totalitarianism in their consciously held *personal* values. I readily stipulate, too, that some neorealists, like Gilpin in his *War and Change*, can moralize at length in their professional writings and do express pluralistic values in their moralizing. The problem is—and this is my charge—that neorealist discourse grants absolutely no scientific standing to moral norms. At best, the moralizing of neorealist scholars is recognized as a proclamation of personal commitments, belief, or faith on the part of individuals, and not as an argument whose truth content is decidable within scientific discourse or groundable within theory. The result is a scientific theory that says no to neorealists' expressed values and yes to totalitarian expectations—hence the aura of quiet despairing (but not theoretically describable irony) surrounding some neorealist arguments. Sadly, many neorealists interpret their own resignation to such a situation as a kind of scientific tough-mindedness, a form of "realism," when in fact their situation is largely attributable to unquestioning acceptance of a moral system: the moral norms of economic reason and positivist science.

might tame and restrain the lust for power by confronting it with an ideal alien and hostile to political domination.[72]

Of course, neorealism's totalitarian implications are only partly to be discovered in its celebration of power before order. They are also present in neorealism's silences, in those aspects of history neorealism denies, omits, or represses. As Aldous Huxley reminds us, the greatest triumphs of totalitarian propaganda have been accomplished "not by doing something, but by refraining from doing. Great is the truth, but still greater, from a practical point of view, is silence about truth."[73] Neorealist structuralism is silent about four dimensions of history. I will call these the "four p's": process, practice, power, and politics.

First, neorealist structuralism denies *history as process*. Like other static structuralisms, neorealist theory has two characteristics. One is a "fixity of theoretical categories" such that each is a category of stasis even when it is set in motion among other moving parts. The other characteristic is that all movement is confined within a closed field whose limits are defined by the pregiven structure. Thompson very clearly articulates the consequences of such a conception: "[H]istory *as process*, as open ended indeterminate eventuation—but not for that reason devoid of rational *logic* or of determining *pressures*—in which categories are defined in particular contexts but are continuously undergoing historical redefinition, and whose structure is not pre-given but protean, continually changing in form and in articulation—all of this . . . must be denied."[74]

Second, neorealism joins all modes of historicism in denying the historical significance of *practice*, the moment at which men and women enter with greater or lesser degrees of consciousness into the making of their world. For the neorealist intellectual, men and women, statesmen and entrepreneurs, appear as mere supports for the social process that produces their will and the logics by which they serve it. In particular, people are reduced to some idealized homo oeconomicus, able only to carry out, but never to reflect critically on, the limited rational logic that the system demands of them. They are reduced in the last analysis to mere objects who must participate in reproducing the whole or, as the enlightened intellectual knows, fall by the wayside of history. True, neorealists would never admit that theory is without "practical relevance." But for them, relevance finds its measure only in terms of the technical adequacy of the theorists' advice to agents of power, and technical adequacy consists solely in the enhancement of the efficiency of means under objective structural constraints. Nowhere in neorealist categories do we find room for the idea that men and women who are the

72. Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Escape from Power," in Morgenthau's *Dilemmas of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 244–45.

73. Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (London: Vanguard, 1952), p. 14. The foreword was authored in 1946.

74. Thompson, *Poverty of Theory*, pp. 83–84.

objects of theory can themselves theorize about their lives; are in fact engaged in a continuing struggle to shape and redefine their understandings of themselves, their circumstances, their agencies of collective action, and the very categories of social existence; do indeed orient their practices in light of their understandings; and, thanks to all of this, do give form and motion to the open-ended processes by which the material conditions of their practices are made, reproduced, and transformed. Neorealist structuralism cannot allow this to be so. For to do so would mean that neorealist theory would itself be a mere part of history, and not the intellectual master of history it aspires to be.

Third, for all its emphasis on "power politics," neorealism has no comprehension of, and in fact denies, the social basis and social limits of *power*. For the neorealist, as we have seen, power must be ultimately reducible to a matter of capabilities, or means, under the control of the unreflective actor whose status as an actor is given from the start. No other position on power could possibly be compatible with neorealism's atomistic and utilitarian conceptions of international order. Yet such a position strictly rules out a *competence model* of social action. According to a competence model, the power of an actor, and even its status as an agent competent to act, is not in any sense attributable to the inherent qualities or possessions of a given entity. Rather, the power and status of an actor depends on and is limited by the conditions of its *recognition* within a community as a whole. To have power, an agent must first secure its recognition as an agent capable of having power, and, to do that, it must first demonstrate its competence in terms of the collective and coreflective structures (that is, the practical cognitive schemes and history of experience) by which the community confers meaning and organizes collective expectations. It is always by way of performance in reference to such collectively "known" (but not necessarily intellectually accessible) generative schemes that actors gain recognition and are *empowered*. Thus, according to a competence model, building power always has a community-reflective performative aspect. Thus, too, the power of an actor always has its limits. Although an actor can play creatively off of given practical schemes, and although an actor can sometimes offer up virtuoso improvisations that elicit novel orchestrated responses to new circumstances, the actor can never exceed the limits of recognition.[75] The author of the "Melian Dialogues" understood this dialectic of power and recognition. Neorealists have forgotten what Thucydides knew, in favor of a notion of power wedded to the Industrial Revolution's faith in humankind's limitless expansion of control over nature.

Fourth, despite its spirited posturing on behalf of political autonomy and in opposition to the alleged economism of other traditions, neorealist his-

75. See especially Bourdieu, *Outline*, chap. 4, "Structure, Habitus, Power: Basis for a Theory of Symbolic Power."

toricism denies *politics*. More correctly, neorealism reduces politics to those aspects which lend themselves to interpretation exclusively within a framework of economic action under structural constraints. In so doing, neorealism both immunizes that economic framework from criticism as to its implicit political content and strips politics of any practical basis for the autonomous reflection on and resistance to strictly economic demands. It thereby implicitly allies with those segments of society that benefit from the hegemony of economic logic in concert with the state. Politics in neorealism becomes pure technique: the efficient achievement of whatever goals are set before the political actor. Political strategy is deprived of its artful and performative aspect, becoming instead the mere calculation of instruments of control. Absent from neorealist categories is any hint of politics as a creative, critical enterprise, an enterprise by which men and women might reflect on their goals and strive to shape freely their collective will.

Taken together, reflections on these "four p's" suggest that neorealist structuralism represents anything but the profound broadening and deepening of international political discourse it is often claimed to be. Far from expanding discourse, this so-called structuralism encloses it by equating structure with external relations among powerful entities as they would have themselves be known. Far from penetrating the surface of appearances, this so-called structuralism's fixed categories freeze the given order, reducing the history and future of social evolution to an expression of those interests which can be mediated by the vectoring of power among competing states-as-actors.[76] Far from presenting a structuralism that envisions political learning on a transnational scale, neorealism presents a structure in which political learning is reduced to the consequence of instrumental coaction among dumb, unreflective, technical-rational unities that are barraged and buffeted by technological and economic changes they are powerless to control.

Again, though, none of this is to say that neorealist "structuralism" is without its attractions. For one thing, and most generally, there is something remarkably congenial about a structuralism that pretends to a commanding, objective portrait of the whole while at the same time leaving undisturbed, even confirming, our commonsense views of the world and ourselves. As compared to Wallerstein's conception of the modern world system, for instance, neorealist structuralism is far more reassuring as to the objective *necessity* of the state-as-unit-of-analysis convention among students of politics.[77] It thus relieves this particular niche in the academic division of labor

76. Some good examples of the agenda-limiting effect of neorealist structuralism are pointed up by Craig Murphy in his discussions of Stephen Krasner's "Transforming International Regimes: What the Third World Wants and Why," *International Studies Quarterly* 25 (March 1981), pp. 119–48; and Robert W. Tucker's *The Inequality of Nations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977). See Murphy, "What the Third World Wants: An Interpretation of the Development and Meaning of the New International Economic Order Ideology," *International Studies Quarterly* 27 (March 1983).

77. As Wallerstein, Hopkins, and others frequently urge, the modern world system presents itself as only one unit of analysis, an N of 1.

of responsibility for reflection on its own historicity. Its pose of Weberian detachment can be preserved.

For another thing, this strange structuralism finds much of its appeal in the fact that it complements and reinforces the other three commitments of the neorealist orrery. As already noted, neorealism's atomistic understanding of structure gives priority to—and then reconfirms—the commitment to the state-as-actor. One might also note that neorealism employs the only form of structuralism that could possibly be consistent with its utilitarian and positivist conceptions of international society. Anchored as they are in the ideal of rational individual action under meaningless, quasinatural constraints, these conceptions would be radically challenged by modes of structuralism that question the dualism of subject and object and thus highlight the deep intersubjective constitution of objective international structures. Neorealism is able to avoid this radical challenge. It is able to do so by restricting its conception of structure to the physicalist form of a clockwork, the philosophical *mechanism* so dear to the heart of the Industrial Revolution's intelligentsia.

3. The ghost of the old revolution

The "secret world," John le Carré writes, "is of itself attractive. Simply by turning on its axis, it can draw the weakly anchored to its center."[78] The same, we can now note, might be said of the neorealist orrery of errors. Having seen its several elements whiz by—statism, utilitarianism, positivism, structuralism, and statism yet again—we sense that there is a strange unity of contrarieties here. We sense that the whole machine exerts a centripetal force that is difficult to defy.

To be sure, when we slow and examine the elements we find that errors and absurdities abound. We find, for example, that the utilitarian interpretation of international order presupposes a conception of the state-as-actor—a conception that a utilitarian would want to disown. We find, too, that neorealist statism runs contrary to any genuinely structuralist understanding of the international system. We find that neorealism appeals to a Weberian interpretation of positivist method, a method that parades as the end of ideology even as it subordinates all criticism to a scientifically indefensible commitment to technical rationality's objectivity and neutrality. And we find that despite neorealism's pretensions to the status of a political structuralism, neorealist theory is as economistic as they come.

Yet the neorealist orrery is meant never to be held at rest. It presents itself only in motion. And thanks to this, its countless errors become not damning indictments but counterweights to other errors, balancing and perpetuating

78. Le Carré, *The Little Drummer Girl* (New York: Knopf, 1983).

the motion of the whole. The limits of positivism obscure the errors of statism in a state-as-actor conception of international order, which reduces systemic analysis to a physicalist structuralism, which in turn propels us into the utilitarian world of technical reason and necessity, which brings us around to positivism once again. Around and around it spins, eroding and then consuming the ground upon which opposition would stand. Around and around it spins, until we lose sight of the fact that it is only motion. Like le Carré's secret world, this neorealist orrery has no center at all.

A much earlier study of the emergence of statist tendencies offers some clues as to how such a centerless swirl could become so powerful. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Karl Marx set out to discover how in France of 1848 through 1852 it became possible for "a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero's part." His conclusion was that Bonaparte's wielding of power was occasioned by a crisis-born bourgeois reaction, but that it could not be wholly accounted for by material circumstances. Nor could it be attributed to the intrinsic qualities of Louis Bonaparte. In large measure, Bonaparte attained power because he was able to secure recognition among the French, and he was able to secure recognition because, amidst crisis, he helped to make "the ghost of the old revolution walk about again."

> . . . The French, so long as they were engaged in revolution, could not get rid of the memory of Napoleon, as the election of December 10, 1848, proved. From the perils of revolution their longings went back to the flesh-pots of Egypt, and December 2, 1851, was the answer. They have not only a caricature of the old Napoleon, they have the old Napoleon himself, caricatured as he would inevitably appear in the middle of the nineteenth century.[79]

One may venture a similar interpretation to account for the extraordinary power of the neorealist orrery. As in the ascent of Bonaparte, the emergence of neorealism is no doubt partly to be explained as a reaction to crisis. In particular, a reasonably complete interpretation of neorealism in its context would want to consider the current fiscal and legitimation crisis surrounding the American state in its role as system-manager and guardian of the capitalist accumulation process. Such an interpretation might comprehend neorealism as a crisis-prompted redeployment, from domestic to international politics, of the "economistic" ideological legitimations hitherto evidenced primarily and increasingly with respect to the state's domestic performance. This account would grasp neorealism as a contribution to "statist economism," a historical successor to international laissez-faire economism.[80]

Another part of the explanation of neorealism's success looks beyond

79. Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: Norton, 1972), pp. 438–39.

80. I develop this interpretation at greater length in Richard K. Ashley, "Three Modes of Economism," *International Studies Quarterly* 27 (December 1983).

material circumstances to collective memories of the past. Despite its errors, its idealism, and its emptiness, neorealism succeeds in its illusion of greatness because it at once cues and caricatures the ghosts of revolutions past, most of all the behavioral revolution in the Cold War study of international relations. Awakened is a remembrance of a naturalistic model of science, the very model in whose name the behavioral revolutionaries marched. Awakened, too, is a one-time revolutionary faith that the light of science will illuminate the conditions of state action, thereby reducing the chances of miscalculation, overcommitment, and their sometimes disastrous consequences. Summoned forth once again is the sense of urgency of the darkest days of the Cold War. Objectivity, neutrality, detachment, "state-as-actor," a "technology of peace"—these were among the slogans. Recollecting this heroic revolutionary project, neorealism ennobles its followers. Never mind that the faith in naturalistic science and the harmonizing force of reason implicit in these memories do violence to the very core of classical realism's internationalist thought, including its long-standing resistance to behavioralist methods. Never mind that the darkly pessimistic side of Morgenthau, Carr, Wight, and Herz does not square with the behavioralists' optimism. With Gilpin, one can remember classical realism not as an embodiment of a continuing dialectical struggle between absolutist darkness and bourgeois Enlightenment but only as a product of the latter:

> Embedded in most social sciences and in the study of international relations is the belief that through science and reason the human race can gain control over its destiny. Through the advancement of knowledge, humanity can learn to master the blind forces and construct a science of peace. Through an understanding of the sources of our actions and the consequences of our acts, human rationality should be able to guide statesmen through the crisis of a decaying world order to a renovated and stable world order. The fundamental problem faced, this argument continues, is not uncontrollable passions but ignorance.
>
> Political realism is, of course, the embodiment of this faith in reason and science. An offspring of modern science and the Enlightenment, realism holds that through calculations of power and national interest statesmen can create order out of anarchy and thereby moderate the inevitable conflicts of autonomous, self-centered, and competitive states. . . . [T]his faith that a 'science of international relations' will ultimately save mankind still lies at the heart of its studies.[81]

Like the French gazing upon Louis Bonaparte, neorealism's followers glimpse in this caricature of past revolutions an image that reflects well on them, that calls to mind the best images of themselves.

Yet like the French, the followers quickly experience a sickening jerk as the whole project is yanked too soon into closure. The neorealist caricature

81. Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 226.

of science has not deployed its revolutionary images to "fire the imagination," or to "glorify the new struggles," but to seal discourse within a continuous "parody of the old." Its discourse is now frozen in acquiescence to the Cold War conditions of the revolution it recalled: competition among states mutually preparing for war. As Gilpin writes, "The advance of technology may open up opportunities for mutual benefit, but it also increases the power available for political struggle. The advance of human reason and understanding will not end this power struggle, but it does make possible a more enlightened understanding and pursuit of national self-interest."[82] How painful this is: the revolutionary science of peace has become a technology of the state! Was it always so? By the time this awful realization comes, it is too late for such reflections. The neorealist orrery has spun its followers into its arc. A "grotesque mediocrity" reigns.

Such reflections suggest that a serious problem awaits the critic of neorealism. Despite its serious flaws and totalitarian nature, neorealist orthodoxy will not be dislodged from its lofty status by the force of logical criticism alone. For neorealism's power is largely due not to its truth or the consistency of its logic but to its capacity to elicit the collective recognition of women and men, scientists mostly, who must somehow organize their expectations and coordinate their practices in light of commonly remembered experiences. True, as I have noted, neorealist theory is like all intellectualist theory in that it contains no terms that would allow it to reflect critically on the practical social basis and limits of its own power. Yet the fact remains, "the ghosts of revolutions past" are neorealism's main allies. At least, so they appear. Everywhere the collective remembrance of the study of international politics is on neorealism's side.

4. Recovering a silenced realism

And then we spy an apparition in the shadows, lodged deep in the recesses of our remembered experience. When last we met these ghosts of classical realism, we were introduced via neorealists' terse interrogations of their heritage. Neorealists asked the classical ghosts a few pointed questions: Is the state the most important actor, yes or no? Is it not true that your central concept is "national interest defined as power," yes or no? They elicited testimony establishing neorealism's status as classical realism's rightful heir.

Then, as the ghosts were hurried out of the probate courtroom, the neorealist interrogators explained to us why the interrogation had to be so brief. Classical realists had a few sound ideas worth remembering, it seems. But they "are considered to be traditionalists—scholars turned toward history and concerned

82. Ibid.

more with policy than with theory and scientific methods."[83] Sadly, their work knew nothing of economic relations and fell short of modern scientific standards. They would often fall prey to the "analytic fallacy," engage in "circular reasoning," get their explanations "inside-out," or even "drift to the 'subsystem dominant pole.' "[84] Hard as it is to believe, many classical realists did not even know, until helped along by neorealists, that the logic of their "framework is identical to that used in neo-classical economic theory where it is assumed that firms act to maximize profits."[85] Worse, many had been heard to echo Hans Morgenthau's insistence on realism's "emancipation from other standards of thought," including economics.[86] Why, some had even "insist[ed] that theorists' categories be consonant with actors' motives and perceptions."[87] Under the circumstances, surely, the classical realist legacy is honored most and embarrassed least by retaining its scientifically redeemable statements and turning a deaf ear to its fatuities. Let the tired old ghosts rest in peace.

As we edge closer to the dark corner, however, the haze lifts, and the visages of classical realism appear, far more clear-eyed than we had been led to believe. As their words become audible, we note that there is a definite coherence here, a coherence born of a sustained, disciplined, and richly developed perspective on international politics. Some of the words do indeed resonate with things that we have heard neorealists say. Others, however, do not. Eavesdropping on this conversation of honored ghosts we learn many things that the neorealist keepers of the flame have somehow neglected to bring to our attention. As we listen, it begins to become clear why.

a. The practical structure of classical realism

The first thing we learn is in some respects quite obvious. Classical realism, in its method, is not at all the intellectualist or technocratic tradition that neorealist structuralism would aspire to be. On the contrary, classical realism is very much animated by a *practical* interest in knowledge.[88] It is, if you will, the ethnomethodology of the modern tradition of statesmanship. As such, its approach is largely hermeneutical. Its reality is the reality familiar to those who are competent parties to the tradition of statesmanship. Its remembrances of things past are the official remembrances of this community,

83. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 63. In the quoted words, Waltz refers specifically to Morgenthau and Kissinger.

84. The quoted words are all Waltz's. He includes nonrealists as well as classical realists among his targets.

85. Krasner, *Defending the National Interest*, p. 37.

86. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, pp. 12–14.

87. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 62. Waltz refers specifically to "Aron and other traditionalists" in this connection.

88. See Richard K. Ashley, "Political Realism and Human Interests," *International Studies Quarterly* 25 (June 1981).

the way history would have been and perhaps should have been had it offered recurring endorsement of this modern tradition of international political practice. Its problematics are those that parties to this tradition—competent statesmen—are prepared to recognize as problematic, not as economic individuals and not as history-less states-as-actors, but as statesmen who expect that their understandings can secure public recognition within the overall community of statesmen and against the background of collectively remembered experience.

What takes longer to see is that such an approach is above all *systemic*, although not of a form that neorealist physicalism can comprehend. In fact, after a good deal of time watching and listening to neorealist commentary with an eye to elements of continuity, we begin to see that classical realist scholarship already has a definite "*structuralist*" aspect. It is not the structuralism of clockwork metaphysics, to be sure. It is not a structuralism, like Waltz's, anchored in an atomistic conception of global society. Instead, as in competence models of social action, classical realism is enduringly committed to a simple generative scheme, a practical cognitive structure that orients its discourse and in reference to which all political practice is understood. Before I introduce this scheme, a few general notes on its qualities and its status in classical realist argument are in order.

This scheme, it must be said, is a practical scheme. At once subjective and objective, necessary and contingent, the scheme exists as a preliteral relation, almost a postural relation, which can be grasped only in the objective coherence of the actions it generates, in its uniting of otherwise seemingly disparate practices. It is not produced as a scientific postulate in some sense external to practice. Rather, it is learned, much as Thomas Kuhn would insist a scientific paradigm is learned, through the practical transference of quasipostural relations.[89] It can be grasped only by reliving, via ritual and practice, the conflicts, rites of passage, and crises that bring the scheme itself strategically into play, sometimes artfully and sometimes ineptly. Accordingly, the meaning of the scheme is in its practical state, and the scheme is misunderstood at the very moment that it is objectified or "captured" within some conceptual system, formal logic, or set of rules external to practice.[90]

89. See Kuhn's concluding contribution to Lakatos and Musgrave, *Criticism and the Growth*. All social scientists who work with graduate students in their research programs are "familiar" with such schemes. The generative scheme of a research program is what our "brightest" students—the ones who are really competent—seem to grasp through a kind of "fuzzy abstraction" from our own research practices. It is what allows them to do, with minimal direction, the kind of independent research we instantly recognize as exactly the kind of work we would have wanted to do but, for some reason, never thought to do. The generative scheme is also that which our "second-rate" graduate students never quite grasp when, in trying to learn from our own practices, they embarrass us by mimicking our practices too exactly under inappropriate circumstances or by following our instructions too much by rote. It is that which we spend hours trying patiently to explain to graduate students but which, we know, always loses its life once it is translated into a rule.

90. See Bourdieu's chapter, "Generative Schemes and Practical Logic: Invention within Limits," in *Outline*.

For the classical realist, however, this generative scheme is no less real because it resists capture within a frozen category. On the contrary, this scheme is grasped as the self-replicating "genetic code of political life." Embodied in all aspects of international politics, from the sovereign state through the international system, this scheme is the principle "which allows [us] to distinguish the field of politics from other social spheres, to orient [ourselves] in the maze of empirical phenomena which make up that field, and to establish a measure of rational order within it."[91] For the classical realist, it is the grasping of this scheme and the conditions of its successful application that makes competent political practice possible. It is the indispensable element of international political *savoir faire.*

In modern international society, the community bounded by the consensual recognition of this scheme defines the modern tradition of statesmanship for the classical realist. Within this tradition, statesmanship is not, as objectivism would have it, the "execution of a rule," or acting in accordance with some external objective necessities, or mechanical obedience to a timeless model for which all processes are reversible and time and tempo are no matter.[92] Nor is it reducible, as in neorealism, to rational choice, under constraints, on the part of an actor whose status as such is pregiven and unquestioned. Rather, statesmanship refers to *practice*, playing off the generative scheme in ways ranging from the awkward and uninventive to the artful and creative—and always with an eye to the problematic reproduction of the state itself. On the one hand, it allows for the possibility of slips, mistakes, and clumsy moments on the part of the maladroit. On the other hand, it involves virtuoso improvisations reflecting a perfect command of the "art of living" and playing on "all the resources inherent in the ambiguities and uncertainties of behavior and situation in order to produce the actions appropriate to each case, to do that of which people will say, 'There was nothing else to be done.' "[93]

What, then, is this scheme? One possible way of answering is to refer to "power," "interest defined as power," or, better, "balance of power." I shall refer to it as a *balance-of-power scheme.*[94] All such labels are troubling, however. They conceptualize that which functions to dispense with concepts. They invite a kind of fetishism among too-literal interpreters, an ahistorical reduction of the scheme to the manifest conditions and relations the labels immediately connote. For the communication of the classical realist tradition this has been a difficult problem.

91. Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Commitment of Political Science," in his *Dilemmas of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 39.

92. Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 24.

93. Ibid., p. 8.

94. I will not defend this choice of labels at this point; my reasoning will soon become evident. Recalling Ernst Haas's important 1953 paper, "The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept, or Propaganda?" *World Politics* 5, 4, it may be an interesting exercise to explore whether the balance-of-power scheme discussed here could (under various circumstances) generate all eight of the meanings Haas abstracted from the relevant literatures.

Still, an answer, however tentative, is required. Groping toward an answer—and knowing that any written answer will fail as much as it succeeds because it idealizes that which has its true meaning in its practical site—I would venture to introduce the balance-of-power scheme as a "dialectical unity of plural totalities." An extremely simple postural scheme, it poises in unceasing dynamic tension two opposed attitudes or interpretive orientations. Lacking better alternatives, let me call these opposed aspects the "particularity of the universal" and the "universality of the particular."

The particularity of the universal. According to this side of the dialectical relation, all universalizing claims—all claims as to some universal truth and objective necessity of law, morality, concept, theory, or political order—are inherently problematic. They are problematic in that they reflect and conceal particular points of view and particular interests that cannot be reconciled with other points of view occupying the same totality. Put somewhat differently, all universalizing claims mask an implicit hierarchy of social control relations centered on some particular set of interests and subordinating other opposing and legitimate interests.

The universality of the particular. According to this side, all claims or actions of a particularistic sort—interests expressed, actions undertaken, and commitments made on the basis of immediate, contingent, and specific experience—are inherently problematic. They are problematic because they bear implicit universalizing projects, implicit claims on what the whole world might be. Claims as to the truth of action or commitments based on a unique heritage or on unreflected understandings of individual interests, for example, imply limits on what other aspects of the social totality can do, have, and be. They implicate the social whole.

Such a scheme, it should be clear, in no sense implies a necessary reduction of politics to the interplay of instrumental logics (as in utilitarian models). Quite the contrary. Among parties who recognize the scheme, including classical realists, the scheme at once generates and unifies all practices in a system of structures that are evaluative as well as cognitive. Against all pretenses and aspirations as to the existence of the possibility of a universal unity—be it the unity of unrestrained reason, the anticipation of order founded on law or morality, the expectation of logical unity implicit in positivist science, the championing of universal empire, or a Cobdenite faith in the harmonizing influence of the market—the scheme commends recognition of countertendencies toward pluralism or fragmentation, which will be animated in reaction to just these universalistic and unifying aspirations. Likewise, against all claims as to the rightness or truth of a particular experience or point of view, the scheme commends attention to the universe of opposing perspectives that might oppose or even negate the first. In short, the scheme legitimates a plurality of perspectives on all relations in life, and it unifies

all political practice in opposition to all attempts to reduce political life to the singular rational unity that any one perspective would impose upon it.

It is not too much to say that the balance-of-power scheme, far from being a logical relation deduced from a prior structure of states in anarchy, is the constitutive principle of a pluralistic states system. Practices oriented with respect to the scheme produce and transform the modern international order. The reasoning, briefly summarized, is as follows.

Working amidst ever-shifting factors and forces, including all of those traditionally called "elements of national power," statesmen never literally possess power and never truly hold the reins of control. Rather, competent statesmen are engaged in an unceasing struggle, at once artful and strategic, to be "*empowered.*" They succeed to the extent that they can strike balances among all aspects of power—e.g., industrial capacity, population demands, military capability, nationalist labor, internationalist bankers, and the consent and recognition of other statesmen—to establish an at least momentary equilibrium that, in turn, defines the state and its interests. It is toward just this balance of forces, a balance of power embedded in and producing the state, that statesmen strive. This, and nothing else, is the national interest, the "national interest defined as power."[95] This equilibrium, and nothing else, is what defines the state's boundaries and secures the effective distinction, however momentary, between domestic and international political life. The state, to borrow from Foucault, is an "effect of power."[96]

Defining and achieving this balance is the art of statesmen. Theirs is not the task, as in neorealism, of securing the ends of an unproblematical, given state. Theirs, rather, is the art of orchestrating the (re)production of the state in a transnational context of other statesmen similarly engaged. In their art's work, statesmen must of course pick their way through an overwhelming maze of problems, roadblocks, and dead ends, all of which are susceptible to countless interpretations from multiple points of view. Amidst all these complexities, competent statesmen know "instinctively" to interpret all relations with reference to a scheme first inscribed on international institutions as the earliest modern states established their precarious footings in the dialectic of particular aristocratic and universalizing bourgeois interests. Through long practice, they have internalized a predisposition to orient all practices with reference to the axial principle, the generative scheme, of balance of power. For statesmen, this simple dialectical scheme has a genuine economy of logic (though it is not the logic of economy) that will make their own practices comprehensible in the eyes of other competent statesmen, and thanks to which they can understand their practices as well. More importantly,

95. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 6.

96. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 73–74. In the specific quotation, Foucault refers to the individual as an "effect of power," but his overall argument is applicable to the empowering or constitution of all subjective agents, including the state. His "Two Lectures" address the relation between the two.

as judiciously applied by artful participants, the scheme orients the comprehension of interests and the undertaking of practices that promise to optimize power, in its fullest sense, on behalf of the state.

b. The political conception of political concepts

As we listen further to the conversation among classical realist ghosts, and as we begin to get a feel for the balance-of-power scheme at work throughout classical realist discourse, another insight comes. If classical realists sometimes appear slippery in their use of concepts, it is not always because of a lack of discipline, an inductivist bias, or a failure to think in systemic terms. Neorealists mistakenly read classical realism in this way because they do not understand the tradition they purport to carry forward. They do not understand that, for the classical realist, the fruits of intellectual labors are no more immune to the dialectical logic of the balance-of-power scheme—at once subjective and objective—than are the institutions and practices they study. They do not see that, thanks to classical realists' commitment to the balance-of-power scheme, classical realist theory institutionalizes a persistent struggle to overcome problems noted earlier with respect to neorealist theory.

In particular, classical realist theorizing long sought to avoid the tendency, so evident in neorealism, to let the "impulse to theorize" manifest itself in the production of a lifeless, antihistorical enclosure. Deeply committed to the balance-of-power scheme, classical realists such as Martin Wight are conscious of "a kind of recalcitrance of international politics to being theorized about."[97] Hans Morgenthau cautions that there is "a rational element in political action that makes politics susceptible to theoretical analysis, but there is also a contingent element in politics that obviates the possibility of theoretical understanding."[98] Both warn against any attempt to arrive at a complete, naturalistic accounting in terms of finished external structures that finally contain the political world. As both understand, to try to impose a single conceptual order on international political life, even if that attempt is inspired by the dialectical balance-of-power scheme, is to deny the truth of the scheme that inspires the attempt.

From the vantage point of classical realism, as from the vantage points of statesmen participating in the tradition of the modern states system, all key concepts—power, national interest, the sovereign state, the states system, and so on—must be understood in reference to the balance-of-power scheme. Seen as finding expression throughout all levels and in all things of the political universe, the balance-of-power scheme dictates an understanding of all such concepts as reflecting (perhaps momentary) equilibria among

97. Martin Wight, "Why Is There No International Theory?" in Herbert Butterfield and Wight, eds., *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967).

98. Hans Morgenthau, "The Intellectual and Political Functions of Theory," in Morgenthau, *Truth and Power: Essays of a Decade, 1960–1970* (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 254.

opposed tendencies and opposed interests: monarch and church, nationalist and internationalist, local and global, regressive and progressive, traditionalist and rationalist, fragmenting and universalizing, aristocracy and bourgeoisie. Not even the structures of the modern state or the states system, not even the practical efficacy of the balance-of-power scheme itself, can be taken as given. They are essentially political concepts because they are, in the words of a recent debate, "essentially contested" or "essentially disputed" concepts.[99] And they are disputed not so much because of a lack of agreement but because, at a deeper level, there is an *agreement to disagree*. There is a more-or-less consensual recognition of the truth of a dialectical scheme that both disallows any final closure on a singular, contradiction-free truth and generates the expectation that, for reasons unspoken, there will forever be pressures to subsume the whole within a false unity.

In contrast to neorealism's closure, then, the tradition of practice represented by classical realism (the tradition institutionalized in the modern states system) is never really "complete." Rather, it appears to each new generation that inherits it as a lively, difficult, ambiguous, and never completed struggle. This struggle requires the creative interpretation of new circumstances and sometimes virtuoso performance of system renewal, in light of commonly recognized organizing schemes embedded in past experience and embodied in current social structures. The compromises among contending forces must ever be won again. The balances must ever be restruck. The strategic alliances with various factions having contesting nationalist and internationalist claims—alliances without which statesmen might not secure the autonomy required to permit their competent participation according to classical realist expectations—must ever be drawn anew. Always and everywhere, balances are in jeopardy; always and everywhere, strategic artistry is required.

c. Power, recognition, and balance of power

At last we are beginning to grasp this balance-of-power scheme. Although we are still no doubt quite clumsy in its application—overcoming this clumsiness does take practice and a sense of history—it does at least enable us to make sense of the continuing conversation among classical realists. Take, for instance, their discussions of power. We can now see that the classical realist conception, when compared to the neorealist conception, is considerably richer and much more sensitive to power's social basis and limits. We can sense that this is because the classical realist conception is founded

99. See W. B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56 (1955–56); Stuart Hampshire, *Thought and Action* (New York: Viking, 1959); Stephen Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (London: Macmillan, 1974); K. I. Macdonald, "Is 'Power' Essentially Contested?" *British Journal of Political Science* 6 (November 1976), pp. 380–82; Lukes, "Reply to K. I. Macdonald," ibid. 7 (1977), pp. 418–19; John Gray, "On the Contestability of Social and Political Concepts," ibid. (August 1977); and Shapiro, *Language and Political Understanding.*

on an implicit competence model of political practice, a model anchored in the balance-of-power scheme. The scheme dictates a commitment to the *necessary ambiguity of political reality*, and this in turn establishes the dialectic of recognition as a necessary and irreducible aspect of all social power relations.

This becomes clearer when one takes note of the interpretive unity at work behind classical realists' dual usage of the term "power," both as a capacity to influence (to "have power") and as a designation of competent, recognized participants (to "be a power"). To be recognized as a power, that is, as a sovereign state, a state must satisfy certain minimal requisites (e.g., effectively patrolled territory); and, in general, these requisites reflect a state's capacity to make good on the claim that its statesmen's partially unique interpretations of the whole need to be recognized and granted a separate voice in the dialogue among mutually recognizing states.[100] To "increase power," statesmen must engage in practices that serve to move their own vantage points on the whole, and within the eyes of other powers, toward the collectively recognized "central" vantage point—the view from the center of a plurality of political orbits. To become a "dominant power" is to become the one power recognized as the state whose vantage point, and interests defined therefrom, defines the objective limits of political and social possibility; that is, the limits that no power can violate without imperiling its status as a power.

Whether a state is a minor or a dominant power, though, its power confronts its own limit, as contained in the anchoring scheme of balance of power recognized by all competent parties to the system. Even among dominant powers (perhaps especially so) statesmen must make good on the claim, implicit in the modern concept of sovereignty,[101] that their own vantage

100. However, before one leaps to the conclusion that there is some fixed set of operations by which one translates certain objective requisites into "attributes of statehood," it must be stressed that the requisites of statehood themselves depend upon collective recognition, are essentially reinterpretable, are subject to dispute, and have historically evolved.

101. This is one of the points where Ruggie and I part ways—or, perhaps, it is on this point that Ruggie needs to make more explicit what remains unclear, at least to me. In his review of Waltz, Ruggie draws interesting parallels between private property rights, as conceptualized by Locke, and sovereignty, as conceptualized by Vattel. I agree that Vattel exhibits strong parallels to Locke's atomistic and contractarian views; as Quincy Wright notes of Vattel, he "adhered to the atomistic theory which holds that international law is merely a series of contracts between wholly independent states" (Wright, *A Study of War* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964], p. 230). I think, too, that the parallels are provocative: Ruggie's analysis causes me to wonder if there might be more than an analogy at work here, if perhaps there is more than a coincidence between the emergence of new relations of labor and property, as justified by Locke, and the new mode of sovereignty, as justified by Vattel.

It occurs to me, however, that Ruggie may have been drawn into a scholastic argument which causes him to exaggerate the surface parallels between intellectual rationalizations at the expense of an understanding of a real difference between private property rights and sovereignty as active principles of practice. I would like to offer the view that the modern concept of sovereignty designates the collectively recognized competence of entities subject to international law and superior to municipal law. It thus involves not only the possession of self and the exclusion of others but also the limitation of self in the respect of others, for its authority presupposes the recognition of others who, per force of their recognition, agree to be so excluded. In effect,

points on the whole are indeterminate, ambiguous, and allow for the plurality of possible interpretations within the whole that they themselves interpret. Playing off the balance-of-power scheme, the powerful statesman must make good on the claim that his interpretation of the whole allows room for the interpretive vantage points of even the lowliest of "minor powers" recognized by the system of states and from whom the dominant power expects recognition in return. For to the extent that a power statesman fails to make good on this claim in the eyes of others—perhaps because he has become captive of moral zeal, for instance, or because he has surrendered to "national interests" in the most "egoistic" sense of the term—his practices will take on a special significance when read in reference to the balance-of-power scheme. His practices will signify the state's incompetence as a partner to the dialogue of international politics. The statesman representing the power in question will be viewed as unwilling, or perhaps as structurally unable, to learn from diplomatic interaction. His diplomatic practices will be seen as nothing more than instruments of "nationalist universalism," the attempt on the part of a single society to bend the whole world to the logic and demands of its unique national experience. Such a state will actually lose power, or what we may call "symbolic capital."[102]

In fact, there is a strong sense in which a master-slave dialectic of power obtains: one in which the aspiration to absolute power yields absolute impotence, and the demand for a totally gratified ego negates being itself. At the extreme, the high-capability state whose leaders perform incompetently and allow themselves to be understood as attempting to make globally determinate their own univocal interpretations of order will be denied recognition, and hence existence within the community of states, altogether. From the point of view of the tradition, such statesmen will be seen not as competent partners in a community of sovereign states, and least of all as worthy leaders, but as threats and dangers to be opposed, taught to behave if possible, and expelled or destroyed if necessary.

d. Rudiments of a theory of international political practice

The conversation among classical realist ghosts continues. And as it does, classical realism's status in international relations discourse, and its impli-

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sovereignty is a practical category whose empirical contents are not fixed but evolve in a way reflecting the active practical consensus among coreflective statesmen who are ever struggling to negotiate internal and external pressures and constraints and who, if competent, orient their practices in respect of the balance-of-power scheme. Thus, one cannot say flatly that sovereign states exhibit a "form of sociality characteristic of 'possessive individualists,' for whom the social collectivity is merely a conventional contrivance calculated to maintain the basic mode of differentiation and to compensate for the defects of a system so organized by facilitating orderly exchange relations among the separate parts" (Ruggie, p. 278). One has to say that practice so normalized may be associated with a particular form of sovereignty under specific historical circumstances yet to be explained.

102. See especially the last chapter of Bourdieu's *Outline*.

cations for scientific theory, begin to be seen in a different light. It is clear that classical realism, owing to its practical interests and its reliance on a competence model, provides a richer political framework than does neorealism: at once broader in the scope of critical questions it can entertain (including self-reflective criticism), superior in its generative potential, more elegant and less demanding in its assumptive and conceptual bases, and more sensitive to the deep political limits and dilemmas of competent international practice. At the same time, there is something troubling about this conversation—especially if we measure it as a *scientific* discourse that might provide a viable alternative to neorealist theory. Thanks to its commitment to "the priority of practice to theory," classical realism is vulnerable to the charge, advanced by neorealists, of circularity.[103] It is ensnared in the "hermeneutic circularity" of the tradition of practice it interprets.

Evolving its theory while peering "over the shoulder of the statesman when he writes his dispatches,"[104] classical realism can advance its theory no farther than competent statesmen, in the course of their practice, are able to theorize about themselves and their circumstances. Classical realism thus cannot pose questions that competent professionals in the tradition will not recognize, including those questions that they have a structured political interest in *not* recognizing. Where competent statesmen are prepared to recognize problems, classical realism will give voice to problems. But where competent statesmen have an interest in silence, classical realism will be silent, too. Among these problems are those that would call into question the tradition within whose context statesmen demonstrate their competence, secure recognition, and orchestrate the empowering of states. For the classical realist, as for the competent statesman, such questions are not literally forgotten. Rather, they inhabit the domain of "that which must not be said." They are unspoken and unrecognized by competent parties as a condition of their competence.[105]

Considering this tradition-bound circularity of the classical realist dialogue, we are forced to conclude that, as a theoretical alternative to the neorealist orrery of errors, classical realism fails. It fails as a theory of world politics, in the first place, because it is so deeply immersed in the tradition it interprets that it lacks any independent theoretical standards for the criticism of that tradition's limits. It fails, in the second place, because it honors the silences of the tradition it interprets and thus contains no categories that would allow one to specify, or even advance hypotheses about, the historical conditions

103. Martin Wight, "The Balance of Power and International Order," in Alan James, ed., *The Bases of International Order* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

104. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 5.

105. This interest in silence, it must be stressed, is not an instrumental interest, not a relation that competent statesmen consciously conceptualize in logical or means-ends terms. It is, instead, one that statesmen do not necessarily conceptualize, one best served when it is universally internalized without conceptualization.

that make that tradition possible or the deep and transnational social power structures that tradition-bound practice at once presupposes, reproduces, and mystifies. It fails, in the third place, because it is unable to contemplate the historically specific developments that threaten the unspoken conditions upon which the dominance of that tradition historically rests. It is therefore unable to grasp the deeper dimensions of crisis in the world polity. And it fails, in the fourth place, because in refusing to comprehend its own limits it must refuse as well to engage and learn from opposing theories and arguments (including theories of imperialism, transnationalism, and interdependence) that would call these conditions into question. Thus, while classical realism is rich with insights into political practice, it fares no better than neorealism as a scientific *theory* of international politics. Though it closes on an understanding that is far truer to the traditional practice of world politics, it is no less closed. Though it affirms the hegemony of a balance-of-power scheme rather than the hegemony of a logic of economy, it is no less self-affirming.

To say that classical realism should be denied the status of a scientific theory, though, is not to say that it should be banished from the theoretical discourse of international relations. On the contrary, its practical significance should be accommodated *within* any reasonably complete theory of international politics. True to its own practical commitments, it should be conceptualized within theory as the "organic intellectuality" of a transnational tradition of statesmanship. It should be conceptualized as the ideological apparatus of a global professional community, the community of competent statesmen, which administers the recognized public sphere of international life, which is able to remember and interpret its past, which can learn from its experiences and theorize in limited ways about itself and its performance, and which can to some degree transform its practices and its institutions in light of its remembrances and its theories.[106] So viewed, classical realism's lapses, circularities, silences, and omissions cannot be regarded as pretexts for "rejecting" and then ignoring classical realist argument or, as in neorealism, for developing a "new, improved, scientifically tested" version. Such reactions forget that classical realism and its lapses and omissions at once mirror and ideologically reproduce a tradition that constitutes important aspects of the world we study. Instead, classical realism, its generative potential, and its limits and distortions should be addressed, interpreted, explained, and deployed as part of the explanation within a theory of modern international political practice.

To think of classical realism in this way is to begin to look beyond the simple competence model implicit in the conversation among ghosts. It is

106. The term "organic intellectual" is due to Antonio Gramsci in his path-breaking studies of hegemony. See Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, eds., *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), especially pp. 5–14.

to anticipate the development of a *dialectical competence model*—a model that would overcome classical realism's failings and provide a viable alternative to neorealism's economic model of choice under constraints. Several features of such a model merit notice.

First, such a model would be developed to account for the emergence, reproduction, and possible transformation of a world-dominant public political apparatus: a tradition or regime anchored in the balance-of-power scheme and constitutive of the modern states system. The regime should not be construed to organize and regulate behaviors among states-as-actors. It instead *produces* sovereign states who, as a condition of their sovereignty, embody the regime. So deeply is this regime bound within the identities of the participant states that their observations of its rules and expectations become acts not of conscious obedience to something external but of self-realization, of survival as what they have become.[107] We may refer to this regime as a balance-of-power regime. We may understand it to be the tradition of statecraft interpreted by classical realism. Again, classical realists are the "organic intellectuals" of this regime, the reigning intelligentsia of the worldwide public sphere of modern global life.

Second, such a model would situate this balance-of-power regime in terms of the conditions making it possible: the social, economic, and environmental conditions upon which its practical efficacy depends. One such condition can be inferred from classical realists' notorious silence on economic processes and their power-political ramifications. As Hedley Bull says of Martin Wight, so can it be said of classical realists and regime-bound statecraft: they are "not much interested in the economic dimension of the subject."[108] How is it possible for the balance-of-power regime to maintain such a silence? Under what historical social, economic, and environmental conditions is it possible for the balance-of-power regime, as the public political sphere of world society, to maintain silence on matters economic while at the same time coordinating and orienting practices in ways reaffirming the regime itself? One possible answer is that the regime presupposes capitalist relations of production and exchange. It presupposes a deep consensus granting control over production to a sphere of "private" decisions that are themselves immunized from public responsibility—a practical consensus that thereby produces a sphere of "economy" operating according to technical rational logics of action. In turn, such a consensus further presupposes capitalist labor and property relations. This consensus, together with the worldwide power bloc whose dominance it signifies and secures, might be called the *modern global hegemony*. The balance-of-power regime is its public political face. The silences

107. See Richard K. Ashley, *The Political Economy of War and Peace: The Sino-Soviet-American Triangle and the Modern Security Problematique* (London: Frances Pinter, 1980), pp. 38 and 279–86.

108. Hedley Bull, "Martin Wight and the Theory of International Relations: The Second Martin Wight Memorial Lecture," *British Journal of International Studies* 2 (1976), pp. 101–16.

of the regime on matters economic at once reflect and reinforce the dominant power bloc's control over production independent of public responsibility.

Third, such a model would necessarily account for the balance-of-power regime's orientation and coordination of political practices such that, on balance (and as an unintended consequence), they tend to direct commitments of resources and the development of ideological legitimations in ways securing the possibility conditions of the regime. The model might show, for example, how the competent statesman's interest in accumulating symbolic capital, or symbolic power, by playing off the balance-of-power scheme, effects a "double standard" of political action. That double standard, in turn, secures the political preconditions of global domination on the part of a transnational capitalist coalition, the dominant power bloc of the modern global hegemony.

Fourth, such a model would explore the learning potential of the balance-of-power regime. In particular, along the lines of Pierre Bourdieu's argument,[109] it might further develop its specifications of the process of symbolic capital accumulation. It might explore how symbolic capital, accumulated through the ambiguous and "disinterested" performances of competent hegemonic statesmen, provides a kind of "creative reserve," a basis in authority, for the exercise of leadership in the orchestration of collective improvisations in response to crisis.

Fifth, such a model would offer an account of crisis. It would specify the tendencies threatening to undermine or transform the conditions upon which the practical efficacy of the balance-of-power regime depends. It might specifically consider those tendencies that threaten to eradicate the statesman's latitude for ambiguous, intrinsically equivocal political performances honoring the balance-of-power scheme and not immediately reducible to expressions of economic interests.[110] Owing to this loss of latitude for ambiguous performances, it might be shown, the competent statesman is deprived of the ability to accumulate symbolic capital and, with it, a reserve capacity for learning and change in response to system crisis. Such reasoning would suggest the possibility of a world crisis—not just one more cyclical economic crisis, but an epochal crisis of world political authority, a crisis involving a degen-

109. Bourdieu, *Outline*, chap. 4.

110. A number of tendencies are relevant in this connection. Most can be associated with late capitalist development: "post-industrial" forms of state legitimation according to which the state legitimates itself, not on traditional grounds, but increasingly as an economic dysfunction manager; the fiscal crises of modern states struggling to justify themselves in these terms; the internationalization of capital and the emergence of newly industrialized countries, resulting in a malalignment of world industrial capacity with political-coercive means and traditional symbols of political power; the globalization of the world polity such that hegemonic "responsibility" is ostensibly universal, with no "external areas" remaining for the externalization of costs; the contradictions exposed through encountering "limits to growth"; the emergence of socialist movements aiming to institutionalize the public political determination of production and exchange but which are also under pressure to rationalize their politics; the Cold War, which institutionalizes the totalization of political competition; and nuclear weapons, which institutionalize the possibility of totalized warfare.

eration in the learning capacity of the regime and, consequently, a loss of political control. Understood in the context of the modern global hegemony, such a crisis might be expected to be marked by the economization of politics and the resulting loss of political autonomy vis-à-vis economic and technological change. As if international politics were the last frontier of the progressive world rationalization tendency delineated by Weber, hegemonic practice might come under increasing pressures to find its rationale not by playing equivocally off the balance-of-power scheme, but by measuring every gesture in terms of the ultrarationalistic logic of economy.

Sixth, such a model would not view the modern global hegemony in isolation. Nor would it mistake it for *the* whole of world politics.[111] It would instead regard it as the dominant world order among a multiplicity of mutually interpenetrating and opposed world orders, some of which might escape the logic of the modern global hegemony and assert alternative structuring possibilities under circumstances and by way of oppositional strategies that can in principle be specified. For example, the modern global hegemony might be understood to contest with—and, as a kind of "pluralistic insecurity community," to contain—totalitarian communist, collectivist self-reliance, Eurocommunist, Muslim transnationalist, and corporatist authoritarian world order alternatives.[112] Developing such a model would involve exploring the strategies by which oppositional movements representing these and other alternatives might take advantage of the indeterminate and ambiguous qualities of regime-bound statecraft, while exploiting its traditional silences, to transform its conditions of dominance, produce the conditions of their own self-realization, and secure the widening recognition of their own ordering principles as the active principles of practice.[113]

These anticipations of theory are, of course, rudimentary at best. They do, however, suggest some possibilities for the development of a model that would preserve classical realism's rich insights into international political practice while at the same time exposing the conditions, limits, and potential for change of the tradition in which classical realism is immersed. Fully developed, such a model would more than surpass neorealism. It would offer an interpretation of neorealism, finding in it a historically specific reaction to crisis that refuses to comprehend that crisis because it cannot acknowledge the richness of the tradition that is endangered. It would interpret neorealism,

111. Ashley, *Political Economy of War and Peace*, pp. 294–98; Hayward R. Alker Jr., "Can the End of Power Politics Possibly Be Part of the Concepts with Which Its Story Is Told?" in Alker's "Essential Contradictions, Hidden Unities" (in progress).

112. See Hayward R. Alker Jr., "Dialectical Foundations of Global Disparities," *International Studies Quarterly* 25 (March 1981).

113. As might be inferred from this description, the capitalist power-balancing order addressed in this dialectical competence model is not understood to exhaust the totality of international political reality worthy of theoretical examination. On the contrary, while it is arguably the dominant mode of order, it is but one point of entry into the theoretical analysis of an international reality that consists of the dialectical interplay and interpenetration of multiple world orders.

in other words, as an ideological move toward the economization of politics. And it would underscore the possibly dangerous consequences should this move succeed. For from the point of view of such a model, the economization of international politics can only mean the purging of international politics of those reflective capacities which, however limited, make global learning and creative change possible. It can only mean the impoverishment of political imagination and the reduction of international politics to a battleground for the self-blind strategic clash of technical reason against technical reason in the service of unquestioned ends.

e. The classical realist repudiation of neorealism

We do not need to await a dialectical competence model's critical interpretation of neorealism's flaws and dangers, however. Such a critique already exists. It is already present in the very literature to which neorealism claims to owe its intellectual debts. In classical realism's revered texts, we find recurring warnings against the very practices that neorealism has made its own. In the name of realism, neorealism commits specific errors against which classical realists specifically warned.

Listen, for instance, to the sixteen-year-old words of Hans Morgenthau, whom Gilpin calls "the leading modern spokesman for political realism."[114]

> What characterizes contemporary theories of international relations is the attempt to use the tools of modern economic analysis in a modified form in order to understand international relations. . . . In such a theoretical scheme, nations confront each other not as living historic entities with all their complexities but as rational abstractions, after the model of 'economic man.' . . .

Hear Morgenthau's words of nineteen years ago:

> . . . This theorizing is abstract in the extreme and totally unhistoric. It endeavors to reduce international relations to a system of abstract propositions with a predictive function. Such a system transforms nations into stereotyped 'actors' engaging in equally stereotyped symmetric and asymmetric relations. What Professor [Martin] Wight has noted of international law applies with particular force to these theories: the contrast between their abstract rationalism and the actual configurations of world politics. We are here in the presence of still another type of progressivist theory. Its aim is not the legalization and organization of international relations in the interest of international order and peace but the rational manipulation of international relations . . . in the interest of predictable and controlled results. The ideal toward which these theories try to progress is ultimately international peace and order to be achieved through scientific precision and predictability in understanding and manipulating international affairs.

114. Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 213.

A quarter-century ago:

> . . . [T]he contemporary political scene is characterized by the interaction between the political and economic spheres. . . .
>
> Yet what political science needs above all changes in the curriculum—even though it needs them too—is the restoration of the intellectual and moral commitment to the truth about matters political for its own sake. That restoration becomes the more urgent in the measure in which the general social and particular academic environment tends to discourage it. . . .

And thirty-six years ago:

> The very appearance of fascism not only in Germany and Italy but in our very midst ought to have convinced us that the age of reason, of progress, and of peace, as we understood it from the teachings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had become a reminiscence of the past. Fascism is not, as we prefer to believe, a mere temporary retrogression into irrationality, an atavistic revival of autocratic and barbaric rule. In its mastery of the technological attainments and potentialities of the age, it is truly progressive—were not the propaganda machine of Goebbels and the gas chambers of Himmler models of technical rationality?—and in its denial of the ethics of Western civilization it reaps the harvest of a philosophy which clings to the tenets of Western civilization without understanding its foundations. In a sense it is, like all real revolutions, but the receiver of the bankrupt age that preceded it.[115]

Other famous lines could be recalled, including the contrastatist theme introduced as part of Morgenthau's six-point manifesto of political realism: "While the realist indeed believes that interest is the perennial standard by which political action must be judged and directed, the contemporary connection between interest and the nation state is a product of history, and is therefore bound to disappear in the course of history."[116]

Now it is abundantly clear why neorealist interrogators have been so abrupt in their questioning of the classical tradition. These extensive remarks suggest that classical realists, given a chance to speak, would be among neorealism's sternest critics. As Morgenthau stressed on many occasions, utilitarian, positivistic, and rationalist commitments—commitments present in neorealism—tend to pitch social science on an unhistoric and apolitical attitude toward politics, an attitude too often dangerously allied with the state. Such commitments threaten to produce a form of pseudo-political understanding that falsely reduces the inherently dialectical character of politics to the monothetic orientation of economic reason, an orientation in which all perspectives,

115. Morgenthau, "Common Sense and Theories," in *Truth and Power*, p. 244; "The Intellectual and Political Functions of Theory," p. 248; "The Commitments of Political Science," p. 48; *Scientific Man versus Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp. 6–7.

116. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 10.

even the measure of power and its changes, are thought to be ultimately collapsible into a singular, internally consistent scale of universally interconvertible values. Such commitments permit no real sense of political dilemmas, no real appreciation of the autonomy of the political sphere. They tend toward a one-sided rationalism, a view tragically flawed for its lack of a sense of the tragic, a half-truth that must ultimately be transformed into the opposite of itself and must produce its own ruin in the vain search for a universal domain. These commitments are not just politically naive. They are positively dangerous.

I do not mean to glorify classical realism. It is, as I have said, a tragic tradition. It is a tradition whose silences, omissions, and failures of self-critical nerve join it in secret complicity with an order of domination that reproduces the expectation of inequality as a motivating force, and insecurity as an integrating principle. As the "organic intellectuality" of the worldwide public sphere of bourgeois society, classical realism honors the silences of the tradition it interprets and participates in exempting the "private sphere" from public responsibility. It thus disallows global public responsibility for "economic forces" that will periodically disrupt and fragment the global public sphere. Herein, I think, are the seeds of realism as a tradition forever immersed in the expectation of political tragedy, an expectation that realists can explain only euphemistically, in terms of the antinomies of fallen man.

My aim, rather, is to underline the fact that neorealism is not worthy of its name. Neorealism scoffs at classical realism's warnings and sense of limits, misstates its interests, deadens its ironies, empties its concepts, caricatures its rich insights, reduces practice to an endless serial performance of constrained economic choices on the part of one-dimensional characters, and casts the whole of it up before a flat historical backdrop devoid of perspective, contradiction, and life. Once again, the memory of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* comes to mind: "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great, world-historical facts and personages occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce."[117]

5. A concluding self-critique

E. P. Thompson concluded *The Poverty of Theory* with an "obligatory" *auto-critique*. I, too, sense the obligation. Having played the critic, I want to offer a few self-critical remarks in conclusion. Much that I have said needs to be criticized—so much, in fact, that I fear that the several respondents will have neither the time nor the space to give me all the swats I deserve. Let me concentrate on five criticisms that I think are important.

First, my argument may not have been sufficiently attentive to the sig-

117. Marx, "Eighteenth Brumaire," p. 436.

nificance it will take on when read against the background of the great battles of the past. In particular, much of my argument has crossed the venerable battleground where once the entrenched soldiers of "tradition" confronted "science" on the march, and I may have left room for the conclusion that I have enlisted in the ranks of "tradition" as over against neorealist "science." In fact, such a conclusion would be mistaken. For the burden of my argument in this respect is not to condemn science in favor of tradition. Nor is it to suggest the dilution of scientific standards by broadening liberal scientific tolerance to embrace tradition as part of science. What is called for, instead, is a methodologically more demanding science: a science that expands the range of allowable criticism, and sharpens the standards of theoretical adequacy, by institutionalizing the expectation of continuous critical reflection on the historical significance and possibility conditions of our own attempts to arrive at objectivist conclusions. That is, a dialectical science is called for.[118]

Second, I think there is some merit to the charge that I am engaging in that sort of criticism which, if successful, leaves an aching void in the soul of a discipline. In attacking neorealism, I have moved not only against neorealist theory but also against predominant understandings of method that deflect criticism and obscure neorealism's many theoretical flaws. Yet I have only briefly outlined some possibilities for an alternative theory, and I have not even begun to sketch the implications of my argument for an alternative method. I have failed to outline a dialectical methodology that recognizes the inevitable opposition of theory and practice and attempts to internalize that opposition in its method. I have failed to stress adequately the need to approach all aspects of international systems not only as reflections of an objective whole but also, and at the same time, as potentially bearing competing wholes, competing ordering principles struggling to find unfettered expression. I have insufficiently stressed that practice must be grasped not just as conformity to the norm but also as a continuing strategic struggle to produce or escape alternative forms of order. If my critique is to be successful, these gaps will need to be filled.[119]

118. Bourdieu describes three modes of knowledge—phenomenological, objectivist, and dialectical. For a discussion of these three modes of knowledge in the study of international politics, see Ashley, "Realist Dialectics."

119. One major project under way is the "Dialectics of World Order" work of Hayward R. Alker Jr., Thomas Biersteker, Ijaz Gilani, and Takashi Inoguchi. See, for example, Alker, "Dialectical Foundations of Global Disparities"; Alker and Thomas Biersteker, "The Dialectics of World Order: Notes for a Future Archaeologist of International *Savoir Faire*" (Delivered at the September 1982 meeting of the American Political Science Association, Denver, Colo.); and Alker, Biersteker, and Inoguchi, "From Imperial Power Balancing to People's Wars: Searching for Order in the Twentieth Century" (Presented at the April 1983 meeting of the International Studies Association, Mexico City). The World Order Models Project, under the direction of Richard Falk and Saul Mendlovitz, can be said to exemplify a dialectical methodology of normative clarification by which competing world order developmental constructs, representing various social and cultural points of view, are exposed, confronted, and elaborated. See for example, Richard Falk, *A Study of Future Worlds* (New York: Macmillan, 1975). Papers by

Third, it may be reasonably argued that I have unfairly singled out neorealism to take the brunt of a critique that could easily be expanded to include other targets. Neorealism is in many ways just part of a trend. I think it is evident, for example, that the "economization" of political theory is not a phenomenon unique to international relations theory in the United States. The current "legitimation crisis" in the U.S. polity may help to account for the sudden rèinvigoration of microeconomic theories of politics, game theory, exchange theory, rational choice theory, and public choice theory, but such economic theories of domestic politics have always been near the center (if not always the surface) of the postwar scientific study of politics. I think it is evident, too, that even among international relations theories, neorealism is not the only perspective meriting such an attack. In important respects, much that I have said here could as easily be applied to Immanuel Wallerstein's world systems perspective. I think that Wallerstein's neo-Marxist structuralism exhibits many of the positivistic and physicalistic qualities earlier ascribed to neorealism. I think, too, that Wallerstein's perspective is, in some ways, just as guilty of statism. I would be inclined to account for this replication of flaws in terms of Wallerstein's sharing a Weberian lineage (in his case via Merton and Parsons) with neorealism.[120]

Terence Hopkins indicate an important effort toward the development of dialectical perspectives within neo-Marxist world systems analysis. See Hopkins, "World Systems Analysis: Methodological Issues," in Barbara Kaplan, ed., *Social Change in the Capitalist World Economy* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1978); and Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Cyclical Rhythms and Secular Trends of the Capitalist World Economy," *Review* 2, 4 (1979). Johan Galtung's *The True Worlds* as well as his most recent methods text, *Methodology and Ideology*, outline and richly illustrate a dialectical approach.

120. The mention of Wallerstein reminds me to amend my earlier remarks on the commitment to "actor models" implicit in Weberian solutions to the problem of subjectivity and meaning. There is a partial exception to the claim that social scientists rooted in this tradition will generally reject as "meaningless" social analyses which do not come to rest in an "actor model." That exception is social analyses which come to rest in "the market"; I term it a "partial" exception because market and exchange relations are generally taken to be individualist in origin within bourgeois ideology, and hence all analyses in terms of market relations can themselves be thought ultimately to come to rest in an actor model. Despite his radical intentions, Wallerstein's analysis seems now stuck in this box. His model of the capitalist world system seems to amalgamate a market-based model of production and exchange relations (one which refuses to close its eyes to the reproductive hierarchy of the global division of labor) with an actor model of state practice, a joining that has some sorry consequences. Wallerstein is left to oscillate between—without ever transcending—the poles of market force and state purpose. Worse, when called upon to account for creative moments in the system's evolution (moments that cannot be reduced to market "dynamics" within the center-periphery hierarchy) he is left only two avenues: either (a) that instrumentalist form of economism according to which the state conspires with (or is totally enslaved to) a dominant power bloc or segments of capital who themselves are close to omniscient, or (b) that idealist form of statism which credits the state with an all-seeing awareness of its situation in history, and the will and ability to change the system while perpetuating its essential structures. As this suggests, Wallersteinians offer us the choice between economistic accounts and what turn out to be, on close inspection, neorealist accounts (which, we have seen, are themselves economistic in an important sense). I do not think, by the way, that this trap is escapable via a Parsonian move in the treatment of the states system, such as the one promoted by John Meyer. It seems to me that escaping this trap will require reexamining the position that locks Wallerstein into it, namely, the Weberian position on subjectivity and meaning

Fourth, in this connection, it may be argued also that my neglect of Wallersteinian and other radical perspectives has deprived my critique of a full sense of the epistemo-political context of neorealism. This is a fair criticism. A more complete critique would have stressed the opposition between Wallersteinian heterodoxy and neorealist orthodoxy against the background of crisis.[121] On the one side, Wallerstein's perspective is an instance of heterodoxy, a mode of theory that consciously sides with the dominated in a social system. Occasioned by the current crisis, it struggles to find words for that which the dominant would prefer to exclude from the realm of conscious political discourse, namely, the political content of core-periphery relations. In Pierre Bourdieu's words, it struggles to "expand the domain of discourse" and expose "the arbitrariness of the taken for granted."[122] On the other side, neorealist theory is an instance of orthodoxy, implicitly on the side of the dominant. It emerges under the condition of a crisis that calls into question the self-evidence of the given order by severing the once near-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of its organization. Under these conditions, and with the help of heterodoxy, the arbitrary principles of the prevailing order can begin to appear as such. It becomes necessary to develop orthodoxies to "straighten opinion" by "naturalizing the given order," an order that, prior to crisis, was simply taken for granted. Neorealist orthodoxy does just that. It develops "a system of euphemisms, of acceptable ways of thinking and speaking the natural and social world, which rejects heretical remarks as blasphemies."[123] It serves primarily, as I noted earlier, to constrain the domain of discourse. I regret that this line of argument could not have been more fully developed; had we followed it further, we might have come to understand some of the strange asymmetries in debates between neorealists and neo-Marxist world systems analysts.

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in social reality. Having said that, let me distance myself from a fashion current among neorealists: the ritual slaying of Immanuel Wallerstein (usually coupled with the celebration of the totemic figure of Otto Hintze). I want to state plainly my own intellectual debt to Wallerstein's pioneering work: like many American international relations theorists trained in the 1970s, I owe much to Wallerstein, not just for his theory but for the exemplary boldness of his enterprise, and his willingness (so threatening to neorealism) to punch holes in the convention-made walls of our minds.

On Wallerstein's error of anchoring his analysis in market-based explanations, see Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism," *New Left Review* no. 104 (1977). See also John W. Meyer, "The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State," in Albert Bergesen, ed., *Studies of the Modern World-System* (New York: Academic Press, 1980); John Boli-Bennett, "The Ideology of Expanding State Authority in National Constitutions, 1870–1970," in Meyer and Michael T. Hannan, eds., *National Development and the World System: Educational, Economic, and Political Change, 1950–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

121. This treatment of the opposition between heterodoxy and orthodoxy in the context of crisis is due to Bourdieu, *Outline*, pp. 159–71.

122. Ibid., p. 165.

123. Ibid., p. 169.

Finally, I must confess to nagging doubts about tone. Had I the neorealist's gift for theorizing, I would certainly aspire to write the kind of critique that would cause my opposition to concede error on the spot—a deft, dispassionate, and surgically precise articulation of a logical flaw that would bring neorealists to their knees with technical certitude. I am not so gifted, however, and so my lesser approach has been to circle the neorealist orrery of errors, try to glimpse its self-affirming and antihistorical closure, and then set the whole of it before the eyes of the classical realist tradition upon which neorealism claims to improve. Along the way, I have called names, I have poked fun, I have stolen some of Morgenthau's angrier words to hurl at neorealists, and I have tried to expose the implicit political content of this purportedly neutral enterprise. I have said, in effect, that this supposedly scientific realism is bad science and worse realism. In the manner of Thompson, I have whacked away at the bungs of structuralist barrels lined up in the academy, and I have done so in the hope that some "minds might get out." Such a tone is hardly calculated to win friends, I know. Worse, it makes me appear the aggressor, and leaves me open to a calculated strategy of "withering nonchalance" in response.

In my defense, let me say that I am driven to these lengths by a combination of concern and hope. My concern is that, amidst the wrenching of economic, social, and epistemic crisis, social scientists who study international relations will mistake neorealism's anticritical closure for a much needed pillar of certainty, security, and, most of all, collective understanding. I am concerned that the faculties that above all distinguish science from nonscience—the reflective exercise of criticism—are thus being deadened at just the time when their potential is most needed and most likely to burst forth. I am concerned that, as a result, the scientific study of international politics in the United States is gravitating toward a reactionary pole rather than involving itself in the expansion of the field of political discourse and, with it, opportunities for the creative evolution of world society. And I am especially concerned about graduate students and younger scholars who are *told* to think critically and creatively but whose freedom to think critically in public depends to a very considerable degree upon their linking their accomplishments to collectively recognized foundations. Insofar as neorealist lore comes to occupy the collectively recognized foundations of the discipline, the urging of criticism-consciousness can only be a cruel hoax.

My hope is encapsulated in the words of Sartre: "Words wreak havoc when they find a name for what had up to then been lived namelessly."[124] My hope and my hunch is that the present polemic amounts to little more than a putting into words of what many have already "lived namelessly." I suspect that I am not the first to wonder why neorealist arguments always

124. Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'idiot de la famille* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 1: 783, and quoted in Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 170.

come to us not as ideas that pry open beloved concepts and make room for new scientific adventures but as case-hardened conceptual devices that enclose the senses in an all-encompassing finality. I imagine that others have recoiled at the feeling, upon encountering these neorealist depictions, that one is an innocent fallen victim of a vast and diabolical machine, a perpetual motion machine that bends every attempt to escape it into a reaffirmation of itself. And I would guess that others have been troubled by the eerie sense of completeness about neorealist theory, as if there is no more of consequence to be said, save a defense of the edifice here, a demonstration of its efficacy there. If I am right, and I hope I am, then most international relations scholars have long sensed what I have tried to put into words.

Let us then play havoc with neorealist concepts and claims. Let us neither admire nor ignore the orrery of errors, but let us instead fracture the orbs, crack them open, shake them, and see what possibilities they have enclosed. And then, when we are done, let us not cast away the residue. Let us instead sweep it into a jar, shine up the glass, and place it high on the bookshelf with other specimens of past mistakes.