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**Reconsidering Classical Political Realism: An Ontological
Analysis on the Influences of Friedrich Nietzsche in Hans
Morgenthau's Philosophical Approach to Politics**

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RESUMEN

El realismo clásico como una de las teorías fundamentales de Relaciones Internacionales ha sido objeto de constantes cuestionamientos a sus ideas transversales, generando conclusiones alteradas debido a la ausencia de un análisis ontológico adecuado y profundo. El pensamiento filosófico de Hans Morgenthau, uno de los teóricos más representativos del realismo clásico en la modernidad, ha sido fuertemente influenciado por el filósofo Friedrich Nietzsche desde muy temprana edad. Este hecho no solo tuvo implicaciones en la filosofía de vida de Morgenthau sino también definió su pensamiento político consolidado en la teoría clásica realista. Para comprender su enfoque político, es necesario indagar en cómo Nietzsche inicialmente construyó sus consideraciones hacia la naturaleza humana y a la individualidad, agregado al sentimiento de poder como motor de esta naturaleza. El análisis a la extrapolación de estos fundamentos conceptuales que Nietzsche realiza hacia el ámbito político será crítico para proveer un mejor acercamiento a sus influencias en la filosofía política de Morgenthau. A partir de los nexos descubiertos entre ambos autores, será posible brindar una reflexión distinta sobre el trasfondo filosófico existente en los elementos constitutivos de la teorización del realismo clásico de Hans Morgenthau.

Palabras clave: Realismo clásico, filosofía, análisis ontológico, Hans Morgenthau, Friedrich Nietzsche.

ABSTRACT

One of the fundamental theories of International Relations, classical realism, has been subject of constant questionings to its cross-cutting ideas, which has generated distorted conclusions by the absence of a deep and adequate ontological analysis. The philosophical thought of Hans Morgenthau, one of the most representative realist scholars of modernity, has been heavily influenced by the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche from a very early age. This fact not only had implications in Morgenthau's philosophy of life but also defined his political thought fully entrenched in classical realist theory. To understand his political approach, it is crucial to first examine how Nietzsche built his considerations of human nature and individuality, added to the will to power as the driving force of this nature. The analysis of Nietzsche's extrapolation of these conceptual foundations into the political arena will be critical to provide a better understanding of his influence in Morgenthau's political philosophy. By unveiling the multiple nexuses between both authors, it will be possible to offer a different overview to the philosophical backdrop existing in the constitutive elements of Hans Morgenthau's theorization of classical realism.

Key words: Classical realism, philosophy, ontological analysis, Hans Morgenthau, Friedrich Nietzsche.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout time, topics such as war, peace, cooperation, power, security among many others have crosscut every discussion on political affairs. In this vein, theories have played a fundamental role in providing sources to better understand events that arise over time and that are result of the multiple linkages between such concepts. The study of International Relations (IR) has been built upon diverse theoretical frameworks, many of them raised in response to critical milieux of world politics. One of them is classical realism theory, a determining centerpiece in debates of IR entrenched in ancient tragic perceptions of life – mostly on the chaotic and conflictive nature of human beings – and ascribed to Hans Morgenthau as its main proponent (Gellman 1988, 247). The underlying political and moral assumptions on power-driven relations in world politics were firstly defined by classical realist scholars and became conceptual cornerstones in political debates ever since (Walt 1998, 30). Despite this fact, classical realism has lately begun to lose ground whilst contemporary theoretical approaches, such as neorealism, develop as perhaps more accurate tools to explain current political behaviors. Nevertheless, these latter theories are rooted in already defined realist concepts without paying much attention to the philosophical foundations that uphold them. Therefore, defining concepts of classical realism are not only being strongly questioned in their validity, legitimacy or applicability, but also their philosophical mainstays are left in mere rhetoric, which ultimately result in garbled conclusions.

As means to avoid this issue, Morgenthau himself strongly suggested the need to pose ontological questions to political science, that is to say, to revisit the starting thoughts that gave birth to intersectional concepts within it. In the case of classical realism, these thoughts pondered human nature and the perpetual lust for power as driving forces of politics (Morgenthau 1958,

390). In this spirit, it is then feasible to inquire about the nature of classical realism with a special attention to the ontological grounds of these two guiding principles. Conventional readings of this theory successfully pinpoint but fail to review them carefully. By having an in-depth look at Morgenthau's philosophical foundations, a quite peculiar yet intriguing backdrop to classical realism can be found. Friedrich Nietzsche, one of the most influential philosophers of the 19th and 20th century, seems to be the key intellectual source of Morgenthau's theoretical constructs.

Along his work, Nietzsche not only presented a very contested perception of life but also evinced various criticisms to human expressions, including political behaviors, which propelled myriad debates and academic productions on its interpretations and analysis (Stocker and Knoll 2014, 1). Nonetheless, it has been an uncommon thought to underline the enormous influences that his philosophical appraisals may have had on political theories such as classical realism. Morgenthau's political contributions had a remarkable influx of Nietzsche's conceptualizations at all levels, which served him as the paramount intellectual authority that seeded the ethos of the realist approach to world politics (Frei 2001, 90-95). The key consideration to this fact are the multiple yearning and passionate references about Nietzsche in Morgenthau's diaries as "the greatest outsider of (...) all" and "the god of my [Morgenthau's] youth" (Frei 2001, 25). Given this strong interconnection, this paper will explore the philosophical bedrocks that constitute classical realism through an ontological analysis of Friedrich Nietzsche's conceptions about the individual's nature and power as a means to draw a more adequate appreciation of Hans Morgenthau's understanding of world politics.

In this sense, with the overarching objective of better understanding the defining concepts of classical realism, the first section of this paper will provide a comprehensive approach to Nietzsche's philosophical concepts. By digging into Nietzsche's work, it will be possible to

reveal the ideas that inspired him to conceive a tragic sense of life via his later assumptions on power and human perfectionism. These approximations will serve as basis for understanding Nietzsche's approach to politics extensively discussed in Chapter 2. The analysis provided thereto will bring into account the philosophical background of Nietzsche's thoughts on various political aspects closely related to the defining ideas of classical realism. Finally, the last chapter will focus on examining the multiple linkages between Hans Morgenthau and Friedrich Nietzsche. By thoroughly comparing both authors, it will be feasible to illustrate the conceptual nature of classical realism encountered in the philosophical foundations that severely nurtured Morgenthau's considerations on the political arena.

CHAPTER 1: CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY

The understanding of the implications of Nietzsche's philosophy in Hans Morgenthau's realist theory demands a thoroughgoing analysis of certain concepts crucial in the philosophical convergences between both scholars. In Nietzsche's work, it is possible to acknowledge an important influence from classical scholars as Thucydides, Machiavelli or Goethe – essential cornerstones on the transversal tragic standpoint of his philosophical thought (Shaw 2007, 15-19). In *Twilight of the Idols* (1976), he clearly mentions Thucydides and Machiavelli as persons who better identify his approach towards perfection and power – two of the maxims developed in his philosophy and in his assumption of life, and concepts that would become hallmarks on how classical realism as a theory would be later crafted by its scholars: “Thucydides and perhaps, Machiavelli's *Il Principe* are more closely related to myself by the unconditional will not to gull oneself and to see reason in reality – not in ‘reason’, still less in morality” (Nietzsche 1976, Ancients 2). Evidently, although not explicitly assumed by the author, earlier scholars re-appropriated as iconic realist theorists of IR have a strong input on this affirmation; but, what are the principles sustaining these self-centered comparisons?

Nietzsche's work is full of associations with many outstanding scholars and even historic idols as a resemblance of himself, for instance, Ermanarich and Zarathustra. All of these characters depart from a common assumption: the perfectionism within their humanity comes from a sameness of nature's perfection by mimicking the creative, active and dynamic power existing within it (Hatab 2008, 208-209). Thus, when he speaks about Thucydides, he also

bestows him with some of the defining values of nature while diminishing other idealistic thinkers as Plato with the absence of these same values. For instance, he argues:

Thucydides: the great sum, the last revelation of that strong, severe, hard factuality which was instinctive with the older Hellenes. In the end, it is courage in the face of reality that distinguishes a man like Thucydides from Plato: Plato is a coward before reality, consequently he flees into the ideal; Thucydides has control of himself, consequently he also maintains control of things. (Nietzsche 1976, Ancients 2)

This process of personal introspection became the most radical representation of his philosophy – fully exhibited in his most advanced work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1972) – after understanding nature encapsulated in the earthly figure of mankind. The convergences of his ideals into the most tragic, anti-moralistic, courageous and instinctive values was precisely the breaking point between the common human being and his magnanimous sophist model of humanity inspired in the Greek instinct that better resembled nature's pureness. It is right in this instinctive conception of life where the fundamentals of power are found, for which we will further examine the understanding that Nietzsche gives to power as a preamble to the conceptual influences into classical realist theory.

The Construction of Power – Instinctive Forces in Nature

The distribution of power is a decisive concept in the understanding of classical realism as Morgenthau adequately elaborates in *Politics Among Nations* (1985) and which showcases strong influences from Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche's consideration of power is built upon three constituent ideas: the will to power [*der Wille zur Macht*], the eternal return, and the construction of both in one identity, the overman [*Übermensch*] found in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1972). These are all the result of the creative forces in nature that ultimately interact between each other to achieve its greatest perfection, which Nietzsche transposed into the perfect mankind blueprint. In this sense, it is crucial to analyze more deeply each of these ideas depicted

in Nietzsche's comprehension of nature to unveil the fundamental construction of power throughout his entire work.

The Individual as a Resemblance of the Perfection in Nature

The centerpiece of Nietzsche's philosophy is the exhaustive road to achieve human perfectionism at all levels by transposing nature's behaviors into the individual to later promote the enhancement of humanity as a whole (Cavell 1990, 40-61)¹. Nonetheless, this perfectionism process requires an understanding of the interactions between forces in nature – *the eternal return of the same* – so the individual can replicate nature's perfectionism into himself. The eternal return, as better presented in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1972), is a juncture between nature and its spirit – the excessive emission of forces that leads into the balance of nature and so into its perfection (Nietzsche 1972, 43-62). In the prologue, the greatness of Zarathustra precisely represents this connection and Nietzsche uses it to exemplify the *Übermensch*. The idea behind this affirmation is undertaken from Waldo Emerson's essays on the power of nature as infinitely creative, active and uniquely responsive to the instincts but, at the same time, as “aggressive, egoistic, immoral in terms of an unquenchable creativity within its lust for power” (Emerson 2010, 180; Gómez 2014, 22). These fierce and chaotic values are indeed later found in the

¹ Human perfectionism is a defining concept in Nietzsche's philosophy strongly influenced by Waldo Emerson's philosophy of nature. Just like Nietzsche, Emerson finds the origins of power in natural forces. This conceptual symbiosis between Nietzsche and Emerson is adequately sustained by Jorge Gómez in *Nietzsche Parásito de Emerson* [Nietzsche, Emerson's Parasite] (2014) – analyzing parasitism as the conceptual juncture between both – and Stanley Cavell in *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (1990) – accounting Nietzsche's perfectionism in Schopenhauer's identity. Although both authors resemble the entire Nietzschean foundational process, the considerations on human perfectionism are propelled by an inherent will to power.

Übermensch model and highlighted by both Emerson and Nietzsche in the principle of individuality – the self in itself – needed to achieve this human perfection².

As it can be understood, chaos in nature is the source and consequence of its creative power; yet, the only way to offset it is through a principle existing in the inherent repetitiveness of the eternal return: compensation. As the expressions of power are in a constant change whether expanding, preserving or contracting, the compensation principle uses the natural confrontation among opposing power valuations to reduce chaos and sustain nature. Nonetheless, because a force necessarily counterbalance another, compensation represents a luring action of constant force intensification, which justifies an endlessly increasing struggle for power (Emerson 1983, 295-300). This common denominator endows Emerson's superior man and Nietzsche's overman, both as connection and reflection of nature and its power-driven relations in one sole individual (Emerson 1983, 413).

Additionally, nature's compensatory forces underlie a constant repetition of events resulting in a cyclical model – the return to itself. While explaining this turbulent yet unfathomable process, Gómez uses circularity to better portray its significance in the construction of the *Übermensch*. He summarizes this idea:

If in nature there is no end since in every end there is a new beginning, in the superior man the circular evolution requires a circular background that “depends on the power or truth of the individual soul.” The circle has the essential task of creating even more self-centered circles commanded by itself. (...) The individual soul expresses itself as force,

² Nietzsche will drive these concepts throughout his entire work, specially highlighting them in the early shaping process of the superior man in *Human, All Too Human* (1894) and *On the Genealogy of the Morals and Ecce Homo* (1969). A more mature version of these concepts will transcend to the *Übermensch* exposed in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1972) as its topmost point. Emerson's philosophy on the individual is used to bring a better understanding of these conceptual evolutions when he refers to the “imperial selfishness” or “self-reliance” in *Obra Ensayística* [Essay Work] (2010). By following instinctive passions only found in the individuality of the self, the perfection of the superior man would be achievable (Mikics 2003, 32-35).

as power and as will to be itself (...). The individual soul creates the truth and values of community as its own truths. (Gómez 2014, 34-35)³

This appreciation allocates the radical feeling of power as the energetic principle of creation at all levels in nature, which allows it to reformulate and reorder within its creative chaos (Emerson 1983, 299). The eternal return of the same allows Nietzsche and Emerson to transcend the individuality existing in human chaos and understand how nature vitalizes itself and uses power as its major force. However, Nietzsche's assumption of the superior man will ultimately depend on a dangerous and personal identification of forces which will eventually propel the strongest, most-instinctive ones within the individual (Nietzsche 1894, 22-26). Hence, the compensation principle will not only represent the interaction among natural forces but also will be first and foremost explained by the will to power, resulting in a power-compensation notion towards human greatness, further explained here below (Kaufmann 1974, 309-320).

Power as Instinct and as Moralization

By relating power to the confinements in nature, Nietzsche presupposes power as an inherent and vital force, which propels all kinds of actions. The juncture between Nietzsche's earlier superior man and his later *Übermensch* is that both have an increasing anxiety for power and act according to their own will. Yet, the analogy with nature is that life represents a surplus of power that only the superior man can take advantage of with his will to power, which allows him to utterly live within a space of eternal clashing powers, the driving force of nature and life itself (Emerson 2004, 69; Nietzsche 1972, 49-51). The behavioral sense of the superior man confronting this game of powers is first exposed in *Human, All Too Human* (1894), where the

³ Translated to English by Alejandro Briones. Originally published in Spanish by Jorge Gómez in *Nietzsche Parásito de Emerson* [Nietzsche, Emerson's Parasite] (2014).

will to power is the only mechanism to achieve a perfect balance between the imitation of natural forces and the perfectionism instinct existing in the superior man (Nietzsche 1894, 22-24).

However, Nietzsche finds that human morality represents the biggest challenge and setback to freely achieve this state of individual perfection. By fathoming the power-compensation idea, Nietzsche alludes to the religion of courage – an identity necessary to encounter the weakness and trepidation of the common being (Nietzsche 1882, 389-392). Still, he does not leave this fact lagging; instead, he welcomes the existence of moral limitations – those set and accepted by social conventionalisms – as the *Übermensch* uses them as tools to compensate his force in his need to introject nature's power with the shadow of morality (Gómez 2014, 114). This conception is precisely the juncture between the will-to-power model and the way in which it can transcend the moral foundations of humanity.

Nietzsche's criticism of the social acknowledgements of power is represented in the multiple questionings that Zarathustra has throughout his conversion process into the *Übermensch*. Values such as ambition of dominance, voluptuousness or egoism are commonly foreseen as immoral; whereas for Zarathustra, these values are the result of a proper expression of the will to power and act as inputs to reach individual perfectionism (Nietzsche 1972, 309-314). Herein, the disavowal of these values simply respond to a decadent conception of life typically inspired by what is morally understood as *good* or *bad* (Nietzsche 1972, 283). Dichotomies as such not only undervalue power as an inherent human force but also moralize the human being to such extent that it is impossible to distinguish those values that will allow him to reach his greatest enhancement. The moral-driven misconception of the will to power is precisely what encourages Zarathustra to understand the faults existing in humanity and its estrangement from natural instincts.

In addition, Nietzsche approaches society by describing how those values existing in exemplary individuals are belittled, mainly for the moral avoidance to the forces of power existing in nature. Power – as seen by humanity – is a diminishing will of covetous human beings, yet Nietzsche exposes it as a “healthy egoism, that one sprouting from a powerful soul, the one that converts [power] into virtue” (Nietzsche 1972, 312-313). The understanding that Nietzsche gives to mankind under this philosophy will have a crosscutting implication in his political thought and in his explanation to the relations of power existing in it. This analysis of power as will and as competition will provide the keystones to adequately straddle these concepts into the philosophical foundations of classical realism, not without first addressing the political views existing in Nietzsche that ultimately associate his ideas with the core principles existing in this political theory.

CHAPTER 2: TRANSPOSING NIETZSCHE INTO POLITICS

The aforementioned conception of power in society, added to the individual fights luring a perfectionist approach to life, represent essential concepts in the philosophical foundations of classical realism, particularly evident in Hans Morgenthau's political approach and his transposition of these concepts onto the State. Likewise, the principle of compensation that the *Übermensch* finds in the moral conditionings surrounding power is embedded in Nietzsche's political philosophy not only as a way to perfect humankind but also as a natural equilibrium of the clashing powers existing in human nature. To that effect, it is vital to explore Nietzsche's transposition of individual values onto politics in order to comprehend the political inspirations behind Morgenthau's thought.

To begin with, when Nietzsche refers to his home country, Germany, there is an innate sense of the will to power and the superiority model that he himself represents, and uses these scenarios to provide subtle arguments on political matters. The first approach he takes is by underlining the role of enemies in a consequential equilibrium of power forces. In *Twilight of the Idols* (1976), he dives into his appreciation of world politics by saying that “[a] new creation in particular the new Reich (...) needs enemies more than friends: in opposition alone does it feel itself necessary, in opposition alone does it become necessary” (Nietzsche 1976, 3 6.84). His impulse to understand the valuable outputs of competing with an adversary comes from his admiration to the Greek stoicism in which human novelty was a result of a will to confront the enemy – not obscured by moral assumptions but rather enlightened by manifestations of natural forces – and an insatiable thirst for power as sources to reach an exemplary mankind model

(Nietzsche 1986, 45 2.67). This evaluation exhibits curious similarities on how Nietzsche understands the individual as a powerful being and society – by beholding the same fights that the individual faces at both internal and external levels.

An accurate finding in Nietzsche's politicization of life coming from the will to power and its struggles can be inferred from his understanding of the "internal enemy" in every superior man as a more internalized sense of power: "here too we have spiritualized hostility [*die Feindschaft*]; here too we have come to appreciate its value" (Nietzsche 1976, 3 6.84). That hostility is not only a reference to a personal confrontation to natural inner forces – and so the externalization of power – but also to a reactive effect of others exercising theirs. It is in these interactions where human nature is transferred to a representation of life filled with power-driven political units, and thus, life itself as a political reflection of power in its entirety.

The Political Perfectionism: A Reflection of Nature into Politics

Before approximating the strong relationship existing between Nietzsche's concepts and the core ideas in classical realism, it is crucial to understand the perfectionism that Nietzsche wants to promote in mankind as a structured society. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1972), he provides a critical position towards a relentless decaying culture, mainly sustained by the weakness of ethics (Nietzsche 1972, 454-455). This will be the representative thought towards the decadence he found in late modernity, both at political and social levels, for the absence of a thirst of knowledge and moral transformation as underlined in his early readings on the Greeks (Nietzsche 1969, 2.25). Nietzsche's alternative to this lack of potential ethics is found in institutions as instruments to enhance humanity at the community level, thus promoting a moral reform capable of developing a more exemplary society. In this regard, Cavell will endorse this affirmation by interconnecting a moral perfectionism as the political rationale of constitutional

democracies, mainly in the ability of a transcendent institutional system to “withstand not in its rigors but its failures (...) to keep the democratic hope alive in the face of disappointment with it” (Cavell 1990, 56). This idea takes us to more defined political mechanisms, precisely by locating some of the behaviors of the superior man in taking setbacks as retributions to his individual refinement, yet this time, focusing on institutions with a special attention to the cultural aspect.

Although Nietzsche argued that the decadence of humanity has deeply hindered the political arena, he builds a buoyant notion towards better moral politics. In Daniel Conway’s analysis to this appraisal, Nietzsche considers that “since a form of ethical life has survived the demise of the sustaining institutions of late modernity, future enhancements of humankind remain possible” (Conway 1997, 47). The symbiosis between institutionalism and individualism that Nietzsche proposes depart from a deeper attention to micro politics as means to promote more transcending ethics at the macro-political level. As politics should be led by exemplary individuals at this latter level, the resulting perfectionism will be consequence of well-constructed human beings at the microspheres (Nietzsche 1976, 9.44). The individualist approach to reach it under the chaotic values sustained on nature’s power are the same that exist in the political actors and their power to push their equals towards perfectionism. The conceptual amalgamation herein presented will afterwards result in an impact on how power is understood within institutions and how various individual values and behaviors are foreseen in political interactions between leaders and communities.

Power and the Eternal Return: Transcending the Individual into Politics

Having analyzed the connection between Nietzsche’s ideas and the conception of politics, it is imperative now to walk through the conceptual linkages existing between the will to power and

the eternal return – as vital forces of nature – and the discourses of power in the realist approach to politics. Gilles Deleuze envisions the ideological evolution surrounding power and underscores the commonalities existing between Nietzsche and Thomas Hobbes (Deleuze 1983, 45-71). Although Deleuze gives a distinction on how each understands the existence of power, both Nietzsche and Hobbes converge into an externalizing process of it into society at a certain point of its manifestation⁴. Focusing on Nietzsche, the power in society to enhance culture – treated in the subsequent section – will be the breaking point between the individual seeking power – as constructed in the *Übermensch* – and the perfectionism of the entire society.

Accordingly, one of the main ideas that underline social behaviors towards perfectionism is the eternal return. Nandita Biswas brings a much broader attention to this conceptual analogy departing from a comprehension of life where the purest and wildest sense of power is demonstrated in the continuous and cyclical actions of human beings. As “political life cannot be understood as a mode of existence that somehow separates human beings from nature”, the circularity of the eternal return and the power-compensation principle are decisive to create a model where individuals can cope with the chaotic struggle of forces (Siemens and Roodt 2008, 30). The assumption of a political arena sustained in these natural principles reveals how the will to power transposes from the self (a principle of individuality) into the community. In *Daybreak* (1982), Nietzsche showcases a clearer explanation for this behavior by characterizing power as a reactive constituent of any human interaction. Its depiction in politics result in an individual

⁴ Both Hobbes and Nietzsche agree that power is an innate force in nature, for which it can be found in all human interactions. Yet, Deleuze presupposes that the main distinction between Nietzsche and Hobbes is that the former considers power as an internalized fight towards achieving an idealized perfection, whereas the latter conceives power as an externalizing force which social recognition and can be exercised in relation to a differentiated ownership of power (Deleuze 1983, 60-65; Patton 1993, 153). Nevertheless, this affirmation is strongly restricted by the externalization of power that Nietzsche will later propose referring to creative societies and the ability to enhance culture as a result of this will to power – thus, transposing this idea into a more political sphere.

exercise of power over others based on a personal sense of power (Nietzsche 1982, 67). These new interjections bring attention to the feasible faculty to relate individual behaviors while taking sovereign actions as political units and State-actors, which undoubtedly enlightens the underlying idea towards the foundations of classical realism in Nietzsche's philosophy.

Political Freedom and the *Principium Individuationis*: A Proximity to World Politics⁵

It was earlier mentioned that in *Twilight of the Idols* (1976), Nietzsche places his model of the superior man in the aggrandizement of his home country, particularly in its cultural advancement. In fact, he strongly criticizes the *Politik* that cumulates both political and military power without fostering culture (Nietzsche 1976, Germans 1)⁶. It is in this cultural approach where he finds the free will of a person within society and the responsibility of governments to foster it as the mechanism and ultimate goal to enhance humanity. Moreover, Nietzsche will melt the individual power into the vitality of the community within his appreciation to culture; thus, any failure in any of these two elements will deleteriously affect the other. Hence, by considering freedom, culture and politics, Nietzsche will suggest an instinctively guided institutionalist model to better pursue his intention to allocate at a governmental level the responsibility to nurture an exemplary society. The complex institutional overhaul herein responds to the strong

⁵ Nietzsche uses the term *principium individuationis* to identify the cross-cutting principles of self-consciousness and individuality existing in the construction process from the superior man to the *Übermensch* (Nietzsche 1967, 1). This term is an adequate tool to identify some post-Zarathustrian approaches: for instance, our comprehension of power and politics as it is part of the wisdom in the grandeur of an exemplary individual and the dexterity to understand the compensation principle into politics at both macro and micro levels.

⁶ This strong critique based on the shortcomings that Nietzsche found in the German government could be interpreted as an inconsistent idea with our approach to classical realist theory, where mostly military power does not have a cultural-enhancement approach as Nietzsche suggests. Nonetheless, this contrasting position – elucidating a consequential effect of power rather than a causal impulse – does not represent a contradiction to the founding principles on the will to power as core delineations to this theory and guiding principles on our comparative philosophical approach.

linkage Nietzsche finds between nature's eternal return and people's empowerment to maximize its development⁷.

In this vein, Nietzsche explains that “freedom is measured by the resistance which must be overcome (...) The aristocratic commonwealths of the type of Rome or Venice, understood [political] freedom exactly in the sense in which I understand it: as something one has or does not have, something one wants, something one conquers” (Nietzsche 1976, Expeditions 38). Once again, it is possible to find a strong determination of the will to power envisaged into more complex social and political spheres. Therefore, the role of governments – inspired in his aristocratic conception of common development – would be driven by the challenge to transcend the moral setbacks that vilify vital values like power needed for social enhancement.

In fact, the assumption of political freedom is not left there alone. Nietzsche, by bringing up the concept of *healthy egoism* introduced in Chapter 1, transfers freedom into an individualistic assumption of the nation-state notion. Once again, he takes the individual will to power to resemble the political understanding of sovereign States by which their self-interested actions are result of the externalization of natural power forces, yet without explicitly invoking this approach. In this way, individual freedom is entitled to a sovereign individual expression of power (Nietzsche 1969, 59). Conversely, Patton will join both the political freedom and the principle of sovereignty in drafting the ideal political institutionalism when he mentions that “Nietzsche invites us to imagine a political community founded upon the capacity for autonomous action shared by its members” (Patton 1993, 159). Thus, the ideal of the eternal return is again a transversal axis of the compensational behavior of power, when Nietzsche

⁷ This idea finds its origin in the concept of eternal return that was previously analyzed between Emerson and Nietzsche, mainly because Nietzsche understands that cultural development is just one step in his perfectionist process. At the same time, it is in the compensation of forces where the potential of society can be found. Nietzsche would take Emerson's idea of “compensation [as] the secret of strength in politics” and situate it in the core of his political thought, both in politics per se and in the politicization of life (Emerson 1983, 982).

implies that a sovereign action is generally a conscious acknowledgement and result of other powers interacting between each other (Nietzsche 1972, 455-464). Therefore, the political compensation process, at some point, will acquire a concessional status resulting in the equilibrium of forces as seen in nature and in politics as well.

Finally, the sovereignty idea can also be delineated in Nietzsche's attraction to spearheading humanity by targeting a micro-cosmos of understanding politics. The deeply entrenched individualistic approach of his philosophy stands to reason that he did not put a defined emphasis on arguing about world politics and behaviors in a more international scope. Yet, he effectively managed to identify his principles in a defined State-centric political cosmos, with institutions that – in exercise of their sovereignty – can contribute to the production of outstanding human beings (Nietzsche 1976, 9.44). A further reading to his impetus to reach this human perfectibility can be interconnected with the power that this aim grants to free and sovereign States⁸. It is precisely the constant jumps from the individual being to a macro scope of life existing in Nietzsche's work that brings us to unearthing his influence in the complexity of the realist political theory and its core elements.

Nietzsche's Perfectionism in the Security Principle

One final overview to Nietzsche's political approach includes his understanding of security given its paramount role in the conceptualizations surrounding classical realism. Just as power, Nietzsche alleged that security was an inherent element of nature mainly as a result of the full-

⁸ Although there is not a clear exemplification of this affirmation in Nietzsche's words, the analysis hitherto bolsters to associate the individual being with the State as an individual *per se*. In *The Case of Wagner* (1967), Nietzsche mentions that entirety no longer exists, which can be transposed into a macro-scope of politics and restate an appreciation to a more unitary approach to interact with other political actors (Nietzsche 1967, 7). It seems that for Nietzsche it is easier to address his concepts to a minor stage of politics, for instance, an institutional focus within each society into human empowerment. However, this same isolation to achieve these goals, in a way, transcends to a reluctant and egoistic view of the State, which can be the fulcrum to the sovereign existence and determination of a State fully rooted in the classical realist theory.

fledged influence of his *Übermensch* archetype on humanity (Nietzsche 2011, 173). However, he will once again take back all concluding inferences to his proposed institutional redesign mentioned earlier. Within this scope, Phillip Roth stresses that “although Nietzsche is convinced that what we perceive is not reality, but merely our mental construction, he understands that humans need to be deceived into thinking that they are perceiving reality” (Roth 2014, 212). It is precisely this belief that brings us closer to what makes someone feel secured in a rather chaotic environment as portrayed in Nietzsche’s early readings.

By generating in individual sovereign actions a sense of belonging and ownership – similar to the *principium individuationis* – entrusted in this constructed reality, a feeling of security will be propelled mainly by underlining the specific values that distinguishes the morality of a certain community from another. In fact, Nietzsche will draw on the instinctive behavior posed in his superior-man model into the survivorship and self-preservation of States; thus, it would be the communitarian model upon an Aristotelian perception of community which will be able to grant the security of its individuals⁹. Likewise, the community values strengthened by the philosophy of culture earlier considered will also contribute to its common preservation and resistance by inscribing the political authority as the instrument to vouch for security (Nietzsche 2011, 106). This in-depth walkthrough to the core principles and ideas surrounding Nietzsche’s political approach will now allow us to examine more specifically its determining influence on the philosophical foundations in classical political realism and its main scholars.

⁹ Van Tongeren provides a deeper analysis on the relationship between the security principle and the defining instincts existing in Nietzsche’s philosophy of nature. This latter is an input that allows the creation of a community life based on the ideas of the *political animal* of Aristotle. In this regard, “because the human is an animal and furthermore a weak animal, he is dependent on community, (...) protects himself and sanctions his protection with morality and law” (Van Tongeren 2010, 67). The instincts that Nietzsche suggests to be followed for achieving human greatness represent a chaotic clash with reality; however, they are underpinned as foundational values that allow the survival of individuals – or the secure of their existence. Thus, the security principle is set as a cornerstone in the political individual and in the constitution of a community.

CHAPTER 3: REDISCOVERING THE ROOTS OF CLASSICAL POLITICAL REALISM

Man is a political animal by nature, he is a scientist by chance or choice; he is a moralist because he is a man.

—Hans Morgenthau, *Scientific Man versus Power Politics*

In this final chapter, we will unveil the multiple linkages between the fundamental concepts drawn up in Hans Morgenthau's realist political theory with Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical concepts and approaches to politics. An insight to understanding the State in Nietzsche's political thought was already mentioned beforehand as means to narrow the conceptual interjections between classical realism and Nietzsche's philosophy. Nevertheless, the symbiosis between Nietzsche and Morgenthau is deeper than it could be imagined not only in the roots of realist concepts on which Morgenthau draws to explain political affairs but also in the philosophical grounds that he uses to strengthen his theory. Just as Nietzsche developed his ideas about the *Übermensch*, Morgenthau equally found an explanation to his surrounding world by transposing many of his own experiences and ideas towards life into the broader overview of classical realism. The insecurities that targeted Morgenthau's education during the 1920s were eclipsed by his affinities for Nietzsche's readings, rooting in this way as fundamentals of his future thinking (Frei 2001, 106-108).

Nonetheless, Morgenthau's admiration and appreciation of Nietzsche's philosophy does not end there. Christoph Frei, while recalling many of Morgenthau's early writings, unveils critical declarations that deepens Nietzsche's influence in both his personal and academic learning. Morgenthau's solitude at his young age drove him to find in Nietzsche a sense of living, an exemplary path to discover life through a philosophy that could join his individual

fighters with the most intimate and instinctive values of nature. When Morgenthau identifies Nietzsche's philosophy as a religious and spiritual nourishment, it allows us to reason that his philosophy meant a source of embracing its values into his personal life and begin his effort to at least get closer to the enhancement of humanity for which Nietzsche was looking (Frei 2001, 99).

A great intimation of the superior-man model in Morgenthau's life is later seen in his work on politics when he indirectly confers the development of political science to exemplary individuals. He would end up adopting a very Nietzschean critique towards those who are not doers of greatness, the lowermost (Nietzsche 1972, 74-75) by saying that "[a]t such impracticality in action (...), the handmaids of all ages, the born servants of society, can only laugh. Of them, (...) history reports nothing but laughter. Yet what they laugh at is the moral and intellectual outlook from which stems our heritage of political knowledge and wisdom" (Morgenthau 1955, 275). This observation enacts Morgenthau's tendency to reach a perfectibility in politics mostly sharpened in the intellectual advancement of politics as both theory and science.

The Fundamentals of Political Science: Morgenthau's Philosophical Approach

Morgenthau's appreciation of philosophy is a transversal component that evinces a direct influence of Nietzsche in his philosophical thought. While analyzing Morgenthau's *Reflections on the State of Political Science* (1955), it is possible to identify a similar behavior found in Nietzsche when he transcends his thought into a larger goal on enriching societies by propelling individual capacities. In *Schopenhauer as Educator* (1997), Nietzsche stresses that the State is above wisdom for which it should be the key instrument to achieve the goal of humanity towards

perfectionism acting as a mediator between the spirit-dialogue in an exemplary individual and the mechanisms to achieve it (Nietzsche 1997a, 8.193; Nietzsche 1997b, 9.110-111). The individuality principle and the relation with the State highlighted in this assumption will precisely become the cornerstones in Morgenthau's philosophical understanding of world politics.

First of all, the state of nature assumed by Nietzsche is the ontological principle that Morgenthau uses to acknowledge the consistency of political theory. In this vein, he will argue that the concepts and methods of political studies respond to natural behaviors which are "philosophic in that its validity does not derive from its being capable of empirical verification (...) but rather from its logical consistency with certain general propositions which claim to present the true nature of reality" (Morgenthau, 1955, 265). For him, the role of political theory is not to question nor frown upon the validity of these behaviors but instead assume their fallacy or validity in political studies encountering them as general truths found in the insides of nature. He also builds his political thought upon the individuality principle and the moral arguments examined in the previous chapter, both considered as elements that determine a given political behavior which infers in quantitative political methods (Morgenthau 1955, 259).

Additionally, Nietzsche's great causation between natural and instinctive values and the individual actions that respond to those instincts constantly underlays Morgenthau's political thought. This becomes a necessary assumption in political theory as it concerns imperative philosophical questionings that remain overridden by contemporary political debates, for instance: lust for power, freedom, immorality principles, among other aspects that were essential foundations in Nietzsche's milieu view (Morgenthau 1955, 265-266). Similarly, Morgenthau will situate the individual as the centerpiece of analysis in social sciences "both as creature and

creator of history in and through which his individuality and freedom of choice manifest themselves” (Morgenthau 1955, 258). That manifestation will not only result in crafting politics in the likeness of the individual, but also the concepts of Nietzsche’s philosophy of nature will be equally defining features in every political interaction, particularly on the exposure of the will to power and the power-compensation ideal intended to a betterment of politics. For Morgenthau, the absence of revisiting these crucial elements to adequately substantiate theories represents “the tragedy of politics” and the untenable separation between political theory and political science (Morgenthau 1955, 266-268)¹⁰.

Morgenthau’s Nexus with Nietzsche’s Conceptualization of Power

Having encountered the notions determining Morgenthau’s philosophical approach to politics, it is now imperative to draw nearer to the basic principles and concepts that distinguish classical realism from other political theories. Keir Lieber considers the realist view of politics as pessimistic and tragic, mainly for the greed and lust for power existing in all political actors and the *animus dominandi* situated “at the heart of the human predicament (...) well-intentioned to search for physical security (that is, the impulse of self-preservation) [which] paradoxically generates anxiety, mutual fear and conflict” (Lieber 2009, 8-9). Morgenthau’s perception of life has a huge impact in the construction of his realist theory departing from the intrinsic need of the individual to discover his own power, and at times, use that power to dominate others and to

¹⁰ Morgenthau considers that ignoring the philosophical pillars in political science unavoidably leads to an omission of human nature as the spirit of the theory. Likewise, it is an aberration to make distinctions between theory and science, as science itself needs general truths (innate to theory). Morgenthau finds these truths in the principles from Nietzsche’s philosophy of nature (broadly explained in chapter 1). Any attempt to ignore the natural driving forces that propel the individual and its social interactions will limit political theory to a mere descriptive analysis of particular facts. This problematic will curtail the theoretical predictions on political behaviors that political science is aimed to generate (Morgenthau 1955, 268).

counter the constantly threatening environment to ensure his own security, falling into an insatiable vicious struggle for power (Frei 2001, 25-40). With this in mind, how does Morgenthau initially conceive the idea of power?

The complex struggles that Morgenthau intimately faced while reading Nietzsche led him to conclude that power politics was enormously tied to his ethical approach to humanity (Frei 2001, 105), which resulted in a tragic understanding of the will to power. Predominantly in *Scientific Man versus Power Politics* (1946), Morgenthau draws this convergence with an exemplary similitude with Nietzsche in centering human nature in politics, power, the ambiguity of morals, human freedom and the ethical responses of statesmen (Frei 2001, 122). Focusing on power, Morgenthau would consider it as the central concept in his theory, which should be applied wisely at two predominant levels. On the one hand, power should grant the capacity to bring a comprehensive understanding of world politics and distinguish it not only from other social sciences but from the different fields within it¹¹. On the other hand, Morgenthau underlines the relations of power as the superior value existing in world politics that provides a complete description of the political landscape found in the human essence portrayed in it (Morgenthau 1955, 272). Both considerations have usually been ignored by the conventional reading on the considerations of power, from which a materialistic interpretation of it ensued (Morgenthau 1966, 9). These appreciations will reassert the reliability of Morgenthau's political science by considering power as its underpinning truth.

Reckoning his philosophical approach, Morgenthau refers to power as the truthful reconciliation between the nature of the political man and the political society (Morgenthau

¹¹ This specific approach to power drives our attention to the political perfectionism of Nietzsche (refer to Chapter 2, The Political Perfectionism: A Reflection of Nature into Politics) and its influence in political knowledge.

1955, 262)¹². Hence, the existing power relations – primarily those guided by the balancing mechanisms in the power-compensation principle – will be justified as means to thwart the unquenchable natural lust for power that drives political affairs and contributes to the stability of society (Morgenthau 1985, 225). For Morgenthau, the resulting balance of power exists under two conditions: the neediness to maintain power stability with regard to other States and the avoidance of a State to be conquered by others in order to keep its freedom in a likely weak international political system (Morgenthau 1993, 184). The moralistic foundations of power are strongly considered by Ned Lebow when he states that this balance of power responds better to the exercise of power between political actors rather than a depleted observation of their capacities to enact it (Lebow 2007, 9-10).

State Institutionalism and State Decadence

A final approach to the Nietzsche-Morgenthau nexus is found in how both understand the State as a political actor – more adequately positioned by Morgenthau in the international political arena as a locus of power. Nietzsche's previously discussed appeal to a profound institutional redesign most certainly does not stray far from what Morgenthau would propose. The decadence of humanity expressed by Nietzsche is also evident in Morgenthau's criticism of the State during the mid-twentieth century. He underscores that current political challenges threaten not only the representation of the nature of man in society but also the stability of institutions overwhelmed in an unproductive blindness to control every individual without promoting their free will and self-sufficiency (Morgenthau 1995, 270). In this regard, the faulty institutionalism in States brings

¹² It might be considered that this convergence represents a contradiction as moral truths are not inherent to a chaotic human nature. Morgenthau will argue that for reconciling both immoral and moral truths "one must weigh the immorality of the means against the ethical value of the end and establish a fixed relationship between them" (Morgenthau 1946, x). This premise will then turn power into a moral-centered political discussion compromised of a more philosophical and intellectual analysis of understanding world politics.

forward a constrained manifestation of individual powers that constitute the natural foundations of power-relations among States. Without a doubt, Nietzsche's eagerness to foster a political betterment towards the *große Politik* (Siemens and Roodt 2008, 87) is also Morgenthau's call on the extrapolation of a State-centered perfectibility into world politics.

The difficulties that Morgenthau finds for the accomplishment of these appraisals respond to the fact that "three great revolutions of our age – the moral, political and technical – (...) move in the same direction – that of global conflagration (...). Their coincidence in time and parallel development aggravate the threat to the survival of Western civilization which each of them carries independently" (Morgenthau 1985, 375)¹³. Such shortcomings are portrayed in classical realism and are grounded in the principles that Nietzsche found in his judgmental position on failing political systems, for instance: lack of genuine creative culture of action, absence of exemplary statesmen, and deterioration of values upheld in the cyclical notion of power and human perfectionism. Morgenthau's realist theory awakes an awareness towards the abrupt vicissitudes between the status quo and resurgent new State powers, both integrated in a threatening and unsafe political arena (Morgenthau 1985, 375). The security-led ideal in this theory equally centralizes power, on the one hand, as source of fearful States looking to ensure their security, and as the force that transcends to a natural political equilibrium by counterbalancing power relations, on the other.

¹³ Morgenthau's preoccupation on the future of world politics is broadly based on the aristocratic assumption of State politics that was also initially appreciated in Nietzsche's writings on his thoughts about Germany (Siemens and Roodt 2008, 89). He considered that the raising propagation of democracies resulted in a more fragmented, conformist and destructed international morality provoked by atomized individuals that did not respond to an aristocratic understanding of world politics (Morgenthau 1985, 225). This scattered international panorama – although recognized as a result of a more civilized society – deepened his tragic perception of world politics, centered even more on its morality (Morgenthau 1985, 229).

CONCLUSION

Classical realism as one of the main paradigms in the study of IR has been subject to constant debates of construction and deconstruction through the multiple convergences existing there. Both Morgenthau and Nietzsche considered the need to first revisit philosophical foundations before giving any critiques or analysis towards a certain issue; not doing so would inevitably result in mistaken assumptions limited to a simplistic and elusive approach to knowledge (Nietzsche 1986, 247). In fact, classical realism has not been exempt from a pre-conceived reading of the so-called human nature and the persistent lure of power, which have generally been considered as outdated or even mistaken assumptions by contemporary theories. Irretrievably, such realist concepts have been distorted by a lack of an adequate ontological analysis to the ideological background that encouraged their scholars to undertake a certain political posture. The unconventional reading on how power as a natural condition drives every political behavior – a crucial underlying concept of classical realism – presented herein, precisely unveils an untouched discussion crucial to question the philosophical foundations of this theory.

In order to provide an adequate ontological approach, it was necessary to first explore the origins of the distinguishing concepts of classical realism found in Nietzsche's philosophy. From early diary entries to his matured conception of humanity, Friedrich Nietzsche demonstrated an unfathomable obsession towards perfection embedded in the deepest confinements of nature. It was precisely in its creative spirit where he found the keystones to innate behaviors in all human beings. The eternal return of the same became that strategy to naturally control the chaotic and increasing will to power that, as in nature, is the paramount driving force. It was clear for Nietzsche that mankind's perfectionism would only be attained with a full transposition of these values into oneself and into society, and so it was for Hans Morgenthau.

The strong interrelationship between Morgenthau and Nietzsche has a first insight in the political assumptions Nietzsche had in transposing the superior man model into politics, more specifically in a redesign of a cultural community that promotes first and foremost individual fulfillment. While Nietzsche defended a less State-controlled political arena, his criticism was not to diminish nor to deny that humanity – and life itself – are political by nature (Nietzsche 1986, 3-4). Instead, his institutional and political transformation lured the production of a genuine culture towards the ultimate perfection of mankind. Under this aim, Nietzsche will ascribe the right to take sovereign actions to political units – whether as the State or as the people – which will guide them to an outstanding outreach towards life.

Furthermore, one of Morgenthau's notions that better captures two Nietzschean conceptualizations for world politics – the will to power and the *principium individuationis* – is the *political animal*. As previously analyzed, this concept, which embodies every representation of human nature buoyed by the constant quest for power, is the cornerstone for the political and institutional design in Morgenthau's classical realism. By having these principles embedded in his personal thought, the comprehension of politics resulted in a naturalization of the State where the same mechanisms on individual behaviors are mirrored at a larger scale (Morgenthau 1946, 150-156). Thus, States transcend individual will to power into a rather conflicting and self-interested demeanor with other States.

Yet, the chaotic argument behind this transposition is restrained by a moral assumption of power sharpened by a need to outweigh the faults within the State to grant it security, self-sufficiency and survival. In this perception, the cultural enrichment that Nietzsche endorses seems to be the root for the faulty observation that Morgenthau has towards the State. Therefore, statesmen should endeavor to provide security and stability in individuals by stimulating their

natural instincts for creation and individual freedom – a genuine sense of correspondence and value through the wisdom and knowledge entrenched in the philosophical bounds of the nation-state. Without a doubt, this appreciation restates Morgenthau's commitment to his philosophical inspirations and his proposal to embrace chaotic human nature through mechanisms that can grant the survival of the State on the one hand, and compensate the constant game of power relations inherent to politics on the other.

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