



philosophers and intellectuals who are trained on his work like searchlights, illuminating this aspect and that nuance, or the authors of the essays themselves, given an opportunity to write intelligently, and from their various theoretical perspectives, about someone whose work they all clearly admire? All three possibilities are surely valid, both independently and in combination, and one hopes that this increases, rather than diminishes, the potential audience for this collection.

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Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Neibuhr, Morgenthau, and Waltz

Campbell Craig

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It has become commonplace in recent years to speak of ‘American Realism’ as a distinctive theory of international politics — the hard-headed power politics of a superpower that grasps the enduring nature of international anarchy, and the need for great power politics of coercion and hegemony in global order. Not infrequently, this vision of Realism is contrasted to more sanguine or optimistic views that stress the need for increased cooperation and point to the evolution of transnational structures of authority such as the EU — a contrast popularly and pithily captured by Robert Kagan as a divide between the world of ‘power’ inhabited by the United States and the ‘paradise’ occupied by western Europe under its aegis. In these forms, ‘American Realism’ has become both an influential school of thought and a powerful political and rhetorical position.

Campbell Craig’s intellectual history of influential strands of Realist thinking in the United States in the post-WW II era compellingly demonstrates not only that the past of American Realism is vastly more complicated than its contemporary proponents acknowledge, but that it yields lessons for the future very different from those commonly invoked under the Realist flag. Focusing on three influential figures in the development of International Relations theory — Reinhold Neibuhr, Hans Morgenthau, and Kenneth Waltz — Craig shows how the views of each was fundamentally transformed by their engagement with a question largely (and peculiarly) absent in the thinking of



contemporary Realists: the revolution created by nuclear weapons and the looming possibility of global ‘omnicide’. In the face of the overwhelming destructive capability of these weapons, both Neibuhr and Morgenthau came to recognize that their previous views about the inevitability of armed conflict in a world characterized by anarchy and a power politics based in a universal *animus dominandi* simply made no sense. As a result, each was forced to the conclusion that a truly realistic theory of international relations required a fundamental rethinking of previous Realist assumptions, and each moved — however, haltingly — toward visions of world order, of a new Leviathan. Perhaps even more surprising — and certainly challenging for contemporary neorealists — is the conclusion that Craig reaches from a close analysis of the writings of Kenneth Waltz. Waltz’s engagement with nuclear weapons, he argues, leads him to gradually move away from his rigidly ‘structuralist’ account of international anarchy towards an appraisal that stresses responsible and restrained state action — the return of individual and state levels of analysis that Waltz is generally seen as consistently opposing.

This is a rich study, demonstrating how history and theory can be brought together into a fruitful dialogue, with important contemporary relevance. Craig’s argument is not just that the Cold War history of Realism is different than is usually recognized, but that taking it seriously places an engagement with the consequences of nuclear weapons again at the center of theories of international politics. It yields a clear rejection of Waltz’s arguments in favour of controlled nuclear proliferation — an issue of great current relevance. More broadly, Craig argues that theorists of global politics — including those who consider themselves Realists — must once again engage with the question of the possibility of a ‘world state’ as a rational response to the dilemmas of security in the nuclear age, and that this possibility is actually supported politically by the fear generated by those weapons.

But it is necessary at this point to ask whether Craig’s reliance on a particular reading of this tradition reaches its limits. By stressing the centrality of fear and the provision of security in the production of sovereignty and the state, he is left with only one real solution to the dilemma — a move ‘upward’ to a still more inclusive form of state. As he argues, this is not so much a rejection of the logic of Realism as it is a logical consequence of a specific theory of sovereignty. Yet it might well be argued that sovereignty cannot be reduced to the provision of physical security, even within Realism. As Hobbes, whom Craig refers to frequently, was well aware, the fear of violent death was only one of the factors motivating human beings — and often not the most powerful, as religious martyrdom clearly demonstrated. The foundations of political community, and the sources of contestation between those communities, go well beyond simple physical fear; and while Craig’s stress on the significance of nuclear fear in state action provides an important reminder, it is



not clear to me that in itself it can produce the effects he suggests. Perhaps more importantly, a broader vision of the nature of sovereignty can also mean that the resolution Craig suggests — the move to a world state — is by no means the only, not mention most desirable resolution to the important challenges he identifies. In fact, an alternative path forward can be found by looking at one of the figures at the center of this book: Hans Morgenthau. For it can be argued that Morgenthau was not quite as befuddled in the face of nuclear weapons as Craig implies, and that he sought in his later work to revive a republican American patriotism that could oppose jingoistic nationalism, provide leadership more sensitive to international dangers, and be more amenable to the construction of forms of international order without requiring the — in many ways worrying — creation of a global state.

These issues could obviously be developed at greater length, but it is one of the achievements of this book that it puts such questions clearly back at the center of the study of world politics, and at the center of Realism in all its forms. Craig's book provides a fine example of how substantial intellectual history can contribute to an engagement with contemporary political dilemmas as well as clarifying theoretical lineages.

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Slavoj Zizek: Live Theory

Rex Butler

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This is an interesting book. However, to save the time of those who may be dithering about whether to read it or not, note that Rex Butler tells us that Zizek 'fundamentally *has nothing to say*' (p. 123). This at least explains why there are no direct answers to the strings of rhetorical questions that pad out the text. The 'fundamental question' posed here, we are told quite late on, is 'What is the relationship between the master-signifier and *objet a* in Zizek's work?' (p. 70), and the answer is that there is an 'impossible simultaneity' between the 'act' and the 'master-signifier'.

The book is not an 'introduction' to Zizek's work, but it does piece together a series of arguments that Zizek makes about the 'act', the 'master-signifier'