

## Abstract of **Morgenthau *mal compris*** :

Ben Schupmann

The intention of this thesis is to investigate the philosophical foundations of Hans Morgenthau's project of political realism. It argues that the fundamental goal spanning Morgenthau's writings on political realism, as a response to scientism in the social sciences, is both to critique this approach and to present a viable "unscientific" alternative with which to properly understand and practice politics. More narrowly, his intention is to critique the possibility of a making politics into a science modeled upon scientific method because social phenomena actually defy scientific method. This critique of political "science," rests on a more fundamental denial of the possibility of a scientific understanding of either human nature and ethics (i.e. normative political action), which are the necessary basis for any theory of politics. That is, human nature is inherently unscientific and political action is inherently unscientific; to attempt to understand either according to science is to make a categorical error in epistemology. To complement this critique of scientism, this thesis will outline and discuss Morgenthau's positive and rational yet unscientific contribution to politics. To do this, this thesis will present Morgenthau's positive account of human nature and a theory of ethics – which will produce a better picture of what an unscientific theory of politics constitutes: something akin to art, owing to the nature in which agents must aesthetically perceive and interpret phenomena unscientifically. Finally, the relationship between politics and tragedy will be discussed, as these two concepts are intimately related; tragic art is an imitation of political practice, but in doing so it reveals some things about politics that may help to avoid catastrophe in real political practice.