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INTRODUCTION BY DANIEL J. LEVINE, THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Manners constitute a restraint.¹

Toward the end of Second World War, the British defense intellectual Basil Liddell Hart began publishing extensively on fashion and manners. In part, this reflected his much-diminished standing in policy circles: personal scandal, an emotional breakdown, and political maneuverings had taken their toll on Britain's one-time 'unofficial Chief of the Imperial General Staff.'² In part, too, it reflected a long-standing preoccupation with femininity and female bodies – one that, on Alex Danchev's account, "outsailed the boundaries of fashion, and yawed into fetishism."³

In part, though, Liddell Hart's turn to fashion was motivated by an attempt to address the root challenges that late-industrial and early atomic warfare posed to global security. Decades of unbridled populism and mass mobilization did not bode well for a humanity now teetering on self-extinction. New forms of self-imposed restraint – emotional, social, and political – had to be cultivated. These, he asserted, were all of a piece:

Manners are apt to be regarded as surface polish. That is a superficial view. They arise from inward control. A fresh realization of their importance is needed in the world today, and their revival might prove the salvation of civilization – as happened after the devastating civil and religious wars of the seventeenth century, and again after the French Revolutionary earthquake. For only manners in the deeper sense – of mutual restraint for mutual security – can control the risk that outbursts of temper over political and social issues may lead to mutual destruction in the atomic age.⁴

This revival of 'inward control' it appears, had begun at home. "Basil," Kathleen Liddell Hart wrote to her parents in 1944, "wants to start a campaign for the re-refeminization of women." Accordingly, she and her daughters by a previous marriage (Jennifer and Judith, aged 16 and 13) were learning "to cook...make jam and bottle fruit;" "to be charming and elegant...when we have guests;" and to dress for dinner – including stockings and corsets. The author of *The British Way in Warfare* apparently wished to measure Jennifer's and Judith's waists – as he had that of their mother.⁵

Having spent the early years of the war (and their mother's second marriage) in Canada, Jennifer and Judith seem not to have known Basil very well. When Kathleen's family remonstrated on their behalf, Liddell Hart's reply stressed the corset's historic role in moral and civilizational development:

The habit...of women wearing 'stays' from adolescence on grew up when our civilization emerged from barbarian chaos, and the few short intervals where there has been a break in the habit have

¹ Basil Liddell Hart: "Manners Mould Mankind" (1846), cited in Alex Danchev: *Alchemist of War: The Life of Basil Liddell Hart* (Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1998), 218.

² John Mearsheimer: *Liddell Hart and the Weight of History* (Cornell University Press, 1988), 168; AJ Trythall: "The Downfall of Leslie Hore-Belisha," *Journal of Contemporary History* 16:3 (1981): 391-411.

³ Danchev, *Alchemist of War*, 86.

⁴ Danchev, *Alchemist of War*, 218; Danchev, "'Cross Dressing,' Liddell Hart, Fashion, and War," *Alternatives* 24:2 (1999): 249-268, at 260.

⁵ Danchev *Alchemist of War*, 216-217.

been disorderly and disruptive periods...*the corset is of fundamental importance in determining the character of a mode, and the influence of a mode on a character.*⁶

Restraint could not simply be studied. It was acquired through direct bodily experience, along the lines of military drill – the emotional or affective equivalent of ‘muscle memory.’ To that end, the corset was a tool. Basil himself had apparently also worn one from time to time – a detail he chose to omit here.⁷

Readers of Brent Steele’s *Restraint in International Politics* – the subject of the present roundtable – will not be surprised to discover that policy prescriptions are inseparably bound up with complexes of libidinal desire and aesthetic sensibility. Nor that the labor of sustaining those prescriptions may be disproportionately shifted onto those who have the least ‘voice’ in such matters. The former, Steele argues, is always the case, while the latter constitutes a distinct politics of its own.

By *restraint*, Steele means the power “to go...against or resist...something we would otherwise expect to prevail” (12 and 22). This includes the power to step outside the ebb and flow of events; to resist the call of instinct and desire; and to confront, reflect upon, or push back against routinized practices and ‘standard operating procedures.’ Less a virtue in itself – as Steele points out, restraint’s moral worth can only be understood in relation to the ends it is put to – it is rather a *precondition* for virtue.

Indeed, it may be impossible to imagine democratic politics without it. That is because properly autonomous political agents must first emancipate *themselves from themselves* – one must deaden, or resist, one’s own felt preferences, urges, and predilections. Only then will one have the space to reflect upon events, to argue over their meaning, or to work collectively and collaboratively to respond to them.

Even so, it may bear asking: who is assumed to possess these faculties as a matter of course? Who, by contrast, must demonstrate their mastery of them as a condition of inclusion – or is denied even the opportunity to try? Consider, Steele notes, that restraint is typically ‘coded’ as a masculine, heroic trait, while its lack is widely associated with the historically marginalized: women, the working class, and racialized outsiders (83-86; 94-115). This might explain, he continues, why elite narratives for restraint not only encounter strong counter-narratives of “actionism” – a complex of populist beliefs and dispositions in which the power of bold decisions to create and/or shape history restraint is celebrated – but actually *produce* them (74-77, 90-1). If restraint is mistrusted among actionists for undermining, weakening, or misdirecting the political agency of the community, it may be because it is so closely associated with their own marginalization and exploitation.

Thus, Steele explains, it is not enough to call for policies of restraint. We must also acquire a synoptic understanding of what those policies entail:

If we want a more meaningful and useful debate about the policy of restraint, we need a better account of the challenges of and for restraint in global politics, from individuals, to groups, to states, to the structure of the global system itself. We need, then, a comprehensive account of the *politics* of restraint (Steele 2020, 1; emphasis in original).

To this end, *Restraint in International Politics* combines Jungian accounts of libido and its emotional complexes with historical/sociological accounts of the practices, institutions, and policies from which they emerge and into which they are decanted. Drawing at turns on Aristotelian accounts of political virtue, the psychology of Carl Gustav Jung, and the

⁶ Danchev *Alchemist of War*, 217. The broader theory on which this sensibility is predicated was less idiosyncratic than this presentation may suggest. See Daniel Bertrand Monk: “The Jew and the Tank: Habit and Habitus toward a Theodicy of War,” *Security Dialogue* 51:2-3 (2020): 248-267. I am indebted to Monk for pointing out this aspect of Liddell Hart’s thinking to me.

⁷ Danchev *Alchemist of War*, 95.

historical sociology of Norbert Elias and Anthony Giddens, Steele maps out the ‘career’ of restraint. He does so along three distinct axes: conceptual, temporal – across different ‘generations’ of US foreign and security policy – and across a set of substantive issue areas, from health and development to global security.

The breadth and richness of this work is such that the brief overview undertaken here cannot fully do it full justice. Fortunately, the contributors to this roundtable provide their own, richly-nuanced ‘takes’ on various aspects of it.

For Lina Benabdallah, a key point in Steele’s analysis is the ‘polyvalent’ quality of restraint. “While it might seem like a no-brainer” that would-be hegemons would need to master the practice of restraint, it turns out that upon close examination, the ostensible distinction between restraint and actionism is extremely difficult to sustain. Consider the effort one must invest in ‘holding back’ from actions one might very much wish to undertake. “When do we draw the line,” Benabdallah asks, “between categorizing policies or practices as ‘restraint’ (be it towards the self or others) and thinking about them as actionism? Is there a degree of actionism in restraint, and can restraint be a form of actionism?” Further, if there is no firm normative ground for distinguishing between restraint and *akrasia* – moral and/or emotional ‘incontinence’ – then is restraint not simply another aspect of *phronesis* and/or prudence (*viz.*, Steele 50)? If that case, what is the distinction between them, and in what way is its cultivation not a straightforwardly Foucauldian project of ‘disciplinary’ rule, cast in more classically or psychologically ‘heroic’ terms?

In Maria Mälksoo’s account, Steele is to be congratulated for challenging two longstanding shibboleths in Anglo-American International Relations. First, it opens up the ‘black box’ of the state. Second, it stands squarely against a mode of political analysis that has not entirely come to terms with the irrational and the essentialist. Steele, Mälksoo asserts, has given us “a measured re-enchantment of how we think of, and exercise, world politics,” one that brings “the body and bodily knowledge emphatically to the centre of sense-making attempts of world politics.” Yet Mälksoo expresses concern with Steele’s singular focus on the United States. “Are the parameters of restraint and actionism comparable in Russia, the West and East of Europe, Asia, and Africa? Do *all* politics *everywhere* incentivize action and speed” in terms comparable with his account of American politics?

Manali Kumar’s discussion – which opens with a recent example of a disciplinary case from an Indian military academy, in which male and female cadets were differentially punished for violating the school’s prohibition on physical intimacy – suggests one possible line for such inquiry. Might Steele’s understandings of actionism and restraint rely too heavily on a variant of standpoint feminism? “[B]ecause politics has always been gendered masculine,” Kumar argues, “arguments in support of actionism or restraint are often accompanied by gendered understandings of identity and masculine behavioral expectations.” Accordingly, we must take care not to universalize a set of masculine ‘ideal types’ that “may be culturally specific to the West, and perhaps even racialized as ‘White.’”

Along those lines, two further analytical questions could be posed. First, does Steele adequately account for the national state as an appropriate ‘container’ for the analysis of restraint which his study proposes? Jung and Elias are making arguments whose boundaries do not covary with either the American state or its civil society. How, if so, does the complex political economy of libido, and its instantiation into Eliasian institutional-sociological frameworks of outsiders and insiders ‘bolt on’ to the political, social, and institutional history of the US? Second, what is the basis for the ‘generational’ analysis Steele undertakes, and how are his generations conceived? Are they exogenous periodic impositions – the demographic equivalent of ‘Kondratieff cycles’ – or do generational shifts follow from immanent shifts in the forces that produce particular sensibilities within elites across time?

Finally, Benjamin Friedman’s discussion of *Restraint* presses Steele from another, more policy-oriented direction:

[A]s someone who is professionally focused on restraint in U.S. foreign policy, the book left me wanting more in three distinct senses: theoretical attachments to existing takes on restraint, explanations of how ideologies that are conducive to restraint or actionism are relevant, and the use of cases to explain why restraint fails.

Against Steele's psychological and sociological analyses, Friedman offers a 'structural' explanation for pendulum swings between 'restraint' and 'actionism' in US foreign policy. Recent examples of US overreach must be understood in the context of a 'unipolar moment,' he explains – thus, the cost to be paid for them was minimal. Further, if Steele's argument for restraint is not merely analytical, but also in some sense strategic – if, that is, Steele wishes not merely to *describe* restraint, but to *revalorize* it, given a moment in which actionism seems to be in the ascendant – “it would have been useful to hear more about the content of this strategic narrative and how politicians and pundits might employ it.”⁸

Steele takes up these challenges – along with the arguments of the other three contributors – in his rebuttal, which nicely rounds out the discussion.

Participants:

Brent J. Steele is the Francis D. Wormuth Presidential Chair and Professor of Political Science at the University of Utah and the co-editor in chief of *Global Studies Quarterly*. He is the author of the recently published *Vicarious Identity in International Relations* (Oxford University Press, 2021), with Chris Browning and Pertti Joenniemi, and *Restraint in International Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), which co-won the ISA Theory section book award for 2020.

Daniel J. Levine is Aaron Aronov Associate Professor in Judaic Studies at the University of Alabama. He is the author of *Recovering International Relations: The Promise of Sustainable Critique* (Oxford, 2012), and has articles published or forthcoming in *Perspectives on Politics*, the *European Journal of International Relations*, *Global Studies Quarterly*, and *Millennium*, among others. His current project is titled 'Israel, Palestine, and the Politics of Jewish Fear.'

Lina Benabdallah is Assistant Professor at Wake Forest University and Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies' (CSIS) Africa Program. She is the author of *Shaping the Future of Power: Knowledge Production and Network-Building in China-Africa Relations* (University of Michigan Press, 2020). Her research has appeared in *International Studies Quarterly*, *The Journal of International Relations and Development*, *Third World Quarterly*, *Project on Middle East Political Science*, as well as in public facing outlets such as the *Washington Post's* Monkey Cage and *Foreign Policy*.

Benjamin H. Friedman is Policy Director a Defense Priorities, an adjunct lecturer at George Washington University, and a co-editor with A. Trevor Thrall of *U.S. Grand Strategy in the 21st Century: The Case for Restraint* (London: Routledge, 2018).

Manali Kumar is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow with the Institute of Political Science at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland and Editor-in-Chief of 9DASHLINE.

Maria Mälksoo is Senior Researcher at the Centre for Military Studies, University of Copenhagen. She received her Ph.D. in International Studies from the University of Cambridge in 2008. She is the author of *The Politics of Becoming European:*

⁸ As Steele's response to Friedman is taken up in his rebuttal, there is no need to anticipate it here. It does seem, however, that Friedman's account of ideological divisions within the US electorate is itself ideologically selective. Is mistrust of American exceptionalism uniform across the American left, as Friedman seems to suggest, or unique to it? Surely not; when President Trump invoked the specter of an expert political class that had betrayed homegrown interests in favor of global agendas, he was taking issue with precisely that narrative of exceptionalism – America as the 'indispensable nation.' Meanwhile progressivist 'talking points' retain strong commitments to exceptionalist themes and imagery. Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren may be reading Thomas Piketty on economic inequality, or Sheri Berman on social democracy – but talk of protecting 'the little guy' comes straight from Robert LaFollette and the New Deal.

Polish and Baltic Post-Cold War Security Imaginaries (Routledge, 2010), a co-author of *Remembering Katyn* (Polity, 2012), and the editor of the *Handbook on the Politics of Memory* (Edward Elgar, forthcoming). Her work on rituals, deterrence, ontological security, transitional justice, liminality and memory politics has appeared in various IR journals and edited volumes, most recently in *Journal of Genocide Research* and *European Journal of International Relations*. She is the principal investigator of the ERC Consolidator Grant project RITUAL DETERRENCE (2022-2027) and in the Volkswagen Foundation-supported collaborative project on memory laws (MEMOCRACY, 2021-2024).

REVIEW BY LINA BENABDALLAH, WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

Restraint in International Politics is a major contribution to the examination of restraint in International Relations.¹ In it, Brent Steele offers a definitive, thorough, and powerful examination of the ways in which restraint permeates social, economic, and political life. Given the constellation of crises and frictions this year, ranging from pandemic management, crisis around US presidential elections, a summer of Black Lives Matter protests that were global, the timing of the publications of *Restraint in International Politics* could not have been more apt. Yet beyond timeliness, Steele offers not only a comprehensive account of restraint in IR but also elegantly and convincingly argues for restraining restraint.

Five key themes around the politics of restraint emerge from this book. First, drawing on a Jungian concept of the Complex,² Steele issues three precepts regarding restraint. These are that restraint involves both agents and structures, that it concerns mind and body (and not physical restraint only), and that restraint has a normative or moral quality (65). Yet, even if we are talking about restraint as having a moral quality, Steele contends that restraint is contextual and situational. It is, in his words, “polyvalent” (90) rather than being a net good or a net bad. The study of restraint in international relations, and more specifically in foreign policy analysis can be polarized and polarizing, with two main camps that diverge in their assessment of restraint. On the one hand, some view that the only way for global hegemony to be kept in check is for them to elect to practice restraint and refrain from interventionism and expansionism. Others, however, might view restraint as “a weak and immoral quality of international politics” (205). Certainly, these two camps are represented in the making of US foreign policy with the interventionist camp represented by Wilsonian and Jacksonian strategies, and the Washingtonian retrenched and restrained approach. Whereas it might seem like a no-brainer for many to be persuaded that hegemony needs to be ‘kept at bay’ and need to practice restraint, Steele’s granular account of restraint resists giving a blanket endorsement of restraint. After thorough examinations and rich case illustrations, Steele makes a compelling case for a restrained restraint.

Second, Steele constructs the book’s theoretical framework via the interplay of two complexes: the complex of Restraint and complex of Actionism. The actionist complex refers to “the unleashing of the libido as psychic energy” whereas the restrained complex is about “the ways in which such libido is curtailed, cultured, blocked, or channeled” (71). Put in the context of U.S. foreign policy making, for example, the actionist complex can be said to be represented by interventionist strategies and the restrained complex by non-interventionist ones. It then follows that since emotions and affective discourses are important resources for the “unleashing” of psychic energy and fueling support for interventionism, resistance and retrenchment are important for the restrained complex. The complexes developed in Steele’s account are “not only schema for understanding the active proclivities of individuals, groups, and even cohorts or nations (the ‘is’), they are also social ideologies that serve as blueprints for how one should live and go about acting within the world through time (the ‘ought’)” (90). These two complexes are interdependent.

Third, Steele draws some parallels between the politics of restraint and other familiar concepts in politics that are linked to restraint but operate differently from it. These concepts include among others moderation, constraint, mindfulness,

¹ Richard Falk, “The Decline of Normative Restraint in International Relations,” *Yale Journal of International Law* 10, (1985): 263–270; Jeffrey Meiser, *Power and Restraint: The Rise of the United States, 1898–1941* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2015); Barry Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

² Carl Gustav Jung, “The Association Method,” *The American Journal of Psychology* 21:2 (1910): 219–269; Jung, “A review of the Complex Theory,” in Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler, eds., *The Collected Works of Carl Jung* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967, 92–103); Jung, “Men, Women and God, Interview with Frederick Sands of *The Daily Mail*,” reprinted in William McGuire and R.F.C. Hull, eds., *C.G. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 244–251; Jung, “Introduction,” “The Concept of the Libido” and “Transformation of the Libido,” in Gerhard Adler and R.F.C. Hull, eds., *Symbols of Transformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967): 121–170.

punishment, and discipline (self-discipline).³ In helping us discern the differences between these nuanced terms, Steele explains that moderation is an active component of restraint and that punishment is an expression of moderation. However, at times the nuancing between restraint and discipline is unclear. This is perhaps due to the fact that the two concepts share much in common. Discipline as well as the process and politics of disciplining can both be turned towards oneself as much as they can be imposed on ‘others.’ This is congruent with Steele’s definition of restraint “as a multilayered, multilevel *process* in International Relations” (12, emphasis in original).

Fourth, and directly related to the previous point, I find that one of restraint’s multiple affordances is that it can be understood as a technology of government. This is perhaps the second reason why I find restraint and discipline to share more overlap than restraint and moderation or punishment. Much like restraint, disciplining is also used as a technology of government whereby ‘outsiders’ that cannot control or govern themselves are either socialized in banisters of norms and regulations that can teach them the “civilized” way, or they are sanctioned (at varying degrees) if they are perceived to be ‘unteachable.’ Government, in the Foucauldian sense of regulating and managing through self-control, guidance for the family, directing the soul and so on can be viewed as the interplay of the two complexes that Steele develops, the restrained and the actionist.⁴ It is this interplay between actionism and restraint that explains the “government” or “management” of the (add the date) Global Financial Crisis (GFC) whereby “outsiders’ incapacity to restrain required austerity at the same time that the creative energies of the ‘Established’ needed to be unleashed to get economic growth back on a healthy track” (232).

Last, it is necessary to examine the full range of applicability of restraint (both domestic as well as foreign policy applications) in order to fully understand its intricate workings and appreciate Steele’s case for restraining restraint. Along the lines of restraining the self-versus restraining the other, Steele observes various cases where restraint is not only imposed on foreign actors, cohorts, or nations, but also deployed to restrain “outside” groups from within the same societies. To me, perhaps the most compelling argument for restraining restraint is found in Steele’s delicate account of the hierarchical dynamics and power relations that are at play when “Established” groups restrain and constrain “Outsider” groups based on gender, race, and class dynamics. As Steele contends, “restraint has, for millennia, consistently been hierarchically imposed upon women and the ‘feminine’” (103). Indeed, those who are on the outside or, in Steele’s words, “those who can’t restrain themselves,” are then “disciplined” or “socialized” into the societal norms as viewed by the “Established” groups (83).

In terms of the book’s overall arguments, even when we know that restraint and actionism can have a symbiotic relationship, I am compelled to ask when do we draw the line between categorizing policies or practices as “restraint” (be it towards the self or others) and thinking about them as actionism? Is there a degree of actionism in restraint, and can restraint be a form of actionism? In practical terms, is there a place where eugenics, for example, stops being perceived as a practice that can be used towards restraining “outsiders” and starts being understood as an action of violence that is productive of (as opposed to a passive means towards) domination, exclusion, subjugation, and so on by a group of “Established” people against a group of “Outsider” people?⁵ Similarly, to what extent would colonial legacies (which relied on eugenics sciences distinguishing between ethnic groups based on physical attributes, facial features, and so on) be viewed as restraining practices if they are or they led to ethnic cleansings and genocides? Another example of the intertwining character of restraint and actionism can be

³ See, for example, Randall Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*.

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Anthony Lang, *Punishment, Justice and International Relations: Ethics and Order after the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Keally McBride, *Punishment and Political Order* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

⁴ See Thomas Lemke, “Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique,” *Rethinking Marxism* 14: 3 (2002): 49-64.

⁵ See for example Cecelia Lynch, “The Moral Aporia of Race in International Relations,” *International Relations* 33:2 (June 2019): 267–85.

found in the threat to use force against protesters in the U.S. in the summer of 2020. In June 2020 and as a response to Black Lives Matter protesters in DC, President Donald J. Trump ordered the deployment of active-duty forces to ‘restrain’ the protesters. Trump justified this on the grounds that “we need to get control of the streets. We need 10,000 troops up here [in Washington]. I want it right now.” In response to that, then-Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper “ordered about 1,600 active-duty U.S. Army troops to move forward for possible deployment in Washington.”⁶ In Esper’s analysis, “moving the active-duty forces, but not actually deploying them on the streets ‘was enough to keep the president at bay.’” In a way, despite the fact that Trump was the commander-in-chief, his impulses to ‘restrain’ protesters denouncing racial injustice and police brutality through the use of even more force were then ‘kept at bay,’ and ‘restrained’ through the action of ‘moving’ rather than ‘deploying’ the troops. Here again, the blurring of the lines between restraint and actionism is evident and the question becomes whose restraint and whose actionism?

Second, can restraint be developed, learned, routinized, and perfected if it is a moving target? Is restraint learned in the school of hard knocks? Do stories and narratives provide instructive examples that can be recounted for perfecting the craft of restraint? Indeed, if restraint is polyvalent, and if we situate it along a spectrum of actionism to restraint, it seems that there would be need for a faculty of judgment, of practical wisdom (or *phronesis*) to navigate the spectrum. The very notion of sustaining restraint seems to call for an act of judgment. It can be said that from a practical wisdom or *phronesis* perspective, it is the active choice of practicing restraint of one’s capabilities that is viewed as a virtue.⁷ In navigating *akrasia* (acting against one’s better judgment) and the balance of vice and virtue, *phronesis* can act as the regulator of all virtues and it is what allows us to determine the (golden) mean which exists between excess and deficiency. If so, who has access (or privilege) to perfect restraint?

By way of conclusion, I would like to emphasize that this book is a *tour de force*. For all the attempts to frame its contributions in a humble (and perhaps restrained) terms, it is a big (and a much-needed) intervention in theorizing IR. Although restraint might be thought mostly to apply to (or be recommended for) situations of crises, Steele’s in-depth account reminds us that restraint is found in everyday politics just as much as in big crisis moments. Such banality of restraint with practices that are typically applied to Outsider groups who are perceived to be incapable of restraining (or governing) themselves serve as a good antidote to dogmatic (or even impulsive) endorsements of restraint. For example, the discussion that Steele presents about the GFC and the Eurozone is particularly worth highlighting. The austerity measures and first set of bailouts of Greece in 2010 were characterized by former Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis as “tough love” by the European Union which was ‘fed up’ with Greece and other Southern EU members for “living beyond their means” (228). These austerity measures can be examined as part of a (restrained) technology of government meant to “teach” the citizens of Greece (Portugal, Spain, Italy as well) values about spending, saving, debt management, and so on. These measures of restraint which were described as exceptionally tough and heartless when applied within the EU are ordinary everyday practices that international monetary institutions impose on even more “Outsider” groups such as African peoples. Therefore, examining the quiet and ordinary locations of restraint can tell us as much if not more than exceptional times or times of crises about how restraint works and for whom it works. In such ordinary sites, restraining those “who can’t restrain themselves” permeates the *raison d’être* of a constellation of global governance institutions which are themselves productive of swaths of ‘unteachables’ who then exist in a perpetual mode of needing to be restrained. Steele’s case for restraining restraint is compelling and convincing.

⁶ David Ignatius, “How Trump Came to the Brink of Deploying Active-Duty Troops in Washington,” *Washington Post*, 5 June 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/06/05/how-trump-came-brink-deploying-active-duty-troops-washington/>.

⁷ David McCourt, “Phronesis and Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice,” E-IR (2012) <https://www.e-ir.info/2012/11/23/phronesis-and-foreign-policy-in-theory-and-practice/>.

REVIEW BY BENJAMIN H. FRIEDMAN, DEFENSE PRIORITIES

The cover of Brent Steele's *Restraint in International Politics* shows "Laocoön and his Sons," an immensely famous Roman statue depicting a man and two boys suffering as they are attacked by serpents. What makes this image an icon of restraint, I'm not sure. It could be how the serpents, sent by a vengeful god, seem to tie down the humans they are killing— a somewhat odd image for a book that ends by advocating foreign policy restraint. Or maybe it relates to what Laocoön did to earn this punishment, which was, depending on which story you credit, either having sex in a temple or warning his fellow Trojans against accepting the "Trojan horse" that would be their downfall. In that sense, he was a punished for advocating a kind of restraint, and wise check on the collective will that was, typically, rejected.

Perhaps the cover should have shown an image of Odysseus, as described by Homer, tied to the mast amid his oarsmen, whose ears are full of wax. These restraints, dreamed up by Odysseus to resist the siren calls that would draw his boat to be dashed against the rocks, are an apt metaphor for the defenses people and nations erect against their potentially ruinous desires.

Steele's book might have focused more on such strategies of self-restraint in foreign policy. That is a broad enough topic, especially given that much of the theorizing about liberal government and institutional checks on power concerns it. Governments' restraining their citizens and others, as discussed especially in chapters three and six, seems a theoretically distinct matter, and an impossibly broad one. After all, government, whether it's democratic or not, exists to restrain people in various ways. The topic is as big as the field.

The range of theoretical tools Steele employs in taking us through his vision of the actionist and restraint complexes, and their application in a broad array of political circumstances, is wildly impressive. Steele reviews a range of international relations literature that bears on restraint and uses Karl Jung's idea of complexes—psychological tendencies that became socio-political ones as they spread among groups—to elaborate restraint and actionist tendencies in politics.¹ These two complexes are interdependent; they define themselves largely in opposition to each other. Actionism arises as a consequence of a buildup libido as psychic energy (10) in society (another concept of Jung's), and is therefore very hard to resist.

Steele takes us through various cases of actionism and restraint. Chapter 3 explores how restraint "has historically been utilized to justify actionist intervention" upon marginalized classes, racial minorities, women and others (94). Chapter 4 tackles American foreign policy, with a special focus on President Eisenhower and the Suez crisis. In this chapter, Steele adds the idea that actionism and restraint rise and fall with generations. It also briefly touches on foreign policy in Germany and Japan.

Chapter 5 connects restraint to Just War theory, securitization theory and ontological security. It uses these frameworks to look at two recent events in U.S. Syria policy: President Obama's decision to not bomb Syria in 2013 after chemical weapons attacks and the U.S. intervention after ISIS's beheadings of terrorists in 2014. Chapter four deals with various governments uses of fiscal "restraint" after the global financial crisis and "restraint" as applied in global public health.

The trip through so many sorts of restraint, individual and collective, in theory and then demonstrated with examples in fiscal, defense, and public health policy, is a powerful feat of scholarly bridge building. But it's hard to see how these forms of restraint have enough theoretical coherence to apply usefully in so many areas. And as someone who is professionally focused on restraint in U.S. foreign policy, the book left me wanting more in three distinct senses: theoretical attachments to existing

¹ Carl Gustav Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (New York: Holt, 1934); *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, volume 7, Two Essays in Analytical Psychology*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

takes on restraint, explanations of how ideologies that are conducive to restraint or actionism are relevant, and the use of cases to explain why restraint fails.

By theoretical attachments to existing takes on restraint, I primarily mean the realist focus on the balance of international power as an explanatory variable for the action of states. Steele brings up the balance of power on several occasions: in discussing the work of Kenneth Waltz (87-88), John Herz (41-44), and the English School (81-82).² But he does not explore, either in theory or in the case material, what this means for modern United States.

It is no accident that the article that coined the term “restraint” in its modern foreign policy and academic usage came out in 1997, early in the so-called unipolar moment following the Soviet Union’s demise.³ With no great rival to balance U.S. power, the temptation of American leaders to fruitlessly meddle and boss beckoned, the authors argued, so the United States, like Odysseus, should restrain itself. Both Waltz and Robert Jervis have sounded similar chords, albeit with greater focus on the tendency of hegemonic (or unbalanced) powers to be drawn into foolish foreign policy by the relative lack of consequences.⁴ For these structural realists, the trouble isn’t so much that aggressive foreign policies will produce catastrophe. Such a clear signal, an evident disincentive, would produce some restraint that ducks disaster. The danger is the bleeding cost of overstretch. For a unipole, the structure of the international system can produce folly.

I was one of the organizers of the 2016 Cato conference “The Case for Restraint,” which Steele briefly discusses (253).⁵ It is true that “we failed to recognize the reasons for the recurrence of actionism,” (283). But I did give—in a presentation there and a co-authored chapter in the edited volume the conference papers produced—an explanation for the triumph of what Steele calls actionism and what I would call primacy and a tendency towards foreign policy ideologies that conflate global dominance with security.⁶ The argument there is that relatively unbalanced U.S. power, even during the Cold War, shifted the balance of domestic interests in the United States, solidifying a support base for primacy/actionism and atrophying the sources of support for restraint.

Steele’s concluding suggestion that restraint should be not just a grand strategy but a “story,” is compelling. But it would have been useful to hear more about the content of this strategic narrative and how politicians and pundits might employ it to achieve more restrained policy results. Is a strategic narrative different from ideology? I doubt it, except perhaps in being a relatively undefined one.

² Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979); John H. Herz, “Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 2: 2 (January 1950): 157-180. The classic work of the English is Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press).

³ Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky, “Come Home, America: The Strategy of Restraint in the Face of Temptation,” *International Security* 21:4 (Spring 1997): 5-48.

⁴ , Waltz, “Structural Realism after the Cold War,” *International Security* 25:1 (Summer 2000): 5-41; Robert Jervis, “Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective,” *World Politics* 61:1 (Winter 2009): 188-213.

⁵ Steele is not quite right that Barry’s Posen book on restraint inspired the conference, though it was certainly a key influence. Barry Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014). We organizers were card-carrying restrainers before Posen’s book came out.

⁶ Benjamin H. Friedman and Harvey M. Sapolsky, “Unrestrained: The Politics of America’s Primacist Foreign Policy,” in A. Trevor Thrall and Benjamin H. Friedman, eds., *U.S. Grand Strategy in the 21st Century: The Case for Restraint* (London: Routledge, 2018): 220-42.

Ideology is a kind of institution, a set of normative rules that govern conduct.⁷ Ideologies that are conducive to restraint, after all, have always been part of U.S. politics. The most prominent one is the liberal tradition that views an overactive foreign policy as a threat to liberty at home, including the exceptionalist and even bigoted notion that the world is a wicked and corrupting place from which Americans should stand apart.⁸ A newer version of restraint (or perhaps a restraint-adjacent conception) that is more evident on today's progressive left is suspicious of notions of American exceptionalism and the excessive militarization of foreign policy while remaining enthusiastic about ambitiously employing non-military tools of U.S. foreign policy.⁹

Steele briefly touches on these traditions (132-133), but they do not seem to inform the narrative he's promoting. This seems both a theoretical and prudential error. A restraint narrative will likely sell better if it attaches itself to the public's (or maybe elite public's) ideological predispositions. It is notable that the sketch of the narrative Steele gives, based around Reinhold Niebuhr's Serenity Prayer, mirrors some of the ideological tension within the fledgling restraint policy community. The serenity to "accept the things that cannot be changed" tracks a conservative disinclination to avoid trying to manage and reform foreign countries and seeing the U.S. as indispensable to history's direction. On the other hand, Steele notes that the prayer's hope "to change the things which should be changed" concedes a "habit of U.S. identity" to be an active and humanitarian country and thus carries the potential for the U.S. to engage in non-militarized activism for the greater good (263).

Restraint's success and failure seems partly a reflection of how foreign policy ideology has shifted over U.S. history, which I attribute, per the discussion above, to changes in the United States' relative power abroad. The shift from an exemplarist tradition, however unevenly it was applied amid westward expansion, to the crusading idea of liberalizing the world provides an alternative way of accounting for the shift from restraint to actionism, which Steele sees as a function of generational change.

The decision to take up the limited episodes of restraint in the 1956 Suez Crisis and the potential strike on Syria in 2013 is defensible, but misses an opportunity to discuss restraint's broader contours and challenges. More fulsome case material might have clarified what kind of restraint Steele has in mind, prescriptively. What precisely does it mean to be a stoic in the mode Steele describes when the temptations of the actionist complex—its political rewards—beckon? Is restraint an alternative politics, one that maybe succeeds by exciting a different constituency than actionism?¹⁰ Or is it a Gary Cooperesque refusal to appeal to the emotionally to the masses?¹¹ The cases touch on, but mostly miss, how fleeting and limited restraint in U.S. foreign policy has become and how limited success for restraint may require embracing and channeling actionist impulses—that Jungian psychic energy.

⁷ Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007): 23.

⁸ Walter McDougall, *Promised Land Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

⁹ Kate Kizer, "A U.S. Grand Strategy for a Values-Driven Foreign Policy," New Voices in American Foreign Policy, Michael J. Zak Lecture Series (Washington DC, Center for New American Security, 2019): 37-48, <https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/Grand-Strategy-Report-Final-online-1.pdf>.

¹⁰ Friedman and Sapolsky.

¹¹ This is the second author to suggest Gary Cooper's on-screen persona as a model for foreign policy, and I agree. James Fallows a couple times suggested reclaiming "Gary Cooper, not chicken little as our national icons." See e.g., James Fallows, "Year-end Pensees #2: Security," *The Atlantic*, December 22, 2008, <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2008/12/year-end-pensees-2-security/9254/>.

President Dwight Eisenhower's efforts to restrain U.S. power at the start of the Cold War seems more important and essential to understanding restraint than holding back allies during the Suez Crisis. When a country is very powerful, restraining allies and clients is a less difficult and theoretically important kind of restraint. As Steele discusses (155-156), Eisenhower's temporary success with the New Look seemed to require action-oriented promises—threats of massive nuclear retaliation on behalf of allies and enhanced efforts at covert warfare. This means of restraint, like the progressive variant discussed above, surrenders a lot to its actionist critics, granting some of their basic premises about the size of threats and American capacity to manage history to meet them.

Eisenhower left office having failed to contain a fearful public reaction to the Soviets' 1957 Sputnik launch, which fueled the efforts of John F. Kennedy and others who were running for president to peddle a missile gap. His "chin-up" speeches trying to reduce public anxiety didn't have their expected aim.¹² But the administration did manage to use the public's overwrought fear in constructive ways by channeling federal funding for scientific research at universities, public education, the space program and more.¹³

Steele sees this desperate kind of restraint can be seen as a buildup of psychic energy that was satisfied by an actionist policy brought about by a generational shift. But the Kennedy administration's embrace of a more global Cold War largely continued policies embraced by the Truman Administration. President Harry Truman's Secretary of State, Dean Acheson (born the year before Eisenhower), with the help of NSC-68 and the Korean War, helped make containment into a more aggressive posture that led to the Vietnam War.¹⁴ Eisenhower, with his anti-statist beliefs and redirection of actionist impulses, seems more a temporary holding actor restraining the Cold War floodgates than a generational avatar.

President Barack Obama's restraint was a slight thing. His decision not to bomb Syria in 2013 occurred amid a broader pattern of embracing the actionist status quo, one which was emblematic of the 44th president's ambivalence about military policy. Obama hired mostly conventional hawks to top security positions, surged troops into Afghanistan, launched innumerable drone strikes in seven countries with shaky legal backing that helped overthrow the Libyan government, pushed, albeit half-heartedly to overthrow Syria's, sent troops back in Iraq after pulling them out, and fought, at least rhetorically, to keep defense spending high, amid deficit concerns. On the other hand, Obama gave an interview in his year in office, making forceful arguments against what he deemed Washington's foreign policy playbook and much of the policy his administration had been executing for seven years.¹⁵

Even more than for Eisenhower, whatever restraint Obama produced came by giving in to most of the central premises about the virtues of U.S. global dominance that inform actionism. And without getting into a discussion of which of President Donald Trump's largely illiberal foreign policy ideas rate as restraint, we can say that he too failed to implement the pro-restraint tendencies he harbored. There was no retrenchment in the Middle East, contra Steele (1). Actionism was dominant.

¹² Robert A. Divine, *The Sputnik Challenge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹³ I discuss this example as a model for a more restrained counterterrorism and homeland security policy in Friedman, "Managing Fear: The Politics of Homeland Security," *Political Science Quarterly* 126:1 (Spring 2011): 77-106.

¹⁴ Samuel F. Wells, Jr., "Sounding the Tocsin: NSC 68 and the Soviet Threat," *International Security* 4:2 (Fall 1979): 116-158

¹⁵ Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine: The U.S. President Talks through His Hardest Decisions about America's Role in the World," *The Atlantic* (April 2016), <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>. On this as repudiation of Obama's past policies, see Benjamin H. Friedman, "Obama Versus Obama's Foreign Policy," *Cato-at-liberty*, March 16, 2016, <https://www.cato.org/blog/obama-versus-obamas-foreign-policy>.

Steele's cases seem a missed opportunity to reflect on this outcome and explain how in 2013 the U.S. had so much less room for restraint than in 1956, where the policy was already endangered. From my perspective the cause of this is the global U.S. and how it deranged the U.S. liberal identity. But I would like to hear more about how Steele's actionist and restraint complexes can be said to interact to produce that result. It is good news for restraint to have more diverse intellectual roots, especially ones as theoretically creative as those depicted in this book.

REVIEW BY MANALI KUMAR, UNIVERSITÄT ST. GALLEN

In November last year, an article in *The Washington Post* criticized the President of Notre Dame for lacking “self-control.” Commenting on the president’s letter to students who had stormed the football field after a game in November, the author observed that having “a lack of personal self-discipline while demanding it from others will utterly erode your authority.”¹ On the other side of the world in India, a female cadet with the Indian Naval Academy alleged discrimination after she was punished more harshly for physical intimacy with a fellow male cadet.² Since reading Brent Steele’s award-winning new book, *Restraint in International Politics*, I have been noticing the undercurrents of the ‘politics of restraint’ beyond global politics as well. It appears that “struggles over restraint are everywhere” (248).

In contrast to the vast international security literature that advises policy self-restraint as moderation,³ Steele’s masterful book-length treatment of restraint as a process in international relations, and his original conceptualization along the three dimensions of space, time, and issue area, are valuable additions to the discipline. The principal objective of the book is to make “a political and normative argument” in support of restraint in global politics, but with the recognition that “restraint has been used to discipline, repress, and oppress groups, as much as it has prevented conflict” (7). The author does so by introducing Carl Jung’s concepts of ‘libido’ and ‘complex’ to international relations.⁴ The first half of the book focuses on theory building, with the first chapter devoted to developing a sociological account of restraint by combining insights from Norbert Elias and Anthony Giddens.⁵ The second chapter draws on Jung to articulate the twin complexes of actionism and restraint. The former involves “the unleashing of the libido as psychic energy” to push a community to address “a crisis or occurrence... “out there” needing rectification” (73). By contrast, in restraint the “libido is curtailed, cultured, blocked, or channelled” (74); it resists and conceals emotion “to present a front of calm” (75). The third chapter explores how restraint has historically been employed to “justify actionist intervention upon individuals and groups” by using moral discourses to portray particular others “as less capable of rationality and judgment for self-control” and providing “asymmetric access to spaces” which makes these groups more likely to publicly demonstrate their lack of restraint (94). Chapters four through six apply these complexes to explore how they function in democracies, in the context of security, and in international political economy and public health, generating novel insights and offering several interesting questions for further research.

Steele’s addition of the perspective of restraining the other to the usual approach of restraining the self, adoption of a mixed ontology, emphasis on taking seriously the interdependence of causes and consequences, and discussion of the relationality of social contexts are some of the most compelling elements of this book. Yet, the one thing I struggled with throughout the

¹ Sally Jenkins, “Notre Dame’s President Lacked Self-Control. It’s Student Body is Merely Following his Example,” *Washington Post*, 10 November 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2020/11/10/notre-dame-president-john-jenkins/>.

² “Woman Cadet at Naval Academy, Relegated for ‘Indulging in Physical Intimacy,’ Alleges Discrimination,” *The Wire*, 13 November 2020, <https://thewire.in/women/armed-forces-tribunal-naval-academy-female-trainee-cadet>.

³ See for example: Jeffrey W. Meiser, *Power and Restraint: The Rise of the United States, 1898-1941* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015); Bruce Jones, *Still Ours to Lead: America, Rising Powers, and the Tension between Rivalry and Restraint* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2014); Barry Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); G. John Ikenberry, “Institutions, strategic restraint, and the persistence of American postwar order,” *International Security* 23:3 (1998): 43-7.

⁴ See for example: Carl Gustav Jung, “The Concept of the Libido” and “Transformation of the Libido,” in Gerhard Adler and R.F.C. Hull eds., *Symbols of Transformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); and, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

⁵ See for example: Norbert Elias, *The Established and the Outsiders: A Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems* (London: Sage, 1994); and, Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

book is Steele's insistence that both actionism and restraint are "unique masculine emotional states" (72) and that both complexes involve "a masculine sensibility" (84). Engaging only briefly with the question of how such a binary approach is useful, Steele offers only "the simplest defense...that the public sphere of politics has been gendered masculine for millennia" (84). It seems Steele's argument is that because politics has always been gendered masculine, arguments in support of actionism or restraint are often accompanied by gendered understandings of identity and masculine behavioural expectations. But does this require treating these complexes as "masculine ideal types" (44)? While these complexes may indeed be universal, the particular instincts identified as 'masculine' may be culturally specific to the West, and perhaps even racialized as 'White.' Moreover, it makes one wonder what a feminine sensibility would be or what feminine complexes and emotional states might involve. What would we lose by treating these complexes as gender-neutral, while recognizing that they are enmeshed with gender politics?

Nonetheless, it is easy to see the value of Steele's approach to restraint and its many possible applications. Jumping ahead to chapter six, Steele's discussion of restraining discourses pertaining to particular groups is exceedingly relevant to contemporary events. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic this year, much global discourse focused on the need to 'restrain' China. The virus was blamed on Chinese peoples' cultural preference to consume "wild animals" such as bats and shop in "dirty wet markets."⁶ This apportioning of blame was situated within a broader discourse that identified China as an authoritarian society that could not be trusted to be honest about the scale of the crisis. China had an inherent 'moral failing,' had become a 'burden' on international society, and continued restraint in the face of China's moral failings was irresponsible. And so people and many leading politicians called for investigations and action against China. Likewise, pandemic mitigation efforts can also be seen to involve a "struggle between restraining and breaking free of restraints" (247). Government policies intended to restrain public behavior to control the spread of the virus are being met with protests by those seeking to restrain what they perceive as unwarranted actionism on the government's part. As Steele notes, the two complexes are mutually constitutive and "[work] with and against one another" (72).

At the same time, applications of this understanding of restraint raise several questions. Steele's treatment of national generations as "both structures and agents" in chapter four is also thought-provoking (125). Briefly, drawing on Elias, Steele suggests that since "established generations occupy positions of power and are more organized and coherent," they dominate society until ousted by "an Outsider generation" (125). Conceiving of both complexes and generations as "arrangements of emotions, materials, ideas, and the environment" (135) shaped by a "formative experience" does offer interesting insights into how particular foreign policies may be informed by generational factors. And yet, in every Reactive generation, for instance, we can find also examples of actionist foreign policy. Former US President Harry S. Truman and diplomat George F. Kennan's generational predispositions may have made them more receptive to calls for restraint; Steele argues that the doctrine of containment is precisely such an example. However, in making the case for the European Recovery Program, many members of the Truman administration including Kennan adopted a strikingly actionist discourse. For example, Kennan argued in favor of undertaking "dramatic action" urgently to restore "hope and confidence" in Western Europe.⁷ One might perhaps argue that underlying the actionist rhetoric to push for American aid to Europe was the motivation to

⁶ See for example: Katie Shepherd, "John Cornyn Criticized Chinese for Eating Snakes. He Forgot about the Rattlesnake Roundups back in Texas," *Washington Post*, 19 March 2020. Available online at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/03/19/coronavirus-china-cornyn-blame/>; and, Jason Beaubien, "Why They're Called 'Wet Markets'—And What Health Risks They Might Pose," *NPR*, 31 January 2020. Available online at: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/01/31/800975655/why-theyre-called-wet-markets-and-what-health-risks-they-might-pose?t=1628077548473>.

⁷ See for example: Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan), 16 May 1947. FRUS, 1947, Vol. III, Document 132; and, Memorandum from George F. Kennan to Mr. Acheson, "Policy with Respect to American Aid to Western Europe: Views of the Policy Planning Staff," 23 May 1947. Policy Planning Staff/Council, Meeting Minutes 1947-1962, Record Group 59, Entry A1 558-H, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, MD.

restrain the spread of Communism. But going down this path only demonstrates the difficulty of disentangling actionism and restraint.

Likewise, Steele's discussion of President Barack Obama as an advocate for both actionism and restraint in chapter five also raises some intriguing questions. Obama's restraint, as Steele notes, may have been a result of factors such as his race and the need "to avoid the label of an "angry black man" (183). How might individual-level factors interact with generational ones? Similarly, the author's discussion of the Syria decision shows that it was the British House of Commons' rejection of strikes that served to restrain the United States. Yet, given the interplay of both complexes and Obama's own apparent preference for action in this case, why did the UK succeed in pushing the U.S. towards restraint while actionist allies such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan failed? Within-administration case studies of actionist versus restrained policy choices may help illuminate some of these mechanisms, especially given the Obama administration's rather unrestrained drone strike policy.

In offering a new way to think about restraint in conjunction with its twin, actionism, Steele's *Restraint in International Politics* offers up new avenues of inquiry and analytical tools for other general concepts in international relations. For example, one may conceive of strategic interaction among states in pairs of actionist-actionist, restrained-restrained, or actionist-restrained tendencies. Some insights may be valuable beyond the realm of the international as well. Steele notes that "the neoconservative finds a virtue in the actionist complex, seeing it as necessary to engage an otherwise dangerous and chaotic world" (77). Extending this insight to American domestic politics, one could argue that both the far-right and the progressive left appear to value actionism. In a highly polarized political environment, what can we expect when two actionist groups try to pull policy and society in opposite directions?

Rarely does an International Relations (IR) book meet the high bar of engagement usually offered by intelligent novels. Brent J. Steele's fourth single-authored book and the first comprehensive study of restraint in international politics manages the counterintuitive feat of bringing together the erotic and philosophical. What Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* and Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* convey aesthetically, *Restraint in International Politics* explores intellectually.¹ Published at the apex of the age featuring excessive rhetoric and overindulgences in U.S. foreign policy and beyond, this imaginative study is an active reminder of physicality, affect, and the all too human in international relations. Empirically timely and normatively timeless, theoretically compelling and analytically elegant, *Restraint in International Politics* delivers a provocative investigation of the libidinal undercurrents of world politics, with a nuanced proposal for holding back in the current age of collective incontinence.

With this book, Steele expertly brings Social Theory and Political Psychology to a deep conversation with the key subfields of IR – democratic “peace” (Ch. 4), security (Ch. 5), international political economy, and global health (Ch. 6). The achievement of *Restraint in International Politics* surpasses his earlier books, which are otherwise comparable in their characteristically passionate and unrestrained imagination,² for its wide-ranging breadth of theorization. The grand themes of social theory – race, gender, class, generation, structure, and agency – are brought to bear on the logic of state behaviour in international politics (Ch.-s 3 and 4). The “black box” of the state is opened up with both a deep historical curiosity (notably, a generational analysis in the study of U.S. foreign policy) and embracing of the various psychological idiosyncrasies that IR with its fetish of rationality has traditionally sought to keep in check. While not leaving a stone of the IR orthodox subjects unturned, the achievement of this thorough ploughing is ultimately refreshingly unorthodox: engaging critically with the disenchanting view of international politics across the IR spectrum (1-44, 72-91), Steele offers a measured re-enchantment of how we think of, and exercise, world politics.

Theoretically, *Restraint in International Politics* makes the original move of bringing Carl Gustav Jung,³ the father of analytical psychology, and Norbert Elias,⁴ the doyen of “the civilizing process” in a productive dialogue to illuminate the social, psychological, and moral stakes of restraint in international politics. While the study of political ideas of Jung is not alien to Political Science (for example, in the context of animating collective archetypes in the analysis of Nazism and the New Right movements),⁵ Steele's book is the first to introduce the giant of psychoanalysis systematically to the terrain of IR. Mobilizing Jung's account of the libido (which is understood as broadly psychic energy, not just sexual drive), Steele develops two “masculine ideal types,” restraint and actionism, detecting them throughout global politics as well as its

¹ Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984); Bernhard Schlink, *The Reader*, trans. Carol Brown Janeway (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).

² See Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-identity and the IR State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008); *Defacing Power: The Aesthetics of Insecurity in Global Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010); *Alternative Accountabilities in Global Politics: The Scars of Violence* (London & New York: Routledge, 2013).

³ Carl Gustav Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (New York: Holt, 1934); *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, volume 7, Two Essays in Analytical Psychology*, 2nd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

⁴ Norbert Elias, *The Established and the Outsiders: A Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems* (New York: Sage, 1994); *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, revised edition, translated by Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000 [1939]).

⁵ Nicholas Lewin, *Jung on War, Politics and Nazi Germany: Exploring the Theory of Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009); Laurie M. Johnson, *Ideological Possession and the Rise of the New Right: The Political Thought of Carl Jung* (London and New York, Routledge, 2019).

theorization in various IR perspectives (Ch. 2).⁶ Delineating these two “emotional complexes” in international relations via conceptual deep-digging and empirically sweeping illustrations, the book offers a set of novel thinking tools and a creative vocabulary to make sense of restraint and the power politics thereof in international relations. Setting out to explore how urges and bodily desires matter politically; which groups have historically been considered capable of restraint and which ones have not in domestic and international politics; and what actionist and restraint complexes do in world politics, Steele provides a programmatic contribution to the micro-interactionist study of IR. In the spirit of the recent scholarship investigating the “ugly twin” of international socialization processes,⁷ *Restraint in International Politics* critically complements the progressive Eliasian narrative of restraint with a Jungian account on “why, when, and how, [the] backsliding of the Civilizing Process occurs” (247). Jung’s account of the libido enables to plug some gaps in the Eliasian account of the civilizing process: the sociological dynamics between the Established and the Outsiders is thereby supplemented with the psychological zooming in on the build-up patterns of psychic energy behind a restrained façade that requires channeling outward. Various insecurities of dominant groups shed light on the puzzling persistence of violent lashing out (and ostensibly “out of character”) behaviours in modern state practice and international interactions (for example, torture, lynching, eugenics).

Epistemologically, creating a dialogue between Elias and Jung (with Giddens looming in the background), brings the body and bodily knowledge emphatically to the centre of sense-making attempts of world politics.⁸ Defying the rationalist presumptions of the behavioural logic of states in international relations, *Restraint in International Politics* rejects the separation between bodies and minds. Instead, it zooms in on the variegated ways in which embodied emotions make people to act out and upon the world, and the struggles over restraint in their collective embodied interactions in world politics. Arguing that “struggles over the libido as psychic energy are ubiquitous and historically universal” (94), Steele’s conceptualization of restraint does not ontologically privilege materials or ideas, and agents or structures, in the analysis of global politics. Attentive to the impossibility of bracketing analytically and practically the players of world politics from the games played, *Restraint in International Politics* offers a theoretically persuasive and empirically well-rounded human psychology-bound perspective on world politics via multiple spaces, timings, and issue areas, notably from the post-war U.S. foreign policy to the deep discursive dive into the dealing with the systemic troubles of capitalism in the 2010s, and the international and transnational politics of global health in the twentieth century. Throughout its effortless weaving of the conceptual threads from International Political and Social Theory with animated and richly detailed empirical capsule studies, Steele’s reading of the politics of restraint is intently cognizant of the normative dimension of the global political struggles over restraint. Indeed, the actionist and restraint complexes in world politics are “not only schema for understanding the active proclivities of individuals, groups, and even cohorts of nations (the “is”), they are also social ideologies that serve as blueprints for how one *should* live and go about acting within the world through time (the “ought”)” (90).

Two contributions stand out in particular on a conceptual and empirical level.

First, stemming from a relational and interdependent ontology, Steele’s conceptualization of restraint and actionist complexes in world politics adds an innovative layer to the standard understanding of “control power” in IR as the ability of

⁶ Figure 2.1. (89) offers a useful panoramic scan of the authoritative IR scholarship along the spectrum of restraint and actionism, with varying scope for agency and structural constraints.

⁷ See Rebecca Adler-Nissen, “Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society,” *International Organization* 68:1 (2014): 143-176; Ayse Zarakol, “What Made the Modern World Hang Together: Socialisation or Stigmatization?,” *International Theory* 6:2 (2014): 311-332.

⁸ See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984); Erik Ringmar’s case for “carnal knowledge” in “Constructivism and ‘First Encounters’: A Critique,” *E-International Relations*, 30 August 2020, <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/08/30/constructivism-and-first-encounters-a-critique/>.

an actor to control other actors.⁹ As the restrained view of power entails resisting emotions and, by extension, maintaining ‘control’ of one’s own emotions and body, the politics of restraint crucially entails self-disciplining (and hence the “control power” over Self, or “channel[ing] and push[ing] the libido into subterranean locations”) (78), along with the paradoxical self-appointment to restrain other actors purportedly unable to restrain themselves. The frequent succumbing to *de facto* actionism for the sake of restraining others for “the common good” (for example, via military interventions, fiscal and moral disciplining of various states and population groups) is the characteristically inconsistent feature of the politics of restraint. The book attends to the manifold “struggles between restraining and breaking free of restraints, the discourses used to justify restraint or a lack thereof, the emotions involved in and outside of restraint, and the processes and outcomes that are enabled by the politics that surround restraint in international relations” (247) with an empathic understanding of the normative and cultural draw of “doing something” and the intuitively lesser appeal of moderation in international politics. Importantly, the book practices what it preaches. While proceeding from a bold suggestion that “almost any conflict, tension, dilemma, or anxiety in global politics, today, in the distant past, and anywhere in between, has its origins in the politics of restraint” (2), restraint is amply in evidence in the presentation of the argument, as instead of boasting, the author consistently seeks to add but “one more layer” to existing analyses.

Second, it is in the intersection of the rich empirical illustrations and the subtle normative reminders about the ethics of restraint (against the backdrop of the more evident pull of actionism) where the paradoxes and promises of restraint are most evocatively illuminated. Investigating restraint through the empirical “test drives” along various discursive and social contestations in the realms of democratic institutions and norms affecting foreign policy making, security, global health, and international political economy, Steele offers a critical reflection of the actionist impulses in general and an expert unpacking of the reasons for the recurrence of actionism in the U.S. politics in particular. Chapter 3 “The Historical (Ab)uses of Restraint: Gender, Race, and Class” serves as an exemplary reminder of the richness that sociological scholarship provides for IR,¹⁰ not least in the context of understanding the socially thick back-stories of various moral discourses on restraint frequently utilized to justify actionist intervention upon various individuals and groups in international politics. The ensuing empirical chapters deliver on the conceptual promise with gusto.

The author’s expertise in the topic of U.S. politics at home and abroad exposes simultaneously the main vulnerability of the theorization offered. Although the book provides various illustrative vignettes around the world, one is left wondering how culturally U.S.-specific the constant striving to move forward as the bottom line of the actionist complex really is. Are the parameters of restraint and actionism comparable in Russia, West and East of Europe, Asia, and Africa? Do *all* politics *everywhere* incentivize action and speed (and hence actionism) to the comparable degree of the United States? The author acknowledges the book’s “parochial selection bias” (255), yet the effective generalization from the potentially *sui generis* example of the knee-jerk actionist in world politics could have received further methodological contemplation. I would have further appreciated a compactly rounded methodological prequel of the author’s take on the relation between thinking and acting before the recap offered in the conclusion of the book.

Various extensions of the argument can be imagined in further probes of the proposed analytical framework. The religious dimension in international politics¹¹ could certainly be addressed more systematically as a notable source of social restraints

⁹ See Peter J. Katzenstein and Lucia A. Seybert, eds., *Protean Power: Exploring the Uncertain and Unexpected in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018): 10.

¹⁰ Elias, *The Established and the Outsiders*; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977); *The History of Sexuality: The Care of the Self* (New York: Random House, 1984); James Q. Wilson, *Thinking about Crime* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975); Randall Collins, *Violence: A Microsociological Approach* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Naomi Zack, “The American sexualization of race,” in Naomi Zack, ed., *Race/Sex: Their Sameness, Difference, and Interplay* (London and New York: Routledge), 145-155.

¹¹ See Mustapha Kamal Pasha, “Beyond the ‘Religious Turn’: International Relations as Political Theology,” Andreas Gofas, Inanna Hamati-Ataya and Nicholas Onuf, ed., *The Sage Handbook of the History, Philosophy and Sociology of International Relations*, (London: Sage, 2018), 106-121. Compare: Mika Luoma-Aho, *God and International Relations: Christian Theology and International*

and hence a social organiser and discipliner to different degrees in different places of the world. It would be interesting to “mirror back” the self-restraint practices of various Outsiders of international politics, either via the manifold practices of mimicry in the attempts to lure and convince the Established for instrumental and strategic gains in asymmetrical international relationships, or via the instances of bottled-up psychic energies bursting onto the social scene through various social movements (for instance, Black Lives Matter). Steele’s creative application of Jung’s account of the libido and complexes could be further stretched to the study of individual leaders in foreign policy making. For instance, the last four years of American presidency encourage us to consult Jung’s later works on the “Hitler conundrum,” particularly his diagnosis of *pseudologia phantastica*, or the form of hysterics which is characterized by a distinct tendency to believe one’s own lies.¹² Finally, while *Restraint in International Politics* is perhaps too self-depreciating about its allegedly masculine bias, it would be fascinating if the Jungian libido as a central referent would receive an equally methodical application in IR from the perspective of the feminine “life energy” of Freya, so to speak.

The book also delivers its own actionist paradox of sorts by outlining a strategic narrative of restraint as a delicate placeholder for the standard “what is to be done?”-hand-wringing of IR scholarship, seeking to generate concrete policy advice from scholarly musings. The coda of the book reads like a stand-alone essay, embedded in the Niebuhrian humble recognition of the limits of our knowledge and our power. It is in the conclusion where the humane ethics of Brent J. Steele shine through most intensely: we read a call for humility, for recognition of one’s own limits in the face of the world, and for slowing down, pausing, and listening (255). Taking a breather from the continuously talking and acting political and professional world of IR is more acutely relevant in the pandemic context of non-stop “digital academia” than ever. With its message of “a restrained case for restraint” (266), Steele’s thought-provoking book offers important solace in the hectic world for the IR scholarly community more generally. With its stoic sensibility, this book leaves us with something to breathe – a lungful of mountain air.

Relations (London: Continuum, 2012); Vassilios Paipais, ed., *Theology and World Politics: Metaphysics, Genealogies, Political Theologies* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

¹² Carl Gustav Jung, “After the Catastrophe,” *Collected Works*, vol. 10 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 203-204.

RESPONSE BY BRENT J. STEELE, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

I want to thank Andrew Szarejko for organizing this review of my book. Thanks as well to Daniel J. Levine for his introduction to this forum, and of course thanks to the respondents, Lina Benabdallah, Benjamin H. Friedman, Manali Kumar, and Maria Mälksoo, who have provided such in-depth engagements with the book.

I will start with Friedman's review, which focused on detailing a book that Friedman wanted me to write rather than the one I wrote, even down to the choice in cover art. As such, a substantive response is not required. However, the review points to what I see as a shortcoming in how International Relations as a field has generally understood or discussed restraint. That is, very narrowly, both in terms of for whom, and of what, restraint can be appreciated. Friedman notes that he was left "wanting" in several areas, primarily regarding a lack of discussion in my book of "the realist focus on the balance of international power as an explanatory variable for the action of states."

This is such a narrow and largely superficial ground for evaluating the phenomenon I title "actionism" that it radically simplifies the debate over restraint to be almost inconsequential. How many more debates do we need about the balance of power? U.S. actionism is, by and large, a product of many other factors besides, and perhaps even separate from, the 'balance of international power.' The move towards hierarchy, the attempt to maintain U.S. hegemony and primacy, anxieties over race, gender, and class, those *urges* and even reflexes of a U.S. polity (and, to be fair, some IR 'realists' too), are not animated or even driven by balance of power logic. Rather the cause is the United States' obsession with being on top, dominating, and controlling other international actors. It is a story that can understand the major events that have transpired, I think, even since my book's publication (as I note below in response to Kumar's review), including the dynamics of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic and how an unrestrained United States has been unable to prevent the deaths of over 700,000 Americans and counting, the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, and the January 6th insurrection by Trump and his supporters and one political party of the United States' very precarious democratic republic.

Balance of power logic isn't wrong, then, so much as it is radically incomplete in a story about restraint. I recently elaborated on this concern (and referred to many of these more recent events) in a study and conversation with Chris Peys, in *Contemporary Voices*, when I note:

...why simple calls for the US to be more "restrained", or to adopt restraint as a 'Grand Strategy' ...are going to be heeded for a very short period of time. If realist scholars actually read my book, or work similar to it, they would, as I note in my conclusion, have a more realistic understanding of the challenges of restraint. In my story, psychic energy builds up, it even gets backed up, and it eventually overwhelms the US political community.⁵⁰

This is part of a broader issue in how scholarly discussions on 'restraint' have unfolded, not only through narrow topics but *narrow groupings of voices*. Very rarely do these discussions include the voices of BIPOC scholars, those from the Global South, and female-identifying scholars. In short, restraining one's scholarly self within these debates on restraint may help broaden the terms of that debate, and also enable others whose voices have been marginalized and not consistently included within them.

All the same, Friedman seems to advocate a more restrained U.S. polity (see his fn. 11 on Gary Cooper as a model), which I do as well.

⁵⁰ Chris Peys and Brent J. Steele, "Restraint in International Politics: A Conversation between Brent Steele and Christopher Peys," *Contemporary Voices: St Andrews Journal of International Relations* 2:1 (2021): 1-21.

I am honored by Kumar's review of my book. I knew her work on India and identity,⁵¹ but I am guilty of only just now discovering her work on prudence, which is a huge but related topic to restraint that I only address in passing in this book through the work of Harry Gould.⁵² I think there is a big coda of a story to tell about restraint vis-à-vis prudence, and Kumar's work will be central to that understanding of that story as it unfolds.

Kumar asks a very good question in her review about the gendering of the complexes of restraint and actionism, why it is "required," and what would be lost if we treated them in a "gender-neutral" manner. She also notes that if this is the case, why not also view these complexes as racialized as "White" and "culturally specific to the West"? I discussed the gendering of the complexes in the book (p. 72, pp. 84-86), but I can make a more pointed defense here. Simply put, if we make them gender-neutral we risk naturalizing and essentializing them as 'the way things are' rather than constructed forms of conduct. The complexes reflect not universal categories across time and space that represent the 'true two views' on the politics of restraint, but rather are ideal types that approximate how individuals, groups, and states uphold, re-enact, and re-embody the politics of restraint. More directly, they are forms of discipline (here I'm overlapping with some of the points in Benabdallah's review), that are enacted not as those in power would tell us to 'ensure the national interest' or to do 'what is prudent' or 'what is right,' but rather to perform and embody masculine roles. The point here is not only analytical, but political. Restraint and actionism when enacted and defended and valorized can be contested, because they are not 'just the way things are' but are instead politically problematic ways of relating to others within communal spaces that exclude some and include and prioritize others.

I appreciate Kumar's other point about these complexes being "culturally specific to the West" and "even racialized as 'White'." I wish had thought about that exact point a bit more. It would have enlivened and enriched the cases of racial violence (such as lynching and red-lining) I focus on in especially chapter 3, and would definitely have extended from what I have always found to be the somewhat sanitized approach that Elias and Eliasians take to understanding the 'established' versus 'outsiders' dynamic I use to organize some of my illustrations.⁵³ And it would have helpfully politicized those categories within especially the dynamics of Global North-South relations.

I want to thank Kumar as well for drawing the connections she finds in contemporary events, especially with COVID-19 and policies that demonstrate the interdependence of the complexes, in her example of the context of China. Finally, I want to additionally express my appreciation, but also anxiety, at the spot-on troubling implication she draws for U.S. domestic politics in the review's closing paragraph. Specifically, she asks whether "one could argue that both the far-right and the progressive left appear to value actionism," and what this might mean if those two groups continue in that direction pulling U.S. society further apart.

The answer, in short, isn't good. I think the only way in which it will be mitigated (I won't say resolved), and that will still probably involve continued low-scale violence by the right in the U.S. is through constant, active, democratic participation by a coalition of the left in every local, state, and national election in the U.S. for years to come. But of course one insight from the book is that exhaustion is always a possibility following a period of actionism. If that happens, then the rage-fueled

⁵¹ Kumar is the co-coordinator of the "Making Identity Count" project, and the co-editor (with Amit Julka) of the reports on India: <https://makingidentitycount.wordpress.com/countries/india/>

⁵² Harry Gould, "Gendering Prudence," Paper Presented at the 2010 International Studies Association-Northeast annual conference, Baltimore, Maryland; "A Third Prudence", Paper Presented at the 2019 annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Toronto, Ontario; "A Reflexive Practice of Prudence" in Brent J. Steele and Jack Amoureux, editors, *Reflexivity and International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2015), 253-263.

⁵³ Norbert Elias, *The Established and the Outsiders: A Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994); Andrew Linklater "Process sociology and international relations". *The Sociological Review* 59 (2011):48-64; *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-System* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Stephen Mennell, *The American Civilizing Process* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

actionism of the right, enabled and consistently reinforced by a structural set of political economic conditions which continue to enable and monetize that actionism, will win out. And because it only represents a minority of the US polity – albeit an activated one aided and abetted by the United States’ skewed electoral system – the implications are not positive.

Benabdallah’s engagement with my book does a better job of summarizing it than I ever could, extracting insights and repackaging it in ways that will be useful to readers. Her main concern is one shared by other reviewers (including Kumar) in this roundtable regarding where restraint ends and actionism begins, or vice versa. She notes, in a very helpful application of the two complexes, that the deployment of U.S. troops against BLM protestors indicates a “blurring of the lines between restraint and actionism” as “whose restraint and whose actionism?”

I completely agree. I considered the broader context of the BLM protests, again, in the aforementioned conversation with Chris Peys.⁵⁴ But Benabdallah’s question especially gets to the crux of why restraint cannot only be considered via agents (protestors, the ‘few bad apples’ within police departments), but also within and from structures (like structural racism), and how all of this shapes judgments of who *needs* to be restrained, whose actionism is legitimate and whose is not, and even what is considered restraint or restrained. The complexes themselves are always intertwined, but they can be useful for enabling us to reflect on how we not only understand but judge and evaluate others in our political communities.

Let me make two further observations in reflecting on Dr. Benabdallah’s excellent review. First, she is absolutely right about the connections between Foucauldian discipline and restraint, and that the “two concepts share much in common.” It is why I noted that the “discipline articulated by Foucault ...hews closest to the conceptualization of restraint that I develop in this book” (99). I assume that the concept of restraint that I develop precedes the era of disciplinary punishment as articulated by Foucault, and probably will extend beyond it (if we are indeed beyond it, and I think in some ways we are moving that direction).

Second, I am heartened, relieved and grateful for her observation that the book is a ‘big intervention’ and a “*tour de force*,” and all the more given her own breathtaking and incisive book from 2020, *Shaping the Future of Power*.⁵⁵ I put my all into my book. But putting one’s all into a book doesn’t necessitate that it will be received in kind as something that is useful or necessary. I do attempt to frame the book in modest terms, as she notes, simply because I know there is more to say and write on restraint. But I am relieved, honored and humbled that Benabdallah took so much from the book, how it can be applied to contemporary politics from the geopolitical to the everyday, and how we might develop from it in the future in both analytical and political ways of knowing, acting, and challenging. I thank her again for a wonderful and thoughtful essay on the book, and look forward to our conversations about her work, and mine, and others, in the years to come.

Last, but not least, I want to thank Mälksoo for her very careful and kind thoughts on my book. I thanked a number of people in my lengthy acknowledgments section to the book, including Maria, for their help along the way with the argument and the approach. She was one of those whose advice made possible the book, and indeed without which the book wouldn’t have happened. So I am especially grateful and honored by her participation in this roundtable.

As with Benabdallah’s review, I am lucky to have Mälksoo’s succinct and detailed summary of the book’s arguments and insights. Her main concern is one I was also acutely aware of when I wrote the book over the course of several years – my U.S.-centric focus in it at the expense of other cases. This indeed risks making it “culturally U.S.-specific,” although considering how little it has been either engaged or understood by U.S.-based and U.S. foreign policy-focused ‘realists’ who otherwise write on restraint, those specialists will not likely be aware of it.

⁵⁴ Peys and Steele, “Actionism and Restraint: A Conversation,” esp. 9-10.

⁵⁵ Lina Benabdallah. *Shaping the Future of Power: Knowledge Production and Network-Building in China-Africa Relations*. University of Michigan Press, 2020.

In response, I do not know if other countries experience the ebb and flow of restraint and actionism as regularly as the United States. I suspect for reasons mentioned at the end of Chapter 4 that such a flow obtains in Japan and Germany. However, stemming from my concerns about restraint and actionism within both agents and structures, I do think there are structural, and global, features of what Giddens calls “late” or “high modernity” that have enabled and incentivized actionism.⁵⁶ These include the global neoliberal capitalist system/era, and the increasing pace and speed of social life⁵⁷ that has been fostered but not determined by technological developments. The challenge of restraint is one that goes beyond the space and time of the contemporarily decadent and fractured United States.

Finally, I appreciate Mälksoo’s closing observations regarding my call for restraint in doing IR (as a field, as a vocational endeavor), and how it is even more resonant in our pandemic era of “non-stop ‘digital academia’.” One thing the pandemic has demonstrated to me (which I noted earlier in this response) is how much we gain by listening and empathizing with others. Restraint enables that listening. What we have to say to others should not be confused for us *having to say it*. We need to listen, to allow others to act, enable others to bring their voices into the conversation. I know that sounds corny. But within the terror that has been this pandemic, some of the best things that have happened have been when I have listened to others tell me their experiences and stories – my students, my children, my parents, my brother, my colleagues, and my friends who share their stories on my podcast, including Mälksoo herself.⁵⁸ As academics, as researchers, as lecturers, we are incentivized by our vocation (at times) to speak, to write, to get our arguments out. But a strategic narrative of restraint, applied to IR, applied to myself, hopefully will be read as a call for some of us to quiet down, enable marginalized and overlooked voices, and see what they have to say about our world while we, while I, listen.

⁵⁶ Anthony Giddens. *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

⁵⁷ Simon Glezos, *The Politics of Speed: Capitalism, the State and War in an Accelerating World* (London: Routledge, 2013).

⁵⁸ “Maria Mälksoo” on *The Hayseed Scholar Podcast*, July 3, 2020, <https://www.buzzsprout.com/515302/4425938>