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Introduction by Christopher Ball, Loyola University Chicago

T heories of international relations in the grand sense are rare. Hans Morgenthau "purport[ed] to present a theory of international politics" in 1948.[1] Raymond Aron's *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* appeared in 1962. Kenneth Waltz presented his unmodified *Theory of International Politics* in 1979. It would be twenty years before Alexander Wendt countered with another article-less book title: *Social Theory of International Politics.* [2] A decade later, Richard Ned Lebow presents *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*, returning an indefinite article to his title along with a page-count rivaling only Aron's tome. The modesty of the title, however, belies the book's ambition. The reviewers praise the historic breadth of the book and welcome its focus on honor and social standing as explanatory factors. They differ on the value of grand theory. Richard W. Mansbach embraces Lebow's project, both in its theoretical ambitions and its empirical insights. Patrick Finney is sympathetic to its culturalist core but more skeptical about the novelty and explanatory power of some of its claims. Geoffrey Roberts commends it as a grand historical narrative, but has doubts about the enterprise of grand theorizing in general. In the end, the merit of grand theory itself more than the specifics of Lebow's offering divides Mansbach's more favorable review from the more critical appraisals of Finney and Roberts.

Most historians and a fair number of political scientists are skeptical of grand theories. Too much analytical parsimony yields too much synthetical imprecision. Too much analytical complexity yields too much synthetical confusion. Hypotheses and implications are either too vague or too narrow to be verified to anyone's satisfaction. In his review, Roberts argues that *A Cultural Theory* is too precise and insufficiently deterministic to serve as a grand theory in the international relations (IR) discipline. This is a compliment rather than a criticism as far as historians are concerned. Roberts argues that IR theorists will require greater abstraction and inter-theoretical discussion than *A Cultural Theory* provides in order for it to serve as a competing theoretical paradigm. What makes the book interesting to historians necessarily dooms it as paradigm-buster among IR theorists.

Lebow disagrees, which is not surprising given his career-long efforts to integrate political science and history.[3] For Lebow, a new grand theory is necessary because "the motive of the spirit and the human need for self-esteem" is absent from existing grand theories, and

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[1] Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace, 1st ed. (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1948), 1.

[2] Raymond Aron, *Peace and War; a Theory of International Relations*, trans. Richard Howard and Annett Baker Fox (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1966). The French title was *Paix et guerre entre les nations* and was published in 1962. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1979); Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[3] See Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), x.

so they miss how "strivings for honor and standing influence, if not often shape, political behavior" (35). Mansbach supports this endeavor, and his review highlights several of Lebow's novel hypotheses . One is that when honor is at stake, leaders will be more likely to take risks in the domain of gains (537-38), a finding that contradicts what Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky's "prospect theory" would predict.[4]. Others concern the aggressive behavior of emerging powers seeking standing, the role of honor in state-formation, and the role of "soft power" in hegemonic transitions (535-551). According to Mansbach, honor-seeking motives often provide better explanations for aggressive or stubborn actions than do power-seeking or security-seeking motives.

Like Roberts, Finney is skeptical of grand theory but his criticism differs from that of Roberts. Finney argues that *A Cultural Theory* sacrifices the specific for the general because of its grand-theory ambitions. Finney discusses several of Lebow's twentieth-century cases and argues that he often "flattens out" specific culturalist explanations. Finney argues that rather than synthesizing existing, detailed cultural histories, *A Cultural Theory* often ignores them to focus on spirit as a universal motive. For example, cultural historians have explained how German military culture before World War I produced belligerent policies; however, to cultural historians, these are complex and contingent effects, not the result of primary drives to seek honor and standing. Lebow rejects this criticism, claiming that his case-studies examine the contingent and contending factors.

Mansbach defends Lebow on his point. Mansbach hails *A Cultural Theory* for recognizing that the social meaning of honor and the conduct that will increase standing vary in time and place. Competing IR theories rely on trans-historical factors and regard culture as an epiphenomenon, Mansbach argues. Finney acknowledges that *A Cultural Theory* avoids the pitfalls of parsimony that bedevil IR theories, but since his standard is existing historiography, not IR theorizing, he is more critical of the specific cases than are Mansbach or Roberts.

Finney and Roberts agree on one point: *A Cultural Theory* downplays the role of ideology. Lebow draws on ancient Greek philosophy, in particular Plato's and Aristotle's identification of the human drives of reason, appetite, and spirit (60). Roberts argues that theorizing or ideology-formation is as much a human drive as the others (and one that cannot be captured by classical concept of reason as *phronēsis*). *A Cultural Theory* does not have a clear conceptual category for ideology, and therefore Finney and Roberts are critical of Lebow's account of World War II and the Cold War. In response Lebow does not deny the role of ideology, but maintains that it is subordinate to the drives that he prioritizes.

There is a consensus among the reviewers that *A Cultural Theory* focuses on change over continuity and human agency over material structure. For Finney and Roberts, these are elements of the historic narrative; for Mansbach, they are the central features of the grand

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[4] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk," *Econometrica* 47:2 (1979). Barbara Farnham, ed., *Avoiding Losses/Taking Risks: Prospect Theory and International Conflict* (University of Michigan Press, 1994).

theory. There is no stable order, but a continuous process of non-teleological change. While some orders are more robust than others, they are in flux. Lebow also emphasizes an equal role for human agency with social structures, particularly hierarchies of standing and understandings of honor. These emerge from continuous human interactions, and are transformed by them.

In the more abstract and abstruse debates among theoretical paradigms, Lebow positions *A Cultural Theory* near the IR version of "social constructivism" and sets "the foundations for a psychology of identity" that current constructivist IR theories lack (16).[5] It is not clear that other constructivist theories require such a psychology of identity. For example, Wendt's theory identifies sovereign states as corporate agents – "states are people too" – because they are as "real" as social structures, which have constitutive effects as well as causal ones.[6] Wendt's chapter-length discussion of the mechanisms of process and causes of structural change recalls Roberts' description of grand theory as "the associating and disassociating of concepts and the endless elaboration of distinctions" in contrast to Lebow's detailed case-studies.

One does not expect immediate policy relevance from a theoretical work, but *A Cultural Theory* provides several insights into contemporary affairs. For example, Mansbach notes that Iran's insistence that talks on its nuclear program be conducted with "justice and respect" has more meaning if it reflects genuine concerns about honor and standing. Similarly, a myopic focus on the security aspects of territorial disputes in the South China Sea would miss the competition over rank that such disputes might represent.

Despite all its achievements, *A Cultural Theory* is not a capstone book. The theory of international relations it promotes is a "special case of political order" (4). Lebow plans to construct of a theory of order for a subsequent volume that will further develop the theory of international relations he has already presented. Of books that are to be chewed and digested rather than tasted, *A Cultural Theory* is a banquet, and still only a first course.

Participants:

Richard Ned Lebow is the James O. Freedman Presidential Professor of Government at Dartmouth College. His recent publications include *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge, 2008), *Why Nations Fight* (Cambridge, 2010), *Forbidden Fruit: Counterfactuals and International Relations* (Princeton, 2010) and *The Politics and Ethics of Identity: In Search of Ourselves* (Cambridge, 2012).

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[5] For an overview, see Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander, eds., *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and his Critics* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Lebow suggests that Wendt is not really a constructivist (3, fn.7).

[6] Wendt, *Social Theory,* 215-218.

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Patrick Finney teaches in the Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University, UK. He has published widely on twentieth century international history and history and theory. Publications include (ed.) *Palgrave Advances in International History* (London, Palgrave, 2005) *and Remembering the Road to World War Two: International History, Collective Memory, National Identity* (2010). He is currently writing a global history of World War Two collective memory since the end of the Cold War for Oxford University Press.

Richard W. Mansbach is Professor of Political Science at Iowa State University and a former editor of *International Studies Quarterly*. He is the author, with Yale H. Ferguson of *Remapping Global Politics: History's Revenge and Future Shock* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), *A World of Polities: Essays on Global Politics* (Routledge, 2008), and *Globalization: The Return of Borders to a Borderless World?* (Routledge, 2012).

Geoffrey Roberts is Head of the School of History at University College Cork, where he teaches History and International Relations. His many books include *The History and Narrative Reader* (Routledge 2001), *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War* (Yale University Press 2006), and *Molotov: Stalin's Cold Warrior* (Potomac Books, 2012).

Review by Patrick Finney, Aberystwyth University

A *Cultural Theory of International Relations* demands to be taken seriously. On the one hand, it is a very substantial piece of scholarship, almost 800-pages thick with a 170-page bibliography testifying to prodigious reading across the diverse disciplines of political science, International Relations (IR), history, and psychology. On the other hand, its explanatory goals are hugely ambitious, for Lebow is proposing nothing less than a new grand theory for IR, if not for the social sciences as a whole.

Lebow reaches back to the ancient Greeks – principally, Homer, Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle – for his theoretical framework, rooted in the premise that there are four basic drives of the human psyche: spirit, appetite, reason and fear. Although the way in which these drives express themselves varies across cultures and epochs they are nonetheless "universal attributes of human nature" (41).[1] "Each motive has an associated 'logic' that prompts specific approaches to cooperation, conflict and risk-taking" (505), and Lebow sketches out the ideal-type worlds to which each might give rise. In practice, real worlds evince mixed motives and behavior, and the relationship between the motives helps to explain historical change. For example, spirit- and appetite-based societies are inherently competitive and delicately-balanced and unless the dominant motive is held in check by reason, fear will rise and order unravel as violence and warfare break out. Thus human history is a saga of the consolidation and decline of order, as social formations predominantly rooted in one drive give way to alternative ones. Having outlined these ideas in general terms, Lebow then proceeds to explore them through an extensive series of case studies ("illustrative and provocative, not definitive" (161)) stretching from the Peloponnesian Wars through to the American invasion of Iraq. Across two millennia Lebow plots how these different motives have manifested themselves, given rise to conflicts and determined the character of warfare, thus claiming to offer a novel explanation for the whole course of international relations.

Amongst the various motives in play, Lebow is primarily interested in the role of the spirit which he contends is neglected by dominant theories. Liberalism and Marxism prioritize appetite, conceiving of politics as driven by the pursuit of material interests; realism, with its vision of anarchy, lays considerable stress on fear, whilst also acknowledging the primacy of material interests "after security" (15). Only certain strands of critical constructivism understand that culture and ideology are more than smokescreens obfuscating political, economic and military realities. What is needed, Lebow contends, is a new form of constructivist paradigm, one "that builds on the motive of the spirit and the human need for self-esteem and describes the ways in which strivings for honor and standing influence, if not often shape, political behavior" (35). Thus his theory is necessary

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[1] Strictly speaking Lebow identifies three basic drives: fear "is not a drive of the psyche, but an emotion that comes to the fore in proportion to reason's loss of control over spirit and appetite" (113). Lebow is correct to admit that the various different typologies and taxonomies he uses in the early chapters of the book – and his multi-layered exposition - can be a little confusing for the reader (112-114).

"to explain behavior other theories cannot, identify new problems, reframe existing ones in helpful ways and, more generally, to establish a new and fruitful research program" (35).

Lebow's wide-ranging "dynamic model of the relationship of identity to interest and behavior and how this process shapes and can transform" (33) political systems has potentially profound ramifications. In particular, he speculates about how the contemporary international system might evolve in ways that enhance stability and justice, pointing to transformations that are perhaps already underway as dominant understandings of honor and esteem are reconfigured. He writes, "from the vantage point of, say, the year 2030 we might look back on the Iraq War as one of the defining moments of the international relations of the twenty-first century because of the way it delegitimized the unilateral use of force and accelerated the emergence of alternative measures of standing" (502). Whether this transpires will depend upon the decisions of human agents, and especially policy-makers in the United States who must choose whether "to reaffirm traditional modes of behavior or transform the character of the international system". Following Hans Morgenthau, Lebow sees his international theory as potentially contributing to this normative endeavor by providing "leaders with the conceptions they need to grasp the potential and the feasibility of bringing about a positive change in the nature of international politics" (503).

Given its theoretical richness and complexity, its grand historical scope, and its contemporary pertinence, Lebow's book has not surprisingly already excited considerable discussion within IR.[2] In approaching the text here from the perspective of an international historian (of culturalist persuasion), I make no pretence of dealing comprehensively with its claims and implications and am to an extent taking it on terms other than its own. I will discuss just two aspects of the book, first reading some of the historical case studies against the existing historiography and second exploring how Lebow's conception of policy-making chimes in stimulating ways with recent culturalist work in international history. To précis my position in advance, I sympathize with the timely and provocative aspiration to develop a fuller account of human motivation, and find the analysis of foreign policy in terms of emotions and identity, anger and prestige, honor and the thirst for recognition to be refreshing. Yet the totalizing and generalizing schema of the book is not entirely to my taste.

International historians are bound to ask what fresh insight Lebow can bring to our thinking about the origins and nature of the major wars that he considers in his case studies. My assessment here focuses on the more contemporary ones – as the conflicts with which I am most familiar – which Lebow admits are the "hard cases" (31) for his theory since in the modern world the core motives are increasingly intertwined; moreover, in the twentieth century appetite and fear are conventionally assumed to have been dominant.

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[2] For example, "Roundtable: Actors, Motives, and Politics among Nations. A Symposium on Richard Ned Lebow's Cultural Theory of International Relations," *International Relations* 23:1 (2009): 141-171, and the series of articles in *Millennium* 38:1 (2009): 107-159.

On the origins of the First World War, Lebow offers a reworking of the "social imperialism" (324) explanation for German bellicosity. In part, this entails structural elements, specifically "the continuing political domination of a nobility with premodern values, and its social and psychological consequences for the German middle class" (368). This last group was not merely incorporated into but actively drove the German pursuit of imperialism, "seeking to buttress their self-esteem vicariously through the successes of their nation". More broadly, the fact that "the need for self esteem was deflected outwards in the form of international competition and willingness to use force in defense of the national 'honor'" was the "most important underlying cause of imperialism and World War I" (312-313). Lebow's account does not neglect agency, however, since war only became inevitable as a consequence of individual decisions. Lebow contends that the choices key policy-makers made were not explicable by the "rational" criteria of economic or strategic interest. Against appetite- and fear-oriented explanations, he again invokes the role of the spirit, in the form of the search to attain or enhance national recognition and standing, and through that personal honor and self-esteem. Lebow demonstrates with choice quotations how the thinking of leading political and military decision-makers was saturated with the language of honor in the years before the war and as they made their fateful choices in the summer of 1914. Since these policy-makers effectively betrayed their putative national interests, their policies "cannot effectively be explained in terms of either interest or security, and can readily be accounted for by reference to the spirit" (529).

Lebow's discussion of the origins of the Second World War again imbricates agency and structure to explain both the actions of leading Axis policy-makers and the wider public support they garnered. He rejects the idea that standing or prestige are merely "instrumental concerns intended to advance a state's influence, and thus its security or material well being;" rather "they are important ends in themselves and often pursued at the expense of security or wealth" (371-372). So again the spirit figures centrally here, purportedly offering a "more compelling" (372) account of Axis aggression than conventional explanations based on appetite or fear arising from insecurity. In the German case, Lebow stresses the shock and humiliation induced by the Treaty of Versailles and how right wing opponents of Weimar were consequently able to gain support by promising to restore Germany's position in Europe and consequently its national self-esteem. Once in power Hitler's early foreign policy successes were enthusiastically received by a population that craved this psychic sustenance; moreover, although there was no great enthusiasm for his later wars, "what support they did have derived in large part from the same motives" (530). The lineaments of Hitler's rhetoric "indicate the extent to which the spirit was central to his rise to power and subsequent popularity"(385).

Fascist Italy is categorized by Lebow as a typical parvenu state, a weak latecomer aggressively seeking to assert its right to a place amongst the great powers and to recover from perceived snubs (in this case, the "mutilated victory" of 1919). Its foreign policy was "grossly irrational from the perspective of national security" (387), yet middle classes and leaders alike colluded in the effort to turn Italy's "myth of being a great power into reality" (396). The Japanese "had even more compelling reasons for hostility to the status quo powers, as they had been the object of European economic exploitation and racism and only grudgingly accepted as a great power" (531). Desire for standing and recognition –

coupled with economic motives – drove the Japanese into a war with China in the 1930s and the inability to bring this to a successful conclusion led to the decision to confront the European colonial powers and the United States. The persistence of feudal remnants and "premodern values" – "the spirit-driven values of a traditional warrior class" – explained the Japanese "willingness to take extraordinary risks with their own security" (531). Since "retreat or surrender" were unthinkable, the Japanese plunged into a war they could not win (416-417). Although it is discussed only briefly, Lebow also contends that the responses of other powers to Axis aggression "cannot be understood adequately with reference to just security or appetite" (374).

Lebow portrays Cold War confrontation as a product of the power vacuum in central Europe and the antagonistic nature of the superpowers' social systems. Appetite, spirit and fear "were all implicated and probably reinforcing at the onset of the Cold War" (533). Once it was fully underway, however, spirit becomes much more significant. Against the orthodox realist emphasis on fear and the revisionist focus on appetite, Lebow stresses "the ways in which striving for recognition and standing helped to shape the Cold War and contributed to its demise" (439). On both sides superpower competition was animated by concern for prestige and reputation, which were viewed as absolute and not merely instrumental goals. Personal emotions were also heavily implicated: the Cuban Missile Crisis, for example, was shaped by John F. Kennedy's anger at Soviet betrayal in breaking a promise not to send missiles to Cuba or "to embarrass him before the congressional elections" (447). By the 1980s "Moscow and Washington were locked into a global competition for standing, at great financial and material cost that was increasingly at odds with any legitimate security needs" (456). The Cold War finally ended thanks to a rethinking on the Soviet side, as Mikhail Gorbachev and his advisers came to see it as "a self-sustaining competition that was inimical to the security of both superpowers and could only be stopped by dramatic, unilateral gestures on their part" (457), which they promptly made. American commentators have pervasively failed to give Gorbachev proper credit for his initiative, and have instead insisted that the Soviets were forced into retreat by American pressure: far from reflecting reality, this vein of triumphalist interpretation actually simply underlines how Americans persistently framed the Cold War in terms of competition for standing. Lebow extends his analysis of American policy into the post-Cold War era, discussing the invasion of Iraq as a response to the insult and humiliation inflicted by the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Material motives and objective security considerations cannot make this disastrous war explicable: rather it is necessary to consider anger and the desire for revenge, together with the urge to use military power to strengthen American hegemony.

It is probably entirely predictable that an historian should start to pick holes in Lebow's case study expositions. Without wishing to get diverted into the broader discussion about the respective attitudes towards the past of historians and IR scholars, Lebow's treatment seems in line with how Robert Jervis has characterized the practices of the latter: "since we are often painting in broader strokes and looking for ways to explain a great deal with a relatively few factors and relationships, we can utilize understandings of history that

simplify and trim it".[3] As Lebow's purpose is to offer concise readings that support his overarching theoretical claims, his explanations obviously cannot be expected to match the depth, nuance and complexity of free-standing historical interpretations. At points, he admits frankly that he does not pretend to offer a "comprehensive explanation" (376) of the origins of particular conflicts and that his accounts are rather designed simply to highlight the role of the spirit. Yet the overall impression conveyed by the text is that Lebow believes he is offering more than just another positioned, contestable reading. Of Hitler's role in precipitating World War II, for example, he essays the fairly strong claim "that concern for self-esteem was not only an underlying cause of this conflagration, but a necessary condition" (376). Moreover, in discussing alternative explanations offered by historians and IR scholars Lebow is pretty forthright about their inadequacies, so it seems legitimate to approach his text in the same spirit.

How novel are Lebow's readings? To an extent, his approach simply entails reformulating elements from elsewhere in the existing historiography. On the origins of the First World War, for example, cultural historians dissecting the mood of 1914 have noted the prevalence of notions of honor, prestige and sacrifice, just as military historians have invoked ideational factors to explain warmongering policies that were not "rational" in economic or strategic terms. Lebow's account, for example, is quite in tune with – and draws on – recent work on German military planning that stresses its bellicosity and thereby re-emphasizes Berlin's war guilt. The key difference is that such work explains this pathology as a product of the contingencies of national military culture or the specific values of a particular social group or ruling caste, while Lebow seeks constantly to operate on a more abstract level of explanation by invoking universal human psychic drives. It is this construal of these dispositions as products of spirit rather than of a narrower culture which primarily lends his analysis its distinctiveness. (I will recur later to some of the other the implications of this move.)

The second ground on which Lebow lays claim to innovation concerns the relative importance of the spirit compared to other operative factors. Anyone familiar with the primary documentary material on the Cuban Missile Crisis would not find it difficult to accept the claim that personal emotional responses were implicated in the making of American policy; equally, the notion that the wider Cold War evolved into a counter-productive, illogically competitive confrontation is not a particularly hard sell. (The same goes for the idea that the invasion of Iraq was a product of outraged pride and score-settling rather than sober strategic calculation.) Yet there is a significant difference between asserting that conceptions of honor, prestige, credibility and identity were involved in the conflict, and asserting that they were what it was primarily about. The interpretive tension with which Lebow must tussle here is very similar to

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[3] Robert Jervis, "International Politics and Diplomatic History: Fruitful Differences," Proceedings of the First Williams/H-Diplo Conference on New Scholarship in American Foreign Relations, http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Williams-Jervis-Keynote.pdf, 2.

that faced by culturalist international historians seeking to probe the significance of culturally constructed notions of race, class, gender or religion in policy-making. On the one hand, if he presents the spirit as just one (hitherto unrecognized) determinant or variable amongst many then his claims become much less novel and interesting, and proponents of established realist or liberal interpretations can more easily dismiss this ideational dimension as mere garnish. On the other hand, the more he asserts the central and supreme importance of the spirit, the more his interpretation will appear strained in relation to competing explanations and the greater the risk that he will be accused of peddling monocausal idealism. Lebow seems to wrestle with this dilemma, employing various finessing formulations, but ultimately to embrace the latter hazard, presumably judging that it is essential in order to sustain his overall theoretical edifice. Thus in his First World War case study he insists that the spirit must figure as the prime explanation for the phenomena he is describing: other motives are admitted to be in play, and can be "not insignificant", but they are decidedly "secondary" (361).

Lebow's interpretation thus stakes a strong claim to originality on two counts. However, the two moves that he makes in order to do this are very precisely ones likely to arouse skepticism amongst historians, since they seem to embody a predilection for the classic IR virtues (or vices) of generalization and parsimony. Granted, we must be careful not to over-simplify or pigeonhole here, since historians of culturalist leanings are more likely to be sympathetic to his effort to stress the ideational than historians invested in the realist and liberalist approaches he is primarily critiquing. Yet in broad terms Lebow's arguments are not the kind which historians, generically predisposed to deeply textured renderings, historical specificity and multi-causal explanation, are likely to find persuasive.[4]

Lebow's discussion of the origins of the Second World War is perhaps the most problematic of his modern cases. The accounts of policy-making in the three Axis powers are very brief and at times verge on the trite. (The discussion of Japan is the most substantial: this is Lebow's only non-western case and devoting serious attention to it allows him partially to pre-empt charges that his theory is too Eurocentric.) Moreover, these sections are marred by stylistic infelicities, which compound the impression that Lebow lacks a sure touch here. In the discussion of Fascist Italy, he has some difficulty in handling competing historiographical perspectives. Proverbially, another sin in IR practitioners' renderings of history is to efface the fact of historiographical diversity and to select as bedrock from a contested interpretive terrain whichever version happens to fit their wider theoretical paradigm. Lebow does not quite do this since he acknowledges the existence of multiple perspectives, but he neglects the most important position in the international history literature, namely that associated with the likes of MacGregor Knox, which presents Mussolini's foreign policy as insistently ideological and as incarnating an important breach with that of Liberal Italy. The omission of an interpretive strand that would somewhat

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[4] On the general dangers inherent in treating either IR or History as homogeneous, however, see Ian Clark, "International Relations: Divided by a Common Language?" *Government and Opposition* 37:2 (2002): 271-279.

disturb his overall thesis does impair the effectiveness and credibility of Lebow's attempted historiographical synthesis.

Apart from the headline invocation of the spirit, Lebow identifies four key operative factors in these Second World War case studies: "the survival of prefeudal values; leaders' needs to pursue aggressive foreign policies to sustain themselves in power; pathological leaders driven to commit acts of aggression … for personal rather than political reasons; and the late recognition of these three countries as great powers" (374). The case of Imperial Japan works reasonably well against this template, since the role of persisting semi-feudal structures in spawning militarism and imperialism has long figured in the historiography. Similarly, the festering sense of resentment engendered amongst Japanese by the refusal of the western powers to grant them proper recognition was an undoubted motive force behind their imperialism (though it is surprising that Lebow does not mention in this context the controversy over Japan's racial equality proposal at Versailles). This said, Lebow's reading with its emphasis on the quest for standing does perhaps underplay the ideological and racist dimensions of Japanese expansionism. Indeed, if pushed too far the argument that Japanese policy was a response to western discrimination flirts with endorsing dubious nationalist rationalizations of expansion as a defensive riposte to encirclement, even as a genuine campaign to liberate Asia from western colonialism.

It is in the Nazi German case that Lebow departs most extensively and problematically from established historiographical orthodoxy. Most of his material on Germany deals with the humiliations of the Weimar period and Hitler's rise to power, with Nazi foreign policy itself receiving very cursory coverage in a handful of pages. The notion that injured national pride helped bring the Nazis to power and ensured support for their efforts to enhance Germany's international position is persuasive, but it is also a commonplace in the existing literature. Moreover, in that literature it figures as part of more complex explanations and is not asked to bear the explanatory weight that Lebow seeks to ascribe to it here. Even glossed through the four-part model mentioned in the previous paragraph, his spirit-based account marginalizes many other factors. The presence of economic and strategic motives in Nazi policy is acknowledged, but in a very perfunctory and elliptical fashion (419). What this analysis most dramatically downplays, however, is the role of Nazi ideology, and the twin fixations of race and space. This element has figured centrally in dominant explanations of Nazi foreign policy since the 1960s, but because Lebow's schema requires Nazism to present as merely a variant of revanchist nationalism, its specificity and significance is obscured here, with only a few passing references to "wider imperialist aims" (385), racism, and anti-Semitism. This renders Lebow's account extremely superficial when weighed against existing historiographical explanations of the well-springs and dynamics of Nazi policy. Moreover, there is something very jarring and distasteful, even ethically problematic, about reducing the Holocaust (briefly mentioned in a section on the changing character of warfare (423-429)) to a by-product of a German search for self-

esteem.[5] In this instance, Lebow really does not do justice to the phenomena he is seeking to explain.[6]

These criticisms should not obscure the fact that Lebow's case studies offer considerable food for thought. True, he tends to push his argument too far, and it is questionable whether his whole complex theoretical structure is really required to facilitate his readings, since some of them have been made in slightly different terms by others. But the aspiration to move beyond the frames of realism and objective material interests in explaining foreign policy-making is one that is entirely laudable, and speaks intriguingly to the thrust of recent culturalist work in international history.

Lebow frames his methodology here with reference to various bodies of literature in the social sciences. Pre-eminent here is IR work on "ontological security" (25), which stresses how states and peoples "require consistent concepts of self that are generated and sustained through foreign policy routines. These routines are embedded in biographical narratives that government officials, media and intellectuals develop and invoke to explain and justify foreign policies. Policies at odds with these narratives and the values they encode can bring shame on officials if public opinion judges their behavior incongruent with their state's identity" (25). Identities "are structured around diverse narratives and values, which once established give leaders strong incentives to act consistently with them, or at least to defend their policies with reference to them". Self-esteem, for Lebow, constitutes a "critical component of identity, and is maintained through the quest for honor and standing" (26). Similarly, psychological and political science research in Terror Management Theory has emphasized the importance of "biographical narratives" which "encourage the illusion of immortality by enhancing continuity" and thus bind groups together (138). Lebow is adamant that since his theory derives from ancient Greek thought these literatures are not his inspiration, but there is a perceptible affinity in their respective approaches towards understanding decision-making. In particular, they direct attention towards how the "dominant discourses" or "value structure" of a society can influence or determine action (160), which in turn helps to explain behavior that is irrational by the lights of objective material interests.

These preoccupations obviously also chime with the concerns of culturalist international history, where a growing body of work is exploring how "beliefs about national identity, ideology, race and ethnicity, gender, and class", together with other cultural attitudes,

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[5] Elsewhere, Lebow writes that "Hitler's racism, which vaunted the superiority of Aryans over other races, was also intended to enhance his listeners' self-image and self-esteem" (385), which strikes me as an odd formulation.

[6] I realize these are not original thoughts, since it is well established that "most historians would shudder to consider the immediate origins of the Second World War as a 'case' of something rather than historical phenomena to be understood in their own right": Robert Jervis, "Political Science Perspectives," in Robert Boyce and Joseph A. Maiolo (eds), *The Origins of World War Two. The Debate Continues* (London, Palgrave, 2003), 207.

"shaped the exercise of economic, political, or military power".[7] At numerous points in Lebow's book there are passages that call to mind the work of such culturalists. For example, his discussion of the complex depressive personality of the Austro-Hungarian Chief of the General Staff Conrad von Hötzendorf, and how his obsession with national and personal honor underpinned a determination to crush Serbia in 1914 (348-351), is reminiscent in tone of Frank Costigliola's thick descriptions of the intellectual and emotional lives of Cold War policy-makers.[8] Similarly, there are aspects of the analysis of modern American foreign policy as a product of a providential sense of exceptionalism – an extreme "variant of the parvenu discourse" (478) – that echo Walter Hixson's interpretation of the same as driven by a particular mythicized sense of national identity.[9] Finally, the allusions to gendered rhetoric in foreign policy discourse (e.g. 484) inevitably gesture towards the work of Robert Dean and Kristin Hoganson on masculinity.[10] Throughout, the thematic and tropic overlaps are legion and the commonality in the efforts to shift the locus of explanation to the ideational is extremely striking.

As far as I can tell, Lebow does not draw on any of this culturalist international history work in compiling his case studies. This is a pity since there is much rich empirical material in these histories to buttress his analysis, as well as considerable grist for his theoretical and methodological mills. Given the staggering amount that he has read, it seems rather churlish to take him to task too harshly for this omission, however. Moreover, he is scarcely alone amongst IR critical constructivists in failing to pay any heed to this vibrant intellectual enterprise that has so many affinities with their own. For example, I have briefly discussed elsewhere how critical constructivist work on American foreign policy in the War on Terror might benefit from acquiring a deeper historical perspective through an engagement with this international history literature.[11] Yet this regret over the absence of intellectual exchange cuts the other way too, because international historians too seldom avail themselves of the insights of critical constructivism, which tends to be bracingly fulsome and explicit about its theoretical framework and broader interpretive entailments in comparison to historical work.

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[7] Susan Brewer "'As Far As We Can': Culture and US Foreign Relations," in Robert D. Schulzinger (ed.), *A Companion to American Foreign Relations* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2003), 17.

[8] For example, Frank Costigliola, "'Unceasing Pressure for Penetration': Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George Kennan's Formation of the Cold War", *Journal of American History* 83:4 (1997): 1309-1339.

[9] Walter L. Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy. National Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008).

[10] Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood. Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood. How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998).

[11] Patrick Finney, "International History, Culture and the War on Terror," *International Relations* 23:1 (2009): 75–83.

This said, there undoubtedly remains some distance between the two intellectual projects. Culturalist international historians place a premium on the careful, archive-based, evocation of patterns of thought, interpretive strategies, representational impulses and meaning-making techniques, rooted in specific temporal and spatial contexts. As a consequence of this attachment to the local, they will likely be skeptical about the validity of Lebow's claim to identify universal human psychic drives, even if it is nuanced by the rider that these manifest themselves very differently in different cultures. (The fact that these trans-historical and immutable truths have been sought in ancient Greece is unlikely to ameliorate qualms here, since this renders the gesture irredeemably Eurocentric whatever case studies the theory might be applied to.) Moreover, Lebow's urge to generalize and universalize means that he constantly flattens out the specificities of behavior by transforming all action into a manifestation of some kind of generic drive. Thus as noted above, bellicose German strategists prior to 1914 are animated by the spirit rather than national military culture, and the ideologies of the Axis powers between the wars are interesting not in themselves but as examples of aggressive parvenu nationalism. The same can be said of my other examples. Lebow is not really concerned with American exceptionalism as an ideological construct and project *per se*, but only in so far as it typifies a certain form of nationalism. Similarly, he is not intrinsically concerned with the deep and complex lineaments of policy-making discourse, and the way in which cultural filaments of race, class, gender and religion intertwine: his preoccupation is always in finding a way to make the move from details to drive, as fine-grained analysis is sacrificed to span. Ironically, therefore, this is a putatively cultural explanation that is not particularly interested in culture.

There is much more that could be said about this intriguing and bold book.[12] I am not sure that I can accept Lebow's overall grand theory, and the rendering of history and of policy-making in the case studies is not really to my taste. To a large extent, this is because of a difference of disciplinary perspective, in so far as I see the features that trouble me as products of particular IR predilections and methods. I am also skeptical whether the ambition to impact upon policy-makers and the shape of real world international relations will be fulfilled. Yet I applaud the ambition to re-envision the way in which we think of policy-making – and indeed, of human behavior – which has important theoretical and methodological implications for international history. Hence I would urge international historians – and especially culturalist ones – to read this book as an important provocation towards an affective turn.

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[12] It would be tedious to make too much of factual errors in such an expansive work, but I cannot resist observing that however well Lebow might know the ancient Greeks, he has misunderstood contemporary English football (soccer) fans. When playing Germany they do not "routinely shout 'two to one' to remind Germans that they won two world wars to Germany's one World Cup victory against England" (17). This would not make sense since the Germans have beaten the English many more times than once. The favored chant is "two world wars and one World Cup," invoking England's 1966 World Cup final victory over (West) Germany, the only time England have won the trophy. The underlying point about the parlous condition of English national self-esteem remains all too valid, however.

Review by Richard Mansbach, Iowa State University

Let there be no mistake: Richard Ned Lebow's magisterial *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* is a "big" book in every meaning of the word. The text is 570 pages; the bibliography runs an astonishing 170 pages; and the index is 21 additional pages. More importantly, Lebow asks big questions and frankly admits his quest for "grand theory." Lebow's theory is "dynamic," "dialectical," "open-ended," "interactionist," and "normative" (505-507). It is holistic, rejecting both the reductionism characteristic of 'scientific' IR and the spurious distinction between facts and values. Lebow challenges liberalism and realism by placing culture and the values it expresses at the center of his theory.[1] Culture, he argues persuasively, is reflected in a society's values, and those values interact to produce behavior. The reader must admire the sophistication, historical sweep, and psycho-philosophic insights of Lebow's assault on traditional interstate theorizing and his bold effort to identify an alternative

Still, the theory that Lebow propounds is surprisingly parsimonious. Evoking Durkheim, Lebow begins from the reasonable premise that politics entails the effort to satisfy human needs. His general theory–derived from classical Greek philosophy, history, and tragedy–is built upon "three fundamental motives that reflect universal human needs–appetite, spirit and reason–and a fourth–fear–that grows in importance in proportion to the failure of reason to constrain appetite or spirit" (505). The Greeks were what Onora O'Neill calls "universalists" who "orient ethical reason and judgment partly by appeal to certain universal principles that are to hold for all lives and across all situations."[2]

Each motive, Lebow argues, produces different types of behavior and different levels of violence. For him, the most important (and ignored) of motives is "the spirit"–"the universally felt need for what we call self-esteem" (15)–that is revealed in man's ceaseless seeking after "honor," even at the cost of basic needs that Lebow terms "appetite." The spirit "makes us admire and emulate the skills and achievements of people considered praiseworthy by our society," and it "craves autonomy" and reacts angrily to slights or challenges by those of lesser standing (15).

Lebow contrasts his constructivist approach to dominant theories of IR that are rooted in "material interests" (15). Whereas liberalism and Marxism are built on "appetite," realism focuses almost entirely on "fear." Homer's *Iliad* is Lebow's model of a spirit world in which individuals and societies are driven by a quest for honor, a quest that leads to frequent but limited warfare fought according to widely understood rules. As long as spirit (or appetite) is 'tamed' and guided by 'reason,' violence will be circumscribed. History, as Lebow interprets it, entails constant movement between international systems dominated, on the

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[1] John Keegan famously described "war as culture," though his definition of the elusive concept differs from Lebow's. Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Random House, 1993), 24.

[2] Onora O'Neill, *Toward Justice and Virtue: A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning* (Cambridge, 1996)*,* 11.

one hand, by 'reason' and 'fear' and, on the other, between 'spirit' and 'appetite.' From Aristotle and Plato, Lebow posits 'reason' as facilitating the establishment and preservation of order, but he recognizes two levels of reason–one involving the instrumental resort to norm violation in order to achieve short-term goals, and the other, of a higher order, involving learning that self-restraint in satisfying appetite and spirit and compliance with community norms enhance stability and, therefore, long-term order. "The time," he concludes, (515) "is long overdue" for the social sciences "to acknowledge and study the positive contribution of emotions, harnessed to reason, order and cooperation."

A Cultural Theory, then, is a historically rich constructivist corrective to the parsimonious but flawed dominant schools of international relations theory. Culture, far from being an epiphenomenon that hides the "realities" of political life, shapes identities that offer people "meaning, order and predictability" (16). In Lebow's constructivist universe, the value of community dominates individual egoism; agency dominates structure; interaction produces shifts in actors' identities and interests; and these in turn rewrite the script for societies in which they play their parts. In this universe, levels of analysis are no longer a 'problem,' as units affect international systems that in turn alter the units that compose those systems. It is also a world that is far from the anarchic universe of realists.

Lebow's argument rests on his contention that each of the four motives has a different logical relationship with conflict and cooperation. He identifies four ideal-type worlds animated by one of these motives. Worlds dominated by 'reason' or 'spirit,' he argues, are characterized by cooperation, but the latter also features conflict among actors of equal status that are prepared to take risks. Such conflict, Lebow argues, is highly ritualized and tends to be limited. Both cooperation and conflict are normal in worlds dominated by 'appetite,' with cooperation dominant only so long as actors perceive common interests. Finally, the 'fear-based worlds,' central to realist analysis, are dominated by insecurity and unconstrained violence. To examine these hypothesized logics, Lebow reviews a series of historical cases encompassing more than two millennia, recognizing that all exhibit a mix of motives to a greater or lesser extent.

Space does not permit us to assess each of these cases. Suffice it to say that they are meticulously researched though readers may wonder whether the theory, and particularly the role of the 'spirit,' is as germane to the post-industrial world as it was to earlier and less complex societies governed by smaller and more easily identifiable political elites. Lebow's final case, the American invasion of Iraq, is perhaps the most dubious and is perhaps superfluous. Without disagreeing with Lebow's harsh criticism of the recent Bush administration, the reader may conclude that the author is too involved to offer the objective scholarly analyses typical of earlier cases.

From the cases, Lebow derives a number of important hypotheses. One that I find especially relevant to my own research is that 'spirit' played a crucial role in the emergence of the modern state. Lebow (535-536) is describing what Philip Bobbitt calls the "kingly

state"[3]–"a domain of absolute authority that made the king the personification of the State."[4] Such states were "machines built for the battlefield,"[5] and they reflected the union of economic and military capabilities. The logic of kingly states was an extension of the sovereign's "standing" to personify the state and enhance dynastic interests. The search for glory or 'standing,' as Lebow terms it, was reflected in the efforts of Louis XIII and XIV to end religious strife within France and secularize political life, overthrow Hapsburg power, place Bourbons on the thrones of France's neighbors, and impose French hegemony on Europe. France emerged from the Thirty Years' War as an archetypal kingly state, legitimated by divine right and dynastic continuity, and featuring "the transformation of the princely Valois state into the Bourbon kingly state, a centralization, secularization, and nationalization of state authority along absolutist lines famously identified with the principle of *raison d'état.*"[6]

A second hypothesis entails a revision in prospect theory, the product of Lebow's recognition that values affect perceptions of cost and benefits and, therefore, of risk (365-368, 536-539). He argues convincingly that prospect theory, which claims that actors take greater risks when confronted with the prospect of losses than with the opportunity to make gains, is relevant in the main to cases dominated by "appetite." By contrast, "spirit" and honor produce a willingness to take great risks, even risks to individual and collective survival, risks apparent in German and Russian actions in 1914 and Soviet and American behavior in 1962.

Lebow's third proposition is that countries, especially those he terms "parvenu" states, seeking acceptance as great powers tend to be aggressive, especially if they have previously suffered humiliation (539-540). His analysis represents nationalism as a collective extension of the "spirit" and seems to recall the enduring idea of American "exceptionalism." Nationalism, in his view, exemplifies how "people manifest strong desires for group membership and identification because they provide a 'heightened level of self-worth'," and he concludes "that people who identify with nationalities or nations to some degree seek vicarious fulfillment and enhanced self-esteem through their victories, and suffer a corresponding loss of esteem, even humiliation, when they suffer setbacks" (17).

The search for status, which is integral to Lebow's third proposition, also is central to his fourth, that rising powers challenge hegemons for a variety reasons of which "status is one of the most important" (541). The demand for greater status, especially status equivalent to a state's capability, is a variant of a desire for prestige–desired as an end in itself rather

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[3] Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History* (New York: Random House, 2002), 95-97.

[4] Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From medieval to Global Assemblages.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 95.

[5] Bill Jordan, *The State: Authority and Autonomy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 152.

[6] Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles*, 109.

than as instrumental to other ends. However, , in contrast to the claim of power transition theorists, Lebow provocatively concludes that such challenges need not culminate in war and that military rivalry is only one of many ways in which the search for status can be pursued. His observation that challengers rarely seek war and that hegemons are more likely than challengers to initiate violence has important theoretical implications.

The search for status, then, is more likely to involve soft rather than hard power. Power that is perceived as legitimate is, he stresses, more effective, and genuine "hegemony" requires such legitimacy. Legitimacy, in turn, owes much to the belief that exercising power promotes justice. The normative underpinnings of social orders rest on the motives Lebow enumerates, but, as he repeatedly emphasizes, voluntarism is more effective than coercion, and legitimacy is a crucial resource for a durable normative order. Voluntary compliance with social norms minimizes the threat of aberrant or extreme behavior, thereby ensuring more durable social structures. It is in this light that Lebow reinterprets what lay behind Sparta's 'fear' of Athens. Unlike realist interpretations of Thucydides, Lebow contends that Spartan politicians feared "Athenian wealth and cultural primacy, and with it the growth of its empire, because this threatened their status as the leading city in Greece, something integral to Spartan identity" (548).

Lebow's fifth proposition, perhaps more widely accepted than he admits, is that context determines how effectively power can be translated into influence. More important is that he recognizes that context is difficult to interpret, especially because of the problem of accurately understanding an adversary's preferences, with the result that policies often elicit unanticipated responses. Non-realists will be gratified to see how he has thus integrated attitudes into influence equations and, in constructivist fashion, how he regards values and attitudes as suitable, if elusive, objects of empirical analysis. Lebow examines interactions for the impact they have on participants' identities, that is, whether they confirm or challenge those identities and in this way keeps his promise of integrating change into his proposed paradigm. Any challenge to identities simultaneously threatens participants' interests and autonomy, thereby triggering an angry response.

One of Lebow's highly provocative insights is that security and fear are less prevalent than realists believe. For instance, he interprets Imperial Germany's *Weltpolitik* and Japan's aggressive behavior in the decades before World War II as efforts of parvenu powers to achieve greater standing, and he argues that such diverse actions as Imperial Germany's effort to increase its naval power, Austria-Hungary's preoccupation with Serbia at the expense of defending its frontier with Russia, Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Iran's endeavor to become a nuclear power, and America's invasion of Iraq cannot be explained as efforts to increase security. This argument is very convincing and merits serious attention in the way we teach international relations.

Not surprisingly, Lebow, along with critical theorists and postmodernists, regards language to be as much of a source of power as material capabilities. Events as disparate as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's response to American willingness to negotiate with Iran based on 'justice and respect,' Germany's angry rejection of the "War Guilt" clause of the Versailles Treaty, and David Lloyd-George's speech during the 1911 Agadir crisis make more sense

when viewed from Lebow's perspective and the role of 'spirit' and the need for self-esteem than any theoretical alternative. The impact of 'spirit' and 'honor are evident in Lloyd-George's declaration that "if a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated where her interests were vitally affected as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure."[7]

A further proposition is that, notwithstanding the presence of anarchy in all cases, "there was a wide variation in the degree of order of the systems in question" (558). Lebow elaborates Wendt's claim that interaction determines how states relate to one another under anarchy by arguing that "reflection upon the consequences of one's own and others' behavior" determines whether there will be order under anarchy; order "is a function of the extent to which reason constrains and educates appetite and spirit" (559).[8] Society -- international and domestic -- plays a crucial role in this and is at the heart of Lebow's cultural theory. Durable order built on honor is only possible in a "thick" or "robust" society characterized by a clear hierarchy and held together by "affection, friendship and belonging" (184).

Especially where international society exists, as in fifth-century Greece and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, actors are likely to recognize that restraint is necessary to achieve goals. Such systems constitute rudimentary moral communities "in which members are obliged to treat one another according to shared norms, rules, and standards that need not be applied to 'outsiders.' Sameness provides the legitimacy for moral communities, which in turn legitimates the regulation of behavior by members of the community."[9] "By demarcating exclusion and inclusion on the basis of sameness and difference, moral communities draw boundaries of 'inside' and 'outside'[10] much as sovereignty, according to Lebow, made "the binary of 'us' and 'others' appear a natural, if not progressive, development" (10).

The persistence of order, then, is at least partly a function of identities, and these, according to Lebow (563) are a function of shared motives that are culturally constructed and that define 'appropriate' behavior. Motives and behavior can be altered in Lebow's

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[7] 21 July, 1911 Lloyd George's Mansion House Speech, http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Agadir_Crisis:_Lloyd_George%27s_Mansion_House_Speech .

[8] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46:2 (Spring 1992): 391-425. Lebow does not equate 'order' with 'peace.' Instead, where there is order warfare will be limited and regulated.

[9] Yale H. Ferguson and Richard W. Mansbach, *Remapping Global Politics: History's Revenge and Future Shock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 155.

[10] Ibid, 174

constructivist preference for agency. The central role of agency logically leads Lebow to emphasize change rather than continuity. Flux is to be expected where behavior alters structure, language alters meaning, and reason and reflection temper behavior. Key changes include shifting identities, new mixes of motives, and the content of motives and how they are pursued. In his emphasis on non-linear change, Lebow echoes Rosenau for whom the world is one of "flux and transition" for which theory should allow "for chaos."[11] Indeed, Lebow is one of those rare theorists whom Rosenau argues are temperamentally predisposed to search out change rather than seek continuity.[12]

In conclusion, Lebow is in good scholarly company in clearly differentiating values from the traditional realist concept of interest. This distinction, so crucial to *A Cultural Theory*, as well as Lebow's emphasis on shifting values and motives, echoes the seminal work of Albert Hirschmann and his focus on how private vices can become public virtues. Like Lebow, Hirschmann has a profoundly historical perspective and a critical focus on culture. Three decades ago Hirschmann asked: "How did commercial banking, and similar money-making pursuits become honorable at some point in the modern age after having stood condemned or despised as greed, love of lucre, and avarice for centuries past?"[13] Hirschmann's answer resembles Lebow's description of the shifts among 'appetite,' 'interest,' and 'spirit' when he reports that Dante and St. Thomas attacked "glory-seeking" as "both vain and sinful" and describes a transformation in culture and values during the Renaissance when "the striving for honor achieved the status as a dominant ideology as the influence of the Church receded and advocates of the aristocratic ideal were able to draw on the plentiful Greek and Roman texts celebrating the pursuit of glory." [14] However, Hirschmann continues, "All the heroic virtues were shown to be forms of mere self-preservation by Hobbes, of self-love by La Rochefoucauld, of vanity and of frantic escape from real self-knowledge by Pascal. The heroic passions were portrayed as demeaning by Racine after having been denounced as foolish, if not demented, by Cervantes…." [15] Yet, "less than a century later, the acquisitive drive and the activities connected with it, such as commerce, banking, and eventually industry, came to be widely hailed"[16]; "'appetite' had triumphed.

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[11] James N. Rosenau, "Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges: Toward a Postinternational Politics for the 1990s," in Ernst-Otto Czempiel and Rosenau, eds., *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges: Approaches to World Politics for the 1990s* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989), 3.

[12] James N. Rosenau, "NGOs and Fragmented Authority in Globalizing Space" in Yale H. Ferguson and R. J. Barry Jones, *Political Space: New Frontiers of Change and Governance in a Globalizing World* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 261-279.

[13] Albert O. Hirschmann, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 9.

[14] Ibid, 11.

[15] Ibid, 12.

[16] Ibid, 13.

Like Hirschmann, Lebow's work is anchored in and infused by historical analysis of ideas and values. Such analysis is imperative if, as Lebow correctly insists, a theory of international relations must capture the dynamic quality of human relations. Lebow follows Michael Mann who insists "that some of the most important characteristics of our world today can be appreciated more clearly by historical comparison. It is not that history repeats itself. Precisely the opposite: World history develops. Through historical comparison we can see that the most significant problems of our own time are novel. That is why they are difficult to solve: They are interstitial to institutions that deal effectively with the more traditional problems for which they were first set up."[17]

Change is precisely what many IR scholars, especially realists, are incapable of recognizing. As a result, they, along with others who ignore history, are, as Stanley Hoffmann contends, "tempted to exaggerate either continuity with the past that we know badly or the radical originality of the present, depending upon whether we are more struck by the features we deem permanent, or with those we do not believe existed before."[18] Lebow's work -- past and present -- –is a refreshing corrective to those who, as the neo-Weberian John Hobson explains, assume "either that history is repetitive such that nothing ever changes because of the timeless presence of anarchy, or that history takes on the form of repetitive and isomorphic 'great power/hegemonic' cycles, each phase is essentially identical, with the only difference being *which* great power is rising or declining–i.e., same play, different actors."[19] Kenneth Waltz exemplifies the first category and Robert Gilpin the second, and both are profoundly ahistorical, even anti-historical or as Hobson puts it "histrophobic."[20] "The texture of international politics," Waltz argues, "remains highly constant, patterns recur, and events repeat themselves endlessly." "The enduring anarchic of international politics," he then declares, "accounts for the striking sameness in the quality of international life through the millennia."[21] And Gilpin insists "that the fundamental nature of international relations has not changed over the millennia" and that it is a "recurring struggle for wealth and power among independent actors [read 'states'] in a state of anarchy."[22] Of the three structural properties Waltz identifies, only one -- the distribution

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[17] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. I, *A History of Social Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 32.

[18] Cited in K. J. Holsti, "The Problem of Change in International Relations History," in Yale H. Ferguson and R. J. Barry Jones, eds. *Political Space: Frontiers of Change and Governance in a Globalizing World* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 23.

[19] John M. Hobson, "What's at Stake in 'Bringing Historical Sociology *Back* into International Relations'? Transcending 'Chronofetishism' and 'Tempocentrismi in International Relations," in Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson, eds., *Historical Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9.

[20] Ibid, 5.

[21] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 66.

[22] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 7.

of capabilities -- is permitted to vary. Thus, as John Ruggie observes, Waltz's model lacks any mechanism for system transformation or "a dimension of change," and his "theory of 'society' contains only a reproductive logic, but no transformational logic."[23]

A Cultural Theory is the capstone of Lebow's unceasing commitment to restoring a dynamic and historical dimension of international relations and to reinstating values and motives to their proper place at the center of enquiry. It also is a milestone in the effort to transform constructivism into a genuinely theoretical enterprise.

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[23] John Gerard Ruggie, "Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis," in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 148, 152.

Review by Geoffrey Roberts, University College Cork

Fifty years ago in a famous critique of the grand social theory of his day, the radical American sociologist C. Wright Mills attacked the opaque and convoluted prose of one of its leading exponents, Talcott Parsons. To illustrate his argument Mills cited a typically incomprehensible passage of 350 words from Parsons' *The Social System* and then translated it into two sentences of understandable English: "People often share standards and expect one another to stick to them. In so far as they do, society may be orderly." Mills then translated the whole book - 555 pages of dense text - into just four short paragraphs of plain English.[1]

Parsons' aim in *The Social System* was to outline "a conceptual scheme for the analysis of the structure and processes of social systems" that would help explain the existence of order in domestic societies.[2] Richard Ned Lebow's goal is equally ambitious: a schema to explain political order (and disorder) in international relations, a schema that utilizes the concepts and insights of existing theories of International Relations (IR) but which highlights the persistent importance in human affairs of what ancient Greek philosophers called "spirit" – the individual and social pursuit of self-esteem.

Compared to Parsons, Lebow's writing is a model of clarity and accessibility and he provides neat, if not short, summaries of his arguments and conclusions at both the beginning and the end of *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*. But here is a Mills-type summary of the book's 570 pages:

> Human beings have three fundamental drives: "appetite" or the pursuit of material self-interest; "spirit" or the desire for self-esteem; and "reason" or the use of wisdom, logic and practical reasoning to maximize gains for appetite and spirit and to achieve moral goals. Together with the powerful emotion of "fear" these drives shape human affairs, including external relations between political communities.

> Associated with the motivating forces of appetite, spirit, reason and fear are different patterns of political behavior. Appetite-based political entities are characterized both by conflict arising from the parochial pursuit of material self-interest and by co-operation deriving from the existence of common material interests. In spirit-based worlds the pursuit of self-esteem, typically in the form of honor and standing, also leads to conflict but these conflicts may be constrained by the existence of common value systems and expected modes of behavior. When reason governs politics and constrains appetite and spirit there is a high degree of order and cooperation. When reason loses control order breaks down and there is conflict, sometimes catastrophic. The most

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[1] C. Wright Mills, "Grand Theory,"chapter 2 of his *The Sociological Imagination* (Pelican Books: London, 1959/1970)

[2] T. Parsons, *The Social System* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1951), vii.

> conflict-driven worlds are those in which fear is pervasive and perceived existential threats dominate political action.
>
> These patterns of behavior are not fixed but subject to historical variety and change. Elements of each motivation are universal but their interrelations and relative importance differ over time and space. However, the pursuit of self-esteem in different forms has been an endemic feature of the history of "international" relations for nearly 3,000 years.
>
> This historical generalization about the enduring role of spirit in human affairs forms the basis for a "cultural" theory of international relations that encompasses and transcends the extant theoretical paradigms of Realism, Liberalism, Marxism and Constructivism.

As a grand historical narrative Lebow's work has much to commend it. Simply breathtaking is the range of his historical knowledge and the diversity of his sources. The book begins with an account of politics in the ancient world and continues with an analysis of the dynastic struggles of Medieval Christendom. An examination of the rise of the state in early modern Europe is followed by an outline history of international relations in the nineteeth and twentieth centuries, including accounts of the origins of the First and Second World Wars and the Cold War. Lebow concludes his narrative with an interpretation of the reasons for and circumstances of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Just to contemplate writing history on such a grand scale would make most historians shiver. But where historians fear to tread political scientists like Lebow go boldly.

Lebow has a compelling narrative theme: the extent to which "spirit" has shaped the history of international relations since the time of the Greek city-states. Lebow derives his concept of spirit from the ancient Greeks, from Homer, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Broadly, the spirit refers to the human need for the self-esteem that stems from the recognition, respect, admiration and praise of other people. In international relations the drive for self-esteem typically takes the form of the pursuit of honor and standing.

"Honor" is a central concept in Lebow's analysis and he provides extensive descriptions and illustrations of what he means by it, but nowhere in the book (and I stand to be corrected by the author) does he give a succinct definition of the term. My best shot would be that honor is the recognition and respect that comes from having an accepted role and responsibilities and from being dutiful and behaving in the expected manner, even at personal cost to oneself. "Standing" is a more familiar and straightforward notion, referring in the IR context to prestige and status relative to that of other states or political communities.

Lebow illustrates his argument about the centrality of spirit in international relations via a number of historical case studies. He begins with the honor-based warrior societies of the ancient world. In these societies the pursuit of honor typically took the form of displays of bravery in battle and the willingness to risk life and limb to defend one's honor. Lebow

contends that the frequency of war between the Greek city-states was driven by the pursuit of honor rather than power or material gains. But the ties and shared values of these societies – not least in relation to concepts of honor - meant that while warfare was frequent it was also quite limited and controlled. However, there was a tension between the pursuit of honor and the pursuit of standing, and the more prestige and status were sought the more unrestrained warfare became and the more unlimited the goals of war. From being limited competitions driven by honor, warfare became unrestrained contestations in which the very survival of states and societies was at stake.

Lebow continues with this theme of the tension between the pursuit of honor and standing in his chapter on medieval Europe. In the Frankish kingdoms of the eighth and ninth century concepts of the honor were very weak and warfare was frequent and brutal. The pursuit of standing was co-equal with material self-interest and the consequence was constant conflict, upheaval and disorder, notwithstanding the efforts of Charlemagne (742-814) to impose some restraints and order. The Hundred Years War (1337-1453) between England and France came in the wake of a revival of honor in the form of chivalry. To an extent chivalry restrained the conduct of war by the two kingdoms. But the pursuit of honor also intensified their rivalry and prolonged the conflict, particularly when allied to strategic considerations. In ancient Greece, honor limited warfare because it could be satisfied by mutual respect and recognition of acts of bravery. In Medieval Europe the attainment of material gains were as important to the pursuit of honor as the rituals and constraints of chivalry.

After the Westphalian Peace of 1848, argues Lebow, "honor became an increasingly powerful motive, if not a way of life for most of the European elite."(p.262) War was the main means through which honor and standing were pursued but mindful of the devastating impact of the thirtyyears of warfare that preceded Westphalia, the ends and means of war were limited and conducted according to expected modes of behavior, including adherence to a growing body of international law. "Actors who seek recognition, standing and honor in the eyes of others ", writes Lebow, "are intensely competitive but tend to play by the rules of the game when they understand that this makes their goals attainable". (p,264) "Self-restraint and rule-oriented behavior" were also facilitated by the reduction of the number of major political units in Europe to about twenty, including the six great powers whose activities shaped the character of the international system. Like many others, Lebow sees warfare in early modern Europe as central to the growth of state bureaucracies and the expansion of the role of governments. In Charles Tilly's famous phrase "the state made war and war made the state".

According to Lebow the values and motivations associated with the quest for honor and standing in international relations persisted into the ninteenth and twentieth centuries. In the nineteenth19th century, great power warfare declined and competition in secondary arenas became more important, notably imperial rivalries and conflicts over the occupation of extra-European territories. As Lebow notes the pursuit of honor and standing in the form of colonialism was an enthusiasm shared by the middle and working classes as well as the aristocratic elite and the role of spirit in international relations was reinforced by the rise of democracy and mass politics.

Spirit is also central to Lebow's analysis of the disintegration of the nineteenth century international order and the outbreak of the First World War. During the July Crisis of 1914 reason lost control of the spirit. What appear to be strategic miscalculations during the crisis were, in fact, rationalizations for motives inspired by honor and standing. The result was that key actors indulged in behavior that involved risks disproportionate to the power and material interests actually at stake in the crisis. This propensity to excessive risk-taking was reinforced by nationalist politics and by public opinion in Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary and other states.

Spirit was also central to the outbreak of the Second World War. The main cause of that war was the German-Japanese-Italian challenge to the international status quo – motivated in large part by the perceived sleight to these states' honor and prestige represented by the post-First World War peace settlement.

Appetite (markets for the west, reparations for the Soviets), fear (perceived security threats) and spirit (the pursuit of prestige and competition for standing) all played an important role in the origins of the Cold War but as the conflict developed issues connected to self-esteem, including a sense of honor, became more significant. To illustrate this point Lebow refers to the American response to the communist takeover in China in 1949, to the Soviet A-bomb test of the same year and to the launch of Sputnik in 1957. On the Soviet side there was Khrushchev's outrage at the U-2 spyplane overflights and his subsequent risk-taking behavior in relation to the Cuban missile crisis, motivated by considerations of honor as well as strategic calculation.

Lebow concludes his historical narrative with an analysis of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, which he sees as an assertion by elements of the Bush administration of American honor and standing following victory in the Cold War and, more acutely, post the trauma of 9/11.

Lebow makes it clear throughout the book that he is not arguing that spirit is the only important factor shaping international relations; merely that the history and functioning of IR cannot be understood without taking it into account.

This synopsis of Lebow's narrative hardly does justice to the details, complexities and subtleties of his arguments and interpretations. It is these that make the book so valuable to historians rather than the prolonged analytical argument about the role of sprit in international relations. For historians the idea that self-esteem is an important human motivation is hardly a revelation; neither is the notion that the pursuit of recognition, honor and standing is associated with particular patterns of action and interaction. As Lebow's book shows, the main source of his ideas about the role of spirit in international relations is the work of historians. What he brings to the table is not original historical analysis or interpretation but a grand narrative synthesis of existing historiography.

Lebow's argument about spirit is convincing and he has performed a signal service in bringing its importance in international relations to the fore. But there is something

missing from his schema and hence from the story he is seeking to tell: there is a fourth human drive that has characterized and shaped international relations over the centuries - the drive to theorise or ideologise, the drive to impose sense, order and meaning on the world, whether in the form of religious belief, political ideology, micro- or meta-narrative. Lebow does touch directly on the ideological factor from time to time and it is implicit in much of his discussion of the world views that shaped the actions of states, but it does not feature centrally in his analysis.

This omission is surprising given the nature of his own theorizing enterprise and is most glaring in relation to the twentieth century when, it seems clear, ideology vied with appetite, spirit, reason and fear in precipitating the major events of world politics. One example concerns the Second World War. The key precipitating event of that conflict – the action that led to a global war as opposed to a limited European war - was Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union in June 1941. While Hitler's action was motivated by fear, material interests, strategic calculations as well as by considerations of honor and prestige, it was also shaped by the dictator's Nazi ideology, by his perception of the USSR as a judeobolshevik state and by his Social Darwinist view that racial war between states was both desirable and inevitable.[3]

Another example concerns Stalin and the outbreak of the Cold War. Recent work on the Soviet role in the origins of the Cold War supports Lebow's contentions about the role of spirit.[4] At the end of the Second World War the Soviets felt that, as they had played the major part in defeating Hitler, their victory deserved recognition and just material and symbolic rewards. When these were not forthcoming from the west the Soviets felt slighted and their self-esteem was undermined. They sought to defend their honor and standing from what they saw as western threats and attacks. At the same time the sources of the western attack on their self-esteem was understood and explained by the Soviets ideologically. The USSR's victory in the Second World War was a victory for the Soviet socialist system, and it was this challenge that western capitalists and imperialists responded to in the war's aftermath.

Its title notwithstanding, much of Lebow's book is devoted to historical analysis and interpretation and this is what historians will find most valuable and interesting. Lebow's avowed purpose, however, is to contribute to IR theory. The point of the prolonged discourse on the role of spirit is not to construct a meta-history of international relations but to effect a paradigm shift in IR theoretical discourse.

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[3] On the ideological framing of Hitler's decision to invade the USSR see C. Reynolds, *Modes of Imperialism* (Martin Robertson: Oxford, 1981), chap.4

[4] See, for example, G. Roberts, "Moscow's Cold War on the Periphery: Soviet Policy Towards Greece, Iran and Turkey, 1943-1948," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46 (January 2011).

Lebow is unlikely to achieve his theoretical ambitions. As Wright Mills pointed out "grand theory is drunk on syntax, blind to semantics."[5] What drives its discourse is the associating and disassociating of concepts and the endless elaboration of distinctions. Grand theorists are interested in abstractions, not concrete conceptions deriving from the real world. Lebow's "theory" is too specific to generate the abstract discourse required by a paradigm shift. Its prospects of generating a concrete research program in international relations are better but only historians are likely to be interested in detailed narrative and analysis of the role of spirit in world affairs.

Much of what passes for theoretical discussion in IR revolves around the positioning of theories in relation to each other. Lebow's book is no exception in this respect although his discussion is more interesting than the arid discourse of much IR theory.

For Lebow a "theory" is a conceptual framework for conducting research that generates propositions for empirical testing. He thinks there is a need for a new theory because the available paradigms do not take sufficient account of the role of spirit. Realism, Liberalism and Marxism focus on the role of appetite or material self-interest, while Constructivism lacks an adequate account of the individual and social psychology that constructs the identities of states.

Closest to Lebow's own views are the "Ontological Security" hypothesis and Prospect Theory. The Ontological Security hypothesis is that states have identities that they seek to protect even more than their strategic and material well-being. Prospect Theory argues that states are prepared to take greater risks to prevent losses than they are to make gains. Lebow's spin on these arguments concerns the role of honor, standing and self-esteem in constructing identity and defining the really important losses.

Lebow seeks to validate his theory by describing a series of "ideal-type" worlds based on each of the primary human drives and motivations – appetite, spirit, reason and fear. These ideal-types generate hypotheses and predictions about the behavior of states in real-world situations in accordance with the mixtures of these drives and motives and their importance relative to each other. That is the main role of his historical narrative: to bear out the validity of the ideal-types he has identified and hence his underlying theory about the primary importance of spirit.

The problem with this approach to theory construction is that the ideal-types are not the abstractions they purport to be but distilled descriptions of the real world which are then filled out when applied empirically. Not surprisingly the result is validation of the ideal-types because they themselves are derived from the same empirical observations and generalizations. Like most IR theory, Lebow's cultural theory is not so much an explanation of international relations as an analytical framework for its description.

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[5] Mills, "Grand Theory," 42.

This is not to say that ideal-types and other such devices are not useful heuristics for generating interesting concepts and distinctions. Lebow's book is a master-class in how grand theory can help generate narratives that capture and summarise big chunks of the human experience.[6] Lebow's approach is all the more valuable from the historian's point of view because of its non-deterministic framework of analysis and his emphasis on the role of human agency in generating and transforming patterns of state action. Not many historians will want to accompany Lebow on all his meandering through IR theory but they can learn a lot from his substantive historical interpretations and from the rigour and openness with which he tests his propositions and presents his findings.

A Cultural Theory of International Relations is not so much a general "theory" of international relations as a series of generalisations about human nature and the way this nature expresses itself in thought and action in different times, places and cultures. Lebow welds these generalisations into a compelling grand history of international relations. His narrative is both enhanced and distracted by his parallel journey through IR theory. His claim to have constructed a new paradigm for the study of international relations and his expectation that it will generate a new research programme is surely overblown. But his corrections to existing IR theories and their neglect of the role of spirit in human affairs have considerable merit, as does his insistence on testing his own propositions against empirical reality in all its density and complexity.

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[6] Another example of a highly effective grand narrative by a social scientist is Michael Mann's *The Sources of Social Power*, 2 vols (Cambridge University Press, 1986, 1993). See further G. Roberts, "History, Theory and the Narrative Turn in IR," *Review of International Studies* 32 (October 2006).

Response by Richard Ned Lebow, Dartmouth College

I would like to thank Professors Finney and Roberts for clearly and correctly presenting overviews of my argument, and Professor Mansbach for reading it so favorably against grand theories in international relations.

Prof. Mansbach is most generous in his praise of my book and my broader research program. He sympathizes with my efforts to root international relations in history and culture and free it from the shackles of narrow, parochial, largely American approaches that treat people as rational and interchangeable actors who are only interested in security and wealth, and live interchangeable and unchanging environments. Professor Finney, by contrast, lumps me together with those international relations scholars who are insensitive to, or ignore, cultural and historical nuances, all for the sake of generalizing across cases.

To some degree, their different responses reflect different disciplinary perspectives. Prof. Mansbach cites John Hobson on the ahistorical, even anti-historical, orientation of most international relations theorists. My work, he recognizes, is based on careful historical research, which often uses primary sources in multiple languages. It is theory-driven but attempts to reconstruct events from the bottom-up, not the top-down. Prof. Finney apparently eschews any generalizing schema, and for this reason confesses that "the book is not entirely to my taste."

Prof. Finney's criticisms suggest that he brings an inappropriate yardstick to the evaluation of my case studies. With regard to the origins of the two World Wars, he accuses me of not paying sufficient attention to the multiple causes of these conflicts or to the culturalist strand of interpretation in which he works. He laments that my "spirit-based account marginalizes many other factors."   Prof. Finney assumes – incorrectly – that my goal in case studies should be to present a comprehensive treatment of the origins of events. It is nothing of the kind. Both World Wars have generated large literatures about their underlying and immediate causes, and it would be presumptuous to think that case studies could possibility do justice to them. The purpose of a case study is to make a plausible argument for a particular interpretation, with the understanding that it is not the only explanation for the event in question, especially as most major international developments have multiple, reinforcing, explanations across levels of analysis. A case study is intended to document or evaluate a theoretical claim. The appropriate question for Prof. Finney to have asked is whether or not I achieve this goal. On the whole, he thinks I do, as he acknowledges the importance of the spirit for the several initiators of these wars.

Prof. Finney calls my account of Nazi Germany superficial as I say next to nothing about anti-Semitism or the Holocaust. He complains that my spirit-based account marginalizes Nazi ideology. He finds it "very jarring and distasteful, even ethically problematic" that the Holocaust is only addressed in a section on the changing character of warfare. As a Jewish child who was separated from his parents and hidden in a French village for part of the War, I can assure Prof. Finney that I am neither ignorant of nor insensitive to the political and human consequences of Shoah. I do not welcome his allegation that my argument is

"ethically problematic." My case study is not about Nazi racism, but about Hitler's rise to power, and in this context, it is fair to highlight what Hitler and the Nazis had in common with other forms of aggressive nationalism to help put their movement and success into a broader context.

Any event shares features in common with other events just as it is always in some ways idiosyncratic. I emphasize the general at the outset, but then turn to the idiosyncratic, as one of the distinguishing features of my approach is to use theory as the starting point for case-specific narratives. Good historians should be sympathetic to this approach, rather than cast aspersions against its author. As my brief is Hitler's rise to power, not his wartime policies, I look at anti-Semitism only in so far as it is relevant to that goal and to my analysis of the character of war. Some historians, whom I cite in the text, argue that anti-Semitism lost Hitler as many votes as it gained him. Moreover, as I know all too well, anti-Semitism was not uniquely German, but a feature of right-wing movements and governments all over Europe. For both reasons, it does not feature heavily in my account of the unique aspects of the German case. A spirit-based argument can nevertheless go a long way toward explaining anti-Semitism and its prevalence in Germany and among groups and classes elsewhere who felt threatened by change. We see the same phenomenon with respect to prejudices against immigrants in contemporary Europe and the United States.

Both World Wars are "hard" cases for my theory in the sense that regional and international societies were thin. Realists, moreover, have for a long-time maintained, and convinced many people, that one of the principal causes for World War I was insecurity. One of the best ways for a theory to demonstrate its mettle is to engage competitors on their home courts. Thus, I try to show the weaknesses and inadequacies of realist accounts for World War I and II and how a spirit-based explanation provides a more convincing explanation. The appropriate comparison group for my case studies is not multiple historical accounts of these events but other theoretical attempts to explain them.

Prof. Finney credits me with innovative arguments in these cases, but fails to grasp the original nature of my account of German imperialism. It is not a rehash of the social imperialism thesis as he suggests. Advocates of this thesis argue that imperialism was pursued by governments to reconcile the middle or working classes to aristocratic rule and privilege. This is an accurate description of Benjamin Disraeli's support for imperialism, but not of Bismarck's or his successors. Bismarck wooed the middle and working classes primarily with domestic nationalism and social programs. His successors were under pressure from an insecure middle class to pursue an imperial policy; they were neither the originators nor the principal impetus for overseas expansion.

More importantly, I place Germany and Austria in comparative perspective. I contend that modernization created three gradients, two of which ran from west to east in Europe. Britain had the largest middle class proportionately and an aristocracy most willing to accommodate it. The relative size of the middle class and aristocratic willingness to make peace with it declined as one moves east through France to central Europe and Russia. The third gradient had to do with the aristocratic lock on power, especially in the realm of foreign and military policy. This was greatest in the east, and diminished as one moved

west, especially to France and Britain. Austria-Hungary and Germany were just the opposite of Goldilocks' bowl of porridge. They were countries with sizeable and growing middle classes and aristocrats antagonistic to them and fearful of their power, privileges and above all, their social standing. They also had a relatively free hand in military and foreign policy and many of them incorrectly, and tragically, believed that war would be an effective means of shoring up their class.

Prof. Finney is also wrong in overdrawing the connection between my theory and that of ontological security or Terror Management Theory. I make perfectly clear in chapter three the similarities and differences between these approaches and my own. Both can be subsumed to my theory, but it is independent of and not derivative of either.

I wrote *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* for international relations scholars but hoped it would find a receptive audience among classicists, ancient and modern historians and psychologists. It has been well-received by scholars in most of these disciplines, and I continue to hope for a better reception among historians.

The third review, by Prof. Geoffrey Roberts, describes my book as ambitious and clearly written, does not dissent from my case interpretations, and is persuaded by my contention that international relations cannot be understood without taking the spirit into account. We have some minor differences and a larger one concerning the value of a theoretical enterprise of this kind.

In his short restatement of my argument, Prof. Roberts gets it almost right. He equates appetite with material interest, while I describe material interest as only one of several appetites, but certainly the one most relevant to international relations. Reason the motive must be distinguished from reason as an instrumentality. In Plato's understanding, which I adopt, the role of reason is to discover what leads to a happy life and to constrain and educate appetite and spirit alike to contribute with it toward that end. Instrumental reason – which is the only concept of reason moderns possess – is indeed the handmaiden of appetite and spirit. The Greeks distinguished between these two kinds of reason, and also practical wisdom, all noted in my discussion of motives in chapters 2 and 3. Prof. Roberts attributes "moral goals" to reason, which is a Christian, not Greek way of thinking about life.

Later in his description, Prof. Roberts writes that I describe the pursuit of self-esteem as an endemic feature of international relations for at least 3,000 years. This is true, but pursuit of material interests has been equally endemic. I privilege one motive over the other in different historical epochs, but contend that both are always present, as is fear to the degree that reason is not. This is why I create four ideal type worlds, representative of these motives, and show how each generates distinct logics of cooperation, conflict and risk-taking. Each motive is also associated with a different kind of institutional structure and all but fear with a different conception of justice. These logics, structures and conceptions of justice are really the core of my theory and the basis for my ideal types.

Prof. Roberts is scornful of ideal types, but ever since Max Weber, they have been used with telling effect by social scientists. Because they have been created on the basis of insights derived from the real world and then used to organize our understanding of these worlds does not make them tautological. This is because they are abstractions intended to highlight and exaggerate important dynamics while ignoring others. They are Kantian-style noumenal worlds based on gross over-simplifications intended to stimulate concept formation. I contend that realists and liberals mistake their ideal type worlds for real ones, and that one of the virtues of my theory is that I do not. I expect to see all motives in play and to interact in complex ways that cannot be captured by any theory rooted in a single motive. I use my ideal worlds as theoretical templates, not as depictions of actual politics.

Prof. Roberts is wrong in his assertion that I fail to define honor. I characterize it as "standing achieved in accordance with rules." Honor is not only relational but socially determined, and all honor-societies – or activities in which it is possible to gain honor – are rule-based. There must be some consensus about how honor is won, conferred and lost. As competition for honor is intense, there is always a temptation to cheat, and when enough actors do, the rules break down and the contest is transformed into one of standing. European international relations underwent such a transition in the decades prior to 1914.

Prof. Roberts misrepresents my argument about the rise of the territorial state. I do indeed see warfare as a central component, but unlike many other historians and IR scholars, understand these wars as driven more by honor than by security. In contrast to Charles Tilly, whose famous line about the war and the state Roberts quotes, I give equal emphasis to display. The building of palaces, theaters, gardens, and urban development and science more generally, became another form of costly competition, that at times exceeded military expenditure. Both forms of competition contributed to the rise of the state because required bureaucracies to extract taxes and manage the diverse activities that these moneys went to support.

Prof. Roberts writes that historians are the main source of ideas about the spirit and self-esteem. I do not think this is so, although I draw extensively on the work of historians in my case studies. The spirit and self-esteem were theorized by ancient Greek philosophers – although certainly evident in Thucydides as well – and find resonance in European thinkers like Montesquieu and Tocqueville. Political theory, not historiography, has been my inspiration.

Prof. Roberts would add another fundamental human drive: to theorize or ideologize. I would agree that all cultures – but not all people – develop concepts which are used to explain, predict and rationalize. I see no reason to privilege this activity out over many others in which our species regularly engages. Nor would I make it a fundamental motive as theories and ideologies can generally themselves be explained or reduced to other motives. This is demonstrably true for Hitler and Stalin, the examples Roberts cites.

Prof. Roberts is entitled to pass any judgment he likes on my theoretical ambitions. However, to dismiss my theory and others as "drunk on syntax, [and] blind to semantics," is to invoke a clever throw-away line rather than an argument.

I wrote my book primarily for international relations scholars but hoped that historians would also find it useful. Toward this end, I have tried hard to use primary sources, wherever possible, to familiarize myself with and engage the extant historical literature and to adhere to the rules of inference common to the historical profession. I hope in return that historians many historians will approach my book with the understanding that it is a work of theory, but one that may be useful to their enterprise.