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Morality and American Foreign Policy by Robert W. McElroy
Traditions and Values in Politics and Diplomacy by Kenneth W.
Thompson

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overestimating human error in ex post facto analysis can be dangerous.

Why do states withdraw their troops? The answer is based on decision makers' perceptions of changes in global politics, enemy composition, resource base, and home public support. In the end, new administrations had to come to power to replace the prevailing intervention strategy and get out. The message is that old leaders continue policy patterns, and only new ones may change the course.

This study rejects the notion that policymakers are universally unwise, motivated by grandeur or ideology, or that they have distinct human limitations. In fact, leaders are judged neither harshly nor favorably. Protractedness is not the result of foolishness of choice but murkiness of the situation. Cohen, in summarizing the progressive stage of interventions, argues that the middle game is hard to evaluate for success or effectiveness. Assessments are muddy, and a general fog prevails, limiting clear understanding.

In the end, conclude the editors, foreign military interventions are unpredictable, complex, destructive, and difficult to evaluate on a cost-benefit scale. Why? Because the cases chosen emphasize these factors, and the framework cannot screen out noise. On a broader note, intervention may continue to be characterized in this way because, as part of international relations conflict, political goals will continue to be advanced by military means, opportunities and incentives for intervention will exist, and international controls marking parameters of acceptable intervention will not be delineated.

An appraisal of this book must rest on the wisdom of case selections and on the theoretical framework used to extract information and build general patterns about protracted military intervention. The emergence of a new era in international relations characterized by intensified, violent nationalist movements, poses problems relating to the balance between self-determination and sovereignty and assessments of security and stability—in short, serious challenges for a potential intervenor. Are there guidelines for policymakers in this book? Do scholars have a better understanding of the process of intervention?

Many questions are still unanswered, yet the book is a catalyst for anyone who wishes to probe the matter further. In these cases, for example, if protracted interventions are costly and less than successful, we might want to know more about the effects of policy planning. Were the intervention strategies essentially random or clearly planned? Were they outlined in both short- and long-term frameworks? Did the introduction of military troops to solve the conflict reconfirm or invalidate policymaker beliefs about force effectiveness? One acquires no real perspective on these points, in spite of the historical detail and conscious comparative analysis presented. The study lacks criteria to measure intervention policy success and failure. What does each entail? What degrees of difference exist? What happens once intervening states begin to realize that they may not achieve their objectives? This choice is essentially one of flight or fight; but since military intervention in this project is conceived as a process composed of small steps, the overarching strategy is hard to unveil. Perhaps including some short, successful interventions as case studies might have sharpened the causal logic developed to identify involvement and disengagement decisions. Al-

ternative design structures are often recommended over a chosen research strategy, but the issue here is whether substantial alteration in conclusions might have been the result. This is hard to say.

The status of intervention as a key concept to understand contemporary world politics is rising. As a tool of influence, it represents overt and covert involvement by bigger states into the economic, social, and political processes of weaker countries. It is a bulwark of power politics. With the end of the Cold War and new domains of conflict eruption, sovereignty and security demands are unlikely to disappear from the international scene. Today, humanitarian and collective intervention are the frequently debated issues in official international circles; but military force is still a significant part of the action. In essence, this book is timely for its emphasis on military force and contributes to our knowledge about dangers behind protracted conflict involvement. This should be useful in the current world environment of multiple conflicts and attendant, ample temptations for intervention.

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Morality and American Foreign Policy. By Robert W. McElroy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. 194p. \$24.95.

Traditions and Values in Politics and Diplomacy: Theory and Practice. By Kenneth W. Thompson. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992. 353p. \$37.50 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

Though the contrasts between Robert W. McElroy's *Morality and American Foreign Policy* and Kenneth W. Thompson's *Traditions and Values in Politics and Diplomacy* are both real and apparent, that the contrasts between these two readable and knowledgeable books are not far greater than they are illustrates much of the difficulty with the state of theory in the field of international relations.

McElroy's work is a dissertational effort to clarify the gap between the realist and "internationalist" paradigms in international relations as well as build a "pathway" between them. It is a laudable first book. Decrying the undoubtedly still great distance between ethics (or philosophy generally) and the study of international affairs, McElroy suggests properly if not originally that the consideration of morality is inexorably bound to the consideration if not the reality of international progress. There is more than a hint of purposiveness here, although unfortunately the philosophical clarion to such purposiveness is Immanuel Kant whose notions of the universalization of international norms and a kind of golden rule of international behavior reflect all too vividly the usual Kantian requirement of intersubjectivity. It is no surprise, either within Kant or McElroy, that substantive unanimity imports a methodology of interstate contractuality and that the search for a peaceful and "regular pattern of interactions," therefore, still lacks a convincing pathway. The dialectic, drawn from Kant's "law of states" and Kant's "cosmopolitan law" that would protect citizens within states, is categorically obedient to the classificatory in ways that stifle progress along intellectual and real world pathways.

How, then, to break out? As McElroy far less ashamedly has morality a part of foreign affairs than Thomp-

son, McElroy places responsibility upon the individual actor. It is the "moral politician" (Kant again) who must triumph over the "political moralist," the latter given to expediency and the former given to such departures from traditional realism as a) Herbert Hoover's 1921 Russian relief effort, b) Richard Nixon's destruction of America's chemical and biological weapons, and c) Jimmy Carter's Panama Canal Treaty. By contrast, there is Dresden, although here McElroy is too ready to write of circumstances, the slowing of the Eastward infantry drive in 1944, etc., than he is of the theoretical and actual differences between moral and amoral choices.

In short, the weakness of McElroy's first book is not in its scholarship or its writing. It is in its inability to yet define a theory that would suggest how to propel the moral norm towards intellectual and international progress. Descriptiveness too often subverts prescriptiveness. McElroy settles for explanations of why the clarity of the norm—and why better rates of moral compliance occur when national security is less involved—predict the moral choice. There is a link between the moral choice and the demands of someone's "real" world to be sure, but it is not only involved with, but dependent upon, the underlying linkage of international relations theory with both reality and the deepest intellectual understandings of how both morality and reality are known.

With Thompson, the gap between morality and reality is wider still. Thompson's ambivalence about the place of morality in international affairs being obvious from the start. Substantively, this is a rich book, a bevy of seedbeds for moral discourse being planted in discussions of nuclear security, disarmament, human rights, and the conflicts over values that marked the decisions of Lincoln, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon. There are attempts to sew together the morality versus reality threads that weave their way through the book in chapters on history as end point or beginning, national decline, and the openness of history when seen from any contemporary perspective.

But Thompson's problem with perspectives, briefly stated, is his lack of systematic differentiation. His discussions of intellectual contrasts fail to deal with the epistemological, that is the "forms of knowledge," differentiations that underlie all ethical positions. Thompson's oft written-of education, the University of Chicago's morally skeptical Morgenthau sharing top billing with the ethical admonitions of Neibuhr, apparently did not lead Thompson to an understanding of the role of epistemology in theory. Thompson properly decries the lack of continuity among "the seemingly endless repetition of intellectual and philosophical debates." But even his worthy developmental portrayal of the movement from international law, through political, to institutional approaches within international relations studies, does not bind the development to commensurable contrasts between methodological and epistemological approaches. As a result, the thoughtful portrayal of international realism never discovers the roots of the almost static analysis of qualitatively similar variables of human nature, state-to-state relationships, undifferentiated kinds of power, and the like. As a further result, the less thoughtful but still credible depiction of idealism finds the principle intellectual tension in international affairs to lie within the dualism of each human nature, not the differentiation between and among various human natures. Even the description of Lincoln's Sanitary

Fair speech contrast between a man's living off the "product of his labor" or "the product of other men's labors" would leave one to think the tension's options equally weighted. Did Lincoln think that? Does Thompson?

What is so frustrating is that Thompson, at least at times, comes so close to seeing things, as they must be seen if theoretical advancement is to occur, from the intellectual top. His marvelous description of the maintenance of tensions within the foreign policy of Richard Nixon, the best segment of the book, credits Nixon's own deep understanding of that tension for the success of the China strategy and other Nixon triumphs. But in Thompson's general discussion of history, his proper scoring of Fukuyama's wrongness about Hegel is dulled by his own wrongness about Hegel. Thompson's earlier attack on Hegel's drive for the imposition of the state on a population fails to recognize the primacy of the ethical state within Hegel's prescription. Yes, there is a deterministic rationality to Hegel, but it is an ascending, differentiated rationality that Hegel strives for, and Hegel deals with it through a dialectic of tension that is epistemologically distinguishable from the dialectic of Kant.

Not surprisingly, Hegel is suspicious of liberalism, more so than Kant, but that squares with Hegel's dialectic dealings with ever more differentiated cognitive variables. Kant's dialectic steadfastly held to the classificatory imperative. Kant's dialectic is a dutiful first cousin to the Categorical Imperative that was at the heart of all of Kant's thinking and, not surprisingly, therefore, Kant saw perpetual peace as growing out of the contractual form that McElroy identified. Hegel's peace is the product of the engrossment of the ever more complex intellectual and ultimately real world variables that somehow reconcile today's reality and tomorrow's thrust of the historical Idea.

Perhaps the greatest dialectic, for international relations theory as well as for the real world of international relations, is the never ending conflict of Kant-like and Hegel-like dialectics themselves. First and foremost, both German idealists dealt with the core epistemological issues of the nature of knowledge, as well as the limits to knowledge. It is on their epistemological writings, not the substantive writings on politics or peace, that international relations theory should be built. Kant did not believe in the synthetic, differentiated cognition beyond the most restrictive notions of mathematics, natural science, and personal morality. As a result, the human purposiveness of his vision of international affairs, like his vision of the improvement of knowledge, was overshadowed by the hand of Providence. Hegel's belief in the human capacity to understand ever more differentiated, or synthetic, qualities of knowledge, along with his belief in the expansion of the limits of knowledge and morality, was the core of his optimism. That Kant would reject the coming into objective consciousness of an ever-improving moral vision, and that Hegel would depict the dialectic as a movement of consciousness towards just such a vision are both understandable and commensurable. That proponents of the realist and the idealist visions of international relations would differ over the cognitive reconcilability of the two very different cognitive entities of reality and hope is also understandable and commensurable. Indeed, it is the essence of the contrast between the realist and the idealist perspectives.

It is this contrast, I would hope, that the later books of McElroy, and even Thompson, would speak to. If they do, the progress of understanding in international relations will be as assured as the contrast between the traumas of the present world and the peacefulness of the world's future.

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Democracy and Foreign Policy: The Fallacy of Political Realism. By Miroslav Nincic. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992. 200p. \$37.50.

In this book, Miroslav Nincic examines, explores, and refutes a notion promulgated by such proponents of classical "realism" as Hans J. Morgenthau and George F. Kennan. The notion holds, in Nincic's words, that "democratic foreign policy suffers from having to accommodate the sentiments of the public and its representatives, sentiments that are grounded in a combination of factual ignorance and emotive drives that clash with the tenets by which international affairs are best managed" (p. 152).

In a nicely-organized and fluidly-written argument, Nincic focuses on the American experience to examine the impact of public opinion, of Congressional consideration, and of electoral politics on the development and conduct of foreign policy. He argues that realist arguments essentially suggest three rules: ideals should not be confused with interests, interests and power should be "brought into proper balance," and "the actual conduct of foreign affairs should proceed in a measured, consistent fashion" (pp. 22-23). He concludes that, in general, democracy does quite well by these (rather mushy) criteria.

Public opinion—"the mentality of the masses"—is really quite reasonable and coherent, he argues. While the average American may not be terribly well-informed about foreign policy, the public is not "particularly disorganized, unstable, or extreme regarding foreign affairs" (p. 45). In general, it appears to be "moderate" and pragmatic, and its "normative goals are actually quite close to the foreign policy preferences of the leadership groups from which policy makers are generally drawn" (p. 52).

He reaches a similar conclusion about Congress. Although he acknowledges that "instances of misguided comportment by the nation's legislators do exist," he concludes that "examples of considerable Congressional wisdom can also be found" (p. 64). And while conceding that electoral politics can sometimes adversely affect the conduct of foreign policy, he argues that there are also positive benefits in elections as they enhance the exchange of ideas and hold political leaders accountable for foreign policy failures (p. 119).

He also concludes that there has often been a tendency in American foreign policy for leaders to exaggerate, for domestic political reasons, the degree to which there is an outside threat. In this, he may be overstating the case somewhat. If the threat was indeed exaggerated, it seems to me that political leaders largely believed their own exaggerations.

In the final chapter, Nincic wades into the decades-long debate—for which the classic realists bear eternal responsibility—about what is, after all, the "national interest." As he demonstrates once again, the more one

struggles with this concept, the more one becomes enmeshed in muddled vapidities and "limp tautologies" (p. 158).

He concedes that the concept might have some objective validity if it is very narrowly defined as a quest for physical survival, economic health, and the continuance of the society's basic normative order (p. 161). But even that concession is questionable. The Soviet Union appears recently to have peacefully decided that its national interest lay in its own physical disintegration and in a radical restructuring of its basic normative order. Similarly, many leaders, such as the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, would consider the economic health of their country to be of only very secondary importance. Nincic concludes that, in general, "a national interest emerges only from an authentically democratic aggregation of domestic preferences" (p. 168). That may be about the best way to deal with the issue (apart from abandoning it entirely), though it is not clear why the aggregation has necessarily to be "democratic."

With his intentional focus on the American case, Nincic specifically eschews a comparative perspective (p. 24). In some important respects, however, his argument might have been strengthened with a bit of comparison. That is, while he argues convincingly that American foreign policy has shown a fair amount of moderation, coherence, and wisdom, his case might be stronger if that experience were juxtaposed with the alternative.

While democratic governments have made their share of foreign policy blunders, these, it might well be argued, pale in comparison to the foreign policy disasters non-democratic countries have experienced under such leaders as Hitler, Mussolini, Kim Il-Sung, Khomeini, Nasser, and Saddam Hussein. And one might also look at the quality of the people democracies have generally put forward to run their foreign policy, comparing them to the similar products of non-democratic societies. The overall record for non-democracies, after all, is fairly abysmal. Rebecca West may exaggerate somewhat when she observes in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941) that in 645 years of rule the Hapsburg family produced "no genius, only two rulers of ability . . . countless dullards, and not a few imbeciles and lunatics," but she is not that far off the mark. In such a comparison, it would seem, democracies do rather well. And a consideration of this sort might have served to enhance Nincic's basic argument.

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From Confrontation to Cooperation: Resolving Ethnic and Regional Conflict. By Jay Rothman. Newbury Park: Sage, 1992. 231p. \$51.00 cloth, \$24.50 paper.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s several scholars of international relations developed conflict management training workshops, the purpose of which was to support a process towards peace in the context of intractable conflicts. John Burton, Leonard Doob, and Herbert Kelman, among others, conducted "controlled communication" or problem solving workshops with high-level representatives of groups involved in protracted communal disputes. John Rothman's book presents an extension of those early action/research projects. Applying principles found in the conflict analysis and conflict