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G. John Ikenberry, ed. *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 308 pp. \$32.99 (paper), ISBN 978-1-107-42106-6; \$85.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-107-07274-9.

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The ninth of Walter Benjamin's 1940 theses "On the Concept of History" consists of the following controversial observation about Paul Klee's drawing *Angelus Novus* (1920): "A Klee painting named *Angelus Novus* shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress."^[1]

Benjamin's view of the angel of history is not unlike how realist international relations (IR) theorists have long viewed their liberal colleagues: despite the tragedy of history, they are led by their belief in progress to make utopian prognostications about the future. And, for much of history, realists could point out to the recurrence of the deadliest of man-made tragedies—hegemonic war—as evidence of the folly entailed by a liberal view of world politics. But since 1945, time seems to be on the side of liberalism: we are living through a long period without a hegemonic war.

Does this mean that we have achieved progress in world politics? Is the realists' pessimistic view of the *Angelus Novus* no longer warranted? Four decades after Benjamin wrote his theses, Robert Gilpin set out in *War and Change in World Politics* (1981) to investigate these same questions. What are the sources of change in world order, and what is the role of war—hegemonic war—in producing change? Perhaps unsurprisingly in light of Gilpin's deep-seated political realism, while weaving his arguments about change, he ends up saying much about

continuity and the cyclical nature of world order. For him, understanding the sources of change in world order requires us to appreciate that the fundamental features of international politics have *not* changed over time.^[2] World order changes because great powers rise and fall. These power transitions, Gilpin argues, recur because of the cyclical diffusion of technology and production, which generates differential rates of economic growth among states, altering the distribution of material capabilities. When new great powers emerge, they throw the existing international order off balance: its distribution of roles and status no longer reflects the underlying balance of power and interests. Rising states will therefore attempt to change the existing order, often by force, starting a hegemonic war from which a new order that better reflects the balance of power will emerge. This is the gist of a Gilpinian view of world politics: the recurring processes of innovation and diffusion lead to changes in the balance of power, which produce recurring hegemonic wars, which in turn lead to changes in world order. Much change, little progress. From this vantage point, contemporary world politics is not fundamentally different from Athens-Sparta relations in the fifth century BCE. Both are shaped by the "recurring struggle for wealth and power among independent actors in a state of anarchy," which, for Gilpin, is the core enduring feature of world politics.^[3]

Taking *War and Change in World Politics* as its point of departure, G. John Ikenberry's edited volume *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* asks how Gilpin's arguments have stood the test of time. Much has changed in world politics—and IR scholarship—during the three-and-a-half decades since Gilpin wrote his *opus magnum*. While he worked in the shadow of expected US decline vis-à-vis its old rival, the Soviet Union, the present volume was produced in the shadow of potential US decline vis-à-vis its new rival, China. While Gilpin wrote soon after the meteoric impact of Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979), which temporarily gave structural neorealism a quasi-hegemonic place in IR theory,

the present volume was written by a set of authors that displays the wide theoretical diversity present in today's study of world politics.

Like Gilpin's book, *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* is organized around three themes, or problems. The first part of the book covers the sources of international order, analyzing "the various ways that leading states project power and ideas into the global system and establish their rule over the system" (p. 3). In three essays, Charles A. Kupchan, David A. Lake, and Ikenberry look at, respectively, the strategies that hegemons use to build international order, the role of authority in producing order, and the ways in which liberalism makes the contemporary US-led global order more stable. The second part of the book focuses on power transitions and how they create opportunities for the (often violent) transformation of international order. In another set of three essays, William C. Wohlforth, Jonathan Kirshner, and Michael Mastanduno look at, respectively, the roots of hegemonic decline, the causes of hegemonic overexpansion, and the difficulties faced by the US-led order as a result of China's rise. Finally, the third part of the book centers on the broader theme of foundational systemic change, analyzing "the great world historical shifts in the basic units and structures of global order" (p. 3). In the last trio of essays, Daniel Deudney, Barry Buzan, and John A. Hall look at the consequences for world order of, respectively, the nuclear revolution, the rise of modern capitalism during the long nineteenth century, and the rise of the nation-state.

Two things should be clear from the list of names above: this is a star-studded ensemble cast and one that guarantees a broad plurality of views. Together, these two features make *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* much more than a scholarly reflection on Gilpin's landmark work. It is one of the best collections of essays for understanding contemporary world order—and the state of scholarship on this fundamental issue.

After engaging the essays in the book, I offer some brief general critical reflections and discuss topics on which further research is needed. I conclude by discussing the lessons the book offers for US-China relations.

Arguably the most important question in world politics—and the most basic question Gilpin attempted to answer—is, what are the sources of international order? The first part of *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* engages this question, exploring "variations in types of international orders and the strategies hegemonic states employ to rule these orders." In his introduction to the

volume, Ikenberry lists the questions addressed by these essays: "If all orders are a mix of coercion and consent, what choices and circumstances lead hegemonic states to create one mix or another mix? How do [global hierarchical orders built around imperial or liberal logics] differ and what explains why one or the other emerges within a particular historical era? How do we compare and evaluate the performance of international orders?... What does it mean when we say that leading states 'run' or 'rule' an international order? If the United States has pursued a 'liberal strategy' of order building and governance, what sort of strategy of governance might China pursue?" (p. 7).

The three authors in this section lay out the dimensions in which order may vary (Kupchan), the role of authority in producing order (Lake), and the reasons for the resilience of the US-led liberal international order (Ikenberry). Drawing on a previous article and departing from Gilpin's materialist understanding of hegemony, Kupchan argues that hegemonic systems "have a distinctive normative character" because "order emerges not just from hierarchy, but also from packages of ideas and rules that inform the nature of a given order and govern social relations within that order" (p. 20).^[4] His essay provides a very useful analysis of the dimensions on which these "packages of ordering ideas and rules" may vary (p. 8). Four dimensions—what Kupchan calls "four main logics of order" (p. 27)—work together to produce each particular hegemonic system: geopolitical, socio-economic, cultural, and commercial. In each of these dimensions, a hegemonic power may implement different preferences, generating a variety of patterns of rule. After laying out the logics of rule implemented by three past hegemonic powers—the Ottomans, imperial China, and Great Britain—Kupchan analyzes the US-led order, which he describes as having a geopolitical logic that varies from region to region, an egalitarian socioeconomic logic, a liberal inclusive cultural logic, and a free-market capitalist commercial logic. Using this framework, Kupchan argues that the "next world will thus be the first in which diverse orders intensely and continuously interact with each other in the absence of Western hegemony," making global governance "more vital—but also more elusive" (p. 21).

Writing from a similarly liberal viewpoint, Lake asks why it is that most states comply with "biased international orders" without having to be coerced (p. 63). For him, the key to this stable sort of hegemonic order is authority, which legitimizes the rule of a dominant state over subordinate states. Lake argues that liberal powers are better at acquiring authority because

of their own domestic constitutional limits on abuses of power, which make them more trustworthy international rulers. This explains the stability of the liberal international order that has prevailed in the postwar era. Finally, Lake argues that when hegemonic powers acquire authority over others—as the United States, in his view, has—international order is sustainable because other states become vested in it over time. From these arguments, Lake concludes that there is a good chance that the US-led liberal order will be robust to the rise of new powers.[5]

Concluding this first part of the book, Ikenberry's essay puts forth two arguments. First, he argues that a durable international order requires three features: a configuration of power that supports it, legitimate rule and institutions, and the ability to solve problems and provide services to states.[6] Second, he argues that at a deeper level the US-led liberal order is the product of two “unfolding logics of order building” (p. 9): “One is associated with the Westphalian state system, where great powers over the centuries have been building on and developing rules, institutions, and practices for managing the state system and great-power relations. The other is associated with the liberal ascendancy, where liberal democratic states have risen up in power and influence and engaged in repeated efforts to build international order” (p. 91). From Ikenberry's perspective, these two macro-historical processes work well together because “the liberal project has entailed a commitment to international order that is open and at least loosely rule-based” (p. 93). The attempt to reconcile Westphalian rules with the liberal internationalist project is not without risks, however. For Ikenberry, the greatest source of tension in today's international order is between the Westphalian emphasis on sovereignty and the liberal emphasis on human rights.

Overall, the three essays hang together quite well, providing a good synthesis of liberal accounts of US hegemony. The postwar international order has been stable because it is based on a preponderance of US power along with a US-backed normative package that gives the United States the authority needed for stable hegemony, by including US security provision, the rule of law, a prominent role for rights and institutions, an egalitarian social logic, and a market-based international economy that enables other states to amass wealth.

From my perspective, these arguments prove quite useful in understanding the “how” of international politics. Kupchan, Lake, and Ikenberry have much insight to provide on how the United States rules the world. The particular norms, rules, and institutions the United States

has spearheaded are no doubt a crucial component of postwar international politics. Without them, we would be unable to understand the flavor of international interaction, its sociological dimension. They are, in fact, one of the key distinctive features of postwar politics and today constitute the fabric of day-to-day interstate relations.

It is less clear to me, however, that these essays can explain the “why” of postwar world order. Can the norms, rules, and institutions of the US-led account for why others accede to US hegemony? Would other states rebel against US leadership in the absence of the particular “package of ordering ideas and rules” that comes with American hegemony? Are these norms, rules, and institutions—rather than the sheer magnitude of the US advantage in conventional military power or the presence of nuclear weapons—the reason peace has prevailed among the major powers?

To put the problem in more theoretical terms, how do we distinguish between rule and domination? How do we distinguish between legitimacy and coercion? The authors in this volume do not engage these deeper questions—at least not here—and so their arguments on the role of norms and institutions in producing legitimate and authoritative rule are hard to evaluate empirically. There is little doubt that US hegemonic power has mostly met with acquiescence; that most other states, including most major powers accommodate US interests. But can we say for certain that this lack of balancing against US power preponderance is caused by the character of US leadership rather than more realist variables, such as the balance of power, on which Gilpin would have drawn to craft an explanation? Why are norms necessary to account for peace when US power preponderance would make it very difficult for any state or plausible coalition of states to match US capabilities in the near future; and when the nuclear revolution allows major powers to enjoy abundant security despite US hegemony? These are tough questions, and one could not expect the authors of these essays to answer them conclusively in such brief format, but these were the questions Gilpin would no doubt ask, so it would have been useful to see a discussion of the empirical evidence that allows liberal authors to be so confident in attributing “normative packages,” rather than more Gilpinian configurations of powers, the key role in shaping US hegemony.

The second part of *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* deals with power transitions and their impact on international order. Power shifts are the recurring central event in Gilpin's view of world politics. Caused by

differential rates of economic growth, these power shifts have important consequences. They often cause hegemonic wars, which in turn lead to profound changes in world order. The three essays in this section analyze the causes of hegemonic decline (Wohlforth), the reasons why rising powers tend to become overextended and declining hegemons have a hard time retrenching (Kirshner), and the challenges facing the existing US-China grand bargain in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis (Mastanduno).

Wohlforth's essay examines Gilpin's arguments about the inevitability of hegemonic decline, concluding that none of them foreordain US decline. In *War and Change in World Politics*, Gilpin identifies three processes that cause hegemonic decline. First, the costs of the hegemonic grand strategy will cause its "rate of growth to slow more markedly than a non-hegemonic state" (p. 116). The second process Gilpin identifies is that as the costs of hegemony rises, free-riding by other states will increase, creating a problem for the hegemon. Wohlforth finds no evidence in support of either of these claims. The third process is "the diffusion of the techniques of power [and] the capacity of late developing rising states to leapfrog stages of development by adopting the power-generating practices and techniques of the early developing dominant state" (p. 120). Here, Wohlforth counters that hegemons such as the United States can implement anti-diffusion policies.^[7] Overall, these findings lead Wohlforth to argue that hegemonic decline is not foreordained and that hegemons can typically "use their position to slow decline and mitigate its effects" (p. 111).

In a more theoretically self-conscious essay, Kirshner recasts two of Gilpin's assumptions about power transitions in a classical realist mold. This allows Kirshner to eschew his two long-time *bête noires*—rationalism and structural neorealism—on which Gilpin is ambivalent. The first of these assumptions is that a rising state will stop seeking to change the international system once the marginal cost of doing is greater than the marginal benefit. Seen in a classical realist light, which emphasizes uncertainty and the psychological biases of leaders, reality seems to Kirshner to point in the opposite direction: "great, rising powers near their apogee are almost certain to suffer from a hubris cultivated by a long string of successes" (p. 152). In his view, therefore, the likely outcome is hegemonic over-reach. The second assumption made by Gilpin that Kirshner targets is that "once an equilibrium between the costs and benefits of further change and expansion is reached, the tendency is for the economic costs of maintaining the status quo to rise faster

than the economic capacity to support the status quo" (p. 152). To the contrary, Kirshner argues, hegemons often fail to anticipate decline and, consequently, fail to adapt to their downward trajectory—in other words, they fail to retrench. The reasons for this had been identified by Gilpin: retrenchment poses political difficulties, both because different leaders in the declining state will perceive the situation differently and because of "the hubris/fear paradox," according to which concessions will only lead to additional demands by a rising state (p. 157). Taken together, the two amendments to Gilpin's theory that Kirshner proposes lead to a potentially even more conflictual view of world politics, with hubristic rising powers extending beyond reason while stubborn declining powers resist retrenchment.

Concluding this part of the book, Mastanduno focuses on the "grand bargains" that underpin any hegemonic order, particularly those that define the postwar US-led order. In his view, the grand bargains the United States cut with Germany and Japan after World War II are the backbone of the postwar global order. Today those grand bargains are insufficient to provide a stable world order, however. Unlike Germany and Japan, which became protégés of the United States in the aftermath of World War II, China is a security rival. So far, the United States and China have managed to maintain a mutually beneficial grand bargain. China benefits from an international environment conducive to economic growth. The United States benefits from the more benign foreign policy intentions of an integrated China. But this existing grand bargain with the United States is unstable. The post-2008 financial crisis has undermined the United States as the engine of global economic growth, "forcing both China and the United States to confront an uncertain process of adjustment" (p. 164). China is now moving from an economic model of export-led growth to one of growth driven by domestic consumption. As a result, the high level of interdependence between the United States and China that has characterized the first decades of the post-Cold War era is unlikely to be sustainable, with serious consequences for world order.

Unlike the essays in the first part of the book, these three essays are not easy to reconcile. (Not that there is anything wrong with that.) Wohlforth holds a sanguine view of the prospects of continued US hegemony. In contrast, Kirshner invites us to reflect on whether such an optimistic view may be colored by unwarranted hubris about the trajectory of US power, a problem that could be compounded by hubristic overreaching on the part of a rising China. Mastanduno contributes to this more pessimistic view by accentuating the ways in which US-

China relations may unravel, generating a great opportunity for the rebuilding of world order—an opportunity that is fraught with the dangers inherent in any power transition.

These essays could be pushed further by asking what would be the consequences of the hubristic US resistance to retrenchment, combined with an equally hubristic Chinese overreaching foreign policy, to which Kirshner opens the door. What are the broader problems we can expect from the unraveling of US-China relations, either due to these forces or to the post-2008 crisis dynamics on which Mastanduno focuses? None of the authors in this section—or, for that matter, in the whole volume—predicts a hegemonic war between the United States and China. But many of them describe factors that may lead to increased tensions. Given both the importance of this question and the fact that it percolates throughout the book, I discuss it at greater length below.

The third and final section of *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* looks at the broader theme in Gilpin's work: macro-historical shifts in the type of basic unit and the organizing logic of the international system. As Ikenberry puts it in his introduction: "Over the millennia, the global system has been made up of different sorts of political units—city-states, empires, universal religious groupings. In the modern era, the Westphalian state system has been the dominant organizational form of world politics. What are the causes of these great changes in the basic units of the system? In particular, what accounts for the rise of the state system—as it both emerged as a tool of empire and a deep organizational change to it? How have states competed with alternative organizing logics and dealt with the rise of modernity and functional imperatives of world politics that alter and transform states and the states system?" (p. 11).

The three essays in this part of the book focus on the consequences of three of the most important transformations of the modern era: the nuclear revolution (Deudney), the rise of modern industrial capitalism (Buzan), and the diffusion of the nation-state as the primary form of political organization (Hall). Starting with the consequences of the nuclear revolution, Deudney argues that these have deeply transformed the international system. First of all, nuclear weapons have radically changed what power—particularly relative conventional military power—can achieve in world politics, with "far reaching and cross-cutting implications for hegemonic political orders that rest on concentrations of power and upon the potential influences of different kinds of power" (p. 197).

Furthermore, nuclear weapons, by deterring war, "decrease the likelihood of several well-known syndromes of hegemonic power concentrations (encroachment and counterbalancing, overextension, and hegemonic transitions)" (p. 197).[8] At the same time, nuclear proliferation and the specter of nuclear terrorism also have an impact on US hegemony in a negative way, making failures of deterrence much more likely than they were during the Cold War. Overall, Deudney finds that nuclear weapons bring with them the possibility of an enduring liberal US-led order, as rising economic powers will be less tempted to convert their own economic power into military capabilities.[9] Overall, Deudney concludes, "hegemony is made much easier and durable by nuclear weapons" (p. 232).

Criticizing Gilpin for his focus on material factors, Buzan argues that when one accounts properly for the effects of the rise of modern capitalism during the long nineteenth century (1776-1914), the evolutionary—rather than cyclical—logic of world order becomes clear. Capitalism and industrial modernization have altered the ability of states and societies to generate wealth, affecting the production of security and, with it, the patterns of great-power rise and fall. Furthermore, capitalism has enabled functional differentiation in world politics. By highlighting these transformational changes, Buzan questions Gilpin's view of the deep continuity of world politics. As Buzan puts it, the question is whether "structural changes observable through a more sociological approach override Gilpin's realist analysis, changing the game in a fundamental way, or [whether] they, as his work assumes, merely change aspects of the process without fundamentally changing the realist game of great-power rivalry mediated by periodic war?" (p. 237). For Buzan, the answer is unequivocal: the world has changed, the nature of power has changed, and hegemonic war is now exceedingly unlikely.

Finally, Hall engages "the world historical transition from empire to nation-state" (p. 12). This was the latest transformation in the units that populate the international system. Hall problematizes the relationship between empires, nations, and states, arguing that while it is true that states created empires, it is also true that late nineteenth-century imperialism also ultimately created nation-states. In their quest for scale, nineteenth-century states sought to acquire their own empires; these empires, in turn, "often sought to become nation-states," breeding "state-breaking nationalist movements" (p. 265). Nationalism, in this view, is partly a consequence of the need states had to increase their scale in the context of late nineteenth-century geopolitics.

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These three essays make useful contributions to these broader themes in Gilpin's book. All three focus on dynamics that are unlikely to be reversed, and that therefore should lead us to question Gilpin's cyclical view of world politics. This line of thinking is mirrored by Ikenberry, who, in his introduction, writes that "the twin dynamics of the Westphalian project of building a functioning state system and the 'liberal ascendancy' have altered the rise and decline logic" (p. 13). These essays give us reason to think that the nuclear revolution and the societal changes introduced by the rise of industrial capitalism are two additional dynamics that make contemporary international politics substantially different from pre-nineteenth-century world orders, demonstrating the possibility of progress—not only change—in world order, and denying Gilpin's cyclical view.

Taking stock, and drawing partly on the summary Ikenberry makes, this volume makes four main contributions to our understanding of power, order, and change in world politics. First, it encourages us to question Gilpin's cyclical understanding of power shifts and world order. Second, it invites us to go beyond Gilpin's materialism and consider the role of domestic politics, ideology, political traditions, leadership beliefs, nationalism, etc., in the production of world order. Third, it emphasizes the complexity of international orders, which include "packages of norms and ideas" or "grand bargains" between the major states in the system. Fourth, it conducts a preliminary reflection on the problem of change in the absence of violence by posing—but leaving unanswered—one of the most important questions in contemporary world politics: "how do orders end if hegemonic wars no longer operate as an instrument of global order?" (p. 15).

Beyond the theoretical questions about the sources and role of legitimacy and authority that I mentioned when discussing the essays in the first part of this book, there are two other questions on which this volume prompts further reflection. First, how does the nuclear revolution alter the dynamics of change in world order? Put differently, how can change in world order happen when great-power war is ruled out? As Ikenberry notes: "What if great-power war is removed as a cause of hegemonic transitions? Gilpin speculates about this at the end of *War and Change in World Politics*. If nuclear weapons have made war between the great powers profoundly irrational and unlikely, the opportunities for building new orders after hegemonic wars will disappear. Hegemonic wars will disappear. Power may continue to shift, but the critical factor that destroys the old order—massive

violence—will be missing. A rising state may have the power to reshape the system but not the opportunity. This introduces yet another factor that might generate an evolutionary logic in the rise and fall of international orders—nuclear weapons and deterrence. The effect is to give an advantage to the declining status quo ante and to reinforce continuity in international order" (p. 98).

For IR theory, this might be a reason to doubt the relevance of Gilpin's book for contemporary world politics. Since, in Wohlforth's words, "an all-out military slugfest among the world's most powerful states ... seems exceedingly unlikely to serve as a mechanism for reorganizing the international system," Gilpin's argument, in which hegemonic war plays a pivotal role, may strike readers as irrelevant. As Wohlforth notes in a quite trenchant observation, his is the only chapter in which "war" is in the title—and "the word 'war' is absent even from the title of this volume" (p. 110). This means that IR theorists must continue the work of reconciling the basic intuitions of realism with the consequences of the nuclear revolution.[10]

For world politics, the implications of the nuclear revolution are momentous: systemic change is now even harder than in the past. Put simply, with great-power peace may come the perpetuation of the US-led liberal hegemonic order. Seen in this light, the longevity of the *Pax Americana* would have little to do with any "normative packages" or the palatability of the way Washington runs the international system. Instead, it would be the consequence of a lack of mechanisms for change short of risking a conflict that would be in no challenger's interest because it would threaten its own survival. This transformation has twin consequences for the problem of world order. On the one hand, the nuclear revolution decreases the need for balancing against the US preponderance of conventional power. On the other, it also decreases the need for an unmatched concentration of power in order to produce a stable world order.

These second-order consequences of the nuclear revolution bring with them novel possibilities for world order. One possible future would entail the United States maintaining a preponderance of conventional power despite China's economic rise. Knowing that an armed challenge to the global US-led order is made impossible by the nuclear revolution, Beijing would eschew conventional balancing despite growing increasingly wealthy and, therefore, capable of reaching military parity with the United States if it so wished. A second possible future would witness decreasing US investment in its preponderance of conventional power, leading to the reestab-

lishment of a balance of power vis-à-vis China not because of balancing on Beijing's part but, instead, due to Washington's realization that the continuity of a stable US-led order would not require US conventional preponderance. In between these two scenarios, even more novel possibilities emerge. Could the United States and China lead a concert of powers that share the costs of the unparalleled US conventional power-projection capabilities, using them to pursue shared goals? This may sound far-fetched but it is a possibility compatible with the logic of the nuclear revolution and the arguments connecting it with hegemonic rule weaved by the authors of the essays in this volume.

The second question on which *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* prompts additional reflection stems from what Ikenberry labels the distinction between global and regional international orders. Not all international orders are world orders; some are regional orders. At different points in this volume—for example, Mastanduno when discussing the unraveling US-China grand bargain or Kupchan when calling for a managed transition to “a new and more regionalized international order” (p. 60)—the authors posit the possibility of deep transformation in East Asia within the framework of an enduring liberal world order. This possibility prompts several interesting questions: What are the mechanisms for change in regional orders given the likelihood of a continuing world order? How much regional transformation can the current world order sustain without being transfigured? Should we expect world politics to be conducted under a thin overarching world order, with each two or more blocks developing thick regional orders, as was the case during the Cold War? These are topics on which much work remains to be done.[11]

Finally, *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* includes many interesting insights on the future of US-China relations and the likely contours and consequences of the expected (economic) power transition between the United States and China. I would organize these contributions into two positions: optimists and pessimists. Unsurprisingly, liberal theorists are the most optimistic about the prospects of US-China relations. Lake concludes that it is possible to integrate China into the current American-led global order. Beijing benefits enormously from the current world order, which “protects territorial integrity and generates prosperity for all from security property rights, monetary stability, and trade openness,” and is therefore unlikely to challenge or confront American authority (p. 80). Along similar lines, Ikenberry argues that “the American-led international order may have more life in it than is generally thought.

China and other states may grow more powerful but an alternative order that harnesses the power of leading states may not exist for decades to come” (p. 9). For these authors, the angel of history has finally managed to rescue the present.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, several authors in this book foresee a turbulent future for leadership in Washington and Beijing. To begin with, the two amendments to Gilpin's theory that Kirshner proposes in his essay lead to a potentially more conflict-prone view of world politics, with hubristic rising powers such as China extending beyond reason while delusional declining powers such as the United States resisting retrenchment. Contextualizing this hubris on the part of China, Hall compares it with Wilhemine Germany, arguing that Beijing's regime “lacks legitimacy, and it may yet seek it by playing the nationalist card” (p. 285). Kupchan believes that China wants to “resurrect in East Asia a sphere of influence that is arrayed in concentric circles around a Sinicized core,” attempting to “exercise a brand of regional hegemony modeled on the tributary system” (p. 55). Furthermore, Chinese socioeconomic aims are likely to remain rather different than the United States', since its political system is unlikely to become democratic anytime soon. Economically, its preference is likely to continue to be for state planning and mercantilism. In sum, Kupchan argues, “China and the United States would have a unique role to play in shaping a hybrid order—one that would at once recognize the political autonomy and normative diversity of different regions but also rest on a working consensus among them” (p. 60).

But even in this more pessimistic view, we should note, the angel of history seems to be at work. No contributor to this volume expects the “realist nightmare ... of a nasty power transition and new Cold War period.” As Mastanduno puts it: “Even if economic interdependence between the United States and China is scaled back from the extraordinary grand bargain, it will remain in absolute terms far greater than that which characterized economic relations between the United States and Soviet Union, or between West and East, during the Cold War. A new Cold War would require other states to choose sides and line up behind one or the other dominant powers. But even America's closest security allies in East Asia wish to hedge—they prefer the regional security presence of the United States to balance China, but they also wish to reap the economic benefits of deeper integration with a growing China. Even more important is that the United States and China themselves prefer to hedge. Each prefer bilateral cooperation and especially the economic benefits that accompany it, while preparing

quietly but steadily for the possibility of future conflict” (p. 190).

Is this mutual preference for a managed, peaceful power transition between the United States and China the result of the “package of ordering ideas and norms” with which Washington infuses world order? Or is it the inevitable result of the nuclear revolution? Much like Klee’s *Angelus Novus*, we cannot but fixedly contemplate the past, and there is not enough of it to warrant definitive answers to these questions. But most of the authors in *Power, Order, and Change in World Politics* see the recent past as irresistibly propelling us to a better, more peaceful future. Time will tell. For now, this volume offers excellent food for thought on the questions Gilpin so elegantly explores.

Notes

[1]. Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” in *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, 1938-1940 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 392-393. For a radically different interpretation of Klee’s drawing, see Carl Djerassi, “One Angel by Paul Klee,” in *Four Jews on Parnassus [A Conversation]: Benjamin, Adorno, Scholem, Schönberg* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

[2]. See Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 4-7.

[3]. *Ibid.*, 7.

[4]. See Charles A. Kupchan, “The Normative Foundations of Hegemony and the Coming Challenge to *Pax Americana*,” *Security Studies* 23, no. 2 (2014): 219-258.

[5]. Lake develops his arguments on hierarchy and authority more fully in David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

[6]. This argument runs through Ikenberry’s previous work. See G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); G. John Ikenberry, “Democracy, Institutions, and American Restraint,” in *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*, ed. G. John Iken-

berry (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 213-238; and G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American System* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

[7]. In previous work, Wohlforth has examined constraints on US hegemony more thoroughly. See Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[8]. This argument builds on Deudney’s prior work. See Daniel Deudney, “Unipolarity and Nuclear Weapons,” in *International Relations Theory and the Consequences of Unipolarity*, ed. G. John Ikenberry, Michael Mastanduno, and William C. Wohlforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 282-316.

[9]. Deudney’s views are closely related to my own arguments on the consequences of the nuclear revolution for the durability of current US power preponderance. See Nuno P. Monteiro, “Three Essays on Unipolarity” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009), chap. 3; and Nuno P. Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), chap. 4.

[10]. Beyond Deudney’s contribution to this volume, his prior work (Deudney, “Unipolarity and Nuclear Weapons”), and my work (Monteiro, “Three Essays on Unipolarity”; and Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics*), see Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Campbell Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebhur, Morgenthau, and Waltz* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); and Campbell Craig, “American Power Preponderance and the Nuclear Revolution,” *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 1 (2009): 27-44.

[11]. For recent theoretical treatments of this issue, see Benjamin Miller, *States, Nations, and the Great Powers: The Sources of Regional War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Patrick J. McDonald, “Great Powers, Hierarchy, and Endogenous Regimes: Rethinking the Domestic Causes of Peace,” *International Organization*, forthcoming.

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