task of Çidam's political theorizing in *In the Street:* to investigate and reflect on the intermediating practices of participation in contemporary theaters of political emancipation and to ask whether the political theory pictures that hold us captive are adequate to the tasks of thinking, theorizing, and judging political action in the street. In this regard, the book is an achievement not only in its effort to theorize aesthetic and political judgment but also in rethinking the relation between political action and the catharsis of successful outcomes.

**Liberalism in Dark Times: The Liberal Ethos in the Twentieth Century.** By Joshua L. Cherniss. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021. 328p. $35.00 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S1537592722000354

— Matt Sleat, *University of Sheffield*
m.sleat@sheffield.ac.uk

Liberals are theoretically bound by their own principles not to act like their more ruthless opponents, even though a failure to do so may significantly hamper their ability to successfully counter antiliberal movements. Where opponents of liberalism, unimpeded by such self-imposed constraints, may be more than willing to override individual rights or liberties in the pursuit of their goals, possibly even at the expense of inflicting untold suffering on others, liberals cannot follow suit without betraying their principled commitments to those same rights and liberties. This creates what Joshua L. Cherniss calls liberalism's "predicament." Either liberals stop being so squeamish and match the ruthlessness of their opponents—running the risk that they will need to act in ways that leave them no longer liberals at all—or they hold onto their principles, despite the disadvantages this puts them at. What is a liberal to do?

There is not anything peculiarly liberal to this predicament, of course. Any political agent with principles may find themselves in a position where they must choose between sacrificing those principles for political efficacy or holding onto them when it would be advantageous not to. It is a general issue of political integrity. But it is a familiar predicament for liberals, given their strong self-professed commitments to the rule of law, individual rights, mutual respect, and the tolerance of a diversity of views and ways of life. The paraphrase of Robert Frost's famous definition of the liberal as someone unable to take their own side in an argument is almost endearing were it not for the possibility that it potentially leaves liberals unable to act when they need to in the defense of liberal values or principles.

In this terrifically rich, scholarly, and stimulating book, Cherniss seeks to recover a way of thinking about liberalism as a response to the problem of ruthlessness. Being a liberal is not so much about the values or principles one holds, the institutions one supports, or the ideals thought worthy of pursuit, although it is about those. It is ultimately about developing and sustaining a particular sort of ethos, one that enables liberals to find ways of living with the liberal predicament, rather than coming down on either horn of the dilemma. This "tempered liberalism," exemplified in the thinkers Cherniss explores—Weber, Aron, Camus, Niebuhr, and Berlin—puts front and center questions of the appropriate dispositions, sensibility, and attitudes toward others that liberals should cultivate at both the individual and social level. It is a question of character, how one faces up to the liberal predicament, and the sort of social spirit that nurtures the right sort of individual characters and is, in turn, strengthened by them. It is an ethos in which individuals recognize the temptations of ruthlessness in the pursuit of their ideals but are imbued with the fortitude to resist them.

The recovery of this ethos- and character-focused liberalism is timely. The suspicion that we may have an impoverished, if not deeply mistaken and distorted understanding, of our own liberal tradition, as explored in recent years by the likes of Helena Rosenblatt, Edmund Fawcett, Samuel Moyn, Greg Conti, and others, has obvious practical implications for those engaged in the endeavor of defending liberalism against its contemporary detractors. Cherniss makes a valuable contribution to aiding a better self-understanding, and although he sensibly leaves the reader to make the connections themselves, few are likely to finish the book without a clear sense that our societies lack the ethos of tempered liberalism and are all the worse for it.

The notion that liberals should refocus their attention on the political ethics of ethos and character is an exciting and provocative one. Liberals would do well to take it very seriously, and one can see several potentially fruitful lines of inquiry that could be developed from Cherniss's work, either in terms of exploring additional "tempered liberals" —regular mentions of the likes of Trilling, Shklar, and Williams, for instance, suggest this category plausibly includes thinkers beyond those explored here—the nature of a liberal ethos, and the individual characters and social practices or institutions that support it. The contrast between a liberal and ruthless ethos is another such area. How far we should go, how ruthless we must be, in the pursuit of our ideals and values cannot be separated from the question of the place of those ideals and values in our sense of the sort of lives we think worth living. This is likely an issue of ethos also. But insofar as it is, recognizing it as such means that drawing the relevant distinction between a ruthless and tempered ethos might not quite identify the right contrast—or at least not the contrast in all its complexity. Cherniss rightly notes, "Liberalism regards politics as important, but not all-important. Politics should be pursued in such a way that allows participants to do other things; indeed, the goals of politics include



https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592722000354 Published online by Cambridge University Press

securing conditions that allow most people to do other things" (p. 217). This instrumental view of politics has often led liberals to view individuals' private lives as the sphere in which we pursue what is truly meaningful or noble: politics merely provides the conditions under which such pursuits become possible. Antiliberals, in contrast, "seek a more inspiring, fulfilling sort of politics" (p. 217). This certainly is a difference between liberals and antiliberals. Liberals want a limited politics because what is of value in human life is pursued outside the political; (many) antiliberals see politics as the sphere that deals with the most supreme values and ends of human lives. That difference profoundly colors our sense of the sort of character we should be cultivating and, importantly, *what is going to count* as ruthlessness in pursuit of our values and ideals. Scruples, and the ethos that cultivates and supports those, defend those parts of our ethical lives that we must in some sense think we could not betray while still being able to live with ourselves. From the liberal perspective, antiliberals are prone to ruthlessness because they care too much about politics: they assign it too central a place in a meaningful human life. Which is, of course, why part of the liberal project has so often been, explicitly or not, to try and take the heat out of politics, to downplay its significance. Antiliberals see squeamishness where liberals put scruples not just because of their propensity toward political purism or absolutism, though that is clearly an important factor, but also because they have a fundamental and deep-seated disagreement as to the sort of lives worth living (or not) and the place of politics within those.

The cultivation of a tempered ethos does not and cannot resolve the liberal predicament. The best we can hope for is that it offers liberals a way of continuing to live with it. It may turn out that the permanence of such irresolvable tensions—and the problem of ruthlessness that Cherniss identifies is but one of them—makes liberalism too demanding of human beings for it to endure much longer. *Liberalism in Dark Times* is a vital book for those who are not willing to give up on it quite yet.

**Just and Unjust Uses of Limited Force: A Moral Argument with Contemporary Illustrations.** By Daniel Brunstetter. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. 304p. $100.00 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S1537592722000329

— Brian Orend, *University of Waterloo*
bdorend@uwaterloo.ca

In this important and finely crafted book, Daniel Brunstetter notes that there is a difference between limited force and war, and that the ethics of the former are underdeveloped relative to the latter. This is a shame, because few states wish to take on the full risks and frightful costs of war, yet many still opt for using targeted tools of violence to forward their foreign policy objectives—whether to strike at terrorists, degrade enemy regimes, or punish war criminals. Brunstetter focuses on four kinds of limited force: drones, targeted airstrikes, no-fly zones, and small-scale interventions by special forces.

These phenomena cry out for moral and political evaluation. Brunstetter, in this refreshingly ambitious book, purports to offer a full-scale theory in this regard—of the "*jus ad vim*," where *vim* stands for "force (short-of-war)," with the whole phrase thus meaning "the justice of using limited force." This book represents the culmination of nearly a decade of thinking deeply about and contributing impressively to this vital topic.

The book kicks off with an engaging, illustrative quote from Julius Caesar, poised at the banks of the Rubicon, warning his troops that, should they cross it with him, full-on war would result. Although Caesar proceeded to do so, the domain of *vim* deals with force, so to speak, on the near side of that famous river. Importantly, Brunstetter acknowledges that he does not deal with all tools of *vim*; he neither discusses cyberconflict nor peacekeeping operations. Those perhaps get plenty of attention on their own, yet their absence does denote an incomplete theory. Maybe Brunstetter would say that they do not always involve physical, kinetic force—certainly the cyber case—and thus make an awkward fit with *vim* in any event. He is concerned with the deliberate use of political violence, usually killing force in some sense, and that which lies between everyday police action and full-scale war. That domain is large and murky, and he spends considerable time and care wrestling with its definitional and ontological complexities.

Brunstetter models both his title and, he says, his style, after Michael Walzer's canonical *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (published in 1977 and currently in its fifth edition). Most readers will find Brunstetter much more self-consciously theoretical than Walzer, in the analytical style, and he prefers to focus only on a handful of contemporary cases, as opposed to the hundreds of historical references within Walzer. A strong case that Brunstetter keeps developing, which will edify most, is that of Mali's and France's repeated deployments of various *vim* tools: trying to keep the Islamist groups there under control while avoiding a large-scale, "boots on the ground" military intervention that might very well result in regime change, prolonged occupation, or both. Brunstetter has deep ties both with France and America and focuses on cases heavily involving them: the Global War on Terror (GWOT), Mali, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Syria. Syria provides a fitting illustration of *vim*: although the West has declined to intervene in that dreadful civil war with a warlike quantum of force and scope of objective, it has engaged in repeated, targeted missile and bombing attacks, especially in response to the Assad regime's use of prohibited chemical weapons. The goal has been to punish that violation of the laws of war, to



https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592722000354 Published online by Cambridge University Press