

Forthcoming as a special issue of *The Journal of Narrative Politics*, Vol.3 Is.2, 2017:

Internal Relations: From Distant Strangers to Ourselves

N.A.J. Taylor and Stefanie Fishel (eds.)

(a) Original call for papers

This proposed special issue will reflect on *relations* within the discipline of International Relations (IR) in all its respects. We seek papers that address *relations* as they exist internal to IR, as well as speculations as to how things ought to be.

For many scholars, the idea of *relations* within IR will refer only to the condition of anarchy in international politics, to the dynamic of states and individual peoples, or the society of states. We are not interested in such readings. These orthodox understandings of relations in IR have now occupied over a century of thought, and continue to enjoy ample forums debated elsewhere.

Rather, contributors are encouraged to:

- Focus on relations internal to IR as manifesting in exploitation, exclusion, discrimination, a lack of civility, or domination of certain individuals or groups;
- Probe the historical context of issues and ideas that have achieved some change over the discipline's development, or comparisons to those that have not (gender vs. post-colonial studies);
- Examine the role of tenured faculty and “big name” scholars in responding to or the various concerns being raised (e.g. taking part in industrial actions on behalf of exploited labor);
- Consider the similarities and differences between the various forms of relations that take place in IR (e.g. the co-operation between scholars in post-colonial and gender studies), as well as their interactions (e.g. race and industrial conditions);
- Reflect on the notion of “circles of niceness” that was proposed elsewhere as a framework for more fruitful engagement and self-reflection;
- Discuss the tendency for some issues to be met with silence (e.g. the reliance on adjunct labor to deliver learning) and for others to draw support from unexpected sources (e.g. liberal support for questions of race);
- Engage with the more general “sectionalization” of the International Studies Association (ISA), as well as more recent attempts at inaugurating a unification of the field; and
- Explore the narrative voice as an appropriate expression, a process of discovery, or a means of coping with either lived experience or assessments of the situation.

(b) Organization and article summaries

Editorial:

What are Internal Relations?

For many scholars, the idea of relations within IR will refer only to the condition of anarchy in international politics, to the dynamic of states and individual peoples, or the society of states. We are not interested in such readings. These orthodox understandings of relations in IR have now occupied over a century of thought, and continue to enjoy ample forums debated elsewhere. This paper sketches out the terrain of a new programme of work that is actively reflective on relations as they exist or ought to exist within the discipline of International Relations (IR). Our central argument is that IR scholars—and the discipline—are held together by virtue of a shared level of analysis: the *inter*-national. We believe that paradoxical situation wherein scholars investigate injustice, violence, and domination out-there-in-the-world at the neglect or absence of a thoroughgoing examination of relations internal to the world of IR must change.

N.A.J. Taylor (The University of Queensland and La Trobe University) and Stefanie Fishel (The University of Alabama)

Opening a Political Account

This paper explores the challenges inherent in giving an account of world or global politics, when that term seems to encompass a range of complex and even contradictory gestures: the notion of a journalistic observation; the notion of empirical quantification; and, following from a Rousseauian model of the confession and the development of reflexive and relational modes of thought, the account of ourselves as participants in and productive of both modes of accounting and objects of account. It asks about the possibilities and limitations for modes of political 'accounts' to be rendered sensitive to relations that are deemed 'personal' (such as family life and care responsibilities, often gendered and therefore often excluded), relations that are deemed 'professional' (the institutional roles and current transformations of what it means to be 'an academic'; taking into account specifically the moves to precarious labour, to loss of tenure, and other features that radically shift the economy as well as the identity of scholarship), and even relations that are deemed 'geographic' (the continued emphasis on 'area studies'; the often unspoken urban element of networks of university relations centred primarily in 'the city'). This paper articulates relations between disparate literatures – such as the current work on (feminist) slow scholarship as a response to the pressures of neoliberalising institutions; examinations of the relations between city life and academic work; and methodological engagements with alternative modes of academic work, writing, and production – in order to perform an inter/personal account of the shifting and tenuous relations of contemporary politics.

Delacey Tedesco (Department of Political Science, University of Victoria)

Theorist, theorize thyself: A political self-help story

Post-positivist approaches to social science insist on being aware of the subjectivity of the researcher. This article explores how the author's body came to inform her research about political order born from ideas of the "natural" body. Two vignettes are offered to think about how critical approaches can be used in the "real" world to understand the interplay between bodies, politics, experiences, and the researcher herself. The first, "Diets for nation-states, or

how to have a healthy body politic” takes the human microbiome, my health struggles, and the state as its focus. The second, “The security of a small mammal, or critical security studies hits the streets” relates my experiences living in Baltimore to a wider questioning of security studies in IR. How might critical security studies respond to lived experiences differently than traditional approaches?

Stefanie Fishel (Department of Race and Gender, University of Alabama)

Evasions and Invitations: A Male Feminist’s Personal and Intellectual Adventures in a Homophobic and Patriarchal World

Through a series of vignettes, this paper explores how the author has both failed and been forced to live feminist values in a world where male privilege is conditional upon particular gendered performativity. Taking my own experiences seriously, I interrogate the interlocking emotional, relational, and academic dynamics involved in naming and challenging heterosexist white supremacist patriarchy from a white US cis-male perspective. While exploring the limits of solidarity and the problematics of speaking for others, I also defend male feminism. Pointing to the violence of patriarchy towards cis-men, the possibilities of relationships forged in struggle, and potential uses (and abuses) of privilege in academic settings, this paper shares some lessons from an imperfect person living through the contradictions of an “impossible historical situation” (Memmi, 1965: 39).

Jesse Crane-Seeber (School of Public and International Affairs, North Carolina State University)

Losing My Religion: On Not Having A Doktorvater, and On Becoming A Teacher

My encounter with the sociology of the IR discipline—both with the scholarship of the sociology of knowledge as applied to IR, and with the lived reality of the organizational and interpersonal aspects of our scholarly lives together—has never been especially smooth or congenial. I entered graduate school with the naive notion that the academic life was centered around ideas, and that academics were smart people interested in living the “life of the mind” and deeply ensconced in the intellectual work of “thinking about things.” That this was not the case was deeply impressed on me through a variety of experiences in graduate school, not the least of which resulted in my not having a dissertation committee chair who was by any stretch of the imagination “in” IR. But at the same time, and perhaps in consequence, I discovered that at least for me, the only thing worth doing in this profession is to teach students, and to direct my scholarly writing—and those “professional service activities” I engage in—toward the opening of space(s) for such teaching. So this is a story of the end of one vision of the field, and the emergence of another.

Patrick Thaddeus Jackson (School of International Service, American University)

Memories from Conferences Past

This paper draws upon, and theorizes, personal memory and autobiography to examine the internal politics of the academic conference. While one cannot understate the powerful professionalizing role conferences play, this paper asks whether the academic conferences as a particular form of knowledge production might not be otherwise. In particular, this paper examines the hierarchical and exclusionary tendencies that separate the conference world of professors at prestigious institutions (and, therefore, often flush with travel funds) from the conference world of graduate students, contingent academics, and those at peripheral

institutions. This paper also takes seriously the ways these asymmetries and exclusions also co-exist alongside the utopian possibilities of the conference, which sometimes appear in intellectual exchange, camaraderie, and reciprocity. The paper concludes by raising the question of what a conference might be otherwise. “At the very least, let us start by not conflating the academy with the university; our employment position with the value of our labor; contingency with failure; stability with merit; travel budget with personal goods (after all: “from each according to their ability...”). And, finally, let us not confuse the academic conference *as it is* with the conference *as it might become*.”

Isaac Kamola (Trinity College)

IR is dating ANT, and other internal relations

Relations internal to IR are increasingly being shaped by outside influences, most recently in relation to materiality. Sometimes insiders invite these outsiders as a means to rejuvenate the subfield; other times, outlanders searching for access to IR’s inner sanctum are characterized as invasive competition; most of the time, however, it is hard to tell the difference. In particular, I examine congress between IR and ANT (or STS in general, though STS and ANT are often conflated when viewed from the outside). IR and ANT where institutionalize at roughly the same time making them effectively the same age. While IR spent its formative years preoccupied by internal discussions and distinctions, ANT was more intellectually promiscuous focusing on matters well-beyond its home in STS. That said, the pair still have much in common: they share a fondness for authorial concepts, the cult of personality, and an odd preference for participating in disciplinary turf wars. This article is a reflexive assessment of some traffic patterns between these two scholarly camps, and questions whether these somewhat unlikely bedfellows can be kept together beyond what I will call the initial “intellectual dating” phase.

Nicholas J. Rowland (Division of Education, Human Development, and Social Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University)

The worm’s IR

This is one of those true stories that may appear fictitious, or even otherworldly. It begins with my reading of a banal message I received on June 3, 2008, from someone I had never met. It ends more than two years and four thousand messages later, when a woman—whom I still didn’t know—pleaded guilty to a seven-year suspended prison sentence, after having her passport seized while she was expelled from University and deported from Australia. What happened in between put me at the centre of a set of social relations that rippled outwards from my office in a Department of International Relations in suburban Melbourne as far as the Vice Chancellor, various Australian and Vietnamese law enforcement agencies, and the office of an Australian parliamentarian. During that time, my life—and its very security and survival—seemed to me “the world”. Looking back, I query what it means to study the world when you are the only person left in it.

N.A.J. Taylor (School of Political and International Studies, The University of Queensland and School of Law, La Trobe University)

(c) About the editors

Stefanie Fishel is an assistant professor in the Gender and Race Department at the University of Alabama. She has held previous positions at Colgate University and Hobart and William Smith Colleges. She earned her doctorate from The Johns Hopkins University in 2011 with specializations in International Relations and Political Theory. In 2005, she received her MA from the University of Victoria in Victoria, Canada. Her research focuses on human bodies and their metaphorical and material relationship to the discipline and practice of International Relations.

N.A.J. Taylor has taught at La Trobe University and the University of Queensland, and has held or will hold visiting research fellowships at Roskilde University, Bard College, La Trobe University, Linköping University and The New School, where he was an Australia Awards fellow. His research focuses on alternative pathways to WMD-free worlds, particularly from inter-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives.