
Alternatives

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Abstracts

Movement in the Key Concepts of International Relations

Risto Wallin*

The purpose of this article is to present many solid reasons to carry out a study of the topics related to the construction of world-unity and world-citizenship vocabularies through the methods of conceptual history. The scrutiny of the historical foundations of the UN world-unity vocabulary is not very helpful in itself, but in order to understand the historical dimensions of the present, the study of the historical foundations of world-unity structures represents a very useful starting point, since those world-unity structures still constitute a fundamental part of the current framework of international relations; and it will be no less useful to make visible the conceptual structures related to the use of time layers in political narration since they are key elements of almost all future-oriented political narratives. **Keywords:** Conceptual movement, political vocabulary, international relations, Kosselleck

Speaking Rights to Theory

P. A. Hayman*

The status of constructivism as an open and accommodating intellectual approach is at odds with its aim of becoming the most appropriate site for a theory-practice synthesis. As an exemplar of the social concern that forms the ontology of constructivism, human rights is well placed to provide the context of a critique. More often than not, human rights are taken to be an unreliable variable within differently conceived international political schema. It is now an appropriate time to look again at the opportunities that human rights offers in establishing the cohesion of constructivism. Challenging the limitations of preconceived notions of social knowledge, the focus of the article will be on the human-rights side of the equation; namely, its features as a universal and its manifestation as a power, and what they tell us about the requirements for “becoming theory.” **Keywords:** international theory, constructivism, human rights, universalism, power, change

“Can the Subaltern Be Heard?”: Political Theory, Translation, Representation, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

J. Maggio*

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” questions the notion of the colonial (and Western) “subject” and provides an example of the limits of the ability of Western discourse, even postcolonial discourse, to interact with disparate cultures. This article suggests that these limits can be (partially) overcome. Where much commentary on Spivak focuses on her reading of Marx through the prism of Derrida, and on her contention that the “native informant” is simultaneously created and destroyed, I contend that Spivak’s terms of engagement always imply a liberal-independent subject that is actively speaking. Moreover, given the limits of understanding implied by Spivak’s essay, I advocate a reading of culture(s) based on the assumption that all actions offer a communicative role, and that one can understand cultures by translating the various conducts of their culture. On this basis I argue that the title of Spivak’s essay might be more accurately stated as “Can the Subaltern Be Heard?” **Keywords:** Spivak, postcolonial, culture, translation, political theory

Dadaism and the Peace Differend

Oliver P. Richmond*

This experimental essay attempts to show how alternative methods and approaches are valuable in interrogating the ways in which orthodox theories of international relations (IR) approach peace. Drawing on a broad variety of critical traditions, it seeks to encourage the development of creative and experimental interdisciplinary approaches as well as to underline the deficiencies of more instrumentalist theories and methods. It especially tries to show how eclectic and experimental theories and methods produce sophisticated insights that are capable of reorienting analysis so as to respond to dynamics that must be understood if sustainable and multiple variations of peace are to emerge. **Keywords:** Dadaism, peace, differend, international relations, experimental eclecticism