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Forum

On On Diplomacy: James Der Derian's Classic 30 Years On

FORUM CONTRIBUTIONS & CONTRIBUTORS

THE MAKING OF A CLASSIC: *ON DIPLOMACY* 30 YEARS ON

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Over the last decades, International Relations has achieved a degree of disciplinary maturity. This is reflected in the questioning of disciplinary foundational myths as well as in the growing self-reflective appreciation of disciplinary fore-runners. On one hand, scholars have been busy re-reading, re-interpreting, criticising and re-appraising earlier stories about the discipline and its alleged canonical books and thinkers (de Carvalho et al., 2011). Some older works have been discarded as best forgotten, others have been re-appraised and some have been rescued from oblivion. On the other hand, disciplinary associations celebrate distinguished scholars and pick the best books of the year (and indeed the decade), and courses as well

as introductory texts are structured around "classic works" in the discipline (Bliddal et al., 2013).

The desire to convene first a conference panel, and then this forum on James Der Derian's *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement* drew on both of these impulses. The intent is both to celebrate a work which we find to have a deserved status as a classic, and to examine in detail what makes it a classic. In the following contributions, a stellar cast of scholars in and around the study of diplomacy provide their personal takes on the book, and Der Derian provides his own genealogy of the genealogy. In the rest of this introduction, I will first provide a more general scene-setting, locating *On Diplomacy* in the broader study of international relations and diplomacy. Then I will briefly discuss my own favourite takeaway from the book, the understanding of diplomacy as "the mediation of estrangement" (Der Derian 1987a: 42).

CLASSICS, CLAIMED AND MADE

What defines a book as a classic? Some texts become known as instant classics. When used in marketing, this usually implies that the book captures something of the spirit of the age, and that it will be sold in airport bookstores and make the authors rich and everyone else envious and dismissive. More interesting are the rare texts which are recognised as seminal almost immediately, and soon accepted as classics, such as Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations*, which was rapidly adopted in teaching and sold remarkably well (Knutsen, 2016: 305). Another category of texts is the forgotten classics, which were highly important in their own time, but are largely forgotten now. During the 17th century, Justus Lipsius was published far more than, for instance, Bodin, and his key texts clearly influenced both Grotius and Hobbes (Leira, 2008). Today, however, he is remembered most for giving a name to the office-building in Brussels which houses the Council of the European Union. Less ambiguous are the Pantheon classics; everyone knows that they are classics and reveres them as such, and they made important contributions to disciplinary developments when they were published. But even so, they might not speak much to current readers. Nevertheless, at the very pinnacle of the Pantheon, we find the texts which continue to speak to scholars, generation after generation.

Before reaching the Pantheon, texts must prove that they stand the test of time; in most cases, it takes some time for a classic to be established as such. For relatively recent texts we might most appropriately be talking about classics in the making, as they are just establishing themselves as nodal points in disciplinary discourse and practice. Thirty years after the book's publication seems to be a useful time to take stock of this process. By that time, the book has had time to influence more than a generation of scholars, and we have enough distance to assess both the

work on its own terms and the impact it has had. And thirty years after its publication, it is safe to say that *On Diplomacy* has made a mark, and that it continues to engage.

To those of us coming to what was then referred to as 'critical' IR in the late 1990's, on the heels of the heated theoretical debates of the preceding decades, *On Diplomacy* had a somewhat mythical nimbus. At the basic material level, it was virtually impossible to get one's hand on an actual physical copy of the book. My first exposure to it came in the form of a hand-me-down photocopied version filled with Iver B. Neumann's comments in the margins. Used copies currently sell at Amazon for above 300 USD (which is in line with what you would have to pay for a first edition of a Henrik Ibsen play). But more importantly, the book seemed almost incomprehensibly ahead of its time. While we were struggling simply to find room to think and graduate outside of the mainstream, *On Diplomacy* had already been in the field for more than a decade. Furthermore, while many of the seminal 'critical' texts were articles or collections of articles (cf. Walker, 1993; Neumann, 1999), Der Derian had produced a full-fledged monograph, fleshing out a sustained argument over hundreds of pages, and tying together concerns of classical IR theorising (particularly of the English School kind) with newer social theories.

The book was ahead of its time in its intellectual comprehensiveness, but it was also topically ahead of its time, setting out a somewhat different course than many of the other canonical critical works. Another of these early monographs, David Campbell's (1998) *Writing Security*, first published in 1992, can provide a useful contrast. Campbell started from the notion of identity being inescapably connected with difference, and the Self existing in separation from and opposition to the Other, and, like many of the writers on identity in the 1990s, applied this insight to foreign-policy-making, stressing how states constituted themselves as different from other states through processes of exclusion and boundary-drawing. This form of analysis proved easy to replicate for other cases, and spoke to mainstream concerns about wars, hot and cold.

While Der Derian was also dealing with difference between people and political entities, expressed through the terms alienation and estrangement, his concern was with how this alienation could be overcome. In the terms of Foucault, who resonates in most 'critical' work of this type, it can perhaps be suggested that while a number of scholars were working out the implications of sovereign and disciplinary power for IR, Der Derian had jumped directly to a form of pastoral power and even biopower. One instance of this would be his understanding of diplomatic change and evolution: "it is not necessarily the preponderant accumulation of power - be it material or spiritual – which will determine diplomatic forms; rather, it is the circulation, exchange and exercise of alienated power which generates the

rules of diplomacy which dominant power(s) might impose" (Der Derian, 1987a: 86–87). Intellectually speaking, Der Derian had suggested solutions before many other writers had fully identified the problems. While much academic energy in the 1990s was spent on discussing alterity and the potentially destructive consequences of turning difference into otherness, *On Diplomacy* had already suggested a way forward.

With a gradually broadening and deepening reception of Foucault, parts of the discipline of IR have in a sense caught up with *On Diplomacy*. While the book had already gained a reputation in its first decade, it became recognised as an enduring classic in the succeeding decades, as new generations of scholars discovered it. The basic (and somewhat flawed) bibliometrics of Google Scholar demonstrate this development convincingly. *On Diplomacy* was cited regularly, if not particularly frequently, in the years immediately after its publication. But starting in the late 1990s, and accelerating from around 2005, it has been cited more and more frequently, with 2016 being the year with the highest frequency to date.

The discipline of IR caught up to *On Diplomacy* not only theoretically, but also thematically. Since its publication, there has been growing interest in diplomacy, both within and outside of the discipline, and where diplomacy was historically associated with aristocracy, secrecy and war-mongering, it has increasingly become seen as something positive, as a way of if not overcoming, then at least living with difference (Leira, 2016). And in the intellectual pursuit of diplomatic studies, it seems hard to overestimate the importance of *On Diplomacy*. Diplomatic studies in IR had, up until its publication, been almost indistinguishable from diplomatic history, and both scholars and practitioners had tended to think of diplomacy as some sort of tactile art to be described and intuitively understood. *On Diplomacy* demonstrated that diplomacy could be theorised just like any other topic, and infused diplomatic studies with a much-needed dose of theoretical vigour. Others have theorised diplomacy differently afterwards, but it remains necessary to touch base with Der Derian's work for anyone engaging diplomacy theoretically.

A CLASSIC IN THE MAKING

As the following essays demonstrate, there are many reasons why Der Derian's theorisation of diplomacy continues to inspire. But I will argue that the central one is the one at the heart of the text: the coupling of estrangement and mediation with diplomacy. In the book, the reading is of diplomatic culture, understood as "the mediation of estrangement by symbolic power and social constraints" (Der Derian, 1987a: 42); in the article version of the argument, diplomacy itself is seen as "a mediation between estranged individuals, groups or entities" (Der Derian, 1987b: 93). As one contemporary reviewer noted: "The point seems so central that one wonders that Der Derian is the first to have capitalized on it in a contemporary context"

(Warren, 1989: 210). The reactions among students and non-IR specialists when presented with this understanding of diplomacy for the first time, are similar: it makes intuitive sense (at least when one has explained what "estrangement" means).

In contrast with more specified definitions of diplomacy, which tend to narrow the scope of analytical investigation, Der Derian's conceptualisation opens things up. Starting from the meta-level of mediation, rather than, for instance, from specific functional traits of diplomacy, implies that diplomacy is not tied solely to state apparatuses, but can be approached as a general phenomenon. This also allows for studies of diplomacy as a form of 'third culture' concerned specifically with the mediation of estrangement between other cultures, and worthy of study in and of itself. Furthermore, in this perspective, diplomacy is explicitly scalable; in addition to being a general phenomenon that is abstractly approachable at the macro-level, it can be studied at the micro-level of face-to-face interaction and mediation. Such a detailed study might also reveal the limits to the usefulness of this approach, though, as it could highlight how there is much more to diplomacy, at least at the micro-level, than the mediation of estrangement (Adler-Nissen, 2015). And, as the contributions to this forum suggest in different ways, there are still other genealogies of diplomacy to be written.

James Der Derian starts the festivities by providing his own genealogy of the genealogy. It is appropriate that this genealogy is itself full of fits and starts, and draws in not only Hedley Bull, Michel Foucault, Karl Marx and a varied cast of IR luminaries, but also James Baldwin and Buddy Guy. The genealogy of the genealogy makes clear what the original genealogy hints at, namely how it, for all its timelessness, was a distinct product of its time and place. This is how it must be, for as **Iver B. Neumann** stresses in his broader situation of *On Diplomacy* as a genealogy, the goal is to write a history of the present in terms of the past. Although praising *On Diplomacy* as the first work of its kind in IR, Neumann finds that Der Derian could have been more explicit about his method, and that he in particular underspecifies the genealogical breaks when alienation and diplomacy became problematised in new ways. This in no way invalidates the analysis, but suggests that future research could lead to alternative genealogies, alternative dating of the genealogical breaks and perhaps also alternatives to alienation and estrangement. In her contribution, **Merje Kuus** agrees with the centrality of estrangement for diplomacy. However, going back to mythical origins and with Wagner as her tool, she argues that this estrangement carries with it the possibility of recognition, since political subjectivity is, at heart, relational. To Kuus, then, *On Diplomacy* opens for an exploration of the emotional base of politics and an ethic of subjectivity. While Neumann and Kuus look to the foundations of *On Diplomacy* to suggest the possibility of different analyses of diplomacy and politics, **Michele Acuto** reflects on

the book as a way of transcending both diplomacy and IR, starting with the book's insights about techno-diplomacy and incorporating Der Derian's later work. He does so by maintaining a focus on diplomatic culture(s) and its (their) transformation in light of ever proliferating estrangements and mediations, and the rapid rise in new technologies. He concludes by suggesting that the developments of the last 30 years have only made Der Derian's starting question about the possibility of diplomacy for the future more pertinent. The possible futures of diplomacy are also a topic of **Paul Sharp**'s closing statement. Placing *On Diplomacy* in the wider trajectory of IR and diplomatic studies, he notes how it revitalised the latter, and how it allows us to yet again raise questions about diplomacy's future. He notes how Der Derian suggests that diplomacy might be coming to an end, but also suggests other possible readings, like Acuto's emphasis on techno-diplomacy as a new form rather than a replacement, or a complete slide to diplomatic practices which fall in and out of play.

A CLASSIC OF OUR MAKING

In *On Diplomacy*, James Der Derian took on a somewhat forgotten topic and, through a fusion of English School ideas and social theories, opened it up for new generations of scholars. Immediately recognised as a profound work of analysis, through its continued (and increasing) influence on scholarship, it has proved itself as a classic in the making. Our discussion here obviously performatively contributes to this construction; if a sign of a classic work is that it continues to resonate and create discussion, year after year, this forum is surely contributing to the making of *On Diplomacy* as a classic. However, as demonstrated in the various contributions, the book is not a classic simply because we say it is, but because of the many contributions it has made to scholarship. One testament to its status as a classic is how "the mediation of estrangement" is now close to being a compulsory reference for anyone wanting to write in a theoretically informed way about diplomacy. The insights contained in such pithy phrases, which make intuitive and self-evident sense, making one see a well-known phenomenon in a new light, are the kinds of insights of which classics are made.

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'EVERY DOG GOT HIS DAY': *ON DIPLOMACY* AFTER THIRTY YEARS

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> "People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does."
>   Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*

Having been asked to join a roundtable commemorating *On Diplomacy*, my reaction is one of deep appreciation shadowed by a mild apprehension. Who would not be grateful for recognition by esteemed peers? But thirty years on, some unease sets in. Has the book suddenly become timely? Belatedly timeless? Or is it simply a case of time out of mind?

All things considered, I think it best to leave in more capable hands the question of what what I do does (it sounds better in the original French) and in higher hands the matter of when what I do must come to a stop. Nor do I wish to subject readers

– yet again – to the tag-team muses (Hegel and Marx *vs* Nietzsche and Foucault) or critical methods (dialectical *vs* genealogical) that inform *On Diplomacy*. And as much as I enjoy going down the conceptual rabbit holes that drive the narrative, like the alienation of alienation or mediation of mediation, I suspect it is not a widely shared pleasure.

I would rather double-down on the ambitious subtitle of the book to provide a genealogy of the genealogy of estrangements (diplomatic and otherwise) that first set me on this path of inquiry. I do so in the hope that my particular tale might be of some general use to others in their own efforts to mediate the professional, political as well as personal alienations that define the field of diplomatic study.

Made fully and regularly aware of the academic taboos against the personal (see below), I always thought it better to make explicit what too often is left implicit: just about all academic writing outside of the more formalistic sciences is ultimately autobiographical. This is even more so in diplomatic discourse, which might pride itself on neutrality and objectivity yet reads more like literature than practically any other narration of International Relations. Without getting *too* personal, I also suspect that those drawn to the art and practice of diplomacy have in common familial histories of estrangement that engendered mediatory practices of one kind or another.

If the diplomat is indeed an 'honourable spy', no one provides greater illumination into these psychological shadows than John Le Carré in his brilliant essay 'Son of the Author's Father'. In this arena, I would say that I was loved neither too much nor too little. Probably more formative was having parents who, out of economic necessity as well as political disposition, provided my three sisters and me access to a broad range of public schools in the course of a dozen moves as a family. I learned early on how much survival on each new playground resembled Will Roger's definition of diplomacy: 'The art of saying "nice doggie" until you can find a rock.'

LA JETÉE

That said, autobiography cannot fully explain the book. Overall, I believe accidents played a more significant role than intentions, parental or authorial, in the making of *On Diplomacy*. An unexpected encounter in 1975 at the Montparnasse Post Office in Paris set the compass spinning in a distinctly French direction. There and then I ran into T——, a tall, spikey-haired proto-punk, like me, a McGill student in exile in Paris. I had come to Paris on the recommendations of one of my professors, Peter Gourevitch, a former student of Stanley Hoffmann who, upon hearing of my intent to take a break from studies, insisted - I suspect in the hope that it might bring me back into the academic fold – that I attend Hoffmann's lectures at Science Po. I did, but quickly dropped out, not because of the quality of the lectures, but because of the snooty

airs of the Parisian students, who probably found my backpack wardrobe of a red hoodie and Oshkosh overalls a bit *déclassé*.

T—— was wired, in all senses of the word. In his metamorphosis from situationist to punk, he jammed as many political, cinematic, musical and pharmacological events into a day as possible. We went to film screenings of Chris Marker (*La Jetée* several times), an African drumming performance outside La Coupole and lectures by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, in between deliveries from the airport of contraband hidden in 16 mm film canisters to his North African *copains*. I was able to find a slightly more reputable job as an apprentice to a semi-famous African-American fashion photographer who had emigrated to Paris; indeed, up until I stumbled into my first academic job as an adjunct professor at Columbia, I thought photography to be my vocation. I did get to meet James Baldwin, though, which made my day, if not my decade.

However, I returned to McGill, took every course the political philosopher Charles Taylor offered and avoided all International Relations courses except one taught by Janice Stein. I graduated with a joint degree in political science and history, receiving a first class honours only, I believe, because the professors on the examination committee got into an intense inter-disciplinary argument that had nothing to do with my work. I took another year off, writing a novel that never got finished, and then, after seeking counsel from Stanley Hoffmann, I met on his suggestion with Hayward Alker, who set my head spinning in a very positive direction: Hayward convinced me that it might just be possible for me to find a home in International Relations.

But then the accidents kicked in with a vengeance. He sent me to the MIT admissions office, where I picked up the wrong applications, and while on the road I stopped at a public library and typed out a Rhodes application to Oxford. Two interviews followed; the last one was with a Chicago committee that mirrored its own oddness by selecting a radical ecologist, a Fidelista, the first Hispanic Rhodes ever (a *ranchero* poet no less) and a crypto-Trot with continental philosophical pretentions (me) as new Rhodes Scholars. What can I say, they were heady times.

SELF-ALIENATION

I went to Oxford intending to do political philosophy, but after alienating my first two tutors – one could only talk about John Rawls (and probably still does), and the other drank sherry and broke wind non-stop throughout our tutorials – I found my way to the Balliol office of a professor who reputedly knew how to run a graduate seminar as well as the traditional tutorial. After passing my entry interview with him by bald-facedly confessing to a chronic inability to distinguish a dependent from an independent variable – they all seemed interdependent – Hedley Bull took me on for four very stimulating years of tutorials and supervision.

I think it was the third or fourth week that Bull gave me the question that would eventually inspire *On Diplomacy*, vex me to this day and – as Trump tweets our way to World War III – take on a renewed relevance: 'Does western diplomacy have a viable future?' Deceptively simple, and impossibly difficult to answer, it grew into a master's and then a doctoral thesis, *A Genealogy of Western Diplomacy: From States of Alienation to the Alienation of States*. The title reflects several trips to Paris during term breaks for decent food, deep dives into the National Archives, and a fuller immersion into Foucault; the subtitle signifies the lingering influence of early Marx, from the 1844 Manuscripts to his critique of Proudhon's '*Philosophy of Poverty'* and his reversal of it to '*The Poverty of Philosophy'*.

Here the story could have split into several different directions. After months of benign neglect, Bull organized evening revisions of my thesis at his North Oxford home, fueled by fortifying bottles of Riesling. The *viva* for the D.Phil was parlous – three hours of such intensive grilling by Michael Howard and Adam Watson that I did not hear them say that I had passed. The garden party that followed was barely one step removed from Alice in Wonderland.

But then things got weirder. Bull, Howard and Watson recommended the dissertation to the Oxford University Press. Two external reviewers confirmed their assessment. The managing editor, a great grandson of a former Prime Minister, sent me a very effusive letter of agreement, saying a formal contract would shortly follow. I promptly bought a bottle of champagne and popped it with my colleagues.

This proved premature. It seems that at OUP (or at least its venerable Clarendon Press) there was a medieval holdover in which 'delegates' drawn from the Oxford faculty can lodge an objection in regard to a publication and request a secondary review of it by a referee of their choosing. This was duly done for *On Diplomacy* and the report, evidently (I was never privy to the review), came back negative. A few weeks later I received a very apologetic letter saying the offer would have to be rescinded (which in a similar case two years later would lead to a lawsuit by another author, who won on the grounds that a letter of agreement is equivalent to a contract).

One of the external reviewers was so offended by this turn of events that he literally took the manuscript in hand, went down the street to Blackwell's Press, and insisted they publish it. I had an excellent experience with Blackwell's for *On Diplomacy* as well as for the sequel, *Antidiplomacy*. For that extraordinarily good deed, an actualization, were there ever one, of Hegel's 'alienation of the alienation', I owe an enormous debt to John Vincent. He also wrote a very nice blurb for the sleeve jacket.

DOGGED DIPLOMACY

The first review of *On Diplomacy* stands out in sharp contrast. Written by a respected diplomatic historian, the reviewer damned me with very faint praise as 'modish',

'ambitious', and – the ultimate slam in British academic vernacular – 'clever'. He dismissed the 'pretentious language' as 'tedious' and concluded that the 'book is a conceit'. I think you can get the picture. I promptly violated the cardinal rule for a junior untenured scholar and sent him a letter that responded in kind (and then some in unkindness), burning whatever bridges might have been left with the banks of the mainstream. Fortunately, the second review of *On Diplomacy*, in the manner of the mediation of the mediation, negated the first; it is also the reason why to this day I always pick up Nick Rengger's bar bill. After that primal experience, I vowed always to punch up, never down.

Forever after, my publication path would go from the road to perdition one day to the yellow brick road the next. I will recount but one way station, where I won, literally, the contract to my last book (I now prefer the format and impact of the documentary film). It happened at an annual ISA meeting, but after-hours, at Buddy Guy's blues club in Chicago, where fellow IR theorist David Campbell and I were challenged to a high-stakes game of barroom pool by an acquisition editor and his hotshot assistant. The bet was written out on the back of the editor's business card: "HarperCollins agrees to publish the desired Work by the desired Author within 24 months"; if we lost, we picked up the very large bar bill for the evening. What followed was as close to an epiphany as one can get in a barroom. First up, I potted the first seven stripes but choked on the eight-ball. The editor's wingman matched me, and sank seven solids but missed the last one. Next up, Campbell called and pocketed the eight-ball (he still claims credit for the victory as well as the contract). I never again shot as good a game of billiards. Unlike Oxford University Press, HarperCollins honoured the agreement.

The evening (by then the morning) ended when Buddy Guy joined a local blues band on stage to sing 'My Time After Awhile'. The last line of the song, one I have never forgotten, is a fine coda for my chequered book journey from *On Diplomacy* to *Virtuous War*, and, I hope, a line of encouragement for others who have chosen the hard paths over the easy ones, who take a beating and keep getting back up:

"Go ahead and mistreat me, But every dog got his day."

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POSTSTRUCTURALISTS ALSO HAVE A DUTY OF METHODOLOGICAL CARE[1]

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On Diplomacy (Der Derian, 1987) was the first attempt at bringing theory to the study of diplomacy, and it was a solid piece of empirical research. However, I will leave the celebration of these qualities to others, and concentrate on the question of methodology, where the book also has importance for the discipline as such. Methodology, Patrick Jackson (2011) tells us, is the way in which we get our data (the production of which may be by way of many different methods) to tell us something about what lies beyond that data. The area of validity, that is, the domain that the data are supposed to tell us something about, is in this case known Western history; not pre-history, traditionally defined as the period before writing, and not the future.

ALIENATION

Methodology is only one of two techniques by dint of which *On Diplomacy* mediates between the empirical analysis and the world. The other is conceptual. Der Derian assumes a general human condition during the times and in the places that he analyses, namely alienation. If alienation is ubiquitous, then diplomacy will bear the marks of it, which means that the concept of alienation may be used as a resource with which to understand the practices of diplomacy, and that our understanding of the practices of diplomacy, in the degree that they demonstrate alienation, will tell us something about the general condition of alienation. In order to focus more specifically on how Der Derian draws on methodology to mediate between the data and the world, then, a preliminary on the work alienation does for the book seems in order.

Der Derian gives three reasons for the concept's relevance: Alienation invites a process-oriented analysis rather than a structural one; it invites theorizing about mediation, which is central to diplomacy; and it fits IR theorizing, which "attempts to explain a system by studying the genesis of its internal relations, which are seen as expressions of alienated *powers*" (Der Derian, 1987: 6).

Concepts have histories, and those histories determine their power. In the case of alienation, there is a legal root. In law, 'alienating' means transferring something to somebody else. There is also a biblical root, which alludes to the severing of direct

relations between the creator and creation in the Garden of Eden. It was Rousseau who introduced the concept to social theory, and Hegel that rounded it out as an analytical concept. Der Derian sums it up as follows:

> In summary and for future reference, we note the dialectical movement Hegel has evinced from alienation. First, in his philosophical usage: the positive alienation of Spirit for self-consciousness: its negative estrangement from the discord which follows; and a positive alienation of self-consciousness for a consensual social existence. Second, in his innovative systematic and sociological application: a negative intrapersonal estrangement created by the positive alienation of self-consciousness which can potentially be overcome by the positive estrangement of labour. [...] Hegel's philosophical account of alienation can be used to explain two critical moments of diplomatic history: when the mutual estrangement of states from Western Christendom gives rise to an international diplomatic system; and when the Third World's revolt against Western 'Lordship' precipitates the transformation of diplomacy into a truly global system (ibid.: 23).

Der Derian adds the meta-reflection that theorists are themselves alienated from the world by dint of their theorizing, for "...theorizing itself is a process of alienation: we must 'make strange', as did the Russian formalists in literature, our habitual ways of seeing diplomacy" (ibid.: 10). On the one hand, we have changing diplomatic practices, and on the other, we have a theoretical concept, alienation, which is inherent to the social world that Der Derian wants to study. The methodological question then becomes how to hook up the specific diplomatic practices to the world – or, more precisely, to the world understood as an alienating and alienated place. Der Derian's answer is genealogy.

GENEALOGY

A genealogy, as trail-blazed by Nietzsche (esp. 1996) and Foucault (esp. 1977), is, to use the jargon, a history of the present in terms of the past. A genealogy documents how what we know today emerged from something different, sometimes very different. A genealogy is not, as it were, a history of the past in terms of the present, which simply traces the phenomena in the form in which we have them today back through history (the most common way of writing history). Neither is it a history of the past in terms of the future, that is, a history of a goal of history that we have yet to glimpse but know is there, which is what some religiously inspired historians and also some Marxist historians write. Nor is it a history of the past in terms of the past, which is what the Cambridge School does when they tease out what texts by someone like Hobbes mean by minutially detailing to what and whom in his own time the author responded.

It is rather a way of accounting for how we ended up where we are now by treating a phenomenon in the same way that genealogists treat family trees.

Any individual has parents, grand-parents, great-grandparents, etc., and a key point is that there is not necessarily anything in the contemporary reality of, say, your 64 great-great-great-great-grandparents that ties them all together except the fact that they will be retroactively tied together by the fact that they engendered you. By the same token, any social phenomenon has more than one origin, and one cannot find those origins simply by looking at one celebrated ancestor. For example, as Foucault demonstrates in his genealogy of the state, the one celebrated ancestor of the European state is the Greek polis, but if we look at the genealogy of the welfare state, another deep origin, namely the idea and practice that humans are to be shepherded by a pastor, constitutes a second origin (Foucault, 2007). Some origins may be celebrated, and some may not be. One's family tree may include a 16th-century prince, as well as a 16th-century pirate. The social phenomenon of the fashion model has an origin in the actress, but also in the demimonde and the Bohemians (C. Neumann, forthcoming).

Once the contemporary phenomenon to be studied is isolated, the way to produce the data needed – the genealogical method – is to trace that phenomenon back to where it became a problem that called for some kind of social solution. The way to do that is to trace the phenomenon back in time to a point where it looked decidedly different, and then trace it forward until it becomes a problem. The problem-solving period is the break in the phenomenon's social existence, and the time that separates two different periods of that existence. Once that job is done, the procedure is repeated, with the previous incarnation of the phenomenon as the base point of back-tracing to an even earlier incarnation of the phenomenon, and forward-tracing to specify the relevant break. Ideally, this goes on until the known history of some area is covered, and the genealogy is finished.

The methodology and accompanying method of genealogy are what Der Derian draws on to theorize the phenomenon of diplomacy. The immediate purchase is that he beats previous writers on diplomacy, who simply told the history of diplomacy by projecting their contemporary incarnation of diplomacy onto previous periods. To take a key example, Harold Nicolson writes about 20th-century diplomacy as being simply a more elaborate version of 15th-century diplomacy, which, in turn, is more elaborate than ancient Greek diplomacy of the 5th century BCE. Or, as Der Derian puts it, in Nicolson, "glib descriptive pronouncements not infrequently stand in for explanatory statements" (1987: 81).

EXECUTION

Methodological kudos are due to James Der Derian for having produced the first book-length genealogy in IR. He identifies six periods or 'paradigms' of Western

diplomacy and estrangement: mytho-diplomacy, proto-diplomacy, diplomacy, anti-diplomacy, neo-diplomacy, and techno-diplomacy. There is, however, a problem, and it is to do with exactly how these breaks are identified and understood. Let me try to demonstrate what I mean by giving a short exposition of how Der Derian presents the breaks.

> Mytho-diplomacy is:
>   a paradigm for the seminal essay to mediate through sacred symbols the fear and estrangement between man and God and between peoples. […] the emergence of mytho-diplomacy corresponds to the alienation (transfer) of immediate conflicts – arising from man's interaction with man and with nature – to an atemporal plane where they could be rendered intelligible and manageable (1987: 50).

This is insightful and convincing. There is, however, a sense in which 'the West' remains alienated from gods and nature in the way discussed here, and so the genealogist must ask: when did this kind of alienation become a problem for humans, how did they forge an answer to that kind of alienation, and when did the answer come to overshadow proto-diplomacy in importance? In other words: why, how and when did the break occur?

Der Derian's answer is to do with social differentiation. Proto-diplomacy emerged as a solution to the problem of numerous conflicts between three subject positions which all have a central bearing on mediation: the trader, the warrior and the priest. Since the trader is the least well known of these origins (which is ironic, given that he was the one who ruled the roost before social differentiation set in), Der Derian focuses on him:

> Often the 'alien trader' and the envoy would be one and the same, such as the venetian bailos, the English Levant Company in Constantinople, or individual merchants like the Englishman William Caxton, who negotiated treaties between England, Burgundy, and the Hansa merchants. Typical of their limited legal status were the letters patent of 1386 granted by the Crown of France which assumed the seigneural privilege to inherit all of the alien's property upon his death, and only by omission tacitly allowed for his acquisitions and posssession of property (ibid.: 87).

Three new developments constitute the problem that leads from Western proto-diplomacy to diplomacy: contacts with Saracens, the discovery of 'the new world' and Machiavelli's writings, which "exploded the remnants of a mythical Christian unity to open the way for a system of diplomacy based on states' interests" (ibid.:

102). The result was a diplomacy that reified 'raison d'état', as laid out by Meinecke: "It was the diplomat, sending in his reports, who was the acknowledged discoverer of the interests of states... he found himself compelled to try and bring events, plans, and the possibilities at any particular time, over one common denominator" (quoted in ibid.: 103).

The break between proto-diplomacy and diplomacy is much more incisively marked than the one between mytho-diplomacy and proto-diplomacy. It is to do with the increased contacts with a powerful Other that followed the Crusades, and came to a head with the problem of how to categorize the humans (?) of the 'new world' and the turning of Christianity into Europe, which places it squarely in the first half of the second millennium. An immediate question, however, is how we should think of these three factors in relation to one another. Exactly how are they modular? Why isn't the emergence of these new problems large enough for them to count as breaks in their own right? How long before the uptake of Machiavelli's writings was so widespread that we have not only a shift in ideas, but a shift in social practice, which is what the genealogist is after? What about the incredible professionalization and institutionalization of diplomacy that began with the emergence of Foreign Ministries in the late 18th century (I. Neumann, 2011)?

As diplomacy faded, anti-diplomacy came along and exploded the idea of raison d'état in the name of utopian universal humanity:

A genealogy of diplomacy, we saw, is about the conflicts, fears, and estrangement which made diplomacy necessary and possible. Utopias are essential to this genealogy because their picture of an optimum society is at once a longing for the lost unity which made mytho-diplomacy possible; a critique of the conditions of fear and estrangement which made diplomacy necessary; and an imaginative programme for making the demise of diplomacy, if not probable, at least not impossible. This last feature of utopian thought is what earns it a special place in the anti-diplomacy paradigm. [...] We have identified a variety of power rituals which have contributed to the development of diplomacy, for example, sacrifice, gift-exchange, precedence, courtoisie, and civilité. These rituals correspond to descending mediations of discord and estrangement, viz. God, Christ, pope, and monarch. A utopian writer projects a further downward step and a lateral step, to a diagonal mediation one might say, because, in the words of Thomas More, he "desires rather than expects" a future self-mediation of power which is rationalized through ritual (Der Derian, 1987: 142, 144).

Neither the the French nor the Russian revolution was able to pull off anti-diplomacy, and so they quickly reverted to what Der Derian calls neo-diplomacy, where

the diplomat mediates not (only) on behalf of his state, but (also) on behalf of humanity as such:

> The situation of Dr Franklin, as Minister from America to France, should be taken into the chain of circumstances. The diplomatic character is of itself the narrowest sphere of society that man can act in. It forbids intercourse by the reciprocity of suspicion; and a diplomatic is a sort of unconnected atom, continually repelling and repelled. But this was not the case with Dr Franklin. He was not the diplomatic of a Court, but of MAN (Thomas Paine quoted in ibid.: 172).

There is then a shift to techno-diplomacy: "As time replaces space as the significant mediation of diplomacy, crisis-management takes the place of reflective decision-making. If and when laser weapons and artificial intelligence finally replace 'slow' kinetic weapons and human minds, we might then speak of an end to a genealogy of diplomacy" (ibid.: 208). This was to become the key topic (or should we say paradigm) of Der Derian's succeeding period as a scholar.

Again, the breaks from anti- to neo- to techno-diplomacy strike the reader as underdeveloped. For example, anti-diplomacy is clearly an ongoing phenomenon: witness Iranian diplomacy post 1979, Afghan diplomacy under the Taliban, present IS-diplomacy and, for that matter, any revolutionary diplomacy. Neo-diplomacy is also ongoing, as can be seen, for example, in the continuing phenomenon of American exceptionalism. Franklin is still, as it were, with us in spirit. True, answers to other problems have probably overshadowed the answers to alienation that were neo-diplomacy and anti-diplomacy, but how and when did that happen?

My criticism of the lack of care that has gone into arguing the case for the analytical breaks that the book operates with is not extrinsic to the text. It is an intrinsic critique, for Der Derian takes care not to reify these when he writes about their status that "Occasionally, after a great conquest or defeat – be it military, diplomatic, or even technological – the historical flux seems to crystallize, sometimes long enough for us warily to speak of a paradigm" (ibid.: 70). I should also rush to say that he does provide reasons why he identifies the breaks where he does. My critique is not of a lack of answers, but of a certain lack of acknowledgement of the principle that poststructuralists have the same duty to care about the specificities of methodology as do all other scholars. Consider what is said regarding the transition from the paradigm or period Der Derian calls 'proto-diplomacy' (the Middle Ages, the Renaissance) to 'diplomacy' (from the Renaissance to the Napoleonic Wars):

> What gives definition to a diplomatic system, I have argued, is not the structure itself, but the conflicting relations which maintain, reproduce, and sometimes transform it. And since our concern here is with the emerging of a new

system, which implies conflicts internal to the system and between the system and its predecessor, proto-diplomacy, we will first search out the crises that make the antagonistic relations visible – and definable. A crisis, in this sense, represents a diachronic event or, more familiarly, a 'watershed', which allows us to identify decisive *moments* in the development of diplomacy without defying its discontinuous *movements*. [...] our primary focus, then, will be on the conflicts which first made diplomacy necessary, followed in importance by the collaborations which made it possible. We should remember two previously noted factors: the etymological evidence, supplied by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, that *diplomacy* and *mediation* acquired their modern meanings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and that new usages of words do not necessarily signify the emergence of new phenomena. But they do suggest a critical juncture in diplomatic history where traditional practices and descriptive names are under attack (ibid.: 106–107).

So, what a genealogy, and most particularly Foucauldian genealogy, does is to demonstrate how knowledge and power intertwine in different ways to produce an historically changing social phenomenon like diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

In terms of methodology, there is one key problem with the way this book carries out its genealogical reading. It does not lie in stylistics, or in the way the book tells the history (in the form of a genealogy) of diplomacy chronologically. That is alright: readers are used to thinking from the past towards the future, and readers must be accommodated for a book to be legible. The problem, which stands out even in a short précis of the periods as recounted here, is that the book seems to have been researched *not* by going back in time and then going forward again to identify breaks, but by going forward all the time. As a result, we get the breaks, but we do not get the details about how these breaks played out beyond the barest outlines. Der Derian acknowledges this, and puts it down to genealogy's limitations as a method. Given the time spans involved, Der Derian seems to argue, genealogical analyses have to remain bird's-eye rather than detailed: "We can do little better than investigate the *perspectives*, that is, the apparent relationship between important actors and the utopian thinkers and thoughts of their day" (1987: 157).

I wonder, however, if this limitation is not located in the way Der Derian has applied the genealogical methodology and method in this book, rather than in any inherent limitations thereof. If so, I take it to mean that Der Derian's book is even more valuable than we thought, for it is also an invitation to complement the first-cut analyses of the breaks in diplomacy's genealogy in more detail. Perhaps such further studies may even move some of the breaks in time and so question the junctures and

ruptures that it suggests. Such an emergence of further work would be an even greater homage to *On Diplomacy* than this forum.

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DIPLOMACY AND THE OTHER – AND WAGNER

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Much of the practice and study of diplomacy is preoccupied with the question of 'how': specifically, how to advance the interests of a particular state or stabilize the system of states. *On Diplomacy* remains refreshing in its effort to move past this busyness and ask fundamental questions about what diplomacy is for and what levers move the field in its core. By radically defamiliarizing the history of diplomacy, Der Derian (1987: 67) probes questions about social relations and symbolic mediation that traditional diplomatic theory has failed to ask. In the relational core of diplomacy, Der Derian sees alienation. Underneath the lofty rhetoric of engagement, understanding, and peace he discerns estrangement, domination, and violence.

Is it possible to go further down on that journey? Can there be anything other than estrangement at the heart of diplomacy? My comments probe these questions by putting Der Derian into another conversation with the thinkers whom he uses as well as one he bypasses. I argue that diplomacy is fundamentally about the en-

counter between Self and Other. Estrangement is the principal facet of that encounter in the world in which we live today, but it is not necessarily all there is to that encounter.

SYMBOL AND MYTH

Der Derian approaches diplomacy not from the familiar angle of daily institutional practice but from the angle of myth. Mythology, he notes, is the opposite of common sense: it is a system of sacred symbols for ordering and communicating the human experience (Der Derian, 1987: 49). A myth is not a story about what happened or could have happened; it is about the pre-history of what happened. Its power as an analytical tool stems from the ways in which myth can reveal the possibilities deeply rooted in human encounters before anything happens. As Roger Scruton (2016: 33, 57) puts it, myth is not about what is first in time but about what is first in essence: it is a magical realist summary that illuminates the emotional and moral possibilities inherent in the actual world. To reach for myth as a lens on the social world is to step into a different level of analysis.

The insights possible at that level are discernible in several of the works that Der Derian cites. Diplomacy in the sense of "the ordered conduct of relations between one group of human beings and another group alien to themselves", Harold Nicolson notes, "is far older than history" (Der Derian, 1987: 44). Nicolson's remark is not about states, peoples, or the people; it is about human beings. When Adam Watson suggests that diplomacy's rules of immunity have something to do with religious taboos, he points to pre-modern symbolic structures underneath modern protocol (ibid.: 45). When Llewellyn Woodward defines diplomacy as an attempt to "increase human freedom" and "drive out fear" (ibid.: 50), he speaks not of power, interest, stability, or the free world; he speaks of human freedom. That Woodward evokes human freedom in 1945, when something more practical or programmatic may seem appropriate, indicates that we need to take the concept of freedom seriously. To understand diplomacy, Woodward continues, we need to "reach out beyond the borderlines of history". He recognizes, I think, that diplomacy touches on some fundamental dilemmas that animate human endeavor and must be explored "beyond the reach of chance events" (Scruton, 2016: 31).

Many accounts speak of diplomacy as a sustained effort to engage with other actors, interests, and perspectives. Even though some of this is self-indulgent navel-gazing, it is worth exploring the symbolic structures that enable engagement. For Der Derian, these structures are about estrangement. Mutual recognition is tantamount to mutual estrangement, he says (Der Derian, 1987: 117), for people are estranged from what and whom they fear and cannot control. Diplomatic mediation thus arises from the mutual recognition of national insecurity (ibid.: 41). At the level of daily administration and common sense, Der Derian is correct. At the level of

mythology, the sacred symbols that underpin the common sense but are obscured by it, diplomacy is a mediation of otherness.

This encounter with the Other is at the heart of the point by Bakhtin that Der Derian uses as the epitaph for an entire chapter. "Man has no internal sovereign territory", Bakhtin says, "he is all and always on the boundary; looking within himself, he looks *in the eyes of the other or through the eyes of the other*" (ibid.: 168, emphasis in original). Bakhtin sees the link between Self and Other as a fundamental facet of human aspiration. He likewise sees an essential link between political currents and emotional ones: the hold of power and law on our psyche and the emotional structures that undergird political and legal ones. He thereby prompts us to ask what happens at that boundary between Self and Other—what happens there in intellectual as well as emotional terms—and what could happen there.

DIFFERENCE AND FREEDOM

It is the link between political processes and emotional ones that brings me to a thinker whom Der Derian bypasses but many others consider essential to our thinking on power and subjectivity – Richard Wagner. Among the philosophers whom Der Derian (ibid.: 50) identifies as his most important guides – Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, Levi-Strauss, and Foucault – Wagner is engaged with or present in the work of almost every one of them. He was deeply influenced by Hegel and Feuerbach, his treatment of freedom bears striking similarities with that of his contemporary Marx – whom he not as much contests as transcends – and he was a key influence on both Nietzsche and Levi-Strauss (Scruton, 2016: 284).[2] I thus read *On Diplomacy* alongside Wagner's *Ring Cycle* and *Parsifal,* as well as the commentary on these works by several philosophers and especially Roger Scruton (2004; 2016), to probe diplomacy from an angle that Der Derian skips.

Wagner's work is centrally about the encounter with the Other and the role of power, law and the sacred in that experience. He was searching for ways to understand, and to overcome, the "accumulation of power and fear" (Der Derian, 1987: 55) that gives rise to endemic cycles of violence. Wagner believed that "all that is most important in our lives occurs both outwardly in the realm of politics and law, and inwardly in the realm of love, need, and resignation. And the two processes unfold in parallel, since they are ultimately one and the same" (Scruton, 2016: 53). It is this link between the political and the personal, law and emotions, and power and subjectivity that IR theory tends to obscure but Wagner illuminates with astonishing force and nuance. He shows that the encounter with the Other is a prerequisite for one's freedom and individuality.

Violence can be overcome not through pacifying the Other but by recognizing their inalienable right to freedom and selfhood autonomously from us. Recognition in that sense is not a token instrumentalist acceptance that one cannot dominate

the Other but a deeper existential and emotional acceptance that the freedom of the Other is a prerequisite for one's own freedom. To fully recognize the Other is to recognize that one's own selfhood depends on this. To be a person is to respect other persons as ends in themselves (Scruton, 2016: 17). Diplomacy as a practice of engaging with difference is thus premised on the recognition that political subjectivity is fundamentally relational.

THE SELF AS THE OTHER

Wagner was far from first to grasp this relationality intellectually. What he adds is that recognition is not only an intellectual exercise but also an emotional and visceral leap of faith. It is because of the emotional substance of dominance and power that recognition is so difficult in a society that compels us to treat others as objects and not as subjects. Wagner shows the true cost of recognition, and he shows the even greater cost of not reaching for it. The price of domination, Wagner shows, is the denial of subjectivity, and that price is paid first by those who seek to dominate.

At the level of daily events, diplomats are civil servants and diplomacy is an arm of the state bureaucracy. There is no shortage of hubris in the profession. But to be effective, diplomats need to create personal relationships of trust. To do that, they need to be able to relate to the human beings on the other side "as persons", to quote one experienced diplomat I interviewed for my work. Most of diplomatic practice is transactional negotiation and advocacy around specific issues. But underneath the transactional busywork can be, and, some argue, needs to be, a reflexive and potentially transformational engagement with difference. Recognizing the interdependence of political actors reminds us, or at least should remind us, that our freedom requires that of the Other.

At the level of mythology, then – the level that packs the possibilities before anything happens – diplomacy is about the encounter with difference. It is both a practice of power, and, potentially, an ethic of subjectivity in relations with others (see Constantinou, 2013: 156). Beneath the busywork around trade deals and international posturing is the encounter with, and boundary between, Self and Other. In that encounter, diplomacy can reveal "new or expanding" spaces, shift perspectives on the Self, and thereby enable different encounters with the Other (Constantinou, 2010: 67; see also Constantinou, 2013; Kuus, 2016). Estrangement is central to politics at both collective and individual level today: much of international relations is about the pursuit of domination and the rules that both codify and legitimize it. Whether estrangement is the only possibility in that encounter is a different question.

On Diplomacy prompts us to embark on this path of reflection, but it does not guide us far on the path itself. Freedom, recognition, and the Other do not feature in the index. Perhaps this is because the book's principal focus is not diplomacy but International Relations (IR) theory. The struggles for recognition in the book are the

struggles fought in IR theory at the time. In that field of intellectual endeavor, the master-slave relation is habitually read in terms of reversals: freedom and enslavement are in a zero-sum game in which one's freedom is pursued at the expense of the other. This premise yields elaborate theorizing around the codification of violence through rules. The rule of vengeance is replaced by the rule of law, but the new rule, too, requires violence to enforce it. Power is domesticated in institutions, but its hold on our subjectivity remains intact (see Scruton, 2016: 87). It is the emotional base of politics, one that political theory tends to evade, that Wagner illuminates with profound insight. An engagement with his work can add a new awareness to our thinking about political subjectivity.

On Diplomacy is most valuable in its effort to articulate fundamental philosophical ideas about power, difference, and freedom in the core of international relations. Through his exploration of symbolic structures, Der Derian underscores the fundamental relationality of international politics. This is the lesson from Wagner: that our subjectivity depends on recognizing the free subjectivity of the Other (Scruton, 2016: 21). At the end, Der Derian (1987: 209), too, circles back to the existential encounter between Self and Other. "Until we learn to recognize ourselves as the other," he says, "we shall be in danger, and we shall be in need of diplomacy".

ENDNOTES

[1] I am grateful to Halvard Leira for inviting me to participate in the panel and to Benjamin Tallis and Costas Constantinou for engaging with the ideas presented here.

[2] The philosophical literature on Wagner is voluminous and diverse: his work has inspired thinkers across the entire spectrum of political theory. A Marxist like Žižek (2010; Žižek and Dolar, 2002) and a traditional conservative like Scruton (2004; 2016) disagree on many things, but they agree on the fundamental importance of Wagner for the most pressing political and existential questions of our time.

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ON DIPLOMACY BEYOND *ON DIPLOMACY*: TIME FOR A 'SECOND' EDITION

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When I was invited to take part in the 2017 ISA celebration for the 30 years of *On Diplomacy* I realized I had in fact lost the book. Twice. I first misplaced a second-hand copy of James Der Derian's classic somewhere in-between moving from Norway to the hallways of the aptly-named Hedley Bull Centre at the Australian National University (ANU), where I studied for my postgraduate degree in diplomacy. As I started my PhD in diplomacy at the ANU, *On Diplomacy* was one of a few texts I could not afford not to re-buy: considered a classic of diplomatic studies and already rare in libraries around campus, for many, the volume had already become 'a must'. Many years and a few overseas moves later, I lost the copy I bought at the ANU as well. I brought it to a class in my "Negotiation" course at University College London's Faculty of Engineering Sciences only for some eager scientist to appropriate the slightly faded pages in view of the upcoming essay deadline – a good sign of the appeal of more lyrical diplomatic thinking amidst technocratic experts, I thought there and then.

Accustomed to searching for and purchasing different sorts of texts, I was struck by the lack of copies of *On Diplomacy* in academic bookstores around London, a void that was only accentuated by Amazon's cheeky suggestion that I purchase a second-hand hardback copy for just £235 – quite the bargain for a vintage title really. Losing the second copy could not have been more timely. Having only managed to borrow another second-hand copy from King's College's library shortly before ISA 2017, I pondered quite publicly whether I should have stolen an original copy for myself as Paul Sharp placed his on the table at the convention roundtable. Der Derian's classic is a book well worth the risk, I reckoned.

No doubt, I cannot boast an affair with *On Diplomacy* as extensive as those of some of the other scholars in this forum. In 1987, as *On Diplomacy* was 'hitting the shelves', I was less preoccupied by the interventions of Fred Halliday (1987) on *The Making of the Second Cold War*, as noted by Sharp, than by scrolling through the pages of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1986). Unlike the more senior figures in this forum, I made my acquaintance with Der Derian's foundational text much

later, in the early-2000s at the ANU, when the text was assigned, appropriately enough, in a session on Hedley Bull and the English School. Yet Der Derian's work had a different style (and logic) from the other classics of that IR period: it spoke of complex historical processes, but kept its gaze on the *cultural* complexity of the diplomatic milieu. In so doing it fed into my growing fascination with diplomacy proper – and studies of such – as more general IR literature seemed to overlook these intricate structures and their pre-Westphalian roots.

As I grappled with the complexities of the great debates and the intricacies of current shifts in IR theory, it confirmed to me that my purpose in academia was to engage with that particular, peculiar world of diplomacy, which, although it might receive less attention, and less frequent or feted publications, displays a resilience and an enthusiasm that few other strands of social science can. The ISA celebration was, therefore, not just a good chance to look for another copy of the book: it spoke of why we should look back again at our diplomatic studies tradition, but it also spoke of the need to hold that in tension with the 'new diplomacy' of our present time, which is characterized by radical global transformations and formidable theoretical challenges. Most of all, it reminded me that the part of the book that really sparked my interest in the type of diplomacy I work on (e.g. Acuto 2011), came at the end. I would therefore like to offer some reflections here on the importance, but also the incompleteness, of *On Diplomacy* for a generation of diplomatic scholars that, like me, has predominantly developed in the contexts of debates on the 'new' domains of diplomacy.

ON DIPLOMACY BEYOND DIPLOMACY

On Diplomacy is a persuasive narration of the historical formation of a diplomatic culture. As Neumann (in this forum) already pointed out, the book reminds us of the strength of the 'essayist tradition' in IR – a tradition that goes beyond the dominance of structured qualitative assessments of world politics and exceeds the shadow cast by often even less readable quantitative tomes. *On Diplomacy* did not compromise with the behaviouralist tendencies popular in (world) politics at the time. Nor did it make do with a present-tense discussion of many IR texts in what – we would later learn – was the last decade of the Cold War. Rather, perhaps thanks to Bull's mentoring, it stayed the course as a historical reconstruction offering historical arguments. As such, it stands as an example to the present generation of diplomatic scholars of the value of challenging the dominance of the 'now' in academia, a challenge to the urgency of policy and the pressure for rapid publication. Der Derian is not always easy to read, or indeed grasp, but he most certainly presents us with a text that has remained pertinent, convincing and dense in persuasive assertions (a mark of many Enlightenment essayists like Samuel Johnson and Joseph Addison) that still echo across diplomatic research papers, syllabi and discussions – as our ISA roundtable proved.

Yet as Jef Huysmans (1997: 337) noted on the book's tenth anniversary, Der Derian's work is "often a bit of a rough ride" and should perhaps be best understood not as a "single entity" but as a series of "poststructuralist interventions" in IR between more 'heavy' scholarly interventions on one hand and more 'pop' activism between media, opinions and cross-disciplinary experimentation on the other. Representative of the former type of Der Derian, *On Diplomacy* is thick in theory whilst, in a sense, not being a theoretical book: Nietzsche, Hegel, and Marx all loom large in the discussion of the book's most famed idea: that diplomacy is the mediation of 'estrangements'. This has certainly inspired Foucauldian approaches to diplomatic analysis in the past three decades, but it should also remind us of the importance of not losing sight of the symbolic and inter-cultural powers of the diplomatic profession. I would argue, however, that *On Diplomacy* must be read in dialogue with the other kinds of Der Derian that are out there – including the one that turned up at the ISA celebration, and that gestures well beyond the limits of IR as a discipline, probing and poking at innovative methods and unlikely disciplinary engagements. After all, this is why *On Diplomacy* was on my syllabus, and perhaps why it disappeared from my desk whilst I was teaching in the Faculty of Engineering Sciences.

Indeed, I originally put *On Diplomacy* to work for an inquiry *beyond* diplomacy, which took the descriptions (and pre-scriptions) of the last chapter seriously and was inspired by that spirit of curious engagement with technology that is key in the study of diplomatic affairs. I always read *On Diplomacy*'s more forward-looking discussions of changes in the scientific-technological bases, and the types of 'diplomats' engaged, in light of the Der Derian that came after 1987, who is exemplified by the book *Antidiplomacy* (1992) and the article 'Virtuous War' (2000). In light of these, *On Diplomacy's* last few pages were not enough, alone, to satisfy my early appetite for understanding the contemporary and historical technological challenges of – and to – diplomatic cultures. Yet they undoubtedly contained embryos which would echo in these later important works: the Der Derian of *On Diplomacy* was already telling us to go beyond diplomacy, into its radical transformations.

Years later, taking IR methodology further beyond the comfort zone that *On Diplomacy* had already pushed the limits of, Der Derian would continue to test its historical discussions, classic conditions and preconceptions of causality. For instance, in an article (2011: 373) on the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of President Ronald Reagan, he attempted a mix of visual culture and IR sensibilities to see whether the "ubiquity, interconnectivity and reflexivity of global media" was in fact symptomatic of a new quality and speed of today's diplomatic milieu. The 2011 model Der Derian, as the 1987 one, calls for better diplomatic sensibilities (to the entanglements of diplomats) as much as for novel means for diplomatic studies.

The 'techno diplomacy' of *On Diplomacy* should also be understood in its transition from the novelty in diplomatic method and practice discussed by Der Derian in

1987, to the foundations of his present disruptive intervention in rethinking the methods and ontology of IR from the 'quantum' up (e.g. Der Derian and Foldy, 2015). Welcoming the readers of *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* "to the weird new worlds" (Der Derian, 2011: 373) of this type of diplomatic landscape, this is a different Der Derian to the Bull-inspired 1987 model, and yet he also stands in dialogue with that last chapter of *On Diplomacy* that warned us that already the times were indeed 'a-changing'. As Noe Cornago summarized at the ISA roundtable, one of the marks of Der Derian's take on diplomacy is in his capacity to go looking for new signs and new symptoms of major transitions – something that eventually emerges in the 'techno' diplomacy of the book but also something that has been re-iterated across his scholarship over the years. Key here, in my view, are the changes in the 'mediation' that is at the heart of *On Diplomacy*.

What has happened in the years since 1987, then, is an exponential expansion of the mediations and the estrangements that were so well captured in the original text. The rise of non-traditional diplomatic actors, which was documented in its early days in *On Diplomacy's* technology chapter, has been accompanied by a growing awareness in IR (beyond the *realpolitik* of the first debate) of the material underpinnings of the diplomatic game. 'Things' and material objects, as well as non-state diplomats, are now more widely recognized as populating a scene that might in fact have far more 'techno diplomacy' than ever before (Mayer and Acuto, 2016). IR as a discipline is thus after all forced to reconsider its practices of mediations amid a rampant variety of cultural, political, economic and technological estrangements.

On Diplomacy contained important seeds of subsequent work by Der Derian (2000, 2011) but also work that others in diplomatic studies (e.g. Bjola and Homes, 2015) find critical to much of the way in which we speak of diplomacy today. We can appreciate how the symbolic relations discussed in *On Diplomacy* allow us to better understand the dynamics of 'post-international society' estrangement in the present. Yet here too we encounter some initial appreciation of the paradoxical clash of diplomatic culture with new (para-)diplomatic cultures, and the continuous alienation of diplomats themselves from their own system. An often under-appreciated element of *On Diplomacy* is, therefore, its still pertinent flagging of what we could term the 'unevenness' of alienation that underpins estrangements and the differential impact that changing socio-technical conditions have on diplomats and their culture(s). As Der Derian notes in the book, and as the ISA roundtable confirmed, these estrangements happen by multiple means, not just verbal or quintessentially international ones. Yet this begs us to read more of Der Derian's diplomacy after *On Diplomacy*.

ON DIPLOMACY AFTER *ON DIPLOMACY*

If we read *On Diplomacy* in light of Der Derian's more recent quantum turn and its representation in his 'Project Q'[1], we need to ask ourselves not just about the

mediatory role that diplomatic agents might have, but also about the alienation of diplomats themselves, who often struggle to know what the system does to them - in a reversal of the logic of *On Diplomacy*. Hence, *On Diplomacy*'s tongue-in-cheek preamble on the imminent 'demise' of diplomacy, setting the readers up for what is in fact a solid argument for the value and the culture of diplomatic engagements, remains today more than ever a pertinent 'essay question': does diplomacy, Western or otherwise, have a viable future? Will it withstand its necessary stretch to a wider and more complex realm, and make the necessary 'quantum' changes?

By his own admission, there is an unlikely line of work that goes from the still very classical IR style and themes of *On Diplomacy*, to the multimedia and posthuman experimentations of Project Q, via a middle ground of 2011's "quantum diplomacy". Yet this is a trajectory that certainly foreshadows much of the contemporary turn to neo-materialism and STS-infused IR (e.g. Salter, 2015). This approach to 'IR' (if we can still call it IR) also calls for novel theoretical and empirical tests and for a sense of the present as an exciting experimental and necessary moment. As he noted in a recent interview, Der Derian's international society-inflected tendency towards historical IR in *On Diplomacy* might also have to give way to more attention to current affairs: "Political science", as he puts it, "is too busy looking in the rear view mirror, to prove how we got here with models and numbers, to deal with *now*", and to appreciate that, Der Derian suggests, from a Project Q perspective, that "you have to look over the horizon, look beyond the disciplinary boundaries" (in Caso, 2016). He makes an apt call for a transformed and more experimental diplomatic tradition, which would be historically aware, but not stuck in the past or lost in the now, with no rejection (as the ISA roundtable proved) of the value of re-reading history as a foundation of our shared IR discipline. Balancing the needs of past, present and future in such enquiries emerges as a key concern.

As he puts it then, again speaking of Project Q more than *On Diplomacy*, but embodying the 1980s spirit of his earlier work, "the best progress – epistemic, ethical, political – comes through a respectful dissent, not consensus." Respectfully, Der Derian had already offered quite some disagreement with the predominant state-centric tradition of diplomacy of the 1970s and 1980s by speaking, and writing, of symbolic power and alienated relations of estrangement. Today, still respectfully, but perhaps in a less tongue-in-cheek manner, Der Derian still takes a hit at the world of IR. After all, it might be time for Der Derian to return to this more traditional path and, conscious of the advances of Project Q, consider a sequel to the 1987 classic. It is perhaps a good moment for him to begin working on *On Technology: A Genealogy of Diplomatic Estrangement*, picking up from where he left 30 years ago, and telling what is, after all, the future of diplomats and diplo-

matic culture in a world of quantum entanglements. That would certainly be another book worth stealing.

ENDNOTES

[1] Led by Der Derian at the University of Sydney and funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Project Q has sought to engage IR scholars, physicists and philosophers in a discussion of peace and security dynamics in a "Quantum Age". See more at: https://projectqsydney.com (Accessed 20/05/2017).

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RE-READING *ON DIPLOMACY*

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It is difficult to believe that James Der Derian's *On Diplomacy* (*OD*) is thirty years old. That it remains essential reading for anyone interested in theorizing diplomacy is both a tribute to its quality and, perhaps, a comment on the fits and starts with which diplomatic theory has developed since that time. When asked to participate in the

roundtable on the book organized by Halvard Leira, I felt honored. I also felt not a little worried. I find it a difficult book, and the other people on the roundtable are the sort who not only write theory easily, but they speak theory easily too, and they even do so in their second or third languages. What follows, therefore, is not a critique, and it is still less an argument. It is a set of reflections prompted by re-visiting *OD*, re-visiting Word Perfect notes from my first encounter with the book in the early 1990s, and trying to think through what it offers people who study diplomacy and who practice diplomacy today.

CONTEXTS

Where to place *OD* historically? The book first appeared in 1987 – a big year for diplomacy. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was signed that year, which is widely seen now as signaling that the Cold War had completely lost its animating spirit, and the Brundtland Report was published. Therefore, it was out with the old – managing the nuclear-armed great power competition – and in with the new – managing sustainable development and Our Common Future. However, the book had been put together in far more worrying times that were then just recently past. E. P. Thompson's *Heavy Dancers* (1985), his meditations on exterminism (1983), and Fred Halliday's *Origins of the Second Cold War* (1983) with its injunctions that the intellectual left should take the international politics of states more seriously, while mainstream IR should take the post-capitalist state fact more seriously, probably better capture the milieu of its gestation. And, of course, by the time I read *OD,* the USSR had gone and terms like 'the New World Order', 'uncommon coalitions' and 'the unipolar moment' were being promoted to capture what international relations were now about. In short, there are multiple possible contexts in which to place the book.

These difficulties of placement, indeed, the difficulties of identifying defining milestones in diplomacy generally, are nicely illustrated by the way *OD* begins:

> Why an inquiry into the origins of Western Diplomacy? There are some practical reasons, the most immediate one being the supposed crisis in which diplomacy finds itself today. On the evidence of physical risks, and political and technological changes the diplomat has been listed as an endangered species: the increase in the forcible occupations of diplomatic missions, the development of summitry and shuttle diplomacy, the spread of instant communications, and the burgeoning of espionage are frequently cited as factors leading to the imminent demise of diplomacy. But does this constitute a crisis, or even something new, in the history of diplomacy? (Der Derian, 1987: 1)

On first reading, it's not exactly an explosive opening. And as far as the development of diplomatic studies is concerned, it is somewhat depressing to note that

such a paragraph, with only minor changes (we could add terrorism, cyberism and social mediaism, maybe), would not seem out of place at the head of a paper, article or book on diplomacy written now. Is that as far as we have come in thirty years, still presenting the same old litany of changes and challenges which are said to confront diplomacy? It's not the litany in the opening paragraph of *OD* that matters, however, but the appending of "supposed" to "crisis" in the second sentence, the question with which the paragraph ends, and the answer which the book provides.

The idea of diplomacy in crisis is not a new one. Customarily it is answered in one of two ways. The first position is 'yes, diplomacy is in crisis and will perish if it fails to adjust'. This is Barry Fulton's (1998) argument, for example. The second position is 'no, diplomacy is not in crisis, and to think it is to confuse ephemera with essentials. It needs merely to adjust and accommodate.' This is the general position reached by multiple official and semi-official government-sponsored conferences on diplomacy.[1] Others have noted that crisis appears as a permanent condition of diplomacy, but then have tended to default to the second position (e.g. Hocking, 1995). In contrast, *OD* collapses this choice and finesses the answer through a genealogy which shows diplomacy not to be in crisis. Rather, it is a term which emerges in a Western world which moves in and out of crises involving how human beings understand themselves in the general scheme of things and the terms on which they have relations with one another. This movement is turbulent and the effort to manage it is strenuous and imperfect, but together they constitute conditions which, very broadly speaking, may be regarded as normal, by us at least, if not by those who experience them.

I lack the expertise to comment on *OD*'s use of alienation and types of alienation other than to note the intuitive suggestiveness with which these ideas strike most students of diplomacy, although most of us do not do much with them. I also cannot really comment on the general account of Western estrangement other than to note that it is the work of a virtuoso with which I can barely keep up, and I am in no position to pull it up on any particular point. Another contributor to the roundtable has raised questions about the book's account of how different conditions of alienation give rise to different types of mediation. Were I to make a comment along these lines, it would be about how a quick reading of the different types of diplomacy suggests a measure of historical stageism, an evolution or progress of diplomacy (which *OD* admittedly disavows).

This, however, would be to allow a small point to obscure what for me, at least, is a big point. My understanding of diplomacy was hugely enriched by the different approaches to mediating estrangement which *OD* sets out: mytho-diplomacy, proto-diplomacy, diplomacy, anti-diplomacy, neo-diplomacy and techno-diplomacy. For me, their value lies not in the part they play in a broad brush account of

how Western estrangement has been mediated over time, but in the part they play as archetypes of diplomatic understandings of conditions and relations of separateness which seem to pop in and out of existence in the diplomacy of the present and, I would venture, in what we would recognize as the diplomacy of any time and place.

IMPACTS

To understand the impact of *OD* on me requires, alas, a bit of biography. I have always been interested in international relations for profoundly orthodox and un-elevated reasons. I came to the study of International Relations through the social science route, as opposed to the humanities one, mainly because Politics programs let you do more IR than did History programs. The price I paid for this instrumentalism was to be trapped in a field populated by a few very powerful and important insights which, nevertheless, could be completely absorbed almost in the moment of hearing them, and a great deal of follow up work which I found profoundly uninteresting. The same applied to diplomacy. I was pulled to it by the power, the drama, and the human predicaments, but the study of it followed the same route as IR. How could something be so self-evidently interesting, stimulating, and puzzling, yet the study of it be so dull? As far as IR is concerned, a rescue for me came through discovering the essays of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics, and, in regard to diplomacy, reading *OD* and Costas Constantinou's *On The Way To Diplomacy* (1996).

   OD took the study of diplomacy beyond axiomatic claims about how things are and likely must be, which permit only explications of what must follow from their being so. Instead, it asked important and open-ended questions. Why do we have/need diplomacy? How do our understandings of it come to be the way they are? How might diplomacy be, and how might we want it to be? In short, it put the sort of life back into theorizing about diplomacy that you would only find in the close, but interpretive, narratives of the best diplomatic historians. You do not have to agree with *OD*. On estrangement, for example, I'm with Frost's neighbor, rather than Frost himself, on the value of at least some fences and the estrangements they help maintain. I also lean more towards tragedy than power as the driver of mediations which are unsuccessful, oppressive in their consequences, or both. On these and other issues, however, *OD* invites arguments, interpretations and the possibility of innovation in both.

IMPLICATIONS

I will give two brief examples of what it did for my own thinking about diplomacy. Both may seem obvious and taken for granted today but at the time they were, for me at least, revelations. The first concerns that common diplomatic metaphor of

the bridge. *OD* neatly demonstrates how as it proclaims diplomacy's role in linking people, the metaphor also re-produces and re-affirms an existential condition of separateness between peoples which requires such bridges. The second example is the insight about how a practice only becomes fully articulated when it is under pressure. This I found very useful in my own recent work on secret diplomacy and Nicolson's attempt to defend it in a liberal international era (Sharp, 2016a).

What then does *OD* offer the study and practice of diplomacy today in the age of Trump, Brexit, the Nine Dash Line and the Mexican Wall? There are several possibilities. The first, suggested in the chapter on techno-diplomacy, is that diplomacy has a "potential historical end" which, by failing to mediate estrangement, it may be reaching (Der Derian, 1987: 191). Diplomacy is, indeed, a sponge word and, sometimes, looking at how it is used in my own work and the work of others, I wonder if it has finally become waterlogged, sinking below the surface, losing its usefulness while retaining the potential to have consequences (Sharp, 2016b). If it has, I think this to be an unfortunate, but not necessarily permanent, state of affairs. The second possibility involves trying to frame contemporary diplomacy with one of *OD*'s archetypes – see, it's gone techno, or it's sliding back to proto, or we are witnessing the forward march of 'neo-diplomacy' being halted. If so, then I'd throw in my own archetype for consideration – re-constitutive diplomacy, struggling to express something new – think Smith's people from somewhere, anywhere and nowhere – in terms of old solidarities.

The fourth possibility is not to be found in *OD*. It comes from Der Derian's later work, but it is absolutely consistent with the argument about how to see things laid out in *OD*. That is the idea of "quantum diplomacy" (Der Derian, 2011). In this, the diplomacies set out in *OD* lose both their stage-like and archetypal characters. They become practices which are all in play at the same time or, more accurately and more troublingly for the orderly mind, in *and* out of play in ways about which it is very difficult to theorize. After all, does Brexit undermine Adler Nissen's (2014) account of opt-outs actually affirming and deepening EU integration by showing it as hopelessly optimistic, or do the efforts of British diplomacy to find a way back without coming back demonstrate the force of her arguments? Are we trying to make sense of what the Trump revolution means for US diplomacy and diplomacy in general when the Trump revolution, insofar as it ever existed, is already over?

OD remains a great book. It provides an account of why people need the idea of diplomacy or something like it in terms of alienation, the estrangements to which alienation gives rise, and the various practices of mediation which emerge to resolve or manage those estrangements. It invites us to contemplate the incompleteness or imperfections of those practices and yet also the necessity of undertaking

them. They and the terms on which we tell ourselves they are undertaken, after all, are all we've got.

ENDNOTE

[1] See, for example, the 503rd Wilton Park Conference on *Diplomacy: A Profession in Peril* in 1998.

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