

Editors' Introduction

International Relations and the challenges of global communication

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We live in an interconnected, hyper-mediated world. A plethora of communications surrounds our everyday lives and politics, whilst new media and technologies have brought forth possibilities for, and ways of, communicating across space and time. Long-distance communication and travelling, the accelerated flow of information, ideas, images and sounds across national and other frontiers, the construction of multinational urban centres and global media corporations, the live broadcasting and commercialisation of major events and crises, the expansion of global advertising, spin and political marketing, and the advent of the Internet, have modified and complicated the reality of national, international and transnational relationships. This very collection of essays was made possible via the Internet to connect the Editors, based in different locations and while they were travelling. This is now the norm. Slightly more unusually, yet underlining the growing potential of this area, a workshop held at the University of St Andrews in November 2006 brought some of the contributors together both physically and virtually through the medium of Skype. Physical presence has long not been necessary in order to communicate, influence, or indeed, coerce.

Practices of global communication allow for people and societies to engage with each other with relative ease, if sometimes with a certain social unease, in a process of uncovering distant problems and marginalisations, transcending differences, exploring mutual bases for action and emancipation, and experiencing a closer relationship with a range of everyday life experiences in many different geographical, cultural, and identity contexts. Such practices allow for a political engagement across many old spatial and epistemic boundaries. If these dynamics hold, then global communication enables an undoing of the 'othering of others', a desecuritisation and repoliticisation of discourses.¹ For some it enables a glimpse of what emancipation might look like.² Yet, it is also clear that global communication may itself entail

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¹ See in particular, Claudia Aradau, 'Security and the Democratic Scene: Desecuritisation and Emancipation', *Journal of IR and Development*, 7 (2004), pp. 388–413.

² Ken Booth, 'Security and Self', in Keith Krause and Michael Williams, *Critical Security Studies* (London: UCL Press, 1997), p. 110.

dynamics of othering and confirm ontologies of discrimination, perhaps under the guise of universal claims of knowing or particular claims of exception. This is significant for those that *can* communicate, locally or globally (for not everyone can or does) in a way others recognise or appreciate.³ Being incommunicado is a choice for some, but for many others it remains an everyday experience, indirectly, directly or structurally.

These dynamics have been replicated to a significant extent in the orthodox disciplinary debates of International Relations (IR),⁴ particularly in its assumptions relating to self and other (friend and enemy, state and non-state, western and non-western, developed and developing, liberal and non-liberal, to name but a few of its underlying binaries). Its tendency to isolate reduce human life and the communications that connect individuals within 'international relations', are thrown into sharp relief by an examination of what it is that is being, or fails to be, communicated.⁵ For example, IR often represents its knowledge systems as universal, when in fact they are local to the west/north.⁶ Such representational habits⁷ and knowledge systems are prone to isolating themselves in order to maintain their belief in universality.⁸ Yet this strategy, we argue, is no longer plausible.

It is the realisation of an underlying ontology that rests upon the notion of communication as potentially global, yet far from transparent and disinterested, that makes it possible to contextualise the critical shifts in the discipline that have been underway for some time. Orthodox approaches in IR have found it difficult to come to terms with these changes, many of which have modified the way states and international organisations, as well as diplomats, politicians, and officials, can manoeuvre. Some who have managed to engage with these dynamics have viewed them as constraints rather than opportunities. They have found it difficult to place these changes into the context of new dynamics, connections, and actors, or others previously not perceived to be significant. By reference to writings on globalisation, some authors tended to label these changes as 'dramatic' and 'revolutionary', indicating nothing less than the 'shrinking of the world', transforming and provincialising it into a global village, and thus requiring the development of new international or global theories. Yet these theories were only rarely combined with an equally 'revolutionary' rethinking of IR's orthodox ontology as well as the epistemology and methods they have given rise to.⁹ Typically, terms like 'global village'

³ For a range of different ways, some of which remain marginal and unappreciated, see Ruth Finnegan, *Communicating: The Multiple Modes of Human Interconnection* (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁴ R. B. J. Walker, *Insidel/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁵ See Christine Sylvester, 'Art, Abstraction, and IR', *Millennium*, 30:3 (2001), p. 540; see also Barry Buzan and Richard Little, 'Why IR has Failed as an Intellectual Project and What to do About it', *Millennium*, 30:1 (2001), pp. 19–39.

⁶ Sylvester, 'Art, Abstraction and IR', p. 541. See also Sandra Harding, *Is Science Multicultural?* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998).

⁷ Roland Bleiker, 'The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory', *Millennium*, 30:3 (2001), p. 509.

⁸ Paul Feyerabend, *Conquest of Abundance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 223–4.

⁹ Among these rare exceptions, for example, is the work of Michael J. Shapiro which has been very unsettling to the discipline and has been seen as 'post-disciplinary', a positive term for some but also a means of dismissing its relevance to IR for others. See, among his works, *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices of Biography, Photography and Policy Analysis* (Madison, WI:

have been appropriated by the discipline without any effort to come to terms with the ‘communication’ theory and analysis that brought them into being.¹⁰ Such terms were treated on the whole as mere metaphors for use rather than concepts to be critically engaged with. This is not to suggest that the gurus of communication studies, like Marshall McLuhan, and their methods or anti-methods must become the new testaments of IR. But, generally, the conventional approach within IR has been, until recently, an attitude that ‘we’ know all that there is – or is needed – to know about global communication, and therefore that there is no need to situate IR within the emerging dynamics of communication elsewhere.

Of course, critical approaches in IR that cut across disciplines and methodologies have pointed to the explicit or implicit exclusions, marginalisations and misrepresentations that the dominant channels and forms of communication have brought about. From this perspective, theories of globalisation that are credited for producing new imaginings of the global can be seen to have failed to globalise imagination, that is to retrieve and disseminate theories of the global from non-Western and non-metropolitan centres.¹¹ In parallel, constructivist, post-structuralist and post-colonial thinkers in IR have begun to approach these new communicative dynamics critically, mainly by drawing on outside bodies of theory and developing interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approaches.

This is not to sing the praises of specific theoretical or methodological approaches, or to legitimate yet again the critical versus the traditional. There seems to be little doubt that humans nowadays communicate and are being communicated with globally; they are invariably (and not necessarily by choice) connected with, mediated and remediated by what is going on elsewhere in the world as well as in their locality. This much anyone studying international studies, or social sciences, or humanities, can accept. Within the context of IR this needs to be addressed, analysed and theorised. This project is indicative of a major challenge to both traditional approaches and more critical approaches alike. These communicative dynamics certainly imply inter- or cross-disciplinarity, require new methods to approach them, and possibly offers global communication as a new ontology for IR, which transcends realist inherency, liberal institutionalism, social constructivism, and perhaps even the critical universal emancipatory project.

What does this challenge involve? The orthodox story of IR claims a right and a privilege to interpret unknowable others and to take actions on their behalf in line with ‘our’ own interests, identities, and biases. Much of the debate has contested this right, as Dillon has pointed out.¹² Orthodox theory often does not want to confront the implications of this debate because of the far-reaching nature of the critique it implies for IR. In this context, the traditional disciplinary story of IR and its

University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); *Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); *Methods and Nations: Cultural Governance and the Indigenous Subject* (New York: Routledge, 2004), and *Deforming American Political Thought: Ethnicity, Facticity, and Genre* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2006).

¹⁰ Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), and Marshall McLuhan and Bruce R. Powers, *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹¹ See, for example, Arjun Appadurai, ‘Grassroots Globalisation and Research Imagination’, in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *Globalisation* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 6.

¹² In particular, see Michael Dillon, ‘A Passion for the Impossible: Jacques Ranciere, Equality, Pedagogy and the Messianic’, *European Journal of Political Theory*, 4:4 (2005), pp. 429–52.

hegemonic claim of the privilege on global matters to advise on taking action for unknowable others, is unsustainable. But the critical disciplinary story is also unsustainable. On the one hand, IR theory's failure to communicate to 'practitioners' – a common lament in relation to critical theory – should not be underestimated or unproblematically endorsed. An even clearer failure to communicate needs to be acknowledged for both traditional and critical IR theory: namely the failure in both cases to communicate across disciplinary boundaries. That one of the two works that can undoubtedly claim to have had an impact beyond the discipline in the last decade or so is Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations* – a tired story of power politics and liberal norms dressed up as universal aspirations and analytical frameworks – should be a cause for concern. The other work, Fukuyama's *End of History and the Last Man*, if more sophisticated, offers little more than a celebration of the universalisation of Western liberal values. Engaging with global communication should therefore be a means to uncover IR's own disciplinary, communicative positions – and their openness, potential and limitations.

Critical approaches have long indicated the necessity for IR to contribute to a broader understanding of global politics and relationships, and to avoid engendering negative 'unintended consequences' in its decision-making processes that may affect millions of lives and livelihoods. This does indeed raise questions of how IR communicates to the world; how it disguises its communication; how it draws and contributes to other disciplines; how far it can take its ambitions to move beyond simple and often rather tragic reductionist contributions to elite political management strategies; and also how to avoid the emergence of a 'critical orthodoxy' that legitimates only certain 'critical' moves and communications and accredits certain individuals as 'spokespersons' within, and for, the discipline. IR could be more ambitious than this in terms of negotiating a process of everyday participation and emancipation beyond the state-system, through which there occurs a recognition of what these dynamics may mean in a given context, when and how these may occur, and how an understanding of communicational dynamics may help this process.

To this extent, this Special Issue seeks to pose anew the question of communication and re-assess its relevance to global politics. Posing it anew means not merely from the angle concerned with the communicability of states and dominant global actors, and their old and new strategies of formal or informal communication, important as these may be. This Special Issue seeks rather to engage with the question of communication in a reflective mode, to explore what it means to practice or to engage in communication; to assess the power implications of particular types of communication, and to examine the limitations and prospects of scholarly communications to and about the 'outside world'. The concern with the latter follows from the belief that reflection is more likely to be successful if it also involves self-reflection. Thus, posing the question of communication underlines a concern with how far developments in IR have become sensitised to how the world and events are communicated within and across the discipline; and how far they employ or are open to non-hegemonic and participatory forms of communication, including popular communications involving imagery and emotions as well as alternative languages, mediations, and aesthetics. We did not want to frame this Special Issue in terms of competing theories of communication and/or IR, which has become the mainstream approach to (critically) engaging current problematics and predicaments. Rather the contributors focus on the assumptions and effects of unproblematised global

communications as well as on what alternative communications are in place and/or are possible.

Being incommunicado

In particular, and as became apparent as the articles for this issue were drafted and redrafted, this collection of essays raises the question of how IR is communicated and experienced through the intersubjectivities of everyday life for people normally hidden or thought of as insignificant and powerless in traditional IR. They may only be rhetorically pronounced as significant but in effect reduced to insignificance in enforcing the official protocols of communication, as Jenny Edkins suggests in her article. This engages with what Jef Huysmans has called the ‘political aesthetics of everydayness’, which is a key dimension of these often nebulous but significant processes and effects of global communication on IR, far beyond its attempted appropriation by states, institutions or media.¹³ Indeed, this has rapidly emerged as a crucial aspect of the democratisation and empowerment that has occurred within the communicational revolution of the last decades in the context of the project of sharing communication commons and redressing informational inequalities (with reference for example to the work of UNESCO and the ITU). This requires mediating identities, knowledge, resistance, either in an individual or *ad hoc* manner, through transnational social movements, or through sovereign institutions or transnational corporations. As with the critical normative and structural problems of emancipation and self-emancipation, the essays that follow highlight what engenders resistance and criticism to the main communicative assumptions prevalent in IR’s orthodoxies, and how these are expressed. This addresses how far developments within IR can be said to constitute a ‘communicative turn’ and what is at stake in embracing such a turn, as discussed in the essay of Albert, Kessler, and Stetter in this volume.

While these issues have been discussed within more critical approaches to the discipline and beyond, focusing on communicative action or dialogic ethics,¹⁴ even these often develop accounts of the problems that emerge from the exercises of positivism, of hegemony, of neoliberalism, and of sovereign claims to authority. These determine how communication is framed in rational or ethical terms rather than directly listening to the voices and communications of everyday life, including ways of operating that appear passive or silent:¹⁵ for example the voicing of emotions that is either sidelined or crudely appropriated in world politics, as Bleiker and Hutchison show in their contribution to this volume. Of course, ‘silent’ voices and frameworks for communication are interlinked, but a focus on the former should not exclude or marginalise the latter.

¹³ Jef Huysmans, ‘Desecuritisation and the Aesthetics of Horror in Political Realism’, *Millennium*, 27:3 (1998), p. 588.

¹⁴ See for example, Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990); Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998).

¹⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984).

The issue that this kind of problematisation raises is that of the state of being *incomunicado* in an era of intense global communications. In the past, conventional IR tried to solve this problem by giving every ‘people’ a state, preferably liberal and democratic. The state was then the responsible vehicle that would provide an institutional framework for the voicing of views, grievances and aspirations internationally, and as such the only aspect worth examining further was that of its institutional presence and efficiency, and if and where necessary, the issue of developing or strengthening state capacity. This, we argue, covers only one dimension of the problem (to be sure not an insignificant one) and betrays an ideologically specific understanding of global communication as a liberal ontology. It leaves unsolved a more subtle dimension of being *incomunicado*, described more poetically by Gabriel García Márquez as a persistent problem of solitude.¹⁶ The condition of Macondo and the Buendias in his celebrated novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, are paradigmatic of the condition of solitude of Colombia or Latin America or the Third World. As explained by Márquez in his Nobel Lecture, the crux of solitude of the inhabitants of these places concerns the inability to employ conventional forms of communication to render their story believable; and more, that the use of such conventional – read, ‘not our own’, foreign and dominant – forms of communication can ironically increase solitude and non-communication.¹⁷ Becoming *comunicado* is not just about the ability to tell one’s story but about the ability to tell it by using and translating one’s own terms of reference and cultural markers. This often requires an uneasy and not always possible ‘leap of faith’ for the receiver to read literality in an apparent metaphor, order in the apparent chaos, reality in the apparent fiction.¹⁸

In postcolonial studies, this problem has been articulated and debated in terms of ‘who speaks for the subaltern’.¹⁹ The subaltern cannot effectively communicate his or her life story and predicament. S/he is constantly represented and communicated – even when this is done positively – through dominant structures and forms of communication that are not her own. The words of the subaltern thus become weak, rough, illiterate, inaudible, and always need to be interpreted and put in a form that is effective and persuasive within the dominant regimes of representation and argumentation. This is a critique that confronts head-on Habermasian theories of communicative action that presuppose standards of Western rationality and privilege linguistic forms of communication.²⁰ Needless to say, it also stands juxtaposed to much positivist and mainstream theorising in which sites of power and knowledge are defined in material and statist ways, and limited to those actors who have a direct stake and access to such privileges. Within this context, Soguk’s contribution to this volume explores the ‘transverbal communication’ of the ‘EuroKurds’, seeking to

¹⁶ Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

¹⁷ Gabriel García Márquez, ‘The Solitude of Latin America’, Nobel Lecture, 8 December 1982, accessed at: (http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1982/marquez-lecture-e.html).

¹⁸ A work that artfully and insightfully tries to communicate this predicament is Michael Taussig, *The Magic of the State* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

¹⁹ Gayatri C. Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 217–313. See also among others, Gayatri C. Spivak, *A Critique of Post colonial Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Philip Darby, *At the Edge of IR* (Cambridge: Continuum, 2000).

²⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Cambridge: Polity, 1986) and Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992).

address the diasporic practices that cut across the usual migration problems, and looks at forms of communication and community that the subaltern invents and orthodox IR misses.

To reverse the condition of being *incomunicado* requires a practice of communication that does not end with the function of establishing contact and exchanging messages. Rather it should include the right and power to register and circulate views about the ‘commons’ and also to participate in its construction. This requires participation in what is entailed in keeping the peace, doing or deferring justice, enforcing or exceptionalising rights, in any given context. In the absence of such participation, the neutrality and egalitarian promises of communication are exposed as a conceit. When communication is combined with disempowerment, material or discursive, it should become a source of deep concern and of high political interest. Especially worrying is the extent to which the frenzy of mass communication increasingly makes invisible both interstitial spaces and the ‘drama of alienation’.²¹

Armand Mattelart’s work on communication is especially sensitive to these concerns. Mattelart does not approach communication simply from its so-called media modality but from the wider perspective of ‘the multiple circuits of exchange and circulation of goods, people, and messages’.²² His work sensitises us to the fact that the exercise of communication is a highly political matter and that it cannot be dissociated from the social, cultural and economic contexts within which it operates. In other words, it is never just about transmitting and receiving messages but about the production of meaning and the constitution of social, economic and political subjectivities. Further, and crucially, Mattelart suggests that in the modern world, communication and excommunication go together. One could perhaps even say that excommunication precedes communication. He argues that the right of communication as initially established by the early international jurists, such as Vitoria, was a means of legitimating the conquest of the ‘New World’ – silencing natives, justifying European settlement, and the spread of the gospel. Nowadays, he provocatively argues that ‘excommunication is the status of three quarters of the world population’.²³

The production of a specific discourse on communication for Mattelart masks a strategy of modern governance. He suggests that ‘the contemporary ideology of boundless communication [is] a substitute for the philosophy of infinite progress’ and that ‘the technologies of communication embody the promise of a way out of the structural, economic and political’ crises of modern Western ways of living. He therefore calls for the revival of a memory that exposes the managerial appropriation of concepts and expropriation of words. This is because the ‘[s]ocial atopia, as the oblivion of the place where the ideas and practices are being produced, goes hand in hand with the loss of the power of enunciation, the power to name things’.²⁴ This leads with mathematical accuracy to the state of being *incomunicado*.

The challenge that follows from this is the need to remain ever vigilant and develop ways that move away from hegemonic and imperialistic forms of communication and

²¹ Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1988).

²² Armand Mattelart, *The Invention of Communication* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 1996), p. xiv.

²³ Armand Mattelart, ‘Communications/Excommunications: An Interview with Armand Mattelart’, conducted by Costas M. Constaninou in this volume, p. 34.

²⁴ Mattelart, ‘Communications/Excommunications’, p. 36.

towards ones that are more participatory and democratic, that do not predetermine voices, or at the very least register excommunication in the act of communication and actively seek to reverse it. Put differently, given that communication is constitutive of meaning and subjectivity the task becomes one of reflectively engaging the world, the event (and the discipline of IR), at the same time as seeking to democratise global communication and redeem the excommunicated. Or as Mattelart puts it, embracing ‘the utopia of democracy through knowledge’, something that must include the creation ‘of the conditions for the development of human potentialities’ and where the right of communication is not reduced to the mere right of transmission and reception of messages, but should comprise ‘the recognition of the right of everyone to participate in the transformation of society.’²⁵

Empowering communicability

Communicability has become an issue of giving voice to the problems, interests and aspirations of the excommunicated and indeed for everyone. It also becomes an issue of empowering agency rather than simply speaking on behalf of, or usurping the role of, the representative or mediator. This much has already been accepted and addressed by a number of critical works both within and outside IR. What has been more difficult to accept and much less explored, especially within IR, is the extent to which simply ‘giving voice’ to the subaltern and excommunicated does not equal emancipation, desecuritisation, and communicability in their own everyday spaces. For it can also entail indirect forms of conformity and cooption, subtle conditions and protocols for making authoritative claims that undermine the democratisation of communication. IR needs to address the power implications of global communicability, *inter alia*, via its own constitution as a discipline receptive to others, and to the ‘world out there’, including mainstream broadcasting, film and music industries, as well as epistemic communities. This needs to be carried out in order to prevent IR’s orthodoxies from intentionally or unintentionally acting to delegitimize and sideline through these dominant regimes certain forms of often non-liberal behaviour, ontologies, and epistemes. This can be placed in the context of (traditional and critical) orthodox IR theory debates, and their control of communication, meaning and process, by hegemonic actors, ideas, and sovereign assumptions. This represents a challenge to that which has been seen to be the dominant systems of knowledge creation in IR. We are surrounded by systems of communication that result in certain representations being accepted as the standard against which all others are judged. Those that do not conform to this are ‘alternative’ or ‘other’. They become peripheral to the ‘loud’ transmissions of the system of communication and, to reiterate, end up being excommunicated or treated as background noise. The first step to empowering IR communicability has to do with counteracting the ‘muscular objectivism’²⁶ that has dominated the communication of IR, from which many of its problems stem, and in so doing open up the contemporary culture wars that are raging across many disciplines other than IR. This places in interesting relief both the

²⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁶ See Appadurai, ‘Grassroots Globalisation’, p. 6.

link of ‘controlled communication’²⁷ with conflict resolution and the idealist, liberal, and critical association of free communication with sustainable forms of peace. This raises the issue of not just understanding these processes of global communication, but also situating the everydayness of scholars’ experiences in IR, as the discipline moves beyond the requirements of liberal-realist ‘re-search’ that implies that knowledge should be narrowly replicable without a need for a broader ethical exploration.²⁸

Such limitations, resistances to them, and power representations flow back and forth between academic discourse and public information. If television news, for example, is dominated by Western policies and politics, so too is IR’s academic discourse – almost everything is viewed through a comfortable lens of legitimacy. Images produce and reproduce expectations of what IR is, and in turn, perhaps, of how far it may move, as well as determining expectations of its acceptability. As Richard Rorty has noted, ‘the novel, the movie and the TV program have, gradually but steadily, replaced the sermon and the treatise as the principal vehicles of moral change and progress.’²⁹ Mainstream media and disciplines provide the moral compass through which particular policies and discourses and stereotypes continue to be legitimated, and indeed are reproduced, and Galtung’s ‘faultlines of the human condition’ become ever reinforced.³⁰

The power implications of such representations are clear to see in common media clichés in the West: the Western soldiers who save the day (or muddy the waters further); the African who needs Western help (and tutelage); the woman who needs the strength of a man; and the child who needs the protection of the adult. Such views are the mainstream, recreated in Western television news and journalistic comment, in Hollywood movies, and in various artistic representations, travelogues and discourses of emergency (as the essays by Weber, Lisle, Dunn, Wilkin and Edkins illustrate in this volume). Thus questioning the mainstream discourse requires us to question not only the standard academic and policy discourses, but also the various ways in which such standards are communicated. Moreover, the status and use of information and how this is deployed to form individual and collective opinions and wills is also at stake with regard to communicability – not just the access to information and means of communication. As put by Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart:

The age of the so-called information society is also that of the production of mental states. It will be necessary to rethink the question of freedom and democracy. Political freedom cannot be reduced to the right to exercise one’s will. It also lies in the right to control the process whereby that will is formed.³¹

In this respect, developments in information and communication technologies provide new sites of domination and power struggle. For example, the digitisation of

²⁷ John W. Burton, *Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

²⁸ For a brilliant discussion of how the culture wars have challenged positivism’s attempt to make research devoid of the search, and so of any creativity, see Appadurai, ‘Grassroots Globalisation’, p. 8.

²⁹ Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. xvi.

³⁰ See Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilisation* (Sage Publications, 1996), p. 60.

³¹ Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, *Theories of Communication* (London: Sage, 1998), p. 156.

information, more recently, brought forth radical changes to the global production and communication of knowledge in terms of new agencies, properties and possibilities. Humans increasingly depend on the Internet to acquire information and develop knowledge. The brave new world of the Internet and its opportunities, ‘the nihilism on the information highway’ producing communicative activity at the expense of public responsibility,³² has apparently deflated the radical agenda of the New International Information Order declared by the UN General Assembly in 1974. Yet the agenda has been recharged given that global asymmetries in information appear to have shifted elsewhere and are encapsulated in what has become known as the digital divide, which covers not just the question of digital access but also the ability to use, produce and manipulate online information.³³ Individuals are now involved not only in the consumption but also in the production of information, not just locally, but also globally (if one has the necessary skills), but even then the control of the means of communication is far from being democratic and unproblematic. The days of global communication being the preserve of diplomats, statesmen, traders, and a few cultural icons are long gone – though new inequalities have emerged – and this has far reaching implications for all IR theories, whether orthodox or post-structural. In the cacophony of global, everyday voices, new hegemonic discourses are emerging, determined by access, technical proficiency, as well as the more familiar legitimating functions of older hierarchies and institutions. Activism, lobbying, information (dis- and mis-), public or private, local, global, glocal, political, social, economic, ideological as well as advertising, visa applications, travel, and economic transactions, take place in a virtual town square, which as it increasingly emerges, is every bit as political and politicised as the older ‘forum’.

This both familiar and accelerated power potential of the Internet, its capacity for storing and retrieving information, has often been discussed in almost messianic terms. The computer ‘saves’ information but it is the Internet, the network of networks, that will technically ensure the eternal salvation of (valuable) information (and redeem the hosts of the network who are responsible, so far, for its ‘openness’). The miraculous ease and apparent immediacy with which online information is stored and recovered adds to a feeling of techno-spiritual omnipotence. Some critics rightly took to task ‘the religion of the infosphere’ preaching the new gospel of how communication networks are conducive to global conciliation and a ‘new world of consciousness’.³⁴ This zeal has accompanied not only the techno-libertarians but also visionary communication theorists, like Marshall McLuhan. The power implications of these technical developments, especially with regard to challenging the commodification of knowledge and promoting a democratic culture of openness, are discussed in May’s essay in this volume.

Jacques Derrida’s *Archival Fever* provides pertinent warnings about the investigation of the power of the digital hyper-archive. Specifically, the warning that the archive, *any* archive, is not an unproblematic depository of information but that

³² Hubert L. Dreyfus, *On the Internet* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 73–89.

³³ See, among other studies, Pippa Norris, *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and Paul DiMaggio, Eszter Hargittai, W. Russell Neuman and John P. Robinson, ‘The Social Implications of the Internet’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27 (2001), pp. 307–36.

³⁴ Armand Mattelart, *The Information Society*, pp. 68–70.

it has always been an accessory to authority and rule (that is, linked to an *archē*) and to that extent, perhaps, that it is bound to remain so.³⁵ Historically this affiliation to authority and rule has not been simply in the form of denying or restricting access to the masses (that is, ensuring a monopoly of knowledge, as Harold Innis put it)³⁶ but also by instituting a ‘death of memory’, a forgetting of the suppressions and repressions that accompany the selection, preservation and organisation of information. Suffice to mention here the policies of online search engines, these digital archivists, popular indexers and information gatekeepers, and their commercialisation, page ranking and different international agreements with different governments around the globe. Vigilance about digital regimes and their ex-communications will therefore become an increasingly important critical exercise in the future. This is a sign that global communicability must be measured against the background of available information sources, practices of selective social memory and forgetting, and the prioritisation of specific forms and channels of communication.

For as long as there have been societies, there have been cultures of communication – both mainstream and their alternatives. History provides us with accounts of how such alternative cultures, new media, and technologies in particular impact upon the ability of groups to create counter-cultures of communication. But there are also new forms of often anti-mimetic, everyday, aesthetically inclined engagement.³⁷ Such acts of resistance are associated not just with new content but with new forms of communication including many social and peace movements, various art and cultural movements (for example, Dadaism and its rejection of all that had led to World War I),³⁸ the student protest movement that swept France, the United States and elsewhere from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, the anti-nuclear power movement in the US and Europe, the more recent anti-globalisation movement that reached its zenith in Seattle, the social and performative struggles of the World Social Forum, and so forth. They also include varieties of subaltern representation, the dilemmas and difficulties of which have been outlined already by Gayatri Spivak and others. As Radhakrishnan notes:

... the subaltern task is that of convincing the dominant discourse that in a world of shifting significations, it is wiser, truer, freer, and more just to relate to the world-as-real on the basis of the subaltern symbolic than on the basis of the dominant symbolic, that the subaltern representation of the real is more valuable and worthwhile for all concerned that the dominant representation.³⁹

A polemic, no doubt, but in the absence of the ability to find a voice using standard routes of communication, protest cultures have sought alternatives to the often

³⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Archival Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

³⁶ Harold A. Innis, *Empire and Communications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950) and *The Bias Of Communications* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951).

³⁷ Roland Bleiker, ‘The Aesthetic Town’, p. 527. See also T. W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2004), Necati Polat, ‘Poststructuralism, Absence, Mimesis: Making Difference, Reproducing Sovereignty’, *European Journal of International Relations*, 4:4 (1998), pp. 447–77; Costas M. Constantinou, *States of Political Discourse: Words, Regimes, Seditions* (London: Routledge, 2004).

³⁸ Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), p. 7.

³⁹ R. Radhakrishnan, ‘Globalization, Desire and the Politics of Representation’, *Comparative Literature* (Fall 2001), p. 327.

existential issues about which our institutions are so often silent.⁴⁰ This has happened not just in the realms of the direct desire for political change, but also in terms of protest in every genre, and sometimes with a symbiosis between the two. Thus filmmakers such as Carolee Schneemann have used experimental cinematic techniques to comment on gender roles within society; whilst new artistic movements have often gone hand-in-hand with societal change. The difficulties with any such movement, however, is that despite their newness, they themselves eventually also often begin to become the mainstream. Sometimes this is in response to their acceptance by the wider society, but sometimes it is because in order to be fully heard, they have to begin to speak in the language which is dominant, such that they themselves become part of the culture that is being resisted. Is this a form of communication, or is it also indicative of becoming incommunicado as global forms of communication digitise and capitalise such resistance into marketable and transferable media?

For IR, dealing with challenges to the dominant representations has been marked by delay in comparison to other social science disciplines, such as sociology and social anthropology, where dealing with social change and the forces that engender it, has been more of a given. For IR the challenge has been to consider that which falls outwith the mainstream. This is recognised within some versions of critical IR with its acknowledgement that orthodoxy is constrained by its need to maintain the discipline within restrictive lines, and it is a fact recognised by this Special Issue also. But this raises the concern that the discipline itself risks remaining or becoming incommunicado (depending on the extent one thinks IR communicates with other disciplines), and how this might be prevented.

Outline of contributions

The first essay consists of an interview conducted with Armand Mattelart by Costas Constantinou. This establishes the parameters for the Special Issue as a whole. Mattelart suggests that ‘media tropism’ engenders a reductive vision of the history of communication and a historical amnesia that prevents us from discerning where the truly important stakes lie in the current and rapid transformation of our contemporary mode of communication. In particular, he argues that the dissociation of politics from culture has hinged upon the replacement of equality by identity as the primary goal of political action. This, he says, ‘legitimated the figure of the universal over the last two centuries’ and has done much to allow an unproblematised managerial and capitalist framework to condition global politics. This sets the scene for the following articles that discuss various aspects of global communication in IR from a range of perspectives, as well as the issues of being or becoming incommunicado, and seeking to regain or invent modes of communicability.

In the following essay, Mathias Albert, Oliver Kessler, and Stephan Stetter examine the ‘communicative turn’ towards world society. They argue that the concept of ‘communication’ is conventionally deployed through the use of simple

⁴⁰ James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography and Creativity in Social Movements* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 2.

sender-receiver models. Drawing on the work of Karl Deutsch, they argue that conflict studies and theories of ‘communicative action’ are solely receptive to developing an understanding of the role that communication plays in IR theory. Yet communication is central, and requires an engagement with the ‘linguistic turn’ of speech act theory and of symbolic interactionism in IR theory. They claim, and we support this claim, that all social systems and orders are communicatively constituted as well as based on the ‘disruption of communication – that is, preventing communications which reject the social order or which belong to a different social order’. This presents the communication/excommunication binary as the key problem that can cause the breakdown of social systems and orders, and which can also lead to the rise of ‘conflict communication’.

Chris May argues in his essay, drawing on the work of Lewis Mumford on ‘openness’ in the global information society, that work in this area acknowledges the significance of the move to digital communication but has not really engaged with the new practices of openness. He suggests that there is an increasing dissatisfaction with the global regime of intellectual property rights that has led to the examination of the organisation of the production, communication, dissemination and use of information and knowledge. This has led to a move away from the commodification of information and knowledge and the collapse of the legitimacy of its ownership. The concept of openness indicates ‘sharing and cooperative intellectual endeavour’ according to May. He argues that an interest in open communication offers a site of identity (re)construction and a realm where a new politics may develop which reflects wider social changes. IR, by not engaging with everyday life, fails to engage with the implications of this move and its promises of emancipation through ‘being digital’, which is required in order to shift away from an authoritarian representation of politics, disciplines, priorities, and knowledge.

Peter Wilkin follows this with his analysis on the history and politics of Globo, a major media corporation in Brazil, examining what this means for the practice of communication in the periphery and semi-periphery of the world system. He shows how Globo influenced the construction of an elite-led political culture in Brazil that has been characterised by both authoritarian and democratic approaches to government. This is viewed through the prism of world systems theory and provides a critique of what Wilkin identifies as Globo’s role in the development of neoliberal governance at the local, regional, and global levels of analysis.

Emma Hutchison and Roland Bleiker examine the interaction between fear, emotions and world politics in the following essay. They explain that much of IR scholarship is conducted in a version of the social sciences that fails to recognise the importance of ephemeral phenomena. For this reason, supplementing social science with modes of inquiry emanating from the humanities is required, and would allow for the acceptance and communication of the importance of unobservable phenomena, which cannot be validated empirically. It would also allow for an understanding of emotions in a political context, and for the valuing of their aesthetics. Finally, this would enable an open and sustained form of inter-disciplinarity and ‘communication across different fields of knowledge.’

Cynthia Weber then turns to the communicative role of film in global politics. She examines the impact of the film *United 93* and argues that its success lay in its ‘immediacy’, transforming every viewer into ‘a virtual survivor’ of 9/11. To understand this process she turns to the concept of ‘remediation’ through which one

medium is represented via another, leading to observers actually feeling as if they had become participants. In Weber's words, 'virtual reality seems to be as real as reality itself . . .' allowing the remediator to effectively control communication and the experiential knowledge of others – in this context, about 9/11.

Debbie Lisle's essay discusses the engagement with the other that travellers often encounter, refuse, or seek out. She examines the global ownership that travel offers its participants, and the ways in which an ethical vision is propagated via *Lonely Planet* (LP) guidebooks as a way of 'communicating the world' and using travel to 'make a difference' 'out there', often in the 'Third World'. As the inverted commas mount up, Lisle underlines how limited the engagement and mediation that emerges from this sort of 'adventure' can be, which is more often another form of Western domestication of the non-Western world rather than a true engagement between traveller and host. In grandiose terms, LP now claims that the travelling it recommends is an opportunity for its users to overcome the global inequality that resulted from colonialism and more recently from capitalism, as well as for cross-cultural communication. Yet, as Lisle shows, LP ends up repeating the very global inequalities it seeks to overcome. Indeed it 'alleviates such a colonial echo by drawing from, and reproducing, a discourse of humanitarianism' in order to reaffirm our part in a 'global society'. In effect, these travel guides and the episteme they propagate reiterate a colonial logic as normal and beneficial for the developing world as Lisle illustrates in the context of Burma.

Nevzat Soguk examines the issues posed by the politics of migration and the limitations of IR's traditional vocabulary to speak to the complexity of this issue. He argues that diasporic peoples, such as the Kurds, experience what he calls 'relationality' in which they articulate their lives through incessant movements, in defiance of modernity's geopolitical cartography. They are able to employ transversal forms of communication to support their alternative political-cartographic vision. This attests, Soguk argues, to the crucial role of such enabling forms of communication, which are deployed ' . . . as instruments of everyday struggle through networks of what Mattelart calls "anti-discipline", the loosely coordinated, counter-hegemonic practices.' In this sense, he also describes 'Kurdish diasporic formations as transversal practices that communicate against the disciplinary boundaries' of IR and shows the need not only to communicate IR to the world but also the reverse: 'communicating the world to IR'.

The following essay opens up these spaces further. Kevin Dunn looks at Punk Rock and what it suggests for the politics of global communication. Punk, he argues, uncovered previously hidden modes of interaction and thinking within the lived experiences of people's daily lives. Punk offers the possibility for counter-hegemonic contributions to global communication, and its medium became a subversive message in its own right, aimed through its Do-It-Yourself ethos at developing agency and empowerment. Punk music opened up issues such as Third World resistance to Western imperialism, labour, race and class and showed the author, among many others, how he could 'disalienate' himself – something which has important implications for a discipline torn between the two extremes of tragic realism and Enlightenment-oriented progressive liberalism. This article also illustrates performatively the author's alienation from the orthodoxies of IR.

The final essay in this collection, by Jenny Edkins, opens up a ubiquitous area of global governance and communication that affects everyday life – one that is so much

part of our landscape that it is often unquestioningly taken for granted. Edkins argues that the treatment of victims of major traumatic incidents (in this case after 7/7), is indicative of ‘governing terror’ inherent in contemporary forms of global liberal governance.⁴¹ As with many of the essays in this collection, Edkins is concerned with uncovering ways in which this failing form of governance can be challenged or contested. In particular, she argues that traumatic events ‘threaten to reveal that governing contingency is impossible’. Yet, communication is governed in such instances by a set of protocols that mean that any communication that falls outside these disciplinary constraints is not heard, ‘excommunicated’, labelled a result of trauma or dissidence, and so silenced. In particular, Edkins is concerned with the development of attempts by IR to make such voices reappear, rather than being silenced by the discipline. Indeed IR has an obligation to move outside such constraining protocols.

The Editors feel that this is a fitting way to sum up the aims of this Special Issue.

⁴¹ Michael Dillon, ‘Governing Terror: The State of Emergency of Biopolitical Emergence’, *International Political Sociology*, 1 (2007), pp. 7–28. See also Michael Dillon, ‘Governing through Contingency: The Security of Biopolitical Governance’, *Political Geography*, 26 (2007), pp. 41–7; Michael Dillon and Luis Lobo-Guerrero, ‘Biopolitics of Security in the 21st Century’, unpublished paper (2007); Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); G. Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005).