

Who needs Philosophy of Science, anyway? Foreword to a Symposium

One of the pleasures of editing *International Theory* (IT) has been the seriousness with which our reviewers have taken their task. In the case of Nuno Monteiro and Keven Ruby's paper, 'IR and the False Promise of Philosophical Foundations', all three of our reviewers – Fred Chernoff, Milja Kurki, and Patrick Jackson – not only wrote incisive and lengthy critiques, but also suggested independently that if it were published they would be interested in responding in print. An unusual coincidence in itself, our sense that Monteiro and Ruby had raised an important question was soon reinforced by reception of another critique submitted by Raymond Mercado as a regular manuscript.

The question in effect is whether the by now substantial International Relations (IR) literature devoted to problems in the philosophy of science is worthwhile. Monteiro and Ruby argued that IR scholars cannot hope to solve such problems, that trying to do so is methodologically and paradigmatically divisive, and that it is unnecessary because the standards by which IR scholarship should be judged are in any case substantive rather than philosophical.

It is a provocative argument made with élan, and whether their answer is right or wrong, their *question* has to our knowledge never been put so directly to the field. Thus, although, as a matter of principle, we are reluctant to devote so much space in the journal to a single article, it seemed that doing so would have exceptional value in this case. So we decided to invite our four critics to revise their papers for publication, and asked one of our Board members, James Bohman – a professional philosopher himself – to write a piece as well, all followed by a reply from Monteiro and Ruby. The result will not be the last word on the question, but we do hope it is a useful first.

The Editors