Introduction: International Relations

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The International Relations section of the First Edition of the ISJ is dominated by philosophical and conceptual discussions on topics ranging from soft power and global prospects for peace to separatism and security lessons from the past. On display is the full range of themes encompassed by International Relations as it offers students the freedom to explore their intellectual curiosity. Equally, the entries selected for this section all display the versatility of student thought through their analytical boldness and originality. They set out on paths not commonly taken with regard to the ideology they favour, the philosophy they engage with, and the analogies they employ.

These characteristics can be seen in Hugo Bozicas’ critique of Immanuel Kant’s Guarantee of Perpetual Peace as he questions the adequacy of the liberal world order as a vehicle for lasting peace between nations. His argument that Kant’s understanding of human nature is incompatible with the way in which Kant envisions perpetual peace is intriguing, especially in light of Kant’s deep-rooted influence on the way we think of politics and diplomacy today. Likewise, Gabriel M. Kessler challenges the orthodoxy in his argument that Brazil intentionally constrains the maturation of its economy as it strives to be recognised as a global political-economic power. Another topical issue is the rise of identity politics and divisive domestic politics, amid which Chloe Rispin explores the potential for Californian separatism. Her discussion of the philosophical pathways to independence gains additional salience as California constitutes, in many respects, a counterbalance to the present Administration. Lastly, my own piece represents the subfield of Security within International Relations. I experiment with history by seizing the transnational aspects of cybercrime and the Internet, bridging them with the Golden Age of Piracy on the high seas. This analogy is a means to explore how states may better counter illusive threats that have transnational, real-world consequences.

The most important shared theme in the International Relations section is perhaps the tension between an ever-changing world and our existing ideological, philosophical and theoretical concepts. Are they adequate to satisfy our need for modern, dynamic modes of thinking about economic prosperity, peace and security? How should we improve upon them?