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Inside/outside: Isocrates' *On the Peace* and the morality of interstate relations

A widely-held tenet of contemporary International Relations theory is a belief in a strict distinction between the moral codes which operate within states and those which apply to relations between states. Like much else in modern International Theory, the origins of this distinction have often been traced back to classical Greece. And it is undoubtedly possible to point to instances of this approach in Greek writing about interstate relations (occurring most influentially in Thucydides; most unambiguously in Demosthenes *On the Liberty of the Rhodians* [ch.29].) Taking as its focus Isocrates' mid-fourth-century speech, *On the Peace*, this paper explores and questions that assumption of a strict and unchallenged division between 'inside' and 'outside' in the morality of classical Greek interstate relations.

The speech *On the Peace* is notable for its extensive use of parallels and analogies between life inside the *polis* and the behaviour of the *polis* towards those on the outside. These analogies take various forms, some specific (interstate *versus* internal tyranny, for example) and some more general (the broader moral criteria for interpersonal and interstate relations), and also seem, at first sight, to suggest an entirely inconsistent attitude to the 'inside'/'outside' distinction: at times, Isocrates appears to assume that there is no division between internal and external morality; at others, the existence of that same divide becomes a central point of his argument.

It will be argued, however, that a closer analysis of the development of these parallels and analogies shows that their use is far from random. Rather, it is both carefully managed and integral to Isocrates' argument. Isocrates' case here -- indeed, his broader programme for a 'reformed' Athenian imperialism -- relies on a belief in the applicability of the morality of individual life to the interstate relations of the *polis*. Yet, as becomes clear, the Athenians have traditionally been reluctant to acknowledge this obvious fact. It is Isocrates' desire to highlight this conflict in approaches (and, of course, the superiority of his own approach) that determines the careful manipulation of the barrier between 'inside' and 'outside' in this speech.