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# Relating to Difference: Aliens and Alienness in *Doctor Who* and International Relations

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## Abstract

In this paper, selected episodes of the 2005 series of the BBC science fiction television show *Doctor Who* are used to discuss self/other identity formulations, in terms of how “we” relate to those considered different. I shall examine how *Doctor Who* represents threats and dangers and relate

this to how we can use such understandings to learn, discuss, and critique conventional understandings of security in International Relations (IR). Popular culture texts such as *Doctor Who* provide examples of how difference is often conceptualized as a threat to be eliminated. At the same time, *Doctor Who* also gives space to question and critique these understandings of “others” as threats, especially in its illustrations of the location of threats, its shifting perspective, and its centralization of a nonhuman as its protagonist. As such, *Doctor Who* points toward theorizing world politics in which the self = good/others = threats dichotomy can be questioned and opens up new ways of engaging with those considered different.

**Keywords:** [popular culture](#), [IR theory](#), [critical security](#), [identity](#), [Doctor Who](#)

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