

Citations for Dvora and Peri

There can be no more deserving winners of the Grain of Sand Award than Peri Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow. Everything they have done and accomplished fits the spirit of the award. Through broad, sustained, and no doubt lonely effort over the last fifteen years, they have worked to build a vibrant, eclectic, and self-sustaining community of interpretive scholars. Their methods were multiple: they helped innumerable young scholars trying to publish for the first time by reading and commenting on their work-in-progress; they mentored graduate students and other early career scholars by teaching them professional norms of the discipline—something very, very few senior scholars ever do; they raised their voices again and again against hegemonic projects such as DA-RT and before DA-RT, against the ascendance of positivist norms as the starting point for *all* research; they institutionalized their efforts by creating annual awards for the best graduate paper and the best book that incorporates interpretive methods or methodologies. They created a book series on interpretive methods at Routledge. They held an NSF-funded workshop on interpretive methods. They created the Methods Café and for many years coordinated it at both the APSA and WPSA annual meetings. They organized APSA Short Courses. They created an APSA conference group. They created an Executive Committee for that group. In short, they built—quite literally from *nothing*—a social and professional “space” for scholars of all ranks and disciplines to talk to and learn from one another. In short, they made it bearable for so many of us to remain in Political Science without going crazy.

To honor their many accomplishments, several friends and colleagues have written their own stories of what Dvora and Peri’s influence has meant to them personally and professionally.

Julie Novkov, University of Albany

Dvora and Peri have been so important in creating a home for interpretive work in political science. A home requires several things. First, there must be a community of senior scholars who do this work and will speak up for its legitimacy. While individuals were doing this work and fighting their own individual battles to secure space within the discipline for it, bringing people together as an identified community made a huge difference by highlighting the prominence of the people doing it and the important contributions it was making. Second, a home implies a means of mentoring or “raising up” people who want to do this work. I got crucial mentoring from interpretive scholars on my way up, and I’ve tried to pay it forward, both with my own students and with other scholars. Last but not least, a home has to be a place that’s both supportive and enjoyable, a place where new ideas can develop and grow in a nurturing environment. Peri and Dvora, through their workshops and the methods café, have created a lot of spaces, both physical and virtual, where this could happen.

Fred Schaffer, UMASS AMHERST

Peri and Dvora have had a profound impact on my professional and intellectual life. Over the years, they have been my mentors, teachers, editors, advocates, comrades-in-arms, interlocutors, and more. They are tireless, generous, and smart. They are my friends.

The two of them have deeply shaped my understanding of both interpretivism and who I am as a scholar. They have encouraged me to find my own voice and given me platforms from which to speak. In inviting me to participate in panels, roundtables, short courses, and the methods cafe; in putting together *Interpretation and Method* and asking me to write an essay for it; in launching the Routledge Series on Interpretive Methods and helping me craft my contribution to it; in publishing their own incisive and thoughtful writings; in founding the Interpretive Methodologies and Methods conference group; and in countless conversations over coffee, beer, or dinner they have changed and enriched how I do and see my own work.

Peri and Dvora are pioneers. If not for them, we – as a group of interpretivists – would not be here today. They have been the prime movers in bringing us together to create this vibrant community.

Peri, Dvora – I have spent my career writing about words, but in this instance I struggle to find the right words to adequately express the depth of my gratitude to you. So please accept a humble and wholly insufficient “thank you.”

Samantha Majic, John Jay College/City University of New York

I first met Peri as a grad student, at a WPSA reception. In the style of awkward academic receptions, we started chatting about our research, and she told me that she was doing a project about IRBs. I was just in the process of completing my first IRB application, and so I went on a very therapeutic rant to Peri, who listened very kindly and offered much thoughtful advice. We kept in touch and, I believe that I met Dvora through her. I'll be honest: Dvora scared me initially: is there anything she has not read? A great piece of statement jewelry that she does not have? The answer to both of those questions is no. And the answer to the question, "are you fortunate to know Peri & Dvora?" Yes.

Ido Oren, University of Florida

Here, Ido Oren, recounts two distinct memories he has of Dvora and Peri.

One was two years ago at the APSA meeting (in San Francisco, I think), at a panel on DA-RT. The room was packed and the editor of the APSR was in attendance, along with other poohbahs supportive of DA-RT. Several speakers diplomatically raised concerns about the policy but then came Peri and threw all caution and diplomacy to the wind. She ripped DA-RT apart in front of the "distinguished" audience. She was fearless and fierce!

Another moment I remember, somewhat hazily, is a lunch meeting organized by Dvora and Peri about 10 years ago at a noisy restaurant near Times Square in NYC. I can't remember who else was in attendance exactly. If I'm not mistaken, it was there that we laid the foundation (more accurately, Dvora and Peri led us to lay the foundation) to the institutionalization of the IMM group-- participating in the APSA program; creating the awards; and, later, creating the executive committee.

Lee Ann Fujii, University of Toronto

My "real" academic life started in 2006, when I met Dvora and Peri at APSA in Philly. What I remember is not so much the panels we attended or were on together, but rather what happened outside the official rituals of APSA. A group of us had gone to the food hall across from the convention center. Lots of APSA goers were coming and going, rushing to and from their next panel. Dvora and Peri, on the other hand, were not rushing. They invited me, a newly minted PhD, and several other graduate students to sit and eat. And so we did. We sat and ate at a long table. And mostly we talked. There was no sense of hurrying to finish. There was no looking up to see who had passed by. There was just uninterrupted conversation, one that made me feel included, rather than just a hanger-on.

From that moment forward, Dvora and Peri became mentors and friends. I suddenly had two sets of eyes to guide me through my first R&R. For my first R&R, I will never forget one thing that Dvora said when I bristled at one reviewer's remark that my data were "anecdotal." "Teach, don't defend," she told me. I have passed that bit of wisdom on to others more times than I can remember.

From there, they walked me through yet another R&R at a different journal, then another, and another. Then they invited me to write a book for their Routledge series on interpretive methods. True to their earlier mentoring, their expectations were high. I had thought the book would just be a "brain dump" of all my random thoughts on interviewing. How wrong I was. The book began as one kind of project and over many extended conversations--over Skype, in the marginalia of many, many drafts, over email--the book became something quite different. It became a source of *learning, not teaching*. Each revision made me look harder, deeper, and more closely at such big, amorphous topics such as "reflexivity" and "ethics."

It is not an exaggeration to say that everything I have come to be as a scholar, teacher, and mentor is because of what they taught me. I can only say thank you, Dvora and Peri. You cannot know how much of a difference you have made to me personally and to the discipline as a whole. I am so grateful and humbled to have known you both all these years.

Videos

Timothy Pachirat

Joe Lowndes