
2. Opening up international relations, or: how I learned to stop worrying and love 'non-Western IR'

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The sub-title of this chapter is borrowed from the tag-line of Stanley Kubrick's 1964 movie, *Dr. Strangelove, or: How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*.¹ Kubrick's movie was loosely based on the novel *Red Alert*, highlighting the dangers of the Cold War arms race and the strategy of mutual assured destruction (MAD). While the movie's original plan was to focus on the potential of a nuclear exchange, in the course of adapting the book Kubrick found that many lines in the screenplay were quite funny,² and opted for a satirical take on the stratagem of threatening total annihilation to deter unilateral annihilation.³

Not unlike Dr. Strangelove's relationship to MAD, this chapter's relationship to 'non-Western IR' is full of dread insofar as the latter is a project of knowledge production that occludes the very avenues it is supposed to open.⁴ In what follows, I highlight the limitations built into the 'non-Western IR' project by contrasting it with the study of 'constitutive outside' in postcolonial studies, which has affinities with critical international relations (IR).⁵ The chapter begins by looking at the discussions on opening up IR. The following section identifies Eurocentrism as the challenge, distinguishing between three dimensions. The final section identifies two responses to this challenge: the project of 'non-Western IR' and the study of 'constitutive outside', and elaborates on the latter as a method of inquiry into the international that is sensitive to the 'geopolitics of knowledge'.

¹ <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0057012/> (accessed 19 December 2018).

² This is not, in any way, to make light of the horrors and the long-lasting destruction of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War, the environmental and human consequences of Cold War nuclear tests and radiation experiments.

³ 'Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Dr-Strangelove-or-How-I-Learned-to-Stop-Worrying-and-Love-the-Bomb> (accessed 19 December 2018).

⁴ I regard 'non-Western IR' as a 'project' insofar as scholars who identify with this effort have decisively set out to build a 'school' of their own. See the section 'How to open up IR: "non-Western IR" or "constitutive outside"?' below.

⁵ On the affinities between critical theories and postcolonial studies, see Ingram (2018); Kerner (2018b).

WHY OPEN UP IR?

Since the mid-1990s, critical IR scholars have increasingly drawn on postcolonial studies to call for opening up IR (Chan et al. 2001; Chan 1993a, 1996; Jones 2006; Bleiker 1997; Jones 2002). I begin with an overview of the arguments offered by those who, customarily, see no such need, which I then use as foil for discussing the points advanced by critical IR scholars.

Why open up IR? Those who ask this question follow it up with a second one: The academic discipline may have originated and flourished in Western Europe and North America, but how is this not merely an accident of history and therefore inconsequential for our knowledge about world politics? The questioner's anticipation is that 'properly trained' scholars from outside North America and Western Europe will 'become leading theorists at some future point' by

[standing] on the shoulders of American academics, much the way America's leading lights have stood on the shoulders of their European predecessors. This is the way scholarship advances. (Mearsheimer 2016: 149)

There is no need to open up IR according to the questioners, because the production of knowledge is not about geographical location but 'proper training'. To begin with, scholars from outside North America and Western Europe already are 'leading theorists' (even when defined narrowly in terms of 'proper training').⁶ Yet, this does not, in any way, affirm above-mentioned claims which rest on dated understandings of knowledge production. For knowledge is not independent of, but conditioned by the context it responds to. There is no knowledge that is untouched by interests, as Robert Cox (1981) underscored when he wrote that theory is 'always for someone and for some purpose'. In the twentieth century, IR was shaped around concerns of securing the global reach of rising (as the US in the aftermath of the Second World War) or declining great powers (Great Britain after the Second World War). The same conditions did not only shape but also limited what we know about world politics. When Stanley Hoffmann (1977) declared IR to be an 'American Social Science', he not only underscored how US context and interests shaped the academic discipline, but also pointed to its limitations (cf. Agnew 2007).

Consider, for example, Ido Oren's (2014) study on democratic peace research. Oren's reflexive analysis of early generation political scientists' texts revealed that their definitions of democracy were very different from that employed by contemporary democratic peace researchers.

In the democratic peace literature, democracy is typically defined in terms of electoral process ... This definition is consistent with, and builds upon, the analytic categories and

⁶ The question of what/who counts as 'theory'/'theorist' (or 'proper training' for that purpose) is far from being settled. See the section 'Eurocentrism is the challenge' below for further discussion.

coding rules employed by data-gathering projects such as Polity. In the Polity data set, polities are coded on a scale that takes competitiveness and fairness of electoral processes, as well as constraints on the freedom of executive action, as the defining empirical features of democracy. (Oren 2014: 316)

Oren found striking the contrast between the categorizations contemporary democratic peace researchers made using these definitions, and those made by early generation political scientists. He wrote:

Whereas in the Polity dataset Imperial Germany is ranked significantly behind the United States, Britain, and France on the democracy scale, in the 1890s Wilson clearly regarded the German political system as superior to France's immature democracy, while for Burgess, 'there [was] no state, large or small, in which the plane of civilization [was] so high' as in 'the United States of Germany' (1915, 94). (Oren 2014: 319)

The point is that the definitions employed by contemporary democratic peace researchers are 'the product of the very same history of international conflict that serves as the testing ground of the proposition' (Oren 2014: 318). Remembering that the democratic peace theory comes closest to a law-like generality that IR's 'properly trained' scholars have generated, such findings throw a shade on their self-image as detached scientists, and their understanding of the relationship between theory, theorist and context.

Needless to say, this is not a point against social scientific endeavor, but about the need to 'remain attentive to that which gets overlooked, lost or mistranslated' in knowledge production (Seth 2014: 317). That IR has originated and flourished in Western Europe and North America is not inconsequential for our knowledge about, say, postcolonial statehood or gendered insecurities. As Ken Booth noted, we do not know how IR would look like today

if, instead of being founded by a wealthy Liberal MP in Wales (and those like him elsewhere in the Anglo-American world) what if the subject's origins had derived from the life and work of the admirable black, feminist, medic, she-chief of the Zulus, Dr. Zungu? (Booth 1996: 300)

Space does not allow for a discussion on the foundational myths of IR (see, e.g., De Carvalho et al. 2011). Suffice it to say here that postcolonial studies research on the 'constitutive outside' is not about producing a 'counter-factual history of profession' (Booth 1996), but about inquiring into 'connected histories' of world politics, with an eye on the 'overlooked, lost or mistranslated' role the Zulus (among others) have played in constituting the international (see below for further discussion).⁷

It is important to note here that oftentimes scholars who do not otherwise subscribe to dated understandings of knowledge production nevertheless see little need to open

⁷ While the former asks: 'what if ... happened?' The latter asks a 'what happened between ... and ...?'

up IR, arguing that although it is an ‘American Social Science’, IR has already gone global. It is indeed true that IR teaching and research spans the globe, organized under Political Science or in separate IR departments (Tickner and Waever 2009; cf. Chan 1994). Students of IR around the world are trained often by the same English-language textbooks (or their translated versions). Annual meetings of the International Studies Association consistently attract 5000+ researchers from around the globe. Regional IR conferences convene regularly in myriad locales beyond North America and Western Europe. Evidently IR is already open—the evidence being its embrace by students and scholars around the globe.

However, the fact that IR has gone global in terms of its reach may not be enough to remedy the constitutive effects of its origins in North America and Western Europe. This is an issue raised initially by E. H. Carr, who noted that the study of world politics had, for long, reflected the perspectives and concerns of the ‘mighty’. Carr cautioned that this state of affairs was not sustainable in the long run, and that, in the future, the less powerful should be expected to begin to make their voices heard in world politics as well as in its scholarly study (Carr cited in Barkawi and Laffey 2006). In the early 1980s, K. J. Holsti echoed Carr when he invited students of IR to take stock of the field and see ‘*who* does the theorising?’ ‘The problem of what *kind* of theories we use to understand and explain the world of international politics is not divorced from *who* does the theorizing’, Holsti (1985: 118) argued (original emphasis). Since IR ‘reflected the historical experience of the European state system in the past, and the Cold War more recently’, concluded Holsti, one should expect ‘serious challenges’ to come from those who did not share these experiences or experienced them differently.

More recent studies taking stock of IR teaching and research around the world have found that the answer to the question ‘who does the theorizing?’ points to a slant toward certain institutions in North America and Western Europe (Kristensen 2015b). Course syllabi in North America and Western Europe seldom include scholarship produced in other parts of the world (Hagmann and Biersteker 2014). While the global South seems to pay heed to IR as studied in the US and Western Europe in terms of teaching, scholarly output by the latter offers a more complex picture (Tickner and Waever 2009). While scholarly publications bear surface resemblance to IR scholarship in the US and Western Europe, their substance often takes forms that are not entirely familiar to those students schooled in the former (Bilgin 2012),⁸ the point being that the international is approached differently by scholars in different

⁸ Until rather recently, there was relatively little information available about the details or dynamics of differences (but see Dyer and Mangasarian 1989; Groom and Light 1994). Ole Waever’s (1998) article entitled ‘The sociology of a not so international discipline’ pioneered sociology of science inquiry into the production of knowledge about world politics, highlighting differences between the study of IR in the US and Western Europe. The US-based TRIP (Teaching, Research & International Policy) survey that collects and analyses data on IR teaching and research has become more global since its launch in 2004 (Wemheuer-Vogelaar et al. 2016).

parts of the world even as their IR looks ‘almost the same but not quite’ to adopt Homi K. Bhabha’s phrase (Bilgin 2008).

To recapitulate, two related findings are offered by critical IR scholars who highlight the need to open up IR. First, sociological analyses of the field revealed it to be ‘not so international’ (Waever 1998). That is to say, scholars from outside North America and Western Europe are not always well represented in scholarly publications and course syllabi. Second, IR’s understanding of the international is less-than-sociological (Chan 1993a; Rosenberg 2006). Our existing body of scholarship does not sufficiently reflect the ‘connected histories’ of various actors who also constitute the international. The point of opening up IR, then, is also about acquiring insight into the reasons behind the differences between what each of us does in the name of IR and the implications of such variegation for our understanding of the international. Such differences cannot be explained away in terms of access or not to ‘proper training’ or wished away by pointing to how IR has become more global over the years. Such differences need inquiring into by treating scholars from outside North America and Western Europe as thinking actors (Bilgin 2016c). I will take up this point again in the section ‘How to open up IR: ‘non-Western IR’ or ‘constitutive outside’?’ below.

Opening up IR has turned out to be a more challenging task than initially imagined. Both Carr and Holsti had anticipated the field opening up to contributions from outside the US and Western Europe sometime in the future. However, come the 2000s, students of IR increasingly realized that the issue is not only about ‘who does the theorizing?’ but also what they say. And, what they say (be they from inside or outside North American and Western Europe, the mainstream or the critical fringes of IR) may be characterized by Eurocentric takes on the international.⁹ The point is, notwithstanding significant achievements of critical IR during the 1980s and 1990s in terms of opening up IR to contributions by those hitherto underrepresented in scholarly publications, our knowledge about world politics has yet to address IR’s Eurocentric limitations (Bilgin 2016c). The following section looks at multiple dimensions of the challenge of Eurocentrism.

EUROCENTRISM IS THE CHALLENGE

Eurocentrism of IR is often reduced to geography alone. The fact that the founders of IR were located in institutions in Western Europe and North America has not been inconsequential for our understanding of world politics (see above). Yet, reducing Eurocentrism to the centrality of the roles played by individuals and institutions in Western Europe and North America has impoverished our understanding of the persistence of Eurocentrism and limited our horizons in addressing its implications

⁹ For a discussion, see Çapan (2016).

(Bilgin 2010). In what follows, I will identify three dimensions of Eurocentrism in the study of world politics: normative, methodological, and epistemological.

Normative Eurocentrism is observed when scholars put Europe and its interests on top of their research agenda. For example, what allowed a historian of the twentieth century to remark that at the eve of the Second World War the ‘Middle East was secure’ (Ovendale 1998) is normative Eurocentrism. What is Eurocentric about this remark is that British and US insecurities are placed at the front and center of the author’s analysis with little or no consideration for local actors’ concerns who, at the time, were suffering under mandate regimes and/or unfair oil concessions. Most (but not all) of Orientalist literature is Eurocentric in this normative sense (Said 1978; cf. Dabashi 2017). They were produced not only in Europe but also for Europe, often without reflecting on their implications on the Middle East (Bilgin 2019).

Second, methodological Eurocentrism occurs when research is designed in a way that ‘occludes the global’ (Go 2014) by drawing a direct line from ancient Greece to Renaissance Europe to modern day West with next-to-no sociological insight into ‘connected histories’ of societies (Rosenberg 2016; Mignolo 2018).¹⁰ Over the years, methodological Eurocentrism has produced a particular narrative about Europe’s place in world history. That particular narrative is considered as erroneous by many, and ‘connected histories’ are available.¹¹ Yet Eurocentric narratives have nevertheless been allowed to design research by virtue of the persistence of concepts that have been informed by the same narratives. Put differently, the very concepts through which we study world politics (such as state, development, sovereignty and security) have their limitations not only when transplanted to other parts of the world but also when studying ‘Europe’ (see, esp., Halperin 1997, 2006).

Following Julian Go, I understand ‘occluding the global’ as a consequence of methodological choices made by scholars insofar as they conduct research by ‘conceptually [slicing] or [dividing] relations into categorical essences that are not in fact essences’ (Go 2014: 125). Such ‘categorical essences that are not in fact essences’ include ‘national state’¹² and ‘Europe’, notes Go. For example, what renders Westphalia a myth is not only that sovereignty was exercised in only one part of the globe (and was/not allowed in other places through colonial expansion and later decolonization) but also that ideas about sovereignty were developed through connections between various parts of the globe (Grovogui 2006). To quote Go (2014: 126–127):

National states did not develop their ideas and practices about sovereignty first *in Europe* and then transpose them outward; they developed first amidst sixteenth century colonial

¹⁰ The term ‘connected histories’ is borrowed from Subrahmanyam (1997). Edward Said also insisted on studying connectedness of things through ‘contrapuntal reading’. See Said (1993). For a discussion on its implications for IR, see Bilgin (2016b).

¹¹ For a succinct overview, see Seth (2014).

¹² On state-centric narratives as a ‘territorial trap’, see Agnew (1994).

claims and disputes between empires about overseas territory. And the so-called 'external' colonies of Britain were not 'outside' Britain: they *were* British. (original emphasis)

As such, addressing Eurocentrism in IR is not (only) about studying other parts of the world. Methodological Eurocentrism has implications for understanding Europe as well as the rest of the world insofar as it 'severs societies from their constitutive connectedness' (Barkawi 2016: 200).

Third, what emboldens some scholars to offer their definition of 'proper training' as a yardstick, presuming that 'knowledge-making has no geo-political location and that its location is in an ethereal place' (Mignolo 2009: 8) is epistemological Eurocentrism. It is also what allows some to rebuff the calls for opening up IR, by insisting that 'proper training' is the key (see 'Why open up IR?' above). Walter Mignolo (2009: 8) has followed Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez in characterizing epistemological Eurocentrism as 'the hubris of the zero point'. Such 'hierarchical patterns of epistemic judgement' are at work in the production of knowledge regardless of one's epistemological position (empiricism or interpretivism), Mignolo has argued. While Mignolo acknowledges that 'reflexivity of hermeneutics might allow one to represent "both sides" (that is, colonizer and colonized) by bringing in the spatial', he has maintained that 'this is not a sufficient corrective, or even the best way because it leaves unanalyzed the formation of the representational itself' (Alcoff 2007: 90). For 'the question of what is meaningful or intelligible ... is no less subject to colonial representations than the question of what is true. Both are judged within a European frame of reference' (Alcoff 2007: 89). Hence Mignolo's insistence on the 'need to take a further step back to reach the level of exteriority where representations are made possible in the first place' (Alcoff 2007: 90).

Mignolo uses the three-worlds classification to illustrate his point. Classifying the world into First ('free'), Second ('socialist') and Third ('developing') originated during the Cold War. After the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, constitutive effects of the three-worlds classification have remained (Bilgin and Morton 2002). One reason behind the persistence of this classification is its constitutive effects on knowledge production, as discussed by Carl Pletsch (1981) who noted that the three worlds are studied differently by different social disciplines that focus on science, ideology and culture, respectively. Pletsch elaborated in the following manner:

Western social scientists have reserved the concept culture for the mentalities of traditional societies in their pristine states. They have designated the socialist societies of the second world the province of ideology. And they have long assumed—not unanimously, to be sure—that the modern West is the natural haven of science and utilitarian thinking. (Pletsch 1981: 579)

Pletsch also highlighted the exceptions to these generalizations, including 'subclans of each of these sciences of modern world' who 'make forays into the ideological regions of the second world, and area studies experts who study the process of modernization in the third world' (Pletsch 1981: 579).

Following Mignolo, Pletsch's otherwise critical analysis was Eurocentric in the epistemological sense insofar as

it mapped what First World scholars thought of the new world order. First World scholars have the privilege of being both in the enunciated (one of the three worlds) and the enunciator (the First World). As a consequence, what scholars in the Second and Third World thought of themselves and how they were responding was not taken into account. They were classified but had no say in the classification other than to react or respond. (Mignolo 2009: 8)

The persistence of epistemological Eurocentrism has recently inspired Hamid Dabashi to ask 'Can non-Europeans think?' The occasion for Dabashi's rhetorical question was the publication of an essay on philosophy on the *Al Jazeera* website, whose author identified what he considered to be key contemporary thinkers in the world. Western European and North American thinkers were identified by name while others were acknowledged as a geographical cluster, without naming names or betraying any awareness of their contributions. Dabashi (2015)¹³ wrote a short piece in response, questioning such oversight of thinkers from outside Western Europe and North America, asking a very basic question: 'who gets to be recognized as thinking actors?' Later, Dabashi contributed a second piece, this time asking 'Can Europeans read?', thereby admonishing fellow scholars for not engaging with works produced by scholars from outside Western Europe and North America. This is an issue previously highlighted by Robbie Shilliam in the IR context when he asked:

Why is it that the non-Western world has been a defining presence for IR scholarship and yet said scholarship has consistently balked at placing non-Western thought at the heart of its debates? (Shilliam 2011: 1)

Remembering Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan's (2007) question 'Why is there no non-Western IR theory?' as well as Arlene Tickner's (2008) observation regarding the 'invisibility' of 'third world scholarship', the question is less about an 'absence' or 'invisibility' and more about IR's obliviousness to scholars from outside Western Europe and North America, argued Shilliam. Such obliviousness is rooted in assumptions that IR shares with other social sciences as to what/who is defined as 'theorist' and 'theory' (or 'proper training'). This is also what Arif Dirlik (2011) pointed to when he questioned the definition of theory that informs IR debates. He asked:

is it possible to reverse the question, and ask not why Chinese do not have theory, or do not seem to be willing to do theory like 'we' do, as if that were a failure, and ask instead why 'we' have theory and do theory the way 'we' do? Instead of subjecting Chinese ways of doing things to the scrutiny of 'our' ways, and judging them by the standards of 'our' practices, is it possible to inquire if the way they do things may have something to tell us about the nature and shortcomings of the ways 'we' do things. (Dirlik 2011: 150–151)

¹³ Dabashi and Mignolo's contributions to the debate on the *Al Jazeera* website were later included in Dabashi's collection of essays entitled *Can non-Europeans Think?* (2015).

To re-cap, Eurocentrism in IR is multi-faceted and cannot be reduced to geography alone. This is not to overlook the significance of what John Agnew (2007) referred to as ‘know-where’ but to explore its implications in full. What is at stake in debates on ‘who does the theorizing?’ is not merely opening up IR to scholars originating from/located outside North America and Western Europe, but opening up to those perspectives that may question IR’s self-understandings regarding the constitution of the international and what/who counts as theory and theorist.

HOW TO OPEN UP IR: ‘NON-WESTERN IR’ OR ‘CONSTITUTIVE OUTSIDE’?

This section distinguishes between two ways of responding to the challenge of Eurocentrism in IR: one that has affinities with critical theory and one that does not. I will begin with ‘non-Western IR’, suggesting that the project occludes the very avenues it is supposed to open. I then highlight how the study of ‘constitutive outside’ offers a method of inquiry into the international that is sensitive to the ‘geopolitics of knowledge’.

To begin with, I refer to ‘non-Western IR’ as a project insofar as many scholars who identify with it have decisively set out to build a school of their own. Acharya and Buzan’s rhetorical question (‘Why is there no non-Western IR Theory?’) did not give rise to such efforts but helped fuel them. Consider the Chinese experience. The first step in building a ‘Chinese school’ was taken in 1987 when the idea of developing an ‘IR with Chinese characteristics’ was raised (Ren 2008: 293). Initial response by local scholars took three forms, according to Ren:

For some of the skeptics, an ‘IR with Chinese characteristics’ was more or less a transplant from the well-known political slogan, ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics.’ For others, Chinese studies of International Relations, theory or not, are necessarily conducted in the Chinese way and therefore it is unnecessary to make the call ... Another basis for skepticism was the concern that Chinese IR needs to distinguish ideological pursuit from the search for national interests, and policy analysis from academic research. (Ren 2008: 294)

Not much progress was made until the 2000s when interest in a Chinese school was renewed in a context shaped by critical IR scholars’ calls for opening up IR, and global interest in China as a rising power (Kristensen and Nielsen 2013). A debate that was conducted in Chinese during the early years turned international in the 2000s as Chinese scholars found themselves a part of the discussions on ‘non-Western IR’ (Shoude 1997; Song 2001; Qin 2011, 2013; Wang 2013).

On the one hand, there is little evidence that contributing to ‘non-Western IR’ is what China’s scholars have had in mind. Close observers of IR in China have noted that efforts to develop a Chinese school were mostly modeled after the English school in terms of style and substance (Kristensen and Nielsen 2013). What is on offer is described by an outside observer as ‘Realism with Chinese characteristics’ (William Callahan cited in Dirlik 2011: 149). Consequently, the Chinese school has not offered

much in the way of a discussion on the alternatives in the way Stephan Chan (1993a, 1993b, 1996, 1997) and L. H. M. Ling (2002a, 2002b, 2013) have done: tapping into the same body of cultural resources but offering thoroughgoing criticism and openings. Indeed, Arif Dirlik (2011) cautioned that the debates on a Chinese school are better understood as an attempt on the part of China's scholars to find their own voice in the world, and not as a challenge to IR theorizing. On the other hand, there is no denying that the debates on a Chinese school have crystallized 'non-Western IR' for outside observers. This is because theirs is the most concerted effort to build a national school of IR—save for individual efforts in some local settings (Kristensen 2015a). As such, notwithstanding the aims of the thinkers behind the Chinese school, they are viewed as promising to address IR's limitations.

The project of 'non-Western IR' occludes the very avenues it is supposed to open by virtue of reducing Eurocentrism to geographical location, thereby underestimating persistent limitations of IR. For example, 'non-Western IR' does not challenge narratives on 'autonomous development' of Europe and the concepts and theories warranted by this narrative. What it offers is fresh narratives that say one of two things: if you developed X, we developed Y, or we developed X before you did. That said, neither of these fresh narratives questions assumptions regarding centrality of X for development in Europe. Nor do they offer methods that would allow studying X without severing it from its constitutive connectedness.

It is in this sense that Immanuel Wallerstein (1997) cautioned against 'anti-Eurocentric Eurocentrism'. He was referring to the efforts of those who seek to identify traces of progress and modernization outside Europe while failing to recognize how the very notions of progress and modernity are shaped by a particular understanding of world history that fails to recognize the contributions and contestations of others who were also present in their production. As such, the very design of 'non-Western IR' does not allow for much more other than (what Ina Kerner referred to as) 'decentering by addition' (Kerner 2018b: 616). This is because 'non-Western IR' "underestimates the tension between the generalizing and restricting elements" of Eurocentrism. While the products of 'non-Western IR' such as the Chinese school may 'successfully counter aspirations to generalize a particular ... it cannot at the same time shed light on the restriction of a universal' (Kerner 2018a: 554). Put differently, 'non-Western IR' leaves standing the Eurocentric edifice of IR—save for its claim to relevance across space.

Following David Blaney and Naeem Inayatullah (2008), I adopt a strategy of 'excavation' opening up IR, and not adding another body of thinking that leaves (almost) untouched the limitations of IR. 'Constitutive outside' refers to the ideas and experiences of those people and states who also constitute the international. They are constitutive in the sense that their ideas and experiences have shaped X (be it sovereignty, modernity, democracy, secularism or war). Yet, they are outside because such constitutive connectedness is not a part of prevalent narratives on X. Accordingly, the notion of 'constitutive outside' highlights a contradiction that is central to our efforts to open up IR. This is not a contradiction to be resolved, but only acknowledged and thought through.

Walter Mignolo too has elaborated on the evolution of ‘constitutive outside’, which he terms ‘exteriority’. According to Mignolo, ‘exteriority’ is not (only) a matter of geography, but epistemology.

Exteriority is not the ontic outside of Europe but the outside built into the process of building European ‘interiority’. That is, ‘exteriority’ is the epistemic invention of an ontological outside ... It is not a question of geography but of epistemological construction of colonial ontologies. (Mignolo 2018: 380)

Those who are ‘outside’ are not (only) physically outside North America and Western Europe, but because they have been left outside of Eurocentric narratives on world history (Bilgin 2016a).

Recent scholarship in history has been increasingly attentive to our ideational and material constitutive connectedness. These studies build upon but also go beyond previous studies on histories of give and take between the East and the West. In earlier accounts, material contributions of the Chinese, the Indians and Arabs (among others) were acknowledged (Hobson 2004) and self/other dynamics were noted (Neumann and Welsh 1991), but little mention was made of the ideational and institutional connections between Europe and other parts of the world (Wolf 1982). Indeed, when Franz Fanon (Fanon 1963: 102) is quoted as having argued that ‘Europe literally is the creation of the Third World’, emphasis is put on the usurpation of material resources, including labor, but not ideas or institutions. More recently, studies on the ‘constitutive outside’ have ‘excavated’ already existing connections including but also going beyond material resources (Blaney and Inayatullah 2008).

I will explore three instances of ‘excavation’ as such. First there is the recognition that ‘the content of the modern social sciences and humanities was at least in part cultivated by reference to non-European bodies of knowledge and culture’ (Shilliam 2011: 2). Consider the connections between Native Americans and American revolutionaries in the making of the idea and institutions of democracy in North America. Iris Marion Young has argued that American revolutionaries’ ideas about freedom and self-government were influenced by the ideas and practices of Native Americans. In contrast to ‘the modern Western discourse which positions in the Native Americans as the excluded Other in comparison with which the Europeans confirmed their cultural superiority’, are ‘hybrid interpretations’ of history that ‘excavate’ the relations between ‘Indians’ and ‘Europeans’ in North America, according to Young. From these accounts we learn that ‘the Indians [regarded] the Europeans as obsequious servants to distant lords and social conventions, while they [knew] freedom’ (Young 2007: 23). By excavating moments of interaction, exchange and learning between Indians and Europeans, according to Young, these studies serve to ‘hybridize the idea of democracy’, thereby grounding democratization efforts worldwide on a firmer footing. The point is, ‘connected histories’ of Native Americans and American revolutionaries as such challenge the above-mentioned ‘direct line from ancient Greece to Renaissance Europe to modern day “West”’ in prevalent narratives on ‘democracy’.

Second, there is self/other dialectics in the making of 'European' (and 'Western') identity and modernity. What is emphasized in such accounts is not only the significance of the other for self-identity construction. It is also about how self/other dialectics have shaped the social science concepts through which we make sense of our own history (Jahn 2000). Consider Beate Jahn's study on the emergence of ideas about the state of nature through interaction with the Amerindians. Jahn (1998: 631) has argued that thinkers such as Samuel von Pufendorf and Emmerich de Vattel, whose ideas critical IR draws upon, 'did not develop universal ideas but rather universal yardsticks which were supposed to provide them with a justification not to extend equal rights to others'. Accordingly, argued Jahn, critical IR excludes others at the moment of inclusion:

For it is on the basis of the 'inclusion' into humanity defined as European rationality, European political organization, European capitalism or forms of communication and morality that alternative forms of rationality, political organization, modes of production or forms of communication and morality are excluded, not only from the higher echelons of humanity, but also from certain concrete legal and moral rights. (Jahn 1998: 636–637)

In this instance, writing 'connected histories' is about excavating the connections that existed at a moment when 'exteriority' was produced. It is only through inquiring into Amerindians as 'Europe's "constitutive outside"' that the roles others' contributions and contestations in political community (a notion that has been central to critical IR) can be excavated.

Third, there is the multiple authorship of what are viewed as autonomously produced ideas and institutions as revealed by studying what Edward Said (1993) referred to as 'intertwined and overlapping histories' of humankind (Bilgin 2016b). Consider Siba Grovogui's (2006) archival study on the contributions of African intellectuals to European debates on the post-Second World War order in Europe. While these intellectuals' contributions and contestations shaped debates during the Second World War, Grovogui showed, their contributions were not always acknowledged when the intellectual history of this period was written. Nor was their advice regarding the post-war order given due value, noted Grovogui. Once the war was concluded in a way that was favorable to the allies, the camaraderie between European and African intellectuals that was formed during the war ended abruptly.

These three examples of inquiring into 'constitutive outside' suggest that a good place to begin when seeking to open up IR is to re-consider Europe, its place in history, and how prevalent narratives on Europe and its place in history have shaped our understanding and study of the international. One implication of inquiring into 'constitutive outside' for opening up IR is that we come to realize how identifying the issue as one of absence of IR theory outside of North America and Western Europe sets the problem in self-centered terms: by formulating the problem in terms of others not doing things (theorizing) in the way that we are accustomed to. Formulating the problem this way diverts attention away from inquiring into observations regarding existing theoretical explorations produced outside North America and Western

Europe not being recognized as IR. For, as captured by the notion of ‘constitutive outside’, what is absent may not be theorizing per se, but due recognition of the ways in which some others’ ideas and writings have shaped our thinking about the international.

CONCLUSION

Opening up IR is not only (or even primarily) about opening up the field to contributions from outside the US and Western Europe (the answer to the question: ‘who does the theorizing?’), but about considering the contributions and contestations of the ‘constitutive outside’ (the answer to what do they say?). Contesting prevalent accounts that portray scholarship originating outside the US and Western Europe as ‘pre-theoretical’ (Pasha 2011) and resisting attempts to utilize ethnographic methods to study everyday life as a way of accessing others’ conceptions of the international (for a critique, see Jabri 2013), the chapter called for inquiring into ‘constitutive outside’ (Blaney and Inayatullah 2008). Opening up IR entails recognizing multiple authorship of key notions (such as human rights, see Grovogui 2011) and broadening our perspectives by excavating the contributions and contestations of others.

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