Introduction to the Special Issue
Regional International Relations and Global Worlds: Globalising International Relations*

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Introduction

The call for globalising International Relations (IR) is about students of IR coming to terms with a globalising world and embracing a plurality of approaches reflective of multiple experiences and interpretations of 'the international' around the world.[1] In this essay, we would like to push the call for 'Global IR' further and suggest that the term 'regional IR' is more reflective of the current state of disciplinary IR, which was born in the U.K. and raised in the United States; *and* that encouraging the development of local schools of IR is likely to replicate the same limitations that are sought to be addressed in the first place. Hence our call for globalising IR in a manner that is truly reflective of our global worlds. The method that we proffer is *not* one of 'adding (the locals) and stirring', *but* rethinking disciplinary IR's epistemological and ontological underpinnings. The former corresponds to a reluctant pursuit of plurality and leaves disciplinary IR untouched. The latter embraces pluralism, "not because of what it adds to our understanding of world politics, but because of what it takes away" through reflecting our "own assumptions, concepts and commitments".[2]

We begin this introductory essay by tracing the scholarly efforts that have sought to globalise IR. Part two lays out the major challenges facing these efforts, namely Eurocentrism (epistemological) and reification (ontological). The essay concludes with a discussion about decolonising as the most promising effort toward globalising IR. As you will see, the contributors to this special issue focus on different aspects of the challenges facing globalising IR, offering diverse answers. Some iden-

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* The title is a play on words as the 'Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds' was the title of Amitav Acharya's presidential address to the 2014 convention of the International Studies Association (ISA). See, Amitav Acharya, "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds", International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 58, No 4, 2014, p. 647-659.

1 Amitav Acharya, Pinar Bilgin, and L.H.M. Ling, "Global IR special issue," *International Studies Review,* Vol. 18, No 1, 2016, p. 4-146.

2 Daniel J. Levine and David M. McCourt, "Why Does Pluralism Matter When We Study Politics? A View from Contemporary International Relations", *Perspectives on Politics,* Vol. 16, No 1, 2018, p. 103.

tify explicitly with the decolonising agenda, while others do not. What they share is a commitment to looking at the international from the methodological, theoretical and/or geographical margins with a view to globalising not only the margins but also disciplinary IR.

Why Globalise IR?

What does it mean to 'globalise' IR? Is IR not global already? After all, you are reading the introduction to a special issue of the journal *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, which is Turkish for international relations and has been published regularly since 2004. International Relations has a longer history in Turkey. Departments of International Relations were established around the 1950s, concomitant with the development of the field elsewhere in the post-World War II period.[3] Previously, issues related to world politics were studied and taught as part of Political Science, Law and History. That there exist in Turkey not only IR programs but also standalone departments as well as dedicated journals is indicative enough that International Relations has already been globalised.

Yet this is not what we understand by 'globalising' IR. Here we refer to an ongoing effort on the part of scholars designed to render our knowledge about the world more reflective of the experiences of various actors in different parts of the world *and* the meanings they attach to these experiences.[4] As such, 'globalising' IR as we understand it, differs from the effort that began in the 1950s to spread one model of studying world politics to other parts of the world.

The 1950s' effort is best described as the globalisation of a 'regional IR' insofar as disciplinary IR was exported to different parts of the world while retaining its original characteristics as an 'American Social Science', in Hoffmann's memorable phrasing.[5] Though cognisant of IR's birthplace being in the UK, Hoffmann was referring to a particular form the discipline took in its post-World War II home as shaped by the historical, political and institutional context. Since the late 1970s when Hoffmann first made this observation, IR has become more aware of continental European theorising and methodological plurality, while remaining cautious toward pluralism.

The reckoning began with a series of studies using sociology of knowledge tools to reveal who produces IR as part of which networks. The precursor to these studies was Holsti's book *The Dividing Discipline*, where the author made the perfunctory observation that IR as a discipline was heavily slanted toward North America and Western Europe.[6] Less than a decade later, Chan's contribution to a survey of the field was entitled "Beyond North-West: Africa and the East", beckoning IR's ongoing neglect of worlds beyond the 'North-West'.[7] In 1998, Waever's study on the patterns of journal publications cemented the finding that the field dedicated to the study of international relations was

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3   Stephen Chan, "Beyond North-West: Africa and the East", A. J. R. Groom and Margot Light (eds.), *Contemporary International Relations: A Guide to Theory*, London, Pinter, 1994, p. 237-254.

4   See for example, Stephen Chan, Peter G Mandaville and Ronald Bleiker (eds.), *The Zen of International Relations: IR Theory From East to West*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001; "Special Issue: Locating the 'I' in 'IR': Dislocating Euro-American Theories," *Global Society*, Vol. 17, No 2, 2003, p. 107-221; Anna M. Agathangelou and L.H.M. Ling, "The House of IR: From Family Power Politics to the Poisies of Worldism", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 6, No 4, 2004; Arlene B. Tickner and David Blaney (eds.), *Thinking International Relations Differently*, London, Routledge, 2012.

5   Stanley Hoffmann, "An American Social Science: International Relations", *Daedalus*, Vol. 106, No 3, 1977, p. 41-60.

6   Kalevi J. Holsti, *The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory*, Boston, Allen & Unwin, 1985.

7   Chan, "Beyond North-West: Africa and the East".

"not so international".[8] Biersteker and Hagmann went beyond 'the published discipline' and found that course syllabi were also less than international.[9] As TRIP surveys have laid bare, this is true for not only research and teaching North America and Western Europe, but also beyond.[10] Somewhat ironically, contributors to Global IR discussions do not always engage with scholarship beyond North America and Western Europe.

By the 2010s, there had accumulated a body of knowledge on the sociology of IR, which indicated two things. First, that IR was less than international—that is to say, scholars from outside North America and Western Europe are not always well represented in scholarly publications and course syllabi. And, second, that our knowledge about world politics was less than sociological insofar as it did not reflect "how things are different but also…how things mix", to quote Chan.[11] That most of our efforts to globalise IR have thus far been directed toward remedying the first (the discipline being less than international) without always inquiring into how this is implicated in the second (our knowledge being less than sociological) has meant that students still have a long way to go in understanding the epistemological and ontological implications of IR having been a 'regional' discipline tasked to make sense of a 'global world'.[12] Over the years, even as an explicit effort was made to render the field more 'open' by highlighting the limited number of contributions from outside North America and Western Europe, the remedies adopted seldom went beyond 'adding and stirring', i.e. inviting contributions by scholars from the margins but often without reflecting on the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of disciplinary IR, thereby leaving its essence untouched as a 'regional IR'.

Challenges Facing Globalising IR

This part of the essay lays out what we identify as two major challenges facing the efforts to globalise IR. These have less to do with 'who does the theorising', and more about 'what they say'. This is not only because IR as it is produced outside North America and Western Europe may be similarly Eurocentric and may therefore replicate the same limitations but in a different guise.[13] It is also because the very nature of what we study, i.e. the international, cannot be understood without engaging with those who also constitute the international.

The Problem of Eurocentrism as a System of Knowledge

How to define and overcome Eurocentrism has been a concern for the social sciences and humanities for some time.[14] We understand Eurocentrism as a system of knowledge that constructs 'Europe' as a

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8   Ole Waever, "The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations", *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No 4, 1998, p. 687-727.

9   Jonas Hagmann and Thomas J. Biersteker, "Beyond the Published Discipline: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of International Studies", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 20, No 2, 2014, p. 291-315.

10   Wiebke Wemheuer-Vogelaar et al., "The IR of the Beholder: Examining Global IR Using the 2014 TRIP Survey", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 18, No 1, 2016, p. 16-32.

11   Stephen Chan, *Plural International Relations in a Divided World*, Cambridge, Polity, 2017, p. viii.

12   Vivienne Jabri and Stephen Chan, "The Ontologist Always Rings Twice: Two More Stones About Structure and Agency in Reply to Hollis and Smith", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 22, No 1, 1996, p. 107-110.

13   Zeynep Gülşah Çapan, *Re-writing International Relations: History and Theory Beyond Eurocentrism in Turkey*, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

14   Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*, trans. Russell Moore and James Membrez, 2009 ed., New York, Monthly Review Press, 1989; Siba N. Grovogui, *Beyond Eurocentrism and Anarchy: Memories of International Order and Institutions*, New York, Palgrave

separate place and as being temporally ahead of 'non-Europe'. Following Dhareshwar, "Eurocentrism is not merely the Eurocentrism of people located in the West…it permeates the cultural apparatus in which we participate".[15]

Eurocentrism as a "hegemonic perspective of knowledge" is based on two "founding myths", writes Quijano.[16] The first one is "the idea of the history of human civilization as a trajectory that departed from a state of nature and culminated in Europe", and second "a view of the differences between Europe and non-Europe as natural (racial) differences and not consequences of a history of power".[17] Quijano thus underlines 'evolutionism and dualism' as the two main pillars of Eurocentrism as a system of knowledge: 1) narratives of events rests upon specific binaries such as West/non-West, East/West, rational/emotional, developed/underdeveloped; 2) developments are presumed to occur first in the 'West'/'Europe' and then exported to the outside spaces. This Eurocentric way of narrating events has been the cornerstone of the way in which the making of the international has been narrated. Indeed, Eurocentric narratives portray any development, idea, and event as having been developed exclusively within the space understood as Europe before every other space.[18] That this narrative is oblivious to many instances of learning and give and take between said locations has now been established in works that do not take Europe as an autonomously developed space, or reproduce the dualisms inherent in that narrative.[19]

The historical turn in IR has been one of the main spaces through which Eurocentrism has been problematized. The insights of "connected histories"[20] have been crucial in highlighting two dynamics with respect to narratives on the making of the international. First, that developments that had been written as solely occurring in Europe had been occurring in connection with spaces designated as outside, as discussed above. Therefore, empire and colonialism were centred within the analysis to underline that events and developments did not happen in isolation.[21] Second, that the narrative on the expansion of international society had to consider that the spaces designated as being outside of Europe had their own reasons for joining the international society.[22]

Macmillan, 2006; Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, London, Routledge, 2014.

15   Vivek Dhareshwar, "The Predicament of Theory", Martin Kreiswirth and Mark Cheetham (eds.), *Theory Between the Disciplines: Authority/Vision/Politics*, Ann Arbor, Michigan University Press, 1990, p. 235.

16   Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Neplanta*, Vol. 1, No 3, 2000, p. 542.

17   Ibid.

18   Amin, *Eurocentrism*; Zeynep Gülşah Çapan, "Decolonising International Relations?", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No 1, 2017, p. 1-15.

19   John M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004; Pinar Bilgin, "On the 'Does Theory Travel?'Question: Traveling with Edward Said", Zeynep Gülşah Çapan et al. (eds.), *The Politics of Translation in International Relations*, London, Palgrave, 2021.

20   Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes Toward a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 31, No 3, 1997, p.735-762.

21   Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, "Retrieving the Imperial: Empire and International Relations", *Millennium-Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 31, No 1, 2002, p.109-127; Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*, New York, Palgrave, 2007.

22   Shogo Suzuki, Yongjin Zhang and Joel Quirk (eds.), *International Orders in the Early Modern World: Before the Rise of the West*, London, Routledge, 2014; Pinar Bilgin, *The International in Security, Security in the International*, London, Routledge, 2016.

Consider sovereignty, a key notion of IR. Hobson questions the linear narrative of the origins of sovereignty by asking "where was sovereignty" rather than "when was sovereignty".[23] He argues that sovereignty originated as part of the process of "oriental globalization" and that "eastern influences played an important role in shaping each of the sources of the sovereign state – economic, geopolitical/military, ideological/discursive and political".[24] Hobson thus demonstrates the way in which situating Westphalia at the centre of the story of sovereignty silences the influence of the East and how it was co-constitutive in the emergence of sovereignty.

In later eras, the story of sovereignty cannot be told independent of imperialism since "imperialism in its many forms was essential in shaping the character of both Europe and the non-European world; it is their common history".[25] Grovogui has argued that the emergence of 'resilient' states in 'Europe' (such as Belgium) and so-called 'failed' states' in 'non-Europe' (as in Congo) cannot be understood independent of each other insofar as "the intra-European regime of sovereignty worked to the advantage of the European entity while a permissive ethos in Africa undermined the consolidation of sovereign capacities in Congo".[26] This is not only because of imperialism and colonisation. It is also because of the international society's 'differentiated treatment' in that "while one regime contributed to the 'resilience' of European quasi-states, another helped to undermine the sovereignty of African entities and, later, to assist in the 'failure' of a number of African states".[27]

The challenge of Eurocentrism for IR, then, is not only an issue of the geographical location of those who produce knowledge, but also (if not more so) an epistemic one. Approaching Eurocentrism in the former sense results in diagnosing the challenge as the absence of 'non-Europe' in IR narratives. The solution therefore becomes de-centring existing narratives and 'adding' new (local) perspectives. In contrast, understanding the challenge of Eurocentrism as an epistemic problem means problematizing the system of knowledge itself. Eurocentrism constricts our understanding of the international not because 'non-Europe' is missing, but that it is incorporated in a particular way that overlooks the latter's contributions and the role the former has played in the 'development of underdevelopment', for example, as discussed in Bilgin's contribution to this issue. While some of these may be known to those attuned to History, which also has its own problems, they do not get to inform IR conceptions of state, sovereignty, and development so long as the challenge of Eurocentrism is understood as a problem of geographical location and attempted to be addressed through 'adding (the locals) and stirring', as opposed to, that is, reflecting on and critiquing the very categories that have worked to limit our understanding of the world. The aim of moving beyond the either/or divisions is furthered through the discussion of relationality by our special issue contributor Shimizu who introduces Mahayana Buddhism and its emphasis on relationality with 'others' more than the 'self'. Correspondingly, Blaney and Trownsell underline the need to recraft IR through focusing on existing pluralities and a relationality that goes beyond the anthropocentric. After all, what is pluralism, if not for "[thinking] systematically about [our] own assumptions, concepts and commitments"?[28]

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23 John M Hobson, "Provincializing Westphalia: the Eastern Origins of Sovereignty", *International Politics*, Vol. 46, No 6, 2009, p. 673.

24 Ibid., p. 682.

25 Barkawi and Laffey, "Retrieving the Imperial", p. 113.

26 Siba N. Grovogui, "Regimes of Sovereignty: International Morality and the African Condition", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, No 3, 2002, p. 329.

27 Ibid., p. 316.

28 Levine and McCourt, "Why Does Pluralism Matter When We Study Politics?", p. 103.

The Problem of Reification and the Need for Self-Reflection

Reification is turning something abstract into a concrete thing, and then forgetting the history and process involved. International Relations scholars are guilty of reification insofar as we often "forget that the concepts we use, and the theories into which they are fitted, constitute partial (in both senses of this term) extrapolations from a much larger, more diverse, and indeterminate world".[29] It is through such a process (of turning something abstract into a concrete thing) that "war becomes any event that occasions more than 1,000 battle deaths; freedom becomes merely the conjunction of positive and negative liberty; and peace becomes simply the absence of conflict".[30] Critical theories of international relations are tasked to historicise and contextualize issues of world politics, partly to reveal reification as such. Yet critical theories, too, are known to be oblivious to the ways in which Eurocentrism has shaped the kind of forgetting the history and process involved, turning particular experiences into things, as with state, sovereignty, and security, among others.

Reification is a challenge for globalising IR in two ways. First, to understand that the field of International Relations has been a 'regional IR' requires becoming aware of the amount of forgetting that goes into reifying a particular narrative about how the world works into 'IR theory'. Consider the example of sovereignty discussed above. Sovereignty is often introduced to students of IR as a 'thing'. Even when it is historicised, our historical narratives are informed by that very 'thing', i.e. narratives of Westphalia as a constitutive moment of sovereignty. What is left out are 'connected histories' of Westphalia *and* histories of sovereignty other than Westphalia.

By virtue of remaining oblivious to the process of reification that has produced contemporary notions of 'sovereignty', attempts to globalise IR have remained limited to pointing to presumed 'European' origins of sovereignty and how these notions may not be relevant in 'non-Europe' and then seeking to develop local schools of IR in search for an 'alternative' notion of sovereignty. Our point being, insofar as we remain oblivious to the amount of forgetting that turns a particular experience with sovereignty in 'Europe' into 'sovereignty' as a thing, we miss the opportunity to trace the effects of such forgetting or seek ways of remedying them. Put differently, the problem with reification is not isolated to the margins, it is a problem for disciplinary IR. It is not only that our conception of sovereignty may not be able to capture experiences in Congo ('non-Europe'), it is also failing in Belgium ('Europe').

The second challenge that reification poses for globalising IR is the following: ideas about 'Western' and 'non-Western', once they become reified, become categories that are difficult to escape. This is evident in discussions of 'non-Western' IR where the 'non-West' gets constituted through the characteristics that are assigned to it (such as spiritual) in contradistinction to a 'rational' 'West'. What is more, these characteristics then serve as a ground upon which calls for local schools of IR are built. In contrast to beginning with reified notions of 'Western' and 'non-Western' as a basis of knowledge production is to begin by revealing the history and process of forgetting involved in constructing IR as 'Western'.

The reification of 'Western' and 'non-Western' is problematized in the works of Narayan, who explores how the 'difference' that constructs the binaries of West/non-West, modern/traditional, developed/underdeveloped is constructed. Consider the way liberty and equality are portrayed as being 'Western' values and spirituality is understood as being 'non-Western'. Narayan argues that the charac-

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29 Ibid., p. 99.
30 Ibid., p. 99-100.

teristic of spirituality was ascribed to the 'non-West' as part of the colonial context. At the same time, spirituality as a 'non-Western' characteristic was reproduced by anti-colonial nationalists in order to make the "argument that 'our culture' was both distinctive from and superior to 'Western culture'".[31] The reproduction of difference and reification of aforementioned binary categories, as such, has served to paper over the fact that ideas about equality, human rights and democracy do not belong to the West but rather have been developed in 'struggles *against Western imperialism'*.[32] As such, creating categories and assigning them essentialized characteristics might make certain connections invisible as the "*origins* of a practice or concept seldom limit its *scope of relevance"* whereby "entities of non-European origin that have been assimilated into 'Western culture' over time includes items as disparate as gunpowder, compasses, Christianity and coffee".[33] As Agarwal's contribution to this issue argues, this is true for those masculinist ideas that are found in Kautilya's Arhashastra, which were at the same time passed from the colonial administration to contemporary Indian state. Similarly, Bunskoek and Shih seek to go beyond the either/or dichotomies often encountered in the study of China by discussing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through a post-Western/post-Chinese form of regionalism, which entails approaching China as a Westphalian nation state *and* as amorphous Tianxia. Witzenhausen, in his review of *Recentering Africa in International Relations,* underlines the books discussion of knowledge production and how it opens space to recover untold histories.

Seeking to address aforementioned limitations in the absence of a self-reflection is bound to (re)produce the very same limitations, as observed in attempts to offer a post-colonial critique without showing awareness of the ways in which one is also implicated in (neo)colonialism[34] or anti-Western critique in a way that (re)produces the hegemony of the very same forms of IR. Indeed, 'non-Western IR' approaches (a.k.a. local schools of IR) occlude the very avenues they are supposed to open.[35]

Decolonizing as a Strategy for Globalising IR?

Coloniality refers to "the persistence of logics of thinking and doing even in the absence of formal colonial rule".[36] Developed by the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality (MCD) project, the study of coloniality focuses on the structures of power that were established with the conquest of America and came to define our understandings of labour, knowledge, sexuality and subjectivity, and the ways in which "settler colonialism and plantation economies make some humans human and other humans less-than-human".[37] Over the years, disciplinary IR has allowed a particular experience of Westphalia to become 'thingified' into state and sovereignty, thereby limiting our understanding of the interna-

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31 Uma Narayan, "Essence of Culture and a Sense of History: a Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism", Uma Narayan and Sandra Harding (eds.), *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 90.

32 Ibid., p. 97. Also see, Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent*, London, Verso, 2019.

33 Ibid. Also see Pinar Bilgin, "Do IR Scholars Engage with the Same World?", Ken Booth and Toni Erskine (eds)., *International Relations Theory Today*, Oxford, Polity, 2016.

34 Zeynep Gülşah Çapan and Ayşe Zarakol, "Postcolonial Colonialism? The case of Turkey", Charlotte Epstein (ed.), *Against International Relations Norms*, New York, Routledge, 2017.

35 Pinar Bilgin, "Opening up International Relations, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love 'non-Western IR'", Steven Roach (ed.), *Handbook of Critical International Relations*, London, Edward Elgar, 2020.

36 Robbie Shilliam, *Decolonizing Politics: an Introduction*, Cambridge, UK Polity, 2021, p. 57.

37 Ibid. Also see, Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America".

tional. Whereas, as our special issue contributors Dikmen-Alsancak and Küçük show, the international has been understood differently in Third World and postcolonial IR scholarship, suggesting that the 'international' might not only be understood differently in different parts of the world, but also that the scholars problematizing it might differ among themselves. Smith's contribution to our special issue, in turn, furthers the discussion through problematizing the way the international is understood by disciplinary IR and juxtaposing that with people's everyday understandings and experiences of borders. These discussions highlight ways of approaching categories within IR—not through one narrative but across multiple vantage points. In this special issue, decolonizing IR is proffered as strategy for globalising IR insofar as it focuses on the problem Eurocentrism as a system of knowledge while taking care not to reify aforementioned binaries.

How to 'decolonize IR' and what decolonization entails has been a continuing discussion within the field of IR.[38] It is the coloniality of International Relations that this literature predominantly problematizes. According to Gruffydd Jones, decolonizing entails revealing "the imperial and racialized constitution of international relations" and "moving imperialism from its bracketed location in specialist studies and the distant chronological past and demonstrating the unbroken centrality of imperialism to international relations".[39] Sabaratnam identifies five 'decolonizing strategies': "pointing out discursive Orientalism, deconstructing historical myths of European development, challenging Eurocentric historiographies, rearticulating subaltern subjectivities, diversifying political subjecthoods and re-imagining the social-psychological subject of world politics."[40]

Decolonising IR need not mean one specific strategy or road map, but rather multiple and at times interlocking strategies that problematize narratives and subjects. Furthermore, the challenges identified above materialize in these strategies to differing degrees whether with respect to how Eurocentrism is defined, how history is employed, and/or how reification occurs. As such, no one strategy is a *perfect solution* but rather they all open the way to further problematizations.

As we seek to 'globalise' IR, then, we take the 'global' seriously, aspiring for a body of knowledge that approaches the international as experienced and understood by all those who constitute it. For, as Fierke and Jabri have cautioned, "to invoke the 'global'…does not in itself bring an equalisation of the discursive practices within the discipline, nor of the practices that are its subject matter".[41] Accordingly, we understand the 'global' in contradistinction to those who rely on particular historical narratives of (a presumably autonomously developed) 'Europe' as they overlook the experiences, contributions and contestations of those who also constitute the global.[42] As Muppidi has argued, "it was not knowledge that was lacking, it was knowing how to read that knowledge, knowing how to go beyond the self in understanding the world".[43] Following Spivak, Muppidi makes a case for a "global

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38 Çapan, "Decolonising International Relations?"; Shilliam, *Decolonizing Politics*.

39 Branwen Gruffydd Jones, "Introduction: International Relations, Eurocentrism, and Imperialism", Branwen Gruffydd Jones (ed.), *Decolonizing International Relations*, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2006, p. 9.

40 Meera Sabaratnam, "IR in Dialogue… But Can We Change the Subjects? A Typology of Decolonising Strategies for the Study of World Politics", *Millennium*, Vol. 39, No 3, 2011, p. 782.

41 Karin Fierke and Vivenne Jabri, "Global Conversations: Relationality, Embodiment and Power in the Move Towards a Global IR", *Global Constitutionalism*, Vol. 8, No 3, 2019, p. 506-535.

42 Pinar Bilgin, "Globalization and In/security: Middle Eastern Encounters with International Society and the Case of Turkey", Stephan Stetter (ed.), *The Middle East and Globalization: Encounters and Horizons*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

43 Himadeep Muppidi, *The Politics of the Global*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2004, p. 3.

literacy", defined as "a sense of the political, economic, *and* cultural position of the various national origin places"[44] in counter-distinction to foregrounding one's own 'culture' in the guise of 'objective' or local schools of IR.

The retrieval of the 'colonial'/'non-European'/'non-Western' subject in and of itself does not constitute a panacea, if the challenge of Eurocentrism is not addressed as a system of knowledge. Failing that, persistent Eurocentrism leads to entrenchment of the problem of reification. A similar problem presents itself with respect to decolonizing IR. To quote Shilliam,

"There is an easy option to decolonizing the study of politics. You can simply search for the most exotic forms of politics around the world and revel in their alien-ness. But in doing so, you'd keep the 'familiar' familiar and the 'unfamiliar' unfamiliar. There would be no intimate engagement between 'them' and 'us'. No question raised as to what counts as 'exotic' to whom and why."[45]

The traps such as reification have been established in and through the Eurocentric system of knowledge whereby even in attempts to challenge it, we continue to do so having a priori accepted the 'difference' that the Eurocentric system of knowledge constructed. The aim as such needs to be to question what the construction of 'difference' makes invisible and ways to overcome it without relying upon fixed categories already in place. This perspective underlines that decolonizing cannot and should not be about constructing an idealized 'authentic' and spiritual subject to oppose the rational subject of the West but rather to question the understandings of rationality and spirituality and how the differences continue to be constructed therein. Furthermore, it should not be about constructing alternative narratives that assign different origins and continue a progressive narrative that ascribes static meanings to past, present and future but rather questioning narrative structures and focussing on multiplicity of stories. In that sense, all works aiming to decolonize are mediations on how to retrieve the subject without reifying it, how to construct narratives without falling into historiographical traps, and how to make archives of knowledge available.

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44 Donna Landry and Gerald M. MacLean, *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 295.

45 Shilliam, *Decolonizing Politics*, p. 9.

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