ANALYTICAL ESSAY

"Contrapuntal Reading" as a Method, an Ethos, and a Metaphor for Global IR

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How to approach Global International Relations (IR)? This is a question asked by students of IR who recognize the limits of our field while expressing their concern that those who strive for a Global IR have been less-than-clear about the "how to?" question. In this article, I point to Edward W. Said's approach to "contrapuntal reading" as one way of approaching Global IR that embraces diversity and reflects multiple and overlapping experiences and perspectives of humankind. More specifically, I suggest that contrapuntal reading offers students of IR a *method* of studying world politics that focuses on our "intertwined and overlapping histories," past and present; an *ethos* for approaching IR through raising the "contrapuntal awareness" of its students and offering an anchor for those who translate the findings of different perspectives; and a *metaphor* for thinking about Global IR as regional and global, one and many.

Keywords: international relations theory, Edward Said, postcolonial IR, critical IR, global IR

How to approach Global International Relations (IR)? This is a question asked by students of IR who recognize the limits of our field (Alker and Biersteker 1984; Smith 2002, 2004; Biersteker 2009) while expressing their concern that those who strive for a Global IR have been less-than-clear about the "how to?" question. In his presidential address to the 2014 convention of the International Studies Association, Amitav Acharya (2014, 649) introduced Global IR as "not a theory but an aspiration for greater inclusiveness and diversity in our discipline."[1] In this article, I point to Edward W. Said's (1975, 1983, 1984, 1993) approach to "contrapuntal reading" as one way of approaching Global IR that embraces diversity and "reflects the voices, experiences, interests and identities of humankind" (Acharya 2014, 657). More specifically, I suggest that contrapuntal reading offers students of IR a *method* of studying world politics that focuses on our "intertwined and overlapping histories," past and present; an *ethos* for approaching IR through raising the "contrapuntal awareness" of its students and offering an anchor for those who translate the findings of different

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[1]"Global IR" is Amitav Acharya's (2014) preferred term for designating the search for addressing IR's limits. It was also the theme of the 2015 International Studies Association Conference. Other efforts have focused on "post-Western IR" (Inayatullah and Blaney 1996; Shani 2008), "thinking beyond Western IR" (Pasha 2011b), and "non-Western" approaches to IR (Acharya and Buzan 2009; Shilliam 2011b). While remaining aware of the significant differences between these efforts, I have chosen to use the term "Global IR," in respect for the bigger agenda toward which all the aforementioned scholars have worked.

perspectives; and a *metaphor* for thinking about Global IR as regional and global, one and many.[2]

Global IR

In the second half of the twentieth century, IR scholarship was shaped by US-originated ideas as to what counts as knowledge about world politics. Critics such as Kalevi J. Holsti (1985), even as they interrogated Stanley Hoffmann's (1977) characterization of IR as an "American social science," still remained within the same set of concepts and categories. From the mid-1980s onward, scholars from Western Europe joined this conversation. Steve Smith (1985) inquired into the similarities and differences of American and British approaches to IR. Knud Erik Jorgensen (2000) pointed to the limited visibility of continental IR theory in the rest of the world, labeling it as "the best kept secret." Ole Waever (1998) reflected on the differences between American and Western European approaches and identified IR as a discipline that was "not so international."

The question of what it would mean for IR to become more international does not have a straightforward answer. Some have emphasized the *authorship* of contributions to "top" journals. Utilizing bibliometric methods, Kalevi J. Holsti (1985), Ole Waever (1998), and Peter Markus Kristensen (2015) found a significant portion of the contributors to textbooks and "top" journals to be located in North America and Western Europe.[3] Others stressed the *substance* of works that are produced, with Chan (1996), Chan, Mandaville, and Bleiker (2001), Christopher S. Jones (2003), and Peter Mandaville (2003) problematizing IR's lack of "openness" to "heterogenous" ideas. Let me flesh out these two sets of criticisms.

To begin with *authorship*, writing in 1985, Holsti invited IR scholars to consider the question, "Who does the theorizing?" This question was important for Holsti, not because he was interested in openness for the sake of openness but because he expected the answer to have significant implications for the study of world politics. Holsti thought that since IR "reflected the historical experience of the European state system in the past, and the Cold War more recently," one should expect "serious challenges" to come from those who did not share these experiences or experienced them differently (Holsti 1985, 8). "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, 8) wrote. In doing so, Holsti echoed E. H. Carr who remarked in the 1970s, that

> the study of international relations in English speaking countries is simply a study of the best way to run the world from positions of strength. The study of international relations in African and Asian Universities, if it ever got going, would be a study of the exploitation of the weaker by the stronger (Carr quoted in Barkawi and Laffey 2006, 349).

Consequently, when Holsti encouraged IR scholars to inquire into "who does the theorizing," what he had in mind was bringing in the perspectives of those who seemed to be underrepresented in IR publications as revealed by his analysis of IR scholarship: scholars from outside Western Europe and North America (Holsti 1985, 8).

In the late 1990s, Ole Waever updated and extended Holsti's analysis of bibliometric data on IR scholarship and reached similar findings. IR is a discipline that

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[2]I would like to thank one of the reviewers of the special issue for encouraging me to think through "contrapuntal reading" as a metaphor for Global IR.

[3]Hayward Alker, Thomas J. Biersteker, and Jonas Hagmann looked at syllabi of IR courses and were not impressed with the results (Alker and Biersteker 1984; Biersteker 2009; Hagmann and Biersteker 2014). See Wemheuer-Vogelaar et al. in this issue for an analysis of the results of the latest TRIP survey.

is "not so international," wrote Waever ([1998]).[4] This is because the field was characterized by an overwhelming presence of American authors in "American" journals and a more mixed picture in "European" journals. The rest of the world was notable for its near-absence. More recently, Peter Marcus Kristensen ([2015]) updated Waever's bibliometric analysis. His findings suggested that although there has been some progress in terms of the field becoming more global (as represented in "top" journals), the degree of such change was relatively small.

It is significant to note here that IR is by no means exceptional in terms of lack of "openness," understood as the geographical distribution of authors contributing to "top" journals. Indeed, Kristensen's findings showed that

> Comparatively speaking, IR is not the most American or Anglo-Saxon social science. Nor is IR the social science with the highest proportion of Anglo-Saxon and Continental European contributions taken together (Kristensen [2015], 256–7).

That said, critics of IR singled out the field's lack of "openness" as a limit not because IR's record was worse than some other social science disciplines. The critics singled out IR's lack of "openness" as a problem because although the international was its subject matter, there was little interest within IR on the perspectives of those who also constitute "the international" (Jabri [2013]; Seth [2013]). This is a serious concern because, as Siba N. Grovogui ([2002], 52) wrote, it "undermines the intellectual claim and moral purchase of a discipline that aspires to understand international politics." The problem here is partly about IR's apparent lack of recognition for others' contributions to and contestations over knowledge about world politics (Shilliam [2009]; [2011a], [2011b]). It is also about IR's claim to produce knowledge about world politics notwithstanding such lack (Grovogui [2002], [2013]).

Others suggested that inquiries into IR as a field that was "not so international" should focus on not only the authorship but also the *substance* of what counts as "IR knowledge."[5] This was because, argued Christopher S. Jones, while scholars from outside Western Europe and North America were becoming more visible in IR,

> it is not often the case that these voices have been permitted into the global discourse on IR because of the heterodox or anti-hegemonic wisdom that accompanies them; rather, these voices have been accepted in the mainstream because they have learnt the orthodoxy. The inclusion of scholars from 'India and postwar Japan' in the body (or 'I') of IR may tell us more about the changing ('modernising') intellectual atmosphere of those countries than about any particular openness in the discipline of IR (Jones [2003], 108; also see, Mandaville [2003], Grovogui [2009]).

Accordingly, Jones pointed to Eurocentrism as a limit for theorizing about IR, understood not only in terms of the geographical origins of authors or institutions but also (perhaps more so) as a particular way of approaching world politics that is not open to "heterogeneous" perspectives.

That said, the critics left open the definition of "heterogeneous." Depending on what is understood by heterogeneity, there may be more or less road to travel for students of IR. For those trained within the precepts of mainstream approaches to IR, bringing in the perspectives of scholars originating from outside North America and Western Europe may come across as already helping to render IR more heterogeneous. For others who are looking to discover "different"

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[4]During the 2000s, Waever inquired into various aspects IR's limits through the "geocultural epistemologies and IR" project together with Arlene B. Tickner and David Blaney (Tickner and Waever [2009a]; Tickner and Blaney 2012, 2013).

[5]Waever ([1998]) also considered the substantive aspect, but in terms of meta/theoretical orientations of the contributions.

ways of approaching the international, on the other hand, it is a must to open the field to ideas that are shaped by the "strong cosmologies, distinct religious-philo-sophical traditions" of others (Tickner and Waever 2009b, 20, cf., Bilgin 2008, also see, Chan, Mandaville, and Bleiker 2001). Finally, for those who judge hetero-geneity by outcomes, hearing a diverse set of voices would count only as a first step. As Siba Grogovui wrote,

> the discipline is made up of diverse and vibrant perspectives . . . But this diversity does not guarantee open outcomes, if by openness one means a discipline that reflects its object—international relations in all its complexities and modulations . . . (Grovogui 2009, 138).

From this final perspective, rendering IR more international would involve re-thinking the hierarchies among different kinds of knowledge, as discussed by Anna Agathangelou and L.H.M. Ling (2004) through the analogy of IR as a "colo-nial household." It would also involve considering the hierarchical division of la-bor between the core and the periphery in knowledge production, as discussed by Arlene Tickner (2013). Finally, it would encourage us to think about the ways in which our existing "binary categories such as black/white, Western/non-Western, and global north and south" are "complex and hierarchical" (also see, Hutchings 2011; Krishna 2015, 139). For, highlighting the ways in which "the world has been written from London or Washington without the impediment of having to know much about other places or histories or peoples" (Darby et al. 2003, 10) is to make a point not only about geography and identity but also power and hierar-chy. There is often a periphery inside the core (on the relationship between IR scholars in "top" universities and the rest in the United States as regards theory production and consumption, see the results of successive Teaching, Research & International Policy (TRIP) surveys)[6] and a core inside the periphery (e.g., Israeli scholars' relatively high number of contributions to "top" IR journals, see Kacowicz 2009).

The Difficulty with the "How to?" Question

The difficulty with the "how to approach Global IR" question arises precisely at this point. The prospect of a Global IR invokes, in the minds of many, images of a field that tells "multiple stories" about world politics—none of which are more or less priv-ileged than the others. Although early IR scholars' "science envy" is considered a by-gone concern by some (see Lebow and Risse-Kappen 1995; Woods 1996; Bernstein et al. 2000; Lebow and Lichbach 2007), arguments reminiscent of those past debates are revived time and again when registering objection to calls for a Global IR.

Consider a relatively recent exchange between Steve Smith and Brian Schmidt on this very issue. The occasion for this exchange was the publication of an IR theory textbook that Steve Smith co-edited (with Tim Dunne and Milja Kurki), in which a wide variety of mainstream and critical IR theories (including postcoloni-alism) were introduced (Smith, Dunne, and Kurki 2007). In explaining the plural-ist ethos of the textbook to the readers, Smith wrote:

> We believe that the field is now much healthier because of the proliferation of theories. Not only has this resulted in a significant rethink about what the field consists of, it has also led to a questioning of the main assumptions of the ontology and epistemology of the discipline. Together we see these developments as opening up space for much

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[6]http://www.wm.edu/offices/itpir/trip/. For instance, there is a diversity in IR scholarship in the United States that does not get reflected in the course syllabi (Alker and Biersteker 1984) or in debates on IR as an "American so-cial science" (Halliday, 1987, 227; Ahluwalia and Sullivan 2001).

> more debate, and, crucially, to legitimize a wider variety of theories (Smith, Dunne, and Kurki 2013, 7).

Smith was not unaware of what makes the mainstream apprehensive: how to choose between "multiple stories" in the absence of an Archimedean yardstick. Smith's preference, however, was in line with Stanley Hoffmann's (1977, 57) vision for IR as "the science of uncertainty." Brian Schmidt's review of Smith et al.'s textbook, however, expressed reservations about such a vision for IR. Schmidt wrote:

> too much pluralism leaves us with a divided discipline that not only fails to speak with one voice, but cannot even agree on what we should be studying, focusing on, or seeking to explain. Pluralism, in other words, masks (Schmidt 2008, 298; cf., Lichbach 2007) the fact that we have an incoherent field.

That the "univocal" voice that he sought did not come from "nowhere" but reflected a particular perspective did not seem to trouble the author.[7] On the contrary, Schmidt cautioned his readers that avoiding "too much pluralism" was the only way to advance "scientifically" our knowledge about world politics. He wrote:

> For those who remain committed to a scientific study of world politics and who continue to be influenced by Thomas Kuhn"s account of scientific development, pluralism is viewed as an obstacle to scientific advance. The argument is that as long as we have multiple and contending paradigms, we will not have a unified and hegemonic discipline and thus no scientific progress (Schmidt 2008, 299).[8]

Putting aside the question of what constitutes "too much pluralism," the remainder of the article will suggest "contrapuntal reading" as a helpful metaphor for approaching Global IR. This is because reviving past debates about relativism (as invoked by the "multiple stories" metaphor) distracts from the fresh agenda of Global IR.[9]

This is not to underestimate the significance of Steve Smith's (2004) call for hearing alternative voices in IR as expressed in his presidential address to the International Studies Association in 2004. Rather my aim here is to underscore the point that the task for Global IR is somewhat different than Smith's call. The task for Global IR is better understood as "not additive but reconstructive" (Pasha 2011a, 218). What is being sought is not telling "multiple stories," but "excavating" (Blaney and Inayatullah 2008) multiple layers to already existing stories with an eye on power/knowledge dynamics (Trouillot 1995). The following section turns to Edward W. Said's notions of "contrapuntal awareness" and "contrapuntal reading" to flesh out this approach to Global IR.

Said on "Contrapuntal Awareness" and "Contrapuntal Reading"

Edward W. Said (1975, 1993, 1984, 1983) is an ideal thinker to draw upon when thinking about Global IR. Scholars from a wide range of social science fields including anthropology, sociology, and political geography recognize the significance of his legacy. Still, Said has been "a rather neglected figure" in IR (Chowdhry 2007, 101) with the exception of Middle East Studies, where his legacy is somewhat chequered (Owen 2012). What renders Said's ideas a good starting point for doing Global IR is his notions of "contrapuntal awareness" and "contrapuntal reading." Said's approach to contrapuntal reading offers students of IR a *method* of studying world politics through focusing on "connectedness," on intertwined experiences,

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[7] See Grovogui (2013) for a critique of IR as a "univocal and unilateral" discourse.

[8] For critical perspectives on the incorporation of Kuhnian notions of paradigm and incommensurability in IR, see Waever (1996) and Guzzini (1998).

[9] On relativism as a problem for IR, also see Lichbach (2007).

past and present. Said also offers an *ethos* for approaching IR through raising our "contrapuntal awareness" of multiple ways of thinking through a problem and translating the findings of different perspectives. There is already a wealth of research in IR that focus on future possibilities and/or past instances of translation, including "analytical eclecticism" (Katzenstein and Okawara 2001; Sil and Katzenstein 2010), postcolonial studies (Chowdhry and Nair 2002; Ling 2002; Grovogui 2006), and historical sociology (Halperin 1997; Hobson 2004; Buzan and Lawson 2015). I draw on Said's approach to pull together these studies without seeking to synthesize them, treating contrapuntal reading as a *metaphor* for Global IR, that is global and regional, one and many.

Said borrowed the term "contrapuntal" from music, one of his many interests as a polymath (see Said 2006). Contrapuntal refers to two independent yet harmonious lines in a musical composition (Jackson n.d.). Translated into the social world, "contrapuntal awareness" is about being able to recognize these multiple independent lines while also appreciating the harmony. Such appreciation is a particular quality of "the exile," according to Said, while others might need training in appreciating contrapuntality. He wrote:

> Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is contrapuntal (Said 1984, 171–72).

Said defined "contrapuntal awareness" as belonging to multiple worlds not only in terms of cultural identity but also academic field, thereby defying disciplinary belonging and restraints. Such "eccentricity" allows the exile not only "the negative advantage of refuge," wrote Said, but also "the positive benefit of challenging the system, describing it in language unavailable to those it has already subdued" (Said 1993, 334). Lamenting the passing of an era where intellectuals were expected to be fluent in several subject areas and languages,[10] he maintained that "[t]he fantastic explosion of specialized and separatist knowledge is partly to blame" for present-day limits of our insight into "intertwined and overlapping histories" of humankind (Said 1993, 320).

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said (1993) offered "contrapuntal reading" as a method for doing research as if viewed through the eyes of "the exile." *Culture and Imperialism* is a book about "interdependence of cultural terrains" under conditions of imperialism as highlighted in Said's reading of British, French, and American literature. What was theretofore missing in literary criticism, Said thought, was inquiring into "involvements of culture with expanding empires." He wrote:

> One of imperialism's achievements was to bring the world closer together, and although in the process the separation between Europeans and natives was an insidious and fundamentally unjust one, most of us would now regard the historical experience of empire as a common one (Said 1993, 12).

Empires and imperialism implicated multiple peoples in different ways, wrote Said. "Out of the imperial experiences, notions about culture were clarified, reinforced, criticized, or rejected" (Said 1993, 9). However, he noted, connections forged through such experiences were seldom reflected upon by literary critics who did not (feel the need to) connect the imperial context, which those authors were writing in or responding to. However, Said wrote,

> To lose sight of or ignore the national and international context of, say, Dickens's representations of Victorian businessmen, and to focus only on the internal

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[10]See, for example, Said's foreword to Raymond Schwab's *The Oriental Renaissance* (1950[1984]).

> coherence of their roles in his novels is to miss an essential connection between his fiction and its historical world (Said 1993, 13).

To be able to go beyond merely offering comparative analyses on the dynamics of culture and imperialism, suggested Said, the literary critic needs to be equipped with the exile's "contrapuntal awareness." This is because

> we must be able to think through and interpret together experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development, its own internal formations, its internal coherence and system of external relationships, all of them coexisting and interacting with others (Said 1993, 32).

Adopting contrapuntal reading as a method, submitted Said, is one way in which "intertwined and overlapping histories" of the colonizer and the colonized could be grasped.

Said was aware that imperial experiences had been discussed previously. But he did not think that the "rhetoric of blame" (which characterized previous discussions, he thought) allowed for inquiring into the substance of such experiences.[11] What is more, he reminded, there was the potential for physical confrontation to follow those who engage in a "rhetoric of blame" unless we affirmed "the interdependence of various histories on one another" (Said 1993, 81). Said wrote:

> No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things ... (Said 1993, 336)

Put differently (and contra some of his critics), Said's call for studying "intertwined and overlapping histories" was about making sense of "the connections between things," so we can all begin to see ourselves in others and see others in ourselves.

While Said offered contrapuntal reading as a method for the students of literary criticism, there is a particular aspect of this reading that he considered especially pertinent for the postcolonial. "The voyage in," is a corollary to, but different from the "Empire writing back" (Ashcroft 1989), noted Said. Although "writing back" was about "disrupting the European narratives of the Orient and Africa, replacing them with either a more playful or a more powerful new narrative style is a major component in the process," the "voyage in," in Said's conception, was a "variety of hybrid cultural work" (Said 1993, 244). It is about a "conscious effort ... to enter into the discourse of Europe and the West, to mix with it, transform it, to make it acknowledge marginalized or suppressed or forgotten histories ... I call this effort the voyage in" (Said 1993, 216). Put differently, "the voyage in" was not merely the perspective of one or the other but both sides mutually recognizing each other. As such, Said resisted both the claims to "authenticity" and the calls for "relativism" when he wrote that "[n]o one today is purely one thing" and that "[s]urvival in fact is about the connections between things" (Said 1993, 336).

That Said's approach to contrapuntal reading emphasizes studying the "connections between things," and does not strive to replace one kind of parochialism with another, is what renders it particularly fitting for Global IR as a method, an ethos, and a metaphor.

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[11]The irony here is that those who employ the "rhetoric of blame" and call for relativism often invoke Said's 1978 book *Orientalism* while overlooking the gist of his message in his overall body of work (see Mazrui 2005; cf., Owen 2012).

Contrapuntal Reading as a Method for Global IR

As a *method* of studying world politics, contrapuntal reading focuses on our "intertwined and overlapping histories," moving us away from studying origins and originalities. Whereas the latter assumes singular sources for ideas (consider, for example, contemporary debates on human rights or democracy), studying "beginnings" acknowledges multiple sources of ideas and focuses on relationships of give-and-take, learning, and coconstitution between peoples in their emergence and development. Said wrote:

> the history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowings. Cultures are not impermeable; just as Western science borrowed from Arabs, they had borrowed from India and Greece. Culture is never just a matter of ownership, of borrowing and lending with absolute debtors and creditors, but rather of appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures. This is a universal norm (Said 1993, 217).

Understood in the context of the study of IR, Said's approach to "beginnings as method" (Said 1975) highlights the need for studying world politics through drawing upon "contrapuntal readings" that highlight "overlapping and intertwined histories" of what are popularly referred to as "Western" or "non-Western" ideas.

Studying the "connections between things" is not something to be trivialized by pointing to, say, the coffee plant's origins in Ethiopia, its travel to Europe through Mediterranean trade links, and the opening of the first coffee shop in Vienna by using the sacks of coffee left behind by the retreating Ottoman army after an unsuccessful siege. Such connections are not trivial insofar as the introduction of the coffee plant to other parts of the world integrated them in the capitalist world economic order while diminishing their capacity to feed themselves and giving way to structural (and sometimes direct) violence (Kamola 2007). When the "thing" that we study is not material goods but ideas, adopting contrapuntal reading as a method would allow going beyond understanding the history of the world as a relay race in which the baton of "civilization" is passed on to the next runner but an exercise in studying "beginnings" (Said 1975) as with David Hume and Buddhism (Gopnik 2009) or Hegel and the Haiti revolution (Trouillot 1995; Buck-Morss 2009).

Several IR scholars have already illustrated multiple dimensions of the significance of studying "intertwined and overlapping histories" of humankind as they highlighted "the Eastern origins of Western civilization" (Hobson 2004) and reconsidered the history of development in Europe as reflected in "the mirror of the Third World" (Halperin 1997) or the history of the nineteenth century as "the global transformation" (Buzan and Lawson 2015). Other scholars drew upon Said to read contrapuntally the voices of the postcolonial and the global (Duvall and Varadarajan 2007) toward "understanding our contemporary international relations as a product of a history of cultural encounters (in which colonialism played a key part)" (Biswas 2007, 117), including war (Barkawi and Laffey 1999), terrorism (Barnard-Wills and Moore 2010), globalization (Muppidi 2004), and relation between Asia and the West (Ling 2002). Global IR could flourish by drawing on such contrapuntal readings that do *not* look at the past (1) through state-centric lenses, (2) often without being aware of the particularity of the notion of state that is used, and (3) by overlooking relationships of mutual constitution between peoples, states, empires and civilizations in different parts of the world. To quote Geeta Chowdhry (2007, 105), pointing to contrapuntal reading as a method for IR is not a plea for plurality but a plea for "worlding the texts, institutions, and practices, for historicizing them, for paying attention to the hierarchies and the power-knowledge nexus embedded in them, and for recuperating a 'non-coercive and non-dominating knowledge'."

Contrapuntal Reading as an Ethos for Global IR[12]

As an *ethos* for Global IR, contrapuntality is key to not only producing historical narratives that inquire into multiple beginnings but also orientating students of IR to heighten their awareness regarding multiple perspectives on a problem and offering an anchor for those who seek to translate the findings of different perspectives.

Among those approaches that focus on translation, "analytical eclecticism" may be the one that is most familiar to students of IR. Rudra Sil and Peter Katzenstein (2010) offered analytical eclecticism as a way of focusing on substantive problems that fall through the cracks between theories that are warranted by different epistemologies. Being eclectic, they suggested, would allow researchers to sidestep epistemological debates and focus on "interesting questions."

Although expressing their awareness that "moving between research traditions founded on competing ontological and epistemological principles runs some risk of introducing fuzziness," Sil and Katzenstein nevertheless called for more eclectic research. They offered two reasons. First, they noted, following Hopf (2007), that "analytic foundations of given traditions may not be as far apart as is often assumed," thereby offering possibilities for translation (Katzenstein and Sil 2008, 119). Second, they argued, eclectic scholarship already exists in IR, offering answers to some of the most difficult questions in world politics (Sil and Katzenstein 2010).

Translating an exile's "contrapuntal awareness" to an ethos for doing Global IR offers an anchor for such eclectic approaches that translate the findings of different research traditions that focus on the same problem. Furthermore, heightening their "contrapuntal awareness" would allow students of IR to not only establish new connections in thinking through a problem in world politics (as emphasized by Sil and Katzenstein) but also uncover already existing connections and begin to see problems anew.

Contrapuntal Reading as a Metaphor for Global IR

Contrapuntal reading as a metaphor for Global IR serves to underscore a point that is already made by Acharya: the point is not to "displace but subsume IR and enrich it" (Acharya introduction, this issue). Global IR is not about rejecting some (Western) ideas simply because of their geographical origin based on the presumption that "theory does not travel well" (Salter 2010, 134). Contra some of Said's interlocutors who warrant their call for national IR schools by citing Said's essay on "travelling theory," I read Said as carefully distinguishing between two different processes: that theories respond to a particular time and place, and that they assume new meanings and roles when they travel to other settings and are translated to fit the requirements of their new setting (Said 2000). I will support my reading of Said by making two points. First, Said's essay, "Traveling Theory," not only points to trials and travails of theories as they move from one sociopolitical setting to another ("such movement into a new environment is never unimpeded," he wrote) but also underscores the need for "borrowed, or traveling theory": "For borrow we certainly must if we are to elude the constraints of our immediate intellectual environment" (Said 1983, 226, 41). Second, given that Said himself borrowed liberally from other fields, approaches, geographies, and cultures and praised those few remaining "genuine polymaths" (see Said's foreword in Schwab 1950[1984]), it would be difficult to reduce his discussion on "traveling theory" to a question of geocultural origins.

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[12]"Worlding IR" is typically understood as reflecting on the situatedness of knowing. However, there is another, equally important, dimension to worlding IR, which is about reflecting on the constitutive effects of knowing. This second understanding of worlding (developed mostly in postcolonial studies) has been hardly visible in recent discussions (Bilgin forthcoming).

Finally, as a metaphor for Global IR, contrapuntal reading also highlights how Global IR is one and many. In music, contrapuntality refers to two (or more) lines played beautifully in harmony. Global IR cannot be anything else but like music, one and many, global and regional. Giving up one or the other would only impoverish our understanding of world politics.

Conclusion

Writing in 1999, Thomas J. Biersteker, then editor of *International Studies Review*, identified parochialism in IR as impeding the task of "attaining a genuinely *global* discipline." He wrote:

> We are not so naïve to think that we can create a genuinely deparochialized, global interdiscipline of international studies in the span of a half decade, but it is important that we try (Biersteker 1999, 9).

Toward this end, Biersteker suggested that we heed Richard Bernstein's advice and

> Assume the responsibility to listen carefully, to use our linguistic, emotional, and cognitive imagination to grasp what is being expressed and said in "alien" traditions (Bernstein quoted in Biersteker 1999).

Without wanting to underestimate the significance of "listening carefully" to others, this article suggested another approach to Global IR—one that does not rest on assumptions regarding "alien" traditions or seek to mediate "incommensurable differences" (Biersteker 1999) but engages in contrapuntal reading toward discovering how particular narratives have alienated us all from our "intertwined and overlapping histories." "There is a unique pleasure in this sort of apprehension," wrote Said (1984, 172), especially if one becomes "conscious of other contrapuntal juxtapositions that diminish orthodox judgment and elevate appreciative sympathy."

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