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Postcolonial Maghreb and the Limits of IR

Jessica da Silva C. de Oliveira

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Global Political Sociology
ISBN 978-3-030-19984-5 ISBN 978-3-030-19985-2 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19985-2

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,
there is a field. I'll meet you there.
When the soul lies down in that grass,
the world is too full to talk about.
Ideas, language, even the phrase each other
doesn't make any sense.
~
The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.
Don't go back to sleep.
You must ask for what you really want.
Don't go back to sleep.
People are going back and forth across the doorsill
where the two worlds touch.
The door is round and open.
Don't go back to sleep

—*Rumi*, A Great Wagon *(excerpt)*

Preface

I would like to start by telling three short stories about some of the uncountable encounters that have made this research project what it happens to be now. The first is the story of my first contact with International Relations (IR) theory. As it happens with most early IR students, the readings and discussions I was presented to were distant and emotionless, with a scientifically inflicted language and problem-solving orientation to international politics which I could not connect no matter how hard I tried. They led us, students, to picture the world of IR as an eternal battle between realists and liberals, both theorizing about war and peace among great powers and promoting little "word wars" against each other. I remember that every time I tried to picture the "world" of IR by that time, for some reason, two images helplessly came to my head: either a colored and well-drawn world map or the famous picture of a naked girl running down a road after a napalm attack during the Vietnam War and, to be fair, both could perfectly be representations of the sort of hopeless world I was introduced to in my theory classes. The world I was being trained to see seemed to indulge those two images up to the point that I started wondering if this is all we have for the world of IR.

I had hard times trying to find people, real people (including myself), among all those metaphors about nation-states' behavior, international anarchy, balance of power, institutions, anarchical society, perpetual peace, and so on. But what my first encounter—and many subsequent others—with IR theory has shown me was that the world of international politics—at least the one presented to me in that context—accepts little change, if any, in its constitution and *modus operandi*. Only in the last

weeks of IR theory course, we had a few readings assigned under the label "alternative approaches to international politics". Cynthia Enloe's words in *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* caught me on for good. I remember feeling I had finally encountered real human beings doing things that matter to international politics, even though their roles or features as international actors did not connect them with high politics and international affairs in the conventional way. The works of Sankaran Krishna, Himadeep Muppidi, Naeem Inayatullan, and David Blaney, to name a few, have also shown me that there was more to IR than the world of most IR narratives comprises. I thus realized that many scholars have been bothered by the displacement of the world from IR theories and narratives; many were already working upon the disconcerting absences of a discipline which supposedly deals with "world" politics. The worlds they were trying to portray seemed closer to the world as I imagined it: a world of a variety of actors, their overlapping voices, experiences, memories, histories, and demands. A world of conflict and violence, for sure, but *hope* as well.

The second story is about my first encounter with the Maghreb. The Maghreb is the locale I decided to engage with in most of my research endeavors. As far as I remember, my first encounter with the Maghreb in IR literature took place in my fourth year in university. The European Union's (EU's) policies, structure, and uncertain political nature and future were among the hottest topics in IR by that time. Because of that, perhaps, I was very interested in the dynamics through which European countries were trying to conform the EU as a platform for decision-making procedures and taking action abroad. EU bureaucrats and European national officials were working hard on the delineation of policies and partnerships focused on the EU's surrounding countries—notably the Mediterranean region—releasing a number of reports, scheduling official meetings, and delivering thousands of speeches with an explicit emphasis on questions involving European immigration/border policies toward those countries. At first, I thought I could succeed in a case-by-case study involving EU policies toward each country in the Mediterranean. At that point, I think, I was already biased by the all-encompassing discourse in EU delegates' speeches and institutional policy statements with regard to that region. Nonetheless, I remember that one of the professors kindly suggested me to look at the relations between the EU and the Maghreb. "These countries are so overlooked in IR literature. You may find some interesting stuff to think about and work with"—he said. And, as a matter of fact, Professor Dias was right in more than one sense:

Maghrebian societies were (and still are) largely overlooked in both IR literature and international politics; I was indeed able to find an interesting discussion about the connections and contradictions in the EU's discourses on poverty/underdevelopment, migration, and terrorism regarding Maghrebian countries and individuals. I was able to conclude my research and write a final paper at that time but with the frustrating feeling that I was collaborating with a persistent silence and effacement. I sensed I could only ask and engage with questions about these and other non-European—or "non-Western"—societies through the eyes and the work of scholars speaking from a limited number of institutions and *loci* of enunciation. Not to mention the very limited range of assumptions and themes I was able to find when researching about the place of the Maghreb and its societies in world politics—most of them, as I effortlessly realized, relied upon a chain of words such as "terrorism", "poverty", "failure", "underdevelopment", "insecurity", and "threat".

Finally, the third short story is the "mean reviewer" story. It happened when I was trying to publish for the first time in a journal in the field. When I got the editorial board's message accepting the submission, I could not imagine I was just starting a long journey along with the anxiety about the whole writing process. The words of one of the anonymous reviewers made me go through a chain of mixed feelings—anger, indignation, shame, and helplessness, among them. In his/her view, the article's contents were fine, argumentation was fine. However, to paraphrase his/her words, mine was not a "wordless" text, but certainly a "lifeless" one, for I could not even clearly express to my reader what I was up to when I decided to bring an alternative view of IR. She/he was looking for my motivation, the reason why I was moved to start that research endeavor in the first place. "What does she/he want from me? A personal account of the reason why I think a certain concept is overlooked in our careless discipline?"—I remember thinking. Looking back, I am not sure if that was exactly what she/he was looking for. Maybe she/he just wanted a more open and less jargon-inflicted account on the research problem I was claiming to address—a text in which the reader could feel more welcome and find a safe space to start a dialogue in case she or he feels like to. Perhaps my reviewer was just interested in hearing the aspects of the author-voice I was trying so hard to hide in order to sound more like "a professional scholar" as I understood it.

Was I accepting the role of hostage of the same jargon-inflicted, worldless disciplinary accounts that I loved hating and pointing fingers at? From

the “mean reviewer’s” perspective, it seems, the answer was yes, for she/he could not find any glimpse of the world I was claiming to portray. Truth is that it took me a while to realize that I was angry with myself—not with the poor “mean reviewer” for his/her meticulous reading and honest feedback. I remember experiencing that lingering sentiment of being a fraud shared by most academics, but usually well masked by academic performance and by our fast-paced deadlines. I then realized as never before the real difficulties some of us—perhaps most of us—academics and writers may experience at some point when trying to transmit our ideas. I started wondering if there were any tricks or common knowledge on ways to continue our efforts at connecting with the world(s) we want to understand without being constantly jeopardized by our personal anxieties regarding academic protocols of researching, writing, and being.

The connection between this personal account and the work developed in the following pages lies in the project’s focus on the practices of thinking, (re-)imagining and writing global politics from various different places—we could name them “*loci* of enunciation”, “subject-positions”, “disciplines”, “textual modalities”, and so on. Most of these places are somehow related with the Maghreb as either a geo-historical site, a *locus* of enunciation, or a created language in itself. But not exclusively, for this project also has, at least to a certain extent, converted itself into an examination of the motivations behind the recent turn toward narratives in IR. What does the attention to the tropes of narrative, voice, and reflexivity as theoretical problems entail to the study of global affairs? What sorts of anxieties and hopes do the turn to narratives *both as modes of communicating knowledge* to the world *and as modes of knowing, (re-)imagining, and thus (re)telling* the world bring about in the field of IR? In trying to answer these and other related questions, in the following chapters, I also dared to put myself into some risk through the exercise of imagining an encounter between narratives about/from the Maghreb and narratives about/from IR and IR theory in general as different—but related—attempts at making sense of the world of international and global affairs.

The Maghreb is a region located between many worlds—African, Occidental, Oriental, pan-Arab, and Islamic, to name a few. Thus, not surprisingly, it is permeated by a number of depictions and narratives trying to capture and make sense of such diversity and the types of encounters it generates. The book is an exploration on the politics of narrating postcolonial Maghreb in the writings of Francophone Maghrebian writers such as Abdelkebir Khatibi, Fatema Mernissi, Kateb Yacine, and Jacques Derrida,

who explicitly embraced the task of (re-)imagining their respective societies and, importantly, their subject-positions as Franco-Maghrebian intellectuals after independence from the colonial yoke and subsequent state-building process in the region. The main line of inquiry focuses on the politics of imagination and disenchantment but also hope bridging these texts together, and it draws attention to the "worldliness of texts" (a terminology coined by Edward Said) in order to both situate texts in their contexts and discuss the potential of narrative strategies (and of critical imagination) to promote political change. Narratives are thus conceived as political acts and draw attention to the turbulent contexts in which postcolonial Franco-Maghrebian literature emerges and constantly reinvents itself as a site of resistance and contestation.

Besides shedding light on an almost entirely overlooked region in international studies—that is, the Maghreb—the book thus calls attention to two recent and important movements within the discipline: the turn to narratives as both political and knowledge tools and the growing attention to non-Western thought in IR. In this sense, it is both a recovering of (now classical) non-Western texts (i.e. Franco-Maghrebian literature texts) and an effort at establishing a dialogue between these contributions and other more recent discussions in the field of IR. It makes a case for the kinds of thinking and writing strategies that could be used to better approach international and global studies.

This book is based on a four-year-long research effort that culminated in the author's Ph.D. dissertation in International Relations.

Poços de Caldas, Minas Gerais, Brazil Jessica da Silva C. de Oliveira

Acknowledgments

This book represents my work at the keyboard and at libraries and coffeehouses across Brazil and Canada, with intermezzos in France and, more recently, in a town in the south of Minas Gerais, Brazil. As I now realize, it represents five years of research work, but more than a decade of dreams, doubts, disenchantments and re-enchantments, beliefs and disbeliefs, tears and laughter, music and silence, sadness and joy, studying and working in the field—and in the world(s)—of International Relations (IR). It is also a representation of the hope I learned to nurture every time I was at the verge of losing my faith in our role as academics in a field that purports to understand something as broad and complex as "the world" of global and international affairs. I would never learn how to nurture this hope—and return to it every time it was needed—if it were not for the guidance and support of many people I encountered during the journey.

I gained a lot from my wonderful professors and colleagues while at Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio) during my master and doctoral years. I owe Carolina Moulin—my dear advisor throughout nothing less than seven years—a great debt of gratitude for her consistent support and her attentive, thoughtful, and respectful feedback on my work. While at McMaster as a visiting doctoral student, in 2015, I had the luck of meeting Alina Sajed, who kindly accepted being co-advisor to my project and, over my year in Canada, has become a dear friend who I admire unconditionally—both as an academic and as a person. All these years at PUC Rio, I have been given unique intellectual opportunities and, more importantly, wonderful gifts in the figures of Aline, Paulinho, Victor, Manuela, Geovana, Fernandinha, and Anelise.

I am especially thankful to Paulinho, my *maninho*, for being always present, regardless of distance or time difference. While working at PUC Minas Poços de Caldas, I had the luck to meet another group of wonderful people and bright IR academics to whom I now owe a lot: Mariana, Vinicius, Péricles, and Klei. I must also say that I am grateful to Guilherme Dias, who, with patience and trust, helped me to start loving research as early as during my undergraduate years.

This project also benefitted from the thoughtful and generous feedback of a number of people who have read and commented on various drafts. I am profoundly indebted to Marta Fernández, for guiding and supporting me with all her brightness and generosity throughout all these years. I am also grateful to Naeem Inayatullah for his guidance, honest feedback, and words of encouragement since our first encounter in a methods workshop at the International Studies Association (ISA). Naeem's friendship and engagements remain as precious to me as they first were. I also thank Roberto Yamato, Marcos de Jesus Oliveira, and Silvia Correia for being part of this project in different ways. I must say that any errors, shortcoming, and limitations of this project are my own. And I also would like to thank Dirk Nabers, Marta Fernández, Chengxin Pan, and David B. MacDonald, the editors of the series, for their help in bringing this book about.

I have been blessed with loving parents, whose unconditional love, support, and belief in my abilities and in me have been the source from which I have drawn my strength to pursue dreams before goals and to never give up on the power of my creativity and imagination. So has my partner Joerg Factorine, who accepted me as a whole during this process, and for making me the best beers in this world. His love and encouragement have been crucial since I decided to follow the path of an academic career. I thank, also the other Factorines, for being my second family since then. I must also thank my beautiful friends from undergraduate years to lifetime—Suellen, Patrícia, and Sharmene—for being the best partners for almost everything I love in this life: traveling, eating, and running. I was also lucky enough to have Nathália, a friend who became family after more than two decades of genuine friendship.

I also thank all the good people I was lucky to find in Canada. I am especially grateful to Tatiane, Richelmy, Larissa, Gabi, Dandara, Ale, Tânia, Felipe, Hiraku, and Giácomo, who honored me with their friendship and company. My special thanks to Tati and Richelmy, without whom my one-year journey living in Canada would have been much

more difficult. To Ale, who was generous to receive me in her house—and in her life—on that snowy Easter Sunday and who also brought me to a Sepultura's concert, in Toronto! Many thanks to Riva, Mariam, Aytak, Katie, and Peter for the good talk and company. I am also deeply grateful to the *Brasileiros in Hamilton*, this amazing group of honest, kind, and friendly human beings with whom I share our beautiful language, culture, and the uniqueness of the word *saudade*.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Making the Case for Re-imagination

[W]hat do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity .... Even our imaginations must remain forever-colonized.

Partha Chatterjee, The Nation and Its Fragments

Framing the Question

"What the map cuts up, the story cuts across", writes Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984, 130). Certeau's remarkable words resonate with a number of efforts from inside and across the field of International Relations (IR) and IR theory which share the unease with the discipline's narrow, self-referential, and lifeless world, the same lifeless and limited Eurocentric view of modernity that Chatterjee (1993) is trying to grasp in his now classical *The Nation and Its Fragments*. With the declared task of rethinking knowledge frames such as the state-centric world that most IR students find in their first encounter with IR theory and historiography, the flourish of "critical imaginations" in IR—to use Mhurchú and Shindo's (2016) terminology—however indicates a continuous effort at exploring alternative ways of thinking and talking about the world.[1] For quite a while now, it has been crystal clear that the statist logic of rigid borders and the understanding of the world as "made up of bounded subjects within bounded political communities" (Mhurchú and

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Jessica da Silva C. de Oliveira, *Postcolonial Maghreb and the Limits of IR*, Global Political Sociology,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19985-2_1

Shindo 2016, 2) do not reflect the complexities of the overlapping voices, memories, worldviews, and political formations one may find when looking for stories instead of History, for the world instead of world maps.

The main general goal of this book is to explore "what it might mean to bring the world back into IR" (Sajed 2013, 2). What happens if we fill the world of international and global politics with people with their everyday experiences of being in and acting upon the world? What if instead of states, systemic polarity, conflict, and competition, we rethink the world of IR in terms of—sometimes conflicting, sometimes complementing—worldviews and people's multifarious ways of thinking, narrating, and acting in front of what they immediately conceive as foreign, different, and not the same as "us"? To paraphrase Naeem Inayatullah's insightful words, it seems that people's life trajectories are all far more complex than our IR theories, and our dominant myths about politics, collective identity, and belonging can permit us to make sense (Inayatullah 2011). This book attempts to start filling in this often taken-for-granted gap between the world of conventional IR theory and the world(s) of people's everyday lives.

Some authors have already offered important hints in that direction. Naeem Inayatullah and David Blaney (2004), for instance, not only traced the discipline's denial of its colonial character when dealing with difference but also argued for the reintroduction of the language of "culture" as a means to speak of difference. They suggest us to re-imagine IR as a site of "heterology" (a term they borrowed from Certeau), that is, "the study of many modalities of difference" (Inayatullah and Blaney 2016, 71). The language of culture here points to a shared human condition, that is, our ability to construct, maintain, and transform "meaningful and purposeful schemes of existence", yet these schemes also appear "as multiple, diverse, and often competing human projects" (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004, 17). This reminds us that "human endeavours in meaning-making and world-making are multiple and diverse – and thereby partial" (Inayatullah and Blaney 2016, 70); they are ongoing processes "exhibiting the varied possibilities admitted by cultural encounters", which include violence and silence but also learning and hope (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004, 17). Thus, culture points to commonality, but also to partiality and diversity of *human* experience and modes of thought. From this perspective, IR can be re-imagined as an encounter with difference. Here, difference can be translated in various ways, including what is beyond the language of otherness, intractability, and conflict.

Another important insight comes from Cynthia Weber when she suggests—paraphrasing Clifford Geertz—that IR theory can be conceived as

an "ensemble of stories" IR experts tell about the world (Weber 2001, 129–130). Seeing IR theory and the practice of theorizing in this way allows us to read the various approaches to IR as narratives mediating the world from specific standpoints rather than objective reproductions of an outside reality. Weber's perspective makes visible the authorship to texts and turns the IR theoretician into a subject as much embedded in the world s/he claims to portray as the "characters" (e.g. individuals, institutions, relations, states, etc.) in the narrative. Such a view contrasts with more conventional approaches to IR theory (and theorization) that claim to adopt a disengaged, objective view of an outside reality and portray and analyze that reality as they see it (see e.g. Morgenthau 1985; Waltz 1979). Rather than advocating that "to give meaning to the *factual* raw material of foreign policy" the researcher "must approach *political reality* with a kind of rational outline" (Morgenthau 1985, 5, emphasis added). Weber's stance highlights that the researcher is a subject-position within the process of theorization, rendering him/her complicit with, rather than detached from, the world-making exercise that is knowledge production.

More recently, Aoileann Ní Mhurchú and Reiko Shindo advocated a re-understanding of IR as "a site where relations between various groups such as nations, states and political communities, have been imagined and reimagined" (Mhurchú and Shindo 2016, 2). Besides the ethical and political motivations animating critical approaches to IR, Mhurchú and Shindo follow Sungju Park-Kang's insights when they highlight the epistemological value of imagination in carving out non-state-centric worlds and vocabulary within and across the field. Theirs is an effort to complicate commonsensical views on how global politics and its related categories and relevant actors have been evolving in a diverse and complex world.

I hereby highlight these three perspectives on how a "worldly" IR—to resort to Edward Said's (1983) terminology—might look like precisely because "encounters", "narratives", and "imagination" are key conceptualizations and analytical devices to my own efforts at re-imagining IR in the following pages. In emphasizing an alternative framework for looking at international relations in which the aesthetics of encounters are privileged over a state-centric logic of rigid borders, subjectivities, and geographies, I am not suggesting that the state is irrelevant as a political site or as a level of analysis in IR. It is rather an attempt to indicate that there is more to spatial, political, and subjective formations that are relevant to world politics than a state-centric grammar would allow us to see. Fortunately, I have not felt alone since I started this endeavor. There are a

number of referential works in IR exploring international and global relations from the perspective of encounters to which I am in great debt.[2]

The locale I chose to engage with, the Maghreb, is a region located between many "worlds"—African, Occidental, Oriental, Mediterranean, pan-Arab, Islamic, and so on. Thus, not surprisingly, it is permeated by a number of depictions and narratives trying to capture and make sense of such diversity and the types of encounters it generates. This becomes implicit in the very meaning of the word "Maghreb"—"place where the sun sets", that is, the West—usually defined in opposition to Mashreq—"place where the sun rises", that is, the East—and the many geo-cultural senses this may evoke (Maghreb Studies 2003). In Walter Mignolo's words, the "geo-historical" location of this region is precisely what turns it into a sort of "crossing of the global in itself" or a "crossing" instead of a "grounding (e.g. the nation)" (Mignolo 2012, 69). In addition to the Orientalist lens through which the Maghreb has been portrayed in European literature since nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century travelogues (Mortimer 2001)—by that time particularly famous in the former metropole, France—we now have a renewed wave of stereotypical understandings highlighting the region's political, economic, and social inadequacy, and inherent problematic nature. Such images are the most usual points of departure in the recent literature produced in Comparative Politics and International Security Studies approaches addressing the three Maghrebian countries, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.[3] Poverty, (post) colonial injustice, and violence—and, importantly, exile—are also recurrent themes in the literary production—novels, poetry, plays, and so on—as well as in more academic-oriented texts produced by Maghrebian indigenous writers during colonial as well as postcolonial periods. But what a review of these latter mentioned works reveals is a "plural Maghreb", that is, a site that also evokes a plurality of memories and claims about philosophical, religious, and cultural heritages which sometimes corroborate but also resist these various attempts of "capturing" the region's diversity as intractable and inherently problematic (Khatibi 1983 [1981]).

Thus, borrowing Alina Sajed's words, the Maghreb I chose to engage with "encapsulates the richness of *encounters*, the painful *weight of violence*, and the intricate *webs of memory*" (2013, 2, my emphasis). I tend to perceive these dimensions as more truthful and worldly situated referents to the study of *world* politics rather than simply conceiving that region as the sum of nation-states and their interactions, that is, the "international" as it often appears in IR literature. Regions, at least from where I see them,

are constituted of topological (i.e. what concerns "the deformations of figures" or an understanding of places and boundaries as ever-moving constructs) rather than simply topical (i.e. what concerns spatial demarcation or the conception of places as inert and stable) geographical and geo-historical foundations.[4] More to the point, I am especially interested in the Maghreb as a *locus* of enunciation, rather than as a region or "area" in the pure geopolitical sense of the word (see Mignolo 2012). I want to emphasize the constellation of experiences, modes of thinking, and—why not?—of desires and hopes stated by Maghrebian voices that cannot be grasped by conventional approaches in IR. I aim to look at spatial imaginaries, vocabulary, and subjectivities that are not necessarily "confined to the methodological spatiality of the nation-state"[5] (Sajed 2013, 7) and the "official" portrayals of history and of politically relevant facts and characters.

In order to get a picture of (post)colonial Maghreb, I chose to examine the portrayals offered by Maghrebian writers themselves—Francophone Maghrebian writers, more specifically—in their efforts to (re)think the Maghreb in the postcolonial context, as well as their subject-positions as Francophone Maghrebian intellectuals in their respective societies, but also, and importantly, in a global context. As Rèda Bensmaïa (2003) posits it, postcolonial Francophone Maghrebian writers turned the Maghreb into an "experimental" language, an imaginative tool to express an ideology and aesthetics of difference in the language (i.e. French) that refers back to a specific colonial encounter (i.e. the Franco-Maghrebian encounter) but also, and importantly, to alternative paths toward creative appropriation and less violent forms of cohabitation after decolonization took place in the region. I hereby take literary texts of the so-called postcolonial Maghrebian literature written in French as my main substrata of analysis in order to make sense of specific subjectivities produced within the various (post)colonial encounters in the Maghreb (which, of course, can neither be reduced nor ignore the encounter with French colonialism).

The particular interest in the role of the Francophone Maghrebian intellectual relates with my focus on narratives as political acts and takes into consideration the turbulent contexts in which postcolonial Francophone Maghrebian literature emerges and constantly reinvents itself as a site of resistance and contestation. The writers whose works I examine here—notably, Abdelkebir Khatibi, Kateb Yacine, Tahar Djaout, and Fatema Mernissi[6]—share the *desire* to "reflect on and to mediate in their narratives the persistence of colonial memory" (Sajed 2013, 3),

which led them to design complex maps of Maghrebian cultures, landscapes, individuals, and (hi)stories. Importantly, they are also united by the *hope* of telling silences and saying what is "unsayable" in face of the "orthodoxies" of their time (Hiddleston 2015, 161). To paraphrase Jane Hiddleston's words (2015), literature can be figured out here as the starting point (rather than a definitive strategy) taken up by these writers in order to articulate a mode of questioning and expose their ethical-political motives when pursuing such work of memory and reinvention—or, in the terminology I prefer to adopt here, "re-imagination".

The main line of inquiry here draws attention to the politics of *imagination* and *hope* bridging these texts together. *What is at stake in (re-) imagining the Maghreb through literary narratives rather than through other textual spaces? What does it mean to take the Maghreb—and postcoloniality—as locus of enunciation in these contexts? What do these specific subject-positions show us in their wonderings about their place—and their societies' place—in the world that others might not? To what extent do these narratives pose themselves as alternatives narratives to so-called Eurocentric forms (i.e. Western knowledge, the nation-state, etc.)—and, accordingly, to what extent do they provide a "counter-story" (or "counter-stories") to political modernity's dominant historical trajectory?* In the following chapters, I use this set of questions as strategy to read and interpret the works of the Francophone Maghrebian writers with whom I chose to engage. However, there is more to that, for I believe such exploration brings about useful parallels with the reflections that some scholars have been putting forward in their turn to narratives as alternative methodologies in IR. The voices speaking from and with what has been called "Narrative IR" share a symptomatic unease in relation to both traditional academic modes of inquiry and academic writing. The questions, themes, and gestures IR scholars have made in these directions show not only a preoccupation with the ethical-political implications of textual strategies but also, and importantly, bring to the fore a problematization of the role of the intellectual in the world he/she is trying to make sense of through analytical efforts. And this is precisely one of the recessive themes connecting the works of the Maghrebian intellectuals I chose to engage with in this project. I will thus juxtapose these two distinct sets of texts in order to address the following questions: *what are the potentialities and limits of adopting a more reflexive author-position in writing? Is there any specificity in literary texts and/or in other supposedly more reflexive narrative strategies (such as autobiography, autoethnography, etc.) that makes them more prone to translate cultural*

encounters, as well as the experience of the self and of others in less violent ways? What does it all mean in the context of the relationship between knowledge production and political change?

The choice of taking literary texts—especially those containing a considerable autobiographical stance—as the primary substrata of analysis is closely related to one of the assumptions orienting this project: that the complexities of individual experiences and the numerous encounters constituting them gain texture and are rendered visible through a few remarkable tropes within these texts. These tropes are, to name a few, language, the space of the city and its historical ruins, orality and storytelling as politically oriented practices, writing as resistance, and so on. By contrast, these dimensions remain remarkably absent or somehow hidden in most IR accounts, especially in what regards non-Western peoples. Perhaps due to their open "use of imagination" and their "experimental, non-argumentative form of language", literary texts might also offer alternative interpretations and vocabularies for us to make sense of the complexities of social and political contexts (Hiddleston 2015, 149; see Agathangelou and Ling 2009, 99). In this way, literary texts have the ability to offer a glimpse into more complicated notions of belonging, individual and collective allegiances, space and time which are usually disregarded or obliterated by denotative and territorial epistemologies,[7] and other dominant narratives of Western-centric sciences. In this matter, I emphasize that literary texts are not only products of their specific social, cultural, and political contexts but artifacts that can also affect our understanding of these contexts.

Each chapter in this book is, to a certain extent, dedicated to a different dimension of the complex task of connecting two parallel (and sometimes intersecting) movements within the discipline, that is, Narrative IR and non-Western IR (or Global IR). Robbie Shilliam (2011) reminds us that "[t]he attribution of who can 'think' and produce valid knowledge of human existence has always been political" and the history of modern social sciences and humanities traces back to the "rise to dominance of certain European powers over existing circuits of world commerce" through colonial expansion, slave trade, and the construction of plantation systems in the Americas (Shilliam 2011, 2). Broadly speaking, Narrative IR draws attention to the effects of this historical process in the consolidation of IR scholarship as a specialized "academic discourse". In this sense, narrative approaches to IR often shed light to the power-knowledge nexus, bringing the question of positionality to center stage in

order to highlight how academic discourse is politically implicated vis-à-vis the world it attempts to portray. Non-Western IR, in turn, questions the dominance of Eurocentric perspectives on politics, agency, knowledge, and civilization standards by undertaking the complex task of "emphasiz[ing] the importance of non-Western experiences of modernity" in a global context (Shilliam 2011, 4) while keeping in mind the need to interrogate the essentialization of cultural identities without disregarding the importance of cultural encounters and cross-cultural perspectives on global politics. Taken together, these two movements help me situate the contributions by postcolonial Maghrebian authors within the field of IR as they share the concern of opening space to other voices and worldviews that are relevant in understanding world politics but which have been historically silenced by the disciplinary practices within the field. Moreover, the project not only profits from the encounter of these two movements, but also tries to bridge their contributions. If, on the one hand, an attention to the epistemological value of non-Western approaches prevents Narrative IR from being dragged to "self-indulging" journeys focused on the role of the intellectual, on the other hand, an attention to narrative politics prevents non-Western IR from becoming a replica of the conventional Eurocentric view of IR with an "exotic", non-Western content.

Chapter 2 is a general map of IR critical approaches focusing on narrative and narrative strategies (e.g. autoethnography, autobiography, storytelling, fictional IR, etc.). Edward Said's discussion on the "worldliness of texts"—that is, the relationship between text, writer-subject, audience, and the web of power relations connecting these dimensions or simply "the world"—assists us in understanding this "turn" toward narratives in IR not only on epistemological and methodological grounds but also as a shared pursuit by a number of scholars for adopting a more conscious stance in the task of thinking and writing the political. According to Park-Kang (2015), one of the key promises in Narrative IR is "activating multiple interpretations and exploring the politics of contestedness" (p. 372), signaling toward the need to rethink the discipline's attitude with regard its object of inquiry, that is, the multiplicity of worlds and voices comprising international and global politics phenomena. Though the discussion highlights the productivity of the preoccupation with representational practices in modern sciences and Western academia, the researcher's positionality, and the need of opening up space for marginalized voices and alternative worldviews on international and global affairs, it also punctuates some of the shortcomings faced by those working with narrative

approaches. Among other things, Narrative IR or Narrative Global Politics comes with the dangers of replicating the same intellectual disengagement symptomatic in the academic discourse when privileging exercises of "self-indulgence" focused solely on the intellectual's own narrative voice (see Dauphinee 2013) or keeping intact the tradition of "out-worldly" criticism that disregards the "physicalist sense of violence" experienced by people in situations of political turmoil and inequality (Krishna 1993, 396).

Chapter 3 introduces the reader to the universe of Maghrebian postcolonial literature written in French and the main questions surrounding its development in both shores of the Mediterranean. Besides contextualizing the emergence of postcolonial Franco-Maghrebian literature and the task of re-imagining the Maghreb that is implicit in the works of exemplary Franco-Maghrebian writers such as Tahar Djaout, Abdelkebir Khatibi, Kateb Yacine, and Fatema Mernissi, I address the politics of writing in this set of writings through Edward Said's reflections on the worldliness of texts. Said's insights—especially in his later writings—are appealing here because they help to both situate texts in their contexts and discuss that the potential narrative strategies have to articulate alternative subjectivities and views aimed at political change. In this sense, literature appears as an important method for "worldism" (see Agathangelou and Ling 2009), that is, instead of merely representing reality, literary narratives can also become resourceful spaces for individuals to reinvent and articulate languages and worlds that are particularly relevant to catch a glimpse of real people's lives and struggles. I thus argue that postcolonial Franco-Maghrebian literature was converted by a number of writers into a space for (re-)imagining places and their history, as well as individuals' and peoples' roles as political subjects and agents in history.

Drawing attention to the connection between narrative and history, truth and fiction, popular myths and collective memory, and practice of narration in (post)colonial Maghreb, Chap. 4 purports to read Kateb Yacine's (1929–1989) novel *Nedjma* in terms of how it performs the connection between the past and present as two interrelated living forces that are constantly mobilized in narratives of collective identity and political transformation. Considered a masterpiece of postcolonial Maghrebian literature, Kateb's text addresses such forces in terms that speak to the anti-colonial revolution envisioned during the Algerian War (1954–1962) against France. Addressing this connection allows us not to only conceive Kateb's novel as a counter-narrative of modernity, but also to examine his contributions beyond the captivity of modernity and the nation-state as