

But Where is the Magic? Emotional-relational Humans and their Untold Stories in International Relations

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Abstract

The affective turn in International Relations (IR) has been engaged in the critical project of returning the emotional to the international for a while now. Following these efforts to reinvest humanity in politics, this article seeks to investigate if an engagement with emotional humans can provide refuge from, grapple with and ultimately transform a disenchanted world of IR and spell new worlds into existence that place the emotional-relational at the centre of its practice. Drawing on feminist, aesthetic and decolonial scholarship on emotional-relational humans, I argue that such imaginations can open routes to recovery for emotional worlds in the discipline. I introduce magical realist fiction as a genre of literary writing which embraces the magical ability of humans who resist and transform unbearably rational worlds through their emotional relations with each other. Gleaning moments of emotional incantations by humans—in Isabel Allende’s *A Long Petal of the Sea*, Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *Love in the Time of Cholera*—which work to transform a world that becomes too difficult to bear for its inhabitants, I contend that IR stands to gain invaluable lessons by immersing itself in the kind of emotional magic that such literature and its resident humans spell into being.

Keywords

emotions, fiction, IR theory

Human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them. . .life obliges them over and over again to give birth to themselves.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1989)

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While the moment of giving birth is arguably the most discernible sign of life in its emotional and relational form, it is also a moment most taken for granted in our studies of the world. In the mainstream, statist framing of International Relations (IR), an early focus on war has culminated into a search for explanation and causality so powerful, that nothing remains alive¹. An explicit focus on causes rather than experiences of war led to an elevation of the sex that kills instead of the one that brings forth,² rendering emotional-relational experiences of living as epiphenomenal, feminine and marginal; to the rational, masculine inquiries of international politics. As such, unquestioned assumptions about *what IR is*, has tied it to an ontology of suffering, undermining how *it can be* much more than that³. Decades of critical work in expanding the ethical and practical purview of the discipline bears testimony to how sustained engagement with lived experiences is far from marginal; and pivotal for breathing life back into global politics⁴. That politics happens at the margins; is worth considering for the ‘vocabularies of healing’⁵ which begin to emerge when the margins are reinscribed as disciplinary geography.

Reaffirming the critical need for a ‘humanity of politics’⁶, this article seeks to show how emotional-relational experiences of humans can provide refuge from, grapple with and ultimately transform the unemotional world of mainstream IR, and spell new worlds into existence that place the emotional-relational at the centre of its practice. I begin by situating my research within critical modes of inquiry that have posed a sustained challenge to unemotional ways of articulating global politics and gone beyond critique to offer creative threads to stitch the ruptures in existing scholarship through emotional-relational experiences of humans. I identify three important resonances within such scholarship- feminist, aesthetic and decolonial- which take seriously the responsibility to produce knowledge about humans and their emotional worlds. By examining their key achievements in *expanding* disciplinary curiosities beyond the ‘discursive boundaries that were established through the (discipline’s) initial framing’⁷, and *challenging* ‘the limits of what are presented as ‘realistic choices’ within the discipline’⁸ I contend that such scholarship offers important *routes for recovery* of alternative emotional worlds which open up new spaces for thinking, feeling, and being in IR⁹ and offer an

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1. Himadeep Muppidi, ‘On The Politics of Exile,’ *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 4 (2013): 299-313.
 2. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York Random House: Alfred A. Knopf, [1949] 2010).
 3. Elina Penttinen, *Joy and International Relations: A New Methodology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).
 4. Ty Solomon and Brent J. Steele, ‘Micro-moves in International Relations Theory’, *European Journal of International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2017): 268.
 5. Paulo Ravecca, ‘The Intimate Architecture of Academic Stories: the Politics of Political Science’, in *Narrative Global Politics*, eds. Naeem Inayatullah and Elizabeth Dauphinee (Abingdon: Routledge: 2016), 56.
 6. Solomon and Steele, ‘Micro Moves,’ 272.
 7. Roland Bleiker, ‘Forget IR Theory’, *Alternatives* 22 No. 1 (1997): 57-85.
 8. Aslı Çalkıvık, ‘Claiming the International as a Critical Project,’ in *Claiming the International*, eds. Arlene B. Tickner and David Blaney (London: Routledge, 2013), 51.
 9. I am grateful to Reviewer 2 for identifying this contribution and encouraging me to frame this argument within the article.

important ethical rearticulation of politics ‘as part of a much broader, human project.’¹⁰

Building on already existing efforts to remedy the lack of emotional-relational investigations in the discipline, I introduce magical realism as a genre of literary writing which, through its immanent potential for foregrounding the ethical dilemmas and relational entanglement of its characters, welcomes the resistance to an unbearably rational world by emotional-relational humans. By locating emotional entanglements through which humans bring themselves to bear on and overcome rational world constructions which cast them aside, magical realism offers a transformative conceptualisation of humans as always and already magical. Gleaning moments of emotional incantations by humans— in Isabel Allende’s *A Long Petal of the Sea*, Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *Love in the Time of Cholera*— which work to transform a world that become too difficult to bear for its inhabitants, I contend that IR stands to gain invaluable lessons by immersing itself in the kind of emotional magic that such literature and its resident humans spell into being. Through a literary analysis of the three selected novels, I seek to trace how engaging with the emotional magic of humanness can contribute to a richer way of doing/making global politics.

There is a critical task of setting out who the humans under study here are before we begin to understand how – following Marquez’s insight – they are birthing themselves ceaselessly. It cannot be effortlessly argued that mainstream International Relations denies the presence of humans, however; there is an over-reliance on a certain archetype of the human- as an exclusively rational, thinking, complete and predominantly male subject. Such construction of the human is far from innocent since mainstream IR does not recognise the subjectivity of humans who ‘cannot be identified with the speaking (realist/liberal) subject’; and by extension, of ‘the Other, women, and anyone who cannot speak.’¹¹ This research embraces the emotional-relational and imaginative humans who resist the unifying and rational archetype through their emotional, incomplete and fragmented relations and ways of being in the world. By locating the collapse of the rational-emotional divide in magical realism’s narratives of humans and their experiences of transforming a limiting world through their emotional relatedness to each other, this article offers alternative imaginations of the ‘human’ as an ethical redirection for IR.

A search for emotional-relational-magical humans requires equally relational, emotional and magical methods to study them. For theories to make us feel¹², the methods we generate in our studies of the international must mirror the intimacies between humans and their worlds. While scholars in the discipline have embraced fiction¹³ as a creative practice/site for political reimagination, turning to magical realism further allows ‘positional

10. Roland Bleiker, *Aesthetics and World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 169.

11. Bleiker, *Forget IR Theory*, 76.

12. Jenny Edkins, ‘Novel Writing in International Relations: Openings for a Creative Practice’, *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 4 (2013): 281–97.

13. Among many, see Himadeep Muppidi, “On The Politics of Exile”, *Millennium Journal of International Relations* 44, No. 4, (2014); Sungju Park-Kang ‘Fictional IR and Imagination: Advancing Narrative Approaches,’ *Review of International Studies* 41, no. 2 (2015): 381; Elizabeth Dauphinee, ‘Writing as Hope: Reflections on The Politics of Exile’, *Security*

slippages'¹⁴ which reckon with the precarious intimacies to offer transformative routes for knowing the world. Magical realism beckons us to look at humans not as 'receptacles of qualities' or a 'genderless humanity'¹⁵, but as emotional alchemists who catalyse the (un) making of worlds through their ceaseless encounters with the rational limits of the world. While it is virtually impossible to engage with the full reservoir of magical realist fiction in one article, I engage with three important texts to glean critical contributions that the genre makes towards expanding the scope of the political, in hopes of making it an important foothold for further exploration in IR. I argue that magical realism (i) reinstates a relational ethic through the exploration of emotional entanglements between its characters and their worlds (ii) offers an alternative articulation of time as simultaneous and magical, by releasing its characters from the burden of mapping chaotic lives along linear time (iii) invites readers and thinkers to see and feel their relationality to the characters and their emotional quagmires, by employing imagination as a means of resistance against unemotional theorising and practices in global politics.

Routes to Recovery: Feminist, Aesthetic and Decolonial Scholarship and Their Search for Emotional-relational Humans

The indispensable starting point of studying emotional humans is to recognise that there is something 'more' going on. Such (re)turns to the emotional have achieved great currency in the study of international politics, not least for offering a shift from mainstream IR's *fixation with fixity* which has set limits to imaginations, of humans and their agencies. Emotions researchers have called for a need to shift focus from agency of 'complete persons to sub and trans-personal affective capabilities';¹⁶ to humans who do not arrive as complete, autonomous and rational (unemotional) subjects. By resisting the Western ontology of 'garden variety, intentional humans'¹⁷, emotions scholars have opened up the international to an alternative politics which

Dialogue 44, no. 4 (2013): 347-61; Naeem Inayatullah, 'If Only You Could See What I Have Seen with Your Own Eyes: Staging an Encounter between Social Science & Literature', Unpublished essay, 2001, 4. Available at: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.602.1126&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Last accessed October 2, 2022; Jenny Edkins, *Routledge Handbook of Critical International Relations*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2019); Veronique Pin-Fat, 'Dissolutions of the Self.' In *Narrative Global Politics*, edited by Elizabeth Dauphinée and Naeem Inayatullah, 25-34. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016); and Ravecca, 'The Intimate Architecture of Academic Stories.

14. Christine Sylvester (1994) conceived of positional slippage to occupy positionalities that are ordinarily left out of and alien to our own ways of thinking about and seeing the world. Megan Daigle, "Writing the Lives of Others: Storytelling and International Politics, *Millennium: Journal of International Politics* 45, no. 1, 2016), 35, notes that a certain degree of slippage is analytically necessary, not just incidental.
15. Christine Sylvester, 'Empathetic Cooperation: A Feminist Method for IR', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23, no. 2 (1994): 316.
16. Andrew G. Ross, *Mixed Emotions: Beyond Fear and Hatred in International Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 52.
17. *Ibid.* 51.

– instead of being parsimonious and generalisable –is ‘complex and frenzied’¹⁸ like the emotional humans who inhabit it¹⁹.

I turn to the work of feminist, aesthetic and decolonial scholars of emotions, who have sought to reconstruct the discipline by asking whose *relations* in the *international* are taken seriously, if not those between emotional humans and their worlds? Critiquing the conventional practice of articulating humans only if they arrive as finished products of rational thought free from their emotional ‘more’ness, such scholarship has sought to mend unemotional disciplinary postures towards incomplete, emotional and relational humans, through an emotional ‘love for knowing’²⁰. By foregrounding the intimacy between emotions and reason, clarifying the need for creative forms of writing the international which are better positioned to reflect the emotional experience of living in it, and understanding the incomplete self through relations with the other, such approaches offer *routes to recovery* of alternative life-worlds and emotional-relational humans as an alternative approach of seeing and doing international politics. My aim here is not to try and provide an elegant summary of the variety and volume within/across each of these traditions, but to acknowledge their collective efforts in resisting disciplinary definitions that foreclose engagement with the emotional-relational and placing them at the heart of their inquiries, as a crucial starting point for this project.²¹

Feminist interventions in IR have offered important routes to recovery for emotional worlds and by extension; an alternative politics in the discipline, by seeking to conceptualise humans as inevitably emotional and relational. Having long encouraged a dialectical and historical relationship with the emotional,²² feminists argue that viewing emotions as ‘beneath the faculties of thought and reason’ allows conventional IR to treat emotions as derivative and non-autonomous, rather than relational and agentic.²³ Since feminists consider the personal as political and indeed international²⁴, the international they (re)imagine is always and already emotional and relational. For feminists, emotions do not belong or occur as stable, unchanging attributes but are ‘entangled’ between bodies and the past and present.²⁵ By contending that the presumed difficulty of articulating emotional relations as elements of politics is symptomatic of a lack of epistemological *engagement with* emotions rather than an *absence of* emotions, feminists code

18. Solomon and Steele, ‘Micro Moves,’ 280.

19. Emma Hutchison, ‘Emotions, Bodies, and the Un/Making of International Relations’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 47, no. 2 (2019): 284-98.

20. Ravecca, ‘The Intimate Architecture.’

21. While I have engaged with scholarship across these traditions in the article, it is not a comprehensive overview of these diverse strands of literature, but rather a roadmap to draw a path from IR to magical realist fiction in a way that places the latter alongside critical attempts within the former.

22. Linda Åhäll, ‘Affect as Methodology: Feminism and the Politics of Emotion,’ *International Political Sociology* 12, no. 1 (2018): 36-52.

23. Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 3.

24. Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (2nd ed.). (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

25. Karin Fierke and Nicola Mackay, ‘To See is to Break an Entanglement: Quantum Measurement, Trauma and Security’, *Security Dialogue* 51, no. 5 (2020): 450-66.

the emotional as integral to the rational, rather than divorced from it²⁶. Unfortunately, negative assessment of feminist work where it is deemed ‘an extension of the already pathological ‘emotionality’ of femininity’ has often translated into the reduction of emotions to the category of ‘the unthought’ and feminism to feverish²⁷, in mainstream IR. However, the persistent feminist challenge to an untenable separation of passion from reason²⁸, marks a reflexive decision to ‘disrupt status-quo rehearsals of global ethics’ by restoring the value of emotional and embodied experiences in research.²⁹ By contending that there is no way to divide the passionate from the rational in politics precisely because they are not deployable factors, but ontological frames of analysing the world, feminists recognised that such feelings must be situated and felt within the texture³⁰ of our research.

Crucial to the feminist articulation of the relationship between emotions and reason, is their resistance of the distinction between different categories of studying emotions which serve to negate their importance at all levels of politics and knowledge about the political. Stipulating that distinguishing between ‘affect’ and ‘emotion’ ‘risks reinforcing a binary, gendered logic between a mobile, impersonal, masculinised affect and a contained, feminised, personal emotion’ by making it seem like affect is something new and not historically connected to discourses of knowledge and power,³¹ feminists argue that just as the ability to distinguish between parts of an egg does not make them different, the practice of divorcing affect from emotion does not imply their separateness.³² Reiterating the analytical interdependence of emotions and affect, recent scholarship has introduced ‘feltness’ as a category which reflects the mutual and mixed existence of both.³³ For feminists, the political value of engaging with emotions comes precisely from their amorphous ability to unsettle conventional frames of understanding the world, and allowing us ask questions that might only result in tenuous, incomplete answers.³⁴ how is it that despite being ‘full of bodies’, the presence of humans has not changed the way in which International Relations is conducted?³⁵ By bringing attention to the social and

26. Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

27. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 170.

28. Among others, see Carol Cohn “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals.” *Signs* 12, no. 4 (1987): 687–718. V. Spike Peterson “Feminist Theories Within, Invisible To, and Beyond IR” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 10, no. 2 (2004): 35–46. J. Anne Tickner “You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements between Feminists and IR Theorists” *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (1997): 611–32. Jill Steans “Engaging from the margins: feminist encounters with the ‘mainstream’ of International Relations” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 5, No. 3, 2003, 428–454.

29. Amanda Beattie, ‘The Reflexive Potential of Silence: Emotions, the “everyday” and Ethical International Relations’, *Journal of International Political Theory* 15, no. 2 (2019): 231.

30. I thank Dr. Roxani Krystalli for urging me to think about the ‘texture of my research’ in identifying my research landscape and methodology.

31. Åhäll, ‘Affect as Methodology,’ 39.

32. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Åhäll, ‘Affect as Methodology’.

33. Julia Welland, ‘Feeling and Militarism at Ms Veteran America,’ *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3, no. 1 (2021): 61.

34. Bleiker, *Aesthetics and World Politics*.

35. Lauren Wilcox, ‘Making Bodies Matter in IR,’ *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 1 (2014): 359.

political role of emotions in the sustenance of norms³⁶, resistance to the status-quo³⁷, un/remaking of worlds³⁸, illumination of socio-relational elements in everyday politics³⁹, and identity-formation⁴⁰, feminists have coded the emotional as an 'alternative course of sense-making.'⁴¹

The aesthetics turn has also been instrumental in critiquing and improving the over-reliance on singular, habitual modes of theorising worlds which are inhabited, felt, resisted and transformed in plural ways. Resisting narrow conceptions of the 'rational'; aesthetics scholars have been at the forefront of introducing the value of alternative and transformative forms of (emotional) meaning making in the discipline. Cautioning against remaining with habitual forms of knowledge production, aesthetics scholars contend that such forms might have been intellectualised to a point where they cannot successfully apprehend and relay the emotional⁴² and call for greater analytical attention to creative forms of knowledge which prioritise 'sensation rather than intellectualism.'⁴³ As an improvement on mimetic approaches to international relations which seek to 'capture' an authentic world or an objective reality, aesthetic approaches encourage forms of thinking and writing which mirror multiple fragmented, emotional and relational realities.⁴⁴ They reckon with the emotional along a range of 'sites, locations, and directions'⁴⁵ including the ordinary as well as the sublime.⁴⁶ Following Jacques Ranciere's conception of 'the distribution of the sensible' which sets limits to what/who are included within and excluded from a community, aesthetics scholarship turns to artistic practices as political 'ways of doing and making that intervene and transform'⁴⁷ such distributions. By

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36. Margaret Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding* (London: SAGE Publications, 2012).
 37. Åhäll, 'Affect as Methodology'.
 38. Hutchison, 'Emotions, Bodies and the Un/Making of International Relations'.
 39. Beattie, 'The Reflexive Potential of Silence'.
 40. Karin M. Fierke, *Political Self-Sacrifice: Agency, Body and Emotion in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
 41. Sybille R. de Buitrago, 'Visualisation and Knowledge Production in International Relations: The Role of Emotions and Identity', *Journal of International Political Theory* 15, no. 2 (2019): 258.
 42. Roland Bleiker and Emma Hutchison, 'Fear No More: Emotions and World Politics,' *Review of International Studies* 34, no. S1 (2008): 115–35.
 43. Cerwyn Moore and Laura J. Shepherd, 'Aesthetics and Global Politics,' *Global Society* 24, no. 3 (2010): 299.
 44. Bleiker, 'Forget IR Theory'.
 45. Brent J. Steele, 'Recognising, and Realising, the Promise of the Aesthetic Turn,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 45, no. 2 (2017): 208.
 46. Roland Bleiker and Martin Leet, 'From the Sublime to the Subliminal: Fear, Awe and Wonder in International Politics,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 34, no. 3 (2006): 713-37.
 47. Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 13.

engaging with a multitude of sources and genres- memorials⁴⁸, novels⁴⁹, poetry⁵⁰, images⁵¹ and artefacts⁵² – aesthetic scholarship expands the sites and limits of political participation to reimagine the contours of disciplinary knowledge about the world through the emotional experiences of living in it.

Poems, art, visual images and artefacts possess emotional intensities and evoke affective responses, thereby helping produce knowledge which resist the tidiness and safety of disciplinary frames in favour of messiness, depth and discomfort of emotional worlds.⁵³ Asserting the need to diversify the register of experiencing and being-in emotional worlds, aesthetics become important routes to recovery of emotional humans in international politics. The politics of aesthetics lies precisely in how such sources conceive the emotional as not distinct from, but critical to making the international, intelligible. Engaging with sources which are immanently multi-vocal offers opportunities for more ‘emergent, elastic and non-linear’ forms of knowledge about the international.⁵⁴ It is through their willingness to consider alternative modes of knowledge production, that aesthetics become an important route to recovering affective investments between emotional humans and their worlds.⁵⁵ By choosing to begin from ‘the improbable, the subjugated elements of society, the margins of discursive practices’, aesthetic scholarship reiterates the need for interacting with others’ silenced and marginalised voices⁵⁶ as an alternative way of registering emotional experiences of being in/with the world.

The principle of searching for other(ness) in relation with the self goes beyond the ontology of a complete, aggregated, exclusively rational human, by locating the search for incomplete, emotional humans begins through a commitment to empathetic inquiry. By attending to the ‘faults and fractures that inevitably shape the collectivities we forge’^{57,58}, decolonial scholars have reimaged the emotional landscape of the discipline, enabling us to ‘understand other people’s feelings’ even if the process of recognising others’ needs is frustrating.⁵⁹ Qua decolonial scholarship, conceptualisations of

48. Audrey Reeves and Charlotte Heath-Kelly, ‘Curating Conflict: Political Violence in Museums, Memorials, and Exhibitions,’ *Critical Military Studies* 6, no. 3-4 (2020): 243-53.

49. Inayatullah, ‘If Only You Could See.’

50. Swati Parashar, in Sylvester et al. ‘Emotion and the Feminist IR Researcher.’ *International Studies Review* 13, no. 4 (2011): 687–708.

51. Roland Bleiker, *Visual Global Politics* (London: Routledge, 2018).

52. Caitlin Hamilton, *The Everyday Artefacts of World Politics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).

53. Marysia Zalewski, ‘Stories of Pain and Longing: Reflecting on Emotion, Boundaries and Feminism through Carrie Mathison and Carrie White,’ in *Emotions, Politics and War*, eds. Linda Åhäll and Thomas Gregory (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

54. Gabriel Eshun and Claire Madge, ‘Now Let Me Share This with You’: Exploring Poetry as a Method for Postcolonial Geography Research,’ *Antipode* 44, no. 4 (2012): 1415.

55. Bleiker and Hutchison, ‘Fear No More’.

56. Bleiker, ‘Forget IR Theory’, 66.

57. Richa Nagar, *Muddying the Waters: Coauthoring Feminisms across Scholarship and Activism* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

58. Pierre Beaudelaine, Naimah Petigny and Richa Nagar, ‘Performing Embodied Translations: Decolonizing Methodologies of Being and Knowing’, *Commoning Ethnography* 2, no. 1 (2019): 122.

59. Park-Kang, ‘Fictional IR and Imagination,’ 381.

humans as complete and autonomous subjects of international politics, discounts emotional experiences of incompleteness which make up their human-ness. This recognition of incompleteness and relationality of humans is powerful, because it brings forth the need to conceive of absences as equally significant as presences, fragmentations as important as constitutions.⁶⁰ An acknowledgement of our intimacy with the other, can open up the emotional avenues for conceptualising this other- with ‘thought *and* emotion’.⁶¹ Empathy becomes the cause and effect of our thinking, whereby it allows us to ‘feel others’ and interact with them through a ‘spontaneous sharing of affect’.⁶² By releasing marginalised humans from the need to assert an ‘ontological fullness’ to be seen, decolonial scholars beckon us to think of novel ways to locate the fragmentation and interruptions that can help us locate the human.⁶³

Decolonial thinkers are steeped in efforts to maintain a porosity of boundaries: where the ‘non-masculine self. . . relegated to the forgotten zones of Western self-concept’ is not mechanically distinguishable from the not-self.⁶⁴ In doing so, such approaches offer much needed respite from epistemological colonisation of subjectivities; resisting the self-other dichotomy prevalent in mainstream IR by fleshing the incomplete self through its relations with the other.⁶⁵ Privileging intimacies as the route to recovering the marginalised humans and their stories, posits a challenge to the geographical divide that marks the world and its concomitant forms of knowledge. The West and Non-West become part of one another, once we begin to see them not as geopolitical containers, but as spatial and temporal locations of distancing (West) and resistance (Non-West).⁶⁶ Decolonial perspectives become routes to recovering alternative modes of theorising the other in relation with and as a remedy for incomplete, emotional selves. The decolonial question for IR then is- What alternatives come alive, when we do not wish away the corruption that could occur when academic writing is infused with fragments and snippets of incomplete living?⁶⁷

While being singularly valuable, each of these traditions have an overlapping and enduring concern for the emotional-relational, so much so that their critiques and contributions in recovering it as a site for politics are often shared. It is in the critical project of locating, feeling and relating to incomplete humans that feminist, aesthetic and decolonial scholarship in IR find resonances with fiction’s attention to the (re)imagination and (trans)formation of worlds by the humans who live in them. These traditions rupture the

60. Elizabeth Dauphinee, ‘Writing as Hope: Reflections on The Politics of Exile’, *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 4 (2013): 347-61.

61. Inayatullah, ‘If Only You Could See,’ 4.

62. Park-Kang, ‘Fictional IR’, 381.

63. Jenny Edkins and Veronique Pin-Fat, quoted in Jenny Edkins, ‘Novel Writing in International Relations: Openings for a Creative Practice’, *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 4 (2013): 288.

64. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (2nd edition, New Delhi: Oxford University Press India: Oxford University Press, 2009), 49.

65. Inayatullah, ‘If Only You Could See.’

66. Ibid.

67. Roxanne Lynn Doty, ‘Autoethnography – Making Human Connections’, *Review of International Studies* 36, no. 4 (2010): 1048.

self-assured boundaries of what counts as IR and beckon us to explore ways in which (magical realist) fiction can become an important genre for resisting the hierarchies between the real and imagined, blending the rational with the emotional, and addressing the postcolonial demand for redreaming worlds⁶⁸; thus widening the scope for wonder and curiosity in the studies of international politics.

Recognising the importance of intimate experiences and emotional relations as human ways of grappling with and ‘cracking open the world’, brings us to the need for finding methods which mirror and prioritise the intimacies⁶⁹ between emotional-relational, and by extension, magical humans and our studies of global politics. Critical scholarship in the discipline has opened doors for alternative forms of knowledge which do not decry the absence of completeness in their subjects but embrace the contingencies and incompleteness that surround their emotional struggles⁷⁰. Inviting ‘new ways of knowing and writing’ that break away from epistemologies and methodologies which speak from an ‘unmarked position’ that is predominantly male and white; these approaches offer ‘situated perspectives’ about the genesis and persistence of such power relations between methods and the knowledge they are complicit in producing.⁷¹ While each of them offer critical opportunities for restoring emotional humans to the international; feminist, aesthetic and decolonial scholarship collectively emphasise the need for designing ‘humanistically-oriented methodologies’⁷² which can engage emotional humans in terms of their intimate relations with each other and their emotional life-worlds.

Telling Stories/ Story Telling: Fiction as a Route to Recover Emotional Worlds

In search of methods which are better suited to locate and write about emotional encounters which ‘refuse to be simply located,’⁷³ critical approaches have acknowledged storytelling as a route to recovering emotional humans and their worlds. Feminist, aesthetic and postcolonial thinkers in IR have argued in favour of reading and writing stories because of how they expand both- the sites and voices in the international. Explicating the multiplicity of motivations and ethical dilemmas of characters who are embedded in and simultaneously resist the structures that constrain them, stories help in lowering the guard, and beckon us to participate in an immersive and potentially transformative experience, by creating a ‘shift in the consciousness of the reader.’⁷⁴ However, stories also

68. Wendy Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments* (Nashville: Vanderbilt, 2004).

69. Megan Daigle, ‘The Intimate and the International: Love, Sexuality and Queer Feminist IR,’ in *Routledge Handbook of Critical International Relations*, ed. Jenny Edkins (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019): 327.

70. Park-Kang, ‘Fictional IR’, 361.

71. Charlotte Epstein, ‘The Postcolonial Perspective: An Introduction,’ *International Theory* 6, no. 2 (2014): 299.

72. J. Ann Tickner, ‘You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists 1997’, in *A Feminist Voyage through International Relations* (New York: Oxford Academic, 2014), 78.

73. Edkins, ‘Novel Writing,’ 288.

74. Inayatullah, ‘If Only You Could See,’ 27.

cause discomfort, not least because they insist on a sustained engagement in others' points of view as part of the reader's work of interpretation.⁷⁵ By driving the reader 'into the textual terrain', stories reimagine the demarcation between the self *and* other,⁷⁶ as an invitation to explore the self *through* the other, and recognise how 'we are already a part of each other.'⁷⁷ Such slippage in positions is a requisite for empathetic cooperation to take place, as a relational method of seeing the other within us.⁷⁸ Stories reimagine conventional boundaries by encouraging empathy not only between the researcher and researched⁷⁹, but also the reader and the text⁸⁰. Their political importance lies in how they unsettle distinctions between the researcher and her subject, by allowing us to feel challenged, confronted and moved by the way in which stories 'lodge one world into another'⁸¹. Stories make it possible for us to 'come to our writing already undone,'⁸² as a creative improvement upon writing which buries the writers' situatedness⁸³ as a mere 'vehicle for expressing ideas, rather than a practice that is integral to the formation of ideas itself.'⁸⁴ What stories do 'that other forms of writing cannot' is that they become methods for thinkers of IR to 'write ourselves back into our research'⁸⁵.

Not all stories place emotional human experiences at the heart of their purpose. How can emotional-relational stories of humans contribute to more relational and humane ways of studying the international? This question requires us to revisit the relationship between knowledge and stories in international relations. The act of 'telling stories', at least in the English-speaking world, has not been considered as a knowledge practice, not least because it evokes 'the idea of falsehoods or 'making it up.'⁸⁶ However, as carefully documented by the recent narrative turn in the discipline, it is this *telling* that is most important⁸⁷, for expressing 'how the international acts on bodies (and vice versa)' and for filling the international frame with human emotional-relational experiences.⁸⁸ I argue that fiction as a specific form of storytelling offers a remedy to the disciplinary

75. Ibid.

76. Bleiker, *Aesthetics and World Politics*, 106.

77. Inayatullah, 'If Only You Could See,' 27.

78. Christine Sylvester, 'Empathetic Cooperation: A Feminist Method For IR', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23, no. 2 (1994): 315-34.

79. Zalewski, 'Stories of Pain and Longing.'

80. Laura J. Shepherd, ed. *Critical Approaches to Security: An Introduction to Theories and Methods* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

81. Jacques Ranciere, quoted in Edkins, 'Novel Writing,' 292.

82. Dauphinee, 'Writing as Hope,' 356.

83. Sarah Naumes, 'Is all 'I' IR?', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 3 (2015): 820-32.

84. Dauphinee, 'Writing as hope,' 347.

85. Edkins, 'Novel Writing,' 290.

86. Jenny Edkins et al., 'Tales of Entanglement,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 49, no. 3 (2021): 607.

87. Himadeep Muppidi, 'The Story of a Story,' in *Tales of Entanglement*, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 49, no. 3 (2021): 615-16.

88. Megan Daigle, 'Writing the Lives of Others: Storytelling and International Politics,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 45, no. 1 (2016): 25.

distancing from stories as important forms of knowledge about worlds. By pointing out the 'greater fiction' of scientific writing which conceals the unavoidably personal and experiential elements of research⁸⁹, the genre offers critical opportunities for mitigating the characteristic distancing of Western scientific knowledge which often results in unemotional disciplines.⁹⁰ Calling for a plurality of sources, methods and subjects in the discipline in order to better apprehend emotional worlds, scholars have used fiction to 'venture out' and 'engage those who do not employ the favoured categories of the academic world' but participate in the creation of such worlds.⁹¹ Fiction helps us to 'de-school and re-school IR' by allowing researchers to 'bypass or at least complement the mode of wordling constituted by social science and by Western IR' in favour of experiencing emotional worlds in 'less defensive and more humane ways.'⁹²

The political importance of fiction for IR lies in its ability to overlap 'academic probing' and 'story telling', which enables it to construct and embody 'an extensive architecture of understanding' which is currently missing in the discipline.⁹³ It is the ability of fiction to engage with the diverse worlds of emotional humans through narratives, 'without losing sight of the politics of inequity staging their appearances and disappearances'⁹⁴ which enjoins it to critical efforts towards reimagining the international. Far from producing *falsities*, fiction serves the common critical purpose of (re)imagining alternative and multiple truths as coexisting and relational *realities*. I contend that it is this explicit commitment to imagination, that makes fiction an important source for recovering emotional worlds in international politics. Thinkers of global politics have embraced fiction to push 'beyond the aura of social science' to engage with possibilities that lie beyond it.⁹⁵ By transforming knowledge into 'an activity in which politics, tradition, history, and interpretation converge,⁹⁶ fiction becomes a specific form of storytelling attuned to both- an accounting for emotional worlds as well as reimaginings of the relationships between emotional humans and their worlds. Such worlds are always emotional; and become accessible through fiction's ability to evoke emotional responses of 'empathy, doubt and affection' towards its characters, thereby breaking down the 'epistemological distancing' which insulates the discipline from such emotional experiences.⁹⁷ Given that magical realist texts not only engage with the emotional, but reinscribe the political through

89. Ibid., 26

90. Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, 2009.

91. Tickner and Blaney, *Claiming the International* (London: Routledge, 2013), 15.

92. Naeem Inayatullah, 'Distance and Intimacy,' in *Claiming the International*, eds. Tickner and Blaney (2013): 4.

93. Naeem Inayatullah and Elizabeth Dauphinee, *Narrative Global Politics: Theory, History and the Personal in International Relations* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016): 2.

94. Himadeep Muppidi, 'Reflections on Narrative Voice,' *The Disorder of Things*, 23 March 2013. <https://thedisorderofthings.com/2013/03/23/reflections-on-narrative-voice>.

95. Randolph B. Persaud, 'The Reluctant Immigrant and Modernity' in Inayatullah and Dauphinee, *Narrative Global Politics*, 21.

96. Edward W. Said, 'Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors,' *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 2 (1989): 210.

97. Inayatullah, 'Distance and Intimacy,' 20.

emotional relations that constitute it, offering an alternative *magical politics*⁹⁸, such texts can become important sites for recognising the presence of affect worlds in IR.

Magical Realism: Emotional-Relational-Magical Humans in International Relations

Why must we seek to find the ‘soul of our writing’⁹⁹ in stories of magical realism? I wish to spend some words exploring this question, in hopes of turning suspicious readers into curious ones. The previous section highlighted the recent effective and affective efforts, of creative authorship in International Relations, towards inviting imaginative ways of thinking and writing about humans and their worlds. Following feminist, aesthetic and decolonial explorations with fiction in search for emotional humans, I arrived at magical realist fiction, which is a genre that takes seriously both- the affective encounters that (un)make¹⁰⁰ humans and the ways in which their emotional relations become modes through which they remake and transform the worlds they inhabit. While the endurance of magical realism as a literary tradition is well-documented in the multitude of works that continue to call this genre their home, the task at hand, is to reckon with its immanent potential to generate crucial transformations in the study of emotional-relational and magical humans in IR.

I contend that magical realism offers a remedial method for revisiting disciplinary postures towards incomplete, vulnerable and often invisible humans who go missing due to the academic insistence on articulating humans only if they arrive as finished products of rational thought and free from emotional excesses. In resisting its ‘untenable estrangement’ from emotional-relational living, magical realism makes room for scholarship that prioritises how ‘international life is experienced and practiced by real human beings.’¹⁰¹ By going beyond oppositional narratives, magical realism shows how the challenge of incompleteness is made bearable for emotional humans through a recognition of their prior solidarity with others who are just as incomplete.¹⁰² Magical realist authors do not have to introduce emotions into their writing, because they acknowledge the presence of emotional worlds and humans who inhabit and transform these worlds through their emotional relations, as always and already present. As such, the genre helps to locate and identify humans who are always and already magical; because of their ability to

98. Jeronimo Arellano, *Magical Realism and the History of Emotions in Latin America* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2015).

99. Roxanne Lynn Doty (‘Maladies of Our Souls: Identity and Voice in the Writing of Academic International Relations’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17, no. 2 [2004]: 383), asks this pertinent question in the context of academic writing, to problematise the distancing of researchers from their writing (Quoted in Sunju (Sungju Park-Kang, “Fictional IR and Imagination: Advancing Narrative Approaches.” *Review of International Studies* 41, no. 2 (2015): 361–81., 2015): 366).

100. I owe the formulation of making and unmaking of worlds through the participation of emotional humans, to Emma Hutchison (*Emotions, Bodies, and the Un/Making of International Relations*. *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 47(2), 284–298., 2019).

101. Mira Sucharov and Eric V. Rythoven, *Methodology and Emotions in international Relations: Parsing the Passions*, (Abingdon : Routledge, 2020).

102. Inayatullah, “If Only You Could See,” 30.

transform worlds through their emotional relations. I hope to show how such humans begin to magically reappear once we relinquish expectations of wholeness and see them as they come to bear upon and flood an unbearably dispassionate world through their fragmented yet relational-emotional incantations. Magical humans register their presence by embracing the emotional quagmires that encircle and overwhelm them, since it is through this very grammar of emotion that they can etch their stories upon a world that denies such articulations. By pausing and engaging with the *overwhelm* that allows humans to identify (with) themselves, magical realism poses a challenge to rational modes of articulation which are unable to include the souls of its subjects. By offering relational and human forms of knowledge, magical realist fiction can become an emancipatory antidote to the distancing prevalent in social sciences.¹⁰³

Magical realist fiction also challenges the widespread treatment of fiction writing as an apolitical category. It shows how dominant representations seek to remove from political debate 'what are in fact particular, interested constructions' through an exploration of alternative emotional worlds which are relegated to the 'realms of fiction, fantasy or nonsense.'¹⁰⁴ Starting from 'forms of sentimentality' and the 'wonder and enchantment' which lie at the heart of magical realism, we can begin to appreciate it as a narrative form that is inextricably linked 'with transnational cultures of emotion'¹⁰⁵. The genre's legacy of exploring the human through her emotional-relational entanglements with the world she simultaneously inhabits and resists, is what makes it a rich nesting-ground for thinkers of global politics. The engagement with the emotional in magical realism, lies not only at the levels of its characters, writer's plot choices and individual psychology, but also relates to wider historical processes of emotional representation. I argue, that by bringing forth the emotional dilemmas, encounters and impressions which steadily spill over the boundaries of scientific writing,¹⁰⁶ magical realism can become an ally to feminist, aesthetic and postcolonial efforts in resisting and overturning the anti-emotional tendencies of academic writing in international relations.

Drawing on three pieces from the genre which show how humans weave their emotional relations with their political landscape thereby transforming it, *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie and *A Long Petal of the Sea* by Isabel Allende, I explore three important and interrelated insights into the magical workings of emotional humans, that these specific books and the tradition of magical realist fiction writing at large make possible, for writers and readers of international relations. I choose these texts for their engagement with emotional humans in the context of deeply political landscapes to show how the political is first and foremost, emotional. Each of these novels trace human relationships through political upheaval: coups, partition and wars, and highlight how emotional relations between humans are crucial in surviving, transforming and reimagining such political landscapes. I contend that engaging with magical realism offers an alternative, decidedly

103. Inayatullah, 'Distance and Intimacy.'

104. Weldes et. al (Jutta Weldes et. all eds. *Cultures of insecurity : states, communities and the production of danger*, Minneapolis University of Minnesota Press 1999), quoted in Tickner and Blaney, *Claiming the International*, 10.

105. Arellano, *Magical Realism*, xiii.

106. On the difference between scientific and novel ways of writing, see Jenny Edkins (2013).

more human edge to international politics because the genre (i) reinstates a relational ethic through the exploration of emotional entanglements between its characters and their worlds (ii) offers an alternative articulation of time as simultaneous and magical, by releasing its characters from the burden of mapping chaotic lives along linear time (iii) invites readers and thinkers to see and feel their relationality to the characters and their emotional quagmires, by employing imagination as a means of resistance against unemotional theorising and practices in global politics.

These insights rest upon the broader advantages of reading fiction; not as falsehoods, but as imaginative iterations which are entangled with and help make sense of facts which are historically contingent and rely on fictionalisation to be acknowledged as such.¹⁰⁷ From its primary purpose, fiction aims to invite the reader by 'telling in an aesthetically engaged manner' unlike scientific narrative which serves the primary function of stating and defending the hypothesis and associated claims.¹⁰⁸ Fiction is not only interested in the telling, but also in the showing and feeling. It makes room for old entanglements, but also brings about possibilities for new ones.¹⁰⁹ Offering as much space to mental landscapes as to physical territory, fiction follows an 'emotive structure of belonging,' by charting not just physical territories but also mental landscapes of the protagonists who inhabit the planet.¹¹⁰ Magical realist authors bring the 'magical' to bear on the 'real' leaving it transformed through the stamping of the imaginative onto the evidential, and producing worlds where the fact/fiction dichotomy shatters in the face of their entanglement. The magical in this sense, does not oppose the real, but highlights 'the constructedness of life stories' which cannot be expressed in 'simple chronologies.'¹¹¹ By emphasising that testimony (facts) and literature (fiction) are 'inevitably haunted' by each other, we can begin to understand politics through stories which embrace their coalescence rather than following their estrangement.¹¹² In the engagement that follows, I explore how magical realism allows for emotional distortions of the past, modifications of the present and transformations of the future whilst disturbing their temporal linearities through the 'intermittence of the marvelous'.¹¹³ Through a sustained engagement with the emotional, magical realism becomes an alternative emotional register alongside other forms of literature or popular culture, which enables a more humane and emotional politics of the world.¹¹⁴

(i) Embracing Emotional Ambiguity of Self Through Relationality with the Other

Love in the Time of Cholera follows the emotional oscillations of Florentino Ariza, who falls in love with Fermina Daza, first with her encouragement, and later- once she

107. Park-Kang, 'Fictional IR', 362.

108. Inayatullah, 'Distance and Intimacy,' 208.

109. Muppidi, 'Story of a Story,' 616.

110. Sanjay Seth, *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations: A Critical Introduction*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

111. Muppidi, 'On the Politics on Exile,' 39.

112. Edkins, 'Novel Writing,' 283.

113. Arellano, *Magical Realism*, xix.

114. Tickner and Blaney, *Claiming the International*.

marries someone else- without it. It is a story where the two protagonists are entwined in a love that starts with letters of longing which were re-read empathically, 'in the hope they would tell more than they said'¹¹⁵, before being challenged by rejection and eventually transforming into a kinship 'beyond the brutal mockery of hope and the phantoms of disillusion: beyond love.'¹¹⁶ Marquez draws an allegory between symptoms of love and those of cholera and by narrating the afflictions of love, he brings to us, the deeply material effects of emotions which torment but also assuage the relational needs of humans. He beckons us to follow how the relational human 'need to understand the emotional world of the other'¹¹⁷ lies at the core of how such humans magically transform their worlds by relating to each other.

How does the emotional wound of one's incompleteness find a cure in the relational imagination of the other? For Florentino, torment manifests itself as the frustration of crushing emotions which put his cohesion in jeopardy, causing him to defy the unemotional expectations of his job as President of the River Company of the Caribbean by writing 'everything with so much passion that even official documents seemed to be about love'¹¹⁸, as if everything he expressed was in search of Fermina. He self-admittedly seeks temporary alleviation from his feverous love, in liaisons with women who are not Fermina; she also hides her own love in the garb of coldness towards Florentino's emotional unravelling, all whilst carrying the pain of separation like amputees who 'suffer pains, cramps, itches in the leg that is no longer there'.¹¹⁹ For most of Marquez's book, the two ill fated lovers do not encounter each other physically, outside of stolen glances at weekly mass and formal pleasantries at social events, but this forced separation from their affective counterparts only amplify the emotional resonances of their unfinished love, causing 'barely healed wounds. . .to bleed again as if they had been inflicted only yesterday.'¹²⁰

The wound is emotionally shared by both, in the stultifying gap between the being of their own origins and the becoming of their labours of love, leading readers to identify the humanity of both characters 'as they dance within' the emotional-relational world of their own creation.¹²¹ The emotional mixing of bodies that rarely (if ever) meet physically, allows the humans- plagued by the overwhelm and unfulfillment of their emotions- to rectify this alienation by imagining a world where the other becomes part of them till emotional incantations fill up the space left bare by physical separation. For Marquez's humans, 'being is always interbeing' in that there is an ever present 'other' within the 'self' and vice versa.¹²² If the emotional realm is the only domain where the other is

115. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera* (New York : Penguin Books, 1989), 67.

116. *Ibid.*, 345.

117. L.H.M. Ling, 'Decolonizing the International: Towards Multiple Emotional Worlds,' *International Theory* 6, no. 3 (2014): 580.

118. Marquez, *Love*, 167.

119. *Ibid.*, 109.

120. *Ibid.*, 30.

121. Naeem Inayatullah talks about the need for an 'intimate understanding of actual humans as they dance within various forms of knowledge' within social science, in 'If You Could See', (2001): 36.

122. Ling, 'Decolonizing the International,' 581.

immediate to the self, then such imaginations become the core of the relational human experience. I argue here, that for Marquez, the emotional is always already relational. The penchant for emotional consolation as an imaginative encounter with the other, shows the ways in which affection for others ‘does not so much weave us all together as it helps us to understand that we are already part of each other’.¹²³

Roxanne Lynn Doty’s question¹²⁴ about the struggle to bring in the self without alienating critiques of self-indulgence levelled against such form of writing, finds an answer in the emotional functions performed by the humans in Marquez’s novel who articulate their presence through the absence of *their* other. Far from being indulgent in a sense of isolating the self from her surroundings, humans in a magical realist world indulge their entanglements, because it leads to their signification as emotional-relational beings who can resist the world that severs them from others, by imagining a world where they are one with the(ir) other. Going beyond the disavowal of emotional struggles, Marquez’s humans are imaginatively empathetic- because they prioritise the emotional feeling of others’ struggles than the scientific solving of one’s own.¹²⁵ The imperative upon recasting, rather than discarding the world that does not serve their emotional needs, is what makes Marquez’s humans imaginative. Beckoning us to ‘invent something to do with things you cannot use anymore, but that you still cannot throw out,’¹²⁶ they become magicians with grimoires full of emotional spells, with which they perform the kind of imaginative magic, to not only transform the world but also their own relational positionalities with it. When Florentino Ariza replaces ‘the imaginary protagonists with people he knew in real life’¹²⁷ to enliven the magic of previously read dramas, or when Fermina Daza attempts to ‘discover a secret code, a magic formula hidden in one of the three hundred and fourteen letters’ from her lover, they breathe life into and transform their world(s) by acknowledging and indulging their entanglement with each other. Emotional relating to others requires a recognition of the multiple emotional worlds inhabited by them. Such humans come to bear upon these worlds through their admission to ‘prior solidarity with others’¹²⁸, going beyond stale narratives of opposition that classify the human need for others as a weakness to one that fosters the development of trans(gressive) subjectivities where ‘being is always interbeing.’¹²⁹

By recognising how emotional humans prioritise their ‘mutual embeddedness,’ we can begin to see how such recognition of hybrid emotional worlds can facilitate a ‘wordlist model of dialogics’ in international relations; where ‘multiple legacies of thinking, doing, being and relating’ can expand understanding and ‘even solve conflicts’ in ways that

123. Inayatullah, ‘If Only You Could See,’ 27.

124. Park-Kang resurrects Roxanne Lynn Doty’s (2010) question ‘of how to make the self have a presence without dominating the story’, in ‘Fictional IR,’ 364.

125. Park-Kang, ‘Fictional IR,’ 380.

126. Marquez, *Love*, 301.

127. *Ibid.*, 142.

128. Inayatullah, ‘If Only You Could See,’ 30.

129. Ling, ‘Decolonizing the International,’ 581.

dominant single narratives cannot.¹³⁰ Starting from fractures within them, allows Marquez to narrate humans who seek out similar fractures within others, and invite us to become (un)comfortable in the emotional-relational ambiguities that agitate and overwhelm emotional accounts of international relations. The self-other relationship where the human self is never available to us without the articulation of the other, brings us to an important moment of moving from discoveries to uncoveries.¹³¹ The identification of ambiguity as something other than ‘a dangerous opponent’, through the efforts of humans and their efforts towards magical transformations can help thinkers of international relations to ‘incorporate doubt with a sense of play and humility’ within the tales they tell their readers.¹³² Genealogies of the emotional-relational human that do not assume the presence of ‘an authentic starting point’ and focus instead on how the past is made sense of through the present.¹³³ If not at some arbitrary point in history, when do the self and other meet?

(ii) From Linear to Magical Time

Magical realist fiction allows us to reconfigure time from a flat surface on which to map human stories, to a contoured terrain which the self and other shape by disturbing linear expectations of homogenous temporal existence through their simultaneous and multiple encounters in what I call, magical time. ‘Time has been an unsteady affair, in my experience, not a thing to be relied upon. It could even be partitioned. . .’¹³⁴ Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is a memoir that reminisces and reconstructs a past that is too saturated to remain in the past, and demands attention in the present, as well as a place in the future. It is narrated by Ahmed Sinai, who becomes tied to India’s complicated history, by being born at the stroke of midnight on the 15th of August, 1947¹³⁵. What starts out as a fortuitous coincidence, later becomes an inevitable encounter with millions of people who share the splintering of their lives with Ahmed, and with the nation’s partition into India and Pakistan. Written as a narration of the protagonist’s familial history, the book reasserts the endurance of past generations reflected through the emotional overflows and residues found in the current generation. It allows us to explore further, the relational-emotional and magical humans and their worlds, through their suspension and reconstruction of time in a way that is more hospitable to their scattered and splintered existence(s).

For emotional-relational humans who figure in Rushdie’s partition tale, linear time was an unreliable and ‘unsteady affair’ because ‘it could even be partitioned.’¹³⁶ In

130. Drawing on non-western conceptions of self and relationality, LHM Ling introduces the ‘wordlist model of dialogics’ as a postcolonial response to the emotional legacies and hierarchies of colonialism; as a reclamation of multiple emotional worlds and ways of being, otherwise unrecognised in Western scholarship, in ‘Decolonizing the International’ (2014): 579- 82.

131. Ibid.

132. Inayatullah, ‘If Only You Could See,’ 35.

133. Bleiker, ‘Forget IR Theory,’ 61.

134. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children* (London: Vintage, 1995), 79.

135. This date and time are significant as the moment of India’s formal independence from British colonial rule.

136. Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*, 79.

refusing the homogeneity of time, Rushdie's humans are coming to us already destroyed, exactly like the nations they belong to. The brutal and bloody partition of India and the creation of Pakistan, causes a similar partition within them, making it imperative for them to exist in more than one place and time at once- pre-independent and post-independent India and Pakistan to be able to fully articulate themselves. In the absence of homogenous time along which they can lie neatly, Rushdie's humans assert their fragmentation through a genealogy where they 'remain with uncertainty', instead of relying on linear narratives to present them as ontologically whole.¹³⁷

'I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have seen done, of everything done to me. I am everything whose being-in-the-world was affected by mine. Am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come. Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter; each 'I' contains a similar multitude. I repeat for the last time: to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world.'

Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, p. 383.

This declaration from Ahmed Sinai, makes clear, his effort towards finding the purpose of his existence, and qualifying this desire by refusing to be defined in any way that does start from his multiple origins and positions in the world. The trick, as Ahmed goes onto elaborate, 'is to fill in the gaps, guided by the few clues one is given. . .the remaining shards of the past'.¹³⁸ Performing the trick of obliterating time and using its shards to reconstitute themselves and others like them, through emotional relations which belie homogenous time, is what marks the humans' magical capacities to transform their worlds. Rushdie's humans ascribe an emotional meaning to time, rendering it indivisible from their own stories, and in doing so, they cause time to be become subsumed in their emotional-relational existence, and not just its ordering principle. Another splintered human in Rushdie's novel, an irreverent boatman named Tai, describes his age, by stating that he has seen mountains being born, and emperors dying¹³⁹, causing tremors in established markers of time, and marking it in emotional-relational ways that embed him in the world. It is befitting therefore, when later in the novel, 'Tai dies, but his magic hangs over us still.'¹⁴⁰

At this point, I want to return to the question at the end of the previous section- when do the self and other meet, if not in linear typologies of past, present or future time? What is the rearticulation of time they spell into existence that is more reflective and inclusive of their multitudinous and chaotic life? I argue that splintered humans demand an analogous shattering of time, obliterating linearity by occupying more than one time through their emotional-relational constitutions. International relations scholars have articulated the differences between quantifiable and experiential¹⁴¹, certain and transformative¹⁴²

137. Edkins, 'Novel Writing,' 286.

138. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 427.

139. *Ibid.*, 16.

140. *Ibid.*, 107.

141. Christopher McIntosh, 'Theory Across Time: the Privileging of Time-Less Theory in International Relations,' *International Theory* 7, no. 3 (2015): 464–500.

142. Kimberly Hutchings, *Time and World Politics: Thinking the Present* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

singular and plural conceptions of time¹⁴³, to highlight the schism between dominant representations of time and personal experiences which often contest such representations. The recognition of an ‘untenable estrangement of scholarship from how international life is experienced and practiced by real human beings,’ was articulated as a need to reimagine world-political time in non-linear plural ways.¹⁴⁴ Foregrounding emotional experiences as markers of time brings us closer to temporal imaginations which mirror the contingency and complexity of international politics and the relationships between the actors, events, and structures that constitute it.¹⁴⁵ In rearticulating time as a more human, plural and experiential category which emphasises process and relationships¹⁴⁶, we can begin to see how emotional-relational humans participate in multiple chronologies and ‘double time’¹⁴⁷ which often spill over the ‘bland surface of a clock.’¹⁴⁸

For Rushdie’s humans, who narrate their ‘own life- its meanings, its structures- in fragments’¹⁴⁹, it is impossible to arrange themselves coherently along linear time which materialise as ‘flat surfaces that are opposed to the living.’¹⁵⁰ The emotional-relational need for their internal fragmentation to be reflected in a similar fragmentation of time is met through their magical construction of reality as ‘ongoing reconstructions’¹⁵¹ of time. For humans who carry ‘trauma at the heart of (their) subjectivity’¹⁵², like the *partitioned Midnight’s Children*; who do not fit seamlessly into categories predicated on imaginary wholeness, there is an emotional need to formulate a kind of time that allows them to burst (at)the seams, by disallowing the world to make sense without and outside of their trauma.¹⁵³ The effects of trauma exceed sovereign notions of humans ordered around singular conceptions of time, and in doing so, inevitably render humans emotional and relational. The emotional need for rearticulating time so that it ‘does not shape the narrative’, materialises in the relational need of humans to not be identified as ‘closed identities.’¹⁵⁴ By recognising that ‘we simply could not think our way out of our pasts’¹⁵⁵ because the partition lives within them, Rushdie’s humans continue to narrate themselves by *traumatising* time¹⁵⁶. Trauma-time, therefore, allows trauma to *become* time.

143. Andrew R. Hom, ‘Timing is Everything: Toward a Better Understanding of Time and International Politics,’ *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2018): 69-79.

144. Hutchings, *Time and World Politics*.

145. McIntosh, ‘Theory across Time,’ 490.

146. Hom, ‘Timing is Everything.’

147. Kimberly Hutchings, ‘Happy Anniversary! Time and Critique in International Relations Theory,’ *Review of International Studies* 33, no. S1 (2007): 71–89.

148. *Ibid.*, 72.

149. Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*, 107.

150. Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 15.

151. Andrew R. Hom and Brent J. Steele, ‘Open horizons: the Temporal Visions of Reflexive Realism,’ *International Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (2010): 278.

152. Edkins, ‘Novel Writing,’ 288.

153. *Ibid.*

154. *Ibid.*, 287.

155. Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*, 118.

156. Jenny Edkins offers this insightful rearticulation of time which ‘does not have beginnings and ends’, much like those who inhabit it. Since the traumatic event outlives its occurrence, it cannot be restricted to the past, and must be dealt with in the now, by incorporating the

Once the emotional humans who sought to rearticulate time, achieve this by consuming it, they magically reappear through fragmented narratives that do not constrain them to one chapter of time, allowing them to have a triangulated existence- by morphing into different shapes themselves- 'the base of my triangle is isosceles. I hover at the apex, above present and past.'¹⁵⁷ Since 'no present is fully present' insofar as international politics comprises of diverse temporalities, emotional-relational humans exist contingently and relationally, by magically constructing temporal orders which 'cut across, impinge on and mutually transform each other.'¹⁵⁸

As a means of revisiting the task of locating moments of transformation in our study of international relations, as we feel our way through these texts, I want to draw attention to the powerful ways in which fiction materialises possible spaces for expressions of emotional relationality. I aver, that emotional-relational and magical humans produce, live and relentlessly rework a form of magical time. The magical realist stage, where Ahmed Sinai and other humans who share his plague of being fractured by time, exhibit their fantasies and disrupt the separation of 'identities, activities and spaces', is filled with emotional spellwork of inundating politics with more people who possess 'the ability to see and the talent to speak', and providing humans 'properties of spaces and the possibilities of time.'¹⁵⁹ The emotional-relational humans become magicians once again, this time, by finding a stage upon which to perform: magical realist fiction. The breaking away from homogenous notions of time enables humans to spell a time that is spatial in texture and provides a foundation where 'everything speaks.'¹⁶⁰ Magical time, becomes the emotional-relational correlate of imagination- making humans embrace and 'accept responsibility for the events of (my) turbulent, fabulous world.'¹⁶¹

The imperative for moving toward a magical time, is embedded within an aesthetic project aimed towards expanding the limits of intelligibility that pervade throughout the discipline.¹⁶² Magical time embraces splintering as a way of making intelligible, the collective 'fear of schizophrenia, of splitting'¹⁶³ which enables magical humans to spell an imaginative reality where 'meaning reveals itself only in flashes,'¹⁶⁴ and where one only has to 'turn a corner to tumble into yet another new and transmogrified world'¹⁶⁵. The ability to imagine emotional-relational journeys, in the absence of linear roadmaps, is what makes the texture of such time magical. Rushdie's humans tear away from the presumed unillogical sequences of their own lives by playing in magical time, 'stealing away to wander aimlessly without knowing who to speak to or who not to speak to' to

trauma rather than excluding it. She contends that traumatic events throw existing categories of linear temporality into question (traumatizing them) and necessitate alternative forms and registers of articulation, in Edkins (Trauma and the Memory of Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003): xiv, (2013): 286.

157. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 194.

158. Hutchings, *Time and World Politics*, 88.

159. Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 13.

160. *Ibid.*, 57.

161. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 270.

162. Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 10.

163. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 351.

164. *Ibid.*, 307.

165. *Ibid.*, 257.

rearticulate making democratic decisions to show rather than explain.¹⁶⁶ Imagination; specifically empathetic imagination, works magic by inviting different yet relational humans into the fold, ‘under the influence of a pain staking magic so obscure’¹⁶⁷ that those who cast the spell are also subsumed by it, shows us how the story(ies) and their tellers who are produced look much more fleshed out than they were faintly outlined to be.

Writing As Political: Characters from ‘Margins’ As Navigators of Hope¹⁶⁸

Once the cherished edifice of linear time melts to give way to simultaneous and magical time, we can begin to see how the form of our narration affects the substance of our inquiries- ‘Which facts? Whose ‘real’ world? What form of knowledge?’¹⁶⁹ If emotional-relational humans, through their re-imagining of worlds, times, and each other, come to magically reappear in our stories, then a moment of pause is useful, towards thinking about what these stories do, when all else fails. Writers of magical realism are invested in bringing forth the humans who occupy the lower decks of the scholarship; even though they are the ones stoking the fires to keep its engine running, they are prohibited from ‘mixing with passengers from other class, for sanitary reasons.’¹⁷⁰ Isabel Allende’s *A Long Petal of the Sea* is filled with humans, who have either resided in the third-class decks, concentration camps, and other (dis)locations or have witnessed such ‘living’ from very close quarters. It follows stories seeped in love and displacement, about humans who are ‘trying to find their place in a world in shambles, torn apart by violence.’¹⁷¹

The protagonists are a couple, Victor and Roser, who come together while fleeing from destruction only to stay together through other, subsequent destructions, finding a home for themselves in each other. Their love story is ill fated from the outset, since Roser is wed to Victor’s brother, who, like countless others, dies before we can even *live* him. Their relationship is interrupted by distance, military coups, camps and affairs, and is held together, magically, through these very interruptions and their persistence against them. Their story is embedded within the story of the ceaseless oscillation between freedom and repression in Spain and Chile and shaped more concretely with every new government and coup. Allende beautifully weaves in characters who, like the two lovers, find their locations and conditions under a succession of rapid changes in the world, until they become amalgams of both the trauma and the hope that comes with such changes.

166. Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics*,’ 13.

167. Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*, 69.

168. Isabel Allende dedicates her book, *A Long Petal of the Sea* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), to ‘navigators of hope’.

169. Bleiker, ‘Forget IR Theory,’ 64.

170. Allende, *A Long Petal by the Sea*.

171. Ibid.

One half of the love story in Allende's book and one half of himself, Victor Dalmau's life is constellated with trials and tribulations, finding himself broken and reconstituted just as the countries he leaves and lives (in). The violence he endures in the concentration camps, almost annihilate him, and the destruction of his being is verbalised in the relief of his discovery by his longtime friend- 'You can't imagine the trouble I've had finding you, brother, you're not on any list; I thought you were dead.'¹⁷² How then, did Victor continue to live, once he was 'thought' dead? I argue that he achieved this marvellous, magical feat of daring to survive in spaces of death, by daring to dream through collective imagination of living, with others who probably, much like Victor, had disappeared from 'lists' and were 'thought' to be dead. Through emotional and entangled imaginations- dividing 'the camp into streets with poetic names', constructing illusory orchestras 'without instruments to perform classical and popular music' and nourishing themselves 'with invisible food that the cooks described in great detail while the others savoured the tastes with their eyes closed', Allende's humans transformed the camp by dreaming in it¹⁷³. In wake of a reality that was too real to bear, they turned to each other and to imagination for assuaging their 'anguish of divided love, separation, of living and dying far from one's loved ones.'¹⁷⁴ 'Magical thinking'¹⁷⁵ is what allowed Allende's humans to not only survive, but also bring themselves as something more than the sum of their suffering. In moments where they found themselves ensnared and overwhelmed under absolute and tyrannical power, they found themselves to be in full authority over their emotions, and by extension, of how they transformed their situation through such immersion.

As emotional-relational and magical humans, Victor, Roser and others who brush past them, persist and make their presence felt through their absence in any singular beaker of space and time. Emotional pain becomes not something external to, but a means of relating with others who experience it through them. Defying the distilling of emotions that formed their flesh, they brewed imaginative spells to regain their lives by recognising that while 'pain is unavoidable, suffering is optional.'¹⁷⁶ Allende articulates the nuance between pain and suffering beautifully, in the peculiar feeling of dis-exile Roser and Victor encounter, when they finally return to Spain, to find that the country they had fled was not the country they had returned to, that 'just as they didn't recognise the Dalmau family home, so they couldn't recognise Spain', and such return was 'almost as hard as going into exile itself.'¹⁷⁷ While they articulate their pain, Victor and Roser do not reify the binary between suffering and hope, not least because the belief that suffering is more real and more important often relegates hope and joy as dangerous diversions rather than elements which speak to the 'fullness of life.'¹⁷⁸ Even the painful realisation that what was once their home, 'was no longer any place for them,'¹⁷⁹ does not rid Allende's

172. Ibid., 103.

173. Ibid., 102.

174. Ibid., 230.

175. Ibid., 172.

176. Ibid., 254.

177. Ibid., 257.

178. Penttinen, *Joy and International Relations*.

179. Allende, 'A Long Petal,' 257.

humans of their hopes for finding a home. Far from being overthrown by the dilapidation of the homes they were born in, Allende's humans sought refuge in the imagination of the homes they carried within themselves, as reflected in Roser's steadfast planning to go back to Chile, once they were 'fed up of being strangers'¹⁸⁰ in Spain.

As Allende's work makes clear, it is the magical/political ability of emotional-relational humans to imagine hopeful outcomes in annihilating conditions, that makes it imperative to place their marginalised and violated lives and voices at the heart of our studies. If audacious human beings, who question the form and substance of knowledge are silenced precisely due to the politically significant questions they raise about what counts as knowledge, then the imperative to start from the subjugated rather than the canonical standpoint, lies squarely on the writers of such knowledge¹⁸¹. Characters like Allende's, who come to the text already destroyed, cannot and must not be brought into knowledge systems where the violence they suffered is considered exceptional,¹⁸² not least because violence 'remains the modus operandi of world politics.'¹⁸³ Allende's humans are magicians because they resist despair with hope, in spaces that are predicated on the draining of such hope. By labouring to build amid destruction, they challenge the circularity of vengeance expected from suffering bodies through magical gestures of transformation that are aimed at making themselves complicit in their own redemption.¹⁸⁴ Whilst being persistently displaced, they are also embedded through emotional relationships with each other and the world they are imagining together: they 'embellish the facts because. . . life is how we tell it.'¹⁸⁵

The ability of magical realist authors to write about human suffering without resigning them to it, is what makes such writing more attuned to humanity. By stressing upon opening up possibilities for suffering bodies rather than hurrying to close them, magical realist narratives become portals of uncovering intimacies, among the characters within these writings and readers who encounter them.¹⁸⁶ The canonical demands placed by the discipline on its subjects and thinkers, to speak in ways that are 'devoid of flesh and blood and beating hearts' is precisely what warrants a radical and urgent move towards finding the humans, lest we lose our own humanity.¹⁸⁷ The task for thinkers of international politics, then, is to increase the frequency and quality of such encounters, by making room for hope as a means to embrace, and not escape suffering. By learning how emotional-relational humans 'heal, how they live or even how they thrive in hard times,' in worlds which are in continuous (re)configuration, IR can move towards more ethical, responsible and magical scholarship.¹⁸⁸ Investing emotions, words and time in

180. Ibid., 256.

181. Bleiker, 'Forget IR Theory,' 65.

182. Elizabeth Dauphinee, *The Politics of Exile*, (Abingdon Routledge, 2013).

183. Roland Bleiker, 'The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 3 (2001): 510.

184. Inayatullah, 'If Only You Could See,' 32.

185. Allende, *A Long Petal*, 202.

186. Inayatullah, 'If Only You Could See,' 34.

187. Doty, 'Maladies of Our Souls,' 383.

188. Penttinen, *Joy and International Relations*, 1.

the practices around speaking and listening to unorthodox subjects, is what might unlock transformative potentials for the discipline.¹⁸⁹

(Against) Conclusions: ‘But Sometimes Life is not Logical, but Magical’¹⁹⁰

I came to fiction, because I was tired of confessing. . . of taking the stand in academic courtrooms which swore me to one truth when I had several. . . hoping for words to leap out, only to find them hanging in the thick air above me, refusing to float or work their magic as they did when I dreamed them. . . drawing in heavy; loaned breaths in hopes of acclimatizing, even if just a little. . . enough to be able to share my own findings. . . failing because they started with buts and ended in beginnings. . . worried that my research was inadmissible on grounds of being personal. . . if I was inadmissible. . . pressing it closer and tighter and creating heart shaped crumples in my research. . . hoping to save it from judgments and precedents. . . I knew that I would have to find a different room: one with windows that opened instead of doors that closed; acoustically built for listening instead of delivering, where my work wouldn't be frisked for emotions but where they would become the very reason for my admission. . . this room had to be imagined; for my research and others', if we were to continue having several truths. . .

When a sentence begins with ‘but’, what is the *but* resisting against? Just as sentences starting with a *but* signify a semantic resistance to whatever comes before or after and require a moment of pause to see the unseen, this article was an attempt to locate humans who are bringing themselves to bear upon the world through their resistance against rules of participation that render them unseen. It is also a love letter to the writers; who are, much like me, submerged in relentless rounds of emotional negotiations with themselves and the disciplines they (are trying to) call home, about how much; if at all, of ourselves can we really bring to our work. By doing the emotional work of placing the human; including ourselves at the centre of our thinking, we can begin to conceive an ‘imaginative international’ which goes far beyond the current ‘international imagination.’¹⁹¹ My research is an attempt towards bringing the human into our consciousness, by locating and visibilising them as they are: vulnerable, emotional and entangled with each other and their world. The dilemmas of writing ourselves back into our research, is also one of letting the writing write back.¹⁹² Magical realism’s ability to enable forging of relational ties between characters and readers, based on shared emotional and ethical dilemmas, makes it possible to bring the reader into the world of writing. The generosity of such literature towards showing the unseen, helps in lowering the guard erected through scientific writing, allowing us to find fresh and enriching contexts for reflecting upon old questions.¹⁹³

189. Bleiker, ‘Forget IR Theory,’ 79.

190. I owe this subtitle to Park-Kang’s article where the protagonist in her fiction-piece articulates this simple yet effective realisation, as a response to being challenged for acting outside logical expectations in a demanding situation (2015): 378.

191. Park-Kang, ‘Fictional IR,’ 370.

192. Dauphinee, ‘Writing as hope,’ 357.

193. Inayatullah, ‘If Only You Could See,’ 29.

The three routes (and the above discussed novels) to recovering the emotional-relational-magical¹⁹⁴ human are not exhaustive in any sense, but offer useful thinking-spaces for research that does not aim to wish away the human struggle with emotions, but seeks to recast it into an empathetic search 'project of recovering the humanity already present in larger life.'¹⁹⁵ A (re)turn to stories; especially magical realist stories, is a part-answer to the critical call for our research to make a continued investment in the relational parts of the discipline and the world.¹⁹⁶ While an engagement with magical realism interrupts the linearity and cohesion of IR as a discipline, it deserves critical investigation precisely because this loss would be a gain towards a more intimate, relational and embodied rendering of the discipline and its participants. By speaking in a different voice, stories enable different voices to speak.¹⁹⁷ The veneer of objective gains which serves to justify a unilogical rendering of the world, melts away under the emotional scorch of stories, bringing forth violated, dismembered, forgotten and marooned humans who etch away at the totalities produced and reiterated through knowledge practices, revealing what lies under the surface our own intellect. The radical blurring of genres¹⁹⁸ brings forth blurry humans, who resist, agitate and melt boundaries, transforming them with their imagination. By unsettling disciplinary expectations of change erupting solely from 'big and heroic events, with fireworks and explosions'¹⁹⁹ magical realism offers a second look at the intimate magic practiced by humans in the everyday, to reiterate that the real is always, and without exception, emotional.

How are we as researchers then, to enjoy ourselves to the magical and transformative work of the humans we encounter in our work? I defer to Hannah Arendt's likening of research to deep sea pearl diving: where the role of researchers as pearl divers, is 'not to excavate the bottom. . .but to pry loose the rich and the strange, the pearls and corals in the depths', to carefully introduce the fragments of buried pasts into the present, by acknowledging that the lives that were sunk deep into the sea, survive even after they 'suffer a sea-change'.²⁰⁰ Just as divers reach into the sea to allow themselves to be surprised and overwhelmed by what awaits lies beneath the surface, I argue, that International Relations stands to gain immensely, by a similar diving into stories, enabling reimaginings of the relationship between emotional humans and their worlds, from one that focuses on predictable outcomes to one that privileges transformative encounters. Humans, and their stories, in different forms that they might exist underneath the surface of our inquiry, waiting for pearl divers 'who one day will come down to them and bring

194. At this point in the article, I use these terms in a hyphenated manner, as a deliberate attempt to communicate their relatedness and entanglement; and as a condensed template of the kind of humans this research has made accessible to me.

195. Dauphinee, *Politics of Exile*, x.

196. Lauren Wilcox, 'Making Bodies Matter in IR,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 1 (2014): 359-64.

197. Edkins, 'Novel Writing,' 282.

198. Doty, 'Maladies of Our Souls,' 382.

199. Bleiker, *Aesthetics*, 83.

200. Hannah Arendt ("Introduction" 1970) in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (Fontana: Collins, 1973), 50-51.

them up into the world of the living'²⁰¹, require from us, an intentional immersion into emotional waters, to see and hear them. If the goal is to reach for, and be transformed by the stories that remain buried within, then the question that I set out in the title, is one I wish to keep asking, and never completely answer: in hopes that there will always be magical humans and their stories, waiting to be brought to the surface as 'thought fragments', as 'rich and strange'²⁰² pearls that contain seas bigger than ones they were concealed within.

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201. Ibid.

202. Ibid.