

Storying the International: Towards a more generous International Relations

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The past decade has seen a welcome expansion of stories in International Relations. Thinkers of global politics have dedicated serious effort towards investigating the methodological and epistemological advantages of turning towards stories and storytelling, arguing that the leap towards stories holds the key for developing theories in international relations that listen and respond rather than observe and explain. By highlighting how stories collapse the already precarious demarcation between the self and other, such scholarship shows us how stories can expand the landscape of the discipline with their indelibly inclusionary texture. Explicating the multiplicity of motivations and 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, in a way that the focus shift from 'solving problems' to 'paying attention': to the affects that stories produce in their readers. This relationality that develops between the writing and the reader, in turn, enables emotional empathetic responses in the reader towards the written.

The transformative value of paying attention to stories, about/in the international, is first and foremost the generosity they accord to us, by making room for a "intimacy with doubt" in a discipline that has historically been preoccupied with eradicating it (Inayatullah 2001). Following Jenny Edkins' question- "What does the story do that other forms of writing cannot?", this roundtable is interested in tracing the degree of empathetic imagination we can hope to incorporate into our writing about the world, once we begin to take stories seriously. By exploring sites, modes and methods which allow us to reach for alternative ways of reading, writing and feeling the political, this panel hopes to draw attention to the emancipatory power of stories for breaching cherished edifices of what counts as knowledge in the discipline of IR.

Bringing together academics, activists and other creatives, this roundtable aims to engage with-

- Different genres/modes of storytelling- fiction, epic, poetry, others- as ways of imagining the international.
- Stories as feminist, decolonial and aesthetic routes to alternative forms of knowledge.
- Methodological insights from working with stories in the international.
- Stories as conceptual and ethical (re)visions in the discipline.
- The relationship between stories as sources of knowledge in IR.
- Stories as a sustained challenge to linear ways of thinking about space, time and identity in international politics.

Track Classification: BISA