

Ethics in research: what's new?

Interdisciplinary study day

Friday 21 October, Buchanan Building, Room 216

25 years after Linda Martín Alcoff published her essay on 'The Problem of Speaking for Others', ethical questions concerning the position of the writer, the researcher, or the teacher continue to arise. Who has the right to bear witness to others' trauma? To fictionalise suffering? To carry out research into other people's histories? Should students be asked to confront troubling or difficult material, and if so, in what circumstances? And what do these debates have to do with literary studies, which have traditionally been characterised by a certain level of aesthetic distance or abstraction: how do literary scholars position themselves when literature and 'real life' collide? With a view to bringing together expertise from the Institute and beyond, and to developing the lines of enquiry for a future interdisciplinary conference, this study day aims to draw on methodologies from literary studies and from other disciplines more used to engaging with real-world subjects to explore what's new in debates surrounding both the study of ethical questions, and the ethical positions of individual researchers.

Programme

9:30-10:30: Workshop: discussion of prepared reading available via the links below. What are current ethical issues affecting researchers, teachers and students in the arts and humanities? Have things changed, and if so, how? The short texts to be discussed deal with different aspects of academic life, considering the broad topic of 'ethics' from four distinct, yet overlapping, perspectives: a theoretical approach, a writer's perspective, our position as teachers, and the impact agenda.

Linda Martín Alcoff, 'The Problem of Speaking for Others'
<http://www.alcoff.com/content/speaothers.html>

Marie Darrieusecq, 'Fiction in the First Person, or Immoral Writing', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 50.3 (2010), pp. 70-82 <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/395675/pdf>

Perspectives on the recent debate surrounding 'trigger warnings' in university teaching: <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/1973926/Trigger%20Warnings.docx>

Definition of 'Impact' for the REF:
<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/1973926/Definition%20of%20impact%20for%20the%20REF.docx>

10:30-11:00: Tea & coffee

11:00-12:30: Panel 1: 'Narratives of genocide and trauma'

Nicki Hitchcott (Modern Languages)

'Analysing Memories of Genocide in Rwanda: Theoretical and Ethical Considerations'

Katie Stone (German, UI Maynooth)

'Reconstructing the Cultural Memory of Wartime Rape: The Ethical Challenges and Imperatives of Reading (for) Trauma'

Colette Lawson (Modern Languages)

'Ethics, Politics, Memory: The Problem of Germans as Victims'

12:30-1:30: Lunch

1:30-3:00: Panel 2: 'The lives of others: the ethics of contemporary life-writing'

Katie Jones (French)

'Speech and silencing: the problems of biographical fiction and testimony in narratives of suicide and bereavement'

Elise Hugueny-Léger (French)

'Dealing with authorial control in recent French autobiographical writing'

Paloma Gay y Blasco (Social Anthropology)

'Ideals, doubts and compromises: attempting a reciprocal life story'

3:00-3:30: Tea, coffee & cake

3:30-5:00: Round-table discussion: what does 'ethics' mean for/in contemporary research?

An interdisciplinary discussion aiming to open up the definition of 'ethics' and find common ground across/between disciplines, moving beyond the purely institutional to consider what researchers in different contexts consider 'ethical' research practice to entail. How do the individual ethics of the researcher interact with the study of 'ethics' as part of the research material? How do different disciplines approach the relationships between academic study and its real-world subjects/effects? Panellists include:

Derek Duncan (Modern Languages)

Cat Hobaiter (Psychology)

Anindya Raychaudhuri (English)

Adam Reed (Social Anthropology)