

The ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, Europe 1100 - 1800 presents:

THE LITERARY BIOGRAPHY OF EMOTION: THE PASSION OF AUTHORIAL POSSESSION



Samuel Collins. Ink drawing from the collection *The Journey of Dr. Johnson and James Boswell to Scotland* (c. 1785). © Graphic Arts Collection, Princeton University

Date: August 16 – 17, 2013

Location: Riverview Room, Emmanuel College
(on the UQ campus), Sir William
Macgregor Drive, St Lucia, Q 4067

PRESENTER: DR GORDON TURNBULL

General Editor, Yale Editions of the Private
Papers of James Boswell

This advanced research seminar surveys representative moments in the historical trajectory of English literary biography, the specialized subset of life-writing in which writers seek to author the lives of other writers. Pivoting on the developments pioneered by James Boswell (1740-1795), who converted his autobiographical diaries (so much the record of a 'hypochondriack', or depressive) into the monumental and still-controversial *Life of Johnson* (1791) that produced literature's best-known permanent possessive ('Boswell's Johnson'), the seminar will look back to earlier practitioners (Izaak Walton, John Aubrey), and Johnson himself in his 'Prefaces, Biographical and Critical' (*Lives of the Poets*), forward to such nineteenth- and twentieth-century figures as Elizabeth Gaskell (*The Life of Charlotte Brontë*) and Richard Ellmann (*James Joyce*), and to contemporary developments in electronic and online forms of dispersal of the (auto)biographical subject as the outcomes of earlier versions of

celebrity culture and the consequent imitative longing for personal fame. Attention will be given to the emergence of biographical accounting in the propagandistic passions of the English Civil War, and to their after-echo in Johnson's biographies of poets on emotionally opposite sides of it (Cowley and Milton,) to Boswell's encounters with Adam Smith's Scottish Enlightenment theories of 'sympathy' in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), and to the emotional investments attached to the emergence of the modern professionalised literary biographer.

This seminar is open to Australian postgraduate students, and will be of particular interest to those working in the fields of English Literature, History, Intellectual History, Life-Writing, and Eighteenth-Century Studies. Early career researchers are also welcome to apply for a place in the seminar. Some preliminary reading will be required; see over for details.

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GORDON TURNBULL has been, since 1997, General Editor of the Yale Boswell Editions. He oversees a global editorial team bringing to publication selections of the vast archive of James Boswell's private papers, most of which had been suppressed by Boswell's descendants and were rediscovered only in the twentieth century. Under his direction, seven volumes in the Yale Research Series of Boswell's papers have appeared, including most recently the third of the projected four volumes of the genetic transcription of the heavily revised manuscripts of Boswell's biographical masterwork, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), edited by Thomas F. Bonnell. Gordon Turnbull is an honours graduate of the Australian National University, and came to Yale for doctoral study as a Fulbright Postgraduate Scholar after teaching in the English Department of the University of Newcastle, NSW. He has taught in the Yale English Department and at Smith College, is the author of numerous scholarly and critical essays on Boswell, Johnson, and their circle, has taught and lectured widely on these authors, and is a featured speaker at the annual Boswell Book Festival at Boswell's family estate in Auchinleck, Scotland. His edition of Boswell's *London Journal 1762-1763*, the first re-editing of this famous diary since Frederick A. Pottle's almost iconic worldwide bestseller of 1950, appeared in 2010 from Penguin Classics.

Places for this advanced research seminar are strictly limited. To apply, please email the following documents to Penny Boys, p.boys@uq.edu.au:

- An academic curriculum vitae, maximum two pages.
- A one-page cover letter describing your research interests and explaining how the seminar will benefit your research.
- A brief academic reference (from a supervisor or senior colleague).

Applications close 24 May 2013

Limited financial support is available for students and researchers travelling from the greater Queensland area and interstate, and will be allocated on a competitive basis. If you wish to be considered for such support, please make a note of this in your cover letter.

SEMINAR READINGS (PRELIMINARY):

- James Boswell, *London Journal 1762-1763* (Penguin edition, 2010)
- James Boswell, *Life of Samuel Johnson LL.D.* (selections)
- Samuel Johnson, 'Life of Cowley', 'Life of Milton' (*in Lives of the Poets*); *Rambler* Essay 60; *Idler* Essay 84.
- Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (selections)
- Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (selections)