

National Centre of Biography, ANU

Impro-Lives A Character Building Workshop!

Date: Thursday 26th June

Venue: Seminar Room A, Coombs Building

Time: 12 midday

This is a Biography Workshop aimed at exploring the ways in which we come to both construct and deconstruct ideas of character in life writing.

The workshop will be led by **Sophie Scott-Brown**, who is soon to finish her doctoral thesis on British historian Raphael Samuel.

How do we come to get a sense of someone? How do we look for clues that tell us something about a person and their character traits? How do we fit these against the wider story that we are attempting to tell: what, for example, are the implications for the idea of character in a biographical history as opposed to a historical biography?

In order to gain alternative perspectives on these questions, we will be joined by Canberra based actress **Emma Strand** who will talk about the way an actor goes through the process of physicalizing character from their first encounter on the page or in discussion with a director, script writer, or actor's company to the ways in which they attempt to embody this character through movement, image and speech.



Emma Strand

A particular strand of this inquiry will look at how we go about attempting to understand people very different from ourselves who have different notions of 'self' and 'personality'. This component will be guided by **Dr Malcolm Allbrook**. This workshop will also discuss some of the politics involved in character construction guided by a brief discussion by **Dr Karen Fox**. This issues addressed here will include how we as biographers/historians engage with subjects who have a profound sense of self narrative/public persona and the nature of the challenges presented to the biographer/historian in the research process. It will also reflect upon the ways in which we can attempt to identify the fractures and frissons within the public persona, particularly when the access to personal material is so tightly controlled. This Workshop is intended to be participatory. If you are currently working on life writing research please bring along material; images, accounts etc. that you are using/have used in developing your sense of your subject's personality. This is an opportunity to share your research, your questions, ideas and insights.

Look forward to seeing you there!

Inquiries

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