

[Personal Writing and Textual Practices in the British Empire, C19th-20th](#)

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Type:

Conference

Date:

February 17, 2023

Location:

United Kingdom

Subject Fields:

Biography, Colonial and Post-Colonial History / Studies, Communication, Women's & Gender History / Studies, World History / Studies

Personal Writing and Textual Practices in the British Empire, C19th-20th

One-day conference, University of Leicester

Generously supported by the Leicester Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS)

CFP

*In person, 14 April 2023,
10am-5pm GMT*

Social drinks to follow

Co-convenors:

Dr Ipshita Nath (Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Saskatchewan)

Ellen Smith (AHRC Midlands4Cities PhD Researcher, School of History, Politics & International Relations)

We invite submissions of abstracts for individual papers (20 minutes) or whole panels (x3 individual 20-minute papers) for the LIAS-funded one-day conference on Personal Writing and Textual Practices in the British Empire, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The conference will explore the experiences of individuals as constructed and represented through various forms of writing, specifically personal in nature. We are interested in generating new insights and methodologies to study epistolary writing and textual cultures of the empire. The scope is decidedly broad to allow for the widest possible engagement with our key enquiry, which will examine the relationship between personal writing and the ways British imperialism was conceived and has since been remembered to

the present day.

We are interested in proposals that address genres in personal writings, including private correspondence, journals, memoirs, diaries, scrapbooks, ethnographical accounts, etc. We aim to create discussions around aspects of the colonial and postcolonial experience that these forms recorded, such as relationships, domestic subjectivities, travel, colonial service or labour, warfare, everyday life, political action, personal reflection and expressions of identity.

Proposals for papers or panels that are interdisciplinary in scope are particularly encouraged. We envisage productive links to be made with methodological approaches to writing from disciplines and fields such as history, literary studies, art history, sociology and psychology, and media and communication studies, for instance.

Proposals might wish to address the following topics, but not limited to:

- Letter writing and communication in colonial and global contexts; formal or official communication networks.
- Diary writing, journal reporting and documenting the 'Self'.
- Subaltern life writing and modes of resistance.
- Life writing, memoirs and remembrance or memory studies of empire.
- Writing in familial, personal and domestic spheres.
- Travel writing, migration, emigration, and writing on the move.
- The 'female gaze' on the empire.
- Adventure and exploration tales.
- Missionary writing.
- Processes, techniques and genres of writing; the material aspects and culture of writing.
- Artistic representations of writing, or writing supplemented with visual and textual practices, such as interactions of text and photographs/sketching/art/watercolours.
- Erasure and silencing; editing and destruction.
- Broader archival practices and the material traces or remnants of writing and text.
- Private/personal writing as modes of historiography.
- Problems of authenticity e.g., biases, prejudices, and ideological motivations.
- Ephemera and textual assemblages e.g., scrapbooks and albums.
- Literature and fictional responses to empire in personal contexts.
- Writing and everyday life.

Instructions: For individual papers, please send 250-word abstracts, paper titles, and short biographies to ecss3@leicester.ac.uk (primary conference contact). For panels, please include abstracts and bios for each speaker, as well as a title/short summary of the panel theme and purpose.

We ask that proposals and all elements of these are sent in a single word or pdf file. PowerPoint presentations and visual aids are encouraged and the venue will facilitate this.

Deadline for proposals: 17 February 2023. All submissions will receive confirmation of entry and decisions will be communicated no later than 22 February 2023.

Additional details: the conference is free to attend but registration will be essential as spaces are limited. Lunch and tea and coffee will be provided throughout the day. Registration links and updates will be announced via [@LeicsIAS](#) and the LIAS blog: <https://www.leicias.le.ac.uk/>

**We plan to publish the findings from the conference as an edited collection and speakers will be invited to submit their papers for inclusion in the volume by the end of May.*

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