

## **Meeting 8 Feb 1 2017: Empathy at work, Newton Park as part of the BSU 2017-2018 Professorial Lecture series**

**(No formal report as this was a public event attended by around 75 people, just the announcement which follows here.)**

**How does empathy help us to write and to work?** A panel discussion by members of the CoLA cross-disciplinary 'Empathy and Writing' group, chaired by Professor Maggie Gee

In October 2013 a seminal paper in *Science* by David Comer Kidd and Emanuele Castano reported experiments showing that reading fiction increased 'Theory of Mind' – the ability to understand the world from another person's different point of view, which we might also call empathy. The German origin word 'einfühlung', translated as 'feeling into', sounds very like what happens when a novelist, playwright or screenwriter invents a character, or when a medical doctor hears, and tries to make sense of, a patient's story. How do different professions use empathy? How does it help, and are there limits to its usefulness? Professor Bambo Soyinka talks about empathy in scriptwriting and interactive narrative, neuroscientist Dr Alison Lee talks about empathy and the brain, novelist Emma Geen talks about the origins of empathy in aesthetic theory, and neurologist and writer Dr Omar Al Khayatt talks about the uses and limitations of empathy in medicine.