

### **1.37 The Ethics and Politics of Reading / Researching English Literature**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

With the interest generated in literary and critical theory over the last few decades, the politics of reading literature have been extensively theorized from many perspectives and disciplines. However, not much attention has been paid to the ethics of reading / researching literature in spite the recent global turn to methodology. The objectives of this paper are: to examine the politics of the act of reading / researching English literature within the Sri Lankan context; to consider the implications of the reader's standpoint in reading / researching; and to discuss the ethics relating to the practice of researching literature. Consequently, the paper will provide an overview of the ethical/political concerns of reading / researching literature that would be of critical importance especially for researchers adhering to the practice of reflexivity.

My research methods for this paper are literature surveying, interviews with selected Sri Lankan researchers, and textual analysis of selected critical work. References will also be made to the theoretical concerns of researching literature (such as the praxis of reflexivity and feminist research methodology). The theoretical understanding of postcolonial theory and poststructuralism will direct my reading / research process and conclusions.

The paper concludes that while some political and ethical concerns can only be confined to clarification and expression, others require adherence to guidelines and the adjustment of the research activity or process. On the whole, for researching, my work implies that politics and ethics are symbiotic of one another and thus should comprise a key concern in researching / reading methodologies of English literature.