

Hamlet and Emotions: Then and Now

To be, or not to be

DATE: 10–11 April 2017

VENUE: St Catherine's College,
The University of Western Australia

BOOKINGS: <http://ow.ly/YeIL30a6asv>

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ORGANISERS: Paul Megna, Bob White

Ian McEwan's recent novel *Nutshell* (2016), in which Hamlet is an unborn foetus, is only the latest in a line of appropriations of Shakespeare's plays stretching back to 1600. *Hamlet* itself stretches beyond the seventeenth century, drawing on sources that date back to twelfth-century Denmark, and referring within itself to relics of older drama that Shakespeare may have seen as a boy in Stratford. *Hamlet* looks both backwards and forwards in time. The play also covers a remarkable range of emotional states, including anger, love, hatred, grief, melancholy and despair. Indeed, *Hamlet* stages a plethora of emotional practices: a funeral and a marriage, a vindictive ghost in purgatory, a young woman whose mental equilibrium has been dislodged by the murder of her father by her own erstwhile lover, an inscrutable monarch under suspicion of murder, a couple of mordantly cheerful gravediggers, and a young prince back from university and grieving for his deceased father. This conference explores new readings of the play, focusing on many aspects of its emotional life in the widest sense. Interspersed between four keynote addresses are panels addressing *Hamlet's* sources and influences; the social milieu in which the play was composed and originally performed; cinematic and artistic adaptations of *Hamlet*; and the many spinoffs it has inspired, up to and including McEwan's *Nutshell*. In addition to scholarly presentations on the emotional dynamics of *Hamlet*, its sources and its legacy, the event will feature two panels in which writers, directors and performers will discuss the role of emotion in their various experiences of working with *Hamlet*.

Keynote Addresses:

- **Kevin Curren** (University of Lausanne) 'Hamlet's Unreasonable Judgements'
- **Richard Meek** (University of Hull) "'For by the image of my cause, I see / The portraiture of his': *Hamlet* and the Imitation of Emotion'
- **Kathryn Prince** (University of Ottawa), 'Memory, Action, and Emotion in *Hamlet*'
- **Naya Tsentourou** (University of Exeter), 'Hamlet's "Spendthrift Sigh": Wasting Breath on the Renaissance Stage'