

Early Career International Research Fellowship 2014-2015
Fiona Ritchie



As part of its international research collaboration, the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions funds outstanding international scholars in the field to visit one or more of the Australian nodes for a period of between four weeks and two months, to work with members of the Centre on a research program of their choice. Visitors are invited to present their work in lectures or symposia, where they will receive feedback from and engage in discussion with members of the Centre, promoting collaborative research.

Fiona Ritchie, from McGill University in Montreal, was awarded an Early Career International Research Fellowship in October 2014, and spent eight weeks working with Centre, based primarily at The University of Western Australia.

Fiona is Associate Professor of Drama and Theatre in the Department of English at McGill University. Her recent monograph *Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press) examines the part played by women in eighteenth-century bardolatry, investigating the ways in which actresses, critics and playgoers responded to and shaped Shakespeare. She has also edited, with Peter Sabor, a collection of essays entitled *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (also published by Cambridge University Press). Her next project, funded by a five-year grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, is a study of women and regional theatre in the long eighteenth century, which will investigate the working lives of actresses outside London, as well as women performing off-stage labour (for example as theatre managers).

Fiona describes her experience of being an Early Career International Research Fellow at the Centre, below.

My fellowship at the UWA node of the Centre for the History of Emotions was an immensely productive and enriching experience. I have developed working relationships with several researchers who I might not otherwise have met and laid the groundwork for some exciting projects. What follows is a description of some of the events I was involved in and the impact they've had on my research. I will also outline how the work undertaken during my fellowship might develop into further collaborations.

I enjoyed giving both an informal presentation about my research (on 28 October) and a formal lecture (on 19 November) at UWA. The former served as a useful opportunity for people in the Centre to get to know me and I was also able to find out a little bit about other people's research interests. My public lecture ("Accompanied in Our Tears: Women, Shakespeare and Sentiment in the Eighteenth-Century Theatre") was based on material that I have been working on for a while but it was an important experience for me to be able to present it at the CHE as the feedback and questions I received naturally focused on emotion. The Q&A therefore helped me to refine my ideas about the affective potential of the eighteenth-century stage.

On 14 November I took to the stage in the New Fortune lecture performance given by Aarne Neeme. I am no actor but testing out Aarne's ideas about Shakespearean theatre in practice gave me a unique perspective on the potential of the early modern stage that I will carry forward in my teaching and research.

On 20 November, Penelope Woods and I convened a reading group on emotional contagion. This is something that we have both been thinking about in the context of our work on theatre audiences but we expanded our horizons to consider how this mechanism might work in literature as well. The group was small but attended by people from within and without CHE and the discussion was animated and incisive. I found this session extremely helpful in beginning to unpack the terminology around the circulation of emotion through and around art.

At the start of December I travelled to Melbourne where I gave a paper in a seminar organised by Gillian Russell entitled "Global Theatricalities/Global Shakespeares" alongside Gillian, David McInnis, and Kate Flaherty. I found this a really great opportunity to present some work in progress that I had developed since my arrival at the CHE and to get feedback from other scholars. It was a particular pleasure for me to be able to work with Gillian Russell, whose scholarship has been really important to me. When I initially thought about coming to Australia, she was one of the people that I was most keen to work with, and I was glad to have the opportunity of collaborating with someone not directly affiliated with the Centre. Whilst in Melbourne I also attended part of the CHE's workshop for prospective graduate students. I found it interesting to hear the Centre describe itself and its work and enjoyed meeting some of the other postdocs.

From Melbourne I travelled to Sydney where Penelope Woods and I continued our work on emotional contagion in a half-day workshop organised with Juanita Ruys. This brought together researchers working on various periods, locations and genres to present a text, object or image that demonstrated the transfer or circulation of emotion. This event was one of the highlights of my time at CHE. I felt that the discussion was very rich and really moved us closer to being able to articulate more clearly how emotion circulates in art, literature and music throughout history. The fact that we ran over the allocated time and that people continued to discuss the material in depth over lunch I think speaks to the event's success. This was largely due to Penelope's brilliant idea for the format of the

workshop, which provided concrete examples for us to discuss without using the usual conference paper format.

In Sydney I also repeated my public lecture on women, Shakespeare and sentiment in the eighteenth-century theatre as a pre-conference event at the David Nichol Smith seminar at the invitation of the “Putting Periodisation to Use” research group. I also attended the DNS conference, which provided an excellent forum for me to connect with Australian academics (including Huw Griffiths and Nicola Parsons at the University of Sydney).

In addition to these events, I also attended several talks, seminars and symposia organised by CHE during my time in Australia, including the talks given by Piroska Nagy in October, the “Little Eyases” symposium on boy actors and Peter Reynolds’s production of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the Memento Mori symposium, and Penelope Woods’s related talk in November and Pat Simons’s lecture at Melbourne in December. I benefited greatly from the ideas expressed at these events and the lively discussion that they provoked. I’m also glad to have met Piroska (who I didn’t know, despite the fact that we live in the same city!), with whom I hope to collaborate when we both return to Montreal.

Back at UWA in late December and early January I consolidated some of the links I had made with members of CHE and began working on some longer-term projects. Penelope Woods and I started to explore the possibility of editing a journal special issue on emotional contagion incorporating some of the material from the Sydney event. The ideas developed here and in the reading group held at UWA will inform our co-authored introduction which would set out a theoretical approach to emotional contagion in historical research.

Bob White and I continued our discussions about emotion and Shakespeare in the Romantic period. Bob has invited me to co-author the chapter he is writing for a volume on Shakespeare and quotation. We will take emotion as our focus and explore the use of quotation in both Romantic poetry and theatrical criticism in the period. This is scheduled for submission in November 2015.

Katrina O’Loughlin and I began researching the overlap of the popularity of theatre and spas in eighteenth-century regional Britain. Her expertise on travel writing in the period will mesh well with my new project on performance outside London in the eighteenth century. This collaboration is in its early stages but I hope it will prove productive and will lead to the publication of a co-authored article. We are also exploring the possibility of Katrina visiting the Burney Centre at McGill University in order to continue our work together.

I returned briefly to Australia at the start of February and during my time in Brisbane (on a family visit) I dropped in on the CHE node at the University of Queensland to meet with Peter Holbrook and Brandon Chua. Brandon and I had a productive discussion about Restoration she-tragedy. I hope to return to UQ at some point in the future.

Since leaving Perth in January I have continued to develop these collaborations begun at the CHE. Additionally, I am currently submitting an ARC Discovery Project grant with Kate Flaherty (ANU) and Gillian Russell (Melbourne) on Shakespeare and civic disorder in nineteenth-century Britain, Ireland and Australia. This project arose from work presented at the symposium organised by Gillian in Melbourne in December. Armed with the feedback from the paper I presented in that session (on an account book from the Bristol theatre in the 1740s, which touched on the affective potential of this document), I have also begun to write an article based on that material which I hope to submit in the next few months.

I hope that my enthusiasm for the CHE and the Early Career International Research Fellowship scheme can be seen from my request to stay on for an extra month in January. I am very grateful to the CIs for granting this request as it allowed me the time to develop collaborative work based on the events that took place during my visit. UWA proved to be a very productive space for my research and I had all the facilities I needed (office space, library access, etc). I benefited enormously from formal collaboration and informal conversation with Bob White, Penelope Woods, Katrina O'Loughlin, Andrew Lynch, Susan Broomhall, Yasmin Haskell, Brid Phillips, Ciara Rawnsley, Brett Hirsch and others. I also want to thank sincerely the Centre's staff for making my visit run so smoothly: Pam Bond, Katrina Tap and Tanya Tuffrey all went out of their way to help me and to make me feel welcome. I already miss Club Coffee Tuesdays and Fridays! On a personal note, it also meant a lot to me to have my family so warmly welcomed to Perth as well. I would not have been able to come if they had not been so well accommodated.

In addition to the specific collaborations I've mentioned, the big take away from the fellowship for me has been the opportunity to nuance my thinking about the role of emotions in history by working with scholars who are at the cutting edge of research on this issue. Furthermore, it has also been really inspiring to see a large-scale collaborative research project in action and to see that scholarship across disciplines, geographical locations, historical time periods and contemporary time zones can work so well.