

**Early Career International Research Fellowship 2015**

**Jennifer Wawrzinek**

**'Reading the Face-to-Face: Romantic Encounters with Postmodernism'**



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.

Jennifer Wawrzinek was awarded an Early Career International Research Fellowship in 2015, and travelled to Australia to work with the Centre for a period of two months. Jennifer is a Junior Professor in British Romanticism at the English Institute, Freie Universität Berlin, and holds a PhD from The University of Melbourne. Her research focuses primarily on questions of identity, power and ideology, ethics and politics in Romantic and postmodern literature. She is the author of *Ambiguous Subjects: Dissolution and Metamorphosis in the Postmodern Sublime* (Rodopi, 2008) and co-editor of the essay collections *Negotiating Afropolitanism* (Rodopi, 2011), which was awarded the ABS 2013 Bronze Book Award, and *Border-Crossings: Narrative and Demarcation in Postcolonial Literatures* (Winter Verlag, 2012). In 2012 she was a British Academy Visiting Fellow at the University of London. Jennifer has recently completed a monograph titled *Beyond Identity: Decreation and British Romanticism*.

Jennifer comments, below, on her time as an Early Career Research Fellow with CHE.

I visited the ARC Centre for the History of Emotions (The University of Melbourne node) as an Early Career International Research Fellow during May and June 2015. This was an enormously productive and highly inspirational visit, during which I not only had the

opportunity to present my work to scholars within the Centre, as well as within the School of Culture and Communication at The University of Melbourne, but also to those at other universities in Australia.

During the first month of my visit I presented the following research papers at departmental seminars in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane:

- 'Telling Stories About Faces: Posthuman Encounters in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journal* and Blake's *An Island in the Moon*', English and Theatre Studies Research Seminar Series, The University of Melbourne, 6 May 2015.
- 'Dorothy Wordsworth's Glittering Sheep: *The Grasmere Journal*', Writing and Society Research Seminar Series, Western Sydney University, 8 May 2015.
- 'Wounding the Tissue of the Text in Keats's *Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*', Early Modern Literature Forum, The University of Queensland, 29 May 2015.

In addition, I delivered one of the opening keynote addresses to the 'Reading the Face: Image, Text, and Emotion' international conference, organised by Stephanie Trigg and held at The University of Melbourne, 2–4 June 2015. The title of my address was 'Facing the Eighteenth-Century Animal: From Swift's Yahoos to Shelley's *Frankenstein*'.

These presentations were enormously beneficial because they allowed me to present work from my recently finished monograph on Romanticism and decreation (the presentations in Sydney and Brisbane) and from a new project on the posthuman (Melbourne). This project examines the role of the emotions and affect as modes of communication that variously disrupt and/or refigure the distinctions between human and nonhuman in literature of the long eighteenth century and beyond. Questions and feedback from audience members on all of these occasions has helped me to either rethink possible directions for the development of the posthuman project, or to consider revisions to the decreation monograph. Most significantly, the chance to present to scholars working in the early modern period gave me a fresh perspective on my work, as these scholars either addressed aspects of my work or drew alliances with their own work in different ways than the scholars of later periods to whom I usually present. This was similarly the case with the many discussions enabled during my stay at CHE in Melbourne, because I had the chance to speak with a range of scholars working not only on different periods but in other disciplines (the visual arts and performance, for example). These discussions encouraged me to think about issues such as spatiality and performativity and to consider an interdisciplinary approach to the development of my work on affect, emotions and performativity.

Finally, my residency at CHE in Melbourne was enormously useful in developing future research collaborations and networks. In June 2016, Lisa O'Connell (The University of Queensland) and I will host an international two-day symposium at the Freie Universität Berlin, on the theme 'The Colonial Reinvention of Anglo-European Literature in the Long Eighteenth Century'. This symposium has the specific intention of addressing the intersections of colonial expansion and sympathetic engagement, with a view to ongoing collaboration between the scholars involved in the symposium and particularly those from The University of Queensland and the Freie Universität Berlin. Other contacts made during my residency at CHE in Melbourne will hopefully also result in collaborations and networks. For example, in July 2016, Thomas Bristow will present a paper at my research colloquium in

Berlin. I will also meet with James Simpson, with whom I spoke during the 'Reading the Face' conference, and Andrew James Johnston (FU Berlin) in 2016. This meeting is intended to discuss possible collaboration between Harvard University and the FU Berlin, and possibly also CHE in Australia.

Last, but not least, my CHE residency has also been beneficial to students at the FU Berlin. One of the direct results of my time spent in the Centre, and the work I was doing there, was the development of an MA module on affect theory, the emotions and the posthuman in literature and film from the eighteenth century to the present day. This module comprises two interlinked courses: a primary module titled 'Transhuman Modernities' and an accompanying tutorial, 'Affect Theory'. I taught this module during the Winter Semester of 2015/2016 and several of the students have since developed ideas from the course into MA research theses. Another course developed from work conducted during my stay at CHE, 'History, Empire and the London *Flâneur*', explores affective sensibilities in the early nineteenth century. This course will be taught in the final year of the BA program at FU Berlin in 2016. The research that forms the basis of this course, on which I was working whilst in Melbourne, was also presented as a research paper at the Nordic Association of Romanticism Studies conference in Copenhagen in December 2015. The title of this paper was 'Charles Lamb and Thomas de Quincey in the Balzacian Shop of History', and I am currently preparing a longer version for publication. I presented another paper drawn from work completed whilst at CHE to the 'Narratives of Romanticism' conference of the German Society for English Romanticism (GER) in Wuppertal 2015. This paper was titled 'Blake Re-Reading Lavater: The (Post)human Divine of *An Island in the Moon*'.