

**Distinguished International Visiting Fellowship 2015**

**Jennifer Radden**

**'Early Modern Ideas About Melancholy, Imagination and its Disorders, and Affect Regulation'**



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 Radden is Professor emerita at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She was awarded a Distinguished International Visiting Fellowship in 2015 and spent two months working with the Centre in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne.

Jennifer received degrees in philosophy and psychology from The University of Melbourne and holds a doctorate from the University of Oxford. She has published extensively on mental health concepts, the history of medicine, and ethical and policy aspects of psychiatric theory and practice. Her books include: *Madness and Reason* (Allen and Unwin, 1986); *Divided Minds and Successive Selves: Ethical Issues in Disorders of Identity and Personality* (MIT Press, 1996); *Moody Minds Distempered: Essays on Melancholy and Depression* (Oxford University Press, 2009); *The Virtuous Psychiatrist: Character Ethics in Psychiatric Practice*, co-authored with Dr John Sadler (Oxford University Press, 2010); and *On Delusion* (Routledge, 2011); as well as two edited collections, *The Nature of Melancholy* (Oxford University Press, 2000) and *The*

***Philosophy of Psychiatry: A Companion* (Oxford University Press, 2004). Her current book project, under contract with Oxford University Press, is *Melancholy Habits: Burton's Anatomy for the Mind Sciences*.**

**When asked to comment on her experience working the Centre, Jennifer observed that she had found 'a remarkably vital intellectual community of high-powered and distinguished academics, attracting world-famous names to conferences and talks, and interconnecting across the disciplines (and miles) with vigor and congeniality'. Jennifer reflects on the benefits and highlights of her time with CHE below.**

I took up my post at the UWA campus in early October 2015, amid flowering jacarandas and preening, screeching peacocks, and stayed for five weeks. My time in Australia had begun in Sydney, where I met with Dr Juanita Ruys from the Sydney node of CHE, and at the end of November I moved on to Melbourne, where I read a paper about my current project on Burton's *Anatomy*. I also discussed my work with Dr Stephanie Trigg and her team, as well as lunching with Professor Han Baltussen of The University of Adelaide (there for a conference) to discuss his research on Roman consolatory writing. In the intervening time, I participated in the intellectual life of the Centre at UWA: attending lectures offered by other CHE faculty, graduate students and visitors, as well as presenting a work-in-progress talk, a public lecture and a keynote talk at Professor Bob White's 'Play of Emotions' collaboratory. Throughout my stay I was afforded unflinching assistance by the Centre's administrators, as well as by other scholars. Katrina Tap and Pam Bond, particularly, made my time not only productive but entirely pleasurable.

My involvement in the history of the emotions stemmed from a longstanding research interest in early modern ideas about melancholy, imagination and its disorders, and affect regulation. The current project (coming out as several chapters and journal articles and a monograph with Oxford University Press in November 2016) is about psychological medicine and mind science, and is based on a selective reading of Burton's 1621 *Anatomy of Melancholy*. My contention is that Burton's particular form of embodied interactionism, the central role he accords the imagination in its relation to emotion, delusion and expectation, and his conception of melancholy as a habituated state, all have important bearing on present-day cognitive psychology and psychiatry, and have been unwarrantedly neglected by philosophy and psychology. To give an example: applied to today's depression his emphasis on a holistic, behavioral and cognitive form of preventive self-help – acquiring healthy habits before the onset of severe disorder – has implications for treatment models in clinical psychiatry and public health. Moreover, in the presuppositions underlying these ideas, Burton avoids 'common cause' etiological models and 'magic bullet' single-remedy assumptions, in ways that are echoed in today's new network-based accounts of depression.

As the last great summation and flowering of previous thought about disordered moods, Burton's work is of considerable significance to the history of the emotions in Europe between 1100 and 1800. By the early seventeenth century, older lore and assumptions about health and illness were becoming outmoded. Burton offers a compendium of classical, medieval and renaissance humanist ideas about the affective states associated with melancholy that stands as the magisterial last representative of that long tradition.

I am a philosopher, not an historian, and am reliant on historians to help me understand the broader context of the ideas about which I'm writing. And for that, CHE in Perth, and also in Sydney and Melbourne, offered unmatched resources. Here was a remarkably vital intellectual community of high-powered and distinguished academics, attracting world-famous names to conferences and talks, and interconnecting across the disciplines (and miles) with vigour and congeniality. In the few weeks that I was there, CHE mounted at least four major conferences and colloquia, at one of which I was able to meet and confer with the leading expert on my topic of Burton's *Anatomy*, Angus Gowland, visiting from the UK for the occasion. Moreover, the group has been participating in first-rate scholarly activities across Australia, the US and Europe, in print and at conferences. I had been unfamiliar with many of their recent publications and absorbed them with interest and admiration. These publications, particularly, are extraordinary. In the few short years of the Centre a remarkable collection of works in top flight publications, both individually authored books and edited collections, have been produced for which CHE is rightly very proud.

On this long sojourn at UWA I was able to engage in informal discussions with many of the researchers and visitors at the Centre whose work intersects with mine, and that provided an endlessly useful and interesting stimulus for my book and the related chapters and articles that have spun off from it. Michael Levine from Philosophy kindly took me under his wing and discussed my project and its philosophical implications; Andrew Lynch and I talked about literary expressions of embodiment theory; Keats's melancholy and early modern holistic medicine were a recurrent topic in conversations with Bob White; Yasmin Haskell, Sergio Starkstein and I pursued fear, depression and its treatments; with Kirk Essary there was an ongoing debate over rhetoric, humour and Erasmus (an important influence on Burton); and with Danijela Kambaskovic there were meetings about love melancholy. I also had a chance to meet with those in adjacent disciplines, such as Professor Sean Hood from the School of Medicine (who proved a student of Freud on melancholia), and Dr Colin MacLeod in Psychology, with whom I spent an afternoon debating the evolutionary psychology of depression. Altogether, my visit proved as intellectually stimulating and informative as it was enjoyable, and I am enormously grateful to CHE for its support.

I want to finish with a longer, interdisciplinary view. Back in the 1970s when I wrote a BPhil thesis on the emotions at Oxford, very few people in Philosophy, and I'll wager, similarly few in other disciplines (with Philippa Maddern being a distinguished exception), thought this was a coherent or worthy research topic. Yet by today, the inspiration for CHE strikes me as having been a brilliant and remarkably timely one. CHE scholars are on the crest of a wave, as I wrote to Dean Sen at the close of my stay in Perth, with their focus and publications leading the way for others in the field. I hope that young historians of philosophy and ideas working on the emotions will take heart and take notice; certainly those in the rest of the humanities are doing so.