

**Distinguished International Visiting Fellowship 2016**

**Alessandro Arcangeli**

**‘Stereotypes of the Dancing Other’**



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.

Alessandro Arcangeli held a Distinguished International Visiting Fellowship in 2016. He spent four weeks working with the Centre at The University of Melbourne and The University of Sydney nodes.

Alessandro is Associate Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Verona and the current Chair of the [International Society for Cultural History](#). He is the author of *Cultural History: A Concise Introduction* (Routledge, 2012) and has published widely on dance and leisure, including *Daide o Salomè? Il Dibattito Europeo Sulla Danza Nella Prima Età Moderna* (FBSR-Viella, 2000) and *Recreation in the Renaissance: Attitudes Towards Leisure and Pastimes in European Culture, 1425–1675* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). In a forthcoming article in the *Rivista Storica Italiana* he discusses how cultural history and the history of emotions have been mutually redefining each other over the past generation, to the extent that they have become inseparable.

Alessandro comments on his time as a Distinguished International Visitor with CHE, below.

I am extremely grateful to CHE for having generously offered me the privilege to visit two of its nodes during this past month. I have found it a completely successful and enriching experience.

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

The title of my project was 'Stereotypes of the Dancing Other'. It mentioned more than one of my research interests that concern the history of the emotions. Consequently, I gave two lectures on quite different topics: 'Early Modern Depictions of Dancing Others' (Melbourne, 10 October 2016) and 'Sixteenth-Century Lists of Passions: In Search of a New Paradigm?' (Sydney, 26 October 2016). These two events were my visit's main engagements, together with participation in some graduate teaching and other research activities organised by both nodes, as well as engaging discussion with various members of CHE.

#### OUTPUTS:

The lectures provided the first, combined result of my on-going research in the field and specific work conducted in preparation for, and during, my visit.

On the front of publications, some forthcoming contributions of mine in this area, although strictly related, were completed well before my visit to the CHE.<sup>1</sup> As for the research monograph *Il Villano, il Selvaggio, la Strega: L'Altro Che Danza [The Peasant, the Savage, and the Witch: The Dancing Other]* (Unicopli, forthcoming), I will aim to complete it in time for publication by the end of 2017. While it is a project that has engaged me on and off for the past few years, the encounter with Charles Zika at a CHE workshop in Rome in March 2015 ('Feelings Matter') and the conversations I had the opportunity to hold with him while in Melbourne have given me fundamental information and ideas that will find their way there and will be properly acknowledged. (Likewise, reciprocally, I hope that Charles' growing interest in dance may have found in my familiarity with the subject some useful comments and suggestions).

#### OUTCOMES, DISCOVERIES:

Of the opportunity to prepare and deliver the two lectures, I would like to mention also the helpful feedback I had the pleasure to obtain from the respective audiences.

During my first week in Melbourne, the Melbourne Festival opened with a Tanderrum, the Kulin Nation's celebration of their native ground, which ended with a dance blurring the distinction between performers and audience. I was able to attend the inauguration ceremony, and it gave me some food for thought. In the course of my research, I have paid repeated attention to cultural encounters in the 'Age of Discovery', and to the instances in which music and dance, according to our witnesses, played a role either as being observed as a native practice, being performed for a variety of reasons by European travellers, or else in some instances being the terrain of a joint cultural practice. All this implied an idea of the meaning of the language of gesture (accompanied by a frequent European assumption that it could be universally decoded without problems). The chance to visit Australia made me more aware of a number of case studies from the history

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<sup>1</sup> These include: 'Storia Culturale e Storia Della Vita Affettiva', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 2016; 'The Savage, the Peasant and the Witch', *European Studies in Drama and Theatre* 8 (2017), [Special Issue: 'Danse et Morale: Une Approche Généalogique', edited by M. Glon and J. I. Vallejos].

of the continent I had encountered and cited in my previous work, including Charles Darwin's comments on the corroboree rite he witnessed in Western Australia.

One of the most remarkable connections was, however, Inga Clendinnen's book *Dancing with Strangers*, which had selected precisely dance as a meaningful practice summarising significant aspects of the first encounter of British settlers with native Australians. Only after my arrival in Melbourne did I learn that Clendinnen had just died in September. A friend in Sydney – Jennifer Nevile from UNSW, who was able to attend my second CHE lecture – has now pointed my attention to subsequent research that has discussed and partly qualified Clendinnen's analysis (Grace Karskens, *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney* [Allen & Unwin, 2009]). Jennifer was also kind enough to help me identify (and visit) the location from which Lieutenant William Bradley, in March 1788, depicted a curious view of Broken Bay (which featured on Clendinnen's book cover).

In preparation for my Sydney lecture, further reading of medical sources has given me the opportunity to familiarise myself further with their treatment of the subject and test my interpretative schemes.

#### LINKS FORMED, ONGOING COLLABORATIONS:

Charles Zika was an ideal host in Melbourne in all respects. Our conversations will hopefully find further occasion at forthcoming events. The International Society for Cultural History – for which I have served as Chair for the past few years – will hold its 2017 annual conference in Umeå, Sweden, a university that is an international partner institution of CHE, with senses and emotions as its theme. Due to a competing engagement, Charles is not yet sure if he will be able to attend; in any case, the thematic and methodological relevance of this meeting will surely encourage ISCH and CHE to keep in touch and work together.

The presence, among others, of Giovanni Tarantino in Melbourne at the time of my arrival allowed some of us to have fruitful exchanges about the future of the research in the field, including after the expiry of funding for CHE. On my part, I have promptly subscribed to the Society for the History of the Emotions.

As well as Umberto Grassi, whom I already knew, I sincerely appreciated the opportunity to meet Juanita Ruys. We are co-authors of a forthcoming special issue of the *Rivista Storica Italiana* devoted to the history of emotions. The topic of my lecture in Sydney offered us the chance to register a shared interest in the historical semantics of relevant vocabulary (*affectio* and *affectus*), which may lead to future collaborative work.

I am also indebted to CHE for offering me the opportunity during my visit to meet academic staff outside CHE (early modernists from The universities of Sydney and Melbourne, and from Monash, who attended my lectures or other events in which I participated).