

Distinguished International Visiting Fellowship 2016
Carolyn Larrington
'Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and European Arthurian Literature'



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.

Carolyn Larrington held a Distinguished International Visiting Fellowship in 2016. She spent two months working with the Centre at the UWA node, with visits to nodes at USyd, UMelb and UAdel.

Carolyn is Professor of Medieval European Literature at the University of Oxford and teaches as a Fellow of St John's College. She has published widely on Old Icelandic literature, including the leading translation into English of the Old Norse *Poetic Edda* (Oxford University Press, 2014, 2nd edn). Her recent publications include *Brothers and Sisters in Medieval European Literature* (York Medieval Press, 2015) and an edited collection of essays (with Frank Brandsma and Corinne Saunders), *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature* (D. S. Brewer, 2015). Carolyn also writes on the medieval in the modern world. Two recent studies are *The Land of the Green Man* (I. B. Tauris, 2015), on folklore and landscape in Great Britain, and *Winter is Coming: The Medieval World of Game of Thrones* (I. B. Tauris, 2015). She is currently researching emotion in secular medieval European literatures and planning a second book about *Game of Thrones*.

Carolyn reflects on the benefits and highlights of her time with CHE below.

I spent two busy and productive months as a Distinguished International Visitor based at the CHE node at UWA in Perth. From there I visited the nodes at Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. I very much enjoyed my time at UWA CHE, where I felt immediately at home. I was glad to have my own comfortable office where it was easy to work and I am grateful to Joanne McEwan for inducting me into the library. Attending and participating in various conferences, seminars, lectures and work-in-progress meetings organised by the Centre was stimulating indeed: it was wonderful to find myself among such a lively and committed group of interdisciplinary scholars who truly made me feel part of the community. Thus my visit was highly productive, not only in terms of books and articles read and future publications planned, but also for hearing about other work in the field and encountering new approaches to emotions study.

My original research plan was twofold. I intended to read as much as I could about recent work in the history of emotions field, with a view to writing a book during the remainder of my study leave about emotion and Old Norse eddic poetry. I also hoped to work on a joint project with Andrew Lynch on some aspect of emotion in Arthurian romance. In the event the work that I did at CHE, particularly preparing the seminar paper I delivered in November, has persuaded me to postpone the eddic poetry project in favour of writing a short introduction to emotions in Middle English secular literature. I am currently working on a proposal for this book, which I hope to submit to a university publisher in the next few weeks. Although Andrew Lynch's other commitments made it difficult for us to work in detail on a joint project, we were able to agree on a future co-authored article examining the concept of goal-oriented emotion in Arthurian romance and I look forward to developing this further. I intend to expand and develop the seminar paper, '[Thinking about Feeling](#)', which I gave at UWA, into a journal article to be submitted to *Emotions: History, Culture, Society* in due course.

I particularly appreciated being able to attend the CHE Biennial Research Meeting in Adelaide as this allowed me to meet a good number of CHE scholars from across Australia. The Biennial Meeting was both summative, celebrating all the many projects that have come under the CHE aegis in its lifetime, and looking forward to the outcomes of work still in progress. While in Adelaide I also attended the '[Public Humanities](#)' conference, sponsored by CHE, the Australian Consortium of Humanities Research Centres and Flinders University. There I met a good range of scholars and curators engaged in impact and outreach activities and came away with new ideas for engaging with the wider international public in terms of mediating my research. In the last days of my fellowship I spoke at the '[First International Conference on Contemporary and Historical Approaches to Emotions](#)' jointly organised by CHE and the Australian Sociological Association. This conference was truly interdisciplinary

and it was both eye opening and thought provoking to hear how social scientists were engaging with emotion questions. At this conference I combined my interests in medievalism and emotion study and spoke about medieval(ism)ist emotions and *Game of Thrones*, examining how the HBO series foregrounds specifically medieval kinds of emotion and shuns others, thus complicating and confirming popular ideas about the Middle Ages as mediated through the show. This paper will inform another future book project, on *Game of Thrones*, genre and thematics.

CHE Sydney organised an 'Old Norse Emotions' study day during my visit, which was very successful. Not only did it bring together current and past Old Norse students, it allowed the participants to think about the ways in which emotions could be investigated across literary and historical texts and in material objects. Consequently Kimberley-Joy Knight, a CHE Postdoctoral Research Fellow, and I have established the Old Norse Emotion Research Network: it has 17 members with a key group of seven committed interdisciplinary scholars. The Network plans to organise a number of Old Norse emotion-related sessions at the Saga Conference in Reykjavík, Iceland, in August 2018. Emotion research is a growing field in Old Norse studies and we anticipate much general interest in the work that will be presented there.

In summary, the two months I spent on the DIV Fellowship injected impetus into my new research project on emotions in eddic poetry and has laid a solid foundation for thinking about voice, affect, embodiment and literary effect in Old Norse poetry. It also confirmed my sense that there is space for more specifically literary investigation of emotion, in terms of aesthetic and stylistic effects, audience reactions and cross-cultural translation, and it is this insight with which I will move forward in the remaining months of my sabbatical. I also plan to foster enduring relations with the many fine scholars I met within the CHE project, in future conference, workshop and publication projects.