

Early Career International Research Fellowship 2017

Louise Nyholm Kallestrup

**'Fear of Evil: Emotions and Images in the Construction of Witchcraft in
Early Modern Denmark'**



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.

Louise Nyholm Kallestrup held an Early Career International Research Fellowship in 2017 and travelled to Australia to work with the Centre for one month at The University of Melbourne node. Louise is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Southern Denmark and was awarded a PhD in History by Aalborg University in 2007. Her recent publications include the monograph, *Agents of Witchcraft in Early Modern Italy and Denmark* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), and a collection of essays, co-edited with Raisa Maria Toivo, *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Heresy, Magic, Witchcraft* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

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

Activities while in Melbourne (19 February–19 March 2017):

During my stay, I had the opportunity to discuss my research with Charles Zika on several occasions. It was especially fruitful to discuss my work on my book, *Constructing Witchcraft in Early Modern Denmark* (Routledge, forthcoming 2020). While in Australia my book proposal was in review, and in June reviews of the proposal came back very positive. I have now signed a contract with Routledge with a delivery date for the manuscript of December 2019. As for more informal networking, I am particularly pleased to have met Jenny Spinks and Una McIlvenna, with whom I hope to work in the future.

On 9 March 2017, I delivered a paper to the History Department at The University of Melbourne, titled 'Constructing the Witch in Early Modern Denmark: Emotions, Gender and Crime'. In the paper, I explored how witchcraft was constructed as a crime in Denmark prior to the law of 1617. I argued that witchcraft developed into a criminal offence due to an intersection between reformers' condemnations of Catholicism as 'the Devil's cult' and popular ideas and narratives of evil people, especially evil women. My research rests on the idea that witchcraft was a gendered crime, and that the process of construction took place through various media in which emotions, especially anti-social ones such as envy, pride, vengeance and anger but also fear, played key roles. In contemporary writings emotions were used to establish an image of the witch as anti-social and to warn against the consequences of interacting with witches – as well as to warn against practicing witchcraft. In trials, the emotions expressed and attributed to the witch became decisive for the further development of cases and how suspects were viewed. In Denmark, ninety per cent of the individuals tried for witchcraft were women, and the discourse of witchcraft was characterised by highly gendered emotions. Court records show how these women were presented as socially transgressive by referring to their expression of anti-social emotions such as envy and anger. Women were thought to have less control of their feelings, thus their expressions of anger or rage were feared. My paper examined gendered emotions within the frame of the Lutheran household, which came to penetrate every institutional level of society following the Reformation and grew remarkably strong during the seventeenth century.

I was also able to contribute to node activities by participating in a CHE Reading Group meeting on 6 March 2017 and opening a lecture by James Grantham Turner, on 'Post Platonism: Rethinking the Relations of Art, Love and Desire', on 14 March 2017.

Research output:

During my stay in Melbourne I worked on two articles: one of them was incorporated into the paper I delivered:

1. "'Kind in words and deeds, but false in their hearts": Fear of Evil Conspiracy in Late Sixteenth-Century Denmark'. This article will be published in an edited volume entitled

Cultures of Witchcraft in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present, edited by Jonathan Barry, Owen Davies and Cornelia Usborne (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 137–54. <<https://www.palgrave.com/de/book/9783319637839>>

2. 'Wrath and Fear: The Marginalisation of Witches in Early Modern Denmark', in *Marginality, Media, and Mutations of Religious Authority: Case Studies from the History of Christianity*, edited by Laura Feldt and Jan Bremmer (Leuven, currently under review).

After returning to Denmark two activities ought also to be mentioned:

1. I completed the first draft of a paper titled "'An ungodly body": Envy, Fertility and Witchcraft in Sixteenth-Century Denmark', which was presented at the Nordic Historians Congress in August 2017. The second draft will be presented at a session on emotions and the body, with Katie Barclay as commentator, at the European Social Science and History Conference (ESSHC) in Belfast in 2018.
2. I am co-organising a conference with the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of Southern Denmark in November 2018, entitled '[Negative Emotions in Medieval and Early Modern Europe, 1100–1700](#)'. It will feature keynote speakers Malcolm Gaskill (University of East Anglia) and Craig Taylor (University of York). The call for papers has just been issued.