

Hamlet and Emotions: Then and Now

To be, or not to be

Ian McEwan's recent novel *Nutshell* (2016), in which *Hamlet* is an unborn foetus, is only the latest in a line of appropriations of Shakespeare's plays stretching back to 1600. *Hamlet* itself stretches beyond the seventeenth century, drawing on sources that date back to twelfth-century Denmark, and referring within itself to relics of older drama that Shakespeare may have seen as a boy in Stratford. *Hamlet* looks both backwards and forwards in time. The play also covers a remarkable range of emotional states, including anger, love, hatred, grief, melancholy and despair. Indeed, *Hamlet* stages a plethora of emotional practices: a funeral and a marriage, a vindictive ghost in purgatory, a young woman whose mental equilibrium has been dislodged by the murder of her father by her own erstwhile lover, an inscrutable monarch under suspicion of murder, a couple of mordantly cheerful gravediggers, and a young prince back from university and grieving for his deceased father. This symposium invites new readings of the play, focusing on any aspect of its emotional life in the widest sense.

We envisage papers from a range of disciplines and points of view, which may contribute to any of the Centre's four research programs – Meanings, Change, Performance or Shaping the Modern. Some possible areas of discussion are mentioned below, but they are by no means exclusive. We aim at producing a book proposal, so completed papers ready for publication will save time when approaching a publisher.

Please send proposals for 20-minute papers, including a title and presenter details, to Paul Megna (paul.megna@uwa.edu.au) by 28 February 2017.

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

- Kevin Curran (University of Lausanne)
- Richard Meek (University of Hull)
- Kathryn Prince (University of Ottawa)
- Naya Tsentourou (University of Exeter)

DATE: 10–11 April 2017

VENUE: St Catherine's College,
The University of Western Australia

ENQUIRIES: paul.megna@uwa.edu.au

ORGANISERS: Paul Megna, Bob White

POSSIBLE TOPICS

- How scholarship on the history of the emotions can help us to better understand *Hamlet* and vice versa
- Emotional regimes, communities and practices in *Hamlet*
- Emotions and language
- *Hamlet*, melancholy and depression
- Female consciousness
- Revenge and anger in *Hamlet*
- *Hamlet* and non-Shakespearean Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre and literature
- Emotional accounts of the afterlife and other religious ideas in *Hamlet*
- *Hamlet's* emotional medievalism and allusions to medieval drama
- Nostalgia in *Hamlet*, as well as nostalgia for *Hamlet* in adaptations, appropriations and re-writings
- Gendered emotion in *Hamlet* and its descendants
- Emotional reactions to *Hamlet* through the centuries
- *Hamlet's* influence on theories of emotion
- Emotions in adaptations of *Hamlet* (including novels, movies, popular culture).
- Staging of passions, perturbations, affections, etc.