

Emotions, materiality and transformations in the colonial contact zone

ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (1100-1800) Shaping the Modern collaboratory 2016

7-8 March 2016, The University of Western Australia



Interior of a Shop dealing in Asian Goods (Holland 1680-1700) Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Dirk Hartog plate, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam



The 400th anniversary of the accidental landing of Dirk Hartog and the Dutch VOC ship *Eendracht* at the West Australian coast in 1616 offers a great opportunity to reflect on the emotional and material aspects of the colonial contact zone of which both Australia and the Netherlands, as well as many other regions, formed a part in the early modern period.

Early modern European trade, exploration, missions and colonization brought diverse emotional regimes into contact, often in fraught circumstances, resulting in the high-stakes cross-cultural communication (or, often, miscommunication) of emotions through language and in particular through exchange and circulation of objects (diplomatic, symbolic, mercantile, private, religious). These colonial contact zones are rich sites for explorations of the emotional and material transformations that took place as result of these encounters.

Recent research suggests that the social practice of emotions in colonial spaces (urban centres, trading posts, churches, courts etc) simultaneously shaped and contested colonial rule. In post-colonial societies such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada, these emotional and material transformations left lasting legacies to this very day.

This collaboratory of the Shaping the Modern program will explore the role emotions of the colonial contact zone played in shaping the modern. In particular, we will consider the connections between materiality, transformation and emotions associated with colonial encounters. What were the affective strategies of early modern Europeans in the acquisition, exchange and display of colonial objects? What emotional transformations did objects undergo in their passage between non-European societies and Europe? What was the role of emotions in the formation of early ethnographic texts and collections, and how is this represented in contemporary museums? And finally, what emotional legacies did these material witnesses of early modern encounters leave to modern societies?

Plenary Speakers:

- Benjamin Schmidt, University of Washington, early modern historian, recent books include *Inventing exoticism. Geography, Globalism and Europe's Early Modern World*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2015).
- Angela Wanhalla, Otago University, colonial historian, recent publications include: Annabel Cooper, Lachy Paterson and Angela Wanhalla (eds), *The Lives of Colonial Objects*. (Otago University Press 2015) and *Matters of the Heart: A History of Interracial Marriage in New Zealand*. (Auckland University Press 2013)
- Jay Arthur, Senior Curator of the current *Encounters* exhibition, Australian National Museum

Areas for discussion include, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Emotions of colonial contact zones and contemporary museum exhibitions
- Affective responses to Asian luxury goods in early modern Europe
- Chinoiserie, self-fashioning and the creation of new emotional styles in early modern Europe
- Emotional responses of non-Europeans to colonial political, cultural and religious transformations
- Asian, American and African receptions of early modern European goods
- Global diplomatic gifts and affective political strategies
- Colonial self-doubt and colonial violence
- Scientific encounters, collecting and notions of friendship
- Colonial intimacies and materiality
- Transformation of indigenous spiritual and material spaces and their affective consequences
- The role of emotions in cultural contacts: music, art, theatre
- Emotional biographies of colonial objects

Please send an abstract (max.300 words) and short bio before December 20, 2016 to pam.bond@uwa.edu.au and Jacqueline.van.gent@uwa.edu.au