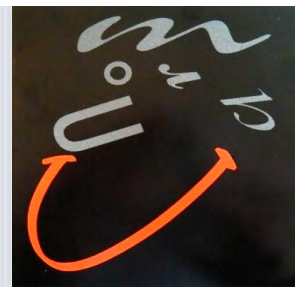


# The Humour Studies Digest

Australasian Humour Studies Network ([AHSN](#))

November 2017



## Update - 24th AHSN Conference

2-4 February 2018, Cairns FNQ

### Update from the Conference Convener:

It's heating up here in the Tropical North of Australia. It's only spring but already 30 degrees. I'm loving it!

Next week's special event is coral spawning on the Great Barrier Reef. The dive tourism industry sells this even as "the world's biggest orgasm" or "the greatest sex show on earth". I know you can see the humour in this! ☺ While there won't be any coral spawning going on in February, I still encourage you to book a trip to our beautiful World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef. Many educational reef presentations include humour to keep their audience of tourists entertained. Please email me if you want to know more.

Among the international delegates arriving in Cairns for the 2018 AHSN conference is Dr Liisi Laineste who is the Chair of the next ISHS Conference to be held in Estonia in June 2018. So, there will plenty of opportunities to network with her (see special invitation for AHSN members to attend the ISHS Conference elsewhere in this Digest).

Other international attendees include Wladyslaw Chlopicki arriving from Poland, Aubrey Mellor from Singapore, Laura Little (one of our keynote speakers) from the USA, and Yousef Barahmeh from the UK, and a very warm message of greetings from overseas AHSN member, Dr Mahmud Farjami.

And things just keep getting better! All delegates to the 2018 AHSN conference will receive a kind gift copy of Rodney Mark's latest book (see book announcement elsewhere in this Digest).

Please let me know if there are any other goodies that you would like to send up to Cairns to hand out to the delegates and I will get that organised for you (eg flyers for books etc).

Don't forget to register to attend by visiting the AHSN website and going to the Events page to find on-line registration and secure payment site at: <http://sydney.edu.au/humourstudies/events/index.shtml>

There is plenty of information also on the Events page about accommodation options, but if you have any questions about travel or accommodation, or if you need clarification on anything regarding the Conference, please feel free to contact me at: [a.pabel@cqu.edu.au](mailto:a.pabel@cqu.edu.au).

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## Travel and Accommodation

For full details, please visit the AHSN website -<http://sydney.edu.au/humourstudies/events/index.shtml>

Central Queensland University's Cairns Campus is only a short distance from a wide range of accommodation facilities, cafes, restaurants, bars, boutique shopping, and also the famous Cairns Esplanade and Pier. The street address of CQU's Cairns campus is: Level 3 CQU Cairns Campus, Cnr Abbott and Shields Streets, Cairns QLD, 4870.

## Enquiries and tourism advice

Some of you have already asked me accommodation and travel related questions about your stay in Cairns. Apart from a PhD in tourism, I also used to work as a travel consultant here in Cairns so am well-placed to respond! There is a wealth of information to share on the many tours and activities that are possible in North Queensland, **so please continue to send me your questions.** ☺

You can also click on these links for more practical information about visiting Cairns:

Tourism Tropical North Queensland:

<http://www.cairnsgreatbarrierreef.org.au/>

Cairns Regional Council:

<http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/region/tourist-information>

All the best, and looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible in sunny Cairns next February,

Anja



The inimitable Dr. Anja Pabel

Lecturer in Tourism  
School of Business and Law  
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## **International Success for AHSN Member at ISHS Conference, Montreal, 2017**

Many congratulations to the 2017 DANYS Award winner at the Montreal ISHS Conference, AHSN member, Cao Ying. Ying and her humour research project featured in the September 2017 issue of the AHSN Digest and we look forward to hearing more from her at the forthcoming 24<sup>th</sup> AHSN Conference in Cairns next February.

The DANYS Award (the Don and Alleen Nilsen Young Scholar Award) was established to honour the joint-founders of the ISHS, Don and Alleen Nilsen, both now professors emeritus at University of Arizona and continuing their life-long dedication to promoting humour scholarship. It is awarded annually to recognize exemplary graduate student work presented at ISHS Conferences.

Previously, AHSN members whose work has also been honoured with ISHS Awards are:

- **At Alcalá de Henares, Spain, 2008:** Certificate of Merit Award for emerging scholar to: Maren Rawlings, Psychology, Swinburne University.
- **At Jagellonian University, Krakow, Poland, 2012:** Graduate Student Awards to: Rebecca Higgie, Communication and Cultural Studies, Curtin University AND Seyed Mahmood Farjami, Communication and Journalism, University of Science, Penang, Malaysia.

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## AHSN Research Student Profile: Ben Matthew Eldridge

Ben Eldridge is a postgraduate student in the Department of English at the University of Sydney. He also teaches literature in English at both the University of Sydney and the University of Notre Dame. His current research involves an interrogation of the arbitrary nature of language, with a focus on the discursive changes in Western storytelling, and the corresponding reformation of the narrating subject. He is particularly interested in the work of contemporary Canadian science fiction author Peter Watts. Watts' idiosyncratic use of language and syntax deconstructs convention in a movement that radically decentres the human subject. Through a reframing of multiple discursive conventions, Watts' texts veer away from traditional textual representation. Ben's doctoral thesis "Fiction, Science & Discursive Power: Peter Watts' Functionally Generative Linguistic Paroxysms" traces this use and abuse of language through Watts' oeuvre.

Peter Watts' fiction is frequently described as bleak, misanthropic and dystopian (amongst a whole range of other equally grim epithets) and, accordingly, humour is not an attribute typically ascribed to his work. His reputation is growing but if his name is recognized, Watts drolly suggests that he is likely to be known as "The Guy Who Writes The Depressing Stories". Despite the bleakness that permeates his work, there is also an unconcealed anger, cynicism, and biting wit, and it is this somewhat submerged satirical trend that propels Ben's interest in the limits of humour. Even Watts' grimmest texts are parodic railings against the inescapable dystopia of modern existence that has defined much 20<sup>th</sup> century literature and they clearly straddle the thin line between humour and horror, between vitriol and resignation. Watts himself remains incredulous that he is the subject of a doctoral thesis, much less one that deals, to some degree, with questions of comedy.

Outside his literary obsessions, Ben is equally enamoured with popular culture more broadly. He works in a variety of media modes from film to music: basically, anything that distracts him from the nightmarish world of thesis production! He wrote this piece for his fellow AHSN members in the midst of another of those extended bouts of thesis non-production -- he is convening a conference at the University of Toronto on the oeuvre of -- you guessed it -- Peter Watts and the photo above shows the two of them together in a highly appropriate setting. Ben has been fortunate enough to bamboozle a number of respected institutions into giving him money to pursue his research on Watts, including receiving grants and scholarships from the International Council for Canadian Studies; Association for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand; Law, Literature & Humanities Association of Australia; the Australasian Humour Studies Network; the University of Toronto; and, obviously, the University of Sydney. Ben can only imagine that his research is so esoteric that people throw money at him in the hopes that he will stop talking about it.

*Ed.: We hope he doesn't do that! Ben is billed to present at the upcoming AHSN Conference in Cairns and we look forward to hearing the latest, fresh from the horse's mouth.*



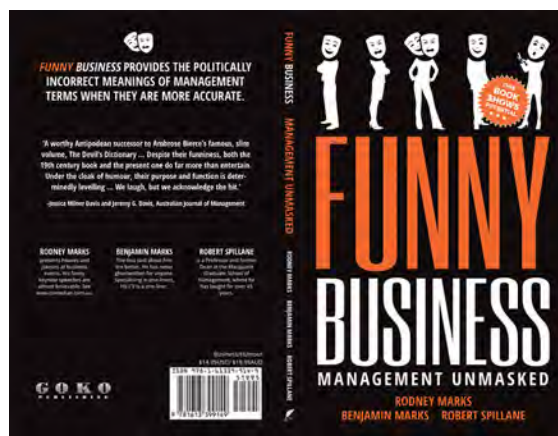
Ben Eldridge and Peter Watts (from left to right; photo credit: Sophia Falcatan, location: The Bedford Academy pub, Toronto)

## New humour publication by AHSN member

### Rodney Marks, Hoaxes and Jokeses, Sydney

Robert Spillane, Benjamin Marks and Rodney Marks. 2017.  
*Funny Business: Management Unmasked* is an exposé of management as it is practiced in business, government and the non-profit sector.

Keywords are explained through humour, making them better understood than via a library of management textbooks. Management theories and applications are made memorable through savage wit and fearless comedy. The book is an ideal gift for bosses, peers and subordinates to give to each other. It is similarly useful to distribute at conferences and seminars, to question assumptions and the status quo. Each business word in the book holds a bundle of meanings, and can serve to create entertaining and productive discussions.



Available at: <https://www.booktopia.com.au/funny-business-rodney-marks/prod9781613399149.html>

*Funny Business: Management Unmasked* (Goko Publishing, 2017) is an updated, expanded and all-new version of Rodney, Benjamin and Robert's popular earlier volume, *The Management Contradictionary* (also with Benjamin Marks and Robert Spillane, Melbourne: 2006).

#### About the Authors

*Rodney Marks* is a comedian, hoax speaker and corporate imposter. He presents funny keynote speeches that are almost believable.

*Benjamin Marks* - the less said about him the better. He has never ghost-written for anyone.

*Robert Spillane* is a Professor and former Dean of the Macquarie Graduate School of Management, where he has taught for over 40 years. He teaches philosophy in the hope that it will be applied to management and psychology in the hope that it will not.

#### More about Rodney

Rodney Marks is an Australian comedian, hoax speaker and corporate imposter. Since 1991, he has presented faux invited keynotes at business events. Rodney holds a BA from the University of New England, Armidale, Australia, an MBA from the Australian Graduate School of Management, and an MPA from Harvard's Kennedy School. He has been artist-in-residence at each alma mater.

He has given more than 3,000 satiric performances in New Zealand, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Mauritius, England and the US, with most of his work in Australia. Rodney is a founding member of the Australasian Humour Studies Network; his previous publications include: *The Management Contradictionary* (with Benjamin Marks and Robert Spillane, 2006, Melbourne) and "Hoax and Prank" (with Jessica Milner Davis) in *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies* (ed. Salvatore Attardo, Sage Publishing, 2014, vol.1: 137-40). His professional website is: <https://comedian.com.au/>



Just lie back and think of Cairns

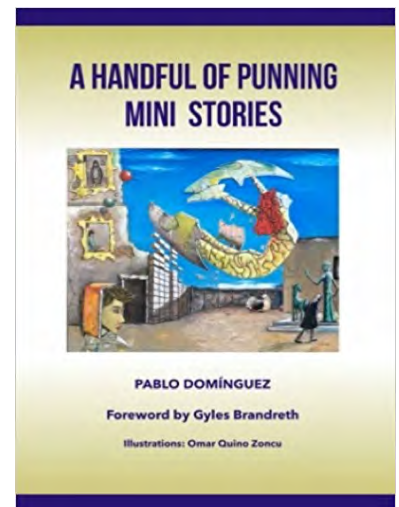
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## New humour publication by AHSN member

Em. Prof. Pablo Domínguez González, Tenerife, Canary Islands

### *A Handful of Punning Mini Stories (2017)*

This short collection of mini stories has been written to show how one-word puns, among them, those registered in the Concise Punishing Dictionary for English Speakers (Dominguez, 2013), can be used in a context. It should be noted that not all of these puns lend themselves easily to such an imaginative exercise: it takes a lot of ingenuity to combine more than three or four in a story if one wants the end result to sound plausible, and above all, to be funny enough to be read with enjoyment. Most of the puns are self-explanatory, but in case of difficulty, the reader can look up their definition in the Mini Dictionary, at the end of the book. The beautiful illustrations are by Quino Zoncu.



These sixty mini stories, available on Amazon at [www.amazon.com/dp/1548414751](http://www.amazon.com/dp/1548414751), should be of interest to anyone who has a creative mind and a good sense of humour, that is someone who is able to laugh at -- or at least to see -- the humour in life's absurdities. It's one of those publications you read with a grin on your face -- and then you look up to see other people watching you and wondering what is so amusing!

### *About the Author*

Pablo Domínguez is Emeritus Professor at the University of La Laguna, Tenerife, and author of *Los sonidos del inglés. Ejercicios fonéticos* (1977), a pioneering book in the field of English Studies in Spain. He was editor of the first 21 issues of *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* (ISSN: 0211-5913), and from its foundation in 1987 until September 2016, he was editor of the gazette *Boletín de ASELE* ([www.aselered.org/boletines](http://www.aselered.org/boletines)). With two of his research students, he published *Inglés ¡ya mismo!*, a parody of modern language teaching methodology. He is also the author of *Concise Punishing Dictionary for English Speakers*, available as paperback or e-book at: [www.amazon.com/dp/B00NETO7Q2](http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00NETO7Q2)



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## 30th ISHS Conference, Tallinn, Estonia, 25-29 June 2018

### *Reminder and Personal Invitation*

The fairytale capital of Estonia - Tallinn - will be the place to experience the magic of the 30th ISHS conference on "Humour: Positively(?) Transforming", 25-29 June 2018. This year's convener, Dr Liisi Laineste, will be in Cairns at the 24th AHSN Conference to spread the word and to reply to any questions you might have.

The call for papers, posters, special panels (90-180 min), workshops (90 min) and other academic formats (including panels of flash presentations, 5-7 mins each) related to humour research is open 1 November 2017 – 31 March 2018.

Submit a proposal via our online form by March 31. Provisional acceptance notifications for abstracts will be sent out on a rolling basis within 1-2 weeks of submitting. Formal acceptance will be issued upon the receipt of the participation fee.

Conference participation fee (payable before February 15) is 220 EUR (ISHS members), 250 EUR (non-members) and 100 EUR (students). Find out about student scholarships and prizes on our website or by sending an email to: [ishsconference2018@gmail.com](mailto:ishsconference2018@gmail.com).

*Tallinn is ready for humour researchers!*

More information and registration: [www.folklore.ee/ishs2018/](http://www.folklore.ee/ishs2018/)

Look us up and follow ISHS2018 on Facebook.

Sincerely,

### *The Conference Organisers*

Liisi Laineste (Chair, Estonian Literary Museum; Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies)

Piret Voolaid (Estonian Literary Museum; Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies)

Mare Kõiva (Estonian Literary Museum; Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies)

Aurika Meimre (Tallinn University)

Carlo Cubero (Tallinn University)

Anastasyia Fiadotava (University of Tartu; Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies)

Anne Ostrak (Estonian Literary Museum; Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies)

Kristel Toom (Graduate School of Culture Studies and Arts; Tallinn University)

### *Conference Sponsors:*



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## **Call for Contributions to a Panel at 2018 ISHS Conference**

### **Tallinn, Estonia, 24-29 June 2018**

Dr Anna-Sophie Jurgens, Feodor Lynen Postdoctoral Fellow (Humboldt Foundation) at the Humanities Research Centre of the Australian National University, is calling for contributions to a Panel she will convene at the 2018 ISHS Conference in Tallinn, Estonia, June 2018.

The panel is entitled “Schlock Horror and Pillow Punches” and will explore the relationships between violence, evil and dumb laughter, clowns and other grotesque circus creatures, in order to discover how ‘Circus Humour’ might be defined.

If you are interested, please email Anna-Sophie direct at: [anna-sophie.jurgens@anu.edu.au](mailto:anna-sophie.jurgens@anu.edu.au)

Dr Jurgens’ personal website is: <https://anu-au.academia.edu/AnnaSophieJurgens>

Interested in Circus and Science? Have a look at:

<http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/german/de/content/circus-science?language=de>

And for details of the ANU conference that Sophie is running next year (mentioned in the September 2017 AHSN Digest), visit: <http://hrc.anu.edu.au/events/imagineers-conference>

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# 18th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter



University of Wolverhampton, UK 2-7 July 2018

Dear AHSN members,

The next International Summer School on Humour and Laughter, ISS18, will take place at the University of Wolverhampton, Telford Campus, Shropshire, UK, from 2-7 July 2018.

See our live website: <http://www.humoursummerschool.org/18>

Look forward to seeing some of you there!

Regards,

Willibald Ruch and co-organisers, Josiane Boutonnet and Tracey Platt, University of Wolverhampton

## *Some Background and Information*

For over seventeen years, the Humour Summer School has brought together outstanding programmes of speakers and offered a delegate symposia. This year is no exception. Designed to fit the needs of new students and as well as researchers, the Humour Summer School offers a deeper knowledge of humour and laughter in dimensions ranging from the philosophical through the physiological, to the practical. The Summer School supports all fields of humour research and offers something for all those interested in the diversity of humour research and its application.

The delegate symposium is a popular session within the week when the Summer School participants have the opportunity to present their own work. Delegates have the opportunity to have one-to-one talks with the experts, discuss their projects and receive great feedback on best academic practice in humour research.

\*Among the lecturers this year are:

- [Tom Ford](#) (Western Carolina University, USA)- Editor in Chief of Humor: The International Journal of Humour Studies
- [Mary Kay Morrison](#) (Quest for Humor)- AATH Past President and CEO of Quest for Humor
- [Graeme Ritchie](#) (University of Aberdeen, UK)- Honorary Senior Research Fellow and ISHS Journal Editorial Board
- [Willibald Ruch](#) (University of Zurich, Switzerland)- Professor of Psychology, Past President of the ISHS, and ISHS Journal Editor
- [Julia Taylor Rayz](#) (Purdue University, USA)-Assistant Professor and ISHS Journal Editorial Board
- [Sharon Lockyer](#) (Brunel University, UK)-Editorial Board Member of Comedy Studies and ISHS Journal.
- & Many More....

(Note\* Subject to change. Please check the website for full details of our programme.)

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## **Australasian Modernist Studies Network presents**

### **AMSN 4: Modernist Comedy & Humour**

*University of Melbourne, October 26-28, 2018*

Is modernism funny? During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Sigmund Freud theorized jokes and their relation to the unconscious, while Henri Bergson argued that laughter is produced by “something mechanical encrusted on the living.” English literary modernists held Victorian earnestness in contempt, often while taking themselves extremely seriously. Early twentieth-century Dadaists committed themselves to nonsense and irrationality and, in 1940, the surrealist André Breton edited and published an anthology of “black humour.” The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also saw the rise of popular and parodic forms of comedy and humour such as the comic strip, vaudeville, camp, and Buster Keaton’s deadpan acting style. These comic forms and styles were bound up with histories of immigration, gender and sexuality, race, technology, and culture industries.

Humanities scholars are devoting new attention to the aesthetics, politics, and social significance of comedy and humour. For instance, in their 2017 special issue of *Critical Inquiry* on comedy, Lauren Berlant and Sianne Ngai note competing trajectories of modern social life: on the one hand, “people are increasingly supposed to be funny all the time,” and on the other, “humourlessness is on the rise.” In the same issue, Ngai opposes the labor-saving operations of the “gimmick” to Victor Shklovsky and Bertolt Brecht’s practices of making methods of production visible. These tensions and oppositions suggest the usefulness of attending to comedy and humour in the field of modernist studies, which in recent years has rethought traditional oppositions among popular, high modernist, and avant-garde cultural forms.

We invite papers that engage with comedy and humour across the interdisciplinary field of modernist studies. How do comedy and humour reflect and affect the geographical, temporal, and cultural expansiveness of contemporary modernist studies, and what might Australasian scholarship contribute to this expansion? When are comic genres and styles normative, subversive, or ambivalent? When is laughter a mode of detachment, and when is it a way of being in relation? Who is in on the joke, and why does it matter?

*Possible topics might include:*

- Camp, kitsch, taste, judgment
- Comic performance genres and styles: vaudeville, music hall, variety, minstrelsy, burlesque, standup, the deadpan, slapstick, shtick, gimmicks
- Humourlessness, earnestness, seriousness, the unfunny
- Jokes, comic timing, comic tones
- Comic strips, political cartoons, caricature
- The ridiculous, the absurd
- Humour and/of the avant-garde
- Laughter and audience behavior



- Ways and theories of reading
- The mechanical, grotesque, or nonhuman; humourous objects
- Pleasure, play, fun
- Comedy as and at work
- Commodity culture, advertisements
- Affect and emotion
- Ethnic, national, or cosmopolitan comic perspectives
- Queer humour, sexual parody
- Overstatement and understatement
- The epigram, the bon mot, the cutting remark
- Normative and subversive humour, harmlessness, vulgarity, offensiveness
- Theories and histories of comedy and humour

Please send an abstract of no more than 300 words and a bio of no more than 150 words to [modernistcomedy@gmail.com](mailto:modernistcomedy@gmail.com) as an attachment by March 30th, 2018.

Confirmed keynote speaker: Professor Nick Salvato (Cornell).

This speaker is supported by the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions.

#### *Conference committee:*

Dr Sarah Balkin, University of Melbourne

Professor Ronan McDonald, University of Melbourne

Elizabeth McLean, University of Melbourne

Jessica Marian, University of Melbourne

Questions may be directed to [sarah.balkin@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:sarah.balkin@unimelb.edu.au).



Jandaschewsky Clowns, 1903.

Image by Talma & Co. Collection: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney.

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## **Call for Papers: Ethics in Comedy, edited by Steven A. Benko:**

*Associate Professor of Religious & Ethical Studies, Meredith College, Raleigh NC*

What makes a joke right or wrong? When is it good or bad to laugh? The rights and wrongs of a joke can be expressed in political terms: a joke is politically incorrect or it exploits a marginalized group of people. Alternatively, a joke can be inappropriate or mean-spirited. A joke can make someone feel bad about their race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, body, gender identity, and the list can go on and on. Laughter can hurt someone's feelings, reveal that the laughter lacks manners, or maybe holds to racist, sexist, or other offensive views. The same way that a joke can make a person feel self-conscious about an aspect of their self, laughter reinforces in-group/out-group dynamics and can make a person feel excluded, isolated, or alone.

These negatives are balanced against the good that jokes and laughter can do: when they punch up, jokes and laughter can diminish the power that others hold over us. Comedians can be the sharpest of cultural critics, using irony, satire, and parody to reveal hypocrisy, speak difficult truths, and skewer social attitudes and biases that marginalize and oppress individuals and groups.

But how do we speak of an ethics of comedy? The difficulty of an ethics of jokes and laughter is that so much of what makes humor work -- and much of the work that humor does -- is based on transgression. This edited volume seeks contributions that attempt to formulate an ethics of comedy. When is a joke right or wrong? Is it wrong if it offends, or right if it offends in the right way? How are we to determine the moral rightness or wrongness of laughing at one moment but not the next? Are there jokes that ought not to be told or punch lines that ought not to be laughed at? And how are we to know when this is the case?

The collection should be accessible to upper level undergraduates. Essays should articulate a general approach to jokes and laughter and then apply that approach to specific examples. Examples can be drawn from any medium (stand-up, television, movies, internet, etc.). Essays that deal with comedians, topics, or ethical theories that undergraduate students would encounter in other courses are encouraged.

Please submit proposals for essays of 6,000-8,500 words that explore the ethics of comedy:

- Frameworks for an ethics of humor, jokes, and laughter
- Normative ethical theories and humor, jokes, or laughter
- Ethics and superiority, relief, and incongruity theory
- An ethical analysis of a specific comedian
- How a particular ethicist, philosopher, or theologian addresses the moral rightness or wrongness of laughter
- The ethics of jokes about a controversial social topic, e.g. abortion, body shape or size, sexual violence, illness, etc.
- Historical approaches to the ethics of laughter: what was the moral status of humor, laughter, and jokes in the past?
- Evolving social standards, ethics, and humor: what jokes used to be funny and are not appropriate anymore?
- Politics vs. ethics in humor

Send your questions about the book or submit your short description to Steven A. Benko at [benkos@meredith.edu](mailto:benkos@meredith.edu). The chapter proposal should consist of a short abstract (275-350 words), chapter title, and a brief biography. Collaborations are welcomed. All proposals must be received by January 7, 2018. Final manuscripts of 6,000-8,500 words should be submitted in MLA style by August 20, 2018.

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## ***Bloomsbury Book Series on Cultural History of Comedy***

Several AHSN members are contributing to this book series and those who attended the 2017 AHSN Conference in Ballarat may remember the presentation by Michael Ewans FAHA (University of Newcastle) on the challenges he has successfully confronted in editing the volume on the Classical period. Robert Phiddian (Flinders University) and Will Noonan (now at Université de Bourgogne – Dijon) are also editing a volume – that on humour in 18th-century literature and culture – and Daniel Derrin (now at Durham University and convenor of the Humours of the Past Project with Hannah Burrows at University of Aberdeen) is preparing the Renaissance volume. Jessica Milner Davis (University of Sydney) is co-editing the volume on medieval comedy with Martha Bayless (University of Oregon).

Will Visconti, now teaching at Central Saint Martins (a College of the University of the Arts) in London, is contributing to yet a further volume, and suggests Digest readers might like to know that the Call for that volume is still open. Details below.

## **Call for Papers: A Cultural History of Comedy in the Age of Empire**

*Deadline - December 1st, 2017.*

Bloomsbury Press announces a Call for Proposals (500 words) for 10,000-word chapters on comedy and humor in the Age of Empire (1800–1920) for Volume 5 in the six-volume Bloomsbury series *A Cultural History of Comedy* (from antiquity to the present).

*500-word proposals are due December 1, 2017.*

*Completed chapters are due August 31, 2018.*

The six volumes will be sold as a set in 2019 and separately in 2020. Comprised of eight thematic overview chapters (Form, Theory, Praxis, Identities, the Body, Politics/Power, Laughter, and Ethics), each volume explores the cultural and/or literary history of comedy and humor through the eight aforementioned rubrics over the course of a historical period. The focus will be western, although not exclusively so, and will certainly encompass cross-cultural encounters and exchanges and cultural hybridity. While chapters are meant to serve as “overviews,” they are not encyclopedia entries or surveys, and authors (some of the top humor specialists in the world) are encouraged to dedicate 50% of their 10,000-word chapters to analysis of a primary figure or figures (either literary or cultural), to a case study, or to a specific cultural phenomenon, in addition to providing a range of case material and historical and intellectual context. Series Editors Andrew McConnell Stott and Eric Weitz and Volume Editor Matthew Kaiser welcome essays that appeal to specialists and non-specialists alike.

We seek proposals for four chapters: on Comedic Form, on Comedic Theory, on Comedy and the Body, and on the Ethics of Comedy.

*What follows is a brief description of each of the four rubrics:*

**Form:** These chapters will investigate the many forms in which comedy has been engendered over the course of time. From Dionysian ritual, to flyting, cinema, and podcasts, comedy manifests itself in ways that speak to the cultural moment, the aesthetic paradigm and the available technologies, always finding a means to articulate its relevance. These chapters will consider specific forms – the comedy of manners, for example – but also the way in which comedy flows beyond formal constraints to become a tone or conceptual approach.

**Theory:** Each epoch has had a favored theory of comedy from Aristotle to the present. These chapters will investigate the dominant and emerging theories of comedy in history, looking specifically at the way in which those theorizations have served to either elevate or repress the status of comedy within the intellectual life of their era. Chapters will include discussions of texts or performances that either demonstrate the influence of these theories, or work against them.

**The Body:** These chapters will consider the place of the body in comedy, treating topics such as the origins of the form in fertility ritual and the plight of body in slapstick. It will also consider the comic body as a site of cultural anxiety in its hapless, failing and scatological existence, as well as the place of gendered bodies in comic narratives.

*Ethics*: Is there an ethics of comedy? From Roman New Comedy through to the comic theory of the Victorians, much comic narrative has been designed with a conservative purpose, to act as a social corrective that seeks to draw attention to, and so modify, the excesses of individuals and society. Similarly, racist or ethnic humor has served to limit or denude the identity of the other. On the other hand, however, satire, parody, and festive comic forms, have sought to open up spaces for liberty, freedom of expression and self-actualization. These chapters will consider the many ways in which comedy has explored its ethical dimension.

Chapter proposals (and questions about the project) may be sent to Prof. Matthew Kaiser at [mkaiser2@ucmerced.edu](mailto:mkaiser2@ucmerced.edu)

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## ***The Humour Studies Digest***

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