

# The Humour Studies Digest



Australasian Humour Studies Network ([AHSN](http://ahsn.org.au))

November 2019

## **AHSN 2020, 5-7 February 2020, Griffith University, Brisbane**

### **Message from the Griffith University Conference Organisers:**

Everything is looking very good for the 2020 conference: outstanding keynote speakers (see below for more details), a strong and diverse program, and a great venue in Brisbane's vibrant South Bank.

Now it's time to book your travel and accommodation and very importantly to register! Please visit the AHSN website at: <https://sydney.edu.au/arts/our-research/centres-institutes-and-groups/australasian-humour-studies-network.html>

Looking forward to seeing you all there next February!

### **Organizing Committee:**

Cliff Goddard  
Reza Arab  
Angelina Hurley  
Zarek Hennessy

### **Enquiries:**

Should you have any questions or need any help, please contact us at: [ahsn2020conference@gmail.com](mailto:ahsn2020conference@gmail.com)

### **Sponsors:**

The 26th AHSN Conference is co-hosted by the Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research (GCSCR):  
<https://www.griffith.edu.au/griffith-centre-social-cultural-research>



Centre for Social and  
Cultural Research

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## Keynote Speakers and Abstracts for AHSN2020

### Leon Filewood

Winner of the 2018 Melbourne International Comedy Festival's "National Deadly Funny Competition", Australia

#### **The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stand-Up Comedian's dilemma: Solidarity in Humour?**

This talk will explore and discuss the challenges/dilemma an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comedian faces when writing jokes. Does he or she write jokes for a white audience on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stereotypes? Does he or she confirm or negate those stereotypes? Does he or she write jokes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to the exclusion and expense of the white audience? How does he or she educate and unite the audience to appreciate each other's humour?" How does he or she foster solidarity through humour?



### Professor Meredith Marra

*School of Linguistics & Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand*

#### **I laugh to Show I Belong: Negotiating Workplace Humour as a Newcomer**

For 20 years the Wellington 'Language in the Workplace' team has been investigating the function of humour in workplace talk, from its roles in expressing power and politeness to its place in the enactment of leadership, as well as the use of humour to construct gender, ethnic and professional identities. Almost all of these analyses involve New Zealanders in intact teams. With increasing attention to global migration, our recent work has shifted to consider the working experiences of newcomers. How important is laughter and humour to their everyday workplace communication, and a sense of belonging?

While humour is a ubiquitous feature of interaction in most workplaces, the shared norms and practices that underpin this humour typically remain implicit. For outsiders, especially non-majority group members, it is often an area that is tricky to navigate and arguably presents a challenge to full participation. Making use of naturally occurring workplace talk involving skilled migrants, I will demonstrate successful and unsuccessful attempts at harnessing humour in the negotiation of in-group status. To support the findings I highlight meta comments provided by the New Zealand team-mates with whom the migrants interact. The analysis indicates that to construct a convincing workplace identity requires constant communicative work.



## Professor Robert Phiddian

*College of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences, Flinders University, Australia*

### **Satire and the Contempt Anger Disgust (CAD) triad of emotions**

Satire has generally been linked to, and often subsumed by, comedy and humour because the classic response to it is laughter. There is, indeed, a lot of overlap between these four words in common usage, for better and worse. This paper focuses on important aspects of the satirical mode that elicit unfunny feelings, precious little reconciliation, and harsh laughter at best. While it is certainly not a good idea to reduce one's sense of satire entirely to ridicule, there is a large tidal difference between satire, which tends to extravagant criticism in the manner of Shakespeare's Timon, and comedy, which tends towards the reconciling kindness and wisdom of his Benedick: 'for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion.' A way of framing this tidal difference is to attend to the way satire mobilises the 'moral', 'harsh', or 'negative' emotions, particularly the triad identified in neuroscience as CAD, for contempt, anger, and disgust. This paper addresses philosophical and psychological accounts of these emotions to argue that they are an integral element of satirical affect.



## Professor Daniel Z. Kadar

*Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Dalian University of Foreign Languages, PRC.*

### **Ritual Activity Types and Humour**

A noteworthy characteristic of ritual activity types is that they tolerate more extreme manifestations of humour than do 'ordinary' instances of interaction. This is because engaging in ritual is communally-oriented, and rights and obligations in ritual behaviour are different from those of ordinary life. In particular, in rites of aggression, some extreme forms of humour may not only be tolerated but even expected. Interestingly, little research has been done on the pragmatics of humour in such settings, including questions such as whether there are moral constraints on humour in rites of aggression. In this talk, I aim to explore this area.





## New Researcher Profile - Richard Scully

### University of New England

For as long as he can remember, Richard Scully has been fascinated by cartoons and comics. From drawing all sorts of doodles and sketches while at school, through to the serious study of 19<sup>th</sup> century caricature, Richard has spent much of his spare time over the years engaging with the incredibly rich history of graphic satire.

Like a pearl, Richard's interest in Humour Studies has grown largely from irritation. Historians still have a great deal of trouble taking comic images seriously. And yet, what a society found amusing can reveal so much about the culture and politics of the past. This was something that fired Richard's interest during his undergraduate studies at Monash University, and especially during his Honours year, when he was finally able to concentrate on one of his all-time pet subjects: the depiction of the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, in political cartoons. With the support of his supervisor – Barbara Caine (now Head of the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry, at the University of Sydney) – Richard then parlayed his BA (Hons) into a PhD that looked at British images of Germany across the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in which cartoons featured prominently. It was also at Barbara's suggestion that Richard (together with Marian Quartly) edited *Drawing the Line: Using Cartoons as Historical Evidence* (Clayton, Monash University Press, 2009). Upon publication, the book was described (by Robert Phiddian in the *Australian Book Review*) as 'a great leap forward' for the scholarship of cartoons, and its contents still represents some of the best scholarship in the field from Europe, North America, and Australasia.

Richard likes to think that it was the quirky nature of his research interests that got him over the line at his first permanent position: Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of New England, Armidale. Since commencing in that role in 2009, cartoons have been the central concern of his research and key to all aspects of his teaching and supervision. 'There's always a cartoon' might be the closest thing he has to a professional mantra or motto, and research into cartoonists' engagement with German President Paul von Hindenburg, Emperor of the French Napoleon III, and (currently) Britain's King George VI, has sustained him over the last decade or so. The cartoon-heavy *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism and Ambivalence, 1860-1914* (Basingstoke, 2012) and *Eminent Victorian Cartoonists* (3 volumes, London, 2018) are the best evidence of Richard's passion for the study of cartoons; while his ARC DECRA (2013-2015) award concentrated on the Anglo-American tradition of political cartooning.



Richard Scully, at the 2018 launch of his book, [\*Eminent Victorian Cartoonists\*](#) (3 Vols, London, Political Cartoon Society, 2018), at the Political Cartoon Gallery, London.

At present, Richard is collaborating with other AHSN colleagues from Flinders, Monash and the ANU, with a view to creating linkages with the Australian cartooning industry. Partners from the Australian Cartoonists Association, Museum of Australian Democracy, and National Cartoon Gallery are looking to develop – for the first time – a comprehensive history of the journalistic art in Australia, from European settlement through to the internet age. Concurrently, Richard is engaging with colleagues from overseas to lay the foundations for a global history of cartoons.

Richard is a member of EIRIS (Équipe Interdisciplinaire de Recherche sur l'Image Satirique), a Life Member of the Cartoon Museum (London), and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He is on the editorial boards of the US-based *International Journal of Comic Art* (ed. John Lent) and of the French journal *Ridiculousa*. His new edited collection (in the spirit of *Drawing the Line*) is due out with Manchester University Press this November: *Comic Empires: Imperialism in Cartoons, Caricature, and Satirical Art*.

Contact Richard about his work at: [rscully@une.edu.au](mailto:rscully@une.edu.au)

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## Launch of an AHSN Member's New Book

**Lindsay Foyle, AHSN Review Panel Member** (and honorary AHSN in-house artist, designer of our wonderful jesting logo), has been trying to perfect inertia for some time (see cartoon below). He says that after his failure to do so, he decided to put 300 of his cartoons into a book called *Could I Have a Receipt?* This will not make it into bookshops, but will be sold as an “e” book via Amazon at just under \$10.

The printed version came off the press last week, and will be launched at **7.00 pm on 27 November 2019 at The Corner Gallery, 88 Percival Road, Stanmore, Sydney.**

Anybody and everybody is/are welcome, but most especially AHSN members and friends, and while the book will be on sale for the occasion, the wine will be free!

Copies of the 100-page A4 sized book will also be **available from the author** for members wanting one but unable to get to the opening. He undertakes to post it to you for \$30 and \$5 a copy extra for mailing if you email him at:

[lindsay44@optusnet.com.au](mailto:lindsay44@optusnet.com.au)

### About the Author

Lindsay Foyle started drawing comic strips while attending Peakhurst Primary School in 1956. He started cartooning in 1976 when working at *The Bulletin* and almost a decade later started to write and publish on the history of Australian cartooning. In 1996, he joined *The Australian* where he worked as a subeditor while also cartooning and writing about cartooning. He left in 2010 and he has free-lanced ever



since. He continues to write on cartooning and in 2018 was invited to contribute to the Melbourne Press Club's Hall of Fame. He has been a member of the Australian Cartoonists' Association since 1970 and twice president and has written for the ACA's quarterly magazine *Inkspot* in most issues since it was first published in 1985. He has also published on the Aussie larrikin image (with Jessica Milner Davis, in *Satire and Politics: The Interplay of Heritage and Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) and other academic studies of humour and cartooning. Lindsay has been a member of the Australasian Humour Studies Network for nearly two decades and a member of the Review Panel since 2016.

Eds: Sincere congratulations, Lindsay!

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## Members New Publications

Sinkeviciute, Valeria. 2019. The interplay between humour and identity construction: From humorous identities to identities constructed through humorous practices. *Journal of Pragmatics* 152: 127-131. At: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.07.005>

Sinkeviciute, Valeria. 2019. Juggling identities in interviews: The metapragmatics of 'doing humour'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 152: 216-227. At: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2018.08.005>

Sinkeviciute, Valeria, ed. 2019. *Special Issue on The Interplay Between Humour and Identity Construction*, *Journal of Pragmatics*. At: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/journal-of-pragmatics/vol/152/suppl/C>

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## Member's New Book

**Valeria Sinkeviciute. 2019 (forthcoming). *Conversational Humour and (Im)politeness: A Pragmatic Analysis of Social Interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 274pp.**

This book is the first systematic study that offers a socio-pragmatic perspective on humorous practices such as teasing, mockery and taking the piss and their relation to (im)politeness. Analyzing data from corpora, reality television and interviews in Australian and British cultural contexts, this book contributes to cross-cultural and intercultural research on humour and its role in social interaction.

Although, in both contexts, jocular verbal practices are highly valued and a positive response – the 'preferred reaction' – can be expected, the conceptualisation of what is seen as humorous can vary, especially in terms of what 'goes too far'. By examining how attempts at humour can occasion offence, presenting a distinction between 'frontstage' and 'backstage' perceptions of jocularity and looking at how language users evaluate jocular behaviours in interaction, this study shows how humour and (im)politeness are co-constructed and negotiated in discourse. This book will be of interest to scholars and students in pragmatics, conversational humour, (im)politeness, intercultural communication, discourse analysis, television studies and interaction in English-speaking contexts.

Hardbound – Forthcoming: ISBN 9789027204134 | EUR 99.00 | USD 149.00

e-Book – Ordering information: ISBN 9789027262110 | EUR 99.00 | USD 149.00

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## About the Author

**Valeria Sinkeviciute** is Lecturer in Applied Linguistics in the School of Languages and Cultures at The University of Queensland, Australia. Her main research interests lie in the field of pragmatics of social interaction and discourse analysis with a focus on conversational humour, linguistic (im)politeness, identity construction, social media and reality television discourse. She is the author of a number of papers on these topics in journals and edited volumes.

### *Praise for Conversational Humour and (Im)politeness:*

“In this thoroughly empirical study of phenomena at the crossroads of humor and politeness, Valeria Sinkeviciute shows how interpretations of verbal behavior can go in different directions, even at the same time, and for the same participants, at different levels of publicness. Her work makes it impossible for pragmaticians to avoid thinking about meaning in terms of meaning potential.”

**Jef Verschueren**, *University of Antwerp, The Netherlands*

“There are far too many studies that talk the talk (blind us with yet more theoretical notions and terms) without walking the walk (doing the necessary empirical footwork). This study, couched in lucid prose, brilliantly does both. Focusing on humour in interactions, it eclectically combines theory from (im)politeness and humour research, and drives it all robustly forward with data from corpora, reality television discourse and qualitative interviewing. Trailblazing, to say the least!”

**Jonathan Culpeper**, *Lancaster University, UK*

“This book offers fascinating insights into British and Australian jocular practices based on interviews and the discourse of reality television shows, an excellent source of publically available natural language data. I highly recommend Valeria Sinkeviciute's work to everybody interested in cross-cultural and inter-cultural studies on conversational humour and (im)politeness.”

**Marta Dynel**, *University of Lodz, Poland*



## AUSTRALIAN CARTOONING MUSEUM – New Home In Melbourne Docklands--And A Call For Volunteers!



The ACM is delighted to announce the opening of its new premises at the District Docklands. These new premises will open in November 2019. As you know, ACM is a charity whose Purpose is “to champion cartoons and cartoonists to entertain, educate and inspire people to think visually and creatively”.

Through this Purpose, we reckon people can solve their problems and challenges more effectively and achieve their goals in new and faster ways. That’s why the work of the ACM is so useful and important, and why your role in it as a volunteer will be so important.

The ACM’s Vision is “to be globally recognised as advocates for re-enforcing the need for design and creative thinking using cartooning”. Wouldn’t it be great to achieve this Vision? Think of how better design and better creativity’ by many people will help make the world a better place!

We need your help as a volunteer to represent the ACM in our Docklands premises. You will be the face of ACM, and you will be there to personally greet visitors and make them feel at home while they enjoy whatever is on display. Computer and scanning skills would be an advantage but not necessary but you’ll need your sense of humour!

**That’s it. Not difficult.** And we will train you in everything you need to know, which is not much! (thank goodness!!)

Contact the Museum Folks on: [newsletter@theaustraliancartoonmuseum.com.au](mailto:newsletter@theaustraliancartoonmuseum.com.au)

ACM Toon Talk Show at:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIQfvC8QivqbFQS5Ep16qIQ?mc\\_cid=849c5f6df2&mc\\_eid=17185c2390](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIQfvC8QivqbFQS5Ep16qIQ?mc_cid=849c5f6df2&mc_eid=17185c2390)



AHSN member, Jim Bridges, President of the ACM (R) with his  
cartoon museum helpers – join the team!



## 32<sup>ND</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR HUMOR STUDIES 2020

ISHS Returns to Italy and the University of Bologna's Lovely Bertinoro  
Campus, 29 June – 3 July 2020

The 32<sup>nd</sup> ISHS Conference will take place at the University of Bologna's Bertinoro Campus, from June 29 to July 30, 2020. Registration and the Call for Papers for the 2020 ISHS Conference is set to begin on 1 **November 2019**, and is accessed through the **Conference website** at: <https://eventi.unibo.it/ishs-2020>. You will be able to submit proposals for papers and for moderated conference panels, symposia, and roundtables of 90 minutes or 180 minutes in length. Panel proposals should include an abstract of 250 to 300 words along with a preliminary list of contributors and their e-mails. Proposals should also indicate whether the panel would be open to additional contributors who could submit panel papers following the opening of Conference registration. The **official call for papers, beginning in November 2019 will run through 1 March 2020**.

*The Conference Convenor* is Prof. Delia Chiaro, Dept of Interpretation and Translation Studies, University of Bologna, and past President of ISHS.

**Bertinoro** is a town situated halfway between the cities of Forlì and Cesena, 6 km away from the SS9 thoroughfare (Via Emilia). Forlì is the town of reference for transport to and from Bertinoro. **The University of Bologna's Residential Centre** is situated in a recently modernized mediaeval stronghold and its fortified walls, set on a hilltop overlooking acres of beautiful Italian countryside, terraced vineyards and the Adriatic Sea. Situated half way between the city of Bologna and the Republic of San Marino and the Adriatic coast, it is a superb location for hosting the ISHS conference.



The complex is located at the top of the built up area of the ancient town of Bertinoro. It lies inside an age-old stronghold and consists of three large, historical, monumental buildings, which were restored and refurbished in 1994. Since then the centre has been functioning both as the University's Summer School and as the site of national and international conferences. Bertinoro is an extremely intimate conference venue as all the buildings involved are virtually a few meters from one another and the town itself is just a short downhill walk away.



More on the venue and travel options at: <https://eventi.unibo.it/ishs-2020/travel-and-venue>

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### Call for Papers

#### Frontiers' new Research Topic about Humor and Creativity

This is a Call for contributions to Frontiers' new Research Topic about Humor and Creativity. It could be either a research article, as well as a theoretical one. Please feel free to extend this invitation to whom it may interest. You can find all the detailed information below.

In collaboration with the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*, we are bringing together a selected group of international experts to contribute to an open-access article collection on:

[Not Funny! A \[Super\] Serious Multidisciplinary Exploration of Humor Creativity](#)

### *Editors*

- Claudio Lucchiari - University of Milan Milan, Italy
- Maria Elide Vanutelli - University of Milan Milan, Italy
- Ori Amir - University of Southern California Los Angeles, United States
- Mirella Manfredi - Mackenzie Presbyterian University São Paulo, Brazil

*The submission deadline is 31 March 2020*

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- Advanced impact metrics

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Kind Regards,

Maria Elide Vanutelli

Topic Editor

Cognitive Science Section, *Frontiers in Psychology*

On behalf of the Topic Editors.

Note for all authors: Please check the list of contributing journals/sections at the [homepage](#) and choose the most relevant section for your submission. All contributions to this Research Topic must be within the scope of the section and journal to which they are submitted.

## Call For Papers And Book Reviews

*Thematic Issue – Humour across Languages and Cultures*

*Bulletin of Transilvania, University of Braşov. Series IV – Philology. Cultural Studies 2/2019*

Is it *humour* that brings humans to life? Its original meaning was derived from the Latin concept for moisture or liquid, being used in close connection with the constitution of personhood, in the ancient and medieval medicine. “Character and temperament were understood to be governed by a mixture of the four humors, or fluids, that defined the physical makeup of the person: blood, phlegm, choler, and the black bile or melancholy” (Wickberg 2014: 350) and the humoral theory provided a scheme of classification for defining the type of temperament and for treating characterological illness. Humour and character were closely associated in early modern British comedy of humours (Ben Jonson’s *Every Man Out of His Humor*, 1599), where the extravagance of characters was explained by an imbalance in the humors and became the basis of any laughable representations. The humoral character provoked laughter in others but was not himself a self-conscious creator of laughter. Starting with the 18th century, the focus on embodiment led many to contrast humour with wit. While wit was intellectual, clever, based on mental incongruities, stylish manners of the clever, and erudition, humour, on the other hand, was concerned with the extravagance of character, being defined more by emotion than by intellect. Humour was later associated with democracy, the natural and unlearned force of character, and the ordinary experience. In the 18th and 19th centuries, “humour was increasingly seen as a subjective quality of mind and perception rather than an objective quality of character (...) [and] it was now associated with a way of perceiving odd characters and, by extension, incongruous situations and ideas” (Wickberg 2014: 350). Even as humour came to be more a psychological concept and eventually a form of literary representation, it claimed a hold on the emotion of sympathetic identification and not only on the superiority defined by the emotional distance of the object of laughter. The redefinition of humour as an expression of love for the others, as benevolent laughter, was compatible with the emergence of sentimental ethics and middle-class Victorianism. “By the mid-19th century, humor had been abstracted from character and made into a form of emotional perception to such an extent that it could be understood in terms of a newly defined character trait: the sense of humour” (Wickberg 2014: 351). Perceiving and appreciating the world in humorous terms became a useful attribute of social acceptance, defining a balanced and self-regulating person. By the 20th century, the idea of humour had become an umbrella term for all forms of laughable representation.

The topics may include and are not restricted to:

- Cross-cultural humour
- Humour in education
- Anthropology, folklore, and ethnicity of humour
- Literature and literary genres involving humour
- Humour theories and theorists
- Humour in the media - Infotainment and new genres
- The entertainment industry
- Humour across professions
- Psycho- and sociolinguistic approaches to humour
- Visual humour

For the present issue, we welcome contributions in one of the following sections:

- Language studies
- Literature

- Cultural studies
- Review articles of one of the following books or other recent books about humour:
  - *The Dynamics of Interactional Humor: Creating and negotiating humor in everyday encounters*, edited by Villy Tsakona and Jan Chovanec, 2018, 316 pp.
  - *Satire, Humor and the Construction of Identities*, by Massih Zekavat, 2017, 210 pp.

We encourage interdisciplinary approaches of humour, ranging across literary and cultural studies, linguistics as well as other disciplines in the humanities. Contributions may be written in English, French or German, must have an abstract of about 120 words in English and authors are advised to follow the journal's submission guidelines and style sheet.

The deadline for article submissions is **31 October 2019**. Articles should be sent as an electronic copy in Word for Windows to the editor of the volume [stanca.mada@gmail.com](mailto:stanca.mada@gmail.com).

All submitted articles will be double blind peer-reviewed. Accepted articles will be returned for post-review revisions by 30 November 2019 and are expected back in their final version on or before 10 December 2019.

Dr Stanca Mada  
 University of Transilvania  
 Brasov, Romania  
 Co-Convenor of the 2017 International Summer School on Humor and Laughter  
 E: [stanca.mada@gmail.com](mailto:stanca.mada@gmail.com).

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## **Reminder, Conference on “Laughing in an Emergency: Humour in Contemporary Art”**

University of Manchester UK, April 17-18, 2020

In addition to keynotes from leading international artists including Richard Bell (Australia) and Stefanos Tsivopoulos (Greece/US), we welcome proposals from scholars and practitioners addressing the interface of humour and contemporary art from diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives. Topics to be addressed include, but are not restricted to, contemporary art and the following: humour and crisis, humour and the global south, humour and identity, humour and gender, humour and resistance, humour and the museum, humour and authenticity, humour and contemporaneity, humour and the art market, humour and cultural resilience. The Call for proposals has now closed but for enquiries, please contact the conference organisers at:

[liae@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:liae@manchester.ac.uk)

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**Dr Frederik Byrn Köhlert**

is a lecturer in Comics Studies and American Studies at the University of East Anglia. He is the author of *Serial Selves: Identity and Representation in Autobiographical Comics* (Rutgers University Press, 2019) and *The Chicago Literary Experience: Writing the City, 1893-1953* (University of Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2011). He is also the series editor of *Routledge Focus on Gender, Sexuality, and Comics Studies*, the editor of *A History of Chicago Literature* (forthcoming from Cambridge University Press), and the course director for the Master of Arts program in Comics Studies at the University of East Anglia.

**When**

Thursday 2pm-4pm  
 December 5, 2019  
 SLC Common Room 536,  
 Level 5, Brennan MacCallum  
 Building A18

**For more information**

Dr Benjamin Nickl, International  
 Comparative Literature and  
 Translation Studies

[benjamin.nickl@sydney.edu.au](mailto:benjamin.nickl@sydney.edu.au)

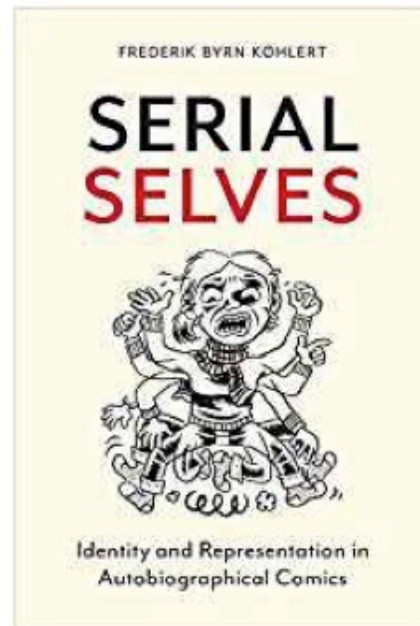
&

Dr Rodney Taveira, United  
 States Studies Centre

[rodney.taveira@sydney.edu.au](mailto:rodney.taveira@sydney.edu.au)

CRICOS 00026A

## ICLS Research Seminar Co-hosted by United States Studies Centre



### “A Grotesque, Incurable Disease”: Whiteness as Illness in Gabby Schulz’s *Sick*

**Abstract:**

Graphic memoirs of illness and disability typically either insist on the representation of physical difference or work to make outwardly imperceptible ailments visible, both of which are strategies enabled by the comics form’s ability to depict subjective notions of bodies as well as mental states as drawings on the page. But what happens if such embodiment is bound up with bland but complicit racial whiteness—a color typically represented on the comics page as nothing more than an absence—as seen and experienced by the artist through the lens of debilitating bodily illness? In *Sick*, his 2016 memoir about suffering under a mysterious illness, Gabby Schulz (who is also known under the pen name of Ken Dahl, the author of *Monsters*) visually investigates the intersection of illness and whiteness in an America desperate to efface its own privilege. As fever wreaks havoc on his body, Schulz begins to see—and to visually depict—his entire existence as a ghost trying on a series of disguises intended to conceal what he calls the “psychic stillbirth” of being white in America—a perspective that allows him to understand, as he says, that “‘embracing my heritage’ is like covering myself in shit.” In this way, Schulz’s critique also comes to include not only the comics form itself, which has so often served to naturalize whiteness as the universal human category, but also the habitual neglect in comics scholarship to examine the racial implications of the white spaces on the page. A horror story with whiteness as its monster, *Sick* helps fill this scholarly gap through drawn depictions of white racial identity morphing into increasingly disturbing images of the death and destruction upon which it rests.

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***AHSN'ers at the International Conference on Verbal Humor,  
23-25 October 2019, Universidad de Alicante, Spain.***



L-R: Debra Aarons, UNSW, AHSN Review Panel member; Wladyslaw Chlopicki, Jagellonian University, delegate to AHSN Conferences, Newcastle 2013 and Cairns 2018; Delia Chiaro, University of Bologna, Convenor ISHS 2020; Kerry Mullan, Chair, AHSN Board; Neal Norrick, University of Saarbrücken.

Full report on this conference convened by G.R.I.A.L.E, in the next Digest.

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

### ***The Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)***

***'We put the "U" back into "HUMOUR"!'***

Send newsletter submissions to our Co-Editors:

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