VARIETIES OF HUMOUR AND LAUGHTER
18th Colloquium of the Australasian Humour Studies Network
3-4 February 2012
UNIVERSITY HOUSE, THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

FRIDAY 3 FEBRUARY

8.30-9.00 **Registration & Coffee** **The Common Room**

9.00-9.10 **Welcome: Dr Jan Lloyd Jones**

9.10-10.30 **Plenary Session:** *Satire and Offence*

Chair: Dr Jessica Milner Davis

9.10-9.40 Dr Christopher G. Rea, Australian Centre on China in the World, ANU, and University of British Columbia, *Riding the Grass Mud Horse: Parody and Spoofing (e'gao) on the Chinese Internet*

9.40-10.10 Prof. Michael Ewans FAHA, Drama, Fine Art and Music, University of Newcastle, *Aristophanic Elements in 'South Park'*

10.10-10.30 Discussion

10.30-11.00 **Morning Tea (The Common Room)**

11.00-12.30	**Parallel Session A: (Common Room)**	**Parallel Session B: (Drawing Room)**
	Humour and the Other	*Humour and Well-Being*
	Chair: Dr Mike Lloyd	**Chair: Dr Bruce Findlay**
11.00-11.30	Assoc. Prof. Louise D'Arcens, English, University of Wollongong, *Here lies Edmund Blackadder, and he's bloody annoyed': (Anti-) historical Humour in 'Blackadder'*	Prof. Carmen Moran, Arts, Charles Sturt University, *Comparing and Contrasting the Effects of Humour and Alcohol on Wellbeing*
11.30-12.00	Mrs Mira Crouch, Social Science/ International Studies, UNSW, *Irish and Jewish Jokes in Theory and Practice*	Dr Prudence Millear, Psychology, University of the Sunshine Coast, *Humour as a Coping Style and its Relationship to Optimism and Self-Efficacy, Well-Being and Mental Health*
12.00-12.30	Assoc. Prof. Anne Brewster, English, UNSW, *Aboriginal Gallows Humour and its White Readers*	Dr Peter Spitzer, The Humour Foundation, *SMILE Study Results (2009-2011)*

12.30-1.30 **Working Lunch (The Common Room)**

1.30-3.00	**Parallel Session A:**	**Parallel Session B:**
	Playful Seriousness	*Punning*
	Chair: Dr Mark Rolfe	**Chair: Conjoint Prof. Michael Ewans**
1.30-2.00	Ms Elisha McIntyre, PhD Candidate, Religion, University of Sydney, *What's so Funny about Faith? Christian Stand-up Comedy and Religious Values*	Dr Debra Aarons, Linguistics, UNSW, *Linguistic Jokes and the Cryptic Crossword Puzzle*
2.00-2.30	Dr Will Noonan, Monde Anglophone, Université de Paris III, *'Aux antipodes de l'humour': Ludic Movements in French Literary Culture and their Possible Equivalents in English*	Miss Helen Appleton, PhD Candidate, English, University of Sydney, *No Pun Intended? Reading Humour in Old English Poetry*
2.30-3.00	Dr Brigid Maher, Italian, La Trobe University, *Macaronic Satire in Italy: Language, Translation and Meaningful Nonsense*	Dr Hannah Burrows, English, University of Sydney, *Norsing Around: Tracing Humour in the Transmission of an Old Norse-Icelandic Saga*

3.00-3.30 **Afternoon Tea   (The Common Room)**

3.30-5.30 **Plenary Session:** *Framing Humour*

Chair: Dr Jessica Milner Davis

3.30-4.00 Dr Angus McLachlan, Psychology, University of Ballarat,
When is Laughter not Humorous?

4.00-4.30 Dr Mike Lloyd, Sociology, Victoria University of Wellington, and Dr Paul Jewell, Philosophy, Flinders University,
'Nothing so Ambitious as a Theory'? The Enigma of Goffman's 'Fun in Games' and the Sociology of Humour

4.30-5.00 Prof. Conal Condren FAHA FASSA, Centre for History of European Discourses, University of Queensland,
Humour and Theoretical Incongruity

5.00-5.30 Discussion

5.30-6.00 **Drinks & Dinner Announcements**

SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY

8.30-9.00	**Welcome Tea & Coffee The Common Room**	
9.00-10.30	**Parallel Session A:**	**Parallel Session B:**
	Comic Verse	*Uses of Humour*
	Chair: Dr Peter Kirkpatrick	**Chair: Dr Maren Rawlings**
9.00-9.30	Dr Janet Hadley Williams , Cultural Inquiry, ANU, *'Elrich, Parodic, Impossible: Varieties of Humour in Medieval Scottish Poetry*	Dr David Rawlings, Psychology, Uni. Of Melbourne, *Examining the Relationship Between Humour Appreciation and the Autism Spectrum in a University Sample*
9.30-10.00	Mr Bradley Wells, PhD Candidate, English, University of Sydney, *'Watch Your Back!' Co-inhered Humour in the Divine Vision of Charles Williams's Verse Drama*	Mr Scott Gardner, Education, Okayama University, *Learning about Communication Using Scenes of Pythonesque Miscommunication*
10.00-10.30	Dr Jan Lloyd Jones, English, ANU, *How to be a Bad Poet; or, the Delight of Unintended Humour*	Dr Bruce Findlay, Psychology, Swinburne Uni. of Technology, *Use of Humour During Conflict Between Close Individuals*
10.30-11.00	**Morning Tea (The Common Room)**	
11.00-12.30	**Parallel Session A:**	**Parallel Session B:**
	Satire, Spoof and Camp	*New Approaches to Humour*
	Chair: Em. Prof. Conal Condren	**Chair: Prof. Carmen Moran**
11.00-11.30	Dr Peter Kirkpatrick, English, University of Sydney, *Patrick White, Humour and Camp*	Miss Jennifer Juckel, PhD Candidate, Media Psychology, Murdoch Uni., *What's so Funny? Using a Multidisciplinary Approach to Understand Sitcom Success*
11.30-12.00	Mr Pip Muratore, PhD Candidate, French Studies & Italian Studies, University of Sydney, *Making a Song and Dance about Sex*	Mr Michael Meany, PhD Candidate, Design Communication & IT, Victoria University, *The Vaudeville 'Two-Act' in a New Media Environment*

12.00-12.30	Dr Benjamin McCann, French, University of Adelaide, *'And don't call me Shirley': Leslie Nielsen and the Deadpan Tradition*	Mr Marshall Heiser, PhD Candidate, Qld C. of Music, Griffith University *The Sonic Saboteur: Jaques Tati Versus the Great American Narrative Franchise*

12.30-1.30 **Working Lunch   (The Common Room)**

1.30-3.00	**Parallel Session A:**	**Parallel Session B:**
	Analysing Humour	*Creating Humour*
	Chair: Dr Will Noonan	**Chair: Mr Rodney Marks**
1.30-2.00	Mr George Catsi, DCA Candidate, Creative Practices & Creative Economy, UTS, *Playing the Line in Contemporary Australian Satire: Too far Either Side can be Deadly*	Mr Nick Smith, PhD Candidate, Creative Writing, ANU, *Workshop Reading, with Discussion, from 'The Future of Food', a Comic Novel*
2.00-3.00	Mr Anton Crouch, Independent Scholar, *Ethnic Stereotyping in Comedy Duos* (workshop)	Mr Peter Kingsley, Farceur, Actor (LAMDA), *The Dramaturgy of a Stage Farce* (workshop and staged reading)

3.00-3.30 **Afternoon Tea   (The Common Room)**

3.30-5.30 **Plenary Session:** *Cartooning* **(The Common Room)**

Chair: Dr Jan Lloyd Jones

3.30-4.00 Mr Rolf Heimann, Cartoonist & Cartoon Historian, *The Changing Face of Caricature*

4.00-4.30 Mr Lucien Leon, PhD Candidate, Research School of Humanities & Arts, ANU, *Mashed Up Political Cartoons: The Video Satire of Hugh Atkin*

4.30-5.00 Assoc. Prof. Robert Phiddian, English, Flinders University, *Australian Cartoons and Cartoonists: An Overview with Speculation on Disciplinary Homelessness*

5.00-5.30 Concluding Discussion

5.30-6.00 **Farewell Drinks**

6.30-9.00pm **Dinner Meeting of AHSN Review Panel**

KEYNOTE

Dr Christopher G. Rea, Postdoctoral Fellow, Australian Centre on China in the World, ANU, and Chinese Literature, University of British Columbia
Riding the Grass Mud Horse: Parody and Spoofing (*e'gao*) on the Chinese Internet

Back in the heady days of 2009, a "mythical beast" galloped its way across Chinese cyberspace and into the lexicon of China-watchers, netizens, and cultural cognoscenti around the world. The Grass Mud Horse (*caonima*) looked as adorable as an alpaca but sounded like a big FU to the Chinese Communist Party and its legions of cybercensors. The GMH was soon celebrated as an icon of *e'gao*, a sub-culture of spoofing and parodic irreverence that in the 21st century has grown into one of the biggest stories to date of the Chinese internet age. This talk considers the question "What, if anything, is different about Chinese parody in cyberspace?", by highlighting several of the unique features of *e'gao* culture, including its use of Chinese-language puns and its indebtedness to Mainland China's material culture of rampant "knock-offs" known as *shanzhai*. Finally, it asks: Jolly on, Grass Mud Horse, but, given how fast internet trends rise and fall, does this steed still have legs, or has it run its course?

Bio-note: Christopher Rea was born in Berkeley, California and raised on a strict diet of *Monty Python*. He studied Chinese at Dartmouth College and Columbia University, with a break in between to work in the exciting fields of insurance consulting, DSL brokering, and bank regulation. Since receiving his PhD in 2008, he has taught modern Chinese literature at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He recently edited the book *Humans, Beasts, and Ghosts: Stories and Essays by Qian Zhongshu* (Columbia, 2011) and will be at ANU in 2012 to finish writing a monograph on the literary and cultural history of laughter in modern China.

PAPERS

Dr Debra Aarons, Linguistics, UNSW
Linguistic Jokes and the Cryptic Crossword Puzzle

I have argued previously (Author, 2011) that certain kinds of joke tap our tacit knowledge of the language we use, and bring this linguistic knowledge to conscious awareness. In getting a joke, we realise that there is something surprising about the structure and function of language that we might not previously have noticed. In contrast to jokes which use language play that involves tacit knowledge of language, and create humour through freshness and surprise, cryptic crossword clues recruit the same mechanisms, but with different effects. Whereas both linguistic jokes and cryptic clues are kinds of language play that work with the structure of language, solving the cryptic clue and getting the linguistic joke are profoundly different in terms of their role in communication. Cryptic clues are part of a particular kind of ludic language that is probably the most extreme example of playing with language form. This peculiar blend of pure play and the blind application of literalism to be found in the cryptic crossword blurs all the distinctions between linguistic levels, uses rebuses and cratylic language, swings between spoken and written modalities and is

deliberately vague about the difference between use and mention. Cryptic crossword clues force solvers to work against all their grammatical intuitions, in viewing language elements as pieces to be joined with total disregard for rules of linguistic structure and use. When working with language as bits of code, puzzlers are thrown into their intuitions constantly, and consciously have to fight against them: cryptic crosswords really do not carve up language at the joints. In this way, they serve as an interesting and puzzling contrast to linguistic jokes.

I examine the ways in which linguistic jokes and cryptic crossword clues use similar mechanisms, how they differ in some of the elements they use, and speculate on why it is that linguistic jokes are clever, funny and satisfying for teller and listener alike, whereas the solver's pleasure, no matter how satisfying, is a solitary one, restricted by the confines of the grid. Finally, I present arguments demonstrating that despite their play with similar mechanisms of language use, cryptic clues, unlike linguistic jokes, tell us less about the human capacity for language, and more about the human capacity for problem solving.

Miss Helen Appleton, PhD Candidate, English, University of Sydney
No Pun Intended? Reading Humour in Old English Poetry

Old English poetry has a love of irony, litotes and paronomasia; these devices could create humour, yet it is difficult for the modern reader to determine whether the poet intended to do so, particularly in poems with a religious subject, such as *Andreas* and *Judith*. Is it merely conventional Old English poetic style or are these devices employed for comic effect? Should we laugh or recoil when drowning is described as 'a bitter beer-drinking' in *Andreas*? Grand, heroic language creates a similar difficulty; when applied to the unheroic it is difficult to determine whether this is comic absurdity or conventional poetic style. This paper will explore the issue of ambiguous humour in Old English poetry; I will consider whether doubt about its presence stems not simply from the modern reader's uncertainty about what the Anglo-Saxons would have laughed at, but is deliberately constructed in the texts themselves.

Dr Hannah Burrows, English, University of Sydney
Norsing Around: Tracing Humour in the Transmission of an Old Norse-Icelandic Saga

There are three medieval redactions of the Old Norse-Icelandic legendary saga *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*. One episode of the saga comprises a riddle-contest between the eponymous King Heiðrekr and a man he believes to be his enemy Gestumblindi, but is actually the god Óðinn, a well-known expert in poetic wisdom contests, in disguise. The different redactions present this contest in different ways; in particular, they contain differing amounts of dialogue between riddles, and in one redaction (the oldest, but not the one usually chosen for modern-day editions and translations) Gestumblindi/Óðinn makes a large number of quips, wry statements and ironic uses of proverbs. This paper will examine the humorous effect of each redaction, considering why such variety might exist and what this adds to our understanding of the humour of other cultures and how we can access it.

Assoc. Prof. Anne Brewster, English, UNSW
Aboriginal Gallows Humour and its White Readers

This paper analyses the gallows humour in Nyoongar writer Alf Taylor's collection of stories *Long Time Now* (2003) and the way that it addresses the endemic problem of alcohol abuse in Aboriginal communities. It is based on the premise that humour is essentially social – that it is mobilised through a set of contractual psychical relations. Aboriginal literature has many audiences; in this paper my interest lies in the cultural work it undertakes in a white cross-racial reading. I draw upon Freud's model of joking in *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten* (1905) to argue that a cross-racial reading of Aboriginal literature requires us to rethink Freud's model (of the psychical relations between teller, reader and butt of joke telling) because it instantiates a situation where the white reader is also the butt of the (indigenous) joke.

Mr George Catsi, DCA Candidate, Creative Practices and Creative Economy, University of Technology, Sydney
Playing the Line in Contemporary Australian Satire: Too far Either Side can be Deadly*

As an exploration of Christian fundamentalist evangelism through satirical performance, writing and media, my doctoral thesis and associated creative work -- a satirical evangelical project called, "I Want to Be Slim" -- seeks to personify the interface between persuasion and the characters in which it is embodied. This reflective paper strives to draw out, unveil and create threads between the two by dissecting the process of creation of satirical characters and, within that, finding key points of observation and humour.   In this creation phase, the notion of a predetermined sliding scale of offence created by the author, targeting parts of the audience differentially, has the author endeavouring to create performances that sail "close to the line", thus giving the satire its potency. However, this also necessarily creates interpretations of "overperformance" and "crossing the line" by one observer group, juxtaposed against underperformance expectations by another group for those projects deemed not to have gone far enough or be funny enough. This analysis will draw on other contemporary examples of Australian performance satire including characterisations in *The Chaser's War on Everything* and *Angry Boys*. **This paper was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.*

Satire as a form is often at best misrepresented, if not misunderstood, leading to differing expectations of its ability to be outwardly humorous whilst cutting into its chosen subjects. Most oft portrayed in the sense of political satire, the representation of other types of satire is at times bundled in with parody and farce. More precision about terminology is required, or else the potency of satirical observation can be diminished and overgeneralisation of satire as a form in its own right result.

Em. Prof. Conal Condren FAHA FASSA, Centre for History of European Discourses, University of Queensland
Humour and Theoretical Incongruity

The analysis of humour can be tricky as an inappropriate theoretical apparatus can itself generate a certain humorous incongruity. This is distinct from explaining a joke within a comic situation. The point at which an analysis can become, risible, is ultimately difficult to determine. One distinction, however, can be helpful, that

between framed humour and *serio ludere*. It is sometimes assumed that all humour is framed, dependent on a distinction between serious and non-serious discourse, and that the joke is, as it were, the paradigmatic example of humour. The argument of this paper is that this is inadequate. *Serio ludere* humour is not always helpfully seen as framed, and what characterises it is precisely the capacity to carry a heavier burden of theory than the humour that is framed. Illustrations will be drawn from academic analysis and modern satiric parody of forms of 'theory'.

Mrs Mira Crouch, Social Science & International Studies, UNSW
Irish and Jewish jokes in Theory and Practice

Both Victor Raskin and Christie Davies have written extensively on ethnic humour. There are points of contact between these positions since both emphasise the importance of set patters of ethnic jokes – ethnic joke scripts, as Raskin calls them. However, there is also a significant contrast between these two theorists. Raskin sees the boundaries between ethnic groups (or, rather, the perceptions of them) as building blocks of the semantic structure of jokes; he has little interest in how these jokes may function in their social context. For Davies, on the other hand, ethnic jokes clarify boundaries, reduce ambiguity and neutralize hostilities between groups (Raskin's "normal" group and "minority" group), while structurally resembling the model Raskin has put forward. In this sense the two positions can be considered to be complementary. Ultimately, however, neither can account for the "funniness" of an ethnic joke. These considerations will be developed further through an examination of Irish and Jewish jokes and the possible relationships between them. Some of these will be sourced from *The Penguin Book of Australian Jokes* (Phillip Adams and Patrice Newell, eds, 1994).

Dr Bruce Findlay and Ms Lena Fishman, Psychology, Swinburne University of Technology
Use of Humour During Conflict Between Close Individuals

It is now being increasingly recognised that humour can be both beneficial and detrimental to individuals and relationships. In order to investigate the positive and negative uses of humour during a conflict between close individuals, a convenience sample of 153 women and 55 men, aged between 18 and 64 years, completed the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) and the Relational Humor Inventory (RHI), and measures of closeness, relationship satisfaction and conflict. Contrary to expectations, participants did not report that they primarily used either positive or negative humour during conflict. However, as expected, the use of positive humour positively correlated with relationship satisfaction and with satisfaction with the outcome of the conflict. Although use of negative humour was negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction, as predicted, there were no significant correlations between negative humour use and satisfaction with the outcome of the conflict. Differences in humour use in different relationship types were also found. The relationship between scores on the more general use of humour (HSQ) and its specific use in a particular conflict situation (RHI) will also be discussed.

Assoc. Prof. Louise D'Arcens, English Literatures, University of Wollongong
"Here lies Edmund Blackadder, and he's bloody annoyed": (Anti-) historical Humour in Blackadder.

The 1980s historical sitcom *Blackadder,* which has repeatedly featured in 'Britain's Best Comedy' lists, offers a fascinating example of how modern humour engages with the historical past. Tracking the fortunes of its central character, Edmund Blackadder, through four periods of history (medieval, Elizabethan, Regency, and First World War), the series follows a particular historical trajectory: the closer Blackadder approaches to modernity, the lower his social status, and the higher his intelligence. Within this trajectory, the medieval past is presented as an era of aristocratic idiocy which must be transcended so the character can evolve toward intellectual, democratic – and comic – completion. Examining the character's dual 'progress' through historical and comic refinement, this paper asks the following: is it easier to do comic justice to the recent past? Do the series' comic goal and progressivist historical agenda validate caricatures of the distant past? In a climate increasingly sensitised toward the question of ethically responsible comic representations of cultural 'others', are the 'others' of the deep past – who can't talk back – still fair game for ridicule?

Conjoint Prof. Michael Ewans FAHA and Mr Dirk Gibb, Research Student, Drama, Fine Art and Music, University of Newcastle
Aristophanic Elements in "South Park"

There is no evidence that the creators of *South Park* have ever read or seen a comedy of Aristophanes; but Trey and Parker do acknowledge the influence of Monty Python's Flying Circus, which has undeniable Aristophanic elements; and arguably *South Park,* with its overt scatological and sexual humour, and its direct attacks on public figures, is even more Aristophanic in both spirit and style than the *Monty Python* films and television series. This paper will survey the main Aristophanic elements in *South Park,* including the episodic plot construction, the various kinds of humour used in the series, and the politico-social satire. Examples will be drawn from two episodes, *Smug Alert* (10.2) and *Sexual Healing* (14.1). It will be shown that there are close affinities between the work of 'the father of comedy' and two gifted practitioners in a new medium 2,500 years later. *Plus ça change…*

Mr Scott Gardner, Graduate School of Education, Okayama University
Learning about Communication Using Scenes of Pythonesque Miscommunication

This paper demonstrates how scenes from certain British TV shows (*Fawlty Towers, Monty Python*) can illustrate in a humorous way the communication challenges many university-level EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students face. The short scenes are selected to represent various linguistic levels (e.g., phonological, lexical, pragmatic) at which communication can fall apart. While these communication breakdowns in their TV context are intended to be humorous i.e. non-serious entertainment, for language learners they have additional pedagogical benefits, deriving directly from the humour. First, they create a relaxed atmosphere in which errors can be observed, tolerated, and laughed at without anxiety. Second, they open windows on how communication works. Discussing the humour, and what creates it, helps learners understand not only how language functions at the different levels indicated above, but also how playing with language can itself be both amusing and educational. Finally, the scenes impress upon learners the fact that negotiation of meaning in communication is a burden all participants carry, native and non-native speakers alike.

Dr Janet Hadley-Williams, Cultural Enquiry, The Australian National University
'Elrich', Parodic, Impossible: Varieties of Humour in Medieval Scottish Poetry

The finest of the Scottish medieval poets were well aware that it was the traditional office of poetry not only to teach but to delight. John Barbour, author of *The Bruce*, spoke of giving his audience 'plesance' (*Bruce*, 1:5), and Robert Henryson, author of *The Testament of Cresseid* and the *Morall Fabillis*, was not the only Scottish poet to recognize the need to mix 'merines' with more serious matters (*Morall Fabillis*, 26). One of the most distinctive features of medieval Scottish poetry is indeed a rich and varied body of comic narrative. Of outstanding interest is a striking group of short fantastic 'elrich' poems. Witty and amusing, these are usually located in a strange topsy-turvy Otherworld, peopled with elves, fairies, etins and other marvellous creatures. Several other early Scottish poems contain parodic elements, which mock romance themes, or religious ritual. A few more appear to delight in nonsense for its own sake. These three groups will be explored in this paper.

Mr Rolf Heimann, Cartoonist and Cartoon Historian, Melbourne
The Changing Face of Caricature

Dictated by changing technical possibilities and demands, the art of caricature has undergone a number of changes, the latest being the use of computers. Different techniques and methods will be explored in this presentation by comparing the works of caricaturists tackling the same face, for instance Rupert Murdoch being drawn by a number of artists. Also investigated are the humorous qualities which contribute to a good caricature and the methods by which caricaturists create their work. Examples are mostly selected from the Australian scene, such as from George Finey, Counihan and Bill Green, up to today's caricaturists like John Spooner, Bill Leak, Paul Harvey, Luke Watson, Simon Schneider etc. and including female artists such as Joanne Brooker and Judy Nadine.

Mr Marshall Heiser, PhD Candidate, Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University
The Sonic Saboteur: Jaques Tati Versus the Great American Narrative Franchise

Meares & Jones (2009) state that while the linear language of public reality flows along an 'axis of successions' (to use Sausurre's term), whenever human affairs are involved, elements of an essentially non-linear personal reality lie embedded within this channel. Similarly, Hollywood and the narrative form go hand-in-hand as proponents of progress, referring to the inner language of 'simultaneities' only in passing. Since Cubism however, the avant-garde of 20th Century art have championed the notion that in developing aesthetic unity, one need not deny "the contradictions and chaos of experience" (Holmberg, 1996: 93). Somewhere in between the spheres of art and commerce lay Jaques Tati, an Oscar-winning auteur who clearly paid homage to Hollywood's silent-era comedians despite being a master of cinema sound. Tati was also a saboteur extraordinaire of the great Hollywood narrative franchise and its ideal of progress, with one of his great weapons being the playful manipulation of the relationship between sight and sound. This paper will

explore several key examples of Tati's appropriately incongruous cinematic collisions of visual and sonic texts, which humorously undermine the world-view that Hollywood so often projects. (Paper includes excerpts from the author's forthcoming book chapter). *References:*

Heiser, M. (2012). "The Soundtrack as Appropriate Incongruity." In M. Evans (Ed.), Sounding Funny: Sound and Comedy Cinema. London: Equinox.

Meares, R., & Jones, S. (2009). Analogical Relatedness in Personal Integration or Coherence. Contemporary psychoanalysis, 45(4), 504-519.

Oring, E. (2003). Engaging humor. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Holmberg, A (1996). The theatre of Robert Wilson. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Miss Jennifer Juckel, PhD Candidate, Media Psychology, Murdoch University
What's so Funny? Using a Multidisciplinary Approach to Understand Sitcom Success

The sitcom genre is one of the most enduringly popular, yet we are still unable to define what it is, specifically, that keeps viewers tuning in. In fact, audiences themselves are not sure why they embrace a particular program, with research indicating behaviour often contradicts intention. Furthermore, numerous studies (Tamborini, Bowman, Eden, Grizzard, & Organ, 2010; Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004) have highlighted the problematically intertwined relationships between the physiological, cognitive and affective processing systems that contribute to research shortcomings. However, we can look to research (Mills, 2005) to identify reliable components and use measures from a variety of disciplines to offer insight into complementary audience responses. This study aims to reduce this information to a combination of key measures that best describe, and potentially predict, the components comprising successful sitcoms. Audience response data will be collected using the current top sitcoms across the four main US networks –*Modern Family* (ABC), *The Office* (NBC), *Family Guy* (FOX), and *Big Bang Theory* (CBS).

A successful sitcom must contain aspects that every diverse member of the audience can enjoy. *Eudaimonia* (Oliver, Limperos, Tamul, & Woolley, 2009) describes how meaningful content is key to enjoyment. This translates to relatable plots and characters that audiences desire to watch again. These items will be assessed on a post-exposure survey. Another quality leading to regular viewing is humour. A typology of humour techniques (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2004) will be adapted for use with sitcoms, providing a timeline of humour events for each program, with which data can be correlated. Finally, to address the discrepancy between post-exposure audience report and response, dial data will used to establish what happens in real time during media exposure.. It is hoped analysis into correlations between these data will reveal patterns that are informative in understanding sitcom success. The development of a reliable tool would not only prove useful in industry (broadcasting/production of programs) but also would help to further research in the social sciences. *References:*

Buijzen, M., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2004). Developing a typology of humor in audiovisual media. *Media Psychology,* 6, 147-167

Mills, B. (2005). *Television sitcom.* BFI: London

Oliver, M. B., Limperos, A. M., Tamul, D. J., & Woolley, J. K. (2009). *The role of mixed affect in the experience of meaningful entertainment.* Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association

Tamborini, R., Bowman, N. D., Eden, A., Grizzard, M., & Organ, A. (2010). Defining media enjoyment as the satisfaction of intrinsic needs. *Journal of Communication,* 60(4), 758-777

Vorderer, P., Klimmt, C., & Ritterfeld, U. (2004). Enjoyment: At the heart of media entertainment. *Communication Theory. Special Issue: Media Enjoyment*, 14(4), 388-408

Dr Peter Kirkpatrick, English, University of Sydney
Patrick White, Humour and Camp

For all its rather earnest reputation, Patrick White's modernist style contains a persistent stream of humour that is not only satirical but also deeply self-aware. Indeed, I would suggest that it is playful in that self-awareness, adhering to what Anthony Uhlmann describes as "a logic of overstatement". Call it camp. Not surprisingly, this campness is most obvious in White's works for the theatre – especially his late plays – but it underpins much of his fiction too, where symbols are often so archly overdetermined they become conspicuously artificial, and even absurd. White thus restages the language of modernism in an Australian context in which it is ironically interrogated and transformed, with potential for new meaning. This, I shall argue, is a form of what Ross Chambers has called "post-colonial camp", where "The visionary can be mocked and denied... even as it is deployed in all its power and prestige". After some initial discussion of White's plays and the "haminess" of *The Ham Funeral* (1947), my major examples will be taken from a mid-career and a late novel: *Voss* (1957) and *The Twyborn Affair* (1979).

Mr Lucien Leon, PhD Candidate, Research School of Humanities and Arts, The Australian National University
Mashed Up Political Cartoons: The Video Satire of Hugh Atkin

Hugh Atkin was an arts/law undergraduate student in 2007, when he entered and won a video mash-up competition sponsored by the ABC's *Unleashed* website. He continues to produce satirical videos that are enjoyed by over 8500 subscribers on youtube and have been viewed 16 million times. This paper presents a case study of the political satire of Hugh Atkin as a context for discussing the parallels between the contemporary video mash-up and the traditional political cartoon. In considering the political cartoon as a tendentious object and vehicle for subversive humour, it is argued that Atkin's videos perform an analogous function through the artist's creative engagement with the montage and photomontage traditions pioneered by Eisenstein and Heartfield. As well, Atkin fluently and effectively transfers the conventional political cartooning devices of reframing, metaphor and timing to a moving image format. Finally, the paper contests that with respect to form and function, the video mash-up phenomenon can be considered an evolutionary step in the long tradition of political cartooning. At the same time, the capacity for politically engaged and technically literate citizens to generate and disseminate humorous responses to current events may prove to be a revolutionary democratisation of the art form.

Dr Mike Lloyd, Sociology, Victoria University of Wellington, and Dr Paul Jewell, Philosophy, Flinders University
'Nothing so Ambitious as a Theory'? The Enigma of Goffman's "Fun in Games"

and the Sociology of Humour

Erving Goffman was a major sociologist of the Twentieth Century, featuring in all lists of significant contemporary sociologists, albeit with the appellation 'micro-sociologist'. Rejecting the pejorative tone of the 'micro' label, Giddens at least has claimed that Goffman was a 'systematic social theorist'. Yet, in his last published attempt (1983) to summarise his own work, Goffman (in)famously said, 'we should be glad to trade what we've [sociologists] so far produced for a few really good conceptual distinctions and a cold beer.' In fact, Goffman left sociologists with a dazzling array of concepts, many of which have been utilised, or at least cited, in existing studies of humour. Hence begins the enigma, for Goffman published an early (1961) significant essay titled 'Fun in Games'. It is interesting that the scholars on humour citing Goffman almost never utilise this essay. However, in considering his essay in relation to the state of contemporary sociological scholarship on humour, while reiterating the enigmatic nature of his work, we would suggest that Goffman deserves at least a toast of a 'cold VB' for his conceptual pointers and stimulation of empirical work, which are a nice corrective to the abstract theorisation that sociologists so frequently produce. *References:*

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Dr Jan Lloyd Jones, English, The Australian National University
How to be a Bad Poet; or, The Delight of Unintended Humour

Bad poets manage to delight us in ways they cannot possibly have predicted. But we are not laughing only at them (rather, we frequently stand in awe). What is it then that makes "Beautiful Railway Bridge of the Silv'ry Tay!" the opening line to what is generally agreed to be the best bad poem ever written? ("The Tay Bridge Disaster", written in 1880 by William McGonagall). This paper examines the unique combination of subject matter, verse form, metaphor, and affective and linguistic styles that allows bad poets to do their worst and still come through smiling. It looks at which poets are always bad, which are sometimes bad, and is unable to answer the question of whether some are never bad. The paper argues that bad poetry provides a concentrated example of what is accounted unintentional (or accidental) humour and demonstrates that in this cameo form the otherwise wide and untrammelled field of unintended comedic consequences can be examined more closely. Throughout, connections will be made to the more cogent statements on humour and comedy found in the writings of philosophers such as Plato, Hobbes, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Bergson and to statements by literary practitioners in the field of humour, including novelists Henry Fielding, Mark Twain and Arthur Koestler. The paper finishes by touching on other sources of unintended humour (translations, signs, etiquette manuals, academic prose), indicating plentiful possibilities for more research.

Dr Benjamin McCann, French Studies, University of Adelaide
"And don't call me Shirley": Leslie Nielsen and the Deadpan Tradition

When Canadian actor Leslie Nielsen died in 2010, obituaries noted how his trademark straight-faced delivery in over thirty films from *Airplane* (1980) onwards had come to define a genre all by itself: the deadpan film. The deadpan – meaning 'to express oneself in an impassive, matter-of-fact way' – was deployed by Nielsen to induce an arch and knowing insincerity to a film, and to create an amusing disconnect between the earnestness of a particular scene and its underlying comic components. Nielsen's career is interesting in several ways, not least as his relentless spoofing of classic movies (*2001: A Space Travesty* [2000], *Repossessed* [1990] and *Dracula, Dead and Loving It* [1995]) highlights the frequent slippage between established genre texts and their spoofable alternatives. By examining clips of Nielsen's work, this paper will interrogate his deadpan deliveries and mock-solemn manner, and place him within a rich contextual tradition of deadpanning, from Buster Keaton, via Jacques Tati, to Bill Murray, that has come to increasingly inflect mainstream comic performances.

Ms Elisha McIntyre, PhD Candidate, Studies in Religion, University of Sydney
What's so Funny about Faith? Christian Stand-up Comedy and Religious Values

Humour is one of the most powerful ways to communicate a group's values. Our laughter betrays our thoughts and feelings and by unpacking a joke we can decode the social commentary that may be hidden (or not so hidden) inside. This paper seeks to understand the social commentary communicated through the comedy of stand-up comedians who approach their humour from a religious perspective. These comedians are all believers and use their comedy for religious as well as entertainment purposes. This paper analyses the content of several Christian stand-up routines in order to investigate the ways in which religious values are communicated, constructed, reinforced, reinterpreted and subverted through humour. Humour is a unique form of communication that by its very nature applies its own rules and logic that allow the world to be viewed in a different way. It will be argued that Christian stand-up comedy is a way of making criticism more palatable, although on the whole it is conservative and serves to reinforce a sense of group exclusivity and conservative religious moral values.

Dr Angus McLachlan, Psychology, University of Ballarat
When is Laughter not Humorous?

Within the field of conversational analysis, it is generally accepted that laughter by a speaker usually marks humorous intent. Instances of nervous and sarcastic or aggressive laughter are recognised as exceptional. Drawing upon the findings of research into 55 pairs of staff and students discussing a series of issues in a laboratory setting, it will be argued that speaker laughter may simply affirm the non-serious character of the conversation and, in one sense, not be humorous at all. Such laughter may be clearly distinguished from laughter that invites others to laugh, and humorous remarks that constitute demands on the listeners to laugh. The implications of this review of "laughables" and the extent to which listeners respond appropriately will be explored in terms of the ways in which speakers and hearers can develop, maintain, and amend their relationships during everyday talk.

Dr Brigid Maher, Italian Program, La Trobe University
Macaronic Satire in Italy: Language, Translation and Meaningful Nonsense

Since the Middle Ages, satirists and parodists have used macaronic language, originally a playful mix of Latin and vernacular, to mock or criticize the powerful. In this paper, I will look at some contemporary uses of macaronic Italian – often mixed with English, the twenty-first century's lingua franca – in political and social satire in Italy. Examples include Dario Fo's celebrated *grammelot* and the singer-activist-blogger Sora Cesira's parodical music videos. Fo's *grammelot* moves beyond language, combining nonsense words with gestures and physical comedy in a multimodal communicative performance that locates meaning in sound and delivery rather than in vocabulary. Sora Cesira's approach moves between languages, using popular songs and music videos as a palimpsest upon which to re-voice and re-present such figures as prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, whose controversial antics with young women are related in a bizarre mash of Italian and English, subtitled for full effect. Fo's work hinges on a peculiar convergence between untranslatability and universality, while Sora Cesira's speaks to an audience of partly bilingual globalized initiates. Both artists use translation, pseudotranslation, and even pseudolanguage to create meaningful nonsense that communicates a powerful satirical message about public language and power.

Mr Michael Meaney, PhD Candidate, Design Communication and IT, Victoria University
The Vaudeville "Two-Act" in a New Media Environment

This paper describes a case study in the development of comedic dialogue for artificial intelligence agents – i.e. vaudeville-style conversations between two on-line chat-bots. Taking a practitioner's point of view, it examines the process and praxis of comedy writing in this new media environment, which is the creative component of my doctoral research project. The emerging comic format closely resembles the 'two-act' form of American vaudeville as described by Page (1915; 2005) and Cullen (2007). The clear set of structural and stylistic requirements for a successful two-act laid out by Page in Writing for Vaudeville also emphasises the importance of character, particularly the development of individual characters that hold incongruous or incompatible worldviews. Incongruity, with or without resolution, has been seen as a cornerstone concept in many humour theories (eg. Raskin 2008; Morreall 2009; Ritchie 2004). From the comedy writer's perspective, incongruity exists on three planes. The lowest is the minutely granular level of the individual line or gag in the script, where structures and typologies can be exposed by linguistic analysis. The middle plane involves comedic techniques described in many 'how-to' texts on developing comic incongruity (eg. Vorhaus 1994; Berger 1997; Byrne 2002). The upper plane concerns large-scale, meta-level, incongruity where the incongruities of life are expressed through the development of comic character. This is the special concern of Henri Bergson (1911; 2005) as theorist and Neil Simon (1966), among others, as practitioner.

This paper will explore the development of these three levels of incongruity in writing comedic dialogue for artificial intelligence agents. Significantly, this research project itself exists at the frontier where the binary opposition between human and non-human collapses – a meta-level incongruity. Further, the paper suggests that, in their work, practitioners translate theoretical understandings of humour into heuristic processes, showing that theory informs practice and practice examines theory. *References:*

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Dr Prudence Millear, Psychology, University of the Sunshine Coast
Humour as a Coping Style and its Relationship to Optimism and Self-Efficacy, Well-Being and Mental Health

Using humour as a coping style is widely regarded as protective of mental health and well-being, and dispositional optimism and self-efficacy have similar outcomes. This study compared the contribution of each of these attributes to well-being (as life satisfaction and psychological well-being) and mental health (as the absence of depression, anxiety, and stress). For the analyses, humour was measured by the Coping Humor Scale (CHS). A convenience sample of full-time employees (N=362) were recruited from diverse occupations to complete an online survey. The results showed that there were significant correlations between the variables in the expected directions, such that greater levels of dispositional optimism, self-efficacy and CHS were associated with greater levels of life satisfaction, psychological well-being and lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress. In the multiple regressions for each outcome, CHS was entered first and dispositional optimism and self-efficacy as the second step. Interestingly, whilst the CHS was initially a significant predictor of all the outcomes, the addition of dispositional optimism and self-efficacy mediated its effect. As such, greater dispositional optimism and self-efficacy, rather than CHS, were the significant predictors of increased life satisfaction and psychological well-being and lower levels of depression, stress and anxiety. The exception to complete mediation was the significant relationship between CHS and depression which remained in addition to the other significant predictors. In this sample of working adults, when humour is measured as coping with problems, it appears to be part of the larger range of actions used by an individual with higher levels of optimism and self-efficacy. However, humour remained an important coping strategy for individuals to alleviate any depressive symptoms that they may experience.

Prof. Carmen Moran, Associate Dean (Research), Arts, Charles Sturt University, Ms Bridget Robson and Assoc. Prof. Anthony Saliba, Charles Sturt University
Comparing and Contrasting the Effects of Humour and Alcohol on Wellbeing

Alcohol and humour often are linked together in popular literature, but there is little research comparing and contrasting the effects of alcohol and humour on measures of wellbeing. A small number of studies in the research literature have indicated a positive link between alcohol consumption and cheerfulness or sense of humour but these links have not been explored further in any depth. In this study we asked 260 people about their drinking behaviours, motives for drinking alcohol, their humour styles (HSQ), and their anxiety and stress levels. Humour style was related to motive for drinking, but not amount consumed. Both drinking to cope and using self-defeating humour were positively associated with anxiety levels and with stress levels. Self-enhancing motive (drinking to feel good) was negatively associated with stress. The positive humour styles did not significantly contribute to anxiety or stress levels. Thus, negative aspects of both drinking and using humour were related to each other, and to anxiety and stress. Drinking and laughing to feel good, as our data suggest, do not threaten psychological wellbeing, but drinking and laughing driven by negative factors both do.

Mr Pip Muratore, PhD Candidate, French Studies & Italian Studies, University of Sydney
Making a Song and Dance about Sex

The focus of my talk is on how the cabaret artist Meow Meow incorporates elements of the style and content of performances from diverse contexts into her act in order to communicate and embody ideas about the representation of sexuality though humour. By drawing on contexts from fin-de-siècle and Weimar cabaret to Victorian music-hall, American vaudeville and burlesque, Meow positions herself within an ongoing tradition of sexually assertive female performers while challenging audience notions of engagement and performance. Meow perfectly encapsulates the current trends for cabaret and neo-burlesque as a means of using past styles to express contemporary ideas of representation, control and sexuality, with an undercurrent of humour and satire. Using theorists such as Griselda Pollock and Laura Mulvey, I shall examine precisely what Meow uses and why, and what this says about changes in comic tastes and sexual mores from the fin-de-siècle to the present.

Dr Will Noonan, Dépt du Monde Anglophone, Université de Paris III
"Aux antipodes de l'humour": Ludic Movements in French Literary Culture and their Possible Equivalents in English.

This paper will focus on the Collège de 'Pataphysique and the Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle (OuLiPo), and specifically the problems of classifying these movements under the category of humour. The OuLiPo uses game-like formal constraints in order to generate new literary possibilities, while 'Pataphysics, a term coined to refer to that which lies beyond metaphysics, lends itself to analysis as a philosophy of incongruity.'Pataphysics identifies itself not as *a* science but as *the* essential science: such claims need not be taken at face value, but the extent to which both movements implicate readers within their internal logic makes it difficult to determine the degree of irony or humour that may be present. Both movements are associated with French literary culture, but also reflect the French fascination with the tradition of *l'humour anglais*. By way of comparison, this paper will also discuss the relationship to humour in the nonsense tradition of Lewis Carroll and in the pseudo-philosophical writings of Flann O'Brien.

Assoc. Prof. Robert Phiddian, English, Flinders University
Australian Cartoons and Cartoonists: An Overview with Speculation on Disciplinary Homelessness*

I've been asked to write a 2200 word overview of Australian cartoonists and cartooning for a forthcoming *Companion to Australian Media History*. This paper is an attempt to draft that ambitiously extensive work of synthesis. It will focus particularly on political cartooning, but will also include some reference to strip cartoons and illustration. The narrative will, perforce, highlight cartoons in the weeklies c.1890-1930 and the dailies c.1960-2000, the two periods of maximum cultural and political prominence. I will also examine some of the complexities of the disciplinary home of cartoon-scholarship. Does the topic belong to media studies, cultural studies, humour studies, political history, or fine arts? The initial ease with which cartoons are assimilated by their audiences masks a real complexity of method and context entailed in any attempt to study them seriously. **This paper was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.*

Dr David Rawlings, Psychology, University of Melbourne
Examining the Relationship Between Humour Appreciation and the Autism Spectrum in a University Sample

Several earlier studies relating creativity, schizotypy, humour appreciation, and the autism/Asperger spectrum are briefly described as providing a rationale for the study to be reported. In the present study, 126 undergraduate students completed a measure of humour appreciation developed by the author, in addition to the Autism-Spectrum Quotient (AQ) of Baron-Cohen. The humour measure required participants to read, and then to rate, how funny, and how unpleasant/aversive, they found 48 purportedly humorous stimuli differentiated according to whether they were 'violent' or 'neutral', and whether they comprised jokes, or comprised real-life situations involving the self or other people. The AQ is the sum of the scores obtained on five sub-scales: Social Skill, Attention Switching, Attention-to-Detail, Communication. The study found a negative association between autism and humour appreciation, with the association due almost entirely to 'attention switching'. I shall attempt to explain this finding.

Mr Nick Smith, PhD Candidate in Creative Writing, ANU
Workshop Reading, with Discussion, from "The Future of Food", a Comic Novel in Preparation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Writing

This session will comprise a 20 minute reading by the author (who is an occasional stand-up comedian as well as writer) from his text in preparation, followed by discussion, focussing on the question of whether the absurdity of the modern experience of work as found in contemporary literature is actually funny or just sad, and on how the creative writing process can be used to explores this.

Dr Peter Spitzer, Medical Director/Co-founder, The Humour Foundation.
SMILE Study Results (2009-2011)

SMILE is the acronym for Sydney Multi-site Intervention of LaughterBosses and

ElderClowns – a randomised controlled trial of humour therapy conducted in Australian residential aged-care facilities (RACFs) involving residents with dementia. This 3-year, NH&MRC–funded study is a world-first, large-scale, high-quality study evaluating humour therapy in RACFs. It is a collaborative study involving the Humour Foundation, the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre (DCRC) and the University of NSW, Faculty of Medicine. Approximately 400 people from 36 RACF's across Sydney were recruited into this study. The primary aim of the SMILE study was to evaluate the effects of humour therapy on QOL (quality of life), mood and behaviour disturbance of residents with dementia in RACFs. Secondary aims included evaluating the effects of humour therapy on staff burnout and turnover; determining the sustainability of the intervention; and evaluating the costs and benefits of the intervention. Results to date can be summarized as follows:

1. No significant differences between groups over time in depression, quality of life (self or proxy rated), social engagement or neuropsychiatric symptoms.
2. A significant decrease in agitation in the humour group compared to controls, measured at post-intervention and follow-up. This decrease is the same effect as using anti-psychotics but is not accompanied by negative side-effects.
3. Between different facilities, the level of management-engagement was a strong predictor for mean agitation improvement (after controlling for resident variables).
4. Scores of Happiness and Positive Behaviour on the Behaviour Engagement Affect Measure (BEAM, an observational tool developed by the DCRC) were increased in the humour therapy group.
5. The secondary aims were being processed at time of submission but should be reported in the presentation in February 2012.

Practical and experimental lessons learnt in the course of the study can be summarized as:

- Humour therapy works for all levels of cognition experienced
- Critical to engagement is tapping into a person's self-identity (occupation, family, self-view), and
- Building up relationships with resident, LaughterBoss and other staff
- Facility expectations must be congruent with the program
- Choice of the 'right' Laughterboss is vital, as is their role in the facility, personality and commitment
- Training/support for the ElderClowns is needed to ensure a larger repertoire and help them with hard-to-engage residents
- There is a need for better measures of 'positive' changes

Overall, results demonstrate that humour therapy can facilitate culture change in an RACF in a positive way and achieve measurable outcomes on the BEAM for a wide range of individuals.

Mr Bradley Wells, PhD Candidate, English, University of Sydney
'Watch Your Back!' Co-inhered Humour in the Divine Vision of Charles Williams's Verse Drama

Writing in the first half of the twentieth century, Charles Williams (1886-1945) is perhaps best known today for his association with J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and the Oxford writing group known as 'The Inklings'. However, as a prolific writer of novels, poetry, plays, biographies, theology and literary criticism, Williams's contribution to and influence upon the development of modern literature spread well beyond 'The Inklings.' While coming to acknowledge Williams's unique literary and theological vision, critics have unfortunately largely neglected to consider the central

role humour plays in his writings, especially in his verse dramas. This paper aims to redress this. In doing so, I hope to show how humour for Williams is both a process and an outcome and that it both reflects and embodies his unique view of the Divine. In particular, how Williams employs humour as a means by which the audience can reconcile seeming paradoxes between the natural and supernatural, temporal and eternal, flesh and spirit. Humour thus operates as a type of incarnational aesthetic whereby both rhetoric and action co-inhere in order to achieve both physical and spiritual enlightenment. To show this, I will employ William Spanos's framework of the 'sacramental aesthetic' at points of Beatricean epiphany in two of Williams's nativity plays, *Seed of Adam* (1936) and *Grab and Grace* (1941).

WORKSHOPS

Mr Peter Kingsley, Farceur, Actor (LAMDA), Member (& Hon. Officer) of The Lambs Club, New York
The Dramaturgy of a Stage Farce

This workshop will explain some of the creative processes required in writing and performing a successful stage farce as opposed to a comedy or drama. The detailed steps required in writing a stage farce will be outlined and the presenter will point out what interests and life experiences are helpful in fulfilling the requirements of farce writing. The topics to be covered include:
- what degree of knowledge of stagecraft is required and how actual stage experience can help in the formulation of a new work
- how personal experience is often a good source of inspiration in outlining a draft of a farce
- how the psychology of revenge feeds directly into the farce form and is central to its purpose, illustrated from the author's own experience
- what social situations are most fruitful in the development of stage farce
- why farce is a "sub-literary" genre and thus does not necessarily interest the poet or "serious author" but should interest the philosopher (or model railroader)
- why and in what ways the structure of a stage farce is more critical than the structures of comedy or drama
- discussion of character and motivation in stage farce and the necessity of two-dimensionality in farce characters
- the importance of the situational in farce
- why stage farce is anything but "improvisational"

To conclude, the presentation will demonstrate that though the demands of writing and performing stage farce are severe and exact, when done correctly, they provide a field of freedom unparalleled in any other stage form. This will be proved by an excerpted reading of the author's own stage farce *The Way It Works Now*. References:
Anthony Francis Caputi (1978). *Buffo: The Genius of Vulgar Comedy*
Stewart E. Baker (1981). *Georges Feydeau and the Aesthetics of Farce*
Jessica Milner Davis (2003). *Farce*
Albert Bermel (1990). *Farce: A History from Aristophanes to Woody Allen*
Jeffrey D. Mason (1988). *Wisecracks: The Farces of George S. Kaufman*

Mr Anton Crouch, Independent Scholar and Retired Geologist
Ethnic Stereotyping in Comedy Duos

Vaudeville was a rich source of material for the emerging phonograph/gramophone industry in the period from the late 1890s to the early 1920s and, even when in decline due to the influence of radio, was preserved for posterity due to the demand for short-subject sound motion pictures in the late 1920s. One of the most popular genres was the comedy duo – a genre that survives on radio and television to the present day. Within the genre, a common trope is the use of ethnic stereotyping – see, for example http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/IrishmanAndAJew and note the distinction that is clearly made between the ethnicities of the characters being portrayed and the ethnicities of the performers.

This workshop intends to examine a sample of the extant recorded/filmed material, to propose relationships between the examples chosen and then to use them to evaluate the role ethnic stereotyping plays in defining the genre of the comedy duo. The methodology used will be the treatment of the examples as biological taxa and the assessment of a matrix of taxa vs characteristics. The workshop structure will facilitate audience participation, as a result of which modification and/or expansion of the matrix may occur. Graphical presentation of the results of cladistic and cluster analysis should lead to comments and questions. The examples used will be vaudeville performances recorded/filmed in the period 1907 to 1929 and include "rubes" (yokels, hicks etc), Irish boarding house guests, "immigrants" (usually a euphemism for Jewish Europeans), classic straight-man/comic foil acts and Anglo-European imitation of African-Americans. There will also be examples of hybrid Irish-Yiddish humour from James Cagney and Flanagan and Allen.

EXHIBITION AND COMMENTARY

Cartoons by Eric Lobbecke

Thanks to Dr Mark Rolfe, member of the AHSN Review Panel, the Colloquium was accompanied by a display of original cartoons from the hand of Australian cartoonist Eric Lobbecke. Commentary on these works and their political context, on their creator and his biography, and also on the recent decease of the British cartoonist, Ronald Searle, was kindly offered in the closing session by Dr Rolfe, Mr Lindsay Foyle (cartoonist and cartoon historian) and Dr Jan Lloyd Jones respectively.