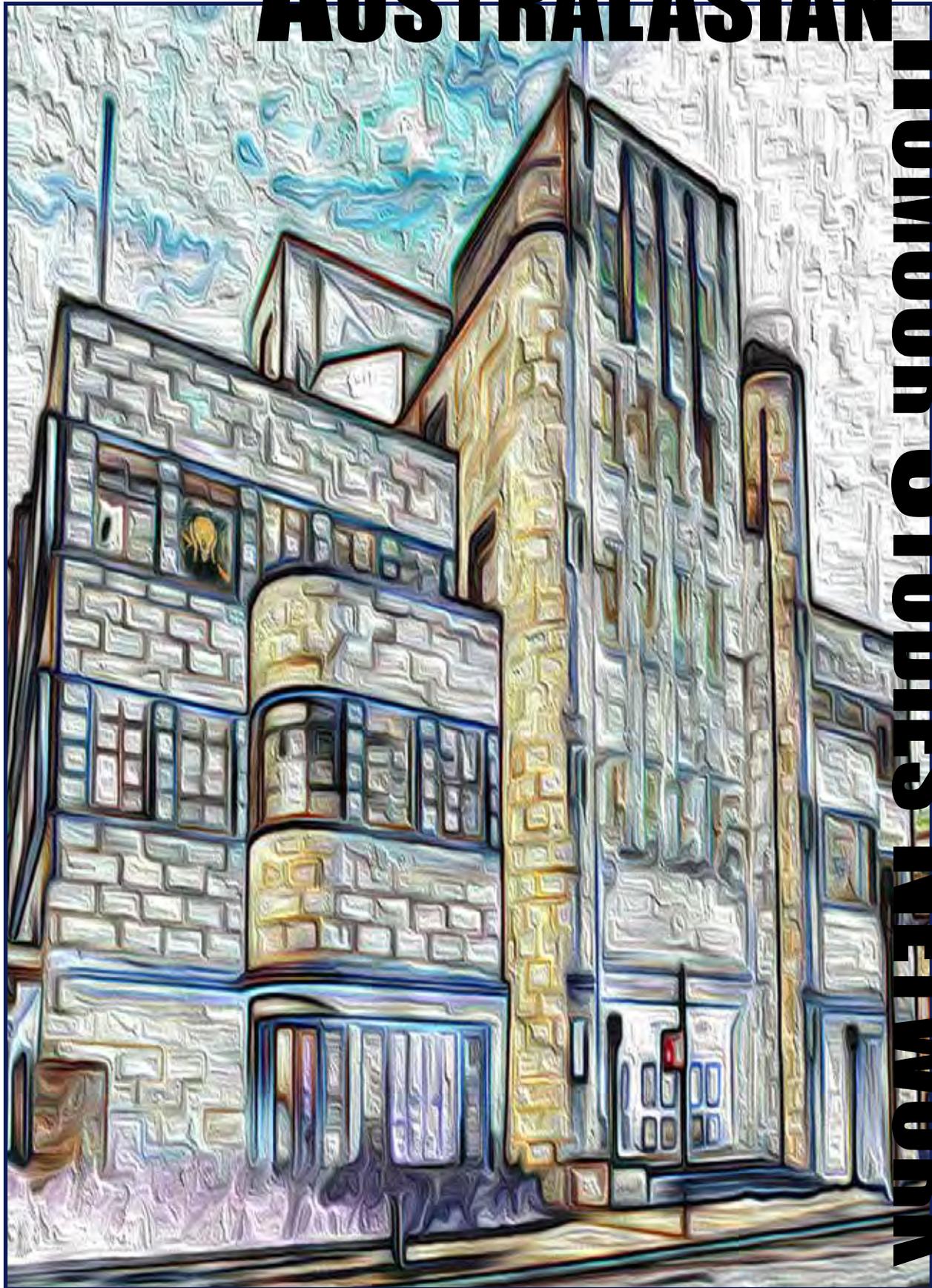


# AUSTRALASIAN

# HUMOUR STUDIES NETWORK



*Nineteenth Colloquium on 'Humour and Creativity'*

The University of Newcastle - City Campus

7-9 February 2013

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# *Nineteenth Colloquium on 'Humour and Creativity'*

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## *Program, Abstracts and CVs*

### *Acknowledgements*

We acknowledge and respect the Pambalong clan of the Awabakal people, traditional custodians of the land on which this campus of The University of Newcastle is situated.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of Professor Bill Hogarth, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Faculty of Science and Information Technology at the University of Newcastle. Professor Hogarth funded the three post-graduate scholarships that were awarded to Mr. Mark Azzopardi (University of Sydney), Ms. Claire Duffy (Deakin University) and Mr. Dirk Gibb (University of Newcastle).

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We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the reviewers who so graciously gave their time and energy.

Finally, we would like to thank you - the presenters. We hope you find this 19th Colloquium of the Australasian Humour Studies Network an engaging, productive and collegial event.

Best Wishes,

Your Convenors.

Conjoint Professor Michael Ewans and Mr Michael Meany.



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AUSTRALIA

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Faculty of Science and Information Technology — School of Design, Communication & Information Technology

- 1:00 Registration, Refreshments (Foyer)
- 2:00-3:00 Plenary Session (Lecture Theatre)  
Welcome and Chair -  
Conjoint Professor Michael Ewans (University of Newcastle)  
Welcome and Scholarship Presentation -  
Professor Eileen McLaughlin, Deputy Head of Faculty.  
  
Adjunct Prof. Hugh Moore (Independent Scholar, Anaheim)  
The Comic Monolog as a Business Tool: How Conferences  
and other Business Events have become Showbiz
- 3:00-3:30 Refreshments (Foyer)
- 3:30-5:00 Parallel Session 1a: (Lecture Theatre)  
Mediaeval Mirth  
Chair: Debra Aarons  
Dr. Hannah Burrows (University of Sydney)  
Mythological Mirth: the Role of Humour in Tales of  
the Norse Gods.  
Miss Helen Appleton (University of Sydney)  
Exploring 'Pæt Cuþe Hol': Unlocking Humour and  
Obscenity in the Exeter Book Riddles.  
Ms. April Bertels-Garnsey (University of Sydney)  
Looking at the One-eyed Garlic Seller: Riddle 86 in  
Anglo- Saxon England and Beyond.
- 3:30-5:00 Parallel Session 1b: (Seminar Room)  
Offensive Jokes and Indigenous perspectives  
Chair: Conal Condren  
Dr. Angus McLachlan (University of Ballarat)  
When is a Joke not a Joke? When it appears in a  
Workplace Campaign against Harassment.  
Ms. Angelina Hurley (University of Technology, Sydney)  
Talk About Laugh - Blak Comedy and Indigenous  
Cultural Perspectives on Humour
- 5:00-5:30 Welcome Drinks (Foyer)
- 5:30 Documentary Film (Lecture Theatre)  
Road Comics: Big Work on Small Stages  
A/Prof. Susan Seizer, Indiana University,  
Visiting Professor, Macquarie University (2012-3)

8:30 Refreshments (Foyer)

9:00-10:00 Second Plenary Session (Lecture Theatre)

*Chair: Michael Meany*

Dr. Phillip McIntyre (University of Newcastle)

Creativity: What is the Research Telling Us?

Discussant:

Prof. Kevin McConkey (University of New South Wales)

10:00-10:30 Refreshments (Foyer)

10:30-12:00 Parallel Session 2a: (Lecture Theatre)

The Psychology of Humour

*Chair: Mira Crouch*

Dr. Maren Rawlings and Dr. Bruce Findlay

(Swinburne University of Technology)

A Scale for Self-Deprecating Humour.

Dr. David Rawlings (Melbourne University)

Is the Autism Spectrum Differentially Related to  
Humour Appreciation and Creativity?

Dr Bruce Findlay and Mr. Imam Hamze

(Swinburne University of Technology)

The Relationships of Attitudes to Religion,  
Humour Style, and Self-control to Psychological  
Well-being in a sample of Australian Muslims.

10:30-12:00 Parallel Session 2b: (Seminar Room)

American, Polish and Applied Humour

*Chair: Mike Lloyd*

Dr Lee-Fay Low (University of NSW) and Jean-Paul Bell  
(Creative Director and Co-Founder of the Arts Health Institute)

Something to SMILE about in nursing homes: a  
randomised controlled trial of humour therapy

Dr. Władysław Chłopicki (Jagiellonian University, Kraków)

Unconventional metonymies and metaphors as a  
vehicle of creativity in humorous short stories.

Mr. Dirk Gibb (University of Newcastle)

'Oh he could grind my coffee': Female Bawdy and  
the 'Hokum' Tradition in Pre-War Blues.

12:00-1:30 Lunch (Foyer)

12:45 - 1:30 Documentary Film (Lecture Theatre)

The Smile Within

Dr. Maggie Haertsch CEO of Arts Health Institute  
and Executive Producer, Hot Tin Productions  
together with Dr Lee-Fay Low and Jean-Paul Bell.

1:30-3:00 Parallel Session 3a: (Lecture Theatre)

Cartoons

Chair: Robert Phiddian

Mr. Lucien Leon (Australian National University)

Moving Images: The Animated and Video Image as  
Political Cartoon.

Mr. Lindsay Foyle (Cartoonist & Cartoon Historian, Sydney)

Humour in Art: Gone and Almost Forgotten.

Ms. Susan E. Foster (Independent Oral Historian)

Degrees of Assassination: An Exploration of Kiwi  
Cartoon Humour.

1:30-3:00 Parallel Session 3b: (Seminar Room)

Some Forms of Humour

Chair: David Rawlings

Dr. Christine Judith Nicholls (Flinders University)

Warpipi Nicknaming, Creativity and Humour:  
A Sociolinguistic Analysis.

Mr. Anton Crouch (Independent Scholar) and

Dr Debra Aarons (University of New South Wales)

An Examination of the Linguistic Humour in the  
Abbott and Costello Routine 'Who's on first?'

3:00-3:30 Refreshments (Foyer)

3:30-5:00

*Parallel Session 4a: (Lecture Theatre)*

Mainly about Satire

*Chair: Mark Rolfe*

Dr. Daniel Derrin (Macquarie University)

Rhetorical Uses of Humour in Early Modern Writing.

A/Prof. Robert Phiddian (Flinders University)

The Emotional Contents of Swift's *saeva indignatio*.

Emeritus Prof. Conal Condren (University of Queensland)

Freedom, Oppression and Satiric Creativity.

Program  
Friday 8  
February  
(continued)

3:30-5:00

*Parallel Session 4b: (Seminar Room)*

Creativities

*Chair: Maren Rawlings*

Dr. Debra Aarons (University of New South Wales)

Referential Ambiguity: The Case of Deixis  
in English Jokes.

Mr. Michael Meany (University of Newcastle)

Humour and Creativity: Theoretical Congruence.

Ms. Anja Pabel (James Cook University)

Tourists' Perceptions about the Use of Humour in  
the Tourism Setting.

8:30 Refreshments (Foyer)

9:00 Third Plenary Session (Lecture Theatre)  
Chair: Rodney Marks  
A/Prof. Susan Seizer  
(Indiana University and Macquarie University)  
Road Comics: Big Work on Small Stages.

10:00-10:30 Refreshments (Foyer)

10:30-12:00 Parallel Session 5a: (Lecture Theatre)  
American and Australian Humour  
Chair: Michael Meany  
Ms. Emma Jean McKinin (University of Missouri)  
Nineteenth-Century Humourists in Australia and  
the US: Similarities and Differences.  
Dr. Michael Lloyd (Victoria University of Wellington) and  
Dr. Paul Jewell (Flinders University)  
I'll Just Open this Can of Whoop Ass: The Social  
Dynamics of Heckling in Stand-up Comedy.  
Mr. Stephen Wye (University of Newcastle)  
Revisiting the Museum of History: Blackface  
Minstrelsy's Grotesque Burlesque.

10:30-12:00 Parallel Session 5b: (Seminar Room)  
Humour in Women's Literature and Art  
Chair: Hannah Burrows  
Ms. Laura Castagnini (University of Melbourne)  
Humour in Feminist Art.  
Ms. Claire Duffy (Deakin University)  
Subversive Humour in Contemporary Women's Fiction.  
Dr. Liisi Laineste (Estonian Literary Museum)  
The Modern Girl in Estonian Caricature.

12:00-1:30 Lunch (Foyer)

- 1:30-3:00      *Parallel Session 6a: (Lecture Theatre)*  
Humour East and West, Comics and Limericks  
*Chair: Lindsay Foyle*  
Dr. Jessica Milner Davis (University of Sydney)  
                    The Theory of Humours East and West: Creating a  
                    Well-balanced Person.  
Mr. Benjamin Juers Indyk (University of Sydney)  
                    The Comic in Comics.  
Emeritus Professor Ken Dutton (University of Newcastle)  
                    Limericks.
- 1:30-3:00      *Parallel Session 6b: (Seminar Room)*  
Workshop  
Mrs. Mira Crouch (University of New South Wales)  
                    Why are we Laughing at this Joke?
- 3:00-3:30      *Refreshments (Foyer)*
- 3:30-4:30      *Fourth Plenary Session (Lecture Theatre)*  
*Chair: Jessica Milner-Davis*  
Mr. Mahmud Farjami (Universiti Sains Malaysia)  
                    Political Satire as the Standard-bearer of Press  
Freedom: A Review of Iranian Political Satire in the  
Press during the 2000s.
- 5:00-5:30      *Farewell Drinks (Foyer)*
- 6:15              *Review Panel Meeting -*  
                    Chinois Restaurant

Major business events are essentially a line-up of in-house, industry and external speakers. A business event comes in different forms, including conferences, congresses, seminars, awards ceremonies and cocktail parties. Presenters at business events can be considered monologists, delivering solo performances that are educational, inspirational, motivational, entertaining or a combination of these. Presentations typically are spoken voice accompanied by a concurrent slide presentation, using software such as PowerPoint or Keynote.

As the presenters are figures of positional power or subject-matter experts, they often use self-deprecating humor to level the hierarchy, and a variety of other forms of verbal and visual humor to maintain audience interest, sugar the pill of a bitter message, and embed a call to action.

Sometimes entertainers are employed to add comic relief, to humanize the workplace and to create a sense or memorability in an endless sequence of similar events.

It is argued in this presentation that comedy has become a business tool. Business, government and non-profit sector executives hire comedy writers, acting tutors and media coaches to package both the presenter and the message. The old joke that 'showbiz' is two words used to refer to performing artists and their need for business skills. Now, it could just as easily refer to organizational leaders and experts needing to develop showmanship to communicate their values, vision, mission and strategy.

Dr. Moore received his PhD in humor from Georgia State Tech, researching Jessica Milner Davis's theory of farce. He then worked for over thirty years in a number of libraries in Alabama, Mississippi and Missouri as a senior cataloguist. His long interest in humor has been fine-tuned by attending far too many business events. He currently lives in a retirement home in Los Angeles, one of the few that allows pets, as he is fond of both dogs and cats.

There is certainly a connection between creativity and humour. In the 1960s Arthur Koestler attempted to make that connection explicit by proposing that a bisociation between two matrices, or frames of thought, led to creative acts. While Koestler was a creature of his time what I would like to do here is bring us up to date on what is happening within the current scholarship specifically focused at creativity. It will be up to you, as experts in your domain of humour studies, to also make the necessary bisociations that might occur in this exercise explicit.

Like the research work that is looking at humour, the research into creativity is also multidisciplinary. It comes from psychology, sociology, literary theory, communication and cultural studies and a number of other areas of research concern. The major shift in thinking has been away from a focus on what individuals do in bringing novelty into being towards what have been called confluence-based approaches. For example, in the most recent Annual Review of Psychology (2010), giving an overview of where creativity research is up to, Beth Hennessy and Teresa Amabile assert that “research into the psychology of creativity has grown theoretically and methodologically sophisticated, and researchers have made important contributions from an ever-expanding variety of disciplines...Deeper understanding requires more interdisciplinary research, based on a systems view of creativity that recognizes a variety of interrelated forces operating at multiple levels” (2010, pp. 569-598). I will conclude by giving an overview of the systems approach to creativity.

Phillip McIntyre is the author of *Creativity and Cultural Production: Issues for Media Practice* (2012). He is a social scientist who researches how new things are created by human beings. He seeks to answer a basic question: what is the most rational way to explain how novel things are brought into being? As well as having a research focus on creativity and innovation, Dr McIntyre also teaches media production and media studies courses in the Bachelor of Communication program at the University of Newcastle. He is the Head of Discipline for Communication and Media in the School of Design, Communication and Information Technology. He was recently a Visiting Fellow at Leeds Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom and in a former life was heavily involved in the music industry where he was a songwriter, instrumentalist, musical director, record producer and engineer, and manager for various groups dealing with promoters, record companies and distribution labels. He has also worked as a music journalist and his most recent media production was a radio documentary series for ABC Radio.

*Prof. Kevin McConkey (University of New South Wales)*

*Discussant*

k.mcconkey@unsw.edu.au

Kevin McConkey is Emeritus Professor of Psychology at the University of New South Wales. A graduate of the University of Queensland, he has held various positions at universities in the USA, Canada, and Australia. Professor McConkey is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, and holds various other Fellowships of scientific and professional bodies.

This talk, like the documentary film that I have recently produced, is entitled *Road Comics: Big Work on Small Stages*. Here I introduce each of these key terms -- “road comics,” “big work,” and “small stages” – in order to map out the contours of the larger ethnographic project framing this work. The remainder of my presentation focuses on the possibilities for creativity opened up by the regional standup stage, most notably the chance it gives comics to explore their onstage personae through regular practice in front of a live, local audience.

The comedy club circuit in middle America is primarily one in which working-class artists perform for working-class audiences. It offers performers whose voices are otherwise rarely heard in mediated broadcast contexts an arena for public self-reflexivity as well as social commentary. The opportunity for such exploration is a large part of what is psychologically compelling to road comics about the genre: for the three professional road comics I follow, the stand-up stage provides them with the opportunity to publicly explore aspects of themselves which they express nowhere else. To make this point I offer several short video clips in which we are able to hear each comic talk about his or her own relationship to the creative possibilities opened up by the stand-up stage. I introduce the notion, common among road comics, that they are drawn, even compelled, to do comedy for reasons they themselves still don't fully understand. The narrative I hear repeatedly goes something like this: “one night I went up for the first time at an open mike, and the next day I quit college, sold all my belongings, and started living for comedy.” On the stand-up stage comics find they are able to perform themselves in ways that satisfy more, it turns out, than almost anything else in their lives, and thus the creative possibilities opened up for the practising comedian on the regional comedy club circuit are the focus of my talk.

Susan Seizer is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication & Culture at Indiana University. Her research and teaching interests include: humor, stigma, and performance. Her first ethnographic research focused on the lives of popular theater artists in Tamil Nadu, South India. Her first book, *Stigmas of the Tamil Stage: An Ethnography of Special Drama artists in South India* (Duke University Press 2005), won the prestigious A.K. Coomaraswamy Book Prize from the Association for Asian Studies in 2007. Her current research turns an anthropological lens on the lives of road comics who play the comedy club circuit in middle America. The book that she is currently writing is a companion piece to her recently produced documentary film, *Road Comics: Big Work on Small Stages* (2012, [www.roadcomicsmovie.com](http://www.roadcomicsmovie.com)).

Prior to becoming an anthropologist, Professor Seizer was a performer of dance, theater, and circus. Many of her scholarly interests follow threads she first explored as a performer: improvisation; the way comedy can be used to do just about anything; and the particular exhilaration that many women find in transgressing normative gender roles through public performance.

Political satire has had a prominent part to play in the social and political sphere of journalism in Iran from the first appearance of the independent press in the beginning of the twentieth century. This presentation maintains that political satire, as the standard bearer of freedom of speech in Iran, has often been one of the first targets in press crackdowns and attempts to limit political freedom, due to its commonly critical examination of power and authority. Like all standard bearers, the more visible, the more vulnerable the figure. From this perspective, I examine the state of political satire and press freedom in Iran 2000-2010. This decade of tension began with a sudden dismantling of the previously reformist, independent press and ended with bloody demonstrations in the streets accompanied by severe repression of journalists and the media.

I include a review of the background political situation relevant to freedom of the press in Iran during the relevant years, along with historical (actual) illustrations showing the extremist measures taken to suppress political satire and satirists during this period of media subjugation. Besides political satire, this paper reflects on nonpolitical forms of the genre which were often used for political purposes by the authorities. Taking well-established examples, I will show how the government used such cases as a pretext to act against freedom of speech and limit the press. The consequences of these pressures, especially the migration of political satire to the online sphere, are also discussed, to round out as comprehensive a review of political satire in the era as possible.

Mahmud Farjami was born in 1977 in Mashhad, a large city in northeastern Iran. For a decade he has written, produced and performed satirical content and programs for Persian media. This began in Oct. 2001 when he began writing political satire for biweekly Azar, which was closed down a few months later! Since then, writing political satire has been his main focus, most notably his satirical columns in "Baztab.com" (most popular Iranian news website 2003 to 2007, when it was banned by the government of President Ahmadinejad), Fararu.com (2007 to 2009), Ayendenews.com (2008 - banned in 2009 by the government), and Tehran Today (daily column, 2009 to 2010).

Studying Persian satire and humor has been his main interest, as well as writing satire. He wrote some scholarly articles about Persian satire (like three for BBC Persian), he has been the editor of one of the special issues of Kheradnameh monthly for Satire, and produced a radio program Tanz Gofar (a scholarly weekly program about satire in Persian literature and journalism in Radio Channel "Goftegoo").

One other piece of work was the lurching of itanz.net in 2006. This site has been the most famous Persian website promoting political humor, tasteful cartoons, and scholarly articles about satire. A number of famous Persian satirists settled in different countries contribute works to itanz.net.

Since 2010 he has been a PhD candidate in the School of Communication, USM, Malaysia, writing about contemporary political satire in Iranian media. He was recognized in the International Society for Humor Studies Graduate Student Awards (Krakow, 2012) for one of his studies on political satire in the Iranian press, and his latest work on this topic has been accepted for publication in Iranian Studies, a journal published by St Antony's College, University of Oxford. He has also written and performed some comedy works: more than 70 satiric items for Holland-based Radio Zamaneh, tens of humorous items for Radio Javan, and he has acted as a standup comic in Iran and Malaysia. He has written two satiric books, both in Persian but published in London by H & S Publisher (Taxi Driver and A Story of Destiny).

**Dr. Debra Aarons (University of New South Wales)**

*Referential Ambiguity: The Case of Deixis in English Jokes.*

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*Authors -  
Abstract and  
Curriculum Vitae*

### **Session - 4b: 3:30 Friday**

In this paper, I explore the fact that deictics (now, then, here, there, she, it, this, that etc.) are the creatures of context. They can be assigned meaning only in a context of use, and are therefore inherently ambiguous linguistic items. Many jokes are based on the particularly ambiguous property of deictics, or indexicals, as they are sometimes known. This property is exemplified in e.g., "Walk this way," as uttered by Igor in the movie, *Young Frankenstein*, in which the preferred meaning is "Walk in this direction," but the utterance is interpreted by Frankenstein as meaning "Walk in this manner." Igor has a hunched back, so Frankenstein follows him, walking in an imitation of his gait. Another way in which the intended sense of words like it, there, and here can be confused is when they function either as pleonastic items, or as deictics. This is exemplified in the Groucho Marx joke: I didn't come here to be insulted: Oh, where do you usually go? Finally, many jokes play on the confusion between lexical items, such as who, what, how which may be used as names, as in *Who's on first?*, as well as being used in the preferred deictic sense.

Jokes using these sorts of ambiguity provide information about several interesting linguistic issues. First, they show that where there is a possibility of ambiguity in bona fide communication, the listener attempts to discern the speaker's intention. Thus, homophony is generally resolved in processing by reliance on context. Jokes, however, make the ambiguity open to conscious awareness. This demonstrates that bona fide communication is a constant process of the reduction of uncertainty, and this process is unconscious. Second, the referential ambiguity picked up in jokes plays on the difference between "use" and "mention", another essential feature of linguistic pragmatics, much explored in studies of the philosophy of language, but not entirely resolved. Finally, the ongoing investigation into naming is illuminated by some peculiar cases thrown up by humorous exploitation of the much-debated relationship between naming, sense and referentiality.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

Dr. Debra Aarons is a linguist in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales. She received her PhD in 1994 from Boston University in Massachusetts, USA. She is a specialist in the linguistics of signed languages, and has published widely in these areas. These days she teaches Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, specializing in syntax, psycholinguistics and pragmatics. She has a particular interest in the intersection of humour, linguistics, and cognitive science. She is a member of a tiny minority of humour scholars and linguists who are interested in cryptic crossword puzzles. Her recent book, *Jokes and the Linguistic Mind*, 2012, is published by Routledge.

### **Miss Helen Appleton (University of Sydney)**

*Exploring 'Bæt Cuþe Hol': Unlocking Humour and Obscenity in the Exeter Book Riddles.*

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### **Session - 1a Thursday 3:30**

The tenth-century manuscript of Old English poetry known as the Exeter Book belonged to a monastic scriptorium, yet amongst its miscellaneous collection of secular and religious texts are several short items which greatly discomfited early scholars of Old English. Interspersed within a much larger collection are several riddles with apparently

obscene subjects. These ribald riddles shed light on humour within a space bound by the Benedictine Rule, a text that prohibits immoderate laughter. This paper addresses whether the sexual riddles can be regarded as evidence of Anglo-Saxon humour, given their context, by arguing that they are not necessarily in conflict with the monastic environment itself, only with scholars' perceptions of it.

These riddles make extensive use of double entendre to lead the reader towards a sexual solution, although the real answer, in most cases, is as innocuous as 'onion' or 'dough'. Riddle 62, a bawdy piece that has confounded all attempts to find an innocent solution, poses a particular problem that I contend can be resolved by exploring how sexual innuendo interacts with the solution in all the ribald riddles. Examining how a genuinely obscene riddle works with its more innocent brethren to create humour, expose ambiguity, and provoke reflection shows that Riddle 62 is not necessarily out of place in a monastic context. Humour in these riddles can become a tool for contemplation, revealing something about the reader's mind, the nuances of language and the uncertain nature of the world. I will argue that rather than occupying a problematic position in the corpus, the obscene riddles of the Exeter Book demonstrate an association between humour and didacticism found in other Anglo-Saxon texts produced in monastic contexts.

### Curriculum Vitae

Helen Appleton is a Research Assistant in the Department of English at the University of Sydney. She has recently completed her PhD, which examined the imaginative construction of the environment in Anglo-Saxon literature. Helen came to Sydney from the University of Durham in the UK, where she studied for her undergraduate and Masters degrees. She is interested in the use of humour in religious and educational contexts in Anglo-Saxon England, and has previously presented to the AHSN on humour in Old English religious poetry.

### Ms. April Bertels-Garnsey (University of Sydney)

*Looking at the One-eyed Garlic Seller: Riddle 86 in Anglo-Saxon England and Beyond.*

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### Session - 1a Thursday 3:30

Identifying humour in Anglo-Saxon literature is a difficult task. Martha Bayless, indeed, suggests that the 'obscene riddles' of the tenth-century Exeter Book manuscript are 'the only inarguably comic texts' extant from the period. Nonetheless, critics have identified techniques such as irony, paronomasia and the grotesque as devices used to create humour across a range of Anglo-Saxon texts beyond these sexually-charged riddles.

The Old English Riddle 86, for instance, contains no obvious bawdiness. Commonly accepted as denoting a 'One-Eyed Garlic Seller', an identification based on its apparent connection to a riddle from Symphosius's fifth-century Latin *Aenigmata*, Riddle 86 omits Symphosius's solution and downplays the original enigma's central paradox. Instead, Riddle 86 presents an incongruous and grotesque puzzle that sits uneasily with its commonly accepted classification as a 'neck riddle'.

The Old English adaptation of this Latin riddle poses a number of questions about the nature of Anglo-Saxon humour. Equally as intriguing are critical attempts to evaluate the riddle's function. This paper will explore issues which this riddle raises regarding the translation of humour across languages, societies and time. To this end,

I shall examine the humorous potential of Riddle 86 from its translation into Old English through Franz Dietrich's initial ideas on the riddle's solution in the nineteenth century, his subsequent identification of its connection with Symphosius's enigma, and more recent scholarly works that find mockery in the poem and emphasise its self-reflexivity.

### Curriculum Vitae

April Bertels-Garnsey is a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of English at the University of Sydney. Her current research focuses on characterisation in Old English verse hagiography. Her previous conference presentations have addressed the issue of social regulation in an Old English saint's life and the connection between sleep and emotions in Old English elegies. In 2013, she will be presenting papers on the representation of family relationships in Old English hagiography and examining the nuances of the Old English vocabulary for pleasure.

### Dr. Hannah Burrows (University of Sydney)

*Mythological Mirth: the Role of Humour in Tales of the Norse Gods.*

hannahmaryburrows@gmail.com

### Session - 1a Thursday 3:30

Old Norse mythology is full of amusing, bizarre and downright irreverent tales of the gods and their adventures, and its humour is one of the reasons why it has had such an enduring appeal. In one episode, the giantess Skaði has it as part of her peace-settlement with the Æsir, the gods, that the troublemaker Loki should do something she thinks he cannot: make her laugh (he succeeds by the timeless method of tying his testicles to a goat's beard). But how does humour actually function within Norse mythological texts? What forms of humour are used, when, and why? What, if anything, is too taboo to be made funny? Is there a distinction between gods we laugh at and gods we laugh with?

My paper will investigate the creation of humour in Norse mythological texts, particularly the poems of the Poetic Edda and Snorri Sturluson's 'textbook' for poets, his own Edda, and what it can tell us about medieval Scandinavian attitudes towards their belief systems. It will also explore the potentially changing functions of humour in the later transmission and reception of these texts during the Middle Ages and beyond. Moreover, it will attempt to answer the important question: who was the funniest Old Norse god?

### Curriculum Vitae

Hannah Burrows is Research Associate in Old Norse-Icelandic at the University of Sydney, where she works on the international editing project Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages (<http://skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au>). She has edited 109 stanzas of Old Norse poetry for the project, including a collection of 38 riddles, some of which she has spoken about at previous AHSN conferences, and she has several forthcoming publications in this area.

Her interest in medieval humour stems from her Masters' thesis on the use of humour in the sagas of Icelanders, and she enjoys the ways in which humour can be a way of accessing the unfamiliar (the medieval imagination and emotional life), and the intellectual challenges posed by the cultural contexts of humour and laughter.

**Ms. Laura Castagnini (University of Melbourne)**

*Humour in Feminist Art.*

Laura.castagnini@gmail.com

**Session - 5b Saturday 10:30**

This paper considers the use of humour in feminist visual art as a subversive strategy. The strategies available to feminist artists are, of course, wide-ranging, however my study will focus exclusively on humour as an area that is highly prevalent in feminist art practices but is rarely paid serious attention by scholars.

In the paper I define feminist art as artworks that disrupt patriarchal structures and investigate why humour is an appropriate tool to do so. This will involve an analysis of humour and its capability to disrupt social conventions as well as produce radical change. A number of case studies from the 1970s will be examined in light of humour theory, by artists including The Waitresses, Lynda Benglis, Martha Rosler, Louise Lawler and Cindy Sherman.

**Curriculum Vitae**

Laura Castagnini is a Master of Arts (Art History) candidate at the University of Melbourne and an independent curator. Her research interests include feminist art histories and their current articulations, performance art, photography and collaborative practices. She is a graduate from the 2012 Gwangju Biennale International Curator Course, holds a Postgraduate Diploma (Art History) from the University of Melbourne and a Bachelor of Visual Art (Painting) from Monash University. She has published a number of catalogue essays and articles about contemporary art and worked at a range of art institutions including Anna Pappas Gallery in Melbourne and as an intern at the Elizabeth A. Sacker Centre for Feminist Art (Brooklyn Museum) and MOMA PS1 in New York. Current curatorial projects include a discursive project about humour and feminist art, which has thus far included a public lecture by the iconic feminist collective the Guerrilla Girls, and will result in a major group exhibition at Margaret Lawrence Gallery (Victorian College of the Arts) in 2013.

**Dr. Władysław Chłopicki (Jagiellonian University, Kraków)**

*Unconventional metonymies and metaphors as a vehicle of  
creativity in humorous short stories.*

chlopicki@gmail.com

**Session - 2b Friday 10:30**

This paper focuses on the analysis of the pathways of the creative minds of three English-language comic writers (Stephen Leacock, Alan Coren and Woody Allen) and one Polish writer (Jerzy Pilch – his works were published in English translation and even received literary awards in the United States) as exemplified in selected humorous short stories, with particular emphasis on the role of imagery (in the sense of cognitive linguistics) in general and on the unconventional metonymies (chains of metonymies), metaphors and metonymy-based metaphors (metaphonymies) in particular that the writers rely on in order to evoke the comic effects. The major issue that will be discussed is the extent to which the imagery depends on immediate and further context to be perceived as humorous, and to what extent certain metonymic strategies can be considered as sure-fire techniques for comic writers.

**Curriculum Vitae**

Władysław Chłopicki is a linguist and a senior researcher affiliated with the Institute of English Philology, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. He is also Head of the Faculty of Humanities at Krosno State College in south-eastern Poland (since 2012). He is interested in humour research, pragmatics of intercultural communication, cognitive linguistics and translation theory.

He has published numerous articles on humour-related issues, as well as a book-length introduction to humour studies in Polish. He has edited and co-edited a number of Polish and English-language article collections on linguistics, translation and intercultural communication, and is the editor of the international Humour and Culture monograph series, as part of which Polish Humour and Hungarian Humour volumes came out in 2012. He has organized and co-organized numerous scholarly national and international conferences on language and communication, including the 24th International Society for Humor Studies conference in Kraków 2012.

He is a member of the editorial boards of *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, *European Journal of Humour Research* and *Israeli Journal of Humor Research*. He was a member of the ISHS executive board 2006-2009, and President of Cracow Tertium Society for the Promotion of Language Studies since 2008. He is an active translator of guidebooks, artistic and scholarly texts.

**Emeritus Prof. Conal Condren (University of Queensland)**

*Freedom, Oppression and Satiric Creativity.*

conalcondren@optusnet.com

**Session - 4a Friday 3:30**

It has been widely held that to thrive, satire requires an environment of political freedom. Dustin Griffin has challenged this, arguing that the great age of English satire, the world of Dryden, Marvell, Swift and Pope, was one of relative oppression, and suggesting that oppression might, indeed, be a condition for satiric creativity. The age of Restoration and Augustan satire would seem to be the ideal test case for any such general theory.

The argument here is that it is important not to conflate propositions about the quality of satire with those concerning the necessary social and political conditions in which any sort of satire can be found. The conclusion is that global theses about such variable and unstable categories as satire and freedom, or its relative absence, are of little value.

**Curriculum Vitae**

Conal Condren is Emeritus Scientia Professor at The University of New South Wales and currently an Honorary Professor at The Centre for the History of European Discourses, University of Queensland.

He works mainly on the intellectual history of early modern England; his most recent academic book is *Hobbes, The Scriblerians and the History of Philosophy* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011). He is currently working on a volume of essays on Shakespeare and the ethics of office, and on a theoretical model of concept formation in politics.

**Mr. Anton Crouch (Independent Scholar) and  
Dr. Debra Aarons (University of New South Wales)**

*An Examination of the Linguistic Humour in the Abbott and Costello Routine 'Who's on first?'*

Anton.crouch@optusnet.com.au

d.aarons@unsw.edu.au

### **Session - 3b Friday 1:30**

In this paper we introduce the Who's on first? routine and give a brief description of its vaudeville origins. Having contextualised the routine, we will examine it in order to understand how the humour is created. The routine draws on some rather complex issues in linguistics and the philosophy of language, specifically the questions, "What is a name?" and "What is a description?" In the philosophical literature, these are difficult questions, beginning with the work of Gotlob Frege, and continuing through Bertrand Russell's theory of descriptions, and finally Saul Kripke's work, Naming and Necessity. The basic ambiguity in the routine is in assigning the correct 'meaning' to terms such as who, what and why. These terms are generally used as question words, but in this routine are recruited into functioning as proper names. The humour is created and sustained through this systematic ambiguity. We will analyse how this ambiguity is played out through the routine and propose some answers to the question of why it is funny, as the use of simple ambiguity is not sufficient for sustained humorous play, particularly in a routine of this length. We will also consider the role of vaudeville in this sort of play and touch on matters such as the nature of comedy duos, live performance, live performance to camera, and the function of familiarity and repetition in encouraging audience response.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

Anton Crouch is a retired geologist researching the applicability of biological classification to cultural phenomena. Present studies are based on the recognition of sound recordings as body fossils of palaeo taxa and particular attention is being paid to the relationship between late nineteenth-century vaudeville and the emergence of jazz and blues.

Dr. Debra Aarons is a linguist in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales. She received her PhD in 1994 from Boston University in Massachusetts, USA. She is a specialist in the linguistics of signed languages, and has published widely in these areas. These days she teaches Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, specializing in syntax, psycholinguistics and pragmatics. She has a particular interest in the intersection of humour, linguistics, and cognitive science. She is a member of a tiny minority of humour scholars and linguists who are interested in cryptic crossword puzzles. Her recent book, *Jokes and the Linguistic Mind*, 2012, is published by Routledge.

**Mrs. Mira Crouch (University of New South Wales)**

*Why are we Laughing at this Joke? - A workshop*

m.crouch@unsw.edu.au

### **Session - 6b Saturday 1:30**

Theories of verbal humour most commonly deal with structural aspects of verbal material that (hypothetically) render such material 'funny'. Jokes are the object of

most investigations from which these theories flow, but very little work has been done on actual persons – human ‘subjects’ – who laugh (or not, as the case may be) in order to tap their understanding of what is ‘funny’. One exception is the work of Grant (Stuart Grant - PhaenEx, 2008 - ojs.uwindsor.ca), who has analysed students’ responses to jokes and other humorous verbal material presented to them in class. Grant’s phenomenological approach cannot be followed in a brief encounter; nonetheless the basic aim of finding out what people have to say about what makes them laugh can be explored in a workshop context. Here it is proposed to read out a small number of jokes (four, say, sourced from old and, hopefully, unfamiliar material) to workshop participants who will be asked to select, for each individual joke, items on a list of structural features and functional properties of jokes to be drawn deductively from propositions within extant theories of humour. Participants will be urged to consider as carefully and thoughtfully as possible their reactions to the jokes when they tick the Yes/No boxes on the score sheet. (Scaling will not be used due to shortness of time.) A tally of responses will be obtained by a show of hands and the ensuing figures will be discussed in the light of participants’ knowledge of humour theory. The object of the exercise is to identify issues that may arise when joke theory postulates meet laughing practices. With any luck, tentative novel conceptualisations may emerge.

### Curriculum Vitae

Mira Crouch is currently Visiting Fellow in the School of Social Sciences at UNSW. She has taught Sociology there since 1975, and has participated with presentations in AHSN meetings since 2006. Mira’s particular interest is in jokes. Her latest book, *Almost Home*, is expected to be published by Fisher Imprints (UK) in early 2013.

### Dr. Daniel Derrin (Macquarie University)

*Rhetorical Uses of Humour in Early Modern Writing.*

daniel.derrin@macquarie.edu.au

### Session - 4a Friday 3:30

I propose to discuss humour as a rhetorical tool in early modern writing and how early modern writers conceptualized persuasive humour within their own forms of psychology. In doing so, I will show how Shakespeare represents humour’s persuasive power dramatically in *Othello* and how it opens up ways of thinking about persuasive humour in action.

Many studies have been made of Shakespeare’s comedy and his comic traditions, such as Barber (1959), Salinger (1974), Snyder (1979), Nevo (1980), and, more recently, Maslen (2006). Another recent study considers Shakespeare and laughter in terms of neuroscientific thought: Ghose (2008). These studies have helped to identify the generic sources of early modern comedy and humour’s material-social functions. However, when thinking about the humorous specifically as a persuasive tool, it is important to ask questions about early modern peoples’ beliefs about the mind. Laughter certainly had the social functions of diffusing tension and reinforcing community. But how much was humour thought to be a mental phenomenon, and thus a persuasive one? What psychological categories were called upon in thinking about humour as a rhetorical tool, or relied upon in using it as one? This paper connects persuasive humour with ancient and renaissance theory about the mental faculties of imagination and reason.

### Curriculum Vitae

Daniel Derrin received his PhD from Macquarie University in 2012 on the subject of rhetoric and early modern concepts of mental process. He has published articles in the scholarly journals *English Studies* and *Parergon* on the writings of Francis Bacon and John Donne. His forthcoming book *Rhetoric and the Familiar in Francis Bacon and John Donne* will be published in early 2013 by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

### Ms. Claire Duffy (Deakin University)

*Subversive Humour in Contemporary Women's Fiction.*

claire.duffy@deakin.edu.au

### Session - 5b Saturday 10:30

This paper will examine critically how humour is utilised in contemporary women's literature to critique cultural values, especially with regard to gender.

Women's literary humour can destabilise conventional ideas about gender and comedy. These conventional ideas are long-standing ones, as I will show through a brief discussion of the history of comedy theory, demonstrating how, in Western culture, comedy has been routinely theorised in gendered terms. Both literary and psychoanalytic analysis of humour is founded on patriarchal authority which excludes women's experience, voice and perspective. The effective downgrading of, and attempt to control, women's humour that such theorisation represents creates a cultural space for women's comic writing to unsettle conventional patriarchal assumptions about comedy and gender.

My paper will look at two examples to illustrate the diverse ways that contemporary women's writing employs comedy for political effects. These are Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges are not the only Fruit* (2001), and Helen Zahavi's *Dirty Weekend* (1991). These two texts illustrate key aspects of comedy's subversive power in contemporary women's fiction. Humour often works both to express and to alleviate social anxiety about issues that are otherwise unsayable. The feminist humour in these texts repositions women by representing them in ways that have been unthought-of or unacceptable in the past.

### Curriculum Vitae

Claire Duffy is a PHD candidate at Deakin University, Geelong. She is interested in the transformative power of humour in feminist literature. She views writing as a powerful tool for voicing that which is not obvious, and that which is not easy—a catalyst for understanding. *Hecate*, *Swamp*, *Verandah*, *AntiTHESIS*, and *In Stead* have published her short stories.

### Emeritus Professor Ken Dutton (University of Newcastle)

*Limericks.*

Ken.Dutton@newcastle.edu.au

### Session - 6a Friday 1:30 pm

This paper deals first with the origin of the term 'limerick' and with the characteristics of this particular verse form. It traces the first appearance of the limerick form in England and its adoption by Edward Lear in a number of books of 'nonsense verse'. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the writing of limericks became a popular form of amusement, particularly among the readers of the magazine *Punch* and among Oxford and Cambridge dons. These works differ in an important respect from the limericks of Edward Lear.

As to subject-matter, the limerick falls largely into two quite different areas. The first is that of the 'intellectual', which typically deals in an amusing way with philosophical or even theological themes. A sub-set of this area is the 'limerick of co-ordinated orthography', which relies for its effect on the peculiarities of English spelling and their at times tenuous relationship to pronunciation.

By far the most common subject area treated in limerick form is the ribald or even the downright obscene. A number of collections of such limericks were published from the early twentieth century onwards. The paper discusses possible reasons for the attractiveness of the limerick form for the expression of vulgar and obscene material.

Although the limerick is predominantly an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, occasional attempts have been made at writing limericks in other European languages; some examples are quoted in the paper. Characteristics common to most limericks are discussed, and the question is asked whether it is possible to develop a general theory to account for the popularity of this verse form.

The very familiarity of the limerick form has allowed some authors to toy with, or even subvert, the expectations of readers. An extreme example of this subversion is what has been called the 'anti-limerick', in which the commonly-accepted rules of the genre are deliberately broken. The paper concludes by reiterating the attraction of the limerick for lovers of whimsy and nonsense.

### Curriculum Vitae

Kenneth R. Dutton AM is an Emeritus Professor of the University of Newcastle, where he held the Chair of French from 1968 to 1998, also serving as Pro Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Following his retirement, he worked in an honorary capacity as President of Alumni, member of the University Council and Deputy Chancellor. He is the author of 20 books and over 50 articles and monographs, chiefly in the fields of literary and cultural theory and biography.

### Dr. Bruce Findlay and Mr. Imam Hamze (Swinburne University of Technology)

*The Relationships of Attitudes to Religion, Humour Style, and Self-control, to Psychological Well-being in a sample of Australian Muslims.*

bfindlay@swin.edu.au

### Session - 2a Friday 10:30

A sample of 228 Australian Muslims (ages 19-74, but half under 25) responded to a hard-copy survey measuring attitudes to religion (Batson et al., 1993), humour styles (Martin et al., 2003), self-control (Tangney et al., 2004) and psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The research question was whether humour styles and self-control would mediate the effect that attitudes to religion are known to have in predicting psychological well-being. Controlling for socially desirable responding, both extrinsic and intrinsic attitudes to religion did positively predict well-being. When humour styles and self-control are also known, affiliative and self-enhancing humour fully mediate the effect of extrinsic religious attitudes on well-being, while self-control partially mediates the effect of intrinsic religious attitudes on well-being, with affiliative humour and self-control being the major predictors of psychological well-being. The advantages and limitations of such a sample will also be discussed.

- Batson, D. C., Schoenrade, P., & Ventis, W. L. (1993). *Religion and the Individual*. New York: Oxford University press.
- Martin, R. A., Puhlik-Doris, P., Larsen, G., Gray, J., & Weir, K. (2003). "Individual differences in uses of humour and their relation to psychological well-being: Development of the Humor Styles Inventory." *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37, 48-75.
- Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, L. M. (1995). "The structure of Psychological well-being revisited." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 719-727.
- Tangney, J. P., Baumeister, R. F., & Boone, A. L. (2005). "High self-control predicts good adjustment, less pathology, better grades, and interpersonal success." *Journal of Personality*, 72, 271-322.

### Curriculum Vitae

After a fifteen-year career as an industrial engineer, Bruce Findlay was a house-husband for several years with a pre-school child. He took a degree in Psychology as an off-campus student to stop his brain rusting up while he was a house-husband. This led to an academic career as a psychologist, initially as a tutor at the University of Melbourne, then as a lecturer at Swinburne University, completing his PhD on the way. His research interests initially centred around relationships. Then he discovered the psychology of humour literature, just too late to attend the International Society of Humour Scholars conference in Sydney in 1996, and since then has supervised two doctoral students and numerous Honours and Masters students in researching aspects of sense of humour and its relationship to psychological health, emotional intelligence, interpersonal relationships, and work-related behaviour.

### Mr. Iman Hamze

This project is Iman's Psychology Honours project. Iman did a Bachelor of Science degree at Swinburne, majoring in Psychology and Psychophysiology, following it up with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) supervised by Bruce Findlay. She is now completing a Master of Psychology (Clinical) at the Cairnmillar Institute in Melbourne, while working as a provisional psychologist at Life Resolutions, a network of counselling practices. As an Australian Muslim of Lebanese background, Iman had a unique opportunity to collect data from this community, and was interested in the interaction of religiosity, humour and psychological well-being.

### Ms. Susan E. Foster (Independent Oral Historian)

*Degrees of Assassination: An Exploration of Kiwi Cartoon Humour.*  
foster.gorbey@paradise.net.nz

### Session - 3a Friday 1:30

Oral history interviews with 23 political cartoonists provide the opportunity to examine the influence of family background, education, religion, politics, popular culture and employment on the way in which cartoonists express their ideas and to question whether there is a correlation between a cartoonist's emotional past and life experiences and the nature of the humour expressed. For instance, are there corresponding factors that link those who tend towards a black, caustic satire, who want to take a 'blowtorch to politicians' or see themselves as assassins for hire? Are

cartoonists who favour a wittier or laconic approach any less passionate about issues or is the stage as equally important to them as it is to those belonging to the so-called 'school of savagery'? Most of the cartoonists, the oldest of whom began cartooning in the early 1970s, are of the generation who grew up with the Goons and went on to relish Monty Python. Some, however, abhor Pythonesque humour, preferring a 'good British sitcom'. Changing tastes in cartoon humour are also reflected in editorial direction; for example, the replacement of a long-serving, daily cartoonist whose tendency was to produce 'whimsies' with a series of independent cartoonists invited to submit cartoons with more 'edge'. Relating to these considerations are the techniques used within cartoons to create humour such as caricature, visual/verbal metaphors, puns, incongruity, graphic style and so forth. The themes addressed in this paper are some of those that are emerging as I work through more than 150 hours of interview material with the goal of completing a publication next year.

### Curriculum Vitae

Susan E. Foster BA (Art History) is currently an independent oral historian; previously Manager/Curator of the New Zealand Cartoon Archive (1992 – 2000), she established a cartoon collection which is now based in the National Library of New Zealand, developed a substantial fund to support the Archive through revenue-generating activities such as touring exhibitions (including exhibition of David Low's cartoons), lecture tours, charity auctions, sponsorship, creation of a Friends' group and publishing a bi-annual newsletter which she called Quiplash. She has also been Executive Director, Museum Directors' Federation (1981-1991); Exhibition Officer, Wellington City Art Gallery and Curatorial Assistant, Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

### Mr. Lindsay Foyle (Cartoonist & Cartoon Historian, Sydney)

*Humour in Art: Gone and Almost Forgotten.*

Lindsay44@optusnet.com.au

### Session - 3a Friday 1:30

Up until The Bulletin imported photoengraving equipment to Australia in 1883, cartoons were drawn on wood and after printing there was no original drawing left. For most of the next 130 years cartoons were drawn on paper. Gradually over the past decade drawing on a computer has replaced drawing on paper and soon there will be no new originals to collect.

However while cartoon originals have been hung on walls and placed in art galleries or museums, the publishers who claimed ownership of the original artwork have deliberately destroyed vast numbers of cartoon originals. Because much of this destruction has been done in office cleanups little record has been left of what has happened. Vane Lindesay in his book on Stan Cross (*Stop Laughing This is Serious*) has recorded one act of vandalism. Another act of vandalism has been spread by rumour. It involves Frank Packer and the destruction of a large number of cartoons that had been published in *Smith's Weekly*. However the rumour confuses two separate acts and only one was at the hands of Packer. Almost all of the cartoons published in *Smith's Weekly* from 1919 to 1950 were destroyed in 1950, but that was at somebody else's behest.

While Packer was not involved with the destruction of the *Smith's Weekly* cartoons, he did order the destruction of a huge collection of cartoons from *The Bulletin* that had taken 80 years to amass. One afternoon in 1961 he ordered they be sent to a tip.

However, almost all newspaper and magazine publishers in Australia have been guilty of destroying the original artwork produced by staff and contributing artists. By interviewing many cartoonists over the past twenty years I have been able to piece together how much of this artwork has been 'disappeared'.

### Curriculum Vitae

With excellent qualifications in dyslexia, Lindsay Foyle left East Hills Boys High School and started work the next day in the art department of the Daily Telegraph filling in the black squares in the crossword blanks. A career in the media filled the next 50 years. He was art director on numerous publications and deputy editor on The Bulletin and Australian Business Monthly. He started drawing cartoons in the mid 1970s, and writing on the history of cartooning in the mid 1980s. He has exhibited cartoons in exhibitions in Australia and overseas and written for The Bulletin, Australian Business Monthly, The Australian, Inkspot, New Matilda, and Quadrant; he has also contributed chapters to a number of books on the history of Australian cartooning. Several books on the same subject have been rejected by many publishers who all claim lack of public interest in the subject. He has been a regular participant in the Australian Humour Studies Network colloquiums from the mid 1990s.

### Mr. Dirk Gibb (University of Newcastle)

*'Oh he could grind my coffee': Female Bawdy and the 'Hokum' Tradition in Pre-War Blues.*

Dirk.Gibb@uon.edu.au

### Session - 2b Friday 10:00

Blues music may have a reputation for recounting serious tales of downtrodden people in grim situations, but such a stereotype ignores the rich vein of "hokum" within pre-World War Two blues. This particular style of blues song employed comedic lyrical content via extended analogies or euphemisms, in order to put across sexual thematic content. Due to their dealing with "taboo" subject matter, such songs were barred from radio play, but were widely circulated upon 78rpm discs and within jukeboxes, and provide a fascinating glimpse into how notions of the "bawdy" permeated African-American popular culture during the 1920s and '30s. Male blues artists were heavily represented within this sub-genre, such as Tampa Red, Blind Boy Fuller and Bo Carter. Even Robert Johnson, in his "Travelling Riverside Blues" (1937), famously declared, "You can squeeze my lemon 'til the juice runs down my leg." However, female blues singers also had their say, allowing for a viewpoint that wasn't entirely from a male perspective of relationships (often complicated) and lust.

This paper will demonstrate how "hokum" separated from its roots in nineteenth-century blackface minstrelsy via a close examination of two blues recordings, revealing a salacious presence within blues music originating all across the United States, although mainly recorded on the East Coast. Working within the framework of the "carnavalesque", as employed notably by Francois Rabelais and theorised upon by Mikhail Bakhtin, the analysis of these recordings will elucidate how audio recordings of vocal music, within a studio context, allowed a permissible space for otherwise unspoken discourses about sexuality (and from an unashamed female perspective, at that) to be made public.

Examining two examples of these songs will reveal a comparison between humorous treatments of female sexuality, from a feminine perspective, within “dirty blues”, and what these thematic concerns have to say about sex and male-female relationships in the context of “hokum.” All in all, “dirty blues” permits contemporary audiences to gain a comprehension, however slight, of a vanished world of juke joints and rent parties, while also allowing them to realise that, while the lyrical treatment and frankness of sex within popular music may change, the carnal side of the relationships between men and women remains as a subject of interest.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

Dirk Gibb began his Bachelor of Arts Degree at the University of Newcastle in 2008, undertaking a double Major in Drama and Film, Media and Cultural Studies. Graduating in 2011, he then spent the next two years (part-time) enmeshed within ancient Athenian drama and contemporary animated satire for his Honours thesis: an examination of the connections between Aristophanes and Trey Parker and Matt Stone’s South Park.

Dirk intends to become a full-time Ph.D student in 2013, and will write a comparative study of Underbelly: Razor and Boardwalk Empire. This marks the second AHSN Colloquium that Dirk has attended – in 2012, he co-presented a paper at the Canberra AHSN, with Conjoint Professor Michael Ewans, on the Aristophanic elements in two episodes of South Park.

### **Ms. Angelina Hurley (University of Technology, Sydney)**

*Talk About Laugh - Blak Comedy and Indigenous Cultural Perspectives on Humour*

#### **Session 1b, Thursday 3:30**

In this session Angelina will introduce a screening of her short film Aunty Maggie and the Womba Wakgun.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

Angelina Hurley is an Aboriginal comedy writer. Her dream is in full swing with a Fulbright Scholarship, her first short film, a DoCA with UTS, and her continuing blog site Womba World. In 2011 Angelina was awarded the American-Australian Fulbright Indigenous Scholarship. She is currently undertaking a Doctorate of Creative Arts at the University of Technology, Sydney. In 2009, her first short film “Aunty Maggie and the Womba Wakgun”, with Rachael Maza Long as Aunty Maggie, was produced by Bungaburra Productions through the Short Black Initiative of Screen Australia. It opened the Brisbane International Film Festival (BIFF), was shown in the Message Sticks Film Festival at the Sydney Opera House, acquired by Qantas for in-flight screenings nationally and internationally, and won Best Australian Film at the Heart of Gold International Film Festival.

### **Mr Benjamin Juers Indyk (University of Sydney)**

*The Comic in Comics.*

ben.juers@yahoo.com

#### **Session - 6a Saturday 1:30**

Few analyses of comics, graphic novels and sequential art have touched on their use within the context of comedy. Theorists have observed that comics are made

up of juxtapositions and 'tensions' between words and pictures, static images and sequences, narratives and the overall composition of each page. In addition, comics use a visual vocabulary to convey non-visual senses and phenomena, an example of which is the representation of time through space. The variety of ways in which these elements can be negotiated relies to a certain extent on the creativity of the reader. This creativity can determine the timing and predictability of jokes and gags in comics that aim to be humorous.

This paper will examine some of the methods developed by cartoonists in response to these considerations. Works by a range of cartoonists, including E.C. Segar, Otto Soglow, Milt Gross and Johnny Ryan, will be drawn on to demonstrate the use of such techniques as 'emanata' (visual signifiers of mood, motion, impact, realisation and confusion), 'chicken fat' (Will Elder's term for peripheral gags and incongruities that reveal themselves upon re-reading) and the paratactic relation between foreground and background.

### Curriculum Vitae

Ben Juers has a BA (Hons) from the University of Sydney and an MFA from the Center for Cartoon Studies. He is currently pursuing a PhD in cartoon comedy theory at the University of Sydney. In addition to self-publishing, he contributes regular gags and comics to The Australian Book Review, The Lifted Brow and Seven Days.

### Dr. Liisi Laineste (Estonian Literary Museum)

*The Modern Girl in Estonian Caricature*

liisi@folklore.ee

### Session - 5b Saturday 10:30

Women present a commonplace "other" in textual jokes as well as visual forms of humour. Scholars have pointed out that gender is among the most recurring humour targets, side by side with ethnic and political humour. Gender representations present in humour are grounded in deep-rooted constructions of femininity and masculinity, revealing binary as well as hierarchical oppositions. That is, women are depicted as different but also inferior to men, both to the characters in the humour and to the authors of the humorous text. Similarly to ethnic humour, gender humour is also based on the juxtaposition of 'us' and 'them, and as joke-tellers as well as cartoonists have often been men, it is the female character who fills the inferior role of the 'other'. The female stereotype - the nagging, gossiping, shrew, cuckolding woman - not only signals the male anxieties that accompany their laughter, but also strengthens the dissociation of women and humour.

The presentation strives to describe the main stereotypes used about the gendered "other" in Estonian interwar caricatures (a period that can be viewed as the "first Republic" of Estonia between the two World Wars), extracting the more frequent categories from the material and analysing these with the means provided by the comparative historical approach. The analysis shows that the visual elements connected to the Modern Girl were highly visible everywhere throughout the world at that time, lending more remarkable elements of that also to caricatures. The Modern Girl had changed the way women were represented

in the media. Although the transformation had already started during the late nineteenth century, the woman from before the First World War had been a static, compliant, home-bound creature. War brought about a number of social changes that influenced the image of a woman: it pushed women into emancipation because of the demographic changes, forced people to mobility (urbanisation), and changed fashion, which became more masculine, permissive and sensual.

The humorous image of the Modern Girl presents a controversial case, where positive (beautiful, sexually attractive, fashionable) and negative (infertile, wannabe, excessively and irrationally fashionable) stereotypes are displayed simultaneously. Examples from the period are described in a sociologically and historically embedded manner, aiming to show how the social and political changes are reflected in humorous discourse.

### Curriculum Vitae

Liisi Laineste holds BcS, MA and PhD degrees from the departments of Psychology and Folkloristics at Tartu University. Since 2005 she has worked at the Estonian Science Foundation, where she is now a Senior Researcher and also the Head of a current funded project; this paper is based on that research-in-progress. She is a member of the editorial board of *Humour: International Journal for Humor Research*, *Canadian Social Science*, and *European Journal of Humor Research*. She has received a number of awards, most recently the Estonian Foundation of Culture, Academy of Science young researcher's award.

### Mr. Lucien Leon (Australian National University)

*Moving Images: The Animated and Video Image as Political Cartoon.*

lucien.leon@anu.edu.au

### Session - 3a Friday 1:30

In awarding the 2007 Prize for Editorial Cartooning to an artist whose submission contained animated content, the Pulitzer Committee dispensed with the notion that a political cartoon must contain just a single, static frame. This acknowledgement of political animations as serious editorial content both legitimizes their role in the journalistic landscape and also raises questions about hitherto commonly accepted determinants in the qualification of images as political cartoons. Dr Karen Speckman has revealed that animated political cartoons depend on the same categories and metaphors for understanding as static political cartoons. I have previously argued that Medhurst and Desousa's taxonomic categories for the recognition and analysis of political cartoons provide an acceptable, though not comprehensive, framework for the critical examination of the satirical video mash-ups of Hugh Atkin. Consistent with my position that both the animated and the video moving image can be considered a part of the political cartooning tradition, I now propose an amendment to Medhurst and Desousa's taxonomy to accommodate the distinctive technical and creative processes in moving image production. I argue that processes such as motion, sound, compositing and editing constitute a creative skillset that can be applied in the production of graphic satire discourse in a comparable manner to Medhurst and Desousa's Six Elements of Graphic Style. A revised taxonomy is necessary not only to acknowledge the unique production and dissemination strategies that are now available to the graphic satirist, but also

to maintain the relevance of an art form whose primary distribution platform is shifting inexorably from print media to new media.

### Curriculum Vitae

Lucien Leon is an early-career researcher and lecturer at the ANU School of Art's Department of Photography and Media Arts. His PhD candidature is located in the Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Research program at the ANU Research School of Humanities and the Arts. The topic of his PhD is Retooling the Print Media Political Cartooning tradition to a New Media Context. In the context of his candidature he has presented papers at the Taiwan International New Media Arts Festival, The 24th Society for Animation Studies Conference and the 18th AHSN Colloquium. His political animations have been broadcast on ABC TV's Q&A program, ABC's Unleashed website, News Ltd's The Punch website, Crikey.com and Dutch ITV. He has also exhibited work in Taiwan, Melbourne and Canberra in various festivals and exhibitions. Looking beyond his PhD, Lucien hopes to extend his research in the area of political animation and contribute to a broad recognition of animations and video mash-ups as being situated in the political cartooning tradition.

**Dr. Michael Lloyd (Victoria University of Wellington)  
and Dr. Paul Jewell (Flinders University)**

*I'll Just Open this Can of Whoop Ass:*

*The Social Dynamics of Heckling in Stand-up Comedy.*

mike.lloyd@vuw.ac.nz and paul.jewell@flinders.edu.au

### Session - 5a Saturday 10:30

In a previous presentation at an AHSN colloquium we described and analysed one example of heckling in a stand-up comedy performance. We showed Joan Rivers first quickly responding to a heckler's claim that her joke about Helen Keller was not funny, the heckler escalating his interruption, and then Rivers effectively breaking the comedic frame by both abusing the heckler and seriously explaining 'what comedy is about'. Heckling itself was not our prime interest, but in response to the paper a professional comedian commented that Rivers' handling of the heckler was quite unusual, if not weak. Interested by this comment, we searched out other examples of heckling in stand-up comedy, and quickly realized that the topic begged for further investigation.

This paper is the preliminary result of our investigations. It aims to do three main things. First, to indicate briefly why heckling is an interesting social phenomenon worthy of sociological analysis. Here we engage with existing literature on stand-up comedy and more linguistically oriented research on stand-up as a speech exchange system. Second, we describe our empirical corpus gathered from readily available internet sites and movies of stand-up performances. Following on from this we move to analyze the main features of heckling, and the variety of forms it takes, and describe in more depth some 'deviant cases'. Amongst the latter is the infamous case of the ex-Seinfeld actor Michael Richards' 'racist rant' response to heckling. We show that the common attempt by comedians to 'destroy' hecklers (opening a can of 'whoop ass' on them) can backfire, emphasizing just how carefully heckling needs to be handled.

Finally, we sum up the paper, reflecting on the 'social dynamics' of heckling, and conclude with implications for further research.

### Curriculum Vitae

Mike Lloyd is a sociologist at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. After a varied background researching and teaching in other areas of sociology, he has recently focused upon humour. His preference is for theoretically informed case studies of specific humorous phenomena.

Paul Jewell is a philosopher whose primary interests are ethics and reasoning. He finds that the study of humour is very relevant to both these areas. He lectures in Ethics in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Flinders University.

**Dr. Lee-Fay Low (Research Fellow, Dementia Collaborative Research Centre, University of NSW) and Mr. Jean-Paul Bell (Humour Therapist, Professional comedian, Creative Director and Co-Founder of the Arts Health Institute)**

*Something to SMILE about in nursing homes: a randomised controlled trial of humour therapy*

jp.bell@artshealthinstitute.org.au

### Session - 2b Friday 10:30

The Sydney Multisite Intervention of LaughterBosses and Elderclowns (SMILE) study was a randomised controlled trial of humour therapy in nursing homes. The intervention comprised 9-12 visits by an Elderclown, a professional performer, augmented by humorous engagement by a LaughterBoss, a trained staff member. There were no differences over time between intervention and usual care groups on the primary outcome of resident mood, however the secondary outcome of engagement showed sustained decrease in the intervention group at 26 week follow-up. Management support and LaughterBoss commitment impacted on how much residents were engaged during sessions, which in turn was associated with greater improvement on mood and agitation. There will be discussion on what the important elements of the intervention might be.

### Curriculum Vitae

Dr Lee-Fay Low, PhD, is a Research Fellow at the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre at University of NSW. Mr Jean-Paul Bell is a Humour Therapist and Professional comedian and is the Creative Director and Co-Founder of the Arts Health Institute. Dr Maggie Haertsch (PhD) is CEO of Arts Health Institute and Executive Producer, Hot Tin Productions.

### Documentary Film screening: The Smile Within

**Screened during the Lunch break - Friday 12:45 (Lecture Theatre)**

A documentary that follows the last four weeks of the SMILE Study a world-first large scale study on humour and dementia. We follow Jean-Paul Bell as he delivers the humour therapy intervention to residents in residential aged care. Jean-Paul provided 88% of the humour intervention during this 3 year National Health and Medical Research Council funded study. The screening will run for 26 minutes with an opportunity for a short Q & A to follow with the producer of the film, Dr Maggie Haertsch (PhD) CEO of Arts Health Institute and Executive Producer, Hot Tin Productions together with Dr Lee-Fay Low and Jean-Paul Bell.

**Ms. Emma Jean McKinin (University of Missouri)**

*Nineteenth-Century Humourists in Australia and the US: Similarities and Differences.*

Ejm83c@mizzou.edu

### **Session - 5a Saturday 10:30**

During the nineteenth century, the United States and Australia were new English-speaking societies. Both countries included native peoples as well as European immigrants. Both were still being widely, and sometimes dangerously, explored. Both witnessed gold rushes. A major difference was, of course, governance. The United States was an independent state; Australia did not become a self-determining commonwealth until 1901.

In both countries, people often responded to hardships, to hazards and quirks of the environment with humour, laughter frequently being the only relief in sight. To illustrate these responses, I have chosen the Australians Henry Lawson, Andrew Barton ("Banjo") Paterson and Edward Dyson and the Americans Ambrose Bierce, Charles Farrar Browne (Artemus Ward) and Bret Harte.

Although there is a broad spectrum of similarities and differences, my principal paths of exploration will be the ways in which these men described the antics of their countrymen in responding to the gold rush and their delight in (or scorn of) dialect.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

Emma McKinin's education and work experience are concentrated at the University of Missouri, Columbia. She has an MA in English and one in Library and Information Science. She retired as Assistant Professor of Library and Information Science in 1991, but she also served in the Science and the Health Sciences Libraries as Head of Reference. She received an Outstanding Achievement Award from the MidContinental Medical Library Association and the Faculty Retiree of the Year Award in 2003 from the University. She was co-investigator on two NIH Grants from the National Library of Medicine.

**Dr. Angus McLachlan (University of Ballarat)**

*When is a Joke not a Joke? When it appears in a Workplace Campaign against Harassment.*

a.mclachlan@ballarat.edu.au

### **Session - 1b 3:30 Thursday**

As part of a campaign to improve health and well-being at a university, a set of three colourful posters was produced featuring animal caricatures and short passages of text admonishing students and staff not to engage in, nor tolerate in others, any form of harassment. In what I hope will pass muster as a semiotic analysis of the three posters, I shall make a few preliminary remarks on how difficult it is to define harassment in short segments of text. Secondly, attention will be drawn to the form and content of the three posters, which clearly serve to ridicule the perpetrators of harassment. The dangers of inviting others to laugh at any person, no matter how reprehensible his or her conduct, will be explored. It will be suggested that presenting another as a figure of fun opens up the possibility of the viewer sympathising with the subject of ridicule and questioning the ethical stance of the authority who, in sanctioning the posters, gives the subject

no right of redress. Thirdly, it will be argued that, with masterful irony, one poster that recognizes the potential for humour to be hurtful could itself constitute harassment, if judged by a precept espoused in one of the other posters: "If it humiliates someone, it's harassment". Finally, two general and related issues will be raised in relation to the analysis of the posters. First, the value of interpreting the posters as part of a continuing dialogue between two parties who enjoy differing degrees of power and may read the posters in distinctly different ways will be explored. Second, the general problems experienced by organisational authorities in developing codes of ethical conduct will be considered.

### Curriculum Vitae

Angus lectures in psychology at the University of Ballarat. His main teaching areas are social psychology, research methodology, and statistics, which offers him ample opportunity to rail against the failings of his chosen discipline. In his first year as an undergraduate he wanted to study philosophy, along with geography and anthropology, but timetabling constraints meant that he ended up with  $\psi$  instead of  $\phi$ . He has a continuing interest in laughter and humorous interaction, which he examines from a pragmatic, semiotic, sociological, and in fact, any perspective other than the one he is paid to adopt. That does not prevent him periodically rolling out the heavy statistical artillery with which psychologists defend themselves.

### Mr. Michael Meany (University of Newcastle)

*Humour and Creativity: Theoretical Congruence.*

Michael.Meany@newcastle.edu.au

### Session - 4b Friday 3:30

Graeme Ritchie stated, "there is little doubt that the construction of humor is generally regarded as creative... and any general theory of creativity should have something to say about humor" (2009, p. 71). Accepting that the study of humour is a sub-set of the more general study of creativity suggests that there should be a high level of congruence between the theoretical and methodological approaches employed in each domain. By offering an account of the criticisms of theories of creativity and humour this paper aims to map the degree of congruence between the two domains.

Fundamentally these criticisms point out moments of reductionism. Simonton argues that concentration on the individual aspects of creativity produces a tradition of "psychological reductionism" (Simonton 2003, p. 304). This tradition "also inspired an antithetical conception of creativity as an exclusively societal-level event... 'sociocultural reductionism,' [where] the individual becomes a mere epiphenomenon without any causal significance whatsoever" (Simonton 2003, p. 304). The role of the individual, the producer, in the construction of humour has not received detailed attention. For example, Raskin's *The Primer of Humor Research* (2008) offers only scant references to the production of humour as a process and even less on the role of the producer.

In a similar vein there is a tendency toward 'structural reductionism' where the elements of the form are given a position of primacy. "When interested

in the structure of a humorous text (mainly, what makes it funny) one can and must abstract away from the reception of said text by any given audience. Their reactions are essentially irrelevant..." (Willis 2005, p. 127). Again, this form of reductionism is countered by 'sociocultural reductionism' that has an insistent focus on the audience reception of creative/humorous texts.

The core of Ritchie's statement above speaks of "the construction of humor" as a creative act. Theories of humour have tended to focus on product over process and on reception over construction. What a general theory of creativity can say about humour production is that humour is the result of the interplay of social, cultural and individual attributes.

Raskin, Victor. 2008. *The Primer of Humor Research*. Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Ritchie, Graeme. 2009. "Can Computers Create Humor?" *AI Magazine* no. 30 (3):71 - 81.

Simonton, Dean Keith. 2003. "Creative Cultures, Nations and Civilisations: Strategies and Results." In *Group Creativity: Innovation Through Collaboration*, edited by Paul Paulus and Bernard Nijstad. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Willis, Ken. 2005. "Merry Hell: Humour Competence and Social Incompetence." In *Beyond a Joke: the limits of humour*, edited by Sharon Lockyer and Michael Pickering, 126 - 145. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York.: Palgrave Macmillan.

### Curriculum Vitae

Michael Meany is a Senior Lecturer in Communication at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Michael's background includes careers as a freelance writer, a typesetter and publication designer, and a playwright. From these varied careers, Michael brings to his research an eclectic mix of skills. His research interests include humour, creativity, script writing and narrative / interactive media design. Currently, he is undertaking a PhD through Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia. The topic of his PhD research project is 'The Development of Humour in Artificial Intelligence Agents'.

### Dr. Jessica Milner Davis (University of Sydney)

*The Theory of Humours East and West: Creating a Well-balanced Person.*

jessmd@bigpond.net.au

### Session - 6a Saturday 1:30

The generalist meaning of "humour" underpinning all contemporary humour research has as its antecedent the ancient medical "theory of the humours", the belief that the blend (L. temperare) among four basic bodily humours or fluids defined a person's constitutional temperament (or personality). With origins in ancient Egypt (possibly in Āyurvedic medicine), these holistic concepts of body and temperament were expounded by Galen of Pergamon (129–199/217 CE), influenced by Hippocrates of Cos (c.460–c.370 BCE), the "father of medicine".

This Western classical view of the physical bodily "humours" and character and health has much in common with a parallel belief in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Although the two systems are not identical, Rey Tiquia has noted that

TCM has long practised what might be called Humour Therapy to restore a well-balanced person. This paper offers a brief account of the two approaches, outlining connections between the Western theory of humours and modern psychological thought including positive psychology. It will also direct participants to an on-line diagnosis of their own "humoural personality".

Arikha, Noga. *Passions and Tempers: A History of the Humours*. NY: Harper Perennial, 2008.

Joubert, Laurent. *Treatise on Laughter*. Trans. Gregory D. de Rocher. Orig. ed., 1579. University of Alabama Press, 1980.

Martin, Rod A. *The Psychology of Humor: An Integrative Approach*. Amsterdam: Academic Press, 2007.

Stelmack, Robert M. and Anastasios Stalikas. "Galen and the humour theory of temperament." *Personality and Individual Differences* 12 (3) (1991): 255-263.

Tiquia, Rey. "The Qi That Got Lost in Translation: Traditional Chinese Medicine, Humour and Healing." In *Humour in Chinese Life and Letters: Traditional and Classical Approaches*, eds. Jocelyn Chey and Jessica Milner Davis. 37-49. Hong Kong University Press, 2011.

### Curriculum Vitae

An Honorary Associate in the School of Letters, Art and Media, University of Sydney, Jessica Milner Davis is a Life Member of Clare Hall, Cambridge, and a 2012 Senior Fellow, Istituto di Studi Avanzate, Università di Bologna. She was President of the International Society for Humor Studies (1996 and 2001) and co-ordinates the Australasian Humour Studies Network <http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies>. Her research interests include the history and theory of comic genres, humour-styles across cultures and multi-disciplinary research on humour and laughter. She published her first book (on farce as a comic genre) in 1978 (updated ed., 2003) and her most recent is *Humour in Chinese Life and Letters* (2 vols. with Jocelyn Chey, Hong Kong UP, 2011 and 2013). She is a member of the Board of Consulting Editors and a Book Review Editor for *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter), and a member of the Editorial Board for the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies* (Sage Publishing).

### Dr. Christine Judith Nicholls (Flinders University)

*Warlpiri Nicknaming, Creativity and Humour: A Sociolinguistic Analysis*.

Christine.nicholls@flinders.edu.au

### Session - 3b Friday 1:30

The practice of Warlpiri nicknaming is to be understood as a subclass of Warlpiri naming practices, and also, to a certain extent, as a subset of Warlpiri humour. When, in 1982, I went to live and work (initially as a linguist and then, from 1984-1992, as the Principal of the local school) in the remote Aboriginal settlement of Lajamanu in the Tanami Desert of the Northern Territory, I was struck by the eloquence of Warlpiri people of all ages and how most people were able to command, apparently effortlessly, an extensive repertoire of creative linguistic resources. Verbal dexterity and acuity, wit and humour, especially in terms of Warlpiri people's ability to discern and linguistically 'skewer' people's physical, linguistic or other idiosyncrasies, their moral weaknesses, or their personal flaws (or, occasionally, individual gifts or achievements) were highly prized forms of

linguistic and cultural capital. Inventive, ironic oral expression was universally highly valued in what was and still is essentially an oral culture, and gifted users of language revered, whereas no special prestige attached to the acquisition of even basic literacy. By and large this remains the case to this day.

In this presentation Warlpiri nicknaming, a resilient pre-contact practice that has survived colonisation, will be discussed in terms of its various categories or genres, its relationship to Warlpiri humour and to Warlpiri linguistic productions in the more general sense, and also in relation to the broader category of Australian humour. Examples will be provided throughout the presentation, with discussion focusing on the specific nature of Warlpiri nicknaming and Warlpiri humour as differentiated from the practices of other groups. The question of the portability or otherwise of Anglo-European theories and typologies of humour will also be canvassed in relation to Warlpiri practices. It will be argued that Warlpiri nicknaming, like Warlpiri humour, is ultimately predicated on an all-powerful Warlpiri esprit de corps, which means, in practice, that scores of individual casualties are to be found strewn along the lexical pathways, sacrificed for the greater good.

Nicholls, Christine, 1995, 'Warlpiri nicknaming: a personal memoir', in the International Journal of the Sociology of Language 113, 137-146, Mouton de Gruyter, The Hague and USA.

### Curriculum Vitae

Christine Nicholls is a writer, curator and Senior Lecturer in Australian Studies at Flinders University. After teaching at secondary and tertiary levels for some years in Sydney, in 1982 Christine went to live and work at Lajamanu, a remote Warlpiri Aboriginal settlement in the Tanami Desert of the Northern Territory, situated approximately 1,000 kilometres north of Alice Springs and 1,000 kilometres south of Darwin. Christine's original position at Lajamanu was that of linguist responsible for developing a bilingual education program for Lajamanu School, in collaboration with local Warlpiri people. In 1986 Christine took up the position of Principal of Lajamanu School, a school with an enrolment of approx. 250-270 students at any given time. Since 1993 Christine has mostly worked at Flinders University, but also at other tertiary institutions in Australia, Europe and Asia, including the University of Tokyo in 2004-2005, where she held the position of Visiting Professor of Australian Studies.

### Ms. Anja Pabel (James Cook University)

*Tourists' Perceptions about the Use of Humour in the Tourism Setting.*

anja.pabel@my.jcu.edu.au

### Session - 4b Friday 3:30

Humour has been studied in many other academic disciplines, however in the context of tourism it has been neglected until recently. This study reviews tourists' perceptions about the use of humour by two typical but different tourism operators. Specific aims of the study include finding out what tourists thought about the use of humour by tourism operators and how these perceptions differed in the two different tourism settings. The two tourism operators are both located in the Far North region of Queensland in Australia. One is a wildlife attraction offering educational wildlife presentations while the other is a one-day guided

tour to the many natural attractions of the Atherton Tablelands. Informal focus group interviews were conducted to explore how tourists perceived the humour in these two tourism settings. The informal nature of these focus group interviews was based on their naturalistic setting and their timing since they took place during the natural progression of the tours, i.e. at the tourist attraction or as part of the day tour. Analysis was based on the identification of relevant themes or categories based on the extensiveness of comments that were made. Findings show that the humour used by tourism operators had a positive effect on research participants. The humour increased their comfort, helped them to be more mindful of educational comments made during the tours, and also made them feel more connected to the tour guides as well as to other tourists who were part of the same tour. These findings are supported by quotations of what the research participants expressed during the course of the focus group interviews. This study casts some light on how humour can be used more effectively during tourism experiences to make them more engaging and entertaining.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

Anja Pabel is a PhD candidate in tourism at James Cook University where she is also involved in lecturing to undergraduate students in customer experience management. Her research interests include tourism, humour and the experience economy. She is currently investigating the role of humour in the tourism setting as part of her PhD studies.

### **A/Prof. Robert Phiddian (Flinders University)**

*The Emotional Contents of Swift's saeva indignatio.*

Robert.Phiddian@flinders.edu.au

### **Session - 4a Friday 3:30**

Satire is generally perceived to be a practice within the broad ambit of humour, but it is also characterised by expressions of rage, anger, and disgust, emotions not often associated with humour. This paper seeks to explore this seeming impasse in the context of Jonathan Swift's presentation of satirical motivation in his epitaph and some of his poems. In particular, it will focus on whether and how satire can channel these emotions through the play-space of humour into peaceable (or at least contained) expressions of free speech.

In his epitaph, Jonathan Swift histrionically described death as a place where 'saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit' (savage indignation can no more lacerate his heart). The hypothesis to explore about the spectacular and ironic anger performed by the Scriblerians against the Walpole administration is this: can they be seen as bringing public passions that might once have been expressed by rebellion or revolution within a print economy of accepted opposition?

The research question is whether the saeva indignatio of which Swift speaks can be usefully discussed in the light of cognitive understandings of anger and disgust as basic emotions. Some of the most memorable sentences in works like *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) (for example the King of Brobdingnag's sentence that finishes 'I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth') depend on a performance of powerful negative emotions in the readers

for their oddly exhilarating effect. There is a seeming paradox in the intensity of satirical ridicule in the Scriblerians and the simultaneous development of political stability under the government of their target Sir Robert Walpole.

This paper will focus particularly on Swift's epitaph and on his Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift D.S.P.D. In these and other poems he addresses the anger and disgust that animates his satire more directly (though only more directly) than he does in the prose satires. This will involve a cross-disciplinary intersection between findings from literary and historical criticism of Swift's work and current cognitive analyses of disgust and anger as basic emotions.

### Curriculum Vitae

Robert Phiddian is Associate Professor in English and Deputy Dean of Humanities at Flinders University. His primary research interests are in political satire of 18th-century Britain and contemporary Australia. In his spare time, he is also the Director of the Australasian Consortium of Humanities Research Centre.

### Dr. David Rawlings (Melbourne University)

*Is the Autism Spectrum Differentially Related to Humour Appreciation and Creativity?*

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### Session - 2a Friday 10:30

The paper aims to present two studies showing how the signs of autism/ Asperger syndrome, as these appear within the normal population, are differentially related to humour appreciation and creativity. In both studies, autism was measured using the Autism-spectrum Quotient (AQ) of Baron-Cohen, a self-report measure of the various components of autism. In the first study, the AQ was correlated with the Humour Appreciation Measure (HAM), a scenario-based measure of various aspects of humour appreciation, developed by the author. Using a student sample (N=126), it was found that the total score on the AQ was related to dislike of scenarios presenting humorous real life situations; but that several components of the AQ were much more strongly correlated with the humour measures than others. In particular, humour appreciation of real-life humour was low in individuals showing poor 'Attention Switching' and 'Communication'.

In the second study, the AQ was correlated with a number of measures used in the psychological literature to index 'creativity'. Groups of 'creative' people in several fields (visual arts, music, biological science, physical science; total N=59) were employed, in addition to students (N=67). Somewhat different relationships with AQ were found depending on the criterion for 'creativity' used. Using a self-report measure of creativity (the Creativity Scale for Diverse Domains), there was a negative relationship between total creativity and most AQ components. A behavioural measure of creativity, the word association test, produced negligible associations with the AQ. When actual 'creative artists' and 'creative scientists' were employed, creative scientists were most like autistic individuals on social and imaginative components of the AQ, but least like autistic individuals on attentional components.

The discussion of results will focus on comparisons and contrasts between the humour and creativity results, and suggest a theoretical framework to explain some of the findings.

**Curriculum Vitae**

David Rawlings retired in 2008 following an academic career in personality psychology of 35 years, spent mostly in the Department of Psychology at the University of Melbourne. He is currently a Senior Fellow of that Department. Current research interests include relating humour appreciation and creativity to such aspects of personality as the autism spectrum.

**Dr. Maren Rawlings and Dr. Bruce Findlay (Swinburne University of Technology)**

*A Scale for Self-Deprecating Humour.*

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**Session - 2a Friday 10:30**

Items appropriate to making jokes or making fun of oneself were written and presented to a sample of 116 first year students (2011 and 2012). The initial 22-item scale had a reliability of .91. The scale was refined using Confirmatory Factor Analysis to 15 items (Cronbach  $\alpha = .895$ ). This Self-Deprecating Humour Scale (SDepHS) correlated positively and significantly with the affiliative, self-enhancing and self-defeating scales of the Humour Styles Questionnaire (HSQ, Martin et al., 2003), validating it as measuring humorous behaviour. Whilst the HSQ correlated with the “big five” scales of the Australian Personality Inventory (API, Murray, et al., 2009) largely in accord with the study by Martin et al., it was found that the SDepHS correlated weakly only with openness on the API ( $r = .19$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and there were no other significant correlations with personality factors. Results of investigations of relationships between the SDepHS and optimism (Life Orientation Test, LOT-R, Scheier, et al., 1994), self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), and autonomy, positive relationships and self-acceptance (Ryff and Keyes, 1995) will be reported.

**Curriculum Vitae**

Maren was a teacher at city and country schools before a 22 year stint at Methodist Ladies' College, Melbourne. In addition to her day job she lectured at RMIT University and the University of Melbourne and wrote pre-degree textbooks in psychology with her husband David. In 2011 she graduated PhD in “Humour at Work” at Swinburne and is currently tutoring first, second and third years in Psychology at Swinburne University.

After a fifteen-year career as an industrial engineer, Bruce was a househusband for several years with a pre-school child. He took a degree in Psychology as an off-campus student to stop his brain rusting up while he was a househusband. This led to an academic career as a psychologist, initially as a tutor at the University of Melbourne, then as a lecturer at Swinburne University, completing his PhD on the way. His research interests initially centred around relationships. Then he discovered the psychology of humour literature, just too late to attend the International Society of Humour Scholars conference in Sydney in 1996, and since then he has supervised two doctoral students and numerous Honours and Masters students in researching aspects of sense of humour and its relationship to psychological health, emotional intelligence, interpersonal relationships, and work-related behaviour.

**Session - 5a Saturday 10:30**

While popular entertainment in the Australian colonies has received recent critical attention, that of rural and regional areas, unlike that of the more populous cities, remains largely unexamined. At the same time, apart from the work of Waterhouse and Miller, the place of blackface minstrelsy in this nation's history is largely forgotten and its legacy remains overlooked.

Beginning in the late 1840s, professional minstrel companies made frequent visits to the Hunter Valley (NSW); by the late 1860s more than twenty amateur troupes were operating out of various local towns. Mahar has observed that "the essence of minstrelsy was burlesque." It was also part of what Trodd, Barlow and Admighoni consider the "fissiparous multiplicity" of the Victorian notion of the "grotesque." Although minstrelsy and blackface may survive today in various forms, often with general censure, so too does burlesque and the notion of grotesque: burlesque remains, even thrives, as a variety of striptease; "grotesque" has lost its Victorian racial connotations and may be largely considered the domain of what Ching has described as "intentional and spectacular violations of good taste and behavior." This paper invokes both Victorian and latterday notions of burlesque and grotesque to revisit the local practice of minstrelsy in the form of a work in progress by the author.

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Lyotard, Jean-Francois (1988), *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, (trans. Bennington & Bowlby), Cambridge: Polity Press.

Mahar, William J. (1999), *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask: Early Blackface Minstrelsy and Antebellum American Popular Culture*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Trodd, Colin, Paul Barlow, & David Admighoni (1999), *Victorian Culture and the Idea of the Grotesque*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Waterhouse, Richard (1990), *From Minstrel Show to Vaudeville: The Australian Popular Stage 1788 - 1914*, Kensington: UNSW Press

**Curriculum Vitae**

After a professional life in management consulting and criminal justice in Washington (DC), Brisbane and Sydney, Australia, Stephen Wye returned to full-time study at the University of Newcastle in 2007. He is currently a postgraduate student in composition at the Conservatorium of Music, University of Newcastle, where his research focuses on nineteenth-century colonial entertainment.

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*Nineteenth Colloquium on 'Humour and Creativity'*

The University of Newcastle - City Campus

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