

**2005 INVITATIONAL COLLOQUIUM OF THE
AUSTRALASIAN HUMOUR SCHOLARS NETWORK**

HOSTED BY

**THE BUNKER CARTOON GALLERY
COFFS HARBOUR**

(CITY HILL DRIVE, Cnr HOGBIN DR AND ALBANY ST)

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST AND ONLY PUBLIC CARTOON GALLERY

“EXPLORING HUMOUR”

Wednesday 30th and Thursday 31st March 2005

PROGRAM ENQUIRIES:

Dr Jessica Milner Davis
Tel: 02 9958 4758
Fax: 02 9967 2041
Email: jmilnerdavis@unsw.edu.au

ATTENDANCE ENQUIRIES:

Dr Leigh Summers
Curator/Manager Bunker CartoonGallery
PO Box 2474 Coffs Harbour NSW 2450
Tel: 02 6651 7343 Fax: 02 6650 0908
Email: bunkergallery@bigpond.com

NB: REGISTRATION FORM attached at last page

TIMETABLE

WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH

9.00 – 9.30 am	<i>Registration, Tea and Coffee</i>
9.30 – 10.00	Mr Lindsay Foyle, Pocket Cartoonist and Cartoon Historian, <i>The Life and Death of the Australian Self-Image</i>
10.00 – 10.30	Dr Heydon Manning, Politics, Dr Robert Phiddian, English, Flinders University, <i>“A Mortgage on Trust” - Cartoonists View the 2004 Election</i>
10.30 – 11.00	Dr Jessica Milner Davis, Arts and Social Sciences, UNSW, <i>“Aussie” Humour and Laughter: an Acculturating Ritual?</i>
11.00 – 11.30 am	<i>Morning Refreshments</i>
11.30 – 12.00	Ms Julie Lee, Art History and Philosophy, University of Adelaide, <i>The Art and Science of Sublime Humour</i>
12.00 – 12.30	<i>General Open Discussion</i>
12.30 – 2.00 pm	<i>Lunch</i>
2.00 – 2.30	Dr John Carmody, Medicine, UNSW, <i>Comic Opera: an Oxymoron?</i>
2.30 – 3.00	Ms Agnes Czeiger, Media, Film and Theatre, UNSW, <i>Humour in Science Fiction Film</i>
3.00 – 3.30 pm	<i>Afternoon Tea</i>
3.30 – 4.00	Dr Paul Thomas, Medicine, UNSW, Dr Carmen Moran, Social Work, UNSW, and Dr Jessica Milner Davis, Arts and Social Sciences, UNSW, <i>Jokes to Take your Breath Away? Humour and Asthma: Laughter-Associated Asthma and Reduced Respiratory Function (LAAARRF)</i>
4.00 – 4.30	Dr Carmen Moran, Social Work, UNSW, <i>Humour and Trauma</i>
4.30 – 5.00	Adj. Prof. Randall Albury, Classics, History and Religion, University of New England, <i>Courtly Humour in the Renaissance</i>
5.00 – 5.30	<i>General Open Discussion</i>
5.30 pm	<i>Refreshments, Performance, and Break for Dinner</i>

TIMETABLE THURSDAY 31 MARCH

8.30 – 9.00 am	<i>Registration; Tea and Coffee</i>
9.00 – 9.30	Dr Leigh Summers, Bunker Cartoon Gallery, <i>Thinly Veiled Laughter: Cartoonists, Sexual Tensions and the Burka</i>
9.30 – 10.00	Mr Rolf Heimann (aka “Lofo”), Vice-President Australian Cartoonists Association, 2003 Cartoonist of the Year, <i>Achtung! Bad Humour: Humour in Political Propaganda</i>
10.00 – 10.30	Dr Michael Hill, Visual Communication, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), <i>COMIC CUTS: A Case Study in Cartooning at UTS</i>
10.30 – 11.00	Dr Heydon Manning, Politics, Dr Robert Phiddian, English, Flinders University, <i>Case Studies in Censorship and Political Cartooning</i>
11.00 – 11.30 am	<i>Morning Refreshments</i>
11.30 – 12.00	Dr Iain Topliss, English, La Trobe University, <i>Temporality and Humour in Cartooning</i>
12.00 – 12.30	<i>Open Discussion on Cartooning</i>
12.30 – 2.00 pm	<i>Lunch</i>
2.00 – 2.30	Ms Stephanie Schnurr, Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, <i>Humour and Leadership in the Workplace</i>
2.30 – 3.00	Dr Peter Gerdes, formerly School of Drama, UNSW, <i>A Vicious Circle or Modern Life? From Chaplin to “The Office” in 20 Minutes [Plus a Bit of Film Viewing]</i>
3.00 – 3.30	<i>General Open Discussion</i>
3.30 – 4.00	<i>Afternoon Tea and Departure</i>

ABSTRACTS

Adj. Prof. Randall Albury, Classics, History and Religion, University of New England
Tel: 02 6772 9529 Email: walbury2@une.edu.au

Courtly Humour in the Renaissance

Baldesar Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (*Il libro del cortegiano*, 1528) reflects the author's view of Italian court society in the early sixteenth century. During approximately the next century and a quarter it was one of the most frequently reprinted and translated books in Europe. *The Courtier* is a complex text, written in the form of a dialogue. One of its purposes is to adapt humanist political philosophy to a new set of political conditions, but after the 1540s it was predominantly regarded as a handbook of courtly manners.

A lengthy section of *The Courtier* is devoted to jokes, setting out the reasons why the courtier must be skilled in the use of humour and providing advice on who should tell what kind of jokes to whom, and in what circumstances. To judge from the underlinings, marginal notes and published comments of later readers, this section of the book attracted particular attention throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

In the present paper I will outline Castiglione's view of humour and its uses at court, giving examples of jokes that the interlocutors in his dialogue tell one another. In addition, I will suggest that beneath the appearance of superficial gallantry, which most appealed to later readers of this work, Castiglione's discussion of humour is directly related to the political philosophy that he espoused for the ideal courtier.

Dr John Carmody, Faculty of Medicine, UNSW
Tel: 02 9417 2082 Email: s6501076@unsw.edu.au

Comic Opera: an Oxymoron?

Many would argue that, of itself, music cannot be humorous. A seemingly simpler question is whether, with the addition of a text, the outcome can be comic. Yet *Grove's Dictionary of Opera* devotes a mere 90 words to the topic of Comic Opera. Looking to examples of this nebulous genre, most of them Italian, comedy seems to be mainly the ridiculous with the music moving as fast as possible while the characters are made fools of by themselves or by others. Rossini's numerous operas illustrate this characteristic; so does *Die schweigsame Frau* by Richard Strauss. At its most jejeune, this style 'contrives superficial eccentric effects and provokes laughter for its own sake', as Israel Nestyev said of Prokofiev's ballet, *The Buffoon* (Nestyev: *Prokofiev*, Stanford University Press, 1960).

By contrast with this 'Old Comedy', such works as Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Wagner's *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* are much more complex. Like Shakespeare's greatest plays, they mix serious material with comic episodes, a characteristic which makes them, perhaps, closer to classical 'Middle Comedy'. Even so, *Figaro* has clear allusions to *commedia dell'arte* – with such characters as Don Basilio, Dr Bartolo and Marcellina – while *The Mastersingers* employs elements of mediaeval (even Gothic) German drama, though whether a work can really be called a comedy which deploys such clear anti-French xenophobia and brutish violence to the arguably Jewish figure of Beckmesser is surely exceedingly dubious. Importantly, in both of those operas the music contributes to the comedy. As would be expected, it is with subtlety from Mozart and rather more coarsely from Wagner during, for example, his parody of Beckmesser's vocal infelicity.

However, it is in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* that all of the essential ingredients coalesce into a great comedy – arguably, the greatest yet written. Even the ironic title makes its contribution: 'All women do such things', whereas the opera convincingly shows that *everyone*, men and women alike, are so emotionally fickle. Furthermore, with great originality Mozart uses a 'motto' theme – first in the Overture and later when the cynical but realistic Don Alfonso drives home his lesson of life to the infatuated young men. Elsewhere, the young women's romantic languor is sensually evoked in the

writing for wood-wind instruments. By the end of the drama, it is the women who have seen reality and gained insight – musically as well as dramatically; the men remain unchanged adolescents. The comedy is set against the most serious aspects of human maturity and insincerity. Yet Mozart's immense achievement – a truly syncretic *dramma giocoso* (his librettists term for *Don Giovanni*) – was misunderstood for generations. Beethoven considered *Così* a truly immoral opera. Perhaps that oxymoronic recognition – even genius can be purblind to the greatness of others – is an aspect of the deepest comedy, operatic or otherwise.

Ms Agnes Czeiger, Research Student, Media, Film and Theatre, UNSW
Tel: 02 9365 4011 Email: aczeiger@forbat.com.au

Humour in Science Fiction Film

There are only a handful of films which gently fool with SF elements in a sustained and self-contained comic climate [Vivian Sobchack].

With its origins grounded in the horror film genre, in one which evokes 'fear' and 'terror', it is generally accepted that there is no humour in science fiction films. Indeed, in films such as the digitally produced *Final Fantasy* (2001), there is an absence of anything comic. However, an exploration of the historical context suggests that there are forms of humour, parody and satire within the science fiction genre. This paper aims to examine some elements that construct these forms of humour and their manifestations in science fiction films.

Lindsay Foyle, Pocket Cartoonist with *The Australian*, President, Black and White Artists Club, and Cartoon Historian

Tel: 02 9500 5300 (h) Email: foylel@theaustralian.com.au

The Life and Death of the Australian Self Image

If you could hold Australia up to a mirror what reflection would look back. In Britain it would be John Bull, and in the USA Uncle Sam. At one time in Australia it was a little boy from Manly. That image was replaced by the noble larrikin after the Great War. But who are we now, have we reverted to the little person at Manly, are we still larrikins, are we South Pacific Americans or are we still waiting to be told by George W Bush?

Dr Peter Gerdes, formerly School of Drama, UNSW

Tel: 02 9332 2307 Email: pgerdes@attglobal.net

A Vicious Circle or Modern Life? From Chaplin to the Office in 20 Minutes [Plus a Bit of Film Viewing]

We who live in a Western society, a so-called fully developed commercialised consumer society, have to live with complexities which create continuously new complexities. We must survive in a world where the pressure of the future is almost unbearable. We have created a technology which can and has to be adapted continuously but that does not help us to gain a feeling of permanence and reliability and a sense of safety. A sense of running in circles (some mistakenly think they are running up a spiral to the top only to find out that this spiral is very glitchy...) can be overwhelming. If one looks often enough at Jacques Tati's films one begins to realise that he uses the idea of circles in an extraordinary number of sequences, particularly when he presents the 'modern world' as he sees it. But: has not Charlie Chaplin visualised *Modern Times* in unique images that no-one can ever forget? Charlie being driven mad by machines going round and round and round and finally being swallowed up by one of them. Circles from which it would indeed be difficult to escape. And, entirely on a different scale, how does one of the most depressing television comedy series start? Watch the opening of *The Office* and you find yourself back in Tati's world of going around in – depressingly funny – circles. Circles, the essence of life's cycle? A few random observations on circles.

Rolf Heimann (aka “Lofa”), Vice President (Victoria and Tasmania) Australian Cartoonists Association, 2003 Gold-Stanley Award winner ('Cartoonist of the Year') and author
Tel: 03 9699 4858. Email: heimann@primus.com.au

Achtung! Bad Humour

This presentation will examine the use of humour as a propaganda tool, illustrated by about 50 examples from Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and other states including Australia. It demonstrates how our concept of what is funny or not depends on our attitudes. Our reaction to jokes unconsciously reveals our background -- our education, our nationality, our religion, our state of mind, and much more. Secret Service agents are being taught to use humour to make subjects give themselves away without realising it.

Cartoonists have often been utilised in propaganda wars to vilify the enemy or to otherwise advance the interests of the establishment. It is often said that cartoonists fearlessly hold up a mirror to society, yet we only admire them if they happen to project prejudices that we share.

Dr Michael Hill, Visual Communication, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS)
Tel: 02 9514 8967 Web: www.dab.uts.edu.au/animation

COMIC CUTS: A Case Study in Cartooning at UTS

In late 2003 and throughout 2004 I became involved in the provision of a series of cartoons for some publications produced at UTS, namely *U*: (the university's glossy flagship magazine), *DAB* (one faculty's glossy public relations magazine), *Form/Work* (a university published journal of refereed articles within the architecture and design discipline), and an online research bulletin aimed at encouraging new researchers.

This case study is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly it involves the transition, on the part of the academic/cartoonist, from the analysis and study of graphic humour to the actual production of cartoons. Secondly, as these publications had an external and media presence, the cartoons were subject to in-house editorial control and the policies of the university's marketing and communications unit. This resulted in an ongoing struggle between the needs of the university and the unrestrained expression of the cartoonist. Thirdly, the element of design as a methodology in the creation of the cartoons was utilised bringing into play the flow and monitoring of message and communication from client to audience as opposed to the singular artistic expression of the cartoonist. Finally, the resultant strategy of creative mythology adopted by the cartoonist represents a resolution of all of the restrictions whilst attempting to retain a humorous edge to the work.

This case study will analyse these four aspects: the transition of graphic humour from study to practice; cartooning and editorial control; cartooning and design; and cartooning as creative mythology. The cartoons will be displayed and discussed in terms of these four elements.

Julie Lee, Doctoral Student, Art History and Philosophy, University of Adelaide
Tel: 08 8303 3387 Email: julie.lee@adelaide.edu.au

The Art and Science of Sublime Humour

The purpose of this paper is to introduce and distinguish sublime humour within the realm of the fine arts and western philosophical tradition. My intention is twofold, firstly, to introduce and delineate a sub-genre of humour for which I will deploy the term sublime humour; and secondly, to propose that developing a theoretical understanding of sublime humour will enhance an appropriate audience's understanding of artworks that contain properties, that whilst confronting, can also elicit a mirthful response, albeit restrained or muted. Furthermore, the distinction between “black” humour and “sublime” humour will be demarcated.

I propose that numerous artists have exploited “sublime humour” within the domain of the visual arts,

moreover, it is particularly prevalent in the works of numerous contemporary Australian artists. The degree of the sublime and the humour can vary, with some works the humour is blatant but the sublime effects are subtle, with other works, the sublime may be marked and the humour fleeting. I do not propose that difficult artworks should be trivialised and viewed as humorous in isolation, but rather that we embrace the humorous potentials in order to curtail the disturbing and/or conceptually challenging qualities, which in turn enables a more considered response.

Sublime humour can serve as a practical critical device for contemporary artists and is an apt descriptor for some problematic artefacts, moreover, philosophically, the term acknowledges that phenomena which possesses qualities that can potentially elicit both sublime and humorous responses in the viewer, can and do exist, and therefore should merit dialogue to by art critics, historians and philosophers.

Dr Heydon Manning, Politics, Dr Robert Phiddian, English, Flinders University

Tel: 08 8201 2426 and 08 8201 3717

Email: mann0012@flinders.edu.au and Robert.Phiddian@flinders.edu.au

'A Mortgage on Trust' - Cartoonists View the 2004 Election

In many respects, the 2004 national election provided a return to campaign normality for the cartoonists after their unanimous condemnation of Prime Minister Howard and Opposition Leader, Beazley during the 2001 election when the plight of refugees featured so large. Their work lacked the moral and satirical intensity on display last time when we argued that 'They were more 'unfair' and powerful than in any campaign we have yet covered' (Manning and Phiddian 2002). We observe in 2004 the cartoonists returning to the type of cartooning found during the 1998 election when siding with the incredulity of the citizen voter, faced with a litany of election products, promises and shonky deals, was the order of the day (Manning and Phiddian 2000). In 2004 cartoonists provide a chronicle of the national and occasionally the state-based issues of the campaign, so we will proceed largely chronologically in our analysis. It was a long campaign, during which the moods and issues changed significantly, without any unifying factor coming to dominate. Though the result now seems unusually clear-cut, people were not at all confident about what mattered and who was going to win during the campaign (until, perhaps, the last few days), and the cartoonists reflected this struggle to find the critical thread. The most notable theme to emerge concerns the way the election became an auction block and this, in view of the result, suggests that while the Coalition camp claims all the accolades for superior campaigning it seriously misjudged the electorates' mood, namely, that Labor under Latham were almost without hope. This is perhaps best captured by a series of searing cartoons from the campaign's last few days when Latham falls for Howard's sucker punch over protection of old growth forests. Though more wordier and far less entertaining the search for electoral meaning could be undertaken focusing on opinion writers, editorialists, web-loggers, and pundits on the electronic media and in all probability yield similar results to the insights offered by our cartoonists.

Dr Heydon Manning, Politics, Dr Robert Phiddian, English, Flinders University

Tel: 08 8201 2426 and 08 8201 3717

Email: mann0012@flinders.edu.au and Robert.Phiddian@flinders.edu.au

Case Studies in Censorship and Political Cartooning

Cartoonist with the *New Zealand Herald*, Malcolm Evans, was dismissed from the paper after he refused to follow his editor's instruction to cease cartooning on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Members of the Jewish community were upset by a number of his cartoons, drawn during the first half of 2003. As an award winning editorial cartoonist Evans, observed in his defense, that his cartoons may offend but that their content was not necessarily wrong. Much like his brethren cartoonists, he guards fiercely his licence to mock politicians, governments and states. This paper examines the space within which cartoonists examine political subjects, analyses the Evans case, assesses the legal environment and the parameter within which mass circulation newspaper editors operate. We defend a wide licence for cartoonists and note that they, for the most part, unnecessarily fear defamation for in all likelihood the courts will interpret their work as comment rather than literal assertion of an assumed

fact. This paper forms part of our continuing research into the role played by cartoons and satire in political debate and opinion-making: are they mere entertainment, useful indices of public opinion, or positively influential in shaping political events?

Dr Jessica Milner Davis, Visiting Fellow, Arts and Social Sciences, UNSW

Tel: 02 9958 4758

E-mail: jmilnerdavis@unsw.edu.au

'Aussie' Humour and Laughter: an Acculturating Ritual?

As suggested by Christie Davies' studies of national styles of mirth (*The Mirth of Nations*, Transaction, New Brunswick NJ, 2002), there may be nothing particularly distinctive about either the texts or the subjects of jokes held to be typically "Aussie", such constructs being largely re-cycled from one cultural context to another around the world. But for the past two hundred years laughter has certainly been used as a secret weapon to identify those who are truly "at home" in majority-culture Australia. Defining Australian humour may thus be a matter rather of the style of the joking rather than the style of the jokes: that is, how Australians use humour, rather than the nature of the humour used. Australians are notorious for using jokes (both verbal and practical) quite aggressively to exclude the out-group and to bond the in-group, and I argue that it is this experiential aspect of humour which characterises Australian culture. Possibly such an approach does not originate with white settlement, but – consciously or unconsciously – was inspired by ingrained characteristics of indigenous culture, as is suggested by recent writers such as Inga Clendinnen and Ruby Langford Ginibi. Whether that is so or not, the in-groups and the out-groups (and their respective characteristics) can readily be traced along with the spread of white settlement. Post World War 2, successive waves of international migration have contributed their own illustrations of the experience of "Aussie" joking and they suggest a unique framework which may also fit other cultural manifestations of Australian humour.

Dr Carmen Moran, School of Social Work, UNSW

Tel: 02 9385 1860

Email: C.Moran@unsw.edu.au

Humour and Trauma

The term trauma, like humour, can cover many events, experiences and reactions. It would seem that all traumatic events have been the subject of jokes, even if circulation of those jokes is limited in place or time. There is a frequent assumption that such humour is a way of dealing with the enormity of certain events, and psychological theories related to coping, denial, and resilience are sometimes cited in support of this claim. There is little empirical work to indicate if such humour helps those who employ or enjoy trauma jokes. Further, there is only slightly more empirical work on the impact of 'trauma-related' humour on those who are the 'victims' of trauma. The larger part of such research that does exist in this area looks at humour in emergency responders. This paper considers these three aspects of trauma related humour: the trauma jokes (also incorporating disaster jokes), the role of humour for victims, and for emergency responders. The conclusion is reached that humour does not block feelings about trauma, and of itself is not a sign of good or bad coping. Rather, its interpersonal qualities and their implications may be more crucial to the evaluation and impact of humour in the aftermath of trauma.

Stephanie Schnurr, doctoral student, Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington

Tel: 0064 4 4636014

Email: stephanie.schnurr@vuw.ac.nz

Humour and Leadership in the Workplace

Researchers across various disciplines agree that humour is "good for business"; it accomplishes a variety of positive functions which may improve performance by enhancing job satisfaction and creating a friendly work climate. Humour has therefore been named as "one of the key characteristics of leadership" (Clouse and Spurgeon 1995: 19).

This paper analyses the interactions of effective leaders from three New Zealand IT organisations showing that humour is skilfully employed to give advice and guidance, mitigate criticism and disagreement, create team, and minimise status differences. These leaders not only use humour to skilfully advance their organisations' objectives but also to consider their subordinates' needs.

Dr Leigh Summers, Curator/Manager Bunker Cartoon Gallery

Tel: 02 6651 7343

Email: bunkergallery@bigpond.com

Thinly Veiled Laughter: Cartoonists, Sexual Tensions and the Burka

At a recent international cartoon competition twelve entries in the category that lampooned fashion were characterised by a focus on the burka. Several of these images, many from Eastern block countries, belittled the wearing of the veil in particular ways. This paper flags several issues that arise from the depiction of veiled women in cartoons held in the collections of the Bunker Cartoon Gallery. Do these works represent a desire to liberate Islamic women from oppressive sartorial and social dictums? Are these works simply sexist representations of women? Do these images betray postcolonial sexual anxieties around the mysterious clothed body beneath the veil? Or, least amusing of all, could the thinly veiled laughter these works elicit be read as an expression of blatant Islamophobia?

Dr Paul Thomas, Medicine, UNSW, and Respiratory Medicine, Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney, with Dr Carmen Moran, Social Work, UNSW, and Dr Jessica Milner Davis, Arts and Social Sciences, UNSW

Dr Paul Thomas Tel: 02 938 24620

Email: paul.thomas@unsw.edu.au

Jokes to take your breath away? Humour and asthma: laughter-associated asthma and reduced respiratory function (LAAARRF)

Laughter has been described as a precipitant of asthmatic symptoms and clinical signs, which can be termed laughter-associated asthma and reduced respiratory function (LAAARRF). We have previously documented in paediatric and adult populations that as many as 42% of asthmatic subjects report laughing to precipitate their asthmatic symptoms. There is a strong association with exercise-induced asthma in these individuals. LAAARRF was also associated with asthma which was less well controlled, as this group are more likely to be admitted to hospital for their asthma, compared with other asthmatics. Those who report this association describe the symptoms as developing within seconds of laughing, unlike exercise-induced asthma where the symptoms take longer to develop.

We hypothesised that there may be features in the humour preference or the response of those with LAAARRF to humorous stimuli which might induce an asthmatic person to respond with wheezing. A community and hospital based survey has been initiated which has attempted to address aspects of laughter preferences and responses. The intention is to be able to compare age and gender matched asthmatic subjects who do and do not have LAAARRF, and a control group of normal non-asthmatic subjects. Asthmatic subjects have been recruited from hospital clinics, while normal subjects have been recruited from the community, including the Bunker Cartoon Gallery, by direct approach.

The instruments are (i) a self-reported asthma assessment (ii) a humour styles questionnaire (HSQ 32) (iii) a questionnaire on humour styles preference in entertainment and (iv) humour and laughter reactions questionnaire. The latter two instruments were developed and validated specifically for this study. This paper will report on the early stages of this research, including the methodological issues that arise when seeking to evaluate the nature and impact of humour in a clinical group.

Dr Iain Topliss, Communication, Arts and Critical Enquiry, La Trobe University
Tel: 03 9479 2387 Email: i.topliss@latrobe.edu.au

Temporality and Humour in Cartooning

This paper distinguishes three basic senses of temporality, each of which seems important when we try to make sense of the development of the single panel cartoon in the 19th and 20th centuries. These are (i) Historical Temporality: the historical conditions under which the cartoon emerges and flourishes as a form; (ii) Reading Temporality: the “reading” moment, encompassing both the fleeting act of consumption of the cartoon, but also the moment of laughter as an activity that interrupts the temporality of the reader’s own life; and (iii) Narrative Temporality: the way cartoons frequently imply a narrative sequence, not shown, an action that the reader has to reconstruct, forwards or backwards, in order to make the joke, a topic that trespasses upon Reader Response theory. The paper discusses each sense, with examples, and proposes some connections between them.

Dr Marguerite Wells, Author of *Japanese Humour* (Macmillan 1997), Actor
Tel: 02 4271 7584 E-mail: sycorax@ihug.com.au

Performance: ‘The Battle of the Black and White Rice-Cakes’ (from the play ‘Yabuhara Kengyō’ by INOUE Hisashi, trans. Marguerite Wells)

Yabuhara, the Blind Minstrel (see Japan Playwrights Association (eds), *Half a Century of Japanese Theater, 1960s*, Kinokuniya, Tokyo, 2004) is a picaresque black comedy about an 18th century Japanese villain who makes his way to the top ranks of the Guild of the Blind by nefarious means (theft, extortion and murder) and through great talent in the recitation of ballads. His speciality was the mock ballad which was a parody on the heroic ballad.

The heroic ballads were principally based on the adventures of the hero Yoshitsune in the long-running battles between the two warrior families, the Heike and the Genji. This ballad, translated into iambic pentameter, is a parody on the fall of Yoshitsune. INOUE Hisashi, the playwright, said that it took him as long to write this ballad as it did to write the rest of the play.

The Great Chrysanthemum Gate that is Lord Whitecake’s ultimate...er...downfall, is the insignia of the imperial family, but may also be seen to resemble the...er...anus.

AUSTRALASIAN HUMOUR SCHOLARS NETWORK

In 1994, the then School of Theatre, Film and Dance at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, was approved by the International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS) to host the 15th International Conference on Humour and Laughter. The Conference took place at UNSW in July 1996, co-chaired by Dr Jessica Milner Davis and Mr John McCallum from the School, and attracting wide-spread media interest and requests for presentations in a variety of discipline areas (such as psychology, education and medicine) on the nature of humour as an area of academic research.

The Conference was supported by a small development grant from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UNSW, the balance of which was used at its conclusion to establish the Australasian Humour Scholars Network, co-ordinated by Jessica Milner Davis (then President of the ISHS) and supported by the School. This structure was designed to consolidate wide-spread interest in the emerging field of humour studies, and to build links between scholars and practitioners in different geographical locations and academic departments across many universities. At its inception in 1997, the data-base of members numbered 40, drawn from perhaps 10 different disciplines. The present 2005 Annual Colloquium (the tenth) has mailed to more than 150 scholars and practitioners in probably 25 different academic disciplines and professions. Members are now located across Australia and New Zealand, with international enquiries also.

One function of the Network has been to offer support to isolated research students dealing with humour-related topics: in 1999 for example the whole of the Colloquium was devoted to a Post-Graduate Meeting, with 7 presentations on humour from research students in the fields of Political Science, Psychology, Management, Linguistics and Theatre Studies. Although most Colloquia focus on a specific theme there is wide participation from different perspectives, including practitioners and research students, as well as academic specialists. It has long been recognized that humour research and theory must reach beyond the basis of one individual discipline if real progress is to be achieved in understanding this complex form of human behaviour.

Other present functions of the Network are:

- Dissemination of news on humour-related research
- A minimum annual program of activities
- Reports on the annual international conference, highlighting current research and thinking
- A focus for media enquiries
- A link to the International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS) and its research publications and principal web-site at www.humorstudies.org hosted by Holy Names University, in Oakland, California.

ENQUIRIES:

Dr Jessica Milner Davis

Tel: 02 9958 4758; Fax: 02 9967 2041

Email: jmilnerdavis@unsw.edu.au

**REGISTRATION FORM
AUSTRALASIAN HUMOUR SCHOLARS NETWORK
(AHSN) @ UNSW SYDNEY**

**INVITATIONAL COLLOQUIUM 30-31 MARCH 2005
AT
THE BUNKER CARTOON GALLERY, COFFS HARBOUR**

Yes, I would like to Register: _____ or, Please take me off mailing list: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Affiliation: _____

Discipline Area/Practice: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____ (mobile) _____

Fax: _____ Email: _____

2-DAY COLLOQUIUM FEE - \$110.00 (incl. GST); \$70.00 student or retiree (incl. GST)
Cost includes 2 days' refreshments, lunches and documentation.

_____ Yes, my Cheque/money order is enclosed

PAYMENT (please circle one): VISA MasterCard Cash Cheque Money Order

(Cheques payable to University of New South Wales – School of Media, Film and Theatre)

Card No.	
Expiry date	
Cardholder's Name	
Cardholder's Signature	

PLEASE MAIL/FAX THIS FORM

TOGETHER WITH PAYMENT TO

Ms Kathy Arnold
School of Media, Film and Theatre
University of New South Wales
Sydney NSW 2052
Tel: 02 9385 5634; Fax: 02 9662 2335
Dr Jessica Milner Davis
Tel: 02 9958 4758; Fax: 02 9967 2041
Email: jmilnerdavis@unsw.edu.au

ENQUIRIES:

NB: IMPORTANT NOTICE: IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO REMAIN ON THE HUMOUR SCHOLARS' MAILING LIST, PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AND TICK THE "PLEASE TAKE ME OFF THE MAILING LIST" BOX.