

Call for Proposals

26th Australasian Humour Studies Network
Conference

5-7 February 2020

Griffith University, Brisbane, South Bank Campus

Theme: *Laughter and Belonging*

Call for Proposals: Now Open

Laughing together can be a powerful force for bonding and bringing people closer to one another, but laughter and humour can also be divisive and exclusionary. This year's conference theme, "Laughter and Belonging", particularly invites presentations on either or both aspects of laughter and humour.

As in previous AHSN conferences, however, presentations are welcome on all aspects of social laughter and humour, and from diverse disciplinary perspectives, including not only humour studies as such, but also literary studies, linguistics, cultural studies, politics, psychology, philosophy, history, comedy studies, law, creative practices, sociology, communication studies and others.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Associate Professor Meredith Marra, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Professor Robert Phiddian, College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University, Australia

Dr Daniel Z. Kadar, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Dalian University of Foreign Languages, PRC

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Important Dates:

Submission portal opens on June 1, 2019

Submission portal closes on July 31, 2019

Acceptance advice by October 1, 2019

Registration for presenters and non-presenters July 1, 2019 –January 8, 2020

Conference dates: February 5-7, 2020

Presentation Format

You will have the opportunity to choose the format of your presentation. Please express your interest in your abstract if you want to be considered for workshop or speed talks panels.

Standard conference talk: 20 minutes for presentation, 10 minutes for discussion.

Practical workshop: You can submit a proposal to run a “hands-on” performance-based workshop of 60 minutes.

Speed talk panel: A feature of the 2020 conference will be a multi-disciplinary panel of 5-6 presenters who will each have 5 minutes to give a short-focused overview of their work. This will be followed by 30-40 minutes of discussion.

Submission Guidelines:

Abstracts are limited to 500 words only including references (if required). Abstracts will be reviewed by at least two reviewers. Please refer to the AHSN Guidelines for Presenters and the Review Procedures of the AHSN.

To submit your proposal for a paper, please follow this link:

<https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/AHSN/index>

Successful applicants will be advised of review outcomes in order of submission and in all case by no later than 1 October 2019.

Presenters will be asked to subscribe to our free AHSN e-Newsletter “The Humour Studies Digest” (if they have not already done so) when submitting their abstracts. You can also subscribe any time at:

<https://mailman.sydney.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/ahsn-members>.

Postgraduate Scholarships

As in previous AHSN conferences, proposals from research students are particularly encouraged. There are **five postgraduate scholarships** available based on merit. The scholarship will waive the registration fee and successful candidates will be advised by 31 August.

Information on transport and accommodation

The conference venue is at Griffith University Southbank Campus, located in Brisbane’s picturesque South Bank Parklands. Ideally positioned in Brisbane’s cultural heart, the campus is a 10-minute walk from the Brisbane CBD and is adjacent to the Queensland Art Gallery, the Gallery of Modern Art, the State Library, the Queensland

Museum, the Queensland Performing Arts Centre and the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

For more information, visit the AHSN website at University of Sydney <https://sydney.edu.au/arts/our-research/centres-institutes-and-groups/australasian-humour-studies-network.html>. Information about fees and registration, as well as transport and accommodation options, will be posted there and also sent to presenters closer to the event.

Organizing Committee:

Cliff Goddard is a Professor in Linguistics at Griffith University. He is widely known for his work in language, culture and meaning, using the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach and its sister theory ethnopragmatics. He has published a number of papers on cultural and ethnopragmatic aspects of social laughter and humour.

Reza Arab is a PhD candidate in Linguistics at Griffith University. He has been studying humour-related speech practices in Persian (Farsi). He is interested in the philosophy of language and pragmatics. He has attended AHSN conferences since 2017 and considers himself a regular!

Angelina Hurley is an Aboriginal woman and writer from Brisbane. A PhD candidate at Griffith University her work focuses on humour from an Aboriginal perspective. She holds a BA Ed, MA Arts Admin and is a Fulbright Scholar. She has presented at AHSN twice and very excited about the 2020 conference.

Zarek Hennessy, a fourth-year PhD candidate at Griffith University, composing an artefact exploring fictocriticism and Sartrean existentialism. Having only attended the most recent conference, he is an AHSN newbie, but found the sincerity of those involved captivating and is excited at the interdisciplinary prospects that the study of humour might bring to academia.



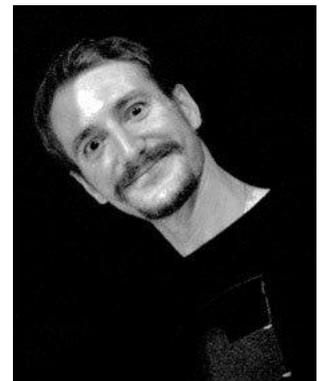
Cliff Goddard



Reza Arab



Angelina Hurley



Zarek Hennessy

Enquiries:

Should you have any questions or need any help, please contact us at: ahsn2020conference@gmail.com

Sponsors:

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

REMINDER: AHSN Invitational Seminar on Humour and Positive Psychology, RMIT University Melbourne, 22 July 2019

AHSN will host an afternoon seminar at RMIT University from 2.00pm on 22 July 2019 at which **Professor Willibald Ruch and Dr Sonja Heintz from the Department of Psychology at the University of Zurich** will present some **current research on humour and its links with positive psychology**.

Professor Ruch is a past President of the International Society of Humor Studies, and he and Dr Heintz have collaborated on several recent humour studies and articles. Courtesy of Assoc. Prof. Kerry Mullan, AHSN Review Panel member, who is kindly hosting the event, light refreshments will be served. Entry is free but please indicate your intention to attend, for booking and catering purposes, by emailing Bruce.

The event will be chaired by Dr Bruce Findlay, founding Chair of the AHSN Review Panel (and Member of the Order of the Jessters). For more information and to indicate attendance, **please contact Bruce** at: bfindlay@swin.edu.au

Time: 2:00pm

Place: RMIT University Building 37, Level 3, Room 04

Directions: 411 Swanston Street (between Little La Trobe St. and A'Beckett St, just north of Melbourne Central train station and just south of the RMIT University tram stop). Look for event signs inside the building. Here is a city campus map: <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/ah5hshrpo0ky.pdf>

Program:

14.00: Welcome by Dr Bruce Findlay

14.10: Presentations by Prof. Dr Willibald Ruch and Dr Sonja Heintz followed by discussion (see details below)

16.10: Vote of thanks: Dr Bruce Findlay – Refreshments served

16.30: Close

Presentations:

Willibald Ruch: *Current research on laughter, gelotophobia, cheerfulness, and humour interventions*

This talk gives an overview on current research on laughter, gelotophobia, cheerfulness, and humour interventions as well as their practical implications. The talk covers research published in recent special issues on humour "Humor and Laughter, Playfulness and Cheerfulness: Upsides and Downsides to a Life of Lightness" (freely accessible at <https://www.frontiersin.org/research-topics/5324/humor-and-laughter-playfulness-and->

cheerfulness-upside-and-downside-to-a-life-of-lightness) as well as yet unpublished research conducted at the University of Zurich. Specific topics include laughter and smiling in positive emotions; lexical categories of laughter; comparisons of individuals with and without gelotophobia (i.e. the fear of being laughed at) in reactions towards emotions; the English version of the State-Trait Cheerfulness Inventory; the 7 Humor Habits Program to foster one's sense of humour; humour-based positive psychology interventions; categories of class clowns; and impacts of clinic clowns.

Willibald Ruch is a Full Professor of Psychology at the University of Zürich, Switzerland. His research interests are in the field of personality and assessment, with a special focus on humour and laughter, cheerfulness, and smiling. In his doctoral dissertation at the University of Graz (Austria) in 1980, he developed a taxonomy of jokes and cartoons and studied their relation to personality. His more recent work, together with his research team at the University of Zurich, includes humour from a positive psychology perspective; the effectiveness of humour training programs and clown interventions; the ability to laugh at oneself; the fear of being laughed at (gelotophobia); and the measurement of humour. He is a past President of the International Society for Humor Studies.



Sonja Heintz: *An update on individual differences and measurement of humour*

This talk presents new directions in how people differ in their appreciation and production of humor and in how humor can be measured, based on both published literature as well as yet unpublished research conducted at the University of Zurich. This includes self-report questionnaires that assess "humor styles" or "comic styles" as different expressions of humor in our everyday lives. Advancements include the validation of the Humor Styles Questionnaire (Martin et al., 2003) with different measurement methods, which showed that the self-defeating humor style might not be maladaptive after all, but might rather relate to higher well-being for oneself and one's relationships. Furthermore, the Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck (Craik et al., 1996) has been recently employed to derive general dimensions of humorous conduct, including entertaining, mean-spirited/earthy, ineptness, and reflective/benign humor as well as canned humor and laughter. Several new constructs and scales have been introduced into the literature on individual differences in humor, labeled "comic styles": Fun, benevolent humor, nonsense, wit, irony, satire/corrective humor, sarcasm, and cynicism. Two of these styles, benevolent and corrective humor, have also been investigated in cross-cultural comparisons. Finally, advancements in the area of behavioral measurement of humor appreciation and humor production (i.e., having participants react to humorous stimuli such as jokes and cartoons) will be presented and discussed.

Sonja Heintz is a senior research and teaching assistant at the Department of Psychology at the University of Zürich in Switzerland. Her main research interests in humour are individual differences (humour and comic styles, dimensions of the sense of humour), measurement (humour questionnaires and humour-related behaviours), and positive psychology (relationships of humour with character strengths and well-being, virtuous forms of humour).



NEWS FLASH: 2021 -- AHSN CROSSES THE TASMAN ONCE AGAIN!

The Chair of the AHSN Review Panel, Dr Angus McLachlan, has announced that the 27th AHSN Annual Conference will be hosted at the Wellington campus of Massey University, with Dr Nick Holm, AHSN Review Panel member as Conference Convenor.

Make your long-term plans for a Kiwi visit now! The last time AHSN convened on the soil of Aotearoa was at Victoria University of Wellington in February 2014, courtesy of Dr Mike Lloyd, AHSN Review Panel member. It was a highly rewarding and enjoyable event and 2021 promises to be even better.

Member Profiles

Sharon Andrews – Profile of a First-time AHSN Conference Delegate

I am an academic at RMIT and am currently the Program Manager for the Master of Public Policy. I am also an amateur stand-up comedian. I started doing comedy on a whim, responding to a flyer for an upcoming open mic comedy night with the idea that I needed to do something that would put me out of my comfort zone. A space flight might have been less intimidating. It's fair to say that I was terrified the first time I stepped on stage and learnt a valuable lesson about the amount of wine one should imbibe to calm the nerves before performing (hint, not as much as I did).



Since then, I have continued to perform in Melbourne and across regional Victoria. I have performed an hour-long solo show at The Butterfly Club and been a national finalist in Raw Comedy, the biggest amateur comedy competition in Australia. I have made new friends, learnt new skills and come to see myself in new ways. I have also changed the perception that others hold of me, given that I am a devout social introvert.

Reflecting on my experience learning comedy and how it has changed my life has encouraged me to explore the power of stand-up at an amateur level. I'm interested in how learning comedy can be understood as an empowering practice. Marginalised, traumatised or disadvantaged groups are already encouraged to participate in stand-up comedy courses suggesting they have something to offer participants. In the UK, large Not-For-Profit Organisations (The Comedy School and The Comedy Trust) run stand up courses for people in prison, people with mental health issues and unemployed people, for example. In the US, comedy boot camps have been designed and delivered to soldiers returning from fields of conflict.

These initiatives suggest that learning stand-up comedy is viewed as beneficial for would-be comedians. However, it is a little researched field. Most explorations of the 'power' of stand-up focus on the lived experience of professional stand-up comedians. In this regard, power comes from audience sizes, the mediums used (TV, arena comedy) or the extent to which the comedian is a valued commodity. Although interesting, this body of theory and research has little to offer in terms of an analysis of how we might understand the 'power' of comedy within the amateur space.

Given the lack of serious engagement with this topic, my key research focus to date has been to develop a conceptual framework and theory of change that articulates the potential of stand-up comedy courses to empower positive changes for participants. I am hoping to submit for publication an article detailing this by the middle of August. The next step in the research agenda will be to test this framework and the cause and effect assumptions embedded within it.

Contact Sharon about her work at: sharon.andrews@rmit.edu.au

My introduction to humour studies was serendipitous, especially so because I'm a PhD candidate in a Music Department and concepts central to humour studies aren't often referenced in music research.

Very early in my candidacy I was attending the annual Music and the Moving Image conference in New York and a quote from Luigi Pirandello's *On Humour* (1908) was shared by the (brilliant) Italian film music scholar Maurizio Corbella—"art in general composes, humour decomposes". I remember feeling a sense of exhilaration when I heard these words, not because the idea seemed directly related to my film music research, but rather, it prompted me for the first time to consider how humour is realised in works of art.

Upon my return from the conference, I became more familiar with Pirandello's work and it served as a catalyst for my exploration into humour studies. My motivation at the early stage of my research programme was to better understand the motivations of a humorist—the films analysed in my dissertation case studies were written and directed by Wes Anderson and I was keen to have a holistic view of his approach to comedy. As my research progressed (and much to my surprise), I discovered that the integration of music and humour plays a vital role in Anderson's comedic style.



My Research

Underpinning my research is the basic premise that all music is interconnected in a film. Each instance of music does not exist in isolation but rather is part of an integrated whole. I am specifically interested in finding new ways to examine compiled soundtracks—those containing both original score and pre-existing music. A compiled soundtrack is the least homogenous stylistic feature employed by a director and there is no other component of a film that demands that the spectator process such a (potentially) vast array of disparate aesthetic styles from a single filmic device. Because there is no standard model for compiled soundtrack analysis, I have adapted/enhanced a poetics framework developed by David Bordwell (Jacques Ledoux Professor Emeritus of Film Studies, University of Wisconsin) to analyse film music. My goal is to offer a new, holistic and empirically evidenced framework for the investigation of compiled soundtracks suitable for interdisciplinary researchers.

Using this framework, I discovered a direct relationship between music and humour in *Rushmore* (1998), *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001), and *The Life Aquatic* (2004). Anderson's humour has a decidedly unique flavour and the often impassive verbal delivery of the dialogue requires careful handling. Music heightens the effects of jokes through dynamics and pauses, illuminating dialogue by providing space for punch-lines and alerting the audience to listen carefully. The repetitive nature of this strategy establishes a particular rhythm both musically and comically—an ebb and flow, building and releasing dramatic tension.

By constructing aural tracks that weave music into the fabric of comedic delivery, Anderson provides explicit (but not immediately apparent) aural signposts for the listener and, in doing so, guides the audience through potentially difficult or abstract humorous territory. The interplay between humour and music is evidenced throughout Anderson's early body of work and has become an essential characteristic of his authorial signature.

Contact Christine about her work at: christine.evans-millar@postgrad.otago.ac.nz

Profile: John Gannon, Doctoral Candidate, La Trobe University, Victoria

Hello, my name is John Gannon and I am a PhD candidate at La Trobe University in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. I also have 20 years of experience working in psychiatric nursing which is the subject of my thesis. The thesis explores the changes that have occurred in this work since de-institutionalisation. I employ an autoethnographic approach – ‘labour autoethnography’ - as a means of exploring these changes. I explore this topic by writing stories about the changes I have seen, interpreting these changes in relation to social theory.



In line with wider social changes, nursing scholarship has identified that the work of ‘mental health nurses’ has become more crisis focused. Also, the rise of managerialism has resulted in the nurses becoming more preoccupied with risk – what I describe as ‘petrification’. I am especially interested in how the nurses everyday work lives have changed. I argue that the playfulness and humour, that was once pervasive in the job, has substantially diminished and this is due to the rise of a culture of professionalism accompanied by stricter surveillance, and the enforcement of tighter standards and needs for greater accountability.

Though, from a managerialist perspective, this rising ‘earnestness’ may appear to be a positive reform, I do ask questions about what the loss of this comic element might mean? What if it was humour and playfulness that facilitated worker resilience and solidarity – a means of ‘getting on’ in a work milieu which is inherently difficult? What if humour also assisted therapeutic relations and collaboration? Perhaps, current issues in ‘mental health nursing’, including job dissatisfaction and burnout, problems with recruitment and retention, and other issues related to care and ethics, are in some way linked to the decline of comic playfulness?

Please feel free to contact me about my work at: 91222746@students.latrobe.edu.au

Profile: Dr Benjamin Nickl, Lecturer, The University of Sydney, School of Languages and Cultures, Department of International Comparative Literature and Translation Studies

I work at the intersection of transnational pop culture and comedy; the latter having been essential for a brief stint in secondary school teaching in Melbourne. I received degrees in literary and culture studies in Germany and America and was awarded my PhD at The University of Melbourne in 2016. I am currently writing a book on Turkish German comedy and the social functionality of humour for KU Leuven University Press. This monograph is going to appear in their European Studies series on contemporary Islam and Muslim identities in Europe in 2020.

What I find so compelling about comedy and what draws me to its study is the creativity of the artists, the screenwriters, the stand-up performers, and all their energy. I have been looking into ethnic and minority culture comedy for a while now, being very interested in the resilience of repressed communities and how mass entertainment humour provides them with a platform. I hope to be able to investigate this area further in the context of the Australasian Humour Studies Network and would love to collaborate with interested researchers or practitioners on all forms of humour: on screen, on the page, on stage, on air, online.....



My current research projects involve the circulation of pop culture across borders and boundaries of communities and countries. Being co-founder of a University of Sydney research group on international and non-English language film festivals in Australia, I want to further the understanding of how comedy film travels from countries such as Korea, Japan, or France. Why and when do festival organisers think a Korean comedy works in Australia? Should a German comedy film about the Holocaust be showcased at all? The panel debate about political correctness killing comedy at the 2019 annual AHSN conference was quite useful for me in that regard.

Chasing up revisions from authors for the book series ('Global Germany in Transnational Dialogues') that I manage and co-edit is only one of my favourite pastime activities. I also love when the university marking system crashes and panicked students shower me in a sea of emails written ALL IN CAPS!!! It is at these moments that I turn to a recent research project about dark comedy and mockumentaries showing the world's most infamous dictators in a funny light.

Please feel free to contact me on: benjamin.nickl@sydney.edu.au

AHSN Members' New Books

Barbara Plester and Kerr Inkson. 2019. *Laugh out Loud: A User's Guide to Workplace Humor*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jokes at work can ease tension, build camaraderie and make a day more bearable, but they can also offend, exclude and harm people. In this book, Auckland academics Barbara Plester and Kerr Inkson draw on the latest research to offer advice and practical tips about managing humor at work.

Using numerous real-life (sometimes cringe-making) vignettes to unpick common scenarios, the authors develop the idea of 'humor boundaries' where friendly banter slips into harassment, bullying and other unwanted behavior.

In ten chapters, Plester and Inkson uncover how humor works, explain the different humor cultures in organizations, and explore the many forms of workplace humor – including their pros and cons. They touch on humor rituals at work, digital humor, workplace jokers, as well as specific issues arising from the concept of political correctness. The final section offers best-practice advice and take-home messages.

'Laugh out Loud' is a practical guide for everyone involved: the humorists (jokers), the targets (sometimes victims), the observers (audience) and most of all the managers who have to set the tone and encourage, control and manage humor. The authors argue that because of humor's potential to create both good and harm in the workplace, it is increasingly clear that it needs to be managed, both by organizational humorists and by every manager. Humor, in short, is a topic that sometimes should be taken very, very seriously!

[About the authors](#)

Barbara Plester (b.plester@auckland.ac.nz)

Barbara started studying humor in the workplace after a past boss decreed there was to be no laughing at work –



too noisy, distracting, and clearly off-task. She lasted three months in a no-laughter zone before quitting and going back to university, where she gained a Masters then a PhD on humor in the workplace, and went on to publish many articles and an academic book. Her 14 years of research include spending a month each in seven companies, observing how humor was used to include and marginalize, support and take down, reinforce and subvert power. Plester's mantra as she strives to retain her own sense of humor and fun at work and home is 'laugh out loud'. She is currently based at the University of Auckland Business School.

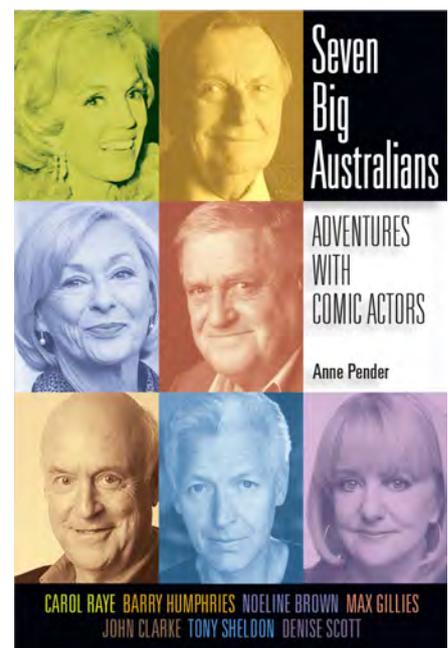
Kerr Inkson also suffered 'humor repression' at work – he was fired from a summer job at a Scottish pea cannery for joking too much. In a 55-year career he has served seven universities, five of them in New Zealand, including 25 years at The University of Auckland, where he is now an emeritus professor of organizational behaviour. As the author of more than 20 books, Inkson strongly believes that getting workplace humor right offers serious benefits for firms.

Barbara Plester and Kerr Inkson. 2019. *Laugh out Loud: A User's Guide to Workplace Humor*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 186pp. 1 illus. in color. ISBN 978-981-13-0282-4 Also available as an eBook

<https://www.springer.com/de/book/9789811302824#aboutBook>

Anne Pender. 2019. *Seven Big Australians: Adventures with Comic Actors*. Monash University Publishing.

In this book, Pender interprets the lives of seven significant comic actors, offering vivid biographical portraits of their childhood, family of origin, their struggles to enter the entertainment industry and the art they created over many decades. Pender documents the lives of Carol Raye, Barry Humphries, Noeline Brown, Max Gillies, John Clarke, Tony Sheldon and Denise Scott. These actors pioneered home-grown humour, transformed the image of Australia, intervened in political life, and brought Australian comedy to the world. Drawing on extensive interviews conducted with each actor over many years, Pender discovers the gruelling nature of daily life as a performer, the demands of working in multiple forms, the realities of scriptwriting under pressure and the exhilaration of performing. These actors are cultural figures whose lives are awe-inspiring, momentous and magical.



Contents

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- Carol Raye: Living on Champagne
- Barry Humphries: A Bit of Psychic Nudity
- Noeline Brown: I'm Not Afraid of the Audience
- Max Gillies: Marvellous Max
- John Clarke: Bat On
- Tony Sheldon: Do You Believe in Angels?
- Denise Scott: Comedy is Not Pretty

Anne Pender is Professor of English and Theatre Studies at the University of New England, a recent Fulbright Senior Fellow at Harvard University, and Australian Research Council Research Fellow 2012-2016. A Menzies Scholar to Harvard and graduate of the Australian National University and the University of New South Wales,

Anne was Visiting Distinguished Professor in Australian Studies at the University of Copenhagen in 2011 and taught Australian Literature at King's College London 2002-03. Anne's other books are *Players: Australian Actors on Stage, Television and Film* (e-book 2016); *From a Distant Shore: Australian Writers in Britain 1830-2012* (2013), co-authored with the late Bruce Bennett; *One Man Show: The Stages of Barry Humphries* (2010); *Nick Enright: An Actor's Playwright* (2008), co-edited with Susan Lever; and *Christina Stead: Satirist* (2002).

Seven Big Australians Adventures with Comic Actors. By Anne Pender. \$29.95 Pre-Purchase on-line:
<http://www.publishing.monash.edu/books/sba-9781925835212.html>

News from AHSN member Peter Crofts' Australian Institute of Comedy

Big Comedy News: Donation of Unique Comedy Collection

Introducing the Louis-Robert Stomm collection

By Jeanette Leigh

Recently we had a significant donation from a great friend of the AIC, Louis-Robert Stomm. If you haven't heard of him, that's because he was the man behind the camera when so many of our top comedians began their careers. Back in the 90s, he put comedy shows together on PBS, 3RRR, Channel 31 and Southern FM.

The Louis-Robert Stomm Collection, consisting of thousands of videotapes and DVDs, provides an unprecedented view of the Melbourne stand-up scene in 90s Australia. Lou recorded the evolution of comedy in Australia by filming around various rooms across Melbourne including The Espy, The Big Spot and the Armadale.

In previous years there were some attempts at filming comedy shows but Lou thought they were pasteurised and awful, despite the huge amount of money being spent.

"I had a word with Marshall Butters who ran comedy nights at the Espy and said, we could do better on a smaller budget and get it onto Channel 31. He said I could use his room if I filmed it, and he'd do the publicity. That show was called Comedy Unlimited New Talent, abbreviated as C.U.N.T. on the running sheet. We never pointed that out to anyone. It was an inside joke. I was told not to do it but I didn't care," said Lou.

Stomm was a maverick in the Melbourne comedy scene and because he filmed comedy five nights a week for more than 10 years, we now have snapshots of greats like Peter Hellier, Dave Hughes Lawrence Mooney, Clare Hooper, Celia Paquola Dave Grant, Pommy Johnston, Lawrence Mooney and Greg Fleet, at the beginning of their careers.

He produced many shows. The Comic Box (1995-2015) was a talk show that came out of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. It featured a different comedian every night, including Catherine Devaney, Michelle Laurie, Dave Hughes and Rove, and overseas artists such as the Amazing Johnathan, and delved into their careers and aspirations. It included a five-minute segment of them performing on the comedy festival stage and would end with a spot called, *The Wheel of Stupidity*, an absurd game show with a wheel that had nothing to do with the game.

Also featured were sketches by various comedy teams from around Melbourne such as comedy writers Ray

Matsen (Hamish & Andy, Spicks & Specks, You're Skitting me) and Jason Marion (Hamish & Andy, Comedy Inc, Full Frontal). Both these guys got their start in The Comic Box on Channel 31. This became the premier interview show for the time.

Out of Comic Box evolved Champagne Comedy, a half hour show that was filmed every week at the Armadale Hotel, and later at the Comics Lounge. This featured comedians from the whole Melbourne and NSW comedy scene (Sammy J got his start here), as well as up and coming comedians and overseas artists such as Neal Hamburger, Simon Pegg, Henning Wehn and Sarah Milliken. By the 4th year, they were making two episodes a week.



Louis-Robert Stomm



“Champagne Comedy worked backwards. It opened with the MC and then the headliner came on first. Normally tryouts would start the show and the headliner would come on last when the room had warmed up. This put a lot more pressure on the headliner to work hard for their money. Some big-name comedians would complain about how hard it was, especially where they had gotten too comfortable and didn't have to work for it. Other big names loved it because it was a lot more challenging,” said Louis.

The Institute is also fundraising – its Chair, Charles Kovess says:

The Australian Institute of Comedy (AIC) was formed to find a home for this amazing collection to create a legacy for current and future generations. The interactive museum will include a library and research facility. The purpose and vision is influenced by what Pete identifies as the *Great Southern Philosophy*, which reflects the unique Australian perspective of life that is deeply influenced by our Aussie humour. We can't achieve it without your help.

What you can do to help:

Donate financial support by contacting me, Charles, on 0412 317 404. For such calls, I am always available.

Donate comedy material by contacting me or our founder, Pete Crofts on 0401 316 369

AIC is a registered charity AIC website: <https://www.australianinstituteofcomedy.com.au/>

Humour and Australia-China relations

AHNS member Jocelyn Chey, together with Jennifer Wong, recently addressed this subject in a 30-minute podcast for 'The Middle', a series published by the University of Technology Sydney that focusses on the common ground between Australia and China. The broadcast took place on 10 April 2019 on 2SER FM and is available at: <https://player.whooshkaa.com/episode/358799>

In conversation with podcast comperes Peter Fray and Wanning Sun, Jennifer Wong and Jocelyn Chey covered a

range of topics, starting with a general introduction to humour and humour studies, responding to the question whether national styles of humour exist. They also discussed different uses of humour, especially in Australia and China, and the importance of framing humour, for instance in comedy clubs or at the Chinese New Year. Both speakers referred to how rich the Chinese language is in puns, a great source of jokes and verbal play. Jocelyn Chey drew attention to the frequency of unintentional humour due to mistranslation or cross-cultural misunderstanding. She also pointed to the difference between humour and wit, known in Chinese as *huaji*. Wanning Sun referred to the distinctive Chinese form of humorous proverbs called *xiehouyu*.

Jennifer Wong described how her successful career in comedy developed. Peter Fray posed questions about common stereotypes of Chinese people as being 'not funny' and 'quiet' – which both speakers refuted. Jennifer explained how she handled serious subjects in her stand-up routines and stressed the limited ability of humour to change pre-existing prejudices.

Peter Fray asked Jocelyn to comment on the use of humour by Australian political figures visiting China, and on political humour in China generally. Jennifer highlighted the abundance of political humour circulating on the Chinese Internet. She and Jocelyn both illustrated their comments with various jokes and funny stories.



Jocelyn Chey

Jocelyn Chey holds honorary positions at the University of Sydney and Western Sydney University and is a retired diplomat who has been posted in China and Hong Kong.

Jennifer Wong is a writer and comedian who has performed at local and international comedy festivals. Her most recent stand-up show, 'How to English Harder', was sold out in Melbourne and Sydney.



Jennifer Wong

AHSN Members' News

STOP-PRESS!! REBECCA HIGGIE WINS THE FOGARTY!

<https://www.fremantlepress.com.au/c/the-fogarty-literary-award/9612-fogarty-literary-award-winner-says-her-manuscript-was-12-years-in-the-making-and-completed-just-before-giving-birth-to-her-first-child>

Rebecca's book is *The History of Mischief*, which tells the story of nine-year-old Jessie, survivor of a car accident that kills her parents. Her older sister Kay is tasked with rebuilding their family with just the two of them. Neither Jessie nor Kay is equipped to deal with life in the aftermath of such dreadful loss, but the discovery of an extraordinary book offers them both a place to begin again. *The History of Mischief* tells its own tales about the lives and losses of different characters across the globe, and across time. And that history itself has another history, which Jessie must discover in order



to begin making sense of her loss, her inheritance and herself. The judges commented: “Higgle’s novel is an immensely engaging work, with a strong forward momentum and a satisfying emotional resolution”.

Publication will be forthcoming.

Book Review

Joanne Brookfield. 2019. *No Apologies: Women in Comedy Claiming Their Space, Finding Their Voices and Telling Their Stories*. Richmond VIC: Echo Publishing. ISBN 9781760685782

Reviewed by Justine Sless

No Apologies is an astonishing book that combines interviews with sixty female and trans comedians and a comprehensive far reaching overview of the stand-up comedy industry. The interviews are with Australian and New Zealand comedians and they look at the topography of comedy rooms, bars and festivals in Melbourne, New Zealand and at the Edinburgh Fringe, all of which reveals an under- documented viewpoint of stand-up comedy at both an amateur and professional level.

Author Joanne Brookfield is a Melbourne based writer, journalist and performer. Brookfield works as a freelance journalist, writing mainly for Fairfax media in *The Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Canberra Times*. She has reported on the three largest comedy festivals in the world, Edinburgh, Montreal’s Just for Laughs and the Melbourne International Comedy Festival and has also performed solo shows in Australia and New Zealand.

The world of stand-up comedy has long been recognised as ‘a man’s world’, and the comedy room scene where most comedians learn the art of being a comedian has traditionally been a hostile landscape for women to navigate. Many women find it difficult to get performance time and must perform in a context where much of the material performed by their male counterparts is based on misogyny, sexism and racism. *No Apologies* is a celebratory counter argument, showing how women are creating their own spaces to perform comedy in, and the result of the increase in women in comedy means that there are more opportunities to collaborate and support each other. *No Apologies* confirms that the gender comedy trope is not a feminist fable, but is something that can be wrestled to the ground and overcome in a myriad of ways.

The book is dedicated to Eurydice Dixon, the 22-year-old comedian who was murdered on her way home after a gig in Melbourne in June 2018. The name Eurydice comes from the Greek word meaning ‘wide justice’, and Brookfield respectfully chronicles the far reaching industry and personal responses to the murder; from festivals around the world setting up funds so that cabs and ubers can be offered to women after gigs, to the state government in Victoria setting up a grant for women in comedy which recognises the incredible potential that Eurydice showed as a performer.

The book’s eighteen chapters cover different facets of what it takes to be funny and they deftly thread the experiences of well-known high profile and emerging comedians, giving breadth and insight into the gruelling and exhilarating nature of what it takes to be a stand-up comedian. There are many insights into the challenges facing women and minority stand ups recounted throughout the book. Chapter three, for example, entitled ‘Giving Yourself Permission To Get Up’ records: ‘In 2018 New Zealander Rose Matafeo won [The Perrier Award] making her only the fifth woman to receive the honour and the first solo non-white winner.’

The title of chapter five, ‘Hell is not Divine Comedy, It’s an Open Mic Night’, says so much about how the stand-up comedy terrain is experienced by women performers. Kate McLennan, from *Get Krak!n* - an Australian comedy series which is a satire of breakfast television shows - says in this chapter, ‘There’s so many stories of MC’s

just throwing female acts under the bus and they know what they are doing, it's such a power play.' Chapter thirteen, 'The Juggle', is about how women balance having a family and performing. It is prefaced with the telling remark, 'Women face so much social pressure to breed yet receive little support when they do.'

No Apologies is a repositioning of who is allowed to be funny and where and showcases a range of brilliant women performers finding their own voice and unapologetically taking up space. It is a polemic punchline of a book – and a testimony to the feminist catch cry, 'Nevertheless she persisted.'

A must read for humour scholars and especially for anyone who has ever thought that they might just give stand-up comedy a go.

Justine Sless is a comedian, writer and former creative director of Melbourne Jewish Comedy Festival. Justine is completing an MA at La Trobe University by research in creative writing, her area of research is gender and comedy. Justine was part of the Organising Committee for the 25th AHSN Conference, held at RMIT University in February 2019.

New Humour-related Book

Comedy for Dinner – And Other Dishes.

Constantino Pereira Martins, ed. 2019. *Comedy for Dinner – And Other Dishes*. Institute for Philosophical Studies, Coimbra University (IEF). eQvodlibet 41: March, 2019. ISBN: 978-989-54328-1-3

At: http://www.uc.pt/fluc/uidief/ebooks/Comedy_for_dinner-and_other_dishes

Contents

Front Matter (Acknowledgments and Foreword, pp. ix-xix)

Jarno Hietalahti. Carl Jung and the Role of Shadow and Trickster in Political Humor: Social Philosophical Analysis (pp. 20-41)

This chapter analyzes the relationship between humor and power in the light of court jesters (comedians) and sovereign (president) based on C.G. Jung's theory of archetypes, and especially on the concepts of the 'shadow' and the 'trickster'. The focus is on the role of the invited comedienne Michelle Wolf, and the current president Donald J. Trump. The author argues how the trickster and the shadow are present on a socially unconscious level, and how they offer a symbolic explanation for the current political situation in the Western world. The chapter opens up the need for ridiculing Trump, and its possibly problematic aspects.

Outi Hakola. Post-Gender Comedy at the White House Correspondents' Dinner (pp. 42-61)

Michelle Wolf's comedy performance at the White House Correspondents' Dinner (2018) received mixed responses from the audience. Heated debate over whether she was too mean in her roast brought forward



several gender-related notions. Wolf's performance challenged the cultural assumptions that political comedy is a male space because of its aggressive style. This challenge brings along the possibility of post-gender comedy. By analyzing the gendered aspects of Wolf's performance and the audience's responses to it, I explore the possibilities and limitations of post-gender comedy as a concept and as a practice. I suggest that post-gender comedy should not be defined in relation to sex/gender categories, but in relation to cultural practices in which gender hierarchies are deconstructed.

Cristian Palacios. *What We Talk About When We Talk About Humor. An Extensive Approach to the Phenomenon of Political Humor* (pp. 62-73)

In this work we propose an extensive and interdisciplinary approach to the phenomenon of humor, comic and laughter from the field of Discourse Analysis and Social Semiotics. We consider not only verbal humor but also another semiotics modes, that is, physical, visual, gestural, theatrical and audiovisual humor and not only the point of view of the production of humor, but also the mechanisms of its recognition. According to our point of view it is impossible to deeply understand the political significance of humoristic discourses without understand the differences between what we call humor and it's opposite, the comical; both modes of what we have denominate the laughable, that is, the propriety of some discourses of being differentiated to the ones considered serious in a given society. In contrast to the comical, the humoristic subject presents itself as someone whose intentions we don't really know, someone unapproachable, hard to pin down. While the comical founds the universe of representations that we use to build the reality; the humoristic, on the other hand, dismantles it, given that, recognizing the adversity of the world that surrounds us, it prevails over the circumstances through ingenuity. Or, for the opposite, through a funny remark free from pathos, it marks everything that in the universe of men can be perceived as a trauma: the death, the absurd of reality, reality itself, the real. If comical can be used as a political instrument, in order to fight against dominant discourse or, on the other hand, in order to preserve pre-existing conditions, humor can't be used in either meanings, and that is its real political implication.

Hüseyin Çavuşoğlu, Özcan Sezer and Tuğçe Bayram. *The Place of Political Humor in Turkish Political Culture* (pp. 74-94)

The aim of the work is to reveal the place of political humor in the Turkish political culture during the Democratic Party's rule (1950-1960). In this context, first of all, the concept of humor, humor theories (Superiority theory, Conflict theory, Relaxation theory) were examined in detail and then the development of the Democratic Party period was examined as a period of rise, pause and collapse. In the last part, the understanding of political humor in DP period was given in detail. It is possible to encounter humor in every period of Turkish political life. By understanding the development of humor, the power of criticism and the domain of influence created by this force, the influence of humor on politics is understandable.

Jolita Horbaauskienė and Ramunė Kasperavičienė. *Humor in Young Democracy: Functions and Applications* (pp. 95-106)

Humour may be used for gaining, protecting or sharing power. It may also be employed as a means to attack, undermine or criticise adversaries or ideas. In political discourse especially, humour maybe considered as an ambiguous and clear-cut concept. The study seeks to explore the instances of usage and goals of humour in political discourse in a country with no long and deep democratic political traditions. Theories of humour and superiority serve as a basis for theoretical framework as well as ground the interpretation of empirical data, which is collected through content analysis. The results of the study may be beneficial for politicians, their public relations representatives and general public.

Leigh Nanney Hersey and Claire Vidrine. No Laughing Matter: Political Cartoonists Take on the #MeToo Movement (pp. 107-119)

Political cartoons have been a much used way to express opinion in the United States since before the country was created. These images have a unique way of exaggerating and simplifying an issue at the same time. This chapter explores how political cartoonists depict the early stages of #MeToo movement. The #MeToo movement was reignited in October 2017 as more and more women began to share their stories of sexual harassment. The research analyzes 82 political cartoons published between October 2017 and January 2018 on the topic. Common themes were identified, such as the political partisanship in the reactions to the accusations. Several literary and cultural allusions were noted, such as the imagery of pigs in the cartoons. The social construction of those portrayed in cartoons was also developed, showing deep differences in the power structure of the women and the accused. This research adds to the literature by demonstrating how the use of political cartoons can bring focus to an important societal issue.

Bio-academic notes on the authors (pp.120-129)

CALL FOR PAPERS - "AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN THROUGH HELL..."

Cultural and positive psychology perspectives on humour

Editors

Elisabeth Vanderheiden

Catholic Adult Education Organisation of Germany

Claude-Hélène Mayer

Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa; Institute for Therapeutic Communication and Language Use, European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany

Dear colleagues,

You are cordially invited to submit a chapter proposal for the book project: "AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN THROUGH HELL..." Cultural and positive psychology perspectives on humour. The book is envisioned as a primary reference in research, studies and concepts on humour from transdisciplinary, cultural and transcultural perspectives.

For publication in 2020 we, Elisabeth Vanderheiden and Claude-Hélène Mayer, are preparing an edited book on "Cultural and positive psychology perspectives on humour". The aim of this book is to synthesize empirical-research-based and theoretical perspectives on humour in cultural contexts and across cultures in order to provide a comprehensible strength-based perspective on contemporary research and practice - which will be accessible to researchers and practicing professionals internationally.

Humour is a relevant resource when it comes to coping with critical and challenging situations in everyday life and across the life span. Viktor Frankl, who survived three years in the concentration camps of the National Socialists in Germany, has highlighted: "Humour is a weapon of the soul in the struggle for its self-preservation", thereby emphasizing the resilience factor of humour in healing, meaningmaking and survival. Particularly against the background of such experience, the access via the 'second wave' of Positive Psychology (PP2.0), pioneered by Paul Wong (2011), can open up new perspectives. Humour can make a decisive contribution to improving social interactions and solving problems (e.g.

Fuhr, 2008). In work contexts, it can reduce feelings of stress and have a positive effect on the perception of leadership and management tasks (e.g. Putz & Breuer, 2017). In medical context, the effect of humour has been researched primarily in connection with pain therapies, severe diseases and palliative medicine, and previous studies have shown the positive effects, for example, in anxiety and pain reduction, as well as its positive influence on rehabilitation (e. g. Yun, Kim & Jung, 2015; Dionigi, Sangiorgi & Flangini, 2013). Additionally, humour strengthens mental resistance and is "an extremely effective technique for processing emotions" (e.g. Ruch, 2015) from negative into rather positive experiences.

However, how humour is perceived and understood, what the roots of humour are, how it is used, what its boundaries and taboos are, and how people react to it, depends all on various factors and contexts, such as sex, age, family status, politics, religion, values and other cultural aspects (Alharthi, 2014; Yue, Jiang, Lu & Hiranandani, 2016; Davis, 2013; Mireault & Reddy, 2016).

We would kindly like to invite authors from various disciplines and cultural backgrounds to submit their chapters.

Book chapters should address humour in various cultural contexts and from different cultural perspectives, thereby keeping the positive psychology perspective in mind. Your chapter could address one of the following topics, but is not limited to:

- What is humour in cultural perspectives
- Humour as a resilience factor
- Humour as a resource in critical life events and in difficult life situations
- Humour in medical contexts
- Humour at workplaces and in management
- Humour in the context of digitalisation
- Humour of the oppressed
- Humour and gender
- Humour in the political context
- Humour in therapy, counselling and coaching
- Humour in pedagogical contexts
- Humour and stress
- Jokes and humour across cultures
- Expressions of humour in cultural contexts
- Neuro-psychological aspects and functions of humour
- ...

Should you be interested in contributing a chapter to this book, kindly inform us of your intent by return of email to: ev@keb-rheinland-pfalz.de and/or claudemayer@gmx.net.

Please submit your abstract and further information electronically here:

<https://elisabeth056370.typeform.com/to/ba8rdt>

1. a brief abstract of ca. 250 words of your proposed topic:
2. five keywords
3. please also send a short bio of the authors (250 words)
4. and add your physical address like in the following example:

E. Vanderheiden (*)

c/o KEB RLP

Welschnonnengasse 2-4

55116 Mainz, Germany

e-mail: ev@keb-rheinland-pfalz.de

The deadline for the abstract submission (250 words) is the 01. October 2019.

The first draft chapter contribution is due on the 01. August 2020 (British English, ca. 6000 words, including abstract, references, tables and graphs).

A detailed publication schedule will be provided after negotiations with the publishers.

We are looking forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Elisabeth Vanderheiden & Claude-Hélène Mayer

Claude-Hélène Mayer

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Call for chapters - Games and comedy

Editors:

Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone (University of Malta)

Tomasz Z. Majkowski (Jagiellonian University)

Jaroslav Švelch (University of Bergen)

To say that games, humour, and comedy have a lot in common would be stating the obvious. The affinities between the ludic and the comic have been remarked by scholars in various fields. Wittgenstein (1980, 83e) likens

a shared sense of humour to the reciprocal understanding of the rules of a game. In his book *The Game of Humor* (1997), Gruner sees a fundamental similarity between humour and games in a shared competitive dynamic, closely bound up with 'winning'. From an evolutionary perspective, laughter – today associated with humour – has been a signal of play (Gervais and Wilson 2005). Moreover, the English word 'joke' likely shares its etymology with the Italian word 'gioco' for 'game' and 'play', deriving from the Latin 'jocus' (OED). Despite these links, there is surprisingly little academic work on humour and comedy in games. The existing literature has charted the possible avenues of research. Humour has been analysed as a tool to make games more engaging, and to contribute memorable scenes and characters (Dorman and Biddle 2009; Fernández-Vara 2009). In-game comedy can also arise from the self-reflective commentary on the games' form and structure (Bonello 2015) or constitute a part of a broader set of grotesque and carnivalesque aesthetics (Majkowski 2015). Moreover, the joys of excessive movement, collisions, and playful destruction link games to slapstick comedy (Švelch 2014; Hudson 2014; Garin 2015).

While game scholars researching the topic often draw from traditional theories of humour and comedy, comedy and humour scholars have employed theories of games and play. Dramatic comedy has been associated with 'timelessness' and a lack of severe consequence (see Sypher, 1980; Garber, 2004), a space opening onto play. Quirk (2015, p. 208) has suggested that stand-up comedy "creates a playground, in Huizinga's sense, both physically and ideologically, which operates in accordance with joking's rules of challenge and negotiation. This is both a force for societal good and a potential source of harm." In his classic study, Bakhtin ties his concept of the carnivalesque with both playfulness and laughter (1984).

Apart from these largely isolated instances of cross-pollination, there has been little dialogue between the two fields of comedy and game studies, and a lack of scholarship that would rigorously explore the relationship between comedy and play in relation to digital (and non-digital) games. The seemingly obvious affinities between games, humour, and comedy are only rarely illuminated. This volume, therefore, aims to fill this gap, map the overlaps between games and comedy, and build a long overdue foundation for interdisciplinary dialogue.

What we are looking for

We are currently looking for contributors of individual chapters. We recognize the breadth and diversity of approaches to, and contrasting or overlapping definitions of, humour, laughter, and comedy (see for example: Milner Davis and Roach Anleu, 2018). This volume will therefore not be limited to a single framework or approach. Instead, we embrace different facets of that most elusive quarry – the 'comic' – as "this little problem, which has a knack of baffling every effort, of slipping away and escaping only to bob up again" (Bergson 1980, p. 61).

We welcome explorations of the applicability and limitations of comedy- and humour-related theoretical frameworks related to digital (and non-digital) games, as well as case studies of particular games, and research into reception of humour in games. We also welcome contributions on the functions of comedy and humour in games, its impact on gameplay, and its political implications.

The possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Rethinking the relationship between humour and play/the comic and the ludic
- Theories of humour and comedy and their applicability to games
- Videogames as vehicles of satire [as '*serio ludere*'? – Lucian]
- Irony and parody in games
- Structural analyses of humour in games
- The comic in game design
- Humour as meta-commentary of game mechanics
- Non-diegetic and paratextual humour (HUDs, menu screens, achievements, Easter Eggs)

- Slapstick, humour, and violence
- Glitches and bugs as comic events
- The comic in player experience and engagement (or disengagement)
- Humour and power in games and game cultures
- Humour in games and game culture as a tool of resistance and critique
- Collective laughter (inclusionary/exclusionary) in MMOs and other multiplayer games
- Stand-up comedy simulators

If you are interested in contributing, please send a 500-word abstract to: games.comedy.book@gmail.com. We will read through all the abstracts and invite authors of selected abstracts to write full chapters for us. Please contact us at this email if you have any questions.

Deadline for abstracts: August 31, 2019

Deadline for full chapters: March 31, 2020

Projected date of publication: 2020/2021

The volume is not signed to a publisher at this point, but we are discussing our project with several leading publishing houses. The final title of the book will be decided in cooperation with the publisher.

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New Humour and Religion Research Network Launched

From the founder, Dr Bernard Schweizer, Long Island University, USA

I am delighted to invite interested scholars to join the Humour and Religion Network, which I just launched together with two of my colleagues. With this initiative, we aim to bring together and connect both scholars and practitioners who work at the intersections of humour and religion.

This is a niche but growing area of research and practice exploring in different ways the multifaceted links between humour and religion. Here are a few examples: academic conferences, such as “Humour in the Beginning” at Radboud University (Netherlands), March 2019, and humour and religion sessions at the conferences of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR), July 2017 and the International Society for Humour Studies (ISHS), June 2018; publications and books; public interviews and articles on popular platforms like Huffpost.com; and a growing number of comedy shows and other humour productions where religion is also featured.

The Humour and Religion Network aims to foster the exchange of ideas and forge interdisciplinary and international collaborations between humanities researchers and social scientists; interfaith leaders and social action stakeholders; as well as comedians and humourists, who all share a common interest in cross-cutting issues at the intersections of humour, satire and comedy, with religion, faith and belief. Some of the themes that may be of particular interest to the members of this Network include:

- Humour about religion in the context of blasphemy/free speech
- Humour and religion in popular culture
- Laughter and interfaith engagement
- Humour traditions in different religions
- Practices and lineages of religious humour, past and present
- Scriptural humour
- Philosophies and theories of religious humour
- Social science approaches to humour and religion

As part of this initiative, we are also aiming to eventually build a public archive of works by scholars who have published on humour and religion in the last 15-20 years. Our goal is to create a comprehensive, organised and searchable open archive of the study of humour and religion, which we hope will become a port of call for anyone interested in past and ongoing research projects and practical work at the intersections of humour and religion. It will be an ongoing work-in-progress.

The Network will further serve as a portal for discussion and information exchange about humour and religion, including calls for papers and upcoming conferences publications, public events, comedy work and the like.

To become a member, you can simply register with Yahoo Groups and ask to join the Network by going to: <https://groups.yahoo.com/humour-religion>.

Or, if you only want to receive e-mails from group members, you can send an e-mail from your personal account to: humour-religion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and confirm the electronic response.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Bernard Schweizer, Ph.D.

Lina Molokotos-Liederman, Ph.D.

Roald Dijkstra, Ph.D.

Recognition of Humour Studies as an Interdisciplinary Field of Studies

Submission by the Australian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)

Message from the Chair of the AHSN Review Panel:

In response to the Discussion Paper produced as part of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification Review of 2019, Robert (Phiddian), Jessica (Milner Davis), and myself (Angus McLachlan) presented to the review Panel members the draft of a possible submission to be made on behalf of the AHSN. It seemed the time might be ripe to strike a blow for the recognition of Humour Studies as a research field in its own right. The submission advocates the creation of an additional level of classification that recognises interdisciplinary research in general, and in our case would include a new field of Humour Studies. This would allow researchers who draw on a number of disciplines to recognise this facet of their work as well as raising the profile of Humour Studies more broadly. Researchers might well class their work in both their home discipline AND in the new interdisciplinary field.

Thanks are due to Robert, in particular, for generating the majority of the submission, as well as to AHSN member Richard Scully of the University of New England who first proposed that the AHSN might speak on this. Thanks also to the Review Panel who offered whole-hearted support for the submission as well as making a number of useful suggestions. The full text of the final AHSN submission is available below.

Angus McLachlan
Chair, AHSN Review Panel

Full text Submission by the Australian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)

Background – Humour Studies

The AHSN is a research network of more than 20 years standing, originally formed at UNSW in 1997 but now located at The University of Sydney which this year has recognised it as a Research Centre/Grouping (<https://sydney.edu.au/arts/our-research/centres-institutes-and-groups/australasian-humour-studies-network.html>). In February 2020, it will hold its 26th annual conference, hosted over 3 days by Griffith University. Conferences have also been held in most Australian states as well as in New Zealand, as it aims to promote scholarship on both sides of the Tasman. Although it welcomes overseas presenters, its membership is predominantly from Australia and New Zealand. In 2019, the AHSN has grown from 40 members in 1997 to more than 400, representing a range of more than twelve discipline areas. Its core is in the humanities and social sciences, including the psychology and sociology of humour, but it also ranges over many professional disciplines such as education, health, religious studies and law.

Humour studies is a widely dispersed interdisciplinary field of dynamic research that well illustrates the problems of emerging and multi-disciplinary research. It has emerged gradually since the 1970s and is now a fully international field, with specialist journals, regional networks around the world, and an annual international conference under the auspices of the International Society for Humor Studies.

Within Australasia, the AHSN is aware of active researchers in humour in the following research code divisions:

- 08 Information and Computing Science
- 11 Medical and Health Services

- 12 Built Environment and Design
- 13 Education
- 15 Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services
- 16 Studies in Human Society
- 17 Psychology and Cognitive Sciences
- 18 Law and Legal Studies
- 19 Studies in Creative Arts and Writing
- 20 Language, Communication and Culture
- 21 History and Archaeology
- 22 Philosophy and Religious Studies

In light of the demonstrated and sustained growth of interest in this field in Australia and New Zealand (numbers at conferences, theses examined, publications in both specialist and non-specialist journals etc.), and after careful consideration, the multi-disciplinary AHSN Review Panel (membership attached – see Appendix 1) would like to take the opportunity offered by the current review of FOR (Field of Research) codes to propose a measure of recognition of this research field. Accordingly, on behalf of the Panel, I submit the following recommendation to your Review.

Recommendation

At one level, we would be happy to recommend an array of six-digit codes for Humour Research across the divisions listed above and possibly others. We realise, however, that your Review will be receiving a number of recommendations of broadly similar scale and no doubt worthiness. An equitable dealing with these may well generate a system of such byzantine complexity that it might not fit the purpose of mapping and facilitating high quality research reporting.

We understand the Australasian Consortium of Humanities Research Centres (ACHRC) will itself be submitting a proposal that recommends general FOR codes at 2 and 4-digit level for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research. It is envisaged that these numbers would be used as second or third descriptors for research after one or two home disciplines have been defined. This proposal would have the general benefit of quantifying and making visible the inventive and often innovative research that is being done across disciplines throughout the sector. It would however also be a satisfactory way to address Humour Studies, should specific 2, 4, or 6 digit solutions marking work in humour not prove feasible in the new taxonomy. Most studies in humour are grounded in one or two disciplines (sometimes overlapping) and then add the topic of humour, laughter, comedy or a combination of those.

Consequently, we advocate recognition of Humour Studies by your Review, and recommend that this be achieved through the institution of appropriate FOR codes for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies which would include Humour Studies at the appropriate subsidiary level. Such a strategy would facilitate recognition of Humour Studies, and that of other fields, in an economical fashion.

Dr Angus McLachlan
 Chair, for the AHSN Review Panel
 30 May 2019

Attachment: AHSN Review Panel - 2019 Membership

Psychology and Health

- Dr Angus McLachlan (Chair of Review Panel)
 Psychology (Honorary), Federation University Australia

- Dr Bruce Findlay
Psychology (Honorary), Swinburne University of Technology
- Adjunct Professor Carmen Moran
Psychology, Charles Sturt University
- Dr David Rawlings
Psychology (Honorary), University of Melbourne

Social Sciences and History

- Emeritus Scientia Professor Conal Condren FAHA FASSA
Institute of Advanced Research in the Humanities, University of Queensland
- Dr Mark Rolfe
Social Science & International Studies (Honorary), University of New South Wales

Linguistics

- Dr Debra Aarons
Linguistics, University of New South Wales
- Professor Michael Haugh FAHA
Linguistics, University of Queensland
- Associate Professor Kerry Mullan
Global, Urban and Social Studies, RMIT University

Literature and Humanities

- Conjoint Professor Michael Ewans FAHA
Humanities and Social Science, University of Newcastle
- Associate Professor Peter Kirkpatrick
English, University of Sydney
- Professor Robert Phiddian
Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University

Media and Cultural Studies

- Dr Nicholas Holm
English and Media Studies, Massey University
- Dr Michael Lloyd
Social & Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington
- Dr Jessica Milner Davis FRSN (AHSN Convenor)
Literature, Art & Media (Honorary), University of Sydney

Visual Art and Practice

- Mr Lindsay Foyle
Cartoonist and Cartoon historian

The Humour Studies Digest

The Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)

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

Send newsletter submissions to our Co-Editors:

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