

## **26<sup>th</sup> Australasian Humour Studies Network Conference**

5-7 February 2020

Griffith University, Brisbane, South Bank Campus

Theme: *Laughter and Belonging*

### IMPORTANT UPDATE –

#### Call Deadline Extended to 31 August 2019

In response to requests for an extension of the submission deadline for the 26<sup>th</sup> Australasian Humour Studies Network Conference, the organising committee has extended the closing deadline to 31 August. The committee would like to thank those who have already submitted their abstracts.

### Call for Proposals

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.

### **THIS EDITION**

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## 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

*Professor Dániel Z. Kádár*, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Dalian University of Foreign Languages, PRC

*Leon Filewood*, writer, performer and produce; winner of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival's 'National Deadly Funny Competition'

## Important Dates:

**Submission portal now open**

**Submission portal closes on August 31, 2019**

**Acceptance advice by October 1, 2019**

**Registration for presenters and non-presenters open: 31 August 2019 – 8 January 2020**

**Conference dates: February 5-7, 2020**

## Presentation Format

Accepted presenters will have the opportunity to choose the format of their presentation. Please express your interest in your abstract if you want to be considered for workshop or speed talks panels (see below).

**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 both available on the AHSN website <https://sydney.edu.au/arts/our-research/centres-institutes-and-groups/australasian-humour-studies-network.html> where you will find the links for submission of your proposal. Successful applicants will be advised of review outcomes in order of submission and in all cases by no later than 1 October 2019.

Presenters will also be asked to subscribe to the free AHSN e-Newsletter 'The Humour Studies Digest' (if they have not already done so) when submitting their abstracts. You may 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 as soon as possible after the end of 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.



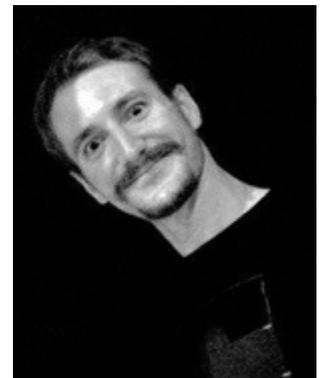
Cliff Goddard



Reza Arab



Angelina Hurley



Zarek Hennessy

## Enquiries:

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

## Sponsors:

The 26<sup>th</sup> 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>



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## **26<sup>th</sup> Australasian Humour Studies Network Conference**

### **Keynote Speakers – Biographical Notes**

Professor Meredith Marra

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

Meredith Marra is Professor in Linguistics and Head of School (Linguistics and Applied Language Studies) at Victoria University of Wellington. Since 2015 she has been Director of the Wellington “Language in the Workplace Project”, a long-standing sociolinguistic research project investigating effective workplace communication in a range of contexts. Recent research has focused on the employable identities of skilled migrants, including collaborations with the Settlement Unit of the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment resulting in publicly available tools and resources for employees and their employers.

Meredith has been analysing humour in workplace talk for 20 years, most notably the use of humour to subvert authority, as a leadership strategy and as a means of creating boundaries between in-group and out-group members. Her recent books include *Negotiating Boundaries at Work: Talking and Transitions* (EUP, 2017), *Leadership, Discourse, and Ethnicity* (OUP, 2011), and *Constructing Identities at Work* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Professor Robert Phiddian

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

Robert Phiddian is Professor of English in the College of Humanities Arts and Social Sciences at Flinders University, South Australia. He is author of *Swift's Parody* (CUP, 1995) and (with Julian Meyrick and Tully Barnett) *What Matters? Talking Value in Australian Culture* (Monash UP, 2018).

He has edited (with Haydon Manning) *Comic Commentators - Contemporary Political Cartooning in Australia* (APIN, 2008); (with David Lemmings and Heather Kerr) *Passions, Sympathy and Print Culture* (Palgrave, 2016), and (with

Jessica Milner Davis) *The Satire of John M. Clarke*, *Journal of Comedy Studies* 10.1 (2019). He is author or co-author of nearly 50 academic articles or chapters, and has in press *Satire and the Public Emotions* (CUP, due late 2019).

He was founding director of the Australasian Consortium of Humanities Research Centres (2011-17) and sat on the board of the international Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (2014-9). He has been on the Advisory Board of the Australasian Humour Studies Network since his daughters drew him with dark and plentiful hair.

[Professor Daniel Z. Kadar](#)

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

Daniel Z. Kadar is Chair Professor and Director of Research Centre at the Dalian University of Foreign Languages, PRC. He is also Research Professor of Pragmatics at the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He is author/editor of 23 volumes, published by leading academic publishers including Cambridge University Press. He has also published a large number of studies in respected international journals. He is Co-Editor of *Contrastive Pragmatics – A Cross-Disciplinary Journal* (Brill Publishers) and of the *Journal of East Asian Pragmatics*, a prospective issue of which will focus on the pragmatics of humour in Chinese, Japanese and Korean cultures (2021).

[Leon Filewood](#)

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

Leon Filewood was born and raised on Waiben (aka Thursday Island), Kaurareg Country, in the Torres Strait. He graduated LLB and Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice from Queensland University of Technology. After several years in private practice as a solicitor in criminal and family law, he went on to private practice as a solicitor in commercial litigation, corporate insolvency and bankruptcy law.

Feeling unfulfilled and isolated from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, he changed career path and became in-house counsel and divisional manager at a Local Aboriginal Land Council in Western Sydney. There he managed the Land Council's housing, health, education and training services.

Leon eventually moved back to Brisbane and now works in local government as a Community Development Coordinator, continuing to serve the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

In 2018, Leon won the Melbourne International Comedy Festival's "National Deadly Funny Competition", a competition to find Australia's funniest black fellas and help develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comedy. He has also delivered a Tedx Talk and is a writer, producer and motivational speaker.

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## **Report - AHSN Invitational Seminar, Melbourne, 22 July 2019**

This successful seminar was held to hear Professor Willibald Ruch and Dr Sonja Heintz, from the Department of Psychology at the University of Zurich, present summaries of some of their recent research into humour and its links with positive psychology. They had both been participants at the recent International Positive Psychology Association conference in Melbourne, and Review Panel member Dr Kerry Mullan kindly agreed to host the seminar at RMIT University, to make the most of their presence. Kerry welcomed about 25 attendees, including people from Singapore, Sydney and Adelaide; Bruce Findlay then introduced Professor Ruch and Dr Heintz.

Professor Ruch talked about 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-downsides-to-a-life-of-lightness>); the origins of positive psychology and humour as one of its character strengths; some yet unpublished work on humour interventions and their effect on life satisfaction and psychological well-being; and showed us some fascinating visual ways of presenting results (such as the words most commonly used in tweets) in a word cloud (see photo), without overwhelming viewers with statistics.

Dr Heintz talked about her research on the measurement of humour, emphasising the importance of covering the breadth of the concept of humour. From early concepts of “sense of humour” such as the HSQ, she has expanded the concept from four styles to nine categories, then to 23 categories of humour structured hierarchically under four broad groups, colloquially named “Low humour,” “high humour,” “aggressive humour,” and “lack of humour.” Dr Heintz also highlighted the need for standardising the measurement of humour, and its applicability across different cultures. Much of this work has been published, and the later work is about to be so.

Both presentations were very well received and led to some interesting questions and discussions. The afternoon finished with light refreshments and the opportunity to speak with our presenters. The event concluded with several Melbourne- and Victorian-based AHSN members taking Professor Ruch and Dr Heintz to dinner at a nearby restaurant.

*Kerry Mullan and Bruce Findlay, AHSN Review Panel Members*

*Editor’s Note:* Sincere thanks to Kerry and Bruce for organising and hosting this important event.



Dr Heintz, Dr Bruce Findlay and Professor Ruch.



A “Word Cloud” image from:

*The language of character strengths: Predicting morally valued traits on social media*

Dandan Pang | Johannes C. Eichstaedt | Anneke Buffone |

Barry Slaff | Willibald Ruch2 | Lyle H. Ungar

DOI: [10.1111/jopy.12491](https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12491)

## **Invitation to AHSN Members: A Celebratory Appraisal of the Late, Great John Clarke**

Launch of *The Satire of John Morrison Clarke (1948-2017) Special Issue of Journal of Comedy Studies*, Vol. 10 (1) Jessica Milner Davis & Robert Phiddian, eds.



John Morrison Clarke, photograph by Stewart Thorn, 2011  
(reproduced with permission).

**When:** Thursday 8 August, 5.30 - 7.20pm

**Location:** School of Art and Design Lecture Theatre (1.42), Building #105, 105 Childers Street, ANU

**Enquiries:** E: [lucien.leon@anu.edu.au](mailto:lucien.leon@anu.edu.au) or T: 02 6125 4357

### Guest Speaker: Bryan Dawe

This lecture is free and open to the public. Refreshments available from 5.30-6.00pm

Registration required: <http://hrc.cass.anu.edu.au/events/celebratory-appraisal-late-great-john-clarke>

#### *About*

As one of the great satirists of our age, John Clarke has not received the scholarly attention that his cultural contribution assuredly deserves. The New Zealand-born, adopted Australian left behind a satirical legacy that spans more than four decades and traversed all forms of media and entertainment. A national treasure on both sides of the Tasman, Clarke variously wrote, performed, directed and co-produced material for stage, newspapers, radio, television, film and books: his collaborators read like a who's who of Australian theatre, film and broadcast.

The launch of the *Special Issue of the Journal of Comedy Studies* on John Clarke is to date the first substantial scholarly study of John Clarke's work. In this volume, leading Australasian humour scholars illuminate and celebrate many of the key facets of Clarke's oeuvre. A panel of contributing authors will speak briefly to the main themes explored in their research, while **Clarke's good friend and collaborator, the artist and satirist Bryan Dawe**, will offer a more intimate and personal reflection of this most erudite and humble of humorists.

The volume is being launched on 8 August 2019 by John Clarke's good friend and collaborator, the artist and satirist **Bryan Dawe**, at the ANU School of Art & Design, by the **ANU Humanities Research Centre** and the **AHSN**.

The Special Issue originated in a seminar chaired by Dr Peter Kirkpatrick and hosted jointly by the AHSN and

the Dept of English at University of Sydney on 25 May 2018. It involves a number of long-standing AHSN members on both sides of the Tasman -- as is only appropriate for a satirist who was himself very much at home in both New Zealand and Australia. The volume also includes a vital contribution from researchers who have catalogued for the first time the Fred Dagg/John Clarke material held in the NZTV archives (making a "Daggliography") -- many thanks to Paul Horan and Mark Hutchings. Paul is the creator of the documentary series, *Funny As: The Story of New Zealand Comedy* (with Augusto, TV New Zealand) and is publishing the book of the series (Auckland University Press). If you would like to contact Paul, email him at: [paulrjhoran@hotmail.com](mailto:paulrjhoran@hotmail.com)

For full details of the authors and contents of this *Special Issue of Journal of Comedy Studies* 10 (1) 2019 (eds, Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian), see the article below on **Members' New Publications**.

*Editor's Note:* Particular thanks to Dr Lucien Leon, School of Art and Design ANU, and a contributor to the Issue, for organising this event; and also to the Humanities Research Centre at the ANU for its support.

**The *Special Issue of Journal of Comedy Studies Vol. 10 (1)* is published by Routledge, London, and can be purchased at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rcos20/current>**

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## Members' New Publications

Goh Abe. 2019. Lessons learned about humor from J.C.H. Davies and examples in his home collection. In Special Issue Dedicated to Christie Davies: Jokes, Targets and Spontaneous Order, eds. Liisi Laineste and Sharon Lockyer, *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* 32 (2): 289-298.

Robyn Brown, Bruce Findlay and Jay K Brinker. Individual Differences in the Way Observers Perceive Humour Styles. *European Journal of Humour Research* 7 (2): 116-136. At: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7592/EJHR2019.7.2.brown>

Nicholas Holm. 2019. 'Fred, it's a mess': Fred Dagg and the cultural politics of the laconic. Special Issue on the Satire of John M. Clarke, eds. Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian. *Journal of Comedy Studies* 10 (1): 39-55.

Paul Horan & Mark Hutchings, 2019. First steps: an overview of John Clarke's television work in New Zealand before 1980. Special Issue on the Satire of John M. Clarke, eds. Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian. *Journal of Comedy Studies* 10 (1): 119-126.

Lucien Leon. 2019. Plus ça change: Three decades of Clarke and Dawe's political satire 1987-2017. Special Issue on the Satire of John M. Clarke, eds. Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian. *Journal of Comedy Studies* 10 (1): 71-87.

Michael Meany. 2019. Contribution to 'Christie Davies at the Humor Summer School'. In Special Issue Dedicated to Christie Davies: Jokes, Targets and Spontaneous Order, eds. Liisi Laineste and Sharon Lockyer, *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* 32 (2): 227-234.

Jessica Milner Davis. 2019. A Wry Kind of Grief: John Clark's Satire and the Bureaucracy of Sport. Special Issue on the Satire of John M. Clarke, eds. Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian. *Journal of Comedy Studies* 10 (1): 56-70. At: <https://doi.org/10.1080/2040610X.2019.1592340>

Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian, eds. 2019. *Special Issue on the Satire of John M. Clarke (1948-2017): Journal of Comedy Studies*, 10 (1). At: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rcos20/current?nav=toCList>

- Marty Murphy. 2019. Generic outlier: John Clarke and 'the shabby suit crime comedy'. Special Issue on the Satire of John M. Clarke, eds. Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian. *Journal of Comedy Studies* 10 (1): 88-101.
- Anne Pender. 2019. John Clarke: the man, the mask and the problem of acting. Special Issue on the Satire of John M. Clarke, eds. Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian. *Journal of Comedy Studies* 10 (1): 8-20
- Robert Phiddian. 2019. John Clarke, tinker-poet. Special Issue on the Satire of John M. Clarke, eds. Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian. *Journal of Comedy Studies* 10 (1): s: 102-118.
- Robert Phiddian and Jessica Milner Davis. 2019. Trans-Tasman Satirist: John Clarke and his Art: Introduction to the Special Issue. Special Issue on the Satire of John M. Clarke, eds. Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian. *Journal of Comedy Studies* 10 (1): 2-7. At: <https://doi.org/10.1080/2040610X.2019.1592310>
- Mark Rolfe. 2019. Is this a Dagg which I see before me? John Clarke and the politics in his political humour. Special Issue on the Satire of John M. Clarke, eds. Jessica Milner Davis and Robert Phiddian. *Journal of Comedy Studies* 10 (1): 21-38.
- Richard Scully. 2019. The New York Times ends daily political cartoons, but it's not the death of the art form. *The Conversation*, 17 June 2019. At: <https://theconversation.com/the-new-york-times-ends-daily-political-cartoons-but-its-not-the-death-of-the-art-form-118754>
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## **Invitation to The LAUGHTER Symposium**

**September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 10-3pm**

**Griffith University, Southbank Campus, Ship Inn Function Room**



**Centre for Social and  
Cultural Research**

Laughing together can be a powerful force for bonding and bringing people closer to one another, but laughter can also be divisive and exclusionary. We invite you to present at The LAUGHTER Symposium, and enter a friendly discussion in asking: what does laughter mean to us? Why does laughter matter?

The Laughter Symposium sets out to show that there is laughter in all disciplines of academic research – yes, even yours – and that there are exciting opportunities for further research in this growing field. Each discipline will have a different take on the topic, and we encourage you to use whatever mode of presentation that fits best. We look forward to seeing yourself and your discipline represented at what should be a lively and curious event.

### **Featured Speakers:**

[Dr Jessica Milner Davis](#)

Member Clare Hall Cambridge, Honorary Associate, Dept of English, University of Sydney

**Title:** Researching Laughter and Humour: Where did 'Humour Studies' Come From?

[A/Prof Kerry Mullan](#)

Convenor of Languages and Higher Degree Research Leader, Social and Global Studies Centre (SGSC), RMIT University, Melbourne

**Title:** 'You Gotta Laugh', but When, Why and How? Cultural Differences in Joking and Social Laughter

The Laughter Symposium is a precursor to the 26<sup>th</sup> Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN) Conference that will be held from 5-7 February 2020 at Griffith University, Brisbane, South Bank Campus.

To register for the symposium please e-mail:

[ahsn2020conference@gmail.com](mailto:ahsn2020conference@gmail.com)

For more information on the **AHSN 2020 Conference in February**, visit the AHSN website at the University of Sydney: <https://sydney.edu.au/arts/our-research/centres-institutes-and-groups/australasian-humour-studies-network.html>

Or email: [ahsn2020conference@gmail.com](mailto:ahsn2020conference@gmail.com)

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## Call for Contributions

*WIF Studies Special Issue 2022*

**“Tu es drôle pour une fille” Funny Women in French, from the Salon to Youtube**

For a special volume of *Women in French Studies* (2022), we seek contributions that investigate the humor of women of French expression since 1789. We wish to explore the cultural archive for signs of women’s creative use of humor since the Revolution and the Napoleonic Code and track it through today’s digital age. Against a tradition of reception that treats women as the unlaughing at which men laugh, this volume aims to demonstrate and reflect on the multiple humorous forms and practices of women of French expression and on their place in what Alain Vaillant calls “la civilisation du rire.”

It has been 20 years since *Humoresques* devoted a special issue to the question in *Armées du rire: l’humour au féminin*, where co-editor Judith Sandor Stora wrote that “l’étude de l’humour féminin en France commence à peine.” In 2012, the Canadian journal *Recherches féministes* took up the mantle with its special issue “Les voies secrètes de l’humour des femmes” but left the door open for a volume on the humor of women of French expression.

The need for such a volume has become all the more compelling since the *Humoresques* volume. Along with novelists of all stripes, women are laughing: in the press and in cartoons, in street art, on the little and big screen, on the radio, and on the stage. Blanche Gardin won the Molière prize for humor in 2018. Franco-Ivoirien stand-up Shirley Souagnon travels to Reunion to conduct humor workshops. The Internet explosion allows women unmediated access to a global public. Greater visibility and increased numbers, though, have not changed the fact that funny women still pose a problem. In 2014, French Youtuber and humorist Nattoo (Nathalie Odzierjko) published a vlog called “Les femmes et l’humour” in response to a viewer’s back-handed compliment, “Tu es drôle pour une fille.” Nattoo’s five-minute vlog deliciously skewers the perennial stereotypes about women and humor, calling to mind 19th-century journalist Delphine Gay de Girardin’s witty nose-thumbing to would-be detractors in her weekly newspaper column from the July Monarchy.

Submissions that explore any region of the French-speaking world and any creative practice using humor (taken in its largest sense to include the comic, the satiric, the ironic, etc.) within the historical parameters are welcome.

Trans-national and historical perspectives most welcome.

Possible areas of inquiry:

- literary humor
- performance (art, music, one woman shows, etc.)
- cartoons and comic strips
- radio
- television
- cinema
- digital cultures.

Abstract of 250-300 words in English or in French requested by November 4, 2019.

Please send proposals to Cheryl Morgan (cmorgan@hamilton.edu)

Notice of acceptance by December 15, 2019.

Full manuscript due by June 10, 2020.

Manuscripts will go through blind peer review.

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Cheryl A. Morgan

Professor

French and Francophone Studies

General Director 2018-19, Hamilton in France

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## **Call for Information**

Request from the Organiser of the 2019 International Summer School on Humor and Laughter, University of Bonn, Germany

Dr Eckart von Hirschhausen, founder of the German clown doctor foundation, Humor Hilft Heilen (Humour Helps Healing), has requested help with locating any relevant source material for his latest project, "**The Funny Side of Climate Change**". If you are aware of any cartoons or comedy sketches that relate to this topic, please be kind enough to email Eckart at: [hirschhausen@hirschhausen.com](mailto:hirschhausen@hirschhausen.com)

For information on the **Stiftung HUMOR HILFT HEILEN (Humor helps healing)** visit their website: <https://www.humorhilftheilen.de/>

Or contact the Foundation via email: Ms Maria Bley: [m.bley@humorhilftheilen.de](mailto:m.bley@humorhilftheilen.de)

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## **Dr Michael Meany remembers the late Christie Davies, master scholar of joke-lore**

Zurich, on the afternoon of July 11, 2010, was hot, humid and the light was surprisingly harsh. Buildings cast hard, sharp edged shadows on the streets. It felt like summer's day in Newcastle (the one in Australia). The sort of day that would typically end with a thunder storm rolling in from the south.

At the Summer School, I had presented a very early description of my PhD project. Christie Davies was so very generous with his insights and suggestions for my research. Now the Summer School had ended. Good-byes had

been said to all those lecturers and students who had helped make this event so memorable including Liisi Laineste, Theresa Hamilton and Alexey Boronenko. In the flood of good-byes, I thought I had lost the opportunity to thank Christie for his generosity.

I took one last chance to tour downtown Zurich. In town, I found Christie. Dodging the heat of the day we entered the cloistered courtyard of Grossmünster church. On the walls of the cloister are stone carvings of a variety of creatures – some mythical, some astrological. I asked Christie which star sign he belonged to. I remember he scoffed a little at the question. However, he did reveal he was a Christmas baby, a Capricorn. Did Christie come from Christmas? I didn't dare ask. I have a photograph of Christie examining the carvings and one of 'his' Capricorn carvings.

We found a cool place down by the lake to get a drink and spoke about the 'weirdness' of South Australia, the problems with humour theory, Bergson and the world around us. He and his work were one. There was no dissonance. The man embodied that particular sense of empathy that his work on the role of jokes between ethnic groups is best known for.

The day ended with a storm – a bang, not a whimper.



From: 'Christie Davies at the Humor Summer School'. In Special Issue Dedicated to Christie Davies: Jokes, Targets and Spontaneous Order, eds. Liisi Laineste and Sharon Lockyer, *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* 32 (2): 227-234.

## **The Humour Studies Digest**

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

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

Send newsletter submissions to our Co-Editors:

Michael at [michael.meany@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:michael.meany@newcastle.edu.au) or Jessica at [jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au](mailto:jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au)

To subscribe or unsubscribe, visit the AHSN website (<http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies>), click on "Subscribe to e-Newsletter" and follow the prompts to enter or remove an email address.