

# 21<sup>ST</sup> AUSTRALASIAN HUMOUR STUDIES NETWORK CONFERENCE 2015

4 - 6 FEBRUARY 2015, STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Hosted by Flinders Institute for Research in the Humanities (FIRh)  
School of Humanities and Creative Arts, Flinders University



Bruce Petty 2015 ©. 'You've got to be joking'; cartoon drawn for the 21<sup>st</sup> Australasian Humour Studies Network Conference 2015, Flinders University.

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# WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We acknowledge and respect the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains on whose country the conference venues and Flinders University are based.

Thank you to our generous sponsors, Flinders Institute for Research in the Humanities (FIRtH) and the School of Humanities and Creative Arts, Faculty of Education, Humanities and Law at Flinders University, and also the Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN), the support of which we are very grateful.

Warm thanks go to the State Library of South Australia, particularly Alan Smith, Director SLSA and the Art Gallery of South Australia, particularly Lindsay Brookes and the Director Nick Mitzevich, for their generous support.

Particular thanks go to Jessica Milner Davis, Bruce Findlay and Michele Parker of the AHSN.

Finally, we would like to thank the session Chairs and you, the presenters. We hope you find this 21<sup>st</sup> Australasian Humour Studies Network Conference engaging, collegial, and lots of fun.

Best Wishes,

The conference co-convenors

Dr Christine Nicholls (Australian Studies, Flinders University)  
Associate Professor Robert Phiddian (English, Flinders University)  
Dr Colette Mrowa-Hopkins (French, Flinders University)  
Dr Antonella Strambi (Italian, Flinders University)

## CONTACT

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# PARTNERS

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Faculty of Education, Humanities and Law  
Flinders University



Flinders Institute for Research in the Humanities



Art Gallery of South Australia



State Library of South Australia

# PROGRAM

**WEDNESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2015**

<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	
8:30am - 9:30am	Registration / Refreshments
9:30am	Welcome from Flinders Institute of Research in the Humanities (FIRtH) Director, Craig Taylor, and Organising Committee: Robert Phiddian; Christine Nicholls; Colette Mrowa-Hopkins and Antonella Strambi, Flinders University
10:00am - 11:00am	<b>PLENARY SESSION, KEYNOTE ADDRESS</b> Session Chair: Dr Colette Mrowa-Hopkins, Flinders University <b>Cliff Goddard, Professor in Linguistics, Griffith University</b> "Sarcastic", "deadpan", "irreverent": A semantic guide to Australian ways of laughing
11:00am - 11.30am	Morning Tea
11.30am - 1.00pm	PARALLEL MORNING SESSIONS BEGIN; 20 minute presentations followed by 10 minutes for questions for each speaker (or group of speakers)
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	<b>Circulating Library</b>
<b>HUMOUR AND AGGRESSION</b> Session Chair: Cliff Goddard, Griffith University	<b>HUMOUR, VISUAL AND TELEVISUAL CULTURES</b> Session Chair: Andrekos Varnava, Flinders University
Presentation One: <b>Jessica Milner Davis, The University of Sydney</b> Can't take a joke? The etymology and practice of "piss-taking"	Presentation One: <b>Mike Lloyd, Victoria University of Wellington</b> Putting words in their mouths: Granularity and humour targets in a photo caption competition
Presentation Two: <b>Colette Mrowa-Hopkins and Antonella Strambi, Flinders University</b> "It's not funny!": Negotiating humour in football talk shows	Presentation Two: <b>Rebecca Higgie, Curtin University</b> The king playing the fool: Play and interplay between Australian politicians and satirists
Presentation Three: <b>Brinker, J.K., Williamson, C, &amp; Buckley, K., Swinburne University of Technology</b> Pragmatic issues in examining the perception of aggressive humour	Presentation Three: <b>Josh Wheatley, University of Sydney</b> Tim and Eric's carnival of the American image
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm - 3.30pm	AFTERNOON PARALLEL SESSIONS
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	<b>Circulating Library</b>
<b>HUMOUR AND PSYCHOLOGY</b> Session Chair: Jessica Milner Davis, The University of Sydney	<b>HUMOUR, PERFORMANCE AND POLITICS</b> Session Chair: Beatriz Carbajal, Flinders University

Presentation One: <b>Maren Rawlings and Bruce Findlay, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne</b> A theory of everything in humour? Self-deprecating humour?		Presentation One: <b>Ann Lever Lee, National University of Singapore</b> “No, no, no, no, no, the minister of misinformation approves”: The satirical revues of Instant Café Theatre company in Malaysia	
Presentation Two: <b>Carmen Moran, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga</b> Theory of mind and humour: Empathy, concern or perspective taking?		Presentation Two: <b>Angelina Hurley, Victoria University</b> Whichway blak way?	
Presentation Three: <b>Brown, R &amp; Brinker, J. K., Swinburne University of Technology</b> Can observers distinguish between self-defeating and self-deprecating humour?		Presentation Three: <b>Karen Austin, Flinders University</b> The fresh face of Indigenous humour	
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>			
3:30pm - 4:00pm		Afternoon Tea	
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>			
4:00pm - 5:00pm		PARALLEL AFTERNOON SESSIONS	
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>		<b>Circulating Library</b>	
<b>HUMOUR AND POLITICS</b>		<b>VISUAL HUMOUR IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE</b>	
Session Chair: Robert Phiddian, Flinders University		Session Chair: Karen Austin, Flinders University	
Presentation One: <b>Andrekos Varnava and Casey Raeside Flinders University</b> ‘Punch and the Cyprus Revolt, 1955-59’		Presentation One: <b>Annick Pellegrin, University of Mauritius</b> Mastodonte power: Laughing at/with <i>Spirou</i>	
		Presentation Two: <b>Beatriz Carbajal, Flinders University</b> A cat has nine lives: Humour through the transmorphic in cartoons	
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>			
7:30pm		CONFERENCE DINNER Wah Hing Chinese Restaurant, 85 Gouger Street Adelaide (near Central Market) See maps section of this program.	

## THURSDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2015

<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	
9:00am - 9:30am	Registration / Refreshments
9.30am - 11.00am PARALLEL MORNING SESSIONS	
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	<b>Circulating Library</b>
<b>HUMOUR ACROSS TIME AND PLACE: LOOKING AT THE LINGUISTIC/LITERARY/ VISUAL/ AND AUDIENCE RECEPTION INTERFACE</b> Session Chair: Jessica Milner-Davis, The University of Sydney	<b>POLITICAL SATIRE AND HUMOUR AS CRITIQUE IN LITERARY CONTEXTS</b> Session Chair: Peter Marks, The University of Sydney
Presentation One: <b>Christine Nicholls, Flinders University</b> Analysing & interpreting (political) cartoons: towards an evaluative framework	Presentation One: <b>Nicholas Holm, Massey University</b> "Against the assault of laughter": Critique and the politics of humour
Presentation Two: <b>Mark Rolfe, The University of New South Wales</b> The populist elements of political satire	Presentation Two: <b>Damien Marwood, The University of Adelaide</b> The tailor retailored, the recognitions re-cognised: Reconsidering the use of satire and Romantic and Socratic irony in Thomas Carlyle and William Gaddis
Presentation Three: <b>April Bertels-Garnsey, The University of Sydney</b> <i>Looking at the one-eyed garlic seller: Riddle 86 in Anglo-Saxon England and beyond</i>	Presentation Three: <b>Pam Kelly, Flinders University</b> Humour in the serious business of political satire: Delarivier Manley and her <i>New Atalantis</i>
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	
11:00am - 11:30am	Morning Tea
11.30am - 1.00pm PARALLEL MORNING SESSIONS	
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	<b>Circulating Library</b>
<b>HUMOUR IN THE WORKPLACE AND SOCIETY</b> Session Chair: Robert Phiddian, Flinders University	<b>HUMOUR AND LINGUISTICS: CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES</b> Session Chair: Colette Mrowa-Hopkins, Flinders University
Presentation One: <b>Sharyn Roach Anleu and Kathy Mack, Flinders University (Sharyn Roach Anleu will be presenting)</b> Judicial humour as a practical resource in the courtroom	Presentation One: <b>Kerry Mullan, Christine Béal, Véronique Traverso, RMIT University</b> Conversational humour from a cross-cultural comparative perspective: French and Australian English
Presentation Two: <b>Bruce Findlay, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne</b> Twenty years of humour research	Presentation Two: <b>Anna Laszlo, Hong Kong Polytechnic University</b> What Grammar can tell us about sarcasm: A corpus-based analysis of American soap operas
Presentation Three: <b>Cale Bain, University of Technology, Sydney</b> News should be funny: How comedy news audiences become better participants in a democracy	Presentation Three: <b>Scott Gardner, Okayama University</b> "Don't even ask": Humour and pragmatics in junior high school English textbooks in Japan

<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Lunch
PARALLEL AFTERNOON SESSIONS	
2:30pm - 4:00pm	2:30pm – 3:15pm
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	<b>Circulating Library</b>
<b>HUMOUR AND AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE - ACROSS THE COLONIAL DIVIDE</b> Session Chair: Christine Nicholls, Flinders University	Session Chair: Antonella Strambi, Flinders University
Presentation One: <b>Michael Walsh, AIATSIS Centre for Australian Languages</b> Black humour: same or different?	Presentation One: <b>Michael Meany, University of Newcastle</b> The cake is a lie: Ideology, humour and comedy in portal
Presentation Two: <b>Iva Polak, University of Zagreb</b> To laugh, or not to laugh – that is the lesson: Gayle Kennedy's <i>Me, Antman &amp; Fleabag</i>	
Presentation Three: <b>Rod Grant, The University of Sydney</b> Kenneth Slessor and Bertha Blither	
<b>Radford Auditorium, Art Gallery of South Australia</b>	<b>ENTRY: ONLY</b> through the western gates of the Art Gallery of South Australia (a distance of approx. 250 metres from the conference venue at the State Library of South Australia. See maps section of this program).
4:00pm - 4:15pm	Refreshments
4:15pm - 5:30pm	<p><b>SPECIAL PLENARY PANEL SESSION:</b> Charlie Hebdo - humour, politics and the art of provocation - where to draw the line?</p> <p>Session Chair: <b>Jessica Milner-Davis, University of Sydney</b></p> <p>Panelists: <b>Colette Mrowa-Hopkins, Flinders University</b> The influence of Charlie Hebdo; a personal perspective</p> <p><b>Robert Phiddian, Flinders University</b> Charlie Hebdo: an academic perspective on humour and political satire</p> <p><b>Chloe A Gill-Khan</b> Charlie Hebdo: a political perspective - questioning the terms of the debate</p> <p><b>Bruce Petty</b> Charlie Hebdo: a cartoonist's perspective</p> <p>Each panelist to speak for 5 minutes, outlining his or her position. The Chair will respond, in terms of the broader field of humour studies. Then the Chair will invite audience members to ask questions, or to comment.</p> <p><b>Panel Session:</b> Charlie Hebdo - humour, politics and the art of provocation - where to draw the line?</p>

	<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>The recent brutal killings of a number of Charlie Hebdo's key staff, including some of their most experienced, high profile satirical cartoonists, has given rise to a good deal of debate about the limits or otherwise of (humorous) expression.</p> <p>Shakespeare wrote:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A jest's prosperity lies in the ear Of him that hears it, never in the tongue Of him that makes it.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(Shakespeare, Love's Labour's Lost, Act V, Scene 2)</p> <p>But what happens when some people don't find certain kinds of jesting, joking, satirical cartooning, or other forms of humorous expression, funny?</p> <p>As this is a Humour Studies conference, panel members will explore questions of whether, or if at all, limits ought to be placed on humorous expression, either in the political satire of cartoonists or in other contexts. The speakers on this panel have been reflecting on these thorny issues for some years, in art, in academic contexts or other forms of work, and/or in life. Each speaker will present a brief position statement, closely related to their responses to the Charlie Hebdo massacre, from his or her own perspective, after which audience discussion will be facilitated by the Chair. As stated, the panel will focus on broader philosophical questions relating to humorous expressions, taking the discussion beyond more narrowly conceived or party political debates (such as Section 18c of the 1975 Racial Discrimination Act - 'to be or not to be', which has already been given a good airing via the Australian media in particular).</p>
5:30pm - 6:00pm	Pre-session refreshments
6:00pm - 7:00pm	<p><b>PLENARY SESSION / KEYNOTE ADDRESS</b></p> <p>Session Chair: Robert Phiddian, Flinders University</p> <p><b>Bruce Petty</b></p> <p>HUMOUR: A PARALLEL LANGUAGE?</p>
7:00 - 7:30pm	Post-session refreshments

## FRIDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2015

<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	
10:00am - 10:30am	Refreshments
10:30am - 11:30am	<p><b>PLENARY SESSION, KEYNOTE ADDRESS</b>            Session Chair: Iva Polak, University of Zagreb  <b>Peter Marks, Department of English, The University of Sydney</b>            'But some are more equal than others: Interpretations, reinterpretations and misinterpretations of Orwell's <i>Animal Farm</i>'.</p>
11:30am - 12:00pm	PARALLEL MORNING SESSIONS
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	<b>Circulating Library</b>
<p><b>SUBVERSIVE HUMOUR</b>            Session Chair: Christine Nicholls, Flinders University</p>	<p>Session Chair: Bruce Findlay, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne</p>
<p>Presentation One:  <b>Michael Ewans, The University of Newcastle</b>            Politics and pragmatics in imperial Vienna: how Da Ponte and Mozart preserved the revolutionary message of Beaumarchais' play <i>Figaro's Wedding</i> (aka <i>The Marriage of Figaro</i>)</p>	<p>Presentation One:  <b>Angus McLachlan, Federation University Australia</b>            Laughter and the preservation of face in experimental settings</p>
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm - 3:30pm	FINAL CONFERENCE SESSION: ENDING WITH A BANG, NOT A WHIMPER
<b>Hetzel Theatre</b>	
<b>HUMOUR, POLITICS, PERFORMANCE, TRANSGRESSION: GENDER, RACE, SEXUALITY</b>	
Session Chair: Michael Walsh, AIATSIS Centre for Australian Languages	
<p>Presentation One:  <b>Jacqueline Millner and Catriona Moore, The University of Sydney</b>            'Performing oneself badly': contemporary feminist performance art and neo-burlesque</p>	
<p>Presentation Two:  <b>Debra Aarons, The University of New South Wales</b>            Blue(s) women: bawdies or bodies?</p>	
3:30pm - 3:50pm	FINAL WORDS / SUMMING UP / FUTURE DIRECTIONS: CONFERENCE ORGANISERS
<b>END OF CONFERENCE</b>	
<p><b>The Glasshouse Hotel</b>  <b>13 Gouger Street, Adelaide</b>            Tel: (08) 7071 7700</p>	
6:00pm - 8:00pm	Meeting of the AHSN Review Panel

# ABSTRACTS

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## **Aarons, Debra**

The University of New South Wales

### **Presentation**

Blue(s) women: bawdies or bodies?

### **Abstract**

In this presentation I compare two female traditions in bawdy entertainment, Afro-American blues singers of the 1920s–1940s who specialized in hokum, with “the unkosher comediennes”, Jewish American women entertainers (1930s–1960s) who specialized in dirt. Both traditions were transgressive in their very nature: Afro-American women, until at least the 1960s, were essentially powerless members of the wider society and older working class women entertainers fitted awkwardly into the social structures available for Jewish women in that period. Yet the bawdy entertainers described here inverted their powerlessness through their performances.

Focussing specifically on Clara Smith, Lucille Bogan and Sippie Thomas, “blue” blueswomen, and Belle Barth and Pearl Williams, “dirty, disgusting and vulgar” Jewish comedians, I argue that the blueswomen used the tradition of hokum not only for sexual innuendo but also for political commentary, particularly in relation to the position of Afro-Americans (women and men) in that era. The bawdy Jewish comedians were less likely to use innuendo and their sexual references were more direct and blunt, since there was not even a pretence of eroticism in their acts. They used “dirt” as a way of exploding hypocrisy, rendering the body in its brute fundamentals, mocking sexual commerce and leveling the audience. Both groups can be located within a tradition of bawdy; they use performance to challenge power and, against their racial, economic and sexual realities, they present the female body as a symbol of desire, strength and unruliness. The influence of the blueswomen and their raunchy constructions of power on the stage can be seen in the attitude and performance of the bawdy Jewish broads. The broads however, being far less marginalized and working in a later period and a different place, were able eventually, to take a certain amount of power and control into their own lives. This was not the case with the blueswomen, whose power was vested only in performance. Both permutations of bawdy, although dormant for decades at a time, have spawned well-nourished inheritors, performers still transgressing, always in a power struggle with and about their bodies.

### **Bionote**

Dr. Debra Aarons is a linguist in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales. She received her PhD in 1994 from Boston University in Massachusetts, USA. She is a specialist in the linguistics of signed languages, and has published widely in these areas. These days she teaches Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, specializing in syntax, psycholinguistics and pragmatics. She has a particular interest in the intersection of humour, linguistics, and cognitive science. She is a member of a tiny minority of humour scholars and linguists who are interested in cryptic crossword puzzles. Her recent book, *Jokes and the Linguistic Mind*, 2012, is published by Routledge. Her most recent article (with Marc Mierowsky), ‘Obscenity, dirtiness and licence in Jewish comedy’ appeared in *Comedy Studies*, 5:2 (2014).

**Austin, Karen**  
Flinders University

### **Presentation**

The fresh face of Indigenous humour

### **Abstract**

“We're the freshest kids on the block, but we've been telling our yarns for 60,000 years”  
Indigenous Stand-up Comedian, Sean Choolburra (in Miller, 2012).

This is a presentation about the contemporary face of Aboriginal humour in stand-up comedy. Aboriginal playwright Jack Davis (1917 – 2000) has said that Aboriginal people have always been public performers: You see, we've always been acting. Aboriginal people are the greatest actors in the world ... we've acted up before magistrates, we've acted up before the police, we've acted up before social workers... (Shoemaker, 1982: 114). Given such comments, stand-up comedy seems to be a logical platform for Indigenous artists who have traditionally delighted in 'acting-up', telling funny yarns and jokes (Kennedy, 2009: 12–14). Particularly since the creation of the National Deadly Funny Comedy Awards in 2007 by Wamba Wamba entertainer, Jason Timaru, with support from the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Australia has fostered a growing number of Aboriginal stand-up comedians (NITV, 2011). Previous winners and participants in these awards include Sean Choolburra, Kevin Kropinyeri and Mia Stanford who currently receive some mainstream public recognition at comedy festivals and in the media (Parr, 2012). My presentation will investigate the careers and humour styles of these, and other, Aboriginal stand-up comedians. In so doing, I pose some compelling questions. What is, or perhaps what should be, the role of the Aboriginal stand-up comic? Are these modern day court-jesters on stage solely for entertainment? Should they challenge racial stereotypes and prejudices? Are they mostly vehicles for cathartic outlet for other Aboriginal people? Are they primarily role-models for upcoming generations of young Aboriginal performers? Or should they express the social proclivities of their audience, exploring and articulating social taboos such as sex, political injustice or hypocrisy? Does the need for instant positive audience response and a steady flow of laughter pressure Aboriginal performers into watering-down unpalatable issues that might offend mainstream listeners? This paper explores what kind of comedy is being produced by Aboriginal Australian stand-ups and what effect their work is having on the broader Australian community.

### **Bionote**

Karen is a PhD candidate in the Department of Humanities and the Creative Arts at Flinders University in South Australia. She is investigating the ways that Indigenous Australians use humour in performance as a tool of negotiation in mainstream Australian society.

**Bain, Cale**

University of Technology, Sydney

**Presentation**

News should be funny: How comedy news audiences become better participants in a democracy

**Abstract**

This study aims to gauge if audiences of satirical news shows translate their experience with comedy into thoughtful discussion. Comedy is often overlooked as an integral contributor to a vibrant public sphere and an effective democracy (Szokolczai, 2012), yet it can constructively add context and nuance to news and current events in ways that appeal to some. Acting as a fifth estate (Reilly, 2010) satirists have opportunities in discussing news content and production, challenging authority and tapping into issues with an emotional stance that traditional news makers do not (Harrington, 2012). As audiences fragment (Baym, 2010) and lose interest in the “Kerry O’Brien” style of journalism (Dietz, 2010), emergent styles of capturing current events such as satire, fake news and/or mock news are born. Certain audiences even come to trust satirical newsmakers and programs more than traditional newsmakers and programs. Moreover, watchers of satirical news shows are shown to have a better understanding of current events than those who gather their news from traditional sources alone (PEW, 2008). Live audiences of television and stage comedy news shows were surveyed electronically to gauge if, through watching the show, they had learned about new issues; whether they might’ve learned new details about an issue they were previously familiar with; and whether they would use what information they had gathered from the show in their daily conversation. Initial and continued findings show that audiences of comedy news shows learn more about issues, and in some cases learn about issues for the first time, by watching these programs. More significantly, these audiences said they would use their newfound knowledge when engaging in public discourse about current affairs. Overall, the study concludes with the findings that comedy news adds to a vibrant public sphere and encourages a healthy and active democracy.

**Bionote**

Cale Bain is a journalist and PhD candidate at the University of Technology, Sydney. He has worked in magazines, newspapers and radio for commercial and public broadcast in both Canada and Australia before achieving his Master of Arts in Journalism at UTS, where he was awarded the post-graduate journalist of the year in 2008. He has worked on a project for the Australian Research Council Development Project - Changing the Media Diet, investigating the representation of obesity and overweight in news and reality TV in Australia. Cale is also an active performer, director and teacher of improvised comedy theatre and is the Artistic Director of Full Body Contact No Love Tennis, a long form improvisational theatre troupe in Sydney. He has performed in comedy festivals throughout Australia and North America and continues to devise new improv. shows, merging his comedy with his journalism and research.

**Bertels-Garnsey, April**  
The University of Sydney

### **Presentation**

*Looking at the one-eyed garlic seller: Riddle 86 in Anglo-Saxon England and beyond*

### **Abstract**

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

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

The Old English adaptation of this Latin riddle poses a number of questions about the nature of Anglo-Saxon humour. Equally as intriguing are critical attempts to evaluate the riddle’s function. This paper will explore issues this riddle raises regarding the translation of humour across languages, societies and time. To this end, I shall examine the humorous potential of Riddle 86 from its translation into Old English through Dietrich’s initial ideas on the riddle’s solution in the nineteenth century, his subsequent identification of its connection with Symphosius’s enigma and more recent scholarly works that find mockery in the poem and emphasise its self-reflexivity.

### **Bionote**

April Bertels-Garnsey is a PhD candidate in the Department of English at the University of Sydney. Her thesis focusses on Characterisation in Old English Verse Hagiography.

**Brinker, Jay K**

Swinburne University of Technology

**Presentation**

Pragmatic issues in examining the perception of aggressive humour (with C Williamson & K Buckley, Jay K Brinker to present)

**Abstract**

The use of humour is a fundamental component of social interaction, facilitating human connectedness and building emotional, social and psychological competence. Humour is used to form healthy relationships with others, increasing resilience, supporting wellbeing, and improving mood. However, not all forms of humour are adaptive and some forms can actually damage interpersonal relationships, in particular aggressive humour. Aggressive humour includes ridiculing or manipulating others, in the form of sarcasm, teasing, mockery or vilification. Knowing what it is about a person that compels them to use a damaging humour style can help us to understand why it is worth the interpersonal risk, and may highlight potential purposeful outcomes. Purposeful outcomes achieve a goal that may be adaptive in the situation, but could still be viewed as maladaptive from a wider perspective (e.g. establishing one's place above another in a hierarchy, defining in-group and out-group boundaries). To understand how aggressive humour may be purposefully used in interpersonal interactions, it is important to understand how it is perceived by others. To date, humour styles have been examined intra-personally, but we know very little about how observer characteristics relate to their perception of different forms of humour. This research becomes even more difficult when we attempt to assess a person's perception of aggressive humour. It is often socially unacceptable to find offensive humour funny and this may influence participant responses to this style of humour – artificially minimising their rating of how funny it was or inflating their rating of how aggressive it is. It may also be personally unacceptable to find aggressive humour funny. Cognitive dissonance occurs when our behaviours conflict with our beliefs. To resolve this dissonance, we must change our behaviour or change our belief. When faced with aggressive humour, the viewer may minimise how amusing they found the clip, or minimise the degree of aggressiveness to reduce the dissonance. The current research project examined observer ratings of video clips of comedians demonstrating aggressive humour. After completing baseline measures of individual differences, participants rated the clips on how funny they thought the clip was and how aggressive they found the comedian. They were also asked to rate their mood after watching each clip. Results are discussed within the limitations of social desirability and cognitive dissonance. Possible research designs and methodologies to address these limitations are offered.

**Bionote**

Jay Brinker is a lecturer in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Swinburne University of Technology.

**Brown, Robyn**

Swinburne University of Technology

**Presentation**

Can observers distinguish between self-defeating and self-deprecating humour? (with Jay K. Brinker)

**Abstract**

Humour is a multidimensional construct and can be beneficial or detrimental to an individual's psychological health, mood and interpersonal management. While much research has been dedicated to the benefits of humour, research has also identified maladaptive humour styles namely aggressive and self-defeating humour. Aggressive humour is directed outward, while self-defeating humour is self-directed, making fun of one's self or allowing others to make jokes at one's expense. Until recently, self-directed humour was always thought of as unhealthy, but research has begun to examine how joking about one's self may be used adaptively. Self-deprecating humour uses irony (i.e., target does not believe their humorous remarks about themselves) and as such it is not as damaging as self-defeating because these jokes are generally light hearted and primarily used to foster relationships. These intrapersonal differences that distinguish these two similar styles are likely to evoke different reactions from observers. Understanding if and how observers are able to distinguish between these humour styles will help provide insight into the role of self-directed humour in social interactions. It was hypothesized that observers would perceive the comedians demonstrating self-deprecating humour as having higher self-esteem than those using self-defeating humour. Participants were shown video clips of well known stand-up comedians illustrating both self-deprecating and self-defeating humour styles and were asked to indicate their perception of the comedian's self-esteem. The results revealed that participants are able to distinguish between the two humour styles, with high agreement among observers. A one sample t-test revealed a significant ( $p < .001$ ) difference in perceived self-esteem scores, with the comedians using self-deprecating humour rated as having higher self-esteem than those making self-defeating jokes. The results are discussed in light of the pragmatic issues in assessing humour perception.

**Bionote**

Robyn Brown is a current Psychology PhD Candidate, Swinburne University of Technology, examining the Perception of Humour.

**Carbajal, Beatriz**

Universidad de Salamanca

### **Presentation**

A cat has nine lives: Humour through the transmorphic in cartoons

### **Abstract**

While conventional textual narratives can access a wide range of linguistic mechanisms to enter the humoristic mode, cartoons access graphic techniques to allow for the concretion of abstract ideas as well as providing visual stimulation through images. Cartoons, being graphic jokes, mainly rely on dislocation, which is often used in caricature, but also on other techniques that create incongruity. This paper explores the correlations between transfiguration and humour in cartoons through a contrast between different stages of graphic humour and contemporary cartoons. An overview of the evolution of transmorphic techniques serves to identify influences and explains emerging uses towards the construction of the pragmatics of cartoons.

Although cartoons, as we know them today, first appeared in the early nineteenth century, incipient pictorial humoristic representations exist from the pre-Christian era. From the antecedents of cartoons, we know that anamorphism, in the representation of non-human and human entities, has recurred in comical images throughout history. It is expected that a journey through some illustrative samples of these transfigurative representations will shed light on the evolution of transmutation in cartoons as a comparative means both to contextualise contemporary cartoons and to better understand the pragmatics of graphic humour.

This presentation focuses on the imagery published in *En dosis diarias*, an award-winning blog by Chilean cartoonist Alberto Montt. His consistent employment of anthropomorphism justifies the interest in his work. This paper aims to define the scope and typology of transfiguration in visual narrative, to explore its humoristic elements and functions, as well as to contrast its canonical uses against innovative ones. Specifically, it will discuss how, despite being diachronically remote, transfigurative representations remain consistent in their basic function: the generation of an incongruity.

### **Bionote**

Beatriz Carbajal is a PhD candidate at Universidad de Salamanca.

**Ewans, Michael**

The University of Newcastle

**Presentation**

Politics and pragmatics in imperial Vienna: how Da Ponte and Mozart preserved the revolutionary message of Beaumarchais' play *Figaro's Wedding* (aka *The Marriage of Figaro*)

**Abstract**

Caron de Beaumarchais' play *Figaro's Wedding* is a witty and often farcical comedy. It also contains a revolutionary message, which led to King Louis XVI initially refusing to allow it to be performed; when he relented in 1784, the success of the play was overwhelming. *Figaro's Wedding* attacks the aristocracy, both implicitly in its satire of the Count, and explicitly in an inflammatory speech in Act V where Figaro denounces his master's lechery, and questions why an accident of birth should allow a relatively unintelligent man to hold sway over his far more intelligent servant.

**Bionote**

Michael Ewans is a Conjoint Professor, within the School of Humanities and Social Science at The University of Newcastle.

**Findlay, Bruce**

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne

**Presentation**

Twenty years of humour research

**Abstract**

Having just retired, I've been reflecting on what my students and I have produced in the way of research into humour over the last 20 years. This presentation will summarise what has been learnt over the course of more than 20 research projects. The projects consider the relationship of self-reported sense of humour with personality, psychological well-being, relationship satisfaction, emotional intelligence, and aspects of work, such as team relations, burnout, and workplace culture. I will then discuss what the lessons learnt mean for possible future research.

**Bionote**

Bruce Findlay is an Adjunct Teaching Fellow, within the Department of Psychology at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne.

**Gardner, Scott**  
Okayama University, Japan

### **Presentation**

“Don’t even ask”: Humour and pragmatics in junior high school English textbooks in Japan

### **Abstract**

This study looks at examples of humour in Japanese government-approved junior high school English textbooks, and assesses how these humour portrayals can assist in teaching linguistic pragmatics to learners of English.

In Japan, where English is a required subject starting from junior high school, government-approved textbooks typically take a grammar-focused approach to English language teaching: “simple” grammar structures are introduced before more complicated ones. Instruction in pragmatics—how language is employed differently from context to context in ways not readily apparent from “surface” structures and meanings—is rarely a central part of English language instruction, apart from the most common conversational phrases (e.g., polite greetings and requests such as “good morning,” “would you...?” etc.). However, in recent years language learning researchers have described a greater need to address pragmatic competence as a vital part of second language acquisition (Murray, 2010; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004). A key component of pragmatic competence is recognising pragmatic uses of humour in interaction.

While humour exists in virtually every culture in the world, its use is still often culture-dependent, and verbal humour is closely connected with pragmatic norms of language and culture. As an example, Japanese students who go abroad for English language study often struggle with the amount of humorous kidding or teasing that occurs in everyday language among English speakers. They are not accustomed to where, when, and how much humour is considered appropriate or “polite” in conversation. Any serious instruction in English pragmatics must include an appreciation of its everyday conversational humour.

Textbooks alone can’t fill this need, but some can help more than others. Some English textbooks in Japan occasionally inject humour into lesson units, ranging from funny pictures to scripted dialogues involving humorous exchanges and even straightforward jokes. As the present research hopes to show, these textbook instances, rare as they are, can serve an important supporting function in priming students for the role humour plays in conversation among English speakers, and how it might be similar to or different from conversational humour in Japan. This research is part of a larger project assessing how to improve instruction in Japan of English pragmatics and politeness forms, including coaching teachers and creating textbooks and guidebooks oriented toward pragmatics.

By analysing these instances of humour in Japanese junior high school English textbooks for their instructive value in demonstrating humour as a function of English interaction, pragmatics, and politeness, it is hoped that this study will prompt more conversation on the role of pragmatics instruction, and especially verbal humour appreciation, in English as a second or foreign language instruction.

### **Bionote**

Scott Gardner has been teaching English and Communication at Okayama University in Japan since 1998. His main research interests are utilising classroom humour, dialogism in education, and improving student writing.

**Goddard, Cliff**  
Griffith University

### **Keynote Presentation**

“Sarcastic”, “deadpan”, “irreverent”: A semantic guide to Australian ways of laughing

### **Abstract**

What, if anything, is distinctive about Australian forms of humour, both in everyday interaction and in the public space? And why? To tackle these questions we first have to do some basic semantic spadework, starting with what we mean by English words like 'funny', 'amusing', and 'humour' itself. As Salvatore Attardo once remarked, humour studies are "plagued by definitional problems", and to this we can add the problem of Anglocentrism – for none of these key words in humour studies have exact equivalents in most languages of the world. I try to show that we can do something about these problems if we use clear and systematic methods for getting at linguistic meaning (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014). With this step out of the way, we can turn to several key descriptors for "Australian" humour, such "sarcastic", "deadpan", and "irreverent". Putting these words under the semantic microscope helps bring into sharper focus some of the favourite Australian forms of humour and also the values and cultural attitudes that lie behind them. At the same time it helps us draw connections (in the spirit of Bakhtin) between small-scale "interpersonal humour" and broader genres and styles of "public humour".

### **Bionote**

Cliff Goddard's research falls at the intersection of language, meaning, and culture. In recent years he has published widely in the areas of ethnopragmatics, cross-linguistic semantics, and the semantics and pragmatics of Anglo English, including Australian English. He works primarily in the natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) framework. His books include *Ethnopragsmatics: Understanding discourse in cultural context* (ed., Mouton de Gruyter 2006), *Semantic Analysis* (OUP 2nd edition 2011), and, jointly with Anna Wierzbicka, *Words and Meanings* (OUP 2014). He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities.

**Grant, Rod**

The University of Sydney

**Presentation**

Kenneth Slessor and Bertha Blither

**Abstract**

Very little of the material Kenneth Slessor contributed to *Smith's Weekly* has received scholarly attention despite the divisions and contradictions it reveals in his approach to writing. One could read Geoffrey Dutton's biography, or more recent criticism by Philip Mead, and remain ignorant that Slessor was chiefly famous as a humourist during the 1920s and 30s. This paper focuses on Slessor's part in the development of a comic character featured in *Smith's Weekly* from 1929 to 1938. Originally conceived as a lampoon of Dorothy Dix, Bertha Blither gradually assumed more diversified responsibilities at the paper as her outrageous behaviour won popularity. By the early 1930s the hard drinking Bertha was an 'expert on everything' and her career constituted a grotesque commentary on advances made by women in the public sphere. Bertha allowed Slessor to inhabit the persona of a crass and domineering woman whose views and values were diametrically opposed to his own, a ploy foreshadowing later excursions into cross-dressing by Barry Humphries. The performative dimension of Slessor's writing – a conscious feature of several poems in *Cuckooz Contrey* (1932) – has been sidelined in a critical discussion which has largely seen his journalism as an irrelevance or an embarrassment. In addition to investigating Slessor's role playing, the paper will demonstrate the degree to which his journalism was shaped by corporate imperatives. Slessor worked in collaboration with cartoonist Joe Jonsson as well as other writers to create a character whose verbal and visual idiosyncrasies illuminate intriguing aspects of gender politics at a time when Flappers were a perceived threat to male hegemony.

**Bionote**

Rod Grant is a PhD Candidate within the Department of English at The University of Sydney.

**Higgle, Rebecca**  
Curtin University

### **Presentation**

The king playing the fool: Play and interplay between Australian politicians and satirists

### **Abstract**

Recent scholarship has recognised that political satirists are important players in contemporary political discourse. Increasingly, world leaders engage satirists alongside journalists and public intellectuals when crafting their public image in mass media. Furthermore, satirists are called upon to participate in serious political discussion on traditional news programs.

Research on this phenomenon has been largely restricted to the work of US satirists Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. This paper examines the under-researched Australian context, arguing that the interplay between satirist and politician has contributed to a complex slippage between play and earnestness in contemporary Australian political media.

It provides many examples, but focuses on the Australian satire team The Chaser and their work over the last decade. The paper argues that Australian politicians have increasingly sought to engage with satirists like The Chaser in a playful manner, even willingly satirising themselves, while satirists have been granted more of a licence to speak both humorously and seriously on political issues.

### **Bionote**

Rebecca Higgle is a Sessional Academic in the Department of Communication and Cultural Studies at Curtin University, Western Australia.

Her passion lies in the study of texts that envisage and engage with politics in unconventional and often mischievous ways. She is concerned with how politicians engage with such texts, how this influences the way they campaign, and the way the public understand or evaluate politics. Her PhD research explored the interplay between satire and contemporary politics, particularly in how televisual and online satirical texts contribute to the evolving nature of political discourse.

She teaches cultural studies, media studies and professional writing at Curtin. She is also a published writer and poet.

**Holm, Nicholas**

Massey University, New Zealand

### **Presentation**

“Against the assault of laughter”: Critique and the politics of humour

### **Abstract**

The proposed paper draws its title from a Mark Twain quotation – “Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand” – that is probably quite familiar to many who study the relation of humour and politics.

Encapsulating a specific attitude towards humour, and in particular the political possibilities of humour, this line is frequently evoked in the context of arguments regarding the ability of humour to constitute a form of transgressive or even radical politics that questions, challenges and critiques existing structures of power. What is often over-looked in these citations, though, is that in its original context, Twain’s unfinished novel *The Mysterious Stranger*, the line is not only spoken by a highly morally ambiguous character, the nephew of Satan (himself also confusingly named Satan), but that shortly after the same character declares that humanity has only a “mongrel perception of humor (sic), nothing more.” Humanity, Satan declares, “lack[s] sense and the courage” to use humour as a “really effective weapon.” Eager to celebrate the political work of humour, Twain’s Satan’s caveats are often overlooked by theorists and commentators who instead take up Twain’s quotation almost as a form of argument by proverb that demonstrates the radical, critical potential of humour. In contrast to that tendency, in my proposed paper I seek to focus on these disruptive details as a lens through which to re-examine the political potential often ascribed to humour and, in particular, the theoretical construction of humour as a form of critique.

To this end, my proposed paper will be composed of three sections. In the first section, I will work through the example of Twain’s Satan, that character’s celebration of laughter and the ongoing reproduction of the aforementioned quotation as an illustration of how the politics of humour have been and continued to be conceived in terms of a fairly simplistic form of critique. In the second section, I expand my scope to address how the equation of humour with critique manifests more broadly and what this might mean in the larger cultural-political context of liberal capitalism. Given the celebration of difference and sanctioned forms of dissent in the (neo-) liberal context, I will suggest that understanding humour as a form of critique might not be as ‘radical’ a gesture as is often conceived. Finally, the third section of the paper will consider the possible limitations that arise from conceiving of humour as a form of critique. Arguing that the politics of humour need not and indeed should not be reduced simply to a matter of humour as critique, I will consider what it means to stand “against the assault of laughter,” in other words, to oppose oneself to a conception of humour as critique, and thereby consider how the politics of humour might be theorised in ways that go beyond critique.

### **Bionote**

Nicholas Holm is a Lecturer in Media Studies at Massey University, New Zealand where he teaches courses in popular culture and advertising. His research addresses the political role of aesthetics, in particular the aesthetics of popular humour. He has published on the cultural politics of humour, comic books, critical theory and squirrels, and is currently working on a manuscript addressing the political aesthetics of contemporary media humour and its relation to liberal politics.

**Hurley, Angelina**  
Victoria University

### **Presentation**

Whichway blak way?

### **Abstract**

'Blak Comedy and Indigenous Cultural Perspectives on Humour', is the dissertation topic of my doctorate of Creative Arts. My project also includes the development of scripts for an Indigenous comedy TV series called 'Reconciliation Rescue'. Through my work I explore humour specifically via an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural experience and perspective. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander humour is commonly expressed through various media including theatre, dance and film. However, it has remained mostly underground and prevalent only within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community itself. Its representation on mainstream television has been sparse with an approximate 10-year gap between viewings.

Awareness is growing. In this paper I will showcase some examples of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander humour and comedy to date including 'Basically Black', 'Babakiueria', the 'Mary G Show', 'Djuki Mala' (aka 'The Chooky Dancers') and their success into the mainstream.

The disadvantaged and marginalised hold humour close for healing, as a means of expression, and a diversion from hard times. Considering the impact and history of colonisation and racism, conflict and oppression, the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people prevails through humour. So much of Australian Indigenous life, stories and culture have, and continue to be, misunderstood, miscommunicated, misinterpreted, appropriated and even stolen. My research represents the importance for an Australian Indigenous voice and perspective being heard through humour the only way we know how... a Blak way.

### **Bionote**

Angelina Yooleelar ('Butterfly') Hurley is an Aboriginal woman from Brisbane. Angelina is the daughter of renowned visual artist Ron Hurley. Her heritage is of Gooreng Gooreng, Jagara, Mununjali, Birri Gubbi and Kamilaroi. She has worked in the area of Indigenous Arts and Community Cultural Development for over 20 years across art forms including visual, event management, performance and emerging arts.

Angelina holds a Bachelor Education (UTS) and a Masters in Arts Administration (COFA, UNSW). She is an emerging writer who in 2011 was awarded the Australian-American Fulbright Commission's Indigenous Scholarship, which took her to Tisch School of Art at New York University. This comedy writer's dream kicked off the production of short film in 2009, 'Aunty Maggie and the Womba Wakgun'. It opened the Brisbane International Film Festival (BIFF), the Message Sticks Film Festival at the Sydney Opera House, acquired by Qantas for in-flight screenings nationally and internationally and won Best Australian Film at the Heart of Gold International Film Festival. Also see Angelina's blog, Wombaworld;  
<http://wombaworld09.blogspot.com.au/p/favourite-links.html>

Angelina is currently completing a Doctorate of Creative Arts at the University of Technology, Sydney by project and dissertation. Her project is the creation of scripts for an Indigenous comedy tv series and her supporting dissertation is entitled 'Blak Comedy and Indigenous Cultural Perspectives on Humour'.

**Kelly, Pamela**  
Flinders University

### **Presentation**

Humour in the serious business of political satire: Delarivier Manley and her *New Atalantis*

### **Abstract**

Humour was not Delarivier Manley's primary intent when she wrote her political satire, *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality, of Both Sexes from the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediteranean [sic]* (published 1709). She was on a serious mission to expose the moral turpitude of men and women of 'quality,' who claimed their right to the high ground of birth and wealth but misused their privilege of power. Its mode of satire and mocking prose style depicting salacious gossip, magnified in form and imbued with sardonic wit, twins ridicule and humour with comic results. It illustrates Ashley Marshall's point in *The Practice of Satire in England, 1658-1770* – although not applied to Manley specifically – that satire as critique is not only "attack or ridicule plus humour or wit", but requires "a more open set of formulae, including but not limited to critique plus distortion, critique plus humorous ridicule or critique plus gratuitousness in motive." Whether her satirical critique was deserved or gratuitous, the latter being the favoured view of early historians, Manley's *New Atalantis* created a furore in the reading public and consternation in and enmity from those it attacked: largely Whigs who held positions of power in the Stuart royal courts and ministry, from the end of Charles II's reign through to Queen Anne's. Manley's *New Atalantis* was an instant success that soon became and still remains her most celebrated work. Alexander Pope immortalised it with a line in his mock-epic poem, *The Rape of the Lock*, 'As long as *Atalantis* shall be read'; intended as a metaphor for lasting certainty, but in the process signifying, along with his bemused chagrin, its unrelenting popularity. It was discussed and shared with excited interest in London's homes, streets, and coffee houses and beyond, went through numerous printings including translations into French, some after her death and 'its immediate topicality had faded' (Carnell, *Political Biography*, 1). As Manley biographer Rachel Carnell has argued, the *New Atalantis*'s emergence in 1709 "probably helped bring down the Whig government in 1710 and influenced the development of the novel in Britain." In this paper I will draw out Manley's sharp wit amid playful prose and feigned scandalous romance that she styled to mask the serious business of political satire in her mission to undermine the Whigs then exerting power in Queen Anne's ministry.

### **Bionote**

Pamela Kelly is an English (Literature) PhD candidate at Flinders University of South Australia. Her research project explores the satirical works of early eighteenth-century English playwright, pamphleteer and novelist, Delarivier Manley, whose satirical secret histories in particular had a profound impact on her society politically and arguably influenced the development of the novel. A literary history, this study follows on from the research project undertaken for her honours thesis that focussed on the work of eighteenth-century poet and contemporary of Manley: Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea.

**Lazlo, Anna**

Hong Kong Polytechnic University

### **Presentation**

What grammar can tell us about sarcasm: A corpus-based analysis of American soap operas

### **Abstract**

Despite there being no universal definition of sarcasm, there are a number of characteristics that are invariably associated with it. Sarcasm is characterised by its sting; it can be hurtful, insulting, hostile, as well as mocking (Haiman, 1998; Riloff, Qadir, Surve, De Silva, Gilbert, & Huang, 2013), but most importantly it is confined to the verbal realm which is made evident by the fact that it is most often discussed under the heading of verbal irony (see Gibbs, Jr., 1986; Kreuz & Glucksberg, 1989; Capelli, Nakagawa, & Madden, 1990). Most of the time, we recognise sarcasm when we hear it, especially if we are the targets of a sarcastic remark; intonation and pitch easily indicate its presence, not to mention the accompanying facial gestures. What this study is concerned with is the case when sarcasm, even though originally verbal, manifests itself in writing, i.e. in a corpus. To be able to examine sarcasm in a corpus that is devoid of all the “dead giveaways,” something else is necessary, possibly something beyond prosodic or extra-linguistic features. The present study, which is part of a postgraduate dissertation, and which relies on the Corpus of American Soap Operas (Davis, 2008), reveals how certain collocations (e.g., ‘...just hate...’) found in the corpus act as conventionalized sarcastic expressions; but only in certain grammatical constructions (e.g.: ... you just hate it, don’t you...) Discourse analytical methods making use of notions, such as collocation and colligation, are utilised to examine these examples. The study, thus, incorporates corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, and humour studies with a specific focus on sarcasm research.

### **Bionote**

Anna Laszlo, a native speaker of Hungarian, is currently a final year PhD student in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The desire to pursue PhD studies was preceded by 5 years of doing English and American Studies in the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary where she obtained her MA in 2011. The initial interest in doing research in literary humour quickly turned into an interest in linguistic humour, while the initial intention of applying cognitive linguistics changed into an intention of doing corpus linguistics in the meantime, and due to the narrowing down of the research topic, the broad area of humour has been substituted with irony and sarcasm. Thus, the current research focus is on the textual features of irony and sarcasm in a soap opera corpus. Other research interests include discourse analysis, sentiment analysis, and literary humour.

**Lever (Lee), Ann**

National University of Singapore

**Presentation**

“No, no, no, no, no, the minister of misinformation approves”: The satirical revues of Instant Café Theatre company in Malaysia

**Abstract**

This paper documents, for the first time, the satirical revues written, staged and performed by the Instant Café Theatre company (ICT) in Malaysia from 1987 to 2009. The paper examines characters created by ICT, including the Minister of Misinformation who has been in every cabinet since the country's independence from British colonial rule in 1957. In his own words, “I have been in the cabinet since it was a tree falling in the forest in Sabah”. His portfolios have included Minister of Breaking Records; Minister of Space and Tourism; Minister of Panic; and Minister of Endless Improbabilities. From the basis of Amy Carrell's Audience-Based Theory of Verbal Humour, the paper examines the nature of audience involvement and support, the public discourse about ICT, as well as the company's actions with regard to state authorities – all ‘players’ within the social and political context, ‘situation’ or ‘stage’ at the time.

**Bionote**

Ann Lever (Lee) is a PhD Student in Southeast Asian Studies, within the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, National University of Singapore.

**Lloyd, Mike**

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

### **Presentation**

Putting words in their mouths: Granularity and humour targets in a photo caption competition

### **Abstract**

Photo caption competitions have existed for about 100 years and are well embedded in popular culture and its humorous productions. This paper begins with a summary of a published analysis (Lloyd, 2014) of the first 20 episodes of a new caption competition running in a very popular New Zealand magazine. The finding was that very visible hand gestures and embodied expressions are a key feature of the photos that form the first part of the competition. These provide a readily understandable and economic platform for directing competitors in their caption-construction. This is still the case after over a year of episodes, but this paper extends this initial finding to report on some other interesting features of the competition using a fuller data corpus of 100 episodes. Firstly, based on readily available categorisations of the people shown in the photos, we see an interesting breakdown in the types of people featured in the photos: politicians are most frequently shown, but the British Royal Family are also high up in the appearance stakes. Secondly, there is something of an avoidance of sexual themes in the humour, thus making the sexual allusions that do appear very interesting. Thirdly, the whole corpus can be used to reflect on the issue of 'humour targets'. In this, the concept of 'granularity' – the degree of resolution around a target - becomes useful as we see from the corpus that the nature of the photos themselves cannot be disconnected from the degree of mockery in the attendant humorous captions. Contrary to sociology's general preference for the 'big picture', the sociological conclusion here is that the 'small picture' is not so small after all.

### **Bionote**

Mike Lloyd is a sociologist at Victoria University of Wellington. His interests include the dynamics of humour in interaction, including visual dimensions.

**Mack, Kathy**  
Flinders University

### **Presentation**

Judicial humour as a practical resource in the courtroom (with Sharyn Roach Anleu)

### **Abstract**

Conventional understandings of the judicial role emphasise impersonality and dispassion as central to neutrality and legal authority. However, the courtroom is not only a legal setting; it is an organisational context where face-to-face interactions must be managed as part of everyday work. Research examining the role of humour among professionals where affective neutrality, disinterestedness and social distance from patients or clients is the professional norm, identifies humour as a form of social regulation. The limited research on humour in the courtroom treats humour at the individual level – the focus is on the individual judicial officer's conduct or behaviour. However, the organisational context is important. Several different professions come together in the courtroom, each highly dependent on the other, including solicitors, barristers and, in the lower courts, police prosecutors. While judicial officers have considerable formal authority within the courtroom, they have little supervisory authority over other professional participants. Findings from a large scale court observation study conducted in Australian magistrates courts demonstrates the magistrate's use of humour as a practical resource to reinforce the magistrate's control over courtroom proceedings and participants. It is not used as a negative sanction but a way to positively direct participants as to what the magistrate expects to happen. First, humour can manage the present, for example to manage waiting time, to signal the close of the session, or to inject some non-legal, personal interruption into the routine proceedings. Second, humour can be used to manage future planning, setting dates, and scheduling later appearances. Judicial humour used in this temporal management assists the organisational flow of events, demarcates the different roles of the participants in the courtroom workgroup while also reinforcing commonality or collegiality among the courtroom workgroup. Nonetheless, the practical use of humour in this context remains bounded by the formal judicial role and conventional understandings of judicial authority.

### **Bionote**

Professor Kathy Mack, BA *magna cum laude* Rice University, JD Law School Stanford University, LLM Law School University of Adelaide is Emerita Professor of Law, Flinders Law School. She is the author of a monograph, book chapters and articles on ADR, and articles on legal education and evidence. With Professor Sharyn Roach Anleu, she has conducted empirical research involving plea negotiations. Since 2000, they have been engaged in a major socio-legal study of the Australian judiciary.

<http://www.flinders.edu.au/law/judicialresearch/>

**Marks, Peter**

The University of Sydney

**Keynote Presentation**

'But some are more equal than others: Interpretations, reinterpretations and misinterpretations of Orwell's *Animal Farm*'.

**Abstract**

2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the publication of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Quickly recognised as a classic satire, and a work of great clarity and almost childlike simplicity, *Animal Farm* contributed greatly to Orwell's reputation during his life and after his death. But the narrative of the book's reception and impact is far more complex than is usually recognised. This paper deals not only with the subtleties and ambiguities of various interpretations, but with the ways in which it was misinterpreted even before it appeared, and has been reinterpreted since its publication. Orwell's publisher Victor Gollancz and others such as T.S. Eliot rejected it as politically or aesthetically suspect, but since publication it has been refashioned as, among other things, a radio play (in the first instance scripted by Orwell), a feature length animation to satisfy American Cold War cultural politics, a musical play directed by Peter Hall, a newspaper cartoon to criticise Robert Mugabe, and an animatronic film. The paper explores *Animal Farm's* creation, initial reception and 'afterlife', treating it as a compelling and still-pertinent case study of the complicated dynamics between literature, politics and ethics.

**Bionote**

Associate Professor Peter Marks teaches in the English Department at the University of Sydney. He is interested in connections between literature, cinema and politics, and has published articles and book chapters on George Orwell, surveillance, literary periodicals and utopias. He is the author of the monographs *British Filmmakers: Terry Gilliam* (2009), *George Orwell the Essayist: Literature, Politics and the Periodical Culture* (2011) and *Imagining Surveillance: Utopian and Dystopian Literature and Film* (2015).

**Marwood, Damien**

The University of Adelaide

### **Presentation**

The tailor retailored, the recognitions re-recognised: Reconsidering the use of satire and Romantic and Socratic irony in Thomas Carlyle and William Gaddis

### **Abstract**

Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and William Gaddis' *The Recognitions* are both commonly regarded as "liminal" works: where the former is generally considered to mark the boundary between the Romantic and the Victorian, the latter is often held to be a proto-postmodern novel. This paper aims to make a mockery of certain aspects of these classifications by demonstrating a number of similarities in form and intention of the works in question, focussing particularly on both authors' engagement with, and attempt to surpass, the philosophical project of Romanticism. Moreover, these similarities, and the predominantly satiric nature of both works, have resulted in two sets of diametrically opposed critical readings: those who read the works as fundamentally "moral" on the one hand, and on the other – particularly at the height of excitement surrounding the "postmodern" – those who argue for the presence of an "open-ended" approach to truth, typically drawing on some form of Romantic or Socratic Irony. While these latter critics correctly point out Carlyle's and Gaddis' desire to dismantle conventional, outmoded religious and philosophical systems, I argue that they underestimate the extent to which the power of irony is held in check in its Socratic form by the Athenian's belief in a "divine" mission to bring others to moral truth via rational discourse, and in its post-Kantian, German Romantic form by the artist's sense of a "prophetic" duty towards the larger community. Socrates' claim to be one of the few "to engage in the true political craft" (*Gorgias*) becomes in the case of the German Romantics, and Carlyle and Gaddis after them, an artistic programme: the aesthetic, the deliberate use of irony and humour, becomes the true political "craft," designed to dissolve external falsehoods posing as truth while simultaneously facilitating access to internal, and eternal (albeit progressive and perfectible), moral truth. Far from engaging in a playful (or despairing) Byronic masquerade, I argue that both *Sartor Resartus* and *The Recognitions* are self-consciously utopian texts, engaging in "a more precise recognition of the darkness," in Carlyle's words, only as a first step towards the "attainment of light" ("Characteristics").

### **Bionote**

Dr Damien Marwood completed his PhD on the works and shared philosophical interests of Jean-Luc Godard and William Gaddis at the University of Adelaide in 2014. He is currently employed in both casual teaching and the further study of the historical and contemporary relevance of German Romanticism and Romantic Irony, particularly as it relates to various formulations (literary, filmic, and theoretical) of the utopian. His most recent paper, "Sur l'eau, or "Sur l'eau"? Adorno, Maupassant, and the Nightmare of Utopia," currently under submission, examined the importance of Guy de Maupassant's two versions of "Sur l'eau," alongside the works of Beckett and Kafka, to Adorno's conception of the utopian in *Minima Moralia*.

**McLachlan, Angus**

Federation University Australia

### **Presentation**

Laughter and the preservation of face in experimental settings

### **Abstract**

Employing the notion of 'face' as used by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their seminal study of politeness, Partington (2006) sought to explain much of the laughter he found in an extensive study of Whitehouse press briefings. He noted that the various 'hitches' and 'glitches' that occurred during the briefings, as well as direct references to the 'business of briefings', often prompted laughter and that these episodes were closely associated with the maintenance of face. This general perspective was adopted in examining a quite different corpus of talk: a series of 55 experimental dyadic discussions of hypothetical life dilemmas recorded in a university laboratory. Earlier research on this corpus had focussed only on the talk during which both participants were clearly oriented towards making a decision on the dilemma. This concentration on the formal exchange of opinions satisfied psychologists' preference for systematic measurement under controlled conditions. However, it had been observed that laughter during this formal discussion phase was less frequent than during the talk that immediately preceded and followed it. Talk during these phases was largely devoted to the practical aspects of completing the experiment and included such matters as locating the relevant items to be discussed, confirming that both participants were talking about the same item, and revealing their individual decisions. During these phases of the conversation, participants negotiated the various demands of the experiment, all the while being observed and recorded. This context offered many more opportunities for loss of face than the more measured and serious exchanges of opinion in the discussion of the dilemmas. It will be argued that Partington's insights can be readily extended to understand the talk of participants in experiments and that laughter plays a critical role in the maintenance of participants' face during the more delicate phases of their recorded conversations.

### **Bionote**

Angus McLachlan obtained his BA in psychology from the University of Durham, England, in 1974, and then completed research into group polarisation at Birkbeck College, University of London, receiving his PhD in 1980, and also lecturing there for a year. A period of travel and diverse jobs ensued before settling into teaching in 1984, first at what is now Glasgow Caledonian University, and then, for over twenty years, at Federation University Australia in its various guises. His general field of interest is social psychology and he has published sporadically in the areas of nonverbal communication and humour.

## **Meany, Michael**

University of Newcastle

### **Presentation**

The cake is a lie: Ideology, humour and comedy in portal

### **Abstract**

This paper examines the use and production of comedy and humour in the computer game Portal (Valve Corporation 2007). Portal is selected as the case study, over more recent games, as it is widely considered an exemplar of the use of comedy in game design, having influenced popular culture and the practice of humour in computer games (Grönroos 2013).

“A game is a type of play activity, conducted in the context of a pretended reality, in which the participant(s) try to achieve at least one arbitrary, nontrivial goal by acting in accordance with rules” (Adams 2013, p. 3). This definition points to the goal-oriented nature of game play, which resembles the telic state as described in Reversal Theory. The “trick of creating humor” (sic) is to balance the demands of obtaining high levels of arousal while supporting the protective frame that in turn supports the paratelic state (Apter and Desselles 2012, p. 419).

The paper maps the techniques of comedy employed in the game, the moments of humour that emerge from the game play, the contribution of character to comedy and the oscillations between the telic and paratelic states. Using Apter and Martin’s Reversal Theory of Humour (Apter 1982; Martin 2007) allows for analysis of the intentional, scripted development of comedy and the context-driven, ludic emergence of humour.

This analysis reveals that Portal is a deeply satirical game; it diminishes the value of goal-oriented behaviour. The game promises the player a reward for successful completion of tasks: cake. “The cake is a lie”, now an Internet meme, insinuates the offer of reward as motivation for action is intrinsically deceptive. To win when playing Portal the player needs to “Rebel”, using Merton’s term from Strain Theory (Agnew and Passas 1997), to reject playing to win within the prescribed means as a bogus strategy that leads to an equally bogus goal. The player is situated in an incongruous position oscillating between the desire to play to win and the need to establish their own goal for the game. Ideology, particularly neoliberalism linked with self-help, personal improvement doctrines, is the target for the humour in the game.

### **Bionote**

Dr Michael Meany is a Senior Lecturer in Communication at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Michael's background includes careers as a freelance writer, a typesetter and publication designer, and a playwright. From these varied careers, Michael brings to his research an eclectic mix of skills. His research interests include humour, creativity, script writing and narrative/interactive media design. He recently graduated with a PhD from Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia. The topic of his research project was 'The Performance of Comedy by Artificial Intelligence Agents'.

**Millner, Jacqueline**

The University of Sydney

**Presentation**

'Performing oneself badly': contemporary feminist performance art and neo-burlesque (with Catriona Moore, Catriona Moore to present)

**Abstract**

We explore how contemporary feminist performance art draws on the humorous traditions of burlesque in search of critical strategies that will resonate with today's publics. We examine how this strand of contemporary art performs both failed femininity and failed feminist identity – contributing to understandings of (post-Butler) feminist and queer theory, as well as to recent theorisations of contemporary art in terms of the artist's joke and ideas of failure.

**Bionote**

Associate Professor Jacqueline Millner is Vice-Dean (Research) at the Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney.

**Milner Davis, Jessica**  
The University of Sydney

### **Presentation**

Can't take a joke? The etymology and practice of "piss-taking"

### **Abstract**

Interpersonal joking, whether verbal or practical, can be an aggressively humorous practice. Its colloquial names indicate this quite clearly. "Taking the piss" and "taking the mickey" are both common expressions for "put-down" humour being used against others, whether friends, enemies or new-comers to a group. Of course it can be done in a light-hearted way, but it can also be a deliberate attack against both "insiders" and "outsiders". The origins of both phrases lie in Cockney English (the dialect traditionally spoken in the core area of London, "within the sound of Bow Bells") and their history and connotations in English are revealing. The age-old enmity between English and Irish is a contributing factor, as are sexual links. Now this expression is used around the world to denote a kind of humour practice that is often seen as equalising or democratic. A culture like that of Australia regards it as a national right and recent legislative changes (for example in Intellectual Property law) uniquely protect this freedom. This paper asks whether having "a good sense of humour" implies one should be able to enjoy both giving and receiving this kind of joke.

### **Bionote**

Jessica Milner Davis is an Honorary Associate in the School of Letters, Art and Media at the University of Sydney and co-ordinates the Australasian Humour Studies Network <http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies>. She has been a Visiting Scholar at Bristol and Stanford Universities, All Souls College Oxford, Università di Bologna and at Clare Hall Cambridge, where she is a Life Member. She researches history and theory of comedy and cross-cultural humour and laughter. Her books include *Farce* (2003) and two co-edited studies of humour in Chinese culture, as well as *Understanding Humor in Japan* (2007), winner of the '2008 Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor' humour research book prize. Twice President of the International Society for Humor Studies (1996 and 2001), Dr Davis was a Commissioning Editor for the *Sage Encyclopedia of Humor Studies* (2014), is a member of the Editorial Board for *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* and an Affiliated Researcher with the Centre for Comedy Studies Research, Brunel University UK (CCSR).

**Moore, Catriona**

The University of Sydney

**Presentation**

'Performing oneself badly': contemporary feminist performance art and neo-burlesque (with Jacqueline Millner, Catriona Moore to present)

**Abstract**

We explore how contemporary feminist performance art draws on the humorous traditions of burlesque in search of critical strategies that will resonate with today's publics. We examine how this strand of contemporary art performs both failed femininity and failed feminist identity – contributing to understandings of (post-Butler) feminist and queer theory, as well as to recent theorisations of contemporary art in terms of the artist's joke and ideas of failure.

**Bionote**

Dr Catriona Moore is a Senior Lecturer, within the Department of Art History & Film Studies, at The University of Sydney.

**Moran, Carmen**

Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga

### **Presentation**

Theory of mind and humour: Empathy, concern or perspective taking?

### **Abstract**

The study was informed by work on 'Theory of Mind' (hereafter ToM) a term first coined by Premack & Woodruff, 1978, which refers to the ability to comprehend that others have a mind, and they too think about and interpret the world. While research outcomes are mixed, there is some support for the hypothesis that people with low ToM ability do not find cartoons requiring understanding the 'thoughts' of one of the characters as funny as people high on ToM do. We sought to give more emphasis to the role of empathy in ToM, by comparing the relative importance of both empathy and cognitive perspective-taking in the appreciation of humour in a non-clinical group. We obtained ratings of funniness and liking of cartoons across three different types of cartoons, which we labelled ToM, neutral and aggressive. One hundred and fifteen participants completed the Interpersonal Reactivity Index scale which has four subscales: empathic-concern, perspective-taking, personal distress, and fantasy. The median on each subscale was used to divide participants into two groups for the purposes of analysis of their ratings of the cartoons. Ratings were analysed using 2-way ANOVA on groups and repeated measures (cartoon types) (ANOVA refers to Analysis of Variance, used to gauge the statistical significance of variables across differing groups). Participants rated TOM cartoons higher on both liking and funniness scales, compared with ratings of the aggressive or neutral cartoons. Against our prediction, neither empathic-concern groups (high vs low) nor perspective-taking groups (high vs low) differed in their funniness or liking ratings of the cartoons. However, cartoon ratings differed across the other groups, namely the personal distress groups and fantasy groups.

In conclusion, ToM cartoons were consistently rated more favourably than aggressive or neutral cartoons by our non-clinical sample. Variables such as perspective-taking and empathy did not predict the ToM cartoon ratings. On the other hand, the variable 'fantasy' may offer insights into the appreciation of cartoons.

Method: The present study sought to give more emphasis to the role of empathy, by comparing the relative importance of empathy and cognitive perspective-taking in the appreciation of humour in a non-clinical group. The Interpersonal Reactivity Index scale has four subscales: empathic-concern, perspective-taking and personal distress and fantasy. The median on each subscale was used to divide 115 participants into two groups for the subscales which were treated as four independent variables. Information below thus refers to group outcomes on the IRI variables.

Using an on-line anonymous study we obtained ratings of funniness and liking of cartoons across three different types of cartoons. Nine cartoons varied in the degree to which they had (a) an action with consequences to at least one of the characters, (b) a victim unable to 'see' what is happening and/or (c) a perspective that allows the viewer to consider scenario funny. The combinations of these elements resulted in three types of cartoons labelled ToM, neutral and aggressive.

Results: Cartoon ratings were analysed using 2-way ANOVA on groups and repeated measures (cartoon types). There was a main effect for cartoon type: the TOM cartoons had higher liking and funniness means than the aggressive or neutral cartoons. Against our prediction, neither funniness nor liking means on ToM cartoons differed across empathic-concern groups or perspective-taking groups (both putatively related to ToM ability). Ratings differed across personal distress groups and fantasy groups but these were for aggressive and neutral cartoons.

Conclusion: ToM cartoons were thus generally rated more highly than aggressive or neutral cartoons by our non-clinical sample. Variables such as perspective-taking, indirectly used to classify our ToM cartoons, did not predict the ToM cartoons ratings. On the other hand, the variable 'fantasy' may offer insights into the appreciation of ToM cartoons and will be discussed using individual cartoons. References and statistics will be provided in the full paper.

**Bionote**

Carmen Moran is an Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Charles Sturt University. She has held a variety of academic positions at various institutions, and has also worked as hospital psychologist specialising in the treatment of anxiety disorders. Her research interests have been centered on stress and coping. Her work on humour has also had this focus. She continues to have a particular interest in cartoons.

**Mrowa-Hopkins, Colette**  
Flinders University

### **Presentation**

“It’s not funny!”: Negotiating humour in football talk shows (with Antonella Strambi)

### **Abstract**

While humour is often used for affiliative purposes, such as establishing and maintaining solidarity, it is also associated with aggression, for example in the case of sarcasm, teasing and ridicule, especially among male friends (Ergül 2014). Since humour is co-constructed through interaction, the recipient may misinterpret the original speaker’s intention, or the recipient may not share the speaker’s view on what is humorous, in which case humour fails. This may lead to misunderstanding and even affect the interactants’ relationship.

This paper adopts a discourse analysis approach to explore the interactional aspects of humour, with a focus on failed humour. Its premise is based on an interpretative framework to conversational interaction (Gumperz 1982; Eldesky 1981; Haugh 2010), which focuses not so much on the speaker’s construction of humour, but on the recipient’s interpretative processes and subsequent negotiation of meaning.

The source of data for this study is a corpus of football talk shows from Australia, France and Italy. TV football shows represent specific types of talk shows, in which disagreements and aggressive humour are very frequent, if not even an integral feature of the genre. They also tend to involve principally male participants, which limits the number of variables that may affect analysis results, and at the same time may provide more opportunities to observe the negotiation of aggressive humour across cultural groups. Our analysis methods are borrowed from Conversation Analysis, and are combined with multimodal analyses, in order to identify and describe linguistic and non-linguistic devices (e.g. laughter) employed to signal and negotiate cases of failed humour.

### **Bionote**

Dr Colette Mrowa-Hopkins is a Senior Lecturer in French and Applied Linguistics, and Head of the Department of Languages and Applied Linguistics Studies at Flinders University (Australia). Her research interests include the teaching and learning of French as a foreign language (FLE); discourse analysis and cultural identity; cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics, with a special focus on emotion communication and conflict talk. Together with her colleague Dr Strambi, she has worked for a number of years on the communication of “negative” emotion in relation to three cultural groups Anglo-Australian, French and Italian across a range of contexts (professional, fiction films and tv talk shows). Their recent publications include a chapter on ‘Verbal aggressiveness or cooperative support?’ in *Linguistic Approaches to Emotions in Context* (John Benjamins 2014), and ‘Processing anger in interactions between Italian and Anglo-Australian male friends’ (*Italica* 2012).

**Mullan, Kerry**  
RMIT University

### **Presentation**

Conversational humour from a cross-cultural comparative perspective: French and Australian English (with Christine Béal and Véronique Traverso; Kerry Mullan to present)

### **Abstract**

This study on conversational humour takes place within the framework of a larger project on social interaction in French and Australian English. Two comparable corpora of naturally occurring conversations during social visits among friends in France and Australia were analysed to investigate how speakers use humour spontaneously in the course of social visits in the two cultures. The data consist of audio recordings of twelve visits (with sixteen speakers) in the Australian corpus and fourteen visits (with eleven speakers) in the French corpus. The corpora were recorded in two urban environments (Melbourne and Lyon), each of them mostly in the same location, i.e. the host's house. Approximately five hours of conversation were recorded in each corpus.

Our earlier research shows that humour plays an important part in negotiating socially sensitive moments in interaction, such as opening rituals (Béal and Traverso 2010) or various face-threats (Béal and Mullan 2013). However, as also shown elsewhere (Dynel 2011), we found that traditional folk categories of humour such as jokes, anecdotes, wordplay or teasing are not readily suited to a comparative cross-cultural discourse-based analysis of humour. This is because humour is a complex area where many different aspects come into play simultaneously, and where the difficulty lies in separating these aspects. The aim of this paper is to revisit the analysis of conversational humour using a cross-cultural and interactional approach, and to show that there are four dimensions involved concurrently:

1. The speaker/target/recipient interplay
2. The language dimension: linguistic mechanisms and/or discursive strategies used by speakers
3. The different pragmatic functions
4. The interactional dimension

Based on this four dimensional model, the paper will demonstrate how humour is created interactionally by the participants over several turns, and a number of representative examples from the two corpora will be analysed by way of illustration. Similarities and differences in the way the French and Australian English speakers used conversational humour in our corpora will be examined. For example, Australians are typically well known for their love of banter, teasing, jocular mockery and abuse (Haugh 2014; Haugh and Bousfield 2012), and many examples of such mock impoliteness occurred in the Australian corpus. The Australians showed a marked preference for such recipient-oriented humour in our corpus, creating complicity with the other participants through a direct attack on another's face for the sake of humour. On the other hand, the French speakers in our corpus used very little recipient-oriented humour, preferring to reinforce complicity at the expense of an absent third party via third-party oriented humour.

Links to the participants' respective underlying ethos and cultural values will also be explored, in particular the importance for Australians of not taking oneself too seriously (Goddard 2009); and the need in French culture to appear sharp and witty, while at the same time making a show of one's positive feelings towards one's friends, if need be, at the expense of outsiders.

### **Bionote**

Kerry Mullan is Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of French Studies at RMIT University and a member of the Globalism Research Centre. She teaches French as a Foreign Language and a course in introductory sociolinguistics. Her main research interests are cross-cultural communication and differing interactional styles - particularly those of French and Australian English speakers. She also researches in the areas of

intercultural pragmatics, discourse analysis and language teaching. She is currently investigating humour in French and Australian English social interaction.

**Nicholls, Christine**  
Flinders University

## **Presentation**

Analysing & interpreting (political) cartoons: towards an evaluative framework

### **Abstract**

Largely dismissive of cartoons as the poor cousins of 'high' visual art, art historians, with few exceptions (including Kerr 1999) rarely venture into serious analysis of cartoons of any stripes, political or otherwise. As multimodal communicative phenomena, cartoons exist at the visual, contextual, critical and linguistic and paralinguistic interface. That cartoons are embedded in a complex visual, historical, social, cultural, political, linguistic, and even sometimes religious matrix, seems a banal truism. Equally banal is the reflection that in any given cartoon, cartoonists don't necessarily bring into play all, or even most, of those elements. Nonetheless, cartoons exist in their own distinctive and complex 'social eco-systems', and their multimodality needs to be factored into any interpretation and analysis.

For the sake of simplicity, in this presentation the focus will be almost exclusively on Australian political cartoons, with a view to working towards an evaluative framework of the cartoons and cartooning *oeuvre* of several well-known Australian cartoonists. In doing so, not only the broadly *political* structures, but also the distinctive *national* structures in which the cartoonists - and their cartoons - are situated, need to be accounted for. The relationship between the cartoonist and the labour market needs to be factored in, for example. For whom, or for what corporation, does the cartoonist work? For what specific audience/s is his/her product created? To what extent does the cartoonist have freedom within his/her job? If controls exist, what are they, precisely? Does gender or ethnicity have any part to play within these determinations?

Cartoonists routinely deploy the visual as their dominant communicative mode, while also often including written language/commentary/literary/social/political allusions. This is so regardless of whether or not written commentary is placed *within* the cartoon by the cartoonist himself/herself, or *in juxtaposition with* commentary provided by another party, e.g. alongside an opinion piece or newspaper editorial. The interactions between these two distinct perceptual systems/communicative modalities, predominantly visual and written, are dynamic and that interrelationship also needs to be discussed. Other 'contiguity effects' may also be significant. For example, dependent on their setting, black and white cartoons can create differing expectations from those rendered in colour.

Further to this, a written text may serve either to *secure* or *anchor* meaning/s attributed to visual elements of a cartoon; or alternatively, to *destabilise/render ambiguous/disturb/disrupt/subvert/dash* viewers' expectations put in place by the cartoon's visual elements. The written commentary can sometimes entirely *overturn* any interpretation based on visual elements taken in isolation. Visual and linguistic puns, metaphors, allusion, *double-entendres*, irony, pastiche, parody, caricature and appropriation can all play significant roles in this process.

Equally, apparently 'purely' visual texts always need to be interpreted alongside the contemporary political zeitgeist or significant social or national events – calling for 'political literacy'. In terms of the politics of interpretation, it is clear that cartoons, political or not, always need to be interpreted in relation to other contemporary sociocultural (etc.) phenomena, regardless of the visible presence of such phenomena.

### **Bionote**

Dr. Christine Nicholls is a writer, curator and Senior Lecturer in Australian Studies at Flinders University, where she also coordinates Postgraduate Humanities students.

Christine has been involved in education, in both the tertiary and schooling sectors, since launching her teaching career in Sydney in the 1970s. Beginning in the early 1980s, Christine Nicholls spent more than a decade living at Lajamanu, a remote Warlpiri Aboriginal settlement in the Tanami Desert of the Northern

Territory, where first she worked as a linguist and then as Principal of the local bilingual school, also playing an instrumental role at the beginning of the visual art movement at Lajamanu. She later held the position of Professor of Australian Studies at the University of Tokyo, 2004-2005.

Christine has published fourteen books for children and adults, all of which have won significant prizes. She is currently the Australian Editor of two high circulation visual arts magazines – *Asian Art News* and *World Sculpture News* - both based in Hong Kong.

**Pellegrin, G. Annick**

University of Mauritius, Mauritius

### **Presentation**

Mastodonte power: Laughing at/with *Spirou*

### **Abstract**

First published in the Franco-Belgian comics weekly *Spirou* (published by Dupuis) on 3 August 2011 (*Spirou* 3825), *L'Atelier Mastodonte* is a series that purportedly recounts the day-to-day life of an atelier of comic authors. The series walks in the footsteps of now completed series such as *Le Gang Mazda*, and *Le Boss* and the very successful *Gaston Lagaffe*, that all revolve around the life of authors or the production of the magazine *Spirou*. Unlike its predecessors, however, *L'Atelier Mastodonte*, does not in fact exist. However, having lost their original fictional atelier, the authors purportedly moved to the attic of the Dupuis building in November 2013 (*Spirou* 3945) and the series is now set in this real-life building.

Lewis Trondheim, the founder of the atelier, asserts that *L'Atelier Mastodonte* saves the authors who contribute to the series by enabling them to save on costly psychoanalysis sessions and by enabling them to earn money in the process (Trondheim, *Spirou* 3850). The authors indeed seem to let off steam as they include copious amounts of self-mockery, as well as jibes at each other and at Frédéric Niffle (the editor in chief of *Spirou*), not to mention the excessive demands of publishers and festival-goers.

How much do these humoristic stories in fact reveal about the realities of the creation of comics? Given that each author retains his or her own type of humour, drawing style and position as narrator, how does this autobiographical fiction serve to create and maintain the image and myth of *Spirou*, its editorial staff and its authors? As Paul Gravett puts it, “[c]omics aren’t “comics” in Europe—they’ve blossomed and mutated into something else entirely”: they have become, as the title of his article states, an entity with “a dazzling respectability”. This is certainly the case of Dupuis, who is increasingly fostering the development of their own myth by recovering their heritage through the publication of vintage albums, anthologies and a multi-volume history of *Spirou*.

I argue that although the atelier itself is non-existent, whether it is set in the Dupuis building or elsewhere, by making comic characters out of those who are involved in the production of the oldest Franco-Belgian weekly currently being published, the series enables readers to feel more involved in the life of the magazine as they are shown the inner workings of the publishing house. Indeed, the stories told in the series may be far-fetched but they are often a reflection of reality, be it the circumstances in which an author broke his leg, the fact that someone is running very late on his work or the authors’ experience of the less pleasant aspects of comic festivals. Thus, readers come to know the faces and certain character traits of these already famous authors. In the process, the authors create their own myth and reinvent that of Dupuis by explicitly referring to the myths created in *Gaston Lagaffe* and by inhabiting this space to create new stories.

### **Bionote**

Annick Pellegrin holds a PhD in French and in Spanish and Latin American Studies from The University of Sydney. She is a lecturer at the University of Mauritius, where she teaches a year-long course on Franco-Belgian comics. She has presented papers at conferences in Argentina, Australia, England, Mauritius and Mexico. Her most recent publications include “Mieux vaut en rire qu’en pleurer: *Spirou* à la rescousse du plat pays” in *Australian Journal of French Studies* and ‘Nothing New Under the Western Sun: The (Necessity and Inevitability of the) Conquest of the Americas in *U.K.R.O.N.I.A. / Les Brigades du temps* and *Hell dorado*’ in *International Journal of Comic Art*.

## **Petty, Bruce**

### **Keynote Presentation**

HUMOUR: A PARALLEL LANGUAGE?

#### **Abstract**

I would like to explore Humour as though it is a communication system with which we have all been programmed as part of our neuronal survival apparatus.

As a cartoonist I can avoid, I hope, questions about the validity and evidence for this proposition. I will follow Humour's development in its many forms, personal, social, and professional, noting its role as release valve, criticism and so on. This will be a sort of history, based on my experience, of the changes in Humour characteristics resulting from moral, social and technical advances.

But the main proposition is to examine the effect on Humour of the great digital takeover and disfiguration of all human communication. The idea of everybody connected to one another and everything known to Google is comical in itself.

There may be a role for our parallel language in trying to decipher what the joke is.

#### **Bionote**

Melbourne-born Bruce Petty (b. 1929) is arguably Australia's most renowned and influential cartoonist, political satirist and occasional filmmaker (inter alia). *Age* journalist Martin Flanagan (2008) wrote that Petty "re-invent[s]the world as a vast scribbly machine with interlocking cogs and levers that connect...people in wholly logical but unlikely ways." Bruce Petty continues to contribute cartoons on a regular basis to *The Age* newspaper.

**Polak, Iva**

University of Zagreb, Croatia

### **Presentation**

To laugh, or not to laugh – That is the lesson: Gayle Kennedy's *Me, Antman & Fleabag*

### **Abstract**

The presence of humour in Aboriginal cinema has reached Australian and international audiences due to the success of Aboriginal film from the second half of the 1990s, although the humour in Aboriginal plays has been around from the first generation of Aboriginal playwrights, which is why its function was noted by scholars in the late 1980s (Shoemaker 1989). However, when it comes to Aboriginal humour in prose form, i.e. the novel and short story, any sustained critical engagement with laughter and humour becomes strikingly rare. As a consequence, when channelled "solely" through novelistic mode, Aboriginal humour rarely "receives any echo" (Bergson 1900) One of the cases in point is Gayle Kennedy's novel/series of vignettes *Me, Antman & Fleabag*, the winner of the 2006 David Unaipon Award. In comparison to its textual humorous predecessor, Vivienne Cleven's *Bitin' Back* (2001), also the winner of the same literary award, accompanied by numerous reviews, subsequently staged (dir. W. Enoch, 2005) and published as a play (Cleven, 2007), Kennedy's text even marketed as humorous has attracted a handful of minuscule reviews even though its humour represents a witty medley of the humour found in *Radiance* (1998), *Black Chicks Talking* (2001) and *Stone Bros* (2009). Unlike Cleven's work located in an imaginary setting with, indeed, an imaginary storyline, Kennedy's text is far more serious in its endeavour: it is an observational comedy and a dark satire of Aboriginal contemporaneity asking the reader to get into the circle of laughter by simultaneously laughing with, at and back. What differentiates Kennedy's text from Cleven's is that the former demands from the reader to be prepared for specific "elastic polarity" of humour, which can "operate for and against, deny or affirm, oppress and liberate" (Boskin 1997).

Hence, the presentation will explore the labyrinth of Kennedy's humour debunking social, gender and racial stereotypes of contemporary Aboriginalities. It will show how the texture of that type of humour can receive the echo even from a twice-removed outsider (i.e., non-Aboriginal and non-Australian), in this case Croatian university students, and what it can reveal about the contemporary Australian moment. In the latter respect, the presentation will raise the issue of the horizon of humour in Kennedy's work, which is "not necessarily a happy thought to those who only want to know of humour's joys" (Billig 2005).

### **Bionote**

Iva Polak (PhD) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, University of Zagreb, Croatia, where she teaches literary theory, contemporary Australian literature and film, Australian Aboriginal literature and film, historical development of literary and cinematic fantasy and dystopian British fiction. She has published in Croatian and international journals, and is the author of a book on the development of Australian Aboriginal fiction (2011). She is a member of EASA and CEACS. Her current project concerns studying alternat(iv)e worlds in the contemporary Aboriginal novel.

**Raeside, Casey**  
Flinders University

### **Presentation**

'*Punch* and the Cyprus Revolt, 1955-59' (with Andrekos Varnava)

### **Abstract**

In recent years numerous scholars have published studies on the views of *Punch* on British politics, foreign policy, and imperialism, especially for the period 1870s to 1910s, which show that *Punch* tended to be critical of British foreign and imperial ventures. This paper shifts the focus onto the end of empire, exploring one of the few violent episodes of British decolonisation, the case of Cyprus. During the early hours of 1 April 1955, in what the British soon realised was no April Fool's Day joke, the Greek nationalist group EOKA (Εθνική Οργάνωση Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών – National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) attacked British targets and government and military personnel in the island aiming to force the British government to cede Cyprus to Greece (enosis). During the four years of violence, which consisted of both state and non-state terror that led the island into civil war between Greek and Turkish Cypriot armed groups and the British security forces, successive British Conservative governments, first under Anthony Eden and then under Harold Macmillan, attempted to hold onto the island because they perceived that it was and would be strategically important to British Middle East policy. What views did *Punch*, traditionally critical of imperialism, take of this violent episode during the end of empire? Did it support the Conservative government's policies and propaganda efforts, or was it critical of them? This paper, by focussing on the four *Punch* caricatures on the Cyprus revolt, shows that although *Punch* had not lost its humour it had certainly lost its critical thinking.

### **Bionote**

Casey Raeside completed his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Teaching at the University of Adelaide (2010) and a Master of Policing, Intelligence and Counter-terrorism at Macquarie University (2012). He is currently awaiting the examination of his History Honours Thesis, which he undertook in the School of International Studies, Flinders University. His thesis looks at the intersect of politics, policy and the print media as it relates to the Second Afghan War in 1879.

**Rawlings, Maren**

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne

**Presentation**

A theory of everything in humour? Self-deprecating humour? (with Bruce Findlay)

**Abstract**

Clarke (2008) suggested that humour could be analysed in terms of a pattern without content, as an unconscious process. The identification of information as humorous, through pattern recognition with surprise, is cognitively rewarding: surprise is defined as a corrective to invalid or defunct existing ideas. Comprehension can be facilitated by Stimulus-Response pairings (laugh tracks, “Boom Boom”). Hurley, Dennett and Adams (2011) contended that an active belief to which we have been previously epistemically committed is diagnosed as false (“hah hah”) and that the discovery is not accompanied by any strong negative emotional valence (“hah?”). The extent of the valence is controlled by perceived psychological distance as either “too close for comfort or too far to care” (McGraw, Warren, Williams & Leonard, 2012). I propose that self-deprecating humour forms such a pattern and deliberately seeks to overcome negative emotional valence by facilitating the rewarding aspects of self-alteration of existing beliefs about the humourist.

**Bionote**

Maren Rawlings was a teacher at city and country schools in Victoria before a 22 year stint at Methodist Ladies’ College, Melbourne, finishing as inaugural Psychology Coordinator and a house coordinator in 2003. In addition to her day job she held casual lectureships at RMIT University and the University of Melbourne (both in psychology) and wrote pre-degree textbooks in Psychology with her husband David. In 2011 she graduated with a PhD in “Humour at Work” at Swinburne University of Technology and is currently tutoring first and second year in Psychology at Swinburne University. Last year, she lectured (as a maternity leave replacement) in the inaugural “Critical Thinking in Psychology” in first year at the Australian Catholic University.

**Roach Anleu, Sharyn**  
Flinders University

### **Presentation**

Judicial humour as a practical resource in the courtroom (with Kathy Mack; Sharyn Roach Anleu to present)

### **Abstract**

Conventional understandings of the judicial role emphasise impersonality and dispassion as central to neutrality and legal authority. However, the courtroom is not only a legal setting; it is an organisational context where face-to-face interactions must be managed as part of everyday work. Research examining the role of humour among professionals where affective neutrality, disinterestedness and social distance from patients or clients is the professional norm, identifies humour as a form of social regulation. The limited research on humour in the courtroom treats humour at the individual level – the focus is on the individual judicial officer's conduct or behaviour. However, the organisational context is important. Several different professions come together in the courtroom, each highly dependent on the other, including solicitors, barristers and, in the lower courts, police prosecutors. While judicial officers have considerable formal authority within the courtroom, they have little supervisory authority over other professional participants. Findings from a large scale court observation study conducted in Australian magistrates courts demonstrates the magistrate's use of humour as a practical resource to reinforce the magistrate's control over courtroom proceedings and participants. It is not used as a negative sanction but a way to positively direct participants as to what the magistrate expects to happen. First, humour can manage the present, for example to manage waiting time, to signal the close of the session, or to inject some non-legal, personal interruption into the routine proceedings. Second, humour can be used to manage future planning, setting dates, and scheduling later appearances. Judicial humour used in this temporal management assists the organisational flow of events, demarcates the different roles of the participants in the courtroom workgroup while also reinforcing commonality or collegiality among the courtroom workgroup. Nonetheless, the practical use of humour in this context remains bounded by the formal judicial role and conventional understandings of judicial authority.

### **Bionote**

Professor Sharyn L. Roach Anleu, BA Tas, MA Tas, LI B Adel, Ph D Conn is Matthew Flinders Distinguished Professor in the School of Social and Policy Studies at Flinders University, Adelaide and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. With Emerita Professor Kathy Mack, Flinders School of Law, she is currently engaged in socio-legal research into the Australian judiciary and their courts. She has contributed to the Masters Program at the International Institute for the Sociology of Law, Oñati, Spain.

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website: <http://www.flinders.edu.au/law/judicialresearch/>

**Rolfe, Mark**

The University of New South Wales

**Presentation**

The populist elements of political satire

**Abstract**

Populism is often considered a 'dirty' word in general and academic discourse about politics. But a group of scholars have sought to rehabilitate the term by focusing on its commonalities with democracy, especially certain shared and consistent linguistic features. Of special interest here is the anti-establishment discourse of stereotypical politicians as participants in the dirty game and of the need of a redeeming politician. This rhetoric arises from the irredeemable tensions of representative democracy itself. Such ideas are common conceptions across the Anglosphere, especially in Australia which is the main focus, and have a lineage that can be traced to the early eighteenth century. *The Augustans*, *Bolingbroke*, etc. were widely read by Washington, Madison, and were standard reading until 1830s. So the satiric, anti-politics strain carried on in USA and became the basis of populism with the gap depicted by satire and thus with permanent dissatisfaction being cultivated by politicians generally and by satirists. This strain was transmitted to Australia from the 1820s/30s.

Interestingly, political satire is entwined with this tradition and reinforces the themes and tensions through posing disparities between purported ideals and supposed realities of politics. This is persuasive as it plays to widely held beliefs about politics. Cartoons are particularly prominent expositors of these themes through visual metaphors. As much as these ideals are reinforced through satire they cannot be separated from the partisan context in which they appear. I'm thinking here of the likes of Davenport who caricatured Mark Hanna, the archetype Fat Man plutocrat. American populism can be traced here to the 1830s, and there were Americans who were popular with American populists but also Australian populists such as Ed Bellamy and his novel *Looking Backward*, which was of more influence in the ALP and the Australian labour movement than Marx. In addition, Henry George was an American who visited and was a big influence here and in the USA.

**Bionote**

Mark Rolfe is a lecturer in the School of Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. His areas of specialisation are rhetoric, propaganda, public diplomacy, Americanisation, political satire, the internet and politics, political leadership and Australian politics.

**Strambi, Antonella**  
Flinders University

### **Presentation**

"It's not funny!": Negotiating humour in football talk shows (with Colette Mrowa-Hopkins)

### **Abstract**

While humour is often used for affiliative purposes, such as establishing and maintaining solidarity, it is also associated with aggression, for example in the case of sarcasm, teasing and ridicule, especially among male friends (Ergül 2014). Since humour is co-constructed through interaction, the original speaker's intention may be misinterpreted by the recipient, or the recipient may not share the speaker's view on what is humorous, in which case humour fails. This may lead to misunderstanding and even affect the interactants' relationship.

This paper adopts a discourse analysis approach to explore the interactional aspects of humour, with a focus on failed humour. Its premise is based on an interpretative framework to conversational interaction (Gumperz 1982; Eldesky 1981; Haugh 2010), which focuses not so much on the speaker's construction of humour, but on the recipient's interpretative processes and subsequent negotiation of meaning.

The source of data for this study is a corpus of football talk shows from Australia, France and Italy. TV football shows represent specific types of talk shows, in which disagreements and aggressive humour are very frequent, if not even an integral feature of the genre. They also tend to involve principally male participants, which limits the number of variables that may affect analysis results, and at the same time may provide more opportunities to observe the negotiation of aggressive humour across cultural groups. Our analysis methods are borrowed from Conversation Analysis, and are combined with multimodal analyses, in order to identify and describe linguistic and non-linguistic devices (e.g. laughter) employed to signal and negotiate cases of failed humour.

### **Bionote**

Dr Antonella Strambi is a Senior Lecturer in Italian and Applied Linguistics at Flinders University (Australia). Her research interests include the study of second language acquisition and teaching methodology, especially with ICT, as well as sociolinguistics and cross-cultural pragmatics with a special focus on emotion communication and conflict talk. Her recent publications, in collaboration with Dr. Mrowa-Hopkins, include a chapter on 'Verbal aggressiveness or cooperative support?' in *Linguistic Approaches to Emotions in Context* (John Benjamins 2014), and "Processing anger in interactions between Italian and Anglo-Australian male friends" (*Italica* 2012).

**Varnava, Andrekos**  
Flinders University

### **Presentation**

'*Punch* and the Cyprus Revolt, 1955-59' (with Casey Raeside)

### **Abstract**

In recent years numerous scholars have published studies on the views of *Punch* on British politics, foreign policy, and imperialism, especially for the period 1870s to 1910s, which show that *Punch* tended to be critical of British foreign and imperial ventures. This paper shifts the focus onto the end of empire, exploring one of the few violent episodes of British decolonisation, the case of Cyprus. During the early hours of 1 April 1955, in what the British soon realised was no April Fool's Day joke, the Greek nationalist group EOKA (Εθνική Οργάνωση Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών – National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) attacked British targets and government and military personnel in the island aiming to force the British government to cede Cyprus to Greece (enosis). During the four years of violence, which consisted of both state and non-state terror that led the island into civil war between Greek and Turkish Cypriot armed groups and the British security forces, successive British Conservative governments, first under Anthony Eden and then under Harold Macmillan, attempted to hold onto the island because they perceived that it was and would be strategically important to British Middle East policy. What views did *Punch*, traditionally critical of imperialism, take of this violent episode during the end of empire? Did it support the Conservative government's policies and propaganda efforts, or was it critical of them? This paper, by focussing on the four *Punch* caricatures on the Cyprus revolt, shows that although *Punch* had not lost its humour it had certainly lost its critical thinking.

### **Bionote**

Andrekos Varnava obtained a BA (Honours) from Monash University (2001) and his PhD from the University of Melbourne (2006), and is currently Senior Lecturer in Imperial and Military History at Flinders University. He is the author of *British Imperialism in Cyprus, 1878-1915: The Inconsequential Possession* (Manchester University Press, 2009; paperback 2012); and co-editor of *Reunifying Cyprus: The Annan Plan and Beyond* (I. B. Tauris, 2009; paperback 2011); *The Minorities of Cyprus: Development Patterns and the Identity of the Internal-Exclusion* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009); and *The Archbishops of Cyprus in the Modern Age: The Changing Role of the Archbishop-Ethnarch, their Identities and Politics* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013). He has published and has forthcoming articles in *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* (2005), *The Cyprus Review* (2005, 2x 2010 & forthcoming 2014), *Journal of Military History* (2010), *War in History* (2012 & forthcoming 2015), *Historical Research* (2014), *Itinerario* (forthcoming 2014), and *The Historical Journal* (forthcoming 2014).

**Walsh, Michael**

AIATSIS, Centre for Australian Languages

### **Presentation**

Black humour: same or different?

### **Abstract**

In a classic paper (1956) the distinguished anthropologist, W. E. H. Stanner, asserted that 'Aborigines found amusing much the same kind of things which we find amusing'. Nevertheless there are differences but nailing down the nature of Aboriginal humour is made difficult by the relatively scant attention paid to humour in the ethnographic literature. In this paper an attempt will be made to survey the range of instances of Aboriginal humour in 'traditional' contexts. This is not to discount the value of Aboriginal humour in such 'post-classical' works as *Bran Nue Dae* or *Black Comedy*. But the post-classical situations would broaden the enquiry too much for a brief presentation. One would need to consider the extent to which post-classical Aboriginal humour is an amalgam of traditional Aboriginal humour and that of the wider community. To do that effectively one needs to understand traditional Aboriginal humour and this can be fairly esoteric. For instance, Garde (2013: 181) distinguishes two kinds of joking: 'joking conducted between those in opposing patrimoiety based on background cultural knowledge about land, clan affiliation and clan totems' vs kin-based joking 'between participants of the same patrimoiety and only between those in a particular kinship relationship'. Examples of traditional Aboriginal humour from a range of cultural and geographical contexts will be presented along with suggestions about dominant themes in traditional Aboriginal humour.

### **Bionote**

Since 1972 Michael Walsh has conducted fieldwork in the Top End of the Northern Territory, mainly in the Darwin-Daly region. This has been a mixture of academic endeavours as well as consultancies since 1979 mainly relating to Aboriginal land issues. From 1999 he has participated in the revitalisation of Aboriginal languages in NSW. From 1982 until 2005 he was part of the teaching staff of the Department of Linguistics, University of Sydney. He has continued his research interests especially through a large ARC grant involving a team of linguists and musicologists running from 2004 to 2010 [<http://azoulay.arts.usyd.edu.au/mpsong/>]. In late 2012 he rejoined the staff at AIATSIS as the Senior Research Fellow, AIATSIS Centre for Australian Languages.

**Wheatley, Josh**

The University of Sydney

**Presentation**

Tim and Eric's carnival of the American image

**Abstract**

Over the last decade, cult filmmaking team Tim Heidecker and Eric Wareheim (Tim and Eric) have produced an extensive body of eccentric and often experimental works that are comic and highly surreal takes on American culture. Establishing their reputation on the late night cable TV network Adult Swim with the animated series 'Tom Goes To The Mayor' (2002), Tim and Eric have developed their peculiar style of comedy across multiple media platforms, including music video, film, online web series, and advertising.

Uniting their work is an engagement with the concept of trash. This paper argues that Tim and Eric utilise a trash aesthetic to satirise contemporary American consumer culture, and the ways in which the mass-mediated image manufactures and mythologises spaces of utopia. The filmmakers present America as a wasteland, littered with the junk of obsolete products, consumerist dreams and bad television.

Engaging with modes of the carnivalesque, Tim and Eric transform the materiality of this space through visions of the grotesque and transgressive.

Focusing on segments from the absurdist nightmare TV series "Tim and Eric Awesome Show, Great Job!", we can explore the ways in which trash materialities are encountered and made carnivalesque. Trash is engaged in a variety of artistic dimensions, which are developed through dialogic assemblages. As such, we can observe the way in which the program's critical concerns flow from the embodied social act of carnival, to the pop-cultural space of the media image and consumerism, to the 'trashy' visual form of the program itself. Through this ecological movement of trash aesthetics, we can observe how the carnivalesque event moves across the dimensions of cultural space, action, and virtuality of the image, to become a charged ideological critique of postmodern America.

**Bionote**

Josh Wheatley is currently undertaking his PhD at the University of Sydney. His area of research is trash aesthetics in contemporary American cinema. His thesis engages postmodern and ecocritical approaches to trash materialities in film, examining networks of value, waste and the image.

## ADDITIONAL BIOS

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**Christine Béal** is Professor of Linguistics at Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3 and a member of Praxiling, a CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research) Research Lab specialising in linguistics and communication. She currently teaches French linguistics, interactional linguistics and cross-cultural pragmatics. Her work is based on naturally occurring data (spontaneous talk between work colleagues, meetings, job interviews, among friends) in French and English. She has focussed on terms of address, speech acts, politeness, rituals and routines, turn-taking and conversational humour.

**Dr Chloe A Gill-Khan** is working on a monograph based on her doctoral research, examining comparative British and French methods of colonial statecraft and their post-1960s models of integration. Combining philosophy, political science, sociological, cultural and postcolonial studies, the research questions the enduring impression that Britain and France are heirs to contrasting national political cultures. Specific areas of interest include the era of European decolonisation, British colonial statecraft in India and French colonialism in Algeria, comparative British and French histories of colonial immigration and the politics, cultural expressions and evolution of the two nations' ex-colonial diasporic communities, in particular British Asians and Franco-Maghrebians.

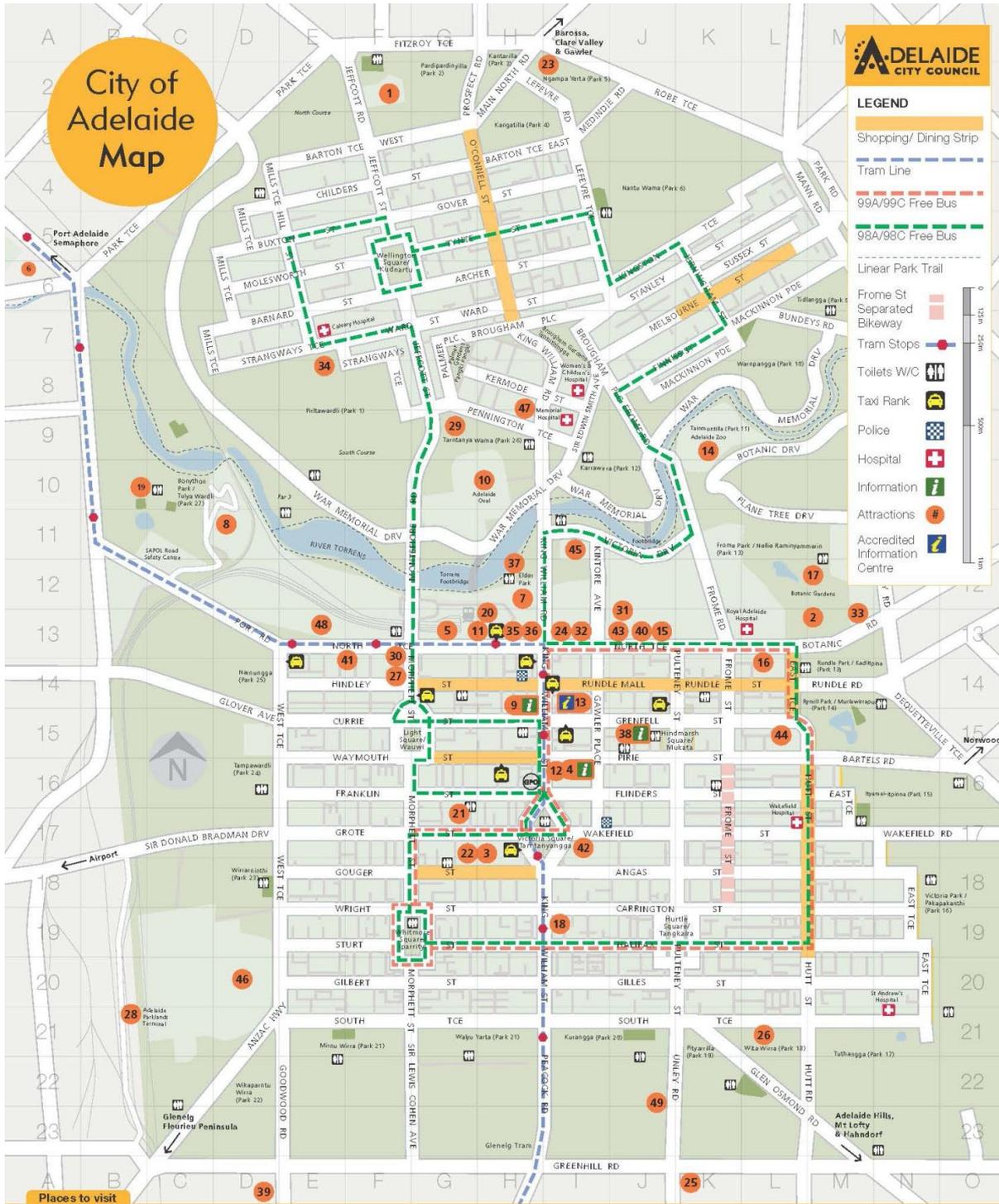
**Peter Kirkpatrick** teaches Australian Literature in the Department of English at the University of Sydney. His recent publications include *Serious Frolic: Essays on Australian Humour* (UQP, 2009), co-edited with Fran De Groen, and *Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia* (Sydney University Press, 2012), co-edited with Robert Dixon.

**Rodney Marks** is a corporate comedian and comic hoaxer. He creates and presents joke-name double-talking characters. Sydney-based, he has performed throughout Australasia, and has had over 30 international tours. He has been visiting professor-at-large at UNSW (2007), and artist-in-residence at the Macquarie Dictionary (2002-03), UNE (2001-02), the AGSM (2000-01), Harvard (1995) and Shalom College (1980). Rodney has degrees from UNE, AGSM/UNSW and Harvard. His website is [www.comedian.com.au](http://www.comedian.com.au)

**Robert Phiddian** is Associate Professor in English and Deputy Dean in the School of Humanities and Creative Arts at Flinders University. He writes a lot about political satire, both in eighteenth-century British literature and contemporary Australian political cartoons.

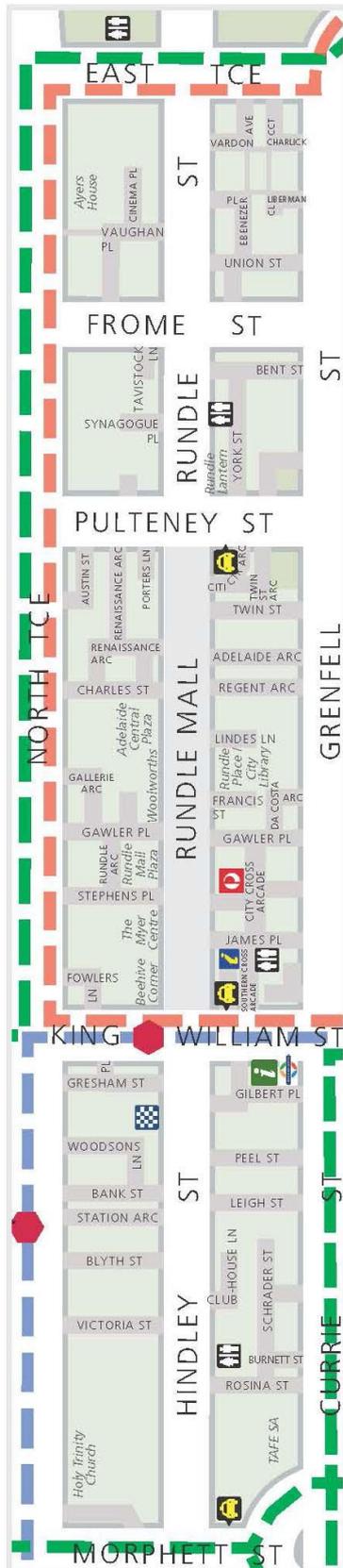
**Véronique Traverso** is Director of Research at the CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research), in the ICAR Lab (ICAR, "Interaction Corpora, Apprenticeship Representations"), dedicated to the study of spoken interaction. She teaches conversation analysis, interactional linguistics, and corpora of Spoken French at the University Lumière Lyon 2. Her work is grounded in the analysis of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction in French and/or Arabic, including verbal, prosodic and gestural aspects used by participants in a variety of settings: ordinary conversation during social visits and talk at work.

# MAPS



November\_2014

## Lanes & Arcades of Hindley & Rundle



## First Steps in Adelaide

If you are already in the City why not join the 30 minute First Steps Orientation Walk that departs from the Adelaide Visitor Centre each weekday (except Public Holidays), Monday to Friday, at 9.30am.

## Adelaide Greeters

Pre-book an Adelaide Greeter for free and spend 2 hours exploring the city with a volunteer, ensuring you make the most of your visit.

greeters@adelaidecitycouncil.com  
cityofadelaide.com.au/adelaidegreeters

## Useful Contacts

### INFORMATION

**Adelaide City Council  
Customer Centre**  
25 Pirie Street, Adelaide  
adelaidecitycouncil.com  
08 8203 7203

**South Australian Tourism Commission**  
South Australian Info Line:  
1300 655 276  
southaustralia.com

**RAA**  
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raa.com.au  
08 8202 4600  
Roadside Assistance—131 111

### INTERNET & LIBRARIES

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It's fast and free! Simply choose 'AdelaideFree' from the available WiFi networks list. Once connected, your device will automatically connect to AdelaideFree when you're in range.

**State Library**  
Corner North Terrace and Kintore Avenue, Adelaide  
slsa.gov.au  
08 8207 7250

**City Library**  
Level 3, Rundle Place, Rundle Mall  
Enter via Francis Street  
adelaidecitycouncil.com/library  
08 8203 7990

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1300 588 140  
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cityofadelaide.com.au/explore

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Police, Fire or Ambulance—000

**Australia Post**  
59 City Cross Arcade  
auspost.com.au—13 13 18

### TRANSPORT

**Bike SA (free city bikes)**  
53 Carrington Street, Adelaide  
bikesa.asn.au—08 8168 9999

**Adelaide Metro Info Centre**  
Corner of Currie Street and King William Street Adelaide  
Monday to Friday: 8.00am–6.00pm  
Saturday: 9.00am–5.00pm  
Sunday: 11.00am–4.00pm

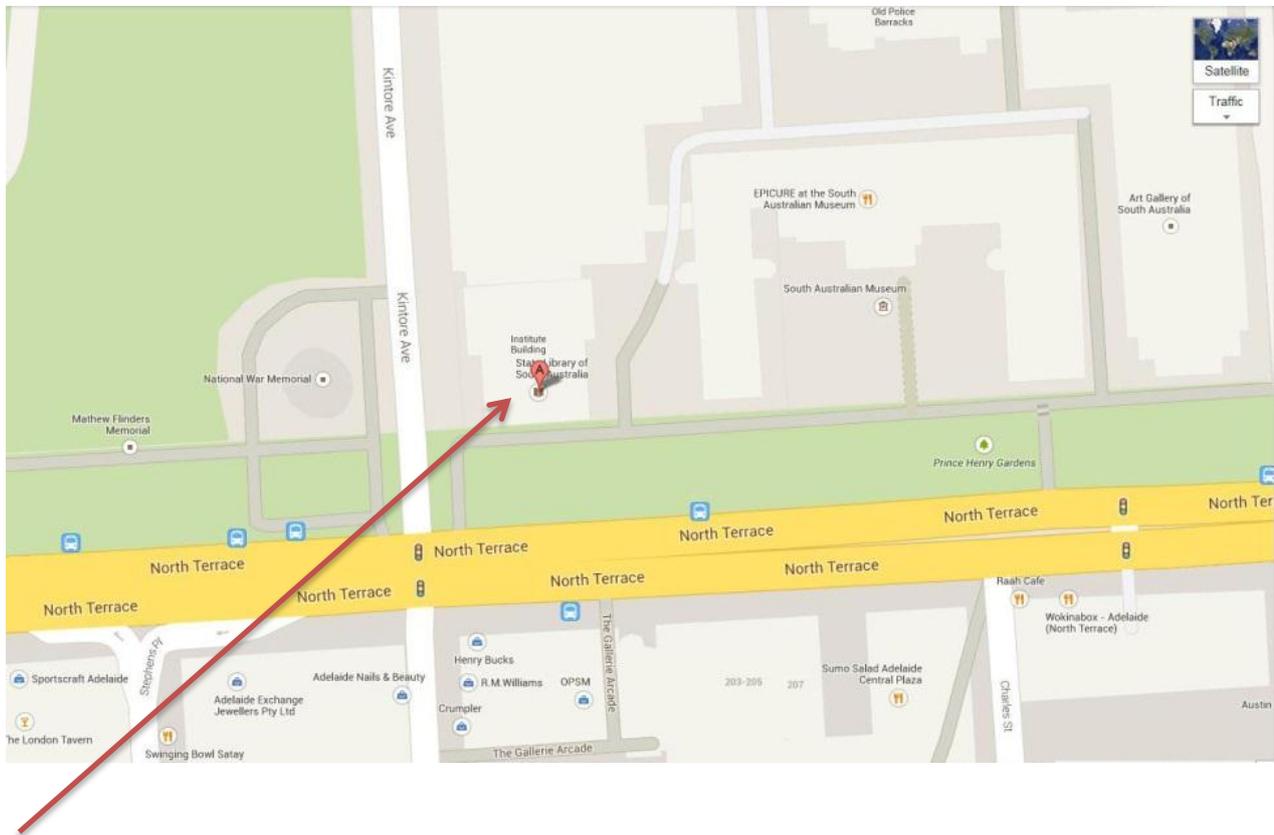
**Adelaide Railway Station InfoCentre**  
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Monday to Friday: 5.45am–12.15am  
Saturday: 6.00am–12.15am  
Sunday: 6.00am–12.15am  
adelaidemetro.com.au  
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Adelaide Independent Taxis—13 22 11  
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**Access Cabs (Wheelchair accessible)**  
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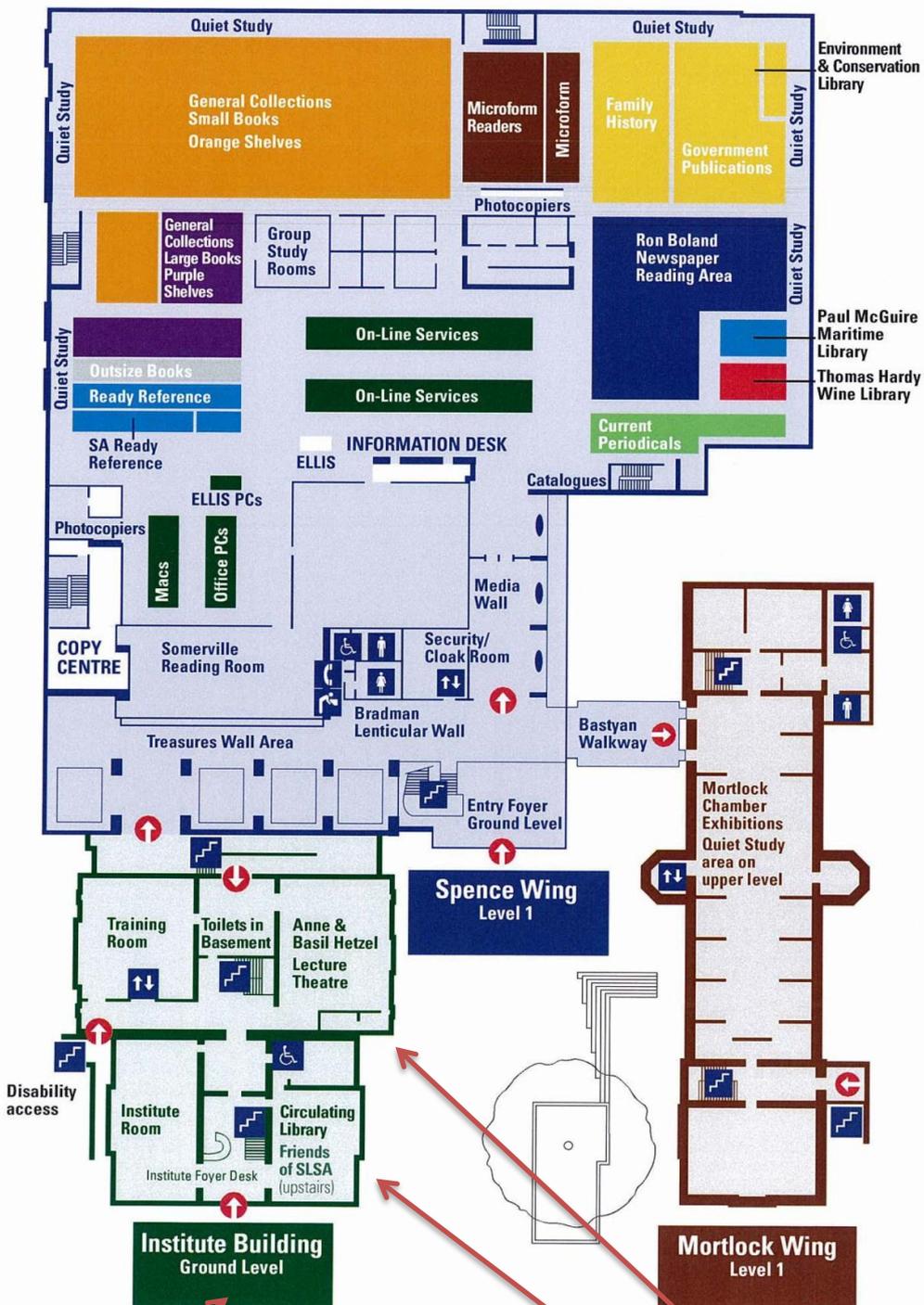
[cityofadelaide.com.au/explore](http://cityofadelaide.com.au/explore)

## STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Located on the corner of Kintore Avenue and North Terrace, Adelaide

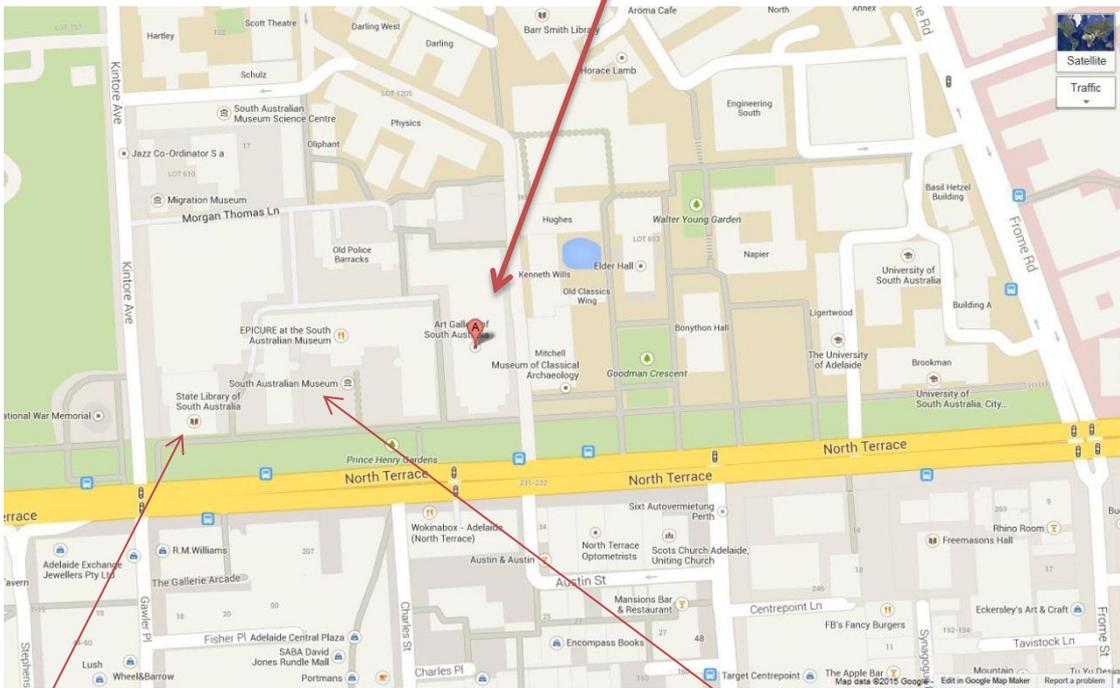
# STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, FLOOR PLAN



**FRONT ENTRANCE**  
 (SLSA, on the corner of Kintore Avenue and North Terrace,  
 Adelaide)

**HETZEL LECTURE THEATRE**  
**CIRCULATING LIBRARY**

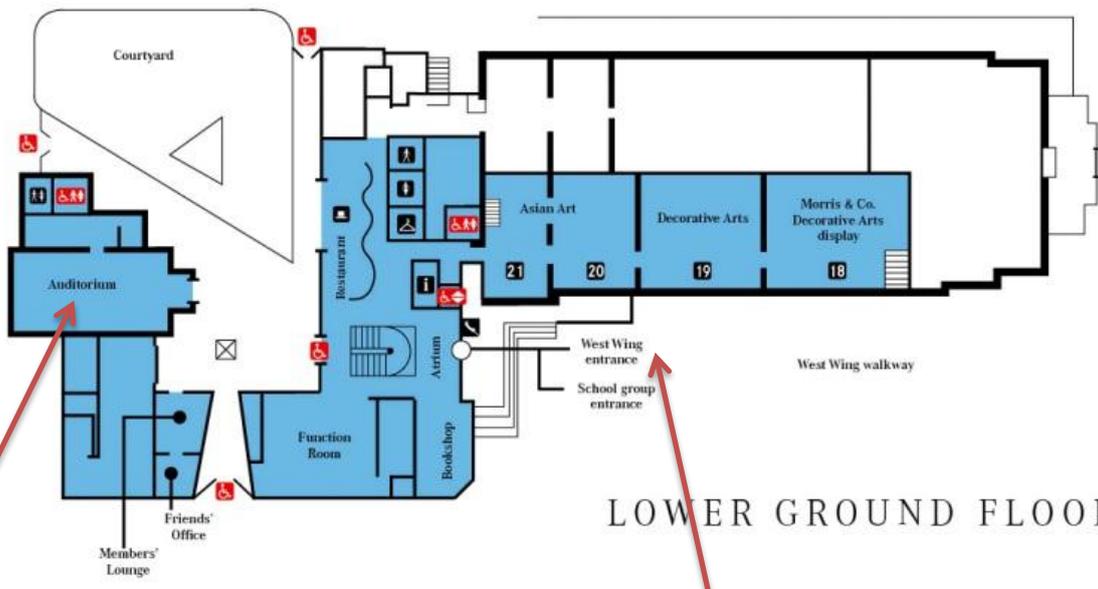
# ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



State Library of South Australia

South Australian Museum

# ART GALLERY of SOUTH AUSTRALIA FLOOR PLAN

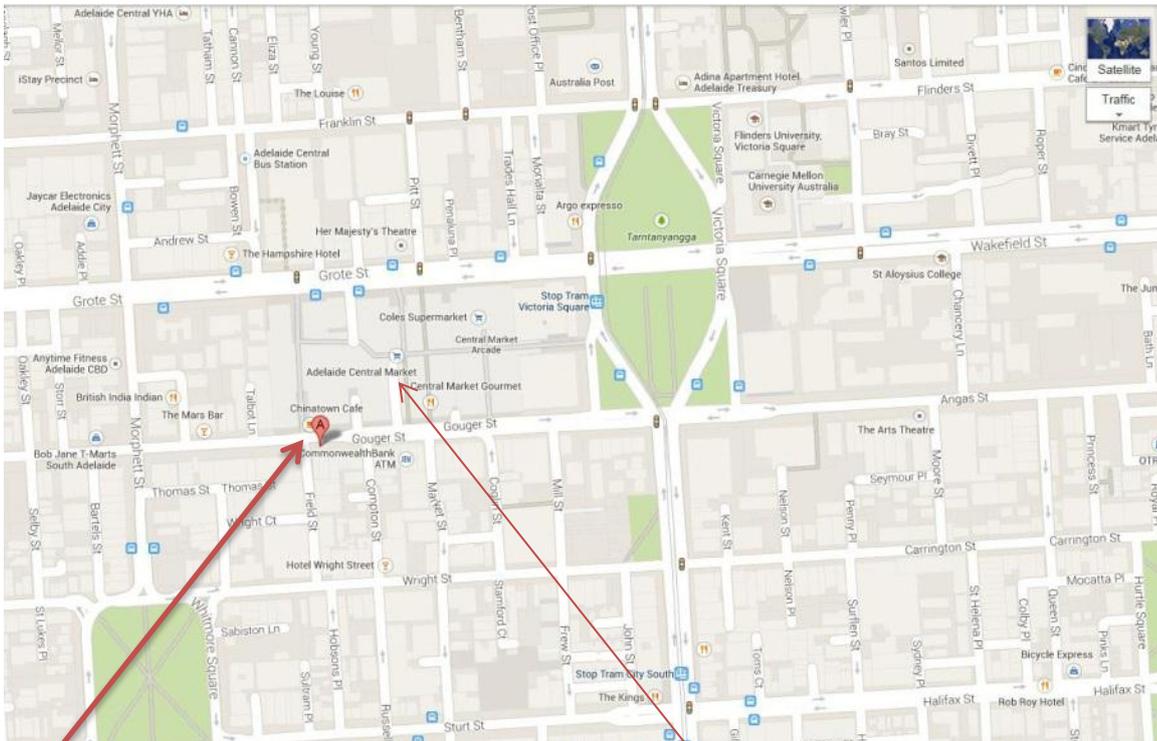


**RADFORD AUDITORIUM,  
ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

LOWER GROUND FLOOR

**ENTRY: ONLY** through western gates of the Art Gallery of South Australia (a distance of approx. 250 metres from the conference venue at the State Library of South Australia).

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