

The tropes are as well-known as they are myriad. Deals with the devil. Hell running short of guests, or being robbed of its prey. Heaven dispatching angels to save individuals from their own folly. Ghosts and goblins shaking mortals from their mundane complacency. Gods and goddesses from various pantheons trying on human guise. Witches, genies, and sundry monsters rattling their cages, to the consternation of those in their presence. In the course of each scenario, accidents happen, mistakes are made, the bumpiest road is chosen, an unforeseen twist occurs. And hilarity ensues...

If humanity's fascination with the marvelous is ancient, a humorous toying with the fantastic appears to be equally as venerable. A supernatural through-line-cum-punchline threads from Aristophanes' heroes with politically-charged superpowers, to the ludic demons and randy folklore of the Middle Ages, to Japanese flatus monsters, to the whimsically chaotic genies, witches, and ghostly entities of classic TV sitcoms.

This conference, organized by CMRS Associate Dr. Sharon King, explores human encounters with the supernatural as evoked through comedy around the world from a variety of genres and disciplines.

*Support is provided by*

*the Endowment for the UCLA Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies.*

Advance registration is not required. No fee. Limited seating. Self-pay parking in lots 2, 3, 4, and 5. Parking information at <https://main.transportation.ucla.edu/campus-parking/visitors>

cmrs@humnet.ucla.edu | 310-825-1880 | cmrs.ucla.edu



**UCLA** Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies

10745 Dickson Plaza Box 951485  
Los Angeles CA 90095-1485

Presorted  
First Class  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
UCLA

# The Comic Supernatural

## A Conference



UCLA Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies  
April 21-22, 2017

# The Comic Supernatural

## A Conference

Thursday, April 20, 2017

UCLA Royce Hall Room 314

Film screening at 5:30 PM of *La Fée (The Fairy)* — Arriving at a small hotel, a mysterious woman named Fiona informs night shift worker Dom that she is a fairy and will grant him three wishes. After she grants his first two wishes—and he falls in love with her—she disappears, and Dom must find her. Is she a real fairy—or something else? (French with English subtitles, 2011, 93 minutes)

Friday, April 21, 2017

UCLA Royce Hall Room 314

8:30 Registration, coffee, pastries

9:00 Welcoming Remarks

Massimo Ciavolella (CMRS Director, UCLA)

Sharon King (Conference Organizer, CMRS Associate)

A Media Montage of Supernatural Humor, Part I

SESSION I - Chair: Jean-Claude Carron (UCLA)

9:30 Edith Hall (King's College, London)

“The Politics of the Supernatural in Aristophanic Comedy”

10:15 Break

10:30 Michael Solomon (University of Pennsylvania)

“Comedy and Cruelty: Marian Masochism in Alfonso X's *Cantigas de Santa Maria*”

Leif Søndergaard (University of Southern Denmark)

“In The Name of the Laughter: Forgotten Images from the 14th Century in Southern France”

12:00 Lunch Break

SESSION II - Chair: Kersti Francis (UCLA)

1:30 Joseph F. Nagy (University of California, Los Angeles)

“Satire, Vision, and the Irish Cockaigne”

Albrecht Classen (University of Arizona)

“And they laughed after all: Comedy on the Late Medieval German Stage”

3:00 Break

3:15 Faye Ringel (United States Coast Guard Academy, Emerita)

“Laughter Through Tears: Jewish Traditions of *Golems*, Demons, Fools”

4:00 Break

4:15 Play, *Saint Martin and the Peasant*

Presented by Les Enfants Sans Abri, based on a 13th-century *fabliau*.

Saturday, April 22, 2017

UCLA Royce Hall Room 314

8:30 Registration, coffee, pastries

9:00 A Media Montage of Supernatural Humor, Part II

SESSION III - Chair: Ian Moulton (Arizona State University)

9:15 Zack Davisson (Independent Scholar)

“Kappa Farts and Tanuki Balls: Supernatural Humor in the Art of the Floating World”

Clorinda Donato (California State University, Long Beach)

“He takes his followers beyond the limits of the known”: The European Reception of Carlo Gozzi's Comic Supernatural in the Late Eighteenth Century”

10:45 Break

SESSION IV - Chair: Gail Lenhoff (UCLA)

11:00 Ronald Vroon (University of California, Los Angeles)

“Satire and the Supernatural in Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*”

Stacie Hanes (Youngstown State University)

“Esme Weatherwax's Journey, Passing, and Lifelong Intimacy with Death”

12:30 Lunch Break

2:00 Play, *The Knight of Enchantment*

Presented by Les Enfants Sans Abri, based on a medieval *fabliau*

3:00 Break

SESSION V - Chair: Sharon King (UCLA)

3:15 Isabella van Elferen (Kingston University London)

“Smile If You Love Sadness”: The Dark Delights of Gothic Irony”

Sherryl Vint, (University of California, Riverside)

“Metafiction, Comedy, and the Cultural Work of Speculative Television”

4:45 Concluding Remarks

Cover image from *Chroniques de Jehan Froissart*