

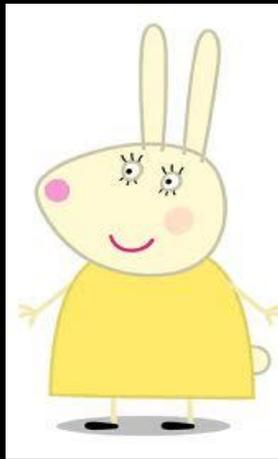
Animated Women's  
Symposium 2014 Uclan

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# About me!

I am the course leader of BA(hons) and MA Animation at the University of Central Lancashire. I am also the voice of Miss Rabbit in Peppa Pig and Nanny Plum in Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. I was also the creator of adult animation series Crapston Villas and Nights. I have recently finished a short taster for a sitcom with animation inserts called Homesick.



# Women and Comedy

In Andrew Horton's book *Laughing Out Loud* he says, "If we speak of women "in" comedy, we mean the actresses in front of the camera bright and brilliant women."

Goldie Horn, Jamie Lee-Curtis, Katherine Hepburn, Meg Ryan, Julie Walters, Jane Horrocks

# Women and Comedy

Andrew Horton says in his book *Laughing Out Loud*, “Women behind comedy becomes a more problematic topic. There have not been many.

There were 2 pages written about women in comedy in this 199 page book.

# Comedy Roles for Women

“Where would Groucho be without Margaret Drumont?” Andrew Horton, *Laughing out Loud*.

Do women always play the same type of character?

“Why are we so reluctant to make comedies for heroines that are just funny situations?” Helen Jacey, *The women in the story*.

# Conventions of Comedy. Good or bad?

Linda Seger's book "When Women call the shots" points out most dramatic theories and models stemming from Aristotle's Poetics have been written by men and no one seems to have worked out what would happen if the hero was a heroine.

# Can you categorize comedy roles?

Dan O'Shannon's book "What are you laughing at?" discusses how limiting the common practice of defining comedy as types i.e farce or slap stick etc. His approach to analyzing comedy is to refer to it as a comedic event that is split into three sections: receiver, comedic information and response. This approach, however overlooks social and political conditioning.

# Is a 'straight man' necessary?



The 'straight man' in stand up comedy or sitcom gives the eccentric character a presence to play against. It has long been accepted as an essential part of the process. *"Well the straight guy is never given enough credit ... (Bud) Abbot gets no credit for framing a gag, for the architecture, for the support, for the drive. He does everything except the punchline; he's amazing."* Mel Brooks. It is thought that if all or both characters were larger than life, they compete rather than compliment. Would scripted comedy work without this element or is it an essential part of the process?

# The Straight man



Will and Grace - Will

Frasier – Ros

Mary Tyler Moore Show – Lou

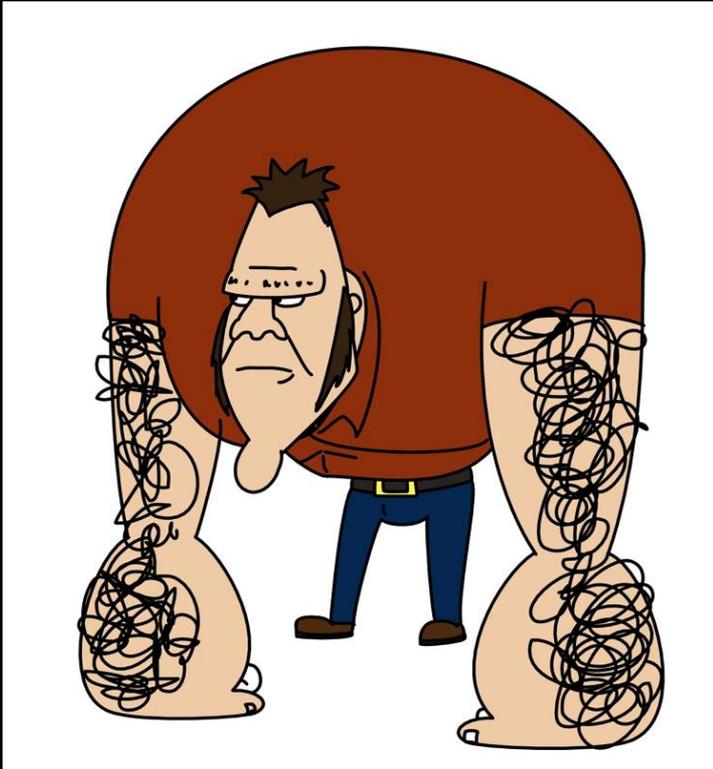
Absolutely Fabulous – Saffron

Cosby Show – Clair

The Office – Pam

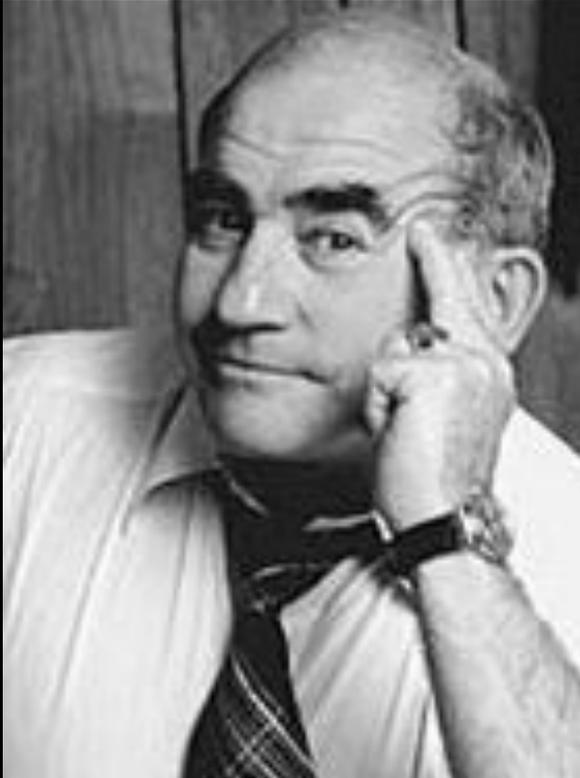
I love Lucy - Ricardo

# Homesick



Too many larger than life characters. The main protagonist should have been more natural and more sympathetic and she is currently too cartoony. There is no juxtaposition between the live action and the animation so there is no difference comedy difference between the pace of the live action and the animation. It is about women and is written by a woman.

# The Straight man



Fawlty Towers – Polly

Will and Grace – Will

Frasier – Ros

Mary Tyler Moore Show – Lou

Absolutely Fabulous – Saffron

Cosby Show – Clair

The Office – Pam

I love Lucy - Ricardo

# Was TV more innovative in the seventies?



According to Linda Artel and Susan Wengraf in their book **Positive Images. Screening Women's Films** , Mary Tyler Moore wasn't a positive role model. "She appears to be coy that it's like she doesn't want to be taken seriously and she is playing at being clever and therefore not threatening."

# Spot the difference!



# Straight Character in Western Comedic Animation



Simpsons – Marge Simpson

Family Guy – Lois

Flintstones – Wilma Flintstone

Peppa Pig – Mummy Pig

American Dad – Francine

Pond Life – Belle

Wait till your father gets home - Irma

# Voice of Reason

In animated adult cartoons the straight role is usually played by a woman.

The character is usually competent and often motherly.

Where are the funny and flawed women characters?



# Have we progressed since Laura Mulvey wrote her seminal paper in 1975?

In her essay Laura Mulvey didn't just make women aware of the male gaze in Hollywood cinema and what this means in relation to psychoanalysis theory, she used it to advance understanding of patriarchal society in the seventies, and gave clues and aims for how she would like to see cinema and the representation of women progress. Laura Mulvey highlighted the fact that the main stream film industry in the seventies was dominated by men. Therefore any female characters created would be solely created by men from their point of view. Coining the phrase 'the male gaze.'



# Putting Themselves in the Picture

Sandra Law wrote a paper in 1992 using Laura Mulvey's essay as a starting point to illustrate how three women animators, Joanna Quinn, Candy Guard and Alison de Vere used their own experiences to create stories and characters.



# Animated Features by Women



Arthur Christmas  
Sarah Smith



Frozen  
Jennifer Lee



Persepolis  
Marjane Satrapi



Brave  
Wreck it Ralph  
(writer)  
Brenda Chapman

# Mainstream animated work created by women in UK

Bobs Birthday	Alison Snowdon and David Fine
64 Zoo	An Vrombaut
Crapston Villas	Sarah Ann Kennedy
Pond Life	Candy Guard
Timmy Time	Jackie Cockle
Sarah and Duck	Sarah Gomes and Tim O Sullivan
Charlie and Lola	Lauren Child developed by Kitty Taylor and Claudia Lloyd.



# Animated shows created by women in UK, USA, CANADA

Foolish Girl

Vesna Mostovac

Dora The Explorer

Co creator Valerie Walsh

Bobs Birthday

Alison Snowdon and David Fine

64 Zoo Lane

An Vrombaut

Crapston Villas

Sarah Ann Kennedy

Pond Life

Candy Guard

Timmy Time

Jackie Cockle

Sarah and Duck

Sarah Gomes and Tim O Sullivan

Charlie and Lola

Lauren Child, Kitty Taylor and Claudia Lloyd

Steven Universe

Rebecca Sugar first female sole creator of a series on  
Cartoon Network.

# Women short Film makers

Joanna Quinn

Sarah Cox

Ruth Lingford

Susie Templeton

Petra Freeman

Joan Ashworth

Caroline Leaf

Sarah Roper

Sylvie Bringas

Gaelle Denis

Alison de Vere

Emma Calder

Marjut Rimminen

Joanna Woodward

Susan Pitt

Joanne Priestly

# Women's Symposium Contributors

Candy Guard	Creator of Pond Life. Novelist
Jackie Edwards	Head of Acquisitions CBBC
Jackie Cockle	Creator of Timmy Time
Jean Flynn	Creative Producer Cosgrove Hall
Jayne Piling	Director British Animation Awards
Anna Gregory	UK Animated Women
Sarah Ann Kennedy	Crapston Villas, Peppa Pig

# Do women have the same opportunities as men?

In the UK there are only 40% in the total workforce which is 4,600

47% Strategic management

46% Creative Development

45% Production

65% Legal

28% Art and Design

21% Animators

27% Editing

81% Distribution, Sales and Marketing

54% Business Management

# Do women have the same opportunities as men?

Candy Guard: I made my own work which was actually quite commercial but I felt that once I had finished I felt unemployable but there were men that were at University at the same time as me who made their own film and then went on to be commercial directors but they directed other people's style.

Jackie Cockle – I never really thought about whether I was a woman in terms of my career. I just thought of myself as a creative person. Cosgrove Hall was a very special place

Jackie Cockle: Jean (Jean Flynn) and I were quite different weren't we. There weren't many of us.

Jean Flynn: No there weren't many of us.

Jackie Edwards:: There were more opportunities in the eighties and nineties for both men and women. Short films etc. Channel 4 and BBC supported young film makers

# Confidence

Anna Gregory: Women know this much and they identify a hole in their knowledge and that's what they focus on which is why they say they can't do something whereas men will say I don't know this but I do know that so I can do it.

Candy Guard: A lot of women stay as assistants. They don't seem to say I'm an animator. It's having the gusto to say I'm an animator

Jean: Well yeah I think there were a few more men than women. I think the reason that the women weren't successful was they just didn't have that confidence.

Jackie Cockle: (referring to the seventies) It was very misogynist there were no women in positions of power.

# Do women seem to take on the enabler role instead of the “creative’ role?

Anna Gregory: There are lot of women creating their own series but they are struggling for funding all the time. They are making such amazing work. We can showcase work and you can see the amount of creativity not just stop motion but scratch film.

Jackie Edwards: Just in Cbeebies we get over 1000 submissions and we only commission 4. CITV commission less and do milk shake. I’m not sure if there are more submissions by men or by women but it’s something to think about. It’s heart breaking either way because we can only commission so few.

# Enabler or Doer

Candy Guard: If you are a mad female director you are neurotic. I used to feel people were warned about me coming into the studio because I was fussy.

Jackie Cockle: If you are talking about series work the type that Jean and I do. You don't really want mad directors. You just want work. It's not necessary the mad director that has ideas because if you are a creative producer you have ideas too.

Candy Guard: I don't think I was mad but I think what Sarah means is that the women allow the men to make the creative decisions. They enable them.

Jane Piling: In the commercial world this is very much the case. The producer sorts out the schedule, the team and organises the budget whereas the directors does all the creative visual side. There are very few women working in the commercial sector. So just as women are used to dealing with fractious difficult children that's what happens in the world of commercials so I think that's where that comes from. It's also multi tasking which is what producing is. Whereas if you animate you just concentrate.

# Enabler or Doer

Sarah Ann Kennedy: Yes but I have heard people say that they became a producer because it was easier to manage everything plus a difficult director than to become a director. I have heard this said from women in the live action industry as well.

Anna Gregory: I think you have to be very focused as a director and this could be seen to be very selfish and this isn't a very female quality. Look at the director of gravity he was particular down to every single frame as is that seen as feminine. (to Candy) You said you had a vision and you wanted it realised so what is wrong with that.

Candy Guard: Yes I remember worrying that I was coming over as mad because I wanted things to be right

# Discrimination

Jean Flynn: No if you're good you're good. I wouldn't want to walk into a job because it was discriminated against. I want to walk into that job because I got it and I was right for it and I've beaten everyone else to get it. I remember my mother telling me if you want something enough you will have to work hard to get it particularly if you are a woman. I don't think I realised how hard then

Anna Gregory: No we want to support women who want to work in this industry and encourage them to get out of their comfort zone. We came in right at the beginning of women working in the industry and we had no knowledge of it. We had to get on with it. Whatever our chosen profession. Don't think ooh I can't do this. Get out there. Have a go. It's like making a roast dinner. If you can make a roast dinner you can do anything.

# Discrimination

Jane Piling: If positive discrimination was brought in it would be a bonkers working environment. That said I do think funding bodies like Creative skillset or BFI should be aware of and should be aware of is something triggered off by something Jean said earlier she said that she thought animation was only made by Americans. If you do not see people like yourself doing something you don't believe you can do it. The gap and the gender perception that boys do science and girls do soft arts and that's the thing that has got to change. It is positive in one way, these young girls go on about feminism and think it is so last year...last century and therefore there is a greater expectation there should be not discrimination but more work and money put into training to show that science isn't a boys thing but a girls thing. That is our responsibility

Jackie Edwards: I do think that there are more women working in childrens than men and this shows women that it is possible to do so if you have the patience and if you really want it you can do it. You have to be determined because it is a hard industry, it's competitive and you have to be resilient but it is possible to do it

# Discrimination

Jackie Cockle: If you are brave enough to be positive and you can do anything and not get hung up. If you want it enough just go for it. There is nothing to stop you. If you are driven by creativity and you want to make a show and you are passionate about it. Get on with it

Candy Guard: I think the most important thing is to just make stuff. Now with computers you really can make films and stuff quite cheaply. You've got a great set up

Jackie Cockle: The main thing is you have an idea you want to communicate and you've got a passion to tell it. No matter what job you choose that's what drive you.