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THE TOE DIALOGUES: ADVENTURES IN PREDATORY PUBLISHING

Speaker

Lisa L. Wynn,
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Date

Monday 2 March
3:00 – 4:30 pm

Location

Room 3.05, Marie Reay
Teaching Centre (#155),
Kambri, ANU

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The open access movement has spawned hundreds of new journals that spam academics with invitations to pay to publish. A librarian coined the phrase 'predatory publishers' to describe open-access journals that do not subject submissions to peer review, and a number of academics have tested the boundaries of this new publishing world by submitting, and occasionally publishing, ridiculous articles. In this talk, Wynn describes how she started responding to publishing invitations from astrophysics, engineering, and nursing journals by jokingly offering to submit articles, photos, limericks and epic poems about toes. Most of these journals welcomed her toe submissions.

Wynn situates these 'toe dialogues' within a long academic tradition of journal pranks, arguing that the jokes academics play on pseudo-journals can tell us a lot about the terrain of academic publishing, from intellectual hierarchies to the international political economy of academic labor. The business model of for-profit academic publishers like Elsevier and the recent scandal at the open access anthropology journal HAU have challenged our understanding of what it means for a

journal or publisher to be 'predatory'. There are many ways that academic publishing is predatory, and many ways that the system's prestige economy is infused with exploitative hierarchies and pyramids schemes. The journals that want to charge academics a few hundred dollars to publish joke articles are, arguably, small fry when compared to some of the other operators with whom we academics regularly consort. In fact, the reason why these small-fry predators get the disparaging label 'predatory' is because they lack the social and cultural capital necessary for truly effective predation. These journals thus act as scapegoats for academics' own dissatisfaction with academic publishing.

Speaker

Associate Professor Wynn is former Head of the Anthropology Dept, Macquarie University, and current President of the Australian Anthropological society. Instagram: [@australiananthropology](https://www.instagram.com/australiananthropology)

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