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“Betwixt Odysseys: A Hellenic Soap Opera with a Godly Twist”: A Critical Retrospective

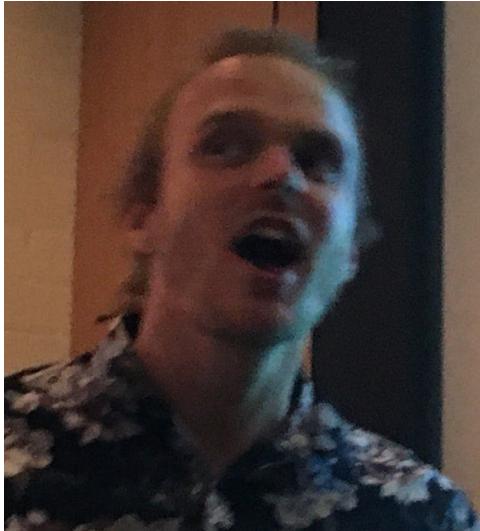
Matthew Alger



Australian
National
University



Betwixt Odysseys: A Hellenic Soap Opera with a Godly Twist



"Showrunner/screenwriter"
Adam D. Rains.



Adam presenting his talk at the
Seminars.

- Seminars talk
- Reminiscent of 2017–18
- “Golden Age” Rains
- 12 minutes + questions
- “High hopes” — Karlie

Outline

- Themes of the talk
- Audience engagement
- Examination of the Kickstarter framing device
- Literary devices and their link to theme
- Reflection

Themes are important

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“Comedy without purpose is not comedy at all.”



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Themes are important



"Comedy without purpose is not comedy at all."



A criticism of shared universes

- Central thesis: “shared universes are bad”
- Introduction to shared universes in Adam’s talk is bad on purpose
- Examples of universe sharing undermining existing canon



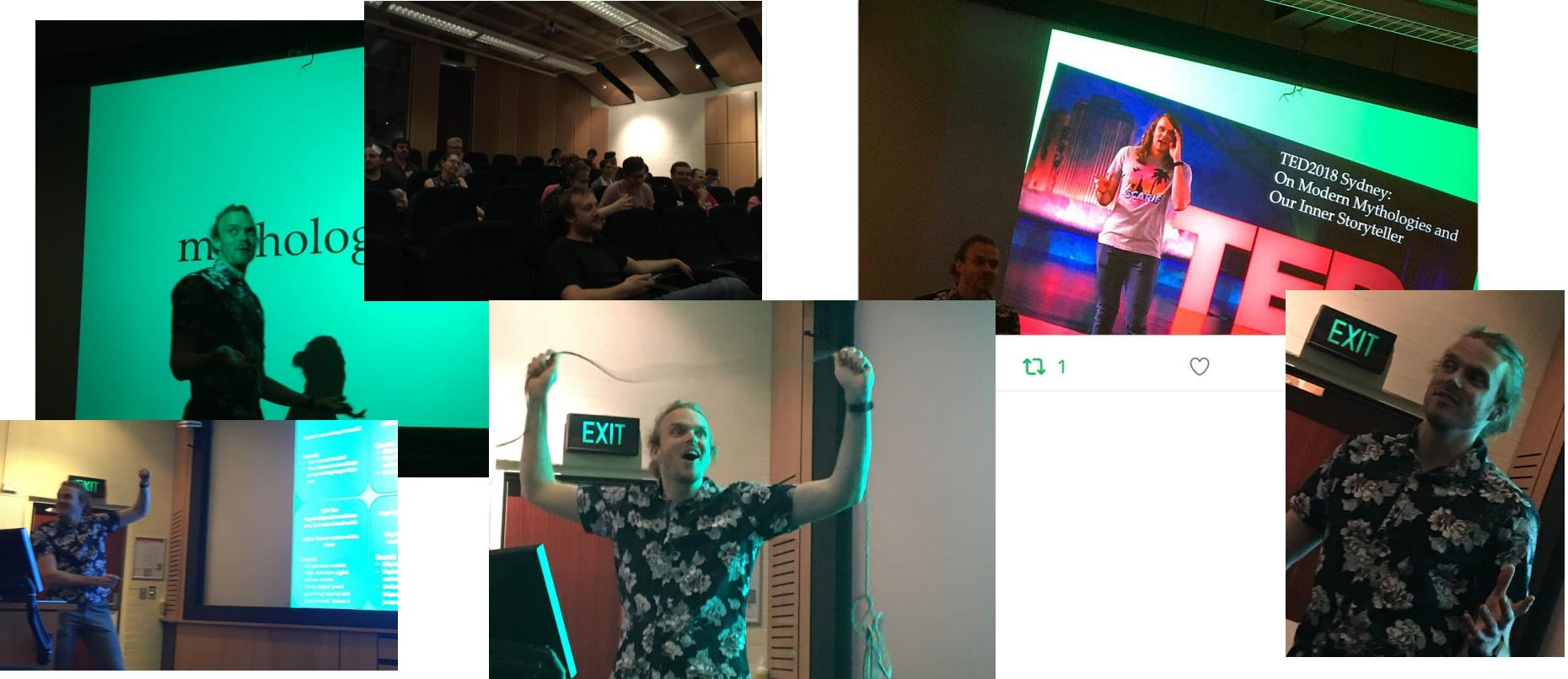
Adam uses intentionally bad examples of shared universes.

What is a shared universe?





A play-by-play review



Chekhov's gun

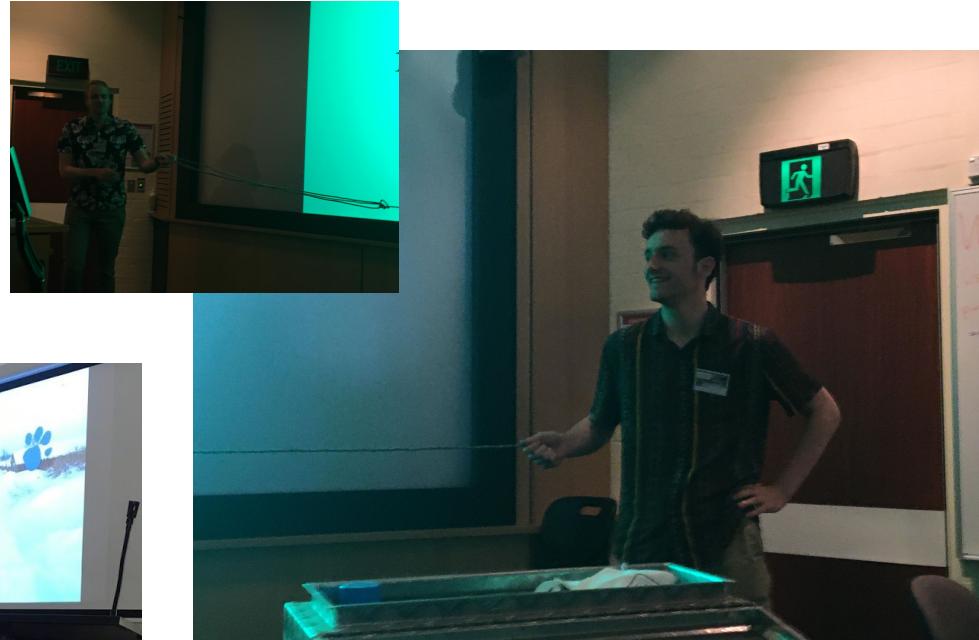
"If you say in the first chapter that there is a rifle hanging on the wall, in the second or third chapter it absolutely must go off. If it's not going to be fired, it shouldn't be hanging there."

— Anton Chekhov

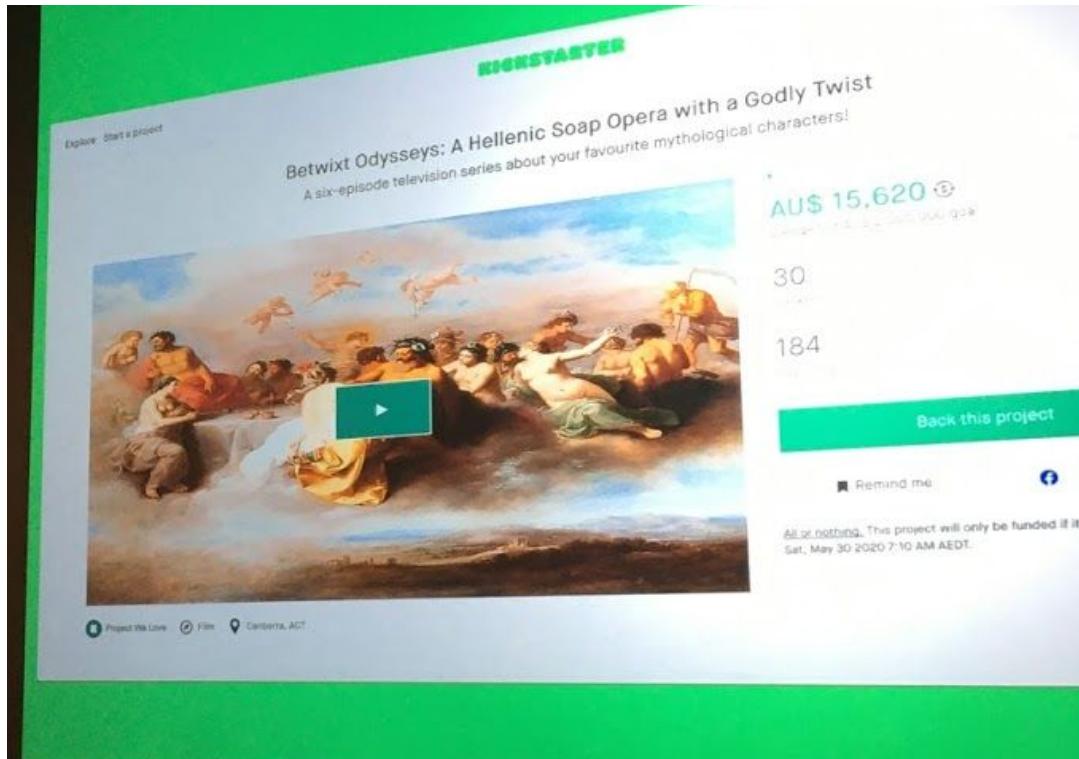


Audience interaction

- Rope conduit for audience engagement
- Audience lives vicariously through one audience member
- Demo



Comparison with a Real, Successful Project



Comparison with a Real, Successful Project

Grilled Cheesus



Your prayers have been answered! Feast on the Goodness. Everybody loves cheese! Please come support us on Kickstarter.

Created by

Rob Corso and Meg Sheehan

286 backers pledged \$25,604 to help bring this project to life.

>Last updated May 28, 2012

Outline comparison

Betwixt Odysseys

1. Introduction and pitch
2. Backstory
3. Cast & episodes
4. Goals, rewards, and stretch goals

Grilled Cheesus

- 
1. Introduction and pitch
 2. Backstory
 3. Description and mockup
 4. Goals, rewards, and stretch goals

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/852445514/grilled-cheesus/>

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(Opinion)**

Crowdfunding under criticism

The Startup 

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Kickstarter: can crowdfunding save culture?

Kickstarter began as a way for small investors to 'bring creative projects to life'. But are the wrong people getting rich? Co-founder Yancey Strickler explains

Inc.

3 Reasons Not to CrowdFund

Yes, crowdfunding is cool. It's democratic. It's disruptive. And it's a bad idea for a lot of start-ups.



By Ari Zoldan *CEO, Quantum Media Group*  @arizoldan

Read This Before You Even Think About Crowdfunding

Or you'll probably have a bad time.



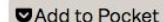
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

The False Promise of Kickstarter

By BERSEPHONE JONES | November 16, 2012



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Forcing a critical audience

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David Nield
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CASEY JOHNSTON · 10/27/2014, 4:00 AM

Emerging Tech

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By Drew Prindle · March 14, 2019 4:58PM PST

Inc.

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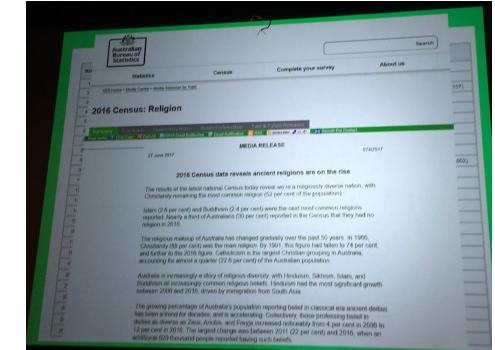
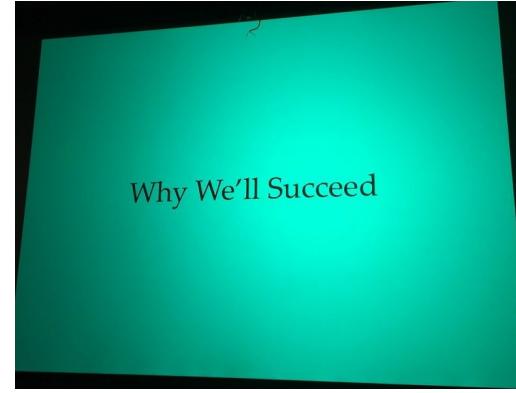
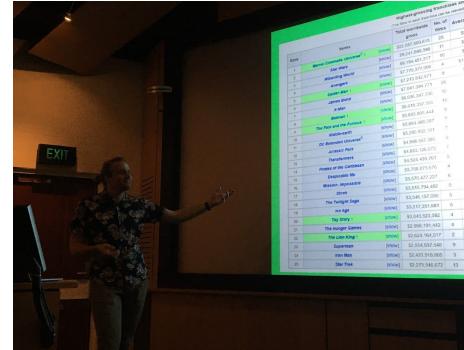
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By Erik Sherman Contributor, Inc.com @ErikSherman

“Success”

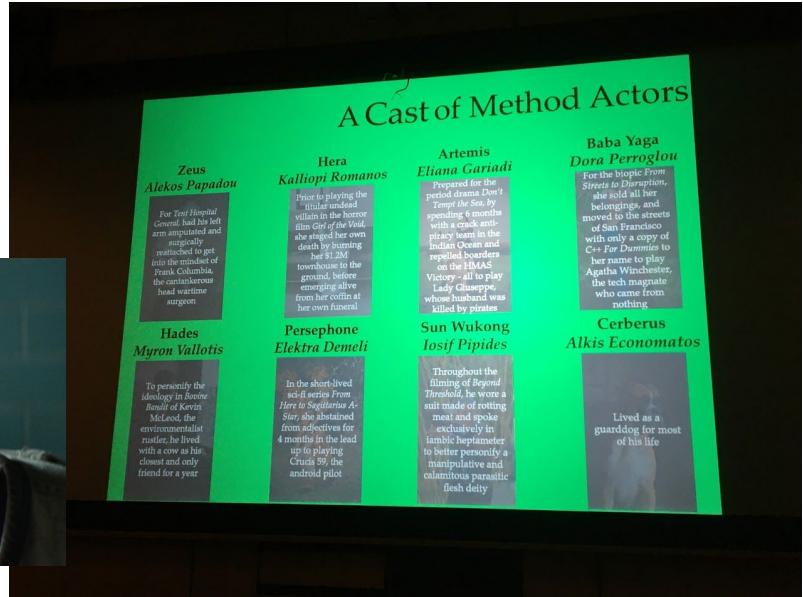
- Capitalists and the census — hated by socialists and libertarians respectively
- Appeal to numbers intended to be taken cynically in the context of the Kickstarter
- Surface-level reading of source material



Cold cynicism underpins Adam's happy-go-lucky talk.

A cast of method actors?

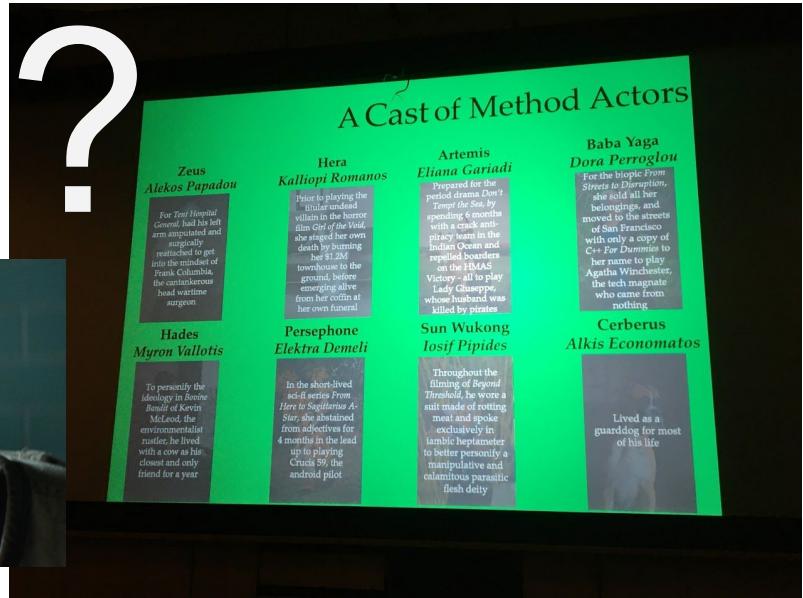
- Draws a parallel between contemporary method acting and shared universe fiction
- Distaste and contempt



Method actors are not in vogue.

A cast of method actors?

- Draws a parallel between contemporary method acting and shared universe fiction
- Distaste and contempt



Method actors are not in vogue.

Easter eggs reward audience attention



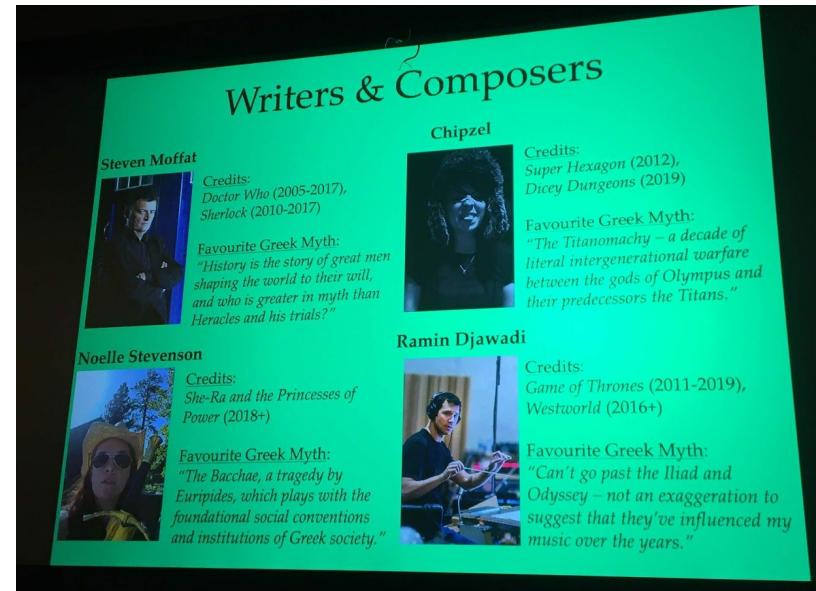
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Easter eggs reward audience attention



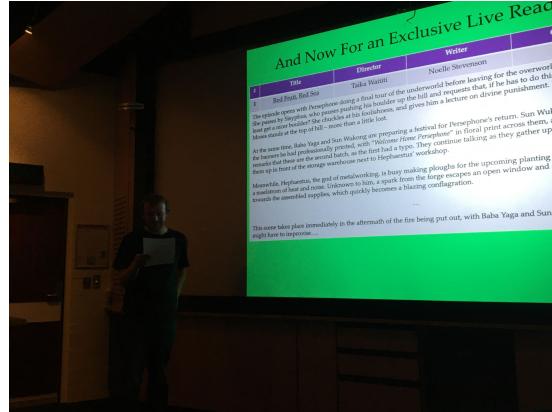
Directors and writers?

- Conflicting direction and writing styles emphasise main theme
- Taken to extremes with combination of chiptune and orchestral music



Shared universes undermine themes

- Each of the traditional stories has an interloper who defeats the purpose
- Episode summaries and live reading aim to hammer this point home



And Now For an Exclusive Live Reading			
Title	Director	Writer	Composer
1 Red Fruit, Red Sea	Taika Waititi	Noelle Stevenson	Chloé
2 Funeral Fuss	Gwen Williams	Noelle Stevenson	Chloé
3 Monday Memory Madness	Taika Waititi	Noelle Stevenson	Chloé
4 Medusa in the Meadow	David 'Davo' Davidson	Noelle Stevenson	Chloé
5 Dog Days	Jennifer Kent	Noelle Stevenson	Chloé

The slide also contains several paragraphs of text describing the plot of the episode, mentioning Persephone, Moses, Hades, Anubis, and Zeus, along with some stage directions and notes for the actors.



Goals and rewards

- Shallow backer rewards parody Kickstarter to highlight central thesis
- Repeated Zeus-themed merchandise undermines Zeus' minor secondary role as God of Anticonsumerism



Summary

- Audience interaction drives engagement with talk
- Theme conveyed through tropes, parody, and literary device
- Analogues between objects of contempt and shared universes
- Intentional undermining of presentation highlights the undermining of canons shared universes bring
- Highly critical talk with modern relevance



Thank you for listening!