

# The Humour Studies Digest

Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)

April 2014



## Flinders' 2014 "Year of Humour" and AHSN Conference 2015

*2015 Conference Organising Team reports*

The 21st AHSN Conference will take place on 4 - 6 February 2015 at the State Library of South Australia.

The organising team comprises four Flinders University staff: Dr Christine Nicholls (Australian Studies), Associate Professor Robert Phiddian (English), Dr Colette Mrowa-Hopkins (French) and Dr Antonella Strambi (Italian).

"Humour Studies" has been selected as the 2014 principal research theme for Flinders University Humanities Research Institute (FIRtH).

The year of activities around this broad theme began in February with a well-attended two-day Research Symposium for Flinders University staff and students (Respondant: Dr Jessica Milner Davis, University of Sydney). This will be followed up by four visiting scholars who will work with Flinders staff in a number of areas, particularly pragmatics, Aboriginal humour, and political satire.

Whilst at Flinders, visiting scholars will present their own research

to staff and to members of the public, beginning with Dr Michael Haugh (Griffith University), who will give a public lecture on the interrelationships between teasing and humour in everyday Australian interaction (see page 3).

*Continues over page*

### ***Hold the Dates!***

AHSN Conference 2015

**4 -6 February 2015**

State Library of South Australia

North Terrace, Adelaide

**Call for Papers: Early May 2014**

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The 2015 AHSN Conference represents the culmination of this year of academic focus at Flinders University.

A warm welcome is extended to all involved in the Humour Studies Network. The Conference Call for Papers and Workshops will be announced in early May by email and on the AHSN website. Meanwhile, the Organisers hope to see you all in Adelaide next February!



## **Chaplin Novel and Museum: An Upcoming Adventure for AHSN Member**

2014 has been a busy year for Charlie Chaplin.

It has been 100 years since Chaplin first graced the silver screen. Now, Chaplin's only known novel *Footlights*, the basis of his 1952 classic *Limelight*, is due to be published for the first time later this year.

Work has also begun on a Chaplin museum at Le Manoir de Ban in Corsier-sur-Vevey, Switzerland, where Chaplin spent the last 25 years of his life.

Dr Peter Gerdes (Former Associate Prof of Film Studies at UNSW) journeyed to Corsier-sur-Vevey to make a film with Chaplin in 1974. They created a short newsreel film to celebrate his 85th birthday.

Peter has fond memories of the house and plans to return to it in the coming months.

"Plans are to bring back all that stylish furniture I had seen him move around in, including the piano," says Peter.

When asked what Peter planned to do during his visit, he said, "One should, of course, get a copy of Chaplin's soon-to-be-published novel!"

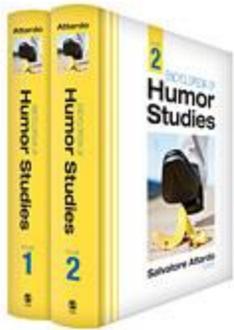
The AHSN look forward to a report on Peter's adventure to Le Manoir de Ban and his first look at *Footlights*.

You can view an extract of the novel here:

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/feb/04/footlights-charlie-chaplin-extract>



**Peter Gerdes** (right) with his wife **Rosmarie** and **Bruce Findlay** (Swinburne U of T and Chair, AHSN Review Panel) at the 2011 AHSN Hobart Conference (University of Tasmania).



## **OUT SOON: *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies***

Ed. Salvatore Attardo. 2014. 2 vols. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications. 984 pp.  
ISBN: 9781412999090. \$350.00 (pre-publication: \$315.00)

*Please recommend to your Librarian – available in e-format or hard copy.*

*Note: pre-publication rate of \$315.00 expires 30 May 2014).*

**Editor in Chief:** Salvatore Attardo (Texas A&M University-Commerce)

### **Editorial Board:**

- Thomas E. Ford (Western Carolina University)
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- Moira Marsh (Indiana University)
- Jessica Milner Davis (University of Sydney)
- John Morreall (College of William & Mary)
- Victor Raskin (Purdue University)

### **Publisher's description:**

The *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies* explores the concept of humor in history and modern society in the United States and internationally. This work's scope encompasses the humor of children, adults, and even nonhuman primates throughout the ages, from crude jokes and simple slapstick to sophisticated word play and ironic parody and satire. As an academic social history, it includes the perspectives of a wide range of disciplines, including sociology, child development, social psychology, life style history, communication, and entertainment media. Readers will develop an understanding of the importance of humor as it has developed globally throughout history and appreciate its effects on child and adult development, especially in the areas of health, creativity, social development, and imagination. This two-volume set is available in both print and electronic formats.

### **Features & Benefits:**

- The book's 335 articles are organized in A-to-Z fashion in two volumes (approximately 1,000 pages).
- This work is enhanced by an introduction by the General Editor, an invited Foreword, a list of the articles and contributors, and a Reader's Guide that groups related entries thematically.
- A Chronology of Humor, a Resource Guide, and a detailed Index are included.
- Each entry concludes with References/Further Readings and cross references to related entries.
- The Index, Reader's Guide themes, and cross references between and among related entries combine to provide robust search-and-browse features in the electronic version.

This two-volume, A-to-Z set provides a general, non-technical resource for students and researchers in such diverse fields as communication and media studies, sociology and anthropology, social and cognitive psychology, history, literature and linguistics, and popular culture and folklore. *Source:* <http://www.sagepub.com/booksProdDesc.nav?prodId=Book235990#tabview=title>

Your Eds would like to celebrate the phenomenal contribution from AHSN Members. Australasian scholars are clearly world leaders in humour (and even humor) research!

**Congratulations to:**

**Jocelyn Chey (University of Sydney):** History of Humor, Classical and Traditional China; The *Huaji*-ists; *Xiangsheng*; *Xiehouyu*

**Conal Condren (University of Queensland):** Satire

**Daniel Derrin (Macquarie University):** Shakespearean Comedy

**Kenneth R. Dutton (University of Newcastle):** Doggerel; Limericks

**Michael Ewans (University of Newcastle):** Ancient Greek Comedy; Aristophanes; Satyr Play; Menander;

**Mike Lloyd (Victoria University of Wellington):** Obscenity

**Peter Marks (University of Sydney):** *Monty Python*

**Rodney Marks (Independent Scholar and Comedian, with Jessica Milner Davis):** Hoax and Prank

**Meredith Marra (Victoria University of Wellington):** Subversive Humor

**Gerard Matte (ACU, Melbourne):** Freudian/Psychoanalytic Theory

**Aubrey Mellor (LaSalle College, Singapore):** Lazzi; Mime;

**Jessica Milner Davis (University of Sydney):** Bergson and the Theory of the Comic; Farce; Genres and Styles of Comedy; High Comedy and Low Comedy; (with **John Parkin, University of Bristol**): Comedy

**Will Noonan (Université de Bourgogne à Dijon):** Absurdist humor; Inversion, Topsy-Turvy; Science, Science Fiction and Humor; (with **Jessica Milner Davis**): Humor and Literature

**Robert Phiddian (Flinders University, with Will Noonan):** History of Humor, Early Modern Europe

**Marguerite A. Wells (Independent Scholar):** History of Humor, Modern Japan; Kyōgen; Rakugo; Senryū; Sha-re; (with **Ronald Stewart, Hiroshima Prefectural University**): History of Humor, Premodern Japan

**Haiqing Yu (UNSW):** *E'gao*, Culture of Internet Spoofing in China

## **EVENT: FIRTH Public Lecture on Humour and Australian Banter – Flinders University**

**Time:** Tuesday 10 June 2014, 5.30pm for 6.00pm

**Location:** Flinders-in-the-City, 182 Victoria Square, Adelaide (the old Reserve Bank Building).

**Directions:** Enter from Flinders Street or Victoria Square (the Lecture Theatre for the presentation is on the first floor)

**Michael Haugh, Languages and Linguistics, Griffith University**

### *Jocular mockery and banter in everyday Australian interaction*

Teasing in everyday interactions, which combines elements of (ostensible) provocation and ostensible playfulness in a figurative cutting down or diminishment of a target, has been the subject of a growing body of studies. However, what has arguably not been as well studied to date is the interactional mechanics of the different kinds of social actions through which teasing is accomplished. In this presentation, the ways in which teasing as *mocking/ridiculing* can be accomplished in a jocular or non-serious frame, or what is termed “jocular mockery” (Haugh 2010), and how these jocular teases can develop into extended sequences of “banter” (Dynel 2008; Leech 1983; Plester and Sayers 2007) is examined building on methodological and analytical insights from interactional and corpus-assisted pragmatics (Haugh 2014). The ways in which various kinds of “serious” interactional work can be accomplished in “unofficial” ways through ostensibly non-serious instances of jocular mockery and banter is also discussed.

### *References*

Dynel, M. 2008. No aggression, only teasing: the pragmatics of teasing and banter. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 4: 241-261.

Haugh, M. 2010. Jocular mockery, (dis)affiliation and face. *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 2106-2119.

Haugh, M. 2014. Jocular mockery as interactional practice in everyday Anglo-Australian conversation. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 34: 76-99.

Leech, G. 1983. *Principles of Pragmatics*. Longman, London.

Plester, B. and J. Sayers. 2007. 'Taking the piss': functions of banter in the IT industry. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* 20: 157-187.

**Bio-note:** Associate Professor Michael Haugh has been involved in research on pragmatics and the English language with a focus on (im)politeness, **implied meanings and humour** for a number of years. A full listing of his publications is **available** at: <http://www.griffith.edu.au/humanities-languages/school-languages-linguistics/staff/michael-haugh>

## **University of Sydney EVENT**

### **Accessing English Humour in Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Texts: Sources, Contexts, Intentions, Reception**

MEMC (The Medieval and Early Modern Centre at the University of Sydney) and AHSN are holding a Joint Seminar in Second Semester 2014.

**Time:** 17 September 2014, 4.00 – 6.30pm

**Location:** Common Room, John Woolley Building (N480 – 4th floor), University of Sydney, Camperdown (main) campus.

#### **Programme**

1. “The Old English *Riddle 86* and the Nature of Anglo-Saxon Humour”

**April Bertels-Garnsey** [april.bertelsgarnsey@sydney.edu.au](mailto:april.bertelsgarnsey@sydney.edu.au)

2. “Classroom Insults and Humour in Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*”

**Anna Wallace** [annamwallace@gmail.com](mailto:annamwallace@gmail.com)

3. “Humour and Deception in Versions of *Tristan and Isolde*”

**Chenoa Hunter** [chenoa.hunter@sydney.edu.au](mailto:chenoa.hunter@sydney.edu.au)

4. *Humour in the Early Robin Hood Ballad*.

Likely focus: the intersection of humour, finances, and the Church.

**Sabina Rahman** [srah2881@uni.sydney.edu.au](mailto:srah2881@uni.sydney.edu.au)

#### **Refreshments**

#### **Discussants:**

Em. Prof. Conal Condren FAHA FASSA (University of Queensland)

Prof. Daniel Anlezark (University of Sydney, TBC)

All AHSN members and guests are welcome, but please contact for catering purposes and further directions: Dr Jessica Milner Davis, AHSN Co-ordinator: [jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au](mailto:jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au)

## POSTGRAD HIGHLIGHT

This month, *The Digest* profiles doctoral candidates at Flinders University: Karen Lee Austin and Beatriz Carbajal Carrera.



### **Karen Lee Austin**

*'Explorations into the humour discourse of Australia's Indigenous people.'*

Karen is currently writing a PhD thesis that investigates the forms and functions of humour used by Indigenous Australian people. Her thesis investigates how it is that humour has played, and continues to play, an important role in Indigenous Australian communities. She considers both the nature and purposes of humour in some Australian Indigenous cultures, primarily via the performing and visual arts. Karen will show that recognisable humour topics and structures have existed, and continue to exist, in Indigenous post-colonial socio-political discourse. Through a chronological engagement with select humour practices, her dissertation explores what some of those recognisable forms are as shown in early (European) recordings of Indigenous practices and also those found in traditional narratives. She questions how and why such forms of humour were used, and she ponders what happened to those practices in post-colonial environs. Finally, Karen investigates how, and to what purpose, humour is used currently by some urban Indigenous Australians within a mainstream performing arts setting

#### **Background:**

Karen's Honours Degree explored Indigenous Australian Photography with a particular emphasis on the photographic artwork of Indigenous artist, Nici Cumpston. She completed this project with an award of first class honours and a university medal for academic excellence. During the project Karen keenly noted that humour is a frequent thematic in much Indigenous Australian visual art work. This recognition set her on a trajectory to explore humour's use in the broader context of Indigenous visual and performing arts. Karen has a keen interest in both the dynamic practices of Indigenous artistic expressions, as well as in the uses of humour within those fields.

#### **Contact:**

Karen currently holds a tutoring position in the School of Social and Policy Studies at Flinders University. She can be contacted via email at [Karen.austin@flinders.edu.au](mailto:Karen.austin@flinders.edu.au).

## POSTGRAD HIGHLIGHT

### Beatriz Carbajal Carrera

*'A buen entendedor, pocas palabras bastan? Estudio contrastivo entre hablantes nativos y no nativos de la interacción humorística con manifestaciones culturales en la obra de Alberto Montt.'*

*'A Word to the Wise Is Enough? A Contrastive Study of Native and Non-Native Speakers' Humoristic Interaction with Cultural Manifestations in Alberto Montt's Work'*



Beatriz is currently writing a PhD thesis on responses to humoristic cartoons. Her thesis investigates the impact of the speaker's communication styles and strategies on their interaction with cartoons in Spanish. From the perspectives of Intercultural Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis, her dissertation explores the variables of appropriateness and humour effectiveness (joke recognition and appreciation). Particularly, it draws attention to cartoons containing references to folklore, such as distorted proverbs, literature, pop culture and musical tradition. Her research looks at idiomatic expressions enfolded in absurdity, inappropriateness and language play, questioning which of those elements are less grasped and valued by cartoon readers. The purpose of her project is primarily to identify significant obstacles in foreign language learning, and secondly to compensate this lack with a valid learning strategy.

#### Background:

Her Master thesis consisted of a pragmatic-discursive study of jokes applied to Spanish Second Language courses. It can be accessed online here: [http://www.mecd.gob.es/redele/Biblioteca-Virtual/2012/memoria\\_Master/Beatriz-Carbajal.html](http://www.mecd.gob.es/redele/Biblioteca-Virtual/2012/memoria_Master/Beatriz-Carbajal.html) . She has a keen interest in humour studies related to intercultural communication, cultural misunderstandings, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, language play, taboo, and visual culture.

#### Contact:

She holds a lecturer position in Spanish at Flinders University since 2012. To connect with Beatriz and find out more about her work, visit <https://flinders.academia.edu/BeatrizCarbajalCarrera> .

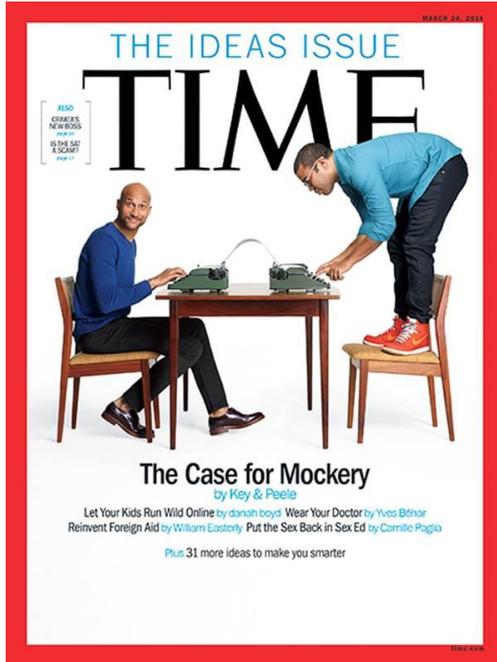
### *Do you know a promising grad student?*

We're looking to showcase graduate students at the early stages of their projects. If you've got a student in mind, please encourage them to send us a 250 words summary of their project and we will feature them in the coming months. Postgrads, you are of course welcome to contact us on your own volition.

Send submissions to your Eds (Rebecca at [rebecca.higgie@curtin.edu.au](mailto:rebecca.higgie@curtin.edu.au) or Jessica at [jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au](mailto:jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au) ) and let us celebrate and encourage upcoming talent in humour research.

## Member Message from Rodney Marks

Corporate Comedian <http://comedian.com.au/>



*In his ceaseless round to keep up with the latest business developments and any connections with humour, Rodney noted the March "Ideas Issue" of Time Magazine featuring advocacy for mockery in public and private life.*

*Rodney writes:*

On the cover of Time magazine's 13 March 2014 South Pacific edition (The Ideas Issue), there is a comical photo of Key and Peele, at the title "The Case for Mockery". Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele are the creators of their eponymous television sketch-comedy, Key and Peele, shown on Comedy Central in the US, and in Australia on the Comedy Channel, both since 2012. Both are African-Americans, and Barack Obama is a recurring character on their show.

They write in the article that they like to make fun of everything, and they decry political correctness:

*But ask yourself again what's worse: making fun of people or assuming that they're too weak to take it?*

*The white whale of comedy is still out there. The day we can make fun of a black lesbian dwarf with Down syndrome who's in a wheelchair, and someone who isn't a black lesbian dwarf with Down syndrome is able to laugh—instead of trying to protect the dwarf's feelings—we can pack up our artificial larynxes and retire.*

It is remarkable that Time magazine can have a front cover on comedy, but humour studies is not taught at many universities, or taken seriously.

*Do you have a Member Message?*

*Send submissions to your Eds (Rebecca at [rebecca.higgin@curtin.edu.au](mailto:rebecca.higgin@curtin.edu.au) or Jessica at [jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au](mailto:jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au) )*

## **A Raucous Recommendation!**

Every day, AHSN scholars study and enjoy wonderful forms of humour. Two graduate students, Alison O'Connor and Rebecca Higgie, got to know each other from opposite sides of the country by sharing beloved objects of study and humour. Together, they decided that this should be extended to all AHSN members!



This month, Jessica Milner Davis shares some of her favourite Japanese humour.

**Her hot tip: "Japanese Tradition" by the Rahmens Duo (and friends)**

Look for their tongue-in-cheek videos on *YouTube*. Jessica recommends two of her favourites:

On Eating Sushi: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDL8yu34fz0>

On Apologising: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bG6oT5kYI0Y>

Got something to share in the next *Digest*? Send it to Rebecca at [rebecca.higgie@curtin.edu.au](mailto:rebecca.higgie@curtin.edu.au)

### ***New ASHN Member Publications***

Mahmud Farjami. (2014). Political Satire as an Index of Press Freedom: A Review of Political Satire in the Iranian Press during the 2000s. *Iranian Studies*. On-line: DOI 10.1080/00210862.2013.860325 To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2013.860325>

Susan Seizer (Indiana University) has published her most recent ISHS paper (Boston, 2011) on-line: <http://humorinamerica.wordpress.com/2014/03/24/craft-and-magic-on-the-u-s-comedy-club-stage/>

Your Ed Rebecca Higgie has been conferred (That's Dr Ed to you now!)? Her thesis, *Speaking Truth: The Play of Politics and Australian Satire*, is available to download at: [https://www.academia.edu/6532050/Speaking\\_truth\\_the\\_play\\_of\\_politics\\_and\\_Australian\\_satire](https://www.academia.edu/6532050/Speaking_truth_the_play_of_politics_and_Australian_satire)

## **CALL FOR PAPERS: Comedy and Society Symposium**

**November 22nd 2014**

**School of Drama, Music and Screen, University of Hull, UK**

Bringing together scholars from a range of disciplines (theatre and performance studies, literature, sociology, psychology, politics and philosophy), this symposium aims to encourage a wide-ranging consideration of the contribution made to society by comedy in all its forms. How, for example, is it possible to theorise the connection between comedy and politics, comedy and society, comedy and identity and comedy and gender? In what ways has comedy's impact on society shifted from its earliest incarnations to the present day? What was or is the manner in which playwrights reflect on the nature of their own craft, and its impact on social life? What might the relationships between personal or political protest and comedy be? To what extent can comedy issue a challenge to society by tackling prejudice and stereotyping head-on?

The symposium includes Keynote Presentations from **Professor Arpad Szakolczai**, Professor of Sociology at University College, Cork and **Dr Sharon Lockyer**, Director of the Centre for Comedy Studies Research, Brunel University.

Papers are invited which engage with the questions above in relation to any form of written or performed comedy, historical or contemporary. Abstracts of 300 words for papers lasting 20 minutes should be sent to **Dr Louise Peacock** at [l.s.peacock@hull.ac.uk](mailto:l.s.peacock@hull.ac.uk) by 22nd May 2014.

### ***The Humour Studies Digest***

### ***The Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)***

***'We put the "U" back into "HUMOUR"!***

Send newsletter submissions to our Co-Editors:

Rebecca at [rebecca.higgie@curtin.edu.au](mailto:rebecca.higgie@curtin.edu.au) or Jessica at [Jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au](mailto:Jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au)

To subscribe or unsubscribe, visit the AHSN website (<http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies>), click on "Subscribe to e-Newsletter" and follow the prompts to enter or remove an email address.

When contacting us, please edit your Subject line so it is more specific than "Re: Contents of The Humour Studies Digest..."