

# 24th Australasian Humour Studies Network Annual Conference

2-4 February,  
Centre for Tourism and Regional Opportunities  
Central Queensland University, Cairns Campus

## Humour: How Does it Travel?



CQUniversity Cairns Campus



Cairns Esplanade





## **Welcome and Acknowledgements**

We would like to welcome you to the 24th Australasian Humour Studies Network conference. We would also like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Gimuy Wulabara Yidinji Nations.

This event is proudly hosted by the Centre for Tourism and Regional Opportunities (CTRO) at Central Queensland University's (CQU), Cairns Campus. The CTRO is a research centre with a focus to undertake research across the fields of economics, tourism, human society, management, Indigenous issues, agriculture and food, and the environment.

Befitting the nature of tourism and travel, the theme of this year's conference is "Humour: How Does it Travel?" This theme's focus is on addressing the concept and practice of how humour travels, whether between times or places, genres or forms, from creator to recipient, from one hearer to another, as well as humour about travel including tourism experiences and exotic locations, and the questions of whether such travelling is successful, and why – or why not.

We would like to thank all conference attendees who are sharing their knowledge and insights with us, and in particular those who travelled from overseas to Cairns to make this conference a memorable event.

Warm regards from the organising committee,  
Anja Pabel  
Jessica Milner Davis  
Bruce Findlay

## Conference Program

FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2018	
24th Australasian Humour Studies Network Annual Conference	
Venue: Central Queensland University, Cairns Campus	
Time	Activity
From 13:00	<b>Registration</b> with welcome tea/refreshments; Book Table; Posters etc <i>Level Three Foyer</i>
14.00-14:30	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping – Anja Pabel <i>Room 3.27</i>
14:30-15:30	<b>Keynote Address 1</b> Chair: Anja Pabel Opportunism and embellishment in travel storytelling- Philip Pearce <i>Room 3.27</i>
15:30-16:30	<b>Plenary Session 1</b>
Room 3.27	<b>Theme: Social Media and Humour</b> Chair: Bruce Findlay 1. The use of humour in an online community - Kerry Mullan 2. Cultural contexts of Facebook reactions buttons: Like or laugh? - Liisi Laineste
16:30-17:30	<b>Welcome Drinks</b> <i>Level Three Foyer</i>
17.30-late	Conference goers make their own dinner arrangements. Many restaurants are within walking distance of CQU.

SATURDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2018	
24th Australasian Humour Studies Network Annual Conference	
Venue: Central Queensland University, Cairns Campus	
Time	Activity
9.00-10.00	<p><b>Keynote Address 2</b>            Chair: Liisi Laineste            Censorship humour around the world – Laura Little            Room 3.27</p>
10.00-10.30	<b>Morning Tea - Level Three Foyer</b>
10.30-12.00	<b>Concurrent Sessions A and B</b>
<p>Room: 3.27  <b>THEME: Failed Humour</b>            Chair: Carmen Moran            1. “It’s not funny at all”: Failed humour in Chinese sitcoms: A case study of <i>Ipartment</i> - Ying Cao            2. <i>Kaiwanxiao</i> (“just kidding”): Conversational humour and claims to non-serious intent in Taiwanese talk shows - Wei-Lin Melody Chang, Michael Haugh and Daniel Kadar            3. “It’s not nice [...] you’re just taking the piss out of me”: Failed humour and differences in its evaluation by (non-)participants - Valeria Sinkeviciute</p>	<p>Room: 3.54  <b>THEME: Satirical Humour</b>            Chair: Michael Ewans            1. Fictional worlds in media satire: Two Polish cases - Wladyslaw Chlopicki            2. Stand-up comedy as a social corrective - Robert Crosby &amp; Michael Meany            3. The political video satire of Huw Parkinson - Lucien Leon</p>
12.00-13.30	<p><b>Lunch and Poster Presentation</b> - Elaine Anderson            Title of poster presentation: What’s my line? Expert advice requested!            Level Three Foyer</p>
13.30-15.00	<b>Concurrent Sessions C and D</b>
<p>Room: 3.27  <b>THEME: Humour in Australia</b>            Chair: Kerry Mullan            1. Australian data for the Benevolent and Corrective Humour Scale (BenCor) - Bruce Findlay            2. Breaking the taboo: Sport and satire in Australia - Jessica Milner Davis            3. Comic verse into film comedy: Humouring <i>The Sentimental Bloke</i></p>	<p>Room: 3.54  <b>THEME: Being a Comedian</b>            1. (Interactive workshop). Is humour funny? Why a duck? If you duck do you still get creamed with a pie? Is a protagonist antagonistic or just in agony? Is agony justified by a pie? - Ira Seidenstein</p>

- Peter Kirkpatrick	
15.00-15.30	<b>Afternoon Tea</b> - <i>Level Three Foyer</i>
15.30-17.00	<b>Plenary Session 2</b>
Room: 3.27	<b>THEME: Performing Humour</b> Chair: Jessica Milner Davis 1. Comedy as method: Using humour to do research - Craig Batty & Stayci Taylor 2. <i>O carne vale!</i> How laughter goes through the stomach – Clowns and cannibalism - Anna-Sophie Jürgens 3. Tickling the masses: the rise, fall and rescue of humour in Australian circus - Mark St Leon
17.00-18.00	<b>Drinks and free time</b> - <i>Level Three Foyer</i>
18.00-Late	<b>Optional Conference Dinner:</b> The Raw Prawn

SUNDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2018	
24 <sup>th</sup> Australasian Humour Studies Network Annual Conference	
Venue: Central Queensland University, Cairns Campus	
Time	Activity
9.00-10.30	<b>Concurrent Sessions E and F</b>
Room: 3.27 <b>THEME: Verbal Humour</b> Chair: Wladyslaw Chlopicki 1. Riddling the Chinese riddle - Jocelyn Chey 2. Proprietary punning: Types of pun through Japanese history - Marguerite Wells 3. 'Do you call this thing a coat?': The travelling wit of the ultimate dandy and man of fashion, Beau Brummell - Dita Svelte	Room: 3.54 <b>THEME: Humour Across Time and Place 1</b> Chair: Peter Kirkpatrick 1. Can Aboriginal humour travel through time? - Karen Austin 2. Could tickling vary through time and place? - Angus McLachlan 3. Unpacking the art of teaching stand-up comedy - Justine Sless
10.30-11.30	<b>Morning Tea - Level Three Foyer</b>
11.30-12.30	<b>Concurrent Sessions G and H</b>
Room: 3.27 <b>THEME: Humour in Interaction</b> Chair: Craig Batty 1. Proposing a framework for the use of humour in pre-planned presentations to tourists - Anja Pabel & Philip Pearce 2. Tour guide or muse? Advancing student humour and creativity in language learning - Scott Gardner 3. Using humour to co-construct identity in social interaction - Roslyn Rowen & Lara Weinglass	Room: 3.54 <b>THEME: Humour Across Time and Place 2</b> Chair: Angus McLachlan 1. Can irony travel to Iran? Ethnoprismatic perspectives on the ironic - Reza Arab. 2. The doomsday smoothie: Peter Watts' firebrand humour - Ben Eldridge
12.30-13.30	<b>Lunch - Level Three Foyer</b>
13.30-15.00	<b>Plenary Session 3</b>
Room: 3.27	<b>THEME: Humour and Other Worlds</b> Chair: Bruce Findlay 1. Has Plautus stopped travelling? - Michael Ewans & Carl Caulfield 2. Time-travelling humour: Why the odd joke creates its own legacy - Adrian Hale 3. Travel from the beyond and other feats: Hoaxes and belief in the paranormal - Carmen Moran
15.00-16.00	<b>Farewell Afternoon Tea</b>

16.00-17.00 **AHSN Review Panel Meeting – room TBA**



**24<sup>th</sup> AHSN CONFERENCE, 2-4 FEBRUARY 2018, CQUniversity, CAIRNS CAMPUS**

## **Abstracts, Bios and Contact Information**

### **Keynote Speakers**

**Laura E. Little, Beasley School of Law, Temple University, USA**

#### ***KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Censorship humour around the world***

##### **Abstract**

Comedians know from experience, and research supports the proposition, that an audience will predictably laugh when observing a censored statement (whether bleeped or otherwise obscured) – at least where the audience has been primed by the context to interpret the statement as comedic. In fact, one need not look far in order to observe an entire genre of censorship humour—ranging from one of vintage TV shows to current internet memes—that employs the censors’ tools—bleeps, blurs, black bars, asterisks, and the like—to evoke or enhance laughter. For those who condemn censorship as the enemy of cherished free expression among citizens, one might reasonably ask how this comedy can flourish. This presentation will wrestle with the question: why is censorship funny?

Canvassing the various forms of censorship humour flourishing throughout world culture in print, film, television, music, and internet entertainment, the presentation will probe how censorship humour varies throughout the world. Many censorship jokes simply ridicule the censor. Particularly colourful evidence of this mock-the-censor humour can be observed in societies subject to repressive or totalitarian control. Other censorship humour, however, is more nuanced, suggesting that censorship humour might provide unique emotional rewards beyond simply providing a vehicle for expressing frustration at being muzzled. These emotional rewards may include a spark emitted from the benign danger of a censored joke and the creative enterprise of imagining what message was likely censored from a communication. Even more intriguing is the possibility that – at least in those societies that generally enjoy a free flow of ideas – censorship comedy may actually celebrate censorship itself. Indeed, citizens may find comfort in observing the line between proper and improper communication, which censorship jokes help to identify.

**Bionote:** **Laura E. Little** is the Charles Klein Professor of Law and Government at Temple University’s Beasley School of Law in Philadelphia. She has published extensively on US federal court jurisdiction, conflict of laws and constitutional law, as well as on humour and the law. She serves as Temple Law School’s Senior Advisor to the Dean and, in 2014, the premier legal society in the US, the American Law Institute, appointed her as Associate Reporter of the Restatement (Third) of Conflict of Laws. Before entering academia, Professor Little practiced law in Philadelphia, representing the print media in First Amendment cases and serving as law clerk to Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist of the Supreme Court of the United States. Laura has received many awards for both scholarship and teaching, including a national award for her article, *Regulating Funny: Humor and the*

*Law*. Her forthcoming book on this subject is titled *Humor Rules* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

**Philip L. Pearce, Distinguished Professor, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia**

***KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Opportunism and embellishment in travel storytelling***

**Abstract**

Telling a travel story in contemporary times is framed by a number of forces. Perhaps the two most powerful of these forces are the pervasive power of social media and the commonality of modern travel and holidays. Social media limits the impact of storytelling as photograph sharing, tweets and texts may have prepared the audience for aspects of the tales to be told. In a similar way, the commonality of holiday taking undermines the novelty and originality of many travel experiences. Audiences have heard these kinds of tales before and the speaker is in danger of being labelled the travel bore. For social life in general, and for the motives of being seen as successful, urbane, interesting and possibly culturally sensitive and aware, anyone who seeks to tell a travel story has to counteract the negative effects of anticipation, advanced awareness, and familiarity. The storyteller has to grasp an opportunity, offer a pithy account, and hold the audience. Embellishment and humour are tools to meet these objectives. A contrast can be drawn between the demands of modern travel storytelling and the older Australian tradition of the long-winded, meandering yarn. The presentation highlights how humour, particularly through grasping a momentary opportunity and cleverly using embellishment, can create a successful humorous travel episode. Examples from the research team's effort in understanding travel stories, including communication from tourists and to tourists, will be employed.

**Bionote:** Philip L. Pearce has written books on tourist behaviour (1982, 1988, 2005, 2011), positive psychology and tourism (2011, 2014), and tourism and humour (2015). He has a doctorate from the University of Oxford and was appointed as the first Professor of Tourism in Australia. His published papers are in the areas of tourist experience, emerging markets, and communities and tourism. He has developed models of tourist motivation and experience, and uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods. He has concentrated recently on Asian tourism topics (Pearce & Wu, 2017, *The World meets Asian tourists*). He is an active PhD supervisor with over 40 successful doctoral graduates and a current team of students from 6 countries. He particularly enjoys work with his students on fresh approaches to tourist experience design, emotions, satisfaction, and the management of tourists' behaviour. He was awarded the title Distinguished Professor at James Cook University in 2016, the first social scientist to achieve this accolade.

## Presentations

**Elaine Anderson, Independent Scholar, Vancouver**

***POSTER PRESENTATION: What's my line? Expert advice requested!***

### **Abstract**

This poster sets out Elaine's background and why she is interested in studying humour. Her background is in interdisciplinary studies including a PhD in Integrated Studies in Land and Food Systems. She spent about five years studying and performing improvisation (improv) and the same amount of time writing and performing comedy sketches on community television. This is her first Humour Studies conference and her poster presentation is designed to garner advice and ideas on how to further her research and knowledge in Humour Studies.

**Bionote:** **Elaine Anderson** is a graduate of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. The first part of her career was spent in communications focusing on television and video production writing, performing, and editing. Switching gears, she returned to university to complete three degrees (in English, Planning and Agriculture) culminating in an interdisciplinary PhD which combined her interests in agriculture, environment, community stewardship and public policy. She is now focussed on integrating humour studies into her future academic and professional career. She is particularly interested in the evolutionary roots of humour and the benefits humour might have as a potential tool in resolving conflict.

### ***Can irony travel to Iran? Ethnopragmatic perspectives on the ironic***

#### **Abstract**

In early 2016, a young French filmmaker made a video clip titled “Don’t Go to Iran”. Viewers see negative statements about the country while the pictures are the opposite. SBS, an Australian television network, republished the video on its website with the description “the spectacular Iranian tourism video which is deeply *ironic*” (17 May, 2016). An Iranian TV channel (Alalam, May 14, 2016) republished the same video, describing it as “*film.i bā ruykard.e tanz.āmiz*” (‘a film with humorous/satiric approach’). A surf in Persian social media shows that everybody easily understood the incongruity between what the film says and what it shows, but the Iranian users label the filmmaker’s message as *ta’ne* (glossed as ‘sarcastic’), *kenāye* (a higher category of allusion, indicating that the author or speaker says something but means something else), or *tanz* (literary humour). What this indicates is that, like any other linguaculture, Persian has its own cultural forms of playful language. Kuka (1923) was one of the first authors to notice this. Using the Anglo-English vocabulary, he writes that in Persian “we may not come across good specimens of sustained irony like that of Swift” while “Repartees and Epigrams, and in the display of fine Fancy, the Persians can stand comparison with any nation” (p. XIV). The general point that can be drawn from this and many other examples (from translated books and cross cultural communication) is that the categories, terms, and techniques of playful language are culture-specific and cannot transfer easily to other languages (cf. Goddard, 2017).

Irony is an important meta-category of figurative language in English, and it is generally recognised to include a variety of types (Gibbs, 2000: 356; cf. Dynel, 2017). This variety reveals a certain capacity for cognitive categorisation of playful language in English. This paper examines how the main theories of verbal irony in English define *the ironic*. It will examine three definitions of verbal irony by Grice (1989), Sperber & Wilson (1981), and Clark & Gerrig (1984). Based on this examination, I will use ethnopragmatic techniques of reductive paraphrase in simple cross-translatable words to show what *the ironic* means, and to compare it with similar categories of Persian to answer the question: Can irony travel to Iran?

#### **References:**

- Clark, H. & Gerrig, H. (1984). On the pretence theory of irony. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 113 (1): 121–126.
- Dynel, M. (2017). Academics vs. American scriptwriters vs. academics: A battle over the etic and emic “sarcasm” and “irony” labels. *Language & Communication*, 55: 69–87.
- Gibbs, R. W. (2000). Irony in talk among friends. *Metaphor and symbol*, 15(1-2): 5-27.
- Goddard, C. (2017). Ethnopragmatic perspectives on conversational humour, with special reference to Australian English. *Language & Communication*, 55: 55-68.
- Kuka, M. N. (1923). *Wit, Humour and fancy of Persia*. Bombay: New Impression.
- Sperber, D. & Wilson, D. (1981). *Irony and the use–mention distinction. Radical pragmatics*. New York: Academic Press.

**Bionote: Reza Arab** is a PhD student in linguistics at Griffith University in Brisbane. He worked on irony and intention for his Master's thesis at the University of Warsaw, Poland. Since beginning his doctoral work in 2016, he has been working on taste related vocabulary in the context of playful language in Persian (Farsi) and also on pragmatic categories of culture specific forms of witticism in Persian.

**Karen Austin, Department of Humanities and the Creative Arts, Flinders University, South Australia**

### ***Can Aboriginal humour travel through time?***

#### **Abstract**

Some historical anthropological studies have recognised elements of humour in the interactions of close-knit Indigenous Australian communities (Spencer [1914] 2014; Thomson 1935; Berndt 1976; Stanner [1956] 1982). While it is impossible to say whether or not recognisable humour forms have ‘travelled through time’ to influence current Indigenous Australian artistic works, my research explores this very question.

The propensity to embellish life with mickey-taking, humorous yarns and mimicry can be seen in the early records of some remote Aboriginal societies that have arguably been less affected by colonial hegemony than more modern Aboriginal communities. Records of these scenarios reveal how humour has been used as an important tool of social censure and solidarity, reinforcing the legal, moral and emotional boundaries of traditional Aboriginal communities. Contemporary research often acknowledges the group boundaries and solidarity that humour creates in social communications (Billig 2005; Kuipers 2009). This paper explores some of the early records of Aboriginal Australian societies, recognising the various forms and functions of humour in various events. It then ‘travels on’ to investigate contemporary forms of Aboriginal artistic expression, revealing how humour continues to play an active role in these expressions. Much of this work relies on humour as important tools of political protest, education and to engender a sense of social cohesion amongst Indigenous Australians (Garde 2008; McCullough 2008; Neu 2008; Oshima 2000). Often traditional humour forms can still be seen at work, connecting Indigenous artists with their histories, cultures and traditions. However, these humorous forms and functions have also journeyed beyond Aboriginal boundaries. Common humour forms can be seen at use beyond the confines of Aboriginal communities, and as recognisable aspects of broader Australian humour traditions. Shared humour forms and functions provide examples of the commonality of humour styles that traverse group boundaries and help Australians to create a ‘broader sense of we’ in this nation (Putnam 2007, p. 139).

#### **References**

- Berndt, R., 1976, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*, Melbourne: Thomas Nelson (Australia).
- Billig, M., 2005, *Laughter and Ridicule, Towards a Social Critique of Humour*, London: Sage.
- Garde, M., 2008, ‘The Pragmatics of Rude Jokes with Grandad: Joking Relationships in Aboriginal Australia’, *Anthropology Forum*, 18/3: 235-253.
- Kuipers, G., 2009, ‘Humor Styles and Symbolic Boundaries’, *Journal of Literary Theory*, 3(2): 219-240.
- McCullough, M. 2008, ‘Poor Black Bastard Can’t Shake-a-leg: Humour and Laughter in Urban Aboriginal North Queensland, Australia’, *Anthropology Forum*, 18/3: 279-285.
- Neu, J., 2008, *Sticks and Stones, the Philosophy of Insults*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Oshima, K., 2000, ‘Ethnic Jokes and Social Function’, *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 13/1: 41-57.
- Putnam, R., 2007, ‘E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century’, The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture, *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30/2: 137-174.
- Spencer, B., [1914] 2014, *Native Tribes of the Northern Territory of Australia*, London: MacMillan

Stanner, W., [1956] 1982, 'Aboriginal Humour', *Aboriginal History*, 6: 128-131.

**Bionote:** Karen Austin graduated in 2017 with a PhD in the Department of Humanities and the Creative Arts, Flinders University, Bedford Park, South Australia.



**Craig Batty, School of Media and Communication, RMIT University, and**

**Stayci Taylor, School of Media and Communication, RMIT University**

***Comedy as method: using humour to do research***

**Abstract**

If writers and performers worldwide use comedy to raise questions and create awareness about social, political and cultural issues, can these practitioners be considered academics? That is to say, if creative modalities of research are now commonplace in universities, can we see the use of comedy in a different light? Indeed, what happens to a comedian's practice once they enter the academy: is it still considered professional practice, or is it valued as a research practice? This paper discusses comedy writing and performance when placed in an academic setting, arguing that it has great potential as a mode of research that can sit happily alongside art, design, creative writing and media practice.

Much has been written about creative practice research, particularly in the fields named above. It is a staple of many university research cultures, and core to the work of many practitioner-researchers situated in the contemporary academy. We know of its potential as a site of knowledge; we know of its fabric and principles; and we usually know how to articulate it to others. Yet not so much has been written about the *form* this type of research takes; specifically, why one might choose comedy – whether viewed as fiction or otherwise – to express, embody or otherwise perform research findings. In many ways, non-fiction work is straightforward to argue as research, usually because the enquiry is explicit in its content. But what of comedy: of film, television, animation and web series set in imagined worlds? In this paper we explore the potential for comedy within the academy as a mode of creative practice research. We draw on our experiences of undertaking, supervising and examining PhD projects using comedy, and our own comedy writing and performance research outputs, to discuss the ways in which researchers might use humour to present their findings in imaginative, innovative and fun ways that expand understanding and garner impact.

**Bionotes:** **Craig Batty** is Associate Professor and HDR Director, School of Media and Communication, RMIT.

**Dr Stayci Taylor** lectures as the Industry Fellow with the Media program in Melbourne's RMIT University's School of Media and Communication. Her PhD explores gender, comedy and perspective in screenwriting practice, drawing from her industry background as a television screenwriter in New Zealand, which includes co-creating a prime time sitcom, and multiple writing roles on nine series of the award-winning bilingual soap *Korero mai*. Her publications include works in *Senses of Cinema*, *New Writing* and *TEXT*. She currently has a female-centred comedy screenplay in development with the New Zealand Film Commission.

**Ying Cao, PhD Candidate, Humanities and Communication Arts, Western Sydney University**

***“It’s not funny at all”: Failed humour in Chinese sitcoms: A case study of *Ipartment****

**Abstract**

Although linguistic research of humour in both natural conversations and in fictional conversations in TV sitcoms has increased, the study of failed humour still lags far behind. There is only scant research on failed humour in natural conversation of English-speaking contexts (Bell, 2015), and study exploring failed humour in conversations of Chinese sitcoms is nearly a blank field. Therefore, this study intends to fill this gap. It also intends to address how failed humour can be used to construct gendered identity in Chinese sitcoms. Failed humour will be explored specifically as a vehicle for gendered identity construction in a representative Chinese sitcom, *Ipartment*. The following research questions are addressed. 1) How to define failed humour in sitcoms? 2) What are the triggers and responses of failed humour in *Ipartment*? 3) How are the gendered identities of female characters constructed via their responses to failed humour in *Ipartment*? The data is collected from the first season of *Ipartment* and 124 instances of failed humour are examined. Alvarado (2013)’s theoretical framework of the stages of failed humour and Brock (2015)’s participation framework in sitcoms are applied to investigate failed humour in *Ipartment*.

Preliminary findings are: 1) failed humour in dramatic discourse is largely different from that in natural conversation. Two communicative levels in sitcoms need to be carefully addressed in defining failed humour in sitcoms. 2) Triggers of failed humour such as the need to mitigate tension, the use of humour to exert control on others’ behaviour, and to address a cultural/knowledge gap, which are not a feature of natural conversations, are in fact rather ubiquitous in sitcoms. 2) Responses to failed humour in sitcoms are more diversified in form and more aggressive in the affective sense than is normal in natural conversation. The most pervasive responses are: ignoring, topic change and teasing back. Moreover, laughter, the most common response to failed humour in natural conversations, was not observed in this sitcom. 3) No significant difference was found in the types of response to failed humour according to gender. However, significantly, female characters are the major targets of failed humour but the gendered identity they construct for themselves via receiving and responding to failed humour subverts their stereotypical gendered identity. Specifically, female characters in *Ipartment* are found to construct themselves as “dominant” and “powerful” females via their responses to failed humour.

**Bionote:** Ying Cao is a PhD student in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts in Western Sydney University. Her research interests focus on humour in Chinese sitcoms, humour and characters’ identities in Chinese sitcoms, and the linguistic research of humour and gender in Chinese.

**Wei-Lin Melody Chang, School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Queensland, and  
Michael Haugh, School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Queensland, and  
Daniel Z. Kadar, Key Research Institute for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies**

***Kaiwanxiao (“just kidding”): Conversational humour and claims to non-serious intent in Taiwanese talk shows***

**Abstract**

While there is a growing body of work on conversational humour in different varieties of English and in other European languages (Norricks 1993; Norrick and Chiaro 2009; Dynel 2011; Bell 2015), to date there has been less attention devoted to the study of conversational humour in different varieties of Chinese. Building on seminal work on humour in Chinese more generally (Chey and Milner Davis 2011; Milner Davis and Chey 2013), we examine the role that claims to non-serious intent play in the accomplishment of conversational humour in the context of televised talk shows in Taiwan. We focus, in particular, on what is accomplished through claims to be “just kidding” (*kaiwanxiao*) in interactions amongst Taiwanese speakers of Mandarin Chinese. Drawing from an analysis of over ten hours of variety shows broadcast in Taiwan, we examined more than 20 sequences involving claims on the part of one or more participants to be *kaiwanxiao*. Two major findings emerged from our detailed interactional analyses of this dataset. First, claims to be *kaiwanxiao* appear to have two key functions in such settings. On the one hand, such claims may be used to minimise or repair offence that has been taken or to inoculate against the possibility of offence being taken, consistent with findings from studies analysing the functions of claims to be *just kidding/joking* in American and Australian varieties of English (Skalicky, Bell and Berger 2015; Haugh 2016). On the other hand, claims to be *kaiwanxiao* may be used to further boost the effect of the just prior instance of conversational humour. Notably, the latter use of *kaiwanxiao* involves a usage not identified in those previous studies of *just kidding/joking* in English. The second major finding was that while claims to be *kaiwanxiao* were found in a range of different conversational humour sequences, including instances of jocular self-boasting, rather than necessarily being associated with (jocular) teasing sequences (cf. Skalicky, Bell and Berger 2015; Haugh 2016). We suggest the latter reflects the value placed on self-directed forms of conversational humour in Chinese alongside other-directed forms, at least in the context of talk shows in Taiwan.

**References**

- Bell, Nancy (2015). *We are Not Amused. Failed Humour in Interaction*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter
- Chey, Jocelyn and Jessica Milner Davis (eds.) (2011) *Humour in Chinese Life and Letters. Classical and Traditional Approaches*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press
- Dynel, Marta (ed.) (2011) *The Pragmatics of Humour across Discourse Domains*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins
- Haugh, Michael (2016) “Just kidding”: Teasing and claims to non-serious intent. *Journal of Pragmatics* 95: 120-136.

Milner Davis, Jessica and Jocelyn Chey (eds.) (2013) *Humour in Chinese Life and Culture. Resistance and Control in Modern Times*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press

Norrick, Neal (1993). *Conversational Joking*. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press.

Norrick, Neal and Delia Chiaro (eds.) (2009). *Humor in interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins

Skalicky, Stephen, Cynthia M. Berger and Nancy D. Bell (2015) The functions of 'just kidding' in American English. *Journal of Pragmatics* 85: 18-31.

**Bionotes:** **Wei-Lin Melody Chang** is Lecturer at the University of Queensland and author of *Face and Face Practices in Chinese Talk-in-Interactions: An Empirical Analysis of Business Interactions in Taiwan* (Equinox, 2016). Her research interests include politeness, intercultural communication, business discourse and teaching Chinese as second language. She is also involved in the research project "Humour in Taiwan" funded by the Chiang-Ching Kuo Foundation for three years (2016-2019), aiming to study the norms and practices of humour in Taiwan.

**Michael Haugh** is Professor of Linguistics in School of Languages and Cultures at the University of Queensland. His broad research interests lie in the fields of pragmatics, conversation analysis and intercultural communication. He has published widely on (im)politeness, offence and indirect meaning, and more recently on conversational humour. He is currently collaborating on research projects analysing different forms of conversational humour in different languages and cultures, funded in part by a grant from the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation, with a particular focus on teasing and mockery.

**Daniel Z. Kadar** is Research Professor and Head of Research Group at the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Yunshan Chair Professor at the Key Research Institute for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. He is author/editor of more than 20 volumes, published with world-leading publishing houses such as Cambridge University Press, and also he has published a large number of studies in high-impact journals such as *Journal of Pragmatics*. His most recent monograph is *Politeness, Impoliteness and Ritual: Maintaining the Moral Order in Interpersonal Interaction* (Cambridge, 2017). He is interested in politeness, impoliteness, humour and rituals, as well as intercultural communication (with special focus on East Asia).

**Jocelyn Chey, Australia China Institute for Arts and Culture, Western Sydney University**

***Riddling the Chinese riddle***

**Abstract**

Riddles are not exclusive to Chinese culture but the Chinese language is particularly apt for the formation of these question-and-answer forms of word play, and there are traditional frames for their usage in Chinese culture. They may be regarded by some as wit rather than humour, but the solving of a riddle provides not only simple intellectual satisfaction but also those Aha moments that result from the resolution of incongruity and this therefore qualifies them to be regarded as a type of linguistic humour. Some examples of old and new riddles will be provided, to demonstrate the range of such puzzles, including those based on the analysis of written characters and those demanding shared understanding of social customs. The question and answer form of riddles will also be compared with jokes in the form of *xiehouyu* 歇後語, another characteristic form of Chinese humour.

**Bionote:** Dr Jocelyn Chey commenced her work on Australia-China relations for the Federal Government in 1973 when Australia first established diplomatic relations with China. For more than 20 years, she worked in the Departments of Trade and Foreign Affairs and was posted three times in China and Hong Kong, concluding with appointment as Consul-General in Hong Kong (1992-1995). She was the founding Executive Director of the Australia-China Council in 1979 and Director of the China Branch of the International Wool Secretariat, 1988-92. Jocelyn is the Director of the Australia China Institute for Arts and Culture at Western Sydney University. She is also Visiting Professor at the University of Sydney and a consultant on Australia-China relations. She became a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2009 and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. She has edited and co-authored (with Jessica Milner Davis) two books on Chinese humour and published many articles on soft power and cultural diplomacy.

**Wladyslaw Chlopicki, Department of English Studies, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland**

### ***Fictional worlds in media satire: Two Polish cases***

#### **Abstract**

The paper is devoted to two cases of satirical developments, which are linked by the elements of fictional worlds in them. Fictional worlds were discussed by literary scholars, literary semanticists (e.g. Fludernik), text linguists (e.g. Werth or Emmott) and philosophers (Kripke). In humour study, the awareness has been growing of the importance of various aspects of the fictional world for the emergence of humorous effects, such as participants, events, various levels of perspectives, various contexts have been discussed e.g. by Ritchie or Brône and Feyaerts. The first case in point was the sudden emergence of the fictional country called San Escobar, complete with its geography and politics, following a slip of a tongue of the jet-lagged Polish foreign minister, the country becoming the point of reference for Polish opposition and media. The second case is a novel type of Polish political satire, a series of YouTube films entitled “The Chairman’s Ear” (*Ucho Prezesa*), run by the top Polish cabaret (Cabaret of Moral Anxiety), which allegedly aim at “softening the image” of the leader of the ruling party. The films are in the convention of a theatre with consecutive guests visiting the headquarters of the Chairman of the Law and Justice party, all characters being only thinly disguised. They have gained huge popularity (5-7 million people watch every weekly episode) and they too have become a point of reference both for the government and the opposition and were discussed in public by both, including at the prime minister’s press conferences. In the age of post-truth, the Internet-based humorous fiction not only has contributed but even has the ambition to influence the quality of public debate in Poland.

#### **References**

- Brône, G. & Feyaerts, K. (2003). *Metonymic inferencing and incongruity resolution: Marked reference-point structures in humor*. At:  
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-cognitive-linguistics-of-incongruity-resolution-Br%C3%B4ne-Feyaerts/3921ea03db42ca72aaabffe3101093042b41eadf?tab=abstract>
- Emmott, Catherine. (1997). *Narrative Comprehension: A Discourse Perspective*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Fludernik, M. (1993). *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction. The Linguistic Representation of Speech and Consciousness*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Kripke, S. (1980). *Naming and Necessity*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ritchie, G. (2006). Reinterpretation and viewpoints. *Humor: IJHR* 19(3), pp.251-270.
- Werth, P. (1999). *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse*. New York: Longmans

**Bionote:** **Władysław Chłopicki, PhD**, is a Senior Lecturer at the Jagiellonian University, Krakow, and at Krosno State College, Poland. He is a linguist, interested in pragmatics and discourse studies, and is engaged in the cross-cultural study of the language of humor and communication styles. He is a member of the editorial team of the *European Journal of Humour Research* and of *Tertium Linguistic Journal*.

**Robert Crosby, Post-Graduate Student, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW, and**

**Michael Meany, School of Creative Industries, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW**

### ***Stand-up comedy as a social corrective***

#### **Abstract**

Written and performed by Australian comedian Tom Ballard, the comedy lecture “Boundless Plains to Share” examines Australia’s immigration history, culminating in a critique of how the refugee issues are presented in the contemporary social and media landscape. Through a comic frame the comedy lecture presents a sympathetic account of refugee discourse. Individuals make sense of events they encounter by viewing the event through a specific frame (Schwandt, 1994, p 236). The frames tend to align “with the major poetic forms of epic, tragedy, comedy, elegy, satire, burlesque and the grotesque” (Christiansen & Hanson, 1996, p. 159). The frame allows for a meaning to be attributed to the event that is in accordance with their values and beliefs. Frames mitigate incongruity and discontinuity. Situations, which are foreign to individuals, are framed through tragedy in a way that establishes a binary opposition between a phenomenon they perceive as being outside the hegemonic order and their own personal beliefs. As a result of this division, a tragic frame views the otherness of outsiders as scapegoats who need to be punished for their transgressions in order to re-establish social order and hierarchies (Christiansen & Hanson, 1996, p. 161). Developed by Kenneth Burke in *Attitudes Towards History*, the comic frame seeks to position events through comedy rather than tragedy in order to allow individuals to recognise the universal nature that comes with being human and in turn act in a moral way (Burke, 1959). For Burke, a comic frame enables individuals to attain “maximum consciousness” in recognising previous transgressions and move towards correcting behaviour by reducing social tension through a mutual cooperative dialogue, as opposed to a divisive scapegoat binary posited by tragic frames (Burke, 1984, p. 171). This understanding of the comic frame reinforces the notion that comedy can have the intention of operating as a social corrective.

This research used the comedy lecture “Boundless Plains to Share” as a case study and through a mixed methods approach including content analysis, discourse analysis and semi-structured interview explores the question, Can stand-up comedy succeed as a social corrective? The mixed methods approach allows for an analysis of the structural, performative and intentional foundations of the comedy lecture.

#### **References**

- Burke, K. (1959). *Attitudes toward history*. (2nd ed.). Los Altos CA: Hermes Publications.
- Christiansen, A. & Hanson, J. (1996). “Comedy as cure for tragedy: ACT UP and the rhetoric of AIDS.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 82(2): 157-170.
- Schwandt, T. A., (1994). “Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry” in Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, pp. 221-259.

**Bionotes: Robert Crosby** is a graduate of the Bachelor of Communication program at the University of Newcastle. He is an experienced radio producer and presenter. This research is part of his Honours program.

**Dr Michael Meany** is a Senior Lecturer in Communication at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Michael's background includes careers as a freelance writer, a typesetter and publication designer, and a playwright. From these varied careers, Michael brings to his research an eclectic mix of skills. His research interests include humour, creativity, script writing and narrative/interactive media design. He recently graduated with a PhD from Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia. The topic of his research project was 'The Performance of Comedy by Artificial Intelligence Agents'. Michael is also Editor of the *AHSN Digest*.



**Ben Eldridge, PhD Candidate, Dept of English, University of Sydney**

***The doomsday smoothie: Peter Watts' firebrand humour***

**Abstract**

*I'm quite a cheerful guy in person. Apparently people are surprised by this.* (Peter Watts)

Humour is not an attribute typically ascribed to the oeuvre of Canadian science fiction writer Peter Watts. His growing literary reputation precedes him: if his name is recognized at all, Watts drolly suggests, he is known as “The Guy Who Writes the Depressing Stories.” Despite the bleakness that permeates his work, however, his texts also display an unconcealed anger, cynicism, and biting wit. In short, his texts are satirical in the bitterest of all possible ways: his humour frequently does not travel well. But, indeed, even his grimmest texts are, at heart, parodic railings against the inescapable dystopia of modern existence that has defined much 20<sup>th</sup> century literature, clearly straddling the thin line between humour and horror, between vitriol and resignation. And, occasionally, his minor texts (principally his short stories) involve more overt forays into purely comedic territory. It is with this subsumed trend in Watts’ texts – particularly as evidenced in the relatively unknown short story “Firebrand” (2013, available at: [www.rifters.com/real/shorts.htm](http://www.rifters.com/real/shorts.htm)) – that this paper will be concerned. Within “Firebrand”, critical aim is taken at the rampant media-industrial-political complex of contemporary society, and this political stance illuminates many of the submerged tendencies that permeate all of Watts’ texts. The centrality of the (blackened) humour in this story accentuates many of Watts’ general concerns: thematic obsessions with the (a)morality of power; the hijacking of science by vested interests; and, strikingly, the unreliability of informational flows, and the ease with which information can be manipulated. This paper argues that the use of ironic humour in Watts’ minor texts can illuminate the unhappy allegiance of blind rage and eternal hope that defines his oeuvre as a whole, and goes some way to separating his atypical literary stylings from the more familiar trappings of modern capitalist-technological critique that define many of his obvious (now canonical) generic predecessors.

**Bionote:** **Ben Eldridge** is a postgraduate student in the Department of English at the University of Sydney. He has been in residence for the last few months at University of Toronto where he ran a conference on the work of Peter Watts.

**Michael Ewans, School of Humanities and Social Science, University of Newcastle, and**

**Carl Caulfield, freelance playwright and screenwriter**

***Has Plautus stopped travelling?***

**Abstract**

The comedies of Plautus were a great success both in his lifetime, and in subsequent revivals. All twenty of the plays which later Roman scholars regarded as authentic have survived. And adaptations into French, Italian and English were frequent in the early modern period; the most famous among them are Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* (from *The Two Menaechmi*) and Molière's *L'Avare (The Miser)* (from *The Pot of Gold*). But modern performances have been scarce, and there has not been a professional production of a play by Plautus anywhere in the world since 2007. Plautus is today best known, if at all, as the inspiration for three famous twentieth-century works which owe little but their spirit and some of their characters to Plautus' actual plays; the Rodgers and Hart musical *The Boys from Syracuse*, the Sondheim musical and film *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and the telemovie *Up Pompeii!* starring Frankie Howerd as the slave Lurcio. Recently the RSC has also staged *Vice-Versa*, billed as 'a riotous new farce...lovingly ripped off from Plautus' comedies'.

This paper asks why Plautus has survived best only in these modern works, which stray very far from what he actually wrote. Part of the problem is that some of the comic techniques which he pioneered have been absorbed into the mainstream, descending via Renaissance and subsequent forms of comedy to the rom-com and sit-com of today's film and TV. Another problem is that the content of some of his plays does not 'travel' well to resonate with our modern concerns. However, workshops have revealed that rich, robust physical invention and varied vocal delivery can bring out the humour that is latent in some scenes from the original texts. So the time is perhaps ripe for revival of some of Plautus' own plays – especially the masterly *Pseudolus*, whose themes are still thought-provoking today, and perhaps one of his darker, edgier comedies, of which *The Bacchis Sisters* is discussed as an example.

**Bionotes:** **Michael Ewans** is Conjoint Professor in the School of Humanities and Social Science at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Before retiring from the Chair of Drama in 2011 he specialized in directing plays and chamber operas, translating Greek tragedy and comedy, and writing books and articles which explore how operas and dramas work in the theatre. Apart from four books on opera, he has published a complete set of accurate and actable translations of Aeschylus and Sophocles in four volumes, with theatrical commentaries, followed by two volumes of comedies by Aristophanes, also in his own new translations with theatrical commentaries. He is currently the contributing editor of *A Cultural History of Comedy: Volume 1, Antiquity*, to be published by Bloomsbury Methuen in 2019. Michael Ewans was elected in 2005 to a Fellowship of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

**Carl Caulfield** is a playwright, actor, director, screenwriter, dramaturg and lecturer. His works include *Seems Like Old Times*, *Dante's Dream*, *Human Resources*, *Shakespeare's Fools*, *The Anatomy of Buzz*, *Where Late the Songbird* and *Hecuba Reimagined*. *Being Sellers*, Carl's

award-winning, one-man play about British Goon Peter Sellers, was first produced in 1998 at the Playhouse in Newcastle, before transferring to the Edinburgh Festival and then to London at the Man in the Moon Theatre, Kings Road. *Being Sellers* was recently reprised at the Waterloo East Theatre in London with David Boyle as Sellers, and then went on to the 59E59 Theatre in New York. His recent play *Mark Of Cain* explores the impact of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) on a group of returning soldiers. Carl has recently written, directed and co-produced his first short film, *Chloe Comes Through*. His website is [www.carlcaulfield.com](http://www.carlcaulfield.com)

**Bruce Findlay, Adjunct Teaching Fellow, Psychology, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne**

### ***Australian data for the Benevolent and Corrective Humour Scale (BenCor)***

#### **Abstract**

The AHSN membership was recently asked to complete the BenCor, a brief humour scale devised by Ruch and Heintz (2016). Sadly, only 80 completed surveys have so far been received. This paper will describe how and why the scale was developed and will examine the data received from the Australasian sample. Prior approaches to the conceptualisation of humour do not have a moral dimension. Martin et al.'s (2003) HSQ, while suggesting that affiliative and self-enhancing humour are beneficial, and aggressive and self-defeating humour are detrimental to well-being, is not explicitly moral in itself. Ruch and Heintz created the BenCor to correct this lack. They chose as indicators of morality the six virtues identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004) from the Positive Psychology framework. These virtues are wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence, each of which has four subscales, called strengths, like creativity, kindness and forgiveness.

Ruch and Heintz found that their Benevolent subscale correlated positively with 20 of the 24 strengths, and the Corrective subscale with three. Moreover, benevolent and corrective humour could be predicted by character strengths over and above scores on sense of humour and mockery, which Ruch and Heintz claimed indicated that their scale was indeed a moral measure of humour. While treating statistics derived from the small number in the Australasian sample with caution, there were no sex differences, and only weak negative correlations with age. A comparison with European norms will be made. The validity and usefulness of the BenCor will be discussed.

#### **References**

- Martin, R. A., Puhlik-Doris, P., Larsen, G., Gray, J., & Weir, K. (2003). Individual differences in uses of humor and their relationship to psychological well-being: Development of the humor styles questionnaire. *Journal of Research in Personality, 37*, 48-75. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566\(02\)00534-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566(02)00534-2)
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ruch, W., & Heintz, S. (2016). The virtue gap in humor: Exploring benevolent and Corrective humor. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science, 2*, 35-45.

**Bionote:** Dr Bruce Findlay is an Adjunct Teaching Fellow at Swinburne University of Technology's Psychology Department. His research interests include both humour and relationships, and their intersection. He is particularly interested in self-perceived sense of humour and its effects.

**Scott Gardner, Graduate School of Education, Okayama University**

***Tour Guide or Muse? Advancing Student Humor and Creativity in Language Learning***

**Abstract**

In this presentation I will share some research-based ideas and humour-oriented language activities to reinforce the connection between student creativity—including experimenting with humour—and second language acquisition (SLA). In doing so I hope to add to growing evidence that engaging in humour is a vital educational and cultural exercise for language learning (in this case English as a Foreign Language).

The 19th century philosopher and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt said, “A language cannot be taught; one can only create conditions for learning to take place” (cited in Celce-Murcia, (1980) 2013). Applying this adage to humorous social exchanges also makes sense: Good jokes are not exactly ‘told’; rather speakers verbally create conditions under which hearers can make humorous connections. Some of the best outcomes in either language education or joke-telling, then, derive from the speaker knowing how far to lead and when to let the hearer’s imagination take over.

Much SLA research confirms that learner creativity—including language play and joking—is important to second language acquisition, but also reports that it is at times underutilized and even disdained by teachers (see Waring, 2013; Hann, 2014; Davies, 2015; Bell & Pomerantz, 2016). To some a laughter-filled classroom resounding with student-originated humour may mark the ultimate loss of teacher authority. But experienced, creative teachers maintain control by using activities with clear objectives and well-marked boundaries. And in fact creativity often works best when there are boundaries imposed.

This presentation will demonstrate some humour-focused language learning activities that promote creativity and encourage the spontaneous generation of humour, while staying focused on language objectives. Rather than guide students by the hand to destinations marked “humour” or “language function”, these activities strive to draw out more of the curiosity and humour that resides within the students, and that in some cases can feed on itself in a virtuous cycle of humour, creativity and discovery. It is hoped that the activities sampled in this presentation will show that the use of such activities in particular, and the promotion of a creative classroom atmosphere in general, allow for a great degree of humorous interplay and linguistic experimentation, an accepting and egalitarian learning atmosphere, and overall improvement in conversational use of the target language.

**References**

- Bell, N. D., & Pomerantz, A. (2016). *Humor in the classroom: A guide for teachers and educational researchers*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (1980, 2013). Language teaching methods from the Greeks to Gattegno. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 37(2), 1-9.
- Davies, C. E. (2015). Humor in intercultural interaction as both content and process in the classroom. *Humor*, 28(3): 375–395
- Hann, D. (2014). *A study of the playful use of English among learners on an intensive language course*. (Doctoral thesis, Open University).

Waring, H. Z. (2013). Doing being playful in the second language classroom. *Applied Linguistics*, 34(2), 191-210.

**Bionote:** **Scott Gardner** has been teaching English and Communication at Okayama University in Japan since 1998. His main research interests are utilising classroom humour, dialogism and L2 identity, and pragmatics/politeness in L2 education.

**Adrian Hale, School of Humanities & Communication Arts, Western Sydney University**

***Time-travelling humour: why the odd joke creates its own legacy***

**Abstract**

Logically, the humourist seeks an instant, favourable response to their joke. Its positive reception relies on spontaneity, surprise and an original contextual-audience decoding for its effect. Indeed, the joke could be described as an ephemeral and immediate evidence of the linguistic entrepreneur's skill. It is unlikely that any humourist is seeking a permanent place in humour culture for any given joke. However, many humourists do revisit their own, particular jokes, and many people enjoy re-experiencing, via recorded media, a favourite comedian's work, a comic film, or even an entire TV comedy series. Similarly, we enjoy seeing a joke become an artefact of culture, and we enjoy seeing a joke become recontextualised via various derivative memes such that these 'Chinese whispers' collectively comprise a stand-alone, and long-standing joke, long after the original is forgotten, or at least minimised.

This paper will argue that occasionally, the odd joke (defined in this sense as peculiar, or unique) creates a cultural space that demands more than fleeting appreciation. These jokes become autonomous, sometimes long after the original humourist is dead, often during the comedian's own lifetime, and often without any attribution at all. Like urban myths, many of these instances of humour can be enjoyed, and participated in, like some odd version of democracy, whether or not the participant knows the genesis of the joke itself. However, this paper will also argue that the person who is more familiar with the original and its legacy will derive greater enjoyment from the full range of derivative texts, explainable through the idea of an elaborated code (Bernstein, 1964). In order to investigate the process and motivations for this phenomenon, I will present some high-profile examples of this time-travelling humour, including Abbott and Costello's 'Who's on First?', Stan Cross' 'For gorsake, stop laughing, this is serious' cartoon, *Flying High*, *Seinfeld* and the *Simpsons*.

**Bionote:** **Adrian Hale** is a Senior Lecturer at Western Sydney University, with teaching, research and interests across Discourse Analysis, Sociolinguistics, Humour and Literacy- TESOL. Of particular interest in his teaching and research is the diverse and large (1200+) cohort of students in one of the subjects he teaches. These students, living in Western Sydney, represent 180 different nations of origin, as many language backgrounds and often disadvantaged circumstances. His research, and humour, are at the service of these students in assisting their autonomy and success.

***O carne vale! How Laughter goes through the Stomach – Clowns and Cannibalism***

**Abstract**

“I think it bit into his armpit.” This is what it does best – the straying shape-shifting extra-terrestrial clown-cannibal in Stephen King’s 1986 bestseller. Anthropophagy in the form of infernally voracious funsters also appears in Thomas Ligotti’s 1996 story *The Last Feast of Harlequin*, when an anthropologist is devoured by his research object: clowns. A proto- or archetype of the circus that represents productive anarchy and laughter, the clown is an anthropological constant that exists in all cultures. Besides the doltishly clumsy, amusingly simple and funny type of clown, there is the evil violent clown. Violent clowns can be traced back to the (circus-) pantomimes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or more precisely, to their aesthetically virtuosic cascades of violence. Against the background of Baudelaire’s enthusiasm for violent clown pantomimes as the apotheosis of comedy and laughter, Canetti’s idea that one laughs instead of eating, and Adorno’s discussion of violent deformation as a genuine artistic-creation process in circus and related cultural phenomena (such as Variety and Music Hall), this paper explores the relationship between chronically unседentary clown characters engaged in the disintegration of bodies, their specific ‘eating disorders’ and humour. In doing so, it also clarifies what (wo)man-eating Frankfurter in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* – a scion of gluttonous clown pedigree – actually means when it comes to ice picks and subjects of (bad) taste by saying: “Why don’t you stay for the night? Or maybe a bite?”

**References**

- Adorno, Theodor W. (2013). *Aesthetic Theory*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Baudelaire, Charles. 1976 [1868]. “L’essence du rire et généralement du comique dans les arts plastiques”, *Oeuvres complètes* (vol. 2), Paris: Gallimard, pp. 525-544.
- Canetti, Elias. (1962). *Crowds and Power*, trans. C. Stewart, London: Gollancz.
- Elliott, Will. (2006). *The Pilo Family Circus*. Sydney: ABC Books.
- Friedrich, Peter. (2015). Kannibalisches Gelächter. Überlegungen zu Elias Canettis ‘Lachtheorie’, in *“Fröhliche Wissenschaft”: Zur Genealogie des Lachens*, ed. K. Liggieri, Freiburg/München: Karl Alber.
- Jürgens, Anna-Sophie. (2014). “The Joker: A neo-modern clown of violence”, *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 5/4, 441-454.
- Kilgour, Maggie. (1990). *From Communion to Cannibalism: An anatomy of metaphors of incorporation*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- King, Stephen. (1987). *It*. Berkeley: Reprint.
- Ligotti, Thomas. (2009). “The Last Feast of Harlequin”, *American Fantastic Tales: Terror and the Uncanny from the 1940s to Now*, ed. Peter Straub, NY: Library of America, 351–388.
- Piro, Sal and Michael Hess. (1991). *The official Rocky Horror Picture Show: Audience Participation Guide*, Livonia: Stabur Corporation.
- Sharman, Jim. (1996). “In the realm of the imagination: An individual view of theatre,” *Australasian Drama Studies* 28, 20-29.



Sharman, Jim. (2008). *Blood & Tinsel: A memoir*, Carlton VIC: Miegunyah Press.

Von Brincken, Jörg. (2006). *Tours de force: Die Ästhetik des Grotesken in der französischen Pantomime des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.

**Bionote:** **Dr Anna-Sophie Jurgens** is an ANUCES Associate, and Feodor Lynen Postdoctoral Fellow (Humboldt Foundation) at the Humanities Research Centre, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences.

**Peter Kirkpatrick, Dept of English, University of Sydney**

### ***Comic verse into film comedy: Humouring The Sentimental Bloke***

#### **Abstract**

How well does poetry travel into film? In terms of the number of poems that have been adapted for cinema, *not very* would be the obvious answer. One of the more successful examples is Raymond Longford and Lottie Lyell's adaptation of *The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke* (1915) by C.J. Dennis, which was released in 1919, and was a hit both here and in the UK. Apart from shifting the setting from inner-Melbourne to Woolloomooloo, *The Sentimental Bloke* (as the film was titled) followed the book very closely and drew directly from Dennis's verses for its inter-titles. Frank Thring's 1932 talkie version, on the other hand, discarded the poetry and adapted Bert Bailey's stage production from 1922. It was a conspicuous flop.

Longford and Lyell's film starred Lyell herself as Doreen, the "ideel tart" of Bill, the larrikin Bloke of the title, who was played by Arthur Tauchert. Tauchert's background was in vaudeville and, at forty-one, he was an unlikely romantic lead. Nonetheless, his performance has great subtlety and wit: qualities enhanced by Longford's insistence on realism. Indeed, the film itself moves from physical comedy into something closer to a comedy of manners during the Bloke's awkward courtship of Doreen. The action correspondingly shifts from urban public spaces into private domestic space and, ultimately, to a farm, far from the temptations of larrikin life. Though garnished with Australianisms and literary allusions, the original poems are written in a form of stage Cockney popular in vaudeville at the time, and they cried out for performance. The first to do so was leading elocutionist Lawrence Campbell, but others quickly followed. Tauchert himself went on to perform the poems at screenings of the film and, later, on radio. In 1919 recitation was still a popular art form; by 1932, when Thring made his version of *The Bloke*, it had fallen into decline, and Dennis's verses were considered expendable.

Longford and Lyell drew extensively upon the poems for inter-titles, but how intrinsic are they to the film's humour and, more specifically, to its *cinematic* humour? Their classic film marks a point in time when poetry's role as part of public entertainment was being swiftly replaced by newer forms such as film and radio. As film historian Tom Gunning has suggested, it was also a period in which an exhibitionist "cinema of attractions" – including vaudeville-based slapstick – was increasingly subsumed to narrative ends. This paper will argue that elements of these wider tensions within both poetry and cinema play out in *The Sentimental Bloke*.

**Bionote:** Assoc. Prof. Peter Kirkpatrick teaches Australian Literature in the Department of English at the University of Sydney. He was co-editor, with Robert Dixon, of *Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia* (Sydney University Press, 2012) and, with Fran De Groen, of *Serious Frolic: Essays on Australian Humour* (UQP, 2009). He is currently working on a book about poetry and and popular culture.

**Liisi Laineste, Centre of Excellence in Estonia Studies / Estonian Literary Museum.**

***Cultural contexts of Facebook reactions buttons: Like or laugh?***

**Abstract**

The Internet is the place where people spend more and more of their time; it is a place where they nowadays share folklore. Technologically mediated vernacular expression provides an excellent entry point for the study of intertextually rich ways of communication that differ slightly in every culture, regardless of the unifying influences of globalisation. Communication is very closely related to emotions and their expression online is almost inevitable. It is possible to express them verbally, but more and more emojis sneak into our online conversations - sometimes even against our wish (like when the automatic spellcheck replaces: plus ) with the smiley face). Any millennial would tell you: our culture is becoming completely emoji-centered. However, "haha" button on Facebook doesn't overlap with the meaning of social laughter in face to face conversations and we might suggest that mediated reactions to humour might change the nature of online humour in general.

This study analyses the contexts of the relatively new extension of Facebook (from 2016) - the reactions buttons. This is in many ways typical to the times we live in. People don't use emotions by name when they comment on Facebook: e.g. "I feel hateful"; they are more likely to use emotive expressions, metaphors and emoticons. Facebook is used worldwide and the same reactions are presented as the default reactions to Americans, Australians, Chinese, Portuguese and Estonians alike. It is thus worthwhile studying the ways in which people use the Facebook reactions buttons, focusing on how these are used in the context of the migration crisis of 2015 and 2016 to narrow down the selection. The material for the study consists of statistics of Facebook reactions from the biggest locally popular Facebook news pages (based on Socialbakers.com; from Spain, USA, India, Japan, Poland and Estonia). The results are discussed to the backdrop of the events themselves, the posts and comments on Estonian anti- and pro-immigration groups on Facebook and also of online humour produced by people.

**Bionote:** Liisi Laineste is a senior researcher at the Estonian Literary Museum, Department of Folkloristics. Her primary academic interest lies in the various expressions of folk humour, especially in how it manifests on the Internet. She defended her PhD ("Continuity and Change in Post-Socialist Jokelore") at the Department of Folkloristics of the University of Tartu (2009) and has since then widened her scope of interest into globalization of humour, leisure and pleasure studies, caricatures, and the relations between flaming and humour. She has published a number of articles on ethnic, political and internet humour and is the editor of several humour-related volumes, most recently "The Multi-mediatized Other - The Construction of Reality in East-Central Europe 1945-1980" (with D. Demski, I. Sz Kristof, A. Kasabova and K. Baraniecka-Olszewska, L'Harmattan 2017). She has also organized conferences, symposia and a summer school on humour and is a board member of International Society for Humour Studies.

**Lucien Leon, Department of Photography and Media Arts, School of Art,  
Australian National University**

***The political video satire of Huw Parkinson***

**Abstract**

ABC television's Huw Parkinson creates topical political mashup videos that are broadcast on the *Insiders* program and published and disseminated online via *YouTube*, *Twitter*, *Vimeo* and *Facebook*. Since 2014, Parkinson has deftly composited and recontextualised live action broadcast footage of politicians with popular culture film and television clips, coherently conflating the two audiovisual elements into a cohesive, satirical whole. His *YouTube* channel has over seventeen thousand subscribers and several of his videos have attracted over a million unique views. In 2016 his portfolio of innovative and incisive works was awarded the Walkley award for 'Multimedia Storytelling'. In applauding the Walkley Foundation's recent recognition of online journalism with this new category, I nonetheless argue that it presents an awkward and frustratingly imprecise category in which to situate and critique Parkinson's works and similar others. In examining the material and textual characteristics of Parkinson's sophisticated and potent political satire, this paper refers to previous taxonomies in aligning his practice with the political cartooning tradition, and pleads for a categorically aware appreciation for the video mashup craft.

**Bionote:** **Lucien Leon** is a Senior Lecturer in Animation and Video, Department of Photography and Media Arts School of Art ANU.

**Angus McLachlan, Adjunct Research Fellow, Psychology, Federation University Australia – Ballarat**

***Could tickling vary through time and place?***

**Abstract**

If it can be shown that tickling, far from being a reflex, is an experience that participants have to learn how to construct and, moreover, that there are at least two distinctive forms of tickling, then it becomes plausible to see tickling as simple prototypes of humorous exchanges. Using the vast array of tickling video clips and the rather rarer instances of tickling represented in pre 20<sup>th</sup> C Western painting and sculpture, two general families of tickling episode are proposed. The first family is marked by touching unsuspecting others, often asleep or comatose or occasionally distracted, that startles the victims back to full and attentive consciousness. The reaction to the touch promotes laughter by the tickler that usually, one imagines, is reciprocated by the victim. This family could be characterised as a tease in which the victim is subject to a degree of playful humiliation, a punishment for allowing him or herself to slip into such an asocial state. The first family is more commonly found in art and only occasionally in video clips, and is characterised by the light touch that gives rise to what are generally deemed pleasant ticklish sensations. It is not the form of tickling that comes most readily to mind in our culture.

The second family, usually involving infants, is much more frequent in video clips and is less common in art than the first family. The second family is marked by touching an alert and complicit other, but often involves a degree of restraint by the tickler and resistance by the tickled. In the second family it is the tickled who laughs first, often before any touch has occurred, and the tickler who joins in. The second family has been construed as a mock attack in which the tickler works hard to reduce the tickled to a helpless state. The second family is more readily identifiable as a proper tickle in our culture, despite its association with a more vigorous touch that, in isolation, would not be perceived as obviously ticklish. It is clear that the physical nature of the touch is a secondary concern and that only by construing tickling as a distinctive social episode can we shift our explanatory focus from the physiological to the social and, thereby, integrate the various contextual features of tickling that have proved so bothersome to reductionist models. Thus, the relationship between tickler and tickled is not some incidental feature that somehow alters the mood of the tickled so that they are more receptive to a gentle touch; rather the relationship is critical in determining whether a tickling episode is occurring or not. This constructive perspective also raises the interesting though unlikely possibility that what we currently regard as tickling proper may be rather peculiar to our time and place.

**Bionote:** “Angus has finally left the building” -- in this case Building H of the Ballarat campus of Federation University, where **Dr McLachlan** lectured in psychology for longer than he cares to admit. Now free to indulge his interest in laughter and humour employing any methodology that suits, he hopes to continue to make the occasional contribution to the area as an adjunct researcher. Initially, that is most likely to involve further examination of the exchange of laughter tokens and the pragmatic features of laughter during conversation.

**Jessica Milner Davis, Honorary Associate in the School of Literature, Art and Media, University of Sydney**

***Breaking the taboo: Sport and satire in Australia***

**Abstract**

Taboo topics in humour reflect local cultural conventions about things that are held to be so serious that it is not seemly to laugh at them. During the post-war decades in Australia, one topic held to be too sacred for mockery was sport. This barrier began to fall in the 1980s, pioneered arguably by John Clarke whose reports expertly dissecting the ancient sport of farnarkling formed a regular part of the popular *Gillies Report* (ABC TV, 1984-5). Sydney-based duo, Rampaging Roy Slaven (John Doyle) and H. G. Nelson (Greig Pickhaver) made the cross-over from serious sports commentary to satirical send-up with expert but irreverent radio commentaries on live matches beginning with *This Sporting Life* on Triple J (ABC youth radio) from 1986-2008 and on ABC TV from 1993, continued in their own ABC TV show *Club Buggery* (1995-7). As the millennial Olympics approached, satirical critique increased with *The Games* (ABC TV 1998; 2000, starring John Clarke, Bryan Dawe and Gina Riley). This exposed the shady politics and inept institutional management of sport, both in Australia and more broadly. This paper examines the structures and techniques of these humorous treatments of a taboo topic, comparing the artists' different methods and probing the connections between reality, humorous creation, and resulting audience awareness and cultural impact.

**Bionote:** **Jessica Milner Davis FRSN** is an Honorary Associate in the School of Literature, Art and Media, University of Sydney and coordinates the Australasian Humour Studies Network [<http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies>]. She is a member of Clare Hall, Cambridge, and Research Affiliate with Brunel University's Centre for Comedy Studies Research. Her publications include *Farce* ([1978] 2003), and multi-disciplinary thematic studies in humour: *Understanding Humor in Japan* (2011), *Humour in Chinese Life and Letters* and *Humour in Chinese Life and Culture* (both co-edited with Jocelyn Chey, Hong Kong UP, 2013 and 2015), and *Satire and Politics: The Interplay of Tradition and Practice* (Palgrave 2017). She is currently preparing a book on humour by and about judges.

**Carmen Moran, Adjunct Professor of Psychology, Charles Sturt University**

***Travel from the beyond and other feats: Hoaxes and belief in the paranormal***

**Abstract**

Hoaxes can be humorous. This paper discusses putative proofs for paranormal phenomena that turn out to be hoaxes. Hoaxes, when we fall for them, show up our vulnerabilities and also our pretensions. Our ultimate appreciation of humorous hoaxes can epitomise the superiority theory's proposition about humour. To paraphrase Hobbes: *We laugh at others' failings and our own former ones* (Hobbes, 1640). 'Paranormal phenomena' are events not able to be explained by current scientific knowledge, and the term may include factors such as extrasensory perception, communication from a distance, and communication with those who have died. The term may also refer to activities of beings from another world. Between 30 to 70 per cent of people believe in the possibility or actual existence of paranormal phenomena. To what extent are these beliefs based on hoaxes? This question may be unanswerable but it is clear many are. The techniques used to fake paranormal events have been often constructed in a way that makes them amusing, especially in hindsight after the trick has been exposed. This paper will present examples of hoaxes purporting to demonstrate paranormal events. I am focusing on those with a humorous side, even with those that involve fraud. In these, the fraud may not be amusing, but the hoaxes are. Two propositions are offered. The first: belief in the paranormal is associated with low sense of humour. This relationship was reported by Moran (2017). If this is the case, it may explain why believers do not see the humour in such hoaxes. The second: it seems many people *want to believe* and ignore the possibility of hoaxes. The relationship of humour to open-mindedness is further explored. This paper does not discuss genuine academic research into the paranormal.

**References**

Hobbes. T. (1640). *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*. Accessed 7 March 2001 at

[www.socsc.mcmasters.ca/~econ/ugcm/3113/hobbes/elelaw](http://www.socsc.mcmasters.ca/~econ/ugcm/3113/hobbes/elelaw)

Moran, C. C. (2017). *What does sense of humour have to do with the paranormal?* Refereed paper presented at 23rd Australasian Humour Studies Network Conference, at:

[http://sydney.edu.au/humourstudies/docs/AHSN2017BallaratProgram\\_Abstracts.pdf](http://sydney.edu.au/humourstudies/docs/AHSN2017BallaratProgram_Abstracts.pdf)

**Bionote:** **Carmen Moran** is Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Charles Sturt University. Over several years (decades?), she has held a variety of academic positions and also worked in treatment of anxiety disorders. Her early research on humour looked at humour as a coping strategy, but nowadays she is interested in all aspects of humour.

***The use of humour in an online community***

**Abstract**

This paper will examine humorous threads in a local community Facebook group. The analysis will demonstrate how the humour in these threads showcases Australian humour and how it contributes to the members' sense of belonging to this community. The group's aims are to provide members of an inner suburb of Melbourne with the opportunity to positively contribute to the lives of other people in the neighbourhood. As such, many of the posts are from members seeking house/babysitting, recommendations for local services, and/or offering goods to other members of the group at no cost.

Two threads in particular will be examined: one intended to be serious, one not. The non-serious post began as seemingly mocking of group members' tendency to offer unwanted goods (of varying quality) by announcing the offer of a pile of dead leaves free to a good home. The initially serious post quickly turned into a long thread of puns connected to a cracked toilet bowl. Both threads were contributed to enthusiastically and extensively by members of the group, demonstrating online deadpan humour (Holm 2017); banter, teasing, and mock impoliteness, (Haugh 2017; Haugh and Bousfield 2012); and the co-construction of absurd "fantasy" humour (Hay 2001). All have been identified as being particularly Australian (Béal and Mullan 2017, Goddard 2017). In order to analyse these humorous threads, I will use a combination of linguistic theoretical and methodological approaches, such as pragmatics, interactional discourse analysis, Conversation Analysis and Herring's (2007) classification of computer-mediated discourse.

In addition to the two threads referred to above, frequent humorous references (across separate threads) to certain recurring themes in the group - such as a particular highly regarded local plumber and a group member often requesting a lift to the airport - contribute to a sense of positivity towards and belonging to the group. This suggests that, as Idowu-Faith found in her study of blogs (2016), "humour is a collaborative effort that strengthens social bonds and acts as a tool for sustaining entertainment".

**References**

- Béal, C. and Mullan, K. (2017). Conversational humour from a cross-cultural perspective. *Language and Communication* 55, 24-40.
- Goddard, C. (2017). Ethnopragmatic perspectives on conversational humour, with special reference to Australian English. *Language & Communication* 55, 55-68.
- Haugh, M. (2017). Teasing. In S. Attardo (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Language and Humour*. New York: Routledge.
- Haugh, M. and Bousfield, D. (2012). "Mock impoliteness, jocular mockery and jocular abuse in Australian and British English". *Journal of Pragmatics* 44, 1099-1114.
- Hay, J. (2001). The Pragmatics of Humor Support. *Humor* 14, 55-82.
- Herring, S.C. (2007). A faceted classification scheme for computer-mediated discourse. *Language@Internet*, 4, article 1.
- <http://www.languageatinternet.org/articles/2007/761>
- Holm, N. (2017). Online Deadpan and the Comic Disposition. Paper presented at International Society for Humor Studies Conference, Montreal, July 2017.



Idowu-Faith, B. (2016). Speaking in the Free Marketplace of Ideas: The Stylistics of Humour in “Blogversations”. In Taiwo, R., Odebunmi, A. and Adetunji, A. (eds.). *Analyzing Language and Humor in Online Communication*, 65-84. Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference (IGI Global).

**Bionote:** Dr Kerry Mullan is Senior Lecturer, Convenor of Language Studies Global and Language Studies, School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, RMIT University.

**Anja Pabel, School of Business and Law, Central Queensland University, and  
Philip Pearce, Distinguished Professor, James Cook University, Townsville,  
Australia**

***Proposing a framework for the use of humour in pre-planned presentations  
to tourists***

**Abstract**

Humour in tourism settings has been shown to have several benefits. Some of its benefits include increased interest and attention; lightening the general mood; entertainment and fun; breaking the ice between strangers; and as a control and surveillance function (Pabel & Pearce, 2015; Zhang & Pearce, 2016). While there are numerous tour guide books that encourage tour guides to use humour in their interactions with tourists, most of these books lack any specific details on the right type of humour to use and other considerations that tour guides should be aware of when using humour at tourist attractions. This study utilised studies recently published on the tourism-humour relationship and proposes a framework which tour guides can use as a set of guidelines for the use of humour in diverse tourism settings. The framework consists of seven steps which need to be considered when the decision is made to include humour in presentations to tourists. Each of the steps will be explained in detail whilst highlighting any practical issues in the application of humour by tourism operators.

**References**

- Pabel, A., & Pearce, P.L. (2015). Highlighting the benefits of tourism humour: The views of tourists. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 16, 357-364.
- Zhang, C.X., & Pearce, P.L. (2016): Experiencing Englishness: humour and guided tours, *Tourism Recreation Research*. DOI: 10.1080/02508281.2016.1188486.

**Bionote:** Anja Pabel completed her PhD at James Cook University, Australia in 2015. Her PhD research focused on the use of humour in tourism settings. Her research has been published in a book titled *Tourism and Humour* co-authored with Professor Philip Pearce. Presently she is a lecturer in tourism at Central Queensland University. Her main research interests are: humour research, tourist behaviour and marine tourism.

**Roslyn Rowen, School of Academic Language and Learning, Charles Darwin University, and**

**Lara Weinglass, PhD Candidate, School of Languages and Cultures, University of Queensland**

***Using humour to co-construct identity in social interaction***

**Abstract**

In social settings, humour is frequently used to achieve many different interactional goals. Research on humour as a resource for negotiating and constructing identity has broadly focussed on group membership, politeness, building rapport, and negotiating group norms (Holmes, Marra & Vine, 2011; Boxer & Cortes-Conde, 1997; Fine & de Soucey, 2005; Schnurr, 2010). In this paper, we focus on the use of humour as an interactional resource for positioning and constructing a locally-situated identity within social interaction. Data from recorded social interactions in Australian English will be used to analyse the interplay of humour and pragmatics on the construction of identity. Drawing on methodological insights from membership categorisation analysis (Sacks, 1995; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015), conversation analysis (Sidnell & Stivers, 2012), and interactional pragmatics (Haugh, 2012; De Fina, 2010; Clift, 2013), it is proposed that the identity around heavily culturally and socially nuanced topics can be interactionally accomplished. We propose that by analysing the interactional environment in which participants are using humour, we are better able to understand how identity is negotiated and constructed by those participants. We conclude that when participants use humour in interaction, an interactionally appropriate and acceptable local identity can be co-constructed.

**References**

- Boxer, Diana & Florencia Cortés-Conde. (1997). From bonding and biting: Conversational joking and identity display. *Journal of Pragmatics* 27: 275–295.
- Clift, Rebecca. (2013). No laughing matter: Laughter and resistance in the construction of identity. In Phillip Glenn & Liz Holt (eds.), *Studies of Laughter in Interaction*. Bloomsbury: London, pp. 223-236.
- De Fina, Anna. (2010). The negotiation of identities. In Miriam A. Locher & Sage L. Graham (eds.), *Interpersonal Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. 205-224.
- Fine, Gary Alan & Michaela de Soucey. (2005). Joking cultures: Humor themes as social regulation in group life. *Humor* 18(1): 1-22.
- Holmes, J., Marra, M., & Vine, B. (2011). *Leadership, discourse, and ethnicity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fitzgerald, Richard & William Housley (eds.). (2015). *Advances in Membership Categorisation Analysis*. London: Sage.
- Sidnell, Jack & Tanya Stivers (eds.). (2012). *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Hoboken: Wiley.
- Schnurr, Stephanie. (2010). Humour. In Miriam A. Locher & Sage L. Graham (eds.), *Interpersonal Pragmatics*. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. 309-326.

Schnurr, Stephanie & Janet Holmes. (2009). Using humour to do masculinity at work. In Neal R. Norrick & Delia Chiaro (eds.). *Humour in Interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 101-123.

**Bionotes: Roslyn Rowen** is a lecturer in the School of Academic Language and Learning, Charles Darwin University. Her research interests include pragmatics, conversation analysis and language and social interaction. She is also an executive member of the Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL). She is currently working on two humour related projects; humour in the classroom as a learning strategy, and humour as a resource for negotiating identity in interaction.

**Lara Weinglass** is a PhD candidate in linguistics at the School of Languages and Cultures at the University of Queensland. The working title for her PhD project is Humour and Laughter in Australian Workplace Communication. She is in the process of collecting data and is looking forward to analysing the hilarious things her participants (will hopefully) say! Lara is particularly interested in conversation analysis and interactional pragmatics.

**Ira Seidenstein, Freelance teacher and director, International School for Acting and Creativity (ISAAC), Brisbane**

***WORKSHOP: Is humour funny? Why a duck? If you duck do you still get creamed with a pie? Is a protagonist antagonistic or just in agony? Is agony justified by a pie?***

**Abstract**

In my teaching, life is not alphabetical since 'h' for humour precedes 'f' for funny. There is a teaching foundation trilogy integrating movement, acting, clown. In my work as a teacher of clown I am generally, in the first instance, less concerned with the clown being funny than for the actor to find their own sense of humour. Many clowns are not particularly funny. Comedians are usually more funny than clowns. A clown, without being particularly funny, still can be wonderful clown and entertainer. In the field of clown training pathos is a missing element. The great clowns were humorous, funny, wizened in the art of pathos and highly physical. Their performances on stage or screen could evoke tears of laughter or tears of catharsis. My teaching approach is simply to allow the person or performer to engage in their own way with their own humour and using the body first and foremost.

In my workshop I will select four exercises including my simplest one "Three Walks". Then we will see how that simple technique can apply to "The Cleopatra Exercise". Both of those are solos which can be done simultaneously by a dozen or more people. Then we will do another simultaneous one "The Nothing Exercise" that is also simple to perform but allows free form expression. The final exercise will be a duet physical and non-verbal improvisation called "The Sad Sack Exercise". A few people will have a chance to try that duet. I will leave time for questions.

**Bionote:** Ira Seidenstein holds his MA in Visual & Performing Arts from CSU and his PhD in Education from University of Queensland. He is a freelance performer, teacher, director in over 140 live productions. Former performer and teacher in Cirque du Soleil, Slava's Snowshow, Bell Shakespeare Company and Opera Australia, he combined classical acting with clown and expertise in movement. Dr. Seidenstein's method, "Quantum Theatre: Slapstick to Shakespeare", is integrated into his independent International School for Acting And Creativity (I.S.A.A.C.). Central to his philosophy of performance is to guide the performer to find their authenticity via the subtleties of integrating body, intellect, and creativity in action. His methods are used by circus, dance, theatre practitioners who are working as teachers, choreographers, directors, or performing. Personal website: [www.iraseid.com](http://www.iraseid.com)

**Valeria Sinkeviciute, School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Queensland**

***“It’s not nice [...] you’re just taking the piss out of me”: Failed humour and differences in its evaluation by (non-)participants***

**Abstract**

The complexity of conversational humour has been a topic of numerous analyses in the areas of humour studies, pragmatics or sociolinguistics (e.g. Holmes 2006; Bell 2009; Dynel 2009; Haugh 2016, Sinkeviciute 2014). These studies have shown that there is no guarantee that humour will always be positively perceived, i.e., its interpretation travels from participant to participant and its re-evaluation might significantly shift over the time (Sinkeviciute 2017). This paper aims to examine these issues by exploring different participation roles in relation to humour. More precisely, I look at how, based on their responses, attempts at humour are understood by different participants in interaction, and how non-participants (interviewees) evaluate those interactional practices.

To illustrate these points, I focus on two datasets: a multi-party interaction from a British *Big Brother* house and subsequent interviews with the speakers of Australian and British English. The results of the interactants’ data show the instigator’s continuous attempts to engage in humorous verbal acts, even though those are constantly met with serious and emotional responses by the target whose comments indicate the taking of offence. Furthermore, the interviewees’ evaluations suggest further – cross-cultural – variability in humour perception. In other words, it is possible to observe differences between the way Australian and British interviewees perceive the instigator’s attempts at humour and the target’s negative reaction to it. For instance, while Australians claim that humorous turns were not offensive and they would not expect a negative reaction in their own cultural context, the British interviewees refer to those humorous contributions as personal and belittling, which would justify an aggressive response. As a result, the misalignment between what is allegedly intended by the instigator and how it is perceived by the target as well as cross-cultural variability in interpretation of humour not only point to a multi-faceted nature of humour, but also to the necessity to take into consideration interactional behaviours and perceptions of different participants in order to be able to provide a more detailed account of how humour functions in interpersonal interactions.

**References**

- Bell, Nancy D. (2009). Impolite responses to failed humour. In Neal R. Norrick and Delia Chiaro (eds.), *Humour in Interaction*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 143-163.
- Dynel, Marta. (2009). Beyond a joke: Types of conversational humour. *Language and Linguistics Compass*. *Semantics and Pragmatics* 3: 1284–1299.
- Haugh, Michael. (2016). “Just kidding”: Teasing and claims to non-serious intent. *Journal of Pragmatics* 95: 120-136.
- Holmes, Janet. (2006). Sharing a laugh: Pragmatic aspects of humor and gender in the workplace. *Journal of Pragmatics* 38: 26-50.

Sinkeviciute, Valeria. (2014). "When a joke's a joke and when it's too much": Mateship as a key to interpreting jocular FTAs in Australian English. *Journal of Pragmatics* 60: 121-139.

Sinkeviciute, Valeria. (2017). "Everything he says to me it's like he stabs me in the face": Frontstage and backstage reactions to teasing". In Nancy Bell (ed.), *Multiple Perspectives on Language Play*. Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 169-198.

**Bionote:** **Valeria Sinkeviciute** is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at The University of Queensland, Australia. She received her PhD from the University of Antwerp, Belgium. Her main research interests lie in the field of pragmatics of social interaction and discourse analysis with a focus on such areas as conversational humour, linguistic (im)politeness, identity construction, reality television discourse and Australian and British cultural contexts. She is the author of a number of papers on these topics in journals and edited volumes by John Benjamins, Elsevier and Mouton de Gruyter.

**Justine Sless, MA Candidate, La Trobe University, Melbourne**

***Unpacking the art of teaching stand-up comedy***

**Abstract**

Comedy is seen as a 'masculine discourse' (Beynon 2002; Smith 1996), which is designed to promote and maintain male power and dominance across the stand-up comedy-landscape. Zoglin argues that the stand-up comedy landscape is largely 'defined by testosterone' (2009: 6) and notes that conventional wisdom suggests that women are 'less suited by nature to stand-up comedy, an aggressive, take-charge art form' (2009: 182)' (quoted in Lockyer 2011, 114). Whilst comedy is described as an art form, there are few opportunities to attend workshops and classes and less still of education at a formal high school or tertiary level around learning the craft of stand-up comedy. To learn the art of doing stand-up comedy means, for many aspiring comedians, going to bars and comedy rooms. These spaces are already occupied and dominated by men so to hone the craft in front of an audience often within hostile environments can create barriers to participation. This paper asks, can we change the joke from: a man walks into a bar... to: a woman walks into a class room to learn the art of stand-up comedy which could potentially increase the representation of women in stand-up comedy. It presents research-in-progress for a Master's thesis on gender and comedy.

**Reference**

Sharon Lockyer (2011). From toothpick legs to dropping vaginas: Gender and sexuality in Joan Rivers' stand-up comedy performance, *Comedy Studies*, 2:2, 113-123.

**Bionote:** **Justine Sless** is a comedian, award winning writer and creative director of Melbourne Jewish Comedy Festival and a Masters of Arts student at La Trobe University. Justine has taught comedy with Roarhouse, a community-based arts initiative which addresses barriers to participation in community, arts and culture for those from diverse backgrounds and complex needs. She has performed at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, the Melbourne Fringe Festival, and other comedy events as a comedian and MC in Australia and overseas for over a decade.



**Mark St Leon, Freelance lecturer in Accounting, Economics and Management,  
Melbourne Institute of Technology (Sydney)**

***Tickling the masses: the rise, fall and rescue of humour in Australian circus***

**Abstract**

Between the gold rush era of the 1850s until the introduction of television in the 1950s, the travelling show was Australia's practical solution to a fundamental economic problem: how to deliver entertainment to a small and widely-distributed population. The earliest demonstrable example of the Australian travelling show, and the most enduring, was the circus. Then as now, comedy was an essential feature of circus—whether comedy acrobats, comedy riders, comedy wirewalkers or, of course, clowns. The first waves of popular circus artists brought from England during the heady days of the gold rushes included clowns and jesters who purveyed *commedia dell'arte*, 'jests, wits and *bon mots*', mimicked Shakespeare and performed 'stump' speeches burlesque parliamentary candidates soliciting the votes of constituents. Despite this promising beginning, the quality of Australian circus clowning entered a decline as circus proprietors found replication more feasible than innovation.

Any program of entertainment, circus or otherwise, is informed as much by what can be feasibly procured as by what audiences can reasonably expect. Rural areas supplied steady numbers of ambitious equestrians, urban gymnasiums steady numbers of clever acrobats and gymnasts, and municipal bands steady numbers of talented musicians to staff circus bands. But genuinely clever and innovative clowns were not so easily procured. There were references by the 1870s to failure of circus clowns to deliver 'new witticisms ... [as] the public do not care to listen to the one thing over and over again'. As one commentator observed in 1908, to be a decent clown requires 'the art of an actor, the diction of an elocutionist and the agility of an acrobat ... and if a musician too, then so much the better'. Since it was practically impossible to find these elements within the one individual, some circus proprietors dressed up anyone available in a clown's costume and let them loose on a long-suffering audience. Occasionally, the decline in the domestic clowning department was arrested by the appearance - and the inspiration - of a genuinely innovative clown from across the seas: acrobatic clowns such as the 'English history' clown, Benhamo (from England, 1878); the musical Jandaschewsky family (from Europe, 1900); and the renowned Popov (from Russia, 1984). But, as the record attests, although Australia has produced some of the world's outstanding bareback riders (May Wirth), wirewalkers (Con Colleano), trapeze artists (The Flying Waynes), and acrobats (The Seven Ashtons), it is still to produce a circus clown of international pre-eminence.

The history of Australian circus clowning awaits comprehensive study and evaluation. In the meantime, building on a substantial bank of research, the author will argue that the travelling circus played a crucial - if not completely admirable role - in collecting, packaging and distributing humour throughout Australia in the century before the advent of television in the 1950s. How did circus clowning develop over this era? How did audience expectations of humour vary and develop throughout Australia? What imprint did circus clowning leave on Australian society? As a historical overview, this paper, hopefully, will inspire and guide deeper research into its subject matter.

**References:**

Disher, M. Willson. (1925). *Clowns and Pantomimes*, London: Constable.  
Hippisley Coxe, Antony. (1980). *A Seat at the Circus*, London: Macmillan.  
St Leon, Mark. (2011). *Circus: The Australian Story*, Melbourne: Melbourne Books.

**Bionote: Dr Mark St Leon** is a freelance lecturer in accounting, economics and management. In 1991, he founded the Sydney Arts Management Advisory Group (SAMAG), now in its 25<sup>th</sup> year of operation. Mark is descended from one of Australia's earliest and most enduring circus families. He is the author of the definitive history of Australian circus and has written numerous monographs and articles on the subject.

**Dita Svelte, School of Humanities and Languages, University of New South Wales, Sydney**

***'Do you call this thing a coat?': The travelling wit of the ultimate dandy and man of fashion, Beau Brummell***

**Abstract**

The dandy is unique amongst icons of men's style and fashion in his popular longevity – he is as familiar to contemporary observers of men's style as he was striking to the inhabitants of Regency London where he first appeared. The dandy figures not only as a traveller through time, but also geography. He appears and reappears in various countries; at times he poses as aesthete, revolutionary, and decadent; he even enjoys gender and ethno-cultural transmutations. As art historian Susan Fillin-Yeh asks as part of her project to extend study of the dandy beyond white European males: 'Why study dandies? Certainly because new ones continue to flourish' (2001: 3). Why does the dandy persist? From where does he draw his power? In this paper, I will consider how a notion of wit might contribute to understanding not only the dandy, but also the wider appeal of fashion itself. Wit, with its intellectual and creative possibilities, possesses the capacity to surprise through the provision of an unexpected insight.

I will focus on George 'Beau' Brummell (1778-1840) to study this surprising and insightful wit as it manifests in the dandy's verbal epigrams and fashionable sartorial details. The dandy's epigrams are rarely discussed within the sociology of fashion and fashion studies, and are often regarded as separate from his material contributions. For example, in *The Fashion System*, renowned cultural critic Roland Barthes characterises the fashion writing of magazines, largely composed of short utterances which may be regarded as epigrams, as a 'rare and poor rhetoric' (1983 [1967]: 236). I will argue that, counter to this view, Brummell's famous epigrams intend to astonish through their pithy insights. In the study of fashion, the sartorial detail is often read as operating through the logic of distinction; this is the basis of Barthes' claim that the fashion system 'kills' the dandy by replicating his constant innovations (2004 [1962]: 68). I will contend that in fact the dandy's detail contains the appealing spark of a surprising insight. The verbal epigram and sartorial detail can thus be read as expressions of the same impulse to surprise which characterises both wit and fashion. Understanding wit of the dandy as it has travelled to us today through time and space thus also assists us in understanding the broader phenomenon of fashion itself.

**References**

- Barthes, Roland (1983). [1967] *The Fashion System*. Trans, Matthew Ward and Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, Roland (2004). [1962] 'Dandyism and Fashion'. In *The Language of Fashion*, eds. Andy Stafford and Michael Carter, trans. Andy Stafford, 65-69. Oxford & NY: Berg
- Fillin-Yeh, Susan (2001). 'Introduction'. In *Dandies: Fashion and Finesse in Art and Culture*, ed. Susan Fillin-Yeh, 1-34. NY & London: New York University Press.

**Bionote:** Dita Svelte's research focuses on the intriguing intersections between wit and fashion. He argues that the surprising and seductive creative possibilities of wit are echoed in the phenomenon of fashion itself, and that this wit might assist in explaining fashion's own enduring appeal and powerful allure.

**Marguerite Wells, Independent Scholar**

***Proprietary punning: Types of pun through Japanese history***

**Abstract**

The phonological structure of the Japanese language makes it particularly well adapted for punning, and you might think that this would mean puns would be everywhere. Precisely the opposite is the case. This has led to various social controls on punning, including their restriction to various situations (such as literature and, in the modern world, advertising), and the definition and naming of various kinds of pun. In the historical past, in the tradition of Confucian Scholasticism, individuals have taken ownership of certain kinds of pun, and even set up schools, where they took disciples who apprenticed themselves to study punning with the master, along the lines of schools in other branches of the Japanese arts. Whereas in English, punning has traditionally been a game of quick wits and perhaps of rule breaking, in Japan it has rather been a matter for deliberation and application of rules.

This paper will consider various kinds of Japanese pun and their history, and will offer, where possible, English parallels that fit the form of the Japanese pun. Types of Japanese pun include: *goro awase*, *kakekotoba*, *shūku*, *kyōgen*, *rikō*, *kosegoto*, *kasuri*, *kuchiai*, *mojiri*, *goro*, *shiritori*, *jiguchi*, *sharekotoba* and *herazuguchi*.

**Bionote:** **Marguerite Wells** holds the degree of DPhil from the University of Oxford and is the author of *Japanese Humour* (London: Macmillan, 1997). She is a trained actor in both Japanese and English theatre.