



Australasian Humour Studies Network

20th Annual Colloquium on

‘Anything Goes?’

13 – 15 February 2014

The National Library

Wellington, New Zealand



AHSN 2014 Colloquium on 'Anything Goes?'

National Library of New Zealand

13 to 15 February

Program Summary

Thursday 13 February

4:00-4.30 *Registration*

4:30-6:00 *Parallel Session 1a (Thorndon Room) - Cartoons, War Humour*
Chair: Susan Foster

Steven Loveridge (Victoria University of Wellington)
Not Quiet on the Tasman Front?: The Aussie Antitype in New Zealand's War Effort, 1914-1918

Rachael Bell (Massey University, Wellington)
'A Crazy Delightful Contraption': The Use of Humour in an Official War History of WWII

Ronald Stewart (Prefectural University of Hiroshima)
An Angry Voice in a Sea of Silence: The Birth of a Local Cartoonist in Fukushima, Japan.

4:30-6:00 *Parallel Session 1b (Pipitea Room) - Literature*
Chair: Marco Sonzogni

Jean Anderson (Victoria University of Wellington)
Style and Substance: Translation Challenges of Verbal Play in French Crime Fiction

Celina Bortolotto (Massey University, Turitea)
'I'm (not) Joking!': Shame and Humour in Contemporary Caribbean Literature

6:15-8:00 *Special Plenary Session by Staff of the New Zealand Cartoon Archive, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand (Thorndon/Pipitea combined)*
Chair: Melinda Johnston

Melinda Johnston (Research Librarian for Cartoons)
How to Read Cartoons: Fostering Visual Literacy Through Cartoon Analysis

Valerie Love (Research Librarian for Digital Materials)
Keeping the Laughs Alive: Preserving Digital Cartoons for
Posterity

Ian F. Grant (NZ Cartoon Archive founder)
No Laughing Matter: A Cartoon Perspective on Australia-New
Zealand Relations Since the 1890s.

8:00-9:00 *Drinks, finger food*

Friday 14 February

8:30-9:00 Mihi (Chris Szekely, National Library Chief Librarian); Peter Whiteford
(Associate Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Victoria
University of Wellington); Administration Matters (Mike Lloyd)

9:00-10:00 *Plenary Session (Thorndon/Pipitea combined)*

Moira Marsh (Indiana University)
All Jokes Are Bad If They Are Any Good

10:00-10:30 *Refreshments*

10:30-12:00 *Parallel Session 2a (Thorndon Room) - Humour in Workplaces and
Organizations*

Chair: Barbara Plester

Daryl Peebles (University of Tasmania)
Anything Goes - Except in Workplaces

Jeannie Fletcher (Massey University, Wellington)
Humour Through the Looking Glass: Reflections of an
Organisational 'Climate of Care'

Barbara Plester (University of Auckland)
When is a Joke not a Joke: The Dark Side of Organisational
Humour

10:30-12:00 *Parallel Session 2b (Pipitea Room) Humour across Languages and
People*

Chair: Maren Rawlings

Rachel L. DiCioccio (University of Rhode Island)
Humour Communication: An Agent of Interpersonal Influence

Beatriz Carbajal Carrera (Universidad de Salamanca/Flinders University)

Ineffective and Inappropriate. Designing a Questionnaire for Non-native Speakers to Identify Failed Humour in Spanish Language Cartoons

John Rucynski, Jr., Ayako Namba, Scott Gardner (Okayama University)

Measuring Various Cultural Limits of Humour in Language Classes

12:00-1:00 *Lunch*

1:00-3:00 *Parallel Session 3a (Thorndon Room) - Psychological Aspects*

Chair: Carmen Moran

Maren Rawlings (Swinburne University of Technology)

Further Notions for a Scale of Self-Deprecating Humour

Lyn Ashcroft (Independent Scholar), Catherine Ashcroft (Australian Catholic University, Strathfield)

The Tip of the Asperger's: Asperger Syndrome/Autism Spectrum Disorder and Humour

Carmen Moran, Suzanne King (Charles Sturt University)

Childhood and Adult Humour and the Experience of Bullying

Bruce Findlay, Tanya Wallace (Swinburne University of Technology)

The Association of Humour, Social Support, and Personality with Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

1:00-3:00 *Parallel Session 3b (Pipitea Room) - Sociological Aspects*

Chair: Angus McLachlan

Angus McLachlan (University of Ballarat)

Self-mockery as an Affirmation of Identity

Bronwyn McGovern (Victoria University of Wellington)

Mad Rant or 'Taking the Piss'? A Case Study of When Attempts at Humour go Wrong

Rachael Fabish (Victoria University of Wellington)

"Yeah! 'We're Nice Skinheads'! Ha Ha!": The 'Black Rainbow Story' as Comedy

Nicholas Holm (Massey University)

Humour as Edge-Work: Joke Work, Tendentiousness and Tosh.0

- 3:00-3:30 *Refreshments*
- 3:30-5:00 *Parallel Session 4a: (Thorndon Room) - Drama and Performance*
Chair: Debra Aarons
- Thomas Koentges (Victoria University of Wellington)
Philatio: Horace on Impotence and Philosophy
- Michael C. Ewans (University of Newcastle)
The resolution of Joe Orton's "What the Butler Saw"
- Debra Aarons (University of New South Wales)
Bawdy Broads—The Unkosher Comediennes
- 3:30-5:00 *Parallel Session 4b (Pipitea Room) - National humour/humourists*
Chair: Peter Kirkpatrick
- Yaw Sekyi-Baidoo (University of Winneba, Ghana)
Post Mortem or Post-Punch Line Analysis in 'Toli' - Ghanaian Humorous Tale
- Peter Kirkpatrick (University of Sydney)
Why is a Whale?: Lennie Lower's Comic Journalism
- William E. Ellis (Eastern Kentucky University)
Irvin S. Cobb: The Rise and Fall of an American Humorist
- 6:30 *Conference dinner: Wagamama Restaurant (sign up on the day)*

Saturday 15 February

- 8.30-10:00 *Plenary Session 5 (Thorndon/Pipitea combined) - Anything Goes?*
Chair: Meredith Marra
- Susan Foster (Independent cartoon curator and oral historian)
When the Quip Hits the Fan: What Cartoon Complaints Reveal About Changes in Societal Attitudes
- Meredith Marra, Jay Woodhams (Victoria University of Wellington)
One of the Boys? Humour on the Building Site
- Jessica Milner Davis (University of Sydney)
Media Pranks and Hoaxes: The Case of the Failed(?) Australian Radio Prank
- 10:00-10:30 *Refreshments*

10:30-12:00 *Parallel Session 6a (Thorndon Room) - Gender and Politics*
Chair: Anne Pender

Bridget Boyle (Queensland University of Technology)
A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Conference:
Gender, Comedy and the Body

Will Visconti (University of Sydney)
Too Far West (Dangerous Curves Ahead)

Anne Pender (University of New England)
John Clarke and the Secret of Political Humour

10:30-12:00 *Parallel Session 6b (Pipitea Room) - Theoretical and Legal Aspects*
Chair: Paul Jewell

Paul Jewell (Flinders University)
The Role of Humour – a Comparison of some Insights Drawn
from the Epistemology of Kuhn and the Sociology of Goffman
with the Incongruity Theory of Humour

Michael Meany (University of Newcastle)
Comedy - A Computationally Intractable Problem

Laura E Little (Temple University)
Just a Joke: Humour as a Defense in Defamation Actions

12:00-1:00 *Lunch*

1:00-3:00 *Parallel Session 7a (Thorndon Room) - Media, Cartoons, Comics and Politics*
Chair: Robert Phiddian

Khin Wee Chen (University of Canterbury)
Mediascape Mapping: An Ordered Approach for Identifying
Areas in a Socio-political Humour Site in Singapore for Further
Study

Robert Phiddian, Haydon Manning (Flinders University)
'Double Negative: Tracking the 2013 Australian Election
Campaign through Cartoons'

Geniesa Tay (University of Canterbury)
Binders Full of LOLitics: Political Humour, Internet Memes, and
Play in the 2012 US Presidential Election

1:00-3:00 *Parallel Session 7b (Pipitea Room) - Indigenous humour, Negotiating Details*

Chair: Jessica Milner Davis

Karen Austin (Flinders University)

The Presence of Humour – Neglect of Indigenous Australian Humour in Post-colonial Mainstream Discourse.

Adrian Hale (University of Western Sydney)

The After-Life of Jokes: How Humour Negotiates Time, Space, Participants and Contexts

Jan Karen Lloyd Jones (Australian National University)

Milan Kundera and the Limits of Humour in the Totalitarian State

3:00-3:30 *Refreshments*

3:30-4.30 *Plenary Session 8 (Thorndon/Pipitea combined)*

Matt Elliott

Is there anybody out there?

4:40-6:00 *Farewell drinks and finger food*

7:00 AHSN Panel Meeting, venue TBA

ANYTHING GOES?

ABSTRACTS

Plenary Presentations

Moira Marsh

Indiana University (molsmith@indiana.edu)

All Jokes Are Bad If They Are Any Good

What is failed humour? Is it still a joke if nobody laughs? Is it possible to go too far in humour, and how far is too far? When is a joke so bad that it is no good? This paper makes the argument that there is some kind of transgression in every joke, and that a successful joke is one whose transgressions are accepted or tolerated by a salient audience. Several propositions will be advanced in making this argument. One is that it is an error to define jokes as amusing texts. Amusement is not something that jokes do to an audience, but an attitude that the audience choose to take. Further, a joke imperatively calls for an audience response more than any other kind of performance. Another proposition is that without limits, there can be no humour, because humour consists in the artful and deliberate transgression of limits. Anything goes, but only if the salient audiences can be persuaded to treat the transgression in a spirit of play. Since the humourousness of jokes is always defined by the audience, the same text will be funny to some, but not others, and funny to the same person at one time but not another. Thus it makes no sense to ask whether any text is funny. The question must be, funny to whom, and when, and why? These propositions will be illustrated with copious examples, including practical jokes, parodies about topical events, and anything else I can find.

Matt Elliott

Independent author (mattell1@clear.net.nz)

Is there anybody out there?

Best-selling author, Matt Elliott, recalls strange nights spent as one of New Zealand's stand-up comedy pioneers, performing on the Melbourne circuit and writing the only history of local comedy. All events took place in the period B.C. (Before Conchords).

PAPERS

Debra Aarons

Linguistics, University of New South Wales (d.aarons@unsw.edu.au)

Bawdy Broads—The Unkosher Comediennes

In this presentation I will consider the comedy of a group of female Jewish comediennes, referred to by Sarah Blacher Cohen as “The Unkosher Comediennes”. I’ll focus particularly on Belle Barth and Pearl Williams, both of whom were at their peak during the 1950s and 1960s. These comediennes, known for their “Party Records” reconfigured the stereotypes of the middle-aged American Jewish woman. They were bawdy, “dirty”, crude and entirely unrespectable. They played primarily to Jewish audiences (often holiday makers) in Miami. Owning their clubs, they were frequently raided and shut down by the police. Their risqué party records, (e.g., *If I embarrass you tell your friends*, (Barth) *A trip around the world is not a cruise* (Williams)) were banned in Australia for many years. Joan Rivers is an inheritor of this tradition, although she has stamped it with her own characteristics, and extended it to a much more general audience. Sarah Silverman, too, acknowledges their influence on her work and philosophy of comedy. In the presentation, I will examine the relationship of this sort of comedy to the “Shtick” of Lenny Bruce, who attacked both Jews and non-Jews in his performances that drew wider and more diverse audiences. I’ll consider the in-your-face ways in which Barth and Williams use, abuse and provoke audiences by challenging gender roles, besmirching the conventions of class, culture and acceptability of an upwardly mobile immigrant community. At a time when Jewish comedians were bleaching overt Jewish characteristics from their acts and becoming more mainstream in the USA, these bawdy broads chose a different angle, recalling attitudes and behaviours for their audiences that reminded them that “kosher” was but a facet of their identities. I will propose some explanations for the genesis and impact of the bawdy broads and trace their influence on a strand in the comedy of the 21st century.

Jean Anderson

French, Victoria University of Wellington (jean.anderson@vuw.ac.nz)

Style and Substance: Translation Challenges of Verbal Play in French Crime Fiction

Crime fiction in France, as elsewhere, commands a considerable readership, and in many cases is a vehicle for serious social criticism (see Manchette's 1972 concept of the 'néo-polar'). Although Nettelbeck (1994) makes much of the increasing place of popular genres in what he refers to as 'post-literary' culture, he is also quick to acknowledge the importance within these genres of linguistic experiment, noting links between modern classics such as Céline, Jarry, Barbusse and Sartre. I propose to broaden this selection of stylistic innovators to consider the impact of Queneau and Oulipo in grounding experimental writing in the field of crime fiction, which both provides a particularly French twist to the genre and is closely linked with verbal and culturally-embedded humour. Taking examples from writers such as Georges Flipo, Patrick Pécherot, Frédéric Dard (San Antonio) and Dominique Sylvain, I will explore

some of the difficulties encountered in translating these types of comic texts into English.

Lyn Ashcroft

Independent Scholar (lynashc@optusnet.com.au)

Catherine Ashcroft

Australian Catholic University, Strathfield (ashcrofct1@optusnet.com.au)

The Tip of the Asperger's: Asperger Syndrome/Autism Spectrum Disorder and Humour

This paper will consider aspects of the humour both appreciated and generated by Asperger Syndrome (AS)/ Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) individuals. An overview of the types and styles of humour which appear to be favoured by AS/ASD individuals will be offered, based on recent research and, especially, on Catherine as a case study. Tendencies in Catherine which will be a particular focus include: a love of practical jokes; the appreciation and use of patterned humour, such as question and answer format and lists; an enjoyment of repetition as an element of humour; a satirical bent; and, finally, the use of humour as a coping strategy.

The audience will be invited to view and rate a series of Catherine's favourite humorous memes from social media sites as being either within or beyond socially acceptable limits. They will also be asked to rate at least one of Catherine's own humorous creations using this standard. Comments and questions will be invited and it is hoped that there will be fruitful discussion, both on the nature of AS/ASD humour as opposed to 'normal' humour and on the issue of what constitutes the limits of humour.

Karen Austin

Flinders University (klaustin@adam.com.au)

The Presence of Humour – Neglect of Indigenous Australian humour in post-colonial mainstream discourse.

Focusing on visual and performing arts, this paper provides examples of postcolonial events that have played significant roles in negating Indigenous Australian humorous expression in mainstream Australian discourse. These examples range from early encounters between Europeans and Indigenous Australians in the 1700s until the beginnings of contemporary Indigenous expressions in mainstream discourse in the 1960–70s. Indigenous cultural practices, that included humour, responded to western influences that pervaded every aspect of their lives. Moreover, humorous caricatures of Aboriginal people abound in colonial images and literature. Examples will show that these stereotyped images oscillated between a benevolent need to comfort the last vestiges of a dying, once noble race; to mockery and abhorrence for people who could not embrace European civilization. Such images reflected and perpetuated mainstream beliefs and policies; and disregard for Indigenous cultural practices ensued. However, in some instances, Indigenous Australian humour can still be seen revealing a level of self-agency (Clendinnen, 2003: 109). Indigenous

humour frequently manifests itself in quick laughter, mocking mimicry; 'mickey-taking' and funny yarns (Kennedy, 2009: 12-14). Whilst these forms of humour are recognisable in other world cultures, it is the use and function of humour, frequently revealed in performing and visual arts, that points to its particularly Indigenous Australian nature (Milner Davis, 2009: 31, 33). Humour epitomizes Aboriginal resilience and resistance to western colonial hegemony. Indigenous academic Lillian Holt suggests that humour has helped them survive living in a racialised country of what she describes as 'white supremacy' (2009: 86). Most certainly, humour has, and continues to play, a vital role in Indigenous fights for greater autonomy, self-expression and recognition (Foley, 2012).

References

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Kennedy, G, 2009, *What Makes a Blackfulla Laugh?* *Australian Author*, 41/3;

Milner Davis, J, 2009, *'Aussie' humour and laughter: Joking as an acculturating ritual* in De Groen, F & Kirkpatrick, P (eds.), 2009, *Serious Frolic, Essays on Australian Humour*, Uni of QLD Press, St Lucia, Queensland.

Rachael Bell

History, Massey University, Wellington (R.E.Bell@massey.ac.nz)

'A Crazy Delightful Contraption': the use of humour in an Official War History of WWII

Official War History seems an unlikely place to find humorous prose, yet in the first of the Official Histories of New Zealand's participation in World War II humour plays a dominant role in giving an acceptable face to war experience. This paper looks at *Journey toward Christmas*, the history of the First Ammunition Company, to consider the role of humour in creating a double narrative of war: providing an uncommonly warm and inclusive narrative for the public readership, while achieving an authentic and essentially very private account of battalion life for unit members. Among its many uses in the volume humour serves to assume unanimity of group experience and values, provide oblique reference to traumatic events and confirm group membership while distancing unit participants retrospectively from some of the more sordid details of combat. Analysis of reviews suggests that humour was seen by contemporaries as a potentially important element in setting the volume's particular mix of intimacy and distance within collective and national memories of the war.

Celina Bortolotto

School of Humanities, Massey University, Turitea (M.C.Bortolotto@massey.ac.nz)

'I'm (not) joking!': Shame and Humour in Contemporary Caribbean Literature

Shame theorists see laughter as a powerful antidote to shame in its offer of a common ground that allows re-engagement with others. They also highlight how collectively victimized groups have frequently developed “exquisite senses of humour and rich joking cultures as an alternative to mass depression” (Katz). Others, like French philosopher Henri Bergson, see laughter as a powerful corrective tool against “*inelasticity* of character, of mind and even of body” (19, italics in the original). Both as an affective experience of social bonding from within shame or transcending it, as in parody, or as social correction in the form of satire, this paper explores humour as a response to shame in contemporary fictional texts inscribed in the Caribbean Neo-Baroque tradition of literary parody and excess. Ángel Lozada’s novels satirize and parody several dominant narratives in Puerto Rico and in the gay urban scene of New York, exposing the fallacies behind promises of Christian redemption on the island and of sexual and material agency promoted by the “gay lifestyle” in the US. Sonia Rivera-Valdés uses the format of confessional sessions in the form of short stories to humourously complicate rigid sexual, gender and national stereotypes in Cuba and the US, and Santos-Febres’ novel presents Martha Divine, an ageing transsexual in Puerto Rico, as a campy spokesperson for the transformative powers of comic performance. In these three texts humour responds to shame through a satirical criticism against various social incongruities and a playful re-creation of the discourses that perpetuate them.

Bridget Boyle

Drama, Queensland University of Technology (bidboyle@gmail.com)

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Conference: Gender, Comedy and the Body

This performative paper will examine some of the ways in which gender impacts upon contemporary physical comedy. According to the late Christopher Hitchens (2007), women are too concerned with the seriousness of their reproductive responsibility to make good comedy; as slapstick film director Mack Sennett (in Dale 2000, 92) maintained: “No joke about a mother ever got a laugh”. In this paper, I draw upon Kristeva’s (1982) much-cited notion of abjection to help understand how female physical comedians are challenged by their gender when creating comic characters and shaping routines. Dale (2000, 3) makes oblique reference to abjection in relation to comedy, saying “[c]omedies have to stay close to life in some respects to get at what makes us anxious and convert it to laughter”. Limon (2000) and Lee (2004) also utilise the notion of the abject to understand the apparent transgression inherent in stand-up comedy. In this form of comic performance the abject is redeployed from despised limen-dweller to star performer, and this is true, to an extent, of physical comedy. Bare bottoms, flatulence, diarrhoea and constipation have all been grist to the comic mill in varying degrees, but the slapstick hero/clown never gets accidentally splattered in menstrual blood. Are there some horrors too

powerful to be converted to laughter? Despite the challenges, female physical comedians do undoubtedly exist, albeit in smaller numbers compared to men (Peacock 2009). Extant theory provides only partial illumination as to how these anomalies operate. My doctoral research project attempts to understand and demonstrate successful female physical comedy performance, while developing new strategies for a writer/director to overcome the challenges of gender in a mainstage context. Under the narrative umbrella of my research journey thus far, this paper will identify and perform some of these strategies.

References

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Beatriz Carbajal Carrera

**Spanish, Universidad de Salamanca, Flinders University of SA
(beatriz.carbajal@gmail.com)**

Ineffective and inappropriate. Designing a questionnaire for non-native speakers to identify failed humour in Spanish language cartoons

Humour discourse is commonly based on taboo, negative stereotypes and borderline topics within cultures. Intercultural communication, however, increases the difficulties of determining the appropriateness of humour due to the outsider perspective of the interlocutors. This paper presents a newly designed questionnaire to analyse cases of humour in order to identify sources of misunderstanding for non-native speakers. Not every factor can be objectively measured in humorous communicative acts. Many individual variables play a central role during the process. This study explores the influence of the message's communication styles (Spitzberg, 2000) and non-native speakers' strategies (Bell, 2009) on the success of the comic cartoon. The methodology of research intends to test the validity of a cross-cultural communication theoretical framework on multimodal units, namely comic cartoons. Previous research on humour styles has mainly focused on drawing a speaker's personality profile (Martin et al., 2003). This new questionnaire, though, will

measure the impact of politeness on the success of the humoristic message from the Pragmatics' perspective, a linguistic approach that places the emphasis on interpretation. Conflicting samples have been deliberately included in the suggested questionnaire with the aim of covering all ranges of appropriateness and effectiveness. During the design process, the study addressed the challenge of selecting accurately representative models. Can subjective factors be standardized to some extent? And if so, how? In practical terms, the participants' responses will test the hypothesis for each item. As a result, the questionnaire is expected to contribute to the existing taxonomies with the subjective component, which is necessary to complete a holistic insight of the interaction between cartoons and non-native speakers.

Khin Wee Chen

Media and Communication, University of Canterbury (chenkhinwee@yahoo.com)

Mediascape mapping: An ordered approach for identifying areas in a socio-political humour site in Singapore for further study

The metaphor of mapping a geological landscape described by James A. Anderson (2012) is similarly useful for mapping a mediascape. Guided by this metaphor, in a pilot study of a socio-political humour page on Facebook in Singapore, a snapshot of a single media Event was taken to identify Properties, Processes, Consequences, and the Character of this page. Mapping the mediascape identifies and clarifies what areas require further and closer examination in a subsequent, larger study aimed at finding out the *how's* and *why's* surrounding the use of socio-political humour in Malaysia and Singapore. This paper will present the methods employed to identify the Properties and Processes of *9GAG Singapore*, and proposes the subsequent methods necessary for determining the Consequences and Character of this page, which is using humour to oppose a government White Paper proposing to increase the Singapore population to 6.9 million.

Rachel L DiCioccio

Communication Studies, University of Rhode Island (dicioccio@uri.edu)

Humour Communication: An Agent of Interpersonal Influence

The pervasive nature of humour is undeniable. Collectively, the numerous definitions of humour highlight the clear influential thrust that humour delivers in human interaction. The proposed paper will examine the connection between humour use and interpersonal influence. Specifically, this paper will serve as an entry to comprehend how interpersonal intimacy interfaces with humour as a means of influencing the achievement of relational, attitudinal, and behavioral goals in romantic relationships. Humour can shift the charged interaction of a romantic couple by subtly or overtly influencing affect. Romantic relationships are driven by emotion—it is what propels or inhibits relationship development. Recognizing that affect and emotion are integral aspects of romantic relationships, this paper examines how the use of humour communication between relational partners

impacts affect, and, in turn, contributes to the process of interpersonal influence. Because intimate relationships are based on periods of simple co-presence, this paper recognizes the social and often implicit nature of persuasive interaction. Persuasion is an inherent process in all relationships. There is no better example of persuasive interactants than romantic partners. Close relational partners work to persuade each other overtly, around specific topics or issues, and consistently engage in subtle interpersonal influence to maintain relational stability. One mechanism used to create and impact mood/affect is humour communication. Humour can create and alter emotion and "Mood and emotion can alter the likelihood of compliance with a request" (Dillard, Anderson, & Knobloch, 2002, p. 459). Meyer's (2000) functional model of humour communication will be employed to examine how key social functions of humour result in successful/unsuccessful interpersonal influence. The combination of identification and clarification humour and affectionate teasing can create a positive and lighthearted yet potent communication environment. Through the use of humorous messages, partners can tension and the potential for conflict. This paper aims to illuminate the benefit of using prosocial humour to activate interpersonal influence in relationships.

William E. Ellis

History, Eastern Kentucky University (historianbill@aol.com)

Irvin S. Cobb: The Rise and Fall of an American Humorist

Irvin S. Cobb came of age in the late nineteenth century American South. Pressed into the work force in his teens owing to a reversal of family fortunes, he immediately demonstrated a knack for descriptive writing. From his earliest newspaper days in Paducah, Louisville, and then in New York, he became a reporter of note, then branched out into magazine writing, short stories and longer fiction, wrote other books, became a well-known after dinner speaker and lecturer, novelist, and movie script writer and actor. His life illustrated many of the attributes, possibilities, and liabilities associated with "southern" writers and performers of the early 20th century, yet he was also in many ways quintessentially "American." He never overcame his "southernness" or gained the acceptance of such cultural mavens as Henry L. Mencken. Later in his life Cobb became more conservative in his views, in no small part because of declining health. His style of humour became increasingly out of touch with change during the Great Depression as it became strained, more racist, and anti-Semitic. By the time of his death in 1944 his influence and fame had mostly faded.

Michael C Ewans

Drama Fine Art and Music, University of Newcastle

(michael.ewans@newcastle.edu.au)

The resolution of Joe Orton's 'What the Butler Saw'

Joe Orton declared in 1965 that 'farce is higher than comedy in that it is very close to tragedy'. It was his aim to reanimate the genre of farce and forge it into an

instrument of social critique. As the title suggests, *What the Butler Saw* (1969) is a peepshow, in which the audience are voyeurs seeing into an anarchic universe, which exposes the greed, sexuality and violence lying under the surface of middle-class British life. In Bergson's terms this play is a 'snowball farce'. Dr Prentice's attempt to seduce his new secretary Geraldine sets the whole chain of events moving inexorably down towards the disintegration which is threatening towards the end of the second and final Act. At the climax of the anarchy, metal grilles fall into place - not to isolate the patients in the wards of the mental hospital where the play is set, but over the doors of Dr. Prentice's office, trapping all but one of the supposedly sane characters. This *coup de théâtre* dramatizes the play's epigraph from *The Revenger's Tragedy*: 'Surely we're all mad people, and they/Whom we think are, are not'. The action of the play is then resolved in a short but extraordinary final scene. It comprises: (1) a recognition between long-lost relatives, which parodies this familiar comic ending by adding an Oedipal twist: (2) a *deus ex machina*: (3) an Aristophanic revelation (4) the closing departure. Each of these four phases will be analyzed briefly, and in the light of this analysis a challenge will be mounted to Leslie Smith's view that 'the ending reasserts the "real" world we all live in after the fantasy-reality of Dr Prentice's office'. This reading, while *prima facie* attractive, fails to do justice to the full meaning of the play.

Rachael Fabish

Cultural Anthropology, Victoria University of Wellington (rfabish@hotmail.com)
"Yeah! 'We're nice skinheads'! Ha Ha!": The 'Black Rainbow story' as comedy

My Ph.D. research centres on the Black Rainbow collective, a group set up to explore issues of racism in the Wellington anarchist network. In this Maori (indigenous) majority group we moved quickly between serious discussion and joking around. Jokes that pointed towards larger shared understandings were common, and I found myself (as a Pakeha/settler) sometimes 'getting' these jokes and at other times not at all. As a Maori member of the group cracked up laughing while describing their experiences of being tormented by skinheads as a child, I could only respond with shock and pity. The distance this created between us led me to reflect on the limits of humour and what the question 'who's (not) laughing?' tells us about experiences of oppression. Drawing on Michael Jackson's discussion 'From the Tragic to the Comic' from his book *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity* (2002), I came to see humour as a way of gaining agency, detachment and community around tragic experiences. I will discuss how this (and other literature about humour) led me to see the 'Black Rainbow story' in my thesis as a comedy of sorts—a caricature of our activist community. While this involved some stereotyping over the complex realities of the people we spoke about, this joking allowed us to expose social inequalities and create solidarity.

Bruce Findlay, Tanya Wallace

Psychology, Swinburne University of Technology

(bfindlay@groupwise.swin.edu.au)

The association of humour, social support, and personality with organisational citizenship behaviour

This paper presents a study which examined the impact that social support (Blumenthal et al., 1987) and humour (HSQ, Martin et al., 2003; Rawlings & Findlay, 2010) have in predicting one's propensity to engage in organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB, Williams & Anderson, 1991) in the workplace, over that predicted by personality. Data was collected, via an online questionnaire, from 118 employees, working in a diverse range of organisations throughout Australia. OCB can be measured in relation to the organisation or in relation to the individuals with whom one works. As in previous research, conscientiousness predicted OCB towards the organisation, as did social desirable responding, but none of the humour scales did, although scores on an aggressive humour style approached significance as a negative predictor. However, in terms of OCB towards individuals, neither personality nor social support were significant predictors, while aggressive humour, self enhancing humour, and a good climate of humour in the workplace were all significant predictors. Implications of the results for organisations will be discussed.

Jeannie Fletcher

School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing, Massey University,

Wellington (J.R.Fletcher@massey.ac.nz)

Humour through the looking glass: Reflections of an organisational 'climate of care'

Humour serves many functions in organisational discourse, from lowering tension in workplace meetings to supporting creativity and thinking outside the square. Humour's role in innovation has similarly been recognised as part of a 'climate of care', a key feature of organisations with an ongoing capacity for knowledge creation and innovation. This paper looks at the use of humour by colleagues in one such organisation - a New Zealand based IT company. The interdisciplinary study on which this paper is based, explores care and the quality of collegial relationships as a component of the strategic management concept of a *knowledge enabling organisational context*. The data presented here includes emails and face-to-face interactions which are analysed using Spencer-Oatey's rapport management framework. The discussion considers humour used by colleagues in managing interpersonal rapport as they keep each other 'in the loop', negotiate complex power relations and acknowledge the emotional lives of others. Their interactions reflect elements of a 'climate of care' such as mutual trust, lenience in judgment and active empathy. A thread of humour permeates interaction at all levels of this workplace and fun is a stated company value. However in an organisational context, as in other settings, humour can be something of a double edged sword, and this is

considered as an unexpected consequence of a culture that values fun and 'open' communication.

Susan Foster

Independent cartoon curator and oral historian (foster.gorbey@paradise.net.nz)

When the quip hits the fan: What Cartoon Complaints Reveal About Changes in Societal Attitudes

The re-publication of the Danish cartoons by a number of newspapers around the world resulted in violent protests. Although two newspapers in New Zealand chose to re-publish, on the grounds of 'solidarity and supporting press freedom', there was nothing like the scale of the furore overseas. That said, the cartoons did engender a strong reaction from the Muslim community similar to the response of the Jewish community in recent years with regard to several cartoons on the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Religion as the subject of satire is one of a number of areas that has provoked complaint. A study of cartoons which have been either rejected by an editor or published and condemned by a proportion of a readership provides an insight into changes in taste and societal attitudes. Offence can be taken not only over the subject of the cartoon but also the cartoon treatment of it; in different circumstances, the imagery can be considered discriminatory, pornographic, sacrilegious, scatological, inaccurate or too loaded. Although editorial cartoons are published on a page clearly marked "Opinion", the editor is the final arbiter of readership taste. Questions explored will include: How much do editors walk a tightrope between supporting the cartoonist's 'poetic licence', his right to express his opinion, and risking readership displeasure over a quip that transgresses acceptable boundaries? Where there is a good relationship between an editor and a cartoonist, does an editor censor less and/or the cartoonist self-censor more? Do some editors relish the occasional controversy over a cartoon for its news value given current difficulties in maintaining circulation?

The proposed presentation offers the opportunity to explore further some of the themes touched on in my ASHN 2013 Colloquium presentation. The basis of my research will be drawn again from material gathered from oral history interviews with New Zealand political cartoonists as well as subsequent interviews with former and current newspaper editors.

Ian F. Grant

Founder and current chair of the NZ Cartoon Archive (ifgrant@xtra.co.nz)

No laughing matter: A cartoon perspective on Australia-NZ relations since the 1890s

The Australia-New Zealand relationship is a strange, complex one. This presentation explores, in editorial cartoons, the history, the politics and economics, the cultural connections and sporting encounters that illustrate perfectly a century of intense, usually good humoured rivalry and disagreement over practically everything. In New Zealand pulling Aussies down a peg or two ranks highly as a national pastime. While

New Zealanders might laugh about Australia's convict past and the average Aussie IQ, the Australians are really far more insulting. They are largely indifferent to what happens across the Tasman. Editorial cartoons replicate this perfectly. Australia features regularly in cartoons in the New Zealand press – and there are nearly 1,700 Australian-themed cartoons in the NZ Cartoon Archive collection; Australian cartoons about the relationship with New Zealand are very rare indeed.

Adrian Hale

Humanities and Communication Arts, University of Western Sydney

(A.Hale@uws.edu.au)

The After-Life of Jokes: how humour negotiates time, space, participants and contexts

While the field of humour research is extensive and has ancient links, little research has been conducted into the higher levels of pragmatics and discourse; particularly as to how some textual examples, memes and complex ideas are prolonged over space and time, across discrete contexts. This paper will refer briefly to the main theorists of structural humour (see for e.g. Attardo, 1994; Herzog & Anderson, 2000; Raskin, 1995; Hutcheon, 2000; Partington, 2009), before drawing links to theorists of discourse (e.g. Goffman, 1967; Gumperz, 1982; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Gee, 2011). It will also seek to expand on the limits of the 'frame problem' by reference to Gruner (2000) and Hale (2012). The paper will then refer to findings from a study of published utterances from the commercial producers of humour: directors of film, professional comedians, and cartoonists. One assertion is that there are aspects of expert user-linguistic entrepreneur invention of humorous texts which transcend time and space. A related claim is that the 'discursive defence system' can be overcome through multiadicity. By offering examples of intertextual humour, it will be asserted that a surprising aspect of humour discourse is its open-ended potentiality for persuasion and longevity by adaptation.

Nicholas Holm

School of English and Media Studies Massey University

(n.h.f.holm@massey.ac.nz)

Humour as Edge-Work: Joke Work, Tendentiousness and Tosh.0

In June 2012, American comedian Daniel Tosh acquired worldwide infamy, of the fleeting online variety, when he (allegedly) wished rape upon a female heckler whose critical blog entry on her experience subsequently went "viral." The resulting brouhaha, largely waged between online feminists and establishment comedians, rehearsed what Paul Lewis has dubbed the "edgy-jokes-lead-to-angry-criticism-and-counter-arguing-defensive-moves dance." The fact that the initial altercation took place during a meta-textual 'bit' regarding the merits of rape humour only heightened the stakes of the discussion regarding the possible politics of humour. I will approach Tosh's quip as an extreme, contemporary manifestation of long-standing tendency in humour – particularly stand-up comedy – to build humour around topics perceived

to be either at or beyond the edge of reasonable, public discourse. In this paper, I will argue that we can gain a better understanding of Tosh's humour and the accompanying response via Sigmund Freud's model of humour, where he distinguishes between the cognitive and formal aspects of humour ("joke-work") and those "tendentious" aspects that give voice to displaced social aggression. Freud's theory can quite easily be mapped onto the debate around Tosh's joke, whereby those who objected underscore the tendentious aspects, whereas apologists emphasise the centrality of joke-work. However, I wish to complicate this easy equation by suggestion that Tosh's humour is indicative of a shift in contemporary humour, where the joke-work becomes intractably bound up with the tendentious aspects. Tosh's joke is not simply offensive, it is also about the offensiveness of such jokes and the joke-work can therefore not be easily abstracted from controversial social content. Acknowledging the reflexive nature of such humour allows us to build a more nuanced account of the social role of controversial humour, and begin to address how it not only contravenes social boundaries, but might also establish and delineate them.

Paul Jewell

Faculty of Health, Flinders University (Paul.Jewell@flinders.edu.au)

The role of humour – a comparison of some insights drawn from the epistemology of Kuhn and the sociology of Goffman with the incongruity theory of humour

"Every joke is a tiny revolution", opined George Orwell. A significant function of humour appears to be that it facilitates cognitive revolutions, that is, it challenges the assumptions that frame our encounters with our physical and social worlds by presenting absurd or incongruous alternatives. Fifty years ago the notable sociologist, Erving Goffman, published 'Fun in Games' in which he declared an interest in discussing what 'we could learn about the structure of focused gatherings'. He proposed that investigating the sorts of rules that governed how a game was played could lead to an understanding that there were rules that framed any social encounter. At the same time that Goffman was investigating the structure of focused gatherings, Thomas Kuhn, the notable historian of science, was working on 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions', a book that radically challenged the conventional view of how science and scientists operate. Rather than scientific knowledge being accumulated in progressive, incremental steps, he described how scientists operated within paradigms (though from time to time there were revolutionary paradigm shifts). Scientific communities and practices are defined and framed by the scientific paradigms they adopt. Goffman's work was in Sociology. Kuhn's was a history of physical sciences. Goffman does not cite Kuhn in 'Fun in Games' nor does Kuhn cite Goffman in 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions'. Nonetheless, Kuhn's notion of paradigms can be seen as parallel to Goffman's analysis of frames, and both theories can be related to the incongruity theory of humour. Goffman and Kuhn each eschewed grand theory in favour of social structures, and in particular, what the members of a social group counted as relevant to the framing of their interactions. Kuhn made no comment on humour but Goffman pointed out that comedians challenge these rules of relevance.

Combining their views on relevance leads to a suggestion that the humour functions as a 'paradigm buster', by challenging the rules we use to frame our understanding of social and physical structures.

Melinda Johnston

**Research Librarian Cartoons, Alexander Turnbull Library
(Melinda.Johnston@dia.govt.nz)**

How to Read Cartoons: Fostering visual literacy through cartoon analysis

Beginning with a brief introduction to the Cartoon Archive, this paper presents my early thoughts on some of the strategies we can employ when 'reading' cartoons. Part of this reading process involves wider research, where we ask questions like: who was the cartoonist, where did the cartoon appear, what events does it reference and which people or places are shown? However, beyond these contextual questions, there is also evidence to be gleaned from the cartoon itself, and I hope to investigate the challenges this can present. By asking a range of questions in order to interrogate the image, we as readers become more alert to the visual cues presented by the cartoonist and can cite specific visual details in order to clarify the work's meaning. In doing so, we develop our own visual literacy and move from being passive receivers to critical readers.

Peter Kirkpatrick

English, University of Sydney (peter.kirkpatrick@sydney.edu.au)

Why is a Whale?: Lennie Lower's Comic Journalism

Once regarded as Australia's greatest humorous writer, the lasting reputation of Lennie Lower (1903-1947) is now based on his one novel, *Here's Luck* (1930), which appeared just as his career as a newspaper columnist took off and has never been out of print. While *Here's Luck* has attracted some critical attention, Lower's comic journalism has received virtually no discussion or analysis, despite the fact that it was the medium through which he was best known and most celebrated during his lifetime. In the seven years from 1933 that he worked on the *Australian Women's Weekly* and *Daily Telegraph*, for instance, Lower's biographer Bill Hornage estimates that Lennie wrote almost 3,000 columns: "an incredible output [that] has not been equalled by another humorous writer before or since". Using examples, this paper considers the surreal, stream-of-consciousness word-play of Lower's journalistic humour, with its comic juxtapositions, rapid-fire code switches, non sequiturs, and constant punning. Lower developed his comic style during the heyday of silent movies, when film comedians like Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton were inventing ever more sophisticated elaborations of the sight gag, employing "switch movements", visual metaphors and puns. Like cinematic sight gags, Lower's style avoids punchlines through the constant generation of incongruities – a mode of humour well adapted to what Ben Singer has called "the commerce in sensory shocks" of the urban mass media. It's a style that resembles that of S.J. Perelman,

who co-wrote the early Marx Brothers films, and this paper will conclude with some comparison of Lower's work to that of Perelman.

Thomas Koentges

Victoria University of Wellington (thomas.koentges@vuw.ac.nz)

Philatio: Horace on Impotence and Philosophy

While Octavian, Anthony, and Republicans were struggling for power in the first century BC, the satirist and poet Horace slowly claimed literary glory and eventually became friends with the later princeps Octavian (Augustus). His humorous poems are full of geo- and socio-political references. Horace clearly differentiates between two categories of his poems: his *Satires* employ gentle mocking and self-ironical humour while his *Epodes* are satirical and aggressive invectives. Despite this clear distinction between the groups, a modern audience may think that the poet has gone too far in some of the poems. For instance, when, in his 8th *Epode* the young Horace (or the poetical persona) encourages his Stoic sexual partner to use her lips instead of the philosophical books to motivate him for intercourse, some readers might be unpleasantly surprised of the seemingly frivolous path the Augustan poet decided to take. And indeed, the content of the poem was so blunt, offensive, and sexual that translators long refrained from translating it. Reading the poem in Latin or in translation, even modern readers might be uneasy with Horace talking rough and dirty. However, whoever ignores this poem because of their taste impedes themselves from discovering an invective against Stoic philosophy. Not only is Horace's sexual partner under attack at the climax of the poem, but so is the Stoic school in general. And although the poem remains sexual it also contributes to the philosophical discussion of the time. My paper will provide an historical context to the 'tasteless' poem and show that 'anything goes' when criticising philosophical or political opponents in ancient Rome.

Laura E Little

Beasley School of Law, Temple University (laura.little@temple.edu)

Just a Joke: Humour as a Defense in Defamation Actions

Humour often arises as a defense in defamation lawsuits, with those being sued claiming that their challenged communication was "just a joke." This presentation will provide cross-cultural research from both Australia and U.S. case law, using the law of defamation as the relevant definition of humorous transgression. (I plan to include research on New Zealand caselaw as well). Given the long established tie between defamation and freedom of communication law, United States courts evaluate the "just a joke" defense in light of free speech protections as well as reputational interests incorporated in the theory of defamation. Although Australia does not have a formal constitutional provision protecting freedom of expression, both Australian and U.S. courts generally agree on the appropriate approach for

analyzing “just a joke” defenses in defamation cases. In grappling with a humour defense, U.S. courts resort to the constitutional law distinction between fact and opinion. If a joke is characterized as an “opinion,” then the humourist faces no civil liability. If, on the other hand, the joke suggests false facts unfavourable to the defamation victim, the person being sued may lose the lawsuit and face liability. Useful as an analytical starting point, this fact/opinion dichotomy does not adequately integrate all the values and concerns that come into play where humour and defamation law collide. The fact/opinion distinction is particularly ill-suited to humour, which operates in an uncertain area between fact and non-fact. Australian courts reach similar results without the fact/opinion dichotomy. Both sets of courts would further benefit from interdisciplinary scholarship dedicated to understanding humour. In particular, humour scholarship’s core concept—incongruity —helps to calibrate an optimal balance between freedom of expression concerns and the values of human dignity and honour that are often triggered in defamatory humour lawsuits.

Jan Karen Lloyd Jones

Australian National University (jan.lloyd-jones@anu.edu.au)

Milan Kundera and the limits of humour in the totalitarian state

In Milan Kundera’s first novel, *The Joke*, the main character Ludvik writes on a postcard: “Optimism is the opium of the people! A healthy atmosphere stinks of stupidity! Long live Trotsky!” These words are meant as a joke, but they launch him into a bureaucratic nightmare that results in denunciation and humiliation. Kundera uses black humour of this kind throughout his novels as he describes the effects of Stalinism on his native Czechoslovakia and records the frequent victories of the *agelasts* – those who do not laugh. Indeed, humour is present in his work on many levels: in storylines dealing with the reaction of the totalitarian state to dangerous laughter and as an explicit subject for meditation by the author. This paper outlines Kundera’s stance on humour as presented in his novels and theoretical works. It argues that in his writings humour has the role of touchstone, dividing freedom from slavery, art from kitsch, and the individual from the mob. Examples are given from *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, where Kundera contrasts angelic and demonic laughter: “There are two laughs,” he writes “and we have no word to tell one from the other”. The paper also makes reference to writers influential on Kundera’s own writing and thinking – Cervantes, Rabelais, Sterne, Fielding, Kafka – and argues that this philosophical strand represents an alternative, comedic line of descent in the history of literature: a line that is subversive, vulnerable, and – according to Kundera himself – probably doomed.

Valerie Love

Research Librarian for Digital Materials at the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library New Zealand (valerie.love@dia.govt.nz)

Keeping the laughs alive: Preserving digital cartoons for posterity

The Cartoon Archive is one of the largest collections of born-digital materials at the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, with 200-300 new digital cartoons added to the collections each month. But what exactly happens to these cartoons when the library receives them, and how do we ensure their long-term preservation? This presentation will uncover the work that goes on behind the scenes to manage cartoons at the library, and will also provide practical information for cartoonists (and others) on preserving and maintaining the digital files they create. The session will also provide an opportunity for cartoonists and researchers to provide feedback on the cartoon records that the library creates.

Steven Loveridge

Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington (fourfort@hotmail.com)

Not Quiet on the Tasman Front?: The Aussie Antitype in New Zealand's War Effort, 1914-1918

There is a fascinating idiosyncrasy within New Zealand cartoonist's portrayals of Australia during the Great War. Running parallel to familiar comradely images, of fresh-faced ANZACs marching together, was a very different type of depiction. Indeed throughout the war New Zealand cartoonists consistently proved willing to produce acrimonious sketches of Australia as failing to reach the levels of commitment to the cause that New Zealand was. Such representations of a neighbour and an allied nation might be considered as on the very limits of good-natured trans-Tasman ribbing. This paper surveys such depictions and questions how they fit with the wider panorama of New Zealand's war effort and the humorous irreverence conventionally considered to be a key aspect of the trans-Tasman relationship.

Bronwyn McGovern

**Sociology & Social Policy, Victoria University of Wellington
(bronwyn.mcgovern@otago.ac.nz)**

Mad rant or 'taking the piss'? A case study of when attempts at humour go wrong

In 2010, Brother a well-known local identity living on a busy street corner in Wellington, told court appointed psychiatrists he boogied with the dead and was enjoying life in 1984. Though academic writing on the homeless experience unanimously proposes that street life existence is essentially 'no laughing matter', and while Brother's talk could be dismissed as the ramblings of a mad man, here I argue his banter can be understood as displaying an acute sense of 'underdog' humour (Coser, 1959). Drawing from participant observational research spanning a three-year period and forming the empirical component of my doctoral work, I

examine humour as a 'quintessentially social phenomenon' (Kuipers, 2008) that is often quite particular to a specific time and place. Speaking to broader themes of sociality, spatiality, embodiment, domination and resistance, I reveal how humour is used by Brother to manage a life lived in public. I also consider how Brother's jovial talk and actions disrupt mundane understandings of 'normal' boundaries. In arguing 'agency and structure' collide in the case of Brother, I look at how this evokes a simultaneous 'making, remaking, and unmaking' of the person (Hacking, 2004).

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Angus James McLachlan

Psychology, University of Ballarat (a.mclachlan@ballarat.edu.au)

Self-mockery as an affirmation of identity

A segment of a typical Billy Connolly monologue concerning a terrorist attack on Glasgow Airport will be examined for various instances of collective and, in this case, largely positive self-mockery offered by a Glaswegian to a Belfast audience. Connolly explores three defining characteristics of the Glaswegian, religious intolerance, everyday violence, and an impenetrable accent, interlacing his observations with a sustained ridiculing of the failed terrorist attack. Much of the self-mocking humour is derived from the tension between affirmation and condemnation as Connolly explores these moral and practical failings. Connolly also implicitly, and later explicitly, draws on the close cultural connection between the two cities of Belfast and Glasgow such that the audience, in joining in the mockery of the Glaswegian, is also engaged in self-mockery. In analysing this monologue, concepts derived from our understanding of humour between groups will be used to explain humour directed at the self. Notions of joking relationships (Radcliffe-Brown), ridicule as having both disciplinary and rebellious functions (Billig), and the self, grasped as a theory rather than an experience (Harré), will be explored. The analysis will also be used to explain why self-mockery is a pervasive strategy: most groups on occasions must publicly acknowledge that the selves they know themselves to be are the selves they would rather not be. Finally, it will be suggested that a complete understanding of self-mockery can only be gained if it is seen as one aspect of the complex web of exchanges that a self-mocking group has with other groups.

Meredith Marra, Jay Woodhams

Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington

(Meredith.marra@vuw.ac.nz)

One of the boys? Humour on the building site

The building site is a prototypically masculine environment where we might expect stereotypically masculine behaviours: competitive teasing, sexist humour and jocular insults aimed at junior team members. But is it anything goes? When does the humour go too far? As workplace discourse analysts we argue that the answer depends on the contextual constraints and the shared, negotiated repertoire of the particular Community of Practice (Wenger 1998). To explore the role of interaction in establishing these norms, we have worked with teams on two New Zealand building sites. By collecting, transcribing and analysing audio recordings of their everyday talk (supported by ethnographic observations), we argue that 'fitting in' involves navigating the practices of the specific team, which are in turn embedded within the (imagined) norms of the building industry. Focussing on these sites of situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1991), we investigate the ways in which all team members, from the junior apprentice to the master builder, reinforce and contest the norms in their interaction. As expected, many of the practices simultaneously index stereotypically masculine stances, especially through the use of humour. As a discourse strategy, humour plays a significant role in the way in which the teams enact the relational aspects of their 'builder' identities. Using instances of humour recorded on site, we illustrate the ongoing (re)negotiation of group membership, i.e. the way in which team members use humour to demonstrate that they are 'one of the boys'.

Michael Meany

Design, Communication and IT, University of Newcastle

(michael.meany@newcastle.edu.au)

Comedy - a computationally intractable problem

Comedy is an intentionally structured cultural product that employs particular forms and conventions to create the affect of amusement in an audience. Humour, by contrast, is the ability to perceive or express the intentional or unintentional comic elements of life. This definition of comedy calls attention to the agency and intention of the author working in a particular social setting for an audience who shares an understanding of the forms and conventions of comedy. The linguistic theories of humour have been computationally deployed to both detect and produce humour (Binsted et al. 2006; Kiddon and Brun 2011; Ritchie et al. 2006; Ritchie 2009). However, this humour has few of the attributes of comedy, frequently lacking the performative aspects of character, timing and a recognisable comedy form. According to Berger, there are 45 techniques "that comedy writers and all humourists have used, do use, and must use — to generate humour" (Berger 1997, p. vii). This list of 45 techniques generates billions of billions possible combinations (45 factorial, is a massive number). In mathematics there are particular class of problems that are termed NP-complete. These problems are computationally

intractable, however, they have the unique feature that any solution can be quickly verified but there is no known algorithm for finding the solution. Comedy appears to be such a problem – we instantly know it when we hear or see it but how do we make it? Using an excerpt from the Goon Show broadcast titled “The Histories of Pliny the Elder” as an example this paper will examine the application and selection of Berger’s 45 techniques. The conclusion will argue that the production of comedy engages what Bourdieu called the *sens pratique*, a ‘feel for the game’ (Johnson 1993, p. 5), as a structuring device to filter the possible combinations of comedy techniques.

Jessica Milner Davis

School of Letters Art and Media, University of Sydney

(jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au)

Media Pranks and Hoaxes: The Case of the Failed(?) Australian Radio Prank

On 4 December 2012, co-hosts Mel Greig and Michael Christian of radio station 2DAY-FM Australia (Southern Cross Media) made an on-air phone call to a nurse at King Edward VII Hospital in London where the Duchess of Cambridge (formerly Kate Middleton) was receiving treatment during her pregnancy; they pretended to be Queen Elizabeth and Prince Charles, calling from Buckingham Palace. Nurse Jacintha Saldhana passed on the call to a ward nurse who provided them with information about the Duchess’s condition. In Australia that day and around the world the next, people enjoyed the successful prank and the recording went viral. News that Saldhana had committed suicide changed public attitudes. This paper explores the differences between comic hoaxes and pranks in terms of their victims, audiences and aims, using the entry on Hoax, Prank and Spoof in the forthcoming *Sage Encyclopedia of Humour Studies* (R. Marks and J. Milner Davis, in press). It contrasts this sorry tale with more successful on-air pranks such as that made by French Canadian radio comedy duo, Les Justiciers Masqués (The Masked Avengers) to then U.S. vice-presidential candidate, Sarah Palin, during the 2008 US Presidential election. It examines some of the consequences for both sides of the comic equation when a prank (or hoax) fails, asking whether indeed “anything goes” in the digital media age.

Carmen Moran, Suzanne King

Psychology, Charles Sturt University (cmoran@csu.edu.au)

Childhood and adult humour and the experience of bullying

This study looks at childhood recall of being experiences of bullying and evaluates whether responding with humour during childhood predicts ongoing distress and humour style in adulthood. One hundred and forty two participants completed the study. Ages were between 18 and 40 (which is the upper limit for the Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire, see below). We divided participants into groups who did and did not ‘make fun to cope [with the experience of bullying]’. Data were compared across the Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire, Ongoing Distress from bullying, the

Ten Item Personality Inventory, and the Humour Styles Questionnaire from the two groups. As a check on comparability, we demonstrated that the intensity of bullying experience did not differ between the two groups. We then found that those who 'made fun to cope' as children scored significantly higher on adult uses of the positive HSQ scales (self-enhancing humour and affiliative humour) but not the negative ones (self-defeating and aggressive humour). After we controlled for personality, making fun to cope in childhood predicted lower adult ongoing distress but adult humour styles did not. Thus, those who were more likely to use humour at the time to cope with bullying were also those less likely to experience adult distress as a result of that bullying and this was not due to personality differences (as measured here). Can we conclude concurrent humour helps with the experience of being bullied but retrospective use of humour does not? This research is best considered pilot work since our results are correlational and no causal relationship can be inferred, and the numbers in the groups are uneven (only 15% used humour to cope with bullying as children, we discuss this further in the presentation). With these limitations in mind, we suggest that humour in childhood is more effective in preventing ongoing distress from being bullied than after-the-fact adult humour. As always, specific types of humour need to be considered when looking at the wellbeing of self and others.

Daryl Robert Peebles

University of Tasmania (daryl.peebles@bigpond.com)

Anything goes - except in workplaces

Humour as a desirable human characteristic, its value and its purpose, has been debated by philosophers for centuries. The use of humour in workplaces remains a contentious issue in management theory to this day. Some academics and philosophers praise humour and encourage its use; others see it as a frivolous distraction from the job-at-hand. The dichotomy of opinion around humour's use in the workplace appears to stem from a lack of clarity around the 'style' of humour being considered in a workplace context. Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray and Weir's (2003) *Humour Style Questionnaire* provided a tool enabling researchers to examine humour which is predominantly affiliative (and therefore inclusive and uplifting) to determine if this specific style of humour is a valuable workplace attribute. Also in the past decade Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007) developed a concept called psychological capital (or PsyCap) based on capacities in confidence (self-efficacy), resilience, hope and optimism within individuals and collectively within organisations. Luthans et al (2007) demonstrate how high PsyCap improves organisational productivity. This paper discusses a current study being undertaken by the author examining both the use and style of the humour in workplaces and the psychological capital evident in those workplaces, within a context of reported workplace cultures. It further considers some workplace productivity indicators both as self-reports and by supervisors' assessments. A 116-item survey questionnaire was developed from the literature and was completed by 303 individual participants from 50 Australian (mostly Tasmanian) work teams. This was supported by a 29-item questionnaire completed by each participating work team's supervisor and a 12-item

supervisor's questionnaire completed for each of their subordinates participating in this study. Initial results suggest that 'anything doesn't go' – particularly in a workplace environment.

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Anne Pender

English and Theatre Studies, University of New England

(anne.pender@une.edu.au)

John Clarke and the Secret of Political Humour

The New Zealand-born writer-performer John Clarke (born in 1948) has been entertaining Australians for some 40 years. His style in his current popular television program *Clarke and Dawe* relies primarily on a mock interview with Clark playing a politician and Bryan Dawe as an interviewer. The short segments satirise the absurdity of spin. Clarke grew up in New Zealand and spent some time as a young man in the United Kingdom doing various jobs until he was found by Bruce Beresford in London and appeared as one of Bazza's expat drinking partners in the film *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* (1972). In New Zealand in the 1970's, Clarke created the iconic character Fred Dagg for television. Later on in Australia Clarke wrote for and performed in the successful satirical television series *The Gillies Report* (1984). In the 1990's during the lead up to the Olympic Games that were hosted in Sydney, Clarke wrote, produced and starred in the massively successful television series *The Games*. This paper examines Clarke's life as a comic writer and performer, and explores his idiosyncratic ability to celebrate, attack, parody, mock and dig. The paradox is that although nothing is off limits for Clarke it is rare to see him going too far. Is this because Australians accept a wide range of political humour, or a function of Clarke's skill as a writer and as an actor? In contrast younger Australian television comedians such as *The Chaser* team and Wil Anderson are frequently seen to be 'going too far'. The paper is part of the research for a large ARC-funded study of actors in Australia and their transformation of theatre, television and film over the last 50 years.

Robert Phiddian, Haydon Manning

English, Politics, Flinders University (robert.phiddian@flinders.edu.au)

Double negative: Tracking the 2013 Australian Election Campaign through cartoons

Political cartoons are a distinctive part of Australian cultural and political life. They are a unique mode for both political and cultural inquiry; they add vigour to political debates and often reflect sharply on our national self-understanding. They criticise the daily machinations of political and economic elites providing a pithy commentary that can be more memorable for citizens than the mass of opinion and reportage in amid which they sit. The study of election campaign cartoons offers an insight into the quality of Australian political satire as it is reflected in the work of the editorial cartoonists' but also acts as a remarkably vivid and accessible chronicle of the policy issues, leadership tussles and general tone and temper of a national election campaign. We will collect and analyse cartoons for the recently announced Australian Federal Election. The narrative thread of our paper will be determined by the evidence, but the methodology will follow work established in multiple papers by Colin Seymour-Ure in Britain and Haydon Manning and Robert Phiddian in Australia.

Barbara Plester

Management & International Business, University of Auckland

(b.plester@auckland.ac.nz)

When is a joke not a joke: The dark side of organisational humour

Exploring the dark side of organizational humour is unpopular and can cause one to be considered a misogynist (laughter hater). Prior research focuses upon mostly positive aspects of humour and this is particularly true of organizational research. Only a few organizational studies discuss aspects of humour that is used to ridicule, challenge, target others or make barbed points (see Billig, 2005). Although people are reluctant to acknowledge the darker side of humour, this empirical paper investigates humour from one unusual company displaying a dark side. This management research adopts a multidisciplinary approach to theorize humour from psychological (Freud, 1905), sociological (Billig, 2005) and anthropological (Radcliffe-Brown, 1940) perspectives. Mixed methods are used and data were gathered in an ethnographic approach that included participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document collection. In analysis, critical (humour) incidents are examined to reveal elements of power, control and coercion that typifies humour in one engineering organization. The humour experienced, observed and documented in this company contrasts sharply with humour enactments studied in other companies: including a law firm, financial institution and a utility provider. Drawing on humour theories of superiority (Hobbes 1640) and sexual and aggressive release (Freud, 1905), this paper argues that humour in one differentiated engineering company reveals control, power and masculine dominance. Humour is both controlled and controlling and masculine hegemonic power is reinforced through extreme and offensive humour. Because humour is the device of control, employees are even more powerless to object for fear of ridicule. Humour differentiates this small company through constructing outsiders as 'other'.

Maren Rawlings

Psychology, Swinburne University of Technology

(marawlings@groupwise.swin.edu.au)

Further notions for a Scale of Self-Deprecating Humour

The prototype *Self-Deprecating Humour Scale* (SDepH) with 22 items was created by third year students “with a young approach” in 2011. Refinement with Confirmatory Factor Analysis ($N = 116$) reduced it to 15 items. Their validation against the *Humour Styles Questionnaire* (HSQ, Martin et al., 2003) was reported to the AHSN (2013). Subsequently another 11 items, written by the first author (a senior citizen), were added. A sample of 436 Australian and international participants (largely through *Facebook*) responded to the SDepH and to scales for validation. The sample was split in two using a random sequence and *Exploratory Factor Analysis* was performed ($N = 218$), resulting in a two factor solution. These subscales were subjected to *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*, using the second half of the sample. The confirmed scale was validated against the HSQ, the “big five” scales of the *M37* (Rawlings, 2001), *Emotional Self-Efficacy* (Kirke et al., 2008) and a short form of *Social Desirability* (Crowne & Marlow, 1960). Correlations between the SDepH subscales and the HSQ confirmed the new scales’ validity as humour scales, and further factor analysis indicated that the self-deprecation factors were clearly distinct from Martin et al.’s self-defeating humour.

John Rucynski, Jr., Ayako Namba, Scott Gardner

Language Education Center, Okayama University (jrucynski@gmail.com)

Measuring various cultural limits of humour in language classes

As with educators in other fields, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers advocate using humour in class. In addition to benefits regarding class atmosphere (Chiasson, 2002; Garner, 2006), humour plays an important role in laying open the culture(s) surrounding the target language (Askildson, 2005; Medgyes, 2002). As Thomsen and Eichler (1999) put it, “one touchstone of really understanding a foreign culture and language is [the ability to] appreciate their humour” (p.9). In other words, an understanding of the target culture’s humour is a vital skill in achieving language proficiency. Language teachers face potential hurdles, however, in the multicultural setting of their classes, which forces them to consider appropriateness of the humour they use. Apart from vulgar language and sexual innuendo that (most) language teachers want to avoid, popular humour within a culture may capitalize on stereotypes of other groups or cultures, or may exploit social mores in other ways. As Kuipers (2008) points out, “[m]uch humour is based on the transgression of societal boundaries, and such transgression can cause offense as well as amusement” (p.382). This is especially true for teachers who must consider whether the kinds of joking acceptable within the target culture are also acceptable to those studying it. To what extent should transgressive humour be employed to enrich student understanding of the target culture? In this paper, the presenters will share ongoing research based on stereotypes and other “hostile” humour depicted in media such as English-language TV shows and political cartoons. Students from

various cultures were asked to rate whether they found the humour harmless/harmful and funny/unfunny, and to look for any connections between the humour and the harm. The presenters will share some preliminary conclusions on the viability of using edgy—but culturally representative—humour to teach culture in language courses.

Yaw Sekyi-Baidoo

English Education, University of Winneba, Ghana (yseyibaidoo@gmail.com)

Post Mortem or Post-Punch Line Analysis in 'Toli' - Ghanaian Humorous Tale

Aspects of the con-textual links in contextual jokes include the relationship with the goal of the conversational interaction, and the presence and involvement of the audience in the overall manifestation of the joke and its response , (Attardo, 1994: 298-299). The role of the audience in the telling of the joke narrative is also acknowledged in the three-phased sequential organisation of joke narratives (Sacks,1974: 337; Attardo, ibid, 307-311), and much of the role of the audience is in the final phase called the 'response' or the 'reaction'. A study of the performance of humorous tales called 'toli' in Ghana reveals, however, that the response stage may be longer than has been presented normally in the literature. It identifies that a very crucial part of the response stage of most conversational jokes is a post-punch discussion or analysis involving audience and narrator on the nature and interpretation of the punch line and its total contribution to the humour of the tale. These discussions, referred to as the POST MORTEM, often provokes, perhaps, the most sustained and intense manifestation of humour. It involves an analytical engagement on the various points of the tale. The present is a discussion of the form and effect of the post mortem in Ghanaian humorous tales and its contribution to the understanding of the structure of the tale and the humour it evokes. Using a multi-dimensional approach revolving around incongruity and relief - through discourse, pragmatics and semantic perspectives - the study discusses the provocation, nature, and strategies of post-mortem humour, which include explanation of punch lines, provision of alternative punch lines, ironic justification of incongruity, forced associations or congruities, repetition of punch lines, extension and redefinition of punch lines.

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Ronald Stewart

Prefectural University of Hiroshima (ronstewart@pu-hiroshima.ac.jp)

An Angry Voice in a Sea of Silence: The birth of a local cartoonist in Fukushima, Japan.

This paper aims to highlight the current state of Japanese newspaper cartooning by focusing on the emergence of a local newspaper cartoonist as a critical voice for victims of the 2011 disaster, in particular evacuees from the Fukushima nuclear power plant meltdowns which displaced over quarter of a million people. Editorial cartooning in Japan is dominated by a handful of cartoonists attached to the three big national daily newspapers, and by a limited number of cartoonists attached to the one major national news syndication service. Most regional newspapers tend to not to use cartoons, or if they do, use nationally syndicated cartoons. As a result almost all cartoons tend to be focused purely on taking mild jibes at the personalities and politicking of the national parliament. So they are “political” in a very narrow sense, rarely touching on industry, the public, or regional issues, and only very occasionally producing biting satire which questions important issues of responsibility and of moral conduct. This national-centric media, especially its cartoons, has also lost much of its interest the ongoing serious and large-scale problems in disaster struck Northeastern Japan, despite many of these being issues of national import. Anger at inadequate government, industry and media responses to the plight of disaster victims has led to a retired high school art teacher, and evacuee from a meltdown affected town, ASAKURA Yūzō to take to cartooning for the regional newspaper *Fukushima Minpō*. He has become the only satirical cartoonist continuing to persistently produce critical comment and to contribute to media discourse on important issues related to the disaster struck region and disaster victims.

Geniesa Tay

Media and Communication, University of Canterbury (geniesa.tay@gmail.com)

Binders Full of LOLitics: Political Humour, Internet Memes, and Play in the 2012 US Presidential Election

This paper examines the phenomenon of humorous Internet memes, particularly within the context of news and political culture, sometimes referred to as ‘LOLitics’. LOLitics are particular category of digital texts created by online users that like most political humour, are usually responses to news events or gaffes committed by political figures. The analysis situates LOLitics as popular culture products that exist within the intersection between pleasure-driven ‘play’ and (arguably) genuine political discourse. LOLitics are prominent due to their spreadability and replicability, and the amount of texts being produced has visibly risen over the last election cycle. Internet memes have become one of the default ways to respond to particular situations online, and this certainly reflects the reaction towards news and political culture. The 2012 US Presidential election is applied as a case study in examining the significance of these Internet memes to everyday citizen discourse, and the relationships between ordinary citizens, the mainstream media, and politics. The results argue that humorous viral texts, both visual and verbal, reveal the potential

power that ordinary people have in setting the agenda for newsmakers, and to communicate political criticism through popular culture. LOLitics can also be considered as a tool to encourage participation from the politically uninformed or disengaged. This is due to the element of play that is ever-present in LOLitics and the open nature of online communication, which values the process of participation and creation rather than reinforcing the boundaries and standards for media-making.

Will Visconti

Italian, University of Sydney (pip.muratore@sydney.edu.au)

Too Far West (Dangerous Curves Ahead)

In a career that lasted over eighty years, the performances of Mae West were famous, or infamous, for their power to shock, their transgression of boundaries of class, gender, sexuality and propriety, and for the frequent opprobrium which West seemed to attract. Moreover, there was no subject matter considered “off-limits” within Mae West's work, and her plays and films were marked by her fearless approach to topics that even today are often seen as problematic (substance abuse, abortion, rape, and the idea of the “expiry date” of the female performer and her sexuality). Throughout her plays, films, radio appearances and written work, she consistently pushed the envelope in terms of what was deemed acceptable, normal or humorous for her age (and her era). What I plan to examine is the to-and-fro of Mae West's process and performance - or indeed how she made a performance out of her creative process and the preparation for her film and stage roles. When she was castigated for going “too far”, she simply edited her material and tried again, inching forward and gradually setting a precedent for later generations of comics and comic writers, while situating herself within an extant oeuvre of shocking and subversive performers. This paper is intended as an exploration not only of West's much-publicised transgressive use of humour, or the subversiveness of her humour itself, but also the way in which her career trajectory embodied the notion of going “too far” with her final films, and how Mae West's art so frequently imitated her life.

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Contact us

AHSN Coordinator:

Jessica Milner Davis, jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au

<http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies>

2014 Colloquium Convenor:

Mike Lloyd, mike.lloyd@vuw.ac.nz

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