



Australasian Humour Studies Network

THE HUMOUR STUDIES DIGEST



Report on 27th AHSN Conference at Massey University (1-4 February 2021)

From the Organising Committee

Hosted by the School of Humanities, Media and Creative Communication at Massey University and organised by a committee operating across Massey and Victoria University of Wellington, the 2021 conference of the AHSN was certainly one of the more distinctive meetings of the network.

Under the pressures of the global Covid-19 pandemic, and acquiescing to the reality that no trans-Tasman bubble would be forthcoming, the conference eventually became a hybrid event: New Zealand residents presented in person at Massey's Wellington campus, while Australian and international delegates put their multimedia skills to the test devising recorded presentations to be shared and discussed online.

Twenty delegates representing linguistics, media studies, literary studies, art history and fine arts attended the New Zealand event. The online portion was even more diverse with twenty-three papers from Italy, Japan, the USA, UK, Canada, and, of course, Australia on topics ranging from online language learning to migrant film-making, cartoon history to the podcast industry and smile muscles to industrial satire. In particular, the conference theme encouraged delegates to focus on 'Humour at Work,' speaking to both the role of humour in the workplace and the economic realities of humour as big business.



February 2021 Edition

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These two perspectives were exemplified in the keynote speakers. Dr Barbara Plester from the University of Auckland spoke about her research into the role of humour in workplaces, which has become both more important and challenging in the context of social distancing. Similarly, Christelle Paré PhD, Director of Research and Analysis for the Juste pour rire/Just for Laughs group (the world's biggest organiser of comedy festivals), spoke about the new realities for professional comedians and their industry in a post-pandemic world. Dr Plester joined the in-person conference in Wellington and fielded questions from home and abroad, while Dr Paré prepared recorded remarks for the conference before participating in a truly international Zoom session with participants from North America, Europe and Australasia.

At the close of proceedings, Wellington delegates were invited to attend the opening reception of an exhibition curated by committee member Bryce Galloway that sought to reclaim and celebrate the role of humour in the history of NZ art.

The Conference Convenor was Dr Nicholas Holm who was assisted by an organising committee consisting of Dr Meredith Marra (VUW), Stephen Skalicky (VUW) and Bryce Galloway (Massey) University.

In the slightly complicated, multiplatform nature of the event, the closing ceremony took place over Zoom, including the presentation of new Fellows in the AHSN Order of the Jess-ters: Conal Condren FAHA FASSA; Maren Rawlings PhD; and Michael Lloyd PhD. Postgraduate scholarship winners were awarded their certificates: Nicholas Hugman (Victoria University of Wellington), Reuben Sanderson (Victoria University of Wellington), Til Knowles (University of Melbourne), Al Marsden (RMIT University), and Ying Cao (Western Sydney University). In addition, due to the generous donation of an anonymous benefactor an additional suite of 'student scholarships' were awarded to Sofia Morrell (Victoria University of Wellington), Bryer Oden (Victoria University of Wellington), Yeram Isaac Cho (Victoria University of Wellington), Lara Weinglass (University of Queensland) and Amir Sheikhan (University of Queensland).

The full program is available on the AHSN website at: <https://ahsn.org.au/events/events-archive/>

Nicholas Holm, for the Conference Committee

Eds: Sincere thanks to Nick and his Committee members for steering the AHSN into this brave new online world! And congratulations to all who participated so successfully. See also Message from the AHSN Chair, Dr Kerry Mullan (following item)



Massey University - Wellington Campus

A message from the Chair of the AHSN Board

On behalf of the AHSN Board, I would like to thank and congratulate Nick Holm, Meredith Marra, Stephen Skalicky, Bryce Galloway and Lisa Vonk for the hugely successful 27th AHSN conference! Pulling this off was no mean feat, to say the least. It required an enormous amount of adaptability, creative thinking, technical and organisational know-how, patience, and good humour on their part, as the organisers dealt with the rug being pulled from under their feet several times along the way. They managed not to stumble once.

Fortunately, good humour is one thing we are not short of at the AHSN, and this was proved by the collegial atmosphere at the closing ceremony (when we on-liners finally got a glimpse of what we were missing from the live version of the conference), and the daily well-attended Zoom sessions which it was my great pleasure to host. The online component worked really well, and enabled those of us unable to be there in person to feel involved and part of the conference, with presenters and audience regularly commenting and participating in the daily sessions – thanks to everyone for your contributions. We also managed to induct three new Fellows into the Order of the Jess-ters online. Congratulations again to Conal Condren, Maren Rawlings and Mike Lloyd! A well-deserved recognition of your longstanding and invaluable contributions to the AHSN.

As I say every year, this annual conference is one of my personal annual highlights. While face-to-face is of course always better, being able to catch up with the AHSN community and learning about people's research people always makes for an excellent start to the antipodean academic year.

I look forward to seeing you all again next year wherever – and in whatever format - that may be. We have a couple of possible options for venues next year, but are open to all other offers. And rest assured, it can't possibly be any more complicated than it was this year! Please inundate me with offers to host the 2022 or future AHSN conferences at the email address below.

In the meantime, please visit – and like - our (brand new!) Facebook page here:
<https://www.facebook.com/AHSNHumour> Content coming soon.

We have also set up Twitter and Instagram accounts, but we expect these to be more active at the time of conferences: https://twitter.com/AHSN_Humour and https://www.instagram.com/ahsn_humour/

Please also watch out for an AHSN webinar coming your way later this year – details to follow in due course. Until then, all the best for 2021.

Kerry

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RMIT University
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Special Scholarship Winners, AHSN 2021 Conference

With applause and thanks to an anonymous donor, we are happy to announce that the following students were awarded special scholarships to the 27th AHSN Conference, Massey University, Wellington, 3-4 February 2021:

Yeram Isaac Cho, Victoria University of Wellington, for a presentation entitled 'Super easy, barely an inconvenience! Humorous vari-directional double voicing in the YouTube series *Pitch Meetings*'

Lara Holmes, University of Sydney, for a presentation entitled ‘Satirical activism: A new comedy industry’ (unable to present)

Sofia Morrell, Victoria University of Wellington, for a presentation entitled ‘A New Zealander online: Using humour to signal national belonging’

Bryer Oden, Victoria University of Wellington, for a presentation entitled ‘Humour as power: The tangible consequences of misinterpreting humour as a professional migrant’

Amir Sheikhan, University of Queensland, for a presentation entitled ‘Failed humour? Evidence from intercultural initial interactions’

Lara Weinglass, University of Queensland, for a presentation entitled ‘Repetition in humour in Australian blue-collar workplace interactions’

These special scholarships were awarded in addition to the usual **five AHSN post-graduate awards** announced in the January 2021 issue of the Digest. Those were won by:

Ying Cao, University of Western Sydney

Nicholas Hugman, Victoria University of Wellington

Til Knowles, University of Melbourne

Al Marsden, RMIT Melbourne

Reuben Sanderson, Victoria University of Wellington

The Eds: Congratulations to all scholars!

Announcing New Fellows in the AHSN Order of the Jess-ters, 2021

The award of admission to the Order of the Jess-ters recognises distinguished service rendered to the AHSN, making possible for us all the Network’s present program of events and news.

Three new Fellows were inducted at the recent 27th AHSN Conference, chaired by Nick Holm of Massey University Wellington Campus. They are:

CONAL CONDREN FAHA FASSA

- Member of AHSN Review Panel (from its foundation in 2009 to the present)
- One of the seven scholars creating the initial Humour Research Seminar leading to the establishment of the AHSN in 1998 (along with Jessica Milner Davis, Founding Fellow, and Carmen Moran, 2020 Fellow)
- Pioneer of academic courses on satire and politics (at UNSW)
- Formalised the AHSN Review Procedures (adopted in 2010, amended 2012)
- Author of many monographs and articles, including a definitive article on satire as a genre in *HUMOR* (25: 4, 2012) and a methodological chapter on studying humour in *The Palgrave Handbook of Humour, History, and Methodology* (eds., Hannah Burrows and Daniel Derrin, hot off the press and see later item in this Digest)
- Emeritus Scientia Professor UNSW, and Professor, University of Queensland

MAREN RAWLINGS PhD

- Joined the AHSN Review Panel while still a graduate student (from its foundation until 2014)
- First AHSN member awarded the ISHS Graduate Student Award (2008, in Spain) for her paper *Workplace Humour: Worker Personality or Workplace Culture?*
- Presented many ISHS and AHSN conferences
- Author (with Bruce Findlay) of the important research tool, *The Humor at Work (HAW) Scale* (published, *HUMOR* 29: 1, 2016)
- Book Reviewer for *HUMOR* (2014-2018)
- 2019 Melbourne host for visiting humour scholars from the University of Zurich

MIKE LLOYD PhD

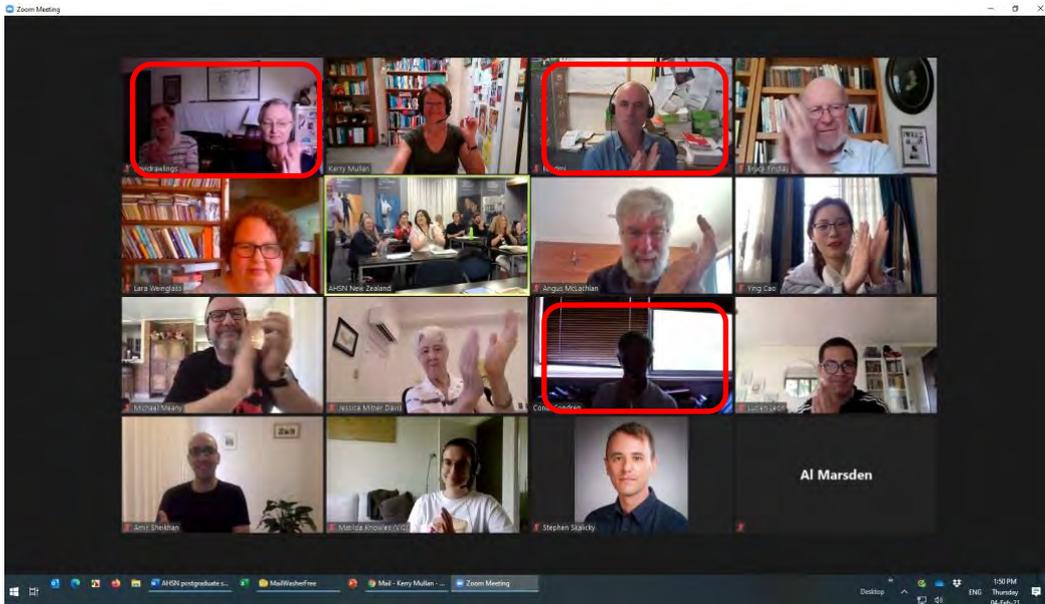
- Member of AHSN Review Panel (2010 to 2020)
- Chair of the 20th AHSN Conference at Victoria University of Wellington 2014, first to be held in New Zealand
- Presenter at many ISHS and AHSN conferences
- Author of many articles on the (in)famous “Naked Man Competition” plus other topics, book chapters and the entry on “Obscenity” in *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies* (ed. S. Attardo, 2014)
- A supportive colleague in humour research, as Moira Marsh attests in *Practically Joking* (University Press of Colorado, 2015)
- Senior Lecturer, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Te Herenga Waka/Victoria University of Wellington

Eds: Congratulations to our three new Jess-ters! For a complete list of the Fellows of this distinguished and exclusive Order, visit the AHSN website at: <https://ahsn.org.au/about/fellows-in-the-order-of-the-jess-ters/>

Faces in the online space...



Did someone say rogues' gallery?



Our New Jess-ters - Maren Rawlings, Mike Lloyd and Conal Condren (in witness protection mode)



Thank you to the organising committee - you did good!



And thank you to Kerry for facilitating the discussion sessions.

New Book Review Editor for the AHSN Digest

The AHSN Board in consultation with the Digest Co-Editors, Michael Meany (University of Newcastle) and Jessica Milner Davis (University of Sydney) has decided to appoint a Book Review Editor for the Digest. An increasing number of books and special journal issues are appearing in a range of disciplines around the world. Quite a few of them are authored by AHSN members, we are proud to say. The Digest has for some time carried book notices and contents lists (more than is often available on the publisher's websites) but sometimes more informed comment provided by an independent reviewer would be helpful to readers. We are pleased to announce that Amanda Cooper (Western Sydney University) has accepted an appointment as Book Review Editor, responsible for both notices and the decision whether to assign a book for review. She is an experienced writer herself (cf. profile of Amanda in Nov 2020 Digest), is looking forward to the role and will operate in collaboration with the established AHSN Review Panel to select both books and reviewers and bring some in-depth commentary to the pages of the Digest. Thank you, Amanda!

Kerry Mullan, AHSN Board Chair

Our Newly-appointed Book Review Editor writes:

Amanda Cooper is a 2nd year PhD candidate working in the Writing and Society Research Centre at Western Sydney University. During her Bachelor of Arts degree at WSU, she made the Dean's Merit List of 2012, 2013 and 2014. Graduating with distinction, she was awarded a Dean's Medal for Academic Excellence by the School of Humanities and Communication Arts. Amanda went on to receive a High Distinction for her Master of Research project, which focused on feminist literary comedy in Muriel Spark's novel, *Robinson*. Expanding on her Master's research, Amanda's PhD project investigates feminist literary comedy in the works of three twentieth-century female authors: Jean Rhys, Muriel Spark and Angela Carter. Amanda was a Postgraduate Scholarship Winner at AHSN's 26th Annual Conference at Griffith University in 2020. She also served as Student Convenor for EMERGE 2020, the 12th Annual Interventions and Intersections Postgraduate Conference hosted by the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University. In this new role, Amanda looks forward to becoming better acquainted with the people and knowledge of the AHSN. Please feel free to contact Amanda about books of interest by email at: A.Cooper5@westernsydney.edu.au

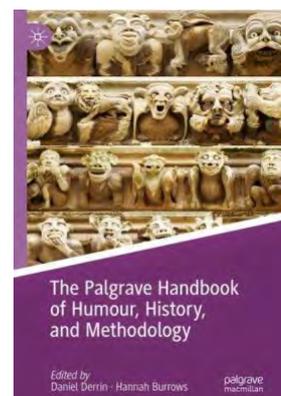


Members' New Books on Humour and The Comic

Daniel Derrin and Hannah Burrows (eds). 2021. *The Palgrave Handbook of Humour, History, and Methodology*. 526+pp. 56 b/w illustrations, 12 illustrations in colour. London: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN (Hardcover): 978-3-030-56645-6 ISBN (eBook): 978-3-030-56646-3 DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-56646-3

Publisher's Description:

This handbook addresses the methodological problems and theoretical challenges that arise in attempting to understand and represent humour in specific historical contexts across cultural history. It explores problems involved in applying modern theories of humour to historically-distant contexts of humour and points to the importance of recognising the divergent assumptions made by different academic disciplines when approaching the topic. It explores problems of terminology, identification, classification, subjectivity of viewpoint, and the coherence of the object of study. It addresses specific theories, together with the needs of specific



historical case studies, as well as some of the challenges of presenting historical humour to contemporary audiences through translation and curation. In this way, the handbook aims to encourage a fresh exploration of methodological problems involved in studying the various significances both of the history of humour and of humour in history.

Editors' Bionotes:

Daniel Derrin is Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of English Studies at Durham University, UK. He has held research and teaching fellowships in Australia and the UK and has published widely on early modern literature and on humour.

Hannah Burrows is Senior Lecturer in Scandinavia Studies at the University of Aberdeen, UK. She has edited and translated the Old Norse riddle corpus for the Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages series, and her publications include articles on the relationship between the riddles and Norse mythological poetry.



Info/Orders: <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030566456>

Contents:

Foreword by Jessica Milner Davis

1. Introduction (Derrin, Daniel)
2. The Study of Past Humour: Historicity and the Limits of Method (Condren, Conal)
3. No Sense of Humour? 'Humour' Words in Old Norse (Burrows, Hannah)
4. Rewriting Laughter in Early Modern Europe (Rayfield, Lucy)
5. The Humour of Humours: Comedy Theory and Eighteenth-Century Histories of Emotions (Tierney-Hynes, Rebecca)
6. Bergson's Theory of the Comic and Its Applicability to Sixteenth-Century Japanese Comedy (Milner Davis, Jessica)
7. Comic Character and Counter-Violation: Critiquing Benign Violation Theory (Derrin, Daniel)
8. Humour and Religion: New Directions? (Gardner, Richard A.)
9. Visual Humour on Greek Vases (550–350 BC): Three Approaches to the Ambivalence of Ugliness in Popular Culture (Mitchell, Alexandre G.)
10. Approaching Jokes and Jestbooks in Premodern China (Baccini, Giulia)
11. Testing the Limits of Pirandello's Umoreismo: A Case Study Based on *Xiaolin Guangji* (Leggieri, Antonio)
12. The Monsters That Laugh Back: Humour as a Rhetorical Apophasis in Medieval Monstrosity (Boryślawski, Rafał)
13. Medieval Jokes in Serious Contexts: Speaking Humour to Power (Bayless, Martha)
14. 'Lightness and Maistrye': Herod, Humour, and Temptation in Early English Drama (Beckett, Jamie)
15. Embodied Laughter: Rabelais and the Medical Humanities (Williams, Alison)
16. Naïve Parody in Rabelais (Parkin, John)
17. 'By God's Arse': Genre, Humour and Religion in William Wager's Moral Interludes (Stelling, Lieke)
18. Romantic Irony: Problems of Interpretation in Schlegel and Carlyle (Whiteley, Giles)
19. Unlocking Verbal-Visual Puns in Late-Nineteenth-Century Japanese Cartoons (Stewart, Ronald)

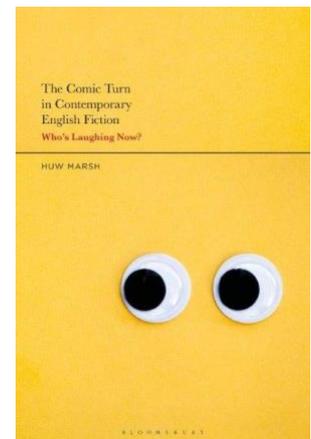
20. Popular Humour in Nordic Jesting Songs of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Danish Recordings of Oral Song Tradition (Hansen, Lene Halskov)
21. Spanish Flu: The First Modern Case of Viral Humour? (Lobanov, Nikita)
22. Translating Humour in *The Song of Roland* (DuVal, John)
23. Intercultural and Interartistic Transfers of Shandean Humour in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries (Tran-Gervat, Yen-Mai)
24. The Scholars, Chronique indiscreète or Neoficial'naja istorija? The Challenge of Translating Eighteenth-Century Chinese Irony and Grotesque for Contemporary Western Audiences (Di Toro, Anna)
25. Putting Humour on Display (Grove, Laurence)
26. Building The Old Joke Archive (Nicholson, Bob, et al.)

Huw Marsh. 2020. *The Comic Turn in Contemporary English Fiction: Who's Laughing Now?* London: Bloomsbury Academic. 248 (hardcover)/256 (eBook) pp. ISBN (Hardcover): 9781474293037 ISBN (eBook): 9781474293051

Publisher's Description:

The Comic Turn in Contemporary English Fiction explores the importance of comedy in contemporary literature and culture. In an era largely defined by a mood of crisis, bleakness, cruelty, melancholia, environmental catastrophe and collapse, Huw Marsh argues that contemporary fiction is as likely to treat these subjects comically as it is to treat them gravely, and that the recognition and proper analysis of this humour opens up new ways to think about literature. Structured around readings of authors including Martin Amis, Nicola Barker, Julian Barnes, Jonathan Coe, Howard Jacobson, Magnus Mills and Zadie Smith, this book suggests not only that much of the most interesting contemporary writing is funny and that there is a comic tendency in contemporary fiction, but also that this humour, this comic licence, allows writers of contemporary fiction to do peculiar and interesting things – things that are funny in the sense of odd or strange and that may in turn inspire a funny turn in readers.

Marsh offers a series of original critical and theoretical frameworks for discussing questions of literary genre, style, affect and politics, demonstrating that comedy is an often neglected mode that plays a generative role in much of the most interesting contemporary writing, creating sites of rich political, stylistic, cognitive and ethical contestation whose analysis offers a new perspective on the present.



Author Bio:

Huw Marsh is a Lecturer in the Department of English at Queen Mary University of London. He holds an undergraduate degree in American Studies and English from the University of Hull and an MA in Studies in Fiction from UEA. His AHRC-funded research focused on the representation of the past in the novels of Beryl Bainbridge, and formed the basis of his first book. *The Comic Turn in Contemporary English Fiction: Who's Laughing Now?*, published by Bloomsbury Academic, is Huw's second book.

Info/Orders: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/the-comic-turn-in-contemporary-english-fiction-9781474293037/>

Contents:

Introduction: A comic turn in contemporary English fiction?

The comic turn; Contemporary English fiction; Who's laughing now?

1. 'Sinking giggling into the sea': Jonathan Coe and the politics of comedy

Jokes and/as innovative action; From satire to comedy: Metacomedy

2. 'A grave disquisition': Style, class and comedy in the novels of Martin Amis

The ethics of style; High and low: Hierarchies of comic style; Comedy, class and style from *The Information to Lionel Asbo*

3. 'Talking about things we didn't want to talk about': Zadie Smith and laughter

What's so hysterical about hysterical realism?; Mixed emotions: Laughter and tears'; Talking about things we didn't want to talk about': Comedy and community

4. 'Like a monkey with a miniature cymbal': Magnus Mills and the comedy of repetition

Comedy, surprise and repetition; Magnus Mills: Deadpan; dead bodies: *The Restraint of Beasts*: Working to rule, ruling the workplace: *The Scheme for Full Employment and The Maintenance of Headway*; Funny as hell: Beckett, O'Brien, Mills

5. 'Simple high jinks?': Nicola Barker and the comedy of paradox

Pooterism, pedantry and the logic of the absurd: Incongruity as comic practice; 'Is the fucking carnival in town or what?': Satire, the grotesque and the carnivalesque; Laughter and redemption: From comedy to humour; Rabbit-duck/Duck-rabbit

6. 'No drawing of lines': Howard Jacobson and the boundaries of the comic

Lancing the boil: *Zoo Time, Coming from Behind* and the necessity of offence'; Jew know why?': *The Finkler Question*, Jewish Jokes and the politics of joke-telling communities; 'Not only funny': *Kalooki Nights* and Holocaust comedy; Comedy Trumped? Pussy and the challenge for contemporary satire

Conclusion: The comic turn in contemporary English fiction

Selling the past as the future: Nationhood, work and performance in Julian Barnes's *England, England*

Research Student Profile

Sofia Morrell, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington

My first real in-depth taste of humour studies has come this summer. I am currently a Victoria University of Wellington summer scholar, enjoying a research internship aimed at students bridging the transition between undergraduate and postgraduate studies. My summer scholarship came off the back of the completion of my BA in Linguistics and Political Science, and Spanish. When I tell people what my majors and minor were at university, many point out that it is an eclectic mix. For me, I see an interesting interaction between each of the subjects, and adding humour in the mix only enhances this.



Sofia in YouTube mode

Alongside my summer scholar supervisor, Professor Meredith Marra, I have dipped my toes, or rather dived, into the fascinating world of humour online, specifically YouTube. While I was formally introduced to humour studies recently, I feel I have stumbled into a field I subconsciously was already interested in and exposed to. Through my undergraduate studies, humour has come up both explicitly in Linguistics and more implicitly in Political Science.

In the back of mind, I have always been curious about what makes something humorous – especially on the internet. As an avid user (and lover) of memes, I have always wondered how this internet humour became salient for me and many of my peers. I am a user of many social media sites, including YouTube. I have used it

not just as a viewer but also a creator (as you can see in my photo). Therefore, as a user of YouTube, the focus of my summer research felt personal as I have an insider, emic understanding of the site norms and practices as well as the etic, technical perspective I have been gaining.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to present with Meredith at the 27th AHSN conference – my first (academic) ‘rodeo’. We investigated the role of humour to signal national identity online, specifically how humour might be a signal of NZ identity on YouTube. Using YouTube comments, we explored the humour support strategies specific to the online and YouTube context that were used to signal a sense of national belonging in one of New Zealand’s popular channels, HowToDad. We found that commenters used a number of cues and indexicalities to show belonging to New Zealand. These ranged from explicit cues such as New Zealand English lexical items (*hāngi, lollies, sweet as*), to more implicit signals in the form of reference to wider societal discourses such as discussions of the Australia/New Zealand rivalry. Interestingly, depending on the level of implicitness, some New Zealand signals from YouTube comments were not salient to other users, including other New Zealanders. This emphasises the importance of the theoretical conceptualisation of a nation as an imagined community (Anderson 1983) or community of imagination (following Wenger 1998).

Throughout my research this summer I have found myself interested in the contextual nature of humour: the *who, what, when, where* of humour. This was highly relevant in our findings on YouTube. It is also relevant in other contexts. For example, I can say things to a certain friend group or family members knowing with confidence that they will find it ‘funny’, but if I say the same thing to others it may not carry the same salience to be perceived as humorous and appropriate. I hope to continue investigating this aspect of humour during my postgraduate studies and beyond.

I’d be very happy to hear about your experience with humour in the YouTube and online context- please email me at: sofia.g.morrell@gmail.com

Anderson, Benedict 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Wenger, Etienne 1998. Modes of Belonging. In *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 173–87.

Research Student Profile

Bryer Oden, Master's Student, Victoria University of Wellington

I was lucky enough to be brought into the humour world by my supervisor Meredith Marra when I was awarded a “Summer Scholarship” from November 2019 to February 2020 at Victoria University. I was immediately thrown into the world of the Language in the Workplace Project (LWP), where I was intrigued by the data in this project corpus as it felt so close to home. Being able to take a step back and examine how ‘New Zealand culture’ feels to those who are not from New Zealand was particularly eye-opening. Even more eye-opening, however, was the role that humour plays in ‘fitting in’ and ‘belonging.’ It was fascinating to look at how humour serves so many different functions and purposes that are subtly ingrained in our culture even when it seems that no one really recognises it, and humour is so easily dismissed as being silly and unnoteworthy. As someone who has been born and raised in New Zealand and has spent years watching the International Comedy festival, watching every late-night panel show around and going to local comedy gigs, it really blew my mind to realise that our



niche little corner of humour is something that is not accessible to everyone. From looking at the LWP project I went on to look at the workplace communication for the Skilled Migrants programme, which really showed how misinterpreting humour had a huge impact on an individual in terms of their social and cultural wellbeing, which became the inspiration of my presentation at this year's AHSN conference.

In 2019 I completed my undergraduate degree majoring in Linguistics, Media Studies and French, and it has only recently occurred to me how humour has played a recurring role throughout my Bachelor's degree. In Media Studies, we make use of humour to assess the framing of certain texts and efficiently it gets messages across in movies, TV shows and advertising. In French we learnt how to make jokes and respond to instances of humour in order to integrate into French culture, and we learnt the essential French equivalent of lol, 'mdr,' which translates to 'to be dying from laughter.' Finally, in Linguistics we look at how even the smallest changes in micro details (such as tone, lexical choice, pronouns etc) can change an instance of humour from being kind and welcoming to menacing. This has made me realise how important humour is to us as a culture and how it surrounds us every day in every different format of communication, and it has been interesting to see how humour plays different roles in different contexts.

A highlight for me from the Summer Scholarship was winning the award for best video. My video focused on what I had learnt about the functions of humour and the kind of research that I undertook over the summer. I thought it would be appropriate to use humour within the video to bring a new layer of meta humour to my presentation, and so I made a rap inspired by the Fresh Prince of Bel Air detailing the works of Barbara Plester and Janet Holmes. The incongruity of me (the complete opposite of a rapper archetype) doing the rapping, plus the fact that I rapped about very 'serious' academic theories helped me to demonstrate my point: humour can be used in so many different ways to achieve different things. I hope that in this case it played a role in highlighting how linguistics is interesting and applicable to aspects of everyday life! Ultimately to sum it all up, I have loved learning about humour and seeing how relevant it is in almost every single interaction we have. I loved speaking at the AHSN conference in Wellington last week and I hope to be around for much more research to come, especially in terms of looking at how we can make humour 'teachable' in order to improve the lifestyles and workplace relationships of both locals and skilled migrants living in New Zealand.

Feel free to email me at bryeroden14@gmail.com if you'd like to get in contact!

Call for Chapters in a New Book (reminder)

Title: Religion and Senses of Humour (ed. Stephen E. Gregg)

Series: Religion and the Senses, Equinox (series editor - Graham Harvey)

The study of humour / comedy / laughter is established within sociological study, but has often been overlooked in the academic study of religion. Where studies do engage with 'religion' they are often dominated by textual scholarship and historical examples within world religions paradigm categories.

The proposed volume is to be written within a Study of Religions multi-methodology, focusing upon embodied, performative and lived approaches to everyday religious acts, beliefs and communities. It will explore how comedy, humour and their performative and material manifestations are enacted by both religious 'insiders' and by 'outsiders' or opponents of religion. Senses of humour within, about and because of religion will be explored. Narratives of humour as a religious or anti-religious act will be foregrounded.

The volume will explore how 'senses of humour' in religious acts, or acts about religion, co-exist and interact with other senses; auditory comedic performances with call and response relationships between performer/priest and audience/congregation; visual gags and material artworks; absurdity and mockery of senses of place, decorum and religious entitlement or rank; auditory-only radio performances; spoken-word satire and word-play; 'belly-laughing', 'shaking with laughter' and crossing the boundaries of 'good taste' and 'tastelessness'.

[Possible Themes for Chapters](#)

Humour and the defence of religious identity; Humour and anti-theism; Humour and mission /dialogue; Comedy and purposeful religious offence; Comedy and accidental religious offence; Standup religious identities; Graphic / artistic humour and religion; Humour and subversive religious identity; Humour in teaching within religions; Humour, religion and the law – blasphemy, infamy and religious/anti-religious freedom.

Proposals are welcomed for chapters of 8,000 words. A proposed title, 300 word abstract and 100 word bio should be sent, in Word or PDF format, to the editor s.gregg@wlv.ac.uk no later than 28th February 2021. Potential authors may find it helpful to read the 'Series Forward' to familiarise themselves with the approach of this project: <https://www.equinoxpub.com/home/viewfulltext/?id=2607-766-2>

Editor's Biography

Stephen E. Gregg is President-Elect of the British Association for the Study of Religions, and Subject Lead in Philosophy, Religion and Ethics at the University of Wolverhampton. His previous book projects include *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Studying Christians* (2020), *Swami Vivekananda and Non-Hindu Traditions* (Routledge, 2019), *The Insider-Outsider Debate: New Perspectives in the Study of Religion* (Equinox: 2019), *Engaging with Living Religion* (Routledge, 2015) and *Jesus Beyond Christianity* (OUP, 2010).

New Special Issue Published and Available Online

The European Journal of Humor Research: Humour in contrast across languages and cultures, Vol 8, No. 4, December 2020

The articles in this special issue are for the most part based on a selection of papers presented at the 25th AHSN conference, 'Humour in All its Forms', held at RMIT University in Melbourne from 6–8th February 2019. One article is a later version of a paper first presented as a work in progress at a workshop on conversational humour on 19th October 2015 at University Paul Valéry, Montpellier 3, France.

The articles have been chosen for their focus on a particular aspect of verbal humour across a number of different languages-cultures, a relatively recent but rapidly growing area of research in the field of humour studies. While some of the articles deal with terminological aspects of humour, others are concerned with the acquisition of humour. What all the articles have in common, however, is a contrastive approach to their examination of verbal humour. The issue highlights the linguistically and culturally specific nature of humour, whether this be the way we talk about performing certain humour events in different languages-cultures, how humour terms can be interpreted differently in and across languages-cultures and how we might address this, or how we acquire and express humour in our first and second languages. The authors employ various theoretical frameworks, methodologies and corpora to examine a number of languages and cultures: Oral Deaf, French, English, Japanese, Brazilian Portuguese, and Taiwanese Chinese.

Articles

Kerry Mullan, Laurence Vincent-Durroux, Caroline David. Editorial: humour in contrast across languages and cultures

Wei-Lin Melody Chang, Michael Haugh. The metapragmatics of "teasing" in Taiwanese Chinese conversational humour

Sophia Waters. The lexical semantics of blaguer: French ways of bringing people together through persuasion, deception and laughter

Cliff Goddard. De-Anglicising humour studies

Laurence Vincent-Durroux. Humour expression at the crossroads of deaf and hearing cultures: the case of the Oral Deaf fitted with cochlear implants

Laurence Vincent-Durroux, Kerry Mullan, Caroline David, Christine Béal, Cécile Poussard. Mastering second language humour: the ultimate challenge

Alessandra Del Ré, Christelle Dodane, Aliyah Morgenstern, Alessandra Jacqueline Vieira. Children's development of humour in everyday interactions: two case-studies in French and Brazilian Portuguese

Book Reviews

Book review: Chakhachiro, Raymond (2018) *Translating Irony Between English and Arabic*, Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Margherita Dore

Book review: Wilkie, Ian Angus (2016) *Performing in Comedy: A Student's Guide*, London: Routledge. Eric Weitz

Book review: Winter-Froemel, E. and Thaler, V. (eds.) (2018) *Cultures and Traditions of Wordplay and Wordplay Research. The Dynamics of Wordplay 6*. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter. Ibukun Filani

Book review: Nilsen, Alleen Pace & Nilsen, Don L.F. (2019) *The Language of Humour: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Theodora Saltidou

Book review: Gérin, Annie (2018) *Devastation and Laughter: Satire, Power, and Culture in the Early Soviet State (1920s–1930s)*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Anastasiya Fiadotava

All contents are available as open access articles here:

<https://www.europeanjournalofhumour.org/index.php/ejhr/issue/view/30/showToc>

Postponement of ISHS Conference From 2021-2022

Announcement of Webinars For 2021

Dear ISHS Conference 2020/21 Delegates and Potential Delegates,

I hope the new year finds you all safe and well.

After giving the matter much thought and following a lengthy discussion in a special ISHS Board meeting on January 6th, I am writing to inform you that the next ISHS Conference will be held in Bertinoro, Italy in the summer of 2022. Under the present climate of uncertainty, we all agreed that cancellation of the conference this year was the most sensible option.

However, to keep our spirits up and our minds sharp while we wait for the status quo to be restored and to meet up in the Italian hills, from March to June this year, the society will be holding a series of bi-monthly webinars each on a specific theme within humour studies and each involving 3 scholars. Our Secretary Martin Lampert from Holy Names College in Oakland will be running these webinars while each Board Member has kindly offered to organise at least one webinar on a specialised topic. If you are a member of ISHS, you will be receiving more information about this very soon. If you are not, please consider subscribing (<http://humorstudies.org/> -- Membership).

Meanwhile, thanking you all once more for your patience,

Warmest wishes from winter in Italy,

Delia

DELIA CHIARO

Professor of English Language and Translation

University of Bologna Alma mater studiorum

Department of Interpreting and Translation

Corso della Repubblica 136

47121 FORLI'

ITALY

Recent Humour Publications

Margherita Dore, (ed). 2020. *Humour Translation in the Age of Multimedia*. 234pp. 27 illus. London and NY: Routledge. ISBN (Hardcover): 9780367312893 ISBN: (Paperback): 9780367312886 ISBN (eBook): 9780429316081

Publisher's Description:

This volume seeks to investigate how humour translation has developed since the beginning of the 21st century, focusing in particular on new ways of communication. The authors, drawn from a range of countries, cultures and academic traditions, address and debate how today's globalised communication, media and new technologies are influencing and shaping the translation of humour.

Examining both how humour translation exploits new means of communication and how the processes of humour translation may be challenged and enhanced by technologies, the chapters cover theoretical foundations and implications, and methodological practices and challenges. They include a description of current research or practice, and comments on possible future developments. The contributions interconnect around the issue of humour creation and translation in the 21st century, which can truly be labelled as the age of multimedia.

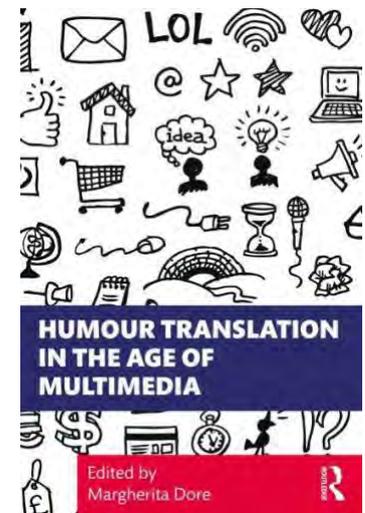
Accessible and engaging, this is essential reading for advanced students and researchers in Translation Studies and Humour Studies.

Bionotes:

Margherita Dore is an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' and the University of Rome 'Tor Vergata', where she teaches courses in Translation Studies, Audiovisual Translation and Sociolinguistics. She is the author of *Humour in Audiovisual Translation: Theories and Applications* (Routledge, 2019). She has (co)authored several papers on humour in translated audiovisual texts and in a range of other contexts, including stand-up comedy.

Info/Orders:

<https://www.routledge.com/Humour-Translation-in-the-Age-of-Multimedia/Dore/p/book/9780367312886>



Contents:

- Chapter 1 – Humour translation in the age of multimedia (Margherita Dore)
Chapter 2 – Humour translation in the digital age (Delia Chiaro)
Chapter 3 – Two cases of doping, two instances of humour: creative humour in cultural dialogue (Liisi Laineste and Piret Voolaid)
Chapter 4 – From translation to transcreation of humorous items (memes) on Romanian social media channels (Cristian Lako)
Chapter 5 – Selling our souls for a laugh: translated humour in advertising (Adrián Fuentes-Luque and Cristina Valdés)
Chapter 6 – Between marketing and cultural adaptation: the case of comedy film titles in Italy (Chiara Bucaria)
Chapter 7 - Multilingual humour in audiovisual translation: multilingual realities, humour and translation in an ever-changing mediascape (Patrick Zabalbeascoa)
Chapter 8 - A corpus-based approach to the study of subtitling humour (Albert F.S. Pai)
Chapter 9 - Amateur dubbing and humour to promote well-being among hospitalised children and adolescents (Margherita Dore and Laura Vagnoli)
Chapter 10 - Audio describing humour: seeking laughter when images do not suffice (Juan José Martínez Sierra)
Chapter 11 - Epilogue: local laughter, context collapse and translational agency (Jeroen Vandaele)

Henri de Jongste. 2020. *Playing with Mental Models: Humour in the BBC comedy series 'The Office'*. Topics in Humor Research, No. 9. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing. 301+pp. ISBN (Hardcover): 9789027205599 ISBN (eBook): 9789027261137 DOI: 10.1075/thr.9

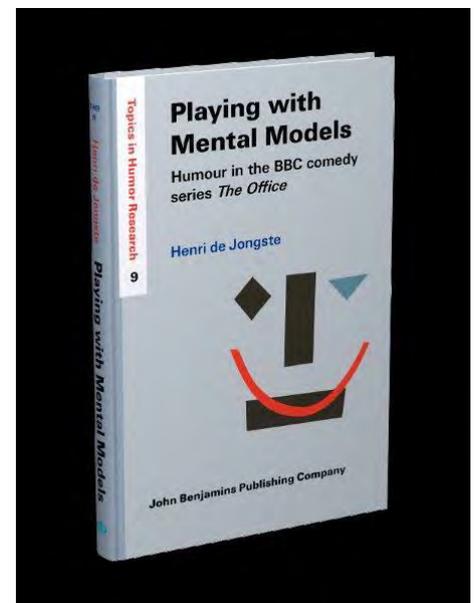
Publisher's Description:

In this book, the author uses a mental-model theory of communication to investigate the acclaimed British situation comedy *The Office*. The approach taken is multi-disciplinary, and focuses on questions as: What are mental models and what role do they play in communication in general, and in creating and watching *The Office* in particular? Whose mental models are involved in creating and watching *The Office*? How do these mental models relate to each other? How exactly do the creators of *The Office* and their audience engage in constructing, exchanging and coordinating mental models? How do mental models and their comic use relate to humour and humour theories and what is the nature of play in the deployment of mental models in comedy?

The book is aimed at humour scholars from various backgrounds and at people interested in communication in general.

Bionotes:

Henri de Jongste currently works at the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Applied Science and Arts, Dortmund. His research areas include Social Theory, Pragmatics and Cultural Anthropology. Henri is interested in communication in general, and in intercultural communication and humour especially. As a lecturer at a business school, he finds he is more interested in understanding the communication process as a practical tool of achieving mutual understanding than in ever more detailed and refined analyses of mini phenomena. He believes a study of communication must be multi-disciplinary.



Info/Orders:

<https://benjamins.com/catalog/thr.9>

Contents:

- Chapter 1. Introduction
- Chapter 2. Constructing mental models
- Chapter 3. Properties of mental models
- Chapter 4. Mental models and The Office
- Chapter 5. Humour theories and mental models (1)
- Chapter 6. Humour theories and mental models (2)
- Chapter 7. Playing with private mental models
- Chapter 8. Playing with presenting public mental models
- Chapter 9. Playing with negotiating public mental models
- Chapter 10. Character personalities
- Chapter 11. Concluding remarks

Note on two French studies of humour:

Both the following two publications were organised by RIRH (Réseau Interdisciplinaire de Recherches sur l'Humour): the first from a workshop by the same name; the second a collection of papers on Francophone humour from the 2017 ISHS conference in Montreal. Dr Yen-Mai Tran-Gervat was an AHSN Visiting Scholar in 2018 and delivered seminars for AHSN members in both Sydney and Melbourne. RIRH and AHSN regularly exchange information on their activities and publications with Dr Will Noonan (formerly at University of Sydney and now at University of Bourgogne – Dijon) acting as Liaison Officer.

Les scènes de l'humour. 2021. Cahiers d'Artès, No. 16. 203pp. Presses universitaires de Bordeaux. ISBN: 9791030006100

Publisher's Description:

Des matinales d'information rythmées par les billets d'humour et les pastilles d'humour, aux émissions de télévision dans lesquelles les humoristes s'insèrent entre les chroniques et les interviews, en passant par les animateur·trice·s qui se lancent dans le seul·e en scène, la circulation entre les différents espaces scéniques est aujourd'hui un trait caractéristique du domaine de l'humour. On assiste à l'avènement de parcours aux contours de plus en plus distendus, avec des humoristes alternant scène, internet, radio, télévision ou encore cinéma. Ce phénomène qui correspond à des demandes structurelles autant qu'à des logiques professionnelles a des effets sur les pratiques et l'esthétique de l'humour, ici envisagées au sens de performances corporelle et langagière, de ressorts du rire et de régimes de représentation. En se déplaçant d'un espace à un autre, les humoristes font-ils-elles le même métier? Dans quelle mesure le passage d'un dispositif à l'autre engage-t-il différentes pratiques et transforme-t-il les formes et les thématiques de l'humour? En croisant des contributions de professionnel·le·s du spectacle et de chercheur·se·s issu·e·s de plusieurs disciplines, ce numéro des Cahiers d'Artès consacré aux « scènes de l'humour » se donne pour objectif d'interroger les effets de cette circulation transmédiatique et intermédiaire à la fois par rapport à la profession d'humoriste et par rapport aux productions humoristiques.



Avec les textes de: Alban Chaplet, Alexia Duc, Marie Duret-Pujol, Bérénice Hamidi-Kim, Morgan Labar, Jean-Marie Lafortune, Christelle Paré, Sébastien Poulain, Nelly Quemener et les entretiens de Sophia Aram, Pierre-Emmanuel Barré, Yann Chouquet, Vincent Dedienne, Nicole Ferroni, Guillaume Meurice et François Morel.

English translation (Kerry Mullan)

From breakfast shows peppered with funny segments and comedy sketches, to television programs where comedians appear between news reports and interviews, and on to presenters who try out solo performances, moving between different platforms is the reality of comedy today. We are witnessing increasingly diverse career paths, with comedians alternating between the stage, internet, radio, television and even film. While this trend may fit modern structural and professional needs, it also directly impacts comedy practices and aesthetics – meant here in the sense of physical and verbal comedy, creating laughter, and different ways of representation. When comedians move from one performance space to another, is it still the same profession? To what extent does this require different practices and how does it alter the forms and topics of humour? With contributions from industry professionals and researchers from a wide range of disciplines, this issue of Cahiers d'Artès (Humour on Stage) examines the effects of this movement between and across performance spaces, from the point of view of the comedians themselves and their performances.

With chapters by: Alban Chaplet, Alexia Duc, Marie Duret-Pujol, Bérénice Hamidi-Kim, Morgan Labar, Jean-Marie Lafortune, Christelle Paré, Sébastien Poulain, Nelly Quemener and interviews with Sophia Aram, Pierre-Emmanuel Barré, Yann Chouquet, Vincent Dedienne, Nicole Ferroni, Guillaume Meurice and François Morel.

Info/Orders: <https://www.eyrolles.com/Arts-Loisirs/Livre/les-scenes-de-l-humour-9791030006100/>

Bernard Andrès, Yen-Mai Tran-Gervat (sous la direction de). *Études littéraires et Humour Studies. Vers une humoristique francophone*. 164p. Paris: Presses Sorbonne nouvelle. ISBN (Hardcover): 978-2-37906-048-9

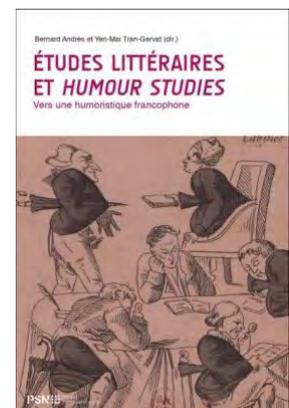
Publisher's Description:

Comme l'indique le nom même de l'International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS), l'humour comme champ de recherche est principalement exploré en anglais. Les disciplines les plus représentées dans les « humo(u)r studies » sont la psychologie, la linguistique, la sociologie et la communication. Le XXIXe congrès de l'ISHS, en 2017 à Montréal, a confirmé ces grandes tendances, mais il a aussi laissé s'exprimer une recherche francophone sur l'humour (française, québécoise, maghrébine notamment, mais non exclusivement), préoccupée par le spectacle vivant, par les traditions historiques et littéraires, et par les réflexions méthodologiques et disciplinaires : c'est de cette « humoristique » francophone que ce volume propose quelques jalons.

Placé sous l'égide de l'Observatoire de l'humour (OH, Montréal) et du Réseau interdisciplinaire de recherches sur l'humour (RIRH, Paris), ce volume fait un point sur ce que pourrait être une « humoristique » francophone et explore les stratégies discursives liées à l'humour dans des corpus et avec des méthodes essentiellement littéraires. Analysant des textes de genres, d'époques et de traditions culturelles différentes, il regroupe une dizaine d'articles en français, émanant de chercheur.e.s représentant des institutions d'enseignement et de recherche des pays suivants : Québec-Canada (5); France (3); Pologne (1); Tunisie (1).

English Translation (Kerry Mullan):

As indicated by the name of the International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS), most research on humour is in English. The most represented disciplines in "humo(u)r studies" are psychology, linguistics, sociology and



communication. The 24th ISHS conference held in 2017 in Montreal was no exception, but it also included research on humour in the French-speaking world (primarily but not exclusively France, Quebec, North Africa). Topics included live performances, historical and literary traditions, and methodological and disciplinary matters. This volume offers a preliminary guide to this Francophone humour.

With the support of L'Observatoire de l'humour (OH, Montréal) and the Réseau interdisciplinaire de recherches sur l'humour (RIRH, Paris), this volume examines what Francophone humour might look like and explores humorous discursive strategies in corpora and literature. The contributions (in French) analyse texts of different genres, eras and cultural traditions, and come from researchers in: Quebec-Canada (5); France (3); Poland (1); Tunisia (1).

Info/Orders: <https://psn.univ-paris3.fr/ouvrage/etudes-litteraires-et-humour-studies-vers-une-humoristique-francophone#>

Contents:

Introduction (Bernard Andrès et Yen-Maï Tran-Gervat)

Premiere partie : prolégomènes

Des Humour Studies à l'humoristique : regard croisé sur deux traditions universitaires (Will Noonan et Yen-Maï Tran-Gervat)

Des formes contemporaines de la Comédie humaine au Québec. Essai de typologie de l'humour littéraire (Jean-Marie Lafortune)

Deuxieme partie : humour littéraire : analyses de cas

Filiations et apories de l'humour Québécois (Bernard Andrès)

« The audience laughed so hard that it did not matter » : Virginia Woolf et le rire en partage (Pauline Macadré)

Fonction de l'humour dans l'œuvre de Samuel Beckett (Mokhtar Sahnoun)

Dany Laferrière : de l'humour transgressif à l'humour en mode mineur (Józef Kwaterko)

Troisieme partie : enjeux politiques et sociaux : problématiques de genres

Vers un féminisme pro-humour : ce que nous apprennent les controverses sur le sexe (Danielle Bobker)

La chevelure comme source d'humour littéraire chez Colette et Dawn Powell (Jeanne Mathieu-Lessard)

L'humour littéraire des femmes au Québec : nouvelles Pénélope, nouvelles Bérénice ? (Lucie Joubert)

Zoomposium - Conference Report

By Melanie McMahon and Anna-Sophie Jürgens

ZOOMPOSIUM

Performance, Science and Technology

27 November 2020, Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science

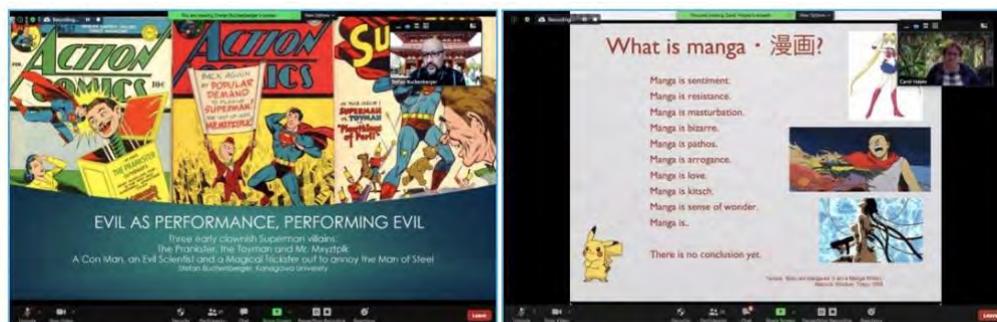
Techno-wizards, science-maniacs, characters called Hokus and Pokus, digitally resurrected Ghosts, potentially inexistent aliens... and many other fascinating cultural creatures emerging from the intersection between science,

technology and fantasy populated the virtual meeting space of the Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science (CPAS) on 27 November 2020.

Our “zoomposium” – a one-day online conference – on the theme of “Performance, Science and Technology” featured a great line-up of speakers from different disciplines (from Australia, Japan and the US), who share a common interest in the intricate interplay between the realms of science and technology in popular culture, and thus in the ways, pop culture and popular entertainment bridge the so-called “two cultures” of the Sciences and Humanities. Exploring an array of historical and contemporary examples, drawing from comic book stories, stage performances, visual media, museums displays and popular film, among others, in their academic presentations, speakers examined the ways popular culture has played an important role in shaping cultural ideas of science and in exciting the public imagination about scientific themes and discoveries.

From comic book science to a technology-driven performance of science and art

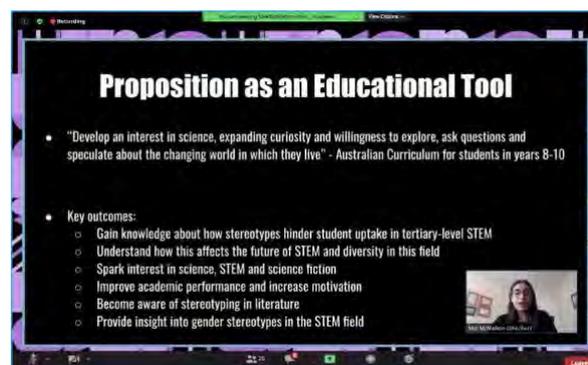
The first two presentations – by A/Prof Carol Hayes from the ANU and Professor Stefan Buchenberger from Kanagawa University (Japan) – focused on comic science and performance in comic book stories, graphic novels and manga art. They showed us some intriguing ways science is used for both comic effects and weird weapons in early comic book stories, and shed a light on “viscerally presented” science in Japanese sequential art. While early Japanese manga engaged with science through a “slapstick style of witty images”, clownish characters like Mr Mxyzptlk, the Toyman and the Prankster, it turned out, combine elements of magic and the circus with the cultural stereotype of the mad scientist.



Screenshots from the academic presentations by Prof Stefan Buchenberger and A/Prof Carol Hayes.

Presenting a mosaic of examples, these two talks provided detailed insights into the way in which pop-cultural interpretations of scientist characters add their quota to the public discourse of science. In doing so, they contributed to, and expanded on, our introduction, in which we discussed both what “clown science” can be defined in comic book stories (see [here](#) for an example) and what role stereotypes of scientists can play beyond fictional stories. In this regard, the types of complex stereotypes were outlined and the harms of such were explored in a way that can be manipulated to act as an educational tool to improve the motivation of STEM students. This prompted meaningful discussion between attendees about the balance of gender within the STEM field.

In the second part of the zoomposium we launched the recently published edited collection [Circus, Science and Technology: Dramatising Innovation](#) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), a book that explores to what extent the engineering of circus and performing bodies can be understood as a strategy to promote awe, how technological inventions have shaped circus and the cultures it helps constitute – and how much of a mutual shaping this is.



As the editor, Dr Anna-Sophie Jürgens, and the director of the ANU Humanities Research Centre, Professor Will Christie (who set the frame for this interdisciplinary publication by supporting the 2018 conference “[Imagineers in Circus & Science](#)” from which the book emerged) showed in their speeches, the book is a contribution to the popular history of technology, the cultural history of engineering, and the history of popular performance. (Studying) circus contributes to a better understanding of the globalised modern culture of technological wonder, and shows how circus informed modern sensibilities, and predates contemporary ones – how it is formative for the present and the future.

We celebrated the book’s launch with an extraordinary performance, which was created especially for this event: a Theremin performance, composed, recorded and designed by Kit Devine (ANU School of Art and Design), Alec Hunter (School of Music) and Charles Martin (Research School of Computer Science). The Theremin is an electronic musical instrument controlled without physical contact by the performer. The eerie Theremin sound is used in television shows, popular music and film soundtracks. For instance, it appears in Mars Attacks and The Day the Earth Stood Still (the old film), Hellboy and The Delicate Delinquent, a film featuring a clownesque Theremin scene with Jerry Lewis and man in a lab coat. The Theremin performance and video created by our performers referred to these themes, themes explored in the Circus, Science and Technology book, and themes studied at CPAS (including science in Sci-Fi. Invented in 1920 (100 years ago!), this instrument beautifully links pop culture, science, technology and art.



Our Theremin performance at work! Photo by Alexander Hunter.

On the evolution from the magical and fictional to the scientific

After the Theremin performance the zoomposium continued with three presentations focusing on technologically based entertainments from around 1900 – a technologically informed age of wonder – and their contemporary reimagining and reappearance in digital shapes. Thomas Conner discussed the nineteenth-century stage illusion Pepper’s Ghost as an early augmented-reality media system; Dr Elisa deCourcy and A/Prof Martyn Jolly investigated how new mechanical and optical apparatuses (above all Magic Lanterns) shaped new performative conventions, audience expectations and (thus) theatrical culture; and Dr Ruth

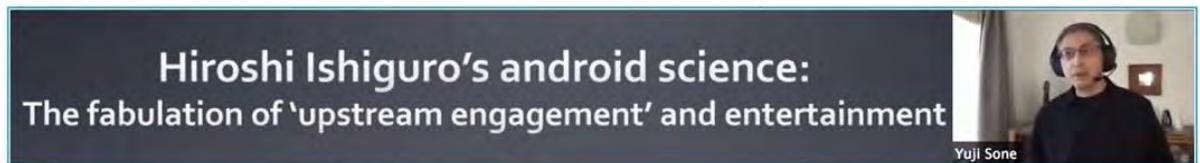
Richards examined the cross-references and interdependencies between (early) animation and the world of the circus. They all highlighted that our new media is not that new at all, and that tradition does not mean stagnation.



Screenshots from the academic presentations by Thomas Conner, Dr Elisa deCourcy & A/Prof Martyn Jolly and Dr Ruth Richards



Finally, the last part of the zoomposium was dedicated to the question of what progress at the interface between popular culture, science and “the public” means in a cultural context where it is unclear where science ends and fiction begins and how much of the latter is represented in the former. Dr Rebecca Hendershott discussed the ways the idea of technological advancement is transported through visual representations of prehistoric hominids; Dr Yuji Sone explored the unique form of storytelling or fabulation accompanying, if not embodied in, Hiroshi Ishiguro’s anthropomorphic robotic machines, humanoids and androids; before Dr Brad Tucker took us into outer space by asking how fictional portrayals of aliens have impacted the search and increase of technology in the search for them.

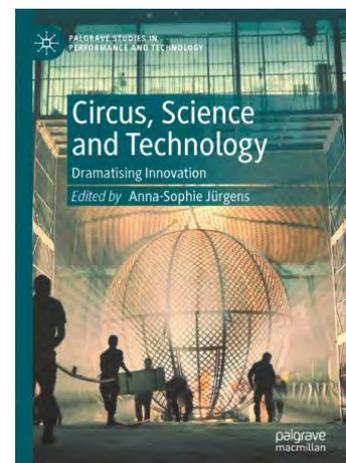


CPAS’ first zoomposium on “Performance, Science and Technology” was a vibrant event with extremely interesting presentations and lively discussions. We had about 78 registrations and about 30 participants in each of the morning sessions; the afternoon sessions had about 20 participants each. Although an online conference can hardly be compared to a ‘real’ live event, the quality of the academic presentations and discussions and the active interaction was very enjoyable and stimulating. We would like to thank all our speakers and participants for this invigorating and exciting day!

Today’s sym/zoomposium was excellent. The focus and thread between speakers was super. I think this nexus between science and pop culture is exactly where good science communication to the public will be unveiled. It reveals deeper truths about us as people and culture and reveals the questions we sometimes overlook. I look forward to whatever comes next. – Dr Eroia Barone-Nugent, Australian National University

For more information, please get in touch with Dr Jürgens: anna-sophie.jurgens@anu.edu.au You can find our forthcoming events [here](#).

Anna-Sophie Jürgens, who works in the fields of Popular Entertainment Studies and Science in Fiction Studies, has been back in Australia since April 2020. Previously a Feodor Lynen Postdoctoral Fellow (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation) at the ANU Humanities Research Centre, she is now a Lecturer at the Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science of the ANU. Anna-Sophie is interested in the connections between comic performance and technology, and humour and science in culture. She works on clown robots, comic pathological body aesthetics and mad scientist clowns (Joker!) in various media.



In 2020, she published the edited collection [Circus, Science and Technology](#) (Palgrave Macmillan), the result of a conference on “[Imagineers in Circus & Science](#)” she organised at the ANU in 2018, and the edited collection [Manegenkünste](#) (transcript, including chapters in German and English) on circus aesthetics. Currently, Anna-Sophie explores the representation of science in Joker films and comics, focusing on the intricate links between (violent) clowning, medical discourse, biochemistry and virology. You can find her publications [here](#) and learn more about her upcoming events [here](#).



Hyperlinks:

<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030432973#aboutBook>

<https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-4148-6/manegenkuenste/>

<https://hrc.cass.anu.edu.au/events/imagineers-circus-and-science-scientific-knowledge-and-creative-imagination>

<https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/jurgens-a>

<https://cpas.anu.edu.au/news-events/events>

The Humour Studies Digest

The Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)

‘We put the “U” back into “HUMOUR”!’

Send your Digest Submissions to our Co-Editors

Michael at Michael.meany@newcastle.edu.au or Jessica at Jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au

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