



Australasian Humour Studies Network

THE HUMOUR STUDIES DIGEST



“Humour at Work: Applications, Industries and Economies”

27th Conference of the Australasian Humour Studies Network

Latest News and Information on the 2021 AHSN Conference

Dear AHSN Members,

Despite the difficulties that we’ve all encountered in the past year, we are pleased that the 27th conference of the AHSN will be going ahead from 3-5 February 2021, albeit with a few changes to the regular structures.

For the majority of the AHSN’s members, based outside of New Zealand, the conference will be an online event. In order to make this process as simple as possible, we have decided to base the event on a format developed by the Political Ecology Research Centre (PERC) at Massey University. This is an asynchronous model utilising a pre-recorded video and forum-based discussion which we hope to also supplement with Zoom sessions where possible. PERC has successfully hosted three online conferences using this presentation format, and you can see how they worked and what past presentations looked like [here](#) and [here](#).

While presenting delegates will be asked to pay a small registration fee to cover technical support and set-up, this event will be free of access for non-presenters and general members of the public.

For those delegates based in New Zealand, we will be hosting an in-person event (national alert levels permitting). Given the current circumstances, this will be a small-scale event at the Wellington campus of Massey University, 3-4 February. If you are interested in attending the event as a non-presenting delegate, please get in touch directly with the conference director, Nicholas Holm, at: nhfholm@massey.ac.nz

THIS EDITION

<i>27th AHSN Conference Latest News and Information</i>	1
<i>Members' New Publications</i>	2
<i>Research Student Profile - Amanda Cooper</i>	3
<i>Research Student Profile – Alex Cothren</i>	4
<i>Members' New Books</i>	
<i>No Laughing Matter</i>	5
<i>Turkish German Muslims and Comedy Entertainment</i>	6
<i>New Books on Humour Studies</i>	
<i>Explorations in Humor Studies</i>	7
<i>Humour in Audiovisual Translation</i>	7
<i>Review Comments on The Linguistics of Humor</i>	8
<i>Documentary on Historic Australian TV Satire</i>	9
<i>New Online Journal Embracing Humour Studies</i>	10
<i>EMERGE 2020: Invitation to Audit a Free Postgraduate Online Conference</i>	10
<i>Online Seminar “Comic Relief: Making the Best of Things in The Italian Tradition”</i>	11
<i>‘Posthuman Laughter’ - Invitation to a free live-stream webinar</i>	11

Final details of registration are currently being resolved, but full information about applicable fee-levels and instructions on how to register will be sent via email to all conference delegates and interested parties in early November 2020.

For more information and updates from time to time, please visit the Events page of the AHSN website at: <https://ahsn.org.au> and the dedicated Conference website at: <https://ahsn-conference-2021.netlify.app>

With best wishes to all AHSN members and hoping to see as many of you as possible, either virtually or physically,

Nick Holm

On behalf of the Organising Committee:

Massey University: Nicholas Holm, Bryce Galloway

Victoria University of Wellington: Meredith Marra, Stephen Skalicky



Massey University - Wellington Campus

Member's News

NSW State Library Awards Ross Steele Fellowship to Robert Phiddian

AHSN Review Panel member and Chair of both the 2007 and the 2015 AHSN Conferences, Professor Robert Phiddian (Flinders University), has been awarded the prestigious Ross Steele AM Fellowship (\$12,000) by the State Library of NSW. This is for a research project which will explore the State Library's extensive collections of cartoons from the first part of the 20th century, with a specific focus on the under-explored editorial cartoon collection. AHSN members based in Sydney can look forward to the pleasure of Robert's company (state travel rules permitting) during several months of 2021.

Eds: Congratulations and well done, Robert!

Members' New Publications

Will Visconti. 2020. "Identity: Popular Performance from Peoria to Paris". In *A Cultural History of Comedy, Vol. 5: A Cultural History of Comedy in the Age of Empire*, ed. Matthew Kaiser. 93-116. London: Bloomsbury Academic. Available online at <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/acultural-history-of-comedy-9781350000827/>

Research Student Profile - Amanda Cooper

Amanda Cooper, Doctoral Candidate, Western Sydney University

During the second year of my BA, Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961) was a set text. I was so intrigued by this writer and amused by this novel that I chose to focus on it for my final essay.

During the research process, I came across the fiery and funny work of Italian-American scholar, Regina Barreca. Giving American pop culture figures and British literary heroines equal weight, Barreca has led the study of feminist comedy and humour for decades, writing books, articles and editing several collections of academic essays. For her, literary comedy by women is magical, irate and, ultimately, a quest for social change. Though not unproblematic, Barreca's passionate, rhetorical style offered, for me, an enticing way into this fascinating new field. From this point onwards, I would continue to note the

undertones, or sometimes explicit overtones, of comedy that featured in many of the assigned texts written by women. When introduced to Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984), I jumped at the chance to explore the jocular orality and carnivalesque physicality of one of Carter's most loved protagonists. I did notice, however, that when discussing these texts in lectures and tutorials, the words humour and comedy were rarely, if ever, used. As such, when it came time to select a topic for my Master of Research project, I knew exactly what understudied and undervalued area I wished to wade into.

My Master's research re-read Spark's second novel, *Robinson* (1958), through a comic lens. In this thesis, I advanced a new interpretation of this frequently overlooked work, supported by literary and cultural critical approaches to feminist comedy and humour by Barreca, Judy Little, Nancy Walker and Audrey Bilger, amongst others. Deliberately avoiding classic conceptions of comedy posed by Aristotle, Kant, Freud, Bergson and their fraternity, I drew instead on feminist understandings of comedy and humour that emerged from the second-wave women's liberation movement. These understandings centred around the change, possibility and hope I likewise saw evoked in Spark's feminist comic strategies and her heroine's resistant, resilient humour. This single case study sought, not only to demonstrate how Sparkian comedy functions in relation to issues of sex and gender, but also gestured toward how such an approach might prove fruitful in reading other literary texts by female authors with a comic bent.

For my PhD research, I hope to widen and update this feminist/comic approach to women's literature. Working within the Writing and Society Research Centre at Western Sydney University, I am currently engaged in considering the complex intersections of comedy, humour, gender and feminism in the works of three twentieth-century female authors: Jean Rhys, Muriel Spark and Angela Carter. By analysing, comparing and contextualising their novels and short stories, I hope with this project to test and extend theories of feminist comedy and humour that scholars have only just begun to investigate and understand. I seek also to establish a better understanding of how feminist literary comedy may have transformed across a period of massive cultural and socio-political change for Britain. One of the distinct features of this thesis is its inclusion of short fiction, which has been widely ignored by scholars working in this admittedly small field. Presenting a variety of feminist literary approaches to comedy, this project juxtaposes the celebrated comic stylings of Muriel Spark with the ludic surrealism of Angela Carter and gloomy irony of Jean Rhys, whose use of comedy and humour has only recently been recognised. Through their comedy, these writers work in varied and idiosyncratic ways to highlight and critique women's oppression, objectification and ostracism. They paint heroines that weaponise humour in order to question feminine myths and conventions, patriarchal structures and behaviours, and ultimately, the cultural conception of gender itself.

The study of feminist literary comedy has not fully found a place either in literary studies, feminist studies or humour studies. But my enduring fascination with and continuing research into the power and potential of



women's comic literature, I believe, possesses significant cultural, literary and scholarly value. I look forward to sharing my future findings with members of AHSN.

Contact Amanda about her work at: A.Cooper5@westernsydney.edu.au

Research Student Profile - Alex Cothren

Alex Cothren, Doctoral Candidate, Flinders University, Adelaide

I am a creative writer whose satirical short stories have been published in *Meanjin*, *Island*, *Overland* and elsewhere. My PhD thesis (co-supervised at Flinders University by AHSN's Robert Phiddian) looks at *who* is involved in my satirical stories, and it posits that our current models of satire need updating. Theorists such as Paul Simpson define satire as a mode of communication involving three distinct subject positions: the satirist (the creator of the satire), the audience (the consumers of the satire), and the target (the subject of the satire's attack). However, my thesis argues that another position should be added to such models in order to more accurately represent who participates in satire. I believe that the central action of satire, a satirist attempting to persuade an audience that a target is worthy of attack, cannot take place without at least some involvement of a fourth participant: *those who the satirist believes have been negatively affected by the target*. To put it simply, if a target has done something wrong, at least in the eyes of the satirist, then it follows that *someone* has been *wronged*. I call this position the 'participant zero', as without the alleged negative effects suffered by these participants, satirists would have no justification for attacking their targets.



This 'participant zero' is my contribution to original knowledge, but it has also been a significant challenge to my creative process. Whilst writing my stories, I became aware of the risk that some representations of the 'participant zero' could inadvertently harm the real-world people and groups who fill this position. This risk is exacerbated by satire's indirect manner of attack, which often relies on audience members recovering the implicit meaning hidden within an explicit statement. Furthermore, satire's frequent strategy of attacking its targets by parodying and exaggerating their viewpoints can result in a warped representation of the 'participant zero', one which can be harmful even when audience members understand the satirist's intentions. Thus, my creative process—once so carefree before I entered the solemn halls of academia!—became saddled with a number of heavy questions. Does the potential benefit of satire balance out any inadvertent harm it may cause? Is the onus on the satirist to consider these risks, or on the audience to accept them as a part and parcel of the mode? Where does freedom of expression end and intolerable abuse begin?

Of course, these types of questions can never be comprehensively answered (if they could, we'd all be out of jobs!) However, I get a sense that some artists think that wrestling in the muck with these dilemmas sullies the purity of their work, or else they fear that their muse might abandon them if they start overthinking how their audience will respond. These are legitimate concerns! However, I have personally found that focusing on the real people who fill the 'participant zero' position in my work has the effect of sharpening, not blunting, my satirical claws. It helps to remind me of why my anger is justified in the first place, and of the real consequences that could result from the misdirection of this anger.

I hope you all are staying safe and laughing as much as possible. We're almost to the end of this historically rotten year, and 2021 is guaranteed* to be better.

**right?*

Alex

Please feel free to contact me about my work at: Alexander.Cothren@flinders.edu.au

Members' New Books

No Laughing Matter

Trindade, Luiz Valério P. 2020. *No Laughing Matter: Race Joking and Resistance in Brazilian Social Media*. Wilmington, DE: Vernon Press. 230 pp. Hardback: ISBN 978-1-62273-796-3

URL: <https://vernonpress.com/book/861>

Publisher's Description

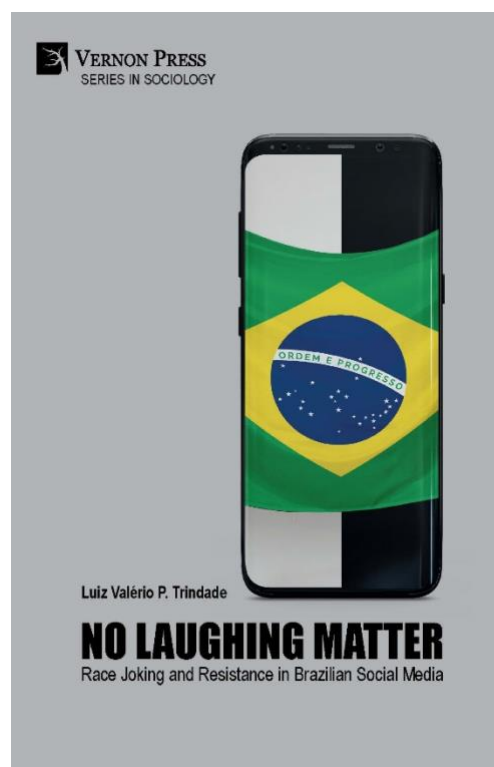
'No Laughing Matter: Race Joking and Resistance in Brazilian Social Media' examines the social phenomenon of construction and dissemination of colonial-like racist discourses fostered against upwardly-mobile black women through disparagement humour on social media platforms, adopting a fresh and innovative perspective. In this book, Luiz Valério P. Trindade explores the idea that disparagement humour might not be as exempt of social impact as the jokers might believe, and that, in fact, this kind of humour reveals the hidden facet of deep-seated colonial ideologies still present in Brazilian society despite being hailed as a unique model of a post-racial society.

The author argues that these ideologies establish and naturalise superior social positions and symbolic privileges to whites while undermining and delegitimising black women's upward social mobility. Social media platforms enable the proponents of these beliefs not only to engage in the practice of online hate speech but also to attract a considerable number of like-minded people, creating a long-lasting echo chamber effect in the cyberspace. This way, they manage to amplify the reach and reverberation of their racist discourses in the online environment in ways not commonly seen in Brazilian offline social contexts.

This monograph is of relevance to students, scholars, and researchers across a variety of disciplines, most notably Critical Race Studies, Media and Communication Studies and Critical Humour Studies; and also, academics in other areas such as Critical Discourse Analysis, Postcolonial Studies, Cultural Studies and Latin American Studies.

Author Bionote

Luiz Valério P. Trindade holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Southampton (UK). Prior to these studies, he was awarded an MPhil in Business Administration with distinction by the Universidade Nove de Julho (Brazil), where he explored the phenomenon of the lack of ethnic diversity in Brazilian printed advertising. His main areas of scholarship and research lie in the sociology of race and ethnicity, social representation of ethnic minorities in means of mass communication, critical discourse analysis, and hate speech on social media. He has published in the *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Discover Society*, *Social Science Space*, *The Conversation*, amongst several others.



Turkish German Muslims and Comedy Entertainment

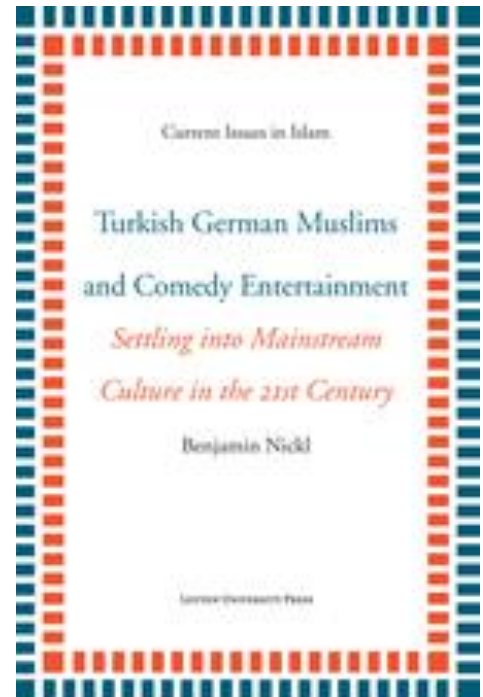
Benjamin Nickl. 2020. *Turkish German Muslims and Comedy Entertainment: Settling into Mainstream Culture in the 21st Century*. *Current Issues in Islam, Vol. 7*. Leuven: Leuven University Press. 232pp. ISBN: 9789461663412; forthcoming December 2020. €19.50 (including 6% VAT).

Free eVersion now available at:

<https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/42526/9789461663412.pdf?sequence=1>
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv17ppc8x>

Publisher's description

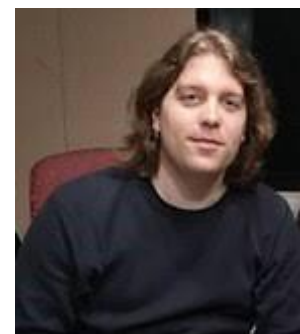
Turkish German comedy culture and the lived realities of Turkish Muslims in Germany: comedy entertainment is a powerful arena for serious public engagement with questions of German national identity and Turkish German migration. The German majority society and its largest labour migrant community have been asking for decades what it means to be German and what it means for Turkish Germans, Muslims of the second and third generations, to call Germany their home. Benjamin Nickl examines through the social pragmatics of humour the dynamics that underpin these questions in the still-evolving popular culture space of German mainstream humour in the 21st century. The first book-length study on the topic to combine close readings of film, television, literary and online comedy, and transnational culture studies, *Turkish German Muslims and Comedy Entertainment* presents the argument that Turkish German humour has moved from margin to mainstream by intervening in cultural incompatibility and Islamophobia discourse.



Author Bionote

Benjamin Nickl is a researcher in Transnational Pop Culture Studies and lectures at the School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Sydney. Read the interview with Ben by Annemie Vandezande, 6 October 2020, at KU LEUVEN UP authors' corner, a very useful blog:

<https://lup.be/blogs/authors-corner/benjamin-nickl-turkish-german-muslims-and-comedy-entertainment>



New Books on Humour Studies

Explorations in Humor Studies

Marcin Kuczok, Anna Stwora, Mariola Świerkot, eds. 2020. *Explorations in Humor Studies: Humor Research Project*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 201pp. ISBN-13: 978-1-5275-4208-2; ISBN-10: 1-5275-4208-4 £61.99

<https://www.cambridgescholars.com/explorations-in-humor-studies>

Publisher's description

Working towards a multifaceted debate on humor and related phenomena, this book is a comprehensive reflection of the contributors' shared interest in various dimensions of humor and its manifold applications. It is composed of a selection of writings that provide important insights into language used for humorous purposes. Theoretical discussions are complemented by an assortment of case studies in linguistics, culture, literature, and translation, as well as in visual and media studies.

Author Bionotes

Marcin Kuczok, PhD, works in the Department of Contrastive Studies of the Institute of English at the University of Silesia, Poland. His research interests include English-Polish contrastive linguistics and cognitive semantics, with particular emphasis on conceptual metaphor and metonymy theory, conceptual integration theory, and the theory of the linguistic picture of the world. He has also devoted a lot of work to axiolinguistics, the language of values, religious discourse, and to the writings of John Henry Newman.

Anna Stwora, MA, is a PhD candidate in the Department of Specialized Languages of the Institute of English at the University of Silesia, Poland. Her research interests oscillate around the multimodal discourse of advertising, especially in its metaphorical and humorous dimensions. Her work also looks at specialized registers viewed from the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic standpoint, cognitivism, communication studies, and contrastive linguistics.

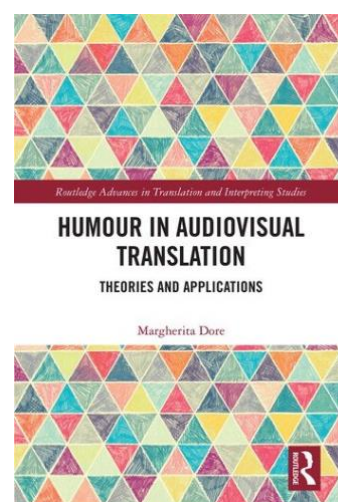
Mariola Świerkot, MA, is a PhD candidate in the Department of American and Canadian Studies of the Institute of English Cultures and Literatures at the University of Silesia, Poland. Her academic interests include American history, literature, and culture, especially that of the 20th and 21st centuries, and oscillate around non-fiction, theory of culture, and identity discourses.

Humour in Audiovisual Translation

Margherita Dore. 2019. *Humour in Audiovisual Translation: Theories and Applications*. New York: Routledge. 314pp. 13 B/W Illus. Print: ISBN 9780367432317 eBook: ISBN 9781003001928
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003001928>

Publisher's description

This book offers a comprehensive account of the audiovisual translation (AVT) of humour, bringing together insights from translation studies and humour studies to outline the key theories underpinning this growing area of study and their applications to case studies from television and film. The volume outlines the ways



in which the myriad linguistic manifestations and functions of humour make it difficult for scholars to provide a unified definition for it, an issue made more complex in the transfer of humour to audiovisual works and their translations as well as their ongoing changes in technology. Dore brings together relevant theories from both translation studies and humour studies toward advancing research in both disciplines. Each chapter explores a key dimension of humour as it unfolds in AVT, offering brief theoretical discussions of wordplay, culture-specific references, and captioning in AVT as applied to case studies from *Modern Family*. A dedicated chapter to audio description, which allows the visually impaired or blind to assess a film's non-verbal content, using examples from the 2017 film *the Big Sick*, outlines existing research to date on this under-explored line of research and opens avenues for future study within the audiovisual translation of humour. This book is key reading for students and scholars in translation studies and humour studies.

Author Bio

Margherita Dore is Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' and the University of Rome 'Tor Vergata'. She (co-)authored over fifteen papers and edited one essay collection on translation practice (*Achieving Consilience. Translation Theories and Practice*, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2016), a special issue of *Status Quaestionis* on retranslation (2018) and one special issue of the *European Journal of Humour Research* on multilingual humour and translation (2019). Margherita Dore has worked on the analysis of humour in translated audiovisual texts and in a range of other contexts, including stand-up comedy.

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
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Review Comments on New Book by Dr Ying Cao

Salvatore Attardo. 2020. *The Linguistics of Humor: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 496pp. ISBN: 9780198791287

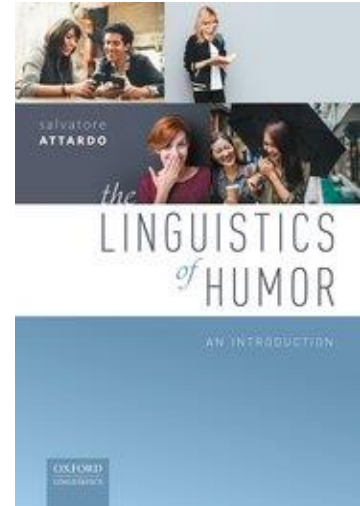
<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-linguistics-of-humor-9780198791287?cc=au&lang=en&#>

This book offers an all-encompassing and insightful overview of the linguistic research on humour. It functions as a research guide for rookie humour researchers, like me, who are engulfed in understanding the complex nature of humour and sorting out the theoretical basis in explaining humour in different genres from the vast volume of research literature. Professor Attardo delineates several fundamental and complex concepts, such as humour, laughter and humorous intention, which have perplexed humour researchers for a long time. He explicates a systematic approach in studying humour, ranging from identification, analysis to application. It becomes an indispensable book for anyone interested in studying humour.

– Ying Cao, Western Sydney University and Wuhan Polytechnic University, AHSN member and three times AHSN Scholarship Winner.

Author information

Salvatore Attardo is Professor of Linguistics at Texas A&M University - Commerce. He works primarily on the linguistics of humor, and on issues relating to implicatures, irony, and rationality, and more generally on Neo-Gricean pragmatics. He was Editor-in-Chief of *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* for ten years. His publications include *Linguistic Theories of Humor* (De Gruyter, 1994), *Humorous Texts: A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis* (De Gruyter, 2001), and, as editor, *The Encyclopedia of Humor Studies* (Sage, 2014) and *The Handbook of Language and Humor* (Routledge, 2017).



Documentary on Historic Australian TV Satire series, The Mavis Bramston Show

Stephan J Wellink, writer/director/producer, of Inkwell Films writes:
[IMDb page: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm5532615/?ref=fn_al_nm_1]

Based on David Frost's *That Was The Week That Was*, MAVIS was the pioneering satirical TV programme that changed the way Australians saw themselves, as the country emerged from the austere post-WW2 period. This satire/cultural commentary through television in Australia, established a tradition which provided the platform for Norman Gunston, Aunty Jack, Max Gillies, John Clarke, Clarke & Dawe, Roy & HG, The Big Gig, Frontline, Full Frontal, Fast Forward, Utopia, Shaun Micallef, Charlie Pickering and many others.

Key interviews have been filmed with Carol Raye and Barry Creyton who, with the late Gordon Chater, were the original stars of MAVIS. We also recorded Maggie Dence who played MAVIS and the writers Bill Harding, John-Michael Howson, David Sale and the late Ken Shadie.

Additional interviews are with Noelene Brown, Max Gillies, Anthony Ackroyd, Peter Moon and Andrew Mercado. We have just secured interviews with Bryan Dawe (The Games, Clarke & Dawe), Clayton Jacobson (KENNY) and Charlie Pickering (The Weekly) and in discussion with Peter Weir who was a production assistant on MAVIS and directed some of its sketches.

Prof. Robert Phiddian (AHSN Review Panel and Flinders University) has agreed to be interviewed for this film. The teaser can be viewed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HmRszvA9v2aeusH0Y5GiXBFAYF29YsPB/view?usp=sharing>

More as soon as the film is ready for screening!

Editors' Note: Congratulations and thanks to Robert for providing humour studies background to this exciting project!

New Online Journal Embracing Humour Studies

Language, Culture, Environment is an open access online journal that is published by KIMEP University four times per year. It incorporates the work of scholars who are engaged in research in the areas of Applied Linguistics, Pedagogy, any aspect of Cultural Studies, Cultural Production and Criticism, and Environmental Humanities. The aim of the journal is to encourage a diverse range of international collaborative work that contributes to our knowledge and understanding of communication and cultural practices and offers new perspectives on the challenges confronting a new age of environmental change.

Articles are free to use but must be attributed to the authors, who retain ownership of copyright. All submissions will undergo an international double-blind review process. All revised papers must be submitted within two months of review. Articles submitted for review may be refused if they breach international copyright laws. Submissions are currently invited for the Winter 2020 issue, on the theme of "2020: Online"

The journal is edited by Dr Vivienne Westbrook, co-editor (with Shung-liang Chao) of *'Humour in the Arts: New Perspectives'* (Routledge, 2018), and by Dr John Westbrook, both currently at KIMEP University in Almaty. The first issue contains an in memoriam section for Harold Bloom and among other articles is one by Hsin Hsieh, University of Reading, on ['Revisiting the Apollo And Dionysus Debate in Peter Shaffer's Works: From Five Finger Exercise to Black Comedy'](#).

Enquiries: email: LCEKIMEP@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.kimep.kz/en/>

EMERGE 2020:

Invitation to Audit a Free Postgraduate Online Conference

EMERGE 2020: 12th Annual Interventions and Intersections Conference

Thursday 12 – Friday 13 November 2020

Hosted Online by the [School of Humanities and Communication Arts](#), Western Sydney University

EMERGE is a chance for WSU HCA students to bring their work into the light at this exciting 2-day event. EMERGE is a chance to showcase research, share creativity and connect after a difficult year. It will feature over 40 papers from a range of fields including literature & creative writing, linguistics & translation, ethics & philosophy, art, music, social & cultural studies, education, history and, yes, humour studies! While the final program is not yet available, two papers will address humour research:

- "The Role of Humour and Directives in the Palembang Speech Community: An Idea from the Practice of Language and Culture in Indonesia" - Susi Herti Afriani (session 3B, 2:45-4pm, 12th of November)
- "Destruction, Glee and Ennui: Negative and Positive Feminist Comic Acts in Jean Rhys' Short Story Cycle Sleep It Off, Lady." - Amanda Cooper (session 4A, 10:30-12pm, 13th of November)

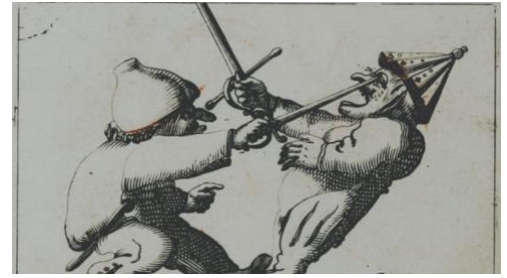
Interested in attending or knowing more? Visit the website and register:

https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/schools/sohca/news_and_events/emerge_postgraduate_conference_2020

Online Seminar “Comic Relief: Making the Best of Things in The Italian Tradition”

<https://adhc.lib.ua.edu/comicrelief/>

The Italian Program in the Department of Modern Languages and Classics at The University of Alabama presents an [online seminar series](#) investigating the comic and its uses in moments or situations of trouble. The [five talks in our series](#) will variously look at how instances of tribulation, crisis, or upheaval can be examined and made sense of through a comic lens, often leading to a cathartic experience.



Featuring distinguished speakers from Italy and the United States, *Comic Relief* is an event designed for UA students and faculty, as well as for the broader public in academia and beyond.

Upcoming seminars:

- Nov. 13** – Jane Tylus (Yale University), “Do Comedies All (Have to) End Happily? Scenes from Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and their Contemporaries”
- Jan. 22** – David Ward (Wellesley College), “Italian Terrorism in Contemporary Italian Literature: Laughing at History”
- Feb. 12** – Dana Renga (The Ohio State University), “Dark Serial Humour”

For more information about the “Comic Relief” series, please visit <https://adhc.lib.ua.edu/comicrelief/>

Contacts: Jessica Goethals (jgoethals@ua.edu) or Fabio Battista (fbattista@ua.edu)

‘Posthuman Laughter’ - Invitation to a free live-stream webinar

‘Posthuman Laughter’- a digital event hosted by The University of Southampton, UK
(Nov 13, 2020/9:00 UK Time / 20.00 Australian Eastern Time - Duration: 1 hour, 15 minutes)

Description

This interdisciplinary webinar focuses on humour that confronts our own media habits, dependence on technology and the wider cultural imaginary surrounding visions of a Hi-Tech, posthuman future.

In Western thought, humour has a long tradition of being regarded an exclusively human phenomenon. Henri Bergson’s *Le Rire* (1900), for instance, introduces the comic as something that “does not exist outside the realm of what is strictly human: “You may laugh at an animal,” Bergson notes “but only because you have detected in it some human attitude or expression” and it also erupts each time “a person gives us the impression of being a thing”. The theory Bergson sketches out, thus presents laughter as an automatic bodily corrective that separates the human both from animals and machines, and thereby automatically humanises us from within.

In this session, we turn to the “impossible object of humor” (to cite Simon Critchley), to probe the lines between the human and being an animal body animated by machines, a distinction, as Bergson’s theory underlines, that is necessarily ambiguous and fluid. For humour is said to attain its infectious dynamic precisely because our lives habitually stray across these lines - we laugh, because being human is only a precarious part time job, an intermezzo between being animal and functioning absentmindedly like a machine.

Speakers

Chris Muller (Macquarie University)

Benjamin Nickl (University of Sydney)

Megen de Bruin-Molé (University of Southampton)

Mihaela Brebenel (University of Southampton)

Jonathon Hutchinson (University of Sydney)

Louise Peacock (De Montfort University)

Ian Reilly (Mount St Vincent University)

Jessica Milner Davis (University of Sydney)



<https://www.facebook.com/WSAgmm/>



<https://wsagmm.wordpress.com/2020/10/26/being-human-as-praxis/>



<https://twitter.com/gmmwsa/>



<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/posthuman-laughter-humour-and-the-monstrous-automation-of-the-everyday-tickets-126555331403>



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The Humour Studies Digest

The Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)

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