23rd Australasian Humour Studies Network Conference

1 – 3 February
School of Mines Campus
Federation University Australia
Ballarat
Victoria

Humour: Here and There; Then and Now

Image courtesy of http://casualhistorian.com/the-forgotten-story-of-john-bull/

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AHSN 2017 Colloquium: *Humour: Here and There; Then and Now*

Program

Wednesday 1 February (Afternoon)

12:00-1:15 *Registration & Light Lunch (Foyer, C Building)*

1:15-1:30 *Opening Remarks **

1:30-3:00 *Session 1 - Cartoons & Visual Humour*

Lucien Leon (Australian National University)
Harry Julius and Rocco Fazzari: Bookending 100 Years of Australian political animation

Paul Jewell (Finders University) and Mike Lloyd (Victoria University of Wellington)
Visual interactive humour: Finding the 'rules of the game'

Mike Lloyd (Victoria University of Wellington)
An evening of mediocre sax: 'Sex jokes' in a photo caption competition

3:00-3:30 *Afternoon Tea (Foyer, C Building)*

3:30-4:30 *Session 2 - Cartoons & Visual Humour*

Jocelyn Chey (Western Sydney University)
The beach is for everyone, isn't it?

Hannah Benbow (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington)
Interrogation or decoration – How are researchers using the New Zealand Cartoon Archive?

5:00-7:00 *Session 3 & Reception (Art Gallery of Ballarat, Lydiard Street)*
Private viewing of a selection of political cartoons from the Gallery's collection followed by refreshments

* All sessions take place in the Old Chemistry Lecture Theatre (C001) except where intimated otherwise

AHSN 2017 Colloquium: *Humour: Here and There; Then and Now*

Thursday 2 February (Morning)

8:30-9:00   *Tea & Coffee (Foyer, C Building)*

9:00-10:00   *Key Note Address*

Jan Shaw (University of Sydney)
  Laughter and the slippage of identity in Medieval romance

10:00-11:00   *Session 4 – Humour and History*

Jessica Milner Davis (University of Sydney)
  Justice on stage: Comic Tradition in the European theatre and modern media

Michael C. Ewans (University of Newcastle)
  'A Cultural History of Comedy'

11:00-11:30   *Morning Tea (Foyer, C Building)*

11:30-12:30   *Parallel Session 5a – Film & TV*

Lesley Speed (Federation University Australia, Ballarat)
  Screen comedy and the fallacy of age determinism

Sung-Ju Suya Lee (RMIT University)
  The Farce Scatter Graph Chart - a new framework method to evaluate farce films

11:30-12:30   *Parallel Session 5b (Seminar Room – Psychology Clinic) – Literary Aspects*

Wanda Campbell (Acadia University, Nova Scotia)
  Something Old and Something New: Comic subversion in short stories by L.M. Montgomery and Margaret Atwood

Bruce Findlay (Swinburne University of Technology)
  Crooked Mick of the Speewah: An Australian spin on tall tales

12:30-1:30   *Lunch (Foyer, C Building)*

AHSN 2017 Colloquium: *Humour: Here and There; Then and Now*

Thursday 2 February (Afternoon)

1:30-3:00   *Parallel Session 6a – Film & TV*

       Cao Ying (Western Sydney University)
         "Not only for fun": Humour and characterisation in Chinese sitcoms

       Marty Murphy (Western Sydney University)
         Breaking Bad in your underpants: the use of comic distance to soften the blow

       Craig Batty, Stayci Taylor (RMIT University) & Marilyn Tofler (Swinburne University of Technology)
         The web series as script development: Audience as comedy gatekeepers

1:30-3:00   *Parallel Session 6b (Seminar Room – Psych. Clinic) – Psychological Aspects*

       Maren Rawlings, Bruce Findlay (Swinburne University of Technology), & Sonja Heintz (University of Zurich)
         Australians think they are humorously self-deprecating, but do Germans laugh at themselves?

       Carmen Moran (Charles Sturt University)
         What does sense of humour have to do with the paranormal?

       Angus McLachlan & George Van Doorn (Federation University Australia)
         Is experiencing ticklish sensations the same as being tickled?

3:00-3:30   *Afternoon Tea (Foyer, C Building)*

3:30-5:00   *Session 7 – Film & TV*

       Michael Meany (University of Newcastle)
         Science and magic collide: An analysis of Adventure Time

       Jane Mummery (Federation University Australia) & Debbie Rodan (Edith Cowan University)
         Shying from cucumbers: Funny cat videos and the question of anthropocentric humour

6:30   *Conference dinner – Oscars (Doveton Street)*

AHSN 2017 Colloquium: *Humour: Here and There; Then and Now*

Friday 3 February (Morning)

8:30-9:00   *Tea & Coffee (Foyer, C Building)*

9:00-11:00   *Session 8 – Talk & Language*

Debra Aarons (University of New South Wales)
   How to do things with jokes: Speech Acts in standup comedy

Michael Haugh (University of Queensland) & Lara Weinglass (University of Queensland)
   Conversational humour in initial interactions amongst Australian and American speakers of English

Cliff Goddard (Griffith University) & Kerry Mullan (RMIT University)
   Explicating "humour" concepts in English and French (and why it matters)

11:00-11:30   *Morning Tea*

11:30-12:30   *Session 9 – Politics & History*

Robert Phiddian (Flinders University)
   Gulliver and satirical catharsis

Mark Rolfe (University of New South Wales)
   Laughing at The Donald

12:30-1:30   *Lunch*

1:30-3:00   *AHSN Review Panel Meeting (C004)*

Accepted Abstracts (Papers not presented)

Yalman Safar Ansari (COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad)
   Management by humor: A path to a performative field?

Marguerite A. Wells (Retired Academic)
   Proprietary punning: Types of pun and their ownership through Japanese history

Contents

Abstracts

Aarons, Debra
University of New South Wales, Sydney

How to do things with jokes: speech acts in standup comedy

In this presentation I examine the Speech Acts used by standup comedians as an open-ended set of strategies designed to create a relationship with the audience. My intention is to place this relationship at the forefront of standup comedy's social impact, showing how it can generate heightened consciousness of the social and political environment of the time.

In his seminal set of lectures, How to do things with words (1962), the philosopher John Austin laid out the beginnings of what became Speech Act Theory, and essentially the beginning of the study of linguistic pragmatics. The basic insight Austin had was that in communication, we don't exchange sets of true and false statements about the world, nor do we always speak in full sentences. We use words to do things in the world, not merely to express a state of affairs. Utterances in their context of use are called Speech Acts. Speech Acts include persuading, apologizing, criticizing, humiliating, complimenting and a host of other intended behaviours. Austin accentuated the idea of speaker intention, on one hand, and hearer's response to that intention if successfully conveyed, on the other. For example, crucial in understanding the speaker's intention in uttering the words, "Fire!" is an understanding of the context of utterance. Is it issued by the leader of the execution squad, an usher rushing into a crowded cinema, or someone having swallowed a neat triple shot of Tequila? The response of the hearer/s, accordingly, is based on an understanding of the speaker's intention.

A huge body of scholarship has grown up around Austin's ideas which have been changed, developed, adopted, adapted, challenged and have also taken on lives of their own. Not much attention has been paid to standup comedy from the viewpoint of linguistic pragmatics. In this presentation, I examine some of the speech acts used in the work of selected standup comedians, to analyze the way they determine the relationship of performer and audience. In so doing, I look additionally at the delivery, timing, intonation and physical performance that are all interwoven in the success of the speech act utterance under analysis. I explicate the context of these utterances: for example, who is speaking (is it a persona or the performer in her own voice?), who is the audience, and what is the speaker's intention in making the utterance in question? Is it to embarrass, enjoin, criticize, tease, disgust, incite or perhaps simply to amuse the audience? The narrow context of the speech event is the standup stage, but the time and place in history is an important contributory factor in socially aware standup. At the heart of standup as a form of social criticism is a reciprocal relationship between standup as a context that licenses certain speech acts, and the success of these speech acts in shaping the social lives of its audience.

Ansari, Yalman Zafar
COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan

Management by humor: A path to a performative field?

The meaning as well as the intensity of humor varies both across cultures and also between sub-cultures, such as those found within organizations (Avolio et al., 1999; Davies, 2009; Merritt, 2013). This gives rise to a question as to whether humor use has any effect on employees' performance and even if it could be an effective management tool, especially with reference to the evolution of the leader-subordinate working relationship. The proposed paper will examine the connection between humor use and performative influence, drawing on the theoretical constructs of Wickert and Schaefer (2014). Wickert and Schaefer define performative effects as "the stimulants for language in order to induce incremental, rather than radical, changes in (managerial) behavior".

Humor in the workplace is not always viewed equally favorably by all employees. Misunderstanding of the humour used by senior employees may arouse suspicion. Employees may become sensitive and cautious when they see their colleagues being targeted and made the butt of jokes by their seniors (see Shamir 1995). The interpretation of humor is predicated on so many factors other than just the shared understanding in that particular (sub)culture. The intended outcome of humor should not be taken for granted. Sometimes, jokes that might generally be classed as well-intended and benign humor run the risk of being misinterpreted. The dilemma of using humor among management is the challenge of not belittling anyone or causing offence without losing the punch of being funny (Barton, 2013).

Yet, Zappos, an online shoe and accessory retailer with a multi-cultural workforce and a reputation for being an excellent company to work for, may serve as a good example of using workplace humor successfully. Arguably, Zappos approach to using workplace humor among its employees offers some deeper insights into understanding how humor can be used to better manage teams. The value of this paper lies in identifying what factors are necessary to explain how Zappos use of workplace humor has been more effective than other companies who have attempted to use humor as a management policy. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to analyze whether the use of humor is a major factor influencing performance and whether humor can be employed as a management tool.

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Shamir,B. (1995). Social distance and charisma: Theoretical notes and an exploratory study. Leadership Quarterly, 6, 19–48.

Wickert, C., & Schaefer, S. (2014). Towards a progressive understanding of performativity in critical management studies. Human Relations Journal, 1-23.

Batty, Craig
RMIT University, Melbourne

Taylor, Stayci
RMIT University, Melbourne

Tofler, Marilyn
RMIT University, Melbourne

The web series as script development: audience as comedy gatekeepers

This paper proposes that the concept of 'script development' – already an ambiguous and academically unexamined practice – is further complicated by the rise of the web series, which in today's media landscape is changing notions of authorship, ownership and stewardship. Using the comedy web series as a case for investigation, and writing specifically from the perspective of screenwriting practice, the paper argues that while notions of 'amateur' vs. 'professional' and 'industry' vs. 'bedroom producer' are still being debated, for comedy creators and audiences a new space opens up in which the 'rules' of script development can be expanded, enhanced or otherwise refashioned, leading to not only new types of comedy, but also new types of comedy talent. In doing so, the paper makes a distinction between comedy 'development' – which might be considered the individual process by which a screenwriter devises, writes and refines their narrative – and comedy 'in development', which might better incorporate notions of collaboration, feedback and bypassing so-called commercial imperatives.

As well as drawing on a range of well-known Australian comedy web series texts (e.g., *Bondi Hipsters*, *Soulmates*, *The Katering Show*), and what their creators/writers have said about them, the paper also draws on interviews conducted with writers, producers and other script development professionals working in the screen industry. Taking a previously authored paper, which examined the role of the pilot in television pitching and commissioning, further, an argument is made that the success of the comedy web series in recent times is serving to destabilise established practices of script development. Furthermore, this is encouraging new – and potentially more useful – processes for comedy screenwriters and their collaborators to work, as well as facilitating more diversity of characters and stories. Does the comedy web series, then, point towards a new era of screen humour?

Benbow, Hannah
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

Interrogation or decoration – How are researchers using the New Zealand Cartoon Archive?

The New Zealand Cartoon Archive adds about 3000 images to its collection every year and is now home to more than 50 000 cartoons. The collection is mostly digitised or born-digital and cartoons are easy to find and view online. We know that our cartoons are widely used: in the 2015-2016 year, we received reproduction requests from television producers, academics, books and magazine publishers, museums, schools and genealogists. But we do not know very much about *how* they are being used. Is the humour and history contained within the Archive being studied? Or are they, as Scully and Quartly suggest in *Drawing the Line*, "a kind of decoration, [used] to break up the text and give an impression of historicity" to a piece of research?

April Fools' Day 2017 marks the 25th Anniversary of the Archive. This paper looks to explore the two-and-a-half decades of research enabled by the Archive and to ask both how the collection is being studied and how we can encourage and support more in-depth and varied investigation of this rich resource. As well as sharing the findings of this research, this paper is also an opportunity for the humour studies community to contribute to identifying opportunities to ask new questions of the archive.

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Scully, Richard and Quartly, Marian (2009). 'Using Cartoons as Historical Evidence.' In Scully, Richard and Quartly, Marian (eds), Drawing the Line: Using Cartoons as Historical Evidence. Monash University Press, pp. 1.1 - 1.13.

Campbell, Wanda
Acadia University, Wolfville, Canada

Something Old and Something New: Comic subversion in short stories by L.M. Montgomery and Margaret Atwood"

"Laughter demolishes fear," writes Mikhail Bakhtin in The Dialogic Imagination, allowing us to take an object and "look into its center, doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare, and expose it". Canadian writers L. M. Montgomery and Margaret Atwood are best known for their novels, but in their short stories they often use comedy to take a serious look at gender. Montgomery in her short story "The Quarantine at Alexander Abraham's" and Atwood in her short story "Rape Fantasies" make use of comic subversion to contest the imbalance of power between the sexes and expose destructive stereotypes to remind us of a shared humanity. Though their stories are set again the dark backdrop of a smallpox quarantine and imagined rape scenarios, Montgomery and Atwood make effective use of the three comic strategies Henri Bergson explores in Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic, "repetition, inversion, and reciprocal interference", to challenge the status quo. In her book They Used to Call Me Snow White...But I Drifted: Women's Strategic Use of Humor, Regina Barreca draws attention to a central distinction between women's comedy and men's comedy. "Whereas men occasionally challenge the idea of reality or the convention of society, women do it regularly. Whereas men occasionally seem to subvert the standing order, women make subversion their business". Though written seventy years apart, these stories reveal that to find the funny is to face the fear.

Chey, Jocelyn
Western Sydney University

"The beach is for everyone, isn't it?" Humour and national identity crises

In 2005 riots erupted between rival youth gangs about access to Cronulla Beach. Cronulla and its "Shire" district of Sydney were mainly "Anglo" but Middle Eastern immigrants starting to patronise the beach led to visible cultural changes including dress codes and beach behaviour. The 2016 Australian film, "Down Under", based on the 2005 Cronulla riots, uses humour to defuse the ethnic tensions in Australian urban society evident at that time and persisting since then by revealing absurdities of both sides. Despite this balanced approach, director Abe Forsythe's comedic success is questionable, to judge from audience reaction and published criticism. It is therefore argued that the disputed territory of the beach that once occupied an iconic place in Australian culture now highlights anxieties about national identity that make this subject too sensitive for effective humorous treatment.

Coincidentally in 2016, some French Mediterranean cities imposed a ban on Muslim "burkinis" on the beach, seen as offending France's principle of secularism (laïcité) by constituting a religious statement in a public place. The beaches of Southern France have a similar status in French as in Australian culture. Both countries are challenged by clashes of national identity and religious and cultural tolerance, but France has also suffered several serious attacks by religious extremists, heightening anti-Muslim feeling. French cartoons reveal some of the absurdities underlying the ban but the foreign comedic response has been more robust than the domestic. In the recent past the role of subversive and provocative humorous publications like Charlie Hebdo and their sharp comments on the relationship between French Muslims and the State has been widely discussed. Possibly the time has now come to refocus the debate.

This paper's primary reference is to Abe Forsythe's film, together with critical comments on it in the Australian press. Reference will be made to cartoonist Pat Grant's 2012 graphic novel "Blue", also based on the Cronulla riots, viewed in the context of discourse on the role of the beach in Australian cultural history. A review of selected cartoons concerning the 2016 "burkini" ban in the French press and social media allows cross-cultural comparisons to be drawn, which in turn reveal the limitations of humour practice and reception. Humour may have a conciliating effect, working through subversion and containment, but it must also be acceptable to its audience. In both France and Australia, the beach, taken as a key aspect of national identity, is a cultural conflict zone where humour has only limited ability to defuse social tensions.

Ewans, Michael
University of Newcastle

'A Cultural History of Comedy'

This proposed paper is an introduction to the new Bloomsbury Methuen book series *A Cultural History of Comedy*, now in preparation. There will be six volumes, covering periods from *Antiquity* (vol. 1) to *The Modern Age* (vol. 6), and the series editors reasonably claim that it 'proposes to be the very first truly in-depth history of comic practice, comic form, and comic themes ever produced in English'. The presenter of this paper has been appointed editor of vol. 1, *Antiquity*, and in this introduction he will describe the rationale of the series, and the highly original arrangement whereby for each period the contributors provide eight chapters organized under the same titles, so direct comparison can be made, once all of the books have been published, between manifestations in six different periods of these eight particular features of the genre of comedy. Authors have accordingly been invited to contribute in the light of their ability to comment from one particular perspective on all the different types of comedy produced over a period of several hundred years. Some other interesting features of the book series will also be discussed from the viewpoint of an editor/contributor.

Findlay, Bruce
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Crooked Mick of the Speewah: An Australian spin on tall tales

Towards the end of the 19th century a series of tall tales first appeared in written form in Australia, though they had been circulating orally for some 30 years. They typically dealt with experiences in the "outback," that is, far away from the big cities of the coast. The anecdotes were supposedly aimed at "new chums" to the bush and seemed to be designed to see how much exaggeration, and outright lies, the new chums could be persuaded to believe. Folklorists Bill Wannan (1954) and Graham Seal (2009) collected many of these yarns, or tall tales, some concerning Crooked Mick, a larger than life figure, who came from the Speewah, a property somewhere west of the sunset, where the crows fly backwards to keep the dust out of their eyes. Like Paul Bunyan, Crooked Mick's American counterpart, Crooked Mick's superhuman feats were described to astound the newcomer or take down a boaster, since no matter what anyone said they could do, Crooked Mick could do it better and faster. This presentation will introduce Crooked Mick and other tall tales; discuss how they fit Ron Edwards's (1977/1996) analysis of the Australian yarn; compare him to Paul Bunyan; speculate on why they were so popular at that particular time; and discuss where these anecdotes fit into theories of humour.

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Wannan, B. (1954). *The Australian: Yarns, ballads and legends of the Australian tradition.* Viking O'Neil: Ringwood, Victoria, Australia.

Goddard, Cliff
Griffith University, Brisbane

Mullan, Kelly
RMIT University, Melbourne

Explicating "humour" concepts in English and French (and why it matters)

Using the NSM approach to semantic analysis (Peeters 2006, Goddard & Wierzbicka 2014, and other works), this paper begins by proposing well-evidenced explications for some key English expressions in the semantic field of "humour" – 'laugh', 'joking', and 'kidding'. In and of themselves, these expressions pose a formidable challenge to lexical semantic analysis on account of their apparent near-synonymy.

Equally challenging, however, is the fact that the English expressions lack exact equivalents in many languages, as we demonstrate in this paper with a contrastive semantic analysis of French. Looking at the broadly comparable French terms - 'rire', 'rigoler', 'blaguer' and 'plaisanter' - it is evident that the semantic field is arranged differently. For example, the verbs 'rire' and 'rigoler' can both mean something close to 'laugh', but 'rigoler' also has an extended meaning of "to enjoy oneself" or "to have a good time". In other contexts, 'rigoler' can also be used to convey a meaning similar to that of English 'joking', as do the verbs 'blaguer' and 'plaisanter', the latter of which can also mean something like 'kidding' or 'teasing'. We show that NSM analyses can capture the fine differences in meaning between similar words both within and across the two languages in question.

Aside from its interest to contrastive semantics, the exercise has more far-reaching implications. This follows from the fact that English terms like 'funny', 'amusing' and 'joking' are being used as foundational categories and descriptors in the interdisciplinary field of humour studies and, increasingly, in interactional and contrastive pragmatics, and in conversational humour and humour in interaction. Many researchers are building their theoretical vocabulary from English-specific materials which are not precisely cross-translatable even into other European languages. We argue that the NSM approach provides a useful way to improve definitional clarity and reduce Anglocentrism in the emerging field of contrastive cultural pragmatics of humour (Béal and Mullan 2013).

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Peeters, Bert (ed.) 2006. *Semantic primes and universal grammar: Empirical evidence from the Romance languages.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Haugh, Michael
University of Queensland, Brisbane

Weinglass, Lara
University of Queensland, Brisbane

Conversational humour in initial interactions amongst Australian and American speakers of English

Conversational humour in English has been the focus of a growing body of work in pragmatics and humour studies. However, the vast majority of this work has focused on interactions in particular national varieties of English between friends and family members (e.g. Hay 2001; Lampert and Ervin-Tripp 2006), in the workplace (e.g. Grainger 2004; Holmes 2000), or in broadcast media (e.g. Bell 2015). There has been much less focus on the role of conversational humour in interactions between previously unacquainted persons (although see Haugh [2011]), and little acknowledgement in scientific literature of the lay view that there are not only similarities but also likely differences in the humour practices of speakers of different varieties of English. In this paper, we undertake a contrastive analysis of conversational humour in initial interactions between American and Australian speakers of English. Drawing from approaches in pragmatics, we analyse instances of conversational humour identified in a corpus of more than 30 video recorded interactions involving Australians and Americans getting acquainted in both same and different nationality pairings (10 X AmAm; 10 X AusAus; 10 X AmAus), along with comments on such instances identified in follow-up interviews with those participants. After undertaking a comparative analysis of the key forms of conversational humour that arise in those initial interactions, their targets, and their sequential placement, we discuss the key pragmatic functions of these various instances of conversational humour in the context of getting acquainted. We propose that in initial interactions, amongst speakers of these two varieties of English at least, conversational humour is a means by which participants invite intimacy, negotiate common stances, and accomplish sensitive or delicate social actions, such as disagreement, along with entertaining themselves. We also reflect on the potential for the misconstrual or diverging evaluations of conversational humour in initial interactions amongst American and Australian speakers of English.

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Lampert MD and Ervin-Tripp S. (2006) Risky laughter: teasing and self-directed joking among male and female friends. *Journal of Pragmatics* 38: 51-72.

Jewell, Paul
Flinders University, Adelaide

Lloyd, Mike
Victoria University of Wellington

Visual interactive humour: Finding the 'rules of the game'

Scholars undertaking research into humour typically find themselves approaching a fork in the road. In one direction lies the broad general path, in the other the narrow street of specifics. The broad path leads towards universalizing theories and spending a great deal of time on definitional issues. Its destination is to achieve clarity on what humour actually is, or at least the production of some guidelines on how to identify and study specific types of humour. A scholar taking the narrow street will typically examine a particular humorous work. Here we try to find a middle road by examining a large corpus of collected data, comprising several hundred entries to caption competitions in news media. Our approach is micro-sociological and phenomenological. If it is accepted that people constantly use categorization in everyday humour, then there should be traces of this right before our eyes. We apply this realization to two caption competitions in popular newspapers. There are three unusual and noteworthy features of caption competitions. The first is that they differ in structure from jokes. The teller of a joke didactically recounts a story that leads to a punchline. The teller manipulates the audience's expectations in order to confound them with a punchline that is surprising, incongruous and thereby funny. In contrast, caption competitions invite the audience to provide the punchline. Secondly, and consequently, caption competitions are communal and co-operative, whereby the producers of the pictures, the publishers, the competitors and the judges interact and collaborate. Moreover, the order of both competitions is produced with remarkably little formal delineation of the 'rules of the game'. Thirdly, the competitions provide a large corpus of data. Looking at the hundreds of examples of captions and then thinking on what they tell us about the community that produced them, will, we hope, provide interesting insights into how members of a community interact as they produce humour.

Lee, Suya
RMIT University, Melbourne

The Farce Scatter Graph Chart - a new framework method to evaluate farce films

While researching farce films for my screenwriting practice PhD, it was noticed that there were varying 'degrees' within the landscape of the farce genre. This opened up the field of questioning beyond what is farce and what is not farce. With the background of genre theories of deconstructing farce, this deeper investigation reveals these 'degrees' further divide into categories within this genre. This is an interpretation utilization framework of the PhD research outcome. By analysing the films in the context of Eric Bentley's ten farce principles, which were then compiled into six smaller principles (for screenwriters), an inherent farce genre hierarchy is revealed. The six farce principles used in the evaluation are briefly: violence, mocking, humour, plot, characters and pacing. It is important to note the farce theorists, Jessica Milner Davis and Albert Bermel, are other key influences. This is not a traditional hierarchy from worst to best, or unpopular to admired, but a new approach to viewing and understanding farce. This resulted in a new chart, The Farce Scatter Graph Chart.

This paper presents the chart as a viable way of categorising farce films, and proposes that it might be a useful way for future farce screenwriters to negotiate where their story lies situated to the other farce films. The chart serves both as a formalist categorisation scheme and system of classification for industry production purposes. The chart continuum is presented with the 'dimension' considerations of the farce element analyses, and hence, the chart ranges from 'not farce' to 'hard hard'. The chart showcases the individual rating system with each film on the chart. In line with the conference theme, the suggested films for placement on the chart are Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* (1925), *Coming to America* (1988), and *Borat* (2006). Further, the chart will include Australian films, such as *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994), and *Kenny* (2006). This framework chart aims to facilitate new knowledge as farce films are money-makers in the motion picture industry. This utilisation concept could help screenwriters to write farce stories that are different, and for production companies to gauge what farce films they could produce for the market.

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Leon, Lucien
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Harry Julius and Rocco Fazzari: Bookending 100 years of Australian political animation

Nearly a century after political cartoonist Harry Julius' last political animation played to Australian cinema audiences in his *Cartoons of the Moment* series, contemporary cartoonist Rocco Fazzari this year delivered his last political animation for the Fairfax Media Group. In ushering in the era of the audio-visual saturated digital 24-hour news cycle, video mash-ups and memes are emerging as the satirical successors to animations and cartoons. With the days of the full-time political cartoonist clearly numbered, this paper celebrates an era where newspaper political cartoonists were seen as arbiters of the political satire image. Fazzari bookends a long tradition of Australian political cartoonists who have distinguished themselves in animation production, beginning with Harry Julius but including Bruce Petty, Peter Nicholson and John Kudelka. I will draw parallels and distinctions between Julius's orthochromatic *lightning sketches* and Fazzari's digital stop-frame animations in the production of political satire, and analyse the symbiosis that often exists between political cartooning and animation. I will examine how, as innovators and early adopters of technology, Australia's political cartoonists and animators placed themselves at the forefront of technological change in their pursuit of effective strategies for the production and dissemination of their tendentious satirical works. Finally, I will explore how conventional political cartooning devices such as caricature, metaphor and reframing are easily transferred to a moving image format, and the benefits that animation can provide through application of textural elements, extension of metaphor and directing the comic impact through timing, editing and sound. The presentation will be based on original research into the collections of the National Film and Sound Archives as well as interviews with the main players in the contemporary political cartooning and animation landscape.

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An evening of mediocre sax: 'Sex jokes' in a photo caption competition

The *New Zealand Listener's* photo caption competition is now into its fifth year. For each weekly episode, the magazine provides an unexplicated photo of either politicians, celebrities, sportspeople, British Royalty, public figures, plus the odd animal/unknown person, and invites contestants to submit a caption to complete the photo. There is no need to explain that the competition's intent is to foster humour: everyone can understand that putting words in others' mouths can be funny. Nevertheless, generating a winning entry is quite a challenge, pointing to the competition's complexity. Two previous papers on this corpus have analysed the type of people and activities seen in the photos (see Lloyd 2014, 2016), showing how the specificity of the humour largely stems from the 'directive' detail that is in the photos – body position, gestures, facial expression, clothing, and other objects can be just as important as who the people photographed actually are. This third analysis of more than 200 episodes connects with the oft noted point that a great deal of humour has sexual themes, noting, however, that in the Listener competition there are relatively few sex jokes. Consequently, it is interesting to see just how the perennial topic of sex is worked into the humour of the competition. The paper describes the variety of sex jokes in the corpus, aiming to preserve the detail of the connection between photo and possible caption, and only then speculates about broader sociological processes in this interactive lay humour. We may know nothing about the submitted sex joke captions that never reach the light of day, but the ones that do appear offer sufficient variation to cast light on the topic of the nature and variety of sexual humour.

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Is experiencing ticklish sensations the same as being tickled?

Harris (1999) proposed two explanations, the reflex and the interpersonal, as to why we cannot tickle ourselves, a widespread phenomenon first noted by Aristotle. Broadly, the reflex explanation is universal and reductionist in form, while the interpersonal explanation allows social and cultural factors to play a role. Cognitive and neuropsychological investigations of the reflex explanation have provided some sophisticated physiological accounts of the inability to tickle one's self, relying, in some cases, on rather ingenious experimental techniques. For instance, Van Doorn, Hohwy, and Symmons (2014) deployed the body transfer illusion and the related rubber-hand illusion to disentangle two competing hypotheses. The first hypothesis contended that when people tickle themselves, a precise copy of the motor command to the muscles leads to attenuation of the sensory input from a 'tickle', and hence an inability to tickle ourselves. However, Van Doorn et al. found that attenuation was the product of a more general notion of agency. In lay terms, as long as participants 'knew' they controlled their own actions, the sensations were significantly less ticklish than when the tickle was known to have been produced by someone else. Although this form of cognitive explanation is almost certainly adequate to account for percepts elicited by light touches to the skin, as occurred in this experiment, it may not be sufficient to account for the full experience of being tickled, as it is understood in everyday terms. An account of the full experience would seem to require recourse to the interpersonal form of explanation of tickling in which the relationship that exists between tickler and tickled is critical. Provine (2000) offers ample evidence suggesting that the relative power and closeness of the tickler and tickled are inextricably linked to whether being tickled is deemed pleasant or unpleasant. The current paper will attempt to explore the capacity of a generic interpersonal explanation to account for the findings of the Van Doorn et al. study. In so doing it will be suggested that cognitive accounts of tickling should be expanded to recognise that the nature of the relationship between ticker and tickled is critical. It will also be suggested that a clearer distinction between the sensation of light tickling, sometimes called "knismesis", and the perception of being tickled, allied to the so-called heavy tickle of "gargalesis", must be drawn.

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Science and magic collide: An analysis of Adventure Time

This paper explores the concepts incongruity and resolution through the analysis of an episode of the American multi-award winning children's cartoon series Adventure Time. Typically the study of incongruity and resolution is based on the short form, canned joke. Morreall presents a distinction between "fictional" jokes and "situational" jokes. "Fictional jokes are to humor research what fruit flies are to genetics, and the frequency with which humor scholars analyze them is understandable. They are repeatable texts that can be understood without knowing anything about the situations in which they are told, unlike situational humor in which 'you had to be there'" (2004, 394). This paper argues that the humour of Adventure Time is situational as it is deeply connected to the context of characters and their universe whilst presenting an incongruous view of the audience's universe.

The two main characters are a boy named Finn and his adopted brother Jake the Dog. Jake has the magical ability to change his size and shape. In the episode 'Wizards Only, Fools' (Series 5, Episode 26) Starchy, a character from the Candy Kingdom, comes down with a cold. Princess Bubblegum, ruler of the Candy Kingdom, attempts to treat him, against his will, with the equivalent of Western traditional medicine. Starchy demands a magic cure. Princess Bubblegum argues that magic doesn't exist and what people perceive as magic is actually the same as science. Finn, Jake, and Princess Bubblegum disguise themselves as wizards and sneak into Wizard City in search of a cold cure.

Adventure Time is targeted at a 9 – 13 year old demographic and has achieved critical and commercial success which a much broader audience base. It has also received some positive academic critical attention for its depiction of gender roles and for tackling issues like the distinction between actions that are lawful and those that are just.

This paper will undertake a content and thematic analysis of 'Wizards Only, Fools' to examine the incongruous pairing of science and magic. It will examine the dialogue between characters and stylistic attributes of the text. Thematic analysis, by comparison, will be used to identify, analyse and report themes in the text. The purpose of this analysis is to reveal how the incongruity of science and magic, in the fictional and real world, has been deployed for comic effect.

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Justice on stage: Comic tradition in the European theatre and modern media

The figure of the judge is one of the oldest stock comic characters in world drama. This paper outlines a tradition that runs from Graeco-Roman comedy where arbitrators and judges are central to unravelling nonsensical legal processes (Scafuro, 1997) through the late Middle Ages, where the comic legal scholar emerged as one of the central tropes of European comedy. The line passes through the *commedia dell'arte* (with Doctors from the Faculty of Law at Bologna, older than the Sorbonne, famous for their foolish hairsplitting disputations) and into theatre and opera via figures such as Shakespeare's Justice Shallow (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1602), Mozart's Dr Bartolo (*The Marriage of Figaro*, 1786), The Learned Judge of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* (1875), as well as the eponymous star of A W Pinero's late Victorian farce, *The Magistrate* (1892). Another line descended from late medieval French guild of law clerks, The Basoche. Like today's law students, these young men enhanced their education with witty revues, often enough (like the Monty Python team) evolving into professional comedians. The world's best-known sheep-stealing case is in the 15th century farce of *Maître Pierre Pathelin* but judicial figures appear in many other farces (eg. *Farce of the Fart/Farce nouvelle et fort joyeuse du Pect*). Today's theatrical representations of comic judges range from Perry Mason, through the bleakly comic Judge Dredd (a long-running cartoon series of both British and American creation), to the irascible dominatrix known as Judge Judy, a staple of American day-time television, and Australia's own High Court judges in Rob Sitch's 1997 film, *The Castle*.

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What does sense of humour have to do with the paranormal?

In many studies humour has been associated with open-mindedness, a tolerance for ambiguity, and the ability to accept disparate information. Belief in the paranormal is about being open to the existence of anomalous experiences that cannot be explained though current scientific knowledge. At a superficial level, at least, there seems to be a link between being high in humour and holding a belief in the paranormal. While speculations exist in the literature, there are no systematic empirical research studies that have tested this link. The study reported here was part of a broader research project involving five fourth-year Psychology students, and myself as supervisor. The research question here is: Are those with a high sense of humour more likely to believe in the paranormal? Belief in the paranormal was measured using Thalbourne's Australian Sheep Goat Scale (Thalbourne, 1995). This scale measures various aspects of perceived paranormal experience, such as ESP, psychokinesis and life after death. Svebak's Sense of Humour Questionnaire (SHQ-6-R) (Svebak, 2006,2010) measured humour across three dimensions, cognitive, social and affective. Control variables of gender, age, personality and religion were also measured. One hundred and eighty four participants completed the online questionnaires. The majority of the sample was female (74%) with a mean age 29 years (range 18-60 years). There was a moderate to high endorsement of belief in the paranormal, especially for the cognitive phenomena such as ESP. As expected, those who scored higher on openness to experience scored significantly higher on belief. In contrast, those who scored lower on sense of humour scored significantly higher on belief. This relationship between belief and humour was also noted in a Multiple Regression Analysis which controlled for the other variables, although the size of the effect was reduced. The social, and to a lesser extent, the affective dimensions of the SHQ-6-R accounted for the relationship with humour. The social dimension measures agreement with the view that people who produce humour in everyday interactions are unreliable or irritating. Those who agreed with this view scored higher on belief in the paranormal. What do these results mean for humour scholars? The empirical finding associating humour and acceptance of paranormal events is new information, but in the opposite direction to existing speculations. Humour may have an inverse relationship because believers see themselves as easy and regular targets for humour, and thus they value humour less. Other characteristics such as skepticism may accompany social humour, suggesting a broader personality pattern explains the result. The cognitive dimension of the SHQ-6-R did not predict belief in the paranormal. Additional tests of cognitive aspects of humour which directly address tolerance for ambiguity and disparate information, and the extent to which they predict belief in the anomalies of the paranormal are warranted. Further research is foreseen.

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Shying from cucumbers: Funny cat videos and the question of anthropocentric humour

It is official, watching funny cat videos (sorry, cat-related media) makes you more productive at work, reducing stress, boosting your energy and your positive emotions. Presumably such positive affect also spills over into our private lives, making us less likely to snap at the family and more fun in bed. More than that, the pleasure gained from watching cat videos has been shown to outweigh any guilt felt about the viewing (aka procrastinating) (see Myrick 2015). No study was really needed, however, to establish the correlates of viewing 'internet cats', motivations for consuming this media, and its potential effects on users. The numbers speak for themselves: "Internet data show there were more than 2 million cat videos posted on YouTube in 2014, with almost 26 billion views. Cat videos had more views per video than any other category of YouTube content" (Indiana University 2015). Presumably this has not changed drastically, unless we are watching more funny goat videos as the current IPrimus advertisement on Australian free-to-air television suggests is worth our while. Funny cat videos are, it seems, a cultural and internet phenomenon and we would not be watching them unless we got something out of it.

This paper is not about these issues of viewers' emotional and productivity benefits, however, or even whether cats are funnier than goats (or any other internet animal). It instead paws at the question of anthropocentric humour. What are we laughing at when we cannot hold back a chortle at the antics of Lil Bub, Maru, Grumpy Cat or any other of the frenzied felines posted online for our delectation? What makes the sight of a cat leaping away from a cucumber, shying from its reflection, chasing its tail, grooming in physiologically surprising positions, batting at toys, or otherwise doing cat-like things so very infectious for smiling? In this paper, drawing upon Arthur Koestler's pioneering bisociation theory of how humour works, we examine the anthropocentric foundations of this kind of humour, arguing, however, that far from marking the development of stronger animal-human relations (and, of course, increasing human productivity), this kind of humour 'others' animals, is ethically suspect, a demonstration of our ongoing refusal to recognise animal content. To turn the joke around and to put it on us, what might it be like to watch these videos and try to experience ourselves as seen by them, as existing as a figure within their world of vision?

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Breaking Bad in your underpants. The use of comic distance to soften the blow

What role does comedy have in the crime-melodrama television serial Breaking Bad (Gilligan 2008-2013)? Little work has been done on the use of humour amid tragedy in this landmark television series and this paper sets out to describe, define and analyse the effectiveness of comic elements in Breaking Bad as a narrative strategy. It explores how comic distance is used in the first season of this complex narrative television series (Mittell) to create a sympathetic audience response towards nascent antihero Walter White (Bryan Cranston). Comic distance acts as a form of relationship zoom lens for our response to fictional characters, reducing or restoring emotional investment in an instant. The paper draws from a larger project describing the laughing response as affective, that is, an embodied comic emotion, using Silvan S. Tomkins's (2008) Affect theory with Murray Smith's (1995) theories of character engagement and Jason Mittell's (2015) analysis of complex narrative television. In certain scenes of the pilot episode, the comic affect, however slight at times, is vital to the building of audience allegiance to the antihero so that his catastrophic descent will be followed over five long seasons of complex narrative television. Farcical structures, slapstick staging and comic incongruities are used to frame White's early experiments in criminality to construct audience allegiance despite his descent into a suburban drug lord. The use of comic distance in Season One is an unlikely but effective strategy in building our engagement with the antihero protagonist and thereafter infuses occasional comic relief into this otherwise dark crime-melodrama.

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Gulliver and satirical catharsis

> 'But, by what I have gathered from your own Relation, and the answers I have with much Pains wrung and extorted from you; I cannot but conclude the Bulk of your Natives to be the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth.' (*Gulliver's Travels*, II, vi.)

Why is the King of Brobdingnag's sentence so enduringly exhilarating? On propositional content it should be merely demoralising, but that has never been its emotional effect in my personal or teaching experience. It (and other similar moments in *Gulliver's Travels*) enact some sort of satirical catharsis, mobilising in readers emotions like those defined by modern neuropsychology as the CAD (contempt, anger, disgust) triad of negative emotions.[1] The application of ideas from experimental psychology to eighteenth-century literature clearly runs the risk of being reductive. If, however, they are deployed with due sensitivity to historical context (especially contemporary conceptions of the passions) they can be used to inform a new and significant account of the cathartic power of Swift's best known work. This paper will read for satirical catharsis in some signal passages of books two and four of *Gulliver's Travels*, in the light of a dialogue between early modern passions and late modern emotions. It extends work commenced in an account of Swift's *saeva indignatio*, the epitaph and 'A Beautiful Young Nymph'.[2]

Notes

[1] Paul Rozin et al., "The CAD Triad Hypothesis: A Mapping Between Three Moral Emotions (Contempt, Anger, Disgust) and Three Moral Codes (Community, Autonomy, Divinity)," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 76, no. 4 (1999): 574–86; Jonathan Haidt, "The Moral Emotions," in *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, R. J. Davidson, K. R. Scherer, H. H. Goldsmith (Eds.), (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 852–70; Joseph Carroll, *Literary Darwinism : Evolution, Human Nature, and Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[2] Robert Phiddian, "The emotional contents of Swift's *saeva indignatio*" in Heather Kerr editor, David Lemmings editor, and Robert Phiddian editor, *Passions, Sympathy and Print Culture : Public Opinion and Emotional Authenticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain / Edited by Heather Kerr, David Lemmings and Robert Phiddian.*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Emotions (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 47–67.

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Australians think they are humorously self-deprecating, but do Germans laugh at themselves?

Peterson and Seligman (2004) felt that "Liking to laugh and tease: bringing smiles to other people" was behaviour indicative of the character strength "humor" of the virtue "Transcendence" in Positive Psychology. Ruch and Heintz (2016) suggested two humour concepts "benevolent" and "corrective" to enrich this character strength of humor and found in a study of 340 participants that both constructs capture important virtue-related humor aspects over and above "sense of humor" (SHS; McGhee, 1999) and "mockery". In a diary study of 45 humour behaviours ($N = 123$), Heinz (2017) found through hierarchical analysis, seven dimensions of humour, "cheerful, witty, deriding, amused, sarcastic, self-directed, and canned", that correlated with subjective well-being, even when personality and humour styles were controlled for. So from a theoretical *and* from an empirical perspective, these German researchers have delineated the positive concept of humour in German speakers. But wait, there's more! As previously demonstrated (Rawlings & Findlay, 2015), Australians are willing to disclose that they laugh at themselves. Heintz included the Australian Self-Deprecating Humour Scale (Self-Dep H: Rawlings & Findlay, 2015) in a large study ($N = 384$) of German-speaking adults. The scale was translated into German and was presented together with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES: Rosenberg, 1965). After exploratory factor analysis (principal axis factoring), two subscales emerged, as had been the case in the Australian study. Only one item shared comparable correlations with both factors and the authors suggested that another translation of this item may be indicated. The personal subscale of the Self-Dep H correlated significantly with scores on the RSES. Australians think of themselves as self-deprecating humourists but this characteristic may not be so unique.

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Laughing at The Donald

On the face of it, Donald Trump should have been an easy target for humour, according to conceptions of political satire and humour which emphasise radical critiques of authorities and telling 'truth to power' and which align with Orwell's aphorism that 'every joke is a tiny revolution'. Associated scholarly arguments have investigated the information role of 'fake news' satire in conceptions of citizenry. But such arguments misunderstood the anti-politics rhetoric of the examined American comedians and do not apply to the reactions of Louis CK, Sarah Silverman, Bill Maher, Larry Wilmot and Stephen Colbert who have compared Trump to Hitler or Mussolini and who thus have deployed the very safe and long-standing *argumentum ad Hitlerum*.

Generally, the reactions of American comedians and satirists hostile to Trump are better explained by hostility and socially corrective notions of humour considered from a rhetorical view of the partisan context. The antagonistic humourists have used his appearance, his outrageous comments, his lies and his overblown business record in attempts to portray his hypocrisies and inadequacies as a presidential candidate. Their jokes, including the *argumentum ad Hitlerum*, are therefore partisan claims of politically and socially deviant behaviour that aim at defining an acceptable candidate for the American presidency. As such, however, they have preached to the politically converted. Most notably, these humourists have not based their jokes on anti-politics appeals against power, which have been common amongst their ilk. Indeed, many anti-Trump humourists preach to the converted and can be identified by their opponents as liberals with the establishment and therefore as 'punching down' rather than 'punching up'.

Not surprisingly, the jokes have had limited effect against Trump, whose appeal is centred on anti-politics rhetoric of 'punching up' for the underdog. His supporters, for the most part, do not accept the characterisation of an acceptable candidate upon which the liberal humour is based due to the social fissures existing in America. Related to this point, his outsider status is enhanced by his proclaimed stand against political correctness, which is identified with 'oppressive' liberals. Trump and his bluster have been fixtures in America for over thirty years and sometimes he has been compared to a comedian. These familiarities blunt the political offenses against him.

Ultimately, the satiric discourse is part of the battle over competing visions of America and its future. This means the liberal humourists performed as party propagandists, as happened on previous occasions in history. Comparisons will be made to satiric attacks on Barry Goldwater in 1964 because his campaign contained the origins of the infamous Southern Strategy of the Republican Party, which is still playing out in the current campaign.

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Laughter and the slippage of identity in Medieval romance

> *"Laughter is a social practice with its own codes, rituals, actors and theatre."*
> Jacques Le Goff

As Le Goff and many others have remarked, laughter is both a cultural and a social phenomenon. It is culturally and historically specific. Even in one social arena, its objects and forms are constantly changing. To approach medieval laughter, then, is to approach medieval culture in its myriad historical and social milieux. There is, however, a thread of constancy that can be drawn through the period. From the unlaughing Jesus and the monastic rules that praise weeping as an appropriate expression of Christian joy, to the undercurrent of bawdy and scatological humour that can be traced from the Anglo-Saxon riddles to Chaucer and beyond, laughter occupied a space of bodily excess in a world in which the body was always suspect. A laughing body was a suspect body, a body guilty of betrayal. And yet, while this laughing medieval body betrays itself, it tells us something about medieval people's sense of self and their relations with others.

This paper will briefly sketch the range of cultural approaches to laughter across the Middle Ages in England, as evidenced in imaginative literature, with a focus on Middle English romance. It will consider laughter within these texts, and the texts themselves as laughing bodies that engage with their audiences in particular ways. For example, laughter in *The Canterbury Tales* offers opportunities for audience self-mockery and critique, while in *Troilus and Criseyde* the laughing body is just one of the bodily transgressions that cut across the surface of apparent narrative intention, suggesting subtextual counter-narratives of entrapment. Laughter in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, on the other hand, breaks through the narrative completely, reconfiguring relationships with the self, and between self and other, and sending the story rollicking off in another direction. By the fifteenth century Middle English romance had moved away from the narrow courtly context of earlier centuries that had emphasised moderation in feeling and expression. It had shifted in tone and audience, becoming a popular genre-like form that was read widely by upper-middle class gentry and mercantile audiences. The paper concludes with a discussion of laughter in one particular fifteenth-century text, the *Prose Life of Alexander*. It explores the discursive seamlessness that laughter disrupts, and the lasting affective shift that is the result of this momentary break. It further considers Alexander's laughter in its relational capacity with the audience. This laughter is performative as it engages with broader, culturally recognizable characteristics of identity. The paper therefore reflects upon laughter not only as a quirk of the narrative moment, but also as a behaviour that potentially marks the limits of self and the possibilities of acceptable difference.

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Screen comedy and the fallacy of age determinism

This paper draws on the context established by Joshua Meyrowitz in his 1985 book, *No sense of place: the impact of electronic media on social behavior* [sic], which argues that widespread access to television shaped a new social landscape since the 1960s. Among the repercussions were changes in the relationship between biological age and social roles associated with distinct age groups, occurring as part of wider social and cultural developments after World War Two. While screen comedy has long had a capacity to depict a loss of distinction between behaviour of adults and children, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century this theme is often manifested more specifically in shifting social distinctions between adulthood and childhood, which are not necessarily determined by biological age. The central focus of this paper is the juxtaposition of ideas about youth and adulthood, and the convergence of the two, in two recent comedy films, *The Intern* and *Trainwreck*. The paper examines the significance of themes of extended youth, the childlike adult, and collisions between various social models of youth and adulthood. Far from being simply or necessarily manifestations of irresponsibility, the theme of extended youth reflects wider and fundamental shifts in age-related social roles, conflicting with the idea that biological age determines social behaviour. The paper argues that these comedies challenge ideas of ageism and immaturity by depicting ostensibly anomalous, absurd situations that actually reflect widespread shifts in ideas of age and youth.

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Proprietary punning: Types of pun and their ownership through Japanese history

The phonological structure of the Japanese language makes it particularly well adapted for punning, and one might think that this would mean puns would be everywhere. Precisely the opposite is the case.

The facility has led to various social controls on punning, including their restriction to various situations, such as literature and, in the modern world, advertising, and the definition and naming of various kinds of pun. In the historical past, in the tradition of Confucian Scholasticism, individuals have taken ownership of certain kinds of pun, and even set up schools where they took in disciples who apprenticed themselves to study punning with the master, along the lines of schools in other branches of the Japanese arts. Whereas in English, punning has traditionally been a game of quick wits and perhaps of rule-breaking, in Japan it has rather been a matter for deliberation and application of rules.

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

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"Not only for fun": Humour and characterisation in Chinese sitcoms

This study aims to explore how conversational humour relates to characterisation in fictional dialogues of Chinese sitcoms. The information-conveying functions of humour have been widely discussed in natural conversations, and many scholars agree that humour can disclose expressive, descriptive and social information about the interlocutors engaged in conversations, explicitly or implicitly (Zhao, 1988). In dramatic discourse, most fictional dialogues are purposely constructed by scriptwriters to disclose essential information about the characters, such as personalities, social status, physical appearance, and so on. (Eder, Jannidis, & Schneider, 2010, p. 30). Previous studies have elaborated at length on the close relations of language and characterisation in English dramatic discourse (Culpeper & Mclntyre, 2010). However, the research focusing on humour and characterisation in fictional dialogues in Chinese sitcoms has not received duly attention, therefore, this study aims to fill this gap. The term "characterisation" in this study refers to an understanding of both how characters are constructed in texts by scriptwriters and how these characters are conceived by audiences (Culpeper & Mclntyre, 2010, p. 176). This study seeks to answer the following questions: 1) How does conversational humour relate to characterisation in fictional dialogues in Chinese sitcoms? 2) What are the humour strategies used in Chinese sitcoms for characterisation? In this study, Iparment, as one of the most influential Chinese sitcoms, is chosen as the data source. Using Zhao (1988)'s framework of the three information-conveying aspects of jokes, and Culpeper and Mclntyre 's (2010) theory of language and characterisation in play-texts, 112 dialogues collected from the first episode of the first season of Ipartment will be analysed from two aspects, including humour used as direct-presentation and indirect-presentation of characterisation; and, second, humour deployed as altero-characterisation (i.e. information provided by agencies rather than characters) and self-characterisation (Eder et al., 2010). The preliminary findings show that, firstly, humour strategies, such as teasing, irony and insult, play more important roles in characterisation in Ipartment; Also, humour in Ipartment is more often used as indirect-presentation of characterisation and altero-characterisation, rather than as direct-presentation and self-characterisation. This study will contribute to the research in conversational humour and characterisation in Chinese sitcoms. In addition, it attempts to propose an operational identification process of humour and taxonomy of conversational humour in Chinese sitcoms, which are interesting but yet understudied fields in the study of humour.

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