



Australasian Humour Studies Network

THE HUMOUR STUDIES DIGEST



## **"Humour at Work: Applications, Industries and Economies"**

### **27<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Australasian Humour Studies Network**

#### **New Dates, New Model**

#### **IMPORTANT UPDATES!**

**3-4 February 2021\***

**Massey University, Wellington Campus,**

**Aotearoa New Zealand**

\*please note the change in dates from the original CFP

#### **Update from the Organising Committee**

Unfortunately, due to ongoing travel restrictions in response to the global pandemic, the organising committee for the 2021 AHSN conference has needed to reassess the status of the event. In light of recent outbreaks in both Australia and New Zealand, we are no longer confident that we will be able to host a TransTasman event in February of next year.

**We have therefore made the difficult decision to split the conference into two interconnected events:**

- The first will be a two-day physical meeting open to delegates resident in New Zealand.
- The second will be an online event for Australian and International delegates.

#### **THIS EDITION**

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Edition – September 2020

The online event will be primarily asynchronous in order to account for multiple time zones, but will also include additional synchronous discussion where possible. The conference will be planned to facilitate communication between the two interconnected events. A small registration fee will be charged for the virtual event, but this will be substantially less than that for the physical event.

In addition, with the establishment of an online component for the conference we are now happy to invite international presenters to virtually 'attend' the event.

**Given the changes to the organisation of the conference, we have decided to extend the dates for submissions by one month. Please see "Important Dates" below for more information.**



Massey University - Wellington Campus

### Keynote Presenters

**International/Online:** Dr Christelle Pare (Research & Development, Just for Laughs/*Juste pour Rire*)  
**New Zealand:** Dr Barbara Plester (Senior Lecturer of Management, University of Auckland)

More keynote presenters to be confirmed....

### Call for Papers

Although often imagined to be aligned with the leisurely or the everyday—something to be pursued for its own sake and own pleasures—in practice, humour is often big business. Whether understood in terms of the international comedy industry, the role of humour in corporate contexts, or its instrumentalist application in a range of industries and activities, humour can be alternately lucrative or costly. Moreover, comedy is not just profitable, but also often shaped by profits as new technologies, institutions and economies change the way we laugh. From the rise of the Netflix stand-up comedy special to the advent of a new breed of online celebrity-comedians, shifts in political economy have had consequences not just for where and when we consume comedy, but also for the types of humour that circulate and which of them can find an audience.

For the 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Australasian Humour Studies Network, we would like to encourage presenters to follow the money, and consider the different ways in which humour can be thought to have either sold out or cashed up. How has humour been implicated in a wide range of business practices and cultures? How has humour been put to work to earn its keep? What changes have arisen from the increasing professionalisation of comedy? How might humour be implicated or understood in light of our wider economic context?

*\*\*Please note that papers and presentations that do not directly address the theme of 'Humour at Work' are more than welcome. As the official conference of the AHSN, we welcome researchers working on any and all aspects of the study of humour.*

We would like to invite proposals for 20 minute presentations. We welcome contributors who hail from a broad range of disciplines and fields of study: media and cultural studies, linguistics, fine arts, psychology, communication, education, literary studies, politics and political science, business studies, history, geography, sociology, theatre and performance, to name a few.

We especially welcome papers from research students of their work in progress, and as usual there will be a limited number of scholarships awarded as registration fee waivers for the best student proposals.

We would also like to extend a particular welcome to contributors from outside the university, especially those who are involved in the production and distribution of comedy.

The 2021 conference of the AHSN invites papers that explore the industrial and economic aspects of humour, including but not limited to:

- The political economics of comedy production and distribution
- Joking about business and work
- Humour's relationship to wider political economic contexts
- Applications of humour in workplace settings
- Comedy as art, business and vocation
- The professionalization of comedy
- The role of humour in workplace cultures
- Comedy industries and technologies

#### [Abstract Deadline and Details](#)

All proposals will be blind reviewed by members of the AHSN Review Panel. If you are interested in presenting at the conference, please submit a 250 word abstract with your name, e-mail address, and affiliation through the AHSN website submission portal at: <https://ahsn.org.au/abstracts/>. Any other enquires regarding the event should also be addressed to: [2021AHSN@gmail.com](mailto:2021AHSN@gmail.com).

For further information about the conference, please consult the events page of the AHSN website at: <https://ahsn.org.au/> and the conference's own website (currently under construction!) at: <https://ahsn-conference-2021.netlify.app/>

#### **IMPORTANT DATES (NOW EXTENDED)**

**Submission of abstracts opens:** 15 May 2020

**Close of submissions considered for Research Scholarships:** 1 September 2020

**Close of general submissions:** 1 October 2020

**Notifications of acceptance:** 31 October 2020

**Registration** will open after acceptances are finalised

#### **Conference Organisers**

Massey University: Nicholas Holm, Bryce Galloway

Victoria University of Wellington: Meredith Marra, Stephen Skalicky

# **Alphabet Soup meets Numberwang; or, The ARC/ANZSRC's FOR/SEO Codes, 2020**

*Richard Scully, University of New England*

As AHSN members may be aware, on 30 June 2020, the ARC announced the final list of FOR and SEO codes that are used as the basic classification for all research. This was the culmination of a long process of consultation with stakeholders (and presumably, people holding other gardening implements), that began on 25 February 2019.

Sadly, Humour Studies is now nowhere to be seen amidst the plethora of research classifications.

But I have to tell you: this was not for want of trying!

While the deliberations of the ABS and the CEO of the ARC are on the QT, the AHSN put out an APB for an EOI to have a HS FOR (and maybe an SEO) included in the LLON (Long List of Numbers), ASAP. A joint submission from the network, as well as a fair few from individual members, were among the 214 submissions received in the first phase of consultation. The network's submission was number 149, apparently, in between one from the Australian Chiropractors Association, and one from Scientia Professor Louise Edwards on – presumably – different themes.

And when the draft set of codes was released on 29 November, there is was in all its glory:

200216 – Humour Studies (a subset of 2002 – Cultural Studies)!

But precisely what happened in the subsequent phase of public consultation – and the seven months between draft and finalization – isn't really clear. Certainly, there were a fair few supportive comments from AHSN members sent, back between November 2019 and February 2020; but, as usual, final decisions tend to take place behind closed doors (or, at least, doors that are closed to all but the bureaucratic-cum-academic mandarins of the research councils and bureaux of statistics). Plus, 'feedback' was very tightly-controlled, and was only admissible if it came in the form of an Excel Spreadsheet (prompting yet another TLA - WTF?).

Regardless... we woz robbed! Humour Studies disappeared from the final version, and we go back to wandering in the wilderness, an interdisciplinary tribe with no promised land to speak of.

Based on the usual timelines, we've got about a decade or so to plan our next campaign (the classifications were last reviewed in 2008). Also, based on the usual timelines, both my kids will still be living at home, and I plan to recruit them both as unwilling research assistants, so the core of a team is already shaping-up. Let me know if you're keen to be involved next time around. Excelsior!

Email me any time on: [rscully@une.edu.au](mailto:rscully@une.edu.au)

Documents relating to the review of the classifications can be found here:

<https://www.arc.gov.au/anzsrc-review>

And documents related to the ARC's consultation process can still be found here:

<https://www.arc.gov.au/anzsrc-review/anzsrc-consultation>

The Australian Bureau of Statistics hosts the official listing - here:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1297.02020?OpenDocument>

## Members' New Publications

Kerry Mullan. 2020. Humour in French and Australian English Initial Interactions. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 169: 86-99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2020.08.005> [Free access until 11.10.20 at: <https://authors.elsevier.com/a/1bcqr1L-nhJHut> ]

Mark Rolfe. 2020. Review of [Nicholas Holm. 2017. \*Humour as Politics: The Political Aesthetics of Contemporary Comedy\*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, xi, 215pp. ISBN: 9783319509495.](#) HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research, 33 (3): 485-488. DOI: 10.1515/humor-2020-0044

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## Mischief-Making from Former Digest Editor

Rebecca Higgle. 2020. *The History of Mischief*. Fremantle: Fremantle Press.

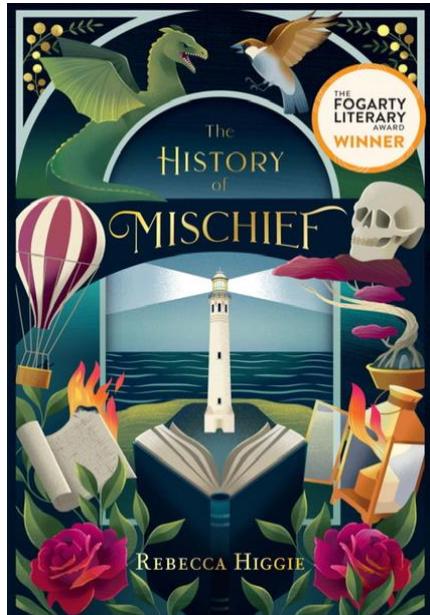
ISBN: 9781925816266 (Paperback). \$19.99 or e-book.

Dr Rebecca Higgle, former AHSN Digest Co-Editor, has a new book coming out. *The History of Mischief* is a fictional story for young adults. While the novel deviates from her scholarship on satire and politics, parts of it draw on Rebecca's PhD research into Diogenes and Ancient Cynicism. It tackles how we cope with grief through play and mischief.

"The skills I gained doing a PhD on satire were indispensable in writing this novel," she says. "More members of the AHSN should give creative writing a go. I remember so many humour papers that would make excellent fodder for a novel."

Rebecca is currently taking a break from academia to be a full time mum, but her humour research is freely available on her [website](#): [<https://rebeccahiggle.com.au/research>]

*The History of Mischief* won the 2019 Fogarty Literary Award for an unpublished manuscript and is out now. You can find it in bookstores or [online](#) [<https://www.fremantlepress.com.au/products/the-history-of-mischief>]



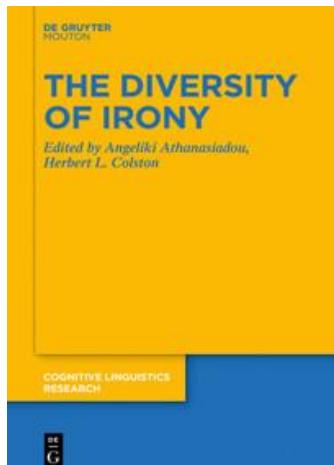
*Editors' Note: Congratulations, Rebecca! Keep up the good work.*

## The Diversity of Irony

Angeliki Athanasiadou and Herbert L. Colston, eds. 2020. *The Diversity of Irony*. Cognitive Linguistics Research [CLR] Series. 2020. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. 307pp. Hardback: ISBN: 9783110648478 U.S. \$ 114.99 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110652246>

### Publisher's description

Although the figure of irony has enjoyed extensive attention through important contributions to the diverse literatures addressing figurative thought and language, it still remains relatively in the background compared to other figures such as metaphor and metonymy. The present volume, together with a 2017 collection by Angeliki Athanasiadou and Herbert L. Colston, aims to the further exploration of verbal and situational irony, its gestural accompaniments, its comprehension and interpretation, its constructional diversity and its cooperation with other figures such as metaphor and hyperbole.



The present volume is a highly interesting collection of chapters dealing with both theoretical investigations and descriptive applications of a central figure pervading human thought and language. Its aim is to draw more attention to irony's diversity and its concomitant connections to other aspects of figurativeness.

[https://www.degruyter.com/view/title/551473?utm\\_source=linguistlist&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=LS\\_linguistlistnewtitles\\_WW&utm\\_term=AK&utm\\_content=brand\\_building](https://www.degruyter.com/view/title/551473?utm_source=linguistlist&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=LS_linguistlistnewtitles_WW&utm_term=AK&utm_content=brand_building)

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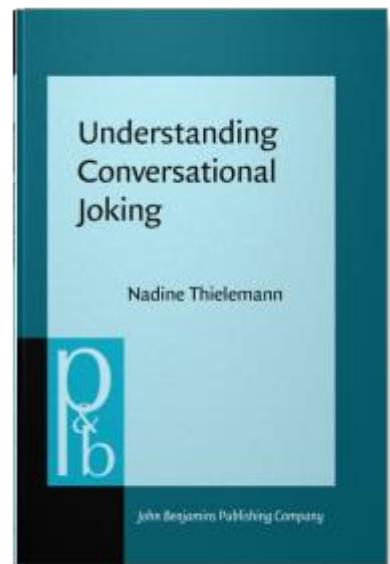
## Understanding Conversational Joking

Nadine Thielemann. 2020. *Understanding Conversational Joking: A cognitive-pragmatic study based on Russian interactions*. Pragmatics & Beyond New Series, No. 310. London and Amsterdam: John Benjamins. x, 287 pp. ISBN 978902720735 e-Book: ISBN 9789027260925  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.310> <https://benjamins.com/catalog/pbns.310>

Author: Nadine Thielemann, Vienna University of Economics and Business

### Publisher's description

This book examines the diverse forms of conversational humor with the help of examples drawn from casual interactions among Russian speakers. It argues that neither an exclusively discourse-analytic perspective on the phenomenon nor an exclusively cognitive one can adequately account for conversational joking. Instead, the work advocates reconciling these two perspectives in order to describe such humor as a form of cognitive and communicative creativity, by means of which interlocutors convey additional meanings and imply further interpretive frames. Accordingly, in order to analyze cognition in interaction, it introduces a discourse-semantic framework which complements mental spaces and blending theory with ideas from discourse analysis. On the one hand, this enables both the emergent and interactive character and the surface features of conversational joking to be addressed. On the other, it incorporates into the



analysis those normally backgrounded cognitive processes responsible for the additional meanings emerging from, and communicated by jocular utterances.

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## **The Sacred and The...Profanity: An Online Symposium**

**8 September 2020, 9.30am - 5.00pm**

**University of Bristol, UK**

**FREE REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**

Building on the recent growth of scholarship in the field of humour and religion, this interdisciplinary online symposium aims to bring together scholars from a wide range of fields to explore the multifaceted relationship between humour, obscenity, and religion, and to consider what happens when these worlds collide.

There are many examples that seem to support the view that religion and humour have a tense relationship; whether it be ‘comic’ representations of religious figures in the media, jokes about God, or films and television which focus on religion and morality that are considered blasphemous or offensive. These occurrences are often enthusiastically cast as a conflict between religious freedom and the right to dignity in belief, on the one hand, and freedom of expression and the right to offend, on the other. However, the intersection of humour, obscenity, and religion is much more complex than this, and this symposium invites participants to work through various aspects of this relationship. Of particular interest is the place of humour and the obscene *in* religion, the positive functions it can serve and ultimately its value. We want to ask: what role can humour play in the sphere of religion, and how comfortably? Even if joking might be allowed, can it ever truly fit in? Who decides on the value of humour for religion?

In addition to the panel of papers, the symposium will include a roundtable entitled: “Exploring Religion and Ritual in Humour and the Obscene”. Confirmed speakers for this roundtable are: Professor Bernard Schweizer (Co-Founder of the Humour and Religion Network), Dr Emily Selove (Senior Lecturer of Medieval Arabic Language and Literature), Dr Lieke Stelling (Assistant Professor in English Literature), and Dr Simon Weaver (Senior Lecturer in Media and Communications).

## Symposium schedule

**09:30-09:45** Introductions

**09:45-11:00** Roundtable – Professor Bernard Schweizer, Dr Emily Selope, Dr Lieke Stelling and Dr Simon Weaver

**11:00-11:20** Break

**11:20-13:00** Parallel Panels 1

### Offending the divine

Joe Watson– Songs Fit for A Garden, Not The Gods: Divine Belonging and Exclusion in the Carmina Priapea

Jay Friesen – A Splash and a Smash: Religious Obscenity and Social Commentary in Curb Your Enthusiasm and Little Mosque on the Prairie

Stephen Gregg – Religion, Comedy and Purposeful Offence

Richard Cimino and Christopher Smith – Irreverence and its role in the Atheist Awakening

### Reflecting on humour

Daria Akhakina – Pious Trickster and Foul Monk: Religious Satire in Roman de Renart

Fatemeh Nasr Esfahani – Persian Ethnic Jokes and Religious Assimilation in Iran

Francisco Barrenechea – Aelian and the Gods of Comedy

Jovan Cvjetičanin – Literary Thresholds in Martial's *Epigrams*

**13:00-14:30** Lunch

**14:30-16:10** Parallel Panels 2

### Gendered humour

Niamh Kehoe – Gendered Humour in Early Modern Saint's Lives

Fredericka Tevebring– Baubo's Joke: Situating the Obscene in the Eleusinian Mysteries

Shannon Philip – Humour of 'Manly' Hindu Warriors and their 'Obscene' Muslim Enemies

Hanna Golab – Ancient Greek Drag in the Service of the Virgin Goddess

### Laughing at/with religious authority

Anastasiya Fiadotava, Liisi Laineste, and Tõnno Jonuks – Contemporary Clergy Jokes in Estonia and Belarus

Peter Swallow – Bringing the Gods Down to Earth with Aristophanes

Lena Richter – Challenging Religious Authority by Using Humour

Monique Ingalls – Of Animatronic Praise Bands and Worship Leading Chickens: Locating the Sacred through Evangelical Christian Worship Music Parodies

**16:15-17:00** - Concluding remarks/drinks

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-sacred-and-the-profanity-an-online-symposium-tickets-116106173691>

You can find more information about the FREE virtual symposium here:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/events/2020/september/the-sacred-and-the-profanity-an-online-symposium.html>

### Contact information

For any queries related to the event, please contact Paul Martin and Nicole Graham

# The Linguistics of Humor

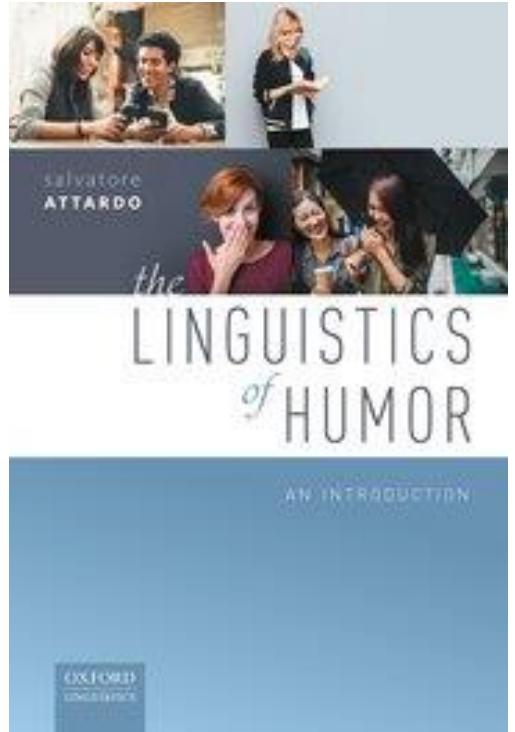
Salvatore Attardo. 2020. *The Linguistics of Humor: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
496pp. ISBN: 9780198791287

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

## Publisher's description

This book is the first comprehensive and systematic introduction to the linguistics of humor. Salvatore Attardo takes a broad approach to the topic, exploring not only theoretical linguistic analyses, but also pragmatic and semantic aspects, conversation and discourse analysis, ethnomethodology, and interactionist and variationist sociolinguistics. The volume begins with chapters that introduce the terminology and conceptual and methodological apparatus, as well as outlining the major theories in the field and examining incongruity and resolution and the semiotics of humor. The second part of the book explores humor competence, with chapters that cover semantic and pragmatic topics, the General Theory of Verbal Humor, and puns and their interpretation. The third part provides an in-depth discussion of the applied linguistics of humor, and examines social context, discourse and conversation analysis, and sociolinguistic aspects. In the final part of the book, the discussion is extended beyond the central field of linguistics, with chapters discussing humor in literature, in translation, and in the classroom.

The volume brings together the multiple strands of current knowledge about humor and linguistics, both theoretical and applied; it assumes no prior background in humor studies, and will be a valuable resource for students from advanced undergraduate level upwards, particularly those coming to linguistics from related disciplines.



## 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).

## Praise comments

Indispensable, both as a text and for deep reading and reflection, giving comprehensive insight into how linguistics applies to humorous communications and the wider realms of humour theory and analysis. This book reflects a lifetime of reading and thinking on the complex and puzzling topic—what is the nature of humour and how do we research it? - **Jessica Milner Davis, University of Sydney**

It is often held to be a scientific ideal that we draw from multiple disciplinary perspectives in advancing our understanding of complex social phenomena such as humour, but we fall short of that ideal for the most part. Professor Attardo shows us how it should be done. In *The Linguistics of Humor*, he offers us a masterful and

insightful overview that will help both those new to the field, as well as seasoned researchers, navigate the rapidly growing field of humour studies. Throughout the volume he integrates different theoretical and methodological perspectives, resulting in something that is much more than the simple sum of its parts. This is a must-read for anyone interested in humour studies. - **Michael Haugh, University of Queensland**

No doubt the most comprehensive treatment of the linguistic study of humor. Attardo succeeds, in particular, in showing how the phenomenon (or better, phenomena) of humor involve(s) the full complexity of what people do with language. - **Jef Verschueren, University of Antwerp**

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### ***The Humour Studies Digest***

### ***The Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)***

***'We put the "U" back into "HUMOUR"!'***

Send your Digest Submissions to our Co-Editors

Michael at [Michael.meany@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Michael.meany@newcastle.edu.au) or Jessica at [Jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au](mailto:Jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au)

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