

CALL FOR PAPERS:
The Power of Ridicule:
Humour and Laughter in Cultural Perspective
SYMPOSIUM

Organized by the Research Project “*The Dark Side of Humour: Popular Culture and the Power of Ridicule*”, Area and Cultural Studies, University of Helsinki

University of Helsinki, 25th-26th October 2016
Unioninkatu 38, Helsinki

Humour and the comic are central to social life, yet laughter is not always pleasant and decent. From daily interactions to media representations, our experience is shaped by the comic register, used for many different purposes and in myriads of situations. While humour is often seen in a positive light, our appreciation of humour as a cultural asset tends to hide the fact that the more sinister uses of humour can create a social arena for expressions of hatred, violence and scorn. This symposium examines this negative undergrowth of modern and contemporary humour, explores the social, media and discursive contexts in which it emerges and traces its various effects on the victims of scorn and derision. With multidisciplinary approaches, we will investigate the cultural meanings of comic representations that remain an unproblematized and undertheorized element of modern and contemporary culture. Through an analysis of the hidden power structures inherent in humour and laughter, we will offer a novel interpretation of how they contribute to our social life and to the web of meanings through which we make sense of our world.

We invite 20-minutes papers focusing on the above-described themes, focusing for instance on topics such as:

- Theories of humour and laughter
- Digitalization and humour
- Histories of humour and laughter
- Humour, media and popular culture
- Politics of humour and laughter
- Humour and the everyday
- Humour and marginalization
- Humour and space/place
- Cultural contexts of humour
- Humour as discipline
- Jokes and comedy

Confirmed keynote speakers are Leena-Maija Rossi (University of Helsinki and University of Turku) and Simon Weaver (Brunel University London).

Please send a 250 words abstract in English, with your name, e-mail address and affiliation to both: outi.j.hakola@helsinki.fi and giacomo.botta@helsinki.fi no later than August 31, 2016.