



Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020 - Community Assembly

## *Laughter*



As an integral part of human interaction, humour has been on the minds of thinkers for centuries. As Peter McGraw and Joel Warner explain in their book, *'The Humour Code: A global search for what makes things funny'*:

*"Plato and Aristotle contemplated the meaning of comedy while laying the foundations of Western philosophy... Charles Darwin looked for the seeds of laughter in the joyful cries of tickled chimpanzees. Sigmund Freud sought the underlying motivations behind jokes in the recesses of our unconscious."*

Humour, laughter and the light-hearted are always important – more so now, of course. Comedy is not just frivolous entertainment; it can help us cope with situations that are otherwise difficult to understand. A good joke can reach people who would otherwise be unwilling to listen. Some cognitive scientists think that humour is now the best way to study the 'human condition' – to help us understand what it means to be human.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, the twentieth-century Austrian-born philosopher, who taught at the University of Cambridge, once said that it would be possible to write a philosophy book consisting entirely of jokes. The suggestion is not as absurd as it sounds. Like comic wordplay, a lot of philosophy explores the ambiguity of language.

I will end with some wisdom from the great Maya Angelou:

*I am serious, so I laugh a lot. You need to laugh. I don't trust anyone who doesn't laugh...Laugh as often as possible. You must. Because the world will offer you every reason to weep. So as often as possible...laugh.*

*Mr Lawlor*