

Peter kay media coursework essay sample

[Media](#), [Television](#)



Peter Kay's 'Phoenix nights', set in Bolton in Lancashire tells a story revolved around the 'Phoenix club', run by Brian Potter (played by Peter Kay). This sitcom has been said to be full of 'witty dialogue, side-splitting one liners and intelligent observational humour' (review from gingaroo) but also some would say that due to the fact that after 'Phoenix nights' Peter Kay moved onto 'Max and Paddies road to nowhere' (two characters from 'Phoenix nights'), he is not capable of sustaining a sitcom and has to move onto other things, compared to American sitcom 'Friends' which lasted ten years.

By watching carefully it can be seen that Peter Kay uses a variety of comic techniques in his humour, these are: irony, satire, stereotypes, parody, trademarks, in-jokes, puns and innuendoes. So how successfully does Peter Kay use comic conventions to create humour in Episode 1 Series 2 of 'Phoenix Nights'?

In this sitcom every single character is an over exaggerated stereotype of a familiar member of the British public. This can be seen best in 'Ray Von', 'Den Perry', 'Les' and 'Holy Mary'.

The name of the character 'Ray Von' is a pun on the outdated seventies phrase 'Rave on' which is just one of the elements about Ray Von which show he is stuck in the seventies period. His mullet hair style, rolled up sleeves and outdated phrases such as 'Shabba!' add together to make this character who he is. 'Den Perry' is a stereotype of a gangster, with his large build, gruff voice, tuxedo, cigar hanging out of his mouth and also his superiority against all others while he gets driven around. When we see Les

working in the butchers we immediately relate to butchers we see in everyday life, his farmers accent, the way he talks to people, an example being; calling the women ‘love’ and non stop talking trying to sell his meat. ‘Holy Mary’ is a typical woman who claims she is extremely religious, and is always saying phrases such as ‘god bless you’, but we can see she is not all perfect as she works in a working mans club and also when Brian rings her while she is in church, she answers the phone. This isn’t respectable of her to do in a church. Consequently these personalities put together with the remaining characters create humour as we can relate to these people from the British public and

see people we know in these characters.

The ‘Phoenix club’ which is the setting for these characters is parodying a typical working men’s club, with ‘tacky’ music and cheap lighting. This makes the audience laugh as the characters within the show are full of praises for the club and see it as there ‘casers palace’, which is known as a posh expensive club in Las Vegas, far from and much classier than this small club in Bolton! Mimicking people who are desperate to make money and are willing to do anything to get it is a technique used by Peter Kay in ‘Phoenix nights’ series two episode 1 to create humour.

We see Brian watching the shopping channel which is selling useless objects such as an umbrella hat (this joke is later added to as we see Brian has purchased one). Also in ASDA we see Jerry singing in an attempt to sell bin bags and later corn beefed hash by using popular songs and changing the words, by this you can see these products are made to look even less

appealing and Jerry we would think would be embarrassed as he has made a joke of himself, but he seems to feel like a celebrity singing in front of customers. This is humorous to us as it is a mocking imitation of the people or objects and shows how people are unaware how stupid they look by doing what they do.

When Brian gathers together the past workers of the Phoenix club in attempt to persuade them to re open the burnt down building, he attempts to make his speech glamorous and breath taking, but instead he makes a fool of himself. Brian enters as a ‘ fanfare’ type of music is playing on a cheap C. D player, he then goes onto telling his previous co-workers his ideas, but as he does this he throws in small phrases such as ‘ I have a dream’ and ‘ I believe children are our future’, this parodies politicians and important people and their trademark speeches. In effect this is humorous as it symbolises the contrast between reality and Brian’s words. Also in this meeting the topic of food for the new club is discussed and Brian says they will have ‘ proper food’ which garlic bread, chicken kiev’s and scampi are his idea of, highlighting his foolishness and the way he lives, which we find funny. At the end of this episode we see the men from the club auditioning ‘ talented acts’ to be the entertainment in the club. Auditioning is a woman in a revealing glittery outfit, which obviously appeals to the men, doing a magician act. She thinks she is doing well, but it is actually an awful act. This implies also people’s stupidity and naivety, which we laugh at.

Another example of characters naivety is Brian Potters political incorrectness, which he seems to think is the right way to talk about people.

This is Peter Kay's use of innuendos and puns which are often linked. When the fireman explains that the fire was started by a 'disgarded fag' which Brian takes as

meaning a homosexual, because of the outdated term 'fag' meaning gay, but it actually means a cigarette or cigar in this case. Brian doesn't realise what he has just said which displays his foolishness which we find amusing. Other puns include the 'Mussels fitness centre' which is in Blackpool hence the 'mussels' and also is a gym where many people go to get 'muscles', the already stated 'Ray Von' and when Les says it is 'BSE' day (bit of something extra) when 'BSE' is linked with mad cow disease, which is ironic because he is working in a butchers. These puns are funny because they emphasise the cheapness of the settings when they are really trying to make them look better. An innuendo is used by Frank in a conversation between him and Jerry, he says it to mean that Brian would manipulate someone to be the licensee for the club, but what it sounds like is a homosexual act, again displaying the characters misunderstanding of what he wants to say and what he actually made it sound like, which is amusing to the audience.

Characters naivety is an example of how Peter Kay uses in-jokes in 'Phoenix nights', but the main example of an in-joke in this episode is as Jerry and Brian are leaving the club with their backs to it, the long shot enables us to see the club ablaze and shows that the characters cannot see this. Jerry says to Brian 'It's our Caesars palace' which is ironic and funny as it is burning down just a few feet away without their knowledge.

Another example of irony is Den Perry's image is made out to be a gangster as already mentioned. This is ironic as the word gangster has connotations of some one in New York who go round shooting people, but Den Perry's life contrast with this as he is in Bolton in England. r, far away form the New York shootings. It is also ironic that when he says ' long live the Phoenix' there is a contrast between what he says and his actions of setting the club on fire.

' Garlic Bread' over the years has become a evermore popular saying, which makes us think of Peter Kay whenever we hear it. It has connotations of exotic, Italian food to may people, but because of its use in the ' Phoenix club' settings, its position is changed and becomes to sound like a common food in Britain. Many people will find the saying ' garlic bread' funny simply because of its use in Peter Kay's stand-up shows, but others will find it funny because of its use under the category of ' Proper food'.

As well as the food being very ' tacky' in it, the ' Phoenix Club' itself is very middle-class and outdated, this is satirising the club as although it has a posh name, there is a remarkable contrast between reality, and what Brian sees the club to be. This is found to be funny because the people who work in the ' Phoenix club' have come to love it and think it is wonderful, whereas we know what it is really like and the people who go there are just the same. Satire is also used successfully by Kay in ' Phoenix Nights' series 2 episode 1 when Brian goes into ' La Ponderosa' in Blackpool, when the receptionist is on the phone. She says to her friend on the phone '...took me back to his place, drops his trousers, couldn't believe it. Any way he's just about to get to the vinegar strokes and his bloody mobile goes off!...' already we find this

amusing because of the way she says it so abruptly and doesn't seem to care about the way she is describing her date. However this joke is found even more amusing when she notices Brian sat there and says ' Can I call you back mum', this is humorous because not many people would describe there dates in so much ' detail' to their mums!

Finally, satire is also used in the same scene but in a less obvious way. behind the receptionist there are a number of clocks with different time zones on. This is satirising posh hotels, however this aim of seeming posh is not made very well by the hotel as some clocks say other countries, one says London and another says Blackpool, however all the times are the same. We find this funny as we laugh at the poor attempts of the hotel to seem upper-class, when they really have failed and made themselves look worse off than before!

Peter Kay's many different comic techniques show he has the ability to make the public laugh in more ways than one. He has also managed to establish himself as someone who is remembered by trademarks such as ' garlic bread'. Rather than the fact that Peter Kay has moved onto new things such as Max and paddy, shows not that he is incapable of sustaining ' Phoenix nights' but that he is capable of exploring and successfully using comic convention to create humour in episode 1 series 2 of ' Phoenix Nights' and bringing to life new ideas.

I believe he has proved that not only can he adapt to different roles (playing two parts in ' Phoenix nights', Brian and max), being himself in comedy

stand-ups, but he can successfully write scripts which the British public have come to love!