

11th International Summer School on Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications

Estonian Literary Museum

Tartu

15th – 20th August 2011



SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMME
LECTURE MATERIALS
SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS

Endorsed by the International Society for Humour Research



ESTONIAN LITERARY MUSEUM
EESTI KIRJANDUSMUSEUM

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Humour and Laughter:
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Programme

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SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMME

Time	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	
09:00	Opening	Meet the lecturer	Meet the lecturer	
09:30	An overview of humour research (GR)	* Approaches to analysing contemporary stand-up comedy (SL)	*Correlation and significance: the basic concepts (GR)	
10:30	COFFEE BREAK			
11:00	National humor -- A critical perspective (HK)	Incongruity and its resolution (GR)	Nasty humour as great literature (CD)	
12:00	What is humour? Etymology and taxonomic studies (WR)	Humor as aesthetic experience: The funny, the bizarre, the fantastic, the grotesque, the macabre, and the horrible (JM)	Humor as play, laughter as play signal (JM)	
13:00	LUNCH BREAK			
14:30	Political jokes (anekdoti) and the fall of the Soviet empire (CD)	Positive Psychology and humour: A good match? (WR)	Excursion	
15:30	Contemporary television comedy and social class (SL)	Can laughter make us happier? (AR)		
16:30	COFFEE BREAK			
16:45	Professional humour – Comedians and their part in humour studies (CW)	Humor as a neutralizing metarelation (AKo)		
17:45		Poster session		
19:00	Opening reception			

* methods talk; #workshop / specialized audience

- DB Dr. Dorota Brzozowska (Polish Philology Department, Opole University, Poland)
WChl Dr. Wladislaw Chlopicki (Institute of English Philology, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland).
CD Professor Christie Davies (Department of Sociology, University of Reading, England)
HK Professor Holger Kersten (Amerikanistik, Universität Magdeburg, Germany)
SK Professor Seppo Knuutila (Department of Folkloristics, University of Joensuu, Finland)
AKo Professor Alexander Kozintsev (Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg, Russia)
AKr Professor Arvo Krikmann (Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum, Estonia)
SL Dr. Sharon Lockyer (School of Social Sciences, Brunel University, London, UK)

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Time
Meet the lecturer	Meet the lecturer	Meet the lecturer	9:00
*Assessment of the sense of humour: Another appraisal of the state of the art (WR)	*Hypothesis testing and refutation in the study of jokes: Some methodological questions (CD)	*The ethics of humor (JM)	9:30
COFFEE BREAK			10:30
Funny business: The benefits of humor at work (JM)	Cognitive construals in jokes - Visual logical mechanisms (WChl)	Mark Twain and the complexities of American humor (HK)	11:00
#Build your own jokes (GR) OR #How to measure smiling and laughter: Learning the basics of the Facial Action Coding System - FACS (WR and TP)	Relationships of punchlineless (and in general older) "Schwanks" and contemporary punchlined jokes ("Witzes") (AKr)	Jokes about particular sets of women: Mothers in law (wife's mother), blondes, Jewish women, female car drivers and lesbians (CD)	12:00
LUNCH BREAK			13:00
Symposium	Is seriousness the opposite of laughter? (SK)	What is funny to whom and why? New findings in humour appreciation and personality (WR)	14:30
Symposium	Comic wisdom: The affinity between humor and philosophy (JM)	Feedback and next ISS	15:30
COFFEE BREAK			16:30
Symposium	Jokes about animals. Cross-cultural study (DB)		16:45
Symposium			17:45
AB Meeting			19:00

JM Professor John Morreall (Religious Studies, College of William and Mary, USA)
 AR Dr. Anu Realo (Department of Psychology, University of Tartu, Estonia)
 GR Dr. Graeme Ritchie (Department of Computing Science, University of Aberdeen, Scotland)
 WR Professor Willibald Ruch (Department of Psychology, University of Zurich, Switzerland)
 CW MA Clare Watters (Italian Studies, University of Birmingham, UK)
 TP MSc Tracey Platt (Department of Psychology, University of Zurich, Switzerland)

Detailed programme for the week

MONDAY (15. AUGUST)

Registration: *Monday, 8:00 – 9:00*

Official opening of the Summer School: *Monday, 9:00 – 9:30*

Local organizers, ISS advisory board, Brief History of ISS

Morning session

Chair: Willibald Ruch

An overview of humour research

Taught by Graeme Ritchie (Monday 9:30 – 10:30)

This talk is a very general and gentle introduction to humour research, aimed at complete newcomers to the field. There will be an extremely short history of humour research, and a summary of some of the principal application areas and a very simple (but widely used) classification of the most commonly proposed types of theory. By looking back at publications of the past two decades, we will consider the wide variety within humour research. This shows up in the multiplicity of types of research and the differing aims of humour researchers. Also, humour is studied from the viewpoint of a number of disciplines, raising the interesting question: is humour research a discipline in its own right?

Suggested reading:

Chapman, A. J., & Foot, H. C. (1976/1996). (Eds.). *Humor and laughter: Theory, research and applications*. London, UK: Transaction Publishers.

Martin, R. (2007). *The psychology of humour: An integrative approach*. London, UK: Elsevier Academic Press.

McGhee, P. E., & Goldstein, J. (Eds.) (1983). *Handbook of humor research*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Morreall, J. (1987). (Ed.). *The philosophy of laughter and humour*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Raskin, V. (2008). (Ed.). *The primer of humor research*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

COFFEE BREAK

National humor - A critical perspective

Taught by Holger Kersten (Monday, 11:00 – 12:00)

Humor works on many different levels ranging from individual, idiosyncratic humor styles all the way to the broad category that has been called "national humor." The notion of national differences between humor styles is based on the observation that all forms of humor are based on the interaction between members of a specific group: the topics, the settings, and the situations when humor is used depend on what a given culture defines as an appropriate framework. In this respect humor can be regarded as "a cultural index, a reflector of social change and conflict" (Boskin 1997: 17). More than a 120 years before Boskin's observation, American humorist Samuel S. Cox expressed a general belief when he said that "there are peculiarities in the humor of different nations as marked as the geographical peculiarities of their country" (693).

This lecture will investigate the issue of a national humor with the help of a case study which focuses on the way in which humor manifests itself in the USA and Canada and show that the debate about the role of humor in a given culture goes far beyond the issue of who or what is considered funny. It will be shown that Canadian and American statements about a national type of humor reflect idealized views of the political and moral values which the two nations claim for themselves. In this way, humor becomes part and parcel of a larger discourse about national identity.

Suggested reading:

- Boskin, J. (1997). History and Humor. In J. Boskin (ed.), *The Humor Prism in 20th-Century America*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 17-27.
- Cox, S.S. (Apr 1875) "American Humor." *Harper's Monthly*, 690-701.
- Goldstein, J.H. (1977). Cross Cultural Researcher: Humor Here and There. In A.J. Chapman, H.C. Foot (eds.), *It's a Funny Thing, Humor*. London: Pergamon Press, 167-74.
- Johnston, C. (Feb. 1901). The Essence of American Humor. *Atlantic Monthly* 87:520, 195-202.
- Kuipers, G. *Good Humor, Bad Taste: A Sociology of the Joke*. Humor Research. Berlin New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006.
- Rourke, C. (1931). *American Humor: A Study of the National Character*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Shultz, T.R. (1977). A Cross Cultural Study of the Structure of Humor. In A.J. Chapman, H.C. Foot (eds.), *It's a Funny Thing, Humor*. London: Pergamon Press, 175-9.
- Ziv, A. (1988). *National Styles of Humor*. New York: Greenwood Press.

What is humour? Etymology and taxonomic studies

Taught by Willibald Ruch (Monday, 12:00 – 13:00)

In this introduction I will discuss why questions like "What is humour?" and "What is a sense of humour?" are difficult to answer and I will propose to replace them with the more focused questions of "How did we use humour in the past?" and "How can we use it more fruitfully in the future?" My presentation will cover the etymology of the term "humour," and of related terms in different languages, and point out that we actually have two terminological systems whose coexistence causes confusion. Each is more prevalent in certain disciplines and in certain countries. Distinguishing between them is important for understanding the current and historic literature. I will give examples where failure to separate them created confusion in understanding the scope of, and testing of, theories. The results of studies attempting to structure the field will be presented involving both a psycho-lexical approach as well an attempt to sample the whole behavioural domain of everyday humorous conduct as comprehensively as possible will be presented. These studies will be used to illustrate how we might arrive at a broader definition of/view of the scope of the field. Overall, this unit will raise awareness of unresolved terminological problems and taxonomic issues and is meant to stimulate discussion along these lines.

Suggested and further reading:

- Craik, K. H., & Ware, A. P. (1998). Humor and personality in everyday life. In W. Ruch (Ed.), *The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic* (pp. 63-94). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ruch, W. (2007). The sense of humor: A new look at an old concept. In W. Ruch (Ed.), *The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic* (pp. 3-14). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ruch, W. (2011). Humor und Charakter (Humor and character). In B. Wild (Ed.), *Humor in der Psychotherapie*. Stuttgart, Germany: Schattauer.

LUNCH BREAK

Afternoon session

Chair: Holger Kersten

Political jokes (anekdoti) and the fall of the Soviet Empire

Taught by Christie Davies (Monday, 14:30 – 15:30)

More and better political jokes were invented and told in the Soviet empire, the satrapies of the Soviet Union and the occupied states of Eastern Europe than in any other society whether democratic or dictatorial. The reason for this was that the Communist party elite tried to control all aspects of society, not just politics but an entire economy in which there was no private ownership of productive property, prices and consumption, the legal system and even science art and literature. Everything was political; everything was planned from the centre and in consequence the subject of political jokes. It was an oppressive one party state, first ruled by terror and later by corrupt and decadent oligarchies that continued to rule by force alone. The regimes lacked legitimacy and this generated the jokes. Open dissent and all criticism except of minor local functionaries was forbidden. The jokes, like most jokes, played with what it was forbidden to say and this was the source of their humour regardless of the particular political stance of the individual. Once those at the top were divided, considered reform came to doubt whether force could be used to enforce compliance, there was not merely a regime change but all a collapse of the entire socialist order in all parts of the empire. The jokes had no part in causing this. Jokes never have a significant effect on a society. However, they had been an expression of cynical realism in the face of tyranny. They were a symptom of the failure of the system and its lack of legitimacy and as such indicated a state of unstable equilibrium, something that most of the Western so-called Sovietologists were quite unable to see. The collapse of the system utterly surprised the latter but not the few political scientists who studied the jokes and built models of how the collapse would come about. The jokes and their relation to the society that generated them will be discussed in detail.

Suggested reading:

Adams, B. (2005). *Tiny revolutions in Russia: Twentieth-century Soviet and Russian history in anecdotes*. New York, NY: Routledge Curzon.

Davies, C. (2010). Jokes as the truth about Soviet socialism. *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 46, 7-30. <http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/ksisu.htm>

Davies, C. (2011). *Jokes and targets* (pp. 213-253). Indiana, IN: Indiana University Press.

Contemporary television comedy and social class

Taught by Sharon Lockyer (Monday, 15:30 – 16:30)

Social class difference, tensions and struggles have been a staple ingredient of many American and British situation comedies and sketch shows, from *The Flintstones* and *Roseanne* through to *Only Fools and Horses* and *The Simpsons*. Focusing on situation comedies and sketch shows, this lecture will examine the depictions of class and class issues, will consider what these comedic representations reflect and say about social classes, and consider the wider social implications of these representations. We will also explore the ways in which, over time, these representations have changed alongside changes in social attitudes towards social class.

Suggested reading:

Butsch, R. (2003). Ralph, Fred, Archie, and Homer: Why television keeps re-creating the white male working-class buffoon. In G. Dines, & J. M. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, race and class in media: A text-reader* (2nd ed., pp. 575-585). London, UK: Sage.

Butsch, R., & Glennon, L. (1983). Social class frequency trends in domestic situation comedy 1946-1978. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 27, 77-81.

Lockyer, S. (2010). Chavs and chav-nots: Social class in Little Britain. In S. Lockyer (Ed.), *Reading Little Britain: Comedy matters on contemporary television* (pp. 95-109). London, UK: I.B. Tauris.

Medhurst, A. (2007). *A national joke: Popular comedy and English cultural identities*. London: Routledge. (Chapter

9: Bermuda My Arse: Class, culture and 'The Royle Family', pp. 144-158).

Senzani, A. (2010). Class and gender as a laughing matter? The case of Roseanne. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 23, pp. 229-253.

Wagg, S. (1998). "At ease, corporal": Social class and the situation comedy in British television, from the 1950s to the 1990s. In Wagg, S. (Ed.), *Because I tell a joke or two: Comedy, politics and social difference* (pp. 1-31). London, UK: Routledge.

COFFEE BREAK

Professional humour – Comedians and their part in humour studies

Taught by Clare Watters (Monday, 16:45 – 17:45)

The work of comedians, be it recorded, live, in books or online, continually pervades our everyday lives. Their popularity demonstrates the privileged position of professional comedy in our interaction with humour. In this lecture, I will provide an introduction to existing scholarship on professional comedians, examining their role in contemporary society and their unique form of humour dissemination. In particular, I will discuss the relation between the humorous text, the performer and the audience, and the impact that this has on defining the limits of 'acceptable humour'. How far do humorous texts rely on the comedian/teller and the context in which they are told? What power do comedians wield over their public's reception? And what comic licence and spaces do we allow them? I will also examine the way in which the varying forms that live comedy takes in different countries affects this dynamic, calling into question whether existing theories can account for these varying traditions.

Suggested reading:

Lewis, P. (2006). *Cracking up: American humor in a time of conflict*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lockyer, S. and Pickering, M. (2005). *Beyond a joke: The limits of humour*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.

Paton, G. E. C. (1988). The Comedian as portrayer of social morality. In C. Powell, & G. Paton (Eds.), *Humour in society: Resistance and control* (pp. 206-233). Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Raskin, V. (Ed.). (2008). *The primer of humor research*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter (esp. Kuipers, pp. 361-399 and Mintz, pp. 281-302).

Stebbins, R. A. (1993). Social roles of the stand-up comic. *Canadian Theatre Review*, 77, 4-7.

Opening reception at the Estonian Literary Museum lecture hall, Vanemuise 42 (Monday, 19:00 – 21:00)

TUESDAY (16. AUGUST)

Meet the lecturer

9:00 – 9:30 EKM lecture hall

Morning session

Chair: Alexander Kozintsev

Approaches to analysing contemporary stand-up comedy

Taught by Sharon Lockyer (Tuesday 9:30 – 10:30)

From its roots in American vaudeville and British music hall stand-up comedy has grown into a huge industry that includes an array of comedy clubs, multi-date arena-style tours, and an increasing number of television and radio programmes. In this lecture we explore the historical and social development of stand-up comedy. We consider the wider social and political roles and functions fulfilled by a range of stand-up comedians from Richard Pryor through

to Shazia Mirza. Although as an art form stand-up comedy is hugely popular, little research exists that explains how we can analyse stand-up comedy, so the final part of the lecture considers how stand-up comedy can be analysed by adopting techniques and tools used in drama and theatre studies, sociology and humour studies.

Suggested reading:

Double, O. (1997). *Stand-up!: On being a comedian*. London, UK: Methuen.

Gilbert, J. R. (1997). Performing marginality: Comedy, identity, and culture critique. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 17, pp. 317-330.

Limon, J. (2000). *Stand-up comedy in theory, or, abjection in America*. London, UK: Duke University Press.

Mintz, L. E. (1985). Stand-up comedy as social and cultural mediation. *American Quarterly*, 37, pp. 71-80.

Paton, G. (1988). The comedian as portrayer of social morality. In C. Powell, & G. Paton (Eds.) *Humour in society: Resistance and control* (pp. 206-233). London, UK: Macmillan.

COFFEE BREAK

Incongruity and its resolution

Taught by Graeme Ritchie (Tuesday, 11:00 – 12:00)

The idea of incongruity-resolution as central to humour is very widespread. It relies on two core ideas: that humour involves incongruity (some sort of mismatch or inconsistency), and that this incongruity is resolved (removed or greatly diminished). Although incongruity has been a central notion in humour analysis for centuries, the role of resolution is a more recent (mid-20th century) innovation. We review different versions of this mechanism, which have been proposed over the past forty years, showing that these are in fact different conjectures, varying systematically in certain ways. In particular, there is remarkably little that all of the different "theories" in this family have in common regarding "resolution", and they may not even all involve the same notion of "incongruity".

Suggested reading:

Attardo, S. (1997). The semantic foundations of cognitive theories of humor. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 3, pp. 395-420.

Oring, E. (2003). *Engaging humor*. Urbana, IN: Indiana University Press.

Ritchie, G. (2009). Variants of incongruity resolution. *Journal of Literary Theory*, 3, pp. 313-332.

Suls, J. (1972). A two-stage model for the appreciation of jokes and cartoons: an information-processing analysis. In J. Goldstein, & P. McGhee (Eds.), *The psychology of humor* (pp. 81-100). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Humor as aesthetic experience: The funny, the bizarre, the fantastic, the grotesque, the macabre, and the horrible

Taught by John Morreall (Tuesday, 12:00 – 13.00)

A standard way of thinking about humor is as the enjoyment of incongruity, or enjoyment of cognitive shifts. This approach, along with the analysis of humor as play, links humor with aesthetic experience. But "the enjoyment of incongruity/cognitive shifts" is not specific enough to characterize humorous amusement, since there are other aesthetic modes of enjoying incongruity/cognitive shifts. These include the Bizarre, the Fantastic, the Grotesque, the Macabre, and the Horrible. Using examples of artworks and films, we will see what is special about humor and how it can interact with these other aesthetic categories.

Suggested reading:

Morreall, J. (2009). *Comic relief: A comprehensive philosophy of humor*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Chapter 4)

LUNCH BREAK

Afternoon session

Chair: Seppo Knuuttila

Positive Psychology and humour: A good match?

Taught by Willibald Ruch (Tuesday 14:30 – 15:30)

Humour as a neutral umbrella term refers to a research area that involves neutral, positive and negative aspects. In fact, the valence of humour is implicitly acknowledged but rarely explicitly investigated. The present talk examines the overlap between humour and Positive Psychology (PP) which is concerned with what makes life worth living the most (Peterson, 2007). This very recent movement tries to make psychology complete again by investigating the positive side of life that has been neglected by business-as-usual-psychology in the past decade. Research focuses on three neglected areas, namely positive experience (e.g., flow, positive affect), positive traits (e.g., talents, virtue, character) and positive institutions (i.e., conditions that allow people to thrive and flourish and foster positive emotions). Humour may contribute to the three research areas, in as much amusement contributes to the richness of positive affect, sense of humour is perceived as a very positive trait and positive institutions may utilize humour. The talk will present the nomological net that PP provides (e.g., character strengths, virtues, orientations to happiness, and satisfaction with life) and highlight where humour is assigned a place. Two research lines will be highlighted: a) humour (traditionally defined and as character strength; i.e., the VIA-humour scale) as a predictor (and perhaps even cause) of satisfaction with life (Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007; Ruch, Proyer & Weber, 2010), and b) the link between humour and virtue/vice (Beermann & Ruch, 2009; Morreall, 2010; Müller & Ruch, 2011).

Suggested* and further reading:

Morreall, J. (2010). Comic vices and comic virtues. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 23, 1-26.

Müller, L., & Ruch, W. (2011). *Humor and the good character: A validation study of the VIA-IS humor scale. Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6.

* Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Peterson, C., Ruch, W., Beermann, U., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2007). Strengths of character, orientation to happiness, and life satisfaction. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 2, 149-156.

Ruch, W., Proyer, R. T., & Weber, M. (2010). Humor as character strength among the elderly: Empirical findings on age-related changes and its contribution to satisfaction with life. *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, 43, 13-18.

Can laughter make us happier?

Taught by Anu Realo (Tuesday, 15:30 – 16:30)

Although the pursuit of happiness is one of the eternal human quests, psychologists are only now starting to comprehend what makes people happy. Research in the past 20 years has made considerable progress in identifying the factors that influence people's subjective well-being (SWB) or happiness. Is there a universal recipe of happiness? Is happiness in our genes? Does money buy happiness? Does happiness change with age? Can laughter make us happier? These are the questions I try to answer in this lecture.

Suggested reading:

Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. E. (2003). Personality, culture, and subjective well-being: Emotional and cognitive evaluations of life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 403-425.

Kuppens, P., Realo, A., & Diener, E. (2008). The role of positive and negative emotions in life satisfaction judgment across nations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 66-75.

Oswald, A. J., & Wu, S. (2010). Objective confirmation of subjective measures of human well-being: Evidence from the U.S.A. *Science*, 327, 576-579.

Ruch, W., Proyer, R. T., & Weber, M. (2010). Humor as a character strength among the elderly: Empirical findings on age-related changes and its contribution to satisfaction with life. *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, 43, 13-18.

COFFEE BREAK

Humor as a neutralizing metarelation

Taught by Alexander Kozintsev (Tuesday, 16:45 – 17:45)

Our mind can be self-intentional. Reflection engenders second-order attitudes (those to one's own attitudes). But whereas a serious metarelation such as that of reason to feeling implies a dual relation to a real or possible object, the humorous metarelation, which has evolved from pretence inherent in primate social play, disables any relation to the object and causes no ambivalence. Unlike all other senses, the sense of humor is entirely subjective. It has no objects in either reality or fantasy; its sole objects are empty representations with which the mind plays. Like parody, humor has no semantics; its "semantic mechanisms" are pretext. The humorous incongruity does not concern the meaning of a text or a life situation; it concerns only the preposterous ways of representing this meaning. All semantic script oppositions are thereby neutralized. Because all humor is parodic, i.e. produced by an actual or imaginary inferior Other, a theory of humor must be metasemantic rather than merely semantic.

Suggested reading:

Bateson, G. (2000/1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kant, I. (2007/1790). *Critique of judgement*. New York, NY: Cosimo Classics.

Kozintsev, A. (2010). *The mirror of laughter*. London, UK: Transaction.

Zahavi, D. (1999). *Self-awareness and alterity: A phenomenological investigation* (pp. 14-21). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Poster session (Estonian Literary Museum, lecture hall; will be available for the next days)

17:45 – 18:45 [Graeme Ritchie]

Ilona Piirimägi, Stand-up comedy as an identity creation and maintenance mechanism for immigrants in Estonia

Raja Kamariah, The meaning and experience on the use of humor among elderly Malays in Putrajaya, Malaysia

Pirjo Nuutinen, Humor and power in Finnish school education

Bastian Meyerhofer, Cognitive processes during belief revision in garden-path jokes: An ERP study

Comedy night at Wilde pub, Vallikraavi 4 (19:00 – 22:00)

WEDNESDAY (17. AUGUST)

Meet the lecturer

9:00 – 9:30 EKM lecture hall

Morning session

Chair: Wladislaw Chlopicki

Correlation and significance: The basic concepts

Taught by Graeme Ritchie (Wednesday, 9:30 – 10:30)

This talk gives an elementary introduction to two basic ideas, which appear in many empirical studies of humour. Correlation is a statistical measure of the extent to which there is a relationship between the variation in two quantities, such as sense of humour and extraversion. Statistical significance is an estimate of the likelihood that a pattern in a set of data (such as a correlation) has occurred by chance. We will explain the ideas underlying both of these notions, with illustrative examples and discussion of some possible errors to be careful of. No real mathematical or statistical knowledge is needed, and precise technical definitions will be avoided; instead, the emphasis will be on the intuitions underlying these two concepts. The aim is to allow an audience, which does not have a background in experimental statistics to grasp the overall picture when presented with results of experiments and studies.

Suggested reading:

Graham, A. (2010). *Understand statistics. (Teach Yourself Series)*. London, UK: Hodder. [This is an *extremely* elementary introduction to probability and basic statistical ideas.]

Howitt, D., & Cramer, D. (2010). *Introduction to statistics in psychology*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education. [A standard student textbook now in its 5th edition. Not just for psychologists.]

Siegel, S., & Castellan, N. J. (1988). *Nonparametric statistics for the behavioural sciences*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. [A more advanced, and quite thorough, textbook, providing a wider range of types of test.]

COFFEE BREAK

Nasty humour as great literature

Taught by Christie Davies (Wednesday, 11:00 – 12:00)

The lecture will discuss Jaroslav Hasek's Good Soldier Svejk, Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quijote, Kingsley Amis' The Alteration, Evelyn Waugh's Decline and Fall and Rudyard Kipling's ballad Loot. The authors are all recognized as great writers, their works are very funny and they contain incidents that in the real world we would find repellent and immoral. Humorous discourse radically differs from serious discourse. The incidents are described in language that is mocking. Attempts to reinterpret the texts in ways that ignore or soften their nastiness are unconvincing.

Suggested reading:

Ayres, R. (2011). Loot. http://www.kipling.org.uk/rg_loot1.htm

Davies, C. (2000). The savage style of Jaroslav Hasek: The good soldier Svejk as a politically incorrect masterpiece. *Stylistika*, 9, 301-315.

Davies, C. (2003) Kipling's comic and serious verse. *The Kipling Journal*, 77, 34-54.
<http://www.johnradcliffe.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/textfiles/KJ308.txt>

Humor as play, laughter as play signal

Taught by John Morreall (Wednesday, 12:00 – 13:00)

Although humorous amusement is often thought of as an emotion, it differs from standard emotions in its emotional disengagement. Emotions typically involve a practical orientation toward the object of emotion: in fear we focus on danger and ways to escape it, in anger we focus on some harm or injustice and overcoming it. In emotions there is something to be gained or lost, and so something to be done. When we laugh about something, by contrast, we drop our practical and even our cognitive concerns. We don't care about accomplishing anything, but are simply enjoying the funny object. Physically, laughter blocks muscular coordination and interferes with breathing and speech. I explain these differences by analyzing humor as a kind of play, and exploring the theory that laughter evolved from play signals in earlier apes.

Suggested reading:

- Chafe, W. (2007). *The importance of not being earnest: The feeling behind laughter and humor*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Morreall, J. (2009). *Comic relief: A comprehensive philosophy of humor*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Chapters 2 and 3)
- Van Hooff, I. (1972). A comparative approach to the phylogeny of laughter and smiling. In R. A. Hinde (Ed.), *Non-verbal communication* (pp. 209-241). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

LUNCH BREAK

Excursion to Tartu (*Town Hall Square, 17:00*)

Beer tasting at the German Culture Institute, Kastani 1 (*19:00 – 21:00*)

THURSDAY (18. AUGUST)

Meet the lecturer

9:00 – 9:30 EKM lecture hall

Morning session

Chair: Graeme Ritchie

Assessment of the sense of humour: Another appraisal of the state of the art

Taught by Willibald Ruch (Thursday, 9:30- 10:30)

Almost 20 years ago I was invited to appraise the state of the art in the assessment of humour. In the keynote to the ISHS conference in Luxembourg in 1993 I presented a rather unenthusiastic view on the psychometric quality of the existing humour scales. Subsequently, new instruments were constructed and some of which were presented in a special issue on the measurement of the sense of humour (Ruch, 1996). What has happened since then—are we happy with the instruments available to assess humour? The presentation will give a historical account of the development of assessment of humour, discuss the criteria available for evaluating scales, present a classification of instruments and finally present and evaluate individual scales. It will be shown that despite the flourishing research on the sense of humour and the ongoing construction of instruments we are still a far cry away from having solved the relevant issues. Time will be reserved for interaction, as delegates might want to have their problems discussed; i.e., what kind of scales should be used for what kind of research questions.

Suggested* and further reading:

- Martin, R. A. (2007). *The psychology of humor: An integrative approach*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Ruch, W. (2004). Humor. In C. P. Peterson & M. E. P. Seligman (Eds.), *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook of classification* (pp. 583-598). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Ruch, W. (2007) (Ed.). *The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ruch, W. (2008). The psychology of humor. In V. Raskin (Ed.), *A primer of humor* (pp. 17-100). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

COFFEE BREAK

Funny business: The benefits of humor at work

Taught by John Morreall (Thursday, 11:00 – 12:00)

This presentation is based on 22 years of doing seminars for corporations, medical groups, and educational groups ranging from pre-schools to medical schools. Check www.humorworks.com. Using lots of examples, we'll discuss three benefits of humor. First it fosters physical and mental health, especially by reducing stress. Secondly, it promotes mental flexibility: the ability to cope with change, handle mistakes in a constructive way, and solve problems creatively. And thirdly, humor works as a social lubricant, creating rapport and team spirit, and smoothing out potential rough spots with colleagues and with clients. We will include discussions of differences between women's humor and men's, and practical tips for incorporating humor into messages.

Suggested reading:

Morreall, J. (1997). *Humor works*. Amherst, MA: HRD (Human Resource Development) Press.

Workshop 1: Build your own jokes

Taught by Graeme Ritchie (Thursday, 12:00 – 13:30)

We will start with a brief summary of the state of the art in getting computer programs to create jokes, highlighting a particular strand of work on punning riddles (simple question-answer jokes with word-play in the answer, as enjoyed by children). A recent example of such software, the STANDUP interactive riddle program (<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/jokingcomputer>), will be demonstrated in action. Then the audience will get a chance to try out these joke-building methods, by carrying out pencil-and-paper exercises in which they try to follow the same rules as STANDUP uses. If time permits, there will then be a discussion of what we can and cannot learn about humour from this line of work.

Suggested reading:

Hulstijn, J., & Nijholt, A. (1996). *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Computational Humor. Twente Workshops on Language Technology 12*. Enschede, The Netherlands: University of Twente.

Mihalcea, R., & Pulman, S. (2007). *Characterizing humour: An exploration of features in humorous texts*. Proceedings of the Conference on Computational Linguistics and Intelligent Text Processing (CICLing). Mexico City, Mexico: Springer.

Mihalcea, R., & Strapparava, C. (2006). Learning to laugh (automatically): Computational models for humor recognition. *Journal of Computational Intelligence* 22, 126-142.

Manurung, R., Ritchie, G., Pain, H., Waller, A., O'Mara, D., & Black, R. (2008). The construction of a pun generator for language skills development. *Applied Artificial Intelligence*, 22, 841-869.

Ritchie, G. (2004). *The linguistic analysis of jokes*. London, UK: Routledge.

Stock, O., Strapparava, C., & Nijholt, A. (2002). *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Computational Humor (TWLT14)*. Enschede, The Netherlands: University of Twente.

OR

Workshop 2: How to measure smiling and laughter: Learning the basics of the Facial Action Coding System – FACS

Taught by Willibald Ruch and Tracey Platt (Thursday, 12:00 – 13:30)

FACS (Ekman, Friesen, & Hager, 2002) objectively describes and measures facial expressions and movements. Based on an anatomical analysis of facial action, it offers an advanced method for describing facial movements as they relate to emotions. FACS therefore is an ideal tool for research of the emotional responses to humour since it allows a distinction among different smiles and laughs (only one of which indicates positive affect) and to score basic parameters such as frequency, intensity, duration, or symmetry. It has been successfully applied to study exhilaration/amusement before and it is superior to other methods used in humour research such as the "mirth-

index". The workshop consists of pre-workshop reading of Chapter one of the FACS-Manual, plus one-hour sessions each on the Action Units (AUs) relevant for smiling and laughter: AU6 ("Cheek raiser & Lid compressor"), AU12 ("Lip Corner Puller"), AU13 ("Sharp Lip Puller"), AU14 ("Dimpler"), AU20 ("Lip Stretcher"), AU25 ("Lips part"), and AU26 ("Jaw drop") and the ones relevant for emotions. For the workshop make sure to bring a small mirror with you

Suggested* and further reading:

Ekman, P., Friesen, W., & Hager, J. (2002). *Facial Action Coding System*. [CD-ROM.] Available from http://face-and-emotion.com/dataface/facs/new_version.jsp, <http://face-and-emotion.com/dataface/general/homepage.jsp>

*Ekman, P. & Rosenberg, E. L. (Eds.). (2005). *What the face reveals. Basic and applied studies of spontaneous expression using the Facial Action Coding System*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ruch, W. (2009). Unresolved issues in research on humour and laughter: The need for FACS-studies. In E. Bänninger-Huber, & D. Peham (Eds.), *Proceedings of the FACS-Workshop 2007* (pp. 42-46). Innsbruck, Austria: Innsbruck University Press.

LUNCH BREAK

Afternoon session: Symposium (14:30 – 19:00)

Chair: Willibald Ruch

14:30 Differences of Duchenne smiles for those with fear of being laughed at, Tracey Platt

14:50 Office humour – a comparative study of the TV sitcom *The Office*, Kai Schwind

15:10 Instrumental othering or primary devices in visual ethnic caricature, Dagnoslaw Demski

15:30 Positioning political comedy in theories of deliberative democracy and the public sphere, Alison O'Connor

15:50 The Development of humor and its implication to culture, Raja Kamariah

16:10 How were political jokes transmitted in Soviet Estonia? A case study. Martin Rebane

COFFEE BREAK

16:50 Reducing the seriousness of utterance: an effect of an elegance of style? Marge Käsper

17:10 "Bears bumped off the bee-keeper": Moscow Mayor's dismissal joke cycle, Anastasiya Ilchanka

17:30 Humour in music, Maria Goeth

17:50 Mapping the history of religious satire in Europe, Dennis Mayhoff Brink

18:10 On the relations between joking questions and paremiology – Proverbs in the service of humour creation, Piret Voolaid

18:30 Food for Thought or Food for the Sharks? A reevaluation of the bad joke, Kara Hunt

Jury and awards (18:45 – 19:00)

Advisory Board meeting (19:00 – 21:00)

FRIDAY (19. AUGUST)

Meet the lecturer

9:00 – 9:30 EKM lecture hall

Morning session

Chair: John Morreall

Hypothesis testing and refutation in the study of jokes: Some methodological questions

Taught by Christie Davies (Friday, 9:30 – 10:30)

Ideally a theory about sets of jokes should lead to hypotheses that are testable and subject to possible refutation. This is possible when a set of jokes such as stupidity jokes are applied to a variety of targets. A good explanation will cover all or most cases and is vastly superior to an ad hoc explanation of a single case. Using comparisons between ethnic jokes about stupidity it was possible utterly to undermine explanations of particular single cases in terms of hostility or aggression. This also required asking the question, what are the stupidity jokes that could be told but are not? The hypothesis was then put forward that those at the centre of a nation or cultural entity are always told about ‘cousins’ i.e. people similar to the joke-tellers but living at the geographical, social and linguistic and often economic periphery. The butts of the jokes are however not marginal or excluded people. It was postulated that when other already existing but as yet unexamined cases were uncovered they would follow the same pattern. Liisi Laineste then claimed that this hypothesis was falsified by her finding that Estonians told stupidity jokes about Finns even though Finland was on the face of it at the centre and Estonia at the periphery. This raises three questions. First ‘is this an exception?’. Second at what point does an exception refute a theory rather than merely being an anomaly that can be treated as a special case for given reasons. Third, ‘given that human beings have free will, what is to stop them in the future breaking the implicit cultural rules of the past?’ Given that there are clearly many non-ethnic stupidity jokes about, for example, aristocrats, athletes, blondes, carabinieri, dictators, marines, rustics etc, it also raises the question about whether a new and more theory is needed to encompass these and how such a theory will relate to the earlier one.

Where only one set of jokes exist. As with sex jokes about the French, but where they persist over a long time then a historical explanation is called for and these are by their very nature contentious. However, it is still possible to use factual information to show that some explanations are just plain wrong such as Delabatista’s explanation of Shakespeare’s comic Welsh characters based on a fashionable literary theory that must now itself be regarded with suspicion. Indeed literary theories are not proper theories rooted in the empirical world but arbitrary and often ideological statements about texts. They are often formulated in an utterly obscure way and are “not even false!” and you can’t say worse than that.

Suggested reading:

Davies, C. (1990). *Ethnic humor around the world* (pp. 40-83). Indiana, IN: Indiana University Press.

Davies, C. (2006). Comic Welsh English in Shakespeare, a reply to Dirk Delabatista. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 19, 189-200.

Davies, C. (2011). *Jokes and targets*. (pp 213-52). Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Laineste, L. (2006). Targets in Estonian jokes within the theory of ethnic humour (Ch. Davies) *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 29, 7-24. <http://folklore.ee/Folklore/vol 29/ davies.pdf>.

COFFEE BREAK

Cognitive construals in jokes - Visual logical mechanisms

Taught by Wladislaw Chlopicki (Friday, 11:00 – 12:00)

The relationship between humour and perceptual imagery (visual, motor, as well as auditory imagery) is a complex one. According to humour scholars such as Raskin (1985) and Attardo (2001), who developed the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), humour is based on conceptual (Script) Opposition (SO) as well as other Knowledge Resources (Logical Mechanism (LM), Situation (SI), Target (TA), Narrative Structure (NS) and Language (LA)). The LM is particularly well discussed in the theory with a good number of mechanisms listed, although not always well defined and differentiated by Attardo (2001) and Attardo et al (2002): Role-reversals, Vacuum reversal, Garden-path, Almost situations, Inferring consequences, Coincidence, Proportion, Exaggeration, Meta-humor, Role exchanges, Juxtaposition, Figure-ground reversal, Analogy, Reasoning from false premises, Parallelism, Ignoring the obvious, Field restriction, Vicious circle, Potency mappings, Chiasmus, Faulty reasoning, Self-undermining, Missing link, Implicit parallelism, False analogy, Cratylism, Referential ambiguity (Attardo 2001: 27). Visual, motor or auditory aspects of humour seem to form part of SI and sometimes SO or LM, and their role is significant, but not always central. In this paper I will postulate a scalar approach to perceptual imagery and will illustrate each rung of the scale with joke examples, completing the discussion with “visually loaded” extracts of a humorous short story, where the perceptual imagery plays the central role. I will also compare the GTVH approach to joke analysis with the now popular cognitive analysis in terms of image schemas and other construals developed by a number of researchers including Langacker, Croft and Cruse or Talmy, e.g. facets, profiling, scope of attention, coarse vs fine-grained view, gradability, subjectivity vs. objectivity or forced dynamics. In the end I will postulated a visual LM as an extra logical mechanism in some jokes.

Suggested reading:

Attardo, S. (2001). *Humorous texts: A semantic and pragmatic analysis*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

Chlopicki, W. (2001). Humorous and non-humorous stories: Are there differences in frame-based reception? *Stylistyka (Style and Humour)*, 10, 59-78.

Chlopicki, W. (2006). Humour and cognition: Dynamics of characters and events. In P. Chruszczewski (Ed.), *Język a komunikacja: Vol. 10. At the crossroads of linguistic sciences* (pp. 331-347). Kraków, Poland: Tertium.

Kovecses, Z. (2010). “Girding up the loins”: A cognitive semantic analysis of humorous expressions. In A. T. Litovkina, P. Barta, & M. Daczi (Eds.), *Humor and culture: Vol. 1. Linguistic shots at humor* (pp. 103-120). Kraków, Poland: Tertium.

Relationships of punchlineless (and in general older) "Schwanks" and contemporary punchlined jokes ("Witzes")

Taught by Arvo Krikmann (Friday, 12:00 – 13:00)

The lecture aims to examine briefly the following subtopics:

1. The main compositional types of non-punchlined “ATU-Schwanks”.
2. Theoretical criteria for and practical difficulties of distinguishing non-punchlined “Schwanks” from punchlined “Witzes”: examination of some borderline cases; incapability of Attardo’s GTVH and other models to serve as tools for making distinction between punchlined and non-punchlined forms of jokes.
3. The problem of “temporal succession” of Schwanks and Witzes in the historical development of narrative jokelore
4. Some remarks on tales about Hodja Nasreddin, perhaps the most well-known representative of “wise fools” in the world folklore. The enormous (mostly Oriental) repertoire of Nasreddin humour reveals an ultimate structural diversity: it includes a lot of classical “ATU”-Schwanks, a lot of inevitably punchlined items, etc. However, Hodja tales reveal a peculiar technical characteristic: the lion’s share (83-94%) of these tales in all relevant sources are ending with a phrase said by Nasreddin.
5. Thus the hypothesis worthy of further testing could be: Perhaps the main structural watershed of jokeloric items does not go between the older non-punchlined Schwank as such and contemporary punchlined joke as such, but

between the tales with a certain “real” or “material” solution of a certain problem and tales ending with somebody’s comment, i.e. the direct speech.

Suggested reading:

Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

Başgöz, İ., & Bertev N. B. (1998). *I, Hoca, Nasreddin, never shall I die. A thematic analysis of Hoca stories*. Indiana: Indiana University Turkish Studies Series.

Krikmann, A. (2008). “ATU jokes”: *Old and abandoned*. ISHS 20th Annual Conference. Alcalá de Henares (Spain). July 7-11, 2008; http://www.folklore.ee/~kriku/HUUMOR/KRIKMANN_ATU_ready.pdf

Krikmann, A. (2010). *Tales about Hodja Nasreddin*. Conference “From Language to Mind IV”. Elva (Estonia), September 16, 2010; http://www.folklore.ee/~kriku/TRANSPORT/KRIKU_Nasreddin_Elva2010.ppt

Oring, E. (1989). Between jokes and tales: On the nature of punch lines. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 2, 349-364.

LUNCH BREAK

Afternoon session

Chair: Dorota Brzozowska

Is seriousness the opposite of laughter?

Taught by Seppo Knuutila (Friday, 14:30 – 15:30)

As humoral theory on human characters and world views made way for modern scholarly medicine in the 18th century, the meaning of humor as a quality of mind remained as such in many languages, but the word also came to mean something that isn’t true anymore, or something that belongs in the world of fallacies. This is one of the ways that the idea of the contradiction between truth and non-truth has developed in the conceptual history of humor. Nevertheless, the mixtures of humor, laughter and the comical can be well argued as culturally defined forms of meanings which cannot be deducted exhaustively from some other world of meanings. To see or present a thing as comical or amusing is to comprehend its meaning in a certain way. In my presentation I look at how comical and serious contradictions are built of various cognitive and experiential elements, conflicting emotions, taboos and ways around them, breaking taboos, and other interpretations. I will analyze how this may form emergent bodies of humorous meanings.

Suggested reading:

Bahtin, M. (1995/1965). *François Rabelais – keskiajan ja renessanssin nauru* (Tvoršestvo Fransua Rable i narodnaja kultura srednevekovja i renessansa.). Taifuuni, Finland. Helsinki.

Descartes, R. (2005/1649). *Sielun liikutukset* (Les passions de l’âme.) Suom. Timo Kaitaro. Teokset IV. Helsinki, Finland: Gaudeamus.

Lotman, J. (1989/1973). Elokuvan semiotiikkaa ja elokuvaestetiikan ongelmia. (Semiotika kino in problemy kinoestetiki.) In J. Lotman, *Merkkien maailma. Kirjoitelmia semiotiikasta*. Helsinki, Finland: SN-kirjat OY.

Lihatšev, D. (1994). Johdatus nauruun. Reunamerkitöjä venäläisyydestä. (Smeh v drevnei rusi.) Pietari-säätiön julkaisuja 1. Pieksämäki.

Lockyer, S. & Pickering, M. (Eds.). (2005/2009). *Beyond a joke. The limits of humour*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Prado, C. G. (1995). Why analysis of humor seems funny. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 8, 155-166.

Comic wisdom: The affinity between humor and philosophy

Taught by John Morreall (Friday, 15:30 – 16:30)

Although philosophy is often considered thoroughly unfunny, insiders know that it is full of comic possibilities. We begin with eight similarities between philosophers and standup comedians: They are conversational. They reflect on everyday experiences. They ask questions about those experiences. In exploring those questions, they are practically detached from them. They search out new perspectives and surprising thoughts, relishing cognitive shifts. They think critically. They don't defer to authority or tradition. And they often think in counterfactuals: "What if . . . ?" With this understanding of the affinity between humor and philosophy, we criticize a school of philosophy that could have incorporated lots of humor but did not—existentialism. As a contrast to existentialism we discuss Zen Buddhism. We close with reflections on how having a sense of humor can foster wisdom, using ten kinds of knowledge that Robert Nozick includes in his description of wisdom.

Suggested reading:

Morreall, J. (2009). *Comic relief: A comprehensive philosophy of humor*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Chapters 7 and 8)

Nozick, R. (1989). What is wisdom, and why do philosophers love it so? In R. Nozick (Ed.), *The examined life: Philosophical meditations* (pp. 267-278). New York, NY: Touchstone Press.

COFFEE BREAK

Jokes about animals. Cross-cultural study

Taught by Dorota Brzozowska (Friday, 16:45 – 17:45)

The presentation shows the results of the analysis of jokes about animals in different cultures. It aims at considering the anthropocentric character of the examined texts. The material basis of the study consisted of the contemporary Internet jokes found on the website in three different languages: English, Polish and Spanish. The presence of animal world in jokes may be observed in varied forms. Animals can be the main and only butts of the jokes or they can accompany humans as side characters. They could play the role of animals, humans can be perceived as animals and animals can take the roles of humans or anthropomorphized beings having still some features associated with animals. Each of these groups is evaluated in a certain way causing that all the relations may be seen in a context as a result of allocentric, anthropocentric or neutral point of view.

Taking the above mentioned categories into consideration, the author analyses the jokes representing different types of the butts and shows the relations between a linguistic picture of the world and the scripts present and most often used in jokes about animals. Another interesting question concerns the reasons why some of the animals were chosen to be present in particular cultures and some were not. Thus, the importance of animal symbols presented in each of the five analyzed cultures was also researched.

Suggested reading:

Leach, E. (1966). Anthropological aspects of language: Animal categories and verbal abuse. In E. H. Lenneberg (Ed.), *New directions in the study of language* (pp. 23-63). Cambridge, MA: M. I. T. Press.

Lefcourt, H. M. (1996). Perspective-taking humor and authoritarianism as predictors of anthropocentrism. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 9, 61-75.

Closing dinner at the University of Tartu Botanical gardens, Lai 40 (19:00 – 21:00)

Meet the lecturer

9:00 – 9:30 EKM lecture hall

Morning session

Chair: Arvo Krikmann

The ethics of humor

Taught by John Morreall (Saturday, 9:30 – 10:30)

Although laughter and humor are valued by most people today, earlier generations had many objections to them, mostly ethical objections. So, for example, when the Puritans took control of England in the 17th century, they outlawed comedy. This session begins with an introduction to how philosophers think about ethical issues. We look at ancient and modern approaches, including Virtue Ethics, Stoicism, Hedonism, Natural Law Ethics, Duty Ethics, and Utilitarianism. Then we discuss nine traditional objections to laughter and humor: humor is insincere, humor is idle, humor diminishes self-control, humor is hedonistic, humor fosters sexual license, humor is irresponsible, humor is hostile, humor fosters anarchy, and humor is foolish. We rebut these nine as general objections to humor by referring back to Morreall's earlier lecture on humor as play. Any play activity has these dangers, but there is no necessary connection between humor and harm. In fact, though it involves a non-practical attitude, humor often has benefits. Here we explore some of the virtues that humor can foster: open-mindedness, seeing oneself objectively rather than egocentrically, patience, tolerance, graciousness, and courage.

Suggested reading:

Morreall, J. (2009). *Comic relief: A comprehensive philosophy of humor*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. (Chapters 5 and 6)

COFFEE BREAK

Mark Twain and the complexities of American humor

Taught by Holger Kersten (Saturday, 11:00 – 12:00)

The American writer Mark Twain has for a long time been regarded as the country's greatest humorist. But since his writings, in their original versions and in translations, are rknown to a large audience outside the United States, his reputation also has an international dimension. Especially his books about Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn and the countless funny sayings and anecdotes that are associated with his name have contributed much to the notion that Mark Twain was a quintessential funny man.

A portrait of Mark Twain as a perpetual joker and comedian, however, does not capture the complexities of the man and his sophisticated use of humor in fiction and real life. Consequently, this lecture will attempt to provide a more inclusive view of Twain's achievements as a humorist by giving a short survey of the various types of humor Twain used throughout his career and by addressing the functions of his humor and the responses it received. In presenting and discussing these issues, the lecture hopes to shed light on the intricate interplay of cultural forces that shaped the production and the reception of humor in Twain's time.

Suggested reading:

Cox, J.M. (1966). *Mark Twain: The fate of humor*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Lynn, K.S. (1960). *Mark Twain and southwestern humor*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Budd, L.J. "Mark Twain: The ecstasy of humor." *Quarry Farm Papers: An Occasional Publication of the Elmira*

College Center for Mark Twain Studies 1995.

- Budd, L.J. (2005). Mark Twain's visual humor. In P. Messent & L.J. Budd (eds.), *A companion to Mark Twain*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 469-84.
- Nickels, C.C. (2005). Mark Twain and post-civil war humor. In P. Messent & L.J. Budd (eds.), *A companion to Mark Twain*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 485-99.
- Camfield, G. (2005). Mark Twain and amiable humor. In P. Messent & L.J. Budd (eds.), *A companion to Mark Twain*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 500-12.
- Michelson, B. (2005). Mark Twain and the enigmas of wit. In P. Messent & L.J. Budd (eds.), *A companion to Mark Twain*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 514-29.

Jokes about particular sets of women: Mothers in law (wife's mother), blondes, Jewish women, female car drivers and lesbians

Taught by Christie Davies (Saturday, 12:00 – 13:00)

All these jokes about sets of women are invented and told by men but they are not about women in general for there is no unifying theme. They have rough equivalents in jokes about sets of men also invented and told by men such as jokes about army sergeants, stupid athletes and male car drivers. Jewish jokes about Jewish women do not get told about other women but do have a counterpart in Jewish jokes about Jewish men. Women do not in general invent jokes; thus in societies where the wife is forced into close contact with her husband's mother there are many proverbs about unpleasant and tyrannical mothers in law but no jokes about this tense relationship. Even in European societies women often resent their mothers in law and enjoy men's jokes about mothers in law but the jokes are invented by men about the man's mother in law. The exception may prove to be contemporary jokes about lesbians invented by lesbians. Each of these jokes about sets of women has to be explained in terms of the same kinds of social variables as jokes about men. The reason why men rather than women respond to these social situations with jokes rather than personal involvement has as much to do with differences in brain function as with social convention.

Suggested reading:

- Bing, J., & Heller, D. (2003). How many lesbians does it take to screw in a light bulb? *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 16, 157-182.
- Cotterill, P. (1996). It's only a joke: The role of humour in mother-in-law relationships. In G. E. C. Paton, C. Powell, & S. Wagg (Eds.), *The social faces of humour* (pp. 193-217). Aldershot, UK: Arena.
- Davies, C. (1990). An explanation of Jewish jokes about Jewish women *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 3, 363-378.
- Davies, C. (2011). *Jokes and targets*. Indiana, IN: Indiana University Press.

LUNCH BREAK

Afternoon session

Chair: Graeme Ritchie

What is funny to whom and why? New findings in humour appreciation and personality

Taught by Willibald Ruch (Saturday, 14:30 – 15:30)

There is increasing evidence that both structure and content contribute to the liking of humour and hence modern tests of humour appreciation (EUHA: Carretero-Dios, Pérez, & Buéla-Casal, 2010; 3WD by Ruch, 1992) contain both content and structure dominated scales. However, taxonomies of jokes and cartoons so far have not systematically applied a bimodal classification by, for example, combining the structure categories (e.g., incongruity-resolution humour, nonsense humour) with contents (beyond sexual humour, e.g., aggressive, scatological, black, female or male put down humour). The rationale for studying the relationship between individual differences in humour appreciation and general personality traits (or more appreciation of aesthetics) will

be outlined referring to pertinent theories (Berlyne, Suls, Rothbarth & Pien, Wilson, Zuckerman) will be outlined and a review of the key classic studies as well as recent developments (Carretero-Dios, & Ruch, 2010; Ruch, & Malcherek, 2009; Savary, 2011) will be offered. Thus unit will show that appreciation of humour is strongly rooted in one's personality and best understood and predicted by an individual's general stance towards aesthetics. Liking of humour structure is particularly reflecting the degree of seeking vs. avoiding of stimulus uncertainty (vs. redundancy). Appreciation of humour content, however, seems to be best and positively (!) related by the individual's attitude towards the topic. This is why humour appreciation may well be used as an objective indicator of one's personality but is not a golden road to the unconscious or repressed conflict areas.

Suggested and further reading:

- Carretero-Dios, H., & Ruch, W. (2010). Humor appreciation and sensation seeking: Invariance of findings across culture and assessment instrument? *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 23, 427-445.
- Carretero-Dios, H., Pérez, C., & Buela-Casal. G. (2010). Assessing the appreciation of the content and structure of humor: Construction of a new scale. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 23, 307-325.
- Ruch, W. (1992). Assessment of appreciation of humor: Studies with the 3 WD humor test. In C. D. Spielberger, & J. N. Butcher (Eds.), *Advances in Personality Assessment* (Vol. 9, pp. 27-75). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ruch, W., & Hehl, F.-J. (2007). A two-mode model of humor appreciation: Its relation to aesthetic appreciation and simplicity-complexity of personality. In W. Ruch (Ed.), *The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic* (pp. 109-142). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ruch, W., & Malcherek, J. (2009). Sensation seeking, general aesthetic preferences, and humor appreciation as predictors of liking of the grotesque. *Journal of Literary Theory*, 3, 333-351.
- Savary, N. (2011). *Untersuchung über Zusammenhänge zwischen Musikpräferenzen, Humorpräferenzen und Persönlichkeit* (Music humor and personality). Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Zurich, Zurich.

Feedback and next ISS, EKM lecture hall (15:30 – 16:30)

Informal closing party for those who are still in Tartu, Town Hall Square (19:00)

End of summerschool

LECTURE MATERIALS

MONDAY (15. AUGUST)

Morning session

Chair: Willibald Ruch

An overview of humour research

Taught by Graeme Ritchie (9:30 – 10:30)

National humor - A critical perspective

Taught by Holger Kersten (11:00 – 12:00)

What is humour? Etymology and taxonomic studies

Taught by Willibald Ruch (12:00 – 13:00)

Afternoon session

Chair: Holger Kersten

Political jokes (anekdoti) and the fall of the Soviet Empire

Taught by Christie Davies (14:30 – 15:30)

Contemporary television comedy and social class

Taught by Sharon Lockyer (15:30 – 16:30)

Professional humour – Comedians and their part in humour studies

Taught by Clare Watters (16:45 – 17:45)

An Overview of Humour Research

Graeme Ritchie
University of Aberdeen

This talk:

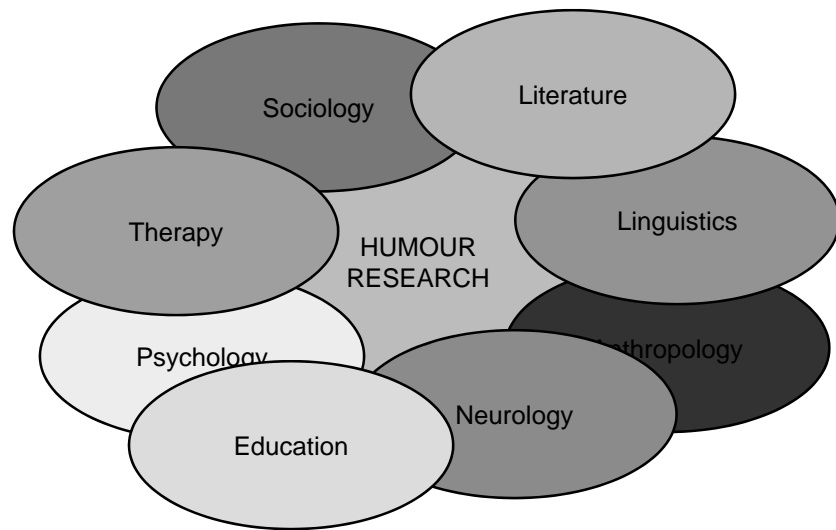
- the nature of the field
- what humour researchers do
- some basic concepts

Some history

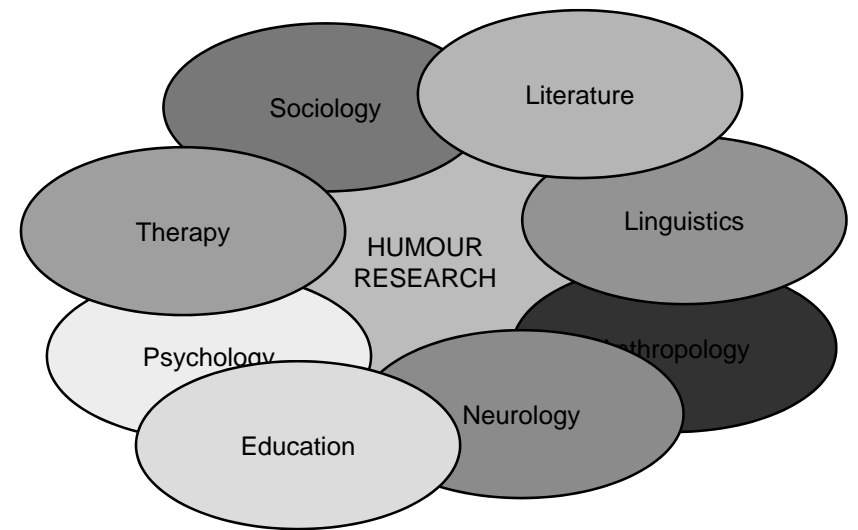
- Early philosophy and rhetoric (e.g. Aristotle, Cicero)
- 17th/18th/19th century essayists and philosophers (e.g. Hazlitt, Hobbes, Schopenhauer, Kant)
- Bergson 1900: analysis of theatrical devices, much cited
- Freud 1905: pioneering, very influential
- Modern approaches (1970s onwards): psychology, linguistics, sociology, etc.
- Expansion and broadening: late 1980s onwards.

VARIETY

- of participating disciplines
- of aims
- of methodologies
- of theories



(and others....)



MULTIDISCIPLINARY

Each discipline has its own:

- definition of what is a problem/goal
- notion of what counts as a solution
- ways of working (methodology)

Humour research is usually within one discipline's framework (its goals and methods).

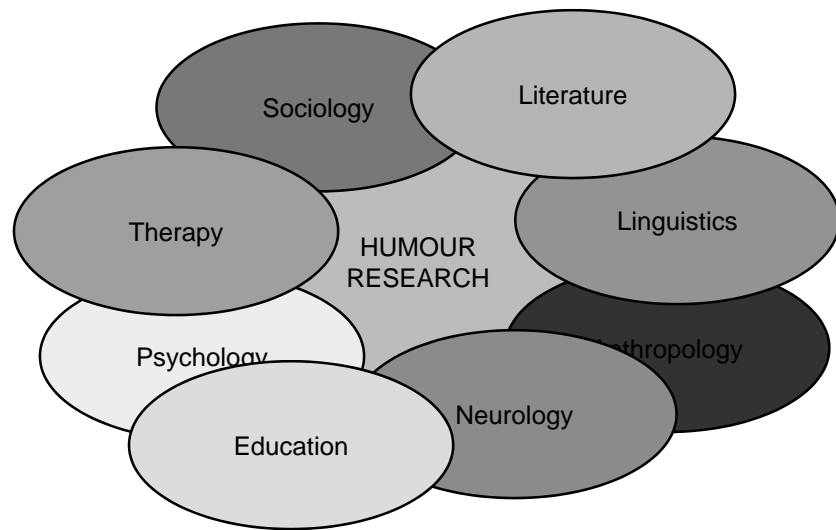
Hybrid (interdisciplinary) work is rare.

So is Humour Research a discipline in its own right?

Does it have any agreed:

- goals
- problems
- definitions of solutions
- ways of working

which are uniquely its own and not borrowed from other disciplines ?



Humour Research has:

- a journal (HUMOR)
- an international society (ISHS)
- an annual international conference
- an annual international summer school
- hundreds of active practitioners
- a growing body of published work
(but very few standard textbooks)

The Psychology of Humor : an integrative approach

Rod A. Martin. Elsevier, 2007.

(A very comprehensive survey of the field.)

The Primer of Humor Research

Victor Raskin (Ed.). Mouton de Gruyter, 2008.

(A collection of separately-authored articles.)

What do Humour Researchers do?

Here are some examples from the pages of the HUMOR journal.....

(these are all topics of articles in the journal between 1989 and 2003)

- Analysis of occurrences of humour in management meetings
- Assessment of whether schizophrenics prefer therapy sessions which involve humour
- Essay on a medieval Italian humourist
- Appraisal of whether Jewish humour is self-deprecating
- The difficulties in translating jokes
- A questionnaire-based examination of people's judgements about humorous items
- The relationship between humour and health
- A mathematical neural model of laughter
- An empirical study of humour use amongst friends
- Considering whether apes display humour
- A computer program that produces riddles
- Measuring effects of humour on problem solving
- Humour in advertising

Recent topics in Humour Research (titles from HUMOR 20, 2007)

The interaction of cartoonist's gender and formal features of cartoons
 How native and non-native speakers adapt to humor in intercultural interaction
 The laughter of the 1962 Tanganyika 'laughter epidemic'
 Burnout and humor relationship among university lecturers
 Factors predicting the perceived effectiveness of politicians' use of humor during a debate
 Lawyers' use of humor as persuasion
 "Taking the piss": Functions of banter in the IT industry
 Regional humor differences in the United States
 A comparison of humor styles, coping humor, and mental health between Chinese and Canadian university students
 Orthographic puns: The case of the Japanese kyoka
 Compounding construction in Thai: Its contribution to humor
 Translating 'humour' into Chinese culture
 Towards a functional approach to the translation of Egyptian cartoons
 Liberated jokes: Sexual humor in all-female groups
 Humor comprehension: Lessons learned from cross-cultural communication
 Interdiscourse humor: Contrast, merging accommodation
 The ambivalence over the Levantinization of Israel: "David Levi" jokes

Recent titles in Humour Research (all from HUMOR 23, 2010)

Comic vices and comic virtues
 Mow 'em all down grandma: The "weapon" of humor in two Danish World War II occupation scrapbooks
 From jeering to giggling: Spain's dramatic break from a satirical to an avant-garde humor
 The interplay of humor and conflict in conversation and scripted humorous performance
 Cooking with humor: In-group humor as social organization
 Resistance and relief: The wit and woes of early twentieth century folk and country music
 Joking as boundary negotiation among "good old boys": "White trash" as a social category at the bottom of the Southern working class in Alabama
 The paragon of animals, eh? Humor and identity in Strange Brew
 Class and gender as a laughing matter? The case of Roseanne
 Measurement of occupational humorous coping
 Assessing the appreciation of the content and structure of humor: Construction of a new scale
 Meta-communicative signals and humorous verbal interchanges: A case study
 Offensive jokes: How do they impact long-term relationships?
 Humor comprehension, humor production, and insight: An exploratory study
 Exploration of Chinese humor: Historical review, empirical findings, and critical reflections
 Humor appreciation and sensation seeking: invariance of findings across culture and assessment instrument?
 Humor in intimate relationships: Ties among sense of humor, similarity in humor and relationship quality
 The faces of humor: Humor as catalyst of face in the context of the British and the Spanish Parliament
 Asymmetry in script opposition

What do Humour Researchers do?

- Applications: how humour, or knowledge about humour, can be used for practical purposes.
- Theory: exploring what exactly humour is, how it works, how it is used, its effects.

APPLICATIONS

- Education: using humour in the classroom, or in instructional texts, or in interactive software, to improve learning.
- Management: using humour in the workplace to improve relationships and increase efficiency.
- Health: using humour as part of therapy, to improve mental, emotional or physical health.

All these are very plausible.
Rigorous scientific evidence is scarce (Martin 2007).

Difficult to distinguish the effects of humour from other effects:

- a pleasurable or relaxing experience
- accompanying phenomena (e.g. teacher's rapport with class)

THEORETICAL RESEARCH

- Description: discussing or analysing instances of humour, building up a picture of the types of humour and their occurrence.
- Measurement: making precise quantitative empirical studies
- Model-building: postulating abstract entities (e.g. emotions, ideas, meanings) whose interactions could give rise to the types and occurrences of humour which seem to exist.

DESCRIPTION

Historically, a major part of Humour Research (in philosophical and literary work).

Usually very discursive and informal.

Often an end in itself.

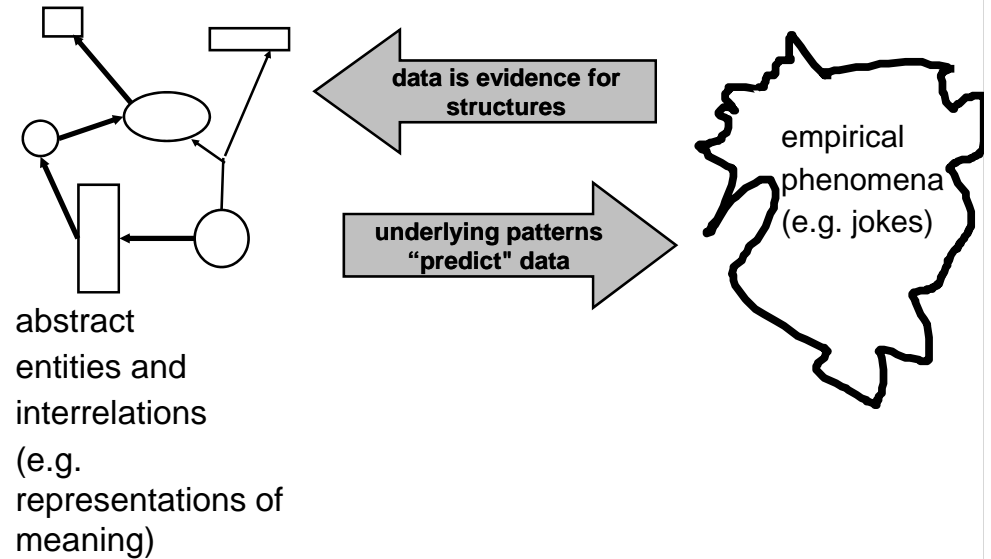
Can blend into "model-building".

Not everyone wants a theory....

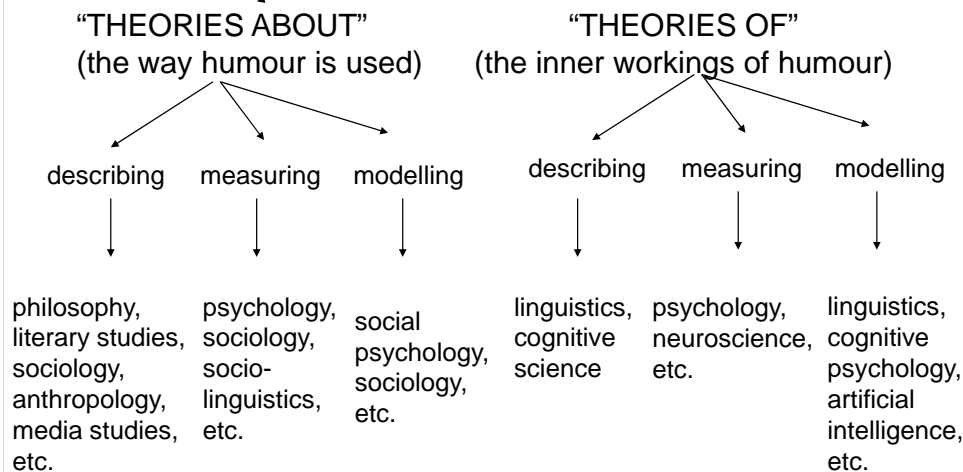
"It is the author's deeply felt conviction that in no possible sense whatsoever of the term is such a 'theory' either desirable or attainable."

(Alexander 1997, *Aspects of Verbal Humour in English*, p.18)

MODEL BUILDING

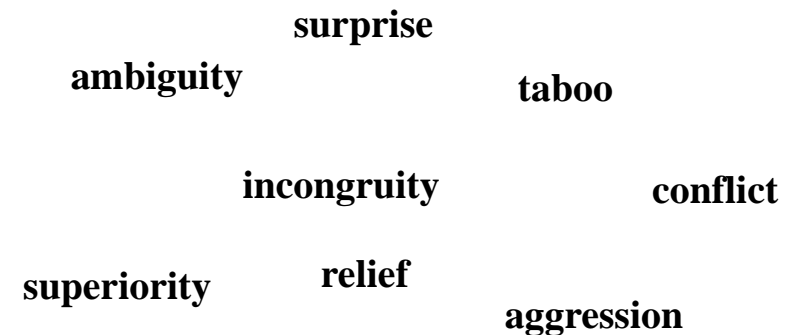


THEORETICAL RESEARCH



"Essentialist" theories

Searching for some magic ingredient



Possible kinds of theory

Conventionally, three styles of theory:

social : "superiority", "aggression",
"derision", "disparagement", "hostility"

psychoanalytic : "release", "sublimation",
"liberation", "economy"

cognitive : "incongruity", "contrast"

(This terminology from Attardo 1994, "Linguistic Theories of Humor")

Superiority/Hostility/Aggression

Hobbes (17th century) suggested we laugh at the plight of others, or at the way we were previously (e.g. before we saw the joke).

Gruner (1978,1997, and elsewhere) has argued that aggression/superiority is the essential property of humour.

Release/Relief

Freud (1905) : Jokes allow us to consider taboo subjects. The pent-up mental energy that would otherwise be used to repress these thoughts is vented in amusement.

More generally: early stage (of joke, etc.) builds up some tension, the ending releases this tension.

Incongruity

"Laughter arises from the view of two or more inconsistent, unsuitable, or incongruous parts or circumstances, considered as united in one complex object or assemblage, or as acquiring a sort of mutual relation from the peculiar manner in which the mind takes notice of them"
(Beattie 1776)

(Also Kant, Schopenhauer, Freud, Koestler, Minsky, etc.)

A widely cited version of "incongruity"

Bisociation: the perceiving of a situation or idea, L, in two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference, M₁ and M₂
(*The Act of Creation*, Koestler 1964)

Incongruity Resolution

It is not enough simply for incongruity to be present.

The incongruity must also be RESOLVED.

(This perspective is extremely popular with theorists.)

Possible kinds of theory

The three styles of "theory":

social

psychoanalytic

cognitive

These address different aspects of humour – they are not mutually exclusive.

Variety amongst the theoreticians

- No accepted theory of humour or of laughter.
(Something which "*explains what is funny, why it is funny, how it is funny, when it is funny, and to whom it is funny*" (Raskin 1998))
- No agreement about what would count as a theory.
- Different views about how to go about building a theory.

Some commonly debated topics

- What is meant by "humour"?
- Can we make progress without defining "humour"?
- How are humour and laughter related?
- Should we be examining the stimuli (e.g. jokes) or the social context?
- Can we study the humorous aspects of a joke/play/film/etc. in isolation from its political or cultural implications?
- How does humour vary across cultures?
- Is the answer to be found in brain activation (neurology)?
- Is humorous experience good for one's health?

Summing up....

- Humour is still largely unexplained.
- Humour research is a relatively new and growing field.
- Humour research is multidisciplinary.
- The aims and methods of different humour researchers vary.
- There are various practical applications of humour.
- There are various ideas about theories of humour.

So there's lots still to do.....

National Humor – A Critical Perspective

Lecture given at the
ISHS Humour Summer School
Tartu, Estonia
August 2011

Holger Kersten
Professor for American Literature and Culture
English Department
Magdeburg University, German

National Humor: Popular Opinions

The Telegraph

HOME NEWS SPORT FINANCE COMMENT BLOGS CULTURE TRAVEL
Film Harry Potter Music Art Books TV and Radio Theatre Dance Opera
Culture

Germany officially the world's least funny country

While they might be world leaders in many fields, the Germans have never really led the way in comedy.

Now an international poll appears to reinforce the humourless national stereotype after concluding that Germany is the least funny country in the world.

More than 30,000 people in 15 countries were asked to rank the nations with the worst sense of humour and Germany came out on top. . . .

July 13, 2011

National Humor: Popular Opinions

The Telegraph

HOME NEWS SPORT FINANCE COMMENT BLOGS CULTURE TRAVEL
Film Harry Potter Music Art Books TV and Radio Theatre Dance Opera
Culture
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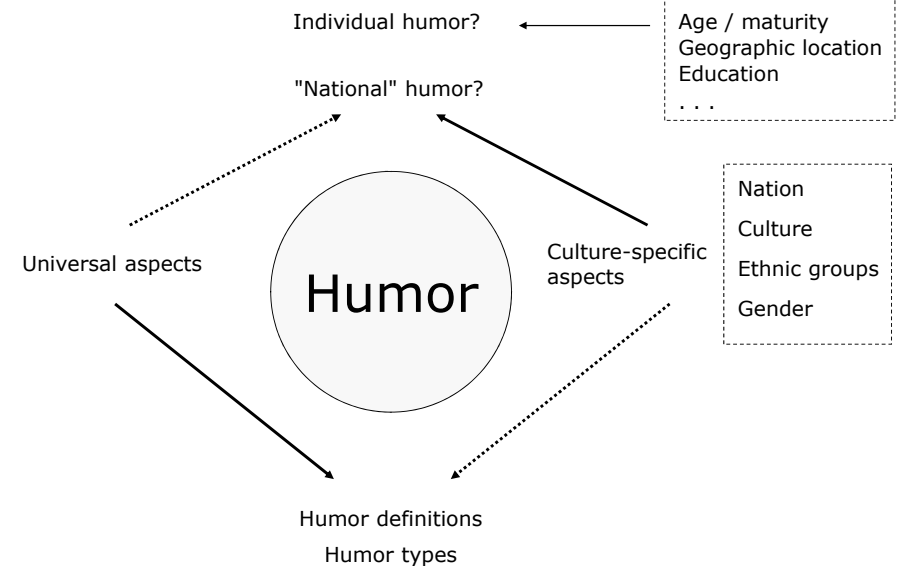
Lloyd Price, the spokesman for Badoo.com, which carried out the survey said: "Germans are brilliant at so many things, including making cars and beating us at football. Unfortunately telling jokes isn't always one of them."

Commenting on **Britain's poor showing** in the survey Mr Price said the international perception of the UK was a country whose people were uptight and reserved.

The top ten least witty countries according to the survey were:

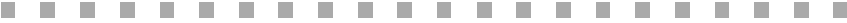
- 1 Germany
- 2 Russia
- 3 Turkey
- 4 Britain
- 5 America
- 6 France
- 7 Poland
- 8 Belgium
- 9 Holland
- 10 Canada

Introductory Reflections






The "Nation" as a Reference System

- Possible alternative reference systems:
Individual, region, group, gender, . . .
 - The concept of the "nation"
 - "Imagined communities" (Benedict Anderson)
 - The concept of a "national character"
- 

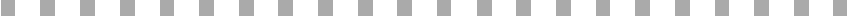


Different Approaches to the Idea of "National" Humor

- "The characteristics that (foreign) observers ascribe to an observed nation: There is no such thing as a peculiarly national humor except as it arises from the unfamiliar aspect of foreign eccentricities of language, costumes, habits, and social relations. In a word ... national humor consists not in a distinctive spirit, but only in the unfamiliar view-point of the onlooker." (Esenwein 1904: 659)
 - "What tends to become national humor is humor by and about the kinds of people who come to stand for the society as a whole – who are believed to embody the identity of the nation." Elliott Oring, *Engaging Humor*, 2003: 113)
 - "National humor" refers to
 - the body of humorous material that exists in a given nation,
 - to the humorous themes, motifs, and techniques that are often present in the comedic acts prevalent in one specific country,
 - and to the cultural conventions and rules that govern them.
- 



Factors that Influence National Humor Styles

- Language
 - History and tradition
 - Social salience of diverse topics
 - Social value attributed to humor
- 



Humor as a Cultural Code

Alan Dundes

Cracking Jokes: Studies of Sick Humor Cycles and Stereotypes (1987)

Joseph Boskin

"History and Humor" (1997)

Mahadev Apte

Humor and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach (1985)



Examples for National Humor Types

Humor in Great Britain

(Palmer in Ziv 1988)

- "It is difficult to trace direct links between this history and the nature of British humor. . . . However, certain generalizations can be made.
- First, distinctly regional styles of humor are a thing of the past. [Existing] differences are superficial compared with the profound regional differences that fissure other nations.
- Second, the quasi-universality of the English language within our boundaries means that linguistically complex humor is accessible to the great majority of the population.
- Third, the fact that we are largely a secular nation means that religious humor is not controversial in the way it would be in a fundamentally nonsecular society.
- Fourth, our relative political stability and homogeneity is perhaps the reason why humor is relatively little used as a political weapon.

Examples for National Humor Types

Humor in France

(Baudin et al. in Ziv 1988)

- "The spirit of the early Gauls lives on in what is termed Gallic wit. This earthy, frank, and unrestrained laughter where jabs at the government are interspersed with jokes on sex and adultery is a constant feature of humor in France."
- "A centralized monarchy emerged early in France's history. It brought with it a series of measures which had a profound influence on the culture and the mentality of its inhabitants. It has left its mark on French humor."
- "As for the ribald spirit, the other facet of humor inherited from those distant ancestors, the Gauls, it has always had free reign, insinuating itself in all genres, from the discreet allusion to the more or less vulgar joke, and testifies to a remarkable constancy in the psyche of a people throughout the vicissitudes of its history. Despite diverse external influences, which will be presented later, the Gallic, now French, rooster has lost nothing of its individualism and individuality."

Examples for National Humor Types

Humor in France (2)

(Baudin et al. in Ziv 1988)

- **Time periods:** Middle Ages, Renaissance Period, The Classical Period (1660-1715), The Enlightenment (1715-89), The July Monarchy (1830-48), Second Empire and the Third Republic (1852-88), development of humor in the twentieth century
- **Popular Forms:** The Feast of Fools, Entertainment by the Mummers' Guilds, Street Entertainers, Carnival, Clowns, Songs and Singers
- **Humor in the Literary and Performing Arts**
 - Coffee theatre (Le Cafe Theatre)
 - One-man Shows
 - Cartoons and Children's Literature
- **Humor in the Visual Arts and the Media**
 - Movies, Television and Radio
 - The Plastic Arts

Examples for National Humor Types

Humor in France (3): Conclusions

(Baudin et al. in Ziv 1988)

- Aggressive humor is very French: making fun of others and not of oneself The main victims are . . .
 - women;
 - the powerful (oppressive and repressive): clergy, magistrates and police, politicians and heads of state;
 - Marginal individuals and groups: social class characteristics, deviant minorities such as snobs, "artists," hippies, etc.; "strange" accents, sometimes rural, sometimes from different provinces
 - foreigners: immigrants, mostly people from neighboring countries and "hereditary enemies" (British, Spanish, Germans after 1870), peaceful neighbors (mostly Belgians, but also the Swiss) . . . This helps the French keep a superior image of themselves.
- Sexual humor is a constant in France . . . adultery, making fun of the cuckold or the deceiving lover, scatological jokes about all kinds of bodily needs
- Intellectual humor in France is chiefly verbal humor.



American Humor: The Scholarly View

Samuel S. Cox

"American Humor" (1875)

Bret Harte

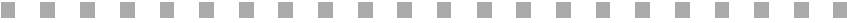
"The Rise of the 'Short Story'" (1899)

W.P. Trent

"A Retrospect of American Humor" (1901)

Constance Rourke

American Humor: A Study of the National Character (1931)



American Humor: The Scholarly View (2)

Max Eastman

Enjoyment of Laughter (1936)

Robert E. Spiller

Literary History of the United States (1946)

Brom Weber

The Art of American Humor (1962)

Louis D. Rubin

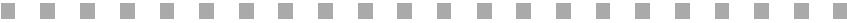
The Comic Imagination in American Literature (1971)



American Humor: Conclusions


There is a close link between humor and cultural values.

The functions of humor in American culture:

- Humor provided unity in a diverse population of various backgrounds;
 - It was seen as a major component in the newly emerging national literature;
 - It was characterized as a democratic force which planted a critical spirit in the nation and proved to be a powerful counterweight to and ultimately, replacement of, what was perceived as an elite culture saturated with European standards of taste
- 



National Humor: Conclusions

- Manifestations of humor have been regarded by literary and cultural critics as significant components in the cultural self-definition
 - Humor has served as an important factor providing group cohesion and a larger sense of cultural or national unity. At the same time, it has been one way of distinguishing one nation from another.
 - In this sense, discourses on humor provide one way of imagining a large group of unrelated people as members of one "community" (Anderson).
- 



What is humour? Etymology and taxonomic studies



Willibald Ruch
University of Zurich,
Switzerland

11th International Summer School and Symposium on



Humour and Laughter:
Theory, Research and Applications



Estonian Literary Museum Tartu, Estonia
15th– 20th August 2011



Some reading

- Craik, K. H., & Ware, A. P. (1998). Humor and personality in everyday life. In W. Ruch (Ed.), *The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic* (pp. 63-94). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ruch, W. (2007). The sense of humor: A new look at an old concept. In W. Ruch (Ed.), *The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic* (pp. 3-14). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ruch, W. (2008). The psychology of humor. In Victor Raskin (Ed.). *A Primer*. Mouton deGruyter, Berlin.
- Ruch, W. (2011). Humor und Charakter (Humor and character). In B. Wild (Ed.), *Humor in der Psychotherapie*. Stuttgart, Germany: Schattauer.
- Schmidt-Hidding, W. (1963). Europäische Schlüsselwörter. Band I: Humor und Witz [European key terms. Volume I: Humor and Wit] Munich, Germany: Huber.
- Wickberg, D. (1998). *The Senses of Humor: Self and Laughter in Modern America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

2

Dissemination

- Humor --
International Journal
of Humor Research
- Humor Research
(book series)



3

Our field

- International Society of Humor Studies-ISHS
 - Humor research (Journal of ISHS, Book Series)
 - Humorology (Apte, 1988)
- Others used
- Humor and Laughter (Chapman & Foot, 1967)
 - Gelotology (W.F. Fry & follower)
 - *Le Comique, das Komische*, the funny
- If humor is the umbrella term
- are “funny”, “witty”, “humorous” interchangeable?
 - What about Satire, Sarcasm, Fun, Mock, Ridicule, Sonsense?

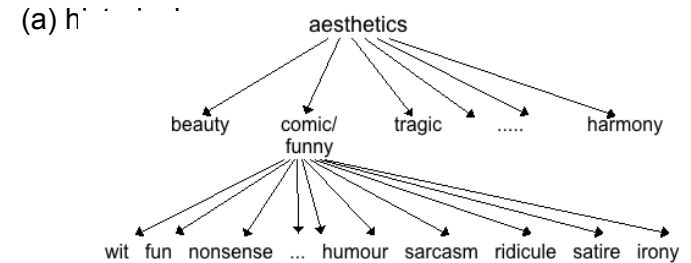
4

Do we have a consistent terminology?

- Confusing, as different terminologies co-exist
 - Historic Terminology (aesthetics)
 - explicit & comprehensive
 - not behavioural
 - Current Usage of selected terms
 - no comprehensive system or nomenclature
 - some terms precise, others are not
- Consequence: confusion in theories and research

7

The multiple usage of "humour": its place in different terminologies



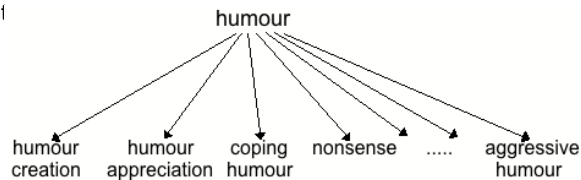
- Figure. "Humour" as part of the "funny", which is one category of aesthetics, (originally a domain of philosophy)

Note:

- *comic/funny*: the "...faculty able to make one laugh or to amuse"
- *humour*: a "smiling" attitude toward life and its imperfections; an understanding of the incongruities of existence

The multiple usage of "humour": its place in different terminologies

(b) current



- "Humour" as an umbrella term for all sort of "ridicula", as used by the current US-literature (without much reflection!)

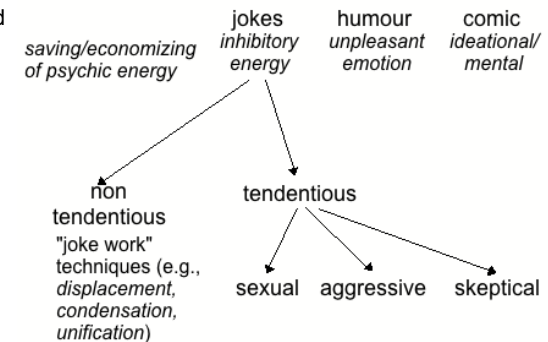
Note:

- *humour* has taken the place of the *comic/funny*; however, an umbrella term needs to be *neutral* (which humour is not).
- *coping humour* = *humour (narrow)*? *humour production* = *wit*?
- *humour* can be "aggressive"-- not in the other terminology

9

Still more confusion....

(c) Sigmund Freud



- Freud's distinction among humour, jokes, and the comic.

10

Why?

How did it come that we do have multiple usages of the term?

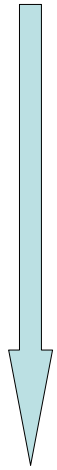
Why is it so difficult to define "humour"?

Is "What is humour?" the right question to ask?

- How have we used the term in the past?
- How did its current meaning evolve?
- How do we want to use it as a scientific term?

11

Meaning of "humour"

- 
- (a) *umor*: Latin word for liquid, fluids
 - (b) *humores*: body fluids: blood, phlegm, black & yellow bile
 - (c) humor = mood (medieval ages); of positive (good humor) or negative (bad humor) quality
 - (d) humor enters the field of the funny/comic; as the *object* of laughter (about 1680); (humorist, man of humor)
Humor & wit: *talents*; ability to make others laugh
 - (e) from *talent of humor* to virtue of *sense of humor* (end of 17th century; humanism; true/false wit, good/bad humor)
 - (e) *good humor*: sovereign attitude of exposing oneself to mockery of others ("test of ridicule"; Shaftsbury, 1671-1713)
 - (f) humor as a philosophical outlook on life (18th cent.)
 - (g) cardinal virtue (*tolerance, compromise*) (19th cent.)
 - (i) Freud (1928) a (mature) defense mechanism, etc.
 - (j) today: multiple meanings co-exist (e.g., umbrella term)

12

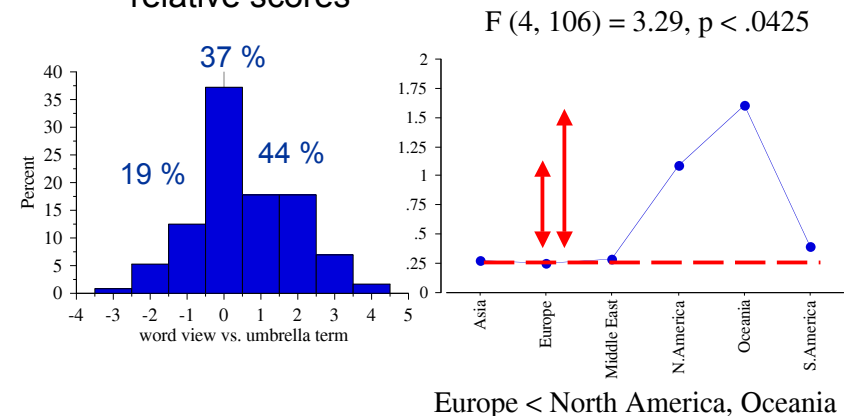
What is "humour"?

- []: "humor is an umbrella term and refers to *all* phenomena of the funny (or comic, laughable), including the capacity to perceive, interpret, and enjoy but also create and perform non-serious incongruous communications".
- []: "humor is a world view or attitude, a style of dealing with situations and life in general that allows us to derive a positive or light side in adverse and serious situations, to remain cheerful and composed, and even smile about them; i.e., at least find them marginally amusing"
- (from "1 = never heard of this use/ does not exist", to "5 = very typical understanding in my culture).

14

What is "humour"?

- relative scores



15

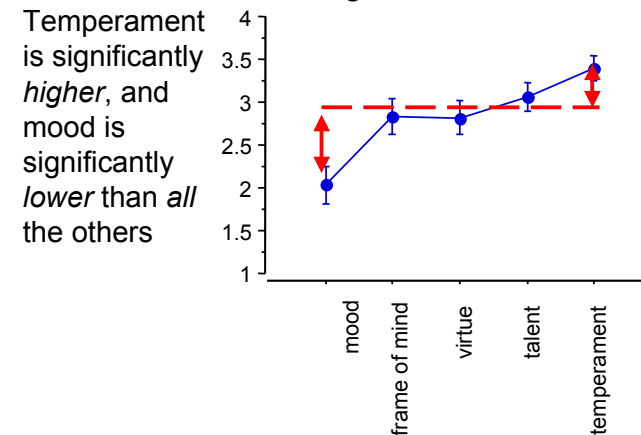
What is a “sense of humour”?

- What does your culture understand the “sense of humour” to be (tick all that apply)?
- (1 = not used at all in this sense, 4 = very much):
 - [] As a mood (like cheerfulness, sadness are)
 - [] As a frame of mind (like seriousness, playfulness are)
 - [] As a virtue (like kindness, humanity are virtues)
 - [] As a talent (an ability, like intelligence is an ability)
 - [] temperament/personality trait (like sociability, anxiety)
 - [] Other (please state)

16

What is a sense of humour?

- from 1 = not at all, to 4 = very strong



17

Mapping the territory

We don't seem to have a strong interest in structuring the field, i.e., by developing a comprehensive taxonomy, classification of the phenomena. Classifications exist, e.g.,

- humour stimuli (Jokes, cartoons, limericks, funny drawings) (Eysenck, 1952, Cattell & Luborsky, 1947)
- Perceptual qualities (Samson & Ruch, 2006)
- of theories and aspects they relate to (Eysenck, 1942; Keith-Spiegel, 1972; Nilsen & Nilsen, 2002, Moreall, 2009; Martin et al., 2003)
- Humour phenomena: (Browning, 1981), Lauer (1972), Schmidt Hidding (1963), Ziv (1980), Milner-Davis (1999).
- Humour words:
 - Mixed: Schmidt Hidding (1963), McGoldrick (2002)
 - Nouns: Ruch (1995)
 - Adjectives: Craik & Ware (1998)
- everyday humorous conduct (Craik, Lampert & Nelson, 1996)
- Comedians (O'Connell, 1976)
- Etc.

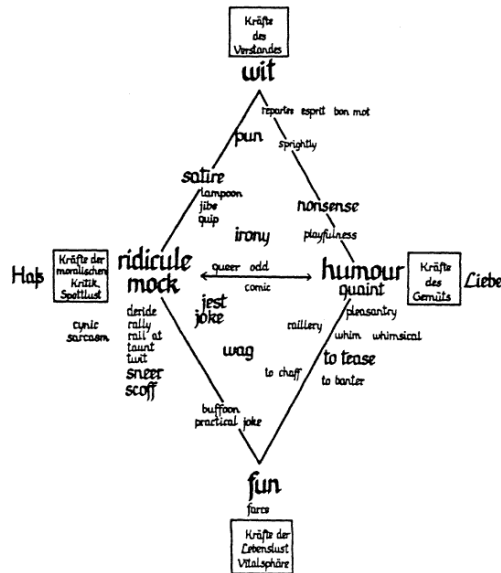
19

A lexical approach

- A pioneer: Schmidt-Hidding (1963)
- Looked up humor-related words in the English language (based on Thorndike English Dictionary)
- Grouped them according to frequency
- Identified four "key words":
 - humor
 - wit
 - mock/ridicule
 - fun

20

Schmidt-Hidding (1964):
(intuitive) model of English
humor words



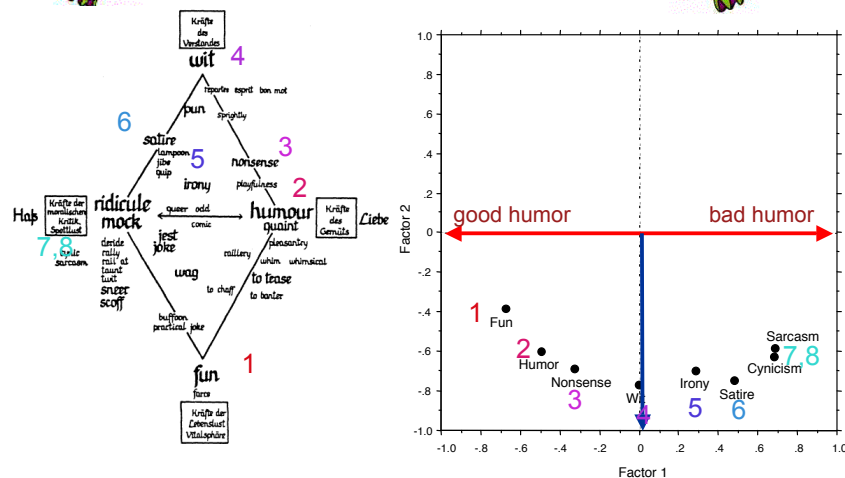
Comic styles

Schmidt-Hidding (1963)

- identified 8 major comic styles
- gave descriptions how they differ
 - 8 parameters (e.g. ideal audience, linguistic features, attitude etc.) Grouped them according to frequency
- Questionnaire study (Ruch, 1991)
 - used descriptions as items
 - 120 People described themselves
 - Factor analysis gave 2 dimensions



Structure of eight comic styles
(Ruch, 2001)



Location of the comic styles *sensu* Schmidt-Hidding in a two-dimensional space (Ruch, 2001)



A psycho-lexical approach to humor
(Ruch, 1996)

I. The factor space
of type nouns

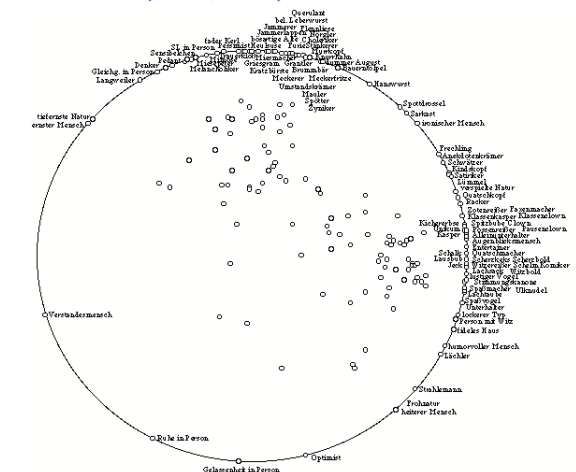
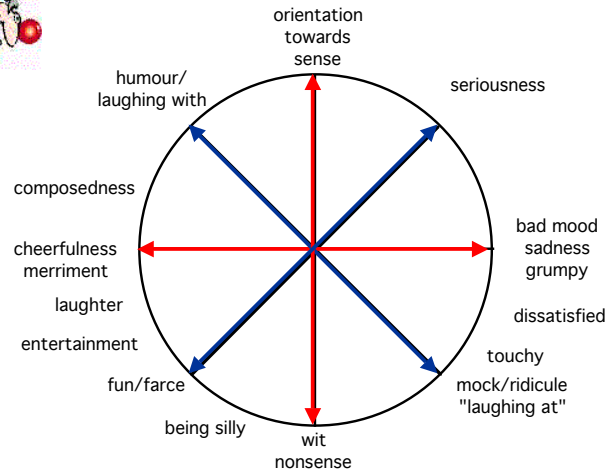


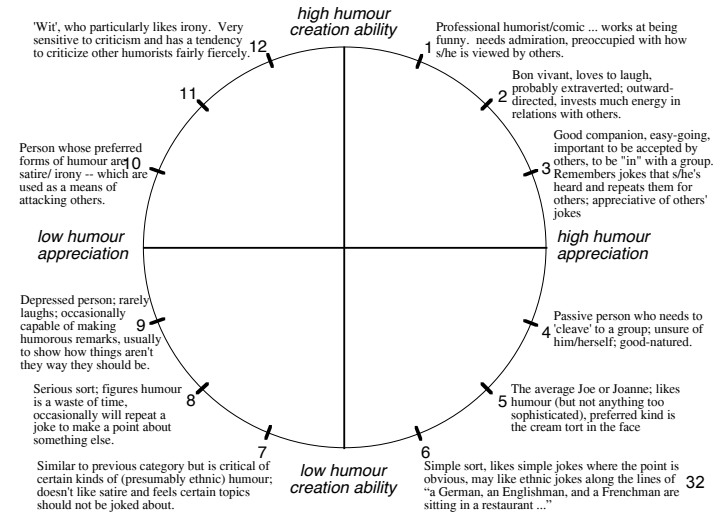
Figure. Location of humor-related type nouns in a two-dimensional space



II. Model



A circumplex model of humor creation and appreciation (Ziv, 1979)



Intuitive Model: Circumplex of humor phenomena (Lauer, 1972)

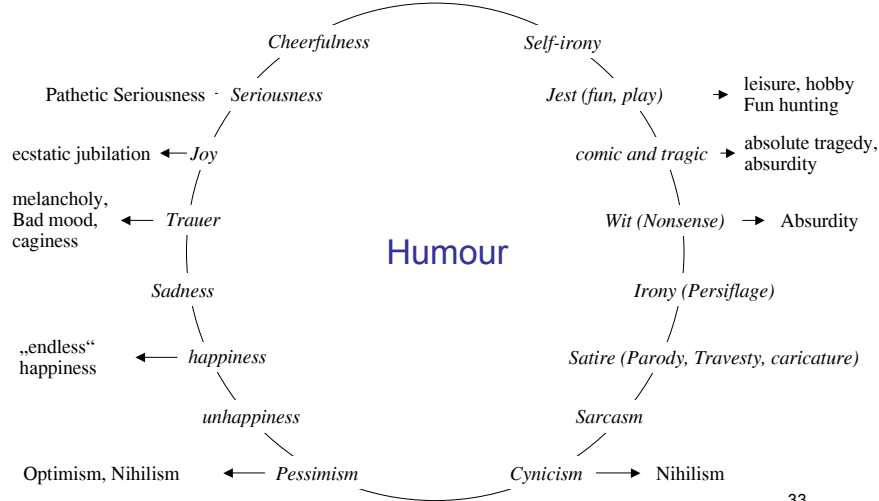
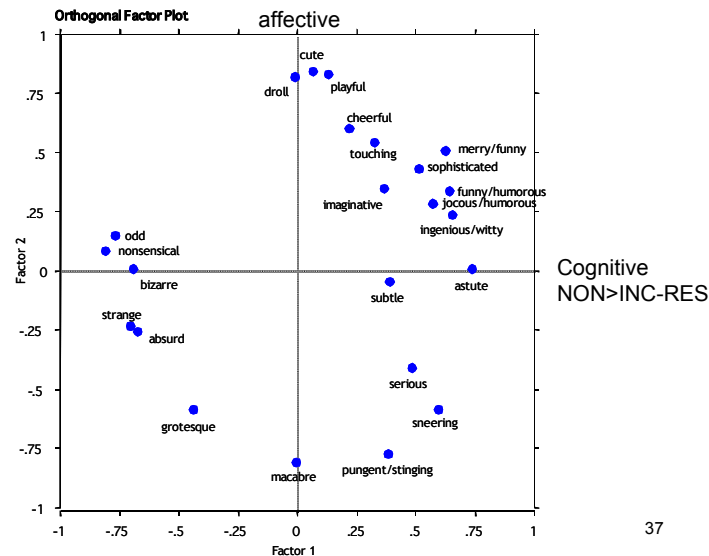


Figure. Important Elements of Humour (Lauer, 1974)

Empirical studies of perceptual qualities

- Empirical humour research implicitly assumes that the recipients response to humour varies on a dimension from not fully to extremely funny.
- Are there any qualitative differences?
 - are there differences between "witty," "funny," "ironic," "humorous"?
 - are there "tastes", like "bitter", "macabre," "salty," "black"
 - blends of qualities
- Samson & Ruch (2008) studied the following qualities:
 - absurd, astute, bizarre, cheerful, cute, droll, funny/humorous, grotesque, imaginative, ingenious/witty, macabre, merry/funny, nonsensical, odd, playful, pungent/stinging, serious, sneering, sophisticated, strange, subtle, touching
 - and found 2 dimensions accounting for the 23 qualities
 - affective factor: "cute" sv. "macabre"
 - cognitive factor: "funny, sophisticated" vs "absurd/strange"³⁶

Two dimensions of experience



37

Empirical studies: Everyday humorous conduct Humorous behaviour Q-sort Desk--HBQD (Craik, Lampert & Nelson, 1996)

- Collected all possible (?) non-redundant statements about observable everyday humour conduct.
- Used a Q-sort technique (9 steps; most-least characteristic of me) for self-and peer assessment in these 100 statements.
- Rated all statements for social desirability
- “Sense of humour“ refers to only a *subset* of those behaviours; does not cover all humour behaviours

38

Everyday humorous conduct

Humorous behaviour Q-sort Desk--HBQD
(Craik, Lampert & Nelson, 1996)

- I. Socially *Warm* vs Cold humor style
- II. *Reflective* vs Boorish humor style
- III. *Competent* vs Inept humor style
- IV. Earthy vs Repressed humor style
- V. *Benign* vs Mean-spirited humor style

Humor Styles Questionnaire--HSQ (Martin et al, 2002)
4 Styles: I. Social, II. self-enhancing, III. self-defeating,
IV. aggressive.

39

General summary

- Different terminologies co-exist currently; joint effort is needed to arrive at a common terminology
- A variety of taxonomic studies were performed for different domains of humour
- approaches were quite diverse and yielded overlapping but also diverging findings
 - Maybe convergence lies in the deeper structure while set of phenomena is different
- More elaborate large scale projects should be performed, at best interdisciplinary and in different cultures
- Language and culture barriers need to be made explicit

45

See Chapter 6 in Christie Davies “Jokes and Targets”, Bloomington Indiana, Indiana University Press 2011

HUMOUR AND PROTEST: JOKES UNDER COMMUNISM

Christie Davies

Davies, Christie (2007). Humour and Protest, Jokes under Communism, *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 52 Supplement 15, *Humour and Social Protest*, pp 291-305

Abstract

The largest corpus of jokes we have ridiculing both rulers and a political system comes from the former Soviet Union and the then communist countries of Eastern Europe. These forbidden jokes were important to those who told them at some risk to themselves. They can be construed as a form of protest but the relationship between jokes and protest is not a simple one. The number of jokes told was greater and the telling more open in the later years of the regimes, not in the earlier years of terror and extreme hardship. The number of jokes is a product of the extensiveness of political control not its intensity. Such jokes probably have no effect either in undermining a regime or in acting as a stabilising safety valve. However, they were a quiet protest, an indication that the political system lacked stability and could collapse quickly.

APPENDIX: JOKES

The Punishing of Jokers

Who Built the White Sea-Baltic Canal?

On the right bank those who told anecdotes. On the left bank those who listened.

Time of terror

What is the difference between India and Russia?

In India one man starves for the people, and in Russia the people starve for one man.

Two Russians discussed who was the greater man, Stalin or President Hoover.

“Hoover taught the Americans not to drink”, says one.

“Yes”, replies the other, “but Stalin taught the Russians not to eat”.

A Russian Jew was walking through the suburbs of Moscow when a car stopped suddenly, a man was thrown out at the side of the road and the other car sped off. He ran over and saw that it was his old friend Moishe who had been beaten almost to death by the KGB and was nearly unconscious, his eyes opening and closing.

“Moishe, Moishe”, he cried, “It’s me, Abram. Don’t you remember me. We were in Auschwitz together.

“Ah”, said Moishe dreamily, “ah yes, Auschwitz”.

Rabinovich was filling in a government form.

Were you ever in the Tsarist army? No.

Were you ever in German occupied territory? No.

Have you ever been arrested and put on trial? No.

Have any of your relatives ever been arrested? No.

Nationality? Yes.

Time of Banality

Can you wrap up an elephant in a newspaper ?

You can if the paper contains the text of one of Khrushchev’s speeches

Brezhnev travels to Central Asia.

He is met by local party leaders who greet him.

“Salaam Aleikum!”

Brezhnev has been well coached.

“Aleikum Salaam!” he replies immediately.

“Salaam Aleikum!” they repeat.

“Aleikum Salaam!” Brezhnev responds.

A dissident who has sneaked in shouts, “Gulag Archipelago”.

“Archipelago Gulag!” replies Brezhnev.

Shortages under Banality

A new food store has opened – everything is sparkling clean and there is an attractive shop assistant in a neat white coat.

A customer comes in and says, “Wrap me up half a kilo of meat please”.

The shop assistant takes out a sheet of paper and says, “Certainly, give me your meat”.

What is seven kilometres long and eats potatoes.

A Polish meat queue.

Jaruselski is being driven through Warsaw in a limousine.
When he sees a long queue of people outside a food store.
He tells his chauffeur to stop and asks them how long they have been there.
“Six hours”, they reply.
“This is dreadful”, says Jaruselski.
“I will have to do something”.
An hour later a huge lorry arrives outside the shop and delivers two hundred chairs.

Carnival

Why is the Soviet system superior to all others?
Because it successfully overcomes problems that no other system has.

Census official: Where were you born?
Soviet citizen: St. Petersburg.
Where were you educated?
Petrograd.
Where do you live?
Leningrad
Where would you like to live?
St. Petersburg

Krupskaya (Lenin’s widow) was telling a group of children what a kind man Lenin was.
“One day she said Lenin was standing outside his dacha shaving with an open razor. A little boy stopped and watched and asked him what he was doing.
“I’m shaving little boy”, replied Lenin.
“Why does that make him a kind man?”, asked one of the children.
“Don’t you see”, said Krupskaya. “He could have cut the little boy’s throat but he didn’t”.

Question to Radio Erevan: Is it true that Mayakowski committed suicide and if so what were his last words?
Answer: Yes it is true that Mayakowski committed suicide and his last words were “Don’t shoot comrades!”

When the Soviet Union bought wheat in Canada in 1964 a question was put to Radio Armenia.
Why were we able to buy wheat from Canada?
Due to the key shortcoming of capitalism – chronic overproduction.

Eastern Europe and Russia

Under the new Soviet-Hungarian treaty the Soviets have the right to navigate the Danube upstream and downstream and the Hungarians to navigate it crossways.

A meeting of Communist leaders in Moscow

Walter Ulbricht takes the first chair. He notices a nail sticking up but he is a tough man and sits in it,

Next Poland's Gomulka takes a chair. He sees there also a nail on his chair but he is not going to be outdone by a German, so he sits on it.

Then Novotný pulls out his chair

"Please, Comrade Khrushchev", he whines, "they forgot to give me a nail."

Marxism

What is a philosopher?

A man who looks for a black cat in a completely dark room at night

What is an advanced philosopher?

A man who looks for a black cat in a completely dark room at night that isn't there

What is a Marxist philosopher?

A man who looks for a black cat in a completely dark room at night that isn't there and every so often shouts "I've found it!"

11th International Summer School on Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications

Contemporary Television Comedy and Social Class



Sharon Lockyer
Sociology & Communications

Lecture Outline

- Comedy and Social Class – Overview
 - Social Class in British TV Comedy
 - Social Class in American TV Comedy
 - Conclusions

Comedy and Social Class - Overview

- History of sitcom in Britain has been 'preoccupied, to the point of obsession with class' (Medhurst 2007: 145)
- Debates less visible than debates around gender, race, and sexuality
- Working-class life repeatedly ignored in British TV comedy (Wagg 1998)
- Also few depictions in American TV comedy (Butsch and Glennon 1983)

Comedy and Social Class - Overview

'Class' sketch from *The Frost Report* (BBC 1966-67)



<http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/collections/p00gs4vy>

'Middle Class is Magical Song' from *Mongrels* (BBC 2010-present)



http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/clips/p0096fwm/mongrels_middle_class_is_magical_song/

Social Class in British TV Comedy

- Andy Medhurst (2007) identifies five main discursive themes that underpin class comedies:

1. Clashes between members of different classes who are portrayed as having little, if anything, in common
– *Keeping Up Appearances* (BBC 1990-95)
2. Difficulties of upward class mobility
– *Steptoe and Son* (BBC 1962-65, 1970-74, 1977, 1981)



Social Class in British TV Comedy

3. Reinforce the central social position of middle classes
– *My Family* (BBC 2000-present)



4. Undermining and critiquing the social position of middle classes
– *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin* (BBC 1976-79)



Social Class in British TV Comedy

5. Ridiculing the experiences, lifestyle and behaviours of specific social classes
– *Absolutely Fabulous* (BBC 1992-96, 2001-05)



Social Class in British TV Comedy

- **Stephen Wagg (1998)** trends in British class comedy
 - a) Successful sitcoms have often:
 - ‘hinged on ideas of authenticity and pretension in class identities: one central character may be pompous/aspiring/convinced s/he is better than all this, only to be trumped, time and again, by a doggedly unreconstructed companion’ (1998: 2)
- *Steptoe and Son*



Social Class in British TV Comedy

- b) A dominance of m/c and u/c representations and fewer w/c portrayals, resulting in a failure to acknowledge the existence of the w/c
- This trend is also reflected in American TV comedy (Butsch and Glennon 1983; Crowther and Pinfeld 1987; Butsch 2003)
- c) When w/c has appeared has focussed on domestic aspects rather than work
- *The Royle Family*
(BBC 1998-2000, 2006)



– <http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/collections/p00clxd2#p00cqxc0>

Social Class in British TV Comedy

- As Brett Mills notes, the implication of this pattern in social class portrayals is that it:

‘reinforces power structures in which not only are such people denied access to the medium, but that the content of their lives is not deemed worthy of broadcast through it ... [and that] this is a result of the demographics of the television industry whose staff are overwhelmingly middle class’ (2005: 149).

Social Class in British TV Comedy

- d) A favouring towards ‘the tipster, the travelling salesman, the wheeler-and-dealer character’ (Wagg 1998: 4-5)
- *Only Fools and Horses* (BBC 1981-2003)



- e) An interest in middle/upper class ‘media and show-business professions’ (Wagg 1998: 4-5)
- *Ab Fab*

Middle-classing of sitcom in 1990s – where workplaces are depicted = in media = m/c

Social Class in American TV Comedy

- **Butsch and Glennon (1983)**
- US TV domestic sitcom 1946-1978 based around families
- Overrep of m/c and underrep of w/c:
 - M/C families accounted for 63.5% of sitcoms compared to 28.7% of population
 - W/C families accounted for 8.4% of sitcoms compared to 65% of population

Social Class in American TV Comedy

- **Butsch and Glennon (1983) continued ...**
- Widespread affluence also exaggerated with prestigious profs - lawyers and professors rather than nurses
- When working wives appear = professional career not economic necessity
- Of 189 series 46 had servant of some sort
- W/C families = less than 20% of series on air in a given season

Social Class in American TV Comedy

- **Butsch (2003)**
- W/C male as incompetent, buffoon, well-intentional but dumb, flawed male
 - Alf Garnett, Homer Simpson, Fred Flintstone
- W/C female as intelligent, rational, sensible
 - Marge Simpson
- Class coded in gender terms – w/c men de-masculinized as depicted as child-like, wives act as mothers



Social Class in American TV Comedy

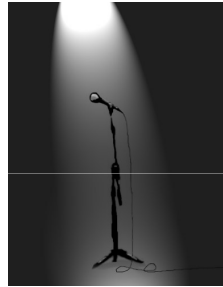
- **Butsch (2003) continued ...**
- No buffoon in m/c sitcoms and husband and wife are wise and work
 - *The Cosby Show*
- ‘Inverting gender status in working-class but not middle-class sitcoms is a statement about class’ (2003: 576)
- Ideological hegemony = dominance of values in mainstream culture that justify and help to maintain the status quo



Conclusions

- Representation of class has been, and continues to be a prominent theme in British TV comedy
- Themes and patterns in class comedy
- Failure to recognise w/c exist, reinforces power structures where w/c denied access to the medium and content of their lives deemed unworthy to broadcast
- Television comedy can be ‘read as an indicator of the ways in which the audience it’s produced for feels about individuals and groups’, or at least, ‘the kind of audience the broadcaster wishes it to be’ (Mills 2005: 101-5).

Comedians and Humour Studies



Clare Watters
University of Birmingham

Aims...

- Defining the comedian
- The comedian in humour and comedy research
 - introduction to research areas
 - recent research
 - what still needs to be done

Definitions

- an entertainer on stage or television whose act is designed to **make an audience laugh**.
- a comic actor or playwright.
(OED online, 2011)

a comical individual; specifically : a professional entertainer who uses any of various **physical or verbal** means to be amusing
(Merriam Webster, 2011)

a person whose job is to **make people laugh by telling** jokes and funny stories or by copying the behaviour or speech of famous people
(Cambridge Advanced Learners, 2011)

Comedian as *negative exemplar*

‘the grotesque, the buffoon, the fool, the simpleton, the scoundrel, the drunkard, the liar, the coward, the effete, the tightwad, the boor, the egoist, the cuckold, the shrew, the weakling, the neurotic’ (Mintz, 1985)

Comedians and Humour Studies

INTERDISCIPLINARITY

- Comedians' texts as humour (linguistics, sociology)
- Comic performance (theatre, film, media and performance studies, anthropology, sociology)
- The Literature of comedians (literature)
- Comedians' texts in translation (translation studies, linguistics)

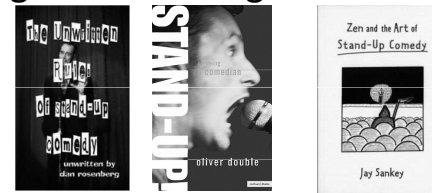
- Gender and professional humour (gender studies)
- The comedian, their social role and interaction (sociology, folklore, anthropology)
- The comedian as a person and joker (anthropology, psychology)
- Teaching professional humour (education)
- Comedians and how they address taboo topics like mental health or disability (disability studies)

Comedians' Texts

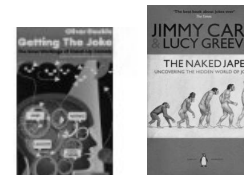
- Jokes!
 - often spread throughout nations, etc.
 - intellectual property
 - often analysed in isolation
- Monologues
 - analysed as theatrical texts
- Sketches
 - can be analysed as dialogues
- Translated comedy

Comedians on the Comedian

- Analysis of the profession, joke telling and guides to being a comedian:



- Comedians as academics or theorists:



Learning professional humour



Southampton Solent University

Search GO

OUR COURSES STUDENT

BA (Hons) Comedy - Writing and Performance (Full Time)

Length: 3 years
UCAS: WW48

Share |    

One of the few courses to combine comedy theory and practice, this degree will lead to an in-depth understanding of how to write and perform comedy.

Course overview

On this innovative and exciting degree, you will learn about the mechanics of different types of comedic writing including situation comedy and performance such as stand-up.

The practice-based element of the course is complemented by a wide-ranging portfolio of academic units which provide you with a solid



- 1st comedian-making BA course in the UK
- Can we teach how to use humour professionally?
- A source for research, not just knowledge transfer.

My Research

- Italian Comedians and the Political Process
- analysis of the same comedians in different spaces: television, stage, film, protest, internet
- The social role of political comedians in contemporary Italy.



What next...

According to Mintz (1985):

- a comprehensive history of the stand-up genre
- thorough studies of joke texts and routines
- ethnographic and demographic research on the comedian-audience relationship and the motives/function of the ritual

...even more

- National/local contexts (outside the Anglophone context in English)
- Movement of comedians, international comedy
- Assessing the smile/reaction to humour in professional clubs
- More on audiences and interaction in different contexts
- More on the impact of class, gender, sexuality, mental health

Further Examples/Material

Comedians on Comedy

- Ajaye, F. (2002) *Comic Insights: The Art of Stand-up Comedy*, Beverley Hills, LA: Silman-James
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Comedian and Audience

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- Quirk, S. (2010) 'Who's in Charge? Negotiation, Manipulation and Comic Licence in the Work of Mark Thomas,' *Comedy Studies*, 1.1: 113-124
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Comedians and society

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- Paton, G. (1988) 'The comedian as portrayer of social morality,' in: Powell, C. and Paton, G. (Eds.) *Humour in society: Resistance and Control*, London: Macmillan, 206-233
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Gender

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- Senzani, A. (2010) 'Class and Gender as a Laughing Matter: the Case of Roseanne,' *HUMOR*, 23.2: 229-53

Impersonators

- Schechter, J. (1994) *Satiric Impersonations: From Aristophanes to the Guerilla Girls*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University

Physiology

- Shouse, E. (2007) 'The Role of Affect in the Performance of Stand-up Comedy: Theorizing the Mind-Body Connection in Humor Studies,' *Journal of the Northwest Communication Association*.

Social Difference

- Wagg, S. (ed.) (1998) *Because I Tell a Joke of Two: Comedy, Politics and Social Difference*, London: Routledge

Italian Comedians

Boria, M. (2009) 'Silence Humour on RAI TV: Daniele Luttazzi, Sabina Guzzanti & Co.,' in: Albertazzi et al. *Resisting the Tide: Cultures of Opposition under Berlusconi 2001-6*, London: Continuum

D'Angeli, C. and Paduano, G. (1999) *Il comico*, Bologna: Il mulino

De Maria et al. (2008) *Chi ha paura di Beppe Grillo*, Milano: Selene

Gagliano, R. (2009) 'The Jester and the Ghost of Democracy,' in: Bolognaro, e. et al, *Creative Interventions: The Role of Intellectuals in Contemporary Italy*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars

Watters, C. (2011) 'Standing up for Italian Comedy: An Interview with Filippo Giardina,' *Comedy Studies*, 2.1: 83-7

- (2011- fc) 'Being Berlusconi: Sabina Guzzanti's Impersonation between Stage and Screen' in: Popa, D. and Tsakona, V., *Studies in Political Humor: In between Political Critique and Public Entertainment*, Amsterdam: John Benjamin

TUESDAY (16. AUGUST)

Morning session

Chair: Alexander Kozintsev

Approaches to analysing contemporary stand-up comedy

Taught by Sharon Lockyer (9:30 – 10:30)

Incongruity and its resolution

Taught by Graeme Ritchie (11:00 – 12:00)

Humor as aesthetic experience: The funny, the bizarre, the fantastic, the grotesque, the macabre, and the horrible

Taught by John Morreall (12:00 – 13.00)

Afternoon session

Chair: Seppo Knuuttila

Positive Psychology and humour: A good match?

Taught by Willibald Ruch (14:30 – 15:30)

Can laughter make us happier?

Taught by Anu Realo (15:30 – 16:30)

Humor as a neutralizing metarelation

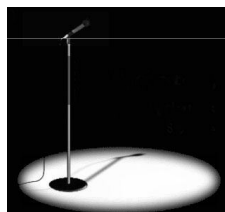
Taught by Alexander Kozintsev (16:45 – 17:45)

Poster session (17:45 – 18:45)

11th International Summer School on Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications

Approaches to Analysing Contemporary

Stand-up Comedy



Sharon Lockyer
Sociology & Communications

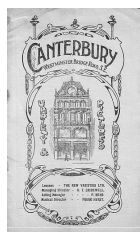
Lecture Outline

- Stand-up Comedy in Historical Context
- Features of Stand-up Comedy
- Functions of Stand-up Comedy
- Changes in Stand-up Comedy
- Stand-up Comedy Post 9/11



Stand-up Comedy in Historical Context

- Roots in British c19th music hall – 1852 as birth of music hall, opening of Canterbury Hall, London
- Own genre in last half of c20th
- World's first comedy club opened in 1962 in NY – **Pips**
- **The Comedy Store** opened in 1979 – UK's first dedicated stand-up club
- Stand-up comedy is now big business e.g. **TCS'** annual turnover was over £2.5 million in 2009

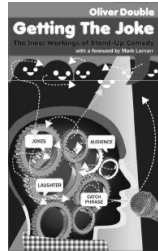


Features of Stand-up Comedy

- Stand-up comedy is 'arguably the oldest, most universal, basic, and deeply significant form of humorous expression' (Mintz, 1985: 71).
- According to OED term stand-up was first used in 1966 (Limon, 2000)
- OED = 'comedian whose act consists of standing before an audience and telling a succession of jokes'.
- What are the limitations of this def?

Features of Stand-up Comedy

- Double (2005) – in addition to being funny, stand-up comedy =
- **Personality** – person on display in front of audience as either exaggerated comic character or version of performer's own self
- **Direct Communication** – direct & intense relationship between performer and audience. 'It's like a conversation made up of jokes, laughter and sometimes less pleasant responses' (2005: 19)
- **Present Tense** - here & now, acknowledges performance situation, things that happen at venue



Features of Stand-up Comedy

- Once on stage comedian:
- Establishes nature of audience – Q & A.
- Comedian is establishing for audience that the group = homogeneous community (Mintz, 1985)
- 'Working the room' = laughter as expression of shared values (Mintz, 1985)
- The Richard Pryor Show (1977):
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VizO0e-Dsfs>

Functions of Stand-up Comedy

- **Mintz (1985) Stand-up Comedy as Social and Cultural Mediator**

2 main functions:

1) '**Comic spokesperson**, as a mediator, an "articulator" of our culture, and as our *contemporary anthropologist*' (Mintz, 1985: 75)

- Examples?????

2) 'The oldest, most basic role of the comedian is precisely this role of **negative exemplar** ... socially unacceptable traits are enacted by the comedian to be ridiculed, laughed at ... and symbolically "punished"' (Mintz, 1985: 75)

Functions of Stand-up Comedy

- We **laugh at** the stand-up ... s/he 'represents conduct to be ridiculed and rejected, and our laughter reflects our superiority, our relief that his [or her] weaknesses are greater than our own' (Mintz, 1985: 74)
 - Examples?????
- Subversive potential of self-deprecating comedy
- 'Through **self-deprecatory** material, a comic ridicules the society that creates ideal for appearance and behaviour as well as individuals who subscribe to those standards' (Gilbert, 1997: 319)

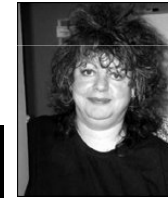
Changes in Stand-up Comedy

- 'Alternative Comedy'
- Style of comedy in UK in 1970s/80s
- The Comedy Store (London 1979)
- Alternative Comedy =
 - comedic styles that break away from existing comic taste of particular era
 - British 'post-punk' comedy movement – away from punchline-based jokes to:
 - Observational Comedy; political satire; breaking social taboos; intellectual comedy; slapstick; improvisation, story-telling and personal narratives
 - 'The thinking person's comedy' (Nilsen and Nilsen, 2000: 289)
- Message to tell, not just entertainment



Changes in Stand-up Comedy

• 1970s/1980s



• 1990s/2000s



Nothing Changes in Stand-up Comedy!

- Largely a male dominated form of comic expression
- Conventional wisdom = women are 'less suited by nature to stand-up comedy, an aggressive, take-charge art form' (Zoglin, 2009: 12)
- Both males and females laugh at male jokers more than they do at female jokers (Provine, 1996)
- Of the 39 comedians described as 'Comedians on Tour' on the *Chortle: The UK Comedy Guide* website 2 are women (2nd Aug 2011)
- 6 women made it to the top '100 Greatest Stand-Ups of All Time' (Channel 4, April 2010)

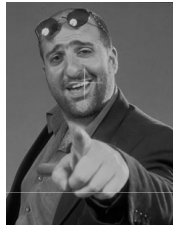
Stand-up Comedy Post 9/11

- **Shazia Mirza (1975-)**
- Female Muslim comedian
- 'My name's Shazia Mirza - at least that's what it says on my pilot's licence'
- Her 'difference' = source of comic material
- Courted controversy – hate mail, death threats, attacked by Muslim men
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGEY8cZuGF4&feature=related>



Stand-up Comedy Post 9/11

- **Omid Djalili (1965-)**
- British-Iranian comedian & actor
- Behind Enemy Lines (2002)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYOI5K8E7WQ&NR=1>
- Both Shazia Mirza and Omid Djalili highlight the 'politics of stand-up comedy'
- (see Lockyer & Pickering 2005/2009)



Incongruity and its Resolution

Graeme Ritchie

University of Aberdeen

Content of this talk

Review the main aspects of “incongruity-resolution theory”.

Show that a variety of very different versions have been proposed.

Background

- Incongruity-based humour: proposed for centuries.
- Incongruity must be “resolved” : a 20th century idea.
- Main growth in 1970s.
- Widely accepted but not fully worked out.

What is incongruity?

“The perceiving of a situation or idea, L, in two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference, M1 and M2.”
(Koestler 1964)

“associating two generally accepted incompatibles; it is the lack of a rational relation of objects, people, or ideas to each other or to the environment”
(Gruner 1978)

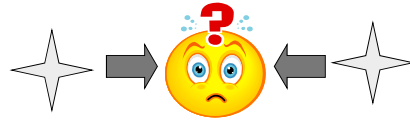
“A conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs” (Shultz 1972)

Koestler
(& Beattie?)



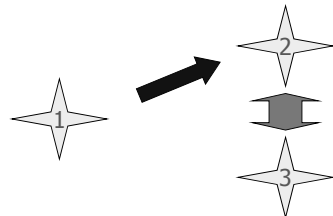
(one idea from two viewpoints)

Gruner
(& Beattie?)



(two ideas that do not fit together)

Shultz,
Nerhardt



(idea 1 anticipates idea 2 but idea 3 occurs,
in contrast with idea 2)

Hempelmann & Attardo (forthcoming) -- 3 levels of incongruity in a joke:

Foregrounded : the incongruity on which the humour rests, and to which the resolution applies.

Backgrounded: not the central point, but an essential part of the supporting story or setting.

Completely backgrounded: not relevant to setting up the joke, and could be edited out.

What is resolution?

Incongruity made to follow, and sense made of the joke. (Suls 1972)

Rendering incongruity meaningful or appropriate by explaining it. (Shultz 1976)

Reconciling incongruity to create coherence. (Brownell et al 1983)

Reinterpretation of information in the light of conflict. (Vaid et al 2003).

IR theories: kinds of variation

1. Scope of theory
2. Sequentiality
3. Location of incongruity
4. Getting to the incongruity
5. Aspects of resolution
6. Extent of resolution

1. Scope of the IR theory

Two main positions:

Universal: all humour is caused by IR
(necessary & sufficient)

Subclass: some humour involves IR
(sufficient)

2. Sequentiality

Does the theory involve a sequence of events forming a process through time?

Sequential

- There is a comprehension process
- Theory describes that process
- Events happen in order through time
- Stage 1 : incongruity
- Stage 2 : resolution

Non-sequential

- Processing not relevant
- Theory describes aspects of the stimulus (e.g. joke)
- Incongruity is a property of the stimulus
- Resolution is the way in which the incongruity “fits” into the context

3. Where is the incongruity?

- A. In the conveyed information:
the joke/movie/etc. conveys “absurd” or “puzzling” content.
- B. In terms of the presentation:
 - i. Set-up/punchline conflict : information in punchline clashes with what came before.
 - ii. Incorrect prediction: information in punchline violates an earlier prediction.
 - iii. Alternative interpretation contrast: there are two possible interpretations (of the stimulus), which clash in some way.

- A. *Woman walks into a bar with a duck on a leash.
Bartender says 'Where'd you get the pig?'
Woman says, 'It's not a pig, it's a duck.'
Bartender says, 'I was talking to the duck.'*
- B.
- i. *O'Riley was on trial for armed robbery. The jury came out and announced, 'Not guilty.' 'Wonderful,' said O'Riley, 'does that mean I can keep the money?'*
 - ii. *"I'm very proud of this watch. My grandfather, on his deathbed, sold me this watch."*
 - iii. *'Is the doctor at home?' the patient asked in his bronchial whisper. 'No,' the doctor's young and pretty wife whispered in reply. 'Come right in.'*

4. Getting to the incongruity

Useful to distinguish 3 logically distinct "routes to the incongruity":

Deviation: how incongruity is formed by distorting normal practice. E.g. Exaggeration.

Discovery: the reasoning by which the audience finds that something odd is involved.

Justification: the information and/or reasoning which makes the incongruity less odd than it might be.

Each of these is sometimes suggested as "resolution".

Deviation

"Your mama's so fat, her ass has its own congressman!"

Exaggeration and (faulty) analogy:
body part extremely large →
body part like a geographical area

Discovery

A reporter saw a crowd gathered around a road accident. Anxious to get a scoop, he told the bystanders: 'Let me through, let me through! I'm the son of the victim.' The crowd made way for him. Lying in front of the car was a donkey.

Punchline supplies information congruous with a road accident. The incongruity is (?) "reporter has claimed to be son of a donkey".

Some (brief and simple) reasoning needed to reach this statement.

Justification

*“I’ve been going to the opera since I was a tiny child. I can remember **Madame Butterfly** when she was a caterpillar.”*

Punchline provides incongruity: opera used to be a caterpillar.

Reasoning to pseudo-justify this: opera called “Butterfly”, young butterfly = caterpillar.

“I think my doctor’s more interested in my money than in my health. When I went to him this morning he said, ‘I wonder what’s wrong with you. Let me feel your purse.’

Deviation: “feel your pulse” → “feel your purse”

Discovery: a doctor does not normally feel a patient’s purse.

Justification: the doctor wishes to know whether the patient has enough money.

5. Aspects of Resolution

Information Content:

The facts or images in the stimulus that give rise to the resolution.

Cognitive Rule:

The general patterns about the world or society (etc.) that allow the reasoning from the Information Content to the mitigation of the incongruity.

Process:

The dynamic sequence of (perceptual and/or cognitive) events that involve the incongruity and its mitigation.

Each of these is sometimes referred to as “resolution”.

6. Extent of Resolution

Full : all incongruity is completely explained, leaving no residual incongruity.

Partial: the incongruity is made to seem less odd, but there is still some incongruity (either residual or new).

Null: there is no resolution, just incongruity.

Each IR theory offers some combination of these as the possible types of humour.

E.g. “All humour involves either Full or Partial resolution.”

Partial resolution

*Why did the elephant sit on the marshmallow?
Because he didn't want to fall into the hot chocolate.*

Rothbart & Pien say the question provides incongruity, the answer resolves this and supplies more incongruity.

"...the resolution... is not a 'real' resolution: it does not get rid of the incongruity -- it actually introduces more of the same -- but because it has some distorted verisimilitude it is accepted playfully as a pseudo-resolution."
(Attardo 1994: 144)

Early variants of IR

Shultz 1970,1972

- Scope: aimed at all humour, tested experimentally only on cartoons
- Sequential.
- Incongruity located in conveyed information.
- Resolution is "justification".
- "Information Content", "Cognitive Rule" and "Process" aspects of distinguished.
- Full resolution.

Suls 1972

- Scope: jokes or cartoons with punchlines.
- Sequential.
- Incongruity is set-up/punchline conflict.
- Resolution is "justification".
- "Cognitive Rule" and "Process" aspects emphasised.
- Full resolution.

Recent variants of IR

Oring 2003

- Scope: all humour
- Non-sequential.
- Incongruity located in conveyed information.
- Resolution is "justification" ("appropriateness")
- "Process" aspect of resolution excluded.
- Partial resolution.

Attardo, Hempelmann , et al. (GTVH)

- Scope: all humour expressed in language.
- Non-sequential (?)
- Incongruity is conflict between two interpretations.
- Resolution is "logical mechanism".
- "Information Content", "Cognitive Rule" and "Process" aspects of resolution all mentioned.
- Partial or null resolution.

	PROCESS?	WHERE IS INCONGRUITY?	EXTENT OF RESOLUTION
Shultz 1970	Sequential	In conveyed information	Full
Suls 1972	Sequential	Set-up/ punchline conflict	Full
Oring 2003	Non-sequential	In conveyed information	Partial
Attardo et al.	Non-sequential	Two conflicting interpretations	Partial or null

Summary

- Incongruity Resolution is a dominant idea
- No precise definition of Incongruity
- No precise definition of Resolution
- A variety of IR theories
- These theories have subtle differences

Is the widespread agreement really agreement?

Humor as Aesthetic Experience:
the funny and the tragic,
grotesque, macabre, horrible,
bizarre, and fantastic

© 2011 John Morreall,
from *Comic Relief: A Comprehensive
Philosophy of Humor*

Aesthetic Experience

- Enjoying perceiving or thinking about something for its own sake.

Incongruity

- Violation of conceptual patterns and expectations
- H. L. Mencken: “I never smoked a cigarette until I was nine.”

**WHEN MACHINE STOPS
PLEASE REMOVE YOUR
CLOTHES**



Versions of the Incongruity Theory

- Humor is experiencing incongruity.
- Humor is experiencing the resolution of incongruity.
- Humor is enjoying incongruity.
- Humor is enjoying the resolution of incongruity.
- *Humor is enjoying incongruity in a certain way.

Humor vs. other ways of enjoying incongruity
(the tragic, grotesque, macabre, horrible,
bizarre, and fantastic)

- In humor we are playful and we tend to laugh.
- The tragic, grotesque, macabre, and horrible evoke negative emotions.
- Because of these negative emotions, there is a puzzle, the Paradox of Tragedy, which extends to the grotesque, macabre, and horrible.

Tragic Incongruity

- In *Oedipus Rex*, by Sophocles, Oedipus vows to do whatever it takes to find and punish the killer of King Laius.

Pablo Picasso, *Guernica* (1937)



Quinten Massys, *Grotesque Old Woman*



Bartolomeo Passerotti, *Caricature*



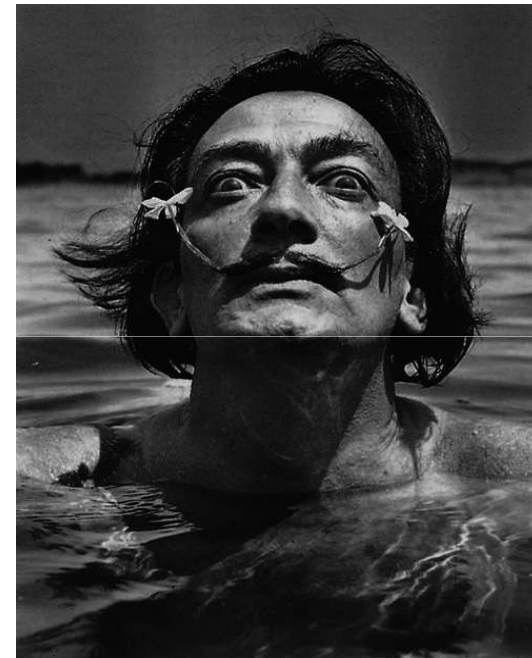
Diego Velasquez, *Pope Innocent X*



Francis Bacon, *Pope Innocent X*



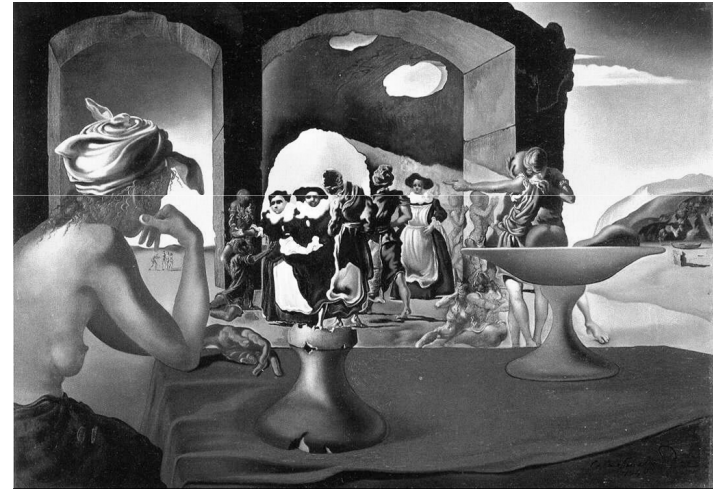
Francisco Goya, *Saturn Devouring His Son*



Salvador Dali, *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)*



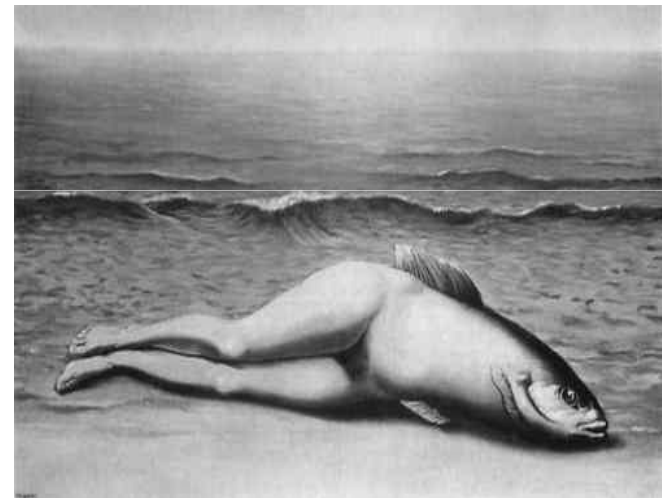
Dali, *Slave Market with the Apparition of the Invisible Bust of Voltaire*



Henri Magritte



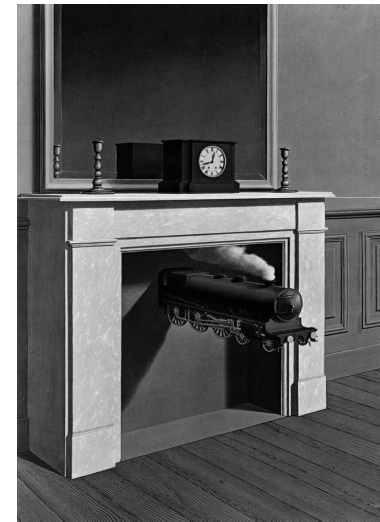
Magritte, *Collective Invention*



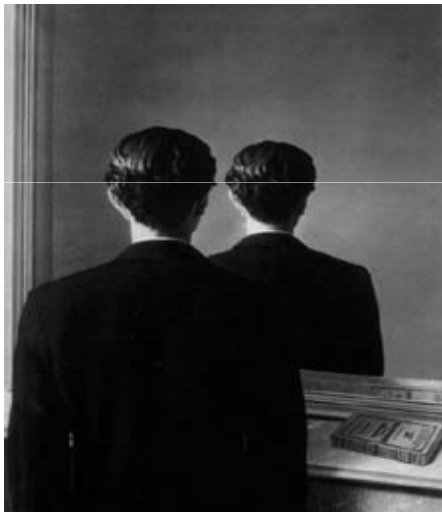
Magritte, *The Lovers*



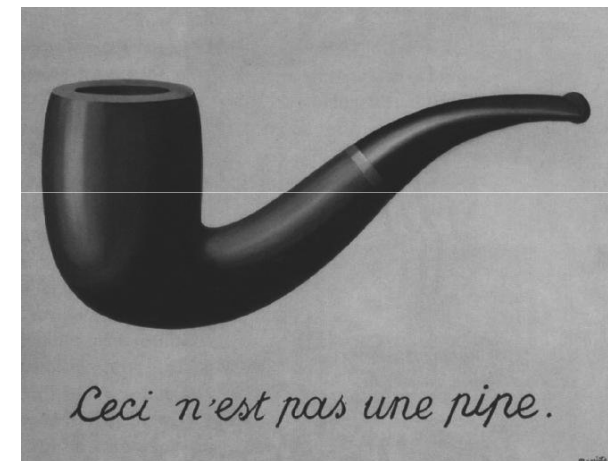
Magritte, *Time Transfixed*



Magritte, *Not to Be Reproduced*



Magritte, *The Wind and the Song*



Magritte, *The Anniversary*



Magritte, *The Human Condition*



André Breton

Working with Surrealist images “is the marvelous faculty of attaining two widely separated realities without departing from the realm of our experience, of bringing them together, and drawing a spark from their contact.”



Positive Psychology and humour: A good match?



Willibald Ruch
University of Zurich,
Switzerland

11th International Summer School and Symposium on



Humour and Laughter:
Theory, Research and Applications



Estonian Literary Museum Tartu, Estonia
15th– 20th August 2011



Aim of the presentation

- To show
 - a recent shift in paradigm in psychology: the emergence of positive psychology (PP)
 - where PP and humour research overlap
 - how Positive Psychology conceptualizes humour
 - and how that differs from traditional humour research
 - How humour (and its absence) relates to virtues
 - That humour affects life satisfaction via the life of pleasure, but also through the life of meaning.
 - That humour relates to life satisfaction
 - A linear effect across the continuum from low to high
 - A directed, maybe causal effect, as life satisfaction increases when humour increases / humour is trained.

What is Positive Psychology?

Positive Psychology pursues the study of

- positive *experience*
 - E.g., happiness, flow, love, contentment, enjoyment, positive affect
 - Experiences relating to past (gratitude), presence, future (e.g., hope)
- positive *traits*
 - E.g., character: strengths & virtues, talents
 - Development of a classification (VIA)
- positive *institutions*
 - institutions that encourage positive experiences and positive traits;
 - E.g., the study of conditions that make relationships thrive, parenthood, family, schools, workplace

Ekman's basic emotions in 1992

-10 -9 -8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 +8 +9 +10

negative emotions

positive Emotions

Fear Joy
 Anger
 Sadness
 Disgust
 Contempt
 Surprise

Ekman (2003) proposed sixteen enjoyable emotions

-10 -9 -8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 +8 +9 +10

negative emotions

positive emotions

Fear	sensory (taste, auditory, gustatory, tactile, olfactory) pleasures
Anger	amusement, contentment, wonder, relief, excitement, ecstasy,
Sadness	<i>fiero</i> (pride in own achievements), <i>naches</i> (pride in others achievements), elevation, gratitude & <i>schadenfreude</i>
Disgust	
Contempt	

Virtues

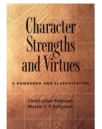
- Virtues are the core characteristics valued by moral philosophers and religious thinkers: **wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence**. These six broad categories of virtue emerge consistently from historical surveys.
 - We argue that these are universal, perhaps grounded in biology through an evolutionary process that selected for these aspects of excellence as means of solving the important tasks necessary for survival of the species.
 - We speculate that all of these virtues must be present at above-threshold values for an individual to be deemed of good character.

Peterson & Seligman (2004)

Six wide spread virtues (Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman, 2005)

1. *wisdom and knowledge*
 - cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge.
2. *courage*:
 - emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal
3. *Humanity*
 - interpersonal strengths that involve “tending and befriending” others
4. *Justice*
 - civic strengths that underlie healthy community life
5. *Temperance*
 - strengths that protect against excess
6. *Transcendence*
 - strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning

The 24 VIA Strengths



- Wisdom and Knowledge
 - Creativity
 - Curiosity
 - Judgment & Open-Mindedness
 - Love of Learning
 - Perspective
- Courage
 - Bravery
 - Perseverance
 - Honesty
 - Zest
- Humanity
 - Capacity to Love and Be Loved
 - Kindness
 - Social Intelligence
- Justice
 - Teamwork
 - Fairness
 - Leadership
- Temperance
 - Forgiveness & Mercy
 - Modesty & Humility
 - Prudence
 - Self-Regulation
- Transcendence
 - Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence
 - Gratitude
 - Hope
 - Humor [playfulness]
 - Religiousness & Spirituality

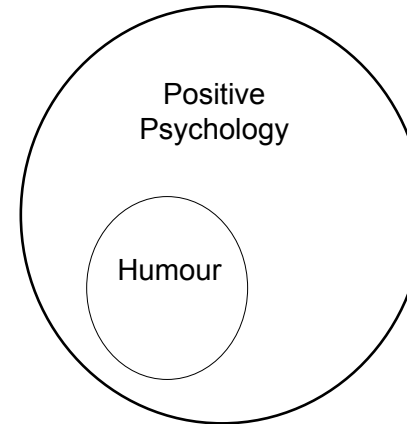
Humour and Positive Psychology

The study of humour entails

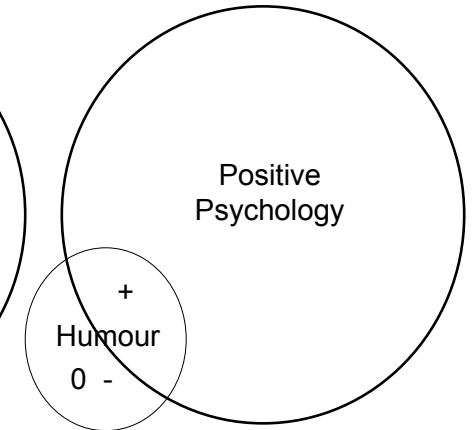
- **positive *experience***
 - E.g., amusement, mirth, hilarity (smiling, laughter)
 - The structure of (positive) experience when exposed to humour
- **positive *traits***
 - E.g., humour-related traits; like sense of humour, cheerfulness, humour styles etc.
 - Humour is one of the 24 strengths in the VIA-classification
- **positive *institutions***
 - institutions may encourage humour & amusement and allow humour to develop;
 - E.g., the role of humour in work and health settings, in relationship, parenting, schools, care-taker homes, etc.

Views on humour and PP

a) Humour as part of PP



b) Humour overlapping with PP



Humour and positivity

- Humour has
 - Relations to virtue
 - what virtues are compatible with humour?
 - virtues are involved in the absence of humour as well?
 - positive experience
 - Presence of positive affect (amusement, hilarity)
 - Absence of negative affect (coping)
- However, some if not most of humour
 - is neutral
 - E.g., incongruity theory
 - or negative, related to vice
 - Mock/ridicule, mockery
 - absence of “negative” humour might be guided by virtue

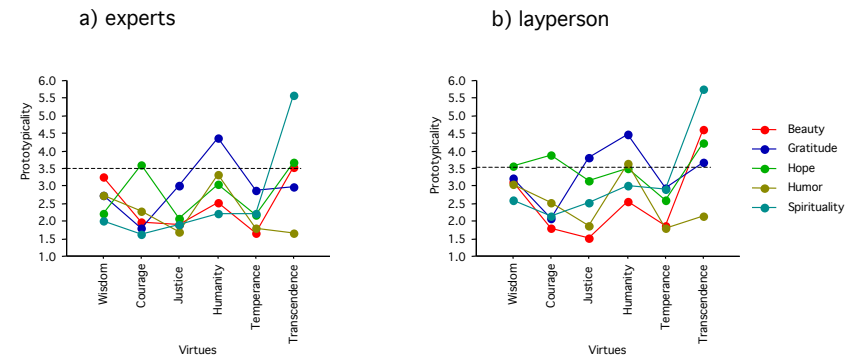
Humour and virtue: Where can humour be located in the classification of strengths & virtues?

- “In a few cases, the classification of a given strength under a core virtue can be debated. Playfulness, for example, might be considered a strength of **humanity** because humor and whimsy can create social bonds. It might also be classified as a **wisdom** strength, inasmuch as playfulness helps us acquire, perfect, and use knowledge. But we had a reason for dubbing playfulness a strength of **transcendence**: Like hope and spirituality, playfulness connects us to something larger in the universe, specifically the irony of the human condition, the incongruent congruencies to which playful people call our attention, for our education and amusement.” (p. 26)
Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

Humour and virtue: Zurich studies

- With the VIA-IS Humour scale
 - Rating of relation between strength and virtues (Ruch, 2010)
 - Experts (n = 88) from theology, philosophy, psychology and laypersons rated the degree of prototypicality of the 24 strengths and the 6 virtues (definitions provided)
 - Results (see next slide): Humour in the VIA-IS is mostly humanity
 - Virtue ratings of humour questionnaire items (Beermann & Ruch, 2009a)
 - Experts (n = 17) identified nature of virtue in a pool of selected items (n = 298) from 12 humour instruments
 - Results: Humour in the VIA-IS is mostly humanity
 - VIA-IS humour scale correlated with virtue indicators (Müller & Ruch, in press)
 - In a sample of 203 adults
 - Results (see appendix): VIA-IS Humour is mostly humanity & courage

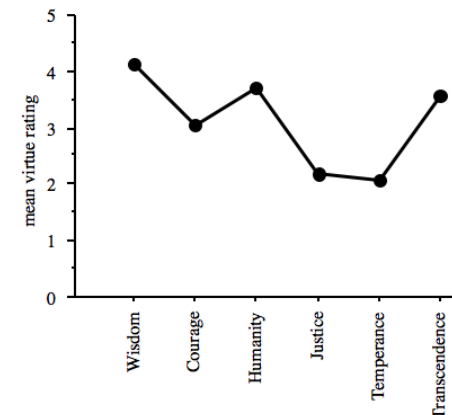
Transcendence strengths (Ruch, 2010)



Humour and virtue: Zurich studies

- Other humour scales
- Virtue ratings of items of 11 humour questionnaire (Beermann & Ruch, 2009a)
 - Experts identified nature of virtue in a pool of selected items from 11 humour instruments, e.g., HBQD, SHS, HSQ, SHRQ, STCI-T, etc.
 - Results (see next slide): Humour is compatible with all virtues; most strongly humanity, wisdom, & transcendence
 - 48 participants rated how often they achieved core virtue by means of humour and evaluated how important the virtue was for them (Beermann & Ruch, 2009b)
 - Furthermore, they reported situations where they used humour to achieve the six virtues (Total of 210)
 - Results (see later slide): Humour is compatible with all virtues; most strongly humanity & wisdom
 - Sense of humour (SHS; McGhee, 2010) and humorous behaviour Q-sort Deck (HBQD, Craik et al., 1996) correlated with virtue indicators (Müller & Ruch, i.p.)
 - Results (see appendix): Sense of humour and socially warm humour are mostly related to humanity (& courage), absence of mean-spirited and earthy humour styles relate mostly to virtues of justice, temperance & transcendence

virtues present in items of humour scales (Beermann & Ruch 2009a)



The virtues in items of existing humour questionnaires primarily refer to *wisdom, humanity and transcendence*.

However, expert judgement revealed that all virtues were present in the reduced set of humour items above a cut-off point.

Figure. Mean virtue rating by experts.

Examples

- Wisdom
 - “Uses humour to express the contradictory aspects of everyday events.” (HBQD, Q.83)
- Humanity
 - „Whenever my friends are in a gloomy mood, I try to tease them out of it.“ (VIA-IS, Q.22)
- Transcendence
 - „I try and find a humorous side when coping with a major life transition.“ (SAWS, Q.14)

Humour in Every day virtuous acts (Beermann & Ruch, 2009b)

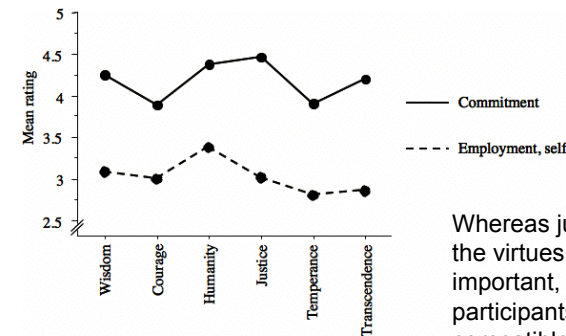


Figure 1. Mean ratings for commitment for virtue and employment of humor for virtue by oneself across the six virtues

Whereas justice and humanity were the virtues considered most important, in the eyes of the participants the virtues most compatible with humour seemed to be again *humanity* and *wisdom*. However, for *each* of the virtues the same amount of situations was provided.

Well-being

- Core outcome variables in positive psychology:
 - Well-being, happiness, satisfaction with life, high positive & low negative affect
 - Orientations to happiness: Life of pleasure, life of engagement, life of meaning
- Search for the determinants of the “good life“
 - *External* factors: wealth, political stability, opportunity for education and schooling, mentors, stable social support
 - *Internal* factors: character, strengths & virtues, basic orientations to life

Humour and the good life Authentic Happiness (Seligman, 2003)

- longer lasting “happiness” or satisfaction with life is based on three elements
 - Life of Pleasure; i.e., the amount of positive emotions and absence of negative emotions (the necessary “ratio” of positive to negative varies)
 - Life of *engagement*;
 - Life of *meaning*;
- Happiness might be increased by enhancing these three orientations, which is done by positive interventions and trainings.

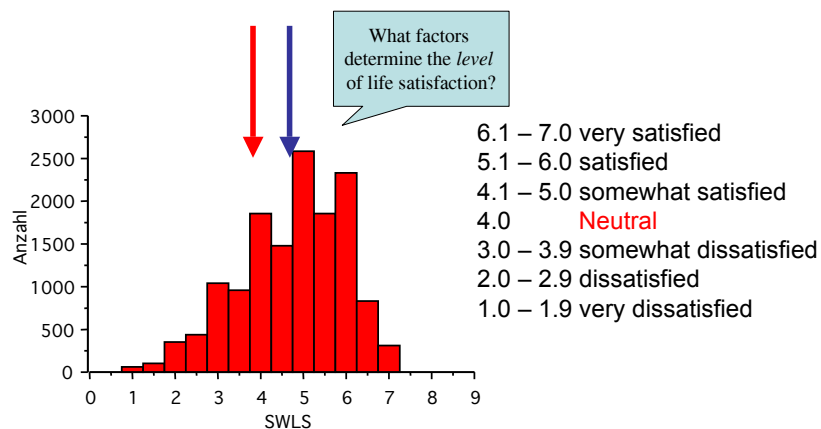
Measurement: empty vs. full life

- OTH (Orientations to Happiness; Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2004), assesses the three orientations to happiness
 - Life of *Pleasure*
 - I go out of my way to feel euphoric
 - I love to do things that excite my senses
 - Life of *Engagement*
 - Regardless of what I am doing, time passes very quickly
 - I seek out situations that challenge my skills and abilities
 - Life of *Meaning*
 - My life serves a higher purpose
 - My life has a lasting meaning
- 18 Items,
- 5-point answer format (“1 = very much unlike me” through “5 = very much like me”)

Humour and happiness: The Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985)

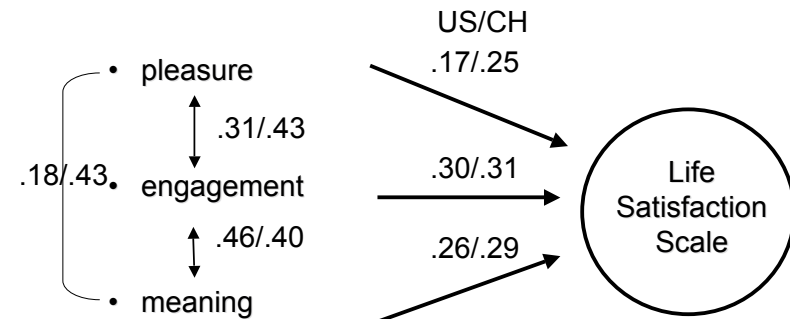
- Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding. The 7-point scale is as follows:
 - 1 = strongly disagree
 - 2 = disagree
 - 3 = slightly disagree
 - 4 = neither agree nor disagree
 - 5 = slightly agree
 - 6 = agree
 - 7 = strongly agree
- ___ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
- ___ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
- ___ 3. I am satisfied with my life.
- ___ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
- ___ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Satisfaction with life (in CH)



Note. n = 14,169, M = 4.74, SA = 1.23 (Ruch, Proyer & Weber, 2010)

Orientations to happiness and satisfaction with life (Petersen et al, 2004; Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007)



Humour and Authentic Happiness

- Socially warm forms of humour are in the *positive emotion* pathway (Müller & Ruch, 2011a)
 - and might increase life satisfaction (see appendix)
- Benevolent forms of humour are in the *positive emotion* pathway (Müller & Ruch, 2011b)
 - and might increase life satisfaction (see appendix)
- Rude, insensitive, and cruel forms of humour impair the building of *meaning* (Müller & Ruch, 2011b)
 - and might decrease life satisfaction (see appendix)

Humour as a strengths contributing to life satisfaction

Coefficients for adults

- .26, .26, .21 (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2004)
- .28. and .29 (US, CH) (Peterson et al. 2007)
- .43 (US) and .27 (Japan; Shimai et al., 2006)
- .24 (SWLS), .51 (SHS), 46 (SHI) (CH, Ruch, Proyer, Harzer, Park, Peterson & Seligman, in press)

Coefficient for self- and peer-rated strengths

- .31 (Self-) & .10 (peer) (Zurich strengths programme)

Coefficients for Youth

- .19 (CH) (Weber & Ruch, 2009).

Conclusion: As these studies partly involve 10.000+ participants one can say that reliably is *directly* associated with life satisfaction. Typically it is between rank 7 and 10 of the strengths. The relationship is linear.

Predictors of Life Satisfaction (Ruch, Proyer & Weber, 2010)

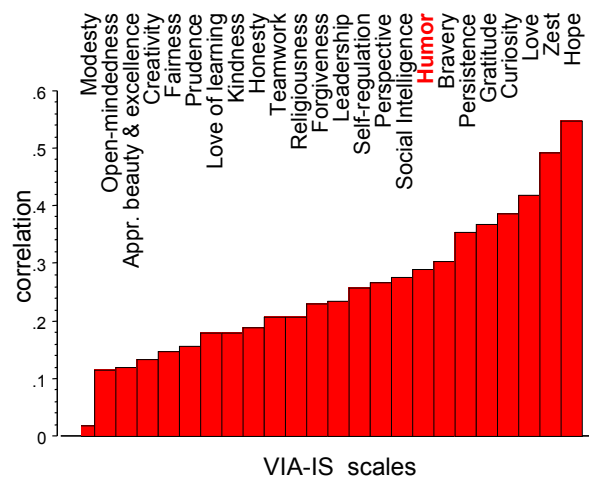


Fig 1. Predictors of life satisfaction (rank ordered by size of correlation with SWL; n = 15,588)

The new theory of well-being (Seligman, 2011)

- Seligman (2011) proposes a new theory of well-being. It does not contain happiness as the main outcome but well-being, and „flourishing“ is brought about by PERMA.
- In particular, five domains of well-being are distinguished, namely
 - Positive Emotions (P)
 - Engagement (E)
 - Positive Relationships (R)
 - Meaning (M)
 - Achievement (A)
- Not much research on PERMA has been undertaken; No assessment proposal has been put forward so far.
- Relationships with *positive emotions, positive relationships & meaning* likely

Conclusions

Humour and Virtue

- Humour may be neutral but humour as strengths (but also sense of humour, socially warm forms of humour) go along with humanity
- But humour is compatible with all virtues
- Temperance, justice, transcendence counteract mean-spirited and earthy forms of humour

Humour and orientations to happiness

- Humour is mostly related to emphasizing pleasure but humour is also positively (when benevolent humour) and negatively (in mean-spirited forms of humour) related to meaning

Humour and happiness

- There are positive (benevolent humour), negative (mean-spirited humour) and zero correlations with life satisfaction

References

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Appendix: Humor and virtue (Müller & Ruch, in press, JPoP)

VIA-IS	VIA-IS Humor	SHS Attitude	SHS Mood	Sense of humor	SW	RB	CO	EA	BN
Virtues									
Wisdom & knowl.	.20	.12	.17	.16	.06	.03	.11	-.07	.15
Courage	.33	.20	.28	.19	.18	-.09	.11	-.06	.10
Humanity	.52	.35	.27	.30	.35	-.10	.04	-.09	.16
Justice	.27	.08	.19	.03	.08	.00	-.16	-.15	.18
Temperance	.00	-.17	.06	-.14	-.14	-.08	-.13	-.34	.00
Transcendence	.27	.17	.23	.13	.16	-.09	-.08	-.19	.17

Note: N = 203. Partial correlation controlled for age, gender. Attitude = playful/serious attitude, Mood = positive/negative mood, SW = Socially warm vs. cold; RB = Reflective vs. boorish; CO = Competent vs. inept, EA = Earthy vs. repressed; BN = Benign vs. mean-spirited.

Müller & Ruch (2011a)

	Pleasure	Engagement	Meaning	LS
<i>HBQD humour styles</i>				
warm vs. cold	.28	-.11	.01	.20
reflective vs. boorish	-.20	-.10	-.01	-.04
competent vs. inept	.04	.05	.02	.13
earthy vs. repressed	.16	-.09	-.08	.01
benign vs. mean-spirite	-.06	.08	.21	.12
<i>VIA-IS</i>				
humour	.38	.11	.17	.33
<i>SHS</i>				
Playful attitude	.30	-.05	-.02	.28
Positive mood	.15	.20	.09	.58
Sense of humor	.32	.02	.04	.23

N = 199; LS = Life Satisfaction; SHS = sense of humor scale (McGhee, 2010)
HBQD = five bipolar humour styles derived from the Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck (Craig, Lampert & Nelson, 1996)

Müller & Ruch (2011b)

	Pleasure	Engagement	Meaning	LS
<i>HBQD humour styles</i>				
warm vs. cold	.21	.18	.19	.26
reflective vs. boorish	-.04	.02	.03	-.05
competent vs. inept	.05	.08	.10	.12
earthy vs. repressed	.23	.00	-.05	-.06
benign vs. mean-spirited	-.11	.13	.08	.24
<i>HSQ Humour Styles</i>				
affiliative humour	.31	.12	.09	.20
self-enhancing humour	.21	.26	.15	.23
hostile humour	.18	-.06	-.11	-.06
self-defeating humour	.10	-.01	.12	-.22
<i>Schmidt-Hidding styles</i>				
humour	-.01	.13	.27	.02
wit	.02	.07	.06	-.07
irony	.10	-.06	-.08	-.12
satire	.05	-.03	.05	-.18
fun	.16	.08	.12	.24
nonsense	-.05	.04	.04	.09
sarcasm	.05	-.06	-.08	-.18
cynicism	.19	-.01	-.01	-.21

N = 235-413; LS = Life Satisfaction; HSQ = Humor Styles Questionnaire (Martin et al, 2007); Schmidt-Hidding styles = eight comic styles according to Schmidt-Hidding (1963)

Müller & Ruch (2011b)

	Pleasure	Engagement	Meaning	LS
<i>STCI-T</i>				
cheerfulness	.29	.24	.14	.45
seriousness	-.14	.09	.18	-.09
bad mood	-.16	-.13	-.03	-.48
<i>3 WD</i>				
INC-RESf	-.02	.09	.04	.09
NONf	-.01	.04	.07	.07
SEXf	.28	.01	.02	.11
<i>PhoPhiKat</i>				
Gelotophobia	-.07	-.08	-.05	-.37
Gelotophilia	.22	.13	.16	.18
Katagelasticism	.34	-.01	-.03	-.07

N = 235-413; LS = Life Satisfaction; STCI-T = Stat-Trait Cheerfulness Inventory (Ruch et al, 1996); 3 WD = 3 Dimensional Humor test (Ruch, 1992); measures funniness of Incongruit-resolution, nonsense, sexual humour; PhoPhiKat = self-report instrument of Gelotophobia, Gelotophilia, Katagelasticism

Can Laughter Make Us Happier?

Anu Realo

Department of Psychology
University of Tartu

11th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter:
Theory, Research and Applications

Estonian Literary Museum Tartu, Estonia
15th– 20th August 2011



 TARTU ÜLIKOOL

Why is Happiness So Important?

- Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener (2005) reviewed cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental data showing that happy individuals are more likely than their less happy peers to have
 - fulfilling marriages and relationships,
 - high incomes,
 - superior work performance,
 - community involvement,
 - good health, and a
 - long life.
- **Happiness leads to success, not only the other way around!**



Sonja Lyubomirsky

Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 803-855.

Overview of the Lecture

1. What is happiness and how can it be measured?
2. Is happiness in our genes?
3. Does happiness change with age?
4. Can laughter make us happier?

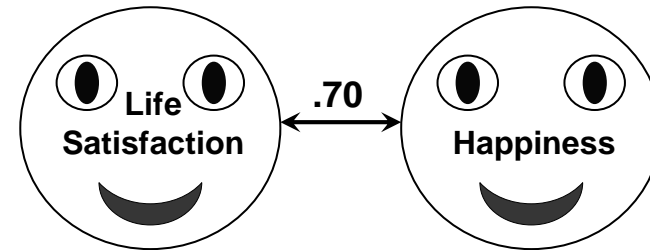
1. WHAT IS HAPPINESS AND HOW CAN IT BE MEASURED?

Subjective Well-Being

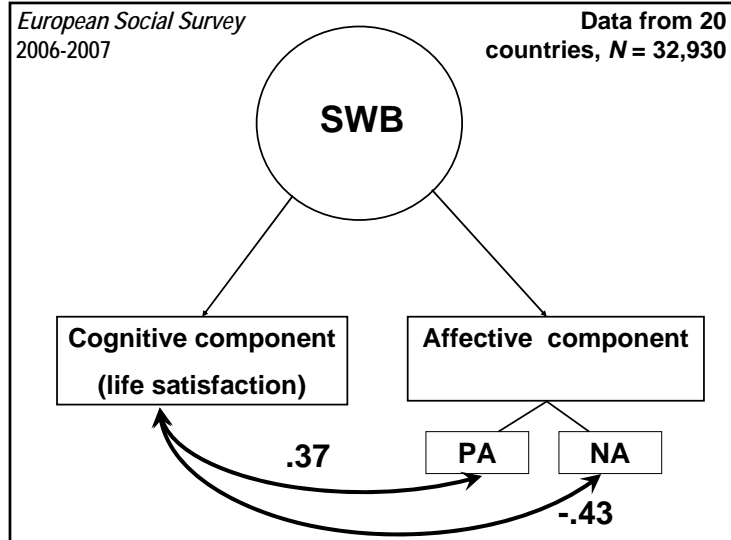
- **Subjective well-being (SWB)**, people's emotional and cognitive evaluations of their lives, includes what lay people call happiness, peace, fulfillment, and life satisfaction (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003).

Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. E. (2003). Personality, culture, and subjective well-being: Emotional and cognitive evaluations of life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 403-425.

Life Satisfaction and Happiness



European Social Survey, 2006-2007, Data from 20 countries, N = 36,554



Two Components of SWB

- Yet, is life satisfaction equally related to the presence of positive emotions and the absence of negative emotions?
- Moreover, can culture moderate the relationship between the components of SWB?

The Role of Positive and Negative Emotions in Life Satisfaction Judgment Across Cultures

- The cultural dimensions of **individualism** and **survival/self-expression** moderated the relationship between positive and negative emotions and life-satisfaction judgments. In other words, what represents **the good life** in an emotional sense is dependent on the values that characterize one's society.
- Some cultures (i.e., individualist cultures) promote satisfaction with life by emphasizing the minimization of displeasure, whereas other cultures (i.e., cultures stressing self-expression) do so by emphasizing the importance of pleasant experiences.

Kuppens, P., Realo, A., & Diener, E. (2008). The role of positive and negative emotions in life-satisfaction judgment across nations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 66-75.

2. ARE SOME PEOPLE BORN WITH “HAPPINESS GENE”?

Determinants of SWB (1)

Different demographic variables such as gender, income, marriage, and education have relatively little impact on the levels of subjective well-being.

People's evaluation of their subjective well-being is surprisingly stable in time, rising or falling to one's biological set range of happiness after different positive or negative life events.

The impact of external factors on subjective well-being is relatively modest!

Determinants of SWB (2)

People's base level of subjective wellbeing depends largely on two basic personality dispositions—**Neuroticism** and **Extraversion**.

People with higher levels of neuroticism tend to experience more negative affect whereas people with higher levels of extraversion are more inclined to experience positive emotions.


Therefore, when making judgments about life-satisfaction, **hedonic balance** (i.e., the proportion of positive/pleasant emotions to negative/unpleasant emotions experienced) serves as an important source of information.

Genes account for about 50% of the variation in people's levels of happiness!

2008, Vol 19, 3, pp. 205-210

Research Report
Happiness Is a Personal(ity) Thing
 The Genetics of Personality and Well-Being in a Representative Sample

Alexander Weiss,¹ Timothy C. Bates,^{1,2} and Michelle Luciano^{1,2}
¹The University of Edinburgh and ²Genetic Epidemiology Unit, Queensland Institute of Medical Research, Brisbane, Australia



Sample:
973 pairs of adult twins

Genes account for about 50% of the variation in people's levels of happiness — the underlying determinant being genetically determined personality traits, like being **sociable, active, stable, hardworking and conscientious**. These happiness traits generally come as a package, so that if you have one you're likely to have them all.

Personality and happiness do not merely coexist, but that in fact innate personality traits *cause* happiness. Twins who had similar scores in key traits — extraversion, calmness and conscientiousness, for example — had similar happiness scores; once those traits were accounted for, however, the similarity in twins' happiness scores disappeared.

3. DOES SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING CHANGE WITH AGE?

Life Events

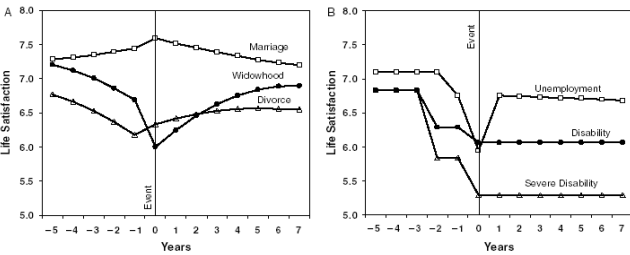


Fig. 1. Average within-person trajectories for life satisfaction before and after various life events. Panel A shows reaction and adaptation to marriage, death of a spouse, and divorce. Panel B shows reaction and adaptation to unemployment and the onset of varying degrees of disability. Adapted from Lucas (2005), Lucas (in press-a), Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, and Diener (2003), and Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, and Diener (2004).

Although happiness levels are moderately stable over time, this stability does not preclude large and lasting changes. **Happiness levels do change, adaptation is not inevitable, and life events do matter!**

Lucas, R. E. (2007). Adaptation and the set-point model of subjective well-being: Does happiness change after major life events? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16, 75-78.

Life Satisfaction and Aging (1)

- Longitudinal data are seldom considered in studies of life satisfaction and aging: the few studies that have such data have focused on stability of life satisfaction over time, reporting correlations of **.46 to .66** over periods of up to 17 years.

Life Satisfaction and Aging (2)

- **Cross-sectional data** studies of life satisfaction and age have yielded mixed results, with some finding no relationship, some reporting a positive linear association, others a curvilinear relationship with life satisfaction being highest among those aged 45–65 and lower among people younger and older.
- The latest study by Blanchflower and Oswald (2008) argues that life satisfaction is **U-shaped through life**: mental distress tends to reach a maximum in middle age, around 45 years of age.



Life Satisfaction Across the Lifespan: Findings from Two Nationally Representative Panel Studies

Brendan M. Baird · Richard E. Lucas · M. Brent Donnellan

Abstract Two large-scale, nationally representative panel studies (the German Socio Economic Panel Study and the British Household Panel Study) were used to assess changes in life satisfaction over the lifespan. The cross-sectional and longitudinal features of these studies were used to isolate age-related changes from confounding factors including instrumentation effects and cohort effects. Although estimated satisfaction trajectories varied somewhat across studies, two consistent findings emerged. First, both studies show that life satisfaction does not decline over much of adulthood. Second, there is a steep decline in life satisfaction among those older than 70. The British data also showed a relatively large increase in satisfaction from the 40s to the early 70s. Thus, age differences in well-being can be quite large and deserve increased empirical and theoretical attention.

Social Indicators Research, 99, 183-203.

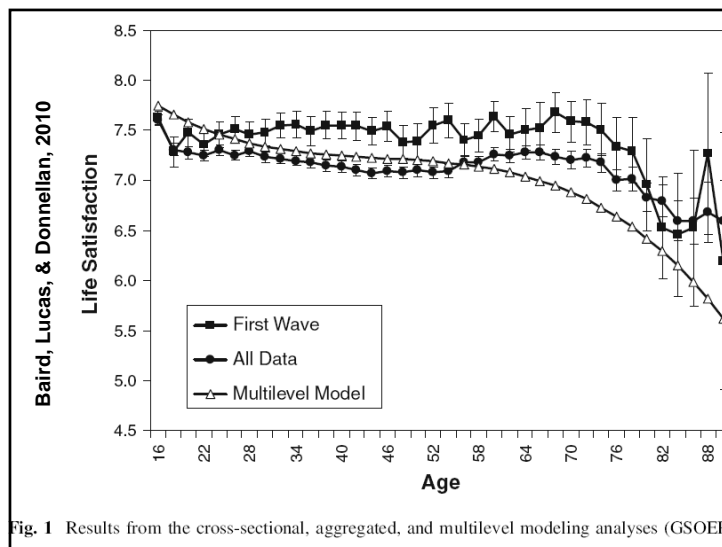


Fig. 1 Results from the cross-sectional, aggregated, and multilevel modeling analyses (GSOEP)

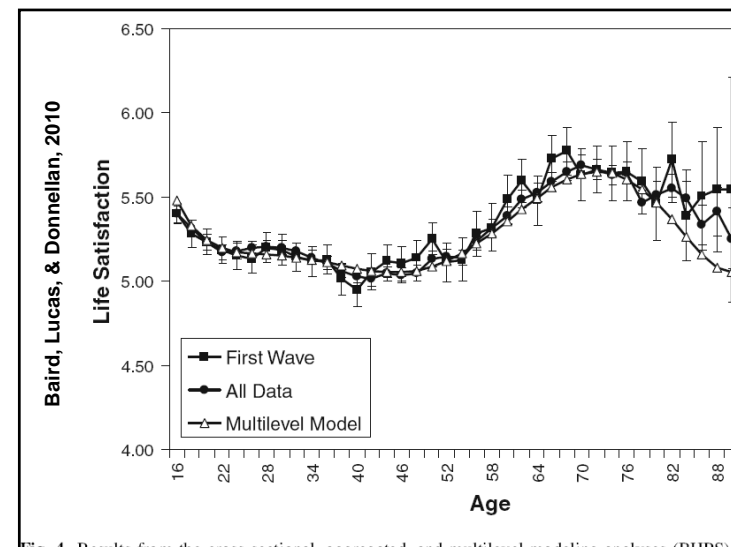


Fig. 1 Results from the cross-sectional, aggregated, and multilevel modeling analyses (BHPS)

Does life satisfaction change with age? A comparison of Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Sweden

Anu Realo*, Henrik Dobewall

Department of Psychology, University of Tartu, Tlgi 78, 50410 Tartu, Estonia

ABSTRACT

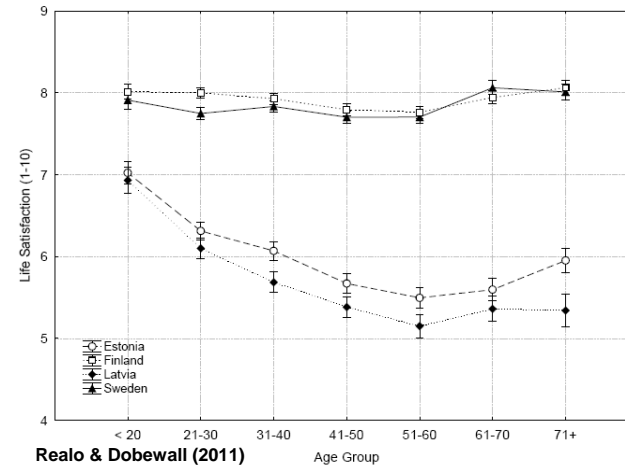
In this study, the relationship between age and life satisfaction was examined over a period of 27 years (1982–2009) in four countries—Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Sweden—using nationally representative samples of adults between the ages of 15 and 100 from the European Value Survey, the World Values Survey, and the European Social Survey (total $N = 39,420$). Unlike in Finland and Sweden, the relationship between age and subjective well-being in Estonia and Latvia was best described as curvilinear, with younger and older people having higher levels of life satisfaction. The observed age differences in life satisfaction in Estonia and Latvia, however, seem to be due to an interaction of cohort and period differences.



2011, vol 45, 297-308

4. CAN LAUGHTER MAKE US HAPPIER?

Figure 2



Realo & Dobewall (2011)

What is Laughter?

- **Laughter** is often seen as synonymous with humor. Yet, human laughter isn't just a response to jokes. People laugh when they're nervous, excited, tense, happy, or simply because someone else is laughing (80% of laughter has nothing to do with humour).
- **Laughter is not a learned behaviour.** Although it is certainly socio-culturally altered and attenuated with age, laughter is otherwise ubiquitous. It is seen in babies of three or four months old. It has been observed in children who are congenitally deaf and blind. It can be 'uncontrollable' and 'infectious'. Laughter is a 'hard-wired' physical and psychological reflex (Abdulla, 1998).
- Already Darwin (1872) gave a comprehensive description of laughter in terms of respiration, vocalization, facial action and gesture and posture. He noted that "... [t]he sound of laughter is produced by a deep inspiration followed by short, interrupted, spasmodic contraction of the chest, and especially of the diaphragm" (Darwin 1997 [1872]: 199) (Ruch, 2008).

Is Laughter Uniquely Human?

- Aristotle declared that humans are the only animal to laugh, but then, he never saw this video of Jaak Panksepp tickling rats ... (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qObkITM5I2Y>)
- Higher primates such as chimpanzees laugh (albeit as sounded panting rather than the human-style modulated exhalation) during rough-and-tumble play and there is some evidence that other mammals, such as rats, may laugh when they are 'tickled'.

Can Laughter Make Us Happier?

- Socially warm and benevolent forms of humour (including laughter) are in the *positive emotion* pathway (Müller & Ruch, 2011a) and might increase life satisfaction.
- Rude, insensitive, and cruel forms of humour impair the building of *meaning* (Müller & Ruch, 2011b) and might decrease life satisfaction.

Conclusions (1)

- Happiness can be measured via **subjective well being** which has two components: affective balance and life satisfaction. Culture moderates the relationship between the components of SWB.
- Genes account for about 50% of the variation in people's levels of happiness.
- Happiness leads to success, not only the other way around!
- Subjective well-being changes with age but the shape of the relationship is yet unclear. Moreover, there seem to be cultural differences in change trajectories depending on a culture's political, economic, and social situation.

Conclusions (2)

- Although happiness levels are moderately stable over time, this stability does not preclude large and lasting changes. Happiness levels do change and life events do matter!
- Laughter (as a reaction to socially warm and benevolent humour) may increase life satisfaction.
- The "**formula**" for being happy has many component parts. The basic formula has **hedonic balance** (many positive and few negative emotions) and **satisfaction** components and but as with any formula, each component may be present in different amounts.

Humor as a Neutralizing Metarelation

Toward a Metacognitive and Metasemantic Theory of Humor

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Main Points:

- (1) Literary theories formulated by the Russian Formalists and Bakhtin can be productively applied to humor studies.
- (2) Humor is not a cognitive but a metacognitive phenomenon. Like parody, a humorous text has no semantics and can be understood only from the metalevel. The central element of humor is self-parody (pure pragmatics) rather than semantic script opposition, logical mechanism or reinterpretation.
- (3) The metacognitive and metasemantic theory is biologically grounded and testable. It alone accounts for the uniqueness of humor and is a viable alternative to cognitive and semantic theories.

2

Frames

**Cognitive/
semantic
(objective or
relational)**

Cognitive linguistics
(Minsky, 1974; Coulson,
2001; Ritchie, 2004,
2006, etc.)

General Theory of
Verbal Humor (Raskin,
1985; Attardo, 1994)

**Metacognitive/
metasemantic
(subjective)**

Theory of play
and fantasy
(Bateson, 1972)

Theory of metamotivational
states: telic vs. paratelic
(Apter, 1982)

Narratology
(narrator distinct
from author)

3

While disagreeing in terminology,
both cognitive and semantic theories of humor
are based on the same questionable assumptions:

- The meaning of humor must be sought in the semantics of the humorous text.
- There is nothing unique about humor, maybe except the non-bona fide mode.

But most literature (not only crime fiction)
is based on the non-bona fide mode. If so,
why overstate the relevance of Grice's
conversational maxims for humor research?

4

Do the principles of semantics apply to any coherent text?

Does parody have semantics?

No:

It is the original that has semantics, and the only purpose of parody is to undermine this semantics without suggesting an alternative (irony presupposes an alternative). Unlike irony, parody is pure pragmatics without semantics.

Parody can be understood only from the metalevel, not from the text level.

5

Russian Formalists —
the precursors of modern literary criticism —
and the relevance of their ideas
to humor research



Boris
Eichenbaum



Viktor
Shklovsky



Yuri
Tynianov

6

Eichenbaum's theory of *skaz* —
a self-parodic narrative implicitly stylized
as another's narrative: The first
appearance of the implicit narrator

The meaning of *skaz* is very different from
the ostensible meaning of the text, which
misleads the reader.

"It is not a teller of tales who hides behind
the printed text of [Gogol's] 'Overcoat' but,
rather, a performer, almost a comic actor."

Boris Eichenbaum, 1919

7

Shklovsky's theory of prose.
"Defamiliarization" (*ostranenie*) —
the precursor of Derrida's "différance"

In literature, the form creates a content,
not vice versa as in everyday usage.
The "content as such" in literature does not exist.
What we take for "content" is part of the form.

The implicit narrator is a formal device,
which the author uses to defamiliarize
the material.

Viktor Shklovsky, 1925-27

8

Tynianov's theory of parody

The function of parody extends far beyond ridiculing specific pieces of literature.

"The purpose of parody is to expose the conventionality of the system and to transcend it; to take the text out of the system and to dismember it as a system."

Yuri Tynianov, 1929

9

Mikhail Bakhtin & Valentin Voloshinov: Heteroglossia and objectified direct discourse



In objectified direct discourse, the author's speech sounds as "another's speech," and the narrative proceeds exclusively within the character's narrow purview.



In Dostoevsky's *Nasty Story*, nearly the entire narrative is stylistically vulgar, and must be attributed to the character, not to the author, although nothing in the text, except its quality, directly suggests this.

Valentin Voloshinov, 1929
(written or inspired by Bakhtin)

Viktor Vinogradov's theory of *skaz*



Introduced the term "linguistic mask," or "stylistic mask" (1925). This mask can be ugly and inappropriate for the author. In this case, it is perceived as a play signal and a comic device.

Sixty years later, the term "authorial mask" was (re)introduced by Malmgren (1985) with regard to American postmodernist texts.

Modern narratology: the narrator is present in any work of literature, and should not be confused with the author even in ostensibly bona fide narratives.

11

Modern theories of discourse

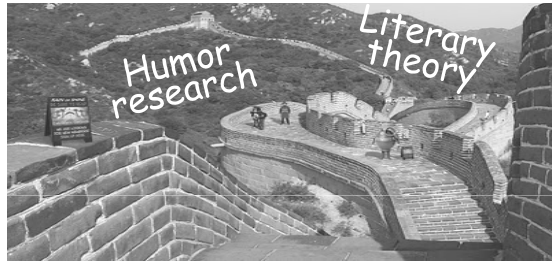
Irony is based on a latent repetition, or mention, of another's speech (Sperber, Wilson, 1986) or on pretending to be another (Clark, Gerrig, 1984)

Humor relies heavily on "indirect echoes" of another's speech (Curc6, 1998), or "latent quotations" (Kotthoff, 2006).

Humor is a form of irony, one in which the ridiculed narrator (*6nonciateur*) is not specified (Ducrot, 1984)

12

Most cognitive and semantic theories of humor ignore the achievements of literary theory



Attardo (2001) acknowledges the presence of the implied narrator in humorous literary texts, but rejects the "strong version" of Sperber & Wilson's Mention Theory (basically the same) with regard to jokes (Attardo, 1994).

13

Why is literary theory largely neglected in humor studies?

Literature is rightly believed to comply with its own laws, whereas jokes are wrongly judged by the standards of everyday talk; hence the excessive concentration on Grice's maxims.



However, the clash between the author/speaker and the inferior Other is no less acute in jokes than in literary humor or comedy. The non-bona fide theory does not account for this figure.

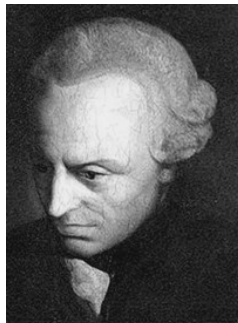
14

Humor can be productively studied the same way parody is studied

"Good jokes cannot be reduced to what seem to be equivalent serious statements; they have an essential ambiguity all of their own" (Davies, 1998, pp. 179-180).

But jokes are not ambiguous—they are parodic with regard to "what seem to be equivalent serious statements."

The challenge for humor studies: to explore the means by which the semantics of "what seem to be equivalent serious statements" is "reduced to nothing" (Kant, 1790). This is what the metasemantic theory attempts to do.



Basic postulates of the metasemantic/metacognitive theory of humor

Humor is based, not on semantic oppositions at the text level, but on the pragmatic oppositeness of two frames at the metalevel—that of the subject and that of the inferior Other.

The text *appears* funny if, and only if, both these frames overlap in its perception. Conditions related to semantics are neither sufficient nor necessary because the only mechanism of humor consists in undermining semantics.

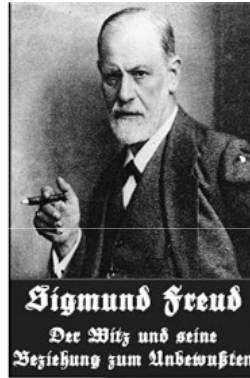
The theory should not be confused with the Ambivalence Theory of humor (psychoanalytic or otherwise). As in parody, the clash between the two perceptive frames does not cause conflict; instead, the meaning is lost. In humor, there remains neither a dual relation nor even a single relation to the object/target of the "equivalent serious statement."

16

The metasemantic and metacognitive theory is falsifiable and thus testable:

Primitive and crude jokes agree with it, but witty and refined ones seem to disagree.

Humor is often viewed as a contest, and laughter, as a sign of victory/approval (e.g. Gruner, 1997). Why should a defeat be approved?



Some jokes seem so meaningful and artistic that it's hard to imagine that they are self-defeating rather than "tendentious". Witticisms can serve as counterexamples to a metacognitive and metasemantic theory.

17

If jokes can be clever and even didactic, like metaphors and proverbs, then why invoke the inferior implicit narrator and metasemantics?

The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.

(Steven Wright)

Questions for experimental psychologists:

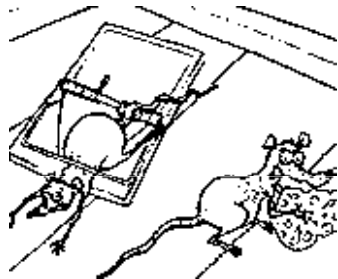
How many people consider it an anti-proverb (joke), and how many consider it a bona fide adversative proverb like "A lie has no legs, but it has broad wings"?

Do those people differ psychologically?

18

Sick humor as parody of didactics:

A semantic theory can't distinguish a joke from a proverb at the linguistic level whereas a metasemantic theory can.

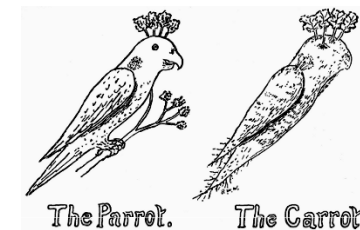


Semantic level: SO + LM
GOOD / BAD
(DILIGENCE / HASTE
& LAZINESS / PRUDENCE)

Pragmatic level (metalevel):
DIDACTIC INTENT /
FAILURE due to crudeness
(cynicism)

In the joke, "appropriate inappropriateness" (Monro, 1951; Oring, 1992) at the semantic level turns out to be inappropriate appropriateness at the pragmatic level. A proverb is a victory (over literalness), but a joke is a cleverly pretended defeat.

Nonsense as parody of didactics



The Parrot.

The Carrot.

The Parrot and the Carrot one may easily confound, They're very much alike in looks and similar in sound, We recognize the Parrot by his clear articulation, For Carrots are unable to engage in conversation.

(From *How to Tell the Birds from the Flowers*, by Robert W. Wood, 1917)

20



"A noisy noise annoys an oyster."



GTVH: Humor works at the level of the signified, not of the signifier. Nonsensical puns without semantic oppositions are poor relatives of referential jokes. (Hempelmann, 2004)

Robert W. Wood thought otherwise!

Metasemantic theory: Puns and nonsense highlight the basic function of humor: to obliterate reference and to displace the signified by the signifier, the "content" by the form. In jokes, it is the "content" who is the poor relative. The referentiality of humor proves to be spurious even in "referential" jokes.

If humor is purely subjective, why do jokes rather than phonebooks amuse us?

Many jokes do not amuse us either, although shared humorous intent + convention + social context contribute to acceptance.

"The comic never lives in the object, but in the subject" (Jean Paul)

When no prepared humor is available, the subject in a humorous mood "invents" that the world is a comedy.



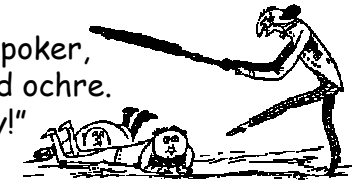
"The heaviest bales of the German book trade, which in reality crawl along in an annoying and disgusting way, at once assume wings as works of art if anyone imagines (and thereby lends them higher motives) that they have been written for parodic amusement."

Jean Paul (Johann Paul Richter), 1804 23

Was Freud familiar with sick humor?

If aggressive or sexual material is added to nonsense, the effect is enhanced; however, not because the "content behind the comic façade" is liked by the Id, but because the "content" itself turns out to be a parody/façade. The "content" of humor doesn't matter because it is the content of the fool's mind.

There was an Old Man with a poker,
Who painted his face with red ochre.
When they said, "You're a Guy!"
He made no reply,
But knocked them all down with his poker.



From *A Book of Nonsense*,
by Edward Lear, 1846

22

Who is the inferior implicit narrator, and what's the meaning of self-parody?

The essence of humor is "imitation of inferior people" (Aristotle), "descending incongruity" (Spencer, 1860), "comic degradation" (Bain, 1880), or "degradation of values" (Stern, 1980). Humor attributes this to the inferior Other.

Who are the "stupid" in jokes is important for sociology; what matters for humor theory is, why do joke authors, tellers, and listeners pretend to be stupid?

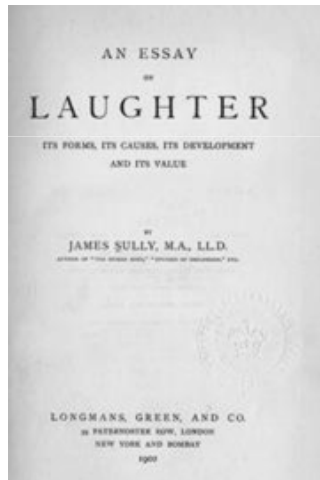
Can the two incompatible perceptive frames inherent in humor correspond to two stages in the subject's mental development and/or evolution?



The ontogeny of the "implicit narrator"

Humor develops from "make-believe unruliness" ("laughing rowdiness") in infants to intellectual forms of "play-challenge" in adults.

James Sully, 1902



25

The ontogeny of the "implicit narrator":

Stages in the development of children's humor, from pranks to jokes

(Martha Wolfenstein, 1954)



1. "I do it!"

2. "It is not I that does it!"

3. "It is not I that says it!"

4. "It is not I that thinks it!"

26

The phylogeny of the "implicit narrator".

(1) The prehuman past: Primate social play

Primate proto-laughter is a sign of pretense—a marker of the metacommunicative frame, which is present in both primate social play and humor.



Evolutionally, laughter derives from the signal of non-seriousness of attack (James Sully, 1902)

"The playful nip denotes the bite, but it does not denote what would be denoted by the bite."

Gregory Bateson, 1972

The phylogeny of the "implicit narrator".

(2) The human past: Folkloric parody

Domestic folk tales of the joke type contain remnants of parodically reinterpreted prehistoric beliefs. In the same tales, stratified society is sometimes viewed from the standpoint of egalitarian society and thus appears absurd.

(Propp, 1946; Meletinsky, 1958; Yudin, 2006).



"Humor compels the modern mind to assume the appearance of the primitive mind while retaining all the properties of the modern mind and all its knowledge."

Sergei Eisenstein, 1934

28

Theories of humor:
Semantic/cognitive
vs. metasemantic/metacognitive (1)

Type of theories	View of humor	Basic opposition	Text
Semantic/cognitive	Relation/representation	Objective or relational (two scripts or frames)	Incongruous or ambiguous (semantics)
Meta-semantic/meta-cognitive	Meta-relation / metarepresentation	Subjective (seriousness vs. non-seriousness). All other oppositions are neutralized	Self-parodic (pragmatics)

29

Theories of humor:
Semantic/cognitive
vs. metasemantic/metacognitive (2)

Type of theories	Perception level	Logical mechanism	Target
Semantic/cognitive	Same as in narrative (implicit narrator is ignored)	Purpose (connecting two opposed referents)	Part of reality or fantasy
Meta-semantic/meta-cognitive	Metalevel (implicit narrator is parodied)	Means (pretext for undermining reference)	Representation of reality or fantasy

30

Theories of humor:
Semantic/cognitive
vs. metasemantic/metacognitive (3)

Type of theories	Narrative Strategy and Language as joke parameters
Semantic/cognitive	Rank lowest in GTVH (provide only the form for the semantic "content")
Meta-semantic/meta-cognitive	Rank highest (critical for detecting parody: indicate the presence of the inferior Other)

31

Theories of humor:
Semantic/cognitive
vs. metasemantic/metacognitive (4)

Type of theories	Laughter	Evolutionary precursor of humor	Source of pleasure
Semantic/cognitive	Physiological response (sign of pleasure or approval?)	Irrelevant (humor is a by-product of language)	Intellectual play (problem solving)
Meta-semantic/meta-cognitive	Metamessage of non-seriousness + disruption of speech	Rough-and-tumble play of animals, based on pretense, like humor	Liberation from problem solving

32

Areas to which the theory has been applied:

Folklore, Literature, and Animation

A. Kozintsev. Foma and Yerema; Max and Moritz; Beavis and Butt-head: Images of twin clowns in three cultures. – Humor: International Journal of Humor Research, vol. 15-4, 2002, pp. 419-439.

Political satire on TV

A. Kozintsev. Puppets: Rage and jest. In: O. Mesropova, S. Graham (eds.). Uncensored? Reinventing Humor and Satire in Post-Soviet Russia. Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2008, pp. 183-199.

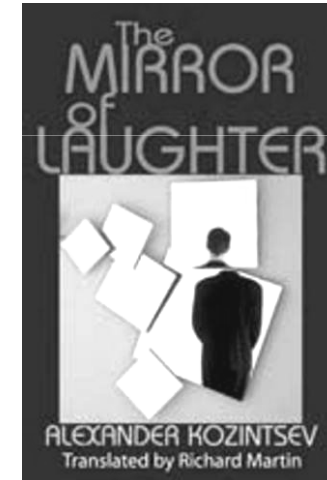
Jokes

A. Kozintsev. Stalin jokes and humor theory. – Russian J. of Communication, vol. 2, no.3/4, 2009, pp. 199-215 (in English):

<http://www.marquettejournals.org/images/RJCVol2Nos3-4Final.pdf>

33

More about the metacognitive /
metasemantic theory of humor
can be found here:



New Brunswick & London,
Transaction Publishers,
2010

34

WEDNESDAY (17. AUGUST)

Morning session

Chair: Wladislaw Chlopicki

Correlation and significance: The basic concepts

Taught by Graeme Ritchie (9:30 – 10:30)

Nasty humour as great literature

Taught by Christie Davies (11:00 – 12:00)

Humor as play, laughter as play signal

Taught by John Morreall (12:00 – 13:00)

Correlation & Significance : the basic concepts

Graeme Ritchie

Humour research involves empirical questions

e.g.

- > Do people in culture X tell/appreciate jokes of type Y?
- > When a text has property P, do people class it as humorous?
- > Do people of personality type T like humour of type Y?
- > When a person encounters humour of type Y, what patterns of activity are there in the brain?
- > Do the texts of author A have more examples of humour of type Y than the texts of author B?

Humour research involves empirical questions.

We want to characterise:

the extent to which an empirical claim is supported by evidence.

Our fictional subject matter for today...



**dragon
s**

Start with a QUESTION.

e.g.

“Are large dragons more aggressive than small ones?”

Next, rephrase this as an answer, our HYPOTHESIS.

e.g.

“Large dragons are more aggressive than small ones.”

(That is, something that can be TRUE or FALSE.)

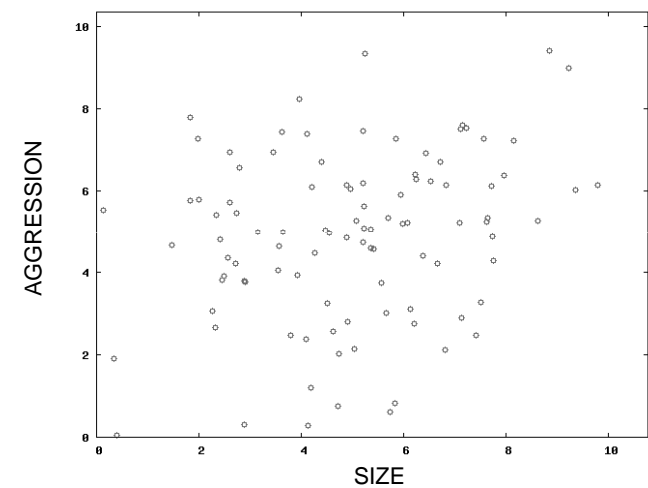
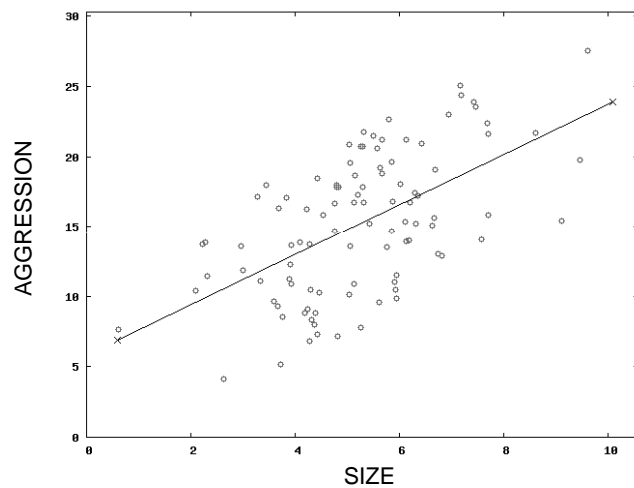
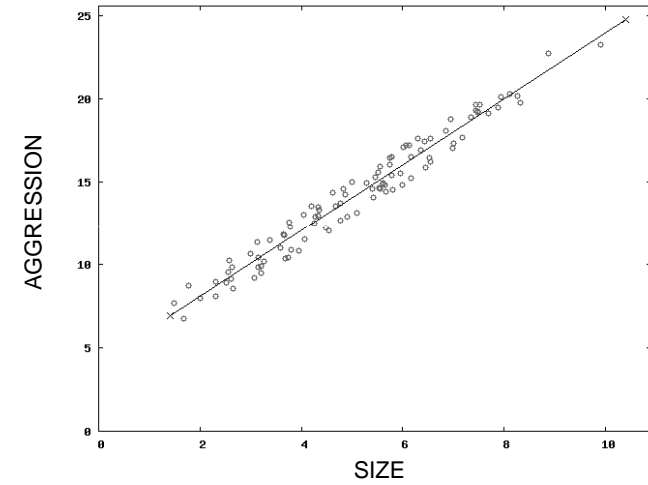
Then make it more PRECISE:

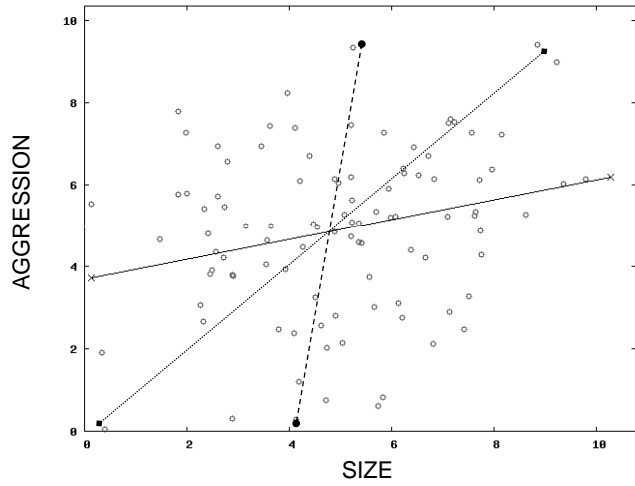
i. what we measure:

“If we measure the length L of a dragon from the tip of head to tip of tail, and assess the aggression F of the dragon using a recognised aggression scale, and do this for a number of dragons.....”

ii. what relationship we expect among the measurements:

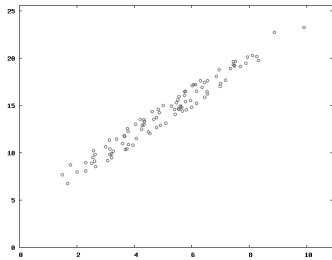
“... then L and F will be positively correlated.”



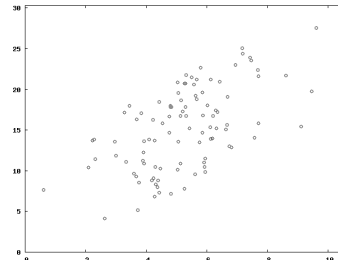


CORRELATION

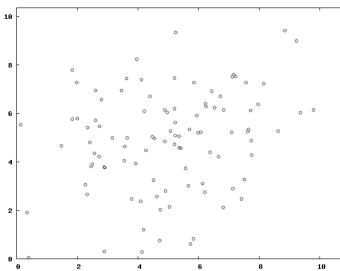
$$r = \frac{\sum(x - x_m) \times (y - y_m)}{\sqrt{\sum(x - x_m)^2 \times \sum(y - y_m)^2}}$$



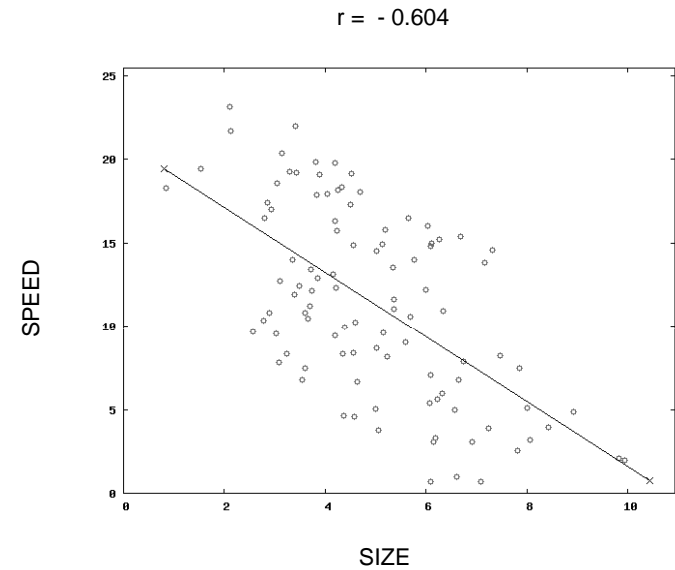
$r = 0.981$

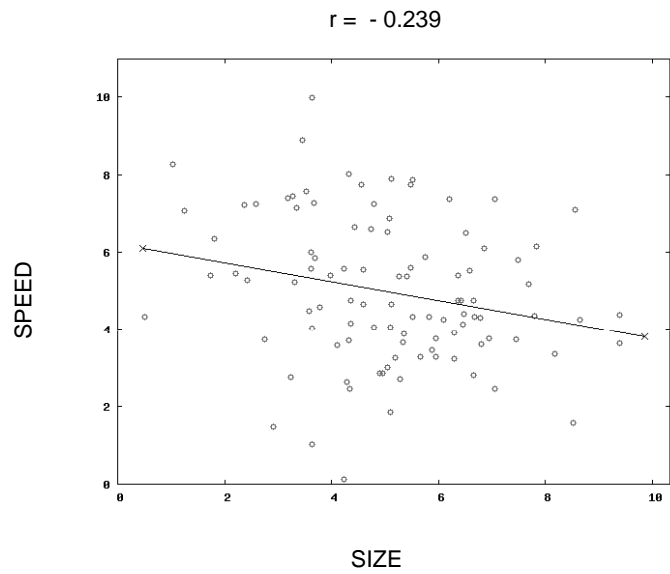


$r = 0.573$

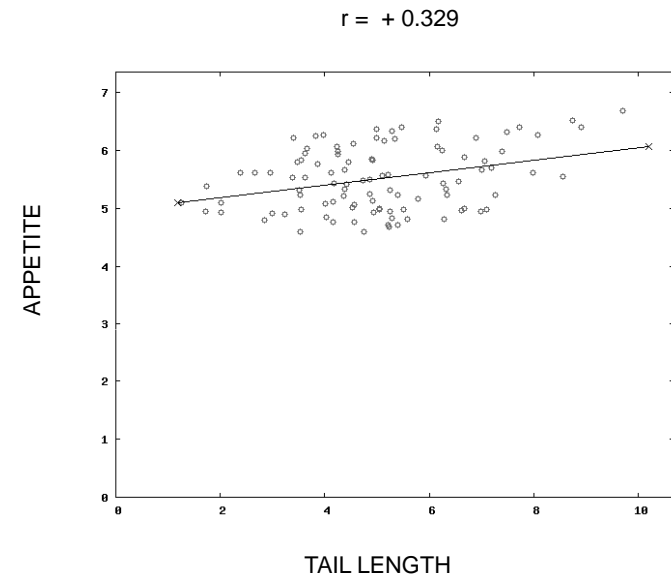
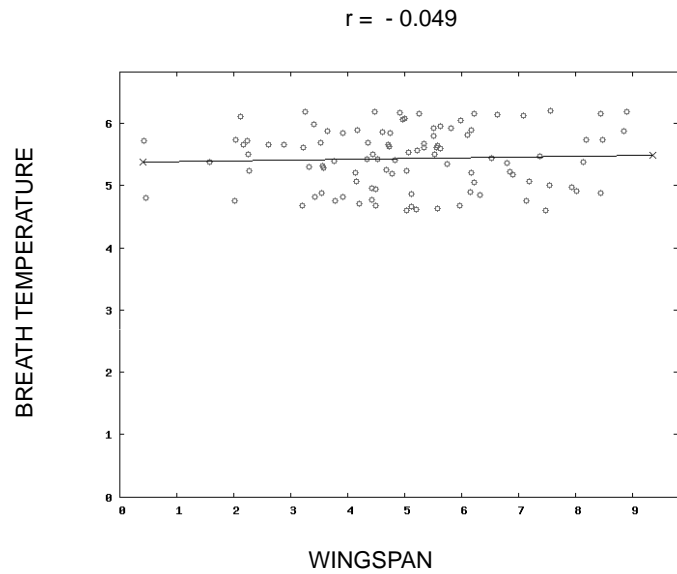


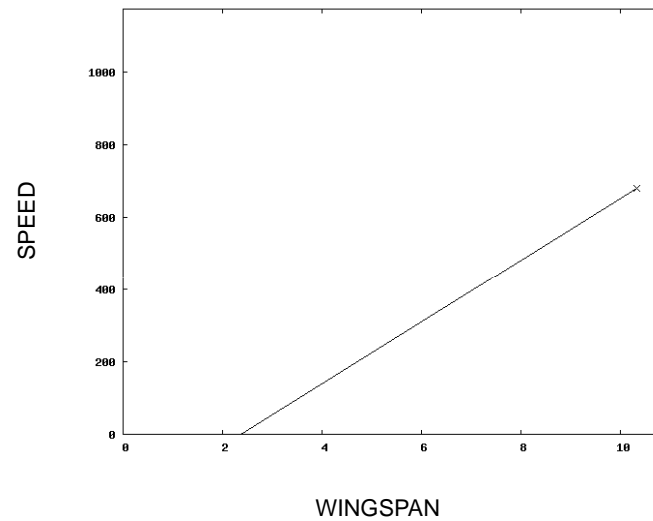
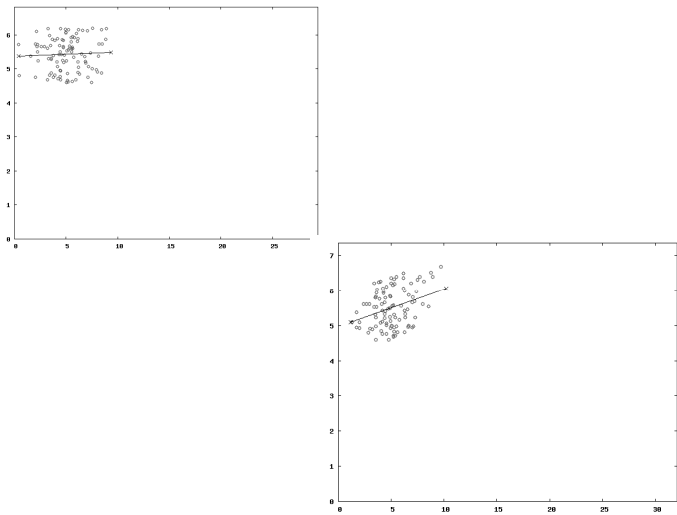
$r = 0.252$



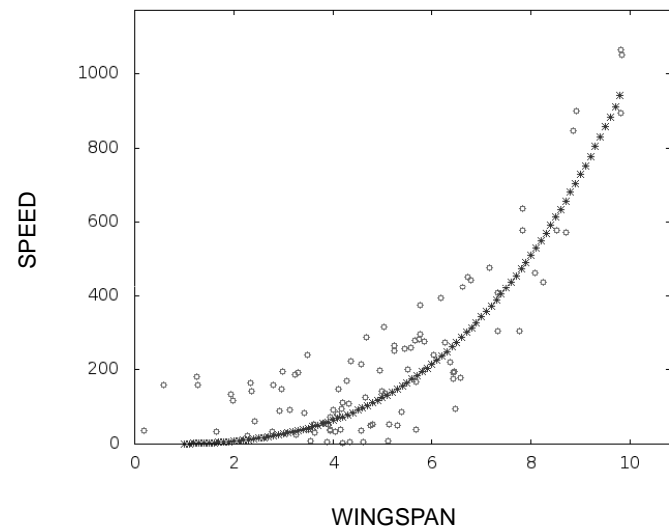
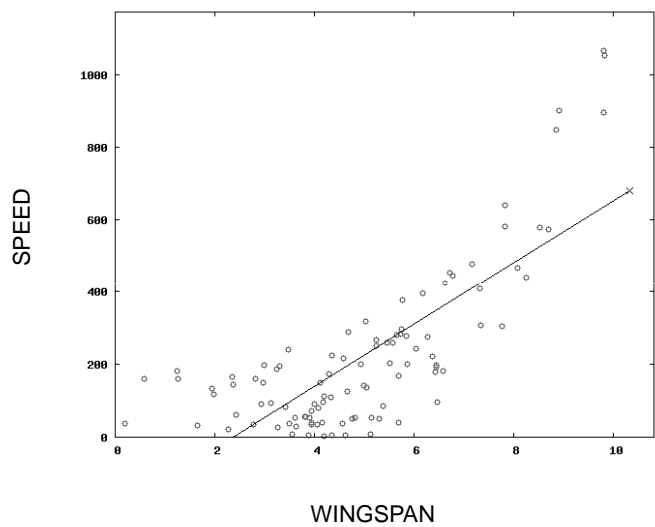


Straight lines aren't everything





$r = +0.774$



Don't apply tests blindly –
look at the data!

Summary so far....

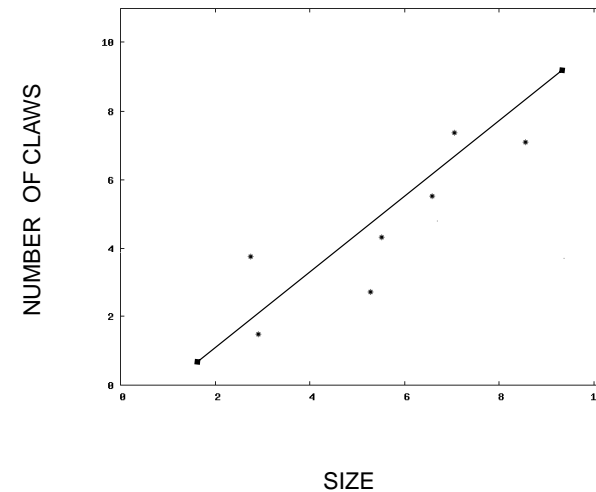
Correlation can be:

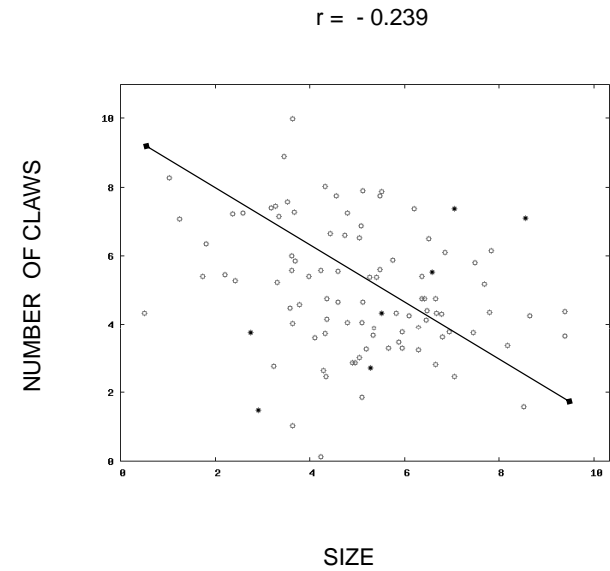
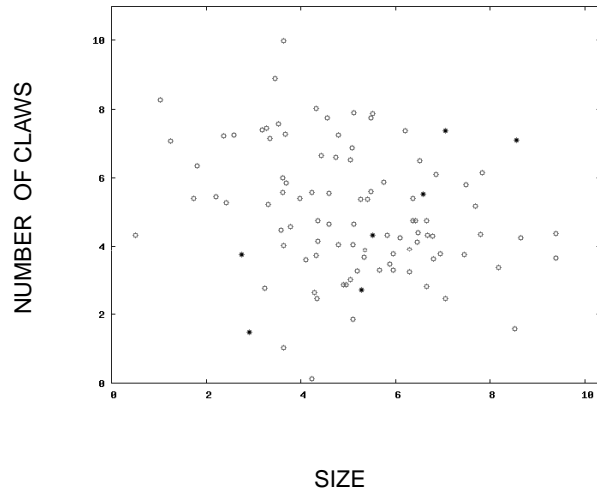
- positive/negative - do the variables go up/down together or in opposite directions?
- of varying strength – the higher the r value, the sharper the relationship
- significant/insignificant – next part of this talk.

(All examples shown here so far have been "significant".)

Statistical significance

"What is the probability that you have really found something?"



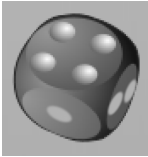


Central idea :

what is the likelihood that what we see has happened purely by chance?

Probabilities

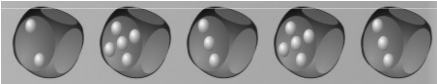
- Range from 0.0 (impossible) to 1.0 (certain).
- So 0.5 means “a 50-50 chance”, 0.05 means “a 1 in 20 chance”, etc.
- These values can be combined arithmetically according to certain rules.



If the die is "fair", in a single roll,
each face will have probability:
 $1/6 = 0.1667$

If we roll it 5 times, **each** possible sequence has
same probability:

$$0.1667 \times 0.1667 \times 0.1667 \times 0.1667 \times 0.1667 = 0.000128602$$



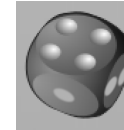
$$p = 0.000128602$$



$$p = 0.000128602$$

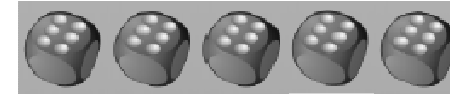


$$p = 0.000128602$$



Suppose we suspect this die is "biased" so that it will
tend to show a 6 when rolled (with 0.9 probability).

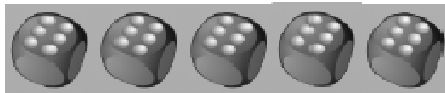
We test it by rolling it 5 times. We get:



If the probability (before we rolled),



if the die is "fair":
 $p = 0.000128602$



if the die has the suspected bias:
 $p = 0.59049$

i.e. More than 4500 times more likely

Two possible explanations:

- A) The result came simply by chance.
- B) The result came from the bias that we suspected

If (A), then the probability of these results = 0.000128602
(1 in 8000, roughly)

If (B), the probability of these results = 0.59049
(3 in 5, roughly)

Statistical significance

We compare two explanations:

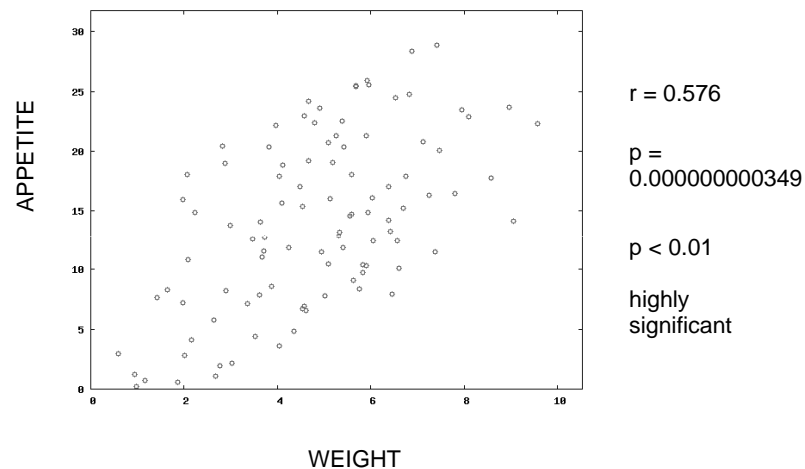
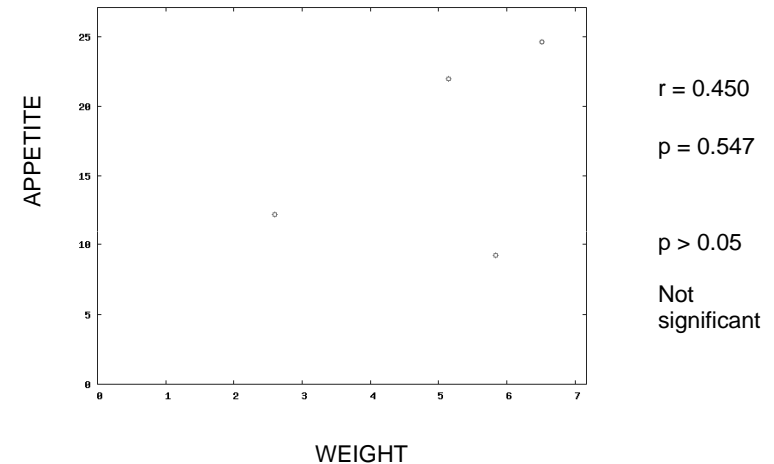
(A) any patterning within the data occurs just by chance

(B) there is some meaningful pattern within the data

Given a collection of data, it estimates:
“what is the probability that this happened by chance?”

If this probability is VERY LOW, then we take that as support for option (B).

This is NOT absolute proof of (B) - just an estimate of the unlikeliness of option (A) (the “null hypothesis”).



How it is reported

“ $p < 0.05$ ”

means

“the probability of this appearing by chance is less than 0.05” (i.e. 1 in 20)

“ $p < 0.01$ ” means

“the probability of this appearing by chance is less than 0.01” (i.e. 1 in 100)

“the null hypothesis was rejected”

means

“the explanation using pure chance is highly unlikely, so our hypothesis – that something is going on – seems more likely to be true”

Warning 1:

A value for statistical significance doesn't tell you **what** the pattern in the data is.

You still have to inspect the data to see what is going on.

Warning 2:

You have to select a suitable statistical test for the situation – different circumstances need different tests.

Easy to get this wrong!

Warning 3:

“statistically significant” \neq
“theoretically significant”

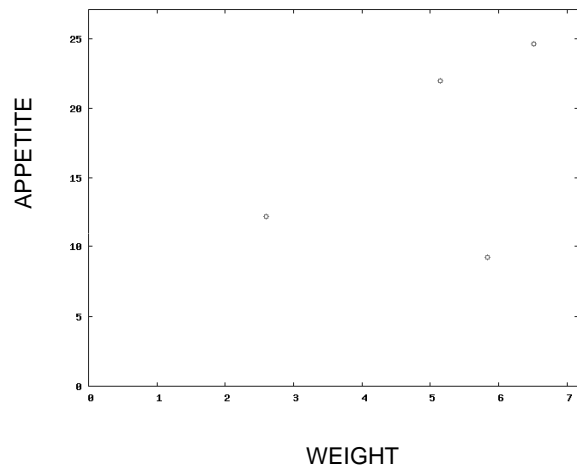
A good value for statistical significance doesn't tell you that the pattern is interesting, or if it is a large effect.

[Maybe r is very low (loose pattern) ?
Maybe the line is extremely flat ?]

Warning 4:

Failing to show something is (probably) true is not the same as showing it is (probably) false.

If the pattern occurring by chance does not have a very low probability (i.e. if the null hypothesis is not rejected), then it does **not** follow that the alternative hypothesis has been shown to be false.



$r = 0.450$
 $p = 0.547$
 $p > 0.05$
 Not significant

	length	wingspan	size of feet	tail length	weight	breath heat	neuroticism	sense of humour	agoraphobia	aggression
length										
wingspan										
size of feet										
tail length										
weight										
breath heat										
neuroticism										
sense of humour										
agoraphobia										
aggression										
	length	wingspan	size of feet	tail length	weight	breath heat	neuroticism	sense of humour	agoraphobia	aggression

	length	wingspan	size of feet	tail length	weight	breath heat	neuroticism	sense of humour	agoraphobia	aggression
length	1	-0.023	0.105	0.11	-0.045	0.026	0.111	0.009	-0.157	-0.07
wingspan		1	-0.141	-0.057	-0.014	-0.01	-0.052	-0.028	-0.063	0.097
size of feet			1	-0.03	-0.021	0.067	-0.176	-0.268 **	0.148	0.012
tail length				1	-0.07	-0.094	-0.052	0.105	0.011	-0.006
weight					1	0.009	-0.138	0.197 *	0.095	-0.029
breath heat						1	0.041	-0.079	0.053	0.298 **
neuroticism							1	0.197 *	-0.049	-0.112
sense of humour								1	-0.079	0.054
agoraphobia									1	0.002
aggression										1
	length	wingspan	size of feet	tail length	weight	breath heat	neuroticism	sense of humour	agoraphobia	aggression



Warning 5:

If you make enough tests, you may find a pattern... by chance.

Summary

- Correlation measures how variables are related
- Significance tells you how unlikely the pattern is.
- Applying tests is not a substitute for examining the data.
- Much care is needed.

NASTY LITERATURE

Evelyn Waugh “Decline and Fall” and Kingsley Amis “The Alteration”

Here are the lecturer’s notes on both of these texts the texts. The draft of Christie Davies’s article on Jaroslav Hasek’s “The Good Soldier Svejk” which makes a set of similar points can be copied from the organiser’s files on request.

1. Evelyn Waugh, *Decline and Fall*, London, 1928.

In the opening scene in Waugh’s novel *Decline and Fall* the quiet, innocent Paul Pennyfeather, an Oxford undergraduate at Scone College, who is hoping to become an Anglican clergyman, is attacked by a savage group of upper-class drunks. They are from the Bollinger Club, a wild, drunken and destructive club for present and former members of Oxford University. It is rumoured to be a satire on the Bullingdon Club (of the 1920s) whose distinguished members in our own time include David Cameron, the British Prime Minister and Boris Johnson, the mayor of London.

When drunk the Bollinger members became complete hooligans, protected from serious censure or the legal penalties of the criminal law by their high, indeed in many cases aristocratic, social standing. They are able to attack Pennyfeather with impunity, even though they are being watched from an upper window by two fellows of Scone College.

The next day the upper-class hooligans (though only those who are attached to the College) are fined by the College and the fines go by custom to ‘pay for’ huge quantities of port for the dons. But the innocent Pennyfeather, a drab individual of no consequence and limited means, whose clothes had been ripped off by the drunks, is expelled from Scone College and the University for his indecency in running through the College half-naked. Thus is the class system upheld.

The disgraced Pennyfeather can no longer enter the church and is forced to become a schoolmaster at a very bad boarding school indeed, Llanabba Castle in North Wales whose headmaster is Dr. Augustus Fagan. On the day of the school sports a Welsh band is hired to provide music. The band’s revolting appearance and qualities are described in detail and Dr. Fagan gives a disquisition on the racial shortcomings of the Welsh people.

The Problem for the humorous writer:

Pennyfeather’s expulsion from the College is clearly unjust. His life has been ruined by the verdict of the College fellows, even though he is an innocent victim of others’ violence. How does Waugh render this mini-tragedy and grotesque injustice funny? What style of writing does he use to achieve this end? Both Waugh’s and Dr. Fagan’s account of the Welsh are unfair and prejudiced, depicting them as in all respects utterly inferior, indeed an inferior race. How does Waugh render what, if serious, might have been offensive, extremely funny? Why did the Welsh themselves see it as funny and not protest, given that they had shortly before booed and demonstrated at the opening night of Caradoc Evans’ play *Taffy* because it mocked them as a people? Caradoc Evans was himself

Welsh, from the Welsh speaking heartland of Wales. Waugh himself was a complete outsider to Wales, a snobbish Englishman and an Oxford graduate who had indeed taught for a time at a down-at-heel boarding school for English pupils in North Wales and hated it. Does it not make nonsense of the trite and silly proposition that it is alright to mock your own people but not alright for others to do it?

2. Kingsley Amis, *The Alteration*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1976.

The Plot:

Hubert Anvil is a ten year old boy, whose voice has not yet broken, living in an imagined alternative world, a Roman Catholic England where there has been no Reformation. Indeed there has been no Reformation in Europe and only the United States is a Protestant 'heretic-schismatic' country. Abbot Thynne, the Principal of Hubert's college and Pope John XXIV, an Englishman from Yorkshire, both independently decide that Hubert ought to be castrated in order to preserve his magnificent voice and enable him to sing castrati as an adult. Hubert is unsure about this and with the help of the American ambassador tries to escape to the United States. Before he can do so he suffers an internal injury that turns septic and he has to be castrated anyway, which opens the way to a happy ending. Hubert goes on to have a splendid and successful career as a soloist in the Pope's Sistine Choir and also as the secular opera singer Hubertus Incus.

Two key characters are the German singers Federicus Mirabilis, Fritz (Wunderlich) and Lupidradus Viaventosa, Wolfgang (Windgasser) sent to England by Pope John XXIV to see if Hubert Anvil's voice is as perfect as rumoured, which would, of course, make him a suitable candidate for 'the alteration'. They agree that he is. The book ends with their listening to him sing as a great operatic star fifteen years later when his brilliance confirms that they were right to have him altered at a young age.

The problems for an author creating humour about such a topic :

A. The idea of castrating a young choir boy to preserve his voice does not fit altogether well with our modern ideas about bodily integrity, the rights of the individual and informed choice. Indeed it is for these reasons that in the book the imaginary American ambassador to England tries to rescue Hubert. [The last outstanding castrato singer was Alessandro Moreschi (1858-1922) castrated in 1865, who became first soprano at the Sistine Chapel Choir. For technical musical reasons Pope Pius X banned the creation of new castrati in 1903 (see Franz Habrock, *Die Kastraten und ihre Gesangkunst*, Berlin, 1927)].

Indeed some contemporary readers, particularly Southern Baptists, may well find the entire theme of a boy's castration for artistic and religious reasons rather distasteful, even shocking. How, then, can the author render this horrid history funny? What language, what style does Amis need to use?

.B. One of the devices used by Amis to create the necessary distance between the reader and the alteration is to set the book within an imagined world, within an alternative history of all its countries, not just England. How can this be presented in a humorous way?

Humor as Play, Laughter as Play Signal

© 2011 John Morreall

From *Comic Relief:*

A Comprehensive Philosophy of Humor

Standard Emotions

- Practically oriented states in which an animal is motivated to do something conducive to its survival and/or the survival of the species.
- Fear, anger, disgust
- Sadness
- Sexual passion, parental love

Standard Emotions

- (1) *Beliefs and desires* cause
- (2) *physiological changes*, which together motivate
- (3) *adaptive actions*.
- The person's (4) *sensations of those physiological changes* are the "feelings" in emotions.

Humorous Amusement

- Physiological changes
- Sensations of those changes

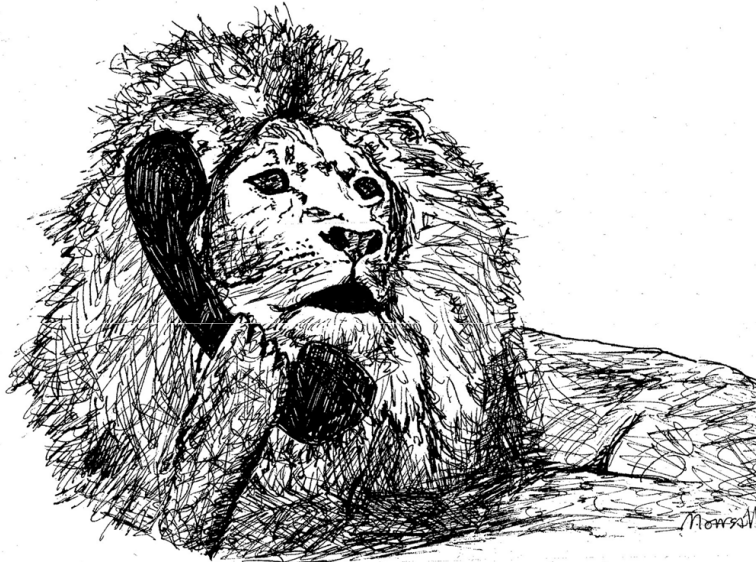
- BUT no beliefs or desires are needed.
- There is no motivation for adaptive actions.

Emotions can be irrational by involving irrational beliefs—e.g., fear of yellow pencils.

But amusement cannot be irrational.

Emotions / Humour

- We care about the object of emotion
- We are serious
- Practical orientation
- The beginnings of actions
- We need not care about the object of amusement
- We are not serious
- No practical orientation
- Actions are blocked



“Thin-crust, no onions, with extra zebra and wildebeest.”

The objects of emotions are people, things, or events. The objects of amusement need not be any of these.

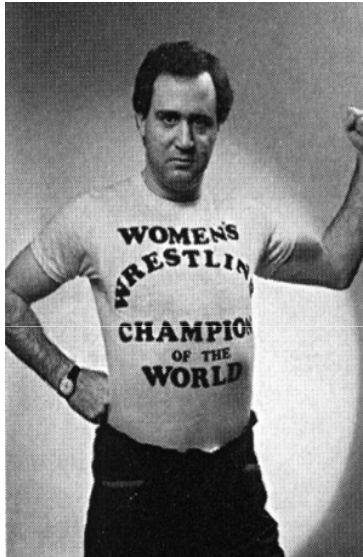
- Oscar Wilde: “Work is the curse of the drinking classes.”
- Steven Wright: “I saw a sign that said ‘24-HOUR BANKING.’ Who has time for that?”
- Rita Rudner: “A friend of mine was in labor for 36 hours. I don’t even want to do something that feels good for 36 hours!”
- “urban Berbers”

Play

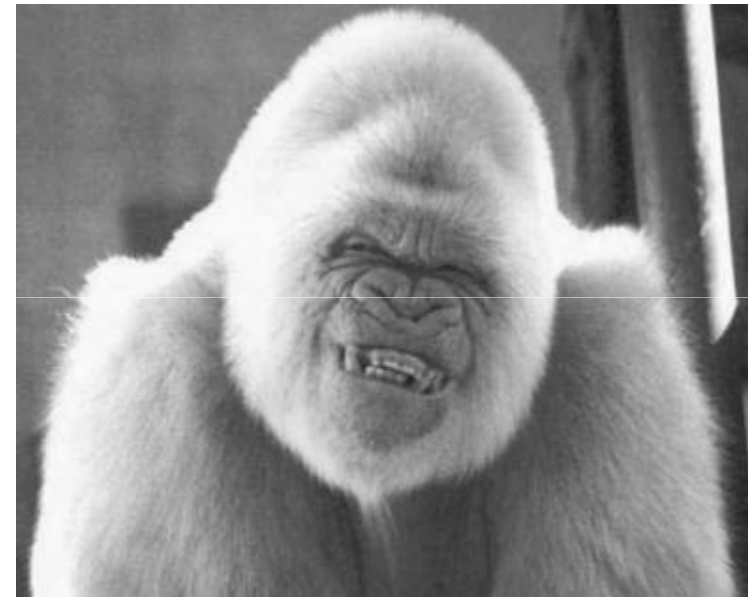
- The only “goal” is pleasure.
- Normal concerns about what is true are suspended.
- Normal concerns about morality are suspended.
- Communication can be non-bona-fide.

GRICE'S RULES

- Do not say what you believe to be false.
- Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- Avoid obscurity of expression.
- Avoid ambiguity.
- Be brief.



Andy Kaufman (1949-1984)





THURSDAY (18. AUGUST)

Morning session

Chair: Graeme Ritchie

Assessment of the sense of humour: Another appraisal of the state of the art

Taught by Willibald Ruch (9:30 – 10:30)

Funny business: The benefits of humor at work

Taught by John Morreall (11:00 – 12:00)

Workshop 1: Build your own jokes *Taught by Graeme Ritchie*

OR

Workshop 2: How to measure smiling and laughter: Learning the basics of the Facial Action Coding System – FACS

Taught by Willibald Ruch and Tracey Platt

(12:00 – 13:30)

Afternoon session: Symposium (14:30 – 19:00)



Assessment of the sense of humour: Another appraisal of the state of the art



Willibald Ruch
University of Zurich,
Switzerland

11th International Summer School and Symposium on



Humour and Laughter:
Theory, Research and Applications



Estonian Literary Museum Tartu, Estonia
15th– 20th August 2011



Following this lecture you should be able to

- understand the use of humour instruments in research
- know different measurement approaches to measure humour
- know the criteria for the evaluation of scales
- know selected scales for different domains
- describe some sense of humour scales
- understand what scales we do need in future and which ones we don't.

2

Suggested reading

- Martin, R. A. (2007). The psychology of humor: An integrative approach. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Ruch, W. (2007). Humor measurement tools. In Ruch, W. (Ed.). The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ruch, W. (2007) (Ed.). The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ruch, W. (2004). Humor. In C.P. Peterson & M. E. P. Seligman (Eds.), Character strengths and virtues: A handbook of classification (pp. 583-598). American Psychological Association, Washington DC, USA (& Oxford University Press).
- Ruch, W. (2008). The psychology of humor. In V. Raskin (Ed.), A primer of humor (pp. 17-100). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

3

Where do we need humour instruments?

We do use humour tests to, for example,

- assess individual differences in sense of humour
 - Assessment of the humour profile of a person
- relate individual differences in humour to individual differences in other phenomena
 - To study causes and consequences of humour; e.g., environmental and genetic influences. See how humour relates to personality or gender.
- To study whether general relationships are different for subgroups
 - E.g., whether frustration leads to aggression in humourless individuals but not for those with a sense of humour.
- Examine whether a humour intervention is effective
 - E.g., short-lived and long term changes in humour

4

Frequent questions (for thesis)

- What instruments to use for a project
 - Shall one use the one with the highest number of subscales? The fanciest name?
 - The one, which is most *reliable*?
 - Is there one to use for all kind of questions?
- What are the criteria for evaluating tests anyway?
 - How good are current scales?
 - What do they measure?

5

Measurement approaches

- Self-report scales
 - Questionnaires
 - Surveys
 - Inventories
 - Diary method
- Informant based measures
 - Observer ratings
 - Peer reports
 - sociometric measures (e.g., rank pupils in a class)
- Tests
 - with “right-wrong answers”
 - with “open answers” to be judged later on

6

Evaluation criteria for tests: Psychometric properties

- objectivity
 - administration, scoring, interpretation
- reliability (accuracy of measurement)
 - internal consistency, stability
 - A coefficient between .0 and 1.0;
 - > .60 for a research instrument
 - > .70 for individual assessment
- validity
 - content validity (experts agreement on content)
 - criterion validity (what can be predicted by test)
 - construct (to what degree does test represent the construct)
 - convergent & discriminant
- other criteria

7

What is a “sense of humor”?

- a style (i.e., “typical” behavior, personality)
 - predominant mood (e.g., good vs. bad-humored)
 - an attitude/world view?
 - defense mechanism/coping style
 - affect-based temperament (e.g., cheerfulness)
 - aesthetic perception (e.g., jokes preference)
 - Virtue (in 2nd half of 19th century sense of humor became a cardinal virtue in England)
- an ability (i.e., “maximal” behavior)
 - talent (creativity, problem solving)
 - skill
 - competence

8

Consequences

- If sense of humour is
 - a style (i.e., “typical” behaviour, personality)
 - an ability (i.e., “maximal” behaviour)
 - an attitude?
 - an affective disposition (emotion, mood)?
 - a virtue
 - competence?
- nature of assessment
 - questionnaire, self- peer report
 - no self-reports! Tests (creativity type)
 - Self-report
 - Self- & peer report
 - Self- & peer (!) report
 - Peer report

10

An early appraisal (Ruch, 1993)

- For a ISHS plenary lecture the existing humour scales (e.g., SHQ, CHS, SHRQ, 3WD) were analysed in a German sample (Ruch, 1993)
- Results showed a poor state of the art. Among the flaws were
 - Instruments without theory (or very loose connection to a theory)
 - No instruments where theories or models exist (e.g., humour as a world view)
 - Overuse of the term “sense of humour,” despite instruments lacking convergent validity
 - Lack of methodological sophistication, no elaborated construction stage
 - Low psychometric properties (homogeneity, reliability, content and construct validity)
 - Assumption humour is unidimensional
 - Lack of instruments for the measurement of negative forms of humor and humorlessness
- Ruch, W. (1993). Approaches to the study of the “sense of humor”. (invited lecture) Eleventh International Conference on Humour and Laughter. Luxemburg, September 29 - October 4, 1993.

11

Effects

- Immediate responses
 - emotional
- Short term
 - Brushing up of existing approaches
 - Symposium on the measurement of the sense of humour at the 1994- ISHS conference in Ithaca, NY.
 - Construction/publication of new scales MSHS, STCI, CPPT, HBQD
 - Special issue on “Measurement of the sense of humor” *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*. (Vol 9:3/4, 1996)
 - Edited book on “The Sense of Humor” with review of 60 humour tests
- Long term
 - More new scales (e.g., HSQ, EUHA, PhoPhiKat, tests for children)
- Did it pay off?
 - Partly, some instruments have better quality, most problems remain
 - New problems: Adaptation into cultures

12

Review of tests

- Ruch (1998) surveyed the existing tools used for diagnosing humour states and traits and found the following numbers for individual categories
 - Informal surveys, joke telling techniques, or diary method (8 instruments)
 - Joke and cartoon tests (19 instruments)
 - Questionnaires, self-report scales (14 instruments)
 - Peer-reports (6 instruments)
 - State measures (1 instrument)
 - Children humour tests (5 instruments)
 - Humour scales in general instruments (6 instruments)
- Meanwhile about 15 new scales were constructed

13

Brief survey of types of instruments

- Styles, humour as personality/temperament
 - HBQD, STCI, HSQ, MSHS, CHS, VIA-IS humor
- Humour appreciation tests
 - IPAT Humor Test of Personality, Antioch Humor Test, 3 WD, EUHA
- Humour Creation Test
 - Cartoon Punch line Production Test (CPPT)

14

Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS)

- Thorson & Powell (1993)
- Items generated in a „brainstorming“ procedure and later factor analysed. Empirically four factors were found, items with clear loadings kept and used to form a total(!) score.
- Traits to be measured: Sense of humour
 - humour production;
 - coping or adaptive humour;
 - appreciation of humour,
 - attitudes towards humour/humorous people
- Translated into several languages. Uses a total score despite of orthogonal components
- Differing number of items for the 4 factors
- Children version

15

Humour styles questionnaire

- Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003)
- distinguish between two putative healthy and unhealthy humour styles
- according to their “function”
 - affiliative humour
 - self-enhancing humour
 - aggressive humour
 - self-defeating humour
- utilizing 32 questions in a 7-point answer format
- Concepts derived in a top-down approach; clustering theories and views of humour, and then writing items which later get purified empirically.

16

Cont.

- Good reliability, support of criterion validity
- Widely used in health psychology research
 - Positive scales predict positive phenomena
 - Negative scales predict negative phenomena
 - Often seen as cause, or mediator, of health outcomes
- “most widely accepted scale”, formation of “school”
- Does not claim to be comprehensive
- Humour use as a “style”, or personality trait
- Different from comic styles as used in theatre etc.
- Interpretation occasionally mixed

17

Temperamental basis of humor (Ruch & Köhler, 1998)

- Instead of "sense of humor"
 - cheerfulness (state & trait)
 - seriousness (state & trait)
 - bad mood (state & trait)
- I.e.,
 - current ("state") & habitual ("trait") dispositions for
 - humorous & humorless behaviors and experiences
 - cognitive and affective dispositions
- State-Trait Cheerfulness Inventory-STCI
(Ruch, Köhler & van Thriel, 1996, 1997)
 - Trait form with 60 and 30 items
 - State form with 30 and 18 items

18

Cont.

- Predicts laughter, smiling, "robustness of mood"
(Ruch & Köhler, 2007)
- Cheerfulness (and bad mood) predict all positive humour scales, socially warm and competent humour style, as well as the sense of humour and typically define a factor loaded by sense of humour (Ruch, Proyer, Esser & Mitrache, 2011).
- (low) seriousness predicts aggressive humour
- Cheerfulness AND bad mood predict self-defeating humour
- Not comprehensive, but foundation of positive humour (better than extraversion)

19

Everyday humorous conduct Humorous behaviour Q-sort Desk--HBQD (Craik, Lampert & Nelson, 1996)

- Collected all possible non-redundant statements about observable everyday humour conduct.
- 9 step format (1= least; 9 = most characteristic of me) for self-and peer assessment in these 100 statements.
- Applied factor analysis, statistical tool in a large sample (N > 600) to arrive at five dimensions (humour "styles")
 - I. *Socially Warm vs Cold* humour style
 - II. *Reflective vs Boorish* humour style
 - III. *Competent vs Inept* humour style
 - IV. *Earthy vs Repressed* humour style
 - V. *Benign vs Mean-spirited* humour style

Evaluation

- Most comprehensive assessment tool, also suited for applications to single individuals
 - contains a mixture of personality, attitude, mood, talents questions
- ### Problems
- Difficult to replicate factors (German, Swiss & Irish samples), only with "tricks" (Müller & Ruch, 2011a)
 - self-peer correlations low for some factors; e.g., reflective vs. boorish; benign vs. mean-spirited (Ruch, Proyer, Esser, & Mitrache, 2011)
 - Strong intercorrelations between factor 1 & 3 and 4 and 5- (Müller & Ruch, 2011a; Ruch et al. 2011).
 - Only cold and warm, as well as earthy and repressed show negative correlations in a direct rating task. (i.e. When no Q-Sort)
 - Self-rated earthy correlates more with peer-rated mean-spirited humour than self-rated mean spirited does (Ruch et al. 2011).
 - should "Competent vs Inept" humour style be measured via self-report; (correlations to a cartoon punch line production test (CPPT) is low; 24 Seboek, 1999)

Proposed Four Factor-Solution

- F1: *Motivational*
 - HBQD: earthy, mean-spirited, boorish
 - HSQ: Hostile, self-defeating
 - Comic-styles: Sarcasm, Cynicism, Satire, Irony, Wit vs. Humor
- F2: *Social*
 - HBQD: Warm, boorish, competent vs. cold
 - HSQ: Affiliative, Self-enhancing, hostile, self-defeating
 - Comic-styles: Fun, Nonsense
- F3: *Competence (lack of)*
 - HBQD: Inept, cold, repressed
 - HSQ: Self-defeating vs. affiliative
 - Comic-styles: ----
- F4: *Intellectual*
 - HBQD: Reflective, benign
 - HSQ: Affiliative, Self-enhancing
 - Comic-styles: Humor, Nonsense, Satire, Wit, Irony

25

Humour appreciation tests

Measures aesthetic perception of humour stimuli; typically *not a questionnaire*

- typically contain jokes, limericks, cartoons, funny pictures
- classified either intuitively, based on theory, or empirically
- are rated for various aspects representing liking and disliking
- to assess ones humour appreciation profile
- or other aspects of personality

26

EUHA

- Carretero-Dios (2005) introduced a new assessment tool named EAHU (from Spanish *Escala de Apreciación del Humour*, English: Humour Appreciation Scale).
- The EUHA is used to differentiate six empirically isolated factors:
 - incongruity-resolution humour (INC-RES)
 - nonsense humour (NON)
 - sexual humour (SEX)
 - black humour (BLACK)
 - men-disparagement humour (M-DIS) and
 - women-disparagement humour (W-DIS)
- Spanish version is well-validated

27

Humour Creation (Wit)

- not well studied, no theory exists
- Babad (1974): Producer vs. Reproducer (unrelated)
- Köhler & Ruch (1996): quality/quantity of humour creation
- Feingold: humour information, joke knowledge, humour reasoning, and joke comprehension
- Assessment:
 - caption removed cartoons
 - asked to produce funny captions
- Scoring
 - Judged for funniness, originality, wit, fantasy

28

Example: IPAT Humor Test of Personality *Cattell & Tollefson (1966)*

- *Traits to be measured:* Introversion vs. extroversion, dry wit vs. good-natured play, compensation vs. tough self-composure, flirtatious playfulness vs. gruesomeness, urbane pleasantness vs. hostile derogation, high anxiety (with defiance) vs. low anxiety (resigned adjustment), theatricalism vs. cold realism, neat, light-hearted wit vs. ponderous humor, damaging retort vs. unexpected, "off-beat" humor, cheerful independence vs. mistreatment humor, anxious concern vs. evasion of responsibility, rebound against feminine aggression vs. scorn of ineffectual male, dullness vs. general intelligence

Antioch Humor Test



- Mindess, Miller, Turek, Bender & Corbin (1985).
- Traits to be measured: Nonsense, philosophical, sexual, scatological, social satire, hostile, demeaning to men, demeaning to women, ethnic, sick, quantity and nature of humour production.
- Unclear psychometric results
- Construction process unclear
- Rarely used

30

Example: 3 WD

- *Traits to be measured:*
 - Funniness of incongruity-resolution humour (INC-RES_f),
 - funniness of nonsense humour (NON_f),
 - funniness of sexual humour (SEX_f),
 - total funniness of humour,
 - aversiveness of incongruity-resolution humour (INC-RES_a),
 - aversiveness of nonsense humour (NON_a),
 - aversiveness of sexual humour (SEX_a),
 - total aversiveness of humour,
 - structure preference,
 - appreciation of sexual content.

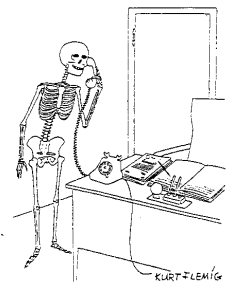
32

Cartoon punch line production test-CPPT (measure of wit, Köhler & Ruch, 1996)

Instructions

- Cartoons often are composed of two elements: a drawing which by itself is not (or only slightly) funny, and an text which often contains the punch line. Below you can find some of such drawings with the text removed.
- We ask you to create as many witty captions for these drawings (or cartoons) as you can. The number of different punch lines will be counted.
- Please look over each drawing carefully and try to create a caption that suits the drawing and – combined with it – produces a joke. Try to come up with as many different possibilities as you can. Each new solution should be witty in its own way.
- Let your imagination run wild; don't feel limited it any way.

33



① Yes...anorexia Online...how can I help you

There is no body here

Skelephone

But you said it was dress down day....

[operator]: "please hold, your call is in a queue. Please hold..."

Hello doctor. I appear to be missing something...

They say "talking the ear off somebody", look at me now

Hello, this is Mr. Skeleton/Fat. How can I help you?

Hello. Bobby Sands speaking.

34



Wittiness Punch line

- 1.0 "Whatever does he smile about?"
- 2.0 "He was a former member of the fire-brigade."
- 3.0 "His favourite fish has fallen ill."
- 4.0 "He's sure that this helps his hair grow again."
- 5.7 "He expects his hair growing again if he steeps his arm in kitten shit."

36

2011: Remaining common flaws

Test creation

- Still tests are created which are not based on any theory, have no prior development of the concept, or even NO explicit concept
- Instruments are not carefully or skilfully constructed
- Instruments don't undergo extensive validation
 - Convergent and discriminant analysis
 - often prediction of external, rather than humour related criteria
- Inappropriate measurement approach for the concept

Adaptation

- No translation, independent back-translation procedure

Users

- Often select wrong tests for their project
- Don't apply sound criteria for the evaluation of tests

37

Cited work

- Ruch, W. (1993). Approaches to the study of the "sense of humor". (invited lecture) Eleventh International Conference on Humour and Laughter. Luxemburg, September 29 - October 4, 1993.
- Ruch, W., Proyer, R. P., Esser, C., & Mitrache, O. (2011). Cheerfulness and everyday humorous conduct. In Romanian Academy, "George Barit" Institute of History, Department of Social Research (Ed.), Studies and researches in social sciences (Vol. 18). Cluj-Napoca, Romania: Argonaut Press.

38

Funny Business: The Benefits of Humor at Work

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www.humorworks.com





Mind Games for Tech Success: You've Got to Play to Win

By DALE RUSSAKOFF
Washington Post Staff Writer

Cody Robertson's interview for a programming job at Microsoft Corp. was going pretty much as expected: grueling code-writing tests, questions about his background and his love of computers. Then, just as he began to relax, things got wacky.

Pretend, his interviewer said, that you have eight seemingly identical balls, one slightly heavier than the others. If you use a balance-type scale, what is the minimum number of trials needed to identify the odd ball?

Huh?

Mind-bending job interviews such as Robertson's are fast becoming a rite of passage to the new economy. Many software developers swear that such logic games help them identify competing applicants who think easily in a world without boundaries—people with the creativity to conceive the next big breakthrough.

While human resources professionals disdain the craze as a quirk of brainy Generation Xers who dominate the dot-coms, some scientists and educators believe they see a method to the silliness. Playful work environments that foster exploration appear to help drive the innovation that defines the high-tech sector.

From workers sprawled on their stomachs using laptops, to employee playrooms full of Legos and caulk, to the rebellion against hierarchy, the culture of the new economy makes work feel unthinkably like play. Consciously or unconsciously, it recalls the atmosphere of early childhood—the stage of human life when the learning curve is steepest and the pace

See PLAY, A4, Col. 1

At Excite@Home in California, employee Michael Beardon uses the preferred method to get to the first floor.



43 Consecutive Profitable Quarters and Much More in This Issue!

ADAPTEC

ANNUAL REPORT 1995

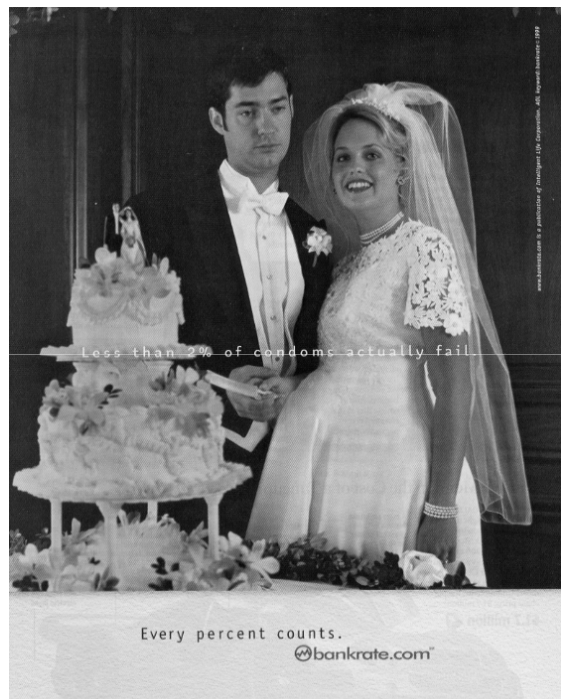
IS THE WORD ON THE STREET ABOUT ADAPTEC REALLY TRUE?

YES! WHEREVER INPUT/OUTPUT IS GOING, THEY'RE ALREADY PAVING THE WAY!

The Amazing Facts of:

- 10wero Man
- Adaptra
- Bottleneck Buster

IN THIS ISSUE:
Data Transfer Through Adaptec's Secure products blast off into the 21st century with 4xram's new solution!

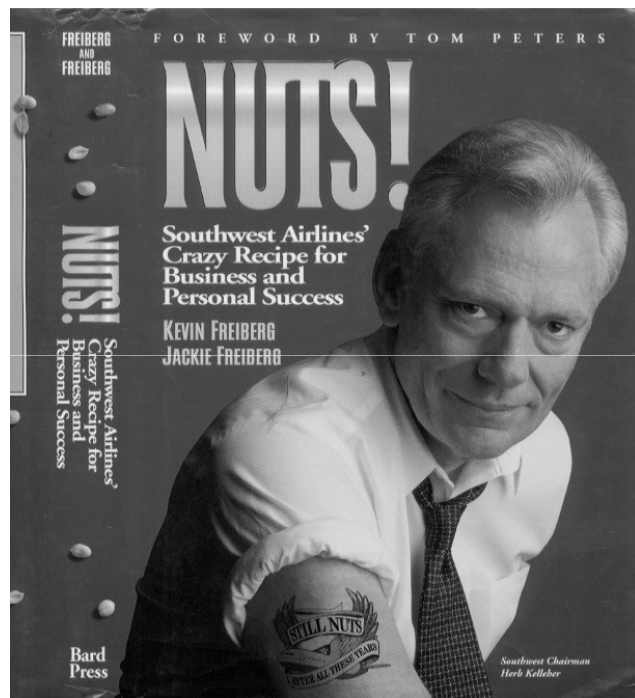
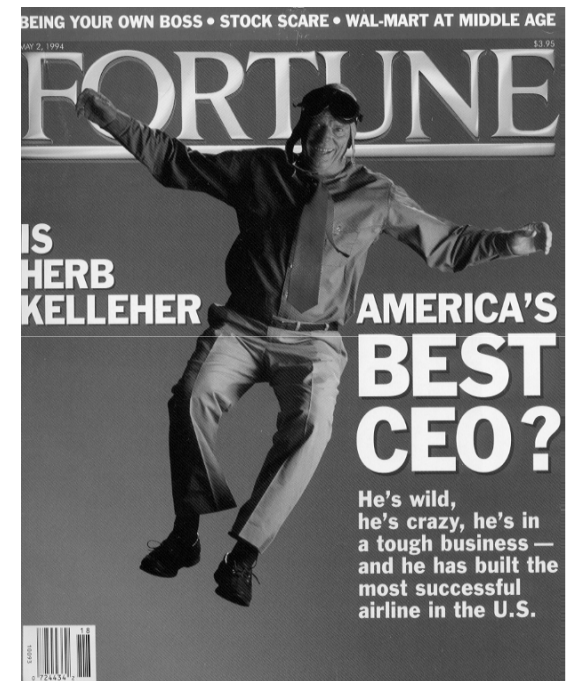


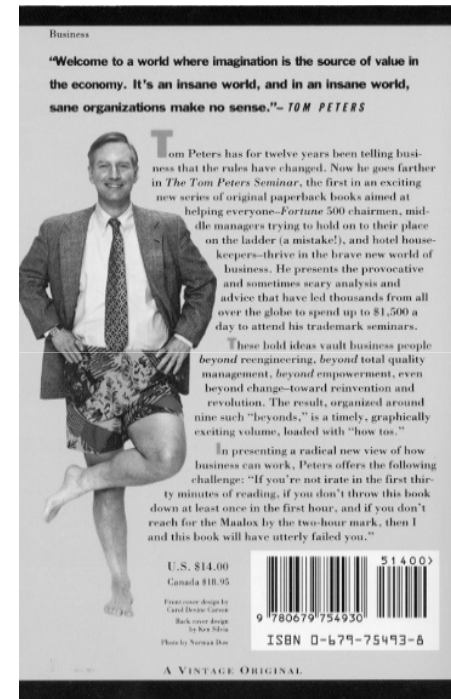
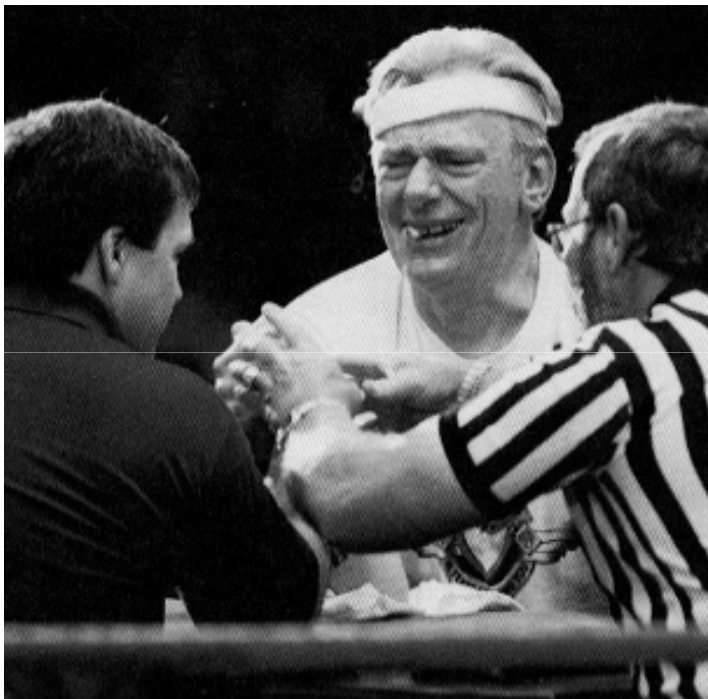
Less than 2% of condoms actually fail.

Every percent counts.

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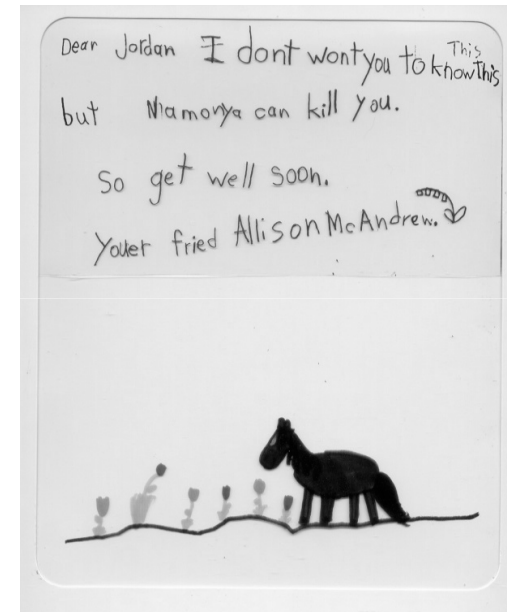


INCONGRUITY THEORY

Humor is the playful enjoyment
of incongruity..

WHEN MACHINE STOPS
PLEASE REMOVE YOUR
CLOTHES





KINDS OF MENTAL DISTANCE

- Distance in Space
- Distance in Time
- Personal Distance
- Distance of Fiction





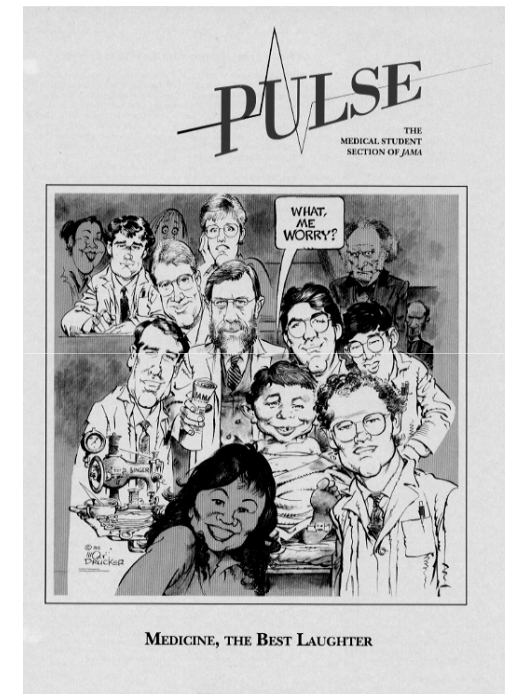
Courthouse toilets explode after lines get crossed

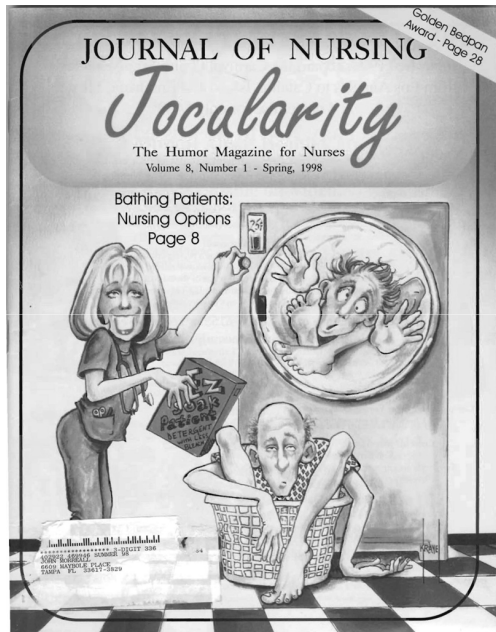
SEATTLE – About two dozen toilets and urinals in the King County Courthouse exploded when they were flushed Thursday because an air compressor had been erroneously connected to a water line, officials said.

“We think we lost about 20 to 25 toilets,” said building manager Bill Kemp. No injuries were reported, although several people apparently were soaked.

Laugh—for the Health of It

- Workout for heart and lungs
- Pain reduction
- Relaxation
- Immune system boost
- Laxative benefits
- Stress reduction





Patients' Charts

- On the 2nd day her knee was better and on the 3rd day it disappeared completely.

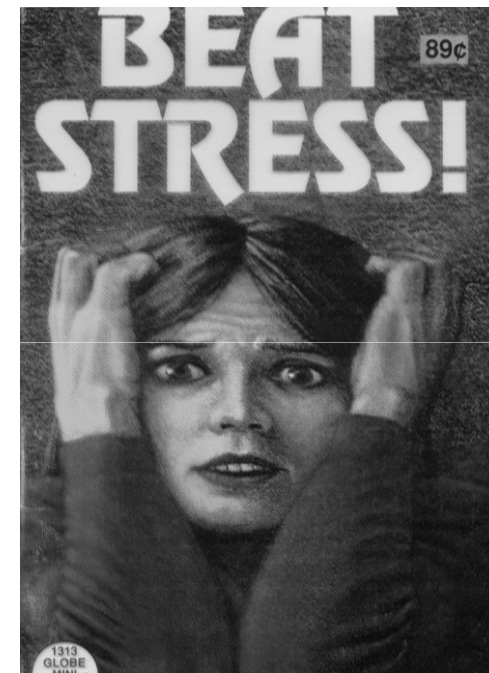
The patient has been depressed ever since she began seeing me in 1996.

Patient has two teenage children, but no other abnormalities.

The patient refused an autopsy.

She stated that she had been constipated for most of her adult life, until she got a divorce.

Discharge status: Alive but without permission.



HOW TO AVOID STRESS BEFORE IT KILLS YOU

The first definitive work on stress management
in everyday life, with special emphasis
on applying biofeedback in stress reduction

**Matthew J. Culligan
and Keith Sedlacek, M.D.**

Stress

- costs American employers over \$200 billion a year
- prompts 2/3 of office visits to physicians
- is major contributor to the 6 leading causes of death in U.S.

The Damage of Stress

- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- Impaired memory
- Strokes
- Heart attacks
- Ulcers
- Weakened immune system (cancer, infections)

Stress

- Stress is a fight-or-flight reaction.
- It involves two emotions:
fear and anger.
- Fear prepares us to run away.
- Anger prepares us to fight.

Humor is the Opposite of Stress

- Laughter reduces stress chemicals in the blood (epinephrine, plasma cortisol, DOPAC).
- Stress suppresses the immune system. Laughter boosts the immune system.
- In stress, we feel like passive victims. In joking about a problem, we feel a measure of control.

Winter-weary city issues ban on snowfall

The Associated Press

SYRACUSE — It's official: No more snow shall fall in the city of Syracuse until Christmas Eve.

The Common Council agreed to that last night.

The resolution says that while the city has distinguished itself with a record snowfall of over 162.5 inches for the 1991-1992 season, its residents have had enough snow and are ready for a real spring.

"Now therefore be it resolved, on behalf of the snow-weary citizens of the city of Syracuse, any further snowfall is expressly outlawed in the city of Syracuse until Dec. 24, 1992."

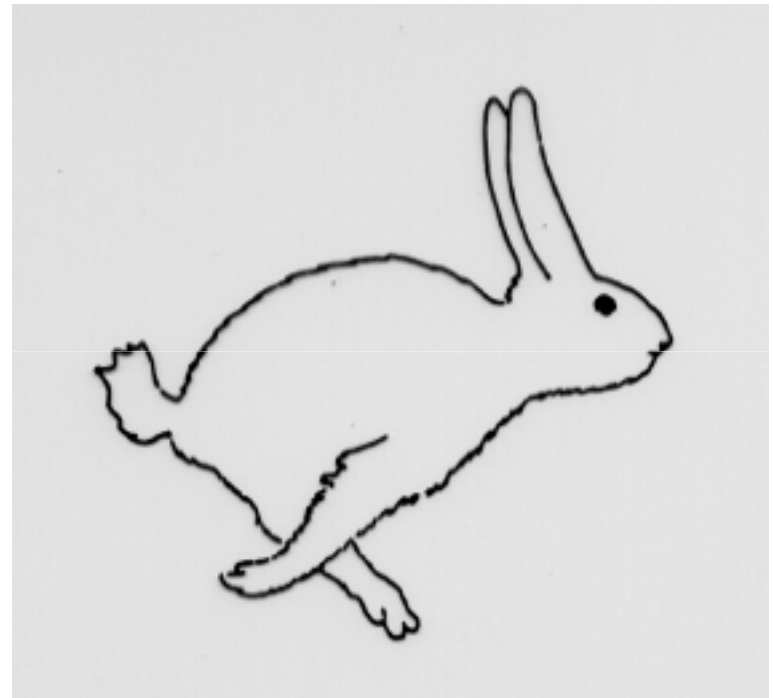
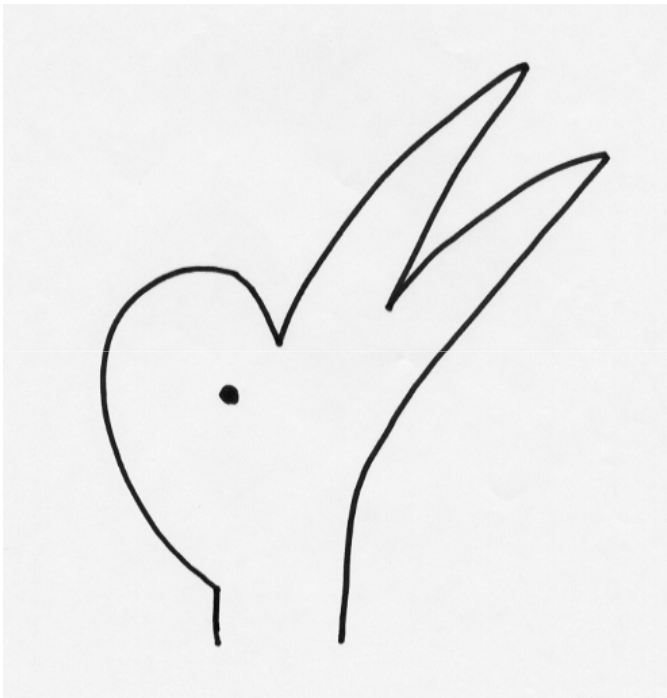
The resolution will likely have little effect — it has no penalties for violations, and Mother Nature is known to be a scofflaw.

If you can neither accept it nor change it, try to laugh at it.

--Ashleigh Brilliant

Humor Makes Us Mentally Flexible

- Getting out of mental ruts
- Seeing situations from multiple perspectives
- Having a positive attitude toward change, risks, and mistakes
- Seeing oneself objectively
- Solving problems creatively



Woman without her
man is nothing

Thanks to Dr. Joel Goodman of the Humor Project

Rules of Brainstorming

- Go for quantity, not quality.
- Don't criticize any idea.
- Wild ideas are OK.
- Combining and improving ideas are OK.

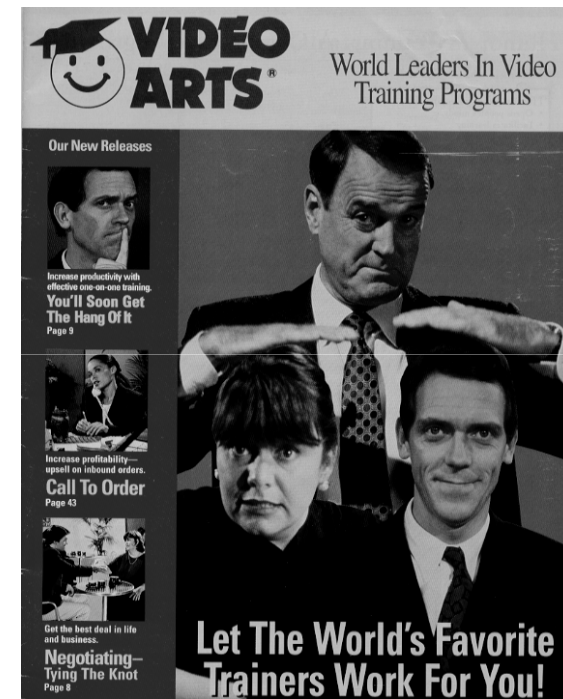
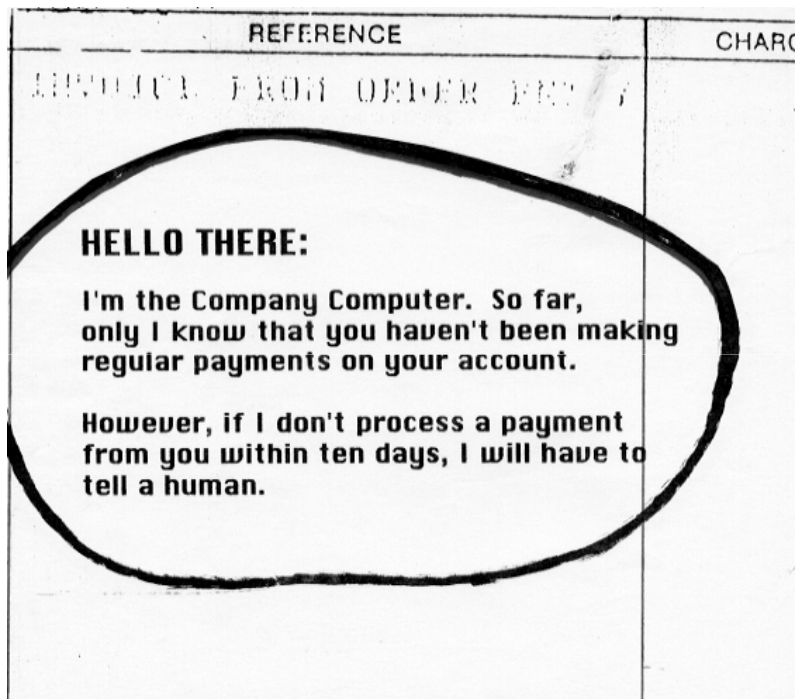
Products Discovered by Accident

- ScotchGard
- Teflon
- Microwave oven
- Velcro
- Aspartane
- Post-It Notes
- Sony Walkman
- Kitty litter

Humor as Social Lubricant

- Creating rapport and good morale
- Criticizing
- Defusing conflicts
- Women's humor and men's humor





Using Humor in Presentations

- Don't announce that you'll be funny.
- Connect the humor with the topic.
- Keep everything short.
- Use true stories rather than jokes.

Using Humor in Presentations

- Tell stories from your own experience, or change the stories to make them sound like they happened to you.
- Avoid humor that emphasizes your position or power.
- Avoid ridicule. If you want humor with a target, poke fun at yourself.

MEN'S HUMOR WOMEN'S HUMOR

Competitive

Cooperative

Practical jokes

Sarcasm

Kidding

Fictional jokes

True stories

Like *The Three Stooges*

Hate *The Three
Stooges*

Build your own jokes

Graeme Ritchie

University of Aberdeen

(Based on work with Kim Binsted, Annalu Waller, Rolf Black, Dave O'Mara, Helen Pain, Ruli Manurung, Judith Masthoff, Mukta Aphale, Feng Gao, Wendy Moncur)

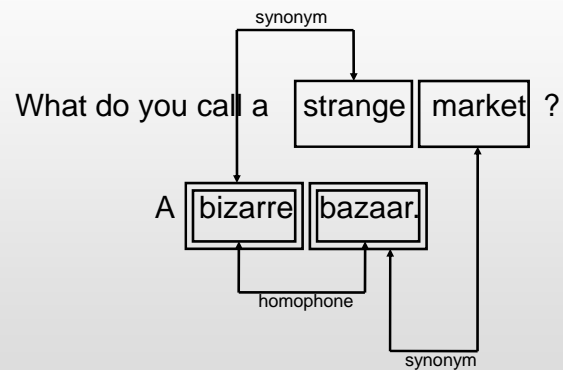


JAPE (1993 – 1996)

- The JAPE computer program produced *punning riddles*, e.g.:
 - What's the difference between leaves and a car?
One you brush and rake, the other you rush and brake.
 - What do you get when you cross a monkey and a peach?
An ape-ricot.
 - What do you call a murderer with fibre?
A cereal killer.



Example



STANDUP Project (2003-2007)

Design and build a pun generator which is:

- ☞ fast
- ☞ robust
- ☞ large scale
- ☞ usable by children with “complex communication needs”
- ☞ guidable by the user
- ☞ can be tailored to individual users



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DA telling punchline first
Week 5



NI exploring to get 'any joke'
Week 8



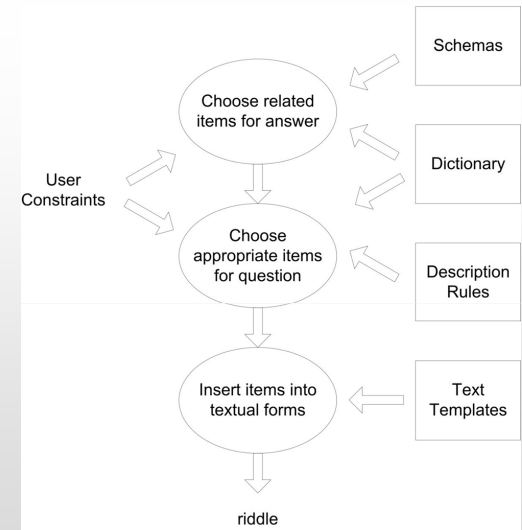
The Joking Computer Project (2009-2010)

- Enhance the STANDUP software with explanations of how it works.
- Make it into a public exhibit for children.
- Publicise research into computational humour.
- Run joke-building workshops with children.

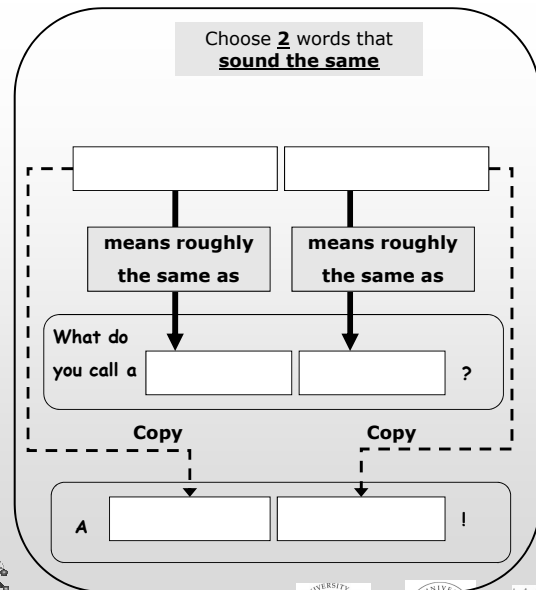
<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/jokingcomputer>



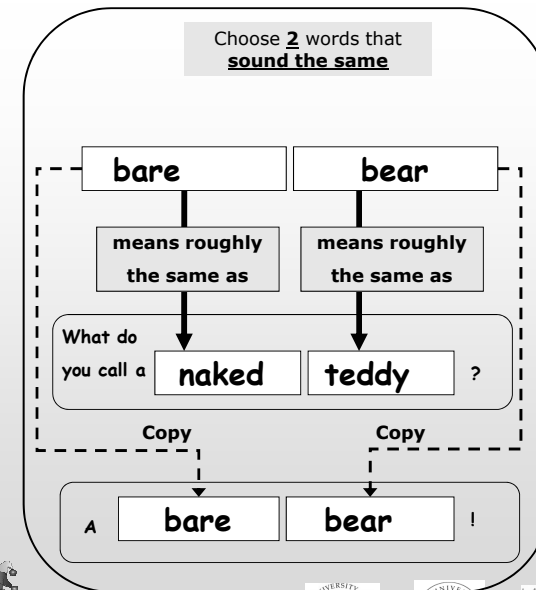
Overview of Riddle Generator



Joke recipe 1



Joke recipe 1



Joke recipe 1

So here's my great gag....

What do you call a naked teddy?

A bare bear!



Now make your own jokes

Fill in a Joke Recipe worksheet step-by-step.

There are 3 different recipes to try.

Make up as many jokes as you like!



If you get stuck...

- There is an example on the left of each Joke Recipe worksheet.
- There are examples of words to use on the back of each joke recipe.

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/jokingcomputer>





How to measure smiling and laughter:

Learning the basics of the Facial Action Coding System- FACS



Willibald Ruch & Tracey Platt
University of Zurich, Switzerland

11th International Summer School and Symposium on



**Humour and Laughter:
Theory, Research and Applications**



Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia
15th- 20th August 2011



Smiling and laughter in humour research...

Humour researchers are interested because they ...

- are suitable *dependent variables* in studies, used as an index for enjoyment (indicator of quality of stimuli)
- are both part of the emotion induced by humour
- signify the intensity of affect
 - big smile > slight smile; big laugh > small laugh

The assessment of smiling and laughter poses problem

- are smiles / laughter homogeneous categories?
- Is laughter > smiling? (qualitative or quantitative differences)
- what parameters (frequency, intensity, duration...etc?)
- choice of device (Video, Electromyography?)

Assessment of responses to humour 50 years ago

a) Mirth-spectrum (Redlich, Levine & Sohler, 1951)

Code	Behaviour categories
(N)	negative response (frown, grimace, etc.)
(O)	No response
(s)	Half-smile
(S)	Smile
(C)	Chuckle
(L)	Laugh

Issues:

- Are negative responses alike (contempt = frown = disgust)
- How to define a half smile?
- How does chuckle and laughter differ?
- Are all smiles alike?

Assessment of responses to humour 50 years ago

b) "Mirth-Index" (Zigler, Levine & Gould, 1966)

Scoring	Behaviour categories
0 =	negative response (grimace, etc.)
1 =	no response (blank face etc.)
2 =	inhibited to half or slight smile
3 =	full smile
4 =	laugh

Responses ordered on a continuum from negative to positive response

Issues:

- Is laughter more than smiling?
- Are negative and positive responses mutually exclusive (what about mixed feelings?)
- Most importantly: is every smile ("upward turn of the lip corners") a smile?
- Is every laugh alike?
- Do smiling and laughter signal the same emotion?

Assessment of responses to humour 30 years ago

c) Smiling and laughter measured as separate entities, as two dependent variables (e.g. Chapman, 1983)

- Parameter: frequency, intensity, duration
- So: frequency of smiling, frequency of laughter, duration of smiling etc.

Issues:

- Does smiling signal a different amusement/enjoyment than laughter?
- Remaining issue: are *all* smiles created equal (smiling was coded as an upward turn of the lip corners), are *all* laughter alike?
- Smiling and laughter seem to exclude each other, if one codes a laugh, one can not code a smile at the same time.

4

The "laughing score" (Shimizu *et al.*, 1982)

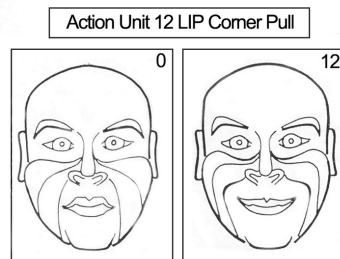
Coding of the recordings:

EMG-Amplitude (Zygomatic major muscle):	
< 10 mV	= 1 Point
10 - 100 mV	= 2 Points
> 100 mV	= 3 Points
Changes in Plethysmogram <i>and/or</i> Electrodermal Activity <i>and/or</i> Respiration	= 1 Point
Occurrence of phonation <i>and/or</i> Body Movement	= 1 Point
	maximal 5 Points

5

Facial Action Coding System – FACS (Ekman & Freisen, 1978)

- FACS is a comprehensive, anatomically based system for measuring all visually discernible facial movement. It describes all visually distinguishable facial activity on the basis of 44 unique action units (AUs), as well as several categories of head and eye positions and movements
- It allows for the coding of different parameters of one AU
 - Frequency
 - Intensity (5 point)
 - Unilaterality / Asymmetry
 - Timing
 - Duration
- In case of several AU's („Event“)
 - Identification of the AU's involved
 - Dominance-Rules

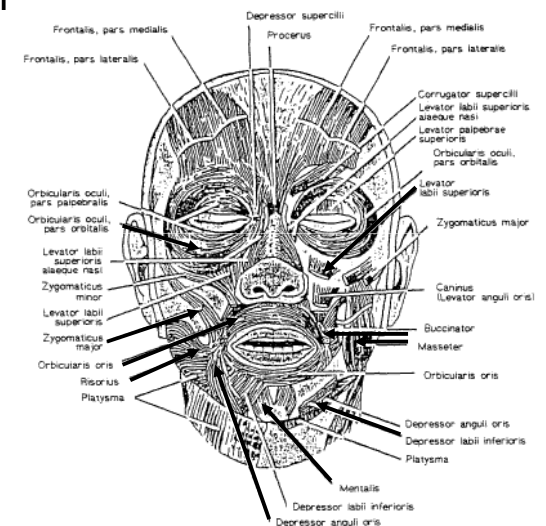


6

Facial muscles involved in laughter

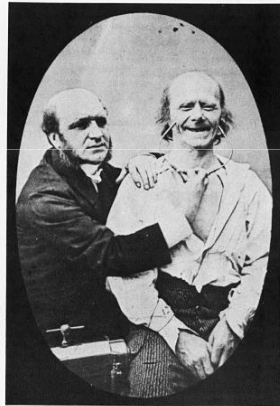
Enjoyment Display

- zygomatic major
 - orbicularis oculi
- additional muscles (Sumitsuji, 1967) :
- levator labii superioris
 - Risorius
 - Mentalis
 - depressor anguli oris
 - orbicularis oris
-
- Buccinator
 - depressor labii inferioris



7

Key concept: Duchenne Smile



- Duchenne du Bologne, a French anatomist, photographed the face of a man during electrical stimulation of his facial muscles.
- He discovered “false” smile
- Paul Ekman called the *genuine smile* Duchenne-display to honour Duchenne
- ...and defined the *enjoyment smile* (also called: happy felt smile, spontaneous, emotional smile, Duchenne smile, D-smile)
 - This smile also signifies amusement of humour (Ruch, 1992)
- Duchenne, G.B. (1862) *Mécanisme de la physionomie humaine*. Paris: Bailliere.

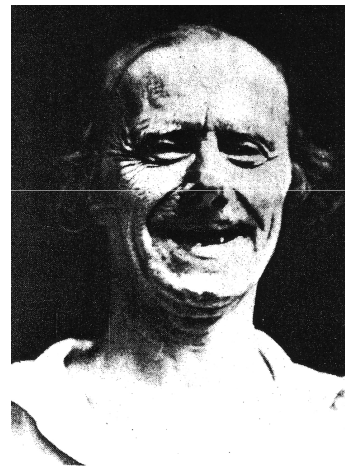
8

Definitions of the enjoyment smile

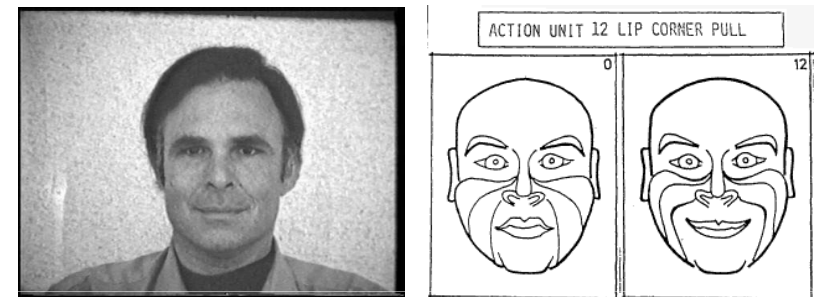
- ... include all smiles in which the person actually experiences, and presumably would report, a positive emotion.
 - These positive emotions include: pleasure from visual, auditory, gustatory, kinaesthetic or tactile stimulation; *amusement* and delight; contentment and satisfaction; beatific experiences; relief from pain, pressure or tension; and enjoyment of another person.
- Ekman & Friesen (1982) hypothesize that the common-elements in the facial expression of all such positive experiences are the action of two muscles
 - the zygomatic major pulling the lip corners upwards towards the cheekbone
 - the orbicularis oculi which raises the cheek and gathers the skin inwards from around the eye socket. (Duchenne marker)
- Differences may exist in intensity and timing of these actions

9


The Duchenne Marker



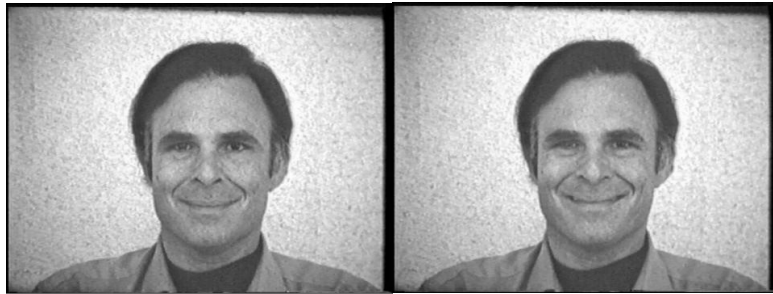
10



AU12: zygomatic major muscle

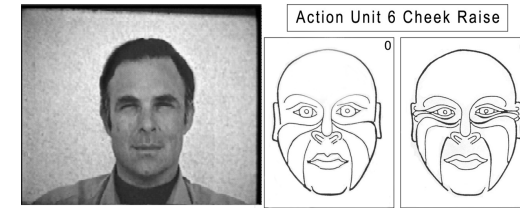
- 1) Pulls the corner of the lips back and upward (obliquely) creating a  shape to the mouth
- 2) Deepens the nasolabial furrow, pulling it laterally and up. The skin adjacent to the nasolabial furrow is raised up and laterally
- 3) In a weak to moderate 12 there is some raising of the infraorbital triangle and there may be some deepening of the infraorbital furrow

11



- 4) In a strong action:
 - a) The infraorbital triangle upwards push is more evident.
 - b) The infraorbital furrow deepening is more evident.
 - c) Bags the skin below the lower eyelid.
 - d) Narrows the eye opening.
 - e) Produces crow's feet at eye corners.
 - f) Raises and widens the nostrils.
 - g) Flattens and stretches the skin on the chin boss.
- 5) a strong action of 12 including appearance changes under (4) is always scored as 6+12.

12



AU6: orbicularis oculi muscle

- 1) Draws skin towards the eyes from the temple and cheeks.
- 2) Raises the infraorbital triangle, lifting the cheeks upwards
- 3) Pushes skin surrounding the eye towards the eye socket, narrowing eye opening, bagging/wrinkling skin below eye.
- 4) May cause crow's feet lines or wrinkles to appear, extending radically from the outer corners of the eye opening.
- 5) Deepens the lower eyelid furrow
- 6) May lower lateral portion of the eyebrows to a small extent
- 7) A strong 6 may: :
 - a) Make evident or deepen the nasolabial furrow.
 - b) Raise the outer portions of the upper lip to a small extent.
 - c) Make evident or deepen the infraorbital furrow, so that this wrinkle runs across the top of the infraorbital triangle in a straight or crescent-like shape.

13

Markers of the Enjoyment smile

Morphology	marker	Behavioural manifestation
	Duchenne	Action of the zygomatic major and orbicularis oculi muscles
	Symmetry	Action of the zygomatic major produces symmetric changed in both halves of the face
Dynamics	marker	Behavioural manifestation
	"Smoothness"	Onset of the action is "smooth", without irregularities
	Timing	The total duration of the action is limited and not variable (typically between 1/2 and 4 s)
	Synchronicity	zygomatic major and orbicularis oculi reach the apex at the same time; coordinated apexes

Nach: Mark G. Frank & Paul Ekman.(1993). Not all smiles are created equal:The differentiation between enjoyment and non-enjoyment smiles. Humor,6, 8-16.

14

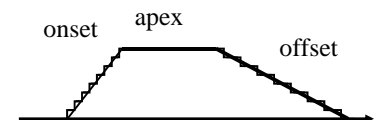
Vice versa...

Smile not genuine, when

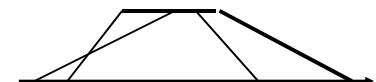
- AU12 is asymmetric



- onset is jagged or stepped, not smooth over its course

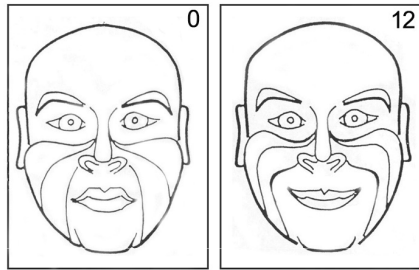


- apexes are uncoordinated

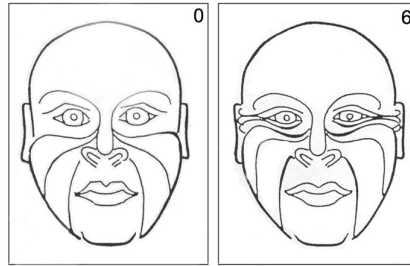


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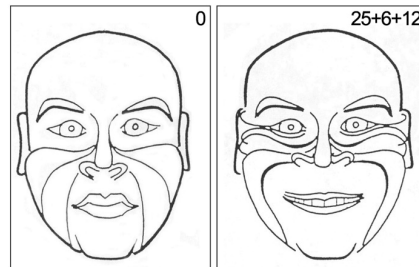
Action Unit 12 LIP Corner Pull



Action Unit 6 Cheek Raise



Action Unit 12 Lip Corner Pull



Enjoyment display

- Morphology
 - AU6 +12 (AU25 / 26)
- and proper dynamics

Duchenne Display: 2 Components



Duchenne Laughter

- Ruch (1992) finds the Duchenne display to underlie laughter responses to humour
- Keltner & Bonnano (1997) distinguished between Duchenne laughter and non Duchenne laughter;
 - however, no study has been carried out to validate this distinction in laughter
- Ruch (2005) and Zweyer, Velker & Ruch (2004) find differences between Duchenne based laughter and non Duchenne laughter
- *Types of laughter?* Is there one type of laugh, and its faked variant, or are there several types of laughter expressing different types of emotions or motivations
 - As claimed by the historic "Ausdruckspsychologie"
- If the latter, how are they created?

Laughter of joy (Huber, 2010)

Huter
6C+7B+12D+25D+58+63

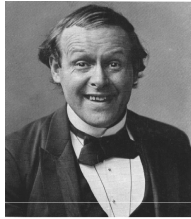
Heller
6E+7B+R9B+12D+25D+26C

Piderit
6C+7A+12C+25D+26C

Rudolph
6C+7C+12C+20B+25D+27D

Borée
6E+7E+12C+25D+26C

Mischievous laughter



1E+2E+6D+7C+12D+25D+26C

Huter



Borée

1D+2D+7B+L12C+25C+26B+61+64

Rudolph

4B+5B+6B+12C+17B+20C+25D+26B



(slight)



(strong)



(very strong)

5B+6A+12C+17B+20B+25D+26B

4B+5D+6B+12C+20B+25D+26E 20

Laughter is more complex: What do we need to consider?

- Morphology of laughter
 - Respiration
 - Vocalisation
 - Phonation
 - Resonance, Articulation?
 - Face
 - interaction with sound
 - Body movements and posture
- Physiology of smiling & laughter
 - Peripheral changes
 - Central changes

21

What is the relationship between smiling & laughter?

Basic question

- Is smiling a weak form of laughter, or
- are smiling and laughter *qualitatively* different?

Why is this important?

- If smiling and laughter are *qualitatively* (not quantitatively) different, then they should be kept apart in empirical studies.

How are smiling and laughter encoded in different languages?

- In some languages "smiling" and "laughter" have the same root;
 - German: "Lachen" vs. "Lächeln";
 - Dutch: "lachen" vs. "glimlachen"
 - French: "rire" vs. "sourire"
- In others they have different roots
 - English: "smiling" vs. "laughter"

22

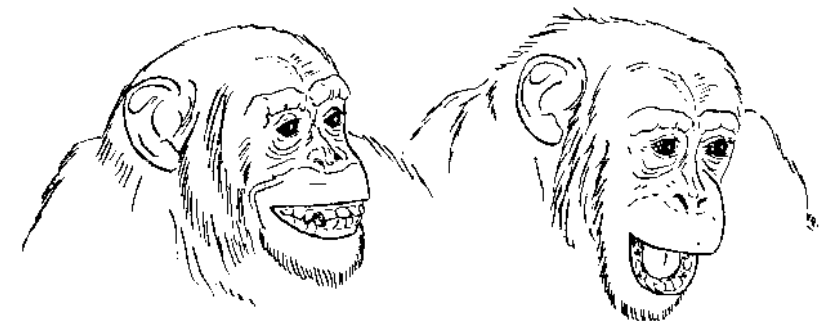
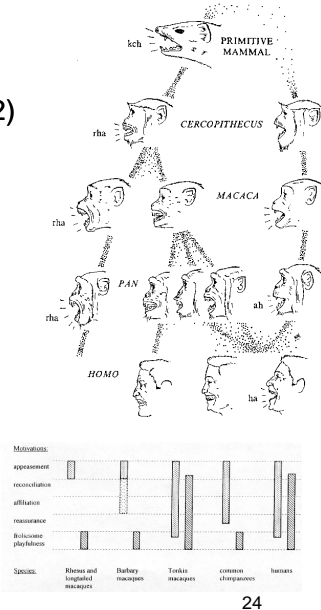


Figure. (left) Horizontal bared-teeth display in Pan troglodytes, the chimpanzee. (right) Relaxed open-mouth display in Pan troglodytes.

23

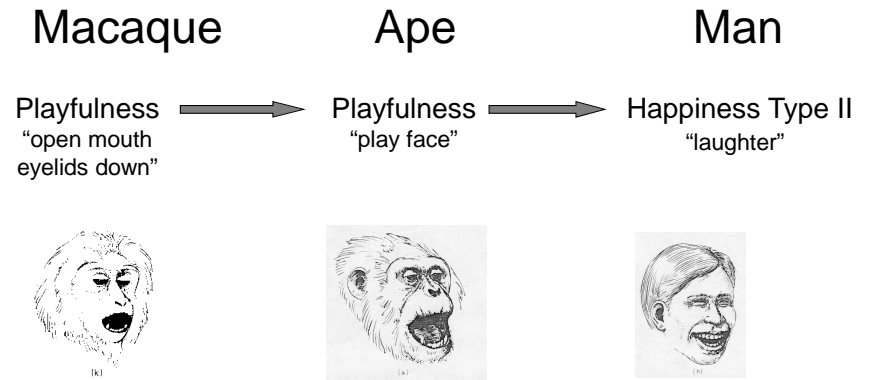
Ethology (z.B. van Hooff, 1972)

- smiling and laughter have a *different* phylogenetic origin (van Hoof, 1972)
- they converge to a considerable extent in Homo, as well more egalitarian ape societies (Preuschoft & vanHooff, 1997)
- But,
 - there are several types of smiles, all created differently (several types of laughs too but less well studied)
 - the „broad smile“ (cheese) smile is based on the contraction of the risorius (AU20), not the zygomatic major muscle (AU12)



24

Phylogenetic development of laughter



25

The graduation hypothesis (Ch. Darwin, 1872)

- Smiling and laughter on one dimension, are quantitatively different
 - "A man smiles - and smiling, as we shall see, graduates into laughter." (p. 195)
 - "A graduated series can be followed from violent to moderate laughter, to a broad smile, to a gentle smile, and to the expression of mere cheerfulness" (p. 206)
 - "Between a gentle laugh and a broad smile there is hardly any difference excepting that in smiling no reiterated sound is uttered, though a single rather strong expiration, or slight noise - a rudiment of a laugh - may often be heard at the commencement of a smile" (p. 208)

26

Other types of smiles

- The *Duchenne smile* is the only smile signifying enjoyment
 - other facial actions cast doubt on whether enjoyment is genuine
- However, up to 20 other smiles were described, which are different in terms of form and function
 - Exact number is not known, also these are not well studied
 - Different classifications exist
- They have to keep apart in studies, as mixing them with genuine enjoyment might mix apples with oranges/pears (chalk & cheese; grannies & MGs)
- Thus, it is *not* sufficient to define (and code) smiling as "pulling up the lip corner"

27

Not all smiles are created equal



28

False Smiles

- are *deliberately* made to convince another person that positive emotion is felt when it isn't.
- two kinds of false smiles
 - phoney smile
 - nothing much is felt but an attempt is made to appear as if positive feelings are felt.
 - masking smile
 - strong negative emotion is felt and an attempt is made to conceal those feelings by appearing to feel positive.

29

Phoney smile



Phoney Smile: AU 12 American Phoney Smile: 12 + 20 + 25 + (31)

30

Ekman, Friesen & O'Sullivan (1988)

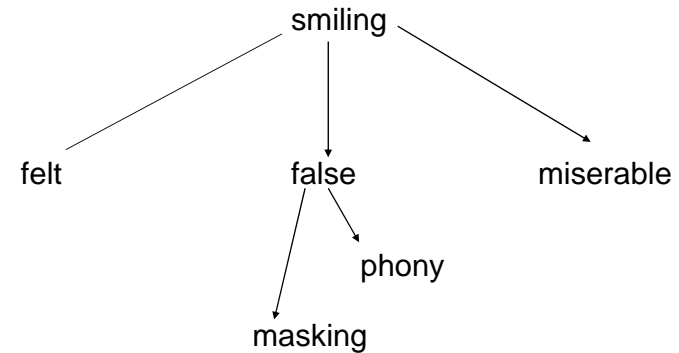


Masking smile

- strong negative emotion is felt but an *deliberately* attempt is made to conceal those feelings by appearing to feel positive
- can be detected because "[s]igns of the felt emotions the masking smile is intended to conceal may persist and provide evidence that the smile is false" (Ekman & Friesen, 1982, p. 247).
- A masking smile combines the smiling action (zygomatic major), which is part of the felt smile, with traces of the muscle movements from one or another of the negative emotions.

32

Classification-II: Ekman & Friesen (1982)



33

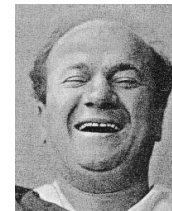
Types of smiles

Table: Types of smiles according to Ekman (1985)

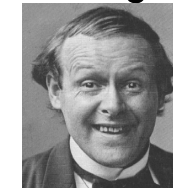
Types of smiles	Operationalization (in FACS terms)
1. Felt Smile	6+12
2. Fear Smile	1+2+4+20 or 1+2+4+12+20
3. Contempt Smile	14 or 14 unilateral
4. Dampened Smile	6+12+(14 or 15 or 17 or 24)
5. Miserable Smile	12+(14 or 15 or 17 or 24) asymmetric
6. Sadistic Smile	4+6+12+23 or 4+6+10+12+23
7. Enjoyable Contempt	6+12+14 or 6+12+14 unilateral
8. Enjoyable Sadness	1+4+6+12 or 1+4+6+12+15
9. Enjoyable Fear	1+2+4+6+12+20
10. Enjoyable Excitement	5+6+12
11. Enjoyable Surprise	1+2+5+6+12+26
12. Flirtatious Smile	6+12+25+(61 or 62)
13. Embarrassment Smile	6+12+(short 17)+(61 or 62)+64
14. Chaplin Smile	13
15. Qualifier Smile	12 (abrupt start)+(14 or very short 17)
16. Compliance Smile	1+2+Qualifier Smile+(sigh or shrugging)
17. Coordination Smile	12x often asymmetric
18. Listener Response Smile	12x often asymmetrical, often with nodding

34

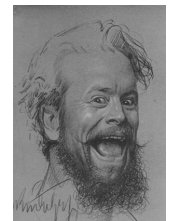
Ideas about types of Laughter



Laughter
6D+7D+12D+25D+27C



Schadenfreude
1+2+6+7+12+25+26



meaningful laughter
2A+4B+5B+6B+7B+12B+(20?)+25D+27D



Grin
6+7+9+12+25



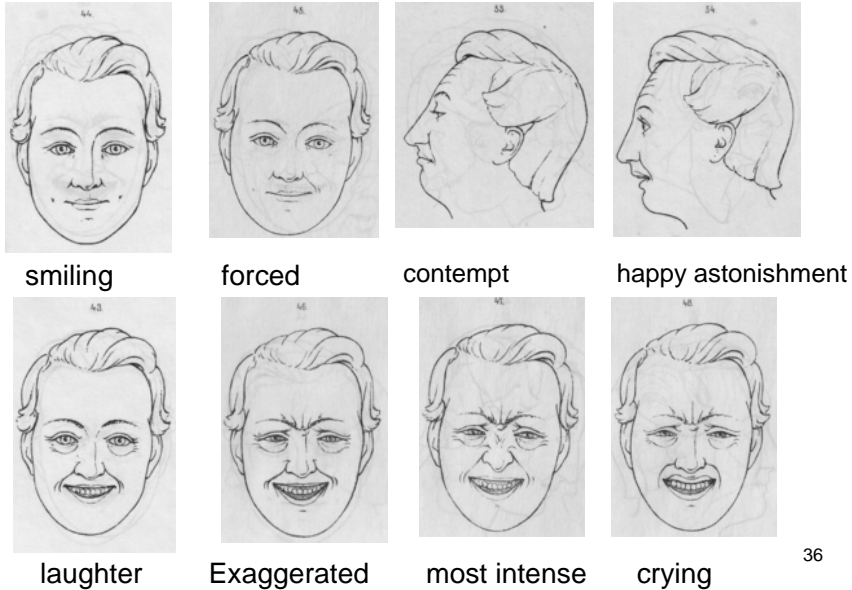
Demonic, non malicious laughter
2C+6B+7B+12C+20B+25D+27B



secretive, verschmitztes laughter:
1C+2C+12C+25C+27B

35

Appendix Classification-I: Piderit (1867)



36

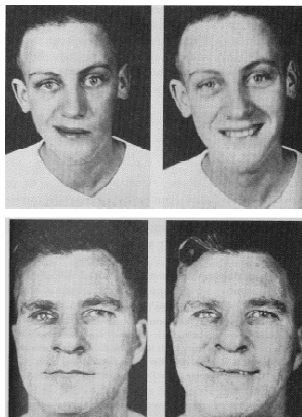
List of 23 different types of laughter

German	English	German	English
... Lachen	... laughter	... Lachen	... laughter
rger liches	angry	bedenkliches	anxious
geknstete liches	contrived	trauriges	sad
ausgelassenes	hilarious	hilfloses	helpless
frh liches	happy	verzweifeltes	desperate
bedeutungsvolles	meaningful	hysterisches	hysterical
erleichtertes	eased	listiges	cunning
dankbares	thankful	trotziges	sullen
entschuldigendes	apologetic	berhebliches	boastful
berrasschtes	surprised	verchtliches	contemptuous
lsterne	ruttish	schchter nes	shy
schadenfrohes	mischievous	verlegenes	embarrassed
sptliches	taunting		



37

Spontaneous vs deliberate actions



- Neural substrates are different
 - Deliberate facial actions have their neural origin in the motor strip of the neocortex
 - spontaneous emotional movements are initiated in subcortical motor centres

Evidence from neurological patients

38

coded....

*Table: Types of smiles according Ekman & Friesen (1982)
(operationalization in FACS terms by Steiner 1986)*

Felt Smile

1) (6 or 7)+12 (between 2/3 s and 4 s)

Phoney Smile

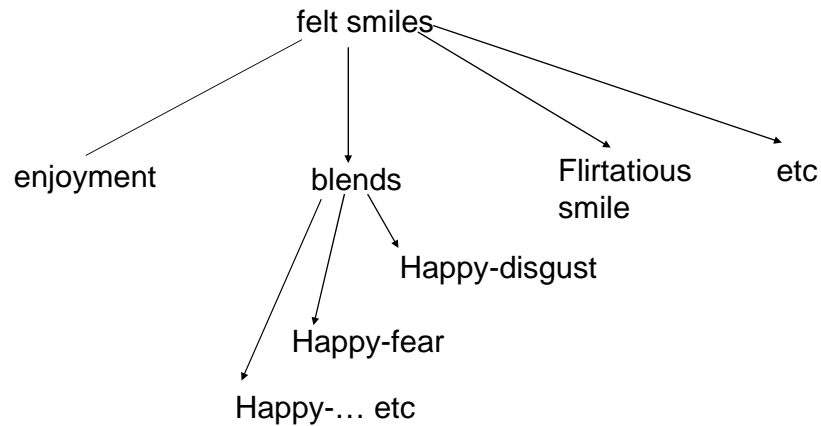
2) (6 or 7)+12 (shorter than 2/3 s or longer than 4 s)
3) 12 and no other OU

Masking Smiles

4) 12 and 4+5+7+10+23 or (25 or 26) Prototype Anger
5) 12 and 9 or 10 Prototype Disgust
6) 12 and 14+4+15 Prototype Sadness
7) 12 and 1+2+4+5 Prototype Fear
8) 12 and U10 or U14 Prototype Contempt
9) variants of prototypes (see Steiner, 1986)

39

Classification-III: Ekman (1985)



Blends involving smiles

- Co- occurrence of two *felt* emotions, one of which may be enjoyment/happiness.
- Both are generated spontaneously
- Facial combinations of
 - Enjoyment display
 - Display of the other emotion

For example:

- pleasant surprise: (AU6+12) plus AU1+2
- Enjoying disgust: (AU6+12) plus AU9 or 10

Emotions and Action Units

Emotion	Action Units (Prototypes)	Major Variantes
Surprise	1+2+5B+26 1+2+5B+27	1+2+5B 1+2+26, 1+2+27 5B+26, 5B+27
Fear	1+2+4+5*+20*+25, 26 or 27 1+2+4+5*+25, 26 or 27	1+2+4+5*+L or R20*+25, 26 or 27 1+2+4+5* 1+2+5Z, with or without 25, 26, 27 5*+20* with or without 25, 26, 27
Happiness	6+12* 12C/D	
Sadness	1+4+11+15B with or without 54+64 54+64 1+4+15* with or without 54+64 6+15* with or without 54+64	1+4+11 with or without 54+64 1+4+15B with or without 54+64 1+4+15B+17 with or without 54+64 11+15B with or without 54+64 11+17
25 or 26 may occur with all prototypes or major variants		

Notes. * in this combination the AU may be at any level of intensity. 54: head down; 64: eyes down.

Emotions and Action Units

Emotion	Action Units (Prototypes)	Major Variantes
Disgust	9 9+16+15, 26 9+17 10* 10*+16+25, 26 10+17	
Anger	4+5*+7+10*+22+23+25,26 4+5*+7+10*+23+25,26 4+5*+7+23+25, 26 4+5*+7+17+23, 4+5*+7+17+24 4+5*+7+23, 4+5*+7+24	Any of the prototypes without any one of the following AUs: 4, 5, 7, or 10.
Contempt	unilaterale 14	

Note. * in this combination the AU may be at any level of intensity..

Blends of Emotions

Here: Fear and Surprise



44



↑ FACHRICHTUNGEN

- Home
- Über uns
- Studium/Lehre
- Forschung
- Summerschool
- Links
- Testarchiv
- Online
- Gelotophobia
- ZIEL**
- Ziel - Details
- Trainings
- Kontakt
- Impressum

ZIEL - Zurich Interaction and Expression Laboratory

→ Personality is a term that refers to a consistent pattern in our behaviour, our thoughts and of our expectations and goals. Different individuals have different, but coherent emotional response patterns to the same stimuli, which are also consistent over a long time period.

Information on how a person is emotionally relating to the environment is exhibited in our emotional expressions, in the body and especially in the face. Facial expressions of emotions are ⁷ universal. In social science research biases can occur when people self-report their inner states too positively, due to wanting to be socially desirable, or trying to hide or deny their real emotions. Yet the study of emotional markers in the face allows the inner state to be objectively measured.

The Zurich Interaction and Expression Lab, is a research team based in the → Section of Personality and Assessment at the Department of Psychology, that investigates the expression of emotion in more detail, relating it to humour and humorous interactions using the Facial Action Coding System (FACS).

For more information click → [here](#).

ZIEL

Details on the Zurich Interaction and Expression Laboratory:
→ [ZIEL Details](#)

[↑ top](#)

FRIDAY (19. AUGUST)

Morning session

Chair: John Morreall

Hypothesis testing and refutation in the study of jokes: Some methodological questions

Taught by Christie Davies (9:30 – 10:30)

Cognitive construals in Jokes - Visual logical mechanisms

Taught by Wladislaw Chlopicki (11:00 – 12:00)

Relationships of punchlineless (and in general older) “Schwanks” and contemporary punchlined jokes (“Witzes”)

Taught by Arvo Krikmann (12:00 – 13:00)

Afternoon session

Chair: Dorota Brzozowska

Is seriousness the opposite of laughter?

Taught by Seppo Knuutila (14:30 – 15:30)

Comic wisdom: The affinity between humor and philosophy

Taught by John Morreall (15:30 – 16:30)

Jokes about animals. Cross-cultural study

Taught by Dorota Brzozowska (16:45 – 17:45)

Hypothesis testing and refutation in the study of jokes: Some methodological questions

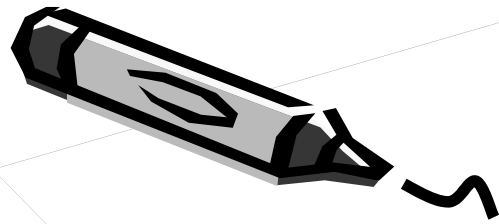
Christie Davies

Table 1 Original List of Stupidity Jokes by Country [Davies 1990]

Country where the stupidity jokes are told.	People about whom the stupidity jokes are told
Australia	Tasmanians. Irish
Austria	Burgenlanders, Carinthians
Britain	Irish
Brazil	Portuguese, Baianos
Bulgaria	Šopi, the peasants from the rural area outside Sofia
Canada (East)	Newfoundlanders
Canada West	Ukrainians
Colombia	Pastosos from Pasto in Nariño
Czech lands	Slovaks
Denmark	Aarhusians, people of Aarhus
Egypt	Sa'idis of Upper Egypt , Nubians
Finland	Karelians
France	Belgians, French-Swiss (Ouin-Ouin)
Germany	Ostfrieslanders
Greece	Pontians (Black Sea Greeks)
Israel	Kurdish Jews
India	Sardarjis (Sikhs)
Italy	Meridionali (Southerners)
Yugoslavia	Bosnians. Albanians
Mexico	Yucatecos from Yucatan, Gallegos
Netherlands	Belgians, Limburgers
New Zealand (North Island)	Irish, Maoris
New Zealand (South Island)	Irish, West Coasters
Nigeria	Hausas
Pakistan	Sardarjis (Sikhs)
Russia	Ukrainians, Chukchees
South Africa	Afrikaners (van der Merwe)
Spain	Leperos from Lepe; Gallegos from Galicia
Sweden	Finns
Switzerland	Citizens of Fribourg/Freiburg
Tadjikistan	Uzbeks
Turkey	Laz
United States	Poles, Portuguese

Table 2 Newly discovered Stupidity Jokes by Country

Place where the stupidity jokes are told	People about whom they are told
Argentina	Gallegos (in effect Spaniards)
Estonia	People of islands of Hiiumaa and Saaremaa
Faeroe Islands	Citizens of Klaksvík
Jordan	Sarihis from village of Al Sarih. Tafilians from Southern town of Al Tafili.
Peru	Arequipeños from Arequiba
Portugal	Alentejos (from the South, south of the River Tagus/ Tejo)
Romania	People of Oltenia
South Korea	People of Choong Chong Do (Do means Province)
Syria	People of Homs and Hama, Kurds
Tangier	Berbers
Venezuela	Gochos



Cognitive construals in jokes: Visual LMs

Władysław Chłopicki, Krakow
19 August 2011, Tartu



Linguistic study of humor

- Script-based approaches
 - humor qualitatively differs from other linguistic phenomena
 - humor based on opposition/overlap of scripts
 - humor also based on other Knowledge Resources (logical mechanism, situation, target)
 - focus on product, not process
- Culture-independent analysis



Linguistic study of humor

- Cognitive approaches
 - humor displays similar features as other linguistic phenomena
 - focus on process rather than product
 - focus on narrative layers, characters, relations
- Mainly culture-independent, although include cultural models (of metaphors or emotion concepts)



Logical mechanism

- a very abstract mapping "which introduces a spurious similarity between elements in the scripts involved"; abstract skeleton shared by very many different jokes
- Sometimes treated as resolution of the script incongruity
- previously termed „local logic“



Logical mechanisms

- role-reversals, figure-ground reversal,
- faulty reasoning, ignoring the obvious, vicious circle,
- garden-path, false analogy, parallelism, field restriction
- exaggeration, almost situations
- juxtaposition, coincidence, referential ambiguity
- chiasmus, cratylism (phonetic)
- meta-humor, self-undermining



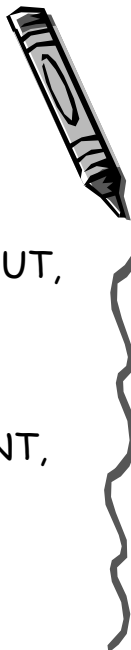
Image schemas

- First introduced by Lakoff and Johnson 1987
- Defined as 'construals of experience'
- Basic (pre-conceptual) schemas are spatial:
- UP-DOWN, FRONT-BACK, LEFT-RIGHT, NEAR-FAR, CENTRE-PERIPHERY, CONTACT



Other basic image schemas

- **SCALE** - PATH, CYCLE
- **CONTAINER** - CONTAINMENT, IN-OUT, SURFACE, FULL-EMPTY, CONTENT
- **FORCE** - BALANCE, COUNTERFORCE, MOMENTUM, COMPULSION, RESTRAINT (REMOVAL), ENABLEMENT, BLOCKAGE, DIVERSION



Further basic schemas

- **UNITY-MULTIPLICITY** - MERGING, COLLECTION, SPLITTING, ITERATION, PART-WHOLE, MASS-COUNT, EXCESS, FRAGMENTATION, LINK
- **IDENTITY** - MATCHING, SUPERIMPOSITION
- **EXISTENCE** - REMOVAL, BOUNDED SPACE, CYCLE, OBJECT, PROCESS



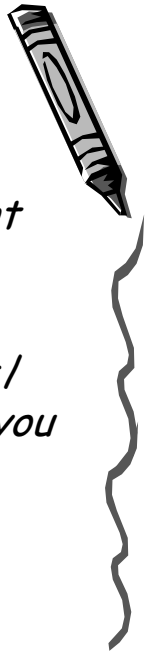
More specific construals of experience in language

- Figure/ground alignment (*above/below*)
- Individuation/boundedness (*leaves vs foliage, constellation of stars*)
- Geometric structure of objects (*milk in the bowl, dust on the bowl*)
- Coarse vs fine-grained view (*across the field/through the field*)



Further construals

- Gradability (scale): *She is pregnant vs very pregnant, a slightly used washing mashine*
- Force dynamics (physical/abstract/fictive motion): *I kicked the ball, you may/must leave, the road winds through the valley*



Polish joke material

- Wąchock (Polish fool town) jokes
- Hrabia (Count) jokes
- Baba (woman) jokes
- source: www.dowcipy.celebs.pl
- *Kawalarz Polski* collection (2006)



Wąchock joke

- Why are they now replacing the wires in high-voltage lines running to Wąchock with **barbed wire**? Because Wąchock lies on a hill and the current used to slide down.
- "decision maker" in the background - collectivist effort



GTVH analysis

- SO wire vs barbed wire, electric power vs gravity, real/imaginary problem, good/bad solution, stupidity vs knowledge, possible/impossible
- LM **false analogy (faulty reasoning)**
- SI electrical repairs
- TA sottys (local headman), Wąchock people
- NS question/answer
- LA wire-barbed wire



Two interpretations of the Wąchock joke

- Current sliding on the inside
- Current sliding on the outside
- barbed wire element essential - a visual LM?
- Image schemas: UP/DOWN, COUNTERFORCE, COARSE/FINE GRAINED VIEW



Versions deprived of geometrical structure

- Why are they now replacing the wires in high-voltage lines running to Wąchock (**with more modern ones**)? Because Wąchock lies on a hill and the current used to slide down.



GTVH analysis of the deprived version

- SO electric power vs gravity, real/imaginary problem, stupidity vs knowledge, possible/ impossible
- LM false analogy
- DOWNWARD/UPWARD schema remains, otherwise it's nonsensical
- and the joke is not very funny!



Versions with different geometrical structure

- Why are they now replacing the wires in high-voltage lines running to Wąchock **with gravity-resistant ones/with serrated ones**? Because Wąchock lies on a hill and the current used to slide down.
- "inside" interpretation



Another Wąchock joke

- Why do chickens in Wąchock wear slippers? So that they do not make scratches on the tarmac.
- 'decision maker" (the local headman) in the background - but the effort collectivist



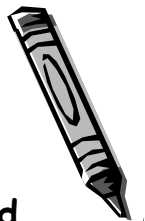
Cognitive analysis vs GTVH

- **fine-grained view** of chicken claws/ feet (incompatible shapes of claws/slippers) - change in scope of attention
- **GTVH - field restriction** - only people can wear slippers
- **gradability** (perfect, scratchless tarmac vs imperfect one)
- **GTVH - false analogy** - wearing slippers (on claws/feet) prevents chickens/people from scratching surface



Slipper-free version

- Why are chickens in Wąchock **all locked up**? So that they do not make scratches on the tarmac.
- some visual element remains (scratching - gradability of tarmac), mildly funny
- but the fine-grained view of chicken claws and human feet missing (**a visual LM?**)



Geometrical Mother-in-Law joke

- Daddy, why is Grandma running away in zigzags?
- Don't chatter, just keep passing on cartridges!



No-zigzag alternative

- Daddy, why is Grandma running away?
- Don't chatter, just pass on a cartridge!

- zigzags - a visual LM?,
- also DIVERSION schema essential for hunting script, as well as ITERATION (pl) and EXCESS



Count joke

- Count: Dear Jan, does the lemon have legs?
- Jan: No, your lordship.
- Count: Blast it, I have squeezed the canary into my tea again.

- categorization/blending joke (more convincing mechanism than false parallelism)



Canary-less joke

- Count: Dear Jan, does the lemon have legs?
- Jan: No, your lordship.
- Count: Blast it, I have squeezed the **mouse/hamster** into my tea again.

- lack of blending ruins the joke - absent-minded Count, canary - flying, shape and colour; SUPERIMPOSITION schema



Count joke

The Count's boastful story: The roe deer I killed was big and heavy, I had to handle it myself, so I put **one of its legs on my left arm, and the other on the right** ...

He is called away to the phone...

- Where did I stop the story?
- **One leg on the right arm, the other** - on the left.
- Aah, I remember... These Russian women - most extraordinary they were!



Baba joke - metaphor

- Baba (=woman) comes to the doctor with a nail in her ear.
- 'What is the problem?' asks the doctor?
- Baba replies 'I am listening to metal.'



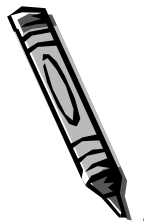
Image schemas in the Baba joke

- metonymic construal (INSTRUMENT IS MUSIC) crucial for the visual LM,
- also RESTRAINT (nail in ear), PART-WHOLE (metal/music), MASS-COUNT (metal/metals) schemas



Conclusions 1

- visual elements help the audience vicariously experience the humour
- specifically, presence of image schemas and logical mechanisms facilitates the triggering of script oppositions in the audience



Conclusions 2

- visual LM postulated as additional mechanism in some jokes
- best analysed with cognitive image schemata, e.g UP/DOWN, MASS/COUNT, COUNTERFORCE, FINE GRAINED VIEW, GRADABILITY, ITERATION, GEOMETRICAL STRUCTURE, SUPERIMPOSITION, RESTRAINT



Conclusions 3

- logical mechanisms and image schemas are often related
- LMs should be recognised as variants of ISs whenever possible, cf. Figure-ground/Figure-Ground, Exaggeration/EXCESS, Juxtaposition/CONTACT



Conclusions 4

- Not all LMs should be identical to images schemas
- a number of LMs may be claimed to be largely **humour-specific** e.g. Role-reversal, or Vicious circle, when used in punch lines



Relationships of punchlineless (and in general older) "Schwanks" and contemporary punchlined jokes ("Witzes")

**Arvo Krikmann
Estonian Literary Museum**

**11th international summer school and symposium
on humour and laughter:
"Theory, research and applications"
Tartu, August 2011**

There are two salient categories (distinct data sets) of Western jokeloric narratives:

- **contemporary, necessarily punchlined jokes circulating in the oral tradition, printed sources and on the Internet;**
- **traditional non-punchlined Schwanks the most classical part of which constitute plots belonging to the number interval 1200–1999 of ATU (Aarne-Thompson-Uther) registers of folktales.**

Contemporary humour theorists have largely addressed punchlined jokes and almost totally neglected non-punchlined "ATU Schwanks", Elliot Oring being one of the few exceptions.

2

The "axiological stance" of ATU folk tales:

- **There is a certain "motivating power" that determines the kind of conflict, course of events and final resolution of the plot.**
- **The principal characters of the tale embody a certain axiologically marked feature, due to which they will be punished or rewarded in the final resolution of the story.**

Accordingly to the nature of these two constituents, the subgenres of AT-tales can be divided to two generic classes:

1. The class that includes tales of magic and religious tales where the motivating force is of a supernatural kind, and 'good' means some moral virtue, thanks to which the character earns supernatural advisers and helpers and enjoys victory in the end.

2. The class that includes the bulk of animal tales, romantic or realistic tales (Novelle), all tales of the stupid ogre, and the main subcategories of Schwanks. The course of events and the final result is caused by natural factors and reasons. The axiological distinctior is of intellectual type, the 'good' meaning reason, cleverness, wit, craftiness, skill to successfully lie and deceive, etc., and the 'bad' stupidity, dumbness, dullness, simple-mindedness, etc.

3

4

The main compositional types of non-punchlined "ATU Schwanks" are:

1) tales about clever acts, deception, skilled theft, witty repartees etc. – ca 400 (40% of ATU Schwanks);

2) tales about numskulls and another fools and stupid acts – ca 270 (27%);

3) those Thompson calls "Tales of Lying" and Uther calls "Tall Tales" – ca 90 (9%);

4) tales of lucky accidents – ca 30 (3%).

The four kinds constitute about 4/5 of the plots of Schwanks in Uther's register.

5

The distinctive features between *Schwank* and *Witz* (joke) set forth by German folklorists (Hermann Bausinger, Siegfried Neumann, Lutz Röhrich, Norbert Neumann) are:

- a Schwank is on average longer than a joke;
- the world of the Schwank is normal, typical and rational, whereas the world of the joke is abnormal, bizarre and nonsensical;
- Schwanks tend to be explicitly didactic, whereas jokes avoid overt moralization;
- jokes tend to be told in the present tense, Schwanks in the past;
- Schwanks "live" by deeds and events, jokes by possibilities offered by language and speech;
- Schwanks are typically multiepisodic and end with a narrative resolution, whereas jokes typically consist of one single episode, and end abruptly with a punchline.

6

Elliot Oring (*Jokes and Their Relations* (1992), p. 82) considers most of the listed differences to be relative, or concomitant, if not irrelevant, and asserts:

"The only distinction that seems critical in distinguishing the joke from the humorous tale is the presence or absence of what is colloquially referred to as a *punchline*. A joke without a punchline is not a joke. [- - -]

In other words, it is the punchline that conditions the other conspicuous features of the joke."

7

Linguistic and other incongruity theories of humour in general (Arthur Koestler, Victor Raskin, Salvatore Attardo, and others) are exclusively oriented to punchlined jokes.

Presence of the punchline has the definitive power: where is no punchline, there is no joke, no funniness.

So the ATU Schwanks should likely fall altogether outside the scope of humour, and one could guess to what did punchlineless Schwanks owe their existence, popularity and longevity?

There are many other deficiencies in the current humour theories as well that impede the proper analysis of non-punchlined Schwanks.

8

For example, in Salvatore Attardo's GTVH model there is a curious puzzle that concerns theoretical labelling of the characters of verbal (folk or other) humour and their axiological qualification.

The GTVH model defines only one type of joke characters – the TARGET, that is, the "object" or "butt" of the joke. Indeed, the punchline can often qualified as an unintentional self-exposure of the butt of the joke.

But not less often we meet both in Schwanks and punchlined jokes a pair of characters opposed to each other, communicating and fighting with each other, and in that case the "loser" can be punished by the clever "winning" antagonist either materially and/or physically, or via a witty retort.

9

For example, two items of so-called trumping, or adversarial humour, quoted by Tony Veale et al.:

- Arthur Neville Chamberlain: I believe that Herr Hitler genuinely wants peace.
Winston Churchill: Yes, a piece of Poland, a piece of France, a piece of...
- Emperor Charles the Bald: What separates an Irishman from a fool?
Irish philosopher John Scotus: Just this table.

Here Chamberlain and Charles the Bald are obviously targets of verbal punches they get from Churchill and John Scotus, correspondingly. But how should one describe the role left for Churchill and Scotus themselves? In contemporary cognitive psychology and linguistics the word "target" is almost automatically paired and associated with the word "source". Are they then "sources" of humour, or if not, then what are they?

10

Further, cleverness in jokes is not an unreservedly positive trait. As Christie Davies claims, in ethnic jokes cleverness of characters (prevalently Jews and Scots) is typically accompanied by stinginess, the output being an axiologically ambivalent condition that Davies calls "canny":

"The canny person has to have cleverness, but canniness also requires a crafty, calculating, thrifty, measuring disposition. Canniness implies cleverness and rationality, but it is a shrewd cleverness, and a calculating rationality applied in the pursuit of personal advantage..."

"The comically canny hero of ethnic jokes is represented as "too clever," "too clever by half," "too clever for his own good"..."

(Ethnic Humor Around the World (1990). p. 15)

11

This takes us to the question of how sharp is the distinction between stupidity and cleverness, alias between positive and negative characters in jokes in general?

In the world's jokelore there is a whole plead of "wise fools", Hodja Nasreddin being perhaps the most salient of them.

Besides, there is a lot of jokes based on so-called "twisted logic", or "Jewish logic" where it is often hard to determine the axiological quality of the sayer.

The following item is allegedly one of Sigmund Freud's favourite jokes that he used to tell to illustrate the psychological mechanism of rationalisation:

A woman explains why she doesn't have to pay for her neighbours' tea pot. First, I never borrowed the pot. Second, when I borrowed it, it was already broken. Third, when I gave it back, it was in perfect condition.

12

Archival and other source materials can suggest and support the hypothesis that the non-punchlined ATU Schwanks and punchlined jokes represent just two different historical strata in the development of the jokelore of many European nations (including Estonians).

Above-mentioned German folklorists have even attempted to corroborate that many of contemporary punchlined German Witzes are the direct typological descendants of their older non-punchlined Schwank ancestors.

And indeed, the existing folkloric source materials of European (particularly Northern-European) peoples quite clearly reveal that in the 19th century people likely preferred to tell (and collectors to record) non-punchlined Schwanks, whereas in the 20th century, in contrast, mainly punchlined jokes.

13

Such a supposition could be implied from / supported by several likely weighty empirical circumstances, historical studies and theoretical postulates, for example:

- Perhaps the birth of the punchline as the "device of joke making" was just one of the epiphenomena of the alleged general disappearance of the cultural model of the Great Chain of Being in the last decades of the 18th century.
- Many tales of deception are very reminiscent of certain so-called practical jokes that are considered to belong to the ancient, primitive strata of the development of humour – see, for example, in Rapp's *The Origins of Wit and Humor* (1951).
- The punchlined joke cannot be retold to the same listener twice or more times, but the non-punchlined Schwank can.

14

• Paul McGhee (*On the Cognitive Origins of Incongruity Humor: Fantasy Assimilation versus Reality Assimilation* (1972; 1979)) attempted to correlate the stages of development of humour with the ontogenetic stages of the human personality, observing children as a seedbed to corroborate the discovery that the feeling of cognitive (including humorous) enjoyment and satisfaction can be caused not only by the novelty of the stimulus, but also by the possibility to reduce the novel stimuli to repeatedly experienced and familiar schematic patterns of mind.

• Everything in the case seemed to correspond to Yuri Lotman's (*Лекции по структуральной поэтике* (1964), p. 172-183) postulate about the two historical strata of aesthetics – the earlier "aesthetics of sameness" ("эстетика тождества") and the modern "aesthetics of opposition" ("эстетика противопоставления").

15

However, on some broader spatial and temporal scale, there are irrefutable facts that undermine these beliefs and constructions.

The most well-known of them is the notorious *Philogelos* (Laughter-Lover), the allegedly oldest manuscript of old Greek jokes that has survived to our days, a collection of 265 texts supposedly written in the 10th century of our era, but based on considerably older sources.

Philogelos displays a number of established ethnic, social and psychotypological butts (including the notorious *scholastikos*, translated into English as "pedant", "(absent-minded) professor", "egghead" etc., the Kymeans and Abderites, deals with topics of sexual behaviour, drunkards, etc.

16

What is particularly remarkable, is that the texts of the *Philogelos* are just jokes – short items in the form of a dialogue or "reverted wellerism", evidently oriented to punchlined endings, although the punchlines can often feel somewhat strange and cryptic when read in contemporary translation.

They have nothing in common with the predominant narrative patterns of the ATU Schwanks of deception.

They very frequently involve stupidity, but parallels with the ATU types are few and far between and, as a rule, restricted to cases in which stupidity is demonstrated, but is not punished.

17

Here are some examples from Michael Hendry's Internet anthology "IOCI ANTIQVI: ANCIENT JOKES" (<http://www.curculio.org/Ioci/>):

- A professor nearly drowned while swimming; he swore that he would not enter the water again, before first learning how to swim well.

ATU 1293. Philogelos no. 2

- Wishing to teach his donkey not to eat, a pedant did not offer him any food. When the donkey died of hunger, he said: "I've had a great loss. Just when he had learned not to eat, he died."

ATU 1682. Philogelos no. 9

- A man from Kyme was trying to sell some honey. When someone came and tasted it and said that it was very good, the seller said: "Well, yes: if a mouse hadn't fallen in it, I wouldn't be selling it!"

ATU 1578A*. Philogelos no. 173

18

Some more examples from *Philogelos* without ATU parallels:

- An Abderite, seeing a eunuch conversing with a woman, asked him if she was his wife. When he answered that a eunuch could not have a wife, he replied "Then she must be your daughter."

Philogelos no. 115

- A Kymean doctor, operating on someone who was in terrible pain and crying out, switched to a blunter scalpel.

Philogelos no. 177

- Running into a poindexter, a friend said "I congratulate you on the birth of your son." To which he replied "Yes, thanks to all my friends!"

Philogelos no. 98

19

But the most serious empirical argument that has totally confused me, vanished my faith in the strictly bivalent distinguishability between the punchlined and non-punchlined humorous narratives and completely demolished my hitherto perception of what the punchline "as such" is, and of the historical collation of punchlined and non-punchlined folk jokes, was the existence of the huge and extremely heterogeneous corpus of tales about Hodja Nasreddin that have been, and continue to be, very popular and productive in the very large area of the Oriental world.

Nasreddin totally destroyed my earlier perception of axiological rules governing humorous narratives, the very concepts of "good" and "bad" in humour, of relationships between the cleverness and stupidity, between the philosophical depth and seriousness and coarse vulgar clownade, between the intentional and the spontaneous in general, etc.

20

Publications of Nasreddin tales – both on paper and on the Internet – are innumerable, but the number of credible academic sources is quite low.

In Uther's new register of folktale types the proportion of Nasreddin plots seems to be relatively high: it includes at least 126 references to Albert Wesselski's book *Der Hodscha Nasreddin* I–II (1911), that is, almost ¼ of all Uther's joke plots. But in Wesselski's book the percentage of materials originating from Southern Europe and other places outside Turkey and other "core areas" of such plots is quite high.

M. S. Kharitonov's collections *Twenty three Nasreddins* (1978) and *Twenty four Nasreddins* (1986), on the contrary, include only about 50 references to the older versions by Aarne, Thompson, Andreev, the register of Eastern Slavic peoples by Barag et al., that constitute only ab. 4% of the sum of Kharitonov's plots.

21

Let us look at the following seven variants of Nasreddin plots that seem to reiterate quite frequently in various sources and, at the same time, are indexed in ATU registers and thus should belong, on the principle, to non-punchlined Schwanks, not punchlined jokes.

When reading these examples, please contemplate a little bit on some questions:

- 1) how "non-punchlined" do you really feel them?**
- 2) how are stupidity and cleverness related in Hodja's behaviour in each of these stories ?**
- 3) to what extent and sense is there possible to speak about the "real winner" or "real loser" of the conflict arising in each of the stories?**

In Uther's system the first five stories belong to the category "The Clever Man", the sixth – to the category "Other Jokes about Religious Figures", and only the seventh – to the category "Stories about a Fool" (previously Thompson's "Numskull Stories").

22

ATU 1594. The Donkey is Not at Home

One day, a friend of the Hodja came to him and asked if he could borrow his donkey for two hours to go to the town. The Hodja, not really wanting to lend his donkey, thought for a while and then said:

"Dear friend, I would like to help you but I have lent my donkey to another friend."

The man was turning to leave when he heard the donkey, who was in the stable, bray. The braying became louder and louder. Then the man turned to the Hodja with great anger and shouted:

"You, Hodja, you have cheated me!"

The Hodja, in turn, was very angry and shouted back: "You silly man, haven't you any sense, whom do you believe, me or the donkey."

23

ATU 1558. Welcome to the Clothes

The Hodja was invited to a banquet. Not wanting to be pretentious, he wore his everyday clothes, only to discover that everyone ignored him, including the host. So he went back home and put on his fanciest coat, and then returned to the banquet. Now he was greeted cordially by everyone and invited to sit down and eat and drink.

When the soup was served to him he dunked the sleeve of his coat into the bowl and said, "Eat, my coat, eat!" The startled host asked the Hodja to explain his strange behaviour.

"When I arrived here wearing my other clothes," explained the Hodja, "no one offered me anything to eat or drink. But when I returned wearing this fine coat, I was immediately offered the best of everything, so I can only assume that it was the coat and not myself who was invited to your banquet."

24

ATU 1592B. The Pot Has a Child and Dies

Nasreddin borrowed a pot from his friend. The next day, he gave the pot back to the friend, and also gave him another smaller pot. The friend looked at the small pot, and said, "What is that?" "Your pot gave birth while I had it," Nasreddin replied, "so I am giving you its child." The friend was glad to receive the bonus and didn't ask any more questions. A week later, Nasreddin borrowed the original pot from the friend. After a week passed, the friend asked Nasreddin to return it. "I cannot," Nasreddin said. "Why not?" the friend replied. "Well," Nasreddin answered, "I hate to be the bearer of bad news...but your pot has died." "What!" the friend asked with skepticism. "A pot cannot die!" "You believed it gave birth," Nasreddin said. "So why is it that you cannot believe it has died?"

25

ATU 1624. Thief's Excuse: The Big Wind

Cogia Efendi one day went into a garden, pulled up some carrots and turnips and other kinds of vegetables, which he found, putting some into a sack and some into his bosom; suddenly the gardener coming up, laid hold of him, and said, "What are you seeking here?" The Cogia, being in great consternation, not finding any other reply, answered, "For some days past a great wind has been blowing, and that wind blew me hither." "But who pulled up these vegetables?" said the gardener. "As the wind blew very violently," replied the Cogia, "it cast me here and there, and whatever I laid hold of in the hope of saving myself remained in my hands." "Ah," said the gardener, "but who filled the sack with them?" "Well," said the Cogia, "that is the very question I was about to ask myself when you came up."

26

ATU 1534E*. Good Decision
(usually connected with the character of Hershele in Jewish jokes)

Nasreddin Hodja was named the kadi of Aksehir. One day, two men with a dispute came to him and asked him to resolve their conflict. The Hodja listened to the plaintiff first. "You are right!" he said when the plaintiff completed his account. Then, the Hodja listened to the defendant. "You are right!" he said to the defendant as well. Everyone in the room was perplexed. One of the observers dared to protest. "Kadi effendi," he said, "You agreed with both of the parties. The dispute can't be settled if you say "you are right" to both of them." Nasreddin Hodja considered for a moment, then he said: "You are right too!"

27

ATU 1826. The Clergyman Has No Need to Preach

Once, the people of The City invited Mulla Nasruddin to deliver a khutba. When he got on the minbar (pulpit), he found the audience was not very enthusiastic, so he asked "Do you know what I am going to say?" The audience replied "NO", so he announced "I have no desire to speak to people who don't even know what I will be talking about" and he left. The people felt embarrassed and called him back again the next day. This time when he asked the same question, the people replied "YES" So Mullah Nasruddin said, "Well, since you already know what I am going to say, I won't waste any more of your time" and he left. Now the people were really perplexed. They decided to try one more time and once again invited the Mullah to speak the following week. Once again he asked the same question - "Do you know what I am going to say?" Now the people were prepared and so half of them answered "YES" while the other half replied "NO". So Mullah Nasruddin said "The half who know what I am going to say, tell it to the other half" and he left!

28

ATU 1334*. The Old Moon and the Stars

One day Nasreddin Hodja and a friend were admiring the sky and watching a new moon. Hodja Effendi," asked the friend, what do they do with the old moons?" – "They cut them, trim them and turn them into stars!"

And finally, the notorious tale about looking for the ring or keys:

One day Mullah Nasruddin lost his ring down in the basement of his house, where it was very dark. There being no chance of his finding it in that darkness, he went out on the street and started looking for it there.

Somebody passing by stopped and enquire: "What are you looking for, Mullah Nasruddin ? Have you lost something?" – "Yes, I've lost my ring down in the basement." – "But Mullah Nasruddin , why don't you look for it down in the basement where you have lost it?" asked the man in surprise. "Don't be silly, man! How do you expect me to find anything in that darkness!"

29

Idries Shah, the psychologist Robert Ornstein and others have tried to qualify Nasreddin as an outstanding Sufi poet and philosopher and extract from behind the surface of his seemingly foolish and absurd deeds and sayings some deep-reaching philosophical content.

In this spirit, the tale about looking for the ring or keys should admittedly be interpreted not just as a joke, but in deeper sufistic, spiritual manner, i.e. it allegedly suggests not to look for the eternal in temporal and earthly. The (dark) house symbolizes the internal (mental, spiritual) world of the human being and the space outside of it, respectively, surrounding us environment. The key for resolving many difficult problems should be looked for inside the dark hideouts of our soul and mind, not in the outer space. One must look for the God just where he had lost him etc.

30

On the other hand, İlhan Başgöz (*A Thematic Analysis of Hoca Stories in Historical Perspective* (1998)) has collected and studied the oldest recordings of Nasreddin stories (in manuscripts of the sixteenth century) that should likely reveal the oldest layers and the most adequate "initial stance" of Nasreddin's character.

Başgöz argues that Nasreddin is, by and large, a antihero.

Nasreddin stories cast challenges to practically each component of Turkish political and social system of the time;

they problematise many fundamental aspects of human relationships and human knowledge;

they ridicule established and petrified rules and traditions and defy the authorities;

they express distrust towards the ways of social and individual functioning of human life and expose the folly of human characters.

31

What is particularly noteworthy, according to Başgöz, the general mentality of these early tales appears to be astoundingly rude and obscene.

Hodja's attitude to religious matters is overtly blasphemous.

His family relationships are drastically upside down. No norms and models of social, moral and sexual behaviour are followed, all constraints and taboos break down. Primeval instincts run amok. The father's and mother's authority is nonexistent, all the communication between family members is violent and vulgar.

The coarse sexual and scatological terminology is used without any restrictions. Beside his wife, Hodja happens to have sexual intercourses with a whore, with a man, frequently with a donkey, by chance also with camel and cat.

32

As a whole, the corpus of tales about Hodja Nasreddin turns out to be a huge mixture of everything that thoroughly demolishes and blends together any clearcut borders between the punchlined and non-punchlined humorous narratives, violates all axiological rules, all criteria for distinguishing "the good" and "the bad" that work very well for Schwanks and jokes of the "Western standard", between cleverness and stupidity, coarse obscenity and philosophical seriousness. All borders between the intentional and the spontaneous, between sincere speech and irony, between what happens "really" and what is played seem to be ruined.

33

However, there is an empirical fact that can indicate another, perhaps more promising, aspect for structural division of humorous narratives.

It is the technical fact that in the book *Twenty Four Nasreddins* (1986) by M. S. Kharitonov, the best compendium of Nasreddin tales that I know, 83% of texts are ending with a phrase said by Nasreddin.

In the Turkish material of Albert Wesselski's book the share of such texts is even 94%; the frequencies are similar in other sources as well (e.g., those by G. Borrow, P. N. Boratav, and others).

Such ending comment can include a critical or approving evaluation of a situation, make a generalising conclusion from it, be a witty retort to a verbal attack of some other character, etc.

34

So, the main structural watershed seems to go not between the non-punchlined Schwank as such and contemporary punchlined joke as such, but between the tales with a certain "real" or "material" solution of a certain problem and tales ending with somebody's comment, i.e. the direct speech.

This ending remark can be considered as one of the focal "points of dissemination" which, according to the configuration of conditions, can be qualified as an unintentional self-exposure of the butt of the joke, a witty retort of the clever antagonist, or just as a "sub-punchline" humorous comment of a neutral bystander (e.g., in wellerisms), axiologically ambivalent or totally asemantic saying of a "wise fool", a remark reminding the moral conclusion in the end of fables, etc. etc.

35

Is seriousness the opposite of humour and laughter?

SeppoKnuutila

Joy is a pure emotion. It is an unsubstantial, uneven and original passion. This was René Descartes' thesis in his book *Passions of the Soul* (1649). In addition to joy, there are five pure or original emotions, namely wonder, love, anger, desire and sorrow. He postulated that all other emotions are, in one way or another, mixtures of these six. Descartes had noted, you see, that when a person is very joyful, the subject of his joy never makes him burst into laughter. This is because even as laughter is considered a symbol of joy, joy can only make one laugh when it is moderate and mixed with some amount of wonder or anger.

According to the sublime interpretation, humour and the comical in their highest forms refer to the seriousness of life, to the truth. But folk humor is also interested in what is possible but not necessarily true. It is also worth asking whether seriousness is unavoidably the companion of truth, and if so, why? Humorous attitude towards things can be permeated with a genuine interest of knowledge and humor can be used to express things that might otherwise remain unexpressed. Also, the lines between humorists and non-humorists do not meander only between people but also inside of them. Everyone has both socially shared and a personal view on the nature and limits of the comical, the serious and the not-serious.

According to well known Finnish proverb even the smallest joke is half true. In other words every humorous presentation would refer to some serious thing that is true in itself. When, for example, TV shows perceived as insulting are discussed, the point isn't that the shows would present a half-true picture of the subjects of the comedy, but that they depict a societal atmosphere that allows the public ridiculing of a certain group. The demand for so-called political – racial, ethnical, gender-related, religious etc. – correctness have been, for decades, received by the similarly minded and rejected by the ones in dissent.

The opposite of truth is a lie, and it includes all things non-true – such as fiction. A common characteristic of the formal theories of humour and the comical is the disparity born of presenting the way things are versus the way they should, or could, be. Who laughs, and when, is dependent on the context. As the so-called humoral theory on human nature and world views gave way to scholarly medicine in the 18th century, the meaning of humor as a quality of mind remained in many (European) languages, but it also took on the meaning of something that is no longer true, that belongs in the realm of belief. This is one of the ways that has constructed the idea of the conflict between true and non-true in the conceptual history of humor. From this, some have drawn the erroneous conclusion that all humorists are liars.

But there are much deeper furrows in the cultural history of laughter and humor, ones where comical and tragic, painful and pleasurable presentations are intermingled. In the following I thought to take a look at how comical disparities are constructed out of various cognitive and experiential elements, conflicting emotions, taboos and rules and finding ways around them, or breaking them; and how they form emergent bodies of meaning. As examples I will use a couple of Finnish incidents from recent past, ones where the humorous, comical and serious are intertwined and formed new, unforeseen constellations of meaning.

Ambiguity

The grand narrative of our cultural history is permeated by the idea of an original purity of natural beings in the sense of unsubstantiality. Mixed emotions, elements and any imaginable forms kind of prove by their very existence that the world primarily consists of pure elements. Our everyday knowledge of chemical elements, evolution, racial hygiene, primary colors, and clean chords also includes assumptions of the basic structure of reality. A principle of linearity according to which good has preceded evil, right has preceded wrong, cleanliness has come before dirt and innocence before experience, has been considered elementary to western metaphysics. Mixed beings brought into existence through invention, breeding or, for example, wars or expeditions, can be functional, enduring and beautiful, but in all cases they can be estimated as dependent on the absolutes.

A good example of a split comic entity is the tramp character of Charlie Chaplin, whose disparity of outfit, movement and behavior has amused and moved audiences of his movies everywhere. Juri Lotman writes: "In exactly the least fitting situations Charlie acts like a flawless gentleman. These

characteristics surface only when an on-screen context would rather call for behavior of a tramp, a con man or a thief."

According to the philosopher Carlos G. Prado's view, humor and its representations are in itself a culturally and historically shaped form of meaning and a dimension of mind. Thus presenting or seeing something as comical is also understanding its meaning in a certain way. If, for example, you are amused by something, someone's appearance or behavior, a situation, someone else may claim that there's nothing funny about it, but it would be weird to claim that you don't find it funny or aren't amused - if you are. "The trouble is, you can restrict who tells a joke, but you can't restrict who finds it funny." (1995, 2006)

Correctness

The previous views and notes on the dimensions of humor and the comical present an initial answer to the question posed in the heading: there's no reason to regard laughter and humor as opposites to seriousness, but it is rather a question of complicated articulations of different systems of meaning and context and cognitive and emotional dimensions. I will present one more viewpoint to the problematic of humor before presenting the examples I promised. It is the demand of correctness that can as well be contextualized as political, ethnical or gender-related.

The demand of correctness and inoffensiveness is largely a cultural construction and has an interesting history in also our own cultural sphere. The demand for political correctness began to gain such publicity and foothold already in the 60's that during the following decade it already began turning against itself. Inside various minority and freedom movements it was at first requested that all societal spheres and layers are publicly dealt with in an equal manner. Bernard Saper has described how and with what kind of consequences political correctness also found its way into humor in the USA in the 70's. A central demand was that those exact groups that are made fun of in public could have a say in how they are treated and how they are depicted. According to Saper, though, political correctness turned into a fashionable mantra among narrow-minded circles and pro-punishment revisionists, one that was repeated in every occasion to back up demands of control and censorship. In Saper's own view, specifically in a multi-cultural, democratic society like the USA, where all groups have the right to freely express their opinion, all kinds of joking and fun should be tolerated, even encouraged, so that it would show the co-operation of humor and tolerance. Tolerating fun made of one's self gives one the right to make fun of others, he suggests.

In his critique of the defenders of politically correct publicity Saper presents how humor protects itself from criticism, even from attempts of analysis, to which I briefly referred to earlier. Personally I find it positive that the need for correctness is constantly under discussion, because the discussion shows how different arguments are built, how they're taken to extremes and how flexibility is preserved. It is also interesting to observe how the demands for correctness change over the years, sometimes quite rapidly.

In Finland - like elsewhere in the world - there has also been a lively discussion about the demands and breaches of correctness in advertising. Especially in the 90's commercials presenting women as ridiculous and alcohol as positive were banned (and threatened with fines). Interestingly, most of these commercials were humorous. But in the banning decisions humor was not seen in mitigation, even as the representatives of the advertisers tried to appeal to the playfulness of the presentations and to label the ones protesting as humourless person? This wasn't, of course, only about misunderstandings between the parties, but genuine disagreements on the meanings of the commercials. No one involved claimed sexist advertising to be harmless or public embarrassing of young women acceptable.

In France in the mid-90's the mineral water company Perrier had a row with the feminist organization European Women's Lobby about a commercial deemed sexist. Chicago Tribune wrote about the issue as follows (23rd August 1996): "French mineral water firm Perrier has scrapped an advertising campaign in Belgium after the European Women's Lobby denounced it. Billboards featuring three young women naked from the waist up with Perrier caps covering their nipples, and the slogan "Wonderbubbles," were taken down over the weekend, a Perrier spokeswoman said. She denied the company had given in to the threat of a boycott, saying the campaign 'was meant as a joke, not to shock or offend anyone'." Even as Perrier was protecting its image, the result shouldn't be interpreted as seriousness winning over humor, "because registering offence and lacking in humour are not necessary corollaries of each other". "We should therefore make distinctions between serious and comic forms of utterance and dialogue, but not conceive of them as, or allow them to develop into, rigid compartmental divisions. Their interrelations should in themselves be celebrated, for when the aesthetics and ethics of humour and comedy openly interrogate each other, this encourages cultural reflexivity and integration and is to their mutual benefit" (Pickering and Lockyer 2009, 14-15).

Finnish Examples

A couple of years ago in Finland a sales director of a big car firm said in a magazine interview that he approves of the same things in a woman and a car, since "all the usage features of a car are found in a woman". "A car's appearance is finalized with springs and tires - a woman's ankles and shoes are important to me, and a woman often loses her shape if she wears heels less than seven centimeters high." He also talked about his views on a woman's place in a firm (they don't make good leaders) and at home (when the woman stops ironing and cleaning, the relationship is coming to an end.) I can't really say who was the first to react, but it rapidly escalated into a public discussion where the boss's sexist remarks were largely disapproved of (obviously he also found sympathy in the internet discussion forums). The uproar ended with the boss in question resigning and apologizing both to the company, whose image he had damaged with remarks "meant mostly as humor", and to everyone who he had unintentionally insulted. He was sorry that his humorous comparisons between women and cars had been taken seriously. He probably agrees that "sexist jokes may not have led anyone to believe that real women were as bad as fictional women", but it probably didn't cross his mind that, "sexist jokes keep alive the association of those negative traits with real women and reinforce the stereotypes. That is how sexist jokes keep alive sexism." (Morreall 2009: 74)

Another, related example: in January, this year, the head manager of a big department store chain had talked a bit of this and that, in an informal manner, in the 70th anniversary of the company. Also Finland's prime minister at the time Mari Kiviniemi was present in the occasion and her elegant outfit had already been complimented by the host of the event. Inspired, the head of the chain wanted to top this and remarked that it isn't adequate to call such a presentable lady just a prime minister (literal translation of the Finnish term is "head minister") but that she should rather be titled a full body minister. His pun immediately became a media pet peeve and his humor was vastly judged sexist and not correct. Even the cultural minister Stefan Wallin reproached the head manager for his choice of words and concluded that this kind of humor is already out-of-date, which is a positive thing. The Feminist Association also strictly condemned the director's uttering's. After a week the boss publicly lamented his bad choice of words and promised to stick to serious business from thereafter, as humor doesn't seem to fit him very well. The comedy of his pun was simple, but when humorously referring to the prime minister's body, it's hardly likely that the speaker realized how "the creator of humor is putting ideas into people's heads for the pleasure those ideas will bring, not to provide accurate information" (Morreall 2009, 72).

Around the time of the latter example there was a show in Finnish television that had, among other things, different comedy characters competing for the audience's approval. One of the main stars of the show was a fictitious contractor Timo Harjakainen whose manner of speech consisted of alcohol humor, jokes and monikers that demeaned women and especially his (ex)wife plus of boasting about his financial scams. In other words this fictional character was allowed to speak aloud all the things that real "contractors", if they're smart, have to keep quiet in public. This character eventually finished second, as the competition was won by an actor playing the character of an egg. This exemplifies exactly what was written about by Pickering and Lockyer as: ".../comic impersonation permits offense, or at least a considerable extension of the ethical limits within which this is allowed. When a comedian dresses as another, and acts in character, this extends the potential scope of humor, allowing it to encroach on what would be taken as ethically dubious territory if the performer was 'playing it straight.'" (2009, 183-184).

The folklorist Alan Dundes pondered in a discussion – many years ago - the thinning of the public racist, sexist and sexual minority-related humor in America. His assumption was that it doesn't just go away, but keeps on living mouth to mouth in smaller circles, like folklore. On the other hand, the modern culture research emphasizes most of all the many roles of context in the process of the construction of meanings, which is of course an obvious dimension that also sheds light on the previous examples. The sales boss's staff rushed in to explain how their boss's joke had been removed from its context and thus made to look inappropriate. How would a joke about a "full body minister" have been correct in its proper "context", the company's anniversary celebration, is still a valid question.

One more example from Finland, from last spring. Most people know that Finland's hockey team won the world championship this year. As the victorious team returned home, they were greeted by a huge group of fans. The heroes descended from the aircraft waving happily, until one of the team coaches fell flat on the ground at the bottom of the stairs - and stayed laying down right there. At least that's what it looked like. And this surprising episode was seen as a brief flash in all the TV newscasts of that evening. But in no time the falling was making rounds in YouTube, in several versions. Someone came

up with the idea of combining the footage with the comments of an ice hockey presenter from a situation where a young Finnish hockey player Mikael Granlund scored an astonishing goal: "Did you see, what the guy hits, did you see, what the guy hits! Oh lord what just happened! Heaven's sake what comes from there! It is, it is like that, it is like that! Once more, look and be amazed!" The result was textbook comedy: two "texts" that don't belong to each other's spheres - heroism and recklessness - were combined, with the result of making tens, if not hundreds of thousands of Finns laugh. The coach in question was, of course, drunk - although press photos later showed his shoe with a missing sole that had caused the tripping.

When part of the victorious team was drunk also in the welcoming party that was broadcast live, a discussion immediately begun in the newspapers and on discussion boards about, among other things, what kind of example the team would set for youngsters. And the opinions were split two ways in a familiar manner. Some regarded the misbehavior as comedy, in the light of traditional drunk humour, whereas others held the opinion that sports heroes specifically can and should be demanded correct public behavior. It was repeatedly discussed in different contexts whether the homecoming circus was only bad taste and embarrassing stupidity, or if the context of heroism was favorable also for coarse comedy. In my opinion, the falling down of one member of the heroic team, an assistant coach, was clumsy and simple Finnish slapstick comedy - no more than that. The comedy, though, ended in sanctions: The Finnish Ice Hockey Association presented two members of the team (leader and coach) that had appeared drunk in public with fines worth several thousand Euros. Thus the other side of an unintentional gag was revealed.

Conclusion

If seriousness was the opposite of humour, would the world no doubt be a much simpler and contradictory system in many other senses as well, one which could include either truths or lies. "So, humour and seriousness remain inextricably linked. Neither can abolish the other without abolishing itself – or without threatening the social order" (Billig 2005, 243). In other words the problem of humour on a general level seems to lie exactly in its tendency to reach all phenomena imaginable, both imaginary and real. Pointing out the comical moment, technique or articulations - for example by applying S. Attardo's and V. Raskin's general theory of verbal humour (GTVH) - from any humorous text is not a problem to a skilled humour researcher, but exactly describing the meaning of humour in changing contexts is. This question surfaces multi-facetedly in the book *Beyond the joke. The limits of humour*, edited by Sharon Lockyer and Michael Pickering. It is easy to agree with the editors when they write: "Power and freedom are deeply serious issues, while the very spirit of humour is such that it often involves attempts to subvert or explode the intentions or consequences of seriousness" (2009, 26).

In the Finnish incidental examples the bosses responsible for presenting sexist humour were sorry for specifically the fact that their jokes that were meant to be innocent and benevolent had been perceived as insulting. Their jokes were, however, received more seriously in the companies whose reputation and business were considered to be on the line; the same went down in the Perrier company. Humour both connects and separates, as has been noted in various contexts again and again. It can also get a boss separated from his company. There was nothing funny per se about the hockey coach falling down, but the aspects involved in it and leading to the falling (world championship and the state of drunkenness) gave enough reason for to take a (tragi-)comical look at the incident. The coach did not consciously perform a joke or comedy; it was done by the media and the active YouTube users. All the comic aspects of the examples still exist, of course, even if the incidents themselves are already yesterday's news. A mere disapproval of comedy or humour doesn't make them disappear.

Even as I personally do not see any reason to defend sexist, racist or ethnically offending humour, I think it is positive that their meanings are discussed and ambivalent attitudes are held forth. In general culturally significant, serious phenomena, to which humour undeniably belongs, are not unsubstantial or prone to simple determination. Their meanings are constructed and keep shifting in various communicative contexts. According to Novalis (G.P.F von Hardenberg 1772-1801) wit is born when imagination and common sense touch each other: "Humour is the result of the free mixing of the forced and unforced. It is only good that one idea has many names." Along the same lines, the author Milan Kundera has written that flashes of humour reveal the world in its moral multi-mindedness. And more: "Humour is the intoxication and joy born of the relativity of all things human, one that "springs from the certainty that nothing is certain."

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Comic Wisdom: The Affinity between Humor and Philosophy

© 2011 John Morreall,
from
*Comic Wisdom: A Comprehensive
Philosophy of Humor*

Samuel Johnson ran into an old college friend after 40 years.

“You are a philosopher. I have tried in my time, too, to be a philosopher, but I don’t know how. Cheerfulness was always breaking through.”

Was Socrates the first stand-up comedian?

Philosophers and stand-up comedians:

1. are conversational
2. reflect on everyday experiences, especially puzzling ones
3. ask questions. “X—what’s up with *that*?”
4. are practically detached

Philosophers and standup comedians:

5. search out new perspectives and surprising thoughts
6. think critically
7. don’t defer to authority—nothing is sacred
8. think in counterfactuals, nonactual scenarios

Philosophical questions often sound funny-strange or funny ha-ha

- René Descartes: “Might I be dreaming right now?”
- Hilary Putnam: “Could I be a brain in a vat?”
- Ned Block: “Why do mirrors reverse left-right but not up-down?”

Bertrand Russell

- The time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time.
- I would never die for my beliefs because I might be wrong.
- Many people would sooner die than think. In fact, they do so.
- It has been said that man is the rational animal. All my life I have been searching for evidence which could support this.

Existentialism

Existentialist themes with comic possibilities:

- conflicts between individual and group
- living inauthentically
- absurdity
- living without guidelines, making it up as we go along.

Humorous Existentialists

- Soren Kierkegaard, “essentially a humorist”
- Friedrich Nietzsche. Zarathustra as “the laughing prophet”

Non-humorous Existentialists

- Jean-Paul Sartre. Laughter as scorn.
- Albert Camus. The proper response to the absurdity of life is “metaphysical rebellion” rather than humor.

Humor and Nonattachment in Zen Buddhism

- A monk asked Master Tozan, “What is the Buddha.”
“Three pounds of flax.”
- A monk asked Master Ummon, “What is the Buddha?” “A wiping stick of dried shit.”
- Master Tokusan: “The Buddha is a dried piece of barbarian dung, and sainthood is only an empty name.”
- If you meet the Buddha, kill him.

Master Sengai: If by sitting in meditation, one becomes a Buddha . . .



Poem by Masahide

My barn burned down.
Now I have a better view
Of the rising moon.

The dying master:
“Tell them truth is like a river.”

Zen is opposed to
rational, logical thought

- Thinking with concepts is not direct experience.
- Concepts are static, while reality is dynamic.
- We create concepts by making distinctions, especially between opposites, but reality is a unity.

Humor “breaks up” our concepts

- Koans: What is the sound of one hand clapping? What did your face look like before your parents were born?
- The most misleading concept is “I,” “the self.”

Aha and Ha-ha:
Enlightenment and Amusement

- Enlightenment should come suddenly, like the punchline of a joke.
- Zen began with the Flower Sermon of the Buddha. Only Mahakasyapa understood--and smiled.

Jokes about animals. Cross-cultural study

Dorota Brzozowska
Opole University

Aim

- The analysis of contemporary jokes about animals
- the anthropocentric versus allocentric (biocentric, zoocentric) view
- relations to taboo subjects
- cross-cultural aspects: why certain animals are present in particular texts and others not

Material

- Contemporary internet jokes:
- Polish
- English
- Spanish

- 600 - 200 in each group

Anthropocentrism

- (from Greek: *άνθρωπος*, *anthropos*, "human being"; and *κέντρον*, *kentron*, "center")
- the idea that humans are the central concern and that humans must judge all things according to this central concern for humans: *Anthropos* must be considered, looked after and cared for, above all other real, symbolic or imaginary

Zoomorphism

- from the Greek ζῷον (*zōon*), meaning animal, and μορφή (*morphē*), meaning shape or form. It is defined as:
- The representation of deities as animals or the attributing of animal characteristics to them.
- The use of animal figures in art and design or of animal symbols in literature.
- The viewing of human behavior in terms of the behavior of animals.

A taboo

- is a strong social prohibition (or ban) against words, objects, actions, or discussions that are considered undesirable or offensive by a group, culture, society, or community. Breaking a taboo is usually considered objectionable or abhorrent. Some taboo activities or customs are prohibited by law and transgressions may lead to severe penalties. Other taboos result in embarrassment, shame and rudeness.

- “The general theory is that taboo applied to categories which are anomalous with respect to clear-cut category oppositions” (Leach 1966: 39).

The language of obscenity

- falls into three categories:
 - 1) dirty words – usually referring to sex and excretion;
 - 2) blasphemy and profanity;
 - 3) animal abuse – in which a human being is equated with an animal or another species (Leach 1966: 28).

Aggression

- . „Aggression, as manifested either in sex or in killing, is somehow a disturbance of the natural order of things, a kind of necessary impiety” (Leach 1966: 54).

Edible substances

- recognized as food and consumed as a part of the normal diet.
- recognized as possible food, but that are prohibited or else allowed to be eaten only under special (ritual) conditions. These are substances which are consciously tabooed.
- by culture and language are not recognized as food at all. These substances are unconsciously tabooed. (Leach 1966: 31).

Animal categories

- Those which are very close –‘pets’, always strongly inedible.
- Those which are tame but not very close – ‘farm animals’
- Field animals, ‘game’- a category towards which we alternate friendship and hostility
- Remote wild animals – not subject to human control, inedible (Leach 1966: 44).
- The category, which cuts across the others, and is significantly taboo-loaded, is vermin.

A joke: script opposition

- ‘a large chunk of semantic information surrounding the word or evoked by it’. A text can be characterized as a single-joke-carrying text if both of the following conditions are satisfied:
- 1) the text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts
 - 2) the two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite’ (Raskin 1985: 81).

Animals in jokes

- Animals as butts with humans
- Only animals
- Animals as animals or humans
- Humans as humans or animals
- Taboo concerning sex
- Taboo concerning food

Zoocentrism /anthropocentrism/ anthropomorphism

A group of bats, hanging at the ceiling of a cave,
discovers a single bat
STANDING upright underneath on the floor of the
cave.

Surprised by this unusual behavior, they ask this fellow:
“What the heck are you doing down there?”

And the fellow shouts back: “Yoga!”

<http://www.jokesdot.com/category/animal-jokes/page/7>

Zoomocentrism and anthropocentrism

- What did the bird say when his
cage fell apart?
- Cheap-Cheap <http://www.jokesdot.com/category/animal-jokes/page/7>

Antropocentism / zoocentrism

- A man walks into a doctors office one day
with a frog on his head.
- He sits down and the doctor says,
“What’s the problem?”
- The frog says, “Doctor, is there any way
you can get this wart off my ass?”

<http://www.jokesdot.com/category/animal-jokes/page/7>

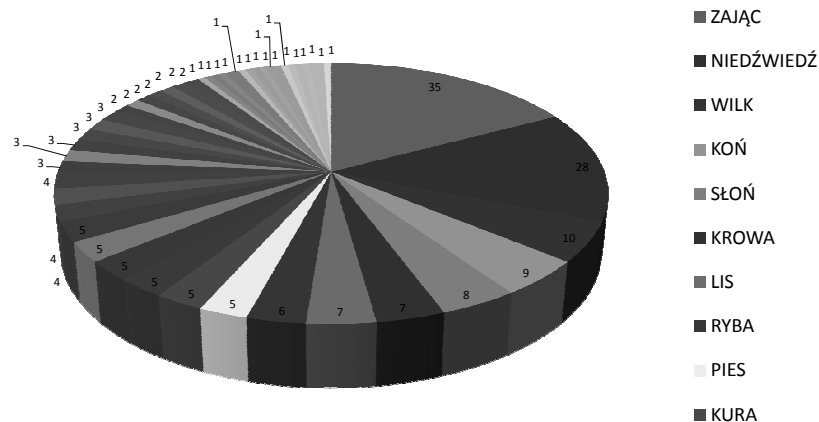
Anthropocentrism

- A lonely frog telephoned the Psychic Hotline and asked what his future holds.
- His Personal Psychic Advisor tells him: “You are going to meet a beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you.”
- The frog is thrilled, “This is great! Will I meet her at a party?” he croaks.
- “No,” says the psychic, “in biology class.”
<http://www.jokesdot.com/category/animal-jokes/page/7>

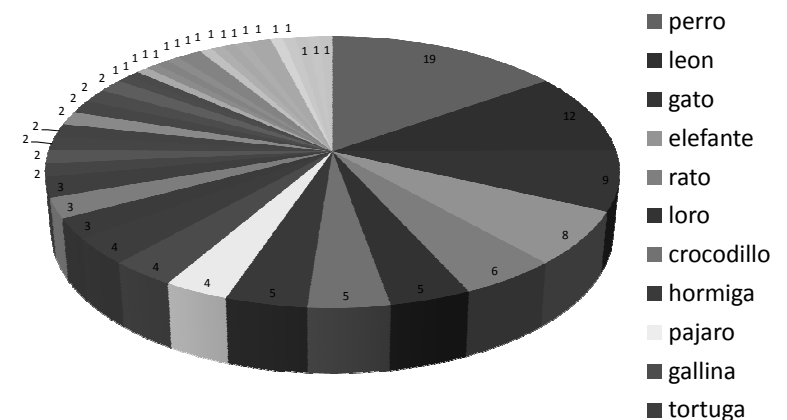
Food

- What do you get when you cross a pig and a centipede?
- Bacon and legs! <http://www.jokesdot.com/category/animal-jokes/page/7>

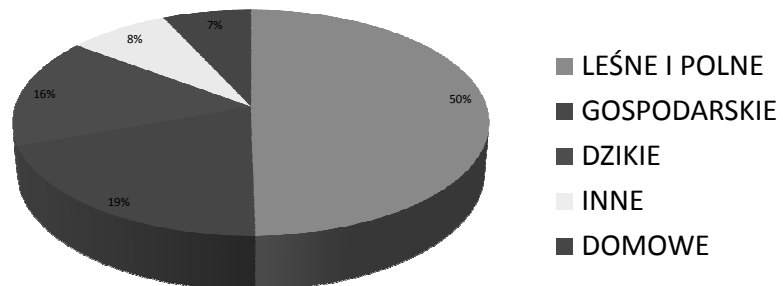
1a. Animals in Polish jokes: hare, bear, wolf, horse, elephant, cow (%)



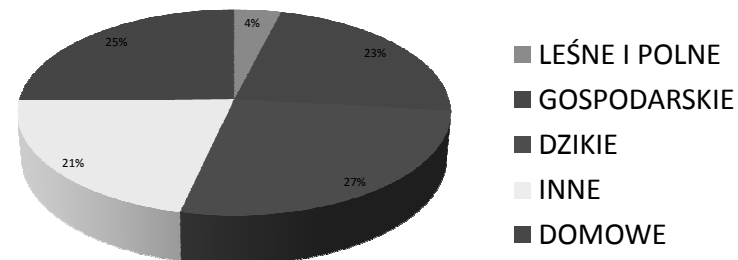
1c. Animals in Spanish jokes: (%)



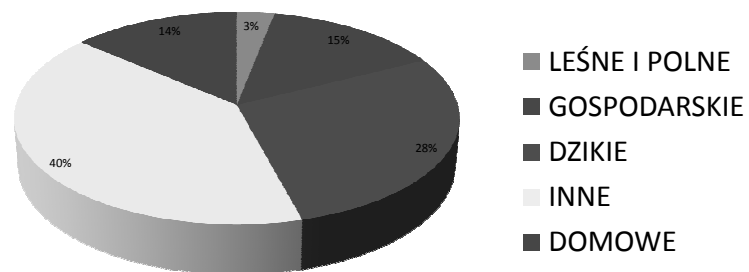
2a. Polish: game, farm, wild, other, pets (%)



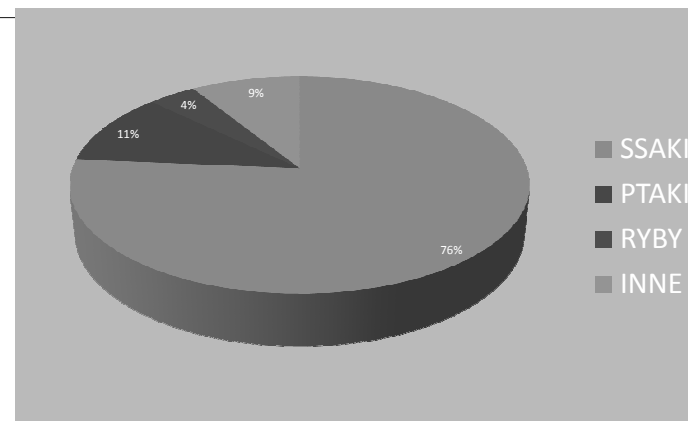
2b. English: game, farm, wild, other, pets (%)



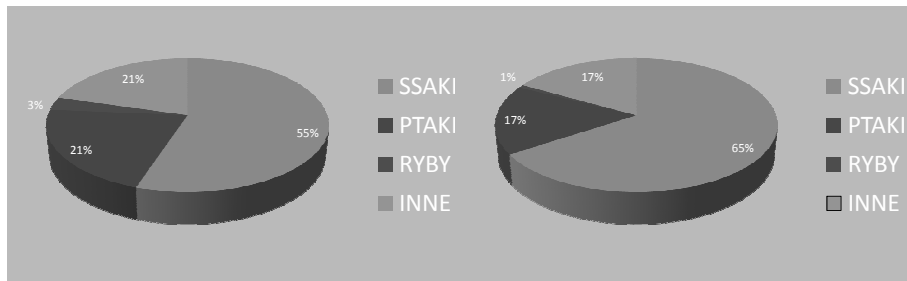
2c. Spanish: game, farm, wild, other, pets (%)



3a. Polish: beasts, birds, fish, other



3b.c. English, Spanish: beasts, birds, fish, other



Conclusions

- The opposition anthropocentrism versus zoocentrism is present in jokes of different cultures
- In zoocentric jokes animals are seen as superior to humans and viewed in a positive way
- Anthropocentric view shows the superiority of humans and the valuation could be positive or negative

- There are some neutral – usually verbal jokes
- Taboo concerning food is often used in both categories of jokes
- There are some culture specific differences – e.g. Spanish jokes are more similar to the English jokes than to the Polish ones.

SATURDAY (20. AUGUST)

Morning session

Chair: Arvo Krikmann

The ethics of humor

Taught by John Morreall (9:30 – 10:30)

Mark Twain and the complexities of American humor

Taught by Holger Kersten (11:00 – 12:00)

Jokes about particular sets of women: Mothers in law (wife's mother), blondes, Jewish women, female car drivers and lesbians

Taught by Christie Davies (12:00 – 13:00)

Afternoon session

Chair: Graeme Ritchie

What is funny to whom and why? New findings in humour appreciation and personality

Taught by Willibald Ruch (14:30 – 15:30)

Feedback and next ISS, EKM lecture hall (15:30 – 16:30)

The Ethics of Humor

John Morreall, from *Comic Relief: A Comprehensive Philosophy of Humor*

Ethics

- A theory of morality
- Some approaches:
 - Hedonism of Epicurus
 - Stoicism of Epictetus
 - Virtue Ethics of Plato and Aristotle
 - Divine Command Ethics (Judaism, Christianity, Islam)
 - Natural Law Ethics of Thomas Aquinas
 - Duty Ethics of Immanuel Kant
 - Utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill

Nine critiques of humor

- 1. Humor is insincere.
- 2. Humor is idle.
- 3. Humor diminishes self-control.
- 4. Humor is hedonistic.
- 5. Humor fosters sexual license.
- 6. Humor is irresponsible.
- 7. Humor is hostile.
- 8. Humor fosters anarchy.
- 9. Humor is foolish.

Contemporary Ethics of Humor

- Michael Philips, “Racist acts and racist humor”
- Ronald de Sousa, “When is it wrong to laugh?”
- Merrie Bergmann, “How many feminists does it take to make a joke: Sexist humor and what’s wrong with it”

The big assumption

- Racist jokes and sexist jokes *make assertions*—that blacks are stupid or lazy, that women are stupid or conniving, etc.

Christie Davies

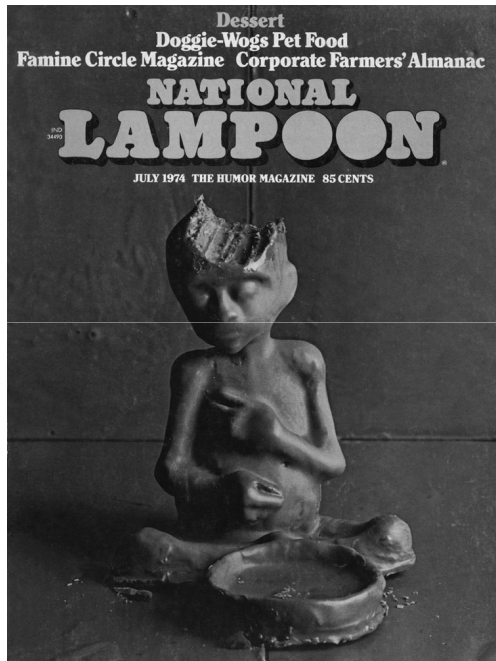
- Ethnic jokes are typically not about an enemy, but about a group similar to the joke-teller.
- The “target” group is not believed to have the shortcomings attributed to them in the joke.
- E. g., Polish jokes in the U.S. in the late 20th century.

Morreall

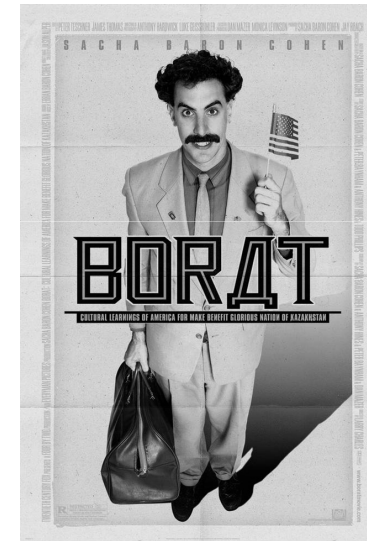
- Joking and humor are forms of play.
- The communication is typically non-bona-fide: the declarative sentences are not assertions, the expressions of beliefs and attitudes need not be sincere.

What’s actually wrong with racist and sexist jokes, and immoral humor

- The playful disengagement can be irresponsible.
- The playful disengagement can block compassion for suffering people.
- The playful disengagement can promote prejudice.



Sacha Baron Cohen, *Borat*



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Comic virtues

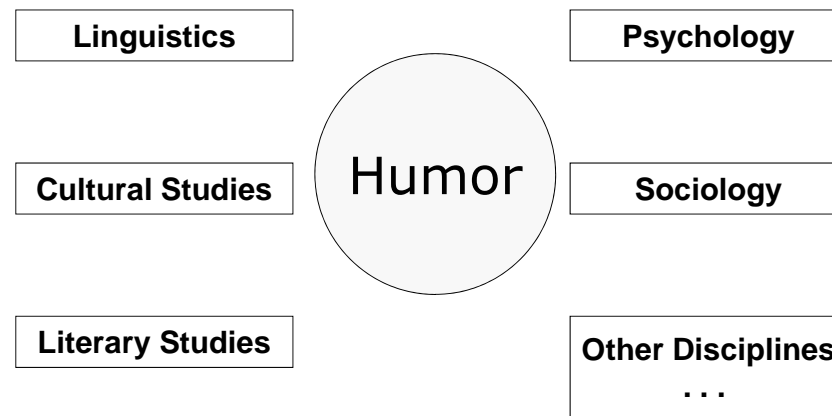
- Openmindedness
- Seeing oneself objectively
- Patience
- Tolerance
- Graciousness
- Courage

Mark Twain and the Complexities of American Humor

Lecture given at the
ISHS Humour Summer School
Tartu, Estonia
August 2011

Holger Kersten
Professor for American Literature and Culture
English Department
Magdeburg University, German

The Study of "Humor" in the Context of Literary Studies



The Study of Literature Approaches, Methods, Techniques

- Matters of Genre
 - Fiction / Nonfiction
 - Prose (Novels, Short Fiction)
 - Drama (Comedy, Farce, Burlesque)
 - Poetry
 - Historical Contexts
 - Formalist Approaches
 - "Close Reading"
 - Terminology (comedy, irony, satire, parody, etc.)
-

The Study of Literature Approaches, Methods, Techniques

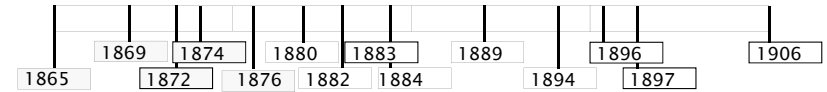
- **The tradition of humor in literature:**
 - Writers and texts from the classics to the modern contemporary period
 - **Specific cultural traditions for the perception and appreciation of humor:**
 - Cultures may differ in what they identify and appreciate as humor (value systems: "sophisticated" vs. "popular" humor)
 - Humor perception may differ and changes across different time spans
-

Contexts for Mark Twain's Humor

- Humor in English literature
- "American" humor
 - ❖ A "classic" writer: Washington Irving
 - ❖ Early 19th century American humor
 - Southwestern humor
 - Down East humor
 - Literary Comedians

Survey: Mark Twain's Literary Career

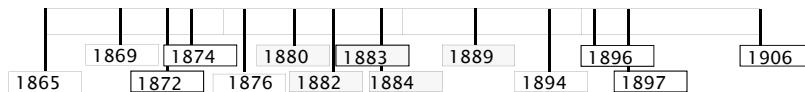
(1865 – 1906)



- ❖❖ "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" (1865)
- ❖❖ *The Innocents Abroad* (travel book, 1869)
- ❖❖ *Roughing It* (travel book, 1872)
- ❖❖ *The Gilded Age* (novel, 1874)
- ❖❖ *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (novel, 1876)

Survey: Mark Twain's Literary Career

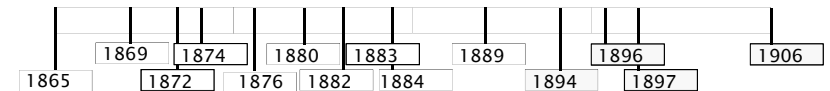
(1865 – 1906)



- ❖ *A Tramp Abroad* (travel book, 1880)
- ❖ *The Prince and the Pauper* (novel, 1882)
- ❖ *Life on the Mississippi* (travel book, 1883)
- ❖ *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (novel, 1884)
- ❖ *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (novel, 1889)

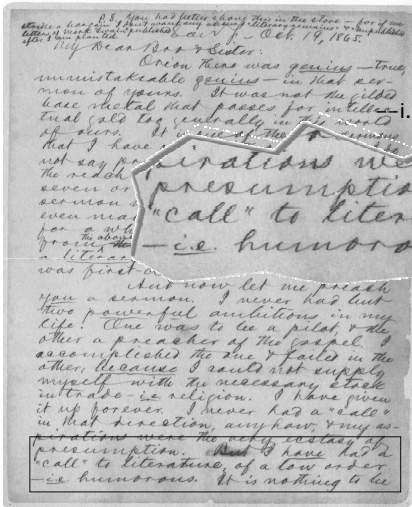
Survey: Mark Twain's Literary Career

(1865 – 1906)



- ❖ *The Tragedy of Puddin'head Wilson* (1894)
- ❖ *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896)
- ❖ *Following the Equator* (1897)
- ❖ *Eve's Diary* (1906)
- ❖ *What Is Man?* (1906)

Twain's decision to become a "humorist"



Letter to Orion and Mollie Clemens,
San Francisco, 19 and 20 Oct. 1865

... But I *have* had a
"call" to literature, of a low order
-i.e. humorous. It is nothing to be [proud of . . .]

*... inspirations were no very ecstatic
presumption. But I have had a
"call" to literature, of a low order
-i.e. humorous. It is nothing to be*

You see in me a talent for humorous writing,
& urge me to cultivate it . . . It is only now,
when editors of standard literary papers in
the distant east give me high praise, & who
do not know me & cannot of course be
blinded by the glamour of partiality, that I
really begin to believe there must be
something in it.

Twain's First Nationwide Success

"Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"

- Setting: California gold regions
- Complex frame narrative
 - I-narrator
 - Simon Wheeler (vernacular narrator)
 - Jim Smiley (a character in Wheeler's story)
 - A stranger
- "Local color" writing
- Vernacular language (dialect)
- Tall Tale / Deadpan Manner



From: "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog"

... Simon Wheeler . . . never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the gentle-flowing key to which he tuned the initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm; but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed me plainly that, so far from his imagining that there was any thing ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, . . .

... He ketch'd a frog one day, and took him home, and said he cal'klated to edercate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. . . . Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do most any thing and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor, Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog, and sing out, "Flies, Dan'l, flies!" and quicker'n you could wink, he'd spring straight up, and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor again as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straightforward as he was, for all he was so gifted. . . .



The Technique of

"The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"

From: Mark Twain, "How to Tell a Story" (1895)

The humorous story may be spun out to great length, and may wander around as much as it pleases, and arrive nowhere in particular . . .

The humorous story is strictly a work of art--high and delicate art--and only an artist can tell it; . . .

The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it; . . .



The Innocents Abroad (1869)

PREFACE

This book is a record of a pleasure trip. . . . Yet notwithstanding it is only a record of a picnic, it has a purpose, which is to suggest to the reader how he would be likely to see Europe and the East if he looked at them with his own eyes instead of the eyes of those who traveled in those countries before him. I make small pretense of showing anyone how he ought to look at objects of interest beyond the sea – other books do that, and therefore, even if I were competent to do it, there is no need. . . .



RETURN IN WAR-PAINT.

From *The Innocents Abroad*

He took us to the municipal palace. After much impressive fumbling of keys and opening of locks, the stained and aged document was spread before us. The guide's eyes sparkled. He danced about us and tapped the parchment with his finger:

"What I tell you, gentlemen! Is it not so? See! handwriting Christopher Colombo!--write it himself!"

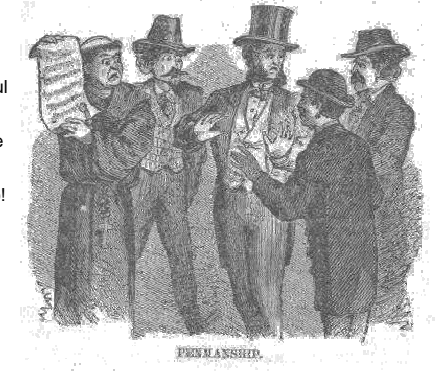
We looked indifferent--unconcerned. The doctor examined the document very deliberately, during a painful pause. --Then he said, without any show of interest:

"Ah--Ferguson--what--what did you say was the name of the party who wrote this?"

"Christopher Colombo! ze great Christopher Colombo! . . . He write it himself!--Christopher Colombo! He's own hand-writing, write by himself!"

Then the doctor laid the document down and said:

"Why, I have seen boys in America only fourteen years old that could write better than that."



FROM *THE INNOCENTS ABROAD*.

The Humor of *The Innocents Abroad*

- Travel narrative
- Tradition of American travelogues about Europe
- Subscription books

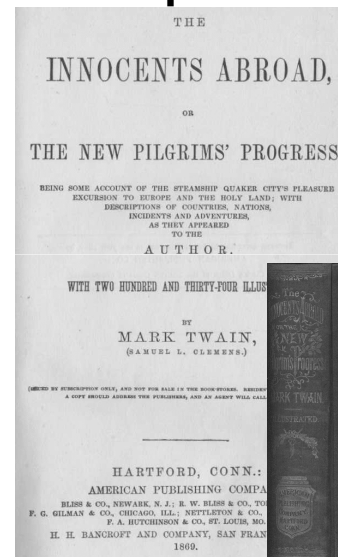
From a review:

It is so different from any narrative of travel that was ever written before. The mere tickle of an ever pervading humor is not all that makes it delightful, but that humor is like an atmosphere, in which the old world scenes that so many tourists and travelers have led us into, take on a new and altogether novel appearance, . . .

It would be a great mistake to suppose that the book is just a big package of Mark Twain's jokes, to be read with laughter, and for the sake of laughter. It is the panorama of Europe and the Holy Land as they were seen by one who went abroad with no illusions; who carried with him a shrewd pair of American eyes and used them to get his own impressions of things, as they actually presented themselves, not as he had been taught to expect them; . . .

Buffalo Express, 16 Oct 1869

Responses to *The Innocents Abroad*



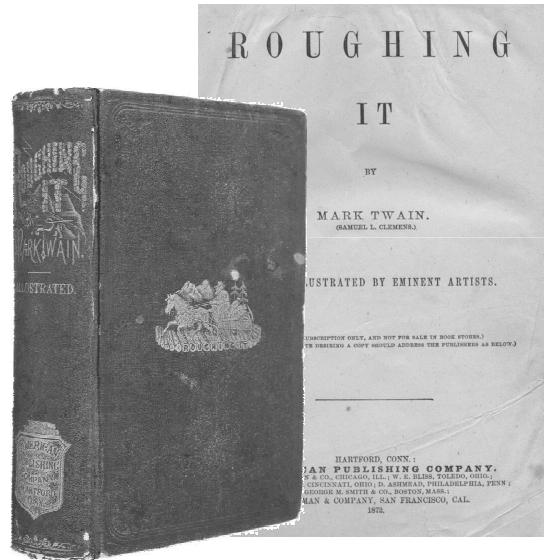
Out in California they don't care much for tradition, [. . .] They are wanting in reverence and a good many others of the undoubted virtues. Mark Twain is a true Californian, with the original, quaint, and not always refined humor of the Pacific; a very shrewd observer, not by any means unpoetical, but yet delighting to take the traditional poetry out of things.

Hartford Courant (31 Jul 1869)

The Nation, 2 Sep 1869:

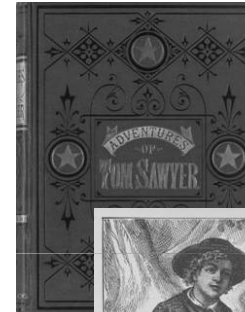
- "American humor."
- "audacity," "extravagance," and "exaggeration" as typical ingredients
- "our peculiar school of humorists"

Roughing It (1872)



- "certainly grotesque, and hardly extravagant"
 - "genuine and thoroughly enjoyable"
 - humor showed a "spontaneity and naturalness," "an underlying element of sturdy honesty and rugged sense" which was "antagonistic to sentimentality and shams"
 - "keen insight and shrewd observation."
 - "there is nothing classic, bookish, or conventional"
 - "his genius is characterized by the breadth, ruggedness, and audacity of the West"
- Overland Monthly*, June 1872

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876)



"[Mark Twain's] humor has that eclectic quality that makes itself appreciated alike by the tutored and untutored, by the refined and the coarse natured [sic]; for it appeals to the instinctive love of the ludicrous and the exaggerated which dwells in human souls."

The San Francisco Evening Bulletin (20 Jan 1877)

"There is little of the humor in this book which abounds so plenteously in Mark Twain's other writings."

Hartford Evening News,
6 Jan 1877



"AIN'T THAT WORK?"

A Tramp Abroad (1880)

"The Awful German Language"

- Some German words are so long that they have a perspective.
- These things are not words, they are alphabetical processions.



A COMPLETE WORD.

Life on the Mississippi (1883)



"SET HER BACK."

"What is the shape of Walnut Bend?"

He might as well have asked me my grandmother's opinion of protoplasm.

I reflected respectfully, and then said I didn't know it had any particular shape. My gunpowdery chief went off with a bang, of course, and then went on loading and firing until he was out of adjectives.

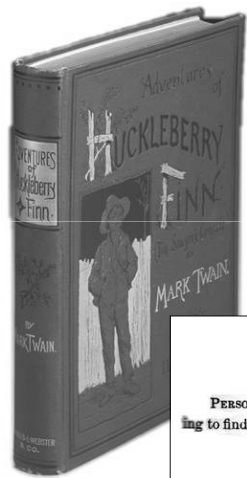
The book "is pervaded by his quaint and irresistible humor."

Hartford Courant, 15 May 1883

"The spirit of fun never flags, but every page of humor is underlaid by some solid truth, often more or less grim."

New Orleans Times-Democrat, 20 May 1883

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885)



NOTICE.

Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.

BY ORDER OF THE AUTHOR

PER G. G., CHIEF OF ORDNANCE.

From: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Huck and Jim Discuss the French Language



From: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Huck and Jim Discuss the French Language (1)

"Why, Huck, doan' de French people talk de same way we does?"

"NO, Jim; you couldn't understand a word they said—not a single word."

"Well, now, I be ding-busted! How do dat come?"

"I don't know; but it's so. I got some of their jabber out of a book. S'pose a man was to come to you and say Polly-vo-oz-franzy—what would you think?"

"I wouldn't think nuff'n; I'd take en bust him over de head—dat is, if he warn't white. I wouldn't 'low no nigger to call me dat."

"Shucks, it ain't calling you anything. It's only saying, do you know how to talk French?"

"Well, den, why couldn't he SAY it?"

"Why, he IS a-saying it. That's a Frenchman's WAY of saying it."

"Well, it's a blame ridiclous way, en I doan' want to hear no mo' 'bout it. Dey ain' no sense in it."

"Looky here, Jim; does a cat talk like we do?"

"No, a cat don't."

"Well, does a cow?"

"No, a cow don't, nuther."

Huck and Jim Discuss the French Language (2)

"Does a cat talk like a cow, or a cow talk like a cat?"

"No, dey don't."

"It's natural and right for 'em to talk different from each other, ain't it?"

"Course."

"And ain't it natural and right for a cat and a cow to talk different from US?"

"Why, mos' sholy it is."

"Well, then, why ain't it natural and right for a FRENCHMAN to talk different from us? You answer me that."

"Is a cat a man, Huck?"

"No."

"Well, den, dey ain't no sense in a cat talkin' like a man. Is a cow a man?—er is a cow a cat?"

"No, she ain't either of them."

"Well, den, she ain't got no business to talk like either one er the yuther of 'em. Is a Frenchman a man?"

"Yes."

"WELL, den! Dad blame it, why doan' he TALK like a man? You answer me DAT!"

I see it warn't no use wasting words—you can't learn a nigger to argue. So I quit.

Reactions to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*



The book was banned by the Concord Public Library:

"gratuitously coarse," "crude," "inartistic," "unnecessarily broad humor," "careless hack-work," "rubbish"

"For some time past Mr. Clemens has been carried away by the ambition of seriousness and fine writing. In *Huckleberry Finn* he returns to his right mind, and is again the Mark Twain of old time."

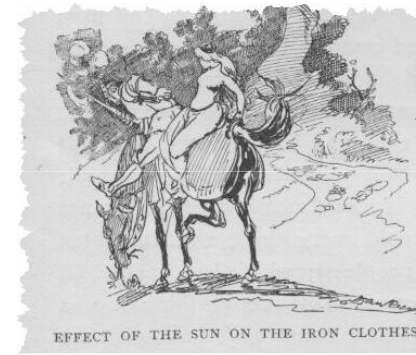
Atheneum (Dec 1884)

"All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called '*Huckleberry Finn*' . . . it's the best book we've had."

Ernest Hemingway (1934)

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889)

[Disadvantages of Wearing a Knight's Armour]



Meantime it was getting hotter and hotter in there. You see the sun was beating down and warming up the iron more and more all the time. Well, when you are hot, that way, every little thing irritates you. . . .

Well, you know, when you perspire that way, in rivers, there comes a time when you—when you—well, when you itch. You are inside, your hands are outside. So there you are; nothing but iron between. It is not a light thing, let it sound as it may. First it is one place; then another; then another and another and another, then some more; and it goes on spreading and spreading, and at last the territory is all occupied, and nobody can imagine what you feel like, nor how unpleasant it is. And when it had got

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889)

to the worst, and it seemed to me that I could not stand anything more, a fly got in through the bars and settled on my nose, and the bars were stuck, and wouldn't work, and I couldn't get the visor up; . . . and the fly—well, you know how a fly acts when he has got a certainty—he . . . change[d] from nose to lip, and lip to ear, and buzz and buzz all around in there, and keen on lighting and biting in a way that a person already so distressed as I was, simply could not stand. So I gave in, and got Alisande to unshin the helmet and relieve me of it. Then she . . . fetched it full of water, and I drank and then stood up and she poured the rest down inside the armor. One cannot think how refreshing it was. She continued to fetch and pour until I was well soaked, and thoroughly comfortable.

From chapter 14



A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889)

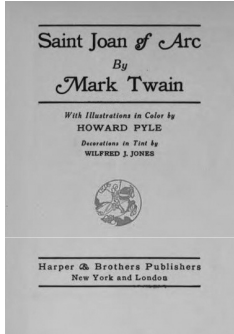


"This kind of humor, the American kind, the kind employed in the service of democracy, of humanity . . ."

"At every moment the scene amuses, but is is all the time an object-lesson in democracy. It makes us glad of our republic and our epoch . . ."

William Dean Howells, *Harper's Monthly* (Jan 1890)

Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc (1896)



"I shall never be accepted seriously over my own signature. People always want to laugh over what I write and are disappointed if they don't find a joke in it."

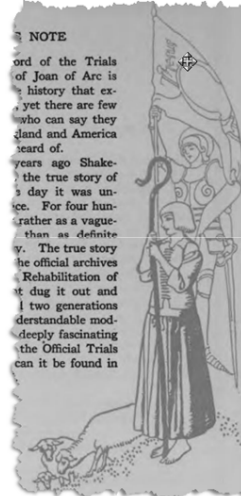
Mark Twain, 1894

An "incursion into sober historical literature"

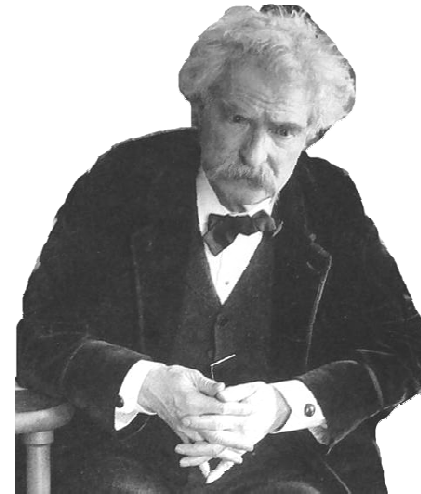
Chicago Tribune 9 May 1896

"Mark Twain as a historical novelist is not at his best"

Brander Mathews, in *Life Magazine*, 28 May 1896



Mark Twain's Political Commentaries



"To the Person Sitting in Darkness"

"The War Prayer"

"The United States of Lyncherdom"

"King Leopold's Soliloquy"

"War Monuments"

Mark Twain's "Dark Writings"

"Facts Concerning the Recent Carnival of Crime"

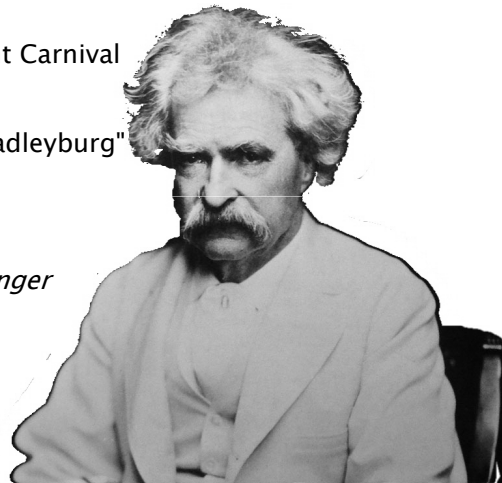
"The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg"

Posthumous publications

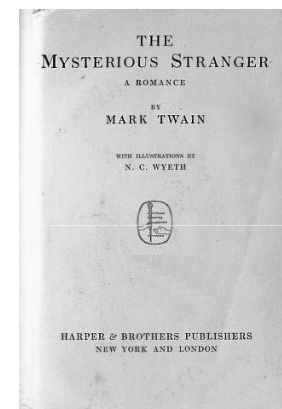
No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger

What is Man?

Letters from the Earth



The Mysterious Stranger (1916)



"Here we have a last word from him we have always called the greatest American humorist, a word that comes to us after the grave has closed over the speaker, a final and conclusive word. It is difficult to imagine a message carrying a grimmer credo of despair, disillusion, and contempt for human existence. It blows upon the spirit like a cold wind over a dark and desolate land, a land where there is never a light, near or far, promising, shelter, and love. . . . And such is the conclusion Mr. Clemens arrives at. The one boon is death. . . ."

New York Times Review of Books, 29 Oct 1916

"The story of the jester who could cure every sad and bitter heart with the nimble fancies of his brain, but who was himself saddest and bitterest of any, is an old one. It has had much corroboration, and now again its truth is proved."

Mark Twain's Late View on Humor (1906)

Humorists of the "mere" sort cannot survive. Humor is only a fragrance, a decoration. [. . .] There are those who say that a novel should be a work of art solely, and you must not preach in it, you must not teach in it. That may be true as regards novels but it is not true as regards humor. Humor must not professedly teach, and

it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live forever. . . . I have always preached. . . . If the humor came of its own accord and uninvited, I have allowed it a place in my sermon, but I was not writing the sermon for the sake of the humor. I should have written the sermon just the same, whether any humor applied for admission or not.

"Humorists" - July 31, 1906



An Evaluation of Mark Twain's Achievement



Brander Matthews,
Professor of Literature,
Columbia University

We have to-day here in the United States as a contemporary a great humorist, who is also one of the masters of English prose. He is one of the foremost story-tellers of the world, with the gift of swift narrative, with the certain grasp of human nature, with a rare power of presenting character at a passionate crisis. There is not in the fiction of our language and of our country anything finer of its kind than anyone of half a dozen chapters in *Tom Sawyer*, in *Huckleberry Finn*, in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

Brander Matthews, "The Penalty of Humor" (1896)

Jokes about particular sets of women: mothers in law (wife's mother), blondes, Jewish women, female car drivers and lesbians.

Christie Davies

Part 1: The Mother in Law joke

EQUALITY killjoys have banned mother-in-law jokes

County Hall humour police reckon the centuries-old putdowns could upset "family elders".

The bizarre ban has been imposed by Barnet Council and there are fears the politically correct madness could spread to other areas.

The London borough's cultural awareness booklet says: "British mother-in-law jokes, as well as offensively sexist in their own right, can also be seen as offensive on the grounds that they disrespect elders or parents."

But comedians say the council must be joking.

Dom Joly, 41, said: "All comedy is basically about taking the p*** out of someone."

Writer John Sessions, 57, said: "Whoever came up with this has clearly had a sense of humour bypass."

Fans of mother-in-law jokes have included legends Bob Monkhouse and Les Dawson.

FIVE CRACKERS

Bob Monkhouse: "My wife said: 'Bob, can my mother come down for the weekend?' So I said: 'Well, she's been up on the roof two weeks already.' "

Bernard Manning: "I'll never forget the day I took my mother-in-law to the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussauds. Suddenly one of the attendants whispered to me: 'Please keep moving, we are trying to do a stock take.' "

Peter Kay: "I saw six men kicking and punching the mother-in-law. My neighbours said 'aren't you going to help?' I said 'no, six should be enough.' "

Les Dawson: "My mother-in-law said: One day I'll dance on your grave'. I said 'I hope you do, I'm being buried at sea.' "

Report in the Daily Star a British newspaper with a working class readership

Questions:

- 1 Why was there so much excitement about a mere joke?**
- 2 Why did the controversy result in a conflict between social classes?**
- 3 Why is the joke so very popular in Europe and North America? Why do 'alternative' comedians refuse to tell them? How do class differences fit in here?.**
- 4 Why are the jokes always about the wife's mother and not about the husband's mother? Even though family tensions between wife and husband's mother are greater and the subject of study by psychologists.**
- 5 Why are there so few jokes told by adult men about their own mothers except in the case of the 'Jewish mother jokes**
- 6 Why in India are there so many comic songs, proverbs and soap operas about the wife's mother but no jokes? How do Indian family structures differ from those in Europe?**

Part 2: Jokes about women drivers

Policeman: I've had my eye on you for some time now.

Young Lady: That's funny. I thought you were arresting me for speeding.

We bumped into some old friends yesterday, my wife was driving.

My wife is a careful driver, she always slows down when going through a red light.

Nothing confuses a man more than a woman driver who does everything right.

My wife wanted a foreign convertible, so I bought her a rickshaw.

A traffic policeman stops a woman and asks to see her driving licence.

'Lady, it says here that you should be wearing glasses when driving.'

'Well,' replies the woman, 'I have contacts.'

'Lady, I don't care who you know, your still going to get a ticket.'

Wife: "There's trouble with the car. It has water in the carburetor."

Husband: "Water in the carburetor? That's ridiculous."

Wife: "I tell you the car has water in the carburetor."

Husband: "You don't even know what a carburetor is. Where's the car?"

Wife: "In the swimming pool."

Policeman: 'When I saw you coming round that bend I thought, "Forty-five at least".'

Woman motorist: 'Well, I always look older in this hat.'

My wife had a nasty accident with the car this morning. She backed it out of the garage, completely forgetting that the night before, she had backed it in.

<http://thejokes.co.uk/jokes-about-women-drivers.php>

<http://uk.cars.yahoo.com/01082011/36/bonnet-motorway-driver-video-0.html>

Questions:

1 Why are there no jokes about men drivers.....or are there?

2 Why until the European Union equality police intervened did women in Britain get cheaper car insurance than men?

Young women face paying an extra £1,000 a year for car insurance following a European Court of Justice decision next month, insurers are warning.

The court is expected to rule that calculating car insurance based on gender is unlawful.

Young women will be hit hardest by the ruling they currently get cheaper deals than men of the same age, because they are considered a 'safer risk'.

Typically, a woman aged 17-22 currently pays just £1,682 a year in motor insurance, compared to a young man who pays an average £2,750.

Figures show that young men are twice as likely to make a car insurance claim and 10 times more likely to be in a crash involving serious injury than young women.

Young men are also 25 times more likely to commit a traffic offence within their first three years of driving.

The AA said that although the anticipated ruling would result in young men's premiums dropping slightly, the key effect would be a near doubling for young women's premiums.

Simon Douglas, director of AA Insurance, said: "This will be particularly bad news for young women who are proven to present a much lower risk to insurers and at present, pay premiums that are up to 50 per cent cheaper than their male peers. I expect premiums to increase substantially for them, while they will probably fall a little for young men.

According to the company, the use of gender in calculating insurance risk has been a 'thorn in the EC's side' for many years.

The AA believes that the current use of gender for determining premiums is technically illegal, although the UK has enjoyed derogation based on evidence of the its risk-based approach to insurance.

"My fear is that the European Court of Justice will no longer tolerate such exceptions and the UK will have to toe the European line," said Mr Douglas (Xetra: [609900](#) - [news](#)) .

Added an AA insurance expert: "Insurers may look to use other risk factors as a proxy for gender - for instance occupation or vehicle type - but it isn't clear to what extent this will be permitted if it constitutes a form of indirect discrimination."

Older drivers have less to fear from the announcement, as the gender difference in insurance premiums narrow with age. All motorists are likely to be affected by the ruling to some extent however.

Insurers warn that if they are not allowed to use such an important risk factor as gender, there will be an increased risk that premiums will not cover claims costs.

Part 3: Jokes about blondes and Essex Girls

A blonde was buying a new car. She got in and said to the salesman: "There is something wrong with the mirror - I cannot see myself at all - just some cars

A dumb blonde was really tired of being made fun of, so she decided to have her hair she would look like a brunette. When she had brown hair, she decided to take a drive in the country. After she had been driving for a while, she saw a farmer and a flock of sheep and thought, "Oh! Those sheep are so adorable!" She got out and walked over to the farmer and said, "If I can guess how many sheep you have, can I take one home?" The farmer, being a bit of a gambler himself, said she could have a try. The blonde looked at the flock and guessed, "157." The farmer was amazed - she was right! So the blonde, (who looked like a brunette), picked one out and got back into her car. Before she left, farmer walked up to her and said, "If I can guess the real color of your hair, can I have my dog back?"

An Essex Girl and an Irishman were in a pub, when she noticed that he had 'L' and 'R' marked on his wellies. " 'ere", she asked him, "why 'ave yer got 'L' and 'R' written on yer wellies like that?" " Well yer see", he replied, "being Irish I'm a bit on the t'ick (thick, stupid, twp) aide, so I need to be reminded which welly is for my left foot and which is for my roight foot." "Ow!" said the Essex girl, "that must be why it says C and A in my knickers."

And compare with

A peasant is riding on his donkey when suddenly a Ferrari goes past at great speed. Later the farmer sees it standing at the side of the road and asks the driver. "How come your car can go so fast?" The driver tells the ignorant peasant "It is because it is painted blue and green." The next day the farmer goes into town and buys two cans of paint, one blue and one green and throws the whole of the blue can over the animal. The animal hates the feel of the paint so much it bolts away up the road. The peasant looks on in amazement as the animal disappears and says "And that's even before I added the green color."

Butler: That beggar is at the door again? He claims to be a relative of yours. Hrabia (count): He must be some kind of idiot! Butler: I agree my lord but that hardly disproves his claim.

Posh Spice takes her car to a mechanic to have some dents taken out. The mechanic knows she isn't very so he decides to wind her up. He tells her "You don't need me to take out the the dents, Just put your mouth to the exhaust blow up it very hard and everything will pop back into place." She takes the car home and starts blowing. Beckham sees her from the living room and shouts loudly: "You stupid cow! You must wind the windows up first!"

Questions

1 Why are the jokes told about blondes and not women with different hair colours?

2 What is the gender of the persons in other types of stupidity jokes?

Decked out in pink, hundreds of blondes marched through the streets of the Latvian capital Riga Saturday in a rally started to lift the Baltic state's spirits.

"We have more than 500 participants registered, including a 15-member team from New Zealand, seven ladies from Finland and Italy and 32 from Lithuania," said Marika Gederte, head of the Latvian Association of Blondes.

The brainchild of like-minded local blondes, the parade began in 2009

Dubbed the "Go Blonde Festival", the rally has snowballed to include side events such as a Marilyn Monroe lookalike contest, a concert by blonde divas, and a pink fashion and accessories show.

Money collected during the event is donated to local charities.

Part 4: Jewish Jokes about Women

Did you hear about the new Jewish American Princess porno film?

-It's called Debbie Does Nothing.

What's the difference between a Jewish American Princess and an Italian American Princess?

-With the Italian American Princess, the jewels are fake, and the orgasms are real

A young Jewish man excitedly tells his mother he's fallen in love and that he is going to get married. He says, "Just for fun, Ma, I'm going to bring over three women and you try and guess which one I'm going to marry." The mother agrees. The next day, he brings three beautiful women into the house and sits them down on the couch and they chat for a while. He then says, "Okay, Ma, guess which one I'm going to marry." She immediately replies, "The one on the right." "That's amazing, Ma. You're right. How did you know?" The Jewish mother replies, "I don't like her."

This guy walks into a bar, and sits down at the bar. There's a really good-looking girl alone at the end of the bar. He catches her eye, and smiles at her. She gives him an icy stare in return. A little

while later he tries again, and is rebuked. He calls the bartender over. "Listen, I'd really like to meet that girl, can you help me?" "Sure," says the bartender, "have you ever heard of Jewish Fly." "No, is it like Spanish Fly," replies the man. "Much better than that," says the bartender. He mixes the girl a drink, (with the Jewish fly of course) and gives it to her. A little later she smiles at the man. After a few more minutes she begins to lick her lips suggestively. The man walks over, sits down and says, "May I get you another drink?" "No," she says in a deep sexy voice, "but you can take me shopping."

Questions

1 Why are these jokes told only about Jewish women?

2 Why do only Jews invent them?

3 Why do they not get switched to other women?

4 Why are there no jokes about Jewish men getting drunk or into fights ?

A drunk Russian guy walks up to a Jewish guy and says to him, 'why are all you dirty Jews so rich and yet so mean?' To which the Jewish guy replies, 'I am not a rich man and none of my Jewish friends are rich either' Feeling angered at the Russian guys question the Jewish guy then asks ' why are all Russian girls called Natasha and work as prostitutes?' To which the Russian guy replies in shocked anger, 'it's not fair to say that. My grand mother's name is Svetlana and she no longer works as a prostitute!

Part 5: Lesbian Jokes

http://lesbianlife.about.com/od/just4fun/Lesbian_Jokes_and_Fun.htm

A man is sitting at a bar and sees two lovely women across the room. He calls the bartender over and says, "I'd like to buy those two ladies a drink." The bartender replies, "It won't do you any good." The man says, "It doesn't matter, I want to buy those women a drink." The bartender brings the drinks to the women and they acknowledge the drink with a nod of their heads. A little while later, the man approaches the women and says, "I'd like to buy you two another drink." The women both reply, "It won't do you any good." The man says, "I don't understand. What do you mean it won't do me any good?" The first lady says, "We're lesbians." The man says, "Lesbians? What are lesbians?" The second woman replies, "Lesbians... We like to lick vaginas." The man says, "Bartender, three beers for us lesbians."

Two Lipstick Lesbians are on a plane when the engines start to fail. One of them runs back to the lavatory and opens the door and asks her partner inside if she shaved today. She says, "Yes, why?" "Whew, that's good! The flight attendant told me to run back and get you cause we'll be going down in less than two minutes."

What does a lesbian bring on the second date?

A U-haul.

A lesbian walks into a sex toy store and asks where the vibrators are. "Come this way," the cute woman behind the counter says, gesturing with her finger. "If I could come that way, I wouldn't need the vibrator, would I?" the woman responds

What is the difference between a butch lesbian and an elephant? About twenty kilos and the dungarees.

Questions

1 Why do these jokes figure prominently on a lesbian web-site? Where do they get them from?

2 Why are there far more jokes about gay men than about lesbians in general circulation?

AN AFTERTHOUGHT

Jokes about dim men

Military intelligence: an oxymoron

We can see the opposition between the mental and the material in George Orwell's [1982 (1941), 61] two "symbolic opposites - the half-pay colonel with his bull neck and diminutive brain like a dinosaur, the highbrow with his domed forehead and stalk-like neck." Orwell had in mind the comic and very British Colonel Blimp, invented in the 1930s by the Anglo-New Zealand cartoonist David Low [1956, 265-275] as a symbol of the stupidity of the traditional military mind. The Blimp cartoons ran for many years and the words blimp and blimpish entered British English to describe those like him and their qualities. Low [1956, 265] claimed that his character Colonel Blimp, a military airhead built like a dirigible, was based on direct observation of "chaps of a military bearing" talking in a Turkish bath; Low was further inspired when he read a letter in the press by "some colonel or other ...to protest against the mechanization of cavalry and insisting that even if horses had to go, the uniform and trappings must remain inviolate and troops must continue to wear their spurs in their tanks." The British had been the first to develop the tank and in 1916 to use it in battle but, according to Low, the Blimps disliked sophisticated machinery that required brains and wanted the physicality of a good old fashioned cavalry charge with much use of knightly spurs. The horse is a common symbol of faithful stupidity as are those who ride it. For Low the Blimps, together with their civilian adherents, stood for an entire British class, one trapped in military tradition and enthusiasts for the use of instant force to resolve all disputes of any kind. Here again it is a case of the powerful being mocked as stupid. It is the nature of the power being exercised or which could be exercised that determines jokes about a target not the mere possession of power as such. If that power is based on force or physicality then it leads to stupidity jokes.

We can see this again in the jokes about dim military men that were told by Soviet students doing compulsorily military courses at the university about their instructors, men brought in from the regular army :

Instructor: "Suppose we have a unit of M tanks... no, M is not enough. Suppose we have a unit of N tanks!"

Instructor: "Cadets, write down: the temperature of boiling water is 90°." One of the privates replies, "Comrade *praporshchik*, (warrant-officer) you're mistaken - it's 100°!" The officer checks in the book, and then replies, "Right, 100°. It is the right angle that boils at 90°."

A missile silo officer falls asleep during his watch, with his face on the control board and the "red button". As the colonel comes in, the officer snaps up and proudly reports: "Nothing to report during my watch, comrade Colonel!". "Nothing to report, you say? Nothing to report?! *Then where the hell is Belgium?!"*

From Italy

Carabiniere al maneggio: Carabiniere at the stable

- Buongiorno, vorrei un cavallo. Good morning I want a horse
- Da montare? To ride/ or to be assembled from a building kit?
- No no, già pronto...No No , ready to go

Two Carabinieri on horseback are patrolling through the Villa Borghese and telling stories about Carabinieri heroes of the past .The first one begins : "One day Salvo D'Aquisto was riding a horse – oh, between 1930 and 1940". The other replies: "Good God! The horse must have been tired".

Stupid Athletes

The central theme of many of the jokes cited above is that a person with merely physical skills is stupid. Sometimes there is a military or a political dimension to such jokes involving power based on force but this is not necessary for there are also many jokes about stupid athletes or sportspersons, as in the jokes below that were told about David Beckham, known as Becks, a soccer celebrity in England, Spain, Italy and the United States. Blake Morrison [2009] has written about Beckham, "Intelligence? His shortness up top is legendary and nothing to do with close-cropped hair" but it does not really matter whether he is stupid or not. The stupidity jokes are not really about him but about all football players and indeed sports players in general. Some sports stars are intelligent but what matters is that they do not need be. They merely need to have certain highly specific physical aptitudes, that can make them very rich, but which have no real use outside that sport.

The Real Madrid players are in the dressing room on Saturday, just before the game, when Zidane walks in. "Boss," he says, "there's a problem. I'm not playing unless I get a cortisone injection." "Hey," says Becks. "If he's having a new car, so am I."

<http://www.wanguogunxing.com/cms4/modules.php?name=NukeJokes&func=JokeView&jokeid=31>

Accessed 20 Jan 2010 [See also Enodreven 2005]

David Beckham goes shopping, and sees something interesting in the kitchen department of a large department store. "What's that?" he asks. "A Thermos flask," replies the assistant. "What does it do?" asks Becks. The assistant tells him it keeps hot things hot and cold things cold. Really impressed, Beckham buys one and takes it along to his next training session. "Here, boys, look at this," Beckham says proudly. "It's a Thermos flask." The lads are impressed. "What does it do?" they ask. "It keeps hot things hot and cold things cold," says David. "And what have you got in it?" ask the lads. "Two cups of coffee and a Choc ice," replies David. [Enodreven 2005]

Beckham's statements in real life may have something in common with the fictitious ones in the jokes and the comments of dim athletes generally have been collected and published by Barry Fantoni [1982-2008]

As with the jokes about the marines, jokes about athletes can take in the Texas Aggies

The star football player for the Aggies was failing his math class at the semester and had to pass his exam in order to play in the game that weekend at Kyle Field. The professor and the school board get together and decide to ask him one question at halftime of the game. If the Aggie answers the question correctly, he passes and can play. However, if he answers incorrectly he fails the course and is ineligible. Well the game finally rolls around and everyone is anxious about the question. At halftime the player and his professor go to the center of the field and over the loudspeaker the professor asks the question "What is two plus two?" The Aggie thinks and thinks, finally he asks the professor if he can use a calculator. The professor says "No, your time is up". In desperation the Aggie shouts into the microphone "Four!"

With that Kyle Field erupts into the chant of "Give him another chance, give him another chance!"

Blondes

The Men's Stupid Female Counterpart – the Blonde

Jokes about blondes and sex have long existed but in the great wave of blonde jokes of the late twentieth century most of the jokes were about the blonde's stupidity. Over a half of Elliott Oring's [2003, 62] sample of blonde jokes from the internet were about stupidity compared with under a third about promiscuity. Nonetheless her promiscuity is the key to her stupidity. The blonde's mindless sexual body corresponds to the mindless tough body of the warrior or athlete. Her unthinking use of it in bed or in the back of a car is categorized in humor along with the unthinking risks men take with their bodies when fighting and both are the bases of jokes about comic stupidity. Both of them lack calculativeness. Both adhere unthinkingly to stereotypical sex roles, to tough masculinity and to the uses of feminine allure respectively. The blonde joke fits very well the opposition between body and mind; between mental and material that characterizes all the other stupidity jokes. It has already been shown that blondes are sexually attractive and that this leads to jokes about their being sexually available. The jokes about blonde stupidity evolved out of the earlier sex jokes. Jokes about blondes and sex were common long before the huge cycle of blonde jokes of the late twentieth century. The blondes in these earlier jokes are not usually

depicted as particularly stupid. The potential for stupidity jokes was already there, based on the contrast between sex as an unthinking urge, an expression of the instinctual, on the one hand and the possession and use of a thoughtful and calculative intelligence on the other but the great wave of jokes about stupid blondes like those below, really only began at the beginning of the 1990s [Oring, 2003, 59].

Which third grader has the best body, the blonde, brunette or redhead?

The blonde, she is eighteen. [Oring 2003, 60]

What do you call it when a blonde dies her hair black?

Artificial intelligence [Oring 2003, 60]

The jokes began in America but they very rapidly spread to other countries such as Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland and even Brazil, where the dumb blondes of the jokes are known as *louras burras* (blonde she-mules). These jokes are not merely imported ones but include new local inventions that depend on local knowledge and on forms of word-play only possible in the local language.

A blonde is trying to pass history at school. "Can you tell us what the first capital of Poland was?" After thinking long and many hints from the examiners, she finally comes up with Gniezno and receives a C. When she leaves the other girls keep pestering her: what do they ask about? The blonde tells the question and the other blonde writes the answer down on a piece of paper and puts it into her shoe. Her turn comes and after a long time of sweating before the examiners, the question about the first capital of Poland comes up again. Happy, she reaches for her shoe, takes out the paper and smiling reads out with confidence: Radom Shoe Factory. [Sent to the author by a humor scholar from Kraków Poland 2008]

A brunette meets a blonde girl and asks her: Have you heard of this rail disaster at Skierniewice? No, what happened? A train was derailed and 100 people are injured. One hundred? One hundred? ... That's a million before redenomination. [Sent to the author by humor scholar from Kraków Poland 2008]

Due to cumulative hidden inflation followed by hyperinflation the Polish zloty was denominated in millions. The currency had to undergo redenomination and on January 1, 1995, 10 000 old Polish złotych became one new Polish zloty.

A blonde bought herself a new car. She gets in and says: "The mirrors must be wrongly adjusted – I cannot see myself, just some cars." [sent to the author by a humor scholar from Kraków Poland 2008]

A friend is taking a blonde to the cinema. Above the entrance there is an illuminated advertisement which proclaims:
Two hours of excitement! Two hours of thrill! Two hours of relaxation! Two hours of real entertainment! The blonde says: "Are you crazy? Why have you brought me here? Do you think

that I am going to sit 8 hours in the cinema!" [Sent to the author by a humor scholar from Hungary 2008]

Elliott Oring [2003, 69] has explained the timing of the blonde joke cycle in terms of the cumulative expansion of the numbers of women occupying responsible positions in the workplace that required the steady exercise of intelligence. The flaunting of sexual attractiveness or the seeking of easy sexual relations with male colleagues does not fit with this. Blondes may 'have more fun' but there is an antithesis between fun and work, particularly when it is the kind of fun conventionally associated with blondes. Oring backs up his argument by reference to earlier, university based, stupidity jokes which mocked female students seen as having gone to college not to work or to prepare for work but to find sexual partners. The blonde of the jokes is just a 'placeholder' in jokes that employ a playful manipulation of moral values in response to a contemporary situation. The blonde is a symbol of the inept, the sexual, the easy, and the easy route to approbation [Oring, 2003, 65]. The previous tradition of jokes about sexy blondes set her up for this.

Oring is right to stress work and the workplace as the key factor, for this is the area where intelligence is most valued and stupidity most deplored and in consequence ludicrous. This is why so many stupidity jokes are attached to particular professions, occupations and social classes. Historically these stupidity jokes were nearly all about men. The few jokes about stupid women were given a family or domestic setting and the only occupation about which female stupidity jokes were told was that of the domestic servant, who was also often shown as in search of a man or as having sex with the men of the house. Ethnic jokes about stupid, though loyal and amiable, male Irish domestic servants had already begun to appear in Britain by the reign of Charles II in the late seventeenth century and ethnic jokes about 'Bridget' the simple Irish maid servant were common in nineteenth century America as well as Britain . There were many American ethnic jokes about other immigrant such as Swedes, Poles and Finns, all quite unused to the sophisticated American household.

By the 1920s there were many more women working in responsible jobs outside the home that required the exercise of independence and intelligence and it is at this time that their comic antithesis, the dumb blonde first emerged. Far from being a joke about the stupidity of women in general, it is an acknowledgement that the new world of work requires intelligent rather than merely decorative women. The dumb blonde is a comic misfit and anachronism, who can only succeed by using her physical attractiveness and that alone to manipulate men. The classic dumb blonde was Lorelei Lee, invented by Anita Loos [1925] for her humorous novel *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. The heroine, the blonde Lorelei, is attractive enough to have been acquitted of a murder, of which was guilty, by an all-male jury in Little Rock, Arkansas. She is seriously deficient in understanding. She tells the reader that an Englishman has sent a friend of hers books "by a gentleman called Mr. Conrad. They all seem to be about ocean travel" [Loos, 1925, 20]. She asks her rather more literate black maid to read *Lord Jim* for her but manages to give her *The Nigger of the Narcissus* by mistake [Loos, 1925, 28-29]. Lorelei's is not just chance ignorance. She is a siren as thick as the rock after which she is named. That her schemes pay off says much about the sheer irrational force of sexual attraction; she is not only stupid but a generator of utterly stupid behavior in her entranced followers. Anita Loos [1977, 73-4] records in her memoirs that she had the idea for the book on a long train journey from New York to Hollywood, when all the men who were with her drooled over a "Broadway cutie" who was "a quite unnatural blonde. Concerning our mental acumen there was nothing to discuss; I was the smarter. But why did she so far outdistance me in

feminine allure? Could her power like that of Sampson have something to do with her hair?" Loos writes also of "another stupid creature (who)...had bedazzled one of America's foremost intellectuals, H. L. Mencken. I sometimes caused Menck to laugh but in the matter of sentiment he preferred the witless blonde" [Loos 1977, 73-4]. Mencken could see the humor in the situation, for he much enjoyed her story and encouraged Loos to publish it [Bode, 1969, 161]]. Her book became a best seller and gave rise to several films and a musical. The humor Loos created out of her experience of a modern cultural conflict is an ancestor of the later joke cycle about dumb blondes.

It has been suggested that the image of the dim blonde is taken seriously and could affect how people behave in the real world [Bry et. al. 2008]. In Hungary in November 2004, blonde women held an angry protest outside the Parliament building in Budapest, claiming they were being discriminated against in the workplace and the job-market. "Blondes - real and bleached - waved banners outside the ministry with slogans saying 'We're blonde not stupid' and 'Love us for our minds' [*Blonde discrimination is no joke* 2004]. The demonstrators from Hungary's 'Blonde Women's Movement' also attacked a bar called Blondy with eggs and cakes and urged the blonde barmaids working there to go on strike. Al-Nasser a subscriber to the Muslim discussion forum Ummah which also reported the incident in 2004 commented "now this protest is the ultimate proof...how stupid! and will be the subject of the new wave of blond jokes". Another subscriber responded with:

Blond gets caught speeding, the cop is also a blond; Cop: "Let me see your driver's license."
Driver: What's that?" Cop: "A square thing with your picture on it." Blond: fumbles thru her purse, finds a mirror, sees herself in it and hands it to the cop. Cop: looks at it then hands it "I'm gonna let you go without a ticket, I didn't know you were a cop." [*Hungary to ban blonde jokes?* 2004]

What is curious is that for most blondes, including many of the protesters, blondeness is chosen. If blondeness truly were to carry with it the heavy social penalty of being thought stupid and treated accordingly, why is it chosen to the point where artificial blondes outnumber real ones by ten to one. It is easy to see why, in societies obsessed with youth, so many should wish to avoid discrimination against the gray-haired but why choose blonde when many other youthful but 'intelligent' hair colors are on offer. Even the woman who is naturally blonde can easily and cheaply dissolve her follicles of gold in henna or coat them with pitch and no-one will ever know. The subjective pay-off to those who choose to 'have more fun', or being thought by others to have more fun, is presumably greater than the negative experience of being considered dim blondes. These choices and dilemmas reinforce the thesis expounded here, namely that there is a tension and an ambiguity in the social order as traditional sex roles fail to mesh with the impersonal and instrumental rationality required by modern occupations, which is what gives rise to the blonde jokes .

More Jokes about sets of women

<http://www.iamstaggered.com/featured/several-thousand-mother-in-law-jokes>

<http://www.jokesaboutblondes.net/>

<http://thejokes.co.uk/jokes-about-women-drivers.php>

<http://www.iewishjokes.net/category/21/0/0/Jewish-Mother>

http://jokes.contentavailable.com/i/Ethnic/Whats_a_Jewish_American_Princess_favorite_position/6825/

<http://www.sickipedia.org/search/1/?q=lesbian>

More Jokes about sets of men

<http://www.hsmx.com/hslife/Jokes/beckham.htm>

<http://thejokes.co.uk/jokes-about-drunks.php>

<http://the-jokes.co.uk/jokes-about-drunks.php>

<http://www.free-funny-jokes.com/funny-military-jokes.html>

http://www.boredstupid.com/boss_jokes/the_foreman.shtml

<http://jokes4all.net/supervisors.html>

<http://www.sickipedia.org/search/1/?q=queer>



What is funny to whom and why?

New findings on humour appreciation and personality



Willibald Ruch
University of Zurich,
Switzerland

11th International Summer School and Symposium on



Humour and Laughter:
Theory, Research and Applications



Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia
15th– 20th August 2011



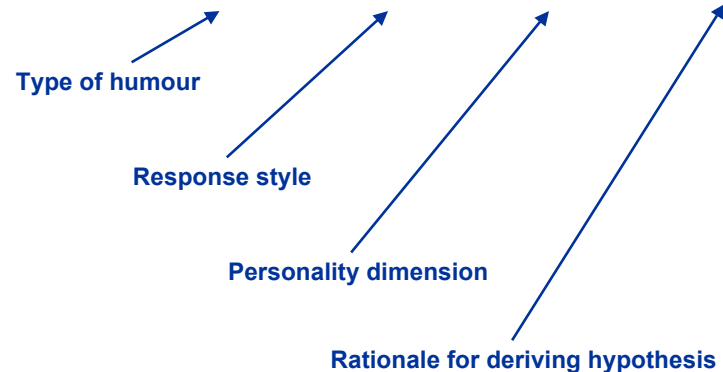
Some reading

- Carretero-Dios, H., & Ruch, W. (2010). Humor appreciation and sensation seeking: Invariance of findings across culture and assessment instrument? *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 23, 427-445.
- Ruch, W. (1992). Assessment of appreciation of humor: Studies with the 3 WD humor test. In C. D. Spielberger, & J. N. Butcher (Eds.), *Advances in Personality Assessment* (Vol. 9, pp. 27-75). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ruch, W., & Hehl, F.-J. (2007). A two-mode model of humor appreciation: Its relation to aesthetic appreciation and simplicity-complexity of personality. In W. Ruch (Ed.), *The sense of humor*: (pp. 109-142). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ruch, W., & Malcherek, J. (2009). Sensation seeking, general aesthetic preferences, and humor appreciation as predictors of liking of the grotesque. *Journal of Literary Theory*, 3, 333-351.
- Savary, N. (2011). *Music, humor and personality*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Zurich, Zurich.

1

Humour appreciation and personality

"What is funny to whom and why?"



3

Types of taxonomy

- Intuitive taxonomies (e.g., blonde jokes; ethnic jokes, sexist jokes)
- Theory-based taxonomies (e.g., Freud's harmless, sexual, aggressive jokes)
- Factor analytic taxonomies
 - humour stimuli (Eysenck, 1942; Ruch, 1992)
 - Jokes, cartoons, limericks, funny fotos
 - responses to humour
 - Ratings of own feeling, stimulus dimensions (Ruch, 1981; Ruch & Rath, 1993; Samson & Ruch, 2005)

4

Complexity of taxonomy

- Unimodal classification (scatological, sexual, aggressive)
- Bimodal classification, e.g.
 - content and structure (Ruch, 1992)
 - joke work vs. tendency (Freud 1905)
 - thematic vs. schematic (Sears 1934)
 - cognitive vs. orectic factors (Eysenck 1942)
 - collative vs. motivational (Berlyne, 1972)
- Multimodal, e.g.
 - Attardo & Raskin (1993) six knowledge resources
 - Do they matter?

5

Two major joke structures

(a) Incongruity-resolution

have punch lines in which the surprising incongruity can be completely resolved.

The common element in this type of humour is, that the recipient first discovers an incongruity which is then fully resolvable upon consideration of information available elsewhere in the joke or cartoon. (see Suls, 1972)

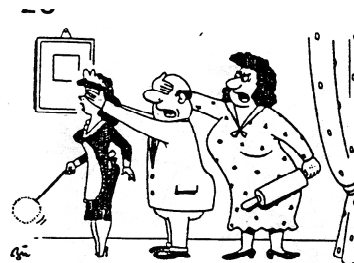
Although individuals might differ with respect to how they perceive and/or resolve the incongruity, they have the sense of having "gotten the point" or understood the joke once resolution information has been identified.

Examples: Incongruity-resolution humour

5



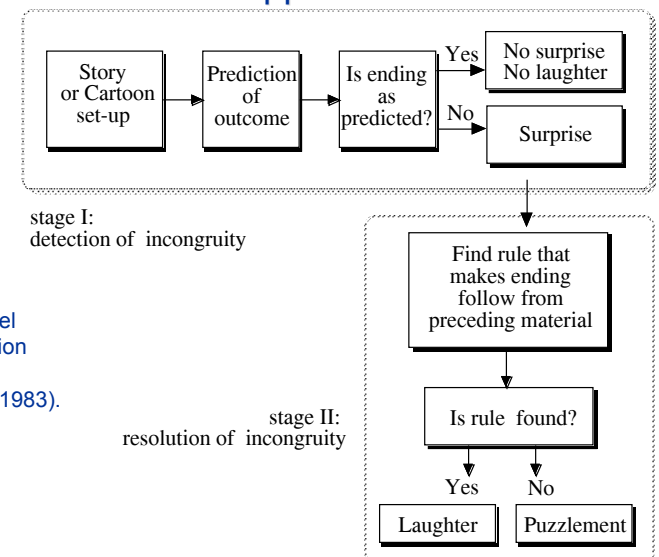
"I don't want to appear authoritarian! But you're going to have to wash your ears again soon."



"And now YOU guess!"

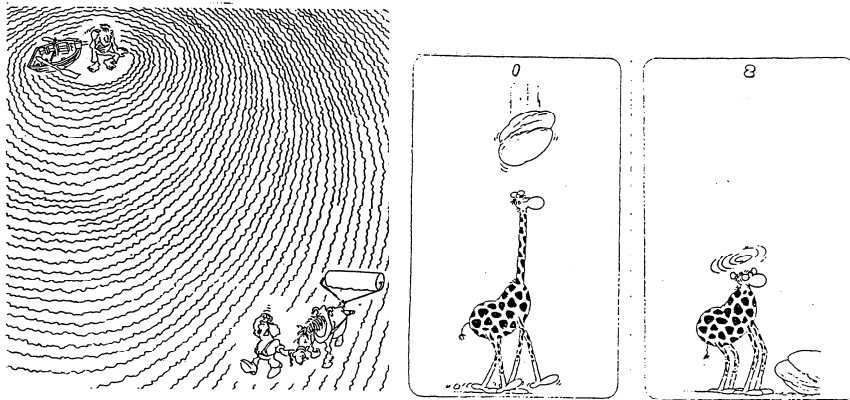
7

An information processing model of humour appreciation



The two-stage model (incongruity-resolution model) of humour appreciation (Suls, 1983).

Examples: nonsense humour



9

Two major joke structures

(b) Nonsense

.... has a surprising or incongruous punch line, exactly as in incongruity-resolution humour.

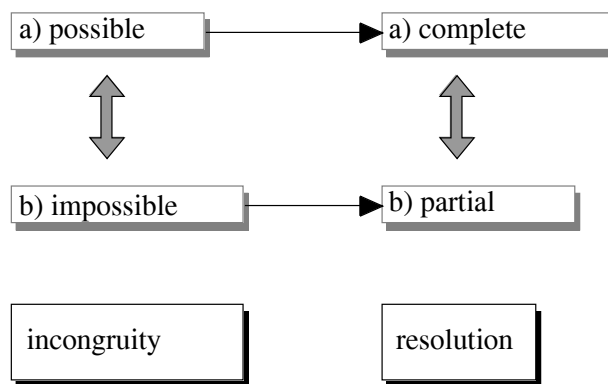
However, the punch line may

- provide no resolution at all,
- provide a partial resolution (leaving an essential part of the incongruity unresolved),
- actually create new absurdities or incongruities.

(see Rothbart & Pien, 1976)

In nonsense humour the resolution information gives the appearance of making sense out of incongruities without actually doing so.

Types of incongruity and resolution



Types of incongruities and resolutions and their relationship (Rothbart & Pien, 1977)
Nonsense humour is based on impossible incongruities that yield partial resolutions

Content dimensions

(c) Sexual

- Always extracted (Eysenck 1942; Herzog & Larwin 1988; Kosuch & Köhler 1989; Lewis & Nieuwoudt 1995)

- But sexual humour has a structural loading as well.
 - INC-RES SEX
 - NON SEX

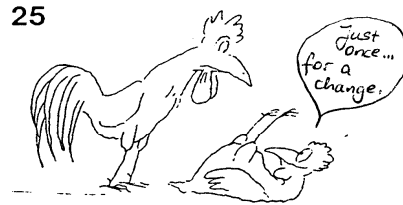
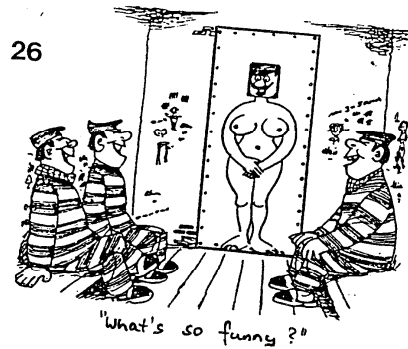
(d) Aggressive/Hostile?

- Herzog & Larwin (1988), Kosuch & Köhler (1989), Ruch (1992).... Little evidence despite the fact that "aggressive" humour was incorporated in the sample.

(e) Disgust / scatological humour?

-

Examples: sexual humour
 (a) incongruity-resolution
 (b) nonsense structure



14

Response dimensions

- Ruch (1980)
 - Five verbal ratings (2 orthogonal dimensions)
 - Funniness (all positive responses)
 - Aversiveness

		Funniness		
		low	high	
a v e r s i v e n e s s	low	not funny not aversive	not aversive very funny	low
	high	not funny very aversive	very funny very aversive	high

16

The 3 WD as a test of humour appreciation

- 30 jokes & cartoons (+5 for “warming up”)
- 7-point rating scales (funniness, aversiveness)
- 6 scales:
 - funniness & aversiveness of
 - Incongruity-resolution (INC-RESf, INC-RESa)
 - Nonsense (NONf, NONa)
 - Sexual humour (SEXf, SEXa)
- derived indices
 - Total funniness, total aversiveness
 - Structure preference index
 - SPIf = NONf-INC-RESf

19

Rationale for studies of personality correlates

- Starting point: the two structures mainly differ with respect to the degree of resolution obtained.
 - In incongruity-resolution humour a complete resolution of the incongruity is possible while there are residual traces of incongruity in nonsense humour.
- Thus,
 - In INC-RES the resolution of incongruity contributes to appreciation (enjoyment is contingent on resolution?)
 - In NON appreciation is based on the existence of residual incongruity (enjoyment related to remaining incongruity?)

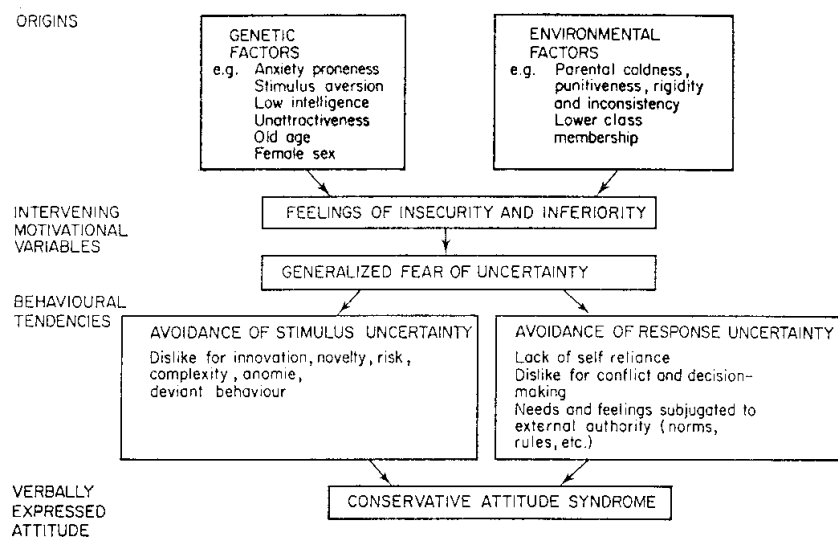
Global hypotheses

- Appreciation of the
 - incongruity-resolution structure is *a manifestation of a broader need of individuals for contact with structured, stable, unambiguous forms of stimulation*, whereas
 - nonsense structure in humour reflects a *generalized need for uncertain, unpredictable, and ambiguous stimuli*.

Personality characteristics

- Intolerance of ambiguity/conservatism incorporate the aspect of avoidance of high stimulus uncertainty (in information theory sense, e.g., complexity, novelty, ambiguity, incongruity, unfamiliarity, unpredictability), thus
 - hypothesized to predict funniness of INC-RES based humour and aversiveness of nonsense-based humour.
 - Results: conservatism: $r = .50$; intolerance of ambiguity: $r = .40$ (Ruch, 1992; 10 samples)
- Sensation seeking/openness to experience incorporate the acceptance or seeking of high stimulus uncertainty, thus
 - hypothesized to predict funniness of NON based humour (and to find INC-RES boring)
 - Studies: Ruch (1988), Forabosco & Ruch (1994), Carretero-Dios & Ruch (2010).

Wilson's dynamic theory of conservatism



Sensation seeking

- Zuckerman (1979) sensation seeking (SS) is
 - "a trait defined by the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences" (p. 10).
- Subscales
 - Experience seeking (ES) involves the seeking of stimulation through the mind and the senses, through art, travel, even psychedelic drugs, music and the wish to live in an unconventional style.
 - ES is closely related to the novelty and complexity dimension of stimuli (Zuckerman, 1984).
 - Boredom susceptibility (BS) represents the tendency to avoid repetitive experience

Earlier studies on humour appreciation and aesthetics (Ruch & Hehl, 2007)

- Barron Welsh Art Scale (BWAS; Barron & Welsh 1952)
- A figure-preference-test measuring artistic perception as a personality style.

Material: 84 line drawings (appr. 2 x 3")

Answer format: "like" / "don't like"

Total score (62 items): liking of complexity vs. simplicity.

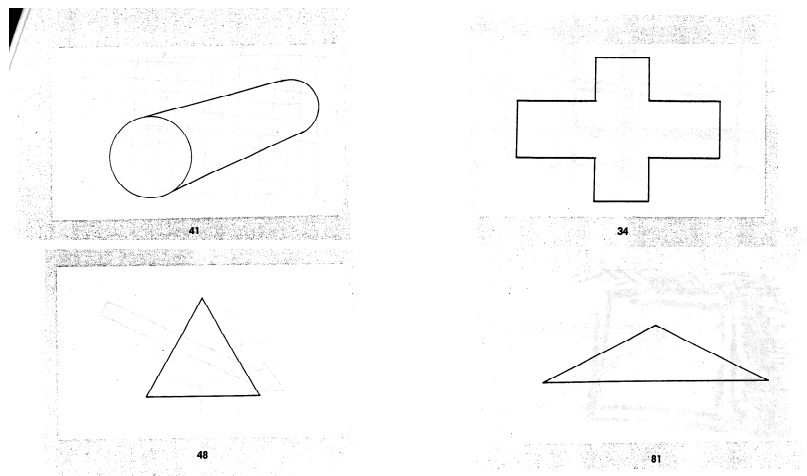
Scores for *liking of complexity* and *liking of simplicity*

Barron (1953): BWAS assesses complexity-simplicity as a personality dimension

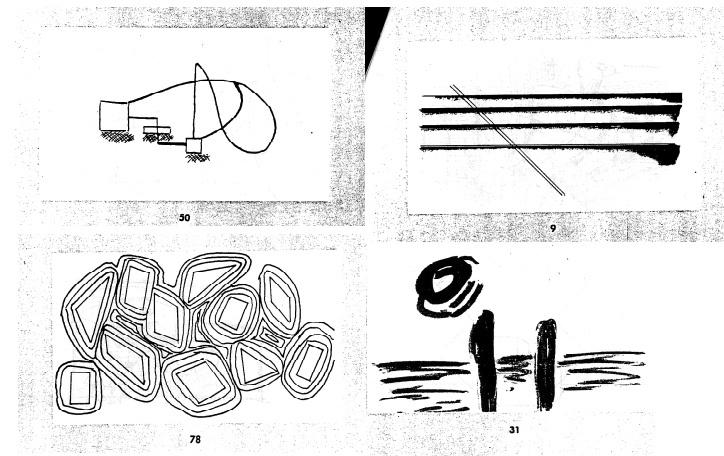
Barron-Welsh Art Scale

INC-RESf		
	Dislike (simple)	.22*
NONf		
	Like (complex)	.20*
SPIf		
	BWAS	.31***

Items correlating positively with INC-RESf (41; 34; 48; 81)



Items correlating positively with NONf (#50; 9; 78; 31)



New studies on humour appreciation and art: the grotesque and music

- Ruch & Malcherek (2009) studied the relationship between humour appreciation and liking/disliking of grotesqueness in texts.
- Grotesque: The adjective »grotesque« refers to the strange, fantastic, ugly, incongruous, unpleasant, or disgusting. Theorists have highlighted relationships to the uncanny, absurd, abnormal and distinguished, but also proposed the grotesque to be a hybrid, for example of the ludicrous and the fearsome (i.e. it simultaneously arouses reactions of fear and amusement in the observer), bizarreness and pity (i. e. simultaneously invoking in an audience a feeling of uncomfortable bizarreness as well as empathic pity), empathy and disgust, but also involving awe, and horror in addition to the ludicrous (see Connelly 2003; Kayser 1957; Thomson 1972).
- Ruch & Malcherek (2009) argue that both content and structure add to the arousal potential of the text.

Cont.

- Degrees of grotesqueness was varied in three levels (low, medium, high grotesque 4).
- Rated for degree of "liking" and degree of "aversiveness" on 6-point scales
- Selection: 12 experts (6 literary scholars, 6 non-scientific connoisseurs) were asked to judge 81 text excerpts.
- The inter-rater reliability was high and the total score was used to select six excerpts of low, middle and high level of grotesqueness for the main study (preceded by 4 "warming up items")
- The texts retained were by Woody Allen, William Burroughs, Leonora Carrington, Daniil Charms, Heinz Ehrhardt, Robert Gernhardt, Eckhard Henscheid, Heinrich von Kleist, Christian Morgenstern, Herbert Rosendorfer, Helge Schneider, and Karl Valentin.
- Furthermore, the 110 subjects answered the sensation seeking scale, the Barron Welsh art scale, and the 3 WD.

Predictors of grotesqueness in texts

Table. Correlations between appreciation of humor and texts differing in grotesqueness.

	Liking of grotesque texts				disliking of grotesque texts			
	low	medium	high	all	low	medium	high	all
BWAS								
Like (complex)	.32***	.31***	.28**	.36***	-.01	-.01	-.13	-.06
Dislike (simple)	.03	-.01	-.03	-.01	-.02	.00	.01	.00
BWAS-total	.13	.17#	.17#	.18#	.01	.00	-.07	-.03
SSS								
TAS	-.07	.01	.19*	.06	-.07	-.10	-.14	-.12
DIS	-.06	.05	.26**	.11	-.22*	-.35***	-.42***	-.37***
ES	.15	.27**	.35***	.31**	-.14	-.28**	-.37***	-.29**
BS	.05	.17#	.32***	.22*	-.18#	-.28**	-.40***	-.32***
Total	.03	.16	.35***	.22*	-.19#	-.31***	-.41***	-.34***
3WD								
INC-RESf	.29**	.14	.07	.20*	.16#	.25**	.30**	.26**
NONf	.43***	.45***	.41***	.51***	-.11	-.07	-.08	-.09
SEXf	.15	.02	.19#	.15	-.11	.03	-.03	-.05
INC-RESa	-.06	-.02	-.06	-.06	.49***	.40***	.40***	.47***
NONa	-.05	-.11	-.26**	-.17#	.53***	.51***	.53***	.58***
SEXa	.08	.06	-.13	.00	.44***	.44***	.52***	.52***

Note. N = 108 - 110

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001; # p < .05 (one tailed)

35

Appreciation of humour and music

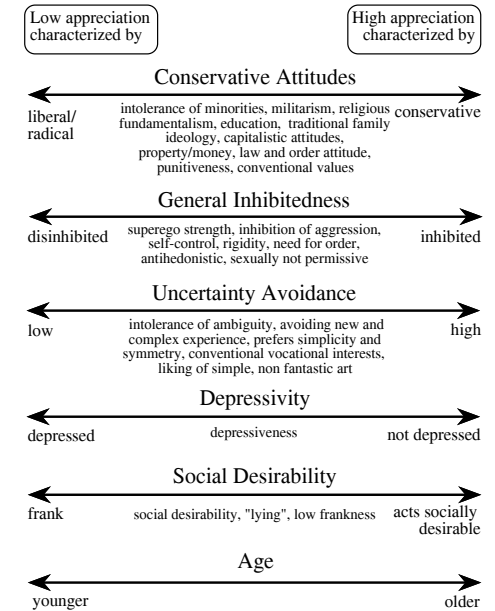
- Study correlating music (sounding und verbal) preferences and humour preferences (Savary, 2011).
- 518 participants judged 93 brief segments of music over the internet (3 each for 31 types of music) (sounding preference), filled in an instrument for (verbal) evaluation of these styles and filled in the 3 WD, a conservatism scale, ad the German versions of the *Big Five Inventory* (BFI) and the *Sensation Seeking Scale* (SSS-V).
- Furthermore, 16 music experts judged the degree of complexity (vs. simplicity) of the 31 music types. This yielded that *Schlager*, *House*, *Minimal Techno* und *Hardcore Techno* were judged to be least complex and *new music*, *classical music*, *jazz* and *progressive rock* yielded the highest complexity ratings.

36

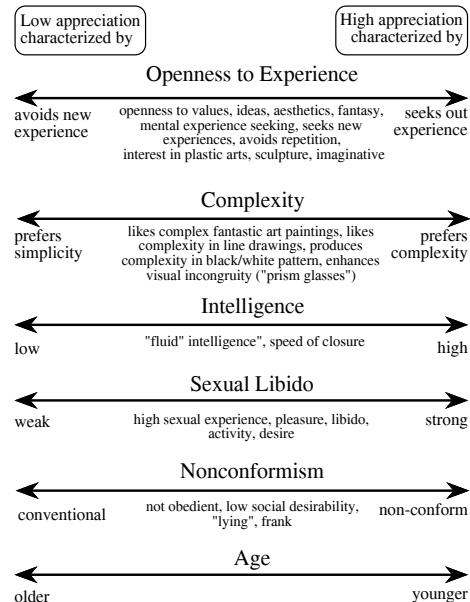
Results

- INC-RESf: Multiple R: .51
 - Pop (0.35), R & B, Country, Schlager, Ragga / Dancehall, world music, songwriter, Ska, Reggae, Latin, Rock'n'Roll, Soul, Folk, folk (Swiss) (0.17).
- NONf: Multiple R: .41
 - CH-songwriter (0.26), Ska, Reggae, world music, Soul, Ragga / Dancehall, Folk, Indie-Rock, progressive rock, country, Rock'n'Roll (0.19).
- SPIf: Multiple R: .49
 - New music (0.28), Jazz, gothic rock, drum'n'bass, progressive rock (0.16), Schlager (-0.16), Pop, R & B (-0.33).
- Preference for complex music:
 - conservatism (-.37), openness to experiences (.35), Experience Seeking (.29), SPIf (.27), SPIa (-.25), NONa (-.22), INC-RESf (-.21).
- Preference for music types is correlated with humour appreciation, and the same traits (Openness, ES, conservatism) are predictive of both.

Summary of other findings: incongruity-resolution humour



Summary of other findings: Nonsense humour



Summary

- *Content* and *structure* contribute to appreciation of humour
- Humour appreciation overlaps with the arts; it should be seen and discussed as part of aesthetics.
- Individual differences in appreciation of humour also predict individual differences in other areas of aesthetics
- Personality traits relating to preference or avoidance for stimulus (and response) uncertainty (i.e., conservatism, openness to experience, intolerance of ambiguity, sensation seeking etc) predict both, humour appreciation and appreciation of arts (here: the grotesque, music).
- Liking of complexity vs. simplicity underlies humour appreciation.

POSTER AND SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS
THURSDAY, AUGUST 18TH

POSTER ABSTRACTS

Stand-up comedy as an identity creation and maintenance mechanism for immigrants in Estonia

Ilona Piirimägi, Estonian Literary Museum

Stand-up in Estonia can be seen as a relatively new tradition entering into the local culture. It is largely built up by immigrants who are introducing their tradition and creating new forms of interaction in a dialogue with the locals. Stand-up forms a basis for integrating their multiple backgrounds, ethnic and other identities. Internet is a medium that is essential to this evolving art form as it is where the new audience acquires the basics of stand-up and reads about or discusses the performances. We can talk about a dialogue between artists and their audience also on the level of how the audience helps to shape the tradition. The stand-up evenings in Estonia are characterised by a warm atmosphere without a competitive aspect and no threat of being booed at. Local themes affect the subjects addressed in the routines. The nature of the audience affects the styles and humorous techniques used. The local stand-up tradition in Tartu has been created within a year, and as a result there already is a homogenous auditorium that actively interacts at the events as well as in the Internet. The immigrant stand-up artists on the other hand feel a connection with their auditorium and its subjects, becoming an accepted part of the local culture, becoming one of "us".

The paper was prepared within the framework of grant project ETF8149.

The meaning and experience on the use of humor among elderly Malays in Putrajaya, Malaysia

Raja Kamariah Raja Mohd Khalid, Institute Gerontology, Putra University Malaysia

Humor among elderly in Malaysia is not well understood even though there is a growing interest in the study of humor across cultures. This pilot study set out to explore in depth the use of humor among the elderly Malays using semi-structured interviews and observations with two cases. The investigation on the use of humor indicated that humor is understood as a verbal outcome of laughter, production humorous anecdotes, and as part of ones personality. In addition to that, for Malay subjects, humor is regarded as a form of relaxation. Besides, the subjects benefited humor for general health improvement, physically and psychologically. The data analyzed revealed that even though humor comes in spontaneously, but there are limitations in the use of humor. Interestingly, humor too, increase self-worth with in the two subjects. The results can be regarded as groundwork in understanding the use of humor among elderly Malays. It is necessary to add interventions to improve the well-being of the elderly by using humor. Specific plans and programs related to the use of can be developed to help the elderly to acquire positive outcomes of aging.

Humor and power in Finnish school education

Pirjo Nuutinen, University of Eastern Finland

The poster describes the research in pedagogic humor in Finnish schools. The main purpose of the study is to construct a comprehensive view about the ways of using humor and managing unintentionally emerging comic situations in school life, and further, to analyze power behavior of the parties in these situations.

In the poster, the theoretical grounds combining humor theories and theory of power behavior in the pedagogic context, will be clarified shortly. The poster also gives information about narrative methodology and collected materia and describes tentative main results of the study.

Cognitive processes during belief revision in garden-path jokes: An ERP study

Bastian Meyerhofer, CRC Textstrukturen Georg August Universität Göttingen, Experimental Psycholinguistics

Cognitive flexibility in adapting naive 'theories' about the environment in light of new evidence is emotionally rewarded by pleasant feelings of mirth. A great number of jokes lead the reader down a garden-path. The first interpretation of a semantically ambiguous textual input is constructed based on cues in the linguistic and non-linguistic material. The text representation is assumed to be accomplished by a 'mental space' (a spreading activation of the semantically related contents of long-term memory). This leads to the probabilistically most plausible 'theory' about the meaning of the text. In jokes this 'theory' and the expectations based on it are violated. A quick and sometimes very complex belief revision process is needed in order to overcome the puzzlement and find a new coherent interpretation of the whole text. A number of jokes which follow this garden-path mechanism will be empirically investigated with psycholinguistic methods. In a first step event-related brain potentials (ERPs) to the endings of texts with three conditions will be measured (funny, non-funny, and nonsense endings). Components for the violation (N400) and for the belief revision process (P600) are hypothesized.

SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS

Differences of Duchenne smiles for those with fear of being laughed at

Tracey Platt, University of Zürich

Individual differences between gelotophobes and those with no fear of being laughed at, so far are based on online self-reports. The Facial Action Coding System (FACS) allows coding of any anatomically possible facial muscle movements called Action Units (AUs). Thus, facial expression can be measured objectively. The Duchenne smile, with unique measurable markers, can be distinguished from other smiles. A sample of 20 non-gelotophobes (score below < 1.5) and 20 gelotophobes (score above < 2.5) identified using the geloph <15> (Ruch & Proyer, 2008) were interviewed. A list of 39 primers utilizing 16 enjoyable emotion triggers was used to elicit Duchenne display. Results show that different enjoyable emotions do elicit different intensity of Duchenne display and there is an impact on the differences between the groups. Also enjoyable emotion with high arousal (schadenfreude, amusement and relief) and low arousal (contentment, gratitude, elevation) showed that arousal type impacted on the different groups differently, with high arousal having lower intensity of Duchenne display for those with gelotophobia. The study showed that gelotophobes highest intensity of enjoyable emotion was in olfactory and auditory pleasures, which occur without social interaction, although lower than those with no gelotophobia, it confirms they are not generally low in joy as earlier predicted.

Office humour – a comparative study of the TV sitcom The Office

Kai Schwind, Faculty of TV production and filmstudies, University College Lillehammer, Norway

The British TV comedy format The Office (BBC, 2001) by Ricky Gervais and Stephan Merchant has turned into a global success and comedy phenomenon ever since it was first released on BBC2 in July 2001. Since its first release ten years ago the format was adapted for various international TV markets, including the USA (The Office – An American Workplace, NBC, 2005-) and Germany (Stromberg, Pro7, 2004-).

My PhD project sets out to contrast and compare the original format with its two transnational counterparts. In this paper for the ISS11 I would like to present a closer look at how the humor in The Office is constructed. I will give an introduction as to how the distinct style and aesthetics of the show (the so called mockumentary style) has contributed to the establishing of awkward comedy (or comedy of embarrassment), which seems to be a new status quo in contemporary sitcom and TV humour conventions.

Furthermore, I would like to focus on the socio-cultural differences related to humor in the British, American and German versions of The Office. What cultural myths and stereotypes are represented in each version and what can they tell us about how various national “hot topics” are negotiated and dealt with in the series? In conclusion, I

suggest that *The Office* is also a sitcom about comedy itself and, leading on from that, a comment on the myth “beloved of Western society, and the English in particular: that humour is not simply a quality one might possess, like right-handedness, but an indication of personal value” (Gray in Lockyer & Pickering, 2005). Hence, “to be a master of humour, to be one of the class that decides what is funny, is to assume power over the rules of social interaction” (ibid., 2005)

Instrumental othering or primary devices in visual ethnic caricature

Dagnoslaw Demski, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

The visual representations of ethnic groups are part of a wider body of caricatures. In the end of Nineteenth and the beginning of Twentieth centuries in the satirical journals emerged several such ethnic series presenting various groups. What was the cause of that making them and the apparent increase of interest in them? Did they reflect the view of middle-class society?

Basing on the Kenneth Rivers’ concept of transmutations of visual caricatures I focused on the ethnic targets. This period can be seen as basic for nation-building process in the region. The question is what visual means and devices were used to characterize the other ethnic groups – metaphor, irony, simile and so on. These remarks are illustrated by examples from Central Europe.

Positioning political comedy in theories of deliberative democracy and the public sphere

Alison O’Connor, Faculty of Social Sciences and International Studies, University of New South Wales, Australia

At times, it is an ill-defined relationship between the proliferation of satire, and the quality of public debate in Western liberal democracies. This paper intends to explore two competing theoretical explanations of satire in the public sphere. In the first theory, satire becomes increasingly prolific and flourishes in a robust public sphere, where protest, dissent, and competing ideas are encouraged. In the alternative explanation, satire flourishes when protest is restricted and avenues for alternative ideas are limited; satire is a reflection of the disenfranchised rather than reflective of a strong public debate. The paper will explore these competing theories in relation to the UK economic downturn and the proposed ‘Big Society’ of UK Prime Minister David Cameron, as well as connecting these discussions to broader questions of the effectiveness of protest and resistance and the responsiveness of government.

The Development of Humor and Its Implication to Culture

Raja Kamariah Raja Mohd Khalid, Institute Gerontology, Putra University Malaysia

Humor, or in Malay language often refers to *kelakar*, *lucu*, *gelihati* and *gila-gila* are associated with stimuli that can lead the person to think about the humor and induce to laughter. Malays sometimes use humor in traditional poems or in folklore to evoke hidden messages which sometimes come in a form of sarcasm. Since 1988 to 2010, the International Journal of Humor Research published 465 articles related to humor using western populations. Not until 1998, humor studies began to take place in Asia region (Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Japan and China). Meanwhile, in Europe’s Journal of Psychology, there were 1602 humor research articles since 1980 to 2010 and only one study involving elderly in 2010. In addition to this, in *The Gerontologists*, only 327 articles related to humor since 1961 to 2010. The literature reviews from cited journals related to the humor studies revealed inconsistency in the humor research particularly from different perspectives of cultures. The implication of this scenario is that humor itself cannot be considered universal due to insufficient studies involving different cultures. Thus, this research will fill in the gap and could be useful in formulating the benefit of humor for the elderly especially among Malays elderly.

How were political jokes transmitted in Soviet Estonia? A case study.

Martin Rebane, Estonian Literary Museum

Political jokes under totalitarian regimes were mostly transmitted by word of mouth. Telling critical jokes was not particularly safe as they criticized the regime. This was also the case for Soviet Estonia. Many authors have naturally concluded that hence the transmission was a “underground project” or something that was not done publicly. My study has shown that on contrary, many jokes were told by people who were far from being “underground” or whose intention was certainly not to undermine the state.

I will describe a few cases where such jokes were told, how people interpreted the acts of telling such jokes and what they valued most about the jokes.

The paper was prepared within the framework of grant project ETF8149.

Reducing the seriousness of utterance: an effect of an elegance of style?

Marge Käsper, Tartu University

I would arise the question of style and non-seriousness through two case-studies: a presentation made once to show to my very Marxist colleagues in France why in a post-Soviet country is it so difficult to take Marx as a theorist seriously, and a project of study that is meant to become a final chapter of my doctoral thesis on book reviews.

Marx study (2005) gathered a series of examples from Estonian newspapers where Marx was mentioned in contexts of quite out of ‘normal relevance’: in a cartoon with Marilyn Monroe, a sentence of Marx to characterize misfortunes in traveling, etc. Important is that in all citations whether the citation was slightly altered or a not-a-sure-remembering (*démémoire*) was exposed. The discursive function of mentioning was mainly to procure an interesting beginning or final to text.

In my current study on book reviews in humanitarian sciences in France and in Estonia I’ve noticed several wordplays, references to proverbs, jokes etc. in Estonian texts while the French texts are less playful. Taking in account also a certain ‘discursive insecurity’ I study in these texts, I will ask, is it to recompense stylistically the burden of a text otherwise ‘too serious’ for Estonian writers?

“Bears Bumped off the Bee-keeper”: Moscow Mayor’s Dismissal Joke Cycle

Anastasiya Ilchanka, Herzen State Pedagogical University

Yury Luzhkov, Russian politician, has been a mayor of Moscow for eighteen years. His ambiguous activities engendered a lot of debates along with a number of jokes. Furthermore, his subsequent dismissal spontaneously evolved an entire joke cycle. The body of empirical research in this paper includes sixty five topical jokes of this cycle which in fact demonstrate the glaring discrepancy with the previous jokes about the mayor. The work focuses on the differences as well as aims to answer the following question: what makes the attributes of jokes on one and the same butt change?

Humour in Music

Maria Goeth, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

Can music be funny? And if yes, what does it have to be like? A little excursion through the world of bizarre sounds, musical satires and tone jokes.

Mapping the history of religious satire in Europe

Dennis Mayhoff Brink, University of Copenhagen

Although it is no secret that Europe has a long and conflictual history of religious satire – a history which has again become relevant after the “return of religion” – this history still appears surprisingly unmapped. To overcome some of the confusion caused by this lack of an outline of the history of religious satire in Europe, the presentation

distinguishes between three different kinds of religious satire, founded and developed in three different epochs of European history.

Thus, the presentation distinguishes between (1) one kind of religious satire developed during the carnivals of the middle ages, (2) another kind of religious satire developed throughout the campaigns of the age of reformation, and (3) a third kind of religious satire developed as part of the critiques of the enlightenment. On the basis of this historical outline of the history of religious satire, the presentation will clarify the different techniques and functions used and fulfilled by the three kinds of satire, using historical examples of graphic and literary satire mainly from Britain, Germany, and France.

On the Relations between Joking Questions and Paremiology – Proverbs in the Service of Humour Creation

Piret Voolaid, Estonian Literary Museum

The subject matter of the paper is inspired by the issue of genre borders, especially as concerns the migration of recognizable text nuclei across structural and genre borders. The paper observes the employment of paremiological material in one of the subgenres of riddles, namely (Estonian) conundrums, or joking questions – riddles where the answer is or involves a pun or unexpected twist. The content of proverbs or phrases is applied in conundrums according to four main models schemes.

1. One and the same core imagery or motive functions both as a saying and conundrum.
2. A proverb or phrase used as the question half of a conundrum.
3. Definition-giving conundrums – the question and its answer can be viewed as a short aphoristic piece, in which the term presented in the question is described in a roundabout manner by an illustrative expression.
4. Wellerism-like conundrums.

The current relations of conundrums and paremics indicate a change in the connotational context of proverbs. The repertoire of poetical-didactical phrases (which can be full of contradictions) on the whole reflects the worldview, attitudes and social psychological notions of the general population. The down-to-earth worldview expressed via proverbs (putting emphasize on moderation, preferring of natural values and the old to the new, deprecation of harmful vices) can in a new context acquire a diametrically opposite meaning, and induce humorous reception. The multitude of forms the same content can be poured into benefits active use of the heritage material and is convincing proof of its multifaceted nature.

Sample texts used in the paper come from the database of *Estonian conundrums*, available online at <http://www.folklore.ee/Keerdkys>.

The paper was prepared within the framework of the Estonian state programme project SF0030181s08 and grant projects ETF8137 and ETF8149.

Food for Thought or Food for the Sharks? A reevaluation of the bad joke

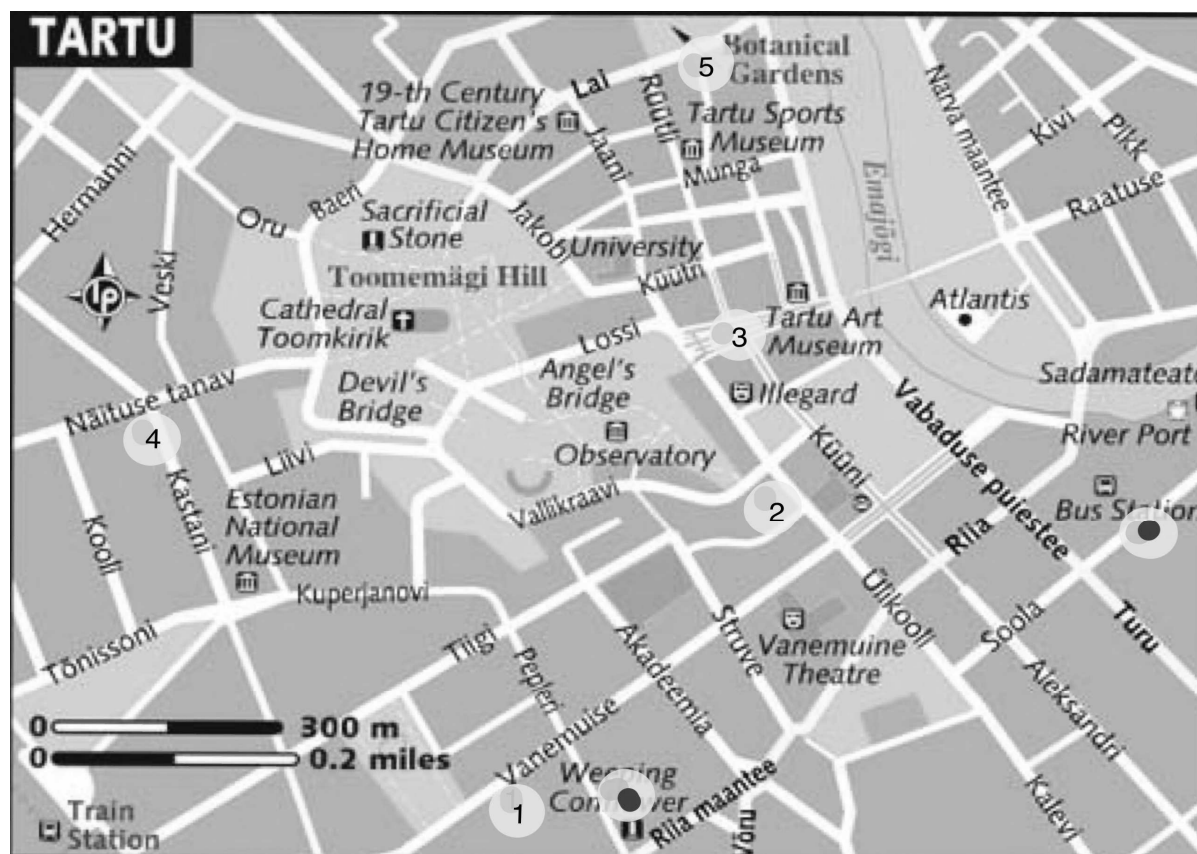
Kara Hunt, University of California

The conceptual framework from which humor arises and the societal foundations without which it would face extinction are neither emergent phenomenon nor a newly discovered linkage. Textual analyses of sovereign, racial, gendered, sexualized, grotesque, childish, and temporal humor, to name a few, have long evaluated the structural underpinnings of humor as they are informed by societal relations and underscored by egotistical fantasy. This paper urges for the differentiation between jokes that highlight a conflictual relationship between humans born of modernity and those referencing the structurally incapacitated subjects upon whom the modern human was born. Saidiyah Hartman maintains that it was not until the Middle Passage that black slavery constituted a cultural memory, inscribed by “everyday practices”, which completely restructured social interaction. I maintain here that the practice of humor is one such social interaction indelibly influenced by and constructed at the expense of the black.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Map of important places in Tartu center:



(1) – Estonian Literary Museum, Vanemuise 42; (2) – Wilde pub, Vallikraavi 4; (3) – Town Hall Square; (4) – German Culture Institute, Kastani 1; (5) – Botanical Gardens, Lai 40. Hotel Tartu (near the Bus station) and Hostel Pepleri (near Estonian Literary Museum, No 1) are marked with a dot without a number.

If in trouble, call: Liisi +372 51 37927; Ilona +372 56 56 86 23; Martin +372 55 908 505

Catering

Lunch is provided to all delegates at restaurant Cafe Shakespeare, Vanemuise 6, 13:00 – 14:30 (Thursday: 13:30 – 14:30).

Transport in Tartu

All places connected with the summerschool (hotels, ISS venue, restaurants, etc) are within the walking distance. However, if you need to get around, there are taxis close to the conference venue (Vanemuise 1). The starting fee is ca EUR 1.5, the price per kilometer about 0.5-0.8 EUR.

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

Opening reception

Date: Monday, 15th of August

Time: 19:00 – 21:00

Venue: Estonian Literary Museum, Vanemuise 42

Free for all registered participants



Stand-up comedy night

Date: Tuesday, 16th of August

Time: 19:30:00 – 22:00

Venue: Wilde pub, Vallikraavi 4

Local and international stand-up comedians show their skills. Welcoming drink and snacks included.

Free for all registered participants

City excursion

Date: Wednesday, 17th of August

Time: 17:00 – 19:00

Venue: Town Hall Square – „Soup town“ – German Culture Institute

Free for all registered participants



Beer tasting

Date: Wednesday, 17th of August

Time: 19:00 – 21:00

Venue: German Culture Institute, Kastani 1

Local brewery A Le Coq offers its beer for tasting. Drinks and snacks included.

Free for all registered participants

Closing reception

Date: Friday, 19th of August

Time: 19:00 – 21:00

Venue: Botanical Gardens, Lai 40

Drinks and dinner. Cost: 20 EUR per person.

Confirmation of attendance must be given in advance (Wednesday, 17th of August at the latest)



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