



7th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter

Abstracts of Presentations

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Christie Davies

Were Soviet Political Jokes a form of Protest ?

The anti-regime jokes told in the former Soviet Union and in its East European colonial empire constituted the largest, most scathing and most insightful cycle of political jokes ever known. But were they a form of political protest or simply an expression of cynical detachment or even a Bakhtinian carnival that may have reinforced the system ? The earlier accounts of jokes told in countries occupied by Germany between 1939 and 1945 suggested that jokes told about the occupiers were a form of resistance but later studies have questioned or even denied this. How was it in the case of the former communist countries? It is easy to show in either case that the effect of the jokes was utterly unimportant but does it follow that we can not use the jokes as a means of gauging alienation from an illegitimate regime and of a willingness to turn against it given the chance ? The history of the Soviet era suggests that we can.

Bruce Adams, *Tiny Revolutions in Russia, Twentieth Century Soviet and Russian History in Anecdotes*, (New York, Routledge Curzon 2005)

Chad Bryant, "The Language of Resistance: Czech Jokes and Joke-Telling under Nazi occupation, 1943-45", *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol 41, No. 1, pp.133-151, (2006)

Christie Davies, *Jokes and their Relation to Society*, (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 1998) pp 63-100.

Elliott Oring, "Risky Business, Political Jokes Under Repressive Regimes", *Western Folklore*, Vol. 63, No. 3, Summer, pp.209-236, (2004)

Alexei Yurchak, "The Cynical Realism of Late Socialism: Power, Pretence and the Anekdot", *Public Culture*, 9, pp. 161-188, (1997)

Nikolai Zlobin, "Humor as Political Protest", *Demokratizatsiya*, ,vol. 4, 2, p.223-31(1996)

Jokes and Cartoons, Conflict and War

When war breaks out there is a move to mobilise humour for the war effort to denigrate the enemy . In the case of cartoons which have artist-authors and publishers it has a degree of success. In the case of jokes there is a problem , since the anonymous inventors and tellers of jokes may not go along with the official line. Cartoons anyway range from being illustrated political arguments , where funniness is a bonus , to ones whose aim and consequence is laughter and where any political message is incidental . Many are somewhere in between In wartime some cartoons differ little from official propaganda posters and indeed the latter may employ humour. However, others do not fit this pattern and it is illicit to produce a strained interpretation of them to try to find patriotic malice or uplift. It is possible , though, to note what are distinctively wartime images of the enemy and to suggest that their occurrence in peace-time political cartoons , such as anti-Semitic ones , indicates a similar level of hostile conflict. Jokes often mock the war-time enemy but jokes are also very independent of official aims and often subversive , so that allies or even the armed forces and prospects of the joke-tellers own side become targets . Besides the very ambiguity and independence of jokes does not fit well with their use in conflict or even with seeing them as part of that conflict

Mark Bryant, *World War II in Cartoons*, London, Grub Street 2005 (1989)

Church of Scientology, *Hate and Propaganda: Sanctioned and Promoted by the German Media and Government*, Los Angeles, Church of Scientology , 1993

L Perry Curtis, *Apes and Angels, The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, Newton Abbott UK, David and Charles, 1971

Christie Davies, *Ethnic Humor around the World*, Bloomington Indiana, Indiana UP, 1997 (1990) pp 171-233

Christie Davies, Humour is not a Strategy in War , *Journal of European Studies* Vol 31, 2001 pp 395-412

Christie Davies , Review of Wolfgang K Hünig , British and American Cartoons as Weapons in World War I , *Humor, International Journal of Humor Studies* , 2005 vol 18, No 3, pp 340-4

Hünig, Wolfgang K, *British and German Cartoons As Weapons in World War I, Invectives and Ideology of Political Cartoons, a Cognitive Linguistics Approach*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2002

Marianne Lomonoca and Susan Schleuning, *Weapons of Mass Dissemination : The Propaganda of War* , Miami Beach FL, The Wolfsonian-Florida International University, 2004

Is Humour Theory of any Use to Anyone ?

Academic writings about humour often include a potted history of past humour theorists such as Bergson, Freud, Hobbes, Koestler etc implying that the theories of these past masters of speculative thinking could help us in our research. But do they? There can be no doubt but that humour can be a vehicle for ridicule and social control, tendenz, the sudden glory of superiority, and aggression but these are neither always present in humour , as is often claimed , nor are they specific to humour. Also if we only have texts we can not infer these qualities from them and it is illicit to impose them on the material; when present they are better regarded as an aspect of the context in which humour is used. With jokes which are transportable and anonymous you can not infer anything. So why bother with the theories? The theories do not make unambiguous and falsifiable predictions , so in what sense are they theories , rather than mere perspectives ? Often their employment produces deductions that can be shown to be false, yet this never seems to deter their proponents., who likewise have no criteria for saying when their theories will work and when they will not and often stretch them to the point where they become trivial . Can this critique also be extended to empirically better established theories such as incongruity or the General Theory of Verbal Humour ?

Bergson, Henri, *Le Rire, Essai sur la signification du comique* , Paris, Alcan , 1924 (1900)

Michael Billig, *Laughter and Ridicule*, London, Sage , 2005

Christie Davies , *The Mirth of Nations* , New Brunswick NJ, Transaction , 2002 pp 201-228

Christie Davies , Victor Raskin on Jokes, *Humor, International Journal of Humour Research* , 17-4, 2004 : 373-380.

Christie Davies, Comic Welsh English in Shakespeare , a reply to Dirk Delabatista, *Humor, the International Journal of humor Research*, 19-2 (2006) pp 189-200

Charles R Gruner, *The Game of Humor*, New Brunswick NJ, Transaction, 1997

Elliott Oring, *Jokes and their Relations* , Lexington , University Press of Kentucky

Elliott Oring, *Engaging Humor*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press , 2003

John Parkin , The Power of Laughter: Koestler on Bergson and Freud, in John Parkin and John Phillips(eds) , *Laughter and Power*, Bern, Peter Lang , 2006 pp 113-143

Christian Hempelmann

Is Incongruity that is Resolved Humor?

Among the major groups of approaches to humor, incongruity theories focus on the humorous text and its processing: Basically, two things in the text don't match. In

contrast to superiority and release theories, they are not interested in affectual, psycho- and socio-dynamic, or other functional properties of humor, but rather the essence of the text's humorousness and, potentially, funniness. This lecture will contrast incongruity theories and other approaches, highlight the potential role of resolution, and provide an overview of the main proponents of incongruity theories.

Forabosco, G. (1992). Cognitive Aspects of the Humor Process: The Concept of Incongruity. *Humor*, 5/1-2, 45-68.

McGhee, P. E. (1972). On the Cognitive Origins of Incongruity Humor: Fantasy Assimilation versus Reality Assimilation. In: J.H. Goldstein and P.E. McGhee (Eds.). *The Psychology of Humor*. New York, Academic, 61-80.

Mitchell, H. H. (2005). *The Time Course of Comprehending Humor*. Unpublished Dissertation. University of Memphis.

Rothbart, M. K., and D. Pien. (1977). Elephants and marshmallows: A theoretical synthesis of incongruity-resolution and arousal theories of humour. In: A. J. Chapman, Antony J. and H. C. Foot (Eds.), *It's a Funny Thing, Humour*. Oxford: Pergamon, 37-40.

Suls, J. M., (1972). Two-Stage Model for the Appreciation of Jokes and Cartoons: An Information-Processing Analysis. In: J.H. Goldstein and P.E. McGhee (Eds.). *The Psychology of Humor*. New York, Academic, 81-100.

Wordplay: Humorous and Non-Humorous

Humorous wordplay is a convenient object of study for those interested in humorous texts. Its principles are universal, their mechanisms are apparently simple, and insights into punning are assumed to scale up to insights into humorous texts in general and into humor overall. This lecture will present the unexpectedly intricate linguistic mechanisms of puns and related types of humorous wordplay, such as spoonerisms, calembours, and malapropisms, and attempt to contrast them to non-humorous wordplay.

Hausmann, Franz Josef. 1974. *Studien zur Linguistik des Wortspiels*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Hempelmann, C.F. (2004). Script Oppositeness and Logical Mechanism in Punning. *Humor*, 17-4, 381-392.

Hinton, L., Nichols, J., and Ohala, J. (1994). Introduction: Sound-Symbolic Processes. In: L. Hinton, J. Nichols, and J. Ohala (Eds.). *Sound Symbolism*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 1-12.

Marchand, H. (1969). *The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word-Formation*. München: Beck.

Oaks, D. D. (1990). *Enablers of Grammatical Ambiguity*. Dissertation: Purdue University.

Sobkowiak, W. (1991). *Metaphonology of English Paronomasic Puns*. Frankfurt: Lang.

Zwicky, A. M. and Elizabeth D. Zwicky. (1986). Imperfect Puns, Markedness, and Phonological Similarity: With Fronds like These, Who Needs Anemones? *Folia Linguistica*, 20-2, 493-503.

Are Cartoons Drawn Jokes?

Formal, Aesthetic, and Cognitive Differences to Verbal Humor

(with Andrea Samson)

Despite the general identity of their semantic humor processes, there are crucial differences between *verbal* humor stimuli like jokes and *pictorial* humor stimuli like cartoons. This is obvious in the formal domain, where the encoding of humor into purely pictorial—or an interaction of pictorial and verbal—symbols offers different formal and aesthetic possibilities than in purely verbal ones. Despite these differences, most previous research assumed an essential similarity of processing for both types of humor. In contrast to this, we should assume the stimulus difference to

also have an effect on the cognitive processing. From a contrastive perspective, there are three main sources of differences between verbal, linguistic jokes and pictorial, visual cartoons: formal features, aesthetics, and cognition.

The aim of the lecture is two-fold: On the one hand, it should provide a clearer theoretical basis for future research into cartoons, their cognitive and aesthetic factors. On the other hand, cartoons may be able to provide new insights into the semantics and cognition of humor in general, as the distribution of the essential humor elements in the stimulus is not as restricted and forcedly linear as in verbal humor. The interaction of verbal and visual parts in mixed cartoons should provide a good starting point for such research, for example to distinguish phases of humor cognition. An additional emphasis will be on the difference between cognition (joke recognition) and appreciation (funniness).

- Brône, Geert, and Feyaerts, K. (2003). The cognitive linguistics of incongruity resolution: Marked reference-point structures in humor. Preprint nr. 205 (2003). Department of Linguistics, University of Leuven, 58pp.
<http://wwwling.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/iclc/Papers/BroneFeyaerts.pdf>
- Carroll, P. J., Young J. R., and Guertin M. S. (1992). Visual Analysis of Cartoons: A View from the Far Side. In: Rayner, K. (Ed.) *Eye Movements and Visual Cognition: Scene Perception and Reading*. New York: Springer: 444-461.
- Herzog, T. & Larwin, D. (1988). The appreciation of humor in captioned cartoons. *The Journal of Psychology*, 122, 597-607.
- Lessard, D. (1991). Puns and Cartoons. *Semiotica*, 85-1/2, 73-89.
- Paolillo, J. C. (1998) Gary Larson's Fare Side: Nonsense? Nonsense!. *Humor*, 11, 261-290.
- Samson, A. C. and Hempelmann, C. F. Are Cartoons Drawn Jokes? Formal, Aesthetic, and Cognitive Differences to Verbal Humor. Manuscript.

Analyzing Texts with the General Theory of Verbal Humor

Among the linguistic approaches to humor, the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) has achieved prominence as an encompassing and formalized approach. We will look at its development as a theory in Raskin (1985) and its expansion in Attardo and Raskin (1991). The emphasis will be on introducing recent approaches to further develop the theory and criticism of it, but most importantly, getting our hands dirty on some sample analyses.

- Attardo, S. (2001). *Humorous Texts. A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter 2001.
- Attardo, S. and Raskin, V. (1991). Script theory revis(it)ed: joke similarity and joke representation model. *Humor*, 4, 293-347.
- Attardo, S., Hempelmann, C. F. and Di Maio, S. (2002). Script oppositions and logical mechanisms: Modeling incongruities and their resolutions. *Humor*, 15-1, 3-46.
- Hempelmann, C. F. (2003). Christian Jokes. 99 Nuns Giggle, 1 Nun Gasps: The Not-All-That-Christian Natural Class of Christian Jokes." *Humor* 16-1, 1-31.
- Hempelmann, C.F. and Ruch, W. (2005). 3 WD meets GTVH: Breaking the ground for interdisciplinary humor research. *Humor*, 18/4, 353-388.
- Paolillo, J. (1998). Gary Larson's Far Side: Nonsense? Nonsense! *Humor*, 11-3, 261-290.
- Raskin, V. (1985) *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*. Reidel, Dordrecht.

Giselinde Kuipers

Social differences in sense of humor (and how to study them..)

Humor is related to social background - it differs between social groups. Relations between humor and gender have been thoroughly explored by humor scholars, other

social background characteristics, such as age, class and ethnicity have gained less scholarly attention. This presentation will review studies of the relationship between humor and social background, focusing both on the how humor is related to social background (and how this may differ between countries), and on the question how the relation between humor and social background can be studied.

Kuipers, Giseline (2006) *Good Humor, Bad Taste: A Sociology of the Joke*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Martin, Rod (2007) *The Psychology of humor: An Integrative Approach*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Ruch, Willibald (1998) (ed.) *The Sense of Humor: Explorations of a Personality Characteristic*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Humor and social theory

Humor scholars generally distinguish three classical theories of humor: superiority theory, relief theory, and incongruity theory. In this presentation, I will consider the relationship between these three classical theories of humor, which are generally philosophical or psychological in focus, and sociological (and anthropological) thought about humor: can questions about humor and its social functions be subsumed under these three theories? Or can we distinguish another "social humor theory" in sociological thought about humor?

Apte, Mahadev L. (1985) *Humor and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Bergson, Henri (1935/1911) *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of Comic*. London: MacMillan.

Billig, M. (2005). *Laughter and Ridicule: toward a social critique of humour*. London: Sage.

Coser, Rose (1959) Some Social Functions of Laughter: A Study of Humor in a Hospital Setting. *Human Relations* 12 (2), 171-182.

_____(1960) Laughter Among Colleagues: A Study of the Social Functions of Humor among the Staff of a Mental Hospital. *Psychiatry* 23 (1): 81-95

Davies, Christie (1998) The Dog that didn't Bark in the Night: A New Sociological Approach to the Cross-Cultural Study of Humor. In: Ruch, (ed.) *The Sense of Humor*, 293-308.

Lewis, Paul (2006) *Cracking Up: American Humor in a Time of Conflict*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Oring, Elliott (1991) Review of 'Ethnic Humor around the World'. *Humor* 4(1), 109-114.

_____(1992) *Jokes and their Relations*. Lexington: the University Press of Kentucky.

_____(2003) *Engaging Humor*. Urbana; University of Illinois Press.

Ethnic humor and ethnic relations

Ethnic humor is humor about ethnic minority groups. In the Western world, it is probably the most controversial form of humor, and also within humor scholarship, interpretation of ethnic humor is highly contested. This presentation will discuss the meaning and function of ethnic humor in modern societies. In order to understand the variety of meaning ethnic humor can have, we will not only look at jokes, the traditional fare of ethnic humor scholarship, but also at the recent wave of "ethnic comedy" in European television (e.g. Goodness gracious me, Tuerkisch fuer Anfaenger, Shouf Shouf Habibi) in which minority groups participate more actively (and ironically) in ethnic humor, poking fun both at themselves, at stereotypes, and at ethnic relations in society as a whole.

Davies, Christie (1990) *Ethnic Humor around the World: A Comparative Analysis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- _____(1991) Ethnic Humor, Hostility and Aggression: A Reply to Elliott Oring. *Humor* 4 (4), 415-422
- _____(2002) *The mirth of nations*. New Brunswick: Transaction.
- Kuipers, Giseline (2006) The social construction of digital danger: Debating, defusing, and inflating the moral dangers of online humor and pornography in the Netherlands and the United States. *New Media and Society* 8 (3): 379-400.
- Oring, Elliott (1991) Review of 'Ethnic Humor around the World'. *Humor* 4(1), 109-114.

The cultural industry of humor

Much of the humor people encounter in everyday life they encounter through mass media: television comedy, sitcoms, films, cartoons. A whole industry is based on the invention, production, distribution, and translation of humor. The main center of this global industry is in Hollywood, where American television production is located along with movie industry, but there are many other global, regional, and national centers of cultural production. This presentation will explore the nature and organization of this "mass production of humor" as well as the international distribution of American comedy around the world.

- Gitlin, Todd (1994) *Inside Prime Time*. London: Routledge.
- Kuipers, Giseline (2006) Television and taste hierarchy: the case of Dutch television comedy. *Media, Culture & Society* 28 (3): 359-378.

Sharon Lockyer

Sitcoms, Sketch Shows and Mocumentaries: Analysing Television Comedy

Television comedy is often a staple ingredient in domestic and international broadcasting markets. Sitcoms, sketch shows and mocumentaries are usually prominently positioned in television schedules, are immensely popular and financially successful. Studies of television comedy have taken various guises from institutional analyses to genre studies and the examination of the history and development of television comedy. One of the most interesting ways in which television comedy has been examined is in relation to issues surrounding representation and identity politics. This lecture examines how the diverse and, sometimes subversive, representations of gender, class, race and ethnicity have been studied and discussed. The lecture will be illustrated by a range of examples, from *Absolutely Fabulous* and *The Cosby Show*, to *Little Britain* and *The Simpsons*.

- Marc, D. (1989) *Comic Visions: Television Comedy and American Culture*. Unwin Hyman: Boston.
- Medhurst, A., and Tuck, L. (1996). 'Situation Comedy and Stereotyping'. In Corner, J., Harvey, S. (eds.) (1996). *Television Times: A Reader*. London: Arnold. pp. 111-116.
- Mills, B. (2005) *Television Sitcom*. London: British Film Institute.
- Morreale, J. (ed.) (2003) *Critiquing the Sitcom: A Reader*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Borat, Berlusconi and Brass Eye: Exploring the Limits of Humour

Humour in conversations, or on television, or in films can sometimes cause considerable social tension and moral controversy. In recent years examples of humour that has 'gone too far', or has been 'in poor-taste' or simply outright

'offensive' have dominated public debate. But why are people offended by what is, at least ostensibly, intended in fun?; How should they deal with the offence?; What kinds of topics, or comic treatment of topics, cause people to take offence?; Is it ever legitimate to take offence at an item or instalment of comic discourse?; Is it necessarily counter-productive to do so? These are just some of the questions that are raised when we consider the limits of humour. This lecture explores these questions by drawing on illustrations from contemporary television and film, including *Borat!: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*.

- De Sousa, R. (1987) 'When is it Wrong to Laugh?'. In Morreall, J. (ed.) *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*. Albany: State University of New York. pp. 226-249.
- Lockyer, S., and Pickering, M. (2005) 'Introduction: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Humour and Comedy'. In Lockyer, S, and Pickering, M. (eds.) *Beyond a Joke: The Limits of Humour*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. pp. 1-24.

Elliott Oring

Humor in Folklore and Anthropology

An overview of the development of interest in humor in the ethnographic disciplines. The histories of these disciplines are explored emphasizing the role that humor has played in the researches of folklorists and anthropologists. Particular attention is given to practices that remain important today: archiving, indexing, historic-geographic considerations, and the social and cultural contexts of humor.

- Apte, Mahadev L. 1985. *Humor and Laughter*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- Oring, Elliott. 1988. Folklore Methodology and American Humor Research. In *Humor in America: A Research Guide to Genres and Topics*, ed. Lawrence E. Mintz. Pp. 213-230. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

The Analysis of Jokes

On the structure of jokes and other humorous texts. How jokes are organized and what their constant elements seem to be. How jokes are different from other humorous narratives. The various terminologies describing joke structure. The emphasis is on cognitive aspects of the joke—what tellers and their audiences must know and recognize—rather than their emotional qualities.

- Raskin, Victor. 1985. Jokes. *Psychology Today*. October: 34-39.
- Attardo, Salvatore and Victor Raskin. 1991. Script Theory Revis(it)ed: Joke Similarity and Joke Representation Model. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* 4:293-347.
- Oring, Elliott. 1992. Appropriate Incongruity. In *Jokes and Their Relations*. Pp. 1-15. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- _____. 2003. Appropriate Incongruity Redux. In *Engaging Humor*. Pp. 1-12. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Humor as Communication

Humor definitions and theories have focused upon what characterizes a humorous stimulus. But apart from its own funniness, what does a humorous stimulus

communicate? Are serious propositions embedded in humorous communication?
What are the communicative qualities of jokes and other humorous forms in context?
What messages are conveyed by the use of jokes in particular social contexts?

- Emerson, Joan P. 1969. Negotiating the Serious Import of Humor. *Sociometry* 32:169-181.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1960 [1905]. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Norrick, Neal R. 1993. *Conversational Joking: Humor in Everyday Talk*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Oring, Elliott. 2003. Jokes Thoughts. In *Engaging Humor*. Pp. 27-40. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- _____. 2003. The Joke as Gloss. In *Engaging Humor*. Pp. 85-96. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

The Analysis of Repertoire

Certain forms of humorous expression—for example, jokes or songs—often cohere in repertoires in which the expressions are stylistically and/or thematically related to one another. A repertoire may be attached to both individuals and groups, and it is presumed that such repertoires reveal something about the individuals and groups that perform them. How can these repertoires be analyzed, and what is their relation to their performers and audiences?

- Cross, Paulette. 1973. Jokes and Black Consciousness: A Collection with Interviews. In *Mother-Wit from the Laughing Barrel: Readings in the Interpretation of Afro-American Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Davies, Christie. 1990. *Ethnic Humor Around the World: A Comparative Analysis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Oring, Elliott. 1981. *Israeli Humor: The Content and Structure of the Chizbat of the Palmah*. Albany: State University Press of New York Press.
- _____. 1992. Jokes and the Discourse on Disaster. In *Jokes and Their Relations*. Pp. 29-40. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky

The Aesthetics of Joke Performance

Professional comedians may be complemented and rewarded for their comic art, but jokes in their everyday tellings are rarely looked at as artistic performances. Joke telling however, is an art, and accomplished performers may have a very keen sense of their aesthetic techniques and artistic goals. Discussion will center on the aesthetic techniques and artistic goals of particular joke tellers.

- Bauman, Richard. 1986. *Story, Performance, and Event: Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kravitz, Seth, 1977. London Jokes and Ethnic Stereotypes. *Western Folklore* 36:275-301.
- Provenza, Paul and Penn Jillette. 2005. *The Aristocrats*. Thinkfilm. Mighty Cheese Productions.
- Sacks, Harvey. An Analysis of the Course of a Joke's Telling in Conversation. In *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, ed. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer. Pp. 337-353. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Graeme Ritchie

An introduction to humour research

This talk is a very general and gentle introduction to humour research, aimed at complete newcomers to the field. It will consider issues such as “what do humour researchers do?” and “is humour research a discipline in its own right?” Brief mentions will be given to some of the principal application areas and to the most commonly proposed types of theory.

- Attardo, S. (1994) *Linguistic Theories of Humor*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Chapman, A. J. & Foot, H. C. (1996) (Eds.). *Humor and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications*. London: Transaction Publishers. (First published 1976.)
- Martin, R. (2006) *The Psychology of Humor: an integrative approach*. New York: 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.
- HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Computational Humour and Language Skills Development

After an initial brief review of past work on getting computers to create simple jokes, the main part of the talk will be about the STANDUP interactive riddle generator, which was developed recently at three Scottish universities (<http://www.csd.abdn.ac.uk/research/standup>). This software, specially designed for children with language impairment, allows the user to explore words and phrases by building simple puns. There will be a brief demonstration of the software in action, and a report on sessions in which children with language disabilities tried out the program.

- Hulstijn, J. & Nijholt, A. (1996). *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Computational Humor. Twente Workshops on Language Technology 12*. University of Twente, Enschede, NL.
- Ritchie, G. (2004). *The Linguistic Analysis of Jokes*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 10)
- Ritchie, G., Manurung, R., Pain, H., Waller, A., O'Mara, D. (2006) *The STANDUP Interactive Riddle Builder*. IEEE Intelligent Systems 21 (2), March/April. Pp. 67-69.
- Stock, O., Strapparava, C. & Nijholt, A. (2002). *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Computational Humor (TWLT14)*. University of Twente: Enschede, NL.

The methodology of testing humour theories

If we adopt the long-term aim of constructing a rigorous scientific theory of humour, then we have to develop methodologically appropriate working practices for testing potential theories. In this talk we discuss some of the issues and make some suggestions, drawing illustrations where possible from recent humour research.

- Ritchie, G. (2004). *The Linguistic Analysis of Jokes*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 2)
- Ruch, W., Attardo, S., Raskin, V. (1993). Toward an empirical verification of the General Theory of Verbal Humor. *HUMOR*, 6(2), pp. 123-136.
- Vaid, J., Hull, R., Heredia, R., Gerkens, D., Martinez, F. (2003). Getting a joke: the time course of meaning activation in verbal humor. *Journal of Pragmatics* 35, pp. 1431-1449.

Willibald Ruch

Measuring humour traits and states: What instrument to use when and why?

For scholars at the beginning of the planning of their research often the issue arises, what instruments to use for the own project. Shall one use the one with the highest number of subscales? The one, which is most reliable? Is there one to use for all kind of questions? What are the criteria for evaluating tests anyway? 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. The lecture introduces what aspects of humour are being measured, and gives an overview of item formats and answer scales. Furthermore, the most known scales are reviewed and their advantages and shortcomings are discussed. Finally, the issue is addressed what kind of scales should be used for what kind of research questions. Time will be reserved for interaction, as delegates might want to have their problems discussed.

- Martin, R. A. (2007). *The psychology of humor: An integrative approach*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Ruch, W. (1998) (Ed.). *The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
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Humour and laughter: malleable or (genetically) fixed?

Reliable interindividual differences in humour and laughter exist - but where do they come from? How does it come that our senses of humour are so different? Is the sense of humour, or components of it, primarily learned, imitated, or innate - a given (you either have it or not and you can't do anything about it)? Are programmes aimed at improving sense of humour effective? In this lecture we will look at designs of studies that are sensitive to detect environmental and genetic influences and review the results of the few studies that looked at genetic factors in humour and laughter. Those results will be discussed jointly with the results of the published studies on effectiveness of programs of training on the sense of humour.

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- Manke, B. (1998). Genetic and environmental contributions to children's interpersonal humor. In W. Ruch (Ed.), *The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic* (pp. 361-384). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Revell, T. & Lemery, K. (in press). Genetic and environmental influences on the temperamental basis of humor in children. *Humor*.
- Steger, M. F., Hicks, B. M., Kashdan, T. B., Krueger, R. F. & Bouchard Jr., T. J. (in press). Genetic and environmental influences on the positive traits of the values in action classification, and biometric covariance with normal personality. *Journal of Research in Personality*.

Humor as character strength, orientations to happiness, and life satisfaction

The emergence of Positive psychology did introduce a new measure of humor, which conceptualizes humor as a trait of character. Therefore, Positive Psychology provides the framework for studying humor in the context of other strengths of character and of virtues. Furthermore, Positive Psychology is interested in defining and measuring the good life (i.e., orientations to happiness that one can pursue), as well as in satisfaction with life in general. This new framework allows the study of the role of humor in wellbeing in a broader context. The talk will introduce to Positive Psychology, its basic concepts and measures, and give a review of studies examining the relationship of humor and happiness.

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).

Andrea Samson

Humor in fMRI studies

This presentation gives an overview into the field of fMRI studies that attempted to investigate humor processing by means of functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI). fMRI is based on the principle that neural activity goes along with increased blood flow and blood volume. This is due to the fact that for neural activity, additional energy in form of oxygen is needed which is delivered by the blood. As oxygenated and deoxygenated blood has other magnetic properties, the amount of oxygenated blood can be measured by the means of a strong magnet field.

Before fMRI studies on humor were conducted, several studies on humor processing with brain damaged patients came to the result that the right prefrontal cortex is involved in humor processing. Surprisingly, none of the existing fMRI studies found activity in this area, but rather a more left sided network. The main focus of this presentation is on cognitive humor processing and the related areas that are involved during humor processing. Regions involved in affective/emotional processing will be briefly summarized. Several areas will be discussed on the background of the stimuli used in each fMRI experiment. It will also be discussed in which sense fMRI studies can prove or reject aspects of existing humor theories.

Goel, V. & Dolan, R.J. (2001). The functional anatomy of humor: segregating cognitive and affective components. *Nature Neuroscience*, 4, 237-238.

Samson, A.C., Zysset, S., Huber, O. & von Cramon, D.Y. (in submission). Different Logical Mechanisms in Cartoons: an fMRI study. Manuscript.

Shammi, P. & Stuss, D.T. (1999). Humor appreciation: A role of the right frontal lobe. *Brain*, 122, 657-666.

Wild, B., Rhodden, F.A., Grodd, W., & Ruch, W. (2003). Neural correlates of laughter and Humour: A Review. *Brain*, 126, 2121-2138.

Theory of Mind, Empathy and Humor

Is humor processing influenced by abilities such as empathy or Theory of Mind? Theory of Mind can be seen as the cognitive aspect of empathy which describes the ability to attribute mental states such as beliefs, intentions or motivations to others (Premack & Woodruff, 1978). Empathy includes also more emotional components such as empathizing. Some humor models state that the ability of Theory of Mind is necessary to comprehend and appreciate humor (Howe, 2002; Jung, 2003). This presentation gives an overview on the existing studies that addressed these issues: Some studies used questionnaires to measure empathy and sense of humor, others

investigated subjects with minor Theory of mind abilities (patients with the Asperger syndrome or autism) and their performance in humor experiments. Studies that used the method of functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging will also be taken into account. The several approaches come to an inconsistent picture on the relationship of Theory of Mind, empathy and humor. Therefore the influence of the methods to measure empathy, theory of mind and humor as well as the influence of the stimuli used in the experiments will be discussed.

Howe, N.E. (2002). The origin of humor. *Medical Hypotheses*, 59 (3), 252-254.

Jung, W. E. (2003). The Inner Eye Theory of Laughter: Mindreader Signals Cooperator Value. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 1, 214-253.

Lyons, V. & Fitzgerald, M. (2004). Humor in Autism and Asperger Syndrome. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 34, 5, 521-531.

Premack, D. & Woodruff, G. (1978). Does the chimpanzee have a theory of mind? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 4, 515-526.

Are cartoons drawn jokes?

Formal, Aesthetic, and Cognitive Differences to Verbal Humor

(joint presentation -- see Abstract under "Christian Hempelmann")

Eva Ullmann

Joy and Humour at work, more than effective

A general questionnaire from the Gallup Organisation in 2004 had the result that only 16% of Germans are satisfied with their work. That leaves 84% unsatisfied and less motivated. They don't recommend their company to others, have more sickness days and to speak with the Financial Manager: unsatisfied people are much more expensive. What can humour do for people's motivation? How does humour and joy help people to get more strength to do their work? The workshop will start with a presentation about humour at work and the effects of humour on the quality of people's work. Moreover this workshop will tell some stories about institutions who used humour in daily work to motivate their workers, solve conflicts and inspire customers. Members of the workshop will also use and produce some practical "authentic" humor. The workshop also includes questions about what makes the members laugh, which humour inspires every single person, and finishes with a discussion about the usefulness of humour games in a researcher's office.

Farely, Frank; *Provokative Therapy*, Meta Publications Inc. 1994

Morreal John; *Humour Works*; HRD Press Inc. 1997

Watzlawik, Paul; *Anleitung zum unglücklich sein*; Piper Verlag, 2005

Freiberg, Kevin; *Nuts*; Broadway Book, 1998

Höfner, Eleonore; *Das wäre doch gelacht*;

Vorhaus, John; *The Comic Toolbox*; Silmann-James Press, 1994 (German: 2001 bei Zweitausendeins)