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Preface

This special issue of *Eruditio–Educatio* on *Humour in Contemporary Societies* contains nine articles and three reviews by twelve contributors. Some authors have contributed to more than one study or review for this issue. The fact that four of the twelve contributions to this issue are co-authored can be seen as a positive sign of cooperation in the field of humor research.

Thanks to the multifarious disciplinary affiliations and scholarly interests of the authors, this volume encompasses linguistics, literary and communication studies, folklore, sociology, the arts, anthropology, translation, and education. The volume brings together a wide range of contributions on the genres, forms and devices of American, Croatian, Hungarian, Japanese, and Swiss humor, from anti-proverbs to anecdotes, from jokes to folk poetry. Several studies offer insight into the use of humor in various domains of discourse such as literature, translation, the audiovisual media and education, while other studies draw on gender, ethnic, and legal humor. The articles of the issue are listed, perhaps in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. The first part of the volume contains nine articles, while the final part (Reviews) examines three recent books related to humor, published in Hungary, Poland, and the USA. The issue *Humour in Contemporary Societies* contains three cartoons by the famous Hungarian cartoonist and arts researcher Géza Halász.

The thirteen contributors to the volume represent a variety of cultural and language backgrounds. Nearly all of them are linguists or folklorists, some even both; the majority hold PhDs in folklore or linguistics (Melita Aleksa Varga, Péter Barta, Györgyi Géró, Judit Hidasi, Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Anna T. Litovkina, Darko Matovac, and Draženka Molnar). Among the authors of contributions are such established humor researchers as Péter Barta, Judit Hidasi, and Anna T. Litovkina, as well as young PhD and MA students who are now just beginning to undertake humor studies (Peter Zolczer, Erik Dobrovodský, and Melinda Mikusová).

Four contributors reside in Slovakia and are linked to J. Selye University (teachers Andrea Puskás and Peter Zolczer, MA students Erik Dobrovodský and Melinda Mikusová), and one contributor works in Slovakia, at J. Selye University (Anna T. Litovkina). Seven contributors have strong connections to Hungary. Four were born in Hungary and continue to reside there (Péter Barta, Györgyi Géró, Géza Halász, and Judit Hidasi). Moreover, there is one Russia-born (Anna T. Litovkina) and one Bulgaria-born (Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt) contributor who have moved to Hungary. One contributor was born in Slovakia, and works in Slovakia but he is doing his PhD studies in Hungary (Peter Zolczer). Three

contributors (Melita Aleksa Varga, Darko Matovac, and Draženka Molnar) live in Croatia. It might be noted that every contributor to this special issue has at least one thing in common: a love of humor.

As co-editors of the issue, we have wished to reflect the diversity of humor research both in Slovakia, Hungary and Croatia, as well as internationally. We hope that this special issue of *Eruditio–Educatio* on *Humour in Contemporary Societies* will appeal to a wide range of readers: humor researchers, linguists, anthropologists, ethnographers, folklorists, literary scholars, sociologists, psychologists, cultural historians, film critics, translators, and others interested in humor. We also hope that the reader will enjoy reading the present issue as much as the contributors have enjoyed working on it.

Komárno – Budapest, October 2014

Péter Barta – Anna T. Litovkina – Andrea Puskás – Peter Zolczer

Humor Capsules from Japan

Hidasi, Judit

Abstract: The paper aims at presenting some samples of one-minute Japan related stories which reflect on the culturally specific attitude and mentality of Japanese people – typically different from that of other people's. This selection of short-story grotesques is part of a longer collection of essay-like stories that might as well be called "humor-capsules from Japan for everyday consumption". The grotesque as a genre of humor is a true resonance to the absurdity and controversial nature of our understanding the essence of Japanese uniqueness. The short stories presented here are all pieces of Japanese speakers involved communication discourse, which are not meant to be humorous by the Japanese speakers but are captured as humorous by speakers of other nationalities.

Key words: grotesque, one-minute stories, controversial effect, humor, Japanese communication

1. The motivation

In order to communicate in Japanese, the knowledge of the language is necessary but not quite sufficient – as is in fact the case with practically all languages, but the extent and the nature of this phenomenon is characteristically unique in Japan. The following brief anecdote brings the truth of this painfully home:

> (1) One day I was rather late trying to catch a train which was due to leave in a few minutes so I decided to rush straight to the platform which I remembered was the one that westbound trains would normally leave from at the busy Shinjuku-station. I had no time to make enquires of the platform-inspector, so on boarding the train, I turned to the first passenger, a middle-aged Japanese man, and asked him in Japanese:
>
> – *Sumimasen ga, kono densha wa doko e iku'n desu ka?* [Excuse me please, where does this train go?]
>
> – *Wakarimasen*…..[I don't know...]
>
> (Hidasi 1997, 43)

I was a bit taken aback and quite embarrassed at this reply. I did not think I made an error either in grammar or pronunciation, still, something was clearly wrong. The man was already sitting on the train and presumably knew where he was going: why did he then claim not to know? For me, this was a turning point, the incident which turned my attention from the language per se to communication.

2. Culture is Communication, and Communication is Culture

Analyses of case studies show that communication problems between speakers with different backgrounds usually occur not so much for linguistic, but for cultural reasons, because language use normally reflects the cultural and social backgrounds of the speakers. Suffice to think of the concept of communicative competence that was introduced to linguistic literature by Canale and Swain (1980), who in their model distinguish initially three components, as follows: *grammatical competence* (words and rules), *sociolinguistic competence* (appropriateness) and *strategic competence* (appropriate use of communication strategies). The refined version (Canale 1983) added to the above model the element of *discourse competence* (cohesion and coherence). Bachman's notion (1990) of *pragmatic competence*, includes both sociolinguistic and *illocutionary* competence. *Strategic competence* in its turn is associated with the interlocutors' ability in using communication strategies (Faerch – Kasper 1983).

The cultural conventions or "frames" that in fact guide linguistic and communicative behavior are difficult to perceive in successful acts of communication, they are best studied when dysfunction occurs. In other words, it is situations exhibiting cases of miscommunication that are truly worthy of our attention since the underlying cultural motivations are better revealed in instances of discord and misunderstanding. Cross-cultural interaction, therefore, is a fruitful area for this kind of analysis.

In this study some stories will be presented to illustrate some specific problems that occur in the communication with Japanese. These stories are humorous, but not intentionally: the Japanese interlocutors are not even aware of the fact, that their verbal or non-verbal behavior or reaction might evoke a humorous effect with non-Japanese.

The conflict in communication between Japanese and non-Japanese speakers (irrespective of the language used) often comes from the fact that the conversation partners attach different meanings to the verbal or non-verbal communication behavior.

> (2) In the lobby of a luxury hotel in Europe, a Japanese tourist accidentally knocked over a valuable vase. Alerted by the crash, the hotel manager rushed forth from his office and the Japanese tourist met him with a smile, deep bows and apologies. The manager told him the extent of the damage which he caused to the hotel – at which point, the tourist started giggling. The manager's face darkened at this. In the meantime, the tourist's wife also joined them and she, too, started giggling. Seeing this, the European manager grew red in the face and increasingly indignant, he restated the claim for damages and named a sum of money. To his greatest surprise, the tourist accepted this at once and paid up without complaints.
>
> (Hidasi 2008, 103)

During the incident, the European manager exhibited palpable indignation that the Japanese guest tried to "giggle the whole thing away." Of course, this was not the case, since the tourist unquestioningly paid for the damages. In this particular situation, the smile and the giggles were used to conceal extreme embarrassment and to defuse a shameful situation. If the hotel manager had known that Japanese people use smiles and laughter to vent their anger and frustration, he would not have misinterpreted the situation. In European cultures, people often employ humor to vent their anger or frustration. In this given situation a European would have likely tried to make a joke of the situation or tried to haggle over the amount of money involved. Japanese people simply employ a different device for the same.

Differences in communication styles and patterns can be attributed to cultural differences, in particular to *differences in cultural values*. The greater this difference, the higher the probability of difference in communication behavior. And the greater the differences in communication behavior, the higher the potential of misunderstandings.

Bearing in mind the existing differences between cultural values of Japanese and non-Japanese speakers, it is only natural that there would be a lot of divergences in communication styles. Although some recent studies based on comparative cross-cultural surveys (Matsumoto 2002) have found that there is a definite shift in values of the Japanese towards values traditionally attributed to Western cultures, these changes so far are traceable mostly on the level of consciousness, but few of them are manifesting themselves on the level of behavior. The ones for instance who confess a strong preference for individualism over collectivism would often behave in real-life situations differently and follow collectivistic behavior patterns. This can be very well seen in decision making situations.

(3) Jenny: *How did the meeting go last night?*
Tomoko: *It was a very useful discussion.*
Jenny: *How so?*
Tomoko: *We all talked. And Mr. Takeda explained his reservations about the proposal.*
Jenny: *Did anyone else agree with him?*
Tomoko: *No. He was the only one who has some doubts.*
Jenny: *Then we won the vote.*
Tomoko: *Oh, there was no vote, of course. We postponed it.*

(Storti 1994, 53)

It is difficult for foreigners to comprehend the mechanism of consensus-based decision making that is still the rule in most working environments in Japan. If one only heard the words spoken in a meeting, one would expect a fast and smooth decision respecting the will of the majority. But the real messages are often left unuttered and that makes foreigners confused.

> (4) An American on leaving a project meeting with his Japanese colleagues expressed his satisfaction:
> *– I am glad that the group has agreed on version B.*
> *– But Johnson-san, we decided to accept version A.*
> *– You must be kidding: I heard you all saying that version B was better.*
> *– You may have heard the words, but must have missed the pauses… –*
> explained his Japanese colleague.
>
> (Hidasi 2008, 85)

As this anecdote suggests, not only spoken messages are significant in verbal communication, but so are the ones left unsaid. Unspoken messages are as important parts of communication as verbalized ones. The pause, the moment of silence inserted into the flow of communication can be of various types and have a variety of functions in other languages as well but in Japanese culture, it is especially significant. The real message is very often carried by the *ma* – the pause inserted into the flow of words. Foreigners unskilled in the techniques of *ishin denshin* (telepathy, tacit understanding, thought transfer) and *haragei* (visceral communication, 'belly language') fall victim to this as they fail to negotiate the signals of meta-communication and fail to understand the message properly. "*Haragei* and *ishin denshin* are both methods of exchanging thoughts and feelings in an implicit way. However, they differ in that *ishin denshin* happens unintentionally, while *haragei* is created by a person`s will. Under the influence of *ishin denshin*, both a speaker and a listener can understand what the other is thinking and wants to say because they have similar experiences and backgrounds. In contrast, when *haragei* is used, people deliberately try to either transmit or catch hidden messages in conversation. *Ishin denshin* takes no effort, but *haragei* is a conscious attempt to communicate underlying meanings." (Davies – Ikeno 2002, 105)

Quite often the difficulty of understanding comes not from spoken or unspoken words but from the comprehension of the entire communication situation. This is certainly a case of well-hidden messages. Let us see an example.

> (5) An artist from Poland was invited out to dinner by his Japanese colleagues. Three of them picked him up at his hotel and on the way to the restaurant they were talking in the car. They asked him what sort of food he liked, and he explained that his favorite was Italian cuisine, but that he liked Chinese cooking as well.
> – *And what about Japanese sushi?* – they asked him.
> – *Well, you know, I have tried it, but since I don't very much like fish, it was difficult for me to swallow raw fish* – he said.
> All three of his hosts then roared with laughter, but he had hardly finished speaking this when they landed up at an exclusive sushi-bar.
>
> (Hidasi 2005, 171)

This informant recalled how embarrassed he became when he understood that he had been taken to a sushi-bar. Had he known beforehand, he would not have admitted that he did not like raw fish, since he did not intend to offend his hosts. The hosts became embarrassed too; this was clear from their laughter. The European visitor was not cautious enough in his response. He did not realize the "social function" of the question, but took it at its face value, that is, at its "informational function" and accordingly gave a straightforward answer. He did so not only because he did not feel the need for tact in such a trivial topic as food, but because in a European environment if someone is asked about preferences in food, the purpose is to choose a restaurant accordingly. Actually this often happens in Japan as well, but responses are taken into account only if made prior to arrangements. But in this particular case, the group of three had already decided to take their guest to a Japanese restaurant. Having the best intentions, they wished to treat him to quality Japanese food. Once decided on, the venue could not be changed abruptly, since a new consensus would have had to be reached for the change, but under the circumstances there was no time for this.

All the above cases of miscommunication have involved the manifestation of some fundamental cultural values prevalent in Japanese society: *collectivism, group-orientation* and *consensus-seeking.*

3. What is the function of communication?

Not only are there divergent communication styles in the world, but the function of communication also differs from culture to culture – people expect different things from communication. Whereas in the West, the main function of communication is *information presentation* and *information exchange*, in Japanese communication this function is frequently only secondary. The primary function of communication in Japan is *to maintain and enhance human relationships.* This in its turn – as can be expected – is a culture driven requirement: smooth

human relationships and communication supporting these relationships are of primary value. For the sake of this, the Japanese are ready to sacrifice their individual preferences or conveniences. This brings me to the important point that communication strategies differ. And people's *attitudes towards communication strategies also differ.* Let us consider this example.

> (6) After a demanding day of a scientific conference a group of professors moved to a nearby restaurant for drinks and dinner. They occupied their seats with great noise and started to put their orders with the waiters without delay.
> – *I would like to have rye bread, not the soft white one* – announced the Canadian member.
> – *Hai, kashikomarimashita*… [Yes madame, understood] – whispered the young waiter.
> The meals and drinks were delicious, and the international company were seemingly enjoying themselves. Our young waiter disappeared from sight. With the dessert and the coffee concluding, the company was just about to leave, when the young waiter reappeared in great rush from outside the street and handed over the Canadian guest a nicely wrapped bag.
> – *Here you are, the rye-bread, please*.

Japanese communicators are famous of their skill in avoiding saying 'no'. Particularly so in a customer – provider situation, and particularly so in Japan, where the number one rule of the service industry is that "the customer is god". A waiter cannot say 'no' to a cherished guest. So no matter what happens, wishes of the customer must be satisfied – even at the sake of inconveniences like hunting around the neighborhood shops for rye-bread.

> (7) On a rather stormy day the ski-slopes were getting gradually empty by early afternoon. So it was a real relief to see a figure approaching whom I could ask about the exact time:
> – *Do you have a watch please?*
> – *Yes, I do*… – and off he slid.

This is a clear violence of the conversation maxims – at least in the European sense – but the situation is even more complex on the level of pragmatic discourse in the next story.

> (8) I was still new in the neighborhood, when on a sunny Saturday morning I started out on my bike to discover the location of the post office. I stopped at the small local train-station and asked for instructions.
> – *You are asking the post-office? Well, you turn left at the next cross and then the second street on your right.*
> – *Thank you! – and added in explanation: – you know I have to send some books home.*

– I understand. To America right?
– No, no…to Europe…Hungary
– I see… – came the respond hesitantly.
– By the way, is it open on Saturdays?
– No, it never is in our town.

Certain communication styles that end up in miscommunication or misunderstanding might lead to tension and frustration. This, in its turn, often results in *negative stereotyping*. This is why there is much more at stake at an intercultural communication setting than simple comprehension on the level of information exchange. Communication is expected to be satisfying on the level of emotions and attitudes as well. Communication is considered to be satisfying for European or North American interlocutors if the information is provided in an efficient way. On the other hand, communication is considered to be satisfying for Japanese interlocutors if they succeed in avoiding conflict and maintaining good human relationships. This difference results in a different attitude to and a different interpretation of what "successful communication" is.

4. Conclusion

There are some deeply rooted principles of national cultural behavior which, when understood, provide us with certain clues to patterns of communication. Once we are conscious of these, we are already one step closer to an understanding of them, and hence to the correct interpretation of their meaning in the context of intercultural communication. What we are aspiring to attain through the study of these processes is an adequate and proper interpretation of certain communication situations, and, consequently, the avoidance of friction, misunderstandings, and communication breakdowns on all levels of interaction, whether in academic, business or every-day setting. In this brief account of critical incidents it was not possible for me to analyze the interrelations of culture and communication in a Japanese context to a depth and detail the subject would really require and deserve. What I in fact aspired though to do here was to touch upon some of the directions of analysis that might make it easier for us to fully understand differences in communication.

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Caricature by Géza Halász

The Basel Carnival
Where Folklore Meets Humour

Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Hrisztalina

Abstract: The present paper aims to show that – contrary to the popular belief – the Swiss actually do have a sense of humour. However, it will not be the "general" Swiss humour but rather the local Basel humour that will be discussed here. During *Fasnacht*, the traditional annual festival that takes place in Basel towards the end of winter or at the beginning of spring, numerous *Cliquen* (associations or clubs) present their *Sujets* (themes). They elaborate in a playful and satirical way on the most important events in local life, sports, culture and politics that took place during the last year. For this reason, each *Clique* composes a satirical poem, printed on a long strip of paper (*Zeedel*) which explains and comments on the Sujets in the Basel dialect. In order to illustrate the sophisticated and unique Basel humour there will be several Zeedels analyzed in the course of the paper.

Key words: Swiss sense of humour, local humour, modern folklore, Basel Carnival, *Zeedel* (satirical poems)

1. Introduction

Experts in the field of intercultural communication and foreigners who have spent a relatively long period of their lifetime in Switzerland argue that the Swiss do not really have a sense of humour. In scientific articles and specialized books dealing with the issue, the Swiss are usually described as dull and boring people who extremely rarely tell a joke, but rather prefer "not to understand" an ironic remark than to react to it, and who never guffaw (see Bilton 2007, 13; Küng 1996, 185; Ódor 2007, 215–217).

This not quite positive picture arises most probably from the fact that there is actually no such thing as a "general Swiss humour". Switzerland is a federal state consisting of 26 cantons. Each canton has its own constitution, legislature, government, courts, and is politically, legally, economically and culturally quite sovereign. Hence, it is not surprising that both the self-image and the sense of humour of the Swiss are marked by regionalism. For instance, the people living in North-western Switzerland (e.g. in the cantons Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft) do not only speak a different language, but they also comprehend humour in a somewhat different way compared to the residents of Ticino or Geneva. However, neither of them can be labelled as humourless. Getting to know them closely, one would notice that besides their multifaceted sense of humour, the Swiss possess a significant degree of self-irony. Most of the times when joking, they actually laugh at themselves (cf. Schweizer Humor).

The main objective of the present paper is to test (and eventually to prove) the latter assertion. Our hypothesis is that the Swiss do have a sense of humour but it is rather locally than generally articulated, and that it manifests itself, among others, in the modern Swiss folklore. We are going to test the hypothesis by analysing several *Zeedel* (strips of paper containing satirical poems) from *Fasnacht*[1], the traditional carnival that takes place in Basel annually.

2. The Basel Carnival as a Part of the Modern Swiss Folklore

According to the American Folklore Society the word *folklore* names an enormous and deeply significant dimension of culture which includes, among others, folk traditions – the things that people traditionally believe, do, know, make or say. However, folklore is not anymore something that is simply old, old-fashioned or dying out. Though folklore connects people to their past, it is also a central part of life in the present (cf. American Folklore Society).

In this context, the Basel Carnival, the so-called Basler Fasnacht, can be described as a living tradition and as a part of the modern Swiss folklore. The Fasnacht traditionally takes place in the City of Basel, Switzerland, towards the end of the winter or at the beginning of spring (depending on the date of Easter) and lasts for exactly three days – from Monday at 4 am till Thursday at 4 am. Although Fasnacht has its roots in medieval times, it has been celebrated this way for only 80 years (see Habicht 2001, 75).

Fasnacht is traditionally prepared and performed by the *Cliques*[2]. In autumn already, the members of the Clique sit down to debate and decide about the *Sujet*[3] which is to be presented during the next year's Fasnacht. Once the question is settled, the Clique's artists start to design the costumes and masks; the lantern-painter provides the first sketches, and the Clique's poet sets to work on the Zeedel, on which they explain the Sujet in a form of a satirical poem. From the Clique's point of view, the parade (held on Monday and Wednesday afternoon) is the highlight of Fasnacht. Here they have a platform to present their Sujet and to hand out their Zeedel to the visitors of the Carnival (Habicht 2001, 41–42). Due to the fact that their faces are hidden behind their mask, the members of the Cliques feel free to hold a mirror up to the authorities, and to criticise them in a humorous and often satirical way (see Fasnachts-Comité 2013, 9).

1 *Fasnacht* is the Swiss-German dialect word for "carnival".
2 A *Clique* is an association or a club which functions as strong personal network and plays an important role in the social life of the city (cf. Habicht 2001, 40).
3 In Basel dialect the word *Sujet* is used in the sense of "topic", "theme".

According to statistics, there are usually between 11 000 and 12 000 masked participants who belong to different Cliques and to other Fasnacht groups as, for instance, big brass bands (*Gugge*), decorated wagons (*Wääge*), etc. (cf. Fasnachts-Comité 2014, 21). They are all eager to present their *Sujet* and to express their opinion on it in front of a wide audience.

3. Fasnacht Sujets

Fasnacht is the opportunity to let off steam. That is why the Cliques use the occasion to satirize anything that has gone wrong during the last one year. Anything that has drowned the public attention can become a Sujet, and is going to be critically commented or made fun of. With a lot of esprit and irony, the Cliques comment on people, institutions and events which have upset them in one or another way. Local themes, of course, are the favourites. So is the local government or the public transportation system. One thing which will always become a subject of the satire is the Swiss financial politics. Due to the increasing globalisation, topics like the NSA scandal or the computerisation of the world can also become targets of the Fasnacht humour (cf. Habicht 2001, 43).

However, there is a rule which should be strictly kept by all the Cliques – Sujets insulting minorities, other human races or religions, or implying sexual innuendos are declared taboo (cf. Fasnachts-Comité 2013, 25). During the Basel Fasnacht, humour, irony and satire are welcomed and even expected, but no joke is allowed to hit below the belt line.

4. The Basel Sense of Humour

As mentioned above, the audience in a way expects from the Cliques to interpret their theme with a lot of humour or rather with a lot of Basel humour. But how can one define the term "Basel humour"?

The Swiss-born publicist, poet and writer Roger Bonner describes the Basel sense of humour as the one which comes the closest to the British humour. It is full of understatement, self-irony and satire (Bonner 2007, 46). However, it is important to mention that the Basel humour is never crude or loud. It is rather of the intelligent kind: witty and sophisticated and (ever so often) very black[4] (cf. Habicht 2001, 45).

The Basel sense of humour is unparalleled in Switzerland or in other German-speaking countries. The residents of Basel have been known in the rest of Switzerland as people with a very sharp tongue who joke in their own, very unique and somehow peculiar way. And this concept seems to be proved true during Fasnacht – the ideal platform to exercise the "exclusive" Basel sense of humour.

4 Black humour juxtaposes morbid or ghastly elements with comical ones that underscore the senselessness or futility of life (cf. Encyclopaedia Britannica).

5. Zeedels and Humour

The Fasnacht humour is presented, among others, in a form of satirical poems printed on colourful strips of paper, and is not always easy to understand; therefore it is not always enjoyed by all the visitors. There are two main reasons for this. On one hand, it requires a lot of background knowledge. If someone is not familiar with the people, institutions and events of local interest, s/he has only a very little chance to comprehend the Sujet, to appreciate its presentation and to laugh at it. On the other hand, the poems on the Zeedels are composed in Basel dialect which causes tremendous difficulties even to the German visitors. In spite of all this, it is not very likely that the tradition would be changed. The explanation for this paradox was given more than 200 years ago by the priest Jacob Probst. He defined the Basel spirit as an *esprit moqueur* (a mocking spirit). According to Probst, one can joke and jeer solely in Basel dialect. One might use standard German only if it comes to a serious issue (cf. Schneider 1986, 293).

In what follows, we are going to examine carefully three Sujets, presented during Fasnacht in March 2014 – the subject of one is of local, the other of national and the third of international importance. For this purpose, there will be several Zeedels analysed. In all the three cases, the reader will be provided with the needed background information concerning the topic addressed in the poem. For better understanding, the cited parts will be translated into English. In the course of the discussion, special emphasis will be put on elaborating the different humour techniques used by the Cliques' poets when composing the satirical poems.

5.1. Local Topics: *Club de Bâle*

In 2014, there were approximately 200 different Zeedels handed out to visitors during the two *Fasnacht* parades (see -minu 2014). More than a dozen of them addressed the same issue – the exclusive private member club *Club de Bâle* which opened its doors on August 1, 2014.

From the very beginning, *Club de Bâle* was meant to become the most elite private club in the city, following the model of similar associations in London and Zürich. According to the original concept, one had to be personally invited by the Executive Board in order to become a member. The founders of the club had the vision of convincing approximately 100 prominent residents of Basel to join them and to pay the annual membership fee of 12 000 Swiss Franks. They also had an extra ace up their sleeve – *Club de Bâle* would be located in a very beautiful historical building on the banks of the river Rhine. However, they did not count on the negative reaction of the Basel prominence. Numerous famous and influential individuals rejected the invitation. The local columnist -minu who also refused to join the "elite", delivered the probably most accurate

explanation for the reaction of the Basel VIPs: "The club does not fit the Basel mindset. The old wealthy Basel families do not like to show what they have. They contribute willingly but do not speak about it in public" (see lha).

Although the *Club de Bâle* has not been open yet, it became one of the central Sujets of Fasnacht 2014. Numerous Zeedels mirror the negative public opinion on the topic. When expressing their thoughts and feelings about the club several Clique poets used irony[5], thereby causing a humorous effect. They, for instance, broached the issue of the constant competition between Basel and Zürich and their efforts to become the more interesting, unusual, fancy or, in other words, the better city to live in:

> *Normal sy isch fir uns e Qual:*
> *Zem Gligg gitts jetzt dr Club de Bâle.*
> [To be normal is quite an agony for us:
> But fortunately, we have now *Club de Bâle*]
>
> (Clique Lumpeditti 1987)

> *Waas Ziiri macht – daas isch jo glaar –*
> *veränderet die halbi Wält!*
> [There is no doubt that what Zürich does,
> Changes half of the word.]
>
> (Rätz-Clique Alti Gardi)

The Cliques sound ironically also when commenting on the potential club staff:

> *Firs Wohl von dinne und digge Ränze*
> *wird dr Wicky denn am Kochtopf glänze.*
> *Fir ihn lauft d Umstellig zimmlig glatt:*
> *vom Altersheim zwor zrugg in d Stadt.*
> [Wicky will shine beside the cooking pot;
> And he will care for the wealth of small and big bellies.
> In his case, the change happened quite smoothly:
> He moved from the nursing home to the city.]
>
> (Basler Rolli Stammclique)

5 Irony is a language device in which the real meaning is concealed or contradicted by the literal meanings of the words (verbal irony). […] Verbal irony arises from a sophisticated or resigned awareness of contrast between what is and what ought to be […]. (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

When the simple irony does not seem to be enough for expressing the indignation of the poets, they tend to add a satirical[6] bite to their poems. This is the case when speaking about the famous Basel architect, Jacques Herzog, who designed many buildings in his hometown:

> Dr Schaggi Herzog findets gspässig
> *(und isch sogar e bitzli hässig):*
> *Är gieng doch zum e Club nit aane,*
> *wo-n-är dr Ubau nit kenn plaane.*
> [Jacques Herzog thinks it is odd
> (And he is even a little angry):
> He wouldn't join a club
> which has not been designed by him.]
>
> (Pfyffer- und Tambouregruppe Die Antygge)

Some poets generate a humorous effect by deploying puns. For instance, we can witness how an extra connotation of the German word *Stück*[7] can be used for achieving this effect:

> *Und im Nääbezimmer dien die Ryyche*
> *Denn ihri beschte Stigg verglyyche.*
> *„Wäär hett dr Diggschd?" – S liggt uff dr Hand:*
> *Me reedet doo vom Kontostand!*
> [The rich ones are sitting in the adjoining room
> And they are comparing their best pieces.
> Who has the thickest one(s)? – It is obvious:
> We are speaking about the account balance!]
>
> (Waage Rhyhafe Waggis)

5.2. Topics of National Interest: The Financial Situation of the Swiss Middle Class

As previously mentioned, there are also Fasnacht Sujets dealing with subjects of national importance. Compared to the local themes, they are significantly underrepresented. However, the Swiss issues are by tradition an integral part of the Basel carnival and should not be disregarded in the course of this study either.

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6 Satire is artistic form, chiefly literary and dramatic, in which human or individual vices, follies, abuses, or shortcomings are held up to censure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony, parody, caricature, or other methods, sometimes with an intent to inspire social reform (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

7 *Stück* means originally "a piece of something". In the idiom *mein bestes Stück* ("my best piece") it gets an extra connotation, meaning "penis".

The Zeedel of the *Ammedysly-Wageclique* and the *Wettstai-Clique* focuses on the current financial situation of the middle class in Switzerland. It is a matter of fact that for the last few years the Swiss average earners have had to pay higher and higher taxes and have not received any benefits from the state. In contrast, the low-income earners and the unemployed ones have been granted numerous subventions; the very wealthy ones, on the other side, have benefitted from the tax incentives. Surveys dealing with the subject have shown that currently, the Swiss middle class is in a more difficult situation than before the financial crisis of 2008. There is a concern that this trend will not be reversed in the foreseeable future (see Zucker 2012).

In their poem, the two Cliques who joined forces during Fasnacht 2014 make some ironic remarks related to the unenviable situation of the middle class:

> *Syt Joore griegsch du glychvyl Lohn*
> *D Grankenkasse aber styggt rasant*
> *klar gits bi dir au kai Subvention*
> *will du gheersch zem Mittelstand.*
> [You have had the same income for years
> But your health insurance has grown rapidly
> Of course, there is no a subvention for you
> Because you belong to the middle class.]
>
> *Die am undere Ykommensrand*
> *däne isch es au egal*
> *s zahlt zem Gligg dr Mittelstand*
> *ihri Prämie und Styre, ganz banal.*
> [The low-income earners
> Do not care
> Fortunately, the middle class is paying
> Their premiums and taxes; the situation is quite trivial.]

Sporadically, the poets use also satire for expressing their disapproval:

> *Wenn du dä Täggscht do verstoosch*
> *bisch vermuetlig au im Club drby*
> *und sparsch, wenn d uff dy Örtli goosch*
> *mit dem Zeedel s Babyr grad y.*
> [If you understand this text
> Then, most probably, you belong to the club
> And when using lavatory
> You save toilette paper by using this *Zeedel*]

The image of the water runs like a golden thread through the whole poem. The authors use either expressions containing the word itself or implicate the image in one or another way, thus referring to the erstwhile easy-going years of the middle class which are now slowly fading away like the running water.

The first hint to this idea can be found in the title of the poem, which is expressed with a pun, namely *Quo v(b)adis Mittelstand?* [(Where) do you go bathing, middle class?] At this point, the reader has to be familiar with the figurative meaning of the German expression *baden gehen* (*go bathing*), namely "to fail", "to have no success". This idiom describes quite precisely the situation of the Swiss middle class.

In addition, one of the verses contains a figurative expression including the word "water". The German idiom *jemandem steht das Wasser bis zum Hals* [*be in deep water*] is used when referring to somebody who is in a difficult situation which is hard to deal with:

> *Vyl hesch zwor nid in dynere Hand*
> *mit hän leider nid meh z biete als*
> *dä Fötzel. Uns, em zahlend Mittelstand,*
> *stoot nämmlig s Wasser bis zem Hals!*
> [You have no power of decision
> And we can't give you anything but this shred.
> We, the paying middle class,
> Are in deep water now.]

Finally, the last verse of the poem makes the whole concept round by using two idiomatic expressions, the imagery of which arises from the semantic domain of 'water'. Firstly, the poets deploy the idiom *etwas geht den Bach runter* [*go down the tubes*] when alluding to the Swiss middle class. Secondly, they refer to the very beginning of the Zeedel and repeat once again the question they have asked in the title:

> *S goot dr Bach ab, sag y numme*
> *Guete Nacht und sali miteinand!*
> *S goot nimm lang und denn isch umme*
> *Quo v(b)adis Mittelstand?*
> [I can only say: Everything goes down the tubes
> Good night and bye to everybody!
> Soon it will be all over
> (Where) do you go bathing, middle class?]

5.3. International Issues: The NSA Scandal

Due to increasing globalisation, the Cliques chose quite frequently more general topics for their Sujets. The NSA scandal, for instance, was one of the most popular themes during Fasnacht 2014. Previously, the Swiss media reported in detail about the US National Security Agency (NSA for short) collecting telephone records of tens of millions of Americans, and how its staff tapped directly into the servers of numerous companies including Facebook, Google, Microsoft and Yahoo to track online communication. The Swiss were informed about the claims that the NSA had also spied on EU offices in the US and Europe, and had even eavesdropped on German Chancellor Angela Merkel's mobile phone. The whole situation became even more peculiar when Merkel discussed the matter by phone with US President Barack Obama. He assured her that her calls were not being monitored now and that it would not happen in the future. But the White House did not deny bugging her phone in the past (cf. BBC News US & Canada).

The Clique *Fasnachtsgesellschaft Giftschnagge* elaborates on the subject in a very original way. What immediately catches the attention of the reader is the pun in the title of the poem. The Clique poets have modified Barack Obama's presidential campaign slogan from 2008 (*Yes, we can*) by adding an initial letter to the word *can*. The result is a very witty hint to the NSA scandal: *Yes, we scan*.

Another pun can be found immediately at the beginning of the poem. The poets quote the first two lines of a famous German children's song about a *Wanze* ("true bug"). Though the song is quoted literally, the mention of Angela Merkel in the second part of the verse activates another meaning of the polysemous word *Wanze*, namely "bugging device". In this way, the authors emphasise once again what the real subject of the poem is:

> *Auf der Mauer, auf der Lauer sitzt 'ne kleine Wanze...*
> *Lueg doch mol die Wanze aa, wie die Wanze danze kaa*
> *Loost mit grosse Oohre zue, losst au d Merkel nit in Rueh*
> *Kennt gar ihri ghaime Blään, sait verschmitzt, hejoo, we scan!*
> [A small true bug is sitting on the wall and is observing…
> Look at the true bug, look how nicely she can dance
> She eavesdrops with her big ears and does not let Merkel alone
> She even knows her (Merkel's) secret plans and says whimsically smiling:
> hey, we scan.]

The poets add to their interpretation of the topic some local flavor, too. They draw parallels between the NSA scandal and the "Fasnacht-Sujet-affair" that took place in Basel shortly before Christmas, 2013. As it turned out, one of the Cliques published on a special homepage the Sujets of several other clubs, when these should have been revealed just at the very beginning of Fasnacht. This act created a real scandal in Basel, since it is a matter of honor to keep the

topics secret. However, the *Fasnachtsgesellschaft Giftschnagge* addresses the subject with humour; we can even witness a bite of self-irony between the lines of the poem:

> *E Raune, jä en Uffschrey goht aafangs Joor au dur Basel-Stadt:*
> *„Uff fasnachtsleaks.org findsch alli Sujets!" – isch das nit glatt?*
> *Du mainsch, jetzt wurde, ganz ungeniert, scho d Fasnachtsverain ussspioniert!?*
> *S' isch halb so wild, merggsch resigniert, vyl findsch dert nit, wo intressiert.*
> [In the beginning of the year, a whisper or an outcry goes around the City of Basel:
> You can find all the Sujets on fasnachtsleaks.org, isn't that funny?
> What you say is that somebody has spied without inhibition on Fasnacht!?
> However, you realize that it is not that bad – he wouldn't find so many interesting things.]

As the previous example shows, the poets do not value very highly the importance of the Fastnacht Sujets. At the very end of the poem they repeatedly stress what their opinion on the subject is by making an ironical remark:

> *Mir hoffe jetzt – und das wär edel*
> *D NSA scännt au unsere Zeedel!*
> [We are hoping now – and it would be noble -
> That NSA would scan also our Zeedel]

Conclusion

The analysis of several selected Fasnacht Zeedels has proved our hypothesis, namely that the Swiss actually do possess a sense of humour. In fact, it is rather the local Basel sense of humour which can be witnessed during Fasnacht. The central themes picked up and presented by the Cliques are mostly of local interest. When interpreting them, the Clique poets follow the tradition and use the Basel dialect, deploying figurative language and a lot of puns. As previously assumed, the main features of the Basel humour are the irony, the witty sarcasm and – what makes it unique – the self-irony. Let us conclude the paper with a quotation from Alex Poter, adding an extra – artistic – note to the findings of the study:

"So, if you ever come to Switzerland, feel free to have a good time and laugh with all the Swiss. When you least expect it, they might just laugh with you. Then you'll see that the bankers and all the rest of them only look serious because they always try very hard to hide all that good chocolate stuck on their teeth" (Poter 1996, 168).

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"Behind Every Man Who Lives Within His Income Is a Wife Who Doesn't"

The Figure of Wife as Revealed Through Anglo-American Anti-Proverbs

T. Litovkina, Anna

Abstract: Proverbs have never been considered sacrosanct; on the contrary, they have frequently been used as satirical, ironic or humorous comments on a given situation. Wolfgang Mieder has coined the term "Antisprichwort" (anti-proverb) for such deliberate proverb innovations. In the present study I am going to explore the nature of women in the role of wife as revealed through Anglo-American anti-proverbs. The study will also make an attempt to analyze the surface meanings of the anti-proverbs with a view to establishing the image of the wife, her qualities, attributes and behaviors. My discussion is organized in eight sections.

Key words: anti-proverb, proverb, wife, Anglo-American, role, parody, stereotype

0. Introduction

0.1. Women in the role of wife in proverbs from around the world

A cursory glance at any collection of proverbs of various nations instantly reveals many striking similarities between proverbs about women (in particular, wives).[1] Many of them, no matter from which culture, sometimes even have almost identical meaning and wording, and devalue, discriminate and undermine wives. Let the proverbs below speak for themselves (for more on proverbs about wives from around the world, see Schipper 2003, 169–173):

> Girls are beautiful, sweet and tender; where do all those wicked wives come from? (Russian)
> From a garment flutters a moth and from a woman her wickedness; better the wickedness of a man than a woman's virtue. (Hebrew)
> Woman is more wicked than the Devil. (Bulgarian)
> As long as she is with her mother, kind as a lamb; as soon as she has got a husband, she pulls out a long tongue. (Serbian/Croatian)
> There is only one wicked wife and every man supposes he has got her. (Dutch)
> It is difficult to rule a bad wife as it is hard thing to climb a fierce horse. (Chinese)
> A bad wife ruins a family. (Chinese).

1 I owe much gratitude to Fionnuala Carson Williams for her friendly help in proofreading the study, her critical comments, and suggestions.

As many contemporary studies have also pointed out, proverbs about women from whatever country and tradition contain sexism and antifeminism (on women in American proverbs, see Kerschen 1998 and Rittersbacher 2002; on women in Polish proverbs, see Perlinska 1996; on women in Yoruba proverbs, see Daniel 2008; Yusuf 1995, 1997, 1999; on women in Turkish proverbs, see Kansu-Yetkiner 2006; on women, sex and marriage, in Moroccan proverbs, see Webster 1982; on women in proverbs from around the world, see Schipper 2003). Yusuf, in his analysis of the way proverbs are used to show the philosophical and conceptual view of marriage in the English and Yoruba worlds concludes that both the cultures view marriage as an "essentially male-serving institution and yet claim that marriage diminishes a man's happiness and increases his exposure to destruction" (Yusuf 1999, 55). What is the agent of this destruction? Naturally, the female, the greatest enemy of man and "a necessary evil". One could also use such compendia as Thiselton-Dyer's *Folk-lore of Women* (1906) and make them applicable to our discussion: "What sort of thing is marriage?" "Daughter, it is spinning, bearing children, and weeping." (Thiselton-Dyer 1906, 147). American culture is not different with regard to the proverbial treatment of women. Let us have a look just at a few examples expressing prevailing negative attitudes toward wives: *He who has a wife has a master; It is a good man that never stumbles, and a good wife that never grumbles; Two good days for a man in his life: when he weds, and when he buries his wife; Never praise your wife until you have been married ten years; When a man takes a wife, he ceases to dread hell; A good maid sometimes makes a bad wife* (see Kerschen 1998, 22–30; Mieder et al. 1992, 653–655).

Summarizing his chapter on American proverbs about wives and marriage, Kerschen stresses that "this entire discussion could be reduced to the opinion that is expressed by one proverb: "A good wife is a perfect lady in the living room, a good cook in the kitchen, and a harlot in the bedroom." In other words, a wife exists to be of service to her husband as a hostess, cook, and lover. Anything else and she is a troublesome shrew who brings a man only misery" (Kerschen 1998, 22). According to other lessons expressed in American proverbs, an ideal wife should, first of all, diligently and industriously work in order to serve her husband and nurture their children *(Choose a wife on Saturday rather than on a Sunday; A woman's work is never done; Man works from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done)*. She should be devoted to her home *(A woman's place is in the house; A woman, a cat, and a chimney should never leave the house; Men build houses; women build homes),* and boost her husband's ego and superiority *(Rule a wife, and have a wife; A wise woman never outsmarts her husband)*. Among qualities she should also possess are modesty, quietness, kindness, faithfulness (for more American proverbs about wives, see Mieder et al. 1992; Kerschen 1998).

0.2. Anti-proverbs

For centuries, proverbs have provided a framework for endless transformation. In the last few decades they have been perverted and parodied so extensively that their variations have been sometimes heard more often than their original forms. Wolfgang Mieder has coined the term "Antisprichwort" (anti-proverb) for such deliberate proverb innovations (also known as *alterations, parodies, transformations, variations, wisecracks, mutations*, or *fractured proverbs*) and has published several collections of anti-proverbs in German and English (for a summary of relevant research, see T. Litovkina and Mieder 2006, 1–54).

Like traditional gems of wisdom, anti-proverbs appear in a broad range of generic contexts, from personal letters to philosophical journals, from public lectures and sermons to songs, from science fiction to comics and cartoons, from fables to poetry. They are also found in great abundance on the Internet, in advertising slogans, in the titles of books and articles, and in magazine and newspaper headlines. Anti-proverbs are commonly quoted in collections of puns, one-liners, toasts, wisecracks, quotations, aphorisms, maxims, quips, epigrams and graffiti. There is no sphere of life where they are not used.

It should be noted that while some anti-proverbs negate the "truth" of the original piece of wisdom completely (for example, *All's unfair in love and war {All's fair in love and war}*[2], the vast majority put the proverbial wisdom only partially into question, primarily by relating it to a particular context or thought in which the traditional wording does not fit. Typically, an anti-proverb will elicit humor only if the traditional proverb upon which it is based is also known. Otherwise, the innovative strategy of communication based on the juxtaposition of the old with the "new" proverb is lost. Anti-proverbs may contain revealing social comments. More often than not, however, being based on mere wordplay or puns, they are playful texts generated primarily for the goal of amusement. All's fair for anti-proverbs: there is hardly a topic that they do not address.

Women is undoubtedly one of the most frequent themes in Anglo-American anti-proverbs. There is a wide range of roles females might play at a certain phase of their lives, for example, infant, daughter, fiancée, bride, wife, mother, grandmother, mother-in-law, widow, divorced woman, spinster, whore, mistress, and many others; and women in all these roles are subjected to mockery in Anglo-American anti-proverbs. Just a few examples:

> If at first you don't succeed, date the boss's daughter. (Esar 1968, 204) {If at first you don't succeed, try, try again}
> Old playboys giving fur coats to young mistresses:
> There's no fuel like an old fuel. (Safian 1967, 51) {There's no fool like an old fool}

2 For the reader's ease all anti-proverbs are followed by their original forms, given in { } brackets.

> The girl who is always a bridesmaid but never a bride, probably has a confirmed bachelor as her fiancé? (Esar 1968, 493) {Always a bridesmaid, never a bride}
> Man proposes, and a mother-in-law opposes. (Esar 1952, 220)
> {Man proposes, God disposes}
> Widows rush in where spinsters fear to tread. (Esar 1968, 865)
> {Fools rush in where angels fear to tread}.

For many centuries, the main goal of females has been to get married–and according to these anti-proverbs they are still portrayed as quite artful in achieving this, see the transformations of the proverb *Give a man enough rope and he will hang himself*:

> Give a man enough rope and he skips; give a woman enough rope, and she makes a marriage knot. (Esar 1968, 692)
> Give a girl enough rope and she'll ring the wedding bell. (McKenzie 1980, 202)

Whenever a chance is given, a woman "makes a marriage knot". The two anti-proverbs above show the eternal struggle between sexes emphasized by the metaphor of the rope. According to these examples the rope connects the women's dominance and the man's acceptance of it, even in spite of his strong resistance.

While a man can easily find a wife, even when he gets old, for a woman finding a husband might soon become 'too late', she turns into a spinster (or old maid), another butt of mockery of anti-proverbs. Indeed, in most societies, including America, where women believed (and many of them still believe) that their true and most important role in society was (and often still is) to get married and have children, anything deviant from this norm was (and often still is) considered abnormal, unfulfilling, suspicious and hopeless:

> Spinsters live longer than married women because where there's hope there's life. (Esar 1968, 759) {Where there's life there's hope}.

The overwhelming majority of Anglo-American anti-proverbs depicting women in a role deal with women as wives.

0.3. The focus of the present study

In the present study I am going to explore the nature of women in the role of wife[3] as revealed through Anglo-American anti-proverbs. The study will also make an attempt to analyze the surface meanings of the anti-proverbs with a view to establishing the image of the wife, her qualities, attributes and behaviors. My discussion is organized in eight sections. The first two sections focus

3 Two studies (see T. Litovkina 2011a; T. Litovkina 2011b) concentrate on discussing the nature of women as revealed through Anglo-American anti-proverbs.

on two main stereotypical traits associated with women in the role of wife as seen in Anglo-American anti-proverbs: while the first section depicts a woman whose main purpose in life should be to serve her husband and children, the second reflects wives' dominant, manipulative, powerful and bossy nature. The third section shows wives' infidelity and unfaithfulness to their husbands, and the fourth demonstrates their talkativeness, lack of wisdom, outright stupidity and ignorance. The focus of the fifth section is on the demanding, critical and fighting nature of wives, and the sixth discusses the exaggerated importance placed on their appearance, and in particular, on clothes. The seventh section portrays wives as materialistic and hungry for money, whose greediness might even lead to their husbands' bankruptcy. Last but not least, the eighth section gives a list of other stereotypical (negative) qualities of the wife, for example, their quarrelsome, conflicting, fighting and aggressive nature, their terrible outbursts of anger, nosiness, and unhappiness.

While certain themes occur pervasively in anti-proverbs about wives, others appear in only a few. For this reason, my discussion might sometimes seem uneven and the treatment of certain thematic categories might seem to be either narrower or broader. It must also be mentioned here that a number of our anti-proverbs treat several thematic categories simultaneously. Such examples could be discussed in various sections of the present study, under various headings. As a rule, anti-proverbs that embrace more than one theme will be quoted and discussed only once, except in cases in which only a few anti-proverbs have been identified to illustrate a specific theme.

Although the title of this study features the word "anti-proverbs," I could not resist the temptation to quote a few examples employing proverbs without any change. The following examples might not be considered anti-proverbs but they offer too clear a parallel to omit (the first one represents the wellerism[4]):

> "Every little bit helps," as the old lady said when she pissed in the ocean to help drown her husband. (Mieder and Kingsbury 1994, 76)
> Make love, not war.
> I'm married, I do both. (Rees 1980, 80)

4 Wellerisms, named for Charles Dickens' character Samuel Weller, are particularly common in the USA and Great Britain. This form of folklore is normally made up of three parts: 1) a statement (which sometimes consists of a proverb or proverbial phrase), 2) a speaker who makes this remark, and 3) a phrase that places the utterance into an unexpected, contrived situation. The meaning of the proverb is usually distorted by being placed into striking juxtaposition with the third part of the wellerism. Wellerisms are certainly considered to be anti-proverbs by Mieder and T. Litovkina and, therefore, are included in their collections of anti-proverbs (see Mieder and Tóthné Litovkina 1999; T. Litovkina and Mieder 2006).

The anti-proverbs discussed in the present study were taken primarily from American and British written sources. The texts, and others too numerous to include here, were drawn from hundreds of books and articles on puns, one-liners, toasts, wisecracks, quotations, aphorisms, maxims, quips, epigrams, and graffiti. Most of the anti-proverbs quoted here (with references to their sources) can be found in the book "Old Proverbs Never Die, They Just Diversify: A Collection of Anti-Proverbs" (see T. Litovkina and Mieder 2006).

In order to confirm or argue with some statements expressed in anti-proverbs, American proverbs about women are also cited throughout the article. The overwhelming majority of them are quoted from the largest dictionary of American proverbs – that edited by Wolfgang Mieder (see Mieder et al. 1992).

Discussion

1. "All work and no pay makes a housewife"

For centuries nothing else has been considered to be more important for a woman than serving her husband and children. In fact, a number of Anglo-American proverbs even emphasize that women should not leave their homes: *A woman's place is in the house; A woman, a cat, and a chimney should never leave the house.* Numerous anti-proverbs from our corpus express the idea that women were created for housework. While these anti-proverbs portray women as working bees, they also show men's negative attitudes towards women, their anti-feminism and chauvinism (on male chauvinism in American proverbs, see Mieder 1985). Housework is considered to be hard work but the difference in it and other kinds is that a housewife is not paid:

> All work and no pay makes a housewife. (Esar 1968, 398) {All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy}.

While a husband's duties are usually over when he comes home from work and, therefore, he can be involved in any kind of free time activity such as watching TV, reading a newspaper, and so on, wife's household jobs do not have an end. Wives are depicted as constantly busy with cooking, washing the dishes, cleaning, raising children and any other household task, as the proverbs *A woman's work is never done* and *Man works from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done* and their transformations below suggest:

> A woman's work is never done, especially the part she asks her husband to do. (Esar 1968, 883)
> Just about the time a woman thinks her work is done, she becomes a grandmother. (Prochnow 1958, 199)
> Men and women work from sun to sun; then men watch "Seinfeld"[5] while women do the laundry. (The Burlington Free Press, June 3, 1995)

5 *Seinfeld* is an American television situation comedy (or *sitcom*) that originally aired on NBC from 1989 to 1998.

Despite the fact that raising children has been considered for a long time the only domain where women are more influential than men, the meaning of the traditional proverb *The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world* is frequently contested in our corpus. As we can see from its alterations below, mothers, unfortunately, can't always exercise the power and influence prescribed by the text of the original proverb:

> On the matrimonial sea, the hand that rocks the cradle very seldom rocks the boat. (Athens News, in Lawson 1924, 117)
> The hand that rocks the cradle is usually too busy to rule the world. (Esar 1968, 105)
> The hand that rocks the cradle is usually too busy washing dishes to bother about ruling the world. (Esar 1968, 231)

A mother's duties, especially child rearing, do not have an end. Everything has its appointed time and place but rest is the only thing she never has:

> To the mother of young children, there's a time and place for everything, except rest. (Esar 1968, 533) {There's a time and place for everything}.

While the alterations above talk about mothers' role, they also allude to the relationship between husbands and wives, throwing light on the controversy as to whether the husband and his wife (who is also a mother) are equal. They are "too busy to rule the world" because they have to work, work and work.

2. "A man's home is his wife's castle"

The fight for power and dominance remains one of the most important aspects in a wife-husband relationship, all the way through their marriage. As we have explored in the first section, wives are frequently treated as second class citizens, as subsidiary and subordinate, inferior to their husbands, and denied the same power. The second section will focus on anti-proverbs portraying wives from a completely different perspective. This section will discuss anti-proverbs about families in which it's wives who wear the breeches and it's their husbands' destiny to wear skirts (see the proverbs *When a man's fool, his wife will rule; The husband is the head of the house, but the wife is the neck and the neck moves the head*).

Having a strong will, women persistently try to get their way and, therefore, whenever they can, women exercise their power and dominance on men, for example, *Women will have both her word and her way; Two things govern the world—women and gold; While there's a world, it's a woman that will govern it*. According to Anglo-American anti-proverbs, one of the most deep-rooted stereotypes of women in a role of wife is that of the demanding, manipulating, and ruling woman:

> Behind every successful man is a wife who tells him what to do, and a secretary who does it. (Esar 1968, 868) {Behind every successful man there's a woman}
> Give a husband an inch, and it's all the closet space he'll get. (Safian 1967, 29) {Give him an inch and he'll take an ell [=a measurement of length]}.

The proverb *A man's home is his castle* is transformed again and again in order to indicate that what used to be a man's home, after getting married becomes "his wife's castle":

> A man's home is his wife's castle. (Anonymous 1908, 12)
> A man's castle is his home, and his wife has the keys to all the rooms. (Safian 1967, 16)
> A married man's home is his castle, with him being his vassal. (Esar 1968, 775)

As we can see from the proverb mutations above and below, the husband simply turns into his wife's underling:

> All the world's a stage, and every father plays a supporting role. (Esar 1968, 784) {All the world's a stage}.

Other proverb alterations demonstrating wives' dominance and power over their husbands follow. In the example below a poor man is surrounded by two bossy women: his wife and his daughter who, in line with the proverb *Like mother, like daughter*, possess similar qualities:

> No man can serve two masters, unless he has a wife and grown-up daughter. (Esar 1968, 721) {No man can serve two masters}.

Since men are afraid of losing their power and dominance, not surprisingly, a number of anti-proverbs picture wives, entirely usurping their husbands' alleged position as head of the household. The three examples below even employ the words "boss" or "bossed", alluding to wives who wear the breeches:

> If experience is the best teacher, how is it that some husbands still think they're the boss of the family? (McKenzie 1980, 166) {Experience is the best teacher}
> 'Tis better to have loved and lost than to marry and be bossed. (Esar 1968, 90) {It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all}
> A bachelor is a rolling stone that gathers no boss. (Woods 1967, 274) {A rolling stone gathers no moss}.

The husband of such a bossy, powerful, dominant woman is even compared to a *worm* (a weak, submissive man, obeying his wife's orders) in a number of our anti-proverbs:

> Two men were traveling together. The first morning out one of them was up bright and early. "Come, come," he said, prodding the other. "Don't you know that it's the early bird that catches the worm?" "Well, it serves the worm right for being up so early," mumbled the other as he turned over, "and my wife says that I'm a worm." (Esar 1945, 143) {The early bird catches the worm}
> A henpecked husband is the only species of worm that's afraid to turn. (Esar 1968, 381) {Even a worm will turn}.

Even food preparation, one of the most stereotypical female activities, might be delegated by bossy women to their husbands and become their duty, especially if they wake up early. Hence two transformations of the proverb *The early bird catches the worm*, in which the husband is depicted as "the early bird" who diligently works in the morning, preparing breakfast for himself or even for his wife:

> The early bird gets up to serve his wife breakfast in bed. (Safian 1967, 35)
> "And remember, my son," said the father of the groom, "the early husband gets his own breakfast." (Copeland 1965, 238)

How can wives achieve dominance and exercise their power? Tears are considered to be the inborn attribute of the "weaker sex" which are used to exercise their power and gain whatever they wish (see also the proverbs *A woman laughs when she can but cries whenever she wishes; As great a pity to see a woman weep as to see a goose go barefoot* which are a clear warning that women's tears should not be trusted). As we can see from the examples below, tears are supposedly used by the most "successful" representatives of the "weaker sex" whenever other ways of manipulating or controlling don't have influence:

> Motto (successful wife's): If at first you don't succeed, cry, cry again. (Prochnow and Prochnow 1964, 187). {If at first you don't succeed, try, try again}.

The proverb transformations below clearly state that wives' wishes have to be accomplished without any disputes or arguments, otherwise there might be a problem for most husbands. Experienced husbands supposedly know it too well:

> Experience teaches wisdom: the experienced husband has learned to think twice before saying nothing. (Esar 1968, 286) {Think twice before you speak}
> To most husbands: A word from the wives is sufficient. (Loomis 1949, 357) {A word to the wise is sufficient}
> One word to the wife is sufficient: say "Yes." (Berman 1997, 455) {A word to the wise is sufficient}.

3. "When the husband is away, the wife will play"

A striking proportion of Anglo-American anti-proverbs from our corpus refers to adultery, a form of extramarital sex which has been historically considered to be an extremely serious offence or even a crime in many cultures (for sexual anti-proverbs, see T. Litovkina 2011c). A number of passages from the Bible – most notably the sixth (or in some traditions seventh) commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" – brand adultery as immoral and a sin. While adultery has been decriminalized in most European countries, in some countries it is still a crime (e.g., Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines). According to Muslim law, adultery is punishable by stoning. In the United States of America, laws vary from state to state. The popularity of extramarital sex in our proverb parodies may be symptomatic of modern societal mores. Adultery is humorously defined as "Two wrong men in the right place" (Legman 1968, 791) {Two wrongs don't make a right}. One more example demonstrating justification of the extramarital relationship:

> Before marriage, two's company and three's a crowd; after marriage, two's company and three's a great relief. (Esar 1968, 188) {Two's company and three's a crowd}.

A number of anti-proverbs in our corpus refer to wives' infidelity. While there is a widely-held expectation that wives should be faithful to their husbands and should not have a sexual relationship with anyone other than their husbands, fidelity is applied less strictly in the case of husbands; and it is not surprising, if we think of a double standard existing in this regard. Just in line with this statement, fewer anti-proverbs in our material refer to the extramarital sex of wives than to the adultery of husbands. The following anti-proverbs, while stressing the status of a woman (married), do not refer to the status of a man who has an extramarital love affair:

> When the husband is away, the wife will play. (Schipper 2003, 221) {When the cat's away, the mice will play}
> When I was young and full of life
> I loved the local doctor's wife,
> And ate an apple every day
> To keep the doctor far away. (Thomas W. Lamont, My Boyhood in a Parsonage) {An apple a day keeps the doctor away}.

The transformations of the proverb *One man's meat is another's man's poison* below, suggest that one man's spouse might become another man's lover:

> One man's Claire is another man's affair. (Berman 1997, 267)
> One man's Jill is another man's thrill. (Berman 1997, 267)

The proverb innovations below indicate that a married woman ought to keep her extramarital activity a secret–that is, adultery is still considered to be a prohibited form of sexual intercourse:

> Early to bed, early to rise
> makes sure you get out before her husband arrives. (Mieder 1993, 124) {Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise}
> When the husband comes in at the door, the lover flies out of the window. (Ogden Nash, in Esar 1968, 14) {When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window}.

Sometimes the 'product' of adultery might be obvious:

> An oriental wife gave birth to a white child and explained: "Occidents will happen." (Safian 1966, 48) {Accidents will happen}.

The same kind of an "occident" occurs in the following joke, employing puns that play on personal names and exploiting the popular proverb "Two wrongs don't make a right" with a transformation that mocks the difficulty that many Chinese people have with pronouncing "r":

> Mr. Wong, a Canadian of Chinese extraction, visited the nursery in the maternity ward, and then hastened, much perturbed, to his wife's bedside. Said he: "Two Wongs do not make a White!" Said she: "I can assure you it was purely occidental." (Hockett 1972, 155)

4. "A word to the wise is sufficient, a word to the wife never is"

After discussing wives's infidelity and unfaithfulness, let us focus on other stereotypical features associated in Anglo-American anti-proverbs with women in the role of wives, talkativeness, ignorance, and lack of wisdom.

Talkativeness is usually depicted as an inborn female characteristic, and the tongue is a body part primarily associated with women (see the proverbs: *Wherever there is a woman, there is gossip; A woman's hair is long; her tongue is longer; A woman's strength is in her tongue; One tongue is sufficient for a woman*). A number of anti-proverbs from our corpus contemptuously portray wives as talkative.

> To most husbands: A word from the wives is sufficient. (Loomis 1949, 357) {A word to the wise is sufficient}.

Women's uncontrollable talkativeness, a character trait which is believed to be destructive to family life, is depicted in scores of anti-proverbs. In the following examples reworking the proverb *A woman's work is never done*, "work" is transformed into words as the positive notion of a hard-working woman is traded for the image of a female who talks too much:

> Women talk more than men because woman's work is never dumb. (Esar 1968, 500)
> A woman's word is never done. (Adams 1959, 170)
> Woman's work is never done, probably because she can't get off the telephone long enough to do it. (Esar 1968, 398)

A woman, especially when cast in the role of a nagging wife, might be viewed as lacking in wisdom, that is, "wise" is antonymous with "wife", reflected in additional transformations of the proverb *A word to the wise is sufficient*. Whereas intelligent and wise people can take hints and don't need long explanations, wives (who are not considered to be wise at all by their husbands!) do need explanations:

> A word to the wife is never sufficient. (Safian 1967, 29)
> A word to the wife is sufficient – to start a quarrel. (Esar 1968, 653)
> A word to the wise is sufficient, a word to the wife never is. (Esar 1968, 779)
> One word to the wife is sufficient: say "Yes." (Berman 1997, 455)

Wives' outright stupidity, silliness, ignorance, and lack of capacity for logical thinking are portrayed in a number of additional Anglo-American proverb transformations:

> "Tit for tat," quoth the wife when she farted at the thunder. (Mieder and Kingsbury 1994, 140) {Tit for tat}
> A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, especially when your wife has it. (Esar 1968, 203) {A little knowledge is a dangerous thing}.

5. "Behind every successful man there's a great…nag, nag, nag"

Wives are often seen as ill-natured, demanding and nagging. When husbands can't provide them with what is, in their opinion, the best, the most expensive, the most luxurious, if they can't compete with their colleagues, friends or neighbors, they become dissatisfied, which leads to their constant complaint and criticism. And naturally, a wife can always have a number of reasons for complaining, and thus, simply by their nature, women are seen as those never satisfied with anything. This idea is exemplified in the proverb *Is a woman ever satisfied? No, if she were, she would not be a woman* and the joke below:

> Wife (heatedly) – "You're lazy, you're worthless, you're bad-tempered, you're shiftless, you're a thorough liar."
> Husband (reasonably) – "Well, my dear, no man is perfect."[6] (Copeland 1965, 227) {No one is perfect}.

6 Similar example about women from the mouth of men: "I've got a new girlfriend. She reads modern novels, likes classical music and impressionist art and loves visiting museums. But then, nobody's perfect." (Metcalf 1993, 185) {Nobody's perfect}.

In the following two transformations of the proverb *Necessity is the mother of invention*, a mother is depicted as a complaining and nagging wife, whose poor husband always has to invent something in order to keep family peace, either a "washing machine, kitchen stove, or television set", or "a new excuse for being out late":

> A famous proverb was first uttered when an Indian mother complained to her husband that she had no washing machine, kitchen stove, or television set. So the poor man went out and invented them. Thus was born the proverb: Mother is the necessity for inventions. (Howard 1989, 257)
> Said Father, as he tried to think up a new excuse for being out late,
> "Mother is the necessity for invention." (Life, ca. 1925, in Berman 1997, 298)

Observe also the numerous transformations of the most frequently parodied proverb treating women in our corpus of Anglo-American anti-proverbs, the proverb *Behind every great [successful] man there is a woman* (the number of its transformations in our corpus is 36):

> Behind every successful man there's a great…nag, nag, nag.
> (Alexander 2004, 140).
> Behind every famous man there's a woman–telling him he's not so hot.
> (McKenzie 1980, 175)
> Behind every successful man is a woman who wants to go on another cruise. (Esar 1968, 198)
> Behind every successful man is a woman who is trying to keep up with the Joneses. (Esar 1968, 163)
> Behind every successful man is a woman who keeps reminding him that she knows men who would have done even better. (McKenzie 1980, 334)
> Behind every successful man there's a woman sneering that she knows a man who's more successful. (Esar 1968, 161)

6. "Behind every successful man is a woman complaining she has nothing to wear"

It has been considered a general truth that while men exercise their power over women through their money and physical strength, women's power over men primarily rests on their looks and sex appeal. Indeed, with ageing women's value steadily and inevitably diminishes. According to the proverb, *The hell of women is old age*. The proverb *A man is as old as he feels, a woman as old as she looks* emphasizes that while men are judged by their inner youthfulness, women are judged by their looks. No wonder that by means of various beautifying practices, including clothes, cosmetics, jewellery and hairdoes, women work really hard on their looks in order to charm and seduce men. Prettiness may be the only virtue of some women, and even so they might still have quite great power and influence on men. A number of anti-proverbs stress the exaggerated importance placed by men on women's appearance:

> Why should we look for a wife – that is, a young lady whom we intend making our wife – possessing pretty feet?
> Because "All's well that ends well!" (Rowley 1866, 16) {All's well that ends well}.

Old or elderly women might not necessarily think of themselves as old women, and therefore, try to keep abreast with aging, and fight a battle against this inevitable process. Their beautifying inventiveness sometimes has no limits but it might not always help them. Such women, therefore, become the butt of a ridicule. According to these anti-proverbs, in some elderly wives almost nothing natural is left:

> "Wife is just one sham thing after another," thought the husband, as his spouse placed her teeth, hair, shape, and complexion on the bureau. (Mieder and Kingsbury 1994, 151) {Life is just one damned thing after another}.

One of the most decisive things contributing to a wife's appearance is clothes. Due to nice garments and finery, even the ugliest women can become quite attractive! The more clothes they have, the more they want:

> Behind every successful man is a woman complaining she has nothing to wear. (Esar 1968, 163) {Behind every successful man there's a woman}
> Behind every successful man is a woman who wanted a mink. (Esar 1968, 334)
> Save your pennies, and your wife's dressmaker will take care of the pounds. (Anonymous 1908, 21) {Take care of your pennies and the pounds [the dollars] will take care of themselves}.

Wives' clothes and other purchases cost quite a lot of money (see the following section).

7. "Clothes may make the man, but his wife's may break him"

For many centuries women have economically depended on men's material achievements; and such dependence is also frequently emphasized in our corpus of Anglo-American anti-proverbs. Therefore, the financial status of her future husband might be crucial for a woman:

> Love may be blind, but when a girl examines her engagement ring it's evident she's not stone blind. (Safian 1966, 56) {Love is blind}
> Man proposes and the girl weighs his pocketbook and decides.[7] (Loomis 1949, 355) {Man proposes, God disposes}

7 It has to be said here that money is also very important for men as well; naturally, it might also have an impact on men when they choose a wife: "The rich man and his daughter are soon parted." (Frank McKinney Hubbard, in Prochnow 1988, 160) {A fool and his money are soon parted}.

> The man to whom money isn't everything, should marry the woman to whom everything isn't money. (Esar 1968, 162) {Money isn't everything}
> The man who believes life is what you make it, usually marries the woman who believes life is what you make. (Esar 1968, 477) {Life is what you make it}.

The two examples below point out that it doesn't matter if a man courts a woman in a gentle or an aggressive way, the only thing which matters for a woman is "a full purse":

> Faint heart never won fair lady—but a full purse can always pull the trick. (Wurdz 1904) {Faint heart never won fair lady}
> None but the brave deserve the fair, but only the rich can support them. (Esar 1968, 784) {None but the brave deserve the fair}.

Marriage has meant, and in many families still means, that a husband has to support his wife materially. Naturally, financial support is what many women still expect men to do after they marry them. Here come two transformations of the proverb *Behind every great [successful] man there is a woman*:

> Behind every successful man is a woman who makes it necessary for him to make money. (Esar 1968, 117)
> Behind every man who lives within his income is a wife who doesn't. (Esar 1968, 418)

In fact, in these anti-proverbs, there is no end to wives' financial wishes and demands:

> Every father knows that money talks mostly in the mother tongue. (Esar 1968, 403) {Money talks}
> The man who said "talk is cheap" never had a wife with a charge account in a department store. (Braude 1955, 253) {Talk is cheap}
> Two can live as cheaply as one – but wives work because they don't care to live that cheap. (Safian 1967, 17) {Two can live as cheaply as one}.

Wives' obsession might cost their husbands quite a lot (see the proverb *The wife can throw more out the back window in a spoon than a man can bring in the front door with a shovel*), even bankrupting them. A lot of anti-proverbs point out that the cost of wives' beautiful looks or their other purchases might lead to their husbands' empty purse:

> Clothes may make the man, but his wife's may break him. (Prochnow and Prochnow 1987, 162) {Clothes may make the man}
> Behind every man who lives within his income is a wife who doesn't. (Esar 1968, 418) {Behind every successful man there's a woman}.

8. "What every wife wants to know: how the other half lives"

After discussing the main features of a wife's character, according to these biased anti-proverbs, in the last section of the study let us examine other stereotypical traits wives possess. Wives' talkativeness has been already depicted above as one of the most negative and destructive traits associated with women in the role of wife. Long tongues make women quarrelsome and belligerent as well. Similarly to the proverbs *There was never a conflict without a woman; Women and dogs cause too much strife; There's hardly a strife in which a woman has not been a prime mover; Women will have the last word*, a number of Anglo-American anti-proverbs reflect a quarrelsome, belligerent and ill-natured nature to wives:

> A word to the wife is sufficient – to start a quarrel. (Esar 1968, 653) {A word to the wise is sufficient}.

Matrimony is, thus, also frequently associated with constant fighting, quarrelling, and arguing:

> Marriage is like life in this–that it is a field of battle, and not a bed of roses. (Robert Louis Stevenson, Virginibus Puerisque) {Life is not a bed of roses}
> It takes two to make a quarrel, and the same number to get married. (Prochnow 1955, 191) {It takes two to make a quarrel}
> There are two sides to every argument, and they're usually married to each other. (Esar 1968, 41) {There are two sides to every argument}
> Make love, not war.
> I'm married, I do both. (Rees 1980, 80) {Make love, not war}.

A reprimanding nature of wives is reflected in:

> It is the late husband that catches the lecture. (Loomis 1949, 354) {The early bird catches the worm}.

Wives are shown as revengeful furies with terrible outbursts of anger, see the variation of the proverb *Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned* in which a woman's place is not "the house", indicated by the traditional proverb *A woman's place is in the house* but something worse – "hell"[8], the Devil's dwelling place:

> Hell hath no fury like a woman who has waited an hour for her husband on the wrong corner. (Esar 1968, 32) {Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned}.

8 This is consistent with some proverbs which bring a parallel between a woman and Hell, e.g., *When a man takes a wife, he ceases to dread hell.* Women in proverbs are also seen to be closely connected to evil powers (or the devil, or Satan), and cooperating with the devil, e.g., *Women are the devil's net; Women are the root of all evil; He that has a good wife has an angel by his side; he that has a bad one has a devil at his elbow; A whistling girl and a crowing hen always end in the devil's den*. Sometimes they are even perceived as even being worse than the devil himself, e.g., *A woman knows a bit more than Satan*.

Additional examples demonstrating wives' anger and revengefulness (in the second one, "tit for tat" as a "reward" for the thunder's wrong against the wife is also combined with her lack of capacity for logical thinking, and outright stupidity):

> When angry with her husband, a wise woman always counts ten–but not over him. (Esar 1968, 184) {When angry count to ten}
> "Tit for tat," quoth the wife when she farted at the thunder. (Mieder and Kingsbury 1994, 140) {Tit for tat}.

Life with some wives might seem for their husbands like permanent torture by being fried alive in "the frying pan" of matrimony. Even dying and getting "into the fire" of hell might be a relief and a possible way to "escape" from such a marriage for the wicked man from the text below:

> When a wicked married man dies he gets out of the frying pan and into the fire. (Reflections of a Bachelor, 1903, in Adams 1969, 347) {Out of the frying pan into the fire}.

Until the XXth century, when divorce was practically not allowed, spouses were really sentenced to living with each other for life, whether they liked each other or not. Death was the only way of dissolving marriage. This might be one of the reasons why in our corpus we can find a number of anti-proverbs expressing the wish of one of the spouses to die, either from the perspective of the wife, or from that of the husband. A wish of an old wife to get rid of her second "half", is jokingly expressed in the wellerism below:

> "Every little bit helps," as the old lady said when she pissed in the ocean to help drown her husband. (Mieder and Kingsbury 1994, 76)

Although the stereotype of an ideal wife is that of a hardworking bee, working diligently, looking up to her husband, not all women in our anti-proverbs can fit it. On the contrary, some females are shown as quite lazy. When they do anything at all, even something insignificant (for example, a little sewing), their husbands might be more than bemused:

> A stitch in time is a surprise to many a husband. (Safian 1967, 35) {A stitch in time saves nine}.

A wife's nosiness and insatiable curiosity to find out more about her husband's affairs are reflected in the three variations of the proverb *Half the world doesn't know how the other half lives*:

> What every wife wants to know: how the other half lives. (Copeland 1965, 788)
> Half the world doesn't know how the other half lives, but that isn't the half that's made up of women. (Esar 1968, 878)
> Half the world doesn't know how the other half lives: the women can't keep track of the men. (Esar 1968, 2)

Naturally, it is not quite easy to hide anything from one's wife:

> There are two sides to every man: the side his wife knows, and the side he thinks she doesn't know. (Esar 1968, 403) {There are two sides to everything}.

If a husband tries to conceal unpleasant truth from his wife, it is justified by the proverb *What you don't know won't hurt you* and its parodies below:

> The husband who doesn't tell his wife everything probably thinks that what she doesn't know won't hurt him. (Esar 1968, 410)
> What a wife doesn't know doesn't hurt her, but it does give her friends something to talk about. (Esar 1968, 353)

And last but not least, according to following anti-proverb, whatever a woman does in her life, whatever choice she makes: either she falls in love with a man and their love relationship is over, or their love is fulfilled in marriage, the result is the same; her "poor" fate remains misery, unhappiness and disillusion:

> There are two kinds of disillusioned women: those who have loved and lost, and those who have loved and married. (Esar 1968, 231) {It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all}.

Many more features of the female character in a role of wife exemplified in anti-proverbs (for example, unreliability, irresponsibility, irrationality, changeability, fickleness, unpredictability, arrogance, egoism, naughtiness, opportunism, stubbornness, and many others) could be considered in the present article.

Summary

The present study has made an attempt to explore the way that the wife is constructed in the corpus of Anglo-American anti-proverbs. A critical look at the anti-proverbs quoted and discussed above reveal some interesting facts. As it has been demonstrated, on the one hand, a wife's main role, as seen in Anglo-American anti-proverbs, is to serve her husband and children, working diligently from sun to sun, without having any rest; on the other hand, wives in our corpus are also shown as powerful, dominant, manipulative and bossy creatures ruling their husbands. A striking proportion of additional anti-proverbs refers to their infidelity and unfaithfulness. Wives have the reputation of being uncontrollably talkative as well; and they are also seen as outright stupid and ignorant, and lacking any wit and wisdom. A number of anti-proverbs focus on the exaggerated importance placed on their appearance. They are constantly criticized for hard work on their appearance, as well as high expenses invested in clothes. Wives are shown as dependent on husbands economically;

moreover, they are also seen as materialistic and hungry for money. The more they have, the more they want; not surprisingly, their greediness might lead to breaking their husbands. Wives are also portrayed as ill-natured, demanding, nagging, overcritical, and they are never satisfied with anything. Last but not least, the list of the vices of a wife includes a number of other negative qualities as well, for example, a quarrelsome and belligerent nature, anger, curiosity, revengefulness, and laziness. It has to be pointed out here that the figure of dedicated, happy, loving or satisfied wife hardly ever appears in our material. A rare exception just proves the rule:

> Behind every successful mason is a dedicated wife and incredulous mother in law. (Bryan 1996, 16) {Behind every successful man there is a woman}.

As we have just seen, similarly to traditional Anglo-American proverbs in general (for example, *The wife can throw more out the back window in a spoon than a man can bring in the front door with a shovel; He that takes a wife, takes care; He who has a far wife needs more than two eyes; A woman's place is in the home*), the overwhelming majority of the proverb parodies discussing women in the role of wife are also antifeminist and demeaning to women. The fact that wives in our corpus are depicted as primarily possessing negative stereotypical qualities (although it has to be emphasized here that proverb modifications offer less sexist, more positive messages of wives than proverbs do) might show once again that not only proverbs but also anti-proverbs tend to be created primarily by men, in the male dominant world.

Why are wives constantly assigned inferior or abnormal qualities? Why are they still shown as species of a second sort? One of the possible answers to these questions might be: men create and use the anti-proverbs in order to provide themselves with a sense of their own worth and therefore feel better about themselves, enhance their own self-esteem and superiority. The following quotation – although it refers to proverbs, and not anti-proverbs – might prove this thought:

> One of the richest sources of proverbs is [a] man's fears and hatreds of his fellow man, his xenophobia. [A] Man is always willing, even eager to characterize, deride, spoof his fellow man, especially if in doing so he thinks he is raising himself in the eyes of the world or in his own. In such proverbs there are of course numerous examples of [a] man's earliest objects of derision, women – antifeminism, fear and hatred of women, especially wives.
>
> (Coffin 1968, 201)

While examining a wife's nature as revealed through proverbs, that is, old pieces of wisdom, might be a way of looking back to "the tradition", examining a wife's nature in anti-proverbs, that is, proverb alterations, might be a way to

look forward to the change in gender relationships in the modern world. Even despite modern enlightenment, wives, in the overwhelming majority of our examples, are still frequently shown as subordinate to their husbands, as people of a second sort, as a species who can constantly be criticized, blamed, ridiculed and made fun of:

> Behind every great mother stands a man who prodded her along. (Yu and Jang 1975, 128) {Behind every great man there is a woman}
> Charity begins at home, but that's no reason to treat your wife like a pauper. (Esar 1968, 123) {Charity begins at home}
> If at first you don't succeed, blame it on your wife. (Esar 1968, 292) {If at first you don't succeed, try, try again}.

A number of additional anti-proverbs, however, show that women, not always accepting their subordination and inferiority, struggle with old stereotypes, demanding a place in the sun different from what is "prescribed" for them by men, create new truths, not always favourable to men, and not always accepted by men. Some proverb mutations might even be seen as a sort of women's counter attack in which they tend to change the basic meanings of proverbs in favorable way for themselves, as well as to provide a more gender-balanced and positive perception of the wife's image. Indeed, nowadays, alternative roles for women are getting more and more acceptable. Thus, women might have many other choices in their lives in which they can be fulfilled than simply getting married and having children, for example, having meaningful and successful careers:

> The hand that used to rock the cradle is now busy writing about planned parenthood. (Esar 1968, 80) {The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world}.

Since singleness becomes more and more common, the negative sentiment for being a single woman diminishes in anti-proverbs as well. With change of traditional roles, spinsters in our corpus might not always be viewed as pitiful and unfulfilled souls, or losers. On the contrary, they might be even treated with respect and envy. According to these anti-proverbs while being married sometimes might just be disaster and folly, remaining single might even turn into bliss and happiness:

> When spinsterhood is bliss, 'tis folly to be wived. (Esar 1968, 760) {Where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise}.

Indeed, as an American proverb stresses, *It takes a wise woman to be an old maid*. Therefore, fulfilling themselves in a role of wife is not always seen in the corpus of Anglo-American anti-proverbs as women's ultimate goal. By borrowing old bits of wisdom and creating these new truths, by using folklore in a transformed way people also try to change the world in which they live.

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Humour Production and Appreciation of Croatian Speaking Individuals on the Example of Anti-Proverbs

Aleksa Varga, Melita – Matovac, Darko

Abstract: The present paper discusses the results of a research on humour production and appreciation as exemplified in a collection of Croatian anti-proverbs. The goal of the research is to account for the preference of humour Croatian-speaking individuals deploy mostly while making up the anti-proverbs and how this humour is rated by the wider public. The research is a part of a broader research *HumAn* (Humour and Anti-Proverbs) initiated by Aleksa Varga, Hrisztova-Gotthardt and T. Litovkina in 2008.

Key words: anti-proverbs, humour appreciation, humour production, Croatia

1. Introduction

In a number of interrogations and interviews conducted among a cross-section of people of different age groups living in different regions of Croatia, the youngest ones being 18 and the oldest 78 years old, it was deduced, not surprisingly, that almost all claimed to possess a sense of humour.[1] There was only one person among the dozens interviewed who stated he does not possess a good sense of humour and does not understand certain jokes. Although these were all subjective claims or self-assessments uttered by the informants themselves, the notion of the sense of humour, its degree and quality were actually the starting points and the starting ideas for the present research. Even though theorists occasionally make reference to the fact that some people express more humour than others, there has been, to our knowledge, little empirical work done on developing a comprehensive definition and description of habitual humour behaviour (Martin 1998, 16). However, since the above-mentioned facts fall beyond the scope of this paper, we opted to conduct a smaller empirical study that will address this issue by employing a statistical approach. The main question in this paper was therefore: how do Croatian-speaking individuals produce humour, and how do they appreciate humour?

The present research is based on the statement that humour comprises a wide range of notions such as amusement, wit, ridicule, comedy, whimsy, and satire (Martin 1998, 17) and therefore investigates humour production and appreciation on the basis of anti-proverbs. What exactly are anti-proverbs? The term was introduced by Röhrich and Mieder (Röhrich–Mieder 1977, 115). They

1 On the one hand not having a sense of humour in Croatia is considered a negative characteristic, so that not many individuals are ready to admit that they lack a sense of humour in general. On the other hand the sense of humour is considered to be an innate capacity.

can be defined as "deliberate proverb innovations (alternations, parodies, transformations, variations, wisecracks, fractured proverbs)" (T. Litovkina–Mieder 2006, 5) of traditional proverbs. It is namely said that

> *the folk do not consider proverbs sacrosanct, and people are well aware of the fact that proverbs at times are simply too rigid and limited in their prescribed wisdom. Because a proverb is by nature a generalization, it cannot in itself be defined as 'true' or 'false'. And because it is easy to find exceptions to nearly every generalization, proverbs are often altered to provide satirical, ironic or humorous comments in a given situation.*
>
> (T. Litovkina et al. 2007, 48–49)

It is a well-known fact that anti-proverbs have been produced on a daily basis. Some of them stay for a longer period of time and some are just briefly there and then again forgotten or replaced by other, more humorous alterations. Since anti-proverbs can rarely be traced back to their creators, we decided in the course of this research to rely on anti-proverbs with known sources and test how they are appreciated by the public. The texts, i.e. anti-proverbs themselves, were therefore composed by 3rd year BA students and 1st and 2nd year MA students of the Faculty of Teacher Education, Osijek, Croatia, and rated through the Internet questionnaire by informants who were not part of the anti-proverbs creation process. These were later analysed statistically by the PSPP programme.[2] The goal of the research was to attest to the quality of humour future primary teachers, students aged from 21 to 23, produce and how it (humour) is appreciated by the wider and more mature public. Preceding researches were the ones conducted by Aleksa Varga, Majdenić and Vodopija in 2010, and the *HumAn* (Humor and Anti-proverbs) project started by T. Litovkina, Hrisztova-Gotthardt and Aleksa in 2008.

2. Production of Croatian Anti-Proverbs

The first question here is why were the students of the Faculty of Teacher Education chosen as the young people who were asked to create proverb transformations and how were the proverbs which were supposed to be modified chosen.

The reason for choosing the students of this particular faculty lies in the fact that since teaching proverbs in the primary school is part of the curriculum of the Croatian language and literature subject, future primary teachers should have sufficient knowledge in terms of familiarity and usage of traditional proverbs. Therefore, the assumption was that they will be able to produce witty

2 GNU PSPP is a program for statistical analysis of sampled data. It is a free replacement for the proprietary program SPSS, and appears very similar to it with a few exceptions (http://www.gnu.org/software/pspp/ Accessed: 9 August 2014).

alterations of traditional proverbs. The choice of proverbs to be altered comprised two steps. The first step consisted of investigating which proverbs have been enlisted in primary school textbooks used to teach Croatian language and literature (only textbooks which have been used in Croatian schools were taken into consideration).[3] The hypothesis was that in the primary school, grades 1–4, only the most frequent proverbs will be listed and children will be exposed to the proverbs belonging to the (still not defined) Croatian proverbial minimum. The proverbs from the textbooks therefore made up the testing corpus for the study. There were altogether 70 different proverbs found (Aleksa Varga–Majdenić–Vodopija 2011, 5). The second step comprised the proverb modifications. Precisely, the goal was to determine the ways in which proverbs from the Croatian textbooks could be modified. A final list of 18 proverbs was handed out to 3rd year BA and 1st and 2nd year MA students of the Faculty of Teacher Education in Osijek (there were altogether 77 students tested) on paper. The students had 45 minutes to complete the test. They could write as many modifications of proverbs as they wanted. The total number of anti-proverbs obtained was 1441. The 3rd year BA students wrote 482, 1st year MA students 419 and 2nd year MA students came up with 540 anti-proverbs. The most frequently altered traditional proverb was *Što možeš učiniti danas, ne ostavljaj za sutra* 'What you can do today do not leave for tomorrow', which was altered 129 times. Since further analysis concentrated on the type of alterations the students used when creating the anti-proverbs, it was noticed that they consistently modified the second part of the proverb, keeping the syntax of the traditional proverb. (An excerpt from the list of the most frequently modified traditional proverbs can be read in Table 1.)

Table 1: Excerpt from the most frequently mentioned proverb modifications:

Anti-proverb	English translation of anti-proverb	No. of occurrences
Što možeš učiniti danas, ostavi za sutra.	What you can do today, leave for tomorrow.	68
Tko tebe kamenom, ti njega ciglom.	Who hits you with a rock, hit him with a brick.	23
Tko tebe kamenom, ti njega još većim.	Who hits you with a rock, hit him with a bigger one.	22

3 When choosing the Croatian textbooks for the study it was decided not to use only the synchronic approach, but to test the textbooks diachronically and include all the books that have been used in schools to teach the native language (till 1991 Serbo-Croatian, from 1991 Croatian). Finally 17 textbooks published from 1972 till 2007 for the primary school were tested (Aleksa Varga–Majdenić–Vodopija 2011, 5). It should be noted here that the lack of textbooks to teach Croatian as a second or foreign language, especially at the primary school level, is a topic that deserves special attention.

Tko pod drugim jamu kopa, fizički je radnik.	Who digs a whole is a physical worker.	19
Tko tebe kamenom, ti njega s dva.	Who hits you with a rock, hit him with two.	13
Tko radi, umoran je.	Who works is tired.	13
Što možeš učiniti danas, ostavi za prekosutra.	What you can do today, leave for day after tomorrow	10
Tko radi, nije na Zavodu za zapošljavanje.	He who works is not on Employment Agency.	8
Što možeš učiniti danas, možeš i sutra.	What you can do today, you can do tomorrow too.	8
Bolje poštenje, nego nepoštenje.	Bette honesty than dishonesty.	8
Tko čitati ne zna, ne zna ni pisati.	Who cannot read, cannot write either.	7
Tko drugome dobro čini, loše mu se vrati.	Who makes good to others, will get bad in return.	6
Svatko može kokodakati, ali ne i kukurikati.	Everybody can cackle, but not do cock-a-doodle-doo.	6
Pametni prave šale, a budale ih ne razumiju.	Clever people make jokes, fools do not understand them.	6

The main issue is: where does the humorous effect in modified proverbs, i.e. anti-proverbs, come from? Although there are several linguistic theories that address the issue of production and appreciation of humour, all of them with interesting and valid results, we opted to advocate for the cognitive linguistics approach, more specifically the Conceptual Integration Theory developed by Fauconnier and Turner 20 years ago (see Fauconnier–Turner 2006 and Evans–Green 2006). In the last several years, this approach has been successfully employed in the analysis of different types of humorous situations ranging from various humorous cartoons and advertisements, to political humour and radio-talk (e.g. Coulson 2002, Coulson 2005, Lundmark 2003, Delibegović Džanić–Omazić 2011 and Delibegović Džanić–Berberović 2010). In order to explain how the Conceptual Integration Theory reveals the creation and appreciation of humour, we need to briefly introduce its basic presuppositions.[4]

4 Since thorough theoretical discussion on production and appreciation of humour is beyond the scope of this paper (as previously indicated, our focus was on empirical approach to this topic), we will address this issue just in short terms, only to indicate our stand. We are leaving the in-depth analysis and more thorough theoretical description for upcoming papers.

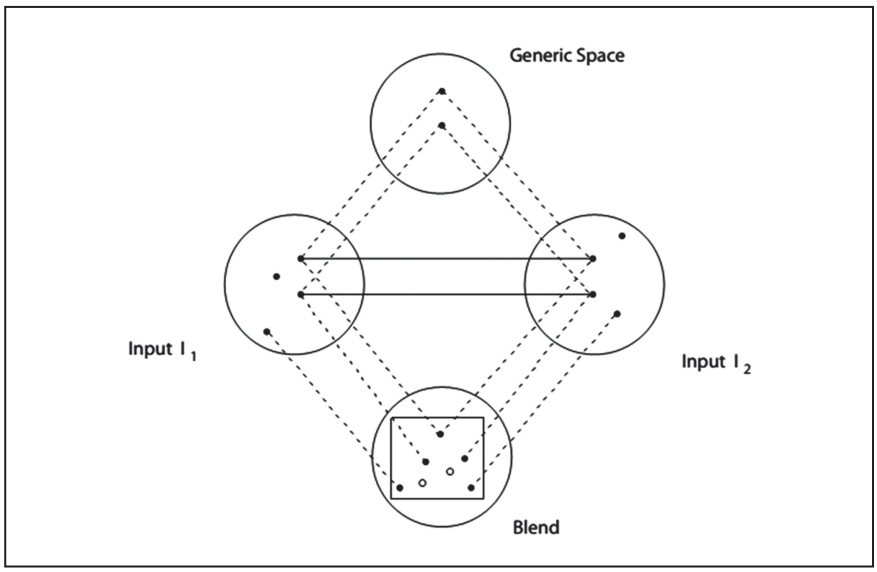
The basics of the Conceptual Integration Theory is the process of conceptual blending that involves production of new concepts out of existing ones. As Coulson (2005) observes: "the possibility of creating novel concepts from familiar ones is obviously conducive to humor" (Coulson 2005, 110). The cognitive operation of conceptual blending, which can be described as a central human cognitive ability, presupposes the existence of at least four mental spaces and relations between them (mental spaces can be described as a temporary storage of information relevant for a domain in question) – there are at least two input spaces, a generic space, and a blended space. The generic space captures the shared elements of both inputs while the blended space is a space where the selected elements from input spaces are projected into. Blend, a new mental space, is an emergent structure that is not an exact copy of any of the input spaces. A basic model of the conceptual integration network is given in Figure 1. Humour is created in the blended space, as it is a novel combination of two input spaces, but not identical to any of them. In other words, the blended space is incongruent with input spaces and that is what is responsible for humorous effect. As Delibegović Džanić and Berberović put it: "humor is produced in a series of mental gymnastics over a conceptual integration network. The key element in the creation of humor in conceptual blending is the incongruity produced in the blended space." (Delibegović Džanić–Berberović 2010, 209).[5]

So how can the Conceptual Integration Theory help us explain humorous effect present in anti-proverbs? As an example, we will use the anti-proverb *Tko radi, nije na Zavodu za zapošljavanje* 'He who works is not on the Employment Agency'. Input space 1 is the original proverb *Tko radi ne boji se gladi* 'He who works is not afraid of hunger'. As previously mentioned, only the second parts of proverbs are modified in our survey and that is not something that is the outcome of an accident. By quoting the first part of a proverb, it is the intention of the person producing the anti-proverb to evoke in the mind of the person to whom the anti-proverb is addressed the original proverb, as well as the linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge that comes with it. Since the proverb is stored in our minds as one symbolic unit with fixed phonological and semantic pole,

5 To demonstrate the conceptual integration model we will use an example from Coulson (2002). She quotes the following joke: Q: *Why did the chicken cross the road? A: To get to the other side*. Delibegović Džanić and Berberović explain the process of conceptual blending involved in producing humorous effect in this joke in the following way: "Input space one contains chickens, which usually live in barnyards and have instinctive behaviour. Input space two includes humans, who usually live in cities and act intentionally. Projections from input spaces to the blend result in the creation of a chicken that lives in the city and makes intentional decisions, behaving as a human being who intentionally crosses the road. The humour is created in the blended space, as the combination of a human being and chicken results in incongruity. […] The fact that chickens do not freely wander the streets and do not intentionally cross roads yields the incongruity in this joke. It is important to point out that the emergent structure within the blend does not involve the creation of a creature that is a cross between a human and a chicken, but it actually contains a chicken with human-like intentions that lives in the world created in the joke." (Delibegović Džanić – Berberović 2010, 202).

the hearer hearing just the first part of the proverb automatically expects its second part. But when this second part is altered, the hearer is presented with a novel construction that can have an effect of surprise on him/her (our knowledge on proverbs and their usage says that it is not to be expected that the proverb will be modified). Whether the hearer will interpret the modified proverb, i.e. anti-proverb, as humorous or not, depends on how much the anti-proverb is incongruent with the original proverb, i.e. input space 1, and information in input space 2. Input space 2 in our anti-proverb *Tko radi, nije na Zavodu za zapošljavanje* 'He who works is not on the Employment Agency' involves the concept of EMPLOYMENT AGENCY and all that comes with it, e.g. specific economic situation in Croatia, unemployment rate in Croatia, the situation of living off the Employment Agency, etc. The generic space, i.e. the space that captures the shared elements of both inputs, involves the concept of WORK. The humorous effect which is present in the blended space, having in mind the information projected into it from input space 2, can be considered as an example of a dark humour. As it will be shown later, not all our participants see this blend as equally humorous.

Figure 1: Basic model of conceptual integration network (Fauconnier – Turner 2006)



Taking into consideration that humour involves the bringing together (or blending if we use the Conceptual Integration Theory's term) of at least two normally disparate ideas, concepts, or situations in a surprising or unexpected manner (Martin 1998, 25), we decided to test how humorous the alterations of proverbs were and how have they been appreciated by the wider, more mature public. The second part of the present research was therefore making up a questionnaire consisting of the anti-proverbs created by the students.

3. Appreciation of Croatian Anti-Proverbs

Is humour really a cognition or is it more of an intellectual variable related to intelligence and creativity, as it was stated by Rod A. Martin (Martin 1998, 40), or is it actually independent of age, sex or education? By education, we understood the notion of intelligence, although psychologically this cannot be linked together. However, since there were no means in this phase of the research to test the intelligence of the informants, we took the criterion of education and the number of years spent in the educational system as considerable indices. Since the questionnaire was placed on the internet, only the informants who had access to the web and who were computer-literate completed it. Therefore, the present study cannot draw final conclusions regarding the appreciation of humour of Croats, but represents views of a certain group of people. It should be thus regarded as an introductory study into the research on the appreciation of humour in Croatia, which is planned to be extended in the near future.

3.1. Choosing the Anti-Proverbs for the Study

Considering the vast number of anti-proverbs, there had to be a certain criteria made in order not to compile a long questionnaire people will not want to complete. The starting point were the 18 proverbs from the first part of this research, and the goal was to choose three anti-proverbs for each of the traditional proverb to be placed in the online questionnaire. The criterion for choosing three modifications for each proverb was the frequency of their occurrences.[6] All obvious and widely accepted modifications of proverbs, i.e. the ones that are on their way of becoming proverbs themselves (e.g. *Što ne možeš danas, ostavi za sutra* 'What you can do today, leave for tomorrow'[7]), were excluded from the survey. Based on previous and preliminary research, we concluded that it is reasonable to expect that they would not be found humorous by our informants since their humorous effect was worn out in direct proportion to their occurrence frequency. In the end, there was a final list of 54 anti-proverbs which was further tested. In the following, the anti-proverbs will be referred to as A1–A54 (Table 2).

6 It was presupposed that the results of our survey would not be valid if proverbs with e.g. only one modification were included. The choice of using three modifications of a single proverb fell to the fact that the informants were supposed to be able to have a choice of deciding which modification was the funniest and grade them accordingly.

7 The conclusion is based on an ongoing research project by Aleksa Varga and Matovac *Kroatische Sprichwörter im Test*, to be presented at the EUROPHRAS conference in Paris, 2014.

Table 2: Anti-proverbs composed by students which were enlisted into the online questionnaire for further rating

Anti-proverb	**Word-to-word English translation**
A1. Zrno do zrna pogača, kamendo kamena šljunak.	Corn to corn a bun, rock to rock, gravel.
A2. Zrno do zrna pogača, ali pazi na zube.	Corn to corn a bun, but take care of your teeth.
A3. Zrno do zrna pogača, kamen do kamena dva kamena.	Corn to corn a bun, rock to rock two rocks.
A4. Lijepa riječ – ostaje lijepa!	A nice word- stays nice!
A5. Lijepa riječ je bolja od ružne.	A nice word is better than an ugly word.
A6. Lijepa riječ je lijepa za čuti.	A nice word is nice to hear
A7. U mladosti tko ne uči, kasnije ništa ne zna.	Who does not learn when he is young, knows nothings afterwards
A8. U mladosti tko ne uči, duže živi.	Who does not learn when he is young, lives longer.
A9. U mladosti tko ne uči, taj se dobro zabavlja.	Who does not learn when he is young is having a good time.
A10. Tko čitati ne zna, cijeli život je nepismen.	Who does not know how to read is illiterate his whole life.
A11. Tko čitati ne zna, gleda slike.	Who does not know how to read, looks at pictures.
A12. Tko čitati ne zna, čuva oči.	Who does not know how to read, takes care of his eyes.
A13. Tko radi, umoran je.	He who works is tired.
A14. Tko radi, nije na Zavodu za zapošljavanje.	He who works is not on Employment Agency.
A15. Tko radi, jedva dočeka godišnji.	He who works can barely wait for vacation.
A16. Tko ne radi, ne umori se.	Who doesn't work, doesn't get tired.
A17. Tko ne radi, taj je na Birou.	Who doesn't work is on the Employment Agency.
A18. Tko ne radi, barem se naspava.	Who doesn't work, at least gets some sleep.
A19. Što možeš učiniti danas, ostavi za sutra.	What you can do today, leave for tomorrow.
A20. Što možeš učiniti danas, nemoj.	What you can do today, don't do.
A21. Što možeš učiniti danas, bolje ostavi za sutra.	What you can do today, better leave for tomorrow.

A22. Lako je govoriti, a još lakše šutjeti.	It is easy to talk, and even easier to listen.
A23. Lako je govoriti, a još lakše ogovarati.	It is easy to talk, and even easier to gossip.
A24. Lako je govoriti, ako znaš jezik.	It is easy to talk, if you know the language.
A25. Ne kiti se perjem, zvat će te kokoš.	Don't put feathers on yourself, they will call you a hen.
A26. Ne kiti se tuđim krznom, iako je krzno u modi.	Don't out fur of somebody else on you, although fur is in vogue.
A27. Ne kiti se, nisi drvce.	Don't decorate yourself, you are not a tree.
A28. Tko visoko leti, ima krila.	Who flies high, has wings.
A29. Tko visoko leti, pije Red Bull.	Who flies high, drinks Red Bull.
A30. Tko visoko leti, u avionu je.	Who flies high, is in the plane.
A31. Bolje poštenje, ako želiš biti siromašan.	Better the honesty if you want to be poor.
A32. Bolje poštenje, ali još bolje drago kamenje.	Better the honesty, but even more better is jewellery.
A33. Bolje poštenje, nego veza za posao.	Better the honesty, than connections to get a job.
A34. Tko tebe kamenom, ti njega još većim.	Who throws a rock at you, throw a bigger one on him.
A35. Tko tebe kamenom, loše će proći.	Who throws a rock at you, will draw a poor end.
A36. Tko tebe kamenom, ti njega isto jer je kruh skup.	Who throws a rock at you, throw a rock at him too because bread is expensive.
A37. Tko pod drugim jamu kopa, fizički je radnik.	Who digs a hole under somebody else is a physical worker.
A38. Tko pod drugim jamu kopa, bole ga ruke.	Who digs a hole under somebody else, has sore hands.
A39. Tko pod drugim jamu kopa, bar nešto radi.	Who digs a hole under somebody else at least does something.
A40. Vuk dlaku mijenja, ali i pas.	The wolf changes its fur, but a dog too.
A41. Vuk dlaku mijenja, ali mijenja i vučicu.	The wolf changes its fur, but changes the she-wolf as well.
A42. Vuk dlaku mijenja, ali šampon ne.	The wold changes its fur, but not its shampoo.
A43. Tko drugome dobro čini, glup je.	Who does good to others is stupid.

A44. Tko drugome dobro čini, nema vremena za sebe.	Who does good to others doesn't have time for himself.
A45. Tko drugome dobro čini, sam si je kriv.	Who does good to others, it's his fault.
A46. Što si posijao, to i prodaj.	What you saw, you have to sell.
A47. Što si posijao, zalij.	What you saw, water.
A48. Što si posijao, posijao si, ostalo ukradi.	What you saw, you sawed, steal the rest.
A49. Svatko može kokodakati, ali ne i biti kokoška.	Everybody can cackle, but can't be a hen.
A50. Svatko može kokodakati, ali jaja samo kokoš može nositi.	Everybody can cackle, but only a hen can lay egs.
A51. Svatko može kokodakati, ali pijetao bira fine koke.	Everybody can cackle, but the peacock picks nice hens.
A52. Pametni prave šale, a budale ih ne razumiju.	Smart ones make jokes, but fools don't understand them.
A53. Pametni prave šale, a budale djecu.	Smart ones make jokes, and fools children.
A54. Pametni prave šale, jer nemaju pametnijega posla.	Smart ones make jokes because they have nothing better to do.

3.2. Results of the Online Survey

Apart from supplying the metadata regarding their age, sex, region they were born and live in, their native language, highest degree and number of years spent in the educational system, the informants were asked to rate the anti-proverbs according to how humorous they found them. The scale was from 1 to 5, 1 meaning the least humorous, 5 was the most humorous alteration. The 5-scale choice was made due to the scale the informants were used to on account of the grades used in the Croatian educational system.[8] A hundred and twenty-three informants filled out the questionnaire, 99 women and 24 men, 40 of them were aged under 30 years, 72 aged 31-40 year bracket while only 11 were older than 40 years of age. 74 had a college (or MA) degree, 22 a MSc (or a PhD) degree, 1 informant finished only primary school and 26 of them have had secondary school education.

8 However, considering that the average rating most anti-proverbs got was 3, which can be interpreted as a middle point, where one could not decide if they liked the text or not, it seems that the 4 grade-scale would seem as a more appropriate choice. This way the informants would have to chose whether they find the proverb not humorous (grades 1 or 2) or humorous (grades 3 and 4).

Analysing the average means of anti-proverbs in general, it can be seen that the highest ranking anti-proverb *Ne kiti se perjem, zvat će te kokoš* 'Don't put feathers on yourself, they will call you a hen' got the grade 3,54, whereas the lowest ranking anti-proverb with the grade 1,82 was *Tko drugome dobro čini, glup je* 'Who does good to others is stupid'.

Table 3. Means of anti-proverbs tested

Group	Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev
1	A1	123	2,54	1,20
	A2	123	2,13	1,12
	A3	123	3,00	1,23
2	A4	123	2,49	1,32
	A5	123	2,32	1,35
	A6	123	2,20	1,32
3	A7	123	2,63	1,42
	A8	123	2,84	1,38
	A9	123	3,12	1,39
4	A10	123	2,70	1,40
	A11	123	3,37	1,29
	A12	123	2,73	1,27
5	A13	123	3,01	1,35
	A14	123	3,52	1,31
	A15	123	3,27	1,41
6	A16	123	2,52	1,34
	A17	123	2,88	1,43
	A18	123	3,11	1,31
7	A19	123	3,11	1,32
	A20	123	3,31	1,26
	A21	123	2,78	1,31
8	A22	123	2,59	1,27
	A23	123	2,94	1,34
	A24	123	2,87	1,30

Group	Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev
9	A25	123	3,54	1,25
	A26	123	2,48	1,22
	A27	123	2,88	1,35
10	A28	123	2,81	1,22
	A29	123	3,02	1,33
	A30	123	3,13	1,34
11	A31	123	2,29	1,14
	A32	123	2,68	1,27
	A33	123	2,37	1,18
12	A34	123	3,02	1,35
	A35	123	2,45	1,20
	A36	123	3,40	1,35
13	A37	123	3,36	1,26
	A38	123	2,98	1,25
	A39	123	2,91	1,21
14	A40	123	2,94	1,33
	A41	123	3,00	1,43
	A42	123	2,78	1,49
15	A43	123	1,82	1,05
	A44	123	2,18	1,17
	A45	123	2,28	1,28
16	A46	123	2,54	1,24
	A47	123	2,80	1,33
	A48	123	2,58	1,39
17	A49	123	2,82	1,36
	A50	123	2,66	1,38
	A51	123	2,74	1,48
18	A52	123	2,75	1,36
	A53	123	2,89	1,45
	A54	123	2,32	1,19

There was a further analysis of anti-proverbs obtained according to the age, sex and level of education. The most important question posed here was if there was a significant difference in the ratings of proverbs according to the criteria mentioned. The analysis according to sex was conducted by the Independent Samples T-test (Table 4) and showed a significant difference ($p<0,05$) in only 5 anti-proverbs: A11: *Tko čitati ne zna, gleda slike* 'Who does not know how to read, looks at the pictures', A14: *Tko radi, nije na Zavodu za zapošljavanje* 'He who works is not on Employment Agency', A15: *Tko radi, jedva dočeka godišnji* 'He who works can barely wait for vacation', A17: *Tko ne radi, taj je na Birou* 'Who doesn't work is on the Employment Agency' and A18: *Tko ne radi, barem se naspava* 'Who doesn't work, at least gets some sleep'. That means that in those 5 anti-proverbs there was a significant difference in how men and women graded them. Further analysis showed that these anti-proverbs were all considered funnier by women. Grades given by women to the proverbs are as follows: A11: grade 3 (Mean: 3,49), A14: grade 4 (Mean: 3,67), A15: grade 3 (Mean: 3,46), A17: grade 3 (Mean: 3,05), A18: grade 3 (Mean: 3,26). Given that our online questionnaire was completed by 99 women and only by 24 men, it is hard to make any valid assumptions on why this proverbs were graded as funnier by women – this can be explained as a consequence of a misbalance in the number of men and women that completed the questionnaire, but it can also be seen as a marker indicating that women and men appreciate humour differently. (It is interesting to observe that 4 out of 5 anti-proverbs in question involve concept of WORK).

Table 4: Excerpt from the Independent Samples T-test regarding the sex of the informants and grading of anti-proverbs

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
A11	Equal variances assumed	3,64	,059	2,14	121,00	,034	,62	,29	,05	1,19
	Equal variances not assumed			1,90	30,90	,067	,62	,33	-,05	1,29
A14	Equal variances assumed	,11	,737	2,58	121,00	,011	,75	,29	,17	1,33
	Equal variances not assumed			2,39	32,23	,023	,75	,31	,11	1,39

A15	Equal variances assumed	2,52	,115	3,25	121,00	,002	1,01	,31	,39	1,62
	Equal variances not assumed			3,61	40,37	,001	1,01	,28	,44	1,57
A17	Equal variances assumed	1,98	,162	2,79	121,00	,006	,88	,32	,26	1,51
	Equal variances not assumed			3,04	39,14	,004	,88	,29	,30	1,47
A18	Equal variances assumed	,58	,449	2,63	121,00	,010	,76	,29	,19	1,34
	Equal variances not assumed			2,85	38,98	,007	,76	,27	,22	1,30

Further analysis regarding the educational level and age was conducted using the one-way ANOVA test, in order to account for the differences among the groups of the informants. The analysis according to the educational level showed that there was a significant difference ($p<0,05$) in one anti-proverb among the groups, namely the *Svatko može kokodakati, ali pijetao bira fine koke* 'Everybody can cackle, but the peacock picks nice hens'.

Table 5: Excerpt from the one-way ANOVA test regarding the educational level

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
A51	Between Groups	23,43	3	7,81	3,84	,012
	Within Groups	242,25	119	2,04		
	Total	265,67	122			

Running a post-hoc analysis showed that the informants who have finished secondary school rated the anti-proverbs the highest, giving it an average grade of 4 (Mean: 3,58), whereas informants with the MSc or PhD degree ranked it lowest, with an average grade of 2 (Mean: 2,45). It is hard to come to an ultimate conclusion, but it can be presumed that more educated persons appreciate more sophisticated and educated humour, and anti-proverbs tested in this research were all produced by students who finished their secondary education within the last several years. It is to be presumed that their humour is

closer to people who finished just the secondary school than to those who had a MSc and PhD degree. Humour appreciation therefore seems to be in direct connection to education.

The analysis according to the age of informants showed significant difference ($p<0,05$) in only one anti-proverb as well, namely *Tko tebe kamenom, ti njega isto jer je kruh skup* 'Who throws a rock at you, throw a rock at him too because bread is expensive'.

Table 6: Excerpt from the one-way ANOVA test regarding the age of informants

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
A36	Between Groups	16,26	3	5,42	3,14	,028
	Within Groups	205,22	119	1,72		
	Total	221,48	122			

Taking into account the results of the post-hoc analysis, we can interpret the result in the way that the anti-proverb was ranked highest with the average grade of 5 by informants younger than 30, and the lowest by informants older than 40 years (average grade given by them is 2). It can be presumed that this is in connection with the economic situation and life experience. Informants older than 40 years do not see the information that bread is expensive as something funny as they know how hard it is to earn the money to buy the bread. On the other hand, younger informants, mostly students, still do not think about these issues, and therefore find it funny. It is hard to propose any valid conclusion on humour and age difference since only one anti-proverb showed significant difference according to the age of informants. Nevertheless, it is a mark that further research in that direction needs to be conducted. Generally, if we compare the grades given to anti-proverbs with the age of the informants, we can see that informants older than 30 years (32,5% of the informants were aged under 30) generally rated anti-proverbs with lower grades, indicating that they do not find them funny as much as younger informants do. This alludes to the fact that there exists a generation gap which influenced the humour appreciation.

4. Conclusion

The present preliminary research on humour production and appreciation showed that Croatian-speaking young individuals produce humour that has generally not been rated as funny by the majority of the older population. Could this be explained with the existence of a generation gap, or is it just a unique situation due to the controlled environment in which the humour "had" to be produced? The problem might lie in the lack of the context in which the anti-proverb is produced or used? There is further research on bigger data sets certainly needed so that something conclusive can be said. Finally, we would

like to conclude, as Knox (1951, 541) pointed out, that humour actually is a "playful chaos in a serious world, (….) a species of liberation, and it is the liberation that comes to us as we experience the singular delight of beholding chaos that is playful and make-believe in a world that is serious and coercive".

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Postmodern Humour in Woody Allen's Short Stories

Puskás, Andrea

Abstract: The paper examines the relationship of postmodernism and humour with special attention to their appearance in the short stories of the American director and writer Woody Allen. The research examines the short stories from Woody Allen's short story collection *Side Effects* to illustrate the connection between postmodernism and humour in an American cultural and literary context. It examines parodic humour, mocking, self-reflection, the linkage of public and private selves and irony in the short stories as well as the special way they ridicule convention and tradition. The paper investigates how Woody Allen's stories exploit the opportunities of postmodern irony and points out how they apply the elements of stand-up comedy and juxtapose the intellectual and the banal.

Key words: postmodernism, humour, irony, short story, stand-up comedy, intellectualism

1. Introduction

"Not only there is no God, but try finding a plumber on Sunday."

(Woody Allen)[1]

Although Woody Allen is best known as the director and scriptwriter of several cult films, he is also the writer of outstanding and witty short stories, which first appeared in three basic collections namely *Getting Even* (1971), *Without Feathers* (1975) and *Side Effects* (1980). The short stories discuss struggles with God, religion, identity, satirize social phenomena, construct new universes in the most comic and playful way.

The collection *Side Effects* is an anthology of 17 short stories, which were written between 1975 and 1980. It includes Allen's famous short story *The Kugelmass Episode*, which won the O. Henry Award, the annual American award for short stories in 1978, the same year Allen won his first Academy Award for his film *Annie Hall*.

Humour is the driving engine of each short story. In one of them, *Reminiscences: Places and People*, Allen reveals the essence of a good piece of writing: "In order to be a writer (…) one must take chances and not be afraid to look foolish"

1 http://thinkexist.com/quotation/not_only_is_there_no_god-but_try_finding_a/227164.html (Accessed: 10 September 2014)

(Allen 1998, 393). The stories themselves 'look foolish' indeed, in the most entertaining sense of the word. Woody Allen's name has been linked with postmodernism several times; his short stories are great examples of postmodern fiction as well. The paper argues that the special way of using humour in *Side Effects* reflects the postmodern attempt to question authorities and to bring the high and the low, the mainstream and the marginal closer to each other, and they create a comic atmosphere by juxtaposing the intellectual and the banal.

2. Postmodern Humour

Postmodernism has a great variety of definitions, however, the basic assumption that links all of them is the belief that postmodern texts celebrate fragmentation and diversity, emphasise chaos and doubt and construct new worlds. Brian McHale claims that unlike modernist texts, postmodern fiction asks ontological questions and its basic concern is to confront different worlds and reflect on the mode of existence of the world (or worlds) it projects (McHale 1987, 10).

In his essay *Pluralism in Postmodern Perspective* (1992) Ihab Hassan lists more specific features of postmodern texts. He distinguishes eleven signs typical for postmodernism: indeterminacy, fragmentation, decanonisation, self-less-ness or depth-less-ness, the unpresentable, irony, hybridisation, carnivalisation, performance or participation, constructionism and immanence (Hassan 1992, 198). All these features can be easily detected in Allen's short stories. His specific mode of world-making, his approach to the search or loss of identity, the uncertain atmosphere of his stories, the way he connects formal fragmentation with indeterminacy and the way he breaks and subverts cultural codes definitely make him one of the representatives of postmodern writing. The stories in *Side Effects* figure out the traditional, conservative approach to sexuality, human relations and the impersonality of intellectualism.

Woody Allen's special usage of humour in his texts very much underlines the assumption that postmodern humour is not merely the ironic depiction of cultural codes or the tool of ridiculing authorities. Apart from irony he uses variations of humour in order to suggest that there are no absolute truths, no reliable solutions and messages, just playfulness and laughter, many times at the banality and absurdity of existence.

The connection between postmodernism and humour has been studied by various literary critics and scholars including Paul McDonald, Lance Olsen or Nancy A. Walker. All of them agree that humour is very often the integral part of the atmosphere postmodern texts provide. More and more critics point out that postmodern humour is not necessarily pessimistic and deconstructive, but beside its dark, pessimistic face and absurdist black humour it also offers a lighter and more optimistic potential. Olsen formulates this notion in the following way:

> *What is striking about postmodern humor, then, is its refusal to see truth as something that exists along an either-or axis. Consequently, postmodern humour at the same time becomes both a negative and a positive perspective on the world.* [...] *Postmodern humor delights in its own sense of liberty. It delights in its own sense of process. Indeed, process is everything because the goal is at best uncertain, at worst nonexistence.*
>
> (Olsen 1990, 19)

The above assumption suggests that postmodern humour is based on juxtaposition, and emphasises the process rather than the goal. One of the basic goals of postmodern humour is to challenge and undermine authority. Humour is a wonderful tool to avoid seeming too emotional and to celebrate plurality, since it provides alternative perspectives and standpoints.

In her Introduction to *What's So Funny: Humor in American Culture* (1998), Nancy A. Walker sees American humour as something which always has a purpose. She claims that the key themes of American humour seem to relate to three main areas. The first is ethnic experience, the second is social interaction, by which she understands "the possibility of social harmony" (Walker 1998, 64). The third area is the American Dream of "equality, opportunity and freedom" (Walker 1998, 65). These three main areas also appear in *Side Effects* and it can be assumed that somehow, these areas or topics reflect the basic characteristic features of postmodernism as well.

Discussing ethnic identity can be seen as the manifestation of approved cultural diversity and shifting this issue to the foreground underlines the fact that ethnicity is not just an important element in the process of identity formation, but also a key category that has to be reconsidered. The combination of humour with postmodernism and the discourse of ethnicity suggest that there has been a need in American culture to highlight inherited master narratives of ethnic heritage and religious issues from a new perspective.

The second key theme of American humour listed by Walker is social interaction, which is closely linked with the postmodern attempt to re-examine social practices and society as such. Postmodernism investigates the consequences of the breakdown of communication, the relationship between the private and the public sphere; however, humour makes it more possible to draw a more positive conclusion on the above issues. To a certain extent, without humour, the postmodern message of alienation, chaos and diversification remains a pessimistic, aimless idea providing no values and axioms. Humour and laughter are a positive agency in postmodern culture and literature, which points out that the postmodern world is not necessarily pessimistic and disastrous.

The American Dream and its impact on the individual have been many times identified as one of the most central elements to American comic imagination. Paul McDonald claims that there is such a sharp distance between the promises

of the American Dream and American reality that the new term of "the Great American Joke" has become more accurate to express such disparity – a term first used by Louis D. Rubin, Jr. (McDonald 2010, 23). In this case, humour is also used as the tool of offering an alternative, the tool of possible progress in order to construct a more ideal and liveable world.

Apart from the above-mentioned main themes, Woody Allen applies several tools of postmodern humour. He highlights the needs and wants of the American Little Man, reflects on ethnic identity, provides a reconsidered view on religion, culture and society and constructs new identities. In his short stories he exploits the techniques of stand-up comedy and undermines the authority of highly intellectual narratives.

2.1. The Story of the (Jewish) American Little Man

Allen's protagonists are typical examples of the everyday little man. They are not unique at all, office workers, doctors, teachers, writers, people who constantly look for happiness and satisfaction in their own way. A common feature that almost all characters share is their constant dissatisfaction. In *The Lunatic's Tale* the protagonist searches ideal happiness; though he has everything, he wants more and more. He is the typical consumer: never satisfied with what he has, always gullible and ready to buy something new. "Never to find all the requirements one needs in a single member of the opposite sex" (Allen 1998, 384). He believes that perfection exists; however, he finds it impossible to reach.

The stories are full of jokes about depression and insecurity that form the protagonists' identities. Almost all protagonists are the victims of circumstances. In *Nefarious Times We Live In* the first-person narrator tells us: "I had just been medically discharged from the army, the results of certain scientific experiments performed on me without my knowledge" (Allen 1998, 397). They are not able to govern their own lives and are constantly exposed to various influences. Even their place of living and job seems to be determined by coincidence. On the other hand, it can be assumed that most protagonists are somehow connected to New York – they either live there, like Sidney Kugelmass or are somehow influenced by it. They are mostly Jews, which is not always directly stated; sometimes there are only indirect references to their religion, e.g. the mention of their rabbi or the kabbalah. However, religion is regarded as something unreliable and rather manipulative throughout the stories. In *The Condemned* belonging to a certain kind of religion is even ridiculed: "Father Bernard shook his head. 'This time of year, I think most of your major faiths are filled,' he said. 'Probably the best I could do on such short notice is maybe make a call and get you into something Hindu. I'll need a passport-sized photograph, though'" (Allen 1998, 313). It seems that the most powerful engines of the protagonists' identities are dissatisfaction and the eager pursuit of happiness, due to which their behaviour is often seen as incompatible with outside, social expectations, no matter how strong these outside influences are.

2.2. The Bizarre and the Absurd

The clash between private and public expectations is not the only powerful opposition exploited in the collection. The short stories in *Side Effects* frequently confront serious and childish behaviour and present absurd, even bizarre situation and solutions. They very typically place childish behaviour in a serious setting, such as a workplace, an office or the academic environment of a university.

In *The Diet*, the protagonist F. experiences the hostile behaviour of his colleagues regularly. "Sometimes, if he turned around rapidly, he would discover thirty or forty coworkers inches away from him with tongues outstretched" (Allen 1998, 370). Later on, F. becomes the target of wild (and at the same time ridiculous) expression of childish hatred: "Once, Traub, a petty clerk, had nodded courteously, and when F. nodded back Traub fired an apple at him" (Allen 1998. 370). The inclusion of unexpected and bizarre elements in the narration juxtaposes the serious and the frivolous, and allows the latter to undermine the former. It is no longer possible to take F.'s life failures, unsuccessful public and private life seriously or at least with deserved respect with the image of office workers throwing apples and sticking out their tongue in one's mind. A very similar absurd world is created in *The Kugelmass Episode*.

John Barth argues that when the characters of a work of fiction become authors or readers of the work they are in, we are reminded of the "fictitious aspect of our own existence" (Barth 1990, 81-82). *The Kugelmass Episode* offers something even more complicated and bizarre: with the help of a magician the protagonist, Sidney Kugelmass, a frustrated professor of humanities, a dissatisfied Jewish New Yorker, enters the world of a fictive, literary character, Madame Bovary and has an affair with her. He becomes the character of the novel he has once read and taught in order to avoid the disillusioning reality of his everyday life. He finds short-term satisfaction in the novel, however, he makes a mistake by trying to project his idealized, fictive life into reality, and is not aware of the dangers and risks of his choice. Later on, Emma Bovary comes to New York, and suddenly, the literary character from a classic novel becomes part of the New Yorkean reality of the short story. This absurd circumstance becomes the source of further complications and problems. The story has a bizarre ending, Kugelmass enters the magic cabinet again, however, due to an unexpected mistake, the cabinet explodes, Persky the magician, the only person who can help Kugelmass get back to New York dies, so Kugelmass remains in a Spanish course book forever and is unable to come back to "reality", which definitely gains a new definition after all.

The short story is not only the parody of literary criticism and interpretation but also disfigures the attempt to write literary works with aims other than entertainment and laughter. The story ridicules reader-response criticism and its assumption that the reader's interpretation and understanding shapes the

message of the story and the idea of giving too much significance to the relationship between the reader and the text and the reader's contribution to the meaning of the text. In the short story, the protagonist enters the text literally and thus effects the interpretation of all those who read the novel at that time: "(…) at this very moment students in various classrooms across the country were saying to their teachers, 'Who is this character on page 100? A bald Jew is kissing Madame Bovary?'" (Allen 1998, 352).

Allen comments on how literary criticism should be treated and makes fun of those who take writing, literature and being a writer too seriously. In the short story *Reminiscences: Places and People*, his character, Maugham gives a rather funny advice to a young author, making fun of serious stylistic, formal or other literary criteria and the idea that such criteria can make a piece of writing more or less valuable: "Maugham then offers the greatest advice anyone could give to a young author: 'At the end of an interrogatory sentence, place a question mark. You'd be surprised how effective it can be'" (Allen 1998, 393). He not only disregards literary criticism – in the same short story he writes: "One must never take criticism too seriously" (Allen 1998, 392) but many times juxtaposes the ideal life art or literature show with the miserable and very simple life of his protagonists. In *The Shallowest Man* one of the characters says: "Who cares what the point of the story is? If it even has a point. It was an entertaining anecdote. Let's order" (Allen 1998, 426). He undermines the authority of literary criticism and literature and assumes that stories do not have to include any message at all.

3. Stand-Up Comedy in the Short Story

The atmosphere of the short stories in the collection *Side Effects* is very similar to the realm of stand-up comedy. The narrator of each story reminds us of a stand-up comedian, who explores issues in the form of dialogue, takes everyday events and subjects them to detailed analysis. In *The Philosophy of Humour* (2012), Paul McDonald explains that the activity of stand-up comedy involves an element of detachment and impartial reflection, as well as a shift in perspective and has the purpose of challenging tradition critically and approaching authority and accepted wisdom in a special way (McDonald 2012, 112-113). The comedian entertains his or her audience not by telling prefabricated jokes but many times by telling stories about observed everyday experiences. Very similarly, the narrator of the short stories in *Side Effects* tell the reader stories structured on observation, reflections on puzzling everyday lives and life events from the perspective of a cynic. Just like stand-up comedians, the narrator sometimes even addresses the reader, e.g. in *The Lunatic's Tale*: "For, dear reader, I was not always what is popularly referred to as "a New York street crazy," (Allen 1998, 379), "Undoubtedly, dear reader, you have heard the expression, "a body that wouldn't quit" (Allen 1998, 380) or "Pity my dilemma, dear reader!" (Allen 1998, 384). The narrator communicates in an easy-going, informal style and addresses the reader as an old friend.

A stand-up comedian constantly figures out the analysed details of the everyday event and in order to amuse his or her audience ridicules and even exaggerates them and many times provides shocking, absurd images. Paul McDonald points out: "In American popular culture entertainment always takes precedence over authenticity" (McDonald 2010, 31). This is the exact case of stand-up comedians, in order to entertain, they transform, exaggerate, make shifts and juxtapose, and in the meantime the audience quits thinking about whether the story or the characters are authentic or not. Whether the story being heard is trustworthy is no more important, the only thing that matters is laughter. Laughter and its subverting potential give the audience the power to transform reality, more exactly the minor details of everyday life into images that are comic, absurd or bizarre. Similarly, the short stories in *Side Effects* include the very same purpose and function: the stand-up comedian narrator uses humour to lift the details, moments of everyday experience into the realm of what McDonald calls the "comic corrective" (McDonald 2010, 41). The stories' cynicism helps both the narrator and the reader avoid being and seeming vulnerable and emotional.

4. (Anti)Intellectual Humour

In the short stories, Woody Allen displays the typical American, who has everything that is necessary for a comfortable and pleasurable living; however, he is constantly dissatisfied and feels the need for a change. The absurdity of having everything but having nothing at the same time is a motif that repeatedly appears in almost each short story. The narrator-protagonist of *The Lunatic's Tale* honestly confesses: "And so it was that I was the most miserable of men. On the surface, apparently blessed with all the necessities for the good life. Underneath, desperately in search of a fulfilling love" (Allen 1998, 381). However, again, before the story could go deeper into any intellectual discourse on the essence of life and the discussion of things, values that would make the protagonist content and would fill his life with love, the narrator avoids any kind of philosophical discourse by finishing quickly with a joke: "Is anything in nature actually "perfect" with the exception of my Uncle Hyman's stupidity?" (Allen 1998, 381). The joke is based on the juxtaposition of nature's perfection, a dignified, philosophical issue and the uncle's stupidity, a banal comment on an empty and valueless state and condition.

The story of *The Lunatic's Tale* offers the most number of deep philosophical and moral questions out of all the short stories. The protagonist is a formerly wealthy and successful doctor, now roller-skating unshaven down Broadway, who tells us the story of his breakdown. He pursued sensual pleasures and was unable to choose between two women, one of them was smart and reasonably attractive, the other the most beautiful woman he could ever imagine. During

the first half of the story, several serious discourses are opened, such as the needs of a happy life, the secret of perfection as well as the discussion of meaningful relationships. There are various intellectual references, such as the mentions of Eliot and Bach, intellectual remarks ("the "coed who enjoys Bach and Beowulf" looked like Grendel, and the "Bay Area bisexual" told me I didn't quite coincide with either of her desires" Allen 1998, 381) and philosophical dilemmas openly discussed with the protagonist's analyst (psychological level) and his rabbi (religious level).

The story is full of questions and dilemmas, the narrator's uncertainty and inability to choose makes the reader want to have answers and obtain solutions. However, the last couple of paragraphs include a bizarre twist. Being a brain surgeon, the protagonist transplants the brilliant brain into the perfect female body, marries the ideal woman he has created and after a few months becomes again dissatisfied with the dream woman and falls in love with a less attractive stewardess. The ending of the story completely negates and even ridicules the intellectual quest of the preceding passages. This unexpected and comic turn suggests that the protagonist failed to control his life and environment and it is impossible to get answers and solve dilemmas on philosophical, moral or religious levels. Allen even subverts the grounds of all intellectual, moral, scientific, psychological or philosophical attempts to explain the world and provide security and certainty. He even refuses to believe that the intellect is able to understand the basic motivation of human beings and is able to get rid of constant dissatisfaction.

The open refusal of intellectualism and claiming that the intellect fails to provide answers seem to dominate the overall atmosphere of the short stories; however, there are various intellectual comments at unexpected parts, which reveal that though the writer refuses to discuss matters on an intellectual level, he cannot resist playing with the readers general knowledge and checks the level of the reader's education by testing whether s/he laughs at certain parts of the text. In the short story *The Condemned* he plays with the reader's (non) existing knowledge of Shakespearean plays, more concretely one of the most discussed and bloodiest play *Titus Andronicus*: "Even the works of the great Shakespeare will disappear when the universe burns out – not such a terrible thought, of course, when it comes to a play like *Titus Andronicus*, but what about the others?" (Allen 1998, 313). Though he suggests that intellectualism cannot provide answers to existential questions, he constantly plays with the intellect and 'intelligent jokes'. In *Remembering Needleman* he writes: "Human freedom for Needleman consisted of being aware of the absurdity of life. 'God is silent,' he was fond of saying, 'now if we can only get Man to shut up" (Allen 1998, 301). It seems that for Allen, though intellectualism is not able to solve existential questions, there is something more superfluous: the combination of speech and human stupidity.

5. Conclusion

Woody Allen is one of the most central figures of contemporary American culture. His short stories in the collection *Side Effects* are great examples of the application of postmodern humour. The analyses of the collection's short stories has shown that Allen's basic method for creating a comic atmosphere is the juxtaposition of the serious and the frivolous, the intellectual and the banal. By using the elements of stand-up comedy he also contributes to shifting the traditional narrative closer to popular culture, by making it more informal and interactive. Although the stories refuse to believe that human nature and existence can be explained on an intellectual, psychological or religious level (and thus question the authority of philosophy, morality and religion), they constantly play with the intellect, the reader's literary knowledge and provide unexpected, sometimes even bizarre endings, and suggest that the only way to find happiness is laughter and playfulness.

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The Comic and the Academic: David Lodge's Campus Novels

Dobrovodský, Erik

Abstract: The academic novel, often referred to as 'campus novel', can be considered a relatively new genre, which emerged in America in the late 1940s. The main focus of this genre is on the academic staff, living their lives as individuals while being a part of a 'small world', the campus itself. This closed world with its own norms and values offered many intrigues which made a good footing for excellent satirical stories. This paper intends to show the determinative role of the comical elements as they are depicted in David Lodge's famous Campus Trilogy: *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses* (1975), *Small World: An Academic Romance* (1984), and *Nice Work* (1988), paying special attention to the influence of the academic setting on the events.

Key words: comic, academic, campus novel, humour

Introduction

The significance of the novels in contemporary history is still determinative; nevertheless, the social and cultural importance of reading books is more underrated. To keep up with the changing demands and to satisfy the needs of a modern reader the writers need to give birth to stories which do not only catch the interest of the readers but also have something to teach or have characters the readers can identify themselves with. It would be hard if not impossible to define what makes a good novel. There is a wide variety of novels to choose from, making it possible for everyone to find a story of their own interest.

The main goal of this paper is to show the comical elements and situations as they are depicted in *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses* (1975)*; Small World: An Academic Romance* (1984) *and Nice Work* (1988), which are known as *The Campus Trilogy,* written by David Lodge. This famous trilogy of campus novels gives a picture of the British academic life at a fictional English university. Even if the events occurring in the novels seem to be autobiographical, the author claims them to be completely fictional.

The paper deals mainly with humour and its main types, briefly focusing on comedy, which is very typical for David Lodge's novels. All the following parts focus on humour and comedy, narrowed down to the English campus novels of the post-war era.

The introductory part is followed by a brief summary of the social situation in the post-war period, how it influenced authors, and what kind of changes it caused in literary circles. It also deals with the theory concerning the campus novel, its definition and history.

The first novel to be analysed is *Changing Places,* which is one, if not the best-known novel written by the author. This part is followed by the analysis of its outstanding sequels *Small World* and *Nice Work*.

Changing Places (1975) was a great success when it appeared and is still considered to be one of his best novels. It is not only funny and innovative but also a greatly sophisticated novel. The novel's doubleness and binary oppositions are the main sources of its comedic tone.

Small World (1984) continues the allusiveness of its prequel and takes it much further with its intertextuality, rewrites and parodies while at some point it continues the previous storyline. Romance is a frequent topic of the novel, and while it has romantic elements of Shakespearean comedy it does not have a happy ending. It mainly dramatizes the problems of a discipline pulled in many directions by literary theories. The characters embody contrasting attitudes to the subject, from intellectuality and morality to traditional empiricism and humanism.

The third novel of the trilogy*, Nice Work* (1988) goes back to conventional realism again, making it lack comedic devices, which makes the story less funny compared to its predecessors, though it does not make the novel less enjoyable. As a novel of ideas it analyses the English culture and the effects of industrialism while telling a story of an enforced relationship starting with hostility and ignorance which later develops into mutual understanding and respect.

The last past part of the paper compares the novels and answers questions like; What were the similarities?; How did they differ?; Was humour a defining element in all of the novels?; and draws a final conclusion.

The English post-war period and the birth of Campus novel

With the end of the Second World War, Great Britain's role as world power had weakened. The consequences of the war could be clearly seen not only in economic recession but also in education and healthcare problems, which affected the whole country.

The Butler Education Act of 1944 was a huge step for radical changes in English education. This huge landmark made children pursue their primary education at least until the age of 15 while creating a two-tiered school system which consisted of "Grammar Schools" and "Secondary Modern Schools", which offered free education (Sanders 2004, 593).

One of the biggest benefits of this act was the introduction of university scholarships which allowed students with lower social status attend universities as well. The act attempted to undermine the university education as an exclusive privilege of the upper classes (Womack 2002, 28).

All of these reforms played a huge part in the birth of great English novelists including David Lodge, who was not from a family with high social status. With the multiplication of university students and educated people new challenges and problems arose. As Philip Gardner observes, the Education Act:

> *gave rise to a significant number of deracinated and disoriented young men, no longer at home in their working- or lower-middle-class attitudes and environments, but at the same time not feeling accepted by the social system into which their education appeared to be pushing them.*
>
> (Gardner 1981, 24)

This culture alienation and discontent was a good reason for literary figures to show their displeasure and to create the figure of the "angry young man", a young person who strongly criticizes the political and social situation. Kenneth Womack described them as follows:

> *The figure of the angry young man as a fictive person reveals himself as a literary character simultaneously oppressed by the hypocritical value system of the same society whose standards and traditions he so desperately strives to oblige.*
>
> (Womack 2002, 29)

In the early 1950s a number of younger poets made a clear and explicit stand against modernism, internationalism, neo-Romanticism and the exclusiveness of the "upper-class bohemia" (Marwick 1996, 26).This reaction to the English novel was followed by another reaction in the early 1970s, which was characterized by David Lodge as a post-modern novel aiding the modernist critique of traditional realism. The critique of the English post-modern novel became harsher and important critics characterized it as a novel which is "fading", and has a gap between ideas and action (Head 2002, 6).

Summarising this period in English literature, we can clearly see that with the end of the war many young authors wanted changes in literature, and while their ideas about the best style and movement may have differed, they were definitely unified in their avoidance of realism.

In 1969 David Lodge had a famous declaration about the novelists in crisis being at a crossroad faced with the alternative roads, where Lodge himself recommended going straight and following the road of realism (Head 2002, 6).However, starting his career as a realist and the novelist of manners, even Lodge soon began to explore the possibilities and the limits of realistic writing. Together with his friend and contemporary writer Malcolm Bradbury, David Lodge "discovered in their situation as novelists working simultaneously within and against the English literary tradition a situation analogous to that of the postwar liberal humanist who had previously served as the focus of the Anglo-liberal novel" (Morace 1989, xiii).

The social changes in England together with the new literary experiments enabled the birth of a new sub-genre, which became widely popular not just among readers but authors as well; the campus novel, which proved to be a genre just as enjoyable for a contemporary reader as it used to at the end of the 20th century.

The academic novel, often referred to as 'campus novel' emerged in America in the late 1940s and depicts the actions and happenings around a campus of a university. The main focus of the campus novel is on the teachers (the academic staff) and the students as they live their life as individuals while being a part of a 'small world', the campus itself.

The Latin term 'Campus' means field and refers to the space occupied by a university. Since the term was not used in Britain until the 1950'we consider Americans to be the first to use the word campus in this sense. Richard Bradford calls this genre a 'University Novel'; in his opinion "the university serves as an eccentric microcosm, usually comically inverted by the perversely unreal environment where academics live and work" (Bradford 2007, 35). The campus novel became a popular genre as it depicts topics like power and sex and human relations while also dealing with traditional themes of fiction, making it an interesting reading material for a wider circle of audience.

The closed world of the university with its own norms and values offered many intrigues which made good footing for excellent stories. The universities in America offered a wide variety of academic and literary studies for students who were interested in gaining a degree in history or classics before starting a literary career (Connor 1996, 15).

England on the other hand had fewer possibilities and did not offer such opportunities for the students who chose writing as their career. This can be the main reason why the first campus novels were written in America; however it did not take long for the British authors to come up with stories just as enjoyable as their American counterparts.

The popularity of campus novels inspired writers including David Lodge to choose this genre for their own novels. Lodge's own campus fiction contains three novels published between 1975 and 1988: *Changing Places*, *Small World* and *Nice Work*. These novels are set partially or entirely in the imaginary city and university of Rummidge. Despite the continuity of the places and some of the characters, these books were never planned to be a part of a trilogy. It was only when the author started to work on *Small World* that he decided to make it a sequel of his previous work. Each novel, however, remains formally and thematically distinct though they still make a perfect Campus Trilogy together (Bergonzi 1995, 14–15).

Comic elements in *Changing Places*

The first part of the famous Campus Trilogy experiments with the form of classic novel combined with epistolary novel and screenplay. The main focus is on the personalities of the two protagonists followed through the changes in their environment and culture. The writer, as an omniscient narrator, plays with the form and content of the story, creates situational comedy and often makes rapid switches between the characters and their stories, building up the whole novel consciously.

Lodge draws a picture about the academic life on the two different campuses with the help of a teacher exchange. The difference between the two school systems and the teachers clearly indicates the duality of the novel which can be followed throughout the whole storyline. This duality can be seen in the description of places such as universities and countries but also in human treats like life philosophy, culture and personality.

The world of academia, no matter which university or campus we are talking about, has its own rules and formalities. In a closed world where everyone tries to find a better position, those with ambition have better chances to succeed. This ambitious character is represented by Morris Zapp, a confident American professor, who had reached everything he wanted in his career. His biggest goal was to become the most distinguished specialist on Jane Austen, which he actually achieved even if he personally did not like her writings. On the other hand, Philip Swallow's character is more of a modest lover of literature, without any big academic achievements. The comic tone of the story is already set with the first few lines of the novel:

> *High, high above the North Pole, on the first day of 1969, two professors of English Literature approached each other at a combined velocity of 1200 miles per hour. They were protected from the thin, cold air by the pressurized cabins of two Boeing 707s, and from the risk of collision by the prudent arrangement of the international air corridors.*
>
> (Lodge 2011, 5)

The flight to their destination plays an important role in the later development of the story. The discussions they have with the other people during the flight bring up questions about culture and morality. This is the first time when the protagonists meet different opinions from their own, making them support their own standpoint while hearing out other ideas. These serious parts are mostly followed or include funny parts with the purpose of a comic relief.

Morris Zapp's integration into British society is more a challenge than an enjoyable task. Although he meets Philip Swallow's wife Hilary, he quickly realizes that she in not someone he can easily seduce. His first meeting with the Head of Department, Professor Masters is quite unique as well. Masters' incomprehensible way of speech would be hard for anybody to understand:

> *Mmmmmmmmner, mmmmmmmmmmmmmmner, mmmmmmmmmmmner, he bleated. Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmner mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmner, Masters. He pumped Morris's hands up and down in a double handshake. Mmmmmmmmmmmmmner Zapp? Mmmmmmmmmmmmmner all right? Mmmmmmmmmmmner cup of tea? Mmmmmmmmmner jolly good. He stopped bleating, cocked his head to one side and closed one eye. Morris deducted that he was in the presence of the Head of the Rummidge English Department, home from his Hungarian pig-shoot* […]
>
> (Lodge 2011, 74)

The absurdity of the situation and the description of Masters are really satirical. The head of an English Department was solely chosen based on the fact that he likes hunting just like his predecessor. He has no publications or books written, which is contradictory to the academic system of hierarchy.

The next comical situation, a visit to a striptease bar, shows a clear picture of differences in the quality of service and the culture itself. While Philip Swallow in America gets a show which is to his liking, Morris Zapp is waiting for the show in a cold room all alone. This is another sign of Philip Swallow's change, since his old self would not even consider visiting a place like that.

Another source of comedy is the influence of the hippie movement not only on adults but on children as well:

> *I'm sorry to have to report that the twins' sudden craze for gardening turned out to be an attempt to cultivate marijuana. I had to root up all the plants and burn them before the cops got wise.*
>
> (Lodge 2011, 116)

The following chapter continues the structure of the epistolary novel and is written in a form of newspaper clippings. These clippings give a picture of general happenings in Euphoria and Rummidge that can be described as chaotic, with all the riots and student unrest. David Lodge proved that he is able to use humour even in serious situations like these. The clippings contain advertisements of young people who are searching for sexual partners and articles about the hippie movement. The situation in Rummidge is the same as in Euphoria; the movement has reached Europe as well. The Head of English Department, Gordon H. Masters' resignation acts rather comically, knowing his combative nature and the encouraging words he tells to one of the reporters:

> *The situation closely resembles that of Europe in 1940, he said yesterday. The unacceptable ultimatum followed a Blitzkrieg and occupation of the neighbouring territory, was Hitler's basic strategy. But we did not yield then and we shall not yield now.*
>
> (Lodge 2011, 137)

The fifth chapter goes back to the conventional way of narration and form. It is focused on the two protagonist and their wives again. The only thing that is different is the fact that the wives 'changed places' as well. Philip seems to be happy next to the independent feminist Désirée, while the male chauvinist Morris starts to open up and be more kind with Hilary.

The last chapter of the book is written in a form of film script. Beside the dialogs we also get notes on the noises and action, scenery and camera angles. Similarly to the first chapter, this chapter starts with the description of the

flights. The two aircrafts have different pilots, one British and one American. This is the same duality that could be seen at the beginning of the novel. Their different attitude creates another situational comedy and lightens the tension. After the two planes almost collide, the captains' reaction clearly shows the cultural difference:

> *BRITISH CAPTAIN: (coolly into microphone) Hello Kennedy Flight Control. This is BOAC Whisky Sugar Eight. I have to report an air miss.* [...]
> *AMERICAN CAPTAIN: (enraged, into microphone) What the fuck do you think you guys are doing down there?*
>
> (Lodge 2011, 205)

The protagonists finally meet in a hotel and try to decide who should sleep with whom. When it comes to deciding, Morris is happy as long as he can sleep with either of the girls, so Désirée decides to sleep with Hilary. The next day they talk about the future and want to decide how to proceed. While Désirée, Morris and Philip list a few funny options, like group marriage where all the four of them stay together in one house, Hilary is the only one who remains serious for the whole time.

At the end they start to talk about the ending of the novels. Philip is talking about the predictability of the novels, how they prepare the reader mentally for the ending. When there are only two pages left, the reader acknowledges the fact that the book is coming to the end. On the other hand the movies are different. There is no way of telling which frame is going to be the last one. The author ends the story right in the middle of Philip's last sentence, ending the story brilliantly.

One of the biggest ironies of the story is the ending itself. In Philip Swallow's book, *Let's Write a Novel*, he reads about the possible endings of a novel for beginning writers. According to the book the best ending is a happy ending, it is followed by the unhappy ending and the worst thing a novelist can do is writing a novel without an ending, just like the novel *Changing Places* itself.

Comic elements in *Small World*

The second novel of the trilogy, *Small World,* is an enjoyable sequel of *Changing Places*. The author does not spare the academics, showing their true faces in a novel full of comedy, romance and intertextuality. *Small World,* compared to its prequel, shows the academic life on a bigger scale. It gives an insight into the world of endless conferences, an event that every scholar tries to attend in order to be recognized. The novel parodies the endless struggle for position, power and acknowledgement in the world of academia.

The legend of *The Holy Grail*, from the well-known Arthurian legends, gives the basis of the story. All of the characters have something important they are striving for; yet for the majority 'Holy Grail' is equal with power, money and fame, symbolised by the position of UNESCO Chair. The modern knights, in this case the scholars, wander all around the world from one conference to another to get closer to their dream, since everybody knows that finding the 'Holy Grail' is not an easy task. In fact, even its existence is questionable; still everybody believes that it is real.

Many new characters appear in the novel, including the young Irish scholar, Persse McGarrigle and his 'Holy Grail', Angelica Pabst, but we meet the old veteran knights as well, like Philip Swallow and Morris Zapp. All of them have their own life, their own story which slowly interweaves into something bigger, a novel which gives the reader enjoyable moments with its humour, storytelling and mystery.

David Lodge starts the novel with a comical description of the formal session and the people's reaction to the long and often boring conference papers:

> *Persse yawned and shifted his weight from one buttock to another in his seat at the back of the lecture-room. He could not see the faces of many of his colleagues, but as far as could be judged from their postures, most of them were as disengaged from the discourse as himself.* […] *In the third row a man was surreptitiously doing The Times crossword, and at least three people appeared to be asleep. Someone, a student presumably, had carved into the surface of the desk at which Persse sat, cutting deep into the wood with the force of a man driven to the limits of endurance, the word 'BORING'.*
>
> (Lodge 2011, 238)

One of the problems occurring at the conferences is the fact that scholars often give the same papers on more than one lecture. For this reason they try to call widely-read scholars to raise the quality of the event. This is why Morris Zapp, a figure of frequent situational comedy in *Small World*, makes his appearance. His own paper named "Textuality as Striptease" proves to be too obscene for the audience, making people leave the room and faint. Morris talks about an idea of language complexity and the fact that it can never be completely understood:

> *To understand a message is to decode it. Language is a code.* But every decoding is another encoding.
>
> (Lodge 2011, 249).

He compares the curiosity of the reader to the curiosity of the audience in a striptease bar and follows the interpretation with a humorous statement to lighten the mood:

> *I am told – I have not personally patronized these places, but I am told on the authority of no less a person than your host at this conference, my old friend Philip Swallow, who has patronized them* [here several members of the audience turned in their seats to stare and grin at Philip Swallow, who blushed to the roots of his silver-grey hair] – *that the girls take off all their clothes before they commence dancing in front of the customers.*
>
> (Lodge 2011, 251)

The focus of the novel is not just only on university life but on literature itself. Compared to David Lodge's previous novel, *Small World* pays attention to the different literary theories and parodies them by giving every character a different attitude and way of interpreting the same thing.

The entire rumpus around the UNESCO Chair becomes comical, when Arthur Kingfisher appoints himself to the same position. The rivalry between the scholars is no different from the one in any other field, which is the reason why the characters plan to visit the next conference, continuing the endless tradition of their predecessors.

In his parody, Lodge proved that even serious problems can be discussed with the help of the comedy. The story about academia and endless pursuit of love may stand in contradiction, but definitely not in *Small World*, where everything relates to everything else.

Comic elements in *Nice Work*

The last part of the trilogy, *Nice Work*, was not planned to be the continuation of the previous novels. Although we meet characters from the previous novels, such as Morris Zapp and Philip Swallow, their role in the last novel is not decisive. The author, humorously, uses the form of the industrial novel to, in fact, talk about the industrial novel itself.

The protagonists of the novel have completely different personalities and ideologies, yet are forced to cooperate and work together. One of the protagonists, representing the academic world and literary interests, is Robyn Penrose. She is a specialist of the 19th century industrial novel and the role of women in literature. Her complete opposite, Victor Wilcox is the Managing Director of a factory, who stands for practical industry. Virtually, the whole story of the novel is based on the mutual understanding and cooperation of these two people, who need to work together because of the 'Industry Year Shadow Scheme', the government's new plan to make the academic people understand the importance of the industry.

David Lodge gives a comic picture about the economic problems at the university, such as using the same envelope while editing the address on it several times, or saving the writing paper by using abbreviations and acronyms.

Victor owns shares of many British corporations and tries to help his nation with all he can. As a big patriot, he prefers British products and buys everything that comes from his country to support its economy. He is respected at his workplace, but definitely not loved. As a determined leader, he governs the whole factory with iron grip, always busy with profit making. On his way to the office he meets his receptionists, and a comical situation occurs:

> *'Morning Mr. Wilcox'*
> *'Morning. Think we could do with some new chairs in here?'*
> *'Oh yes, Mr. Wilcox, these are ever so hard.'*
> *'I didn't mean your chairs. I mean for visitors.'*
> *'Oh…'*

(Lodge 2011, 598)

Another comical situation, to enlighten the mood of the novel, is the visit of Robyn's brother and his girlfriend Debbie. They both work in the field of finance, having no monetary problems. The author describes Debbie as a kind of dull personality, who has no interest in other subject except her own:

> *Debbie giggled. 'Back to back is like a loan that's made in one currency and set against an equal loan in another.'*
> *'Oh I see, it's a metaphor.'*
> *'What?'*
> *'Never mind', said Robyn, hugging herself against the dump chill of the evening.*

(Lodge 2011, 724)

Victor, similarly to Robyn at the factory, is shocked to see how different the world of academia is from his own. He finds their moral and clothing lacking, and does not understand the reason for the breaks they have. When Robyn tries to explain him how demanding their work is, and how deep conversations do they have about literary topics, another situational comedy occurs:

> *It was unfortunate that at this moment the Professor of Egyptology, who was sitting nearby, said very audibly to his neighbour, 'How are your tulips this year, Dobson?'*

(Lodge 2011, 857)

After these experiences both of them admit that they have learnt new things from each other, and that this project really had a sense. In the end Victor loses his job because the company is brought by a bigger one, an everyday occurrence in the modern capitalist world. He loses his job, but gains the support of his family and intends to start his own business.

Robyn gives a copy of her works to Morris Zapp, who shows them to the publishers in America. He also offers her a position as a university teacher abroad. Her problems of getting a job seem to be solved when she gets a notice about her inheritance and on the top of that she is offered a place at University of Rummidge.

Lodge ends his novel with an unexpected happy ending. Even if the protagonists continue their lives separately, they find their own happiness in things which were always with them; they only needed to look at it from a different perspective.

Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to point out the comic elements occurring in the academic setting of the novels *Changing Places*, *Small World* and *Nice Work,* written by the British author David Lodge. These three novels, also known as '*The Campus Trilogy*', became the author's most famous and widely read campus novels.

The paper also depicted the oppositions of the comic and the academic, and highlighted the frequent usage of humour and situational comedy in the selected novels, describing the basic set up and form of each novel first, then showing the comic elements in each of the novels individually.

In *Changing Places* the author used the contrast between British and American culture as a source of comedy. The confrontation of reserved Britain and progressive America can be followed throughout the whole storyline. Even the main characters were shown as stereotypes of their own culture, one of them happy and satisfied, while the other always searching for a better life. The unexpected twists, such as the professor exchange and the change of environment became another source of comedy in the novel. David Lodge often used the differences in the personalities, unexpected situations with unique characters and the change of the narrative form, to create verbal and situational comedy.

Small World continued to provide the readers an exceptionally enjoyable story, full of comedy and intertextuality. The borders of the novel had widened and many new international characters were introduced, allowing the author to parody rapid globalization. The new world of conferences provided a new field for comedy and comic situations. The author used satire to conceal his own critical views about the quality of conferences and about scholars using them as means of free vacations.

Nice Work, compared to the previous two novels, was more conservative and did not use humour so commonly. The industrial novel was the most determinative genre of the story, which made it stand closer to realist fiction than to campus novel.

The most frequent source of comedy in the novel was the Industry Year Shadow Scheme, which intended to bring academics closer to industry. As a part of the program, the author made two completely different people with different personalities work together and learn from each other. He also used satirical elements, describing the fund cuts and early retirements in academic circles, and criticized the overpaid banking industry.

The analysis clearly showed the determinative role of humour in the selected novels. It also pointed out the dominance of situational comedy in *Changing Places* and *Small World*, relegated to the background in *Nice Work*. All of the novels contained comedy, parody and satire, and all of them depicted the world of academia shown in contrast with another field, pointing out the differences in attitude. Each novel experimented with different form and narration, but the author used the same characters and even introduced new ones to make the story flow better. Even if the extent of humour was different in each novel, and was used depending on the characters or situation, David Lodge parodied the academic world, the scholars, and the meaningless conferences in all of the selected campus novels.

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The Popular and Urban Roots of Hungarian Joke

Géró, Györgyi – Barta, Péter

Abstract: Hungarian humour went through significant changes in the 20th century. Though the urban middle-class way of living and culture had developed by the early 20th century, they had to coexist all over the country as well as in ethnic Hungarian territories abroad with the traditions of rural culture and folklore until the middle of the century. Consequently, Hungarian humour is made up of two important layers of folklore: popular funny stories that have been developing among the peasantry for centuries, and jokes, a genre that emerged from urban oral culture in the last third of the 20th century. In this paper, we examine the thematic categories of this genre of popular and urban humour and their popularity.

Key words: Hungarian, joke, humour, popular, urban, theme, minority, profession

1. Introduction

1.1. A short history of jokes

The collection and the study of funny stories and jokes began centuries earlier in the Western countries of Europe than in Hungary as the formation of the middle class in those countries had started earlier. A good indicator of the belated middle-class formation in Hungary is the fact that genres of urban folklore only appeared as late as the last decades of the 19th century.[1] With the unification of Pest, Buda and Óbuda in 1873, Budapest became the tenth largest city on the continent by the turn of the century, though only every third of its inhabitants was born in Pest or Buda. Immigrants accounting for two thirds of the population had arrived from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as well as from the neighbouring countries, representing tremendous linguistic, cultural, ethnic and social diversity. The rootlessness of the immigrants made the city susceptible to accepting different influences, and, since one of the characteristics of jokes is ridiculing *otherness* (Heller 2002, 3–5), *the Budapest joke* ('a pesti vicc') found a rich breeding ground in this whirling and colourful diversity. Compared with other big cities, the citizen of Budapest remains provincial for a longer time, as most of the immigrants at the turn of the century moved into the feverish commotion of the throbbing city from the countryside. The new city-dwellers strengthened the folklore character of the joke, not so much because of the folklore elements they had brought from their rural home, as by means of the oral tradition, which for them was an every-day way of living.

1 Cities that had developed earlier fell victim to the storms of history. During the Mongol invasion and the 150-year-long wars against the Turks, not only market towns but, in the central region of the country, also a large part of villages were destroyed.

At the turn of the century, 570 cafés operated in the city of a population of 600,000. Cafés represented a way of life. This was the place and the way where and how a new stratum of society, the new urban intelligentsia, was born, and this was also the most typical birthplace and habitat of 'pesti' humour. A product of modern mass culture, the joke, found a powerful market in the show business of the big city in the years of peace preceding World War I.

1.2. The joke and its environs: questions concerning the genre

The joke is a genre of urban folklore. It is short, hard-hitting and highly dramatic. It is associated with city dwellers, it adjusts itself to the hectic pace and the happenings of city living. The laughing stock is usually one or another group of the society, determined in terms of their profession, origin, gender, age, or social standing.

The predecessors and the contemporaries of the jokes are the genres of folk humour: anecdotes, funny stories, humorous folk histories. They are focusing on smaller, better-determined local groups, with frequent verifying elements. They are the genres of the countryside where feudalistic structures survive. Anecdotes are popular among the upper layers of society. For the Hungarian nobility, the informal social events providing occasions for telling anecdotes still served as the most common form of entertainment until the late 19th century.

Popular stories and other funny stories are genres mainly characteristic of peasantry. According to the definition of the Hungarian Encyclopaedia of Ethnography, the popular story is 'a short, striking, epic prose genre, maintaining a cheerful tone. Its characters are not concrete historical personalities, rather representatives of an abstract type, e.g. *the Gypsy, the bootmaker*, etc. The popular story does not claim concrete authenticity. It abounds in amusing turns, has a light style and often uses the tools of irony and mockery' (Szemerkényi 1977, 32). The community events providing occasions for telling tales and stories are primarily times of joint working events and village festivals, which gradually lost their grounds as the traditional peasant way of living disappeared, and as a result of the forced collectivization of agriculture in Hungary in the 1950s. The sweeping transformation of the peasants' way of living did not, however, take place overnight, but step by step. It was an observable tendency that after the collectivization, adapting to the new organization of work, new story-telling occasions emerged, and this entailed significant transformations of the genre: long, epically well-elaborated traditional fairy tales were replaced by shorter and faster forms of funny stories (Vöő 1962, 1107–1109).[2] Though both types

2 In West European folklore, this change was completed as early as the first third of the 19th century, while among the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Hungarian popular culture, peasant story-telling lasted until the mid-20th century, or, in more archaic regions, even till the end of the century.

are aimed at, and have the function of, entertaining the audience, fairy tales and legends required a lengthy, detailed interpretation with deep empathy, while the popular stories are built on a punch line and their recitation is faster, to-the-point, using unexpected twists. They require a shorter time of interpretation, rely on less common knowledge, therefore, they can also function in heterogeneous groups, not only in traditional, closed village communities.

The gradual switching from popular fantasticality to the spheres of reality has created transitionary genres, the connecting link of which is humour. Some of them are longer, having a more epic character, like tall tales, village-mocking stories, anecdotes based on historical subjects, while others have a more concise, more dramatized structure that is built on a punch line, like popular stories or jokes themselves.[3] Popular stories are most liked among peasants, and they have multiple links to more traditional folklore genres, in terms of formal elements as well as concerning their motives: they find their subjects in rural life, their motives often show influences from folk tales, and some folk tale characters also appear here: priests and Gypsies, landlords and servants, artful dodgers and profligate wives, just to mention a few (Magyar 2009, 17–19).

In this way, popular funny stories have been organically incorporated into the body of genres of Hungarian folklore as a whole. The joke, on the other hand, though it has a lot in common with the popular stories, and has by our day spread in all layers of the society, is basically the genre of the urban middle class, the intelligentsia. Unlike the former genre, this one is not associated with a geographically and culturally homogeneous community determined by its own traditions, but is generated by an ethnically, culturally, linguistically and socially heterogeneous, permanently changing environment (see *pesti vicc*). Therefore, it makes use of motives, ways of thinking and characters of different cultures (even subcultures), it spreads extremely rapidly and, as a result, the stock of jokes has a strikingly international character.

2. Hungarian folk and urban humour

2.1. Comparing jokes and funny popular stories

Below we will be comparing the material contained by two collections that were published at the turn of the 20th century, primarily from a thematic point of view. On the one hand, we relied on the work by József Köves titled *A legnagyobb vicckönyv*, featuring 10,000 jokes. The other subject of comparison will be *Szilágysági dekameron*, a collection of funny popular stories by Zoltán Magyar, which includes the author's self-collected funny popular stories.

3 Funny popular stories have long been pushed in the background behind more acknowledged folklore genres (tales and legends). The Hungarian folklore science has only paid attention to the important role they play in modern popular culture in the past few decades, therefore their collection and systematization have not yet led to any results that can be considered comprehensive and final.

SUBJECT/CHARACTER	JOKE	FUNNY POPULAR STORIES
characters	Gypsy Székely Jew	Gypsy Székely Jew
laughing stock	Scots	village mockers ('Rátót sagas')
loonies	mentally ill psychiatrist sick-nurse	the village idiot
profession	physician restaurant keeper policeman	priest soldier excise officer policeman/gendarme
innate silliness, ignorance	policeman aristocrat	village mockers ('Rátót sagas')
boozing	drunkard	popular stories on wine drinking
marital status jokes	young Maurice pupils marriage mother-in-law	childhood stories pupils indecent stories
sexuality	erotic and pornographic jokes	indecent stories
absurd, grotesque	absurd jokes	tall tales
historic events, famous people	political jokes anecdotes	historical popular stories

Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the larger subject areas that they used to organize their material basically correspond to one another.[4]

4 There can be different aspects of classification, though the thematic units of folklore collections often turn out to be identical. What we have found most suitable here is categorization according to situations of life and the characters and groups referred to by name. Of course, like in every such collection, there are also unclassifiable 'other cases' as well, but they remain beyond our scope now.

2.2. Presentation of the contemporary stock of jokes according to main subject areas

We have examined the material included in one of the largest web-based collections (vicclap.hu) and looked into the popularity[5] of the different joke categories. The following table shows the frequency of the different joke categories in decreasing order. Naturally, the categorization of texts according to subjects is not always clear-cut.

SUBJECT	NUMBER OF ITEMS
marriage	1,661
obscene	1,075
children	866
doctor, psychiatrist, lunatic	821
blonde	811
policeman	767
political	495
mother-in-law	420
traffic	411
workplace	372
pub	355
Gypsies (Roma)	345
computer	340**
Scots	315
Jean*	269
Székelys	268
soldier	240
Jews	230
lawyer	108

Table 2.

* Some of the material collected here is not jokes proper and from the point of view of genre classification, they cannot be grouped among jokes unambiguously.

** Jean, the butler, is the survivor of the jokes about aristocrats that mostly became obsolete by the 21st century.

5 We have not examined the popularity (evaluation) of individual jokes in the strict sense of the word, nor the number of occurrences (frequency) of individual jokes, just the number of jokes of a given subject appearing in a collection. That is why we do not make a difference between popularity and frequency in this article.

2.2.1. Minorities

All the 843 jokes classified in this category are associated with ethnic groups and minorities that the majority Hungarian population has been living with for centuries. They appear in the Hungarian folklore as positive figures who, in spite of their subordination and helplessness, are clever enough to turn their defenceless status to their own advantage and outwit the powerful (e.g., landlord, priest, policeman, or gendarme). Gypsies and Jews live in rural and urban environments as well, though Gypsies are more characteristic of the villages, while (since the beginning and mainly since the middle of the 20th century) Jews are typically an urban population. A part of the jokes is clearly linked to a locality. Some of the typical scenes are the Gypsy shanty, the Gypsy row, the forest, the fair, the local parish, the church, the pub, all of which can be linked to the rural way of living. Some typical characters also imply the scene: the village constable, the game warden, the village parson, the Gypsy marketer, the voivode are characteristic figures of the village, while the job centre attendant, the tramway, or the registrar evoke an urban environment. The Gypsy is traditionally the most popular figure of the Hungarian joke repertory, he appears in the most varied situations. His figure is a widely liked, fallible, congenially artful character both in folklore and in fiction. In more recent jokes and contemporary popular stories, however, the Gypsy is often no longer a positive character; rather his laziness, trickery and theft appear as characteristic stereotypes:

Joke 1:
Gazsi hears from others that in the developed Western countries people only have to work one day a week. So he travels to Germany and asks the first person he bumps into:
– Could you tell me, please, is it true that one only has to work one day a week here?
– Yes, and it is in the middle of the week, on Wednesday.
– And tell me, please, every Wednesday?

(Köves 1999, 122)[6]

Joke 2:
The Gypsy is walking across the meadow. On his way, he meets the game warden.
– Good morning, Gypsy. Where are you going?
– A hen? Me? Oh, c'mon.

(Köves 1999, 124)

6 The original (Hungarian) text of the jokes is to be found in the Appendix.

The humorous stories about Jews represent a different situation: the funny folk stories mainly tell about playing tricks on Jews and ridiculing their different customs; they emphasize the differences between the two groups. The Jew jokes, on the contrary, rather ridicule the negative stereotypes the majority has in relation to the Jews: money-minded thinking, miserliness, cunning:

Joke 6:
Old Kohn wants to buy Coke from the vending machine at the airport. He inserts a dollar coin and presses the button. Nothing comes out. He inserts another dollar, presses the button, and still no luck.
– Clever, very clever, – the old man says.

(vicclap.hu)

Joke 7:
Kohn applies to have his name changed to Kovács. One week after the change has gone through, to the attendant's great surprise, Kovács (formerly Kohn) submits another application to have his name changed, this time to Szabó.
– I understood why you had your name changed to Kovács, - the attendant says. – But why do you want to change it from Kovács to Szabó?
– Well, what'll happen if I introduce myself as Kovács and they ask me what my name had been before?

(vicclap.hu)

Another group of the jokes has been taken over from the Jewish culture and they reflect the characteristic Jewish way of thinking, the attitude to life, and their humour arises from the self-irony that is inseparable from this culture (Papp 2009)

Joke 8:
On his deathbed, Samu asks Ráhel:
– Ráhel, were you here with me when the Nazis took away our first shop?
– Yes, I was, Samu.
– Were you with me when we were taken to the concentration camp?
– Yes, I was with you.
– Were you with me when the Nazis took away our second shop, too?
– Yes, I was with you then too.
– And are you here with me at my deathbed?
– I am here now, too.
– Ráhel, Ráhel, you do not bring good luck.

(vicclap.hu)

The characters featuring in these jokes are mainly all Jews; typical figures are the wise rabbi and the yeshiva student. Some theories hold that the Pest joke was born from the marriage of the down-to-earth way of thinking of the Hungarian peasant and the Jewish way of thinking (Erőss 1982, 233), others regard the latter as a central element of the whole East-Central European region.

The shrewd Székelys[7] traditionally appear both in jokes and in humorous folk genres with a frequency similar to Gypsies. In the whole Hungarian language area, they are known for their wily way of thinking, being quick of mind but slow with words and their simplicity that hides wisdom. In the popular stories telling about them, erotic contents also often appear. In the new and unaccustomed urban environment, however, i.e. in the more recent layers of humour, the Székelys may become fallible, awkward figures, who are ridiculous in themselves:

Joke 3:
– Hey, brother, will you take me to Szentgyörgy?
– I will.
They sit silently in the coach for hours.
– Is Szentgyörgy still far away?
– Well, it's getting further away by the minute.

(Köves 1999, 147)

Joke 4:
The Székely child takes the dinner out to the field for his father. On getting there, he asks:
– Father, is Gergő Kovács a relative of ours?
– No, son, he is not.
– Father, is it certain that Uncle Gergő is not a relative of ours?
– I tell you, it is certain. Why are you asking?
– Just because he is in bed with my mother at home.
– Well, then he must be a relative of ours, son.

(Köves 1999, 151)

Joke 5:
Public opinion pollsters are working in the villages of Csík. They ask Uncle Mózes:
– So, Uncle Mózes, now that the price of bread has been raised again, how do you feel?
– I feel good.
– Could you be a bit more explicit?
– I feel bad.

(Köves 1999, 154)

7 Székelys are an ethnic group speaking Hungarian and living in Székelyföld, a part of Transylvania. Since 1920, the territory has belonged to Romania, but it has more or less retained its language and identity.

2.2.2. More remote groups: village mockers, jokes about Scots and aristocrats

Mockers are a popular genre of Hungarian folklore; the anthologies of folk poetry contain a very high number of mockers. We can distinguish woman mockers, profession mockers, lad mockers, maiden mockers, religion mockers, village mockers, nationality mockers, etc. (Szemerkényi–Lajos 1977). Mockers are characterized by exaggeration, irony and improvization. Village mockers, which are popular in every region, typically ridicule the ignorance and clumsiness of the inhabitants of poorer, nearby villages. In *Szilágysági Dekameron*, residents of Szilágysámson despise the neighbouring village, Szér, and its residents:

> Joke 11:
> *Says the man from Szér: Open the gates, the yard needs airing.*
>
> (Magyar 2009, 59)

> Joke 12:
> *In the old times, we used to say that we would know when the world would pass away, as in Szér it would pass away one day earlier. It was because the people in Sámson used to despise those in Szér. It was a very remote village …*
>
> (Magyar 2009, 63)

Among the jokes, quite surprisingly, we find the Scots as the primary target group of mocking. To determine the origin of the legend would be difficult. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the English style was considered trendy, and this was the time when the English-type dry humour became popular. It is possible that Scots jokes also originate from this period. The target of Scots jokes is the legendary stinginess of the Scots. Considering the lack of any real-life historical relations and experience, presumably their function may have been simply to ridicule this human quality:

> Joke 9:
> *Two old Scotsmen are sitting about on a bench in the cemetery.*
> *– How old are you?*
> *– I am 78. And you?*
> *– I am 88.*
> *– Then for you it's not worth going home.*
>
> (Köves 1999, 315)

> Joke 10:
> *The Scotsman was asked why he had bought his girlfriend a lipstick for her birthday. Because, says the Scotsman, this is the only present that I will gradually get back from her in small portions.*
>
> (vicclap.hu)

This group also includes stories on human dumbness and ignorance in general. People associate these qualities with aristocrats and policemen. These two groups had emerged in different historical epochs. The jokes on aristocrats were born as mockery by the Hungarian middle class taking shape toward the end of the 19th century directed toward a social class so high above them in terms of social status. Their constant characters evoke the image of those figures who are unviable, ignorant, perform weakly sexually, and have that characteristically aristocratic speech defect:

Joke 13:
– Did you hear the news? A chimney-sweeper was run over by a car.
– Terrible. One can no longer be safe on the roof.

(vicclap.hu)

Joke 14:
Countess Anasztázia asks her husband, Tasziló, on the morning after their wedding night:
– Tell me, dear Tasziló, does what we have been doing cause such pleasure to everyone?
– Yes, of course.
– Even to the peasants?
– Yes, to them also.
– Do you not think it is too good for them?

(Köves 1999, 80)

Over the past decades, the popularity of jokes on aristocrats has decreased dramatically. These are exclusively formula jokes, that is, they do not have an epic core, and the punch line is often based on a pun. Especially popular is the short, question-and-answer structure, in which the question and the answer, similarly to the absurd jokes, are completely incongruent with the situation.

2.2.3. Profession jokes

Historical changes swept away ignorance as a group characteristic from the aristocracy that lost its role in the society, while the new possessors of power inherited it with their newly acquired power. It also happens that the same joke exists in two versions, one with an aristocrat, the other with a policeman as the main character (joke 13). The jokes on policemen emerged after the Second World War, during the dictatorship of the proletariat. The policeman at that time was a representative of the political power, thus having power of life and death, so mocking them was a way for the defenceless men of the street to get rid of the fear they felt of him. For this reason, policeman jokes can be classified as belonging to the group of political jokes as well. Stupidity and ignorance ridiculed in these jokes, in most cases, were based on reality: policemen were selected not on the basis of ability and qualification, but of political reliability:

Joke 15:
The detective is interrogating a suspect:
– How did your marriage come to an end?
– I became a widower.
– And who died?

(Köves 1999, 283)

Policemen jokes have been one of the most liked types of jokes over the past decades, the question-and-answer structure of formula jokes is rather common here, too. The zeugmatic structure is also quite often applied. From a pragmatical point of view, the basis of the humorous effect is the out-of-context, incongruent interpretation or behaviour:

Joke 16:
– Why does a policeman buy a hatchet when his wife gives birth to a baby?
– He wants to carve a man from the child.

(Köves 1999, 280)

The policeman, or earlier the gendarme, who, abusing his power often pilfered this or that from the peasants' attic or cellar, also features in funny folk stories. The priest and the soldier, the two members of the peasant community who are not peasants themselves, are classical characters of the folk stories. Most of the funny stories about priests are priest mockers at the same time, so they can be classified as mockers as well. They mainly ridicule greed, miserliness and hypocrisy:

Joke 17:
A priest was preaching: Brethren, don't do what I do, do what I say.

(Magyar 2009, 93)

Both in popular folk humour and in jokes, the Gypsy and the priest often feature as a pair. In these pieces, it is not the ethnic content, but the priest-mocking motive that is dominant. In the jokes, the priest has later been replaced by the doctor, a character more typical of modern city living. Jokes on physicians were popular in Budapest as early as the beginning of the 20th century (Erőss 1982, 68), typical stereotypes characterizing them were money-grubbing and incompetence:

Joke 19:
– Well, says the doctor to the patient, you will have to lie in the hospital and undergo surgery.
– Oh, no, I would rather die.
– Look, sir, one does not exclude the other.

(Köves 1999, 236)

The doctor-patient and the psychiatrist/psychologist-patient jokes tend to merge together. Sometimes it is really difficult to determine the difference between them. The funny popular stories about village idiots can also be grouped among mockers, while jokes on loonies are set in the upside down world of the mental clinic or the madhouse. Most of them have a punch line based on the conclusion that those inside and those outside are not different after all:

> Joke 18:
> *– Doctor, I have dual personality. I am not me, as there are two of us.*
> *– Hmm, (the doctor looks sternly at the patient), now will you repeat all of this, but only one of you should speak at a time.*
>
> (Köves 1999, 118)

2.2.4. Marital status jokes and children jokes

The marital status jokes and children jokes are, beyond doubt, the commonest type of all: the marriage jokes, erotic jokes, blonde jokes, pupil jokes and mother-in-law jokes account for over half (4,838) of the jokes classified in 19 categories in total.

Marital fidelity, e.g., is a frequent and popular theme in such jokes. The jokes show that in the vast majority of cases, infidelity is found out by the spouse and that it is often mutual. We also learn from the corpus that sex is the number one reason for cheating but it accounts only for less than half of the cases; it is followed by business. Accordingly, the forms of appearance of infidelity are far from being exclusively sexual. Trying to find out who is most laughed at, we see that husbands come first, and then wives.

The next question was to see if jokes draw a different picture of men and women. Different jokes or even different variants of the same joke often say the same thing about husband and wife. Here are some of the common points that jokes attribute to men and women.

- The two sexes cheat repeatedly in almost the same proportion.
- Husbands and wives find out their spouse's infidelity in an identical proportion.
- Cheating spouses and lovers of both sexes try to conceal infidelity in the vast majority of cases.

However, the survey has also shown many differences between the two sexes.

- The major difference is that the pair cheating wife–cheated husband appears in twice as many jokes than the cheating husband–cheated wife combination. This would mean that almost twice as many wives than husbands cheat![8]
- Husbands change their lovers faster than wives.[9]
- Extreme violence (murder/suicide) is much more common with men: as forms of appearance of cheating and as a reaction when cheating has been found out.
- The difference between the two sexes is present in the ways infidelity is found out: catching in the act is a more male, recognizing a telltale sign a more female way to learn the truth.
- Men are more inclined to confess to cheating or to give themselves away: cheating husbands tell their spouses about it three times more than cheating wives (Barta 2012, 199–200).

The group euphemistically referred to as erotic jokes, and its folklore counterpart, the indecent stories, mainly include blue and obscene texts. Popular humour has always confronted the middle-class standards that had become prudish and euphemistic in the course of the development of civilization, and retained its bare and brutally outspoken nature. The popularity of this category can look back on a long history both in its urban and its folklore version, and, as shown by Table 2, it is one of the most popular sources of humour currently as well. It is difficult to draw the dividing line separating erotic jokes from marriage or children jokes, as both categories contain an abundance of erotic jokes, too.

The 'dumb blonde' is a new player in the international joke world. Our first verified encounter with a Hungarian joke about blonde women dates from July 1999, it appeared on the Internet website *vicclap.hu*. It is likely that these jokes became massively popular at around the turn of the millennium. A look at joke categories shows us that blonde jokes are among the most popular in Hungary: they are in fifth place for frequency, beating the traditionally top-seated police, political and mother-in-law jokes. The most important stereotypes appearing in the blonde jokes are stupidity and violation of sexual morals. The stupidity in these jokes does not involve making an occasional accidental mistake but is a congenital inability to think logically, labelling all blonde women as obtuse at all times.

8 Theoretically, it is not impossible, if the numerous unfaithful wives have affairs with the few unfaithful husbands and single men.

9 Theoretically, it is not impossible, if husbands have affairs with single women.

Women have been the butts of sex jokes and jokes about their role in the family (wife or mother-in-law) since time immemorial. The 'dumb blonde' is different in that she is generally young and single, and often a secretary.

What then is the latent social problem behind this appearance and rapid spread of jokes about women in a new role? Over the course of the 20th century, the system of social expectations regarding female and male roles lost its certainty as the actual roles changed in European society, and the accelerated rhythm of recent decades triggered particularly acute changes. A fundamental change occurred in the life of the female: thanks to access to education and mass entry into the workforce, women have entered the public space that for centuries had been reserved for the male of the species. Women have appeared in a new role, one that might even be conceived as a role threatening the integrity of the male community. The response is a symbolic assault in which the men cast doubts on the intellectual and moral suitability of (blonde) women, in an effort to destroy their self-esteem and identities (Géró 2008; Géró 2010a; Géró 2010b; Géró 2012).

Jokes on mothers-in-law constitute a significant group. According to the history of Hungarian jokes, they have a long history. Several researchers observe that though a marriage involves two mothers-in-law, the jokes mostly mock the husband's. This applies to the Hungarian stock of jokes as well as to the German, the Russian or the Spanish ones: their mother-in-law speaks too much, orders them about, is offensive, dumb, ugly, old and a horrible cook. All this leads to extreme aggression from the son-in-law, he seeks her life, either in thought or in deed.

Among children jokes, many jokes are about the child's unexpectedly apposite remark (the so-called 'out of the mouth of babes' jokes) and many are, in line with the age group, 'pee and poo' jokes. But the commonest children jokes are the Móricka jokes. These latter ones belong, at the same time, to the group of Jewish jokes and most of them have an erotic content. They are often organized in a question-and-answer structure, in which the dialogue is set between the (female) teacher and Móricka or Móricka and one of his parents. The humorous effect is elicited by the contrast between the innocence we would expect due to his age and the boy's behaviour that belies this expectation:

> Joke 20:
> *– Children, who can give me an example of harmony in married life?*
> *the teacher asks.*
> *Móricka puts up a hand:*
> *– My grandparents live in harmony. Grandpa snores and grandma is deaf.*
>
> (vicclap.hu)

2.2.5. Historical anecdotes, political jokes

In Hungary, the top position of the popularity list has always been shared by erotic jokes and political jokes:

> Joke 21:
> *Two old ladies are feeding the pigeons.*
> *– You know, these pigeons are just like politicians.*
> *– Why?*
> *– While they're down on the ground, they eat from our hands, but once they begin to soar they shit on our heads.*
>
> (debrecenlive.hu)

The predecessors of the latter were historical popular stories and anecdotes related to a historic event or a famous personality, which have a long history both in peasant folklore and in the higher literary tradition. Already our first known funny anecdotes are linked to an outstanding Hungarian historical personality, King Matthias. Nowadays, this type is slightly being pushed into the background, at least as far as visitors of Internet websites are concerned. But, till our day, this is the only area of the Hungarian humour research, still in its infancy, in which serious, reliable and professional collection has been carried out beginning from 1945 (Katona 1994). In modern history, there are some personalities (Rákosi, Kádár) who had cycles of jokes organized around themselves.

3. Conclusion

In Hungary, genres of urban folklore only emerged in the last decades of the 19th century. This was the time when a new social layer, the urban intelligentsia, and, simultaneously with it, 'pesti vicc' (the Budapest joke) was born. Joke is a genre of urban folklore, which develops in an ethnically, culturally, linguistically and socially varied and continuously varying environment, as a result of which the stock of jokes shows rather an international character. The predecessors and the contemporaries of the joke as a genre are genres of folkloristic humour: anecdotes, popular funny stories and folk histories, which are all linked to a locally and culturally homogeneous community cultivating the same traditions, and are organically integrated among the other genres of Hungarian folklore. Table 1 proves that popular funny stories and Hungarian jokes largely correspond to each other from a thematic point of view, as the typical themes and typical characters show conspicuous similarities.

Findings of the frequency examination show that the most frequent jokes can be grouped as belonging to marital status and children jokes: they account for more than half of all jokes classified in 19 categories. Minority jokes are linked to ethnic groups or minorities with which the Hungarian majority have

been living together for centuries, their chief characters are e.g. Gypsies, Jews or Székelys. Considering Gypsy jokes, there is strong correlation between folklore anecdotes and urban jokes. Jokes on Jews are of two types: one reflects the negative stereotypes that originate from the perception of the majority, while the other is borrowings from the Jewish culture.

Among profession jokes, it is policeman jokes that have been topping the list for years. As policemen are linked to power, these jokes can be regarded as political jokes at the same time. According to classification by the source of humour, they belong to mockers, the new representatives of power-inherited dumbness as a group characteristic from the jokes on aristocrats so popular in early 20th century. The recent social changes are also reflected in the emergence of jokes on blondes, indicating that another social group is beginning to take over this role nowadays.

Besides erotic ones, political jokes have always been the most popular in Hungary. Their predecessors, the anecdotes linked to historic events or famous personalities, boast a long-standing tradition both in peasant culture and in higher literary tradition. The Hungarian joke also carries on this tradition until the change of regime of 1989; there are historical personalities who have been surrounded by cycles of jokes. Frequency examination shows, however, that this type seems to be pushed into the background nowadays.

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Appendix

[1]

Gazsi azt hallja mindenkitől, hogy a fejlett nyugati országokban már csak heti egy napot kell dolgozni. Kiutazik hát Németországba, s ott az első kérdése:

– Hát, tessen már mondani, igaz, hogy itt csak heti egy napot kell dolgozni?

– Igen, mégpedig a hét közepén, szerdán.

– És tessék mondani: minden szerdán?

(Köves 1999, 122)

[2]

A cigány megy át a réten. Útközben találkozik a vadőrrel.

– Jó napot, cigány. Hová, hová?

Mire a cigány:

– Én tyúkot? Ugyan má'!

(Köves 1999, 124)

[3]

– Mondja, bátyám, elvinne Szentgyörgyre?

– El én…

Szótlanul ülnek a bakon már órák óta.

– Messzi van még Szentgyörgy?

– Hát, már elég messze…

(Köves 1999, 147)

[4]

Ebédet visz apja után a mezőre a székely gyerek. Odaérve megkérdi:

– Édesapám, rokonunk nekünk a Kovács Gergő?

– Nem, fiam, nem rokonunk.

– Édesapám, biztos, hogy nem rokonunk a Gergő bácsi?

– Biztos, ha mondom. De miért kérded?

– Csak mert otthon fekszik az ágyban édesanyámmal.

– Hát akkor mégiscsak rokonunk, fiam.

(Köves 1999, 151)

[5]

Közvéleménykutatók járják a csíki falvakat. Megkérdezik Mózes bácsitól:

– És Mózes bácsi, most, hogy megint emelték a kenyér árát, hát milyen a közérzete?

– Jó.

– Egy kicsit bővebben!

– Nem jó.

(Köves 1999, 154)

[6]

Az öreg Kohn a reptéren kólát akar venni az automatából, bedob egy dollárt és megnyomja a gombot. Semmi nem jön ki. Bedob még egy dollárt, megnyomja a gombot, megint semmi.

– Ügyes, nagyon ügyes! – jegyzi meg az öreg.

(vicclap.hu)

[7]

Kohn kérelmet nyújt be, szeretné a nevét Kovácsra változtatni. Miután meg-történt a névcsere, a hivatalnok legnagyobb meglepetésére (az immár) Kovács egy hét múlva újabb kérelmet ad be, ezúttal Szabóra szólóan.

– Amikor Kohnról változtatta Kovácsra, azt még megértettem – mondja a hivatalnok. – De miért akarja Kovácsról Szabóra változtatni?

– Azért, mert mi van akkor, ha bemutatkozom mint Kovács, és megkérdik, hogy mi voltam azelőtt?

(vicclap.hu)

[8]

A halálos ágyán kérdezi Samu Ráhelt:

– Ráhel, itt voltál velem, mikor a nácik elvették tőlünk az első boltunkat?
– Itt voltam, Samu.
– Velem voltál, mikor elvittek minket a koncentrációs táborba?
– Veled voltam.
– Velem voltál akkor is, mikor a nácik elvették tőlünk a második boltunkat is?
– Akkor is veled voltam.
– És most is itt vagy velem a halálos ágyamnál?
– Most is itt vagyok.
– Ráhel, Ráhel, nem hozol szerencsét!

(vicclap.hu)

[9]

Két öreg skót üldögél a temetőben egy padon:

– Maga hány éves?
– Én 78. És maga?
– Én meg 88.
– Akkor magának már nem is éri meg hazamenni.

(Köves 1999, 315)

[10]

A skótot megkérdezték, hogy miért vett a barátnőjének születésnapi ajándékul egy ajakrúzst.

– Azért – feleli a skót –, mert ez az egyetlen ajándék, amit kis részletekben, lassanként visszakapok tőle.

(vicclap.hu)

[11]

Mondta a széri: nyissátok ki a kaput, mert meg kell szellőztetni az udvart!

(Magyar 2009, 59)

[12]

Régen azt mondtuk, hogy megtudjuk, hogy mikor múlik el a világ, mert Szérbe hamarabb elmúlik egy nappal. Mer a sámsoniak kicsit lenézték a szérieket. Eldugottabb falu vót…

(Magyar 2009, 63)

[13]

– Hallottad, kéhlek? Egy autó elütött egy kéményseprőt.
– Hettenetes! Máh a háztetőn sincs biztonságban az embeh!

(vicclap.hu)

[14]

Anasztázia grófnő a nászéjszaka hajnalán azt kérdezi ifjú férjétől, Taszilótól:

– Mondja, kedves Tasziló, az, amit mi most csináltunk, mindenkinek ilyen öhömöt szehez?

– Természetesen.

– Még a pahasztoknak is?

– Igen, nekik is.

– Nem gondolja, hogy ez túl jó nekik?

(Köves 1999, 80)

[15]

A nyomozó faggatja a gyanúsítottat:

– És hogy ért véget a házassága?

– Megözvegyültem.

– És ki halt meg?

(Köves 1999, 283)

[16]

– Miért vesz a rendőr kisbaltát, ha gyereke születik?

– Embert akar faragni a gyerekből.

(Köves 1999, 280)

[17]

Az egyszeri pap úgy prédikált, hogy: „Kedves híveim, ne azt csináljátok, amit én csinálok, hanem amit én mondok!"

(Magyar 2009, 93)

[18]

– Doktor úr, nekem kettős személyiségem van. Én nem is én vagyok, hanem mi ketten vagyunk.

– Hm… – néz a betegre az orvos szigorúan. – Most ismételje meg az egészet, de egyszerre csak az egyikük beszéljen!

(Köves 1999, 118)

[19]

– Nos, uram – mondja az orvos vizsgálat után –, önnek feltétlenül be kell feküdnie műtétre.

– Azt nem, doktor úr, inkább meghalok!

– Nézze, az egyik nem zárja ki a másikat.

(Köves 1999, 236)

[20]

– Gyerekek, ki tudna mondani egy példát a harmonikus házaséletre? – kérdezi a tanárnő. Móricka jelentkezik:

– Az én nagyszüleim harmonikusan élnek. A nagypapa horkol, a nagymama meg süket.

(vicclap.hu)

[21]

Két öregasszony eteti a galambokat. Az egyik megszólal:

– Te, ezek a galambok olyanok, mint a politikusok.

– Miért?

– Hát, amíg lent vannak a földön, addig a kezünkből esznek, de ahogy felkerülnek, csak szarnak a fejünkre!

(debrecenlive.hu)

Caricature by Géza Halász

The Constraints of Translating Humor in Audiovisual Media

Zolczer, Peter

Abstract: The paper deals with the analysis of humorous scenes collected from the popular American television series *Friends*. The humorous load in all the selected scenes is generated by a particular feature of the source language and/or culture. The analysis focuses on (1) the differences between the scenes' humorous load in the original English and the dubbed Hungarian versions, and (2) the constraints caused by such features of dubbing as e. g. the synchronization of the Hungarian dubbing with the lip and body movement of the actors on screen and the timing of the their utterances. The methodology of the research is based on Juan José Martínez-Sierra's case study *Translating Audiovisual Humour*. The results show that the most dominant constraint of translating humor for dubbing is caused by lip movement synchronization.

Key words: humor, translation, audiovisual, dubbing, lip synchronization

1. Introduction

Audiovisual Translation is a field of research dating back to the late 1950s and early 1960s. According to Díaz Cintas the beginnings of the field have been "sluggish and shaky", but it "experienced a remarkable boom at the close of the 20th century" (Díaz Cintas 2009, 1). As Cho (2014) and many others (Díaz Cintas 2003; Chiaro 2009; Fois 2012) point it out, until very recently there has been a confusion about the terminology and definition of the field. Terms such as 'media translation', 'screen translation', 'TV translation' or 'film translation' have been used interchangeably, however, scholars of the field in their most recent works are using the term 'audiovisual translation' which has become widely accepted and defined as "the interlingual transfer of verbal language when it is transmitted and accessed both visually and acoustically, usually but not necessarily, through some kind of electronic device" (Chiaro 2009, 141). There are different modes of audiovisual translation, such as dubbing, subtitling, voice over, narration or surtitling, and their number varies according to the classification we use. Bartolomé and Cabrera differentiate as much as 17 audiovisual translation modes (Bartolomé and Cabrera 2005). This paper deals with only one of these modes, dubbing, which is the replacement of the original audio output with the translated audio output.

Translating humor is never easy, especially not in those cases where the humorous load is conveyed by such linguistic elements which are unique in the language in question (e. g. wordplays). The successful translation of this kind of humor requires a high level of creativity from the translator. If the language

element of the source language – that creates or contributes to the humorous load – does not have such an equivalent in the target language which might be used in the same context, the translator is usually forced to reduce (or in certain cases completely leave out) the humorous load. The amount of the reduction, however, is usually restricted "only" by the differences in the source and target language and culture. In case of dubbing, these restrictions are extended with the inherent constrains of this mode of audiovisual translation. According to Bartrina and Espasa the activity of translation involving such constraints are "[…] situations where the text to be translated is part of a more complex communicative event which attempts to convey a message by various means, such as pictures, drawings, music, etc." (Bartrina – Espasa 2005, 83). From a technical point of view, there are three additional constraints of dubbing, which considering the purpose of this paper are essential: lip movements, body movements and the timing of the characters' utterances. In this paper I attempt to list and analyze previously collected humorous situations in order to shed light upon the characteristics of the constraints of translating humor in AVT using an English-Hungarian language pair.

2. Theoretical background

The theoretical framework of this paper is based on Martínez-Sierra's case study *Translating Audiovisual Humour*. The objectives of his study were (1) to create a method for analyzing humor in AVT, (2) to describe the way humor is translated in AVT, and (3) to recognize translational tendencies related to humor translation in AVT. As a source of his corpus he chose certain episodes from the popular animated TV comedy *The Simpsons*. Martínez-Sierra conducted a qualitative and a quantitative analysis on the 365 humorous instances collected from four episodes of *The Simpsons* focusing on the original English and the dubbed Spanish versions. Martínez-Sierra created a taxonomy of humorous elements consisting of 8 categories:

1. *Community-and-Institutions Elements*, meaning culture-specific items (celebrities, politicians, films, books, etc.).
2. *Community-Sense-of-Humour Elements* relate to topics which are more well-known in certain communities, but are not culture-specific.
3. *Linguistic Elements*.
4. *Visual Elements* are those which produce or contribute to the humorous load by what we see on the screen and not the visually coded versions of linguistic elements.
5. *Graphic Elements* are the humorous written messages on the screen.

6. *Paralinguistic Elements* are the non-verbal elements of a voice (rhythm, resonance, tone, intonation, timbre).
7. *Non-Marked (Humorous) Elements* are miscellaneous examples of humorous load which cannot be categorized.
8. *Sound Elements* are sounds or combinations of sounds which can convey a humorous load.

Martínez-Sierra's taxonomy is a useful tool which allows the identification of change or loss in the humorous load. In order to make the analysis transparent he designed 'cards' (basically tables) which contained such information about the humorous situations as the season and episode number, the original and the target transcription, context, load difference and the comments. His results revealed (among others) the following tendencies of translating humor in AVT:

a. Most humor (in the analyzed corpus) is translatable.
b. The shared background knowledge of the audience plays an essential role in translating humor in AVT.
c. Translating humor in AVT demands the rendering of humorous elements which interact in unique ways.

The intention of using Martínez-Sierra's taxonomy in this paper was to reduce the subjective aspect of determining the humorous loads of the analyzed scenes as much as possible. The tendencies also provided a valuable basis in the qualitative analysis of the same scenes. In order to fully appreciate the analysis of these humorous situations it is important to become familiar with dubbing as a mode of AVT, and also the constraints it creates in the process of translation. According to Luyken, dubbing is "the replacement of the original speech by a voice track which attempts to follow as closely as possible the timing, phrasing and lip-movements of the original dialogue" (Luyken et al. 1991, 31). The advantages (e. g. availability to larger audiences, no need for reading subtitles) and disadvantages (e. g. time-consuming and expensive, authenticity and credibility issues) of dubbing are often discussed, however, there seems to be a general opinion or tendency about it which is summarized brilliantly by Chiaro in a single sentence: "It would not be unfair to say that dubbing has a worse reputation in subtitling countries than subtitling has in dubbing countries" (Chiaro 2009, 147). Considering the steps involved in the process of dubbing, it is easy to see how they form constraints for translation since the following factors need to be synchronized:

- Lip movements in shots where the lips or the whole face of the actors are visible. This means that the target text (utterance) must coincide with the actor's lip movements, mainly in the cases of bilabial and labio-dental consonants and open vowels.

- The body movements of the actors. In other words, the target text (utterance) must coincide with the actor's head, arm, or any other body movement, which usually occurs in cases of assertion, negation, surprise, etc.
- The timing of the actors' utterances. This means that the target text (utterance) must coincide with the time interval which starts with the character opening his/her mouth and ends with closing it.

To include all these factors in one definition, using a translational approach Chaume Varela proposes the following: "Synchronization is one of the features of translation for dubbing, which consists of matching the target language translation and the articulatory and body movements of the screen actors and actresses, as well as matching the utterances and pauses in the translation and those of the source text" (Chaume Varela 2004, 43). The analysis in this paper is based on this definition, since by including all three factors (phonetic, kinetic, isochronic) it serves as an effective tool for identifying the constraints of humor translation in AVT.

3. Corpus and method

The corpus consists of 10 humorous scenes from different episodes of the popular American television series *Friends*. Most of the scenes (7) are selected from episodes of the 9th season, but there are also scenes (2) from the 8th and one scene from the 4th season. The selection of the seasons and episodes was not based on any pattern. The main reason for selecting this particular series is that it is a very popular one in the genre of comedy which makes it an ideal source of investigating humorous elements in AVT. The low number of humorous scenes analyzed in this paper indicates that it was a qualitative research. The reason for not involving a quantitative research was the way the selected humorous scenes were collected. All 10 scenes contain such a humorous situation which is based on a particular feature of the source language and/or culture. Since there is no possibility for an automated search for such humorous scenes, finding them needs watching the episodes one by one, focusing on language-specific humor (usually wordplays) and noting them down. The details of each humorous scene are summarized in headings, where the season and episode number, time interval of the dialogue and the transcription of the source and the target audio track are indicated. This is followed by the analysis, which consists of three parts:

1. The first part contains the description of the context and the determination of the humorous load. The transcription of the source and target audio track does not contain the visual elements of the situation, which is why in most cases the context is essential to understand the humorous load of the situation. The description of the context is always based on the original (English) version of the scene.

2. The second part includes the analysis of the target text, which in fact is an attempt to reverse-engineer and explain the decisions of the translator(s). In certain scenes alternative versions of the target text are suggested and discussed. The humorous load of the target text is determined here as well.
3. The last part contains the comparison of the humorous load of the source and the target texts which shows whether the humorous load in the target texts remained, changed or was lost. In each case where a shift in the humorous load is present, an attempt has been made to explain it by pointing out the specific constraint which caused it.

Since the primary purpose of this paper is not the analysis of the humorous load of the selected scenes, but to determine the specific constraints of translating them, the type of humor is neither examined nor determined. Nevertheless, in most cases the analysis reveals that the type of humor is wordplay.

4. Analysis and results

The following scene contains an example for a situation where the lip movement of the character can cause constraints in mediating the humorous load between the original and the dubbed version.

Friends, season 9, episode 10 [00:11:20 >> 00:11:30].	
a) Original English version: *Monica – What does she do there?* *Chandler – Oh, she's regional vice president. She's just below me.* *Monica – She did what?* *Chandler – Be-low-me.*	
b) Dubbed Hungarian version: *Monica – Na és mit csinál ott?* [And what does she do there?] *Chandler – Hát ő a körzeti elnökhelyettes. Éppen alattam van.* [Oh, she is the regional vice president. She is just below/under me.] *Monica – Hogy épp hol van?* [Where is she?] *Chandler – A-lat-tam.* [Be-low/un-der-me]	
Context: Chandler is talking with Monica (his wife) on the phone. There is a woman with Chandler in his office. Monica asks Chandler about the woman's job position.	
Humorous load: Source version: Community-Sense + Linguistic.	Target version: Community-Sense

Table 1. Example for a constraint created by lip movement.

Analysis: The humorous load of this situation is generated by Monica's mishearing the word 'below' during the phone call. This becomes clear to the audience in her sudden reaction of asking Chandler what the woman did. Instead of "she's just below me", she heard "she's just blown me" which is an informal way of expressing that "she has just orally satisfied me". The linguistic element in the humorous load consists of not just the lexical similarity and the usage of the words 'below' and 'blow'. The abbreviated "she's" can be interpreted as "she is" and "she has" as well. If Chandler had not used the abbreviated form, Monica would not have misheard his sentence, since it would not have made sense ("She is just ~~blown~~ below me"). Because of the difference in the linguistic systems of the source and the target language the Hungarian version does not contain any humorous load generated by a linguistic element. Also Monica's reaction "*Hogy épp hol van?"* [Where is she?] does not coincide with the original version. The community-sense element is only partially maintained, because the Hungarian word 'alattam' [below/under me] in an informal conversation might have the meaning of 'the position of a person during an intercourse', but in this context it is not obvious. It is possible, however, to use another word instead of the second 'alattam' in order to fully maintain the humorous load of the Community-Sense element. The word is 'beosztottam' [(my) emloyee"] which would definitely inform the Hungarian audience that Monica misinterpreted Chandler's answer, and it would fully release the incongruity as well, generating humorous load as a result. The fact that the last syllable of the two words 'alattam' and 'beosztottam' is the same ('tam') would also partially convey the linguistic element of the humorous load of the original version. The reason why the translator(s) did not use this obvious solution is very simple: it would not have been possible to synchronize the word 'beosztottam' with Chandler's lip movement. As it is clear from the transcription of the dialogue Chandler is intensely articulating the second 'below' ("be-low-me") in his final line with three distinct syllables. The suggested Hungarian version would consist of four different syllables (be-osz-tot-tam), which would make it impossible to synchronize it with Chandler's lip movements. The above scene is a perfect example of how dubbing can cause constraints in translating humor.

The next scene contains a situation where the loss of the humorous load is caused by a constraint that is present because of a specific graphic element.

Friends, season 8, episode 13 [00:20:35 >> 00:20:45].
a) Original English version: *Joey – All that worrying I was doing? That was crazy. Crazy. Like my friend the bird here would say, "It was cuckoo!"*
b) Dubbed Hungarian version: *Joey – Ezért izgattam magam. Ez hülyeség. Hülyeség. Ahogy madár barátom mondaná „Kakukk".* [This is why I was worrying. This is stupid. Stupid. Like my friend the bird would say, "Cuckoo!"]

Context: Joey is eating breakfast while he is thinking about his feelings towards Rachel. He is trying to convince himself that the worrying about loving Rachel (one of his best friends) was completely unnecessary. There is a cereal box on the table with a bird and the label "Cocoa Puffs" on it.	
Humorous load:	
Source version: Graphic + Community-Institutions + Non-Marked	Target version: None

Table 2. Example for a constraint created by a graphic element.

The humorous load in this scene is generated by Joey's spelling deficiency which quite often produces humor in the series. The graphic element of the humorous load is the "Cocoa" label on the cereal box that is pronounced by Joey as "cuckoo". The community-institutions element is present because of the connection between the word 'cuckoo' and the word 'crazy', and the non-marked element is the very fact that Joey often misspells/mispronounces words, since out of all the main characters, he is the one who had the least formal education. In the Hungarian version the word 'crazy' is translated as 'hülyeség' ['stupidity'], a word with a different semantic meaning, and for the word 'cuckoo' the translator(s) uses its Hungarian equivalent 'kakukk'. The problem is that in Hungarian there is no linguistic connection (no converging mental representations) between the words 'kakukk' and 'őrült' [crazy] or 'hülye' [stupid]. The graphic element is also "missing" from the target version, because the Hungarian audience is not encouraged to notice the label "Cocoa Puffs" on the cereal box (the Hungarian equivalent of 'cocoa' is 'kakaó'). Without the community-institutions and graphic elements the non-marked element also vanishes, which leads to the complete loss of the humorous load. The problem is that it is impossible to convey the same humorous load in the target version, because the key graphic element (the cereal box label in the video) cannot be changed. Therefore the above scene is an example of a situation where the constraint for a successful humor translation is created by a graphic element.

Note: In this particular case there is an alternative solution which would convey a non-marked humorous element. Since there is no way of telling the species of the bird on the cereal box, in the Hungarian version Joey might have said: "*Papagáj barátom úgy mondaná „Lökött, lökött"* [Like my friend the parrot would say, "Dumb, dumb"]. The number of syllables in the original sentence and the one suggested here are nearly equal, which means that it would not have created any constraints in the synchronization of the utterance and the lip movement.

The following scene contains a situation where the inevitable loss of one of the humorous elements is compensated by using a different semantic meaning of the same element. The constraint of translating this particular humorous situation does not derive from the features of dubbing, however, it includes an interesting translational solution which might be useful in situations where the translator is restricted because of the lip movements of the characters.

Friends, season 9, episode 03 [00:10:10 >> 00:10:35].	
a) Original English version: *Monica – What are you doing?* *Chandler – Looking for restaurant jobs for you in Tulsa.* *Monica – Aw, that's so sweet. Did you find anything?* *Chandler – Slim Pickins.* *Monica – Hmm. Nothing, huh?* *Chandler – No. Slim Pickins. It's a barbecue joint.* . . . *Monica – "Slim Pickins"? That is so cheesy.* *Chandler – Well, So Cheesy also has an opening.*	
b) Dubbed Hungarian version: *Monica – Mit csinálsz?* [What are you doing?] *Chandler – Hát. . . Állást keresek neked Tulsában.* [I'm looking for jobs for you in Tulsa.] *Monica – Oh, de cuki vagy. Találtál valamit?* [Aw, you're so sweet. Did you find anything?] *Chandler – Sovány moslék.* [Light Pigswill] *Monica – Hmm. Szóval semmi?* [Hmm. So nothing, right?] *Chandler – Nem. A Sovány moslék egy barbecue-büfé.* [No. Light Pigswill is a barbeque joint.] . . . *Monica – "Sovány moslék"? Fincsi hely lehet.* ["Light Pigswill"? It must be a delicious place.] *Chandler – Nem. A Fincsi, az most nyílik.* [No. Delicious has an opening now.]	
Context: Chandler is sitting at the table looking at his laptop. Monica arrives home and the dialogue starts.	
Humorous load:	
Source version: Community-Institutions + Linguistic	Target version: Linguistic + Non-Marked

Table 3. Example for compensation for the loss of a humorous element.

The humorous load in the scene above is generated by the combination of a community-institutions and a linguistic element. The former contains the idiomatic meaning of 'slim pickins' and 'cheesy' while the latter is realized by using these two phrases as names for restaurants. The first time Chandler uses the phrase 'slim pickins' it is his answer to Monica's question about job offers in Tulsa. 'Slim pickin(g)s' has the idiomatic meaning of 'very few, almost no choices'. Because of the context Monica interprets Chandler's answer as 'basically no jobs in Tulsa'. Chandler than tells her that "Slim Pickins" is actually the name of a restaurant which has a job offer. Monica then characterizes the selection of "Slim Pickins" as a name for a restaurant as "so cheesy" (the phrase 'so cheesy' also has an idiomatic meaning that is 'inauthentic'). Then Chandler tells Monica that "So Cheesy" is a name of another restaurant (probably meaning 'so cheese-like' or 'so tasty'). The humorous load is generated by Monica's using the idiomatic and Chandler's using the lexical meanings of the phrases. In the Hungarian version "Slim Pickins" is translated as "Sovány moslék" [Light Pigswill], which as a phrase does not have an idiomatic meaning, however, the constituent words 'sovány' [light] and 'moslék' [pigswill] do create a humorous load, since the purpose of pigswill is to fatten up the pig, hence a light version of pigswill would be pure nonsense. "Cheesy" in the Hungarian version is translated as "fincsi" [delicious] and Monica uses it not to describe the name-selection of Slim Pickins, but to describe the restaurant itself. The humorous load in the Hungarian version is created by the conflicting associations of mental images which the words 'moslék' [pigswill] and 'fincsi' [delicious] evoke. This way the missing idiomatic meanings (community-institutions element) from the Hungarian version are compensated with the careful and creative selection of words (non-marked element).

Results

Although the limited number of analyzed humorous scenes (10) does not allow the forming of reliable generalizations, a summary of the changes in the humorous load of the scenes in the target language versions – in respect to the constraint which caused it – might be useful in forming hypotheses about the translation of humor in AVT, especially in dubbing. All the analyzed scenes contain a change in the humorous load, which only in 1 case is a positive one. In the remaining 9 scenes there is a negative change, meaning that the degree of the humorous load either decreased or was lost. Out of the 9 negative changes in 7 cases there was a loss of one or more humorous elements caused by a constraint connected to certain features of dubbing. In 6 cases out of the 7, the constraint is caused by the lip movement of the character, and in 1 case it is a graphic element. The qualitative analysis of the humorous scenes showed that such features of dubbing as e. g. the synchronization of the target text with the lip movement of the character can cause constraints for the translator which are present only in AVT.

4. Conclusion

While translating humor the translator often has to face problems rooted in the very nature of humor translation. Most of the times these problems are caused by (1) the differences in the source and target language and/or culture, and (2) the "untranslatability" of the language and/or culture-specific items. In case of audiovisual translation more problems might arise simply because of the features of this type of translation. In the process of dubbing, even if the translator has a perfect translation for a humorous situation, he/she might not be able to use it because of e. g. the lip movement synchronization. Of course, this is true for any situation, however, in the non-humorous ones the number of alternative options of the translator makes it less difficult to produce a usable translation (even in case of dubbing there are more ways of translating a non-humorous utterance than translating a humorous one). This paper deals with the analysis of 10 humorous scenes in their original English and dubbed Hungarian versions, collected from different episodes of the popular American television show *Friends*. The results show that in 6 out of 10 cases the complete or partial loss of the humorous load is caused by one of the constraints of dubbing: the synchronization of the translation with the lip movement of the character on the screen. The analysis also showed that in certain cases it is possible to compensate the loss of one or more humorous elements in the target language version by a slight alteration of the context. Increasing the number of humorous scenes in the corpus and involving the analysis of the subtitles might strengthen this conclusion and even shed light upon previously unknown tendencies about the constraints of translating humor in audiovisual media.

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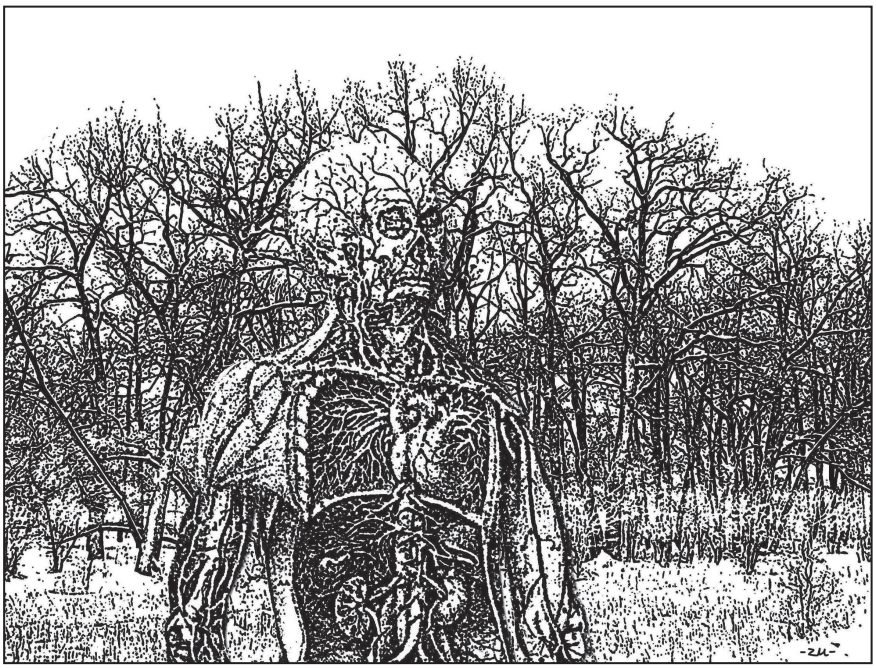


Caricature by Géza Halász

Toward the Understanding of Humorous Metaphors and Metonymies in the EFL Setting

Molnar, Draženka

Abstract: Based on the well-known fact that both figurative language and humour should be included in the program of EFL classes as an effective way to create a more comfortable, productive classroom environment, this study examines the factors that have to be taken into account in order to understand such a language and suggest ways of teaching it within the framework of cognitive linguistics. Furthermore, the goal of this study is to explore the relationship between metaphor, metonymy and humour in order to attain a better understanding of the cognitive processes that are involved or even contribute to laughter in discourse. Finally, the study will show that integrating humour can improve students' overall language awareness and encourage them to use English more confidently and imaginatively.

Key words: figurative language learning, conceptual metaphor, metonymy, humour, visuals

1. Introduction

Teaching EFL learners to master figurative language has always proved one of the most controversial and difficult experiences. What is more, the difficulty does not seem to be reduced as the learners' overall language proficiency develops. Despite the high degree of difficulty and the cultural or pedagogical challenges it might impose, figurative language is pervasive in everyday conversational discourse and, as such, considered an inevitable part of general English. Therefore, it is no longer the question of whether it should or should not be taught in EFL classes, but how? Before we try to answer that question, let us offer an adequate framework for the analysis of the figurative expressions.

The great bulk of previous research concerning mastering conventional figurative language has provided researchers with a good number of thought-provoking findings about the nature of foreign language acquisition, among which the following three form the basis of the present research: a) figurative expressions are motivated and should be taught embedded in the conceptual framework of which they form part, b) contrary to traditional beliefs in foreign language learning, the majority of English figurative expressions could possibly be presented to learners in ways that go beyond 'blind' rote-learning, c) cognitive linguistics provides articulate tools for the analysis of the dynamic, complex and creative issues of humour interpretation, as it offers solutions for the justification of their existence and their conceptual categorization.

To adequately capture the range of figurative expressions and different humour theories, we need a linguistic framework that recognizes the whole spectrum of inter-related concepts, ranging from the immediacy of bodily form and

function to the abstract thought. Cognitive linguistics is one such framework, viewing language as a highly-grounded and experiential facet of human intelligence and an integral part of human cognition. This implies an undeniable influence of the developments in cognitive psychology (memory, attention, perception, categorisation) on the linguistic research.

Moreover, it provides articulate tools for the study of a complex, dynamic and creative phenomena as are figurative expressions and humour. Concerning the theoretical model, the aim of this study is twofold. In the first part, we will define figurative language, give reasons for its promotion in figural humour and offer the appropriate theoretical background for its interpretation. Since insights from some humour theories (Attardo 1994, 2001) are, to a large extent, compatible with the cognitive linguistic framework, the section will present briefly research in both areas and will identify possible common ground between the two. In the second part of the study, the connection between metaphor, metonymy and humour is discussed based on an analysis of the figurative expressions collected from comic strips and print advertisements, featuring both visual and verbal elements. The aim of the second section is to illustrate the fruitful interplay of the often overlapping cognitive mechanisms and humour in the acquisition of figurative language in the EFL setting. In particular, we offer insights into the role of metaphor, metonymy and humour to the teaching of an array of figurative expressions containing colour terms in English. Without a doubt, the meanings of colour terms go well beyond their foci. Our perception of colour depends not only upon our ability to see the colour, but also on our ability to decode it within a framework of our cultural constraints and associations. Bearing that in mind, the choice of the visual materials in the form of comic strips, where the graphic form, that is, colour itself, is capable of conveying rich conceptual expression beyond the qualities of iconic signs, seems more than justified. The additional hypothesis rests on the assumption that such text-image integration reflects the intuition that the verbal and graphic forms are very similar in their expressive capacities and, as such, successfully contribute to laughter and to the overall metaphoric competence. Finally, we will argue for the relevance of using figurative language in teaching in the EFL setting supported by the implementation of the appropriate teaching methodology. Some practical guidelines for teaching figurative expressions in the EFL classrooms will be offered as well.

2. Defining Figurative Language and Use

Different types of linguistic expressions (idioms, metaphors, proverbs, etc.) form figurative language. Figurative language has been extensively studied in the last several decades (Gibbs 1994; Moon 1998; Katz – Cacciari et al. 1998; Dobrovoľskij – Piirainen 2005) from three different perspectives: psychological, linguistic and cognitive.

Psychological studies have examined people's mental imagery of idioms (Cacciary – Glucksberg 1995), idiom processing (Gibbs – Bogdanovich et al. 1997) and idiom usage (Nayak – Gibbs 1990). Some linguists used a corpus-based approach to metaphor analysis and figurative language learning (Cameron – Low 1999; Deignan 1999; Boers 2004; Boers – Lindstromberg 2008). Cognitive studies have focused on various issues, ranging from metaphor (Lakoff 1987; Lakoff – Turner 1989; Kövecses 2000) and idiom analysis (Langlotz 2006) to figurative language teaching (Boers 2004).

Dirven (2002, 337–338) suggests that there are degrees in figurativeness (low and high) which he illustrates by an example. While analysing figurative expressions, he applies three main cognitive strategies: *synaesthesia* (mostly associated with adjectives, e.g. *black mood*), *metonymy* (*blackshirts*) and *metaphor* (*black swan*). Dirven (2002, 341) defines the figurative use of language as follows:

> *The figurative use of language in its various manifestations is then but a consequence of simultaneous mental operations of the sensory organs in synaesthesia, contiguity in metonymy, and similarity in metaphor. In all of these, the tension between one element and the other is built upon a different interaction of likeness and difference, of similarity and contrast. The greater the contrast between the two elements, the greater also the degree of figurativity, or in its higher realisation, the higher the degree of metaphoricity.*

Figurative language is arguably the most powerful source for meaning creation and sense extension. The present study deals with the figurative use of colour terms, where the primary domain of predication no longer belongs to the colour domain. In other words, the colour terms in the collocational units such as *grey economy, green issues, white lie, black market, black sheep, white strike, pink elephant* etc. refer not merely to a property of the noun, but rather ascribe an additional quality to it. Most of the scholars would probably consider them figurative. However, under closer inspection and more complex analysis, most of the expressions would probably not be classified as a "proper" instance of figurative usage. In some instances it could be that the colour term does not carry any figurative meaning in itself, but rather serves as a trigger in the interpretation of the phrase (*between the devil and the deep blue sea, pink elephant*), while in some other instances it is not the colour term, but the whole phrase (*red herring, red tape, redtops, blue-collars, white coats, black swan*) that contributes to the figurative meaning. As far as the classification is concerned, it is important to highlight the difference between transparent figurative expressions, whose syntactic structure is equal to its non-idiomatic meaning such as *to give the red card* and opaque ones, whose structure was disjointed from that of its idiomatic meaning such as *red herring*, since as it will be seen further on, this distinction will have an influence on methodology, in the manner of teaching them.

3. Visual language in the classroom

Polysemous nature of colour terms, reflecting cultural and social aspects of everyday life, gives rise to their creative and humorous use and their frequent appearance in figurative language. Perceptually very conspicuous, colours easily find their way into the various linguistic instantiations of visual materials, such as comics and newspaper advertisements. The role of the language teachers and their implementation of the appropriate teaching techniques and materials seem of great importance.

Comics are, without a doubt, an excellent source for teaching. Geltrich-Ludgate and Tovar (1987, 80) classify the comic strip as an authentic text, a source from the "real world". As such, comic strips provide most valuable insight into the foreign language and views of native speakers. They represent a reflection of everyday events, but also a reflection of culture, economics, values, gesture, clothes, architecture. Their ability to adopt to changing times makes comics a timeless source of cultural history and a wonderful motivational force in the classroom.

Recently, the emerging interest in comics has given rise to its visual language and cognitive linguistic analysis (Narayan 2001; Cohn 2003; Cohn 2007a; Cohn 2007b). The present study, however, rests upon Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) study, arguing in favour of conceptual metaphor pervasiveness and showing that the graphic form is capable of conveying rich conceptual expressions beyond the demonstrative qualities of iconic signs. We intend to show that integration of text and image in comic strips successfully demonstrates the use of creative processes and underlying cognitive mechanisms – conceptual metaphor and metonymy.

Given all the advantages that stem from an understanding of humour, it seems a worthy cause to teach it in the classroom. What is more, it offers students a fun, yet challenging approach to EFL learning that seems to be missing.

4. Metaphor and metonymy as the source of humour

The present section focuses on the conceptual motivation behind the figurative expressions with colour terms collected from the visual materials[1], mostly comic strips and newspaper adds. As we will demonstrate, two cognitive mechanisms – conceptual metaphor and metonymy, often overlapping, would equally contribute to the humorous effect of the appropriate readings. The following sub-sections explore how metaphor and metonymy can be used for humorous purposes by applying relevant theories of humour and metaphor/metonymy to the selected visual material.

1 All the examples of the comic strips and newspaper advertisements are part of the author's private corpus of figural and verbal humour gathered from random Internet resources.

4.1. Conceptual motivation

The most serious studies on figurative units, especially idioms and figurative collocational units of other types, consider motivation a central parameter.

Aside from the fact that motivation could be understood subjectively, the difficulty of the proper interpretation of the figurative unit arises from the fact that one unit can be motivated in different ways for different individual speakers. For some, it can be based on everyday experience, for others on general knowledge of a cultural background.

Colour terms are widely known for their numerous meaning extensions. The fundamental role in the category extension is the role of motivation (Lakoff 1987). From the cognitive viewpoint, most figurative units are considered motivated in one way or the other because the speaker intuitively looks for an interpretation that makes sense. However, motivation in figurative units could be perceived as a matter of degree, varying from absolutely transparent cases to fully opaque ones.

In colour semantics, two conceptual processes – metaphor and metonymy – are frequently explored means of extensions.

4.2. Humour theories and Cognitive Linguistics

Despite the fact that humour is still a largely marginalised topic in the cognitive linguistics paradigm, some theoretical accounts developed by Koestler (1964), Raskin (1985), and Attardo (2001, Attardo at al. 2002) provide a necessary background in the field, merging psychological models of humour with the major tenets of cognitive linguistics. Cognitive linguistics, with its focus on cross-cognitive and conceptual aspects of language use, should provide an adequate framework and articulate tools for the analysis of a complex, creative and multidimensional phenomena in both verbal and visual humour. In his oft-quoted passage, Koestler (1964, 51) introduces a common psychological operation called *bisociation*, while highlighting the importance of *duality* and *tension* in humorous texts. These ideas are further developed by Raskin (1985) in his Semantic Script Theory of Humour. The same idea of the two opposing scenarios was mentioned earlier by Attardo (2001, 2) and is defined as "a cognitive structure internalized by the speaker which provides the speaker with information on how a given entity is structured." Later on, he renamed and extended the theory further in order to account for any kind of humorous text or narrative.

4.3. Conceptual metaphor, metonymy and humour

The relationship between humour and metaphor is not unnoticed: humorous interpretation of the figurative expressions often hinge on exploiting the salience gap between a literal and figurative readings in the mind of the speakers

involved. The above mentioned duality and tension (see 4.2.) in bringing two concepts together lie at the very root of metaphor. Cognitive theories define metaphor as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another, thereby mapping properties of one into the other (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Let us analyse an example of a humorous one-liner: "Don' use that tone with me" (see Figure 1.). Even though our study is based on the analysis of the figurative expressions with colour terms, the chosen comic strip is only partially relevant. Namely, no colour terms are mentioned in the figurative expression, but the image of two colour chart strings somehow relates to the topic. This text supports two different (opposing) scripts: that of two people arguing and that of two incompatible colour tone charts. The opposition is that between the real and imaginary script, that is, between the text and the image. The blurring of the boundaries between the two scripts is achieved through the ambiguity of the word 'tone' as it can belong to both scripts and is open to multiple interpretations. This interpretation variability lies behind the author's intention to produce a metaphor leading to ambiguity. Since there are no other words pertaining to just one script, two possible interpretations of the comic strip may arise: first, "the right" interpretation may be completely non-existent, and second, if the reader opts for one, it is likely that he/she would choose the 'argument' script (that is closer to human immediate everyday experience) over the 'colour incompatibility' script. In the case of the latter, the duality of the image-text incongruence is realised, the boundaries between the scripts are resolved and the tension between them contributes to the humorous effect. Even though there are no colour terms expressed linguistically in Figure 1., the choice of the comic strip is more than justifiable, since the colour chart image is associated with our general knowledge about colours, and, as such, contributes immensely to the humorous interpretation. A common metaphorical schema might be that *emotion is colour* or *change of colour is a change of state* (Figure 1.) As the cognitive theory of metaphor suggests, the source domain, (in our case, colour), is a well-structured, familiar, more concrete concept, whereas the target domain (emotions), is usually less familiar and abstract. Once a metaphoric mapping is established, we may say that the target domain has been metaphorically structured in accordance with the source domain. The high level of entrenchment[2] in a speech community makes the language users mostly unaware of their existence.

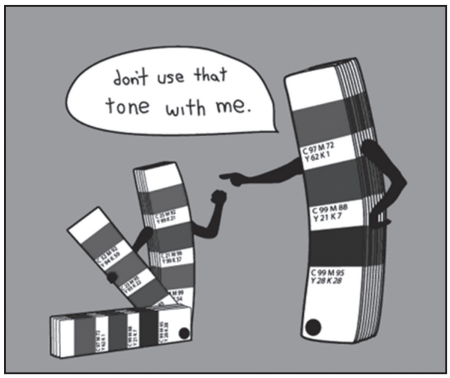


Figure 1.

2 Cf. "dead" metaphors in traditional terminology

According to some viewpoints (Tourangeau and Sternberg 1981, 30), the most humorous metaphors correlate positively with the dissimilarity between the concepts/domains. In other words, the distance and incongruity between the concepts/domains may be regarded as a characteristic feature of humorous metaphors. This process can give rise to sub-types of metaphors, e.g. personification or 'animalification' as illustrated by the figurative expression '*the black sheep of the family*' (see Figure 2a.-2d.). A rather transparent expression might be considered a proper instance of figurative usage, where the colour itself refers not merely to a property of the noun, but rather ascribes an additional quality to it. The idiom *black sheep* is a reduced version of the canonical English proverb "*There is a black sheep in every flock*". Its origin could be traced back in the story of Genesis[3], where Jacob removed the black sheep form the herd or

Figure 2a.

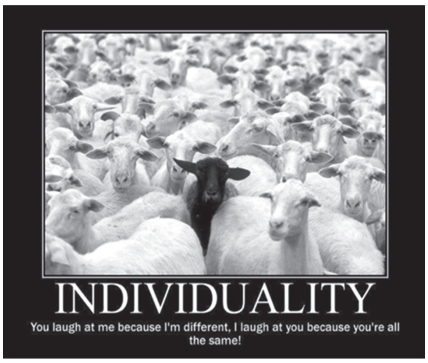


Figure 2b.

it could be associated with the Roman use of sacrificing black sheep to the underworld. Despite the origin, *black sheep* refers to something undesirable and is quite widespread in many European languages[4]. Traditionally, the actual meaning of the full canonical version of the English proverb would be interpreted as applying relevant semantic features of *the black sheep* taken literally to a person. In cognitive modelling, the proper interpretation would rely on the fruitful interplay of

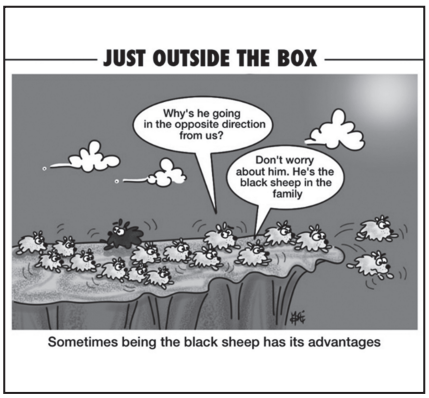


Figure 2c.

3 *sheep* is a salient cultural symbol playing a significant role in Christian tradition.

4 Cf. Dobrovoľjski and Piraiinen (2005, 173–183) for additional cross-linguistic meaning interpretation of the idiom *black sheep* via "symbolic knowledge" shared by all members of a given linguistic community.

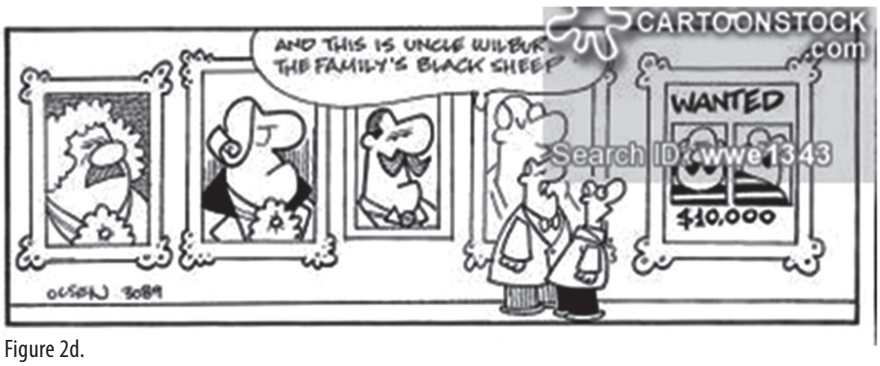


Figure 2d.

cognitive mechanisms, our knowledge of colour semantics and knowledge of the world. Let us see which cognitive mechanisms motivate the interpretation of the above mentioned proverb. All the members of a given linguistic community share the same knowledge that words meaning *black* have a secondary reading, which can be universally described as 'odd', 'evil', 'bad'. Due to the cultural link between the colour *black* with the concepts of *negative values*, the function of *black* serves some further purpose other than merely ascribing a colour to the noun.

Aside from a highly general metaphor *human is animal*, where 'a black sheep' is mapped onto 'a person judged to be bad / odd / undesirable', and 'every flock' onto 'any relevant group of people' (presumably 'family'), we have also identified metonymy of the type *salient concrete attribute stands for salient abstract attribute*. The abstract attribute *negative* is directly associated with the concrete attribute *black*, which is a salient feature in the domain of *outcast*. Naturally, 'sheep' should be metaphorically interpreted as 'people'. Full appreciation of the metaphor in Fig. 2a.-2d.comes from both visual and textual clues and the reader's realisation that the two incongruous concepts, deriving from the two incongruous domains (*animals vs. people*, i. e., *sheep vs. outcasts*), are in a way congruous. Whereas the first three comic strips (Fig. 2a.-2c.) explicitly use the image of *'the black sheep'* and additional verbal support to paraphrase the meaning, the last one (Fig. 2d.) textually exploits the expression with no *'sheep'* image, but direct reference to the person.

It has often been claimed that the borderline between conceptual metaphor and metonymy is blurred. Metonymy is generally viewed as a cognitive mechanism enabling the selection of a salient reference point in a frame to refer to a different concept in the same frame or to the frame as a whole. They highlight one part of the experiential scenario, creating a local descriptive shortcut within a single syntactic phrase. In Langacker's terminology (1993), a focal property, called *active zone*, is activated and the situation is described in an abbreviated way. It is important to mention a productive number of figurative collocational units associated with the active zone phenomenon (e.g. *redhead, white face, red nose, red eyes, grey head*), where a certain highlighted body part stands for the whole person.

The series of the next comic strips (see Fig. 3a.-3f) exploit metonymy in their attempt to illustrate the same figurative expression *'red nose'* referring to three different target domains: *alcohol abuse* (Fig. 3a.-3b.), *disease* (3c.-3d.) and *humour* (3e.-3f.). Two subtypes of metonymy are at work in the meaning extensions of the category *red*: *part-whole* and *part-part* metonymy.

Figure 3a. Figure 3b.

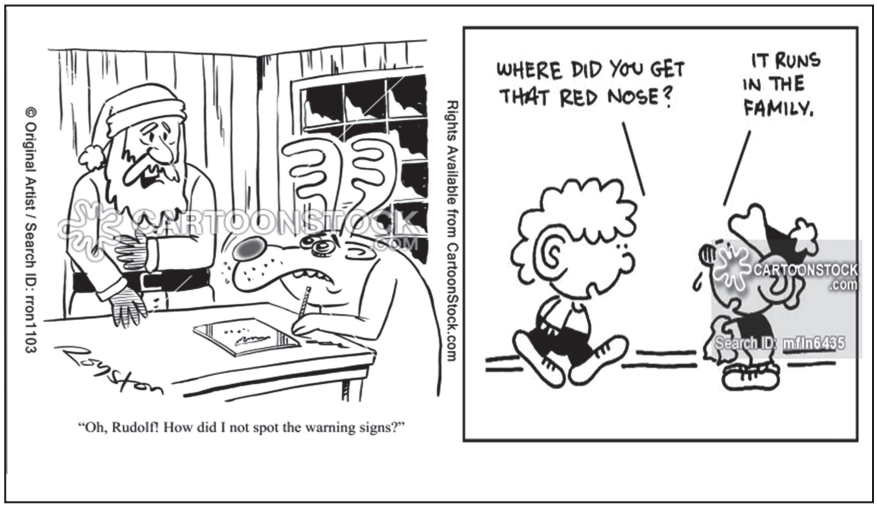


Figure 3c. Figure 3d.

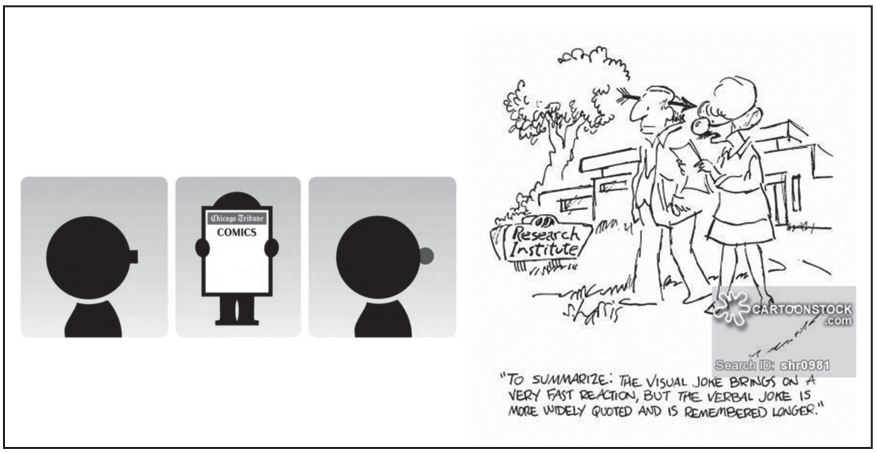


Figure 3e.

Figure 3f.

The authors of the comics take different approaches in the elaboration of the same figurative expression. Whereas some explicitly use the phrase *'red nose'* (Fig. 3a. and 3d.) as a part of the verbal wit, the others prefer visual clues (Fig. 3b., 3c., 3e., 3f.) and colour as a mental shortcut to a broader conception that a *'red nose'* invokes. As illustrated in Fig. 3e., a graphic compositional structure of a three-panel pattern (used in strips from an advertising campaign by the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper) successfully incorporates the "rising-climax-falling" narrative arc and the metonymic idea that reading the comics section will bring humour to reader's life. A graphic morpheme of a *red nose* in Fig. 3e. and a clown *red nose* in Fig. 3f. should not be interpreted as an attempt to be funny, but in connection to a much broader conception that they invoke.

In Fig. 3a.-3.d., the colour red stands for its prototypical referent blood, whereas in Fig. 3e.-3f., the clown nose stands for the concept of humour. In all the instances, nose is the most prominent part of the human face. Abnormality of the nose as the physical trait metonymically reflects some kind of abnormality of the character or inner state.

The humorous effect in Fig. 3d. lies in the ambiguity and multiple interpretations of the word *'run'*, although an image-text interaction definitely supports the *disease* frame motivated by *effect for a cause* metonymy.

According to Wierzbicka (1990, 1996), quite a number of the extended meanings are motivated by the strong conceptual links between colour categories and their natural prototypes. The metonymies in the figurative expressions such as *green fingers, black thoughts, red menace, white Christmas, out of the blue* are conceptually motivated by the entrenched association of green with the vegetation, black with night, red with blood, white with snow, blue with the sky.

Figure 4.

Let us analyse expression *to have green fingers* into details because it is much more complex than the previous ones. It refers to someone who is usually very successful or skilful in making plants grow. This figurative expression is motivated by two mapping processes within *a part-whole* metonymy type. Naturally, the colour *green* refers to the colour of the leaves, which, as a salient property, stand for the whole plant. The other part of the expression, *fingers*, evoke the domain of *plant growing*. In a prototypical scene of plant growing, fingers are the most prominent and useful instrument of manipulation. Thus, *green fingers* represent a double metonymy of the types *part for whole* and *instrument for action*, but the two vehicles do not activate the same target. The humorous effect of the comic strip in Fig. 4. is achieved through the incongruity resolution between the literal and figurative meaning of the colour term *green* (referring to fingers) and *black* (referring to dirt under fingernails).

5. The Teaching Approach

There are at least four major reasons for integrating figurative language in the EFL teaching: (1) to increase knowledge of vocabulary, (2) to organise and memorise new words, (3) to integrate skills work and (4) to improve language awareness and use. Aside from the fact that figurative expressions contribute to the overall level of communicative competence, they give language a peculiar character and colour. Similarly, they offer a valuable insight into the foreign language history, culture, customs and lifestyle. Studies in cognitive linguistics (Kövecses – Szabó 1996; Boers 2000; Boers 2004) show the importance of the role played by the memory in vocabulary acquisition and the role of teachers and their choice of the appropriate methodological approach. Finally, due to the dynamic character of many figurative expressions and their tendency to change over the years, it is very difficult, even impossible, to detect the motivation behind them, unless we resort to their origins. Another level of difficulty with figurative expressions with colour terms arise from the fact that colours reveal specific beliefs held by a particular culture. According to Irujo (1986), it is precisely this culture-bound nature that makes them difficult to master for learners who do not belong to the same linguistic community.

Opinions on how to teach and learn figurative expressions have been versatile. The present study is based on two major assumptions: a) the meaning of many figurative expressions is motivated by the students' pre-taught conceptual knowledge of the concepts to which they relate to, and b) humorous effect

of comic strips contributes to their acquisition, interpretation and retention. As the *Common European Framework Reference* points out, it is of highly important for our students to be exposed to different text types and genres. Newspaper comic strips have been chosen for the obvious image-text integration and possible students' preference.

This particular paragraph outlines some of the practical guidelines for teaching figurative expressions in EFL classrooms. The overarching term to begin with is enhancing students' awareness of three different aspects: 1) conceptual motivation – conceptual metaphor and metonymy; 2) the role of etymology; 3) historical-cultural backgrounds. Conceptual motivation awareness implies recognition of metaphor and metonymy as common ingredients of an everyday language, with the reference to their experiential basis. Additionally, it assumes a possible cross-linguistic/cultural similarities in metaphoric and metonymic themes. Bearing all that in mind, there are several criteria we should follow while choosing which particular figurative expression to teach: the frequency of appearance, the transparency of their sense, cross-linguistic resemblance and students' needs and interests.

A nice and humorous outlook on the topic of 'colour' and an example of a possible introductory comic strip is illustrated by Fig. 5., where characters humorously elaborate on the complexity of the term itself. Once we narrowed down the number of figurative expressions to those containing the colour

Figure 5.

term, we suggest grouping according to conceptual framework. The concept encourages cross-linguistic conceptual awareness, facilitates retention and lends itself particularly well to multilingual material development. It consists of a three-tiered system: *Iconic models* > *Archimetaphors* >*individual metaphors*, which, aside from its economic aspect, offers an additional level of abstraction. To exemplify, the concept would assume that all the metaphors that express *anger* and involve a specific body part (head and neck) and the change of colour would be grouped in a manner that underscores their closely knit conceptual relationship (*red in the face, go red, red with anger, see red, make someone red-hot, red-headed, be as a red flag to someone*), highlighting simultaneously the productivity of the Iconic Model (*anger*). Figures 6. and 7. illustrate the colour as a physiological reaction to feelings of anger or envy. Due to the essential sameness of human beings and their physiological functioning across cultures, the body-based conceptual metaphor *feeling is colour/change of colour is change of state* and metonymy *effect for cause* have been regarded as ubiquitous in all cultures, if not "universal".

Figure 6.

Figure 7.

It is fair to assume that students will acquire more easily the figurative expressions whose literal meaning is close to their figurative one, that is, that are transparent (Fig. 2.). Under the assumption that many of them do share cross-linguistic equivalents and conceptual motivation, they should be taught first. However, more complex figurative expressions should not be left out from the curriculum. Their interpretation may require not only cognitive, but also etymological or historical-cultural awareness. Once a metonymic motivation of a colour term is lost (Fig. 8.-12.), it contributes little to the proper interpretation

Figure 8a.

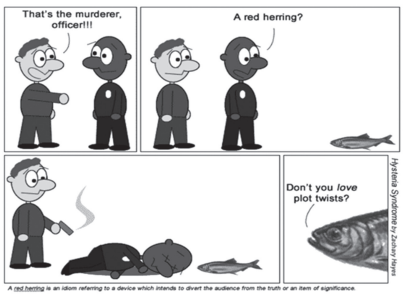
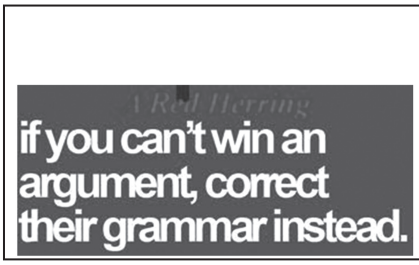


Figure 8b.



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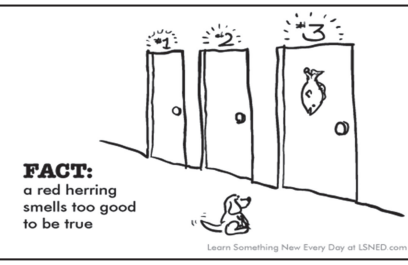

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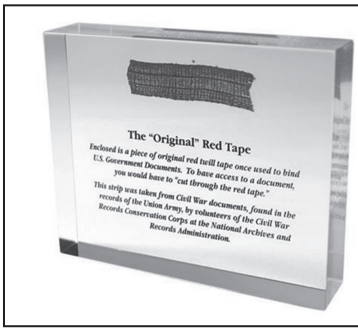


Figure 9a.

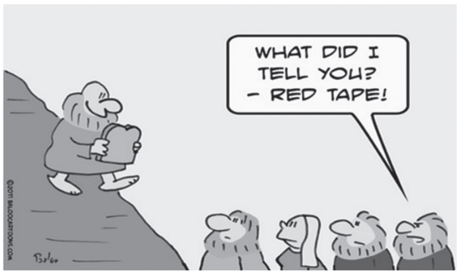


Figure 9b.

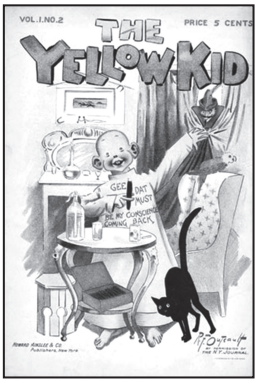
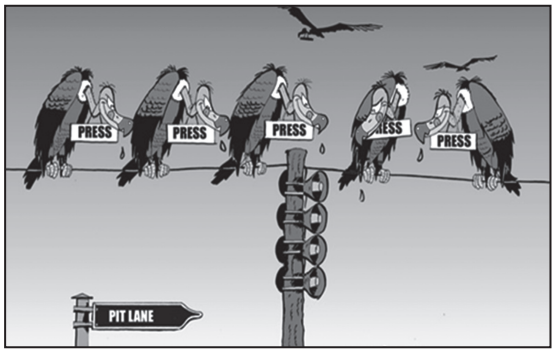


Figure 10a.



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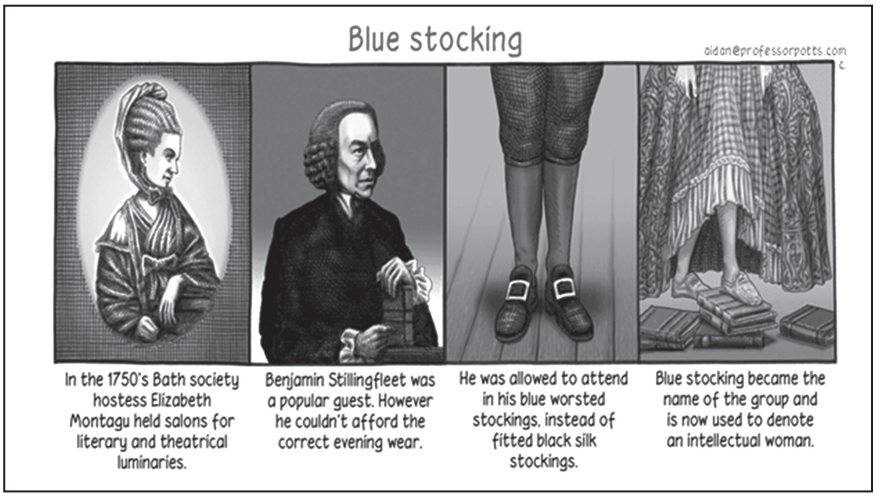

Figure 11.

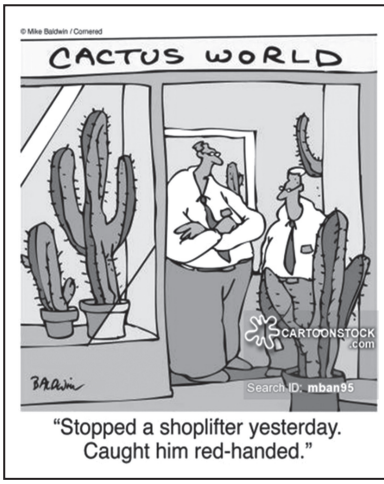

Figure 12a.

Figure 12b.

of the figurative expression. The role of etymology and tracing back the origin of the expression might help students in their appropriate interpretations. We suggest adequate visual support (ranging from the original to the extended figurative meaning) that would go well beyond the words to attain the meaning of the figurative expression.

6. Conclusion

This study supports the hypothesis that figurative expressions with colour terms are products of our conceptual system and are motivated by cognitive mechanisms, such as conceptual metaphor, metonymy and generally shared knowledge (Kövecses – Szabó 1996; Kövecses 2002; Gibbs 1994). The analysis presented in this study has shown the fruitful interplay of cognitive mechanisms in the creation and interpretation of humorous comic strips. Some of the findings raised in this study intend to be helpful to English teaching and learning of figurative expressions in the EFL setting. The main arguments of the present thesis are as follows: Firstly, linguistic humour theories and cognitive linguistics provide an adequate framework and articulate tools for the analysis of a complex, creative and dynamic phenomena in both verbal and figural humour of the comic strips. Secondly, two powerful cognitive mechanisms – conceptual metaphor and metonymy – are quite pervasive and successfully combined in the interpretation of humour in comic strips. Finally, some of the findings offer better theoretical and practical insights into EFL teaching. It is firmly believed that the learners' awareness of conceptual motivation and appropriate usage of visual materials and humour in the classroom correlates positively with their vocabulary acquisition, interpretation and retention. Figurative language of colour is a remarkable world of nuances and shadings of human psychology, history, culture, customs and conventions. The aim of the present study is, therefore, to shed new light on the nature of figurative expressions and promote their appropriate acquisition in a humorous way in the EFL setting. The occurrence of metonymy and metaphor in comic strips exemplifies how human cognition and language constantly interact in structuring our dynamic pool of encyclopaedic experiences, allowing us to communicate about them. It can be concluded that there are same tendencies in conceptual motivation for the linguistic units related to universal bodily experience, which consequently leads to a greater overlap between languages (e.g. *go red, red in the face, see red, red-headed, green with envy*). Pervasiveness of the underlying cognitive mechanisms in the humorous interpretations of figurative expressions with colour terms, as well as cross-linguistic commonalities, allow us to apply the common iconic models as source domains for their conceptual groupings. The form of the comic represents a valuable multilingual didactic material and allows teachers to be creative and versatile in their approach to figurative language teaching.

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Hurley, Matthew M. – Dennett, Daniel C. – Adams, Reginald B. Jr. (2011): *Inside Jokes: Using Humor to Reverse-Engineer the Mind.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 359 p. ISBN 978-0-262-51869-7 [1]

Zolczer, Peter

Hurley, Dennett and Adams did a wonderful job in choosing the title of their book. *Inside Jokes* conveys such a level of ambiguity (Do we learn the punch line of a joke when we get to the end of the book?; Do they want us to think that by reading the book we can understand humor?) that if nothing else, this would make the reader curious enough to start and read the book. Only by taking a look at the subtitle (*Using Humor to Reverse-Engineer the Mind*) does the reader see that the authors' intention is to use a cognitive and evolutionary approach to discuss the connection between the human mind and one of its mysteries, humor. The highly interdisciplinary nature of the book also becomes evident if one examines its back cover. Matthew M. Hurley is a researcher of teleology and agency at the Center for Research on Concepts and Cognition at Indiana University. Daniel C. Dennett is Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University. Reginald B. Adams, Jr. is Associate Professor of Psychology at Penn State University, researching social perception and emotion.

The authors do not wait for long to make a joke in their book. In the preface they claim to have created such a theory of humor that would allow the building of an artificial agent capable of humor production and perception. They, of course, continue with emphasizing that their book is not a recipe for making "humorous robots", but an attempt to fully investigate how the evolution of the human mind has reached the point where it became capable of creating and appreciating humor. The authors believe that humor is the product of a computational problem of our minds, and it evolved soon after we have become capable of open-ended thinking. They also believe that during our evolution, humor became one of are addictions, from a biological perspective, the same way as sugar did. The book tries to answer a number of humor-related questions: What is humor? Why does humor exist? Why is humor enjoyable? What is the essence of humor? The authors make it clear that they use different (evolutionary, psychological and cognitive) approaches for reaching their goal and do not want to build an artificial agent based on a humor-algorithm. They also emphasize that the existing humor theories played an important role in creating their own theory. By listing a number of jokes they show how the blurry edges of the various types of humor make the phenomenon even more complex.

1 See the extended version of this review in: Zolczer Péter (2014): Humor – evolúció és kogníció. In: *Antik nevetés, et al. – kritikai elmélet online 2*. Pál Katalin (ed.), www.etal.hu. (in print)

Even if humor does not have a function nowadays, according to the authors, it must have had one at some point during our evolution (the same way goose bumps did). In the second chapter they list a few hypotheses for the function of humor which include humor as an information virus, humor as a meme and humor as a by-product of a mechanism for passing on genes. They believe that they found the mechanism which allows them to fully explain the evolution, function and nature of humor: "In short, we have Chevrolet brains running Maserati software, and this strain on our cerebral resources led to the evolution of a brilliant stopgap, a very specific error-elimination capacity that harnessed preexisting 'emotional' reward mechanisms and put them to new uses" (p. 12). The reader must not feel disappointed if any part of this quotation feels too complex to understand, the authors explain their theory in a very clear manner in the remaining 300 pages of the book.

The third chapter deals with the phenomenological approach of the theory of humor. It contains the various definitions of humor whose deficiencies are pointed out. The reader is presented an example (thinking about the red color can evoke the same effect as seeing the red color) which clearly shows the problem of describing humor as a quality (just thinking about a humorous situation can also make us laugh). The authors try to answer the question: What does it mean to call something funny? Then they move on to the differentiation of Duchenne (spontaneous, heartily) laughter and (consciously or unconsciously) simulated laughter, and conclude that laughter is neither necessary nor sufficient for humor. The following part of the chapter contains the detailed etymology of the word 'humor'. The authors investigate humorous situations which are funny for us but not for others. To be able to explain these situations they examine studies about patients with neurological damage who have the capacity to spontaneously laugh in the absence of humor. They also provide a detailed definition of the word 'funny' and its (pragmatic) uses. They conclude the chapter with the knowledge-relativity of humor (how important background knowledge is to appreciate humor) and the role of humor in mating and dating.

The fourth chapter contains a comprehensive overview of all humor theories: Biological, Play, Superiority, Release, Incongruity and Incongruity-Resolution, Surprise and Bergson's Mechanical Humor Theory. At the beginning of the chapter the authors make their standpoint clear: they believe that each theory describes a certain aspect of humor correctly, but they fail or forget to describe the other (remaining) aspects. In their view, it might be fruitful to gather and combine the advantages of these theories to create a new, comprehensive humor theory.

After listing all the advantages and disadvantages of the humor theories, the authors – in the fifth chapter – compile a list of 20 questions connected to humor. They believe that answering these questions would allow them to create a comprehensive, cognitive humor theory. Some of the questions included

in this chapter are: Is humor an adaptation?, Where did humor come from?, Why do we communicate humor?, Why do we feel surprise in humor?, Why does humor so often point to failures?, Why do we desire humor so intensely? etc.

The sixth chapter is about the problem of emotion and emotion simulation in case of an artificial agent. They conclude that emotion has a greater impact on our brains than logic. In order for the reader to understand their humor theory, first the authors introduce their emotional model based on James-Lange's (emotion) theory. They also provide a detailed overview of the rationality and irrationality of emotions, and their impact on the evolution of emotion as well. After investigating the emotional algorithms, they turn to the epistemic emotions, which they find an essential element of higher intelligence and humor production and perception. Using algorithms for generating emotions might not be a productive activity, however, the authors believe that using the same methods in case of epistemic emotions might provide useful results.

The seventh chapter includes a description about the way we think. The authors, again, use the evolutionary approach to discuss the heuristic search mechanism of our minds. After listing the elements of a good theory of thought, they continue with the way the human mind constructs mental spaces. They introduce the most important terms of cognitive science: conceptual blending, frame, schema, script, etc. To demonstrate the connection between these notions, they use the JITSA (*Just-In-Time Spreading Activation*) model. The following part contains a thorough description of beliefs and their connection to humor perception. They also make a clear distinction between short- and long-term memory, since they both play an essential role in generating and perceiving humor. The following example shows the connection between belief and humor: you want to drink a little water and when you try to grab a glass from the table, you realize that it is glued to it. You are surprised. However, you would not be surprised if your belief that glasses are movable from the table would not have been activated in your mind. This type of belief is called active belief.

In the next chapter the authors deal with the relationship between humor and (the feeling of) mirth. They use the term *basic humor* for such situations, when we realize that there is an error in the structure of one of our active beliefs, which then causes us to feel mirth. Looking everywhere for our sunglasses while they are on our heads, is a good example for basic humor. Since this is a first person experience, the perspective of the person involved is essential for the humorous situation. The first person humor is usually embarrassing or humiliating, which means that it is not really humorous in the moment of its happening, but only after a certain period of time, when the person is remembering back to it.

The ninth chapter deals with the relationship between humor and intentionality. The authors discuss the higher-order varieties of humor. With the help of intentionality, we can activate more mental spaces and see things from a different perspective. Only humans are capable of this kind of humor which the authors name as third person humor.

In the tenth chapter the authors turn to the readership by asking them to try to come up with such a counter-example (of humor) which cannot be explained by their humor theory. Then they revisit every detail of their model and by changing its parameters to meet the extremes, they try to find all of its weak points. The only aspect of their model which seems to generate contradictions is the one which involves such humorous situations where determining the humorous load of the situation depends on whether we see it from a first or a third person perspective. Imagine the situation of having a big gulp of three-week-old milk that you thought was fresh. Is this funny for you, or for those who see you drinking it?

The next chapter deals with a great variety of humorous stimuli. According to the authors, humor is a product of evolution, and because of this, they assume the existence of proto-humor. This means that it is really difficult to draw the line between humor and non-humor, or at least there must be cases where it is impossible to decide which category would fit better. In order to have as sharp borders as possible, they create four dimensions of humor: the knowledge-relativity of humor; the differences of humorous stimuli for every individual; the type of humor that is humorous, but we do not know why; and related phenomena (jokes as evolved memes for pleasure).

In the twelfth chapter the authors try to answer the question: Why do we laugh? Their starting point is the fact that laughing is only a by-product of evolution without any real function. However, laughter is energy-consuming. Why do we do it then? They consider laughter as a variety of (involuntary) communication (in the same way as trembling or shivering). In the remaining part of this chapter the authors discuss the role of humor in sexual selection, the art of comedy and humor in literature.

The last chapter provides a brief summary of the authors' humor theory and the answers for the 20 questions stated in the fifth chapter, which ultimately form a cohesive interpretation of humor.

The authors of *Inside Joke* fulfill their promise stated in the subtitle of their book; by using humor they are able to reverse-engineer the mind and provide a comprehensive, evolutionary-cognitive humor theory. The ambiguity of the title also becomes clear, since by reading the book the reader is given a tool which enables him or her to understand humor. Matthew M. Hurley, Daniel C. Dennett and Reginald B. Adams, Jr. break with tradition as they do not give us an alternative humor theory, but they create a theory by combining all the positive factors and advantages present in existing humor theories. Their theory not just explains why something is humorous or why do we laugh on it, but it explains the nature and existence of humor as well.

Litovkina, Anna T. – Judith Sollosy – Péter Medgyes – Dorota Brzozowska (eds.) (2012): *Hungarian Humour*. Humour and Culture, vol. 3, Kraków: Tertium Society for the Promotion of Language Studies 384 p. ISBN 978-83-61678-48-9

Melinda Mikusová – Erik Dobrovodský

Hungarian Humour started with an idea of the well-respected linguists and humour researchers Władysław Chłopicki and Anna T. Litovkina in 2009. Thanks to their hard work and cooperation the third volume of this series was published in 2012 with the contribution of twenty-four authors, all specialists in Hungarian humour.

All twenty-two chapters, divided into nine parts, deal with the topic of humour. They discuss the topic from various aspects based on the numerous researches conducted in the field, together with the opinion and expertise of the authors. The reader can find many examples – jokes, satirical drawings, puns, parody and irony, etc. – supporting the ideas and hypotheses in each chapter.

The first part provides an interesting insight into humour in literature and the arts. The authors showed that since the medieval times, humour has played an important role and appeared in many forms in Hungarian literature, e.g. in poems and anecdotes. Authors used different comic devices like puns and repetitions to create a witty atmosphere in their writings. Another chapter shows that humour was preserved in old Hungarian Baroque sermons as well. Among the listed sermons the reader can find the song of the Marriage at Cana, which contains surprisingly many elements of humour. The first part furthermore describes the linguistic humour of two famous representatives of Hungarian literature: Dezső Kosztolányi and Péter Esterházy. The chapters give an in-depth description of famous literary works, highlight their most characteristic way of using humour, and point out the fact that even the translated version of their original can be enjoyable, as long as the translator is able to recognize and imitate the author's comic genius in the target language.

In the second part humour in media is described in detail. Media, just as literature, uses humour to reach a larger audience, to raise awareness, provoke, and encourage people to form their own opinion. There are two chapters discussing humour as it is depicted in ARC posters and analysing the historical development of stand-up comedy in Hungary. Géza Hofi, János Komlós, Endre Nagy and other notable comedians are listed, who are still considered to be the most famous representatives of this genre.

Frequent targets of satirical attacks in media, especially in newspapers, are the minorities. Jews and Roma, often called as Gypsies, appear in many jokes and are exposed to continuous discrimination. Important elements, such as their opinion about stereotypes and the way they handle criticism directed against them, are debated in the third part of this volume. Stereotypes cannot be narrowed down only to minorities. We all hear jokes about women, especially about

blonde girls, mothers-in-law, and wives. Some people find them funny, others hate them. The fourth big part deals with gender and sexuality, paying special attention to jokes on marital infidelity and blonde girls. These chapters provide interesting ideas and information based on research and supported by many examples.

Politics always served as a ground for humour. The fourth part, with the title *Political humour*, contains many caricatures which are allowed to be published only since the fall of the Soviet Republic, giving a realistic picture about the period's atmosphere. Another field in which humour plays an integral part is education. All the chapters on the topic discuss how humour affects young children's development and how it is possible to use it in a classroom – to improve the learning process. The last chapter of the part focuses on the fear of being laughed at, called gelotophobia.

Everyone can tell at least one proverb, but who would be able to tell an anti-proverb? The seventh thematic part emphasizes the formation process of anti-proverbs and lists a wide range of interesting examples. In contrast to proverbs, which contain the wisdom of our ancestors, anti-proverbs appear funny for people because the letters, words and even sentences are mixed, changed and replaced in them. Just like the anti-proverbs, which are used more frequently nowadays in everyday communication, simple and commonly used proper names can serve as a good source of humour. But we have to keep in mind that people are different. What appears funny to one person, may not be humorous to the other. Taking this into account, no matter how funny a joke appears to us at first, we have to be considerate of others and make sure not to hurt their feelings.

The last few pages summarize three Hungarian National Interdisciplinary Humour Conferences, highlight their key events and briefly describe the plenary lectures and papers delivered during various sections, all of which contributed to the success of this significant series. The authors have achieved their purpose to show how greatly humour affects every aspect of our life.

The third volume of the *Humour and Culture* series – whose topics range from blond girl jokes to funny names, from stand-up comedy to anti-proverbs – definitely brings the reader closer to the world of humour. This volume, with its witty, interesting, and thoughtful chapters and examples, is guaranteed to put the reader in a good mood.

Sokszínű humor ["Manyfold Humour"]. Ed. by Katalin Vargha – Anna T. Litovkina – Zsuzsanna Barta. Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó 2013, 291 p. ISBN 978-963-9372-75-7

Dobrovodský, Erik – Mikusová, Melinda

Sokszínű humor ["Manyfold Humour"] is a volume of studies containing the papers of the 3rd Hungarian Interdisciplinary Humour Conference held at Eötvös Loránd University in 2012. The thirty-three researchers have examined different topics. Their writings have been classified into five thematic parts showing that humour is present in media, literature, philosophy, stereotypes, psychology, and linguistics.

What is the purpose of making Internet memes? How did Géza Hofi use political humour successfully in his performances? How can humour be effectively used in language teaching? These are just a few questions that are answered in the first part. Furthermore, the chapters give a wide range of examples which the reader might see on the social media networks or which can be effectively used in language teaching. These articles encourage teachers to use humour as a tool to create a more positive, encouraging and cheerful atmosphere in the classroom. With a little smile and laugh, a teacher can easily achieve effectiveness, because using humour brings optimism and positive feelings, reduces stress level and helps students to stay focused and remember ideas better. Humour should not be fully rejected from lessons, because they help students to stay focused.

The use of humour in literature is described in the second part. One chapter points to the fact that Kelemen Mikes, famous for his *Letters from Turkey*, used humour frequently in his writings. His typical characteristic features described in the article made him one of the most famous political representatives of Hungary. Despite these facts, his name seems to disappear from not just secondary school education, but even Hungarian teacher training university syllabi. The next part describes the way Jenő Rejtő used funny, comical situations, characters and descriptions in two notable works of his. The author in the next chapter investigates the aim of naming in parody, listing methods used by writers to create names for their characters and claims that these names have great hidden comic potential. The use of humour in philosophical articles is described in great detail in the following part focusing mainly on the attempts of integrating humour into this academic discipline.

Stereotyping about a particular race or ethnic group is everywhere in the society, it is around us, presented in the media, literature, politics, etc. It is also used for entertainment purposes. We often label people based on behaviour, fashion brands, belief, clothing, hairstyles and even skin colour.

The chapters dealing with humour and stereotypes depict the ethnic jokes with their satirical attacks against different nations such as the Swiss, and ethno-religious groups as the Jews. The researches intend to show that not all the jokes are based on stereotypes and that there are ethnic jokes which cannot be associated with stereotypes. The chapters titled *Funny names* and *Gender and humour* deal with topics such as the importance of naming a character – putting special emphasis on the ethno-stereotypical humour – and highlight the differences between men and women in their way of using humour and handling jokes.

It is a commonplace that humour and laughter have many health benefits, they help us to stay emotionally and physically healthy. The thematic part Humour and psychology offers a wide variety of studies linked to this idea. The first chapter focuses on the importance of having a sense of humour especially in the case of psychology students to handle stressful situations and be able to maintain a cheerful attitude. The next chapter describes the connection between gelotophobia, humour and aggression examined in the prison environment. The outcome of the research revealed that prisoners use and interpret humour differently than average people. One chapter analyses the reasons why some of the contestants of Való Világ – a reality show in Hungary aired on RTL Klub television channel – became popular with the help of aggressive humour. The author also offers tips how to be successful in the next show. The next research points to the negative side of humour highlighting the problem of obesity. Jokes about overweight people are considered to be funny, however, these people often report being discriminated and humiliated. In fact, they need continuing support, also because later they can suffer from other disorders.

The last big thematic part examines humour from a linguistic point of view. One of the chapters deals with *The development of humour competence in Hungarian children from a cognitive approach,* focusing on their ability to use language properly in social situations. Another research discusses humour present in Hungarian riddles and intends to show that the genre has not completely disappeared by now. The last chapters review the most common synonyms for the word "humour" and study the linguistic humour in anti-proverbs. The authors give examples not just in Hungarian but also in Russian, German, English and French and compare them to each other.

This diverse volume of studies offers something for everyone. No matter what field of humour the reader is interested in, everyone will be able to find something in this book that will definitely attract their attention. How to use humour in media, politics, why to use it in teaching and what are the health benefits of humour are just a few of the many questions the readers will find answers to. These articles will definitely provide the readers with all the information needed to form their own opinion about these debated and analysed topics.

AUTHORS

Aleksa Varga, Melita, PhD.
University of Osijek
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
L. Jaegera 9
HR–31000 Osijek
e-mail: melita.aleksa@gmail.com

Barta, Péter, CSc., PhD.
Eötvös Loránd University
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Translation and Interpreting
Múzeum krt. 4/F
H–1088 Budapest
e-mail: barta.peter@btk.elte.hu

Bc. Dobrovodský, Erik
Čiernovodská 102
SK–92 507 Mostová
e-mail: erik.dobrovodsky@gmail.com

Géró, Györgyi , PhD.
Corvinus University of Budapest
Faculty of Social Sciences
Institute of Behavioural Sciences and Communication Theory
Közraktár u. 4–6.
H–1093 Budapest
e-mail: gyorgyi.gero@uni-corvinus.hu

Halász, Géza
Pacsirta u. 4.
H-2120 Dunakeszi
e-mail: halaszgezu@gmail.com

Prof. Hidasi, Judit
Budapest Business School
Department of Social Communication and Media Studies
Diósy Lajos utca 22–24.
H–1165 Budapest
e-mail: hidasi.judit@kkk.bgf.hu

Dr. Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Hrisztalina, PhD.
Foreign Language Centre, University of Pécs
Szántó Kovács János u. 1/B.
H-7633 Pécs
e-mail: xpucuhu@gmail.com

doc. T. Litovkina, Anna, PhD.
J. Selye University
Faculty of Education
Department of Modern Philology
Bratislavská cesta 3322
SK–94501 Komárno
e-mail: litovkin@terrasoft.hu

Dr. Matovac, Darko
University of Zadar
Department of Croatian and Slavic Studies
Obala kralja Petra Krešimira IV. 2
HR–23000 Zadar
e-mail: darko.matovac@gmail.com

Bc. Mikusová, Melinda
Proletárska ulica 47
SK-925 01 Matúškovo
e-mail: melinda.mikusova@gmail.com

Molnar, Draženka, PhD.
University of J. J. Strossmayer
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
HR–Osijek 31000
e-mail: drazenka.molnar@gmail.com

PaedDr. Puskás, Andrea, PhD.
J. Selye University
Faculty of Education
Department of Modern Philology
Bratislavská cesta 3322
SK–94501 Komárno
e-mail: puskas.andrea@selyeuni.sk

Mgr. Zolczer, Peter
J. Selye University
Faculty of Education
Department of Modern Philology
Bratislavská cesta 3322
SK–94501 Komárno
e-mail: zolczer.peter@selyeuni.sk

LINGUISTICS TEXTBOOK SERIES 162.

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FEMALE IDENTITY IN FEMINIST ADAPTATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE

TINTA KÖNYVKIADÓ