

Lecture abstracts

Jokes about animals. Cross-cultural study

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

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

Suggested reading:

- Leach, E. (1966). Anthropological aspects of language: Animal categories and verbal abuse. In E. H. Lenneberg (Ed.), *New directions in the study of language* (pp. 23-63). Cambridge, MA: M. I. T. Press.
- Lefcourt, H. M. (1996). Perspective-taking humor and authoritarianism as predictors of anthropocentrism. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 9, 61-75.

Cognitive construals in Jokes - Visual logical mechanisms

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

Suggested reading:

- Attardo, S. (2001). *Humorous texts: A semantic and pragmatic analysis*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Chlopicki, W. (2001). Humorous and non-humorous stories: Are there differences in frame-based reception? *Stylistyka (Style and Humour)*, 10, 59-78.
- Chlopicki, W. (2006). Humour and cognition: Dynamics of characters and events. In P. Chruszczewski (Ed.), *Język a komunikacja: Vol. 10. At the crossroads of linguistic sciences* (pp. 331-347). Kraków,

Poland: Tertium.

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

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

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

Suggested reading:

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

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

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

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

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

Suggested reading:

Bing, J., & Heller, D. (2003). How many lesbians does it take to screw in a light bulb? *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 16, 157-182.

Cotterill, P. (1996). It's only a joke: The role of humour in mother-in-law relationships. In G. E. C. Paton, C. Powell, & S. Wagg (Eds.), *The social faces of humour* (pp. 193-217). Aldershot, UK: Arena.

Davies, C. (1990). An explanation of Jewish jokes about Jewish women *Humor: International Journal*

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

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

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

Suggested reading:

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

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

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

Laineste, L. (2006). Targets in Estonian jokes within the theory of ethnic humour (Ch. Davies) *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 29, 7-24. [http://folklore.ee/Folklore/vol 29/ davies.pdf](http://folklore.ee/Folklore/vol%2029/davies.pdf).

Nasty humour as great literature

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

Suggested reading:

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

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

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

Mark Twain and the complexities of American humor

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

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

Suggested reading:

- Cox, J.M. (1966). *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Lynn, K.S. (1960). *Mark Twain and Southwestern Humor*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Budd, L.J. "Mark Twain: The Ecstasy of Humor." *Quarry Farm Papers: An Occasional Publication of the Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies* 1995.
- Budd, L.J. (2005). Mark Twain's Visual Humor. In P. Messent & L.J. Budd (eds.), *A Companion to Mark Twain*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 469-84.
- Nickels, C.C. (2005). Mark Twain and Post-Civil War Humor. In P. Messent & L.J. Budd (eds.), *A Companion to Mark Twain*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 485-99.
- Camfield, G. (2005). Mark Twain and Amiable Humor. In P. Messent & L.J. Budd (eds.), *A Companion to Mark Twain*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 500-12.
- Michelson, B. (2005). Mark Twain and the Enigmas of Wit. In P. Messent & L.J. Budd (eds.), *A Companion to Mark Twain*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 514-29.

National humor - A critical perspective

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

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

Suggested reading:

- Boskin, J. (1997). History and Humor. In J. Boskin (ed.), *The Humor Prism in 20th-Century America*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 17-27.
- Cox, S.S. (Apr 1875) "American Humor." *Harper's Monthly*, 690-701.
- Goldstein, J.H. (1977). Cross Cultural Researcher: Humor Here and There. In A.J. Chapman, H.C. Foot (eds.), *It's a Funny Thing, Humor*. London: Pergamon Press, 167-74.
- Johnston, C. (Feb. 1901). The Essence of American Humor. *Atlantic Monthly* 87:520, 195-202.
- Kuipers, G. *Good Humor, Bad Taste: A Sociology of the Joke*. Humor Research. Berlin New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006.

- Rourke, C. (1931). *American Humor: A Study of the National Character*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Shultz, T.R. (1977). A Cross Cultural Study of the Structure of Humor. In A.J. Chapman, H.C. Foot (eds.), *It's a Funny Thing, Humor*. London: Pergamon Press, 175-9.
- Ziv, A. (1988). *National Styles of Humor*. New York: Greenwood Press.

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

The lecture aims to examine briefly the following subtopics:

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

Suggested reading:

- Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Başgöz, İ., & Bertev N. B. (1998). *I, Hoca, Nasreddin, never shall I die. A thematic analysis of Hoca stories*. Indiana: Indiana University Turkish Studies Series.
- Krikmann, A. (2008). "ATU jokes": *Old and abandoned*. ISHS 20th Annual Conference. Alcalá de Henares (Spain). July 7-11, 2008;
http://www.folklore.ee/~kriku/HUUMOR/KRIKMANN_ATU_ready.pdf
- Krikmann, A. (2010). *Tales about Hodja Nasreddin*. Conference "From Language to Mind IV". Elva (Estonia), September 16, 2010;
http://www.folklore.ee/~kriku/TRANSPORT/KRIKU_Nasreddin_Elva2010.ppt
- Oring, E. (1989). Between jokes and tales: On the nature of punch lines. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 2, 349-364.

Humor as a neutralizing metarelation

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

Suggested reading:

- Bateson, G. (2000/1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Kant, I. (2007/1790). *Critique of judgement*. New York, NY: Cosimo Classics.

- Kozintsev, A. (2010). *The mirror of laughter*. London, UK: Transaction.
- Zahavi, D. (1999). *Self-awareness and alterity: A phenomenological investigation* (pp. 14-21). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Is seriousness the opposite of laughter?

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

Suggested reading:

- Bahtin, M. (1995/1965). *François Rabelais – keskiajan ja renessanssin nauru* (Tvoršestvo Fransua Rable i narodnaja kultura srednevekovja i renessansa.). Taifuuni, Finland. Helsinki.
- Descartes, R. (2005/1649). *Sielun liikutukset* (Les passions de l'âme.) Suom. Timo Kaitaro. Teokset IV. Helsinki, Finland: Gaudeamus.
- Lotman, J. (1989/1973). Elokuvan semiotiikkaa ja elokuvaestetiikan ongelmia. (Semiotika kino in problemy kinoestetiki.) In J. Lotman, *Merkkien maailma. Kirjoitelmia semiotikasta*. Helsinki, Finland: SN-kirjat OY.
- Lihatšev, D. (1994). Johdatus nauruun. Reunamerkitöjä venäläisyydestä. (Smeh v drevnei rusi.) Pietari-säätiön julkaisuja 1. Pieksämäki.
- Lockyer, S. & Pickering, M. (Eds.). (2005/2009). *Beyond a joke. The limits of humour*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Prado, C. G. (1995). Why analysis of humor seems funny. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 8, 155-166.

Approaches to analysing contemporary stand-up comedy

From its roots in American vaudeville and British music hall stand-up comedy has grown into a huge industry that includes an array of comedy clubs, multi-date arena-style tours, and an increasing number of television and radio programmes. In this lecture we explore the historical and social development of stand-up comedy. We consider the wider social and political roles and functions fulfilled by a range of stand-up comedians from Richard Pryor through to Shazia Mirza. Although as an art form stand-up comedy is hugely popular, little research exists that explains how we can analyse stand-up comedy, so the final part of the lecture considers how stand-up comedy can be analysed by adopting techniques and tools used in drama and theatre studies, sociology and humour studies.

Suggested reading:

- Double, O. (1997). *Stand-up!: On being a comedian*. London, UK: Methuen.
- Gilbert, J. R. (1997). Performing marginality: Comedy, identity, and culture critique. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 17, 317-330.
- Limon, J. (2000). *Stand-up comedy in theory, or, abjection in America*. London, UK: Duke University Press.
- Mintz, L. E. (1985). Stand-up comedy as social and cultural mediation. *American Quarterly*, 37, 71-80.
- Paton, G. (1988). The comedian as portrayer of social morality. In C. Powell, & G. Paton (Eds.) *Humour in society: Resistance and control* (pp. 206-233). London, UK: Macmillan.

Contemporary television comedy and social class

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

Suggested reading:

- Butsch, R. (2003). Ralph, Fred, Archie, and Homer: Why television keeps re-creating the white male working-class buffoon. In G. Dines, & J. M. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, race and class in media: A text-reader* (2nd ed., pp. 575-585). London, UK: Sage.
- Butsch, R., & Glennon, L. (1983). Social class frequency trends in domestic situation comedy 1946-1978. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 27, 77-81.
- Lockyer, S. (2010). Chavs and chav-nots: Social class in Little Britain. In S. Lockyer (Ed.), *Reading Little Britain: Comedy matters on contemporary television* (pp. 95-109). London, UK: I.B. Tauris.
- Medhurst, A. (2007). *A national joke: Popular comedy and English cultural identities*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 9: Bermuda My Arse: Class, culture and 'The Royle Family', pp. 144-158).
- Senzani, A. (2010). Class and gender as a laughing matter? The case of *Roseanne*. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 23, 229-253.
- Wagg, S. (1998). "At ease, corporal": Social class and the situation comedy in British television, from the 1950s to the 1990s. In Wagg, S. (Ed.), *Because I tell a joke or two: Comedy, politics and social difference* (pp. 1-31). London, UK: Routledge.

Humor as play, laughter as play signal

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

Suggested reading:

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

The ethics of humor

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

mindedness, seeing oneself objectively rather than egocentrically, patience, tolerance, graciousness, and courage.

Suggested reading:

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

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

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

Suggested reading:

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

Comic wisdom: The affinity between humor and philosophy

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

Suggested reading:

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

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

Funny business: The benefits of humor at work

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

Suggested reading:

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

Can laughter make us happier?

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

Suggested reading:

- Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. E. (2003). Personality, culture, and subjective well-being: Emotional and cognitive evaluations of life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 403-425.
- Kuppens, P., Realo, A., & Diener, E. (2008). The role of positive and negative emotions in life satisfaction judgment across nations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 66-75.
- Oswald, A. J., & Wu, S. (2010). Objective confirmation of subjective measures of human well-being: Evidence from the U.S.A. *Science*, 327, 576-579.
- Ruch, W., Proyer, R. T., & Weber, M. (2010). Humor as a character strength among the elderly: Empirical findings on age-related changes and its contribution to satisfaction with life. *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, 43, 13-18.

An overview of humour research

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

Suggested reading:

- Chapman, A. J., & Foot, H. C. (1976/1996). (Eds.). *Humor and laughter: Theory, research and applications*. London, UK: Transaction Publishers.
- Martin, R. (2007). *The psychology of humour: An integrative approach*. London, UK: Elsevier Academic Press.
- McGhee, P. E., & Goldstein, J. (Eds.) (1983). *Handbook of humor research*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Morreall, J. (1987). (Ed.). *The philosophy of laughter and humour*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Raskin, V. (2008). (Ed.). *The primer of humor research*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

Incongruity and its resolution

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

Suggested reading:

- Attardo, S. (1997). The semantic foundations of cognitive theories of humor. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 3, 395-420.
- Oring, E. (2003). *Engaging humor*. Urbana, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Ritchie, G. (2009). Variants of incongruity resolution. *Journal of Literary Theory*, 3, 313-332.
- Suls, J. (1972). A two-stage model for the appreciation of jokes and cartoons: an information-processing analysis. In J. Goldstein, & P. McGhee (Eds.), *The psychology of humor* (pp. 81-100). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Build your own jokes

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

Suggested reading:

- Hulstijn, J., & Nijholt, A. (1996). *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Computational Humor. Twente Workshops on Language Technology 12*. Enschede, The Netherlands: University of Twente.
- Mihalcea, R., & Pulman, S. (2007). *Characterizing humour: An exploration of features in humorous texts*. Proceedings of the Conference on Computational Linguistics and Intelligent Text Processing (CICLing). Mexico City, Mexico: Springer.
- Mihalcea, R., & Strapparava, C. (2006). Learning to laugh (automatically): Computational models for humor recognition. *Journal of Computational Intelligence* 22, 126-142.
- Manurung, R., Ritchie, G., Pain, H., Waller, A., O'Mara, D., & Black, R. (2008). The construction of a pun generator for language skills development. *Applied Artificial Intelligence*, 22, 841-869.
- Ritchie, G. (2004). *The linguistic analysis of jokes*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Stock, O., Strapparava, C., & Nijholt, A. (2002). *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Computational Humor (TWLT14)*. Enschede, The Netherlands: University of Twente.

Correlation and significance: The basic concepts

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

Suggested reading:

- Graham, A. (2010). *Understand statistics. (Teach Yourself Series)*. London, UK: Hodder. [This is an extremely elementary introduction to probability and basic statistical ideas.]
- Howitt, D., & Cramer, D. (2010). *Introduction to statistics in psychology*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education. [A standard student textbook now in its 5th edition. Not just for psychologists.]
- Siegel, S., & Castellan, N. J. (1988). *Nonparametric statistics for the behavioural sciences*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. [A more advanced, and quite thorough, textbook, providing a wider range of types of test.]

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

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

Action Units (AUs) relevant for smiling and laughter: AU6 (“Cheek raiser & Lid compressor”), AU12 (“Lip Corner Puller”), AU13 (“Sharp Lip Puller”), AU14 (“Dimpler”), AU20 (“Lip Stretcher”), AU25 (“Lips part”), and AU26 (“Jaw drop”) and the ones relevant for emotions. For the workshop make sure to bring a small mirror with you

Suggested* and further reading:

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

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

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

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

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

Suggested* and further reading:

Martin, R. A. (2007). *The psychology of humor: An integrative approach*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press.

Ruch, W. (2004). Humor. In C. P. Peterson & M. E. P. Seligman (Eds.), *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook of classification* (pp. 583-598). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Ruch, W. (2007) (Ed.). *The sense of humor: Explorations of a personality characteristic*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

Ruch, W. (2008). The psychology of humor. In V. Raskin (Ed.), *A primer of humor* (pp. 17-100). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

Positive Psychology and humour: A good match?

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

2010), and b) the link between humour and virtue/vice (Beermann & Ruch, 2009; Morreall, 2010; Müller & Ruch, 2011).

Suggested* and further reading:

- Morreall, J. (2010). Comic vices and comic virtues. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 23, 1-26.
- Müller, L., & Ruch, W. (2011). *Humor and the good character: A validation study of the VIA-IS humor scale. Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6.
- * Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Peterson, C., Ruch, W., Beermann, U., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2007). Strengths of character, orientation to happiness, and life satisfaction. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 2, 149-156.
- Ruch, W., Proyer, R. T., & Weber, M. (2010). Humor as character strength among the elderly: Empirical findings on age-related changes and its contribution to satisfaction with life. *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, 43, 13-18.

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

There is increasing evidence that both structure and content contribute to the liking of humour and hence modern tests of humour appreciation (EUHA: Carretero-Dios, Pérez, & Buéla-Casal, 2010; 3WD by Ruch, 1992) contain both content and structure dominated scales. However, taxonomies of jokes and cartoons so far have not systematically applied a bimodal classification by, for example, combining the structure categories (e.g., incongruity-resolution humour, nonsense humour) with contents (beyond sexual humour, e.g., aggressive, scatological, black, female or male put down humour). The rationale for studying the relationship between individual differences in humour appreciation and general personality traits (or more appreciation of aesthetics) will be outlined referring to pertinent theories (Berlyne, Suls, Rothbarth & Pien, Wilson, Zuckerman) will be outlined and a review of the key classic studies as well as recent developments (Carretero-Dios, & Ruch, 2010; Ruch, & Malcherek, 2009; Savary, 2011) will be offered. Thus unit will show that appreciation of humour is strongly rooted in one's personality and best understood and predicted by an individual's general stance towards aesthetics. Liking of humour structure is particularly reflecting the degree of seeking vs. avoiding of stimulus uncertainty (vs. redundancy). Appreciation of humour content, however, seems to be best and positively (!) related by the individual's attitude towards the topic. This is why humour appreciation may well be used as an objective indicator of one's personality but is not a golden road to the unconscious or repressed conflict areas.

Suggested and further reading:

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

What is humour? Etymology and taxonomic studies

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

Suggested and further reading:

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

Professional humour – Comedians and their part in humour studies

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

Suggested reading:

- Lewis, P. (2006). *Cracking up: American humor in a time of conflict*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lockyer, S. and Pickering, M. (2005). *Beyond a joke: The limits of humour*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.
- Paton, G. E. C. (1988). The Comedian as portrayer of social morality. In C. Powell, & G. Paton (Eds.), *Humour in society: Resistance and control* (pp. 206-233). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Raskin, V. (Ed.). (2008). *The primer of humor research*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter (esp. Kuipers, pp. 361-399 and Mintz, pp. 281-302).
- Stebbins, R. A. (1993). Social roles of the stand-up comic. *Canadian Theatre Review*, 77, 4-7.

EXTRA LECTURES:

Jokes about Stalin in the Light of the Metasemantic Theory of Humor

Taught by Alexander Kozintsev (Saturday, 9:30 – 10:30)

The lecture, based on two recent collections of Stalin jokes, explores these texts from the standpoint of humor theory. The principal feature distinguishing most of them from satire is that they do not mock their ostensible target. Rather than expressing any relation to reality, they mock all the stupid ways reality can be represented. Viewed from the metalevel, these jokes are parodic in the broadest sense, which includes self-parody. They ridicule not only the official view of reality, but any other views of it as well, including the satirical view. The basic principle underlying these and all other jokes is the clash between the author and the intellectually inferior implicit narrator, who is the principal target of the jokes. As a result, the relevance of Stalin jokes for reconstructing either Soviet reality or people's attitude to it is minimal, whereas their relevance for humor theory is considerable, since they highlight the contrast between satire and humor, specifically black humor.

Suggested reading:

- Arkhipova, A.S. & Melnichenko, M.A. (2009). *Anekdoty o Staline: Teksty, kommentarii, issledovaniya* [Stalin jokes: texts, commentary, and analysis]. Moscow : OGI.
- Kozintsev, A. (2010). *The Mirror of Laughter*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction.
- Krikmann, A., Ed. (2004). *Netinalju Stalinist. Internet-anekdoty o Staline* [Internet jokes about Stalin]. Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum ja koostaja.

Dialect and Humor in American Literature and Culture: An Uneasy Relationship

Taught by Holger Kersten (Tuesday 12:00 – 13:00)

Among the many ways of creating humor, the manipulation of language is one of the most often used and most powerful techniques. The spectrum encompasses simple formal devices (repetition, stuttering), language errors (malapropisms, mispronunciation), and varying degrees of language play (wordplay, double entendre, puns). One of the more complex applications of language for humorous purposes is the usage of a nonstandard language as the main vehicle for conveying narrative or poetic material.

In the United States, the second half of the nineteenth century was a time that was particularly rich in the production of a wide variety of humorous dialect materials published in pamphlets, in collections of dialect poetry, and produced for theatrical performances. The deviations from the standard language took the form of regional varieties of English spoken in the United States and of the kind of language associated with various ethnic groups in the country. It was in this manner that the speech of African Americans, Irish Americans, and German Americans (among others) became prominent vehicles for the expression and presentation of language-based humor.

Although it was a tremendously popular phenomenon, dialect humor has received only limited scholarly attention, mostly because the use of dialect writing has often been regarded as a problem: More often than not, it has been equated with harmful stereotyping and racist denigrations of minority groups. By providing an overview of the rich tradition of dialect writing in American culture and by placing it within its proper cultural context, this lecture attempts to show that the unconventional syntax, the mixed metaphors, and the thought-dissociations were not a sign of cultural inferiority but a very successful means of creating humorous entertainment for large audiences. Moreover, with the flexibility of their imaginative linguistic forms they offered alternatives to the sounds, the rhythms, and the logic of the conventional language and thus opened paths for new and different kinds of aesthetic experiences.

Suggested reading:

- Apte, Mahadev L. "Dialect Humor." *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Ed. R. E. Asher. 10 vols. Oxford, etc.: Pergamon Press, 1994. 907-8.
- Boskin, Joseph, and Joseph Dorinson. "Ethnic Humor: Subversion and Survival." *American Humor*. Ed. Arthur Power Dudden. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. 97-117.
- Harris, Trudier. "Speech and Dialect." *The Oxford Companion to African American Literature*. Eds. William L. Andrews, Frances Smith Foster, and Trudier Harris. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. 687-90.

- Ives, Sumner. "A Theory of Literary Dialect." *A Various Language: Perspectives on American Dialects*. Eds. Juanita V. Williamson, and Virginia M. Burke. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971. 145-77.
- Jones, Gavin. *Strange Talk: The Politics of Dialect Literature in Gilded Age America*. Berkeley, Calif.: U of California Press, 1999.
- Kersten, Holger. "Culture Wrapped in Broken Speech: 'Hans Breitmann's' Humorous Achievement." *Essays in Arts and Sciences XXVII* (Oct. 1998): 37-52.
- , "Sentimental Communication in Disguise: Yawcob Strauss's German Dialect Humor." *Thalia: Studies in Literary Humor XVII.1&2* (1997): 21-35.
- , "Using the Immigrant's Voice: Humor and Pathos in Nineteenth Century 'Dutch' Dialect Texts." *MELUS: The Journal of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 21.4 (1996): 3-17.
- , "William Henry Drummond and American Dialect Poetry." *Informal Empire? Cultural Relations Between Canada, the United States and Europe*. Eds. Peter Easingwood, Konrad Groß, and Hartmut Lutz. Kiel: I&F Verlag, 1998. 149-167.
- Krapp, George Philip. "The Psychology of Dialect Writing." *A Various Language: Perspectives on American Dialects*. Eds. Juanita V. Virginia M., and Virginia M. Burke. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971. 22-29.
- Nash, William R. "Dialect Poetry." *The Oxford Companion to African American Literature*. Eds. William L. Andrews, Frances Smith Foster, and Trudier Harris. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. 213-216.
- Winokur, Mark. *American Laughter: Immigrants, Ethnicity, and 1930s Hollywood Film Comedy*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.