
"Cognitive Processing" by Ulrike Willinger

According to a study known as "Cognitive Processing" conducted by Ulrike Willinger, a neurologist at the University of Vienna, it was found that those who appreciated dark humour were among those with high amounts of intelligence as well as having the greatest emotional stability. With this in mind, I should be able to classify the group who prefer dark humour over any other form of

Exploring the possible reasons behind the development of people's sense of humour. Famous philosophers such as Plato and Hobbes believed in the "Superiority Theory" which states that humour is at the expense of another's misfortune making us feel better than them. A popular supporter of this theory, Roger Scruton, states that our amusement is drawn from belittling of others. (Morreall 1987,168).

Another popular theory known as the "Relief Theory" proposed by Lord Shaftesbury in his essay titled "An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour" believes that humour is tension being released. Supported by Herbert Spencer in "On the Philosophy of Laughter", Spencer describes emotions as "nervous energy". Spencer believes that humans typically release these emotions in tiny muscular actions which lead to something greater such as clenching a fist before throwing a punch. However, laughter is an exception, simply being a form of release and does not lead to any particular action.

However, the most popular theory, known as the "Incongruity Theory", states that comedy is based on going against our typical expectations and patterns. Famous philosopher, Aristotle, while not directly references it, hints at this idea in "Rhetoric (3,2)". James Beattie, however, was the first to use the word incongruous when it came to describing humour in "Criticisms, Arranged in Alphabetical Order, Designed to Correct Improprieties of Speech and Writing"(1779). Immanuel Kant is most famous for his contribution to this theory, stating that humour essentially arises from our expectations falling short.

In more recent times, Peter McGraw(a behavioural scientist) and Caleb Warren (an assistant professor of marketing at the University of Arizona) , proposed the "Benign Violation Theory", which bears similarity to the "Incongruity Theory", stating that humour is basically a insignificant contradiction to our beliefs.

In the study produced by Nichole Force, a doctoral student in Psychology, "Humour as a weapon, shield and psychological slave.", Force makes references to terms such as "Gallow Humour", which is used by the oppressed minority to ridicule the mighty majority, and

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Schadenfreude (German), which is essentially the “Superiority Theory”, in order to form sustainable claims that humour is a form of coping mechanism in order to retaliate against that which we cannot control.

Renowned comedian, Steve Allen, stated “Tragedy plus time equals comedy.” in a Cosmopolitan magazine back in 1957. This can apply to both real time and hypothetical situations such as the Looney Tunes which has remained as one of the top cartoon producers.

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