HOW HUMOR WORKS, pII

Status Loss Theory as the logical basis of all forms of humor.

"Many theorists seem to confuse offering the necessary conditions for a response to count as humor with explaining why we find one thing funny rather than another. **This second question, what would be sufficient for an object to be found funny, is the Holy Grail of humor studies."**
-Aaron Smuts

"No single theory yet can explain the diverse forms and functions of humor and laughter."
-Gil Greengross & Jeffrey R. Miller

Ernest Garrett Jr.

In our first paper, we introduced the "Status Loss Theory" of humor, a concept that unites the findings of hundreds or even thousands of years of humor research and conceptions under a natural umbrella based on evolutionary psychology and the logic of our village-based social instincts. The paper cited several common sayings relating to jokes and humor and concluded with seven examples of classical types of humor and how the theory explained them, but this may be insufficient to compellingly establish the full explanatory power of the idea.

With that in mind, in this follow-up paper, we will go through a much more thorough list of different types of humor, including modern and older examples of humor, describing what makes them work and how the theory applies to them, and also demonstrate some other useful applications that come from the idea, including explaining far more, possibly all, of our common sayings about the topic.

The point here is to go beyond *claiming* that the theory is the most expansive basis for humor studies, by *showing* it, as well as hopefully to provide a feel for how the idea works to help understand humor in general and even function to *create* and *improve* jokes.

All of this is or was far beyond the scope of basically the entire volume of humor theory that currently exists, and can be done here in clear and simple terms, using only our core concept and informal equation, without the need for large amounts of additional jargon or even complex language.

As a brief review, the Status Loss Theory states that humor and humorous laughter developed as a way for people to peacefully move each other down in status in their ancient village groups, since these villages benefited from having clear leaders, but *fighting* for leadership would only harm the most fit people there. The pleasure we feel is to reduce any chance of aggression at these moments, and the smile helps to show the same indication of peace to our peers. Its function, the way the brain determines when something is humorous, can be modeled as: $Humor = ((Quality_{expected} - Quality_{displayed}) * Noticeability * Validity) / Anxiety$.

While these variables probably can't be measured, their *ratio* and *relationships* are reflected extremely well in this informal equation format. We covered the basics of it here previously, but they should become clear again, and hopefully *more* clear, as we go through things.

Doge. There wasn't enough space to address this previously, but we can do so now. There may be multiple Doge memes, or multiple reasons other people may laugh, but the above are

three examples of Doge memes that made me personally laugh, and which could thus be investigated. The same is true of most of the other examples we'll use. They may each have other ways in which they are funny, and we are describing our own humor and what we found by investigating it using the theory.

Now, in regards to Doge, notice that the three above pictures all have something in common, which is that *Doge is in a position of respect or power,* and the captions are childishly describing the situation.

The humor here is that Doge, who writes (or thinks/speaks) so childishly, has not only *taken over* the respected human position in the picture, but seems to be *mocking* it, and in the process easily exposing the "lofty subtext" of it. The idea is that this supposed high-expectation human position has been conquered by a dumb animal, who not only understands it completely, but *is making fun of humans* for finding it so impressive.

Remember though, as stated in the previous paper, though it isn't believable that a dog would do these things, the *error* exposed by the meme or joke is what must be believable. Thus, *Doge's simplistic comments* should accurately reflect the subtext of whatever he's mocking.

With these things in mind, *it's easy to imagine and construct other Doge memes that would also be funny.* One example being Doge on stage at the Academy Awards, receiving an Oscar, with similar captions such as "wow, such accomplishment, much speech, so tears."

Plus, particularly, the *higher the position of respect he has, the funnier it seems to feel*, such as if the background graphic at the awards is for "Lifetime Achievement" or some other major award that Doge was receiving. There's also a classic form of humor that uses similar devices...

Clowns and Court Jesters. These are two of the most common types of "comedic character" in recent human history. These have actually been in practice for so long that they've been distilled to consistent, known conventions that are very functionally humorous and that we can easily see and analyze.

The first role of clowns or jesters is to make *fools of themselves*, particularly through dressing in bright mismatched colors that draw attention to themselves, along with bells or squeaking horns that make distinct noise and thus make them even more *noticeable* to their audience.

They also typically paint their faces sickly-pale colors, though they will include bright smiles and cheery demeanors to both lower any anxiety about their health, and make themselves seem more foolish for not being aware of their appearance.

But, *on top of that,* the Court Jester will typically mock and make fools of other people. The function here being that the victims of this treatment have their value lowered even *more* sharply, because such a foolish person could outthink them.

This device is nearly identical to Doge's foolish (and *also often* brightly-colored) comments exposing the supposed sophisticated subtext of traditionally high-class people and positions. Let's continue.

The Three Stooges. The first example here will specifically be the "high society" pie fight that you can see at youtube.com/watch?v=a4-spBDcJyk. This is an interesting case because the Three Stooges were known for being incredibly funny, but attempts to imitate their humor in the years since seem to have failed repeatedly.

This may be because people focus on the *violent* aspects of their humor and don't realize the *actual source* of the humor, which is, in fact, status loss, via quality gaps that the violence (or pies to the face) allow them to show.

In the case of the pie fight, you'll notice that Moe is trying to regale some women with stories of his world travels before he gets pied in the face mid-sentence, deflating the haughty image he was trying to put across.

The entire fancy party then descends into a much more humble, chaotic and childish pie fight. With other people getting hit in similar situations, like the woman who indignantly commands everyone to stop before getting nailed with her own pie to the face.

In addition, there's the traditional "slapstick" violence that the Stooges made famous, but which proved very difficult for others to recreate. This is because when Moe slaps Larry or Curly, it's pretty easy to see that he slaps them extremely hard, with heavy sound effects.

But the point here is *not* the *violence*, it's that the violence *shows* that the normally highly-intelligent Moe is *utterly flustered and defeated* by their stupidity (one quality gap to notice), and in hitting them so hard, shows that he *doesn't care in the least* about their feelings, their well-being or even any risk of retaliation.

This is a further quality gap shown in all three of them, Moe for being so flustered that he loses all empathy, Larry and Curly for accepting this treatment. Furthermore, Larry and Curly's non-violent acceptance of this insures low anxiety for viewers.

Clearly, as talented comedians, they (or their director) recognized or *felt correctly* that this was the point of what they were doing, and their dialogue, mannerisms and micro-expressions communicated it properly to the viewer's instincts.

You can even *see* the frustration in Moe's face in the above graphic. When this is done without this knowledge and proper performance, it's just pointless hitting that doesn't create humor.

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Silent Library. (youtube.com/watch?v=4NS0F9dKMjQ) This is a comedy game show in Japan, where six players hand out random painful-but-harmless punishments to each other in a library, and it's *very* successful, to the point of spawning many spin-offs. It became so due to some unique methods that can be explained through the humor equation.

First is the *setting*. Libraries are traditionally seen as places of intellectual study, and actually require silence amongst their users, and the game players also struggle not to make noise as they play.

Settings like this *greatly* heighten the "Quality Expectation" feeling in everyone, while also avoiding the anxiety that would be created in many viewers if they were playing at a funeral or hospital and potentially disrespecting grieving families or disrupting the care of hurt people.

In addition, the new punishment is revealed first, then handed out by mixing a series of face-down cards, with each player selecting one and then turning them all over at once to reveal who has the "punishment face" card.

This creates a *sharp* moment when all realize who'll be punished, where the brain can have the image of them suffering the punishment immediately, in the split second that the card is revealed, thus making the image of their suffering very *noticeable*, but *low anxiety*, since they are harmless things like having a nose hair tweezed.

Note also in the clip (the episode featuring kickboxer Ernesto Hoost, if the link is dead) that the background people in the library almost always remain silent and unbothered by the barely-restrained hijinks of the show's participants, insuring that there's no anxiety in viewers about the library's other patrons being disturbed, and even potentially creating a quality gap if the viewer notices how strange it is for them not to be aware of what's going on at the other table.

One may also notice that since the high "Quality Expectation" feeling comes from the setting and not the players themselves, this indicates that it can be an external feeling unrelated to what one's observing, similar to how a feeling of anxiety from one situation can stop a person from laughing at something else that would otherwise be funny.

Nitrous Oxide. This gas is typically used in medicine, particularly dentistry, to relieve pain, and also to relax the muscles and remove anxiety (due to a type of disconnection from reality). As

you probably know, this also is called "*laughing gas*," as it has the side effect of making the patient suddenly find *all kinds of things* to be *abnormally funny*.

The Status Loss Theory and its accompanying equation include the claim that the brain's urge to laugh at things scales in reverse proportion to the amount of anxiety the brain feels at the time. It's easy to see why Nitrous Oxide's relaxation and anti-anxiety effects could naturally cause this.

It may also be that the brain has a "button" that's triggered when the right humorous proportion is reached in something it sees, and Nitrous Oxide artificially hits this, causing the person to believe they're laughing at whatever's in front of them, or both.

But the "manically humorous" results of Nitrous Oxide's relaxation and anxiety-lowered effects are natural predictions of this theory. Note though that not every anxiety treatment increases humorous feelings, but some probably simply reduce anxiety to normal levels rather than push it below normal.

Impressions. Another classic form of humor that demonstrates some fundamental aspects of the theory. Most commonly, a great impression allows the audience to imagine the target of the impression doing or saying foolish or low-quality things, or simply exaggerate the person's natural mannerisms to a degree that they look highly unnatural and wrong.

Thus, one of the keys to a good impression is *accurately* matching the voice and innate mannerisms of the target, making it easier to imagine the target doing or saying those things, and thus creating higher *validity* for the audience's humor reaction.

On top of that, a good impressionist can study his subject and find certain aspects of their personality that might be odd or seem wrong in small ways, that they can exaggerate and thus draw attention to for the audience's enjoyment. But as said, everything springs from the natural mannerisms and voice of the subject.

In addition, the theory (via the equation) predicts that impressions will be more effective when targeted at people that have high expectations, like for example the President, or well-known actors that have strong or "tough guy" reputations which appears quite clearly to be true in reality. Combine that reputation with unique mannerisms ripe for exaggeration into absurdity, and you have a classic impression target like Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"Ball-busting." Also known as "ball-breaking." This is a common practice amongst friends, particularly in the Northeast United States in the last few decades, but reflects similar friendly mocking that is far older and a common part of social behavior.

The basic idea behind this type of humor is that the person says something to or about their friend that given their relationship would be extremely out-of-place and thus absurd to imagine (absurd, of course, meaning *very* wrong, which per our equation greatly aides in creating humor).

The *key* to this type of humor is a *strong relationship* between the friends. This causes a *high expectation* of how they treat and regard each other. From there, negative or insulting comments are presented in the context of showing how absurd it would be if the friends really meant it, given their well-established closeness and respect.

That closeness and the mildness of the insults (they may be exaggerated in degree, but they rarely are about anything that might actually hurt the person's feelings) also generally stops them from causing real offense. Thus, "ball-busting" and "friendly teasing" in general allow close buddies to share a unique type of pleasure.

Sarcasm. Similar to "ball-busting" in its large-scale popularity, especially in urban areas. Sarcasm actually works in a similar fashion as well, saying something that would be absurd if it was truly meant, given that the opposite is so obviously true.

Possibly due to other cultural reasons, most people who use sarcasm don't like to display emotion and speak very flatly. This hurts the *noticeability* of their statement's absurdity (since saying it with *conviction* would help push it into noticeably wrong territory), but it's made to work by exaggerating the *degree* to which the wrong statement is made.

So, instead of looking at a bad dancer and saying "he's pretty good!" with huge amounts of emotion in order to show a noticeably wrong scenario that people can laugh at from being able to easily imagine you actually meaning it, the sarcastic response is to have very little emotion, but to say "he's *the best dancer I've ever seen,"* which still goes so noticeably wrong that it can get laughs.

It should be noted too that in this case the *absurdity* comes from the sarcastic statement, but

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the *validity* comes largely from the error or low-quality of the thing that is being mocked or exposed by the sarcastic statement, making it a good demonstration of how aspects of the equation can be fulfilled by *different* things in the same observation, which nonetheless combine to create stronger humor. We'll bring up another example of that when we discuss song parodies below.

In the meantime, there's also an offshoot of this we should address, which we'll call "*damning by faint criticism*," where someone will try to be nice by responding to something *terribly* bad with only a *slight* indication that it might not be good (as in "well, it's not exactly the fastest car in the world"). This is often humorous or funny because the criticism is *so clearly not enough.*

Thus the idea of someone responding to something so totally bad with such a slight criticism is noticeably wrong and causes us to laugh, either due to them truly meaning their response (and thus displaying low-quality themselves), or them just trying to be polite, with us imagining for a moment that they really did mean that far-too-slight criticism.

These can also *layer*, which, as we've said, is extremely powerful. For example, if the same statement makes us aware of both the terribly bad quality in the thing AND of poor judgement in the person giving too-slight criticism, we'll laugh much harder. Now, speaking of criticism...

Baba Booey. This is a classic element of Howard Stern's radio show, which has run so long and produced so much humor that it could be the subject of an in-depth paper by itself. But here, we'll focus on a specific example, which is a key to the show's humor in multiple ways.

Stern has spent years getting laughs by mocking his producer Gary Dell'Abate's physical appearance and mistakes. But, similar to the Three Stooges, this is not about the insults by themselves, as most of the humor results from the way they occur.

First of which is that "Baba Booey" (a nickname coined from the way Gary mispronounced a cartoon character's name) himself accepts the mockery without much anger. Other people on the staff take the treatment the same way when they are mocked. Gary may argue about his mistake, but there's no implied threat in it, and it often only serves to allow Howard to defeat him in the argument and make him look even worse.

This lack of violent or angry response *keeps anxiety low* in listeners, as well as *displaying even lower quality* in Gary for not sticking up for himself. In the past though, Gary has become

genuinely upset by this and tried to threaten or angrily insult Howard back, and the result (at least to us) feels unfunny and uncomfortable (youtube.com/watch?v=dH0Q_zffyIk&t=5m12s), but he eventually settles back into the proper role.

It's clearly hard for most normal people to passively accept this kind of torture, even if they realize it's for comedy's sake, which is probably a large part of why the Stern Show's humor has been so difficult for others to emulate.

Let's also note here that mocking Gary repeatedly for the *same* things would get old quickly (since as we've said, expectations adjust downward as low quality is displayed, thus lowering the humor as one hears something multiple times), so Howard takes every opportunity to go after Gary when he makes new mistakes.

Furthermore, the insults and mockery that Howard uses against Gary are genuine criticisms of him and his shortcomings. This adds *validity.* Both Howard and Gary realize this also, as Howard himself has said that "the secret to my show is honesty," and Gary has stated "he doesn't want you to act mad, he wants you to BE mad." Though again, Gary does not show this anger in his responses. This is also referring to starting genuine arguments among his staff for the sake of better drama, but that's not a matter of humor so we won't go into it.

Let's add also that "song parodies," where lyrics of popular music are replaced by ones that mock someone, are a common part of Stern's humor. These combine the sense of *misplacement* (which, in line with what we've said previously, will work best when the new lyrics fit the song seamlessly), with trivializing the insult towards the victim.

This, depending on the listener, can come off as further lowering the victim, since a grave insult to them is being made so casually and publicly that it's being sung out loud without fear of consequences, or lowering the *singer,* if it comes off as him being so clueless about the nature of the insult that he sings it publicly with no awareness that there might be retaliation.

Both will work to create humor, and since the technique allows it to be combined with misplacement, it becomes doubly effective, and thus is a humor-device that Stern's show, and other shows, have used consistently for years. Now, since we've mentioned other shows...

Chappelle's Show. While not running as long as Stern's, Dave Chappelle's TV show was enormously successful in the limited number of seasons that it did exist. Chappelle also,

instinctively or purposefully, had comedy skits with heightened humor due to aspects similar to Stern's mockery of his employees, which as we've shown fit neatly with the Status Loss Theory's equation. The *lack of response* by a mocked person being one common example.

You can notice many examples of someone getting insulted in the skits, such as when his above "playa-hater" pimp character, Silky, gets insulted by other haters, and taking a moment to simply look down at themselves awkwardly without responding.

The example that springs quickest to mind being from, I believe, Season 1 Episode 9, when "Silky" gets insulted by "Buc Nasty" as played by Charlie Murphy, but these clips are nowhere I can find on Youtube. He does eventually insult them back, but not before milking a few moments doing what might be commonly called "standing there and looking stupid," to increase the humor of the insult.

It's well-known also that Chappelle did lots of ethnic humor, but actually left the show entirely, largely due to one incident where he was doing a black parody character and noticed someone on the set, who wasn't black, laughing in a way that made him very uncomfortable. We can actually use the Status Loss Theory to understand what happened.

The way Chappelle describes it, it seems pretty clear that he did these type of skits in the "imagine this being true and laugh at how absurd (*noticeably wrong*) it would be" vein, but he sensed from this person that they were laughing in a way that indicated they WERE taking it as true, and the low-quality the person was responding to in the skit was, to that person, not imaginary at all.

It may be that the anxiety Chappelle felt from this contributed to him not being able to enjoy his own show's humor anymore, but regardless, the anecdote demonstrates some of the important subtleties in our humor instinct, and how fragile it can be.

Straight Men. Most comedic teams, especially in older TV performances that we can study, use what's called a "Straight Man" for various effective purposes. These are easy to list within the theory. For one, Straight Men provide easy targets for the sillier character's mockery, and their very "straightness" creates the high expectation that is often undermined to create the humor. Also, someone acting "normal" in the routine adds to the *validity* of it for the audience.

As we've seen, many of the above examples also clearly use people who can be classed as Straight Men. But some repetition here and in other conventions we're discussing may help to establish the concepts. It also helps to occasionally couch things in more general principles.

Also, an aside that seems relevant: There's a joke that could be attempted here by starting this entry by "clarifying" that this isn't about a TV show with no gay characters, but it doesn't feel like the joke would work that well. We can apply Status Loss Theory and the equation to figure out why.

At first consideration, it probably came to mind because it *would* represent a pretty valid and noticeably wrong error, since we just discussed two other shows in a row, and thinking it's a program related to LGBT issues (particularly one that for some reason targets heterosexuals which would make little sense since most normal shows can be seen as doing that without

needing to point that out) would be way off the path from what we were *actually* discussing with the phrase.

However, it's difficult to phrase the "clarification" in a way that's short enough to be really effective (we'll explain that below when we discuss the phrase "*brevity is the soul of wit*"). Also, given that we made no reference to homophobia when discussing the "ball-busting" picture that contains "Die Homo" (we addressed why this type of humor isn't funny to many in the previous paper), there's a concern that a joke here about LGBT issues may come off as though we ourselves don't have a sensitivity to them, which would cause anxiety in many readers and thus also not be as funny.

Furthermore, I don't think the error is THAT unexpected, since a lot of people will know what a "Straight Man" is in comedy and feel that it could be misinterpreted already, so it'd be hard to get a real wide gap between the expectation there and the very wrong but believable error we're trying to quickly get people to imagine.

As we've thought about it now, simply saying "no, this isn't a homophobic TV show" would have much more brevity, probably enough to have gone for the joke. But the discussion of *why we originally didn't* is probably more useful given our paper's subject than a simple gag line.

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Funny Faces. Also known as "mugging," and used to great effect by comedians like Jim Carrey. Much like farts in the previous paper, there are many situations in which a simple facial expression can be funny, and we can discuss a few here.

For one, an unnatural facial expression is typically associated with bad acting, and when there's a close-up of an actor making an unnatural face (which is what "mugging" most often refers to), it becomes a double (or layered) quality-gap to notice, as not only does the actor look bad, but the director does too for putting the very wrong face front-and-center on camera, so people will laugh extra hard at it, and as a result most directors in serious movies won't risk doing extreme close-ups of emotional faces at all.

Obviously though, in the case of actors like Jim Carrey, you'll see close-ups of his faces in his comedies all the time, for the same reason that serious movies avoid them. Also, Carrey's highly-flexible face allows him to stretch any expression to the point that it noticeably becomes too much emotion, even if it was originally correct.

He can use this to make a fool of himself, as being overly emotionally effected by a mild moment seems to come off as a sign of low-quality or weakness in a person (which thus makes us laugh at some faces in real life as well), or to make a fool of others, using the exaggeration of his expression to mock the idea that he would really care, in a manner similar to the way sarcasm functions.

Most of Carrey's exaggerated expressions as the Riddler in Batman Forever were done in this vein. We'll focus more on this type of concept when we get to "Maniacal Laughter" in our later sections.

Slipping on Banana Peels. A classic type of humor, that we can touch on briefly. As we mentioned in the first paper, misplacement is the classic sign of mental error, and slipping is the classic sign of physical error, probably because it indicates both a lack of dexterity and a lack of visual awareness, as well as likely exposing both people who were too young and people who were too old to be attempting whatever physical feat they were trying.

For this to work well, the "slipper" must be someone who isn't of close association to the viewer (so there's no anxiety about them losing status or getting hurt, though if the slipper looks very hurt it may still cause anxiety in the viewer and thus kill the humor regardless of their relation).

It also will be funnier if the slipper is someone who has a high expectation (like a stuffy gentleman in a suit), though an awkward-enough fall can still be hilarious even if the person looked shaky to begin with, since it can surpass the type of fall one might expect.

Generally, this type of laugh seems outdated. Possibly because people no longer throw banana peels on the street, or this slip was only done as part of a popular comedy routine of many decades ago (we can probably look more into that), and doesn't really work because banana peels don't seem that slippery to begin with.

But regardless, anyone who's seen the popularity of "fail compilations" on Youtube knows that slipping in general *is* and probably *will be* a potential source of humor as long as humans exist.

Funny Music. We discussed song parodies above, but here we're referring specifically to instrumental music that nonetheless can get humorous laughter, such as "BrodyQuest" by Lemon Demon (youtube.com/watch?v=ygI-2F8ApUM).

The visuals in the video have a humorous element, but for the purposes of this example the music itself is all that matters. It seems to be a good illustration of how humor, despite often being stimulated verbal means, doesn't need language to function, and due to evolution probably developed before we had it.

In the case of BrodyQuest and a lot of other funny instrumental songs, the *type and tone* of instruments seems to play a key role. Here, the melody and a lot of the accents are of an abnormally high, and thus *immature* or *childish* tone.

You might note also that at various points the instruments interrupt each other slightly, giving a feeling that they aren't quite in harmony and are getting in each other's way. Overly-

enthusiastic pounding on the drums or strumming on the instruments can also give a feeling of childishness, eagerness to please (often a sign of low value), or improper amounts of emotion by the musicians.

When these are combined, one can enjoy the song while also unmistakably feeling some pleasure from the humorous things they're also sensing.

"Poo-Poo" and Butt Humor. It seems natural to move onto this here. This helps to illustrate how people of different ages tend to find different things funny also. Children won't notice a lot of more subtle adult errors, but the problems of potty-training, farts, and pooping oneself and so on are close to their experience, as well as highly noticeable in the sounds, smells, and dramatic incidents associated with them.

Moving out of diapers and learning to control one's bodily-functions is also a large part of their transition away from being toddlers (by contrast, adults are past these problems and thus find references to these errors to be hard to imagine as actually happening, and as such have low *validity*). Thus, the signs of low-quality that children most-readily recognize and respond to would naturally be butt and toilet-centric things.

Public references to private bodily functions are also probably among the first ways children learn to break or disrespect social convention. And disrespecting social convention is also a convenient way to demonstrate layered humor, with potential quality gaps shown in either the self (of the "imagine how wrong it would be if I meant this" variety), or in other people (by happily offending them without any acknowledgement of consequences). Thus, children naturally would love to joke about butts and what comes from them.

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Unfunniness.

That's probably enough examples to demonstrate the basic functions of the humor equation in things that cause humorous laughter. Let's move on and discuss a few examples of things that are NOT funny, and the reasons why.

Bullying. It's probably clear by now that the anxiety created by seeing someone legitimately threatened or frightened would render bullying largely unfunny to a viewer. But it's also worth pointing out that the "Quality Gap" comes into play here, further reducing any potential humor.

This is because "bullies" purposefully pick on people who they think are weaker than them. Thus, as an observer, assuming you feel the same way, there's no high "Quality Expectation" that's going to be violated. The "power balance" between the two is already what one expects.

On the other hand, bullies who find that their victims aren't as defenseless as they imagine, or who otherwise fail miserably, are ripe for laughter for the same reason. That course of events would violate the expectation of who has the strength or power in the situation.

Mainly though to detached observers, not those in the immediate vicinity who may have anxiety about whether the newly-embarrassed bully would get violent.

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Accounting Errors. This is a good contrasting example that's been brought up in earlier discussions of this idea. The question being why one does not automatically laugh if they're checking the numbers on a company's accounting and find something incorrect.

The key reason is that, while you *have* found a small sign of low-quality, your *Quality Expected* wasn't high. After all, if you *fully* expected already that the accounting would be perfect, you wouldn't have checked. For a thing to potentially be funny, it must violate something you've already *taken for granted.* In this case, you aren't taking for granted that the numbers are right, but you probably *are* taking for granted that the people could write like functional adults.

Thus, if you opened up the accounting books and found them *written in crayon* (this wouldn't be very believable but work with me here), *that* would be the type of thing that would violate something you were expecting and could potentially make you laugh.

That's provided of course, that you weren't in any grave trouble due to this (meaning low anxiety), you realized that accounting books *really* shouldn't be written in crayon (so it was noticeable) and that as we said, you believed that someone had actually really written the books that way (so it'd be valid). Note also though that weaker quality expectations can still be violated if something *very* wrong is found (in other words, if the quality noticed is low enough).

Literal-Mindedness. This refers to a type of thought process that causes people to rarely laugh, or have no apparent sense of humor. If someone is uncomfortable with social

interaction, they will feel uncommonly high amounts of anxiety in most conversations, which will kill their sense of humor.

But generally, "literal-mindedness" refers to an inability, for one reason or another, to recognize what other people will and won't normally say or think. They'll assume every statement is meant sincerely.

Therefore, when a person tries to "joke" by saying something obviously wrong or foolish in the "imagine if I meant this" vein, the literal-minded person doesn't have any expectation for what the other person will usually understand, and thus can't feel any difference. In terms of the equation, their "Qe" is essentially zero in those situations.

Note that *everything else may be in place*. They may find the person's statement to be wrong AND noticeable, and valid, and even feel no anxiety, but they won't laugh without a pre-defined expectation of what that person (or a person in general in that situation) should understand.

As long as that "Quality Expected," or Qe, is 0 in the equation, the result of the numerator (the top part of the fraction) will be 0 or negative, which means the fraction as a whole can't have a positive value (which, as stated in the original paper, is when things become humorous).

Another way to picture this is to imagine yourself pulling the string on a talking doll. The doll says the same thing over and over, which clearly is not what a normal person would do, and you aren't frightened of the doll or anything like that. But you didn't *expect anything better* of it. You didn't think the doll would be able to carry on a real conversation. So you don't laugh.

Lastly, these same "literal-minded" people who are dead-silent in normal joking conversation may become giddy with laughter if you discuss something that they do know, like in "Sheldon Cooper's" case, math. They will have an expectation for what the average person should understand (which for most real people will be unattainably high), and thus might laugh at any math-related question you try to ask. Thus, different people's knowledge bases and amount of social experience will effect their sense of humor.

"Sticks in the Mud." Also known as being humorless, stiff, stern, stodgy, or many other things. A chief example is Animal House's "Dean Wormer," seen above. A "Stick in the Mud" person is different from a "Literal Minded" one, in that they may deal with others all the time, as

Dean Wormer spoke to his students regularly. As such, they can know perfectly well when you're attempting to joke, but will just stare at you all the same.

Why? Well, in their case, their *anxiety* is triggered differently. The students in Animal House aren't worried about their education, but *Dean Wormer is*. To him, flunking out of school is a terrible thing for a young person, so he feels a level of seriousness, or associated anxiety, with the situation that the students don't.

The same seems quite true of many bosses, authority figures, "career-driven" people or others who have an uncommon amount of anxiety associated with errors or failure and thus seem humorless to others.

It might be good at this point to note that these types of concepts can be checked against one's own instincts. I find it easy to put myself in the place of the Dean, with those same types of thoughts about the joking students in front of me, and find myself just as unamused by their behavior. Hopefully you can do the same, if you haven't been doing so with the examples already. I find this to be the best way to investigate and verify these ideas, and this will especially come into play with our next example.

Bad Jokes. It's generally easier to investigate one's humor and figure out why something *does* make you laugh, but the Status Loss Theory can also be used, with some thought, to figure out why bad jokes fail and even improve them. We've shown a bit of how this can be done with already funny material earlier, but now will focus on a joke that's actively bad and see if we can salvage it.

Our patient in this case will be a joke I recall that actually won a "bad joke" contest on a cruise. Which is quite simply, "what kinds of beans do animals like? Human Beings!" "Beings" and "beans" are pronounced similarly. On the cruise, this won the contest because it was so generally poor that it allowed people to laugh at the joke teller, but we want to see if we can make the joke *itself* funny.

So what can we gather from looking at it now? Well for one, it's intended to be a short set-up for a pun. This means based on what we know already that the humor should come from sensing misplacement.

In those cases, there laughter is based on pre-set standards of what should go where, so we can't really raise expectations, nor is there any anxiety involved that would be lowering the humor, so we must instead focus on the other variables, making the misplacement as *valid* as we can while also being as *low a quality* (or wrong) and noticeable as we can muster.

In the case of the joke as it is currently, the pun attempt seems to fail for several reasons. First, it has validity problems. The statement itself is not *valid* even once you fix the intended misplacement.

Animals aren't known for liking "beans," nor are "animals" in general known for eating human beings. So if we're looking for an instinctive sign that someone has screwed up a normal course of events, we can't find it because we *can't sense any normal course*.

So what can we do to improve this? We have to make the initial statement closer to something that makes sense. In this case, we know animals aren't known for eating beans, so who is? Well, people are. Are there people who are known for eating people? Yes! *Cannibals.* So we'll replace "animals" with "cannibals."

Now, "human beings" still doesn't sound *that* close to "beans." And that "forced" feeling takes away from the validity of the misplacement, since we want the misplaced thing to have a lot in common with its surroundings, which in this case is something that might normally fill the end of that spot. So, is there an ACTUAL bean that might also sound like a body part? Yes. *Kidney beans*.

Finally, the best context I can think of to make this statement would be if you were actually telling someone an interesting factoid about cannibals. In that case, let's change the phrasing to sound more like that. Which gives us: "Did you know cannibals eat beans?" "Really?" "Yes. Kidney beans."

I can imagine that if you actually got someone to believe you were telling them something you'd read, then hit them with that, you could get a small but real laugh at the joke. Hopefully this demonstrates to some degree that this theory can be used to create as well as improve humor, which makes it unique from basically all previous theories on humor.

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Sayings.

Another unique property of Status Loss Theory is that, in addition to demonstrating a logical evolutionary purpose, it fits easily with our common understanding of humor, and particularly with a lot of sayings we associate with the subject, thus uniting the *theory* with our natural use and experience of it. We addressed several sayings in the previous paper, and can now continue to demonstrate by listing more.

"Brevity is the soul of wit." The best jokes and humor tend to spring from quick moments and short, sharp statements ("punchlines"). There are at least two logical and natural reasons for this within our theory.

For one, laughter results when the *brain itself* senses the quality-gap. Not when it's *told* there is one. Thus, a snapped off punchline that doesn't include too much information functions like the Mother Bird throwing her baby out of the nest to make it use its wings. It causes our brain, as the listener, to work for itself to make the final connection, and if in doing so, we feel the quality-gap in the right way, we laugh.

Secondly, and this is key to mockery, the *less one speaks, the less you seem to have worked to come up with the idea*. Therefore, if I respond to someone with a very quick statement that immediately exposes a weakness in what they said, it looks as though that weakness was very easy to see, and as a result, the target looks even worse for missing something so easy.

Combining these two has the dual effect of increasing the audience's likelihood of recognizing the error themselves, and further lowering the quality seen in the target, thus *greatly magnifying* the resulting humor.

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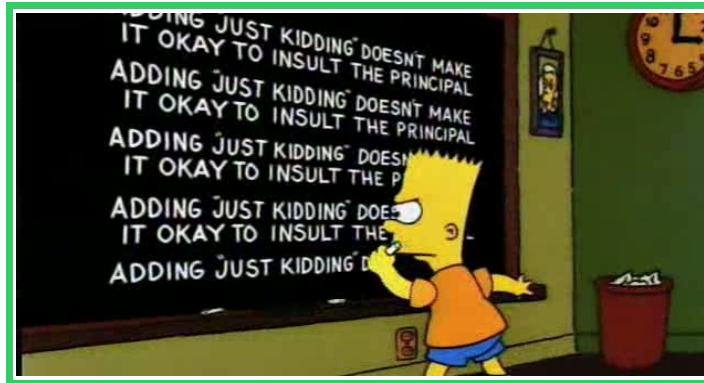
"I'm just joking." Stated in various ways. This is commonly said in response to someone getting angry at being mocked or playfully insulted. But our theory states that laughter primarily functions to *lower someone's status*, therefore, we do often laugh at other people's expense. Thus it would seem that the person's anger is justified. *So why would people claim to be joking as a sign that the person shouldn't be angry?*

Well, as we've said, there's a large branch of humor that revolves around saying things you don't really mean solely to allow people to laugh at the thought of it really being said. But beyond that, when people actually claim to be "just joking," or "just kidding," they're also referencing the *low anxiety* aspect of humor, and particularly how it is meant to peacefully establish the social order. So what they're identifying is that they themselves feel no anger or anxiety and intend no serious threat by what they said.

Of course, some people use this as an excuse to conceal actually angry insults or attempts to embarrass someone else outside of the context of exposing real errors that others will notice and agree upon. This is clearly what Bart was doing above.

"Quick-witted." A common compliment to someone's intellect. This generally refers to the person's ability to spot subtle errors and quickly find methods to expose them, especially ones that are subtle enough to make other people, who haven't yet seen it, realize the error themselves, but noticeable enough that they recognize that there's a joke in the first place.

Doing so without being forced or insulting also requires a good feel for people's social boundaries (or having familiar people around you). A "quick-witted" person has these things figured out, or can do so spontaneously in the right moment. In a similar vein...

"Comedic timing." In addition to using brevity well, "comedic timing" seems to be clearly a matter of recognizing moments where expectations reach the right height to be deflated by the right comment or action and thus create the most humor.

For example, a writer with good comedic timing would probably realize instinctively that it's funnier in a scene for a taxi cab to pass someone immediately after they step out with their hand-raised and reach for the cab's door, showing not just that they missed the cab, but that the person thought incorrectly that the cab was stopping for them.

In this case, if the cab passes too early, then the person hasn't shown that they expect the cab to come (so they themselves look less foolish and you lose that potential quality-gap for viewers). Thus, if it's necessary for the character to miss the cab, a natural sense of comedy and comedic timing would pick up on how and when to do it to add a laugh to the scene.

"Laughter is the best medicine." A classic saying, which comes from the observation that laughter releases pleasure chemicals in the brain. This fits naturally with the Status Loss Theory, which predicts logically that laughter causes smiles and pleasure to allow us to form social orders peacefully, with clear signals of no threat to each other, and feelings that lower our stress and aggression.

In addition, laughter is one of the few universal and natural ways to make someone feel those positive things. You can't say, for example, that ping-pong is the best medicine, because not everyone enjoys ping-pong. But laughter, and its inherent pleasurable effects, are hard-wired into all of our brains.

The phrase can also refer to using laughter to "get over" one's problems or distance themselves from them. As we've said, if a person feels too much anxiety they won't laugh, but once the anxiety lowers, a strong enough joke (as we show by the equation, a large enough numerator can overcome a large denominator) can cause you to laugh at the problem.

This works extremely well because it goes beyond someone else *telling us* that our problem isn't that big a deal, and instead, assuming the joke works, it causes our brain to *see this itself*. This comes from, as said, the natural way our humor instinct functions.

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"Ridicule is man's most potent weapon." This quote is from the political book "Rules for Radicals," but reflects many other sayings about the effectiveness of ridicule in discrediting one's enemies and dealing with irrationality. The book adds that "it's hard to counterattack ridicule," and that it may cause your enemies to become angry and thus be further discredited.

Naturally, since humor (and thus ridicule) is the in-born instinct that causes us to stop following a particular person or idea, it fits well as a tool in political battles. Especially because humor functions through independent verification by the other people who see the ridiculed thing.

Again, each brain that laughs observes the thing and makes its own connection, so *deceiving* other people into laughing is very difficult, and thus collective laughter is very likely to have

identified a real mistake.

It's difficult to counterattack this because there is no real argument offered by the laughter. It is only acknowledgement that people feel they've found something wrong. On top of this, the *low anxiety* that is also communicated by laughter and ridicule makes the person telling the joke come off as being non-violent and thus more socially acceptable, on top of being clever for having recognized the ridiculed thing in the first place.

An angry response by the ridicule's target will only show the opposite in him. Thus, a politician or politically-oriented person who is clever enough to use ridicule will reap many rewards.

"You had to be there." Most people have said this at some time. As we've said above about timing, these circumstances often depend on the *expectation* that existed at that moment, sometimes even due to micro-expressions that change our feelings in the situation without us even realizing it, and which we may leave out in later descriptions of the moment.

Let's use, for an example, "Afro Ninja," the classic viral video from which we took the above frames. (youtube.com/watch?v=BEtloGQxqQs) A huge part of the humor is the Ninja's oh-so-confident head-nod before he attempts a backflip and falls flat on his face.

The nod sets up a higher-expectation for him that increases the humor when he falls. Furthermore, he gets up immediately after, indicating that he's not seriously hurt, though he does attempt, awkwardly, to continue his martial arts routine while stumbling off the screen.

If someone had seen this in person and laughed, then described it later, they might focus on the face-plant on the ground, without mentioning the head nod and that he got right back up.

The listener may then picture something pretty brutal and see the storyteller as more of a jerk then anything else for laughing. Thus, these surrounding elements clearly can change moments, whether we know it at the time or not.

"I didn't see *that* coming." In the equation, there are multiple elements that, if highly-perceived, can play the main part in creating laughter (as long as the others aren't 0 and the anxiety isn't too high). It turns out that we actually have several sayings that describe situations where a particular part of the equation is the strongest contributor to the humor.

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In this case, "I didn't see that coming" refers to humor where high quality expectation (Qe) matters most, or in other words, when something violates our most base and unquestioned assumptions.

"It's just so wrong!" This phrase naturally indicates that the Quality Displayed (Qd) aspect of the equation is doing most of the heavy-lifting in causing the reaction. In this case, we may not have a particularly high expectation of what's going on, but what we see is so totally low-quality or incorrect that it causes huge laughter anyway.

A likely example of this is from the movie "I'm Gonna Git U Sucka," where a montage of 80's "inner-city" life is shown, followed by a car driving by in the background with a police boot still attached to the back tire, which is dragging on the ground and making sparks. Even after the previous montage, it's *so* wrong that it makes me laugh now just being reminded of it.

"It's funny because it's true." As you might have figured, this phrase identifies when *validity* is the most powerful aspect of the humor response. Observational comics, like Chris Rock (above) specialize in this type of humor, in which the "Quality Expectation" always comes from the real world and isn't manipulated or set-up beforehand as a fictional scenario where it can be knocked-down more easily.

The payoff for meeting this challenge is that any errors found come off as automatically highly valid to the audience. But by the same token, it doesn't offer any practice in making *fictional* scenarios come off believably. This explains why Chris Rock has always struggled a bit in skit or fictional comedy, from Saturday Night Live to his movie projects. But on-stage, he remains one of the greatest *observational* comics that's ever performed.

"I was in a silly mood." Generally, this reflects scenarios where someone's *anxiety* is at its lowest levels. On top of it, once we laugh at one thing, it seems that we become extra attuned to our environment and are expecting or looking for further funny things around us.

Furthermore, there's a noted "contagious" effect to laughter that can also cause someone in a group of laughing people to feel this way. Comedy Clubs are known to take advantage of this phenomenon by using solid walls that cause any laughter in the room to echo and thus sound more prominent.

The natural reason for this, within Status Loss Theory, is that signs of mass pleasure and non-

threat in a group would logically cause anyone there to instinctively feel less anxiety themselves, and thus laugh far more easily.
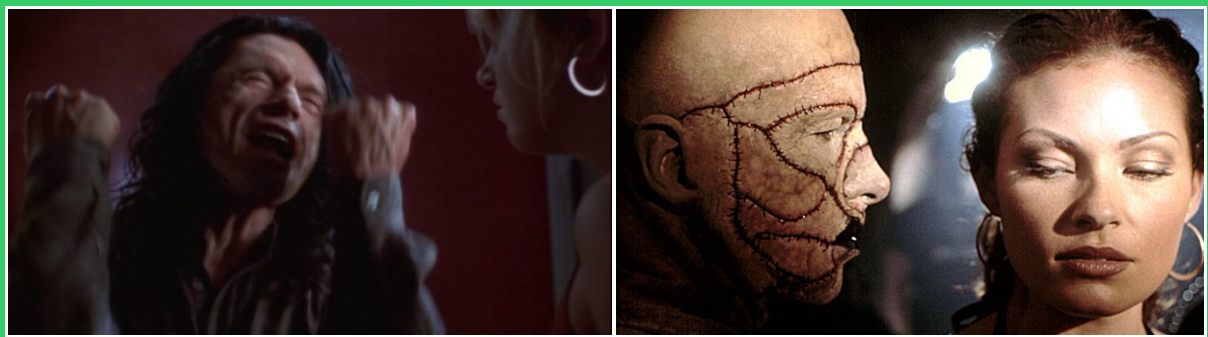
"It's so bad it's good." A common quality of cult films, but one that almost always occurs unintentionally, and is extremely difficult to do otherwise. The reason for this is a concept we outlined in the first paper, which is the four distinct types of humorous laughter (first person, second person, third person known and third-person unknown) which are often confused.

In a normal comedy, the humor is "third-person known," laughing at the movie characters. But in "so bad it's good," the laughter is actually *"second person,"* at the *director* for failing so miserably. Thus, nothing in these movies needs to actually work on its own, and actually, the less they work, the better, since we laugh at each new moment that falls gloriously flat.

Furthermore, there has to be *validity* in the terribleness of the movie for this to work. We have to feel, down to the tiniest things we observe (which is *much* more then we consciously realize) that the director *genuinely* tried and *doesn't know* how bad the movie is.

This probably makes it clear why it's so rare for this to actually occur, and also explains why purposefully bad "wink wink" movies (also known as "camp") fail very often.

You may have noticed in these above entries that the same ideas occur repeatedly. This is because the core idea of humor is not that complicated. The equation, *((Qe-Qd)NV) / A*, consists of only 5 variables, and any complexity only comes from confusions between the different types of laughter, and the many ways those variables show up in the things we notice.

This list should presumably help to demonstrate a lot of those ways, and we can move on.

Clarifications.

Here, we'll move outside of the various expressions of the humor equation and our humor instinct, and go into some surrounding issues, questions, and ramifications of it.

"Validity" vs. "Believability." In the earliest forms of the humor equation, we used the term "believability," but in the course of refining it, we realized that "believability" didn't actually describe the requirement well and it needed to be changed. Mainly because a lot of clearly funny humor triggers off of things that are not actually happening in reality, and instead require that the brain senses that they are errors that *could potentially* be made.

In a lot of cases of humor, this is identical to "believability," but the subtle difference matters most, and is probably easiest to explain, in the case of puns. In those, and in misplacement in general, the brain is *not* judging whether or not someone in front of us has genuinely made the misplacement it has observed. It already *assumes* that people are involved the moment it senses a pattern, and instead simply judges the degree of the misplacement.

If this degree is high enough, meaning the thing has a lot in common with where it is (creating the level of pattern expectation), but is still noticeably wrong, then the requirement is fulfilled (making it *valid)* and we laugh without any double-check as to whether a person actually did it.

Now, the reason for this, and what makes it *especially* interesting, is in what it reveals about the origins of our humor instinct, which is that it clearly evolved not only before language, but also *before we had higher brain functions* that allowed hypothetical scenarios or sophisticated deception.

Our humor instinct comes from a part of our brain that was evolutionarily programmed in a time where our intellect expressed itself in terms of "A," then "B", and get "C." Put the animal in the fire, wait until it smells good, then eat it. Grab the stick, hit the branch, and the fruit will fall.

In this time, any sequence of organization was done by another person for a clear purpose. Thus, the organized patterns we observed were all *already* attempts by our peers to get things done, and our brains needed only to check for *a disturbance in the pattern* to know already that someone screwed up. The need for the misplaced thing to have something in common with its surroundings is only our brain recognizing that there *is* a pattern in the first place.

Obviously as we've shown, a large portion of "modern" humor does involve hypothetical scenarios, but this aspect of our sense of misplacement indicates that those abstract imaginings connect to something much more basic in our instincts.

Why we aren't all violent psychopaths. Given that the Status Loss Theory proposes an evolutionary advantage to humor and laughter, based in *demoting* people's status, it may seem

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that anyone who is resistant to this demotion, particularly through displaying violent tendencies, would have an evolutionary advantage.

This would be because their violence would cause anxiety and nullify other people's urge to laugh at them. But that makes little sense, since laughter has been a core part of our social instincts for thousands of generations and yet we're not all hair-trigger lunatics. So what gives?

Well, the way things actually work out, the violent tendency that would protect one from laughter under this theory would actually not spread due to *other* factors. Mainly, that people with this violent temperament inevitably became outcasts from the social group. These people didn't reproduce and thus any gene that might have led to this trait was rarely passed on.

Why do comedians curse so damn much? Comedians have been associated with profane comments and jokes for a very long time. Some, like Andrew Dice Clay, have used it to great comedic effect, while in many other cases, curses seem to come off like a substitute for an actual good joke. What makes the difference?

It's in the meaning that people take from the profanity. When it creates laughs, (by itself), it's due to the *disrespect for social convention* that the comedian is showing. The expectation is that he won't act that way due to the social pressures from most of society, and by casually flouting that, he makes it look like a weak and meaningless barrier.

Take for example, one of Andrew Dice Clay's most famous dirty jokes, a nursery rhyme (youtube.com/watch?v=CFAnaixvZFY, NSFW). If you can't play it, it's *"Little Miss Muffet, sat on a tuffet, eating her curds and whey. Along came a spider who sat down beside her and said 'Hey, what's in the bowl, b***?'"* There's clearly no humor here other than the actual profanity, which serves as the punchline almost entirely by itself.

It should demonstrate clearly that the expectation of "clean language" here is heightened to the maximum by using the nursery rhyme form, followed by casually tossing that context, and all the social expectations associated with it, away at the end. The entire "character" of Andrew Dice Clay was based on disrespecting these conventions, including not starting his set when the audience expected it, and smoking, hacking and clearing his throat into the microphone.

Anyway, when it comes to this type of profane humor, one of the keys to the audience's appreciation of this is that they have *low anxiety* associated with the breaking of these

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conventions. People who feel the conventions are justified, perhaps due to being older, or who have children or are concerned about what children may hear and so on, likely feel much more anxiety in regards to these conventions being broken, and won't laugh nor appreciate it. The same can be true of gleeful farts, or "mooning" other people, and these similar signs of disrespect will be unappreciated by the same people who dislike profanity in comedy.

On the other hand, cursing is an easy thing to notice in a comedian's repertoire, and very easy for anyone else to do. Thus, you'll see many inexperienced or amateur comedians simply cursing up a storm without any real purpose to it. This obviously doesn't work, and comedians who do it well don't rely solely on it.

Lenny Bruce used his audience's acceptance of broken social convention to offer commentary on topics, like religion and race, that no one else would touch. Similarly, "Black Comedy" and "Roasting" now also play off the great amounts of humor that can be mined from otherwise anxious-topics, when people agree beforehand that those lines will be crossed without offense.

Andrew Dice Clay occasionally found insights into sex and similar topics that sprung from this acceptance, and also used his rare charisma to keep people entertained after the nursery rhymes were over.

Let's note further here that other quirks of humor, like "say a line once, it's funny, say it again, it's less funny, keep saying it, it's not funny, *keep saying it,* it becomes funny again," come from repetition of the joke eventually becoming a disrespect for the social convention that creates new humor. This hopefully further shows how the *context* in which we receive a line, even when it's exactly the same line said more than once, is key to the humor we feel from it.

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Maniacal Laughter. This is frequently used in storytelling to show the extreme evilness or derangement of a particular character. This is because, when it comes to humor and our social instincts, someone's laughter gives us clues about what does or doesn't cause them anxiety.

In the case of maniacal laughter, it will almost always come in a case where the villain has done or experienced something that causes extreme anxiety in normal people, such as hurting someone, or being in extreme pain themselves. When we see the villain laughing heartily at these moments, it indicates that his emotional circuitry is highly abnormal, and thus that he or she is dangerously insane.

The above image is from Alan Moore's Batman graphic novel *The Killing Joke.* It depicts the moment when the Joker emerges from falling into a chemical vat and discovers his own skin disfigurement for the first time. Rather than be horrified, he laughs voraciously, indicating his insanity in exactly this way.

Associative Laughter. There are many circumstances where we will laugh extra hard at seemingly slight things, even when there is no apparent joke to others, and beyond even what we might expect from just having very low anxiety (as discussed under "silly moods" above). There are several circumstances where this might occur.

First, in general, heavy laughter can sharpen one's awareness for low-quality things and thus make it easier for them to notice and laugh at other humor, similar to the way a bump in the night can sharpen your awareness of threatening things.

On top of that, once a comedian has established a sufficiently good reputation, the mere *knowledge* of them addressing another subject may make you start to laugh just from suddenly becoming aware that that subject was ripe for *that level* of humor. Simply being *among* the vulnerable subjects that that comedian mocks will lower that person or thing's status.

Lastly, there's the idea of "callbacks," where a simple phrase can remind us of a previously humorous moment or joke and make us laugh again. In these cases, the thing in question may have regained some status or quality expectation simply by us only hearing the joke once and having moved onto something else, and being reminded, even with a single word or phrase, of that previous joke makes us laugh again at the memory of the original joke.

If that "callback" is structured as a pun or well-done misplacement, we can have a layered result where we laugh even stronger. But eventually, our feeling of "Quality Expectation" (Qe) will adjust downward and our laughter will reduce to nothing.

As an aside, it may be good to note here that the moment after some good mockery, when we might sigh and make a comment like "what a moron," is the *exact result* of our expectations adjusting downward.

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Fake Laughter. A classic canard of the comedic co-host. Though often for them it's a necessity to help a show come off well, people engage in fake laughter in general as an attempt to partake in the surrounding positive social results of people sharing a sense of humor.

When two people find the same things funny, it indicates that several of their perspectives on the world are similar, particularly, what they expect to be high value, what they find to be low value or are aware is low value, the amount of subtlety that they can handle in what they notice, the types of things they feel are believable, and what does or doesn't make them feel anxiety.

Laughing at the same time as someone else, or at someone else's jokes, is a way of trying to represent or achieve this type of type of intellectual common ground with another person. It also can achieve closeness by demonstrating that you are no threat to the desired person or people, or that you feel no anger or threat from your own errors or jokes at your expense and thus are more socially acceptable.

In other circumstances, we may force out fake laughter when we feel nervous as a way of trying to lower the anxiety of a tense situation. Note though that this "nervous laughter" which occurs under high anxiety is, of course, not the real thing.

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Flirting with Humor. The same social closeness that can be sought through fake laughter is used just as often to demonstrate closeness with boys or girls that a person may find attractive. However, there are other aspects unique to demonstrations of humor that come into play in dating and romance.

For one, joking in very subtle manners can be a strong indication of one's knowledge and intellect to a potential mate. In addition, it is an introductory of giving pleasurable feelings to the other person, which can show a capability to give pleasure in other ways. Obviously of course also, as mentioned above, the ability to show low anxiety and threat to a girl is very important for a man who potentially wants to win her trust.

The above frame is from the romance film "The Notebook." I've never bothered to watch it, but it looks close enough. Let's finish this thing up.

Humor in Animals. As we mentioned in the previous paper, other species of ape, as well as even dogs and similar social animals with breath control also display various forms of laughter. The sense of humor in the other primates has been shown to be almost entirely based on slapstick (news.discovery.com/human/evolution/apes-laughter-humans-evolution-120920), which results from falls and other types of physical failure.

This is logical under the Status Loss Theory, since apes would obviously base their social orders primarily on physical fitness and thus demote each other mainly for physical failures.

Laughter in dogs has been found to occur during certain types of play with their masters and, appropriately enough, to have anxiety-reducing effects (psychologytoday.com/blog/canine-corner/200911/do-dogs-laugh). This likely indicates the properties of the humor instinct can extend beyond humans, and are thus a much deeper and inextricable part of our social instincts, our pleasure, and our lives.

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Hopefully, as originally stated, this paper established the far-reaching explanatory power of the Status Loss Theory of Humor. Perhaps also, it was able to lay the groundwork for the theory's function as a potential logical basis for investigating and understanding humor in all of its forms in the future. I imagine this could be extremely useful and uniquely important to this branch of social and evolutionary psychology.

If you enjoyed this paper, you can subscribe to youtube.com/storybrain, or message me with any questions at twitter.com/storybrain1. Thanks again.