

**NON-VERBAL INFLUENCES ON THE CREATION OF EXPECTATIONS
IN HUMAN COMMUNICATION**

БЕРНАРД СЫПНЕВСКИЙ (КЭМДЕН, США). ВЛИЯНИЕ НЕВЕРБАЛЬНОЙ СОСТАВЛЯЮЩЕЙ НА ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ОЖИДАНИЙ В КОММУНИКАЦИИ. В продолжение исследований, представленных в (Sypniewski 2010) и (Sypniewski 2012), данная статья рассматривает роль невербальных элементов в организации контекста коммуникации и влияние, которое контекст оказывает на формирование ожиданий у участников общения и на выбор способа дальнейшей коммуникации. В качестве примеров используются классические комические фильмы с участием братьев Маркс, Мела Брукса и Джина Уайлдера. Намеренная неудача в удовлетворении некоторых ожиданий аудитории и одновременное соответствие другим ожиданиям вызывают смех, как показано в работе (Sypniewski 2010). В каждом примере формирование ожиданий не может быть объяснено без исследования и оценки контекста и «фона», то есть, имеющегося у аудитории ожидаемого опыта по взаимодействию с окружающим миром. Этот опыт подвергается детальному анализу в данной статье.

Примеры рассматриваются как равнозначные взаимосвязи между актёрами, а также между некоторыми актёрами и зрительской аудиторией. Обсуждение взаимоотношений между авторами сценария и аудиторией не входит в задачи данной статьи. Тем не менее, анализируется двойная роль в *Animal Crackers*. Рассмотрена также возможность расширения применения понятия *места действия* в рамках «ЛИНГВИСТИКИ КАК ТОЧНОЙ НАУКИ»¹.

Ключевые слова: Лингвистика как точная наука, ожидания, юмор, контекст, опыт, равнозначные взаимосвязи, место действия, функциональная роль

¹ Hard-Science Linguistics – направление, основанное Виктором Ингве (Victor Yngve, 1920-2012) изучающее язык не как набор абстрактных объектов, а как процесс коммуникации между людьми (people communicating with other people), как коммуникативное поведение; см. также библиографический список – прим. редактора

Sypniewski Bernard (CAMDEN, USA) NON-VERBAL INFLUENCES ON THE CREATION OF EXPECTATIONS IN HUMAN COMMUNICATION. Continuing the work begun in (Sypniewski 2010) and (Sypniewski 2012), this paper examines the way that arranging the surroundings with certain non-verbal elements creates expectations in people which effects the way they communicate with each other. The examples given come from classical American humor sources: the Marx Brothers, Mel Brooks and Gene Wilder. As such, the intentional failure to satisfy some of the audience's expectations while satisfying others is designed to provoke laughter, as explained in (Sypniewski 2010). In each example, the creation of expectations cannot be explained without an examination and appreciation of the surroundings and the "background", i. e., the audience's expected experience with the real world. This real world experience is examined in detail.

The examples are treated as coordinated linkages among the actors themselves and between some of the actors and the audience viewing the movies. A discussion of the communication between the screen writers and the audience is beyond the scope of this paper. However, we discuss a double role part in *Animal Crackers*. We also discuss a possible extension to Hard Science Linguistics' notion of the *setting*.

Keywords: Hard Science Linguistics, expectations, humor, surroundings, experience, coordinated linkages, setting, role part

Introduction

When people communicate with each other, more than words are involved. There is an old saw that says that we cannot predict what someone else might say next. Evidence shows that this is not exactly so. When we communicate with our fellows we and they have expectations of what has been, is being, and might be said. We understand communications through our experience with the world. We communicate in a form of shorthand, not having to explain things which are "obvious" because of common experience. A quick way to bore people is to "beat a dead horse".

Most linguists do not consider the role of expectations and most schools of linguistics do not have any way to account for them in their studies. Hard Science Linguistics (HSL) treats expectations as a central part of its modeling of people communicating with other people. Expectations were introduced in (Yngve 1996: 263ff). I have begun my own study of expectations and related matters with (Sypniewski 2010) and (Sypniewski 2012). This paper continues that work.

Humor is fertile ground for the study of expectations. Humor is usually carefully constructed in such a way as to make expectations obvious and to make the satisfaction or failure to satisfy those expectations obvious after the fact¹. (Sypniewski 2010) looked at some simple jokes to demonstrate the mechanisms involved. This paper uses examples from two movies (one of which relies on a third movie as described below) to examine how a comedian, as defined in (Sypniewski 2010), can manipulate the audience's² expectations either by creating new expectations or by playing on already existing ones by using non-verbal clues prior to the use of verbal communication. Prior to entering into our discussion, we should distinguish between laughter and humor. Essentially, *laughter* is an involuntary behavior in response to some stimulus, in the case of the present discussion, humor, and *humor* is a behavior intended³ to provoke laughter in some person; see (Provine 2000 in passim).

Traditionally, linguistics concerns itself only with "language"⁴ and primarily with spoken language at the present time⁵. While many linguists examine texts which by definition have been made at some time in the past, these examinations are usually constrained by linguistic theory based on current speech, i. e., speech which is currently taking place. As a result, linguists have traditionally confronted problems such as deixis and ambiguity which have, over the years, proved to be significantly difficult to explain using

¹ This is an important point. If the punch line was "telegraphed" or the audience "could see it coming" the joke would not be as funny or perhaps not be funny at all. Expectations require an element of time to acquire a value. This element may be very brief or it may be longer but it must be there; see Sypniewski 2012.

² *Audience*, in this paper, means the viewing audience rather than any audience that might appear in the movie.

³ While this paper discusses intentionally created humor, we acknowledge that laughter may be provoked unintentionally. We will not consider it here.

⁴ I place *language* in quotation marks because it is an ambiguous term and means different things for different linguistic studies. HSL does not have a theory of grammar, universal grammar or many of the notions of other linguistic school because HSL does not consider these to be able to be studied scientifically; see (Yngve 1996).

⁵ There is no sense of time in traditional linguistics. Everything happens in an eternal present. This is not the case with HSL, especially when expectations are involved.

traditional theory. In fact, most schools of linguistics do not take time into account which raises many unasked and unanswered questions about various linguistic theories.

HSL remedies these problems by expanding the scope of linguistic inquiry to include non-linguistic items which might have an effect on how, what or why people communicate¹ as well as time as an important component of our linguistic research. Not all aspects of communicative behavior can be explained if we only consider what happens in the present, as this paper will show. However, when we expand our focus to include “non-linguistic” portions of reality, as HSL has done, problems such as ambiguity become more tractable and, at times, may even disappear.

Research has shown that humor can be a laboratory for the study of expectations. Humor relies heavily on the audience’s pre-existing assumptions about the world (Sypniewski 2010). HSL models these assumptions² with expectations. Briefly speaking, when initially set out in a linkage³, an expectation has no value. Some communicative behavior may give the expectation a value which is usually modeled as either a satisfaction of the expectation, i. e., what the person being modeled expected to occur did, in fact, occur, or a failure to satisfy the expectation, i. e., what the person being modeled expected to occur did not, in fact, occur. Much humor relies on the failure to satisfy an expectation which may have been created by the comedian or which the comedian assumes (yet another expectation) the audience has because of some sort of “common knowledge”.

It is becoming more and more apparent that people communicate in ways which depend on a large number of pre-existing assumptions or assumptions which may be created by the communicative behavior. Some assumptions are shared; some are not. Humor is a laboratory for the study of expectations because the manipulation of assumptions is very often obvious when the humor is critically examined by a researcher.

¹ *Communication* (technically, communicative behavior) itself has an expanded meaning in HSL to include various forms of non-verbal communication as well as verbal communication. In short, HSL is not language dependent.

² We will not discuss the difference between *assumptions* and *expectations* as it would take us too far afield.

³ A *linkage* is what an HSL model of some observed event is called.

The Marx Brothers

The Marx Brothers made many classic plays and movies during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Their second and one of their best movies is *Animal Crackers*, a close adaptation of a Broadway play produced in the late 1920s. In *Animal Crackers*, Groucho Marx plays Captain Jeffery¹ Spaulding, an African explorer², just returned from the jungle. In an early scene, Mrs. Rittenhouse³, a rich society matron, gave a party for Captain Spaulding. Captain Spaulding wore typical but ill-fitting explorer's garb for the time: jodhpurs, boots, a tweed jacket, pith helmet and the like. At least that is what everyone thought explorers wore. On the day after the party, he started telling stories of his jungle adventures to the enraptured party goers⁴. Stories about adventures⁵ in remote parts of the world were in vogue at the time the play and movie were produced. The famous Tarzan series began in 1912⁶ in magazines and in 1918 in the movies. Using this as an example of the types of stories (fictional that they might have been) which the public eagerly read⁷, listened to⁸, and viewed, we see that the public expected lengthy narratives. Captain Spaulding, however, doesn't waste his breath on lengthy stories. He told very brief episodes of his voyage to Africa and some of the experiences he had once he got into the bush,

¹ A newspaper article shown at the beginning of the movie says the characters name is Captain *Geoffrey* Spaulding.

² Jungle exploration was something of a rage during the 1920s and 1930s resulting in many newsreels and movies with characters like Clyde Beatty, Tarzan and King Kong. A good example of the jungle explorer phenomenon (albeit a South American jungle explorer) can be found in Grann 2010 and Fawcett 1953. We're still fascinated: recall Indiana Jones.

³ She had no first name in the movie.

⁴ The party goers seemed to have stayed at Mrs. Rittenhouse's home overnight. Apparently, Mrs. Rittenhouse's home was vast.

⁵ Many of these stories came from missionaries. They were used as source material for popular books, often uncritically; see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tintin_in_the_Congo#Works_cited for discussion about the source material for *TinTin in the Congo* from 1930.

⁶ Edgar Rice Burroughs wrote 13 Tarzan novels by 1930 and continued for many years thereafter.

⁷ Besides magazine articles and books, by 1929 there was also a *Tarzan* comic strip.

⁸ The Tarzan stories were also made into radio plays.

some 300 miles from the coast¹. The few stories he tells are all very short thereby failing to satisfy the party goers and possibly the viewing audience's expectations with regards to story length.

One of those brief stories was:

(1a) *One morning I shot an elephant in my pajamas.*

(1b) *How he got in my pajamas, I don't know.*

If Captain Spaulding had just said 1a, there would be no joke, no humor. It is, of course, somewhat unexpected to picture an explorer, the early 20th century's vision of rugged, self-reliant manhood standing in the middle of an African jungle in his pajamas but some expeditions were known to have been quite "civilized" and may have included pajamas for their white adventurers. 1a sets up the picture, the expectation, of a rugged explorer in his pajamas, gun in hand (no doubt with smoke curling up from the muzzle) standing over the carcass of an elephant (as an aside, cape buffaloes, depicted in **Picture 1**, which were popular game for hunters because they were large and considered dangerous) that had the misfortune of wandering into camp. 1b overthrows that expected scene by saying that it was the elephant that was in Captain Spaulding's pajamas and *not* the brave Captain. The audience now has a stranger picture of a dead elephant wearing the Captain's pajamas lying dead in or about the camp with the Captain, possibly naked, standing over the body. To make the unresolved, unasked question: What was the elephant doing in your pajamas? even more difficult to answer, Groucho Marx was, to put it uncharitably, a bit of a runt and not exactly the rugged "he-man" that African explorers were commonly thought to be. For example, after Mrs. Rittenhouse told the party goers that Captain Spaulding was fearless, Mr. Chandler, an art aficionado who came to the party to show off a recent acquisition, brushed off the Captain's jacket saying that there was a caterpillar on it, at which point Captain Spaulding fainted dead away, hardly the epitome of the fearless adventurer. During his story-telling, Groucho's rapid-fire delivery did not give the party goers or the viewing audience enough time to form the question about the elephant in his pajamas or other questions, much less to answer them. The rapidity of the story-telling and his speech in

¹ Adventure stories always took place in the interior of the continent. The coast was the more settled part.

general reduced his listeners to the status of bystanders rather than actual participants in a conversation.

There are two parallel sets of expectations here, as will be explained in more detail in the **Discussion**. The large group of party goers, who are otherwise unnamed characters in the movie and who sometimes act as a chorus, have one set of expectations and the viewing audience has another¹. Much of the humor is based on playing these two sets of expectations off against each other in subtle and, because the movie stars the Marx Brothers, sometimes not so subtle ways.

Picture 2 is a still from the movie showing Captain Spaulding's entrance to the party. He is carried on a sedan chair by African bearers who are dressed in what seems to be some sort of Egyptian garb². In this photo, he is greeted by Mr. Chandler who is dressed in contemporary evening wear. The party goers stand in the background admiringly. They are dressed in their finery but not as formally as Mr. Chandler. Obviously, Captain Spaulding is, to these people, a celebrity and a hero. It is apparent from the dialog that this party is the event of the social season.

Shortly after leaving his sedan chair and after being greeted by Mrs. Rittenhouse and others, Captain Spaulding is introduced to the party goers as a heroic figure. During the course of this introduction, Captain Spaulding alternates between appearing modest, almost shy and acting out in very unexplorer-like ways. At one point, he does a rather silly dance to the amusement of all. None of Captain Spaulding's antics causes anyone to question whether he is, in fact, a heroic African explorer.

The next day, Captain Spaulding tells stories, one of which is the two line story in 1a and 1b. There are several layers of humor in this example. The first is that involving the expectation surrounding the

¹ At the time of this writing, *Animal Crackers* is 73 years old but still popular. We need to be alert to the fact that the viewing audience's expectations have changed, probably several times. The party goers, because they are acted in a scripted movie, do not change expectations over time.

² *Animal Crackers* was originally a stage play produced in New York City in the 1920s. The world was in or barely out of the throws of "Tut mania" as the result of the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen by Howard Carter in 1922. Of course, the clothing is inappropriate. It is a comment on the contemporary public's confused image of African exploration, Egyptian archeology, and anything in the least bit "exotic".

word *pajamas*. People, not elephants, wear pajamas but 1b shifts the picture from the Captain wearing pajamas when he shot the elephant to his kill wearing pajamas. Both the party goers and the audience watching the movie have an expectation created by the last phrase in 1a (*in my pajamas*) that it was Captain Spaulding who was wearing pajamas. 1b shifts the mental image to the elephant wearing Captain Spaulding's pajamas, a physical impossibility¹, and, therefore, does not satisfy the expectation. This is funny enough but the Marx Brothers, particularly Groucho, were great comedians who included considerable social commentary in their best work.

The Captain Spaulding character is a commentary on the explorer craze of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the unthinking hero and celebrity² worship of the general public. Prior to his first appearance on the screen, the party goers and the viewing audience have expectations of what an "African explorer" is like. The viewing audience has another expectation besides their own African explorer expectation. They have come to see a Marx Brothers movie and, therefore, expect to see something funny in the extreme. By being the opposite of the societally-expected African explorer type while receiving the adulation of the party goers, who sing "Hooray for Captain Spaulding, the African Explorer" when he first arrives, Groucho creates an expectation in the viewing audience that he will be something like what they would have expected an explorer to be like while, at the same time, having an expectation of what the Marx

¹ The impossibility of an elephant wearing *any* human's pajamas is actually necessary. If Groucho had made the animal more human-sized, there might be some speculation about how an animal of that size "accidentally" got into Groucho's pajamas which might have been lying around or hung out on a clothesline. This would change 1a into a factual statement which might, under some, perhaps improbable, circumstances create an expectation which could be satisfied and, hence, there would be no humor because there would be no expectation that would not be satisfied.

² One of the highlights of the party is to be the unveiling of the painting *After the hunt* which was recently purchased by Mr. Chandler. The bland painting is supposedly famous. Mr. Chandler is famous because he bought a famous painting. There is no other reason to have invited Mr. Chandler to the party. In fact, Chico and Harpo reveal that Mr. Chandler is actually Abie the Fish Peddler, a person who would otherwise not be invited to a society party. One of the underlying themes of the movie is that everyone is trying to fool everybody else into thinking that they are something they are not.

Brothers were like. For the viewing audience, these expectations conflict. The party goers, who only have the expectation about an African explorer¹, act as though that expectation were satisfied. This clash between expectation of the party goers and the viewing audience creates a social commentary which constitutes a second layer of meaning that is not complete with just 1a-1b. It is an underlying theme throughout the movie. What I have called a clash is created by the fact that, to the party goers, who are scripted characters, there is only Captain Spaulding; to the viewing audience, there is Captain Spaulding played by Groucho Marx. We will discuss this in more detail later.

Groucho is anything but the public's ideal of an African explorer. His physical type alone rules him out of the Fawcett/Beatty category but his demeanor seals the exclusion. It is never quite clear whether Captain Spaulding is a fraud but, in any event, he is not above taking advantage of whatever adulation that comes his way. He jokes about his activities². The great explorers of the day would often talk lovingly about the lands they explored such as:

1. *Above us towered the Ricardo Franco Hills, flat-topped and mysterious, their flanks scarred by deep quebradas. Time and the foot of man had not touched those summits. They stood like a lost world, forested to their tops, and the imagination could picture the last vestiges there of an age long vanished. Isolated from the battle with changing conditions, monsters from the dawn of man's existence might still roam those heights unchallenged, imprisoned and protected by unscalable cliffs. (Fawcett 1953:122)*

Captain Spaulding was less enthusiastic: *Africa is God's country and he can have it*. In short, the public expected its explorers not only to look a certain way but to behave in a certain way. Captain Spaulding satisfied none of these expectations for the viewing audience. The fact that the party goers acted as though Captain Spaulding satisfied their expectations was part of the Marx Brothers' social commentary about the uncritical nature of the public towards its heroes.

¹ The party goers only act with Captain Spaulding. For them, there is no such person as Groucho.

² *Then, we tried to remove the tusks ... but they were embedded in so firmly, we couldn't budge them. Of course, in Alabama the Tusk-a-loosa. But that's entirely ir-elephant to what I was talking about.* This joke immediately follows 1a and 1b.

Percy Fawcett¹ was a genuine explorer, primarily of the Amazon basin and other parts of South America. He made several expeditions into the Amazon searching for what he called the Lost City of Z. In order to fund his expeditions, he gave lectures in England. As the result of some of them, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, best known for his Sherlock Holmes stories, wrote the *Lost World* in 1912 (Fawcett 1953: 122) which later became a popular film in the 1920s, around the time that *Animal Crackers* was on Broadway. Clyde Beatty was a circus performer, animal trainer, sometime adventurer with the motto “Bring ‘em back alive!” and movie star of the early 1930s. Men such as these were in the public’s imagination during the time that *Animal Crackers* was made and formed the general perception of what an “African explorer” was like: ruggedly handsome, fearless, wise in the ways of nature, able to live off the land, and, in some respects, romantics. Compare **Picture 3 and 4** with **Picture 2**.

Picture 2 shows Groucho’s entrance into the movie. Prior to this scene, there had been much discussion among the cast about the arrival of Captain Spaulding. It is easy to see from these early scenes that the cast of characters, except for Captain Spaulding and his aid, played by Groucho’s brother Zeppo, eagerly anticipated the Captain’s arrival. If we wished to model this, we would give each character’s participant² in the linkage we set up an expectation like [R]<expect real explorer>³. Prior to Groucho’s entrance, this expectation has no value. Note what happens when Groucho does appear. Rather than the expectation failing as we might expect, the expectation is satisfied: [R]<expect real explorer/true>.

This is an appropriate place to discuss the viewing audience’s reaction. The viewing audience knows that they are watching a Marx Brothers movie and that the Marx Brothers are noted for their nearly surrealistic humor. The viewing audience has the same expectation as the characters in the movie but it is certainly not satisfied: [A]<expect real explorer/false>. As a consequence, there is a dissonance between

¹ Fawcett was a colonel in the British army when he first started exploring. His first expeditions were into Bolivia at the behest of the British government. Recall Groucho’s role as *Captain Spaulding*. This is yet another subtle means of creating an expectation in the party goers.

² We might wish to model the unnamed party goers as one participant, a sort of corporate character in the linkage. We do this in our discussion.

³ [R] could model Mrs. Rittenhouse in the movie.

the viewing audience and some of the characters in the movie that sets up the viewing audience for upcoming jokes. However, the viewing audience sees that Captain Spaulding is played by Groucho Marx who, because of subsequent activities in the movie, becomes a sort of additional character for the viewing audience. The audience also sees the incongruity in the party goers' expectations of Captain Spaulding which only heightens the humor.

Modeling the joke in 1a-1b is easy enough. We set up a linkage with two participants: [elephant] = [Captain] + [party goers]. The people at the party have the expectation that only people wear pajamas: [party goers]<expect pajamas/human>¹. [Captain] has the task of telling the joke which we will represent in two parts² [Captain]<say 1a> and [Captain]<say 1b>. [party goers] have the task of listening to the Captain, which we will also break into two subtasks: [party goers]<listen to 1a> and [party goers]<listen to 1b>. [party goers] also has an expectation procedure which we will only partially describe³:

2a. [party goers]<expect pajamas/human> :: continue

2b. [party goers]<-expect pajamas/human> :: <look puzzled>

When [Captain]<say 1a> executes, the first part of the expectation procedure, 2a, executes⁴ but when [Captain]<say 1b> executes, [party goers]'s expectation fails and the subtask <look puzzled> executes, 2b. In the movie, Captain Spaulding simply goes on and does not wait for any reaction to 1b. Groucho's delivery style is rapid fire and he does not give his audience much chance to react to any one joke in particular, often leaving them "at sea". The rapidity of his delivery creates visual confusion in the minds of the party goers which seems

¹ In the movie, the party goers are an anonymous group, each member having similar reactions to all others. We can say that [party goers] can be treated as a collective whole. [Captain] has a role part of [comedian] as described in Sypniewski 2010.

² In a more formal presentation, we could say that [Captain] has a task of telling the joke: [Captain]<tell elephant joke> and that the task <tell elephant joke> has two subtasks <say 1a> and <say 1b>. The numbers are here for convenience only. If we developed the linkage more formally, they would not be part of the notation or description.

³ The expectation procedure can be part of both [party goers]<listen 1a> and [party goers]<listen 1b> or a separate task.

⁴ Essentially, 2a means that the party goers go about doing what they are doing and are otherwise unaffected by 1a.

to throw them back on their experience in order to make sense of what is happening. However, the viewing audience, which has had the same expectation (about African explorers) as the party goers and has had their expectation fail, laughs instead, in part because their second expectation (about the nature of a Marx Brothers movie) was satisfied.

The difference between the party goers in the movie and the audience of the movie is not simply a matter of scripting. Recall the expectation¹ about the African explorer:

3a: [party goers]<expect real explorer>

3b: [audience]<expect real explorer>

Both the party goers and the audience still have this expectation, now with values², when the joke is told.

4a: [party goers]<expect real explorer/true>

4b: [audience]<expect real explorer/false>

The party goers are made to react to the joke as though they were acting upon 4a, which causes their bewilderment. However, the viewing audience also has their expectation fail (4b), allowing the viewing audience to see the absurdity of the situation described in the joke. In short, once they are given values by the events of the movie, the 4a and 4b play off each other. The difference between 4a and 4b sets up the humorous situation for the viewing audience once Groucho says 1a and creates other expectations:

5a: [party goers]<expect pajamas/ human>

5b: [audience]<expect pajamas/ human>

Once Groucho says 1b, both expectations fail <-expect pajamas/human>. The audience gets the joke; the party goers do not. The humor is intensified for the audience by seeing that the party goers do not get the joke.

One more thing should be noted. The joke relies on the phrase *in my pajamas* which would normally not be ambiguous. The joke makes it intentionally ambiguous prior to the expectation's getting a value (3a and 3b). If this phrase were disambiguated prior to the expectation's

¹ An expectation is a property of the person being modeled which initially has no value. It gets a value when the expected circumstance either occurs (the expectation is satisfied) or does not occur (the expectation is not satisfied); see Sypniewski 2012.

² 3a and 3b get values when Captain Spaulding makes his entrance.

getting a value or after the fact, the humor would fall apart because 5a and 5b would get different values. Groucho takes care of this problem with the speed of his delivery. He moves on more quickly than the party goers can resolve the ambiguity. We can see from this that comedians are intuitively aware of expectations in their audiences and, in this case, playing off the expectations of a fictitious audience (the party goers) and the real one.

Mel Brooks and Gene Wilder

Mel Brooks co-wrote with Gene Wilder and directed *Young Frankenstein*. The 1976 movie is a comedy which uses the famous *Frankenstein* story and movie¹ and its genre as the basis for humor. Gene Wilder stars as the Viktor Frankenstein's grandson. He is invited to the old family castle in Transylvania to take up residence. The scene that we examine here takes place in the early part of the movie after young Frankenstein arrives in Transylvania. He is met at the train station by the faithful family retainer Igor who will drive him to the castle in a hay wagon.

When Dr. Frankenstein and Igor approach the hay wagon, the doctor throws some of his luggage into the wagon. Dr. Frankenstein cannot see into the wagon because its sides are taller than he is. They hear a loud "OOOF!"² as though the luggage hit someone. Dr. Frankenstein boosts himself up on the wagon step and sees a woman (Inga, played by Teri Garr) lying on her back on the hay; see **Picture 5**. She is awake and somewhat dreamy eyed. Later, Igor introduces her to Dr. Frankenstein as his new assistant. Dr. Frankenstein did not ask for an assistant prior to his arrival. The executor of his great-grandfather Beaufort's estate, Herr Waldman, invited the doctor to his ancestral home and thought that he might like an assistant. Neither the doctor nor Igor discuss Inga's qualifications as a medical assistant. Once they

¹ In the interview with Gene Wilder on the *Young Frankenstein* DVD, Wilder admits to being inspired by the *Bride of Frankenstein* as well. This can be seen in Madeline Kahn's distinctive hairdo at the end of *Young Frankenstein* which resembles the hairdo of Frankenstein's bride.

² Or "oh!". The sound is the sound of someone with the breath knocked out of them.

are introduced, the doctor does not inquire about her qualifications at all¹.

The particular piece of humor that we consider depends in part on the appearance of Inga. First, she is an obviously attractive, sexy young woman. Second, she wears what is sometimes called a “peasant blouse” or “peasant dress”, a low-cut, off-the-shoulder dress draped precariously on her upper torso. Thirdly, she is lying on hay.

When Inga first sees Dr. Frankenstein peering over the side of the wagon², she asks him whether he would like a “roll in the hay”. The phrase *roll in the hay* is an American euphemism for sexual intercourse. Dr. Frankenstein looks knowingly at the audience. Inga then starts rolling back and forth in the hay, singing, in a nursery rhyme fashion, “Roll, roll, roll in the hay”. Needless to say, there is nothing sexual about this. Inga never meant anything sexual by her appearance or words despite what Dr. Frankenstein might have thought³.

The scene was carefully set up. The elements of Inga’s appearance mentioned above were not accidental or haphazard. They parallel a notorious movie, the Western called *The Outlaw*. This movie, made in 1943, introduced Jane Russell who became one of the eras “bombshells”. When movie audiences first saw Jane (her character was named Rio) she was in a stable, lying on hay, wearing a peasant blouse (she was a peasant of sorts) and eventually engaged in some off screen sexual intercourse with Billy the Kid. At least, that was the innuendo. Although many contemporaries considered *The Outlaw* to be scandalous, the movie was made at a time when explicit sex was not

¹ Madeline Kahn, who plays the doctor’s fiance, raises a question about this later in the movie. It is not answered then either.

² One might even say that he was leering over the side of the wagon. Pearlman writes:

Dr. Frankenstein climbed up on the wheel and looked into the back of the wagon. A young woman was lying there in the hay. She was so gorgeous, in a peasant way, that she was almost frightening. The doctor had been dreaming of bazooms like Inga’s since the day he reached puberty. And she was obviously friendly. She was smiling. (Pearlman 1974:28-29)

³ In his novel based on the film, Pearlman writes:

Dr. Frankenstein guessed that she was singing a Transylvanian children’s song. It certainly had spirit. And possibilities. (Pearlman 1974: 29)

shown. However, there was no attempt to hide Russell's sexuality¹ and it had been used in marketing² the picture which was released in a censored version in 1943 and later, over objections, in an uncut version³ in 1946.

There is another element in the scene which must be taken into account: the hay wagon. There is no reason why Igor should pick up the doctor in a hay wagon rather than a carriage or an automobile. Indeed, later in the movie, different characters arrive at the castle in automobiles. Later in the movie, Inspector Kemp arrives in a limousine driven by an official chauffeur and the doctor's fiancée, Elizabeth, arrived by taxi. The only reason that Igor picks up the doctor in a hay wagon is to set up in the audience's minds the reference to *The Outlaw*. It is part of the setting which help create the expectations that form the basis for the "roll in the hay" joke.

Both scenes are brief but they make substantial impacts on the films. The setting in the hay wagon is an allusion to *The Outlaw* and Jane Russell's personality as portrayed in that movie. The allusion not only sets up the roll-in-the-hay joke but it sets up an expectation of sexual tension between the doctor and Inga throughout *Young Frankenstein*, like that between Rio and Billy the Kid in *The Outlaw*:

6a: [audienceYF]<expect Inga to be like Rio>

6b: [audienceYF]<expect sexual activity>

The "roll in the hay" joke, itself, sets up additional expectation. Inga is now expected to be a bit innocent in the ways of the world:

7. [audienceYF]<expect Inga's innocence>⁴

¹ Some posters alone were controversial; see, e.g., <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/film-news/8354765/Jane-Russell-the-poster-controversy-that-made-a-star.html>

² One can see 23 advertising posters for movie at: <http://www.movieposterdb.com/movie/0036241/The-Outlaw.html>. Out of 23 posters, 18 show Jane Russell laying back on the hay or simply laying back in similar poses. All show the actress wearing her peasant blouse or something very much like one. Whatever the exact design, the blouse was draped precariously over her torso.

³ Today, we might refer to this as a "director's cut".

⁴ The failure of 6a could create 7 through an expectation procedure.

This expectation continues throughout the film and allows the audience to see the sexual innuendos which Inga does not see, thereby heightening the humor of her role.

Discussion

Humor makes its mark without analysis. We laugh when we think something is funny. By analyzing humor we can understand what makes us laugh. When we analyze humor, we appreciate that we are not simply creatures that live in the moment. There is a complex history which we all have. Some of it is shared; some of it is personal. What we share makes us the social beings that we are.

Expectations

Both scenes described above are brief, taking less than a minute each. As such, the participants could not have afforded to linger on convoluted audience assumptions. The assumptions, here modeled by expectations, had to be likely enough properties of the audience so that the audience's reactions to the failure to satisfy expectations would be reasonably predicted by the comedians and their writers. In *Animal Crackers*, the assumptions about the audience came about because of the personalities of Groucho Marx and his brothers and the absurdity of the joke; in *Young Frankenstein*, the comedians assumptions came about because they thought their audience could draw the analogy between Inga and Rio (6a) as well as see the ambiguity of the phrase *roll in the hay* once Inga started singing and rolling in the hay.

Expectations are closely related to time. Yngve tells us that a linkage is a *system defined over a definite stretch of time* (Yngve 1996: 215). In other words, the model has a beginning and an end¹. What we see in the current examples is that, although we might model communicative behavior that takes place at one specific time, we cannot ignore assumptions which have been built up prior to the events being modeled. Assumptions and the expectations which model them result from the prior experiences of the persons being modeled

¹ The researches and theories of traditional linguistics sometimes seem to exist in a timeless, Platonic realm. Because of its connection to the real world, all HSL models include references to specific, identifiable pieces of time.

and may persist over substantial periods of time. What comedians show us is that this experience, though internal to the persons being modeled, are not inaccessible by others "from the outside". Some experiences are common enough to be assumed to be part of the general public or, if one person knows another well, to be part of a specific person. We can see genuine evidence of expectations in people's gestures, speech and reactions to events. Laughter is one such reaction. Expectations are not philosophically created entities. Expectations are models of real properties in real people.

In both our examples, the comedians assume that their audiences will have certain assumptions which we model through expectations because the audience was composed of persons who lived at a certain time through certain events: the explorer "craze", the controversy around *The Outlaw*, etc. The comedians assumed that their audiences would be familiar with certain social conventions: pajamas as sleep wear, the slang phrase *roll in the hay*, etc. None of these assumptions were esoteric or specialized. The comedians expected their audiences to act like ordinary people of their time. Although assumptions exist in the present, some may have been created by events in the past, e. g., the assumptions around *The Outlaw* may have been created 30 years before *Young Frankenstein*.

I went into some detail about the explorer craze and *The Outlaw* because the reader might not be familiar with some of this background. In other words, I do not have the same assumptions about my audience at this time as did the comedians about their audience of their time. From this we can see that expectations and the assumptions upon which they are based are closely linked to the existing contemporary social milieu and are not abstractions. Both the elephant joke and the roll in the hay joke were told so quickly as to make them *immediately* funny only to those with the expectations that the comedians predicted ahead of time. Expectations are heavily time-dependent. The assumptions that expectations model must be pre-existing for the model to be accurate and for the jokes to work. Through comedy, we can see that the life time experience of a person creates certain assumptions of how the world behaves; these assumptions and, thereby, a person's experience may be modeled with expectations.

There is significant evidence for the existence of assumptions. We would have a difficult time living our daily lives if we did not share

assumptions with one another. Think of how tedious and slow our lives would be if we had to tell every person with whom we came into contact every detail about everything that we wanted to say as if they were hearing it for the first time. HSL models these assumptions with expectations which are properties of a participant in a linkage. In other words, HSL sees assumptions as part of a real person. They are not theoretical entities.

This is not the case for other linguistic analyses of humor. Various philosophically based theoretical objects are created in order to support an analysis which only looks at the language of humor and not humor as an activity subject to the whole panoply of human life. For example, (Higashimori 2009) describes jokes in nearly metaphysical terms as the title of his work indicates. There is little or no reference to what happens between people but, primarily, to metalinguistic objects and metarepresentations. These are purely theoretical and depend entirely on the theories of his school of linguistics, Relevance Theory. Expectations and assumptions are real and would exist whether Yngve developed HSL or not. If one were not comfortable working with metalinguistic objects, Higashimori's analyses may not be usable in the furtherance of a study of humor. Expectations and assumptions can be used by any scientifically minded researcher.

Furthermore, all of Higashimori's example jokes are very simple. It is not clear from his paper how more complex humor, such as that presented here, could be analyzed with metalinguistic objects.

The Setting

Once again, comedy can help us understand the relation between expectations and their social milieu. The Romans liked comedy as much as we do. The two major Roman comedic playwrights, Plautus and Terence, wrote different kinds of comedy for different audiences. Plautus wrote what we might call "sitcoms"; Terence wrote comedies of manners. Plautus' plays have been adapted for the modern stage and as the movie *A Funny Thing Happened to me on the Way to the Forum*. It is still very funny. Terence's plays need footnotes and are rarely performed. The original social milieus for Plautus and Terence were very different from each other. Plautus' audience was more "blue collar" than Terence's audience. Plautus relied on human nature as a source of expectations. Terence relied on the experience of the contemporary educated elite for his.

Martin Gardner, in his analysis of the Marx Brothers as social critics, records an anecdote that will help us here. Recall that *Animal Crackers* was originally a Broadway musical written by George S. Kaufman. Gardner says:

A perfect example of how quickly a reference may become obsolete occurred during a performance of the Broadway stage version of Animal Crackers. George S. Kaufman reputedly said that Groucho uttered the ad lib that produced "the greatest single explosive laugh in Broadway history". Harpo was in the middle of a leisurely, and probably boring, harp solo when Groucho, with pained ennui, said to the audience, "I wonder what ever happened to Rhinelander?" The topical reference juxtaposed with Harpo's "serious" turn on the harp ignited an explosion of laughter from the attentive and subdued audience. Most contemporary audiences will not understand the joke and its reference. (Gardner 2009: 12-13)

In a footnote, Gardner explains that Kip Rhinelander was a socialite in New York City who was involved in a scandalous divorce over his wife's ancestry. Hardly anyone remembers the case now but in the late 1920s, a New York City audience had it fresh in their minds. Experience, therefore assumptions, therefore expectations, which Gardner calls *a reference* in the above quote, are dependent on the personal histories of the individuals being observed. Those experiences may be general to a large part of the population or may be more specific to an individual or a small group. When creating an act, the comedian must sense the nature of the audience in order to properly manipulate their assumptions. This example clearly shows that expectations can cease to exist over the course of time, something which we will not discuss further here.

The scene from *Young Frankenstein* reinforces this point. The setting refers to another movie that was produced some thirty years before *Young Frankenstein* but still echoed with movie goers, however dimly. The setting: hay, a young woman dressed in a certain way lying on her back, is enough to resurrect a past experience which recalls or creates an assumption. The scene is quick but the setting is strong enough to do its job.

If the above analysis is accepted by the reader, it tells us something else. HSL claims that the setting¹ has significant effects on the behavior

¹ A setting is defined as a representation in linguistic theory of other parts of the physical surroundings of a group in an assemblage that includes just those

of people when they communicate with each other. While previous studies have taken the immediate setting into account (see, e. g., Sypniewski 2004), the current study suggests that, at times, the setting may extend into the past if there is some reference to it in the course of contemporary events. Indeed, some models of people communicating with other people may not be accurate or as fully developed as they could be without extending the setting into the past; e. g., the Rhinelander anecdote mentioned above.

Taking the past into account comports with our everyday experience. Although it is commonplace to think of a conversation as an exchange of information¹, conversations are often comments on past events or continuations of previous discussions. As such, it is important to know something of the past in order to interpret the conversations correctly. We do this all the time. If we cannot understand the references in the conversation because we do not understand the past, we ask for clarification, i. e., for some sort of explanation of the past events being referred to in the conversation. When the explanation is given, assumptions are created in the listener.

Role Parts²

A role part in HSL is

a representation in linguistic theory of the functional part or role that a person plays in a particular assemblage (Yngve 1996: 193)

For example, if we observed someone ordering a cup of coffee in a restaurant, we could model the observation with a role parts of [customer] and [waitress]. HSL recognizes that individuals not only act as individuals but often act out roles. In other words, if Bob were the customer and Sandy were the waitress, each would bring their own interpretation to their roles while Mary and Rhoda would differently act theirs because they were different people. However, anyone who acted as either a customer or waitress would do very much the same thing relative to each other, regardless of their individual

properties that are required to account for their communicative relevance in the assemblage (Yngve 1996: 129).

¹ The term *information* is usually used uncritically and ambiguously.

² I would like to acknowledge my graduate students Doug Taggart, Kevin Desmond, Louis Szgalsky, Rob Hussey, Zabih Shinwari, Jack Myers, and Liaqat Saraosh who helped me work this section out in my mind.

personalities. It would be highly unusual to say the least for Bob to order a cup of coffee from Sandy only to see Sandy change the oil in his car in response. Role parts and expectations have much to do with each other.

In *Animal Crackers*, Groucho occasionally performs an “aside”, a theatrical device in which an actor “steps outside” his role and talks to the audience, perhaps commenting on the actions of the play. One of those asides takes place in the scene we have described above. The party goers sing their song of greeting to Groucho. At one point, they sing:

party goers: *Hooray for Captain Spaulding, the African explorer.*

Groucho: *Did someone call me schnorrer?*

Party goers: *Hooray, hooray, hooray!*

Groucho does not otherwise participate in the song. Aside from creating a rather unusual rhyme, the word *schnorrer* both comments on Groucho's thoughts on how he will be perceived and shows that Groucho is trying to hide something. *Schnorrer* is Yiddish¹. African explorers are generally not Jewish. The word has several meanings. On its face, *schnorrer* means beggar. It is nuanced beyond meaning simply “someone who asks for a handout”. *Schnorrer* can mean a freeloader or a social parasite, i. e., a person who habitually takes advantage of the generosity of others. According to the now online 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, *schnorrer* is a

Judæo-German term of reproach for a Jewish beggar having some pretensions to respectability. In contrast to the ordinary house-to-house beggar, whose business is known and easily recognized, the schnorrer assumes a gentlemanly appearance, disguises his purpose, gives evasive reasons for asking assistance, and is not satisfied with small favors, being indeed quite indignant when such are offered. He usually travels from city to city and even into foreign countries; but he must not be confounded with the tramp, whose counterpart is not to be found in Jewish beggary.

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13293-schnorrer>

Groucho's question is, then, a question whether anyone recognizes him for what he is. The question is never answered and Groucho goes on as planned. We learn in the very first scene of the movie, in which Hives,

¹ *Schnorrer* is also a German word. This should not be surprising when one considers the considerable connections between German and Yiddish.

the head butler admonishes the rest of the staff to be attentive and respectful to Captain Spaulding, that the Captain is viewed as a major celebrity. Hives refers to him as *one of those men who expect royal treatment*.

When he asks his question, Groucho “steps out” of his role as Captain Spaulding. He is simply Groucho Marx¹. This happens so quickly that we might not otherwise notice it. One moment, he is Captain Spaulding. The next, he is Groucho, asking an important question but getting no answer and then he is Captain Spaulding again. It is important to note that he receives no affirmative answer. Immediately after the question, the party goes sing *Hooray, hooray, hooray!*, something they would not do if they answered his question affirmatively. No one treats a *schnorrer* as a hero.

If we were to model Groucho’s behavior, we would have to give Groucho two distinct role parts, one for the Captain and one for Groucho. While this may, at first, sound a bit odd, upon further consideration we can see that this is not all that unusual. Later in *Animal Crackers*, Groucho stops talking to Mrs. Rittenhouse and a guest, Mrs. Whitehead, and pretends to be acting in a Eugene O’Neill play, *Strange Interlude*². Aside from dramatic asides, each of often play more than one role at a time. Consider this actual observation. Two coworkers, Jack and Lisa, are sitting in Jack’s office discussing some work related matter when Jack’s telephone rings. It is his daughter Stephanie who wants to ask him about some family-related matter. Jack talks to her briefly and hangs up the phone. He then goes back to talking to Lisa about their work.

Jack has two roles. In one role, he is an office worker; in the other, he is a father. This scenario cannot be modeled without reference to both roles. One way of modeling this little scenario is to use three

¹ There are several ways to analyze this. One could say that the Captain actually is a *schnorrer* and steps out of his role as Captain to ask the question because he is afraid that his *real* identity (as a *schnorrer*) might be revealed. In any event, there are two roles here.

² He makes several asides like in the O’Neill play but uses his own strange commentary on the scene he is performing in *Animal Crackers*. *Strange Interlude* was on Broadway about the same time as *The Cocoanuts*, another Marx Brothers play which led to their first movie. The O’Neill play became notorious for episodes like the asides which were meant to show the characters’ deepest thoughts.

linkages: [office], [family], and [both], with [both] being a coordinating linkage containing [office] and [family]. [both] “manages” the tasks and other aspects of the other two linkages. Since role parts are functional parts of a linkage (Yngve 1996: 195), we can see that they can be placed in [both]. Jack has only one role in each of the other two linkages, as appropriate to each individual linkage. [both] co-ordinates these role parts.

Just like Jack, the participant Groucho also has two role parts: [captain] and [Groucho]. They are coordinated through a linkage we can call [comedy]. [comedy] co-ordinates two other linkages we call [animal crackers] and [theatre]. [animal crackers] is the linkage that models the goings on in the movie and [theatre] is a linkage that models Groucho’s interaction with the viewing audience.

Conclusion

Humor is created by manipulating the audience’s expectations about how the real world works and then failing to satisfy those expectations. This failure prompts laughter which is the goal of humor. Expectations can be created verbally or non-verbally. The setting can create expectations. Since expectations are the result of past events, in order for the setting to create expectations, the setting may have to refer to those past events.

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The Outlaw. The 1943 version is in the public domain; it can be seen online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRuvspnEBGA>.

Young Frankenstein. Twentieth Century Fox, Beverly Hills, CA, 2002.

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¹ The script of *Animal Crackers* has, apparently, not been published. There has been a copyright controversy regarding the film which has apparently delayed the dissemination of the script and, therefore, its analysis. A first draft of the script of *Young Frankenstein* by Gene Wilder (Mel Brooks is not credited) is available online at <http://www.moviescriptsources.com/movie-script.php?id=286>. Note, however, that the scene of the meeting between Dr. Frankenstein and Inga is very different than the one described here which is taken from the movie. A novel based on the film reproduces the scene which we describe pretty accurately. It is *Young Frankenstein* by Gilbert Pearlman, Ballantine Books, NY 1974.

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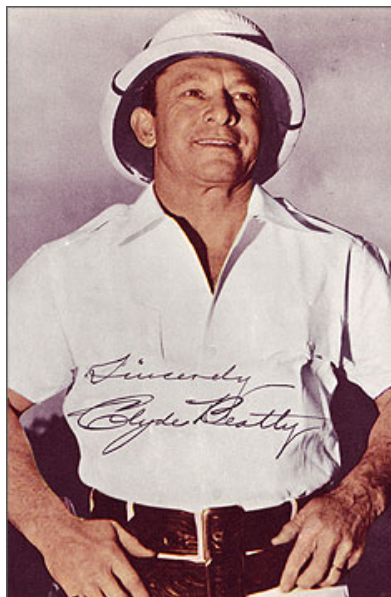
Picture 1



Picture2. Captain Spaulding's entrance at the party



Picture 3 - Percy Fawcett



Picture 4 - Clyde Beatty



Picture 5 - Inga in the hay wagon



Picture 6 - Jane Russell (Rio) in the hay.