

Running head: MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT: THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL
CORRECTNESS ON STAND-UP COMEDY

Master of Professional Communication – Major Research Project:

The Influence of Political Correctness on Stand-Up Comedy

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To my beloved daddy, I cannot wait to see you again.

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Abstract

Over the past 20 years, stand-up comedy has been part of the public debate within a prevailing ideology of non-discrimination and inclusiveness – most notably in relation to political correctness. In this context, a trend seems to be emerging, in which a person's taste in humour is defined by their political identity (Healy, 2016). In other words, a joke is not funny unless it meets a person's taste conventions prescribed by a political paradigm (Healy, 2016).

While the current humour and comedy research aided the analysis of this paper, they present dichotomous views that either allow or disallow joking about certain topics. This dichotomy suggests that the current humour and comedy research does not do justice to the complexity of the topic and that there is a need for further research.

This major research paper examined stand-up comedy in an age of political correctness and argued that an ideology of political correctness, non-discrimination and inclusiveness influences the content of stand-up comedy performances and the audience's responses to them. I analyzed YouTube videos containing race-based and rape jokes as well as jokes about gender stereotypes. Moreover, I examined YouTube users' comments to the three different joke-tokens. Examining both the jokes and YouTube users' comments gave me insight into how these joke-tokens are understood and perceived by YouTube users.

None of the jokes can be considered politically correct. This implies that these jokes can ignite political debates, which was observable in YouTube comments about feminism, liberals, gender stereotypes, sexism, misogyny, racism, East Asian culture, rape myths and misandry.

The YouTube commenters' perception seems to be that political correctness has been attempting to influence the stand-up comedy environment with the aim to dictate the content of stand-up comedy performances. However, the YouTube users see political correctness as a

“killer” of stand-up comedy and as a negative concept mainly promoted by liberals, the leftist society and feminists. The most dominant theme across all YouTube comments seemed to be the aversion to feminism. Regardless of the joke, feminism was the concept that commenters blamed for the existence of political correctness, the censorship of stand-up comedy performances, for a joke’s lack of funniness, and for the lack of awareness and importance of male rape in research and society.

In stand-up comedy, it is an art and talent to convey the literal meaning of a joke so that the subtext is clearly derivable – and even then, the audience’s interpretation depends on experiences, emotions, values, beliefs and political ideologies.

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Introduction

Rape jokes are great because they make a comic seem so edgy and dangerous, and the truth is: It's like the safest area to talk about in comedy cause who is gonna complain about a rape joke? I mean I would say rape victims, but they are traditionally not complainers" (Humor Legendado, 2016)

This research paper examines stand-up comedy in an age of political correctness. Herein I argue that an ideology of political correctness, non-discrimination and inclusiveness influences the content of stand-up comedy performances and the audience's responses to them. To accomplish this argument, I conducted inductive research using grounded theory to analyze YouTube videos containing race-based and rape jokes as well as jokes about gender stereotypes by a female comedian and male comedians. Moreover, I examined YouTube users' comments to the jokes.

Over the past 20 years, stand-up comedy has been the subject of the public debate within a prevailing ideology of non-discrimination and inclusiveness – most notably in relation to political correctness. This debate implicates stand-up comedy as a tool to potentially disclose or conceal power relations and to promote political ideologies and inequalities (Pérez & Greene, 2016). In this context, a trend seems to be emerging, in which a person's taste in humour is an extension of their political identity (Healy, 2016). In other words, a joke is not funny unless it meets a person's taste conventions prescribed by a certain political paradigm (Healy, 2016). This aspect leads to questions about what topics can be joked about and what topics are or should be taboo. While race and gender roles as well as behaviours have often been the subject of jokes, rape jokes have increased over the past few years, particularly in American popular culture (Strain, Martens, & Saucier, 2016). Rape is proximate to other acts in a trajectory of depraved acts: incest, paedophilia, bestiality and murder (Salamon, 2017). This gives rape shock value, which can render jokes about rape taboo. Thus, Kramer (as cited in Pérez & Greene, 2016) states

that stand-up comedians making jokes about rape can give the audience the impression that “rape, a brutal and violent act, can be funny, entertaining and unserious” (p. 266) and potentially result in controversy.

Literature Review

Research on humour and stand-up comedy in relation to political correctness has focused on the history and philosophy of humour, ethics of humour, tensions and challenges related to political ideologies and social issues such as sexism, racism, and rape (Gaut, 1998; Healy, 2016; Miles, 2014; Morreall, 2014; Pérez, 2016; Pérez & Greene, 2016). This literature review unfolds all these topics and provides an overview of humour and comedy research.

Political correctness

Political correctness is predominantly promoted by political liberals and is a phenomenon that transforms common language into a language of inclusion of all people by aiming to change attitudes and beliefs that are in the way of more meaningful social change (Strauts & Blanton, 2015). Political correctness is defined as an “extension of political ideology” as Healy stated (2016, p. 138). Political conservatives argue that the term is used to “convey ways in which some political liberals might promote tolerance of minorities and members of other historically disadvantaged groups to the point of that their own actions could be construed as another form of intolerance” (Strauts & Blanton, 2015, p. 32). Scruton (2017) saw this form of tolerance as non-discrimination movement and stated that “a great negation sign has been placed in front of all the old distinctions, and an ethos of “non-discrimination” adopted in their stead. And yet this seeming open-mindedness inspires its proponents to silence those who offend against it.” (Scruton, 2017, p.10). However, if linguistic reform is enough to change attitudes and beliefs, then the backlash against such linguistic reforms might just as well cause less tolerance in a different form (Strauts & Blanton, 2015). This suggests a paradox that those preaching tolerance become intolerant of views other than their own and that linguistic reforms do not seem to be

effective enough in truly changing societies' attitudes and beliefs. In terms of humour, political correctness is unable to consistently negotiate nuances between artistic presentations like stand-up comedy that might offer progressive ideas and presentations that are hate-filled and non-inclusive (Healy, 2016).

The role of stand-up comedy

Morreall (2014) defines stand-up comedy as an instrument to create awareness about social issues, foster critical thinking in the audience about the social and political system as well as potentially train the audience's mental flexibility. Besides, Morreall (2014) argues that stand-up comedians foster wisdom, give new perspectives and enjoy the "mental gymnastics" (p. 128). In stand-up comedy, these mental gymnastics mean that comedians are able to effortlessly perform complex thought processes about observations that they make about the social and political environment. Miles (2014) who studied the relationship between comedians and their audiences focusing on emotions, sees the nature of stand-up comedy as an "interactive" and "co-constructed" one that allows heckling and audience participation (p. 12). Expanding on this, stand-up comedy can be a continuous conversation between the comedians and their audiences, in which the comedians seek the audience's acceptance of a joke. Sturges (2010) who interviewed comedians in the UK about their experience as comedians points out that "comedy definitely exposes and permits sharing of the most dangerous and disturbing feelings" (p. 288). Having attended stand-up comedy performances in comedy clubs in the UK, Sturges also suggests that the audience's responses indicated that they were not looking for "mild jokes":

They roar with laughter and applaud when a telling blow has been struck against taboos and those who support or seek to enforce them. Their audible intake of breath at something almost too daring indicates recognition of thoughts they might have had, but scarcely like to admit. (p. 288)

Sturges (2010) also looked at comedy in relation to freedom of expression to cast a light on the issue of giving or avoiding offence. He defines comedy “as the sub domain of the humorous, in which humour is turned into art by [...] stand-up comedians” (p. 281). The joke represents “the vehicle through which comedy is communicated” (p. 281). Sturges also refers to Freud’s definition of a joke, who called “the joke a combination of [comic] technique and [humorous] thought.” (p.281). Stand-up comedy and senses of humour vary between different cultures and are not universal concepts (Sturges, 2010). “For a routine to be classed as a joke it has to be accepted as such by an audience” (Sturges, 2010, p. 289). This makes the audience’s reaction the main criterion of a joke’s success.

Philosophy of humour

Morreall (2014) also focused on humour’s reputation in philosophy and education and the underlying theories of humour in his study. These theories are relevant to this major research paper because they explain the motives of the audience’s responses to a stand-up comedy performance. Morreall describes the superiority theory, which is grounded in the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes’ analysis (1839) that considered humankind to be self-centred and competitive (as cited in Morreall, 2014, p. 123). The theory encompasses the idea that the essence of laughter is the enjoyment of feeling superior to someone and, according to Scruton (1987), devaluating its object in the subject’s eyes (as cited in Morreall, 2014, p. 123). The superiority theory has advanced to the “realm of political identity politics” (Healy, 2016, p. 138). This means that the superiority theory still decides the acceptance or rejection of a joke, but because of the changing political landscape, superiority is defined by the adoption of a number of political ideas and the process of interpolation is confronted with certain words and phrases that

have been defined as offensive by a certain political group (Healy, 2016). To accept the superiority theory, Miles (2014) states that one must agree that the concepts of experiencing humour as a state based on emotions like joy, pleasure and nervousness and experiencing humour as a state of lacking emotions and indifference to the suffering of others must co-exist.

The philosopher Frances Hutcheson (1750) challenged Hobbes' theory of humankind being self-centred and competitive by pointing to two factors that must be true to make laughter an expression of superiority (as cited in Morreall, 2014, p. 123f.): There is no laughter when people do not compare themselves with others or with themselves and people always laugh when they feel superior. However, both factors were falsified by Hutcheson because wealthy people might compare themselves with poorer people without laughing at them. Furthermore, people might laugh at speech figures without feeling superior. Hutcheson's critique led to a rethinking of the concept of laughing and to the creation of relief theory and incongruity theory.

Relief theory was made prominent by Sigmund Freud (Morreall, 2014) and considered laughter the release of pent-up nervous energy. According to the theory, nervous energy is suppressed because of political or social authority and, due to the loss of importance, has to be released. The incongruity theory is the most accepted theory in humour today (Morreall, 2014). It states that humour is the enjoyment of something that violates ordinary mental patterns and expectations (Morreall, 2014). This enhances the understanding of the affinity between humour and philosophy, particularly in stand-up comedy. Kant (1987) elaborated on the incongruity theory by calling humour a playful activity and comparing the enjoyment of jokes with the enjoyment of music and games (as cited in Morreall, 2014). Morreall (2014) suggests playfulness and the tendency to laugh as two conditions that distinguish amusement from non-humorous enjoyment of violations of our mental patterns. Berger (2016) added to other theories

that define an audience's motive to laugh at a joke: the psychoanalytic one and the theory that connects humour to "communication paradoxes" (p. 490). The psychoanalytic theory describes humour as a form of concealed aggression. Jokes make participation in such aggression possible without guilt. The final theory that ties humour to communication paradoxes suggests that humour makes use of "paradox, play and the resolution of logical problems" (Berger, 2016, p. 490).

Modern theories of humour

In the context of this project, it is also important to look at the ethical standards, by which people feel comfortable finding something funny (Healy, 2016). Moralists like Gaut (1998) believe that the sense of humour should be aligned with ethical considerations. Thus, jokes based on ethically bad stereotypes are derogatory and not funny. "This prompts the objection that jokes only manifest attitudes in a context, depending on who is telling them and for what purposes" (p. 53). A more progressive moralist view is the acknowledgement that humour is flawed but can still be present because of the cleverness of a joke. To contextualize this opinion, Gaut refers to the negative use of humour in society as an instrument for oppression, expressing disapproval of outside groups and excluding them. On the other hand, anti-moralists consider humour as rebellious, free from imagination, free from repressions of everyday social interactions, a non-serious play (which is in line with Kant's definition of humour as a playful activity) and most effective by causing laughter and enjoyment in the audience when it does not respond to ethics. There are two concepts anti-moralists live by: amoralism and immoralism. Amoralism sees no interaction between humour and ethics; ethically bad attitudes are irrelevant and cannot determine a joke's funniness. Amoralism requires interpretative subtlety. Immoralism is the

unethical form of incongruity, which says that ethically bad attitudes are relevant and count towards the funniness of a joke.

Gaut (1998) also proposes two categories of responses to humour. The intellectual response focuses on the display of cleverness and deconstructions of assumptions implicit in jokes; whereas the affective response involves passion and feelings. The dispute about ethics and humour lies in amusement as laughter does not necessarily have positive functions alone but may also have negative ones like causing embarrassment or anger etc. (Gaut, 1998). Gaut also suggests moving away from talking about types of jokes (e.g. racist), because they imply that, the utterer's (= stand-up comedian) implicit attitude is racist and then assign this attitude to them. The more precise terminology is "joke-tokens" (Gaut, 1998, p. 53), so-called joke-utterances, which are jokes in context. They imply that utterers, by providing a new context for the joke, subvert attitudes, which would be manifested in implicit contexts. Further, Gaut (1998) emphasizes that attitudinal structures manifested in a context are essential for the moral assessment of jokes. Since jokes are very short and difficult to be evidently patterned, manifesting attitudes depend on the way a comedian performs the jokes. Still, to manifest a certain attitude such as racism, for example, one must explicitly show a racist attitude.

In the context of this major research paper, it is also important to note that humour has the potential to reinforce or subvert sexism, racism, and rape. Strain et al. distinguish between disparagement and subversive humour (Strain et al., 2016). Disparagement humour belittles an individual based on the individual's group membership. For instance, Ford and Ferguson (as cited in Weaver, 2011) state that racist humour "can increase tolerance of prejudice in people who are predisposed to it" (p. 415). This example also counts for jokes about gender stereotypes and rape jokes that could increase the tolerance of sexist behaviour and undermine the shock

value of rape while increasing beliefs in rape myths such as only women who dress in sexualized fashion invite rapists or male rape is exclusively a homosexual issue (Abdullah-Khan, 2008). In contrast, subversive humour conveys a joke's message in two ways: one is based on the word's literal meaning used in the joke and the other message is in the subtext inferable from the joke and may be inconsistent with the literal meaning of the joke (Strain et al., 2016). This means that subversive rape humour potentially targets rape culture by referring to the "absurdity of the sexual hierarchy and its continuity, or by making individuals who perpetuate rape culture the "butt of the joke" as stated by Strain et al. (2016, p. 89). Subversive rape humour then requires that the literal meaning of the joke would be a joke about rape and the subtext's implication would be that rape is bad.

While the current humour and comedy research aid the analysis of this major research paper, they present dichotomous views that either allow or disallow joking about certain topics. This dichotomy suggests that the current humour and comedy research does not do justice to the complexity of the topic and that there is a need for further research.

Research questions

In the literature review, I identified the following research questions that I explored and answered after conducting the rhetorical analysis of race-based and rape jokes as well as jokes about gender stereotypes in selected comedian's YouTube stand-up comedy performances and YouTube users' comments to them. For the analysis, I also used the concepts of the current research that I discussed in the literature review:

1. How do social values such as inclusiveness and non-discrimination define political correctness in the current stand-up comedy environment?
2. What rhetorical boundaries do concepts of political correctness create around stand-up comedy, and do stand-up comedians use those boundaries to make jokes?
3. How do race and gender of the stand-up comedian affect the resulting YouTube comments that follow the posted performance?

Data Collection Approach

I collected the data manually without the aid of software. The first step was a search of stand-up comedy performances consisting of these jokes on the American video-sharing platform YouTube, on which YouTube account holders publish most stand-up comedy shows. The data that I collected included jokes made by a female and by male stand-up comedians. Jokes are optimal research objects because they are the prototypes of the discourse about humour (Hirsch, 2017). YouTube has a comment feature, which makes it an optimal data source for the audiences' responses to the stand-up comedy performances.

The first two weeks of May 2019 were dedicated to the data collection and the selected YouTube videos' publishing dates range from 2010 to 2018. For this major research paper, I chose one joke of each of the mentioned joke-tokens. To have a representative amount of YouTube responses, I collected 20 comments for each of the selected stand-up comedy performances on YouTube. To select comments easily, I exported them from YouTube into an Excel sheet with the support of the cloud-based social network and text analyzer software *Netlytic*. *Netlytic* can automatically summarize YouTube comments' content and is, therefore, a helpful tool for the selection of the comments for the analysis. When I selected the comments for my analysis, my goal was to have a variety of comments with substantial content that contribute to answering the research questions and reflect concepts in humour and comedy research.

Selecting comments with substantial content helped to gauge the audiences' opinions and watching how the jokes are made on YouTube gave insight into how comedians use rhetorical boundaries created by political correctness to make their jokes.

Method of Analysis

I have chosen rhetorical analysis as my method for this major research paper because this method allows me to analyze the structure of the jokes and YouTube responses and what rhetorical appeals comedians and YouTube commenters use. Through analysis of race-based and rape jokes as well as jokes about gender stereotypes as rhetorical devices in selected comedian's YouTube stand-up and YouTube users' comments, I explored and answered the previously identified research questions.

I transcribed and analyzed the data using discourse analysis, structures of arguments, the rhetorical triangle, associational clusters as well as the key considerations of effective speeches: ethos, logos and pathos. Furthermore, I identified a theme across the selected YouTube videos and comments to determine a common sentiment. In the final step of my analysis, I developed a theory based on the identified theme and provide answers to the research questions.

Rhetorical analysis

The study of rhetoric encompasses the social uses of symbols to persuade a change in behaviour or opinion (Hauser, 2002). Analyzing rhetoric means reconstructing a rhetor's intentions behind their behaviour and attitudes. While metaphors have traditionally been the most common trope of rhetorical analyses, this paper investigated jokes as a rhetorical device to achieve a communicative effect and potentially persuade a change in an audience's mindset. Weaver (2011) sees metaphors and jokes as structurally identical rhetorical devices. He defines the structure of a joke with an incongruity or contrast combining two or more elements that do not fit together (Weaver, 2011). Berger (2016) elaborates this definition of a joke as "a short narrative, with a punch line, meant to evoke laughter" (p. 493). Weaver's definition of a joke

leads to his claim that “[...] because rhetoric is the art of convincing and metaphor is one of the dominant tropes, if not the dominant trope, to view humour as having a metaphorical potential is to view it as having the potential to be persuasive or to have a *serious, communicative* impact [...]” (p. 416). This means that a joke can contain several arguments that have different meanings. For example, a joke can be merely offensive, provocative, funny, innocent etc. For the rhetorical analysis, I used Berger’s (2016) list of comedic rhetorical devices (see Appendix A), which serve as the tropes that structure certain jokes. Greenbaum (1999) also stated that “the comedic act is an inherently rhetorical discourse that is designed to convince the audience to look at the world through their comic vision” (as cited in Pérez & Greene, 2016, p. 267).

One of the elements that I analyzed was the context of discourse of the three types of jokes. The context of discourse is also connected with ethos, logos and pathos, which are modes of persuasion and key considerations of effective speeches. Ethos describes the rhetor’s role, credibility and expertise. “The author’s [rhetor’s] position represents a particular communal outlook that points toward agreed-upon values and invites the audience to join (or return to) the community.” (Killingsworth, 2005, p. 252). Analyzing the comedian’s ethos, therefore, gave important insights that, in turn, aided me in answering my third research question regarding the comedian’s race and gender that potentially affects the YouTube users’ resulting comments to their posted performances. In the context of ethos, I also examined associational clusters (Hauser, 2002) in the jokes to learn about the comedian’s thought process and motives. “Associational clusters are terms and ideas that congregate together” (p. 169). Logos focuses on the shared reality of the comedian and their audience. In terms of logos, I particularly analyzed the structure of arguments in YouTube users’ comments. Pathos is the last mode of persuasion

that I analyzed in the YouTube comments. Pathos involves the audience's emotions and potentially affects their responses to stand-up comedy performance.

Ethos, logos and pathos have been defined as the rhetorical triangle consisting of the arguer (= ethos), the argument (= logos) and the audience (= pathos) (Weaver, 2011). The rhetorical triangle was revised by Killingsworth (2005) and now consists of the arguer, the audience and value instead of argument. The value defines the common ground and relationship of the arguer and audience. It might be an existing concept or a completely new one that attracts the audience (Killingsworth, 2005). In this major research paper, I applied the rhetorical triangle to humour, which means that the comedian takes the role of the arguer, the joke's content is the argument/value and the people commenting on the stand-up comedy performance are the audience.

Data analysis

The data analysis is divided into three sections covering each joke-token that I analyzed. Each of the sections introduces the details about the video, continues with the analysis of the joke and concludes with the analysis of the YouTube comments.

Analysis of joke about gender stereotypes

The YouTube video, with the title *Gender Inequality isn't ALL bad – Andrew Schulz – Stand Up Comedy* is the first video I selected for the data analysis. It contains a joke about gender stereotypes and was published by *The Andrew Schulz* channel in the category *Comedy* on January 21, 2018. The video has 2,179,632 views, 49,000 likes and 1,400 dislikes (May 24, 2019). The video received 2,217 (May 24, 2019) comments and is described as “They say you can’t find anything good that has come from gender inequality. Stand-up comedian Andrew Schulz accepts that challenge. Even in gender inequality there’s a silver lining” (The Andrew Schulz, 2018). The following joke about gender stereotypes stretches throughout the video and is the research object of this analysis:

There is no nuance anymore. Nothing is all good, nothing's all bad, right? Because there are a lot of countries that treat women like shit. That’s fucked up, but they got the best food! [Laughter] That’s undeniable, right? The more countries are like ‘Stay in the kitchen! The better the food comes out!’ [Laughter] (The Andrew Schulz, 2018)

The joke’s structure is characterized by the typical structure of all types of humour, which includes an incongruity or a contrast and, therefore, combines two elements that do not usually fit together and potentially cause an absurdity (Weaver, 2011). “There is no nuance anymore. Nothing is all good, nothing’s all bad, right?” can be interpreted as a preparation/introduction for the joke that Schulz is about to make and is, together with “That’s undeniable, right?” an example of inviting the audience’s participation by using “right?” to ask for agreement (Miles,

2014). In this specific context, the joke potentially supports sexist conceptions of ‘truth’ and ‘work’ or expresses sexist ambivalence and incongruity by contrasting that “[...] there are a lot of countries that treat women like shit. That’s fucked up, but they got the best food! [...]” (Weaver, 2011). The humour techniques that Schulz used are absurdity and stereotyping. While it is logical that it is ‘fucked up’ that a lot of countries treat women like ‘shit’, the connection between treating women badly and the best quality of food can be considered unexpected and absurd. This absurd connection can amuse the audience as it does not correspond with its sense of logic (Berger, 2016).

By making this joke, Schulz also uses stereotyping as a humour technique by revealing that women’s stereotypical role is being in the kitchen. The statement “The more countries are like ‘Stay in the kitchen! The better the food comes out!’” consists of the claim that “women in the kitchen equals better food”. On the one hand, Schulz grounds his claim by exemplifying countries that are known for being very progressive regarding gender equality such as Canada and Sweden: “Canada treats their women equally. Their food is like fucking dog shit! [...] Sweden most equal country in the world [...] Swedish food is horrendous.” On the other hand, Schulz adds the Middle East as an example for ‘amazing’ food: “Rough for women out there [...] Middle Eastern food is so good, the women have to wear a veil, so they don’t eat it [...]”.

The context of discourse for this joke is how women are treated across different countries as Schulz (2018) stated by saying that “[...] there are a lot of countries that treat women like shit’. The video’s title *Gender Inequality isn’t ALL bad [...]* and the video’s description add gender inequality to the context of discourse. The capitalized word ‘all’ appears to emphasize the negation that gender inequality is completely bad. To be perceived as funny, the title must be identified as part of the video’s comedic intent. The topic of food in this joke relates to most

women's traditional role in the kitchen, with the kitchen being "[...] the place where modern patriarchal definitions of women were inscribed and new domestic technologies deployed over the twentieth century. They also document how the kitchen offered a space of safety, self-definition, expression and pleasure for women [...]" (Johnson, 2006, p. 124). Schulz' joke can be interpreted as controversial and offensive as it supports gender inequality, which is directly connected with the widespread social justice issue of sexism (Butler-Wall et al., 2016).

Schulz's associational cluster behind this joke could be a provocation by offering a different and new perspective on gender inequality. This motive is exemplified by introducing his joke with "There is no nuance anymore. Nothing is all good, nothing's all bad, right?", which is most likely connected to the video's title *Gender inequality isn't ALL bad* and introduces reasons why gender inequality could be good or why gender equality is not all good.

Analysis of comments to joke about gender stereotypes

For this analysis, I chose 20 comments for the rhetorical analysis. The comments (see Appendix B) either respond to a specific joke made in Andrew Schulz' stand-up comedy performance, to gender equality, male and female cooking skills, feminism or to Schulz himself.

The major themes identified in these comments are agreement, disagreement, feminism and political correctness. Some comments' agreement or disagreement is based on relatability and/or personal beliefs. Schulz' stand-up comedy performance also ignited debates about gender equality, feminism, political correctness and Schulz' personal background that seems to have contributed to his performance's funniness. What was made explicit, not only in the comments that I selected for this analysis was the argument of truth. Many comments including some of the comments in the selection in Appendix B include "this is true" as a claim, which responds to the

joke's rhetorical potential to be persuasive or to have a *serious, communicative* impact according to Weaver (2011).

Comparing the selected comments to Gaut's (1998) identified response types to humour, some comments appear to represent the intellectual response, which is well exemplified by comment 13 that states "What an ingenious way to have a crack at one of the inhumanities of Islam", which potentially refers to Schulz' example of a place with good food: "Rough for women out there [...] Middle Eastern food is so good, the women have to wear a veil, so they don't eat it [...]", of which "rough for women out there [...]" or having to wear a veil could be the main references to the commenter's mentioned "inhumanities of Islam". Another example of a potential intellectual response is comment 18 ("Middle Eastern woman here. Can't stop laughing lol. We DO have the best food. I'll take it."), which came from a self-identified Middle Eastern woman who seemed to enjoy the joke and takes it as a compliment for the Middle Eastern cuisine. Based on this comment it can be interpreted that the joke worked for its cleverness, whereas comment 10 by YouTube user Kiley Rowe ("Why don't men just learn how to cook for themselves? Oh right, too stupid to follow a recipe") might rather be an indicator of an affective response to the joke due to the derogatory term 'stupid' as a backing for men's inability to follow a recipe. It seems that Rowe (2019) uses Schulz' politically incorrect joke to express her opinion about men being unable to follow a recipe and cook for themselves. This response contains a stereotype of men being incompetent at cooking and responds to the joke by using political incorrectness as the frame.

As mentioned, Schulz' (2018) claim made in his joke that treating women badly results in the best quality of food can be considered unexpected and a violation of ordinary mental patterns and expectations, which are conditions that describe the incongruity theory. Comment 17

(“Damn it this is so sexist AND so true. I never thought of it this way before, but my cooking did become [sic] because of gender inequality. I still would prefer money over food tho [sic]”) exemplifies this violation of ordinary patterns and expectations with “I never thought of it this way before”. The comment also implies that gender equality worsened her cooking skills. A few comments also seem to make the superiority and psychoanalytic theories explicit. For example, comment 11 “What an asshole !! Defending women oppression [sic] for food? Is that even funny?” This comment rather describes an affective response to the joke by using vulgar language like “asshole” and exclamation marks to express strong emotions such as hostility or rejection. The commenter is male according to his name (“Mario Arijan Cerquis”) and sees the joke as a defence of women’s oppression for food and questions the funniness of the joke by using the word “even” to potentially express surprise and shock. This comment seems to support Healy’s (2016) claim that a joke is not funny unless it meets a person’s taste conventions prescribed by a political paradigm. The commenter seems to see Schulz’ joke as an endorsement of women’s oppression, which is not a convention supported by his political paradigm.

There are various examples of the psychoanalytic theory of humour in the YouTube responses to Schulz’ jokes. Comment 4 (“Its [sic] everything that gets better.. not just food.”) seems to support the idea of gender inequality making “everything” better. While it is not clear if the comment is of sarcastic nature, the literal text reveals misogynist thoughts. The commenter, who is male (“Jake”) seems to either disclose the desire to participate in this politically incorrect humour without guilt as described in the psychoanalytic theory or use sarcasm to counter Schulz’ joke with a joke. The computer-mediated communication makes it unclear whether the commenter has a sexist attitude or simply participates in Schulz’ stand-up comedy performance. Either way, the comment can be interpreted as an explicitly sexist one.

Another topic that commenters touched on a few times in response to Schulz' jokes was feminism. In doing so, it was more in a derogatory manner that seemed to ridicule the feminist movement. Comment 6 ("1k Feminists watched and disliked this video.") and comment 14 ("Triggering feminists in 3...2...1...") make this mockery particularly apparent. More comments treat feminism in a particularly derogatory manner and reveal misogynist thoughts as well as sexist attitudes. Comment 5 ("This is more true than it is funny. The fact remains that feminism is cancer, period. Its based on socialism, doesn't work [sic]") compares feminism with cancer, which is a preposterous comparison that gives feminism the connotation of being a disease. Based on the commenter's name ("Anthony Caruso"), the commenter is male. Another comment (see comment 15 in Appendix B) that makes an anti-feminist argument was made by a male commenter ("Walter Barone") who identifies himself as Italian:

"I am Italian and I can guarantee that before feminism came...it's exactly how that work if the food no was at least great... you see the table fly... from the dining room to the living room... that's why we have the best food in the world... now with feminist plague if you want eat good Italian food than you will find mostly only men's able to make... very sad...[sic]" (Barone, 2018)

By saying that "you see the table fly...from the dining room to the living room", Barone refers to Schulz' example that women "need a little nudge" (Schulz, 2018, 2:33) to make the food tasty and that nudge is flipping the table to make Lasagne tasty. Barone (2018) calls feminism a "plague", which gives feminism the connotation, similar to Caruso's (2018) comparison of feminism and cancer, of being a disease.

There are also comments that explicitly talk about political correctness influencing stand-up comedy. Comment 1 is a good example here: "it is so good to see real comedy again ,,,,pc culture was a killer [sic]". This comment implies that real comedy has not been available, and it is back "again". The commenter ("niniononous Mak") uses "pc" as the abbreviation for political

correctness and considers it a “culture” that was a killer for comedy. Another example is comment 3 (“how the fuck is this guy still alive?? i think the fact that he isnt THAT famous is actually protecting him lol dont get me wrong he's hilarious but there's no way in hell the pc police will let him say this things lol [sic]”). The commenter (“SuperNOIS3”) mentions the “pc police” as a comparison to the actual police force that maintains law and order. In this context, the police are no actual policemen but most likely a group of people attempting to enforce the ‘law of political correctness’ and, therefore, censoring everything that is not politically correct. By saying that Andrew Schulz “isn’t [sic] THAT famous” and capitalizing “that”, the commenter might refer to comedians that have been censored or experienced public criticism about their stand-up comedy performances because of not making politically correct jokes. Thus, if Schulz was more famous he would not be as protected from the “pc police” because they would not let him tell such jokes. The last comment that touches on political correctness and feminism in relation to comedy is comment 19: “Know why because these she p.c white knights and feminazis are ruining comedy because they don’t understand that comedy is meant to make you feel comfortable about laughing at hurtful truths and themselves” (Darth Kage, 2019). Kage (2019) uses the abbreviation p.c for political correctness and adds white knights, which defines the group of people helping to promote political correctness. This comment does not only attack the concept of feminism itself, but it also sees feminists as feminazis, which is a derogatory term used for feminists describing a radical form of feminism. Radical feminism sees men as enemies of women, which is a fringe idea leading to lesbian separatism and, therefore, has little appeal to most women (Bryson, 1992, as cited in Abdullah-Khan, 2008). The commenter claims that “p.c white knights and feminazis are ruining comedy” because of their lack of understanding of comedy, which, in commenter 19’s opinion, serves the purpose of allowing people to laugh about

hurtful truths and themselves. This interpretation of comedy can be seen as a mixed description of the incongruity and psychoanalytic theory of humour. Just like commenter 5 and 15, commenter 19 expresses anti-feminist and misogynist thoughts as well as a sexist attitude. From their comments, it can be interpreted that they took Schulz' joke about gender stereotypes seriously to express their thoughts on feminism and political correctness. This is also exemplified by comment 12: "Fuck equality. Women are submissive and they dont [sic] deserve shit" (Khan, 2018)

The comments that I selected for this analysis also include examples of the comedian's ethos. Comment 9 describes Andrew Schulz as "another racist jew [sic] 🤔". The laughing emoji indicates that the commenter ("Alien from Mars") enjoyed the joke about gender stereotypes by Schulz. By using "another", the commenter implies that there are more "racist jews" than Andrew Schulz. Other examples are comment 16 ("What the f do you know about how they treat women in the middle east. [sic] Jew propaganda") and comment 20 ("Damn, I didn't even get a chuckle in. Shulz [sic] is not funny to me. He has that typical jewish [sic] white guy humor."). Comment 16 expresses annoyance by using the phrase "What the f [...]" and makes the claim that Schulz' joke is "Jew propaganda". Comment 20 does not find Schulz' stand-up comedy funny and backs it with the reason that Schulz "has that typical jewish [sic] white guy humor." What is noticeable about all these comments is that the commenters have made assumptions about Andrew Schulz' religious background based on his German last name that could be of Jewish descent. Commenter 9 calls Schulz a racist. This seems to be a reference to cultural racism, which is based on cultural differences because Schulz does not talk about races but women, food, various countries and cultures in his jokes (Ramos, Pereira, & Vala, 2019). Commenter 16 seems to be offended by Schulz claim that it is "rough for women out there [in

the Middle East] [...]” and is not the only one who seems to be offended as it can be seen in comment 7 (““Middle-eastern [sic] women are treated right... GTFO [Get the fuck out], they are educated, they vote, and they know their role....they're not forced into having to work”) that uses “GTFO” to express indignation towards Schulz’ lack of knowledge about Middle Eastern women’s societal status. Both comments are supportive of the argument that the joke cannot be funny unless it supports their political opinions. Commenter 20 sees a comedian’s religious background and ethnicity as requirements for the funniness of a stand-up comedy performance. The comment defines Schulz’ humour as “that typical jewish [sic] white guy humour” without any arguments as a backing. Schulz’ religious background appears to be the main criterion that influences comment 9, 16 and 20.

Most comments have an argument but no backing. For example, comment 2 (“This is so true. I believe in equal opportunity for women but having a girl that cooks is way better.”) agrees with Andrew Schulz’s joke that women in the kitchen equal better food, states briefly the belief in equal opportunity, possibly as a disclaimer, and claims that “having a girl that cooks is way better” without backing the claim. Comment 6 is the only example of an argument with an attempt of backing: “Yet, all the best chef’s [sic] are men.....so much for equality by merits? Or skills through oppression, are the only possible solution?” (Agent J, 2019). “Yet, all the best chef’s [sic] are men [...]” is the argument that the commenter states and suggests dichotomous options to back up the claim: “Equality by merits” and “Skills through oppression”. Comment 2 and 6 both show an example of responses that have taken Schulz’ joke as the base to discuss gender equality.

A number of the analyzed comments, especially comments 5, 12 and 15, could be cases of Strain et al.’s (2016) disparagement humour, which means that Schulz’ joke about gender

stereotypes potentially increased the tolerance of prejudice about gender equality in commenters who were already predisposed to it.

Analysis of race-based joke

The second YouTube video that I chose for my analysis is a race-based joke in Ali Wong's Netflix Special *Baby Cobra*. The video's title is *Ali Wong: Baby Cobra - Vows and Racism | Netflix Is A Joke | Netflix* and was published by Netflix on May 5, 2016, with the description "Promise to love, honor, cherish and be a little racist together, forever. Marriage according to Ali Wong (Netflix Is A Joke, 2016). The video has 592,319 views, 3,000 likes, 137 dislikes, and there is a total of 216 comments (May 24, 2019). The joke that is the research object of this analysis goes as follows:

[...] For marriage, I think that for marriage, it can be nice to be with somebody of your own race. The advantage is that you get to go home and be racist together. [Laughter] You get to say whatever you like, you ain't gotta explain shit. My husband: half-Filipino half-Japanese. I am half-Chinese and half-Vietnamese, and we spend a hundred percent of our time shitting on Korean people. It's amazing. [Laughter] (Netflix Is A Joke, 2016)

Like Andrew Schulz' (2018) joke about gender stereotypes, Ali Wong's joke also follows the common structure of all types of humour, which includes an incongruity or a contrast and, therefore, combines two elements that do not usually fit together and potentially cause absurdity (Weaver, 2011). In Wong's case, the incongruity, or specifically the inappropriateness specifically, is that racism is permissible if someone is married to a person of the same ethnicity. By mentioning that "[...] we spend a hundred percent of our time shitting on Korean people.[...]", Wong makes use of an "exclusionary joke" (Weaver, 2011, p. 423) that is characterized by excluding "the other" and commenting about what happens to "the other"

without portraying stereotypes. In this context, “the other” represents Koreans that are getting mocked by Wong and her husband.

The humour techniques that Wong uses in her joke are absurdity and exposure. She introduces her joke by saying that “for marriage, it can be nice to be with somebody of your own race” and finishes her statement with the punchline “the advantage is that you get to go home and be racist together”. While the introduction might be logical, the punchline is surprising and absurd. Wong adds on to the punchline’s absurdity by mentioning her husband’s and her nationalities (“My husband: half-Filipino half-Japanese. I am half-Chinese and half-Vietnamese”) as an example of a married couple that is racist towards Koreans. However, all of Wong’s mentioned nationalities (Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean) are a subgroup (East Asians) of the same ethnicity, namely Asian. This example mixes racism with nationalism and, therefore, illustrates an illogicality as another component of the humour technique absurdity. Wong also uses exposure as a humour technique by using her husband and herself as a couple of the same ethnicity being racist together and mocking Korean people. This revelation exposes her and her husband’s racist behaviour, which possibly represents a common behaviour among other married couples and, thus, causes the audience to laugh because of its relatability to such racist behaviour.

The context of discourse for Ali Wong’s joke is racism in marriage. Wong implies that a married couple with the same ethnicity is allowed to be racist towards other ethnicities, and there will not be any consequences or misunderstandings. This implication can be interpreted as controversial and offensive because of racism’s role in society as a “highly contested issue” (Richards, 1997, p. 10).

Wong's associational cluster behind this racist joke might be creating awareness about the racist behaviour of married couples with the same ethnicity. The joke also allows for the interpretation that people of the same ethnicity can be racist and mock other people of the same or other ethnicities ("You get to say whatever you like, you ain't gotta explain shit"), while people who do not have the same ethnicity cannot be racist towards people with other ethnicities, because there is no shared ethos such as agreed-upon values (Killingsworth, 2005). Another associational cluster could be that Wong intends to create awareness that close relationships such as marriage result in people being comfortable behaving in a racist manner together.

Analysis of comments to race-based joke

For the analysis of comments to Wong's race-based joke, I once again selected 20 comments (see Appendix C) that responded to several aspects of the joke such as cultural and societal aspects in East Asia and to Ali Wong as a comedian. The identified themes of the comments are Asian cultures, racism, political correctness and feminism. Ali Wong's joke also garnered responses about her pregnancy, which is well visible in her stand-up comedy performance, as well as racist and sexist comments about her. Various YouTube comments attempted to explain the joke's meaning and back it with the argument of truth. An example of this intention is comment 8:

Its actually not that harsh if you're Asian and you understand what she's talking about. She not saying she personally hates Koreans, the whole Joke is about her and her husband's ethnicity and the dynamics between Asian countries. For example if she was Chinese and her husband was Korean then the joke would change to shitting on Japanese people. [...] You just have to be part of that culture/ethnicity to really find it funny cause you know its true lol [sic] (Blackjack, 2018).

At the same time, this comment seems to exemplify an intellectual response to Wong's joke (Gaut, 1998) because the YouTube user Blackjack (2018) added lol (= laughing out loud) at

the end of the comment. The comment also confirms Weaver's claim that a joke can have a rhetorical communicative impact by stating that "You just have to be part of that culture/ethnicity to really find it funny cause you know its [sic] true lol". In this context, the commenter claims that one must be part of the culture/ethnicity to recognize the truth in the joke and, therefore, to find it funny. This claim implies that ethos is the dominant aspect that makes this joke funny, which is also exemplified by comment 2: "I am korean [sic] and thought it was hilarious" (Sin, 2019). YouTube user Tom Sin implies that Korean people can find an offensive joke against Korean people funny. Comment 4: "I'm Korean and I'm just saying if I were y'all, I'd shit talk Korean people too LMAO" (Pak, 2018) has the same implication and also implies that Korean people can even make fun of themselves. Both comments are intellectual responses that understand that humour is flawed and see the cleverness behind Wong's racist joke (Gaut, 1998). The YouTube users who composed comments 2 and 4 could both have an amoralist view and find ethically bad attitudes irrelevant for a joke's funniness (Gaut, 1998). Another potential amoralist view is comment 19 by YouTube user Jack Paper (2017): "koreans shit on all asian races too lol its just how asians are [sic]". This commenter reveals that Koreans are also racist towards other ethnicities but also distinguishes Asian nations into different ethnicities ("Asian races"). The comment explicitly reveals Koreans' racist behaviour and could be an example of Sturge's (2010) thoughts that an audience might have had but rarely admits.

Another comment that attempts to explain the joke and uses the argument of truth is comment 13:

The joke is that all people, regardless of ethnicity, is to some degree racist. Some are vocal about it, some just think about it and keep it to themselves...[...] I don't get why some people get offended when it's just true. This is hilarious to me. The question is not whether you have racist thoughts or not, but what are you doing about it? Are you educating yourself so you can understand other people better and change your biases? (Ferrer, 2018)

The YouTube user Stephanie Ferrer argues that everybody is racist to a certain degree. This could be an argument that adds on to Wong's associational clusters, namely to create awareness about everybody's racist behaviour. The comment also represents an intellectual response to Wong's joke.

Comment 6 ("Nationality and race are different") by YouTube user GrassFedMeats addresses the racist joke's illogicality of distinguishing Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean as different ethnicities instead of nationalities, even though they represent a subgroup of the Asian ethnicity. This comment could be based on the urge to correct the joke's illogicality, which represents an affective rather than an intellectual response to Wong's joke.

There are also other affective responses to the racist joke. Comment 3 exemplifies such a response to the joke:

Mmm... no. I'm mixed, my family never spoke towards others in a negative way. I'm raised to accept everyone, regardless of historical and stereotypical point of view. Accepting that everyone is racist is bad. Being racist is actually a disability that is treatable by interacting with people who you feel like you dislike. Racism exist [sic] only on society level. (John, 2018)

The commenter's argument is that accepting everyone as being racists is bad and that racism is a disability, which only exists on a societal level. This argument supports the idea of racism as a social construct and a curable social disease (Hattery, McGettigan, & Smith, 2014).

Ali Wong's joke also attracted politicized comments such as comment 5 by YouTube user gizdonk ("Being racist is funny to liberals now?") and comment 20:

she truly sucks as well as all of you that thinks she's funny. Depraved people like this is why this country has been abandoned by God and we're so messed up by liberal idiots! WAKE UP AMERICA!!! YOUR FREEDOM IS NOT FREE!!! [sic] (courageousPS2714, 2016)

Both YouTube users gizdonk (2018) and courageousPS2714 (2016) mention liberals in their comments. While gizdonk seems to call liberals out on the contradiction that being racist is not in line with liberal values and, therefore, should not be funny, courageousPS2714 explicitly describes liberals as “idiots” and the reason why America is “so messed up” and “abandoned by God”. Both commenters use the word liberals in a rather derogatory manner, and courageousPS2714 even refers to Ali Wong as a “depraved” person who is responsible for the United States’ current societal and political climate.

CourageousPS2714’s negative comment about Ali Wong leads me to the analysis of her ethos that garnered various types of comments from YouTube users, including sexist and racist ones. For example, comment 9 (“She is funny, but we have been duped. She is disguising a Feminist, anti-male delivery as anti-feminism”). The YouTube user Europa Man (2018) implies that Ali Wong is funny, despite being a feminist who delivers anti-male as anti-feminism content. Wong “being funny but a feminist” gives the concept of feminism a negative connotation that could be a factor influencing the funniness of Wong’s stand-up comedy performances. Another comment that addresses Ali Wong directly is comment 11 by YouTube user Angelo Muhajid (2018): “She sucks. And Chinese are not fancy – trust me!!”. Muhajid dislikes Ali Wong and her stand-up comedy performance without explaining why and adds a racist remark (“And Chinese are not fancy”) about Chinese people without backing. Another negative comment about Ali Wong’s performance is comment 12 by YouTube user Aaron Hoppitt (2018): “I thought she was super cringey, racist to whites and unfunny how anyone laughed at her jokes is beyond me.” Comment 12 implies that Wong has explicitly shown a racist attitude towards “whites” in her stand-up comedy performances (Gaut, 1998). This implies that Wong’s racist attitude and cringing behaviour make it impossible to laugh at her jokes.

Several YouTube users used “bitch” in their comments and talked about Ali Wong’s pregnancy, which seemed to have influenced the commenters’ judgement of the funniness of Ali Wong’s stand-up comedy performance. Comment 15 exemplifies this particularly well: “So a dumb bitch who is on stage pregnant telling lame jokes. Yeah this is trash.” (Grey, 2018). This comment represents an especially hostile response to Wong’s joke by using derogatory terms such as “dumb”, “bitch” and “lame”. Another hostile response to Wong’s joke is comment 16 “Documentaries on genocides and mass murders are funnier than this bitch” (Eaxl, 2017). This comment is particularly exaggerated and grotesque in its comparison of Ali Wong’s stand-up comedy performance’s funniness with the funniness of “documentaries on genocides and mass murders”. Both, the YouTube users Eaxl (2017) and Grey (2018), used the word “bitch” in their comments. The word “bitch” has various connotations. It describes a female dog but is also used to describe sluts or domineering women, degrading them collectively and making them vulnerable to verbal violence (Lee, 1998). Thus, both commenters explicitly reveal sexist attitudes by vocally degrading Wong as a “bitch”. Grey (2018) also refers to the fact that Ali Wong was pregnant during her stand-up comedy performance (“[...] who is on stage pregnant”), which suggests that Ali Wong’s pregnancy is a factor in the funniness of her joke.

Two more comments address Wong’s pregnancy by making remarks about her baby: Comment 17 “I [sic] hope the baby will not become a racist person..” (O’Line, 2017) and comment 18 “feel sorry for [sic] baby who is gonna have to take an idiot as his/her mother” (Vatanek, 2017). Both comments depict Ali Wong in a bad light, once as a “racist” and once as an “idiot”. There is no backing for these arguments but there is an implication that Wong’s race-based humour will have negative effects on her future motherhood and parenting skills.

Wong's joke attracted further racist comments such as comment 1 "Asians and Koreans the [sic] all look the same" (Robles, 2019). This comment is an example of the "other-race effect" (Laurence, Zhou, & Mondloch, 2016, p. 374) suggesting a problem with individuating between other-race faces, which underlines Feingold's claim that all Asians look the same for white people and vice-versa (1914, as cited in Laurence et al., 2016). Comment 7 is another example of a racist and derogatory comment about Chinese people:

OMG! These delusional Chinese see themselves as French of the asia [sic] LoL. Try to fix your toilet first. A hole in the ground is not a bathroom my dear fancy Chinese. And tell U.N. and Peace Corp to stop sending people to China to provide running water LoL. (Excaliber, 2018)

Depending on the YouTube user Excaliber's own ethnicity, this comment could also be considered ethnocentric that gives the commenter's own ethnicity and culture superiority by disdaining Chinese people and their culture (Angraini, Toharudin, Folmer, & Oud, 2014). The commenter also indicates that Chinese people see themselves as the superior culture of Asia despite that their bathrooms are "holes in the ground" and the U.N. as well as Peace Corp still provide running water in China. By adding these degrading aspects about China, the comment provides additional details about the discourse of Asian cultural and societal aspects.

Two more comments add on to that same discourse. Comment 9 by YouTube user anru (2018) states:

Asians tend to only hate, fight and look down upon each others in the so called modern world where "modernization" is widely believed to equal to "westernization" (Not necessarily it's true). And comedy is all about rural truths. [sic]

By adding "And comedy is all about rural truths [sic].", anru (2018) supports the idea of comedy as an instrument to create awareness about social issues (Morreall, 2014). This commenter suggests that Wong's joke is true and backs it by saying that "Asians tend to only hate, fight and look down upon each others [...]". Comment 14 by YouTube user S Lee (2018)

also indicates that there are tensions between Asian people: “Asians need to unite, the reason why we take so much shit in the West is because we're too internally divided to stand up for ourselves as a group” (Lee, 2018). This comment and comment 9 are both politicized comment, which suggest that the Western world is superior to the Asian world. This suggestion supports the concept that westernization is accompanied by the opinion that Western values have to be adopted by developing nations (Heath, 2004).

Analysis of rape joke

The third YouTube video that I analyzed was Dave Chappelle’s stand-up comedy performance about male rape. The video is titled as *Dave Chappelle | Man Rape | Stand-Up Comedy* and was published by *Laugh Factory* on April 14, 2010, with the description: “Caught me slippin!” Dave Chappelle UNCENSORED at The Laugh Factory in Hollywood, CA (Laugh Factory, 2010). The video has a total of 10,077,449 views, 77,000 likes, 1,400 dislikes and received 5,662 comments (May 24, 2019). The joke that I chose to analyze is:

[...] I'm looking at the paper the other day – I'm not making this up – there's a serial rapist in Houston – there's nothing funny about serial rape, BUT [Laughter] what is noteworthy about this particular rapist is that all of his victims have been men. Enjoy your evening! [pretends to walk off the stage while the audience is clapping]. I can't believe you clapped about that. Some man raping men in Houston is the most gangster shit [Laughter] so far – like seven men have already come forward in the Houston area in report of this motherfucker, which means he must have raped thousands [Laughter] cause it's a tough phone call for us to make [Laughter]. It's not like when you get raped ladies, society don't give a fuck about male rape. There is no hotline for us. When men get raped, you just gotta get up walk that shit off. Huh got raped, caught me slippin'. [Laughter] (Laugh Factory, 2010)

The structure of this joke is the same as Schulz’ and Wong’s jokes and consists of incongruities (“there’s nothing funny about serial rape, BUT [...]” and “seven men have already come forward in the Houston area in report of this motherfucker, which means he must have

raped thousands”). To introduce his joke, Chappelle uses a real crime case about a serial rapist in Houston that he recently read about in the newspaper. This introduction serves as the short narrative before the punchline of the joke (Berger, 2016). What differs from the previous jokes is that Chappelle elaborates his joke into several more jokes throughout his performance and by doing so, exposes more aspects of male rape. He also integrates his audience into his performance with statements such as “Enjoy your evening!”, “I can't believe you clapped about that.” and “It's not like when *you* get raped ladies”.

The context of discourse for Chappelle’s joke is male rape and the news article about a serial rapist in Houston, which was a real crime case on the first male-on-male serial rapist profiled by the FBI (Rogers, 2007).

Chappelle’s used humour techniques are unmasking and comparison. He unmask the news article about the serial rapist in Houston by giving more details about the crime case. By mentioning female rape (“It's not like when you get raped ladies”), he also makes use of comparison as a humour technique to create awareness about a double standard between male and female rape, which is that society gives female rape more attention than male rape. This is supported by Chappelle’s statement: “[...] society don't give a fuck about male rape. There is no hotline for us. [...]”.

Chappelle’s associational cluster to make this joke about male rape is that he wanted to draw attention to male rape and its myths, which have not received as much attention as female rape in society (Abdullah-Khan, 2008).

Analysis of comments to rape joke

The 20 comments on the rape joke that I selected are listed in Appendix D. The overall perception of the commenters seems to reflect the current research on male rape, rape myths and feminist views about male rape. Commenters used a dichotomous argument of “truth” that influenced the funniness of Chappelle’s joke. It was either funny because the commenters regarded the joke as true and a revelation of social behaviour or the joke was not funny because it was true, and rape is a taboo topic to joke about (see comment 4 and 17 in Appendix D). Political correctness, feminism, the double standard between different genders in the context of the same crime (rape) and Dave Chappelle’s personality were the dominant topics in the commenters’ responses.

The underlying theories of humour, the relief and superiority theory, were also identifiable in the comments. One example is comment 1 (“Omg this isn't even a funny topic but I can't stop laughing 😂”), which expresses laughter as a release of pent-up energy that was suppressed because of social authority defining rape as a taboo to joke about because of its shock value (Morreall, 2014). An example of the superiority theory present in the YouTube responses would be comment 11: “What a sick bastard joking about that subject. What a sick load of vial [sic] people making comments about how funny it is.” It is an affective and emotional response expressed by derogatory vocabulary such as ‘sick’ and ‘bastard’. The commenter considered rape as a taboo topic and people laughing about Chappelle’s joke a “sick load of vial [sic] people” devaluating rape’s shock value. Another comment that exemplifies the superiority theory is comment 18:

I'm normally a big fan of Dave Chappelle's comedic work, but this joke was too tasteless for me. [...] Call me all you want, but rape jokes are not funny and the people who joke about rape are mostly ignorant people who don't understand that these jokes might

victimize survivors even further. Some rape survivors might even think that their beloved comedic idol Chappelle treats rape like a joke. [...] MechaKnightJerry, 2011)

Joking about rape at the cost of victims potentially further victimizes survivors and Chappelle joking about rape survivors makes him guilty of treating rape as a joke. The commenter argues that mostly ignorant people find rape jokes funny. However, the argument of victimizing survivors more by joking about rape is countered by commenter 17 (MrTrippytaka) who identifies as a victim of sexual abuse:

Speaking as a male victim of sexual abuse I can say that I laughed and was sad at the same time. The line Dave uses "We're gonna take that shit to the grave," is funny and sad because of how true it is. I helped counsel hundreds of men over the years for whom disclosure was one of the hardest steps they ever took in their lives. I applaud Dave for telling it like it is. Sometimes the most unpalatable truths can only be wrapped in humour for us to hear them at all (MrTrippytaka, 2012).

The comment is an example of an actual rape victim who was able to laugh about Chappelle's joke and uses the argument 'the joke is funny because it's true and sad'. MrTrippytaka (2012) builds credibility for his argument by disclosing his victim status and expertise in counselling male rape victims. "Sometimes the most unpalatable truths can only be wrapped in humour for us to hear them at all" is an example of humour's role as a coping mechanism to help deal with or overcome serious trauma. The comment also suggests that Chappelle's intention behind the joke, which was creating awareness about the difficulty of reporting rape for male victims was understood. Another commenter that seemed to have understood Chappelle's intention to draw attention to male rape myths is commenter 7:

I honestly hate rape jokes but this one is great, because its not making fun of rape,its making fun of our culture around it.Men aren't treated the same as women when they get raped because theyre supposed to be "tough" and walk it off. Dave makes light of this because it IS ridiculous. [sic] (Axolotl Hamilton, 2018)

This comment offers an intellectual response to Chappelle's joke and suggests that the joke belongs to subversive rape humour, which targets rape culture by referring to the "absurdity

of the sexual hierarchy and its continuity, or by making individuals who perpetuate rape culture the “butt of the joke” as stated by Strain et al. (2016, p. 89). The commenter’s argument (“theyre [sic, men] supposed to be “tough” and walk it off”) is supported by research on masculinity that sees rape as an act of power and control that has overlooked male rape due to the strong gender stereotypes, in which men and women are socialized. For example, men are supposed to be the dominant and strong gender and hence disallowed to be victims of rape (Abdullah-Khan, 2008).

Other comments support this perception. For example, Comment 3 draws attention to another male rape myth:

元の [another commenter] Well in this situation it was Men raping men. Also its not women who makes it difficult for men to come forward... Its [sic] other men. If a man were to come forward and say that a woman raped him then he would get clowned by other men not women. [...] Men set that double standard not women [...] [sic] (Historical Freedom, 2018).

Historical Freedom (2018) reveals the myth of male invulnerability by stating that “If a man were to come forward and say that a woman raped him then he would get clowned by other men not women”. This myth includes men themselves who do not recognize that men can and do become victims of rape (Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996, as cited in Abdullah-Khan, 2008). A response to Historical Freedom’s comment goes as follows:

Historical Freedom [another commenter] Not gonna lie, basically no one cares about male rape at the moment. It’s presented as a primarily female problem (which it is), but people need to recognize that it’s as serious when it happens to men as when it happens to women (Strionic, 2018).

Both comments suggest that rape is a gruesome crime regardless of the victim’s gender. However, there has been extensive research on female rape but not as much on male rape, which suggests that rape is not gender neutral. The rape cases of 2004 during the Iraq War have brought

more acknowledgement to male rape as a legal and social issue, but there is still a lack of support and understanding (Abdullah-Khan, 2008).

Comment 13 (“Nah. He said it “society doesn’t give a shit about men rape” and that includes the political correctness that happens today.”) also argues that there is a lack of support and understanding for male rape and explicitly involves political correctness. This comment implies that political correctness while purporting to be inclusive, excludes male rape from the discourse about rape. This creates a paradox that political correctness is not actually inclusive. Another comment that explicitly mentions political correctness is comment 15 (“If he did this same joke today so many people would get butthurt and “outraged” saying rape isn’t a joke. Fuck political correctness”). This comment indicates that rape seems to have become a taboo subject to joke about and people are nowadays sensitive and outraged about such jokes “saying rape isn’t a joke”. The use of the word “fuck” shows an affective response filled with resentment about political correctness influencing stand-up comedy performances. Another commenter who does not think that comedy is political and cannot just be laughed about is commenter 20 (see Appendix D). This commenter expresses frustration about the idea that people’s taste in humour have become an extension of their political identities (Healy, 2016). However, since rape is a politicized social issue, it potentially ignites political debates.

The YouTube comments also included feminism. All comments that talked about it treated feminism as a negative movement, which is to be mocked and blamed for not acknowledging male rape and thereby reinforcing the stigma around it. Comment 9 (“1.2k feminists disliked the video”) is characterized by a sexist attitude and uses sarcasm to mock feminists by making them the group of 1,200 YouTube users that disliked Dave Chappelle’s video. Another comment that specifically blames feminists and the “leftist society” for not

acknowledging male rape as a social issue is comment 12: “Funny...but sad as F****, because it is tr: feminist, leftist society does not give a shit [sic]” (TechnocraticDreadnought, 2017). On the one hand, this counters the fact that feminism has shed light on the issue of male rape and contributed to research about it: “The politicization of rape by feminism and the victims’ movement has successfully drawn interest in this area, placing it on the political agenda (Abdullah-Khan, 2008, p. 115). On the other hand, the comment also supports the argument that feminists give little consideration to male rape:

Feminist work has developed from the premise that women are dominated and controlled by men, and that rape and other forms of violence against women serve to reinforce this dominance. As such, feminist work has ignored the fact that males too are raped [...] (Abdullah-Khan, 2008, p. 69).

One comment that demonstrates the ignorance of male rape particularly well is comment 16 that expresses a sexist and misandrist attitude:

Male 'victim'? Well now you [sic] what it feels like to be a woman. Women aren't treated as victims when they claim rape. But you want pity? Tell your sex to stop it. [...] (Hauranah, 2013).

The quotation marks (‘victim’) indicate sarcasm, mockery and unacceptance of men becoming victims of rape. The comment also suggests that women do not rape, which is a misconception because there have been cases of rape involving women as the perpetrators (Abdullah-Khan, 2008).

There are a few comments that attributed the responsibility for double standards between male and female rape to feminism. Comment 10 is one of them: “Wow, stupid bitches cheer about man rape. Imagine if it’s a woman, bitches” (Klaus Heissler, 2018). This is a particularly affective response filled with hostility (“stupid bitches”) about his perceived double standard that allows women to “cheer” about male rape but disallows men to “cheer” about female rape. By using derogatory and vulgar vocabulary like “stupid bitches”, the commenter potentially reveals

a misogynist and sexist attitude. Comment 14 (see Appendix D) is another example of an affective comment that expresses dismay about the same double standard (“Make a rape joke about men they laugh their ass off. Double standard extreme feminist [sic]”). Additionally, the comment blames radical feminism for this double standard.

Compared to the other two comedian’s ethos, which I analyzed in this major research paper, Dave Chappelle mostly garnered positive reactions and praise about his joke, with only a few negative comments about his appearance. Commenter 2 (see Appendix D) claims that there is a new Dave Chappelle and the former, real Dave Chappelle died. The new Dave, as the commenter expresses in a rather derogatory manner, is “[...] bigger thicker way blacker and his voice is way deeper. [...]” The former and real Dave Chappelle died because of Oprah Winfrey. This implies that Oprah Winfrey and “her cronies” had a major influence on Dave Chappelle’s stand-up comedy performances that have now become worse. It is unclear how the commenter’s arguments are backed, apart from the statement “Even his family says he was killed and replaced.” Commenter 6 makes reference to Chappelle’s physical appearance (“I liked him better when he was skinny like this”), which apparently influences the funniness and quality of Dave Chappelle’s stand-up comedy performances. One comment that focuses on the influence of the comedian’s ethnicity on the accessibility of the stand-up comedy’s content is comment 19:

the great thing about dave Chappelle is that his comedy, even for a black guy, is accessible to any race. He talks about blacks, whites, asians, muslims and he isn't afraid to speak his mind about life in his comedy. [sic]

The statement “even for a black guy” indicates that black comedians usually do not make their stand-up comedy accessible to all ethnicities. While this comment praises Chappelle for his inclusion of all ethnicities in his stand-up comedy performances, it also implies that other black comedians discriminate against other ethnicities. Another comment that praises Chappelle’s comedic talent is comment 8, which states that Dave Chappelle is “the prime example that

comedians are actually one [sic] of the smartest and introspective people ever the beginning of this speaks volumes [sic]”. This comment supports the role of comedians that I described in the literature review as someone who creates awareness about social issues, fosters critical thinking in the audience about the social and political system as well as potentially trains the audience’s mental flexibility (Morreall, 2014). Dave Chappelle’s stand-up comedy performance is the reflection of Sturges (2010) described role of comedy, which is the exposure of the most dangerous and disturbing feelings for the purpose of making people aware of social behaviour around the topic of male rape.

Discussion

This section summarizes and compares the previous analyses of the three joke-tokens and YouTube comments to them. Finally, I conclude the discussion by offering responses to the research questions that I identified in the literature review and explored in my analysis.

The three jokes that I analyzed make all use of several humour techniques (stereotyping, exposure, unmasking and comparison). None of the jokes can be considered politically correct as they are either about social issues, namely gender stereotypes and racism, or a topic with shock value such as rape. This also implies that these jokes can ignite political debates among the YouTube users, which was observable very well in the comments about feminism, liberals, gender stereotypes, sexism, misogyny, racism, East Asian culture, rape myths and misandry. The most dominant theme across all YouTube comments that I analyzed seemed to be the aversion to feminism. Regardless of the joke, feminism was the concept that commenters blamed for the existence of political correctness, the censorship of stand-up comedy performances, for a joke's lack of funniness, and for the lack of awareness and importance of male rape in research and society. A group that commenters also mentioned in a negative way was liberals that they, along with feminists, seem to regard as the apparent promoters of political correctness.

The fact that such joke-tokens have the potential to ignite political debates goes hand in hand with the political nature of humour that has the ability to unite or divide the audience and the stand-up comedian who makes the joke (Pérez & Greene, 2016). Hence, in the case of these joke-tokens, it is never “just funny or comedy” as one commenter suggested (see comment 20, Appendix D). Humour rather seems to be a coping mechanism that, through laughter, helps to cope with the reality of unpleasant human social behaviour and issues.

By inviting the audience to participate, which Schulz and Chappelle particularly demonstrated, they negotiated the acceptance and the funniness of the joke with their audience, to which the audience responded by either laughing or not laughing. This negotiation reflects the rhetorical triangle of ethos, logos, and pathos that represents the relationship between the comedian and, in the case of this major research paper, the YouTube users that comment about the joke. Although the YouTube users' comments were computer-mediated communication, they gave more insight into the social perception and discourse about gender stereotypes, sexism, racism, and rape than the actual audience (usually part of the rhetorical triangle) attending the stand-up comedy performance.

While all three comedians might have the intention of creating awareness about social issues and behaviours, their jokes allow for different interpretations. On the one hand, Schulz' joke about gender stereotypes can be seen as promoting the oppression of women and endorsing traditional gender roles from the past, Ali Wong's racist joke might be seen as normalizing racist behaviour within relationships and Dave Chappelle's rape joke can be seen as perpetuating male rape myths. On the other hand, the jokes might have simply shed light on social behaviour that is perceived as common, odd, unjust, amusing, annoying etc. by the comedian or on issues that were socially constructed such as racism (Hattery et al., 2014). The possible interpretations underline the rhetorical and communicative impact that jokes can have, especially when looking at the argument of truth that many YouTube commenters used to agree or disagree with the jokes by the three comedians. In stand-up comedy, there seems to be a fine line between subversive humour and disparagement humour. While the literal text of the joke is present, the subtext is only inferable (Strain et al., 2016). In stand-up comedy, it is an art and talent to convey the literal meaning of a joke so that the subtext is clearly derivable – and even then, the audience's

interpretation depends on experiences, emotions, values, beliefs and political ideologies. This means that the audience (in the case of this major research paper the YouTube users) are left to their own interpretation of the joke's subtext. This can generate affective responses that are mainly hostile, offensive, sad and resentful as well as sometimes framed with political correctness to express resentment about the topic that was joked about (see comment 11 in Appendix B, comment 14 in Appendix C, and comment 16 in Appendix D). I consider Dave Chappelle's rape joke subversive humour because he creates awareness about the issue of male rape that has not gotten much attention in research and society. He uses a real male-on-male rape news story from Houston, Texas, to introduce the joke and builds his joke around that story. Chappelle does not make rape itself the subject of the joke, but the social behaviour, myths and stigma around male rape. By doing so, he targets and makes fun of the existing "sexual hierarchy and its continuity" (Strain et al., 2016, p. 89). While Schulz' joke literally asks for women to be in the kitchen so that the quality of the food is good, the subtext's meaning allows for various interpretations. This requires critical thinking and can direct the YouTube users' attention to Schulz' ethos to guess what his attitude towards gender stereotypes is in order to evaluate the offensiveness of the joke's literal meaning. Ali Wong's joke is more of a personal exposure of her own racist behaviour with her husband that – because it is a confession and joke about herself – can potentially reduce the offensiveness of the joke's literal meaning. However, unless Andrew Schulz and Ali Wong explicitly showed a sexist or racist attitude outside their artistic performances, their attitudes remain open to interpretation and make attributing a sexist or racist attitude to Andrew Schulz and Ali Wong pure speculation. This makes it impossible to clearly categorize Schulz' and Wong's joke as either subversive humour or disparagement humour. The comments to each joke-token gave an inconclusive insight into whether the YouTube users

interpreted the jokes as subversive humour or disparagement humour. The comments varied from affective to intellectual responses. While explanations on how to understand the joke (see comment 8 in Appendix C) indicated that the joke was perceived as subversive humour, the vulgar comments about feminism rather seem to support the idea of the joke being disparagement humour, which would “increase tolerance of prejudice in people who are predisposed to it” (Weaver, 2011, p. 415).

Looking at the identified research questions in my literature review, I can certainly say that the YouTube commenters’ perception seems to be that political correctness has been attempting to influence the stand-up comedy environment with the aim to dictate the content of stand-up comedy performances. This statement also supports my hypothesis as defined in the introduction of this major research paper. However, the YouTube users talking about political correctness see it as a “killer” of stand-up comedy and as a negative concept mainly promoted by liberals, the leftist society and feminists. (see comment 1, 3, 9, 19 in Appendix B and comment 13, 15 in Appendix D). These groups have defined political correctness as the apparent language of inclusiveness and non-discrimination, but which only allows a specific repertoire of jokes in stand-up comedy that has the purpose to subvert a negative social behaviour or culture, i.e. rape culture. This creates the boundary, which requires the jokes to be politically correct and inoffensive to everyone. As the comments to the YouTube stand-up comedy performances have shown, this is a utopic objective because of the diverse political ideologies in society and the different psychological aspects of humour. For example, humour can serve as a coping mechanism to deal with trauma etc., which was very well described by commenter 17 “Sometimes the most unpalatable truths can only be wrapped in humour for us to hear them at all” (see Appendix D). This stance supports Healy’s (2016) view that political correctness does

not have the ability to consistently negotiate the nuances between artistic performances like stand-up comedy that might offer progressive ideas and presentations that are hate-filled and non-inclusive. Making only a certain repertoire of jokes available comes with censorship and limitation of the comedian's artistic freedom. Moreover, this poses the question: Who is the agent of censorship? A few YouTube comments in the analysis promoted this type of censorship (see comment 11 in Appendix B and D). Additionally, just because political correctness causes a shift in language towards inclusion and non-discrimination does not mean the elimination of social issues such as sexism racism and rape. A shift in language does not seem to be enough to change attitudes and beliefs in society. The numerous offensive, resentful and hostile YouTube comments rejecting political correctness, feminism, women, men and liberals in this major research paper are the proof of sexist attitudes' existence, despite political correctness' objective to achieve an inclusive and non-discriminatory society. Stand-up comedy can create awareness about such attitudes, about negative social behaviour, stereotypes, social issues etc. In doing so, a stand-up comedian must be aware of the boundaries dictated by society and the current political climate. However, if a stand-up comedian garners their audience's laughter, there is no need to change the stand-up comedy's content.

My analysis has shown that the rhetorical boundaries that political correctness seems to have created around stand-up comedy are not completely accepted by the audience, the YouTube users and the stand-up comedians. The fact that I have analyzed politically incorrect joke-tokens that have garnered negative and positive YouTube comments proves that the stand-up comedians that I included in my analysis make their jokes without considering these boundaries and still "enjoy the mental gymnastics" (Morreall, 2014). This might also be an indication that stand-up comedians have the perception that their audiences are not interested in "mild jokes" (Sturges,

2010, p. 288). Perhaps, stand-up comedy serves the purpose of reminding us that we are all fallible and guilty of the negative and odd social behaviours, stereotyping, issues etc. that stand-up comedians want to create awareness about. This allows stand-up comedy to be a safe space for audiences to recognize negative thoughts that they might have had and critically think about them.

Moving to my final research question in the literature review, I can confirm that the stand-up comedian's race and gender garnered comments from YouTube users. The analysis made apparent that the stand-up comedians' ethos seems to influence the funniness of a joke in different ways. According to the YouTube comments, pregnancy, the stand-up comedian's body, race, ethnic background and religious orientation seemed factors for the funniness of a joke (see comment 20 in Appendix B, comment 14 and 12 in Appendix C, and comment 6 in Appendix D). While Schulz and Chappelle both received some vulgar comments that included words like "asshole" and "sick bastard", there was not as much name calling as in the YouTube comments to Wong's racist joke. She received more hateful comments than Schulz and Chappelle. Her YouTube audience's comments included "bitch", "dumb", and "idiot", which, apart from hostility and resentment, revealed sexist attitudes by degrading Wong as a "bitch". This difference in YouTube reactions to Ali Wong's stand-up comedy performances potentially reflects a known double standard between the evaluation of female and male stand-up comedy performances (Shouse & Oppliger, 2012). Some YouTube users even commented on Wong's pregnancy, making her stand-up comedy's content a criterion for her parenting skills (see comment 17 and 18 in Appendix C). Obviously, the computer-mediated communication facilitated resentful and hostile comments about the stand-up comedians. Some commenters (see comment 11 in Appendix B and comment 12 in Appendix C) also attributed a sexist attitude to

Schulz and a racist attitude to Wong. As mentioned before, it is rather difficult to attribute such attitudes to stand-up comedians when they move within the framework of stand-up comedy. Due to both stand-up comedians' comedic intent to provide a new context for a joke, they explicitly subvert sexist and racist attitudes that would be manifested in implicit contexts (Gaut, 1998).

Conclusion

This major research paper's analysis offered a new perspective on stand-up comedy, examining both, jokes and audience's (here YouTube users) comments to them. One limitation of this analysis is that it included only a very limited number of comments that do not sufficiently represent the major social perception around gender stereotypes, racism and male rape. An additional limitation of this analysis is the inability to clearly identify sarcastic YouTube comments.

The findings in this analysis have shown that political correctness is difficult to implement in the world of stand-up comedy because it fails to consistently negotiate nuances between artistic performances like stand-up comedy that might offer progressive ideas and presentations that are hate-filled and non-inclusive (Healy, 2016). Another challenge is the agency of creating boundaries around political correctness: Who is in charge of limiting the content of stand-up comedy performances to create a politically correct stand-up comedy environment?

The YouTube users' comments have given insight into the social perception of gender stereotypes, racism and male rape and consisted of differing opinions to the three stand-up comedy performances that I analyzed in this major research paper. Some of the comments applauded the stand-up comedians for their jokes, some implied that the three joke-tokens (jokes about gender stereotypes, race-based jokes, and rape jokes) should not be used in stand-up comedy, and some comments were filled with hostility. This difference suggests that there is a thin line between subversive humour and disparagement humour that depends on the stand-up comedian's delivery, timing and talent.

While Andrew Schulz and Dave Chappelle received some vulgar comments about themselves, Ali Wong garnered even more heinous comments about herself, which potentially confirms the double standards that exist between the evaluation of female and male stand-up comedy performances. In all three cases, commenters seemed to find the stand-up comedians' race, gender and physical appearance to be criteria for the funniness of their jokes. This confirms that the ethos played an important role for the YouTube users in how they perceived the three stand-up comedy performances.

Stand-up comedy is a type of artistic performance that stand-up comedians navigate in and constantly negotiate the acceptance of a joke with their audiences. In doing so, just like other artists, stand-up comedians cannot expect that everyone in the audience will laugh at their jokes. The audience's divergent mindsets, political ideologies, experiences and emotions influence their reactions to the different joke-tokens. Stand-up comedians must be aware that jokes about highly politicized topics can have a serious communicative impact and garner diverse reactions. This makes comedic writing in such areas an art and underlines the role of stand-up comedy as an offer of progressive ideas and as an instrument to create awareness about common, negative, odd, unjust, and amusing social behaviours. The audience's relatability with the specific behaviour can earn laughter during a stand-up comedy performance, cause audience members to heckle, garners resentment etc.

To conclude this section, I want to acknowledge that comedy is an enormously complex research topic that needs to be explored further. Although there is humour and comedy research, these areas have mainly presented dichotomous concepts without taking into consideration the audience of a stand-up comedy performance and hence does not do justice to the complexity of

stand-up comedy as an artistic performance with social and political impact as well as the diverse mindsets of the society that we live in.

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Appendices

This section is divided into four appendices: Appendix A includes Berger's techniques of humour in alphabetical order and appendices B, C and D are lists of comments to the different joke-tokens.

Appendix A

Berger's techniques of humour in alphabetical order		
1. Absurdity	16. Embarrassment	31. Parody
2. Accident	17. Exaggeration	32. Puns
3. Allusion	18. Exposure	33. Repartee
4. Analogy	19. Facetiousness	34. Repetition
5. Before and After	20. Grotesque	35. Reversal
6. Bombast	21. Ignorance	36. Ridicule
7. Burlesque	22. Imitation	37. Rigidity
8. Caricature	23. Impersonation	38. Sarcasm
9. Catalogue	24. Infantilism	39. Satire
10. Chase Scene	25. Insults	40. Scale, Size
11. Coincidence	26. Irony	41. Slapstick
12. Comparison	27. Literalness	42. Speed
13. Definition	28. Mimicry	43. Stereotypes
14. Disappointment	29. Mistakes	44. Theme and Variation
15. Eccentricity	30. Misunderstanding	45. Unmasking

Appendix B

Comments on joke about gender stereotypes	Author	Date
1. it is so good to see real comedy again ,,pc culture was a killer [sic]	niniononous Mak	21/03/2019
2. This is so true. I believe in equal opportunity for women but having a girl that cooks is way better.	Danlovesmakinvids	15/03/2019
3. how the fuck is this guy still alive?? i think the fact that he isnt THAT famous is actualy protecting him lol dont get me wrong he's hilarious but there's no way in hell the pc police will let him say this things lol [sic]	SuperN0IS3	12/03/2019
4. Its [sic] everything that gets better.. not just food.	Jake	18/02/2019
5. This is more true than it is funny. The fact remains that feminism is cancer, period. Its based on socialism, doesnt work [sic]	Anthony Caruso	10/01/2019
6. 1k Feminists watched and disliked this video.	paisa007	08/01/2019
7. Middle-eastern women are treated right... GTFO, they are educated, they vote, and they know their role....they're not forced into having to work	Sam10947	06/01/2019
8. Yet, all the best chef's are men.....so much for equality by merits? Or skills through oppression, are the only possible solution?	Agent J	06/01/2019
9. another racist jew [sic] 🤔	Alien from Mars	05/01/2019
10. Why don't men just learn how to cook for themselves? Oh right, too stupid to follow a recipe	Kiley Rowe	04/01/2019
11. What an asshole !! Defending women oppression [sic] for food? Is that even funny?	Mario Arijan Cerquis	12/26/2018
12. Fuck equality. Women are submissive and they dont [sic] deserve shit	barood khan	12/16/2018
13. What an ingenious way to have a crack at one of the inhumanities of Islam	tobo86	12/03/2018
14. Triggering feminists in 3... 2... 1...	Dan Duario	12/02/2018

Comments on joke about gender stereotypes	Author	Date
15. I am Italian and I can guarantee that before feminism came... it's exactly how that work if the food no was at least great... you see the table fly... from the dining room to the living room... that's why we have the best food in the world... now with feminist plague if you want eat good Italian food than you will find mostly only men's able to make... very sad...[sic]	Walter Barone	09/25/2018
16. What the f do you know about how they treat women in the middle east [sic]. Jew propaganda	Omar khateeb	09/19/2018
17. Damn it this is so sexist AND so true. I never thought of it this way before, but my cooking did become [sic] because of gender inequality. I still would prefer money over food tho [sic]	TheAhlivia	15/08/2018
18. Middle Eastern woman here. Can't stop laughing lol. We DO have the best food. I'll take it.	Jojo Aljarallah	01/08/2018
19. Know why because these she p.c white knights and feminazis are ruining comedy because they don't understand that comedy is meant to make you feel comfortable about laughing at hurtful truths and themselves	Darth Kage	05/11/2018
20. Damn, I didn't even get a chuckle in. Shulz [sic] is not funny to me. He has that typical jewish [sic] white guy humor.	BRI	02/03/2018

Appendix C

Comments on race-based joke	Author	Date
1. Asians and Koreans they all look the same	Jesus Robles	01/04/2019
2. I am korean [sic] and thought it was hilarious. Korean pride!!	Tom Sin	01/02/2019
3. Mmm... no. I'm mixed, my family never spoke towards others in a negative way. I'm raised to accept everyone, regardless of historical and stereotypical point of view. Accepting that everyone is racist is bad. Being racist is actually a disability that is treatable by interacting with people who you feel like you dislike. Racism exist [sic] only on society level.	Michael John	12/25/2018
4. I'm Korean and I'm just saying if I were y'all, I'd shit talk Korean people too LMAO	rebecca pak	05/11/2018
5. Being racist is funny to liberals now?	gizdonk	05/10/2018
6. Nationality and race are different	GrassFedMeats	09/30/2018
7. OMG! These delusional Chinese see themselves as French of the asia [sic] LoL. Try to fix your toilet first. A hole in the ground is not a bathroom my dear fancy Chinese. And tell U.N. and Peace Corp to stop sending people to China to provide running water LoL.	Excaliber	08/28/2018
8. Its actually not that harsh if you're Asian and you understand what she's talking about. She not saying she personally hates Koreans, the whole Joke is about her and her husband's ethnicity and the dynamics between Asian countries. For example if she was Chinese and her husband was Korean then the joke would change to shitting on Japanese people. Its like saying the French don't like the Americans. And the Irish don't like the British. You just have to be part of that culture/ethnicity to really find it funny cause you know its true lol [sic].	Blackjack	07/24/2018

Comments on race-based joke	Author	Date
9. She is funny, but we have been duped. She is disguising a Feminist, anti-male delivery as anti-Feminism.	Europa Man	06/29/2018
10. Asians tend to only hate, fight and look down upon each others in the so called modern world where "modernization" is widely believed to equal to "westernization" (Not necessarily it's true). And comedy is all about rural truths. [sic]	anru	06/21/2018
11. She sucks. And Chinese are not fancy-- trust me!!	Angelo Muhajid	06/06/2018
12. I thought she was super cringey, racist to whites and unfunny how anyone laughed at her jokes is beyond me.	Aaron Hoppitt	06/04/2018
13. The joke is that all people, regardless of ethnicity, is to some degree racist. Some are vocal about it, some just think about it and keep it to themselves...and of course, it has varying degrees. I don't get why some people get offended when it's just true. This is hilarious to me. The question is not whether you have racist thoughts or not, but what are you doing about it? Are you educating yourself so you can understand other people better and change your biases?	Stephanie Ferrer	05/20/2018
14. Asians need to unite, the reason why we take so much shit in the West is because we're too internally divided to stand up for ourselves as a group	S Lee	05/19/2018
15. So a dumb bitch who is on stage pregnant telling lame jokes. Yeah this is trash.	Kotak Grey	02/17/2018
16. Documentaries on genocides and mass murders are funnier than this bitch.	Eaxl	11/26/2017
17. i [sic] hope the baby will not become a racist person..	Reza O'Line	02/01/2017
18. feel sorry for [sic] baby who is gonna have to take an idiot as his/her mother.	So Vatanak	01/22/2017

Comments on race-based joke	Author	Date
19. koreans shit on all asian races too lol its just how asians are [sic]	Jack Paper	01/13/2017
20. she truly sucks as well as all of you that thinks she's funny. Depraved people like this is why this country has been abandoned by God and we're so messed up by liberal idiots! WAKE UP AMERICA!!! YOUR FREEDOM IS NOT FREE!!! [sic]	courageousPS2714	05/21/2016

Appendix D

Comments on rape joke	Author	Date
1. Omg this isn't even a funny topic but I can't stop laughing 😂	Akanksha	04/06/2019
2. That's the real dave Chappelle RIP. Not sure how the "new" dave is taller bigger thicker way blacker and his voice is way deeper. Even his family says he was killed and replaced. That's the real dave remember him because he died because of people like Oprah and her cronies. Yes murdered. [sic]	Pyluserectusdungenhavenhooter Man	02/15/2019
3. Historical Freedom [other commenter] Not gonna lie, basically no one cares about male rape at the moment. It's presented as a primarily female problem (which it is), but people need to recognize that it's as serious when it happens to men as when it happens to women.	Strionic	11/26/2018
4. This wasn't funny. Because it is true.	contrafax	11/19/2018
5. -- 元の [other commenter] Well in this situation it was Men raping men. Also its not women who makes it difficult for men to come forward... Its other men. If a man were to come forward and say that a woman raped him then he would get clowned by other men not women. Even kids... Say a male student where caught having sex with their female teacher... Typical reaction from other guys is usally "Aye!!! You the man!" Other way around and somebody is getting locked up. Men set that double standard not women. As a matter of fact there is an episode of SvU (Law Order) that shows as a prime example of what I'm talking about... There is only one, so just google svu episode where guy gets raped by women and you'll see what I'm	Historical Freedom	09/29/2018

Comments on rape joke	Author	Date
<p>talking about. There is also one based on that Huston case where those men where getting raped by other men... and watch the reactions...[sic]</p>		
6. I liked him better when he was skinny like this	David Mouzayek	09/23/2018
7. I honestly hate rape jokes but this one is great,because its not making fun of rape,its making fun of our culture around it.Men aren't treated the same as women when they get raped because theyre supposed to be "tough" and walk it off.Dave makes light of this because it IS ridiculous. [sic]	Axolotl Hamilton	08/07/2018
8. Dave Chappelle is the prime example that comedians are actually one [sic] of the smartest and introspective people ever [sic] the beginning of this speaks volumes	D W	07/03/2018
9. 1.2k feminists disliked the video	Yash K	04/09/2018
10. Wow, stupid bitches cheer about man rape. Imagine if it's a woman, bitches.	Klaus Heissler	03/29/2018
11. What a sick bastard joking about that subject. What a sick load of vial [sic] people making comments about how funny it is.	CowsRus	12/22/2017
12. Funny..but sad as F****, because it is tr: feminist, leftist society does not give a shit. [sic]	TechnocraticDreadnought	05/10/2017
13. Nah. He said it "society doesn't give a shit about men rape" and that includes the political correctness that happens today.	NickToVa	04/13/2017
14. make a rape joke about women they call us insensitive and support rape. Make a rape joke about men they laugh their ass	Majin fu	11/12/2015

Comments on rape joke	Author	Date
off. double standard extreme feminist [sic]		
15. If he did this same joke today so many people would get butthurt and "outraged" saying rape isn't a joke. Fuck political correctness.	Ch0plol	03/30/2014
16. Male 'victim'? Well now you [sic] what it feels like to be a woman. Women aren't treated as victims when they claim rape. But you want pity? Tell your sex to stop it. Now you wanna cry because it backfired.	Hauraunah	01/12/2013
17. Speaking as a male victim of sexual abuse I can say that I laughed and was sad at the same time. The line Dave uses "We're gonna take that shit to the grave," is funny and sad because of how true it is. I helped counsel hundreds of men over the years for whom disclosure was one of the hardest steps they ever took in their lives. I applaud Dave for telling it like it is. Sometimes the most unpalatable truths can only be wrapped in humour for us to hear them at all.	MrTrippytaka	12/15/2012
18. I'm normally a big fan of Dave Chappelle's comedic work, but this joke was too tasteless for me. I couldn't really laugh about these jokes. Call me all you want, but rape jokes are not funny and the people who joke about rape are mostly ignorant people who don't understand that these jokes might victimize survivors even further. Some rape survivors might even think that their beloved comedic idol Chappelle treats rape like a joke. But I've got a problem with that audience too. Ignorant people..	MechaKnightJerry	02/12/2011

Comments on rape joke	Author	Date
19. the great thing about dave Chappelle is that his comedy, even for a black guy, is accessible to any race. He talks about blacks, whites, asians, muslims and he isn't afraid to speak his mind about life in his comedy. [sic]	leepipesateneo	06/18/2011
20. why can't we just watch and laugh at this video. this shit ain't political. it comedy [sic]	nayr3636	05/13/2010
