An Evaluation on Classification of Humor Theories

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Abstract

Humor-related literary genres occupy a significant place in literary research and history to the extent that western scholarship in particular, often treats humor and related literary genres almost as an autonomous discipline. Although certain studies that address the emergence of humor focus on the three main theories, namely “superiority”, “incongruity” and “relief” they may be divergent in creating interdependent sub-theories. Therefore, these theoretical approaches as a whole require classification pertaining to the history of humor, to the modes of creating it, and to the disciplines that interpret it. Based on this, the subject of the present essay is the classification of the humor theories in terms of historical periods, style of humor conception, and academic disciplines. Moreover, introduction of these classifications to Turkish scholars is the aim of the present study. Current studies on humor have been mostly put forward within certain theoretical frameworks. The most important reason for the emergence of this theoretical tendency in the current studies on humor is that a large amount of knowledge has been obtained in the theoretical sense over time since the ancient age when the origins of studies on humor, and laughter emerged. In the early period, philosophers focused more on laughter, so the first theoretical approaches to laughter emerged during this period. However, many thinkers and scholars of the modern period have introduced different theoretical approaches through different perspectives on laughter and humor. Moreover, the current laughter and humor studies based on this theoretical background have become an interdisciplinary field of study with the participation of scholars from various disciplines such as literature, education, folklore, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, history, communication, medicine, economics, and fine arts. As a result of the laughter and humor studies carried out in the course of its historical development process, laughter and humor theorists have established many humor theories. Aforementioned humor theories have been classified by scholars based on some of their unique characteristics. This study reclassifies the humor theories in terms of their similarities and differences under the titles “classifications according to historical periods”, “classifications of theory families and classifications due to the style of humor conception”, and “classifications according to academic disciplines” and evaluate these theories and classifications as a whole.

Keywords

Humor, Laughter, Theory, Classification, joke

References

These semi-otic theories of humor are semantic in spirit, and, although less formalized than strictly linguistic theories, show findings remarkably similar to those of linguistics. Their advantage, in Attardo's view, is the global point of view, which, when adopted, can allow linguistics to encompass, e.g. visual humor. These minor deficiencies obviously cannot overshadow the overall achievement of Linguistic theories of humor. I recommend the book without reservation to any one interested in humor research. References: Attardo, Salvatore and Victor Raskin, 1991. Humor Theory. Quote by Bernard Shaw. Our desire to write about the. The author analyzed the existing classification systems of humor as well as countless jokes, anecdotes, humoresques, comical narratives, caricatures, etc. He came upon the logic of the funny, and came to the conclusion that a quantitative evaluation is possible. But the author in his younger years was not skilled in technical work and its methodology. He could not lay out his thoughts in an accessible and convincing manner. The first classification attempt of laughter and humor theories and an evaluation of these theories within the framework of certain main theories were conducted by British psychologist James Sully. In his book titled An Essay on Laughter: Its Forms, Its Causes, Its Development and Its Value, published in 1902, Sully noted that there were essentially two main laughter theories: the first of them could be called “Moral Theory” or “Theory of Degradation” (Sully, 1902: 120) and the other could be called “Intellectual Theory” or. 1. Theory of Degradation or Moral: Aristo, Hobbes and Brain's Theories 2. Theory of Contrariety or Incongruity: Kant's Theory of Nullified Expectation, Schopenhauer’s Theory and Different forms of the incongruous (Sully, 1902: 119-135). The general acceptance