

# 1 On the importance of the dynamics of humour and comedy for 2 constructionism and reflexivity in social science research methodology

## 3 4 **Abstract**

5 Humour and comedy have gained increased significance in academic research in recent  
6 years. This article examines the importance of humour and comedy as valuable tools in  
7 qualitative social science research methodology. It makes the original contribution of  
8 utilizing humour and comedy theory, and critical understandings of both their macro and  
9 micro mechanisms and functions, to argue that humour and comedy can accommodate,  
10 and indeed, expedite, social science research methodology in relation to two key  
11 principles: constructionism and reflexivity. This represents a significant and rigorous  
12 theoretical contribution to not just humour and comedy theory but the paradigm of  
13 qualitative social science methodology. Following a review of the benefits of using  
14 humour and comedy in qualitative research, the article considers how the broader theories  
15 and more intricate mechanics of humour and comedy can facilitate research into the social  
16 world, examining how humour and comedy can inform and develop constructionism and  
17 reflexivity.

18  
19 **Keywords:** humour; comedy; social science methodology; constructionism;  
20 reflexivity

## 21 22 **Introduction**

23 The academic significance of comedy has grown in recent years (Lockyer, 2016). There  
24 is increasing recognition that humour and comedy have functions beyond the frame of  
25 play (Fox, 2018). A growing body of literature exists that suggests there is potential for  
26 using humour and comedy in social science research methodology. In sociology (Davis,

27 1979; Watson, 2011, 2015a, 2015b, 2019), geography (Browne, 2016), health research  
28 (Wilkinson et al., 2007), folklore studies (Norrick, 2006), theatre and performance (Fox,  
29 2016) and creative writing (Batty & Taylor, 2019), there are calls for humour and  
30 comedy to be considered useful theoretical and methodological tools in social science  
31 research methodology.

32 In 1979, Davis argued for the use of humour in Symbolic Interactionism to  
33 engage students. Recognising that sociology students preferred ethnomethodology and  
34 Marxism than Symbolic Interactionism, Davis suggested that adopting humour as a  
35 topic and ‘the primary investigative tool’ in Symbolic Interactionism would ‘renew the  
36 appeal of Symbolic Interactionism by making it the only school of sociology that uses  
37 *humor* as its principal resource for investigating the social world’ and would distinguish  
38 it from ‘other approaches to the social world, which we might collectively call the “dour  
39 or sour sociologies”’ (1979, pp. 106-107; original emphasis). That said, there is a usage  
40 of irony and surrealism in Karl Marx’s writing that is often unacknowledged (When,  
41 1999). More recently, Sen (2012) advances humour analysis as an analytical tool to  
42 explore a range of cultural and social subjects. Sen outlines numerous shared  
43 characteristics that define humour analysis and qualitative research methods, such as a  
44 focus on spoken and written words in naturalistic settings, and argues that as humour  
45 analysis can explore how individuals, groups and societies understand a range of topics,  
46 in different contexts and cultures, it should be much more widely utilized as an  
47 ‘investigative qualitative research tool’ (p. 1). Watson (2015a, 2015b) provides a  
48 detailed case for the use of humour and comedy as social science methodology. Watson  
49 argues that using humour and comedy should be methodological principles  
50 underpinning the conduct and reporting of social science research. Drawing on three  
51 dominant theories of humour - superiority, relief and incongruity - and the social,

52 political and cultural analysis and critique of particular types of humour and comic  
53 techniques - satire, irony and parody - Watson (2015a) argues that the humorous view  
54 ‘presents unique opportunities for investigating the social’ (p. 2).

55 This paper significantly develops this existing literature by arguing that humour  
56 and comedy are essential tools in qualitative social science research methodology by  
57 utilizing humour and comedy theory and critical understanding of both their macro and  
58 micro mechanisms and functions. It begins by reviewing the benefits of using humour  
59 and comedy in qualitative research set out in existing research. The focus subsequently  
60 shifts to consider how broader theoretical approaches to understanding humour and  
61 comedy can facilitate research into the social world before narrowing the analytical lens  
62 to examine how the more intricate mechanisms and functions of humour and comedy  
63 can accommodate, and indeed, expedite, social science research methodology in relation  
64 to two key principles underpinning qualitative research: constructionism and reflexivity.  
65 These principles are discussed because of their paradigmatic centrality in social science  
66 research methodology and their macro-theoretical alignment with humour and comedy.  
67 This suggests that humour and comedy may be far more important for qualitative social  
68 science research than is usually assumed.

69

## 70 **Contextualising humour and comedy in social science methodology**

71 Reflections on the benefits of humour and comedy in social science methodology  
72 specifically refer to their use during data collection and analysis in qualitative research,  
73 particularly focus groups, interviews and creative writing, and in the write-up of  
74 research. When discussing humour use in focus groups exploring service user  
75 participation in medical education, Wilkinson et al. (2007) identify the functions of  
76 humour used during focus group participant interaction; to cope with difficult topics

77 within the focus group context; and to manage power relations within the focus group.  
78 Similarly, in her focus group study of sensitive everyday topics, such as bodies, Browne  
79 (2016) observed how using humour is a useful research strategy when dealing with  
80 potentially taboo topics as it allowed ‘participants to explore what they found  
81 interesting or incongruent about each other’s practices, and challenge held social norms  
82 and meanings’ (p. 203). Furthermore, Robinson’s (2009) analysis of humour used in  
83 focus groups exploring women’s experiences of smoking and motherhood, highlighted  
84 how humour enabled women to share ‘dark secrets’ (p. 267) that would not be  
85 expressed without using humour. Robinson (2009) concludes that humour is ‘not just a  
86 product of focus groups’ as it can include ‘specific verbal expressions that actually  
87 “produce” data’ (p. 275).

88         Discussions regarding methodological benefits of humour and comedy also refer  
89 to their use in interviews. Recognising that the success of interviews largely depends on  
90 the personal and professional qualities of the interviewer, Legard et al. (2003) argue  
91 humour can ‘foster a sympathetic interviewing environment: the ability to share a joke  
92 made by the interviewee or to lighten a situation with humour can facilitate the  
93 interviewing process’ (p. 143). Similarly, Oring (1987) used jokes to expedite life  
94 history interviews. Norrick (2006) argues that humour benefits rapport between  
95 interviewee and interviewer in oral history interviews and can aid recall of events and  
96 experiences. Norrick acknowledges how the ‘dual perspective of humour’ can enhance  
97 critical insight in oral history interviews. This ‘dual perspective’ is caused by the  
98 realisation of discrepancies between how events, experiences, actions or observations  
99 were understood in the past and present, which, as outlined below, can be explained by  
100 the incongruity theory of humour.

101           Alternative ways of understanding topics generated by humour and comedy  
102 underpin the use of comedy in creative writing methodology. Calling for “‘comedy-as-  
103 method’” as ‘a discrete mode of research enquiry’, Batty and Taylor (2019) employ the  
104 tools of comedy in their fictional writing to express their research findings and to  
105 ‘critique and offer alternative readings and positions’ (p. 390). Comedy writing practice  
106 as research encourages audiences to critically reflect on social, cultural and political  
107 norms and expand knowledge. Creative methods also underpin innovative theatre and  
108 performance research methods. Fox (2016) employs creative audience research  
109 methodologies by asking audiences to respond to her stand-up comedy performances by  
110 producing one-line jokes. The ‘comedic countersignatures’ (p. 27) provide ‘more  
111 embodied and discursive types of research ... as part of performance documentation’ (p.  
112 22), which Fox argues might have been more difficult to access had critical comments  
113 on her stand-up comedy been elicited via interviews and focus groups.

114           While these are valuable insights into the potential benefits of humour and  
115 comedy for qualitative social sciences research, some of these observations are made in  
116 brief concluding discussions, and sometimes, are secondary to the main topics of the  
117 research. They do not foreground close consideration of the unique characteristics, or  
118 defining features and functions, of humour and comedy that lend themselves to social  
119 science research methodology. This paper provides a different approach as it *centres*  
120 critical discussion of the potential of humour and comedy to social sciences research. In  
121 addition, rather than considering the opportunities for specific qualitative data collection  
122 and analysis methods, the paper takes a macro approach to assessing the progressive  
123 role of humour and comedy to social sciences research more broadly by considering  
124 how key principles of social sciences research - constructionism and reflexivity - are  
125 enhanced through the employment of humour and comedy in the research process.

126 Paradoxically, in adopting this macro approach to social sciences research principles  
127 (instead of considering *individual* data collection and analysis methods), both macro  
128 and micro understandings of humour and comedy are utilized. Wider theoretical  
129 understandings of humour and comedy are examined to assess what they proffer social  
130 science researchers in addition to exploring how the more intricate mechanics and  
131 functions of humour and comedy benefit social science research methodology.

132

### 133 **Humour and comedy theory and social science methodology**

134 The three dominant theories of humour – superiority, incongruity and relief theory –  
135 each offer insights for development of the understanding of humour and comedy as  
136 critical tools for social scientific methodology. Of central importance are observations  
137 on incongruity theory as a discussion of humour and creativity. This is a significant  
138 component of the argument *for* the place of humour and comedy in the research process  
139 because research, like humour, is a creative endeavour.

140 Superiority theory - the idea of comedy as ridicule of the butt of the joke  
141 (Aristotle, 2012; Nietzsche, 2015) - most obviously translates into humour and comedy  
142 as a mode of critique, that the subject of research might through the methodology of  
143 investigation, be subjected to satire or parody and this might aid understanding of the  
144 research topic. This method may have ethical implications and while it might suit  
145 research into elite groups, or of obtuse institutions, and might form a useful technique  
146 for social theorists to talk to one another, it may be of limited ethical value for those  
147 researching social problems or disadvantaged groups.

148 Incongruity theory (Schopenhauer, 1819; Koestler, 1949, 1967), as a theory of  
149 the structure of humour and comedy, and the idea that contrasting objects are brought  
150 together in humour and comedy, offers more potential for developing social scientific

151 methodology, because it illuminates humour in the world as an important research  
152 finding (as explored below), and the use of incongruity as a tool for making significant  
153 conceptual shifts and developments in knowledge creation. This is not out of step with  
154 the processes of sociological theory more generally, where any conceptual framework  
155 or concept offers the analogous reinterpretation of social reality through its framework.  
156 What comedic incongruity as methodology offers is a greater emphasis on drawing  
157 together different objects, rather than the replication of similarity. It might be that social  
158 and political ideology is rigorously tested through incongruity rather than referred to as  
159 explanation.

160           Watson's (2011, 2015a, 2015b, 2019) work on developing a methodology of  
161 humour marries superiority and incongruity approaches. The emphasis in Watson's  
162 work is on the ridicule and parody of social phenomena through incongruous conceptual  
163 shifts that broadly highlight absurdity but also have potential to create new knowledge.  
164 Watson (2011) states 'Satire... functions as a form of critical analysis while irony  
165 contributes to the development of theory and "paradigm innovation"' (p. 139). It is an  
166 account that urges social theorists to use irony, satire and parody as a method of critique  
167 (or even ridicule). This is a textual practice that focuses on argument and on  
168 sociological theory, rather than an explanation of how the methodology could usefully  
169 be taken into the field, although that is not precluded. Watson (2011) defines irony  
170 through its ability to change expectations and as 'operating within a "logic of  
171 discovery"' (p. 140). This process of discovery need not be limited to irony and can be  
172 used to describe many other tropes of incongruity, or of comedy in general. Through a  
173 reading of Kenneth Burke on humour and rhetoric, Watson (2019) introduces  
174 incongruity to dialectics as a method of analysis and critique, through techniques of  
175 'trained incapacity, functional stupidity and interpassivity' (p. 91). This builds on

176 Burke's 'perspective by incongruity' or 'planned incongruity' which is the use of  
177 incongruity as criticism. Trained incapacity is defined as a lack of flexibility to adapt  
178 skill sets, functional stupidities are conscious irrationalities produced by being a role  
179 holder in an institution, and interpassivity is the projection of our activity onto objects  
180 or 'others'.

181         The creative process of developing new social scientific theoretical frameworks  
182 and applying them to the social world can be illuminated through work on creativity as  
183 a process. This is a field that has discussed humour, comedy and incongruity in close  
184 proximity to creativity. If comedy can be closely aligned with creativity, this might  
185 signal the importance of comedy as a research methodology. Koestler (1949, 1967)  
186 argues that comedy and laughter are a part of the 'creative trinity' along with scientific  
187 discovery and artistic creation. This places comedy and humour near to the outputs of  
188 research or the creation of new ideas. Similarly, Hyde (2008) details the connections  
189 between mythical trickster figures, humour and laughter, and the creation of culture, and  
190 Gladwell (2013) outlines Brer Rabbit and other trickster figures as examples of creative  
191 resistance. Brer Rabbit is the spirit of resistance in African American slave narratives. A  
192 similar humour of resistance is documented by Goffman, for example, in humorous  
193 responses to stigmatisation from people with impairments (Crow, 2005). Goffman  
194 documents this as a response to the ludicrousness of 'serious' social processes that  
195 create the 'normal' and 'deviant' (Crow, 2005, p. 115). This puts humour at the centre  
196 of the construction of culture and understandings of the place of identities and bodies in  
197 cultural systems, but importantly, it also signposts transformative potentials of humour.  
198 These ideas are present in the philosophy of affect. Weeks (2020) discusses the  
199 transformative potential of laughter and comedy, describing 'comic laughter as a  
200 potentially transformative affect' (p. 2). Weeks (2020) discusses how laughter can



201 disrupt perceptions of time as an interruptive force. Both laughter and the moment of  
202 creative inspiration have a transformative potential in their emergence, and thus  
203 provoke movement and change in some contexts. This might, in the research context,  
204 encourage changed perceptions of experience and time that uncover truths and  
205 contribute to the generation of data.

206         Research suggests that creative thinkers have a particular relationship with  
207 incongruity. Ambiguity and incongruity can be aligned as both are descriptions of the  
208 coinciding of two objects or concepts that are the material of comedy. The experience of  
209 ambiguity or ambivalence has been shown to connect with a propensity for creative  
210 thinking. Fong (2006) observes that ‘individuals experiencing emotional ambivalence  
211 are better at recognizing unusual relationships between concepts’ (p. 1016). In this  
212 research, experiences of emotional ambivalence led to the observation of an unusual  
213 environment which triggers creative thinking through ‘recognizing unusual  
214 associations’ (p. 1019). Fong (2006) found this was conditioned by the experience being  
215 conceived as unusual, rather than normal, and it follows that the experience of  
216 ambivalence or incongruity, humorous or not, could be creative in the research context  
217 because it has the potential to lead to the discovery of new connections between  
218 concepts.

219         The final of the three theories, relief theory, describes the psychological release  
220 or relief generated by laughter (Spencer, 1864; Bain, 1865). This theory provides  
221 different challenges and obstacles. If the release of laughter is encouraged in the  
222 research process, in an effort to increase in situ positive emotion, or to placate the  
223 impact of the social world, critical analysis may be lost, and the social world may be  
224 trivialised in research outputs. This release might not be a hindrance in all cases, as  
225 Richie and Lewis (2011/2003) argue, ‘the ability to share a joke made by the

226 interviewee or to lighten a situation with humour can facilitate the interviewing process’  
227 (p. 143). Returning to Weeks (2020), laughter is an example of ‘affect’. The ‘release’ of  
228 humour and laughter in research contexts points towards meaning making situations,  
229 and points of significance rather than triviality (trivialisation is returned to in the  
230 discussion).

231         Having mapped out the ways in which humour and comedy theory can explain  
232 how humour and comedy can facilitate research into the social world, and discussed  
233 some of the tensions involved, the focus now shifts to examining the more intricate  
234 mechanics and functions of humour and comedy and how they relate to the key  
235 principles of qualitative social science inquiry - constructionism and reflexivity.

236

### 237 **Humour, comedy and constructionism in social science methodology**

238 The argument that our social world is constructed through social processes has  
239 underpinned the history of the social sciences through the work of scholars including  
240 Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Schutz and Goffman. However, the term constructionism  
241 gained popularity in the social sciences in the 1960s (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008).  
242 Berger and Luckman (1967) made a significant contribution to our understanding of  
243 constructionism. Drawing on symbolic interactionism, they argued that social  
244 phenomena are created and sustained through social practices. Constructionism views  
245 ‘knowledge as constructed, and not necessarily reflecting any external realities. In this  
246 view, knowledge depends on convention, human perception and social experience’  
247 (Gilbert, 2008, p. 506). Constructionism rejects the epistemological positions of  
248 positivism and empiricism. Knowledge is created by social processes and interactions,  
249 and ‘in principle social scientific is no different from everyday knowledge’ (O’Dowd,  
250 2003, p. 41).

251           The application of constructionism to social science research enables  
252 phenomena to be constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed, and thus ‘places  
253 constructionism squarely in a political environment’ (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008, p. 9).  
254 For social constructionists, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation and religion are  
255 classifications based on socio-cultural practices, behaviours and beliefs, rather than  
256 objective reality. As social constructs, these categories are fluid, malleable and  
257 dynamic, vary across time and cultural context, and are products of history and culture.  
258 Constructionism works at micro and macro levels (Burr, 2015). Micro constructions  
259 occur in everyday social interaction. Macro constructions are based on the power of  
260 language linked to ‘material or social structures, social relations and institutionalised  
261 practices’ (Burr, 2015, p. 25).

262           Gergen and Gergen (2003) argue that constructionist inquiry invites researchers  
263 to ‘open the door to multiple traditions, each with their own particular view of  
264 knowledge and methodology’ and challenges researchers to ‘be creative, to initiate new  
265 ways of producing knowledge that are tied to our particular values and ideals’ (p. 60).  
266 Accepting this invitation, and rising to this challenge, this paper argues that humour and  
267 comedy have much to offer constructionist researchers and should be considered useful  
268 additions to the constructionist researchers’ toolkit. Davis (1993) discusses potential  
269 links between humour and social construction and some constructionist research  
270 acknowledges humour and comedy as useful tools for reconstruction in everyday life.  
271 For example, Chambliss’ (1996) analysis of humour and comedy used by nurses to  
272 create ‘normality’ in a context that is largely ‘abnormal’. However, little research  
273 examines how the specific dynamics of humour and comedy can contribute to the  
274 constructionist research endeavour. This is perhaps surprising given the social aspect of  
275 humour and comedy (Bergson, 1911/1999).

276 Co-creation of social phenomena is central to constructionist research. As  
277 Gergen (2015) argues, there is ‘enormous potential for creating new worlds together.  
278 We can *co-create* new ways of understanding, new traditions of relating, and new forms  
279 of life’ (p. 28; emphasis added). Burr (2015) advises that constructionist researchers  
280 should view research as a ‘co-production’ (p. 172) between research participants and  
281 researchers. Co-creation, or co-production, are central to humour and comedy (Scarpetta  
282 & Spanolli, 2009; Smith, 2009) as both the joke-teller and audience contribute to the  
283 success, or otherwise, of attempts of creating humour and comedy. Employing a  
284 communication tool in social science research that is *dependent* on co-creation could  
285 facilitate, and deepen, co-creation of social phenomena. Humorous and comic meaning  
286 depends on social negotiation which draws on contextual dynamics, delivery of the  
287 humour and comedy and identities of those involved in the humorous or comic  
288 interaction (Palmer, 1994; Douglas, 1978). Co-creation is possible through humour and  
289 comedy in research interactions where the attempt at humour or comedy leads to a  
290 laughter, or unlaughter, response. Unlaughter refers to the failure to find pleasure in the  
291 humour and comedy (Billig, 2005; Smith, 2009). Laughter and unlaughter are socially  
292 significant as they signal the extent to which constructions of social phenomena are  
293 shared between the researcher and participants and highlight any divergences and  
294 contestation in understanding, which can encourage critical reflection and reanalysis.  
295 Furthermore, different types of laughter have different social and communicative  
296 purposes (Provine, 1996). This is central to constructionist research. As Gergen (2015)  
297 advises, constructionist ‘dialogues also invite us to be critically aware. They invite us to  
298 explore the possible ways in which such traditions are harmful to our lives, and to  
299 consider how we might generate new alternatives’ (p. 223). The use of humour and  
300 comedy can contribute to the creation of ‘new alternatives’ due to their structural

301 features. Through his examination of the linguistic structures and mechanisms of racist  
302 humour, Weaver (2011) argues that humour and joking structurally employ rhetorical  
303 devices, which are ‘particular linguistic mechanism[s] that manufactures a play-on-  
304 words to create a non-literal meaning’ (p. 19). Rhetorical devices allow fusing of  
305 ambiguous ideas, knowledge and discourse to facilitate, reinforce or redefine  
306 classifications and meanings. For example, Weaver (2011) discusses ‘reverse humour’  
307 to describe comedy used by black people where the ‘etymology can be traced ... to an  
308 earlier discourse that uses identical signs but which employs these signs for a reverse  
309 semantic effect’ (p. 119).

310 Gergen (2015) highlights the importance of transformative dialogue to  
311 constructionism, which is ‘specifically aimed at bringing about new and more  
312 promising futures’ (p. 122) and outlines three ‘forms of action’ (p. 137) pertinent to  
313 transformative dialogue. These are: ‘telling my story’; ‘affirming the other’; and  
314 ‘revealing similarities’. Gergen (2015) argues that dialogue depends on those involved  
315 in the communication understanding each other and sharing views on topics that are  
316 personally important. Humour and comedy can play important roles in ‘telling my  
317 story’. Humour and comedy often depend on the sharing of personal stories and  
318 experiences, including mundane everyday lived experiences and interactions delivered  
319 via observational comedy through to sharing of unusual or unique experiences that are  
320 infrequent and experienced by only a few individuals and groups. In her analysis of  
321 comedy used by women, Gilbert (1997) highlights the autobiographical nature of  
322 performed comedy, which can also be applied to jokes, comic narratives and tales  
323 shared in personal interactions. Gilbert (1997) argues that comedy offers marginalised  
324 groups a way of constructing their marginality and providing cultural critique. Some

325 types of comedy, such as self-deprecating comedy, are useful tools for subverting the  
326 status quo and offering ideological critique.

327         Furthermore, in her analysis of comedy used by disabled comedians, Lockyer  
328 (2015) highlights the affirmative potentials of comedy: '[b]y collectively embracing  
329 positive individual and collective identities through their comedy on their own terms,  
330 disabled comedians can begin to confront negative stereotypes surrounding impairment  
331 and disability' (p. 1405). Such comedy counters the 'tragic' conceptualisation of  
332 impairment and disability and moves towards a positive understanding of disability that  
333 highlights the rich lives of some disabled people, which Kuhn (1962) might refer to as  
334 shifting from one paradigm to another. Such observations link to Gergen's (2015)  
335 reflections that simply 'telling one's story' is not sufficient for transformative dialogue  
336 as it is also 'vital that one feels affirmed in their expression, that is, understood and  
337 appreciated' (p. 137). As Hay's (2001) Model of Humour Support illustrates,  
338 recognition, understanding and appreciation are central components of the comedy  
339 process.

340         Transformative dialogue is also facilitated by reducing distance and polarities  
341 between those involved in the communication and by sharing experiences, such as  
342 sharing a smile, that can simultaneously 'reveal similarities' (Gergen, 2015). Laughter  
343 caused by humour and comedy can create social connectedness. When analysing the  
344 meaning of laughter, Bergson (1911/1999) reveals its social aspect and the significance  
345 of social connection in the experience of laughter, maintaining, 'you would hardly  
346 appreciate the comic if you felt yourself isolated from others ... Our laughter is always  
347 the laughter of a group (p. 11). Double (2014) observes that sharing is central to  
348 comedy: 'shared feelings, shared experiences, creating a sense of community with the  
349 audience' (p. 206). Furthermore, Coser's (1959) analysis of humour used in hospital

350 settings highlights how humour and comedy can reduce distance, arguing that ‘laughter  
351 and humor are indeed like an invitation, be it an invitation for dinner, or an invitation to  
352 start a conversation: it aims at decreasing social distance’ (p. 172; see also Lockyer,  
353 2015).

354           Therefore, humour and comedy shared in social science research settings can  
355 help to create a sense of community and reduce social distance to facilitate  
356 transformative dialogue. In addition to contributing to, and facilitating, key features of  
357 constructionist research such as the co-creation of social phenomena and the three  
358 ‘forms of action’ of transformative dialogue, there are other aspects of constructionist  
359 research that lend themselves to the use of humour and comedy. O’Dowd (2003) argues  
360 that constructionism encourages ‘reflexivity ... [and the] social scientist is very much  
361 part of the life-world being studied and acts as an interpreter, mediator or communicator  
362 in this world’ (p. 42). It is to the relevance and significance of humour and comedy to  
363 reflexivity and social science research that the argument now turns.

364

### 365 **Humour and comedy as reflexivity in social science methodology**

366 Reflexivity is an important concept in qualitative social scientific research, influencing  
367 feminist methodologies (Haraway, 1991; Richardson, 2004 Ackerly & True, 2008),  
368 critical race studies (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012) and social theory more generally  
369 (Giddens, 1991; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Speck, 2019), among other areas.

370 Reflexivity is a process whereby researchers acknowledge, understand and attempt to  
371 mitigate their presence, influence or bias in the research process, particularly in the field  
372 collecting data and in analysing data (Bryman, 2016).

373           Reflexivity is an understanding of the power relations and assumptions of power  
374 that researchers impose on the world, an effort to work through these, and conceptualise

375 the extent of the subjectivity of knowledge. It is to ‘inquire critically into the hidden  
376 presuppositions that shape our thought’ (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012, p. 574) and is an  
377 essential concept in robust constructionism. It is important in informing theory and  
378 analysis with the aim of avoiding unconscious assumptions through it (Silverman,  
379 2012). Reflexivity is a process that is never complete or achieved and thus points to a  
380 description of open-ended meanings and translation in research contexts. In the  
381 discussion of constructionism above, themes of comedy as co-creation and dialogue (an  
382 interaction between the self and others), and of affirming the other through comedy, are  
383 key constructionist tools. This has implications for a discussion of reflexivity where the  
384 reflexive process is, in part, a consideration of the effect of the self on the other, and the  
385 ways in which self/other relationships impact knowledge creation and relations of  
386 power and knowledge.

387 In humour research there has been a limited discussion of the connections  
388 between humour and reflexivity. The concepts are often aligned, for example, Sullivan  
389 (2000) argues that reflexive practice should be employed to manage the gallows humour  
390 of social workers. Comedy and reflexivity have been linked in the performance of  
391 comedy (Moser, 1990; Emmerson, 2016), with Emmerson (2016) arguing that comedy  
392 can be ‘a means of being critically reflexive’ (p. 723). Here reflexivity is defined  
393 through self-reflection and is a personal activity. Speck (2019) discussed comedy  
394 controversies as examples of reflexive modernity in practice, where ‘demand for the  
395 discursive justification of all claims to cognitive and normative authority and the  
396 obligation to respect the equal rights of all individuals’ (p. 233) are two principles in  
397 conflict in controversial comedy. Reershemius (2012) has demonstrated that humour is  
398 a tool for discursive reflexivity in academic presentations. This reflexivity is defined as  
399 awareness of, and interaction with, an audience, or rapport building. Hewer et al. (2019)



400 argue that researchers should ‘consider the positive role humor can play when engaged  
401 reflexively’ (p. 431). They argue that humour facilitates research and subverts power  
402 relations if used reflexively, although the discussion stops short of explaining how  
403 humour and reflexivity are connected.

404         Reflexivity as a process of developing or uncovering meanings that is never  
405 complete, suggests that it is a technique that connects with meta-communication. It is a  
406 process of communicating knowledge about the conditions in which knowledge is  
407 produced and communicating about the self through that knowledge. Kuo and Anderson  
408 (2008) offer a description of metacommunication: ‘[m]etalinguistic awareness can be  
409 broadly defined as the ability to “reflect on and manipulate the structural features of  
410 languages” (Nagy & Anderson, 1998, p. 155)’ (pp. 39-40). Reflexivity, as an attempt to  
411 understand our impact on the construction of knowledge, is communication about the  
412 linguistic process of knowledge creation. With this link to meta-communication,  
413 reflexivity has much in common with humour and comedy, although this is not obvious  
414 at first glance. Eco (2018) has argued that humour and comedy function as  
415 metacommunication as comedy ‘casts doubt in other cultural codes’ (p. 33).

416         The relationship between reflexivity and metacommunication, or the non-literal, is  
417 highlighted by Richardson (2004). In a study of unmarried mothers, Richardson gives  
418 an example of a poem created from 36 pages of interview transcript. She argues that a  
419 ‘[p]oetic representation plays with connotative structures and literary devices to convey  
420 meanings; poetry commends itself to multiple and open readings in ways conventional  
421 sociological prose does not’ (p. 401). Through a discussion of reflexivity, Richardson  
422 explains how the interpretivist sociologist may impose their own frame, and power  
423 relations, on the researched and so misrepresent them. She argues that the poem disrupts  
424 this.

425 Comedy and poetry have similarities in their use of the non-literal for meaning  
426 making and because of this, were connected genres in classical literature and philosophy  
427 (Aristotle, 2012). Both deal with connotation, and humour and comedy are literary  
428 devices that encourage polysemy or multiple meanings. It is proposed that humour and  
429 comedy are devices that can, under some conditions, allow access to reflexivity. The  
430 reflexive potential of humour and comedy emerge from the ability of the humorous to  
431 manipulate meaning, present double meanings or polysemy, and challenge or change  
432 our ‘first’ understanding of a context.

433 It is important to address how this might be achieved in practice. Ali and Kelly  
434 (2012), in a discussion of research ethics, objectivity and reflexivity, argue that  
435 ‘researchers ought to consider not only *what* they know, but *how* they come to know it’  
436 (p. 60; original emphasis). Humour inside of the research process may be dismissed as  
437 trivial and without meaning. In understanding *how* the researcher comes to know the  
438 social milieu, a method of understanding is to identify how humour is articulated in that  
439 world by research subjects. Humour may be used by the researcher to construct  
440 understanding, to form an interaction between researcher and researched; and to be co-  
441 creative. In discussing reflexivity, Ali and Kelly provide a critique of objectivity  
442 through a discussion of inequality. Humour is frequently a subjective phenomenon and  
443 so identification of it and its meanings may signal access to a critique of imposed  
444 ‘objectivity’. Humour in the research context, in dealing with affective superiority and  
445 release, may signal inequality in need of reflexive attention.

446 Humour in the research context may highlight a dispute over knowledge claims.  
447 Ali and Kelly (2012) cite Haraway’s comments on ‘situated knowledge’ (p. 60): ‘our  
448 ““positionality”” means that all research is only ever ““partial””, but this does not make  
449 it less valid or useful’ (p. 60). The reflexivity from an understanding of the emergence

450 of humour is one that considers the situatedness of the humourists, the ways in which  
451 knowledges of situations are conveyed through humour, if the researcher is excluded  
452 from the joke, and how the research imposes knowledge and categories that may be  
453 partial. Humour in the research context could therefore signal the imposition of  
454 knowledge by the researcher, as frames of understanding clash and humour is used to  
455 mitigate or negotiate that. Humour often deals with the ‘unconscious’, the unsaid, with  
456 taboo or with social boundaries. Humour in the research context may signal this.

457         Humour can be a mode of self-criticism (Emmerson, 2016). We saw above that  
458 humour as satire, irony and parody can form critical theory. Considerations of  
459 reflexivity emphasise the position of the researcher and the difficulty of seeing beyond  
460 that position. Ackerly and True (2008) ask ‘[h]ow can we study power and identify  
461 ways to mitigate its abuse in the real world when we, as researchers, also participate in  
462 the projection of power through knowledge claims?’ (p. 693). This is an ethical  
463 dilemma, and reflexivity is essential for ethical research practice (Ali and Kelly, 2012).  
464 Through humour, our own knowledge claims, or hypothesis formation, data collection  
465 and data analysis, may become reflexive through positionality becoming the subject of  
466 humorous critique. What is humorous or ridiculed in the research context? How does  
467 this signal power relations in the research context? How is humour being employed in  
468 the process of creating knowledge claims? These are important questions. Mulkey and  
469 Gilbert (1982) show that humour is used in scientific settings to overcome the  
470 incommensurability of discourses and practice in the scientific community. It could  
471 equally be used to highlight and address such practice as a mode of reflexivity.

472         Humour as a reflexive tool has implications for the most pressing of social  
473 issues, not least because humour controversies emerge around identity characteristics  
474 that are contested, subject to inequality and the effects of power in society. In

475 examining critical race studies and the use of reflexivity in that field, Emirbayer and  
476 Desmond (2012) refer to Du Bois's writing on reflexivity and double consciousness as a  
477 method of critiquing the racialised assumptions of scholarship dominated by the white  
478 academy and embedded white supremacy. They explain that 'Du Bois (1978 [1904], p.  
479 57) held that we must gain reflexive control over such assumptions and deliberately  
480 form new ones' (p. 575). Humour and comedy can be used as a rhetoric to convey  
481 racism in wider society (Weaver, 2011; Pérez, 2014) but also as a method of talking  
482 about experiences of racism, which can be expressed in research contexts (Hylton,  
483 2017). Examples of humour on issues of social inequality that emerge in the research  
484 context may be ignored or censured. Alternately, they could be analysed to develop  
485 reflexivity and to improve knowledge production as it relates to social exclusion,  
486 inequality and unequal power relations through a detailed consideration of the meanings  
487 of the humorous.

488         Next, the discussion brings the concepts of constructionism and reflexivity,  
489 humour and comedy, together in an account of the applicability and limitations of the  
490 methodological ideas presented in this article.

491

## 492 **Discussion**

493 Earlier in the article we accounted for the choice of discussing constructionism and  
494 reflexivity through humour and comedy because of their paradigmatic dominance in  
495 social science research methodology and the implications humour and comedy may  
496 have on this paradigm. Kuhn (1962) argues our understandings of the world are rooted  
497 in paradigms. Paradigms are 'roughly a network of interrelated commitments to a  
498 particular theory, a conception of a subject matter, and methodological practices'  
499 (Gergen, 2015, p. 25). Humour and comedy studies have been rooted in their own

500 paradigms. Until the eighteenth century, the superiority theory dominated, and humour  
501 was viewed with suspicion (Aristotle, 2012). In recent decades, humour and comedy  
502 have grown in significance in social and personal life, yet they are still often clearly  
503 demarcated from the serious activities of social and political cultures, and from research  
504 and knowledge creation on those cultures. Humour and comedy, we have argued, are  
505 involved in the shifting of conceptual frames, cultural creativity and meaning making  
506 through their polysemy, and therefore can be aligned with the process of shifting from  
507 one paradigm or frame to another. With the addition of a consideration of humour and  
508 comedy in understandings of constructionism and reflexivity, there is the potential for a  
509 significant shift in social science research methodology paradigms, or for the  
510 development of research contexts in which those shifts are more readily facilitated or  
511 embraced. This is a theory on the creative process of knowledge production. A more  
512 developed understanding of humour and comedy and their creative potential as a  
513 qualitative social science research methodology, we have demonstrated, offers  
514 significant insight for understanding how the social world is constructed and how  
515 researchers can be reflexive of it and their constructed knowledge. As an integral part of  
516 social relationships, humour and comedy have often been excluded or side-lined in the  
517 formal processes of knowledge creation, where in fact they are central to co-creative,  
518 transformative dialogue in the social world. An inclusion of humour and comedy might  
519 encourage knowledge that incorporates and explains a wider range of emotional and  
520 affective responses to the social world. This acknowledgement creates a significant  
521 research development. Reflexivity, as a central consideration of constructionist  
522 approaches and metacommunication about the conditions of knowledge creation, is  
523 aided through its similarity with humour and comedy as parallel methods of uncovering  
524 meanings, addressing disputes over knowledge, creating spaces for self-criticism that

525 are not necessarily self-damaging, and fostering an awareness of the paradigmatic  
526 misunderstandings that happen on social issues because of competing frames of  
527 knowledge creation.

528         The benefits of using humour and comedy in social science methodology may  
529 be tempered by some of the perceived limitations of their use and application. Watson  
530 (2015b) argues that humour and comedy as methodology is not applicable in all social  
531 science contexts, if it is a humour and laughter of superiority - ‘laughter can be a form  
532 of bullying and used to ridicule. It follows that in ethical terms it should not be used  
533 against the “non-hegemonic”’ (p. 417). In the discussion above, we argue that an ethical  
534 use of humour and comedy in the research context is not one that employs ridicule of  
535 research subjects but one that is reflexive of the power relations of social research and  
536 unpacks the meaning making activity of emerging humour and laughter. In her analysis  
537 of humour used by self-help groups in research settings, Davidson (2001) observed how  
538 humour was used to demarcate group membership and experience - between self-help  
539 group members and the researcher. This served to resist the researcher’s ‘authority’,  
540 distance the researcher from the research participants and protect ‘subjectivities from  
541 outside(r) influence and intrusion’ (p. 179). Similarly, Norrick (2006) observes that  
542 researchers who fail to understand a joke or believe that joking is inappropriate in  
543 research contexts, can create ‘misunderstanding, disruption of involvement and loss of  
544 rapport’ during the research process (p. 89). In addition to impacting the relationship  
545 between the researcher and research participants, the use of humour can also influence  
546 interaction and responses between individual participants during the conduct of  
547 research. Robinson (2009) found that, in some instances, humour was used by focus  
548 group participants to control the direction of the discussion, to suppress discussion of  
549 ‘uncomfortable’ topics and to silence participants who wished to discuss topics in a

550 serious manner. Thus, the polysemy of humour and comedy in the research context  
551 should be acknowledged with reflexivity both making use of humour and being  
552 reapplied to it, as a process that is never complete.

553 Overall, utilising humour and comedy in a qualitative social science research  
554 methodology for understanding constructionism and working towards reflexivity, we  
555 are presented with questions that may in the past have been discussed as mundane,  
556 banal or frivolous. Important questions are: What is laughed about by the participants of  
557 research? What do we joke about in the process of research? How is humour shared  
558 between researcher and researched? What happens when a joke is not shared between  
559 those involved in the process of research? What signals specific instances of humour in  
560 the research process? What, in the research process, cannot be joked about? How do the  
561 instances of humour in the research context influence the making of knowledge claims?  
562 What is the creative potential of humour in the research process? These now become  
563 important for a methodology that seeks out and attempts to bridge the constructed  
564 boundaries of discourse and knowledge in the research process and becomes reflexive  
565 of them. It is an attempt to understand the hidden, tacit or absent knowledge that is  
566 constructed in the research context and that robust reflexivity ought to lead towards.

567 What we present is a dialogue on the potential of humour and comedy to inform  
568 qualitative social science research through a more complete and useful notion of  
569 constructionism and reflexivity. We hope this is an invitation to engage with ever-  
570 evolving dialogue and practices related to developing significant, rigorous and original  
571 qualitative social science research methodologies.

572

573

574

575 **References**

- 576 Ackerly, B. & True, J. (2008). Reflexivity in Practice: power and Ethics in Feminist  
577 Research on International Relations. *International Studies Review*, 10(4), 693-  
578 707.
- 579 Ali, S. & Kelly M. (2012). Ethics and Social Research. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching*  
580 *Society and Culture* (3 ed.) (pp. 58-76). Sage Publications.
- 581 Aristotle (2012). *The Art of Rhetoric*. HarperCollins.
- 582 Bain, A. (1865) *The Emotions and the Will* (2 ed.). Longmans, Green and Co.
- 583 Batty, C., & Taylor, S. (2019). Comedy Writing as Method: Reflection on  
584 Screenwriting in Creative Practice Research. *New Writing: The International*  
585 *Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, 16(3), 374-392.
- 586 Berger, P., & Luckman, T. (1967). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the*  
587 *Sociology of Knowledge*. Anchor Books.
- 588 Bergson, H. (1911). *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. Green Integer  
589 Books.
- 590 Billig, M. (2005). *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour*. Sage.
- 591 Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant L.J.D. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Polity  
592 Press.
- 593 Browne, A. (2016). Can People Talk Together About Their Practices? Focus Groups,  
594 Humour and the Sensitive Dynamics of Everyday Life. *Area*, 48(2), 198-205.
- 595 Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods* (5 ed.). Oxford University Press.
- 596 Burr, V. (2015). *Social Constructionism* (3 ed.). Routledge.
- 597 Chambliss, D. (1996). *Beyond Caring: Hospitals, Nurses, and the Social Organization*  
598 *of Ethics*. University of Chicago Press.



- 599 Coser, R.L. (1959). Some Social Functions of Laughter: A Study of Humor in a  
600 Hospital Setting. *Human Relations*, 12 (2), 171-182.
- 601 Crow, G. (2005) *The Art of Sociological Argument*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- 602 Davidson, J. (2001). 'Joking apart ...': A 'Processual' approach to Researching Self-  
603 help Groups. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 2(2), 163-183.
- 604 Davis, M.S. (1979). Sociology Through Humor. *Symbolic Interaction*, 2(1), 105-110.
- 605 Davis, M.S. (1993) *What's So Funny? The Comic Conception of Culture and Society*.  
606 University of Chicago Press.
- 607 Double, O. (2014). *Getting the Joke: The Inner Workings of Stand-up Comedy* (2 ed.).  
608 Bloomsbury.
- 609 Douglas, M. (1978). *Implicit Meanings: essays in Anthropology*. Routledge.
- 610 Eco, U. (2018). Frames of Comic Freedom. In N. Marx and M. Sienkiewicz (Eds.), *The*  
611 *Comedy Studies Reader* (pp. 25-33). University of Texas Press.
- 612 Emirbayer, M. & Desmond, M. (2012). Race and reflexivity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*,  
613 35(4), 574-599.
- 614 Emmerson, P. (2016). Doing comic geographies. *Cultural Geographies in Practice*,  
615 23(4), 721-725.
- 616 Fong, C.T. (2006). The effects of emotional ambivalence on creativity. *Academy of*  
617 *Management Journal*, 49(5), 1016-1030.
- 618 Fox, K. (2016). Confetti and Red Squirrels: A Stand-up Autoethnography as an Archive  
619 of Detritus. *Comedy Studies*, 7(1), 21-37.
- 620 Fox, K. (2018). Humitas: Humour as performative resistance. In K. Bonello Rutter  
621 Giappone, F. Francis and I. MacKenzie (Eds), *Comedy and Critical Thought:*  
622 *Laughter and Resistance* (pp 83-99) Roman & Littlefield.
- 623 Gergen, K.J. (2015). *An Invitation to Social Construction* (3 ed.). Sage.

- 624 Gergen, M., & Gergen, K.J. (Eds.) (2003). *Social Construction: A Reader*. Sage.
- 625 Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern*  
626 *Age*. Polity Press.
- 627 Gilbert, J.R. (1997). Performing Marginality: Comedy, Identity and Cultural Critique.  
628 *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 17 (4), 317-330.
- 629 Gilbert, N. (Ed.) (2008). *Researching Social Life* (3 ed.). Sage.
- 630 Gladwell, D. (2013) *David and Goliath*. Penguin Books.
- 631 Gubrium, J.F., & Holstein, J.A. (2008). The Constructionist Mosaic. In J.A. Holstein &  
632 J.F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Handbook of Constructionist Research* (pp. 3-10). Guilford  
633 Press.
- 634 Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. Free  
635 Association Books.
- 636 Hay, J. (2001). The Pragmatics of Humour Support. *Humor*, 14 (1), 55-82.
- 637 Hewer, R., Smith, K. & Fergie, G. (2019). The Social Functionality of Humor in Group-  
638 Based Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 29(3), 431-444.
- 639 Hyde, L. (2008). *The Trickster Makes this World. How Disruptive Imagination Creates*  
640 *Culture*. Cannongate.
- 641 Hylton, K. (2017). I'm not joking! The strategic use of humour in stories of racism.  
642 *Ethnicities*, 18(3), 327-343.
- 643 Koestler, A. (1949). *Insight and Outlook. An Inquiry into the Common Foundations of*  
644 *Science, Art and Social Ethics*. University of Nebraska Press.
- 645 Koestler, A. (1967). *The Ghost in the Machine*. Hutchinson of London.
- 646 Kuhn, T.S. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.
- 647 Kuo, L-j., & Anderson, R.C. (2008). Conceptual methodological issues in comparing  
648 metalinguistic awareness across languages. In K. Koda and A. M. Zehler (Eds.),

- 649        *Learning to Read Across Languages. Cross-Linguistic Relationships in First- and*  
650        *Second-Language Literacy Development* (pp 39-67). Routledge.
- 651    Legard, R., Keegan, J., & Ward, K. (2003). In-depth Interviews. In J. Ritchie & J. Lewis  
652        (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Sciences Students and*  
653        *Researchers* (pp. 138-169). Sage.
- 654    Lockyer, S. (2015). From comedy targets to comedy-makers: Disability and comedy in  
655        live performance, *Disability & Society*, 30(9), 1397-1412.
- 656    Lockyer, S. (2016). Comedy matters: On the impact of comedy. *Humor*, 29(2), 153-155.
- 657    Moser, D. (1990). Reflexivity in the Humor of *Xiangsheng*. *Journal of Chinese Oral*  
658        *and Performing Literature*, 15(1), 45-68.
- 659    Mulkay, M. & Gilbert N. (1982). Joking apart: Some recommendations concerning the  
660        analysis of scientific culture. *Social Studies of Science*, 12, 585-613.
- 661    Nietzsche, F. (2015). *Aphorisms on Love and Hate*. Penguin Classics.
- 662    Norrick, N. (2006). Humour in Oral History Interviews. *Oral History*, 34(2), 85-94.
- 663    O'Dowd, L. (2003). Constructionism, social. In R.L Miller & J.D. Brewer (Eds.), *The*  
664        *A-Z of Social Research* (pp. 41-43). Sage.
- 665    Oring, E. (1987). Generating Lives: The Construction of an Autobiography. *Journal of*  
666        *Folklore Research*, 24(3), 241-262.
- 667    Palmer, J. (1994). *Taking Humour Seriously*. Routledge.
- 668    Pérez, R. (2014). Brownface Minstrelsy: "José Jiménez," the Civil Rights Movement,  
669        and the legacy of racist comedy. *Ethnicities*, 16(1), 40-67.
- 670    Provine, R.R. (1996) *Laughter*. *American Scientist*, 84 (1), 38-47.
- 671    Reershemius, G. (2012). Research culture and the pragmatic functions of humor in  
672        academic research presentations: A corpus-assisted analysis. *Journal of*  
673        *Pragmatics*, 44: 6-7, 863-875.

- 674 Richardson, L. (2004). The Consequences of Poetic Representation. In C. Seale (Ed.),  
675 *Social Research Methods: A Reader* (pp 401-404). Routledge.
- 676 Richie, J. & Lewis J. (2011). *Qualitative Research Practice. A Guide for Social Science*  
677 *Students and Researchers*. Sage.
- 678 Robinson, J. (2009). Laughter and Forgetting: Using Focus Groups to Discuss Smoking  
679 and Motherhood in Low-income Areas in the UK. *International Journal of*  
680 *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(3), 263-278.
- 681 Scarpetta, F., & Spagnolli, A. (2009). The Interactional Context of Humor in Stand-up  
682 Comedy. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 42 (3), 210-230.
- 683 Schopenhauer, A. (1819) *The World as Will and Idea. Book 1*. Everyman.
- 684 Sen, A. (2012). Humour Analysis and Qualitative Research. *Social Research Update*,  
685 63, 1-4.
- 686 Silverman, D. (2012). Research and Theory. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching Society and*  
687 *Culture* (3 ed.) (pp. 29-44). Sage.
- 688 Smith, M. (2009). Humor, Unlaughter, and Boundary Maintenance. *The Journal of*  
689 *American Folklore*, 122 (484), 148-171.
- 690 Speck, S. (2019). The Comedy of Reflexive Modernity: Reason, Religion and the  
691 Ambivalence of Humour. *Cultural Sociology*, 13(2), 233-248.
- 692 Spencer, H. (1864) *The Physiology of Laughter*. Macmillan.
- 693 Sullivan, E. (2000). Gallows humour in social work practice: an issue for supervision  
694 and reflexivity. *Practice*, 12(2): 45-54.
- 695 Watson, C. (2011). Notes on the Variety and Uses of Satire, Sarcasm and Irony in Social  
696 Research, with Some Observations on Vices and Follies in the Academy. *Power*  
697 *and Education*, 3(2), 139-149.

- 698 Watson, C. (2015a). *Comedy and Social Sciences: Towards a Methodology of Funny*.  
699 Routledge.
- 700 Watson, C. (2015b). A Sociologist Walks into a Bar (and Other Academic Challenges):  
701 Towards a Methodology of Humour. *Sociology*, 49(3), 407-421.
- 702 Watson, C. (2019). *Perspectives by incongruity* in the performance of dialectical ironic  
703 analysis: a disciplined approach. *Qualitative Research*, 20(1), 91-107.
- 704 Weaver, S. (2011). *The Rhetoric of Racist Humour: US, UK and Global Race Joking*.  
705 Ashgate.
- 706 Weeks, M. (2020). Affect philosophy meets incongruity: about transformative  
707 potentials in comic laughter. *The European Journal of Humour Research*, 8(1), 1-  
708 13.
- 709 Wheen, F. (1999) *Karl Marx*. Fourth Estate.
- 710 Wilkinson, C.E., Rees, C.E., & Knight, L.V. (2007). "From the Heart of My Bottom":  
711 Negotiating Humor in Focus Group Discussions. *Qualitative Health Research*,  
712 17(3), 411-422.