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## Humor in the Age of Digital Reproduction: Continuity and Change in Internet-Based Comic Texts

*Limor Shifman*

### Abstract

This paper focuses on one of the most prominent manifestations of humorous communication in the present era – Internet-based humor. It explores both the content of Internet humor and the various forms that it takes. A content analysis of 400 humorous texts from eight salient humorous websites shows that the Internet functions both as a ‘carrier’ of old humor types such as jokes and cartoons and as a ‘generator’ of new humor types. The new types are defined and analysed in the light of three characteristics of the Internet: Interactivity, multimedia and global reach. Whereas interactivity is expressed in the humorous texts in a very limited way, the features of multimedia and global reach are more visible. The results point to a prominence of the visual humorous forms over the verbal forms, as well as to a global dominance over the local. This supremacy of the global is evident in the analysis of the humorous topics: Globally oriented topics such as sex, gender and animals are

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much more popular than locally oriented topics such as ethnicity and politics. This does not mean, however, that the humorous texts reflect a universal set of values. Not only are the vast majority of the texts in English, but they also reflect the values and priorities of Western, capitalist and youth-oriented cultures.

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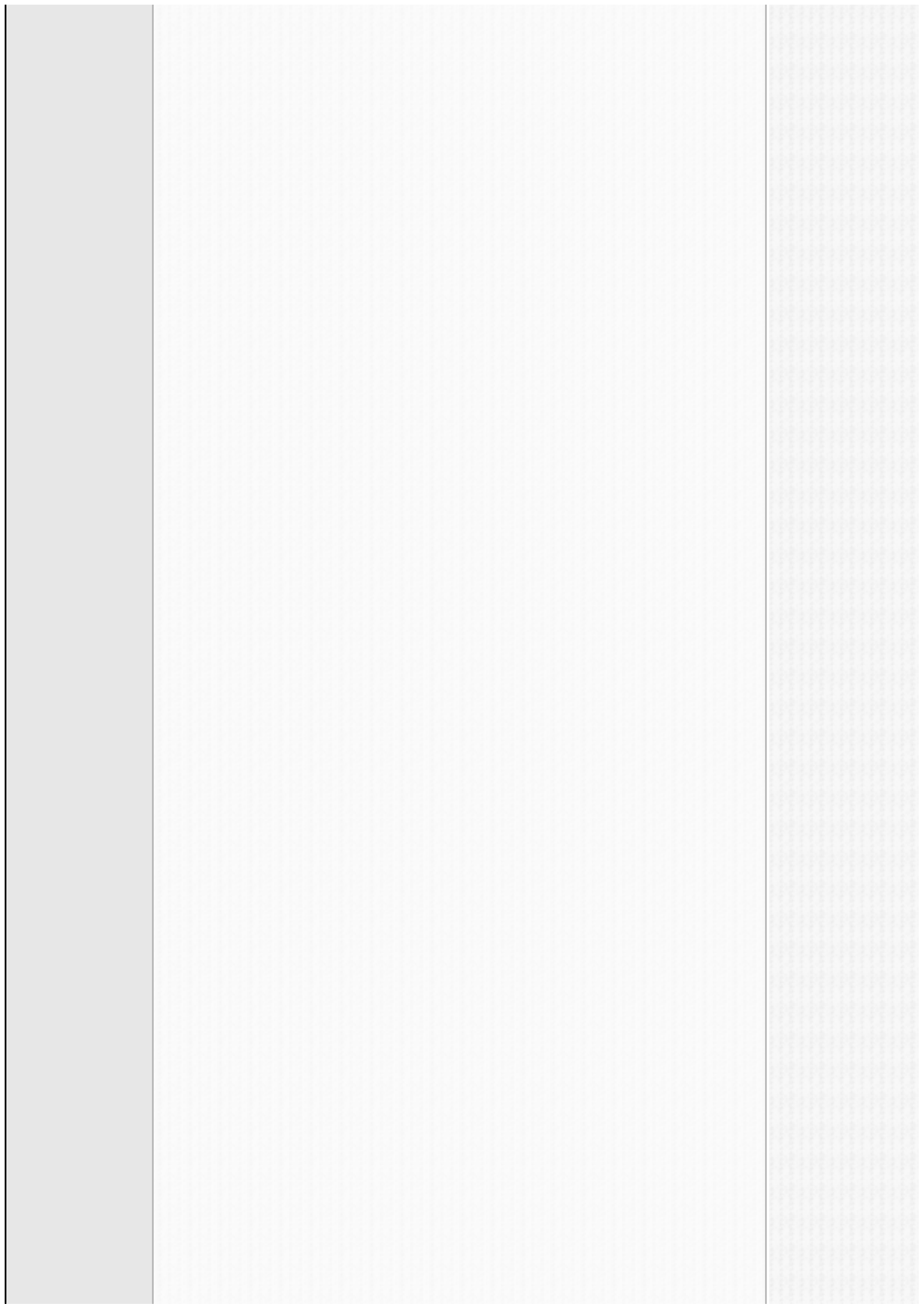
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