

Verbal humor without switching scripts and without non-bona fide communication.



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Verbal humor without switching scripts and without non-*bona fide* communication

John Morreall

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Abstract

According to Raskin's script-theory, five factors are necessary for verbal humor: 1) a switch from the bona fide mode of communication to the non-bona fide mode of joke-telling; 2) the text of an intended joke; 3) two (partially) overlapping scripts compatible with the text; 4) an oppositeness relation between the two scripts; and 5) a trigger, obvious or implied, realizing the oppositeness relation. I argue that although this theory works well with prepared fictional jokes, it does not explain all verbal humor. The reason is that prepared fictional jokes are a sophisticated kind of verbal humor with features which are not shared by other kinds of verbal humor. I illustrate with examples of semantic, phonetic, and pragmatic techniques for creating verbal humor without switching scripts and/or without switching to non-bona fide communication.

Keywords: [Raskin](#); [script theory](#); [verbal humor](#); [joke](#); [bona fide](#)

About the article

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