



HUMOR EDUCATION AND ART

HUMOR: A
TRANSDISCIPLINARY
APPROACH

El humor, la
educación y el arte
Humor: aproximaciones
transdisciplinarias



Jacqueline Benavides Delgado (Editor)

Humor, Education and Art

El humor, la educación y el arte



Abstract

The history of music, literature, theater, dance, and painting reflects an interest in humor. From the Greeks, tragedy and comedy were two sides of the same coin that reflected the psychic world of the human being. The same can be said of literature, with works as magnificent as *Don Quixote*, in which through satire the value of books is questioned and, in this sense, of knowledge itself; or that *Candide* of Voltaire, in which the criticism of philosophy is mixed with the finest black humor and a particular pedagogical attitude... The list is extensive. In this third volume of the series *Humor: transdisciplinary approaches*, edited by Ediciones UCC, these close links are reflected, from the analysis of exaggerated stage performances of clowns to the analysis of universal and regional literary works. This volume also includes a fundamental theme: education. Can humor facilitate teaching processes? Is it possible that it works as a facilitator for teaching a second language or other school learning processes? How do humorous acts show the most important features of a culture and help transmit them from one generation to another? The reader will find a variety of topics that combine, culture, education, art and humor from a scientific perspective.

Keywords: culture, philosophy, humor, childhood, psychology.

Resumen

La historia de la música, de la literatura, del teatro, de la danza y de la pintura, refleja un interés por el humor. Desde los griegos, la tragedia y la comedia eran dos caras de una misma moneda que reflejaba el mundo psíquico del ser humano. Lo mismo se puede decir de la literatura, con obras tan magníficas como el *Quijote*, en la que a través de la sátira se pone en entredicho el valor de los libros y, en este sentido, del conocimiento mismo; o ese *Cándido* de Voltaire, en el que la crítica a la filosofía se mezcla con el más fino humor negro y una particular actitud pedagógica... La lista es extensa. En este tercer volumen de la serie *Humor: aproximaciones transdisciplinarias*, editada por Ediciones UCC, se reflejan estos vínculos tan estrechos, desde el análisis de las puestas escénicas exageradas de los payasos, hasta el análisis de obras literarias universales y regionales. También este volumen recoge un tema fundamental: la educación. ¿Puede el humor facilitar los procesos de enseñanza? ¿Es posible que funcione como un facilitador para la enseñanza de una segunda lengua o de otros procesos de aprendizaje escolar? ¿De qué manera los actos humorísticos evidencian los rasgos más importantes de una cultura y ayuda a transmitirlos de una generación a otra? El lector encontrará una variedad de temas que combinan, la cultura, la educación, el arte y el humor desde una óptica científica.

Palabras clave: cultura, filosofía, humor, infancia, psicología.

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(Editor)



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■ Prologue

Humor, like language, is a distinctly human characteristic, hence its relevance, transcendence and peculiarity. Linked to but different from laughter, humor seems to be an achievement of evolution. Everything suggests that, within the evolutionary process of *homo sapiens*, humor constituted the ability to understand the minds of others, get perspective, and join a social group. The use of humor in society involved the symbolic and cognitive development that is required to comprehend incongruity, a fundamental element in understanding humor.

These first traces of humor anchored in evolution multiplied with the cognitive, artistic, religious, cultural and political explosion of the progress of humanity. Humor was naturally connected with social changes, epistemological debates, philosophical thought, war, revolutions, child development, and everyday life. This impending presence of humor in the lives of people throughout history was the first motivation of this publishing project. The second one was my doctoral dissertation that dealt with humor in children. With the continuous support of the Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia Press, the most nationally- and internationally-recognized authors were invited to participate in this initiative.

The response was surprising, and the result materialized in this series that we introduce today. Its title is very eloquent, *Humor y perspectivas transdisciplinarias* [Humor and Transdisciplinary Perspectives] since it brings together many disciplines around a single theme. The aim of the series is to make visible the work of many researchers in the social sciences, natural sciences, humanities and arts whose subject matter has been humor. Very few works have gathered so many researchers from different countries and fields of knowledge around humor in the Spanish and English languages.

In this sense, this series is a very novel initiative. It is not a publication to laugh; rather, it is a compilation that shows the diversity of the theme. Humor as a political weapon, as a cathartic mechanism, as a way of understanding cognitive development, as an achievement of evolution, and as a way of expressing the change of time and culture. Thus, *Humor y perspectivas transdisciplinarias* is enriched by

the diverse views of professors and researchers from more than fifteen countries, including Israel, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, England, France, India, Iran, Chile, Denmark, Spain, the United States, and Colombia.

In order to group the texts according to clearly identifiable thematic lines, three books were compiled. The first one, *Humor y política, una perspectiva transcultural* [Humor and Politics, a Transcultural Perspective], is based on the idea that humor, in any of its expressions, has the power to influence social or cultural political processes, as well as individual processes at the psychological level. It also suggests that this influence is reciprocal because humor can influence the individual or society, but society and the individual can in turn influence the expressions of humor. In this sense, the book reveals the influence of humor as a political weapon and driving force of cultural and social change.

The second book, *Filosofía y psicología del humor* [Philosophy and Psychology of Humor], approaches the philosophical view of humor from classic studies and connects with the advances in psychology. Consequently, many of the chapters focus on children, their development, and the understanding and production of forms of humor associated with psychological processes such as understanding other minds. Humor in other social and educational spaces are also part of this in-depth analysis and its influence on learning, leadership, and community formation.

The third book, *El humor, la educación y el arte* [Humor, Education and Art], shows us another facet: arts and humor. Much literature and other artistic expressions have been based on human aspects of exaggeration or contrast that produce laughter. In addition, the humor reflected from satire and irony is and has been a powerful weapon of social mobilization, through verbal and non-verbal communication.

Therefore, the reader interested in humor may not find in these books reasons to laugh, but he will definitely find reasons to think about the power of humor in our lives, the history of humanity, and our societies.

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