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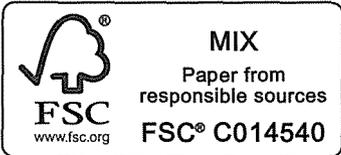
Aspects of Tourism

TOURISM AND HUMOUR

Philip L. Pearce and Anja Pabel



Tourism and Humour



ASPECTS OF TOURISM

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Tourism and Humour

Philip L. Pearce and Anja Pabel

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Foreword

As Tourism students and academics we've all experienced, endured and tolerated the repetitious jibes of Tourism being nothing more than a Mickey Mouse, joke subject, not worthy of attention – and certainly not warranting serious study. Occasionally barbed, sharpened (no doubt) by the green-eyed monster, but usually essentially good humoured in nature, I guess we've heard it all. Although sometimes exasperated, on the whole we've been able to ride and rebuff such would-be jesting, operating as we are from a position of strength. After all, at least to my mind, being likened to Mickey – one of the world's most endearing, popular icons, both culturally and commercially – isn't such a downer anyway. And, thankfully, Tourism has it all: the perfect vehicle in which to explore (temporally, spatially and, OK, maybe tangentially) the entire gamut of human emotions – of which humour is, itself, of course, an important one. Ubiquitous, though not uniform, humour can (and should) be fun, fun, fun. But it can also be serious business. Rather like tourism, then, humour too is multi-faceted. In their educative volume, Pearce and Pabel acknowledge, explain, tackle and deal admirably with these layered complexities.

Adopting a sensibly structured, reasoned and systematic approach, while avoiding too rigid or restrictive a format, the authors deploy sound academic thinking to underpin their accessible manner and style. Grounded and informed, by drawing on their own personal research, experiences and anecdotes to supplement the theoretical base, the authors' timely *Tourism and Humour* suitably bridges academia and 'the everyday ordinary'.

It's often suggested that humour is a matter of individual taste so, by way of a personal touch, here are a few favourites of mine to further set the scene and, in so doing, hopefully emphasise to the reader that, despite best intentions, subjectivity is never far away from the heart of this enquiry. I've always advocated the use of humour in teaching in general and, in particular, teaching Tourism – a subject that lends itself so readily to such a medium. And what better example of this than Wallace and Gromit's epic trip to the moon documented in their wonderful *A Grand Day Out* video? According to Peter (1978), 'Two things reduce prejudice, education and laughter'. Dovetailing together perfectly, these two precious, priceless 'commodities'

are evident in glorious excess in our hero and his dog's splendid, must-see, laugh-out-loud video of spatial/spacial travel.

Timing is all important in humour. If pathos laced with dark humour appeals, what could be funnier, time-wise, than the wonderfully inappropriate release of the 'Hong Kong takes your breath away' strapline and campaign that coincided with the height of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) crisis? The irony is reinforced by the droll tone in the advice from *Viz* magazine: 'Asthmatics, avoid going on holidays to places which take your breath away.'

The visual, too, obviously plays its part in humour. This perspective features strongly in the Pearce and Pabel volume. As a historical note, Cannibal Tours, a biting slant on tourists/would-be travellers, created in the 1980s, was an early documentary/tourism teaching aid, poking fun at the traveller/tourist rather than the 'natives' ... the observers rather than the observed. More traditionally, the cartoon-based humour format is probably familiar to those of a certain vintage. In the UK, the now defunct *Punch* magazine's Travel Special offered priceless vignettes. Elsewhere, the recent inauguration of the First International Tourism Cartoon Competition, organised through the Turkish Anadolu University, was a welcome venture recognising humour in our subject. And then there is my own particular favourite – Donald McGill with his notorious saucy seaside postcards replete with exquisite characterisation, innuendo and incisive social comment (see Wheeler, 2007).

Film, too, should not be overlooked. Be it the seminal *Mr Hulot's Holiday*, of which the latter-day Mr Bean is surely a poor imitation, *Confessions from a Holiday Camp* or *Carry on Abroad* (a classic of its genre, laudably tagged 'A holiday of a laughtime'), humour, holidays and film would seem a suitably fertile combination. And yet, preliminary research suggests that, surprisingly, over the years, they have been relatively few. Latterly, though, *The Inbetweeners'* two films – huge box office successes here in the UK – have both deployed holidays and travel (Greece/Australia) to contextualise their coarse comedic content.

To the Clown Prince of Denmark, Victor Borge, 'A laugh is the shortest distance between two people'. But is the Great Dane barking up the wrong tree? Culturally, humour doesn't always travel well through time nor space – be it between generations or across borders. Nor, notably, across genders. Superficially straightforward, there is then more to humour (and tourism) than meets the eye. This book, like the above examples, is best addressed with an open mind. I'd elaborate the old adage, 'travel broadens the mind', to read, 'travel broadens the broad mind but narrows the narrow one' – a most apposite ploy as the authors themselves approach their topic (and readers) with this understanding.

So here we have it – *Tourism and Humour*, with more than a dash of education: a suitably heady mix, a cocktail prepared, presented and proffered by Pearce and Pabel. Enjoy and relish.

Brian Wheeler
NHTV, Breda,
The Netherlands

1 Better to Laugh Than Cry

What Happens When We Laugh?

It often starts with a quick smile. As the individual mentally processes the punchline, or concludes that a scene or story is inherently funny, a number of physical changes follow the 'getting of the joke'. These responses are publically visible. The eyes close a little, the mouth opens, the jaw is lowered, teeth are exposed and there is a universal 'h'-type sound from deep in the human larynx. It is not speech, it is not any language, but we quickly recognise the pulsing rhythmic noises made by those captured in the mirth of the moment. Ruch and Ekman (2001), both prominent researchers in the analysis of human expressions and humour, suggest that across the globe we all perceive and respond to the onset of laughter from other humans.

At the end of the 19th century, Hall and Allin (1897) examined how 3000 people from the United States laughed. They recorded a string of behaviours which comprise a laughter episode. The person captured by the humour may appear a little out of control. They pay less attention to what others are doing. Individual differences are apparent but some recurring behaviours are readily recognisable. Almost no-one stands perfectly still and laughs. Much more often there is head shaking, jerking of limbs, contortions of the trunk and rocking back and forth. In full and expressive laughter, there are repetitive waves of loud pre-speech 'h' sounds, punctuated by periodic sharp intakes of breath, all of which may be accompanied by tears streaming from the eyes. Indeed, the picture may not be a pretty one but the person participating is beyond caring for that period of time.

Interestingly, in some cultures one or both hands sometimes seek to cover the mouth. Sometimes a forehead or thigh may be slapped, and almost inevitably the chest heaves and expands to take in more air. Large-breasted women or rotund men may even seem to have body parts moving in several discordant directions at once. Children sometimes jump up and down, stamp their feet, and spin around as if contorted by an alien force and, if the episode continues, they may utter quick pleas such as 'stop, stop, no more!' Given all these physically engaging consequences, it is perhaps not surprising that in

some cultures when people know they are likely to laugh a lot, they prepare for the physical consequences by lying down. O'Hanlon (1984) reports exactly this behaviour among the Ibo in Indonesia. No Western comedy festival yet prepares its audience in quite this way.

The physical analysis of laughter has many more components, but our interest in this volume reaches beyond the external acts and actions of laughter. Our concern is with all the facets of tourism-linked humour and its reception. The concern embraces both laughter and other more subtle responses to humour. More importantly, the interest in the following chapters lies centrally in the psychological benefits and social consequences of humour in the large and complex set of encounters made possible through tourism.

Looking at Laughter

Examining laughter (and smiling) in more detail helps shape our interests in humour and tourism. The description we have offered so far is a general one and some key distinctions introduce subtlety into the analysis. The ethology and communication researchers approach laughter from a descriptive and technical point of view but they point out that intentionality matters. The physical behaviours they observe are organised according to a key variable which is whether the laughter is spontaneous or fake, that is, either involuntary and without restraint, or composed and contrived for a variety of interpersonal motives. For spontaneous laughter, the trigger for the laughter is thought about and quickly processed, and there is no restraint on the expression of the mirth. Interestingly, in this spontaneous laughter with all its bodily movements and physical response quirks, the individual's self-awareness is seen as reduced. In the sense of the presentation of one's self in everyday life as described by Goffman (1969), the individual laughing uproariously and spontaneously is no longer on front stage. Instead, when laughing almost uncontrollably about the joke, story or incident, the individual is offering a window through which the outsider can glimpse their mind and personality. It may also be that the very best psychological rewards of laughter come from this uninhibited involvement. The topic of the benefits of positive responses to humour for individuals and groups will be an area of interest throughout this book.

Not laughing, when many others are doing so, is also potentially revealing. One of the authors has spent time at many conferences and public events with a senior colleague who is a very well respected tourism academic. When other professors are joking their way through mock debates or giggling at one another's staged and manufactured comic performances, the figure in question looks about as happy as a penguin in the tropics (we will assume here that penguins in the tropics are very unhappy, and clearly show signs they

would rather be somewhere else). So both laughing and not laughing offer insights about what others think, possibly suggesting topics with which individuals are variously comfortable and uncomfortable as well as sometimes showing predilections among some people for strong cognitive mastery of their public face.

The alternative for many people to not laughing is to fake it, that is, to signal to others that they too get the joke or appreciate the situation. Some may be totally involved in performing a socially ingratiating act and have no idea why the situation is funny, whereas others do understand but see less humour in the circumstances than their associates. The voluntary or fake laughter has some distinguishing features. In addition to the slightly delayed onset of the laughter (cues from others are being attended to by those who wish to join in), there are suggested difference in voice quality, pitch and even the vowels which accompany the basic 'h' sound (Ruch & Ekman, 2001). The careful observer can often identify those who are faking their appreciation of the humour. The laughter may be produced just a little too late (monitoring others takes time) and there may be hesitancy about when to stop laughing. Additionally, not all of the physical signs of abandonment to the humour are evident. The vowels used appear to matter as well. The 'h' sound accompanied by the vowels 'a' or 'e' as in 'ha ha ha' or 'he he he' seem convincing to us as authors, but someone using the stylised trademark 'ho ho ho' of Santa Claus is, in our view, less compelling as indicating spontaneous laughter.

The faking of responses to humour has been particularly closely studied for smiling. Collett (2004) reports that the work of the French anatomist Guillaume Duchenne de Boulogne in 1862 resulted in an appreciation of the roles of two sets of facial muscles. The first set of muscles, which are under conscious control, affect the position of the mouth and control its corners as well as the rounding of the cheeks. The effects of this first set of muscles create a pretty good smile, especially if some teeth are on display to add to the enthusiasm. There is, however, a further set of muscles which are not under conscious control and these are responsible for the crinkling of the skin at the outer edges of the eyes: the term in the beauty magazines is that of 'crow's feet'. All importantly, the genuine smile, the quick spontaneous equivalent to the involuntary laugh-out-loud humour, is the naturally occurring operation of this second set of muscles. They produce, in the truly genuine smile, not only the upturned mouth, rounded cheeks and teeth display but a shining example of crow's feet. To illustrate this point the reader can inspect photos taken of one's family and friends. Look in particular for the crow's feet. When the smiles were held too long at the photographer's request, the eye area is relatively smooth (assuming one's family and friends are not all severely wrinkled and withered specimens) and their overall expressions have a slightly forced and less enthusiastic look. The full and genuine smiles are now referred to as Duchenne smiles.

Controlling Laughter

The Duchenne smiles have also been found to be involved in laughter and again serve to distinguish between the spontaneous full-bodied kind of reaction and the socially planned but always slightly inadequate fake versions (Ruch & Ekman, 2001). The notion of faking one's laughter is one kind of control, but there are and have been strong societal and cultural rules about managing and controlling the expression of spontaneous laughter. Wiseman (2007) has commented that many psychologists, and one of the authors has a psychology background, repeatedly find sexual undertones when discussing human behaviour. He also asserts that like much Freudian theory including Freudian slips many such propositions are 'completely untesticle'. Undaunted by this commentary, the authors believe there is a case to be made that the suppression of full-bodied laughter is linked to gender-based issues and sexual roles.

It was noted in passing that the covering of the mouth with the hand while laughing is not uncommon in some groups and the point may be specified more clearly as applicable to women in cultural groups with strong taboos about overt signs of public sexuality (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989). Historically and in Western society the beautifully attired, cultivated ladies of 19th-century Victorian England or Puritan America did not engage in the full-bodied laughter we have documented. The heroines of Jane Austen and Henry James would have considered such open-mouthed displays to be frightfully vulgar, hinting at an altogether too robust enjoyment of the sensual components of life. Such decorum and the expression of these mannerisms pervade the popular television programmes depicting the eras in question, and whether it be *Brideshead Revisited* or *Downton Abbey*, it is the rebels and outsiders who laugh, not their conformist sisters.

Much the same line of reasoning about the suppression of overt sexuality can be made in relation to laughter and the use of the hands to cover the open-mouthed laugh in a number of Asian cultures. Almost any observation of young Japanese girls and women will reveal that when they laugh they cover their mouths. It can be suggested that there are both physical and symbolic links between open laughter, kissing, touch and sexual arousal. These issues are not a simple arcane detour in our preliminary discussion of humour and tourism but represent a background to understanding the position which humour holds in many societies and even in academic culture.

Huizinga (1938) in his major book *Homo Ludens* and Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1989) in his manual *Human Ethology* established some of these links. Open-mouthed laughing exposes a person's inner lips. From all the detailed mapping of our sensory motor cortex, as well undoubtedly as from some personal experiences, we know that the lips are key erogenous zones and that,

through intimate kissing, both male and female sexual arousal is highly likely. These links have been known for a long time in the texts describing sexual behaviour (Ellis, 1937; Morris, 1969) as well as captured in the literature of the Western world. For example, Shakespeare illustrated the connection quite well when he instructs his characters to kiss with inner lip to show their passion. The noted English actress Judi Dench was once asked a question at the Australian University where one of the authors was an undergraduate as to why she appeared to engage in such a passionate, sexually charged scene when performing the role of Viola in *Twelfth Night*. Kissing with inner lips, she explained to a group of callow undergraduates, could not be done in any other way.

The control of laughter and open-mouthed exhilaration with their connections to sexuality can be linked to discussions of power and control (cf. Foucault, 1972). Once select behaviours are labelled as inappropriate by major organisations, spiritual leaders and politicians, citizens themselves take up the vigil of maintaining the right way to live and monitor each other in the manners of the day. The same forces of reactionary conservatism, apparent in the banning of some ribald seaside postcards in England (Wheeller, 2007) and titillating novels of the 1950s in Australia (Robertson, 2013), have at certain times and specific countries created a tight manacle of control over the reactions to humour.

Often the social institutions dampening the flames of laughter, enjoyment and passion have been the churches with the sober and funless creeds of the Protestants, the Lutherans, the Methodists and the Presbyterians foremost among many (Blainey, 2004). The Methodist creed of the paternal grandmother of one of the authors required her to avoid dancing, never to drink alcohol and to participate in sex only for procreation purposes. Immodest laughter was certainly off limits in this duty-bound sense of the world. More generally, it is appropriate to suggest that a general pall has been cast over the enjoyment of humour in some cultures and for some time. The great Protestant work ethic is not matched by a great Protestant play, joke and laugh ethic during non-work time. It is a modest step to see that the study of humour may not always be assessed as worthwhile.

The restraints on enjoying humour and contemplating its execution and effects are not confined to Western cultures. Yue (2011) reports that Confucian teaching, too, tends to frown on rather than smile at humour. Yue's studies of humour appreciation among Hong Kong students uncover a sharp contrast between enjoying humour and valuing it as a personal style or characteristic; it is apparently not a leading or wholly desirable trait with which students would like to be too closely identified. These background considerations from earlier times and across cultures undoubtedly influence how we think about humour and, further, how and why we should study the topic in tourism.

Valuing Humour Research: Our Positions

It is perhaps useful to document the backgrounds and perspectives of the authors in relation to their view of humour and its analysis. One author is an Australian scholar with long-standing research interests in tourist behaviour and experience, while the companion author grew up in Germany and is commencing her academic career as a researcher and educator in Australia. Both authors like to laugh, they sometimes attempt to be funny, and they recognise that the humour they like is wide ranging, occasionally subversive and sometimes risqué. The staff from Channel View, who readily accepted the proposed manuscript, are based in Bristol in the UK. The key contact personnel were quick to see that humour was an appealing topic, and possibly a profitable one. Do these affiliations and nationality issues matter? It can be suggested that they do because they form a part of an Anglo-Antipodean valuing of humour. For example, Robertson (2013) is of the opinion that people from the UK and Australia are united by a common sense of humour. As a prominent Australian living in London he observes:

When you come to think of it, [humour] is what we really have in common. You can't share a joke with a New Zealander. They are the joke. You can't share a joke with a Canadian, they wouldn't get it. Americans have an irony deficiency, Germans have no sense of humour, Malaysians always take offence and South Africans are still very sensitive. We are probably the only two countries in the world that can actually enjoy each other if we really try. (Robertson, 2013: 53)

Robertson's remarks support some stereotypes that exist concerning who likes humour, and what styles of humour they like. The issue of who we are and where we are based is not irrelevant to how we position this book. Humour matters in our culture and in the tourism enterprises with which we are most familiar. Humour of this local Anglo-Australian style may not matter everywhere, and humour itself may be less of a laughing matter in other settings.

Wiseman (2007) provides some evidence supporting the everyday stereotypes. He directed an extensive study where he collected literally several thousand jokes in an online research exercise called Laughlab. A total of 40,000 jokes were rated by 350,000 people from 70 countries. Working at this macro-scale of analysis, Wiseman reported few differences in the appreciation of the jokes across the multiple countries in his sample. It is important to remember that this finding is centred on responding to provided jokes and so does not consider other ways of expressing humour, nor does it deal with the spontaneous production of humour or seeing humour in a situation. His work omitted crude and vulgar jokes and concentrated on verbal twists and the bizarre, quirky and illogical joke formats. The Canadians were the least

likely to find the jokes funny, while the Germans seemed to be among the most likely to enjoy a range of humour styles. Australian and UK respondents shared a relatively high liking of most jokes. Other nationalities were more selective in their joke appreciation. This initial foray into the nationality and cultural issues surrounding humour, and in this case specifically joke appreciation, offers a clear reminder that humour may be difficult to manage in tourism contexts, especially when the audience is heterogeneous and members vary not just in their nationality but in their age, gender, religious and cultural sensitivities and basic personality styles. In later chapters of this book we will consider our own data and the analysis of the nationality and cultural determinants of humour appreciation.

Building on these established variations in appraising humour, the researchers have adopted the following position. We understand the need to be reflexive in tackling humour. What we may find funny, others may not. We also understand that many readers will expect some level of humour, some opportunities to smile or laugh at the experiences and behaviours we record. There is, as the productive tourism scholar Martin (2007) reports, always some pressure on a humour researcher not to be unremittingly serious. The readers may have noticed that we have already presented some material in a style which is not the same kind of writing as is found in our leading tourism journals, where seriousness prevails and asides or quips about the work are rare. While we hope this volume offers accessible and enjoyable reading, we have some serious and, we believe, useful points to make for our academic community and associated government and industry sectors. We promise, however, not to launch into exhaustively explaining jokes, a process we see as one of the least amusing and mind-numbing traps of writing about humour. As the humorous international travel writer Bill Bryson suggests, if you have to explain the joke to the person, it is usually no longer at all funny. He illustrates this perspective with a short account of his own.

Driving in outback Australia in his rented vehicle, Bryson engages a local gas/petrol station worker in conversation in mid-afternoon. Bryson's destination is the little town of Hay, a small rural settlement several hours distant from his current location. Bryson says to the attendant 'I had better hurry. Do you know why?' The attendant responds with a blank look. Bryson replies: 'Because I want to make Hay while the sun shines.' Confronted again with a blank look, which Bryson describes as probably permanent, the author repeats the line with more emphasis and an encouraging expression. Squinting into the sun, and oblivious to Bryson's attempt at humour, the local replies, 'You won't have any trouble with that. It will be light for hours yet' (Bryson, 2000: 113–114). Getting the joke or humorous remark relies on a shared cultural understanding supplemented by mental acuity.

Additionally, we adopt the view that humour in tourism is complex, that nuances of place, style and personality matter, and that humour can go badly wrong. One whole chapter of this book is concerned with this last issue. The

recognition that the topic is complex, and may fail, needs to be juxtaposed with the authors' view that humour can also be very successful in tourism. The authors develop an argument and build a model which offers a distinctive, tourism-linked theory of the positive operation of humour. We are labelling this approach an orchestra-based model of experience and we link humour to the elements of the model. We use the term 'theory' here in the most liberal sense, described by Smith and Lee (2010), of integrating themes and organising ideas with some, but not necessarily always precise, predictive powers. The pathway to construct this approach to understanding tourist humour is pursued by isolating and explaining component parts of the tourism-humour relationship in the following chapters. It is pivotal to this volume that we assert and use evidence to assert that humour is often a highlight of the tourist experience, whether that is in anticipating the travel, being on-site and enjoying others and the setting, or reflecting on personal travel or the voyages of others. Our position is that the evidence is preliminary, but the journey to explore this new location in tourism studies is worthwhile.

Previous Humour Studies

The contribution of many researchers to the general study of humour needs to be recognised. At the start of this chapter some of the detailed analysis of laughter investigated by ethologists, non-verbal communication specialists and physiologists was introduced. This kind of work offers insights, but the main academic shoulders on whom we perch a little creatively, given that there are few tourism scholars writing about humour, are the contributions of the psychologists.

This chapter has progressed without following the usual academic convention of defining terms in the first paragraphs of a piece of work. It is useful now to review more formally this issue of the compass of our meaning for the term humour. According to some of the key researchers in the field, humour is indeed an elusive term (Martin, 2007). In this book it will be defined as encompassing both the production and perception of a communication or act which induces an emotional state of mirth or exhilaration (cf. Ruch, 1993). The identification of the best emotional label to be used for humour, such as mirth or exhilaration as cited above, has been debated, but there is agreement that whatever terminology is used, the responses are often linked to basic affective responses such as enjoyment and mild surprise (Martin, 2007: 8–10). The physically observable behaviours associated with humour may be minimal, such as a brief nod of comprehension or a slight smile or, as already discussed, rounds of laughter.

The development of the study of tourism and humour can be advanced further by an initial inspection of the conceptual schemes or theories in this field, particularly when linked to tourism examples and material. No single

theory of humour prevails, but there are a number of mini-theories applicable to types of humour and specific sorts of settings. Superiority theory, which is expressed in several forms, has a long history and some credibility as an approach to understanding humour. The observations which follow apply to the development of conceptualisations of humour in Western cultures. Scholars familiar with the rise of other globally important civilisations undoubtedly have other perspectives to offer on the rise and contemporary approach to humour in different cultures (cf. Davis, 2006).

Early views of laughter and humour espoused by Aristotle suggested that laughing and smiling at others were responses to the inferior characteristics of others. Thomas Hobbes continued this approach to laughter by observing that it resulted from a feeling of superiority or 'a sudden glory' in the perception of oneself compared to another (Martin, 2007: 22). The psychoanalysts of the early 20th century, including Freud, also supported the value of the superiority theory as an explanation of humour, although they added ideas about anxiety and embarrassment as well (Wiseman, 2007). Importantly, there have been changes in the approach to the superiority theory across the centuries. While the pre-20th century commentators were concerned with superiority deriving from the use of wit and ridicule, the more recent 20th-century approaches focus on superiority residing in aggression or implicit contests between interacting parties.

A closer examination of the history of humour appreciation develops a fuller understanding of the rise of the theories and the residual unease about studying the topic and enjoying humour. The meaning of the term humour has changed markedly in the course of history. The trajectory of change is from a morally negative to a morally positive perspective. Aristotle (335 bc, cited in Beermann & Ruch, 2009) considered comedy as indicative of inferiority, since at that time humour was perceived as a failure of self-mastery. Nevertheless a simplistic reading of the ways the ancient world evaluated humour should be avoided as some positive as well as negative views were advanced (Perks, 2012).

The term humour is derived from the Latin word *humorem*, which means body fluids (Martin, 2007). Four basic body fluids of blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile were the humours which defined wellbeing and personality. The Greek physician Hippocrates (4th century bc) believed that good health depended on the proper balance of these four fluids and it was assumed that any kind of disease could be traced back to an incorrect mixture of these fluids (Martin, 2007). A dominance of blood, phlegm, yellow bile or black bile would lead to changes in a person's temperament resulting respectively in optimistic, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic dispositions. These four humours were also assumed to regulate a person's prevailing or immediate temperament. When all four humours were in harmony, then a person was considered to be in good humour. However, when the four humours were imbalanced then a person was perceived to be in a bad humour (Ziegler, 1998).

As medical science progressed, pathology based on the concept of humours was abandoned, but the theory of temperaments as well as the term humour survived (Ruch, 2002). In the early Middle Ages humour was often condemned as dangerous and irreverent especially among the religious orders (Le Goff, 1997). At the same time, it should also be noted that 'jokers' were mostly able to avoid such direct condemnation. In mediaeval times, it was the jokers or court jesters who were able to comment on social life and question authority in their smart and witty ways while at the same time remaining immune from repercussions (Plester & Orams, 2008).

There were times when even laughter was perceived as a vice. In England this perception became even more robust after the Protestant Reformation, a period during which comedy and laughter were treated with suspicion and disdain (Morreall, 2010). In this historical era – approximately the middle of the 16th century – humour was referred to as a predominant mood quality, which could be either positive (good humour) or negative (bad humour). Eventually 'good humoured' and 'bad humoured' became recognisable dispositions. Therefore 'to be in a good humour' means that one is in a cheerful mood (Ruch, 2002). During the 19th century, humour even emerged as a cardinal virtue, where being of 'good humour' was associated with a strong and optimistic character (Martin, 2007). With the rise of the humanistic movement, humour was considered to be a virtue because it contributed to tolerance and benevolence (Beermann & Ruch, 2009).

In today's world, many people like to be surrounded by people who have a good sense of humour as it is widely considered to be a valued characteristic. In contemporary society humour is regarded as an umbrella term for anything that is funny. The source of the humour may be from an intentionally positive expression of a story or joke, but it can also encompass amusement derived from negative forms such as sarcasm, satire and ridicule (Ruch, 1996). It appears that many researchers consistently conceive of humour as having a positive social influence. Lockyer (2006) advises that there are only a small number of studies that focus on negative aspects of humour, for example those that deal with indecency and different humour tastes. In the 21st century, humour is increasingly being studied as a serious topic of research directed especially towards creating positive outcomes for people's health and education, and for enlivening the workplace (Lockyer, 2006).

The theories of humour mentioned briefly can now be specified more clearly. Martin (2007) declares that, irrespective of how humour is used, it is likely that any humorous communication is based on one of these theories.

Superiority theory

Superiority theory is the oldest theory of humour and laughter. As already noted, philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle were among the first to suggest that laughter is the result of feeling superior to others and jokes are often

deployed to evoke such feelings (Spotts *et al.*, 1997). Laughter itself is sometimes regarded as a revealing, potentially dangerous and uncontrolled communication, as it may signal otherwise carefully concealed views and values connoting felt superiority (Carty & Musharbash, 2008). Superiority theory specifies that people laugh at others' weaknesses, stupidity or misfortunes because they feel some sort of triumph over them or feel superior to them in some way (McGhee, 1979; Morreall, 1983). Nevertheless there are positive outcomes here too. Humour reflecting perceived or felt superiority has two effects: first it acts as a social corrective in that it keeps human society in order by criticising those who break rules by laughing at them; and secondly it makes people feel part of a group as they can laugh together at others' misfortunes and mistakes (Meyer, 2000; Norrick, 2003; Rogerson-Revell, 2007). The parental admonition to children that 'it is rude to laugh' represents a contemporary recognition of the management of humour built on avoiding showing superiority when appraising the misfortune or behaviour of others.

Incongruity theory

According to Aristotle, for humour to be successful incongruity is a necessary condition (McGhee, 1979). This involves humour bringing together two unrelated ideas, concepts or situations in a surprising or unexpected manner. This theory presumes that people laugh at what surprises them; it is unexpected or odd in a non-threatening way (McGhee, 1979). The incongruities perceived by individuals are invariably built on their prior experiences and knowledge (Roth *et al.*, 2006). Incongruity theory focuses on the unexpected and is therefore concerned with the cognitive aspects of the humour. Questions and issues addressed in this approach include trying to understand how humour is processed rather than being concerned with the physiological or socio-emotional effects of humour (Critchley, 2006; Meyer, 2000). It is worth noting that incongruity can also result in puzzlement – a familiar enough feeling when as an individual you just do not get the joke (Forabosco, 1992; Ruch, 1993).

Relief theory

The perspective of relief theory as put forward by Freud (1905, cited in Martin, 2007), is that people use laughter to release built-up nervous energy including sexual or aggressive feelings. Freud postulated humour to be a kind of safety valve that made it possible to share our feelings without creating unpleasantness and disrupting social harmony. In this way people experience humour and laugh because they sense the opportunity to reduce certain tensions or stressors in their life (Morreall, 1983). Relief theory suggests that humour is related to a person's 'hang ups', where they laugh at things that make them uncomfortable or guilty (Solomon, 1996). In this view, robust

laughter is enjoyed by many people because it is a welcome release from stress and other negative emotions (Morreall, 2010). The physical reactions to humour including 'laughter, snickering, guffaws and peeing-in-your pants hysteria' are, arguably, all examples of the release of energy taking place (Roth *et al.*, 2006: 125).

It should be noted that the three theories are not competing with one another and can be viewed as complementary (Perks, 2012). It is also impossible to compare them, as each theory focuses on different aspects of humour. The incongruity theory, based on cognition, attempts to explain the mechanisms of how humour works because it considers the necessary conditions for humour to occur. Superiority theory and relief theory are more outcomes focused. The former theory tries to clarify why people find different things funny focusing on their social associations whereas the latter is about feelings and emotional release. Some humour researchers go so far as to declare that most humour theories are mixed theories and 'that humour in its totality is too huge and diverse a phenomenon to be incorporated into a single integrated theory' (Krikmann, 2007: 28). The traditional humour theories have also been criticised for merely focusing on the functions or structures of humour and neglecting to consider how humour was actually used by individuals in their social settings (Refaie, 2011).

One advocate of superiority theory, Gruner (1997), views humour as playful aggression where one party wins compared to the other. For example, there is a global trade in jokes which depict the superiority of one social group over others, or perhaps more accurately demeans one labelled group compared to the joke teller and listener. These superiority-informed jokes are of the type: *What happens when New Zealand tourists come to Australia? The IQ of both countries is lowered.* There is a ready substitution of groups and labels in these jokes, but they are linked by the commonality of making the listener feel comfortable and superior both in easily recognising the joke and, provided they are not a member of the targeted group, not being personally implicated in its disparaging effect. A more subtle version of the assertion of superiority is evident in the following lines where the initial quest for superiority is challenged: *Local: Where are you from? Tourist: I am from somewhere where we do not end our sentences with a preposition. Local: Where are you from – 'Professor'?* The sarcasm in the reply to the initial claim for superiority is an effective comic retort. Given the long history of somewhat disparaging remarks about tourists and tourism, of which perhaps Boorstin's (1962) analysis is the most cited academic statement, it can be expected that many tourist jokes and tourism-related humour may also fit this superiority format (Cohen, 2010).

Nevertheless, superiority-oriented theories and Gruner's approach in particular are not without problems or ambiguities. Although Gruner claims that all humour can be reduced to the bedrock of superiority, the way he argues his case is, at times, somewhat creative. In particular, there is a kind

of logical gymnastics involved in Gruner's approach in terms of always identifying an injured party. For example, he suggests that the banter among friends where they exchange puns or teasing remarks is still about one party winning and losing. Even for self-deprecatory humour, he asserts that there is a winner in that the person telling jokes is defeating their former self.

It is perhaps even more difficult to use the superiority approach when considering whimsical exercises in absurdity. For example, zany jokes, some of which depend for their effect on an extended introduction and a surprise conclusion, can be identified. Consider the little polar bear from northern Greenland who has been a tourist and is discussing with his mother his dissatisfaction about returning home in winter. He comments: *'I went to Canada and I saw brown bears. Are you sure I am not a brown bear? I went to the United States and saw black bears. Are you sure I am not a black bear? I even went to China and saw Panda bears and Australia and looked at koala bears. Are you sure I am not a panda or a koala bear?'* 'No dear,' replies his mother. 'You are a polar bear.' The little polar bear replies, *'Then why am I so fucking cold?'* It is difficult to identify an inferior party in this kind of joke. Presumably it is the listener for accepting the validity of the first premise of a globe-trotting, articulate baby polar bear. Clearly some kinds of humour require considerable distorted reasoning by the superiority theorists to identify the aggrieved losing party.

Gruner deftly avoids one criticism of his use of the superiority theory framework. His approach consists of not viewing aggressive humour and superiority theory as necessarily belittling someone. Gruner argues that the superiority is a playful contest and therefore not a serious threat to the target audience. Further, he suggests that individuals who can poke fun at others may well understand the conventions of politically correct behaviour but are in fact achieving positive personal outcomes. Well-known humour scripts, Gruner argues, enable some humourists to express their sophistication and self-confidence since they are only playfully mocking such favourite abstract targets as dumb blondes or badly dressed tourists and not actually causing harm.

Superiority, incongruity and relief theory explanations are the dominant but not the only ways way to understand humour about tourist–local interaction and tourism places. Other theoretical perspectives can also be explored. For everyday settings and for many work environments involving elements of danger or stress, the foundation work of Goffman (1969) which emphasises the social integration function of humour has been pivotal (Joyce, 1989; Mitchell, 1996; Scott, 2007; Young, 1995). Goffman's original approach stressed the way humour was used to bind members of a team when they are producing a performance: *Surgeons performing a complex operation on a patient's lower bowel make a serious mistake. One comments, now we are all in the poo together.*

In his early work on humour in teams, Goffman (1969: 168–173) noted the gentle mocking of the other group members' foibles as well as mild

derisory comments about them. Affection not malice is seen as driving these easing remarks. As a link to this approach, the work of both Sweet (1989) and Evans-Pritchard (1989) suggests that that in tourism-oriented cultural performances and social interactions, ethnic groups may use humour in some positive ways. In her analyses of North American Pueblo Indians and their dance performance, Sweet observes that tourists and performers join together to laugh at the Pueblo dance routines which mimic tourist behaviour and stereotypes. Evans-Pritchard also studied North American Indian and white American interaction. Her case studies revealed that a number of Indians played with the stereotypes visitors held, and confounded the tourists by such actions as dressing in a formal suit, parodying the sullen Indian image depicted in films and pretending not to understand English. It might be argued that the humour here is less about superiority and more about mutual engagement in the parody. The perspective is closer to Gruner's view of play rather than the traditional superiority explanations.

Goffman (1974) also identified how humour acted as mechanism to help interacting parties define or indeed redefine more clearly the nature of the frame or situation in which their meeting was taking place. In this view humour can be a tool which helps participants switch frames and readjust expectations. This approach allows for a positive, integrative and constructive use of humour. The jokes and amusing stories may be capable of binding together participants who are in ambiguous situations.

The integrative approach to understanding and interpreting humour is also aligned with three of the four dimensions of humour presented by Martin (2007: 211). In particular, a link can be drawn between Goffman's approach and what Martin has termed affiliative humour. Two other categories of interest to tourism in Martin's work are self-defeating or self-disparaging humour and self-enhancing or coping humour. Martin's fourth humour style, aggressive humour, which he regards as used for criticising or manipulating others, is clearly aligned with superiority theory. It will be argued in subsequent sections that this type of humour is often seen as inappropriate, especially in light-hearted, entertainment-oriented tourism contexts.

There is a close compatibility between Goffman's micro-sociological approach and the work in psychology on the cognitive approaches to understanding humour. The idea of frames is somewhat analogous to the co-existence of two schema (Wyer & Collins, 1992). These researchers propose that humour involves the activation of two different schema to understand a situation or interaction. In this area of analysis, schema are organised units of understanding bringing together memory and everyday and familiar knowledge. Wyer and Collins suggest that humour involves the juxtaposition of two co-existing schema. As people appraise a situation and seek to fit it into their everyday knowledge, one schema is dropped or shown to be redundant as the other takes over. In their view, humour results only when the less serious or more trivial schema takes over. The particular appeal of

the schema approach lies in its ability to make sense of the quirky or bizarre humour jokes and forms.

Personality and Humour Involvement

The exposition of generic theories of humour is accompanied in the literature by some detailed treatments of individual and personality differences in producing humour and responding to humour. The issue of a sense of humour is important to tourism studies because the variability in responses to humour are likely to be influential when dealing with tourist market segments, varied settings, different national groups and cross-cultural interaction. In contemporary Western society at least, having a good sense of humour is widely regarded as a positive trait. In the list of character strengths developed by positive psychologists, humour is identified as a virtue which helps individuals forge connections to the larger universe and provides them with meaning (Park *et al.*, 2006). There is now widespread agreement that a sense of humour is not a unitary ability or characteristic (Martin, 2007). At least two dominant meanings have emerged in a long-running series of psychometric and factor analytic studies. There is an ability to comprehend humorous situations and a different and independent ability to produce humour (Kohler & Ruch, 1996). This distinction is consistent with the organising definition used in this book and suggests that an overall appreciation of humour must consider both its production and perception.

Martin (2007) subdivides the two meanings of a sense of humour further by suggesting that the perception of humour may involve habitual behaviour (such as people who laugh easily), temperament differences (such as ongoing cheerfulness), cognitive abilities (being able to comprehend subtleties and incongruities), select attitudes (a positive view of humour) and a world view which embraces a non-serious outlook on life. By way of contrast, the production of humour is dependent on individuals being good self-monitors (that is, sensing how others are reacting to them) as well as having the memory, creativity and divergent thinking skills to spot the comic components of situations (Feingold & Mazzella, 1991; Kohler & Ruch, 1996; Turner & Turner, 1978). One familiar interpretation of these two meanings of a sense of humour resides in everyday statements where people assert that they enjoy humour but are unable to remember jokes or effectively tell funny stories.

The fine-grained studies of the links between personality types and humour appreciation have revealed a number of enduring and consistent relationships (Martin, 2007: 200–202; Ruch, 1994). Two preliminary items of information are needed in order to understand these studies. Factor analytic studies suggest that most of the variation in humour appreciation is accounted for not so much by content but by the structure of the humour. The

dominant factors identified in research analyses concerning humour appreciation are first incongruity, and secondly nonsense or zany humour. The third consistent category which appears in the factor analytic studies of jokes and humour types is the one content-based dimension which recurs across studies: it is humour built on sexual themes (Ruch, 1993). In assessing the links between personality and these types of humorous material, researchers in this field use two measures of humour. First, there is the obvious dimension of the extent to which the material is amusing or funny. The second dimension is one of how unpleasant or aversive the humour is seen to be.

Typical studies by Hehl and Ruch (1990), Ruch (1994, 1997) and Ruch and Hehl (1998) have produced an array of findings which broadly indicate that extroverts enjoy all kinds of humour a little more, that perceived aversiveness is weakly correlated with neuroticism, that religious fundamentalism is negatively correlated with seeing jokes as funny, that sensation seekers enjoy all humour types more, that conservative and authoritarian personalities appreciate the incongruity jokes much more than the truly bizarre or zany jokes, and that those known as tough minded, that is, low on empathy, appreciate the sexual humour more. These kinds of individual differences are broadly useful for interpreting humour receptiveness and production at the individual and personality level of analysis. These profiles are important because they can be seen as potentially moderating or softening the effects of nationality reviewed earlier.

Forms and Styles of Humour

There have also been long-standing concerns with the forms of the humour. Long and Graesser (1988), looking at naturally occurring humour in conversation, identified 11 categories: irony, satire, sarcasm, overstatement and understatement, self-deprecatory remarks, teasing, replies to rhetorical questions, clever replies to serious statements, double entendres, transforming common or frozen expressions, and puns. It is possible to argue that several of these forms are present not just in conversation but in comic routines, jokes, the telling of stories, slapstick action and mime. In the tourism context, guided tours, tourism signs, cartoons, postcards, travel writing, humorous photographs and video blogs are other expressive outlets where forms of humour may occur. Some illustrative material is offered in Figure 1.1 and Table 1.1.

In citing and using the material in Figure 1.1 and Table 1.1, the ever-present issue of the authors' selection due to our own sense of humour and the superiority issues arising from seeing mistakes in English are evident. Cohen (2010, 2011) has provided some reflexive analysis of the analysis of cartoons in particular. He suggests that those creating the humour do so from a privileged and superior position, often one of their own fluency in the language or cultural norms. On a more academic note, Cohen's own considerable

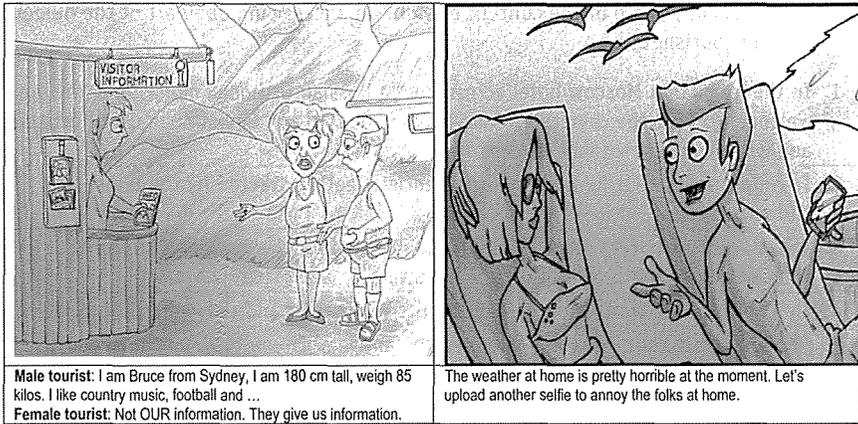


Figure 1.1 Amusement derived from tourist behaviour: The cartoon format

collection of tourist-related jokes largely reinforces the discrepancy between the abstract ideological conception of the successful modern tourist and actual tourist practices. This is more than the dumb tourist being the butt of the jokes, and leads Cohen to emphasise that academic work has often ignored the power and the agency of those who prepare for tourists and who create tourism settings. Cohen suggests that his review of tourist cartoons also ‘pointed to the problem of the permeability of the boundary between quotidian reality and its liminal reversal in vacation, prompting a more thorough investigation regarding the possible interpenetration of the two spheres of life’ (Cohen, 2010: 15).

These kinds of comments are undoubtedly heart-warming for those who assert the value of studying mobilities as a paradigm for contemporary tourism research (Hannam, 2014). As with all tourism-related phenomena, care must be taken to consider the full array of forms or component parts of the topic before advancing too many general points or implications. It is apparent that written jokes and cartoons are some of the easier humour forms to study, but an over-reliance on the research and tourism implications drawn from one part of the humour array is arguably premature.

The chapters in this book deal with a range of humour forms and topics. As a way of outlining the diversity and variety of tourism forms and processes, a map of the elements involved follows the work reported by Pearce (2009). It is reproduced and slightly modified in Figure 1.2 as a useful organiser of issues and perspectives to be considered.

The flow of ideas and processes depicted in Figure 1.2 can be described as follows. There is considerable variability in the tourism humour system in terms of who is producing the humour. The impetus for the amusing material may come from industry personnel or be generated by the tourists themselves. Outside observers, such as authors and professional comedians, may

Table 1.1 A small sample of the content of signs characterising one part of the humour in tourism link

1. In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian Orthodox monastery: You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists, and writers are buried daily except Thursdays.
2. In an advertisement by a Hong Kong dentist: Teeth extracted by the latest Methodists.
3. In a Bucharest hotel lobby: The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.
4. In a Leipzig elevator: Do not enter the lift backwards, and only when lit up.
5. At a Budapest zoo: Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food give it to the guard on duty.
6. In a Paris hotel elevator: Please leave your values at the front desk.
7. In a Tokyo bar: Special cocktails for ladies with nuts.
8. In a hotel in Athens: Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11 am daily.
9. In a Japanese hotel: You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.
10. On the menu of a Swiss restaurant: Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.
11. In an East African newspaper: A new swimming pool is rapidly taking shapes since the contractors have thrown in the bulk of their workers.
12. In a Rhodes tailor's shop: Order your summers' suit. Because is big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation.
13. In a Zurich hotel: Because of the impropriety of entertaining guests of the opposite sex in the bedroom, it is suggested that the lobby be used for this purpose.
14. In a Rome laundry: Ladies, leave your clothes here and spend the afternoon having a good time.
15. In a Czechoslovakian tourist agency: Take one of our horse-driven city tours – we guarantee no miscarriages.
16. In the office of doctor in a Rome: Specialist in women and other diseases.

Source: Humor Matters (2014).

be writing and performing material which is of interest to this book and tourism humour studies. Given the diversity of humour builders, creators and performers, the potential audiences and the contexts in which those audiences experience the humour are equally diverse. There are links among the next three sections of Figure 1.2 with the content of the humour, the type of techniques involved and the delivery mechanisms. Some of these performances require very little skill whereas on other occasions they represent a highly practised routine. The results of the contexts, the content and the delivery formats can all be interpreted as providing humour which has a defined quality or style. We recognise irony and satire (or at least some of us do some of the time) and we are also familiar with the jokes and

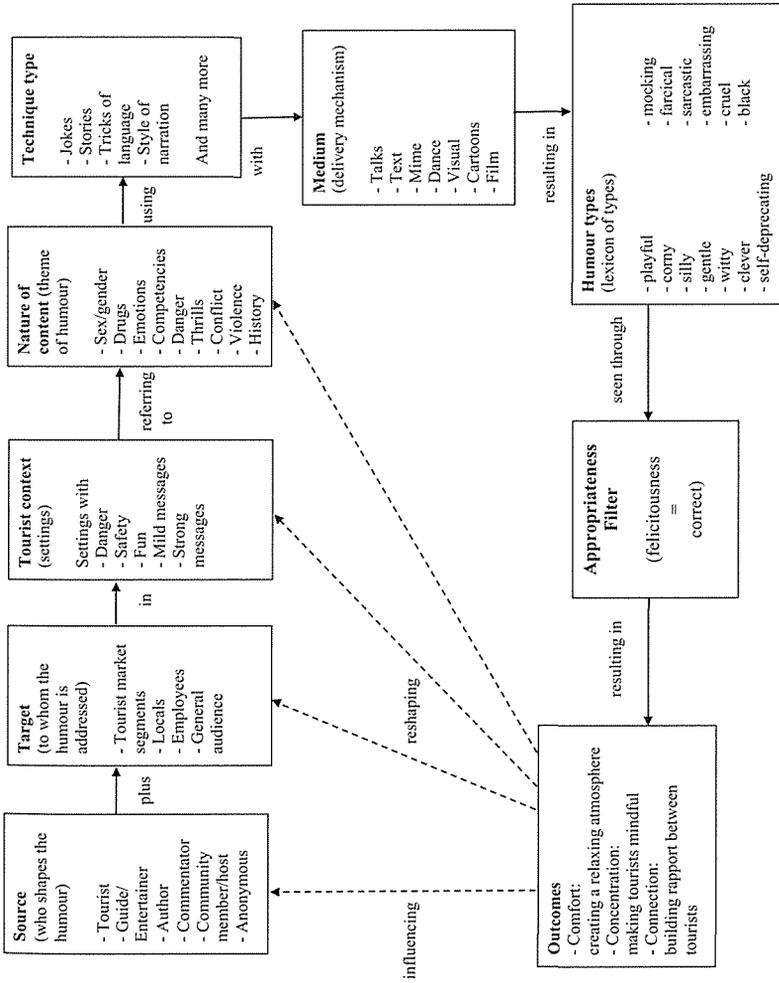


Figure 1.2 A conceptual map of the tourism-humour links
Source: Modified from Pearce (2009).

performances built on corny humour, cruel remarks and dark or even sick remarks. The personal and community censors with which we judge humour are mediators in the tourism humour system. If we see the humour as felicitous, a term used in the literature to mean acceptable and appropriate, then we may benefit from the amusing situations and events in a variety of ways. The inappropriateness of the humour will negate many of the positive outcomes. As already suggested, this pivotal judgement process occupies one chapter of this book but does not dominate our attention. Both the individual benefits and the wider community and business consequences of successful humour are reviewed in the chapters to follow and Figure 1.2 does indicate that the system has key feedback loops where the success of humour or indeed its failure shapes the production and performance of those who generate and select their humour material.

As an important extension to the analyses of the tourism–humour links developed in Figure 1.2, it is also practical to understand humour along a time dimension. More specifically, we can see the role of humour in its various forms and expressions occurring prior to travel, during on-site experiences, including the experience of getting there and returning, and then in a post-travel phase. This book uses these time-based components of the total trajectory of the tourism experience to organise subsequent chapters.

The Benefits of Humour

Some of the potential outcomes of tourism-linked humour are also depicted in Figure 1.2. The identification of these benefits is derived from analysis of several key themes in the humour and psychology literature and warrant our close attention. Not all of the benefits are firmly rooted in empirical tourism studies and it is one of the tasks of this book to add to the evidence base. One recurring argument for the development of tourism studies is that the distinctive contexts of tourism generate special kinds of social meaning and interaction. Building on the theme that one academic purpose of tourism studies lies in adding to the analysis of social life in the contemporary world, it can be suggested that studying the tourism–humour link offers the promise of confirming and extending the models explaining the consequences of humour in close interaction. In essence, tourism studies can extend our understanding of the humour phenomenon by stretching the examination of the contexts to be studied.

Already in tourism studies there are arguably four cumulative insights which summarise the findings and observations from the existing case studies of humour (Cohen, 2010; Frew, 2006a; Pearce, 2009; Pearce & Pabel, 2014). The first level of outcome which has been highlighted is on a broad scale and offers opportunities for reflection on how academics and others see tourism (Cohen, 2011). This is a large and amorphous topic, varying from the

foundation criticisms of tourism itself by Boorstin (1962) to the depiction of the unattractive pedantic tourism scholar Roger Sheldrake in the novel *Paradise News* (Lodge, 1991). Most tourism researchers are somewhat familiar with the tedious jokes from colleagues and others about enjoying holidays and travel. Superiority rather than incongruity would appear to be a mechanism for examining such everyday material and its academic accompaniments. At best the mild teasing might indicate some of the affiliative behaviours originally observed by Goffman. This book will not pursue this topic in detail.

The key interests in tourism and humour in the present volume are tied to more specific concerns. In particular there is a focus on what humour is doing for tourists themselves. These outcomes are indicated in Figure 1.2 but remain only partly confirmed in the limited work on tourism and humour. The results from previous work do suggest that humour establishes visitor comfort levels, assists visitor concentration and establishes connections to presenters (Pearce, 2009). The comfort–concentration–connections findings are inductive thematic summaries of points derived from established and successful instances of provided tourist humour. Each of these interacting elements can also be linked to a theoretical or conceptual underpinning.

The argument that humour establishes a comfort level is given weight by the early use of humour in some novel tourism settings. For those feeling anxious or slightly unsure of what is to come, the first few jokes reduce the role ambiguity for the audience or participants; visitors are able to grasp quickly their role which is to be entertained and enjoy the setting to the full. The Disney theme parks are adept at this sort of quick banter. Arriving at the Jungle Cruise, one of Disney's longest running family rides, the presenter says: 'If you'd like to keep your family together, please stay in the same line. However, if there is someone in your family you'd like to get rid of, just put them in the opposite line and you'll never see them again.' Nothing too serious is going to happen here and the audience is being primed to respond to a version of prop-assisted stand-up comedy.

The proposal that humour can establish a comfort level can be understood through considering the ambiguity which tourists experience in a number of settings. Often the novelty of the situations makes expectations about the setting and the visitors' roles unclear (Pearce, 2005; Ryan & Collins, 2008). Goffman's frame analysis is relevant to these settings, as the humour both through its existence and in its style provides what Goffman defines as a key to the setting. He observes: 'The systematic transformation that a particular keying introduces may alter only slightly the activity thus transformed, but it utterly changes what it is a participant would say is going on' (Goffman, 1974: 45).

The second insight from the available case studies lies in recognising that humour assists concentration. A prerequisite of humour is that for nearly all jokes and verbal quips, as well as for stories which are a common technique

in the sites studied, the visitor must be listening and concentrating in order to 'get' the humour. Pearce and Pabel (2014) report that many experienced travellers hardly bother to pay attention to important airline safety messages. The innovations deployed by a number of companies, including Southwest Airlines in the United States, the Virgin group of airlines and Air New Zealand are to wrap the safety messages in more palatable humour. Concentration is also important in many adventure tourism settings. By detecting whether or not visitors are responding to the jokes, the tour leader can also see how well they understand the requirements and how much attention is being paid to the safety directions. This is an important task, given that some participants may be highly anxious and only appear to be following instructions.

The role of humour in assisting concentration and paying attention to new material has been recognised for some time in the literature on mindfulness (Moscardo, 1999). Mindfulness refers to the active processing of information where individuals are responsive to new ways of looking at a situation rather than being trapped by familiar routines (Langer, 1989, 2009). Mindless processing of the guide's or presenter's script will not result in the audience members grasping the jokes – a situation likely to be apparent if others are laughing and the individual is not.

The third generic finding revealed in the tourism studies of humour is that humour can establish a variety of connections for participants (Frew, 2006a). The first of these connections is a direct one; it is effected between the audience and the presenters themselves. For example, humour helps guides establish that they are not simply a talking book. This is achieved by comments which are either self-deprecating or show a postmodern awareness of their own role. This kind of linkage and connection is sometimes obvious even to inexperienced guides operating in developing countries who sometimes quickly learn that humour about themselves is good for engaging visitor sympathies (Salazar, 2006). The ability to mock oneself is possibly one of the best humour-linked styles, since choosing oneself as the target of the humour cannot offend any audience member and, provided the content is acceptable, is thus very likely to be seen as appropriate. This kind of self-deprecating humour is subtly different from that noted by Evans-Pritchard and Sweet, where the mocking quality of the humour was targeted at the select behaviours of the audience.

Balme (1998) observes that in the Samoan section of Hawaii's Polynesian Cultural Centre traditional practices are not just presented as specific skills of Samoan society. Rather, they are delivered and embodied through the presenter's skilled humour. For example, in presenting the task of collecting coconuts the presenter plays with the audience's expectations that he will be the tree climber, but then switches perspectives and becomes the overawed sophisticate when confronted with the difficulty of the task. In this process the audience and the presenter merge as one in admiring the

skill of another performer when the actual tree climbing takes place. Balme (1998: 58) refers to this playing with reflexivity as ‘strategies of resistance against the tourist gaze’. Similarly, in Disney’s Jungle Cruise the presenter comments: *‘And just ahead you’ll notice an alligator playing with an elephant. That’s something you don’t see every day [long pause] but I do’,* and similarly: *‘I had such a good time – I’m going to go again! [in a low voice] and again and again and again.’* The reflection on the guide’s own performative labour functions smoothly to provide humour with no cost to other targets (cf. Bryman, 2004).

Other humour-linked connections involve selecting an audience member or participant and then joking with them about a characteristic they have. This rapport-building fun making is illustrated by the routine used in two of the successful tourist attractions studied in the work on humour at tourist attractions by Pearce (2009): the Canyon Swing, an adventure activity in New Zealand; and the Jungle Tour in Disneyland, Los Angeles. The guide’s patter often starts with lines such as: *‘Where are you from?’ [The visitor answers.] The presenter says ‘Sorry’ as if he hadn’t heard. The visitor repeats the answer and the guide says, ‘Oh, I heard you the first time. I’m just sorry.’* Similar routines involving subcategories of the audience such as all those wearing a certain colour or all those who are from a specific state or country are deployed to involve audience members and build rapport.

Additional jokes often provide a wry comment on the tourist role, the attraction itself and the larger world. These asides occur at the end of the Canyon Swing presentation: *‘Now you can do something much more scary and ride on our New Zealand roads’;* and throughout the Jungle Tour: *‘Please exit the boat the same way you entered – pushing and shoving. Any children left on board become the property of Walt Disney company. . . . If you leave them we will be forced to take them back to It’s a Small Small World and glue their feet to the floor and have them sing that hideous song over and over.’* Similarly, *‘Over there are the remains of my last crew [pointing to skulls]. Look, they are still smiling – that’s what happens after about 10 hours in Disneyland. Those smiles are just plastered on’* and finally, *‘You know people ask me how many people work here. [Guide looks around.] About one in ten, I’d say.’* The existing findings and perspectives from the small corpus of tourism studies about humour will be reconsidered and refreshed throughout this book. As a starting base to build our tourism-specific treatment of humour they represent a first foray into the fascinating field.

Laughing Not Crying

One further and pivotal set of ideas builds the essential rationale for the studies and subsequent chapters in this book. The growth and identification of positive psychology as a field of study forms a key backdrop for this

volume. While there have always been researchers within psychology seeking to embellish people's lives, the efforts in particular of Seligman, Csikszentmihalyi and Diener at the start of the 21st century have formed a coherent nucleus of theories, empirical studies and methods of investigation now referred to as positive psychology (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008; Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). At core, the approach respects the clinical and remedial work which characterises the efforts of many researchers and practitioners but asserts that making healthy people happier and more fulfilled is also a valuable endeavour. Aspects of this approach are very relevant to tourism studies overall (cf. Filep & Pearce, 2014; Pearce, 2009), but one particular theory is pivotal to the humour work.

Fredrickson (1998, 2001), in a series of studies which provide supporting evidence, has argued for the importance of the 'broaden and build' theory of human emotions. The essence of Fredrickson's theory is that, when a person is experiencing positive emotions such as being joyful and amused, they are also more willing and ready to engage with others and build their understanding of the world. The empirical studies reveal that the positive, outward-reaching consequences of being amused and happy predispose individuals to seek out others, build skills and capacities and foster resilience in more difficult times. The work corrects the sometimes quoted view that tough, emotionally challenging times – in brief those that make you cry – are good for you. It is possible to respect people's skills in coping with adversity but the emotional lows tend to restrict people's orientation to the world – an unhealthy shrinking inwards rather than an engaged willingness to learn, interact and be with others (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998).

For the positive emotions, a rising spiral of influence can be depicted. As people experience good feelings and become more engaged and build superior skills, so their opportunities for more amusing and positive times expand. In this way, laughing and enjoying the humour of settings holds the possibility of improving mental health and builds a portfolio of happy memories. These stores of good times also matter when people deal with their past and use their experiences to think about their future (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008). Individuals who have a store of positive, happy, fun-filled memories and who are able to see their past as a string of largely positive experiences, rather than a litany of difficulties, are better able to cope with change and take control of situations, adapt more readily and are less apt to blame others for ongoing problems. Again the experiences of humour are positive influences on wellbeing. In all of these views, positive experiences and emotions related to humour matter not just for the moment but for their enduring value in building capacity and shaping the trajectory of people's lives. Tourism, as one of the world's industries most dedicated to serving and building people's happiness, is a rich world in which to study the links between happiness and humour.

The coming chapters

The theme of humour in tourism is tracked in several ways in the following chapters. The role of humour in pre-departure information and travel preparation is considered in Chapter 2.

The attention shifts in Chapter 3 to the tourists' on-site experiences, with original data being incorporated to illustrate cases of humour in adventure tour and environmental situations. Tourists also record their experiences of humour and many individuals have written about tourism in entertaining and humorous ways. Chapter 4 will cover both communication efforts by tourists and by recognised authors. In Chapter 5, and following some points already considered in the present chapter, the issue of unsuccessful or inappropriate humour in tourism will be considered. Chapter 6 extends some of the previous discussion, notably emphasising the themes of technology, social connectedness and the analysis of experience. The final chapter of this book also considers links to the topic area of positive tourism. It offers an overview of the material presented and draws together the two types of implications normally associated with detailed tourism studies: the conceptual value of the work for fellow researchers and the potential for applied or industry applications of the studies for public good and commercial uses. Humour in tourism, we will argue, is more than a laughing matter.