

# Language and image interaction in cartoons: Towards a multimodal theory of humor

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## Abstract

In cartoons, meaning and humor are produced either via two semiotic modes, the verbal and the visual, or solely via the visual mode. Due to their condensed form and to the interaction between language and image, cartoons are often considered to be a direct and easy to process means of communicating a message. The present study aims at showing that cartoon humor is not always easy to grasp fully, therefore the reader should pay attention to all the verbal and visual details of each cartoon. For this purpose, a *General Theory of Verbal Humor* (GTVH) framework of analysis is adopted, while cognitive and semiotic approaches are complementary and relevant in this respect. Special attention is paid to exaggeration, contradiction, and metaphor as humorous mechanisms and to the hyperdetermination of humor, which seems to result from the interaction of verbal and visual elements and from the use of visual metaphor. By bringing to the surface some of the common humorous mechanisms in both the verbal and the visual mode, the present analysis aims at taking the GTVH a step further towards the unification of linguistic and semiotic approaches to humor.

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Cartoons are full of difficulties. In their image, in their text, in their punch line, in their drawing. The only easy thing about them is their arrival on the newspaper premises: you put them in the fax machine, you press a button and ...there it is!

Kostas Mitropoulos, Greek cartoonist (1925-)

(*Ta Nea*, January 9th 2001)

## 1. Introduction

Previous research has claimed that cartoons convey messages via their humorous representation of and comment on reality. In cartoons, meaning is produced either via two semiotic modes, the verbal and the visual, or solely via the visual mode. Hence, cartoons could be considered a specific kind of *semiotic domain*. As defined by Gee (2003:18), a semiotic domain is “any set of practices that recruits one or more modalities (e.g. oral or written language, images, equations, symbols, sounds, gestures, graphs, artifacts, etc.) to communicate distinctive types of meaning”. Furthermore, the visual code and its interaction with the verbal one result in the non-linearity of cartoon messages, affecting thus the cognitive processing of cartoons (Samson and Hempelmann, 2006; Hempelmann and Samson, 2007).

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Due to their condensed form and to the interaction between language and image, cartoons are often considered to be a direct and easy to process means of communicating a message and informing the public opinion. More specifically, it is often suggested in the relevant literature that, on the one hand, “[r]eaders might prefer image presentations of social issues as a fast and easy way to stay informed” (Giarelli and Tulman, 2003:946) and, on the other hand, that a cartoon is “sometimes able to convey a complex message in a much more immediate and condensed fashion than language” (El Refaie, 2003:87; see also Templin, 1999:21; Edwards, 2001:2141; Plumb, 2004:432).

In addition, humor is considered to be the *sine qua non* for cartoons: “a cartoon is a joke told in a picture”, as Samson and Huber (2004) put it. Attardo and Chabanne (1992:167–168) define the cartoon as a kind of joke text involving a mixed-code message. They claim that “the humorous device lies in the lines uttered by the characters; as a result, the drawing itself would be a graphic equivalent for the narrative introduction [of the narrative joke], giving the necessary information for the identification of the situation. The caption is thus seen as some sort of ‘humorous commentary’ on the otherwise nonhumorous drawing. The opposite can be also true: [...] cartoons are often based on the contrast between a perfectly ‘normal’ caption and an incongruous drawing. The importance is that the humorous point is created by the interaction of the drawing and the text” (1992:168; see also Lessard, 1991:74). Furthermore, it is important to note here that cartoon humor can result not only from the text included in it or the text and image interaction, but also from the picture itself, in case no text is included in the cartoon panel. As Samson and Huber (2007:14) summarize:

- (a) the picture can be an illustration of the verbal joke, without adding to the humorous effect; hence, only the text is responsible for the humorous effect;
- (b) the picture provides supporting information not contained in the humorous text; hence both text and image contribute to the humorous effect;
- (c) the picture is essential for the production of humor; hence, humor is based only on the picture, not in the text, if any.

In short, the two classifications cited above (i.e. Attardo and Chabanne, 1992; Samson and Huber, 2007) are compatible as far as the first two categories are concerned, while the third category is discussed only in the second classification.

The first aim of the present study is to show that conveying a message via cartoon drawing is not always as simple as it might seem. More specifically, cartoon humor is not always easy to grasp fully, therefore the reader should pay attention to all the verbal and visual details of each cartoon. For this purpose, a GTVH framework of analysis (*General Theory of Verbal Humor*; see Attardo, 2001) is adopted. The starting point of the GTVH is that humor results from the full or partial overlap of two different and incompatible scripts activated in a single text. A script is a cognitive structure involving the semantic information surrounding a lexical unit and representing the speaker’s knowledge of the world. Thus, a script provides the speaker with information on the structure, components, functions, etc. of a given entity or activity (Raskin, 1985:80–85; Attardo, 2001:2–8).<sup>1</sup>

Given that, in semiotic domains encoded via verbal and visual means (cartoons, comics, plays, films, sitcoms, etc.), meanings are produced and scripts can be activated and opposed by both, the second aim of the present paper is to provide feedback for the GTVH, namely to make some preliminary suggestions for its expansion, in order to be able to account not only for the verbal mechanisms of humor, but also for the visual ones. Therefore, *cognitive* (Brône and Feyaerts, 2003) and *semiotic* approaches (Lessard, 1991; Nikolajeva and Scott, 2000; El Refaie, 2003, 2004; see also Forceville, 1995, 2002; Carroll, 1996) are complementary and relevant to my study, especially in order to account for the role of image in creating a humorous effect.

It should be noted here that the idea of a unified theoretical model for the analysis of verbal and visual humor is not new. Lessard (1991) establishes a correspondence between verbal and visual puns by identifying two common mechanisms for their production, *antanaclasis* (i.e. repeating a single word/form so as to activate two different meanings) and *syllipsis* (i.e. activating two meanings for a single word/form in a given context). Although Lessard is investigating only a certain kind of humor (i.e. puns), his work could be considered a first step towards the unification of the semiotic and linguistic approaches to humor (see Attardo, 1994:184), which – as will be shown here – is possible within the GTVH framework.

<sup>1</sup> This definition of *script* draws on what is called *schema* or *frame* in psychology, artificial intelligence, and linguistics (see, among others, Schank and Abelson, 1977).

In this context, first, a brief outline and exemplification of the main analytical tools of the GTVH used for the present analysis is provided (section 2), followed by a review of the studies using a GTVH framework for linguistic and semiotic cartoon analysis (section 3). After the presentation of the data under investigation (section 4), all three categories of cartoons identified (Samson and Huber, 2007; see above) are examined: cartoons including only verbal humor (section 5.1); cartoons whose humor results from the language and image interaction (section 5.2); and cartoons whose humorous effect relies entirely on their visual aspects (section 5.3). In the cartoons of the second category, special attention is paid to exaggeration and contradiction as humorous mechanisms (section 5.2.1) and to the hyperdetermination of humor, which seems to result from the interaction of verbal and visual elements and from the use of visual metaphor (section 5.2.2). The final section (section 6) discusses the main points of the analysis proposed which could be considered as feedback for the GTVH and which put into question the ‘popular’ view of cartoons as an easy and direct means of communicating a message. Further trends in cartoon research are also explored.

## 2. A brief outline of the GTVH

The GTVH is a linguistic theory of humor based on semantics, but also involving text linguistics, theory of narrative, and pragmatics broadly conceived (Attardo, 2001:22). The basic units proposed by the GTVH for the analysis of humorous texts are the *punch line* and the *jab line*. Both are based on a script opposition (see section 1 and below), but their textual position and function are different. While the punch line is final and causing a surprise effect, jab lines are humorous elements fully integrated in the text and do not disrupt its flow (Attardo, 2001:29, 82; Tsakona, 2003, 2007b).

Both kinds of humorous lines can be analyzed using six *knowledge resources* (henceforth KRs):

- (a) the *script opposition*, which is the necessary requirement for humor: a humorous text is fully or partially compatible with two different and opposed scripts. Furthermore, Raskin (1985:111) identifies three basic types of opposition between the ‘real’ and ‘unreal’ situations evoked by the overlapping scripts of a humorous text: actual/non-actual, normal/abnormal, and possible/impossible (see the analysis of the examples following the presentation of the remaining KRs);
- (b) the *logical mechanism*, presenting the distorted and playful logic that causes the script opposition;
- (c) the *situation*, including the objects, participants, activities, places, etc. presented in the humorous text;
- (d) the *target*, involving the persons, groups, or institutions ridiculed by humor;
- (e) the *narrative strategy*, referring to the text organization of the humorous text (narrative, dialogue, riddle, etc.; in the present case, cartoons), or to the speech act including humor; and
- (f) the *language*, which is responsible for the exact wording of the humorous text and for the placement of the functional elements that constitute it (i.e. the distribution of information along the text and the position of the punch line and/or the jab lines).

Each punch or jab line results from the combination of the different values each KR can take. The analysis in KR terms brings to the surface the similarities and/or differences among jokes and humorous texts in general (for a detailed discussion, see Attardo, 2001:1–28).

The following examples (1–2) illustrate the analysis proposed by the GTVH. In the beginning of the story *L’Odysee d’Astérix* (*Asterix’s Odyssey*)<sup>2</sup>; Goscinnny and Uderzo, 1981:7) of the Asterix comic series, Julius Caesar is indignantly trying to find a solution to his (permanent) problem, namely how to defeat the Gauls who keep attacking his ‘invincible’ Roman soldiers and making fools of them and Caesar personally. He turns to the chief of the Roman secret police for help and advice.

A couple of different scripts are opposed in this part of the story.<sup>3</sup> First of all, the invincible, well-trained and well-equipped Roman army is repeatedly defeated by the inhabitants of a small (virtual) Gaul village, which becomes therefore the only place in the area not conquered yet by the Romans. In particular, Caesar yells (example 1):

<sup>2</sup> Extracts from the original French text have been translated by the author for the purposes of the present paper.

<sup>3</sup> Due to space limits, only two of the script oppositions in these pages were selected for analysis here. For a detailed analysis of humor in the Asterix comic series, see Gavrilidou and Tsakona, 2004–2005.

(1) *Non!!! Ça ne peut pas durer!!! Ce village d'Armorique continue à ridiculiser la puissance de Rome!*

'No!!! This cannot last any longer!!! This Armorican village still ridicules the power of Rome!'

In GTVH terms, jab line (1) is analyzed as follows:

Script Opposition: normal/abnormal, the invincible Roman army has conquered every part of the Gaul area/is repeatedly defeated by the inhabitants of a small Armorican village

Logical Mechanism: role reversal

Situation: Julius Caesar is having a meeting in his palace with the Roman chief of the secret police

Target: the Roman Empire, the Roman Army, and Julius Caesar personally

Narrative strategy: comics story

Language: –

More specifically, the first script activated is related to the particular characteristics and conquests of the invincible Roman army (see 'normal' in the Script Opposition KR in example 1), while the opposed one is related to the unexpectedly victorious Gauls (see 'abnormal' in example 1), who have been able to resist the Romans for such a long time.<sup>4</sup> In this particular case, the Romans are the losers and the Gauls the winners; therefore their roles have been reversed (see the Logical Mechanism KR above). These words are uttered by Julius Caesar during his meeting with the chief of the Roman secret police (see the Situation KR above) and the humorous target is the Roman Empire, in particular the Roman Army and Julius Caesar personally (see the Target KR above).

*Le chef de la police secrète* 'the chief of the [Roman] secret police' could be considered another humorous element in this extract (example 2; see Gosciny and Uderzo, 1981:7), since in Roman times, there was no secret police, at least not as we know it nowadays. The script opposition here is based on an anachronism: the script related to contemporary secret services and agents overlaps and, at the same time, is incompatible with the popular script related to the way information was intercepted in Roman times (see the Script Opposition KR in example 2). This is not to say that there were no spies in the service of Julius Caesar or the Roman Empire in general: one could identify some similarities and analogies (see the Logical Mechanism KR in example 2) between the secret services nowadays and in ancient (Roman) years (e.g. their effort to gain access to classified information, to keep their identity secret in order to achieve their goals, etc.). Nevertheless, one could hardly imagine an institutionalized secret police with a chief in charge of it at that time. The analysis proposed for (2) *le chef de la police secrète* by the GTVH is the following:

Script Opposition: actual/non-actual, secret police in modern states/secret police in ancient Rome

Logical Mechanism: analogy

Situation: Julius Caesar is having a meeting in his palace with the Roman chief of the secret police

Target: the Roman Empire and the contemporary secret services

Narrative strategy: comics story

Language: title of officer of inexistent service

Finally, in the GTVH framework, the notion of *hyperdetermination* of humor also proves important for the analysis of cartoons (see section 5.2.1). Attardo (2001:100–101) identifies two kinds of hyperdetermination: *textual hyperdetermination*, which involves the presence of more than one active source of humor at the same time; and *punctual hyperdetermination*, which involves the simultaneous activity of a given source of humor in different contexts and levels. So, it seems that, in the former case, a text unit may include different sources of script opposition(s) along its vector (see examples 1–2), while, in the latter, a punch or a jab line can be related to more than one script opposition.

<sup>4</sup> This script opposition actually forms a running gag, since it surfaces in each and every story of the Asterix series.

### 3. Analyzing cartoons in GTVH terms

The GTVH was originally based on jokes and verbally encoded material (e.g. narrative texts in Attardo, 2001; Tsakona, 2004, 2007b; see section 2). However, Attardo himself (1998, 2001:128–134) considers the visual mode (as complementary to the verbal one) in his analysis of the sitcom *Chuckie Bites the Dust*, pointing out that at least some of the humor included in the text is based not on the words uttered by the sitcom characters, but on their movements and gestures, hence the Language KR is specified as “signifier of the semiotic” in general (Attardo, 1998:242). Nevertheless, he does not discuss in detail the theoretical implications of this kind of analysis for the GTVH framework. Some more recent studies have attempted to broaden the scope of the GTVH by analyzing verbally and visually encoded humorous material in GTVH terms.

Takouda (2002) offers a pragmatic analysis of Greek comic strips by Arkas, the most popular contemporary Greek comic-artist. The aim of her study is to propose a model for the use of humorous material to teaching Greek as a second/foreign language. In her analysis, she insightfully mentions that, in the case of comic strips, where the humorous effect is accomplished via verbal and visual means, the Language KR should account not only for the verbal, but also for the visual elements contributing to the humorous effect (2002:13). Nevertheless, her analysis practically focuses on the verbal aspect of the comic strips under investigation.

Using a GTVH theoretical background, Gavrilidou and Tsakona (2004–2005) identify and analyze the verbal and visual mechanisms of humor in the Greek translation of the French comic series of *Asterix*. Regarding the verbal aspect of this comic series, they investigate the humorous potential and exploitation of puns, recycled fixed expressions,<sup>5</sup> proper names, and well-known Latin phrases. Regarding the visual aspect of the same data, they focus on the unrealistic events and figures appearing in these stories, on the humorous potential of anachronisms and intertextuality, and on the false interpretations of well-known historical facts, all presented via the visual code and causing script oppositions. Special emphasis is given to the *play* with the two semiotic codes, the verbal and the visual, resulting in the incongruous use of writing conventions. In other words, a specific *iconographic* code, common for several comic series, is created, which is ‘opposed’ to the common writing conventions. This code is based on the use of visual metaphors and of a variety of font sizes and types for representing the sounds the characters make and their feelings.<sup>6</sup> For example, bold letters are typically used to represent loud voice and ‘trembling’ letters indicate pirates’ terror when faced with the Gauls (see, for example the caption including Asterix, Obelix, and the pirates in Goscinny and Uderzo, 1981:21). In short, script oppositions in the *Asterix* series seem to emerge from the verbal code (both as ‘spoken’ by the characters and as written in the panel balloons), from the creation of incongruous characters and situations, and from the creative and humorous distortion of what is historically known about that era.

To sum up, along the lines of Lessard (1991; see section 1) and in agreement with Attardo (1998, 2001:128–134), the present study investigates how cartoon humor can be described in GTVH terms. Given that the Language KR is to account for all kinds of encoding of humor (whether visual or verbal; see above Attardo, 1998:242; Takouda, 2002:13) and that the present study is semiotically oriented, special emphasis is given to this particular KR as an analytical tool of the GTVH. Moreover, the notion of play between the two semiotic modes (as defined in Gavrilidou and Tsakona, 2004–2005) is further elaborated: the verbal and visual modes *interact* in the majority of the data examined in order to transmit humorous messages.

### 4. The data of the study

The data of the present study consist of 561 political cartoons coming from the most popular daily and weekly Greek newspapers (*Adesmeftos Tipos*, *Vima tis Kiriakis*, *Ethnos*, *Eleftheros Tipos*, *Eleftherotipia*, *Kathimerini*, *Kiriakatiki Eleftherotipia*, *Ta Nea*). They were collected from December 2004 until March 2005 (see also Tsakona, 2007a, 2008).

The analysis of my data confirms the categorization proposed by Samson and Huber (2007; see section 1), which is based on the assumption that language and image may or may not collaborate for the creation of humor. More specifically, in 174 out of 561 cartoons (31.01%), humor appears only in the text; in 375 of them (66.84%) humor

<sup>5</sup> This term comes from Redfern (1997:267) and refers to the ‘distorted’ well-known phrases, clichés, proverbs, etc. For this kind of humor, see also Hodge and Mansfield (1985:206), Tsakona (2004:207–210), and Antonopoulou and Tsakona (2006).

<sup>6</sup> See also Saraceni (2003).

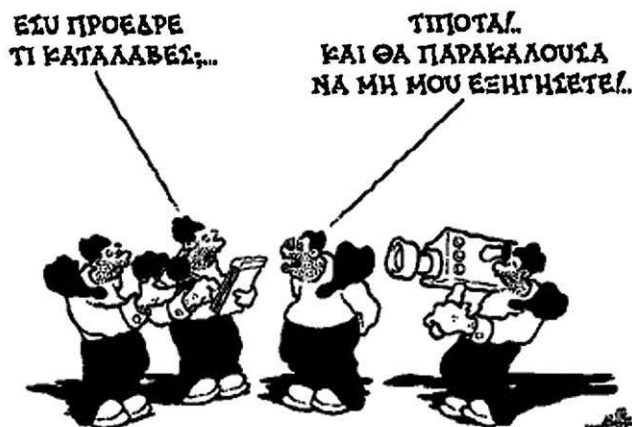


Fig. 1. Cartoon by Dimitris Chantzopoulos, published in the newspaper *Ta Nea* (19 January 2005). Reproduced by permission of *Ta Nea*.

results from the interaction of verbal and visual elements; and in 12 cartoons (2.13%) the picture is the only source of humor.

In what follows, I will examine each category separately, in order to identify the humorous mechanisms in use and to explore the possibilities and inadequacies of the GTVH for this kind of analysis, while at the same time making some suggestions towards its expansion.

## 5. The analysis of the data

### 5.1. Cartoons based on verbal humor

In the cartoons of the first category, it is the language used which is responsible for the production of humor: the script opposition stems exclusively from the text included in the cartoon. Image plays a supportive role in the production of humor by providing the background of the action, hence pictorial elements are reflected in the Situation KR.

In Fig. 1, a couple of journalists are asking the Greek Prime Minister, Kostas Karamanlis<sup>7</sup>: “Mr. President, what did you make out of all this?” His answer is the punch line of the cartoon, since it is the final utterance of the cartoon text and it is also breaking the expectations regarding his political role and responsibilities: “Nothing! And I would beg you not to explain anything to me”. The Prime Minister is expected (see ‘normal’ in the Script Opposition KR below) to be capable first of understanding what is going on in the state, then to be willing and in a position to provide the media with relevant explanations when asked, and – most importantly – to show some concern about the country’s problems. Instead, this cartoon presents him not only disclaiming his responsibilities, but also implying that he is normally informed by the media and refusing to acquire even second-hand information (see ‘exaggeration’ in the Logical Mechanism KR below) to understand and/or give any kind of explanation to the media. In short, this cartoon criticizes the unexpected and, hence, ‘abnormal’, carefree, and rather indifferent attitude of the Greek Prime Minister towards the problems his government has to deal with. Using the six KRs proposed by the GTVH, the punch line of this cartoon is analyzed as follows:

Script Opposition: normal/abnormal, The Prime Minister shows concern/indifference for the country’s problems

Logical Mechanism: exaggeration

Situation: the Press interviewing the Prime Minister

Target: the Greek Prime Minister, Kostas Karamanlis

Narrative strategy: newspaper cartoon

Language: –

<sup>7</sup> All cartoon texts are translated from Greek by the author.





Fig. 2. Cartoon by Spiros Omerakis, published in the newspaper *Ta Nea* (27 December 2004). Reproduced by permission of *Ta Nea*.

In Fig. 2, a little boy is indignantly asking Saint Basil (in Greek *Άγιος Βασίλης*), who is the Greek Orthodox equivalent of Santa Claus and visits children not on Christmas Eve, but on New Year's Eve: "Come on now! Are you visiting us, too? Yes or no?" Saint Basil's answer is: "You'd better ask Alogoskoufis" (i.e. the Greek Minister of Economy and Finance), implying that the measures proposed by the Minister for Greek economy are such that Greek people may not have enough money to buy presents for their children on that particular year. In other words, although Saint Basil is expectedly responsible for children's presents in the New Year's Eve (see 'normal' in the Script Opposition KR below), he appears to be replaced in his role by the Greek Minister of Economy and Finance who becomes, therefore, the appropriate person to answer the question whether children are going to get their presents, after all (see 'abnormal' in the Script Opposition KR). In short, there is a role reversal (see the Logical Mechanism KR below) between Saint Basil and the Greek Minister of Economy and Finance. The punch line is Saint Basil's reply and its analysis in GTVH terms is the following:

Script Opposition: normal/abnormal, Saint Basil brings presents to children on New Year's Eve/the Greek Minister of Economy and Finance, George Alogoskoufis, is responsible for the presents on New Year's Eve

Logical Mechanism: role reversal

Situation: A kid meeting Saint Basil on New Year's Eve

Target: the Greek Minister of Economy and Finance, George Alogoskoufis

Narrative strategy: newspaper cartoon

Language: –

In both cases, humor appears in the cartoon text, while the picture only supports the dialogue between the cartoon characters. The humorous mechanisms identified in the data under investigation are the same as the ones found in other humorous genres (e.g. in jokes), namely puns, neologisms, parallelisms, contradictions, exaggerations, metaphors, recycling of fixed expressions, etc. In such cases, the analytical tools provided by the GTVH can account for the production of cartoon humor.

## 5.2. Cartoons based on verbal and visual humor

The examination of the data becomes a more complicated and not so straightforward issue in cases where humor is produced via the interaction of verbal and visual means, namely in cartoons of the second category. The interaction of the two semiotic modes often seem either to enhance the humorous effect or to produce a humorous effect via the juxtaposition of contradicting verbal and visual elements (section 5.2.1). In addition, the use of visual metaphor in cartoons often results in hyperdetermined humor (see section 2). The same effect also occurs in cases where there are

more than one humorous utterance in a single cartoon and/or when the cartoon panel can be divided in different parts, each evoking a different (but thematically related) script opposition (section 5.2.2).

### 5.2.1. Exaggeration and contradiction

The analysis of my data reveals that when the logical mechanism resolving the script opposition is juxtaposition or exaggeration, verbal and visual elements collaborate for the production of humor.

In Fig. 3, a man says to the one next to him: “Here, dear sir, is the queue for the candidates for the Presidency of the [Greek] Democracy. The queue for getting a holiday bank loan is right next to this one!” Humor in this cartoon emerges from the fact that the media ‘unofficially’ announced too many candidates (see ‘impossible’ in the Script Opposition KR below) for the Presidency of the Greek Democracy (for the elections of 2005). For several weeks, journalists had been trying to find out and become the first to report the candidate proposed by the ruling party, who would be the most probable one to win the election. The number of candidates is compared – in an exaggerated manner (see ‘analogy’ and ‘exaggeration’ in the Logical Mechanism KR below) – to the number of Greek people asking for a bank loan especially during the Christmas holidays (there are too many of them as well), so the cartoon is humorously criticizing these people as well (see the Target KR). In other words, the scripts opposed in this cartoon is the ‘possible’ one involving a limited number of candidates for the Presidency of the Greek Democracy and the ‘impossible’ one involving as many candidates as the people asking for a bank loan on Christmas holidays. The script opposition is encoded via both verbal and visual means; the center of Athens (with Acropolis in the background) is pictured as over-crowded:

Script Opposition: possible/impossible, a few candidates for the Presidency of the Greek Democracy/the candidates for the Presidency of the Greek Democracy are as many as the Greek people asking for a bank loan on holidays

Logical Mechanism: analogy and exaggeration

Situation: a crowd in the center of Athens, supposed to form huge queues

Target: the candidates for the Presidency of the Greek Democracy; people who have asked for a bank loan during Christmas holidays

Narrative strategy: newspaper cartoon

Language: exaggeration in both image and text

In Fig. 4, a journalist is reporting live from somewhere in SE Asia while the tsunami is devastating the area (in December 2004): “Dear spectators, the tragedy has been avoided! No tourist is found among the victims of the lethal



Fig. 3. Cartoon by Kostas Mitropoulos, published in the newspaper *Ta Nea* (12 December 2004). Reproduced by permission of *Ta Nea*.





Fig. 4. Cartoon by Tasos Anastasiou, published in the newspaper *Ta Nea* (27 December 2004). Reproduced by permission of *Ta Nea*.

earthquake!” In the background, one can see the tsunami destroying the place and the local people trying to save themselves (not all of them successfully). The script opposition is caused by the contradiction between the image and the words spoken by the journalist: although he is presented to be in the middle of a disaster, he reports that the tragedy has been avoided, because no tourist was harmed. The cartoonist criticizes the exaggerated concern shown by the media for the tourists visiting those areas and their indifference for the huge problems the local populations had to deal with. The image of the disaster activates the ‘actual’ script (see the Script Opposition KR below), while the journalist’s words denying the disaster activate the ‘non-actual’ one. In other words, humor is produced via text and image interaction:

Script Opposition: actual/non-actual, the tragedy of the local populations in SE Asia due to the tsunami/no tragedy occurred in the SE Asia, because no tourists were harmed

Logical Mechanism: juxtaposition

Situation: a journalist reporting from somewhere in SE Asia

Target: the media

Narrative strategy: newspaper cartoon

Language: language in contrast to image

In short, in cases of exaggeration and contradiction, humor can be produced via the interaction of verbal and visual means. It could be claimed that, in the former case (Fig. 3), there is an *enhancing* or even *complementary* interaction of the two modes, while, in the latter (Fig. 4), there is a different kind of interaction, namely a *counterpointing* or even *contradictory* one (cf. Attardo and Chabanne, 1992:168). As Nikolajeva and Scott put it, “[i]n *enhancing* interaction, pictures amplify more fully the meaning of the words, or the words expand the picture so that different information in the two modes of communication produces a more complex dynamic. When enhancing interaction becomes very significant, the dynamic becomes truly *complementary*. Dependent on the degree of different information presented, a *counterpointing* dynamic may develop where words and images collaborate to communicate meanings beyond the scope of either one alone. An extreme form of counterpointing is *contradictory* interaction, where words and pictures seem to be in opposition to one another. This ambiguity challenges the reader to mediate between the words and pictures to establish a true understanding of what is being depicted” (2000:225–226; emphasis in the original).

Finally, it should be reminded that the Language KR of the GTVH is “responsible for the exact wording of the text and for the placement of the functional elements that constitute it” (Attardo, 2001:22; see section 2). The language and image interaction for the production of humor is leading to the modification of the definition of this KR: the Language KR becomes “responsible for *any kind of codification appearing in the text* and for the placement of the functional elements that constitute it” (cf. Attardo, 1998:242; Takouda, 2002, in section 3).



Fig. 5. Cartoon by Dimitris Chantzopoulos, published in the newspaper *Ta Nea* (31 January 2005). Reproduced by permission of *Ta Nea*.

### 5.2.2. Hyperdetermined humor in cartoons

Very often in the data examined, verbal humor (usually a pun or a recycled fixed expression, but not always; see Fig. 5) co-occurs with a *visual metaphor*. El Refaie (2003:80) claims that a visual metaphor “seems to emerge from the composition of several verbal and visual signs, which, through their particular relation to one another, together produce [a specific] idea” (see also Forceville, 1995, 2002; Carroll, 1996). Furthermore, visual metaphor seems to be one of the most common humorous mechanisms in cartoon drawing in general (see Templin, 1999:21; Edwards, 2001:2142; El Refaie, 2003; Plumb, 2004).

But how is visual metaphor related to humor? As previously stated, a visual metaphor emerges from the combination of verbal and visual elements and their co-existence in a specific context (here, in the same cartoon panel). However, the elements constituting a metaphor come from different frames of reference and can also be *incongruous* to one another and break the frame expectations, thus resulting in the creation not only of a metaphorical concept, but also of humorous effect (see Lessard, 1991; Miller, 1993:366; Paivio and Walsh, 1993:309; Carter, 2004:120; Müller, 2007).<sup>8</sup>

In Fig. 5, the Greek Prime Minister, Kostas Karamanlis, and the Greek Leader of the Opposition, George Papandreou, are represented like Laurel and Hardy, the comic characters that used to be very popular a couple of decades ago and used to make people laugh with their incongruous actions, dialogues, and personalities in general. The cartoonist combines the physical traits of the two most important Greek political leaders nowadays with those of Laurel and Hardy, creating thus a visual metaphor (hence the Logical Mechanism KR is defined as analogy). The logos of their parties on their shirts also contribute to the creation of the same visual metaphor.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the metaphor is verbally realized in their dialogue. Kostas Karamanlis-Hardy says: “Laurel,<sup>10</sup> I am ahead of you, according to the polls!” George Papandreou-Laurel replies: “Hardy, if you want to make a career on your own, say it out loud!” The metaphor seems to imply that the similarities between the two political men and the two comic figures, apart from their physical traits, lie also in their interdependence: one cannot exist or survive politically without the other, exactly like Hardy could not survive as a comic figure without Laurel – and vice versa. Incongruity emerges from the overlap and contrast between the ‘actual’ script involving the seriousness that the two political leaders are expected to exhibit in their actions and words, and the ‘non-actual’ one suggesting the comicality inherent in their actions and words.

<sup>8</sup> Given the similarities between metaphor and humor, a crucial question seems to be why some metaphors are considered humorous, while others are not, and eventually which contextual, discursive, cognitive, etc. aspects of interaction/communication contribute to the humorousness of a metaphor. The investigation of this issue lies beyond the scope of the present study. For a detailed discussion of the relationship between metaphor and humor, see Tsakona, 2004:179–189, 2007a, 2008; Müller, 2007; for the cognitive perspective on this relationship, see Brône and Feytaerts, 2003; Brône et al., 2006:208–209; and references therein.

<sup>9</sup> This kind of representation could also be considered a visual pun based on *syllipsis*, since two different scripts/meanings can be evoked from the same form (see Lessard, 1991 in section 1).

<sup>10</sup> The literal translation of *ΛΙΓΝΕ* appearing in the original cartoon text is ‘thin man’, referring to Laurel. Correspondingly, Laurel calls Hardy *ΧΟΝΤΡΕ*, meaning ‘fat man’. Initially, *Laurel and Hardy* was translated and became known in Greek as *Χοντρός και Λιγνός*, i.e. ‘The fat man and the thin man’. In this context, I opt for the proper names rather than their Greek equivalents, to facilitate interpretation for non-Greek speakers.

At the same time, there is a *reversal* (see the second Logical Mechanism KR in the analysis proposed) leading to a second script opposition: although the two political opponents usually try to defeat one another (as implied in Hardy's words), they suddenly realize (in Laurel's words) that they cannot survive politically without one another: one's unsuccessful politics helps the other gain political power. In other words, while the 'normal' script would suggest their antagonism in order to gain power, the 'abnormal' opposed one activates their interdependence and mutual support. Laurel's words is the punch line in this cartoon, but humor clearly emerges from language and image interaction:

Script Opposition: (1) actual/non-actual, Kostas Karamanlis and George Papandreou are serious politicians/a comic duet, like Laurel and Hardy; (2) normal/abnormal, political opponents try to defeat one another/depend on one another to increase their political power.

Logical Mechanism: analogy and reversal

Situation: conversation between the two political opponents

Target: the Greek Prime Minister, Kostas Karamanlis, and the Greek Leader of the Opposition, George Papandreou

Narrative strategy: newspaper cartoon

Language: visual metaphor paralleled with verbal metaphor

In short, the interaction between verbal and visual elements in the creation of a cartoon causes two different (but interrelated) script oppositions based on two different logical mechanisms.

Cartoon (6) presents a dialogue between the Greek Leader of the Opposition who is also the leader of the Greek Socialist Party (PASOK), George Papandreou, and the ghost of his father, Andreas Papandreou, who had been a Prime Minister for several years. Background information is also necessary to the effect that a number of Greeks consider that the son practically inherited the leadership of the party from his father. Moreover, the son is supposed to be in a process of re-organizing the Party and redefining its political goals and identity. This process has often been described in the media as "turning the page". So, the dialogue between the two goes: "Father, do you mind if we change the page again?" The father replies (from the heaven above): "What do you think? I left the Party as a book and you've turned it into a folder!"

The verbal play in Greek revolves around the various interpretations of *αλλάζω σελίδα*. The first script evoked corresponds to the most prototypical reading of the expression, i.e. 'turn a page (in a book)'. A second less salient script activated corresponds to the literal (rather than fixed expression reading), i.e. 'change/replace a page (in a document)'. The third script (which may become salient in context) corresponds to the metaphorical mapping, i.e. 'turn a page' meaning 'change a policy'. On top of these, lies the consequential/inferential relation between changing a policy and performing improvements. Furthermore, the pun is supported by visual means: the party is pictured as a folder full of pages, with the logo of PASOK on its back. The combination of image details related to the different scripts opposed here creates a visual metaphor. At the same time, a script opposition emerging from the father's reply is based on *juxtaposition*, thus appealing to the commonly held view that the changes planned and effectuated by George Papandreou are too radical or too pointless, so that they may eventually damage the Party cohesion and reduce its political power in the long run (see 'abnormal' in the Script Opposition KR below), instead of reinforcing its impact on Greek politics (see 'normal' in the Script Opposition KR):

Script Opposition: (1) actual/non-actual, turn a page/change a policy; (2) actual/non-actual, change or replace a page in a document/change a policy; (3) actual/non-actual, turn a page in a book is/is not the same as replacing a page in a document; (4) normal/abnormal, changing a policy leads/does not lead to an improvement

Logical Mechanism: ambiguity, analogy, juxtaposition

Situation: dialogue between father (former leader of the party) and son (present leader of the party)

Target: son's politics

Narrative strategy: newspaper cartoon

Language: pun, verbal and visual metaphor, multiple incompatible lexemes (book, folder)

In both cases, language and image seem to be in *complementary* rather than contradictory interaction (as defined by Nikolajeva and Scott, 2000; see section 5.2.1). The present analysis reveals that, such complementary interaction results in multiple script oppositions and multiple logical mechanisms, where a number of additional inferences may be at play *simultaneously*. This means that one or more (different, but thematically relevant) script oppositions can be included in a single cartoon, emerging both from the text and from the picture.



Fig. 6. Cartoon by Dimitris Chantzopoulos, published in the newspaper *Ta Nea* (24 January 2005). Reproduced by permission of *Ta Nea*.

Such cartoons could be characterized as cases of *hyperdetermined* humor (see section 2). The analysis proposed shows that, in cases where humor is encoded via verbal and visual means at the same time, a kind of textual hyperdetermination may occur: the script opposition and the logical mechanism coming from the verbal encoding can differ from the ones coming from the pictorial elements (Fig. 5). Punctual hyperdetermination is also possible in cartoons: humor may occur in different levels due to the language and image interaction (Fig. 6).

Furthermore, textual hyperdetermination can occur when different script oppositions are related to different *parts* of the same cartoon. More specifically, a single cartoon may include two (or even more thematically linked) script oppositions emerging from different parts of the same panel. In such cases, it is possible that two (or more) different utterances/texts appear in the same cartoon panel, therefore there may be two (or more) jab lines present.

In Fig. 7, on the left, there is a patient–doctor conversation. The patient asks: “What’s wrong with me, doctor?” The doctor’s reply is: “[You suffer from] Exhausted and under-paid nurses”. The cartoon refers to the low-quality services provided by Greek public hospitals. Humor stems from an ambiguity (see the Logical Mechanism KR below). The script-switch trigger (Raskin, 1985:114–117) appearing in the patient’s question “What’s wrong with me?” may be interpreted either as “Which illness do I suffer from?”, which is the patient’s intended meaning, evoking a ‘normal’,



Fig. 7. Cartoon by Giannis Kalaitzis, published in the newspaper *Kiriakatiki Eleftherotipia* (23 January 2005). Reproduced by permission of *Kiriakatiki Eleftherotipia*.

expected script (see the Script Opposition KR below), or as “What’s wrong with my condition in general?”, to which the doctor responds, thus activating an ‘abnormal’, unexpected script. The exaggerated image interacts with the text, thus reinforcing the second interpretation proposed (i.e. the ‘abnormal’ one; cf. Fig. 3), hence there is an enhancing/complementary interaction between language and image: apart from the expression on both the doctor’s and the nurse’s faces, the patient lies on a camp bed covered with patched bedclothes, while his meal lies on the floor surrounded by cockroaches. The analysis of the jab line (i.e. the doctor’s reply) is as follows:

Analysis of the left part of the cartoon panel:

Script Opposition: normal/abnormal, patient suffering from a disease/in the hands of exhausted and under-paid hospital staff

Logical Mechanism: ambiguity and exaggeration

Situation: patient–doctor conversation in a hospital

Target: low-quality services provided in Greek public hospitals; the Minister of Health

Narrative strategy: newspaper cartoon

Language: pun and exaggerated visual representation

On the right part of the same cartoon, there are four patients also lying on tiny camp beds under an arrow saying “Camp beds 90% reduced”. One of the major problems Greek public hospitals have had to face in the past few decades is the lack of an adequate number of beds for incoming patients. Consequently, patients are often put up in camp beds in overcrowded rooms or even in the hospital’s corridors. Humor in this case is based also on a pun: the word *reduced* is ambiguous (see the Logical Mechanism KR in the analysis below) and can mean either ‘reduced in number’, as the Minister of Health had promised, or ‘reduced in size’, as the cartoonist humorously suggests, pointing to the ineffectiveness of the Ministry of Health to solve this particular problem. The image interacts with the text in the arrow in order to create a script opposition (cf. cartoon 3), resulting in the second jab line of the cartoon. In other words, the ‘possible’ script of reducing the number of camp beds in hospitals evoked by the text in the arrow is opposed to the ‘impossible’ script of reducing their size as shown in the picture. Therefore, a quite different analysis can be suggested for that part of the cartoon:

Analysis of the right part of the cartoon panel:

Script Opposition: possible/impossible, camp beds are 90% reduced in number/in size

Logical Mechanism: ambiguity

Situation: inadequacy of hospital beds

Target: low-quality services provided in Greek public hospitals; the Minister of Health

Narrative strategy: newspaper cartoon

Language: pun and contradiction in visual representation

In sum, hyperdetermined humor in cartoons may result from either the language and image interaction or from different (but thematically related) parts of the same cartoon. It seems that the use of verbal and visual means for producing humor can result in complex and multi-layered humorous compositions, where there is not always a single script opposition. Cartoon humor may result from a variety of verbal and/or visual elements. In Fig. 7, the general theme is related to the low-quality services provided in hospitals, and more specifically with two causes: over-working and under-paid hospital staff and lack of space (see the Situation and Target KRs). These incongruities are both represented in a single cartoon. In such cases, the decoding of cartoons is not always as simple and straightforward as it is often suggested (see section 1 and references therein). Their condensed form and the interaction between verbal and visual elements for the production of humor can render the task fairly demanding for the cartoon reader.

Furthermore, the analysis in GTVH terms may help explain – from a semiotic point of view – the variety of the meanings that can be derived from a single cartoon and their respective responses. The identification of multiple script oppositions and logical mechanisms and the hyperdetermination of cartoon humor could provide an explanation to the question why different readers react differently to cartoons and, most importantly, why readers find cartoons humorous for different reasons. As Giarelli and Tulman put it, “[cartoons] prompt multiple interpretations. The reader can choose some and ignore others. Cartoonists might intend to stimulate multiple interpretations among readers. In addition, the expectations, assumptions, and personal biases held by the coder will contribute to the generation of multiple meanings for a single unit” (2003:952; cf. El Refaie, 2003:81).



Due to the possible activation of more than one script opposition and to the different levels of hyperdetermined humor, each reader could identify and focus on a different script opposition, thus receiving a more or less different message than the others and reacting in a different manner to the same humorous material. It, therefore, seems that the variety and interaction of humorous components in each cartoon should be examined *in detail* before attempting to answer any question related to the holistic, instant, or symbolic processing of cartoons, or to their stages of processing (cf. the analysis proposed by Hodge and Mansfield, 1985:203 ff.). Cartoons are obviously not always a direct and easy to process means of communicating a message, despite what has often been claimed (see section 1).

Finally, these findings seem to be in line with the cognitive analysis of cartoons proposed by Brône and Feyaerts (2003) who examine the details of visual (and verbal) representation in cartoons and explore the use of non-salient aspects of a script in cartoons, the suppression of salient ones, the compression mechanisms in their visual and verbal representation and the figure-ground reversal (i.e. the distortion of conventional logic), all of them contributing to the humorous effect of cartoons. The visual elements and their interaction with verbal ones (if any) appear to be of critical importance for the production of a humorous message, but also for its cognitive processing, namely its actual interpretation by cartoon readers.

### 5.3. Cartoons based on visual humor

A few cartoons in the data under examination are based solely on their picture to create the humorous effect. In Fig. 8, there is a picture of Christ the Pantocrator (almost) as illustrated on the dome of every Greek Orthodox church. Christ's placement on the top of every church is not accidental: it symbolizes His ability to see, bless (via a specific gesture of His right hand) and rule everything from above (*Pantocrator* means 'the one who rules everything'). In this cartoon, Christ is not blessing people with His right hand, but covering His eyes with it, so as not to become a witness to the economic, political, and sexual scandals that had gone public in Greece at that time and in which several members of the Greek clergy were (accused of being) involved. In other words, the expected (see 'normal' in the Script Opposition KR below) gesture is here replaced by the unexpected (see 'abnormal') one, thus activating an opposed script in the context of traditional Greek Orthodox iconography. Thus, the script opposition is based on the incongruous picture of Christ in comparison with the traditional one (in Fig. 9):

Script Opposition: normal/abnormal, Christ blesses the worthy/refuses to see the unworthy (i.e. the members of the Greek clergy involved in scandals)

Logical Mechanism: analogy

Situation: the illustration of Christ in the dome of Greek Orthodox churches

Target: the members of the Greek clergy involved in scandals

Narrative strategy: newspaper cartoon

Language: His right hand is covering His eyes instead of blessing people



Fig. 8. Cartoon by Ilias Makris, published in the newspaper *Kathimerini* (2 February 2005). Reproduced by permission of *Kathimerini*.

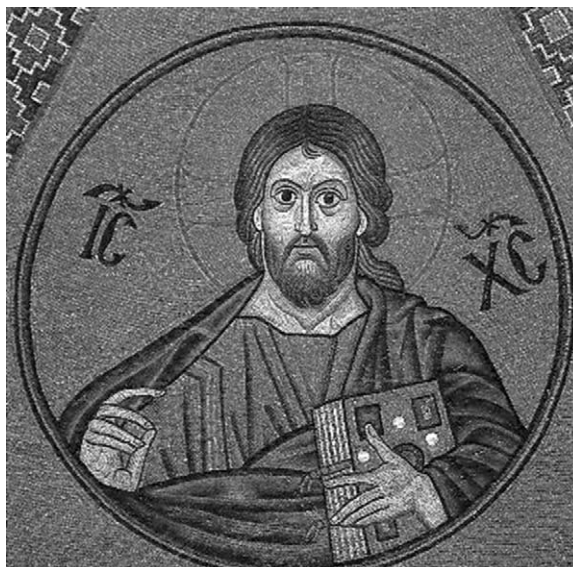


Fig. 9. Mosaic of Christ Pantocrator from the Monastery of Osios Loukas, Greece. Reproduced by permission of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture–Archaeological Receipts Fund.

By playing with a well-known religious image (see Fig. 9), this cartoon belongs to the nonverbal cartoons of my data, in which humor is produced exclusively by visual means. In such cases, the Language KR is to account for the visual mechanisms causing the humorous effect (see also sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2).

## 6. Discussion and concluding remarks

The present analysis reveals that, in several cartoons, humor is based solely on their texts, while pictorial elements play a supportive role by providing the background of the humorous utterance or text. In such cases, humor can be analyzed in GTVH terms by identifying the puns, neologisms, contradictions, exaggeration, etc. included in their punch line (or jab lines, if any). However, an expansion of the GTVH is required and is, therefore, proposed here for the cases where humor results from the language and image interaction or from the cartoon image only. More specifically, the Language KR, which is responsible for the encoding of humor, should also account for the visual effects causing the script opposition and its resolution.

In general, the examination of the data shows that the analytical tools proposed by the GTVH, namely the punch and jab lines, the six KRs, and the notion of hyperdetermination of humor, appear to be both useful and usable and to provide a flexible theoretical framework which can account for the analysis of humorous data combining the verbal and visual modes or whose humor is based solely on the visual representation. It should be noted, however, that the multimodal data examined here involve *still* images, not moving ones (e.g. cartoon animation, funny video recordings, sitcoms, etc.), where paralingual and/or performance features are essential for the production of a humorous effect. Hence, further multimodal analysis of humor is necessary for the elaboration and refinement of the analytical tools of the GTVH (along the lines of, e.g., Attardo, 1998, 2001:128–134; Attardo et al., 2003; Canestrari, 2006; see also Goodman, 2006; Swann, 2006; and references therein).

Another interesting finding emerging from the present study is that the Script Opposition, Logical Mechanism, and Language KRs of the GTVH may receive multiple definitions within the analysis of a single cartoon, thus resulting in textual or punctual hyperdetermination of humor, in Attardo's (2001) terms. This may be the result of either the language and image interaction or the co-presence of more than one sources of humor in the same cartoon panel. Consequently, a cartoon is not always "a joke told in a picture" (Samson and Huber, 2004; my emphasis; see section 1), but, to be more accurate, a cartoon may consist of several jokes, namely script oppositions contributing to the total humorous effect of the cartoon as a whole. Furthermore, the presence of more than one script opposition in a single cartoon could be one of the reasons why cartoons cannot always be paraphrased verbally without any loss. In other

words, the non-linearity of the visual mode and its inherent potential often result in complex messages which are not always easy (or even possible) to transfer to the verbal mode without killing the joke or, at least, ruining its condensed form (see also Lessard, 1991).

This finding is in line with previous research pointing to the generation of multiple meanings from cartoons (see, among others, Giarelli and Tulman, 2003; El Refaie, 2003). It has also implications for experimental (psychological or cognitive) research on cartoon humor, or even for communication and semiotic studies, since it highlights the fact that certain cartoons can activate multiple (opposed) scripts and, hence, can be interpreted more or less differently by different readers. Therefore, cartoons are expected to be analyzed in great detail in order to account for all their humorous potential.

The close examination of the verbal and visual elements of cartoons also reveals that humorous mechanisms, such as *exaggeration*, *contradiction*, and *metaphor*, are common for the creation of humor via both verbal and visual means. I suggest that this finding points to their centrality in the creation of humor in general, since such mechanisms appear to be very common in different kinds of humorous data (e.g. short stories; see Tsakona, 2004:169–189, 219–225; Müller, 2007) – a point which should be further investigated in a variety of humorous data, especially while trying to identify the main logical mechanisms used for the production of humor (see, among others, Attardo et al., 2002; Brône et al., 2006; Samson et al., 2006; Veale et al., 2006; Hamrick, 2007; Brône, 2008).

Furthermore, in cartoons, certain verbal mechanisms are quite often combined with specific visual ones. For example, in the data examined, puns and recycled fixed expressions are often combined with visual metaphors. This is due to the fact that all of them are based on analogy and conceptual metaphor: puns and recycled expressions usually play with the literal and the metaphorical meaning of a word or a phrase, while the cartoon image is composed by elements related to the different meanings and their respective scripts (see Fig. 6). I suggest that the way verbal metaphors are related to visual metaphors – and vice versa – in cartoons should be taken seriously into consideration by the cognitive scientists exploring the boundaries between literal and metaphorical representation (see, among others, the discussion in El Refaie, 2003).

Consequently, the widely held view that cartoons are a direct and easy way of conveying a message (see section 1) is admittedly put into question. Cartoons can be rather complex and not so easy to decode, after all, due to the variety and the interaction of the humorous mechanisms involved in the production of each one of them. In addition, the presentation and the detailed analysis of my data highlight the fact that the decoding of a cartoon requires and presupposes detailed knowledge of the social and cultural information exploited for the production of humor. Cartoons do not invent viewpoints or stereotypes, but, on the contrary, they do provide information on social and political reality and, at the same time, they *rely* on it for their humorous effect. The humorous scripts opposed are based on explicit knowledge of this type and commonly held beliefs known to the readers in advance. If the scripts opposed are not easily recognized and widely known, humor cannot be understood (see, among others, Hodge and Mansfield, 1985; Raskin, 1985; Davies, 1998; Mitchell, 2007). In the case of the Greek data considered, the humor would be totally incomprehensible even to a Greek audience, if they were not familiar with the events and situations encoded verbally and/or visually.<sup>11</sup> Cartoon humor, as most humor and humorous genres, is evidently contextually and culturally bound (see also Morrison, 1992; Abe, 1998; El Refaie, 2003; Giarelli and Tulman, 2003; Plumb, 2004).

In this context, it is important also to note that the mechanisms used for the humorous representation of beliefs and widely held views in cartoons are all part of the *visual literacy*, namely the ability to understand the ‘socially acceptable’ rules of the visual semiotic mode used in public communication (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). As Gee (2003:19) insightfully puts it, “[i]n the modern world, print literacy is not enough. People need to be literate in a great variety of different semiotic domains. If these domains involve print, people often need the print bits, of course. However, the vast majority of domains involve semiotic (symbolic, representational) resources besides print and some don’t involve print as a resource at all”. Since cartoons are a semiotic domain combining language and image and involving print (see section 1), the detailed analysis of their function and use in creating (opposed) scripts and transmitting humorous political, social, or other messages is of great importance for people processing them. In this context, the present paper suggests that the analysis in GTVH terms can bring to the surface the semiotic resources involved in the production of cartoon humor.

<sup>11</sup> The same holds for the Asterix examples presented in section 2: those readers who are not familiar with some historical information on the Roman Empire would not be capable of grasping the humor based on the respective script oppositions (see also Gavriilidou and Tsakona, 2004–2005:163–164).

In this light, the question whether cartoons actually shape public opinion or affect it in any other way becomes even more interesting. The fact that different messages can be derived from a single cartoon should be taken into serious consideration when investigating their impact on an audience. The context of appearance of political newspaper cartoons (such as the ones examined here) should also be thoroughly investigated, in order to define the degree of compatibility with the scripts and viewpoints emerging from the newspaper texts and/or articles surrounding cartoons. In other words, further research is required, in order to explore the possibility of interaction between the meanings/messages derived from cartoons and the ones coming from adjacent and/or thematically related newspaper articles (along the lines of El Refaie, 2004).

Finally, the examination of a larger set of data may reveal further combinations of visual and verbal means in cartoon drawing. Furthermore, a comparison with sets of non-political data, as well as with data coming from different languages and socio-political settings would be illuminating not only for the exploration of cartoon humor, but also for the proposed expansion of the GTVH to account for visual humor as well.

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