What is the basis of 'sick' humour?

Whether we find a joke funny or not largely depends on where we have been brought up.

The sense of humour is mysteriously bound up with national characteristics.

A Frenchman, for instance, might find it hard to laugh at a Russian joke.

In the same way, a Russian might fail to see anything amusing in a joke which would make an Englishman laugh to tears.

Most funny stories are based on comic situations.

In spite of national differences, certain funny situations have a universal appeal.

No matter where you live, you would find it difficult not to laugh at, say, Charlie Chaplin's early films.

However, a new type of humour, which stems largely from the U.S., has recently come into fashion.

It is called 'sick humour'.

Comedians base their jokes on tragic situations like violent death or serious accidents.

Many people find this sort of joke distasteful.

The following example of 'sick humour' will enable you to judge for yourself.

A man who had broken his right leg was taken to hospital a few weeks before Christmas.

From the moment he arrived there, he kept on pestering his doctor to tell him when he would be able to go home.

He dreaded having to spend Christmas in hospital.

Though the doctor did his best, the patient's recovery was slow.

On Christmas Day, the man still had his right leg in plaster.

He spent a miserable day in bed thinking of all the fun he was missing.

The following day, however, the doctor consoled him by telling him that his chances of being able to leave hospital in time for New Year celebrations were good.

The man took heart and, sure enough, on New Year's Eve, he was able to hobble along to a party.

To compensate for his unpleasant experiences in hospital, the man drank a little more than was good for him.

In the process, he enjoyed himself thoroughly and kept telling everybody how much he hated hospitals.

He was still mumbling something about hospitals at the end of the party when he slipped on a piece of ice and broke his left leg.

A man broke his right leg just before Christmas and was taken to hospital.

He wanted to know when he could go home.

On Christmas Day, he was still in hospital with his leg in plaster, but there was a good chance of leaving hospital for the New Year.

In fact, he was out in time to go to a New Year's Eve party where he drank too much, slipped on a piece of ice, and broke his left leg.

An aunt of mine lives in a small village in the country and tells this story of what happened to her once.

In order to understand the story, you should know a little about life in an English village.

For example, people often enjoy afternoon tea together, they still leave doors unlocked, and certain tradesmen are used to delivering goods and, with permission, leaving them inside the owner's house.

One day, my aunt had invited some friends round for afternoon tea.

She had put some cakes in the oven to bake and had gone upstairs to do some cleaning.

When she finished, she decided to have a bath before her friends arrived.

She was just about to get into the bath when she suddenly remembered the cakes.

She wrapped a bath towel around her, went down to the kitchen, and took the cakes out of the oven.

Just then, there was a knock on the back door.

She was sure it was the baker, who would open the door, come in, and leave the bread on the kitchen table.

She panicked, dashed into the cupboard under the stairs, and closed the door.

Then, horrified, she heard footsteps coming to the cupboard.

The door opened and there stood the gasman who had come to read the meter-which was in the cupboard.

My aunt blushed and said, “I'm very sorry. I was expecting the baker.”

“Oh,” the gasman said. “Sorry, madam.” He closed the door gently and left.

He found it difficult to walk after his operation.

She considered it sensible to forget what they had said to her.

He thought it silly to make a fuss.

When he heard the joke, he laughed.

He laughed at the joke.

The man amused us with some jokes.

I enjoyed his jokes.

He entertained the people by playing the piano for about an hour.

Please keep off the grass.

Don't run SO fast.

I can't keep up with you.

There was a notice on his door which said 'Keep out I could swim very well when I was younger.

I was able to solve the problem after an hour.

Whether you find 'sick humour' funny or not will depend on your ability to see the funny side of an unpleasant event.

The man spent Christmas Day feeling miserable because he was not able to be with his friends.

The point of the joke taken to illustrate 'sick humour' is that no sooner was the man out of hospital than he had to go back in again.

Most amusing stories are based on comic situations.