Cassis Kilian

Aesthetics of the Raw
The Tricky Relationship between Humour and Authenticity

206/2024

Herausgegeben von / The Working Papers are edited by:
Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz,
Forum 6, D-55099 Mainz, Germany.
Tel. +49-6131-3923720; Email: ifeas@uni-mainz.de; http://www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de
http://www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de/92.php

ISSN: 2750-7866 (Online)

Geschäftsführende Herausgeberin / Managing Editor: Friederike Vigeland (fvigelan@uni-mainz.de)

Copyright remains with the author.

Zitierhinweis / Please cite as:
Kilian, Cassis (2024): Aesthetics of theRaw. The Tricky Relationship between Humour and Authenticity. Arbeitspapiere des Instituts für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz (Working Papers of the Department of Anthropology and African Studies of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz) 206.

Kilian, Cassis: Aesthetics of the Raw. The Tricky Relationship between Humour and Authenticity

Abstract

Authenticity and truth are problematic categories from an anthropological perspective. Advertisers discovered authenticity as a sales pitch. "Keeping it raw" is a strategy to produce authenticity in social media. This aesthetics also distinguishes stand-up comedy from other comedic genres and authenticity is the most important key word for stand-up comedians; being true is considered a cue. Theories on aesthetics have often considered truth a prerequisite to perceive something as beautiful but nobody would assert that beauty evokes laughter. This seems to be the reason why most authors writing on aesthetics have omitted artistic practices that excite laughter. But what evokes laughter in stand-up comedies? Something authentic? When doing research in Berlin's comedy clubs, conceiving a performance that would make people laugh was an insightful exploration concerning the tricky relationship between humour and truth, aesthetics and authenticity. It revealed authenticity as a dubious category, but one even anthropologists cannot dispense with.

Keywords / Schlagworte

humour, aesthetics, authenticity, performance, comedy, Berlin / Humor; Ästhetik; Authentizität; Performance; Comedy; Berlin

The author

Cassis Kilian is a postdoctoral fellow in the research project NoJoke on humour as an epistemic practice of the political present [www.nojoke.net]. She has been an actress before writing her PhD on African film and teaching at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at Mainz University. Her publications focus on cosmopolitanism, senses, perception, and methodology. Her most recent book is entitled Attention in Performance: Acting Lessons in Sensory Anthropology (Routledge, 2021).

E-mail: ckilian@em.uni-frankfurt.de

JG|U

JOHANNES GUTENBERG
UNIVERSITÄT MAINZ

Aesthetics of the Raw: The Tricky Relationship between Humour and Authenticity

Introduction¹

In August 2019, I went to Berlin to do research on humorous practices. Stand-up clubs had sprung up like mushrooms after rain in the German capital. In 2016, Paul Salamone and Caroline Clifford founded the Berlin Stand-up School to help aspiring comedians of the exponentially growing comedy scene. The beginners' class was conceived to teach them how to write stand-up sets based on true stories of everyday life and their own experiences. Wherever I went, people told me that authenticity is crucial to excite laughter: a stand-up-comedian has to be true. Against the backdrop of Erving Goffman's (1959) pertinent observations on the presentation of self in everyday life, this dogma made me smile. Goffman used the metaphor of the stage to consider how people play act in real life − the claim that comedians can abstain from self-fashioning on stage seems absurd. Is it not rather a well-calculated performance of their self-fashioning in real life? Even supposing that comedians tell what, in Goffman's wording, could be conceived as a backstage story they perform in a comedy club; they are on what he referred to as frontstage. What does authenticity mean in such a setting?

I teach at a Department of Anthropology and African Studies. Students often use the terms 'authentic' and 'true' when describing African artworks or practices. Similar to stand-up comedians, they consider the terms synonymous: someone or something authentic is true to something. I help them understand that concepts of African authenticity often refer to colonialist concepts of primordiality, and that what they perceive as truly African is often a product of globalisation. I show how the artist Yinka Shonibare hints at postcolonial entanglements by using wax prints, the allegedly authentic African fabrics that Dutch entrepreneurs had conceived for the Indonesian market (Downey and Shonibare 2005). Thomas Hylland Eriksen's (1993) reflections on ethnicity and nationalism help me to explain how claims of authenticity and allegedly true (hi-)stories are used to enforce power interests and that this requires a critical examination of 'authenticity' as an ideology.

Thomas Fillitz and A. Jamie Saris (2015) collected many anthropologists' reflections on the notion of authenticity. They concluded that it should not be used as an analytical category to distinguish behaviours or experiences from what, consequently, would have to be considered less authentic. In other words: authenticity should be regarded as an emic not an etic category. However, the so-called ontological turn in anthropology calls for taking non-academic reasoning seriously. This implies that the hierarchy of a non-academic's subsidiary emic

perspective and a researcher's superordinate etic perspective is as questionable as the distinction of emic and etic categories. David Graeber (2015) in a debate with Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, one of the most important proponents of the ontological turn, has warned against the power-blindness this change of paradigm may entail when abandoning analytical distance. It is impossible when scrutinising strategies of imposing truth.

Analytical distance is also needed regarding influencers' claims of authenticity on social media (Morton 2017; Shtern, Hill and Chan 2019). Social media marketing is revealed as more efficient than professional commercials and is based on strategies of authentication (O'Gorman 2019; Wellman 2020) which researchers scrutinise thoroughly. When I began my research in stand-up clubs, I also focused on strategies of authentication and I was convinced that the distinction of emic and etic categories was necessary for doing so. I considered authenticity an emic category and saw my task as an anthropologist in finding out why and how it is used in such settings. Regarding the strategies of authentication, I found that it was important to consider the corresponding aesthetics.

I often wondered how I might grasp what distinguishes the aesthetics in stand-up clubs, with its reference to authenticity from those of other comedic genres, such as clowning. Josie Reade (2020: 1) notes that the staging of "authenticity, relatability and digital intimacy" on social media depends on "keeping it raw". I noticed that keeping performances raw is also crucial regarding the intimate atmosphere in stand-up clubs: there are no funny costumes, no distancing outrage. Stand-up comedians take the mic and speak directly to the audience. The communication with the audience is crucial for all forms of comedy that are performed on stage. Live comedy, more than any other dramatic genre, is co-produced: if the audience does not laugh, the performers are lost. When I considered what excites laughter in stand-up clubs, I realised that self-disclosure is essential to create the intimacy on which these clubs depend to attract audiences.

The comedian's confessions were sometimes raw to a point that I wondered whether aesthetics would be an appropriate category to analyse this specific practice to communicate with the audience. If so – this was my thesis – this aesthetic would refer to specific strategies of keeping a performance raw that help comedians to perform authenticity. I wanted to learn more about these strategies and an aesthetics that is not easy to discern as such, so I decided to take the mic and to tell a story that was not true. If I excited laughter, then I had found out how it is possible to perform authenticity. I could compare this experience to those when I performed other comedic genres and, thus, discern the aesthetics of the raw. However, I soon found that authenticity was a category that I could not dispense with when analysing my various experiences with humorous practices and the corresponding aesthetics. This incited me to question the distinction of emic and etic categories and to conceive of a suggestion how anthropologists might cope with the category of 'authenticity' without referring to this dichotomy.

I will begin my reflections on humour, authenticity and aesthetics by asking how theories on aesthetics broach the issue of humour and whether they can dispense with the fuzzy categories of truth and authenticity. I then draw on the heretical reflections on aesthetics which Alfred Gell (1992) developed in his essay "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology". I argue that the term 'technology' is a cue for grasping the art of exciting laughter and suggest considering humorous practices as a sophisticated technology of *dis*enchantment. In a next step, I will analyse how I learned that authenticity is an indispensable analytical category during field work in Berlin: I first performed in a theatre in the tradition of the famous cabarets in Berlin in the 1920s and then in an anglophone stand-up club. The analysis of my punchlines, my staging and the reaction of the audience in the respective clubs incited me to question my academic arrogance of considering authenticity an emic chimera and thereby dismissing a category that is essential for people when they want to distinguish truth from falsity.

Exploring this topic in depth, it became obvious that I and other anthropologists have never stopped asking what is authentic or not, notably when dealing with specific aesthetics. However, we used what I aim to uncover as an academic conjuring trick anthropologists often use when confronted with problematic terms; we considered authenticity an emic category. Hey presto! We quote people from our field of research and are, thus, able to introduce fuzzy terms that are indispensable because they point to something that matters, without being accused of using dubious categories. By way of conclusion, I look for a solution that is more productive and more honest: I suggest using the word 'authenticity' as a relational term that is closely connected to a movement of searching.

Aesthetics and humour, beauty and truth

Ever since Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1983 [1750–1758]) introduced the term aesthetics in the 18th century, scholars and artists have debated what it designates: the perception of beauty or, in a much broader sense, the perception of artistic practices? Does it refer to judgments or experiences, to normative aspects or fascinating aspects of art?

Alfred Gell (1992: 41) compares the study of aesthetics to the study of theology, because it "depends on the acceptance of the initial articles of faith: that in the aesthetically valued object there resides the principle of the True and the Good, and that the study of aesthetically valued objects constitutes a path toward transcendence". Following him (Gell 1992: 41–42), art critics are to be considered theologists, and artists, priests. Whether many of those 'priests' referred to Plato's reflections on beauty or who quoted whom is unclear, but one thing is striking, namely, that many artists stick to a simple definition of aesthetics. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Joseph Beuys and others expressed themselves in a way similar to John Keats (1905 [1819]: 205), who claimed, "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty". Keats' insight was inspired by a Grecian urn, something utterly serious. There have been many attempts to extricate the study of aesthetics from the theological impetus Gell identified (Marchart 2019; Verne 2019). Instead of

focusing on concepts of beauty, it is possible to conceive aesthetic experiences as a specific sensorial perception granted by certain practices (Verne 2019: 5). However, when Mirco Göpfert (2013) considered bureaucratic practices and the corresponding aesthetics in Niger, he found that gendarmes invest a lot of energy in writing reports – for them the beauty of the documents is crucial.

It seems that, even today, reflections on aesthetics are often connected with concepts of beauty and truth, and they are still deadly serious. Most writings on aesthetics exclude humour, although a considerable part of artistic production is conceived to make people laugh, but humour does not confirm the "initial articles of faith" Gell (1991) mentioned. The claim that what provokes laughter reveals a hidden truth is commonplace, however, nobody would assert that beauty evokes laughter. Rather the contrary: whereas beauty evokes respect and is often associated with sublimity that prohibits laughing, laughter is mostly associated with disrespect and the revelation of imperfection or meanness.

Nowadays, most scholars refer to the incongruity theory of humour and argue that something that violates expectations excites laughter (Morreall 2020). Immanuel Kant already had observed that "Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing" (1951 [1781]: I, I, 54). Is it possible to consider such an experience an aesthetic experience? John Morreall (1981: 57) requires that humour should be conceived as "a kind of aesthetic experience, equal in value at least to any other kind of aesthetic experience". This plea reveals that there is a conspicuous reluctance to connect humour and aesthetics. According to Mordechai Gordon (2012: 114–116), there are significant differences between aesthetic experiences and experiences that excite laughter. The most intriguing discrepancy is, according to him, that what it is aesthetically pleasing is related in one way or another to beauty, but what we perceive as funny is not necessarily beautiful, rather the contrary. Mike W. Martin (1987: 182) states that "the enjoyment of an unmitigatedly smutty joke is more akin to low-grade pornographic pleasures which have generally been denied the status of aesthetic pleasures". This judgemental statement alludes to the "dirty" aspects of humour on which many anthropologists have focused.

Marcel Griaule (1948) and Mary Douglas (1968: 162) wondered why there are people who consider it funny when other people throw shit at one another "either verbally or actually". Many anthropological writings on humour focus on the transgression of norms, not least, those of what is perceived as beautiful, but anthropological writings on humour have not yet broached the issue of aesthetics. Gell also omits the topic of humour; but his somehow sarcastic view on art, his sober approach to artistic practices grants the possibility of considering the production and reception of humour. Certainly, after the ontological turn, Gell's concept of how anthropologists should explore topics such as religion and art seems obsolete, because he (1992: 43) calls for an etic perspective:

> Just as the anthropology of religion commences with the explicit or implicit denial of
> the claims religions make on believers, so the anthropology of art has to begin with a

denial of the claims which objects of art make on the people who live under their spell, and also on ourselves, in so far as we are all self-confessed devotees of the Art Cult. (Gell 1992: 42)

However, Gell's merit was to turn the attention to artistic skills and the making of art – his advice to view art as a "technology of enchantment" still has a certain appeal. I worked for more than twenty years as an actress and would not refer to acting as a technology. Writing on the methodological problems with which actors are confronted (Kilian 2021), I always preferred the term "approach". I often emphasised that many of these approaches enable actors to let things happen, to react instead of acting. However, comic effects are actively produced because comedians have to make things happen. Performing a comedy depends on exact timing; it is a juggling act whose success depends on how actors use their tools. After a detailed analysis of my research in Berlin, I will explain why I consider performing a comedy a technology of *dis*enchantment. Notwithstanding Gell's demurs, I consider it useful to analyse the variety of humorous practices with reference to the term 'aesthetics' because it allows one to explore how they respond to specific settings.

Exploring aesthetics in Berlin's comedy clubs

My research in Berlin focused initially on comedy as knowledge production. I wanted to find out how the challenge to create punchlines would change my perception of what is significant. With reference to the incongruity theory of humour, I observed incongruences in everyday life and in the socio-political configuration of Germany and conceived punchlines that I put to the test on stage. This was possible because most comedy clubs offered an open stage: it is an opportunity for newcomers to perform in front of an audience but, in most cases, experienced performers try out new gags or seize the opportunity to promote solo shows.

Berlin's first comedy club was called Kookaburra, however, it closed its doors during the lockdown because of COVID in 2021. It was founded by Sanjay Shihora, a disciple of Marcel Marceau, and his wife Svenja, also a mime artist, in 2002. Other than the numerous new clubs that focus on stand-up, it was more in the tradition of the cabarets that were famous in the 1920s. This became obvious when considering the variety of performances on an open stage: jugglers and illusionists performed, and the comedians had mostly conceived a sort of role that defined a specific attitude. Different than actors who perform texts written by others, cabaret artists mostly create a persona that they try to establish as their label and which they often refine during their career. Some always perform in the same costume, some in everyday clothes, some adopt a certain manner of speech, some do not. Some report details from their private life, some perform people they hate. The personas the artists conceive are often used like veils in dance – performers use them to hide and reveal themselves.

Ulli Lohr, for example, acted as a waiter. He related how wealthy clients display connoisseurship, how migrants without work permits are exploited in posh restaurants, how

a waiter perceives the growing gap between poor and rich in Berlin. Lohr also reported on the struggles which a homosexual born in the 1960s in the German provinces had to undergo until Christopher Street Days became hip. All this was intercut by the legerdemains of a waiter who serves at breakneck speed and who simultaneously observes the etiquette and retains his charm. Lohr actually is a homosexual born in the hinterland and he was a professional waiter. He knows what he is talking about, but he does not use strategies of authentication: the public never knows whether he has actually experienced what he reports on and he certainly never waited at tables juggling with bottles and wineglasses.

Lohr put his juggling acts to the test on the open stage of the Kookaburra Club. These shows were often hosted by Horst Blue. It is obvious to Germans that this name is a stage name, the combination of the stuffy Teutonic first name Horst and the English colour designation is too adventurous. Blue acted as an entertainer and usually appeared in a glittering blue suit on stage. He always entered out of breath and informed the audience in a crude mixture of German and English that this time, he did not arrive from Las Vegas but, exceptionally, from a sales event of a car dealership in some Hicksville. No, this time he did not disembark from the Queen Elizabeth, he just left the MS Support Stocking which cruised on a lake near Berlin. Blue's performance was marked by ostentatious theatricality – he probably drew on own failures and ironically referred to his own career, which is respectable but not brilliant, however, he did not perform authenticity, rather, on the contrary. When acting as an MC, Blue established the atmosphere of a Tingel-Tangel, a term that designates the cheap but attractive cabarets that were famous in Berlin in the roaring twenties. This period was marked by glitter, make-up, costumes and posing, although many comedians embodied workers, prostitutes and other destitute people; authenticity was not considered a sales pitch, it was artistic virtuosity that attracted people.

I referred to this atmosphere when writing my first skit. Corresponding to my research topic, I tried to conceive a persona that would give me the possibility of considering how capitalist logic, the dynamics of globalisation and new technologies shape everyday life. Digitalisation, for example, demands a reorganisation of archives which often results in the closure of the libraries of smaller faculties. I decided to act as an elderly librarian confronted with the rapid changes at university who perceives the world in which she lives with childlike wonder. I could draw attention to odd old-fashioned practices, such as covering a book, or to funny objects, such as stamp carousels, that survived in the niches of the digital revolution. As an actress, I had often experienced that it is useful to find someone who is apt to inspire me, even though the factual correspondences to the role I had to act are rather vague. I trusted that a shaky protestant pastor with amazed eyes and a friendly smile could inspire my attitude and movements and help me to find an appropriate manner of speaking.

I decided to wear old-fashioned clothes and deliberately referred to the stereotype of a librarian. However, as a proponent of an outdated sustainability that consisted of refusing consumerism without being aware of it and using what was still serviceable, the librarian could still be fascinated by undreamed-of possibilities granted by new technologies and global

change. I imagined her biography and lifeworld in as much detail as possible, a practice I had learned at the acting school. Back then, I was not aware that it is very useful when conceiving skits. I envisioned that the librarian attends a yoga course for seniors – this would allow me to perform in weird and funny positions – and that she has a rubber plant on her desk. This kickstarted a chain of associations: Her predecessor wanted to cast it away 34 years ago, but she kept the plant. Each year on the third of February, the commencement of her employment, she takes the measurement: It had not grown since and gathers dust, but she enjoys cleaning the leaves. The challenge to create punchlines directed my attention. I invented absurd experiences and situations connected with the global tendency to create effective structures at low cost. Roughly put, all the punchlines I conceived were meant to reveal the logic and effects of global capitalism. Even a rubber tree which refuses to grow but, nevertheless, demands meticulous care from a librarian who does not want to see this poor thing starve can be a starting point from which one can shed light on concepts of capitalist value creation: cleaning its leaves is a waste of time that does not pay.

Those who want to perform on an open stage have to sign up: in many clubs you simply note your first name on a sheet of paper, at the Kookaburra Club you had to introduce yourself at the entrance. I had made people laugh when acting in comedies, but I had never conceived a persona I would perform and never written a text that I would speak. This made a substantial difference and scared me because I felt much more responsible for what I would do on stage. When Svenja Shihora asked me for my name I heard myself answer "Lucia". I was very surprised about my prompt reaction and the spontaneous choice, but she noted my stage name without hesitation – I had never had one before.

Performers were given seven minutes on the open stage of the Kookaburra. Lucia related that she sometimes practised yoga postures instead of sitting on her chair at the library. I stood on one leg in the so-called eagle position; it looks like sitting without a chair. I reported that somebody from the finance and supply management passed by. He conceived a concept how the university might abolish the traditional offices, in which each employee has their own desk, and create flexible workspaces instead. This would allow the saving of a lot of money. The manager was amazed when he saw the librarian in the eagle position and told her that the university might even renounce providing chairs for the employees, but Lucia objected that it would be difficult to look for another desk where she might place her rubber plant every morning. I had conceived other episodes that made the audience laugh – Blue and the other comedians said that my first trial had been promising. Sanjay Shihora, the owner of the Club congratulated me.

The experience on stage was simultaneously familiar and new for me. My mouth had become dry to the point where I had difficulties speaking, a form of stage fright I had never been confronted with before. Marianna Keisalo (2016), an anthropologist doing research on humour who also performs on stage, reports that it takes several years to learn how to be funny. One might then find one's own voice and has to spend several years more learning how to talk about what one really wants to communicate. Keisalo (2016) states that there is a lot of writing

and preparation involved; writing a joke "is comparable to writing an abstract for a paper, 5–10 minutes of comedy is like writing a research article, and an hour of material is about the same as writing a monograph".

Bearing Keisalo's warning in mind, I had planned to perform but one short skit at Kookaburra. However, I immediately started working on a second. I conceived it while taking a bath; it took me no more than half an hour to write it down. I seized the opportunity of the next open stage at Kookaburra and performed it. My mouth did not become dry, people laughed even more. The other comedians were truly surprised and Lohr said that if I continued at this speed, I would soon be able to perform a solo programme. I must confess that I had not told them that I had worked as a comedian for many years; for me it was less surprising that I succeeded faster than others to establish myself on stage. To put it in Gell's terms, I was familiar with the technical requirements and knew how to perform to excite laughter. Given that I had had about twenty years of stage experience, I had probably unconsciously learned the laws of humorous dramaturgy and the art of creating punchlines although I had never written a skit.

Keisalo's remarks refer to stand-up comedy, a genre she has published on widely. As an actress, I had instinctively turned to the more theatrical form of comedy most comedians practised at Kookaburra. Although some stand-up comedians performed there, it was not a stand-up club and the audience was rather reluctant when a stand-up comedian performed on the second open stage. It is revealing that this comedian did not really like my performance and said that instead of such a sophisticated performance of absurdities he prefers a more direct humour. I vaguely felt that he outlined how stand-up comedy differs from other comedic styles performed on Berlin's stages and I wanted to know more about a genre that incites Keisalo and other anthropologists' curiosity.[2]

I had never been to a stand-up club before. What struck me in the first club I went to, was that the performers and the audience were much younger than I. Although it seemed that the performers had chosen their outfits carefully, what they wore could pass for everyday clothes and although many adopted a specific style and attitude when speaking, it could pass for their self-fashioning in everyday life. They dealt with topics such as porn on the web, drugs and ingroups and outgroups in Berlin. I was curious to know how the skits I had conceived for a very different context would be received in this club, so I asked the host how to sign up for the next open stage. The host was a youngster styled in a way that everybody would easily recognise him as a Berlin hipster: he had full beard and oversized thick frames on his glasses. He looked me up and down but condescended to explain to the old lady in front of him that one has to sign up on Facebook and asked me whether I had performed at another club before. I replied that I had performed at Kookaburra – obviously, he did not consider this club hip. When I told him that I acted as a librarian, he judged it necessary to interfere: stand-up was not to be confounded with acting, no disguise and all that. He asserted being truly interested in who I am, to learn about my professional experiences and everyday life. He highlighted that

---

2 See, for example, Seizer (2017).

authenticity is more important than anything else in stand-up and warned me against pretending to be someone else.

Again authenticity, the term I always tried to exorcise when teaching. I immediately wrote another comedy that I performed a week later on the open stage of the Comedy Café Berlin, another stand-up club whose staff and audience are also very young. I wore jeans and a black t-shirt and adopted the attitude of a tough intellectual, perhaps a journalist. Whenever I quoted a dialogue I drew on stereotypes, such as the Berlin hipster or the big-eyed manga girl. I performed the following text: In an attempt to represent how I performed it, I use a lot of punctuation marks and italics to make clear when I conveyed dialogues.

Hello

The other day I wanted to take the mic in another club. The host asked me: "*Have you ever taken a mic before*? I said: "*No, but I acted twice in a cabaret. I acted the role…*" "*How old are you?*" the host asked. "*59*", I replied. "*That explains everything… Stand-up has nothing to do with cabaret, no costumes, no props, no roles. We want authenticity, true stories.*"

I hope not every story I heard on an open stage is true. But anyway … Authenticity is difficult for people of my age. I'll give you an example. Imagine you are 59 years old! Just give it a try …. Imagine your niece turns up on her 18th birthday.

"*Oh auntie, I want a tattoo as a present, I want a tattoo as a gift.*"

Authentic reaction? Ok.

"*A tattoo? NOOOO!!!* [I shouted to wake everybody up] *And if I ever see you with a tattoo, I won't let you in anymore, my door is closed.*"

"*Oh, no problem, auntie… that's fine!*"

"*But you forgot that all your clothes, all your stuff is in my house. You stored everything there before leaving for Australia and I'll burn it all.*"

"*Oops!!! No problem auntie, I'll buy new clothes.*"

"*I forgot: no money for birthdays, no money for Christmas, no money at all!*"

"*Auntie, you can't buy me!!!*"

But I still have one weapon, my best weapon.

"*Do you have to write an essay, my dear niece?*"

"*Oh yes, auntie, I have to write an essay … and I have to submit it next Monday …*"

"*I won't help you! I won't save you this time!*"

"*Oh, auntie … Please … don't do that to me!!!*"

"I won't save you … Besides, what's the topic?"

"Tattoo artists in Berlin!!!"

"Tattoo artists in Berlin???"

I want to share my most violent phantasy with you … I enter a fancy tattoo studio …
I get the tattoo artist by the throat and I say:

"In the eighties, when I was young [I sung the subclause referring to a song by Eric
Burdon], *there were no tattoo artists in Berlin … Just imagine what I would look like if there
had been tattoo artists in Berlin in the eighties!!!"*

And I kill him …

But I'm never authentic in real life. I act like this:

*"My niece, you want a tattoo??? … you will have one, but a big one, right on your forehead,
right in the middle!"*

"Oh auntie, maybe not on my forehead …"

*"My dear niece, you must learn from your old auntie. Whatever you do in life … Do it a
hundred percent…"*

"But auntie, I would be marked for the rest of my life …"

*"That's it!!! That's my aim!!! You don't want a job at Deutsche Bank??? Fight capitalism, all
your life!!!"*

The audience laughed a lot, much more than at the Kookaburra. The other comedians
appreciated my performance although I had broken one of the taboos Clifford, the teacher of
the stand-up comedy school mentioned earlier, insisted on: "Don't blame the show!" Clifford
warns stand-up-comedians to criticise the genre, but I had ridiculed the dogma to be authentic
and true.

However, the truth is that I took advantage of the situation and was less cautious than in
academia, in other words, I had been far more authentic: I ferociously repudiate tattoos. I am
convinced that young people take decisions that they will regret one day and, if you asked me,
I would ban all tattoo studios. Sure, I hide this attitude when talking to students: I supervised
many BA theses on tattoos and often responded to students' predilection for texts on body
modification. In academia, I adopt the attitude required from an anthropologist in my position:
I perform openness and refrain from judgemental remarks. I was keen to seize the opportunity
to finally tell young people what I really felt. Probably, most of the youngsters in the audience
did not share my view on tattoos; without much doubt many of them had tattoos themselves.
I supposed they laughed because I had refrained from performing an inauthentic tolerance,
they knew all too well. I became aware that it was impossible to abstain from using the

category 'authentic' when analysing what I had experienced in the stand-up club and in which respect it differed from my self-fashioning in everyday-life.

However, I needed the term authenticity rather to describe a dynamic relationship to something or someone – myself included – than a state or an attitude. When I compared my experiences in the different clubs, I always asked in relation to what I had been authentic. I consider the outfit I wore at the stand-up club a costume, just as the one I chose for performing at Kookaburra. In both cases, my choice was led by the effect it would have on the audience, but I would wear the outfit I wore at the stand-up club in everyday life as well – the one I wore at Kookaburra not.

I have two nieces, but they reject tattoos. There were some fictional elements in my set for the stand-up club. However, I agree with Keisalo (2016): what motivated me when conceiving the set was that I wanted to communicate something that really mattered to me and thereby I discovered why comedians claim that authenticity excites laughter in a stand-up club. I assume that the youngsters who saw my performance acknowledged that I was right on some points, not only that they exploit their relatives but also that they will probably regret their tattoos if they do not already regret them today. A young Afro-American comedian from New York said that I excited laughter because people do not dare to admit it, not even to themselves. If a stand-up comedian is authentic, the audience can dare to be authentic as well; in other words, their laughter confirms that she or he revealed something true.

Authenticity and keeping aesthetics raw

Robert Gernhardt, a poet and well-known German satirist, once remarked: "Laughter is always a loss of control, therefore, there is no such thing as high-class laughter, just the same as there is no such thing as an high-class orgasm" (my translation, Gernhardt quoted in Thimm 2006).[3] As long as he lived, Gernhardt was very popular but also cherished by intellectuals, notably scholars of literary studies – those whom Gell (1992) considered theologists of aesthetics – because the satirist juggled with topoi, stylistic and rhetorical devices of poetics. To put it in Gell's terms, Gernhardt mastered the technology of enchantment very well but in his satirical texts, he enchanted his readers only to create an expectation that he then violated with a *dis*enchanting twist. Laughter and enchantment do not match, because humorous practices target a disillusionment which audiences relish, therefore, Gell's proposal to consider artistic skills a technology of enchantment is inept to grasp artistic practices for exciting laughter. However, it is possible to consider humorous practices a technology of *dis*enchantment, and this permits one to analyse what evokes the loss of control Gernhardt points to when talking about laughter.

---

3 "Lachen ist immer Kontrollverlust, daher gibt es ein niveauvolles Lachen so wenig wie einen niveauvollen Orgasmus." (Gernhardt quoted in Thimm 2006).

Before I went to Berlin, I read what Keisalo had written on stand-up comedy and considered myself a novice because I had never conceived a skit or a stand-up set. However, I became aware that I was not a beginner, because I realised that as an actress who often performed in comedies, I had tools and technical skills that I was able to identify more sharply when I applied them in a new field. Performing a comedy necessitates utmost precision, because one has to create an expectation and a tipping point, mostly in a very short time; preparing and delivering a punchline is a technical skill. Violating people's expectations is hard work: I suggest considering it a technology of *dis*enchantment that consists of raising a strained expectation and destroying it in such an unforeseeable manner that the audience loses control and must laugh. People are, thus, first enchanted and then *dis*enchanted very quickly and effectively, and they enjoy when someone gives them a good shaking. Comedians have to master the technology of *dis*enchantment so well that they can apply it without effort, because casualness is the precondition to make people laugh, to achieve what Gell refers to as "the halo-effect of technical difficulty" (1992: 46).

Although I had been trained in the technology of *dis*enchantment, something was new: so far, I had always performed texts written by someone else; I now performed what I had written myself and felt naked. I spontaneously took a stage name and invited none of my friends or colleagues. I wanted to take risks and was anxious to protect my academic self and my privacy. I performed on a stage but, to put it in Goffman's terms (1959), it was a backstage because I revealed aspects of my personality that I do not perform on the numerous front stages of my everyday life.

When I performed at the Kookaburra club, I used more fictional elements but, to be sure, they also revealed what I had on my mind. I do not want to delve here into debates on the tricky relationship between truth and fiction. It has been extensively discussed in the context of anthropological films, notably those of Jean Rouch (Kilian 2012: 253-256). However, I did not keep my performance raw; it was obvious that I performed a persona. It was fun performing in clothes that I like but that are so old-fashioned that I would never wear them in everyday life. Similar to the stand-up club, I enjoyed telling people what I really thought about issues that I could not broach in academia as candidly, but I performed in yoga postures and used other theatrical tools.

This was not the case when I performed at the stand-up club. It is significant that I asked my nieces whether they would feel offended by the set I planned to perform. They said no, not least because they also repudiate tattoos, however, my precaution reveals that I felt my private self no longer safeguarded by a role. The contact with the audience was more direct and more intense, I became aware that I enjoyed this unprotected exposure on stage and begun to understand why authenticity is a cue for stand-up comedians and why the intimate atmosphere in the clubs incites them to risky confessions. Keisalo (2016) notes: "They say you get hooked on doing comedy, the highs of intense connection and sense of being understood when the audience erupts into laughter." The rawer I kept my performance, the closer the connection with the public; the more authentic I was, the more intense the feeling of being

understood. In some respects, however, I was more authentic in the Kookaburra: I performed a librarian, but this elderly Amish Pippi Longstocking was an alter ego that allowed me to reveal some very peculiar aspects of myself. The category 'authentic' sneaked increasingly into my analysis: because the question in relation whether I had been authentic and in relation to what I felt the need for distance gained more and more importance.

Many comedians I saw on the open stages of Berlin's stand-up clubs seemed less worried by such concerns. The relation of distance and intimacy is important here. In contrast to the comedies I had seen at the Kookaburra club, the performances of the stand-up comedians often took the shape of a public confession. This corresponded to the intensified intimacy in the clubs which was related to audiences' expectations concerning authenticity. What intrigued me was the vehemence of these confessions: a young guy presented himself as a "child fucker", a young woman confessed that whenever she saw twins she thought of threesomes, a comedian related his sexual experiences with his grandmother. Mothers confessed that they considered their children mostly disruptive; one reported that she made her child ill. Another young woman reported that, while consuming drugs, she had locked a child in a public toilet.

Forensic linguist Roger W. Shuy states that "confessions, not having been previously disclosed, gain excitement" (1998: 4) and reports on confessions of crimes never committed – the confessors were less concerned with punishment than with establishing an image as a tough guy (1998:6).[4] I hoped that the comedians related mere phantasies. Even under this premise, what I heard was often unbearable for me. Once I thought of leaving a show in the interval, but when I saw a frail shy youth standing alone, I supposed that he was shocked as well and asked him, how did he like the show. Referring to the performance that had sickened me most he said: "the dirtier the better". Douglas (1968) stated that in some settings, it is considered funny when people throw shit. A stand-up club is such a setting: it allows comedians to break taboos and the audience to enjoy it.

Before the comedians enter an open stage, the hosts usually declare that the club does not take any responsibility for the content of the performances. Two hosts told me in confidence that they would often prefer not to hear what comedians confess. However, many hosts do not abstain from breaking taboos and violating privacy themselves, notably when they confront each other within the so-called comedy roast battles. It is obvious to the audience that the hosts know each other very well and refer to compromising private even intimate details. Alex Upatov is a well-known comedian and host in Berlin, a sought-after protagonist of such comedy roast battles. When he was on stage with Drew Portnoy, a comedian much older than he is, he reported that Portnoy had been host at the Kookaburra club at a time when comedy at Berlin was not yet funny. This battle can be viewed on YouTube (Upatov and Portnoy 2018). The audience's laughter affirms that there is a fundamental difference between what they consider funny and performances in the Kookaburra.

---

[4] Andreas Jahn-Sudmann and Frank Kelleter (2012) also analyse the dynamics of outperforming in view of gaining excitement. They consider series in the so-called quality TV.

Is it possible to conceive the distinction in terms of aesthetics? Sanjay Shihora, the director of Kookaburra, told me that his aim when founding the club was to revive the prolific culture of cabaret in Berlin in the 1920s and the corresponding Tingel-Tangel atmosphere. Lohr's performance is a prime example that it is possible to adopt and transform the corresponding aesthetics of performance to deal with current phenomena in Berlin. The aesthetics of Berlin's cabarets was forged by artists such as Otto Reutter, Claire Waldoff and Friedrich Hollaender; its main feature is a very sophisticated humour. The stand-up shows I saw in Berlin, by contrast, often brought reality TV to my mind, a setting that also incites people to confess monstrosities. Shuy (1998) observed that the admission of something that people would usually hide is a means of creating social bonds that prompts listeners to reply with confessions of their own – the audience in stand-up clubs responds with complicit laughter. Confessions are, thus, apt to create the intimacy of a stand-up club. Reality TV and excesses of self-disclosure in social media are often referred to as mean and dull, in any case, not as sophisticated. However, such judgements are of little use to analyse the specific aesthetic related to the authenticity and intimacy such settings convey.

What stand-up comedians reveal is often deliberately ugly; whatever concept of beauty one might refer to, it would be inapt to grasp the distinctive feature of this aesthetics; it is deliberately raw. The technology of *dis*enchantment in Berlin's stand-up comedies draws on the trash aesthetic that is also known from rap; as far as I know, the phrase "keeping it raw" was coined by Eminem in his eponymous song. The aesthetics of the raw is used as a sales pitch on social media. Sure, marketing experts and producers of rap and reality TV shows carefully cultivate this aesthetics. However, confessions in reality shows, performances of influencers and rappers would not be so irritating and incite so much public and scholarly attention if people did not *really* disclose themselves, similar to many stand-up comedians.

Anthropologists can conceive the aesthetics of the raw as a strategy of authentication used by stand-up comedians. This wording marks a distance from those who have the feeling of being authentic and corresponds to an academic reflex of taking refuge in an etic point of view when confronted with a mess. I consider this an academic conjuring trick: anthropologists often speak of emic categories when observing and exploiting how other people make sense of the messy world. It is possible to understand dubious but apparently indispensable categories such as authenticity "ethnographically" (Fillitz and Saris 2012). I also adopted this arrogant point of view when I was confronted with the problematic term "authentic". I assumed that comedians use strategies of authentication – this insinuates that they are not authentic. I claimed that such thing as authenticity does not exist – this implies that comedians lack the analytical skills I dispose of concerning this category. However, the opposite proved to be the case because comedians analyse the humorous practices on Berlin's stages very well and it soon turned out that I would need the term authenticity as well, because it is an indispensable cue when exploring the aesthetics of stand-up comedy.

Conclusion

In tragedies, kings often struggle with faith; in comedies, subalterns often struggle with daily life. In 2013, philosopher Matthew Kieran still considered it necessary to explain "why comedy is the equal of tragedy" (2013: 427), given that comedy was often considered to be of a lesser value than tragedy in philosophical aesthetics. Directors and actors, by contrast, have often observed that comedy requires more sophisticated artistic skills than tragedy. It is easier to make audiences cry than laugh but the *dis*enchanting quality of a punchline seems to thwart attempts to connect humour and aesthetics. There is a large consensus that punchlines are revealing, but what do they actually reveal? A truth, authenticity? I mentioned that beauty has often been equated with truth in discussions on aesthetics but, to the best of my knowledge, it has never been connected with authenticity. The comedians I met mostly used the words truth and authenticity synonymously; but the more I became involved in Berlin's comedy scene, the more I learned that authenticity refers rather to the dirty aspects of truth, more to what actually matters to people in everyday life.

I analysed two clearly distinct technologies to excite laughter: one practiced at the Kookaburra, a comedy club whose aesthetics drew from Berlin's cabarets of the 1920s, the other practiced in Berlin's stand-up clubs. In this context, I introduced the formula "aesthetics of the raw", because stand-up comedians dismiss roles and costumes – they keep their performances raw.

Publicity in social media is often artfully kept raw as well, such as ripped designer jeans. Many stand-up comedians use social media and some practice content marketing and product placement (Kumar and Papa 2020; Riley-Adams 2014). Humour has often been used in commercials but in these cases, actors performed punchlines conceived by screenwriters in carefully staged scenarios; stand-up comedians who promote products, by contrast, allegedly speak for themselves; their "true" stories convey authenticity that has been revealed as a sales pitch. The calculated staging of authenticity by keeping performances raw must incite academics to rigorously analyse the construction of 'true' stories in social media and elsewhere.

Claims of authenticity are often misused; as soon a certain aesthetic seems to convey authenticity, it is reproduced to manipulate people; whenever academics are confronted with something allegedly raw or authentic, it should arouse intellectual alertness. However, my research in comedy clubs incited me to question whether we should consider authenticity an emic category that is inapt for academic analysis. This had been my conviction when I discovered that authenticity is a cue for stand-up comedians. I planned to deconstruct the emic category by making fun of the alleged authenticity in stand-clubs. I conceived a comedy on my self-fashioning in everyday life, but I became aware that authenticity had become an analytical category with which I could not dispense. I discovered that my motivation to conceive punchlines was to communicate what was really on my mind. I revealed my attitude towards tattoos, something I hide in other contexts, notably when confronted with young people in academia. As a stand-up comedian, I was authentic and hoped to excite youngsters'

authentic laughter, in other words, that they would also perceive the incongruencies related to the topic 'tattoo' that I perceived.

People often laugh frenetically at sexist and racist jokes; their laughter reveals that they still stick to obsolete concepts of race and gender. People often laugh against their will, they must laugh; an uncontrollable laughing fit proves that laughter is a loss of control, perhaps not a high-class aesthetic experience but an authentic reaction. Some scholars have contested its authenticity since it also depends on social dynamics and is restricted by norms. However, findings from cognitive science show that although laughter occurs mostly in interactions and is, thus, undeniable social, voluntary laughter is distinctly different from involuntary laughter (Scott et al. 2014). People identify a forced or polite laughter easily − its immediacy and vehemence reveal whether laughter is voluntary or involuntary. The eruptive quality of laughter creates the intimacy of a stand-up club. Henri Bergson ([1900] 1980: 84) observed in a treatise on comedy, entitled *Laughter* (*Le Rire*), that a shared laughter reveals "something mechanical encrusted on the living". Sociologist Cate Watson (2020) notes that he, thus, highlights the constant change of life and everything.[5]

Bergson's famous dictum on the social necessity of breaking up what is encrusted on the living hints at the connection of laughter and authenticity. The philosopher emphasises the need to focus on change, and this implies that authenticity is to be regarded as a category in constant flux that is related to other entities that are also in flux. I started my reflection on the category 'authentic' by reporting how I deconstructed first-year students' concepts of African authenticity referring to the history of wax prints, but one day, a student objected that no matter how it arrived in Africa, this tissue is truly African today. I laughed, like people often do when they are debunked by a witty remark. The student's observation refers to the constant flux and relational aspects I consider important regarding a nuanced view on the category 'authenticity' in academia. Anthropological knowledge grows from an engagement with other people. Authenticity is an analytical category that people − anthropologists included − need for orientation when they look for what matters to themselves and other people. Problems start with the attempt to fix the results of this quest. The feeling of having discovered something authentic is exciting, intense and sometimes hilarious, but if you tell a joke twice, the audience will not laugh again! Laughter connects people who suddenly discover what was encrusted on the living, but the experience of this revelation cannot be repeated.

Punchlines reveal what was concealed. They are insightful for anthropologists because they share what Mirco Göpfert (2020) considers an "epistemophilic obsession": they want to discover hidden truth. The obsession is related to the relationships anthropologists engage when doing research: "if knowledge in anthropology is relational, then so is the ethnographer's will to know" (Göpfert 2020: 495). An important question of knowledge in

---

[5] Watson, Cate. 2021. "Henri Bergson, comedy, and the meaning of life…" Paper presented at the Conference of the German Anthropological Association at the University of Bremen, 27–30 September 2021. See also Watson (2020).

anthropology is about how what we want to know "might echo somebody else's will to conceal" (Göpfert 2020: 495). If authenticity is an aspect of truth, associated with what is callow, raw and perhaps even dirty, one would expect that people would hide everything authentic, but in some contexts – and comedy, notably stand-up, seems to be such a context – people enjoy exposing it. Keisalo (2016) stated that they feel intensely connected and understood, and the eruption of laughter seems to be the authentic confirmation of this connection and understanding.

Authenticity is an opalescent notion that designates ephemeral phenomena. I suggest relating it to a movement of searching which grants the possibility of connecting with other people who are also searching. Anthropologists cannot omit this fuzzy category, but they can conceive of it as a relational one, just as with knowledge. If they ask in relation to what it is possible to consider something authentic or not, they can adopt the analytical distance Graeber (2015:6) regarded *de rigueur* when analysing how something presented as true serves the purposes of power. This does not exclude taking the quest for authenticity seriously, because anthropologists can also ask why it discloses something ephemeral that matters to them or other people in relation to something they perceive as encrusted. To put it in Graeber's (2015: 36) words, an anthropological exploration of authenticity should "open up a sense of unsettling possibility".

References

Baumgarten, Alexander Gottlieb. 1983 [1750–58]. *Theoretische Ästhetik. Die grundlegenden Abschnitte aus der "Aesthetica"*. Hamburg: Meiner.

Bergson, Henri. [1900] 1980. "Laughter." In *Comedy*, edited by W. Sypher, 61–190. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press.

Douglas, Mary. 1968. "The social control of cognition: Some factors in joke perception." *Man: New Series* 3 (3): 361–376

Downey, Anthony, and Yinka Shonibare. 2005. "Yinka Shonibare." *BOMB* 93: 24–31.

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 1993. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives.* London: Pluto Press.

Fillitz, Thomas, and A. Jamie Saris, (Eds.). 2015. *Debating Authenticity: Concepts of Modernity in Anthropological Perspective*. New York: Berghan Books.

Gell, Alfred. 1992. "The technology of enchantment and the enchantment of technology." In *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, edited by Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton, 40–63. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books Edition.

Göpfert, Mirco. 2013. "Bureaucratic aesthetics: Report writing in the Nigerien gendarmerie." *American Ethnologist* 40 (2): 324–334.

———. 2020. "Epistemophilic obsessions: Espionage, secrets, and the ethnographer's will to know." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 10 (2): 487–498.

Gordon, Mordechai. 2012. "Exploring the relationship between humor and aesthetic experience." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 46 (1): 110–121.

Graeber, David. 2015. "Radical alterity is just another way of saying 'reality': A reply to Eduardo Viveiros de Castro." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5 (2): 1–41.

Griaule, Marcel. 1948. "L'alliance cathartique." *Africa* 18: 242–258.

Jahn-Sudmann, Andreas and Frank Kelleter. 2012. "Die Dynamik serieller Überbietung." In *Populäre Serialität: Narration – Evolution – Distinktion. Zum seriellen Erzählen seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*, edited by Frank Kelleter, 205–224. Bielefeld: transcript.

Kant, Immanuel. 1951 [1781]. *Critique of Judgment*. New York: Hafner.

Keats, John. 1905 [1819]. "Ode on a Grecian urn." In *The Poems of John Keats*, edited by Ernest de Sélincourt. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.

Keisalo, Marianna. 2016. "Learning to make people laugh: A semiotic anthropology of stand-up comedy." *Allegra Lab*.

https://allegralaboratory.net/learning-to-make-people-laugh-a-semiotic-anthropology-of-stand-up-comedy/

Kieran, Matthew. 2013. "Tragedy versus comedy. On why comedy is the equal of tragedy." *Ethical Perspectives* 20 (3): 427–450.

Kilian, Cassis. 2012: *Schwarz besetzt: Postkoloniale Planspiele im afrikanischen Film.* Bielefeld: Transcript.

———. 2021. *Attention in Performance: Acting Lessons in Sensory Anthropology*. Anthropological Studies of Creativity and Perception. Series Editor: Tim Ingold. London: Routledge.

Kumar, Aditya, and Papa CJ. 2020: "Finding content marketing's funny bone with Papa CJ." https://scatter.co.in/comedy-content-marketing/

Marchart, Oliver. 2019. *Conflictual Aesthetics: Artistic Activism and the Public Sphere*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Martin, Mike W. 1987. "Humor and aesthetic enjoyment of incongruities." In *The Philosophy of Humor*, edited by John Morreall, 172–186. Albany: SUNY Press.

Morreall, John. 1981. "Humor and aesthetic education." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 15 (1): 55–70.

———. 2020. "Philosophy of humor". *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/humor/

Morton, Heather. 2017. "The new visual testimonial: Narrative, authenticity, and subjectivity in emerging commercial photographic practice." *Media and Communication* 5 (2): 11–20.

O'Gorman, Brenna. 2019. "#TrippinWithTarte: The immaterial labour of selling calculated authenticity and glamour on Instagram." *Major Papers* 96, University of Windsor. https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1108&context=major-papers

Reade, Josie. 2020. "Keeping it raw on the 'gram': Authenticity, relatability and digital intimacy in fitness cultures on Instagram." *New Media & Society* 00 (0): 1–19.

Riley-Adams, Ella. 2014: "Brands: Has Jerry Seinfeld revolutionized branded content?" *The Content Strategist*. https://contently.com/2014/02/10/has-jerry-seinfeld-revolutionized-branded-content/

Scott, Sophie, Nadine Lavan, Sinead Chen and Carolyn McGettigan. 2014. "The social life of laughter." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 18 (12): 618–620.

https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-52205-004

Seizer, Susan. 2017. "Dialogic catharsis in standup comedy: Stewart Huff plays a bigot." *Humor* 30 (2): 211–237.

Shtern, Jeremy, Steph Hill and Daphne Chan. 2019. "Social media influence: Performative authenticity and the relational work of audience commodification in the Philippines." *International Journal of Communication* 13: 1939–1958.

Shuy, Roger W. 1998. *The Language of Confession, Interrogation, and Deception*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thimm, Katja. 2006. "Mensch, lass locker." [Robert Gernhardt and Barbara Wild interviewed by Katja Thimm] *DER SPIEGEL* 9/2006: 144–148. https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-46046468.html

Upatov, Alex, and Drew Portnoy. 2018. "Comedy roast battle #9 – Alex Upatov vs. Drew Portnoy." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2Qlbz3rT2M

Verne, Markus. 2019. "Ist Kultur ästhetisch?" *Arbeitspapiere des Instituts für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz* 182: 1–22.

Watson, Cate. 2020. "Governance and the centrality of failure: a comedy of errors. University of Stirling." *Comedy and Social Science: New Directions in Sociology* 1. Stirling: University of Stirling.

Wellman, Mariah. 2020. "Ethics of authenticity: Social media influencers and the production of sponsored content." *Journal of Media Ethics* 32 (2): 68–82.