

Apr 8th, 1:00 PM - Apr 22nd, 6:00 PM

An Examination of Wladimir Kaminer's Humor

Jordan D. Beal
Cedarville University, jdbeal@cedarville.edu

Rachel Hershey
Cedarville University, rhershey@cedarville.edu

Ian A. MacPhail-Fausey
Cedarville University, ianamacphailfausey@cedarville.edu

Teresa A. Welcome
Cedarville University, teresaawelcome@cedarville.edu

Annis Shaver
Cedarville University, ashaver@cedarville.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/rs_symposium

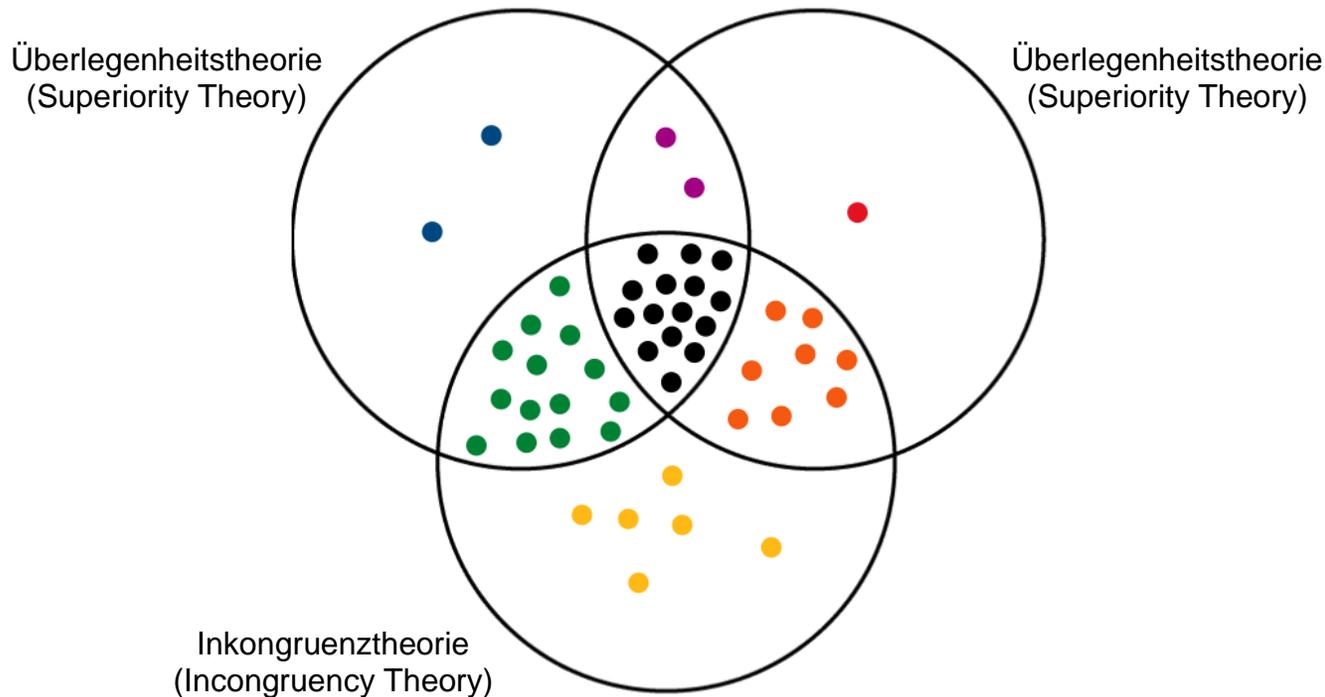
Beal, Jordan D.; Hershey, Rachel; MacPhail-Fausey, Ian A.; Welcome, Teresa A.; and Shaver, Annis, "An Examination of Wladimir Kaminer's Humor" (2020). *The Research and Scholarship Symposium*. 5. https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/rs_symposium/2020/poster_presentations/5

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Cedarville, a service of the Centennial Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Research and Scholarship Symposium by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Cedarville. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@cedarville.edu.

An Examination of Wladimir Kaminer's Humor

From Russian Immigrant to German Bestseller

Jordan Beal Rachel Hershey Ian MacPhail-Fausey Teresa Welcome Dr. Annis Shaver



Abstract

Humor is a quality of amusement that is evoked by mishap plus time. The source of the mishap may be a crude theme, embarrassing situation or interpersonal clash caused by various incongruencies. One must be chronologically and spatially removed from the occurrence for the situation to be considered humorous. The audience must have the ability to recognize and relate to the absurdity. Scholars recognize three main theories of humor. Superiority theory involves the application of judgement and superiority on themes or people who are often perceived as crude, lowly, or controversial. Relief theory sees humor as a means by which tense or embarrassing situations can be relieved, in which no harm is done to those involved. Incongruity theory emerges in situations where stark or subtle differences in culture or expectations cause an interpersonal clash, where each supposes his is the authentic perspective and the other's the improper.

Wladimir Kaminer (b. 1967) is a Russian-born immigrant to Germany and best-selling author of more than 20 books that describe the humorous interactions between Germans and immigrants to that country, especially Russians.

To determine which theory best explained the humor in Kaminer's works, each group member read one of Kaminer's books, then suggested three chapters from their book that best highlight the humor of their respective title for group analysis. The chapters were analyzed by each group member for categorization under one, two, or all three theories of humor. The results were entered into a chart to visualize the distribution of the group's individual evaluations of each chapter. A Venn diagram best illustrates our results, which show that the humor of most of the chapters is best explained by a combination of at least two theories with Incongruity Theory being the most common element of every combination.

Conclusion

After the four researchers examined 12 stories from four books, they determined that humor is most commonly displayed as a combination of two to three of the theories. Particularly in the humor of Wladimir Kaminer, incongruity theory forms the basis of most cases of humor. "The incongruity theory is the most important of the three explanation models since every comic effect can be traced back to a moment of incongruity" (Bogomolova 2010, p. 20).

Kaminer, Wladimir. (2009). *Meine russischen Nachbarn*. Pölsneck, Germany: CPI books GmbH
 Kaminer, Wladimir. (2017). *Goodbye, Moskau*. Lenk, Germany: CPI books GmbH
 Kaminer, Wladimir. (2007). *Ich bin kein Berliner*. Pölsneck, Germany: CPI books GmbH
 Kaminer, Wladimir. (2000). *Russendisko*. München, Germany: GGP Media Pölsneck
 Bogomolova, Ievgeniia. (2010). *Interkulturalität und Humor*. Nordstedt, Germany: Books on Demand GmbH

