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The inimitable humour: Decoding AI's comedic failures

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Abstract

Humour is an intercultural, psychological activity that brings people together through shared experiences and emotions, socially, culturally, and emotionally. The impact of a humour script is contingent on many factors, ranging from the social and cultural context to the dispositions, inclinations, and temperaments of the speaker and receiver. This paper takes different theoretical positions and analyses the context-sensitive and emotionally charged nature of humour, which further explains the socio-cultural and psychological functions of humour within a society. The paper reviews the quality of humour produced by AI with human humour by looking at the specific traits and functions of humour. Based on different socio — linguistic and psychological theories, the research compares the style of jokes that human and AI systems make, highlighting the need for linguistic variation, timing, audience adaptability, and cultural nuance within humour. This article tries to expose the flaws of AI by leaning on the complexity of humour as an extremely human phenomenon. The article argues that interdisciplinary research is needed for a better understanding of the complexities of humour and its role in human life. The study demonstrates that AI-generated humour obstructs the traditional roles of humour in society.

Keywords: Humour; Artificial Intelligence; Humour Theories; Irish Joke; Functions of Humour

1. Introduction

Human life and reality are perpetually influenced by cultural, political, and scientific interventions, but Artificial Intelligence, the most recent and perhaps the most jarring influence, has introduced incredible changes to creative and cognitive activity. The displacement of humans from rigorous physical and cognitive performance by AI might have been expected, but its attempt to invade human-level faculties is quite amusing and scandalous as well. The emergence of AI as 'a poet, teacher, narrator,' to a large extent enjoyable, but its simulacrum of the 'divine — animating the dead, resolving impairment via robotic images — signals a paradigm shift in the organic and automated reality of humans.

Historians such as Adrienne Mayor have persuasively outlined the genealogy of the artificial in ancient myth—citing figures as diverse as Talos, Pandora, and Hephaestus's automata—to demonstrate the human fascination with self-moving, semi-autonomous beings which predates digital computation [1]. Alan Turing's concept of intelligent machines that are also capable of human-like conversation was formalized in his eponymous 'Turing Test'. But the term Artificial Intelligence did not gain traction until the mid-20th century [2]. To mirror human intelligence by imitating their linguistic and reasoning capacity, many intellectual exercises were conducted touching certain mile stones such as Dartmouth Workshop, (1956), AI Winters (70s, 80s) IBM's Deep Blue (1997), Watson (2011), and AlphaGo (2016(GPT-3, 2020) and generative AI (Chat GPT, 2022).

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2. Review of Related Literature

Artificial intelligence, being a dynamic force in the digital age, revolutionizes the very way in which people process information and interpret it, providing new means of communication and expression. But the ability to refabricate certain realms of life by machines and a set of coded languages is uncertain, as the 'essence of being human' is inimitable. When ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle thought about how this enigmatic phenomenon affects society and the personality, whereas Thomas Hobbes recognized the cognitive shift that happens while enjoying humour. The understanding of humour as a response to absurdity by Immanuel Kant demonstrates the philosophical shades of humour. Many consider possessing a sense of humour to be a quality, as it helps foster relationships and to communicate and negotiate meaning within a multicultural society. In this context, the role of AI in generating humour has to be examined as the computer algorithmic systems begin to comprehend, generate, and respond to humour.

Paul E. believes that Artificial Intelligence of computers is merely an imitation of human life. He says it "requires human intelligence such as reasoning, learning, decision making, perception, and natural language processing" to perform a task [3]. In their article, "Applicability of Artificial Intelligence in Different Fields of Life," Shubhendu S. Shukla and Vijay Jaiswal discuss the ascendancy of Artificial Intelligence on human life, but emphasize the need to understand it. According to the authors, AI is like any other machine that operates based on human instructions, hence it need not be dreaded. It is emphasized that they have a limited scope—for example, a spell-checking system can identify grammatical errors in an article, but cannot evaluate the logic or meaning of the article. The authors conclude that once artificial intelligence passes the infancy stage, the innovations will be both expected and unexpected, and it solely depends on the ways in which humans decide to use it [4]

In the research article entitled "Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence in Modern Society," Ravi Teja Yarlagadda demonstrates the significance AI and IoT, as they have greatly increased efficiency in all significant fields of human interactions. He maintains that these new technologies have opened a wider arena for smarter cities, smarter agriculture, better healthcare, smarter transportation, and most importantly, efforts to reduce climate change. He states that AI and IoT now make it possible to detect problems early and facilitate timely interventions and enhancements that were hard to achieve in the past. This article concludes by observing that such modern technologies can be beneficial to human endeavors, coupled with positive environmental consequences [5].

Humour, on the other hand, is too mysterious to be labeled as either an intellectual or emotional activity. In "Humour and its Cultural Context," Jessica Milner Davis argues that humour is a form of social behaviour, and it plays an ambiguous role in pluralistic societies: it can unify people and reinforce pleasant relationships, but it also accentuates ethnic divisions and, at times, provides a socially tolerated way of expressing aggression towards others [6].

Lenka Gogova, in her article, contemplates the role that humour plays in shaping culture. The humour is cross- cultural and its nuances are reflected in ethnic jokes. She says that humour is a social thermometer that measure the sensitivity of a certain sociotechnical group's views, attitudes toward different cultural.

Similarly, Kim and Chilton's study showed that LLMs enhanced with cognitive and social skill simulations could produce meme captions close in quality to Gen Z preferences. This indicates that augmenting AI with relational frameworks may improve alignment with humour norms but still lacks human consciousness [8].

2.1. AI, Creativity, and Humour

The current surge of AI-generated artifacts raises questions about the nature and prospects of machine creativity. However, the attempt of AI to generate humour raises an epistemological and cultural challenge. The kinds of jokes that exist in different cultures show that humour is a highly refined act, and it is steeped in cultural experiences. For example, the Irish 'Four-course meal' joke exemplifies not only wordplay but a dense network of cultural allusions.

AI-generated responses to queries like "Give some Irish four-course meal jokes" produce a series of variations on one persistent comic theme:

- "An Irish four-course meal: three potatoes and a pint of Guinness."
- "An Irish four-course meal: breakfast, Guinness, lunch Guinness, dinner Guinness… and a potato for dessert."
- "An Irish four-course meal: one potato, one pint of Guinness, one more pint of Guinness, and… ah sure, another Guinness." - "An Irish four-course meal: Guinness, whiskey, Guinness, Baileys… the potato just for decoration."

- An Irish four-course meal: two spuds and two suds." [9]

These results reveal both AI's capabilities of mimesis and combinatorial variations. Nonetheless, rather than producing laughter, it emphasizes certain inadequacies in the simulation of authentic humour—real-time social situations and interactions and cultural sensitivity. This incompetence lies in the fact that AI cannot tell jokes as humans do. When humans voice a joke once, it is crafted by context, individual style, and audience expectation. Repetition or modification of the same joke destroys the effectiveness of the joke, since the underlying mechanism – the surprise or recognition of incongruity will be ruined.

When AI responds with questions like, "Would you like me to spin these into pub-style one-liners? Want me to craft a comedy routine?",[9] it fundamentally misunderstands the peculiar, organic quality of live humour— the spontaneity and the creation of an atmosphere which is conducive for counter attack. The iterative process, which AI offers up as a feature, actually works against the core spontaneity upon which good joke delivery is based. Instead, AI provides an endless combination of permutations that do not reflect any actual participation in the performative aspect of comedy. This is further evident when people of different cultures try to make jokes on the same subject at the same or different times; in those situations, AI does not understand the joke because it cannot fathom their cultural uniqueness. It proves that the self-deprecatory practice elements are hardly available to algorithmic imitation.

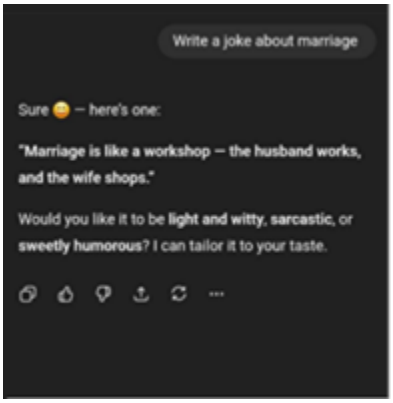

Figure 1 joke on marriage

Figure 2 marriage jokes

3. The Functions and Sociality of Humour

Humour is essential to social life in many ways. Noel Carroll observes that it can be used to relieve stress, to promote amity among strangers, to dissipate tension within a fractious group, to display intelligence, to castigate injustice, to seduce, and so forth. Inasmuch as it discharges these functions well, humour accrues value [12].

Although canned jokes that are pre-scripted and widely circulated may affect the intensity of laughter, human ingenuity places it in the right social and situational context, as well as the time of delivery. Thus, the use of canned jokes in real-life situations demonstrates the complex relationship between humour and context.

AI, however, can't generate and change the context on the fly, which restricts its ability to produce real-time humour. Human narrators can adjust their jokes to real-life situations and interact with people, whereas AI simply throws out jokes on demand by a single user and cannot, therefore, engage in shared storytelling or pick up on subtle social cues. Hence, the fundamental communal function of humour as a means of connecting people is impaired.

Similarly, in a situation when jokes are exchanged between a machine and a person, the interaction does not happen within a living social fabric. In real human interactions, humour is not only a source of entertainment but also a process of co-creation and bonding when both the speaker and the hearer have the same target of humour. The effect of humour is deepened by individual experience, impromptu timing, and a subtle understanding. AI's failure to imitate these factors is proof that the entire social facet of humour, the one that serves as a means for people to become close, is still outside the reach of artificial systems.

3.1. The Linguistic, Cultural, and Psychological Barriers for AI Humour

It is Victor Raskin's semantic-pragmatic model suggests that humour is contingent on the experience, psychology, society, and situation of its participants. The equation;

HU (S, H, ST, E, P, SI, SO) =X,where X=F[funny] or X=U[unfunny]HU (S, H, ST, E, P, SI, SO) =X,where X=F[funny] or X=U[unfunny] [13]. underscores the multivariate, situational quality of humour. Wordplay, idioms, and cultural references further complicate comprehension for both humans and AI. Unquestionably, AI's challenge is compounded by an absence of lived, embodied cultural experience and the inability to understand others' psychological realms.

The Artificial Intelligence's attempts to deliver jokes demonstrate a basic deficiency in the suprasegmental aspects of human interaction, such as affective resonance, irony, intonation, and metapragmatic cues. In real-time discussions, the incapacity to adapt, respond, or co-create tales reveals the inflexibility and social isolation of machine-generated humour. The scripted, context-agnostic humour fails to produce the desired effect that one gets while listening to a joke or comic narration.

3.2. Emotional, Social, and Cultural Consequences

Carroll says that humour or comic amusement is an emotion like fear [11]. Like paradigmatic emotions, humour is directed at the things that are perceived as incongruous. It often induces a chain reaction of recollecting absurd or humorous aspects of a similar kind from one's experience for further amusement, accentuating its intersubjective and contagious character. Aristotle identifies it as the stimulation of the soul, which places a human's mind in a good mood and is a powerful method of speaking. Aristotle maintains that a good joke convinces the listener and creates an emotional connection between the speaker and the listener or the audience [14].

When humour is mediated by a non-conscious agent, like AI the social function of creating acquaintanceship and bonds are undercut, as interaction becomes unidirectional, recursive, and ultimately disconnected from communal life. According to the Incongruity theory of Humour, it is the sudden realization of an incongruity— a difference between the expected and actual results, which might occur as a result of the unfolding of meaning or the denial of expected outcomes [15].

This alteration in thinking triggers amusement when the mind detects this paradox or contradiction in context. However, for humour to be effective, this realization must be spontaneous and unpremeditated. When a person is consciously searching or waiting for such incongruity—for instance, reading a scripted joke, waiting for the punchline—the excitement and emotional release that accompany natural humour are diminished or lost. Thus, anticipating humour, such as waiting for a scripted joke on a screen, tends to spoil the authentic amusement by reducing the element of surprise and spontaneity that governs real-life humour experiences.

Cultural studies and the significance of humour have been studied extensively in the past. Artificial I-generated humour struggles significantly with this aspect. AI often generates jokes by mixing constructed patterns or formulaic structures without a true awareness of cultural context or audience sensitivities. As a result, AI frequently fails to customize the joke to the audience's cultural background or values. This mismatch might result in humour that falls flat or is misconstrued. For example, ethnic humour that demands the cultural cues regarding a society cannot be effectively mimicked by AI as it doesn't have cultural consciousness. This shows that culture plays an integral role in one's sense of humour.

It is where sexual and political jokes and the Relief theory of Humour gain importance. According to Sigmund Freud and Herbert Spencer, humour is related to unconscious content. The laughter a joke produces releases libidinal drives

by surpassing the superego of a person. According to these theorists, when a political joke or sexual joke is heard, it releases the repressed energy built up in a person, while discussing such topics is considered taboo in a civilized society. Similarly, it can act as a tool for social correction. Satires and political jokes attack the corruption and the anti- social act of the people in power. It initiates a bloodless revolution and brings about changes in a society. Through joke allusions, humour functions as a socially sanctioned outlet for expressing taboo or difficult sentiments, simultaneously fostering happiness and facilitating learning or critique in a manner that is both socially acceptable and psychologically beneficial. But the jokes that are produced virtually in privacy detain the infectious quality of the laughter and thus the opportunity develop a social consciousness is undercut.

4. Conclusion

Humour, though it is universal, its generation and perception are always contextual. Apart from being an act of fun, it has a reality of delivering social and cultural particulars through its deep scripts and actions. These socio-political and cultural codes that are embedded in a humour script define a society's ethics and morality. Sometimes, humour acts as form of language and seems to be an inherent part of communicative competence. Similarly, the perception and appreciation of humour have always acted as an index of different personality traits and cognitive abilities. Since it is highly contextual and deeply related to human social interaction, humour is a very human phenomenon. Despite its ability to make human life easier, Artificial Intelligence fails to imitate or produce certain human acts. The study explains the reason of AI's failure in creating human humour.

Humour creates sociability by appreciating and discussing human feelings. By mechanically reproducing programmed patterns, AI takes away the element of unpredictability that awakens the human mind and body with laughter. AI's inability to grasp culture and customs—the intricate warp and weft—of human life and humour scripts a major limitation. Also, since they cannot contribute to social dialogues and think critically, AI does not perform the complicated social tasks that humour performs between people. Without being new or original, humour made by AI cannot reflect how humans can connect brutal reality and provide relief. The humour scripts generated by AI prove that AI fails to create social-technical interactions through humour scripts and to realize the unique, physical, and historically placed character of human humour.

Compliance with ethical standards

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