

ANYONE UP FOR A GOOD LAUGH? THE HUMOUR THAT UNITES VS THE UNIVERSITY THAT DIVIDES

José Igor Prieto Arranz

University of the Balearic Islands, Spain , jose-igor.prieto@uib.es

Abstract:

Humour's notorious absence from university curricula can perhaps be traced back to Aristotle's pronouncement of comedy as inferior to tragedy. It can, therefore, be argued that such texts can be seen as part of the 'neglected' materials vindicated by cultural studies. Consequently, this paper will highlight the role played by cultural studies in making the study of humour more visibly present within the Academia, as well as discuss the value of (the study of) humour. In so doing, the unifying qualities of humour will be presented first, to be followed by a discussion on the seemingly dividing 'anthropological essay' role played by many humorous texts (Critchley 2002: 65). This discussion will be based on previous research (Prieto 2007) in support of Critchley's claim that humour may be indicative of 'a certain ideal image of the world' (2002: 87-90).

In fully circular manner, having pointed out the cultural value of humour, this essay will finish by denouncing the scarce presence of humour and, by extension, cultural studies within the largely archaic and highly departmentalised Spanish university context.

Keywords: *Culture; Humour; Cultural studies; Departmentalisation; Spanish university.*