

HUMOUR

DOES IT HAVE A CORE?

by Josef Kobra Kucera

Yes, humour has to have a core as a foundation for its message. But the core must be truthful. You could make fun of the fact that Napoleon was obsessed with authority, unscrupulous and egotistical, but not of the fact that he was a coward, because he wasn't. Humour can be white and black, kind and sarcastic, but you should always get a sense of humanity from good humour. There are about thirty theories on humour. As a professional critic and author of cartoons, sometime I stop gazing at a cartoon thinking about what message the author wanted to convey.

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There are so many kinds of humour. Somebody may laugh (mainly small children), if you make a funny face at them. But that is not a real laugh; Mr. Karel Polacek, a famous Czech writer, calls it giggling. Humour depends on knowledge of life, and I don't mean education only.

A scientist, who is trying to explain his profession to the public, needs to use shortcuts and comparisons, as well as humour. Naturally, this way a meeting point for science and humour is created. Students of nuclear physics came up with the title of this book. Another suggestions was: "Every redneck knows what uranium can do," but unfortunately, this is a perfect rhyme in Czech only. There are many red-necks in politics, who prefer bombs to power plants. And what shall we call those who protest against nuclear power plants? Because this is a book about humour and every good joke needs you to surmise the punch line, I will leave this question open. ☼

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