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**And they say women don't
have a sense of humor:
On Gender and Sarcasm**

MA Thesis submitted by

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- Abstract -

In the seventies, several studies have indicated an *anti-female bias* in the appreciation of humor. Humor deriding women was considered to be funnier than humor deriding men, both among men and women.

However, since then, there seems to have been a change in the appreciation of humor with regard to gender. Over the recent decades, trends have been found - mostly among people who hold pro-feminist or liberal views - indicating a decrease in the enjoyment of humor deriding women, and an increase in the acceptance of humor displayed by women and/or deriding men, that is, humor which challenges traditional views of gender (Lampert and Ervin-Tripp, 1998; Kotthoff 2006).

The aim of this study is to examine whether gender based differences in the appreciation of humor still exist in our society today, and whether these differences indicate a progressing trend towards equality, or a non-progressing, unequal state of affairs. The means with which these questions are addressed, is the use of sarcasm. It has been shown that sarcastic remarks, such as "I can always count on you to be on time" (said to a friend who arrived late, as he usually does), are used - among other pragmatic effects - to express humor and mocking, and are a way of exercising power over the other. Additionally, this type of non-neutral, aggressive humor has been shown to be sensitive to the contextual setting in which it is used. In the present study, utterances of this kind were examined in four different settings: directed by a woman to a man; by a man to a woman; by a woman to a woman; and by a man to a man. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they enjoyed these sarcastic remarks. Results show that gender does indeed play a crucial role in the way sarcastic remarks are perceived.

According to the Disposition Theory of Humor, the extent to which we enjoy humor, or in this case, a sarcastic remark, is dependent on our attitudinal disposition towards the speaker and the addressee. When one party derides another, we are expected to find it more enjoyable if we are positively affiliated with the deriding party and/or negatively affiliated with the derided party, and vice versa.

Participants who rated their degree of enjoyment from sarcastic remarks uttered in these 4 different settings, were then tested for their own degree of sexism by filling the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick and Fiske, 1996). Since participants were overall non-sexist, the Disposition Theory of Humor regarding differences between sexists and non-sexists could not gain support. However, differences were found between the non-sexist women and men who participated in our study.

These findings are shown to be consistent with previous findings in the field of gender and humor and are partly explained within Ariel and Giora's (1998) Point of View Theory. According to Ariel and Giora, feminist women differ from traditional women in that they adopt an ingroup (feminine) as opposed to an outgroup (masculine) point of view. This should be exhibited, among other things, by exerting power over men and exercising solidarity with women. It therefore predicts that feminist women will find most enjoyable the setting in which a sarcastic remark is directed by a woman to a man, and least enjoyable a sarcastic remark directed by a woman to a woman. Given that our female participants were non-sexist, these predictions were borne out.

This view further predicts that men who adopt an ingroup (masculine) point of view will find most enjoyable a sarcastic remark directed by a man to a woman, and least enjoyable - a sarcastic remark directed by a man to a man. However, our male participants were not sexist and did not adopt a masculine point of view. They did not enjoy sarcastic remarks directed by a man to a woman; in fact they did not enjoy any remarks directed at women. In contrast, they found most enjoyable sarcastic remarks directed by a man to a man.

How can this be explained? Our participants, though non-sexist, must be aware of the patriarchy of our society and of the fact that men are perceived as the dominant group, while women are still perceived as the disempowered group. Therefore men still keep measuring themselves against other men who they compete with. This is why men found the setting in which men deride other men to be most enjoyable and the settings in which women are derided to be less, if not least, enjoyable. These findings reflect their competitive attitudes towards each other and their lack of interest in competing with women, the subordinate group.

Compared to findings from the seventies, it seems as though our contemporary society has gone through some considerable changes, especially among the women. Modern, liberal women have changed their attitudes both towards men and women, in that they no longer enjoy deriding women, but do enjoy deriding men. The modern, liberal men however, seem to have changed their attitudes only towards women, but not towards men as they are still ubiquitously competitive among themselves.

Crawford (2003) states that "for every socially subordinated group, developing a sense of group identity and solidarity is the first step towards political and social change". Our findings show that this step has clearly been taken.

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1. Introduction

In the seventies, several studies have indicated an *anti-female bias* in the appreciation of humor. Humor deriding women was considered to be funnier than humor deriding men, both among men and women.

However, since then, there seems to have been a change in the appreciation of humor with regard to gender. Over the recent decades, trends have been found - mostly among people who hold pro-feminist or liberal attitudes - indicating a decrease in the enjoyment of humor deriding women, and an increase in the acceptance of humor displayed by women and/or deriding men, that is, humor which challenges traditional views of gender (Lampert and Ervin-Tripp, 1998; Kotthoff 2006).

The aim of this study is to examine whether gender based differences in the appreciation of humor still exist in our society today, and whether these differences indicate a progressing trend towards equality, or a non-progressing, unequal state of affairs. The means with which these questions are addressed, is the use of sarcasm. It has been shown that sarcastic remarks, such as "I can always count on you to be on time" (said to a friend who arrived late, as he usually does), are used - among other pragmatic effects - to express humor and mocking, and are a way of exerting power over the other. Utterances of this type were examined in four different settings: uttered by a woman to a man; a man to a woman; between women and between men. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they enjoyed these utterances. From their ratings, it seems that gender does indeed play a crucial role in the way sarcastic remarks are perceived.

The 182 participants in this study all exhibited low degrees of sexism and accordingly, an anti-female bias was not manifested in their appreciation of humor. In addition, they are all probably aware of the patriarchy of our society and of the fact that men are perceived as the dominant group, while women are still perceived as the disempowered group. As will be shown, the differences found in this study between humor appreciation of women and men, are highly consistent with previous findings. Among the male participants, given that they are non-sexists and therefore hold liberal attitudes, the results indicate their ubiquitous competitiveness towards each other and a lack of interest in exerting power over women. Among the female participants, under the assumption that they hold pro-feminist attitudes, results indicate a tendency to be supportive and express solidarity and unity in a struggle for social equality, expressed by a derisive attitude towards men.

1.1. Disposition Theory of Humor

According to The Disposition Theory of Humor (Zillmann and Cantor, 1976), the intensity of the response to a humorous presentation depends on the viewer's disposition towards the protagonists involved. When a humorous presentation involves a disparager and a disparaged party, it is proposed that:

- i. Humor appreciation is facilitated when the viewer feels either positive disposition towards the disparager, negative disposition towards the disparaged, or both.
- ii. Humor appreciation is impaired under the opposite conditions, i.e.: when the viewer feels either negative disposition towards the disparager, positive disposition towards the disparaged, or both.

In short, we are expected to laugh more when our friends make fun of our enemies than the other way round.

Dispositional attitudes can be measured among demographic groups as well as individuals. While group membership plays an important role, it has been shown that in terms of nationality (La Fave et al., 1973), political affiliation (La Fave, 1972; Priest, 1966), religion (La Fave, 1961) and gender (La Fave, 1972, Moore et al., 1987)), attitudinal dispositions among these groups are more accurate than group membership alone in predicting the appreciation of humor. For example, when encountering a situation in which a Canadian disparages an American, a pro-Canadian Canadian is expected to enjoy it more than a situation which depicts the opposite, while a "neutral" Canadian is expected to show this preference to a lesser extent, or not at all.

Cantor (1976) examined derisive humorous encounters between two protagonists in four different settings: woman-man; man-woman; between men; and between women. She found that situations in which men deride women were rated the funniest both among men and women. This supports the view that group membership alone might not be sufficient in predicting humor appreciation, at least not when it involves gender. Cantor does address the notion of dispositional attitudes, "classification of people and protagonists along demographic lines should aid in the prediction of humor responses only as long as these categorizations adequately reflect affective dispositions", however, she did not measure the participants' dispositions regarding gender in any way.

In comparison, Support for the Disposition Theory of humor relating to gender, is found in Moore et al. (1987). Moore et al. examined funniness ratings of sexist versus non-sexist humor, among men and women, whose attitudinal dispositions were measured using Spence and Helmreich's Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS: Spence, Helmreich and Stapp, 1973). They found, as predicted, that although sexist jokes were found overall funnier than non-sexist jokes, joke type

interacted with attitudinal disposition such that men and women with less traditional views of women's roles showed reduced preference for sexist humor compared to more traditional men and women.

In the present study, gender related dispositional attitudes were measured using Glick and Fiske's Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick and Fiske, 1996), to be discussed in chapter 1.3.

1.2. Sarcasm

1.2.1. Sarcasm and Irony

The terms Sarcasm and Irony have been diversely defined and occasionally interchanged by various scholars in the literature of psychology, humor and linguistics throughout the recent decades. I assume that this is due to the fact that they are indeed closely related, and that the way they are used in colloquial speech differs from their definitions per se. For our purposes and for the sake of simplicity, we will distinguish them and use their definitions from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Irony is defined as the "Expression of one's meaning by saying the direct opposite in order to be emphatic, amusing, sarcastic etc." For example, let us use Holden Caulfield, the protagonist of J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* for inspiration. If Holden were to say *last night was a helluva good time*, when in fact, he had too much to drink, lost control over his thoughts and actions, hurt himself, made an embarrassing phone call to his ex-girlfriend in the middle of the night (answered by her father) and was physically attacked and robbed by a pimp in his hotel room, then it would be a case of being ironic.

Sarcasm, in contrast, depends for its effect on "the use of bitter, caustic and other ironic language directed against an individual" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The main difference lies in the words "directed against an individual", while irony can be used neutrally, referring to a situation without being directed at any specific individual, sarcasm must have a "victim", the person towards whom the sarcasm is directed. Therefore, it has also been regarded in the literature as *aggressive humor* (Goldstein and McGhee, 1972; Martin et al., 2003), and *indirect criticism* or *ironic criticism* (Schwoebel et al., 2000; Toplak and Katz, 1999). These terms too, imply the existence of a "victim". For example, let us quote Holden in the scene where he meets three out-of-town girls and tries to strike up a conversation with one of them:

*"Where you Girls from?" I asked her.
She didn't answer me, though. She was busy looking around...
"Where you girls from?" I asked her again.
"What?" She said.*

"Where you girls from? Don't answer if you don't feel like it. I don't want you to strain yourself."

"Seattle, Washington," she said. She was doing me a big favor to tell me.

***"You're a very good conversationalist,"** I told her. "You know that?"*

In this sentence, Holden is being sarcastic towards the lady. She is the "victim" of his sarcasm, the person towards whom his criticism and mockery are directed.

In addition, according to Giora (1995) and Giora et al. (2005), the degree of irony – or sarcasm, for this matter - hinges on the gap between what is said and what is implied, or in other words, the gap between the desired state and the disappointing reality. In Holden's line to the lady, the gap is between his will to have a real conversation with her (the desired state), and her actual conversational abilities which are obviously, poor (the disappointing reality).

To ensure their comprehension as sarcastic, the utterances used in this study all involve a significant gap between what is said – related to a desired state of affairs - and the reality that frustrates it, and are all directed towards a specific individual who is the "victim" of the sarcasm.

1.2.2. Why do people use sarcasm?

Using sarcasm or irony - or any other form of non-literal/indirect speech - is not trivial. Why do people choose to express their thoughts and intentions indirectly when a literal and direct version is at hand?

Empirical and theoretical findings include the following uses of sarcasm:

- "Politeness strategy". When one has a negative comment or proposition, she/he might choose to say it indirectly in order to be polite. (Giora, 1995)
- Avoiding being dull and uninformative. Merely saying "you are late" to a friend who is late, is uninformative (stating the obvious) and therefore might be dull. (Giora, 1995)
- Expressing humor. (Dews et al., 1995; Kreuz et al., 1991; Roberts and Kreuz, 1994)
- Expressing mockery. (Katz and Pexman, 1997; Kreuz et al., 1991)
- Softening the edge of an insult or criticism (Dews et al., 1995; Schwoebel et al., 2000)
- Avoiding damaging the relationship of the interlocutors (Dews et al., 1995)

Thus, when Holden chooses to say *you're a very good conversationalist*, he is expressing his criticism and disappointment in a humorous, mocking way, he is avoiding being dull and uninformative, he feels that this way his insult is muted,

and perhaps he feels that if he were more direct and simply said *you are boring*, it would be impolite and might damage his relationship with the lady causing her to get up and walk away.

1.2.3. Sarcasm and the current study

In light of the above, the sarcastic utterances examined in this study are rather complex. On the one hand, they express criticism mockery and disappointment, and on the other hand, they are mitigated by humor - sarcasm is, after all, fun.

These utterances all involve a "victim": the person towards whom the criticism is directed, the person who is being derided. This, in turn, makes the speaker - the "victimizer". In terms of the *Disposition Theory of Humor*, the speaker is the *disparager*, while the addressee is the *disparaged*.¹

Additional factors which should be taken into consideration are the social status and the relationship between the protagonists. According to Coser (1959, 1960) and Howell (1973), teasing typically marks an asymmetrical relationship, with the person in the more powerful or superordinate position allowed to tease or rib individuals in less powerful or subordinate positions without being teased in return. As Kotthoff (1996) phrased it: "not only the frequency of humor, but also its direction tends to reflect and reproduce existing authority structures". In addition, Kotthoff (1996) also found that teasing is much more common among friends, and is indicative of the stability of a friendship.

In the current study we controlled for the status criterion by simply disregarding it. In all the situations, the context was informal and hierarchy-free, and there was at least a certain degree of friendship implied between the protagonists, which theoretically places both of them at the same status level and renders the teasing between them common and acceptable. Therefore, any differences that might occur, can only be attributed to the gender factor.

1.3. Sexism

Let us begin with one more quote by Holden Caulfield:

...And when she turned around, her pretty little butt twitched so nice and all. She knocked me out. I mean it. I was half in love with her by the time we sat down. That's the thing about girls. Every time they do something pretty, even if they're not much to look at, or even if they're sort of stupid, you fall half in love

¹ In general, the addressee of the sarcastic remark is not necessarily the "victim", since a sarcastic remark may well be uttered in the third person (e.g., "good old Johnny, I can always count on **him** to be on time"). However, in this study, only remarks which are directed at the addressee in second person are examined.

with them, and then you never know where the hell you are. Girls. Jesus Christ. They can drive you crazy. They really can.

What Holden is expressing in these lines is very much in compliance with Glick and Fiske's theory of sexism: Ambivalent Sexism. According to Glick and Fiske (1996) sexism is a special case of prejudice, namely, one that is marked by a deep ambivalence towards women, rather than strict antipathy. Sexism is viewed as consisting of two sets of attitudes: hostile and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism (henceforth HS) fits Allport's (1954) classic definition of prejudice - "an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization". Measures of such antipathy include social distance and negative stereotype. HS encompasses a wide range of negative attitudes such as antipathy, resentment and anger. It views women as inferior and less competent adults than men, and suggests that women constantly use their dyadic, sexual power to manipulate and gain control over men.

Benevolent sexism (henceforth BS) holds interrelated attitudes towards women. It encompasses subjectively positive feelings for women, and tends to generate positive social behaviors. It is a highly admiring and worshiping view of women. It regards women as superior to men, esthetically as well as in their capacity for nurturing and being compassionate, and suggests that women should be cherished and protected due to men's intimate and sexual dependency on them. Though this may seem as a pro-women stance, BS is sexist in that it is still based on traditional stereotyping. It leads to restricting women's social roles and perpetuates masculine dominance and women's subordination. An act of BS may be considered positive in the eyes of the initiator, but not necessarily interpreted as such by the recipient. For example, a man offering to help a woman with carrying her groceries, well-intended as it may be, might be taken by the woman as implying her weakness and inability to manage on her own.

Ambivalent sexism is composed of three components: Paternalism, Gender Differentiation, and Heterosexuality. Each of these components inherently withholds a hostile aspect and a benevolent aspect (for a complete overview of these components, see Glick and Fiske (1996), and references therein).

Paternalism – is treating women as a father treats his children i.e., by dominating them on one hand (the hostile aspect) and by protecting them and being affectionate towards them on the other (the benevolent aspect). Dominative paternalism justifies patriarchy under the view of women as less competent than men. Protective paternalism justifies patriarchy under the view that men are dyadically dependent on women as wives, mothers, and sexual objects, and therefore women are to be loved, cherished, and protected.

Gender Differentiation – relates to using physical differences as a basis for social distinction. The drive to competitive differentiation justifies men's social power under the perception that they are the only ones who possess the traits required

for governing social structures (hostile). On the other hand, again, since men are dyadically dependent on women, women are viewed as possessing many positive traits which complete those of men (benevolent). Thus the benevolent sexist sees his wife as his "better half".

Heterosexuality – is a powerful source of ambivalence towards women. Men's dyadic dependency on women (as romantic and sexual objects) creates a vulnerability which men, being the more "powerful" group, resent, and is shown to be associated with hostility towards women and the desire to dominate them (hostile). On the other hand, men's sexual motivation towards women may also be associated with a desire for psychological closeness and intimacy, which greatly affect happiness in life (benevolent).

Under this complex view, Glick and Fiske developed the ASI – *Ambivalent Sexism Inventory*, a self report questionnaire consisting of two types of sentences, relating to either hostile sexism or benevolent sexism. Scores of these two scales can be distinguished so that according to participants' degree of agreement with the sentences, they can be categorized into four types: ambivalent sexists (high degree of agreement with sentences of both HS and BS); hostile sexists (high HS, low BS); benevolent sexists (high BS, low HS); and non-sexists (low HS, low BS).

Examples for HS related sentences from the ASI are "Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash", or "Women exaggerate problems they have at work"; examples for BS related sentences are "No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman" or "In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men".

The implication of this tool is that it can predict behavioral patterns towards women. Hostile sexism scale has been shown to correlate with negative attitudes towards and stereotypes about women, while benevolent sexism scale has been shown to correlate with positive attitudes towards and stereotypes about women. Ambivalent sexists are expected to treat women inconsistently and diversely, they "are likely to be patronizingly sweet or viciously hostile toward any particular woman at any given time" (Glick and Fiske, 1996); non-sexists are theoretically expected to treat women not at all differently than men.

These predictions have been validated in many different studies. For example, Sakalli (2001) tested 221 students' attitudes towards wife beating in Turkey. Her results showed that participants with high hostile sexism viewed wife beating as more acceptable and blamed the wife for eliciting the beating, while participants with high benevolent sexism, being protective of women, blamed the husband for the beating.

For the current study, the predictions of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory combined with the Disposition Theory of Humor are as follows:

- i. Benevolent sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by a woman to a man to a greater extent than that directed by a man to a woman.
- ii. Hostile sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by a man to a woman to a greater extent than that directed by a woman to a man.
- iii. Benevolent sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by women to men to a greater extent than hostile sexists.
- iv. Hostile sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by men to women to a greater extent than benevolent sexists.
- v. Non-sexists should show no preference for any of the different settings.

1.4. Gender and Linguistic Behavior

In gender theories, the essentialist view (e.g., Tannen 1990; Gilligan, 1982), considers gender a fundamental attribute of individuals, i.e., something that women and men have, or are, either biologically, through socialization, or both. Different essentialist views regard women's ways as revered, demeaned or equal in comparison to men's, and some emphasize differences while others - similarities.

According to Ariel and Giora (1998) and Giora (1997, 2001), the linguistic behavior of men and women cannot be explained along the lines of the essentialist stance. They suggest that it is politically problematic to inquire the differences and similarities in linguistic behavior under such gender dichotomy, since they perpetuate the unequal social structure, and imply that no change is necessary. Moreover, they claim that this method is theoretically weak since it studies features, which are a superficial and local phenomenon, rather than strategies. For instance, even when women and men exhibit similar linguistic behavior, they still might be acting under different social constraints, or different motivations (Giora, 2001). Therefore, Ariel and Giora propose a strategy which is much more in accordance with the constructionist view (e.g., West and Zimmerman 1987; Hare-Mustin and Marecek, 1994).

Constructionists view gender as a system constructed in social interaction. While Essentialist views construe gender as residing within individuals, constructionist views construe gender as residing in interactions. Thus, taking the social context into consideration, Ariel and Giora focus on the relation between linguistic behavior and its motivation. Linguistic behavior should be explained regarding the speaker's point of view, which is a reflection of her/his motivation.

A speaker's point of view encompasses the terms of Self versus Other. Adopting a Self point of view means that speakers identify with their ingroup members

and their objectives, values and interests; adopting an Other point of view means identifying with the objectives, values and interests of outgroup members. Ariel and Giora suggest that while for men, being the dominant group in our society, it is acceptable to fully adopt a Self (masculine) point of view, for women, being the disempowered group, social constraints might make it more acceptable to adopt an Other (masculine) point of view rather than a Self (feminine) point of view. Following group relation theories (e.g., Giles 1984; Tajfel 1978), Ariel and Giora assume that feminist awareness should induce a divergence as opposed to convergence strategy, so that feminist female speakers should adopt a Self (feminine) point of view, while lack of feminist awareness should involve a convergence strategy, so that non-feminist women are expected to adopt an Other (masculine) point of view thus resulting in linguistic behavior similar to that of men.

To sum up, the group relation based theory proposed by Ariel and Giora groups male and non-feminist-female speakers on the basis of their similar speech products, namely identifying with the masculine group's objectives, values and interests, and groups male and feminist-female speakers on the basis of their similar strategy, namely, adopting a Self point of view.

Ariel and Giora (1998) examined manifestations of social identity in Israeli literature, in order to find different points of view in men's and women's writings. They list seven parameters which comprise the adoption of a Self point of view:

1. Focus on the Self rather than on the Other. E.g., one would expect to find more female characters in women's writings, and more male characters in men's writings.
2. The self as a point of reference to the other. E.g., in the phrase "X's friend", "x" is the anchor, and "friend" is the anchored, ingroup members should be favored as anchors, while outgroup members – as anchored.
3. Individuation of the self. E.g., ingroup members should be portrayed as individual and distinct while outgroup members should be portrayed more homogeneously.
4. Portraying the self as independent. E.g., ingroup members are expected to be autonomous and self-supportive.
5. Objectification of the other. E.g., employing more external descriptions (based on physical characteristics) for outgroup members than ingroup members.
6. Exerting power on the other. Under the assumption that being in power is considered a positive state in our culture, ingroup members are expected to be in control over outgroup members.
7. Cooperating with the self. Acting in favor of ingroup members. E.g., one is expected to comply more with ingroup members than with outgroup members.

As predicted, their findings indicated that male and traditional female writers exhibit similar speech patterns by adopting a masculine point of view (for men – Self, for women – Other), while feminist-female writers exhibit a similar strategy to that of men by adopting a Self point of view (for men – masculine, for women – feminine).

Regarding the current study, parameters #6 and #7 above are relevant. Directing humor at others is viewed as aggressive behavior. As stated above, teasing typically marks an asymmetrical relationship, with the person in the more powerful or superordinate position permitted to tease or rib individuals in less powerful or subordinate positions without being teased in return (Coser, 1959, 1960; Howell, 1973). Thus, being sarcastic towards other individuals is a manifestation of exerting power over them. Adopting a self point of view predicts that power should be exercised over outgroup members, and solidarity should be expressed among ingroup members.

Regarding sarcasm, the predictions of this view, are that non-feminist women and men, adopting a masculine point of view, should find it most enjoyable when sarcasm is directed by a man to a woman, and least enjoyable – between men; while feminists, adopting a feminine point of view, should find it most enjoyable when sarcasm is directed by a woman to a man, and least enjoyable – sarcasm directed by a woman to a woman since this might hinder their solidarity.

1.5. Summarizing the Predictions

1.5.1. Combining the Disposition Theory of Humor and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

The Disposition Theory of Humor proposes the following (see chapter 1.1):

- i. Humor appreciation is facilitated when the viewer feels either positive disposition towards the disparager, negative disposition towards the disparaged, or both.
- ii. Humor appreciation is impaired under the opposite conditions, i.e.: when the viewer feels either negative disposition towards the disparager, positive disposition towards the disparaged, or both.

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory predicts that (see chapter 1.3):

- i. Hostile sexism scale correlates with negative attitudes towards and stereotypes about women.
- ii. Benevolent sexism scale correlates with positive attitudes towards and stereotypes about women.

Given that sarcasm is a display of humor involving a derider (the speaker) and a deridee (the addressee/victim), the predictions of The Disposition Theory of

Humor with the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory taken together are as follows (see chapter 1.3):

- i. Benevolent sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by a woman to a man to a greater extent than that directed by a man to a woman.
- ii. Hostile sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by a man to a woman to a greater extent than that directed by a woman to a man.
- iii. Benevolent sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by women to men to a greater extent than hostile sexists.
- iv. Hostile sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by men to women to a greater extent than benevolent sexists.
- v. Non-sexists should show no preference for any of the different settings.

1.5.2. Point of View theory

Under Ariel and Giora's Point of View Theory, the predictions are as follows (repeated from chapter 1.4):

- i. Non-feminist women and men, adopting a masculine point of view, will find it most enjoyable when sarcasm is directed by a man to a woman, and least enjoyable – sarcasm used between men.
- ii. Feminist women, adopting a feminine point of view, will find it most enjoyable when sarcasm is directed by a woman to a man, and least enjoyable – sarcasm used between women.

Since there is no tool assessing feminism used in this study, I assume that the non-sexist category of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory is indicative of egalitarian, liberal and to some extent, pro-feminist attitudes.

1.5.3. Strategy

In order to test these predictions, female and male participants were presented with a questionnaire consisting of sarcastic remarks said in four gender-differentiated settings: said by a woman to a man; man to woman; between men and between women, and were asked to rate their degree of enjoyment from each situation. Following these ratings, participants were presented with the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory.

Regarding ambivalent sexists, and the settings in which sarcasm is used between men and between women, there are no specific predictions relevant to the discussed theories. However, they were also included since a factorial analysis might still yield interesting and enlightening results.

2. Method

Participants: 110 women aged 17-64 and 72 men aged 15-74 were approached via email and Facebook. They were all friends and family members of friends and family members of mine.

Design: a 2x2x2x2x2 factorial design was used with *participant gender* (M/F), *Hostile Sexism* (high/low), and *Benevolent Sexism* (high/low) as between-subjects factors and *speaker gender* and *addressee gender* (M/F) as within-subject factors.

Materials: 24 items consisting of short situations ending with a sarcastic utterance appeared in 4 different settings: Woman-Man ; Man-Woman ; Woman-Woman ; Man-Man. 4 booklets were prepared so that each participant would be presented with one of the four variations for each item. Following each item there were 4 questions: the first regarded the participant's degree of enjoyment from the sarcastic remark; the other 3 regarded the participant's opinion of the speaker on 3 scales – the extent to which the speaker is derisive, the extent to which the speaker is sophisticated, and the extent to which the speaker is perceived in a positive light. These four questions were to be answered on a scale of 1-7 such that 1= not at all, 7= very much.

The exact questions were as follows:

- 1.As a viewer of the situation, to what extent did you enjoy what X said to Y?
- 2.In light of what X said to Y: Do you find X derisive?
- 3.Do you find X sophisticated?
- 4.Do you perceive X in a positive light?

In the current study, only the first question is addressed.

Example:

9* רבקה ואסף במסעדה מפוארת. הגיעו המנות המאוד פלצניות, ואסף אוכל עם הידיים. רבקה אומרת לאסף: רואים שלימדו אותך נימוסים בבית.

7 - במידה רבה מאוד	6	5	4	3	2	1 - כלל לא	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	בתור צופה מהצד, מה מידת ההנאה שלך ממה שרבקה אמרה לאסף?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	לאור מה שרבקה אמרה לאסף: האם היא נתפסת בעיניך כלעגנית?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	האם היא נתפסת בעיניך כמתוחכמת?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	האם היא נתפסת בעיניך באור חיובי?

This specific item, as phrased here, appeared in one of the booklets. In the other three booklets, it appeared in the other three settings: with the situation reversed, so that the sarcastic utterance is said by Assaf to Rivka; with a female friend in place of Assaf, so that the sarcastic remark is uttered by a female speaker to a female addressee; and with a male friend in place of Rivka, so that the sarcastic utterance is said by a male speaker to a male addressee.

In addition, two buffer items were presented at the beginning of each booklet and there was counter balancing in item order for each booklet (each booklet had a version in which the items' order was reversed). The items appeared on one sheet so that participants had to scroll down the page in order to continue from one item to the next. The personal information required in the beginning of the questionnaire consisted of Age, Native language, Gender and Education.

Finally, each booklet ended with the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. 22 sentences (11 relating to hostile sexism, 11 – benevolent sexism) indicating degree of agreement, according to the following 6 point scale: 1 = disagree strongly; 2 = disagree somewhat; 3 = disagree slightly; 4 = agree slightly; 5 = agree somewhat; 6 = agree strongly. Six of the sentences were phrased such that their scores should be reversed. Scores above 3.5 were defined as High, while scores below 3.5 were defined as Low.

Procedure: participants were told that in the first part they would have to answer 4 questions following each short story such that in the first question they would have to rate the degree of their enjoyment from a certain utterance, and in the other three questions they would have to form an opinion of the speaker (an example was given); in the second part they would have to mark their degree of agreement with the sentences presented. Questionnaires were sent via the internet and were answered online anonymously.

In addition, a pilot of 20 participants was run to ensure that the participants were not aware of the factors being controlled. After filling the questionnaire, these 20 participants were asked, if they had any idea what the aim of the study was, or what the difference was between the situations presented. None of them was able to guess correctly.

Results

A five factor ANOVA test was run with *participant gender* (M/F), *Hostile Sexism* (high/low), and *Benevolent Sexism* (high/low) as between-subjects factors and *speaker gender* and *addressee gender* (M/F) as within-subject factors. The dependant variable was the degree of enjoyment.

There was a significant main effect of *participant gender*, $F(1,174)= 3.92$, $p<0.05$, such that the sarcastic situations were enjoyed more by male participants ($M=3.64$, $SE=0.17$) than by female participants ($M=3.15$, $SE=0.17$).

An additional significant main effect has been found for *addressee gender*, $F(1,174)=9.45$, $p<0.01$, such that there was a higher degree of enjoyment when the addressee was a man ($M=3.49$, $SE=0.12$) than when she was a woman ($M=3.3$, $SE=0.12$).

Finally, there was a 3-way interaction effect between *participant gender* X *speaker gender* X *addressee gender*, $F(1,174)=5.68$, $p<0.05$ (see figures I,II and III below). Among men, the most enjoyable setting is the one in which sarcasm is used between men ($M=3.827$, $SE=0.187$), while the least enjoyable is the one which takes place between women ($M=3.508$, $SE=0.188$). Among women, the most enjoyable setting is the one in which sarcasm is directed against a man by

a woman ($M=3.389$, $SE=0.187$); the least enjoyable setting is the one which takes place between women ($M=2.992$, $SE=0.182$).

Regarding Sexism, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory yielded overall low scores of sexism. Mean of hostile sexism was 2.63, $SE=0.06$ (on a 6 point scale), and of benevolent sexism 2.77, $SE=0.06$. Although men were significantly more sexist than women on the HS scale, $t(180)=2.66$, $p<0.05$ (men: $M=2.85$, $SE=0.11$; women: $M=2.5$, $SE=0.08$), the averages all lie in between *disagree somewhat* and *disagree slightly*, indicating that overall both male and female participants were non sexists, and can be regarded as holding liberal, and somewhat feminist views. In addition, very few participants scored high (above 3.5) on these scales: both on the HS scale and on the BS scale only 37 participants scored high (out of a total of 182 participants). Given the above, it is plausible that the 3- and 4-way interaction effects involving the Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism factors might not provide an accurate indication. Recall that predictions of the Disposition Theory regarded differences between hostile sexists and benevolent sexists, but since these were not found to a sufficient extent among our participants, it is impossible to determine whether these predictions were borne out or not. Therefore, these interaction effects, presented below, will not be discussed.

A 3-way interaction effect has been found between *Benevolent Sexism X participant gender X speaker gender*, $F(1,174)=4.11$, $p<0.05$. Among participants with low BS scores, male participants enjoyed the sarcastic remarks to a greater extent than female participants regardless of the speaker. Among participants with high BS scores, the male participants enjoyed the sarcastic remarks to a greater extent when they were uttered by a man, while the female participants enjoyed them more when uttered by a woman.

A 3-way interaction effect has been found between *Hostile Sexism X speaker gender X addressee gender*, $F(1,174)=6.96$, $p<0.01$. Among participants with low HS scores, when sarcasm is addressed to a man, it is more enjoyable when uttered by a man than a woman, while when addressed to a woman, it is more enjoyable when uttered by a woman than a man. Among participants with high HS scores, findings were opposite, when sarcasm is addressed to a man, it is more enjoyable when uttered by a woman than a man, while when addressed to a woman, it is more enjoyable when uttered by a man than a woman.

A 4-way interaction effect has been found between *Benevolent Sexism X Hostile Sexism X speaker gender X addressee gender*, $F(1,174)=4.5$, $p<0.05$. Among participants with low BS scores, there were no differences regarding HS scores and gender of speaker and addressee. Among participants with high BS scores, those with low HS scores, found sarcastic remarks addressed to men more enjoyable than those addressed to women, regardless of the speaker. Among participants with high BS scores and high HS scores, when sarcasm was

addressed to a man it was more enjoyable when the speaker was a woman than a man, but when addressed to a woman, it was more enjoyable when the speaker was a man than a woman.

Female Participants

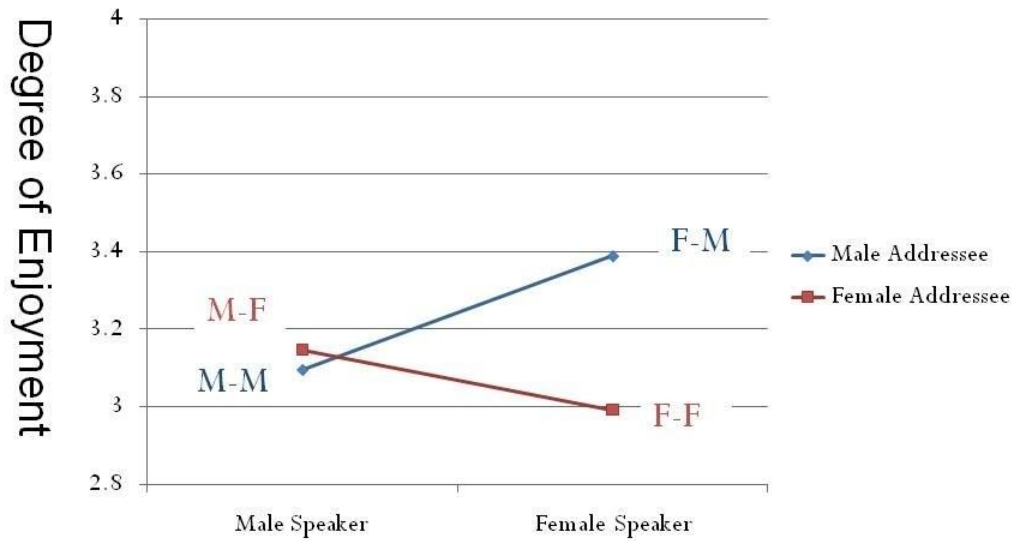


Fig. I

Male Participants

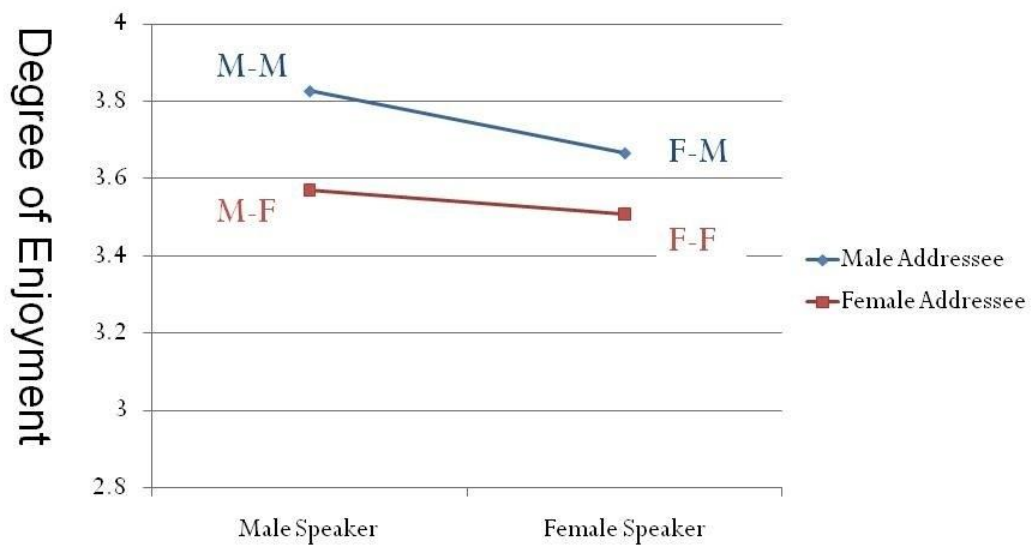


Fig. II

Fig. III: Mean (Std. Errors) of Enjoyment Ratings

Speaker gender	<u>Female participants</u>		<u>Male participants</u>	
	Addressee gender		Addressee gender	
	Woman	Man	Woman	Man
Woman	2.99 (.18)	3.39 (.19)	3.51 (.19)	3.67 (.19)
Man	3.15 (.19)	3.09 (.18)	3.57 (.19)	3.83 (.19)

Discussion

The results are summarized below:

1. Both the men and women who participated in our study are non-sexist, and can be regarded as liberal and somewhat feminist.
2. The men enjoy sarcasm more than the women.
3. Both the men and women find it more enjoyable when sarcastic remarks are directed at men than at women, or in other words, they all enjoy seeing a man being derided more than a woman being derided.
4. There is a difference in the most and least enjoyable settings between the men and women. Men find it most enjoyable when men (ingroup members) are derided by other men, and least enjoyable when women (outgroup members) deride women. Women find it most enjoyable when women deride men (outgroup members) and least enjoyable when women deride women (ingroup members).

Regarding the predictions of the Disposition Theory and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (repeated here for convenience; see 1.5.1):

- i. Benevolent sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by a woman to a man to a greater extent than that directed by a man to a woman.
- ii. Hostile sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by a man to a woman to a greater extent than that directed by a woman to a man.
- iii. Benevolent sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by women to men to a greater extent than hostile sexists.
- iv. Hostile sexists will enjoy sarcasm directed by men to women to a greater extent than benevolent sexists.
- v. Non-sexists should show no preference for any of the different settings.

Since participants were overall non-sexist, it cannot be determined whether predictions (i-iv) are borne out or not. As for prediction (v), since there are differences between the preferences of the male participants and female participants, grouping all participants into one group, namely, non-sexists is problematic. Yet, even if we do regard them all as non-sexists, prediction (v) is still not borne out since there is an overall preference for the settings in which the addressee is a man over those in which she was a woman.

Recall the predictions for the Point of View Theory (repeated from 1.5.2):

- i. Non-feminist women and men, adopting a masculine point of view, will find it most enjoyable when sarcasm is directed by a man to a woman, and least enjoyable – sarcasm used between men.
- ii. Feminist women, adopting a feminine point of view, will find it most enjoyable when sarcasm is directed by a woman to a man, and least enjoyable – sarcasm used between women.

As explained in chapter 1.4, feminism, according to Ariel and Giora (1998), is expressed by adopting a Self (feminine) rather than an Other (masculine) point of view. Since our female participants are somewhat feminists, given their low sexism scores, then prediction (ii) is borne out, since the female participants indeed adopted a Self point of view, and found it most enjoyable when sarcasm was directed by a woman to a man, which is the portrayal of a woman exerting power over a man, and least enjoyable – when sarcasm was directed by a woman to a woman, which hinders their solidarity.

Results of the male participants are more complex. Apparently, prediction (i) is not borne out, since the men favored the settings in which men were being derided, and especially by other men. So in point of view terms, these men did not adopt a Self (male) point of view. This is probably due to the fact that our male participants are not sexist, meaning they do not hold traditional views, but are liberal and, perhaps to some extent, even pro-feminist. This is partly why the settings in which women were being derided received lower ratings among these men. However, it is yet to be explained why, regarding ingroup members, men and women exhibited opposite ratings: men found it **most** enjoyable when sarcasm was used among their ingroup members (between men), while women found it **least** enjoyable when sarcasm was used among their ingroup members (between women).

In order to explain our results, let us review previous findings regarding humor and gender, with which our results are highly consistent.

Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (2006) tested the use of teasing in natural conversations among mixed- and same-gender groups. They found that among European-Americans (but not Latino/Asian-Americans), women tease to a lesser

extent when among their ingroup members, but do tease men in mixed-gender groups in order to express their equality. Men, on the other hand, tease freely among themselves, but less in mixed-gender groups.

According to Hay (2001), Crawford and Gressley (1991) and Crawford (2003), the preferred type of humor among women is sharing funny, mundane, personal happenings from everyday life in order to create a "shared understanding of life's absurdities", while men's humor functions as a form of status competition. Similarly, Jenkins (1985) states that while women's humor supports a goal of intimacy by being supportive, men's humor reinforces goals of competition and self-aggrandizement. Similar preferences have been found in other types of humorous expressions as well. Bruner and Kelso (1980), state that even "witty toilet graffiti often confirm well known gender differences, with male graffiti tending to attack others and female graffiti tending to express sympathy".

In addition, Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (1998) reviewed over forty studies regarding humor and gender conducted between 1970 and 1996. They concluded that while in the seventies many studies have indicated an *anti-female bias* in humor (meaning that jokes deriding women were considered funnier than jokes deriding men, both among women and men), there are trends indicating a decrease in the enjoyment of anti-female humor and an increase in the acceptance of humor deriding men, that is humor which challenges traditional views of gender. Importantly, these trends are mostly visible among people who hold pro-feminist or liberal attitudes. Kotthoff (2006) addressed this topic as well and similarly concluded that in Western societies there are various signs of change in the gender politics of humor. The traditional incompatibility between displaying femininity and active, and, in particular, aggressive joking is declining.

Regarding our findings, if we assume that our female participants were not only non-sexist, but somewhat feminist in their views, and therefore also aware of the fact that they are the socially disempowered group compared to men, then the explanation is straightforward. In lines with previous findings presented above, the female participants' ratings of enjoyment were lower than those of the males' simply because sarcasm is a type of humor less preferred by them. Moreover, they found most enjoyable, situations in which women deride men, and least enjoyable - situations in which women deride ingroup members. They enjoyed women deriding women the least because this setting hinders their solidarity and unity, which are traits they must endure being the disempowered group and struggling for change. They enjoyed women deriding men the most since, in lines with both Ariel and Giora's explanation and Lampert and Ervin-Tripp's explanation, this expresses their power and/or equality among men, the dominant group.

Regarding the male participants, they enjoy sarcasm more than the female participants because, according to Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (2006), this is a

preferred type of humor for them since this is their way to create rapport and solidarity. I would like to take this explanation one step further and ask why. Why does male bonding rely on teasing and sarcasm, while female bonding relies on sharing and supporting? Why did the men in our study find the settings in which other men, their ingroup members, were being derided to be the most enjoyable?

Perhaps the answer to this lies deep in human nature (while not excluding the possibility that these "natural" traits are results of socialization processes). Steven Pinker, in his book "how the mind works" (1997), states - from an evolutionary psychology point of view - that "Every human society acknowledges some kind of superiority hierarchy, **especially among males**. Males strive to achieve superiority using different methods, among humans as well as other species." That is to say, men are competitive. Many studies of child development have shown this trait to be typical even of boys at young ages, e.g. Maltz and Borker (1982) researched children's play and showed that girls use words to create and maintain relationships of closeness and equality, while boys use words to assert their own position of dominance. Men enjoy seeing another man derided, since it only gets them one step closer to winning the "Alpha Male" title. Under the assumption that similarly to our female participants, our male participants must also be aware of their being the dominant group, it is plausible that their competitiveness is expressed only towards other men. Therefore they found situations in which men were derided to be more enjoyable than those in which women were derided (indicated in figure 2 by the blue line being above the red line). Competition with women, the disempowered group, is of no interest to them. And the fact that they still enjoyed it most when men were derided by other men rather than by women, is perhaps due to the fact that in this particular setting they can fully identify with the derider.

3. General Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine whether gender inequalities in the politics of humor, exist in our society today, as they clearly did in the seventies, or whether there is a trend towards equality, such as noticed by Lampert and Ervin-Trip (1998) and Kotthoff (2006). Sarcasm is a suitable phenomenon for this study since this type of non-neutral, aggressive humor has been shown to be sensitive to the contextual setting in which it is used. In the current study, it was tested in 4 different settings: when directed by a woman to a man; a man to a woman; between women; and between men.

According to the Disposition Theory of Humor, the extent to which we enjoy a sarcastic remark is dependent on our attitudinal disposition towards the speaker and the addressee. When one party derides another, we are expected to find it

more enjoyable if we are positively affiliated with the deriding party and/or negatively affiliated with the derided party, and vice versa.

Participants who rated their degree of enjoyment from sarcastic remarks uttered in these different settings, were then tested for their own degree of sexism. Since participants were overall non-sexist, predictions of the Disposition Theory of Humor regarding differences between sexists and non-sexists could not be determined. However, differences were found between the non-sexist women and men who participated in our study.

These findings were shown to be consistent with previous findings in the field of gender and humor and were partly explained within Ariel and Giora's (1998) Point of View Theory. According to Ariel and Giora, feminist women differ from traditional women by adopting a feminine as opposed to masculine point of view. This should be exhibited, among other things, by exerting power over men, and therefore predicts that feminist women will find most enjoyable the setting in which a sarcastic remark is directed by a woman to a man. Given that our female participants were non-sexist, meaning non-traditional, liberal and somewhat feminist, this prediction was borne out.

The participants in our study rated their degree of enjoyment of sarcastic remarks uttered in four settings differentiated by gender, without being consciously aware of this differentiation. As was clear from the feedback in the pilot test, they were not consciously thinking "oh! Here, a woman is making fun of a man, and here, a man is making fun of a woman, so I like this better because I am a feminist woman", they simply rated every situation intuitively.

A statistic analysis shows that the gender, both of the speakers and addressees and of the participants, did play a role in affecting the degree of enjoyment.

In their ratings, men found the setting in which men deride other men to be most enjoyable and the settings in which women are derided to be less enjoyable, indicating their competitive attitudes towards each other and their lack of interest in competing with women, the subordinate group.

Women found settings in which women deride other women to be least enjoyable, and settings in which women deride men to be most enjoyable, indicating their shared identity and solidarity, complemented by a derisive attitude towards men as an attempt to prove themselves equal.

A point remaining to be checked, among sexist men, is whether their sexism can overcome their competitiveness among each other, thus resulting in their finding the setting in which women are being derided by men to be the most enjoyable, and gaining support for the Disposition Theory of humor. Similarly, among sexist women, it is yet to be explored if their traditional sexist opinions would exhibit a lack of solidarity and result in their finding the setting in which men deride

women to be the most enjoyable. In order to test this, a larger sample must be reached, which unfortunately, could not be accomplished in this study.

In addition, concerning the two alternative understandings of gender – constructionism and essentialism - this study supports the constructionist view in that it shows that competitiveness is not only a trait that both women and men possess, but that whether they exhibit it or not, solely depends on social context.

In conclusion, both the men and women who participated in our experiment are not sexist, but do apparently acknowledge the fact that our society is patriarchal. They perceive men as the dominant group and women as the subordinate group. Compared to findings from the seventies, it seems as though modern, liberal women have changed their attitudes both towards men and women, in that they no longer enjoy deriding women, but do enjoy deriding men. The modern, liberal men however, seem to have changed their attitudes towards women, but not towards men as they are still ubiquitously competitive among themselves.

Crawford (2003) states that “for every socially subordinated group, developing a sense of group identity and solidarity is the first step towards political and social change”. Our findings show that this step has clearly been taken.

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Appendix A: Sarcasm Questionnaire

בשאלון שלפניך שני חלקים.

בחלק הראשון מופיעים קטעים קצרים שבסופם נאמר משפט.

עליך לקרוא את הקטעים ולענות על השאלות הנלוות על סולם

מ 1 עד 7, כך ש:

1- משמעו כלל לא, 7- משמעו מידה רבה מאוד

לדוגמא:

ציפי ואמנון מטיילים ברמת הגולן. לפתע ציפי מצביעה בהתלהבות מוגזמת על שלג בצד הדרך. אמנון אומר לציפי: "אפילו ילדים קטנים לא מתלהבים כל-כך כשהם רואים שלג." בשאלה הראשונה, עליך יהיה להחליט, בתור צופה מהצד, מהי מידת ההנאה שלך ממה שאמנון אמר לציפי.

1 משמעו שלא מצאת בדבריו שום הנאה; 7- מצאת בדבריו הנאה רבה מאוד.

לאחר מכן, עליך לגבש עמדה כלפי אמנון.

לאור מה שאמנון אמר לציפי:

א. האם הוא נתפס בעיניך כלעגני?

1 - לא נתפס בעיניך כלעגני כלל; 7- מאוד לעגני.

ב. האם הוא נתפס בעיניך כמתוחכם?

1 - לא נתפס בעיניך כמתוחכם כלל; 7 - מאוד מתוחכם.

ג. האם הוא נתפס בעיניך באור חיובי?

1 - לא נתפס בעיניך באור חיובי כלל; 7- אור חיובי מאוד.

בחלק השני מופיעים משפטים ועליך לדרג את מידת ההסכמה שלך איתם.

חשוב! אין תשובה נכונה או לא נכונה. עליך לענות לפי תחושתך האישית.

אורך השאלון כרבע שעה והוא אנונימי לחלוטין.

תודה רבה!

1. ענת ותומר יושבים בבר, ומתחיל להתנגן ברקע שיר של הביטלס. תומר מתלהב ואומר שהוא מת על הרולינג סטונס.
ענת אומרת לתומר: הידע שלך במוסיקה הוא פשוט מדהים!
2. דני הולך למסיבת יום ההולדת של ליבי ומצפה לראות שם המוני אנשים.
כשמגיע באיחור קל, הוא רואה את ליבי יושבת לבדה.
דני אומר לליבי: את כל-כך פופולארית, מרוב אנשים כמעט ולא מצאתי אותך.
3. שאולי ופנחס במסעדה. שאולי שופך מלח בהגזמה על כל המנה שלו.
פנחס אומר לשאולי: שאולי תשים קצת מלח במנה שלך.
4. מוריה הזמינה את שרית לארוחת ערב בביתה. שרית מגיעה ומוריה מגישה לה קורנפלקס עם חלב.
שרית אומרת למוריה: פשש... איזו השקעה.
5. יוסי משמיע לנגה שיר שהוא מאוד אוהב. רק שהוא לא שם לב שהווליום חלש מידי מכדי לשמוע.
נגה אומרת ליוסי: תנמיך קצת, זה ממש צורם.
6. מירה עובדת על הסמינר שלה כבר חודשים רבים, וכששואל בא לבקרה הוא רואה שהיא עדיין בעמוד הראשון של המבוא.
שואל אומר למירה: מתקדמת יפה הא?
7. גידי נכנס לדירה של אליק, ומוצא תוהו ובהו.
גידי אומר לאליק: תמיד ידעתי שאתה בחור מסודר.
8. דינה חוזרת מהים שרופה עד כדי כאב.
שולה אומרת לדינה: השתזפנו קצת, הא?
9. רבקה ואסף במסעדה מפוארת. הגיעו המנות המאוד פלצניות, ואסף אוכל עם הידיים.
רבקה אומרת לאסף: רואים שלימדו אותך נימוסים בבית.
01. אריה נכנס לדירה של ציפי ורואה שבספרייה שלה רק 2 ספרים.
אריה אומר לציפי: לא ידעתי שאת כזאת תולעת ספרים.
11. רני מגיע באיחור לפגישה עם אבשלום.
אבשלום אומר לרני: תמיד אפשר לסמוך עליך שתגיע בזמן.

21. עלמה מספרת לבלה כל מיני פרטים משעממים על ניכוי מס מהמשכורת שלה.
- בלה אומרת לעלמה: השיחות איתך תמיד כל-כך מרתקות.
31. דנה שואלת את יובל מה הוא עושה בערב שישי. יובל אומר שהוא נשאר בבית לקרוא ספר.
- דנה אומרת ליובל: אתה כזה בליין.
41. אילנה אומרת לנמרוד שהיא לא דופקת חשבון לאף אחד ותמיד עוברת על החוק. ומספרת איך פעם אחת היא נכנסה לשיעור שתי שניות אחרי המורה. נמרוד אומר לאילנה: וואו את כל-כך פרועה!
51. יונתן מספר לדני בטון מופתע שהוא פתאום שם לב שהחורף בירושלים הרבה יותר קר מאשר בתל-אביב.
- דני אומר ליונתן: תמיד ידענו שאתה גאון.
61. רונה לא מפסיקה לספר ליולי על כמה שרע לה וכמה שהולך להיות עוד יותר רע כי יש לה תחושה שהולכים לפטר אותה ושהחבר שלה עומד לעזוב אותה.
- יולי אומרת לרונה: את תמיד כזאת אופטימית?
71. ישי מריח את בית השחי שלו ועושה פרצוף חמוץ.
- טלי אומרת לישי: אתה כל-כך סקסי.
81. כוכבה מספרת לאיתי שהיא טיילה המון והייתה בחו"ל עשר פעמים. איתי שואל איפה, וכוכבה עונה שכל הביקורים היו בטורקיה.
- איתי אומר לכוכבה: את ממש אשת העולם הגדול.
91. אביב מספר לרענן שהוא התחיל לעבוד כמלצר ומדגים לו את שליטתו במגש. המגש נופל מידיו.
- רענן אומר לאביב: פשש... אתה מה זה מקצוען.
02. אריאלה חזרה מחופשה בניו-יורק, ודינה שואלת אותה אם היא הלכה לתיאטרון, למוזיאונים ולגלריות, ואריאלה אומרת שהיא הייתה רק במוזיאון הסקס.
- דינה אומרת לאריאלה: את ממש בחורה רחבת-אופקים.
12. יוצאים לבלות במועדון אקסלוסיבי, יוסי מגיע בטרנינג ונעלי בית.
- מיטל אומרת ליוסי: פשש דפקת הופעה!

22. דינה יוצאת מהשירותים בלי לשטוף ידיים.
אלי אומר לדינה: את כזאת בחורה סטרילית.

32. גיא ממליץ לבנו לשקר למורה שלו בבית הספר.
איציק אומר לגיא: אתה פשוט אב למופת.

42. תמי מתרברבת בפני זיוה ביכולת שתיית האלכוהול שלה ואומרת שהיא יכולה לשתות יותר מרוב האנשים שהיא מכירה. בערב הן יוצאות לשתות, ואחרי בירה אחת תמי מודיעה שהיא מרגישה סחרחורת ורוצה ללכת הביתה לישון.
זיוה אומרת לתמי: יכולת השתייה שלך ממש מדהימה!

Appendix B: Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

1. לא משנה לאיזה הישגים הוא הגיע, גבר אף פעם אינו שלם כאדם ללא אהבתה של אישה.
2. הרבה נשים דורשות "שיוויון" אבל בעצם מעוניינות לקבל יחס מועדף (למשל, מדיניות גיוס עובדים שתיתן להן עדיפות על פני גברים).
3. במקרה של אסון, לא בהכרח צריך להציל את הנשים לפני הגברים. **
4. רוב הנשים מפרשות הערות או מעשים תמימים כסקסיסטיים.
5. נשים נפגעות ונעלבות בקלות רבה מדי.
6. הרבה אנשים מאושרים בחיים גם בלי להיות בקשר רומנטי עם בן/בת המין השני. **
7. פמיניסטיות אינן מעוניינות שלנשים יהיה יותר כוח מאשר לגברים. **
8. נשים רבות הן בעלות מידה של טוהר שלא קיימת אצל רוב הגברים.
9. גברים צריכים להוקיר נשים ולהגן עליהן.
10. רוב הנשים לא מעריכות מספיק את כל מה שהגברים עושים בשבילן.
11. נשים רוצות להשיג כוח על-ידי שליטה בגברים.
12. כל גבר צריך אישה שאותה הוא יאהב ויעריך.
13. גברים הם שלמים ללא נשים. **
14. נשים מגזימות בתיאור והערכת הבעיות שיש להן בעבודה.
15. כשאישה מוצאת גבר שיתחייב כלפיה, היא בדרך כלל מנסה 'להחזיק אותו קצר'.
16. כשנשים מפסידות לגברים בתחרות הוגנת, הן בדרך כלל מתלוננות על אפליה.
17. כשלגבר יש אישה טובה, הוא צריך להעריך ולהעלות אותה על נס.
18. למעשה יש מעט מאד נשים שנהנות להקניט גברים על ידי כך שהן 'משחקות אותה' קלות להשגה מבחינה מינית, ואז מסרבות כשמתחילים איתן. **
19. בהשוואה לגברים, לנשים יש רגישות מוסרית גבוהה יותר.
20. גברים צריכים לגלות נכונות להקריב את רווחתם האישית על מנת לפרנס ולתמוך כלכלית בנשים בחייהם.
21. הדרישות של פמיניסטיות מגברים הן סבירות לחלוטין. **
22. בהשוואה לגברים, לנשים יש חוש תרבותי וטעם טוב ומעודן יותר.

הדירוג: 1- מאוד לא מסכים

2- די לא מסכים

3- קצת לא מסכים

4- קצת מסכים

5- די מסכים

6- מאוד מסכים

** - להפוך את הציון: 0=5, 1=4, 2=3

סקסים עוין: 2,4, 5,7,10, 11,14,15,16,18,21

סקסים אבירי: 1, 3,6, 8, 9,12,13,17,19,20,22

ואומרים שלנשים אין חוש הומור: על מגדר וסרקזם

- תקציר -

בשנות השבעים, מחקרים שונים הצביעו על נטייה אנטי-נשית בהומור (*anti-female bias*). כלומר, הומור הלועג לנשים נתפס כמצחיק יותר מאשר הומור הלועג לגברים, הן בקרב גברים והן בקרב נשים.

מאז ועד היום, מסתמן שינוי בהנאה מהומור עם התייחסות מגדרית. במהלך העשורים האחרונים, נמצאו מגמות – בעיקר בקרב בעלי עמדה ליברלית או פרו-פמיניסטית – המצביעות על ירידה במידת ההנאה מהומור הלועג לנשים, ועלייה במידת ההנאה מהומור המובע על ידי נשים ו/או הלועג לגברים, כלומר, הומור המאתגר את תפיסת המגדר המסורתית (למפרט וארווין-טריפ, 1998; קוטהוף, 2006).

מטרת המחקר הנוכחי היא לבדוק האם גם בחברתנו כיום קיימים הבדלים על בסיס מגדרי בנוגע להנאה מהומור, והאם הבדלים אלה מצביעים על התקדמות לעבר שוויון מגדרי, או שמא הם מצביעים על חוסר התקדמות ואי-שוויון. הכלי באמצעותו נבדקו השאלות הללו, הוא השימוש בסרקזם. מחקרים הראו שהערות סרקסטיות כגון "תמיד אפשר לסמוך עליך שתגיע בזמן" (נאמר לחבר שהגיע באיחור) משמשות בין השאר כביטוי של הומור ולעג, ומהוות אמצעי להפעלת כוח על האחר. בנוסף, נמצא שסוג זה של הומור עוין עשוי להיות מושפע מההקשר החוץ-לשוני בו הוא נאמר. במחקר הנוכחי נבדקו מבעים מסוג זה בארבעה תרחישים שונים: כשהם נאמרים על ידי אישה לגבר; על ידי גבר לאישה; בין נשים; ובין גברים. המשתתפים במחקר נתבקשו לדרג את מידת ההנאה שלהם מהמבעים השונים. מהתוצאות ניכר כי לגורם המגדר אכן יש השפעה מכרעת על אופן תפיסתן של הערות סרקסטיות.

לפי ה-Disposition Theory of Humor, מידת ההנאה שלנו מהומור, או במקרה זה, מהערות סרקסטיות, תלויה בעמדה שלנו כלפי הצד הלועג וכלפי מושא הלעג. כאשר צד אחד לועג לאחר, אנו נהנה יותר כאשר יש לנו נטייה חיובית כלפי הצד הלועג ו/או נטייה שלילית כלפי מושא הלעג, ולהיפך.

מיד לאחר שהמשתתפים דירגו את מידת ההנאה שלהם מהמבעים הסרקסטיים בארבעת התרחישים השונים, נמדדה מידת הסקסיזם שלהם בעזרת השאלון Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (גליק ופיסק, 1996). מאחר ונמצאו באופן כללי מידות נמוכות של סקסיזם בקרב המשתתפים, לא ניתן היה לאמת או להפריך את הניבויים של ה-Disposition Theory לגבי הבדלים בין סקסיסטים ללא-סקסיסטים. עם זאת, נמצאו הבדלים בין הגברים והנשים (הלא סקסיסטיים) שהשתתפו במחקר.

אנו מראים כי ממצאים אלה עולים בקנה אחד עם ממצאים קודמים בתחום המגדר וההומור, ומסבירים את חלקם במסגרת ה-Point of View Theory של אריאל וג'ורא (1998). לפי אריאל וג'ורא, נשים פמיניסטיות נבדלות מנשים מסורתיות בכך שהן מאמצות נקודת מבט נשית, ולא גברית. הביטויים לכך הם בין השאר, הפעלת כוח

מצדן על גברים, והפגנת סולידריות עם נשים. לכן הניבוי לגבי נשים פמיניסטיות הוא שהתרחיש הכי מהנה מבחינתן יהיה זה שבו אישה מפנה הערה סרקסטית לגבר, והתרחיש עם מידת ההנאה הפחותה ביותר יהיה זה שבו ההערה הסרקסטית נאמרת בין נשים. בהתחשב בכך שהמשתתפות שלנו הפגינו מידת סקסיזם נמוכה, הניבויים הללו אומתו.

בנוסף, התיאוריה הזו גם מנבאה ש בקרב גברים אשר מאמצים נקודת מבט גברית, התרחיש המהנה ביותר יהיה זה שבו גבר מפנה הערה סרקסטית לאישה, והתרחיש עם מידת ההנאה הפחותה ביותר יהיה זה שבו הסרקזם נאמר בין גברים. אולם, המשתתפים הגברים לא היו סקסיסטיים ולא אימצו נקודת מבט גברית, ולפיכך הם לא נהנו מהערות סרקסטיות שהיו מופנות לנשים. לעומת זאת, הם דירגו את התרחיש בו הסרקזם נאמר בין גברים כמהנה ביותר.

איך ניתן להסביר זאת? המשתתפים, על אף היותם לא סקסיסטיים, מוכרחים להיות מודעים לפטריארכיה שבחברתנו ולעובדה שגברים נתפסים כקבוצה השלטת, בעוד נשים עדיין נתפסות כקבוצה החלשה. לכן הגברים עדיין בוחנים את עצמם אל מול גברים אחרים איתם הם מתחרים, וזוהי הסיבה שהם דירגו את התרחיש בו הסרקזם נאמר בין גברים כמהנה ביותר, ופחות נהנו מהתרחיש בהם הסרקזם מופנה כלפי נשים. ממצאים אלה משקפים את התחרותיות הנצחית בינם לבין עצמם, ואת חוסר העניין בתחרותיות עם נשים, הקבוצה החלשה בחברה.

בהשוואה לממצאים משנות השבעים, נראה שחברתנו כיום עברה שינויים לא מבוטלים, בעיקר בקרב נשים. נשים מודרניות, ליברליות שינו את עמדותיהן גם כלפי נשים וגם כלפי גברים, שכן הן כבר לא נהנות מלעג המופנה כלפי נשים, אך כן נהנות ללעוג לגברים. לעומת זאת, גברים מודרניים, ליברליים שינו את עמדותיהם רק כלפי נשים, אך לא כלפי גברים, שכן הם עדיין תחרותיים בינם לבין עצמם.

"לכל קבוצה נחותה חברתית, פיתוח זהות משותפת וסולידריות הם צעד ראשון בדרך לשינוי פוליטי וחברתי" טוענת קרופורד (2003). הממצאים שלנו מראים באופן חד-משמעי שהצעד הזה כבר נעשה.

אוניברסיטת תל-אביב

הפקולטה למדעי הרוח ע"ש לסטר וסאלי אנטיין

החוג לבלשנות

ואומרים שלנשים אין חוש הומור: על מגדר וסרקזם

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