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Schopenhauer Version on Incongruity Theory

Incongruity theory is one of the arguments that try to explain why things are funny. This theory has over the years become the theory that is most accepted all over the world especially when explaining humor and comedy (Veatch).

There are various versions of Incongruity theory that have been given by different people over the years. These versions include Schopenhauer version which states that incongruity is perceived from the concept and the real object that it claims to represent. Kant's version which is the most widely accepted version indicates that mismatch occurs when an expectation is strained into almost nothing. Hegels' version seemed to be similar to that of Schopenhauer but seemed to state more that, the laughter in it was a negation of the expected appearance. Bergson was one of the people who also attempted to give a perfect explanation of the theory by reducing the approach into the living and the mechanical.

The most tough version of incongruity is, therefore, the version by Arthur Schopenhauer. He states that the theory is to be perceived to be between the concept and the object that it is supposed to represent in itself. In his version, he goes ahead to state that for a person to be able to understand the incongruity theory, which is the most complicated theory used compared to the superiority and relief theories, one has first to be able to understand the Ludicrous.

According to the incongruity theory, therefore, people will laugh when there is an action that seems to be incomplete. It is also because the feeling of laughter is usually a feeling that gives pleasure and satisfaction and even from the realization that one can view things differently. The Ludicrous is divided into two which contains the folly and the wit. The folly is when a person finds themselves laughing unintentionally due to an action that has been done by another whereas wit is when someone makes a joke knowingly. In both instances, there is laughter though the intentions are different. It also means that the laughter is from the realization of the real world which has surpassed one's perception.

In determining this theory, some criteria are used in its analysis. This criterion involves generality, specificity, and standard of taste. In generality, most of the arguments that exist seek to provide predictions that emanate from the observed behaviors which however do contain variables that intervene which at times are a presentation of different psychological processes. In this case incongruity theory by generality is a theory that tries to explain the feeling of laughter and why people laugh. The method of laughter and the reasons to laughter is in itself a psychological process. The theory is meant to predict the reasons as to the behaviors of people and the ideas that cause laughter.

Specificity refers to the degree in which a particular subject relates uniquely with the thing that is supposed to explain. In incongruity theory, though it is complicated, it describes more and gives a better understanding of why people engage in laughter, comedy, and situations of humor. With the different versions of people like Kant and Schopenhauer, they create a clear perspective that humor is as a result of a perceived concept and the real object and a sudden transformation of an expectation that is reduced to nothing. This theory, therefore, has more specificity when it is compared with theories like the relief theory which

describes humor as a way to relieve tension in stressing situations and instances of fear or the superiority theory where people laugh at an occurrence because it proves them to be more superior.

The standard of taste is also a criterion that is used which in analyzing incongruity theory. The standard of taste is the response and preference of a particular explanation that gives us the most satisfaction and pleasure. Incongruity theory gives more pleasure to theories like the relief and superiority theories that people cannot relate. People have widely accepted it as it provides a reasonable view. It, therefore, means that the standard of the taste of this theory is high.

The theory cannot also explain a situation where there is a lack of humorous response even though a purported incongruity had presented itself. I believe this weakness can be addressed by looking at the different groups of people for one to be able to understand the outcome. It means that an inconsistency may not have the desired response as it has been told to the wrong group of persons or was intended to be rhetorical.

Work Cited

VEATCH, THOMAS C. "A theory of humor" *Humor - International Journal of Humor Research*, 11.2 (2009): 161-216.