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Title: Fear, anger and desire: affect and the interactional intricacies of rape humor on a live podcast.

Abstract

In an ongoing research project, called "Humor på allvar", we investigate humor as affective discursive practices. Here, a point of departure is to treat jokes, laughter and unlaughter as highly ambivalent practices that are deeply connected to social order (Billig, 2005). In this presentation, we will exemplify this point with a specific case of aggressive and sexist humor, enacted in an infamous episode of a Swedish podcast, that evoked strong public criticism and condemnation due to its rape humor. Such humor is often understood as expressions of inner, misogynist attitudes. This paper, however, investigates rape humor as a collective and interactive phenomenon. Drawing on data from the transcribed podcast we illuminate rape humor in terms of affect, desire, and repression, and as such, how taboo-breaking arouses both pleasure and fear among the participants. The analyses detail affective practices that both promote and discipline affects. The men in the group interpellate one of the participants as a clown, someone whose taboo-breaking they interactionally support and simultaneously distance themselves from. Building on Wetherell's (2012) understanding of affect as both discursive and embodied, we suggest a reintroduction of repression and desire into a discursively oriented framework.

References

Billig, M (2005). *Laughter and ridicule: Towards a social critique of humour*. London: SAGE.
Wetherell, M. (2012). *Affect and emotion: a new social science understanding*. London: Sage.