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THERE IS METHOD IN THE HUMOROUS SPEAKER'S MADNESS: HUMOUR AND GRICE'S MODEL

Abstract

The interdependence between humour and the Cooperative Principle (CP) (Grice 1975/1989b, 1978/1989b, 1989a) appears to be a bone of contention in pragmatic studies on verbal humour. The well-entrenched approach advocated by Raskin and Attardo is that jokes (and also other forms of intentionally produced humour) constitute the *non-bona-fide* mode of communication standing vis-à-vis the Gricean model and governed by a *humour-CP* (Raskin 1985, 1987, 1998; Raskin and Attardo 1994; Attardo 1990, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2006), and that they violate, not merely flout, the maxims and even the CP (Attardo 1990, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2006). The aim of the article is to shed new light on the interdependence between humour and the CP with a view to substantiating that the authors who regard humour as an independent communicative mode and as an intrinsic violation of maxims and the CP appear to labour under a serious misapprehension. It will be argued that the Gricean model of cooperative rationality does allow for humorous verbalisations, which normally rely on maxim flouts.

Keywords

Cooperative Principle, humour, maxim flouts, rationality.

1. The Gricean model

The discussion on the relation between humour and the Cooperative Principle (CP) together with its subordinate maxims must be opened with a recapitulation of the pertinent premises of Grice's work on communication with a view to gravitating towards humour in the context of the model. The analysis of Grice's philosophy on communication is not confined to the two publications (Grice 1975/1989b, 1978/1989b), most widely acknowledged in linguistic studies, but has a broader view on Grice's work, which is the *sine qua non* for adequate

understanding of Grice's postulates (cf. Davies 2000, 2007). Readers familiar with Grice's writings may consider some, if not all, parts of this overview obvious. Nevertheless, they are not redundant in the context of Attardo's and Raskin's postulates concerning humour.

1.1. Maxim nonfulfilment and inferences

Undoubtedly, Grice's model of communication will have garnered support primarily thanks to the concept of *implicature* generated in the light of the CP and subordinate maxims. Grice (1975/1989b) introduces Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner as *categories* (not maxims as they tend to be called in literature), each of which comprises maxim(s). The maxims are presented as subordinate to the CP and should not be (although they often are in literature) analysed in isolation from the CP. The CP is proposed as unchallengeable common knowledge and a tacit mutual agreement, which interlocutors take as the covert communicative *sine qua non*, enabling them to derive implicatures manifesting a great variety of forms. The process of inferring *conversational implicatures* depends on the assumption that the speaker is adhering to the CP, while the subordinate maxims may be either observed or *flouted*, i.e. *exploited* to yield implicatures.

Many misinterpretations of the Gricean model arise due to the inconsistencies of the nomenclature researchers apply when revisiting the theory, which sometimes results in equating maxim *violation* with maxim *flouts*. Even Grice himself happens to be inconsistent in the use of the term "violation" (e.g. Grice 1975/1989b: 32)¹, which he appears to apply as a superordinate term in reference to two types of maxim non-fulfilment. Grice argues that a flout is "a justifiable violation" or "only a seeming, not a real, violation; the spirit, though perhaps not the letter, of the maxim is respected" (Grice 1989a: 370). Irrespective of such unfortunate linguistic formulations, neither the two phenomena, nor the terms denoting them can be equated. Most rational is Mooney's (2004) suggestion to use the term *nonfulfilment*² rather than "violation" as a blanket category covering cases when the participant will "fail to fulfil a maxim in various ways" (Grice 1978/1989b: 49), giving rise to conversational implicature. Unostentatious violations and flouts are differentiated by their covertness and overtness, respectively. Flouting is a legitimate phenomenon subscribing to the fulfilment of

¹ Grice's (1975/1989b: 32) example in which "no maxim is violated" but a clash occurs appears to be a clear instance of the Relation maxim flout. This would suggest that one implicature generating verbalisation can be explained in a number of ways.

² It is worth noting that Grice (1975/1989b) distinguishes also two other ways of failing to fulfil a maxim, besides flouts and violations, i.e. *clashes* and cases of *opting out*.

the CP and generating conversational implicatures, whereas violation takes place unbeknown to the interpreter and, consequently, misleads him/her, albeit doing thus in accordance with the speaker's intention. The majority of Grice's lectures concerning the CP and implicatures, and, likewise, his followers' research are focused on flouts. On the other hand, violations appear to be marginalised. The concept needs to be revisited given its prominence in humour research.

1.1.1. Maxim violation

Bearing in mind the covertness of violations from the hearer's perspective, it could be hypothesised that violation pertains only to the act of lying understood as deliberate misleading, which invariably entails the violation of the first Quality maxim. Apart from the case of premeditated deception, it is hardly conceivable that other maxims should be unostentatiously violated. Should they be (e.g. Manner maxims in doublespeak), they are only subordinate to violating the Quality maxim. If present, the intention to violate a maxim, i.e. mislead must be covert, while the inherent quality of flouts is their overtness. Also, there can be no error recovery as regards violation since there is no indication of it (Mooney 2004). Mooney (2004) thus dubs lies successful violations, which produce no implicatures.

A question arises as to what happens if the hearer discovers the speaker's intention to mislead, thereby putting paid to the latter's communicative plan. In such a case the hearer may actually derive certain inferences as to the speaker's premises. Allegedly, one might observe that an untruthful proposition which remains a successful violation is simply interpreted as genuinely meant by the speaker and, as a result, is most cooperative, which is on a par with the communicator's expectation. In essence, non-detected lies would be subsumable to the CP. This is, however, what Grice does not allow for, acknowledging the privileged status of the maxim of Quality, writing that it appears "to spell out the difference between something being, and (strictly speaking) failing to be, any kind of contribution at all. False information is not an inferior kind of information; it just is not information" (Grice 1989a: 371). Grice hence argues that the importance of at least the first maxim of Quality is such that it transcends the whole model and that "other maxims come into operation only on the assumption that this [the first] maxim of Quality is satisfied" (Grice 1975/1989b: 27). Grice suggests that the CP holds only for truthful communication, with deliberate lies excluded from the model. This postulate, albeit proposed hesitantly, appears to boast the moral overtones of the model. Admittedly, this may be one of the tenets responsible for misinterpretations of the model and the postulates of benevolence attributed to the speaker (cf. the section on the purpose of communication). It is probably because of the illegitimacy of Quality violation, which is here argued to underpin other

violations, that this type of nonfulfilment is given short shrift in Grice's writings, while flouts are of primary importance to the model and account for the generation of conversational implicatures, coinciding with the prototypical realisation of the CP.

1.1.2. Maxim flouts

Among the core properties of implicature, Grice (1975/1989b, 1978/1989b) lists calculability, which entails derivation of the inferences on the premise of rational conversational activity. Conversational implicatures are calculable because of rationality that underlies the line of argumentation which leads the addressee from acknowledging a maxim flout to construing the speaker's intended meaning. Presupposing the existence of the CP, the addressee is always capable of drawing the conversational implicature of a given utterance. Grice explicitly states that "to calculate a conversational implicature is to calculate what has to be supposed in order to preserve the supposition that the Cooperative Principle is being observed" (Grice 1975/1989b: 39). Maxim flouts guide the discovery of non-conventional inferences, on the assumption that the speaker is rational. It is also crucial to observe that rational thought is *non-monotonic* and subject to change in the light of new information. This means that implicatures can be cancelled if they are falsified by new information.

Davies (2000, 2007) observes that the implementation of the CP and the subordinate maxims is sometimes claimed to coincide with being direct and explicit, while failure to do so necessitates clarification and repair (e.g. Bernsen et al. 1996). By the same token, Chapman (2005: 190) reports that some commentators unduly accuse Grice of utopian idealisation of conversations, which hardly ever progress as envisaged, i.e. with all the maxims fulfilled. It needs to be highlighted that the model may be idealistic in the sense that it does not presuppose any miscommunication or deceit, but maxim flouts are presupposed in the model. Grice is preoccupied with the conveyance of implicit language and hence the discrepancy between saying and meaning. Rather than concentrating on miscommunication avoidance, as some suggest (e.g. Bernsen et al. 1996), Grice is concerned with how the communicator forms his/her utterance employing implicit language, i.e. flouting maxims, so that the addressee recognises his/her intention. A maxim which the hearer observes to have been flouted sets in motion the process of argumentation in order to safeguard the underlying assumption of cooperation. Therefore, cooperation does not invariably correlate with directness, i.e. conformity with the maxims. Nor is it so that observing the maxims enhances a conversation (Davies 2000, 2007). A claim could even be ventured that maxim flouts and, hence, implicatures consequent upon them, are more frequent and

unmarked, whereas maxim observance is the marked case (Davies 2007). The maxims are advanced mostly to be acted against for the sake of specific communicative goals.

1.2. Rationality and intentionality at the heart of cooperation

Introducing the notion of CP, Grice presents communicational cooperation, stating that “our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts” (Grice 1975/1989b: 26). The import of this quote is transparently that cooperation is to be understood primarily as the rationality of coherent exchanges. Notably, the term “cooperation” is marginal in the philosopher’s writings, discussed in only two lectures on communication (Grice 1975/1989b, 1978/1989b), whereas the prevailing and prevalent tenets are *intentionality*, *speaker’s meaning* vis-à-vis sentence meaning, *rationality*, as well as the *calculability* of meanings (Davies 2000, 2007), all of which form the basis for the CP motivating the operation of conversations.

Crucial in Grice’s writings on communication is the factor of intentionality, the prism through which the notion of meaning is explicated (Grice 1957/1989b, 1969/1989b, 1982/1989b). Grice (1957/1989b) advocates nonnatural meaning (meaning_{NN}) as the meaning uttered by the speaker with the intention of inducing a belief in the hearer. Grice (1961/1989b) develops this issue, contending that what the speaker means is what he/she M-intends to convey through the utterance. Since Grice presupposes intentionality on the speaker’s part, unintentional communicative stimuli (e.g. hiccupping, slips of the tongue, or unintentional humour production) would not count in the model of communication. Communication occurs when the hearer appreciates the speaker’s intention, which itself is the cause of the belief, according to the pattern: “A uttered x with the intention of inducing a belief by means of the recognition of this intention” (Grice 1957/1989b: 219). Later, Grice (1969/1989b) sustains the notion of intentionality but adds that the utterer means something if he/she intends to produce a particular response in the audience and wants the audience to recognise this intention, the fulfilment of which is the sine qua non for the fulfilment of the former intention. In essence, communicative intention is *reflexive*, not iterative, and so the communicative success consists in the hearer’s recovery of the speaker’s intentions, which need not occur at the level of the recipient’s awareness. Admittedly, the speaker’s intention may be geared towards generating humour and eliciting the hearer’s humorous response.

Secondly, Grice’s conceptualisation of cooperation pivots on the notion of rationality. In the first lecture on the CP, Grice (1975/1989b: 26) states, “one of my

avowed aims is to see talking as a special case or variety of purposive, indeed rational behaviour.” Also, in the retrospective epilogue, Grice (1989a) emphasises that the use of language is a rational activity which involves “rational cooperation” (1989a: 341). Clearly, the notion of cooperation as envisaged by Grice should not be equated with the folk meaning of the term (Davies 2000, 2007). Grice’s conceptualisation of cooperation resides in logic, hence providing the rational and intention-based foundations of meaning, maxims and the CP. Davies (2000, 2007) even argues that the only reason why the Principle of Cooperation is not dubbed the Principle of Rationality is because Grice addresses logic at the level of discourse, where rationality is realised between interlocutors. This is the underpinning of the postulate that humorous verbalisations, if rational and intentional, do subscribe to the CP mode.

To conclude, the underlying presumption of the CP is that interlocutors cooperate in the sense that they are communicatively rational (Grandy and Warner 1986). As already discussed, this does not mean that they must be literal to this intent. Cooperation does not intrinsically entail the speaker’s benevolence to the interpreter, manifested in the avoidance of any processing effort to be made by the latter, as some commentators suggest (see Davies 2007). On the contrary, within the CP, such difficulties will arise only to be overcome by the hearer who presupposes the speaker’s communicative rationality. As Davies (2007) rightly posits, it is the presumption of the CP that allows the speaker to impose a greater inferential effort on the hearer, who must invest their cognitive resources in order to comprehend a given utterance. This observation is most pertinent to humour, the understanding of which is often intellectually demanding. Also, cooperation, as conceived by Grice, immanently carries no interlocutors’ benevolence manifesting itself in skirting difficult or debatable topics or cooperative striving towards a common goal.

1.3. Purpose of communication

The Gricean model allows for different communicative purposes and requirements and thus grants speakers considerable leeway in the choice of communicative goals. The CP offers the rationale for any type of communication, whether formal or informal, adversarial or friendly, task-oriented or ostensibly purposeless. It cannot be argued that the Gricean rationality model is hinged on the stipulation that the sole reason for communication is the exchange of informative content. Researchers often neglect one of Grice’s postulates propounded in the first lecture on the CP, viz.

The conversational maxims, (...) and the conversational implicatures connected with them, are specially connected (I hope) with the particular purposes that talk (and so, talk exchange) is adapted to serve and is primarily employed to serve. I have stated my maxims as if this purpose were a maximally effective exchange of information; this specification is, of course, too narrow, and the scheme needs to be generalised to allow for such general purposes as influencing or directing the actions of others. (Grice 1975/1989b: 28)

Additionally, in the epilogue to his collection of writings, Grice (1989a) acknowledges the fact that some analysts will have misunderstood his idea of cooperativeness as being restricted to conversations not embracing disputes or seemingly purposeless chats and clarifies that irrespective of whether the aim of an exchange is specified or if it is indeterminate, the same principles will hold. Grice redefines the postulate, which appears to have been clear enough even without this explication.

It is the rationality or irrationality of conversational conduct which I have been concerned to track down rather than any more general characterization of conversational adequacy. So we may expect principles of conversational rationality to abstract from special character of conversational interests. (Grice 1989a: 369)

Goals are very broadly conceptualised and may also be second-order ones, as in the case of a casual chit-chat, in which “each party should, for the time being, identify himself with the transitory interests of the other” (Grice 1975/1989b: 29). The model could be extended even further to cover interactions produced as a form of phatic communion, which embrace some forms of humour devoid of communicative content, e.g. jokes produced solely for the sake of a humorous effect (although canned jokes can carry relevant informative content). However, even ostensibly uninformative contributions such as humorous acts do convey meanings, producing social implications (cf. Mooney 2004) and affect interpersonal relations (see e.g. Martin 2007). What is of crucial importance, discussing an intentionally conveyed utterer’s occasion-meaning, Grice (1969/1989b: 92) does allow for an audience’s amusement as the primary goal of the speaker.

Another major query concerns the way the goal is assumed. The CP entails the presumption that the speaker and the hearer interact rationally to reach a common goal. The use of Passive Voice in “as is required” in the formulation of the CP does not specify by whom or from where the requirements and acceptance of the communicative goal are issued. The question arises whether the requirement and purpose of the interaction comes from the speaker, the hearer or perhaps widely accepted norms. Grice elucidates this issue, stating that human conversations are “cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a

common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction” (1975/1989b: 26), which suggests a combined negotiation between communicators.

Nevertheless, Grice explicitly states that although participants in an interaction have a common immediate aim, their ultimate respective aims may be “independent and even in conflict” (1975/1989b: 29). Moreover, Grice explicates that conversationalists may manifest “a high degree of reserve, hostility, and chicanery and with a high degree of diversity in the motivations underlying quite meager common objectives” (Grice 1989a: 369). Therefore, one may gather that quarrels or adversarial humour such as exchanges of brickbats, by means of which interlocutors wish to outwit one another, will also subscribe to the CP model, albeit on two conditions. The first condition is that the transactions must be voluntary and concerted exchanges, rather than solitary ones (Grice 1989a), and thus that they need to be formed by two interlocutors, the speaker and the hearer, with their respective goals. The second condition is that verbal encounters continue in an appropriate style until the interactants wish to terminate them (Grice 1975/1989b). In essence, Grice (1989a) states that irrespective of whether the common goals are apparent or even non-existent, or whether the cooperativeness as such is minimal, the CP still holds.

1.4. CP violation

It should be acknowledged that Grice (1975/1989b, 1978/1989b) takes as a departure point an ideal model of perfectly formed communication which does not allow for any communicational failures, where the CP invariantly obtains and where there is no room for misunderstandings or deception (cf. section 1.1.1). Grice philosophises on the issue of communicative practices, not verifying his claims against empirical material (Chapman 2005), which may explain why some of the tenets appear fallible when applied to real-life discourse. There are exceptional cases when the CP does not hold in discourse. Thomas (1995) dubs CP nonfulfilment *infringement*, arising due to imperfect command of language consequent upon low competence (of a child or a non-native speaker) or state of mind such as drunkenness or nervousness. Undoubtedly, infringement is a case of communicative failure, but it is not so that the CP is violated in actual fact if the speaker fails communicatively due to a linguistic or mental incapability he/she cannot control and is even unaware of. If rational and competent, the hearer does realise that the former does not, or rather cannot, conform to the CP. In accordance, the hearer observes this uncooperativeness or linguistic irrationality as unintended, unless she/he cannot be cooperative too, on the same grounds. “Infringement” means that the CP is not operative and must be suspended, due to the fact that the condition of the speaker’s rationality and intentionality is not met. This postulate

could also be extended to cover situations when it is the hearer that is incapable of acting in accordance with the cooperative rationality provision or simply misunderstands the speaker's intention. Needless to say, real-life communication is prone to unintentional misunderstandings, which cannot, however, be deemed as the CP violations.

CP nonfulfilment can also be viewed from a different perspective. According to Grice's (1975/1989b) formulation, the CP does not hold if the first maxim of Quality is violated, which is the case of deliberate deception, i.e. lying. However, that the CP does not hold does not mean that it is violated. If a communicative act is completed, albeit centring on false premises introduced by the speaker, it still cannot be said that the CP has been violated. The CP is simply inoperative, as Grice (1975/1989b) himself suggests. In the Gricean view, the possibility of the CP violation, whether overt or covert, is simply ruled out and the operation of the CP is assumed by default. If at all, the CP violation could be the case of two interlocutors who are incapable of intentional and rational expression of their thoughts and of appreciation of each other's irrationality. Otherwise, an absolute violation of the CP is virtually impossible, as normally interlocutors have certain intentions and consciously pursue them in all social encounters.

2. Grice's model and humour

With the background presented above, it is now easier to revisit and criticise the postulates advocated by Attardo and Raskin as regards the correspondence between the Gricean model and humour (Raskin 1985; Raskin and Attardo 1994; Attardo 1990, 1993, 1994, 1996a, 2006). Notably, Attardo and Raskin are not the only two and not the first to have discussed humour in the context of the CP (see Attardo 1994; Dynel forth.), but their views appear to be predominant in humour literature. It should be mentioned that a few authors do not support the view of maxim and CP violation (e.g. Jodłowiec 1991; Morreall 2004; Kotthoff 2006). Unfortunately, these postulates manifest varied degrees of plausibility. For example, Kotthoff (2006) unnecessarily raises the issue of politeness, a complex multifaceted issue (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987), laying her arguments open to criticism (see Attardo 2006)³. The four strands within the study on humour and the Gricean model (Raskin's postulate of the *non-bona-fide* mode with its own CP and Attardo's tenets of humour violating Grice's maxims and the CP) intertwine and are mutually reliant. By necessity, such will be the sections of the discussion

³ It should be noted that Grice (1975/1989b) mentions that Politeness maxims might actually be added to the set of four maxim categories and be embraced by the CP.

below, since the explanation of one of the issues will entail another, tackled in another section.

Raskin and Attardo's postulates are aimed to hold primarily for canned jokes but are also presented as being pertinent to other forms of humour (Attardo 1996). Discussing the relationship between the CP and humour, the present paper also aims to present a broad picture of intentionally produced verbal humour, both jokes and conversational humour, whether spoken or written. It is here argued that producing humour, the speaker flouts maxims but abides by the CP, thus perfectly realising the Gricean model of communication, while the approach comprised of Raskin's and Attardo's postulates is a superfluous methodological complication.

2.1. Non-bona-fide mode?

Proposing the *non-bona-fide* mode for humorous cooperation, Raskin (1985) draws upon the premise that Grice's CP together with the maxims yield the *bona-fide* mode, which he ascribes to Grice (1975) and defines as the "ordinary" mode, where there is no room for lying, acting or joking (1985: 89). In other words, the underlying premise for the postulate of an alternative communicative model is that the bona-fide mode accounts for effective and truthful conveyance of meanings and abiding by the CP, to which humour does not conform.

Bona-fide communication is governed by the 'co-operative principle' introduced by Grice (1975). According to this principle, the speaker is committed to the truth and relevance of his text, the hearer is aware of this commitment and perceives the uttered text as true and relevant by virtue of his recognition of the speaker's commitment to its truth and relevance. (Raskin 1985: 100-101)

First of all, it is interesting to observe that nowhere in his writings does Grice (1989b) advocate the bona-fide mode as coterminous to the realisation of the CP. It is Raskin (1985) that is responsible for the term's formation and ill-advised attribution to Grice. Secondly, Raskin (1985) interprets the bona-fide, supposedly CP-oriented, mode as the speaker's being relevant and truthful. As discussed earlier, Grice's pivotal concept is rationality and not relevance, with the Relation maxim bearing the potential to be legitimately flouted as long as this serves some communicative purpose.

The issue of the truthfulness maxim is a problematic one. In Raskin's view, the Gricean framework presupposes that "the speaker is absolutely and unexceptionally committed to the truth of what is being said" (Raskin 1998: 99), while in the non-bona-fide mode, the speaker's commitment to truth is waived (Raskin 1985, 1987, 1998). Raskin (1985, 1998) postulates his alternative model

on the premise that Grice's commitment to truth is replaced by the speaker's commitment to humour, and so the maxims serve as a formula for an efficient joke. Indeed, Grice (1975/1989b) leans towards placing the first maxim of Quality above all others, but this should not be used as an argument against humour being subsumable to the CP, since producing humour, the speaker does not mean to be untruthful. Raskin (1998: 100) actually admits that humour is "a very close extension of the completely truthful," suggesting that people will find truth in the fictional world of jokes standing in opposition to the real world. However, the crux of the matter is that jokes and forms of conversational humour (with the exception of cases when the speaker wishes to malevolently deceive and poke fun at the target) cannot be equated with not being truthful, i.e. lying. Producing a joke or a humorous utterance relevant to the ongoing interaction, or not being serious and not supporting the import of one's utterances, e.g. in teasing and banter, does not mean that the speaker has any intention of lying. The speaker's intention is not to lie, and thus to deceive, but to amuse the hearer, which appears to be most legitimate in the Gricean model, on the grounds that a given verbalisation does not covertly violate Quality maxims.

Raskin's (1995, 1998) understanding of the Gricean model of communication (in Raskin's terminology, the bona-fide mode) is fallacious also along other lines. Raskin (1998) explicitly states that the model requires that all the maxims be infallibly fulfilled, concluding that "a technical manual comes the closest to a real-life implementation of BF," thereby ousting legitimate flouts and resultant implicatures, which are the most fundamental tenets in Grice's writings on communication, the tenets which have given rise to extensive pragmatic research. In addition, Raskin (1985: 146) also claims that "deliberate ambiguity is excluded" from the Gricean CP. This is certainly a misguided belief since Grice does allow for the flout of the second Manner maxim, which yields deliberate ambiguity underlying many humorous forms.

In the same vein, Raskin and Attardo (1994: 32) state that "the main venue" for bona-fide communication is using literal language. The latter stands vis-à-vis non-literal language, which the authors equate with figures such as: metaphor, irony, understatement and exaggeration or metonymy; indirect speech acts; implicature and humour. Needless to say, the list provokes misgivings since the categories are not distinguished along one criterion and are by no means mutually exclusive. Even if the authors admit that these non-literal phenomena "stand in various relations to Grice's category of bona-fide communication" (Raskin and Attardo 1994: 32), they appear to be of the opinion that literalness is the prototypical case of communication within the CP, which is not the case given that the most significant in Grice's writings are maxim flouts and implicatures. Also, Raskin and Attardo (1994: 32) regard flouts/exploitations yielding implicatures as "uncomfortably accommodated" in the bona-fide model. Transparently misreading

Grice's view on speaker's maxim flouts and their relation to the CP, the authors put forward other dubious claims, i.e.

When the speaker is making a joke, Grice's cooperative principle is not honoured, and therefore, the speaker is not trying to communicate as simply as possible, or in other words, the speaker is engaged in non-bona-fide communication, one set of non-literal modes. (Raskin and Attardo 1994: 34)

Raskin distinguishes, as does Grice, between a bona-fide type of communication, in which the speaker is committed to communicating in the most effective way, as clearly as possible, etc., in short follows the CP. (Attardo 1996: 5)

At this stage, it hardly needs to be explained that no mode bifurcation is not to be found in Grice's lectures, while the fulfilment of the CP does not entail being explicit so that the hearer's processing costs are minimised. In addition, the authors maintain that the purpose of the non-bona-fide joke-telling mode, in opposition to the bona-fide mode which is "information-conveying" (Raskin 1985: 89), "fact-conveying," "no-nonsense" (Raskin and Attardo 1994: 32) and "precisely serious" (Attardo 2006: 353), is "not to convey any information contained in the text he is uttering but rather to create a special effect with the help of the text, namely to make the hearer laugh" (Raskin 1985: 101). As earlier corroborated, Grice (1975/1989b, 1978/1989b, 1989a) explicates that his model does capture communicative practices which are not intended to convey information as such. The amusement of the hearer, solidarity enhancement or the release of tension in a social encounter may constitute the sole purposes of communication subsumable to the Gricean model. In essence, the CP model, albeit not coinciding with the fallacious concept of the bona-fide, would successfully hold for intentionally produced humour.

Raskin (1985), however, maintains that this separate humour-cooperative mode needs to be introduced, and to guarantee the hearer's humour-oriented cooperation, the speaker forewarns the former, either verbally or by means of non-verbal cues, that a joke is intended, which obviously does not pertain to spontaneous jokes. On the other hand, the interpreter may appreciate this intention without having it signalled. Alternatively, the hearer may not know that the speaker is trying to produce humour and only when he/she fails to analyse the text in bona-fide communication, will he/she backtrack the text of a joke as a humorous one (Raskin 1985; Raskin and Attardo 1994). Analysing a sample joke, Raskin (1985) suggests that it is only at the stage of the trigger that the switch into non-bona-fide mode occurs, i.e. "the combinatorial rules will have to reject the first default value of the mode of communication adopted earlier and switch to the next default value, namely that of joke telling, which is of course, non-bona-fide" (Raskin 1985: 125). Admittedly, this situation appears to be highly unlikely in reality. The textual

category of a joke boasts salient features in structuring, register or topic, rendering it instantly recognisable. However, initial mistaking of a humorous chunk for a serious proposition, though instantly cleared, may be the case of some conversational humour forms, e.g. teasing or contextually adjusted one-liners.

Moreover, the postulate of the non-informative non-bona-fide mode may also be found inappropriate given that jokes and particularly conversational humour can carry informative import relevant to the ongoing non-humorous exchange. One-liners and witticisms may function as witty comments or even crucial arguments in a conversation. Attardo himself observes the problem but claims to solve the paradox, stating that “jokes communicate on the basis of the presuppositions that the text may have independently of its humorous nature” (1996: 6). The fact that humorous verbalisations communicate meanings, whether via presuppositions or via implicatures, appears to be yet another reason why humour cannot be excluded from the Gricean model. Finally, the authors posit that the hearer, having realised that

the speaker has abandoned bona-fide communication (...), no longer has any clue as to the speaker’s commitment to the truth or relevance of anything in his or her utterances. In other words, if the speaker is not bound by Grice’s cooperative principle, then the hearer is limited to the processing of the literal meaning of the speaker utterances while being in the dark about their speech act-status and thus barred from making any inferences from these meanings. Even the existential presuppositions are then called into question (...) The effect of this situation should clearly be devastating to the process of communication. (Raskin and Attardo 1994: 34)

Indeed, having realised that the speaker is being jocular, the hearer needs to appreciate the former’s intention and, with the exception of conversational humour conveying relevant meanings, appreciate that the speaker is not necessarily referring to genuine situations, feelings, beliefs, etc. However, it is not so that the hearer perceives the speaker to be irrational, which would entail suspending the CP, and discontinues the process of implicature derivation, e.g. to infer the content of the joke. The world of the joke may indeed be different from the “real world,” hence violating common sense assumptions but the communicative process occurs unobstructed. To account for this fact, Raskin and Attardo (1994) emphasise that the non-bona-fide mode is indeed cooperative and shares some features with the “bona-fide” mode.

The reason bona-fide communication extends so naturally into humor is that both are cooperative. In fact, we tend to think that the distinction between the cooperative and non-cooperative modes of communication will prove more essential than that between bona-fide communication and non-bona-fide communication. (Raskin and Attardo 1994: 34)

This quotation reveals that the authors will have had some doubts about the distinction, at least at some point in their studies. *Nota bene*, discussing the non-cooperative mode, Raskin and Attardo (1994) focus on lying, which is indeed uncooperative and falls outside Grice's Cooperative Principle. Similarly, Raskin does observe that the two modes could actually be merged, even if his premises for this statement are insufficient.

In fact, it would be quite reasonable to postulate an extended form of bona-fide communication which would include humor since ordinary discourse abounds in facetiousness. (Raskin 1985: 104)

Unfortunately, such strands as the two above are not pursued, while the authors (particularly Attardo 1990, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2006) are adamant that the two modes are absolutely indispensable and are governed by two separate principles and sets of maxims (discussed in the next section).

Raskin's (1985) doubt-provoking bona-fide vs. non-bona-fide distinction is frequently repeated in humour literature. On the whole, the tenet of humorous vs. serious mode is certainly an important one as it helps distinguish purely humorous units (jokes, teasing, etc.) from serious discourse, with a reservation that some forms may lie at the border between the two genres. A vexing question arises whether the serious vs. humorous mode distinction must be introduced in the context of the CP. The notion of humorous mode is essential, but should not be contrasted with the supposed Gricean mode if such a move entails dissociation from the CP as well. This is why the notion of humorous *keying* (Goffman 1974; Kotthoff 1999, 2007) or *framing* (Bateson 1953; Gumperz 1982) appears to be preferable. Such a conceptualisation allows for purely humorous activity to be embraced by the Gricean model, which originally appears to boast no postulates against humour. According to Grice, communicators engage in communicative behaviour, presupposing a mutual tacit agreement that some rules are followed, which guides the recipient to the interpretation intended by the speaker. The same pertains to communication of a humorous character. Additionally, it must be highlighted that the two modes of communication can merge. They meet in units of conversational humour such as witticisms or quips, which are amusing but do convey meanings relevant to the interaction and therefore cannot be subscribed solely to a jocular mode (cf. Morreall 2004).

2.2. Humour-CP ?

Supporting the premise that humour does not conform to the CP and its maxims, Raskin (1985) proposes that humorous discourse and serious communication are mutually exclusive, while the former necessitates a cooperative principle peculiar to itself, viz. the humour-CP. Thus, four maxims anchored in the humour-CP for the non-bona-fide mode of joke telling are advocated. First and foremost, it must be appreciated that the proposal accounts only for jokes and does not embrace forms of verbal conversational humour (e.g. teasing or witticisms), which appear to be unjustly marginalised as if they were captured neither by the CP nor the humour-CP.

- (i) Maxim of Quantity: Give as much information as is necessary for the joke
- (ii) Maxim of Quality: Say only what is compatible with the world of the joke
- (iii) Maxim of Relation: Say only what is relevant to the joke
- (iv) Maxim of Manner: Tell the joke efficiently (Raskin 1985: 103; Raskin and Attardo 1994: 37)

Raskin (1985) and Raskin and Attardo (1994) also draw some ill-advised parallelisms between the Gricean model and their own framework.

Just as *bona-fide* communication can fail if the speaker does not have full control of the maxims [i.e. Grice's], humor fails if the maxims [Raskin's] are not abided by. Similarly, the hearer can fail the speaker in bona-fide communication even if the speaker does everything right and the hearer of the joke can fail to get it even if the speaker provides all the necessary ingredients and follows all the maxims. (Raskin 1985: 103)

Indeed, the non-fulfilment of Raskin's maxims may result in a joke's failure. However, it should be emphasised that in Grice's model, the maxims need not, and very often will not be, abided by, but flouted, in which case the speaker still has full control of the maxims, while the hearer infers the implicated meaning. Secondly, Grice does not allow in his idealised model of communication for miscommunication consequent upon the hearer's misunderstanding of the speaker's intention, especially if the speaker verbalises it adequately. The both similarities are thus unfounded.

Surprisingly enough, Raskin (Aymone 2007) admits that his humour-CP was actually "a spoof," which appears to have deceived many. As Raskin (Aymone 2007) provocatively explains, his motivation in 1985 was to ridicule the idea of the CP and show its methodological vacuity for humour analysis. Whatever his motivation may be, Raskin appears to have had a change of heart and no longer fully advocates his earlier proposal, a proposal which has garnered so much support. On the other hand, Raskin (Aymone 2007) still upholds the notion of the

non-bona-fide mode for humour, admittedly divorced from the main original premise as being opposed to the Gricean model.

Among the deceived, the most prominent researcher is Attardo (1990, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2006), who supports Raskin's (1985) proposal of a separate CP with its set of maxims forming a different mode of communication, adding the postulate that humour actually violates the Gricean maxims and the CP.

The lowest common denominator is the original CP, but then a humour-CP is introduced which can accommodate the original CP, but can also allow violations of the CP as long as they are eventually redeemed by an ulterior intent. (Attardo 1994: 286-287)

The postulate of a humour-CP being hierarchically superior to the Gricean CP does not appear to be a wise claim. Even if one assumes that the two do exist, a reverse situation would more likely be the case, humour being a subtype of communication. However, the most rational choice would be to retain only the original CP.

2.3. Maxim violation?

Attardo's (1993, 1994) major contribution to Raskin's proposal is that humour actually violates the Gricean CP and its maxims, constituting the non-bona-fide mode governed by a humour-CP. Attardo (1993, 1994) acknowledges the difference between violation and flouting of maxims, in accord with Grice's view that flouting is an overt violation, but uses the terms inconsistently, as many quotations will show. Attardo champions a claim that humour, primarily jokes, violate the maxims, i.e. "do not flout or exploit the maxims, but that they violate them, i.e. they fail to conform to their 'recommendations'" (1993: 542, 1994: 273). It is self-evident that this clarification does not elucidate much as it fails to appreciate that flouting also entails "failing to conform" but with a particular intention on the speaker's part. Attardo finds some motivation for the violation claim in Grice's writings.

(...) flouting, i.e. their patent (Grice has 'blatant') violation that allows the hearer to infer that a given maxim is being violated only insofar as another maxim is being obeyed. (Attardo 1993: 543)

(...) Grice's original suggestion that irony and humor might be connected to violations of the conversational maxims. (Attardo 1993: 541)

All jokes involve violations of one or more of Grice's maxims. The claim that jokes could be viewed in terms of flouting of conversational maxims dates back to Grice himself, who considers irony as an example of implicature, and a (complex) pun. (Attardo 1996: 5)

Firstly, Grice (1975/1989b: 30) clearly does not propose any correlation between one maxim's flout and another's observance but discusses maxim flouts in the light of the abiding CP. There is nothing in the Gricean proposal that disallows the simultaneous flouts of all maxims. Secondly, Grice (1975/1989b: 34) discusses the case of irony as a means of verbalisation which hinges on the Quality maxim flout, certainly not maxim violation. It should be observed that irony can sometimes coincide with humour, but certainly cannot be equated with a joke or a pun, merely because it is rooted in some form of ambiguity. Grice does not explicitly account for the interdependence between humour and maxim flouts, let alone violations. However, Grice's (1975/1989b: 36) discussion of an example couched in ambiguity (I have sinned/I have Sind), which may be perceived as a pun (a common manifestation of humour), corroborates that a communicator may wish to flout at least one of the Manner maxims to convey an implicature. Attardo's argumentation thus yields no evidence to his violation proposal, and even subverts it in the light of Grice's original postulates concerning flouts.

It is here maintained that the humorous speaker flouts maxims, aiming to amuse the hearer. Indeed, jokes may fail to fulfil maxims, temporarily misinforming or perplexing the hearer, for example by providing him/her with too little information or, in the case of garden-path humour (see Dynel, forthcoming), allowing for "wrong" inferences (hinged on initially covert ambiguity) until the punch-line subverts them. However, all this occurs according to the speaker's plan, of which the hearer becomes fully aware, whether or not warned in advance that the verbalisation is of the humorous type. The hearer is led to the proper interpretation at the end of the jocular formulation. On no account can this nonfulfilment be a violation, which is inherently covert to the interpreter.

The humorous speaker has no intention of genuinely deceiving the hearer. Even if the latter, whether prepared for a jocular twist (in the case of canned jokes) or not (in the case of shorter units of conversational humour), does not appreciate that a given maxim is not fulfilled, he/she acknowledges this thanks to the online processing of the consecutive part of the utterance. The assumption that in the initial stage of interpretation, the nonfulfilment is covert is unfounded since normally whole utterances are analysed, not their elements, while initially derived inferences are subject to cancellation in the light of new information (Grice 1975/1989b, 1978/1989b). In essence, maxim nonfulfilment cannot be perceived as violation but flouting since the speaker expects the hearer to be able to appreciate maxim nonfulfilment and to draw adequate inferences.

Attardo is, however, adamant at refuting the argument pertaining to the hearer's awareness of maxim nonfulfilment, "The fact that one is aware of the speaker's violations does not change the status of the violation, but merely makes them obvious" (1993: 545). Admitting this, Attardo falsifies his own theory since in Gricean terms, an obvious violation can be nothing but a flout, which the speaker commits with a view to gaining a communicative aim, possibly to amuse the hearer. On the other hand, genuine violations are those maxim exploitations which are covert and thus pass undetected.

2.4. CP Violation?: Rationality and cooperative goals

The problem of maxim flouts/violations has a bearing on the postulate of the CP violation. Attardo's reasoning resides in his misreading of yet another of Grice's tenets, i.e. the convolution of premises concerning maxim violations and flouts, and the wrong inference that the CP is momentarily violated if a maxim is flouted.

(...) when a maxim is being flouted, the violation of the CP is only superficial and temporary, so much as, that the hearer assumes that while the speaker is violating one maxim he/she is still fulfilling the other three. (Attardo 1993: 539)

Firstly, the quotation above testifies to Attardo's inconsistent use of the terms "flout" and "violation," which he appears to treat as synonymous. Secondly, as already observed, that a maxim is flouted does not mean that the remaining maxims (NB not only three, as Attardo claims mistaking maxims for categories) must obligatorily be fulfilled. Most importantly, according to the original conceptualisation, flouts occur only because the CP is invariantly upheld, on no account even momentarily violated. Attardo (1993, 1994) wrongly assumes that the CP is normally violated when a maxim flout occurs and claims that in jokes (and humour, on the whole), which operate on maxim violations, there is "no ulterior interpretation of the text that can salvage it from the violation of the maxim" (Attardo 1993: 543; Attardo 1994: 273), i.e. that the CP must be violated as well. It emerges, therefore, that the postulate of CP violation in humour is misguided, being centred on ill-advised premises. This is also corroborated by the example the author discusses. Analysing a well-trodden humorous form of interchange ("Do you know what time it is?" "Yes"), Attardo (1993) posits that it relies on the responder's misinterpretation of the indirect speech act of requesting, which causes him/her to violate the Quantity maxim, while there is hardly any maxim that is followed to meet the request. Indeed, the affirmative answer reliant on the pretended misinterpretation may not be cooperative in the literal sense of the word,

but it neither violates the maxim nor breaches the CP since it is rational and has a communicative (humorous) purpose, which the interlocutor should appreciate.

Another tenet adducing evidence against the CP violation is Attardo's (1993, 1994, 2006) understanding of the notion of Grice's cooperation as standing vis-à-vis non-cooperation. In Attardo's view, humour violates the CP, being "non-cooperative in Grice's sense" (Attardo 1994: 271) and manifests "non-cooperative behaviour" (Attardo 1994: 275). Following Raskin, Attardo avers that the bona-fide mode, the CP and thus cooperativeness presuppose "the speaker's commitment to truth, relevance, clarity, and to providing the right quantity of information at any give time" (Attardo 1994: 274), which is transparently not what Grice intended, given the notion of flouts of Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner, the prototypical implicature-yielding realisation of the CP, as discussed above. Even if, as Attardo (2006: 353) strongly affirms, the observance of maxims (as if they were instructions) does occur, it is relatively rare. Following Raskin, Attardo fails to appreciate the foundations of Grice's conceptualisation of cooperation as rationality. On the other hand, Attardo (2006) acknowledges the aspect of goal assumption in cooperation, but denies that this phenomenon is found in humour.

Cooperation is an adoption of goals. It can happen at the linguistic level (comprehension) or at the extra-linguistic level (cooperation toward goals that are non-linguistic). Neither has any allowance for special 'humor' cooperation. (Attardo 2006: 350)

It is difficult to comprehend the underlying argument that humour cannot be subsumed under either of the categories of cooperation. Producing a humorous verbalisation, the speaker normally wants to be understood and has an aim, which is shared by the interlocutor, even if the original utterance is disruptive of the conversation (e.g. interactional puns such as "What do you do when a bird dirties your windscreen?" "Never ask her out again.") or entails competition (e.g. mutual adversarial teasing).

On the other hand, outside his humour studies, Attardo (1997ab) supports a different approach, i.e. that Grice's cooperation revolves around the common purpose or direction of the conversation, as proposed in the basic formulation of the CP. Attardo (1997b) rightly emphasises that cooperation need not exclude competition and conflictual goals, which is why the cooperative behaviour also embraces quarrels, in which conversationalists pursue different goals but have one mutually accepted direction, i.e. to argue. All this is true, but Attardo proposes "broadening the scope of the CP to include a host of competitive situations which it failed to apply previously" (Attardo 1997b: 32), which yields a conclusion that in Attardo's understanding the Gricean model, as originally proposed, does not account for competitiveness and different goals, whether or not openly stated. As

earlier argued, Grice (1975/1989b, 1978/1989b, 1989a) does allow for such communicative goals and thus no broadening is necessary.

Non-cooperative behaviour, according to Attardo (1997b), manifests itself in misleading the hearer, while the latter cannot possibly have a compatibly cooperative goal, i.e. to want to be misled or lied to, which is indeed what Grice (1975/1989b) appears to have suggested, emphasising the importance of the first Quality maxim. Attardo (1997b) mentions also that the second case of non-cooperativeness is joking, which is most surprising since in the light of his article it would transpire that humour is cooperative. In essence, although Attardo acknowledges the importance of cooperation (Attardo 1997ab) and rationality (Attardo 2006, 2003, 1997ab) on the part of the communicators as the pivots of their interactions, he fails to ascribe their due significance to the CP model, when applied to humour. Attardo (2006: 259) even highlights, "I never connected my work on pragmatics on the NCP, rationality, the PCP, etc. to my work on humour, since the latter needs only Grice's CP." This quotation testifies to Attardo's miscomprehension of Grice's principal premise of cooperative rationality.

Attardo (1993, 1994, 2006) is oblivious to critiques of commentators stressing that jokes (and other forms of humour) cannot possibly violate the CP since communication does occur (e.g. Jodłowiec 1991), or that the hearer generates implicatures in accordance with the speaker's intentions (Kotthoff 2006). Attardo maintains that humour immanently violates the CP. Motivating this claim, Attardo (2006) equates humour with lies (already discussed in the section on the non-bona-fide mode), which are transparently divergent. In lying, the speaker intends the hearer to make an inference without any access to some information, while in humour the whole speaker's meaning and intention become overt at some point. Therefore, it is not fortunate to state that "the CP is violated without the intention to let H arrive at an implicature whenever S finds it useful" (Attardo 2006: 350). In humorous communication, the speaker may wish the hearer to derive some implicatures (and not other implicatures), the global aim being to allow the latter to comprehend and enjoy a humorous stimulus (and possibly contextually relevant meanings). The same will also pertain to non-humorous communication. Also, according to Grice's (1975/1989b, 1978/1989b) model, implicatures are cancellable and can be defeated to make way for other implicatures.

Notwithstanding all the above, Raskin and Attardo consent to the tenet of humour's rationality and cooperation. Raskin (1985: 104) does appreciate that humour subscribes to play, which obeys mutually accepted rules, and hence is cooperative. Additionally, Raskin and Attardo (1994) do admit that jokes are successful communicative exchanges, rooted in cooperativeness and rationality. The speaker and the hearer in a joke context "are both actively, consciously—and cooperatively—engaged in joke-telling non-bona fide communication mode" (Raskin and Attardo 1994: 37). Also, they add that "hearers perceive the intention

of the speaker as an attempt to make them laugh” (Raskin and Attardo 1994: 37). This means that the hearer acknowledges the speaker’s intention to amuse him/her and thus willingly follows the train of thought set by the speaker, to the effect that the communicative process is perfectly cooperative.

Raskin and Attardo (1994) and Attardo (1990, 1993, 1994) do observe the paradox of CP violation, which should entail “breakdown of communication” (Attardo 1993: 537) and the communicative success of jokes, i.e. their ultimate cooperativeness. Attardo (1990, 1993, 1994) endeavours to explain this paradox by resorting to Raskin’s (1985) earlier postulate of non-bona-fide communication and humour-CP (problematic conceptualisations, as earlier discussed), by which means he aims to avoid admitting that humorous acts are cooperative in Grice’s sense or that they do not violate the CP. Accordingly, the non-bona-fide mode and the humour-CP are claimed to presuppose speakers’ cooperation, which explains why jokes do not give rise to misunderstanding and are appreciated. Attardo (1990: 358) maintains that jokes “violate” the maxims and the CP to “achieve a socially desirable effect.” Jokes (and humour on the whole) violate the CP because they are not subsumable to the bona-fide mode of communication, which (supposedly) represents the realisation of the CP as envisaged by Grice. On the other hand, “What takes one into NBF [non-bona fide] is the unredeemed violation of the CP” (Attardo 2006: 354). This reasoning is a clear manifestation of circular logic, with one postulate testifying to the other and vice versa. It emerges that the introduction of the second (redundant) mode of cooperative and successful communication involves another (redundant) CP holding for humour, and explaining its communicative feasibility.

A conclusion can be drawn that the additional mode of communication and CP for humour are based on dubious premises and are thus superfluous. In a humour-oriented communication, the CP still holds while the maxims may be, and usually are, flouted to meet the intended communicative purpose. The CP holds and may be used to describe humorous communication as long as it does take place in accordance with the speaker’s plan, rationally pursued also by the hearer who observes the speaker’s intention. Like other communicative tasks, humour is a rational goal which the speaker and the hearer try to attain. It is thus not only the postulate of the CP violation that is ill-conceived, but also the claim on which it bases, i.e. that humour is contingent on maxim violation.

3. Concluding remarks: The CP and maxim flouts in humour

The discussion above was meant to subvert the postulate that various manifestations of humour violate the model of communication proposed by Grice. Firstly, although humorous forms infringe on maxims, they do this overtly, i.e.

flout/exploit them, which the CP model of communication presupposes. Secondly, rationality, which lies at the heart of Grice's CP model, is also inherent to intentionally produced humorous verbalisations, be it jokes or conversational humour such as witticisms, quips, teases, etc. The CP holds in any interaction between the speaker who rationally produces an utterance and the hearer who derives implicatures, presuming the interlocutor to be rational. Thirdly, even if humorous keying does exist, the concept of a non-bona-fide mode standing in opposition to the Gricean model is unfounded.

Maxim flouts are legitimate in the original Gricean model and inherent to communication, also that of the humorous type. The CP framework presupposes the abundance of flouts since they help obtain implicatures on the assumption of the conversationalists' intention to preserve the CP, understood as the rationality of communicative behaviour. The speaker employs flouts in humorous verbalisations for the sake of the rational meta-aim of amusing the hearer and its further benefits for interpersonal communication and, optionally, the conveyance of informative content. Staying within the CP model and making rational inferences, the hearer also presupposes that the speaker is rational, cooperative and thus compliant with the CP, and vice versa.

It is not the aim here to engage in a detailed analysis of various types of humour, pointing to particular maxim flouts, as they entertain an inexhaustible number of manifestations in various humour types. For example, Manner and Quantity flouts are inherent to humour for it is very often couched in semantic ambiguity or lack of clarity of expression, whether a short humorous chunk such as a neological lexeme, a comparison, or a conversational witticism. On the other hand, the Relation flout always occurs in interactional puns, while absurd humour or friendly teasing resembling putdown humour will often flout the first Quality maxim. Below, three random examples of conversational humour are discussed to show that it violates neither the CP nor the maxims, but flouts the maxims.

Asked about the fortune he has, an actor by the name of George Raft said wittily but evasively, "Part of the \$10 million I spent on gambling, part on booze and part on women. The rest I spent foolishly."⁴

The actor flouts the maxims of Relation, given the question, and the first maxim of Quality, and the maxims of Manner ("be orderly"), ultimately implicating his unwillingness to discuss his properties and simultaneously

⁴ A similar quote can be found in the 2007 Oscar winning film "No Country for Old Men" by the Coen brothers. Asked for the money he took, the protagonist says, "It's too late. I spent it. About a million and a half on whores and whiskey and the rest of it I just sort of blew it here."

entertaining the audience. Notably, the maxim of Quality is exploited in two ways, i.e. the actor is transparently not telling the truth, saying he has no fortune, and, secondly, is overtly untruthful, pretending to genuinely believe that spending money on alcohol, gambling and women is not foolish. Its inferential complexity notwithstanding, this witticism can still be interpreted within the Gricean model.

An SMS interchange between two young men, who engage in banter and try to outwit one another:

A: I've just heard that tonight a UFO will kidnap all handsome men but you needn't worry, obviously. I just want to say good-bye.

B: Well, I'm already in their flying saucer. Yesterday they took those with a very high IQ.

The exchange is initiated with an ostensibly hurtful remark hinged on Quality and Manner ("be orderly") maxim flouts. Basing his utterance on a transparently false premise, i.e. a UFO wishing to kidnap someone, the first interlocutor initially purports to offer a warning (the supposed Quantity flout) only to implicate that the other is not handsome enough to be kidnapped. Thanks to the maxim flouts, the man communicates his willingness to amuse the other, who, on the other hand, engages in the humorous frame and produces a parallel verbalisation also flouting the first maxim of Quality.

"Banning the bra would be a big flop," said by a woman during a conversation on lingerie.

The pun above flouts the maxim of Manner, "avoid ambiguity," in order to communicate two relevant meanings based on the polysemy of the word "flop" via a witty comment.

Likewise, canned jokes are dependent on egregious flouts of all the maxims. Unless the jokester signals that a joke is to come, by saying e.g. 'Do you know this joke' or 'Have you heard the one about...?', the joke will also flout the maxim of Relation. NB the signalling of the joke does not entail suspending the maxims, as e.g. Perlmutter (2002) asserts, but explicit delineation of the current purpose of the exchange.

In conclusion, the postulate of humour-CP and non-bona-fide communication appears to be a redundant terminological complication since jocular communication nicely falls into the Gricean model. It transpires that upholding the violation of maxims and the CP validates the introduction of the non-bona-fide mode and thus dissociation from the CP. However, the latter easily accommodates humour as long as it is rationally produced and does not entail covert mendacity, as the CP presupposes. The parallel non-bona-fide framework is not divorced from the original one, also pivoting on rationality and communicativeness, but

reformulates the tenets to provide a formula of how to “tell an effective joke” (Attardo 1993: 544). In the light of the discussion above, it should be evident that Raskin and Attardo misinterpret the Gricean model of communication in a considerable number of ways. As a result, they launch the superfluous model burdened with various theoretical complications, following circular logic. The concepts of the CP and maxim violations and the non-bona-fide with its separate CP motivate each other, but contribute nothing new to the model of rational communication. On the whole, what governs interactants, whether humorous or serious, is conversational rationality. Even if humorous verbalisations may entail genre-specific illogicalities, absurdity, ostensible deceits etc., they are still rationally produced, the underpinning aim being to amuse the hearer. There is then method in the humorous speaker's madness.

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