“I need someone well versed in the art of torture—do you know PowerPoint?”
The Laugh’s on Us
Lessons from 85 Years of Cartoon Psychiatry*

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OMG, 40 min of *jokes*?
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“It could be one of those things that crawl into your ear and lay eggs, and the eggs hatch and burrow into your—nope. It looks fine.”
Use of Couch in Psychiatrist Cartoons

χ² (Yates) = 73.7, p < .0001 (two-tailed)
THE UNPUBLISHED FREUD

SOME BLOW MIGHT CHEER YOU UP.
Gender of Psychiatric Patients for Two Time Periods

\[ \chi^2 \text{ (Yates)} = 32.1, p < .0001 \text{ (two-tailed)} \]
“Your problems make my fee seem insignificant.”
“Don’t you think it’s time we talked about Operation Doug?”
“Lately I’ve had uncontrollable cravings for venison.”
LASSIE! GET HELP!!
“Face it, Porky. You’ll always be Looney Tunes.”
“Every now and then I get the overpowering urge to wear a cowbell.”
“I think we’ve made real progress today.”
“They think they’re accidents.”
“You are a very sick rabbit.”
"We could reshape your nose with conventional surgery, but I’m going to suggest something radical."
“Actually, I divorced him right after I fired him. God, it makes me feel better to talk this through.”
“Oh, my husband’s fine in bed as long as he stays on his side.”
"Next week we’ll try sitting in a chair."
FACE YOUR DEMONS.

TAKE A PILL.

GOOD SHRINK, BAD SHRINK
Why Do We Laugh?

Historically, 3 theories:
- *Superiority* (Plato, Hobbes)
- *Relief* (Freud)
- *Incongruity* (Kant)

Slightly more recent idea:
- *Connect the Dots* (Morrison, unpublished)
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“…laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from [the] sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmities of others, or with our own formerly.” — Thos. Hobbes
“I’m terribly sorry, Mrs. Crummett, but all at once I’ve had it up to here with psychiatry.”
“Sober, Mrs. Thompkins is the personification of virtue.”
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“Bad sex! Bad, bad, bad sex!”
“Well, you have three hundred miles and two more waterfalls to get in the mood.”
"I can’t understand a word you’re saying. Have you got a gun in your mouth?"
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Humor arises “…from the suddenly vanishing transformation of a tense expectation.” — I. Kant
“...what is essential to humor is the mingling of two ideas which are felt to be utterly disparate. The neatness of the joke will depend on two things: the degree of contrast between the two elements, and the completeness with which they are made to fuse.” — DH Monro
“First off, you’re not a nut. You’re a legume.”
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“I’m not hopping mad, I’m just hopping disappointed.”
"I’m right there in the room, and no one even acknowledges me."
SO, COULD WE HAVE ALL YOUR STUFF AFTER YOU DIE?

DOCTORS WITHOUT BOUNDARIES
Boundary Violations

- Sexual issues: impropriety, transgression, violation
- Dual relationships (financial, friendships)
- Gifts, services (e.g., babysitting)
- Timing, duration of appointments
- Language (erotic terms, pet names, other expressions that might cause discomfort)
- Self-disclosure
- Physical exam that is inappropriate in context
- Other physical contact

Gabbard, Nadelson. JAMA 1995;217:1445
Boundary Issues in Cartoons and Film

Psychiatrists’ Sexual Boundary Violations

percent

Cartoon Psychiatry

California Psychiatry*

Boundary Violations by Category

- Sexual
- Dual
- Gifts/Services
- Time
- Language
- Self Disclosure
- Physical Contact

Comparison:
- 1925-1964
- 1965-2009
“Then again, we are what we eat.”
“Are you uncomfortable discussing this because I’m a man or because I’m your husband?”
“Think of it, Madam. I was only 16 at the time.”
“Well, right now I’m feeling a little uncomfortable.”
“You’ve done me a world of good, Doctor, but you know too much.”
“Shouldn’t you be writing some of this down?”
“Have you ever tried buying lots of stuff?”
I'm beginning to think he's crazier than I am.
“He’s still in therapy.”
“I think what Polly really want is approval.”
“I medicate first and ask questions later.”
“Could we up the dosage? I still have feelings.”
“Our psychopharmacologist is a genius.”
“How many verses of ‘Froggie Went A-Courting’ are there, Jay, before your pill kicks in?”
“It would have been an open casket, but he overdosed on Viagra.”
“Your eggs will be ready in a minute. Meanwhile, take a mood stabilizer.”
"Would you care to try some of my handmade artisanal antidepressants?"
“Discouraging data on the antidepressant.”
“We had an argument and now he’s trying to make me feel bad.”
“You know, Doctor, I've been toying with the idea of killing myself.”
“Hold it! Where’s Toomey?”
Welcome to Lovers' Leap

Assisted

Unassisted
“Looks like broker assisted suicide.”
“It was assisted suicide, but he was too pig-headed to ask for it.”
“Yes, Oregon’s lovely, but we’re just here for the suicide.”
“Lieutenant, he left a suicide sticky.”
“If you’re not going to come back inside, at least put on a sweater.”
Of 1600 mental health cartoons: 45% are related to substance use. Of these, 93% concern alcohol.
“Do you know what you’re looking at, Pal? You’re looking at a drunken psychoanalyst.”
Substance Use as % of All Mental Health Cartoons

Percent

- Patient Intoxicated
- No Intoxication Shown

Years

1925-1934
1935-1944
1945-1954
1955-1964
1965-1974
1975-1984
1985-1994
1995-2004
2005-2009
All Years
“Actually, right now I’m in retox.”
“Would you like to buy some Girl Scout crack?”
“At this point, we know it’s addictive.”
Non-Substance Diagnoses

- Anxiety
- Mood
- Sleep
- Sex
- Psychosis
- Impulse
- Somatoform
- Personality
- Dissociation

1925-1964 1965-2009
“Of course your Daddy loves you. He’s on Prozac. He loves everybody.”
“Perhaps your performance anxiety wouldn’t be so bad if you performed better.”
“I finally saw a shrink today.”
“After tonight, you’re going to need a prescription.”
“I was able to get in one last lecture about diet and exercise.”
“His final wish was that all his medical bills be paid promptly.”
“He’s going to be O.K., but he wants you to remarry anyway.”
“Lots more interesting stuff under the table.”
“You have irritable spouse syndrome.”
“Alternatively, your mother could have a cooking disorder.”
Points to Ponder
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“Please! One at a time.”
“And then she said, ‘And that goes double for that fatheaded, conceited analyst of yours.’”
“You needn’t feel guilty. You earned the fortune you inherited by giving her great happiness while she was alive.”
“My father—who the hell do you think named me Edward the Lesser?”
IT FEELS LIKE EVERYONE IN THE WORLD IS LYING TO ME.

CONGRESS IS LYING ABOUT THE BUDGET, STOCK ANALYSTS ARE LYING ABOUT THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS, MY BOSS IS LYING....

THIS THERAPY STUFF IS SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN TO WORK, RIGHT?

IT'S 100% EFFECTIVE.
I think my employees are trying to kill me. Am I paranoid?

Put your answer in an e-mail. I don't want to be paying for the pauses between your words.

I've ruled out paranoia.

Phew! That's a relief.
“Does this make me your bitch?”
“You left your demons here last week.”
“You’ve got to want to connect the dots, Mr. Michaelson.”
"Going to be long over there, Mr. Happy? I need to get my casserole in."
“First, we’ll look for repressed memories of malpractice suits.”
“After-psychotherapy mint?”