

Japanese Humor in Films and Media

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Scale of humor

- Most humor lies on this scale, but can shift depending on how long you see it
- Animated things are usually a segment more to the left than if they were live action

Boring

Funny/passively funny

Punchline

Shock humor
(weirded out)

Uncomfortable



Bizarreness

- Something being so bizarre that it acts as a punchline.
- To Americans this can be shock humor on a level that is closer to being weirded out, especially when seeing the joke with no context.





カップヌードル

@cupnoodle_jp

Follow

修正になんでも応えてくれるデザイナーさんが上司からの「チーズ感が足りない」というダメ出しに全力で応えてくれた結果...ミルクシーフードヌードルの広告がこのような形になりました！

だといかに感があるの
え感のある髪型に。

笑顔に！
3元、0元)



商品をもっと目立たせる。



9:52 PM - 16 Oct 2017

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YUKI @yuki_minamin · 17 Oct 2017

Replying to @cupnoodle_jp

本気にする人がいるからいいじゃないか



Nudity

- In Japan, nudity is a step more acceptable than in the US
- Hot springs and public baths are common, and people are usually naked
- Kids being naked is pretty fine, even to show. Family often bathe with kids
- In this context, it's private, but can be more nostalgic than funny



<https://youtu.be/KUOwbcdZozQ?t=21>

- Most Americans would find this video shocking, which could slide into being uncomfortable or funny depending on the person watching it
- Partial nudity like this isn't uncommon in variety shows and comedies like Maiko Haaaan!

https://youtu.be/4OA_9l0JtIE?t=36



Boring

Japanese (nudity)
Funny/passively funny

The fact that they
were dancing
Punchline

Americans
Shock humor
(weirded out)

Uncomfortable

- If anyone saw this in theaters, there were audible gasps when you saw the dick

Japanese

Americans

Seeing his dick

If we saw his
dick longer
than a short
moment

Boring

Funny/passively funny

Punchline

Shock humor

Uncomfortable

(weirded out)

Shinchan

- Kids show
- He says



“Elephant! Elephant!” and waggles his dick

- He also moons people, but we kinda have that in US

Boring

Japanese (his nudity)
Funny/passively funny

Hee hee,
elephant trunk
Punchline

Americans

Shock humor
(weirded out)

Uncomfortable

Breaking Social Norms

- Japan is a much more formal society
- Outside of films/TV/anime, very little goofing around happens (it would be seen as rude, not funny)
- These media often have characters/a character that acts really informal, and that in itself is comedic

Azumanga Daioh



Relatable

Teacher is lazy, drives like a maniac

Boring

Funny/passively funny



Teacher steals a bike

Teacher steals a bike

Punchline



Shock humor
(weirded out)

Uncomfortable



More cool than funny, except the over the top characters

Japanese

Boring

Funny/passively funny

The comedy
The comedy

Punchline

Shock humor
(weirded out)

Uncomfortable

They'd both be rude outside of films/TV

Liveaction

- If they weren't over the top, then they'd be seen more as rude than comedic

- Because we as Americans can act how we want, this behavior is just weird/annoying



Japanese

American

Boring

Funny/passively funny

Punchline

Shock humor
(weirded out)

Uncomfortable

“The teller and hearer must share a sense of cultural context or particular knowledge to judge a joke as non-sense. Therefore, stories are categorized in this section based on the Japanese cultural context.#466 [Errand] (8th place of December, 2010)I asked my 6 years old, 1st grade son to run some errands. Me: Can you go and buy some apples, potatoes and cucumbers? Do you think you can do that?Son: Yeah, I’m fine.Then he came back from shopping.Son: They weren’t there, so I bought some radishes, onions, and egg plants!In this story, there is no good reason for the boy to buy radishes, onions, and egg plants instead of apples, potatoes and cucumbers in the Japanese context. The boy only picked random items at vegetable shop. The point is that he just bought nothing his mother asked for. However, I must admit that this story might make some sense in different cultural context, therefore it may not be non-sense otherwise.”

“A common scene in dramas is the sudden appearance before guests of a family's younger son totally naked, to the embarrassment of the family, particularly elder sisters. In these scenes the boy's genitals are not censored.”

Bibliography

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