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Whimsical Satire and the Crossing of Humorous and Ironic Targeting: An Analysis of May Kendall's "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" (1887)

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This article explores the whimsical satire in the poem "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" (1887) by Victorian poet, novelist, and essayist May Kendall (1861-1943). It has two central objectives. Firstly, it aims to conceptualise Victorian whimsical satire as presenting a crossing between, on the one hand, the bitingly critical English satire that had experienced a golden age in the eighteenth century, and, on the other hand, the whimsical, convivial humour typical of the Victorian era. Secondly, it strives to demonstrate that, when analysing whimsical satire, it is useful to consider irony and humour, including whimsical humour, as distinct yet often co-occurring phenomena that each offer specific ways to criticise a society or culture. My reading of Kendall's poem highlights how its whimsical humour adds psychological depth to its criticism of the Victorian anthropocentric view of society. The poem suggests that the affective desire to justify hierarchies leads anthropocentrists to think irrationally.

Keywords: satire, humour, irony, poetry, Victorian culture, May Kendall

Introduction

In this article, I explore the whimsical satire in "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" (1887), a comic poem by Victorian poet, novelist, and essayist May Kendall (1861-1943) that ridicules anthropocentric understandings of evolution and in doing so indirectly criticises the hierarchical view on gender that such understandings can be used to justify.[1] I do this with the aim of working towards a broader theoretical model of humour in whimsical satire, which will allow me to describe how whimsical comic elements can contribute to satirical criticism. After briefly discussing how a cognitive linguistics-based model can add to historical interpretations of Victorian whimsical satire, the article will, for that reason, mainly analyse Kendall's poem through the lens of the model's formal, relatively ahistorical[2] approach.

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[2] This elicits the question: to what degree is there a tension between the objective of studying a historically marked type of satire and my use of mostly ahistorical theories of satire, humour and irony? It is important to note that I do not aim to add to the description of the overall characteristics of whimsical satire. I explore the effectiveness of satire with given characteristics – namely the relative whimsicality of its comic elements – at the specific function of expressing criticism. Therefore, it seems appropriate to use up-to-date insights on how comic texts can express criticism, meaning insights from contemporary humour, irony and satire studies.

I conceptualise Victorian whimsical satire as presenting a crossing between two cultural-historically marked traditions of comic literature. On the one hand, there is the more prototypical, bitingly critical, English satire that had experienced a "golden age" in the eighteenth century, with authors such as Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Alexander Pope (1688-1744), John Gay (1685-1732), Joseph Addison (1672-1719), Richard Steele (1672-1729), Henry Fielding (1707-1754), and Jane Austen (1775–1817) (Hahn 29). On the other hand, there is the whimsical, convivial humour typical of the Victorian era, present in the works of novelists such as Charles Dickens (1812-1870), and predominant in nonsense literature, in periodicals such as *Punch, or the London Charivari* (1841-2002), and in popular entertainment such as music hall and the "Savoy operas", the most famous of which were created by the duo William Schwenk Gilbert (1836-1911) and Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900) (Gray 145). Like the more biting satire, whimsical satire uses its comic properties to criticise aspects of culture and/or society; however, in the case of whimsical satire, these comic properties are not clearly aggressive and sharp but rather fanciful and sympathetic to the point where they express the type of whimsical, convivial tone popular in Victorian humour[3].

Technically, any of the whimsically/convivially humorous works that somehow poke fun at society can be read as containing whimsical satire. Notable examples of works in which whimsical satire plays a central role would be: satirical contributions to periodicals like *Punch* and its competitors *Fun* and *Judy*, nonsense literature by authors like Edward Lear (1812-1888) and Lewis Carroll (1832-1898) that explores laughter as offering relief from fears about urgent societal issues (Gray 175-176), comic chapters in the novels of Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863), and satirical texts connecting scientific thought to the Victorian view of society like Kendall's science poems or *Flatland* (1884) by Edwin Abbott (1838-1926). From the perspective of whimsical satire representing a crossing of the said comic traditions, I aim to analyse to what degree and how whimsical humour contributes to Kendall's poem's social and cultural criticism.

On a more theoretical level, I suggest that, when analysing Victorian texts that combine satire with whimsy, it is useful to consider satire as a practice at the crossing between ironic and humorous forms of criticism. I propose that irony and humour,[4] including whimsical humour, can be seen as distinct, yet often co-occurring phenomena, that each offer specific ways to criticise a society or culture.[5] Irony, I propose, can criticise cultural ideas or discourses by foregrounding their problematic elements and by

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[3] The first two sections ("Conviviality" and "Jokes") of the volume *Victorian Comedy and Laughter: Conviviality, Jokes and Dissent* (2020), edited by Lee Louise, explore the convivial and playful aspects of Victorian laughter in more detail.

[4] I use "comic" as an overarching term for the humorous and the ironic. I view satire as a practice of cultural/societal criticism that, as I argue below, can involve both humour and irony.

[5] While no generally accepted way of distinguishing between humour and irony exists, most experts consider them separate phenomena (Dynel 542). In linguistics, theories of irony often describe it as a pragmatic phenomenon (Attardo, "Irony" 814), while theories of humour tend to present semantic properties as its most central characteristics. In literary studies, humour tends to be seen as more spontaneous and less cerebral than irony (e.g. Schoentjes 222; Chambers 4-7; Moura 93-94). My proposed distinction follows these trends.

suggesting that they could be invalidated by other relevant ideas or discourses. Whimsical humour, as I will argue, can criticise a culture or society by exploring how ridiculous ideas and behaviours are created or maintained not because they are good or rational, but rather because they help people manage affective pressures to cling to justifiable ways of thinking. I then claim that the discursive/epistemic criticism expressed through irony and the more psychological criticism expressed through whimsical humour both play an important role in the way "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" tackles its satirical targets. Moreover, the phenomenon of ironic criticism crossing into whimsically humorous criticism in Victorian satire can be read as a response to the misuse of science-based frameworks (e.g. Darwinism) as justifications that relieve affect-based insecurities (e.g. insecurities about gender and social roles).

Whimsical and convivial satire

"The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" belongs to the "Science" cycle in Kendall's poetry collection *Dreams to Sell* (1887). The poems of "Science" are critical of how scientific innovations such as Darwinism and non-Euclidean geometry influenced the Victorian view of the world, man, and society (Funk; Holmes; Manu). Lee Behlman notes that "Kendall's satires in *Dreams to Sell* critique the pervasive egotistical worldview that placed humans at the cent[re] of a triumphant evolutionary progress. Her central target is Richard Owen's Natural Theology, which sought to co-opt evolution for conventional Christian use" (533).

"The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" specifically can be read as poking fun at Darwinism-based anthropocentrism and the way in which it shaped British society, reinforcing the centrality of (higher-class) men, who were considered more developed and rational, and thus naturally dominant. The text presents a philanthropist who wants to save a stranded jellyfish. The jellyfish is woman-coded[6] (e.g. the text uses the pronouns "she" and "her" to refer to the jellyfish) and is described, from the perspective of the philanthropist, in a way that evokes a damsel in distress (e.g. "HER beauty, passive in despair", emphasis added).[7] When the philanthropist is about to "save" the jellyfish, she explains that his efforts are unnecessary since she does not have a sensorium and is, as a result, incapable of feeling pain and indifferent towards death. That makes the philanthropist's pompous discourse on how he will save the animal sound laughable.

As such, the poem mocks how Victorians would carelessly blend a basic understanding of Darwinism with their pre-existing ideas of men as developed beings who would have to save helpless others (see Birch). In that sense, it is a satirical text presenting a clear criticism towards Victorian culture. Simultaneously, the text's humour can be seen

[6] "Woman-coded" (Thomas 244) here means that the character is not necessarily a woman in the fictional world but is given typical and/or stereotypical traits that evoke womanhood.
[7] This article does not reference the lines of the poem when quoting but instead attaches the poem as an appendix.

as whimsical – as it revolves around the fanciful ideas of an eloquent sea creature and a man somehow fixated on saving a jellyfish – and convivial since no specific individuals or groups are explicitly mocked.[8] Being unaware of the commentary or choosing not to focus on it, readers could perfectly interpret the poem as gently poking fun at the eccentric fictional philanthropist or at the strange idea that a jellyfish can talk. The combination of satire with whimsicality and conviviality becomes meaningful when considering the preferences concerning comic works inherent to the poem's literary and cultural-historical context.

In early to mid-Victorian Britain, convivial (Andrews 38), "typically good-natured and decent" (Palmeri 753) comic works had become the norm. Satire specifically was also increasingly convivial with "[w]himsical and charming social satire" (Noakes 97) becoming the dominant form of satire. This departed from the "sharply political, often radical, satire typical of the period 1815-1825" (Palmeri 754). The shift largely resulted from a "climate of respectability", upheld by the growing and increasingly wealthy middle class (Noakes 97), as well as by several "political developments and the conditions of serial publication" (Palmeri 754).

However, the general cultural shift towards convivial forms of the comic was not solely caused by the need to be respectable. It also resulted from an evolution in the dominant view of humour. From the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, humour was increasingly seen as "an ethical force" expressing "a natural sympathy for others" (Ward 726). This partial shift continued an eighteenth-century growth in the appreciation of "amiable" comic works that approach their topics and targets (i.e. the person(s)/group(s) who are made the butt of the joke) with sympathy and suggest an appreciation for differences between people (Ward 726). Around the early Victorian period, critics and theorists furthermore introduced a distinction between "wit" and "humour", which characterised humour more favourably as being natural, coming from the heart rather than from the intellect, and expressing a feeling of love, allowing it to promote conviviality (Andrews 38-39). The characterisation of the philanthropist as being eccentric though ultimately well-meaning and the fact that the jellyfish corrects him cordially can then be interpreted as choices that make the poem humorous in the sense that its laughter does not condemn anyone for being different but rather promotes sympathy by making the reader laugh "with" its unusual characters.

Another contextual factor that can inform an interpretation of its whimsical humour is that an earlier version of the poem, titled "The Jelly-Fish and the Philanthropist", like several of the "Science" poems appeared in a comic periodical, in this case, the celebrated *Punch, or the London Charivari*. As Richard Noakes mentions in "*Punch* and comic journalism in mid-Victorian Britain", by the moment of the periodical's founding, a

[8] The poem does of course rather directly present specific groups connected to the anthropocentrism-based view of society: Victorian philanthropists (see Ginn), Darwinists, and men; however, the text does not explicitly ridicule their traits or behaviours.

growing middle class was upholding a "climate of propriety", albeit not a universal one, motivating satirists to focus on respectable social satire, marked by whimsy and charm. In that regard, "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" can be read as framing serious criticism of the societal interpretation of scientific developments in a whimsical and charmingly humorous social interaction.

By approaching Kendall's poem through the lens of changing preferences regarding the comic leading up to and during the Victorian era, I can thus interpret the playfulness and relative inoffensiveness of its comic elements as more than just a failure to be sharply critical. These properties allow the text to criticise society in a manner viewed as respectable and tap into humour's potential to stimulate conviviality.

This article, however, suggests that there is a danger to relying solely on such a contextual approach. When focusing on the transition of dominance between the sharp satire typical of the eighteenth century as a "Golden age of Satire" (Hahn 29) and the convivial humour that became dominant in the Victorian era, scholars run the risk of overlooking the specific ways in which whimsical and convivial humour can criticise society and culture. When analysing a text like Kendall's poem, which is at the crossing of satirical and humorous laughter, it is then easy to assume that the typically satirical jokes (i.e. the satirical references to theory of evolution, and the ridiculing of the philanthropist as a man who erroneously believes he has to save a woman-coded being) are responsible for most of the text's critical effectiveness. Jokes that are whimsical rather than directly ridiculing social or cultural realities and present all their characters as likeable, and/or do not explicitly attack positions in social or cultural debates, could then simply be read as softening the criticism. Indeed, current critics rarely pay attention to the critical potential of playful uses of language or the light-hearted tone of socio-critical segments when discussing the satirical aspects of Victorian comic literature (e.g. Wagner-Lawlor; Lee). Such an approach can be problematic since whimsical and convivial jokes can clearly possess their own critical potentials.

An example of whimsical humour possessing its own critical potential is Victorian whimsical humour, which often offered temporary relief from societal or cultural conventions or restrictions that were normally taken very seriously (Gray 146-147). In that case, the frivolity of the humour could suggest criticism aimed at the society or culture in question for being overly rigid concerning the conventions or restrictions in question.

Sympathetic or convivial humour may not be as obviously critical as the corrective ridicule to which it was favourably compared in early nineteenth-century comic theory (Ward 725). Still, its usage as an "ethical force" (Ward 726) promoting sympathy for (laughable) others implies a desire to correct the behaviour of people who would treat others unsympathetically.

These examples demonstrate how the conviviality and whimsicality of humour can be used critically. Note that, in both cases, the critical potential of the properties in humour is tied to the way in which they partially and temporarily relieve a societal or cultural pressure to think in a certain way, i.e. to think of norms as being serious and of

others as having to behave in a non-ridiculous manner. The humour does not criticise by directly pointing out how discourses, attitudes, or behaviours, are incongruent with relevant ideas (e.g. cultural values) or discourses (e.g. scientific discussions), but rather by freeing the audience from the pressure to conceptualise culturally charged experiences through an acceptable affective lens. In doing so, it exposes the said pressure and hints at the possibility of more organic ways of thinking. One can be sympathetic towards others without ignoring their eccentricities, and people's respect for conventions when they are relevant is not necessarily compromised by individuals treating them frivolously at other times.

These are just two examples of how whimsical and convivial humour can criticise culture and society. While conviviality and whimsy may not provide ideal conditions for harsh and serious criticisms, they are not politically neutral, innocuous properties either. The idea of whimsical and convivial jokes possessing a specific critical potential makes comic texts like Kendall's "Science" poems, which combine societal and cultural criticism with whimsical and convivial jokes, all the more interesting. Not only can I read the use of whimsical and convivial humour as making the satire more digestible to Victorian audiences, but I can also analyse to what degree and how it adds to the text's comic criticism, using its specific critical potential.

While the critical aspects of certain whimsical traditions of humorous writing such as Victorian nonsense verse (e.g. Lecercle) or the Savoy operas (e.g. Goron) have received scholarly attention, no general method for the analysis of whimsical and convivial jokes' critical meaning exists so far. In what follows, I will develop and demonstrate such a method by means of an analysis of "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish". I will argue that the specific way in which whimsical and convivial humour allows a text to express criticism is more similar to the way simple jokes poke fun at their target, which I call "humorous targeting", than to the way more typical, aggressive satire criticises its target, which I will call "ironic targeting". I furthermore propose that both types of targeting can coexist in the same satirical yet whimsical and/or convivial text, reinforcing each other's criticism. Victorian whimsical satire, such as that in Kendall's poem, can then be conceptualised as a comic practice in which the ironic targeting of typical satire and the humorous targeting that can be achieved through whimsical and convivial jokes cross into each other. I will start my analysis by discussing Paul Simpson's model of satire and applying it to Kendall's poem to argue that said model mainly describes satire based on ironic targeting. I will therefore develop a new model, borrowing elements from various existing humour theories, that will allow me to describe humorous targeting as clearly distinct from ironic targeting. After applying the new approach to Kendall's poem to analyse how the text expresses cultural criticism through its whimsical aspects, I will conclude by detailing the interplay between humorous and ironic targeting in Victorian whimsical satire.

At this point in the study, I am about to switch from a historically contextualising approach to a more ahistorical, predominantly stylistic and cognitivist approach.

Readers who are primarily interested in Victorian satire as a type of writing reflecting its historical and political contexts may wonder about the usefulness of this shift, especially since it leads to the invocation of several theoretical concepts (e.g. scripts, the reader's mind) that expand and complicate the conceptual framework and make my reading reliant on current theories about the psyche. The cognitivist and stylistic approach, however, is dominant in the field of humour studies where it crucially serves the formal analysis of textual humour. Such a formal analysis of the whimsical and convivial humour in whimsical satire will allow me to describe its critical aspects without relying on the contextualist reading that would make me highlight its politically and culturally motivated avoidance of overtly offensive ridicule.

One may still ask whether a similar analysis could not be reached without the ahistorical models, since the contextualist reading so far has already led me to question the idea of the whimsical and convivial comic elements as being relatively inoffensive. The formal models, however, specifically allow me to identify comic properties systematically and to describe what these properties add to the text's meaning. I can then analyse which of those aspects of meaning entail a criticism of society or culture. Without the models, I would have to identify and interpret the comic properties intuitively. Yet, while individuals are often able to describe and interpret what they find humorous about a text, intuitive accounts tend to differ widely (Holland 117-128), which is why I have chosen a model-based approach.

Ironic targeting

The way I conceptualise ironic targeting will mostly rely on Paul Simpson's discussion of irony in satire as presented in *On the Discourse of Satire: Towards a Stylistic Model of Satirical Humour* (2003). In that monograph, Paul Simpson provides an analytical model for satire, though I will argue that he mainly considers the ironic aspects of satire. Simpson describes satire as a "discursive practice" that is "configured as a triad embodying three discursive subject positions" (8). These positions are those of the satirist, who produces the text, the satiree, to whom the text is addressed, and the satirised, whom the text attacks or criticises. The positions can constantly be renegotiated. Furthermore, on a linguistic level, satirical texts would be marked by three ironic phases. These phases can occur simultaneously. The first ironic phase is "echoic", in that the text presents an utterance that echoes a real or imagined previous discourse event and masks the utterance's true originator (93). The abstract and intertextually or intersemiotically evoked utterance in question is called the "prime" (93). For example, the philanthropist in Kendall's poem echoes the anthropocentric discourse of the era that connected the scientific idea of "higher and lower species" to social hierarchies such as the gender hierarchy (Birch). It does so by connecting the idea of a human saving a jellyfish to the idea of a philanthropic man saving a woman in need. The prime would therefore be an utterance suggesting that the relationship between humans and the "lower species" is similar to that between men as heroic and women as helpless.

The second ironic phase is "oppositional" (Simpson 95). In this phase, the text adopts a discursive position that is antithetical to that which it initially leads readers to expect. The twist by which the text becomes antithetical to an expected thesis is called the "dialectic" (Simpson 95). In Kendall's poem, the text initially seems to present a human philanthropist rescuing a helpless, female-coded jellyfish, thus suggesting the anthropocentric idea of the rational human male being superior both to less evolved animals and less rational or weaker humans. The dialectic entails the twist by which the text ultimately negates that idea. The jellyfish states that the supposed rescue is unnecessary as it does not possess a sensorium and does therefore not fear death or suffering. In that way, the text points out how it is foolish to link evolutionary development to social hierarchies placing the most "developed" social groups (i.e. the people deemed most rational, mostly men) above social groups deemed less developed and therefore helpless (such as women and animals). Furthermore, the paradoxical idea of the jellyfish knowing it does not have a sensorium highlights the opposition between the unintelligence that the Darwinist discourse would attribute to a jellyfish and the remarkable intelligence of the jellyfish character in the poem.

The third phase is that of an "irony of conferral" (Simpson 153). It is informed by the clash between the prime and the dialectic and consists of the establishment of a "satirical uptake" (153). The uptake entails that the addressee "confers the status of satire" upon the text and, as a result, responds to it in a particular way (153). This mainly involves the recognition and acceptance of a "claim of insincerity", which can influence how the addressee judges the text in terms of truthfulness and acceptability (165-167). For example, the addressee of Kendall's poem can accurately respond to the text as satire by recognizing and accepting that it is insincere in its early characterization of the lyrical subject as a true philanthropist who will save the helpless jellyfish. This also makes the idealising, lyrical style of the text (e.g. "This creature of prismatic hues, / Stranded and desolate!") appear insincere, at least when one considers it as the style of the poem and not as the speaking or thinking style of the philanthropist.

Simpson's model is thus applicable to "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish". The instances of irony that it helps describe, however, are not the convivial and whimsical comic properties. In fact, the whimsicality and conviviality results from aspects of the poem that would make the ironies described by Simpson easier to overlook than if they were not present. These are the characterisation of both the jellyfish and the philanthropist as being likeable, the implicitness of the larger discourses that are being evoked, and the presence of other, amusing elements allowing readers to enjoy the text without focusing on the discourses to which it refers implicitly. The implicitness with which the anthropocentric discourse (that justifies the social centrality of men relative to women) is evoked, and the fact that the text can be enjoyed as telling a simple whimsical story about two amusing characters make it easier for the reader to ignore or to avoid focussing on the text's echoic irony than it would be if the poem evoked the anthropocentrism very explicitly and did not tell an amusing story. The fact that the

characters are both sympathetic and kind to one another makes the poem's rejection of the anthropocentric discursive position represented by the philanthropist seem less like a complete rejection. It can suggest that the text does not *side against* him entirely. That makes the "oppositional irony" less evident to the reader. As the whimsical and convivial aspects make both the evocation of the prime and the dialectic easier to overlook, they must indirectly affect the irony of conferral, which is informed by the clash between those two elements. Indeed, the fact that the evocation of anthropocentric discourse and the rejection of the anthropocentric discursive position (the echoic and oppositional irony) can be overlooked more easily, due to the poem's whimsical and convivial aspects, in turn, makes the irony of conferral less evident since the beginning of the text does not sincerely aim to make the reader empathise with the philanthropist's desire (i.e. the irony of conferral). Yet, at the same time, the general whimsy of the text admittedly also hints at the idea that the poem should not be taken all too seriously.

Overall, if one were to assume that Simpson's model can account for all the poem's satirical aspects, its whimsical and convivial aspects mainly seem to soften and/or de-emphasise its typically satirical nature. I claim, however, that the poem's whimsical humour allows it to ridicule anthropocentric discourse in a way that is notably different from the irony-based mechanism modelled by Simpson. The satire of a poem then entails both the critical irony described by Simpson and this other form of comic targeting, which I suggest calling humorous rather than ironic.

While irony is a difficult concept to define due to the meaning of the term shifting several times throughout history (Colebrook 1-54), I generally agree with Simpson's use of the word. He derives his conceptualisation of irony from a discussion of Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson's (1981) model of irony as echoic mention (Simpson 90-93). His descriptions of the forms of irony resonate with different contemporary models for irony. Somewhat simplified, the echoic use theory claims that an ironic utterance echoes another utterance or a thought that can be attributed to someone and suggests that the utterance being echoed is inappropriate (e.g. wrong and ridiculous). Another post-Gricean approach, the pretence theory claims, again simplified, that the sender of an ironic utterance is pretending that the meaning of their utterance, when interpreted as non-ironic, matches their actual thoughts or attitudes (Popa-Wyatt 128). The idea that the addressee must know that the sender is only pretending this, corresponds to Simpson's idea that a claim of insincerity has to be made by the sender and ratified by the satiree in the phase of conferral. Simpson's oppositional phase is arguably equivalent to the idea that the sender's actual thoughts or attitude clash(es) with the meaning that their utterance would carry when interpreted unironically, which is an element of both the echoic use and the pretence theory, but it also resonates with the classic idea of irony as saying one thing and meaning the opposite as well as with theories of "irony as negation" inspired by that notion (Attardo, "Irony" 797).

While these pragmatic approaches to irony, which match aspects of Simpson's description of the ironic phases and thus justify his use of the term, are typically applied

to verbal irony, echoing, opposing viewpoints, and false pretence are conceivably characteristics of ironic phenomena in general. In *The Compass of Irony*, for example, Douglas Colin Muecke, who revived the general study of irony in the 1960s, presents three formal characteristics of irony, including irony as an attitude and situational irony. These general characteristics imply both opposing viewpoints and false pretence. Firstly, irony requires a duality, in the sense that a situation (or text) can be interpreted in two ways: that of the "victim" and that of the ironist (19). Secondly, an opposition must exist between the two ways of interpreting the situation (opposing viewpoints) (19-20). Thirdly, except for sarcasm and very overt irony, irony requires "an element of 'innocence' (20)". According to a main interpretation, the situation invalidates the viewpoint of the victim, however, either the victim is unaware of this, or the ironist pretends to be unaware of it (false pretence).

Note that both Simpson's description of the ironic phases and the approaches to irony with which it can be associated are ahistorical. For my current purposes, it seems relevant to distinguish between (1) irony as a textual phenomenon that appears to be part of the mechanism behind satirical texts' ability to express criticism and (2) the concept of irony explored and reflected in Victorian thought and literature. I am using the former notion, which corresponds to verbal irony and situational irony expressed through text. I approach it from an ahistorical perspective.

There are however one minor and two more significant issues with the application of Simpson's theory to Victorian whimsical satire. The minor issue lies in the applicability of some general claims about satirical discourse and humour that Simpson (1-6) presents in his introduction, and that are meant to justify his conceptualisation of satire as a type of humorous discourse. These include the "straightforward assumption" that "humour is basically a good thing" (1) associated with human relationships, and the "key point of departure" that satirical discourse, whatever the linguistic origins of the term "satire" may be, "suffuses the general humour resources of modern societies and cultures" (4). Simpson initially only supports these claims using anecdotal evidence. The assumption that humour is a good thing seems questionable as it evokes the bias of "comic innocence" (Zijp) that has recently been exposed in the field of critical humour studies. The idea that satire is fundamentally humorous may apply to the contemporary satire Simpson analyses, but its general validity is debatable and may vary historically (Condren 388-389). In any case, not all historical satire is humorous and "good", in the sense of "convivial". Conviviality and the importance of humour in addition to irony can therefore be traits of the typically Victorian satire I am analysing.

This article, therefore, regards Simpson's theory as a model for satirical irony that does not account for truly humorous aspects of satire, which in turn problematises Simpson's central idea of satire as a discursive phenomenon. Simpson, moreover, does not aptly theorise the idea of an ironic phase. He presents a convincing argument for the distinction between echoic irony and oppositional irony (Simpson 92-93), and the irony of conferral would clearly define a separate "discursive event" (Simpson 153), that requires

the satiree to have experienced the echoic and oppositional ironic phases. Simpson's concept of the different "forms" or "modes" of irony as 'phases', though, seems limited to the idea that the echoic and oppositional irony define mutually interdependent discursive elements and that the irony of conferral is 'injected' into the text by the satiree after working through the previous phases and noting their collision (Simpson 153, 165). The question remains: how can irony be conceptualised as one phenomenon with different modes, and is it more than a coincidence that these modes work together to define a coherent discursive practice like satire?

Loosely based on Salvatore Attardo's theory of "Irony as Relevant Inappropriateness"[9] and on my analysis of Kendall's poem so far, I can suggest that the different "ironic modes" of satire work together to exploit a communicative instinct that is also exploited in verbal irony. It is triggered when receivers are confronted with an utterance presenting incongruous information. The information can be internally incongruous (as in, e.g., "No, you don't need an umbrella, it's only raining cats and dogs.") or it can be incongruous to other contextually relevant knowledge (e.g. when the utterance claims that it's only raining a little when it is raining a lot). The instinct makes the receivers reevaluate the validity of the incongruous pieces of information based on the easily accessible sources of knowledge from which they can be derived (e.g. the immediate environment, common sense, knowledge of similar insights, etcetera). An utterance can then be called ironic, in an overarching sense, if the incongruity is meant to trigger that instinct.

In the case of satirical irony, the properties of oppositional irony make the information presented by a text internally incongruous. The properties of echoic irony evoke the context of societal or cultural principles or authorities that serve as the accessible sources of knowledge based on which the incongruous insights can be reevaluated. Finally, the uptake defining the irony of conferral makes it so that the reader knows they are to recognise the principles or authorities as sources of knowledge that need to be questioned and realises that this was the aim of the incongruous text.

Following this logic, the ironic phases each correspond to the processing of the properties of a type of irony that come together to form the mechanism of a special form of irony, namely satirical irony. This view allows me to summarise how the ironic targeting in "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" functions: the poem presents an incongruity between the idea that the rational philanthropist must save the weaker jellyfish and the

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[9] Attardo claims that an ironic utterance is not irrelevant to the exchange but inappropriate, in the sense that not all presuppositions of the utterance are compatible with those of the context. The receiver can then assume that the aspect of the text causing the inappropriateness was kept as small and as easily resolved as possible, following a "principle of least disruption" (Attardo, "Irony" 813). For example, if someone ironically says: "What nice weather," while it is raining, the hearer can assume that the disruption is limited to that single utterance not corresponding to the actual weather. They can then find the actual meaning by changing that one disruptive aspect. As such, the principle of least disruption allows the hearer to easily deduce the intended ironical meaning. I borrow Attardo's idea of the receiver resolving an incongruity (the inappropriateness) through a simple deduction using easily available information.

negation of that idea by the story. That makes the reader reevaluate the former idea based on the principle of Darwinism-based anthropocentrism evoked by the text. They ultimately understand that the poem is ironically hinting at anthropocentrism being a questionable source of knowledge.

Humour and whimsy

Moving from irony to humour, the more whimsical comic aspects of "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" seem to rely heavily on incongruous ideas and on the faulty logic by which the text connects them. The poem combines a romantic idea of heroic rescue with the hardly romantic idea of a jellyfish. It does so through the faulty logic attributed to the philanthropist, who sees the fairly inconsequential act of "rescuing" a jellyfish as a valid form of heroic philanthropy. This evokes the "incongruity-resolution"-based humour (Attardo, *Linguistic Theories* 47-48).

Like irony, humour, in the contemporary sense, does not have one generally accepted definition (2-3). Most theories of humour, however, fall into one of three categories: incongruity-based theories, which connect humour to incompatible ideas being brought together, superiority-based theories, which focus on the aggressive dimension of humour and connect it to a sense of superiority over someone or something, and release-based theories, which connect humour to a release of cognitive/psychological tensions or pressures (Attardo and Raskin 46-50). For the contemporary study of textual humour, approaches that view incongruity and the (partial/playful) resolution of that incongruity as central characteristics of humour have been dominant. The "resolution" entails that the incongruent ideas are nevertheless brought together based on some (faulty and/or playful) logic. Furthermore, following Victor Raskin's Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH, see below), most contemporary incongruity-based theories situate the incongruity at the semantic level. "Semantic" here is meant in the cognitivist sense, referring to the level of language at which a mental representation of the text's content is formed through the activation and combination of structured units of "semantic" (i.e. pertaining to the dictionary meaning of lexemes) and encyclopaedic knowledge (Attardo 2010, 5-6). Examples of such theories are the 1984 SSTH, its successor model the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), developed by Salvatore Attardo and Victor Raskin in 1991 and expanded by Attardo to make it applicable to texts longer than a simple joke in 2010, the cognitive linguistic approaches based on Seana Coulson's space-structuring model (Coulson; Coulson and Kutas), Francisco Yus' 2016 model based on relevance theory, and Geert Brône and Kurt Feyaerts' 2006 cognitive linguistic approach that serves as a general framework for the analysis of humorous texts that exploit cognitive construal operations.

I can describe the whimsical humour of Kendall's poem more technically by using Raskin and Attardo's SSTH-GTVH paradigm. The SSTH[10] is based on the idea of "scripts". These are chunks of structured, typical, lexical-semantic and encyclopaedic knowledge about a concept that gets activated by the lexemes in a text, thus allowing readers to conceptualise the text's meaning. Put simply, the model claims that a text carries a joke if it is partially or fully compatible with two opposing scripts (Raskin 99) in the sense that their respective concepts are negations of one another, that their concepts can be expressed as antonyms, or that they are "local antonyms", meaning that they function as opposite principles within a certain discourse (Raskin 108). The fact that at least a part of the text is compatible with both scripts suggests that they partially overlap (Raskin 104), which essentially means that they must contain some shared semantic properties.

Kendall's poem evokes at least two Raskinian scripts: that of a heroic rescue, containing the typical notion of a man rescuing a helpless woman, and that of a jellyfish, containing the notion that jellyfish often get stranded and the idea of the animal as a lower species. The scripts overlap in the sense that both contain an entity that dies easily, namely the person (typically a beautiful woman) who must be rescued, when compared to another identity (the male rescuer or representative of a higher species in the case of the jellyfish). The scripts oppose each other in that a heroic rescue is a rare, beautiful, high-stakes situation while the rescue of a jellyfish is banal, aesthetically unpleasing, and inconsequential.

The GTVH builds on the SSTH by considering the script opposition to be the most central of six Knowledge Resources (KR), types of information into which one can tap to generate a humorous text. The second most central KR, Logical Mechanism (LM) accounts for the resolution that brings together the incongruent scripts through a playful and/or false logic. In the poem, the opposite scripts are brought together through "conceptual blending" (Fauconnier and Turner 58-60). The figure of the talking jellyfish namely combines characteristics of a typical jellyfish (e.g. being stranded, looking like a "silver sphere", not having a sensorium) with characteristics of a typical damsel in distress (e.g. being able to talk, beautiful, feminine). The reader has to perform the LM to understand the text, but this manner of blending the concepts can also be seen as the faulty way of thinking through which the philanthropist sees the jellyfish as a person he can rescue heroically.

Another relevant characteristic contributing to the poem's whimsical humour that can be described in terms of incongruity and resolution is its high level of semantic creativity. I can reach this description using the cognitive linguistic approach to humour introduced by Geert Brône and Kurt Feyaerts. This approach views textual humour as

[10] The SSTH is admittedly a slightly dated model, however, its expanded version, the GTVH, can still be seen as a contender in the ongoing debate on how cognitive incongruities can best be conceptualised (see Attardo, "Cognitive Linguistics" & "Humor" for discussions of the relationship between the GTVH and theories from the field of cognitive linguistics). In the following, I will rely on the SSTH-GTVH paradigm specifically for its unique emphasis on the importance of semantic opposition.

resulting from non-prototypical uses of normal construal operations (e.g. metonymy, metaphor, mapping). The non-typicality of the use creates an "effect of unexpectedness or incongruity" (Brône and Feyaerts 370), while the construal operations still provide a clear semantic motivation for the humorous utterance that serves as a resolution. The first stanza of "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish", for example, conceptually blends the concept of a jellyfish with that of a damsel in distress. On the one hand, the jellyfish in the poem lies in sand and seaweed and looks prismatic like a prototypical jellyfish, on the other hand, she is described using she/her pronouns, being beautiful, and seemingly needing to be saved, like a damsel. Blending is a normal construal operation, not specific to humour. Here though, it is used in a non-prototypical fashion, since a jellyfish is not the type of animal that we would normally associate with human beauty.

The aspects of the poem that the incongruity-resolution-based theories allow to systematically identify as being humorous (i.e. the strange role of the jellyfish, the faulty reasoning by the philanthropist, and the high semantic creativity of the poet) are thus distinct from the ironic properties I described using Simpson's model. This resonates with the idea that humour and irony are distinct phenomena and that the potential critical aspects of whimsical humour cannot be described by a model for satire focussing on ironic targeting. To investigate to what extent and how the whimsical humour in Kendall's poem adds to its societal and cultural criticism, I will now analyse the critical function of humour as described by the previously mentioned humour theories.

Neither theory aptly explains the connection between humour's semantic structure and its ability to target. The GTVH broadly implies that the Target, being a LM, is partially determined by more central LM's like Script Opposition and Logical Mechanism but does not explain what that partial determination entails. I will therefore introduce my own approach, which is based on Raskin's claims that humorous script oppositions instantiate one or more of a small list of oppositions that "are essential to human life" (113). These oppositions are "good versus bad", "death versus life", "obscene versus non-obscene", "money or much money versus no or little money", and "high stature versus low stature" (113-114). Attardo (*Linguistic Theories* 203-205) sees these as instantiations of another list of more basic oppositions underlying humorous script oppositions, also defined by Raskin in the same text: "actual-non-actual", "normal-abnormal" and "possible-impossible" (111). In an unpublished MA thesis cited by Attardo, Władysław Chłopicki applies the SSTH to a corpus of Polish humorous short stories. He reworks the list of three basic oppositions. The basic oppositions he recognizes are "absence versus presence", "necessary versus unnecessary" and "much versus little" (Chłopicki cited in Attardo, *Linguistic Theories* 210). Attardo claims that the instantiations are more culturally dependent than these basic oppositions. Up until recently, Western cultures would for example have had an extra opposition "excrement/non-excrement", which would still exist in many non-Western cultures (Attardo, *Linguistic Theories* 204). Given the prevalence of animal jokes throughout many cultures, I would argue that "human-non-human" could also be added.

The oppositions contrast a "good" thing which people happily talk about with a "bad" thing, that is potentially offensive or taboo. At first glance, one might think that this links incongruity-based models of humorous texts to aggression-based[11] theories. The switch from the unoffensive to the potentially offensive script then may create aggression that in turn could cause the humorous effect. This explanation, however, would not shed light on the critical potential of jokes that rely on anthropomorphism.

My alternative analysis entails that the oppositions essential to life can be seen as binaries that allow a thinker to quickly evaluate the situational appropriateness of action and thoughts. Low-status behaviour, for example, is inappropriate in a high-status context, similarly to how a luxurious mindset is inappropriate in a low-budget situation, to how sexual thoughts are inappropriate in a non-sexual situation, and to how it is inappropriate to project human ideas onto an interaction with an animal.

My theory furthermore combines Raskin's idea that lexical knowledge is stored in scripts with the more traditional notion of scripts as specifically containing prototypical knowledge of situations and activities. It also uses the notion of simulation from the framework of grounded cognition. Conceptualisation is seen as resulting from stimuli triggering "simulators", i.e. structured collections of knowledge about a category, stored as a constellation of modality-specific experiences that each consists of several features. When a simulator gets triggered, by a stimulus of which the experience is part of the simulator, the larger experience gets simulated (Barsalou 620-623; Coulson).

I claim that linguistic signs and structures carry meaning in the sense that they cause the mind to simulate experiences and that these experiences are furthermore interpreted as parts of larger, dynamic experiences revolving around a single desired or feared (or undesirable) experience. These larger experiences can be called "situations". I then redefine a "script" as the dynamic network of associated experiences corresponding to one situation. It can entail (1) perceptions that allow a thinker to identify a type of situation prototypically, (2) experiences manifesting or evoking the central desire or fear of such a situation, or (3) experiences that one can have pursuing or avoiding the central desire or fear. Readers fit the meanings of textual signs and structures into scripts, in the sense that they imagine the experiences which the signs and structures evoke as being part of an experienced situation.

The rescue of a damsel in distress is an example of a situation centred on the desire to save the damsel. The first stanza of Kendall's poem triggers a "damsel" script by presenting a beautiful female figure who is in despair and "passive" (Kendall 1887, 35), suggesting that her problem can be solved by another actor. The second stanza focuses on the indignation the lyrical subject feels as they observe the apparent suffering of the jellyfish as well as its beauty. Both feelings trigger a desire to save the animal. Although

[11] With "aggression-based", I am referring to the broad category of humour theories that "mention the negative element of humor, its aggressive side" (Attardo, *Linguistic Theories* 49). This category of theories is also commonly known as "superiority theories" (see above) or "hostility theories".

the jellyfish is not a typical damsel, the idea of saving a beautiful woman in distress helps the reader to identify the situation and invites them to integrate the experience of the jellyfish into the damsel script. The rest of the poem presents experiences (including thoughts and experiences of actions and utterances) that the lyrical subject expects to have or actually has as they pursue that desire.

A situation can involve different types of affects. Freely based on Valerie DeBellis and Gerald Goldin's concept of "meta-affects" [12] (Goldin 62-63; DeBellis and Goldin 136-137), I distinguish "base affects", which define the situation's central desire or fear, from "meta-affects". Meta-affects are related to other experiences of the script and influence one's experience of a base affect (e.g. the negative affect associated with paying a bill can ruin the positive affect of enjoying food while dining at a fancy restaurant[13]). Meta-affects of a script can be directly associated with experiences that are part of it (e.g. the negative affect of having to pay the bill) or they can get triggered when an experience breaks a cultural rule of situational appropriateness (e.g. the wearing of informal clothes is itself not affectively charged but can feel inappropriate in a fancy restaurant).

When a strong meta-affect of a situation has an axiological (good-bad) valence that is different from that of the situation's base affect, thinkers may feel an urge to abruptly abandon the script in order to focus on the pursuit or avoidance of another desire or fear, e.g. the dread of losing money (bad) outweighs the desire to enjoy food at a restaurant (good) => thinker abandons "dining" script and focuses on leaving the restaurant (new base affect). I call such a sudden shift a meta-affective script switch (MASS).

When a meta-affect with an axiological valence opposite to that of the situation's base affect does not overpower the base affect and no MASS takes place, the situation can be said to "justify" ignoring that meta-affect (e.g. the experience of dining at a fancy restaurant justifies ignoring the high expense). Later, if another meta-affect would normally cause a MASS, it can feel awkward to switch away from the justifying situation to the point where the thinker may try to ignore the new meta-affect. They can use semantic creativity to conceptualise their experiences in such a way so as to counteract the meta-affects that could cause a switch (e.g. someone refuses to acknowledge that the food they paid a lot of money for comes in disappointingly small portions and acts

[12] DeBellis and Goldin use "meta-affect" to refer to "affect about affect, affect about and within cognition that may again be about affect, the monitoring of affect, and affect itself as monitoring" (Goldin 62).

[13] The example of a restaurant is a homage to Schank and Abelson's (42-46) seminal work on scripts, and to Attardo (*Linguistic Theories* 200), who borrowed their example to explain Raskin's and his usage of the concept.

like they are pleased with the portions being small). I label this phenomenon "justification maintenance".[14]

My model proposes that humour helps to relieve the tension between a cognitive-semantic instinct to perform a MASS and the psychological urge towards justification maintenance. Humour occurs when a thinker struggles to maintain a justifying script despite their instinct to switch away from it (1), as well as when the thinker finally gives in to the instinct to perform a MASS, thus releasing the tension (2). (In my example, this would occur when someone is making obvious excuses for why the portions at an expensive restaurant are too small (1), and when they finally acknowledge their desire to leave and thus allow their instinct to switch away from the fancy restaurant script to overrule their urge to maintain it (2). The obvious excuses would be laughable and the sudden switch from appreciating the food to wanting to leave would be ridiculous.) As a result, humour can be used, satirically, to criticise how a society or culture irrationally adopts, maintains, or even clings to certain views, because they justify otherwise problematic or dumb thoughts or behaviours.

Anthropomorphic humour, such as that in Kendall's poem, can then revolve around the tension between the realisation that a thought or behaviour is situationally inappropriate, based on the human-non-human binary, and affective impulses to ignore that binary as it justifies ideas of greatness. The critical potential of the whimsical humour in "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" does therefore not have to rely on a strong sense of aggression or superiority, but rather on how it presents the problematic kind of trans-species thinking inherent to social Darwinism as a form of emotions-based inappropriateness. The philanthropist is not ridiculously stupid or evil but silly, in the sense that he lets his emotions, namely his desire for greatness and his affective appreciation of the jellyfish's beauty, cause him to overvalue himself and to inappropriately project his desire for an encounter with a damsel in distress onto a eukaryotic marine animal.

Some of the text's creative images highlight the cognitive effort one may be willing to invest to experience themself as the hero in a damsel-in-distress story. Throughout the poem, the image of a stranded jellyfish is blended with that of a damsel in distress, who is beautiful, "utterly alone" and would produce a "murmur". The initial verses "Her beauty […] through sand and seaweed shone" furthermore use synaesthesia, connecting the experience of the beauty of the jellyfish with an experience of light, suggested by the lexemes "through […] shone". Also, the image of the jellyfish as a "creature of prismatic hue" uses metonymy, replacing the slimy body of the animal with its most aesthetically

[14] The connection between the semantic creativity typical of humour and the need to regulate emotional experiences is loosely inspired by Norman Holland's 1982 DEFT framework, which claims that humour makes us laugh because it allows us to confirm our identity. This confirmation entails that the humorous stimulus allows us to project our fantasies (clusters of desires and wishes) onto it but also suggests psychological strategies by which we can distance ourselves from what we consider vulgar, and by which we can transform, and/or adapt to the world. My concept of justification maintenance loosely parallels the concepts of "defence" and "fantasy" in Holland's framework.

pleasing property. Finally, the image of "the crystal sphere" uses metaphor to emphasise the transparency and roundness of the jellyfish, while de-emphasising its sliminess.

These construal operations are arguably motivated by the philanthropist's desire to strengthen the base affect of the damsel script by conceptualising the jellyfish as more attractive and damsel-like. The mixing of scripts combines the image of the jellyfish with that of a prototypical damsel, the light in the synaesthesia can symbolise the idea of an ideal reality connected to his desire for heroic greatness, and the metonymy and metaphor highlight the jellyfish's beauty while downplaying its unattractive qualities. In short, the poem uses whimsical images to suggest that the philanthropist's anthropomorphic way of thinking is influenced by his emotions allowing him to evade his sense of appropriateness.

The poem moreover creates a tension between the suggested desire to imagine the encounter with the jellyfish as that with a damsel in distress and the sense of situational inappropriateness by adding situations that make it harder to ignore the incongruity. The jellyfish unexpectedly starts to talk like a human and even surpasses the human philanthropist in her rationality ("She said: 'Your culture's incomplete'"). It is this tension which introduces the effect of humour.

This tension is relieved when the poem's final stanza indicates that the incongruity is not to be ignored. The central desire of the damsel script, i.e. the heroic rescue of the jellyfish, cannot be realised since the jellyfish does not possess the right biology to play its role in its pursuit: "It does not matter what may come, / I'm dead to woe or bliss". The final verses make it clear that no justification will stop the switch from occurring: "I haven't a Sensorium, / And that is how it is." The release of the tension re-activates the effect of humour.

Overall, the poem presents the ignoring of the human-non-human opposition as the ignoring of an inappropriateness based on an affective desire to experience a situation in which the lyric I is a hero rescuing a beautiful damsel in distress. It furthermore highlights how the creative conceptualisations that allow this ignorance are ultimately untenable. Relating this to the idea of anthropocentric Darwinism, the poem suggests that the lyric I's affective desire to justify the view of himself as a potential damsel-rescuing hero causes him to ignore how irrational it is to mix an idea of Darwinist evolution with an idea of interhuman dynamics.

Conclusion: the crossing of humour and irony

In the previous sections, I explored how satire can criticise aspects of culture and/or society by using two forms of comic targeting, namely ironic targeting and humorous targeting. The ironic form of targeting relies on a satirical form of irony, which I described, borrowing from Simpson's model of satirical discourse. I essentially claimed that the information presented in satirical texts contains an internal incongruity. That incongruity is ultimately meant to make the reader aware of the need to question the validity of an echoically evoked societal or cultural principle or authority as a source of knowledge.

"The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish", for example, applies the ironic way of targeting to present the Victorian anthropocentric discourse as a source of knowledge that needs to be questioned. However, whimsical satire, such as that in Kendall's poem, only subtly applies the ironic way of targeting and combines it with a humorous form of targeting that can be achieved through whimsical and convivial humour. Humorous targeting uses humour to expose irrational ways of thinking about societal or cultural ideas, that are motivated by a need to justify otherwise problematic or dumb thoughts or behaviours. Whimsical and convivial humour can thus add (socio)psychological depth to the irony-based criticism of a cultural or societal way of thinking.

Relating my analysis of the humorous targeting in "The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish" to that of the ironic targeting, it becomes apparent that, while the phenomena are clearly distinct, they are also strongly interconnected. Both forms of comic targeting allow the poem to criticise the way in which Victorian culture connected social and evolutional hierarchies by pointing out an incongruity between ideas that apply to animals and ideas that apply to humans. Both forms add specificity to this general criticism based on their respective critical potential. The poem's satirical irony connects the ignoring of the human-animal binary by the text and by the fictional philanthropist to the discursive context of Victorians failing to question anthropocentric Darwinism as a source of knowledge applicable to gender relations. The text's humorous targeting adds psychological depth to the criticism. It suggests that those ignoring the human-animal binary are not simply unaware of the idea that the human condition differs from that of animals. There are psychological, affective factors that direct their focus away from that idea and that make them more willing to use semantic creativity with the aim of resolving the incongruity. These factors revolve around a drive to cling to the way of thinking that justifies them viewing themselves as potent actors in comparison to helpless others.

Kendall's satirical poetry demonstrates how Victorian whimsical satire can create a synergy between the ironic targeting of the bitingly critical satire typical of the 18th century and the humorous targeting that is possible through whimsical and convivial humour. Irony can target cultural ideas or discourses shaping society by suggesting that they could be invalidated by other available and relevant ideas or discourses. Whimsical humour can criticise a culture or society by exploring how ridiculous ideas and behaviours are created or maintained not because they are good or rational, but rather because they help people manage affective pressures to cling onto justifiable ways of thinking. As I have shown, the discursive and epistemic criticism expressed through irony and the more psychological criticism expressed through whimsical humour can then both play an important role in the way whimsical satire tackles its targets. Moreover, the phenomenon of ironic targeting crossing into whimsically humorous targeting, inherent to Victorian whimsical satire, can be read as a response to the way in which science-based frameworks (e.g. Darwinism) treated as generally valid sources of knowledge can be misused as justifications that relieve affect-based insecurities (e.g. insecurities about gender and social roles).

In summary, while the whimsy and/or conviviality typical of Victorian comic works, including satire, reflects a cultural shift away from aggressive, corrective laughter, this study has argued that it does not necessarily make satire from the era less critical. Victorian whimsical satire is situated at a crossing of sharply critical satire, which predominantly relies on ironic ways of targeting, and whimsical and convivial humour, with humour possessing its own way of targeting. The combination of the humorous and ironic ways of targeting gives whimsical satire a unique critical potential. By combining formal theories of humour, irony, and satire, one can model the interplay between humorous and ironic ways of targeting, which allows for a systematic analysis of how the whimsical and convivial humour adds psychological depth to the societal and cultural criticism in specific whimsically satirical texts.

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Appendix

"The Philanthropist and the Jelly-Fish", by May Kendall

Her beauty, passive in despair,
Through sand and seaweed shone,
The fairest jelly-fish I e'er
Had set mine eyes upon.

It would have made a stone abuse
The callousness of fate,
This creature of prismatic hues,
Stranded and desolate!

Musing I said: "My mind's unstrung,
Joy, hope, are in their grave:
Yet ere I perish all unsung
One jelly-fish I'll save!"

And yet I fancied I had dreamed
Of somewhere having known
Or met, a jelly-fish that seemed
As utterly alone.

But ah, if ever out to sea
That jelly-fish I bore,
Immediately awaited me
A level hundred more!

I knew that it would be in vain
To try to float them all;
And though my nature is humane,
I felt that it would pall.

Yet this one jelly-fish," I cried,
I'll rescue if I may.
I'll wade out with her through the tide
And leave her in the bay."

I paused, my feelings to control,
To wipe away a tear —
It seemed to me a murmur stole
Out of the crystal sphere.

She said: “Your culture's incomplete,
Though your intention's kind;
The sand, the seaweed, and the heat
I do not really mind.

“To wander through the briny deep
I own I do not care;
I somehow seem to go to sleep
Here, there, or anywhere.

“When wild waves tossed me to and fro,
I never felt put out;
I never got depressed and low,
Or paralysed by doubt.

“'Twas not the ocean's soothing balm.
Ah no, 'twas something more!
I'm just as peaceful and as calm
Here shrivelling on the shore.

“It does not matter what may come,
I'm dead to woe or bliss:
I haven't a Sensorium,
And that is how it is.”