

# MULTIMODAL HUMOUR ON OVERPOPULATION IN JOEL PETT'S ENVIRONMENTAL CARTOONS

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**Abstract.** Cartoonists' skill to reveal important problems, to influence and construct public opinion has become a great power. This study examines humour as a social instrument and focuses on the expression of humour, or irony in particular, in famous American cartoonist Joel Pett's overpopulation cartoons. The analysis explores the role, interaction and synergic effect of verbal and visual modes in constructing an ironic attitude towards the negligence of urgent global issues. Four selected Joel Pett's environmental cartoons are analysed in detail, examining their content, the incongruity between the implied and explicit messages, the verbal mode and its interplay with the pictorial signs, and the amusing effect which is achieved by multimodality. The message communicated via visual mode contributes to the context of the cartoon, helping the reader comprehend the implications, and correlates with the verbal means rendering its hilarious message. Multimodality is determined as an essential element that allowed the reader to perceive humour.

**Keywords:** irony, satire, humour, cartoon, multimodality.

## Introduction

Humour has become an integral part of people's lives, and this can be proved by growing interest in the discourse of humour in different media. The subject of humour and matters such as smiling, laughter and positive well-being, in general, is a popular topic in the media (Rosa, Laurentiis, Perego 2014). However, humour is an extensive term, and a multi-disciplinary field of research is a complicated matter to examine. It comprises various study fields, such as philosophical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, and linguistic and is analysed from various perspectives (Dynel 2009). Prominent philosophers and writers have taken a great interest in this phenomenon. For instance, Sigmund Freud explained humour in correlation with his interest in human sexuality and provided a psychoanalytic theory of humour that claims that it is a way to conceal sexual aggression (Berger, 2017). According to him, unintentional humour is one of the best examples of accidentally expressing suppressed thoughts that often cross one's subconsciousness (Simpson 2003). In other words, certain unintentional jokes or humour can only be understood if "some sort of eruption from suppressed subconscious" is activated (*ibid.*, p. 18). Freud also emphasised the formal or structural aspects of humour and claimed that form and techniques utilized in jokes are of equal importance to the subject of the joke. In fact, Freud assigned humour to a crucial social dimension, enabling people to gain valuable insights into social and political matters (Berger 2017). Hence, humour is often intimately connected with culture, nation or a certain group of people, their experience etc.

As an alternative to Freud's theory, political philosopher Hobbes introduced a different approach to humour which emphasized the connection between the latter and authority and perceived humour as an inconspicuous yet influential means of social control by dominant elements in society (Berger 2017). Similar to Hobbes' stance towards humour is presented by Simpson (2003, p. 2), who agrees that humour often functions as an instrument of social influence. These approaches present reasoning for the employment of humour in environmental cartoons – it can affect people's opinions, beliefs, persuade the public to do something and induce changes. Hobbes, Simpson and Freud explained humour from their own perspective, which their beliefs and career/occupation had directly impacted. Therefore, it can be implied that there is no correct or wrong understanding of what humour is and how it works.

As the concept of humour is broad and complex, many different definitions of this phenomenon, from very primitive to more complex ones, can be traced. New Oxford Dictionary (2003) describes humour as a character trait, as "the quality of being funny". Ross' (2005, p. 1) definition describes humour as "something that makes a person laugh or smile". This presupposes that humour is a somewhat subjective matter, and its effectiveness depends solely on a person. A thing that one finds funny might not be so amusing to another due to different factors, and the most important and compulsory component of effective humour is shared knowledge or background. This idea is supported by Raskin (1985), who states that the scope and degree of mutual understanding in humour varies directly with the degree to which the participants share their social backgrounds. Moreover, the understanding of

humour can differ based on culture, beliefs, religion, a person's status in society, hobbies, occupation etc.

Regardless of the fact, it is evident that responding and reacting to humour is a universal trait that all individuals share (Raskin 2005); therefore, humour has been widely used in different media as a device to attract the public's attention, persuade people to do or buy something or create more interest in certain issues or ideas (Ross 2005). This aim of employing humour can be implied as to the reason for the utilization of this device in cartoons; naturally, authors seek to make the public more invested in particular problems and more aware of certain the gravity of certain situations.

The present study aims at identifying humour on overpopulation in Joel Pett's environmental cartoons. The research has been carried out applying descriptive and analytical methods.

### **Classification of humour**

There are various means used to convey comedy; however, Ross' (2005) suggested roughly divided into verbal, which relies on words and non-verbal humour, which appertains to visual and/or auditory representation. Humour is more than just a joke. It combines linguistic properties, such as morphology, lexis, syntax etc., as well as body language, facial expressions and tone of voice, to name a few (Ross 2005). While some of the former components of humour are general and can be common to different genres, it is vital to distinguish means of humour applicable to the printed genre.

### **Means of constructing verbal humour**

Ross (2005) offers quite a number of methods of constructing verbal humour, for instance, creating ambiguity with the help of vocabulary, as in punning through polysemy or causing humorous effect by semantical incongruity. Incongruity has been named as one of the fundamental principles that underpin the language of humour (Simpson 2004). This discrepancy is present in both non-verbal and verbal humour. The latter originates from the exploitation of language conventions and deserves examining various verbal means of constructing humour.

### **Irony**

A crucial method of constructing verbal humour is employing irony. Incongruity as a fundamental element reinforcing the language of humour is present in irony. Ross (2005) defines irony as a way of expressing meaning in the language of a different tendency and relates humour and irony, stating that

irony is an expression of meaning, often humorous or sarcastic, by the use of the language of a different or opposite tendency. Simpson (2004) treats irony as a foundation for satire and parody as both invoke a particular kind of irony to meet their stylistic incongruity. It is something in between what was uttered and implied. It is evident that despite some definitions being more extensive than the others, all three sources approach irony in a similar way. It means that the medium to emerge incongruity appears when one is said, but another is meant. Thus, a problem of interpretation and vulnerability to misunderstandings arise.

Words and expressions must be used carefully to understand the context as, according to Colebrook (2006), the meaning of a word is just how a word works in a context. Therefore, the background knowledge of the situation is a compulsory element that provides the word with proper meaning. Colebrook (2005) maintains that irony reveals and reinforces shared human assumptions due to fixed conventions. That implies that whenever language is not used conventionally, irony can be recognized.

Thus, although perceived differently, irony can be defined as the incongruity between what is said and what is meant and therefore, the basis for ironical effect is incongruity, which is evidently the motive force to constructing verbal humour. Moreover, incongruity can be intertwined with verbal and non-verbal means.

### **Parody and satire**

Parody relies on employing stylistic devices. According to Simpson (2004), parody can be understood to comment on typical features of syntax, lexicon, phonology, prosody, etc. However, the most prominent feature of parody is its function to convey verbal humour. While sometimes parody can be treated as offensive or mocking, Simpson (2004) believes that not all parody is hostile, as it can be treated as expressing criticism on negative aspects in a subtle, hilarious though comprehensible way.

Parody, another form of verbal humour, as a stylistic device is close to satire but contains offensive elements. The function of satire is to expose negative issues of society and people seeking to encourage changing something for the better. Pollard (2018) claims that satire seeks to reveal the difference between the real and desired state of things. It aims to improve the existing state of things moulding public opinion revealing sins and sinners. Thus, satire concentrates on changing and improving certain situations, while parody produces ridicule focusing on various features of individuals.

## Visual mode

Visual mode is a weighty medium of sending humorous messages in cartoons through a visual component. Ross (2005) states that people are more likely to watch and listen to humour than read it. According to Cook (1992), verbal communication is often considered through non-verbal means that support verbal communication and must be treated and considered seriously. Therefore, the analysis of the message of the environmental cartoon must comprise the linguistic analysis as well as the context whereby context is meant music, pictures, paralanguage, situation, participants, etc. Forceville (2002) notices that a verbal text often requires additional or expository information supplied by an image as a visual mode.

The problem is that interpretation is not a matter of academic research, as no rules or code allow us to identify the correctness of interpretation; thus, Forceville (2002) states that dictionaries and grammars can help master the language code. However, there is no such thing as a grammar of a picture. However, there is no need to focus on the lack of guidelines or code of a picture as most cartoons, advertisements, or other genres employing visual mode are rarely purely pictorial (Forceville 2002). Therefore, images seldom have to be analysed from the pictorial aspect alone, i.e. the relation between word and image must be considered and perceived as equally important. Thus, where two modes join – multimodality arises.

## Word and image relation. Multimodality

Forceville, Urios-Aparisi (2009) provides a list of modes, such as pictorial signs, written signs, spoken signs, gestures, sounds, music, smells, tastes, and touch, though not all of them is appropriate to cartoons. Incongruity, with the help of multimodality, can be intertwined with pictorial and written signs (Kress 2010). The contradiction between verbal and depicted information or between the messages of two modes allow irony to occur. Though multimodality cannot be treated as a direct method of constructing humour, it plays an important role in the production of irony. As Doumont (2002) states, a conflict between verbal and nonverbal communication is put to good use in irony and humour when people know nonverbally what is meant and what is said verbally. Thus, the incongruity between verbal and non-verbal communication resulting in irony or humour can be found in cartoons where both means of communication are present. Hence while analysing a cartoon, it is crucial to take into consideration both

modes, i.e. multimodality and its contribution to the final product and its amusing effect.

Multimodality arises when more two or more modes merge and are blended; consequently, understanding images and language and how these two modes interplay is extremely important to perceive a full concept or intended message of a cartoon. Naturally, multimodality is an important issue to be considered when analysing environmental cartoons as it often helps to produce or reinforce the humorous effect.

## Cartoons

As a means of addressing issues or poking fun of those in power, Editorial cartoons have been present for a very long time. Drawings published during, for example, more than two centuries of wars are often a topic of analysis in history classes and a great way of familiarizing with the political or social situation at the time. Tsakona, Popa (2014) state that editorial cartoons offer valuable insight into the socio-political context. While political and social issues are the most prevalent topics for cartoons up to the present time, many other problems are facing the world today that are being addressed and recognized with the help of this medium. Naturally, a question arises – why this, seemingly outdated method of expressing certain ideas or opinions, is still ingrained in our society, among many others, more technologically advanced methods.

Cartoonists' ability to address important issues and project the public's opinion has become a great power and means of influence and hazard for the people depicted (Hackbart-Dean 1997). This power is used to recognise serious yet disregarded problems, environmental issues being one of them. With newspapers (printed or internet-based) being ubiquitous in the modern world, raising awareness can be considered rather advantageous. Another important function that these drawings perform (as a result of involving and introducing the public to the socio-political issues) is creating discussions: a compelling cartoon "promotes debate and disagreements on various subjects" (ibid., p. 163). Thus, it is evident that a great cartoon can encourage people to talk about certain problems and therefore take action to solve them. However, to perform such a function, it is essential to interpret and understand it correctly.

Cartoons are often subjective, have very distinctive styles, and are filled with symbols that should be identified to see the real concept or subject of a cartoon (Dyer 2014). Another key element to adequate analysis stems from consistency. Dyer (2014) suggests that familiarity with cartoonist's styles helps to interpret their

cartoons. For this reason, only one cartoonist – Joel Pett – was chosen for the analysis of cartoons.

Context is an extremely important matter to be considered when examining cartoons. The reader needs to get involved and examine cartoons thoroughly as they require a background or context to make sense (Dyer 2014). Tsakona and Popa (2011) also claim that to work humour, whether it be environmental, political, philosophical etc., background knowledge is always required about the issue it aims to affect.

Thus, cartoons act as a powerful means of raising awareness about certain issues and exposing people to news or problems that are sometimes suppressed, concealed or ignored by political leaders, corrupted media etc. However, in order for cartoons to actually become powerful, they must be interpreted correctly. Thus, such matters as context, symbolism and cartoonist's style must be considered.

### The Use of Humour in Joel Pett's Environmental Cartoons

The main functions of humour in cartoons are to reach people, influence them and/or raise awareness of a certain situation. Thus, cartoonists employ a vast array of different methods and stylistic devices that help to achieve humour. It has been already mentioned that there are two major divisions of humour – verbal and non-verbal. For instance, verbal humour is rendered through the employment of irony, parody, or satire, whereas non-verbal humour in cartoons is usually conveyed through pictures; if in the cartoon, both verbal and non-verbal means are employed in order to produce a humorous effect – cartoon can be considered multimodal (employing two or more modes that supplement each other). Therefore, that implies that there are many ways for a cartoonist to develop humour in cartoons. This study focuses on analysing the types of humour identified in Joel Pett's cartoons concerning environmental issues.

The collected cartoons were published from 2012 to 2019, and most of them were published in the newspaper's Lexington Herald-Leader official website. Joel W. Pett, born in American in 1953, is an editorial cartoonist for the newspaper Lexington Herald-Leader. His work is published in many newspapers and magazines, such as the Washington Post, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and the Boston Globe, to name a few, and has received a number of awards for his outstanding work as an editorial cartoonist. A prominent and acknowledged cartoonist who won the Global Media Award in 1995, Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award in 1999 and a Pulitzer Prize, has covered many different topics and revealed

problems, social and political, through his cartoons. As climate change and many other environment-related problems are often perceived as a social and political issue, the main focus is on environmental cartoons and the employment of humour in them.

### The peculiarities of humour in Joel Pett's cartoons on overpopulation

Joel Pett's environmental cartoons to be examined place focus on the issue of overpopulation. Four of Joel Pett's environmental cartoons that fall into this category are to be analysed.

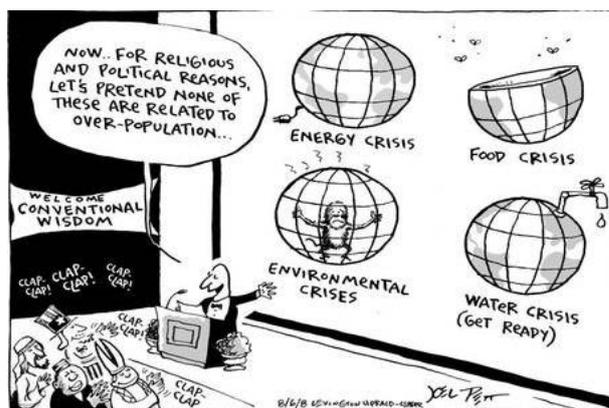


Fig 1. “Joel Pett population cartoons”, 2017

The first Joel Pett's environmental cartoon on population is inserted above (see figure 1). It was published on May 22nd, 2017 and depicts a man, probably a politician, giving a speech on the stage about some problems the world is facing today, such as energy, food, environmental and water crises. While these issues are being presented, the man also makes an utterance: “NOW.. FOR RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL REASONS, LET'S PRETEND NONE OF THESE ARE RELATED TO OVER-POPULATION...”. The crowd listening to the man's speech is also significant – among the listeners, one can notice a Christian leader (man wearing Papal tiara), a man with U.S. symbolism who likely stands for U.S.'s politicians and a man wearing ghutra (headscarf worn by Muslim men) which can be considered a symbol for Muslim countries and their leaders. These men seem to agree to the speaker's ideas and support him by applauding: “CLAP CLAP!”. On the side of the cartoon, a label summarizing the cartoon's idea can be observed – “WELCOME CONVENTIONAL WISDOM”.

Obviously, the visuals or pictorial signs, although providing the reader with contextual information and acting as an explanatory means, do not directly convey any humorous messages. The written signs, i.e. linguistic component of this cartoon, are more significant and dominant means of constructing humour. It allows us to observe that

the orator in the cartoon is portrayed as a toadying person who says the comfortable truth solely. The way he expresses his very subjective opinion on environmental issues is rather humorous. The man states the problems and suggests the guests should pretend that none of the problems is related to overpopulation, which allows us to imply that overpopulation is the main cause of these issues. The incongruity between what the speaker says and what he actually has in mind is indisputable and displays a case of verbal irony. The reader needs to have certain background knowledge or basic understanding of how the presented problems correlate with the issue of overpopulation in order to correctly perceive the ironic message and the humour of this cartoon. Therefore, contextual knowledge is essential here to understand humour.

The public speaker's very obvious lie is met with applause, which shows just how naïve and ignorant the listeners (religious and political leaders) are. They rather hear the comfortable "truth," i.e. believe the blatant lie, than try to solve the actual cause of the problems. It is clear that in this case, Joel Pett parodies toady politicians or even environmentalists who do not stand their ground when placed under pressure. The speaker who knows the truth but chooses to ignore it to flatter those in power is a rather humorous character himself and a source of parody for toady activists, politicians etc. The leaders are also satirized and portrayed as solely seeking benefit for themselves while ignoring the world's problems. Their approval of the ironized message portrays how foolishly they are willing to act to get some benefit. So, both exaggerated representations of the people in the cartoon display a case of parody; the mimicry of their behaviour, decision making etc., is the main subject satirized comically, thus resulting in parody. Finally, probably the most eye-opening yet humorous detail of the cartoon is the label about conventional wisdom. It expresses the idea that this wisdom is based not on the actual knowledge about the problems and possible solutions but on the comfortable "truth" that all the world leaders want to hear and agree on. Therefore, no adequate solutions can be provided, and the situation is not improved.

In a word, this environmental cartoon mocks religious and political leaders, parodies them and their toady followers who know the truth but choose to ignore it. The author also utilizes irony through the orator's statement-making parody and incongruity, the main sources of humour in this case. While the pictures help identify the audience and its significance to comprehending the main idea of the cartoon, the amusing effect is achieved through verbal means and, consequently, they can be considered to be of greater importance in this case.



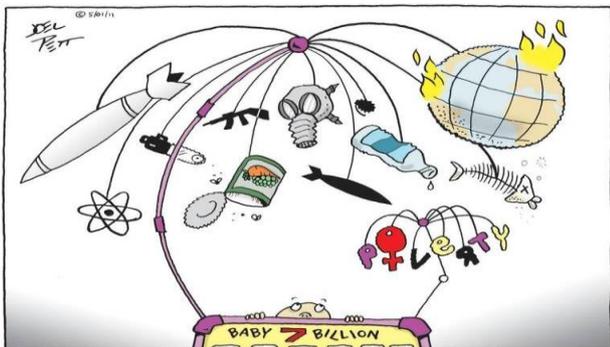
Fig 2. "Joel Pett population cartoons", 2017

The second environmental cartoon regarding a population (see figure 2) was published on May 22nd, 2017, and it shows a naked man wearing only a soldier's helmet and a rifle cartridge belt talking to a new-born. The man makes an utterance as he is handing over a gun to the baby: "WE MADE YOU A CAKE... HERE, DEFEND YOUR SHARE OF IT!". There is a cake behind the man and a sign decorated with balloons saying: "WELCOME 6 BILLIONTH HUMAN". The utterance and the sign are the only verbal expressions in this cartoon, and after taking a better look at them and the visual representation of the cartoon, it can be indicated that the humorous effect is achieved with verbal and non-verbal means.

Firstly, the pictorial aspect of the cartoon where a man is giving the baby a gun is humorous itself. The idea of a new-born having to hold a gun almost twice its size is impossible in real life and therefore amusing. However, together with the verbal means, the man's action of giving the baby a gun acquires a little different meaning. The man saying that they made the baby a cake but giving him a gun and telling him to defend his share of it implies that people do not have enough food due to the overpopulation, and there is an ongoing war for food around. There are bones scattered in the picture, reinforcing the image of war and hunger. Despite all of this, people are celebrating the baby's birth, making a cake even though this helpless new-born will not defend his share of food and therefore is doomed to starve. This portrayal, although very metaphorical, allows the reader to understand the author's intended message, which is to show that the Earth's capacity is not unlimited, and this rapid growth is resulting in a shortage of food or unemployment, naming a few. This comparison of life to a battlefield for food depicts how bad the situation is and encourages the reader to take measures. At first glance, the cartoon seems sad; however, it is somewhat humorous and has many amusing messages. The sign congratulating the six billionth baby is ironic. There is an evident incongruity between the happy welcoming sign and

the idea that the baby is given a gun to fight for survival, almost as a welcoming gift. Another ironized message is sent through the man's utterance where he tells the baby that they made him a cake yet gives him a gun to fight for it. This contrast or clash between the literal perception of a welcoming gift and the author's intended meaning of the word in the cartoon creates irony, which can be considered to be the main source of humour in this case. Once again, the written signs interplay with the pictorial signs and the amusing effect is achieved with multimodality. Moreover, certain pictorial signs or details reinforcing the humorous message of the cartoon make it even more polished. For instance, the scattered bones or the man being naked and wearing only a helmet and a rifle cartridge belt create the amusing effect simply through the visual details while also displaying and emphasizing the gravity of the situation.

To sum up, in this Joel Pett's cartoon on overpopulation, the main source of humour is achieved through multimodal irony; multimodality functions as an essential device in the humour construction as it helps to create the amusing effect by connecting both visual and verbal elements. The pictorial signs, in this case, also act as a source of humour. Small details not only reinforce the message of the cartoon but also help create a comic mood.



**Fig 3.** “Joel Pett population cartoon”, 2017

The following environmental cartoon discussing the issue of overpopulation (see figure 3) was posted on the official website of the newspaper Lexington Herald-Leader on the same day as the previous cartoon, May 22nd, 2017, and it depicts a “BABY 7 BILLION” looking up at the baby crib mobile. However, the toys hanging over the infant's head are not what is usually hanged for distracting babies. In this case, the baby is looking up to see guns, nuclear atoms, respirators etc., rotate over his head. There are no other verbal messages except the “BABY 7 BILLION” sign and the crib mobile letters that spell “poverty”. This lack of verbal expression indicates that the focus should be placed on pictorial signs, hence the toys hanging over the baby's head. The “toys”, indeed, carry very

symbolic meanings; the bomb and the atom symbolize the nuclear arsenal and the dangers this armament imposes on the world, while the saw can be implied to be a symbol of deforestation and tree cutting. The fish skeleton and empty water bottle stand for food and water shortage. Needless to say, letters spelling “poverty” are intended to stand for the issue of poverty. Among these “toys,” there is the Earth on fire as a symbol for global warming whilst a respirator indicates pollution, bad air quality etc.

After analyzing the visuals and the verbal means, it can be stated that humour is mainly achieved through visuals and contextual knowledge. However, the verbal means act as an explanatory means that allow the reader to understand the situation faster. The “toys” depict what the baby is exposed to and what problems the overpopulation causes. The baby himself is the symbol of the rapid demographic growth, and it is evident that in this cartoon, Joel Pett intended to portray how this growth is affecting the Earth. The author managed to make such a serious and heart-breaking matter a laughing matter by constructing a visual metonymy (i.e. the actual problems or concepts are presented by depicting parts of it or giving references, for instance, the saw in this cartoon represents not the tool itself but rather the more significant concept – deforestation, tree cutting etc.) and hanging those frightening “toys” over the innocent baby's head. This visual representation of a baby being entertained or distracted with nuclear weapons, respirators or other scary toys that metonymically stand for even more terrifying issues creates a ridiculous view. The depiction of something so innocent as a baby and something so dangerous or unpleasant as weapons, saws, or skeletons creates a very significant contrast since it acts as a humorous element. Thus, the pictorial signs convey most of the humour in this case, while the written signs provide additional information and context.

All considered, in this cartoon, humour is conveyed mainly through the visuals. The contradiction or clash between something that innocent as a baby and something so frightening as a nuclear weapon acts as a visual element that contributes to humour construction. The verbal expressions in this cartoon are very brief and act as an explanatory means to facilitate understanding the situation. Multimodality is not as conspicuous here as in the previous pictures, and therefore, it can be stated that this environmental cartoon is the first case where the humorous effect is achieved without it.

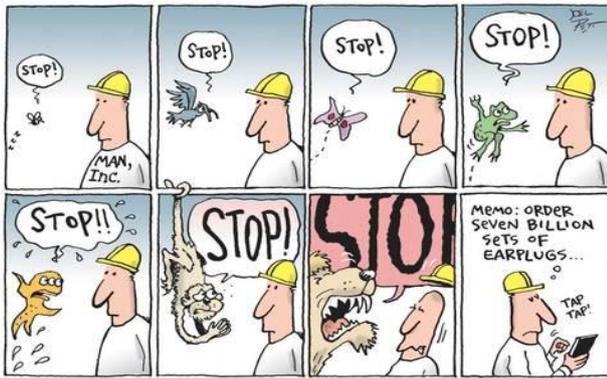


Fig 4. “Joel Pett population cartoons”, 2017

The following case to be examined (see figure 4) is another one of the population cartoons posted on May 22nd, 2017. This cartoon, resembling a comic strip, shows a man being asked or even warned by animals to “STOP!”. At first, a fly begging the man to stop, later a bird, a butterfly, a frog, a fish and a monkey are portrayed doing the same thing. Lastly, a lion is depicted roaring at the man to stop; however, he does not respond to either of the animals. The only thing that the man does after the animals are gone creates a reminder on his phone: “MEMO: ORDER SEVEN BILLION SETS OF EARPLUGS...”.

The first thing that should be discussed is the main character of the cartoon. It is evident that the man wearing a shirt with “MAN, Inc.” written on it metonymically stands for humanity compared to a corporation. The animals in the cartoon stand for the wildlife affected by the rapidly growing human population. As can be seen in the cartoon, the man does not listen to the animals and instead decides to solve the problem by ignoring it, i.e. ordering a set of earplugs for each human being on the planet. This decision displays a case of satire; in the cartoon, Joel Pett criticizes humankind, its lack of necessary actions and exposes the flaws in its behaviour by using man as a symbol for humans and ridicules people’s way of thinking by portraying this terrifying yet amusingly presented situation. The man’s naivety or ignorance is so apparent that it is ridiculous itself. The idea of the man ordering an enormous number of ear buds is also hilarious. There is an incongruity between what is depicted in a picture and what the author intended to say. Essentially, in this cartoon, the metaphorically expressed request from the environment to people to stop is intended to spread the message that people need to start controlling reproduction because of the harmful effects growing population has on the environment. The man misunderstanding what he is being asked or even ignorantly choosing to ignore the problem ironizes humankind and its interesting concept of issue solving. Thus, the clash between the literal suggestion and the implied message is

evident; there is a lot of incongruity between what the author depicts and what he intends to say, making the cartoon very ironic. The satirized image of humankind and its behaviour is intended to arouse the reader’s disapproval of people’s actions and encourage him to correct these wrong behaviour patterns. Evidently, the author attempting to fix people’s behaviour by depicting the idiocy and naivety of the man is a case of satire. As alluded to in the theoretical overview, satire is often employed to express harsh criticism and provoke changes and expose society’s issues; therefore, this cartoon is a great example of the author employing this stylistic device to challenge people to take action and change. Both of here mentioned humorous devices (irony and satire) are constructed with written and pictorial signs. While the visuals provide the majority of the context, the linguistic expression that supplements the pictorial signs allows one to perceive the humorous essence of the cartoon. Multimodality once again contributes to the final humorous effect as it is achieved only after the two modes interplay.

## Conclusions

The provided analysis of Joel Pett’s cartoons on population revealed many ways to convey humour. While one can occasionally observe parody and satire, the most common and recurring way of constructing humour in these overpopulation cartoons is by employing irony. However, it is important to mention that stylistic devices are usually perceived not solely through the language of the cartoon but also through the visuals. In other words, multimodal means are utilized in order to convey humour. In most cases, one mode usually contributes less to the direct construction of humour but provides context that allows the other mode to convey the humorous messages sent through it. Thus, multimodality using verbal and non-verbal means is the dominant way of achieving the humorous effect in Joel Pett’s environmental cartoons. Irony, satire and parody create the amusing effect by verbal means supported and reinforced by visuals. To perceive humour, contextual knowledge is obligatory. In Joel Pett’s environmental cartoons, humour is punitive and sarcastic; therefore, it is more criticizing than amusing.

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## GYVENTOJŲ PERTEKLIAS HUMORAS JOE PETT KARIKATŪROSE

### Santrauka

Viešojoje erdvėje aptariant globalias problemas ir formuojant visuomenės požiūrius bei elgseną, svarbus vaidmuo tenka humorui ir karikatūristams. Šiame tyrime nagrinėjamas humoras kaip socialinis instrumentas, bei tiriama, kaip humoras, dažniausiai reiškiamas per ironiją, konstruojamas garsaus amerikiečių karikatūristo Joelio Petto gyventojų pertekliaus karikatūrose siejamose su demografinių problemų nepaisymu, bei atsainiu visuomenės požiūriu į galimas grėsmes. Karikatūrų tyrimas nagrinėja žodinę ir vaizdinę humoro modas, jų tarpusavio sąveiką bei sinerginį efektą leidžiantį aiškiai komunikuoti kritišką vertinamąjį požiūrį karikatūrose. Tyrimui atrinktos ir išsamiai išanalizuotos keturios Joelio Petto karikatūros. Čia nagrinėjamas jų turinys, žodyno pasirinkimas ir vaizdinė medžiaga, žaismingas tiesioginio ir implikuoto žinutės lygmenų sugretinimas, bei satyrinis ar ironiškas efektas, pasiekiamas per karikatūrų multimodalumą. Tyrimo nustatyta, kad ironija ne tik linksmai nuteikia auditoriją, bet ir skatina iš naujo kritiškai pažvelgti į situaciją ir keisti savo požiūrį. Vaizdiniais perduodama žinia padeda sukurti karikatūros bendrą kontekstą, padeda skaitytojui suprasti jį ir susieti su žodinėmis priemonėmis, perduodančiomis jo „linksimąją“ žinutę. Nagrinėtose karikatūrose multimodalumas yra esminis elementas, leidžiantis skaitytojui suvokti humorą ir visas implikacijas.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** ironija, satyra, humoras, karikatūra, multimodalumas.

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