Rhetoric in Stand-up Comedy: Exploring Performer-Audience Interaction

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My interest in this paper is the organisation of jokes in performance and the skills employed by the comedian in telling jokes and the manner of joke performance that shapes audience response in the audience in the joke telling interaction. Specifically, this paper looks at the ways in which the successful comedian rewrites, manipulates and delivers a joke text in a manner which shows an awareness and consideration for her or his audience. It is performance techniques such as the ones I will identify below that contribute to marking the difference between a joke text and a performed piece of comedy. By looking at how a joke is told rather than analysing the abstracted joke text I will demonstrate the existence, and regular use by comedians, of a series of rhetorical devices that are associated with audience laughter.

The paper does not attempt to demonstrate how joke structure is ordered to deliver powerful punchlines or enhance incongruity – such issues have be well covered by script theory authors such as Attardo *et al* (1994), Attardo and Chabanne (1992), Attardo and Raskin (1991) and Raskin (1985). Nor does it present a theory of humour *per se*, let alone one that is incompatible with traditional theories of joke production such as incongruity, superiority and release[1]. Instead it offers in *in situ* perspective on stand-up comedy which presents new views on joking, laughter and the interaction between them.

1 For reviews of humour theory literature see Piddington (1933), Keith-Spiegel (1972), Paulos (1980), Morreall (1983) and Lippit (1994, 1995a, 1995b).

The Stand-up Audience

One difficulty in approaching the interaction at stand-up comedy venues is understanding the manner in which individuals become part of an audience. Conversation analysis has historically given preference to understanding the interactions between pairs or small groups of individuals. Interactions involving over a hundred people (as are often found in comedy clubs) present new problems. This, of course, is not just an academic problem but also a practical one - comedy performers have to manage and negotiate audience responses to maximum comedy effect during live performances.

One way in which the audience can become more manageable is through their tendency to act as a collective as the stand-up interaction. That is the interaction becomes "pseudo-dyadic": while remaining individuals, audience members choose to act as part of a collective for a particular piece of interaction. This is evident in stand-up comedy as, for the duration of the specific interaction, individual's temporary waive their unique agency in favour of a interactive persona as part of "an audience." This process entails a readiness to accept the responses of other members of the audience as appropriate and then to react appropriately to them. View like this, group laughter in audiences is as much a product of mutual trust as a reaction to a humorous event[2]. Individuals will follow responses of others in an audience by replication and without the direct influence of other stimulus or suggestion.

For example, watching video-taped audiences during stand-up performances it is not unusual to see someone lean across to the person sat next to them and ask for clarification of what a performer's punchline was w*hile still laughing*. In such a circumstance the laughter cannot be a response to a humorous stimulus as in effect the member of the audience has not yet received this piece of information. Instead, their laughter can only be linked to the laughter of others.

A similar example can be found in a review for a performance given by Johnny Vegas[3]. Just as the most memorable segments of speeches given by politi-

2 Fine (1983) argues that laughter in group situations not only becomes part of the group's culture but acts as a method through which cohesion is developed.

3 For brevity in this paper I shall not provide descriptions and performance contexts to individual performers quoted in this paper. However, in order to demonstrate the broad relevance of the paper's finding extracts are drawn from field recordings of professional and semi-professional comedians working in the northwest of England and commercially available recordings of national and international comedians.

cians tend to those which received the longest applause and it is these that are most often chosen for quotation in the media (Atkinson 1984, Heritage & Greatbatch 1986, Clayman 1992) Vegas' reviewer chose to quote a line from the show which was received by huge audience laughter. The line quoted was, "Life's a postman but you've got a vicious dog called Clive". This is indeed a Vegas-like metaphor but, as Vegas himself pointed out during one performance, it is not his line.

The misquotation is drawn from a section in which Vegas tells the audience about asking a psychologist for whom he was a patient out for a date and being turned down by her. Having had his request denied Vegas tells the woman, "**Love**'s a postman but you've got a vicious dog called **pride**". The point here is that it apparent that the reviewer's response is not based solely on the joke text. The misheard version, while perhaps amusing, does not combine the **postal workers** script (postman and dog) with that of **emotion** (love and pride) and so lacks, according to joke theory, a neat incongruity/resolution structure. As such, again according to traditional theory, the reviewer could not have found this "mis-formed" joke as funny as others in the audience and so would have a little reason to quote it as an example of Vegas' successful joking.

Hence, it is apparent that members of an audience look for, and respond to, cues giving guidance as to when laughter, applause or cheers are necessary, desired or appropriate that are outside the joke text (Rutter 2000). They are responsive to the actions of those around them rapidly identifying the beginnings of laughter or applause and then contributing to that response. Audience members pick up on cues such as the raising of hands to begin applause or the beginning of the applause itself such awareness is highlighted by Clayman as "mutual monitoring" (1993: 112) and it is this that firmly reconceptualizes the audience as active, as a group which not only responds to suggestive cues in the developing performance but demonstrates a self-awareness. Below, I suggest on manner in which cues are given by performer to the audience, namely the use of rhetorical techniques.

Common Rhetorical Techniques

A comprehensive step towards establishing the rhetorical techniques can be found in Heritage and Greatbatch's (1986) study of British political oratory. They not only identify a set of rhetorical techniques using in podium performance, but also establish a correlative link between their use and audience response. In brief, their research identifies six distinct rhetorical formats present in politi-

cal speech making namely: Contrast, List, Puzzle-solution, Headline-punchline, Position taking and Pursuit. Each of these can be found with varying regularity in stand-up performance (Rutter 1997) making up something similar to Freud's "auxiliary technical methods" in that they can be seen as not "necessary conditions [to the joke] but only as encouragements to the process of joking" (1976: 208).

Heritage and Greatbatch argue that the rhetorical formats of political speeches are not only stylistic minutiae used to keep an audience attentive and interested but also serve to forecast the completion of a political point, and more importantly for this discussion, to signpost that audience action is expected and appropriate. They assert that any individual member of an audience has to make the decision as to whether to applaud a statement or not in real time and effectively within a second of the statement being made (Heritage and Greatbatch 1986: 112). These signposts then assist in that decision making process by making apparent not only that audience contribution to the interaction is required but what the preferred response is. In political speechmaking this is usually applause and in stand-up laughter but this is not exclusively the case. This assists in the voluntary transformation of individuals into an audience and makes it both possible and profitable to see the audiences as a collective agent.

These devices not only work towards consolidating the decisions made by an audience during their mutual monitoring but they increase their efficiency by allowing audiences to move towards "independent decision-making" (Clayman 1993: 112). By recognising the projected point of completion an audience member can make decisions as to the appropriateness of varying responses in advance of the event and without recourse to other spectators. In the comedy context, if a comedian employs a rhetorical technique which signifies that the end of a sentence coming up but also the end of a conversational turn (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974) and that the preferred response is laughter, audience members can (if they choose) laugh as soon as an appropriate point is reached rather than evaluating other audience members. Thus, through the utilisation of these rhetorical techniques, the risk involved in starting to applaud or laugh is minimised.

Stand-up Specific Techniques

Heritage and Greatbatch's system of techniques provides a specific understanding of political speaking is can be also seen more generally as an outline of the general features of podium talk. However, to develop an understanding of the specific nature of stand-up it is necessary to build upon Heritage and

Greatbatch's work and explore the existence of a number of stand-up specific devices. Therefore, I want to introduce here four rhetorical techniques which demonstrate more specific relevance to the comedy field. In turn, I will define and provide examples of the additional categories of *Re-Incorporations*, *Alliteration and Assonance*, *Character Footing* and *Intonation.*

Re-Incorporations

A re-incorporation, in this sense, is the reappearance of one element of a joke (usually not a punchline) in a stand-up performer's routine. That is, a comedian will introduce a topic at some point during their performance and then drop it only to return to it later in the act. The thematic reappearance of a line, idea or comment becomes a signposted point for laughter and is recognised by the audience as an appropriate spot for laughter to follow. Usually these two moments in the performance are separated by minutes, although the separation can span the length of an act[4] making it difficult to provide full examples within the confines of a paper. Extract 1 below, from Woody Allen, give an unusually short example of this technique. In this example it is the appearance of a paraphrased version (line 50-52) of, *And there's a law in New York State against driving with a conscious moose on your fender - Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays* (line 14-16) which contributes to precipitating the laughter that follows it.

Extract 1: Woody Allen (Simplified)

1	WA:	I shot a moose once. I was hunting up state New York and I
2		shot a moose. and I strap him onto the fender of my
3		car and I'm driving home along the West Side highway.
4		But what I didn't realise was that the bullet did not penetrate
5		the moose, it just creased his scalp knocking him unconscious
6		and I'm driving through the Holland tunnel
7	Aud:	((Laughter))

4 Ben Elton takes re-incorporation beyond the act length limit by referring in a routine on adverts to a famous routine he had done in the past about people fighting for a double seat to themselves on trains. "It took place on a train, OK, that was the advert, OK. 'S beautiful train, it a train in heaven. Its so gorgeous it should be going from St. Peter's gate to the thrown of god it's so splendid right. And its rolling through the most gorgeous countryside and everyone on board is all lazing and stretched out an they're all reading their books and playing chess and nodding off. And never mind the double seat they've all got four seats to themselves".

8	WA:	and the moose woke up.
9	Aud:	((Laughter))
10	WA:	So I'm driving with a live moose on my fender
11	Aud:	((Laughter))
12	WA:	and the moose is signalling for a turn, you know.
13	Aud:	((Laughter))
14	WA:	And there's a law in New York State against driving
15		with a conscious moose on your fender - Tuesdays,
16		Thursdays and Saturdays.
17	Aud:	((Laughter))
18	WA:	And I'm very panicky and then it hits me, some friends
19		of mine are having a costume party. I'll go, I'll take the
20		moose, I'll ditch him at the party - it won't be my
21		responsibility.
22	Aud:	((Laughter))
23	WA:	So I drive up to the party and I knock on the door. The
24		moose is next to me. My host comes to the door. I say
25		hello - you know the Solomons.
26	Aud:	((Laughter))
27	WA:	We enter. The moose mingles.
28	Aud:	((Laughter))
29	WA:	Did very well.
30	Aud:	((Laughter))
31	WA:	Scored.
32	Aud:	((Laughter))
33	WA:	Some guy was trying to sell him insurance for an hour and
34		a half.
35	Aud:	((Laughter))
36	WA:	12 o'clock comes. They give out prizes for the best costume
37		of the night. First prize goes to the Berkowitzes - a married
38		couple dressed as a moose.
39	Aud:	((Laughter))
40	WA:	The moose comes in second.
41	Aud:	((Laughter))
42	WA:	The moose is furious. He and the Berkowitzes lock antlers
43		in the living room.
44	Aud:	((Laughter))
45	WA:	They knock each other unconscious. Now I figure here's my
46		chance. I grab the moose, strap him on my fender and shoot
47		back to the woods, but I got the Berkowitzes.
48	Aud:	((Laughter))
49	WA:	So I'm driving along with two Jewish people on my fender.

50		And there's a law in New York State
51	Aud:	((Laughter))
52	WA:	Tuesdays, Thursdays and especially Saturday.
53	Aud:	((Laughter))
54	WA:	The following morning....

In any form of analysis based on traditional humour theory the audience laughter of lines 51 and 53 is difficult to fully explain. For example, one approach may suggest that the idea of bylaws prohibiting the carrying of people on cars on specific days raises laughter because of the incongruity of the image. However, this text-based analysis is limited. It cannot explain the relationship of line 49-52 to the rest of the extract, suggest why Allen reuses the phrase, or why this technique marks the joke as in anyway different from its use in lines 14-16.

A more contemporary example can be found in Extract 2. Here Tony Burgess uses re-incorporation when talking about the clichés that his father would use when talking to him.

Extract 2: Tony Burgess

1	TB:	If I cut myself on a piece of paper - this really pisses me off.
2		I just wanna be alone for a while.
3		Me dad's just chirpin' on in the background,
4		"Oh paper cuts them are the worst type of cuts, aren't they.
5		They're only small but they're the worst type of cuts ya can
6		get. They are the worst type of cuts ya can get."
7		So I, erm, stabbed him with an army knife just to prove a point.
8	Aud:	((Laughter))
9	TB:	(Which would you say was worse?) If paper cuts are the
10		worst type of cuts you can receive why is it you don't see
11		more gangs armed with sheets of A4
12	Aud:	((Laughter))
13	TB:	"Giz us all ya money punk,"
14	Aud:	((Laughter))
15	TB:	"We've got a sheet of Basildon Bond (and we know what
16		to do) with it."
17	Aud:	((Laughter))
18	TB:	Its one of these social clichés that. (If any) girl got pregnant
19		round our way at the age of thirteen. (Right away) me
20		dad's like,
21		"Oh, it's bloody disgusting. I mean how did she get pregnant
22		in the first place? I blame the parents."

23	Aud:	((Laughter))
24	TB:	I'd keep those allegations to yourself
25	Aud:	((Laughter))
26	TB:	"Thing is most parents don't know what's going on under
27		their very noses."
28		Yeah, I agree, dad. Er, pass us those Rizlas[5].
29	Aud:	((Laughter))
30	TB:	"Oh and son."
31		Yeah, dad, yeah.
32		"Watch it with them Rizla papers. Might cut yourself. ←
33	Aud:	((Laughter))

Burgess' re-incorporation is somewhat more complex than Allen's in two ways. Firstly, unlike Allen's re-incorporation, Burgess's does not repeat phraseology but rather re-introduces a theme. Whereas Allen uses repetition of the phrase beginning "And there's a law in New York State..." Burgess' re-incorporation works with the reintroduction of the theme of paper cuts within a new context. Secondly, Burgess' re-incorporation takes place not after a continuation in a single narrative in the way that Allen's does but after a thematic diversion.

It is apparent that although joke theory cannot recognise the relationship between both Allen's and Burgess' re-incorporational joking and the rest of the rest of the flow of the performance narrative. Because previous research into joking has tended to remove joking from its communicative and interactional surrounding it cannot create a framework which links these re-incorporations with their previous joking introduction. However, it is apparent that the comedy audience does this without any difficulty. When re-incorporations are used the audience can be seen to recognise the previous use of the reintroduced phrase and realise that this re-introduction is a request from the performer for laughter from the audienc[6].

Alliteration and Assonance

Excessive alliteration, rhyme or repetition can itself create humorous joke texts (especially in children's humour). However, there is a difference between

5 Rizla is a brand of cigarette paper which are used, in this context, for rolling a marijuana joint

6 Discussing re-incorporations whilst talking to the improvisational comedian Neil Malarkey during my research he told me that when teaching improvisation and theatre sports he advised performers to go back to something they had said before in the performance when short of ideas

the use of alliteration as method of joke production and its use as a performance technique. Alliteration as a performance technique differs from its use in joke formation in that the success of this technique relies a great deal on not being excessive. What I am suggesting is that joke punchlines are structured by the performer to include alliteration, assonance or, more rarely, rhyme. In these joke tellings, the meaning communicated by the punchline is not reliant on the rhetorical technique used but its acts, once again, as a signpost to the audience. The coincidence of this technique with the punchline of a joke (or other points of humour) highlights that the comedian's turn is nearing completion and that laughter is the preferred response from the audience.

An example of the use of alliteration can be seen in Extract 3. Talking about the censorship of traditional children's rhymes Oliver Double delivers a complexly organised sequence in which he offers a list of three different rhymes (line 6, 8-10, and 12). The first two of these stand in contrast to the third which in turn also uses alliteration and forms the punchline to the joking sequence.

Extract 3: Oliver Double

1	OD:	'Parently lot of this censorship comes from these born again
2		Christian groups in The Sates right, an' this is true. Read
3		about this recently.They want to ba:n primary school text
4		books cause they say they turn little kids to depravity. Righ-
5		An a couple of genuine examples (that I wanted to r-)
6		"Rain, rain, go away come again another day," coz thy say that's
7		a prayer to the pagan weather god. Right. They also want to get
8		rid of "Lavender blue, dilly dilly, Lavender green," coz they say
9		its turning little kids to homosexuality coz of the last line "When
10		I am king, dilly dilly, you shall be queen." Well, y'know if they
11		can make that out of that, what are they going to make out of
12		"Little ***b***oy ↑ ***b***lue come ***b***low on your ↓ ho::rn"?
13	Aud:	hHHHHHHHHHHh
14	OD:	That's
15		what I wanna know.

The words, "little boy blue come blow your horn," uses a repetition of "b" which have been italicised in the transcript. This is further emphasised by Double by his placing of stress on "blue" and the "b" of "blow" (line 12). This combination of performance techniques leads successfully into audience laughter. Although simpler in construction, a similar use of alliteration can be seen in Extract 4. Here Harry Enfield uses the repetition of "s" to signpost his point of completion.

Extract 4: Harry Enfield

1	HE:	But, Er:: (0.6) But when I was ↓born a- I was so UGly
2		that my mother was *s*ent to ↑pris*o*n for *s*even year*s* for
3		having ↓me.

I want to suggest that a basic joke text (Perhaps: I was such an ugly baby that my mother was put in jail) is made more successful in performance by the alliteration of 'sent' and 'seven' and the sibilant in 'years' and 'prison'.The simple replacement of 'seven' by 'eight' would, I believe, reduce the success of the joke (but not significantly alter the joke text) and its replacement by 'six' would also effect the humorous response, as while the alliteration is maintained the assonance with 'prison' and 'seven' is lost. Further, it may also be the case that if 'sent to' was replaced by 'put in' - which creates a new alliteration between "put in" and "prison" - the joke would suffer as the technique becomes more apparent because of the proximity of the alliteration.

Finally, Jo Brand, in Extract 5, also uses alliteration to support her punchline. Like Double she creates her signposts by the alliteration of three words. However, in keeping with stand-up's tendency to greater complexity than other forms of podium speaking (Rutter 1997), the use of alliteration is combined with a rhetorical techniques identified by Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) namely position taking (line 10) in which Brand talks of models adopting political stances.

Extract 5: Jo Brand

1	JB:	I even- even though t.a ↓Cindy Craw↑ford had joined in
2		as well cos I saw paper erh yesterday an:: i there was a
3		headline, "Cindy Crawford, My worse nightmare." (0.5)
4		.hhh an I though' what's that? ↓Nu↑clear War? (0.4)
5		Kids starvin in ↑Africa? (0.7) No:p ↓Spot on he face
6		on the day of a photoshoot.
7	Aud:	h-HHHHHHHHHHHHHhhhh
8	JB:	Good one there Cindy.
9		(1.4)
10		Politically correct or what? Ya *f*uckin ***th***in ole *f*ucker. ←
11		(.) ur::m::
12	Aud:	HHHHHHHHHHH
13	Aud:	xx - xx -xxxxx-x-x
14	Aud:	((whistles))

Character Footing

Jokes, both those told in natural conversation and those told in a professional stand-up context, feature the adoption of accents, mimicry of vocal attributes, and the creation of characters through vocal qualities. The term character footing refers to the voice that is adopted by stand-up performers for only a short period of time within a stand-up sequence. These changes in voice act not only as indicators of who said what in the telling of a narrative but, in stand-up especially, as tools for ordering the interaction. Character footing is usually associated with either the quotation of a character in a narrative (as in Extract 6 taken from Greg Proops' show at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe) or the creation of a character in a narrative (as in Extract 8). As such the shift in performers' characterisations, their changes from one character frame to another, is similar to changes in Goffman's notion of footing (Goffman 1979, reprinted in Goffman 1981). Footing for Goffman is "the alignments we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production and reception of an utterance" (Goffman 1981:128)[7].

As part of telling his story Proops uses two different instances of character footing. The first (line 7-8) is his idea of how he must sound to the Edinburgh taxi driver. This he contrasts with the second instance of character footing which is a caricature of the taxi driver's Scottish accent (line 10).

Extract 6: Greg Proops (Simplified)

1 I was doin the festival. Every night I was doin a show. Every
2 night (.) after the show I would get in a cab ask to go to my flat
3 and they would take me fuckin ANYWHERE but my fla:t.
4 Ended up in Aberdeen half the time, you guys. They couldn't

7 I want to suggest that stand-up comedians use the adoption of character in two different ways in performance to enhance the success of a joke. The first is character footing which I illustrate above. However, there is also a more consistent adoption of character employed by stand-up comedians who adopt a theatrical persona for the duration of their act for example in the cases of Emo Philips or Rowan Atkinson as Mr. Bean. I don't wish to dwell on this latter performance technique here beyond highlighting its existence and difference to character footing. This I do for a number of reasons: Firstly, the adoption of character throughout a performers act takes stand-up away from is position as the ground zero of performance comedy to a more theatrical style of performance. Secondly, because of its rarity especially among the performers who contributed to research that informed this paper, it is uncertain what effects, if any, the adoption of performance characters has on both the ordering and delivery of performance and the relationship this precipitates with the audience.

5 understand me, I couldn't understand them I couldn't understand
6 their burr they couldn't understand my west coast I must ov just
7 sounded like THIS
8 nyee nyee nya nyee n SHIT n- nyaa nyaa nyaa nyaa WRO::ONG ←
9 WaY: Nya nya n turn here tarten dude.
10 Coz this is what they sounded like to me
11 Hu her ha:r:::: ity a u aaa-uh:: uhah:: ar:ahah u a SPECCY GET. ←

In a similar fashion, Sean Hughes uses character footing to quote another person who he has contact with as part of the comedy narrative. However, in contrast to Proops, Hughes only portrays one character but offers more instances of this character's speech. Hughes begins his sequence by talking about being left alone in the house as a child and being afraid that an intruder is also in the house. He talks about shouting around corners to scare the imagined intruder and checking in cutlery drawers for no apparent reason.

Extract 7: Sean Hughes

1 SH: An ya there like an the f the- the fact<is like y'know. A used
2 to ↓luv it as well like cuz- >the thing is<if there's a psycho in
3 your house (0.7) <ya dhhead> (0.6)
4 Aud: hhhhhhh
5 SH: Yer j- Yer ↑dead
6 Aud: hhhh
7 SH: >WHAT'S IT DO? Ya gonna OPEN the closet an he's there
8 with a hatchet an e goes< (.)
9 "Ya got me hhh!" ←
10 Aud: HHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHhhh
11 Aud: XXXXXXxxxx
12 SH: "Nor::, here's the
13 hatchhhet. Ya go' (me)" ←
14 Aud: hhhhhhhhhhh
15 SH: >"I wuz gonna ↑hide under the bed wouldjav looked
16 under there? < Un:: Yeah:::
17 Aud: hhhhhhhhh
18 SH: I was gonna HAtchet you to d- °(oh dear)°. ←
19 Aud: hhhhhhhhhh
20 SH: (.) Arr: Hey::"
21 Aud: hhhhhh

Hughes offers three instances of character footing (9, 12, 13, 15-20) in which he changes from narrator to character in the story to tell the imagined conversation with his intruder. Each of these is followed by audience laughter and yet cannot be

fully explained by an analysis that does not include the performance of the humorous sequence rather than the text itself. Whereas both Proops and Hughes use voice of prop as a way of quoting characters in a narrative in Extract 8 Bill Hicks employs a slightly different approach. He uses character footing to play the character in his story rather than quote them as he plays the roles of an imaginary alter ego and a (American) child. Hicks alternates between the two characters for the period of the imagined dialogue:

Extract 8: Bill Hicks (Simplified)

1	BH:	I am available for children's parties > by the way <	
2	Aud:	((Laughter))	
3	Aud:	((Applause))	
4	BH:	Kno some o ya'll might have a young um coming of	
5		↓a::ge an not want to got to the traditional clown	
6		balloon animal (rap) this year < (.) might want to look	
7		me up (.) ↑Beelze ↓bozo (0.5)	
8	Aud:	((Laughter))	
9	BH:	Clown form ↓hell	
10	Aud:	((Laughter))	
11	BH:	(Hyuck) It's Beelze ((Adopting American South accent))	
12		bozo ↓tim::e. (1.1) Tell me some'in who here outta you	
13		younguns (.) has never ↑smoked a ciga↓rette? > C'mere	←
14		↑kids <	
15	Aud:	((Laughter))	
16	BH:	Whatsya na:me.	←
17		(("Child's" voice)) To:mmy.	←
18		((South)) Tommy. How ↓o::le dar ↑ya? (1.1)	←
19		((Child's)) ↑Five.	←
20		((South)) Five years old!an you mean to tell) Beelzebozo	
21		you not snokin cigarettes ↑yet?	←
22	AUD	((Laughter))	
23	BH:	C'mere Tommy. p.hh p.h p.h p.h ((Wheezes twice))	←

Intonation

This particular stand-up technique is, even more than the others identified in this paper, performance specific. That is, it is only evident when the joke text becomes a performance. It is not part of the text of the joke and therefore cannot be understood or explained by joke theory or other previous forms of humour re-

search. However, the use of intonation is no less important to the understanding of stand-up joking because of this.

One of the most striking and omnipresent characteristics of stand-up comedians' performance is their use of intonation[8]. The changes of pitch in their delivery is used not only to provide a varied and interesting "tune" to their script, but also - and more fundamentally for the comedian and my argument here - to signpost the completion of jokes and create an "invitation to laugh" (Jefferson 1979). Also notable about the use of intonation in stand-up is that more than any other format its level of presence means that it regularly operates in tandem with other rhetorical techniques, both stand-up specific and those common in other forms of podium talk.

In stand-up there is often present a contrast in tone between the principal stress in the sentence that sets up the joke and a principal stress in the punchline. This usually takes the form of a fall in intonation followed by a rise. This can be seen in Extract 9 in which Oliver Double talks about the joys of swearing.

Extract 9: Oliver Double

1	OD:	Apart form anything else I like swearin'. Y'know I enjoy a
2		good swea::::r Y'know > its great fun swearin'. < ( )
3		Obviously it pisses my mum off which is a great top reason to
4		do it. I was going over to (Lincoln seriously) I was going along
5		in the car with her trying to annoy her, right, I was going "Bu:m,
6		poo, willy, wee-wee, dickcheeseontoast, > knobby, knobby,
7		knob. < Right.
8	Aud:	HHH
9	OD:	An she goes, "Oh, Oliver (.) What have I do to
10		deserve ↓you? I said, "Ya ↓fucked ↑da:dt."
11	Aud:	hHHHHHHHHHHh
12	Aud:	x-x
13	OD:	She quite liked that one .has w.hell actually.
14	Aud:	H-H-H

8 It is apparent that the rhetorical techniques identified in this paper will have varying presence within any one performance. For example, by the very nature of introduction, intermission and re-introduction, re-incorporations will be very infrequent when compared with the use of contrasting intonation. This does not mean to say that they are any less valid when considering the negotiation of turn taking that goes on between performer and audience.

In line 10, Double delivers his punchline, "You fucked dad" using a contrast in intonation between the last two words. "Fucked" receives a downward intonation while "Dad" is said with a notable rise. This is followed by loud audience laughter. Moreover, this contrast is highlighted with the emphasis placed on the beginning of each of the words. Thus the change in stress and the contrast in intonation combine to signpost the end of the turn and that the preferred response is immediate audience laughter. The same pattern of a fall-and-rise contrast in intonation that is supported by the stress of the pertinent words is found in Extract 10. Here Roger Monkhouse is talking about the Glastonbury Festival that had taken place the week before in very hot weather and had been shown on British television for the first time.

Extract 10: Roger Monkhouse

1	RM:	Was it me though- cuz- > (pictures) of Glastonbury on Channel
2		Four. < Was it me (.) or was it unduly cynical of Right Guard
3		Antiperspirant to advertise their product during the commercial=
4	Aud:	hHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH=
5		=HHHHHHHHHHhhh.
6	RM:	=break when Channel Four are showing Glaston-. I mean that's
7		sick isn't it that. That's like advertising for ↓BUPA durin'
8		↑Casualty[9]
9	Aud:	HHHHHHHHHHHHhhhh

In line 7 Monkhouse stresses the beginning of "BUPA" and gives it a downward intonation compared to the rest of the sentence. This is contrasted by him with the upward rise for "Casualty" in line 8 which again has the stress placed on the beginning of the word.

In both Extract 9 and Extract 10 the contrast in intonation does not highlight a contrast in ideas. Unlike the use of contrast as a means of rhetorical signposting used in stand-up when contrasting ideas or texts, the contrast here is not text-based but performance-based. Monkhouse is not offering a contrast between the private healthcare company and the television medical drama just as Double is not contrasting "fucked" and "dad".

9 BUPA is a company providing health insurance services in the UK and Casualty is a British television drama set in the emergency department of a large city hospital.

Conclusions

This paper has demonstrated that there are a number of rhetorical techniques evident in the performances of stand-up comedians in addition to those identified in other forms of performance talk. Further, it has shown that these techniques are strongly linked to audience laughter and account for instances of laughter for which previous approaches to joking provide only limited explanations. It has shown that by seeing stand-up comedy as a live, interactive process, it is possible to gain insight into the manner in which text, performance and audience fit together during live stand-up.

By shifting from humour research's traditional concern with the joke text to one that centres on the performance of jokes and their negotiated place within stand-up interaction, the actions of audience members start to become apparent and its importance in successful stand-up established. This makes apparent a situation in which, while the joke teller may "manage" (Clayman 1992) the audience, s/he ultimately has no control over it. As in conversational interaction, neither party in the stand-up interaction can govern the other's actions or contributions nor be responsible for those events that may occur externally to the focused interaction such as, in the comedy venue, glasses dropping, a microphone failing or a heckler shouting comments. Against such a background the stimulus-response model that is so often implicit in joke and humour theory becomes less seductive in its ability to provide a general explanation of joking and laughter.

By exploring the performative and live aspects of comedy techniques the process of negotiation between performer and audience becomes apparent. The way in which comedians support punchlines (and other points of humour) with requests for laughter or signpost points at which laughter is expected becomes apparent. Complimenting this is the understanding of audience members as active participants in performance interaction who look for and respond to rhetorical techniques when making decisions about laughing. These features provide the potential for rich investigation of stand-up comedy as interaction to be pursed elsewhere.

Appendix: Notes on Transcripts

The transcription system used within this paper is largely that created by Gail Jefferson and developed by others working in conversation analysis (Sacks *et al.*

1974; Psathas 1979; Atkinson & Heritage 1984). Those relevant to this paper are summarized below.

←	Used in the margins of the transcript to indicate points of interest.
:	The sound proceeding is prolonged. Multiple colons indicate incrementally longer prolonging.
-	An abrupt breaking off of the word begun.
↑↓	An upward arrow indicates a rise of pitch in the sound that follows it. Similarly, a downward arrow indicates intonation lowering.
°text°	Indicates a lowering in volume of speech.
h	An intake of breath. The symbol proceeded by a dot denotes an audible breath out.
> text <	Talk is delivered at a notably quicker pace than that which surrounds it Conversely talk transcribed <thus> indicates a slowing in pace.
CAPITALS	Louder than the surrounding talk.
text	Indicates a stress.
]	Onset of overlap.
=	In instance in which the talk of one speaker leads into the speech of another without any pause.
(0.8)	Denotes pauses in tenths of seconds.
(.)	Pause of less the three tenths of a second.
(text)	Transcription uncertainty often because of inaudibility. Empty brackets indicate that what was said was unintelligible on the recording.
((text))	Indicates elements for which either notation does not exist or would be unhelpful. In this paper it is also used to describe stage business or changes in voice quality.

In order to transcribe group laughter a number of non-traditional symbols have been used in this paper. To this end I have adapted the system used by Clayman (1993, 1992) to transcribe audience applause at political speeches. Building on Atkinson (1984), Clayman uses "x"s to denote applause and keeps with a similar basic pattern to the transcription outline above so that uppercase symbols indicate a rise in volume.

As such audience laughter is transcribed as follows:

hhhh	Quiet audience laughter.
HHHH	Loud audience laughter.
-h-h-	Quiet isolated laughter from individuals in the audience.
-H-H-	Loud isolated laughter from individuals in the audience.

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Retoryka przedstawień komediowych i interakcja wykonawca – widownia

Artykuł poświęcony jest przedstawieniom komediowym, a w szczególności technikom retorycznym używanym przez odnoszących sukcesy aktorów. Autor wskazuje podstawowe techniki: powtórzenia, aliteracje i asonanse, zmiany głosu oraz intonacji. Uznaje, że ich użycie jest ściśle powiązane ze śmiechem widowni i analizuje przypadki śmiechu. Twierdzi, że aktorzy używają tych technik dla zasygnalizowania puent, przy których śmiech jest oczekiwaną reakcją widowni.

Widzowie to aktywni uczestnicy interakcji. Wychwytują oni retoryczne techniki i śmieją się lub nie reagują na nie śmiechem. Decyzja zależy od rezultatu negocjacji z aktorem. Autor może sterować widownią, jednak nie ma nad nią pełnej kontroli. Podważa to model bodziec-reakcja, często *implicite* obecny w wyjaśnieniach istoty śmiechu i humoru.