

“Benign-Violation”: The Politics of Humour in Indian Performative Comedy

Prachi Behrani, Vinaya Kumari & Beulah Victor

Abstract

Humour and comedy have persisted around humankind since the dawn of civilization. Thinkers and philosophers, as early as Aristotle and as recent as Peter McGraw, have been working on the theories of humour for centuries. Despite the benign nature of comedy, the jester or the trickster is no more liberated to satire. This study seeks to recognize Indian society's intolerance towards humour, comedy and jokes in context of the contemporary Stand- Up Comedian, Vir Das condemned for his words. The ethics of humour derived through the analysis of postulations and theories on the same are employed to understand the abomination surrounding the Indian Stand-Up Comics and the dynamic nature of performative comedy. It points out Benign- Violation Theory as a more developed format of humour, adept with the appropriate elements to appeal to the audience and present satirical ideas.

Keywords: Comedy; Humour; Media Studies; Satire, Sociocultural Studies.

Introduction

Humour and comedy are not new to human society and culture, and have been known to pervade human civilisation since times immemorial. Thinkers and philosophers have devised multiple theories for the same but none have been able to devise an all-pervasive postulate, applicable to all forms of humour. In addition to this, despite the benign nature associated with comedy, the jester is often condemned for employing humour as a social corrective. This research article shows the criticism received by a popular comedian, Vir Das for his stand- up comedy video “I Come from Two Indias”, owing to its satirical comedy, to understand how its deviation from the modern theory of humour led its condemnation in India. The following section investigates how Das followed the classic theories of humour, that is the Superiority Theory, the Incongruity Theory and the Relief Theory but fails to take into account the Benign Violation

Theory, which is a major aspect for comedy to be laughable.

Stand- Comedy has its roots in the Minstrelsy of early 19th century America. Though the Minstrel shows were mainly musical theatre, they did incorporate humorous monologues, stock comic characters, and racist ridicule and caricature of the African American people (Parker "*Roots of Stand-Up Comedy*"). The rise of the Indian Stand-Up comedy can be majorly attributed to three major comedy shows aired on the television, *The Great Indian Comedy Show* (2004-2006), *The Great Indian Laughter Challenge* (2005-2008) and *Comedy Circus* (2007-2009). Prior to this, the country's prime comedians were majorly limited to the Bollywood big screen, "playing the hero's goofy side-kick or the scriptwriters' weird punching bag, a role perfected by the likes of Mehmood, Johnny Walker and Johnny Lever." (Jha "*A Brief History of Indian Standup*"). The three aforementioned aided to spread the awareness about sketch comedy and Stand-Up comedy across the country. However, these shows were not yet enough to form a comedy circuit across the nation and required "persistence, scale and capital" (Jha "*A Brief History of Indian Standup*"). Jha attributes the credit of the same mainly to Vir Das and Papa CJ. CJ started performing in 2008 after leaving his full-time corporate job, Das had already begun doing shows and conducting workshops by 2003. Other comedians such as Zakir Khan and Kapil Sharma, and groups such as AIB, EIC, Evam and SnG Collectives also began to surface in the popular comedy "scene" (Jha). Tanmay Bhatt, Biswa Kalyan Rath, Akash Gupta, Aishwarya Mohanraj, Prashasti Singh, Bharti Singh et al are other popular Indian Stand- Up Comics presently. Thus, the art of Stand-Up Comedy is fairly new in India and has only begun to catch the attention of people since the last two decades.

It may be true that Stand- Up comedy is not limited or confined to a single theory of humour and has emerged dynamically through ages employing different tools. But it can also not be denied that this dynamic art form is a reflection of the society, and demands change as per the socio- cultural surroundings. Multiple times in the Indian history of Stand- Up Comedy have comedians found themselves in distress due to their 'jokes'. Various comedians such as Kunal Kamra, Tanmay Bhatt and others have received threats, complaints and disregard in the country. Kamra suffered the wrath of the citizens and the court after criticising the Supreme Court in December 2020. The comedian was condemned for criticising the Supreme Court of India regarding their order to grant bail to Arnab Goswami in the 2018 suicide abetment case. Kamra had openly expressed his disregard for the interim bail granted to the Republic TV Editor in Chief, against which he attracted a notice under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971. (Krishnan).

In addition to Kamra, Bhatt and his former comedy group, AIB, have often been the centre of controversy owing to its unique means to produce humour. News forums such as Indian Express and The Hindu point out Bhatt's FIRs in their articles "AIB's Tanmay Bhat Roasts Legends Sachin Tendulkar, Lata Mangeshkar" and "FIRs against Deepika, 13 Others for AIB Roast Row" respectively. These articles point out that from the 2015 Roast 'AIB Knockout', to Bhatt's 2016 Snapchat jokes on legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar and Late singer Lata Mangeshkar, AIB has never ceased to offend some and make others laugh at the same time. Though many found the Roast funny and within the bounds of humour, the courts had a different opinion:

"The sections under which the complaint would be registered include section 120-b (criminal conspiracy), sections 294, 509 (speaking vulgar, obscene and pornographic words publicly before a women audience) of the Indian Penal Code, Section 67 and 66 A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (circulation of obscene, pornographic content on the internet). The provisions of Bombay Police Act 1951, the Environment Protect Act, 1986, and Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act, 1966 would also be included in the FIR." (Deshpande "FIRs for AIB Roast Row").

The majority of the complaints focussed on the obscenity of language and the disregard of people. The jokes on Tendulkar and Mangeshkar also cost Bhatt an FIR, filed by Maharashtra Navnirman Sena. (Scroll Staff "MNS Files FIR") Though many other comedians have been subjected to backlash and disregard, this study seeks to delineate the reasons behind the condemnation of Vir Das's comedy and its connection with the ideology of censorship.

The Intolerance Towards Humour in India in Context of Vir Das's Comedy Set

Though Vir Das had begun performing Stand-Up Comedy in 2003, his 2000 *Weirdass Hamateur Nights* "was a key factor in bringing a lot of future stand-up stars together for the first time" (Jha "A Brief History of Indian Standup"). Suggesting Das to be one of the pioneers in the Indian Comedy circuit, Jha also points out:

"By June 2010, Das was invited to do sets at The Comedy Store on Wednesdays. For much of the year, Das tried out different styles. His *Weirdass Outbox* shows focused on unconventional styles and

themes while his band Alien Chutney experimented with comedy rock. He even asked audiences to come watch the evening news with him; perhaps the first real instance of news comedy in the country. Early mover's advantage meant that Das could get away with charging Rs 400 for a stand-up comedy ticket in Mumbai circa 2010. His company Weirclass Comedy was also conducting open mics for amateurs by then, seeking to replicate Das's own comedic education in American comedy clubs." (*"A Brief History of Indian Standup"*).

In other words, Das dominated the comedy circuit of the country with his comic oeuvres. However, his art wasn't devoid of controversies or complications. Satire, 'the literary mode with a moral purpose' is usually employed as a measure of social correction through humour and comedy. (Diehl, 311). Despite the clear use of satire in Vir Das's last video, "I Come from Two Indias," delivered at the United States' Kennedy Centre, the actor-comedian was severely penalised for belittling and insulting his country publicly on an international platform. The short six-minute video sparked long debates about the privileges of a comedian to comment upon social issues leading up to a complaint to be filed against Das with the Mumbai Police by the legal advisor, BJP (Maharashtra Palghar District) and the high court lawyer, Ashutosh Dubey (*News18 "Vir Das Booked"*). Commenting upon matters such as India's battle with the Covid-19 Pandemic, the AQI of India, incidents of rapes, the farmer's protest, petrol prices, the contempt against comedians and much more, the video received immense attention. Asmita Chakrabarti's comment on Das's video explains the response of the audience to the comedy set in a nutshell:

"This is the 6th time I'm hearing this. The first time I heard this I felt like the worst person on the planet is no other than Vir Das, the second time I heard this I felt as if Vir Das isn't as bad as I thought him to be. The third time I heard this, I stopped thinking about Vir Das and focused more on the words. The fourth time I heard this I felt that everything he is saying is somewhere true, yet couldn't understand why he had to say all this in America, fifth time I heard him I felt what he did, how he did it is the best way to do it. This time when I hear this, I feel this is a scream of a true patriot dying to see a different India, to see the other India."
(Das)

This explains the mixed and the conflicted reaction of the Indian audience about Das and his video, in addition to the complaint made against him.

Through the public opinion on the video, and the correct employment of the Theories of humour, one may decipher the reason behind the society's intolerance towards the opinions of Das. Provoking the ire of a senior journalist, Das's monologue was considered to, "Depict India's different dichotomies through statements that were full of non-truth, made in rhyme, to provoke and attract attention." (Rajawat "Vir Das") In simpler words, to the Indian Media, the video was assumed to be an attention seeking gimmick consisting of untrue statements simply to attract the audience. The media also pointed out that the comedian's monologue was not delivered as a joke, but instead as a social commentary speech (Rajawat). Thus, his monologue appears to be distanced from the theoretical postulates of humour. Presenting polarities, Das is successful in portraying the 'Violations' in the Indian society but fails to keep them Benign. The comments made by him are offensive to the majority of the audience, being the direct subject of his 'joke'. This can be better explained by quoting and dissecting Das's monologue.

Das begins the video stating that he comes from Two Indias; one where children wear masks but leaders do not. His satirical comparison is directed towards the Indian government and points out towards the manner in which the citizens, even children, try to follow the regulations, but the government sometimes displays negligence. One of his introductory comparisons received the most backlash on social media where the comedian is found saying, "I come from an India where we worship women during the day and gang-rape them during the night." (Das). This joke aligns with the Relief Theory of humour which suggests that laughter is a result of release of powerful emotions, suppressed because of external or internal reasons, providing sentimental pleasure and mental relief. As is explained by Spencer in his *Essays on Education and Kindred Subjects* (1911), 'Laughter is an involuntary movement, a result of the joy one receives on release of suppressed feelings and may be a result of distress or mental anguish' (407-411). When emotions pertaining to agony are redirected to humour, laughter may be produced as a form of release. In one of his seminal texts published in 1905, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* Sigmund Freud also delineates on the role of laughter as a form of relief from pain by focusing on the idea of Tendentious Jokes. He points out:

"Tendentious jokes are able to release pleasure even from sources that have undergone repression. If, the overcoming of external obstacles can in this way be traced back to the overcoming of internal inhibitions and repressions, we may say that tendentious jokes exhibit the main characteristic of the joke work- that of liber-

ating pleasure by getting rid of inhibitions more clearly than any other of the developmental stages of jokes" (131)

This means that jokes wield the power not only to liberate one by releasing repressed emotions, but also to aid a person to conquer, both external and internal, impediments. Whatever one is unable to say in a socially serious setting may be presented in the form of jokes. This is also how the trope of satire functions in a society. Stating satire to be didactic in nature Kaufman points out in the introduction to her 1980 work *Feminist Humour and Satire*:

"No matter how pessimistic it sounds, it seeks to improve us by demonstrating through devices of irony, of exaggeration, of sarcasm, and of wit – our human folly. It exposes realities not merely out of love for truth but also out of desire for reform. Whether or not reforms are achieved, they are implicit ideals." (p. 14).

Thus, when Das juxtaposes the ideologies of "worship" and "rape" in the same sentence, he puts forth the Freudian ideals of a tendentious jokes, hoping to create laughter from a majorly repressed subject. As per the theory, it also exhibits the follies of the India to the entire world. It is to be noticed that while the American audience laughs at the jokes, the Indian citizens majorly condemned it. The reason behind the same can be the audience of the jokes, where comments upon Indians were made in the United States, making it appear less like a social corrective and more as an insult.

The fine line between the Relief Theory and the Superiority Theory is of the "laughter" in the matters. If a person laughs on account of their own suppressed emotions, the laughter serves as a form of release of the pent-up pain. However, when the same laughter is a consequence of considering oneself at a higher pedestal than others, it alludes to laughter resulting from the subject's inferiority. Be it Socrates' opinion regarding laughing at the misfortunes at enemies (Plato, *Philebus* 50); Aristotle's idea of creating comedy at the cost of the inferior (*Poetics* 9); or the writings of Thomas Hobbes regarding laughter being a result of self- appreciation in comparison to others (*Leviathan* 46), all suggest that laughing at the miseries of others is a source of joy. Thus, when Americans laugh at the Indian condition, the humour is not limited to the joke, but also extends to the cost of the Indians. This is a form of malicious laughter, created as a consequence of the hardships or the pains of others. In addition to this, the Indian audience is reported to be extremely sensitive to the matters of religion and

ethnicity and the Indian satirists point out that “they must also tread very carefully with respect to India’s volatile religious and ethnic divisions” (Freedman 110). Thus, the juxtaposition of religious matters along with the reference to a gory “rape” makes the joke appear malicious and harder to digest for the audience.

Vir Das’ monologue was also largely scoffed at due to the major incorrectness of facts. Das mentions that the AQI (Air Quality Index) of India is 9000, yet people sleep on their roofs to look at the stars. Yatish K Rajawat, a News18 Journalist comments upon this statement by pointing out:

“The AQI maxes out 999 so 9000 is a figure that only a performing comedian can conjure from thin air.... I don’t know how many people in India sleep on roofs in the winters, and how many stars can you see with the smog. But that does not matter, facts do not matter –shocking the audience does. Rhyming is far more important.” (“Vir Das”).

Rajawat’s statement hints towards the use of Incongruity Theory by the stand- up comedians. This theory discusses laughter as a result of absurdity and abnormality of a situation. Discussed largely by Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer this theory places laughter as a result of, ‘sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing’ and as a consequence of the ‘Sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation’ (*Critique of Judgement*, 223; *The World as Will and Idea*, 76). This theory considers that humour is produced when one has set expectations about the perceived ‘normal’ and these expectations or assumptions arrive at an anti-climactic end. Adding to it, William Hazlitt clarifies that for laughter to erupt, the shattering of the expectations must be trivial, for if they are serious, the situation leads to mere distress. He also adds to the superiority theory stating that one simply laughs at those misfortunes which belong to others, are distanced or in situations where laughter may be restricted. (Hazlitt *Lectures on the English Comic*, 1-7). Similar to this is the opinion of Kierkegaard who specifies the difference between Tragedy and Comedy, and states that while both are based on contradiction, one suffers in the former but the latter is painless. (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 459). Thus, it will be fair to classify laughter produced as a result of the Incongruity Theory, a form of humour by reason of ‘painless contradiction’. However, the disregard of the absurd statement is condemned by the Indian media owing to the aspect of suffering highlighted by Kierkegaard.

The tropes of exaggeration and the poetic licence, seem to be largely ignored by the social media in light of the offence taken by the country, leading up to the complaint against him. Tapley's argument about performative comedy may serve as a justification for the lack of laughter and the infuriation of the Indian media when she states,

"When they perform these subversions for us, and make us laugh, usually at ourselves, our laughter is revelatory. What is revealed is that subverted or critiqued norm. To see this social ill through the comic's eyes is revelatory. We see with new eyes. Our laughter signals the change to new thinking, the corrected thinking. Laughter is special in that we only laugh at comedy we think is true in some sense" (1)

This also makes one wonder if the Indian vexation stems from the lack of belief in the monologue, or through the rigidity to pave way for a "corrected thinking". Das does address this contempt of the society against comedians and mentions, "I come from an India where we break down the walls of a comedy club because you can hear laughter inside." (Das). Additionally, he contrasts that India's music may be very 'hard' but the sentiments of people are too 'soft', or that they are extremely easy to offend. Possibly, the decision to present his monologue on foreign grounds originated by reason of the fear of the society's intolerance.

Satire is noted to be an impactful tool to influence audience behaviour. (Burgers and Britta p. 971.) With the same intent, Das points out another interesting contrast, using the tropes of exaggeration and satire. He says, "I come from an India that has the largest working population under thirty on the planet but still listens to 75-year-old leaders with 150-year-old ideas." (Das). His jibe at experienced leaders, and their ideas, and his opinion about them being orthodox is also what angered some of the Indian audience. He refers to the protests of farmers in a rather interesting manner and mentions that while many Indians take pride in being vegetarians and yet, "Run over the farmers who grow our vegetables." (Das). This comparison is an example of humour serving as a social corrective and earned a loud applause in the United States, but contempt in India. The media chastised Das by calling him out with headlines such as, "Vir Das, you are no longer funny. Stop giving speeches on Two Indias" (Rajawat "Vir Das"). Das probably knew that this monologue, though extremely humorous, wasn't a laughing matter, but was a means to bring social change through satire. Das could probably foresee such a response when he states, "I come from an India that is going to watch this and say

'This isn't comedy, where is the joke?' and yet I come from an India that will watch this and know there is a gigantic joke, it just isn't funny.'" (Das). This contrast is between the oblivious and the angered; between the ones against social protest and those with it; the ones who don't understand the true essence of humour and the ones who do. Das ends his set stating that he is indeed proud that one of these Indias knows that he represents a great country built by great people. He is hopeful for the future of his 'great' country which might be fading into a memory at present. His hopeful conclusion serves as a disclaimer to point out that he means no disrespect towards India, but simply aims to bring a change. The conclusion also suggests that Das sought, not to make India a laughing matter, but to bring forth the aforementioned issues to light using humour.

The eruption of laughter in the United States and the infuriation of the Indian media and citizens suggest that the latter were offended not only by the violation of the content of the monologue but also with the audience it was uttered to. This may make one wonder, what if the same words had been delivered on the Indian soil? The media also criticised the video for being 'un-enlightening' in the wake of the obvious comments made and stated, "The fact is all countries are ironically divided in some way or the other. To constitute them as merely the sum of these opposites is neither insightful nor revelatory." (Sharma *Firstpost.com*). Thus, one may witness a loophole in the aforementioned theories of humour. The miseries of people are laughable only as long as they either belong to someone else or are trivial in nature; the incongruencies are only funny when the arrived absurdity is a harmless change; pain can only be released in the form of humour when it is converted into a light joke. This proves the contemporary and the most developed theory of laughter, so far- 'The Benign Violation Theory' developed by Peter McGraw and Joel Warner in 2015. This theory forms its basis on three conditions for an incident or a joke to be perceived funny. The first condition specifies that it should be a Violation, meaning an obstruction in the path of what's usually considered normal; second, that it should be Benign in the sense that the violation should be entirely harmless to the subject. The third condition states that both of the aforementioned conditions should take place together simultaneously (*The Humor Code* 23-26). This theory can be better understood through the given figure:

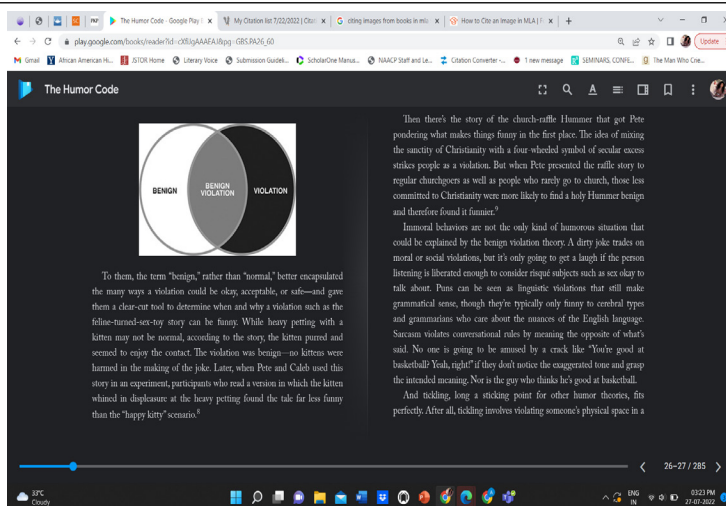


Fig 1. Peter McGraw and Joel Warner, *The Humor Code: A Global Search for What Makes Things Funny*, 2015, p. 26

Thus, the Benign- Violation Theory specifies that humour can neither be produced as a result of mere incongruencies nor from offensive or shocking violations. The change in emotion or situation must always be positive and harmless. Only the instances which match both the criteria at the same time may be considered laughable. According to this Theory, the jokes of Vir Das would have been received without contempt in India, if the element of offence had mellowed down to the bare minimum. An easy manner to reduce the offence generated from the jokes would have been to direct them to a distanced or an external subject. The reason only Indians condemned the jokes while the audience at the Kennedy Centre seemed to applaud at it, could possibly be on account of the factor of relatability; had one made jokes about a foreign land in India, the jokes would have been easier to digest, and Satire easy to understand. The witty monologue, aimed to bring a social change is indeed worthy of praise and appreciation for its intent and writing, however it appears to lack the elements of the contemporary theory of humour to appeal to audiences of all kinds.

Conclusion

Comedy aims to produce laughter through the means of humour. However, performative comedy, as witnessed, may often lead to contempt, anger and offended ideologies. Through the study of the jokes of the popular

Indian comedian, Vir Das in the backdrop of the theories of humour and the country's intolerance towards his jokes on serious social matters, one may conclude that the jokes could have easily turned wittier and funny for the Indian audience, rendering the satirical impact higher with a slight modulation in the theories of humour. Aligning with the Superiority Theory, the jokes would have been laughable if Das was pointing out the inferiorities of India to Indians, and not to the rest of the world. As per the Incongruity Theory, there should have existed more truth in his statements and not logical flaws followed by a shocking statement. One may rightly argue that the trope of exaggeration is a vital element of humour, however, it must not be the only methodology followed. In other words, if the monologue had aligned with the contemporary Benign Violation Theory, it would have been more acceptable for the Indian audience. Comedy and humour are dynamic and so is the audience's interest, which must be given prime importance in the performative arts.

This research article does not support or criticise, either the comedians or the court; it accepts and believes that laughter is a product of a major trinity, which involves (in this case), a comedian, the means of comedy or jokes, and the audience. Any shortcomings on the part of even one of the aforementioned, disrupts the reception of humour and the production of laughter. In cases where the audience is sensitive to critical opinions, being considerate about the audience, and its sentiments towards the jokes becomes more vital. Keeping a note of all this, it is also advisable for the audience to strive and take jokes at face value, to accept the lighter side of criticism and to let comedy function as a social corrective and an emotion lifter. Only when the audience is more receptive to humour, can comedians have the liberty to express all forms of opinion openly, and only then can the zenith of humour be arrived at. This doesn't mean that the audience should embrace what is inappropriate to them in the name of jokes, it simply suggests that the comedian must find the right audience with a congruent mindset to tolerate and take pleasure in their jokes. Also, the jokes must be crafted carefully with technique and consideration.

Works Cited:

"I COME FROM TWO INDIAS." Performance by Vir Das, *YouTube*, YouTube, 14 Nov. 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5A-F9qu6c_4&t=4s. Accessed 22 Aug. 2022.

“Vir Das Booked For ‘Insulting India’, Issues Clarification Post Kennedy Center Monologue.” *News18*, 18 Nov. 2021, <https://www.news18.com/news/movies/vir-das-booked-for-insulting-india-issues-clarification-post-kennedy-center-monologue-4452056.html>. Accessed 22 Aug. 2022.

Aristotle. *Poetics*. Translated by Malcolm Heath, Penguin, 1996

Blakely, Mary Kay, and Gloria J. Kaufman. *Pulling Our Own Strings: Feminist Humor & Satire*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 1980, p. 14.

Burgers, C., & Brugman, B. C. (2022). How Satirical News Impacts Affective Responses, Learning, and Persuasion: A Three-Level Random-Effects Meta-Analysis. *Communication Research*, 49(7), 966-993. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00936502211032100>

Deshpande, Vinaya. “FIRs against Deepika, 13 Others for AIB Roast Row.” *Thehindu.com*, 12 Feb. 2015, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/Mumbai-court-orders-FIR-against-AIB-Roast-show-Bollywood-stars/article60332022.ece>. Accessed 2 Sept. 2022.

Chakrabarti, Asmita “I COME FROM TWO INDIAS.” Performance by Vir Das, *YouTube*, YouTube, 14 Nov. 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5A-F9qu6c_4&t=4s. Accessed 22 Aug. 2022.

DIEHL, NICHOLAS. “Satire, Analogy, and Moral Philosophy.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 71, no. 4, 2013, pp. 311-21. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42635868>. Accessed 22 Aug. 2022.

Express Web Desk. “AIB’s Tanmay Bhat Roasts Legends Sachin Tendulkar, Lata Mangeshkar.” *Indianexpress.com*, 30 May 2016, <https://indianexpress.com/article/trending/trending-in-india/when-aib-tanmay-bhat-roasted-sachin-tendulkar-lata-mangeshkar-the-result-wasnt-pretty-2824244/>. Accessed 2 Sept. 2022.

Freedman, Leonard. “Wit as a Political Weapon: Satirists and Censors.” *Social Research*, vol. 79, no. 1, 2012, pp. 87-112. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23350299>. Accessed 5 Oct. 2023.

Freud, Sigmund. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. Penguin Books,

1976

- Hazlitt, William Carew. *Lectures on the English Poets and the English Comic Writers*. George Bell & Sons, 1901.
- Hobbes, Thomas, et al. "Leviathan." *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, Now First Collected and Ed. by Sir William Molesworth, Bart*, J. Bohn, London, 1839.
- Jha , Aditya Mani. "A Brief History of Indian Standup: The Early Years Supercut." *DeadAnt*, 29 May 2021, <https://deadant.co/a-brief-history-of-indian-standup-the-early-years-supercut/>.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgement*. Translated by J. H. Bernard, Macmillan, 1931.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, edited by Walter Lowrie, translated by David Ferdinand Swenson, by Søren Kierkegaard, Princeton University Press, 1941, pp. 459-468.
- Krishnan, Revathi. "No Laughing Matter – All the Comedians Who Got into Trouble for Trying to Be Funny." *Theprint.in*, 7 Jan. 2021, <https://theprint.in/india/no-laughing-matter-all-the-comedians-who-got-into-trouble-for-trying-to-be-funny/580663/>. Accessed 31 Aug. 2022.
- Kunal Kamra [@kunalkamra88]. "All lawyers with a spine must stop the use of the prefix "Hon'ble" while referring to the Supreme Court or its judges. Honour has left the building long back..." *Twitter*, 11 Nov. 2020, 3: 58 p.m., <https://twitter.com/kunalkamra88/status/1326471978560139270>
- "Contempt of court it seems" *Twitter*, 11 Nov. 2020, 2:19 p.m., <https://twitter.com/kunalkamra88/status/1326446948388368384>
- "Contempt of court it seems" *Twitter*, 11 Nov. 2020, 1:40 p.m., <https://twitter.com/kunalkamra88/status/1326437153082109953>
- McGraw, Peter, and Joel Warner. *The Humor Code: A Global Search for What Makes Things Funny*. Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, an Imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2015.
- Parker, Bethany. "Probing Question: What Are the Roots of Stand-up Comedy?" *Penn State University*, Penn State News, 12 Sept. 2008,

<https://www.psu.edu/news/research/story/probing-question-what-are-roots-stand-comedy/>.

Plato. *Philebus*. Translated by Gosling J C B., Clarendon, 1975.

Rajawat, K Yatish. "Vir Das, You Are No Longer Funny. Stop Giving Speeches on Two Indias." *News18*, 18 Nov. 2021, <https://www.news18.com/news/opinion/vir-das-you-are-no-longer-funny-stop-giving-speeches-on-two-indias-4456319.html>. Accessed 22 Aug. 2022.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Idea*. Translated by R. B. Haldane and John Kemp, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1909.

Sharma, Manik. "Why Vir Das' Standup Special I Come From Two Indias Deserves to Be Criticised – Not for Being Offensive, but for Being Obvious." *Firstpost.com*, 17 Nov. 2021, <https://www.firstpost.com/entertainment/why-vir-das-standup-special-i-come-from-two-indias-deserves-to-be-criticised-not-for-being-offensive-but-for-being-obvious-10143561.html>. Accessed 27 Aug. 2022.

Skand Bajpai [@SkandBajpai]. "In reply to my letter dated 11.11.2020, the Ld. Attorney General for India has given kind consent to initiate criminal conttempt of court against Kunal Kamra". *Twitter*, 12 Nov. 2020, 4:24 p.m.

Spencer, Herbert. "The Physiology of Laughter." *Essays on Education and Kindred Subjects*, The Floating Press, 1911, pp. 402-16.

Staff, Scroll. "MNS Files FIR after AIB's Tanmay Bhat Mocks Sachin Tendulkar, Lata Mangeshkar in a Video." *Scroll.In*, 30 May 2016, scroll.in/latest/809015/mns-to-file-fir-after-aibs-tanmay-bhatt-mocks-sachin-tendulkar-lata-mangeshkar-in-a-video.

Tapley, Robin. "The Corrective Social Function of Performative Comedy Demonstrated on Two Instances." *SN Social Sciences*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2021, doi:10.1007/s43545-021-00074-0.

TNN. "FIR against AIB for 'Meme on PM Modi'." *The Times of India*, 14 July 2017, FIR against AIB for '<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/fir-against-aib-for-meme-on-pm-modi/articleshow/59592570.cms>meme on PM Modi' Read more at: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/59592570>.

cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst. Accessed 2 Sept. 2022.

Vir Das [@thevirdas]. "Clarification regarding 'I come from Two Indias'" *Twitter*, 16 Nov. 2021, 4:18 p.m., <https://twitter.com/thevirdas/status/1460560310465699847/photo/1>

Zoglin, Richard. "stand-up comedy". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 20 Dec. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/art/stand-up-comedy>. Accessed 17 January 2023.