

Twain: An American Humorist

archetype: a representative pattern or model

caricature: a ludicrous exaggeration or distortion of a behavioral characteristic or physical feature(s)

colloquial: familiar; informal; often referring to the distinct manners and mores of a particular region

deadpan: expressing something comic as if it were serious by using a monotone; in oral performance, delivering the comic in a sustained non-expressive facial mode and monotone voice

fast-talker: a style of comedic delivery in which the performer will not be interrupted; connotatively, someone who has a hidden agenda in trying to sell you an idea or something material

heroic ideal: beliefs and expectations of behavior, centered around such ideals as right of freedom of the individual, the challenge of adventure in new frontiers, the value of the common man, support of the underdog, loyalty to one's country, troubleshooter, exceptional courage and brave response in the face of danger, strong coping ability, etc.

hyperbole: extravagant exaggeration

incongruity: inconsistent with logical expectation

interlocutor: in early minstrel shows, the man in the middle of a semicircle who initiates the humor by questioning the "end men."

intrinsic: in the context of this lesson, the inherent personality of the teller built on firmly infixed habits and/or attitudes

irony: the use of words to reveal that the intended meaning is contrary to that which is expressed, or that what happens is contrary to the expectation of what is going to happen

malapropism: a blunder in the use of words; using a word in the wrong context

parodied: imitated or mimicked for comic effect or ridicule

prototype: an original model after which something is copied; a pattern

satire: holding up human vices, follies, beliefs, behaviors, institutions, etc., to ridicule or scorn

slapstick comedy: a type of comedy named after the double paddles used by comedians when "whacking" each other in performance in the 16th and 17th commedia dell'arte in France and Italy. The humor is generated from physical comedy; actors chase, trip, punch, etc., in a wild array of exaggerated physical action and facial distortions. The humor of *The Three Stooges* is an example of slapstick comedy.

wit: an intelligent display of humor; satire often expressed in smart sallies (one-liners) of disparagement (ridiculing, putting someone or something down); a quick turn of phrase; an aptness for clever (intellectually driven) expression. "Wit" often has the connotation of "biting" sarcasm; "wit, when incorporated within the generic term "humor" commonly has the connotation of a broader human sympathy in dealing with the ludicrous and incongruous; a gentle satire.

yarn: a colloquial reference to a story that often uses a dubious situation (one which could not really happen) as the center of its narrative; in this context, the "dubious" nature of the story builds the humor.