Bulletin of the *Transilvania* University of Braşov
Series IV: Philology and Cultural Studies • Vol. 12 (61) No. 2 – 2019
https://doi.org/10.31926/but.pcs.2019.61.12.22

The German protests of ’68 as the source of humour in *Die 68er CARTOONS*

Ioana Andreea DIACONU[1]

The paper presents a series of cartoons on the German student movement from the sixties created 50 years later and tries to identify the sources and mechanisms of humour as well as the trigger of laughter of the sketches. A short presentation of this movement, its importance and echoes to the present and the description of the cartoon technique are indispensable in understanding the cartoons. There will also be an attempt to place these works in the history of German cartoon. In the end, an attempt will be made to identify, whether the publication of translated versions of the examined cartoons would be in any way successful, or rather useless.

Key-words: *cartoons, visual humour, sixty - eighters*

1. Introduction

At the 50th anniversary of the Protests of ‘68, the Caricatura – Galerie für komische Kunst (Caricatura - Gallery of Comic Art) in Kassel hosted the exhibition of 37 cartoonists on the 68 student movement in Germany, their cartoons being afterwards published by Saskia Wagner in the anthology *Die 68er CARTOONS* (Wagner 2018).

The motivation of the event is given in the presentation of the exhibition and the book: “But what became of the so-called "old 68ers"? Where did the march through the institutions lead them? Are they still roughing up the establishment or are they part of it? Do they spontaneously re-create slogans? Do they let their descendants read to them from “the Capital”? The exhibition *Die 68er CARTOONS* looks for answers for these questions.

[1] Transilvania University of Braşov, ioanadiaconu@unitbv.ro

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

2. The protests of 1968 and the students' movement

The protests of 1968 and the students' movement were part of a worldwide civil rights movement that culminated in 1968 with violent protests and riots in different countries.

In Western Germany, the young generation accused their parents of their Nazi past and fought against the restauration of the right wing politics, observing that most state institutions and institutions of the state authority were populated by former Nazi activists. They were protesting also against nuclear arms race and for the freedom of the press – the whole editorial staff of "Der Spiegel" had been dismissed for criticizing the German army and on the other side, the Springer Press Group was holding alone in Berlin over 70% of the market, having thus press and opinion monopole which it was accused to misuse in favour of the contested government, of the establishment itself.

In the students' requirements in the universities were connected to the Infrastructure, to the rights in running the universities and, especially to the elimination of the professors who had been active in the Nazi period.

The students' movement was radicalized by the murder of Benno Ohnesorg, the attempt to assassinate the students' leader Rudi Dutschke, and the passing of the emergency acts. The protests triggered a violent over reaction from the police.

Another aspect of the social movements in the sixties was the sexual liberation or revolution against the traditional codes of sexual behaviour with the symbol of burning bras in public. In connection with the sexual revolution as a reaction to the conservative society stands the formation of Kommune 1/K1, the first commune in Germany with a political background. Initially established by nine men, a woman and a child (among which the German author's Hans Magnus Enzensberger's wife, daughter and brother), who first moved together in Enzensberger's empty apartment in Berlin, on the 12th of January 1967, the commune staged bizarre, provocative and satirical events as an answer to different political issues and events, such as the visit of the Shah or of the US Vice President Hubert Humphrey. It was a model of breaking from what they considered to be narrow minded, bourgeois concepts, as had been first discussed by the members of the "Munich Subversive Action".

In a second phase, the issues of sex, drugs, and music were in the foreground, after the commune moved to a deserted factory in the summer of 1968. A later resident, Uschi Obermeier, a model from Munich, became famous after falling in love with Jimi Hendrix who had visited the K1. The end of K1 was brought by heroin consumption and a gang of rockers who had destroyed the rooms in November 1969, so that the occupants left. (Enzensberger 2004)

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

The protests and the students’ movement were accompanied by motivational, very often versified *ad hoc* slogans, some of which exist until nowadays with modified meaning. Below is a selection of slogans with an attempted translation, as they will be discussed in the context of the cartoons. (bpb 2008)

German slogan	English version
(1) Unter den Talaren - Muff von 1000 Jahren;	(1) Under academic robes a mold a 1000 years old;
(2) Wer zweimal mit derselben pennt, gehört schon zum Establishment;	(2) Who sleeps twice with the same, already belongs to the establishment;
(3) Trau keinem über 30;	(3) Do not trust anyone over 30;
(4) Ho-ho-ho Chi Minh - He unterstützt den Vietcong;	(4) Ho-ho-ho Chi Minh - He supports the Viet Cong;
(5) Revolution ist machbar, Herr Nachbar;	(5) Revolution is possible, Mr. Neighbour;
(6) Haut dem Springer auf den Finger;	(6) Hit Springer on the finger;
(7) All die jetzt aufgestanden sind, sollen sich widersetzen;	(7) All who have now stood up should resist;
(8) Wenn der Krieg ausbricht, war der Frieden offenbar ein Gefängnis;	(8) When the war breaks out, peace seems to have been a prison;
(9) Der Klügere gibt solange nach, bis er der Dumme ist;	(9) The cleverer gives way until he becomes the stupid one;
(10) Lieber niederträchtig als hochschwanger;	(10) Better wicked than pregnant;
(11) Wer zu viel fernsieht, verliert den Weitblick. (Domzalski 2007)	(11) Who watches too much TV, loses their vision.

3. On visual humour

The Webster definitions of a cartoon are: 1) a preparatory design, drawing, or painting (as for a fresco); 2a) a drawing intended as satire, caricature, or humour; a political cartoon; 2b) comic strip; 3) animated cartoon; 4) a ludicrously simplistic, unrealistic, or one-dimensional portrayal or version (Webster dictionary). “The contemporary meaning of cartoon refers to an image or a series of satirical, humorous images. The first time satirical drawings were called cartoons was by the Punch magazine about the sketches by John Leach” (Adler and Hill 2008, 12). In the case of *Die 68er CARTOONS*, all definitions meet.

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

3.1. Humour

Salvattore Attardo asks himself in the essay 'Humour and Irony in Interaction' what humour is and concludes it would be very difficult to find a generally accepted definition for it. "For a phenomenon that is so universal to humans, it is a paradox that there is so little agreement among scholars about how it operates, what it is, or what to label it." (Attaro 2001, 21)

Freud (1905[1960]) distinguishes between wit and the comic, depending on the number of participants in the act. According to him, the comical is found primarily as an unintentional discovery in the social relations of human beings, often exemplified as aggressive or hostile tendencies. In Freud's (1927 [1980]) "Humor," the term refers to a series of painful emotions transformed in a manner that produces pleasure. He argues that humour is the "most self-sufficient of the comic forms" (Freud 1927 [1980], 283)

The dictionary definition of humour is. "(1) The quality of being laughable, or comical; funniness. (2) Something designed to induce laughter or amusement". But the conclusion is again, that "an all-encompassing, generally accepted definition of humour does not exist" (Weinberger and Gulas 1992, 49).

This is why in my analyses of the cartoons I will apply Otto Julius Bierbaum's Definition on humour: "Humor is when you laugh anyway." (Bierbaum 1909, 3)

3.2. The trigger of laughter

In their paper, *We are Humor Beings: Understanding and Predicting Visual Humor*, Arjun Chandrasekaran *et al.* (2016) assert that a legitimate question would be what makes an image to be funny? The important thing in visual humour is to detect all objects in the image, the interaction between them and the context. (Chandrasekaran *et al.* 2016, 4603)

These cartoonists claim that a particular source of humour would be the presence of objects in an unusual context. This source of humour is explained by the fact that a playful violation of the subjective expectations of a perceiver causes humour (Mihalcea 2007).

Other sources of humour are considered to be the misfortunes of others which show our own superiority (Mulder and Nijoholt 2002, 2), the release of tension or mental energy and feelings of hostility, aggression, or sexuality that are expressed through bypassing any societal norms are also enjoyed (Domzalski 2007, 2).

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

4. The history of German cartoons

The first cartoons were printed in Germany at the end of the 19th century in the satirical magazines *Kladderadatsch* (founded 1848), *Nebelspalter* (founded 1875) and *Simplicissimus* (founded 1896). Different other magazines adopted the trend which continued until 1933 when most of them were banned. After the 2nd world war, some new magazines, among which the well - known *Stern*, started again to print cartoons which they considered having good humour. Cartoons also begun to appear in commercial magazines for marketing purposes.

In Germany, the word "cartoon" was made popular at end of the 50s by the Diogenes Verlag (cartoon calendar from 1956) as a name for a (intelligent) Bildwitz. The appearance, technique and distribution of this art form was changed decisively in West Germany in the 1960s and 1970s by the artists of the New Frankfurt School in the satirical magazine *pardon*[2] founded in 1962, with an anarchic humour (Kromschröder 2018, 8). Former *pardon* employees founded in 1979 the satirical book *Titanic*, which became the new forum for cartoonists in West Germany.

Cartoons can be found in the present in almost all major German daily newspapers and weekly newspapers and in cartoon anthologies, such as *Die 68er CARTOONS* (Wagner 2018).

5. The CARTOONS: Laughing at tragic times

The organizer of the exhibition “Caricatura” Kassel decided that the best way to celebrate the student´s movement and protests of the 68 by an exhibition of comic art. 38 artists among which 2 of the founders of *pardon* exhibited over 120 cartoons which were subsequently published in the exhibition catalogue. The cartoons show the protagonists of the 68 movement finding themselves in front of their children and grandchildren like in front of a reversed mirror.



Picture 1. Wagner 2018, front cover

[2] The title of the magazine is written in small letters.

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

The subthemes of the cartoons are as various as the ideas and directions of the movement itself. They deal with the general atmosphere of the movement, with the endless discussions bringing nowhere, the feminist movement, the legendary figures and idols of the movement such as Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh or Mao Tse Tung, free love, state force and arbitrariness, the fate of famous slogans and motivational sentences, the development of the former militants and their relation with their children and grandchildren, and most important, with those who are now of the age they were in 1968. Looking at the age of the cartoonists, we can see that some of the authors have consciously experienced the celebrated period, some of them were children and some of them were born after 1968.

I would like to start my analyses with the cartoons whose authors have experienced the period as mature persons, some of them also as participants. The attempt is made to identify, if the age of the authors has any influence upon the key aspects dealt with in the cartoons.

5.1. Witnesses of the movement

The sociologist Clodwig Poth, born in 1930, was a permanent free collaborator of the famous German satirical magazine *pardon* (founded in 1962 in Frankfurt) and later of Titanic. He had conducted the long term study *Mein Progressiver Alltag* (my progressive everyday life) on the discrepancies between leftist theories and the dull bourgeois everyday life during that period. (Kromschröder 2018).

His cartoons in the book have almost the consistency of comics (comic strips). We have three 2 pages long stories with many drawings and speech bubbles full of text, two of them depicting relevant phenomena and moments from the 68 – emancipation (Poth 2018, 59) and the long discussions and debates (Poth 2018, 89) – and one a present gathering of the apolitical opposition veterans (Poth 2018, 18-19). These three cartoons are a drawn version of Poth´s sociological research. One example would be the discussion between mother and father, both militating against the severe requirements of school performance based on competition and in favour of playful learning and working, until the moment their offspring communicates the bad results in school. The parents´ attitude transforms, becoming similar to what they had vehemently combated: the son is reprehended for his results and for playing football (Poth 2018, 90).

The cartoon on the first veteran meeting of the extra parliamentary opposition brings together almost 50 figures sitting at tables and discussing. The speech bubbles contain idyllic self-representations of the speakers during the protests, but also showing unexpected career turns, such as becoming the chief of the drug squad or getting different other positions in the civil service, both of them

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

being the source of humour. Everything under the supervision of a spy reporting to his bosses from the top of a tree on the event in progress, which is also a laugh triggering element.

Other cartoonists from the generation of active protesters are Franziska Becker, born in 1949, Erich Rauschenbach 1944, BURKH 1952, Petra Kaster 1952, Peter Butschkow 1944, Erich Rauschen-bach 1944, Klaus Stuttmann 1949, Freimut Woessner 1945, Gerhard Seyfried 1944, and Peter Thulke 1951. Their cartoons have in common not only some formal aspects like longer stories and more drawings, but also the subjects they are focussing on: discussions, debates, emancipation and police violence. One of the humorous elements in the long text cartoons is the fact that after reading the text you come to no conclusion at all, or to the one of having read it for nothing. One example of that type of “drawn story” is the depiction of a bicycle accident between two sixty-eighters who remain sitting in different parts of the image, talking about the 3rd world and apologizing to each other, making no attempt to improve the situation (raise, repair the bikes, leave the scene).

The longest story is that of Franciska Becker (2018, 55-57) on studying in Heidelberg, where she depicts the complex times in 14 drawings with many characters and speech bubbles, actually including all themes of the entire exhibition, from the feminist movement to the endless debates.

The mockery of these endless, often pointless discussions culminates with the cartoon showing two people engaged in a sexual activity and a speech bubble with the woman´s request to please postpone the discussion until after the act. What the much younger author Till Mette (2018, 82) has in common with his older colleagues is the idea of discussions going on permanently. The cartoon contains a simple drawing and one speech bubble.

What Till Mette has in common with his younger colleagues, of which some were born after the depicted period, is dealing with the subject of sexual liberation, with free love, or the content of sexual hints. There are hints to random sexual encounters and connected to that, the discussions around the flower children or word games around the figure combination ´68 followed by ´69. (Bexte 2018, 58; Landschutz 2018, 44; Lars 2018, 45; Siktu 2018, 91; Sedlaczek 2018, 95; Greve 2018, 97).

To these artists, the subject seems exotic, as the present young generation seems to be preoccupied by other subjects. Two old people remark that in their youth they were engaging in sexual activities rather than doing sports (Rauschenbach 2018, 53), a young man refuses a date because he is busy with his job (Woessner 2018, 80).

Landschutz lets her female figure who lies naked in bed with his partner assert he would have liked to live in 1968, because he would not have worked, just

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

smoked and have sex with all her girlfriends (Landschutz 2018, 44). A sort of nostalgia is sensed in other cartoons, where contemporary women are depicted in opposition to the sixty-eighters as submissive, materially orientated sex partners (Sieber 2018, 99-100), or the regret about fighting the „begoted prudery" when having to assist nowadays to phenomena which led to the #metoo movement from Holtschultes (2018, 79) non-complicated depiction of two gray bearded sixty-eighters passing by a newspaper stand advertising for the movement.

With regard to the other subjects, we cannot make such a strict classification connected to having witnessed the movement or not.

5.2. Recurrent themes

The most important subject is the gap between generations, whereby the sixty-eighters find themselves in the position of those they had so much hated. As parents, they are quite inflexible, positioning themselves against the choices of their children, which they find unacceptable, exactly as their parents had done before. Til Mette (2018, 113) sketches a couple of elderly people driving somewhere with their son who is sitting behind. There is just one speech bubble containing the information that the parents are generally proud of him for having made something important of himself, still calling his job, hedge fund manager being a big piece of shit. In the next cartoon, the couple, sitting in the living room refuse the son´s visit on the 1st of May, because they would join the traditional Berlin protests on that day. In both situations, the offspring´s desires and plans are minimalised, diminished exactly the same way as their parents had done it in the past. The fact that in both cartoons the mother speaks in the name of the family is perceived as a hint to the feminist movement. The relation between parents – children appears reversed, the son is the serious businessmen with a fair income, his parents are behaving like teenagers planning a rampage.

Other cartoons on this subjects show reciprocal lack of understanding. A child says to her father that the 1968 was so important in music because it´s the birth year of Dieter Bohlen (Lars 2018, 108), another interprets the word flower power as being a term for bio fuel (Sikitu 2018, 76), somebody with earphones corrects his father for a grammar mistake occurred when the latter sent him out to demonstrate (Rürup 2018, 24), a mother is yelling to her daughter not to make her homework (Greve 2018, 22) and a grandmother is mocking at her granddaughter who is choosing a bra with the remark, in her time they were burning the staff (Wurster 2018, 54).

Kai Flemming presents the sketch of father and son walking together, complaining to each other about their former teachers, the son considering himself

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

more disadvantaged by having had a sixty-eighter for a teacher, than his father with a Nazi teacher (Flemming 2018, 25).

Another ironized subject in the relation young vs old generation is pacifism. A knitting father states he would shoot his daughter for wanting to enrol, only if he knew how to do it (BURCH 2018: 21), and a small boy is allowed by his father to buy a toy gun only after promising he would buy a blue helmet and name the toys peace toys, and not war toys (Bengen 2018, 83).

Some cartoons contain reference to K1 and to Uschi Obermeier. Bettina Bexte entitles her drawing everyday life in the commune. She shows four women and a man, whom one of them discovers to have lice. All three speech bubbles, from which one is pointing to two residents, contain the statement, Rainer would be banned from all their beds until the problem was solved (Bexte 2018, 58). In another cartoon, a young boy comes out running from his grandfather’s room holding a playboy magazine with Ushi Obermeier on the cover (Holtschulte 2018, 50).

The commune life is revivified by BURKH the representation of a chaotic flatshare of old people being visited by a community service helper. The speech bubble says: “Our assisted living nest for graciously aging sixty-eighter flatsharers: a wide field for every dedicated civil helper.” (BURKH 2018, 17)

5.3. The sixty-eighters today

The flatshare theme is a suitable introduction to the subject of the representation of the sixty-eighters in the present. Some of them are represented as fun-loving old hippies, hoping that their grandchildren would have a more revolutionary spirit that their children (Butschkow 2018, 16; Sedlaczek 2018, 27; Stuttmann 2018, 38). When living in retirement homes, they compare the situation with living in the commune or with “occupy” actions in their youth. (BURCH 2018, 14, 17; Kaster 2018, 15; Bexte 2018, 70).

In everyday situations they either behave very revolutionary (Kaster 2018, 15, 34; BURKH 2018, 35, 92; Sedlaczek 2018, 95; Greve 2018, 97; Mette 2018, 113), show regrets for not having made retirement arrangements (Stuttmann 2018, 38; Kaster 2018, 46) or live on exotic beaches (Woessner 2018, 32; Butschkow 2018, 33; Flemming, ©TOM 2018, 63).

What almost all cartoons have in common is the idea that the sixty-eighters are exactly like the previous generation: unwilling to change, to give up their way of live, which also represents the most important source of humour.

There are of course some exceptions: a former sixty-eighter driving around with his son to visit relevant spots for the protests is reminded by the latter that they

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

have a housekeeper (Woessner 2018, 31) and a couple drives around in a huge camper van, showing that their past became just an empty form (Wuster 2018, 79).

The saddest part of the freedom movement period was police violence exercised not just during protests, but against anyone seeming to belong to the rebelling party, but not exclusively. A woman selling tomatoes and eggs is picked up from a political gathering of the chancellor Franz Joseph Strauß (Hurzlmeier 2018, 116) the intentions of an intellectual looking man are questioned by fiercely looking policemen (Prüstel 2018, 11) and two children talk themselves out in front of a policemen with the argument, they wouldn't plan a rampage but just talking about protests (Plikat 2018, 115). The most intrusive gesture is that of a policeman asking in a rest room for somebody´s papers, for the clear reason that toilet paper was missing (Hurzlmeier 2018, 11).

Especially in these cartoons Bierbaum´s definition of humour suits best. You laugh that policemen pick up an innocent merchant selling tomatoes and eggs, you laugh that an intellectually looking man is suspected of being dangerous, just because he looks the way he does, at the fact that children are suspected, or at the arbitrary demand for papers, symbolised by the absurd situation of them being used as toilet paper. You laugh anyway.

5.4. Stereotypes and clichés

We find in the cartoons many stereotypes and clichés about the actors of the movement, whether we speak about the protesters or about the people they were protesting against and the police – the others.

The appearance of the sixty-eighters meets all stereotypes: the men are bearded and have long hair, lose or tied in ponytails, some have tattoos; they ware wide trousers and waistcoats. The women also have long hair and long, colourful skirts, both, men and women wear bandeaus. The cliché connected to drug-consumption is represented by smoking weed. The "others" wear suits and are fat, and the policemen are huge, oversized and fierce.

These clichés are used in different art forms, when characters around 70 years old are created. In the first place, the reference is to films, where old men wear long hair, ponies, bandeaus and waistcoats, make music, they grow and smoke weed and when meeting people from their youth, who are usually former residents of a commune where they all had spent time together. They choose jobs that don't imply regular working hours, engage in civil actions generally consider any type of state authority to be an enemy. Such kind of behaviour is in contradiction to the ordinary, convention-rich and very neat German everyday life. Since police and administration have been reformed considerably comparing to the sixties, the rebellious attitude is

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

completely out of place and constitutes together with the relaxed attitude in a competition based society the main source of humour.

5.5. The slogans

Some of the most representative slogans created during and for the protests were presented under chapter one. Such slogans are another guiding theme of the cartoons.

Grandfathers create them like limericks for the small ones or they appear as mottoes on posters (cover, Holtschulte 2018, 25; Prüstel 2018, 39; Plikat 2018, 64; Flemming 2018, 88; Sowa 2018, 111), but the oddest thing is, they appear in present day commercials.

“Who sleeps twice with the same, already belongs to the establishment” is used for selling mattresses and sex dolls (Rürup 2018, 98; Greve 2018, 105), “make love, not war” is turned into “make like – not war” (Sikitu 2018, 6), the word revolution is used for the chewing gum Mao (Karnebogen 2018, 7) and for selling bio products (Feicke 2018, 67), flower power as a name for a restaurant, a fitness studio (Hochschulte 2018, 73) and for green energy (Karnebogen 2018, 75; Sikitu 2018, 76). Revolutionary faces appear on t-shirts and caps, even a taxi driver advertises with different 68 slogans on his car. The cartoons expose the attempt made in the present, to commercialize the whole movement (also Hochschulte 2018, 74).

6. The cartoons seen as echoes of the movement

Sociologic studies identify as long term results of the social movements from the sixties and of the ´68 protests following aspects: liberated sexuality, processing the Nazi period, emancipation, the expansion of universities, reformed police, understanding between East and West, anti-authoritarian education, protest songs, drug experiments, personal / direct addressing, leftist terrorism. (Simon *et al.* 2018, 1-9)

Seven of these issues find representation in the cartoons. Some of them have already undergone a process of restauration, like for instance the theme of sexual liberation (Kaster 2018, 46) or the personal, direct addressing. These two aspects are a source of humor in the cartoons where old people behave like young and vice versa. The grandmother laughs at her granddaughter buying a bra (Wurster 2018, 54), two old men laugh at a jogging young man for not having sex instead of making sport (Rauschenbach 2018, 53) and two tramps, former hippies, regret for having to address to each other with the polite form of the pronoun (Stuttmann 2018, 38).

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

The possible complete restauration is represented by Stuttmann (2018, 93) would imply the mayor of Berlin divorcing his husband, the conservative German prime minister Markus Söder giving up politics because of an illegitimate child, and the chancellor Angela Merkel returning to a housewife´s life. Imagining a jealous Mayor, or Mrs. Merkel behind the cooker are further sources of humour. Three figures and three speech bubbles scan the most important result of the movement: emancipation.

The seriousness of some aspects is diminished in the cartoons. The drug consumption is reduced to the harmless pot smoking (BURKH 2018, 14; Hochschulte 2018, 41; Bexte 2018, 70), the discussion about anti-authoritarian education seems useless, as long as the young people seem rather peaceful and achievement-oriented, to the desperation of their revolutionary sixty-eighters. (Rürup 2018, 24; Sedlacheek 2018, 27; Rauschenbach 2018, 28).

7. On the translatability of the cartoons - instead of conclusions

This brings us back to the history of the social movements of the sixties and the countries in which they took place. The contemporary generations in such countries had undergone similar experiences with the protagonists of those times. They are familiar with the different phenomena the cartoons deal with, like the opposition between flower power/hippies/freedom movement vs. police violence; Vietnam War/ nuclear arms race; conservatives vs. progressives. As far as different drawings refer to such general aspects, they find a potential audience who could enjoy the humour. The translation of such cartoons, for instance into English, would be meaningful and possible.

To be more specific, we talk about the cartoons on police violence, on the generations conflict, on the situation of sixty-eighters in today's everyday life, and on those who have retired to exotic places or nursing homes.

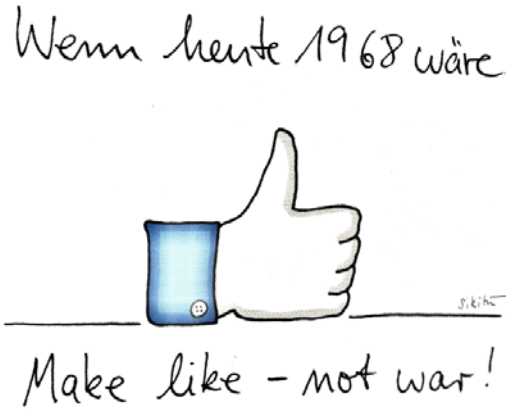
In cultures where the movement had other focusses (like in some ex socialist countries), or did not take place at all, the experiences described in the cartoons are unknown, thus the humour triggering aspects cannot be understood. Translating into Romanian for instance Wurster's (Wurster 2018, 54) cartoon, in which the hippie grandmother tells her granddaughter that they were burning bras in their 20s, would make no sense, although there are no linguistic difficulties. Romanian grandmothers have not experienced anything like that in their past and the gesture has no cultural meaning whatsoever. Too many explanations would be necessary for the correct reception of the message.

The more the cartoons deal with aspects specific to the German '68 movement, the more they become incomprehensible to audiences from other

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

cultures. These include the slogans, names of the German protagonists at the time, or actual political events. Such allusions remain humorous only for the target readers of the source culture, and their translation would be pointless.

As a final remark we can say that aspects such as gender, skin colour, and various weaknesses – as far as the inability to hold a weapon is not considered a weakness – are not a source of humour in the *Die 68er CARTOONS*. The only source of humour is the power not to despair in front of the disasters, and to laugh. Because humour is when you laugh anyway (Bierbaum 1903, 3).



Picture 2. *Make like – not war!* (Wagner 2018: 6)

References

Primary literature

Wagner, Saskia (ed.), Gerhart Kromschröder (preface) and the cartoonists: Franziska Becker, Harm Bengen, Bettina Bexte, BURKH, Peter Butschkow, Tim Oliver Feicke, Kai Flemming, Peter Gaymann, Robert Gernhardt; Katharina Greve; Hauck & Bauer; Michael Holtschulte, Rudi Hurzlmeier, Ernst Kahl, Björn Karnebogen, Petra Kaster, Dorthe Landschulz, Mario Lars, Til Mette, Denis Metz, OL, Ari Plikat, Chlodwig Poth, Andreas Prüstel, Erich Rauschenbach, Leonard Riegel, Stephan Rürup, André Sedlaczek, Gerhard Seyfried, Guido Sieber, Sowa Sikitu, Stuttmann Michael, Tetsche Klaus, Peter Thulke, ©TOM, Freimut Woessner, and Miriam Wurster. 2018. *Die 68er CARTOONS*. Oldenburg/ Frankfurt: Lappan.

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)

Wagner, Saskia (ed). 2018. "Die 68er, Cartoons". *Eschborner Stadtmagazin.* https://www.eschborner-stadtmagazin.de/2018/11/saskia-wagner-hrsg-die-68er-cartoons-2/, accessed on November 2019.

Secondary literature

*** (bpb.de). 2008. "Dossier: Die 68er Bewegung". *Newsletter of `Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung`* http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/68er-bewegung/, accessed on November 2019.

Adler, John, and Draper Hill 2008. *Doomed by Cartoon: How Cartoonist Thomas Nast and the New York Times Brought Down Boss Tweed and His Ring of Thieves*. Garden City, NY: Morgan James Publishing.

Bierbaum, Otto Julius. 1909. *Yankeedoodle Fahrt und andere Reisegeschichten.* Müchen: Georg Müller.

Chandrasekaran, Arjun, Ashwin Vijayakumar, Stanislaw Antol, Mohit Bansal, Dhruv Batra, and Devi Parikh. 2016. *We are Humor Beings: understanding and predicting visual humour.* pen access version of the CVPR paper provided by *The Computer Vision Foundation*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287250475_We_Are_Humor_Beings_Understanding_and_Predicting_Visual_Humor

Domzalski, Oliver Thomas (ed.) (2006): *Das goldene Album der Sponti-Sprüche:* "*Ich geh kaputt – gehst Du mit?*" Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn.

Enzensberger, Ulrich 2004: *Die Jahre de Kommune 1- Berlin 1967 – 1969* Köln: Kieppenhauer und Wietsch.

Freud, Sigmund. 1905[2003]. *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten*. Franz Deuticke: Leipzig und Wien.

Freud, Sigmund. 1927 [1980] "*Humor*". In *Gesammelte Werke* Bd 14, 383 – 389. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

Merriam Webster online: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cartoon.

Mihalcea, Rada F. 2007. "The Multidisciplinary Facets of Research on Humour". In *International Workshop on Fuzzy Logic and Applications,* ed. by Francesco Masulli, Sushmita Mitra, Gabriella Pasi, 412-421. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.

Mulder, Monique and Antinus Nijoholt. 2002. "*Humour Research: State of the Art."* (CTIT Technical Report Series; No. 02-34). Portland: University of Twente, Centre for Telematics and Information Technology.

Simon, Violetta, Olivia Kortas, Lars Langenau, Oliver Klasen. 2017. **"**Elf Dinge, die uns die 68er-Bewegung hinterlassen hat**".** *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2. Juni 2017.

Webster dictionary - https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cartoon, accessed in November 2019.

Weinberger, Mark G. and Charles Gulas*. Humor in Advertising. A Comprehensive Analyses.* Scharpe: New York.

BDD-A31276 © 2019 Transilvania University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:58:57 UTC)