

Scatological Children's Humour

Notes from the Netherlands and Anywhere

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I still remember the first joke I learned when I was about five years old. There was a mother who had two boys; one was called Yesterday and the other Pudding. Pudding and Yesterday had been naughty and were sent to their room. Pudding said to Yesterday: 'I must poop'. Yesterday replied: 'We are not allowed to leave the room. Do it from the window'. Pudding did so but at that same moment the mayor passed by the house and the poop fell on his hat. The mayor was annoyed and rang the bell. The mother opened the door and the Mayor said: 'Something fell on my head when I passed your house'. The mother asked: 'Was it Yesterday?' The mayor: 'No, today!' The mother: 'Was it Pudding?' The mayor: 'No, it was poop!' Hahahaha.¹

Shit and other 'dirty' bodily substances are the favourite topics for jokes among children, to be replaced by sex at a later age. A joke is supposed to provoke

laughter by presenting a story or a situation that is out of the ordinary and is experienced as funny (tautology is unavoidable when one wants to explain what humour is). Shit on someone's head is unusual, out of place and, in the eyes of some, comical. For children that unusual event is enough to enjoy the thrill of the story. But not only for children. Cartoons and illustrations for a larger public also convey the humour of dirt falling on people from above.

Excrement forms the hilarious denouement of the joke.² The children's story is a joke told *because* of the shit and the piss. In this essay I will explore the social context and meaning of scatological jokes in general and among children in particular. I will first dwell on two aspects of humour that are particularly relevant to the topic of this essay. The first is humour's tendency to turn the established order upside down and reveal what

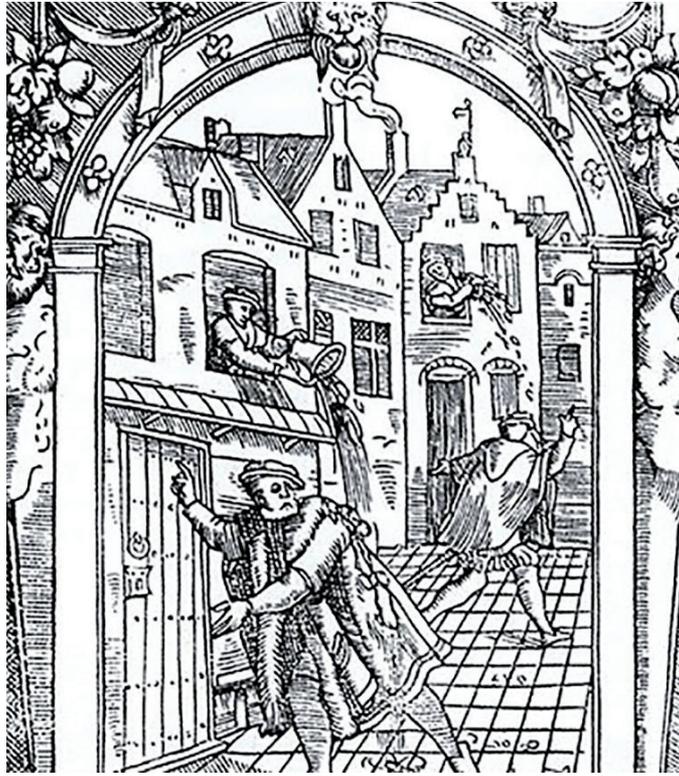


Figure 1. *Medieval Times*. Origin unknown

is normally hidden and not spoken about. The second is that telling a joke is a context-bound act of social communication. Scatological humour is usually regarded as the domain of children but – as I will argue in the conclusion – it is also a phenomenon that connects children with the older generation. The next section provides examples of scatological humour from various parts of the world and from children as well as adults. It illustrates the different shades of this type of humour depending on the specific context in which it is produced and exchanged.

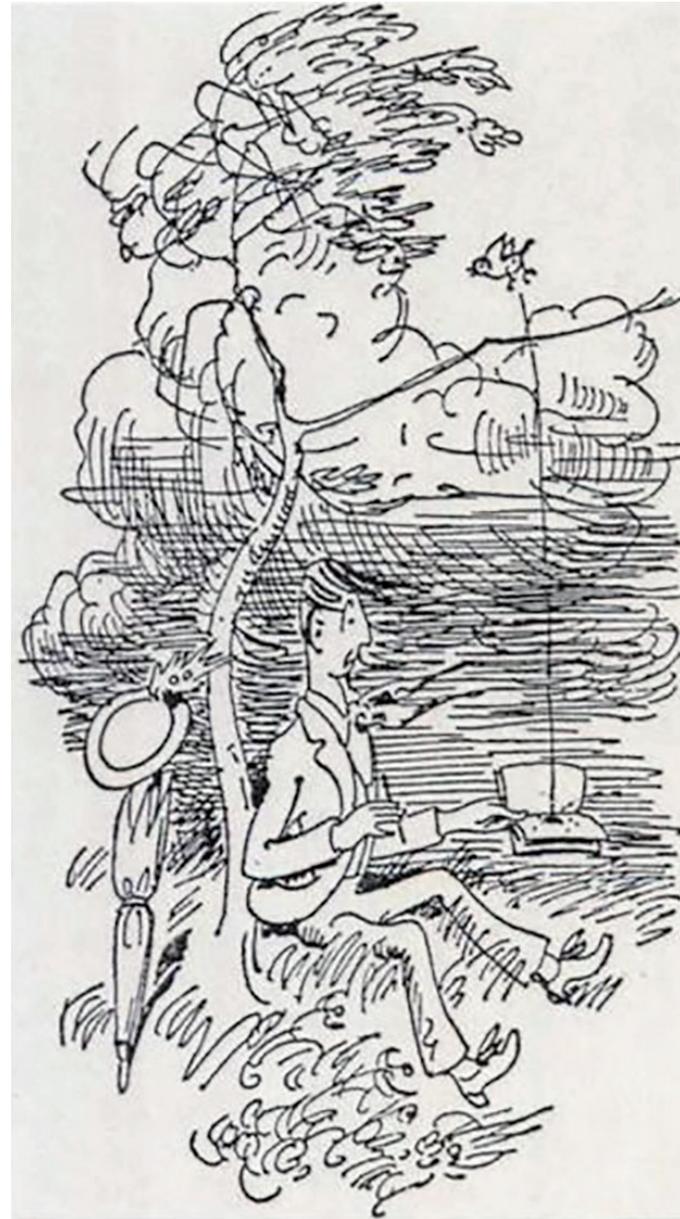


Figure 2. *The bird's relief*. Wilhelm Busch

By 'scatological' I mean 'humorous by referring to excretion'. The term is often used in a wider sense in reference to anything that is regarded 'obscene', in particular sexual matters. Sexual and excretory topics are often overlapping, as they are in human anatomy.³ The closeness of the two subjects can be illustrated by another of my earliest jokes, not very different from the one just cited. Jantje was sitting in an airplane when he felt a strong urge to pee. He opened the window to pee but suddenly the window came down again and cut off his willy. The next day people read in the newspaper: 'Little thumb found without nail'. Hahaha.⁴

Another shade of meaning in the adjective 'scatological' is that dictionaries do not make a distinction between human and non-human excretory matters. The same applies to the first overview study of scatological practices worldwide by John G. Bourke (1891). I feel, however, that human shit and urine are far more disgusting – and therefore more 'scatological' – than that of animals. Nevertheless, in this essay I will follow the dictionaries and Bourke, and discuss jokes that relate to both human and non-human excretion.

Humour

Do we need a full-fledged definition of humour in a special issue on the very topic? I trust that several of the other contributors have made an attempt to grasp the ingredients of that ungraspable phenomenon. Another attempt would mainly produce the opposite of humour. Moreover, as Thomas Crump (1988) remarked in the first issue of *Etnofoor*, we understand a joke in a split second of 'enlightenment'. That moment, he points out

with a reference to Capra must come spontaneously; it cannot be achieved by 'explaining' the joke, i.e. by intellectual analysis. The conclusion is clear, in a split second: 'This is a somewhat formidable challenge to an author trying to write about humour' (ibid.: 25). Mary Douglas (1968: 362) used the word 'desiccated' for Radcliffe-Brown's humourless style of treating joking relations, a qualification that also applies to her own (pioneering) treatise on the subject. Martha Wolfenstein (1954: 13), in her introduction to children's humour, asks the readers to excuse her for the lack of humour in her book:

While the enjoyment of a joke involves an agreeable feeling of ease and effortlessness, the analysis of the very complicated structure of a joke has rather the opposite quality. I make these points so that the reader should not feel disappointed if he does not find this a funny book.⁵

But let me, nevertheless, try to dwell on two aspects of humour, which – hopefully – will not be too boring. Firstly, I agree with Henk Driessen (1997: 222) that humour often has (must have?) a relativizing effect. The joke permits us to look behind the scenes of standard meanings and conventions and shows us another world that can only exist without becoming public and conventional. We know that there is more to life than what directors, ministers, bishops and family heads preach and we share that tacit understanding in several ways, one of them being humour. A large number of views and theories concerning humour fit in this concept of relativity. Douglas remarks: 'Frozen posture, too rigid dignity, irrelevant mannerism, the noble pose

interrupted by urgent physical needs, all are funny for the same reason. *Humour chastises insincerity, pomposity, stupidity*' (1968: 363, emphasis added). Contrasting and comparing the views on humour by Bergson and Freud she concludes: 'The common denominator underlying both approaches is *the joke seen as an attack on control*' (ibid.: emphasis added). 'The joke connects and disorganises. It attacks sense and hierarchy' (ibid.: 370). For Freud, humour offers a brief escape from culture's repression and *Unbehagen*. While Freud thought of sexual restrictions, others have extended this interpretation of humour to other domains of life, in particular political control and economic exploitation. Wertheim's (1974) 'counterpoint' and Scott's (1985) 'weapons of the weak' are examples. In stories and jokes the poor ridicule their oppressors and imagine another world where power and wealth are differently divided. These weapons of humour do not change their material and political living condition, as Billig (2001: 39) rightly remarks, but they do help them to survive and keep their self-respect in miserable circumstances (Scott 1985). Folk rituals and tales have widely been interpreted as humorous rites of inversion (Wertheim 1974: 108-109; Schweitz 1979; Bakhtin 1984; Apte 1985: 156-157; Wittenberg 2014). One quote to illustrate the popular covert defiance of power holders; this one about East Africa: '... Africans delighted to mock their rulers' heroic pretensions. Much was obscene, or scatological, as in distorting party slogans to comment on the presidential phallus, a genre that worked because so much power-play centred on sex and consumption' (Iliffe 2005: 351).

But relativity can also be light-hearted and innocent as in the children's rhyme '*Koning, keizer, admiraal,*

schijten / poepen doen ze allemaal' (King, emperor, admiral; shitting / pooping they all do).⁶ For children it may be quite shocking (and exciting) to discover that even dignified and holy persons are subject to nature's call. Michael Elias (1999: 38) remarks that 'poop' lends itself eminently for drawing attention to the equality of people.

Another relevant aspect of humour and joke-telling is its relational context and social effect. Giseline Kuipers introduces her study of good and bad tastes of humour as follows:

Sense of humor is connected to social milieu and background. There are individual differences in sense of humor, as well as differences between men and women, between people of different social classes and educational levels, between old and young, and of course differences between people from different cultures and countries. What people think is funny – or not funny – is strongly determined by how they were brought up and by the company they keep (2015: 1).

'Sharing humor signals similarity – and similarity breeds closeness. Inversely, the absence of a shared sense of humor marks unbridgeable social and personal distance' (Kuipers 2009: 219). Humour can draw people together in sharing laughter and common ideas about what is funny and what not. But the opposite may also occur and exclude people on the basis of their different taste and intellectual level. Through the study of humour, she throws light on social categories such as class, educational level, gender, age and – to a lesser extent – ethnicity. Her view is relevant for my discus-

sion on the low appreciation of scatological jokes and on children's humour.

Dirt and defecation

My interest in 'scatological humour' derives more from scatology than from humour. For almost twenty years I have been trying to draw attention to the anthropological significance of dirt and defecation and the disgust that surrounds them. My fascination with the topic began – although Freud might have had a different explanation – when I realised that defecation was my 'weakest point' when I was doing fieldwork in a rural Ghanaian town. The public toilet turned out to be a formidable obstacle in my attempt to join the daily life of the family I was staying with (Van der Geest 1998). I was unable to squat next to the other men in the squalid and dilapidated toilet, without any privacy. That awareness led to all kinds of questions about meaning, experience and practice of defecation such as: what makes defecation dirty and uncomfortable to do and speak about in public; whether it is always regarded as dirty; how defecation is managed in everyday life, in sanitation efforts, in ideas about hygiene, in care practices, in gender relations, in power politics, in popular language and so on. Gradually the field widened and I realised that 'shit' was connected to everything, in most diverse manifestations.

Mary Douglas' concept of 'matter out of place' in the seminal introduction to her 'Purity and Danger' (1966) became for me the leading notion in making sense of the ambiguities around 'dirt'.⁷ Nothing is dirty by itself; dirt is defined by its context. It is disorder and carries

an invitation or rather an obligation to restore order. To make her concept work for shit – which seems to be always dirty, independent of context or place – I added a social dimension to her concept of (out of) 'place.' The social situation, the relatedness of people who are involved in the dirt experience, is a stronger predictor of disgust than physical or geographical places discussed in Douglas' work. That widening of the concept of 'place' made the experience of absence of disgust regarding defecation (for example of one's baby or one's own) not only understandable but also logical. Shit is not a neutral substance; it is linked to people (Van der Geest 2007). It carries the identity of the one who has produced it (Elias 1999: 31).

In this essay I will return to Douglas and argue that 'matter out of place' not necessarily produces dirt; it may also cause fascination and attraction, for example in humorous exchanges, as I will demonstrate further below.

How funny are jokes about defecatory matters?

Toilet humour and jokes about shit, snot and vomit get little attention in Kuipers' (2015) study. The few times they are mentioned they are presented as typical examples of bad taste which is not appreciated by most of her respondents and causes vicarious shame. Their popularity among young children is not discussed. Children appear mainly as innocent and naïve characters in the jokes of adults. One example from Kuipers' collection (I cannot resist citing one):

Johnny's class has been learning about animals with names ending in "or". The teacher asks the class: "Can anyone name one animal ending in *or*?" Bobby waves his arm in the air and says: "An alligator, miss". "Well done, Bobby, and what does it eat?" "People, miss". "Very good". Then it's Mary's turn: "A condor, miss". "Very good, Mary, and what does it eat?" "Sheep, miss". Then Johnny puts up his hand and says: "A vibrator, miss". The teacher starts to blush but doesn't want to discourage Johnny so she asks: "What does it eat, Johnny?" "I don't know for sure, miss, but my sister says it sure eats up the batteries" (Kuipers 2015: 126).

As a matter of fact, I laughed when I read this joke and told them to a few people in my environment. The joke is good because it establishes an unexpected link between two completely unrelated elements (Kuipers 2009: 221), not because it is about an intimate body-related object although that may also contribute in the sense that Johnny says something funny about a somewhat tabooed topic without realising it.

Apart from disparagement of scatological jokes, Kuipers' high-brow respondents also disliked 'canned jokes' in general, short humorous stories (*moppen* in Dutch), 'ending in a punch line, which the teller usually does not claim to have invented himself' (2015: 2). But they did like spontaneous humour which shows the wittiness of the speaker. I found the following example, which *is* located in a toilet, in an obituary for Alan Dundes, the author of many publications about scatological folk humour in Germany. A colleague remembers that once in a lecture Dundes told his audience that he was driving to Los Angeles,

... and stopped at a restaurant to use the facilities. No soon was he seated in his stall than he heard a voice from the next stall saying, "Hi, how are you doing?" Although not the sort usually to chat with strangers, Alan found himself saying – a bit embarrassedly – "Not bad". The stranger replied: "And what are you up to?" "Well probably just like you I've been driving to L.A.". At that point, he heard the stranger say in a very agitated manner: "Look, I'll call you right back, there's some idiot in the next stall answering the questions I'm asking you. Bye" (Caroll 2005: 123).

But did Dundes really perform this practical joke on the way to L.A.? Some joke tellers cleverly resuscitate a canned joke by suggesting the event happened to themselves. My oldest brother is a master in this technique.

I share the low appreciation of most shit- and piss-humour of the respondents in Kuipers' study: silly, puerile, embarrassing, bad taste but – as I will argue later on – the bad taste is context-dependent. Midas Dekkers, a Dutch biologist and popular writer about biological topics, has written a richly illustrated plea for more recognition of the importance and normality of faeces in daily life. His style is humorous and seldom of 'bad taste'. Shit, for example, is indispensable for anyone nursing a garden. He illustrates this with a song text of the cabaretière Jasperina de Jong: '*Wat zegt de dahlia? Ik wil fecalia*' (What does the dahlia say? 'I want faeces') (Dekkers 2014: 163).

Telling examples of puerile joking can be found in Dutch poet Gerrit Komrij's *Encyclopedie van de stont* (Encyclopaedia of shit) (2006). But his collection also

seems to suggest – note my cautious wording – that faecal jokes were better appreciated in previous (more prudish?) centuries in the Netherlands than they are nowadays (see for example Dekker 1997; Verberckmoes 1998).

Adults write ‘scatological laternalia’ in toilets in schools, army barrack, train stations and other public places. These are jokes – if they are jokes – that are made anonymously, free from social encounter. The journal *Maledicta* has published several collections of them. They would not reap much appreciation in social conversation but may be enjoyed by some in the solitude and privacy of a toilet. The comical effect – if at all – may be partly due to the rhyme. Two examples of graffiti by Dutch Soldiers, collected by Henk Salleveldt (1996: 55):

Hier rust het stoffelijk overschot
(Here rest the mortal remains)
Van middagmaal en avondpot
(Of lunch and evening meal).

In deze kleine cel
(In this little cell)
Bereidt men worsten zonder vel
(One prepares sausages without a skin)

I am less sure about funny stories relating to excrements and other scatological topics in other cultures. When I asked Ghanaian friends to write to me about such stories and jokes they found it a difficult ‘assignment’. Some promised to think about it and never wrote back. Two sent me a list with examples of meanings and uses of shit in daily life that did not seem to be meant as

jokes. Other contributions were proverbs and expressions, perhaps a bit funny but not meant as jokes. Below are four brief examples that seem to imply that scatological jokes (stories or riddles) are not shared among Ghanaian children:

Shitting on top of another’s shit brings bad luck.
Another person’s shit splashing on you is bad luck.
It is for this reason that some prefer open shitting or avoid toilets that have water.

Do not point at your village, no matter how poor it is, with your left hand. The implication is that ... because the left hand is used to clean shit, it symbolizes shit in that sense. The right hand is thus symbolically for good things. To point to your home with the left hand may suggest disgust.

If someone wants to say that he is a brave man, he may say: “I am a latrine man; I don’t fear shit”.

A common local proverb says: He who shits on the road will meet flies on his return (meaning you will reap what you sow).

In his introduction to ‘Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales’, the colonial ethnographer Capt. R.S. Rattray (1930: vii) warns the reader for ‘the apparent vulgarity and coarseness of some of the stories’. A quick look at his collection tells me, however, that there is hardly any vulgarity, at least not according to present standards. Rattray continues to explain that the use of vulgar words does not mean that the Akan people are uncivilized. There are three features of the story-telling that indicate that

the vulgarity is not part of ordinary life: (a) the tales may only be told after dark; (b) the story-teller begins with a disclaimer, saying that he does not really mean what he is going to say; and (c) the spiritual and earthly authorities that are ridiculed continue to be respected in real life (ibid.: x). The tales, in which the spider trickster Ananse is the central character, do show a humoristic inversion of normal life conditions, but scatological innuendos are practically absent.

In Bangladesh I came across the stories about Gopal, a court jester from medieval Bengal. The tales are humorous for children as well as adults, and always teach a lesson. Some of them are about defecation. The tales have been adapted to comics for children and nowadays more than two hundred of them can be found on YouTube. Here is one tale that was told to me by my colleague and friend Shahaduz Zaman. In it defecation is used to teach an important wisdom about a fact of life:

One day the king's wife gave birth to a male child, and so the king was rejoicing. At that moment, Gopal entered the room, and the king said: "Gopal, on this very, very happy occasion, please tell me what do you have to say? Tell me exactly how you feel at this moment". Gopal replied, "Frankly, at this moment, I feel very happy after passing stool". "Gopal! How could you say such a thing?" The king was mortified. "On this auspicious moment, that's all you have to say? I'm completely disgusted. It's not funny and I don't appreciate your humour at all". After this, the relations between the king and Gopal were strained for some time. But one day, Gopal was rowing the king down the river, when the king

suddenly had an urgent call of nature. Gopal said: "On this side there is a very heavy jungle area. It's not very suitable. Let us go a little further down and we'll find a suitable place". The king said, "Go over to the side!" Gopal said, "Not here. There is danger. Thieves and dacoits. Your life may be in danger. There's a place ahead". The king said, "Gopal, I cannot wait any longer. Go over immediately!" Gopal had to go over and the king jumped out. He could hardly contain himself. When the king returned, Gopal asked him, "How are you feeling?" The king replied: "I am feeling very happy after passing stool".

Returning to children's jokes about faecal topics, Apte's chapter on children's humour (1985: 82-107) is the most elaborate anthropological discussion of the topic that I managed to consult. Apte found that most scientific literature derives from psychologists who view children's humour as a major element in children's socialization and enculturation process. This applies particularly to sexual humour. Scatological (defecation-related) humour among children has rarely been studied to any depth. Apte tends to join psychologists and Freudian scholars in asserting that a high occurrence of both types of humour suggests a repressive attitude towards sex and body waste in a particular society, while a low occurrence is likely to apply to a culture with a more casual attitude to sex and body waste (1985: 107). 'Testing' this hypothesis is not possible however, for lack of reliable and substantial cross-cultural data. Even prominent scholars in the Culture and Personality School failed to pay serious attention to children's humour, let alone defecation-related humour (ibid.: 83). 'Sexual and scatological

humour among children, whether verbal or non-verbal, generally provides a channel for satisfying their curiosity about their bodies, bodily functions, and sexual intercourse' (ibid.: 96).

My son-in-law remembered a number of typical children's jokes and riddles from his own childhood that illustrate the thrill of pronouncing 'dirty' terms. An additional aspect is the comic effect of rhyme:

- *Ik ken een mop. Twee drollen in een envelop.* (I know a joke: two turds in an envelope).
- *Heb je dorst? Ik ken een hondje. Dat piest zo in je mondje!* (Are you thirsty? I know a little dog that will pee into your mouth!)
- *Drie mannen – Nederlander, Duitser en Turk – zitten aan de toog en besluiten tot een weddenschap. Wie kan het langst bier drinken zonder naar het toilet te gaan. De Turk wint! En hij verklapt zijn geheim. Turkie Turkie is niet dom, Turkie Turkie luier om!* (Three men - Dutchman, German, and Turk - bet who can drink the most beer without going to the toilet. The Turk wins and reveals his secret: Turkie Turkie is not dumb, Turkie Turkie wears a diaper!)
- *Waar ligt de Atlantische Oceaen Jantje? Onder mijn stoel meester!* (Jantje, where is the Atlantic Ocean? Under my chair, Sir!)

I agree with Helmers (1965: 126) who remarks that the small children's interest in poop jokes is not the 'forbidden fruit aspect', the pleasure of doing something against the rules. 'What generates laughter is rather the comically perceived evasion of the norm as to what may be said in the standard spoken idiom' (quoted in Neuß 2006).

The anthropological and sociological literature on children's faecal humour may be scarce but concrete examples of children's enjoyment with poop stories abound. The absolute favourite is the story '*Vom kleinen Maulwurf, der wissen wollte, wer ihm auf den Kopf gemacht hat*' (About the little mole who got pooped on his head) (Holzwarth and Erlbruch 1989). I assume that nearly everyone with a child owns a copy of the booklet and has read the story several times to their child while pointing at the pictures of different animals with different shapes of poop falling to the ground. The little mole wants to find out who dropped a turd on his head. He goes from animal to animal but each proves not to be the one by demonstrating his type of poop. Finally two flies, as shit experts, tell the little mole that the turd came from the butcher's dog. The little mole takes his revenge and deposes a tiny little turd on the head of the dog and happily disappears underground. The dog does not even seem to notice his action.



Figure 3: *The little mole visiting the cow and watching its pat.*



Figure 4. *Walter being examined by a doctor*

Another celebrated children's story in the same category is 'Walter the farting dog' (Kotzwinkle et al. 2001). By now there are five parts about Walter, a sweet dog with one problem: his vicious farting. In part one, Walter becomes a hero when he chases away two burglars with his awful farts. The story has been translated in about fifteen languages and sold more than a million times. It took the authors eleven years before they found a publisher willing to print their story. No wonder, because, as Wikipedia reports,

The books have been criticized by some as an example of "poop fiction" for children (in the same vein as titles such as *Captain Underpants* and *Zombie Bums* from Uranus); they have been subjected to occasional complaints and attempts to have the books withdrawn from libraries, and some librarians and bookstores have refused to carry the series.⁸

When my children were small they loved to watch a television programme called *De film van Ome Willem* (Uncle William's film), a kind of talk show of Ome Willem with a group of children. There were sketches, songs, and funny interactions with the musicians and the actors, adults playing children's roles. Ome Willem made naughty poop remarks which the children enjoyed. His opening song always ended with the line '*Lusten jullie ook een broodje poep?*' (Would you like a sandwich with poop?), followed by loud protesting of the kids 'Bahhhhhh'. The programme was broadcasted between 1974 and 1989 and was repeated in 2000, 2004 and from 2007 to 2012. I enjoyed the show as much as my children, for two reasons. First, I watched the sketches and interactions as a father through the eyes of my children. In fact, I imitated some of Ome Willem's jokes in daily conversations with my children. I felt that the little poop jokes benefitted their sense of a humorous dimension of life, a glimpse of an imagined 'fake' world, and their fantasy. The second reason was that Ome Willem's humour was of a good – or excellent, I should say – taste, also for adults, because of his clever tapping into the children's world.

Concluding remarks

There is no smart punch line to conclude this essay. My anthropological interest in defecation as an omnipresent but hidden ingredient of human life, led me to the use of scatological terms in jokes that young children exchange among each other. I did not enter the world of child psychology to offer an explanation for the popularity of defecation-related jokes and riddles

among children. Nor did I carry out serious fieldwork on the topic, let alone carry out a quantitative research. My observations were mainly drawn from my personal experiences in concrete situations with my own children and children in my immediate surroundings, especially in the Netherlands and Ghana.

The term 'children's humour' usually refers to the humour that children produce but it could also apply to humour about children. In this essay I tentatively suggest that these two meanings may somewhat merge in actual experiences. Contrary to psychological explanations that emphasise the taboo-breaking and confrontational character of scatological joking, I wanted to draw attention to the sharing of these jokes between children and adults. Poop and pee – or for that matter shit and piss – are not really tabooed in human interaction and conversation, at least not the Netherlands. They are rather considered childish in the mouth of an adult, especially for a professor in anthropology. They may be out of place, but rarely to a serious degree. Regulation of bowel control is a rather ubiquitous topic in the communication between young children and their parents. Parents make jokes about it in order to prevent traumatic consequences in their children. Poop, one could say, constitutes a normal substance in the parent-child relationship. Adults do not frown upon children when they crack 'dirty' jokes but rather enjoy them as a sign of their children growing up and they encourage them. Depending on the context in which the joking occurs, parents may also initiate poop and pee jokes to challenge their children to respond. Moreover, children's jokes are 'apt to amuse adults mainly by their ineptitude ... which may produce a

comic effect, but different from the one the child gets' (Wolfenstein 1954: 13).

In addition to Kuipers' (2015) remarks about bad taste as expressed in scatological jokes, we must realise – risking to labour what is obvious – that good and bad taste are not fixed to the type or content of the joke but depend on the context in which the joke is told. A 'dirty joke' by a child in the close family situation or in the presence of friends is likely to amuse and mollify the parents. The same joke told by an adult to a child may also be of a very good taste. But in another context that joke may raise eyebrows.

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Notes

- 1 I am quite sure that I used the more accepted term ‘*poep*’. ‘*Stront*’ (shit), a more vulgar word which was and still is used among adults, would have been too rough and too daring. I have the impression that this children’s joke (*mop*) was widely known at that time among the children of my generation and the next one. My own children – now around forty – also knew it.
- 2 Bourke (1891: 175) quotes an ancient funny incident which occurred to ‘... good Socrates, who, when Xantippe had crowned him with a chamber-pot, he bore it off single with his head and shoulders, and said to such as laughed at it, “It never yet was deemed a wonder / To see that rain should follow thunder”’.
- 3 An old priest used to assert to me in my youthful days that sex was dirty; the Creator had decided so by placing sex and excretion so close together in the human body.
- 4 Interestingly, the main character of a 17th century collection of pornographic stories is called Jan Stront (John Shit) (Leemans 2000, 2002).
- 5 This raises an important question for anthropologists. Should there be more humour in our writing about humour? And more religion in our work on religion, more sex in our sex theorizing, more music..., more poetry..., more emotion..., et cetera?
- 6 A producer of tissue paper, Popla, cleverly used the rhyme for its advertising: ‘*Koning, keizer, admiraal; Popla kennen ze alle-maal*’ (King, emperor, admiral; Popla they know all). See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3bzyGs0k-A>
- 7 Seminal? Perhaps, but not entirely new; in a personal message (2/12/2003) Mary Douglas ‘confessed’ to me that she took the idea of ‘matter out of place’ from a book of quotations. She probably referred to the following quotation from John Chipman Gray’s collection: ‘Dirt is only matter out of place; and what is a blot on the escutcheon [shield-shaped emblem bea-

ring a coat of arms] of the Common Law may be a jewel in the crown of the Social Republic’, (included in the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations).

- 8 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_the_Farting_Dog

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