

Both artistic and comic: the status and significance of humour in the context of Louis Cazamian's writings

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Abstract

This study examines Louis Cazamian's considerations on the nature of humour, which were influenced by Bergson's theory of the comic as a contrast between life and automatism and Bergson's idea of humour as a specific type of comic linguistic transposition. In this context, the paper draws attention to the critical function of humour in Cazamian's understanding based on his embracing of Bergson's conception of laughter as a critique of the automation of life. However, Cazamian's speculating diverges from Bergson's thoughts on humour and leads to the creation of an elaborated theory. Cazamian states that humour has an artistic status and attributes characteristics to it that Bergson attributes to works of art. In contrast to Bergson, who emphasises the distinction between art and the comic, Cazamian deems humour's critical aspect to accord with its artistic status. While humour is attributed artistic status because it suggests the multifaceted or elusive character of reality, humour's comic character entails ridiculing the inability or unwillingness to respect that reality has a comic character.

Keywords: humour, art, comic, Louis François Cazamian, Henri Bergson.

1. Introduction: influence of Bergson's conception of the comic and of humour

Reflections on the nature, birth, and development of humour make up a significant part of the work of Louis François Cazamian (1877–1965), an important French scholar of English studies and a literary historian.¹ At a general level, Bergson's conception of the comic is the admitted

¹ Louis François Cazamian was born in 1877 in Saint Denis, Réunion, where he also spent his early childhood. In 1882, the Cazamian family moved to metropolitan France, making it possible for Cazamian to receive an excellent education. He first studied at the Lycée Henri IV, where Henri Bergson was working at the time, and then, from 1896 to 1900, at the École normale supérieure. In 1900, Cazamian became a member of the Agrégation d'anglais. He taught first at the Lycée de Brest (1900) and later at the Lycée de Nevers (1903) and also became a fellow of the Fondation Thiers (1901–1903). He also published his doctoral thesis *Le roman social en Angleterre 1830–1850* [*The Social Novel in England, 1830–1850*] (Cazamian 1903). From 1904 onwards, he lectured at the Universities of Lyon and Bordeaux and then, beginning in 1908, at the Sorbonne. In 1913, his book *Études de psychologie littéraire* [*Studies from Literary Psychology*], a collection of essays written in previous years, was

starting point for Cazamian's reflections on the nature of humour. In his study "Pourquoi nous ne pouvons définir l'humour" [Why we cannot define humour] (1906), Cazamian maintains that Bergson's conception of the comic presented in *Le rire* [Laughter], published in 1900, can be summed thusly: "The comic is always created by replacing living freedom with automatism" (Cazamian 1906: 601).² Bergson considers this undesirable substitution to be the cause of laughter, which draws attention to, criticises, remonstrates with, and suppresses the substitution.³ One of the areas of the comic in which this substitution of living freedom with automatism takes place is the area of linguistic "transposition". Cazamian notes that in Bergson's conception, linguistic transposition is a special "form" of the substitution of living freedom with automatism (Cazamian 1906: 601). Transposition occurs whenever a particular idea is expressed in an unnatural tone (Cazamian 1906: 601). Cazamian paraphrases Bergson,

published (Cazamian 1913). Although he served in the army between 1915 and 1919, he managed to publish the book *La Grande-Bretagne et la guerre* [Great Britain and the War] (Cazamian 1917). In 1919, Cazamian became head of the English Studies Department at the Sorbonne, where he was appointed professor in 1921. He eventually became a professor at the Sorbonne's Department of Modern British Literature and Civilization. During this period, he published several important works: *L'évolution psychologique et la littérature en Angleterre* [Psychological Evolution and Literature in England] (Cazamian 1920), *Histoire de littérature anglaise* [A History of English Literature] (Legouis & Cazamian 1924), and *Criticism in the Making* (Cazamian 1929). Cazamian spent many years working on one of his most famous books, which was also the most frequently quoted of his writings, namely *The Development of English Humour* (Cazamian 1952). He also focussed on humour in other essays and books, particularly *Carlyle* (Cazamian 1932), *L'Humour anglais* [English Humour] (Cazamian 1942) and *L'Humour de Shakespeare* [Humour of Shakespeare] (Cazamian 1945). Cazamian died in 1965. He is considered one of the most important French scholars of English studies of the early 20th century.

² Bergson's concept of the comic has been discussed many times, not only in classic analyses but also in recent literature. Contemporary scholars have repeatedly associated Bergson's concept with the principle of "incongruity". Critchley (2002: 56) suggests that from Bergson's perspective, laughter is accompanied by a feeling of uncanniness resulting from the mechanisation of living beings. Berger argues that Bergson's concept of the comic is tied to incongruity because it consists in emphasising the difference between what we expect and what we find. The comic arises from the fact that "we expect people to be flexible and reasonable", but "we find characters who are rigid and 'automatic'" (Berger 1995: 44). Parovel & Guidi also associate Bergson's concept of the comic with unmet expectations; they highlight that Bergson's considerations suggest that a specific type of incongruity, that of the "violation of causality" simultaneous to certain "psychological features", is able to "elicit the impression of the comic" (Parovel & Guidi 2015: 22–23). Amir states that Bergson, in accentuating the comicality of the opposition of the living and the mechanical, develops a theory of comical incongruity (Amir 2019: 74–75). Lovasz also characterises Bergson's view of the comic as belonging to incongruity theory because this view "traces the comic back to an incongruity between the spontaneity of living things or affects, and the 'automatism' or 'inelasticity' of comic expressions" (Lovasz 2020: 203–204). Andrews mentions various aspects of Bergson's concept of laughter in his analysis of the principle of comical incongruity in literature (Andrews 2013: 78, 93). He even points to Bergson's remarks on humorous "stylistic incongruence" in English literature (Andrews 2013: 89–90). Considering this discussion on Bergson's concept of the comic and the continuity between Cazamian's theory of humour and Bergson's, we can easily conclude that Cazamian's explanation of the comic revolves around incongruity.

³ The connection between Cazamian's theory and Bergson's conception of the comic has already been discussed by Fernand Baldensperger in the essay "Les Définitions de l'humour" [Definitions of humour] (Baldensperger 1907: 219). Emile Pons refers to the concrete starting point of Cazamian's reflections – namely, Bergson's brief remarks on humour. Pons also attempts to identify certain fundamental disparities between Bergson's conception of the comic and Cazamian's conception of humour. He points out that while Bergson defines the comic through the contrast between "living freedom and automatism", Cazamian emphasises the deliberateness of humorous transformations as well as the deliberateness of their concrete directionality. It is in these two senses that Pons sees Cazamian's rejection – or perhaps modification – of Bergson's original conception of the comic (Pons 1954: 80–81). Cazamian's elaboration of Bergson's idea of humour as a "paradox obtained by transposition" has been suggested by Paul Gifford. Gifford (1981: 542) highlights that for Cazamian the mechanism of humour consists in the "arrest" of one or more natural "judgements" of reality. Saroglou touches on the affinity of Cazamian's claims about the nature of humour with Bergson's description of situations in which the comic arises. Specifically, Saroglou (2002: 195) observes that humour in Cazamian's view entails a "momentary numbness of the heart", which Bergson refers to as an important condition for the comic.

arguing that since the natural tone – that is, the natural mode of expression – is known in advance, it is not necessary to present both the natural and the unnatural modes of expression and compare them (Cazamian 1906: 601; Bergson 1914: 122). We always find the natural mode of expression through “instinct”, or focused attention. “Comic ingenuity,” therefore, always leads exclusively to the unnatural – that is, to a transposed mode of expression.

Bergson himself points out that the possibilities of linguistic transposition, which are often used by the authors of comedies, vary widely. In some cases, transposition is quite banal and buffoonish; in others, it is refined and lofty (Bergson 1914: 123). In principle, there are two possible types of such transposition: from a high tone to a low one and from a low tone to a high one. The first case constitutes parody, the second, satire. Satire itself also comes in many types, including ironic and humorous transpositions as its mildest forms. As types of irony, both irony and humour involve transposing the real and the ideal. Whereas irony consists in expressing what should be and pretending that it actually is the case, humour, by contrast, is based on an accurate (one might even say punctilious) description of what is and on feigning the conviction that it should be that way. In this connection, Bergson points out that irony is rhetorical in nature, while humour is scientific in nature (Bergson 1914: 127). Irony always elevates the good and, in the process, turns, with a kind of inner enthusiasm, into “eloquence under pressure” (Bergson 1914: 127). Humour penetrates most deeply into the heart of evil, but pretends it is not evil. Humour is escalated when it penetrates into the heart of evil to document its “details” (Bergson 1914: 127) with cool indifference. This detailed or scientific way of dealing with evil is not an accidental feature of humour but is “its very essence” (Bergson 1914: 128). Humour is associated with precise expressions, detailed descriptions, and connections to facts. Humour is “a transposition from the moral to the scientific”, and the humourist is a “moralist disguised as a scientist”, an “anatomist who dissects what in reality he wants to make repellent to others” (Bergson 1914: 128).

Overall, Bergson acknowledges the moral impact of humour and at the same time situates it among a wide spectrum of comic phenomena in which the contrast between automatism and life manifests itself in various ways. In his analysis of the character of satire – that is, irony and especially humour – Bergson adds another aspect to his basic view of the nature of the comic that is not consistent with his general definition of the comic. This inconsistency between moral impact and ridiculousness is evident in several of Bergson’s claims. Bergson assumes that for the attainment of a moral point of view – that is, one which distinguishes between good and evil – sympathy must be enlisted. However, Bergson stresses that enlisting a “sympathy” that plumbs the depths of another person’s soul – that is, of his or her particular motives, feelings, and beliefs – is fundamentally incompatible with the revelatory function of the comic, and thus with provoking laughter (Bergson 1914: 139–140). Bergson also remarks that a ridiculous character fault, which is the automation of a certain aspect of character, is not “a fault in the moral meaning of the word” (Bergson 1914: 137–138). The “unsociability” of ridiculous characters – that is, their automatism, their inability to adapt flexibly to their environment – is not “immorality” (Bergson 1914: 139).

Bergson does not explicitly address the connection between humour and sympathy in *Laughter*. However, Bergson’s brief, almost incidental observation calling attention to the profound impact of humour is quite insightful. It is no coincidence that Cazamian’s elaboration of Bergson’s sketch of a theory of humour aims to capture the remarkably profound impact of humorous transposition, an impact based on the ability to plumb the individuality of feelings, thoughts, and experiences – that is, the ability to sympathise. However, when Cazamian writes on humour – in contrast to Bergson – he does not aim to characterise humour as a contradictory or divided phenomenon, but as one which is always ambiguous, though it cannot be denied an internal integrity despite this ambiguity.

2. Humour as transposition

I have noted that Cazamian's reflections on humour are based on Bergson's characterisation of humour as a specific type of linguistic transposition – that is, as a shift in expressive tonality. Inspired by Bergson, however, Cazamian concludes that humour consists in the transposition from the natural – usually emotional or rational reactions to reality — to the unnatural — expressions of feigned unnatural or abnormal reactions to the “presentation” of reality (Cazamian 1906: 602). Cazamian agrees with Bergson's observation regarding the “scientific” tendency of humour – that is, humour's orientation towards “exact descriptions, precise enumerations, concrete deductions” (Cazamian 1906: 606). He refers to Bergson when he notes that what distinguishes humorous transposition from other types of transposition is “a fondness for the concrete, the real” (Cazamian 1906: 601). However, this tendency of humour towards exactness and detail is not intentional on the part of the humourist; it follows from a certain principle of psychology corresponding to the achievement of maximum effect. Humour's effect is maximised when its paradoxical nature is maximised. This paradoxical nature – that is, the apparent strangeness or unnaturalness of reactions to reality – is especially emphasised by certain humourists, gaining “strength and value” if the humourist's perception of things is expressed in an evidently “cold, observant, and clear” manner (Cazamian 1906: 607). Cazamian, in keeping with his emphasis on the “scientific” nature of humour, rejects concision in humour, for humour is rarely concentrated “into one word, into one sentence” (Cazamian 1906: 602). Usually, for humour to emerge, an extensive, detailed, and observant description – that is, a scientific-like description – is required. Only then can humour take on its full richness and complexity. For this reason, Cazamian renounces giving examples of humour (Cazamian 1906: 602). Instead of focusing on particular humorous expressions, he refers to individual authors whose texts contain a specific type of humour. In the following, I will mention some of the humourists that Cazamian identifies as being exponents of certain types of humour.

Cazamian rejects restricting humour to its moral scope – that is, he dismisses Bergson's view that the humourist is essentially a moralist who indirectly criticises immoral actions or attitudes. Humour's detailed attention to reality, its precise documentation of the nature of reality, and its analysis of reality do not emphasise the immorality of any particular action or attitude. The scientific aspect of humour is simply a unique characteristic, distinguishing it from other types of linguistic transposition. Cazamian maintains that humour is “a deliberately transposed expression of our feelings and thoughts” and as such, comprises “an evident suspension of our usual reactions” (Cazamian 1906: 607). In comparison with a natural stance, our perception in the transposed attitude towards reality is more observant and methodical – it takes on the characteristics of the scientific method. In humour, a representation of reality is “given precision and emphasis” based on the “humourist's perspective” (Cazamian 1906: 606). The humourist's gaze “acquires the sharpness of a new vision”, and all the senses, our entire perceptual apparatus, participate in this transformation (Cazamian 1906: 606).

According to Cazamian, humour is formally defined as the transposition from the natural to the unnatural, the deliberately contrived, in terms of responses to reality; this transposition results in an unnatural way of “presenting things” (Cazamian 1906: 602, 631). This definition establishes the “conditions” of humour, but not the nature of “humour itself” in its particular manifestations (Cazamian 1906: 608). Cazamian observes two facets of humour: a negative one and a positive one. We can only shed light on humour's negative side, which consists in rejecting normal types of reactions and “banality”. The positive part of humour, which is derived from “originality” and “invention”, is indefinable (Cazamian 1906: 608). Humour's negative aspect represents a “common ground”, constant elements, [and] the general “mechanism” of humour. On such a basis, however, the “original edifice” originating from an “individual's fantasy”

(Cazamian 1906: 608) is pivotal. Cazamian (1906) does not fail to highlight the importance of invention in the humourist's approach to the general mechanism of humour, but he only devotes himself to it more fully later. In *L'humour anglais* [*English humour*], he speaks of the indispensability of the humourist's "originality" and "creative talent", which are prerequisites for taking advantage of the "techniques" of humour (Cazamian 1942: 26). Only mental "liveliness" and "vitality" enable the humourist to discover "new and penetrating" aspects of things. He also points out that the general mechanism of humour "sets in motion" the "impulse" of "comic invention" – that is, "creative originality" (Cazamian 1906: 633). This "positive originality" makes the application of the "humorous approach" (Cazamian 1906: 633) itself possible.

Like Bergson, who rejects the possibility of defining the comic, Cazamian notes that we cannot arrive at a "formula" that might capture the nature of humour. The concrete realisation of humorous transposition presupposes an individual way of presenting reality and thus cannot be captured by attending to the "characteristic and constant" elements of humour (Cazamian 1906: 629). The humourist's inventiveness represents the "spirit" of humour (Cazamian 1906: 629); this spirit is not reduced through an analysis of the mechanism of humour. In this connection, Cazamian distinguishes between the "form" and the "matter" of humour (Cazamian 1906: 602, 618, 633). The form is a general mechanism of transposition and thus comprises a definable procedure (Cazamian 1906: 629) applicable to all cases of humour. The matter is what the form communicates – that is, the nature of reality. It is marked by the personality of the humourist, and as such is "individual and infinitely variable" and escapes definition (Cazamian 1906: 631). It does not submit "to generalisations, to laws" (Cazamian 1906: 629).

Cazamian (1906: 610-617) provides arguments that decisively refute the definability of humour,⁴ particularly when he reflects on different types of humour. He claims that there are four different kinds of humour that are derived from the type of natural, usual, or instinctive "beliefs" that are transposed. Concretely, he speaks of humour that arises when the comic belief is arrested if in the transposition, the natural assessment of a particular fact is covered up as ridiculous through an evident insensitivity towards the comic (Cazamian 1906: 610–611). Cazamian refers to Mark Twain,⁵ Georges Courteline, and Alphonse Alain, among others, as exponents of this type of humour (Cazamian 1906: 611). The second type of humour is based on the arresting of emotional belief if in the transposition, the natural emotional response to reality is obscured and replaced by an unnatural emotional response (Cazamian 1906: 612). According to Cazamian, this type of humour can be found in the works of Jonathan Swift,⁶ Jean Paul, and Charles Lamb (Cazamian 1906: 612–614). The third type of humour arises from the arresting of moral belief if, on the basis of the transposition, there is a clear insensitivity towards

⁴ The aspects of Cazamian's conception of humour discussed above were noted by Maurice Castelain (1925/1926) who points out, that despite Cazamian's conviction about the indefinability of humour, he provides us with the most precise definition of humour ever put forward. Nonetheless, Castelain also criticises a certain "hermeticity" contained in Cazamian's view, which he also notes is "too narrow". According to Castelain, we should be able to see the specificity of humour in a certain "secret understanding" between the humourist and the "spectator of humour". Cazamian immediately responds with gratitude to Castelain's views, acknowledging the "excessive austerity" and the "hermeticity" of his own formulations, while announcing a forthcoming, more extensive text on humour that would apply a "more flexible method". However, Cazamian also adds that he has no reason to abandon his original theory of humour and again presents its basic outlines (Castelain 1925/1926: 202, 207).

⁵ The comic, which is nevertheless suppressed by the depiction of stifling social conditions, is suggested, for example, in Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (2005).

⁶ A great example of feigned insensitivity, which seeks to provoke compassion, is Swift's essay "Modest proposal: For preventing the children of poor people in Ireland, from being a burden on their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the public" (2015).

the received ethical valuation of things (Cazamian 1906: 614). This transposition is recognisable in the work of Thomas Carlyle and Anatole France⁷ (Cazamian 1906: 614). The last type of humour is based on the arresting of philosophical belief – that is, humour arising when the transposition covers up the usual way of assessing the significance of things in terms of their connection with “universal good and evil” (Cazamian 1906: 615). This profound type of humour is found in the works of Laurence Stern,⁸ for instance (Cazamian 1906: 616). Cazamian points out that there are no insurmountable barriers between these four types of humour; the different types of humorous transposition are interrelated, intertwined, and, in individual cases of humour, blended together (Cazamian 1906: 616).

In connection with these “varieties” of transposition that occur in humour, Cazamian discusses in detail the complex ways humour produces its effects. This complexity derives from the fact that humorous transposition works not only through the invented responses that replace usual, natural, or instinctive reactions, but also through the original, suppressed reactions. Cazamian explicitly points out that a humourist suggests a natural reaction by means of an expressed transposed response. However, this reference to what is suppressed does not entail the abandonment of what is expressed in the humour. Cazamian speaks of the complex effect of humour by referring to humour “squared” (Cazamian 1906: 611), which consists in the complex interactions between the natural reaction and the invented response with which the humourist intentionally replaces the natural reaction. However, this replacement also entails an emphasis, a reference to what is being replaced or denied. And the natural reaction itself, which the intentionally produced – that is, artificial – response denies and points to at the same time, suppresses the intentionally produced response, while at the same time drawing attention to it. Cazamian speaks here of a double “suppression” and a “double relaxation” (Cazamian 1906: 617). Between the natural reaction and the unnatural response, a complex process of mutual “suggestion” occurs thanks to the transpositional procedure (Cazamian 1906: 617).

3. The artistic status of humour

The suggestive effect of transposition results in humour’s “aesthetic pleasure” (Cazamian 1906: 628). Humorous transposition produces a “strong impression” thanks to such an ineluctable suggestion (Cazamian 1906: 628). Cazamian draws attention to the artistic status of humour when he observes that in humour, our capacity for “sympathy” is aroused thanks to the effect of “artistic suggestion” (Cazamian 1906: 628). With sympathy, we penetrate into that which is intentionally suppressed by the humorous transposition – a “common case” (Cazamian 1906: 628) in the field of literature. Cazamian (1906) refers to the inadequacy of contemporary aesthetic theory, which is unable to give grounds for the connection between “aesthetic pleasure” and the “reduction” of the natural reaction in transposition – that is, between pleasure and the inevitable suggestion based on this reduction. However, he believes that the “artistic pleasure” produced by humour is linked to the “activity expended” (Cazamian 1906: 632). He also notes that the principle of humour is based on “the artistic superiority of suggested effects over effects obtained directly” (Cazamian 1906: 632). Cazamian explains these brief observations later (Cazamian 1952). He notes that in aesthetics, it is a “general law” that any “indirectly presented subject” forces our mind to act, for only in this way is the mind able to acquaint itself with this subject. However, the subject “benefits” from this “supplementary

⁷ Anatole France’s novel *Amethyst Ring* (1919) is a good example of a humoristic denunciation of ethical hypocrisy.

⁸ A view of reality that is explicitly optimistic, but also full of undeclared sadness, can be found, for example, in Alfred Stern’s novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (2009).

activity” because our mind thereby “multiplies the quality of the subject” through the “energy and ingenuity” expended (Cazamian 1942: 26).

However, I would like to emphasise that Cazamian’s (1906) reflections provide a closer look at the nature of the artistic effects of humour discussed above. I have already indicated the complexity of the effects humour produces. Humorous transposition acts indirectly because a suppressed reaction is suggested by the suppression itself. However, indirect effects also lead to direct effects – the negative side of humour, which involves an invented response denying a natural reaction, is “revealed” as a positive communication. The feelings and beliefs communicated through a humorous transposition as unnatural reactions are diffused like an “essential scent” that in reality corresponds to the “deepest depths of [humourist’s] consciousness” (Cazamian 1906: 618). In humour, “a deep harmony between real feeling and paradoxical feeling arises” (Cazamian 1906: 616). Cazamian observes that here, we are touching on the connection between the “external procedure” of humorous transposition, which highlights the unnatural response, and “the most secret and irreducible elements of personality” (Cazamian 1906: 618). This personality can be revealed in humour; humorous transposition gives its “hidden richness” a method of expression that is both “veiled and transparent” (Cazamian 1906: 618). The external procedure of humorous transposition (the “superficial paradox” of humour) makes it possible to unveil a “secret and original nature”, as opposed to a “normal” nature (Cazamian 1906: 613). A personality’s unveiled originality thus always remains tied to the usual view, to the usual type of emotional or intellectual reaction. The paradox of humour – in which a natural reaction is denied and at the same time suggested by an unnatural response that the natural reaction suppresses and thus references – bestows the “freshness of novelty” (Cazamian 1906: 615) upon the humourist’s perspectives, feelings, or beliefs. The unveiling of the humourist’s “deep” nature corresponding to his/her “artificial stance” and his/her concomitant interest in a new, fresh, or original view on reality is thus always marked in humour by a “deliberate ambiguity, a semi-uncertainty that humorous transposition casts upon thinking” (Cazamian 1906: 615). It might be said that humour’s new way of unveiling reality is the result of a “level-headed conviction tacitly corresponding to an external and artificial stance” (Cazamian 1906: 615) and, as such, does not completely deny the legitimacy of the natural view in which reality appears in the usual way.

Cazamian repeatedly points out that the result of humorous transposition is not a static contradiction or confrontation involving an ordinary stance and original beliefs that produce an artificial stance. Transposition results in an endless movement in which different aspects of the “rich and contradictory” nature of human beings are revealed, along with different types of emotional and ideological reactions to reality. When humorous transposition produces its effect, we are “pleasantly swayed as if by flowing waves” (Cazamian 1906: 614) through these aspects of nature. This movement engenders the “complex and rare flavour” of humour in which “the truth of human nature and the truth of an original nature mix and complete each other” and in which “infinite series of alternating or simultaneous contradictions” express “the duality of a sensitive and mobile spirit” (Cazamian 1906: 614). The complexity, ambiguity, and even the internal contradictoriness of the attitude towards reality constitutes humour’s own dynamic. If a humourist always offers a specific, detail-oriented view on reality, such a view is not stabilised; on the contrary, it constantly changes within itself and reveals new aspects of the reality it concentrates on. The above-mentioned freshness of novelty linked to the humourist’s view is intensified by the development of his/her beliefs and the transformation of his/her emotional reaction to this fact.

Cazamian’s characterization of humour as an artistic product is significantly inspired by Bergson’s writings on the origins and effects of art. Cazamian’s references to the necessity of ingenuity and originality on the part of the humourist in dealing with the general form of humour

appear to be an echo of Bergson's considerations. In his 1920 essay, "L'Effort intellectuel" [Intellectual Effort], Bergson shows that the artist's creative efforts lead to "unpredictable" results, much as do the inventor's (Bergson 1920: 212–213); in Cazamian's work, the humourist is referred to as "an inventor of the comic, or satire, or pathos, or philosophy, or all of them together" (Cazamian 1906: 633). Cazamian's emphasis on the suggestive impact of humour corresponds to Bergson's (1910: 14–16) description of the suggestive power of art, where Bergson indicates that the mere hint of an emotion in a work of art is enough to evoke an intense response in viewers, readers, or listeners because the work suggests emotions. Also, Cazamian's assumption that the humourist's individuality is expressed through humour and that the complexity and inner dynamics of this expression reflect this individual variability of emotions and beliefs, and thus the variability of its manner of presenting reality, is reminiscent of certain motifs in Bergson's writings. Bergson (1910: 7–18) also writes that a work of art suggests a certain part of the artist's personal "history", which is the profound and infinitely variable reality of his or her individual "duration". Bergson (1914: 155–156) also emphasises the individuality and uniqueness of the reality a work suggests, whether it be the external reality of things comprised in their colours and shapes or the internal reality of emotions and the "living law" of their variability.

However, unlike Cazamian, Bergson does not ascribe to humour the status of art. Bergson (1914: 126–129) admits that in many cases, humorous transposition is an element of comic literature or character comedy. However, he repeatedly rejects the true artistic status of comedy. As a segment of a wide field of comic phenomena, it is situated "between art and life" (Bergson 1914: 170) and differs from "genuine" arts (Bergson 1914: 135–136, 170). While works of art always suggest that which is "individual" and, as such, are always based on the artist's intuitive insight into things or into consciousness, the comic author's creations are based on external observation, on observing that which is "general", and as such is the opposite of what is grasped by the artist's intuition (Bergson 1914: 150–170).

Bergson denies comedy the status of true art due to its lack of disinterest. Bergson maintains that art is "disinterested" (Bergson 1914: 170) – that is, detached from any sort of benefit to be derived from its focus on reality (Bergson 1914: 151–155). Unlike art, the search for and creation of comic phenomena are always associated with a tendency to keep the mechanisation of life in check, to criticise the automation of human behaviour or thought, and thus, with a tendency to return humanity to its natural environment – that is, society – as a flexibly reacting component (Bergson 1914: 18–21). Bergson (1914: 18–21, 170–171) presumes that in the practices leading to laughter a perspective concerned with social benefit is always present; such practices are always latently motivated by an interest in maintaining the integrity of social life.⁹ By contrast, as I will show in what follows, Cazamian's reflections on the nature of humour surpass Bergson's presumption of a difference between the efficacy of comic phenomena and the significance of products of art. Such ideas make it possible to demonstrate both the artistic character and the critical significance of humour.

⁹ Despite Bergson's emphasis on the differences between the principles of the comic and art, the relationship between the two should be considered on a more general level, in the context of Bergson's philosophy. It seems that in this broader context, the convergence of the effects of the comic and art will appear. This convergence has been discussed in recent studies on Bergson. Ford (2018: 194) notes that Bergson considers laughter a vital tool for improving social life. Hence, in laughter, a creative force is realised: *élan vital*. Amir (2019: 189) connects comicality with persistent motifs in Bergson's philosophy, suggesting that Bergson's notion of joy is related to his ideas about creation, which consist of the very meaning of life and his concept of laughter.

4. The question of definition

Although Cazamian insists on humour's indefinability, he assumes there are two aspects of humour that are unquestionably true: its general comicality and its ever-present relativizing power. It is clear that Cazamian wants to bring his thesis on the definability of humour to a head in relation to these two aspects.

Cazamian admits that transposing the identification of the comic has a special status in humour. No matter what ordinary reaction to reality is transposed in humour, no matter what belief is hidden in humour, the humourist always pretends not to recognise the comicality of the transposition – or of the procedure constituting the humour – itself. Arresting the identification of the comic cannot be lacking in humour; it is “the most constant of humoristic elements”, an element “also most intimately connected with the pure form of humour, with the humorous attitude” (Cazamian 1906: 618). Nevertheless, the significance of this element of humour is “variable” and in some cases even “null” (Cazamian 1906: 618). The transposition of comic belief characterises humour at a general level, even though in many cases the meaning of this transposition is no longer “dominant” due to the influence of another type of transposition but, on the contrary, is significantly “weakened” (Cazamian 1906: 618). Cazamian notes that the mechanism of humour is transposition – that is, a process that “has in itself a comic value” (Cazamian 1906: 632). At the same time, however, he observes that the search for the comic is not a “basic” characteristic of humour. Thus, although comic efficacy is always associated with the form of the humour (Cazamian 1906: 627), it can be “neutralised” by the “suggestion of its matter”, which makes all the features of the comic “disappear” (Cazamian 1906: 632).

Although Cazamian concludes that even the comic tone of humour associated with its form cannot be considered an ever-present characteristic of humour, I find this view hard to accept in light of Cazamian's own reasoning. For instance, on one hand Cazamian claims that the formal comicality of humour is in some cases “annihilated” (Cazamian 1906: 627) by the influence of its matter. However, this view is inconsistent with his claim that recognising the humorous transposition with which the comic impression or the “comic value” of humour is necessarily connected is a condition for recognising humour as humour. Cazamian himself repeatedly draws attention to this necessary identification of the humorous transposition in connection with humour's efficacy. He writes that to “perceive” humour, we must “recognise” its “general procedure”, which is transposition (Cazamian 1906: 625). The humourist must always draw the listener's, reader's, or viewer's attention in some way to the presence of a humorous transposition; if the transposition goes unnoticed, the “effect” of the humour is lost (Cazamian 1906: 626–627). This last claim enables Cazamian to formulate a much more acceptable view of the comic nature of humour: although in many cases, “comic pretence” (Cazamian 1906: 625) may be suppressed or partially obscured by other elements of the matter of the humour, such pretence cannot completely disappear or stop exerting its effect.

In his deliberations on the definability of humour, Cazamian also writes about the possibility of understanding the character of the matter that is suggested and revealed by the mechanism of humour – that is, its “form”. Cazamian considers the possibility of capturing the general impression that humour always produces – its “philosophy”. A humorous attitude that “introduces a duality” into our inner lives does not mix well with the “unconditional claims” which “primitive thinking” usually leads to; it presupposes “an element of scepticism or rather of relativism in the life of the spirit” (Cazamian 1906: 620). However, Cazamian immediately adds that the idea that a philosophy of humour should be “relativistic” or “sceptical” – though it might contain a “part of the truth” – is “doomed” to “inadequacy” (Cazamian 1906: 621). Such an idea cannot encompass the matter of humour; it captures only its “most general” elements – that is, the “most superficial” ones (Cazamian 1906: 621). These elements are the

“logical” results of a certain way of presenting things in the intellectual and emotional life of a personality. However, such an idea “entirely lacks” a personality because abstract ideas take on “infinitely varied forms and values” in individual personalities (Cazamian 1906: 621). Cazamian states that humour cannot be defined in terms of relativism or pessimism because, on the one hand, these “abstract colourings” are only “potentially” contained in humour and we artificially “free” them from their potential (Cazamian 1906: 622). On the other hand, the impression humour makes is influenced by the humourist’s personality because the humourist’s intellect and sensitivity “suffuse his humour and introduce thousands of different original elements into it” (Cazamian 1906: 622).

By and large, it becomes apparent that Cazamian’s main objective is not to deny the existence of relationships between the matter of humour and a relativistic and pessimistic general philosophy of humour, but rather to point to the fundamental problem involved in the impossibility of formulating a convincing generalisation of the character of the matter of humour, and to the impossibility of separating certain aspects or elements of matter from others. He emphasises that any attempt to rationally define certain material elements entails generalisation, which always results in something being lost in individual cases of the matter expressed and suggested in the form of the humour in question. A rigorous definition, since it is a generalisation, entails simplification and thus the deformation of what is defined.

In his refusal to define the matter or a philosophy of humour, Cazamian is significantly inspired by Bergson’s (1910) reflections, where he frequently addresses the complexity and indefinability of deep psychological reality. Bergson emphasises here that the profound reality of “duration” is a heterogeneous, indefinable multiplicity of intertwining elements – that is, elements that cannot be defined using word-based analyses. Like Bergson, Cazamian too refuses to approach the rich, complex, and intertwining mass of psychic elements with the aim of defining any current state. Definition, as a rational method of describing psychological reality on the basis of analyses, cannot appropriately capture this reality in all its uniqueness – particularly in the case of the complex psychological processes by which humour is generated and works its effects. The uniqueness of individual cases of humour resulting from the originality of a humourist’s unique personality is something that must necessarily escape the generalising entailed in any definition. Overall, Cazamian posits that what we discover by “analysing” the matter of humour, and what is subsequently accepted in any definition as humour’s “constant elements”, as its “determiners”, are “very general and vague” (Cazamian 1906: 623). Grasping any constant elements or specific tendencies by which a humourist’s stance converges with certain conceptions of reality has a strictly “approximate value” and does not manifest “the force of law” (Cazamian 1906: 623).

Cazamian (1906) suggests a remarkable position: humorous transposition is an artistic process that always involves a completely original and individual way of thinking and feeling in relation to reality, and at the same time it is a process that retains – although in some cases in a suppressed or even hidden manner – its comic character. Unfortunately, however, Cazamian’s scepticism about defining humour makes it impossible to further develop aspects of this remarkable conception of humour as an equivocal or perhaps two-sided phenomenon. Thus, Cazamian is incapable of addressing the issue of more precisely determining the significance and peculiar character of the comic in humour or the related question of the relationship between the artistic and comic aspects of humour.

5. The philosophy of humour

There is an undoubted continuity between Cazamian’s later writings on humour and his earlier ones; as time goes on, he also tends to refine his original ideas and, in some important respects,

to correct them. In his later works, what remains of his earlier views is an emphasis on the multifaceted, complex workings of humour resulting from the retention and, at the same time, suggestion of a natural reaction by means of an unnatural response, which, however, the natural reaction itself does not suppress, but joins up with without merging with it. He does correct his earlier scepticism about being able to arrive at a general philosophy of humour and his rejection of the fundamental ridiculousness of humour.

Cazamian (1952) turns to the philosophy of humour again when he discusses the contrast between dogmatism and humour. “Dogmatic” people, “abrupt” and “limited”, are bound to “one way thinking” and seeing things (Cazamian 1942: 23). Humour, on the other hand, requires “mental flexibility, a certain level of flexibility and subtlety” (Cazamian 1942: 23). We “expect” such subtlety from humourists. The humourist’s ability to “perceive more than one thing at a time” implies a number of “tendencies” (Cazamian 1942: 23). If we examine this ability, it soon “expands” into the manner in which the spirit lives and thinks. And Cazamian explicitly says that this manner must be acknowledged as “abstract and general naming, relativism” (Cazamian 1942: 23). In relativism, the humourist’s “intellectual temperament” finds a “deep and active focus” (Cazamian 1942: 23). No matter how “different and dissimilar” the “varieties” of humour are, there is always a single “essence” present in each (Cazamian 1942: 23). Cazamian points out that all humour possesses a “suppleness of thought”, an “inner freedom” of thought forged in the “thousands of judgments in which our independence puts itself at risk”. Every instance of humour has the ability to “maintain its distance”, to observe each object in relation to its horizon, which transcends it, and in relation to all objects that “resemble it and which nevertheless differ from it” (Cazamian 1942: 23–24). In humour, there is always a sense for the infinite multiplicity of beings and the innumerable standpoints that “intersect” again and again in relation to each of these beings, and which are all “legitimate in certain respects” (Cazamian 1942: 24). From the humourist’s perspective, no being has an “absolute” “value” – on the contrary, each being has a “changeable quality” with respect to the “eternal becoming of relationships and circumstances” (Cazamian 1942: 24). In the eyes of the humourist, any issue takes on the character of an “undefinable naïveté” as it “appears and is confirmed in simplified features” (Cazamian 1942: 24). These features “record, define, and classify” the ordinary and necessary dogmatism of our practical lives. However, from the viewpoint of the humourist, who is a “free artist”, all issues are perceived in a changing network of relationships and take on “thousands of other aspects” (Cazamian 1942: 24). The customary human inability to notice this relativity of all things is a source of the humourist’s “dispersed, generalised, and thoughtful” (Cazamian 1942: 24) amusement. Cazamian observes that the philosophical principle of humour lies in a “subtle and radical merriment” (Cazamian 1942: 24), in a “titillation of the sense of universal complexity” (Cazamian 1942: 24). This principle is contrary to the “blind claim present in every individual”, the claim to “be exclusively what he or she is” (Cazamian 1942: 24).

Cazamian (1942: 24) doubts that a philosophy of humour can be defined – that is, grasped conceptually – because we cannot attain the “richness” and “amazing subtlety of humour” with the help of a conceptual apparatus alone. Cazamian’s formulations again closely resemble Bergson’s; Cazamian says that analysis will struggle in vain to capture the principles of humour, to force it into “formulas that are too particular or too abstract” (Cazamian 1942: 24). Analysis is unable to capture the “inconspicuous, barely perceptible scent of humour”, the “fundamental note, the essential resonance of the original comicality that humour produces” (Cazamian 1942: 24). Only “our intuition” reveals its “active presence in all humourists” (Cazamian 1942: 24). We are transported by the “secret magnetism of humour” towards a “sympathetic connection”. Nonetheless, Cazamian speaks of this “philosophy” as the “highest sphere” of humour (Cazamian 1942: 10).

Cazamian (1952: 5) turns again to the question of defining humour, noting that if we do not attempt a definition, we “lose more” than by “committing ourselves” to any definition. An attainable definition has the nature of a formal description: an issue is humorous if it is expressed with the help of a “certain twist, queer reserve, an inappropriateness, and as it were unconsciousness” of what we actually think about the matter (Cazamian 1952: 5). However, Cazamian adds that describing the form of humour will lead us to the “elusive spirit” of humour (Cazamian 1952: 5). The spirit of humour is “intertwined” with this form and can be “captured” in it. Nevertheless, “negative power” is not the only thing humour possesses. It also has “a positive virtue” consisting in a shrewdness that makes it possible to “perceive the paradoxes of experience” and a spiritual “agility” that concedes the ability to “think on two different planes” (Cazamian 1952: 5–6) at the same time. What are the benefits of this “queerly twisted mode of expression” (Cazamian 1952: 5)?

Cazamian notes that the “working of this method” – that is, humorous transposition – can be properly interpreted “in the terms of aesthetic theory” (Cazamian 1952: 6). From this point of view, several types, or rather, degrees of effects of humour, can be foregrounded, and all seem to be inextricably linked with humour. Given Cazamian’s conception of suggestion as a principle of aesthetic pleasure, these degrees of humour’s effects correspond to degrees of pleasure. For Cazamian, increasing degrees of pleasure from humour correspond to increases in the generality of the scope of what is suggested in the humour. I might add that Cazamian also mentions degrees of pleasure from humour when he speaks of the growing “intensity” (Cazamian 1942: 9) of pleasure while moving towards the “profound sense” of humour (Cazamian 1942: 15). This intensifying of pleasure comes from the turning around or inverting of the expression of one’s thoughts (Cazamian 1942: 9), the “relaxation and liberation” resulting from the observation of “absurdity and reversal” and the “extravagance of fantasy” (Cazamian 1942: 10), and the amusement from the inexhaustible complexity of the things mentioned above. Such reversal or fantasy can be found in the works of Laurence Stern, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Butler, and Lewis Carroll. Cazamian (1952: 6) states that the obvious effect of humour is “a special shade of the ludicrous” (Cazamian 1952: 6) that follows from the twisted mode of expression itself. However, he also claims that humanity, “driven and vexed” by established rules of conduct and the unquestioningly accepted identity of objects, a humanity suffering from the dominion of the “iron laws of things” (Cazamian 1952: 6), does not cease to yearn and long for this inversion. Humour offers “a delicious release in extravagance” (Cazamian 1952: 6). While Cazamian generally overlooks the nature of humour, he observes that “the deepest poetry and philosophy” gradually enter into the “modest method” of the inverted presentation of one’s own beliefs and feelings (Cazamian 1952: 6). Such philosophy and poetry “have an affinity with” the process of transposition and “flourish” on the basis of it, representing the “ultimate background” of humour (Cazamian 1952: 6). As in *English Humour*, in *The Development of English Humor*, Cazamian combines the philosophy of humour mentioned above, which he sees in humour’s inverting ordinary ways of understanding reality, with tolerance and relativism.

Humour is unlimited in scope; it is as broad as the “stretch between two extremes”, between “good and evil, happiness and misery, exultation and despair” (Cazamian 1952: 307). Its finest shades, its subtlest suggestions, lie in “the middle zone”, where its full range is reflected in a “shifting synthesis” (Cazamian 1952: 307). Cazamian is undoubtedly recalling the complex workings of humour he had previously analysed in detail: humour’s ability to combine opposites in the form of natural reactions and invented responses in waves that constantly change the tone of the humour. The most important humourists – Shakespeare, for example – demonstrate that the “inmost spirit” of humour is “an acceptance, tolerant without being sceptical, subdued without being depressed” (Cazamian 1952: 307). Cazamian claims that this is the real “philosophy” and “wisdom” proper to humour (Cazamian 1952: 307). In the case of the best

humourists, humour is a “way of thinking and feeling”, a “subtle philosophy” (Cazamian 1952: 412). It is definitely not a simple type of joking, but always “preserves some connection, near and distant, with laughter”; it is an “interior” and “self-contained” method for the “discovery and enjoyment of the comic” (Cazamian 1952: 307).

Thus, unlike in his older writings, Cazamian (1942, 1952) later speaks of a philosophy of humour bound up with the form or basic procedure of humour, which is the transposition of a natural intellectual or emotional reaction to reality into an unnatural, invented, original response. This philosophy, which is relativistic and tolerates diversity, is a part of the humourist’s artistic view of reality, which emphasises the changing, inapprehensible individuality of all matter, things, and relationships. This focus on individuality in its variability frees the reader, viewer, or listener of humour from ordinary ways of viewing reality, which are fettered by customs, conventions, and stereotypes. At the same time, however, the artistic nature of humourist’s approach to reality in no way removes the comicality of humour; on the contrary, the comic is inextricably linked to the form of the humour. In these later writings, Cazamian describes humour as a remarkably complex phenomenon. On the one hand, it is the result of an attentive, detail-oriented viewpoint that is at the same time generalising and contemplative. In its concern with detail, it opens up a broad perspective of philosophical scope that encompasses every detail. However, humour as a complex phenomenon is not attained by the mechanical application of the general mechanism of humour, but only by a truly original, creative way of employing it. On the other hand, such “philosophical” insight resulting when humour engages in very detailed analyses of reality in all its multifariousness is necessarily associated with the comic. Humorous transposition always remains laughable, even if the perspective that humour offers might significantly suppress this laughability.

6. The critical meaning of humour

Nonetheless, in the context of Cazamian’s later writings, we might still enquire about a more precise delimitation of the relationship between the comicality of humorous transposition and the original, individual, and thus, in fact, artistic dimension of humour. To arrive at such a definition, however, we must first describe the meaning of the comicality of humour and the meaning of the laughter that is evoked by humorous transposition.

In light of this, I would like to point out that, even in Cazamian’s later texts on humour, the fundamental influence of Bergson’s (1914) general conception of the comic as an automatism that manifests itself in the appearance, behaviour, actions, and thinking of human beings, as well as Bergson’s conception of laughter as punishment for such automation of humanity, is evident. In later texts, too, Cazamian refers with obvious respect and approval to Bergson’s conception of the comic. In his essay “L’humour de New-York” [The humour of New York], Cazamian applies Bergson’s general formula, that “the comic is born of automatism” (Cazamian 1938b: 157), and in the essay “Humour et amour” [Humour and love] he recalls the “very penetrating analysis” (Cazamian 1938a: 144) performed by Bergson. In Bergson’s view, there is a “bitter essence” within laughter because it “punishes” and “brings” individuals who behave too differently “in line with” social norms (Cazamian 1938: 144). Cazamian (1942: 6) calls attention to the fact that Bergson “illuminated” the meaning of the laughable and that the laughable therefore appears as “a rigidity, the outline of a mechanism replacing the suppleness of life”. Cazamian makes this general concept of laughability concrete in relation to speech. A speaker who “exaggerates or deceives himself” by seeking an “intensity” of effect in his own expressions “passively and uncritically submits” to the natural “development of a particular evolving idea”. Such a speaker “loses the freedom of his own belief” (Cazamian 1942: 6). Cazamian thus points to the laughableness of speakers who are unable to respect the complexity of things and succumb

in their expressions to dogmatic views towards which they remain uncritical. Such speakers are insensitive to the multifaceted character of reality; they lose their freedom of belief because they are unwilling to admit that different and even contradictory beliefs about any aspect of reality might exist. Cazamian's claim refers to the fact that humorous transposition can be understood as a process aimed at ridiculing speakers who succumb in such a manner. I have already pointed out, in our analysis of Cazamian's earlier views, that the humourist's approach can be interpreted in the light of Bergson's general reflections on the laughable as a mockery of the inability to react naturally to reality. In the context of Cazamian's later reflections on humour, however, the effects of laughter manifest themselves differently; it is not the inability to react naturally that is ridiculed, but the loss of freedom – that is, succumbing to any sort of dogmatic, uncritically accepted view of reality. I acknowledge that I can only find hints of such a critical conception of the laughter evoked by humour in Cazamian's later writings. However, Cazamian (1942: 28) does note that the humourist is a “critic” of naive, overly simple approaches to reality. The fact that a humourist is amused by the immutability of a certain social group's habitual practices, such as its “pride”, “self-love”, or common “snobbery”, does not mean that his/her amusement is not critical in tone and that the humourist does not seek to ridicule those practices. In such cases, the humourist highlights “the lowness of foolish and servile conformism” (Cazamian 1942: 28).

Cazamian's thinking on the complex scope of humorous transposition, which expresses and suggests different, and even contradictory, mental and emotional reactions to reality in a mutually variable relationship, his ultimate recognition of the general laughableness of humour, and his acceptance of Bergson's view on the critical role of laughter all indicate a specific, critical reading of the comicality of humour. However, it cannot be said that this critical reading focuses on any concrete, automatically active property, or on any concrete, rigid manner of behaving, feeling, or thinking. Due to the complexity and ambiguity of this reading of humour, its critical impact is dispersed; it does not concentrate on any concrete type of disproportionate, inadequate, unusual, or atypical reaction to reality. Of course, humorous transposition is based on a certain natural reaction and consists in replacing this natural reaction with an invented one. Nevertheless, as these two reactions interact, clash, and mix, the reality in question is constantly revealed in new ways. For this reason, any way of approaching this reality may appear to be too dogmatic, rigid, or automatic, to be insufficiently reflective or cautious. The humourist ridicules such dogmatism in his/her approach to reality; s/he wants to point out that we need to be as attentive as possible to reality to observe its various aspects and reflect on the possibility of our reactions to it being insensitive or inappropriate.¹⁰

7. Conclusion: the complexity of humour

My analyses of Cazamian's writings on humour and my elaboration of the implications hidden in them have led to a characterisation of humour as a remarkably complex phenomenon. The effects of transposition ensure that humour is an art and that, at the same time, it evokes laughter. On the one hand, humour offers a fresh perspective on reality; the enlivening of reality corresponds to the inner variability of viewpoints, feelings, and beliefs produced in humour by a complex process of mutual suppression and, at the same time, references between reactions originally considered natural or normal and reactions originally considered unnatural or invented. The loss of the original status of these two reactions, which takes place as they clash and mix, is identical to the process by which unexpected, differing, and often contradictory aspects of the issues the humourist deals with are gradually revealed. This changing perspective

¹⁰ The critical dimension of Cazamian's conception of humour has been examined in Ševčík (2020).

on reality also corresponds to the concreteness and attention to detail comprised in the humourist's aim, which rejects dogmatic simplification. However, simplifying and rejecting the divergent and even contradictory aspects of reality also entail a restriction of freedom. In contrast, humour is associated with liberation from all dogmatism and definitive beliefs, and even with a release from the hobbling demands of unequivocalness and clear identification. The humourist not only recognises, but indeed emphasises, the possibility of the existence of both differing and contradictory views on any particular matter. However, dogmatic simplification is also criticised in humour by means of ridicule. On the other hand, humour exposes to ridicule the inability to accept the multifarious character of reality, the inability to accept that in relation to reality a definitive attitude cannot be formed, that our beliefs and feelings must undergo constant changes. The inability to take a flexible approach to reality is ridiculed, as are rigid reactions and beliefs, the automatism of unreflective attitudes that do not acknowledge that any matter can – and ultimately, perhaps, must – show hitherto unknown facets in hitherto unknown contexts. If the spirit or philosophy of humour is relativistic, then at the same time humour critically attacks the inability or unwillingness to accept a general relativism. As a product of art, humour showcases the changing individuality of selected issues and draws attention to the fact that this changeability is inherent in everything. As a means of inducing laughter, humour criticises the inability to accept this changeability and to reflect it in thought and feeling. From my analyses of Cazamian's theory and my contentions regarding its implications, it follows that the artistic and comic aspects of humour are inextricably linked.

In closing, I would like to return to a comparison of Bergson's and Cazamian's views. I would like to specifically emphasise the discrepancy between Bergson's conception of the relationship between the comic and art and Cazamian's conception of humour as a phenomenon that is both comic and artistic. I have already noted above Cazamian's assumption that the complicated resonance of humour is set in motion solely by the creative approach of the humourist, and also that the character of this resonance is a consequence of the relationship to the individual personality of the humourist. I underscored that this conception of humour clearly reflects the influence of Bergson's conception of the origin, character, and impact of artistic works. However, we may deduce from Cazamian's writings on humour that he accepts in large measure not only Bergson's conception of artistic creation and its workings, but also Bergson's conception of the comic and the critical importance of laughter, even though the critical role of laughter that is evoked by humour is conceived of as being dispersed. Nonetheless, the fact that Cazamian draws a connection between the characteristics of artistic products and humour and, at the same time, attributes the character of comic transposition to humour – even though he believes that in many cases the comicality of humour is suppressed – entails an overstepping of Bergson's emphasis on the distinction between art and comic phenomena, which I also pointed out above. Cazamian conceives of humorous transposition as an artistic process that demonstrates the multifaceted and elusive nature of reality by suggesting different ways of responding to it and, at the same time, as a means of ridiculing inattentive, unreflective, and therefore, impulsive or dogmatic approaches to such a reality. The humorous highlighting of the legitimacy of different approaches, reactions, and standpoints and the concomitant revelation of the multifarious or inconsistent nature of reality go hand in hand with the ridiculing of approaches in which this inconsistency is insufficiently reflected.

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