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The Position of Humor in Human Communication

Auf einer der berühmten Macy-Konferenzen (19952) hielt Gregory Bateson einen Vortrag über Humor und Paradoxien in der menschlichen Kommunikation. Der Vortrag und die Diskussion (an der Konferenz waren u.a. Lawrence S. Kubie, W. Ross Ashby, J. Z. Young, John R. Bowman, Ralph W. Gerard, G. Evelyn Hutchinson, Walter Pitts, Henry Quastler, Margaret Mead und Warren McCullough beteiligt) sind auch im Internet veröffentlicht worden. Darin heißt es: "One of the rather curious things about homo sapiens is laughter, one of the three common convulsive behaviors of people in daily life, the others being grief and orgasm. I don't want to say that they do not occur at animal levels, partly because I am not competent to say such a thing, partly because I suspect that there are prefigurations in certain mammals but all three phenomena certainly are not developed among mammals to the extent that they are among homo sapiens. Because they are involuntary, or partially so, one tends to think of these phenomena as lower functions, animalish functions, but since the full development of these phenomena is characteristically human, it seems that laughter, sobbing, and orgasm are perhaps not lower functions in a simple neurophysiologic sense but have evolved because of the hypertrophy of the upper levels and the resulting peculiar relationship between the cortical-intellectual processes and those which go on below. These three phenomena, and also the convulsions of epilepsy and shock therapy, have the characteristic that there is a build-up, a so-called tonic phase, in which something called "tension" — which it certainly is not — builds up for a period; then something happens, and the organism begins quaking, heaving, oscillating, especially about the diaphragm. I leave it to the physiologists to discuss what happens."Zum vollständigen Text geht es hier...

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