

Who Makes the Blonde Jokes?

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(Summary)

The dumb blonde figure is very popular in the repertoire of international jokes and is characterized by two main qualities: stupidity and promiscuity. These features are also shared by the jokes which have circulated in Bulgaria since the 1990s. Researchers view dumb blonde jokes as a consequence of the increasing presence of women in professional and public life in positions which were traditionally considered 'male' spheres. The jokes are a reaction to radical transformations in social values and also a specific response to problematized male identities. Over the course of time, the image of the blonde has undergone certain changes as the sexual innuendo has faded and stupidity has become the main object of ridicule. In this way, the blonde has become a version of the classical personage of the fool whose role has always been substantial in the processes of self-identification, whether they be national, social, ethnic, local, or regional in character. In this respect, the blonde represented in such jokes has the potential to become a universal archetype, since her image combines two major identity markers: gender, and more generally, cultural affiliation.

Keywords: jokes; dumb blondes; social transformations

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