

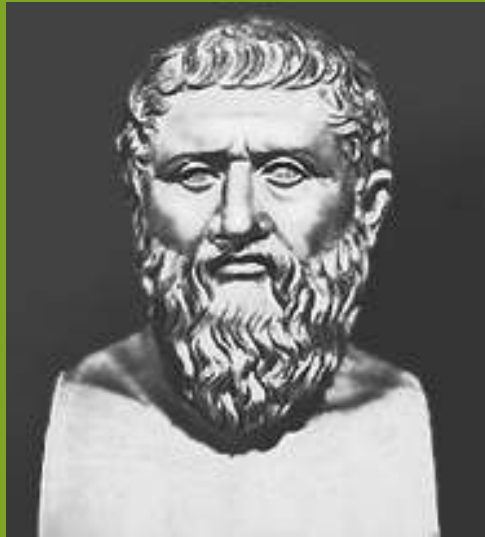
*Humour*  
*as part of the British*  
*national culture*



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# *Humour and its influence on the lives of people*



Plato

“Joking means trying to give yourself a sense of superiority by making fun of other people, and only people of lesser worth do this. “



Sigmund Freud

“Laughter is a safely discharging nervous energy. It provides relief and self-gratification and makes potentially damaging conflicts harmless.”

# *Laughter is the best medicine*



Nowadays laughter is considered to be the best medicine. Nothing works faster or more dependably to bring our mind and body back into balance than a good laugh.

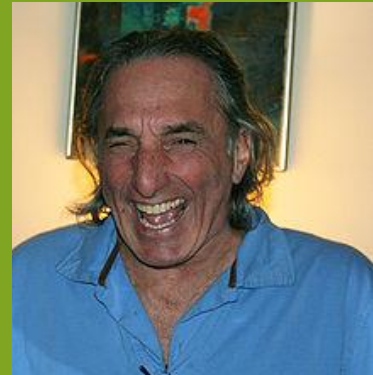
**Without laughter  
life on our planet  
would be intolerable.**

**(Steve Allen)**

# *Humour as part of national culture*

## Humour differs depending on :

- geographical location
  - culture
  - maturity
- level of education
  - intelligence
- the history of the nation
  - social values
- traditions and ideology



# *British Humour*

Of all the characteristics, good and bad, for which the British are known in the outside world, their sense of humour is one of the best-known and most positively regarded.

Laughter is the  
closest distance  
between two people.  
(Victor Borge)



**Traditional  
British  
Humour**

displacement

the surreal

the whimsical

subversion of  
the rules of logic

gentle  
melancholy

conflict between  
two ideas

word-play &  
verbal nonsense

# *Word-play and verbal nonsense*

## The Goon Show

a British radio comedy programme, originally produced and broadcast by BBC from 1951 to 1960.

Many elements of the show satirised contemporary life in Britain, parodying aspects of show business, commerce, industry, art, politics, diplomacy, the police, the military, education, class structure, literature and film.



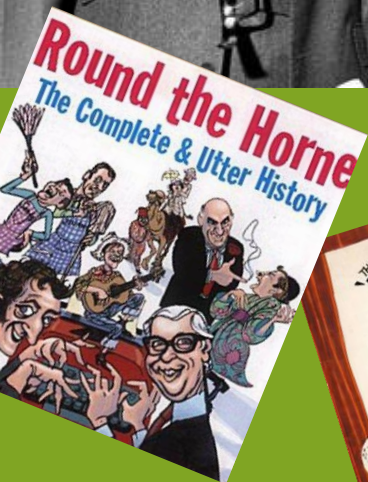
- Why did the bus stop?  
- Because it saw the zebra crossing.

- Do you have any grandchildren?  
- No, all my children are just ordinary.

# *Linguistic humour*



Round the Horne  
a British radio comedy programme, which influenced the British taste for linguistic humour



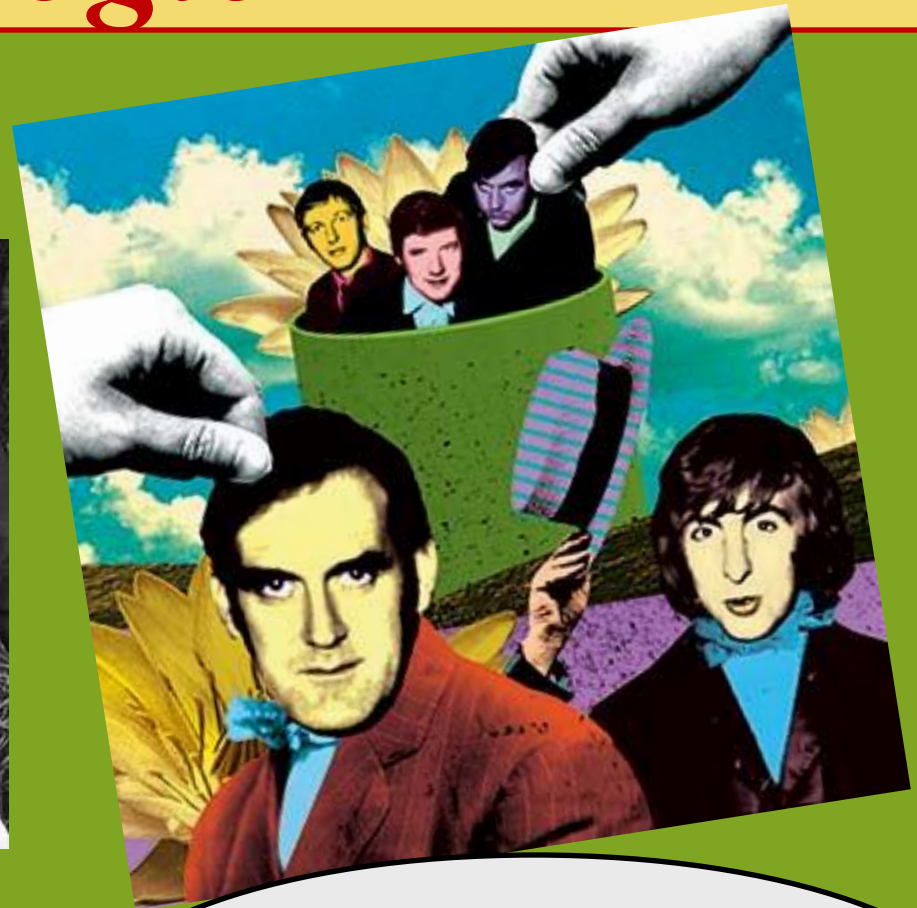
Tourist: Can you tell me the way to Bath please?  
Policeman: Well, first you turn on the hot and cold taps then ...



# *Subversion of the rules of logic*

## Monty Python

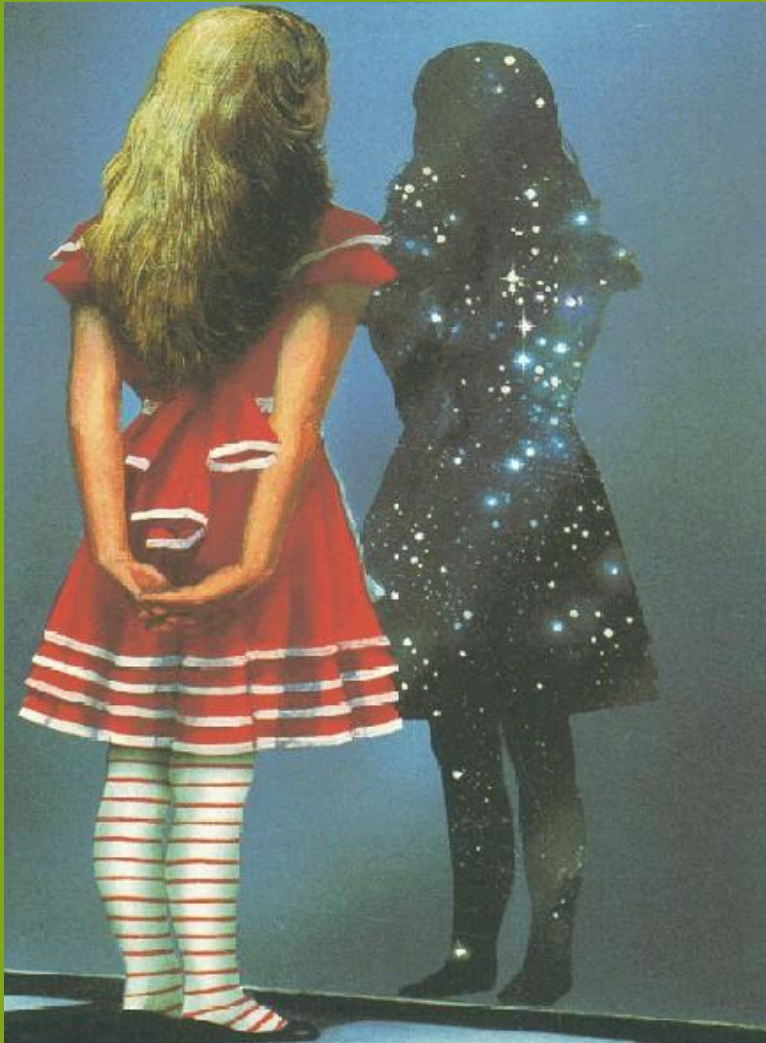
a British surreal comedy group



- Why did the bees go on strike?  
- Because they wanted more honey and shorter working flowers.

Henry: The cat wants to go out.  
Min: How can you tell?  
Henry: He's put his hat on.

# *Subversion of the rules of logic*



In Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* the author creates a parallel universe governed by rules which appear ridiculous to the reader, but are entirely logical within their own dimension.

**A joke's a very  
serious thing.  
(Charles  
Churchill)**

# *Conflict between two ideas & Displacement*

- What is at the back of a bee?
- It`s bee-hind.



- My dog has no nose.
- Then how does it smell?
- Terrible!

- Doctor, I keep thinking that there are two of me.
- OK, but don`t both speak at once.

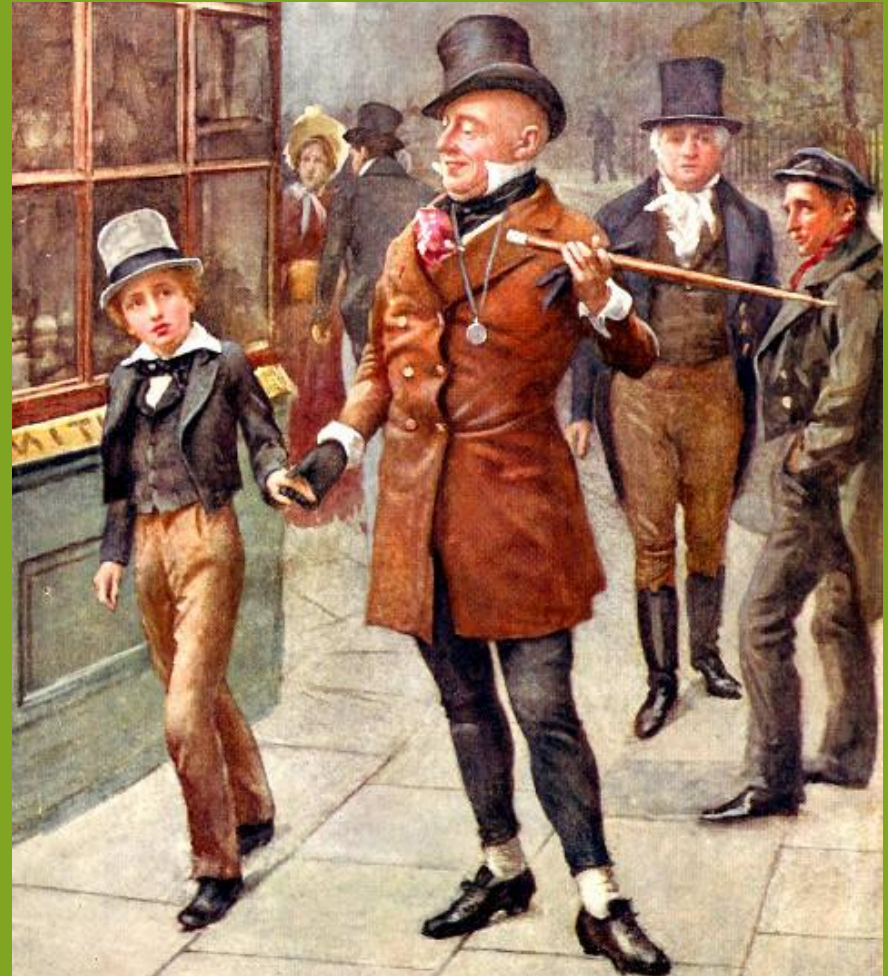


# *Gentle melancholy & Sympathy for the character*

Nonsense seems to be especially appealing to the English when it is allied to a gentle melancholy.



Charles Dickens



Mr Micawber

# *Gentle melancholy & Sympathy for the character*



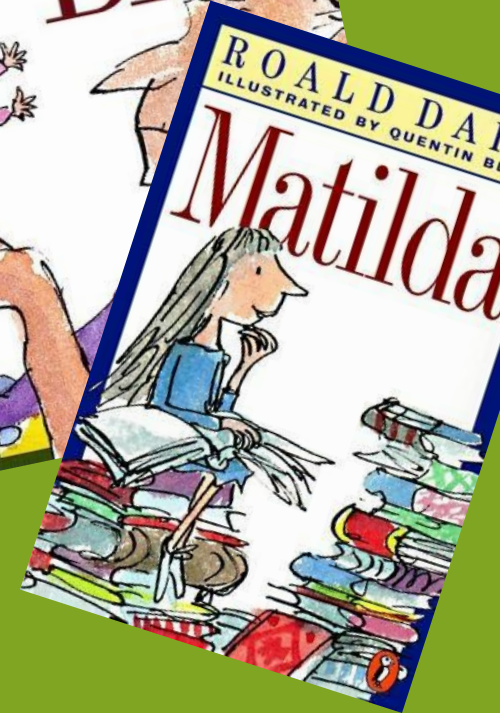
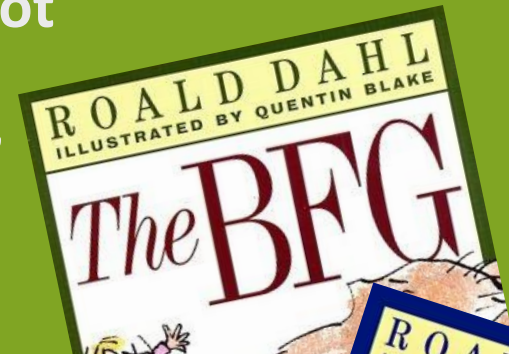
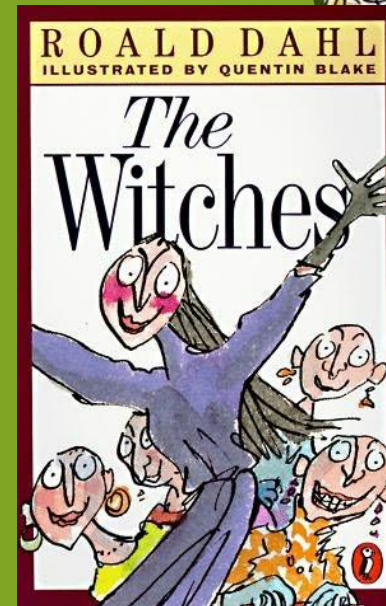
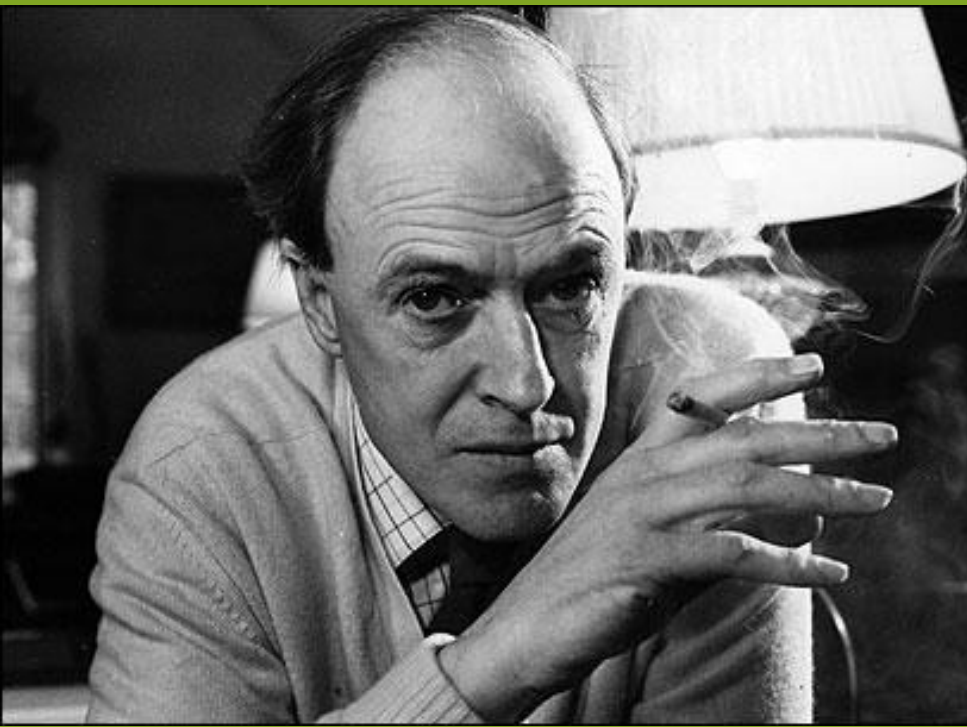
“Bridget Jones’s Diary” by Helen Fielding is a chronicle of the life of Bridget Jones as a single woman in London as she tries to make sense of life and love.



# *The surreal*

## Roald Dahl

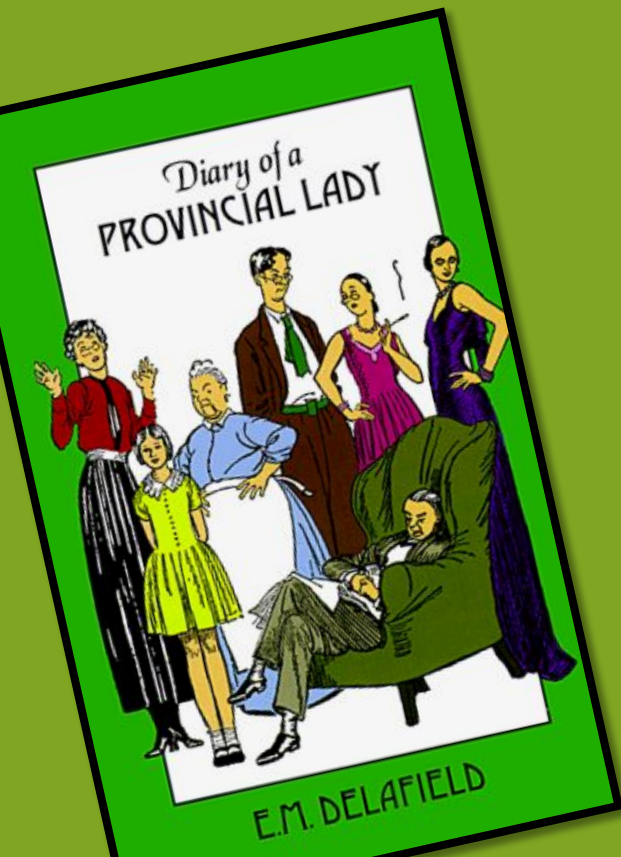
a British novelist, short story writer, fighter pilot and screenwriter, “one of the greatest storytellers for children of the 20th century”



# Irony

## E. M. Delafield

a prolific English author, best-known for her autobiographical *Diary of a Provincial Lady*.



## Jane Austen

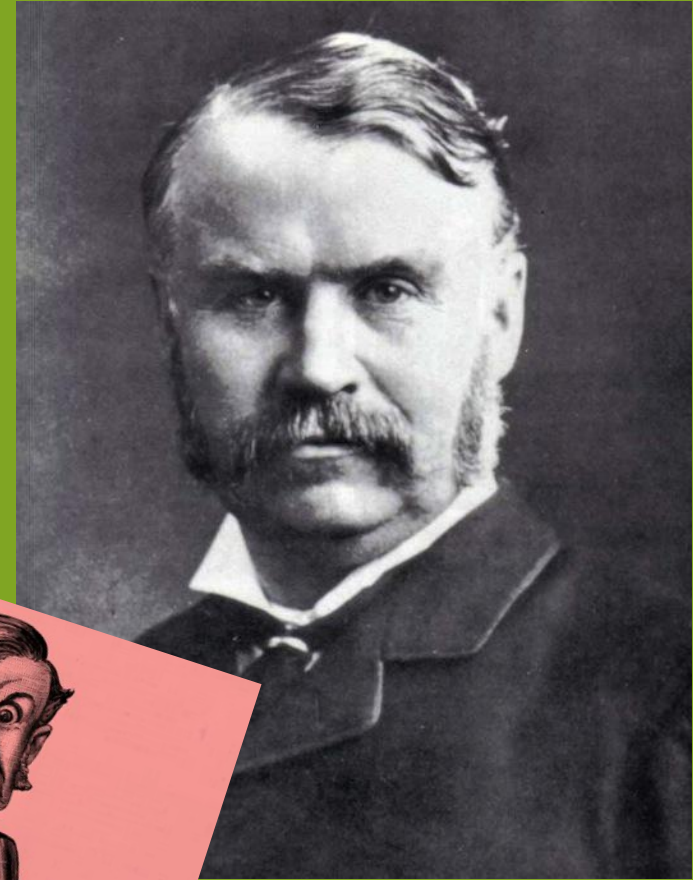
an English novelist whose works of romantic fiction earned her a place as one of the most widely read writers in English literature.



# Parody

## W. S. Gilbert

an English dramatist, librettist, poet and  
illustrator best known for his fourteen  
comic operas .





# *Paradox*

## Oscar Wilde

an Irish writer and poet, one of London's most popular playwrights in the early 1890s. Today he is remembered for his epigrams and plays.

“The Importance of Being Earnest”  
is a comedy in which the major themes are the triviality with which society treats marriage.



# *The main feature of British humour*

It is extremely important that the British are sure that no other nation is allowed to laugh at them except themselves.



This probably comes from the British pride, self-respect and a high self-esteem.

# *British Humour*



Humour is one of the British national peculiarities. Humour is like a drug to many of the British; they can't get enough of it, and they are endlessly inventive in creating more of it.

Their sense of humour has been one of their most enduring characteristics, precisely because they have found it so adaptive and helpful in hard times.



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*Thank you for your attention!*

