

The versioning of Norsemen

An analysis of an unusual television format

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0 Preface

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0.1 Acknowledgements

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0.2 Abstract

The theme of this master thesis is a case study of the versioning of the Norsemen show. It looks at how comedy is affected by something being written for two versions at the same time – Norwegian and English. The research question of the thesis reads “Which types of humour is prevalent in the Norsemen show, and how does this humour change between versions?” The thesis uses this relatively unique situation for an audio-visual comedy as an opportunity to look at humour that adapts well (is made specifically for an adaptation) between languages and culture. The research showed that observational and anachronistic humour was prevalent throughout both the show’s versions. Uses of absurdism and overacting contributed to a general comedic atmosphere. It was also found that the two versions had many small differences between each version, but still both versions had their own strength and weakness. Very rarely did a schism between versions affect the perceived humour of a joke. These results were found through using mixed methods. A quantitative coding schema mapped the frequency and type of jokes in the show. A qualitative textual analysis was used to closely analyse choice scenes from the show based on the results of the coding. Incongruity theory is the primary theory in the thesis’ framework of analysis.

Table of contents

0 Preface	2
0.1 Acknowledgements	2
0.2 Abstract	2
1 Introduction	6
1.1 About Norsemen	8
1.2 Previous research on similar topics	10
2 Theory	13
2.0.1 Superiority theory	13
2.0.2 Relief Theory	14
2.0.3 Incongruity Theory	15
2.0.4 Anachronism in incongruity theory	16
2.1 The genres & elements of comedy and where Norsemen fits in among these	17
2.1.1 Laugh tracks and incongruity	18
2.1.2 Sitcoms are becoming more fluid as a genre	19
2.1.3 Norsemen are also an absurdist and satirical comedy	20
2.1.4 Norsemen and Monty Python: Modern day bureaucracy and juxtaposition	21
2.1.5 The difference between absurdist and nonsense humour, and examples of the former in the Norsemen show	23
3 Method	26
3.1 Quantitative method	27
3.1.1 Choice of quantitative method	27
3.1.2 How to do a content analysis, according to Neuendorf	28
3.1.3 Categories of humour for coding	29
3.2 Qualitative method	32
3.2.1 Methods of textual analysis	33
3.2.2 Understanding the text as a whole	34
4 Content analysis	37

4.1 Coding	37
4.2 Results	38
4.3 Discussion of quantitative results.....	40
4.3.1 Wit and the most prevalent category.....	41
4.3.2 Observation & Other	42
Absurd 4.3.3.....	44
4.3.4 Dark.....	45
4.3.5 Physical	46
4.3.6 Differences.....	47
4.3.7 Conclusion of quantitative analysis	48
5 Qualitative analysis of scenes from the series “Norsemen” (Vikingane).....	50
5.1 Characters.....	50
5.2 Scene analysis.....	54
Season 1 Episode 1: The Homecoming; Returning from a raid	54
Season 1 Episode 1: The Homecoming; Ættestup	57
Season 1, Episode 3: The Funeral; Runestick punishment.....	60
Season 1, Episode 4: The Raid; England	64
Season 2, episode 4 Vengeance; Funeral for the lawspeaker	69
Season 3 Episode 3: Wedding and blood offering; Sacrifice.....	73
Season 1 Episode 1: The Homecoming; Sacrifice to the gods.....	76
Season 2 Episode 2: Slavebound; Master thief	79
Season 2 Episode 3: Hand Job; New Prosthesis	82
Season 2 Episode 4: Vengeance; Ragnars tattoo	86
Season 2 Episode 4: Vengeance; Domino interpretation	90
Season 3 Episode 4: War Table; Nithing Rod.....	95
5.3 discussion	100
5.3.1 Version differences	100

5.3.2 The types of humour	103
6 Conclusion	107
6.1 Final Discussion	109
7 Academic sources	112
7.1 Nonacademic sources	114
7.2 Sources: TV shows and movies referenced	115
7.2.1 Sources: Episodes referenced from Norsemen	117
8 Appendix	119

1 Introduction

Humour always has appealed to me and continues to do so. From the simple jokes that illicit laughter from children to the more complex that require some mental gymnastics before its secret are revealed. Jokes that build up to punchlines, humour that subverts expectations, and the subtler comedic dialogue that does not build up to anything that still makes us chuckle.

First a little bit about my previous knowledge about the Norsemen show. Before beginning on this thesis, I had already watched the Norsemen show, however it was only the English version that is available on Netflix. On the other hand, some of my friends had seen the Norwegian version that aired on NRK nett TV and asked me whether the English version could be any good. At the time, I remember thinking that a lot of my enjoyment of the show had come from the exaggerated Scandinavian accents the actors put on in the English version. Now however, after rewatching it in both English and Norwegian I was able to pick up on the subtler parts of the humour and themes that the show employed. For things we like, it is fun to compare, and after hearing about the Norwegian version I really wanted to look closer at how they stack up to each other. The Norsemen show finds itself in the very rare position of being a format which had both versions created at the same time. Normally the format would be created and later adopted into a different culture with significant changes. I am unaware of exactly how popular the show was internationally, but considering they were hired by Netflix for season 2, and then greenlit and produced a season three for them as well, we may reasonably assume that the Norsemen show had sufficient success outside of Norway. According to Orms actor, Kåre Conradi (Salty Nerd Podcast, 2022), they received fan mails from many different countries and in many different languages, so Norsemen had managed to garner fan followings even outside the US.

As it is a comedy set in a different time period it naturally has the advantage of using themes such as anachronism and dramatic irony by applying contemporary logic and ideas to the past. It is these themes among others that are present in the constructed humour of the show that my analysis will focus the most on. Considering that the show was planned for

Norwegian and English from the beginning (Botheim, 2017), the subject of interest for me to study in this thesis is how the humour is written to fit the two different languages and cultures. The research question of the thesis then reads “Which types of humour is prevalent in the Norsemen show, and how does this humour change between versions”. This subject of study is further warranted, as many types of humour suffer or degrade through translation and not all comedy can be salvaged through a culture and/or language barrier. In this regard the Norsemen show is unique because most shows either (1) receive a transnational adaptation on a later date where it’s filmed as its own show and tailored towards the in-country audience, or (2) is simply translated and delivered in original language with subtitles. Since the Norsemen show was written and filmed with the intent of having a Norwegian and English version it creates a unique approach to looking at two language versions of a show, given that both languages function as the source text.

A versioning such as this is very rare as a format intended for international sale would usually be created as a guide to be used by the adopters of said show to create their own version. Considering it was intended for two languages from the start the writing and styling of comedy must have been influenced by expectations for both languages. It means that his extreme case of a versioning can be used as a fringe case study of versioning. Looking at how the use of humour that needs complex translation is minimized in the Norsemen show. This is under the assumption that the show doesn’t have many jokes that are altered significantly between the two versions.

Normally there would be a source text and a target text that would be compared, and I have not been able to find any research that studies the humour discrepancies of a versioned tv-series. According to what I could find myself, the most common humour adaptation research appears to be the written form of mediated comedy, mainly books. There is also an abundance of adaptation studies on television research, plenty of which are on a corresponding transnational adaptation.

1.1 About Norsemen

Norsemen is a show created by Jon Iver Helgaker and Jonas Torgersen, in which they both served as writers and directors. It originally aired on NRK TV (The online version of NRK (Norsk rikskringkasting)) back in 2016. The show won Gullruten 2017 for best comedy show which is proof of some critical recognition during its initial airing. NRK claims the initial season was watched by just short of 1 million Norwegians on television airings and online streaming. Considering there were around 5.25 million Norwegian citizens (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2017) in 2017 this number becomes quite impressive. The Norsemen series was also featured in the New York times list of best foreign shows to check out in 2017 (Granbo, 2017). It can then be surmised that season 1 of Norsemen was well received in both its Norwegian and English release. Season 2 and 3 is however considerably harder to find data on viewership and recognition. One can make the assumption that season 2 at the very least met expectations given that in an interview with producer Anders Tangen (2017) he explains that season 2 was funded and they were hoping for the potential to make season 3. From an interview with Jon Iver Helgaker (Carlsen, 2016) we learn that the producers wanted to have the show filmed in both Norwegian and English. The production company Viafilm was responsible for Norsemen and had previously produced Lilyhammer (Zandt & Hallberg, 2012-2014), which had seen international success. They also believed a show about Vikings could be well received due to the recent great success of fantasy series such as Game of Thrones (Benioff et al., 2011-2019) and Vikings (O'Sullivan et al., 2013-2020). In the interview Helgaker also said he believed that other Norwegian shows such as Frikjent (Allen et al., 2015-2016) and Nobel (Rønning & Briseid, 2016) had already paved the way for a bigger international interest in Norwegian shows.

Helgaker and Torgersen wrote and directed the show in both English and Norwegian at the same time. Kåre Conradi, the actor who plays Orm said in the Salty Nerds podcast (2022) that during filming they were given both the Norwegian and English scripts. The scenes were filmed in Norwegian, English, Norwegian etc. Switch. With both languages being filmed before the cameras were moved in for the closeups of the scene, creating a situation where the actors had to constantly switch between Norwegian and English. This was done with the intent to potentially sell the show to an overseas market at a later point. After the filming

they moved on to look for potential buyers for the show. The creators have stated in interviews (Carlsen, 2016) that given the unusual nature of versioning it often took some back and forth to explain that they already had the English version filmed. Eventually Netflix bought the English version of the show, and it was added to Netflix's catalogue in August 2017. Season 2 was filmed in early 2017 and became available in Norwegian and English in October 2018. A season 3 was also made, with intentions of a season 4 before the show was cancelled by Viafilm and Netflix in 2020. Viafilm did not greenlight a season 4 and as Netflix was the one co-funding the show for its English version, they were approached to fund season 4. Netflix also turned down the offer to fund a season 4, so even though it is already written, it remains unpublished in hopes of one day continuing.

The Norsemen show itself is a comedy serial placed in the very early Viking age of 790. Given the serial nature of the show it differentiates from average sitcoms even though it often exhibits features of the genre. However, the episodes themselves are not self-contained enough that a viewer would be equally comfortable jumping into an episode in the middle of a season compared to the beginning. Even though the characters often speak in anachronisms in the show, the design itself is quite impressive with many periodical details, utilising tools that have been speculated to be used in the early Viking age. Each of the seasons consists of 6 episodes, making the whole Norsemen show a total of 18 episodes. The Norwegian version has an episode runtime of 30 minutes, but the Netflix English version often lasts a couple minutes extra each episode; i.e. resulting in creating 32–35-minute episodes for the audience of the English version. This creates a versioning of the show where certain scenes have additional parts added to them in the English version. Furthermore, the use of sound, writing and camera angles can also vary between the two versions. As a result, both the Norwegian and English version of the show have to be considered as primary texts when analysing, as opposed to the usual practice in adaptation studies.

1.2 Previous research on similar topics

Part of the reason for selecting a translation of humour in a versioning as a specific theme for research is because I was unable to find any research that matched it. I am not saying this type of research does not exist, but it is not prevalent enough to be easily findable. Most of the humour studies I've been able to find is either literary text analysis, or adaptation studies. Humour analysis such as the one present in Katherine Schaab's text "Upending the status quo: Power-Sharing and community building in *Schitt's Creek*" (2020) shows a method of textual analysis for looking at themes as a throughline for a show and how it builds its narrative. While the text's focus for analysis is not on humour but rather its themes on class divide, it still performs its textual analysis in a manner applicable to this particular thesis.

Texts that go into challenges faced with the translation of humour when moving to a new culture and/or language are highly relevant. Stanislaw Baranczak's (1992) article on translation of Shakespeare's humour from English to Polish delivers great insight into the challenges that translating humour can pose. By focusing on a specific joke from a Shakespeare play, he discusses the different strategies employed by the people that have professionally translated the joke in question in the past. The article describes how wordplay and double meanings force translators into making strategic decisions for how they'll handle this type of humour. Listing possible strategic decisions such as "direct translation" and "letting the joke die", "create a new similar joke in its place", "create a new joke in its place" or "flip around on the dialogue to better accommodate a translation of the joke".

Translating humour, nationalism, ETC. In Mário De Andrade's Modernist Writings (Brune, 2017) is a text that also looks at the challenges in translating a work into another language and discusses how culture and use of lingo and slang provides additional trouble for a successful adaptation. It demonstrates how certain works of text are closely tied to the local cultural understanding and period it was written. Unlike Baranczak's article (1992) Brune (2017) does not discuss possible strategies of adaptation but shows examples of roadblocks

in translation, subsequently providing a good framework for understanding what can be considered a failed adaptation.

The article; *You had to be there: Anachronism and the limits of laughing at the Middle Ages* (D’Arcens, 2014) is a text that explores the use of anachronism in medieval settings and discusses limitations on the comic reception of the Middle Ages. The article discusses how important time can be to the reception of comedy, giving examples of the show *Black Adder* and how the show and its satire was created as a commentary on the concurrent political situation in Britain. The political part is not very relevant to *Norsemen* as the show features almost no political connection to the political climate in 2016, apart from the odd Donald Trump reference. For reference, the Norwegian media follow the US political climate closely. However, the *Norsemen* show does have cultural relevance to other shows out at the time; e.g. as previously mentioned it was created partly due to the success of fantasy as a genre, and the popularity of the show *Vikings*. Furthermore, D’Arcens (2014) investigates why the first of the four *Black Adder* series was received as less funny by audiences and discusses features which can limit what is perceived as funny in a medieval setting. Arguing that due to the main character being of nobility in the first series hinders it in its comedic anti-monarchical deliveries. The argument demonstrates how misplaced power structures can drain the perceived humour out of something even though it would be accurate for its era. The same can be said for *Norsemen* where the show on multiple times jokes about the rape and pillaging Vikings engage in.

While everyone perceives humour differently it can be generalised that the closer to real life a serious topic is depicted, the less likely people are to find it funny and will instead engage seriously with it. This explains why Helgaker said in an interview (Salty Nerd Podcast, 2022) that they tried hard to make the situations absurd. To achieve this absurdity, they tried to make the character that would normally be in the vulnerable position to be the one in charge of the situation. Such as the scene where Jarl Varg threatens to desecrate Liv if Arvid doesn’t show during Vargheims invasion of Norheim (Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2016). The scene flips the power structure by having Liv be the one to egg on the Vikings, while they

make excuses of why they can't desecrate her. Showing an example of how the show utilizes absurd humour.

There is a vast number of scientific papers on humour research, and due to the sheer vastness of research topics and intersubjectivity on humour it is challenging to find closely relevant research. Looking into relevant translation humour research that utilised a coding schema for its data gathering turned up a couple of papers. The ones I found most relevant were "Translating audiovisual humour. A case study" (Martinez-Sierra, 2006), "Investigating Verbal Humour in selected Mr. Iglesias sitcom shows episodes" (Nabila et al, 2022) and "The use of humour in the foreign language classroom: Funny and effective?" (Wagner & Urio-Aparisi, 2012). All three texts utilise coding for their data gathering and focus on humour for their observations. Wagner & Urio-Aparisi (2012) differentiates themselves among the three by being focused on the reception of humour in a foreign language and features a coding scheme that moves through multiple tiers.

2 Theory

The theory section will start off by presenting the three classical humour theories that exist and have been around for a long time. With the third of the theories being the most relevant for the humour discussion in this paper. The theories are named the (1) superiority theory, the (2) relief theory, and the (3) incongruity theory. Anton Nijholt (2020) explains the humour condition that play into these three theories:

“In the traditional humour research, usually three viewpoints are distinguished. They are complementary rather than distinct. The distinction is between a cognitive, psychological and functional point of view. Underlying these approaches is the observation that humour requires a safe and playful context. [...] Participants must share a ‘paratelic’ non-goal-oriented psychological state. The situation must be non-threatening for someone listening to a joke or an observer of a humorous event in order to experience amusement. Apart from this non-goal oriented psychological state, humour researchers distinguish between an ‘incongruity approach, a ‘relief’ approach and a ‘superiority’ approach to humour.” (Nijholt, 2020, p.408)

The playful context and non-goal oriented psychological state referred to by Nijholt fit well with an audiovisual comedy as it can be assumed to be the default state for viewers. The incongruity theory will be the main humour theory used in the thesis, but superiority theory and relief theory will feature a short rundown in the following subchapters. This is because a deeper understanding of these two theories can help inform analysis and discussion based on the incongruity theory. I will explain the superiority theory and relief theory mainly through the explanations laid out by Morreall (2012) in *Philosophy of humour*.

2.0.1 Superiority theory

The oldest of the western theories on laughter, originating with Plato and later receiving the name superiority theory, is the idea that people expressed laughter as a state of superiority over others or former versions of oneself. It argues that people dislike being laughed at, and laughter is used as a way to put someone down. Laughing at people who are in a less

fortunate position than ourselves, a way to flaunt our supposed superiority over them. Morreall (2012) explains that in line with its later name, this theory originated back in a time where humour was heavily criticised by philosophers and viewed as a negative or hostile action. The theory has been criticised as far back as the 18th century as Francis Hutcheson (Telfer, 1995) wrote a critique of the theory showing many examples of situations where people would be less likely to laugh while feeling superior to someone else; e.g. like beggars in the street or animals. While it is a theory which was created back in ancient Greece and revisited in later times it quickly garnered criticism and partially contributed to the creation of the following two humour theories, the relief theory, and the incongruity theory. Following the critiques of the superiority theory in the 18th century, these two theories of laughter started gaining traction.

2.0.2 Relief Theory

Morreall (2012) explains that the relief theory was originally introduced during a time where scientists had figured out that nerves connected the brain and sense organs, but at the time it was believed that the nerves moved “animal spirits” such as blood and air, and that laughing was a way to release the pressure built up in the nerves by the “animal spirits”. The theory was later brought up again and revised in the early 20th century, by Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud, retaining the idea that laughter is used to release pent-up nervous energy. Sigmund Freud had the most recognised version of the theory. In his example, watching a clown means using a lot of exaggerated effort for something simple like walking. This makes it so the spectator builds up the energy they would have expended by walking, releasing the pent-up energy not used in walking instead as laughter. He also argued that repressed sexual energy or desire was able to be released through telling dirty jokes. This idea of the human mind, working in the manner of a hydraulic device, has faced much scrutiny over the years. Freud’s example with the clown would mean people would use more energy thinking about climbing mount Everest than climbing a tree. The idea of jokes letting people blow off hostile and sexually repressed emotions have also been abandoned some time ago, with older studies about jokes such as Ruch & Hehl (1988) showing that

people who laugh the most at sexual jokes are usually the ones who express their sexual feelings instead of repressing them. The relief theory is, in other words, a theory of laughter that has been practically entirely abandoned in our current time. There is still something to be gained in using the relief theory as pivotal theory to explain certain avenues of comedy.

2.0.3 Incongruity Theory

The classical humour theory that still holds relevance today outside of understanding the history of humour theory is the incongruity theory. Being yet another humour theory that arose in the 18th century, the incongruity theory states that something that violates our mental patterns and expectations create opportunity for comedy. Famous philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer and Søren Kierkegaard among others were subscribers to and definers of the incongruity theory. The first appearance of the idea was initially put into writing by Aristoteles (ca. 400-300 BC/1823) back in *Rhetoric* where he explains that a speaker can generate a laugh from the audience by creating an expectation, then violate it. Immanuel Kant goes on to explain incongruity theory in more detail as he posits that in order to create a convulsive laugh, there must be something absurd. This makes it so we have our understanding strained while listening to a story, only to have it dissipate into nothingness, which then makes us laugh. As we mentally strain ourselves over something that does not matter, this creates humour. He positions joking and wit next to other enjoyments such as games of chance and music, as all put the person into a state of play with their sensations and ideas shifting. Jokes such as the man that wanted to save energy by getting a showerhead that only uses half the water, but now complains that it takes twice as long to fill the bathtub are examples of the incongruity explained by Kant. Our perception is that the man gets a new showerhead to save on water while showering, only to have our expectation violated when it turns out he takes baths and ends up using the same amount of water as before.

An example from the Norsemen show is when Arvid and Liv are talking as Arvid is about to go on a Viking Raid (Helgaker & Togersen, 2016). And she says that being a raider is the easiest job in the world as you just run around and stab people with swords. This creates two humorous incongruities, the first is the discrepancy experienced between the matter of killing and robbing people and comparing it with a normal job like working at a supermarket. The second is that explaining a job as “just running around and X” is a classic complaint used by people dismissing or making fun of sports such as soccer, “it’s just running around and kicking a ball for 90 minutes”, so it can also give us the discrepancy of mentally comparing a sport and pillaging. So, the divide between a Viking raid which commonly lasted multiple months if not years and an everyday job or a familiar sports game that is over in 1-2 hours likely gives us a feeling of amusement.

2.0.4 Anachronism in incongruity theory

The theory of incongruity is applicable to many areas of humour, multiple of which are relevant to this text. Given that the term anachronism is defined as “A chronological misplacing of persons, events, objects or customs in regard to each other” by Merriam Webster dictionary, we can start to imagine how incongruity and anachronism can work together to create comedy. Anachronisms are common in fictional work as it is an easy mistake to transplant something into the story which has yet to be invented. An early example of this is Shakespeare referencing a mechanical clock in the play “Julius Cesar” (1599) whose narrative took place about 1000 years too early for that technology. These are common mistakes to make in literary and audio-visual works, but they have also seen a great deal of use as an intentional tool. As early as the Flintstones (Hanna & Barbera, 1960-1966) we see a plethora of anachronisms used to create a humorous atmosphere such as feet-propelled cars, or dinosaurs taking the place of modern-day appliances and machinery. Experiencing these chronological displacements end up tickling our funny bone as the incongruous experience of seeing a caveman use a brontosaurus in the same manner as an excavator and both the man and the dinosaur treating it as though it was completely normal violates our expectation. Intentional anachronisms do not have to be comedic in their

nature, or even perceived as such even when intended to create a laugh. But when the safe setting of experiencing a fictional work is combined with the perplexing nature of anachronisms, the viewer can more easily engage with it playfully.

The requirement of a safe setting is not necessary for incongruity, but for the humorous aspect. Given that we could very well experience something incongruous that is scary or stressful, incongruity alone is not enough to elicit comedy.

2.1 The genres & elements of comedy and where Norsemen fits in among these

To repeat, the Norsemen show is a comedy. However, the field of television comedy is expansive to say the least. In fact, it ranges from variety shows, sketches, improvisation, situational comedy (i.e., sitcom), drama comedy, stand up specials etc. The Norsemen show, even though previously stating that it has few similarities with the traditional sitcom, can be argued to be a situational comedy. This is possible even though the Norsemen show contrasts strongly to more classic sitcoms such as Friends (Crane et al., 1994-2004), Full House (Franklin et al., 1987-1995) and The Big Bang Theory (Lorre et al., 2007-2019). With the help of Lawrence E. Mintz definition of a classic sitcom:

“A half-hour series focused on episodes involving recurrent characters within the same premise. That is, each week we encounter the same people in essentially the same setting. The episodes are finite; what happens in a given episode is generally closed off, explained, reconciled, solved at the end of the half hour [...] The most important nature of a sitcom is the cyclical nature of the normalcy of the premise undergoing stress or threat of change and becoming restored.” (Mintz, 1985, p. 115)

Assuming the knowledge of these other supposedly sitcom shows, we notice immediately that not only a show like Norsemen has clear outliers from this description of a sitcom. For instance, a show like Friends (Crane et al., 1994-2004) with its Ross and Rachel, and later

Monica and Chandler story lines didn't adhere to the cyclical nature of the traditional sitcom. Even sitcoms aimed at younger audiences such as Good Luck Charlie (Baker et al., 2010-2014) cannot be said to consistently follow a cyclical nature. Of course, in these two cases they for the most part adhere to the closed off episodes which introduces its problem and resolution within the same 30 minutes.

2.1.1 Laugh tracks and incongruity

Friends and Good Luck Charlie are also among the shows that feature laugh tracks. As sitcoms used to be filmed in front of live-studio audiences, the crew would record the laughter of the audience and include it in the television airing of said sitcom. This practice of adding laughter as a separate soundtrack in a sitcom is known as canned laughter. As sitcoms moved away from live audiences, most still retained the laugh track, using canned laughter to inform the viewers of when they should laugh. In later years the laugh track has mostly been used in ironic situations when another show or different medium parodies a stereotypical sitcom, as many argue that the laugh track will give the impression that something funny was said or done when it might not have elicited a laugh by its own merits. While I am not intending to argue that a laugh track adds or detracts from the comedy of a show, it can still be argued with regards to the incongruity theory of humour, a laugh track is a speed bump. With the addition of a signal that informs the viewer when something funny is happening the puzzling nature of the discrepancies are often quickly solved for the viewer by the show. A clear signal of when humour is intended would likely do more harm than good for a series such as the Norsemen show. The more absurdist humour and slowly building jokes present would fall completely flat if the viewer is given no time to create expectations and experience incongruity.

2.1.2 Sitcoms are becoming more fluid as a genre

There are plenty of other examples of recognised sitcoms that steer clear away from this traditional formula by Mintz (1985), such as *The Office* (Silverman et al., 2005-2013) and *Arrested Development* (Grazer et al., 2003-2019). *The Office* does hold to the sitcom staple of focusing on the workplace or homelife but features developing storylines and a different approach to filming by making it a mockumentary. *Arrested Development* also features a mockumentary style of filming, not to the degree of *The Office* where they have a tangible filming crew in universe that is recording the workers. Due to the long-established history of sitcoms, the mind of the average viewer likely wanders to the classic style of sitcoms. Yet when watching shows such as *The Office* and *Arrested Development*, the viewer can also recognise them as sitcoms in their own right, even though they feel very different.

“Exploring the ways in which sitcom comes into being might be usefully achieved less through demonstrating that sitcom is a coherent category and more about distinguishing it from other genres. Making sense of the sitcom as a genre is as much about not placing it in some categories as it is about acknowledging the links the genre makes to those characteristics associated with it. This means the sitcom can be understood, for example, as not factual, not news and not documentary.”

(Mills, 2009: 26)

As Brett Mills (2009) explains it, the sitcom as a genre is so vast that it is impossible to nail down. Many sitcoms will vary substantially from each other as they can be linked to different characteristics, settings, themes, or other genres. Comedy is a constant through all sitcoms, hence the name situational comedy, and it also requires certain distinctions to not count as a different type of comedy show. *Norsemen* is a show that could be argued in both for being and not for being a sitcom. In *Norsemen*, the viewer follows a group of fixed set of characters, that remain the same throughout the show. In other words, due to the *Norsemen* shows use of a singular setting and recurring characters it is not a sketch show. The fixed set of characters get into comedic situations which are meant to occur in their daily life in the Viking age. At the same time the show has a serial structure where there is a plot moving forward throughout each episode, and where multiple episodes leave on

something of a cliffhanger that gets followed up in the next episode. Sometimes there are even plot threads that build through multiple episodes which would leave viewers lost if they were to start watching the show in the middle. This betrays the generally self-contained nature of sitcom episodes, where they commonly introduce and resolve the conflict within the same episode.

The form of television has changed with the years. The classical sitcom format became a dominant comedy source, partially because it fit better with commercial breaks compared to variety shows. Tv was also shaped by its weekly airings, made in the assumption that most viewers would not catch every episode as it aired, so that they might lack information on what was going on in the show. Even if they were to watch every episode, it could be easy to miss information and be unable to rewatch it. However today (anno. 2023) we live in the streaming age where we are easily able to watch shows in order and pause and replay any moments we want. The creative process of shows can to a far greater extent assume that the viewer will watch from episode to episode in a chronological order. This way more complex and developing plotlines can be written into sitcoms without fear of confusing the viewer.

2.1.3 Norsemen are also an absurdist and satirical comedy

Sitcom is not the only suitable genre for describing the Norsemen show, another description which fits the bill is absurdist comedy. The show can be, and has in my experience, be described as the Office meets Monty Python given its nature of being an unorthodox sitcom with a lot of absurd and satirical humour. When recommending a show for friends to watch it is not uncommon to try and explain it by using other well-known series as examples. Similarities can no doubt be drawn between The Office and Norsemen outside of the surface level observation of both being sitcoms. Examples include Orm being an inept chieftain who often makes rash or bad decisions that affect the village of Norheim negatively, in the same manner as Michael Scott making poor decisions as a leader that

have negative effects on the office staff of Dunder Mifflin. The comparison can be brought even further in how both characters are willing to argue in situations where they are clearly in the wrong, and they will keep arguing until the other party gives up and they themselves ultimately win.

The presence of awkward humour in both shows is a possible avenue for further discussing the genre of the Norsemen show and will likely show up again later in this thesis. For now, however, the focus is on the comparison the Norsemen with of Monty Python.

2.1.4 Norsemen and Monty Python: Modern day bureaucracy and juxtaposition

The sketch style comedy of Monty Python can be classified under multiple sub-genres such as absurd comedy, dark humour, satire, surrealism, iconoclasm etc. Monty Python and the Holy Grail (Gilliam & Jones, 1975) and Monty Python's Life of Brian (Jones, 1979) are complete narratives from start to finish compared to their usual collection of disconnected sketches. This narrative style makes these two films better suited for comparison with an episodic sitcom with a continuous narrative in contrast to their more separated sketch shows. Multiple themes present in Norsemen are also present in both films. The largest commonality might be the use of contemporary logic in ancient times. It can be described as placing modern day people into older time having them interact with language and logic, we would find common in today's society. Another large unifying theme is absurdist comedy with many instances of logical leaps which provide incongruity for the viewer.

Anachronisms are likely present in most periodical comedies as a good source of incongruity and relatability for the viewer by seeing modern ideas applied to something one regards as ancient. The People's Front of Judea in Life of Brian (Jones, 1979) is shown constantly holding meetings and debating which actions should be taken to rid Jerusalem of the Romans, but their discussion usually leads into further discussion, leaving them in a constant state of non-action. This calls to mind work unions, town hall meetings and

bureaucracy, where one can often have the feeling that there is endless discussion with nothing being done. It also plays into the adage that action speaks louder than words by having the characters talk about action instead of acting 9 out of 10 times. A scene in *Norsemen* employs a similar anachronism by portraying a gathering of Varg's warriors as a work seminar trying to set positive goals for their organisation, because they no longer feel like the good guys (Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2017). In this case the anachronism is of the warriors treating the meeting exactly as one would experience a modern-day work seminar where ideas are passed around and positive affirmation is encouraged. The scene ends with the warriors happy about the resolutions they've reached before the warrior that called the meeting is suddenly executed by Varg scaring the others into reneging on the changes they wanted to make. Not only does it mirror a work seminar, but also the feeling of pointlessness lower-level workers can feel when their suggestions are ignored, and the workplace goes back to the status quo shortly after the seminar. It creates both a relatable humour and incongruity for the viewer through the relatable situation and placing it in a different time period. Also, having the scene immediately switch from a situation where everyone is happy to fearing for their lives plays into the incongruity and absurdity of the humour by forcing our brain to quickly shift gears.

Other clear similarities between the absurd humour of Monty Python and *Norsemen* can be found in the juxtaposition of casual attitudes in serious situations. Many scenes such as the cross-bearing scene in *Life of Brian* (Jones, 1979, [1:13:30]) where they are walking to get crucified, they first must sign in with a roman guard that checks their name on a list and then points them towards where they go in the procession line. One of the prisoners even jokes with the guard for a bit before grabbing his cross and joining the line. Brian can be said to be the only character that reacts appropriately to the situation of them getting crucified, but even though his reactions are what one would expect in such a situation, they are still rather subdued. The same can be said for *Norsemen* in select scenes. An example is the scene where the Vikings sit down to eat at a picnic table after finishing their raid and talk about how easy raiding is and that it is nice to be able to soak in the sun. The corpses of the English charity workers that were previously sitting at the table in the meantime litter the

immediate surrounding area. As is now clear, both *Life of Brian* and *Norsemen* contain instances of anachronistic and absurdist humour.

2.1.5 The difference between absurdist and nonsense humour, and examples of the former in the *Norsemen* show

Incongruous and absurdist humour often seem to be connected as they have much overlap. Olivier Couder (2019) investigates the relation between the incongruous and absurd. Couder explains that humour and the absurd both share a close connection as they both are often defined in terms of incongruity. Couder also challenges the classical notion that absurdist humour requires having no resolution, and quotes Oring (Oring 2003): “What differentiates absurdist humour from other forms is the disparity between ‘the joke world’ and ‘the world as we know it’ which cannot be resolved.” (Oring, 2003, p.25). Couder however posits that the incongruity is resolved the moment it is interpreted as absurdist humour and can only be understood in the context of the entire text. Claiming that humour research has the tendency to focus on short jokes compared to longer and more complex narrative texts, he explains that much absurdist humour cannot be understood in isolation in the same way a constructed joke with a punchline would be due to needing the context of the entire text. He uses an example from the *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (Adams, 1979) where the people of a planet decide to use leaves as legal tender and decides to burn down the forests to avoid inflation. Couder (2019, p.14) argues that the humour does not come from the discrepancy between the joke world and the real world, a reader doesn’t view it as funny because they are unable to resolve the discrepancy between their knowledge of an economic system and the incongruity of using leaves as money.

“At a purely grammatical or semantic level there is nothing odd about this passage. We know what leaves are and are familiar with the basic economic principles described here. What does stand out, however, is that the former have been integrated into the schematic structure of the latter. The incongruity here, then, is one of a conceptual nature. Readers possess a schema of how the (Western) economic system functions. Money, recognised as legal tender, can be exchanged for

goods and services. Highly simplified, inflation occurs when money decreases in value, when it gets you less bang for your buck, so to speak. This can be caused by a disturbed relationship between the market mechanisms of supply and demand (for example, when supply is unable to meet demand, or when production costs rise significantly) or through the creation of a surplus of money. A legitimate strategy to counter inflation, assuming that consumption and population remained 'steady state', would be to halt the production of new money or reduce the amount of money in circulation." (Couder, 2019)

The term schema is derived from schema-theory and is used to explain how a reader processes and understands narrative texts. The brain will have schemas for how the world works in order to simplify matters, such as we have a schema of our understanding of an economic system. It is through the interaction between the fictional schema and our existing schema that absurdist humour is created. Using our pre-existing knowledge to fill in the gaps and challenge how we would consider something to normally go. In Couder's example money doesn't have any intrinsically higher value than leaves do as legal tender, but due to our pre-existing knowledge, it stands to reason there would be an inflation issue due to money now literally growing on trees. It matches our understanding of inflation that they would desire some way to control the extreme abundance of leaves, but we are able to recognise the short-sightedness and idiocy in burning down forests to increase the value of leaves. We are also able to understand that the leaves they currently have will wither and they'll be left with no way to replenish the lost leaves. The example then shows us a series of decisions which we are logically able to follow but that conflict with the logic and solutions we'd expect from such situations. We are in other words able to reconcile the reasoning behind the actions, just that the reasoning does not match what we would expect. This is what separates absurdist humour from nonsense humour according to Couder.

An example of absurdist humour present in *Norsemen* can be found in the episode "Vengeance" (Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2017) where they are preparing the funeral of the law

speaker (the village judge). Arvid which is the recently appointed chieftain of Norheim says that they should give until it hurts given that a person of the law speakers status is to be buried with treasures to take with him to Valhalla. Someone in the crowd suggests that they should bury him with their longship given that it would be the biggest sacrifice for the village and would as such hurt the most. Given that their village is dependent on pillaging, giving up their only longship would cripple the village. The villagers give pause and Arvid becomes nervous when he considers the reality of the village having to bury their only ship. They turn to the newly appointed law speaker Rufus for his ruling on the matter. After a moment of hesitation, he explains that the burying of longships is reserved for the burial of extra important people such as chieftains. Arvid and the villagers breathe a sigh of relief now that they no longer need to consider the possibility of the village's economy being crippled through the loss of their ship. We as the viewer likely already have a pre-existing understanding of the term "give until it hurts" where we understand the saying translates into "donate to the extent where you personally notice your loss of value". Our real-world idea of this saying is then brought into conflict with the fictional world of Norsemen where they understand it as "give the thing that will make it hurt the most". And instead of discarding the suggestion on the basis that everyone in the village would suffer greatly as a result. They treat it as a very real possibility and only evades this fate due to Rufus making up a law on the spot where ships are only to be buried with extra important people. The humour in the absurd situation does not come from our inability to understand why they would cripple their village by burying the ship. It does in other words not stem from a lack of resolution, but from the extreme consideration they would take in a burial ritual. Even though they did not want to do it, they would have buried the ship with the law speaker if the law deemed it such, thus dooming the rest of their living populace.

3 Method

When looking at research in television formats, there are few that can compare with Albert Moran and his extensive research within the field of global adaptation. Moran (2009, p. 79) explains that from the 1980s the US, UK and Australia have been significant sources of fictional formats such as sitcoms. And notes that in newer times more western European countries have joined in creating many formats. Because of this the language of formatting trading and global tv is usually English. It matches with the Norsemen show that the versioning they chose to make in order to sell the Norsemen show internationally was an English version. Moran (2009) also notes that formats are usually written in English even though the business negotiations, broadcast and adaptation speak the native language. Moran further clarifies that even though the formats are written on English, the number of countries creating new formats are on the rise. But the format trading Moran mainly speaks of consists of the most prevalent method of a national tv station licensing the rights to create a local version of a tv show. The Norsemen show stands in a considerably rarer position as a format given that the show was created with two versions from the start. One national and one international. Moran (2009) states that many tv shows are created with a global market in mind, making it so that adaptation into a different language and culture will be easier for the sake of selling the license. In Norsemen's case however no adaptation would be necessary as the version intended for a global market was already finished. Helgaker (Salty Nerd Podcast, 2022) stated in an interview that they were often met with confusion when trying to explain that the show was already filmed in English and would not need to be locally produced. A format in such a unique position would undoubtedly have been of interest to an expert such as Moran to study. Due to the show being in the uncommon position of being a versioning without a single source text, it becomes interesting to look at how the humour was written and performed to target both a local and global audience.

Given the interesting and presumably novel nature of looking at the schism between a versioning of a show that had both versions filmed at the same time, a mixed method approach seemed like the best way to study such a case. The goal of using mixed methods is to use the strengths of both and at the same time covering each other's shortcomings, to

maximise the likelihood of finding new angles of humour and changes to consider. Considering the rare position, the format of the show is placed in, using a research methods that first perform a broad overview followed with a more in-depth view to properly get an understanding of the whole text of the Norsemen show. I will do a quantitative analysis (coding scheme) of the types of humour present in the show and a qualitative analysis (textual analysis) that looks closer at specific scenes. In the two following subsections (3.1 and 3.2) I will explain choice of methods and how they will be employed in this thesis.

3.1 Quantitative method

The aim of the research is to look at the stylings of humour and how they have been employed to create a sitcom comedy in which the humour is easily translated between language and culture. By using quantitative methods, it will be possible to map which type of comedy is most prevalent and the number of jokes that experience a schism between versions.

3.1.1 Choice of quantitative method

A survey could have been another possible method to get an overview of how the perceived comedy in both versions is received. Surveys would also give opportunity to determine if one of the two language versions is funnier to a Norwegian audience. However, the goal of the research is to look at specific characteristics and themes of humour present in the show which such respondents likely would not be able to answer in a survey. Due this and other difficulties in completing a satisfying survey style research within the timeframe it was withdrawn from consideration.

Content analysis on the other hand requires no input from other recruited viewers and less cooperation with other people. Albeit content analysis is also not without flaw. Ideally, an additional coder is necessary for increasing the validity of a content analysis. Still, it is

possible to do a content analysis alone, and this method is as such a better fit for a master's thesis. Also, content analysis seemed like the better idea of the two, because I am also planning to use textual analysis as a qualitative method to look closer at the scenes. This means that the findings from the content analysis will be able to aid and lay groundwork for more in-depth qualitative discussion.

3.1.2 How to do a content analysis, according to Neuendorf

Following the teachings of Neuendorf (2017) on how to create and perform a content analysis there are many aspects that must be defined due to the many possible uses of content analysis. What must be defined include message units and sampling, defining the population and defining variables. Following the content analysis flowchart shown by Neuendorf (2017, p.40), I will go through multiple of the steps present in this flowchart to explain the design of the research.

The content to be studied is the intended humour in the show *Norsemen*. I want to study the type of humour present in *Norsemen* and which of the jokes deviate significantly between versions. This is of extra interest to research due to both versions of the show being filmed and written at the same time. Meaning the conscious knowledge that the *Norsemen* show would exist in two languages influenced the writing. Because of this, seeing which types of humour is most prevalent and potentially spotting changed jokes and which group of humour they belong to has been chosen as the best course. To help with this, I will also use examples present in other humour research. Martinez-Sierra's (2006) content analysis of Simpsons episodes between the source text of English to the target text of Spanish will help shape the design of the content analysis.

The variables that will be looked at in the study are categories of humour and whether they have been changed or are different between the English and Norwegian version. Both humour categories and change grouping will be conceptually defined based on screenings of

the show in later sections of this thesis. The categories then somewhat go against Neuendorf's (2017, p.18) requirements for a properly objective analysis, since Neuendorf claims that the variables should be chosen before observing the message to keep with proper scientific endeavours. At the same time, Neuendorf also admits in the same paragraph that the a priori design has a self-limiting nature.

The variables I use in the code book will be inferentially designed after having engaged with the audio-visual text, because this in part enables the creation of categories that are specifically relevant to this research. The other part is because I've already engaged with the target text multiple times before designing the code book and coding form. Lastly, this inferential approach also has the advantage of being easier to supplement and corroborate the textual analysis I previously mentioned that I will also do as part of the research.

3.1.3 Categories of humour for coding.

It must be clarified that multiple humour categories may have some overlap with each other due to humour not being mutually exclusive in characteristics. For example, absurd humour or incongruity, which are both featured as categories, are general enough categories to be applicable for many situations or texts. Absurd humour can often include other categories such as sarcasm, slapstick, hyperbole, etc. Still, it is also distinct enough on its own that there are plenty of situations where absurd humour is the most accurate descriptor for the joke. Since I have based most of the theory in this thesis in incongruity theory (see section 2.0.3), most of the jokes experienced will have ties to the many different forms of incongruity. The category of incongruity will in the coding only be applied in cases matching the definition provided in this subsection shortly, and not in its subtler forms, as that could easily cover nearly all answers. Following this paragraph are descriptions for all the different types of humour that make up the categories. Each description is also accompanied by an example taken from the same episode that was used from the previous test-run of coding. Specifically, all examples are taken from jokes observed in episode 3 of season 1 (Helgaker &

Togersen, 2016). The timestamps are for the English version hosted on Norwegian Netflix at the time of writing this thesis.

Absurd humour:

Instances where the situation goes out of hand. Where something conflicts with our logic and/or common sense and it creates bizarre situations.

Example: [2:23] Olav lying in his sick bed tells Arvid to feel his heart. Arvid puts his hand on Olav's chest before Olav tells him to really feel it. Arvid then puts his hand inside Olav's chest cavity to directly feel his heart where he replies that the heart feels strong.

Normally when someone asks us to "feel their heart" our mental schemata have the idea of placing our hand on their chest to feel the heartbeat. In this case Olav means it literally by having Arvid directly touch his heart inside his body. This both violates our expectations and brings an absurd logic to a common saying.

Dark humour:

Joking about or making light of more taboo topics such as death, sickness, rape, and politics.

Example: [3:30] When the shaman tells Hildur that Olav will live she replies with "That's great news. I was really worried. I mean, he's lying down in the house with his guts just hanging out for everyone to see".

Hildur talking so relaxed about her husband situation, which is obviously very serious given his entrails is hanging out, takes a very cavalier attitude towards something serious.

Physical comedy:

Includes slapstick and other comedic actions done through body language. It is humour derived from bodily movement.

Example: [13:50] Orm is to fire a flaming arrow at Olav's funeral raft. Where he tightens the bow and releases only to miss even though it's only a few meters between them. He continues missing while stopping Arvid from grabbing the bow until the raft is out of reach.

Orms continual misses in what is supposed to be an important ceremony doubled up with him denying anyone else to fire an arrow until it's too late is the form of the physical comedy in this joke.

Observational humour:

Humour where a character comments on a situation or make relatable observations. Such as starting a discussion or sharing an opinion on an everyday subject. Anecdotes are also included in this category.

Example: [4:30] When the shaman tells Hildur to drink from the prophecy pot (filled with spit) she argues that she'd be guaranteed to get sick from drinking and if he's not the one personally responsible for making the prophecies come true it won't matter if she drinks.

It becomes funny due to Hildur trying to use logic to argue her way out of completing a magic ritual. And also because she is unwilling to complete a prophetic ritual due to the assumption that many others have drunken from the pot.

Wit:

Clever comments, quips, remarks, and one-liners. References in the manner of quotes is also included in this category

Example: [28:26] This happens right after Orms rant on Hildurs lack of comedic understanding from the 'Satire' example earlier. After Orm has finished, Hildur comments "I think it's quite fine you don't find it funny. But obviously... *gestures to the audience that was laughing at the comments she made* humour is a very subjective thing.

Hildurs line becomes funny due to her pointing out that everyone in the crowd found her runestick funny and that Orm is obviously wrong in his claim that she failed at creating comedy.

Other humour:

Used for humour that doesn't fit under the other categories.

3.2 Qualitative method

As described by Brennen (2013) a strength and weakness of content analysis is its ability to break down a population into parts and make them countable, detecting significance depending on the number of times certain words or other values appear. It can make large texts manageable in addition to creating research that is possible to replicate by other scientists for reliability. On the other hand, due to the design of recording down observable and pre-determined categories the content analysis ends up describing the surface level of a text. Brenner paraphrases German sociologist and critical theorist Siegfried Kracauer

"Content analysis considered repetition an important measure of value, insisting that the more times a word, concept or idea was coded in a document, the greater

significance there was to the evidence. In contrast for Kracauer, repetition was less important than a consideration of texts in their entirety as a complete entity. He explained that analysis was an act of interpretation that considered both the surface meanings and the underlying intentions of a text. Kracauer maintained that the goal of textual analysis (which he initially called qualitative content analysis) was to bring out the entire range of potential meanings in texts.” (Brennen 2013, p.194)

Although it can be argued that content analysis is not limited to being only surface level due to the many ways it can be designed and set up, there is no doubt it is unable to look as deeply into specific parts as textual analysis. Even when looking at the exact same text, the findings would likely be quite different between the two methods.

Textual analysis was originally conceived in response to content analysis, as we see in the quote from the previous paragraph, it was initially referred to as qualitative content analysis. This was in order to create a method that is able to more holistically look at texts due to the flexibility it presents. The idea of the method is to immerse oneself into the entire text, so that the researcher themselves can identify categories and select which examples to thoroughly analyse. By using a fundamentally different method from quantitative content analysis, the textual analysis should be able to pick up on things not detected by the coding schemata.

3.2.1 Methods of textual analysis

Due to the wide nature of textual analysis given its ability to look at specific or broad parts in a text, going as in-depth or surface level as the researcher chooses, it has many possible methods. Because of this it is important to clearly explain the how the method will be utilized. Berger (2016) describes 5 different methods within textual analysis: semiotic analysis, rhetorical analysis, ideological criticism, psychoanalytical criticism, and discourse analysis. The different methods use bits and pieces from each other’s methodology, so the

different methods are not completely separated from each other. These methods in addition to other possible methods present in textual analysis presents different possibilities for how we interpret the text we engage with. Such as an ideological criticism reading of the Norsemen show would end up focusing on how the show shapes the thoughts of the viewers and which ideological belief it ingrains into its viewers. A psychoanalytical reading could be done in the framework of Froyd and focus on how the actions of the characters represents the ID, the ego, and the super ego. Brennen (2013) also mentions Genre analysis as a possibility of textual analysis, which is a situation where we interpret a text in relation to other similar types of text. As with any given genre it gives us certain expectations, such as the protagonist team in a sports film having a rival team to play in the finals, or for a group of people to split up in a horror film. We as viewers enjoy the predictability of a genre while also enjoying the differences that defy our expectations. This can work in great advantage to a sitcom in the comedy genre as much comedy is already born from incongruity. As the violation of expectations can lead to experienced humour, a comedy is able to not only play with expectations to illicit laughter, but also play with the expectation that it will break expectations. If we pick up on the pattern of a particular comedic text, we come to expect certain punchlines to be used in certain situations. This means that skilled comedy comes not only from incongruity, but also from remaining unpredictable so the incongruity effect can continue to cause experienced comedy for the viewer. Genre analysis is in other words a good framework tool for looking at comedies and discussing why certain humour stylings work. It will not be utilised as the framework for this analysis, but it is important to note how elements from genre analysis as described by Brennen (2013) are useful in a textual analysis of an audio-visual text like the Norsemen show. The same can also be said for the different methods shown for textual analysis by Berger (2016) as the different methodologies all provide valuable angles with which to view the text.

3.2.2 Understanding the text as a whole

This thesis will not utilize a pre-existing framework for the textual analysis as the content analysis that will be performed prior to the textual analysis is intended to create said

framework and guide what is to be looked at. But as explained in the previous paragraph, elements of genre analysis will be used when discussing scenes as I believe it to be a good fit for textual analysis of humour.

To catch onto the nuances in the comedic themes and study the harmonisations and dissonances between the two language versions of the Norsemen show is the goal of the textual analysis. Using the results of the quantitative analysis to create an angle to what types of humour require closer scrutiny. Given the identifiers of the Norsemen show as an absurdist sitcom we can look to Couderc (2019) claim that to understand absurdist humour it is important to look at the whole text. This is because there often aren't clear cut punchlines in the same manner a short form joke might have. It would then be fair to presume that a closer look at the text will give better grounds to discuss the differences between the two versions. It will also give better grounds to understand how the different humour categories are utilized.

For the purpose of describing scenes, I will actively choose to describe the English version because it is usually the one with extra parts added. After describing the English scenes, I will then compare and discuss differences apparent in scenes between the English and Norwegian version. Looking at the parts outside of verbal performance in the scenes, such as body language and camera angles will only be mentioned if it is observed to have a different impact. It is after all natural that the actors would vary the performance slightly for the sake of variety. It should be mentioned early in the thesis that certain parts of the sound design are only apparent in the Norwegian version, such as grunts and rattles when the Vikings armour up. It is unknown why this is, but it would be fair to venture the guess of budgetary reasons where they only had the chance to ADR certain grunts and noises into the episodes.

Scenes of interest will be chosen and given a synopsis after which it will be discussed and at the end concluded. This will be done for a multitude of scenes to give examples and a broad

view of the comedy present in the Norsemen show. It also gives ample opportunity to point out the more minute differences between the versions. Through doing this I hope to highlight the subtler humour present in Norsemen and use the findings to discuss and conclude which humour stylings the creators chose to create a show that was well received both nationally and internationally. And to discover how often there is a clear dissonance between the humour of the two versions.

4 Content analysis

4.1 Coding

Due to the show consisting of eighteen 30+ minute episodes the population size is small enough that it is manageable to do a census by coding all episodes. Due to the Norwegian episodes being limited to 30-minutes many of the English episodes contain extra scenes or dialogue parts in scenes. The additional scenes have not been included in the coding as the goal is to map which humour types are most present and the cognitive shift between the Norwegian and English version. The episodes have been coded one at a time, first viewing the English to then watch the Norwegian episode while coding. Every minute the show was paused to note down the observations. This is both to leave room for review and make comparison easier between multiple coders. If scenes or parts needed to be replayed, a time mark was to be noted down to not risk recording any data twice. Only the humour that was observed as intended humour was coded. This is to create more consistency as the humour cognitively recognised as an attempted joke is more reliable between coding sessions, as the effect of experienced humour can vary depending on mood. In addition, it makes it simpler to look back at why something was recorded under the selected categories. Whenever something that is intended to be funny is detected, all applicable categories were recorded for the specific instance. This is because many forms of humour will cover multiple groups, such as exaggeration and slapstick can easily appear in the same joke. Many jokes also do not have a single concrete punchline as there could be multiple comedic throughlines in a joke that pays off at different points. It is also done to reduce coder bias as only choosing the humour category perceived as most relevant in a joke attempt can vary greatly between coders. Normally the coding would include co-coders for increased validity. Due to having to change the design of the coding multiple times and the time it takes to code the full population size of the show, I am the sole coder in this case. Ideally the research would have had 3 coders or more due to the large amount of bias that play into both experienced and perceived comedy. And I believe the design of the coding is clear enough that it can be reproduced by other at a later point, which is the very most important part for creating research validity. In short, the coding I'm performing will lack inter coder reliability.

After the humour categories for the joke in question have been noted they will then be placed in one of two different categories. The coding paper will have two groups, group 1 (no change) and group 2 (change). If the humour category can be observed in both language versions and has received no significant alteration between versions, it goes into group 1. If the comedy category can be observed in only one of the versions, or it has been altered in a significant manner, it goes into group 2.

- Significant changes include adding or removing dialogue parts.
- Changing words in a degree where it can no longer be recognised as a translation of the other version.
- Retaining words in their original language since the joke wouldn't work after a translation. This does not apply to the old Nordic words used in the show.
- Acting that is different between versions, only when there is clear that the changes were intended to give a different cognitive reaction.
- Different camera edits that clearly creates a different reception for the viewer.

4.2 Results

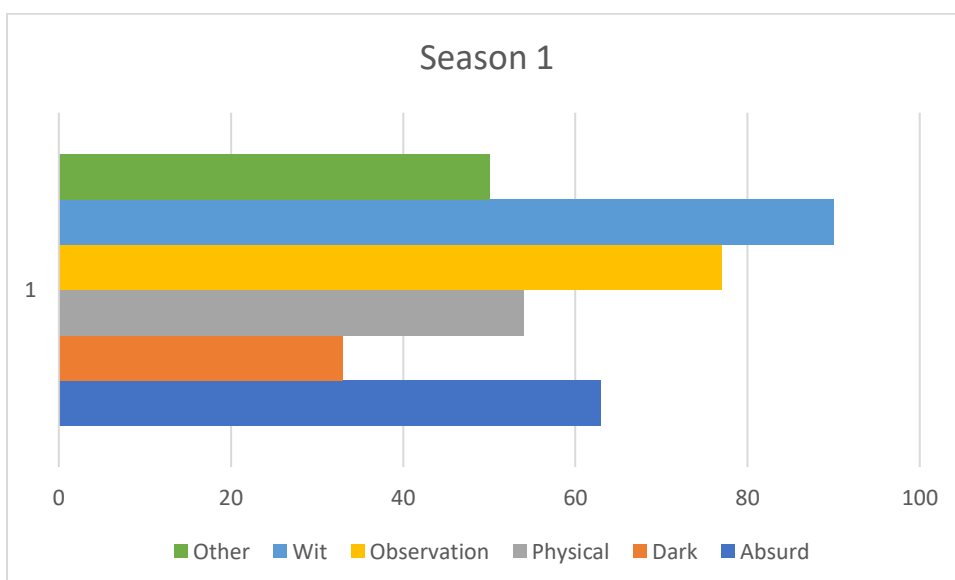


Figure 1.

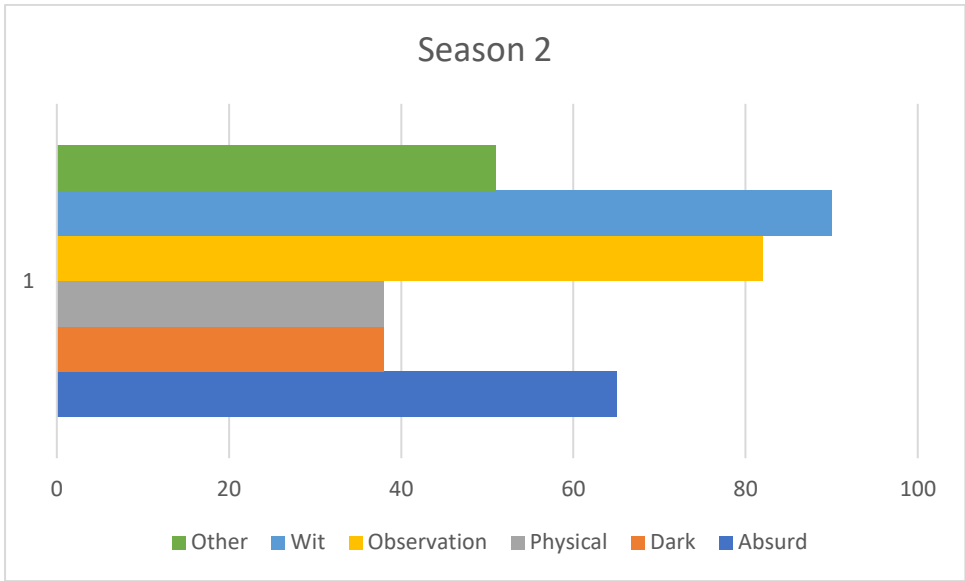


Figure 2.

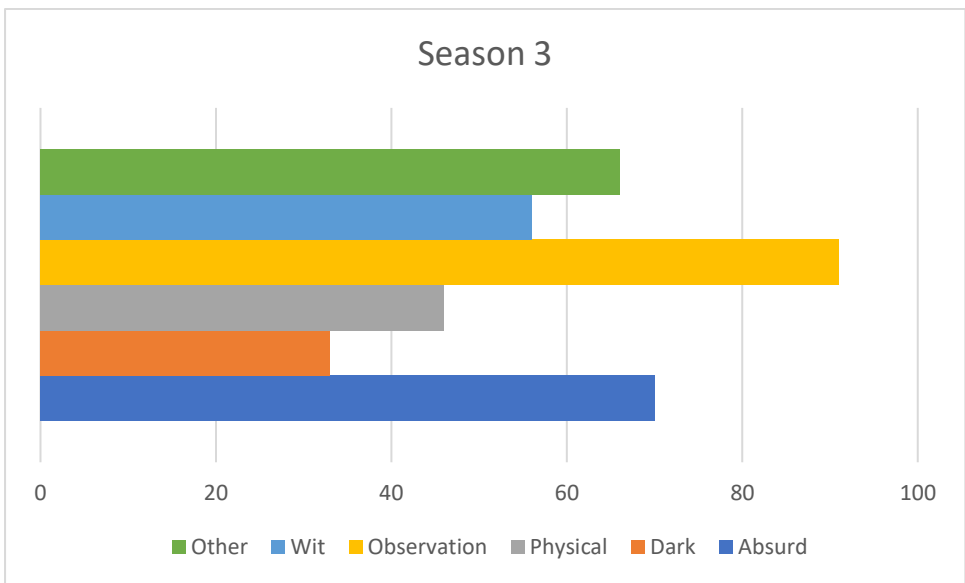


Figure 3.

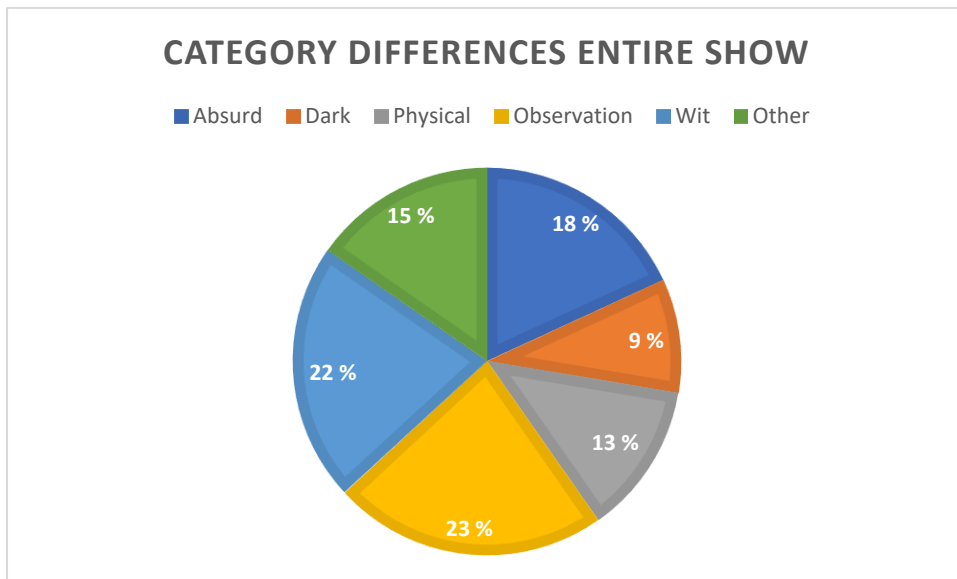


Figure 4.

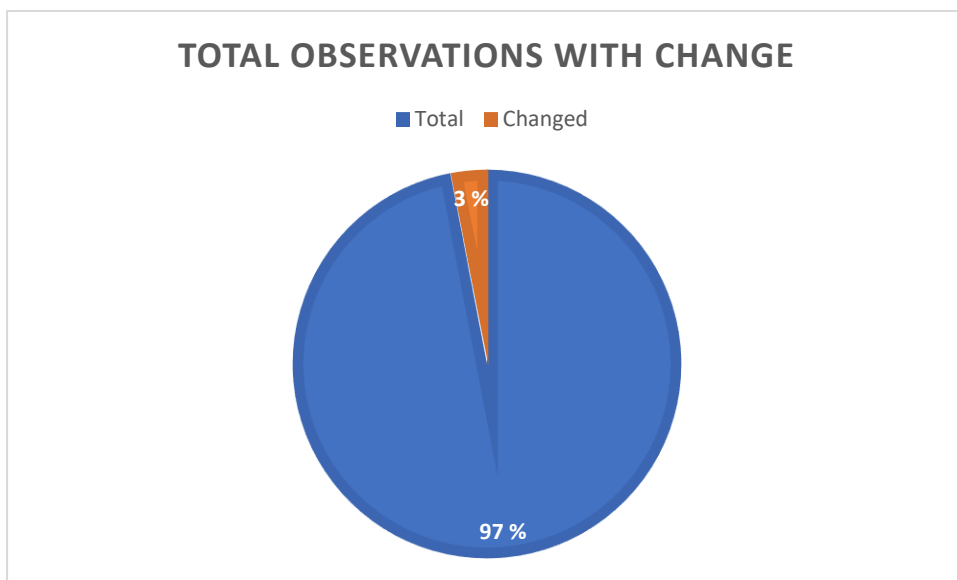


Figure 5.

4.3 Discussion of quantitative results

Given that the coding was inferential due to having seen the show multiple times before finishing the coding script and coding the episode I naturally held a pre-existing assumption on which category would have most recordings. I assumed that wit would be the humour category with the most observations considering the types of jokes that fall into the wit

category are rapid-fire type of jokes. A joke that goes into wit could often be a funny one-liner which effectively takes 2-3 seconds of the shows time while many of the absurd, dark etc. jokes often could run well above a minute in its setup and payoffs. Because of this it seemed likely that wit would be the most prevalent category of humour given that the coding makes a single note of different jokes regardless of their length. Before going over each season and then looking at the entire show and make comparisons it can be mentioned that I was wrong in the initial assumption and wit was in fact not the most observed category (figure 4) during the coding.

In the results of season 1 (figure 1) we can see that 367 notes were taken where intended humour was perceived. It may feel like a small number for around 3 hours of comedy but due to the jokes often lasting for minutes there often aren't too many perceivable punchlines. That is not to say that the show isn't humourous most of the time, as it stands many of the jokes and non-jokes can still be perceived as humourous but not as intended comedy in the manner of a punchline. The number of total observations remain very similar in total number between all 3 seasons, with season 2 having 364 (figure 2) and season 3 having 362 instances recorded (figure 3). Based on my observations during coding and watching the Norsemen show I would argue that humour is even more present in season 3 compared with the other two even though the number turned up smaller. The reasons of which I will get into soon during the discussion of the categories.

4.3.1 Wit and the most prevalent category

Wit ended up as the most prominent category at almost 25% of the observed instances (figure 4), this is not surprising given that the antagonists/villains are often the largest suppliers of comedy in the Norsemen show. This is because jokes consisting of wit and one-liners often originate from the villains. Given that Jarl Varg is not prominent until the end of season 1 a lot of the humour present is done through Orm. While Orm has a wide variety of comedy and he is represented in every single coding category from the coding schema, wit

is the humour category he represents the most given his use of catchphrases, references, and funny one-liners. He is also a core component of many of the “other” appearances due to his use in awkward humour which makes jokes on his expense of how everyone wants to avoid him as he tries to weasel his way into social situations. We can also see “observation” being a prominent category at 21% in total (figure 4), observational humour is a large presence throughout Norsemen. In season 2 Wit is still the largest represented category (figure 2) even with a bigger focus on different characters for the comedy, this appears to be in part due to the show using a lot of funny worded sentences and due to Jarl Varg also prominently using humour that fit into the category of wit. It is observed to a degree that wit is once again the most observed category (figure 2), with “observation” being a close second again. However, when we get to season 3 the trend changes quite a bit. “Wit” goes from being approximately 25% of observations (figure 1 & 2) in both seasons to 15% in season 3 (figure 3). This difference shows a significant change in the styling of humour in season 3, at least regarding “wit” type humour. As was hinted at in the last paragraph I believed that humour was even more present in season 3 even though there were less instances of observed jokes compared to the other two seasons. This belief stems from both the experience of watching and the decline of “wit” (figure 3) and increase of “observation” and “other” for the Norsemen shows last season. “Observation” continued its trend by appearing with higher frequency once again with season 3 having a bit above 25% in the “observation” category (figure 3). “Other” had a very similar appearance rate in the first two seasons (figure 1 & 2), albeit in different comedic stylings, which sees 18% representation in season 3 (figure 3). The noticeable increase in these two categories gives us insight into the steep drop of “wit” in the last season (figure 3).

4.3.2 Observation & Other

Season 3 is in the special spot of being a prequel season whose ending lead directly into the start of season 1. This gives the viewer a supreme knowledge of what is to come for the characters and because of these additional venues of comedy are open to the writers. More “observation” style jokes (figure 3) are preformed through characters giving apt character

analysis of someone else to a degree of accuracy that would be scary in real life. However, in a show it ends up with a comedic relatability for the viewer given just how accurate it is.

“Other” sees a big boost (figure 3) through the increased use of dramatic irony for jokes. In previous season we would sometimes see these jokes through the Vikings making statements about the future such as Viking helmets with horns never catching on. These appear with a significantly increased frequency in season 3. This also follows due to season 3 being a prequel season, the characters will make descriptive jokes about things we the viewers know will come to pass. Such as Chieftain Olav making a promise and stating that if he fails may he get repeatedly stabbed in the stomach until all his entrails hang out, which is exactly what happens to him at the end of episode 2, season 1. These types of jokes permeate season 3 and make up quite a few of the “other” observations in the season.

“Other” as a category naturally contains many different types of jokes, but which jokes are prevalent in “other” changes between each season. As mentioned, dramatic irony is used a lot in season 3, but initially during coding season 1 it appeared that awkward/cringe humour would be the main contributor to the “other” category. Awkward/cringe humour has many appearances during season 1, playing a big role in establishing Orm and how much everyone in Norheim dislikes him. While socially awkward situations are present in all 3 seasons, it is more common in season 1 that the awkwardness is used for the punchline and not just as a comedic element in a different joke. Characters such as Arvid and Liv are also featured in some awkward humour jokes intertwined with relatable humour when they preform exaggerated versions of relationships and marital life. Season 2 has the biggest variety of humour types that were observed for “other”, in season 2 cruelty or pity humour is utilised on Jarl Varg and some other characters. A lot of the cruelty-based comedy fell under the “dark” humour category, but some of those jokes in addition to the pity jokes didn’t fit with the pre-existing categories. Such as a joke where Jarl Varg is attempting to drown a kitten with his new prothesis after he lost both hands at the end of season 1 (Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2017, S2.E3, [11:00]). Normally one would feel pity for a person that has lost both hands, but due to Varg being both a villain and still attempting to commit heinous deeds it becomes fun to laugh at the misery he feels at being unable to pick up the kitten. Season 2 also features juxtaposition jokes that are built on their slow buildup. These are the type of jokes that make it clear what the punchline will be early, such as Rufus and Orm insisting

that Sturla Bonecrusher joins them at their campfire (Helgaker & Togersen, 2017). After learning that the Bonecrusher is tracking down fugitives and selling them as slaves Orm still divulges the information to Bonecrusher that him, Rufus and Liv are all fugitives. This, and their continued camaraderie towards the Bonecrusher makes it incredibly obvious to the viewer that he will capture them to sell as slaves. Lastly it can be mentioned that “other” also featured crass humour which was approximately equally represented through each season. A few times it took the shape of toilet humour, but most of the time it was through sex jokes or very explicit dialogue. The crass humour would often feature in combination with a different category of humour, such as “absurd” or “physical”. The most notable is probably season 1 episode 4 [3:25] (Helgaker & Togersen, 2016) where Frøya and Orm discusses the necklace she is wearing that is made entirely from the cocks of the monks she killed during the last raid.

Absurd 4.3.3

The category “absurd” humour also sees an uptick in season 3 (figure 3), which feels in line with how many comedies develop over seasons containing more outlandish plots and exaggerations of characters. As Orms actor (Salty Nerd Podcast, 2022) stated, the writers wanted to go even more absurd with Orm. Konradi would have discussions with the writers where he felt it wouldn’t make sense for his character to be even more absurd than the previous two seasons given that season 3 is a prequel season. Considering the Norsemen show can be described as an absurd comedy most jokes do contain an element of absurdness, be it through bad logic, exaggeration, or unlikely scenarios. With an increase of 2%, “absurd” lands at 19% for the third season (figure 3). The “absurd” category was defined as logic defying, bizarre situations and extremely exaggerated which all saw representations through the seasons.

As the show itself is exaggerated at every step of the way exaggerated jokes were slightly rarer since you would really need to exaggerate something for something to be perceived as

a joke intended through exaggeration and not the default comedic atmosphere exaggeration contributed to. That is not to say that it couldn't be argued that close to every joke in the show carries some level of absurd element. The observation of "absurd" jokes might have been hampered by the coder (me) already having seen the show multiple times. Most if not all humour relies on some degree of incongruity where our expectations are not met, and our mental schemata is violated. Absurd humour which is built on conflicting or bizarre logic is especially dependent on incongruity for its experienced humour. Which is why I believe it is the category most prone for coder error. Still, even though I believe there might have been more instances of "absurd" jokes it still saw a good representation in the total observations (figure 4) as the third most observed category overall. Jokes built on exaggeration and logic violations are in other words abundant throughout the Norsemen show.

4.3.4 Dark

"Dark" was the only category of all 6 to see less than 10% representation in the jokes throughout all seasons (figure 4). Initially I expected there to be more observations of dark comedy given that the show features many dark themes and things such as death are trivialised in many cases. What was surprising was how some of the darker themes were in many cases played more seriously or for the sake of developing the story. While few of the deaths reach any emotional height due to how silly the Norsemen show is at its nature many of them were still not used for jokes. There were still some jokes built on someone's death such as killing a slave as a part of a wedding ritual, but these types of jokes were uncommon. Slavery sometimes played into the dark humour such as how casually the Vikings would make them do backbreaking labour for nothing in return. The one dark subject that was entirely used for comedy was rape. It was only brought up a single time without it being a joke, and that time it was to set up a plot thread for another joke. As stated by Helgaker (Salty Nerd podcast, 2022) if they wanted to include rape jokes, they wanted to make them farcical to the degree where we the viewer is far removed from

reality. In other words, even though dark subject matter is present, it was not used for jokes as much as expected before the coding.

4.3.5 Physical

In an audiovisual comedy there is some challenge in identifying which instances can be considered physical comedy. The intentional overacting of the actors adds to the comedic feeling of the Norsemen show and physicality play a part in most jokes. When looking at the total “physical” jokes seen through the seasons (figure 4), it lands at slightly below 13%. While that is a considerably lower total number compared to “absurd”, “observation” and “wit” it still ends up being a sizable representation. More so when considering that early projections for the coding assumed that the language-based comedy such as quotes, catchphrases, observation would be most prevalent. This is in addition to anachronisms appearing a lot in the Norsemen show, which is often used in verbal jokes, and very rarely applicable to physical humour. In a very few instances anachronistic physical comedy did appear, preformed through physical references to contemporary times. Usually done through a character doing a physical gesture or action which calls to mind specific people or trends. That was, however, a minority of the instances. Most of the time the physical comedy took shape in either slapstick or awkward humour. Rufus was a character featured in many “physical” jokes, possibly because his character is portrayed as snobby and stuck-up in addition to being an antagonist. He is not exclusive to being the punching bag in slapstick or other physical comedy as others were featured in that field too. Throughout the season “physical” changed quite a bit. Being most represented in season 1 at 15% (figure 1), then season 3 at 13% (figure 3) with the lowest occurrences in season 2 with 10% (figure 2). Season 1 featured many separate instances of “physical” comedy spread out throughout its season. The many small conflicts in addition to the theatre plotline from season 1 gave ample opportunity for physical jokes to be interjected into the episodes. The viewer being introduced to this world also enable more physical jokes with violence or mistreatment of the slaves to have bigger impact as we are not yet accustomed to the show’s atmosphere and flow. Season 1 also gives the impression that the writers might have thought up jokes

that they really wanted to include in the show and decided to put them all in season 1 to make sure they were included. This is due to the variety of physical comedy present in season 1 compared to the other 2. Season 3 also features a lot of physical comedy, but a considerably larger amount of the observed “physical” humour happens through comedic violence. In other words, the types of physical comedy in season 3 feels less varied compared to season 1. Season 2 on the other hand featured good variation in the type of physical humour presented, but considerably less instances of physical jokes compared to season 1.

4.3.6 Differences

After having looked at and discussed each of the categories, we are left with the jokes that were perceived as significantly different in both language versions. Cases where a joke that was present in both versions were observed to be changed beyond regular differences in an audiovisual show where a scene is translated and re-shot. Another criterion that could land a joke in the “change” category is if it was perceived as significantly funnier in one language compared to the other. This is a more subjective criterion, but I believe it is a fitting one for determining larger changes in a joke. The number of jokes observed in the “change” category was very small compared to the other categories. For each season respectively it was 4% for season 1 (figure 1), 2% for season 2 (figure 2), and 3% for season 3 (figure 3) making it right above 3% in total for the complete tally (figure 5). It is also the only category to have 0 observation in some episodes, and the highest number observed in any single episode was 5. The observed changed jokes were also included in their corresponding joke category. Every category outside of “dark” had at least a single joke that fit into the “change” category. Physical had a single instance where it was observed to have a stronger comedic impact in one of the versions. This was not due to the translation of the scripts, but due to the editing chosen for the scene. This is the case for a few of the jokes that landed in “change” where the comedy is significantly stronger in one of the versions due to editing or different delivery, this was most prevalent in season 3 where it felt like the editing was more deliberately changed for certain jokes between the two versions. The category that saw the

highest representation in “change” was unsurprisingly “wit” given that wit is built on clever comments, funny one-liners, catchphrases, and quotes. It will naturally be the most susceptible category for change given that verbal flow is pivotal for the comedic reception of these phrases. But even with a category with a volatility like “wit” there still weren’t that many observations given “change” ended on 3% of the jokes (figure 5) through the seasons. That is not to say that changes and differences were not observed, but few were different to the degree of having a noticeable impact. Season 1 featured the most “change” jokes often tied to some language discrepancies, sometimes a quote that fit better in English and sometimes more varied and creative language for the Norwegian version. In season 2 the choice of language and quotes correlate better for comedy compared to the first season. While in the third season we get a slight increase in “change”, but this increase can be chalked up to season 3 featuring more editing differences for select jokes impacting how funny the coder perceived them.

4.3.7 Conclusion of quantitative analysis

After looking through the different categories from the coding schema and tallying up the results we are better equipped to answer the initial research questions of the analysis. Which types of humour are prevalent in the Norsemen show? And to what degree is the comedy changed between the Norwegian and English version? Due to the wide definition of the humour categories, we are unable to precisely pinpoint exactly which kind of humour is the most prevalent. However, the advantage of creating broader categories is the high percentage each category can reach to create a clearer split between them. It also serves the purpose of making co-coding something as subjective as humour easier. In this case the results showed that “observation” and “wit” both saw very large representations (figure 4), with “absurd” and “other” following suit. This does not come as a major surprise as much of the shows humour was observed to be verbal. The observational humour had been paired with anachronistic, relatable, and anecdotal humour. This shows that a lot of the Norsemen shows jokes come from characters commenting on subject. With a lot of relatable anachronistic observations and musings, it can be viewed as one half of the Norsemen

show's bread & butter. The other half comes through "wit" and the many funny one liners, catchphrases, and references throughout the seasons. Just like in the observational humour, many of the catchphrases are anachronistic by having the characters, mainly Orm. Use a well-known turn of phrase and end it with "As I have decided to start saying". It can be surmised that the Norsemen shows most apparent comedic styling is using anachronisms for verbal humour, and that it has a blend of absurd, dark, and physical humour to give variety. To answer the second research question, it appears that the number of changes observed were quite low for a show that has been translated into two versions. It can be mentioned that many small differences were observed for most scenes, but rarely any were different enough to warrant being included in the "change" category. This means that on a surface level the Norsemen shows two versions are very similar in how the humour is perceived. In the following part I will analyse specific scenes in greater detail, and we will see if there is new insight to be gleamed from moving from a surface overview of the show to a deeper look.

5 Qualitative analysis of scenes from the series “Norsemen” (Vikingane)

5.1 Characters

Orm (Kåre Conradi)

The biggest presences in the show both comedy and plot wise is the antagonists. And Orm is a constant presence throughout the whole show. He plays chieftain Olav’s brother and ascends to the position of chieftain twice throughout the show. He is an emotionally stunted man that is starved for attention, he is also stuck in the closet without being aware of it himself. Orm is possibly the character that gets the most screentime and dialogue throughout the show and is used in a multitude of different joke and humour types. His character is also the proprietor of the most prominent running joke in the show where he’ll use contemporary sayings or quotes with the tagline of “that’s something I’ve decided to start saying”. He tends to avoid battle and his hobbies include arts and craft and flower picking; he is in other words a stark contrast to how one would commonly imagine a Viking. He also has the tendency of twisting words or intentions into benefitting him in conversation, often insisting on lies, both to gaslight others and convince himself of what he’s talking about.

Chieftain Olav (Henrik Mestad)

The chieftain of Norhaug who is married to Hildur and is Orms older brother. He is killed off half-way into season 1. But is prominently featured throughout season 3. Often used to create awkward situations between other characters with his brash and often too direct approaches to subjects. Due to being the chieftain he is sometimes used as a parallel for multiple positions of power, such as a company boss, father figure, and royalty.

Arvid (Nils Jørgen Kaalstad)

The protagonist of the show, Arvid is one of Chieftain Olav’s warriors and is popular with both men and women. He is gullible and a little stupid, often serving the role of the relatable everyman through his observations or comments to a situation. He is often used

for the type of humour that points out logical fallacies or draws parallels between modern day work and the Viking age. Such as talking about pillaging and rape being the villages primary exports. He also plays an active role in almost every romance subplot throughout the three seasons.

Rufus (Trond Fausa)

Another of the antagonists of the show, Rufus is a famous roman actor who was on a tour throughout Europe when he was captured by the Vikings while they were raiding England. He is pompous and demanding while talking highly of the cultural arts. He and Orm teams up early in the show as Orm is intrigued by Rufus' stories of the culture they have back in Rome. Rufus is one of the characters involved in the most physical comedy in the series, as he is a stuck-up character looking down on others no matter which position, he is placed in. He is thereby placed in the role of someone that feels extra great to see receive his comeuppance.

Liv (Kristine Riis)

An antagonistic character that is attracted to wealth and power. She marries Arvid in the start of the first episode after Arvid wins the holmgang with her previous husband. She exerts a domineering personality and only places herself as subservient when she desires to win someone's approval or a favour. She is featured a lot in observational humour where she'll make snide comments about topics and jokes which clearly pain her as a hypocrite. Before her more directly antagonistic turn she plays the role of the comedically nagging wife trope where her and Arvids relationship goes parallel to many situations viewers can recognise themselves in, just exaggerated to a great extent.

Hildur (Maria Saastad Ottersen)

Hildur is the wife of chieftain Olav. She is shown as a caring person, although the one she cares the most for is herself. Showing remorse in Olav's death but at the same time hooking

up with Arvid when he tells her Olav wanted him to become the next chieftain. She is often shown in adverse with Orm in which she is often the first to criticise him or voice the opinion of the people of Norheim. She is in other words intelligent and sometimes helpful but attempts to manipulate or gaslight others for her own benefit during the seasons.

Kark (Øystein Martinsen)

Kark is the long-lost older brother of Olav and Orm which was sent up North as a child and returned to the village as a slave. The family relation between the characters is not known except by Hildur which covers it up to prevent Kark from obtaining the chieftain position of Norheim by birth right. While he is a slave, he was already freed at an earlier point in time and remains a slave willingly. Often having an over-the-top positive outlook on the slave work he does or treating it as a mildly undesirable position to be in such as when he must go and fetch sacrifices. An example would be that he often talks about how lucky he is to be allowed to work outside all day instead of being stuck inside.

Frøya (Silje Torp)

The only female warrior in Chieftain Olavs employ she was hired in exchange for marrying Orm. She is often portrayed as the most skilled warrior and is in the position of the crassest running joke throughout the series, consisting of her collecting the cocks of the people she has raped. Her and Orm is often placed in juxtaposition with each other serving as extremes of the classic male and female gender roles with Frøya filling the traditional male role of just wanting to hang with the other warriors (friends) or travel on raids (business trip). While Orm fills the traditional female role of wanting to share romantic moments or do arts and crafts together. Scenes of the two often feature Frøya trying to ditch Orm, while he ignores the social clues and tries to argue his way into the two spending more time together. Frøya and Arvid strike up a romance between each other towards the end of season 1 which continues into season 2.

Jarl Varg (Jon Øigården)

Another of the antagonists in the show. In contrast to the other antagonists, Varg is more cartoonishly evil compared to the other antagonists. He is a vengeful schemer that was given an incredibly petty backstory for why he became a villain. The reason is his male pattern baldness and how it cost him his hair which was his own entire self-worth. The writers stated they wanted something that would feel relatable worldwide and hair loss is a worldwide concern many people experience. He was also given a speech impediment, since we don't learn of his male pattern baldness backstory before season 3. He serves as the Jarl of Vargheim which places him above the local village chieftains and Norheim and Chieftain Olav is part of his domain. Jon Øigården chews the scenery in almost every scene he is in with overdone body language, eye movement and facial contractions. It works well to establish Jarl Varg as a strange character that feels removed from the other characters in the series. Just like Orm, Varg's character is featured prominently throughout the series with plenty of humour built around him. He is the main source of comedy which involves removing the characters from the situation they find themselves in. Such as when a character is delivering threats or acting menacingly, something will occur that breaks the tension and deflates the seriousness of the situation.

Torstein Hund (Bjørn Myrene)

Jarl Varg's right hand man. Torstein Hund is introduced in the first season as an imposing henchman for Varg. After a few episodes he falls into the comedic role of a somewhat gullible everyman, his characteristics are somewhat like Arvid. But he is utilized for several types of comedy. He is often played up in how nervous he becomes around social interaction, such as parties. Often shown to be thinking aloud to Varg about his worries with how he'll act in a social gathering. He also acts both as a straight man and yes man for Jarl Varg. Often saying a more logical or reasonable option to what Varg is saying, but still going along with Varg's decision. He also goes into a couple philosophical tangents which are meant as humorous anachronisms to the viewer, such as when he complains about their dependency on messenger pigeons in the same way people would complain about smart phones today.

Ragnar (Mikkel Bratt Silset)

Another of Chieftain Olavs warriors. Ragnar is featured in almost every episode of the series even though he is not one of the main characters. He can be described as someone who starts out as a side character that gets a bigger presence as the show goes on. In the beginning Ragnar is portrayed loosely without a defined personality providing what the scene requires. Later in season 1 and onwards he becomes more defined through making statements on fashion and other trends. Showing himself to be trend conscious first through making informed criticism of other people's outfits but is later revealed to be a poser. This is seen through Arvid asking Ragnar for the meaning behind his tattoos, and we learn he gets them to give the impression he is a deep and interesting person.

5.2 Scene analysis

Season 1 Episode 1: The Homecoming; Returning from a raid

(Helgaker & Torgersen, 2016) The scene starts 00:10 and ends 6:40. It cuts away to a different scene at 1:40 to 2:50, and 4:08 to 5:22.

Synopsis & analysis

The scene opens up with a shot of a Viking longship sailing the sea going through a fjord. We hear instrumentation that can be associated with medieval fantasy. The shot of the fjord is zoomed far out so the viewer gets a good look of the lush nature that Norway is often associated with. We then see the people on the ship wearing appropriate Viking gear rowing the boat. The silence of the scene is broken by Arvid calling for everyone's attention, especially the new guys, pointing to the people they likely have kidnapped in their plundering. He is immediately interrupted by Rufus (one of the kidnapped people) exclaiming that they have not been given water and how bad of an arrangement that is. He is informed they'll get water after the briefing. During the briefing of how they'll be working in Norway from now on Rufus continues to interrupt asking what the pay will be. To which some of the Vikings laugh and Arvid informs that the work will not be paid as they are

slaves. Rufus starts complaining about how incredibly bad the flow of information on the boat is, as he didn't even know they were traveling to Norway until yesterday.

This part of the scene is clearly meant to draw parallels with new hires getting a briefing before starting in their new job. The flow of information is a common challenge in a business, and it becomes extra humorous by the idea of a Viking ship having trouble with the flow of information given that it's short enough for the people to be able to see and hear everyone on the ship.

After Rufus starts complaining Chieftain Olav walks over and asks if he finds the flow of information under par and if he'd like some information. As Rufus ascends, Olav proceeds to punch him straight in the face. Rufus reacts by yelling out "did anyone see that?" while holding his nose. The humorous part that draws the comparison between a workplace and a Viking ship is broken the moment Olav punches Rufus bringing us back to the more brutal feeling that would be more appropriate for Vikings in 791. Rufus calling out is in a familiar manner to something we'd hear someone say today if they were punched, asking for witnesses so they can press charges, something Rufus obviously would be unable to do in this situation.

In the last part of the scene Arvid and Olav go to the end of the ship to talk. Olav asks Arvid if what he did might've been too much as he feels a fear-based leader-style isn't really him. Arvid comments that a leader should be a bit crazy. This makes Olav sound more like a company boss considering his management style, while Arvid points him towards being more like how we might envision a viking chieftain.

They then move on to discuss the fact that Arvid is still single, Olav says that there is nothing wrong with being on your own, but Arvid counters by saying it feels weird still being single when all his friends have found wives, started families and farms. Olav then ends the scene by saying that a great guy like him shouldn't have to be single if he doesn't want to and he has a plan for finding him a wife.

In this case it clearly draws to mind the worries someone might have when they reach their 30s, still single with no kids or house. It's a common concern people face in today's society

and something one very likely could discuss with a friend. Chieftain Olav ends up appearing as a friend/co-worker to Arvid while giving the impression of being a modern day business manager.

Versions

The English and Norwegian version of the scene play out fairly similar. In the Norwegian version when Arvid starts giving out information and Rufus interrupts him, Arvid calls Norway for Noreg, which is what it was called in older times. The part where Rufus explains that he has family up in the area and that's why he speaks Norwegian so well, loses a good part of its impact in the English version as all characters are speaking English regardless. We are still able to pick up the humorous situation due to suspension of disbelief by understanding the Vikings are perceived as speaking Norwegian. While it's not displayed in this scene, we see at multiple points in the series newly kidnapped slaves speaking English or speaking Norwegian with an overdone English accent.

In the Norwegian version they are also able to play up Rufus' education more by having him use a bit more complex language than in the English version using the term "dette er under enhver kritikk" while in the English versions he says "it is ridiculous". The Norwegian phrase is something that could be recognised from a criticism of how a business has handled a matter. The English version also brings in a strength of its own in the characterisation, with Arvid and Olav talking in an over the top Scandinavian accent while Rufus only talks with a slight accent. The slight accent might be because the actor himself has a natural accent while speaking English, but the choice not to give him an exaggerated accent is to clearly show he is not a Norseman like the Vikings on the boat.

Conclusion

In the scene we can see some differences between the English and Norwegian version. Things such as word use is a natural occurring difference, as the writers are Norwegian they would be naturally more familiar with Norwegian expressions and phrases relating to specific situations, like criticism heard in the workplace. They are also able to more freely use phrases and words seen in old Norse and Viking culture as people living in Norway can be

more expected to be familiar with the phrases. At the same time, as the show is a drama comedy with its biggest focus being on comedy the English version gains a lot in the use of cheesy Scandinavian accents or norwenglish as some would call it. It adds a layer of comedy to the show which is not present in the Norwegian version.

Season 1 Episode 1: The Homecoming; Ættestup

(Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2016) The scene starts 1:28 and ends 5:20 It cuts away to a different scene at 2:50 to 4:08.

Synopsis & analysis

In this scene Kark the slave has brought a group of elderly men up to the top of a waterfall to have them perform an ættestup in which they'll jump to their death, so they won't be a burden on their families, and it is seen as an honourable way for the elderly to make it to Valhalla. Kark asks if anyone might be willing to do the first jump, he asks if Bjørn wants to do it as he is the oldest in the group. Bjørn asks if anyone else might be more interested but eventually agrees since no one else wants to jump first. Before he jumps, he asks to reaffirm that the jump is a matter of honour, to which the others reply that it is indeed a very honourable thing to do. Bjørn is crushed on the rocks at the bottom of the cliff and the others look on in apprehension.

The scene puts a spin into jumping off a cliff by having the characters talk about it as if it was a mildly uncomfortable thing to do, like jumping into cold water. As it is the second scene in the first episode it helps establish the harsh setting we find ourselves in with it being in the very beginning of the Viking age.

After having witnessed Bjørn's death the other elderly are more reluctant to jump where they declare that it's not very tempting to get crushed on the rocks as few things seem

worse than it. Kark then explains what an ættestup is and why it's important they do it. They have a little back and forth which I will transcribe here.

Kark: Oddvar. Maybe you want to go next?

Oddvar: I'm thinking, what's the worst thing that could happen to me if I don't do the ættestup? I mean, what's worse than being crushed?

Kark: I don't know, I was just ordered to take you up here. You're supposed to do the jump and spare your families the burden that is supporting you in your old age.

Oddvar: Yeah. But I'm only 47 It's.. I. Uh. I mean it's not that old. I'm just going to skip the whole thing.

Kark: Yeah, uh, ok?

Oddvar: Yeah

Another man: I'm not gonna jump either. This is not my kinda thing.

Oddvar: Anyone else? Want to jump?

*Oddvar looks around at the other men shaking their heads.

Kark: Næmmen. Common fellas I mean...

Oddvar: It's just not very tempting.

After this conversation Kark admits that since he's just a slave he can't really force them to do anything they don't want to. But he asks if they could please move somewhere else than Norheim so people will think they jumped to which they agree, and the group departs.

Looking at this conversation shows us a type of humour very prevalent in the series, where they apply contemporary logic to ideas and beliefs held a thousand years ago, one thousand two hundred in this case. Where someone at the time might have seen it as their honour bound duty to kill themselves to relieve their families of having to feed them. As the people at the time likely believed in an afterlife in Valhalla, any way to end up there instead of Helheim would be appreciated. Compare it to someone today where the concept of honour is seen as considerably less important compared to older cultures and being crushed to death on rocks just isn't a very tempting way to die. Thus, they use modern logic to make the ættestup a ridiculous concept that the elderly are smart to avoid. It is also funny to see the men that look to be in their 60's and 70's turns out to be just in their 40's. It works as

both a funny twist to play on expectations and a way to show how fast people grow old in the Viking age.

Versions

This scene plays out very similarly in both the English and Norwegian version as the term ættestup and Valhalla is used in both languages. People from Norway will likely be more familiar with the term ættestup while Valhalla is likely widely understood in the public consciousness due to movies and videogames. What an ættestup is is also explained in the second part of the scene by Kark so international viewers will get caught up in the same scene without needing to make assumptions about what the term means. At the same time, while they have kept ættestup and Valhalla they have translated other Norse terms such as trelle to slave, and ætt to family. They were likely seen as synonymously enough that it would be easier to translate the word without losing much meaning instead of risking to confuse the viewer.

While Bjørns jump to his death is played up casually in both versions it is presented in an even more casual manner in the Norwegian version. In the English version where Bjørn says “see you on the other side” one of the others reply with yeah, see you and another with a thumbs up. After he’s jumped and the others look over the cliff one of them exclaims a somewhat unenthusiastically “wow”. So, while the English version doesn’t exactly play up the shock of seeing Bjørns dead body at the bottom of the cliff the Norwegian version treats it even more casually. Where Bjørn says “Da sees vi på andre sia da karer” and the other replies with “ja, me sees” and he gets a thumbs up at another point than in the English version. After looking over the cliff at Bjørns shattered body in the Norwegian version one of the men says “Det er såpass ja”. The Norwegian version plays extra hard on the humour of the people discussing and treating jumping to your death casually while the English version ends up using the last part with the men looking over the edge as shock humour even retaining a second longer pause before the “wow” is exclaimed.

Another difference in the scenes is when Oddvar and Kark is discussing the fact that the other men doesn’t want to jump at the part where they all declare they won’t jump and

Kark in the English version replies with “Næmmen, common fellas I mean...” and is interrupted by Oddvar before he’s able to finish. In the Norwegian version however, he gets to finish the sentence which I will translate here. “But guys, do you think old man Bjørn enjoyed getting crushed against the cliffs down there? This is about doing something honorable that is bigger than yourselves” after this part, the scene finishes the same way in both versions. This makes it so Kark is putting in a bigger effort to convince the men to jump before giving up while in the English version he doesn’t really put up any fight before admitting he can’t force them as he’s a slave.

Conclusion

This scene works to establish a feeling of old Norse traditions while introducing the comedic element of having the characters talk casually around it and apply modern day logic to it. We can also see that some scenes play out slightly differently in the Norwegian and English versions, likely depending on what the crew felt would work best for a home market and an international market. This is also shown in their choice of language with retaining the Norse words for rituals, traditions, and places, but translating words used for terms we still have today. It also appears the Norwegian version was designed to play extra into the absurd humour of Kark trying to argue for the older men to jump to their death.

Season 1, Episode 3: The Funeral; Runestick punishment

(Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2016) The scene starts at 25:37 and ends 29:14.

Synopsis & analysis

At the end of the previous scene Orm ended it by saying there would be big changes now that he’s chieftain. The camera hard cuts to people being dragged out of their tents with Orm walking around watching it all take place. It then turns out he was gathering people and ransacking their belongings to find out who was writing runesticks about him and leaving them up at the shitting log (public toilet) for people to laugh at. It is narrowed down to three suspects with Hildur being one of the three, after a little while she confesses that she’s the one who has been writing the runesticks. They then have a short argument about

freedom of speech before Orm summons the lawspeaker to pass a sentence. While passing his sentence the lawspeaker reads aloud the runesticks while explaining what the insult means making the whole crowd laugh at Orm. The lawspeaker then decides that Orm can dish out the punishment in the way he deems fit. Which is done through donning a glove and punching Hildur straight in the crotch. Hildur swears revenge on Orm and limps off.

The scene starts with a buildup of people being dragged out of their homes, it is played completely straight for a duration and the tension might build in the viewer. This tension ends up breaking as soon we learn Orm is rounding up people to find out who has been writing demeaning messages about him and leaving them by the toilet. It gives Orm a comedic level of pettiness to see him perform a manhunt throughout the village for a mild grievance.

When Hildur is revealed to be the culprit, she comments that writing the messages is just freedom of speech. Something that is recognisable and relatable to the viewer given that what should be considered free speech is often brought into debate. When Orm agrees with Hildur only to immediately state that in this specific case freedom of speech does not apply it gives the viewer a comedic double punch through using the famous quote attributed to Voltaire by Evelyn Hall "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it" (Hall, 1906/2018) only to immediately create an exception for it. The use of quotes serve as one of Orms staple humour types and works well as comedy due to the Norsemen show being set in the 800s. It creates a naturally funny incongruity in the viewer to hear quotes from the 1900s and 2000s from Vikings supposed to be 1200 years in the past.

When Orm delivers his personally chosen punishment on Hildur we get one of the instances of a joke that combines slapstick and crass humour. This is done through Orm putting on a large glove and punching Hildur in her pelvis, to which she replies with pained sound and the comment "straight in the vagina". These combinations of slapstick and crass humour serve as easily translatable humour since the slapstick itself is easily understood. And it can

be assumed that the comedy of a person saying a dirty word will be appreciated by some people the world over.

Versions

In the first part of the scene when people are dragged out of the tents, we can hear that the background noises used in both versions is from the Norwegian versions recording. We can hear people in the background exclaim “nei” and “slipp” in both versions. It’s possible that it was kept in Norwegian to aid in the Norse feeling of the show even though the dialogue is used in the buildup for a joke, but it can be said that it’s not necessary to understand the words to get the necessary context. The following joke is a deflation of the seriousness of people being dragged out screaming when it turns out Orm did it just to find out who has been writing insulting runesticks about him. When the three suspects are lined up and Orm says “well well well, if it isn’t the runestick maker himself” one of the three responds with “huh?” so that Orm loses the imposing energy he had and must repeat himself. In the Norwegian version the serious music is almost entirely muted after Orm has to turn around and repeat himself, while it remains on the same volume in the English version. It is possible this was done with intent, or it might have been an editing error, but the joke lands considerably better in the Norwegian version as almost all the seriousness built up is swept away at once. While the music continuing to play uninterrupted in English makes it harder to detect that this part was intended to be a joke.

When Orm is confronting the three in the English version the show creates a buildup to the reveal that Hildur was the one writing the messages, it is done through extra dialogue and an extra part of the scene not included in the Norwegian version. In the English version before asking if either three have been carving insulting messages about him he first states that he prays to Thor and Odin that his dear sister-in-law Hildur is not the one responsible. After the two others say it definitely wasn’t them, Hildur admits it was her in the Norwegian version and we move on to the next part of the scene, but in the English one she feigns ignorance and Orms forces them to provide carving samples to match with the evidence. While they carve, Orm is standing over them with his face only inches away to create a comedic uncomfortable part with how intense he is being over something petty. After then

showing that Hildurs runestick matches the one left at the shitting log she admits that she was the one to do it. It is very likely that the extra parts shown in the English version were cut from the Norwegian to save time as the Norwegian episodes appear to be contained to a 30-minute time limit while the English one's often run slightly over. But the choice of cutting these parts from the Norwegian runs somewhat consistent with scenes we've seen earlier. As Hildur and Orm are made out to be more directly opposed in the English version, while in the Norwegian version she will more often speak in a manner that shows the village dislikes Orm. So the English versions use these extra parts to make it a bigger deal to Orm that Hildur is the culprit and how serious Hildur takes it by first attempting to deny it instead of just admitting it almost instantly in the Norwegian version.

They then do a reference to freedom of speech where Orm quotes Evelyn Beatrice Hall from her book about Voltaire "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it" (Hall, 1906/2018, p. 199) which is then excellently undercut by Orm right after saying. "But in this specific case, you went too far" and has her dragged off to stand trial. It can be argued the quote works a bit better in the English version as the quote is originally English, but it is such a famous phrase that it doesn't lose impact or recognisability when translated.

When the lawspeaker reads aloud the phrase used to insult Orm, he uses the words "Orm er en rassr-agr" in both versions. While it is possible that Norwegians would understand the meaning of the word, it is something I'd think is not a commonly known phrase even in Norway. It is then approached with much of the same understanding in both versions and the explanation that follows from the lawspeaker is almost identical. Here he explains that it means Orm is an unmanly, homosexual, perverted person. But in the Norwegian version he also adds "og at han er et forraktelig menneske". To further show that the village is harsher towards Orm in the Norwegian version.

Conclusion

There are clear version differences in this scene with the extra parts in the English version, they are likely a combination of having slightly longer episodes and shifting the focus of the

comedy slightly. We as the viewer is intended to laugh at Orm in this scene, but the Norwegian version brings us faster to the point where the village is laughing at Orm due to hearing the runesticks written by Hildur, while the English version lingers longer for us to laugh at how serious of a problem Orm treats the runesticks. We are also able to see that they've kept Norwegian words in background dialogue in scenes. Deeming that they are worth more as part of creating a Nordic mood for the international viewer, than necessarily understanding what they are saying.

Season 1, Episode 4: The Raid; England

(Helgaker & Torgersen, 2016) The scene starts at 17:53 and ends at 26:30.

Synopsis & analysis

In this scene we follow two separate points that converge at the end of the scene, one is the Vikings in the boat and the other is an English man with the name of Charlie doing charity work. It starts off with Charlie visiting some sick children and livening up their day in the same way Robin Williams character in Patch Adams (Shadyac, 1998). We then see Arvid on board the Viking ship exclaiming that they've spotted land. Back with Charlie, the two nurses/nuns thank him for all his help and make a point of saying he is very likely the kindest person in all of Britain. He thanks them and heads off.

Back with the Vikings we can see them furling the sail and getting close to the shore. Charlie has reached his destination which is a table standing out in the middle of a grassy field, he is greeted by many people wearing white robes and flower crowns. The Vikings are getting close to shore and Orm, looking worried, suddenly stands up and gives a short speech about confidence, then dons his helmet and jumps off the ship before they have reached land. The other Vikings have a discussion of who has the obligation to save Orm, which ends up being Frøya. Back with Charlie he has started a speech about how they've raised a lot of money, more than enough to build a hospital. He opens the chest as the table to show all the money inside to much applause from the table.

The exaggeration of Charlie's kindness and the constant cuts to the Vikings' approach continue to build a mounting expectation in the viewers of some sort of punchline. The punchline itself is clearly building to the contrast between the charitable people and the battle-hungry Vikings and the moment the building tension in the viewer breaks. Possibly due to the slow buildup of this joke, the Norsemen interject another comedic situation into the buildup through Orm jumping ship straight into the ocean. It joins with- and opposes the slow building comedy in the way that it is a joke that quickly builds its expectations through Orm giving a short speech. Only to immediately break viewer expectations of the Vikings charging on land by having Orm pre-emptively jump ship into the sea before they reach land.

The Vikings have at last gotten to shore where they stand around waiting for Frøya to finish pulling Orm to land. After getting him to safety Frøya considers giving him mouth-to-mouth before discarding the idea and running after the others, leaving Orm passed out on the beach. The two points meet up now that the Vikings are creeping up on the picnic table where Charlie and the others are. Some of the other people notice the Vikings and try to bring it to Charlie's attention, but he is so caught up in his speech that he doesn't notice. Arvid tosses an axe into Charlie's back and the Vikings start attacking. Orm wakes up on the beach to the sound of screams and slaughter. He walks over to the others where they have formed a circle around a small girl, taunting her and making fun of her efforts to defend herself with a stick. Orm interrupts them and says "this one is mine" to which the girls start kicking his ass. While Orm is being choked out on the ground by the girl he barely manages to grab a rock and knock her out. Frøya notices two survivors running off and tosses a bow to Arvid so the two of them give chase, while the rest of the Vikings sit down at the picnic table to eat the food set out on it with Orm commenting on how easy the raiding business is. Arvid and Frøya catch up to and kill the two people running away with an arrow each, they sit down next to the two dead bodies and end up making out, ending the scene.

The part where the English are getting slaughtered is something that on its own would not be perceived as funny. The dark comedy manages to break into this potentially serious scene through the slow buildup, clear punchline, and exaggerations it has made about

Charlie and what a great person he is. The strong contrast between the idyllic and peace like moments with the Englishmen up-until the moment where Charlie receives an axe in the back allows the viewer tension awaiting this moment to build. It becomes comedic in part due to the long time it takes to build up to a punchline who viewers likely could see coming from the start of the scene. It serves as an example of how a show with a constant comedic atmosphere can transform scenes that could serve as horrifying in other settings into something comedic.

We can also see other darker subjects serve as funny jokes in this scene. Such as Orms fight with a young girl where he ends up bashing in her head with a rock. In this case the joke is presented in a manner which would not have been potentially serious without the right setting. As it is the subversion of the young girl being significantly stronger than Orm, overpowering him easily and almost choking him to death. It makes for a classic subversion of expectations in a way that is easily understood regardless of language and culture barriers.

The last one is uses the romantic trope of two people running off together in an urgent matter only to end up alone together for a romantic moment. This moment is contrasted by the urgent matter being the killing of two innocent unarmed people running for their lives. The romantic buildup reaches its peak right after Arvid and Frøya both hit each of the fleeing people in the back with an arrow. It ends up creating an absurd and dark comedic punchline with the image of Arvid and Frøya making out close to the two corpses.

Versions

Even though both versions of this scene are filmed and written almost identically we still get to see a huge difference created from the language itself. As the people of England speak English in the show this is a large advantage for the Norwegian version. Given that they speak British with English accents it creates a stark contrast to the Vikings who speak Norwegian. They also show an establishing shot of the English coast at the start of the scene in the Norwegian version, showing the shore and open green fields. As most of the areas

that take place in Norway are filmed in forests or close to forests it adds to the feeling of change the viewer experience when we now find ourselves in England. The English version loses out due to the Vikings and the English people both speaking English, there is still the conscious decision of having the English people speak with a British accent to clearly differentiate them from the Vikings with their overdone Scandinavian accents. It is still clear to the viewer that they are intended to be in a different place than Norway, but it is still a far cry from the stark contrast the Norwegian version provides.

The Patch Adams parody (Shadyac, 1998) performed by Charlie is an example of something humorous where the translation of the scene does not play a part. The context of him helping the sick children by making them laugh is clear even without understanding the reference to Patch Adams, it also plays naturally into the part where the nun says he's the only one able to make the children smile, which is still part of the reference and a buildup of how kind and charitable of a person he is. Which is paid off in the part where him and the other charity workers are brutally murdered by the Vikings.

We get another example of the use of extra dialogue in the Norwegian version in one of the funnier jokes of the show in my opinion. At the part where Orm is rocking nervously back and forth on the ship before standing up resolutely exclaiming "Don't show any fear now folks. Remember that nothings sexier than self-confidence" to which he proceeds to jump the ship, (intending to lead the charge) before it has reached the shore, and sinks straight into the sea. In the English version, Orm is the only one to speak before jumping into the sea, but in Norwegian we can hear someone on the ship say "du, vi er ikke helt ved land enda" while he's jumping out of the boat. This is something present throughout the show where the Norwegian version will in certain parts have a little dialogue spoken by a character off-screen. In certain parts it can aid in creating an atmosphere or mood for the scene, but in this particular case it works against the joke. As the joke is built on the suddenness of Orm building up the courage to stand up and lead the charge only for him to jump straight into the sea. The punchline is delivered both swifter and with more force when the other Vikings say nothing until they decide who has to jump in to save Orm. While in the Norwegian version it effectively delivers the punchline twice as the dialogue shows

what will happen while it happens lessening the impact. The acting direction for Orms character is also a little different in this part, as he resolutely stands up before giving the speech and jumping into the water in the English version. While in the Norwegian version he spends a little longer getting to his feet and stumbles a bit before giving the speech, he also snuffles twice while talking to emphasize that he is afraid. Orm is a character we often are meant to laugh at, and this exemplifies how the Norwegian version takes efforts to make more fun of him or have him appear even more pathetic than in the English version.

An example of a situation where Orm is equally ridiculed in both versions is when he's fighting the girl, and she proceeds to beat him up. They are both shot and worded in the same manner without additional dialogue added in, the only difference is when Orm approaches the ring of Vikings and asks what is going on the camera moves to a faraway shot that shows all the Vikings and the picnic table with all the dead bodies strewn around it in the Norwegian version, while in the English it gives a closer shot focusing only on Orm and Arvid. So that in the English version they choose to keep the focus on the scene that is about to be played out of Orm getting beat up, by assuring the viewer that Orm is referring to the circle of Vikings around the girl when he asks what they are doing. While the far away shot in the Norwegian version is to show that the Vikings are messing around because they've already killed the others. Due to the far away shot, it is not as clear that Orm grabs a sword out of Ragnar's hand before stepping into the circle, making it look a bit like he's handed it instead. This makes it so the English versions camera focus function to better set up Orms downfall as him claiming the right to fight the girl one on one is wholly by his own design.

Conclusion

In this scene we are able to see another of the distinct advantages that can come with a Norwegian language version of a show about Vikings given that it's a lot easier to use a different language to differentiate Vikings and Englishmen compared to the different use of accents in the English version. Due to the suspension of disbelief the viewers are of course able to accept that this person speaking English and the other person speaking English are intended to be speaking two different languages, so it's not something I'd consider a loss for the English version, just more of a positive for the Norwegian version. Like before Orm is

portrayed a bit more cruelly by the show in the Norwegian version. In previous scenes it has either been additional parts or choice of wording to create this impression. But in this scene we are also able to see the actor himself play the character more clumsily and afraid in the shot where he jumps the ship. This shows that even though most of the show is similar in both versions, some conscious decisions have been made in how the humour is to be focused on in both the local and the international version.

Season 2, episode 4 Vengeance; Funeral for the lawspeaker

(Helgaker & Togersen, 2017) Scene duration 19:01 – 22:21

Synopsis & analysis

We open on a shot of the crowd that has gathered while we hear throat song and a single drum to create a serious and somber atmosphere. The body of the Lawspeaker lies on the ground, covered with cloth, swords, pots, and food lying around him. Arvid gives a short speech to the gods about how the Lawspeaker is about to join them in Valhalla. The three slaves present then starts digging before they are interrupted by Orm, coming with the suggestion of letting the slaves get buried together with the Lawspeaker for his journey to Valhall. This is because Orm got excluded from social gatherings by the other slaves during the previous three episodes where he also was a slave. This is in other words a petty ploy by Orm to get back at the other slaves for excluding him.

Arvid comments that they can't bury all the slaves as they would have no one to dig in that case. So it is decided that Kark will not be buried and will have to bury the other two slaves together with the Lawspeakers body. Rufus has taken the place as the new lawspeaker and has the dialogue.

Rufus: Okay then, uh, you two

*Rufus casually points to the two other slaves present.

*slave-1 groans

Rufus: Cheer up. It's one of the greatest honours for a subhuman to be buried next to a respected lawspeaker.

*The two slaves shuffle on over to the body.

Slave-1: Can we eat some of the fruit?

Rufus: Of course not, that's human food for his journey to Valhall.

*The two slaves lie down next to the body

Rufus: Kark.

*Rufus nods to Kark to start digging.

*Kark looks apprehensive for a while before he grips the shovel and start digging.

Orm: Good luck in Helheim. I heard they have their own department for excluders.

Slave-1: We don't believe in Helheim or Valhall. So this trip is going to be a total waste as far as I'm concerned.

Slave-2: Yeah. I'm a christian if you've heard of that. I believe in Jesus from Nazaret. So this doesn't really make sense to me.

Rufus: We'll you'll just have to bite your tongues. Now lie down!

Slave-1: Yeah, it's just so totally against my self-preservation instincts to lie down here and be buried like this.

We then watch on as Kark very slowly throws dirt over the two slaves lying on the ground. Until it eventually does a time-skip, and we see the burial mound is finished, with Kark sitting atop the huge pile of dirt. Suddenly a hand shoots out of the top of the dirt mound and starts grasping around, likely attempting to call for help. The crowd gasps in surprise and Rufus goes on to say

Rufus: Kark. Beat hand

*Kark sits apprehensively and looks back at Rufus

Rufus: Beat, hand!

*Kark lightly shakes his head looking reluctant to do as he is told

Orm: Allow me!

*Orm storms over to the dirt mound and climbs it, snatching the shovel out of Kark's hand. He then starts savagely beating the hand and continues hitting it into the dirt long after the hand retreated down into the dirt. After a little while Orm returns the shovel to Kark and proceeds to stomp and jump on the dirt a couple of times before he returns to the crowd. We are then left with a shot of the spot on the dirt where the hand was previously while we see Kark in the background looking sad.

In this scene we are able to observe some of the nonchalance around offering up human life the show employs for some of its darker humour. We as the viewer know that Orm suggests sacrificing the slaves because he wants revenge for being socially excluded by them during his time as a slave. He has a motive, albeit incredibly petty, for wanting the slaves killed. The other characters though, willingly accepts this, even Arvid which is the shows protagonist doesn't look more than inconvenienced that they'll lose slaves because of this. The only reason Kark isn't killed as well is because Arvid points out that they need at least one slave to dig the dirt. Kark is in other words not spared due to any compassion, but because the others do not want to dig the grave themselves.

While Orm and Rufus are the only two characters that give the appearance of wanting this to happen, the others do not interject in any manner and Kark is the only one that gives the impression of being opposed to the other slaves dying. But it is not only the characters propagating the killing that acts flippant about it, but the slaves also show a nonchalant attitude towards dying. Instead of being horrified or begging for their lives, they simply groan and shake their heads. They treat it in the same manner as doing something undesirable like cleaning the toilets at work. And even though they seem displeased at the prospect of being buried alive, they don't argue or hesitate, they simply shuffle over and lies down next to the body. Their only complaints are that it seems like a waste to sacrifice them

as they do not believe in the Norse pantheon, and that it's a challenge to fight their survival instincts and just lie on the ground letting themselves be buried alive. Showing that even the people being killed treats death as something that mildly undesirable.

Versions

The two scenes play out close to identical, apart from some differences in camera angles for the same dialogues. In terms of language differences, the choice of words and how they come across is also very similar. The one big difference is that the Norwegian version adds some filler words from the slaves, possibly ad-libbed by the actors for the Norwegian recording. The part is after Rufus says, "It's one of the greatest honours for a subhuman to be buried next to a respected Lawspeaker." Slave-1 responds with "Ja, ja, ja..." which is a classic thing to say in Norwegian when one resigns oneself to do some kind of undesirable task or work chore. The same is repeated after the slaves are told they are not allowed to eat any of the fruit they are being buried with. This further adds to the casual experience the characters associate with dying in the show, equating it with a phrase commonly used when one must post-pone plans in order to take out the trash or walk the dog. Putting it on the same level as menial tasks or mild hinderances. This is not present in the English version so the theming of being flippant about death is not conveyed as strongly as the Norwegian version of the scene. But it can easily be argued that the theme is already very clearly conveyed in the scene without this additional use of lines. It can also be said that English doesn't have a phrase that directly translates from it, the closest I can think of from the top of my head is "Alright, alright", but it is more commonly used to stop someone from talking when agreeing to do something, while "Ja, ja, ja..." is more used as words of resignation and highlighting that it's not something one wants to do when agreeing to it. But the theme is still presented strongly in both versions.

Conclusion

From this scene we can observe that the show uses a very casual approach to death and killing for the sake of the humour and story. In a show about Vikings it can be assumed to a

certain degree that the Vikings would not be particularly averse to killing others, but as we see here it is to a comical degree. And even the people in question that are going to die treat the matter incredibly casually. In this scene the additional sacrifice of the two slaves is only seen as inconvenient due to the loss of manpower in digging the grave, it is also the only presented reason why Kark isn't also sacrificed alongside them. Throughout the series we get multiple instances where Kark is almost killed or sacrificed for a pointless or menial reason. There is in other words many other examples in the show to draw from when looking at the theme of being flippant about dying.

Season 3 Episode 3: Wedding and blood offering; Sacrifice

(Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2020) The scene starts at 17:50 and ends at 19:50

Synopsis & analysis

It is a relatively short scene where Kark has been sent up to the slave camp in the forest to get a slave for a ritual sacrifice called bloting, because of Orm and Frøya's wedding. The scene opens on a character that loses his eyes as part of a joke in season 1, rambling on and on about how great eyesight is and how the eyes are the most important part of the body, due to season 3 being a prequel season. When Kark reaches the group sitting around the campfire they go into the following conversation about who should get sacrificed.

Kark: Sorry for interrupting but does anyone feel like getting bloted?

*Everyone looks apprehensive and uncomfortably at each other

Kark: Anyone feel the call? Tina?

*Kark gestures towards Tina sitting by the campfire

Tina: Eh. But, but bloting what is it exactly?

Sight slave: You are sliced open and drained of blood. And then the Vikings use that blood to decorate the bride and groom. And then they feed your body to the pigs.

Kark: Very honourable just so that's said.

*The sight slave looks to Kark and nods in agreement

Tina: It doesn't sound all that honourable to be sliced open and bled out like some kind of party trick.

Kark: Well, when you put it that way it's not very tempting, but it is a lot more than that. You get to be the centre of attention at the party for a brief moment, maybe you can find some meaning in that.

Tina: I don't know about you guys, but uhh, I'm pretty sure that god's plan for me does not include being sacrificed in some ritual.

Sight slave: Can't we just go democratic and vote on it?

Vegard: Yeah, I think that's, that's fair.

Tina: Yeah, that's mega fair. Then it could be anyone of us.

*The three slaves eyes dart between each other while they have a moment of silence.

Tina: So... Everyone in favour of sacrificing ehm... Vegard. Raise your hand.

*Every slave in the camp except Vegard raises their hand.

*Vegard looks around him and raises both hands in front of him in a stopping gesture.

Vegard: Ok. I actually reserve the right to disagree with the majority.

Tina: Yes. But the motive of each individual weighs the same in collective decision making.

Vegard: Good point. And we have to have decision equality. Anything else would-be madness.

Tina: Yes

But I have the right to be a bit disappointed. Thank you.

Vegard rises from the log he's sitting on and joins Kark to walk off. The sight slave returns to talk on about how important eyes are.

In this scene the slaves are reticent about offering themselves up for sacrifice, and clearly presents it as something undesirable for them. But at the same time like in previous examples it is not presented as a major threat or something wholly to be avoided. They treat it in the manner of something they'd like to avoid, but it is also treated with absolute nonchalance when it comes to it. As we can see from Vegard's humorous observation on how he should be allowed to be a little disappointed that his fellow slaves voted for him to die. In addition to a light commentary on flaws in democratic voting it is also obviously a farce with the first person suggested being the one that will be voted to die. In a more realistic setting, Vegard should have been outraged by what is effectively a rigged vote that dooms him to a gruesome death. Instead, he accepts that the individual might have to suffer to maintain decision equality in a group with the mildest of reservations.

Blotting was also commonly done by sacrificing animals, and only in rare occasions humans. This is of course done so they could have this comedic scene, but it also adds to the theming the show holds around killing as a person is sacrificed to liven up the wedding party.

Versions

The only noticeable difference in this scene is how the slaves in the Norwegian version use widely different dialects to show that they have been taken from different places. This does not tie into the theme of death we are currently looking at, however. A slight difference that does tie in with the theme is Vegard's choice of last word. In the English version he says "Thank you" after he has commented that he is allowed to feel disappointed at being chosen to die. While in the Norwegian version he says "Takk for meg" after his comment. So, in the English version he is thankful that his point was acknowledged, while in the Norwegian version it's used to thank someone for their attention or used when quitting one's job. It is likely intended with the meaning of the former but might have been written that way to include the latter as another layer to the words. As Vegard is effectively also quitting his job as a slave by dying.

Conclusion

This time someone must die as a party favour at the wedding, and the choice of sacrifice is decided by throwing Vegard under the bus by voting him out. Both versions very clearly show an impressively casual relation to the sacrifice of human life. Vegard which was voted to die also reacts with the mild bitterness someone that was voted to remain to work overtime while everyone else gets to go home. So, he very easily accepts his death without fighting it at all and barely making any complaints, which is a commonality in multiple scenes.

Season 1 Episode 1: The Homecoming; Sacrifice to the gods

(Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2016) The scene starts at 6:36 and ends 10:50

Synopsis & analysis

Kark has just returned to the village after having failed to make the elderly do the ættestup. We get a couple establishing shots of daily life in the village, showing both tools and games that are period accurate. This builds a certain trust with the viewer that even though the show is mainly comedy it has still made sure to accurately give the feeling of the early Viking age. Kark enters the great hall to give his report to the temporary chieftain Orm sitting on the throne doing some knitting. When Orm asks Kark how it went Kark omits the truth by saying he'll never see those guys again, to which he replies by saying good three times in decreasing volume. This is interrupted by Hildur walking in on Orm and Kark and asking Orm if he really sent the old people in their village to their death. I'll now write the conversation between Hildur and Orm in the English version:

Hildur: So, the rumors are true. That you sent the old people in the village to their deaths.

Orm: Well, they, they took the ættestup.

Hildur: You finally got the chance to run this village Orm. And the result is that people are forced to throw themselves to their death because we don't have any food. What kind of leadership is that? Are you pleased with yourself?

Orm: Yes I think things are starting to fall into place.

Hildur: Well I don't.

Orm: Well then *smacks tongue against roof of mouth* we'll just have to agree to disagree. Which is something I've decided to start saying.

The dialogue between Orm and Hildur shows us another critical look at ættestup to establish comedy, this time it is used in relation to how it reflects on the leadership of the chieftain. As ættestupet was a way for the elderly to not burden their families and ensure more food for those still fit to work, it ends up being phrased harshly and direct by Hildur. Because we don't have any food you are forcing people to throw themselves off cliffs. We are also showcased a bit of Orm's personality in this exchange as he replies that he feels things are falling into place when Hildur criticizes him. And we get a running joke he has of introducing sayings that we use in today's society. Showing that the show not only applies modern logic to poke fun at old traditions but also brings in sayings and tendency from modern time to create comedy.

The conversation between Hildur and Orm moves on to the topic of chieftain Olav and the viking ship which is over a month late in returning home. Hildur accuses Orm of doing nothing about it, to which Orm asks what he's supposed to do, these things are up to Odin and the other gods. Hildur says that they could at least try sacrificing some slaves to bring the ship home. Orm first turns it down feeling it's just not worth the hassle, they have some back and forth in which Hildur exposition dumps some information for the viewer. As she states Orm is Olav's brother and if anything were to happen to him, he'd take over as chieftain, Orm's wife Frøya is on the boat, and that it's Orm's dream to be chieftain. Eventually Orms agrees to sacrifice some slaves after Hildur tells him that is pretty much what everyone in the village wants. Hildur then leaves the great hall calling to Kark for him to follow her, much in the same manner as calling to a dog.

We once more see a comedic situation created by using old practices. Where in previous instances there has been cases of applying more modern logic to old traditions, in this case it's the act of sacrificing slaves that are argued as a common-sense thing to do. Where the absurd notion of taking human lives to achieve something completely unrelated, bringing

the Viking ship home in this case, is seen as a normal way to solve problems. It also creates a clear contrast between Hildur criticizing ættestup as though it's an absurd thing to do, while at the same time advocating human sacrifice to ensure voyage safety. It also contributes to showing us part of Hildur's personality with the hypocrisy of criticizing old practices while at the same time suggesting and following through on them.

Kark is then brought up to the chopping block as he is to be the third sacrifice to the gods, we can see the head of the second slave rolling off right before this. Hildur stands with the axe raised behind her head, blood splatters in her face as she calls out to the gods to be prepared for their third sacrifice. Kark interjects right before Hildur is about to swing the axe, asking if she is certain that they really need to sacrifice three slaves to ensure the boat and crew's safety, and if they can even be sure that it works. Hildur replies that the sacrifice of slaves is not an exact science and that they'll just have to test their way forward. Kark says he completely understands but wanted to make absolutely sure as it is kind of impossible to undo. Before Hildur is able to execute Kark, someone exclaims that the ship has returned. Hildur lays down the axe and rushes off while Kark breathes a sigh of relief and says "see, only two slaves were necessary, please remember it for next time".

This part works well to show the brutal environment they find themselves in with the blood splatters and dead bodies killed off so haphazardly. The seriousness is offset due to the discussion Kark and Hildur have of the scientific approach to sacrifice. The scenes manage to weave two absurdist throughlines, one by having Hildur demand the sacrifice of slaves after admonishing Orm for ordering ættestup. The second by having the slaves be sacrificed to the gods for the Vikings safe return, while we as the viewer know the Vikings are close to home already. It manages to blend anachronistic, observational, absurdist, and dark humour together to make an early example of the types of humour that permeate the Norsemen show.

Version differences

In the English version Hildur is more direct in showing specifically her criticism of Orm as chieftain. When she enters the great hall during Kark and Orm's conversation she says "so

it's true" about the elderly jumping off a cliff, while in the Norwegian version she asks Orm who then confirms it. And when asking Orm if he's happy with the way he's been running the village and Orm saying he is happy and feels it's all been falling into place. She exclaims that she is not happy with it, while in the Norwegian version she states that he is the only one in the whole village who feels that way. At the same time, when Hildur is talking about sacrificing slaves, she states it is pretty much what people want, which is effectively the same thing she says in the Norwegian version. It's possible the Norwegian version aimed to be a bit harsher on Orm as Hildur gives the image that the entire village doesn't like him in their conversation while that is something the viewer will have to assume on their own in the English version.

Conclusion

We are able to see that even in scenes where the scene is shot and worded almost identically without adding or removing length to the scene, we still get to see differences in how far they want to go with jokes depending on the version. With the show in general being crass, brutal, and harsh in many spots, we can still see the Norwegian version pushing harder for it. Or maybe it is the English version that has toned it a little bit down. We can still see it being changed slightly with an international market in mind.

Season 2 Episode 2: Slavebound; Master thief

(Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2017) The scene starts at 27:49 and ends 29:32 with a different scene playing in the middle 28:22 – 28:50.

Synopsis & analysis

A Chinese master thief has been hired by Jarl Varg to infiltrate Norheim's longhouse and steal the map that shows the route to the west. The scene opens on an establishing shot of the dragon decoration on the front of the longhouse during night-time and we see two men armed with spears stationed outside the entrance. We hear low drums and horns that

creates a serious atmosphere. The thief is shown running through the forest doing a front flip as he continues running. After a little while he crouches to the ground, and we see he has spotted a guard standing in the outskirts of the forest taking a piss. He pulls out a blowpipe and quickly launches a poison dart at the guard. The guard quickly falls over and we see the two guards by the door react to the noise they heard. One of the guards decides to go check it out, and while he's about to pass the corner of the longhouse thief quickly scales the wall to avoid detection. [28:22] We then get a short cut to a different scene before we return [28:50] to see a guard patrolling inside the longhouse, with only streaks of light shining through the cracks of the door. We then see the thief slide down from the ceiling with a rope in mission impossible style and break the neck of the guard. Previously, when outside, the music remained at a low background level, but inside the longhouse it builds to become louder over time with the drums becoming more intense. We move to another room with two guards stationed in it, one of the guards is quickly pulled out of the shot, before the thief flips up behind the last guard and stabs him in the neck. The music then completely stops as the thief lands on the floor of the room containing the treasure chest with the map in question. He checks for any mechanisms on the chest's lid before he quickly opens the chest, retrieves the map and turns to leave. The map turns out to be tied to some string that when pulled opens a latch in the ceiling where a large boulder slowly slides down, we see the thief standing still looking at it for a second before it cuts to black, and we hear his head being crushed by the boulder.

Analysis

This is a very clear-cut example of subverting expectations as the character of the master thief has only been present in one previous scene in addition to this one, and in both he is shown to be incredibly skilled. As this is both an action sequence and a scene with no dialogue it does not last for a very long time, but the time is used well to play up how skilled the thief is meant to come across. In addition to taking out four guards the thief also performs multiple unnecessary acrobatics which one would obviously be impractical in a real setting. These are used both to enhance the excitement of the scene in addition to play up extra hard on how skilled he is intended to be perceived by the viewer. The music adds

to the tense feeling of watching the scene, with first using a serious tune created with slow drums and horns, with it becoming quicker and more intense while the thief is taking down the guards inside the longhouse. The suspense in the viewer builds throughout it all, and the sudden stop of music and action leaves the viewer with a tense excitement for what we assume to be the end of the scene. And when we see the master thief take the map only to suddenly stop, we notice the comically large string tied around the map and the slowly sliding down boulder we experience a subversion in expectation as the thief handled everything up to this point masterfully only to be done in by an incredibly impractical trap. The trap itself harkens back to movies like Indiana Jones or home alone with elaborate mechanism that often rely on the person standing still on the spot. Many in the audience and shows themselves have made fun of boulder scenes where people run away from a rolling or sliding boulder when there is ample space on both sides to avoid it. The same observation registers here with the viewer as given what we've previously seen of the master thief he should be more than skilled enough to avoid it in time, but he does not and is killed by the comically impractical trap.

Versions

This is one of the very few scenes in the show which do not have any spoken dialogue, so the scene was obviously filmed once and used for both language versions. Sometimes the editing or sound effect use vary with the Norwegian and English version to enhance or decrease certain aspects of the show. But this time, nothing in the scene was different in any way. Both versions are 100% identical.

Conclusion

There are multiple places in the show where it subverts expectations for the sake of comedy. I felt this example was the clearest example in the show given that in this scene, the only humour present in the scene is the subversion of expectations at the end. Unless we count the guard that pisses and falls over from the poison dart funny, which can be argued for. But the punchline is clear cut in this scene, and it showcases the willingness of

the show to create build-up of tension for the sake of humorous subversion. It also showcases how music is often used in conjunction with the more serious parts, but usually disappears leaving only diegetic sounds when we move onto more comedic dialogue or scenes.

Season 2 Episode 3: Hand Job; New Prosthesis

(Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2017) Scene starts at 0:10 and ends at 4:20.

Synopsis & analysis

The cold open of this episode is a scene where Jarl Varg has gathered a crowd of men standing around listening to him speak, Hund and Varg is on top of a dais where Varg is sitting on a chair with two banners with a wolf howling at the moon on each side. Jarl Varg confirms that both his hands were taken by the vikings of Norheim (Frøya cut them off at the end of season 1). And Torstein Hund explains “And this is something Jarl Varg considers a challenge. Not a problem!”. To which Varg gives an approving nod before Hund continues talking “Or two challenges and not two problems. I guess”. Varg looks annoyed at Hund with some twitches occurring on his neck before he starts addressing the crowd again.

We see a blacksmith locked in an iron cage with a lot of wood and tinder surrounding it.

Varg and the blacksmith have the following exchange:

Varg: And this blacksmith has made new prostheses for me. These.

*Varg shows off a huge flat metal hand resembling a giant foam hand people wear to sporting events.

Varg: Miserable craftsmanship. Nowhere near up to standard. I want prostheses that are better than hands. Prostheses that will give me an advantage both in daily life, and battle.

Blacksmith: Ehm. Jarl, I've tried my best. I really did.

*Varg lifts up his giant metal hand again showing it off while looking at the blacksmith in disbelief while the blacksmith speaks.

Blacksmith: But this is the year 791. And that, that is how far we have come in our metal working. Right?

*He turns around to look at the other blacksmiths gathered around, some of them nod back to him and he turns back to Varg

Blacksmith: Yes.

Varg informs the blacksmiths gathered that they are the best blacksmiths in all of Norway, and that he want's new and better prothesis. He also threatens them that should they fail, they will suffer the same fate as the blacksmith in the cage. At his Hund walks over to the cage and gets ready to ignite it. As Hund readies himself to ignite the fire the Blacksmith in the cage begs for his life and we hear dramatic music rise up in the form of hand drums and cello to create a lingering ominous feeling. The Blacksmith looks on in horror as Hund starts to hit his flintstones together, but after a short while notices that the tinder has yet to ignite. The Blacksmith grabs the opportunity to plead with Jarl Varg again, this time in a fashion more akin to a business or department making an apology in modern times. Using lines such as "It shouldn't have happened, but it happened" and "I will learn from this. I will go over my routines and I will fix this" to argue for his life. After a while the ominous music stops leaving us with only the diegetic sound of birds and other animals in the area. At the same time, Hund gives up on trying to ignite the wood and comments on hard it is to get the fire going "...Should've had some grass. I wonder if these branches have gotten a little wet". He goes on to try and light the fire by rubbing a stick fast up and down on a log commenting on "It worked when I tried it earlier today" before he gives up completely and steps to the side.

This part works as a funny deconstruction of executions in movies where Varg intends to use the Blacksmith burning alive as a fear-based inspiration for the other blacksmiths to work harder. In movies the execution would usually work in both the timing and manner intended

to give the villain more gravitas. But here it is pulled away to the logical endpoint of having wood lying out in the mud over an extended period will make it wet and impossible to ignite. Have all tension escape the moment both for the characters in the scene and the viewer. Torstein Hund's frustrations in attempting to ignite the flame can also remind the viewer of trips into nature where we ourselves struggle to get the bonfire started. Something relatable for most that take trips in Norwegian nature and many other places in the world.

Giving up on trying to burn the Blacksmith alive, Varg shakes his head in preparation and addresses the crowd once more.

Varg: Now. Join me on a small journey. Close your eyes and imagine that the fire is burning like crazy

*Everyone closes their eyes except the Blacksmith in the cage which looks around somewhat befuddled.

Varg: The flames crackle pleasantly and starts licking the body of this miserable blacksmith. Helpless he tosses his head back and forth, screaming in fear and pain.

*The Blacksmith which had closed his eyes in the meantime opens them again looking very unsure of what to do with himself. Hund stands off to the side with a look of amazement mouthing a silent "wow" while listening to Jarl Varg.

Varg: Eventually his all-consuming screams die down. And when the flames dance ends. Nothing but a charred mute lump is left behind. Now you can open your eyes again.

*Everyone opens their eyes; Hund gives off a gasp while opening his.

Hund: You see? The images you create in your mind are often more powerful than the real thing.

Varg: Those mental images should should motivate you to work even harder. To give me something better than these, piece of shit hands. Now get to work!

This is a very comedic follow-up to the joke of the wood not igniting with Varg trying to paint the picture of how he ideally envisioned the execution to go. The absurdness of having someone narrate an imagined execution to the crowd watching as a method to inspire fear. Hearing Varg say “Those mental images should motivate you to work even harder” when he clearly hoped it would have been physical images” The silliness is further cranked up given that the music already had stopped, and we only hear the diegetic sound of birds chirping in the distance. And it is brought even further with Torstein Hund actually being impressed by Varg's narrative and trying to hype up that the imagination is even more powerful than the real thing. This is an example brought quite far and it shows a trend in some of the jokes employed by the showrunners, by subverting expectations to deflate imposing or menacing moments for the show's antagonists, especially Jarl Varg.

Versions

There are some small differences present between the English and Norwegian version in this scene. In the Norwegian version when the Blacksmith is apologising to Varg and explaining that metalworking hasn't progressed further in the year 791, he is cut off by Varg before he is able to turn around and get support from his fellow blacksmiths. The English version ends up lingering longer on the point that they can't create advanced prothesis, likely only due to the English episodes commonly having 1-2 minutes longer runtime. But it also works to enhance the crazy ask Varg has in wanting prothesis that are better than regular hands, given that it's over 1200 years between the show and modern-day medical science. And even today most prothesis are still relatively simple. The joke of Torstein Hund not getting the wood to ignite is played up further in the Norwegian version with him grunting and wheezing a lot more while trying to get it going. He also additionally comments “Det hær var litt dumt da, va dårlig timing.” While looking at Varg. In the middle of rubbing the stick. And after giving up at the end he also says “Det hær er bare å beklage. Tar det på min kappe”. It plays up the awkwardness of the fire not igniting a little more than the English version, but I believe the intention of the added lines and noises was for the sake of relatability with Norwegian viewers. Making sure they can share extra in the feeling and frustration of not getting the fire going while out camping.

Conclusion

The scene gives us multiple different type of jokes and shows off multiple of the humour stylings the show often employs. The show often applies anachronisms where it will use contemporary logic and ideas to discuss or criticise how they do things. In this scene they employ something used more seldom but also present in some scenes where it is clearly stated the time period they live in and the technological limitations that employ. With the blacksmith stating that they live in the year 791 and using that as a reason to why prosthesis must be so simple. It also shows the use of dark humour turning the process of burning a man alive into an absurdist joke by having the audience needing to imagine it. Also, how the displays of power are often subverted by not working out in the manner it usual would in fiction. It also shows a classic use of diegetic sounds to make parts more awkward when we are stuck watching something drag on, with the music stopped and only hearing bird chirping and goats yelling in the background. And lastly, we see how they like to use relatability as another of the methods to aid in the humour.

Season 2 Episode 4: Vengeance; Ragnars tattoo

(Helgaker & Togersen, 2017) Scene starts at 11:47 and ends at 13:31

Synopsis & analysis

The scene opens on Ragnar getting a tattoo on his right arm from a man using a bird's claw dipped in something inky and ashy. While there is no evidence that Vikings did have tattoos the tools used in this scene still contributes to the atmosphere of a show placed in the early Viking age. We see Arvid standing just outside the vestibule of the tent casually holding onto one of the poles while watching Ragnar get his tattoo. Before he starts talking Ragnar looks down at the spot on his arm where the man is scratching with the bird claw. Clearly enjoying himself, Ragnar looks straight up while making exaggerated pain grunts before chuckling and he starts talking. [11:56]

Ragnar: You know Arvid. The thing about me, my body is my rune stick and my tattoos are my saga.

Arvid: Yeah, it's cool.

Ragnar: It's like I've always said. Show me a man with a tattoo and I'll show you a man with an interesting story.

Arvid: Yeah, but it seems like everyone has tattoos these days. So um, does that mean that everyone has an interesting story?

*Ragnar makes an audible hmm while making a grimace and looking slightly up, it is clear he wants to say no.

Ragnar: Well with me, I'm like a canvas of my experiences. My story is etched in lines and shadows, and you can read it on my arms, my shoulders, my back, my stomach, my legs even.

*Arvid takes a step forward and points at a series of small black lines on Ragnars right arm

Arvid: So, what is the story behind those lines anyways?

Ragnar: This? They are a reminder of all the women I've had.

*Ragnar looks satisfied down at his arm which have over a 100 black lines.

Arvid: What!?! But that's a lot!

Ragnar: Yeah, it's quite a few.

*Arvid stands for a second in disbelief, looking like he's thinking about just how many lines there are.

Arvid: That must be about every woman in a 20-mile radius around here.

Ragnar: Yeah but, they are not only physical penetrations Arvid.

Arvid: Hmm?

Ragnar: Two of them are physical and the rest are fantasy penetrations.

*Arvid repeats even louder

Arvid: Hmm!?

*Ragnar looks around to see if anyone is listening in

Ragnar: You know... When I work myself.

Arvid: So, you have tattooed a line for every time you've stroked your sword?

Ragnar: No no no. Only the hand jobs I want to remember. So I can look back and reminisce.

*Arvid scoffs

Ragnar: They are like small pages in the saga of Ragnar in a way. You know?

*Ragnar looks to Arvid for validation. Arvid scoffs again and utters a forced

Arvid: Yeah. It's cool.

*Ragnar quickly and dismissively responds

Ragnar: Yeah. I know.

A clear relatability drawn from this scene to the viewer is Ragnar's embodiment of a hipster type persona. He desires to come off as unique and deep, and when that is not achieved, he attempts to twist the narrative to fit his own portrayal. Most people can probably relate to knowing one or more people, especially in our youth, that make attempts to come off as deep and profound through visual mediums. Such as Ragnar's tattoos which he claims tell interesting stories. When Arvid observes that pretty much everyone has gotten tattooed these days, Ragnar is quick to distance himself from others by explaining that in his case the story of his life is told through his body, using poetic language like "my history is etched in lines and shadows" to make it more fanciful. This is quickly challenged again when he is asked what story the black lines tell, and he informs it's every woman he's been with.

At first it appears impressive as it is over 100 lines on his arm. While someone might believe such a claim today when we live in cities with tens of thousands of inhabitants, Arvid quickly questions the possibility of it. Given the sparsity of population in Norway in 791 Arvid rightly and humourously points out "That must be about every woman in a 20-mile radius from here". Ragnar who tried first to play it cool by acting casually is now forced to further

elaborate that only two of the lines are physical penetrations, while the rest are fantasy. The perplexed look Arvid gives in response to this makes Ragnar continue to explain, making the situation more awkward and deflating the hipster vibe he was giving off at the start of the scene.

Versions

There is only the smallest of additional parts in the English version. Even the language used is almost identical for most of the scene with Ragnar's as they can be said to be directly translatable. That is until the end of the scene when Ragnar must explain what he means with "fantasy penetrations". In the Norwegian version Arvid also says "da har du ha stått på skikkelig da" to further reinforce the joke of how impossible it is for Ragnar to have been with so many women. The slight difference in the shooting of the scene is after Arvid reacts with a louder "hmm!" where Ragnar reacts to taking a moment to look around before saying "you know, when I work myself". While in the Norwegian version he quickly says "Ja asså, når jeg har holdt på sjæl" as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. Arvid also uses the euphemism "stroke your sword" in the English version, and "dra i handtralla" in the Norwegian version, while Ragnar uses the term "handjob" and "runk" respectively.

I would make the argument that the aim of the humour in the two versions of the scene are slightly different, often in the analysis so far, we've observed that the English version attempts to be a bit less cruel/dark in its humour. In this case it appears that the English version is focusing more on the awkward humour and how Ragnar is invertedly made a fool of. Due to Arvid only mentioning the impossibility of Ragnar having slept with so many women before Ragnar must answer, the fact that he looks around before admitting that most of the lines represents the masturbation sessions he wants to remember. And that Arvid uses the euphemism of "stroking the sword" which in my opinion is more coy way to refer to masturbation than the Norwegian choice of "dra i handtralla". All these parts work together to highlight the awkwardness of the conversation between Arvid and Ragnar. The awkwardness in the Norwegian version still looks intentional, but not to the same effect of the English version. Instead, it appears that the absurdity of the topic they are talking about is a bigger focus. With the absence of Ragnar looking around before admitting almost

all the tattoo lines are times he masturbated and Arvid giving extra comments on the impossibility of sleeping with over 100 women, which pulls some of the comedic weight away from the awkwardness and into the strange nature of the conversation.

Conclusion

This scene shows us how certain characters can be used as vehicles for different jokes. In many comedies the characterisation of characters can often take a backseat for the sake of a joke. The same is true in Norsemen but I'd argue that most of the time the show is able to tell its jokes without needing the characters to bend over backwards to get the humour across. Of course, this might be attributed to how far out many of the show's characters are and how callously the characters often approach things such as killing. Ragnar which is a recurring character through the show is shown at different points having deep knowledge of fashion and trends, but as we see here, he is also taking steps to appear deep and interesting. This gives the character a comedic dynamic of being able to both be the object and make others the object of ridicule when commenting on fashion. This shows how the show's writers have taken care to make sure the recurring characters can both be the butt of a joke and make others the butt of the joke.

Season 2 Episode 4: Vengeance; Domino interpretation

(Helgaker & Torgersen, 2016) Scene starts at 15:22 and ends at 19:03

Synopsis & analysis

We open on a sweeping shot of the sea while we hear soft lute and flute music playing, very much in the manner one would associate medieval music in media, and we see two children carry a basket of apples over to a pile of pelts. There are many people present standing gathered and holding different objects, which they take turn to place in the pile. They are preparing for the funeral of the law speaker which was killed earlier in the episode. The

show manages to accurately portray the part where a person of the law speaks standing would get buried with grave goods, which is the tribute the villagers are placing in the pile. While Arvid (The current chieftain of Norheim) and Rufus (The newly appointed law speaker) is watching the proceedings, Torstein Hund walks into the scene and places himself next to Arvid. They then strike up a conversation which shows that even though the visual part of the scene creates an accurate depiction of a viking funeral preparation, the audio part does not. They first make chitchat about how you never know how one should act in these situations and Hund ends up admitting of his own volition that the coin purse he brought as tribute also have rocks in it to provide extra weight. Hund even starts off on a verbal stumble with the line "I've come to pay my condolences" mixing up "pay my respects" and "I've come to give my condolences" which continues on making their small talk feel awkward and forced. After a little while, Hund steals some glances at Arvid while it looks like he is steeling himself for something. Then he launches into the conversation I want to highlight in this scene. [16:52]

Hund: Seems like the first domino has fallen.

*Arvid turns to look confused at Hund for a moment before returning to overlook the preparation, Hund keeps talking while staring at Arvid.

Hund: Don't rule out that the Arvid domino is the next to fall

Arvid: What's domino?

*After getting this question Hund stops staring at Arvid, breathes in through his clenched teeth. Clearly giving the impression he was hoping Arvid wouldn't ask this question.

Hund: Domino is some, uhhh, kind of game Varg got from this merchant somewhere out in the boonies. And if you line up the pieces you can trigger some sort of chain reaction.

Where one-piece falls after another.. also, Loki if I know. I was just told to say this to you.

*It is apparent that Hund does not exactly know what domino is either and while he stumbles through his explanation before he gives up at the end, we also get some far shots to show people still placing tribute for the funeral, reminding us of the setting the

conversation is taking place in. Arvid is managing to look annoyed and confused while Hund tries to explain. Before he somewhat annoyed replies;

Arvid: But am I supposed to know what a chain reaction is? Do people walk around and know these things?

Hund: All I know is what I was told to say to you, and now I've said it. So I guess it is up to you how you interpret it.

*We get a long pause in the conversation while we see a woman bringing a gold saucer to the tribute pile. We get the impression the conversation is over, but after some silence, Arvid quickly looks at Hund and resumes the conversation.

Arvid: But I don't know what to interpret.

*Hund becomes very frustrated at this as he himself doesn't really understand what he's talking about.

Hund: But I s... But I, I. I told you. I don't know it any better than you. I'm sending a message. What Varg told me to say, now I've said it.

Arvid: And I'm sure you know the essence of what you are talking about. So, is it a threat? Or what is it?

*Hund thinks for a short while before nodding to affirm what he's saying.

Hund: Well, I guess it is a threat, yeah. I'm pretty sure of that.

*The conversation again ends, and the two stand there for a while as people continue to place tribute in the pile.

Hund: Have you planned any type of food gathering or snack gathering after this?

Arvid: Yeah we will have a gathering for the closest family, and friends.

*As Arvid put's extra weight on the word "friends" we can see a look of dissapointment on Hund. Once again we get a long pause with the two just standing there before Hund again continues.

Hund: Well I was, I was supposed to go anyways so its...

Arvid: Yeah

Hund: Getting late. Anyways see you

*Hund awkwardly and slowly stagger off while nodding at the people he passes, as he is leaving just as the funeral itself is starting.

This chat between Arvid and Hund showcases both anachronisms and deconstruction. The threat Varg makes toward Arvid is supposed to happen through a metaphor that implies the first incident (death of the lawspeaker) was orchestrated by Varg and that Arvid is next, as we see in the text dominoes is used for this metaphor in this case. This type of veiled threats often appears in political or legal drama series. The one that comes to mind is game of thrones as it is a fantasy series with a lot of political themes. Hund then attempts to deliver the threat in a manner we could find on a show like game of thrones, but in this case, we experience a sort of deconstruction as it plays out the scene as though the person receiving the threat have no idea what the intent of the message is. It is also common that the person delivering the threat is not the one making the threat, so when the person receiving the threat does not understand the message, it forces the third party to elaborate. The scene then ends up with a juxtaposition on the power position of these types of scenes, as it ends up being Hund that ends up in the worst spot, having to struggle to explain the meaning behind Varg's message. As we see him first hoping that Arvid wouldn't ask about the message, then get frustrated due to being unable to properly explain what dominoes are. In the end, Hund is given a sort of escape from the conversation through Arvid explicitly asking if the message was intended as a threat. Hund is in other words the one who ends up clearly more uncomfortable position compared to Arvid.

The anachronism comes in the use of dominoes as a metaphor, as it was still over 500 years until dominoes existed in 791. It applies the humour of the character using a metaphor which is common and easily understood by the viewer but is understandably unknown to the characters. It is also greatly exemplified when Arvid says "But am I supposed to know what a chain reaction is? Do people walk around and know these things?" Applying terms and metaphors that would be common knowledge today to characters in 791 who would be

unlikely to know of either. In that way the show achieves a sort of dramatic irony in that we know what is intended, but the characters get stuck in an awkward conversation trying to sort out Jarl Varg's threat.

Versions

A funny difference in these two scenes is early on when Hund stumbles on his words of "I've come to pay my condolences" creating a mixed version of two common phrases, where he in the Norwegian version says "Jeg kommer for å betale min respekt" which is just a directly translated version of the common English phrase "paying my respects". In both versions Arvid follows up with asking if that's really something people say and Hund responding, "I think so". Showing that the joke was probably written in English first given that it's a mix-up of the English phrases.

A clear difference in the editing of the two versions in this scene is apparent in the part where Arvid and Hund make small talk on how difficult it is to know what proper social behaviour at a funeral is, which they do a little before Hund delivers the threat from Jarl Varg. As previously mentioned in the English scene the small talk is a bit awkward where we either see people placing tributes or a focused shot on Hund looking at Arvid while talking, Arvid seemingly dismissive of Hund. While in the Norwegian version the shots of Hund talking to Arvid is taken from a little farther away and doesn't focus on Hund's face. Arvid looks back at Hund while he's commenting and the two chuckle and smile a little during the small talk. In the English version we as the viewer is being prepped for the awkward dialogue of Hund trying to explain Varg's metaphorical threat to Arvid. As Hund starts off with the social awkward greeting of mixing the phrase for his condolences and it is retained through the whole scene with Arvid being dismissive of Hund making it, so Hund is the one needing to initiate all the conversations in the scene. While in the Norwegian one the two gives of a more amicable atmosphere to each other which makes the start slightly awkward, then pleasant, then awkward again. The part where Hund works equally well in both versions to hint at his social ineptitude.

Conclusion

As mentioned in the analysis of the scene where Varg attempts to burn the Blacksmith alive and fails, the show likes to create humorous situations of typical threat scenarios from movies going awry. Given that scenes in fiction usually play out with perfect timing, the show writers are prone to create these situations but bring a sense of realism about them given that they don't play out as intended. In real life an unsuspecting person would likely not pick up on or understand a metaphorical threat being delivered to them, and by having Arvid question the message, it forces the trope to play out a logical extreme where the one delivering the threat must elaborate and attempt to explain. There are other cases of deconstruction for the sake of comedy in the show, but it is most prevalent in scenes where the initial intent of the characters was to be menacing.

Season 3 Episode 4: War Table; Nothing Rod

(Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2020) Scene starts at 5:50 and ends at 8:43

Synopsis & analysis

The scene opens with Chieftain Olav, Arvid, Frøya, Ragnar and Ørn walking with each of their horse in tow, Orm running to catch up from behind with a bouquet of flowers he picked off-camera. They have arrived at the outskirts of Jarl Vargs village, Vargheim, due to summons by Varg for a war council. Due to season 3 being a prequel season, this is the first time in the continuity where Varg has changed his look to appear eviller and imposing, which Olav comments on. [6:15]

Olav: Wow. I like your new style

Varg: Thank you

Olav: I think that's good. Someone dares to stand out in the crowd

*Varg becoming uncomfortable with Olav continuing to talk about his style change clearly hoping they will move on from the conversation topic.

Varg: Very good to hear, thank you

*Olav turns around to address the other Vikings

Olav: Hey everyone! Varg's got a new style. Real scary

To which the others give slight smiles and nod in agreement. Varg is visibly uncomfortable at this. This is a good bit of dramatic irony for the viewer as we know from previous seasons, and even part of season 3 that Varg is evil, but Olav only perceives it as Varg switching up his style.

The scene moves on to Arvid commenting on the nithing pole they are standing next to inquiring to the two men standing next to it if it functions. The man responds in an anachronism where he explains the nithing pole in the same manner as an artillery cannon.

Arvid: Is that a nithing pole?

Man: u-huh

Arvid: Does it work?

*The man scoffs at the question before answering

Man: Vel uh, through the power of magic it can evoke misfortune and accidents at a distance of several kilometres. So yeah. It works pretty well.

The pole is set up in case Jarl Bjørn and his army were to attack through the forest. Torstein Hund makes a point of how finished Bjørn would be if he were to go through the nithing beam. The others give some light chuckles before noticing two people on horses riding straight towards the direction the nithing pole is pointing. Hund tries to yell at the two to turn around as they are about to rise straight into the beam. He notices that the two riding

towards the beam is his dad and brother, panicked he starts yelling louder and waving his arms. Eventually everyone in the group starts yelling and hand gesturing for the two to move out of the nithing beam, but since they are too far apart the father and brother doesn't hear them. They end up stopping in the middle of the beam and starts waving back. Jarl Varg tells Hund that they should be put down and the two have the following exchange. [7:42]

Varg: Eliminate them.

*Hund turns around to look at Varg

Hund: Eliminate dad and Trym?

Varg: They are doomed anyway.

Hund: Another alternative could be to wait and see if nith actually works.

Varg: Nith works! They are dead men walking.

*The music becomes more tense, and Hund takes a moment before he replies.

Hund: Yes, of course you're right.

*Varg and Olav look at each other and Varg shrugs

Hund then gives the signal for a group of archers that weren't present earlier in the scene to prepare their arrows. Then gives the signal to shoot. The arrows hit and kill Hund's dad and brother to which Varg says "Straight to the head. Very good boys". Hund then stares for a moment at their corpses before his lip starts quivering and he turns around to walk away, turning his head to look back multiple times. When he passes Orm, Orm turns after him and says, "My condolences". To which Hund replies with tear choked voice "Thank you".

The show commonly employs anachronisms for the sake of comedy, where the characters use modern day logic to argue or discuss an old tradition. In the case of the nithing beam

however the comedy comes from the rift between the characters and viewer. Nithing rods were believed to be methods to send curses at others by attaching a horse head at the end of a pole inscribed with runes of the selected curses. Even if some people in Iceland still does it for symbolic reasons in modern times, the common man no longer believes a nithing rod has magical power. So, the scene becomes farcical to the viewer thanks to the complete belief the characters show in the nithing rod being dangerous. This is accentuated with there being no music while the Vikings are yelling and waving trying to get the two to move out of the way. And the shrug Varg gives to Olav at the end of the conversation between Varg and Hund also gives the impression that it was a waste of time to discuss it as it is common sense that nith works. The scene also takes a sudden darker turn when Varg gives the word to have the two killed. It is common in dark humour to suddenly shift the mood to something more serious or violent. And in this case it's clear to the viewer that killing the dad and brother is completely pointless and only a cruelty to Hund, which is reinforced extra when Hund says "Another alternative could be to wait and see if nith actually works" and Varg immediately replying with "Nith works!", letting the viewer know there is no way back and Hund is about to give the signal to have his family killed.

The writers have made sure to differentiate Orm from the group in this scene, even though the other Vikings accompanying Olav are all characters that have had multiple scenes through the show, they all play the same role in this scene. All of them have the same general reactions and do the same yelling and waving as the others, except for Orm. As he is shown holding a bouquet of flowers throughout the whole scene and he's the only one who offers his condolences to Hund. So, he is symbolically removed from the other more, "normal", Vikings by holding the flowers and even though he's standing on a line with the other Vikings, the camera doesn't show him, only letting us see the edge of his flower bouquet.

Versions

In the Norwegian version when Hund is about to give the signal to fire. We can hear his unsteady breathing and after his dad and brother are hit, we hear him chocking up immediately. Vargs words of "Rett I pæra, det er bra gutter" come off even more casual than the English line of "straight to the head, very good boys". Both showing more of Hund's distress and crying voice and Vargs extra casual choice of words are likely used to play up the "dark" part of the dark humour in this scene. Analysing the scene in this fashion might give the impression that the Norwegian version is the focus and the English version have been blunted to lessen the dark part of the darker humour, but it might as well have been the opposite with it being played up in Norwegian. A line in this scene which clearly shows the script was not exclusively written in Norwegian before being written in English is Varg's line of "They are dead men walking" and the Norwegian version of "De er døde menn gående". The English line is a famous phrase which is still commonly used in both real-life and media. It is not common to use the Norwegian version of the phrase, even within Norway, which means it was likely directly translated from English. The nithing pole is also given the same amount of detail in the Norwegian and English version as the viewer is not explained what a nithing pole is but is given a clear idea of it being a device that curses other by magic. It is possible they kept the term in English instead of calling it a curse/scorn pole either because nithing pole invokes an old and pagan feeling, giving the impression of being something old and nordic, or possibly because the word nith(nid) plays better with the rift between the vikings and the viewer given how much they believe in the power of nith.

Conclusion

In this scene we get to see one of the shows classic humour strategies of using anachronisms, by explaining the nithing pole as though it was a modern-day weapon. And we get to see one of the rarer scenes of them using old belief and logic regarding nith, this is played up to a farcical level thanks to the vikings treating it as a death sentence to get nith on someone. Something that comes true in a self-fulfilling prophecy thanks to them killing the dad and brother because they were assumed to have been cursed.

5.3 discussion

After analysing a multitude of scenes, I hope I have been able to showcase all the different types of humour present in the Norsemen show. As the scene analyses looked at how the specific jokes worked while commenting on the type of humour and its commonality, we'll instead discuss the conclusions drawn from the scenes. Anachronisms have been shown to be a prevalent humour strategy through the show, and often used by transplanting a contemporary concept or idea to an old practice. Describing the nithing pole in the same manner a military rocket battery would, or carrier pigeons as if they were cell phones or email are clear cut examples of this. The amusement in these anachronisms comes both from the likening of an old object to a modern object, but also the incredulity the viewer experiences. This is by us knowing that nith obviously does not work and Hund talking about how we are unable to understand how the communication tools function when it is something as simple as a bird carrying a letter.

5.3.1 Version differences

So far, I have looked at and discussed version differences between the English and Norwegian versions of the Norsemen show. This has mainly been through analysing the differences in the particular scenes in question. So, in this section I am planning to discuss the broader picture of the version differences between the two shows based on what we've observed so far. An obvious source of difference in how the humour plays out in some scenes is the fact that the English version present on Netflix do not have the time restriction that the Norwegian version on NRK has. Given that most of the English episodes run 2-3 minutes longer they can use extra scenes or longer parts in the existing scenes. This can contribute to certain comedic moments being given more setup or extra time to breathe to let the humour sink in for the viewer. Apart from added comedic scenes very little addition to the humorous scenes present in the Norwegian version was observed in the English version. The extra time was often used for establishing shots or additional shots of a character moving or traveling to the scene. We can to the level of analysis that has been

done conclude that the duration difference of the two versions do not affect the type or experienced effect of humour significantly.

The language used to construct the jokes do feature differences that I believe have instances of intentional and unintentional changes to how the humour is received in both versions. Given the use of references and phrases which are sometimes Norwegian sayings and sometimes English sayings we can assume that some jokes were written in English first and some in Norwegian first. We know both language versions were being written at the same time and it is likely the writers mixed on creating scenes in the two different languages. At the very least we can tell for certain that both versions were the primary text and neither version was stuck doing concessions for the sake of translating the humour. Some of the smaller changes pertain to how casual or cruel certain jokes are. In the Norwegian version additional words or harsher descriptions are often used when a character insult someone. An example is when Hildur in the English versions expresses her disdain for Orm, but in the Norwegian version she makes a point to proclaim that no-one in the village likes Orm.

The coarser language has also been toned down a bit in the English version such as the characters not saying fuck or shit as much as we see in the Norwegian version. This might have been a request for the Netflix version, a decision by the creators to make it easier to market to different networks or might be intended to make the Norsemen show feel more aimed at teens and adults in the Norwegian version. Personally, I'd venture the reason is to make it easier to market due to different countries age rating systems, removing a lot of the common swear words to stay on the safe side. The show still swears a lot, but it uses Norse terms as replacement such as exchanging "what the hell is going on" with "what in Helheim is going on" and replacing times when someone would say "shit" or "fuck" with "Loki". Phrases such as "For god's sake" is also exchanged with "For Tor and Odin's sake". This is not only a clever way to reduce the amount of swearing for the sake of rating boards, but it also adds another comedic layer to the show as we the viewers experience a short burst of incredulity as we interchange the phrases, we are acquainted to with the ones the show

use. It also adds to the world building and the less serious tone a comedy wants to establish and maintain. The same is true for other phrases featured in the show, it makes for a good comedic anachronism to switch the wording of phrases we commonly use with old Norse words.

Certain camera shots and parts of acting are also changed between the versions. In most instances it can very easily be chalked up to natural differences when repeating a scene. But in a few instances a different angle, distance or timing is used for the camera shots to the degree where it must have been a conscious choice. The same is true for the acting, where a few scenes are acted differently to the degree where one is given the impression the difference between versions were a concrete decision. In certain scenes such as the invasion scene (Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2016, S1.E4) where the Norwegian version cuts to the side when Orm grabs the blade from one of the Vikings, making it appear that he was handed the blade. And in the part where he steps down from the boat, he stumbles his step as he starts the speech. These are also ways the perception of the show is changed slightly between the two versions. In this example, both are ways that make Orm seem more pathetic in the Norwegian version. This stays in line with the previous paragraph that Orm is treated extra cruelly in the Norwegian version, likely due to knowledge of American and Norwegian tv culture. An example where the comedy was experienced differently due to the camera and editing was in (Helgaker & Tøgersen, 2016, S1.E2) Rufus's attempt at escape from Norheim. Where he steps on a stick to balance over a shallow swamp that he might as well have jumped over or just stepped through. In the Norwegian version we just see him balance over on the stick, while in the English version we see him look for a stick, pick it up, and then balance over. It works as an example that the comedy of the two versions can be experienced differently even when no language is present. It was possibly different due to time restrictions in the Norwegian version or potentially that the joke would land better in the US if it was clearer cut. In my opinion it lands better in the English version due to the incredulity of Rufus looking for a stick to cross what is effectively a puddle.

In terms of difference between the versions we can conclude that there are many small differences present in the two versions, the majority of which are intentional. And to bridge the switch from difference discussion to types of humour I will discuss the last and maybe most significant schism between versions. The inherent possibilities the two languages give the comedy. Even though the writers were no doubt fluent in English and familiar with cultural expressions and references, growing up in a country will give a deeper understanding of the language and its applicability. As has been shown in the textual analysis the Norwegian language present is more flowery and varied. Even though the English version conveys the same intentions it does so in a less expressive language. The Norwegian is also able to use dialects for character differentiation and sometimes comedy. Such as Kark being a slave that was sent up north in his childhood speaking with a dialect from Northern Norway which contrasts the other Vikings in Norheim. The more subtle touches of varied language and different accents are not present in the English version, but it does hold its own difference which I would consider a strong point. The exaggerated Norwegian accent all the actors put on in the English version adds multitudes to the comedic atmosphere of the show. It is not something that pops up in the data while doing a content analysis, but in a textual analysis considering the whole picture it opens it up for examination. Outside of dramatic scenes void of talking the comedic accents of the cast will keep the audience primed with the expectance of humour. It matches well with the incongruity theory where experienced comedy is drawn from violating expectations, but the expectations usually need some form of comedic expectancy or else it might be received as frustrating instead. The viewers knowledge that they are watching a comedy likely already covers the necessity for expecting humour, but the addition of the accents goes a long way to make most interactions funnier.

5.3.2 The types of humour

When researching humour jokes or other short forms are the most popular to look at due to the ease of analysing their structure. As it has a clear beginning and punchline it becomes easier to place in a framework. At the same time, humour is a lot more than just setups and

punchlines and analysing strictly these parts of the perceived comedy would be erroneous. Components such as body language, intonation, lighting, camera angles, and many others all play a part in creating the atmosphere of a tv show. Couder (2019) explained a belief that it is impossible to just look for a punchline in a particular joke in the case of absurdist humour, and one needs to look at the entire text to get the necessary context. Given the results of the quantitative analysis and the qualitative analysis I am inclined to agree, and I believe this holds true for many other types of humour. A large part of the comedic atmosphere in the *Norsemen* show comes from the way the characters pronounce and articulate words. I would go as far as to claim that it is the main contributor to the experienced comedy outside of the more concrete jokes and punchlines.

As talked about two paragraphs ago, the Norwegian version uses different dialects and over the top intonation, in addition it also features a more varied vocabulary. While the English version uses a very hammed up or over done Norwenglish while speaking. Kåre Conradi (Salty Nerd Podcast, 2022) said that during his audition he was informed that his English pronunciation was too good and was asked if he could pronounce it worse. In response he hammed up the Norwegian accent as much as he could and was told it was perfect. This gives the English version an advantage and disadvantage compared to the Norwegian version. Comedically exaggerated accents can create a default situation where the viewer is considerably more susceptible for humour. Different moods can affect how likely we are to find something humorous. Sometimes it can be an atmosphere that is forced serious, such as an authority figure telling a group not to make a noise. Other times it can be a silly or happy atmosphere. In my own experience *Monty Python and the holy grail* (Gilliam & Jones, 1975) is a funny movie, and I have laughed while watching it myself and with friends. One time, we watched it with my entire high school class, and no one laughed throughout the entire movie. Watching a comedy with a bunch of people we know, but often not intimately, can lock us in a state where it feels socially unacceptable to laugh. Something that can be alleviated by having clear cut punchlines and laugh tracks, something that is not present in *Norsemen* or *Monty Python and the holy grail*.

It can be observed by comparing the results of the quantitative analysis and the qualitative analysis that the number of observed jokes observed during the quantitative coding were considerably less than one would expect from 9 hours of comedy. During the textual analysis of the scenes, we were able to find considerably more humorous moments, showing that the comedy often does not take the shape of a punchline. This falls in line with Couders (2019) thoughts on needing the complete text to find the absurdist humour funny. In the content analysis absurd humour was less prevalent than observation and wit, and this holds true for the punchlines as they are often verbally presented through observations or one-liners. But absurdist humour permeates the entire show from start to finish by the comedic actions and strange attitudes the characters take. They also consistently make choices that violate our expectations to some degree and use logic we can follow, but to a comically exaggerated degree. The same is true for the dark humour present in the Norsemen show even do a larger degree than the absurd humour. Dark humour is present in most episodes but rarely contains any punchlines to which the viewer would specifically laugh at the darker comedy. At the same time, due to the comedic atmosphere of Norsemen the viewer is able to safely engage with the dark moments present. The jokes preceding and proceeding such scenes can ensure the darker parts are also experienced as comedic. Due to the Norsemen show being an audio visual tv show, physical comedy was naturally present throughout. Many scenes contained elements of physical comedy and multiple jokes that were heightened due to the more physical elements. However, in terms of slapstick and that type of physical humour, there was not a huge increase in occurrences compared to the coding result. Even though it does not register as slapstick the exaggerations from the actors added to the humour in many of the scenes.

Wit ended up with the most observations in the coding results, much due to the speed of which punchlines within the wit category could be delivered. During the text analysis of the scenes, we are able to see quite a few instances of one liners and witty retorts, but the most prevalent of all was the observational humour. As stated earlier in the thesis, anachronisms are a big part of the Norsemen shows identity. It can fairly be described as modern-day people living in 800s Viking times for many of the jokes. The majority of the anachronistic jokes are tied to observational humour, something that is already a large presence even

outside of anachronisms. Using observational humour as the core style of humour in a show is potentially a good idea for a show intended for multiple markets. Given that observational humour often points out something weird it becomes easier to pick up on the humour due to the added explanation the observation provides. The same can be said for relatability, since many of the observational jokes made in the Norsemen show are relatable contemporary topics such as phones, relationships etc. The use of dramatic irony also fits into easily translatable jokes given how the joke often is overexplaining something the viewer already knows will come to pass.

6 Conclusion

After having performed and discussed both the coding results and the textual analysis we are left with an overview of which humour was prevalent, and how it was presented to create a format that was a good fit for a national and international market. After having looked at the differences we were able to determine that there is a multitude of differences between the two versions. However, many of the differences do not make a large impact on the humour of the show. There was a notable low amount of jokes that were changed between the two versions, perhaps unsurprisingly given both versions were made at the same time. The major differences in the humour of the show come from the naturally occurring differences when creating two different versions of a show. Given that the Norsemen show was written by two Norwegian writers the language is naturally more varied in the Norwegian version, even though they are fluent in English. At the same time the Norwenglish accents used in the English version provide their own strong avenue of comedy that in its own way make up for less poignant wording in jokes. This makes each version equally funny (in so far as this can be measured), with the Norwenglish accents winning out in my book, with their own strength and weakness. But the jokes present in both versions remain mostly the same.

As was discussed after the textual analysis, observational humour was the most prevalent of the jokes in the Norsemen show. Their strengths tying into the relatability of observational humour and how jokes built on observations is often easier to pick up on even for a viewer who doesn't fully grasp the cultural background of a joke. Anachronistic humour such as using contemporary logic to comment on old traditions or logic are simple for a viewer to pick up on and appreciate. The same is also true in reverse, where they use antiquated logic, the viewer knows for certain doesn't apply. It creates an easy access for people from many countries to relate to the general topics of the anachronisms. The show also avoids jokes that are particularly hard to effectively translate such as puns. Another likely reason the humour of the show lands well outside of Norway is due to the theme of Vikings and the juxtaposition of portraying them as stupid and comedic. Given that Vikings in most media are portrayed more seriously, it can add to the incongruity of the Norsemen show itself. The Norsemen show avoided jokes that are a struggle to retain in translation and using humour

stylings that are easy to understand for a global market such as funny accents, slapstick, observational humour, and witty comments.

Even with the unique format of both versions being made at the same time, there are still occurrences of jokes that are perceived different due to their translation. The show mainly stays clear of hard to translate jokes, but there are still certain cultural references that are more aimed at Norwegians. Usually, these jokes don't go very far in their cultural reference, but using typical lines that are intended to be relatable with Norwegians. The humour is still likely appreciated by people from other cultures, but in some instances, it might be to a lower degree. There are also a very few instances of puns in the show, and the few times they show up all were noted down as "changed" in the coding schema. All the observed puns were designed with the Norwegian version in mind. However, these were as mentioned, rare, and the English version was able to balance it out somewhat using references. That is not to say that the references would not be understood in Norwegian, and there were also some instances where the reference was perceived as funnier in the Norwegian version. More commonly, however, the references would be more recognisable in their English language version as Norwegians often experience international cultures through the English language.

It is apparent when analysing the show that considerations were made to make sure the English version would be on equal footing with the Norwegian version. As mentioned, some translations differences still ended up affecting certain jokes. This was a low amount, but one might hope for 0% given the unique position these two versions have. Of course, completely 0 perceivable differences in jokes are unrealistic, but is there a way to show could have achieved even less dissonance between versions? Some differences will always be necessary when a text is created in a new language and aimed at a different culture. In the case of Norsemen, the assistance of someone native to the US would probably have helped a great deal. Outside of the few puns used, the textual analysis showed that the Norwegian version has a more varied language and that many of the subtler cultural references are aimed at Norwegians. It is clear Helgaker and Torgersen have a solid grasp of

English, but due to not having lived in the US they are not able to draw on the nuanced use of language and cultural references, which may only be apparent to an American.

The Norsemen show ended up with many minute differences between versions, but as mentioned, few that affected the perceived humour of the jokes. The prevalent types of jokes in the show are observation and wit. It achieves these through a comedic atmosphere created by absurdism, dark humour, anachronisms, exaggerated physicality, and exaggerated accents. Through this Norsemen managed to create a show that is easily consumable for a Norwegian and English audience.

6.1 Final Discussion

The results of this research have shown, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the humour of the Norsemen show translated well between the two versions. While many changes were present most of the did not affect the perceived jokes present in the show. Where a format would normally be created and then left to the discretion of the country adapting it, Norsemen had its international version written and created at the same time. This shows that by being aware of the two versions during the creative process, the production was able to avoid creating types of humour that can suffer greatly during translation. It can also be argued that due to the show being a period piece it became easier to create a national and international version with minimal changes. Due to cultural differences playing a smaller part when something is set in ancient times, we as the viewer already have a certain suspension of disbelief at that point. Meaning that by using a culturally known subject, such as Vikings, it is already able to bridge some cultural differences given the mental schemata the average person would already possess.

Using mixed methods to research this topic functioned quite fine to answer which categories of humour was most prevalent. Inferential coding was a functional method to map which categories were present in the show, to then quantify that data by counting the

population size. However, while inferential coding helps avoid the inclusion of categories that end up irrelevant for the research, it also suffers from a higher level of bias. In this case I had already seen the series a multitude of time before the coding was performed, which meant inferential coding seemed like the best choice for the situation. Given that the results from the coding influenced the choice of scenes and discussion topics for the textual analysis, it might be better in similar research to use a pre-created coding schema of humour categories. As it would allow higher coder reliability.

It can be argued that both coding and textual analysis would have been able to provide good answers on their own. Making the use of mixed methods redundant in this case; Where a quantitative analysis with a more in-depth discussion, or a more thorough textual analysis would land on the same results. I believe, however, that in a situation where more coders could have been involved in mapping the categories of humour, the textual analysis would benefit. When the choices of scenes to highlight different aspects could have been shaped by a group. This would have helped the research to pinpoint the relevant scenes and obtained a more nuanced analysis more accurately. I do believe I have chosen scenes which let me highlight the common humour types in addition to the version differences. But given the vast amount of scenes present in 9+ hours of comedy, there was no doubt untapped potential for analysis.

The results of this unique case study showcase a potential recipe for creating an audio-visual comedy that is able to achieve success both on a national- and international level. It is of course possible that The Norsemen show's success in the US can be attributed to the shows being about Vikings. This is because Vikings are a recognisable historical group, and the US has a large demographic of citizens with Norwegian heritage. It is unlikely this is the main contributor given that from the research performed throughout the thesis, we have observed that most of the humour employed in the Norsemen show is maintained between versions. The staying power of the show likely came because of the humour being easily appreciable in different cultures, but it is very possible its initial success was a direct result of being about Vikings. As the creators themselves stated, the show was made about Vikings

due to medieval fantasy being popular at the time. This, however, moves closer to marketing which is not something this thesis intended or attempted to research.

The success of the Norsemen show goes to show that it might be a viable future for television formats to create a national and international version of a show before trying to sell it to other broadcasters. Of course, looking at just one case study does not allow one to draw definite conclusions, but it does show that further research into similar TV series might be of interest.

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8 Appendix

Season 1 Episode 1: Homecoming						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0						
1	111					
2		1	1	1		
3			1	11		1
4	1			1		
5	1			1		
6				1		
7				1	11	
8	1	1			1	
9		1	1	1	x	
10				1	1	
11			1	1		
12	1	1				1
13	11			1	1	
14	1					
15	1					x
16		1	1		1	1
17	1			1		1
18					1	
19			1	1		1
20					1	1
21	1					
22			1	1		
23	1				1	
24	11					1
25					11	
26	x					

27				1		1
28		11	1		1	
29	1					1
Total	18	7	8	15	13	10
Change	1	0	0	0	1	1

Season 1 Episode 2: Escape						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0			1			
1					1x1	
2	1			1		
3						1
4						1
5	1	11				1
6		1			1	
7	1				1	
8		1				
9			x			
10	1			1		1
11						x
12						
13	1				1	
14			1	1		x
15			1			
16					11	
17	1		1	11		
18	1			11		
19	1				1	
20			11		1	
21	1			1	1	

22						1
23			1			x
24	1					
25	1			1		1
26	1					
27					11	
Total	12	4	8	9	13	9
Change	0	0	1	0	1	3

Season 1 Episode 3						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0			1			
1		1	1		1	
2	1	1				
3				1	1	
4	1		1	1		
5					x	
6		1	1		1	1
7						1
8	1	1	1		1	
9						
10			11			
11	1					
12						
13	1		1			
14		1	1	1		1
15	1				1	
16				1		
17						1
18				1		1

19			1			
20				1	1	
21			1	1	1	
22	1			1		
23						11
24	1			1	111	1
25			1	1		
26	1	1	1			
27		1		1	1	
28						1
Total	9	7	13	11	12	9
Change	0	0	0	0	1	0

Season 1 Episode 4						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0						1
1				11		
2						1
3	1			1	1	1
4				1	1	
5			1			
6	1				1	
7			1			
8				1	1	
9				1		1
10				1	1	
11	1					1
12			1			
13			1		1	1
14		1	1			

15				1	1	
16					1	
17						
18					1	
19		1	1	1	1	
20						1
21	1		1	11	1	
22		1	1		1	
23	1	1	1		1	
24		1	1	1	1	
25						
26					1	1
27				1		
28		1	1	1	1	
Total	5	6	11	14	16	8
Change	0	0	0	0	0	0

Season 1 Episode 5						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0				1		1
1	1				x	
2					1	
3				1	1	
4						
5					1	
6				1	1	
7				1	1	
8				x	1	
9				1		
10					1	

11				11	1	
12						
13			1			
14				1		
15				1	1	
16				1	1	1
17	1		1			
18					1	
19						1
20	1			1	11	
21	1	1	1			
22					1	
23					11	1
24		1				
25	1			1		
26				1	1	
27	1					1
28				1	x	1
Total	6	2	3	15	19	6
Change	0	0	0	1	2	0

Season 1 Episode 6						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0	1		1			
1	1			1		
2		1		1	1	1
3	1					
4					1	
5					1	1
6		1				1

7				1		
8	1	1		1	111	
9	1	1	1		X1	
10	1	1	1			1
11	1			1	1	
12	1			1		
13					1	1
14	11		1			
15				1		1
16				1		
17						
18				1	1	
19	1	1	1			
20		1	1	1	1	
21	1			1		
22			1		11	
23	1		1			
24			1		X	
25			1	1		1
26					1	
27						
28			1	1	1	1
Total	13	7	11	13	17	8
Change	0	0	0	0	2	0

Season 2 Episode 1						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0		1		1	1	
1						
2	1				1	

3		1		1		
4	1			1		
5		1		1		
6				1		
7				1	1	
8	1					
9	1			1		1
10		1			11	
11	1			11	1	
12		1				1
13	1	1		11		
14				1		
15			1	1	1	
16				1		
17						
18	1			1		1
19				1		1
20						
21		11		1		1
22				1		
23	1			1	1	
24					1	1
25						1
26	1			11	1	
27			1		1	
28					1	1
Total	9	8	2	21	12	8
Change	0	0	0	0	0	0

Season 2 Episode 2

	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0			1			
1	1			1	1	
2						
3	1	1		1		
4	1				1	
5			1	1		
6	1		1	1	1	
7		1				
8						
9				1	1	
10						1
11			1			1
12						
13			1		1	
14				1		
15			1		1	
16				11		
17						1
18	11			11		
19			11	1		
20				1		
21					1x	1
22	1			1	11	
23						
24	1				111	
25		1		1		
26	1			1		
27		1	1	1		
28					1	

29	1					1
Total	10	4	9	16	14	5
Change	0	0	0	0	1	0

Season 2 Episode 3						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0			1	1	1	
1	1	1				
2	1		1	1	1	1
3	1				1x	
4				1	11	
5						
6			1		1	
7	1	1	1		1	
8	1				1	
9				1		
10				1	111	
11	11	1				1
12						
13		1		1	1	
14				1		1
15				1	11	
16						
17	1	1	1		1	
18					11	
19						
20			1			
21		1	1			1
22	1					
23					1	

24						11
25				1	11	
26	1					
27						
28						1
Total	10	6	7	9	21	7
Change	0	0	0	0	1	0

Season 2 Episode 4						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0	11				1	
1		1	1	1	1	
2	1				1	
3				1		1
4	11				1	
5				1	x	
6	1				1	
7	1			11		1
8						
9	1				11	
10						
11				1		1
12	1			1		1
13					1	
14		1	1		11	1
15				1	1	
16				1		1
17	1			1		11
18						
19		1		1	11	

20	1	1	1			
21					1	
22	1	1		11		
23						11
24						
25				1		
26						1
27		1	1		1	
28						
Total	12	6	4	14	16	11
Change	0	0	0	0	1	0

Season 2 Episode 5						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0		1		1	1	
1						
2	1			1		
3				1	1	
4	1					
5					1	
6	1		1		1	
7		1		1		
8	1			1		
9						
10	1					11
11	1		1		1	1
12		1		1		
13	1	1				1
14					1	
15						1

16			1			
17					1	
18					1	
19	1		1			
20				1		
21						
22	11		1	1		
23					1	
24		1			1	
25				1		
26	1		1			
27		111		11	1	
28			1			11
Total	11	8	7	11	11	7
Change	0	0	0	0	0	0

Season 2 Episode 6						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0		1		1		
1	1	1	1		1	
2			1			
3				1	1	1
4					1	
5	1		1		1x	1
6		1	1			1
7	1		1	1		1
8					1	1
9						x
10	1				1x	
11					1	

12						
13	1	1		1		
14	1		1			1
15						1
16	11	1				
17				1	x	1
18	1			11		
19				1	1	1
20			1		1	
21			1			
22			1			
23	1				1	
24	1			1		
25				1		1
26	1			1		
27	1					1
28		1			1x	1
29					1	
Total	13	6	9	11	16	13
Change	0	0	0	0	4	1

Season 3 Episode 1						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0	1			1		
1						1
2	1					
3	1			1		
4					11	1
5						
6						

7				1		
8						
9	1	1	1			
10	1			1		1
11				11		1
12				1	1	
13		1	1			1
14			1			
15					1	
16				1		1
17			1			1
18			1			
19	1		1			
20	11			1	1	
21		1				
22				1		
23	1	1		1		1
24						11
25					1	1
26				1		1
27				1	1	
28				1		1
29					1	
30				1	11	
Total	9	4	6	15	10	13
Change	0	0	0	0	0	0

Season 3 Episode 2						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0				11	1	

1		1	1			1
2				1	1	
3				1		
4						11
5			1	1	1	
6	1	1	1	1		1
7				1		
8	1					1
9		1		1	1	
10		1		1	1	
11		1		1		
12				1		X
13						
14						1
15				1	1	1
16			1			1
17		11			x	
18			1			1
19			1			1
20	1	1		1	1	
21						
22						
23						1
24	1	1				
25	1			1		
26			1	1	1	
27	1	1	1	X		11
28				1		
29				1	1	
30						1

31				11		
32	1					11
33						1
Total	7	10	8	20	10	18
Change	0	0	0	1	1	1

Season 3 Episode 3						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0	1			1	1	
1	1		1	1		1
2						
3				1		1
4	1					
5	1		11			1
6	1		1		1	
7						
8				x	1	
9				1		
10						1
11		1		1		1
12			1		1	
13						1
14				1	1	x
15				1		
16				1	11	1
17						1
18	1	1		11	1	
19					1	
20		1	1		1	
21	1		1	1		

22	1					
23		11	1			1
24	1		1			
25						
26			1		1	1
27	1			1		
28	1			1	x	
Total	11	5	10	14	12	11
Change	0	0	0	1	1	1

Season 3 Episode 4						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0			1			
1				11	1	
2	1	1	1			
3				1		
4			1			
5						1
6				11		
7	1	1	1			
8		1			x	1
9				1		1
10		1		1		
11			1			1
12			1			
13			1			1
14				1		
15			1	1	1	
16	1					
17		1				

18	1			11		
19	1				1	
20	x					
21			1			
22						
23					1	
24	11					
25						
26	1			11		
27	1					1
28				1		1
29	1				1	
30	1	1		1		
31				1	1	
Total	12	6	9	16	7	7
Change	1	0	0	0	1	0

Season 3 Episode 5						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0				1		1
1	1	1		1		
2				1		1
3	1			1		
4	1					1
5						
6			1	1		1
7	1					1
8	11				x1	
9				11		
10		1				

11	1			1		
12				1		
13	11		1	1		
14					1	
15		1		1		
16	1				11	
17				1		
18						
19	1		1		1	
20	1		1			
21					1	
22	1				1	
23		1		1		
24	1	1		1		1
25	1				1	
26				1	1	
27						1
28						
Total	15	5	4	15	10	7
Change	0	0	0	0	1	0

Season 3 Episode 6						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0	1					
1	1	1				
2	1					
3						1
4	1		1			
5						
6	1				1	

7	1		1			
8	1			1		
9	1			1		
10	1		1			
11			1			
12				1	1	1
13					1	1
14		1		1	1	
15				1		1
16	1	1		11		
17	1					x
18	1		1			
19				1	x	
20					x	
21			1			1
22						1
23				1		1
24	1					
25	1		1			1
26	1		1		1	
27	1			11		1
28			1			
Total	16	3	9	11	7	10
Change	0	0	0	0	2	1

Template						
	Absurd	Dark	Physical	Observation	Wit	Other
0						
1						

2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25						
26						
27						
28						
29						