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An Analysis of Humorous Spoof Texts in English Language Textbook: Flouting Maxim, Form and Function

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Abstract

The research aims (1) To find types of maxims flouted by the character to create humor in Spoof text in English textbook entitled "Look Ahead 2" Year XI (2) To find the forms of humor found inside of spoof text in English textbook entitled "Look Ahead 2" Year XI (3) To find the function of humor in spoof text created by flouting the maxims. This research employs the descriptive qualitative method. The six spoof texts were analyzed by Reading, Analyzing and Concluding the data in accordance with the research objectives, and research questions. Furthermore, this study employed Data analysis techniques as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994): Data Reduction, Data Display and Conclusion Drawing to analyze the flouting of maxims, forms of humor and functions of humor appearing in conversation between characters on the six spoof texts. Findings on the first research question revealed that there were flouting of maxims occurred in all six spoof texts, including flouting of maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner to create humorous conversation. The second finding shows that there were four forms of humor found including irony (cosmic irony and verbal irony), satire, parody, pun and self-deprecation as the result of flouting maxim. Findings on the third research question showed the functions of humor which were satire, parody and lastly entertainment. In conclusion, all types of maxims are found flouted by several forms of humor with few functions of humor. Following that, the researcher suggests students, teachers and future researchers to broaden their perspective and knowledge about humor in linguistics, especially about spoof texts.

Keywords: Flouting Maxims, Form of Humor, Function of Humor.

The significant finding:

The findings revealed that there were flouting of maxims occurred in all six spoof texts, including flouting of maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner to create humorous conversation. The second finding shows that there were four forms of humor found including irony (cosmic irony and verbal irony), satire, parody, pun and self-deprecation as the result of flouting maxim. Findings on the third research question showed the functions of humor which were satire, parody and lastly entertainment. In conclusion, all types of maxims are found flouted by several forms of humor with few functions of humor. Following that, the researcher suggests students, teachers and future researchers to broaden their perspective and knowledge about humor in linguistics, especially about spoof texts.

**ARTICLES****I. INTRODUCTION**

Language plays a crucial role as a medium of communication in daily life. Everyone relies on language to interact with others, sharing ideas, thoughts, emotions, and information (Tarigan, 1984, p. 16). It is a tool for people to exchange, communicate, and assess ideas and knowledge (Herbert and Eve, 1977, p. 9). The language people use to communicate can be spoken or written and may change according to the context and the individuals involved in the interaction. This suggests that one might use different forms of language to fulfill various communication needs. The ability to use diverse

types of language to foster social connections is an intriguing aspect of human interaction. Language often finds expression in writing, specifically in the form of text.

A text represents a systematic relationship between the social environment and the structure of a language (Halliday, 1989, p. 11). Text carries literal and figurative meanings, with interpretation influenced by social context. This indicates that social context impacts the overall characteristics of a specific text. Gerot (1994), as cited in Pranita (2013, p. 2), identifies thirteen text genres: narrative, recount, descriptive, report, explanation, analytical exposition,

hortatory exposition, procedure, discussion, review, anecdote, news item, and spoof. Although various text types exist in the educational field, narrative and descriptive texts tend to be emphasized, often without focusing on more complex, context-rich texts like spoof texts. Spoof texts are notable for their pragmatic elements and the inclusion of social context within their structure. Such texts exemplify the blending of social context and grammatical structure.

Spoof text is not only used in educational contexts to teach English but also appears in the news industry as “spoof news,” where its main purpose is to entertain (Ermida, 2012; Rubin et al., 2016). Unlike fake news, which attempts to mislead, spoof news humorously contradicts common sense, signaling its satirical nature (Simpson, 2003). Spoof news mimics real news but includes humorous or satirical elements, often to criticize social norms or mock public figures, fitting genres like satire, parody, and irony (Simpson, 2003; Rubin et al., 2016).

Humor is defined as the ability to identify or create amusement, though it often varies by culture, requiring contextual understanding to be appreciated (Felsch, 2004; Attardo, 2017). Since humor relies on cultural, social, or religious contexts, not all jokes are universally understood. In spoof texts, humor is frequently found in character interactions where misunderstandings or ambiguities create comedic effects.

Effective communication, as outlined by Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975), depends on four maxims—quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. Pragmatics studies how speakers imply, and listeners infer meaning within

context, involving concepts like implicature, presupposition, and speech acts (Levinson, 2008). In spoof texts, implicature is crucial for understanding humor, making the pragmatic study of humor, especially through Grice's cooperative principles, a valuable research area. Previous studies have analyzed humor in Indonesian politics, stand-up comedy, and other fields, suggesting that humor's linguistic and pragmatic features merit further exploration in diverse contexts.

Historically, humor research has spanned various fields, including anthropology, linguistics, medicine, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and women's studies. However, humor research within linguistics is still developing (Attardo, 2014). In recent years, linguistic studies on humor have explored humorous discourse in different contexts, such as dialogues from *The Big Bang Theory* (Ma & Jiang, 2013), Indonesian stand-up comedy (Afidah & Wahyudi, 2014), Romanian parliamentary speeches by Corneliu Vadim Tudor (Săftoiu & Popescu, 2014), and Obama's notable speeches (Kayam, 2015).

Research on spoof texts, however, is limited, especially from a purely pragmatic perspective analyzing the content and pragmatic aspects within the texts. Most studies on spoof text focus on reading exercises or evaluating students' writing abilities, as seen in works by Supiati (2017), Julianti (2017), and Mubarok & Sauqi (2014), while humor analysis in spoof texts remains sparse or nearly absent.

Given this gap, the researcher aims to analyze the social context and hidden meanings within conversations in spoof texts, specifically examining the use of Grice's cooperative

principles in the English textbook *Look Ahead 2*. This study will focus on instances of flouting maxims and types of humor within character interactions in spoof texts, under the title “An Analysis of Humorous Spoof Texts in English Language Textbook: Flouting Maxim, Form, and Function.”

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach focused on carefully examining spoken or written words to understand their meanings (Maleong, 2011). It involves creating detailed descriptions of the topic being studied (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). We chose this method to thoroughly analyze our subject. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1990), qualitative research gathers information about people and their behaviors through speaking or writing. Surakhmad (1990) explains that a descriptive approach means collecting and analyzing information to understand the results. Using this method, the research aims to identify and describe the types of humor in spoof texts and any instances where Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) is not followed, based on Grice's Maxims.

The main data for this study comes from spoof texts in the English textbook *Look Ahead 2*, used in Year XI senior high school classes. The study will analyze six sample spoof texts: "We Don't Subscribe to Any Newspapers," "Nasreddin's Coat," "Green, Pink and Yellow," "New Baby," "Young Sailor," and "Mrs. William and Her Obedient Baby." *Look Ahead 2* is a textbook designed to enhance English skills in grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. While the primary focus is language learning, it also incorporates humor, including spoof texts, to engage students and make the learning experience more enjoyable.

To gather data, the researcher will read and analyze the spoof texts, taking notes along the way. The study will use the document review technique (Bowen, 2009), which involves examining and interpreting primary and secondary data to gain insights. The researcher will review the spoof texts in the English textbook to study the types of humor, the maxims violated to create humor, and the function of the humor. This approach will provide valuable knowledge for the analysis.

III. FINDINGS

Six spoof texts, which are included in the English textbook "Look Ahead 2 Year XI," were selected for analysis to examine the flouting maxims, forms of humor, and functions of humor.

Title	Context	In Text Quoting	Explanation
We Don't Subscribe to Any Newspapers (Look Ahead 2, p. 176)	Conversation between Professor and Jack's Father in school about giving jack second chance in class.	"Do you know, last month I asked him when Napoleon died, and he could not answer it" ."Please, sir, give him another chance," said Jack's father, "You see, we don't subscribe to any newspapers in our house, so none of us even knew that Napoleon was ill."	The character's (Jack's father) humorous response to a professor's question about the date of Napoleon's death
Nasreddin's Coat (Look Ahead 2, p. 168)	Conversation Between Nasreddin and Hosts at the party as the hosts serve him based on his appearance.	Nasreddin sat and put of his coat. He put on his coat and said; "Eat the food, Coat!" The hosts and guests were very surprised and asked	The character's Humorous response to hosts at the party.

		Nareddin; "What are you doing?"				"When the baby starts crying. "replies the mother.		
		"When I came here with my old clothes, nobody looked at me. Then I went home and put on my best clothes. I came back in my newest coat and you all gave me the best food and drink. So, you give food to my coat instead of me."			Young Sailor (Look Ahead 2, p. 168)	Jack sends a parrot to his girlfriend from Freetown, Africa, which speaks five languages.	Jack's first port was Freetown in Africa, and he sent Gloria a parrot from there. It spoke five languages. When Jack's ship reached Australia, there was a letter from Gloria. It said, 'Thank you for the parrot, Jack. It tasted much better than chicken.	Humorous response of jack girlfriend when they exchanging letters and gift
Green, Pink and Yellow (Look Ahead 2, p. 161)	Johnny gives an ambiguous answer to the teacher's question about making a sentence using the words green, pink, and yellow	"Who can make a sentence using the words green, pink and yellow". "Me, me, Sir" Johny, the naughtiest student in the class said while raising his hand. And then he said, I heard, "the telephone ringing green...green", then I pink the receiver and I said, "Yellow, who's speaking there?"	Students Humorous response towards quiz thrown by the teacher		Mrs. William and Her Obedient Baby (Look Ahead 2, p. 173)	Interaction of Mrs. William and Mrs. Briggs regarding Mrs. William's Baby	"When my daughter was small, I gave her lots of food, but she cried a lot, and her clothes were always dirty. Why is your baby so different? How do you do it?" 'Well,' answered Mrs. Williams, 'my first child was a boy. I always gave him a lot of food, he got very fat, and his stomach was always full. He cried a lot and was dirty. Now I give my new baby much less, and it is happy and clean.'	an interaction between parents ended up in an unexpected response of Mrs. William.
New Baby (Look Ahead 2, p. 167)	The grandparents are waiting to see the new baby, and the mother's response is unexpected.	"So, when can we see the baby?", asks the grandmother. "In a little while", replies the mother. Some time passes. The grandparents are looking quite anxious at this point. "So, when can we see the baby?", ask the grandfather.	Amusing family situation ended up in an unexpected way					

Flouting Maxims

Text 1, titled "We Don't Subscribe to Any Newspapers," demonstrates flouting maxim through the intentional violation of the Maxim

of Relation and Maxim of Quality. Flouting maxims is a common communication strategy to achieve various effects like humor, irony, or persuasion. In the given scenario, after Jack failed his history class, his father flouted the maxim of relation by mentioning their lack of newspaper subscriptions instead of addressing the professor's comment about Napoleon's death. This was an attempt to explain Jack's incompetence indirectly. Additionally, the father flouted the maxim of quality by jokingly claiming no one in their household knew Napoleon was unwell, an exaggerated or false statement meant for humor. According to Grice (1989), the maxim of relation requires relevance, while the maxim of quality requires truthfulness.

In Text 2, titled "Nasreddin's Coat," Maxim of Quantity and Maxim of Manner are found flouted in the conversation between the characters. Grice's Maxim of Quantity states that speakers should provide as much information as necessary. In the story, Nasreddin flouts this maxim by giving an overly detailed response, suggesting his coat should be eaten since people value his appearance more than himself. This indirect reply overwhelms me with unnecessary information. Similarly, he flouts the Maxim of Manner, which requires clarity, by confusing: "So, you give food to my coat instead of me." This response is ambiguous and indirect, adding to the humor and absurdity of the situation. According to Sperber and Wilson (2006), relevance lies in the most meaningful input, which Nasreddin uses creatively to highlight the irony, resulting in an entertaining narrative.

Text 3, titled "Green, Pink and Yellow," also exhibits the flouting of two maxims which

are Maxims of Relation and Manner.

The characters in the conversation intentionally flout the Maxims of Relation and Manner. According to Cutting (2002), the maxim of relation requires comments to be relevant. When a teacher asks for a sentence using "green," "pink," and "yellow," Johnny responds with a pun: "The telephone ringing green... green, then I pink the receiver and said, 'Yellow, who's speaking?'" His reply is irrelevant to the task and ambiguous, as it humorously twists the words into a playful context, flouting both maxims.

In Text 4, titled "New Baby," two maxims are flouted by the characters in their conversation. The Maxims of Manner and Quantity are violated intentionally. In this conversation, the grandmother eagerly asks, "When can we see the baby?" expressing her desire to meet the newborn. The mother jokingly replies, "In a little while," implying they will eventually visit. As the grandparents grow impatient, the grandfather repeats the question, to which the mother humorously responds, "When the baby starts crying." This unexpected reply creates humor by defying their expectations of a clear answer. The mother flouts the Maxims of Manner and Quantity by giving ambiguous and insufficient information, adding to the comedic effect.

Text 5, titled "Young Sailor," presents only one flouted maxim which is Maxim of Quality. Jack promises Gloria he'll think of her, write to her, and bring a gift from each port. However, Gloria humorously responds, "Thank you for the parrot, Jack. It was far superior to chicken," implying she ate the parrot. Her sarcastic reply flouts the Maxim of Quality by providing false and misleading information. This ironic twist

contrasts Jack's sincerity with Gloria's wit, creating humor and an unexpected ending. The flouting adds a layer of humor and irony to the story.

In Text 6, titled "Mrs. William and Her Obedient Baby," two maxims are flouted by the participants in their conversation which are Maxim of Manner and Maxim of Quantity. In this humorous exchange, Mrs. Williams discusses her baby's behavior with another person, who admires her ability to keep the baby happy and tidy, unlike their own experience. When asked how she manages this, Mrs. Williams gives a brief and ambiguous reply, mentioning she feeds the baby less. This flouts the Maxims of Quantity and Manner, as her response is both insufficient and unclear, adding to the humor and absurdity of the situation.

Form of Humor

In text 1. "We Don't Subscribe to Any Newspapers", humor emerges through irony and self-deprecation, as Jack's father flouts the Maxim of Relation. When the professor comments on Jack's ignorance, Jack's father responds by saying they don't subscribe to newspapers, implying they were unaware of Napoleon's illness. This answer, irrelevant to the professor's point, creates irony as the professor assumes Jack's lack of knowledge is due to stupidity, while Jack's father humorously blames it on their lack of information. The contrast between the professor's assumption and the actual cause adds to the humor.

In text 2. "*Nasreddin's Coat*", humor is created through irony and satire, which arise from flouting the Maxims of Quantity and Manner. Nasreddin's deliberately ambiguous

response exposes society's obsession with appearances, suggesting that people only show interest in him when he is dressed well, but ignore him when he wears shabby clothes. This creates irony, as it highlights the contrast between how society values outward looks over inner qualities. Additionally, Nasreddin's comment serves as a satire, criticizing the superficial nature of a society that judges individuals based on their appearance rather than their character. Through his humorous remark, Nasreddin subtly critiques these societal norms.

In Text 3, titled "Green, Pink, and Yellow", the humor comes from a pun in Johnny's response to his teacher. His reply flouts the maxim of manner by being ambiguous and unclear, as well as the maxim of relevance by straying from the teacher's question. Instead of directly describing colors, Johnny uses wordplay to create humor. This intentional use of a pun demonstrates how characters can employ creative language to entertain and elicit laughter.

In text 4 entitled "New Baby" The form of humor found in his text is irony. This reversal of expectations creates a sense of surprise and amusement for the reader. These humors resulted from the flouting maxim of Quantity and maxim of manners. Overall, the use of irony and exaggeration in the story serve to entertain the reader and create a sense of amusement from the reversal of expectations.

In text 5 entitled "Young Sailor" the researcher just noticed only one humor found in this text which is irony. In the analyzed text, irony serves as a key element of humor, engaging the reader through unexpected twists. Gloria, the recipient of Jack's parrot gift, ironically thanks him by saying, "Thank you for the parrot, Jack. It was far better than chicken."

This statement conveys gratitude but implies a humorous contradiction, as she suggests she ate the parrot rather than appreciating its unique ability to mimic speech. This twist subverts expectations, turning the scenario into a comedic moment. The irony adds depth and highlights how humor can stem from breaking assumptions, demonstrating irony's role in creating amusing situations and enhancing communication.

In text 6 entitled "Mrs. William and Her Obedient baby" is primarily shown only one of humor which is irony. The analysis highlights irony, specifically hilarious irony, as the main form of humor in the conversation. Mrs. Williams humorously contrasts her parenting styles, attributing her first child's messy and tearful state to overfeeding while playfully crediting her new baby's cleanliness and happiness to reduced feeding. This ironic reversal of expectations creates a comedic effect, engaging the audience. The findings demonstrate how irony in everyday conversations, like Mrs. Williams' response, serves to challenge assumptions, reveal contradictions, and enhance entertainment through witty language manipulation.

Function of Humor

In Text 1, "We Don't Subscribe to Any Newspapers," humor is generated through the use of absurdity, making the conversation more lighthearted and entertaining. Jack's father's claim that they do not subscribe to any newspapers is inherently absurd, as it is highly improbable for someone to have no source of news at all. This statement intentionally flouts the Maxims of Relation and Quality, creating surprise and amusement for the reader. The humor here serves primarily as a form of

entertainment, aiming to inject levity and playfulness into the interaction rather than to critique. By employing absurdity, the speaker shifts the tone of the conversation, providing a humorous break that enhances the overall enjoyment of the exchange.

In text 2 entitled "Nasreddin's Coat" is a spoof text that satirizes the human tendency to judge people based on their appearance and clothing, this kind of humor gives us the reader a sense of entertainment and enlightenment of how judgemental our society is. Nasreddin is invited to the town's ruler's palace for a magnificent feast one day. Nasreddin decides to borrow a nice coat from one of his wealthy neighbors, knowing that his appearance would be judged. As he wanders through town wearing the coat, the inhabitants, amazed by his newfound elegance, begin to treat him with respect and adoration.

In text 3 entitled "Green, Pink and Yellow" is a spoof text with the sole purpose of amusing the reader by showing a humorous dialogue between the teacher and the students during the classroom session. This is also shown by one of the student's Johnny, who answers the teacher's question using a pun to lighten the classroom and also bring laughter to those who read. The researcher does not find any satire or parody but rather a light entertainment as a function of humor in this text.

In text 4 entitled "New Baby" is a spoof text that satirizes the exaggerated emotions and societal pressures associated with having a new baby. The text tells the story of a couple, John and Mary, who have just welcomed their first child into the world. Despite their initial excitement and joy, they soon find themselves

overwhelmed by the demands of parenthood and the societal expectations placed upon them.

In text 5 entitled “Young Sailor” is a spoof text that depicted how a social bonding was formed. The relationship of Jack and his new girlfriend that is shown in the spoof text is human interaction in the level of romantic phase, shown by Jack that liked the girl then later being his girlfriend perfectly described human bonding combined with a light humor in the end showing that humor exists in any phase of human interaction.

In text 6 entitled “Mrs. William and Her Obedient Baby” in this written work, the function of humor is to create a cheerful and humorous setting while also trying to parody parents behavior of often comparing their children. The ironic twist aims to entertain the reader while also creating a sense of surprise to entertain the reader.

IV. DISCUSSION

Flouting Maxim employed by the characters in spoof texts

The findings show that the writers of the spoof text in English textbook "Look Ahead 2 Year XI" employed all the types of flouting maxims to create humor. The analysis of the six spoof texts in the English textbook "Look Ahead 2 Year XI" shows that those texts flout different types of maxims such as the maxim of relation, maxim of quantity, maxim of manners, and maxim of relation (Grice 1975). Following that, based on the analysis provided, it is evident that different forms of humor are utilized in each of the six spoof texts available in the English textbook "Look Ahead 2 Year XI".

The analysis, based on Grice's maxims (1975), shows that all four maxims—Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner—are intentionally flouted in the six spoof texts to create humor. In Text 1, “We Don’t Subscribe to Any Newspapers,” the maxims of Quality and Relation are flouted through untrue and irrelevant responses. Text 2, “Nasreddin’s Coat,” flouts the maxims of Manner and Quantity with excessive and unclear information. Similarly, Text 3, “Green, Pink, and Yellow,” flouts Relation and Manner using ambiguous and irrelevant replies. Text 4, “New Baby,” and Text 6, “Mrs. William and Her Obedient Baby,” both flout Quantity and Manner, while Text 5, “Young Sailor,” only flouts Quality with false statements.

Forms of Humor created by Flouting Maxim in spoof texts

These forms of humor include irony, self-deprecation, satire, puns, and reversal of expectations (Martin 2007), which are created by flouting the maxims while also having several functions such as entertainment and parody.

The analysis of the six spoof texts in *Look Ahead 2 Year XI* reveals that humor, including irony, self-deprecation, satire, puns, and reversals of expectations, is used to create absurdity and entertainment. These humorous elements arise from flouting conversational maxims such as Relation, Quantity, Manner, and Relevance.

Text 1, “*We Don’t Subscribe to Any Newspapers*,” uses irony and self-deprecation through Jack’s father’s unexpected response. Text 2, “*Nasreddin’s Coat*,” employs irony and

satire to critique society's focus on appearance by flouting Manner and Quantity. Text 3, "Green, Pink, and Yellow," uses puns through ambiguous replies that flout Relevance and Manner. Text 4, "New Baby," relies on irony by flouting Quantity and Manner, surprising the grandparents. Text 5, "Young Sailor," uses irony when Gloria humorously thanks Jack for the parrot, saying it was tastier than chicken. Text 6, "Mrs. William and Her Obedient Baby," features irony to subvert expectations.

Functions of Humor Created by Flouting Maxim in spoof texts

In a spoof text, humor serves the specific function of satirizing or parodying a particular genre, style, or cultural phenomenon. By using humor to critique and make fun of something, spoof texts can create a sense of amusement and entertainment for the reader, while also providing critical reflection on the subject matter. Table 3. displays that through the analysis of the six spoof texts there are several functions of humor found such as parody, satire, and entertainment. In text 1 "We Don't Subscribe to Any Newspapers" it serves a purpose of entertaining the reader with no intention to critique or satire on certain things. In text 2 "Nasreddin's Coat" it shown that this text want to satire toward certain phenomenon in which the people likely to determine someone worth by their clothing not by their personality in text 3 "Green, Pink and Yellow" is evidently that it is provides light entertainment for the reader through the playful words used by the characters in the text. in the text 4 "New Baby" is a satire or parody of societal pressure towards new parents In text 5 "Young Sailor" is entertainment shown by funny or humorous interaction between the couple. In text 6 "Mrs. William and Her Obedient Baby" it serves as

entertainment for the reader through the twisted and unexpected ending while trying to deliver a parody of parental figures that often compare their children. It is proven through the analysis that each text serves certain functions of humor in the text either its to entertain the reader or to portray certain society phenomenon through satirizing or parodying it. In this case not all of the spoof texts serve as a parody some of it only works as entertainment as based on the table 3 only 2 spoof texts serve as satire or parody and following that the rest are for entertainment purpose only.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the data analysis, In the six spoof texts from *Look Ahead 2*, characters often violate Grice's conversational maxims, particularly the maxims of quantity and manner. They provide too much or too little information, give ambiguous or irrelevant responses, and sometimes lie. Violations of the maxims of relation and quality were less frequent. Four forms of humor were identified: irony, self-deprecating humor, satire, and puns. Self-deprecating humor appeared in all texts, while irony was the most common. Pun is found in only one text. The humor in these texts serves to satirize or parody genres, styles, or cultural phenomena. It primarily functions to entertain and offer satire, sometimes commenting on societal conditions, while other times focusing purely on humor for the reader's enjoyment.

The researcher offers the following suggestions for Future Researchers to explore humor through other pragmatic theories like politeness, sociolinguistics, or stylistics. Humor is a rich field, and researchers can examine it in various contexts, including literature, education, comedy events, celebrity shows, and movies,

which may not focus on humor but still contain it. They can also study the impact of humor in everyday conversations. English students interested in creating humor-focused literary works can benefit from studying humor analysis. That will help them understand different types and functions of humor and assist them in identifying humor forms commonly used in specific situations, enabling them to conduct their humor research.

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An Analysis of Humorous Spoof Texts in English Language Textbook: Flouting Maxim, Form and Function

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