

The comedy styles of Andrew Shultz and Theo Von are incredibly different, while pertaining some similar themes throughout.

Theo Von is the epitome of absurdist humor through anecdotal stories. Most absurdist humor, such as someone like Eric Andre, uses absurd situations and visual comedy to create comedy, however, due to a bulk of Theos' content being on podcasts, he can't rely on visual humor. His absurdist humor comes from a place of anecdotes that are so out there and random that you can't help but laugh at his dead serious delivery. On the other hand, a majority of Andrew Shultz' content is through standup. He uses much more traditional styles of comedy (with his own twist of course), and uses the stage as a place of performance. Where Von uses his persona of being an absolute idiot, Shultz uses intelligent humor to tackle offensive subjects during interactions with the crowd. Although his performances are scripted, he leaves a lot of space for crowd work moments and improvisation based on his audience's reactions.

One trend in Theo's work is that he tends to mix his straight idiotic humor with more traditionally smart comics and wise personalities such as John Mullaney, Jordan Peterson, Tom Segura, and Neil Degrasse Tyson. The mix of smart and witty brain waves with the idiotically hilarious character that is Theo Von creates a genius mix of humor styles. An example of this trend is the priorly mentioned podcast Von did with Neil Degrasse Tyson. During this podcast, Von bounces off the scientifically inclined mind of Tyson to create comedic contrast between the intelligent conversation about life beyond Earth or climate change, and the outlandish comments Von is known for.

An example of a smart Andrew Shultz moment is during his "Infamous special", where he begins by asking a question followed up by the casual delivery of a dark punchline, "is there anyone here who loves joe biden, we have any Taliban in here". He then follows up this comment by allowing for a crowd reaction, where a Pakistani spectator whoops, allowing for his trademark crowd work. He responds to the fan before having a fast paced delivery of a few follow up jokes in response to the fan. He then turns his attention to the fans friend and directs a few jokes about the fans Somali heritage. All potentially dark and offensive jokes but all in good fun with a positive crowd reaction. He then turns his attention back to the prompting joke about joe biden and continues with the routine. Shultz does a phenomenal job of improvings crowd work moments and including them with his routine. Along with this there are many times Shultz will actively call out crowd members and have very intentional moments of crowd work. He will not have a punchline ready and will specifically do an entire routine based on the crowd's reaction and responses.

The two of them have some similarities in their subject matter and in the fact that they both have a large podcast presence and both do standup (although the two tend to focus on their preferred forms of media as stated earlier). They both tackle offensive subject matter such as current events and racial humor, while doing so in a way that stays light-hearted and fun to their audiences.

They mainly differ in their delivery and overall personalities, while also primarily utilizing different forms of media to deliver their comedy.

When considering my own project, a stand up routine, Andrew Shultz' genius approach of crowd work is very intriguing, as I feel interacting with an audience is what makes a lot of comedy funny, and what makes the audience enjoy themselves. Stand up is a form of comedy that relies on immediate audience reaction. Even if a joke is good, if no one laughs the moment is lost and the comedy doesn't quite click. I intend to interact with the audience to a large degree during my stand up routine. Whether it is by making jokes directed at audience members or simply rebounding off of the audience's reaction, having a sense of interaction with the audience is a skill I will undoubtedly use. I also intended to capture some of the energy that Shultz brings to the stage, as it keeps the audience engaged and it sets the tone nicely.

When looking at Theo Von, his dead serious delivery of every absurd comment he makes and the way he appears to believe in everything he says is a skill I will use in my own project. Theo finds the line between making others laugh with and at him, as his comments are outlandish, but his idiocracy is absolutely laughable as well. An example of this is with the short monologue leading to his podcast where Von makes a comment on how being off of pornography for 48 hours has given him the insight that adult asthma is a choice. The line itself may simply be random nonsense, however the way he delivers this absolutely crazy and nonsensical comment with a dead serious face is hilarious. I intend to incorporate some of these absurd ideas in my own work, playing around with the mix between having the audience laugh with and laugh at me. I also intend to incorporate his style of the deadpan delivery, making the joke seem to come from a place of belief and sincerity.

As far as subject matter, humor at another's expense is something I intend to take forward for my routine. Using this form of comedy, you get engagement from both the subject and the audience.

Along with this I intend to take the use of absurdist anecdotal humor. Telling hilariously ridiculous stories can be a great way to have the audience hooked while being able to stay on script and plan out the delivery of the story.

With these main subjects and styles I will be able to involve the audience while keeping things original and mixing things up. I have always found these styles of humor to get the best reaction out of me and those around me, so I think it will click well with the audience of fellow high school students.

## Work Cited

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