

The Humorous Times

Newsletter of the International Society for Humor Studies

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Association News



29th International Society for Humor Studies Conference University of Quebec at Montreal July 10 to 14, 2017

From Jean-Marie LaFortune, Christelle Paré, and Élias Rizkallah,
2017 ISHS Conference Organizers

The *Université du Québec à Montréal*, in collaboration with the *Observatoire de l'humour*, is proud to host the 2017 International Society for Humor Studies Conference from July 10 to July 14, 2017 in *La belle province* of Quebec, more precisely in downtown Montréal. The *Université du Québec à Montréal* (UQAM) is a public French-language university of international influence.

Registration for the 2017 Conference is now open online at <https://ishs-2017-montreal.uqam.ca>. Conference registration fees can be paid by credit card through the conference website. The deadlines for early registration and for paper submissions have been extended to March 15, 2017. Registration fees will include:

- An Opening cocktail (bites and one drink)
- A Closing banquet (complete buffet and two bottles of wine by table of eight)
- Coffee breaks (coffee, tea, snacks)
- An attendee “survival kit” (program, maps, references for attractions, festivals, etc.)

For additional Conference information, you can visit the conference website at <https://ishs-2017-montreal.uqam.ca> or write to Conference Registration at ishs2017@uqam.ca or to Conference Organizer, Christelle Pare at christelle.pare@brunel.ac.uk.

The summer of 2017 in Montreal will be extremely busy, fun and interesting, as the city will be celebrating its 375th anniversary. We strongly recommend that ISHS visitors and members plan their trip in advance to make sure they obtain the best deals and opportunities. We can't wait to see you in Montreal, the "funniest city on earth" ... according to Just for Laughs!

2019 Conference Proposals

The International Society for Humor Studies is still accepting proposals to host the 2019 ISHS Conference in North America. If you are a humor scholar in North America and would like to host the 2019 ISHS Conference at your college or university, contact the ISHS Executive Secretary, Martin Lampert, at ishs@hnu.edu for more details on how to craft and submit a proposal to host an ISHS Conference.

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Upcoming Events

Seventh Texas Humor Research Conference

Dallas, Texas, USA, March 9-11, 2017

The 7th Texas Humor Research Conference will take place at the Dallas Downtown Center of Texas A & M University–Commerce. The conference will include paper sessions, posters, and workshops. For inquiries, contact the Conference Organizers, Christian Hempelmann at c.hempelmann@tamuc.edu or Elisa Gironzetti at elisa.gironzetti@tamuc.edu or visit <http://www.tamuc.edu/humor>.

Forty-Third Annual Meeting of The Association for the Study of Play

The Strong, Rochester, New York, USA, April 5-8, 2017

The 43rd Annual Meeting of The Association for the Study of Play will be held from April 5 to 8, 2017 at *The Strong, The National Museum of Play* in Rochester, New York, USA. The 2017 TASP Conference's theme will be *Playful Communities*. Keynotes will be Bernie De Koven, author of *The Well-Played Game*, and Montana Miller, author of *Playing Dead*. For information, contact Rick Worch at eworch@bgsu.edu or visit the TASP website at www.tasplay.org/about-us/conference.

Thirtieth Meeting of the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor

Orlando, Florida, USA, April 27-30, 2017

The 30th Conference of the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor will be held April 27 to 30, 2017 at the Holiday Inn, Orlando-Disney Springs, Florida, USA. The theme of the 30th AATH Conference will be *Humor: The Power of Play and Purpose*. For more information, visit the AATH Conference page at <http://www.aath.org>.

Seventeenth International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA, July 17-22, 2017

The 17th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter will be held at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana from July 17 to July 22, 2017. Julia Rayz and Victor Raskin are the local organizers. For information, visit the summer school website at <http://humoursummerschool.org/17/>.

Humour, History, and Methodology A Multidisciplinary and Trans-Professional Enquiry

Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom, July 26-28, 2017

The Humours of the Past (HOP) Network is holding a conference at Durham University from July 26 to July 28 to encourage humour researchers and practitioners to share approaches. In addition to individual papers, there will be three roundtable discussions, exploring the verbal, visual and performative 'translation' of historical humour to contemporary audiences. For more information visit the HOP website at <https://humoursofthepast.wordpress.com/>



For more ISHS news, conference information, and 2017 membership, visit us on the web at www.humorstudies.org.

The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Well-Being

Reviewed by Tracey Platt, University of Wolverhampton, and Willibald Ruch, University of Zurich

William Davies. (2015). *The happiness industry: How the government and big business sold us well-being*. London, UK: Verso Books. 320 pp. ISBN: 978-1-78168-845-8.

One may believe that reviewing a book on the “happiness industry” for the International Society for Humor Studies shows that humor is starting to embrace its natural bedfellow, positive psychology. However, before we all rush to jump on this new focus of interest, it might be worth considering the critiques offered by the author, William Davies.

In his book Davies explores how and why there has been a shift in how we pursue happiness. He argues that happiness has moved away from being a personal goal to one that is used and controlled by a myriad of public entities, exploited by corporations to increase productivity, and even appearing on government agendas. Going beyond his own political and economic expertise, Davies also builds arguments that encompass practices within neuroscience and the science of psychology.

Throughout this British-centric book, Davies’ use of words such as “*manipulate*”, “*seducing*”, and “*disquiet*” (p. 6) sets the tone of his insights. Of the eight comic styles defined by Schmidt-Hidding (1963), Davies clearly prefers cynicism to get across his message. This book considers, from the perspective of a political scientist, the exploitation of happiness and its transformation into a commodity.

The first chapter locates the launch of the happiness industry in two historical philosophical perspectives. The first is Jeremy Bentham’s eureka moment and vision for social reform and utilitarian government. Once this Pandora’s Box of pleasure was opened, its measurement by economic or physiological means was pursued, although both methods had problems. The second perspective is that of the German philosopher, theologian-physicist, and experimental psychologist Gustav Fechner. The author uses this history of science lesson to introduce tentative links between happiness and psychology, politics, and economics.

Chapter two introduces the idea that pleasure has a price, a value that can be bought. To do this Davies engages us with tales that relate to the psychology of whiplash, and the potential of “crash for cash” abuse, where he neatly links the condition to the compensation. Once the reader is singing from the same song sheet, he elucidates how we can shop for pleasures with the advent of retail therapy. Once a link between psychology and economy is understood, people are open to the idea that there is a monetary value for happiness. Chapter three elaborates on the price of pleasure, by examining how the pain of spending money can be negated, or exploited, depending on your perspective. This chapter shows that this links to universities with strong business ties. Once we are all aware that money can be connected to pleasure and happiness, chapter four examines how this knowledge is applied, for example, to exploiting work forces and social welfare recipients.

The fifth chapter, “Crisis of Authority,” delves into the impacts of this desire for happiness on the weak and strong of a society, instructing the weak to do better and informing the strong about how great they are. Davies suggests that this is evidence for a breach in moral responsibility towards the weak. This chapter also investigates our relationship to anti-depressant drugs and edition changes in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), both of which, Davies argues, are evidence of how medical doctors and caregivers are influenced by and have bought into the “happiness industry”.

Each chapter is backed up with between 15 and 36 notes, containing a combination of adages and source references, though one who would rather put confidence in an empirical study than an anecdotal blog, for example. Reading and double checking the notes quickly becomes a bit tedious, but if one can depart from this academic obsession and treat the book as a popular “pick up and read” paperback, this will not be too much of an issue.

When Davies presents an argument, he backs it up with a mix of information gathered from newspaper articles, government documents, websites, and blogs, as well as from the results of empirical studies. However, there are direct quotations that have no indication of the source, even when what he

claims was said is important for the arguments he is making. So, he is asking the reader to trust in his accuracy. As trained scientists, this trust is something that most academic humor researchers will struggle to achieve.

There is little doubt that the majority of Davies' claims are very legitimate. For example, how the discovery of psychopharmaceutic anti-depressant medicine with the power to make people feel better led to what he calls a "mass market appeal" which created a shift in perspective away from the psychoanalytical perspective of a person feeling "shame and repressed desires" to it being a sign of their "own weakness and inadequacy" (p.164).

Yet, one cannot really either ignore or accept Davies' thinly veiled warnings against the unscrupulous and unethical psychologists, warnings that are hard to take seriously by anyone who has got their research through an ethics committee. Thus, one needs to be careful not to shoot the messenger. A discerning reader should differentiate the aims of scientists researching positive psychology for their own scientific merit from the goals of economists and the legion of advertisers, market researchers, applied therapists, counsellors, coaches, and consultants who have jumped on the bandwagon selling happiness as a fix for every ill. Sometimes this distinction is not made in the book. Readers should also remember that although the book draws on scientific knowledge, it remains a popular book aimed at an interested general population and should be read as such. If any humor researchers fall into this category, then it is a fascinating exploration and well-grounded argument of how and why people are cashing in on the "happiness industry".

Reference

Schmidt-Hidding, W. (1963). Wit and humor. In Schmidt-Hidding (ed.), *Humor und Witz* (pp 37-160). Munich, Germany: Hueber.

Controlling Laughter: Political Humor in the Late Roman Republic

Reviewed by Mark Rolfe, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Anthony Corbeill. (2015/orig. 1996). *Controlling Laughter: Political Humor in the Late Roman Republic*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Xiv + 251 pp. ISBN: 0-691-02739-0.

It is often said that the past is a foreign country. The difficulty implied in that statement is aggravated when unearthing the humour of an ancient society with a different language. Anthony Corbeill originally met this challenge in 1996 and now Princeton University Press has reissued his valuable book.

Corbeill used Cicero, who was the preeminent orator wielding a reputation as the funniest man in late Republican Rome (p. 44), as a window into wider society and the role of humour in upholding and enforcing communal norms. Cicero's writings are the means for tapping into an array of other evidence—from prayer ritual to philosophical speculation to physiognomic texts—in order to show that he was catering to the ethical predispositions of his audiences.

This book is not an examination of humour in Roman society as a whole. Corbeill makes clear that Cicero's humour was upholding the patriarchal and educated standards of elites who determined what it meant to be a Roman citizen. As a standard bearer of that elite Cicero ridiculed deviance and thereby helped to reinforce those conventions. Corbeill is aware of Bergsonian theories of corrective uses of humour marking social boundaries and nonconformity. Consequently, we learn that witty abuse backed by proof was an approved technique for Roman orators. Additionally, their milieu was far more accepting of political invective than contemporary Anglosphere countries, although that is not to say it is any less practiced in those countries.

What is unusual for us is the lack of compunction with which Romans attacked physical deformities. Such jibes, humorous or otherwise, were justified by the belief that physical appearances reflected the soul and moral proclivities of a person and that "a deformity signals a moral fault" and a deviation from *natura*. Such a depraved person was, then, really a member of the lower orders who possessed "bad habits and false beliefs" (p. 33). A physical peculiarity not only arose out of an evil character rather than chance but also marked individuality, which was an aberration from Roman values and a slight upon the natural "justice of social and political stratification" (p. 35).

The orator could mock individuals through their nicknames, which was not deemed out of place since nicknames also supposedly gave insight into moral character. Pejorative ones such as Marcus Fulvius the Stutterer were bestowed and sustained by communal pressure to reproach an individual and their potential for anti-social acts. Unfortunately, descendants could be stuck with the same nicknames since they were considered probable bearers of the same moral character and thus were similarly victims of jokes.

Such naming was a way of regulating competition among the urban aristocracy and of attempting to hinder prominent families in order to preserve political stability. Even when the nickname was illustrious, it could be a source of ridicule and sarcasm, as when Cicero mocked the "failed promise inherent in the name" (p. 82) of Pompey the Great or denigrated Trebellius the Honest for being a bankrupt who defrauded creditors.

Roman invective resorted to an "ideology of the mouth" (p. 105) associated with debauched banqueting, says Corbeill, for policing social conventions. For instance, in an argument of guilt by association, Cicero joked that the corrupt aide of his enemy Clodius had bad breath that not even animals could stand. Through puns and double entendres Cicero alluded to this man's depraved sexual "feasting" involving also the sister and brother of Clodius. The participation of their mouths in these awful activities apparently demonstrated their evil characters and the threat they posed to the state.

Cicero also used metaphors of gluttony to ridicule bankruptcy and financial profligacy (which is reminiscent of the 'fat capitalist' cartoons by Thomas Nast, although the Romans did not see corpulence as a sign of vice). The orator could further titillate listeners with jokes about effeminate or sexually submissive males who danced at feasts, considered an activity for women, and were accordingly deemed threats to Roman masculinity and the natural order. The ultimate insult was to equate such men with women; thus Julius Caesar was mocked as "the Bithynian queen" and on another occasion as "a man for all women and a woman for all men" (p. 150).

Cicero's wit and political skills were tested by the civil war that engulfed Rome. He was caught between Pompey and Julius Caesar as both were seeking dictatorship. To Cicero, both men endangered the stability and freedom of Rome as well as traditional values of family and service to the state because they were consumed by ambition and individuality. Each man wanted the state as a personal possession. His despairing witticism—"I have someone to flee but no one to follow"—gained wide currency because it expressed the general dilemma. Consequently, both men despised Cicero's jests and his political limits were apparent when he wrote that when the republic is in trouble "the only thing left is to joke—if [Caesar] should let us" (p. 215).

Caesar and Pompey employed humour for their own political purposes, particularly against the senate and aristocracy. In his *Gallic Wars* Caesar recounted many jokes of his soldiers, thus enhancing his persona as a representative who understood ordinary people while still maintaining his elevation above them as a populist leader. Also, he mocked traditional qualities of birth and wealth as vehicles for political advancement, instead valuing the loyalty of the lower orders.

When he can, Corbeill draws modern similarities without overdoing them. He is very careful with the traditions of historical, rhetorical, and humour scholarship. The reconstruction of jokes is not an easy task when both Latin and English passages need to be supplied and puns made apparent, but he accomplishes the feat mostly with ease. Corbeill's valuable work still stands as one of only a small corpus studying the links between rhetoric and humour.

Laughter and War: Humorous Satirical Magazines in Britain, France, Germany, and Russia 1914-1918

Reviewed by Philippa Read, University of Leeds

Lesley Milne. (2016). *Laughter and war: Humorous-satirical magazines in Britain, France, Germany and Russia 1914-1918*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 292 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4438-8686-4.

Lesley Milne's comprehensive and well-structured compendium of First World War satirical publications is broadly researched and draws on an excellent corpus of primary sources, material from which is used effectively and convincingly throughout. Milne is clear in her aim to explore the multiple functions of laughter as a transnational and mobilisable wartime resource in cartoons and written texts from four

publications targeted at the officer class: the British magazine *Punch*, *Le Rire* from France, Germany's *Simplicissimus*, and the Russian publication *Novy Satirikon*. Milne's central concern is to determine why humour was deployed in these popular periodicals, and often to an increasing extent in the period 1914-1918.

The eleven chapters are approached thematically, with consideration given to each magazine and its national context. Chapter one discusses humour as a propaganda tool, investigating the extent to which the four magazines – as valuable sources to compare with other wartime publications such as trench newspapers – can help glean an impression of the military and civilian experience in the four countries. Chapter two examines the shifts in the magazines' functions and content as the nations moved from peace to wartime. Milne observes changes in tone and temporary halts in production, and studies the ways in which the periodicals and their humorous subject matter interacted with the imminence and then the outbreak of war, concluding with the suggestion that laughter was widely used as a tool for resistance in a situation where many felt defenceless.

Chapter three describes the difficulties associated with documenting the war while protecting the civilian population, and the related self-censorship employed by all four magazines. Chapter four looks at satirical anti-German propaganda, spotlighting atrocities, gas warfare, and the Lusitania sinking, while detailing *Simplicissimus*' responses to this coverage where the philistinism and cultural blindness of the Allies are underlined. Chapter five focusses on the war of humorous words as a kind of soft power asset used by the four nations to communicate national and cultural characteristics. Milne discusses the ways in which fun was poked at the enemy for his lack of military prowess, virility, table manners, sporting talent or even respect for the dead, and for his homosexual or excremental tendencies. She also outlines how key belligerent speech acts such as boasts, threats and insults were used in this voice war.

Chapter six explores manifestations of the four nations' typified self-images, and considers stereotypes recognised in both the Allied magazines and in *Simplicissimus*. Satirical anti-semitic and racist texts and images are foregrounded in a discussion of interactions with otherness, and Milne observes a shift from the opening stages of war, when the enemy was depicted with cruel mockery, to the latter stages, when satire began to acknowledge the concept of the 'worthy adversary'. Chapter seven treats the ways in which physical warfare at sea, on land, and in the skies was transposed into magazines as a further example of a linguistic conflict in which satire was used to dent the enemy's military confidence, whilst chapter eight examines representations of homeland and attitudes towards death.

Chapters nine and ten turn to the magazines' treatment of gender, considering representations of sexual hygiene and adultery, the French *marraine de guerre* (war-godmother) phenomenon and its equivalents, men in drag, and women in occupied zones. Some themes are developed further in Milne's discussion of women looking or speaking for themselves in the magazines, in comparison with women as depicted by men. As part of this investigation she treats some of the most topical gender discourses of the period, from wartime depopulation fears which prompted clear gender anxieties as women took on new roles across the four countries, to instances in which these new roles were described as being well received or even titillating. Most interesting is the conclusion that Milne draws whereby humorous gender discourses in the magazines provide evidence of attitudes towards universal suffrage, an issue that endured well into the interwar period in the case of Britain, and beyond for France.

The final two chapters consider the war as it drew to a close, the former exploring the magazines' satirical class-specific shaming of those shirkers, profiteers and *nouveaux riches* seen as not contributing honestly to the war effort. In this discussion Milne also studies to what extent a nation's experience of austerity impacted on the use of humour in its national magazines. The closing chapter inspects attitudes in the Triple Entente publications towards victory over Germany, noting a shift in such attitudes after April 1918 when victory became more probable. Milne investigates how the satirical imagery and narrative reveal anxiety over the possibility of negotiating an unsatisfactory peace on enemy terms.

In evaluating broadly the wartime activity of four magazines hailing from four different belligerent nations, *Laughter and War* fulfils its aim to expose humour both as a significant transnational coping mechanism for an impossible experience, and as a reinforcer of national identity which on rare occasions even succeeded in transcending the boundary between friend and foe. The reader should be aware that whilst this work mainly concerns the journalistic uses of humour in wartime, its treatments do not always

seek to define the humorous or satirical intent of a given cartoon or text, so a certain degree of interpretation might be required. Methodologically speaking, it would perhaps have been useful to include discussion of a satirical periodical from a second or third Central Power, while Milne's decision to structure her chapters thematically with an analysis of each magazine's approach to a given issue can at times render the text somewhat formulaic. However a great strength lies precisely in her teasing out of the key differences in satirical representation, not only across the Allied-Germany divide, but also between attitudes in the Russian, British and French magazines. Overall, given this 'separative' discussion, she succeeds in achieving a nuanced and worthwhile analysis.

"Do You Serve Lawyers and Politicians Here?" Stereotyped Lawyers and Politicians in American Jokes and Anti-Proverbs

Reviewed by Christie Davies, University of Reading, Reading, United Kingdom

Anna T. Litovkina. (2016). "Do you serve lawyers and politicians here?" Stereotyped lawyers and politicians in American jokes and anti-proverbs. Komaróm, Slovakia: János Selye University Press. 189 pp. ISBN: 978-80-8122-172-9.

It is a mark of our global world that a Hungarian folklorist raised in Russia and working in Poland should write an excellent book in English published in Slovakia about a key aspect of American humour, namely the mocking of lawyers and politicians. It is worth explaining at this point what an anti-proverb is: it is a deliberately distorted version, in effect a parody of a well-known proverb and often intended to have a humorous effect. It is difficult to understand why the term anti-proverb should begin with 'anti' rather than some more suitable prefix, but the word is a translation of the German *Antispruchwort*, which perhaps reflects the Hegelian mind-set of German intellectuals. An English empiricist would note that only in a few cases are anti-proverbs the strict antithesis of the proverbs that underlie them. In any case proverbs are rarely precise; they are folk-woolliness passed off as wisdom, but it would be unfair to quibble with the author's terminology. She is after all Eastern Europe's leading expert on the subject and the discussion of anti-proverbs is the most innovative part of the book. Let me quote two illustrative examples:

Where there's a will there's a lawsuit (p.126)

Clothes make the man and suits make the lawyer (p. 135)

It is interesting to note that Professor Litovkina has drawn most of her anti-proverbs about lawyers and politicians from printed sources, particularly anthologies, whereas her much more numerous jokes have come from the internet. This suggests that jokes and anti-proverbs circulate in quite different ways. Jokes travel rapidly by word of mouth and then, every so often, someone collects them and posts them on the internet, just as in earlier times they would have produced a commercial joke book. Jokes are free-floating, and some of the examples provided are really pseudo-lawyer jokes in which a lawyer has been fed into an older joke that originally had different protagonists. It may remain a reasonably good joke, but does not feel authentic, as the lawyer doesn't really belong to it.

Conversely, anti-proverbs are by definition anchored to particular proverbs even when they employ the same lawyer or politician script that is the basis of the jokes. It is difficult to imagine a group of good old boys exchanging anti-proverbs in the bar or locker room and then eagerly passing them on to their friends, which is how jokes about lawyers get around. Anti-proverbs seem to belong in the world of sententious public speakers trying to make a point in an indirect or humorous way. They need a context. Perhaps that is why they end up in published anthologies.

The scripts of the lawyer jokes listed by the author include dishonesty, greed, cunning, arrogance and corruption. She calls them stereotypes, but Victor Raskin's term 'scripts' is more fitting. People believe stereotypes to be true. Most of those who tell lawyer jokes see them as mere jokes based on fictitious scripts, which accounts for their immense popularity amongst the American lawyers who are their targets. Even the nasty animal images that Dr Litovkina discusses in detail, and which are depicted in some very funny cartoons, have been annexed by the lawyers themselves. One of her photographs (p. 77) shows a law office in America outside which a local attorney has hung not just his shingle but a huge model of a shark. The

lawyers are, after all, selling the public what it wants – namely aggression against an opponent, whether in a tort suit, a row over a contract, or a disputed divorce.

The fault lies not with the lawyers but with American society. As one scholar quoted by Anna Litovkina puts it: “Lawyers lie at the very heart of American society. American lawyers are the most American of Americans and they represent the central American values” (p. 7). Whether the writer realized that the verb ‘lie’ has a double meaning is not clear, but the phrase is drolly appropriate.

For these reasons the numerous jokes in Litovkina’s Chapter 4, ‘Killing Off Lawyers’, are non-threatening, and the lawyers know it. Even if there were a threatening reality behind the jokes, as there may be with anti-Semitic jokes, the politically correct ideologues who dominate American institutions would not find the jokes offensive. Lawyers are defined as white, prosperous and solidly middle-class and as such are undeserving of sympathy and protection.

Such a view shows a lack of historical awareness. Lawyers, as an educated and privileged group, are at risk of lethal attack, like the Jews in Nazi Germany, the literate Cambodians slaughtered by Pol Pot’s illiterate militia, or the intellectuals who fell afoul of Stalin or Mao. Behind many of these persecutions are to be found the peasantry, a historically backward class steeped in the idiocy of rural life, witness the peasants who supported Pol Pot and Mao, turned on the Kulaks, or voted NSDAP. I make this point because I strongly disagree with the authorities cited by Professor Litovkina who have made so much use of the line from Shakespeare’s *Henry VI, Part 2* spoken by Dick the Butcher during Jack Cade’s rebellion of 1450: “The first thing we do, let’s kill all the lawyers” (pp. 12-13).

For Shakespeare this was just one more of his many jokes at the expense of the lower orders, but in the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381, just seventy years before Cade’s, the mob really did try to kill all the lawyers and burned down their houses. The lawyers were seen by the peasants as enforcers of feudal oppression and as tax-gatherers for the government. The lawyers’ situation then has nothing in common with modern America where the law is seen as the true embodiment of everything that’s excellent. Of course no system can live up to such an expectation and so we get American lawyer jokes that have nothing in common with Shakespeare’s.

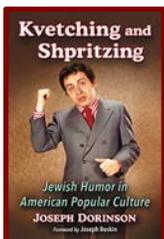
This is a splendid book, full of good jokes and anti-proverbs, which also incites the reader to think hard about the society and legal system that produced them. My own favourite, which I am sure is also cherished by President Donald Trump, is to be found on page 61:

- Q. What do you get when you cross a crooked politician with a crooked lawyer?
A. Chelsea Clinton.

Reference

Raskin, Victor, 1985. *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.

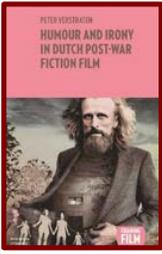
Recent Publications



Kvetching and Shpritzing: Jewish Humor in American Popular Culture

Joseph Dorinson. (2015). *Kvetching and shpritzing: Jewish humor in American popular culture*. Jefferson, North Carolina, USA: McFarland. 249 pp. Paper ISBN: 978-0-7864-9482-8; eBook ISBN: 978-1-4766-2056-5.

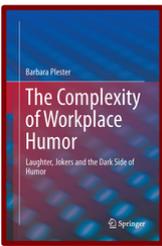
From the Publisher: Jewish humor, with its rational skepticism and cutting social criticism, permeates American popular culture. Scholars of humor—from Sigmund Freud to Woody Allen—have studied the essence of the Jewish joke, at once a defense mechanism against a hostile world and a means of cultural affirmation. Where did this wit originate? Why do Jewish humorists work at the margins of so many diverse cultures? What accounts for the longevity of the Jewish joke? Do oppressed people, as African American author Ralph Ellison suggested, slip their yoke when they change the joke? Citing examples from prominent humorists and stand-up comics, this book examines the phenomenon of Jewish humor from its biblical origins to its prevalence in the modern diaspora, revealing a mother lode of wit in language, literature, folklore, music and history.



Humor and Irony in Dutch Post-War Fiction Film

Peter Verstraten. (2016). *Humour and irony in dutch post-war fiction film*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 410 pp. ISBN: 978-9-089-64943-0.

Adapted from the Publisher: Dutch cinema is typically treated only in terms of prewar films or documentaries, leaving postwar fictional film largely understudied. At the same time, a Hollandse School, first named in the 1980s, has developed with deadpan and ironic films like those of director and actor Alex van Warmerdam. Using seminal theories of humor and comedy, this book explores a number of Dutch films with chapters devoted to low-class comedies, multicultural comedies, neurotic romances, deliberate camp, cosmic irony, and grotesque satire. This text makes surprising connections between Dutch films from various decades. This text is available for purchase in hard copy and as a free e-book through OAPEN at <http://www.oapen.org/search?identifier=605038>.



The Complexity of Workplace Humour

Barbara Plester. (2016). *The complexity of workplace humour: Laughter, jokers and the dark side of humour*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. 164 pp. Hardcover ISBN: 978-3-319-24667-3; eBook ISBN: 978-3-319-24669-7

From the Publisher: This book discusses boundaries for organizational humour as well as the jokers and jesters that enliven modern workplaces. It has long been accepted that humour and tragedy can occupy the same space and that is eloquently demonstrated in this book. Using ethnographic research techniques, a selection of stories, ruminations, cartoons, and narratives of events is combined with theoretical conceptions of humour and fun to create a comprehensive analysis of the good, the bad, and the downright ugly in organizational humour.

Recent Articles in Humor Studies

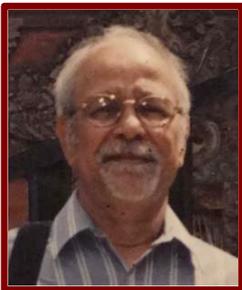
The Humorous Times announces recent articles from *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* and by researchers who publish elsewhere within humor studies. The following list, compiled by the ISHS Executive Secretary, includes humor studies articles published since December 2016. If you have a recent publication, let us know. We will include it in a future newsletter.

- Al-Momani, K., Badarneh, M. A., & Migdadi, F. (2017). A semiotic analysis of political cartoons in Jordan in light of the Arab Spring. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 30, 63-95. doi: 10.1515/humor-2016-0033
- Becker, A. B., & Waisanen, D. J. (2017). Laughing or learning with the Chief Executive? The impact of exposure to presidents' jokes on message elaboration. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 30, 23-41. doi: 10.1515/humor-2016-0056
- Bitterly, T. B., Brooks, A. W., & Schweitzer, M. E. (2017). Risky business: When humor increases and decreases status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 112(3), 431-455. doi:10.1037/pspi0000079
- Brown, L. J. (2016). The capacity to tell a joke: Reflections from work with Asperger children. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 97(6), 1609-1625. doi:10.1111/1745-8315.12544
- Caruana, F., Avanzini, P., Gozzo, F., Pelliccia, V., Casaceli, G., & Rizzolatti, G. (2017). A mirror mechanism for smiling in the anterior cingulate cortex. *Emotion*, 17(2), 187-190. doi:10.1037/emo0000237
- Caudill, A., & Woodzicka, J. (2017). Funny business: Using humor for good in the workplace. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 30, 43-62. doi: 10.1515/humor-2016-0039
- Chen, G. H., Ruch, W. F., & Yan-Na, L. (2017). Temperamental basis of sense of humor: Validating the state-trait-cheerfulness-inventory in Mainland China. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 30, 97-118. doi: 10.1515/humor-2015-0036
- Christensen, A. P., Silvia, P. J., Nusbaum, E. C., & Beaty, R. E. (2016). Clever People: Intelligence and Humor Production Ability. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*. doi:10.1037/aca0000109
- Filani, I. (2016). "Laf wan kill me die" (I almost died laughing): An analysis of Akpos jokes and the readers' responses. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 4(4), 5-25.
- Hawley, J. (2016). Ridicule, religion and the politics of wit in Augustan England. *Historian*, 78(4), 817-818. doi:10.1111/hisn.12398

- Heintz, S. (2017). Putting a spotlight on daily humor behaviors: Dimensionality and relationships with personality, subjective well-being, and humor styles. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 104407-412. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2016.08.042
- Hoicka, E., Butcher, J., Malla, F., & Harris, P. L. (2017). Humor and preschoolers' trust: Sensitivity to changing intentions. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 154113-130. doi:10.1016/j.jecp.2016.10.006
- Isaksen, J. L. (2017). The Power of Obama's Racio-rhetorical humor: Rethinking Black masculinities. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 28(1), 6-19. doi:10.1080/10646175.2016.1235517
- Jared, D., & Bainbridge, S. (2017). Reading Homophone Puns: Evidence from Eye Tracking. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 71(1), 2-13. doi:10.1037/cep0000109
- Kellner, R., & Benedek, M. (2017). The role of creative potential and intelligence for humor production. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 11(1), 52-58. doi:10.1037/aca0000065
- Kreifelts, B., Brück, C., Ethofer, T., Ritter, J., Weigel, L., Erb, M., & Wildgruber, D. (2017). Prefrontal mediation of emotion regulation in social anxiety disorder during laughter perception. *Neuropsychologia*, 96, 175-183. doi:10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2017.01.016
- Kurtz, L. E., & Algoe, S. B. (2017). When sharing a laugh means sharing more: Testing the role of shared laughter on short-term interpersonal consequences. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 41(1), 45-65. doi:10.1007/s10919-016-0245-9
- Kuru, N., & Kublay, G. (2017). The effect of laughter therapy on the quality of life of nursing home residents. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, doi:10.1111/jocn.13687
- Laineste, L., & Voolaid, P. (2016). Laughing across borders: Intertextuality of internet memes. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 4(4), 26-49.
- Lavan, N., Rankin, G., Lorking, N., Scott, S., & McGettigan, C. (2017). Neural correlates of the affective properties of spontaneous and volitional laughter types. *Neuropsychologia*, 95, 30-39. doi:10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2016.12.012
- Lujan, H. L., & DiCarlo, S. E. (2016). Humor promotes learning!. *Advances In Physiology Education*, 40(4), 333-334. doi:10.1152/advan.00123.2016
- Marone, V. (2016). Looping out loud: A multimodal analysis of humour on Vine. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 4(4), 50-56.
- Meyer, N. A., Helle, A. C., Tucker, R. P., Lengel, G. J., DeShong, H. L., Wingate, L. R., & Mullins-Sweatt, S. N. (2017). Humor styles moderate borderline personality traits and suicide ideation. *Psychiatry Research*, 249, 337-342. doi:10.1016/j.psychres.2017.01.038
- Moonsamy, N. (2016). A "Funny" Feeling: Laughter and Nostalgia in Alex Latimer's The Space Race. *English In Africa*, 43(3), 77-94. doi:10.4314/eia.v43i3.5
- Nikopoulos, J. (2017). The stability of laughter. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 30, 1-21. doi: 10.1515/humor-2016-0062
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- Otten, M., Mann, L., van Berkum, J. J., & Jonas, K. J. (2017). No laughing matter: How the presence of laughing witnesses changes the perception of insults. *Social Neuroscience*, 12(2), 182-193. doi:10.1080/17470919.2016.1162194
- Pahl, B. (2016). Pussy Riot's humour and the social media: Self-irony, subversion, and solidarity. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 4(4), 67-104.
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- Pérez-Pereiro, M. (2017). Getting the mob angry: The satire of Masa Enfurecida as political incorrectness in social networking. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 30, 119-137. doi: 10.1515/humor-2016-0086
- Piata, A. (2016). When metaphor becomes a joke: Metaphor journeys from political ads to internet memes. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 106, 39-56. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2016.10.003
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- Ramsey, M. C. (2016). Communibiology and humor: An examination of personality predictors and communicative functions of humor. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality, 36*(2), 172-194.
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- Steir-Livny, L. (2016). Is it OK to laugh about it yet? Hitler Rants YouTube parodies in Hebrew. *European Journal of Humour Research, 4*(4), 105-121.
- Stevens, E. M., & King-Meadows, T. D. (2017). Technicolor Racism or Caricature Assassination? Satirizing White Anxiety About the Obama Presidency. *Howard Journal of Communications, 28*(1), 72-92. doi:10.1080/10646175.2016.1237905
- Tervo, M., & Ridanpää, J. (2016). Humor and parody in Finnish rap music videos. *European Journal of Cultural Studies, 19*(6), 616-636. doi:10.1177/1367549416632006
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In Remembrance



Mahadev L. Apte

February 1, 1931–October 25, 2016

From Elliott Oring, Professor Emeritus, California State University, Los Angeles

Mahadev L. Apte was born in the village of Devace Gothne in Maharashtra, India, on February 1, 1931. He first became interested in Marathi literature when he finished grade school. He was especially taken with the Western-educated Marathi authors who had begun to write humorous fiction in the first decades of the twentieth century.

In 1955 he became a research assistant in Marathi in the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University where he received his M.A. in linguistics. He returned to India in 1958 and spent a year at the Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute in Pune. The following year, he went to the University of Wisconsin under the Rockefeller Foundation Exchange Program to pursue his doctorate in Linguistics and Anthropology. At Wisconsin, he met Judit Katona (who was herself an immigrant to the United States, and who at the age of thirteen, walked across the Hungarian border during the 1956 ill-fated Hungarian revolution). They were married in 1962. Mahadev returned to teach at the Deccan Research Institute before taking a visiting lectureship in Hindi and Linguistics and Duke University in Durham, North Carolina in 1965. After one year, he was offered a tenure track appointment in the Department of Anthropology where he worked for the rest of his academic career.

Mahadev was attracted to the topic of humor quite early. In a series of papers presented at the American Anthropological Association in the early 1970s, he promoted the idea of using humor as a key to

understanding the central cognitive orientations and values operating in a cultural system. He was an early participant at in the International Humor and WHIM conferences.

Except for discussions of joking relationships and ritual humor—both subsets of anthropological interest in kinship and religion—Mahadev was surprised by the general inattention of anthropologists to humor in their ethnographies as well as the overall inattention in humor studies to work by anthropologists. He began to teach a seminar on the cross-cultural aspects of humor at Duke, and over the next three years, he read the scattered pieces that comprised the anthropological literature on the subject. The result was his book *Humor and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach* which was published by Cornell University Press in 1985. The bibliography contains over 600 entries. It served to distill the work that had been done by anthropologists on humor and further stimulated anthropological interest in humor as an ethnographic subject. *Humor and Laughter* is regularly cited in works by anthropologists and folklorists, as well as by literary critics and philosophers.

Mahadev was invited to join the editorial board of *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* from its first issue in 1988, and he continued to serve on the board through 2012. He also published the very first article in the very first issue of that journal: "Disciplinary Boundaries in Humorology: An Anthropologist's Ruminations." In that essay, he discusses some of the points of contact between anthropological and humor research, and also offered the terms humorology and humorologist to label the field and its researchers. (Humorology had actually been suggested by Evan Esar in 1952, but the term did not stick, and I am not sure that it has gained much traction since Mahadev reinvented it.) The very same year, Mahadev edited a special issue of *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* in which he brought together the work of major sociolinguists and humor researchers. Mahadev's important 1987 article "Ethnic Humor vs. 'Sense of Humor'" published in 1987 in the *American Behavioral Scientist* explored the conflict in American values between having a good sense of humor and promoting cultural pluralism.

Mahadev never abandoned his early love for contemporary Marathi fiction, and he received a Fulbright Research Fellowship to study Marathi theater in Mumbai and Pune. He went to India to do research in 1989-1990. The result was *Humor and Communication in Contemporary Marathi Theater: A Sociolinguistic Perspective* published in 1992. In the book, he described and analyzed the forms, techniques, targets, and functions of humor in Marathi theatrical productions and commented on the relation of humor to Maharashtrian social life more generally. He was concerned to identify some of the peculiarities of Maharashtrian humor as well as its connection to universally shared traits, patterns, and qualities. Mahadev also wrote numerous reviews of humor books, but in addition to his work on humor, he wrote and published on linguistics, South Asian language and culture, foodways (together with Judit Katona-Apte who holds a Ph.D. in nutrition), and on autobiography.

I first met Mahadev at one of the early humor conferences, probably the one in Los Angeles in 1979 although I think I have a firmer recollection of Washington D.C. in 1982. We immediately hit it off. Mahadev was easy to like. He was warm, hospitable, and funny. It did not hurt that we were both teaching in departments of cultural anthropology and there were few anthropologists actively engaged in humor studies. That Judit turned out to be equally likeable—and a great cook to boot—only served to cement our connection. In 1987, we were in Hungary together for a conference on life history organized by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In 1989, we met in Rome (where Judit was stationed because of her position in the United Nations World Food Program [WFP]), and we drove to western Hungary to visit various people and places. I also stayed with Mahadev and Judit several times in Durham, North Carolina. In 2001, Mahadev retired from Duke University, and I was honored to be invited by the Department of Anthropology to give a lecture on humor as part of his retirement celebration. Mahadev retired to Bangkok, Thailand, where Judit had been transferred by WFP. I had a chance to stay with them in Bangkok as well, but I saw them mostly when they came through Los Angeles to visit relatives. Mahadev died in his sleep in Bangkok on October 25, 2016. He is survived by his wife Judit, his daughter Sunita, son Sharad, and grandchildren Laszlo, Nicolas, Asha, and Noah. He will be sorely missed.



Arvo Krikmann

July 21, 1939-February 27, 2017

From Liisi Laineste, Department of Folkloristics, Estonian Literary Museum

The world of the humanities has experienced a painful loss with the death of Arvo Krikmann, who dedicated his life to studying folklore, short forms, figurative speech and humour. He passed away after a serious illness on the early morning of February 27. He had been a good colleague, a great teacher and a valued friend.

Arvo Krikmann was born on July 21, 1939, in the village Pudivere in Virumaa county. In 1946-1950 he studied in Pudivere elementary school, followed by middle school in Simuna (1950-1953) and high school in Väike-Maarja (1953-1957). In 1957 he became a student in the department of history and linguistics at the University of Tartu, graduating in Estonian philology in 1962. After graduation he went to work at the Estonian Literary Museum, where he stayed until 1969. Between 1973 and 1977 he studied for a postgraduate degree at the Institute of Language and Literature and in 1975 he defended his thesis on the content and world view of proverbs. He later worked in the folklore section of that Institute, and then became a Senior Fellow at the department of computational linguistics and Principal Researcher at the Institute for the Estonian Language. His career culminated in his appointment as Senior Researcher at the Estonian Literary Museum between 2000 and 2014.

Arvo Krikmann's writings included many much praised articles and monographs. These included his monumental publications on Estonian proverbs (*Eesti vanasõnad I-IV*, 1980–1988) and Estonian riddles (*Eesti mõistatused I-III*, 2001–2013) and he completed many studies of other short forms of folklore. Arvo Krikmann also wrote many more general pieces of the highest scholarly merit. In 1997 he published the outstanding study "Insights into short forms of folklore I: Fundamental concepts, genre relations, general problems", which he defended for his PhD in 1998. More recently he had applied the methods of cognitive linguistics to folkloric data and his studies on the humour of Estonia and its neighbours were much appreciated by humour scholars. His scientific works were internationally widely known, much esteemed and influential.

Arvo Krikmann was a highly valued professor at the University of Tartu from the 1990s where he supervised five doctoral theses and gave lectures and took seminars on short forms of folklore, folk humour, semantics and theories of figurative of speech. From 1997 he was a member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences and he also played a leading role in many international scientific organisations, serving on their editorial boards, steering committees and scientific councils. Arvo Krikmann was the recipient of many honours and awards including the Order of the White Star (third class), the National Research Award, the Estonian Cultural Endowment's Annual Award, the Baltic Assembly Prize, and the Finnish Kalevala Society Allhallows Prize. In 2014, he received the Ferdinand Johann Wiedemann's language prize for his studies of short forms of folklore, notably by introducing linguistic methods to folkloristics and studying humour analytically, and for internationally disseminating his research on Estonia's heritage.

His colleagues and students will remember him as an exceptionally brilliant scholar of remarkable erudition who possessed a wonderful sense of humour. He was in all senses a great person.



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