

The Humorous Times

Newsletter of the International Society for Humor Studies

SPRING/SUMMER 2013

Ralph Mueller, Editor

Volume 26, Issue 2

25th ISHS Conference Schedule



**College of William and Mary, July 2-6, 2013
Williamsburg, Virginia, USA**

The 2013 ISHS Conference will be held in Williamsburg, Virginia from July 2 to July 6, 2013.

ISHS Conference Convenor Larry Ventis has provided the following preliminary schedule.

Tuesday, July 2, 2013

Registration, Sadler University Center: 2:00 – 6:00 pm

Opening Reception, Wren Building Great Hall: 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Wednesday, July 3, 2013

9:00 – 10:30 am

Plenary Session (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Willibald Ruch, University of Zurich: Presidential Address

Christie Davies, Reading University: *Why Jews Write Jokes and Women Don't*

Break 10:30 – 11:00 am

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Teaching, Learning, & Education (Tidewater 1)

Larry Barron, Grand Canyon University & Bruce H. Glenn, Arizona State University: *Humor, Learning, and Retention: Using Humor to Teach about Death and Dying*

Kevin J. Meyer, University of Mount Union: *Experiencing Humor: Teaching the Psychology of Humor*

Junichiro Sano, Soka University, Japan: *Every Answer Must Be Correct—Introducing “Manzai” Humor for Group Work in Class*

Scott Sterling & Shawn Loewen, Michigan State University: *Language Play in a Spanish Foreign Language Classroom*

Carolynn Ordiway-Thiem, Tarleton State University: *Humor Competence in ESL Learning*

Research in Psychology of Humor (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Sonja Heintz, Department of Psychology, University of Zurich: *What is a Humor Style?*

Adam T. Cann, Texas Tech University & Arnie Cann, UNC Charlotte: *Affective Reactions to Affiliative and Aggressive Humor*

Glenn Shean, Department of Psychology, College of William and Mary & Barbara Hansen, Virginia Consortium Program for Clinical Psychology: *Sense of Humor, Age, and the Ability to Identify Non-Verbal Expressions of Affect*

Sonja Heintz, Department of Psychology, Univ. of Zurich: *Humor Styles, Depression, Self Esteem, and Optimism—Unraveling the Effects of Humor and Personality*

William Hampes, Black Hawk College: *The Relation between Humor Styles and Time Perspectives*

In This Issue

2013 Conference Schedule 1

Upcoming events..... 6

- *International Summer School and Symposium*
- *International Conference on Communication Styles*
- *SAMLA: Humor in the Digital Age*
- *"Make it funny"*

THT Book Review Special:

Humor in Japan..... 8

- *The Power of Laughter*
- *How to do things with Humor*

Book Reviews..... 10

- *Horace de Vere Cole*
- *Understanding Language through Humor*
- *Child's Sense of Humor*
- *Humor in Social Relationships*

Recent Publications..... 12

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Next Issue

The next *Humorous Times* is due out in September. Please send information, contributions and announcements by August 31.

Lunch 12:30 – 1:30 pm ISHS Board Meeting

1:30 – 2:45 pm

Symposium (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Rod Martin (Convener): *Investigating Humor Styles and Well-Being within Individuals over Time: Daily Diary Techniques*

Rod A. Martin, Sara Caird, & Kim R. Edwards, Psychology, University of Western Ontario: *An Overview of Diary Methods in Humor Style Research*

Kim R. Edwards & Rod A. Martin, University of Western Ontario: *Can a Laugh a Day Really Keep the Doctor Away?*

Laura James, Rod A. Martin, & Kim R. Edwards, University of Western Ontario: *Do Positive Humor Styles Broaden and Build? A Daily Diary Investigation of Humor Styles and Well-being*

Humor in Literature and Performance (Tidewater 1)

Ingrid G. Daemmerich, Department of English and Philosophy, Drexel University: *Humor as Celebrity-Maker in the Multi-Genre Re-Creations of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*

Cornelia Cody, University of Maryland: *The Heart-Breaking Humor of Dorothy Parker*

Miriam M. Chirico, Professor of English Literature, Eastern Connecticut State University: *Comedic Monologues: the Narrative Revelation of the Authentic Self*

Kathleen M. McKain, Associate Professor of French, Saint Martin's University: *Being Flaubert by Way of Borges*

Break 2:45 – 3:00

3:00 – 4:15 pm

General Theory of Verbal Humor (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Victor Raskin, Purdue University: *Script Dependency: Surprise and Funniness*

Lauren M. Stuart, Purdue University: *An Object Oriented Conception of Scripts*

Julia Taylor, Purdue University: *Making Computational Humor Even More Complex: Fuzzifying GTVH*

Donald Casadonte, Columbus State Community College: *Processing Real Humor*

Cognition (Tidewater 1)

Larry Ventis, Department of Psychology, College of William and Mary: *Is Humor Associated with "Thinking Slow"?*

Xiao Dong YUE, Dept. of Applied Social Studies, Hong Kong University, Lihua Mao, & Schengchang FENG, Peking University, Beijing: *Jokes Pointed at Others Activate Brain Regions Related to Theory of Mind*

Chris Ball, Department of Psychology, College of William and Mary: *Using Sexist Humor to Study the Relationship between Emotion and Memory*

Sachiko Kitazume, Kinki University, Osaka, Japan: *How Humor is Interpreted: Relevance Theory vs. Blending Theory*

Posters (York Room)

Jim Lyttle, Labovitz School of Business and Economics, University of Minnesota, Duluth: *Comic S&M: Legal Defenses for Humorists*

Amy Puderbaugh, Walden University: *Comic Nomads: Instances of Humor among Teleworkers*

Break 4:15 – 4:30 pm

4:30 – 5:45 pm

Assessment (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Martin Lampert, & Kate L. Isaacson, Psychology Department, Holy Names University: *Bordering on the Comic: Using the Humorous Behavior Q-Sort to Identify Humor Types and Blends*

Faisal L. Kadri, ArtificialPsychology.com & Masahi Inoue, Yamagata University: *Improving the Search for Humor-Personality Link by Reducing Correlated Noise of Humor Appreciation*

René T. Proyer, Department of Psychology, University of Zurich: *Playfulness in Adults: Current Research and Measurement Issues*

Bruce H. Glenn, Arizona State Univ., & Larry Barron, Grand Canyon Univ.: *Humor Production vs. Humor Appreciation in Romantic Relationships: What College-aged Males and Females Desire in Current Relationships*

Early to Contemporary American Humor (Tidewater 1)

Holger Kersten, English Dept., Magdeberg Univ.: *Early American Humor Anthologies as a Source for Humor Studies*

Peter Derks, Department of Psychology, College of William and Mary: *Colonial Humor*

Nicholas Zautra, School of Life Sciences, Arizona State University: *Resentment in Satire*

Terry Lindvall, Virginia Wesleyan College: "Dear 8 pound, six ounce newborn infant":

A Century of Comic Prayers in Hollywood Films

Workshop: Teaching Film Comedy (York Room)

Dennis Bounds, Regent University & Terry Lindvall, Virginia Wesleyan College:

This Course is a Joke: Teaching Film Comedy

8:30 – 10:00 pm

Comedy Night Contest and the awarding of the coveted ROFLMAO Trophy (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Thursday, July 4, 2013

Breakfast 7:00 am – 8:30 am

9:00 – 10:30 am

Plenary Session (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Robert Mankoff, Cartoon Editor, New Yorker: *The New Yorker's Cartoon Process: Creating, Editing, Publishing, and Monetizing Cartoon Humor*

John Morreall, Religious Studies, College of William and Mary, *Humor as Social Lubricant*

Break 10:30 – 11:00 am

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Cross Cultural Humor (Tidewater 1)

Xiao Dong YUE, Dept. of Applied Social Studies, City University of Hong Kong, & Feng Jiang, School of Business, Central University of Finance and Economics, Beijing: *Big-H Humor and Little-H Humor: A Multi-Method Study of Humor Perception between the Chinese and Westerners*

Anastasiya Zhvaleuskaya, Belarusian State Univ.: *Attitude towards Excessive Drinkers in Eastern European Folk Tales*

Yukiko Nishimura, Faculty of Humanities, Toyo Gakuen University: *Humor Related to Aging and Gender among the Elderly in Japan: Sociolinguistic Analyses of Japanese Senior Blogs*

Christelle Pare, Institut national de la recherche scientifique: *Urbanisation Culture Societe: Contemporary Quebec Francophone Comedy Industry: Structure and Balance of Power*

Symposium (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Willibald Ruch (Convener): *The BENCOR: Benevolent and Corrective Humor*

Willibald Ruch, Psychology, University of Zurich: *Benevolent and Corrective Humor:*

Two Components of Humor Aiming at Good

Sonja Heintz & Willibald Ruch, Psychology, University of Zurich: *Personality Correlates of Benevolent and Corrective Humor and its Relation to Subjective Well-Being*

Alberto Dionigi, University of Macerata, Italy: *Benevolent and Corrective Humor in Different Italian Samples*

Jenny Hofmann, Lionel Kuster, Tracy Platt, & Willibald Ruch, Psychology, University of Zurich: *Comedians: Their Sense of Humor and their Humor Production Abilities*

Lunch 12:30 – 1:30 pm **Humor Executive Board Meeting**

1:30 – 2:45 pm

Panel Discussion (Commonwealth Auditorium)

End of the World as a Humorous Subject Across Cultures

Wladyslaw Chlopicki (Chair) Jagiellonian University, Krakow Poland

Dorota Brzozowska, Opole University, Opole, Poland

Liise Laineste, Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

John Morreall, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, USA

Christie Davies, Reading University, England

Break 2:45 – 3:00 pm

3:00 – 4:15 pm

Applied and Therapeutic Humor (Tidewater 1)

Joyce M. Saltman, Department of Special Education, Southern Connecticut State University:

Optimism for Dummies

Kevin J. Meyer, University of Mount Union: *The Relationship Between Therapists' Use of Humor and Therapeutic Alliance*

Alberto Dionigi, University of Macerata, Italy: *The Use of Humor in Psychotherapy: Differences Between Patients and Therapists*

Stand-Up Comedy: Venue, Technique, & Consequences (York Room)

Eric Shouse, East Carolina University: *Breakable Rules for Starting an Alternative Stand-Up Comedy Scene*

Jeri D. Martin, Tarleton State University: *Humor in Gay and Lesbian Stand-Up*

Di Yu, Applied Linguistics Program, Teachers College, Columbia University: *Silence as Punch Lines in Stand-Up Comedy*

Break 4:15 – 4:30 pm

4:30 – 5:45 pm

Humor in Art and Protest (Tidewater 1)

Janet Bing, Old Dominion University: *Social Activists, Humor, and the New Media*

Don Baird, The Chicago School for Professional Psychology: *Humor and Freedom: Ai Wei Wei's Purposeful Playfulness*

Mark Weeks, Nagoya University: *Andy Warhol and Comic Nomadic Culture*

From Super Successful, to Failed, and Incomprehensible Humor (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Moira Marsh, Indiana University: *Pulling Up Piccadilly: The Best Practical Joke of All Time*

Liisi Laineste, Estonian Literary Museum: *Failed Humor on the Internet*

Nancy Bell, Washington State University: *Responses to Incomprehensible Humor*

Hilal Ergul, Texas A&M University-Commerce: *Responses to Failed Humor in Mixed Gender Interaction*

Workshop (York Room)

Mariann Martin, Hollins University: *Humor Alive and Well in the Fashion Industry—Providing, Motivating, and Encouraging a Plethora of International Economic Stimuli Programs*

Fourth of July Fireworks, Colonial Williamsburg, 8:30 pm

Friday, July 5, 2013

Breakfast 7:00 – 8:30 am

9:00 – 10:30 am

Plenary Session: Student Award Papers (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Chelsae Hay, Tarleton State University: *It's All in the Ending: Target Shifts in Tragedy and Restoration Comedy*

Sara Caird & Rod A. Martin, University of Western Ontario: *Funny You Should Say That: The Role of Daily Humor Styles in Dating Relationships*

Anna Cairns, Mansfield College, Oxford University: *'Firm in reliance, laugh a defiance': The Laughing Suffragette and Political Protest on the Stage*

Break 10:30 – 11:00 am

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Humor in Public and Social Media, and Possible Virtual Assist (Tidewater 1)

Patrice Opliger, Melodie Tamse, & Sharifa Simon-Roberts, Boston University:

White Saviors: Joking about Interracial Adoptions and Foster Care in American Situation Comedies

Nicole Kypker, Liverpool John Moores University: *Cybill: An Alternative in Comedy*

Cale Bain, University of Technology, Sydney: *Comedy is News*

Rebecca Higgie, Curtin University, Australia :

The Satirists Formerly Known as the Audience: Defining and Examining Citizen Satire

Jenny Hoffman, Tracy Platt, & Willibald Ruch, University of Zurich:

Having Fun with Greta! The Influence of a Laughing Virtual Agent on the Humor Experience

Linguistic Analyses of Humor (York Room)

Elliott Oring: *What is a Narrative Joke?*

Christian F. Hemplemann, Texas A&M University-Commerce: *The Semantic Field of Laughing and Smiling*

Donald Casadonte, Columbus State Community: *Logical Mechanisms and the Mechanisms of Logic:*

The Role of Symmetry Breaking in Humor Processing

Lunch 12:30 – 1:30 pm

1:30 – 2:45 pm

Panel Discussion (Commonwealth Auditorium)

Australian Radio Prank: Tact and Humor in the Digital Age

Paul Lewis, Professor of English, Boston College (Chair)

Jessica Milner Davis, Honorary Associate, Art and Media, University of Sydney, Australia

Robert Mankoff, Cartoon Editor, New Yorker Magazine

Thomas Ford, Professor of Psychology, Western Carolina University

Christie Davies, Department of Sociology, University of Reading

Giselinde Kuipers, Professor of Cultural Sociology, University of Amsterdam

Break 2:45 – 3:00 pm

3:00 – 4:15 pm

Cross Cultural 2 (Tidewater 1)

Will Noonan, Faculty of Languages and Communication, University of Burgundy: *Humor Studies in French and English: Putting Humpty Back Together Again*

Xiao Dong YUE & Na Na Anna HUI, Department of Applied Social Sciences, City University of Hong Kong:

How is Creativity Related to Humor in Chinese Society: A Study in Hong Kong

Christelle Paré, Institut national de la recherche scientifique – Urbanisation Culture Societe’:

An Exploration of Comedy festivals in the Province of Quebec: Sometimes Ambitious, Sometimes Simplistic, but Always Popular

Tsafi Sebba-Elran, Visiting scholar, Borns Jewish Studies Program in Indiana University: *The Jokes that were Never Published – A New Collection of Sexual Jewish Jokes from the Beginning of the 20th Century*

Symposium (Commonwealth Auditorium)

René Proyer (Convener): *Current Research in Gelotophobia, Gelotophilia, and Katagelasticism: From Work- and Family-life to the Perception of Humor, Self Esteem, and Laughter*

René T. Proyer, Stephanie Estoppey, Monica Neukom, & Willibald Ruch, University of Zurich, Department of Psychology: *Laughter and Ridicule in the Family: Familial Aggregations in Gelotophobia, Gelotophilia, and Katagelasticism*

Symen A, Brouwers & Willibald Ruch, University of Zurich, Department of Psychology: *Attitudes toward Laughter across Different Occupational Groups*

Neelam Arjan Hiranandani & Xiao Dong Yue, Department of Applied Social Studies, City University of Hong Kong: *Humor Styles, Gelotophobia, and Self-esteem Among Chinese and Indian Students*

Tracy Platt, Damian Hildebrandt, Jennifer Hofmann, & Willibald Ruch, Univ. of Zurich: *Perception of Laughter*
Willibald Ruch (Discussant)

Break 4:15 – 4:30 pm

4:30 – 5:45 pm

Native American and Other Tricksters (Tidewater 1)

Gretchen Martin, The University of Virginia's College at Wise: *The Fugitive Trickster Heroes of the Slave Narratives*
Dennis Kelley, University of Missouri, Columbia: "Coyote could be very foolish or very wise ...":

Sacred Humor in Indian Country

Jaclyn Kuizon, College of William and Mary: *Humor as an Evolving Trend in Contemporary Ledger Art*

Philosophical Perspectives (York Room)

Mary Ann Rishel: Weill Cornell Medical College – Qatar; Ithaca College: *New Yorker Cartoons and Friends: What They Know You Don't Know, and How They Know it. An Epistemological Study of Cartoons*

Jacob L. Goodson, Department of Religious Studies, College of William and Mary: *Humor and Laughter in William James' Philosophy of Psychology*

Constantino Pereira Martins: *Eccentric Patterns in Humor*

Closing Banquet (Chesapeake A) 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Saturday, July 6, 2013

Breakfast 7:00 – 8:30 am

Annual Members Business Meeting (Tidewater 1) 8:30 – 10:00 am

Upcoming Events

13th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter

Magdeburg, Germany, July 22–27, 2013

The program of the International Summer School and Symposium on Humor and Laughter is designed to provide both advanced students setting out on a research project and experienced researchers considering to enter the field of humor research with a thorough foundation in humor studies. It is our ambition to acquaint course participants with current theoretical models, with methodological issues and with factual knowledge to give them a sense of the complexity of the issues involved, and to steer them away from the pitfalls that are commonly encountered in the scientific study of humor.

Lecture classes by a selected group of experienced international scholars make up the bulk of the programme (see the main Summer School site for information about previous events). These "talks" are supplemented by workshops, a symposium, and opportunities for individual discussions with the speakers ("Meet the Lecturer"). Sessions are held from Monday morning to Saturday afternoon. One afternoon is set aside for relaxation and sight-seeing. Lectures include Dr. Wladislaw Chlopicki (Institute of English Philology, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland); Professor Christie Davies (Department of Sociology, University of Reading, GB); Dr. Christian Hempelmann (Department of Literature and Languages, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Commerce, Texas, USA); Dr. Elizabeth Holt (School of Music and Humanities, University of Huddersfield, GB); Professor Holger Kersten (American Literature and Culture, Magdeburg University, Germany); Professor Giseline Kuipers (Cultural Sociology, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands); Dr. Liisi Laineste (Estonian Literary Museum, Center of Cultural History and Folkloristics, Estonia); Tracey Platt & Jennifer Hofmann (Department of Psychology, University of Zurich, Switzerland); Dr. Graeme Ritchie (Department of Computing Science, University of Aberdeen, Scotland); Professor Willibald Ruch (Department of Psychology, University of Zurich, Switzerland); Jérôme Urbain (Research center in Information Technologies, University of Mons, Belgium); Dr. Reinhold Wandel (English Department, Magdeburg University, Germany); Till Weingaertner (Department of Languages, Linguistics, and Cultures, University of Manchester, England).

Please visit the Internet for further information at <http://www.humoursummerschool.org/13/>

International Conference on Communication Styles

Krosno State College, Krosno, Poland, October 14–16, 2013

This conference aims at: (1) describing changes and development of established communication styles in through the means provided by cultural theorists; (2) defining major culture-specific communication-related concepts as seen from the contrastive perspective; (3) pursuing cross-cultural research that acknowledges the similarities and differences between cultural communication styles; (4) exploring the variety of communication styles and their representation in mass culture and other contexts (5) investigating the (often covert) ideological dimension of different communication styles. Specifically, conference presenters are encouraged to focus on the following areas of research: dimensions of culture, pragmatics of intercultural communication, creativity and tradition in cultural communication, artistic communication, humor in culture and society, communication in families and across age groups, gender communication styles, communication in education, media communication styles, business and workplace communication, communication and ideology, cross-cultural aspects of translation, cultural and linguistic globalization, communication problems and conflicts. For further information please visit the conference website at <http://www.pwsz.krosno.pl/conferences-and-publications-department-of-english/> or contact the organizers at krosno.conference.2013@gmail.com.

SAMLA 2013: Humor in the Digital Age

South Atlantic Modern Language Association, Marriott Atlanta, November 8-10, 2013

The American Humor Studies Association seeks papers for a panel, “Humor in the Digital Age,” for the 2013 South Atlantic Modern Language Association (SAMLA) Conference at the Marriott Atlanta from November

8–10. This panel will examine how the rise of new media (including social media, content-sharing sites, and blogs) has created new contexts for the production, distribution, and exhibition of humor. We welcome papers on humor and comedy as it is employed in viral videos, blogs or vlogs, web series, webisodes, parodies, participatory culture online, memes, or remixes. Papers may cover individual talents Andy Borowitz of The Borowitz Report, Grace Helbig of DailyGrace, Jenna Marbles, Khyan Mansley, Maddox, Tucker Max; groups Derrick Comedy and the Gregory Brothers (“Auto-Tune the News”); sites College Humor, Funny or Die, The Onion, and Stuff White People Like; social media Facebook, Tumblr, and Twitter; and other “genres” like mommy blogs, movie trailer recuts, trending hashtags (#firstworldproblems, #drunknatesilver). Prospective panelists could also consider how humorists and comedians/comediennes use websites and social media to connect with their audiences, attract new fans, and disseminate their brand of humor. The overall goal is to examine how digital media technologies either democratize or restrict the creation and distribution of innovative comedy, examining key problems and possibilities posed by new media for the tradition of American humor. Please send inquiries and proposals of 250 words to Pete Kunze atpkunze@lsu.edu by May 1, 2013.

Humor Course “Make it Funny!”

Torino, North-West Italy, October 28–November 1, 2013

Public speaking and communicating in effective, funny and desirable manner are arts that can be learned. In fact precise rules, techniques and methodologies exist to achieve these goals. Aim of this training course is therefore to help participants to prepare by themselves public speeches (lectures, meetings, symposia, etc...) by highlighting from the very beginning what sentences, paragraphs and issues need to be emphasized in order to make the speech the most effective possible. Participants will acquire new data, experiences and skills which are significant for their own career, and will have the chance to reflect on their own daily experiences from a European perspective. Through comparison with other systems and practices in fact, they can understand more deeply the significance and relevance of their own work in a more extensive political and educational framework. In order to be effective, communication and public speaking need to be amusing.

This course is interesting to teachers, trainers, managers, educational guides, counselors, inspectors, head teachers, principals, non-teaching administrative and organizing staff and anyone who needs to improve public speaking. The course is taught by Rino Cerritelli, Rita Barbero, Franco Tibaldi, and Stefania Quaino. The course fee is 750 EUR; however, you may be eligible for a European grant that will cover your expenses. Please contact the organizers for further information at alba@cesaf.it (subject "MAKE IT FUNNY").

Humorous Times Review Special: Humor in Japan

The Power of Laughter in Japan

Hiroshi INOUE (2010). *Warai no chikara – Waratte iki iki* (The power of laughter – laughter and living). Osaka: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu (Kansai University Publications). 282pp. Y1400 (plus tax).

From Marguerite Wells (Australasian Humour Studies Network)

This important study is by the man who can chiefly be credited with the establishment and work of the Japan Society for Laughter and Humor Studies (JSLHS), Hiroshi Inoue, Emeritus Professor, Kansai University in Osaka. Principally addressed to a Japanese audience, the book summarizes the advocacy and thoughts of its author after many decades of promoting and studying humor and laughter. Inoue states (p. 104):

In Japan for a long time people despised *warai* [laughter] and there was a tendency to look down on "the culture of *warai*" but at last in recent times the value placed on "the Power of *Warai*" has started to rise. Not only does *warai* have psychological effects but at the same time it works its influence on the body and, particularly recently, there has been progress in medical experiments on the influence of *warai* on the body and [thus] there have been more occasions where it has been possible [in Japan] to address the topic of "*Warai* and Health". But there are still many things we do not understand.

I would like to think that *warai* is not despised in current Japanese society, but it would be helpful to see more evidence for the claim. Professor Inoue's own work and that of the Society have of course brought about a change in the way humor is regarded in Japan. In particular, history makes it clear that Osaka's is a more horizontal or egalitarian society than that of Tokyo and that this gives people much permission for laughter. It is not accidental that JSLHS is based in Osaka and Inoue's own valuable account of how that city's merchant origins connect with the use of humor is available (Inoue, 2003). However, it needs to be borne in mind that not just Japan but most societies have cultural and normative restrictions on humor in order to control, for example, cruel humor; thus merely removing restrictions without controlling the negative aspects might not be an entirely positive step. The work of the JSHLS has certainly made itself felt in Japan has a way to go before it can impact Japanese society as a whole.

A case in point was the 2011 resignation of Yoshio Hachiro as Minister for Industry. One of his offences – and apparently the precipitating one – was a joke he made on return from inspecting the Fukushima area, site of the earlier tsunami and nuclear reactor disasters. He rubbed his sleeve against a journalist, offering to give him radiation. While there were also other offences, some joking, some not, his behavior was widely seen as offensive. Would this also have been the case in a Western democracy? Quite possibly. But it was certainly beyond the pale in today's Japan. On the other hand, the recent workshops held by the JSLHS for victims still suffering in the affected areas (reported in the ISHS e-Newsletter, Summer 2012) have successfully highlighted the beneficial power of laughter and lightheartedness.

This analysis has a solid basis of truth in history, geography and linguistics. The Emperor and the Imperial Court were in Kyoto from 792 on, making Kyoto an aristocratic city. Osaka, a sheltered port with river and road access to Kyoto, became a city of merchants, supplying both itself and the court and

aristocrats of Kyoto. When the Shōgun took political control and moved to Edo, later Tokyo, Tokyo culture reflected that of the warriors.

Later chapters outline the physical and psychological aspects of *warai*, defined very broadly. For example the baby's physiological smile is called in Japan the Angel Smile, and Inoue argues it is the precursor of the smile of happiness or humor itself. The binding social effects of *warai* are seen as supporting proposals for humor rooms in hospitals – an innovation in Japan, although growing in popularity in the West. An interesting section deals with the iconography of the *shisaa*, half-lion half-dog, of Okinawa, which is always depicted as snarling. When the author found and brought home a smiling one, he discovered that these are especially made for the Osaka trade because Osakans will not buy one that snarls. Regional differences still run strong, it seems.

References

- Inoue, Hiroshi. 2003. "Osaka's culture of laughter." In *Understanding humor in Japan*, ed. J. Milner Davis. 27–35. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- "Japanese official resigns over radiation joke." *New York Times*, 10 September 2011.
www.nytimes.com/2011/09/11/world/asia/11minister.html
- Nakane, Chie. 1970. *Japanese society*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.

How to Do Things with Humor

Sachiko Kitazume (2010). *How to Do Things with Humor*. Tokyo: Eihōsha. 240pp. Y2940.

From Till Weingärtner (Univ. of Manchester, UK)

When taking Sachiko Kitazume's *How to Do Things with Humor* in the hand, one may initially be confused as to what this book is actually about. The title indicates that it may be some kind of *How-To* book that, for example, could teach the reader the basics of humor to brush up on business relationships or increase their appeal to the opposite sex. Of course this is not the case. The back cover provides us with a little more clarity. It presents a quote from Victor Raskin, who praises this "introduction to the wealth of humor research" as "possibly the best in English for Japanese readers." This may lead a potential reader to make the assumption that the book is limited to a very specific target audience and indeed one may indeed ask: Do we need this book when we are not Japanese readers? Or (in the event we are Japanese readers), wouldn't I be better sticking to something that is written in Japanese in the first place? No, we might not necessarily need this book, but we can welcome its publication, for the material contained within the tome is easy to access and fun to read and, in this guise, provides an interesting first introduction to the world of humor research.

The book contains 10 chapters, each of which deals with different aspects of humor or presents different examples of its application. Theoretical chapters introduce mainstream humor theories or concentrate on Kitazume's own cognitive model. Her idea that humor involves "a twist" does not strike the humor expert as surprising or new; however, the clear explanations she provides, her varied use of visualizing illustrations and her inclusion of examples, such as Raskin's famous doctor joke, help her to explain complex theories in a manner that is easy for the reader to relate to and understand.

The application chapters present fascinating material both in English and Japanese language, and interesting topics addressed include the utterances of former US President George Bush, the design of book covers and the study of humor in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels. Using these examples, Kitazume offers students a glimpse into some of the effects they can achieve by using models of humor in different academic fields, especially for readers who have no objection to or are positively interested in gaining this glimpse from a Japanese perspective.

Writing this review while freezing in a flat in Berlin–still covered in snow at the end of March– this reviewer can't help but smile at the irony of the images on the book's cover. They feature cherry blossoms, mockingly announcing the start of spring and are adorned with the Chinese character for laughter.

Horace de Vere Cole – Prince of Jokers

Downer, Martyn. 2010. *The Sultan of Zanzibar: The Bizarre World and Spectacular Hoaxes of Horace de Vere Cole*. London: Black Spring Press. 310pp. ISBN 978-0-948238-43-7; £16.99.

From Moira Marsh (Indiana University)

“Few people today have heard of Horace de Vere Cole... Yet a hundred years ago he was one of the most celebrated men in England.” So begins this informal biography of Cole (1881-1936), the genius behind the famous 1910 Dreadnaught hoax, in which he and fellow Cambridge students fooled the Royal Navy, and the now-apocryphal prank in which he enlisted friends to impersonate navvies and literally dig up the road in Piccadilly. This self-styled “Prince of Jokers” carved out a unique if short-lived career as a poet-prankster, and because of his penchant for playing sometimes aggressive practical jokes was described as “a very dangerous man to his friends.” Downer, an art dealer and author of two previous biographies and whose wife is distantly related to Cole, has built this biography from contemporary press coverage, memoirs, interviews with Cole's surviving family, and the few unpublished letters and papers that survived Cole's death. Humor scholars will be interested in the hints as to the psychological makeup of a compulsive practical joker.

Understanding Language through Humor

Dubinsky, Stanley and Holcomb, Chris. 2011. *Understanding Language through Humor*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press. 212pp. £ 19.99

From Bilal Muhammad (University of Birmingham, UK)

For those interested in language though slightly daunted by linguistic jargon, *Understanding Language through Humor* provides a readable introduction to linguistics. To ease this introduction, Dubinsky and Holcomb use humor to illustrate various key areas in linguistics from communication theory and phonology to language acquisition and sociolinguistics. The main goal, the authors state, is to present linguistics in a humorous and therefore approachable format for readers with burgeoning interests in language study. Throughout the book, readers can therefore see concepts simplified through humorous anecdotes and cartoons.

Aside from the first chapter, which gives a brief overview of the ensuing contents, each chapter begins with a cartoon that exemplifies the topics that follow. In this way, the structure of the book is fairly predictable and follows a sequence similar to many introductory books on language and linguistics. The second chapter gives an overview of communication and even discusses Peircean semiotics without using cumbersome terms. After the discussion of phonology and phonetics in chapter 3, morphology is introduced in chapter 4 with numerous examples of how words are created and sometimes malformed like the Bushisms of recent history. Syntax, Pragmatics and Discourse occupy the next three chapters until the final few chapters where language and society become the focus.

In these twelve chapters, Dubinsky and Holcomb cover wide ground but make this book accessible to beginners. The non-technical language, humor and references to pop culture provide an easy entry into the study of language. For instance, the book uses a popular cartoon, a recent interview with a U.S. Senator and a Seinfeld excerpt to highlight speech acts. While the topics themselves could be described in a stodgy, overly-academic manner, *Understanding Language through Humor* presents them in a light, informal way. They even manage to discuss language use and political correctness with humorous examples.

Dubinsky and Holcomb also include many personal anecdotes that help relate the contents of the book to real-life situations. In chapter eleven, Dubinsky and Holcomb cover prescriptivism and language policy not through controversies in the academic world but through historical references to Samuel

Johnson's lexicography and dialect differences in the United States. They further expand their scope to discuss Chinese language policies as well, engaging in the linguistic matters of worlds outside of English.

Ultimately, *Understanding Language through Humor* covers a fair amount of material without getting too immersed in unfamiliar language and complex ideas. The complexities of linguistics are absent here and therefore offer a manageable introduction to the discipline. To the beginner, this is an appropriate introduction to the study of language. To the intermediate-level students of linguistics, this book may serve as a light read to refresh on overlooked topics. Old hands would be better served somewhere else. However, if you, regardless of your background in linguistics, would like a light and humorous read about language study, you may want to consider Dubinsky and Holcomb's book.

Child's Sense of Humor

Franzini, Louis R. (2011): *Bimbi che ridono: Come sviluppare il senso dell'umorismo del vostro bambino* [Kids who laugh: How to develop your child's sense of humor]. Rome: Armando, 192pp., ISBN 978 88 6081 949 9; € 15,00.

From Laura Vagnoli (Children's Meyer Hospital, Florence)

It's never too early to start working on the development of children's sense of humor: Franzini encourages adults to play and joke with children so they can develop a playful and humorous attitude towards life. The text analyses the psychology of humor in children and offers many examples, advice, fun exercises and tools for laughing together and improve the use of humor in everyday life. The author suggests that kids who laugh have more opportunities to be smarter, healthier, and to cope better with challenges. At the same time he emphasizes the importance of not using offensive jokes. Particular attention is paid to the use of humor both in children with special needs and in children at school. Franzini offers good strategies to improve child's creativity; according to him a good sense of humor is one of the most desirable personality characteristics that a person can develop. The language register is very simple: this book is meant for a general readership and could be considered as an handbook and a guide for all those who love to share humor and laughter.

Humor in Social Relationships

Tunesi, Luisa. *Stavo scherzando: La comicità e l'umorismo nelle relazioni sociali* [I was joking. Comic and humor in social relationships]. Rome: Aracne, 2012, 218 pp., ISBN 978 88 548 4790; € 13.00.

From Laura Vagnoli (Children's Meyer Hospital, Florence)

Tunesi offers a reflection on the use of comic and humor in everyday life. The text analyzes some theoretical paradigms by describing the importance of hilarity in social relationships. It explores - by using an interdisciplinary approach - a wide variety of human conditions and activities, such as childhood, family, politics with a special reference to Italian culture. Particular attention is paid on the strategies involved in the use of jokes, wordplays, irony, etc. in the new mass-media communication. A general overview on stories and anecdotes from the past is also given. The author chooses to use a simple language register, and her text is supplied by examples and quotations from some of the major theorists (Freud, Bergson, Goffman). Tunesi suggests that humor can be a good coping strategy, and that it can help people to express their freedom of thought. This book can be considered as a starting point to investigate the complexity of humor more deeply



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the web at www.humorstudies.org.***

New Books on Humor

Dubinsky, Stanley and Holcomb, Chris. 2011. *Understanding Language through Humor*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press. 212pp. £ 19.99

Dubinsky and Holcomb here offer an introductory text with the aid of humor for students wary of the language of linguistics. Starting from various communication theories to common language policies, this book covers the basics of linguistics without venturing too far into any one area. Many concepts are illustrated by humorous examples and linguistic terms are worded simply to facilitate comprehension. Students with little to no prior knowledge of linguistics would find this suitable while the veteran student or professor might be better served with something more advanced. For those beginner students, *Understanding Language through Humor* provides a smooth entry into the field of linguistics. (announcement by Bilal Muhammad, please read his review in this issue!)

Goatly, Andrew. 2012. *Meaning and Humour*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Key Topics in Semantics and Pragmatics). ISBN 978-0-521-18106-8. 380pp. 25 b/w illus.; 40 tables; 90 exercises; £ 22.99

By focusing on semantic and pragmatic foundations, Goatly reviews concepts central to linguistic theories of humor. Beginners beware: this book, which can be used as a graduate-level text, is not for the uninitiated. It does, however, have a wealth of discussion questions and exercises to keep readers involved. The book also has enough humorous examples to entertain as well as highlight many of the topics covered. Most, if not all, of the examples demonstrate how ambiguity, from the morphological to the pragmatic, plays a significant role in humor. *Meaning and Humour* offers an enjoyably extensive overview of how humor plays with ambiguous meanings. (announcement by Bilal Muhammad, please find his review in the next issue!)

Laineste, Liisi / Dorota Brzozowska / Wladyslaw Chlopicki (eds) (2013). *Estonia and Poland. Creativity and tradition in cultural communication*, Vol 2, Perspectives on National and Regional Identity. Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press. (ISBN ISBN 978-9949-490-77-6, Vol. 2 printed version; ISBN ISBN 978-9949-490-78-3, Vol. 2 web version)

This is volume two of a book we announced at the beginning of this year. This volume focuses on the role of creativity and tradition in contemporary Eastern Europe, with Estonia and Poland as cases in point. The articles address diverse narratives in the Eastern European cultural space as they occur in various types of media. Parallel research articles by scholars from a wide range of fields seek to provide a novel perspective on the ongoing discussions of identity in these rapidly changing societies. Research material for Volume 2: "Perspectives on national and regional identity" is drawn from a variety of sources, both contemporary, e.g. advertisement campaigns, urban legends, cookbooks, etc. and archival, especially folkloric. The analysis of culturally significant narratives helps to specify their role in the construction of collective identity. The results of the studies demonstrate that both national and regional identities are at least partly determined by concepts and stories shared by the people, but at the same time they are the products of external variables, such as public policies or globalization.

Weingärtner, Till. 2013. *Comedy-Boom in Japan: Performative and media framing of humour in current popular culture*. Band 27 in Hijjya-Kirschnerreit, Irmela (ed.), Iaponia Insula: Studien zu Kultur und Gesellschaft Japans. Munich: Iudicium Verlag. (ISBN 978-3-86205-251-6. 430 pages, paperback, 50 illustrations. EUR 48.00).

At the beginning of the 21st century, comedy dominated the Japanese entertainment industry. The popularity of the comedians - and of the rare female comedians - reached an unprecedented level, and some have progressed to become permanent guests on TV. As a result, the public image of this profession also changed. Previously, the comedic craft was considered slightly disreputable, but now comedians are respected as hard-working professionals. This book is the first comprehensive study on the phenomenon of the comedy-boom in Japan. Erving Goffman's frame concept provides the basis of the interpretation; also basic approaches from theatre studies and the theory of humour and critical work of Japanese comedy experts are used to analyze numerous examples of different genres such as manzai, sketch comedy and rakugo. The focus is in particular on the relationship of the comedians to their roles and the media presentation.

New Articles on Humor

The Humorous Times mentions articles which appeared in our journal or which have been published by researchers who have been active within the ISHS. Please inform us about your publications!

Annik, E.: Culinary discourse: Organic food in Estonia. In: L. Laineste / D. Brzozowska / W. Chlopicki (eds): *Estonia and Poland. Creativity and tradition in cultural communication*. Tartu. ELM Scholarly Press, 2013.

Braun, Annegret / Preiser, Siegfried: The impact of disparaging humor content on the funniness of political jokes. In *HUMOR* 26:2 (2013).

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