

The Humorous Times

Newsletter of the International Society for Humor Studies

Fall 2018

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Association News

2018 ISHS Membership and Finances

From Martin Lampert, ISHS Secretary-Treasurer



The International Society for Humor Studies had a good year in 2018 with 254 affiliates, including 242 new and returning members and 12 additional Board Members and Consulting Editors of the journal, *HUMOR*. At the October 31 close of 2018 membership, the Society was again financially sound with \$70,207.41 in unaudited revenue including \$53,244.41 carried over from 2017 and \$16,963.00 from 2018 membership dues and fees. Operating expenses through October included \$199.33 for recognition awards, \$252.98 for online services, and \$13,547.04 for membership subscriptions and fees to *HUMOR: International Journal for Humor Research*. Revenue over expenses at the end of 2018 is \$56,208.06.

Between December 1, 2017 and October 31, 2018, Holy Names University received an additional \$1,349.00 for the ISHS Scholarship fund. On October 31, the scholarship fund held \$19,072.71. From this fund, the Society made one \$500.00 and two \$250.00 awards in 2018 to graduate students who attended the 31st ISHS Conference in Tallinn, Estonia. As always, I would like to thank the members who made contributions to the ISHS Scholarship Fund, and I would like to encourage others to make donations with their 2019 membership applications.

We look forward to another great year in 2019 with the publication of the 32nd volume of *HUMOR* and the Society's 31st international conference to be held at the University of Texas at Austin from June 24 to June 29, 2019. You can register and submit paper proposals for the 2019 Conference online at the Conference website, <https://www.tamuc.edu/ishs2019>. For Conference information, you can also write to Conference Registration at ishs2019@tamuc.edu. If you would like to host a future ISHS Conference, you can contact me for more information on how to submit a Conference proposal. We are still accepting proposals for our 2021 Conference.

If you would like to join the Society or renew your ISHS membership for 2019, please visit the membership page on the Society's website at www.humorstudies.org. On the membership page, you will find a link that will allow you to renew your membership. On the online application form, you will notice the Society's current fee structure, which allows for membership with either an online or print subscription to the Society's journal, *HUMOR*. For the coming year, *HUMOR* will contain more original research articles, and print subscribers will receive online access to the 2019 *HUMOR* book reviews, which will be published only online. For 2019,

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Next Issue

The next *The Humorous Times* is due February 2019.

membership is \$69 with an online subscription and \$130 with a print subscription. Please note that renewal includes a 3% plus \$1 processing fee. However, regular members who renew before January 31, can still take a \$5 discount on dues, allowing everyone to renew early with an online journal subscription for just \$64 or a print subscription for \$125 plus processing. If you do not wish to receive the journal, but do wish to be a member to receive our other benefits, you can still join ISHS as an Associate member for just \$30 plus processing.

Finally, thank you for your support of the International Society for Humor Studies. Your participation in ISHS helps to advance the importance of humor research and, as always, is greatly appreciated.



2019 International Society for Humor Studies Conference

University of Texas at Austin, USA, June 24 to 29, 2019

*From Christian Hempelmann & Salvatore Attardo, Texas A&M-Commerce,
Dale Koike, University of Texas, and Elisa Gironzetti, University of Maryland
2019 ISHS Conference Organizers*

The University of Texas at Austin welcomes you to join an international and interdisciplinary group of humor researchers for the 2019 Conference of the International Society of Humor Studies. We will discuss humor from its basic definitions to the latest research strands and everything in between. Plenary speakers will include Sharon Lockyer (Brunel University London), Janetta Benton Rebold (Pace University, New York), Tom Ford (Western Carolina University), Villy Tsakona, (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), Nancy Bell (Washington State University), Béatrice Priego Valverde (Aix-Marseille Université), and Herb Colston (University of Alberta). The Conference will also include featured papers and panels, a graduate student award plenary session, and the Fourth International Conference for the Philosophy of Humor.

Submissions can be made for academic paper, posters, 90 or 180 minute multiple presenter panels, 90 minute workshops focused on humor research within the arts, humanities, and sciences. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to cognition and creativity, public and private discourse, individuality and individual Styles, culture and diversity, health and well-being, language and translation, media and digital technology, and performance. Abstracts of up to 200 words should be submitted by March 15, 2019 through the online submission form. Acceptance notifications will be sent out by February 15, 2019 for early submissions, and by March 30, 2019 for submissions received after February 1.

You can find out more about the conference, paper submissions, transportation, and accommodation at the Conference website, <https://www.tamuc.edu/ishs2019>. For conference information, you can also write to Conference Registration at ishs2019@tamuc.edu. We are looking forward to seeing you in Austin!

Upcoming Events

International Association for the Philosophy of Humor Conference and Yearbook

Conference at the University of Texas at Austin, USA, June 2019

The International Association for the Philosophy of Humor (IAPH) invites scholars from different disciplines to share their work on humor, laughter, and the comic, and their roles within the history and practice of philosophy. The IAPH will hold its fourth conference in conjunction with the 2019 ISHS Conference in Austin, Texas from June 24 to June 29. Individuals who would like to present at the IAPH Conference should send their name, affiliation, and paper abstract to Lydia Amir by January 15, 2019, at lydamir@mail.com. The IAPH is also launching the Philosophy of Humor Yearbook to be published by DeGruyter. The first Yearbook is scheduled for 2020 with the article deadline for the first issue set for September 1, 2019. Researchers who would like to submit articles for the first Philosophy of Humor Yearbook should write to Lydia Amir at lydamir@mail.com. For additional information, visit the International Association the Philosophy of Humor online at <http://www.philosophyofhumor.org>.

Twenty-Fifth AHSN Colloquium

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia, February 6-8, 2019

The 25th Colloquium of the Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN) will be held from February 6 to 8, 2019 at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia. The conveners are Kerry Mullan, Craig Batty, and Sharon Andrews of RMIT University and Justine Sless of La Trobe University. The conference theme will be *Humour in all of its Forms: On Screen, On the Page, On Stage, on Air, Online*. For more information, send e-mail to ahsnconference@gamil.com or visit AHSN at <http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies>.

Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting of

The Association for the Study of Play

James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA, March 13-16, 2019

The 45th Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Play will be held from March 13 to March 16, 2019 at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The 2019 TASP Conference will be held jointly with the International Play Association. The Call for Papers for the 2019 TASP Conference is open until December 5, 2018, and paper proposals can be submitted through the conference website www.tasplay.org/about-us/conference. For more information, visit the TASP website or contact the conference organizer, Smita Mathur at mathursx@jmu.edu.

Humour in the Beginning: Cultural Interaction of Laughter and the Comic in the First Phase of Asian Religions, Christianity, and Islam

Soeterbeeck Conference Centre, Ravenstein, The Netherlands, March 14-17, 2019

Humor in the Beginning invites scholars from different fields and academic traditions to return to the origins of Asian religions, Christianity, and Islam and investigate the complex relationship between religion and humor and laughter. For this conference, scholars are challenged to investigate the topic of religion and humor within the specific historical contexts that their sources provide. Sources include but are not restricted to (literary) prose texts, poetry and visual materials.

It is the wish of the organizers to stimulate fruitful comparisons between the work of scholars from the humanities and colleagues from fields such as sociology and gelotology. For more information, contact the conference organizer, Roald Dijkstra at r.dijkstra@let.ru.nl.

Thirty-Second Meeting of

the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor

Chicago, Illinois, USA, April 4-9, 2019

The 32nd Conference of the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor will be held April 4 to 9, 2019 at the Doubletree, Chicago-Oakbrook, Illinois, USA. The Conference theme will be *Too Soon: The Timing of Humor*. For more information, visit the AATH Conference page at <http://www.aath.org>.

Fifth International Gelological Congress

St. Petersburg, Russia, May 29-June 1, 2019

The fifth International Gelological Congress is planned for St. Petersburg State University in Russia, from May 29 to June 1, 2019. The Congress will focus on the communicative potential of humor and laughter, but also the communicative ambivalence of laughter as a phenomenon, building and destroying communication. We will talk not only about interpersonal communication, but also about intercultural, transcultural, cross-cultural communication, sociology of laughter, the fear of laughter, tomfoolery, laughing aggression, communicative aspects, and social genesis of laughter. The Congress invites participants from sociology, social philosophy, psychology, sociolinguistics, folkloristics, literary criticism and others. Interested participant should submit registration materials by October 1, 2018, and paper abstracts (up to 1000 words) by February 25, 2019. For more information, contact the congress chair Sergei Troitckii at sergtroy@yandex.ru.

Nineteenth International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter

Bonn, Germany, July 1-6, 2019

The 19th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter will be held in Bonn, Germany from July 1 to July 6, 2019. Maria Bley, Eckart von Hirschhausen, Lisa Linge-Dahl and Lena Straßburger will be the local organizers. For more information, visit the summer school website at <http://humoursummerschool.org>.

Book Reviews

Judges, Judging, and Humor

Reviewed by John Parkins, University of Bristol

Jessica Milner Davis and Sharyn Roach Anleu, Eds. (2018). *Judges, Judging, and Humor*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan. XXIII+335 pp. Hardcover ISBN: 978-3-319-76737-6; Ebook ISBN: 978-3-319-76738-3.

After a Foreword where Michael Kirby outlines how this book aims to describe the function, importance and dangers of generating humor in the courtroom, the co-editors supply an engaging Preface detailing the origins and commendably broad range of their undertaking. These matters they elaborate in their own first chapter which notes the importance that members of the legal profession assign to a sense of humor, a point widely applicable within human activities, witness their accurate claim that, however hard to analyze or define, "humour is pervasive, occurring throughout organisational life" (p. 15). That said, they also emphasize the novelty of their undertaking, since "until recently no research has been conducted in the courtroom context" (p. 18), their findings being then advanced in the book's three main sections, the first of which examines how judges are and have been portrayed as comic characters, the second investigating how judges themselves use humor during trials, before a third that studies how judges have dealt with specific legal cases concerning or involving humor.

Opening Part 1, the late lamented Christie Davies assembles a number of jokes related to the British judiciary, noting, moreover, that they do not comprise an established collection or theme, as contrast those targeting corrupt lawyers. Nevertheless his examples at once illustrate the comic potential of the courtroom, the mental qualities of the professionals operating there, and the flexibility and adaptability of the jokes, repartees and anecdotes that they have both inherited and generated. Marc Galanter shifts attention to American "judge jokes" (p. 80), noting how less frequent they are than those concerning lawyers, one reason being, he suggests, that unlike the latter group, judges are, at least in the US, "generally admired" (p. 88), the jokes about them being notably less hostile and punitive. In her wide-ranging survey of "Justices on Stage" (chapter 4), which moves from Greek Old Comedy up to modern TV programs like *Judge Judy*, Jessica Milner Davis makes a similar point whereby a satiric attack on the judiciary is softened in many traditions where judge figures are humanized rather than vilified as incompetent and/or venal. The laughter they stimulate is therefore more rueful than disrespectful, connoting a "common human frailty" (p. 130) that links audience with target figure.

Beginning Part 2, Sharyn Roach Anleu and Kathy Mack use some two thousand pages of court transcripts to establish how humor can contribute to the legal process and how it affects the inter-professional boundaries operating there. This they achieve by analyzing a series of excerpts from the said material which allow them to determine that courtroom humor can help to lighten the mood of proceedings (a somewhat obvious point), to expedite business and manage workflow, to reinforce hierarchies (e.g. the superiority embodied in the judge), or, conversely, to establish common ground between judge and advocate, so exemplifying humor's "multiple, often simultaneous functions" (p.167). Predictably enough they conclude, and echoing Milner Davis though on different grounds, that the judicial use of humor implies a more human dimension within court activity. Stina Bergman Blix and Asa Wettergren extend a similar investigation into the Swedish legal system. They too use field research, and though deploying a less systematic approach than is applied in the previous chapter, they do range more widely, including, for

instance the phenomenon of unintended humor, something more frequent in witnesses' statements than in judges' pronouncements. In addition, they note how lengthy trials can create an in-group of participants among whom humorous exchanges become more numerous, while backstage chronotopes such as the coffee break can incite humor among all participants, including, to be sure, the judge officially presiding. These findings surely nuance Leslie Moran's allusion in the following chapter to "the general rule that humor and laughter have no place in the courtroom" (p. 214), but his main subject is the hilarity generated in various swearing-in ceremonies of British judges, an example surely of how comedy can invade ritual performances in many traditions. One might mention community toasts, inaugural lectures, best man speeches and retirement orations, while noting how this contrasts with Galanter's allegation on p. 80 that "like a wedding [!], a swearing-in ceremony [...] or a lodge initiation, a judicial hearing has to be conducted in a way that is serious." Concentrating on legal practice Moran indicates the significant undercurrents of gender and class politics observable within the eighteen events that comprise his case study.

The penultimate chapter is by João Paulo Capelotti and concerns how Brazilian courts in particular have dealt with cases where satiric humor and caricature have caused offence to their targets. When the target is a profession, such as the police or, one might say, lawyers and judges, such cases rarely succeed. When the victim is an individual, the outcome may well be different, but it emerges from the various quotations supplied by Capelotti that the Brazilian judiciary were and perhaps remain radically confused in their thinking, and not only concerning humor. Considerations of family honor and a biased response to the litigants' status and reputation may be significant here, but it remains undeniable that the balance between freedom of speech as exercised by a satirist and the preservation of his victim's dignity is hard to sustain. That said, judges must be required to exclude personal taste and preferences when deciding cases where humorous material has given offence, a point made early in Laura Little's final chapter on the judicial regulation of humor in the US; though judges have emphasized this principle, in reality their unstated preferences still surface. Otherwise the main thrust of her contribution concerns (a) the basis on which jokes may be legally censured notwithstanding the constitutional right to free speech, (b) the importance courts assign to incongruity rather than hostility or relief when they define what is a humorous claim and (c) how in tolerating (cerebral) sexual puns as contrast (uncultivated) vulgar remarks courts may be revealing a similar class prejudice to that identified by Moran.

Humor scholars and legal scholars will not find all the chapters equally relevant to their particular interests, but both groups will gain much from reading a text which is deeply researched and with full apparatus, even if the editorial work is not totally impeccable: there is a certain leavening of cliché and bad grammar, plus the occasional proof-reading error (was there ever, one might ask, a "seventeenth century": p. 131; moreover, what exactly did Shakespeare's Shallow portray in that "old man's picture": p. 116?). To cavil excessively would, however, be to criticize unjustly a stimulating set of essays that do much to fill a gap in humor studies, while also identifying opportunities for further contributors.

Is it OK to Laugh about it?: Holocaust Humour, Satire and Parody in Israeli Culture

Reviewed by Joyce Saltman, Southern Connecticut State University

Liat Steir-Livny (2017). *Is it OK to laugh about it? Holocaust Humour, Satire and Parody in Israeli Culture*. Elstree, UK: Valentine Mitchell & Co. Ltd. 207 pp. ISBN: 978-1-910-38335-3.

There have long been debates about the appropriateness of humor dealing with the Holocaust and as an Israeli scholar and academic in the field of cultural studies, Liat Steir-Livny is in a most credible position to report on her research into this vital subject. She notes in the preface to her most recent book that there is a perception that a "humorous approach to the Holocaust might threaten the sanctity of its memory and evoke feelings of disrespect towards the subject and hurt survivors' feelings," hence those who use such humor often receive complaints. At the same time, however, she posits that in the post-traumatic society of Israel when one inserts holocaust humor into everyday life, the fear factor may be less frightening if more present!

In Chapter 1, the author cites the accepted definition of Jewish humor, shared by most researchers and resting on two core components: the unique tradition of Jewish literacy, including Jewish sacred

writings, and Jewish history including "persecutions, expulsions, exile and pogroms, culminating in the Holocaust." Humor scholars with a variety of different views include Freud, Davies, Ziv, the Friedmans, Reik, Ausubel, Eilbert and Wisse, and having read books written by each of these scholars, one is fascinated that so many learned individuals could have such differing assessments of what are the significant aspects within Jewish humor. If this were not enough to inflame debate, a study of Israeli humor as compared to Jewish humor and examined extensively in the works of Nevo, Eilon, Ziv, Rozenthal and Sover, suggests that perhaps the primary characteristic present in Israeli humor is a form of Chutzpah or cheekiness, often implying aggression. Jokes are now often about power, not weakness, as Israel does not see the Jews as the oppressed minority but rather as "the ruling majority."

In Chapter 2, Steir-Livny reports views held by holocaust survivors, some of whom saw humor as an "elixir" (p. 22). Long viewed as an outstanding authority, Viktor Frankl believed that humor often accounted for the resiliency of those in the camps by "nurturing their souls and spirits," thus enabling people to rise above their horrible conditions. He reported that he and his friends vowed to tell each other a funny tale every day, and they were joined by fellow prisoners. Other researchers on this subject included Lipman, Morreall and Kaplan, all of whom explored humor as a cohesion-creating mechanism that provided a subversive force, perfect in a set of conditions in which the victims were otherwise powerless. Hence Lipkin, a stand-up comic, described humor as "the rescue boat which took them to the safety of sanity" (p. 25). Humor that defies holocaust deniers has also been popular in Israeli culture, as well as in many plays, jokes and other forms of entertainment ridiculing Hitler and the Nazis. Some of course, like G. Rosenfeld, claim that all this leads to a trivialization of that horrifying time in history, a process seen by A. Rosenfeld as "destructive and wrong" (p. 30).

Chapter 3 extends the debate, with Joseph Bau, a survivor and Schindler's List member, moving to Israel along with his wife and continuing to produce animations, stories and drawings. Even the much-applauded *Life is Beautiful* angered many who did not recognize the "tradition of Jewish humour and its ties to pain and persecution," or "the unique role of humour and fantasy in attempts to survive or, at least, preserve a semblance of normality and humanity during the Holocaust" (p. 37). Still others, like Levin and Ostrower, saw the benefits of humor as a means of survival, "one of the highest and most efficient psychological mechanisms in the hierarchy of defense mechanisms" (p. 38). The concept of humor as a "spiritual rebellion" was most powerful in this connection.

Part 2 includes chapters 4 through 10 and delves deeply into holocaust humor, satire and parody, specifically in Israeli culture. Chapter 4 investigates the inter-generational transmission of holocaust pain and family memories through skits, plays, movies, songs and other stage pieces which often employ black humor and are frequently penned by second and even third generation Israelis. This phenomenon is described by one as being "simply the way in which a second-generation survivor, living his parents' trauma, chooses to cope with the post-memory of the Holocaust, which overwhelms him" (p. 67). It is not surprising that even today's Israelis have problems when considering Germany.

In Chapter 5, Remembrance Day observance and other memorial ceremonies are seen as "important memory sites in the process of the construction of a national identity" (p. 79), being marked in some communities by living room discussions amongst friends and guests. The breadth of memorial activities indicates the desire to honor the memories while still moving ahead and remaining vigilant toward any possible repetition of victimhood at the hands of the Palestinians.

Needless to say, the fear of commercialization of the Holocaust is ever present in Israeli society. Skits, television shows and cinema have often been criticized for making the Holocaust "a business in Israel, in the full sense of the word" (p. 105). This issue is dealt with in Chapter 6, while Chapter 7 goes on to describe the politicization of the Holocaust, emphasizing the positions taken in Israeli society today by the extreme right and by those on the left, each side claiming that the other is exploiting the Holocaust for political reasons.

The debate seems to remain unresolved. However despite some scholars' attempts to explain the phases of humor in society, Steir-Livny believes that it cannot be periodized. "Holocaust jokes were told secretly during the "taboo" period, Holocaust humour that comments on social and political issues began in the 1990s and continues until the present and, in the past years, we can still find Holocaust skits criticizing Holocaust memory agents, political and social uses of the Holocaust" (p. 128). She concludes her chapter on

this controversial subject by stating that while holocaust jokes often attempt to break the fear-factor, "by doing so, they preserve the Holocaust as one of the major themes in Jewish-Israeli life" (p. 129).

Recognizing holocaust humor from the perspective of ethnic conflict, Chapter 8 discusses the long-standing repercussions of the disagreement between the Mizrahim and Ashkenazim. The former, arriving in Israel primarily from the late 1940s until the 1960s, believe they have always been marginalized at the bottom layers of society. Hence they are not sympathetic to Holocaust remembrances since they view that part of Jewish history as an "Ashkenazi trauma" (p. 139). Chapter 9 is most fascinating in its discussion of mockeries of Hitler, these including ongoing and highly popular skits, cartoons, and television and internet parodies. "If the object of laughter is an enemy, the intensity of the laughter and enjoyment increases" (p. 154). Each of these attempts to poke fun at Hitler diminishes his image and makes him seem ridiculous, thus dismantling "the fear and anxiety caused by the intense Holocaust remembrance in Israel" (p. 162). Given that "one of the most basic human needs is to control one's environment" (p. 164), it is not surprising that so many outlets have been employed to mutilate the image of the most awful figure in recent history.

The dozens of jokes on Israeli websites dealing with the Holocaust can be found in Chapter 10 and are too numerous to recount here, though one example is: "Why did Hitler commit suicide?" Answer, "Because he received the gas bill." Many unique elements in contemporary Israeli jokes include connections to technology, current Hebrew words and intentional historical errors, all clear departures from the standard examples of holocaust humor.

In her conclusion, while Steir-Livny mentions the disparity of scholarly views regarding the appropriateness of holocaust humor, she does believe that all positions "turn the Holocaust into an integral part of the Israeli present and maintain the unique, intense role of the Holocaust in the Jewish-Israeli collective identity" (p. 187). Is it OK to laugh about it? I guess the concluding opinion should be "Yes!"

Theater and Laughter

Reviewed by Bryan Radley, University of York

**Eric Weitz. (2016). *Theatre & Laughter*. London, UK: Palgrave-Macmillan. VIII+97 pp.
Paperback ISBN: 978-1-137-35608-6; EBook ISBN: 978-1-137-35609-3.**

Theatre & Laughter is a distinguished entry in Palgrave's interdisciplinary series of short "Theatre & ..." paperbacks. From the outset, Eric Weitz's lucid account of the mirth generated by performance does an excellent job of conveying the effervescence of comic theatricality. He never allows the reader to lose sight of the fact that the humour of live theatre is always rooted in the occasion of a specific performance and the physical bodies that are present – that ineffable collective encounter between actors and audience. In other words, Weitz gives both bodies and minds their due. There is as much emphasis on miming and slapstick as there is on defamiliarizing laughter and wordplay, while Erin Hurley's approach to theatre as "feeling-labour" is a key methodological touchstone: "Comic performance undoubtedly is a prime example of the theatre maker's design on our bodied apparatus" (p. 36).

The detailed analysis of James Corden's performance as the overweight servant in the first UK and Broadway runs of *One Man, Two Guvnors* exemplifies this approach. Weitz's subtle take on Richard Bean's 2011 adaptation of Carlo Goldoni's *Servant of Two Masters* focuses on a joke where laughter is produced by the unexpected prospect of the triumph of Francis's appetite for food over his carnal desire for his fellow retainer Dolly. In answer to her question, "Does he prefer eating or making love?", Francis pauses for a long time before turning to the audience to deliver the explosively incongruous punch line: "It's a tough one, that, isn't it?". As Weitz aptly notes, "In this case, the usual reduction of a subject to base, physical desire is itself brought low by the dark-horse consideration of that other possibility we might suspect Francis/Corden to favour" (p. 46-7). He goes on to excavate the debt owed by the comic framing of Goldoni's mid-18th-century prototype to the *commedia dell'arte*'s "twin engines of laughter provocation in performance", namely the central interplay of "virtuosity and spontaneity". Weitz shines a light on "genre-defining dramaturgical parts like word play, doubling and mistaken identity, increasingly audacious scheming, and slapstick", along with *lazzi*-like "well-rehearsed set pieces" and "personalised versions of stock characters or *masks*", which appear in "born-again strains of *commedia*" that have emerged in the modern and contemporary periods (p. 36-7).

As you would expect from the author of *The Cambridge Introduction to Comedy* (2009), Weitz introduces the main branches of humour theory efficiently and stitches together concepts from humour studies, neuroscience, and theatre studies almost seamlessly. The book also successfully counterbalances the progressive possibilities of humour as play and laughter as “event” (in a Žižekian sense) – what Weitz calls the “Laughter for Change camp” (p. 82) – against pessimistic biopolitical interpretations of “laughter as crowd control” (p. 68): “one of the shrewdest technologies of power ever harnessed [...] through laughter we make sure that no one strays too far from approved thought and comportment” (p. 71).

Weitz’s choice of texts is laudably eclectic, inclusive, and international. Luigi Pirandello and Wole Soyinka rub shoulders with contemporary practitioners such as Panti Bliss and Sarah Ruhl. Weitz thus casts his net far wider than you would expect from the rubric suggested by the book’s title. Discussions of comic performance in more obviously theatrical forms such as a Feydeau farce, Christmas panto, or Richard Pryor stand-up routine sit next to comic case studies from film, television, and social media. Different Anglo-American tv genres are especially prominent: sketch show monologues from *Victoria Wood as Seen on TV*; Nelson Muntz’s characteristically derisive laugh in *The Simpsons*; *It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia*’s transgressive sitcom humour; Tina Fey’s devastating caricature of Sarah Palin on *SNL*; John Oliver’s topical political satire. None of these vignettes of analysis is done badly – quite the opposite, in fact. Weitz skillfully captures the way *Breaking Bad* oscillates between “straight-ahead slapstick” and the gruesome, morbid clowning of Walt and Jesse’s “double act”, for example (p. 43). However, these multi-generic ingredients and the highly elastic definition of ‘Theatre’ are not given any rationale until the penultimate section (p. 83). There may be a question too about an implicit generic hierarchy in the idea of theatre’s “performative offshoots” meriting inclusion.

Weitz has edited two essay collections on humour in an Irish performance context. Thus, the book also contains many illuminating examples of comedy taken from the Irish theatrical canon, from Lady Augusta Gregory’s 1904 farce *Spreading the News* to ANU Productions’ site-specific *Vardo* in 2014. He pays productive attention to Samuel Beckett’s “laughology” – in *Krapp’s Last Tape* and *Happy Days*, for example – before producing a terrific close reading of the “theatrical display” of laughter’s “boisterous, restorative ... capacity to save us from the terrifying prospect of facing life’s serial adversities alone” in Tom Murphy’s *Bailegangaire* (p. 55; Murphy (1993, p. 92) translates the titular setting as “the place without laughter”). Similarly, there is an attentive discussion of comedy’s role in a key dramatic reversal in Frank McGuinness’s *Carthaginians*, which is set in a Derry graveyard and responds to the Bloody Sunday shootings. Weitz pinpoints the “emotionally brutal effect” that is achieved through the conjunction of a pair of lewd jokes with “a cruel non-joke” about a daughter’s terminal illness (p. 32-4).

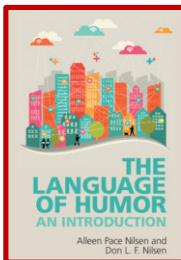
The small size of this lightweight volume makes it approachable, highly portable, and straightforward bedside reading. The book is also easy to navigate. Thanks to a handy tripartite index of subjects, people, and texts, alongside the 22 functional sub-headings, it is a cinch to find any given topic. It also rewards those who want to know more by providing a full list of works cited and several useful recommendations on generic, philosophical, and scientific approaches to comedy and humour. The presentation of the text is not without blemish, however. The year in which Bloody Sunday took place is mistakenly given as 1971, for example, and there are several typos, including a full line of text where the words are merged (p. 33; p. 76).

Such minor quibbles aside, this is an important and entertaining contribution to the study of theatrical humour. *Theatre & Laughter* combines erudition with readability; it will be a valuable text for students, scholars, and the general reader alike.

Reference

Murphy, Tom. (1993). *Bailegangaire*. In *Murphy Plays: Two*. London: Methuen.

Recent Publications

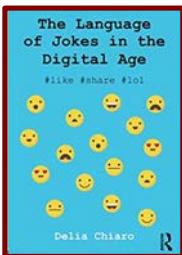


The Language of Humor: An Introduction

Don Nilsen and Alleen Nilsen. (2018). *The language of humor: An introduction.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 400 pp. Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-108-41654-2; Paper ISBN: 978-1-108-40396-2; Ebook ISBN: 978-1-108-24140-3.

ISHS members are eligible for a 30% discount from Cambridge University Press on *The Language of Humor*.

From the Publisher: Much of today's communication is carried out through various kinds of humor, and we therefore need to be able to understand its many aspects. Here, two of the world's leading pioneers in humor studies, Alleen and Don Nilsen, explore how humor can be explained across the numerous sub-disciplines of linguistics. Drawing on examples from language play and jokes in a range of real-life contexts, such as art, business, marketing, comedy, creative writing, science, journalism and politics, the authors use their own theory of 'Features, functions and subjects of Humor' to analyze humor across all disciplines. Each highly accessible chapter uses a rich array of examples to stimulate discussion and interaction even in large classes. Supplemental PowerPoints to accompany each of the 25 chapters are available online, taking many of the insights from the chapters for further interactional discussions with students.

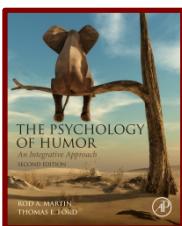


The Language of Jokes in the Digital Age

Delia Chiaro. (2017). *The language of jokes in the digital age.* New York, NY: Routledge. 166 pp. Hardback ISBN: 978-0-415-83518-3; Paperback ISBN: 978-0-415-83519-0; Ebook ISBN: 978-1-315-14634-8.

ISHS members are eligible for a 25% discount from Routledge on *The Language of Jokes in the Digital Age*.

From the Publisher: In this accessible book, Delia Chiaro provides a fresh overview of the language of jokes in a globalized and digitalized world. The book shows how, while on the one hand the lingua-cultural nuts and bolts of jokes have remained unchanged over time, on the other, the time-space compression brought about by modern technology has generated new settings and new ways of joking and playing with language. *The Language of Jokes in the Digital Age* covers a wide range of settings from social networks, e-mails and memes, to more traditional fields of film and TV (especially sitcoms and game shows) and advertising. Chiaro's consideration of the increasingly virtual context of jokes delights with both up-to-date examples and frequent reference to the most central theories of comedy.



The Psychology of Humor, Second Edition

Rod A. Martin and Thomas E. Ford. (2018). *The psychology of humor: An integrative approach* (2nd Ed.). San Diego, CA: Academic Press. 548 pp. Paperback ISBN: 978-0-128-12143-6; Ebook ISBN: 978-0-128-13509-9.

ISHS members are eligible for a 30% discount from Academic Press on *The Psychology of Humor, Second Edition*.

From the Publisher: Most of us laugh at something funny multiple times during a typical day. Humor serves multiple purposes, and although there is a sizable and expanding research literature on the subject, the research is spread in a variety of disciplines. The Psychology of Humor, Second Edition, reviews the literature, integrating research from across subdisciplines in psychology, as well as related fields such as anthropology, biology, computer science, linguistics, sociology, and more. This book begins by defining humor and presenting theories of humor. Later chapters cover cognitive processes involved in humor and the effects of humor on cognition. Individual differences in personality and humor are identified as well as the physiology of humor, the social functions of humor, and how humor develops and changes over the lifespan. This book concludes noting the

association of humor with physical and mental health, and outlines applications of humor use in psychotherapy, education, and the workplace.

In addition to being fully updated with recent research, the second edition includes a variety of new materials. More graphs, tables, and figures now illustrate concepts, processes, and theories. It provides new brief interviews with prominent humor scholars via text boxes. The end of each chapter now includes a list of key concepts, critical thinking questions, and a list of resources for further reading.

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 November 2018. If you have a recent publication, let us know. We will include it in a future newsletter.

- Aharoni, R. (2018). Shifting from meaning to its carrier: A common denominator for three strains of humour. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(3), 13-29.
- Appleton, N. (2018). Of Beggars and Buddhas: The politics of humor in the Vessantara Jataka in Thailand. *History of Religions*, 58(2), 202–204. doi: 10.1086/699262
- Becker, I., & Giora, R. (2018). The Defaultness Hypothesis: A quantitative corpus-based study of non/default sarcasm and literalness production. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 138, 149–164. doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2018.09.013
- Berger, P., Bitsch, F., Nagels, A., Straube, B., & Falkenberg, I. (2018). Personality modulates amygdala and insula connectivity during humor appreciation: An event-related fMRI study. *Social Neuroscience*, 13(6), 756–768. doi: 10.1080/17470919.2017.1403375
- Brcic, J., Suedfeld, P., Johnson, P., Huynh, T., & Gushin, V. (2018). Humor as a coping strategy in spaceflight. *Acta Astronautica*, 152, 175–178. doi: 10.1016/j.actaastro.2018.07.039
- Deen, P. (2018). Senses of humor as political virtues. *Metaphilosophy*, 49, 371-387.
- Dionigi, A., & Canestrari, C. (2018). The use of humor by therapists and clients in cognitive therapy. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(3), 50-67.
- Dževerdanović-Pejović, M. (2018). Humour in online comments regarding Montenegro's accession to NATO. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(2), 81-99.
- Edwards, C. N., & Jones, R. L. (2018). Humour in sports coaching: "It's a funny old game." *Journal of Drug Issues*, 23(4), 744–762. doi: 10.1177/1360780418780047
- Edwards, E. (2018). Exploring the use of humour in medical education in the GP small group setting. *Education for Primary Care*, 29(6), 383–384. doi: 10.1080/14739879.2018.1509677
- Fiadotava, A. (2018). "Who sharpens the knives in my house?" Belarusian jokes about adultery at the turn of the 21st century. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(2), 23-39.
- Fried, K., & Shelley Carson, S. (2018). The influence of performance expectations and personality on audience ratings of humor. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 31, 645-661. doi: 10.1515/humor-2017-0137
- Görkem, S. Y. (2018). Humor of the intimate: Female humor and women policies in Turkey, *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(2), 100-119.
- Howard, P. S. S. (2018). A laugh for the national project: Contemporary Canadian blackface humour and its constitution through Canadian anti-blackness. *Ethnicities*, 18(6), 843–868. doi: 10.1177/1468796818785936
- James, L. A., & Fox, C. L. (2018). Longitudinal associations between younger children's humour styles and psychosocial adjustment. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 36(4), 589–605. doi: 10.1111/bjdp.12244
- Karnieli-Miller, O., Michael, K., Segal, O., & Steinberger, A. (2018). Assessing an intervention focused on enhancing interpersonal communication skills and humor: A multi-method quasi-experimental study among medical students. *Health Communication*, 33(12), 1560–1572. doi: 10.1080/10410236.2017.1384347
- Kaufmann, M. (2018). Black Jokes, white humour: Africans in English caricature, 1769-1819. *Slavery & Abolition*, 39(4), 768–769. doi: 10.1080/0144039X.2018.1537174
- Leader, G., Grennan, S., Chen, J. L., & Mannion, A. (2018). An investigation of gelotophobia in individuals with a diagnosis of high-functioning autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism & Developmental Disorders*, 48(12), 4155–4166. doi: 10.1007/s10803-018-3661-3

- Martinelli, A., Kreifelts, B., Wildgruber, D., Ackermann, K., Bernhard, A., Freitag, C. M., & Schwenck, C. (2019). Aggression modulates neural correlates of hostile intention attribution to laughter in children. *NeuroImage*, 184, 621–631. doi: 10.1016/j.neuroimage.2018.09.066
- McKeague, M. (2018). Lyrical lessons: The potential of informative comedy music as supplementary teaching material. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(3), 30-49.
- Moran, L. J., & Wood, H. (2018). From Judge Judy to Judge Rinder and Judge Geordie: Humour, emotion and “televisual legal consciousness.” *International Journal of Law in Context*, 14(4), 581–595. doi: 10.1017/S1744552318000253
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- Özel, G., Maltête, D., & Lefaucheur, R. (2018). Pathological laughter as a symptom of middle cerebral artery stroke. *Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 55(5), 707–709. doi: 10.1016/j.jemermed.2018.07.020
- Panichelli, C., & Panichelli-Batalla, S. (2018). Humorous sublimation of a dying Cuban writer in Reinaldo Arenas’ The Color of Summer. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 31, 623-643. doi: 10.1515/humor-2017-0052
- Panichelli, C., Albert, A., Donneau, A.-F., D’Amore, S., Triffaux, J.-M., & Ansseau, M. (2018). Humor associated with positive outcomes in individual psychotherapy. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 71(3), 95–103. doi: 10.1176/appi.psychotherapy.20180021
- Priego-Valverde, B. (2018). Sharing a laugh at others: Humorous convergence in French conversation. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(3), 68-93.
- Saint-Jevin, A. (2018). From (un)motivated laughter to impertinent laughter: The laughing machine. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 27(4), 241–247. doi: 10.1080/0803706X.2017.1343497
- Schweizer, B. (2018). Social science research supports free speech take on “offensive” humor. *Free Inquiry*, 39(1), 35–37.
- Sebba-Elran, T. (2018). The intertextual Jewish joke at the turn of the twentieth century and the poetics of a national renewal. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 31, 603-621. doi: 10.1515/humor-2017-0043
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- Sover, A., & Nur El Din, G. (2018). The relation between teaching the Arabic language using humour and reading comprehension at Elementary School in the Arab Sector in Israel. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(3), 94-108.
- Szerszunowicz, J. (2018). Typowy Janusz and Bad Luck Brian: On meme characters from a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective, *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(2), 3-22.
- Takovski, A. (2018). Extending ethnic humour theory: Genuine vs. functional ethnic joke scripts, *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(2), 60-80.
- Tamás, A. (2018). Election campaign tools in Hungarian humour magazines in the second half of the 19th century. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(2), 40-59.
- Walsbergerová, T. (2018). Laughing at robots: Synthesising humour and cyber-paranoia in portrayals of artificial intelligence in Welcome to Night Vale. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 6(3), 1-12.



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