

The Humorous Times

Newsletter of the International Society for Humor Studies

Autumn 2013

Sean Guillory, Editor

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Association News

2013 ISHS Membership and Finances

Martin Lampert, ISHS Secretary-Treasurer

The International Society for Humor Studies had a good year in 2013 with 284 affiliates, including 275 new and returning members plus nine Consulting Editors of the journal, *HUMOR*. At the October 31 close of 2013 membership, the Society was again financially sound with \$52,028.79 in unaudited revenue including \$31,973.79 carried over from 2013 and \$20,055.00 from 2013 membership dues and fees. Operating expenses through October included 101.06 for recognition awards and an estimated \$15,895.00 for membership subscriptions to *HUMOR: International Journal for Humor Research*. Revenue over expenses by the end of 2013 is estimated to be \$36,032.73.

Between December 1, 2012 and October 31, 2013, Holy Names University received an additional \$1,520.00 toward the ISHS Scholarship fund. From this fund, the Society made one \$530 and two \$280 awards in 2013 to graduate students who attended the 25th ISHS Conference in Williamsburg, Virginia. As in previous years, 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 2014 membership applications.

We look forward to another great year in 2014 with the publication of the 27th volume of *HUMOR* and the Society's 26th international conference to be held at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands from July 7 to 11, 2014. For more Conference information, you can write to the Conference Convener Sibe Doosje at S.Doosje@uu.nl or visit the Conference website at ishs2014utrecht.nl. If you would like to host a future ISHS Conference, you can contact me for more information on how to submit a Conference proposal.

At the end of this newsletter, you will find a 2014 ISHS Membership application. On the application form, you will notice the Society's current fee structure, which allows for membership with either a print or online subscription to the Society's journal, *HUMOR*. Due to an increase in the journal's pricing, regular membership dues have increased slightly. For 2014, membership with a print subscription is \$110 and with an online subscription is \$69. Regular members who renew before January 31 can still elect to take a \$5 discount on their dues, allowing everyone to renew early with an online journal

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Newsletter Staff

Sean Guillory (USA):
seanguillory1925@gmail.com
Ralph Müller (Switzerland):
ralph.mueller@unifr.ch
Goh Abe (Japan):
gohabe@green.ocn.ne.jp
Guo-Hai Chen (China):
mypeer2002@hotmail.com
Jessica Milner Davis (Australia):
jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au

Next Issue

The next *The Humorous Times* is due February 2014.

subscription for just \$64. 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.

Finally, thank you for your continued 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.

2013 ISHS Election

Every two years, the International Society for Humor Studies holds an election for ISHS President and for two new Members-at-Large to the ISHS Executive Board. The new ISHS President will serve for two years, from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2015, and will take over from Willibald Ruch (University of Zurich, Switzerland), who will continue on the ISHS Board as the immediate Past President. The new Members-at-Large will replace Chao-Chih Liao (National Chiayi University, Taiwan) and Andrea Samson (Stanford University, USA), who have served on the ISHS Board since January 2010. The new Board Members will serve for four years from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2017.

For our 2013 Election, the Society is pleased to present the following candidates for ISHS President and ISHS Board Member-at-Large. Current ISHS members will receive online access to an electronic ballot in mid-November 2013.

Candidates for ISHS President

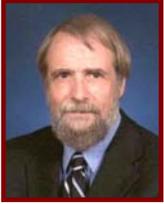


Władysław Chłopicki, Ph.D. Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

Wladyslaw Chlopicki, Ph.D., is a senior lecturer with the Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland, where he has worked since 1988. He is also the Head of the Faculty of Humanities at Krosno State College in southeastern Poland. He has studied and conducted research in the United States, Germany, Britain, and Denmark. His PhD thesis, *Sophistication in Humor: Character Frames*, was completed in 2000. He is particularly interested in translation studies and intercultural communication, and is involved in the Vysehrad Heritage Promotion Project, involving five Central European countries.

Wladyslaw is firmly engaged in the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of the language of humor. He is currently working on the application of cognitive linguistics and intercultural communication to the study of humorous texts. His book, *Humorous Discourse: A Cognitive Study*, is due for publication in early 2014. He has edited and co-edited several article collections, including the recent two volumes of *Estonia and Poland: Creativity and Tradition in Cultural Communication*. He is editor-in-chief of the international *Humour and Culture* series, published in Krakow, which included in 2012 monographs on Polish humor and Hungarian humor.

Wladyslaw has participated in several ISHS conferences since 1987 (17 conferences altogether). Most recently, he convened the 24th ISHS conference in Kraków in June 2012 as well as the International Conference on Communication Styles in Krosno in October 2013. He has also co-organized national biannual linguistics conferences in Kraków since 2000 which have drawn scholars from various language, culture and teaching departments across Poland. He has guest lectured in Germany, Portugal, Northern Ireland, Estonia, and Taiwan. He is a member of the Editorial Board of *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* and the *Israeli Journal of Humor Research*. He is also a member of the editorial team of the *European Journal of Humour Research*. He is President of the Cracow Tertium Society for the Promotion of Language Studies (since 2008) and served as an Executive Board member of the International Society of Humor Studies from 2006 to 2009.



Larry Ventis, Ph.D.
College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia

Larry Ventis earned his Ph. D. in clinical psychology from the University of Tennessee. He is a Full Professor of Psychology at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, where he has served for his entire career. He published one of the earliest case studies of humor in behavior therapy, and his humor research has tended to focus on applied topics, prominently including humor in psychotherapy with children, humor in social skills training, and the use of humor to counter fear in systematic desensitization. The latter research was featured in “The Laugh Factor,” a one hour Discovery Health Channel production. Identification of the role of humor in desensitizing fear led to research on counter therapeutic applications of the same principle in advertising, to desensitize consumers to dangerous products, such as cigarettes. He has also studied humor which emerges in times of traumatic stress, and recently has collaborated in research on the effects of humor styles on stress in retirement. Most recently he has identified and researched roles for Intuitive and Reflective thought in the experience of humor. He has been an active member of ISHS since its creation and has served both on the Executive Board and as a Consulting Editor of *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*. This past summer he enjoyed hosting the 2013 ISHS Conference in Williamsburg, VA. He has also been an enthusiastic competitor in ISHS comedy contests, and once, long ago and inexplicably, even won.

Candidates for ISHS Board Member-at-Large



Goh Abe, Ph.D.
Kagawa University, Japan

Goh Abe serves on the Board of Consulting Editors for *Humor: International Journal for Humor Studies* and on the Board of the Japan Society for Laughter and Humor Studies. He received an M.A. from Ohio State University and an M.Phil. and Ph.D in cultural anthropology from the University of Kansas, specializing in the study of social change and anthropological knowledge. His interest in humor studies began in 1973 while he was a student at Ohio State University.

He attended his first ISHS Conference in 1994 at Ithaca College. With Dr. Hiroshi Inoue, he co-convened the 2000 ISHS conference in Osaka, Japan. He has taught graduate and undergraduate courses on humor at Kansai University in addition to classes on cultural anthropology, intercultural communication, and health.

He has published in both English and Japanese in the journals, *The Society*, *Cross-Cultural Communication Studies*, and *The Japanese Journal of Humor Studies*. He has authored a chapter in *Understanding Humor in Japan* (ed. Milner Davis, 2008) and co-authored with Dr. Christie Davies, *Esunikku Joku (Ethnic Jokes, 2003)*. He has written articles about humor courses taught by Professors Rod Martin and Don Nilsen. He is also the correspondent for Japan for the ISHS Newsletter, *The Humorous Time*. His research interests include laughter festivals, humor education, regional jokes around the world, humor in advertising, and educational methods for cultivating a sense of humor.



Christian Hempelmann, Ph.D.
Texas A&M University–Commerce, USA

Christian F. “Kiki” Hempelmann is an assistant professor of computational linguistics at Texas A&M University–Commerce, Texas. His previous appointments in industry were Chief Scientific Officer of hakia.com and Director of Ontological Semantics at RiverGlass, developing computational linguistic resources for Internet and consumer search and computational humor. His previous appointments include an assistant professorship in linguistics at Georgia Southern University and a postdoctoral research position in computational linguistics and cognitive

psychology at the University of Memphis. He completed his Ph.D. in linguistics at Purdue University in 2003 with a dissertation on the computation and phonology of puns.

Humor has been the focus of Kiki's research since 1995. Since 2003, he has been doing multidisciplinary studies in collaboration with psychologists of humor, topics including the mutual evaluation of humor models, shared perspectives on humor cognition, where his computational semantic expertise is the basis of research on humor and artificial intelligence, as well as the lexical fields of humor and laughter. The latter topic is currently expanded into a large-scale international project on semantics of the lexical field *laugh/smile* in translations of Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Grudgingly, he's also still working with puns, on which he is preparing a monograph.

Kiki has (co-)authored nine articles in *HUMOR*, as well as numerous articles, reviews, book chapters, a book, encyclopedia entries, and published talks on humor, computational linguistics, and computational humor. In 2003 Kiki won the ISHS Emerging Scholar Award, and in 2004 and 2006 European grants (EU Marie Curie and SNF) for multidisciplinary research on humor. He has participated in almost all ISHS conferences since 1999, recently organized two humor conferences in Northeast Texas, as well as two symposia on cartoon humor. He has served as a reader for *HUMOR* since 2000, as a consulting editor for *HUMOR* since 2005, and as a member of the *HUMOR* editorial board since 2011. Kiki has taught at the International Summer Schools for Research in Humor and Laughter from 2003 to 2008 and in 2013, and his work has been widely covered in the media leading to invited presentations on humor, both in Europe and the United States.



Holger Kersten, Ph.D.
University of Magdeburg, Germany

Holger Kersten is a Full Professor of American Literature and Culture at Otto-von-Guericke-Universität in Magdeburg, Germany. In 1997, he joined ISHS and since that time has been a frequent presenter of academic papers at ISHS conferences and other scholarly conventions. His research interests in the field of humor include ethnic humor, dialect humor, and national humor. One area of special interest is humor in 19th-century American literature and culture with a long-standing emphasis on Mark Twain. His work has been published in international journals and books. He has also been a lecturer at the annual International Summer Schools and Symposia on Humour and Laughter, and was the local organizer for the 2013 Summer School. He currently serves on the Summer School's Advisory Board. He is a member of various national and international academic associations, including the American Humor Studies Association and the Mark Twain Circle of America. From 2005 to 2008, he was executive director of the German Association for American Studies and now serves on its advisory board.



Xiaodong Yue, Ed.D.
City University of Hong Kong, China

Xiaodong Yue has a doctoral degree from Harvard University and has been a professor of psychology since 1997 at the City University of Hong Kong. He has also served as an adjunct professor for over 20 universities in China, and is a founding chair of the Division of Counseling Psychology with the Hong Kong Psychological Society. He has published widely on issues of creativity, humor, resilience, and subjective well-being in Chinese society, and has given keynote speeches at several conferences in China and Hong Kong. In addition to his other activities, he also serves as a reviewer for ten international psychology and education journals. Since 2006, he has been a member of the International Society of Humor Studies, and in 2010, he chaired the ISHS Conference held in Hong Kong.

Upcoming Events

Twenty-Sixth ISHS Conference

University of Utrecht, , The Netherlands, July 7-11, 2014



The Society's 26th international conference will take place in the beautiful medieval University Hall of Utrecht University in The Netherlands from July 7 to July 11, 2014. Conference conveners are Sibe Doosje (UtrechtUniversity), Jeffrey Goldstein (UtrechtUniversity), and Giseline Kuipers (University of Amsterdam).

Sibe Doosje has already set up the conference website at <http://ishs2014utrecht.nl> on which further information will be published in the coming months. The conference starts on Monday with preconference tutorials and a workshop on Humor in Business for Dutch business executives. On Tuesday, the conference will be officially opened. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday will be conference days. Of course, there will be a conference dinner, the annual ISHS members' meeting, and the presentation of the 2015 conference. For those interested in funny and informative ISHS2014 news there will be a weekly news blog every Friday, 11 AM CET. Broadcasting will start at Friday September 6th. If you want to be on the mailing list, please send an e-mail to S.Doosje@uu.nl.



2014 Australasian Humour Studies Network Colloquium

National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, 14–15 February 2014

The Call for Proposals for this event closes on 30 August. For details and submission, see the AHSN website: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies> (Events page). The Colloquium theme is "Anything Goes" but proposals outside that theme are acceptable. On-line registration is open via the Victoria University of Wellington at the AHSN website > Events > Registration page. Information on travel and accommodation in Wellington, including maps, is also posted at Events > Information page. Colloquium Conveners are: Mike Lloyd (Sociology), Marco Sonzogni (Italian, Translation Studies), and Meredith Marra (Linguistics), Victoria University of Wellington. For more information, email Mike Lloyd: Mike.Lloyd@vuw.ac.nz or jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au.

2014 Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor Conference

Vincennes University, Indiana, USA. April 3–6, 2014

The Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor is an international community of professionals who incorporate humor into their daily lives. The conference will be held in the Red Skelton Museum of American Comedy. Further information can be found on the Internet at <http://www.aath.org/annual-conference>.

Book Reviews

Comedy: A Very Short Introduction

Matthew Bevis. (2013). *Comedy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, U: Oxford UP. 150 pp.

ISBN #978 019960174; EUR 105.00; USD 11.95

From Miriam Chirico (Eastern Connecticut State University)

While the perception of incongruity is held as one of several theories of laughter, Matthew Bevis's book *Comedy: A Very Short Introduction* depicts the entire field of comic theory as underscored by incongruity. This highly referenced discussion of comedy requires that the reader be familiar with

numerous humor theorists and comedic works and artists, challenging the general readership that might be drawn to the Very Short Introduction series (Oxford UP). However, by integrating such a wide-variety of thinkers and texts, Bevis offers a stimulating discussion that moves beyond his organizational scheme to explore the “repertoires of comedy”: beginnings, bodies, characters, plots, power, pain and endings.

The perennial effort to establish defining traits for comedy frequently leads to generalizations that can be disputed immediately. Conflicting questions pervade the comic genre: is comedy conservative or liberal? Life-affirming or denigrating? Are comic figures rigid stock characters or flexible improvisationalists? Rather than try to resolve these paradoxes, Bevis’ book embraces them, demonstrating repeatedly the fault line of incongruity underlying the entire field. For every theory or idea proposed in comedy, the opposite can also hold true. While this contradictory nature of comedy is not Bevis’ central argument, each time Bevis limns a humor theory, the next page reveals the counterstatement, leading the reader on a lively journey of “both/ and.” One such self-contradictory position occurs as follows: “If comedy is a force for good, it is so not because it paints definitive pictures of The Good Life, but because it challenges its audiences to entertain incongruous versions of what such a life might be” (85). In other words, even as the play or television show paints a picture of a fallen world or defeated individuals, it simultaneously suggests the possibility of alternatives and prompts us to imagine them. Another example: in contrast to the Machiavellian plotting mentioned earlier, Bevis convincingly argues that the genre also allows for Buddhist acceptance – and offers the movie *Groundhog Day* as support.

Bevis’ discussion of laughter is reminiscent of a debate this summer at the ISHS conference initiated by John Morreall’s talk, “Humor as a Social Lubricant.” Morreall provided examples of how laughter eases tension and increases the effectiveness of communication, yet audience members could not overlook the belittling quality of laughter. One might be tempted to designate this second type of derisive laughter as “satire,” to separate it from the unifying form of laughter, but very few forms of laughter exist that do not depend upon some object of ridicule. Bevis, however, reframes this debate by suggesting that laughter might be both derisive and unifying: once we release our aggression by laughing at the object of ridicule, we might then tolerate the situation more easily, as our own laughter entices us into resigned acquiescence. In other words, while satirical laughter may be cruel, the passing of time mollifies the viciousness that drove the attack, resulting in acceptance. Accordingly, T.G.A. Nelson (Introduction to *Comedy*, Oxford UP, 1990) observes “two contradictory, yet equally fundamental, tendencies of comedy, the impulse to [mocking] laughter and the movement towards harmony” (qtd. in Bevis 118). Along the same vein, Bevis points to the inherent contradictions within Freud’s theories of humor: on the one hand, the individual relies upon his rational super-ego to provide the sense of humor during times of trial humor; on the other, a humorous joke can sneak past the repressive super-ego and release the energy of the id, freeing the individual from the anxiety he experiences over taboo subjects. In other words, in order to answer the question “does laughter appeal to the super-ego or to the id?” one would have to say “both.”

As a genre, comedy draws attention to the fixity and the freedom of the self –another apparent contradiction. The stock characters inherited from classical Roman playwrights possess identities that are static and relational: the wily servant, the naïve lover, or the miserly old man. However, as the mask worn by these characters likewise implies playful duplicity and deceit, the entire comic tradition follows suit, encouraging character awareness of the multiple roles they play, alluded to most tellingly in *The Importance of Being Earnest as Bunburying*. While the Delphic Oracle might warn the tragic character to “Know thyself,” knowing “thy selves” seems to be the comic character’s dilemma, for as Bevis states “The implication is that we are always other than what we really want to be, or that we are most alive when indulging in a fantasy of ourselves” (43). For the comic character, there is a thin line between type-casting and role-playing, and the difference depends upon how consciously critical one is of the role one plays. The danger involved in playing a role too long is that the characters may lose sight of their true selves and become “prisoners of the roles they were playing” (42) – hence the fixity of character. Bergson’s theory of “the mechanical encrusted upon the living” explains the comedy of the unwitting individual mindlessly going through ordained motions, which occurs most typically when the contingencies of the body trump the reasoning capacities of the mind. But in order for a comic character to vindicate his existence he must be able to stand outside himself and self-consciously critique the

limitations established for him – therefore permitting his freedom. Here, Bevis quotes Baudelaire: to nurture a sense of the comic, a person should foster “the capacity of being himself and someone else at the same time” (qtd. in Bevis 48). The ability of the comic character to rise above the limits set by such contingencies and reflect upon his ordained role explains the minor triumph of actors like Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin who exhibit mental control in the midst of material chaos.

In the landscape of comedy there is never a resting point, and Bevis’ book charts this continually shifting ground of debate, drawing upon a vast range of thinkers as divergent as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Pirandello, Rabelais, and Emily Dickinson. The compressed nature of the “Very Short Introduction” series has imposed an elliptical writing style upon Bevis, and often his conclusions seem hastily drawn. This “Introduction” is not for the uninitiated, but rather the seasoned traveler in the contradictory world of comedy, one who comfortably recognizes that comedy is the quintessential dialectical genre.

Ethnic Humor in Multiethnic America

David Gillota (2013). *Ethnic Humor in Multiethnic America*. Rutgers University Press. 206 pp. Hardcopy ISBN 978-08135 61493; USD 80.00 Web pdf ISBN 978-0813561509 USD 25.95

Publisher’s Description

When wielded by the white majority, ethnic humor can be used to ridicule and demean marginalized groups. In the hands of ethnic minorities themselves, ethnic humor can work as a site of community building and resistance. In nearly all cases, however, ethnic humor can serve as a window through which to examine the complexities of American race relations. In *Ethnic Humor in Multiethnic America*, David Gillota explores the ways in which contemporary comic works both reflect and participate in national conversations about race and ethnicity.

Gillota investigates the manner in which various humorists respond to multiculturalism and the increasing diversity of the American population. Rather than looking at one or two ethnic groups at a time—asis common scholarly practice—the book focuses on the interplay between humorists from different ethnic communities. While some comic texts project a fantasy world in which diverse ethnic characters coexist in a rarely disputed harmony, others genuinely engage with the complexities and contradictions of multiethnic America.

The first chapter focuses on African American comedy with a discussion of such humorists as Paul Mooney and Chris Rock, who tend to reinforce a black/white vision of American race relations. This approach is contrasted to the comedy of Dave Chappelle, who looks beyond black and white and uses his humor to place blackness within a much wider multiethnic context.

Chapter 2 concentrates primarily on the Jewish humorists Sarah Silverman, Larry David, and Sacha Baron Cohen—three artists who use their personas to explore the peculiar position of contemporary Jews who exist in a middle space between white and other.

In chapter 3, Gillota discusses different humorous constructions of whiteness, from a detailed analysis of *South Park* to “Blue Collar Comedy” and the blog *Stuff White People Like*.

Chapter 4 is focused on the manner in which animated children’s film and the network situation comedy often project simplified and harmonious visions of diversity. In contrast, chapter 5 considers how many recent works, such as *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle* and the Showtime series *Weeds*, engage with diversity in more complex and productive ways.

Un Atlas Imaginaire. Cartes Allégoriques et Satiriques.

Laurent Baridon (2011). *Un atlas imaginaire. Cartes allégoriques et satiriques* [*An Imaginary Atlas. Allegorical and Satirical Maps*]. Paris: Citadelles & Mazenod, 240 pp. ISBN 978-2-85088-515-069€

Commentary and summary by the author (trans. John Parkin)

This book contains documents that one might term figural maps, in the sense that cartographic representation is combined with that of human and animal forms, and, less commonly, with vegetable motifs. The procedure reflects a well-known phenomenon, since everyone who has gazed at length at the

clouds, or daydreamed while staring at the land-shapes in an atlas, knows that imagination sometimes leads us to see animals, people or faces in them. It is a frequent occurrence for us to discern familiar images in unknown shapes -- allowing us to relativise the strangeness of an object and to master some of the mystification it causes.

The first maps reflecting this phenomenon date from the 1330s. After studying the portulan charts of the geographers of his time, Opicinius de Canistris drew maps of Europe and the Mediterranean in which, yielding to his unbridled imagination, he included allegorical forms of the Church and of Islam and visualised the presence of demons in the contours of the shorelines. Later, during the Renaissance, the discovery of new worlds revealed unknown territories. These weird shapes fed a cartographic imagination that printing helped spread via cosmographies and atlases.

The geography of Europe was also represented as a political allegory whose forms sometimes included the symbolic fauna and flora of heraldry. “Europe the Virgin” glorified Charles V, whilst “The Belgian Lion” told of the Eighty Years War that divided the Low Countries.

From the end of the 18th century, with the decline of monarchies, maps became more frequently satirical. They also targeted a youthful public who required amusement to better inculcate a highly nationalist conception of geography. Lilian Lancaster, barely fifteen years old, drew one entire such atlas, published in London in 1869.

The golden age of this trend occurred between 1870 and 1918 at a time when international tensions between European nations were at their height. Thus, countries are caricatured via the features of emblematic figures with belligerent expressions. Artists like Frederic W. Rose or André Belloguet specialised in the genre, and some maps were transferred or diverted from one country to another in order to feed the cause of hostility.

Although fewer nationalistic maps were drawn after 1918, the process of giving lands human shape remained very widespread. It is found among caricaturists and illustrators and in certain contemporary artists, their images often presenting a point of view opposed to conventional wisdom. Whilst ancient maps were made up of people and faces, now they more frequently display a body inscribed with a real or imaginary geography. The mondialised man seeks within himself for the new territories of his imagination.

By gathering together almost all the figural maps known prior to 1918, and by examining some more contemporary examples of the phenomenon, this book presents a range of documents emphasising the bonds linking lands with peoples. Most often their aim is to reveal a political connection, and this process involves a propaganda that gets harsher during wartime. But the documents in question may also be more personally motivated.

Geography becomes a place where the designer projects a “mental map” where he seeks to discover himself. The fact that these maps have always existed demonstrates that the idea of superimposing body on territory lies at the interface between a collective imagination and an individual sensibility. But the highly relative success of such documents, as strange as they are spectacular, questions the effectiveness of a discourse that relies on an essentially ambiguous and polysemous visuality.

Review Comment by Nelly Feuerhahn (trans. John Parkin)

The survey offered by Laurent Baridon’s atlas is remarkable for the quality of the images he presents, for the analyses given of their historical relevance, and for the development of their meanings. The approach of the author, who is Professor of Art History at the Université Pierre Mendès France in Grenoble and a researcher within the team “Art, Imaginaire Société” at the CNRS LARHRA laboratory, brings a highly original vision to bear on a field of research that is currently raising high expectations. By going beyond the simple observation of caricatural forms within this iconographic ensemble, the book forms a precious tool within the field of human science. In addition, Laurent Baridon and Martial Guédron (see also Guédron’s *L’Art de la Grimace*, Paris: Hazan, 2011) have co-authored the more recent and masterly history of caricature entitled *L’art et l’histoire de la caricature*, also published by Citadelles & Mazenod in 2007.

Le Règne de la Poire. Caricatures de L'esprit Bourgeois de Louis-Philippe à Nosjours.

Fabrice Erre (2011). *Le règne de la poire. Caricatures de l'esprit bourgeois de Louis-Philippe à nosjours*. [The Reign of the Pear. Caricatures of the Bourgeois Spirit from Louis-Philippe to the present day]. Seyssel: Éditions Champ Vallon. Collection: La chose publique, 260 pp., 23€.

Commentary and summary by the author (trans. John Parkin)

The caricature of the head of Louis-Philippe as a pear is part of France's political and historical culture. Though not everyone might always accurately identify either its author or its period, this familiar sketch is one of the minor indicators that mark out our past. However, the curious document conceals a complexity and richness that are rarely seen to advantage. The reduction of Louis XVI to a pig or that of Napoleon to an ogre are meaningful, whilst the Pear conveys no special significance (the expressions evoking a "bonne poire" [dupe], or the pear as a synonym for face came later, doubtless as a result of this caricature). Nevertheless the image gained immediate success and an unprecedented reputation, itself a curious fact. Three questions arise: how did this motif emerge from the caricaturists' pencil? Why was it held to be meaningful? How did people seize upon it to perpetuate it through the following decades? For more than 170 years, partial answers have been proposed, but never a synthesis.

The first part of this book aims to reveal the origin of this sign, seen as a convergence of shapes resulting in a pear-shaped silhouette. The Pear represents not only Louis-Philippe but the trinity that gained power after the revolution of July: a dominant group (the bourgeoisie, narrow-minded and fat-bellied), its ideology (the "middle of the road", a shapeless principle founded on the rejection of the issues of Revolution vs. Counter-Revolution) and its sovereign (the "Citizen King"). It thus possesses an evocative power greatly exceeding the somewhat restrictive meaning commonly assigned to it, just like other symbols such as the candle-snuffer exploited under the Restoration Monarchy.

The second part examines the reasons for the Pear's success. The extended analysis of the traditional representations of power, from Sun King up to Pear King, underlines how important in France's political life were the processes of ennoblement and degradation of the sovereign. This symbolic work emerged in 1831-2 in a tense situation: a strikingly powerful feeling of disruption and contradiction favoured the satirical indictment of power. Indeed, to re-site the term "pear" within its period allows one to assess its satiric potential: as a practically virgin symbol, it is highly appropriate to comic exploitation, allowing multiple puns and representations through its varied presence in French everyday speech (the Williams' bon chrétien pear, the pear compôte, "between the pear and the cheese", "the torture pear", "the pips of the pear", etc.).

The third part describes the uses made of this pear. In their own words, the satirists applied the pear to "all the different sauces": texts and pictures stimulated a powerful political humour to which the brittle regime reacted with increasing violence. The population adopted the pear, thanks to its ability to take on board well-established popular activities (graffiti, rebellious cries, grotesque stagings). Stendhal, George Sand, Heine, Dumas, Fenimore Cooper, Théophile Gautier all reveal the trend; Hugo and Flaubert speak of it in their novels and sketch it in their manuscripts. In a word, the Pear enjoys an exceptional progeny, reappearing regularly (in 1848, then in opposition successively to [political leaders such as] Thiers, Félix Faure and Edouard Balladur). It influences later satirical practice (from Gill's melon to Chirac's apples) and remains current in contemporary society (in teaching, in artistic allusions).

The Pear marks an important stage in the construction of France's shared political culture, revealing the victory of a bourgeois political and social model which supplants that of the Ancien Régime, but is abandoned over a forty-year transition period. Thus, despite its trivial appearance, the drawing bears witness to a major historical shift. It appeals to the collective unconscious as the expression of an awareness that a new "reign" is emerging, one to which we remain subject even now.

New Articles on Humor

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 for the online ISHS bibliographies, includes humor studies articles published since June 2013. If you have a recent publication, let us know, and we will include it in our next issue of the newsletter.

- Berger, A.A. (2013). Forty five ways to make 'em laugh. *Israeli Journal of Humor Research*, 3, 45-57. Available from <http://www.israeli-humor-studies.org/Issue-No-3-June-2013.html>
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