

12th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications **University of Eastern Finland, Savonlinna Campus** **Finland**

The 12th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter was held in Savonlinna, Finland in conjunction with the University of Zurich, from July 2 – 7, 2012 (see: <http://www.humoursummerschool.org/12/>).

Professor, Dr. Pirjo Nuutinen and Professor, Dr. Seppo Knuuttila from the University of Eastern Finland in cooperation with the Advisory Board, and together with the Local organizing team and volunteers organized the Summer School. The course was intended to be of benefit to both research students and more experienced researchers considering conducting research in the field of humour and laughter.

This year the teaching faculty comprised twelve speakers. This allowed us to have a greater diversity in the topics covered. Lectures were given by: Professor, Dr. Christie Davies (University of Reading, UK), Dr. Jessica Milner Davis (University of Sydney, Australia), Composer Kimmo Hakola, Dr. Liisi Laineste (Estonian Literary Museum, Centre of Cultural History, Estonia), Professor Dr. Seppo Knuuttila (University of Eastern Finland, Finland), Professor, Dr. Gina Mireault (Johnson State College, USA), Professor, Dr. Pirkko Muikku-Werner (University of Eastern Finland, Finland), Professor, Dr. Jussi Pakkasvirta (University of Helsinki, Finland), M.Sc. Tracey Platt (University of Zurich, Switzerland), Dr. Graeme Ritchie (University of Aberdeen, UK), Professor Willibald Ruch (University of Zurich, Switzerland) and Professor Dr. Sven Svebak (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway)

The programme aimed to provide an overview of the interdisciplinary nature of humour research, by considering theory and empirical evidence, addressing special research issues, discussing methodology and evaluation of research findings to date, and also to consider some of the applications of humour and laughter.

Meet the Lecturer sessions, where participants could sign up for a one-to-one discussion with a lecturer of his/her choice where two consecutive time-slots were made available daily.

Representative sessions addressed following topics:

- An overview of humour research
- Interdisciplinary attitude as perspective on cultural phenomena (like humour)
- Smiling, laughter and humour in the first year of life: A developmental perspective
- Cross-cultural challenges in studying humour
- Testing hypotheses about jokes
- Incongruity and its resolution
- The importance of history in the understanding of ethnic jokes
- The long tradition of humour therapy and the theory of humours, East and West
- Conceptual challenges in the relationship of sense of humour and health issues

- Potential mechanisms explaining the effect of sense of humour upon bodily health
- The role of language in humour
- A hierarchical analysis of the sense of humour
- Experiencing humour: A conceptual model of interpersonal transaction
- Dispositions towards ridicule and being laughed at
- Teasing – We are not amused or are we?
- Is it OK to laugh? Some reflections on tragicomedy
- The kernel of truth in jokes
- How do infants know what is funny: Humour as part of social context, social referencing, and social-emotional development
- The expression of joy: from Darwin to Ekman
- What the face reveals: Smiling and laughter. Using the Facial coding system in humour research
- Using comparative method: Mother in-law jokes and kinship system
- Humour and positive psychology
- The poverty of theory: why theories of humour and social theories are of limited use
- Researching humour on internet
- Laughter, time, freedom and Henri Bergson's theory of the comic
- Is seriousness the opposite of humour and laughter

This year, 41 participants attended the Summer School. These included four volunteering students from the Unit of Home Economics. The student body consisted of undergraduates, postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers, and university faculty members, as well as professionals (teacher, composer, psychologist and magician). These participants came from Austria, Australia, England, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Malaysia, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, and the USA. Academic disciplines represented included Cultural studies, Psychology, History, Methodology, Health care and therapy, Communications and IT, Linguistics, Sociology, Educational Science, Political Science, Literature and Arts. The variety of participants' experiences was reflected in the debate engendered by many of the sessions.

The increasingly popular Summer School Symposium took place on Thursday and it featured presentations of the participants' planned or finished research, or ideas on how to implement and use humour in applied settings. The presentations comprised the following short talks and posters:

Short Talks in the order of presentation:

Aljona Ivanova: *Socio-demographic analysis of humor styles*

Jenny Hofmann: *When share joy is half joy: laughter eliciting positive emotions and mimicry in gelotophobia*

Domenica Ladler: *How do gelotophobes process laughter-specific information? An analysis of the attention individual, interpretation and memory bias*

Ellen Hofer: *EEG responses to laughter and expressions of anger in high and low*

gelotophobic individuals

Jarno Väisänen: *Argumentative group conversations as a method to produce research material*

Timo Laes: *Humor in the drawings of preschool children*

Maria Laakso: *Senseless Humour – The ambivalent relationship between literary humour and literary nonsense*

Sonia Fernandez: *Laughter and hyperrealist black comedies of Thomas Bradshaw*

William Curran and Gary McKeown: *Building the ILHAIRE laughter database*

Anastasia Astapova: *On the genesis of contemporary Russian-language student jokes*

Heidi Hakkarainen: *Humour and unfamiliarity in late nineteenth-century Vienna*

Pauliina Latvala: *Perspective on political humour and folklore in Finland*

Mahmud Farjami: *Political satire as the standard-bearer of press freedom – A review of Iranian political satire in the press during the 2000's*

Posters:

Olli Rissanen: *Expertise in magic – Development from a novice to a master magician*

Jakub Gorecki: *Humour identification as the competence and ability*

The participants made time for social events, which were particularly planned to give experiences of humour in opera and visual arts. The social program included informal reception with piano music on the Monday evening. In the programme on Wednesday afternoon there was a picnic by Lake Saimaa and an excursion to Parikkala Statuepark. In the Wednesday evening the participants attended the general rehearsal of the tragicomic opera “La Fenice” at the Castle Olavinlinna, and finally, on Friday evening the Jubilee 12th anniversary closing dinner was held in Hotel Hospiz, in the historical part of Savonlinna city.

The University of Eastern Finland, Savonlinna Opera Festival, Kalevala Society, Joensuu University Foundation, Art Council of South Savo, University Association of East Savo, Summer Hotel Vuorilinna, and Bookstore Knut Posse/Book & Idea, bakeries Herkku-Pekka, Sirkka Makkonen, Laurikainen and Restaurant Amica supported the Summer School. Without their support the Summer School would not have been possible. Also, Mouton de Gruyter sponsored prizes for the best presentation awards, which were won by Anastasia Astapova, Heidi Hakkarainen, Ellen Hofer and Jennifer Hofmann. Special prize for the best poster was given to Jakub Gorecki.

We would like to thank our Lecturer Helena Valkeapää and students Jenni Korhonen, Lilli lempessalmi and Minna Rinta from the Unit of Home Economics, UEF for catering, OpeArt- student Sari Nyrhinen and licentiate Serja Turunen as well as IT-experts Jorma Nyrhinen and Juha Tikkanen for assisting during the week and in the preparations and for

the award committee for presentations.

The *International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter* was organized for the first time by Willibald Ruch in 2001 (Queen's University of Belfast).

Next years...

The next International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter will be hosted by Professor Holger Kersten on the 22nd to 27th July 2013 and will be held in the conference rooms of the main campus of the University of Magdeburg, Magdeburg, Germany. Registration is now open and can be found on the website <http://humoursummerschool.org/13/> from where you can find the online registration page.

The Summer School Advisory Board would like extend a big thank-you to all those who applied to host the next year's Summer School. The Summer School could not exist without this on-going support from willing local organisers. If you would like to be considered for one of the following years- information on how to apply can also be found in a PDF on <http://humoursummerschool.org/contact.html>... We look forward to hearing from all you prospective hosts!

As in all previous years, the International Society for Humour Studies (ISHS) endorsed the 2012 Summer School.

Pirjo Nuutinen