

Katalin VARGHA – Anna T. LITOVKINA – Zsuzsanna BARTA (eds.): *Sokszínű humor. A III. Magyar Interdiszciplináris Humorkonferencia előadásai* [Many-Coloured Humour. Presentations of the 3rd Hungarian Interdisciplinary Humour Conference]. Budapest: Tinta Publishing House, 2013, 291 pp.

The “Humour Conference”, attended by a number of institutions and researchers from many disciplines, now has a history of seven years. The first event in the series built around the theme of humour, called the 1st Hungarian Interdisciplinary Humour Conference and Humour and Linguistics/Folklore International Symposium was held in 2007 in Szekszárd. This was followed in 2009 by the 2nd Hungarian Interdisciplinary Humour Conference at Siófok. The papers presented at the conferences were published in separate, English- and Hungarian-language volumes.⁵ All three of the Hungarian-language collections (2008, 2010 and 2013) were published by the TINTA Publishing House, the second volume with the assistance of the Faculty of Foreign Trade at the Budapest Business School, the third with the assistance of the Faculty of Humanities of the Eötvös Loránd University and the Hungarian Semiotics Society.

The volume reviewed here contains the papers of the speakers at the 3rd Hungarian Interdisciplinary Humour Conference, held in Budapest in 2012, published by Tinta Publishing House as volume 151 in the series *Segédkönyvek a nyelvészet tanulmányozásához* [*Aids for the study of linguistics*]. 26 of the 33 speakers at the conference have a total of 22 papers in the book. The “Előszó” [“Foreword”] (pp. 7–10) is followed by five thematic units: “Humor a médiában” [“Humour in the media”] (pp. 11–60), “Humor az irodalomban és a filozófiában” [“Humour in literature and philosophy”] (pp. 61–100), “Humor és sztereotípiák” [“Humour and stereotypes”] (pp. 101–148), “Humor és pszichológia” [“Humour and psychology”] (pp. 149–194) and “Humor és nyelvészet” [“Humour and linguistics”] (pp. 195–268). The final section of the volume presents the “III. Magyar Interdiszciplináris Humorkonferencia programja és absztraktjai” [“Programme and abstracts of the 3rd Hungarian Interdisciplinary Humour Conference”] (pp. 269–285) and brief information on the authors and the editors (“A kötet szerzői és szerkesztői” [“Authors and editors”], pp. 286–291). It is worth noting that several of the authors – József Andor, Anna T. Litovkina, László Attila Nemesi and Katalin Vargha – as internationally recognised researchers in the field, are also co-authors of the *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies*⁶ published in 2014.

In the foreword, Péter Barta introduces, with a levity fitting the central theme of the volume, the paradox associated with Hungarians, namely that we are a “great power of

⁵ Margit DACZI – Anna T. LITOVKINA – Péter BARTA (eds.): *Ezerarcú humor* [*The Thousand Faces of Humour*]. Papers presented at the 1st Hungarian Interdisciplinary Humour Conference. Tinta Publishing House: Budapest, 2008; Péter BARTA – Anna T. LITOVKINA (guest eds.): *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* LIV/1. Akadémiai Publishing House: Budapest, 2009; Anna T. LITOVKINA – Péter BARTA – Margit DACZI (eds.): *Linguistic Shots at Humour*. Cracow Tertium Society for the Promotion of Language Studies: Krakow, 2010; Anna T. LITOVKINA – Péter BARTA – Judit HIDASI (eds.): *A humor dimenziói* [*The Dimensions of Humour*]. Papers presented at the 2nd Hungarian Interdisciplinary Humour Conference. Tinta Publishing House – BBS Faculty of Foreign Trade: Budapest, 2010.

⁶ Salvatore Attardo (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Humor Studies*. Los Angeles – London – New Delhi – Singapore – Washington DC, 2014.

humour” and at the same time one of the most pessimistic communities in the world, but he leaves the resolution up to the book’s authors and readers. The individual items of the themes covering and uniting several disciplines that are discussed in the book occur only as a list in the foreword, the wider context of the field within the history of science and international research is not presented.

The papers in the first thematic unit study the operating mechanisms of humour in various areas of the media. Ágnes Veszelszki examines Internet memes, and finds that they share many of the characteristics of verballity, e.g. “the rumour factor, topicality and immediate reactions to events as they occur” (p. 13). It was one of the important conclusions of her case studies that while the main objective of memes is humour and entertainment, their multivocal character and community-forming role are also interesting subjects for research. Géza Balázs approached humour from the perspective of network science, and found that the primary factors shaping and organising humour networks are the themes and messages of the jokes, and the people taking part in them, while the “new infotechnologies”, along with accelerating the spread of information, also induce the appearance of new forms (p. 34). Attila László Nemesi analyses the tools of humour in a long New Year’s Eve stand-up routine by Géza Hofi. He emphasises the significance of implicature and the shared discourse space in the operating mechanism of humour. Anita Schirm examines the opportunities for using humour in education, and calls attention to the humour-generating function of “deviation from the norm” (p. 53).

The second thematic unit places humour in a literary and philosophical context. Katalin Horváth studied the humorous linguistic formations in the “Törökországi levelek” [“Letters from Turkey”] of Kelemen Mikes. In her view, the tension-generating effect of humour works through semantic dissonance and occasional incongruence (p. 64). Luca Anna Németh produced an introduction to Jenő Rejtő’s humour from the linguistic history perspective, emphasising the roles of meaning shift, dissonance between concrete and abstract meanings, homophony, paronymy, folk etymology and “written orality” (p. 78). Mariann Slíz’s paper examines the role of names in parody using semantic, phonetic and morphological criteria, with particular regard for the significance of intertextuality and the exploitation of ambiguities concerning parts of speech. Péter Tánkos’s paper discusses the “relationship” between philosophy and humour. Thought that integrates humour – as the author calls it, “cheerful philosophizing” – is always a sort of critique of metaphysics.

In the third section, humour is placed in the context of stereotypes, identities and ethnicities. Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt reviews the stereotypical vignettes associated with the Swiss to demonstrate that “there is no direct correspondence between national stereotypes and ethnic jokes” (p. 108). The issue is much more complex than that and requires further research. Richárd Papp presents his fieldwork conducted in the community of the Budapest synagogue. He shows how the tension between the sacred and the real can be dissipated using communication involving jokes, and how that reinforces identity. Ágnes Tamás presents the humorous genres, figures and effects of 19th-century humour magazines, and places them in a context of folklore history as well as that of the ethnic minority movements. Tamás Farkas examines the humour potential of names, in relation to ethnic stereotypes. In his typology, he identifies formal and semantic factors, and emphasises the significance of continually shifting connotative content. Judit Hidasi examines

the gender aspects of humour communication and associated public opinion. In her paper she highlights the close link between humour and the ability to improvise.

In the fourth major section, humour presents yet another face in the theoretical and methodological mirror of psychology. Róbert Ďurka studied the links between mental health and sense of humour using a questionnaire, and presents the findings of his statistical analysis. In the paper co-authored by Judit Boda-Ujlaky, Andrea Horváth, Ilona Záhorszki and László Séra, the connections between aggression, humour and gelotophobia in a prison setting are examined, also using a questionnaire. Mária Pethő interprets aggressive humour as a strategy of communication, by analysing male and female behaviour patterns derived from a reality show. László Séra and Judit Boda-Ujlaky investigated the stereotypical relationship between “coarse humour” and physical build using questionnaire data gathering.

The fifth and last thematic section is devoted to linguistic research associated with humour. Zsuzsanna Schnell’s paper focuses on children’s humour. She notes that humour research has generally always focused on written or orally disseminated “prefabricated” jokes, while there are few examples of research on spontaneously organized humour through the observation of participants. Her study employs a cognitive semantic approach and maps the mental conditions for the occurrence of humour (p. 195). Katalin Vargha examines the humorous aspects of riddles in a semantic framework, while John M. Dienhart checks his typology of linguistic puzzles developed on a formal basis using Hungarian material. His conclusion is that Hungarian, primarily semantically motivated, humorous formations require a different type of classification. In his paper, József Andor subjected the semantic ranges of adjectives related to humour and the possibilities of their collocations as nouns to a corpus study and a study based on native speaker intuition. In a co-authored paper, Anna T. Litovkina, Katalin Vargha, Péter Barta and Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt drew parallels between Hungarian, English, German, French and Russian humorous distortions of proverbs according to the characteristic forms of expression of linguistic humour. Their typology contains phonological, morphological, lexical and semantic features as well. They use a wealth of examples to demonstrate the difficulties of categorization and the characteristics that link the anti-proverbs to other areas of folklore.

In preparing the papers from a number of scientific disciplines, the editors – Katalin Vargha, Anna T. Litovkina and Zsuzsanna Barta (series editor Gábor Kiss) – gave equal consideration to a transparent structure, the standardisation of even the smallest formal details and the high-quality production of illustrations. When different disciplines overlap, questions are always raised about the range of applications and the validity of a few key specialist terms. A good example is the term “folk etymology”, which linguists and anthropologists apply to different phenomena. Interdisciplinarity is on the rise, as attested by the changes in the organisation of institutions. Exact definitions aid communication between researchers from various areas, and motivate them to use specialist terms with precise content which are valid in the interdisciplinary framework. The series of conferences on the theme of humour (as indicated by the titles of the volumes) has drawn attention to a wide range of *dimensions*, *faces* and *colours*, including both recurring themes and less frequented areas awaiting cultivation. While questionnaire, corpus study and

philological methods dominate, the cultural anthropologist's "participating observer" approach is hardly present in humour research. As one of the authors, Zsuzsanna Schnell notes, most of the research into the creation and mechanism of the operation of humour has been primarily aimed at prefabricated jokes, and "few studies have examined the cognitive background and the developmental and mental conditions of the spontaneous humour that occurs in everyday conversation" (p. 195). All of that leads to the conclusion that after three conferences, humour research still has a number of open questions and plenty of tasks for the representatives of various disciplines.

Tamás ILDIKÓ

Claudia BEHRENS – Christiana ROSENBERG (eds.): *TanzZeit–LebensZeit. Jahrbuch Tanzforschung 24. Band*. Leipzig: Gesellschaft für Tanzforschung – Henschel Verlag, 2014, 11 studies and essays, 1 interview, 28 photos and diagrams, 237 pp.

This volume published in 2014 by the German Dance Research Society (GTF) presents research projects on the theme of the connection between dance research and human age. It contains studies, lecture texts, essays and an interview. Their aim is to present the competencies that can be acquired through dancing and dance practice and that play an important role in the different life stages. The basic idea of the editors was to show, through the concept of lifelong learning, that the capability of the human brain for development and through it, the human ability to adapt, is practically unlimited. Dance plays an important role in this process, as the studies clearly demonstrate.

In addition to health science approaches, the volume also raises pedagogical and cultural questions. Several of the writings show what a positive effect certain dance styles and forms can have on human health. Besides the now commonplace findings of medical science and biology, the most important contribution of the volume to cultural studies is that it contains a number of studies examining the role of the aesthetic-expressive dimension of dance in connection with human learning and cultural socialisation.

The central issue of the volume (lifelong learning) is approached by representatives of different disciplines examining different themes: the development of the connection between man and society and between individuals and the role dance plays in this in childhood. Other investigations look at how dance develops the creativity and learning capabilities of young people. Dance can also play an important role in the second half of life: several studies examine the effects of dance in old age in addition to helping to preserve mental and physical health. Perhaps the most important message of the writings is that dance has a place in all stages of life and that already in childhood movement develops mental, motor and social (!) skills that will later be decisive in shaping individual and social life and indispensable for a healthy, creative adulthood.

A number of the authors are also active in the field of sports sciences or are practising dancers, performing artists or choreographers. Others are biologists and doctors (sports doctor, neurologist) and only one is a dance researcher. All this confirms what we have earlier found in publications of the Dance Research Society, namely that German dance