3rd International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter
University of Edinburgh

The 3rd International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter was held in Edinburgh, in the School of Informatics at the University of Edinburgh, from 15th - 20th September 2003 (see: http://www.iccs.informatics.ed.ac.uk/iss03/).

The summer school was organized by Graeme Ritchie from University of Edinburgh and Willibald Ruch from University of Zurich. This course was intended to be of benefit to both research students and more experienced researchers considering conducting research in the field of humor and laughter.

The teaching faculty comprised six speakers allowing greater diversity in the topics covered. Lectures were given by Dr Lydia Amir (The College of Management; Israel), Professor Christie Davies (University of Reading, UK), Dr Rüdiger Hasenöhrl (University of Hertfordshire, UK), Dr Graeme Ritchie (University of Edinburgh, UK), and Professor Willibald Ruch (University of Zurich, Switzerland). Dr. Christian "Kiki" Hempelmann, one of the winners of the 2003 "emerging scholar award", joined as a special guest teacher. The program aimed to provide an overview of theory and empirical evidence, address special research issues, discuss methodology and evaluation of research findings, but also to consider some of applications of humour and laughter. Representative sessions addressed topics such as *Humour and western religions: past and present; Humour as a worldview; Taxonomic models of humour; Genetics of humour and laughter; Explaining ethnic jokes; Playing with aggression not aggression: The basis of humour; An introduction to the General Theory of Verbal Humour; Puns: A linguistic review; The neurobiology of humour and laughter; Humour, laughter and the brain; The methodology of analysing verbally expressed humour;* and *What are the components of a joke?*

The summer school was attended by 24 participants, including undergraduates, postgraduates, academics and practitioners. These participants came from Belgium, England, Germany, Israel, Japan, Norway, Romania, Scotland, USA and Wales. Academic disciplines represented included Linguistics, Psychology, Education, Computing and Neuroscience, and there were practitioners using humour in a variety of settings including counselling and stress management. The variety of participants' experiences was reflected in the debate engendered by many sessions.

The Symposium part of the summer school took place on Friday in order to allow participants to introduce themselves and their research. The presentations comprised the following:

> A pilot study: An examination of the influence of humorous teaching materials on children's creativity in personal and social education *by Elspeth Collins*
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> The STANDUP (System To Augment Non-speakers Dialogue Using Puns) Project *by Hisar Maruli Manurung*

HaHa. A reading grid for humour and laughter *by Hugo Stuer*

Use of statistical language recognition in computational humor *by Julia Taylor*

History through laughter *by Matthew Brian Taylor*

Cookie pieces have no calories: Diet Humor – Women's resistance to the diet culture? *by Debbie Iancu-Haddad*

Systemics, humour and the social context *by Diana-Elena Popa*

Analysing audience responses to stand-up comedians *by Pam Wells*

Humour as a critique of society in the French satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo *by Jane Weston*

A theory of humour as an identification, friend or foe system *by John Alexander Hewitt*

Teasing in contact encounters *by Vally Lytra*

Humor as a defense mechanism in the Holocaust *by Chaya Ostrower*

The next summer school will most likely take place in Switzerland. However, there is also a plan to have alternative locations during the following years. Exact details will be announced at the website (http://www.psychologie.unizh.ch/perspsy/humor/iss.htm) of the summer school. As this years' summer school was fully booked, people who subscribed too late were placed on the list of delegates for next year.

Willibald Ruch

Graeme Ritchie