

mainly by shamans' dexterous strategies of language use, is the key to ritual efficacy. This might be a clue that explains the continuous demand for shamanic rituals and divinations in highly modernized Korean society, the phenomenon she pointed out at the very beginning of her book. Is the emotional transformation during the shamanic rituals unique to Korean shamanism, then? Haven't the needs of clients and shamans also changed in response to their shifting interests? These questions are not intended to undermine her work but rather to encourage further investigation on these issues. Bruno's work on the complex body of Korean shamanism will bring a new light to Korean shamanism studies by enhancing our understanding of performative efficacy of ritual language and the agency of multiple participants.

Elliott Oring. **Engaging Humor**. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003. Pp. xiii + 208, illustrations, appendix, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Rachel Lewis
Indiana University, Bloomington

Elliott Oring's latest collection of essays, *Engaging Humor*, follows closely in the tradition of his earlier works *Israeli Humor* (1981), *The Jokes of Sigmund Freud* (1984), and *Jokes and Their Relations* (1992). While much of the territory covered in *Engaging Humor* will be familiar to his readers, Oring continues to develop his scholarly repertoire in fresh, interesting directions. In each of the ten essays on humor, he refines established themes (appropriate incongruity, absurdity in elephant jokes, Freud's relationship to Jewish jokes, dyadic traditions, national character, the failings of aggression theory) and explores previously un- or underdeveloped ideas (Freud's concept of "joke thoughts," the devaluation of sentiment, jokes as conversational glosses, overtly hostile humor, blond jokes, Internet communities).

Oring is a gifted scholar who, like Freud, is deeply concerned with the mechanics of humor. Oring is interested in why and how we

are able to distinguish between humorous and non-humorous communications given that they may contain similar attitudes and information or be used in the same context by the same person. It has long been his contention that humor, and only humor, is structured by the perception of an appropriate incongruity. Consequently, Oring must reconcile his treatise with the fact that non-humorous forms may also exhibit appropriate incongruity:

Definitions and metaphors are rooted in appropriate incongruities, yet neither . . . are in themselves funny. If the perception of appropriate incongruity is at the root of humor, the perception of appropriate incongruity in definition and metaphor should prove humorous as well. Yet it does not. (4)

Oring resolves the problem by positing two types of appropriate incongruity, one of which still only applies to humor: "The reason riddles and jokes are humorous while definitions and metaphors are not is that in jokes the engagement of the incongruity and the search for its appropriateness is *spurious* rather than *genuine*" (5, italics in the original).

It is understandable that Oring would prefer to continue to see appropriate incongruity as "the fundamental structure of humor . . . engendered through the use of specific techniques" (*Jokes and Their Relations* 1992:10), rather than consider it merely one of those techniques (like Freud's mechanisms of condensation, displacement, and representation by the opposite). Of course, even if appropriate incongruity is a technique rather than the progenitor of humor, it is no less important. As Oring himself notes in the brilliant essay "Joke Thoughts," humor cannot exist without technique: "Technique is what transforms a thought into a joke" (28).

Throughout the book, Oring does a fine job of identifying, distinguishing, and critiquing various approaches to humor studies, usually by contrasting them with the "appropriate incongruity" approach. He highlights the failings of incongruity and incongruity-resolution approaches, as incongruity alone need not result in humor (3) and incongruity in humor is never fully resolved (2). His most pointed

critiques are of Gabriella Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi's anti-incongruity/pro-"family resemblances" approach and aggression theories.

Engaging Humor is accessible, interesting, and well supported by excellent notes. It is important reading for anyone interested in theories of humor. Its short essay format is ideally suited for classroom use; each chapter is autonomous and need not be read in order. Of course, this very quality is also a drawback, as it encourages Oring to sacrifice depth for clarity. Although his arguments are fascinating, the restrictive requirements of the essay form often do not allow him to develop his ideas fully. Because essays are designed to stand alone, they require an author to reiterate key arguments and examples, often at the expense of new insight. As a result, some of the essays could have benefited from longer treatments or follow-up essays in the same volume. "Blond Ambitions and Other Signs of the Times," for example, is a superb piece with exciting insight into the meaning of blond jokes; and yet, because the article is structured to refute previous interpretations of blond jokes, Oring's own theory gets less attention than it deserves.

Jack Zipes. **The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World.** Rev. ed. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002. Pp. xx + 321, illustrations, index. \$18.95 paper.

Bryn Neuenschwander
Indiana University, Bloomington

This 2002 edition of the original 1988 work is not simply a reprint of the same material, as Zipes has substantially revised each essay in light of the last fourteen years of scholarship on the lives and influence of the Brothers Grimm. The most radical changes come at the beginning and end of the volume. The original first chapter, which concerned itself with biographical information on Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, has here been expanded into two chapters, the latter of which has annexed much of the original second chapter. The final chapter, "The Struggle for the Grimm's Throne: The Legacy of the Grimms"