

Introduction and Editors' Note

This issue of WOW Review is a themed issue focusing on books that draw on the many sources of humor as indicated in this quote:

Humor takes many shapes and forms. It can be as sharp as a surgeon's knife or as gentle as a touch of silk. It can convey uncomfortable truths, point up life's absurdities, challenge the imagination, take us by surprise, release us from fears and anxieties. And while it is true we don't all agree about what's funny, it's also true that every one of us finds pleasure in some sort of humorous literature. (Mallen, 1993, p. 83, retrieved from files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED362905.pdf)

The books reviewed for this issue reflect these many shapes and forms and speak to the universality of humor in helping us to be more aware of both the realities around us and the world of fantasy. *The Cat, the Dog, Little Red, the Exploding Eggs, the Wolf and Grandma; The Story Starts Here!*; and *The Big Bad Wolf and Me* take advantage of the universal understandings of fairy tales, twisted into scenarios that modernize characters, events, and perspectives. In this case, the child perspective is key to the resulting humor within these stories. This book just ate my dog! reveals an absurd story that cleverly engages the reader in the dilemma faced by the protagonist.

Hello, Mr. Hulot and *Tap Dancing on the Roof* are seemingly very different texts as *Hello, Mr. Hulot* recreates a famous 1940's and 1950's film character from France, and *Tap Dancing on the Roof* provides excellent examples of the poetic form, sijo. However, what these two have in common is asking the reader to examine everyday life for incidents and items that might take on new insights and appreciation through a humorous stance. *Mr. Hulot* has distinct quirky characteristics that come to life in his daily interactions within his community while *Tap Dancing on the Roof* invites readers to examine closely and in humorous ways the often taken-for-granted details that surround them.

The Chickens Build a Wall conveys, in a story filled with irony, uncomfortable truths of prejudice and ungrounded fear—readers can chuckle as they read but are left with serious and significant after thoughts. *Norman, Speak!* reminds readers that joy and companionship are possible even when the ability to understand is limited. However, the humor here is a serious reminder of the need to understand those with whom we have trouble communicating. *Manyunya* provides universal characteristics and insights about a family that can prove humorous for all as readers make personal connections to their own life experiences. And, *When Mr. Dog Bites* gives readers powerful insights to a young man with Tourettes Syndrome whose approach to his disability provides humorous moments that relieve tension and informs the reader in an authentic, understanding frame.

Our hope is that these reviews will invite you into the pleasure of their humor, whether this pleasure challenges your imagination, surprises your expectations, or beckons you to new insights.

Janelle Mathis, Editor



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