

# The Humorous Times

Newsletter of the International Society for Humor Studies

Spring/Summer 2022

Volume 35, Issue 1/2

## Association News

### 2021 ISHS Election Results

*From Martin Lampert, ISHS Executive Secretary-Treasurer*

In Fall 2021, the Society held its biannual Board elections through the internet service, *Qualtrics*. With 114 valid returned ballots, Sharon Lockyer (Brunel University, United Kingdom) received the majority of the votes cast for ISHS President. She will serve as ISHS President through December 31, 2023. Dorota Brzozowska (Opole University, Poland) and Gil Greengross (Aberystwyth University, Wales) were elected as ISHS Board Members-at-Large and will serve through December 2025. We thank Patrice Oppliger for her service as ISHS President for 2020 and 2021. She will remain on the Board as the Immediate Past President. We also thank Sammy Basu (Willamette University) and Will Noonan (University of Bourgogne, France) for their service as ISHS Board members from January 2018 through December 2021. Our best wishes to the new ISHS President and Board members.

### Message from the New President

*From Sharon Lockyer, Brunel University, United Kingdom*

Writing this welcome as the newly elected President of the International Society for Humor Studies is an honor and a privilege. I very much look forward to collaborating with you all, serving as the ISHS President and building on the successes of former ISHS Presidents. I would like to say a huge thank you to Patrice Oppliger, our Past President, for seeing the ISHS through the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring that we continued to connect and thrive as a society during challenging times for humor scholars across the globe. It was great to see ISHS members connect virtually during the ISHS Webinar Series in June and July 2021—thank you to everyone involved in the organization, to all the fantastic speakers and to everyone who logged on (recordings are available on the ISHS website if you missed it!).

Huge appreciation, and thanks, are due to Delia Chiaro and her truly amazing team, for pulling off the wonderful ISHS conference this year—against all the odds—on the ever-spectacular Bertinoro campus of the University of Bologna in Italy. This was the ISHS's first in-person conference since June 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was at this year's ISHS conference that I had the pleasure of meeting Jan Davies for the first time in-person. Jan Davies very sadly passed away recently, and I will treasure the time we spent together and the laughter we shared.

This year's conference reminded me of how unique and special the ISHS conferences are—I had many conversations about the friendly and supportive nature of the ISHS conference with both those new to the ISHS and long-standing ISHS members. This is what struck me back in 1999 when I attended my first ISHS conference—and it is quite something that this has been sustained over the years. This is

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### Next Issue

The next *Humorous Times* is due in November 2022. Items for the November issue should be sent to [ishs@hnu.edu](mailto:ishs@hnu.edu).

testament to each and every ISHS conference delegate who shares their time, expertise and, dare I say it, sense of humor, during panels, plenaries, roundtables and, of course, refreshment breaks! It is this supportive spirit that we should embrace, and extend, as a society as we rebuild after the trials of the last few years. One of my priorities as President is to support our early career researchers and independent researchers, especially those who do not have a local network of colleagues in humor studies. I have lots of ideas about what we can do as a society around this, and I will keep you updated. I am also really keen to hear your thoughts about the ISHS—the good, bad and the indifferent—if you have anything you would like to share with me, please do get in touch (Sharon.Lockyer@brunel.ac.uk).

I look forward to seeing many of you at our next annual ISHS conference in Boston, 3rd-7th July 2023. And to round off, I would like to thank you all for your continued support and passion for humor studies and the ISHS.

## **Message from the Past President**

*From Patrice Oppliger, Boston University*

I was honored to be your ISHS president from 2020-2021. It was with great disappointment that I was unable to preside over conferences in 2020 and 2021; however, I'm glad we could keep everyone at least a little safer. We were able to get together virtually as we hosted a successful webinar series last summer with topics ranging from political humor, tragedy, discriminatory representations, artificial intelligence, rule breaking, and personality characteristics. You can find recordings at <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AhkQa8-GLMi6am7cOFrT46Ddz1E?e=fzbvov> and access them with the passcode, ISHS6#Webs.

I'd like to send a huge thanks to Delia Chiaro for pulling off an excellent conference in Bertinoro this summer under extremely difficult and unprecedented circumstances. Not only was it fantastic to hear exciting ideas in humor research in a variety of areas, we got to do it in a breathtaking venue. If you were one of the unlucky ones unable to attend, Salvatore Attardo was awarded a well-deserved lifetime achievement award for his contributions in humor and language. It was great seeing familiar faces and making new friends whom I hope to see at future ISHS conferences. Speaking of which, I will be stepping in to host the 2023 conference at Boston University from July 3 to 7. You can find more details in this newsletter.

As I exit my term, I leave the society in our new president Sharon Lockyer's very capable hands. A shout out to Martin Lampert who keeps the organization running and puts together these newsletters!

I hope you can all make it to Boston next year!

## **Report on 32nd Conference of the International Society for Humor Studies**

*University of Bologna, Bertinoro Campus, June 29-July 2, 2022*

*From Delia Chiaro, Conference Convener, University of Bologna*

The 32nd edition of the annual Conference for the International Society of Humor Studies took place from June 29 to July 2, 2022 at the University of Bologna's congress centre, a 10th century medieval fortress situated above the small hamlet of Bertinoro, overlooking the plains of the region of Romagna and the Adriatic Sea. The conference finally happened after having been postponed the two previous years owing to the global upheaval caused by Covid-19. Roughly a third of those who had originally registered for the 2020 conference, that is just over a hundred scholars, took the risk of travelling to Italy at a time when Europe was experiencing another wave of the pandemic yet despite severe travel disruptions, and despite it being the hottest week in Italy on record, all went well. The theme of the conference was the seriousness of funniness, and Pulcinella was chosen to be the symbol of the conference. Pulcinella is a traditional character and mask from the *Commedia dell'Arte* and predecessor of Punch. He represents the Italian trickster and the fact that Pulcinella wears a black mask to cover his eyes and nose was a not-too subtle hint to delegates who were strongly advised to wear masks at all times while indoors, Pulcinella is a trickster who is well known for the wisdom of his wit; masks are not pretty, they look funny but serve a serious purpose.

There were five keynote speakers at the conference. The first was Sharon Lockyer who delivered a topical Presidential Address on the current pervasiveness of humor in the public sphere. Conal Condren (University of Sydney) gave a keynote on the history of laughter, while Don Kulick (University of Uppsala, Sweden) examined the role of laughter in a TV series that focussed on young neurodivergent people looking for partners. For his keynote, cartoonist Martin Rowson presented delegates with over 100 political cartoons that were mostly his own, but included examples from his forefathers and masters of the genre Hogarth and Gillray. Tony Veale (University College Dublin) delivered the final keynote on how a machine can leverage its sense of “funny peculiar” to promote a sense of “funny ha-ha” in human audiences.

Altogether there were a total of 26 panels on a broad range of humour related topics. Delegates presented their work on traditional areas such as humor theory and humor stereotypes but also on newer themes such as humor and wokeness, humor and political correctness, offensive humor and of course, humor regarding Covid-19. Humor and neurodiversity represented another relatively new entry that was popular with panellists as were the numerous panels on matters pertaining to the well-established area of humor and philosophy. Four panels had been triggered by the UnaEuropa funded project (led by the Universities of Bologna, Jagellonian, Krakow, and Katholieke Leuven) on Humor in the Public Sphere. These panels were quite dynamic as presenters had only 10 minutes each to present, not only allowing more presenters to take part, but also more time for questions and discussion with the audience. This same format was also adopted for the panel on Humor and the Law.

The organizers did everything in their power to make the conference exclusively an ‘in-person’ event. Exceptions to this rule were the sessions on Humor and Artificial Intelligence. These panellists were allowed to present in hybrid modality, with some live in Bertinoro and others on-line from their homes around the world. Recordings of short talks by Victor Raskin and Don Nielsen were included in the opening ceremony, and Salvatore Attardo received this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award remotely in a touching ceremony carried out online.

This was the second time that the conference had taken place in Bertinoro. Eleven delegates who had come to the Conference in 2002, repeated the experience in 2022. It is significant that some of those eleven scholars had generated over a score of new scholars to the discipline who were present this time around. This is a wonderful achievement for the future of Humor Studies. Giseline Kuipers who had won the very first Emerging Scholar award in 2002, brought with her many new scholars who presented in the four panels that she chaired on Humour in the Public Sphere.



2022 ISHS Student Award winners (Nikita Lobanov, Guillermo Castañar, Aikaterini Zacharopolou, and Dick Zijp) with ISHS President, Sharon Lockyer, and CDA Presenter, Janetta Davies

Three prominent humour scholars, Bill Fry, Larry Ventis and Christie Davies, who were present in 2002 have since passed away. In 2002, Larry Ventis, who we lost to COVID in 2020, gave a keynote on how he used humor to help patients overcome their fear of spiders. Christie Davies, who also gave a keynote address in 2002, left a legacy in an award named after him. This year, Christie’s widow, Janetta Davies, presented Dick Zijp with the Christie Davies Award. The Don and Alleen Nilsen Young Scholar’s Award was given to Guillermo Castañar and two Graduate Student Awards went to Nikita Lobanov and Aikaterini Zacharopolou.

Finally, the conference was not all work and no play. Conference activities kicked off on July 27 with Matteo Andreone’s hands-on comedy and theatre workshop followed by an excursion to local wine cellars with much wine tasting. Delegates could also take an excursion to Ravenna and to the nearby seaside town of Cervia where several people took a dip in the sea. On this trip, the evening meal in a fish restaurant will remain memorable for the size of the portions and quantity of food and drink.

A Gala Dinner was held on Friday, July 1, on the terrace of the Castle overlooking the plains below and the sea. Ian Brodie hosted the traditional joke competition, and much fun was had by all. The following morning, we said our goodbyes to the accompaniment of a huge cake made of puff-pastry, strawberries, and cream, washed down with copious Prosecco.

## Remembrance



### Janetta Davies

*Remembrance from Władysław Chłopicki and Dorota Brzozowska*

Janetta Davies, an active solicitor, an interpreter from Polish, Spanish, French, German and Danish, an ordained Methodist preacher, the widow of renowned humor scholar and deeply missed colleague Christie Davies, passed away on August 23, 2022 in Reading, UK. After Christie's death in 2017, she continued to promote his scholarship by contributing to the Christie Davies Award as well as handing in the award certificates to the winning authors. Her presence as well as awarding speech from the ISHS conference in Bertinoro this year are still fresh in our minds. In spite of her failing health, she had arrived there driven by the sense of duty as well as friendship with many humor scholars (very much like Christie five years before in Montreal). She truly enjoyed humor conferences as there she felt free of her professional responsibilities and looked forward particularly to those presentations that made her "learn what she did not know before". She was an ideal audience—she frequently asked insightful questions as well as actively participated in our webinar series in 2021.

She was a person of sensitivity and compassion—she offered her legal advice to those who needed it most, and always wanted to speak to her vulnerable clients in their own language. This is why she learned and practiced all the foreign languages so passionately till her last days. She had a very sharp mind, greed for knowledge and—of course—a great sense of humor. Talking to her was a pleasure and intellectual treat. Knowing her was a gain and a gift. Jan, the humor scholars' community will greatly miss you!

## Upcoming Events

### 33rd Conference of the International Society for Humor Studies

*University of Boston, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, July 3-7, 2023*

*From Patrice Oppliger, Conference Convener, University of Boston*

The 2023 ISHS conference will be hosted by Patrice Oppliger at Boston University, the fourth-largest private university in the United States. BU is located in Boston near historic Fenway Park. The airport, train stations, historic sites, and entertainment venues are easily accessible by public transportation. Boston is a visitor friendly city and is served by most major domestic and international airlines.

The conference will take place over five days (Monday, July 3rd through Friday, July 7th) with morning plenary sessions followed by breakout sessions. In addition to the 4th of July fireworks (as much as I'd like to take credit and say they are specifically for the conference, the city of Boston provides the festivities), the conference will include an opening reception, comedy night, and banquet.

As for accommodations, there are several nearby hotels. As a more affordable option, the Student Village residence (StuVi-1) will be available for conference attendees and their guests. StuVi-1 is an air-conditioned apartment-style residence at 10 Buick Street with suite-style accommodations. Each suite is comprised of four single occupancy bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchenette, and common living room area. The building also has a rooftop lounge with a spectacular view of the city, several small study rooms, and a first-floor campus café and convenience store. The building is located right on the "T" (subway/trolley line) and adjacent to the Fitness and Recreation Center. The proposed housing rate for this residence is \$95.00/person/night for shared bath and \$167/person/night for private bath.

An all-you-can eat dining hall is also in close proximity to the conference venue. Costs are \$10/per person for breakfast; \$15/per person for lunch. For those who do not wish to eat in the dining hall, there are a significant number of eating establishments located within a block or two of the meeting spaces.

The Conference website will launch in mid-November, and online registration will begin on January 15, 2023. The paper and panel submission deadline will be March 1, 2023. For more information, prospective delegates can write to [ishs2023@bu.edu](mailto:ishs2023@bu.edu).

## Fourth Taboo Conference

University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy, September 28-30, 2022

The theme of the 4th Taboo Conference is Taboo in Language, Culture, and Communication. For more information, visit the Conference website at <http://taco2020.grupposymposia.it/>

## Sixteenth Annual Conference of the Lighthearted Philosophers Association

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA, October 7-8, 2022

The Lighthearted Philosophers Society will hold its annual conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. Conference registration details can be found at <https://www.lightheartedphilosophers.com/>. For additional information, you can write to the conference organizers at [lighthearted.philosophers@gmail.com](mailto:lighthearted.philosophers@gmail.com).

## Twenty-Ninth Annual AHSN Colloquium

University of Sydney, Australia, February 6-7 (online) and February 9-10 (in person), 2023

The 29th Colloquium of the Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN) will be held in two parts: online on February 6 and 7 through Zoom and in person on February 9 and 10 at the Abercrombie Business School, University of Sydney, Australia. The colloquium convener is Ben Nickl. The colloquium theme will be *A Human Right to Humour*. For more information, contact the organizers at [ahsnconference@gmail.com](mailto:ahsnconference@gmail.com) or visit the AHSN website at <https://ahsnhumourstudies.org/events>.

## Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference of the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor

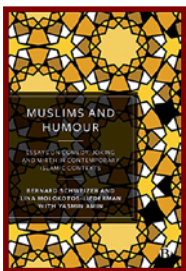
Mesa, Arizona, April 27-30, 2023

The theme of the 36th AATH Conference will be *We're Serious about Humor*. Conference discounts are available to ISHS members. For information, visit the AATH Conference page at <http://www.aath.org>.

## Recent Publications

### Muslims and Humour

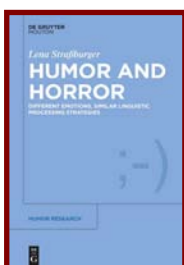
Bernard Schweizer, Lina Molokotos-Liederman, & Yasmin Amin, Eds. (2022). *Muslims and Humour: Essays on Comedy, Joking, and Mirth in Contemporary Islamic Contexts*. Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press, 306 pp., ISBN-13: 978-1-5292-1467-3; E-ISBN: 978-1-5292-1468-0



**From the Publisher:** This thought-provoking collection offers a multi-disciplinary approach on the subject of humour, Muslims, and Islam. Beginning with theoretical perspectives and scriptural guidance on permissible and restricted humour, the volume presents a variety of case studies about Muslim comedic practices in various cultural, political, and religious contexts. This unprecedented scholarship sheds new light on common misconceptions about humour and laughter in Islam and deftly tackles sensitive themes from blasphemy to freedom of speech.

### Humor and Horror

Lena Straßburger (2022). *Humor and Horror: Different Emotions, Similar Linguistic Processing Strategies*. Berlin: DeGruyter, 220 pp., ISBN-13: 978-3-1107-6468-0; E-ISBN: 978-3-1107-6474-1

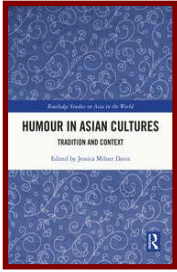


**From the Publisher:** Despite their opposite emotional effects, humor and horror are highly similar phenomena. They both can be traced back to (the detection, resolution, and emotional elaboration of) incongruities, understood as semantic violations through unexpected combinations of oppositional information. However, theoretical and experimental comparisons between humor and resolvable incongruities that elicit other emotions than exhilaration have been lacking so far. To gain more insights into the linguistic differences between humor and horror and the cognitive real-time processing of

both, a main concern of this book is to discuss the transferability of linguistic humor theories to a systematic horror investigation and directly compare self-paced reading times (SPR), facial actions (FACS), and event-related brain potentials (ERP) of normed minimal quadruplets with frightening and humorous incongruities as well as (in)coherent stimuli. The results suggest that humor and horror share cognitive resources to detect and resolve incongruities. This book refines current humor theories by incorporating humor and horror in a cognitive incongruity processing model.

## Humor in Asian Cultures

Jessica Milner Davis, Ed. (2022). *Humor in Asian Cultures: Tradition and Context*. New York: Routledge, 302 pp., ISBN-13: 978-1-0320-0916-2; E-ISBN: 978-1-0031-7637-4



**From the Publisher:** This innovative book traces the impact of tradition on modern humour across several Asian countries and their cultures. Using examples from Japan, Korea, Indonesia and Chinese cultures in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the contributors explore the different cultural rules for creating and sharing humour. Under close examination, Milner Davis and her colleagues show how forms and conventions that differ from those in the West can also be seen to possess elements in common. This fascinating collection of studies will be of great interest to students and scholars of many Asian cultures, and also to those with a broader interest in humour studies. It highlights the increasing importance of understanding a wider range of cultural values in the present era of globalized communication and the importance of reliable studies of why and how cultures that are geographically related differ in their traditional uses of and assumptions about humour.

## Recent Articles in Humor Studies

*The Humorous Times* announces recent articles from *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* and by researchers who publish elsewhere within humor studies. The following list, compiled by the ISHS Executive Secretary, includes articles published since January 2022. If you have a recent publication, let us know. We will include it in a future newsletter.

- Adriaensen, B., Bricker, A. B., Godioli, A., & Laros, T. (2022). Satire and the law: An interview with German lawyer Gabriele Rittig. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 35(3), 483-499. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2022-0057>
- Adriaensen, B., Bricker, A., Godioli, A., & Laros, T. (2022). The difficulty of judging jests: Introduction. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 35(3), 295-304. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2022-0051>
- Aharon, R. (2022). SSTH, GTVH, OSTH—The “two scripts” theory of verbal humor. *Israeli Journal of Humor Research*, 11(1), 44-61.
- Aleksandrova, E (2022). Pun-based jokes and linguistic creativity: designing 3R-module. *European Journal of Humour Research* 10(1), 88–107. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7592/EJHR2022.10.1.62288>
- Alkiviadou, N. (2022). Ain't that funny? A jurisprudential analysis of humour in Europe and the U.S. *European Journal of Humour Research* 10(1), 50-61. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7592/EJHR2022.10.1.649>
- Allen, J. J., Ash, S. M., & Anderson, C. A. (2022). Who finds media violence funny? Testing the effects of media violence exposure and dark personality traits. *Psychology of Popular Media*, 11(1), 35–46. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000296.supp>
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- Armat, M. R., EmamiZeydi, A., Mokarami, H., Nakhilband, A., & Hojjat, S. K. (2022). The impact of laughter yoga on depression and anxiety among retired women: A randomized controlled clinical trial. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 34(1), 31–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952841.2020.1774225>
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- Bamgbose, G., & Ajayi, T. M. (2022). A Semiotic Analysis of Humor in Jenifa's Diary and Professor Johnbull. *Israeli Journal of Humor Research*, 11(1), 62-85.
- Banasik-Jemieliński, N. (2022). "Unicorn humour isn't very subtle." Graphic novels and comics as a potential didactic tool for teaching irony to children: the example of Dana Simpson's Phoebe and her unicorn. *Journal of Graphic Novels & Comics*, 13(2), 302-309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21504857.2021.1946115>
- Baruchello, G. (2022). The Cipolla-Jonas Diagram: Humorous stupidity, dutiful responsibility, and fifteen twists of irony. *Israeli Journal of Humor Research*, 11(2), 47-74.
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- Beth Urhoy, M., & House, W. J. (2022). Pathological laughter prodromal to a stroke of the head of the left caudate nucleus. *Case Reports in Neurology*, 14(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000521304>
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- Bramsen, I. (2022). Agonistic interaction in practice: laughing, dissensus and hegemony in the Northern Ireland Assembly. *Third World Quarterly*, 43(6), 1324-1342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1976631>
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