

The Humorous Times

Newsletter of the International Society for Humor Studies

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Association News

2020 ISHS Election Results

From Martin Lampert, ISHS Executive Secretary-Treasurer

In Fall 2019, the Society held its biannual Board elections through the internet service, *Qualtrics*. With 124 valid returned ballots, Patrice Oppliger (Boston University, USA) received the majority of the votes cast for ISHS President. She will serve as ISHS President through December 31, 2021. Jennifer Hofmann (University of Zurich, Switzerland) and Villy Tsakona (Kapodistrian University, Greece) were elected as ISHS Board Members-at-Large and will serve through December 2021. We thank Władysław Chłopicki for his service as ISHS President for 2018 and 2019. He will remain on the Board as the Immediate Past President. We also thank Liisi Laineste, (Tallinn University, Estonia) and Sharon Lockyer (Brunel University, United Kingdom), and Delia Chiaro (University of Bologna, Italy) for their service as ISHS Board members from January 2016 through December 2019. Our best wishes to the new ISHS President and Board members.

Message from the New President

From Patrice Oppliger, Boston University, USA

First of all, I am honored to serve as your president. Władysław Chłopicki is a tough act to follow as well as an impressive list of past presidents. I've been attending the ISHS conference since 1994 and hosted the 2011 meeting in Boston. The conference is a time we can meet face-to-face and not only discuss our research but share many laughs. It was difficult not having a chance to get together this summer. I'd like to commend Delia Chiaro and her staff for their extraordinary efforts in rescheduling the conference for next June 21 to 25 in the beautiful setting of University of Bologna's Bertinoro campus.

I'm sure I speak for all the members when I say we appreciate the *HUMOR* journal editorial board for their tireless work, most notably on the special issues dedicated to Christie Davies and the upcoming *Humor in the Age of Coronavirus* issue. It has been difficult saying goodbye to beloved members such as Christie and Larry Ventis, whose contributions have enriched our society and the study of humor. I wanted to thank Tom Ford for his work as editor and am grateful for Kiki, who is taking on the role of our new journal editor. Of course, we could not do what we do without Martin Lampert, our Executive Secretary. I want to give a shout out to Sharon Lockyer and the Brunel Research Events team for their work on the Public Webinar Series - Comedy Matters series. Although it's imperative that we social distance, we at least have the technology to stay connected.

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Next Issue

My goal as president is to nurture young scholars and encourage the interdisciplinary work in humor studies. That said, I'd like to shamelessly plug Eric Shouse and my newly published edited book, *The Dark Side of Stand-Up Comedy*. We worked with some outstanding contributors from communication, philosophy, folklore, popular culture, as well as some non-academic, professional stand-up comedians.

Please be safe everyone and keep your sense of humor through these trying days. I hope to see many of you in Bertinoro in 2021!

Message from the Past President

From Wladyslaw Chlopicki, Jagiellonian University, Poland

It is with great honor and satisfaction that I held the position of the President of the International Society of Humor Studies in the term 2018-2019. This has been a very rewarding time as I was lucky to preside over the conference in Tallinn and Austin, both wonderfully organized and very well attended. They were, as I indicated in my Presidential Address in Austin, the 37th and 38th humor conferences counting from the historic 1976 conference in Cardiff, and thus marked 52 and 53 years of organized and institutionalized humor (and humour) research, respectively. What splendid tradition!

ISHS is unique in that it gathers researchers from many disciplines, with Arts and Humanities leading the way, and with Psychology, Social Sciences and Linguistics following suit. Interdisciplinary research is thus something that we are called for to pursue, but naturally this is easier said than done in the day and age when university requirements for promotion largely prompt one to limit oneself to one discipline. Still interdisciplinary projects have arisen from our professional interactions at ISHS conferences, although some may claim the history of humor research has involved a degree of power play between disciplines. In general, keeping the right balance between disciplines for the benefit of the progress of humor studies at large would take us ahead faster. It is with great pleasure that I witnessed interdisciplinary and intercultural debates at our conferences and in print – let us keep them coming.

Among the disciplines that seem to have been left on the back burner and which in my view are essential to humor studies is that of Communication. Communication involves Linguistics, but also Cultural and Social Sciences, and in my view its contribution is not to be underestimated. Why not think of a Humor Communication panel at our next conference? Especially that our new President is a Communication scholar.

Over the recent decades the scholars gathered at humor conferences have engaged in the search for the secret missing ingredient that makes humor what it is. With an open mind, a characteristic and most precious trait of us all, we have looked for it in incongruity, in the target, in the release of tension, in language, in personality, in coping with stress, in culture, but arguably, even though the goal seemed ever closer, getting within earshot of it was as illusory as trying to drink water from a mirage well. But mind you, we should not really despair - think what would have happened if the missing ingredient were actually, officially announced as having been discovered. This would mean the end to our conferences and to all our journals.

Luckily, however, we continue to plough the vast field of humor and laughter among the upheavals and squabbles of the contemporary politics and society as well as in the face of the uncontrollable growth of the grim monster of populism, which supply us with ample and almost inexhaustible research material. Thus each new conference, journal and publication initiative is most welcome! Optimistically, the most devoted Historian in the history of ISHS, Don Nilsen, will have work for a century to come.

What makes me immensely, even tremendously, happy is the considerable number of young scholars who have flocked to take part in our conferences, the evidence of which is the string of awards given to promising young researchers each year. Let us continue to encourage and fund that.

With all the above in mind, I wish Patrice Oppliger, our new President, all the success. Let us defy COVID-19 and meet in person in Bertinoro in June 2021 (it will be much past 19, obviously) and cry out loud together: Humo(u)r scholars of the world, unite!

32nd Conference of the International Society for Humor Studies

Berintonoro Campus, University of Bologna, Italy, June 25-29, 2021

From Delia Chiaro, Conference Convener, University of Bologna

Because of COVID-19 The 32nd ISHS Conference has been rescheduled for June 25 to June 29, 2021, on the Bertinoro campus of the University of Bologna in Italy. For registration, presentation, program, travel, and accommodation information, visit the Conference website at <https://eventi.unibo.it/ishs-2020>.

Other Upcoming Events

Twentieth International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter

Halle, Germany, Postponed

The 20th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter, originally scheduled for Halle, Germany, from July 27th to August 1st 2020, was postponed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Information on the rescheduled symposium will be provided at <http://humoursummerschool.org/20> as it becomes available.

Twenty-Seventh AHSN Colloquium

Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand, February 3-5, 2021

The 27th Colloquium of the Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN) is scheduled for February 3 to 5, 2021 at Massey University in Wellington, New Zealand. The conveners are Nicholas Holm and Bryce Galloway, Massey University, with Meredith Marra, Stephen Skalicky, Victoria University. The conference theme will be *Humour at Work: Applications, Industries and Economies*. For more information, send e-mail to 2021AHSN@gmail.com or visit AHSN at <https://slam-events.sydney.edu.au/calendar/ahsn27>.

Thirty-Fourth Meeting of the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor

Orlando, Florida, USA, April 29-May 2, 2021

The 34th Conference of the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor is scheduled for April 29 to May 2, 2021 at the Rosen Plaza Hotel in Orlando, Florida USA. The Conference theme will be *Is Humor Your Superpower?* For more information, visit the AATH Conference page at <https://aath-conference.com>

Humor Studies News

A New Association, A New Journal, and A New Book Series: The Philosophy of Humor

From Lydia Amir, Tufts University, USA

The International Association for the Philosophy of Humor (IAPH) was founded in 2014 with the purpose of inviting philosophers from various traditions to share study of humor, laughter, and the comic, and their roles (e.g., epistemological, ontological, ethical, aesthetic, political) within the history and practice of philosophy.

With John Morreall as President of Honor, the association is an offspring of ISHS, of which I have been a faithful member since the 1984 Tel-Aviv Conference. As my attempts to attract philosophers to the wonderful conferences ISHS organize were met with little success, a platform for the sustained work done in the philosophy of humor for the last forty years as well as in philosophy's past needed a platform to thrive. Christoph Schirmer, the philosophy editor of *de Gruyter*, chose to attend the inaugural lectures of the association at the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association Conference in 2015 and offered me to found a journal and a book series. I thought he was joking.

Forthcoming in September 2020, *The Philosophy of Humor Yearbook* will be an annual publication of *circa* 300 pages with a two-fold mission. It aims, first, at gathering philosophers of all walks, continental and analytic, of the East and the West, students and seasoned scholars, who are interested in philosophy, its history, its pedagogy and its practice. But it also aims at capturing the attention of theologians, religious studies scholars, political science experts, cognitive studies researchers, psychologists, social scientists and linguists, literature and arts experts; it also addresses comedians, who know much about the comical and can enlighten us in our search for a better understanding of the mystery humor still is.

Six accomplished associate editors from various walks of philosophy have helped developing and implementing the ideas that led to this innovative Yearbook (Sheila Lintott, Christine A. James, Lauren Olin, Steven Gimbel, John Marmysz and Pierre Destrée) and the members of the prestigious board, chosen for their now classical publications in the philosophy of humor, have enthusiastically supported the project from its inception. They include Noël Carroll, Simon Critchley, Stephen Halliwell, Kathleen Higgins, Daniel Dennett, John Lippitt, John Morreall, Robert Roberts and Quentin Skinner.

The Philosophy of Humor Yearbook is an academic journal which aims at academic excellence, but also at rekindling the use of philosophic satire and criticism many philosophers have indulged in, boosting the use of humor in teaching and learning philosophy, and promoting discussions about the main unresolved topics of humor research amongst scholars and comedians. By exploring the intersections of philosophy with the comical in manifold ways, it hopes to be the philosophical and humorous yearly event awaited by all.

In addition to the annual yearbook, DeGruyter is launching a philosophy of humor book series. This series is dedicated to the philosophy of humor and will publish monographs, anthologies and revised dissertations. The first titles, *Cruelty and Laughter*, a co-operation of a philosopher and a psychologist, and *Philosophy and the Comic: Ten Traditions from Antiquity to Post-modernism* by yours truly, will appear in 2021.

We invite you to send submissions to <mailto:mlydamir@mail.com>, following the guidelines at the end of the Yearbook, and to support the Yearbook by subscribing to it and recommending it to your university's library. You are also invited to join the association at www.philosophyofhumor.org, and membership is still free.

Call for Authors: Case Studies on Humor and Health

From Michael Cundall, North Carolina A&T State University

This is a call for authors with a background in health or humor research who are interested in providing responses to case studies written by medical professionals and patients that contain humorous encounters in a healthcare setting.

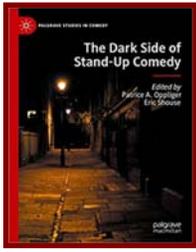
Therapeutic Cases in Health and Humor is a new anthology on humor and medical practice is being published by IGI Global and edited by Dr. Stephanie Kelly and Dr. Michael K. Cundall, Jr. of North Carolina A&T State University. The anthology will consist of two types of articles. The first type is case studies wherein patients and/or medical/healthcare professionals describe a case of humor being used in a healthcare setting of which they were a part. The second article type is a response to the case studies by expert humor or health communication scholars. These analyses will cover topics ranging from propriety, effectiveness, perception, and cultural variables, among others and demonstrate the role of theory in predicting the case outcomes. The goal of these analyses is to provide professionals with a deeper understanding of the role humor can play as well as guidance as to the effective and meaningful use of humor in medical/healthcare settings. The responses should range from 5000-6000 words. This call is specifically for authors of these responses.

This text is aimed to serve medical students; researchers interested in health, humor and medical care; health care professionals interested in enhancing their care with humor; and humor researchers in general.

If you are interested in writing a response for this anthology, please send a copy of your vita to Michael K. Cundall at mcundall@ncat.edu and Stephanie Kelly at sekelly@ncat.edu by September 1, 2020. The editors will match cases with respondents whose expertise best matches the content.

Recent Publications

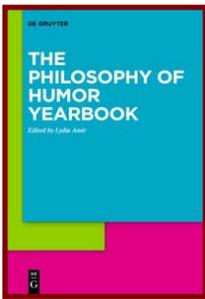
The Dark Side of Stand-Up Comedy



Patrice A. Opliger & Eric Shouse, Eds. (2020). *The Dark Side of Stand-Up Comedy*. Palgrave Macmillan, 329 pp., Cloth ISBN: 978-3030372132; E-ISBN: 978-3030372149

From the Publisher: This book focuses on the “dark side” of stand-up comedy, initially inspired by speculations surrounding the death of comedian Robin Williams. Contributors, those who study humor as well as those who perform comedy, join together to contemplate the paradoxical relationship between tragedy and comedy and expose over-generalizations about comic performers’ troubled childhoods, addictions, and mental illnesses. The book is divided into two sections. First, scholars from a variety of disciplines explore comedians’ onstage performances, their offstage lives, and the relationship between the two. The second half of the book focuses on amateur and lesser-known professional comedians who reveal the struggles they face as they attempt to hone successful comedy acts and likable comic personae. The goal of this collection is to move beyond the hackneyed stereotype of the sad clown in order to reveal how stand-up comedy can transform both personal and collective tragedies by providing catharsis through humor.

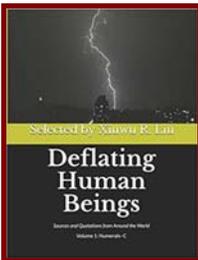
The Philosophy of Humor Yearbook



Lydia Amir, Ed. (2020). *The Philosophy of Humor Yearbook*. Berlin: DeGruyter. Online ISSN: 2698-718X; Print ISSN: 2698-7171

From the Publisher: The Philosophy of Humor Yearbook covers the various intersections of philosophy with humor (and laughter, irony, and the comical), historically and contemporarily, descriptively and prescriptively, seriously and jocularly. It welcomes excellent academic papers of both the analytic and continental traditions, reviews of relevant books, announcements of forthcoming events, and a section dedicated to humorous short papers on philosophical topics.

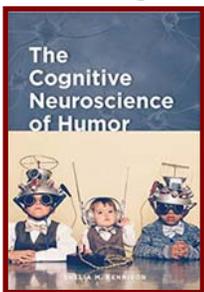
Deflating Human Beings



Xuiwu R. Lui, Ed. (2020). *Deflating Human Beings: Sources and Quotations from around the World*. Oxford, OH: Hermit Studio, 424 pp., Paper ISBN: 979-8660012402

From the Publisher: This collection of sources and quotations offers a panorama of the downside of the human condition, human conduct, and human nature: vanity, errors, sins, limitations, illusions, vulnerability, stupidity, inanity, ignorance, self-deception, cruelty and much more, at individual, group, institutional and societal levels. Quotes—some may better be called excerpts—are selected from classics from around the world, from antiquity onward. To provide the widest coverage, it also samples contemporary works including college textbooks and trade books in two dozen fields or academic disciplines, highlighting history, literature and philosophy. The serious general reader, college students and faculty will find much to ponder in these quotes and excerpts. You may even find inspiration in this, among other things, anti-self-help collection.

The Cognitive Neuroscience of Humor



Sheila M. Kennison. (2020). *The Cognitive Neuroscience of Humor*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 242 pp., Paper ISBN: 978-1433832055

From the Publisher: Sheila M. Kennison presents a rich overview of research on how the human brain works when processing humor, drawing on the new and sophisticated brain-imaging technologies that have enabled researchers and health professionals to expand their knowledge about how the brain works under different conditions. Kennison examines how humor is involved in cognition and memory, human development, and overall mental and physical health.

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 in 2020 to date. If you have a recent publication, let us know. We will include it in a future newsletter.

- Al Kalbani, F., Ahmad, F., Elmanzalawy, A., & Al Futaisi, A. (2020). Inappropriate laughter in a patient with hypothalamic hamartoma. *Sultan Qaboos University Medical Journal*, 20(2), 231–233. <https://doi-org.hnu.idm.oclc.org/10.18295/squmj.2020.20.02.016>
- Amir, L. (2020). Homo risibilis. *Estudios: Filosofía, Historia, Letras*, 133, 71–89. <https://doi-org.hnu.idm.oclc.org/10.5347/01856383.0133.000299229>
- Anderson, C. (2020). “His Sense of Humor carried the Day”: Using humor with nontraditional adult learners. *Adult Learning*, 31(1), 3–5. <https://doi-org.hnu.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/1045159519891254>
- Andreea Soare, N. A. (2020). Cartoons in Romanian humorous news. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 8(2), 49–61.
- Arbuckle, G. A. (2020). Laughing with God: Humour in the scriptures. *Australasian Catholic Record*, 97(3), 275–283.
- Bag, B. (2020). Therapeutic use of humor in psychiatric care. *Current Approaches in Psychiatry / Psikiyatride Guncel Yaklasimlar*, 12(4), 519–533. <https://doi-org.hnu.idm.oclc.org/10.18863/pgy.689943>
- Bergen, D. (2020). The development of sex differences in humor initiation and appreciation. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 33(2), 179–295. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2018-0136>
- Bidgoli, M. (2020). Comedy and humour: an ethical perspective. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 8(2), 82–94.
- Borgella, A. M. (2020). Simon Howard and Keith B. Maddox Cracking wise to break the ice: The potential for racial humor to ease interracial anxiety. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 33(1), 105–135. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2018-0133>
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- Burmeister, J., & Robert Carels, R. (2020). Disparagement humor and anti-obesity attitudes. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 8(2), 68–81.
- Caldwell, T. L., & Wojtach, P. (2020). Men are funnier than women under a condition of low self-efficacy but women are funnier than men under a condition of high self-efficacy. *Sex Roles*, 83(5/6), 338–352. <https://doi-org.hnu.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s11199-019-01109-w>
- Carbajal-Carrera, B., & Sanchez-Castro, O. (2020). The role of secondary incongruities in cartoon appreciation. *European Journal of Humour Research*, 8(2), 25–48
- Casares, D. R., & Gladding, S. T. (2020). Using comedy to explore racial-ethnic identity with clients: A Narrative approach. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 15(1), 69–80. <https://doi-org.hnu.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/15401383.2019.1635937>
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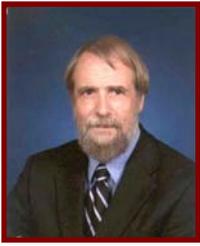
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In Memoriam



Larry Ventis, October 25, 1943–April 11, 2020

On April 11, 2020, ISHS lost our dear colleague, Larry Ventis, to the COVID-19 virus. Larry was a highly regarded faculty member at the College of William and Mary where he was a professor in the Psychology Department from 1969 until his retirement in 2016. He published papers on the psychology of religion, but more notably on the psychology of humor, in particular, on the therapeutic applications of humor. He was a longtime member and contributor to the International Society for Humor Studies. In 2013, he hosted our annual conference in Williamsburg, Virginia; from 2014 to 2015, he served as our President, and he was a consulting editor for the Society's journal, *HUMOR*. But most of all, he will be remembered for his easy-going manner and gracious and generous spirit. The journal, *HUMOR*, will have a special issue in 2021 on Humor in the Age of Coronavirus which will include a special tribute to Larry and his impact on the field of humor studies, but here we provide some remembrances from colleagues who knew him well.

From Don Nilsen, Arizona State University

Larry Ventis probably attended as many ISHS conferences as anyone in the organization. The well-developed empirical studies that he conducted, and the presentations of his findings at the ISHS conferences, and in various publications did a great deal to help establish the field of humor studies as a legitimate academic discipline. Without Larry's presence, ISHS will never be exactly the same.

From Peter Derks, College of William and Mary

As a friend and colleague my memories of Larry are a collage of playful, friendly interactions. An event typical of his creative imagination was winning the joke telling contest at a humor conference with a vaudevillian song and dance routine. Many complained it wasn't "joke telling" but it was too good to ignore! That kind of originality will keep him alive for ever in our minds. He was unique and unforgettable.

From Jessica Milner Davis, University of Sydney

The Professor of Psychology and the Red Sports Car. The weather in Williamsburg in June 2013 was *awful* – just as delegates arrived for the annual conference of the ISHS that year, the heavens opened. Later on, when they deigned to close, the gardens and pathways of that famous, historic foundation, the College of William and Mary, were picture-perfect and the little coffee shop that everyone soon found served excellent espresso—a nice surprise for international visitors who are not really that keen on Starbucks. But on the first day, there we all were, slopping through the wet trying to locate our dorm rooms (charming, once we made it), and there was Mine Host, The Conference Chair, the distinguished but delightfully relaxed professor of psychology, Larry Ventis, to answer all our queries. Was an international adaptor plug needed? No worries, hop into his bright red convertible with Larry and, through the pelting rain, he would transport you to the electrical goods store. Was there an issue with a key? No problem, Larry would sort it out. Timetabling? All under control. Meeting rooms and spare pens, ditto. Nervous students? Larry put us all at our ease. Sightseeing under his guidance in downtown Colonial Williamsburg was a joy with everyone in period costume and excellent dinners to be had.

But the old red convertible with the rain pounding against the hood and said distinguished professor at the wheel, confessing that messing around with old fast cars was one of the loves of his life (along with family and the research lab) – this is my indelible memory of Larry. Surely he was urgently needed back on campus rather than speeding along the rain-slick roads for this dopey international delegate who had left her vital power plug in a New York hotel room. Larry, I will never forget your selfless gift of time and your kindness. You ran the best ISHS conference, and, well, the weather was not your fault. Whenever your spirit chooses to go driving in the better world where you now are, may it always be a perfect day for you and your little red sports car.