

## **Editor's Introduction**

**Lydia Amir<sup>1</sup>**

This issue of the *Israeli Journal of Humor Research: An International Journal* comprises five articles and two book reviews. As usual, the topics are diverse and the authors come from various countries and disciplines: Malta, Lithuania, Nigeria, Israel, and the United States. This time, however, most contributions were written by two researchers.

In “Humor Intervention Approaches for Children, Adolescents and Adults,” Joseph Agius and Sandra Levey present intervention approaches to support individuals who lack the ability to understand humor. Their findings show that individuals with language disorders lack the ability to detect and comprehend humor. They present the essential role of humor in intervention along with factors that play a role in assessment and intervention. The significance of their study lies in the following view of humor’s role: the ability to understand humor is essential for individuals to interact with peers and the use of humor plays a positive role in individuals with disorders. Moreover, humor is universal, one of the most important factors in communication, and an essential component in the quality of life. Finally, children, adolescents, and adults use humor to form relationship and as a way of coping with stress.

Ray N. Chikogu and Lilian D. Efobi argue in “Translation, Religion and Humor: Interrogating the Cognitive Boundaries of the Humorous” that creating humor out of a traditionally orthodox and pious religious activity somewhat debases the element of devotion that should accompany the event. Drawing on Sigmund Freud’s relief/release theory and Peter McGraw and Caleb Warren’s benign violation theory, they study Warri pidgin translations of the solemn Christian “Our Lord’s Prayer” and the biblical Psalm 23 (The Lord Is My Shepherd).

---

<sup>1</sup> **Lydia Amir**, Visiting Professor, Department of Philosophy, Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA; [lydamir@mail.com](mailto:lydamir@mail.com)

First, they explicate the funny bones in the texts, and second, they introduce the results of a set of questionnaires used for scientific validation. On this basis, they argue that the debasement of the subject matter of the items in written texts violates the ethical codes of the Christian faith and reduces the level of humor perceptible to the committed Christian because of his psychological and emotional attachment to the violated norm. Their study validates the benign violation theory of humor and enables them to conclude, first, that the relief theory, as already expressed by humor scholars, is circumscribed and not universally applicable, and second, that language is not significant in the practice of Christianity.

In “Irony, Sarcasm and Parody in the American Sitcom ‘Modern Family’,” Julija Korostenskiene and Aurelija Lieponyte explore verbal manifestations of irony, sarcasm, and parody in the American TV situational comedy series (sitcoms) *Modern Family*, from 2009 to the present. The assumption is that character vocalisations in *Modern Family* reflect the archetypal family model and support stereotypical portrayals of family roles. The notion of the stereotype as manifest in the series is taken as a supplementary parameter to account for the ironic, sarcastic, and parodic topics. Based on Victor Raskin’s Semantic Script-based Theory of Humour (1985), the study links the negative mode of humor to verbal irony, and proposes the impoliteness effect observed in ironic vocalisations as the main trigger of funniness and the result of the implied criticism. The findings generally corroborate the standard theory on irony, sarcasm, and parody. That is, irony is manifest primarily as attacks on human life universals and generally held beliefs, sarcasm is usually targeted at an identifiable human being, while parodies are identified as verbal imitations of some original entity (person, work of art, situation, etc.).

In “Women’s Image as Reflected in Verses from Jewish Sources Cited by Yemenite Israeli Immigrants,” Bat-Zion Yemini presents examples of passages from the Jewish sources of immigrants from Yemen to the Land of Israel, which they were reciting in their homeland and still quote in Israel for rhetorical purposes. Taken out of Moshe Gavra’s book “With My Staff” (2012), these interpolations served two main purposes: (a) to take into account appropriate circumstances, to convey the original message of the quoted passage; (b) to express their disappointment at the decline in their status through irony. The article focuses on quotations whose original meaning turns from the sublime to the ironic, mainly for the purpose of criticizing the status of women in Israeli society. Using the verses, the Yemenite man who was used to

being the sole authority at home expresses his great disappointment at the decline in his status due to the feminist revolution and thereby criticizes the woman's behavior.

The articles section concludes with a humoristic tone used to convey more effectively a significant problem. In "The Feministecles: A Dialogue on Humor and Sexism," Shane J. George and C. L. Richardson address the central ethical question, "Can your sense of humor be wrong?" The originality of their approach lies in the dialogical form they use and the comic effect it produces. Repeating Plato's use of dialogue to provide insight, they explore the feminist origins of the question mentioned above, which center on sexist humor. They suggest that returning to the feminist context and the tools of feminist inquiry provides a more effective and informative framework for evaluating the ethics of humor. In particular, they focus on the tools of Standpoint Theory and Relational Autonomy from contemporary feminism, and their interactions with Philosophy of Mind. The namesake of their dialogue argues that our focus on the individual's sense of humor mistakes the problem. The issue becomes one with a few bad actors rather than an issue with our social contexts and the norms in play within that context. Thus, they suggest that attempts to resolve the problems of sexist humor will have to broaden their contextual focus.

Finally, we close this issue with two book reviews, as usual written by Arthur Asa Berger. The first review is of Alleen Pace Nilsen and Don L. F. Nilsen's new book, *The Language of Humor: An Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 2019. The second is of my very own, *Humor and the Good Life in Modern Philosophy: Shaftesbury, Hamann, Kierkegaard*. State University of New York Press, 2014; paperback 2015.

Since the publication of the latter book, a few events have changed the scene of humor research. I seize the opportunity to urge you to look next year for the new journal published by De Gruyter, *The Philosophy of Humor Yearbook*, and the year after that for the new book series, *De Gruyter Series in Philosophy of Humor*, and already now for the International Association for the Philosophy of Humor (IAPH). As the founder and editor of the new journal and the new book series, I welcome your contributions to these novel publishing opportunities as well as to the *Israeli Journal of Humor Research*. And, as the founder and president of the new association, I invite you to join (membership is free), if you are interested in the new field it represents, the philosophy of humor.

I hope that you will enjoy the current issue of *the Israeli Journal of Humor Research: An International Journal*.

Lydia Amir

Editor of *the Israeli Journal of Humor Research:*

*An International Journal*

Founding-President of the International Association for the  
Philosophy of Humor (IAPH)

Founding-Editor of the journal *Philosophy of Humor*  
*Yearbook* (2020)

Founding-Editor of *De Gruyter Series in Philosophy of*  
*Humor* (2021)