

Editor's Introduction

Lydia Amir*

This issue brings again the best international research in humor theory, its history and practice, through five article and one book review.

It begins with an ambitious thesis advanced by an Israeli Professor of Mathematics. In “Meanings of Actions and Their Detachment,” Ron Aharoni endeavors to unravel the common mechanism to all manifestations of humor – detaching actions from their meaning. He chooses to concentrate on a few types of humor, yet argues that as this mechanism explains distant types of humor (such as derision, mechanicality, stereotypes, coincidences, self-reference and flattened metaphors), it may be pertinent to other forms of humor as well.

Dafina Ivanova Genova follows with “Humor Research in Bulgaria: Past, Present and Future.” Her article offers a critical analysis of humor research in Bulgaria in the fields of psychology, aesthetics, folklore studies, linguistics, journalism and media communication. She shows that there is no unified terminology in humor research in Bulgaria. She justifies this lacuna by the complexity of the phenomenon of humor: the way we define it depends on the perspective we take. Her analysis includes the work of such known figures as Csikzentmihalyi and Passy as well as her own work. She argues that the confusion that follows is the lot of researchers of humor in other countries as well, although to a lesser degree.

In “An Exploration of the Schema and Function of Humor,” Rozel S. Balmores-Paulino qualitatively examines the humor schema and humor functions of selected Filipino residents in Baguio City, Philippines. Based on Focus Group Discussions with Filipino youth, adults and elderly participants, she fleshes out this schema through the cognition of humor and the affective and behavioral dimensions that are linked with it, and presents a very rich analysis of the functions of humor in the Philippines.

In “Interpersonal Act at Workplace through Discreet Use of Humor,” Mitashree Tripathy studies the positive and negative sides of humor in order to explore the relation of humor and interpersonal relationships at workplace. He emphasizes the key components that make interpersonal relations successful. He further identifies the necessity of discreet and controlled use

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of humor in developing interpersonal act in order to produce optimal results and diminish dangers at workplace. The result is an enlightening study of the complex issue of humor at the workplace.

Finally, in “Humor in Medieval Invective: The Correspondence of Todros Abulafia and Don David Ben Shoshan” Shira Shevarsman Maziel focuses on the poetry of the 13th century Spanish-Jewish poet, Todros Abulafia. She examines the humorous aspects of invective in the correspondence between Abulafia and David Ben Shoshan, a powerful Jewish official, who lived in Christian Spain at the same time. She argues that the dichotomy of comedy and invective reflects the instability of Abulafia’s life and the realities of his complex relationships with the dignitaries of his day. The humor shrouds the venom, reduces it by a degree, and permits him to preserve his relationship with his esteemed interlocutor while at the same time resisting or even defying him.

This issue’s book review is for readers of French. Lydia Amir writes about the Paris-based publisher and author Adam Biro’s *Dictionnaire amoureux de l’Humour juif* (Paris: Plon, 2017), or *Amorous Dictionary of Jewish Humor*.

Wishing a Merry Christmas or Hanukkah, and a Happy New Year,

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The poetry of Todros Abulafia, who flourished in Christian Spain during the thirteenth century, is conspicuous for the whimsy that typifies it. This essay seeks to examine the humorous aspects of invective in the correspondence between Abulafia and David Ben Shoshan, a powerful Jewish official. Though the invective is vicious, it includes gentle touches of humor that lend it a lighthearted air and mitigate its inherent offensiveness.¹

¹ This article has been published in Hebrew in *Humor Mekuvvan 10* (2018), pp. 55–67.