

Editorial

Lydia Amir¹

This issue of *the Israeli Journal of Humor Research* holds four articles, one book review and two in memoriam pieces: Pope Francis and philosopher Daniel Dennett left us this year.

The first article by Ronald A. Berk, Professor Emeritus from The Johns Hopkins University, testifies to the author's specialization in Biostatistics and Measurement. Its scope and lengthy references demanded that we publish it in two parts, the first here, the second in 2026.

“Spontaneous Laughter, Simulated Laughter, and Laughter Therapies/Yoga: A Scoping Review” addresses more than 400 studies on laughter over the past 50 years. It builds on the 28 previous reviews, clarifying laughter terminology, and concentrating on neurological laughter research and the differences between spontaneous (real) and simulated (fake) laughter, and laughter therapies/laughter yoga. It examines the quality and quantity of laughter research and the harmful effects of spontaneous laughter. Berk reaches the conclusion that spontaneous, not simulated, laughter or laughter therapy produces the strongest neurological and physiological outcomes. Given the paucity of studies on simulated laughter, the lack of comparability among different therapies and of standard therapeutic techniques, prescriptions, or protocols, the inferences about their effectiveness for clinical and research applications is nearly impossible. Thus, Berk gives us specific recommendations which address the weaknesses of previous studies with the aim of improving future research quality.

The second article addresses joking about liberal democracy in Nigeria. Godwin Aondofa Ikyer from the Department of Literature, Linguistics, Foreign Languages, and Film Studies at

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MoiUniversity Eldoret in Kenya, and Aondoaver Emmanuel Shom from the Department of Political Science, Federal University Wukari in Nigeria study the verbal and digital media jokes, which testify to society disenchantment and agitations against liberal democracy practice in Africa. Their methodology in “Joking About Liberal Democracy: A Critical Analysis of Verbal and Digital Media Jokes in Nigeria,” involves the use of qualitative secondary data used in ethnographic, verbal and digital media communications. They then subject the data to critical inquiry to interpret the layers and miasmas of meanings relevant to the thematic thrust of the paper. They reach the conclusion that the civil society’s verbal and media confrontation with the state, in a joke turn phenomenon, itself constitutes a form of resistance and agitation for a better Nigeria.

The third article is a phenomenological study of the function of satire. Bindu Chintada from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Delhi, India, argues that satire functions phenomenologically by disrupting habitual perceptions and inviting a fresh, critical perspective. By examining satire through the lens of traditional, semantic, rhetorical, and literary theories in “Phenomenological Function of Satire,” and integrating phenomenological principles from Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Cassirer's philosophy of culture and symbolic forms, the unique capacity of satire to expose underlying truths and challenge societal norms is revealed. Satire discloses the hidden structures of power and ideology, prompting a re-evaluation of social and cultural norms. Through its use of irony, exaggeration, and ridicule, it exposes the absurd and the unjust, and fosters a deeper understanding of human experience. Finally, satire can be considered a form of philosophical inquiry: By employing a phenomenological approach, satire offers a novel way of thinking about the world, encouraging critical reflection and challenging conventional wisdom.

In the last article, “Pun Strategies and Hidden Meaning in Selected Posts of Four-eyed Edo Boy on X,” Tayo Adebayo from the Department of Linguistics and African Languages at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria examines puns, an understudied topic in Nigeria. By applying the Cooperative Principle and the purview of conversational maxims discussed by H. P Grice (1975), the author investigates pun strategies and hidden meaning in the posts of X Influencer Four-eyed Edo Boy. Twenty-eight posts were selected from the influencer's X page for analysis. The analysis disclosed that Four-eyed Edo Boy utilizes homophonic puns and the combination of homophonic puns and biblical allusion, idiomatic expression, and slang in his punning posts to create a comic effect on his readers and increase his popularity and followers on the social media platform. And, the pun strategies employed by the writer were constructed through the deliberate flouting of the maxims of manner and quality.

Richard Prust, Philosophy Professor Emeritus of St. Andrews University in North Carolina, reviews Giorgio Baruchello’s *Thinking and Laughing* (Northwest Passage Books, 2025), whose interest lies in the rare quality of being both philosophical and funny.

The “In Memoriam: Pope Francis – ‘In the Image of a God Who Smiles’,” penned by Peter Chave, the English Minister in the United Reformed Church, testifies to Pope Francis’s sense of humor. Humor is a topic of intense interest, and a spiritual discipline, as described in the Pope’s book, *Hope: A Biography* (2025), published three months before his death.

Finally, In “In Memoriam: Daniel C. Dennett – How Humor Enlightens the Workings of the Mind,” Lydia Amir from the Department of Philosophy at Tufts University, pays homage to her esteemed colleague, Daniel Dennett. Few may know that he proposed a new theory of humor in his book, penned with former student and one more co-author, *Inside Jokes: Using Humor to Reserve Engineer the Mind* (Hurley, Dennett, and Adams, 2011). Even fewer knew that Dennett

was, despite his busy life and his many accomplishments, also a strong supporter of the new field of philosophy of humor.

I hope that you will enjoy the variety of the topics and the multi-disciplinary approaches of this international group of contributors to the 2025 issue of *the Israeli Journal of Humor Research: An International Journal*.

Lydia Amir

Editor of the IJHR