

## Editorial

Lydia Amir<sup>1</sup>

*The Israeli Journal of Humor Studies: An International Journal* will publish from this year on one issue per year instead of two. This 2023 issue holds four articles and two book reviews.

In “Taking Offense Seriously: Using (Visual) Humor to Demarcate Social and Symbolic Boundaries,” Adam Valen Levinson uses the comic to access the offensive. His study reveals distinct social patterns in offendability. He proposes to see offense as a supremely meaningful metric in defining groups in terms of what they believe most deeply. Building on major sociological work that cites the increasing solitariness of modern life, his analysis highlights the significance of *micro* (individual) level factors (e.g., age, gender, psychological characteristics) and *macro* (social) factors (e.g., ethnicity, nationality) in predicting sensitivity to offense, in comparison to the seeming irrelevance of the *meso* (interactional). Of particular note is that sexual preferences were the greatest predictor of sensitivity to offense, with women attracted to women reporting the highest sensitivity. Across the board, those who were uncomfortable before disclosing particular information (e.g., sexual, political preferences) were disproportionately from the groups who were more sensitive to offense (e.g., “queer”, right-leaning). Thus, the conclusion of this study is that identity discomfort manifests as symbolic discomfort.

Studies of comedy in Nigeria have been published in this journal before; and this issue features three researchers from Nigeria. What are the reasons that account for the significance of humor for Nigerians? In “Humor in Cyberspace: Laughter as a Coping Mechanism in Nigeria,” Folajimi Oyebola suggests that as part of the willingness to be happy, online comedy is a coping mechanism in the midst of stress which helps to mitigate the affective impact of negative events in Nigeria. His hypothesis is supported by a study of 116 respondents who participated in an online questionnaire requesting their opinion about online comedy in Nigeria, completed the Coping with Humor Scale, and answered questions measuring depression and social anxiety.

In “Phonetic and Multimodal Strategies in Humorous Malapropisms,” Ronke Eunice Okhuosi addresses an under-investigated type of wordplay in the linguistic investigation of humor, malapropisms. He sets out to explore the linguistic techniques used in malapropisms on one

---

<sup>1</sup> Philosophy Department, Tufts University, USA; lydamir@mail.com

Instagram influencer's account, using Chomsky and Halle's Distinctive Features Theory, Kress and van Leeuwen's Multimodality theory, and McGraw and Warren's Benign Violation Theory to account for them. Using a descriptive design for research, he reached the conclusion that words are usually manipulated for malapropism in at least one of the following ways: stress pattern, word class, syllabic structure and semantics. This, he argues, is contrary to what obtains in literature,

Finally, in "Dialectical Stance of 'We' and 'You' Ideologies in Humorous Discourses by African Comedians," Ibukun Titilayo Osuolale-Ajayi studies the jokes of African comedians residing in the United States of America, such as Noah Trevor, Michael Blackson, and Godfery. As generally these comedians project ideologies by the juxtaposition of realities in the western world with the "perceived" realities in Africa, he limits his research to ideological representations about their African ties in their realities and experiences where they are domiciled. He uses Triangulation method, Matouschek, Wodak & Januschek's schema, and an eclectic submission on subversive dialectics for the analysis of the data. He aims to find in their language use, especially from discourse-historical perspective, forms of cultural and political dialectics that appear as part of the ideologies of the two contexts which are of relevance to these comedians.

Two book reviews conclude this issue. First, Henrieta Serban gives us an account of *Humour and Cruelty* (Berlin: de Gruyter 2022), the first volume of philosopher Giorgio Baruchello and psychologist Ársæll Már Arnarsson's four volumes study, which inaugurates the de Gruyter Series in Philosophy of Humor, edited by Lydia Amir. Last but not least, John Parkin reviews Stephen Guy-Bray's *Line Endings in Renaissance Poetry* (London and New York: Anthem Press, 2022).

I hope that you will enjoy this yearly issue of the journal.

Lydia Amir

Tel-Aviv, Israel