

Editor's Introduction

Prof. Lydia Amir*

This issue contains four articles, which focus on various aspects of the philosophy of humor, and one shorter commentary, which calls for a funnier linguistic research on humor.

The first article is based on a paper read at the philosophy panel at the 27th Annual Conference of the International Society of Humor Studies (ISHS), Utrecht, The Netherlands, 2015. The rest of the articles have been chosen for peer-review from papers read at the 1st International Conference of the International Association for the Philosophy of Humor (IAPH), Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, 2016.

The recently-founded association invites philosophers from various traditions to share study of humour, laughter and the comic, and their roles (e.g., epistemological, ethical, aesthetic) within the history and practice of philosophy. Following inaugural lectures at the American Philosophical Association (APA) Western division Conference in Vancouver, Canada April 1-5, 2015 (some of which can be read in a special issue dedicated to the philosophy of humor—vol. 4/2, December 2015), the first international conference of this new association was held in Dublin, in conjunction with the 28th Annual Conference of the ISHS. I am grateful to the organizer of the latter conference, Eric Weitz, for his help and generosity, and for understanding the aim I had in mind in initiating this encounter: it was to bring philosophers closer to humor as well as to interest humor studies scholars in the new and burgeoning field of the philosophy of humor.

Indeed, since Honorary President of the new International Association, John Morreall, has put humor on philosophers' agenda with his numerous break grounding publications on the subject, prominent philosophers have published enough on the subject to make it significant for philosophy and other disciplines as well. As students began working on aspects of the philosophy of humor in their Master and Doctoral dissertations, an International Association had to be created for their sake as well as for their elders. To take an example, I felt rather isolated among my fellow-philosophers, in spite of the commendable support of the ISHS, when I began writing the three monographs on the role of humor and laughter in philosophers' views of the good life, which have occupied me those past years. For all these reasons, and also because despite of my best efforts,

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philosophers have seldom attended the ISHS conferences, I have founded in 2014 the International Association for the Philosophy of Humor.

Additional information about the association's forthcoming journal, membership, and upcoming events can be found in www.philosophyofhumor.org or by writing directly to me at lydamir@mail.com. Most importantly, I cordially invite you to submit abstracts before April 1st, if you wish to participate in IAPH's next international conference. It will be held again in conjunction with the 29th Conference of the ISHS conference in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, on July 10, 2017, within the time-limit of the latter conference, with the hope that participants of both conferences may thus mingle more easily.

After introducing the exciting and burgeoning field the International Association for the Philosophy of Humor attempts to represent, let me present the articles on the philosophy of humor published in the current issue.

First, "Aristotle's Insistence on Humor Being Proper: A Syllogistic Corollary in His Ethics of Aretaic Happiness," has been written by Dr. Wei He Xu from the Department of Chinese at Middlebury College in Vermont, USA. Wei He Xu argues that Aristotle's insistence on proper humor results from a series of embedded syllogisms in his ethics of aretaic or virtuous happiness. In rebuilding brick by brick Aristotle's syllogistic edifice for proper humor, Wei He Xu attempts to establish the veracity of these syllogisms by reconstructing their major and minor premises; he also probes the philosophical underpinnings of their key constructs, such as moral excellence and moral happiness, and unpacks these by concisely annotating their constituent concepts. The result is an improvement of our understanding of the thoughts that underpin these Aristotelian constructs and of how they come together to form the major and minor premises of the syllogisms.

For the scholars who could not attend the philosophy of humor conference in Dublin last year, three articles have been selected and peer-reviewed. These include, "Kinds of Pleasure and Types of Laughter in the Analysis of Laughter-Provocation," which was written by Dr. Mary-Ann Cassar from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Malta. Mary-Ann Cassar argues that most theorists of laughter-provocation would agree that there is an essential link between laughter and pleasure. Yet she asks: taking into account the various genres of laughter-provocation, should we consider comic amusement as the only kind of pleasure involved in all the specimens, or are there other kinds? And, is there any relation between different types of laughter and different kinds of

pleasure? Starting with Plato and Aristotle's account of pleasure and taking "pleasure" as the umbrella term for the cluster of words associated with it (such as amusement, delight, gladness, joy and hilarity), Mary-Ann Cassar uses lexical patterning as a heuristic device to produce a taxonomy of the various pleasure-related words. She indicates how the various emotions signified by the different words may be related to characterizable nuances in the various modes of laughter. The structure presented in her article, which relates kinds of pleasures to types of laughter, gets us closer to understanding the phenomenon of human laughter and its provocation.

In "On Resemblance," Dr. Ayelet Lilti from the Institut Universitaire Elie Wiesel, Paris, France, investigates the role resemblance plays in the comic and in thought. Building on Henri Bergson's assertion that *Le Rire, Essai sur la signification du comique* (1900), was initially meant to be a study of association of images, as well as on various philosophic and literary texts which relate resemblance to the comical, she analyses the former notion, and advances the intriguing assertion that the relation between resemblance and the comical is a constitutive element of our cognition. Resemblance, she argues, is inherent to thinking insofar as the latter manifests the act of reflection. As representation is always the object of thinking, resemblance can be considered the mind's ability to discover similitude between representations, that is, to assemble images.

The fourth article is a short version of the second chapter of the author's Master thesis, *Nietzsche and Laughter*, presented at Sao Paulo University, Brazil, in 2016. In "On Nietzsche's Gay Science," Thiago Ribeiro de Magalhães Leite investigates a significant aspect of Nietzsche's gay science. According to Thiago Ribeiro, *Gaya Scienza* embodies the logic of will to power, the passage from a low state of forces into a stronger one, and therefore, is a symbol for strengthening. A way of correcting the errors that constitute our knowledge and science, and structure modern thought (such as the notions of identity and the "thing in itself," the existence of systems, God, and the unity of things, among others), the gay science is a joyful effort that intensifies the feeling of power. The author takes issue with various interpretations of gay science, and argues that Nietzsche considers it a performative knowledge that rewards itself in its advances and results, therefore improving its intellectual strength through joy.

Finally, in the short article or commentary piece, "Cunnilingus Take a Joke? Or How Introspective Are We about Linguistics?," the linguist and environmentalist Dr. Joshua Nash from the University of New England, Australia, associates the seriousness of scientific enquiry with the ability and possible inability of linguistic researchers to be

introspective of their theoretical assumptions. Joshua Nash advances an argument concerning epistemology and research awareness. He suggests that being aware of one's assumptions of what language is and how it operates can be helpful to creating a more introspective, and possibly funnier, linguistics. A spatialization of humor, he maintains, is important for understanding elements of the linguistics of humor and is part of researchers' ability to laugh at the role and importance of their work. Joshua Nash uses this short commentary piece to express his hope that less serious linguistic research will lead to a more developed understanding of the role of mindfulness in appreciating scientific endeavours.

I hope you will enjoy reading this issue. I seize the opportunity to invite submissions from all disciplines, as long as they illuminate humor, laughter or the comical.

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