Humor as a Rhetorical Device in the Speeches of Gamal Abdel Nasser

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Abstract: This article shows how Egypt's former President Gamal Abdel Nasser (from 1954 until his death in 1970) relied on humor as a rhetorical device in the metaphorical discourse in his speeches. It focuses especially on how he used humor in this discourse to attack his fiercest political opponents, the Muslim Brotherhood. Using humor, Nasser emphasized his socialist worldview built on values of equality, a worldview cognitively distant from that of the Muslim Brotherhood. Nasser turned to humorous metaphors to emotionally arouse and manipulate his audience, thereby increasing his popularity and strengthening his support.

This study uses the theoretical framework of conceptual metaphor developed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003) to investigate and explore the target and source domains that Nasser drew on to conceptualize various aspects of the Muslim Brotherhood: with humorous metaphors, Nasser was able to ignite hatred against the Muslim Brotherhood, showing that their stated values and worldview served as a cover for their true intentions, namely to seize power, control Egyptian citizens with an iron fist, and suppress their rights, thus contradicting the religious values they claimed to support.

Keywords: Gamal Abdel Nasser, humor, conceptual metaphor, critical discourse analysis

Introduction

This study examines how the late Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser used humor as a rhetorical device in his metaphorical discourse. I endeavor to examine how Nasser relied on humor to convey his political messages, advance his ideological positions, and sharply criticize his political opponents. A central premise of this study is that Nasser used humor in his metaphorical discourse to manipulate his audience's emotions and opinions, thereby creating sympathy for his political positions. That is, by using humor, Nasser strove to overcome cognitive barriers, enabling his messages to penetrate his listeners' thinking.

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The premise of this study is that Nasser's use of humor in his metaphorical discourse directed against the Muslim Brotherhood was not simply for amusement. His use of humor was aggressive, intended to attack his political opponents. It is inconceivable that humor would be employed in political speeches purely for amusement.

Inspired by Lakoff and Johnson's (1981) theory of conceptual metaphor, the purpose of this study is to examine how Nasser employed humor as a rhetorical device in his metaphorical discourse in order to conceptualize the Muslim Brotherhood and expose the contradictions and discrepancies between their actions and their words.

1. The Political Landscape in Egypt during Nasser's Presidency, and His Relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood

Nasser served as president of Egypt from 1954 until his death in 1970. He was a member of the Free Officers Movement, which seized power in a coup d'etat on July 23, 1952. The overthrow of Egypt's monarchy by the Free Officers would herald a new era in Egypt's history, which became known as the Nasserite period after Nasser, who soon became the authoritative leader of the "new Egypt." This period lasted until Nasser's death on September 28, 1970. Following its successful coup d'etat, the Free Officers Movement worked cautiously but thoroughly to erode the political capabilities of the former regime. The Officers attacked the former regime's institutions, echelons and individuals. The Free Officers had no difficulty in eliminating the old, overwhelmed, and exhausted regime. The first step was directed against its the main symbol and power center—King Farouk. On July 26, 1953, just three days after the coup, Farouk boarded his royal yacht and was permanently exiled from Egypt (Erlich 2003: 107, 115–116).

After Nasser moved to outlaw all other political parties in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood—which was never formally declared a party—remained intact. The Brotherhood

had already become the largest and most powerful framework for public life in Egypt. Its leaders considered themselves integral to the overthrow and abolition of the monarchy and had hoped to play a prominent role in shaping the revolution. In November 1952, the Brotherhood was boosted by the release of most of its members who had been imprisoned under King Farouk. However, the Free Officers were not interested in sharing power, and under Nasser's leadership, they worked to constrain the political Islamic movement. A major step in this direction was the move in January 1953 to dissolve the student unions in Egypt's universities, most of which had been controlled by representatives from the Muslim Brotherhood. To oppose the students, young people from the pro-Nasser "Freedom Organization" showed up on campuses (Erlich 2003: 120). Under Nasser's leadership, many conflicts broke out between his supporters and those of the Muslim Brotherhood and their representatives on the student unions. As a result, the security forces arrested most of the Muslim Brotherhood's leaders and confiscated their property. Muslim Brotherhood cells went underground to avoid being pursued by the army and the security services. On October 26, 1954, Muslim Brotherhood member Mahmoud Abdel-Latif attempted to assassinate Nasser in Alexandria. Although the gunman was only a few feet away from Nasser, all his shots failed to hit their intended target. In January 1954, the Muslim Brotherhood was outlawed (Erlich 2003: 120).

2. Code-switching in the Speeches of Gamal Abdel Nasser

In order to influence the public and establish new social reforms, Nasser relied on the linguistic fluidity of Arabic to lead him to victory. He consciously and persistently utilized code-switching in political contexts, from verbal strategies in political discourse to non-conventional means of humor (Konik 2019: 1)

Nasser applied code-switching during his political speeches as a means to construct his power and in the same time, as a way to maintain it. For the first time in the Arab world, there

was a distinctive focus on a vernacular form of Arabic combined with standard Arabic. While utilizing the fluidity of Arabic, Nasser led the pan-Arab movement that was often in the center of his political speeches. Through Nasser's countless reforms, Egyptian Spoken Arabic (ESA) not only became the most recognized dialect across the Arab states, but it also highlighted the importance of the vernacular form in the political arena. Nasser's political speeches not only brought back the importance of vernacular as a political tool, but it gave rise to the study of code switching as a powerful political tool across the Middle East (Konik 2019:1–2).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Humor and Politics

The use of humor in politics has been an age-old tradition. It has sustained itself as a persuasive discourse from the Greco-Roman age. During the ancient times the tradition of court jesters appointed by the kings kept alive the performance of political humor. The jokes of Tenali Raman, in the court of King Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagara Empire, and Birbal, who served King Akbar of the Mughal Empire, depict how political humor has scrutinized the health of the democratic system by reprimanding the kings through witty jokes and humorous events (Balakrishnan and Vishaka 2023: 36).

Humor is a familiar and integral part of human life. It is possible to say with a high degree of certainty that humor always has been and remains a prominent feature of humanity. There is no unequivocal definition of humor, but it can be seen to encompass all modes of human communication that make listeners or viewers smile or laugh. Humor allows politicians to show some personality and to appear more like real people and show some humanity. Studies have shown that audiences react more favorably to speakers who use humor than those who do not (Harris 2009: 7). Humor comes in various forms: irony, satire, comedy, even sarcasm and

ridicule (Rotenberg 2018: 82). Three primary theories on the essence and origin of humor in the human psyche today are the release and relief theory, incongruity theory, and superiority theory. Each of these theories addresses theoretical aspects of humor and its mechanisms of action (Rotenberg 2018: 82; Sover 2009).

There is a link between humor and politics (Kayam and Sover 2013: 43), and although the connection between these two phenomena may not be obvious, each contains aspects of the other. Politics is the art of the possible. To survive in the world of politics, a politician must be mentally flexible. Humor involves the ability to view a particular human condition from an unconventional perspective, to detach it from the accepted normative value system, and to treat it in an unusual and amusing way; accomplishing this requires a considerable degree of mental flexibility. It is possible to identify several points of intersection between the arenas of politics and humor:

1. Both are based on creativity and mental flexibility.
2. Both express a position. Politics is, among other things, an expression of a position. Similarly, all examples of humor are expressions of the position of the person making the joke regarding the object of the joke.
3. Both use rhetoric. Both politicians and comedians find creative solutions to the absurdities of daily life and events.

3.2 The Incongruity Theory

Different theories approach humor from different perspectives. This study focuses on the theory that relates to humor as a state of inconsistency, since the humor in Nasser's metaphorical discourse is intended to show that the socialists were actually closer to the spirit of Islam, while the true intentions of the Muslim Brotherhood contradicted the Qur'an, because they wanted Egypt to revert to the ignorance of medieval times, and to deny Egyptian citizens freedom of expression and other basic rights. According to this theory, humor is a response to

the perplexity, discomfort, and incongruity that result from a cognitive conflict between two perspectives on reality, or between expectations and reality (Rotenberg 2018: 83).

3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach that is used in discourse analysis. Focused on how social and political power is created and maintained through language, it seeks to expose discursive biases and manipulations that serve political interests and advance controversial ideological positions. It also highlights the methods or stratagems through which the discourse produces or maintains an unequal balance of power in a society (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 361). CDA aims to expose the linguistic, cultural, and historical roots that support the practices—the modes of action—that preserve the balance of power.[2]

While analyzing texts and "linguistic events" requires some analytical method, it is a principle of CDA that it is neither based on, nor prefers, a single theory or a uniform analytical method. Instead, CDA offers a kind of toolbox for the researcher, a list of linguistic and textual characteristics that can be examined when one wishes to analyze a text critically (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 366; Wodak 2001b: 64).[3]

3.4 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

3.4.1 Conceptual Metaphor in Political Discourse

The phenomenon known as "metaphor" or "figurative language," whereby people speak or think of one object or entity in terms of another, has long preoccupied humans. Since the

[2] Hart 2010: 13–4; Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 361; Meyer 2001: 15; Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 32; Scott 2023: 1–2; van Dijk 2001: 352; Wodak 2001a: 10.
[3] See, for example, Koller (2012: 19–38), who presents a working model for analyzing collective identity in discourse, which integrates a socio-cognitive approach as a major strand in CDA.

beginning of the twentieth century, literary scholars have focused on creative figurative language expressed in literature and poetry. In the last three decades—largely influenced by the theory of conceptual metaphor (Lakoff 1991; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; 1999)—many scholars have focused on the study of metaphor in human cognition (Kupferberg 2016). Conceptual metaphor theory defines metaphors as structures stored in the human brain that influence the formation of figurative language in everyday discourse, literature, and poetry. According to this theory, the metaphors that appear in various types of discourse are evidence of cognitive structures within the human mind.

According to cognitive linguistics, metaphor is an essential core of human thought and creativity. Since the language of politics is characterized by metaphorical themes, metaphors are a powerful tool for uncovering the essence of political thought. Metaphorical expressions nourish our worldview and shape our thinking and, in turn, our actual behavior (Koller 2012: 25; Lakoff and Johnson 1980: Mio 1997: 117–126).

In parallel to the interest in conceptual metaphor that has arisen since the 1990s, numerous scholars have examined the role of various figurative language constructs applying discourse analysis of various texts, including natural interactive discourse and media discourse. These studies have made it possible to explore hidden aspects of language for the first time (Kupferberg and Green 2005; 2008; Weizman 2008).

This study follows Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in taking a conceptual approach to the study of metaphor. Their work sought to reveal the metaphorical nature of human thought through examining common metaphors, the use of which is habitual and agreed upon. Their findings demonstrate that the use of metaphorical language reflects how humans perceive reality. Metaphors frame our world, and without them we are unable to think (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 368).

According to conceptual metaphor theory, metaphors are cognitive structures (that is, structures stored in the human brain) that allow humans to understand conceptual domains of greater complexity than those found in everyday experience, by considering them in terms of other, simpler, conceptual domains. The encounter between the two conceptual domains is a cognitive process in which humans understand the initial domain—the target domain—in terms of the second, or source domain. For example, the metaphor "life is a journey" is a conceptual metaphor that has been studied in many languages. The target domain is "life" and the source domain used to conceptualize it is that of "a journey" (Kupferberg 2016: 20–21). While the target domain is accessed via the source domain, the reverse is not true. For example, when we say "life is a container" we conceptualize the concept of "life" through the concept of the container, but we do not conceptualize the concept of the container through the concept of life. In cognitive semantics, the conceptualization of the target domain through the source domain is known as mapping and refers to the mapping of the target domain through the source domain. The term mapping implies that there is no single metaphorical connection between the two domains, but rather a system of connections or interrelationships between them (Livnat 2014, Part B: 121).[4]

Lakoff (1991) also argues that metaphors not only reflect our view of reality but also influence it. In January 1991, in the wake of the First Gulf War, he analyzed the U.S. administration's political discourse and showed how the Bush Administration used metaphors to justify going to war. In so doing, he demonstrated how metaphor analysis can be critical in exposing discourse manipulations and normally hidden ideologies (Kopytowska and Baider 2017; Kopytowska 2010; Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 368–69).

Conceptual metaphor theory emphasizes that metaphors are an encounter between the two domains, and explores the transition from the abstract to the tangible domain. It is not

[4] See also: Shakkour and Mar'i 2020: 299–331; Shakkour 2024: 94–113.

concerned with a single borrowing of a particular word from domain to domain, but rather with a significant interrelationship between the two domains that manifests itself through a series of metaphorical expressions. Such an interrelationship is not rooted in a coincidental similarity between two objects from different domains but in the conceptualization of one domain through the other (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 120).

In a study of metaphor in Israeli political discourse, Dalia Gavriely-Nuri (2009: 169–193; 2011: 93) shows how metaphor is used to help to portray war as a normal part of life. Such war-normalizing metaphors aim to naturalize and legitimize the use of military power by creating a systematic analogy between war and objects that are far from the battlefield.[5] For example, the metaphorical phrase "Golda's Kitchen" was the popular nickname for the most intimate circle of Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir's advisers. This metaphor conceals a secretive and undemocratic decision-making process, even in security matters and other central issues. In essence, the "kitchen" metaphor hides what was often, in fact, a war room where Israel's most urgent security matters were decided.

If we combine this with the perspective of critical discourse analysis, we can see that the use of this particular metaphor helps to depict war as a normal, mundane, and unsurprising state, as expected and reasonable as medicine or business. In this way, the metaphor masks the true, terrible, and violent nature of war. Such patterns of discourse, repeated time and again (by politicians, military leaders, academics, journalists, and internet commentators), help the public become accustomed to this abnormal situation. Similarly, these metaphors help leaders convince the public of the rationality and necessity of war. (Livnat 2014, vol. 2: 369)

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair defended his decision to send British soldiers to the Second Gulf War in 2003 by using metaphors of progress—the successful attainment of goals (in the future)—as opposed to metaphors of regression, which reflect the failure to reach

[5] For more, see: Lakoff 1991: 25–32.

goals (in the past). These metaphors mirror the choices faced by the U.K.'s Labour Party and its leader, Blair, and thus establish the expected party policy: always go forward. Blair was willing to accept nothing but progress, and presented himself as a strong and reliable leader who would not be swayed by difficulty or criticism. The metaphoric description of a particular problem or situation reflects the speaker's perceptions of it and establishes his or her preferred solution.

In this context, the rhetorical power of metaphors of movement, widely encountered in political discourse, is worth mentioning. One example is the metaphor (Charteris-Black 2005: 54–152; Musolff 2004: 30) that depicts the European common currency (the euro) as a train that must progress at the same speed and in the same direction with all its cars in order to avoid derailment.[6] This metaphor reflects a specific perspective that urges European governments to adopt a uniform monetary policy and act in complete economic harmony in order to ensure the success of the European Monetary Union). Musolff presents examples of manipulative rhetorical baggage evoked by metaphors. The metaphors that he discusses express hostility toward the language of immigrants in Britain, such as the description of roads in British cities as streets in Bombay or Karachi (Musolff 2019: 257–66) and the fictitious Coronation Street[7] as having been relocated from Britain to Pakistan.

In brief, this paper uses conceptual metaphor theory to explore how Nasser employed humor as a device in his metaphorical discourse in order to highlight the discrepancy between the Muslim Brotherhood's statements and their true intentions.

[6] This metaphor appeared in the British broadsheet *The Independent* in January 1999.
[7] This is a fictitious street in an eponymous, long-running soap opera set in the North of England.

4. Methodology

There are over 1,000 speeches of Nasser in the media. Nevertheless, the main limitation of this study is that very few of these speeches focus directly on the Muslim Brotherhood or use humor as a rhetorical device in the metaphorical discourse to conceptualize that organization and expose its true intentions. Therefore, a total of five of Nasser's speeches from the time of his presidency have been selected for the purpose of this study. Since the number of metaphors that use humor are relatively small, this study should be treated as a preliminary or pilot study, and its findings considered in light of this limitation.

The speeches selected for this study are:

1. Speech of Gamal Abdel Nasser on the occasion of Labor Day, May 1, 1966 (National Media Authority. 2015a).
2. Gamal Abdel Nasser's speech on United States aid to Egypt, December 23, 1964 (National Media Authority. 2015b).
3. Gamal Abdel Nasser's speech on social justice (date unknown) (Sada ElBalad, 2018).
4. Gamal Abdel Nasser's speech on the Muslim Brotherhood (date unknown) (SaebTube, 2010).
5. Gamal Abdel Nasser's speech on King Saud (date unknown) (Zegyptian, 2011).

A collection and sorting methodology was used: after collecting the metaphors, we sorted them into different categories according to the source domains from which they were taken. We then attempted to show how humor is reflected in these metaphors to conceptualize the Muslim Brotherhood and expose the discrepancies between their statements and their true intentions.

The metaphors collected were translated from Arabic into English by a native English-speaking translator and editor. The collection of metaphorical constructs showed that there are single-word metaphors and metaphors that consist of a sequence of words. The metaphorical

constructs were analyzed in several stages. In the first stage, the metaphorical constructs were associated with source domains. In the second stage, an examination was performed to show how these source domains conceptualize the Muslim Brotherhood and how humor is reflected in these metaphors. In the third stage, an attempt was made to identify any source domains that merited particular attention, and conclusions were drawn accordingly.

5. Findings

These metaphors in Nasser's humorous discourse were taken from a number of source domains, including nature and animals, the Fatimid Caliphate, religion, humans and the human body, products and tools used by people, and commerce/trade. Nasser relied on these source domains to create humorous metaphors that mocked and ridiculed the Muslim Brotherhood and exposed their true goals as contrary Islamic principles and law. Through his metaphorical discourse, Nasser attempted to reveal the paradoxes inherent in the discrepancies between the Muslim Brotherhood's statements and their true intentions.

5. 1 Metaphors Connected to Historical Events

5.1.1 Metaphors Connected to the Fatimid Caliphate period

The Fatimid Caliphate or Fatimid Empire, named after Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, was a dynasty that ruled vast swathes of North Africa and the Middle East from 909 through 1171. The term Fatimid is sometimes also used to refer to subjects of the Caliphate. The Caliphate's ruling elite belonged to the Ismaili branch of Shia Islam, and were autocratic rulers.

(1) Taken from Nasser's speech on the Muslim Brotherhood, 1965.

> "I met with the supreme leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. He sat there and demanded many things from me. What did he demand? First, that all women should be forced to wear a headscarf. **I told him that if someone says something like that, they'll say we've gone back to the time of the Fatimid Caliphate, which forbade people from walking around during the day, but allowed them to walk around at night.** I told him that he should be the one to make the women of Egypt wear headscarves. He said that I should force them to do so, by virtue of my authority as president of Egypt. I told him: 'Your daughter is studying at the Faculty of Medicine, and she doesn't wear a headscarf. Why doesn't she have to wear a headscarf? If you can't force your own daughter to wear a headscarf, how can you ask me to force 10 million women to wear headscarves?'" (SaebTube 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

Nasser pointed out the ironic and paradoxical nature of the request made by the head of the Muslim Brotherhood in order to make his political rival look ridiculous and absurd. Nasser mocked the request as ostensibly deviant and unjust, and implied that their true goal was to gain power under the guise of religion and observance of religious commandments. Nasser was convinced that if the Muslim Brotherhood came to power, they would impose misguided and inhumane laws on Egyptian citizens, not because they truly believed in these laws, but because they sought to suppress civil rights, silence dissent, prevent freedom of expression, and tighten their own grip on power.

According to Nasser, the Muslim Brotherhood's demands are reminiscent of those of the Fatimid Caliphs, who deprived their subjects of their basic rights. The humor of the metaphor in (1) stems from Nasser's comparison of the Muslim Brotherhood's demands of Egyptian citizens to the strange and humorous demand of the Fatimid Caliph to his subjects, and aims to show the Muslim Brotherhood in an ironic light and ridicule its demands.

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The target domain, Nasser's anecdote about the Muslim Brotherhood's demands that Egyptian women should cover their hair, is conceptualized through the source domain—the deprivation of the basic rights of those living under the rule of the Fatimid Caliphate.

5.2 Metaphors from the Source Domain of Nature

Metaphors from the source domain of nature exist in all religions. In the Hebrew Bible, for example, one reads "When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city?" (Deut. 20:19). That is, just as investing in a seed will yield a sturdy tree and excellent fruit, so is a child like a seed; investing in him will pay off when he turns into a stable adult imbued with values. In the Quran, we read: "We have handed the Quran to you [the Prophet Muhammad] for the deliverance of man from darkness to light," i.e., from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge (Surah Al-Hadid 27:538).

(2) Taken from Nasser's speech on the Muslim Brotherhood, 1965.

> "The supreme leader of the Muslim Brotherhood made many demands of me. He says we need to close down the cinemas and theaters, that is, make everything **completely dark.**" (SaedTube, 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

Nasser used the word "dark" as a metaphor for ignorance, backwardness, and a lack of education. Nasser was implying that the Muslim Brotherhood wanted to return Egypt to the ignorance of the medieval Dark Ages, and to suppress freedom of expression and other basic rights of Egyptian citizens in order to serve their own political interests.

The darkness represents the axis of evil, that is the Muslim Brotherhood—and hence the implication is that, in contrast, the forces of light represent justice, a quality that is attributed to Nasser and his supporters. Darkness and light are complete opposites, and the existence of one is conditional on the absence of the other. These source domains—darkness and light—depict Nasser's struggle against the Muslim Brotherhood as an existential war that is being waged by him and his supporters, since their very existence is conditional on suppressing the Muslim Brotherhood.

The target domain, the reactionary demands of the Muslim Brotherhood, is conceptualized through the source domain—utter darkness.

5.3 Animal Metaphors

Many different cultures have made important contributions to the creation of metaphors from the animal world. For instance, in Persian, comparing someone to a fox implies that person is wise and clever, while in English, the owl metaphor is used to convey approximately the same meaning. However, the fox metaphor also has a somewhat negative connotation, as it implies employing cleverness for deception and cunning. The owl metaphor, in contrast, has a somewhat positive connotation, as it implies employing cleverness for positive purposes (Rouhi and Mahand 2011: 253). Other animal metaphors are used to praise a certain person's

positive qualities. For example, comparing an individual to a lion implies that they are brave and fearless. In contrast, some animal metaphors are used to mock and belittle a person and their personal worth—comparing someone to a chicken, for example, implies that that person is a coward (Rouhi and Mahand 2011: 253).

(3) Taken from Nasser's speech on the Muslim Brotherhood, 1965.

> "We will release the Muslim Brotherhood from prison and give them a second chance. But after that, **if they play with their tails**, we will put them back in jail and not let them back out." (SaedTube, 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

In spoken Arabic, the phrase to "play with their tails" is a metaphor for acting improperly, disrespecting social rules, morals, and ethics, revolting against the authorities, and trampling roughshod over the law. Nasser intentionally used this phrase to threaten the Muslim Brotherhood and warn them against committing acts of criminality and misconduct. By using this phrase, he humiliated them by comparing them to animals that achieve their goals through aggression and brutality.

The target domain, improper or immoral conduct, rebelling against the Egyptian government, is conceptualized through the source domain—playing with the tails of animals.

(4) Taken from Nasser's speech on Labor Day, 1 May 1966.

> "We have not yet succeeded in slaughtering reactionism [a reference to the Muslim Brotherhood], but we have made significant progress in this direction." (National Media Authority, 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

Here, Nasser compares the complete victory over reactionism to a slaughter. The metaphorical use of the verb to slaughter points to Nasser's hidden intention. By likening the Muslim Brotherhood to animals, the act of "slaughtering" them is normalized. The humor in this metaphor stems from Nasser's choice of low language that is out of place for the head of a

republic who is considered a moderate, and someone who would not usually use crude language.

(5) Taken from Nasser's speech on Labor Day, 1 May 1966.

> "The Muslim Brotherhood will continue to bark, and continue to say 'haw haw' [woof, woof], but it will not affect us." (National Media Authority, 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

Here, Nasser uses low language to insult the Muslim Brotherhood and ridicule them. The use of colloquial language by a head of state—someone who is supposed to weigh each word carefully before speaking—to create a metaphor comparing the Muslim Brotherhood to barking dogs is what creates the humor here, and it is little wonder that Nasser's audience responded to these words with cheers and laughter.[8]

The target domain, the Muslim Brotherhood, is conceptualized through the source domain—a barking dog.

5.4 Religious metaphors

When speakers aim to persuade, they may appeal to literary, religious, and folkloric elements, such as songs, proverbs, parables, scriptures, and myths that are accepted in society and culture. In the case of quotations from scripture, the ideas presented are self-evident, their truth requires no proof.

(6) Taken from Nasser's speech on the Muslim Brotherhood, 1965.

> "Nasser and his supporters, and all the Arab nations and all their leaders disbelieve in God, and no one is a Muslim except the Muslim Brotherhood." (SaedTube, 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

[8] Maybe this metaphor is related to the Arabic proverb الكلاب تنبح والقافلة تسير Al-kilabu tanbahu wa al-qafilatu tasiru ("The dogs bark and the caravan moves on").

The target domain, observing God's commandments with piety, is conceptualized through the source domain—true Islam.

(7) Taken from Nasser's speech on the Muslim Brotherhood, 1965.

> "The Muslim Brotherhood rejects democracy, the rule of the people, and parliament. They agree only on the rule of God. What is meant by the rule of God? It refers to the rule of their spiritual leader, who in their eyes is the Caliph of God." (SaedTube, 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

The target domain, the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood's spiritual leader, is conceptualized through the source domain—the rule of God.

In (6) and (7), Nasser's use of religious metaphors is intended to mock the false words of the Muslim Brotherhood, who saw their spiritual leader in Egypt as a representative of God on Earth, and therefore as the person who should rule. According to the Muslim Brotherhood, no one in Egypt is a Muslim except their own members, and those Arab states that are not ruled by an Islamic regime are apostates (disbelievers in God). The Muslim Brotherhood were aware of the falsehoods that they were spreading, and they themselves did not believe their own lies. The metaphorical use of the term "Muslim" by Nasser refers to a true believer who fulfils all of God's commandments with piety. Nasser is joking about how the Muslim Brotherhood have declared *takfir* ('excommunication') on anyone who is not one of them—in other words, only the Muslim Brotherhood can define who is a Muslim. Nasser and his supporters believed that the Muslim Brotherhood were exploiting religion, and that their stated intentions and opinions did not match their true goals, which included installing an autocratic regime in Egypt that would enslave its people, and using the state's finances for their own personal benefit.

(8) Taken from Nasser's speech in response to King Saud, February 22, 1962.

> "Radio Mecca in Saudi Arabia, which is considered a mouthpiece for the rule of King Saud bin Abd al-Aziz, attacked Abdel Nasser and the principles of communism and

> social justice, King Saud claimed that God is in charge of social justice and that no one can impose it on others. If so, then let's abolish the courts, the Ministry of Justice, and the police! When the King was asked, what about the poor? Why do their affairs have no part in the state's finances? After all, this is against the principles of Islam. He said that their deeds will be rewarded in *jannah* ('paradise') in the world to come. And you, King Saud, and all the members of the regime, you don't want a part of *jannah*? Even a little piece of *jannah*? And these poor people, do they have no part in the life of this *dunya* ('the material world')? Given them a small part of the life of this *dunya* and in return you will be awarded a part of *jannah* in the life to come." (Mohamed Zegyptian, 2011, accessed March 20, 2004)

According to Nasser, King Saud, the leader of the hardline Islamic regime in Saudi Arabia, essentially legitimized depriving poor Saudis of their basic rights and trampling them underfoot. Saud excuses this violation of the rights of the poor by claiming that they would receive a great reward in *jannah*, the Islamic concept of paradise. Nasser's mockery of King Saud's words is reflected in his rhetorical question, which establishes the King's arguments as unconscionable and a violation of basic common sense.

The target domain—the wages of poor and disadvantaged Muslims—is conceptualized through the source domain: *jannah* (the Islamic concept of paradise).

4.5 Metaphors Relating to Humans and the Human Body

Metaphors relating to humans play an important role in creating national identity and harmony, and in reducing conflict. Examples of such metaphors include those related to the nation state and the "body politic," such as the "head of state" and the "heart of the state." The "body politic" metaphor remains in use in English and German when referring to the European Union as a confederation of states (Musolff 2004: 83–114).

(9) Taken from Nasser's speech on Labor Day, 1 May 1966.

> "We are building our country. We will develop it, and march forward. You [the Muslim Brotherhood] will never achieve your goal. You are enemies and colonialists, and we will **pluck out the hairs of your beards**. One day, the grandfather will tell his grandson that we have bearded men representing reactionism, but we were able to pluck out their beards on July 23, 1952." (National Media Authority, 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

Plucking out the hairs of the beards of the Muslim Brotherhood is a metaphor for achieving a gradual victory over the group. Long beards are a distinctive characteristic of the Muslim Brotherhood, and thus Nasser's reference to plucking out beards is a metaphor for making the Brothers submit. Again, Nasser's humor is based on his use of simple expressions and "low" language, which serve as a glue that connects him with his people,[9] and allowed him to increase his popularity among the masses. His anecdote of the grandfather telling his grandson about the Muslim Brotherhood and describing them as "bearded men" increases the humor and ridicules the Brotherhood. No wonder that after the use of such language, the audience cheers and laughs.

The target domain, the submission of the Muslim Brotherhood, is conceptualized through the source domain—the act of plucking out their beards.

(10) Taken from Nasser's speech on Labor Day, 1 May 1966.

> "Communism means that there is no master and no slave. There are no 'bearded people' and 'beardless people'." (National Media Authority, 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

[9] It is worth noting that many in Nasser's audiences, in particular the *fallahin* ("peasants") and other less educated Egyptians, including those in Upper Egypt (whose residents were comparatively poorer and less educated than those in Lower Egypt–and were thus fertile ground for the Muslim Brotherhood) would likely not know much, if any, Modern Standard Arabic and would not listen to, or understand, a lengthy speech in that language.

Here, the phrase "bearded men"[10] is used as a metaphor for a pious Muslim man who believes in God and observes God's commandments, while in contrast, the phrase "beardless people" is used as a metaphor to refer to men who disbelieve in God. Wearing a long beard is one of the distinctive features of a pious Muslim man. The purpose of the metaphor in (10) is to mock and ridicule the conduct of the Muslim Brotherhood in a humorous way. Nasser and his supporters were convinced that the Brothers wore beards to give the impression that they were pious Muslims who observed God's commandments, but in practice their conduct and intentions were not compatible with Islamic values. Nasser presents a humorous reframing of the Muslim Brotherhood's distinction between believers (those with beards) and unbelievers (those without beards).

The target domain, true Islam, belief in God, and obeying God's commandments, is conceptualized through the source domain—wearing a beard.

(11) Taken from Nasser's speech on Labor Day, 1 May 1966.

"Abu Beard says that socialism is disbelief in God." (National Media Authority, 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

The metaphor in (11) is similar to that of (10) and is taken from the same source domain. The intention is to ridicule and lower the Muslim Brotherhood through the use of Egyptian Spoken Arabic rather than Modern Standard Arabic.

Arabic male nickname constructions beginning with the word ابو *Abu* ('father of') refer to a distinctive characteristic of a certain man and can indicate either a positive feature or a negative trait. In the event that these constructions indicate a negative trait, the purpose is often to humiliate the person given the nickname. For example, the nickname ابو العلم *'Abu Al-Ilm'* ('father of knowledge') is a positive nickname given to a highly educated and knowledgeable

[10] Nasser uses a Egyptian Spoken Arabic term, ناس بدقون *nas bedu'un* "bearded people." The equivalent term in Modern Standard Arabic is ناس بلحية *nas bilihia.*

man, while the nickname أبو جنيه *Abu Ginieh* ('father of the Egyptian pound')[11] is given to a very stingy person, with the aim of humiliating him and hurting his dignity.

The target domain, true Islam, belief in God, and obeying God's commandments, is conceptualized through the source domain—wearing a beard.

(12) Taken from Nasser's speech on Labor Day, 1 May 1966.

> "The styles of the bearded ones will not mislead us." (National Media Authority, 2015, accessed March 20, 2004)

The metaphorical phrase "the styles of the bearded ones" is a metaphor for the Muslim Brotherhood's cunning, exploitation of the Islamic religion, and concealing their true intentions.

The target domain, the Muslim Brotherhood's exploitation of Islam and concealment of their true intentions, is conceptualized through the source domain—wearing a beard.

(13) Taken from Nasser's speech on social justice, date unknown.

> "If I were to behave as the Muslim Brotherhood did during their rule,[12] I would not bother building factories, encouraging economic growth, and taking care of the economic and social well-being of the citizens. I would choose a fresh life – entertainment, dancing, and ignoring the needs of the citizens. If I had done that, I probably wouldn't have any gray hair." (Sada ElBalad, 2018, accessed March 20, 2004)

Once again, simple popular language is at the heart of Nasser's humorous metaphors. The metaphors in this example refer to how the Muslim Brotherhood chose to act during their time in power—to steal the public's money, ignore economic growth, not concern themselves with the needs of the Egyptian people, and to immerse themselves in the pleasures of power. In contrast, Nasser's reference to having gray hair is a metaphor for the path that he himself

[11] This phrase in Egyptian Spoken Arabic.
[12] Also, this would suggest supporters of King Farouk who was known as a playboy who liked to party on his yacht while his people struggled.

chose—that is, to refrain from enjoying the trappings of power but to focus instead on meeting the needs of Egyptian citizens and ensuring their economic and social well-being.

The target domain, the Muslim Brotherhood's taking pleasure from power, is conceptualized through the source domain—dancing and entertainment.

5.6 Trade Metaphors

The long ongoing negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israeli government can be seen as akin to trading activity, and as in any trade, there is profit and loss. Nasser expresses his disgust at the exploitative nature of the Israeli government in the negotiations, since it is unwilling to make concessions for the sake of achieving peace, while expecting the Palestinians to make such concessions, a position that renders negotiations fruitless and bellicose.

(14) Taken from Nasser's speech on Labor Day, May 1, 1966.

> "We managed to put an end to feudalism [the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood]. The people of the feudal regime made a huge fortune of ten million guineas (Egyptian pounds), twenty or thirty million guineas. They made their fortunes from theft and exploitation. Theft—meaning taking commissions: building a building, taking a commission; building an airport, taking a commission; buying airplanes, taking a commission; building an army, taking a commission, and so on. And if he doesn't take it, then the family takes it."[13] (National Media Authority, 2015a, accessed March 20, 2004)

The word "family" is a metaphor for those close to the feudal regime, that is, those who were well-connected to it. The humor in this metaphor relates to the fact that while these people have

[13] We referred to the two metaphors in (14) as metaphors from the source domain of trade, because they relate to a sort of trade of public funds. However, it is clear that this is an illegal trade that violates the laws of social justice.

close ties like those of a family, these relationships are not true kinship, but rather membership in a common camp whose shared culture of theft and exploitation unites them like a family.

The target domain, government corruption and the theft of public funds, is conceptualized through the source domain—commissions. The target domain, the shared culture of the feudal government, that is, exploitation and the theft of public funds, is conceptualized by the source domain—the family.

(15) Taken from Nasser's speech on Labor Day, May 1, 1966.

> Accordingly, we have recently heard about Mr. Five Percent, Mr. Six Percent, Mr. Ten Percent, and His Majesty Fifty Percent.[14] (National Media Authority, 2015a, accessed March 20, 2004)

In the original Arabic, Nasser uses the Arabic word جلالة *jalalah* ('majesty'). This word has no plural form and is part of the Arabic word for God—*Lafz Al-Jalalah 'Allah'*. The word is also used as an honorific for kings, such as in the phrase جلالة الملك *jalalah al-malik* ('His Majesty'). Nasser is implying that the Muslim Brotherhood believe themselves to be the representatives of God on Earth, but their corrupt actions are hardly compatible with this perception. Nasser's metaphorical use of the word *jalalah* reflects his clear intention to be humorous, since its use in reference to the Muslim Brotherhood is intended to mock the group and present its members ironically as people who exploit religion and use it as an ax to grind.

The target domain, the perception of the Muslim Brotherhood as God's representatives on Earth, is conceptualized by the source domain—God.

(16) Taken from Nasser's speech on United States aid to Egypt, December 23, 1964.

> "We invested a lot of money in building factories to provide work and livelihood for many families, in contrast to the Muslim Brotherhood, who usurp the state's funds and do not invest in building factories to provide job opportunities, but import many things

[14] (15) continues directly from (14).

> from abroad, and do not consider local production. I could import salami for you from France, salami made the French way and not in the Upper Egyptian way."[15] (National Media Authority, 2015b, accessed March 20, 2004)

"Importing salami from France" is a metaphor for the Muslim Brotherhood's policy of not investing in building factories to encourage local production and provide job opportunities, and relying instead on imports. The metaphor portrays the Muslim Brotherhood in a humorous light, since during their rule they relied on importing food products instead of producing them domestically, knowing that only a handful of Egyptians could afford to buy imported goods because of their dismal economic situation. Nasser's humorous reference to importing French-style salami mocks the Muslim Brotherhood.

The target domain, importing salami from France, is conceptualized by the source domain—importing food rather than producing it domestically.

(17) Taken from Nasser's speech on United States aid to Egypt, December 23, 1964.

> "The Muslim Brotherhood always tries to spread rumors that the Egyptian people are starving. One of the employees at our embassy abroad believed these rumors and asked his parents, 'What do you want me to bring you from abroad for New Year? A turkey leg or a piece of meat?'" (National Media Authority, 2015b, accessed March 20, 2004)

The metaphor of "a turkey leg or a piece of meat" is used to poke fun at the Muslim Brotherhood's attempts to spread rumors of a famine in Egypt. The humor of the question posed by Nasser in his anecdote about the embassy worker is clear—the intention is to ridicule the idea that the Egyptian people are starving and in need of a turkey leg or a piece of meat. Usually, Egyptians posted abroad would send gifts to their relatives back home, but not a piece of meat or poultry.

[15] We referred to the metaphors in (16) and (17) as metaphors from commerce.

The target domain, the rumors of famine in Egypt, is conceptualized by the source domain—the need to send a piece of meat or a turkey leg from abroad.

4.2.7 Metaphors Relating to Consumer Products

(18) Taken from Nasser's speech on Labor Day, May 1, 1966.

> "They [the Muslim Brotherhood] say we have luxuries and you have nothing, that we have high-quality soap and you don't have any. We tell them to eat their heart out. Who is using your **soap**? Who is using **perfume**? You left the people naked, infected with ulcers. They can't even manage to take a **shower** or eat." (National Media Authority, 2015a, accessed March 20, 2004)

Nasser's references to "soap," "perfume," and "taking a shower" are metaphors for the welfare of the Egyptian people and the ability of those in power to meet their basic needs. The Muslim Brotherhood claim that during their rule, they cared for the welfare of the Egyptian people. Nasser refutes this, arguing that the Egyptian people did not have their basic needs met during their rule, and some did not even have adequate clothing or access to washing facilities. Nasser employs exaggerated metaphors in this example to create humor.

The target domain, the welfare of the Egyptian people and the ability of those in power to meet their basic needs, is conceptualized by the source domain—soap, perfume, and taking a shower.

Conclusions

This article sheds light on how Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser employed humorous metaphorical discourse in his speeches as a tool to shape public perception of his political enemies. By mocking the Muslim Brotherhood and suggesting that their purported religious

values were a cynical smokescreen for their true intentions to assume total power, Nasser successfully sowed public distrust and hatred toward the group.

Nasser's use of humor as a rhetorical tool underscores the power of this technique in political communication. It highlights how humor can be effectively used to convey serious messages, criticize opponents, and connect with the audience on an emotional level:

1. Revealing a paradox in political opponents' behavior: Nasser exposed the paradox between his opponents' stated intentions and their true intentions.
2. Discrediting the dichotomy of good versus evil: Nasser mocked the dichotomy presented by the Muslim Brotherhood, according to which they were ostensibly "good" because they supported a government based on the commandments and values of Islam, while Nasser and his supporters were "evil" because their socialist values were supposedly contrary to the values of Islam. Nasser mocked this dichotomy as deceptive and false. He sought to show that the socialists were actually closer to the spirit of Islam, while the true intentions of the Muslim Brotherhood contradicted the Qur'an, because they wanted Egypt to revert to the ignorance of medieval times, and to deny Egyptian citizens freedom of expression and other basic rights.
3. Metaphors used to mock political opponents: Nasser used metaphors to convey a sense of superiority over the Muslim Brotherhood, to cast them in an ironic and humiliating light and even to compare them to animals, and to express a sense of strength and determination to fight them in an ongoing war.
4. The humor in Nasser's political discourse is mainly based on a simple vernacular that is not typical of the language used by a head of state. Nasser used code switching between Egyptian Spoken Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, as this

helped clarify his intended meaning, to construct his power and at the same time provided a way to maintain it.

5. Humor based on crude language and personal insults: Nasser did not hesitate to use derogatory words and names to ridicule and humiliate the Muslim Brotherhood.

Nasser speaks bluntly and aggressively against the Muslim Brotherhood and drives home his messages directly and skillfully. It is reasonable to suppose that Nasser preferred to speak bluntly because he believed that such style increased his popularity and enhanced the excitement and sympathy he received from his audience. This is evidenced by the reactions of his audience, who often burst into laughter and cheers in response to his remarks about the Muslim Brotherhood.

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