

**Black Comedy and Discourse Analysis: Unveiling Political Tendencies in Bassem Youssef's Second Interview with Piers Morgan**

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**Abstract**

For decades the Arab-Israel conflict has been the subject talk of all news and media platforms. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023, Hamas attacked Israel capturing almost 250 hostages. This serious event has made headlines and has become a remarkable subject for politicians, news analysts and interviewers. Bassem Youssef, an Egyptian comedian famous for his sarcastic handling of serious political issues, conducted his second interview with Piers Morgan, an English broadcaster and media personality, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2023. In order to investigate how black comedy serves as a critical tool for political expression and how Youssef's comedic approach reflects and challenges political power structures, a systemic functional linguistic (SFL) analysis is conducted, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to decide the linguistic tools employed to figure out the political satirical tendencies. Halliday's (2014) SFL is adopted as the theoretical framework of the present study and the Transitivity Processes, which include material, relational, mental, verbal, existential, and behavioral, are applied to the excerpts extracted from the interview. The study concludes that language is definitely a means of highlighting the political tendencies implicitly conveyed by humorous, ironical and satirical tones. The study proposes a type of discourse analysis, which is ignored in the literature, referred to as *Humorous Discourse Analysis*.

**Keywords:** Humorous Discourse; humor; Political Interviews; black comedy; Systemic Functional Linguistics

الكوميديا السوداء وتحليل الخطاب: كشف التوجهات السياسية في المقابلة الثانية لباسم يوسف مع بيرس مورغان

### المستخلص

كان الصراع العربي الإسرائيلي ، لعقود من الزمن، موضوع الحديث في جميع منصات الأخبار والإعلام. وفي السابع من أكتوبر عام 2023، هاجمت حماس إسرائيل وأخذت نحو 250 رهينة. أصبح هذا الحدث الخطير عنواناً رئيسياً وموضوعاً بارزاً للسياسيين والمحليلين الإخباريين مقدمي البرامج ، وفي الثاني من نوفمبر عام 2023 أجرى باسم يوسف، وهو كوميدي مصري مشهور بتعامله الساخر مع القضايا السياسية الجادة، مقابلته الثانية مع بيرس مورغان، وهو مذيع إنجليزي وشخصية إعلامية. و لدراسة كيفية توظيف الكوميديا السوداء كأداة نقدية للتعبير السياسي التي تعكس النهج الكوميدي ليوسف وتعكس الاتجاهات السياسية، تم إجراء تحليل لغوي وظيفي نظامي (SFL) (كمياً ونوعياً) لتحديد الأدوات اللغوية المستخدمة لتوضيح النزعات والاتجاهات السياسية الساخرة. اتخذت الدراسة هاليداي (2014) كإطار نظري لها و طبقت عمليات التعددية المادية، والعلائقية، والعقلية، و الفعلية، والوجودية، والسلوكية على المقطعات المستخرجة من المقابلة. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن اللغة هي بالتأكيد وسيلة لتسليط الضوء على النزعات السياسية التي يتم نقلها ضمناً بواسطة أسلوب الفكاهة والسخرية والتهكم. تقترح الدراسة نوعاً من تحليل الخطاب، الذي لم يحظ باهتمام كاف ، يُشار إليه بتحليل الخطاب الفكاهي. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** الخطاب الفكاهي ، الفكاهة ، المقابلات السياسية ،الكوميديا السوداء ،اللغويات الوظيفية النظامية

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**1. Introduction**

Humour has always been an influential instrument in political discourse and a sharp means to satirize, attack, criticise and, at the same time, attract the audience's attention to serious political issues in a thought-provoking and engaging way. Black comedy, or dark comedy, being one of the forms of humour, addresses taboo or devastating themes with a combination of humour and seriousness. The phrase *Black Comedy* has always been used by comedians and satirists to represent their views on social injustice, political events and human suffering. In diverse cultural backgrounds, *Black Comedy* echoes socio-political status, discussing matters such as human rights abuses, corruption and wars. In this study, the phrase *black comedy* is used metaphorically to refer to the way Youssef juxtaposes humour, as he always does, with the dark and grim theme (e.g., Arab-Israel Conflict). In this context, black comedy challenges authority, pictures hypocrisy and employ humour to eliminate the impact of the harsh and devastating nature of the conflict.

Kutz-Flamenbaum (2014, p. 294) argues that humor is a comic attempt to arouse amusement which is accomplished (as claimed by (Morreall, 2009) through putting irrelevant notions together to induce some humorous influences. Recently, social media platforms use humor to discuss serious issues which are the subject talk of the public. In a study conducted at the University of Arkansas, Eagan and Brown (2025) argue that there are sustained indications for masculinized features which offer a strong basis for discovering men's humor styles. Aristophanes, the ancient Greek comic writer, was the first to use political comedy in theatres, though, according to Heath (1987), Aristophanic comedy, which discusses contemporary political life, is not political in the sense of targeting political stands outside the theatre. Swift and Chaucer implement sarcasm, irony, and wit in their writings to avoid punishment (Esselami, 2022). Their major themes revolved around the societal rank,

the monarchy and the Church's equivocal practices which cannot be criticized explicitly.

In 2018, MacKenzi Tims carried out a study to investigate the way Millennials (Generation Y- referring to the first generation to reach maturity and adulthood in the new millennium) have moved from old news sources to untraditional media channels, such as satirical news shows and late-night comedy. These were their chief channels for political discussions that present information to the audience. Tims (2018) employed the *Uses and Gratifications Theory* to examine the ways Millennials commonly used to gain political information to achieve their requests for political indulgences. Starting in the 1980s to present, British and American TV shows use comedy to comment on serious political issues which are mainly concerned with presenting the discussions of crucial issues in an entertaining and approachable manner.

In the literature, some TV shows which offer information and entertainment by audio-visual means are referred to as **Infotainment** (blend of the two lexemes *information* and *entertainment*) **Programs** (Boukes, 2019). Savolainen (2022) describes **Infotainment** as a phenomenon, specifically, pertinent to studying daily information from newspapers, TV programs, and the internet. Esselami (2022) discussed Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show*, Bassem Youssef's *El Bernameg* (The Program), and Youssef Hussein's *Joe Show* as examples of orientated infotainment programs. Examples of the most famous TV shows are illustrated in the following table:

**Table 1. Examples of humor-based political TV shows**

-	Title	Date	The Show's objective
1	<i>Yes Minister</i>	1980- 1984	A British sitcom which humorously portrays the inside mechanisms of the British government through the judgments of a naive minister and his controlling civil employees.
2	<i>Spitting Image</i>	(1984-1996)	A humorous <i>Puppet Show</i> which uses caricatures of the chief public figures and events, offering sharp political comments.
3	<i>Bremner, Bird and Fortune</i>	(1997-2000)	British television program presenting humorous sketches of celebrities and politicians
4	<i>Have I Got News for You</i>	(1990-present)	A British News Quiz Show which features humorous and satirical and comic commentaries on recent issues.

5	<i>The Daily Show</i>	(1996-present)	An American humorous news program which features current events in a comic twist, first hosted by Craig Kilborn, and later by Jon Stewart.
6	<i>The Colbert Report</i>	(2000-2014)	A TV show developed from <i>The Daily Show</i> , hosted by Stephen Colbert, which caricatures political commentator shows.
7	<i>Parks and Recreation</i>	(2009-2015)	An American sitcom that humorously depicts the lives of government employees working in the <i>Parks Department</i> of a imaginary town.
8	<i>Veep</i>	(2012-2019)	An American political humorous TV series which traces the life of a fictional Vice President and her staff.
9	<i>Last Week Tonight with John Oliver</i>	(2014-present)	A weekly humorous news program hosted by John Oliver which discusses different topics with humour and perceptive analysis.
10	<i>Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj</i>	(2018-2020)	A comic news show hosted by Hasan Minhaj which covers serious political issues with a touch of analytical journalism and humour.

### 1.1.A note on political satire and humor

Wilson, Dilulio and Bose (2009) argue that the word *political* refers to anyone included in the governmental organizations, included in the pursuit of struggle for power, joined informal groups that grant and withhold benefits or privileges, and involved in conflict management leading the state affairs (p. 27). For Holbert (2014), political objects are classified, according to their positions, into political organizations, governmental branches, news organizations, transnational bodies, and international organizations. The word *satire* dates back to the Latin root *satura* which means "a mixed dish" (Braund, 1996). A mixture of *sarcasm* and *irony* can be nested within a single satirical piece (Holbert, 2014). That is, a satirical piece could use *exaggeration*, *impersonation*, and *transformation*, whereas other satirical pieces could use the potential to utilize *irony*, *repetition*, and *eccentricity* (Buijzen & Valkenberg, 2004). In the twentieth century and with the emergence of telecommunication technologies, satire has been used in visual media to present critical views to the audience (Shaw, 2014). Nowadays, on an audio-visualized media, mainly on the internet and television, Western political satire, practically, utilizes irregular witty, humorous and sarcastic forms to undermine and reveal wicked political trends. Mass media play an influential role in political informative dissemination, either factual or fictitious (Tims, 2018). This renders the public an alternative critical

narration of the political atmosphere where fundamental proportion of conventional news media outlets seem to have been utilized. Satire is embedded under different humorous categories (Berger, 1993; Buijzen & Valkenberg, 2004), and placed in the same sorting standard as imitation, absurdity, slapstick, sarcasm, and irony. Political satire has always been there for ages (Shaw, 2014). For example, in Ancient Rome and Greece, people resorted to satire to accomplish more optimal acknowledgements of their civilization when Aristophanes' comedies, consequently, mock the government (Esselami, 2022). Through ages, satire gains more popularity, beginning to spread all over Europe and flourish during the Medieval Ages. Great authors such as Chaucer and Swift have employed satirical techniques to criticize and attack the European rulers and the Catholic Church (Shaw, 2014). In 2007, Hall & Wrigley point out that the ancient Athenian theatres enacted political satire to demonstrate public opinions "with the earliest example being Aristophanes" (p. 26). Recently, in the United States' 2016 elections, some changes have taken place along with the dissemination of political information (Tims, 2018). Political satire has become a reflection of political trends, employing *humor, irony, mockery, or hyperbolic* forms to reveal political flaws, incompetence, or corruption (Esselami, 2022).

Political satirical discourse reflects the relation between language and current political debates by means of satirical techniques. It underpins the way people's political attitudes are linguistically expressed and portrayed. The satirical ways, in which people talk about these political issues, gain much interest among linguists. Political satire dates back to old politics itself (Poremba, 2008). Political comedy, on the other hand, is the broadest denominator among diverse societies all over the world, regarding many categories of political humorous patterns. Bernardo (2017) argues that humor is an expressive style which reflects uncertainty of social and political bonds

### **1.2. Significance of the study**

This study claims that the alleged interview is not actually a conventional interview in the traditional sense, but rather a **Debate** between two media personalities, each of whom has an influence on public judgement. The data of the were based on this interview due to their special nature which is not encountered in the media field: The interview involves two media celebrities, one from an Arab country (i.e., Egypt) and the other from a foreign country (i.e. England), each with fidelity to their ideologies and beliefs. Bassem Youssef used his guest as a means to reveal the ideology of the foreign states which is implicitly supporting the Israeli aggression



on Gaza, despite its declaration of opposition to it. Therefore, the study considers that the interview is essentially a **Debate** between representatives of two countries and two different cultural, political, and ideological backgrounds. The current study attempts to discuss a genre referred to here as *Humorous Discourse* aiming to offer insight into political black comedy and its role in influencing public perception of political issues and shaping political narratives which are meant to engage world-wide audience. What makes the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 a remarkable date is the attacks that Hamas and Palestinian military groups had launched on Israeli bases and civilians, so the date marks the first invasion of the Israeli territory since the Arab-Israel war initiated in 1948. The present study aims to focus on the linguistic shift from humorous discourse to political discussions, from reminding the people of the Israeli's attacks since 1948 to the Palestinians' first successful reactions to the aggressors.

### 1.3. Research Questions:

The current study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- What is the relationship between the experiential meaning and the discourse of the interview?
- 2- What is the role of the relational processes within the discourse?
- 3- In what way is the experiential meaning realized within the discourse of the discussed topics?
- 4- What are the linguistic tools involved in sending the interpersonal meanings?

## 2. Literature Review

. Bassem Youssef's second interview with Piere Morgan, which is the main data of the present study, is assumed to exhibit a variety of linguistic features which highlight crucial political issues related to the Arab-Israel Conflict. These issues are demonstrated by satire which includes *irony*, *sarcasm*, and *humor* expressed in the interview (or the *Debate* as claimed here). In English, words like *satire*, *irony* and *sarcasm* normally cause confusion among the users, though they are all grouped into one category of meaning (e.g., that is all humorous). As the distinction between these words falls beyond the aim of the present study, words such as *humor* and *humorous* are used instead. The main focus is on the impact of the linguistic structures used in the so-called *Debate* rather than on the choice of a single lexical item. The present section reviews some previous research on *humorous political discourse*: (1)

Sani, I., Abdullah, M. H., Ali, A. M., et al. (2012); (2) Perego, E. (2017) and (3) 2.3 El Mously (2021).

### **2.1 Sani, I., Abdullah, M. H., Ali, A. M., et al. (2012)**

This paper aims to discuss the nature and the function of humor in Nigerian political cartoons following the theoretical framework of humor as the method of data analysis. Content analysis was applied to 35 cartoons texts selected from two famous Nigerian newspapers: *Vanguard* and *Daily Trust* from 2007 to 2010. The cartoons are created within cultural and social contexts so as to provide the audience with information on the nature of political satire in Nigeria. The use of visual rhetoric in the Nigerian political cartoons emphasizes the way visual illustrations managed to offer political comments and launch an attack on the practices of Nigerian political leaders. This research concluded that humor is used by the cartoonists in Nigerian political cartoons to amuse audience and eliminate the impacts of traumatic conditions and encourage them to offer their opinions on contemporary political issues. The study concluded that serious and aggressive humor styles are adopted by cartoonists to direct criticism on political leaders calling for serious political and social reforms. The study also concluded that strong emotions strengthened by the frequent use of interjections within the verbal texts, are motivated by the use of five linguistic items: (1) coinage, (2) loanword, (3) word class, (4) denotation, and (5) connotation.

### **2.2 Perego, E. (2017)**

Perego (2017) examined the way Algerian civilians used political jokes during Algeria's 'dark decade' of the 1990s. Comedy is manipulated here to express resistance and opposition to the government, the military and the political agents whose violent actions gave rise to more violence and devastating consequences. The study offered a shocking view that Algerian civilians being the powerless victims of violence, are actually laughing at themselves. The study concluded that jokes and humour in times of unrest have distressing outcomes. The study concluded that humour prevailing in war-time humour is actually a *Scottsian* (i.e., weapon of the weak). In other words, humour in critical war time is a tool of the marginalized and oppressed civilians that enables them to launch their attacks on powerful political public figures.



### **2.3 El Mously (2021)**

El Mously (2021) explores the portrayal of the Arabs in some American political satire shows through analysing the stereotypes, prejudices, and narratives commonly employed. The research focuses on certain humorous techniques, such as exaggeration, irony, and parody, which are employed to portray Arabs. The research also investigates the cultural and political context in which these images of Arabs occur, putting into consideration the world-wide post-9/11 attitudes, immigration issues, and the tactics of the foreign policy. The study adopted Fairclough (2005) and Van Dijk (2011) and followed a quantitative-qualitative approach for the analysis of data which were collected from Social-baker Company interested in generating marketing information through monitoring, stimulating, and mining profiles of social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and Instagram. The way these portrayals influence the public perception, either reinforcing or challenging recent stereotypes, is also investigated in El Mously (2021). The study also argues that the Arabs are portrayed differently in political satire shows and other media platforms. The study reveals that the most prominent method of satirizing Arab is jokes' examination; it concludes that the American media have employed humorous and satirical techniques to distort the image of Arabs.

To conclude, the studies reviewed here attempt to demonstrate political orientations either in cartoon movies or TV shows. They tackle linguistic approaches to figure out their attitudes. The current study attempts to provide its own analysis which applies both CDA and SFL to a political satirical interview/ debate.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

Recently, social media platforms and TV shows work on uncovering the mysteries behind political debates and investigating people's reactions to crucial political issues. Linguists, on the other hand, work on integrating political discourse within people's everyday language. The main claim of this study is that the ideological presuppositions of the discussion between Youssef and Morgan are unveiled within the interview's argumentative atmosphere via a combinatory approach of CDA and SFL. So, in this section, main tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are reviewed and summarized. Halliday's (2014) Systemic-Functional Linguistic (SFL), which is a constructivist linguistic conception, is also adopted in the analysis of the manipulative power and the persuasive ideologies exercised in Youssef's debate with Morgan on the

consequences of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023 attacks. The application of SFL to the selected data is restricted to SFL's *Tansitivity System*

### **3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

As the present study aims to present a detailed analysis of the intricacies of humor in a selected political discourse, which is the interview/debate between Youssef and Morgan, reference to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is provided for the following reasons:

- CDA is an interdisciplinary approach which draws on theories from political science and stresses the relationship between language, power, and society. Accordingly, reference to CDA in the analysis of the selected data is a necessity.
- CDA underpins which strategies and structures of a given text contribute to the establishment of power relations as argued by Van Dijk (1993a, p. 250).
- CDA describes and explains how power abuse is reproduced and enacted, "or legitimized by the text and talk of dominant groups or institutions" (Van Dijk, 1996, p. 84).
- CDA decodes the unequal relations of power and examines the way discourse challenges the socio-political dominance as suggested by Garret & Bell (1998, p. 6) and Fairclough & Wodak (1997, p. 272).
- CDA is significant, as argued by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), in understanding the social aspects of language and shaping social power dynamics. As language constructs social realities, a critical approach is needed to analyse and account for these realities.

### **3.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), an approach developed by Halliday in 1960, deals with language as a social and semiotic system. Since language is viewed as a system of choices taken by speakers to attain their communicative goals, SFL examines the various functions of language and how these functions enact to make meaning in contexts. So, SFL accounts for the way language is viewed as an interpretive system "using the same semantic potential" (Halliday & Webster, 2007, p. 54). Halliday also proposes that language meets some social and functional needs; for example, it narrates experience, facilitates interaction with the world and forms messages which can effectively send meanings. Based on Halliday's SFL, the language operates the three meta-functions illustrated in figure (1):

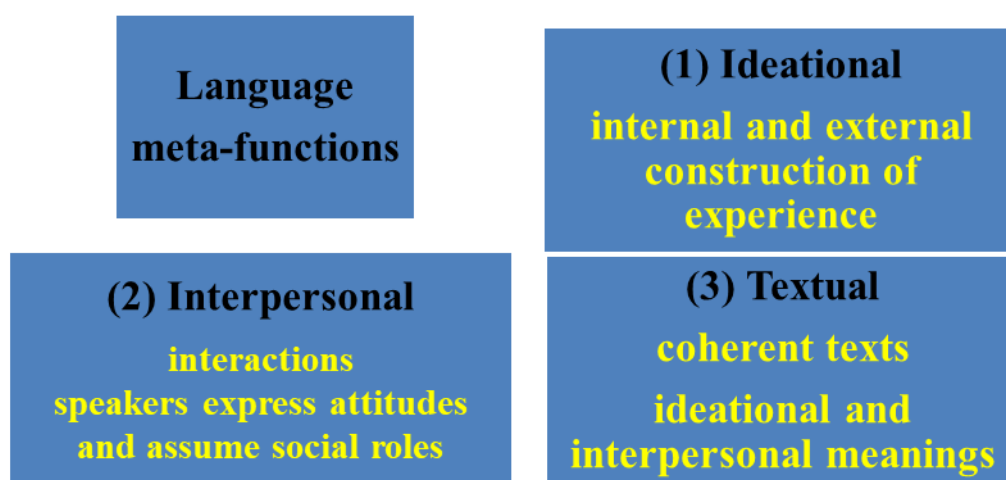


Figure (1) Language meta-functions

### 3.2.1 Metafunctions

People communicate and negotiate by means of language; accordingly, texts (i.e. language chunks spoken or written to communicate in actual circumstances, (Bloor and Bloor, 1995) are organized and structured according to peoples' needs which are met by the following metafunctions of language, suggested by Saragih (2010): (1) *interpersonal* (to exchange), *ideational* (to represent), and *textual* (to organize experience) The ideational function of language, as suggested by Alfiana (2012), refers to language's expressive content that enables speakers/users to express their experience and consciousness of the real world. Language ideational function encompasses (a) Logical functions (relate experiences) and (b) experiential functions (speakers express the elements of their propositional contents related to their utterances). As for language experiential function, Morley (2000) claimed that it is referred to as the *Transitivity System*. In this research, main tenets of the *Transitivity System* are adopted in the analysis of the selected data. Due to the wide range of the key aspects of SFL, the analysis proposed here is restricted only to *Transitivity System*.

### 3.2.2. Transitivity Systems

According to Bloor and Bloor (1995), phraseological categories are nominal, verbal, adverbial, adjectival, and prepositional. Halliday's (1994) *Transitivity Systems* refer to how language presents (a) participants, (b) circumstances and (c) processes in clauses as illustrated below:

a. **Participants:** people/ entities participated in the process; each assumes a specific participant role: (1) **actor:** a doer of an action in a material

process; (2) **senser**: an experiencer in a mental process and (3) **carrier**: an entity described in a relational process.

**b. Circumstances**: Additional information about the process (e.g., time, place, and manner).

**c. Processes**: Actions and events exemplified in a clause. Six types of processes are identified in Halliday's (2014): (1) material, (2) mental, (3) relational, (4) verbal, (5) behavioral, and (6) existential.

**(1) Material Process**: refers to events and activities occurring in the outside world of human beings (Saragih, 2010). It denotes physical experiences of human beings. This process expresses the notion of doing something (Halliday, 1994). It contains Actor + Process + Goal as in *John drives the car*.

**(2) Mental Process**: identifies verbs indicating cognition, perception, desire, and affection (Saragih, 2010). Mental process is associated with psychological matters and is realized through the use of verbs like "*know, think, smell, feel, hear, see, want, hate, like, repel, please, enjoy, admire, and fear*" (Saragih, 2010, p. 7). The process contains Sensor + Process + Phenomenon as in *John hates hot food*.

**(3) Relational Process**: classifies the relationship among entities through attribution, identification, and possession (Saragih, 2010). Relational processes are typically realized by the copulative verbs, such as *be*, and other verbs such as, *seem, become, appear*, etc., or sometimes by verbs such as *have, own*, and *possess*. Halliday (1994) states that the relational processes are divided into two categories: identifying relational process and attributive relational process. The former is composed of "Value + Identification + Token" as in *Sam has a sharp pencil*, whereas the latter includes Carrier + Process + Attributive as in *Sam is good at drawing*.

**(4) Verbal Process**: it is a kind of action, and, to some extent, it is not unreasonable to treat it as a material process. It is concerned with the verb *say* (Saragih, 2010). Verbal processes demonstrate activities associated with information, including that of *saying, asking, commanding, and offering*. It involves Sayer + Process + Verbiage as in *She said a lot of things*.

**(5) Behavioral Process**: refers to physiological and psychological behavior, like *dreaming, breathing, snoring, smiling, looking, hiccupping, watching, listening, and pondering* (Gerot and Wignel, 1994). It consists of Behavior + Process + Behavioral as in *Sam looks at the window*.

**(6) Existential Process**: it is processes of existence where a clause presents an entity as existing without predicating anything additional

about it; it is introduced by the dummy subject "There + be+ Complement" as in *There are three cats* (Hancock, 2005).

Through Halliday's transitivity system, the way language shapes reality and reflects different types of actions and experiences is made clear. Transitivity System is a basic means for decoding the ideational metafunction of language, which in essence represents people's experiences and the world around them. Transitivity on the other hand, is a system closely associated with the entire clause, rather than its predicate (Thompson, 1996). It refers, for example, to the way meaning moves from subject to predicate through verbal categories (Hancock, 2005). This movement is facilitated by some grammatical participants such as the *subject* and the *verb* which are the main components of a sentence (Hicks, 2007). A clause, as argued by Martin, (1992), illustrates the surroundings and the on-goings (i.e., the participants, the circumstances and the processes).

#### **4. Methodology and Specimen Profile**

This section discusses the procedures of data collection and analysis. It also describes the criteria followed in selecting excerpts from Youssef's interview with Morgan. The selected data are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. In the quantitative phase, the number and the frequency of discussing certain issues and the linguistic tools employed are counted to come across the positions where humor is inserted and to calculate the percentages of occurrence. The qualitative phase explains and illustrates these percentages in accordance with the six processes of *Transitivity System* explained in the theoretical framework section of the study.

The first step in the methodology phase was reviewing the second debate/interview between Youssef and Morgan in November 2023 after the attacks of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October. This step was taken mainly to identify the political satirical issues located within the interview. It is argued here that the entire interview discusses some essential political issues especially after the attacks of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023 which has led to an apparent change in the political scene in the Middle East. The interview was downloaded from <https://scrapsfromtheloft.com/tv-series/piers-morgan-bassem-youssef-round-2-interview-transcript/>. During this interview, political issues were discussed, especially by Youssef, in a humorous and satirical way. The mechanisms of mutual turn-taking and the discursive roles of the two speakers in their conversation were traced. Sentences said by Youssef is annotated by the letter Y whereas that of Morgan are annotated by the letter M for ease of reference.

The analysis investigates the following: (1) elements of the Transitivity System suggested by Halliday & Matthiessen (2014); (2) participant roles within clauses (i.e., clausal optional elements, such as time, place, manner and adverbs contributing to circumstantial analysis as a transitivity element).

## 5. Data Analysis

In this section, one aspect of Halliday's (2014) SFL, which is the *Transitivity System*, is applied to selected exchanges between Youssef and Morgan. The six processes of Transitivity (i.e., material (5.1), relational (5.2), mental (5.3), behavioral (5.4), verbal (5.5), and existential (5.6)) are explained and linked to the overall assumption that the interview is actually a *Debate* and the type of discourse analyzed here is *Humorous Discourse* disguised as *Black Comedy*.

### 5.1 The Material Process

**Table 2. Material Processes**

N.		Actor	Process	Goal
1.	(Y)	the nurses	were giving	us like supplies
2.	(Y)	They	are giving	us more money.
3.	(Y)	that kind	Taught	me a lot
4.	(Y)		Inspired	me to do the show
5.	(Y)	the guards	were taking	selfies with me
6.	(Y)	They	always choose	the military form rather than the religious form
7.	(M)	She	was using	your kids as human shields and stuff
8.	(M)	We	Opposed	the Iraq War for example
9.	(Y)	I	Condemn	Hamas
10.	(Y)	You	Condemn	Israel
11.	(M)	I	Interviewed	a lot of pro-Palestinians
12.	(M)	I	unreservedly condemn	the terror attacks of October the 7th
				to criticize Israel.
13.	(Y)	Anti-Zionism	Equals	anti-Semitism
14.	(Y)	they	have to back	Israel in whatever they do
15.	(Y)	I	Send	my aids
16.	(Y)	he	Accused	Jewish billionaires of rigging the midterm
17.	(M)	I	Have	no problem instinctively with students protesting
18.	(Y)	I	am not condoning	This
19.	(Y)	You	Increase	your service,



20.	(Y)		Increase	the taxes
21.	(Y)	If it	will feed	'nothing else,
22.	(Y)	It	will feed	my revenge
23.	(Y)	They	are killing	Babies
24.	(Y)	We	should not kick	them out.
25.	(Y)	They	are erasing	this culture
26.	(M)	He	wrote	a very interesting column last week
27.	(Y)	I	will never give	you anything with peaceful resolution
28.	(Y)	You	have to hit	them hard
29.	(Y)	We	have to kill	Them
30.	(Y)	We	have to make	them feel the pain

There are twenty eight clauses in which the thematic role of the actor is assigned to the NPs “The nurse”, “ They”, “That kind”, “The guards”, “She”, “ We”, “I”, “You”, “He”, and “It”. Youssef begins the first clause with an indication of the nurses’ kindness and sympathy. In addition, the second clause denotes the nurse’s kindness, also, in giving the protestors money. He, also, admits that he feels fraternal during his participation in the demonstrations. In the third clause, he follows his speech with some inspirations on proceeding upon doing his show. In the fourth clause, Youssef feels happy when he tells Morgan that the guards have taken selfie with him on his imprisonment during Dr. Morsi’s reign. On his continual for his accusations, Youssef claims that Muslims Brotherhood has chosen the military way rather than the religious one.

In the sixth clause, he claims that the Islamic party has used kids as human shields to defend themselves. In the seventh clause, Morgan admits that he has protested and opposed the Iraq war. Morgan goes on the attacks of denouncing Hamas; however, Youssef feels the same sensations for Israel. Morgan, in the eleventh clause, interviews many people who oppose the Palestinians. Nonetheless, he only denounces Hamas for their bloody attacks on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. The adverb “unreservedly” denotes Morgan’s endless feelings of hatred against Hamas. Youssef, suddenly, expresses his ironical tendency for Zionism since he knows that anti-Zionism means anti-Semitism.

Morgan audits his speech in the 14<sup>th</sup> clause, especially in the mono-transitive verb “back” which is preceded by the necessity modal “have to”. The direct object is “Israel” which represents terrorism. Youssef infers his fraternal feelings on sending his aids to the Palestinian children. In the 17<sup>th</sup> clause, Morgan finds no problem with the students who have

demonstrated against the Israeli strike for children. The adverb “instinctively” indicates his intuition in his toleration with any way or expression that fits anyone protesting. In a speech, about the American policy, Youssef expresses his reluctance on the increasing taxes imposed by the government.

The 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> clauses express Youssef's rationality in the speech about revenge; the mono-transitive verb “feed” indicates the uselessness and nonsense in pursuing revenge. In a trial of defending and acquitting Israel, Morgan, ironically, accuses Hamas of infanticide in the 23<sup>rd</sup> clause. The 25<sup>th</sup> clause adopts the same view of Morgan on the series of charges against Hamas. That is, he accuses Hamas of falsifying news and erasing culture. The last clause expresses Netanyahu's resentment and hatred towards the Palestinians especially in the non-finite clause “feels the pain”. The use of the first person plural “We” indicates strength.

## 5.2 Relational Processes:

**Table 1. Relational Processes**

NO		Carrier	Relational	Attribute
1.	(Y)	They	are not	very happy with the coverage because our voices are not heard.
2.	(Y)	They	are not	very happy that the attention is not on them.
3.	(Y)	If you	are	successful in this,
4.	(Y)	You	must be	successful at solving this.
5.	(Y)	You	are	against Egypt, you're against Islam, you're against our President, you're against God.
6.	(Y)	But we	are	still aliens.
7.	(Y)	They	are	like professionals, doctors, engineers, professors.
8.	(Y)	They	are	probably were like an engineer or someone very established there but he had to take a step down in order to come here and survive.
9.	(Y)	They	are	good.
10.	(Y)	They	are	safe for now.
11.	(Y)	They	are	right to try and destroy Hamas.
12.	(Y)	Most of those people	are	Jewish
13.	(Y)	Jewish people in	are	saddled by the fact that they are not citizens of America or citizens of the

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		America		world,
14.	(Y)	They	are	citizens of Israel and they have to back Israel in whatever they do.'
15.	(Y)	These	are	not my words, these are the words of Jon Stewart
16.	(M)	all Palestinians	are	responsible and accountable for what Hamas do.
17.	(Y)	People that were in so much support of Israel	are	anti-Semite themselves
18.	(Y)	You	are	Semite. You could even be Jewish.
19.	(Y)	These	are, are	the same people who are seen with Nick Fuentes, with Steven Bannon.
20.	(Y)	All of those people	are	buddies with Benjamin Netanyahu
21.	(Y)	Emotions	are	very inflammatory and it is not right, but those people have nothing else
22.	(Y)	The nonbelievers	are	all over there, why?'
23.	(Y)	Arthur Belfort	called	the Jewish people in England that they are alien and hostile race
24.	(Y)	These	are	British citizens
25.	(Y)	We	now are	the Jewish haters
26.	(Y)	You	are	someone who's always spoken against culture, cancelled culture.
27.	(Y)	If you	are	a Palestinian with an American passport, they give you hell in order to go in
28.	(M)	The Israeli people	are	very unhappy with Netanyahu
29.	(Y)	These	are	Palestinian. These are their lands and then, suddenly take them, why?
30.	(Y)	We	are	liberal. We're all about human rights. All are equal.
31.	(Y)	I	am not	not a big fan of Hamas and they are a militant group.
32.	(M)	If the casualty numbers	are	Correct, they're all coming from Hamas and health authority
33.	(M)	These	are	correct.

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		statistics		
34.	(Y)	It	becomes	a show, a circus, two gladiators in the Coliseum, two pigs fighting in the mud.
35.	(Y)	But the moral question for me	is	, at what point does this become disproportionate?
36.	(Y)	It	became	more for in 1095 when Pope Urban II called for the First Crusade to go and save the birth of Jesus from the unbelievers, Muslim.

Thirty-six clauses are monitored within the relational processes. The thematic role of the carrier varies among “They”, “You”, “We”, “These”, “All Palestinians”, “Most of these people”, “Emotions”, and “the non-believers”. The relational processes are demonstrated within the presence of verb to “be”. Nonetheless, the subjective complements are various among adjectival phrases, noun phrases, and prepositional phrases. As for the first clause, Youssef speaks about the Egyptian protesters on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2011, when they have rejected the oppression; they have been very happy when TV channels have covered their demonstrations. The fifth clause is concerned with the reign of Dr. Morsi especially when Youssef has been arrested and accused of insulting Dr. Morsi. The complement is featured by a parallelism of noun phrases in “against Egypt, Islam, president, and God”.

This parallelism evokes the feelings of empathy with Youssef. The 6<sup>th</sup> clause asserts such facts especially when Youssef uses the first person plural “we” and its subjective complements “still aliens” identifying the feeling of alienation in the world, hence. The 7<sup>th</sup> clause denotes the kindness and sympathy of the protestors who have been doctors, professors, and engineers. The 11<sup>th</sup> clause denotes the right of Jews to destroy Hamas; in other words, Morgan shows his bias for the Jews in the predicative adjective “right” followed by the infinitive phrase “to try and destroy Hamas”. The 12<sup>th</sup> clause justifies such case when the thematic role of the carrier is allocated to admit the majority of the people as Jewish.

The 13<sup>th</sup> clause identifies the fact that the Jews living in America are not citizens of the land; thereupon, they are righteous whenever they come back to Israel when they want as in the 14<sup>th</sup> clause. In a trial of getting away from any confrontation with Youssef, Morgan states that the 15<sup>th</sup> clause is not his words. However, these are John Stewart's. The 16<sup>th</sup>

clause allocates the reproach of the Palestinian people on Hamas' deeds; the adjectival phrase "responsible and accountable" asserts the accusations firstly orientated against the entire Palestinians. Again, Morgan goes on his justifications when he states that those who support Israel are not Semite.

The 20<sup>th</sup> clause asserts the fact of Netanyahu's accompaniment of these people. Youssef turns back to feel sympathetic with the Palestinians who fall victims for Hamas' bloody deeds. Such imagery is expressed by the ploy-syllabic adjectival phrase "inflammatory". Youssef originates the source of hatred and resentment for Belfort who has given Palestine to the Jews without any entitlement. He justifies his speech by the demonstrative plural "those" to give their nationality as British, not Jews. However, Youssef, suddenly, demonstrates his resentment and hatred towards the Jews when he admits that they hate the Jews. The 27<sup>th</sup> clause speaks about the sufferance of the Palestinians who have an American passport; the American authority seems to get into hell for letting any Palestinian in.

A paradoxical item of protesting against Netanyahu policy through the 28<sup>th</sup> clause is attested through the predicative adjective "unhappy" followed by the PP "with Netanyahu" to express the Israeli people's anger and fury. The 29<sup>th</sup> admits the Palestinians' entitlement of their lands; he wonders once when the Israeli get them out. Ironically, he questions Morgan with "Why?" Consequently, he announces his liberalism to speak about human rights; they are all equal. Morgan has, also, denied his concordance with Hamas through the negative structure "am not"; in addition, he regards them as militant group. Consequently, Morgan, snobbishly, admits that Hamas kills civilians, attested in the conditional clause. Youssef, again, returns to describe the battle scene between Israel and Hamas as a show in a circus or between two pigs.

The animalistic imagery denotes the rudeness and ignobility of both sides. Nevertheless, Youssef ends his speech by a rhetorical question about what is going on in Palestine especially when it is disproportionate. The last clause is a paradoxical one in which there is a sense of affiliation between Muslims and non-Muslims; in the same time, the call and adherence for Crusades in 1095 is mentioned to remind Muslim of hostility, strangely.

### **5.3 Mental Processes:**

The mental processes are denoted by the verbs "know", "love", "think" and "mean". Thirty clauses are monitored. The linguistic structures of its phenomenon vary regarding its direct object, embedded clauses, or phraseological levels.

**Table 4. Mental Processes**

NO		Senser	Mental	Phenomenon
1.	(Y)	I	know	that many people are watching this for the first time
2.	(Y)	I	would	really love to tell the story of that moment
3.	(M)	You	are known	as the kind of, they called you the Arab Jon Stewart
4.		I	think	the people in the room didn't know what to do with me because they ended up discussing my jokes
5.	(M)	I	didn't know	whether I was supposed to laugh or be silent
6.	(Y)	I	also acknowledge	that Hamas lived among civilian population in Gaza
7.	(Y)	I	don't know	the answers to those questions.
8.	(Y)	Never did I	know	a creature that looked like a man so keen and greedy... Confound, so confound of a man. You know, I messed it up anyways
9.	(Y)	You	know	how many people they killed?
10.	(Y)	I	mean	, you know, the ghost of the 91 British soldiers, that must be haunting for them
11.	(Y)	I	think	it is important to have a nuanced, deep, interesting, intelligent conversation.
12.	(M)	I	Think	what this interview did, it made a lot of people think, 'Wow, all right, this is incredible.
13.	(Y)	I	Think	the list was insulting Islam, insulting the president, spreading false rumors, and disrupting the fabric of society.
14.	(Y)	a lot of people	Think	that I'm here on asylum.
15.	(M)	I	absolutely think	that Israel has a right to defend itself from the people who committed it, Hamas.
16.	(Y)	I	don't think	Netanyahu will ever be the person to do that.
17.	(Y)	I	Think	it's ridiculous that Israel should have that power over millions of people who are not part of their country.
18.	(Y)	I	Think	it's terrible what's happening in the West Bank with the settlers.
19.	(Y)	I	Think	that the stuff there is completely easy to condemn.
20.	(M)	I	Think	that's a very, well, it's a position I can completely respect.
21.	(Y)	I	Think	it's an important issue.
22.	(Y)	I	Think	there is a rise of anti-Semitism in the world and I think this is very dangerous.
23.	(Y)	I	Think	it is very important to agree on the language because the word anti-Semite has been used



				and abused and most of the time, not for the good interest of the Jewish people.
24.	(M)	I	Think	you can be very critical of Israeli government and their policies and Benjamin Netanyahu and the politicians.
25.	(Y)	All they can think about	is that	these are their enemies that have been hurt.
27.	(M)	I	Think	it's been a deceit to the world.
28.	(M)	I	Think	that has been incredibly inflammatory.
29.	(M)	I	don't think	he's ever going to actually want to forge peace.
30.	(M)	I	Think	he was instrumental with Hamas in wanting to keep them in power

The first structure expresses Youssef's admittance of some people of their acquaintance of following this interview. The second clause is introduced by the verb "love" which Youssef admits of telling the story of the moment when he has been arrested. The third clause is denoted by Morgan who praises Youssef and his program as the Arab John Stewart. As for the 4<sup>th</sup> clause, Youssef speaks about his imprisonment when has been arrested; the most laughable moment is when he makes all people laugh on telling jokes with them. In addition, he does not know either to keep silent or to speak with them funnily as in the fifth clause. The 6<sup>th</sup> clause expresses Morgan's astonishment and his satirical tendency of Hamas' disappearance among the civilians, which makes it difficult for Israel to strike any buildings.

Ironically, Youssef denies any response for these questions. The eighth clause expresses Youssef's ironical tendency. The 9<sup>th</sup> clause expresses Morgan's ironical attitude in the numeration of "how many people" that Hamas have killed. The tenth clause speaks about the historical record of the bloody deeds for the ninety-one soldiers who have been haunted. The 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> clauses expresses Youssef's viewpoint through the verb "think". The 11<sup>th</sup> clause denotes Youssef's simple opinion in the embedded clause which is attended by the direct object "conversation" pre-modified by "nuance, deep, interesting, and intelligent". As for the 12<sup>th</sup> clause, Youssef praises his interview with Morgan; in other words, this interview makes people think. The 13<sup>th</sup> clause, however, expresses Youssef's hatred for Dr. Morsi's reign when Youssef has been accused of insulting Islam and the President, spreading false rumors, and fabricating stories for deconstructing the society.

The 14<sup>th</sup> clause refers to many people's belief that Youssef is on TV in England as an asylum; nonetheless, that is not correct. The 15<sup>th</sup>

clause, however, personifies Morgan's sympathy with Israel who has the right to defend against the terrorist, Hamas. Youssef contradicts Morgan's viewpoint by calling for peace especially from Netanyahu. In the 17<sup>th</sup> clause, Youssef satirizes and makes fun of Israel who has been given the absolute power to control millions of people, not theirs. Youssef's ongoing irony extends to the 18<sup>th</sup> clause by violating the settler's rights. The 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup> clauses belong to Youssef in which he demonstrates his attitude. He denounces all Israel's genocide; in the same time, only Arabs are skillful at condemning. In the 21<sup>st</sup> clause, he speaks about divergence between the two sides which makes it a serious issue as shown in the embedded clause.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> clause expresses his continual attitude against the Jews through the complementizer phrase which expresses the hatred for the Jews as a dangerous approach in the passive structure of the 23<sup>rd</sup> clause. The 24<sup>th</sup> clause revolves around the critical policies which Netanyahu proceeds on. The 25<sup>th</sup> clause is associated with the fierceness and brutality of Netanyahu in tracing his so-called enemies, Hamas. The 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> clauses express Youssef's contradictory tendency toward Hamas. He speaks about their deceit in taking refugees and hostages. In the 28<sup>th</sup> clause, he speaks about the escalated status quo. In the 29<sup>th</sup> clause, Youssef compliments Netanyahu through the negative structure of "don't think" and the complementizer phrase which admits Netanyahu continual pursuit of peace.

#### **5.4 Behavioral Processes:**

**Table 5. Behavioral Processes**

NO		Behaver	Behavioral	Behavior
1.	(Y)	I	believe	that they are right to try and destroy Hamas.
2.	(M)	They	believe	passionately in their just cause
3.	(M)	I	do believe	they're terrorists
4.	(M)	I	believe	they lied about the last..
5.	(M)	I	don't believe	Hamas can possibly stay in any position of authority in Gaza.
6.	(M)	I	did not believe	we had seen evidence that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction
7.	(M)	I	believe	Israel has a fundamental right, and a duty to defend its people from them doing it again.
8.	(M)	I	believe	it was, in a way that Iraq wasn't.
9.	(M)	I	believe	that Afghanistan was harboring terrorists, Al-Qaeda
10.		I	don't believe	that we have made a great wrong

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				to the Red Indians of America
11.	(M)	I	actually believe	there is a middle ground between everybody and they can meet.
12.	(M)	I	do believe	they're terrorists
13.	(Y)	I	watched	the news and there was a lot of protest that was led by Jewish Voice for Peace
14.	(Y)	many people	are watching	this for the first time
15.	(Y)		look	at those Arabs. Oh, they're killing each other. Oh, Israel is good that they got rid of them.
16.	(Y)	When you	see	how Israelis talk inside their community, there was a very famous post.
17.	(Y)	We	don't look	at what was happening over that
18.	(Y)		Look	at the map... Hamas...
19.	(M)	a lot of the Israel Administration	look upon	Palestinians as lesser people.
20.	(M)	You	have to look at	what happened on October the 7 <sup>th</sup> and feel utterly outraged and disgusted for the loss of human life
21.	(Y)	the West	do not look at	us as equals.
22.	(Y)	They	even look at	Ethiopian Jews and Yemeni Jews like less
23.	(Y)	Nobody	had gone	there before

As far as the demonstration of the behavioral processes is pertinent, the speaker's choices highlight the emphasis on the use of the action verbs "believe", "look", "go", "see", and "watch". The intransitive verb "believe" is followed by complementizer clauses in twelve structures. In the twelve structures, the thematic role of the behavior varies both into the first person singular "I" and the third person plural "they" only in one structure. As for the first structure, the first person singular is pertinent to Morgan whose complementizer clause asserts his viewpoint of Israel in their wish to destroy Hamas; in other words, the subjective complement "right" emphasizes his desirability of getting rid of Hamas. In the second clause, the intransitive verb is followed by two phrases: adverbial and prepositional.

Morgan justifies the Jewish strike of Gaza through the intransitive verb "believe" followed by the prepositional phrase "in their just cause". The use of the pre-modifier adjective "just" identifies his bias for the Jews since it expresses his subjective opinion in the fairness and the entitlement of Israel to defend itself. The third clause is ascertained by the

emphatic structure of the action verb “do” preceded by the intransitive verb “believe”; in addition, its embedded clause contains the copulative verb to “be” which is conjugated in its imperfective form. The presence of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural “they” refers to Hamas; furthermore, the subjective complementation “terrorists” emphasizes Morgan’s viewpoint of Hamas. However, the fourth clause asserts a contradictory tendency of sorting Israel as liars through the intransitive verb “lie” included in the embedded clause.

The fifth clause ascertains the weakness of Hamas through the negative form “don’t believe” followed by the elliptical particle “that”. The embedded clause emphasizes the rejection of Hamas in any authority in Gaza. However, the speech included in the sixth clause revolves around the late President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, through the negative form of the intransitive verb “believe” in its perfective pattern. Youssef tries to acquit Saddam Hussein through the embedded clause in which he defends Saddam through discarding any accusations related to the mass destructive weapons, through the visual imagery of the verb “see” followed by another embedded clause ascertaining the availability of mass destructive weapons.

In the seventh clause, Morgan tries to give Israel the right to defend its people and lands against any aggression through the embedded clause including the mono-transitive verb “defend”. The eighth clause identifies a fraternal justification of Youssef in alignment with Iraq that is oppressed and prejudiced from the United Nations’ resolution in 2003. Nonetheless, Youssef in the ninth clause originates the fundamental reasons for terrorism in Afghanistan which harbors many organizations, the most famous of which is Al-Qaeda. The tenth clause refers to some ironical tendencies since Morgan’s negative structure “don’t believe” is followed by denying any making any wrong to the American Red Indians. That is, he wants to acquit the black history of America from any dilemma. In the eleventh clause, Youssef ascertains the co-existence if there is a mutual ground for the Palestinians and Jewish to meet and talk. His speech refers to an amicable solution rather than the bellicose one.

As for the transitive verb “watch”, there are two clauses which are presented by the mono-transitive verb in its affirmative state. The first structure expresses the follow-up of news; in addition, the coordinator conjunction “and” is followed by the subjective complement “protests” which denotes the rejection and the refusal led by the Jewish voice calling for peace. The second structure of the mono-transitive verb “watch” is followed by the direct object represented in the demonstrative “this” and

the PP “for the first time”. The demonstrative “this” refers to demonstrations led by the Jewish protestors. As for the intransitive verb “look”, there are seven clauses five of which is followed by the preposition “at” followed by a NP namely “those Arabs”, “at what was happening over that”, “at the map”, “what happened on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October”, “us as equals”, and “Ethiopian Jews and Yemini Jews like less”. Two structures are followed by the relative clause “what” followed by the occurrence of events. Nonetheless, the most remarkable of which is the seventh of October 2023. The coordinator conjunction “and” is followed by the copulative verb “feel” followed by the adverb “utterly” and the V-ed participle adjective “outraged” expressing the anger and the fury of Hamas’ attacks on the Jewish. Nonetheless, in the 6<sup>th</sup> clause, the negative structure of the verb “look” in “do not” denotes the inequality and racial discrimination, headed by the NP “The West” functioning as the subject who has a peculiar tendency.

### 5.5 Verbal Processes:

**Table 6. Verbal Processes**

NO		Sayer	Verbal	Verbiage
1.	(Y)	I	would say	it did not allow certain voices, certain voices from the other side to be heard.
2.	(M)	The ability of people	Is to say	what they honestly feel about a situation
3.	(M)	I	wanted to say	‘Listen, I’m trying to reach a place where I get this.’
4.	(M)	my instinct	is to say	that Israel has no choice but to respond to what happened in a very forceful manner
5.	(M)	They	resolutely refuse to say	that they can condemn the terror attacks. I find that less worthy of respect.
6.	(Y)	They	Say	Jihad, they sound like a horse, ‘Jihad.’ It’s very funny.
7.	(Y)	They	Say	like these are, and I quote, ‘Iranian-backed jihadists.’
8.	(Y)	I	Said	like, ‘I have like a huge show.
9.	(M)	I	said to you	before that I was an editor of a <i>Daily Mirror</i> in England when we opposed the Iraq War for example.
10.	(M)	He	Said	‘Sometimes a one-line tweet can be unnecessarily inflammatory to people
11.	(M)	I	Said	‘At what point does what Israel is currently doing to the Palestinian people will become terrorism?’
12.	(Y)	a lot of rabbis	Said	‘It’s a Promised Land, but only when the Messiah comes.’
13.	(Y)	He	Said	‘The average Israeli citizen does not have a vision of Peace because for 70 years, this is a country that military war

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				has been going on for.
14.	(M)	She	Said	'This is the first time in modern history there's such human suffering and the world is not even calling for ceasefire.
15.	(Y)	I	want to say	something about what Queen Rania said. Okay, the whole idea about like the West, I think that in three weeks, Israel morally corrupted the West like no other.
16.	(M)	He	Said	there is, 'I don't care about a proportionate response.
17.	(Y)	He	Said	'What is so horrific about understanding that the whole Palestinians people are our enemies.
18.	(Y)	I	had said	that 40 babies have been beheaded.
19.	(Y)	the Sky News	Said	'We cannot confirm any of this but we will show it anyways.' This is a lying government.
20.	(M)	They	Said	things that turned out not to be true.
21.		the Baptist Hospital	Said	that they have received warning, multiple warnings from Israel that they're going to hit the hospital
22.	(Y)	They	Said	they don't want to depend on the milk coming from the Kibbutz.
23.	(Y)	A resolution offered in the Knesset	Said	that Israel should be a state for all of its citizens.

There are 23 clauses included within the verbal processes. All of these processes include the verb “say” followed by the verbiage. The first clause calls for equality and fraternity between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides. That is, there is a possible opportunity for both sides to talk peacefully. The second clause affirms that by feeling safe during a situation. Nevertheless, the 4<sup>th</sup> clause calls for fury through Morgan's viewpoint who gives the Israeli sides the entitlement of defense against the attacks of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 even fiercely. The fifth clause identifies Morgan's righteousness of condemning some Arab countries supporting Hamas for their attacks which evoke Morgan to find these countries' situation less worthy to respect.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> clause, Youssef insults and makes fun of the Islamic who call for Jihad, resembling them to a horse. Then, he follows his speech by “It is very funny”. In other words, he admits that Jihadists come from Iran to stir unrest in the Arab countries as in the 7<sup>th</sup> clause. In the 8<sup>th</sup> clause, Youssef feels boastful since he is informed that he has many followers for his favorite program which makes him a huge show. The 9<sup>th</sup> clause evokes Morgan's sensations of anger who he says that he has opposed the American war on Iraq especially when he has been the editor of *The*



*Daily Mirror*. He refuses any tweets which can increase people inflames in time of disasters and wars. Nonetheless, Youssef feels fraternal to those poor Palestinians who are struck every moment; that is, people feel terrified of what Israel does every day.

Contradictorily, Morgan denies Youssef's feelings; he tells him that many rabbis say that Jerusalem is the Promised Land only on the coming of Messiah. Youssef rejects Morgan's speech, denouncing Israel for its bloody deeds and the citizens who do not know anything about peace. Also, Youssef condemns the silence of the entire international community seeing fire daily poured on infants and seeing infanticide without any little condemnations. The fifteen clause speaks about Queen Rania's statement; Youssef rejects hers since they oppose and denounce the Egyptian authority. However, he justifies his denial by stating that the Palestinians are people, not enemies. On sharp contrast, the West makes the Palestinians real enemies.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> clause, Youssef feels bias towards the Palestinian children through the embedded clause in which the passive structure of the perfective form is headed by "forty children" and tailed by the savage imagery of "beheaded". He, also, goes on admitting that the Western media adopts the same opinion of the lying government. Ironically, Morgan defends Israel's deeds when he justifies Israeli's trike for the Baptists hospital since Israel forewarns and bids them to evacuate the hospital otherwise there is an eminent bombarding. Finally, Morgan demonstrates his total bias by stating that the Knesset issues a resolution in which Israel should be the state for its citizens. This speech denotes his complete bias towards his fraternal Jews.

## 5.6 Existential Processes:

Regarding the extracted processes, there are thirty-two clauses all of which are presented by the dummy subject "there" followed by the copulative verb to "be". However, there are varieties of its subjective complements. Furthermore, these clauses are direct speech pertinent to Youssef and Morgan.

**Table 7. Existential Processes**

NO		Subject	Existential	Existent
1.	(Y)	There	Was	a backlash
2.	(Y)	There	Is also	a backlash
3.	(Y)	There	Are	a lot of people who went to my show
4.	(Y)	There	Was	a song that I did that was very controversial
5.	(Y)	There	Was	no internet as you have.
6.	(Y)	There	Is	a lot of points, very lot
7.	(Y)	There	Is	a whole thing about like
8.	(Y)		is	the right to defend itself, the condemnation

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9.	(Y)	There	is	a rise of anti-Semitism in the world
10.	(Y)	There	were	terrorist attacks somewhere and that reflects on us
11.	(Y)	There	was	a lot of protest that was led by Jewish Voice for Peace and they were read by people who opposed the Israeli attack on the civilians
12.	(Y)	There	was	like a bomb or like an attack on American troops, people would celebrate
13.	(Y)	There	was	like the Eastern Jew in Ukraine and Russia
14.	(Y)	There	was	the Western Jews in Europe.
15.	(Y)	There	are	too many Jews, we need a solution.
16.	(Y)	But there	were	other options: Argentina, South Africa, Uganda, Madagascar.
17.	(Y)	There	were	700,000 people living in Palestine, 3% were Jewish, in 1914
18.	(Y)	there	were	2 million people living there, only 30% of them was Jews
19.	(Y)	There	was	a lot of, as you know,
20.	(Y)	There	is	an incredible movie called 'TANTURA' where the Israeli members of those militias
21.	(Y)	There	was	like a vibrant Palestinian culture happening
22.	(Y)	There	is	a cause on both sides but I'm working on a tightrope here because I'm not a Palestinian
23.	(Y)	There	are	2.2 million people living in Gaza
24.	(Y)	There	are	3.5 million people living in the West Bank
25.	(Y)	There	is	350,000 people living in East Jerusalem
26.	(Y)	There	is	six or seven million people living outside
27.	(M)	There	was	a great deal to be done
28.	(Y)	There	was	a video for Netanyahu
29.	(Y)	There	was	going to be no peace.'
30.	(M)	There	are	40,000 or so Hamas terrorists in their eyes who need to be got rid of and I do believe they're terrorists
31.	(M)	There	are	a lot of parallels given the way they behave on October the 7th to Isis
32.	(M)	There	was	a report and you and I have this discussion on there

Regarding the first two structures, both share similarities in all phraseological levels; nonetheless, the first one differs from the second in the conjugation of verb to "be". The subjective complements "a backlash" refers to a severe reaction. The third one asserts Youssef's self-confidence of pursuing his desire of following his program through the quantifier "a lot of" which is followed by the NP "people" pre-modified by the relative clause "who went to my show". The 4<sup>th</sup> clause identifies Youssef's famous song of his famous program. Speaking about the

demonstrations of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2011, Youssef admits that the internet is out of service.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> clause, the existent denotes an uprising movement against the Jews through the NP “anti-Semitism” followed by the PP “in the world” referring to its comprehensiveness. The following clause refers to the 7<sup>th</sup> of October through the subjective complement “terrorist attacks”; the relative clause “that reflects on us” identifies the dire consequences of these attacks especially on Arabs. The 10<sup>th</sup> clause denotes some anger and fury towards the Israeli policy. The 11<sup>th</sup> clause refers to anger against the American policy through the PP “like a bomb” or like an attack on American troops; the clause “people would celebrate” refers to the amount of happiness when America has been attacked.

The 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> clauses denote the distribution of the Jews in Europe especially in Ukraine and Russia. The 16<sup>th</sup> clause, however, admits the priority of the Palestinians and their numbers in comparison to the Jews who represent only 3% in 1914. This percentage expresses lands without any entitlement. The 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> clauses present the demographical numeration of people especially in Gaza, West bank, and East Jerusalem. The 26<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> clauses express some apprehensions of violence especially in the subjective complement “no peace”. Notwithstanding, the 29<sup>th</sup> clause introduces terrorism incarnated in Hamas; the clause “I do believe they’re terrorist” identifies Morgan’s bias toward the Jews, through the emphatic structure of “do believe”. The 30<sup>th</sup> clause expresses some expectations of the attack of Hamas occurring on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023.

**Table 8. Processes’ Distribution between Youssef and Morgan**

	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Existential</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Behavioral</b>	<b>Verbal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Youssef</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Morgan</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>50</b>

It is notable that Youssef’s processes exceed Morgan’s with the exception of the behavioral processes. As for material process, Youssef expresses his satirical attitudes through affirmative materialistic activities except for three positions “not condoning”, “should not kick”, and “will never give”, which convey his absolute awareness and sheer acknowledgement of attaining any fraternal sensations. The goals of his materialistic processes are triggered by different issues. The most important issue is the speech about Israel and Hamas. Satirically, he expresses many paradoxical viewpoints in rendering a peaceful co-existence with each other; however, he expresses his aggressive attitude

towards Hamas. As for behavioral processes, Morgan exceeds Youssef. Morgan builds his beliefs on the notion of suspicions and personal tendencies. Morgan's processes are, statically, featured by the presence of the verb "believe". Furthermore, there is a repetition of the NP "Hamas" in relation to "terrorists", "lie", and "harboring terrorists". As for Youssef, he makes sue of the intransitive verb "look". Satirically, the negative pattern of the verb "look" in 21 denotes the racial discrimination and the apartheid of the West's look for the east.

As for the relational processes, Youssef succeeds in reproducing his satirical tendencies by parallelizing fabrications of Muslim Brotherhoods. The attributes are featured by aggressive approach towards Hamas. The NP "aliens" expresses his satirical viewpoint of feeling desolate. Furthermore, he satirizes the Jews in more than one position. As for Morgan, he expresses his hostility towards Hams through delegating Israel to get rid of Hamas. Contradictorily, he feels unsatisfied in Netanyahu's policy towards his people through eth predicative adjective "unhappy". The existential processes are featured by Youssef's dominance over Morgan. Youssef criticizes the American policy especially in the Middle East area. Satirically, he heaps a lot of accusations towards Hams and their deeds. In the same time, he announces the Palestinians' entitlement of lands. HE goes on his satirical tendency of the movie "Tantura" which portrays and incarnates the real face of the Jew's terrorism. However, Morgan's existential processes revolve around Hamas and their hindrance for the peace process.

As for the verbal processes, Youssef exceeds Morgan. Youssef, satirically, tries to conceal his doubts and confusion through the embedded clauses which call for paradoxical structures. He makes fun of Jihadist, resembling them to horse. Peculiarly, he feels sympathetic with the Jewish rabbis who call for the Promised Land, reinforcing his political attitude in the 23<sup>rd</sup> clause. Satirically, the 18<sup>th</sup> clause moves and mobile his parental feelings of infanticide of the forty-beheaded children. Morgan, however, guarantees Israel the right of defending itself and its citizens. Mentally, Youssef's processes are featured by their neutrality, the most prominent of which is the verb "think" which evokes the sensation of uncertainty. The verb "know" is distributed on Youssef and Morgan. The embedded clause "9" satirizes the American policy through the interrogative form. Morgan admits his bias for Israel's military solution to defend itself. Satirically, he confesses of Netanyahu's excessive force in discarding and destroying Hamas.

### 5.7 Analysis of Ideology-based Excerpts

The major claim of the present study is that the interview is in essence a debate between two representatives of two different cultures and two different ideologies. In this section, certain excerpts which are crucial to the main theme of the talk, are analyzed in the light of the six processes of *Transitivity System*. Each excerpt is divided into sentences arranged alphabetically. The excerpts are listed in the Appendices.

Excerpt 1 (see Appendix A), quoted from Morgan's turn, includes 19 sentences where the thematic role of the actor is assigned to the first-person pronoun *I*. This excerpt reflects material processes highlighting actions such as observing (the verb *viewed* in sentence a), defending (the verb *defend* in sentence b), inquiring (the verb *question* in sentence c), and expressing (the verb *said* in sentence c). The material process here includes mental process which is reflected by verbs such as *think* in sentences i, n, o and p), *understand* in sentences g and h, *know* in sentences e and i. The material processes in this excerpt are integrated with mental and verbal processes, referring to the physical, cognitive and communicative attitude of the speaker (i.e. Morgan). As claimed in this study, each of the two speakers represents both his country and his own ideology. In sentence b, the material process includes a mental process (the verb *think*):

- **Process:** the verb *defend* (the material process here indicates an act of defence).
- **Actor:** The noun *Israel* (who is taking the defending action).
- **Goal:** the reflexive pronoun *itself* (the entity which is being defended).
- **Circumstance:** providing additional details of the context (from the people who committed it, *Hamas*).

The excerpt does not have relational process and this implies that Morgan's words feel more action or dialogue heavy. The behavioral process is illustrated by Morgan's use of the action verbs *believe* which is followed by a complementizer clause. In this excerpt, the thematic role of the behavior is assigned only to the first-person singular *I* which is pertinent to Morgan. His points of view stress Israel's right to destroy Hamas.

#### - Excerpt 2. (Bassem Youssef)

In excerpt 2 (Appendix B), the most prominent process is the Verbal Process. In *Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)*, the Transitivity System, this process refers to the act of communicating or

saying. All verbal interactions are included under the target of verbal process which mainly focuses on the act of expression and the mental interpretations of meaning; accordingly, a verbal process creates a link between mental and material processes. In paragraphs (a-e) in excerpt 2, Youssef refers to a documentary which ironically and implicitly mocks Israel's policies. The elements of the verbal process are:

- **Sayer:** The person responsible for the verbal action (e.g., Bassem Youssef).
- **Verbiage:** The content or message being communicated.  
(a cow is actually running and the Israeli soldiers are running behind it. And they corner it, and they corner it, and they're about to kill it..... But you see, this is the ideology of the Israeli ruling party)
- **Receiver:** The participant who receives the communication (Morgan and the audience).
- **Target:** What is being referred to or acted upon within the verbal process (Israel oppressive policies towards the week represented as Cows).

The Verbal process illustrated here is embedded under the ideational metafunction. It represents interactions and dialogue within a text and is crucial in narratives where meaning is transferred. What Bassem Youssef is doing here is telling an anecdote that summarizes the practices of the Israeli soldiers in a technique similar to Black Comedy, so only verbal process is prominent here.

Youssef employed black comedy in his interview/debate with Morgan to discuss crucial political issues, among them are Hamas-Israeli conflict. Black comedy was Youssef's weapon to underpin the contradictions and injustice in the debate about these political issues, especially the humiliating the Palestinians and portraying Israel as a victim. Through black comedy and dark humour, Youssef challenges world-wide propaganda and depict the devastating realities of the political situation without using explicit clash and confrontation.

Youssef's interview/debate raises many issues: Hamas and Israel conflict, the failure of the Western media in handling the Palestinian situation, hostility against Israeli practices, a threat of Third World War, and living in a mutual homeland in a kind of peaceful co-existence between Hamas and Israel. In the debate, Morgan explicitly attempts to ask Youssef to convict Hamas. For Youssef, condemning any side does not offer any actual solution to end up the ongoing devastating conflict.



Youssef blames the Western media for the inappropriate handling of the Palestinian case and ignoring its origins and reasons of this hostility. Morgan asks Youssef about Queen Rania's speech and why she could not receive the Palestinians in spite of sympathizing with them. For Youssef, such questions are meant to justify Third World War which is an illogical solution that renders nothing but more disorder in the entire area.

In the two excerpts, Youssef comments on the media failure in covering this dehumanizing situation and ignoring all that happens. The Western media, in Youssef's terms, gives up reflecting and telling the truth. When reflecting his views on Zionism, Youssef is speaking cautiously to explain and clarify truth completely: for example, he talked about Semitism and the everlasting resentment of it. In many situations, Youssef narrates some historical events in a humorous manner to encourage his followers to think of these events: Continuous reference to documentaries, books and some recorded interviews was observed in this second interview.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Youssef ridiculed Israel's dehumanising civilians in Gaza, calling it a terrorist government. His ironical, satirical and humorous approach aims to highlight the seriousness of the humanitarian catastrophe and help the audience reflect on the ethical and moral considerations of actions. In this study, the use of humour is assumed to be a strategy to handle the emotional and expressive weight of the subject matter, making it more comprehensible and accessible to the audience. Youssef's manipulation of black comedy is viewed as an effective means of appealing world-wide audience. The study suggests that the linguistic tools are meant to elicit critical thinking, and at the same time maintain different levels of entertainment that keep the audience involved.

As for material processes, Youssef exceeds Morgan in rendering his satirical tendencies; except that Morgan's interrogative forms add circumstances of place and time. They, also, keep in touch with the thematic role adhered to the subject in the process in such a way that Youssef stresses his confusion and eminent apprehensions on the entire area. In the mental processes, both Morgan and Youssef tend to make much use of their expressive thoughts of the verbs "believe" and "think". However, Youssef adheres to the solutions of his embedded clauses. Finally, the analysis shows Youssef's preferentiality for using paradoxical structures indicating satire and mockery. Nevertheless, Morgan tends to

adhere to support the Jews in his solace for them after the attacks of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023.

Bassem Youssef used humour in his interview in order to express his own opinions, and construct his arguments, and finally to provide some certain knowledge on the Hamas attacks on Israeli bases. contemporary social issues. These ideas collectively demonstrate how the language of the two parties serve as a medium for political commentary and explanation, using humour, from one party, as a powerful tool to involve and stimulate the audience. Finally, this study attempts to contribute to a better understanding of the interaction between media, satire and politics, and stress the implication of manipulating humour as a influential instrument for political engagement and commentary.

The study has investigated the way Morgan and Youssef recreate their political satirical tendencies through the experiential meanings of the ideational Metafunction during their second interview by referring to the six processes of the Transitivity System. The findings have attempted to illustrate that both Morgan and Youssef succeed in conveying their orientations towards the image of policy as depicted in their interview. Throughout the entire interview, the behavioral processes which are carried out by narrating past events and commenting on previous actions outweigh other processes and this stresses the idea that the interview is actually a *Debate* that reflects the different ideologies of the West versus the East. By employing subjective complements that reflect, in a satirical manner, his views on many issues, Youssef tends to make use of the relational processes.

The main conclusion of the present study is that *Humorous Discourse* has to be dealt with as a type of contemporary and historical Black Comedy, similar to the satirical work of Jonathan Swift and the comic films of Charlie Chaplin. The interview/debate, which is the core of this study, resembles modern TV shows such as *The Daily Show* and *Veep*. When Youssef addressed dark issues with humour, the Black Comedy he presented is actually a powerful tool for social change and political insights.

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**Appendices**  
**Appendix A**

**- Excerpt 1. (by Morgan)**

- a. I viewed what happened on October the 7th as is an absolutely appalling atrocity, a terror attack of unimaginable horror.
- b. And I absolutely think that Israel has a right to defend itself from the people who committed it, Hamas.
- c. And I've questioned for the last three, four weeks, 'What is a proportionate response?' And I have said repeatedly, 'I don't know the answer.'
- d. I want people who have a view to have a view about that and I'll ask you again about where you think we are with this. I also acknowledge that Hamas lived among civilian population in Gaza and therefore if you do what the Israelis are currently doing which is a ground offensive into Gaza, a lot of civilians are going to get killed, and at what point does that become disproportionate or even illegal?
- e. And I don't know the answers to those questions.
- f. And I have a moral quandary because my instinct is to say that Israel has no choice but to respond to what happened in a very forceful manner.
- g. I understand why they want to eliminate Hamas altogether.
- h. I understand that if they feel they can, then perhaps we can move to a two-state solution or peace or whatever it may be.
- i. Although, I don't think Netanyahu will ever be the person to do that.
- j. But the moral question for me is, at what point does this become disproportionate?
- k. And when you see thousands of children being killed in Gaza, it fills me with utter horror.
- l. And then people say, 'Well, do you condemn it?'
- m. And I find it very easy to condemn Israel turning off the water, Israel turning off the power.
- n. I think it's ridiculous that Israel should have that power over millions of people who are not part of their country.
- o. I think it's terrible what's happening in the West Bank with the settlers.
- p. I think that the stuff there is completely easy to condemn.
- q. But can I, hand on heart, condemn Israel trying to destroy Hamas after what they did on October 7th?
- r. That is where I'm struggling to find myself saying I condemn it because I believe that they are right to try and destroy Hamas.
- s. Now, what do you feel about my moral quandary?



Appendix B

- a. There is a hilarious documentary called 'The Wanted 18'. It is like an Israeli Palestinian co-production and it tells about the incredible story about the residents of Beit Sahour.
- b. It's a Palestinian town next to the Na... and they said they don't want to depend on the milk coming from the Kibbutz. So they bought 18 cows, 18 cows, and they didn't know how to milk the cows or have a cow farm. So they were like engineers and doctors. They sent people to kind of like to learn how to do the farm. So they bought the cows and they started to produce milk and they started to sell the milk to the villages. The Israeli authorities were not very comfortable. So one day, the military government came in and said, 'Those cows,' and I quote, 'constitute an existential threat to the national security of the state of Israel.'
- c. You need to get rid of them.' And the movie goes about the hilarious attempts of hiding those cows between the butchers and the houses. And in one scene, a cow is actually running and the Israeli soldiers are running behind it. And they corner it, and they corner it, and they're about to kill it.
- d. You know what did the cow say? (both silent.) You didn't fall for this. Cows don't speak, yeah,(both laughter) but you know, it actually said something. You know what did it say? 'Hammuuuuuus!!' (both laughter.) It said, 'But anyways.' But you see, this is the ideology of the Israeli ruling party.
- e. They are not interested. They're not even allowing you to get your own cows. I mean, this, I want to discuss something that is very important because we have been talking about Israel being a democratic state, a secular state for all of its citizens, including its Arab residents, right? Wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong. In 2018, there was a resolution that was offered in the Knesset that said that Israel should be a state for all of its citizens.
- f. That seems basic, right? That resolution was not even allowed to be discussed. Like, why? And the rebuttal was, 'Israel being the state of all of its citizens would threaten the character of the Jewish state.' There is, I have a friend of mine, his name is Andrew. He's a Palestinian Christian. They do exist. And his family comes from a town called Tarshihah.
- g. As many Palestinian towns, these were like, you know, being had another Israel town called Kaffar Rin. It is a left-leaning town. They voted against Netanyahu by 70% and they announced an auction to sell houses. And then they noticed that most of the applicants were Palestinians.
- h. They cancelled the auction.x.Why? Because in each Jewish town, there is something called an admission committee that can decide who can live in this town. Sounds like Jim Crow for me. And then they cancel, and you know, you know what they say in the reason? They say Kaffar Radim welcomes all citizens of Israel despite the race, gender, or colour. However, the majority of the town would like to preserve the character of the town as being Jewish, Zionist, and secular.

i. How does this go together, secular and Jewish aside, you know? And this brings me to this picture. This is a very famous picture. You know, remember this picture? I'm sure you've seen it. Yeah, this, for the people who don't know, this from St. Augustine, Florida, 18th of June, 1964. This was a white-only motel, and these are black activists who wanted to defy the law and jump into the hotel.

j. This guy, he's the hotel owner, his name is James Brock, and he was pouring acid to scare them out of the hotel. His neighbour said that James Brock was a victim because he was just following the law. And you know what James Brock said? He said, 'It's not like I don't like black people. I just don't like them in my swimming pools.' Now, if an official said that, wouldn't you say that this town has kind of a systemic racism?