

THE 2010 MORRIS COLLOQUIUM PUBLIC LECTURE

Can Humor Be Immoral?

Professor David Benatar
Department of Philosophy
University of Cape Town, South Africa

Tuesday, April 20
7:00-9:00 p.m.
Old Main Chapel



In spite of – or perhaps because of – the fact that humor can be so enjoyable, it has the capacity to cause significant offense. One disagreement about the ethics of humor is whether typical moral breaches in this area are as serious as would be suggested by the outrage they often cause. Some hold that humor is a trivial matter and that even when it is errant, it is relatively harmless. Others take (purported) breaches of humor ethics much more seriously. This lecture will examine the ethics of humor and will seek to answer the question “When, if ever, is humor immoral?” Among the types of humor that will be discussed are ones that involve racial, gender or ethnic stereotypes or that offend religious sensibilities.

David Benatar is Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. His research interests are primarily in moral philosophy and related areas. He has published articles on a variety of subjects including cloning, suicide, same-sex marriage, corporal punishment, animal experimentation, gender discrimination, and the ethics of humor. He is the editor of four books and author of a fifth, as well as the author of “Philosopher Interested in Area Man, but not in a Gay Way,” in the forthcoming collection, *The Onion and Philosophy* (Open Court).

The Morris Colloquium, an annual conference in memory of Bertram Morris (Professor of Philosophy, University of Colorado), is organized by the Philosophy Department of the University of Colorado and supported by the generous contributions of the Bertram Morris Fund.

University of Colorado at Boulder

Spring 2010

Bertram Morris Colloquium



presents

David Benatar

Chair, Department of Philosophy
University of Cape Town

with a departmental talk on

“The Second Sexism”

Monday, April 19th

3:15–5:00 PM

Ekeley Sciences E1B20

Simone de Beauvoir described females as the second sex. Whether or not that description is still apt everywhere, discrimination against males is the “second sexism”—the form of sex discrimination that goes unnoticed or at least receives too little attention. This presentation will show that males suffer a number of serious forms of disadvantage and that many of these are a consequence of wrongful sex discrimination. Various objections to this claim will be considered and rejected.

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