

Humor Mekuvvan: Research Journal in Humor Studies

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Abstracts

*Following are abstracts in English
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Ironic Utterances as a Sort of Humor in the Israeli Politics

Dr. Rama Manor & Dr. Avi Gvura*

Abstract

This article deals with a few ironic expressions used by different interviewers in television interviews during the elections campaign in 2013.

The ironic expressions as a type of humor are unique in a linguistic-rhetorical sense as being a part of a causal-pragmatic textual context.

In this article, we point to the functions they play in a political interview prior to the elections.

The irony, as a kind of humor which is used by the interviewer, emphasizes in the article the a-symmetric relations between the interviewer and the interviewee: supremacy-inferiority relations; conflict-completion relations. These relations are evident in the framework of polemic situations where there is no single unequivocal truth.

The purpose of the journalist-interviewer is to reveal through irony, as a humor way, the irony object being criticized. The interviewer reveals the lack of credibility of his interviewee, who mostly appears as a non-credible figure in the eyes of the public. It reveals also the flaws of the party he represents.

Key words: Humor, Irony, Television interview, A-symmetric relations, communicative discourse.

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Humor as a major theme in the corpus of Romanian Jewish folklore in the Israel Folktale Archives

Miri Yousov-Shalom

Abstract

The current article examines the dominance of humor in the Romanian-Jewish corpus in the Israel Folktale Archives. It focuses on the theme of humor and religion, presenting sarcastic descriptions of the Jewish religion, the figure of the rabbi and his helpers. The article further presents close studies of stories which break down the stereotype of the Jewish woman's modesty within the Jewish community, which declared that a woman's place is in the home, and therefore is excluded from public community works. The article studies the theme of humor and feminine sexuality to reveal a different type of Jewish woman, one without inhibitions, a lustful and experienced being. The synthesis of the sophisticated humor referring to religion and sexuality, often in combination, reflects the Romanian Jewish community's ability to call a spade a spade, to laugh and enjoy themes perceived as untouchable by the general Israeli society.

Key words: humor, religion, gender, sex and sexuality.

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Layered humor and information serendipity in Eretz Nehederet's musical parody: 'A Sweetheart from Life'

Yosef Solomon*

Abstract

Eretz Nehedert, an Israeli satirical television program, recently launched a humoristic song entitled 'A Sweetheart from Life' that won public acclaim. The song, a parody that highlights the superficiality of lyrics and content of the contemporary Mediterranean-Israeli songs genre, is found to conceal a profound scientific foundation of the field of information studies. Findings demonstrate that the song supports the framework of Erdelez's *Information Encountering* model, a key model for information serendipity – *i.e.*, chance and unexpected discovery of valuable information; while additionally augmenting current literature in three novel aspects: (a) expansion of existing knowledge with the possibility that info-serendipity may occur in the environs of cafés and eateries that involve interactions with staff; (b) sentimental value generated by the serendipitous episode may involve emotions of love; and (c) an internal order adjustment of two stages of the *IE* model, in a way that the 'Returning' (to the foreground concern) phase may precede the 'Capturing' phase. Finally, a subversive, incisive and courageous satirical layer embedded in the song, although not easily apparent, is presented. This article promotes a connection between seemingly unrelated topics: contemporary Israeli songs, humor and information studies, and hence is expected to enrich the research in all of those disciplines.

Keywords: Serendipity; Information Discovery; Humor; Eretz Nehederet; Contemporary Israeli Songs.

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Seventh and eighth grades students' attitudes toward Integrating humor in math Lessons

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of middle school students toward integrating humor in math lessons . It also compared students' attitudes to those of pre-service mathematics teachers (Gazit, 2013). Mathematics and humor are not seen as consistent with each other. Mathematics is seen as a subject is difficult to understand and its subject matter is isolated without any humanistic elements. Integrating humor in math lessons may create a pleasant atmosphere and reduce math anxiety. Humor can increase motivation as well as promoting creative thinking. A sample of 35 seventh graders and 36 eighth graders answered a questionnaire (Gazit, 2013). An important conclusion to be drawn from the findings is the positive attitudes of the students regarding the integration of humor in math lessons. It recommended strengthen math teacher to integrate humor in their lessons.

Key words: Humor, math teaching, students-attitudes

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Humoristic expressions in prisoners' language

Dr. Tami Yair*

Abstract

This paper examines humoristic expressions in the language of prisoners on four different levels: repetitions on the syntax level, combinations on the lexical-semantic level, contrast and pretension on the semantic pragmatic level and awareness of irony on the pragmatic level. Prisoners' language abounds with creative and picturesque expressions full of imagination and humor (Kaminski, 2003) reflecting stressful situations in their lives. The use of humorous expressions reduces the severity of these situations and makes them more tolerable (Einat, 2005).

Semi-structured phenomenological interviews were chosen for the purposes of this research. Each prisoner was interviewed separately in a place specially allotted by the prison authorities; all interviews were of the same length. The interviewees decided about the contents of their stories, a method that enabled uncovering latent contents which would not have been disclosed in structured interviews (Kvale, 1996). The texts were verbalized and examined for words expressing humor.

Findings indicate that interviewees' humoristic expressions help them describe various phenomena in prison and express negative feelings connected to their lives in a creative way. They enable interviewees to cope with sensitive, painful and problematic issues that bother them and ease up on the stress that exists between them and the prison team. In fact humorous expressions serve the cognitive, psychological and social needs of interviewees during their stay in prison.

Key words: humor, prisoners, language, prison

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The Maqama “Jesper and His Two Lovers” as a Menippean satire

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Abstract

This article is designed to examine the Menippean-Carnival style foundations of the Maqama called, “Jesper and His Two Lovers” written by Yaakov Ben Eliezer. I will show that the Maqama that was written at the end of the twelfth century in Toledo was characterized by qualities of genre and unique plot unfolding, which in turn, were suitable to the qualities of “the serious-funny” genre from the end of the classic ancient era. My claims in this article are based on researchers that established the connection between the eastern genre – the Maqama and the European carnival style genre – the Menippean satire. Ben Eliezer celebrates the values of the carnival, in its content and its main ideas. The claim that the literary work of Ben Eliezer contains carnival style elements is largely related to the historical period in which the author lived - Reconquista wars between Christians and Muslims. During this period Spanish Jewry experienced cultural and social changes. Ben Eliezer reveals the social changes taking place in reality, such that opposes social order.

Keywords: Ben Eliezer, carnival, Menippean satire, Maqama, Jasper

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"And then they all were dead": Humor in Grimm's Fairy-tales

Prof. Shimon Levy*

Abstract

Grimm's Fairy-tales reflect as well as shape German folklore, romanticism and growing nationalism. Side by side with replete depictions of extreme cruelty – like most fairy-tales and myths in other cultures - Grimm's collection also excels in many forms of humor: absurd, satirical, burlesque, nonsensical and often lighthearted and delicately funny excerpts. The following notes discuss a small selection of the fairy-tales, which, under Grimm's editing, is addressed to both children and adults.

Key Words: Fairy-tales, Brothers Grimm, humor, absurd, satire, nonsense, soothing effect, initiation, fear and fun

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A Stand-Up Show that turned, well, Alternative A Stand-Up Show that turned, well, Unorthodox/Unusual/Unconventional/Radical

Esti Adivi Shoshan*

Abstract

“...Good evening, good evening, goood eveninnng Cae...sa..rea!!!” This is the opening sentence of David Grossman’s novel “A Horse Walks into a Bar” (2014). It is also the opening sentence of the stand-up show running throughout the novel. The entire book is a description of a stand-up performance carried out by a 57 year-old stand-up comedian, Dovale Greenstein. This choice, of a comic performance as the heart of the book is unique in Modern Hebrew literature, which tends to use very little humor and satire. It is particularly unusual in David Grossman’s literature.

In the article I will describe Greenstein’s stand-up show in a club in Netanya in August 2013. I will focus on the show’s satirical aspects, on the way it pokes fun at the army’s overuse of force in its dealings with the Arab population. In addition, I will describe other stand-up performances that appear in the book and about which the main character tells us, his audience.

I will also describe Dovale’s efforts, as a young boy, to make his mother laugh. The comedian’s mother is a sad and very introverted holocaust survivor. I will describe the comic efforts on the part of the army van driver, who drives Dovale when he is a teenager to the funeral of ‘one of his parents’. The military’s refrainment from mentioning which of the parents it was who died helps build the case against it. And I will also describe the sneers and derisions suffered by Dovale from kids his age.

Next I will present the analogy between the secondary stand-up shows and the main one; I will point to the parallels the book presents between the stand-up stage and other, very different arenas, such as the boxing ring and the court room. The end of the article will present the varied motives in the book for attempting to make people laugh, and the different functions these attempts fulfill in those who make them and in those who listen to them.

Key Words: David Grossman, A Horse Walks into a Bar, Humor & Satire, Hebrew Literature, Stand-up.

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