

# **Humor Mekuvvan: Research Journal in Humor Studies**

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## ***Abstracts***

*Following are abstracts in English  
to the articles of  
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of the Hebrew version.*

## **Jewish Jokes about Jewish Women: seeking the hidden Gentile**

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**Christie Davies\***

### **Abstract**

Associated with every set of Jewish joke about Jewish women are a set of hidden gentiles. In order to understand the origins and social significance of the Jewish joke it is necessary to locate the hidden gentiles and to use them to make social comparisons and contrasts. It is crucial that in each case the gentiles do not tell jokes of this kind about their own womenfolk. In the case of the Jewish mother joke it is the gentile mother in law of their jokes that leads us to realise that differences in family patterns have led to the humour about Jewish joke. It is the influence of the Western gentiles on the 'enlightened' Jews such as Freud which persuaded them that marriage should be based on free choice that led them to enjoy the shadchan jokes. The JAP jokes come into existence at a time when there is a massive sudden rise in the incidence of intermarriage in the United States. Suddenly gentile wives are attractive, the alluring women of the shiksa jokes and they are the counterpart of the jokes about the greedy, undomestic, sexless Jewish American Princess whom nobody wants. In each case gentile ways are the norm and by implication to be emulated. Using the well-attested comparative method in this way gives us more insight into these jokes than the clumsy trawls through Jewish folkways punctuated by indignation which have been the basis of past analyses and which have also confused humorous and bona fide modes of communication. Jokes reflect reality. They do not create it.

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\* **Prof. Christie Davies** (1941-2017), was a graduate of Cambridge University MA, PhD. He was a full Professor for eighteen years at Reading University. He is the author of *The Mirth of Nations*, Transaction 2002 and of *Jokes and Targets*, Indiana University Press, 2011.

## **Chagall's Sixth Sense – the Sense of Humor**

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**Ruth Dorot\***

### **Abstract**

This article offers an examination and analysis of selected works from the extensive gallery of Marc Chagall's repertoire which reveals comic elements ranging from smiles to laughter which are a cornerstone in the interpretive pattern within the selected works. These are examined thematically applying psychological and philosophical theories and approaches suitable for the artist's world of painting. Chagall's humor lashes out at social conventions, rejects the laws of science and nature, goes against the viewer's expectations, distorts shapes, exaggerates proportions, eliminates boundaries between man and animal, ignores inhibitions, penetrates the solid and the opaque to reveal what lies concealed within. A dream-like, fairy-tale quality is typical of almost all of his humor-filled oeuvre. His, was an ensemble of illogical juxtapositions serving as the foundation of his sixth sense.

**Key words:** Elements of humor, Comic, *Shtetle*, Personification, Symbolic, Surrealism.

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## Humor in Medieval Invective: The Correspondence of Todros Abulafia and Don David Ben Shoshan

Shira Shevarsman Maziel\*

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### Abstract

The sophisticated joke is a prominent feature of the poetry of Tadros Abulafia, a 13th century poet from Christian Spain. The purpose of this article is to trace humorous elements that arise in Expressions of derogatory, in the correspondence of the poet Tadros Abulafia and the minister - David Ben Shushan. In one hand the expressions are humoristic and on the other hand venomous. The main argument is that the humorous elements have an important role in the reality of the poet's life. The duplicity of laughter alongside the denigration reflects the instability of Abulafia's life and teaches about his complex confrontation with the dignitaries of his generation. The ridicule inherently entails the mockery of contempt, modifies it and allows to maintain the relationship with the class holder, but at the same time, it is a tool of resistance and defiance

**Keywords:** Abulafia, derogatory, Ben Shushan, Christian Spain, mockery, Humor.

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**"so that he will forget his weakness, so that I will forget my fear"**

## **Humor in the novel *The Zigzag Child* by David Grossman**

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**Ofra Matzov-Cohen\***

### **Abstract**

The protagonist of the novel *The Zigzag Child* (1994) by David Grossman is Amnon Lev-Ari, a 13-year-old boy whose mother died when he was a baby. Over the years, Amnon ,Nono, grows up in a small family setting: his father, Yaakov, a police officer and his secretary Gabi, a single woman of forty, who show affection to Nono and urge Yaakov to formalize the relationship between them.

The plot tells about Nono's journey, which was produced by Gabi as a special *Bar Mitzvah* gift. Nono is taken on an adventurous journey that is characterizes by special events that turn also into an inner journey to discover his mother whom he did not know. Also, to reveal the love story that was between his father, an estimated police officer, and his mother, an adventurous criminal woman. During Nono's journey he experiences emotional encounters with characters, who are his family relatives that he hadn't met before: his dead mother and her parents.

In the protagonist journey, humor may serve the characters leading each of them among the various events that are fraught with complexed details. Humor also serves as a delicate way to tell Nono about the past. These experiences may shape his world on the verge of entering adolescence.

In this study, I would like to examine the nature of the humor used by Grossman in the text to characterize the world of the protagonist and in the world of the secondary characters, the adults. In what way the various forms of humor contribute to the world of the characters and to the relationships between them? It seems that humor in this novel is essential and necessary at all ages, adolescents and adults, serving the individuals both as a therapeutic tool and as a communicative one.

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## **Humor as a tool for dealing with conflicts and disputes – rabbinic literature and modern insights**

**Michael Rotenberg\***

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to examine whether the humor may be used as an aid in dealing with conflicts or disputes. This article will seek to answer the issue according to the insights that emerge from the ways in which our Sages have faced or refrained from dealing with disputes and conflicts through humor, and by comparing these insights condensed modern research in the field. Two Top insights arise from the findings: first, that humor is used to deal with ' the second cycle of conflict, and not with the core of the conflict; second, that the Sages have significant distinction regarding the types of disputes, as there are types of disputes should not have come into the world, and there are controversies in their power to enrich our world actually.

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