

Humor Mekuvvan: Research Journal in Humor Studies
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Abstracts

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Playing with His Kipa on His Head: political Humor in the Speeches and Essays of Uri Urbach

David M. Feuchtwanger & Tzachi Cohen¹

Abstract

Uri Urbach (1960-2015), Minister and MK (Ba'iet Yehodi), has come to politics after a journalist's career that led him from the marginal to the central stages of Israeli press. Urbach stood out for many traits but the most notable was his precise honed sense of humor he used to express his views.

By the close reading of his publications and oratory we shall attempt to map out Urbach's use of humor in both his careers, political and journalistic, at the cross-road in which he placed himself: between traditional and modern, between left and right, particular and universal, between commitment to Jewish Law and commitment to political Zionism. We will sort out the different types of humor Urbach exercises and show how he used humor as a base for the logic in his own claims and a hammering ram against those of his opponents. Humor always was for Urbach a border melting device and a boarding pass. Urbach expressed himself with humor juggling Bible Verses, other Jewish sources, Hebrew Poetry and modern slang, wordlessly claiming his Israeliness and his normality, thus validating the main claims of his essays and speeches.

Keywords: Consocial Democracy, humor and politics, National-Religious, Religion and State, Uri Urbach, Knesset, Religious Zionism

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From Eshkol's Jokes to Nasser's Jokes: Humor as a Mirror of the Spirit of the Time

Alon Gan²

Abstract

Between 1965 and 1967, Israeli society experienced a huge swing: from the deep pit of economic recession and the anxiety that preceded the Six-Day War, to the high peak of euphoria and exultation following the war. Humor can serve as a litmus paper, of sorts, indicating the national mood. This article seeks to characterize the gloomy feeling of the recession period, as well as the euphoric atmosphere following the Six-Day War, through the humor created during these two opposite stages.

Humor is, in a way, a double agent: it reflects reality but also shapes it. This paper analyzes the humorous booklets that were published during the recession and after the Six-Day War, in an attempt to quantify the proportion between humor as a mirror, reflecting the spirit of the time, and its role in shaping the public agenda that began with the delegitimization of Prime Minister and Defense Minister Levi Eshkol, and continued with the mythologization of the victorious generals, especially Moshe Dayan.

Keywords: The recession period, Six Day War, Levi Eshkol, Moshe Dayan

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"Vova, afraid of God": Political jokes in humorist forums in Russia

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Abstract

Anne Frank wrote her diary between June 12th 1942 and August 1st 1944. After WW2, her father, Otto Frank, published the diary in 1947 - a turning point after which Anne Frank became the symbol most identified with the Holocaust of Europe's Jews. The diary's commercial success, as well as its many adaptations into literature, television and theater, led to academic interest in researching both the diary and its writer.

The present study wishes to expound on the place of humor in Anne Frank's diary as well as her personality. The proposed analysis divides the diary into three parts reflecting her state of mind (pre-incarceration; the onset of life in hiding; the second year of incarceration), accordingly examining the place of humor. This is a twofold examination: firstly, regarding Frank's poetics of humor, namely - how she describes comedic situations in her writing; and secondly, the place of humor in her life, as an inherent personality trait; further on as a means helping her survive, as well as a trait she often denies. Although this combined study describes the central place of humor in Frank's life and writing, it also shows how she distinctly separated between the use of humor in her writing about people in her hiding place, and its use - even condemning it - with regard to the Jewish Holocaust taking place outside the hiding place. This distinction occurs not only in Frank's mind, but is also experienced by the reader, who comes to learn of the polarity of humorous descriptions of situations or people inside the hiding place, as opposed to the harsh descriptions of the outside - an oxymoron largely defining the entire diary.

Key words: Anne Frank, diary, Poetics of humor, Holocaust representations, Women in Holocaust.

Politics and Humor in the Workplace:

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Genderial Aspects of the Effects of Organizational Social Capital and the Use of Positive Humor on Organizational Politics in Customer Service Centers

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Abstract

Humor is an interpersonal and pragmatic communicative practice, whose influence in the workplace is predicated not on its content but primarily on the motives for its usage, which guides the specific manners in which it is used. These motives, we argue, are related to different gender schemes: men tend to use humor as a political tool to differentiate themselves from other workers and to elevate their status in the organizational hierarchy, while women tend to use humor as bridging tool for building Organizational Social Capital (OSC). To test these hypotheses, we analyzed questionnaire data of 212 customer service representative of a large financial firm. The results confirm the hypotheses. Women's use of humor in the service centers is negatively associated with OP and positively associated with OSC, while men's use of humor is positively associated with OP and has no association with OSC. Among men, OSC has a negative effect on OP, while among women the use of humor replaces OSC as a negative predictor of OP. No gender disparity in frequency of positive humor usage, suggesting that the differences we found are not predicated on how much positive humor is used in the workplace but on the specific ways positive humor is used.

Keywords: Positive Humor; Humor and Politics; Organizational Humor; Workplace Humor;

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Use of Caricatures as Propaganda Tools – The Case of the Hezbollah

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Abstract

The article examines Hezbollah's use of cartoons as a tool of propaganda. The erasure analyzed over one hundred cartoons sampled from all cartoons published by the organization on its English news site. For the purpose of analyzing the cartoons, a first-of-its-kind research tool was developed for cartoon analysis. The cartoons were analyzed by two reviewers and their results were tested for intercoder reliability. Several conclusions can be drawn from the quantitative analysis: the Hezbollah is aware of the importance of propaganda in general and of propaganda on the internet in particular. The organization only directs its criticism against external actors. The cartoons are not used for entertainment and humor but rather to express criticism and convey political messages. The messages are direct and blatant, and in many cases violent. Thus, the cartoons reflect the organization's main interests and enemies. Contrary to what we would expect, the criticism conveyed in the cartoons is mainly directed against the United States, not Israel. The organization does not operate in two separate arenas depending on the cartoon language, but rather conveys similar messages in English and Arabic. The cartoons show that the Hezbollah sees itself as a regional, rather than a Lebanese actor.

Key words: Hezbollah, Caricature, humor, terror, propaganda, cartoon

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