

English Abstracts of Articles || תקצירים באנגלית של המאמרים**“Never underestimate the power of a good laugh. It can stop some of the fiercest middle-school monsters”: On educational values inherent in popular-humoristic children and youth literature****Shai Rudin,* Ornat Turin******Abstract**

Popular literature for children and youth is excluded from the school curriculum in Israel - both in the language studies of elementary schools and the literature studies of middle- and high schools. Moreover, the curriculum for the matriculation exams is composed of canonic adult literary works, both Hebrew and translated. It does not include books for youth, despite studies showing that the interpretation of adult literature requires a pre-comprehension of youth and YA (young adults) books, which inculcates the basis of understanding literature and bridges the readers' ability to cope with more complex works. In the present research, we wish to relate to popular-humoristic literary works for children and youth, dealing extensively with the school space. Although these works are absent from the Israeli school curriculum, an examination of their messages shows that their humor is an important means of discussing central themes which the educational systems seek to convey in the right way. These themes include coping with the death of parents or siblings; integrating special needs students; students coping with violent parents; coping with bullies; teacher-student relationships; forming gender identity; exposure to various family models; building friendships between students; and the place in school of students with emotional problems.

The corpus researched includes translated works belonging to the genre of graphic novels and the genre of beginner readers, in the form of series or independent novels. The study concludes that the integration of popular children and youth literature into the school curriculum constitutes a quasi thematic and poetic “Trojan Horse”. The

* Dr. Shai Rudin, Gordon College of Education, Haifa, shair@gordon.ac.il

** Dr. Ornat Turin, Gordon College of Education in Haifa, a research fellow at Hadassa Brandeis Institution, ornat@gordon.ac.il

humoristic poetics and casual mantle of these accessible and subversive books enable the students to be exposed to complex themes and may evoke future emotional and social discourse, given their declared goal of entertainment. Popular humoristic literature, in an era where students refrain from reading, may bring them closer to reading and to discussing the urgent topics related to their lives - topics that barely appear in the canonic adult literature. In addition, the popular humoristic literature enables students to become familiar with many literary concepts of narrative and character building as well as various genres.

Key words: humor and education, graphic novels, poetics of humor, children and youth literature, humoristic literature, literary series, teaching literature.

Humor as a Multiliteracy Tool for Reading Picturebooks

Erga Heller*

Abstract

The reading experience of a picturebook, which is a repeated activity in children's world, strengthens and perfects the understanding of their surroundings. Reading a picturebook constructs and nurtures multi-literacy skills and enables flexible thinking strategies. It also contributes to the full development of the young readers.

Picturebooks develop their young readers' varied literacies and thinking skills, therefore serve as an educational tool that is both amusing and entertaining. A significant part in the process of constructing multi-literacy and thinking methods is evolved in response to comic and humoristic representations within the text, and especially as a result of the humoristic interaction between the verbal and the visual narratives.

This paper examines some cases of comic uses in contemporary Israeli picturebooks and studies them in the context of contemporary Israeli culture and language education.

Keywords: Multi-literacy; Israeli Picturebooks; Humor within picturebooks; Multi-modality; Teaching Literature

* Dr. Erga Heller, Kaye Academic College of Education, heller@kaye.ac.il

Nonstandard mathematics problems, humor, and creative thinking

Mark Applebaum,* Avikam Gazit**

Abstract

In this article, the authors explore the relationship between mathematics, humor, and creativity, and explain the benefits of teaching mathematics by combining the mathematical jokes and problems with a humorous component. Further, they propose a classification of mathematical jokes and provide examples for each kind of the considered exercises.

Key words: Math teaching, creative thinking, humor, problem solving, mathematical jokes

* Prof. Mark Applebaum, Kaye Academic College of Education, mark@kaye.ac.il

** Prof. Avikam Gazit, Hemdat Academic College of Education, avikamgazit@gmail.com

A Different Perspective on Nature: Biomimicry and Comics

Vered Yeflach-Wishkerman*

Abstract

Teachers today want to create learning opportunities and methods that emphasize interest and enjoyment as motivation for learning, as well as to create a sense of flow in the lesson. In the standardized textbooks and assessments this is a complex and challenging task.

Teachers often create moments of humor, laughter and playfulness in the classroom, and use them to further the aims of the lesson but finding humorous approaches the field of biology is daunting. The content and context of biology and ecology are linked to global issues, such as wars of survival between different species, looming ecological catastrophes, global warming, diseases and epidemics; or else they deal with set topics, such as structure of the cell and organelles. Teaching and studying biology can be interesting, challenging and innovative, but it is not often associated with humor.

The purpose of this article is to suggest an attractive approach to teaching biology, that is, by using humor in the classroom, especially in teaching an innovative and relatively new topic such as Biomimicry– a branch of biology that studies biological and ecological systems in order to find an inspiration or technological solutions in nature.

My focus here is on teaching through visual representation, specifically through comics. I will first deal with the key aspects of visual learning and of using comics in particular, and then I will show how comics can be used in scientific teaching and the world of biomimicry.

Key words: visual representation, biomimicry, comics

* Dr. Vered Yeflach-Wishkerman is a senior lecturer, Head of the Junior High School Education Program, teaches at the science department Kaye Academic College of Education, veredy@kaye.ac.il

"Israeli identity, we say, is nothing but a side character of Jewish identity!' On different variations of humor in utterances on Jewishness, Zionism, and Israeliness in the novel *Another Place – A Foreign City*"

Ofra Matzov Cohen*

Abstract

Maya Arad's novel in verse "Another Place – A Foreign City" has at its center a main character, Orit, a soldier serving in the IDF Education and Information Section. A secondary character also described is Jay, Jason, a new immigrant who volunteered for military service and is stationed in Orit's section. The relationship formed between the two and the portrayal of military life interspersed with the routine life of Israeli society, leads to reexamination of utterances about Jewishness, Zionism, and Israeliness, of which some are familiar and popular parts of the Israeli cultural discourse and some less prevalent. Most of the utterances appear to be shaped by humoristic means intertwined with satiric undertones. Utterances on Jewishness and utterances on Israeliness intermingle. In certain situations they even clash and raise questions as to the place of the Israeli and the place of the Jew, presenting different possibilities.

The purpose of the article is to explore the humoristic undertones in the novel and the contribution of this humor to the different meanings of the work. Humor is utilized in the plot from beginning to end not only as a stylistic means of creating meaning through verbal expressions that generate humor, rather also as an inflective decoration. The rhyming verses create a seemingly joyous, lighthearted, and unconstrained atmosphere. This draws the reader closer to the work and to the events in the plot. However, the different types of humor, such as dark humor, cynicism, and ridicule, insinuate that it is used as a subversive means of criticism, and the topics raised require the reader to rethink issues that come to the fore regarding Israeli and Jewish identity.

Key words: heroine, narrator, humor, Judaism, Zionism, Israeliness

* Dr. Ofra Matzov Cohen is a senior lecturer, Israel Heritage Department, Ariel University, ofmc45@gmail.com

Our Sages' Sense of Humor

Gil Kopatz*

Abstract

This opinion article goes against the mistaken assumptions that there is no humor in the Jewish tradition, that the Bible is serious, and that the Talmud is an old and dry book. Through reading in some examples from the Talmud, it presents the opposite, that the Sages had a very fine and timeless sense of humor. It demonstrates and details some delicate, sarcastic, and also cynical uses of sense of humor in the Talmud.

The article analysis some Talmudic texts, reveals and interprets their hidden jokes, presents their classic humorous qualities, and suggests how the Sages used varied forms of humor for educational purposes.

* Gil Kopatz is a multidisciplinary artist, a comedian and a[n amateur] Torah commentator, gil.kopatz@gmail.com