**English Language and Composition**

**Section II**

**Total time – 2 hours**

**Question 1**

(Suggested Writing Time: 40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

**Directions:** The following prompt is based on the accompanying six sources.

This question requires you to synthesize a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. Synthesis refers to combining the sources and your position to form a cohesive, supported argument and accurately citing sources. *Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument.* Avoid merely summarizing sources*.*

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

**Introduction**

The overall purpose of satire is usually to make some kind of moral or political change in society through the use of critical humor. A satirist will choose a subject or person with whom he finds faults and use humor to make those faults obvious. In theory, many satirists hope that the humor will have a corrective effect, almost like a punishment for bad behavior, ultimately leading people to change the way they behave and discouraging others from behaving the same way in the future.

Since the overall purpose of satire is generally to point out the faults in people, satirists often rely on exaggeration to make a point. For example, a politician who favors heavy taxation might be depicted as a pig stealing people’s food from their plates. This sort of exaggeration shows the fault in question and puts a critical spin on it. People often remember and enjoy the satire because it’s funny and entertaining, but if it’s handled correctly, the message should ideally stick with them much longer than the initial entertainment element.

**Assignment**

Read the following sources including any introductory information carefully. Then write an essay in which you evaluate what an editor should consider before publishing certain satirical passages. Synthesize at least three of the sources for support.

Further Discussion Questions for Seminar

1. *Can satire effectively evoke change?*
2. *Is satire a powerful rhetorical tool for illuminating social problems and inspiring change?*
3. *What is the function of satire?*
4. *Does it serve a subversive or didactic purpose?*
5. *What is the relationship between humor and satire?*
6. *Are there any problems with satire?*
7. *How do we account for its prominence today, in fake news programs such as The Daily Show and The Colbert Report, in mockumentaries by Sasha Baron Cohen, and the controversy over cartoon depictions of the Prophet Muhammad?*
8. *Argue: Johnathan Swift observed, “Satire is like a mirror in which people see everyone’s face except their own. “*

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| Source A  Et Tu, Mr. Destructo? : Point-Counterpoint: Is Satire Even A Thing? Web. 28 Apr. 2015. |

*The following excerpt is from a satirical blog website.*

[Point-Counterpoint: Is Satire Even A Thing?](http://www.mrdestructo.com/2013/04/point-counterpoint-is-satire-even-thing.html)

Last Monday, *New Inquiry* blogger Aaron Bady [audited the word satire and made it clear](http://thenewinquiry.com/blogs/zunguzungu/clear-satire/). He wrote, "If something is not taken to be satire, it fails as satire. [It's] an effect, and everything depends on how the joke is received, what the author intended, what the circumstances were in which it was made, and so on."

It's an interesting definition, both for the way it's made and the assumptions on which it relies. He establishes criteria for the existence of satire based on its audience, citing people who mistake *The Onion* and *The Daily Currant* for real news as evidence for the genre's fragility, tying satire's ontology to whether it achieves food for thought for the permanently slackjawed. Leaving aside the fact that a satire's being mistaken for reality is often a satirist's dream, basing the existence of something on the perception of idiots is a powerful argument. Spend enough time hustling Gap jeans for the braindead in a deadpan tone and you could disprove the existence of sarcasm. Choose the right textbook, and [there is no Enlightenment](http://www.mrdestructo.com/2010/03/deconstructing-texas-board-of-education_17.html).  
  
Needless to say, we were greatly exercised by Mr. Bady's essay. One of our contributors (Hitler) noted the date of Bady's essay's publication (April 1) and quipped that it says a lot about your criticism website when your jeremiad only works *as* satire—when one could only add argumentative heft to it by looking at the dateline and crying, "April fools!"  
  
Even talking amongst ourselves, however, we noticed that our opinions on satire and Bady's argument were not in harmony. With that in mind, we chose to offer our first open-ended philosophical discussion. In so doing, we decided to examine the nature of satire via the old inquiry. We here at *Et tu, Mr. Destructo?* have always been partial to the old inquiry, wherein one asks questions or challenges the opinions of another in the hope of reaching consensus or synthesis. In the main, it is both arcane and bourgeois, but it is also a timesaver compared to newer inquiries, like asking a room full of people what something is, then asking them if the photographer has arrived yet. Then tweeting.  
  
Come, join us for a free-ranging examination of the ideas that shape our media and ourselves, especially those of us in media. Welcome to our first ever "Destructo Salon."

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| Source B General Ghandi." No Shame; Satire Counterpoint” Web. 28 Apr. 2015. |

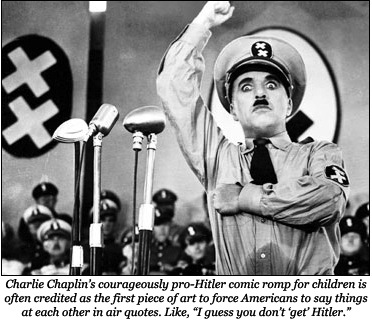
*The following excerpt is a response to the earlier satirical blog.*

I have no shame in admitting that our changing world often confuses and scares me. Fortunately, as a "[literary cub](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/01/fashion/new-yorks-literary-cubs.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)" of some import, I worship before the altar of literature, as my [intellectual hero](http://exile.ru/articles/detail.php?ARTICLE_ID=6469&IBLOCK_ID=35&phrase_id=68414), the shimmering Jonathan Franzen, [might muse](http://www.hbo.com/real-time-with-bill-maher/episodes/0/227-episode/video/227-october-7-overtime.html). I am proud of my literary prowess, evident in many web-based thought experiments and on GoodReads.  
  
Even the life of the mind, however, is an oft rocky road to enlightenment—for how can I be sure what an author means? Was Hamlet mad? Why does everyone in *Dune* want to make so much curry? Is the Terminator innately bad or good, and can he *know* why I cry? And, most vexingly: Does an author mean to give offense? Does he say things of which I approve when he, in fact means something else? I would like to thank Mr. Aaron Bady's article, "Clear Satire," for answering these thorny, ancient questions definitively. Bady offers a refreshing change of pace from the source-burdened, lucidity-mongering persuasive folderol that constitutes my usual reading material. He vows to the reader that he will "brandish [his] ignorance like a crucifix at vampires," and I think even the bloodsuckers at the *New York Times.* Style section would grant him this achievement. A Ph.D student in African Literature at UC Berkeley, Bady [claims no special expertise](http://i.imgur.com/eOVgAHt.png) in crafting his 1,586 word essay radically re-conceptualizing "satire." For this DIY renegade, "Anyone claiming to be an expert is selling something." It takes a modern-day Nietzsche alongside a modern-day Sancho Panzerfaust (friend and amateur comedian Jonathan S.), to see the truth: "Satire" manifests as a conspiratorial whirl of shadow and fog, concealing a deep, dependent vacuity where a stable definition should stand.  
  
Bady is too demure to admit the animating energy behind his assault on "clear satire"—namely, *The Onion*'s broadside against nine year-old Academy Award nominee Quvenzhané Wallis. Calling Wallis a very derogatory word was not, as [one bigot argued](http://www.amcircus.com/sideshow/the-gist-of-it-march-1st-2013.html), "using the language of vicious gossip rags as the vehicle for satire of said vicious gossip," coming as it did after a raft of bizarre press attacks against fellow nominee Anne Hathaway. Nor can we be sure Mark Twain approved of Jim the slave's unlawful escape down the Mississippi River. It is of no concern. As Bady convincingly argues, "there is no evidence you can point to in making [the] claim" that *The Onion*—which since 1988 has published tens of thousands of non-humorous articles advocating the supremacy of the white race—was in any way clearly satirizing Hollywood.  
  
Bady knows that labeling *The Onion* as non-satirical via his say-so is not enough. That would be an ignorant appeal to authority, as I found out by Googling "Derrida." There must be a deliberative rummage through Critical Theory 101, the author drawing upon a wealth of knowledge, hard-earned while the rest of Berkeley snorted amphetamines and cavorted in dog cages. Despite protests to the contrary, we are witnesses to expert insights: "Post-structural theory totally pwned the new critics [sic] sometime in the 70's and 80's"; "Nathaniel Hawthorne did not write novels, for example; he wrote 'romances,'" and, "If you thought Tina Fey actually was Sarah Palin... you wouldn't be laughing." The author is not shy in referencing obscure texts, like Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, usually only read by seventeen year-olds with divorced parents, and Swift's "A Modest Proposal"—which Jonathan S. assures us was "was far from universally understood as satire, at the time." I can attest to this. I own all of these books, each copy in such mint condition, you'd swear they'd never been read.

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| **Source C**  Brendle, Mark Big. "Satire? You Can Take That Concept \*Fist Pump” to the Bank!" : Point-Counterpoint: Is Satire Even A Thing? Web. 28 Apr. 2015. |

*The following excerpt is from a website that makes reviews.*

What is "satire" anyway? That was satire just now, that sentence asking what satire is. But could you have known it was satire? Yes. And how would you know? I'm not telling.  
  
Satire runs like a river beneath the seemingly solid ground of terrible metaphors. If you use the word "satire" and don't put scare quotes around it, it begins to spread through the other words in your piece like a venom or cancer, causing them to become cheap simulacra of the once pristine letter combinations you intended. Just kidding. Or was I?  
Take for instance the classic satirical work *Daddy's Dumb Day* by Hector Pinogree. Upon its release, *Daddy's Dumb Day* was hailed as an investment by a publishing company, one they "hoped would return a hefty profit if popular enough, and so please go out and buy it so we don't bust on this one like all the other 'satires' we've published."

[](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-iJmciNibgSo/UWUHZgYEfHI/AAAAAAAAGww/Mn3O2xgeIsY/s1600/You+Call+It+a+Nightmarish+Icon+of+the+20th+Century.+Aaron+Bady+Calls+It+A+Baller+Retro+'Stache+He+Ain't+Afraid+to+Bring+Back.jpg)

But sometimes the half-full glass is really only 49% full and claiming it is half full makes you a liar in whom everyone is disappointed. Again, that last sentence was not satire, clearly, unlike this one, which is. Or it would be, if "satire" exists at all, but then again, what is "existence" anyway? A torture house of self-aware mortality, you say? Wrong, the correct answer is total silence, as the question was rhetorical. But what is a rhetorical question?  
Possible satirist George Orwell once said, "The problem with satire is that it's full of satirists!" I'm paraphrasing here, not the previous quote, but this sentence itself is a paraphrase of the thought I'm trying to communicate, which means it must be satire, and if satire doesn't exist, neither does this—oh man, did you guys see *The Matrix*?  
The murky business of satire can be cleared up by following a few simple rules. First of all, satire always ends with "And you can take that \*fist pump\* to the bank!" Secondly, writers of satire will give away their reptilian nature by unconsciously inserting words like "eggs," "prey," "venom" and so forth into their prose. If you do it right—satire that is,—you'll know, because people will say to you, "Hey, nice satire, man. That really touched my satirical sensibility in a funny and harmless way." If you do it wrong, prepare to defend yourself against the metaphorical and literal stones hurled by satire-weary pinheads, each eager to point out your shortcomings just like your big brother used to do before he died in Iraq. See, that last part was satire, or not, whatever. Don't care. Say "whatever" and stuff, or whatever, who cares.  
  
Satire isn't about making silly lists though. It's about referencing a half dozen college reading list novels to prove that what you're talking about is actually relevant to adults and not just another internet complaint. As Jonathan Swift said in "A Modest Proposal," "We must secure the future of the internet journalist." And if I may quote David Foster Wallace, perhaps the best known champion against irony, "Mmmblughgbgghaaaaackk."  
  
If you don't get that something's satire, it's the fault of the satirist, not yours. Nothing is your fault, and I'll always love you no matter what. Or so Herman Melville said in his famous novel *The Great Gatsby*, where everyday everyman Clark Gatsby is bitten by a radioactive spider and becomes great, in order to solve the case of Jack the Ripper. (Spoiler: He was Jack the Ripper all along).

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| Source D  Bill Noting. "Satire - The Definitive Guide to Satire: Etymology, History & Lore." Satire: What Is Satire? Definition, Types and Examples of Satire. N.p., 17 July 2000. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. |

*The following excerpt is from a website dedicated to studying the effects of satire on society.*

**Satire - The Definitive Guide to Satire: Etymology, History & Lore**

Satire is an indirect form of critique, in that it mocks or attacks an individual or idea by proxy. Satirical speech and literature is generally used to observe and judge the "evils" or morally questionable ideals held by individuals, groups and sometimes entire cultures. The attack itself is derived from what is known as the satirist's social motive--these critiques illustrate what the satirist, within the context of their own world view, believes is "right" based upon what they ridicule as "wrong". Jean Weisgerber's Satire and Irony a Means of Communication states, "Satire is manifestly directed to people. It involves the victim it attacks and the public it tries to persuade, it restores to language its full status as a means of communication, its end is rhetorical." [1]

The purpose of satire is primarily to make the audience aware of the "truth". The satirist makes an argument that relies upon the intellect of the listener to decipher hidden meaning, with the ideal end goal to inform, enlighten, explain and correct the audience. Due to its critical and judging nature, satire is sometimes deemed excessive or in poor taste.

*"Satire is unpopular because it is upsetting; instead of healing, it uncovers hidden wounds and leaves it to people to recover their health or to burse the sick. In other words, it is negative rather than positive, for while it makes us aware of some tangible evil, the contrasting good often needs to be further defined and remains in any case a mere idea." [2]*

Despite the aggressive, sometimes-personal attacks that are derived from works of satire, it serves a special purpose--catharsis. Satire, particularly in the form of comedy, allows both narrators and audiences to turn outrage, hatred and "other socially unacceptable impulse[s] into socially acceptable and even delightful forms." [3] Neither the victim of the satirist's attack, nor the satirist are subject to physical violence.

**History of Satire**

The word satire is derived from the Latin word satur, though the word was not used in a critical, literary sense until the Roman rhetorician Quintilian described it as a specific genre of hexameter verse. It was not until the Greek playwright Aristophanes used this form of verse in a series of plays, referred to as "Old Comedy", that satire was used in the fashion we know it today.

Old Comedy was a collection of plays that varied in presentation, depending upon the location that it was being performed, though the troupe remained primarily in ancient Athens. Depending upon current events, political figures and public opinion at the time, their topicality also changed. For instance, at the time that the play The Acharnians was being performed, Athens and Sparta were at war. Aristophanes, in turn, revised his plays to make scathing, satirical jokes about people who would take advantage of the concerned citizens of Athens: political fanatics, false oracles, and war-profiteers.

When the comedy was performed on stage the actors in the troupe would often poke fun at various public officials, consistently comment on or involve the audience, and even parody playwriting and acting itself. In The Knights, Aristophanes transformed the Athenian statesman Cleon into a ridiculous figure of war-mongering and evil, depicting him as a man who would do anything and everything possible in order to maintain his political power. The protagonist of Peace, upon returning from a journey to Olympia, informed the audience that they, "looked like rascals" from his vantage point in the heavens, and that now that he can see them up close they, "look even worse". Old Comedy's focus on local figures and issues immersed the audience in the narrative, while simultaneously mocking it, and effectively illustrated that no one was above foolishness or the mockery it incited. The Roman poets Juvenal and Horace derived further meaning from the term satur, these definitions are still relevant and applicable to the majority of modern day satire.

After the fall of Rome, and before the beginning of the Early Middle Ages, Grecian and Roman satire seemed to disappear from literature and performance. Satire was finally reintroduced into the public sphere around the 12th century, through mocking songs and literature. This period also marked the advent of moral satire, which mocked the un-Christian behavior of certain figures. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales is an excellent example of mocking, literary satire.

Though the word satire is derived from the word satur, the Greeks and Romans were not solely responsible for the existence of satire. In fact, different examples of satirical literature and artwork have appeared from as early as 2nd millennium BC. Exploration of Ancient Egyptian archives has turned up a copy of the Papyrus Anastasi, a satirical letter that praises the reader, but then goes on to mock them for their lack of knowledge, understanding and achievements. In the 9th century the Afro-Arab author Jahiz introduced satire through a genre of poetry called hija. In his poems, Jahiz dissected serious thoughts and ideas in the veins of sociology, psychology and anthropology. The Persian author, Abayd Zakani became infamous for his satirical and sexually explicit writings, like Masnavi Mush-O-Gorbeh (Mouse and Cat) and Akhlaq al-Ashraf (Ethics of the Aristocracy).

By the Age of Enlightenment, in the 17th and 18th century, satire had become deeply ingrained in modern society. The rise of partisan politics and conflict between the Whig and Tory parties of the British Parliament fueled the still-growing use of satire as a means of political and social commentary. The Anglo-Irish author, Jonathan Swift, wrote a number of now-famous, satirical essays, pamphlets and novels. Among Swift's more famous works is an essay entitled A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People From Being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick, or A Modest Proposal for short. In his proposal, Swift outlined a way in which impoverished Irish citizens might earn some money, while feeding the higher classes--sell their children to the rich as fresh meat. This scathing, journalistic satire openly attacked Irish political policies and the overwhelmingly negative attitude towards the Irish poor.

Popular satirical authors of the Victorian era, 1837 to 1901, included Charles Dickens and Mark Twain. Charlie Chaplin's 1940 film The Great Dictator satirized Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party. In the 1950s, in the United States, the comedians Mort Sahl and Lenny Bruce introduced a new, cynical form of comedy focused on social and political criticism. Using satire, Bruce and Sahl critiqued popular American culture and political narratives.

In recent years, an increasing number of Western television shows have applied varying forms satire to their programs. In the United Kingdom the programs The Now Show, The News Quiz and Have I Got the News for You regularly utilized critical satire, have been on the air since 1998, 1977 and 1990 respectively and still run today. Satire, political and cultural, is welcomed in American media and culture. Television shows and animations like The Colbert Report, The Daily Show, South Park and The Simpsons use satire as their primary means of social and political commentary.

**Classifications of Satire**

*Classification of Satire by Tone*

Satire and its forms can be categorized in a number of ways including: classification by tone, by topic and even by medium. As previously mentioned, the term satire was originally derived from satur, defined by Quintilian and performed by the actors of Aristophanes' Old Comedy. Two Roman poets, Juvenal and Horace, were responsible for further defining satirical works by their literary tone.

*Juvenalian Satire*

The Roman poet Juvenal is credited with the popularization of what is called Juvenalian satire. Juvenalian satire is characterized by its deliberate, abrasive and often-personal critique of an individual or ideal. This form of satire is generally utilized by writers or speakers who see their target as actively harmful to society, or even outright "evil".

Juvenal satirically attacked many of the institutions and public figures in Roman society, highlighting the contradictions or flaws in an opponent's argument through exaggeration and irony, in much the same vein as many of the political pundits of today.

American author Ray Bradbury's novel Fahrenheit 451 utilizes Juvenalian satire to critique several things, like the rise of television entertainment, growing ad industry, and the censorship of American literature and media. Bradbury's novel is set in an alternate world where the government has made possessing or reading books illegal, as they might offend people or drive them to make "dangerous" decisions. "A book is a loaded gun in the house next door.... Who knows who might be the target of a well-read man?" Special teams are sent to burn any found book at 451 degrees Fahrenheit.

The government of Bradbury's book controls its people by means of excessive television programming without scripts or stories-people shouting and crying, random images and sounds. As citizens view more and more mindless television programming, they begin to care less about knowledge. Traditional schooling is dissolved and replaced with sports programs, "With school turning out more runners, jumpers, racers, tinkerers, grabbers, snatchers, fliers, and swimmers instead of examiners, critics, knowers, and imaginative creators, the word 'intellectual,' of course, became the swear word it deserved to be."

*Horatian Satire*

Horatian satire, named for the 1st century Roman poet Quintus Horatius Flaccus (or Horace), approaches satirical observations, literature and performance in a humorous and lighthearted manner. Where Juvenalian satire focuses on specific verbal or literary attacks on corrupt ideals or individuals, Horatian satire can act as a gentler alternative, while still making commentary on what the satirist believes is "good". Horace coined a series of phrases, including carpe diem, and his book Ars Poetica was esteemed as the definitive source of poetic form until the mid-19th century. In Ars Poetica, Horace wrote a number of satirical, though lighthearted, poems poking fun at the philosophical and political beliefs of both Greece and Rome.

Even today, Horatian satire has widespread influence in Early Modern and Modern Western literature, performance and art. Benjamin Franklin wrote several works of prose examining the political and social issues of his time in the form of Horatian satire. Amongst Franklin's more popular works was Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America. In the very first line Franklin shocks readers with an observation about the not-so-different cultures of Native Americans and colonists, without aiming to accuse or attack a specific individual or ideal. "Savages we call them because their Manners differ from ours, which we think the Perfection of Civility, they think the same of theirs." [4]

Mark Twain's book Advice to Youth, utilizes Horatian satire through his descriptions of the advice and coaching given to young men through comedy. In this passage, Twain details the almost-tragic story of a grandmother, her grandson and the use of a misplaced firearm:

*"A grandmother...was sitting at her work, when her young grandson crept in and got down an old, battered, rusty gun which had not been touched for many years and was supposed not to be loaded, and pointed it at her, laughing and threatening to shoot. In her fright she ran screaming toward the door on the other side of the room; but as she passed him he placed the gun almost against her very breast and pulled the trigger! He had supposed it was not loaded. And he was right-it wasn't. So there wasn't any harm done. It is the only case of this kind that I have ever heard of."*

This passage makes abundantly clear the dangers of leaving firearms in a place where children can reach them. Had the gun be loaded the grandmother would certainly have died. In a few short sentences Twain prepared readers to hear a gruesome, cautionary tale about gun safety. When it turns out that the gun is not loaded, the grandmother is fine and that this is the only time Twain has ever heard a story like it, it becomes a humorous anecdote (though still a cautionary one). The passage is a satirical one, but since it does not make a target out of the characters involved, nor does it assert the idea of gun safety as a foolish one, it falls under the realm of Horatian satire.

Classification of Satire by Topic

Since its inception satire has tended to focus on the topics of politics, religion and sexuality (or bathroom humor). These topics were considered largely taboo, and satire served the important purpose of circumventing social etiquette and critiquing "evil" or problematic facets of each topic, without engaging in overt conflict. Modern satire has expanded to include a wider range of experience and information.

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| Source E  Poly, Marianne. "American Government and Politics in the Information Age." http://www.saylor.org/site/textbooks/American Government and Politics in the Information Age.pdf. Saylor Foundation, 13 Feb. 2014. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. |

*The following is an excerpt from a college textbook.*

**Influence of Satire on Modern Society**

In both the ancient and modern world, satire has played an essential part in influencing cultural and societal views on a tremendous array of subjects, particularly in political matters. Television shows like The Colbert Report, comics like Doonesbury and the New Yorker's politically-charged cover to "The Politics of Fear" are all examples of instances of influential, modern-day satire.

On his show The Colbert Report, Stephen Colbert satirizes the views right-wing politicians and pundits by playing the part of a bigoted and narrow-minded pundit himself. When Colbert defends or explains his "beliefs", he does so in an over-the-top way that satirically critiques the rationale of those who would "agree" with him.

In 2011, Colbert began what would be a long-term satire of both the American presidential candidate Tim Pawlenty as well as the greater issue of money and its corruptive influence on politics. On March 30th, Colbert invited the former Federal Election Commission (FEC) Chairman Trevor Potter on the show to help him fill out paperwork to begin a PAC-a political action committee that allows the use of private money to help influence legislation and elections. The Colbert Report's parent company of Viacom disallowed Colbert from creating his PAC, however. Fortunately for Colbert, as Potter explained, the Citizens United Supreme Court Case allowed Colbert to form a much-less-restrictive SuperPAC.

After forming his SuperPAC, however, Colbert was still upset with the lack of funding and donations. Colbert had Potter back on the show, and Potter explained that though Colbert's SuperPAC was excellent, larger corporations prefer not to openly support political causes. Rather, large corporations support political causes, but prefer to do it anonymously. Potter then helped Colbert do the paperwork to create a 501(c)(4) Delaware Shell corporation, in order for individuals (primarily corporations) to circumvent contribution limits, and donate unlimited funds, anonymously. Colbert named the corporation "Anonymous Shell Corporation"; Colbert later asked Potter what the difference was between his donation process and money laundering. Potter responded that, "It's hard to say."

In the mid-1980s Gary Trudeau, writer and illustrator of the comic Doonesbury used satire to help put an end to a racially motivated law in Palm Beach, Florida. The law in question mandated that all workers or employees, including gardeners, retail clerks, janitors and taxi drivers, who were part of a racial minority were required to register with police and obtain and ID card within 48 hours of accepting a job. In 1985, upon discovering the continued existence of this Jim Crow legislation, Gary Trudeau illustrated a series of comics lambasting Florida's government for its continued support of a racist law. By 1986, local politicians drew up the "Doonesbury Act" and repealed the outdated law.

Shortly after the 2008 election of President Barack Obama, Barry Blitt illustrated a cover for the New Yorker in which he depicted both the president and First Lady Michelle Obama in the midst of a fist bump, armed and dressed as caricatures of Taliban-style, Muslim extremists. Dadlez explained the cover, "Fear-mongering was mocked and sharply criticized by presenting an outrageously exaggerated example of fear-mongering in the form of a cartoon." [7] The cover, however, was taken literally by many and met with significant moral outrage from the American public.

In a press release following the incident, the New Yorker explained that the cover, "satirizes the use of scare tactics and misinformation in the Presidential election to derail Barack Obama's campaign." Blitt went on to defend his cover as well, saying, "I think the idea that the Obamas are branded as unpatriotic [let alone as terrorists] in certain sectors is preposterous. It seemed to me that depicting the concept would show it as the fear-mongering ridiculousness that it is."

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| **Source F**  "Dead Politics Society." Dead Politics Society. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. |

In today’s society most people gain their information about electoral politics from the news media. Although mainstream news media aim to present facts and figures, they have different biases. These biases affect the public’s views on politics. But, what happens when you bring comedy into politics? This is what the Daily Show with Jon Stewart and The Onion have been able to do. The Onion is an American news satire organization and The Daily Show is an American late night satirical television program. Both programs use irony, sarcasm, and ridicule when touching on subjects such as American politics. People turn to these programs for entertainment, but do these programs actually affect and influence people’s political views and decisions?

This question is important because America is struggling today with voter turnout. According to an op-ed, written by John Dean, only 51% of potential voters vote. Dean says that Americans don’t vote because of low self-interest. In another op-ed, written by Martin P. Wattenberg, he says that the main demographic that isn’t voting is the young. In my eyes both of these things can be combined. The young aren’t voting because they have a low self-interest in politics. This could well be because the young population has a small understanding of politics. When young people watch the mainstream news, the dry discussions of policies and reforms doesn’t generate their interest. The Daily Show averages around 1.344 million viewers in a month between the ages of 18-49 years old. 754,000 of the viewers are between the ages of 18 and 34 years old. 21% of the viewers are between 18 and 24 years old. This displays that the show’s viewer demographic is rather young.

In a study done by Jody Baumgartner and Jonathan S. Morris in 2004 they tested the effects of The Daily Show which they call “a popular televised source of political humor for young Americans” They found that even though the participants who were exposed to the show exhibited cynicism and had negative reactions toward the electoral system and news media at large, that viewers of the Daily Show reported increased confidence in their ability to understand the complicated world of politics. The show targets the younger population with 21% of the its viewers being between 18 and 24 years old. If the Daily Show could increase that percentage of its young viewers it could then lead to a stronger interest in politics amongst the young population. By gaining the interest of younger viewers it could cause them to get involved and become more knowledgeable about politics, thus increasing voter turnout in the younger population.

Bringing comedy into the political world lets people feel less intimidated by the mainstream media news stations. It takes the seriousness out of the equation and in a way simplifies politics by cutting straight to the point. Mainstream news gets caught up in the politics of politics and tries to beat around the bush on issues. Programs such as the Daily Show and the Onion make light of serious situations to allow their viewers to better understand what is going on. Minus the negative reactions the viewers had towards the political candidates, the increased confidence in their ability displays that by making politics relevant and comical thus will raise self-interest which could then lead to a better voter turnout.

Though people may look at these satire programs as entertaining they really aren’t that much different from mainstream news stations. Julia R. Fox, Glory Koloen, and Volkan Sahin examined the political coverage of the first presidential debate and the political conventions in 2004 on the Daily Show compared to the broadcast television networks’ nightly newscast. They found that the network coverage ended up being more hype than substance and the Daily Show’s coverage was more humor than substance. But, the amount of substantive information in the Daily Show was the same compared to broadcast network newscasts. This means that it doesn’t matter which coverage or news you are watching because you are getting the same amount of information from both programs. The only difference is that one is giving you hype and build up while the other is giving you comedy.

The Daily Show is a great source of entertainment and gives you a break from the seriousness and games of mainstream media’s coverage of politics. But, while it is comical, satirical, and entertaining it is also just as informative as any other political coverage. The Daily Show’s approach to politics affects electoral politics just as much as any other news station and if used the right way can help solve some problems such as self-interest and voter turnout.

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| Source G  LaToya, Bennie. "Magazine Cover Offensive, Obama Campaign Says | Toronto Star." New York Times, 18 Nov. 2008. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. |

WASHINGTON — Barack Obama's campaign says a satirical New Yorker magazine cover showing the Democratic presidential candidate dressed as a Muslim and his wife as a terrorist is "tasteless and offensive."

The illustration on the issue that hits newsstands Monday, titled "The Politics of Fear" and drawn by Barry Blitt, depicts Barack Obama wearing sandals, robe and a turban and his wife, Michelle, dressed in camouflage, combat boots and an assault rifle strapped over her shoulder — standing in the Oval Office.

The couple is doing a fist tap in front of a fireplace in which an American flag is burning. Over the mantel hangs a portrait of Osama bin Laden.

"The New Yorker may think, as one of their staff explained to us, that their cover is a satirical lampoon of the caricature Senator Obama's right-wing critics have tried to create," said Obama campaign spokesman Bill Burton. "But most readers will see it as tasteless and offensive. And we agree."

In a statement Monday, the magazine said the cover "combines a number of fantastical images about the Obamas and shows them for the obvious distortions they are."

"The burning flag, the nationalist-radical and Islamic outfits, the fist-bump, the portrait on the wall? All of them echo one attack or another. Satire is part of what we do, and it is meant to bring things out into the open, to hold up a mirror to prejudice, the hateful, and the absurd. And that's the spirit of this cover," the New Yorker statement said.

The statement also pointed to the two articles on Obama contained inside the magazine, calling them "very serious."

In Arizona, Republican John McCain said the cover was "totally inappropriate and frankly I understand if Senator Obama and his supporters would find it offensive."

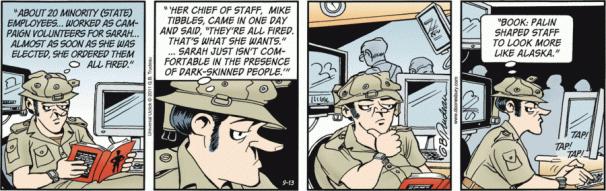
Already the cover was generating controversy on the Internet.

The Huffington Post, a left-leaning blog, said: "Anyone who's tried to paint Obama as a Muslim, anyone who's tried to portray Michelle as angry or a secret revolutionary out to get Whitey, anyone who has questioned their patriotism — well, here's your image."

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| Source G  Cavna, Michael. "THE RIFF: Papers Pull ‘Doonesbury’ — but Must Satire Really Be ‘fair’?" Washington Post. The Washington Post, 27 Jan. 2012. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. |

**THE RIFF: Papers pull ‘Doonesbury’ — but must satire really be ‘fair’?**

*By*[*Michael Cavna*](http://www.washingtonpost.com/michael-cavna/2011/03/04/AB01KwN_page.html)



**IT’S TIME TO**play “*You*Are the Editor.” Your most debated decision today does not concern Iran or Pakistan or the design of your paper’s new iPad app, but rather whether to run a comic strip that includes book excerpts that paint a public figure in a negative light.

For sake of this exercise, let’s say you haven’t secured an advance copy of the tell-all bio being excerpted. You either run the strips — excerpts and all — or you take a pass, at least until you can read the book and conduct your own “verification.”

What would *you*do?

At least two newspapers — including the Chicago Tribune — decided not to run this week's [“Doonesbury,”](http://voices.washingtonpost.com/comic-riffs/2010/11/riffs_best_books_of_2010_trude.html) which, in a “first serial arrangement,” includes excerpts from Joe McGinniss’ soon-to-be-published biography of former Alaska governor Sarah Palin. (The Atlanta Journal-Constitution [reportedly pulled](http://clatl.com/freshloaf/archives/2011/09/13/ajc-panders-to-palinites-pulls-doonesbury) “Doonesbury’s” Palin-story strips as of Tuesday.)

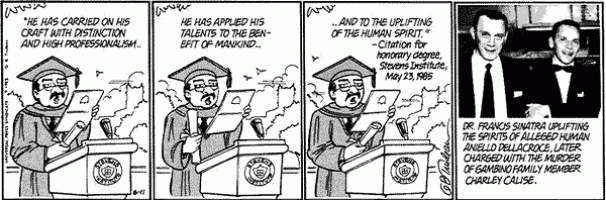
As [reported Sunday by Comic Riffs](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/doonesburys-satirical-comic-strip-tease-with-mcginniss-and-palin-excerpts/2011/09/09/gIQABAXVLK_story.html), [the excerpts](http://wpcomics.washingtonpost.com/client/wpc/db/) include references to Palin’s parenting, premarital romance and employment practices, as well as — um — empowering undergarments.

In explaining its decision to readers, the Tribune said that “the subject matter does not meet our standards of fairness [because] the strips include excerpts from a book that is not yet on the market and therefore unavailable for review or verification by the Tribune.”

The Tribune expanded on that in a note Monday night, saying that the decision was not about partisan politics and that it was not a case of censorship, but rather editorial judgment. Geoff Brown, the Tribune’s associate managing editor/entertainment, writes [in the note](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-09-12/news/chi-doonesbury-pulled-from-chicago-tribune-this-week-20110912_1_doonesbury-sarah-palin-strips): “We do not consider any factors except whether content meets our standards of fairness or taste. We judge each case on its merits.”

(Comic Riffs asked Brown on Monday night what he thought personally of the “Doonesbury” strips. His reply: “I don’t give public opinions on comic strips. Never have, never will.”)

The Tribune, like The Post and many other newspapers, has a decades-long history of making judgment calls regarding the Pulitzer-winning “Doonesbury,” as creator Garry Trudeau’s satiric pencil has famously blurred the lines between comic stripper, journalist and political pundit.

  
[click to see larger image](http://www.gocomics.com/doonesbury/1985/06/11) (GARRY TRUDEAU - Doonesbury (1985))

In 1985, for instance, the Tribune was among the papers not comfortable with how Trudeau satirized the Reagan White House’s decision to bestow a humanitarian award upon Frank Sinatra. [One “Doonesbury” strip](http://www.gocomics.com/doonesbury/1985/06/11) pictured Sinatra with Aniello Dellacroce, whom the cartoonist called an “alleged human” charged “with the murder of Gambino family member Charley Calise.” The Tribune was among the papers that deleted the reference to the Calise murder.

Bottom line: Editors, of course, have the right not to run a cartoon.

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| Source H  "Charlie Hebdo Cartoons Protect 'Freedom of Religion,' Editor Says." NBC News. Ed. Josiah Turner. N.p., 18 Jan. 2015. Web. 28 Apr. 2015. |

The chief editor of Charlie Hebdo is defending the magazine's controversial depictions of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad, claiming that cartoon parodies of religious figures actually safeguard freedom of religion.

Gérard Biard, in an interview with Chuck Todd that will [air in full on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday](http://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press), said through a translator that the cartoons ensure freedom of religion because they "declare that God must not be a political or public figure, but instead must be a private one."

Biard, in his first interview with an American television network since the Paris terror attack, had been asked by Todd to respond to comments from Pope Francis. The pontiff said Thursday that "in freedom of expression there are limits." He said that freedom of faith was a fundamental human right, and that "one cannot provoke, one cannot insult other people's faith, one cannot make fun of faith."

The editor told Todd that "religion should not be a political argument." He said if religion enters the "political arena, it becomes a totalitarian argument. Secularism protects us against this, secularism guarantees democracy and assures peace. Secularism allows all believers and not-believers to live in peace and that is what we defend."

Wednesday’s Charlie Hebdo cover depicting the Prophet Muhammad is “insulting” and “provocative,” according to Iran’s Foreign Ministry. A spokeswoman for the ministry said it could “fan the flame of a vicious circle of extremism,” [according to Agence France-Presse](http://news.yahoo.com/iran-condemns-insulting-charlie-hebdo-prophet-cover-102514320.html).

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Marzieh Afkham reiterated the Islamic republic’s strong position against the attack but said the caricature was an “abuse of freedom of speech, which is common in the West these days.” The cover shows Islam’s prophet weeping and holding a sign reading “Je suis Charlie,” a rallying call that cropped up on social media following last week’s attack. A banner above the Prophet Muhammad reads “Tout Est Pardonné,” meaning “All is forgiven” in French. The newspaper printed 3 million copies of the edition, far more than the 60,000 it usually prints. Many newsstands sold out early Wednesday.

Two radical Islamists linked to al Qaeda in Yemen stormed the French satirical newspaper’s Paris office last Wednesday armed with AK-47 assault rifles and body armor. They killed 12 people there. Five others were killed by an associate before all three were gunned down on Friday by police after the two gunmen took a hostage outside Paris and their associate took hostages at a kosher supermarket in the city.