

Satire in Modern Pop Culture

Satire	Subject of Satire	Comment or Criticism Being Made
<i>Saturday Night Live's Weekend Update</i> <i>The Daily Show</i>	Television News	Identification of human flaws and vices related to politics, entertainment, and current events.
<i>Scary Movie</i>	Horror Movies	Exaggerates the techniques used by horror movies to scare audiences
<i>Austin Powers</i>	1960's Spy Movies	Sexism towards women. Ridicules escapes by the spy and the stupidity of the evil villain.
Political cartoons	Politicians and Political Issues	The policy decisions and personality traits of elected officials can be flawed.
Songs by Weird Al Yankovich	Musicians and Music Videos	The excess of modern musicians. Simplicity and immaturity of lyrics in modern music.



Satire



Noun. A literary manner which blends humor with criticism for the purpose of instruction or the improvement of humanity



The necessary ingredients

- ◆ Humor
- ◆ Criticism, either general criticism of humanity or human nature or specific criticism of an individual or group.
- ◆ Some kind of moral voice: simply mocking or criticism is not "satire."



The Satiric Manner

- ◆ Ironic/Sarcastic
- ◆ Either good natured criticism (Horatian after Horace) or bitterly cynical denunciation (Juvenalian after Juvenal)
- ◆ Always opposed to pretense, affectation, and hypocrisy
- ◆ More than a little bit prone to references to things society finds taboo or disgusting (bodily functions, sexuality, etc.)




Some tools of the satirist

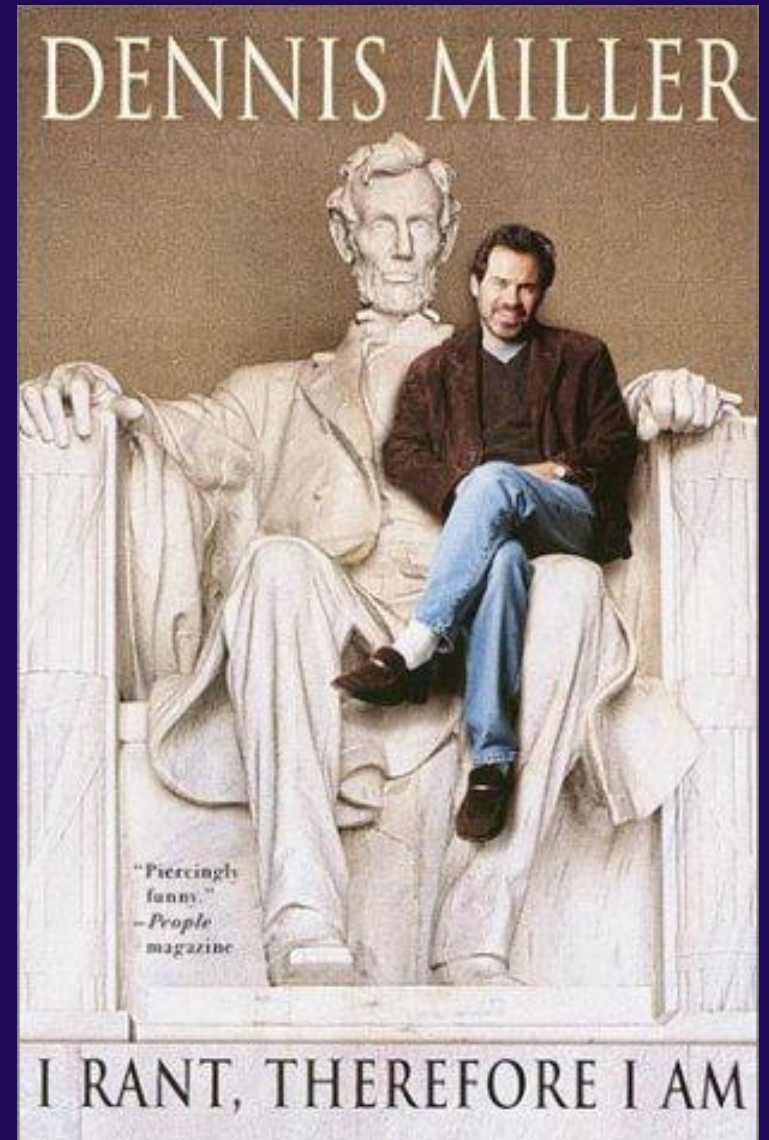
- ◆ Direct satire
- ◆ Indirect Satire
 - Parody
 - Caricature
 - Exaggeration/Diminutization
 - Utopianism
 - Dystopianism

Direct Satire = stating a direct criticism humorously. This is the oldest and, historically, most common form of satiric writing.






Comedian Dennis Miller's popular series of books, *Rants*, are an excellent modern example of direct satire.





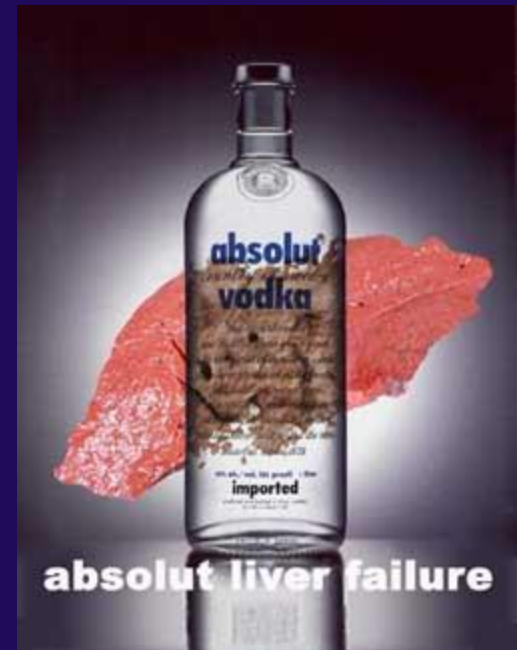
The Death of Common Sense

“You can't get in your car and not run into another idiot who pulls into the gas station with his fuel tank on the wrong side and then has to get instructions from a NASA team at Houston Control to figure out how to maneuver his car so that the tank is on the correct side. And you can't open a paper without reading about a mondo idiot who gets hurt or killed at a railroad crossing because they had to try and beat the train to get home in time to watch Charlene Tilton's salute to porcelain clowns on QVC.”



Parody = a work of literature that mimics another work of literature, usually as a way of criticizing it.

- ◆ Monty Python and the Holy Grail
- ◆ Austin Powers
- ◆ Scary Movie/Epic Movie
- ◆ Gulliver's Travels
- ◆ Don Quixote
- ◆ Wicked



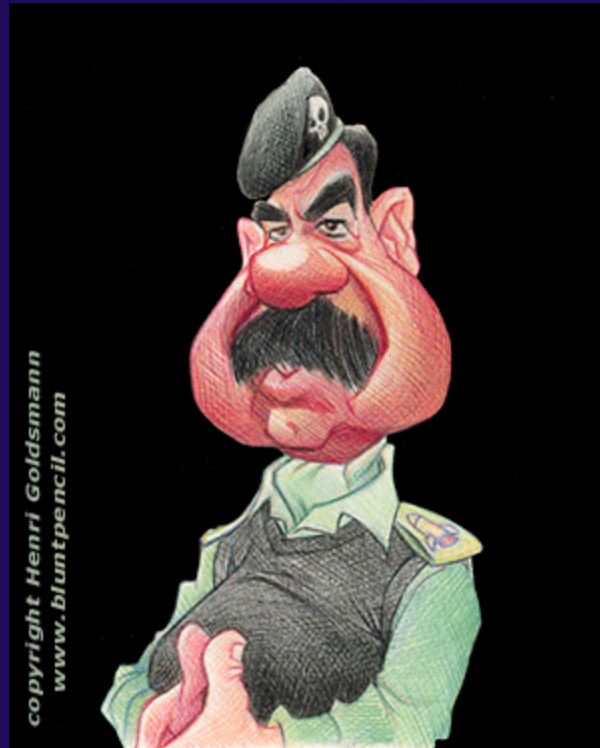


Reversal...

- ◆ When the satirist uses/describes the opposite of what he actually wants to happen in order to make a point...

When Colbert discusses the Mexican “invasion” of Hollywood, he truly means that he does not mind the “immigration” but comments on the irrational fear conservatives have of Hollywood and immigrants.

Caricature = An exaggerated portrayal of the weaknesses, frailties, or humorous aspects of an individual or group.





Caricatures of the presidential candidates by Saturday Night Live cast members in '03 year actually changed the way that the candidates performed in public.


http://teachertube.com/viewVideo.php?title=Satire_Clip_Will_Ferrell_SN_L_Clip&video_id=89824



Exaggeration = The portrayal of something trivial or unimportant as very important, usually to emphasize its triviality.


Diminutization = the portrayal of something perceived as important as something trivial/unimportant to show its unimportance.

- ** Zoolander and the "fashion world"
- ** Weird Al's "Amish Paradise"
- ** The Rape of the Lock (A. Pope)



Utopianism = A criticism of the status quo through comparison with a superior kind of society that highlights the weaknesses of one's own.

- ◆ *Utopia*, by Sir Thomas Moore
- ◆ *Gargantua and Pantegrue*
- ◆ *Gulliver's Travels, Book II*



Dystopianism = A criticism of certain aspects of society through comparison to an inferior society that adopts some of these aspects.

- ◆ George Orwell's *1984*
 - ◆ Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*
 - ◆ Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*
 - ◆ Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano*
 - ◆ *Gulliver's Travels*, Book IV
- * Both Dystopianism and Utopianism use contrast to make point.