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The Power of Ridicule
An Analysis of Satire

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Faculty Sponsor: Walter von Reinhart
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Why Satire?

Satire is a powerful art form which has the ability to point out the deficiencies in certain human behaviors and the social issues which result from them in such a way that they become absurd, even hilarious, which is therefore entertaining and reaches a wide audience. Satire also has the ability to protect its creator from culpability for criticism, because it is implied rather than overtly stated; in this way, it becomes a powerful tool for dissenters in difficult or oppressive political and social periods.

According to Canadian television and newspaper critic John Doyle, "there are specific periods when satire is necessary. We've entered one of those times" (Globe and Mail). Doyle refers to the growing number of issues which are important to Americans, coupled with growing pressure against dissent. Globalization and advances in media technology have brought international issues such as climate change and social injustice to the attention of citizens of countries such as the United States; the "War on Terror" in the Middle East has cost thousands of lives, both military and civilian, and cost billions of dollars, and as of yet it still shows no sign of coming to an end; the Patriot Act gives government agencies and officials the power to violate the constitutionally guaranteed rights of American citizens, and anyone suspected of terrorism can be arrested without further cause; international prisoners held in Guantanamo Bay are denied the right to know what they are charged with, the right to a trial by jury, and basic human rights; protesters who have not violated any laws risk being arrested, gassed, or even shot; and any American citizen who voices overt disagreement with government policies risks being branded a terrorist sympathizer.

What better tool than satire exists for voicing criticisms in these unstable times? Satire is more alive today than ever before, finding outlets in literature, television, the internet, comics and cartoons. Messages that would be ignored or punished if overtly declared are reaching millions of people in satirical form, and making a real difference. It may be the most powerful tool that critics have to get their opinions out into the world.

What Is Satire?

The ancient Romans were the first to define the literary genre of *satira*. Our modern word “satire” derives from this Latin word, but the Roman *satira* was quite different from what we envision satire to be today. The *satirae* of Horace and Juvenal read more like mild lectures than social commentary. While they do provide some degree of social critique and are somewhat humorous, they are not intended to provoke any sort of real social change, and they are too overt to qualify as satire in the modern sense.

Today, satire is a very powerful artistic form used to critique specific human behaviors. The particulars of this form have been defined differently by various people. M.D. Fletcher, author of several critical books on satire, calls it “verbal aggression in which some aspect of historical reality is exposed to ridicule” (ix), but this definition is overly broad and would include argument and simple name-calling. Frank Palmeri, professor of English at the University of Miami, states that “satiric narrative works indirectly through parodic alteration of celebratory forms, established discourses, and dogmatic pronouncements” (1). This definition is narrower, ruling out many works which are not satirical, but lacks definition of what satire is working to accomplish. In

recent years, many people have begun using the term “satire” to refer to any type of humor that involves ridicule, particularly of authority; Canadian commentator Rex Murphy points out that “we throw the term ‘satire’ around rather too generously these days,” and “it's a free upgrade when making simple fun of someone passes as satire” (Murphy). His point is a valid one: applying the title of "satire" to any work that involves jeering degrades the genre.

For the purposes of this paper, satire shall be defined as any piece, be it literary, artistic, spoken, or otherwise presented, which bears the following characteristics:

Critique. Satire is always a critique of some form of human behavior, vice, or folly, with the intent of persuading the audience to view it disdainfully and thereby encourage a degree of social change.

Irony. Satire uses irony, often in a humorous way, to point out the problems with the behavior being critiqued.

Implicitness. Satire is not an overt statement, and it does not come to an explicit verdict, but rather the critiqued behavior deconstructs itself within the satirical work by being obviously absurd, most often because it is exaggerated or taken out of its normal context.

Satire Through History

Satire as defined in the previous section has existed throughout recorded history. In this section I will summarize some of the most famous works of satire, starting with Aristophanes’ comedies in Ancient Greece, and following satire’s use through time up to

modern satire as found in the comic strip *Doonesbury*, the cartoon *South Park*, and the television show *The Colbert Report*.

Although the word “satire” and its definition had not yet been invented, the ancient Greeks produced plentiful examples of satirical work. Aristophanes' plays are a fantastic example of this. He wrote comedies for the ancient Greek competitions in Athens: the City Dionysia and the Leneia. Many of his works survive and have been translated into various languages worldwide; they continue to be read and studied to this day. The plays were famous for making jokes at the expense of particular well-known members of the audience, as well as critiquing Athenian society, government, and foreign policy, especially relating to wars. On many occasions, Aristophanes was sued for slander by victims of his jokes, though the charges were generally dropped in court (Christ). He made regular use of a character portrayed as an outsider within the context of the play, and who would often be ridiculed by the other characters for his views, but who ultimately displayed noble characteristics which would emphasize the foolishness of the behavior of those around him. It is known that some of his plays won awards in the competitions, and so it can be inferred that they were well received (Parker 1).

Many scholars refer to ancient Roman *satura* as satire and treat it as such, but when the ancient Roman Quintilian wrote the famous line, "*satura quidem tota nostra est*" (Quintilian X, i, 93), generally translated as "satire indeed is entirely ours," he was referring to the Roman genre, not to modern satire. This is an important distinction, because not all *satura* is satire; despite the fact that the *saturae* of Horace and Juvenal are often translated as "Satires," they do not qualify as such under our definition. Take, for example, *Satire I* by Horace. The work begins with the statement, "*That all, but*

especially the covetous, think their own condition the hardest." The following excerpt from this work furthers the point:

"O happy merchants!" says the soldier, oppressed with years, and now broken down in his limbs through excess of labor...If any god should say, "Lo! I will effect what you desire: you, that were just now a soldier, shall be a merchant...How now! why do you stand?" They are unwilling; and yet it is in their power to be happy (Satire I).

The important traits of irony and implicitness are missing from this work; it is a direct statement of morality. Furthermore, Horace wrote for a small, elite group of his colleagues; the intent to persuade a large audience of the folly of the behavior he criticizes is absent.

This is not to say that there was no true satire produced by the ancient Romans. Several examples of modern satire have survived the passing of centuries, at least in part, and continue to be studied today. The most well-known example is Petronius' *Satyricon*. Although the title most likely derives from the word *satyr*, which would indicate raunchy tales, rather than *satura*, the satirical intent is clear. The largest surviving section, "Dinner with Trimalchio," which contrasts the behavior of a group of wealthy freedmen to that of upper-class Roman citizens, is a perfect example. The criticism of the greed and conceit of the upper class of Rome, as well as of Emperor Nero, is entirely implicit, probably out of necessity; Nero was famous for sentencing those who displeased him to death. Still, upon close inspection of the work, one can see that despite the overt harassment of the freedmen at the dinner for their lack of refined Roman culture, the true character of these somewhat lower-class people is ultimately good, with well-intentioned gestures and generosity, while the character of the higher-class Roman citizens is quite the opposite; they are nasty, cruel, arrogant, and selfish. In the character of Trimalchio

one can also see criticism of Nero, who often threw extravagant parties and lived in excess, generally disregarding the greater good and acting on whims rather than careful reasoning.

It is believed that Gaius Petronius, a member of Nero's court, is the author (Arrowsmith v-vi), but this cannot be proven. Because we know so little about the author of the *Satyricon*, it is hard to tell what the ultimate intent of the novel was. It is likely, however, that the work, which was published in installments, would have reached the literate portion of the general public as well as the court under Nero (Arrowsmith vii-x). The implicit criticism of current affairs would therefore have reached the people, with the possible intent of encouraging social change.

As Europe moved into the Middle Ages, satire continued to flourish. *The Canterbury Tales*, by Geoffrey Chaucer, is another work still read and studied to this day. In this case, the target of the satire is the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church and the government in England, and the characters are implicitly criticized for this hypocrisy. One of the characters, for example, the nun, is supposed to be married to the church and unconcerned with material things, but in reality she is obsessed with her appearance, constantly primping and pruning herself. Another such character is the Friar, who begs for money which he uses not for the good of the church, but to improve his own condition. Chaucer employs humor to emphasize the absurdity of these characters acting in this way, and in order to make it accessible to the general public he was one of the first to write poetry in vernacular English, rather than French or Latin (Beidler). The work was written during a time of incredible unrest in England; the black death had taken an immense portion of the population during Chaucer's childhood, the working classes were

revolting against the aristocracy, and the authority of the church was being questioned (Wheeler). It would have been dangerous to directly state the opinions which are demonstrated implicitly in the *Tales*, making satire the perfect vehicle for Chaucer to voice his opinions. Nowhere does Chaucer outright say that the church is hypocritical, or that the social structure in England is inadequate; he doesn't need to. The characters demonstrate it themselves. And, Chaucer was treated very well by the government; under Richard II, he served Edward III, who granted Chaucer "a gallon of wine daily for the rest of his life," and Henry IV (Wheeler).

Sir Thomas More's most famous work, *Utopia* (1515), is full of cunning plays on words and quiet criticism. As had been the case earlier in history, overt dissent in his literary work would not only have been censored and remained unpublished, but he would also likely have been severely punished for writing it, and so in this novel More surrounds his opinions with an elaborate framework which frees him from any responsibility for the opinions expressed in the text. Right from the beginning, the person telling the story is given a name ("Hythloday") which in Greek means something like "dispenser of nonsense." It is this narrator who, already labeled an unreliable source, introduces his story by criticizing the political and social atmosphere in England. He then begins to tell his story about a place whose name, Utopia, could mean, in Greek, either "good place" (eu-topos) or "no place" (ou-topos), depending on how it is pronounced (McCrery). He then goes on to describe an isolated society which is socialist, unconcerned with wealth, and religiously tolerant. Everyone there is happy, and members of this imaginary society criticize the sort of civilization found in Europe of his day, in which the government appears to be obsessed with wealth and power rather than

the public good (McCrery). To this day, *Utopia* is widely read, and the word even has its own dictionary meaning as a perfect society. While More's work, and his general opinions, were embraced by many - including the Catholic church, which later named him a martyr and the patron saint of lawyers and statesmen (Catholic Encyclopedia) - his opposition to the government (in particular his refusal to accept Henry VIII as the head of the church) led to his execution in 1535.

Jonathan Swift, quite possibly the most well-known literary satirist of all time, was born in 1667, with an Irish father and English mother. Though he spent his childhood in Ireland, the Glorious Revolution forced him to move to England in 1688 (Cody). The conflict between England and Ireland, as well as the state of English government and society in general, brought him to write his most famous works, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and *A Modest Proposal* (1729), both stunning examples of modern satire.

Gulliver's Travels critiques a wide range of issues which were prevalent in seventeenth and eighteenth century England. In the novel, Swift attacks pettiness, violence, ethnocentrism, stubbornness, irrationality, religion, and government. All of this is masterfully done, using both exaggeration and placement in an unusual context to make obvious the deficiencies in English behavior. Not only is this novel a well-written example of satire, it was also very successful as soon as it was published (Sahlman). It remains successful to this day, and is often used to introduce young students to satire for the first time.

A Modest Proposal is an essay responding to the common sentiment by English landlords that the Irish, perceived as poor, filthy, and even subhuman, were having too

many children, which were becoming a burden to society. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England there were a great number of impoverished Irish families who could not afford to feed their children, and Swift begins by describing their plight in sympathetic terms. As a solution, he suggests that the children be sold by the parents at one year old in order to be eaten by the wealthy. This, he explains, will earn money for the family, provide a delicious delicacy for those who can afford to eat it, and even provide clothing made from the skins of the infants. This suggestion is put forth in serious and even scientific terms, and there is no obvious indication in the tone of the essay that Swift is being ironic. Upon a close look, however, a reader will see that Swift makes occasional scathing remarks regarding the landlords he is critiquing which might easily go unnoticed. The reforms he truly wishes to see, on the other hand, such as making use of local rather than foreign resources and showing mercy to the tenants of landlords, he introduces by claiming that they are useless and that he wants to hear nothing of them. Unlike *Gulliver's Travels*, this essay was not well received, as Swift's peers believed he was writing in bad taste, or even that he was serious about cannibalism.

In 1884, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was published by Mark Twain. The implicitness of the satirical message in this novel made it extremely controversial (PBS), with its critique of many aspects of the southern culture which existed in the mid-nineteenth century, particularly of religion and racism. Even the opening page of the book satirizes the culture, with the statement "Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot." This verbal irony serves to emphasize Twain's desire for the audience to look deeper into the text, while at the same

time critiquing the tendency of people in the story's setting to follow a "don't question the status quo" philosophy when it comes to important moral situations. The use of an innocent child as a protagonist is effective in deconstructing the flawed moral values of the adult world. Huck Finn, portrayed by Twain as an outsider in a similar fashion to those of Aristophanes' plays, acts out of a strong sense of morality which more often than not directly contradicts the morals imposed on him by the church and society. His decision to help out an escaped slave - an action that his society tells him will condemn him to hell - and the constant suggestion that he is doing the "wrong" thing, when he is clearly doing good, is a strong implicit critique of the slave trade, and of the church's consent to it.

Aldous Huxley, born in Surrey, England, published several satirical novels before writing his most famous one, *Brave New World* (1932), set in a futuristic dystopia where mass production, biological engineering, and sleep-learning, all of which were new ideas in Huxley's time (Barron Educational), have taken over the direction of the development of society. He combines a critique of certain aspects American culture in the early twentieth century with the fear that they will take over the world, and while carefree youth, good health, and a high level technology are the norm, these benefits come at the cost of education, freedom, family, religion, art, and philosophy. The vices that had encountered in America are exaggerated to the point where promiscuous sex and drug use are not only permitted, but strongly encouraged, and any person who does not take part in such activities is regarded as defective. The book was very controversial at the time of its publication, and it continues to be so; it is listed as number fifty-two on the American Library Association's list of *100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 1900-2000*.

Not all of modern satire comes in literary form. One of the earliest television satires was England's *The Frost Report*, a 1966-1967 sketch comedy show with a large cast, including future Monty Python members. The targets of the show's satire were numerous and varied. One of the most famous sketches was a critique of the English class system, in which three actors of significantly different heights, with the tallest being very well dressed, the middle-height character in moderate dress, the shortest character who is dressed in very poor garments, represent the upper, middle, and lower classes, respectively. The characters physically look up and down at each other while talking while describing their role in English society. The use of humor in this show made it pleasing to watch, even for people who might otherwise refuse to discuss such issues as class, and the program set a new standard for satire on television (BFI).

In contemporary times, satire has found a place in visual art as well, particularly in comic strips. *Doonesbury*, by Gary Trudeau, which began in 1970 and continues in present-day newspapers across the globe, was the first comic ever to be honored with the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning (Trudeau), and has seen incarnations as a television special and even as a Broadway musical. During its long history, the strip has satirized the education system, government, politics, fast food, and other social issues, and has become well known for its liberal slant. The satire is presented not only with the humorous text but also visually; for example, current president George W. Bush is generally portrayed as an asterisk, which symbolizes the alleged emptiness of his head, and wearing a Roman military helmet, which symbolizes his push for war in the Middle East. The helmet becomes increasingly battered and worn as time goes on, symbolizing his failure in the war.

Despite frequent refusals by some of the more conservative publications to run some of the strips, the comic has been incredibly successful and has provoked significant social change. In June of 1978, a comic included a coupon listing amounts of money allegedly accepted by the Speaker of the House from Korean lobbyists. This resulted in an immense amount of mail, including the coupons which had been cut out from the strip, at the Speaker's office. Another strip satirized a law in Florida requiring minorities to carry a pass card. Soon after the publication of this strip, the law was repealed under an act nicknamed the "Doonesbury Act" (McGill Tribune).

The Comedy Central television show *South Park*, now in its eleventh season, began as a collection of "toilet humor" jokes by creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone; over the years it has transformed into a powerful satirical work, known for airing episodes about current events mere days after they occur. The protagonists, four elementary-school-aged boys living in the small town of South Park, act as the ultimate voice of reason in the show, while the adults in the town represent the irrationalities of society. The subjects of critique are incredibly varied and usually very controversial, attacking both conservative and liberal views on society, which has resulted in a combination of frequent protests and boycotts, as well as an immense, loyal fan base who take the social critique seriously.

A recent notable example of a satirical episode is "Best Friends Forever," in which the character Kenny is killed by God in order to help protect Heaven from an invasion led by Satan. Kenny is revived in a hospital, however, and kept in a persistent vegetative state by a feeding tube while his friends argue over whether he should be allowed to die or not, and Heaven risks a takeover. A key scene in the episode shows a

group of protesters outside the hospital where Kenny is kept, chanting that nobody has the right to "play God" by taking the feeding tube out and letting him die, while a group of angels sent by God runs through the crowd unseen and unheard, desperately yelling "They were playing God when they put the feeding tube *in!*" The episode expresses the writers' critique of the country's handling of the court battle over Terri Schiavo, a woman in a persistent vegetative state whose husband wanted to let her die while her family and many conservatives, including President Bush, insisted that she be kept alive; the case got national attention. This episode won a 2005 Emmy in the category of "Outstanding Animated Program (for programming less than one hour)" (IMDB).

One of the best and most popular examples of modern political satire comes from Stephen Colbert, who plays a conservative news anchor on *The Colbert Report*. This television show on Comedy Central is heavily influenced by and parodic of *The O'Reilly Factor*, a talk show program featuring conservative pundit Bill O'Reilly. In the very first episode, his character said, "I'm not a fan of facts. You see, facts can change, but my opinion will never change, no matter what the facts are" (MSNBC). This statement is a satirization of the tendency for many conservative leaders to insist on a particular opinion even after its validity has been disproven. During each episode of the show, he comments on current events, particularly in politics. He commonly makes statements that are logically untrue, but bases them not in logic, but in faith, nationalism, or other beliefs not based in rational thought, thereby making them impossible to argue with rationally. He also conducts interviews on every show, usually with politicians and liberals with whom his character disagrees; by relying solely on illogical statements to argue with the interviewee, however, he makes the logic of that person's argument clear,

simultaneously making the highly conservative right look foolish through his emphatic but ill-founded agreement with them.

In addition to winning numerous awards, *The Colbert Report*, which first aired in October of 2005, has gained such an immense loyal following that his fans voted to name a bridge in Hungary after him by casting their votes on a Hungarian web site - a contest which he won by seven million more votes than there are people in Hungary (Hungarian Accent); in the end, the Hungarian ambassador to the United States appeared on the show and informed Colbert that, by law, in order for the bridge to be named after him, he would have to be fluent in Hungarian and deceased, and the bridge was later named Megyeri Bridge. Colbert also had a baby bald eagle named after him at the San Francisco Zoo (SF Gate), was awarded an honorary doctorate in fine arts by Knox College in Illinois (Knox), had the mascot of the Saginaw, Michigan OHL hockey team named after him (Saginaw Spirit), had a Ben & Jerry's ice cream flavor named in his honor (Ben & Jerry's), and was awarded Captain America's shield by Joe Quesada, Editor-in-Chief of Marvel Comics (Marvel). All of this recognition is a strong indication that Stephen Colbert is the most popular and successful satirist of all time.

Then and Now: A Comparison of Ancient and Modern Satire

It has been demonstrated that satire has been used extensively throughout recorded history as a tool of critique and social commentary. An analysis of the oldest surviving example of satire, Aristophanes' *The Acharnians*, as compared with a sample of one of the newest, the *Colbert Report*, will establish that the essence of satire has

remained unchanged throughout the centuries, while showing how the genre has evolved over time.

The Acharnians

The Acharnians was Aristophanes' earliest surviving play, performed for the first time in 425 B.C.E. at the Leneia, where it won first place in the competition (Parker 3); it has been revived many times throughout history, and was even recently adapted on stage to the current war in Iraq (Tripaway). Its central message is powerfully anti-war, a call for peace with the Spartans during the sixth year of the Peloponnesian War (Parker 1). The outsider character in this play is Dikaiopolis, whose name means “just city,” who tries his hardest to push for peace, but is not even allowed to speak in the forum because the war is considered by the residents of Athens to be a just one. Aristophanes presents the benefits of peace in contrast to the miseries of war physically, as the protagonist Dikaiopolis forms own personal peace treaty with Sparta when his home city of Athens refuses to listen to his demand for a national call for peace; meanwhile, the warmongering General of the National Guard, Lamachos, calls Dikaiopolis a traitor, coward, and Spartan sympathizer, pushing all the while for war. The consequences of war and peace are shown side by side. Dikaiopolis opens his house to trade and amasses a fortune in possessions, food, and women. Lamachos is all for the war so long as his elected position allows him to remain in Athens, but when a messenger informs him that he has been activated for service in the war, he must face the harsh realities of battle: poor rations, heavy equipment, little reward, and physical injury. At the very end, Lamachos limps off in shame while the chorus praises Dikaiopolis, shouting “All hail, the conquering hero!” (100).

In the voice of Dikaiopolis, Aristophanes makes the shocking suggestion that the war is not, as people are led to believe, a battle of the "good" Athenians versus the "evil" Spartans; quite to the contrary, the Spartans are simply people, with a great deal in common with the Athenians, and the true evil in the situation comes from the politicians who push for war in order to further their own financial interests. Dikaiopolis makes a grand speech explaining this point, and so manages to win over the Acharnians. The Acharnians form the chorus of the play. They are a group of working class older men who at first support the war because of a desire for revenge for an attack on their homeland, and this desire is further encouraged by the "good versus evil" rhetoric of politicians. After listening to Dikaiopolis' argument, however, they realize the truth and support him in his bid for an individual peace.

While Dikaiopolis does overtly argue for peace, it is not his words which ultimately persuade the audience, but his actions. No matter how reasonable his argument is, it makes no difference if nobody listens. In fact, this is demonstrated when the Athenians refuse to let him speak in the forum, and even the Acharnians refuse to listen to his argument at first. They attack him as a traitor for suggesting that the war is unjust until he threatens them with violence. He then must promise to let them behead him for treason if he does not succeed in persuading them before they finally allow him to speak. All of this shows that it is not in the nature of the common people to listen to speech after speech, but rather they must have some other reason for entertaining an argument. The reason for considering Aristophanes' argument in the play is not that the protagonist Dikaiopolis tells them this argument is right, but that he shows them. In fact, Lamachos' arguments for war might be equally as compelling as Dikaiopolis' arguments

for peace; certainly the rhetoric he uses in the play would have been commonly used by politicians of the day, and is still used even today by modern politicians. What matters in the end is that peace is demonstrated to be beneficial, and war to be detrimental to the individual.

Stephen Colbert: The Word

Every episode of *The Colbert Report* features a segment called "The Word." For each episode, Colbert's character chooses a word that is pertinent to a popular topic for the day, and presents a monologue regarding that topic and giving his opinion on it. During this segment, the screen is split into two halves, with Colbert on the left and a blue computer-generated image on the right, on which white text is displayed throughout the monologue. This "Word" panel serves various functions throughout the segment. At times the text converses directly with Colbert, asking questions or posing answers to his questions; more often than not, Colbert acts as though he is unaware of the text on the screen, leaving it free to make jokes at his expense and offer direct insults and sarcasm. Invariably, the text serves to make obvious and emphasize the absurdity of Colbert's statements and general opinions about the topic at hand. A transcription of a March 2007 "Word" segment entitled "Silence," will be the focus of this analysis.

Colbert's audience consists of what he calls his loyal fans; in reality, they are generally liberals, fans not of the character Colbert plays, but of the satire he presents, and they laugh and cheer during each segment. Although he never hints to any degree that he is not completely serious about the far right-leaning opinions he presents, his monologue always contains immense amounts of logical fallacies and contradictions, made all the more obvious by the text counterpart. For example, when Colbert says,

"they know that discussions of our president's war policy are a direct assault on our troops," the Word responds, "**Weapons of Mass Discussion.**" Colbert's claim is a common one made by conservative politicians who want to eliminate dissent from the media in the name of nationalism; the Word's response points out the absurdity of this idea by comparing First-Amendment-guaranteed speech to a massively destructive nuclear weapon. This text, moreover, brings to mind the Weapons of Mass Destruction claimed to be the source of the conflict to begin with, but was never found. This also reminds the audience of the dishonesty which spurred on the war in the beginning, and thus immediately characterizes the politicians being defended by Colbert as dishonest.

Colbert's final statement needs no assistance from the Word panel to make it obviously absurd: "it looks like the only way we can bring democracy there is to silence it here." This statement points out the double standard which exists in American politics. By saying this, he privileges the Iraqi people, whom he usually labels the "enemy," over his fellow American citizens, and in this way he makes a succinct summary of the conservative right's general argument with regards to the subject of democracy. No politician would ever use this exact phrase, however, because it makes the double standard overly clear: while our government policy is to "spread democracy" across the globe, the citizens of this country are being denied a democratic voice on this issue. If these politicians were advocating war because they were truly concerned about the growth of democracy, it would make no logical sense for the government to stifle the democratic processes of the United States. The ultimate point is that they must not be concerned with democracy, and there must be another motivation for the continuation of the war which has not been disclosed to the public.

Comparison

As time has passed and technology has developed, the art of satire has changed as well, and there are notable differences between the ancient satire of Aristophanes and the modern satire of Stephen Colbert. The most obvious is the medium on which they are presented; *The Acharnians*, as a play, was performed on a stage in a competition whose rules stated that there could be only three speaking actors on the stage at once. While the play did have a strong visual component, there were significant limits on what the three actors could achieve on the stage with ancient technology, and the message of the play could reach only those people who physically attended the Leneia; there was no way of recording the performance and replaying it later. *The Colbert Report*, on the other hand, is a television show which is broadcast internationally on television and the internet. The show makes use of modern technology, such as flashy graphic arts and green screen effects, the ability to film the same scenes several times and choose to air only the best cuts, and the ability to record scenes permanently on video and replay them many times to many different audiences. In addition to this, the makers of the show have an immense satirical tradition from which to derive material. The show parodies other genres of programming, such as serious news casting and talk shows, and utilizes some of the most successful techniques for satire, including humor and the appearance of seriousness. Aristophanes was far more restricted with less of a tradition to draw on, and was more or less required to invent his tools as he went. *The Colbert Report's* immense international audience also allows it to have a far more significant impact on society than the relatively

small, select group of people that would have attended *The Acharnians*, no matter how much they approved of its message.

Despite the differences between these two works and the significant span of time between their creation, they have an immense amount in common. Both are presented visually, and while Aristophanes is unable to utilize a split-screen effect, he does a very similar thing by portraying Dikaiopolis preparing for his feast side by side with Lamachos preparing for war, with the characters speaking alternating lines which are similar, but relating to their side of the war-peace argument. For example:

Lamachos: Break out my fieldpack! Issue Emergency Rations...
 Dikaiopolis: An emergency's broken out. Bring our largest lunchbasket.
 Lamachos: Moldy biscuits, a stack of mildewed hardtack...
 Dikaiopolis: The fresh-baked bread, the buns, the *petits fours*!
 Lamachos: ...some lumps of salt, a bag of wormy beans...
 Dikaiopolis: That tasty filet of sole! Never could stand beans. (95)

This dialogue goes on for a long time, gradually emphasizing more and more how well-off peaceful Dikaiopolis is, and how miserable the warmongering Lamachos has become.

This setup is strikingly similar to Colbert's "The Word" segments. The screen, like the stage, is divided in half, with Dikaiopolis and the "Word" panel representing the voice of reason, and Lamachos and Colbert representing the foolish warmongers and supporters of corrupt politics.

Both works also make extensive use of humor as a satirical tool. This is done, in both works, with physical humor, the use of statements so absurd that they are comical, and even cheap shots at individuals: Aristophanes was famous for writing lines into his plays that made fun of a well-known Athenian who would be present at the theater ("Dikaiopolis: I know *him*. / It's limp-wrist Kleisthenes, the All-Athenian Boy!" (16)), and Colbert does the same with well-known members of society, often politicians ("Colbert: Well, folks, guess what. Word: Loretta Sanchez Is A Whore?"). This humor

serves a dual purpose; the idea of "making fun of" the target of the satire makes it easy for the audience to turn against them, but even when the humor is extraneous to the actual critique being made, it keeps the attention of the audience.

Finally, the subject matter and style of satire is essentially the same. Both satirists are critiquing war, politicians' support of it, and the government's handling of it. Both have an example of a supporter of the war whose rhetoric is persuasive to many of those around them, but whose arguments are demonstrated to be empty; Lamachos must actually fight, and deal with hardships, and comes home injured, while Colbert's statements are comically deconstructed by the text on the "Word" panel.

Conclusion

Satire has come a long way over the years. Aristophanes could never have imagined that elements of his style of social commentary would be applied two and a half millennia later on a show which airs new episodes four times a week, and reruns much more often than that, which reaches people across the world and has an enormous impact on global affairs - but this is precisely what has come to pass.

Over the thousands of years during which satire has been generated, many different styles and tools have been used. Humor is one of the most effective, and therefore one of the most popular; some element of it is found in the work of Aristophanes, Petronius, Chaucer, More, Swift, Twain, and nearly everywhere in modern Satire. The appearance of seriousness is also effective. This is perhaps most obvious in Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, which never gives any overt indication of irony, but nevertheless the entire work is ironic. This style can also be seen in *The Colbert Report*.

Stephen Colbert is never seen out of character in the media, even when he is not on his show, but despite this, it is clear that he does not truly believe the things he says. Mark Twain and Aldous Huxley do this as well. In *Adventures of Huck Finn* and *Brave New World*, the main characters always feel as though they are doing something wrong by violating the rules and values imposed on them by society, when in fact they are acting morally; a fact that is obvious to the audience but not to them.

Another common way of making the criticized behavior absurd is simply taking it to an extreme. Swift transforms cruelty and disdain towards peasants into cannibalism in *A Modest Proposal*, Huxley takes social acceptance of promiscuous sex and drug use into social mandate in *Brave New World*, and Colbert suggests that democracy must be completely eliminated in this country in order to encourage it in another on the *Colbert Report*.

A common powerful tool is placing critiqued behaviors in an unusual context where their folly becomes obvious. Perhaps the best example of this is Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, where the vices attributed to English society are transplanted onto fictional foreign countries whose citizens are physically tiny, enormous, separated from the government, or even of another species. More moves English vices into a comparison with his perfect society in *Utopia*, where, relative to perfection, they look truly terrible. Huxley does this by moving his targeted behaviors into the future, where they can be made into extreme forms which are uncomfortable or even frightening for the audience.

Whichever tools a particular satirist uses to create his or her work, satire is one of the most effective and useful ways of getting a message out into the world - more so every day. The genre shows no signs of stopping, or even slowing down. Drawing on

this ever-growing tradition, I have created my own work of satire which demonstrates the tools explored above. My work includes visual satire in the form of comic strips as well as literary satire in the form of manufactured news articles dated three years from now.

Comics

1. “The Second Coming”

This comic draws upon the tools of humor and taking a behavior out of its normal context. The Christian religious figure of Jesus Christ is taken out of history and placed in a contemporary setting, where rather than falling in with the fundamentalist Christians who preach hatred and condemnation of drugs and alcohol, he spends his time with a laid back group of drinkers and marijuana smokers who believe in love and peace.

2. “One With the Universe”

This comic makes use of humor and apparent seriousness at the same time, with the humor existing in the perspective of the audience, and the apparent seriousness in the perspective of the characters. The subject is Buddhist teachings, which state both that the universe is one, meaning everything is made of everything else (biological material cycles through all life forms, and everything is God), and also that all life is sacred, leading many Buddhists to be vegetarians. However, if the first teaching is accepted as true, this means that vegetables are made of meat, meat is made of vegetables, and both are made of human beings and God – making the idea of not eating meat irrelevant.

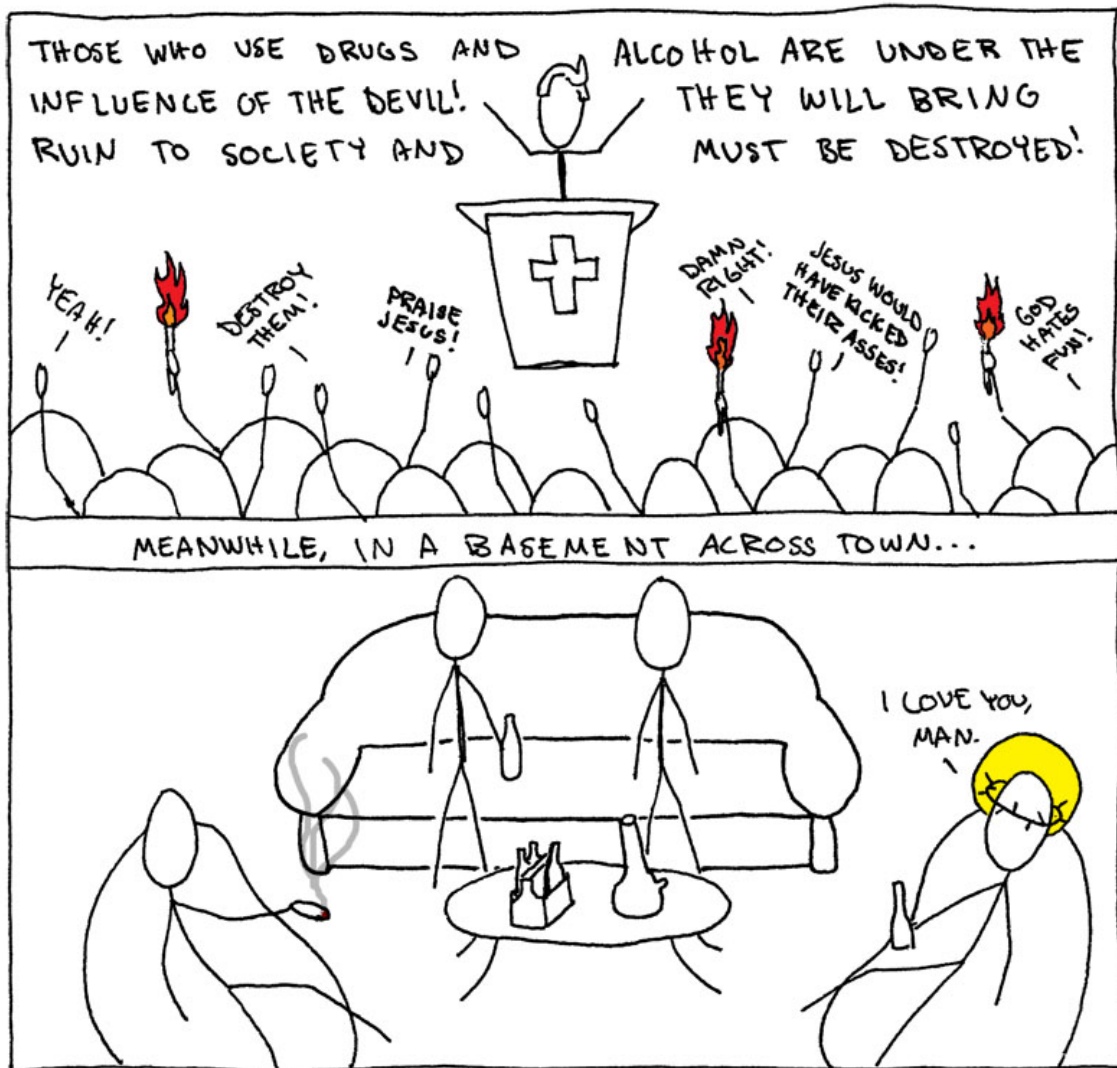
3. “PARA”

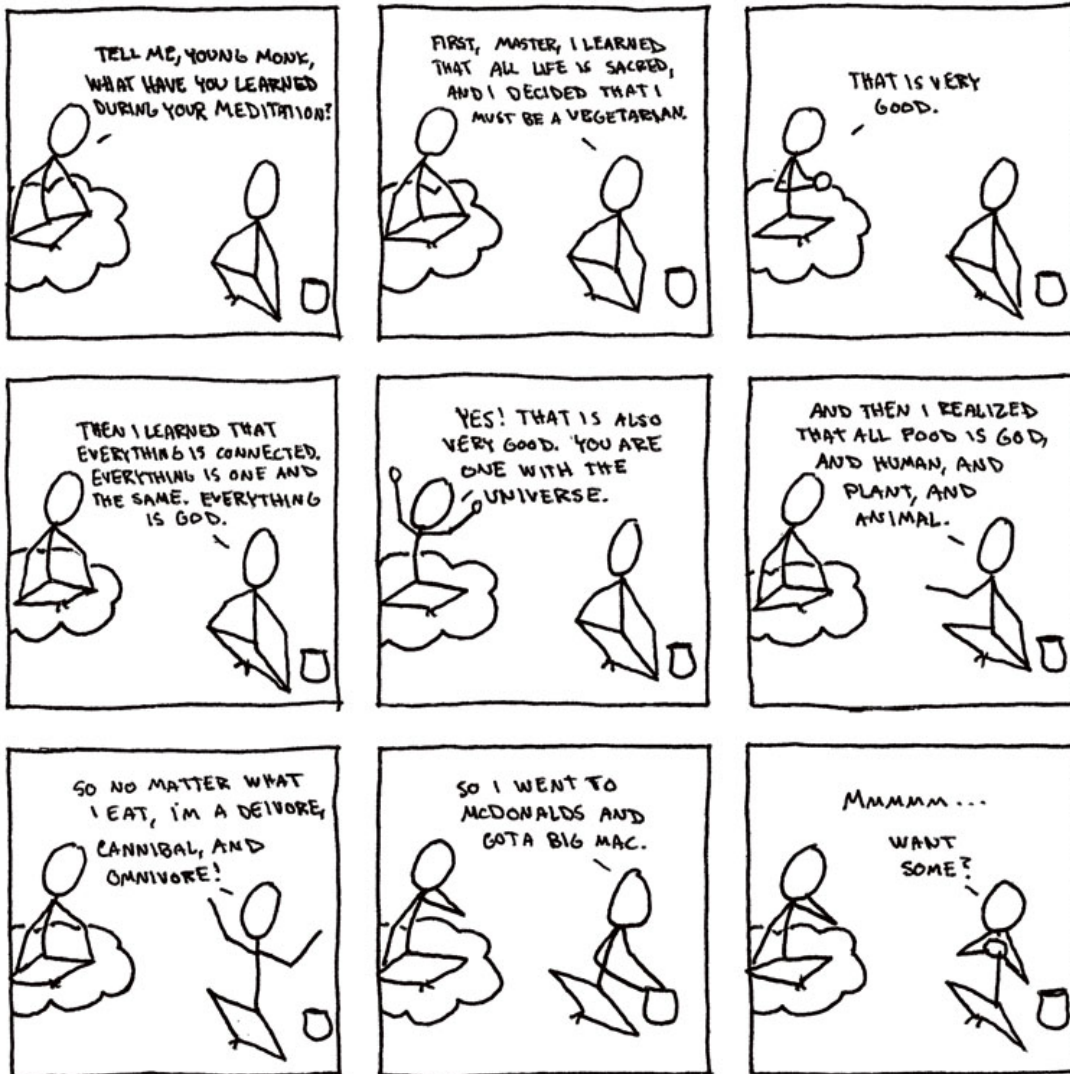
This comic uses humor to point out a glaring error in the philosophy of many animal rights organizations: the animals they mean to “free” have been taken care

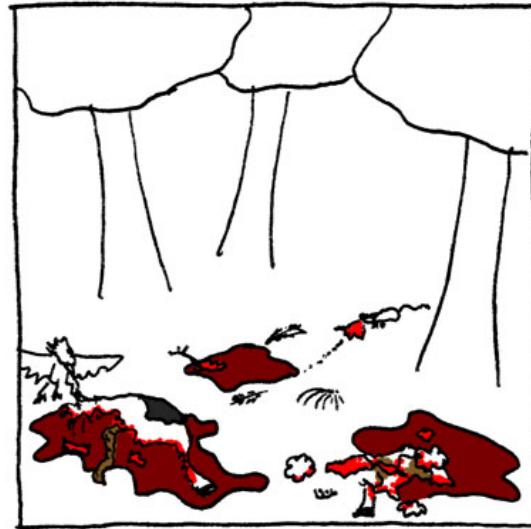
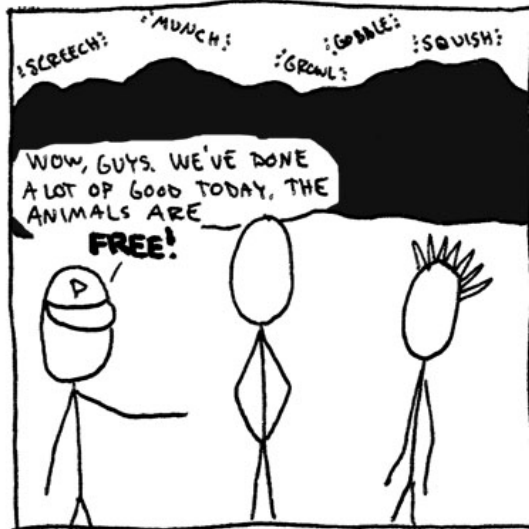
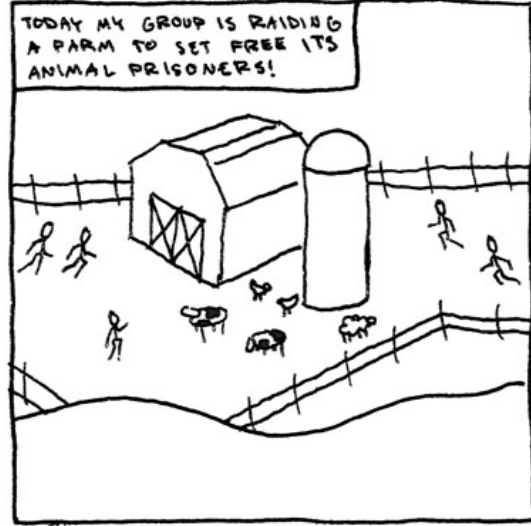
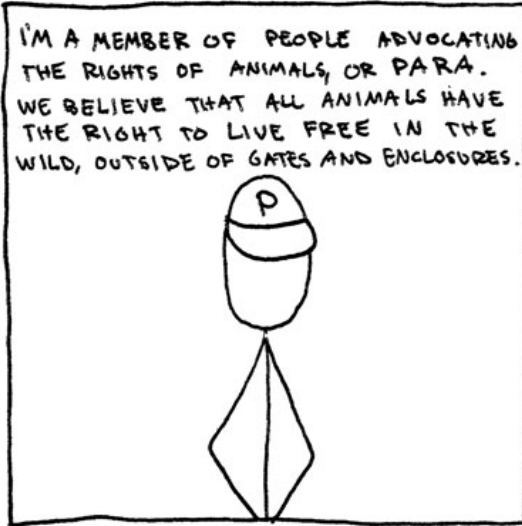
of for so long by humans that they are incapable of surviving on their own, and to release them into the wild inevitably means their quick demise. This is taken to its extreme in the comic in that this end result is graphically portrayed.

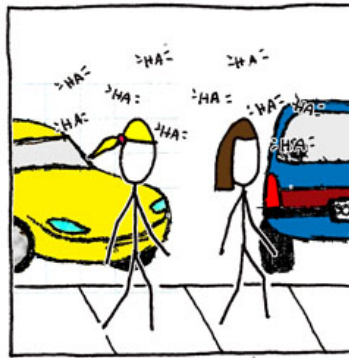
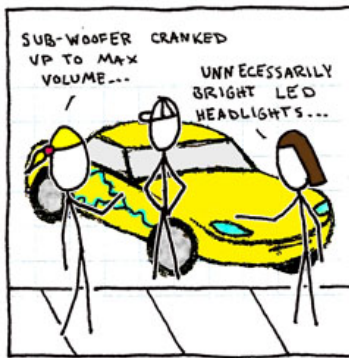
4. “Overcompensation”

This humorous comic takes the common saying that a man driving a nice car must be overcompensating (usually, it is implied, for small genitalia) to its extreme by having the passing girls judge a man with a nice car to be inferior, and one with a beat-up minivan to be superior, rather than being impressed with their vehicles.









News From the Future

Moving a storyline into a future is a way of removing it from its normal context and lends itself well to taking things to a satirical extreme. I have chosen to satirize several current news stories in this way. The articles are taken from various news sources and the full text of which can be found in the next section. I have drawn from these stories to create a fabricated newspaper detailing in a serious tone the extreme results of these current actions.

1. 'Not it!' More schools ban games at recess
Bazar, Emily. USA Today. June 27, 2006.
2. School Postpones Students' Physical Education
Connecticut, Eyewitness News. February 9, 2007.
3. Lawmaker wants baking soda to be sold behind counter
Associated Press. KMOV St. Louis Area News. April 6, 2007.
4. What 10-year-old's jury will hear
Casey, Rick. Houston Chronicle. February 6, 2007.
5. "The Rhody Reporter"
Fictional newspaper dated April 2010, written and designed by Megan LeBoeuf.

'Not it!' More schools ban games at recess

By Emily Bazar, USA TODAY

Some traditional childhood games are disappearing from school playgrounds because educators say they're dangerous.

Elementary schools in Cheyenne, Wyo., and Spokane, Wash., banned tag at recess this year. Others, including a suburban Charleston, S.C., school, dumped contact sports such as soccer and touch football.

In other cities, including Wichita; San Jose, Calif.; Beaverton, Ore.; and Rancho Santa Fe., Calif., schools took similar actions earlier.

The bans were passed in the name of safety, but some children's health advocates say limiting exercise and free play can inhibit a child's development.

Groups such as the National School Boards Association don't keep statistics on school games.

But several experts, including Donna Thompson of the National Program for Playground Safety, verify the trend. Dodge ball has been out at some schools for years, but banning games such as tag and soccer is a newer development.

"It's happening more," Thompson says. Educators worry about "kids running into one another" and getting hurt, she says.

In January, Freedom Elementary School in Cheyenne prohibited tag at recess because it "progresses easily into slapping and hitting and pushing instead of just touching," Principal Cindy Farwell says.

Contact sports were banned from recess at Charles Pinckney Elementary early this year, says Charleston County schools spokeswoman Mary Girault, because children suffered broken arms and dislocated fingers playing touch football and soccer.

Some schools that ban games at recess allow children to play them in gym class under supervision.

Critics of the bans say playing freely helps kids learn to negotiate rules and resolve disputes.

"They learn to change and to problem-solve," says Rhonda Clements, an education professor at Manhattanville College.

Joe Frost, emeritus professor of early childhood education at the University of Texas-Austin, sees playground restrictions as harmful.

"You're taking away the physical development of the children," he says. "Having time for play is essential for children to keep their weight under control."

School Postpones Students' Physical Education *Principal Says Most Students Failed Gym*

NEW LONDON, Conn. -- Physical education is being cut as a required class for freshman at one Connecticut high school.

The Board of Education decided that freshman at New London High School no longer must take gym class. The school's principal said the decision was made because most of the students fail freshman gym.

"Every time you fail, you're one step behind, and if we can look at one area that we know is a problem and find a way to address it, we're putting them in the right direction," said Principal Daniel Sullivan.

"I hear a lot of complaints about it. They say they don't like it. I don't know why, I just think they don't like getting dirty and working," said freshman Arkiah Shuleshko.

Instead of being forced to participate in physical education, New London students will be able to choose another elective class they would enjoy more.

"Physical education takes up one of your classes, and with that, you could be doing a business class," said sophomore Michael Brady.

Some students told Eyewitness News that they're not thrilled about the change.

"I think gym is a really good thing. I think you should have to take gym all four years," said junior Jesse Fitzpatrick.

The high school requires students to have two physical education credits to graduation, one more than the state requires. The second credit can be waived if the student plays two varsity sports as a sophomore or junior.

Lawmaker wants baking soda to be sold behind counter

ST. LOUIS (AP) -- A St. Louis legislator wants to require that baking soda be sold behind the pharmacy counter, as part of an effort aimed at a base ingredient in crack cocaine.

The proposal by Democratic Representative Talibdin El-Amin is modeled after a state law that requires some cold medicines to be placed behind the pharmacy counter because they contain ingredients used to make meth.

The anti-meth law requires customers to show a photo I-D and sign a book specifying their name, address and how much they purchased.

El-Amin's bill would implement similar requirements for the purchase of sodium bicarbonate, otherwise known as baking soda. The measure was filed last month and has yet to receive a hearing.

Federal drug enforcement officers questioned whether adopting the restrictions for a commonly used product would work.

What 10-year-old's jury will hear

By RICK CASEY

If a jury is seated May 15, as scheduled, to decide whether 10-year-old Casey Harmeier committed the crime of attempting to send a false fire alarm, here is some of the evidence jurors are likely to hear.

Casey is a good student, making A's and B's.

According to his father, he has never been in trouble, either at Tomball ISD's Beckendorf Intermediate School or previously at Tomball Elementary School.

When I asked district spokesman Stacy Stanfield to confirm that, she said, "Student records are confidential. I am told he is a good student."

Teacher: 'He's a great kid'

He *was* called to the principal's office last year — to receive the "citizen-of-the-month award."

When Casey was sentenced to three weeks at the district's alternative school for actually activating the fire alarm, alternative-school teacher Janet Bohannon e-mailed his fifth-grade classroom teachers asking if there was anything she needed to know in order to help him.

"Casey is a really good kid and a hard worker," replied Lori Dollar. She added her concern that "we do a lot of labs in science that he will be missing."

Teacher Carrie Roberts wrote: "He's a great kid."

An eyewitness account

Presumably those same teachers would have to testify he was a really stupid kid when he attempted to pull the fire alarm. There were so many witnesses.

He was in line with classmates and a teacher was nearby when he accidentally brushed a clear plastic cover over the fire alarm. Seeing the cover was ajar, another boy dared him to pull the cover off.

A dare is tough on a boy. Casey pulled the cover and was frightened when a loud horn went off.

Neither he nor his teacher nor, apparently, the principal knew the covers were rigged to sound a loud, local alarm precisely to discourage false alarms from being sent to the dispatcher.

In the principal's office, Casey erroneously said he pulled the alarm. Principal Dolores Guidry sentenced Casey to three weeks at the alternative center and the boy who dared him to in-school suspension.

Without consulting Casey's parents, Guidry called the Tomball police, who arrested Casey and charged him with a felony. It was nearly four hours after the incident that Frank Harmeier, who teaches history at the Tomball alternative school, was notified that his 10-year-old was under arrest.

It took Harmeier 51 days, but he finally was able to get school district officials to admit in writing that "the overwhelming evidence" (a fire alarm log) showed that the fire alarm was not set off by Casey but by a staff member attempting to stop the local horn.

Prosecutor Cari Allen was notified. She did not, however, drop the charges.

"I think the evidence will show he was attempting to do it," she said.

Apparently she doesn't know about the eyewitness. I will call her Becky because her mother wants to protect her privacy.

Becky told her mother about the incident when she came home from school that day.

"She said the other boy dared Casey to pull the cover off," her mother said. "She said, 'I don't think you should do that.'"

Becky's mom said her daughter was clear that it was only about the cover.

"There was no dare to pull the fire-alarm lever," she said.

Becky's mom called Principal Guidry the next day.

"I told her Becky had witnessed the whole thing," she said. "But I told her under no circumstances should she talk to my daughter without me or my husband there."

Why?

"I didn't want to take the risk of their taking her off to jail," she said.

She said she had received calls from other parents, all upset that Casey had been arrested without his parents' knowledge.

As it happens, Becky's grandmother dared a classmate to pull an alarm when they were ninth-graders nearly 60 years ago. The girl did. Both had to stay after school several days and write an essay on good citizenship, said Becky's mom.

Neither became a criminal.

Guidry didn't bother to interview Becky, but I'd be surprised if defense attorney Craig Washington didn't want the jury to hear from her.

Watching the prosecutor and school officials squirm during the trial may be the only good thing the juvenile justice system does for Casey.

Already he's been put through a session where, without his parents present, he was asked whether they abused him, sexually or otherwise.

After that session he wrote a brief journal item: "I feel like a dieses. Like all I am is a viol monster of a person well at least thats wat I think. I'm always scared every time I leave my parents sight and the questions I had to answer were scary and asked if I had ever been high, drunk, or raped and it scared me."

At a more recent appearance, Casey was present with his father and Washington as the prosecutor offered a plea bargain and confidently said she knew she could get a conviction.

"I know that's just a negotiating technique, but Casey doesn't," said Harmeier. "He cried all the way home."

Casey will never pull the cover off a fire alarm again. But he wouldn't have anyway. And an essay on citizenship could have helped his spelling.

THE RHODY REPORTER

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"Recess Protection Law" Passes

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) - ets. Americans need to be - A bill proposed six months mature enough to handle the ago was voted into law by responsibilities that come Congress yesterday. The new with playing before they start law will raise the minimum becoming involved in these legal age for the playing of activities."

tag, football, soccer, four Many American parents square, dodgeball, hide-and- are overjoyed at the new law. seek, and a host of other vio- "Finally, I can focus on lent activities to 21. The law choosing my children's raises the age from 18, be- classes in college and making cause, as Representative Jack phone calls when the profes- Bianchi (R-Pennsylvania) put sors hurt their feelings, rather it, "kids are still getting hurt. than having to worry that they They are breaking the law might be engaging in physical and playing these games ille- activity with other human gally, and once they reach the beings," exclaimed one age of eighteen the number of mother shortly after the deci- injuries statistically skyrocket- sion. (cont'd on p. 4)

Congress To Vote On New Match Law

WASHINGTON, D.C. lows closely on the heels (AP) -- Congress votes of a ban on butane light- this afternoon on a new ers, which have been law called the "Match used in the past to create Law" requiring a license homemade bombs. The for civilians to purchase heads of the matches can s u l f u r - b a s e d be used in for the same matches. This issue fol- purpose (cont'd on p. 3)

Seven Dead In Tragic High School Fire

Pawtucket -- Officials re- tried to pull the fire alarm cause it seemed un- ported this morning that the before evacuating himself. safe." He added that the death toll from yesterday's Firefighters have man- cover to the alarm outside fire at Clinton High School aged to uncover a possible the classroom was missing, in Pawtucket has risen to reason for the failure of the but the actual alarm was not seven: Freshmen Denise alarm system. According to activated; when trying to Ucci, Anthony Harris, and Peter Romano, chief of the pull the fire alarm, Russo Steven D'Andrea, Sopho- Pawtucket Fire Department, probably mistook the prank more Kaitlyn Alberto, Sen- the alarms in the school deterrent for the actual iors Tiffany Contadino and were fitted with a prank de- alarm. The students and Dennis Connelly, and Eng- terrent device which sets off faculty around him started lish teacher Geoffrey Freed- a local alarm sound when to evacuate, but those on man. Students, teachers, the cover of the alarm is the other end of the build- friends, parents, and local lifted, but does not set off ing had no idea there was a residents gathered in the an alarm for the entire fire. This also caused a ten- school parking lot today to building or notify the fire minute delay in notifying department. "[The system] the fire department, as eve- mourn. According to Mario was designed to stop kids ryone who had evacuated Russo, a chemistry teacher from pulling prank alarms," assumed that they were al- at the school, the fire was says Romano. "They'd get ready on their way. caused by a bunsen burner scared by the sound when Most of the residents of tipping over during a chem- they lifted the cover and run Pawtucket never knew istry experiment. It hap- off before they actually about the prank-deterrent pened to set alight some pulled the alarm. The idea alarm. Dianna D'Andrea, chemicals which he knew was to save taxpayer money mother of Steven D'Andrea, would spread the flame on false calls for the fire blames the local govern- quickly, so he ordered the department. Most of us ment for the death of her students to evacuate and never liked the system be- son. "He (cont'd on p. 3)

Store Owners Unhappy With New Laws

Providence -- Local store owners are worried that Match Law passes it will introduce a host of new difficulties in running their businesses. One store owner complains that current laws already pose too many restrictions. "I have to keep half the store behind the counter now," he says. "I can't sell cold medicine, soda, household cleaners, type of aerosol can, bug spray, markers, or whipped cream without checking IDs and filling pages of paperwork. I'm losing business because nobody wants to wait in line for an hour to making such

"It's their own fault for keeping the items on the shelves," said H. Lee Scott, CEO of Wal-Mart, during a press conference. "The government recommends renovating stores so that all of the items are behind locked doors, and employees retrieve the requested items for the customer. It would be better for the business, and safer for everyone." Scott supports such

Four Teens Arrested For Soccer

Kingstown -- Four male teenagers were arrested early this morning for violation of the new "Recess Protection" law, making them the first to be charged under the new rules. They were caught playing soccer in the backyard of one of the teen's homes. Jared Ahmed, 19, told police that he was unaware of

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Childhood Obesity On The Rise

Providence -- A new study led by the University of Rhode Island has revealed an alarming rise in childhood obesity over the past five years. The extensive study analyzed data on children aged five to fifteen years, including weight, cholesterol level, and blood pressure, and the results may be cause for concern.

Jessica Cohen, a URI graduate student and member of the research team, explained their findings. "The percentage of obese children skyrocketed in recent years, more than doubling since 2008. Type 2 diabetes has also been found in alarming numbers of children, particularly in the past three years." The study also documented a growing number of other diseases in children which were once considered adult diseases, including tension and dangerously high cholesterol levels.

The leader of the study, Dr. Rachel McMillan, suggested some of

New Match Law Up For Vote In Congress

(from p. 1) if enough are accumulated and pressurized. The new law would require any civilian seeking to purchase a book of matches to apply for a license. The approval process would require proof of citizenship and include a thorough background check. According to Senator Gerald Michaels (R-Virginia), "The purpose of the law is to protect the citizens of the United States from harm. If any delinquent or terrorist the ability to purchase matches at the corner store, the people are not safe. There could be bombs everywhere, and I, for one, do not want to live in fear." Michaels, one of the Senators who introduced the bill, added that anyone with criminal convictions and traffic violations, would be denied a license. The license would also serve as a tracking device so that enforcement officials can keep tabs on how many matches each person is buying. Other provisions of the law would raise the minimum age for buying matches to twenty-one and limit the number of matches which can legally be sold at once to twenty. Kids under twenty won't be able to buy matches, and therefore they won't be able to smoke. It will also prevent a lot of cases of arson and accidental fire."

Military personnel would still be permitted to buy matches for defense purposes." Many people suggest that the new law would not prevent delinquents and terrorists from obtaining matches. "If they're willing to build a bomb, they're willing to steal a book of matches," said Jessica O'Hare, a mother of three who lives in New York City, after the press conference. "Besides, I don't think terrorists are wasting their time on match heads."

This law, like many others introduced in the past few years, is structured around the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act introduced in 2006 which required medications containing pseudoephedrine, a chemical used in the manufacture of the drug methamphetamine, to be stored behind a pharmacy counter, and all sales to be logged.

Harry Beeks stored a pharmacy counter, and all sales to be logged. "If counter, and all sales to be logged. This new law will do a logged.

High School Fire

(from p. 1) was a good boy, he had a great future," she said. "The government had no right to put money before my son's life." D'Andrea announced to the crowd that she plans to file suit against the town government for his death.

Pawtucket Mayor Jeremy Basso could not be reached for comment.

A memorial service for those lost in the fire will be held this Sunday at 9:00 AM at St. Mary's Church. Classes are expected to resume early next week.

Psychologists Charged With Bribery

Los Angeles (AFP) -- Three child psychologists were accused of accepting bribes yesterday for reasons as yet unreleased to the public. They were arrested at their practices in central Los Angeles and taken to California State Prison, Los Angeles County at seven PM. The names of the psychologists have not yet been released by police.

Frustrated Store Owners Speak Out

(from p. 2) renovations mandawalk into the store, select their items on a touch-screen, and Store owners have responded enjoy our air-conditioned wait- by claiming that they are small ing room until their order is businesses lacking the re- ready for pick-up."

sources for renovations. Scott When questioned regarding claims this is one more reason the inability of smaller busi- to buy from his stores. "We've nesses to afford such renova- recently renovated every store tions, thereby risking bank- with a walk-through and drive- ruptcy, Scott suggested that through system," he they "leave behind the burden says. "Customers can place of running a small business and their order online or over the join Wal-Mart's team of enthu- phone and pick it up without siastic sales representatives." ever leaving their vehicle, or

"Recess" Law Passes

(from p. 1) "This is fantastic," said the parents to make sure nothing unac- conservative pundit Theodore Beonard. ceptable is happening, not the govern- "I'm so happy I almost forgot that homo- ment. Kids have been playing outside for sexuals are having loving relationships thousands of years, and it's never done with each other in the privacy of their any harm yet - in fact, it's how they own homes."

"This is one thing we [liberals and conservatives] can finally agree on," in life."

added Gina Bennet, a liberal Democrat and mother of two. "My baby boy is safe pected to be on hand to provide their ex- from harm, and I've even decided to let pert opinions on the subject, but failed to him live on campus at school, a full seven appear."

miles from home, provided he calls every Lawrence F. Merman, Esq., one of the night for me to come tuck him in."

However, there are still problems with the following public statement: "Today the system. "The number of juvenile ar- we have made a great leap in our strug- rests has tripled in the last two years," gle, but it is only just beginning. We need said a local police chief. "Kids are trying to continue to fight to keep our children their very hardest to dodge the law and safe, without ever having to take respon- play these games in secret - mostly at sibility for the things they do. Today's night in abandoned quarries, warehouses, victory will offer even greater inspiration for parents to take a stand against their construction sites, and other such places. It's almost as though having to dodge the outdated obligations, and we will be cer- law is causing these kids to behave more tain to continue to file suit against every dangerously than they used to."

"That would stop if only they would organization that encourages the brutal start obeying the law," responded a sup- treatment of children, as we have for the past ten years." Merman is a multi- porter of the new change, adding that if billionaire with no children of his own. He also announced that his next move they are so determined to get themselves He will be to try to outlaw shoelaces, as chil- injured, then they should be locked up in dren might strangle themselves with juvenile hall for their own safety.

Not all parents are happy with the law. them. The crusade will begin with class "If my kid wants to run around and get action lawsuits against all companies that hurt," proclaims Thomas LeBlanc, father manufacture the lethal devices. Merman of a seven-year-old girl, "she should be could not be reached for comment after able to. It's part of growing up. It's up to his speech.

Meth Use Still A Problem, Say Police

San Francisco (AP) -- In an an- lice officer in San Francisco, dual report given last Thursday, during a public state- law enforcement officials in ment. "The problems that San Francisco, California have cause meth addiction to begin reported a steady trend in with are far stronger than any methamphetamine use over the deterrent we can come up with, past five years. This continues and no matter how many users despite laws in place designed we arrest, more just keep pop- to make the drug more difficult ping up."

Some politicians are propos- ing harsher penalties for "No matter how difficult we ing methamphetamine use which make the materials to obtain, methamphetamine use which the drug makers always find a way to come into effect sometime way," said Robert Lynch, a po- in the next year.

Appendix A

Transcription of "The Word: Silence" (The Colbert Report, 2007)

Colbert: Nation, I am relieved. For a while there it almost seemed like the senate might pass a resolution criticizing the President's troop surge. Even worse, it looked like they might talk about it; and we all know that talking is a gateway to thinking. Luckily, on Monday senate republicans successfully blocked the debate. Leading the republican charge? Democrat senator Joe Lieberman. Here's how Mr. Independent interjected the President's troop surge with a little Joe-mentum.

[A clip plays from C-SPAN 2 with Joe Lieberman speaking.]

Lieberman: What we say here in the senate will be heard by the leaders of the thuggish regimes in Iran and Syria, and by Al-Qaeda terrorists eager for evidence that America's will is breaking.

[Clip ends.]

Colbert: Which brings us to tonight's word: Silence.

["Word" panel appears on the right side of the screen. From this point forward, Colbert will be speaking on the left of the screen, while the "Word" panel displays text on the right. Colbert's speech is indicated by normal text, while the right-hand panel is indicated with bold print.]

Silence

Senator Lieberman is right about our enemies. They hang on every word that passes through the senate chamber.

C-SPAN's only viewers

Because they know that discussions of our president's war policy are a direct assault on our troops.

Weapons Of Mass Discussion

That's why it's so vital for the senate to say nothing. Most senators understand this. Even John Warner, who introduced the bill, voted against debating it.

Have His Surge And Hate It, Too

Folks, this is the same heroic silence congress employed back in 2003 when they first authorized the invasion of Iraq. At the time, anyone who asked questions was called a coward.

Now They're Called Presidential Candidates

Because the best way to support our troops was to send them into war without discussion.

Or Body Armor

Of course, back then the war had the support of the American people. Today's congress isn't so lucky. Over 70% of Americans disapprove of the way the President is handling the war.

He's Handling The War?

Now, of course, the whiners will say, "But the midterm elections were a referendum on the Iraq war! The American people have spoken and shouldn't be ignored!"

They Should Be Wiretapped

Well, folks, guess what.

Loretta Sanchez Is A Whore?

We have elections because we live in a free country, and freedom is worth making sacrifices for. If that sacrifice has to be the voice of the American people, so be it! This is too important. Senator Lieberman is right.

Far Right

Our enemies are listening to what the congress says.

Unlike The White House

We went to Iraq for one reason.

WMD's?

No.

9/11?

No.

Someone Tried To Kill The President's Daddy?

...Kinda. But mostly to bring democracy to the Middle East. And it looks like the only way we can bring democracy there is to silence it here.

Silence

And that's the word.

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