

Emma Foster

Week of April 6th

Weber Period 3

Satire Essay

Satire gives the writer the ability to convey a message that may be too controversial or taboo to say blatantly. In satire, the humorous aspects act as somewhat of a disguise for what the writer is trying to say about a topic. These writers' tones are usually a far cry from serious, but their message usually is of a serious nature. Using satire can save a writer that is under fire due to an article or episode because they can say it was "just a joke", while in reality, the meaning was deeper than a joke. Satire is also used often to soften news or circumstances. In *Status Anxiety*, Alain de Botton argues that the aim of humorists is not merely to entertain but "to convey with impunity messages that might be dangerous or impossible to state directly." "The Borowitz Report" in *The New Yorker*, Trevor Noah's *Daily Show*, and SNL all use satire to express their point of view in a comedic way. Through the use of satire, these sources are able to discuss topics that most would not broach, which makes them important to society.

In "The Borowitz Report", Andy Borowitz makes fun of Trump and his administration, while pointing out their flaws, according to his opinion. For example, in the article "Fauci Tricks Trump Into Believing There Is No Easter This Year", the author mocks Trump. This story isn't real, but to many readers, they think to themselves, "Yeah, that seems about right". He pokes fun at Trump's commonly accepted unintelligence by saying that Dr. Fauci, a member of the COVID-19 task force, convinced Trump that since it was a leap year there was no Easter, thus the US couldn't "reopen" by then since the day didn't exist in 2020. This story highlights the U.S.'s inability to open by Easter due to the coronavirus, and Trump's unwillingness to accept it and take the serious action needed. This article is highly controversial, but since it's comical,

people who claim to be offended by it can be deemed unable to “take a joke”. Additionally, the story “Trump Invokes Defense Production Act to Mass-Produce Gallons of Spray Tan”, again, jeers Trump while pointing out the current issues. In this story, Trump finally invokes the Defense Production Act, not for P.P.E., but tanner. While mocking Trump’s orange skin tone, the author points out that Trump will not institute the act, even though it’s gravely needed, unless it’s beneficial to him in some way. The author’s use of satire emphasizes that Trump continues to ignore the nation’s need for the Defense Production Act, during this pandemic. Most news sites and stations wouldn’t be so bold to say or publish this, but through the use of satire, Andy Borowitz does.

Satire is also used in the *Daily Show* with Trevor Noah. In this show, Trevor Noah hosts a news television series. Most episodes focus on the wrongdoings of the government but explain them in a comedic fashion. For example, he points out that Trump has been giving out medical advice after blatantly saying he is not a doctor. Following this comment, he begins doing his Donald Trump impression that would be for the pharmaceutical ad that plays every time after Trump speaks. He makes the statement, “... America is being led by someone who knows less about medicine than Dr. Pepper”. This will likely be found to be incredibly humorous and truthful by a lot of people, which makes it an exemplary use of satire. If Trump were to draw attention to this, he would be labeled as “butt-hurt”. By using satire Trevor Noah is able to point out the faults in our own government that would be deemed antigovernmental if it weren’t conveyed in a humorous way. He then switches from politics to the new series *Tiger King*. He says the best news is that a new episode might be coming out, according to Jeff Lowe. He sarcastically says “If you can’t trust a 65-year-old man who dresses like a rebellious teenager,

who can you trust?” By using this as one of the only examples of good news citizens have gotten, it shows what a despicable position we are in without outright saying it. Another current issue that he then points out is that the CDC is now saying that everyone should be wearing masks or any kind of mouth and nose covering when we leave the house. He comments “The CDC is going to have everyone looking like broke-ass “Mortal Kombat” characters.” Here, Trevor Noah uses satire to make people laugh in such awful circumstances, which can be somewhat comforting.

SNL also makes use of satire in their skits. They do skits about political topics as well as other topics each week to broadcast a real message in a comedic way. For instance, in one skit, they are high schoolers in history class and the teacher tries, again and again, to get them to learn something and just focus, but it was no use. For instance, at one point, the teacher tries to begin the lesson, but a student interjects and asks if the test, that he already said wouldn’t count, would count. Everyone can picture at the very least, one instance during which they have seen this happen, and they laugh because it’s true, while teachers laugh because this happens practically every day. Without out-right saying students constantly don’t pay attention and go off task, the skit is able to use satire to show exhausting it is to be a teacher.

“The Borowitz Report” in *The New Yorker*, Trevor Noah’s *Daily Show*, and SNL all use satire to express their point of view in a comedic way. Through the use of satire, these sources are able to present material that many would not be so bold to do, which is important to society. In *Status Anxiety*, Alain de Botton correctly argues that humorists are not just to entertain but “to convey with impunity messages that might be dangerous or impossible to state directly.” Satire

allows writers to express a message that may be too controversial, or just too difficult due to the circumstances surrounding it, to blatantly say.