

Satire is everywhere; it's in newspapers, books, the Internet, and television. It's popularity in today's media can be attributed to its ability to inform the masses while still entertaining. In the past, the sole purpose of humorists was to entertain. The role of modern humorists is much more relevant, as their purpose is not simply to tell jokes and make people laugh. Satirists impact society by effectively addressing the important social and political issues of modern life that are otherwise ignored. In his 2004 novel, *Status Anxiety*, Alain de Botton argued that the chief aim of humorists is not merely to entertain, but, "to convey with impunity messages that might be dangerous or possible to state directly." While it's argued that the work of satirists can potentially be harmful to society because it is believed to lead to cynicism, Botton's claim holds true, because the work of satirists benefits society through its ability to engage an audience to fuel important conversations about cardinal issues plaguing modern politics and society.

Critics of political satire argue that it is harmful to society. They believe that satire can harm reputations and cause distrust between citizens and their political leaders. In the *New Yorker* article, "Fauci Tricks Trump Into Believing There is no Easter This Year," Borowitz used satire to spark a conversation about President Trump. He wrote, "after hearing Trump declare on Tuesday that he hoped to reopen the country on Easter Sunday... Fauci decided to spring into action. 'I ran down to my computer and mocked up a phone 2020 calendar with no Easter on it'... According to Fauci, Trump was initially baffled by the news..." Borowitz later wrote that Fauci

was able to convince President Trump that there is no Easter on leap years. This piece of satire brought the question of Trump's intelligence to the public through the use of humor. It allowed the public to question the qualifications of President Trump, and even the United States government as a whole. Critics fear that this is counterproductive, as it will lead to distrust and questioning of the government that could, in turn, result in political instability in the country. This is one example of how critics of satire fear it can damage society. They worry that, in addition to damaging reputations, satire can also lead to cynicism. They believe that all of these issues can be avoided by ending the use of satire in the media.

Despite the warning of critics against satire, many people support and enjoy the presence of satire in the media. This overwhelming support can be attributed to the ability of satirists to engage their audience. They are able to do this through the use of humor, irony, and exaggeration. Programs such as Saturday Night Live and The Tonight Show are renowned for their ability to use humor to engage an audience. In an episode of Saturday Night Live, a skit entitled "World War II 101" used satire to criticize the educational system in America. During this skit, a history teacher struggled to get his students to recall simple information about European history and World War II. Because the writers drew the attention of viewers through their use of humor, they were able to bring the question of whether the American educational system is failing its students to the attention of the public. It's important that the system of education in America successfully prepares the nation's children for the future because they are the next generation of leaders, and their ability to lead the nation is crucial in the future prosperity of America. This is one example of how satirists are able to successfully call attention

to important issues that are otherwise ignored by the media. Addressing these issues is the first step in solving them and improving modern society and politics.

While critics of satire argue that it harms society by causing cynicism and ruining reputations, satire is beneficial to society, as it uses humor to entertain audiences so that it can address and solve the problems plaguing modern American society and politics.