



Understanding Satire

Humor For the Intelligent Sort...

Will you get it?



- Take Notes when you see this icon in the top left corner!



Satire Defined:

- One of the oldest forms of literature and one of the most durable
- A constructive art that seeks not merely to destroy but to rebuild; aim is to inspire reform
(humor + criticism = inspired reform)



Additional Aspects of Satire:

- Actually very conservative
- Cherishes a sound society, good traditions, and wise, viable institutions
- Values the general welfare and the public good
- Audience is reasonably intelligent, educated, and rational (After all, there is no point in appealing to fools; they won't get it!)



Satire Versus Sarcasm

Satire is a blend of criticism and humor for the purpose of correction or improvement.

Sarcasm is simple abuse consisting of a series of insults.



The Three Satire Questions:

1. What institutions, practices, and/or groups are being satirized?
2. What method(s) does the author employ in constructing the satire?
3. What is the tone of the satire?



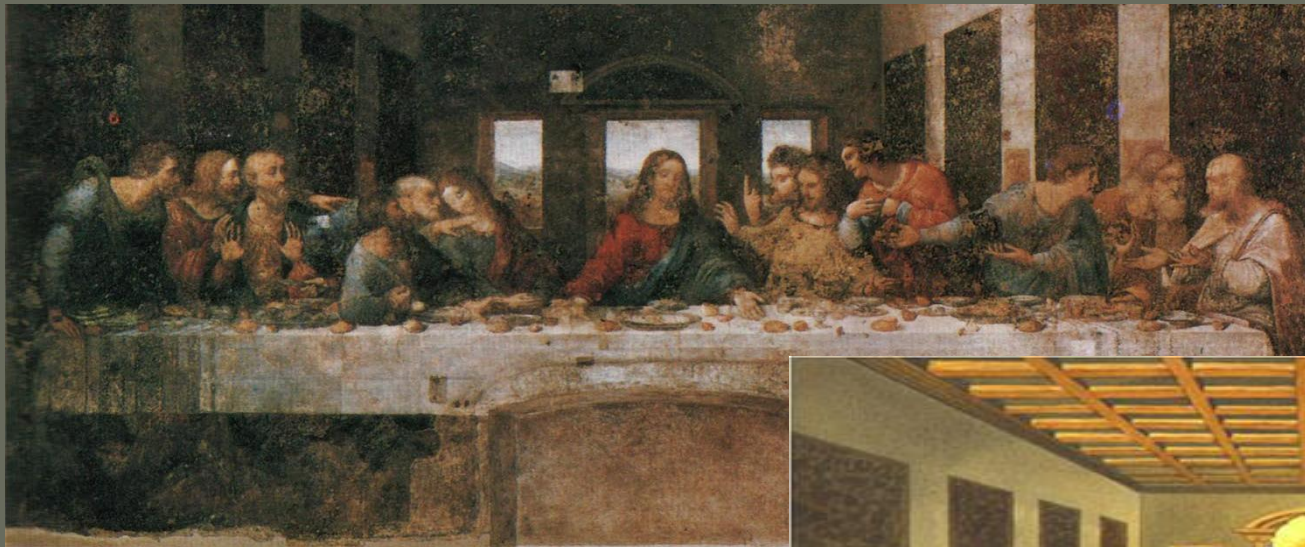
What institutions, practices, and/or groups are being satirized?

- A group or organization
- Individuals
- A “sort” or type of person
- A social class
- A prevailing philosophy
- Social manners
- Modern progress
- Mankind



Method:

- Parody – imitates the style of a particular work or writer.





Method:

- **Irony** - words are used to show the opposite of the actual meaning.

The three kinds of irony are:

- Verbal irony - where what you mean to say is different from the words you use
- Situational irony - compares what is expected to happen with what actually does happen
- Dramatic irony - uses a narrative to give the audience more information about the story than the character knows

Here are two examples of irony:

- A great example of irony in literature comes from *The Gift of the Magi* by O. Henry. It is a story of two people, much in love, who are very poor and want to give a Christmas gift to one another. She is very proud of her long, beautiful hair and he is equally proud of his pocket watch. The irony comes in to play when she cuts and sells her hair to buy him a chain for his watch, and he sells the watch to buy her combs for her hair.

*A traffic jam when you're already late
A no-smoking sign on your cigarette
break*

*It's like 10,000 spoons when all you
need is a knife*

*It's meeting the man of my dreams
And then meeting his beautiful wife*

And isn't it ironic, don't you think

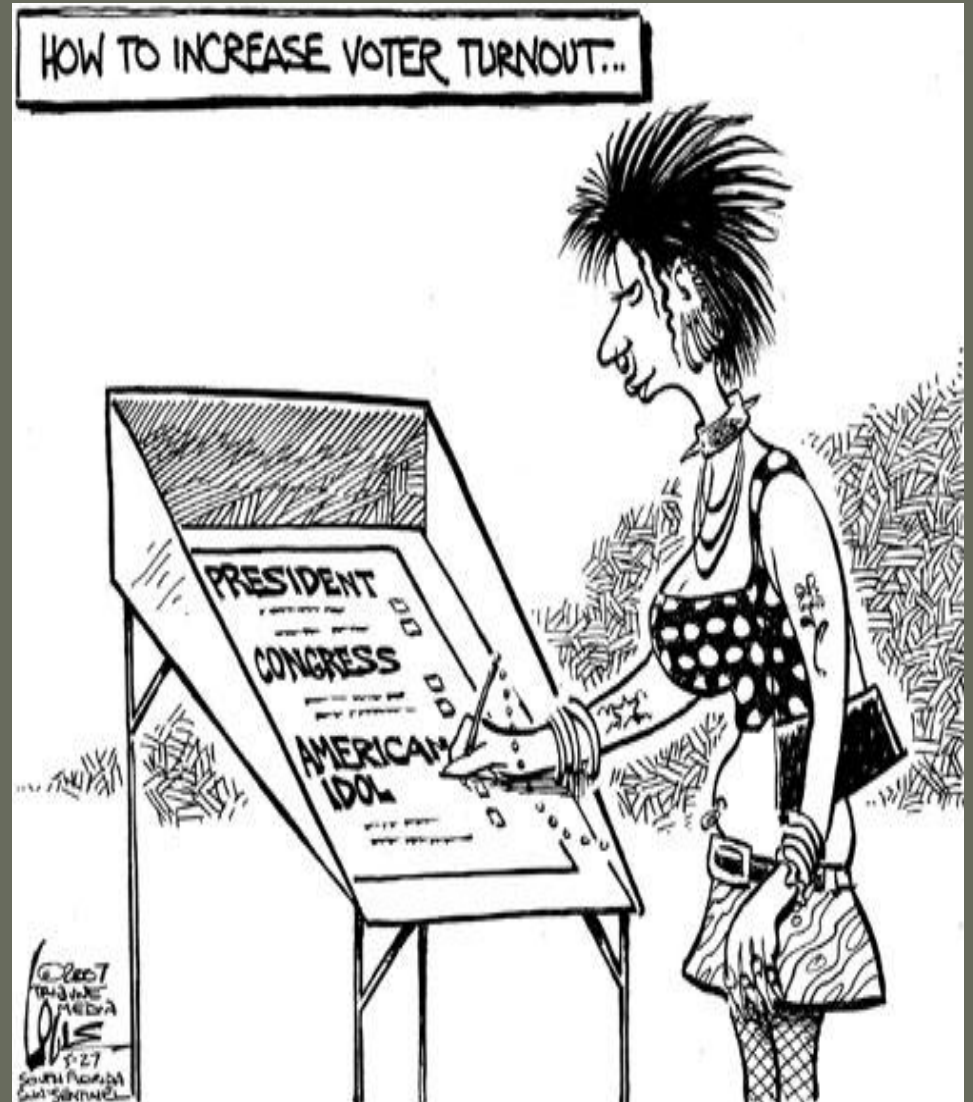
*A little too ironic, and yeah I really do
think*

Alanis Morissette



Method:

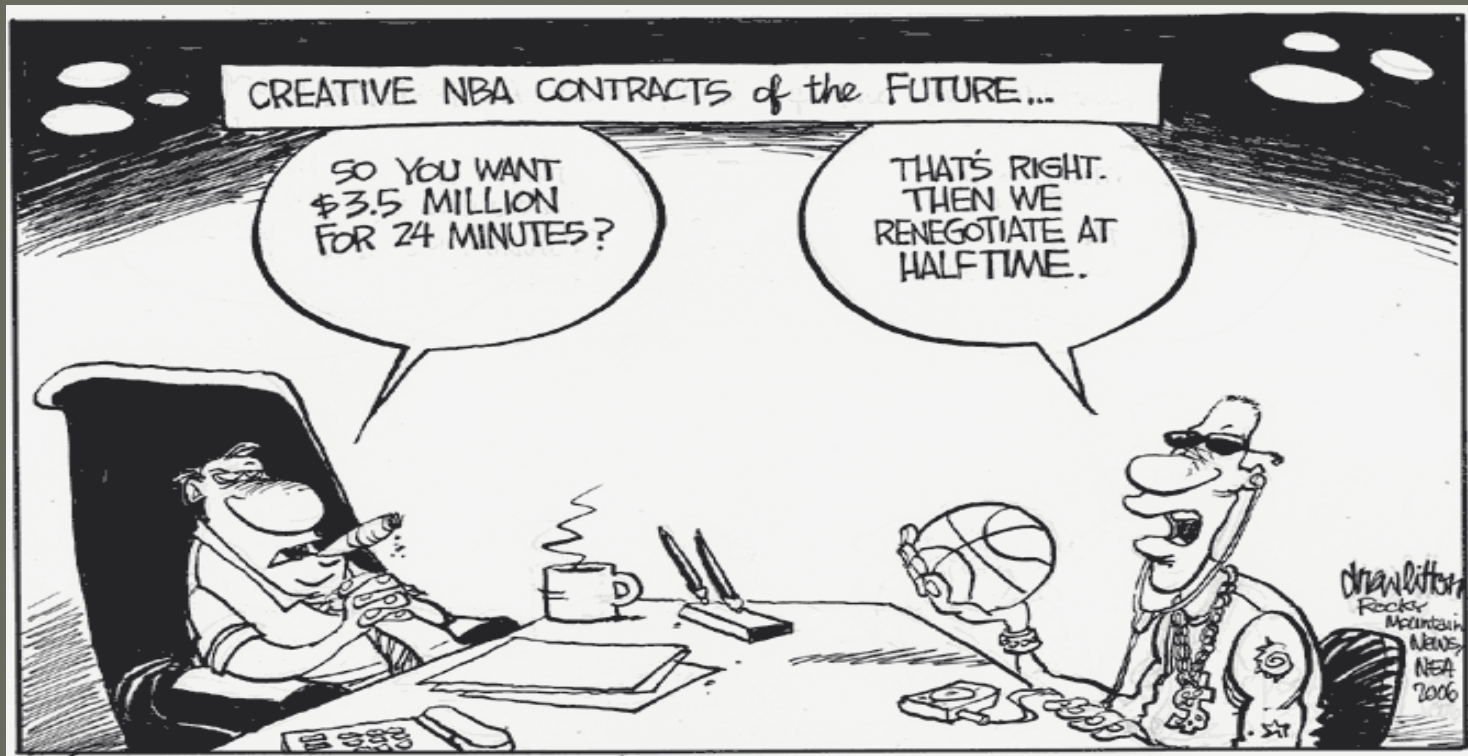
- Cartoons and Art





Method:

- **Exaggeration** – focuses on one or two elements of a situation and extends them beyond reality or out of proportion to everything else.





Tone:

- Horatian - After the Roman satirist Horace:
This form aims to correct through broad laughter.
- Cheerful
- Urbane
- Tongue-in-cheek
- Optimistic
- Warm
- Witty





Tone:

- Juvenalian - After the Roman satirist Juvenal: This form aims to reform through mocking ridicule.
- Cutting
- Bitter
- Angry
- Indignant
- Contemptuous





And, in Conclusion:

In written satire, the pen can be



a mace - hacking and bashing the victims to smithereens or

a rapier – delicately piercing the target.



Who is being satirized?

What method is the author using?

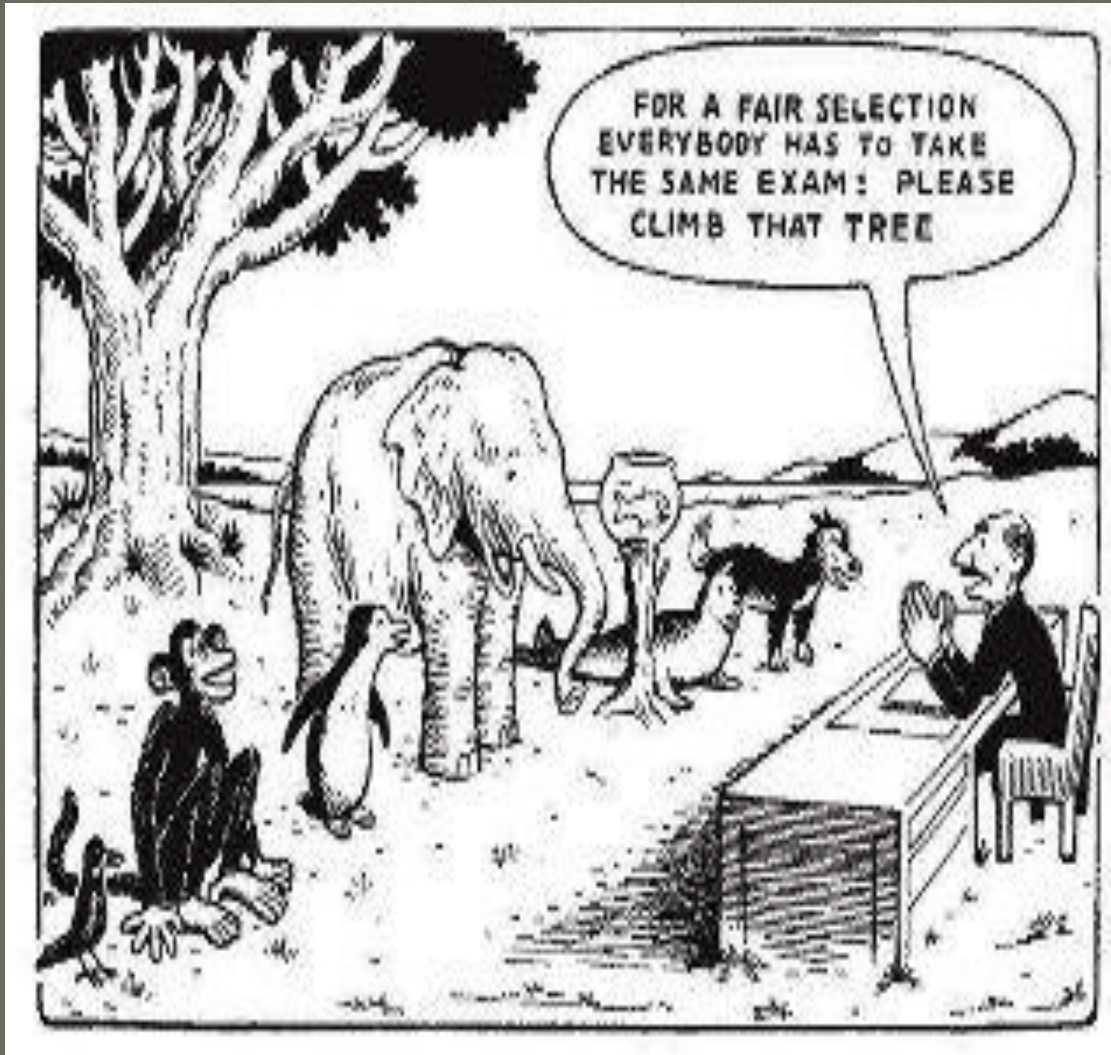
What is the tone?



- Who is being satirized?

"Wikipedia is the first place I go when I'm looking for knowledge... or when I want to create some."
Stephen Colbert, "I Am America"
- What method is the author using?

"You have to remember one thing about the will of the people: it wasn't that long ago that we were swept away by the Macarena. " —*Jon Stewart*
- What is the tone?



- Who is being satirized?
- What method did the author use?
- What is the tone?