

Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and Technology

School of Creative Arts

Political Satire in Contemporary American TV Animation and Popular Media



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Declaration

This dissertation is submitted by the undersigned to the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and Technology in partial fulfilment of the examination for the BA (Honours) in Animation. It is entirely the author's own work except where noted and has not been submitted for an award from this or any other educational institution.

Signed Joseph Shortall

Joseph Shortall

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Introduction

In the month of December 1989, after a series of shorts on *The Tracey Ullman Show*, FOX, aired the first half hour episode of the extremely successful primetime animated series *The Simpsons*, “On January 14, 1990, *The Simpsons* began airing on Sunday nights. Within just two months of its premiere, the animated programme jumped into the Nielsen’s top 15”¹. This pilot episode was a Christmas special of *The Simpsons*, from this success began a boom in primetime animation, series such as *King of the Hill* (1997), *Futurama* (1999), and *Family Guy* (1999) inevitably followed. These series stayed clear of the world of politics, at first, but more recently satire, especially political satire, has become more vocal.

Political satire is not a new concept, it has been around for centuries, only in more recent times it is not fixed to print media, but now it is available in various media; television, papers and the internet are the most common and accessible forms. In chapter one I will consider how to define concepts such as political satire, stereotyping, caricature, allegory and other conceptions closely related to satire.

In chapter two I will examine contemporary American popular print media, primarily comic strips such as *Doonesbury* and *Mad Magazine*, and the political themes encased within them and how they are used to rouse a reaction from the viewers; i.e. is it comical or thought provoking. In chapter three, using a case study of a contemporary animation, I will discuss the animated situation comedy as a satirical form. For this case study I have chosen the prime time animation series *Family Guy*.

¹ Wendy Hilton-Morrow and David T. McMahan, “The Flintstones to Futurama: Networks and prime time animation” in Carol A. Stabile (Ed.) and Mark Harrison (Ed.), Prime time Animation: Television animation and American culture, (London and New York, 2003), P. 82

Family Guy is a successful prime time animated sitcom and is presently the most contemporary of all American television animation. *Family Guy* had a short life on the network that produced it, FOX, and it was cancelled in 2002 but Cartoon Network began syndicating it in 2003, and due to unprecedented DVD sales FOX began producing more episodes for a new season. This series is an ideal case study due to the many stereotypes (Irish American, British, Southern Americans, etc.) and caricatures (Al Gore, George W. Bush, Dick Armie, Bob Dole, etc.) it incorporates.

Following this, in chapter four, I shall have to inspect the satirisation of the American political system, values and the faults of that system in contemporary American animation, such as *The Simpsons*, *Futurama* and *South Park*. For this I will examine episodes and sequences where the American political system and in some cases political icons (past and present) are mocked using satire, caricature and stereotyping.

Chapter 1: Understanding Satire, Stereotyping

Caricature and Allegory

Satire is defined in the Collins English Dictionary as, “One: a work with topical issues, folly or evil are held up to scorn by means of ridicule. Two: the use of ridicule or irony to create such an effect.”² and the Encarta Dictionary explains it as, “The use of wit, especially irony, sarcasm and ridicule, to attack the vices and follies of humankind.”³

Satire is an incredibly old and common form of comedy; it was used in the early years of printing to mock people of interest for instance the English aristocracy. Not much has changed other than it is more widely available on many different media such as the television and, more recently, the internet. Another point that has changed over time is the fact that the target audience has increased so rapidly thus satire (in any form) can be accessed relatively easily, particularly if they live in an industrialised country like America.

Satire is evident in different forms of communication; it is used in advertisements to sell products, used in television programmes, films, comic strips, etc. usually for comedic intention, and even used in political broadcasts to mock or ridicule the opposing party, opponent and their ideals. There are many different forms of satire such as Carnal Satire (carnavalesque) as Laura Rempel states:

Peter Burke, in his study of popular culture in early modern Europe, discusses food (especially meat, unsurprisingly given the root ‘carne’), sex

² Collins English Dictionary, (Finland, Ted Smart), 1994

³ Encarta World English Dictionary, (London, Bloomsbury), 1999

and violence- often in the form of animal sports or torture- as key ingredients of Carnival.⁴

The term carnivalesque refers to the carnivalising of normal life, the inverting of standard themes that occur in a typical society. Mikhail Bakhtin was a Russian theorist of the 1930s and he is renowned scholar in contemporary thought. One subject that Bakhtin discussed and studied was carnivalesque, as Ingrid Hoofd states:

Bakhtin posed his politicising concept of the 'carnavalesque' that aims at a similar effect in the reader, namely to make her or him aware of the non-hierarchical co-existence of many potentially contradictory point-of-views in a society. The carnivalesque was particularly present in many medieval theatre and prose.⁵

Graphic satire ,the use of an image or images in which a target is seen in an exaggerated and misrepresented way where it is humorous to the onlooker, as Laura Rempel states:

Facial and physical hyperbole, and preposterous settings and juxtapositions are the keystones of graphic satire. Unlike the persuasive force of text which presents itself as truth, or as simply the way things are, the basic syntactic absurdities of visual satire add humour to the political content of satirical prints without imposing a political way of seeing on the viewer-reader. 'Truth' and empirical validity are, after all diametrically opposed to rudimentary pictorial devices of satire such as obvious exaggeration and distortion. Paradoxically, graphic political satires might also insidiously darken the lines which the printed word renders as factual contours.⁶

⁴ Laura Rempel, "Carnal Satire and the Constitutional King: George III in James Gillray's *Monstrous Craws at a New Coalition Feast*". *Art History: Cartoon: Caricature: Animation*, Vol.18 No. 1 March 1995, P.14

⁵ Ingrid Hoofd, "Aristotle's *Poetics*: some affirmations and critiques", *Hypertext narrative*, accessed 10/01/2005, <http://www.cyberartsweb.org/cpace/cpace/ht/hoofd3/differends.html>

⁶ Laura Rempel, op.cit, P. 16

Political satire is the clever use of satire to mock or ridicule any political system, values or any person involved in the political sphere. It is with this form of satire that this dissertation is focused on. Political satire is widely available and can be easily appropriated by the public. This freedom can often reflect or even influence what an aware public think of their government and/or individuals in that political system. Political satire requires other elements for example caricature, allegory and stereotyping of its victims to produce a successful lampoon.

Caricature is at its simplest definition; as the Oxford English Dictionary dictates: “Caricature: in art. Grotesque or ludicrous representation of persons or things by exaggeration of their characteristic and striking features, also, A portrait or other artistic representation, in which the characteristic features of the original are exaggerated with ludicrous effect”⁷.

However caricature is often confused as and regarded the same or similar to cartoon. This is not the case, as caricature exaggerates features of a person by forming or creating a ridiculous representation in order to form an allegorical presentation of that person whereas a cartoon needn’t be political or topical but often needs to be humorous, as Lucie-Smith states:

In fact ‘cartoon’ and ‘caricature’ are here regarded as exactly synonymous. It is plain that the two words, in common parlance, have now come very close to one another. A caricature no longer *has* to be a portrait, as its derivation from the Italian *caricatura*- ‘a likeness which has been deliberately exaggerated’ - suggests; while cartoons, including the majority of those currently published in the *New Yorker*, are certainly not always political nor always strictly topical either.⁸

⁷ Oxford English Reference Dictionary (Second Edition), Oxford, New York, (Oxford University Press), 1995/1996

⁸ Edward Lucie-Smith, The Art of Caricature, (London, Orbis publishing, 1981), P. 9

This idea of cartoons not being topical or political is in the vast majority of cases true but there are and can be cartoon strips that can have a political/ topical tone. Another idea which has to be referred to is that caricatures have to be humorous; this common association is also not fully true. Caricature can be a way of making people think through a drawing that is symbolic, as Lucie-Smith states: “What we call a caricature can quite easily be an allegorical or emblematic drawing, whose purpose is not to make us smile but to make us think.”⁹

But when caricature and animation are combined, is it a caricature or a cartoon? In most cases when a cartoon uses a caricature it is usually only so that the viewer knows that person, through their exaggerated characteristic features, without prior introduction. Also in cartoons caricature is used generally for comedic purposes unless the cartoon has a topical or political theme, as stated by Lucie-Smith:

Though the caricature and the cartoon are largely similar, there is a slight difference in the way we use these two words. No one speaks of strip caricature or animated caricatures, yet certain sequences of the *Monty Python* television series which are animated cartoons are at the same time animated caricature. Perhaps the difference is, pace, that caricature puts the emphasis on the satiric, while cartoon puts it on the merely amusing. That is, except when the cartoons theme is political.¹⁰

Caricature can use stereotyping to transmit ideas or even prejudices about certain people or groups of people. For example the way the Irish were portrayed in Victorian English caricatures as simian-like creatures that were no better than

⁹ Ibid, P. 9

¹⁰ Ibid, P. 13

Negroes or Apes. The Irish were featured as having extended brows and a protruding lower lip and jaw, like on Neolithic man or Apes as featured in the book *Apes and Angels* by L. Perry Cyrtis Jr.(Fig.1)¹¹. This stereotype caricature was probably driven by the English prejudices of the Irish people who were, at the time, asking for home rule or freedom from the English government, which was seen by the British as being ungrateful.

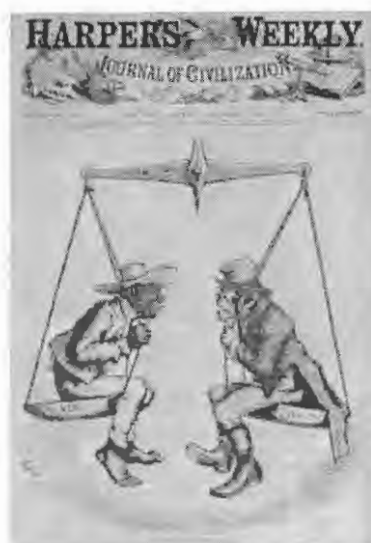


Fig.1: The Ignorant Vote: Honors are easy

(Note the siminised Irishman on the right)

In fact the terms stereotype and prejudice are often regarded as exactly synonymous. It is plain that the two words in common phraseology; now appear very close to one another. A stereotype is defined in the Collins Gem Dictionary as: “something (monotonously) familiar, conventional form stereotype of”, and prejudice is defined as a preconceived opinion. A stereotype is something that all of us use, it helps us perceive the social world around with minimal effort, as Vance

¹¹ L. Perry Cyrtis Jr. *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian caricature*, (Washington and London, Smithsonian Institution Press), 1997, P.60

Locke and Lucy Johnston state: “Stereotypes, like other mental representations, are shortcuts the mind uses to simplify and understand the social world”¹². Stereotypes are not necessarily a cynical response but when combined with prejudice, which is a negative reaction, then the overall outcome is a negative one.

We can conceive of prejudice as a negative evaluative tendency towards a group and its members. In other words, the ‘you and your type aren’t welcome here- go drink elsewhere’ rejection by the bouncer. This is the phenomenon that recent social cognitive research suggests stereotypes may play some part in.¹³

The popular opinion that stereotypes are negative is not fully true, it is only true when a stereotype has been connected with a prejudice or used by a prejudiced person in order to form a negative judgement of the person or people they have a prejudice against, as quoted from Locke and Johnston:

From the view that stereotypes are a necessary evil that everyone learns and activates when judging member of the stereotyped group, we have moved to a view of stereotypes as tools that prejudiced people employ, perhaps in an automatic fashion, to facilitate negative and stereotyped judgements of the groups they are prejudiced towards.¹⁴

To produce a successful caricature or satire also relies heavily on the clever use of allegory. Allegory is defined in the Oxford Dictionary of English as: a story, poem or picture which can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a

¹² Vance Locke and Lucy Johnson, “Stereotyping and Prejudice : a social cognitive approach”, in Martha Augoustinos (Ed.) and Katherine J. Reynolds (Ed.), *Understanding Prejudice, Racism, and Social Conflict*, (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif. : SAGE, 2001), P. 109

¹³ *Ibid*, P. 109

¹⁴ *Ibid*, P. 125

moral or political one/ a symbol¹⁵. Taking this definition into account, allegory requires that the viewers should have an understanding of semiology, which is the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation. If the caricature or satire is about a contemporary topic or person then the audience should have a familiarity of what is occurring in the current world about the piece. For example, most caricatures are of a topical or political nature and in the absence of theoretical or practical understanding of the subject the allegorical meaning of the piece can be lost. The use of semiology and knowledge helps the audience interpret what has been presented therefore creating a reaction that is primarily to make us think about the subject, but synonymously it can be humorous. When it comes to interpreting anything however, it is a fact that for each individual comes a different experience, i.e. a picture might mean one thing to one thing to one person and something else to another. However if the overall meaning of a piece is strong enough and relatively easy to understand the allegory will be interpreted similarly for most of the individuals, as Rayner states:

Many millions of people will have seen a film like *Titanic*, yet for each person their experience of the film is usually a personal and intimate one—even if we are part of an audience of 300 people all sitting together in the dark in the cinema.¹⁶

Satire, caricature, stereotyping and allegory play an important part in today's media and they are used widely. Since the media are widely accessible to

¹⁵ Oxford English Reference Dictionary (Second Edition), Oxford New York, (Oxford University Press), 1995/1996

¹⁶ Philip Rayner, Peter Wall and Stephen Kruger, *Media Studies the essential introduction*, (London, New York, Routledge, 2001), P. 5

anyone, it means then that satire, caricature; stereotyping and allegory have the power to influence us both as individuals and as a society, also as Rayner states:

Our ideas of the world are derived largely from the modern media which produce and 'package' versions of events and issues in their output and which we consume as part of our daily lives and situations. The media therefore have a very strong influence on us both as individuals and as a society.¹⁷

The media come in different forms but the satire, stereotyping and allegory are apparent in each. In the next chapter I will discuss the use of these satirical tools and examine its effectiveness in the print medium.

¹⁷ Rayner, Wall, Kruger, P. 1

Chapter 2: Political Themes in American Comic Strips

Comic strips occasionally have Political themes, this is not a rare occurrence, nor is the use of satire. However in America the satirisation of the political system, values, ideals and politicians, in particular President George W. Bush, has become an increasingly hard area to get any satirical material published in, especially after the terrorist attack of 9/11. As a result of this some renowned graphic artists like Art Spiegelman have had to resort to going overseas to get their material published as it was increasingly difficult to get published in America. As Art Spiegelman stated:

In the wake of September 11, at least on these shores (America), the news media abdicated their responsibilities. They either wanted access to power or were guilty of misguided patriotism or were afraid of being seen as unpatriotic if they were critical. As a result, this was a lonely place for a while¹⁸

The first example that I wish to use is that produced by Art Spiegelman. Art Spiegelman was born in Stockholm, on the fifteenth of February, 1948, however he grew up in Rego Park, New York. His parents were survivors of the holocaust and using the information his father gave him he produced two *Maus* books, published in 1986 and 1991, in these books he depicted the Jewish people as mice, the Nazis as cats, the Polish as pigs and the Americans as dogs. For these works he was awarded the special Pulitzer Prize in 1992.

Spiegelman's most recent book is *In the Shadow of No Towers*, (which contains his reaction to the events of September 11, 2001). In the book he includes

¹⁸ Art Spiegelman, interviewed by Glenn Sumi, "Art Spiegelman:Pulitzer Prize-Winning Comics Legend takes on Bush, Terrorism and Anti Smoking and Explains why many Leftist U.S. Mags Refused his Graphic Post-9/11 Works", *NOW Toronto*, Vol. 24, Oct 21-27, 2004,

10 broadsheet sized plates which depict his perceptive and appalled response to the terrorist attack that left New York and America dismayed but also what he calls “the hijacking of the hijacking by the Bush Administration”¹⁹. One of the images contained within the book is one where Art himself is shown wearing a *Maus* mask and two figures looming over him, the one on the left looks similar to Osama Bin Laden who is holding a cutlass and the figure on the right looks alike George W. Bush holding the American flag and a gun, the punch line being: Equally terrorised by Al-Qaeda and by his own government (Fig. 2). This work has divided a lot of critics, for example, *Time* magazine called Art Spiegelman a moron while *Newsweek* referred to him as a genius.²⁰



Fig.2: On the left, the cover of “In The Shadow Of No Towers” and on the Right possibly the most controversial picture in the book as mentioned above.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

Spiegelman has paid the price for producing images like the ones in his book. Before 9/11 his work was published in the American press however since the terrorist attack no one would publish his work, not even where he was a writer and artist for 10 years:

It was Spiegelman's shrill tone that frightened editors of many left leaning magazines and newspapers that previously had courted and published him. After 9/11, no one, not even the *New Yorker* where he was a staff artist and writer for 10 years would touch the work.²¹

However the fact that he couldn't find any mainstream publisher did not surprise or deter him and he managed to get his work published in Europe on a German newspaper called *Die Ziet* and then others followed.



Fig .3: Satirical view on a news story about when a terrorist was on a flight with explosives in his shoe

²¹ Ibid

Art Spiegelman does not hide the fact that he disapproves of the Bush administration and the American Government, and that is clearly evident in his works. The Political themes which are widespread through his contemporary works take on Bush, Terrorism and American government policies such as the “War on Terrorism” and anti-smoking.

The next example I wish to use is the long running comic strip which was created and is produced by Gary Trudeau. Gary Trudeau was born in New York City in 1948 and was raised in Saranac Lake, New York. In 1970, his successful daily comic strip *Doonesbury* was launched and presently appears in around 1400 newspapers in America and abroad. With the success of *Doonesbury*, Trudeau was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning, the first ever to be awarded to a comic strip artist. *Doonesbury* has been adapted into an animated film, *A Doonesbury Special*, 1977, and even a Broadway musical, *Doonesbury*, 1983.

In the *Doonesbury* strip created at the start of November 2004, Gary Trudeau satirises the American political and electoral system, because at the time the 2004 American Presidential election was taking place. In these cartoons he ridicules the last election results and the debacle that took place after the voting, for example the Supreme Court intervention etc. and he also satirises the upcoming election between John Kerry and George W. Bush, whom Trudeau satirises on a regular basis (Fig. 4 & 5).



Fig. 4: Doonesbury strip from the 1st November 2004



Fig. 5: Doonesbury strip from the 6th November 2004

As I have mentioned, George W. Bush and his administration is ridiculed and mocked on many occasions by Trudeau, one example of this is the next strip. In this strip George W. Bush's time in office is condensed into a few words that berate and mock the President and even though these words are in jest, they hit a cord in George (Fig. 6). With regards to President Bush being an asterisk, it is a common occurrence in the comic strip *Doonesbury* that real people are represented as something else, Bill Clinton was depicted as a Belgian Waffle and Dan Quayle as a feather, i.e. Bill Clinton was a waffler and Dan Quayle was a lightweight. George W. Bush as an asterisk comes from the first time he was elected in 2000. In that Presidential election George W. Bush ran against the democratic candidate, Al Gore, and even though Al Gore won the popular vote, the election results were taken to the Supreme Court where George W. Bush was handed the Presidency.

After this in various publications an asterisk was placed after President Bush's name to indicate that he "lost the popular vote," and was "appointed by judicial fiat."

Some publishers proposed following every mention of Bush's name with an asterisk leading to a pertinent factoid - e.g., "lost the popular vote," "appointed by judicial fiat." *The Nation* decided to lower-case the A in "Bush administration" for the next four years.²²

Because of this fact Gary Trudeau adopted the asterisk as the representation of George W. Bush.



Fig. 6: Doonesbury strip from the 11th August 2004

Another example would be the next strip from *Doonesbury* that appeared on the 26th October 2004. In this cartoon George W. Bush is questioned about the bulge under his suit (Fig. 8). This was based on an actual news story, the story started when people noticed a square like bulge under his suit while he was in an electoral Presidential debate wherein no one is allowed to be prompted. It was said that the bulge was a transmitter from which George was said to be prompted (Fig. 7).

²²Anonymous, "What to call Bush", *Earth Island Journal*, Summer, 2001, accessed 21/01/2005, http://www.earthisland.org/eijournal/new_articles.cfm?articleID=183&journalID=46



Fig. 7: Still Frame from the infamous Presidential Debate (note the bulge)



Fig. 8: Doonesbury strip from the 26th October 2004

The next example of a satirical, politically themed comic is in fact a magazine that originally was a comic, *MAD Magazine*. *MAD* is an American magazine that was founded in 1952 by publisher William Gaines and Editor Harvey Kurtzman, it first appeared in October-November 1952 as a comic entitled *Tales Calculated to Drive You Mad*. "However it was converted into a magazine because of the rules imposed by the Comics Code Authority 1955".²³ Throughout the fifties *MAD* satirised American popular culture and to a lesser extent the political system, this cynicism continued through the sixties where the Vietnam war, drugs and other topics were ridiculed and it is still going. *MAD* has never taken sides when it came to politics because it always mocked the Democrats as much as the Republicans. The

²³ Anonymous, "MAD Magazine", [Wikipedia encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MAD_Magazine), accessed 21/01/2005, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MAD_Magazine

magazine's influence during its life thus far is apparent as it has had frequent appearances and references in the animated sitcom *The Simpsons*.²⁴

An example of a political theme featuring in a contemporary issue of MAD is in the January 2005 copy. This magazine had a special topic of the twenty dumbest people, events and things of 2004. In this special segment MAD satirised Donald Rumsfeld and the Abu Ghraib prison incident where Iraqi prisoners were tortured and humiliated which is shown as a cover of a Harry Potter book (Fig. 9). Then George W. Bush was parodied about his inappropriate jokes about the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq (Fig. 10) and also presidential candidate John Kerry was satirised about his inability to be decisive (Fig. 11).

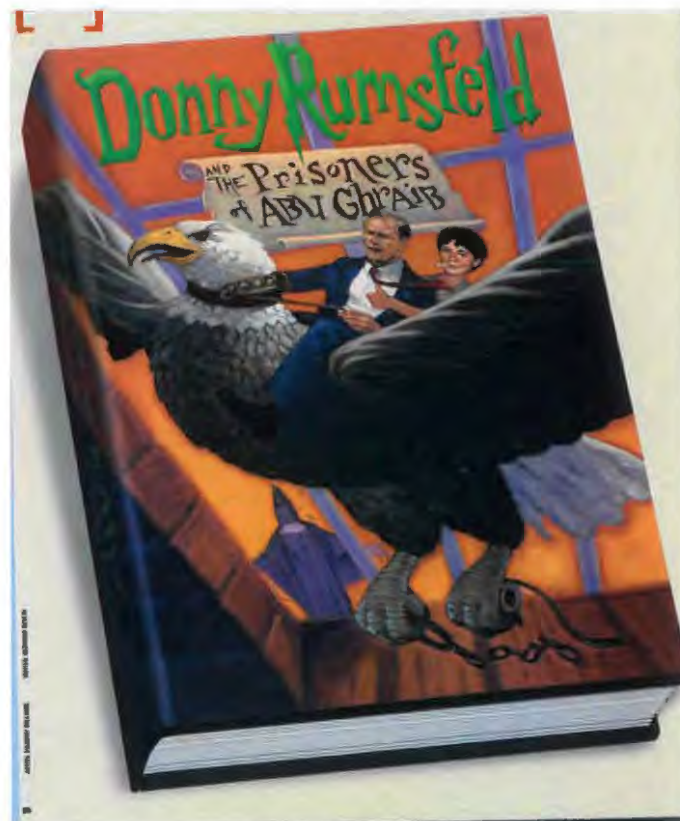


Fig. 9: Satirical view on the Abu Ghraib incident

²⁴ Ibid

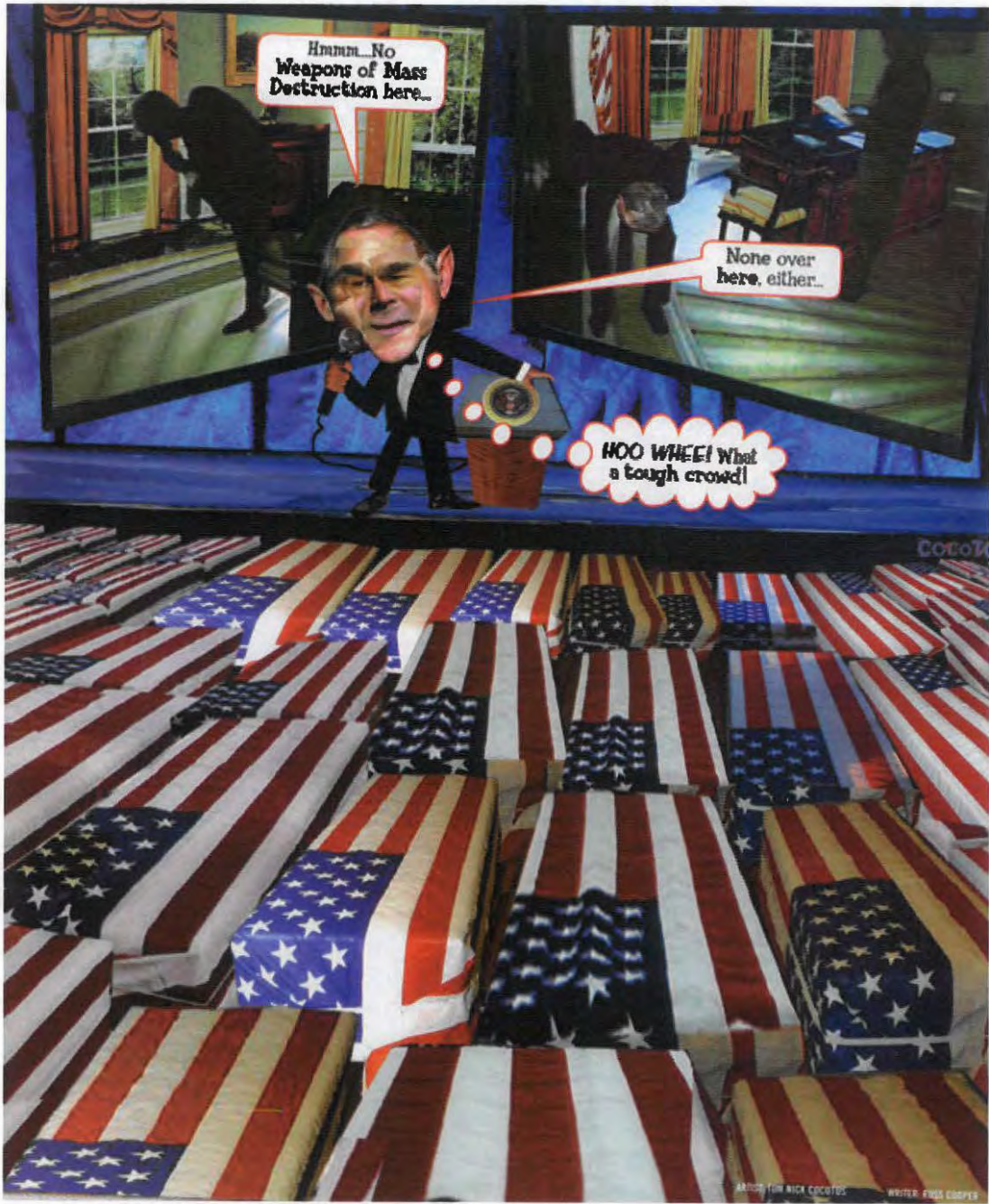


Fig.10: George W. Bush's Bad Jokes

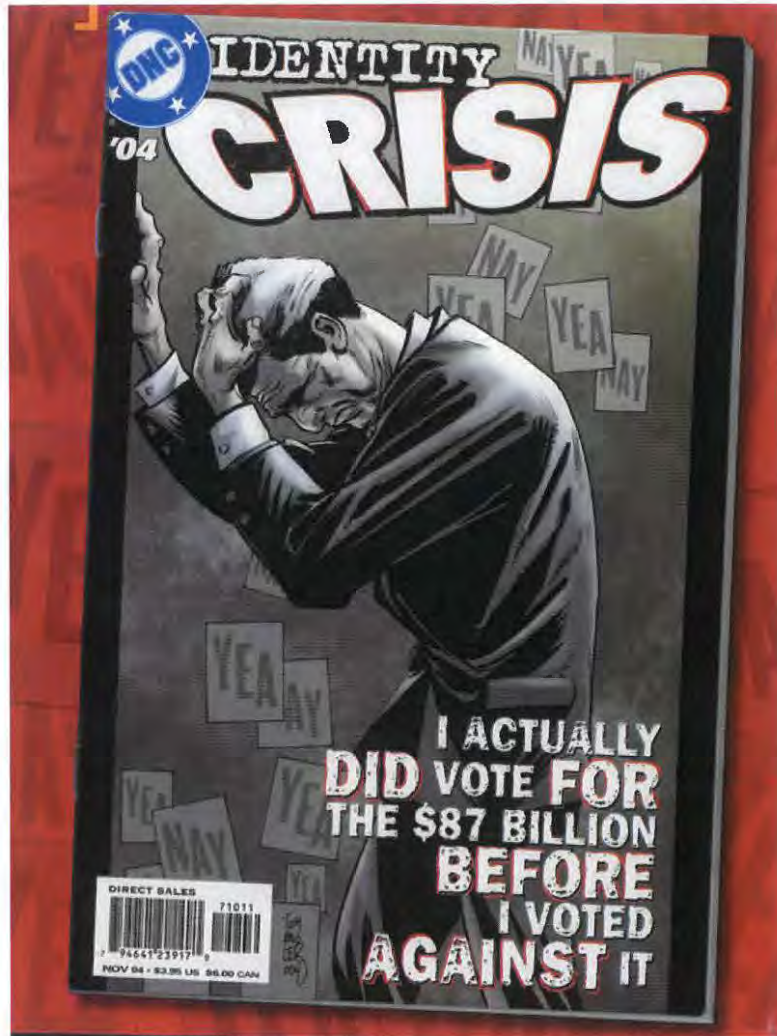


Fig. 11: Parody of John Kerry

Each of the previous three illustrations have different styles to them (because of the different artists for each), but they still remain deeply satirical. The use of the cover and colours of a Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Prisoners of Askaban* by J. K. Rowling, is used to parody Donald Rumsfeld and the Abu Ghraib incident perfectly. Meanwhile in figure 10 the style differs greatly to the other illustrations. The picture is a collage of different pictures to give a stark reminder of what exactly George W. Bush was mocking, joking about trying to find weapons of mass destruction in his office while soldiers were fighting and dying in Iraq to find them

did not receive the reception he was looking for. Finally in figure 11 the artist of this illustration parodies the artwork which is usually featured on the cover of a DC comic, in doing this the artist shows Presidential candidate John Kerry's inability to make important decisions.

Another example is in the February 2005 issue of *MAD*, which satirises George W. Bush by showing what he could possibly have left out of his inauguration speech (Fig. 12), for example "Our nation is guided by a power much higher than any of us here, by which I mean the oil industry"²⁵, this supposed quote satirises Bush's sentiment on the oil industry which gives hefty amounts of money to Bush and the Republicans.

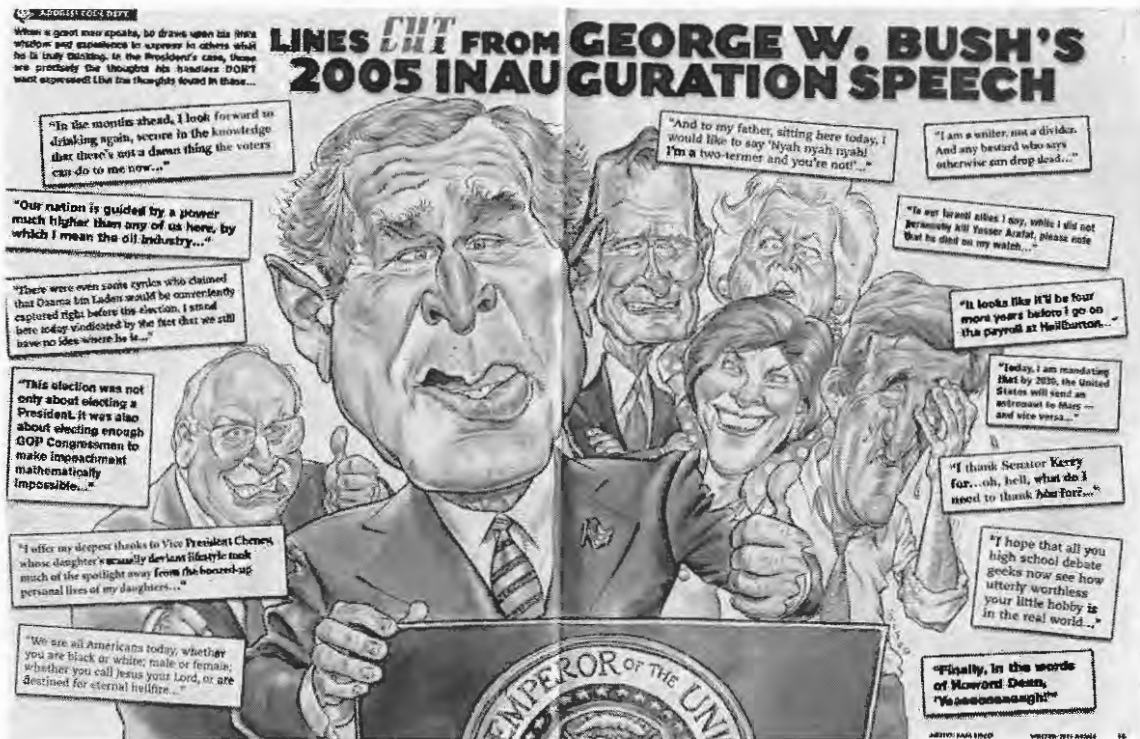


Fig. 12: Parody featured in February 2005's *MAD*

²⁵ Jeff Kruse, "Lines Cut from George W. Bush's 2005 Inauguration Speech", *MAD*, No.450, February 2005, P. 54

In the previous illustration, “Lines cut from George W. Bush’s 2005 inauguration speech”, colour is not used however this doesn’t diminish the piece’s satirical impact. It parodies George W. Bush’s administration and the President himself and the fact that the podium proclaims him as Emperor of the United States just satirises him further.

Political Satire is quite evident in the print media and it goes from the serious to the humorous, it can make you think about a topic seriously or just make you look at the humorous side. In the next chapter I will discuss and reference political satire in an animated TV sitcom named *Family Guy*.

Chapter Three: The animated sitcom as a satirical form.

Case study of *Family guy*

Family Guy is only one in many recent animated sitcoms that has premiered on TV in the last ten to fifteen years, it came after a renewed interest in prime time animated shows had commenced. In 1999 FOX teamed up with creator Seth MacFarlane for his show *Family Guy*. They created a pilot episode which was popular and so *Family Guy* became a series, this animated sitcom became a large ratings grabber for the network especially in the prime time slot between eight and nine pm. However in 2002 FOX cancelled *Family Guy* after three years but then after Cartoon Network began syndicating it in 2003 on their *Adult Swim*. “*Adult Swim*- a late-night lineup floating in hip irreverence and pop culture jokes- has college-age adults raised on *The Simpsons* and *South Park* going gaga”²⁶, the interest in it grew and thus causing massive DVD sales. On this success FOX were persuaded to produce another season of the show. *Family Guy* has good animation and its own style, which is similar to *The Simpsons*, the animation is not overly elaborate but it is acceptable for TV standards. The colours in the sitcom are bright and flat and the characters and scenery have black outlines but these are used in a way that would make people notice the show.

The situation comedy or, as it is more usually known, sitcom in contemporary television has become an extremely popular medium to express ideals and views in a comedic or satirical tone. The sitcom first of all is governed by

²⁶ Rodney Ho, “Late Night Swim: Cartoon Network crew floats young adults’ boat with irreverent lineup”, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Living section, November 11, 2004

a primary rule which cannot be broken; this rule is that no matter what occurs during an episode, nothing changes at the conclusion. "The principle fundamental situation of the situation comedy is that things do not change"²⁷. In other words, anything can happen in a sitcom as long as at the conclusion of every episode everything is resolved and returns to the "original situation". The original situation may vary from sitcom to sitcom but in the sitcom itself it does not change, every episode starts and finishes the same. The original situation in the animated sitcom *Family Guy* is the family at their home in Quahog usually sitting in the living room watching television.

Traditional sitcoms such as *Malcolm in the Middle* (2000), *The Simpsons* (1989) and *Family Guy* (1999) typically employ a three act structure. Act one begins at the original situation and as the act continues a problem arises which a character or characters have to resolve, act two is where the problem develops into something more humorous which the characters cannot deal with at first and the third act is where the problem is finally resolved whereby the next episode can start again at the original situation. This narrative structure suits the sitcom adequately and is the most popular.

There are other themes included in the sitcom such as reoccurring plot scenarios and catchphrases. For example a reoccurring plot scenario in *Family Guy* is where Stewie, the baby, tries repeatedly to kill his mother Lois, always to no avail, Meg constantly trying to fit in with the "popular" kids, also unsuccessfully, and Quagmire (a friend to the main character, Peter Griffin) has a catchphrase when

²⁷ David Mc. Queen, *Television: A Media Students Guide*, (London, Arnold, 1998), P.56

he repeatedly says “Giggidy, Giggidy, Giggidy”. These elements are what make a sitcom memorable and humorous.

In the situation comedy the most common settings that feature highly in the various plots are family, work, friends and home, for example characters come across a problem in one or more of these areas in nearly every sitcom. “Home and work are common areas of experience and most people are able to recognise the humour that results in friction between people forced to live or work together”²⁸, this friction can be caused by anything and can involve anyone. For example in the episode “Peter Griffin: Husband, father...Brother” of the third series, Peter gets a cash settlement from Lois’s parents for enslaving his black ancestors. But when he doesn’t share the reparations with the rest of the black community and because he’s of black decent, it causes friction between Peter and the black community and the white community respectively. Another example of friction is in the episode “A Very Special Family Guy Freakin' Christmas” where Lois goes crazy and lashes out at the family. Stereotyping is also very common in sitcoms such as *Family Guy*; these stereotypes could be racial, gender, sexual minorities and even of individuals. However this branch of stereotyping is mainly of a satirical nature i.e. they are satirising the stereotypical views that are created at first to insult these minorities, as

John Nguyet Erni states:

Social scientific studies of TV stereotypes in the US, which have taken on the phraseology of ‘images that injure’, evoke stereotyping as a moral assault to the pragmatist intellect. The images that injure, therefore, are conceived of as the images that caricature, lessen, diminish; in short images that simplify. The demeaning of minorities on TV amounts to the injurious battering of a (presupposed) cerebral American multiculturalism. This has

²⁸ Ibid, P.58

led to a tendency to study TV stereotypes against a backdrop of a parade of identity types, giving a semblance of a prosperous multicultural society.”²⁹

In the sitcom *Family Guy* satire is the mostly used tool to convey humour, probably because satire is extremely versatile and can target anybody from the American blue-collar male to the President of the United States. Satire crosses political, social, racial, sexual orientation and gender boundaries. However when satire is linked with another element such as ridicule it becomes more humorous to the spectators, an example of which can be found in *Family Guy*. In the episode “Death has a Shadow” (1999), Peter proclaims that he’s not a bad alcoholic, “I can handle it!” When presented as this way it is not particularly funny because you’re relying on a previous knowledge of the character Peter. However when accompanied with a flashback showing Peter in an Ice-cream parlour taking one lick of a Brandy and Butterscotch ice-cream cone and then immediately falling face first into a table intoxicated, the result is a very humorous satirical view of the character Peter.

The show “Family Guy” also has secondary characters such as Peter’s friends: Quagmire, Cleveland and Joe, also there are the newscasters Tom Tucker and Diane Simmons and in the recent series the town Mayor (the voice talent of Adam West). *Family Guy* is the ideal show in which to convey satire, being a sitcom means the storylines can vary and feature anyone as long as it returns or can return back to its original situation. For example in the episode “Peter, Peter, Caviar Eater”, Lois’s aunt Marguerite dies and leaves “Cherrywood Manor”, a large house in an exclusive area worth millions, to the Griffins. When Peter decides to make

²⁹ John Nguyet Erni, “Stereotypes and Representations: International”, in Toby Miller’s (Ed.), *Television Studies*, (London, British Film Institute, 2002), P. 56

himself posh, with the help of Brian, it goes to his head and Lois and, reluctantly, the rest of the family leave him. Peter realises his mistakes and goes back to Quahog with his family but without the inheritance thus returning to the original situation. Most episodes of Family have some form of returning back to the original situation, each being slightly different, depending on the story. However one episode of the series even satirises the return back to the original situation, by not actually doing it and then commenting on it. The writers have so far satirised the Tobacco industry, the American political system, The US President and officials in fact anything American, and that was only in one episode “Mr. Griffin goes to Washington” (even the title is a skit of Frank Capra’s *Mr Smith goes to Washington*).

One example of political satire in Family Guy is in the first season in the episode called “Chitty, Chitty, Bang Death”, in this Peter (the main character) had to organise Stewie’s birthday party when he accidentally let his booking go on the popular children’s place “Cheesy Charlie’s”. At the last moment he gets the circus to go to his house where the birthday celebrations were supposed to be, when he arrives, Peter comes in to screen riding on an elephant and says “Hey look Lois, your looking at the two republican symbols, an elephant and a fat white guy who’s afraid of change” (Fig. 13). This comment, even though it is short, ridicules the American Republican party by the way that it is usually reluctant to make any changes to policies and laws.



Fig.13: Peter's Republican Symbols

In the episode “Mr. Griffin goes to Washington” the place where Peter works, The Happy go lucky Toy Company, is taken over by a cigarette company, when it does so the “evil” cigarette company produces toys which entice children to smoke their company’s cigarettes. At first Lois is disgusted at the fact but when the cigarette company make Peter President she soon forgets and so the Griffins begin to think smoking is acceptable. However, when the American government want to pass a bill that would effectively put the cigarette industry out of business, the cigarette company send their blue-collar President (Peter) to Washington in order to buy the support of politicians so that they can lobby against the bill. When Peter gets to Washington he tries to get the support of Bob Dole, Al Gore and George W Bush (Fig. 14), but when a politician “accidentally” kills a stripper, Peter covers it up and convinces them that smoking is not that bad and so he earns their support.



Fig.14: Peter meets the politicians

However when Lois catches Stewie smoking she realises how bad the smoking industry is. With the help of Stewie's smokers cough she convinces Peter to actually lobby against the Tobacco industry, and thus convinces the American government that smoking is unhealthy and bad especially for children.

This episode completely satirises the American government and the politics that goes on wherein. The idea of a group of politicians being bought off for a cause or idea is not a new concept, i.e. *The Simpson* episode "Mr. Lisa goes to Washington" Lisa witnesses' a senator taking a bribe from a lobbyist. However in *Family Guy* the politicians are not fictional they are actually named as Bob Dole, Al Gore, and George W Bush etc. which, unlike the Simpson's fake congressman of a unnamed state, can portray the idea that politics and politicians can in fact be corrupt. On the other hand it is shown that if there is a politician who is clean, the system can work and justice will prevail. Regardless, politics and the satire of politics do feature highly in *Family Guy*.

Family Guy is not the only animated sitcom on TV that has an element of political satire. In the next chapter I will examine and reference other animated sitcoms (The Simpsons and Futurama) and films (South Park: Bigger Longer and Uncut) that feature political satire.

Chapter Four: The Satirisation of American Political Values in Contemporary Animation

The political system and its values usually bear the brunt of cynical and sceptical satire in contemporary animation. Most of the political satires contained in animation series are just passing comments on almost anything political, for example in the series *The Simpsons*, season ten (1998-1999), the episode “Mayored to the Mob”, Quimby, the mayor of Springfield, proclaims that “the mayors office is not for sale” on saying that everyone laughs. The reaction of the crowd implies that the mayor is corrupt. But every now and again a series might have an episode dedicated to the mocking and ridiculing of American political values and government. These episodes challenge certain attributes of the American political system.

The first American animated series that I wish to discuss is *The Simpsons*. *The Simpsons* has presently produced sixteen seasons and is currently still being produced, though not popular as it used to be. The network FOX decided to produce *The Simpsons* into a full animated series from the shorts which had originally appeared on *The Tracey Ullman Show* from 1987 to 1989. When *The Simpsons* appeared in December 1989 they instantly became an unprecedented success especially in prime time slots and with the ratings. *The Simpsons* paved the way for more prime time animated situation comedies due to the phenomenal interest *The Simpsons* had created. Animated sitcoms like *King of the Hill* (premiered on FOX in 1997), *Futurama* (FOX, 1999) and *South Park* (Comedy Central, 1997) soon

showed the newfound popularity for animated prime time shows that were not just for children but also for the adults.

The use of colour in *The Simpsons* is interesting. The character and background designs and colours are vibrant and immediately grab a viewer's attention but after some time the viewer probably got used to *The Simpsons* odd style, as Michael V. Tueth states:

Perhaps the omnipresence of the Simpson characters in the media has led the public to overlook the fundamental surrealism of Marge Simpson's beehive of blue hair; the absurdity of the perpetual sucking sound of the infant Maggie Simpson; the cartoon-within-the-cartoon personae of Krusty the Clown, Sideshow Bob, and Itchy and Scratchy; the constant smoking of Marge's older sisters, the Bouvier twins; and so on.³⁰

The main characters of the show are coloured a bright yellow, and when the show was first aired, the backgrounds were bright gradient colours. This element was filtered out eventually, probably because they were too garish. The animation in *The Simpsons* was done by Klasky Csupo at first and now it is primarily done in Korea. At the start the animation was good in parts but ropey in others, but was still adequate for a prime time animated sitcom. As seasons followed the animation changed (as did the animating companies) and now the style and quality of the animation is universal, there is no great or bad animation.

One example of political satire in *The Simpsons* is the episode of season three, 'Mr. Lisa goes to Washington', which is a satire of the Frank Capra film *Mr. Smith goes to Washington*. In *Mr. Smith goes to Washington* a small time country

³⁰ Michael V. Tueth, "Back to the Drawing Board: The family in animated television comedy), in Carol A. Stabile (Ed.) and Mark Harrison (Ed.), Prime time Animation: Television animation and American culture, (London and New York, 2003), P. 143

man travels to the city of Washington D.C. and there he challenges a corrupt and dependent government. This is also the case for *The Simpsons* episode 'Mr. Lisa goes to Washington'. In this episode Lisa (first daughter to Homer and Marge) competes in a 'Reading Digest' (Parody on the magazine *Readers Digest*) essay competition with the essay subject of why is America so great. Lisa wins the initial rounds of the competition and so is sent to the final which is held in Washington D.C., the Simpson family get to stay in the infamous Watergate Hotel (Fig. 15), infamous because of the scandal Nixon was implicated in and ultimately led to his resignation of the office of President of the United States of America in 1974.



Fig. 15: The Watergate Hotel in The Simpsons

When at the Watergate Lisa cannot sleep because she is too nervous about the essay competition final and thus goes on an early morning tour of Washington on her own. At a little known monument of Winifred Beecher Howe, Lisa witnesses a lobbyist giving a substantial bribe to an American senator, Bob Arnold (fake name), of an unknown state. After witnessing this Lisa is compelled to change her patriotic essay to reflect what she presently thinks of America and the government. In the revised essay Lisa writes:

The city of Washington was built on a stagnant swamp some two hundred years ago and very little has changed; it stank then and it stinks now. Only today it is the fetid stench of corruption that hangs in the air³¹

As a result of this essay Lisa loses the essay competition however on the plus side because of it the Federal Bureau of Investigation (the F.B.I.) investigate the senator that inspired Lisa to write the modified essay, on doing so they arrest him for corruption. Lisa learns that Bob Arnold has been arrested and charged and with this her faith, though knocked, in democracy and the American government is restored.

In the episode 'Mr. Lisa goes to Washington' *The Simpsons* satirise the American government by implying that it is corrupt. However even though the episode satirises the American political system it concludes on a patriotic note, as at the end of the episode the corruption which is embedded within the American government is removed and faith is restored in democracy and America.

Another good example of political satire in *The Simpsons* is an episode which was shown in the eleventh season of the series. This episode is called 'Bart to the Future' in which the Simpson family makes an unplanned visit to a Native American casino. When in this casino Bart is caught sneaking into an area off-limits to minors. For this action Bart is taken to the manager's office. To teach Bart a lesson the manager shows what his and his family's life is like in the future.

In the future Lisa is the President of the United States (Fig. 15), however in the future the United States is in a lot of financial difficulty thanks to the

³¹ Matt Groening, Ray Richmond and Antonia Coffman, *The Simpsons: a complete guide to our favourite family*. (London Harper Collins, 1997), P. 63

irresponsible spending of previous administrations. Here is a quote from the episode:

Lisa: As you know we've inherited quite a budget crunch from President Trump. How bad is it, Secretary Van Houten? Milhouse: We're broke. Lisa: The country is broke? How can that be? Milhouse: Well remember when the last administration decided to invest in our nation's children? Big mistake.

This last quote is satirising what many administrations promised to do: invest in the nation's children. Because of this mistake the United States owes substantial amounts of money mainly to many governments.



Fig. 16: President Lisa Simpson

So in order to alleviate these debts they create a tax. However Lisa doesn't want the voting public disapproving of her or her administration so Lisa and her cabinet decide to disguise this new tax so they want to avoid calling it a 'painful emergency tax' or 'colossal salary grab'. Instead, Milhouse (Secretary) suggests: "Well if you want to out-and-out-lie... okay, we could call it a 'temporary refund adjustment'".

However Bart (who's a lazy lay-a-bout in the future) lets the cat out of the bag on a live televised Presidential announcement by telling the American public

about the colossal tax hike. As a result of doing this and other previous blunders Lisa decides to give Bart a fake position in the government and sends him off on a phoney assignment to Camp David. When Bart finally realises why Lisa sent him to Camp David (thanks to the help of Jimmy Carter's ghost) he decides to go back to the Whitehouse to confront Lisa and try and prove himself. When he arrives at the Whitehouse Lisa is in a meeting with all of America's creditors, which is going disastrously, he manages to save Lisa and America from the angry diplomats who were demanding that their debts be immediately paid (Fig. 17). As a result of this action Bart buys Lisa and her administration time to raise the funds that have to be paid. It is at this point the vision ends and, as the Simpson family leave the Native American casino, Bart tells Lisa of their future.



Fig. 17: Bart reasoning with the German diplomat

The episode 'Bart to the future' satirises the fact that Presidents and administrations can easily plunge America into debt due to irresponsible spending and unrealistic budgets, and the tax hikes which usually follow. An example of this would be the Clinton administration, this administration cleared American debt over two terms however with the George W. Bush administration the country has spiralled back into debt . This episode is darker than the previous one mentioned

because on conclusion of the episode America still owes substantial amounts of money to a lot of creditors and has little in the way of time to repay.

Another contemporary animation series that features the satirisation of American political values is the popular but short lived prime time animation series *Futurama* (1999). *Futurama* was created by the same person that created *The Simpsons*, Matt Groening. After ten seasons focusing primarily on *The Simpsons*, Matt Groening decided to try and produce a second hit with his idea, *Futurama*. The network FOX agreed and ordered thirteen episodes of the show even without been given a presentation. *Futurama* is set in the future, around the next millennium. The lead is a delivery boy, Fry, from the year 1999 who accidentally gets cryogenically frozen and then he is defrosted just in time for the new millennium in the year 2999. The show instantly became a hit with record breaking ratings:

Audiences eagerly anticipated the debut of Groening's new creation evidenced by its record breaking ratings. On its Sunday night Debut in March the animated series posted the biggest ratings of any show in FOX history premiering after *The Simpsons*.³²

However this initial success was probably due to the fact that Matt Groening was involved in the series and soon ratings figures gradually dropped and so three years since it first aired FOX cancelled *Futurama* in 2002.

The style of *Futurama* is similar to *The Simpsons*, due to it being created by the same person, Matt Groening. The use of colours in this show is more realistic

³² Wendy Hilton-Morrow and David T. McMahan, "The Flintstones to *Futurama*: Networks and prime time animation" in Carol A. Stabile (Ed.) and Mark Harrison (Ed.), Prime time Animation: Television animation and American culture, (London and New York, 2003), P. 82

than *The Simpsons* however it still is as energetic and noticeable. The animation and character designs are also similar to *The Simpsons*, for example characters have no chins and three fingers. The animation is quite good and throughout the shows history it remained the same, however this would not be hard considering that it lasted such a short time.

The episode which features one example of political satire in *Futurama* is called “A head in the polls” which is from the second series. In this episode it is election time and everyone on earth are registering for the upcoming election for the next President of Earth (note that the political system for Earth is an exact replica of the American system). The two main parties have candidates, who are incredibly similar, Jack Johnson and John Jackson; in fact they are actually clones. On returning from registering they hear about a mine accident which causes the price of titanium to massively increase. As Bender, the robot, is mostly made of titanium he decides to sell his body in a pawn shop for the cash. However after discovering the disadvantages of being a head without a body Bender wants his body back. Unfortunately they discover that Richard Nixon, in the form of a head in a jar (Fig. 18), has purchased Bender’s body at the pawn shop.



Fig. 18: Richard Nixon's head as featured in *Futurama*.

With his new body Nixon decides to run for President, however when confronted with the statement that nobody can run for President more than twice (Nixon has run for President twice), he replies “Yes, no body can run more that twice, but as you can see, I’ve got a shiny new body” thus securing his candidacy via a loophole in the law. When Nixon has finished the conference, Fry, Leela and Bender confront Nixon and try to appeal to his ‘better nature’ in order to get Bender’s body back However on realising that they are appealing to Nixon they all laugh at that and Nixon refuses to return it anyway.

Fry, Leela and Bender then decide to steal the body from Nixon, and so they track him down to the Watergate hotel,

“Fry: Why would Nixon want to stay at the Watergate? Leela: They give you a discount if you’ve been here before!”

This quote from the episode is referring to the Watergate scandal 1974. They break into the hotel room where Nixon is sleeping and they try to steal the body from Nixon by unscrewing his head from the body, however he wakes up during the process, on doing so Nixon then states what his intensions are:

Computers may be twice as fast as they were in 1973, but your average voter is still as drunk and stupid as ever. The only thing that’s changed is me. I’ve become bitter and, let’s face it, crazy over the years, and once I’m swept into office I’ll sell our children’s organs to zoos for meat, and I’ll break into peoples houses at night and wreck up the place!
Mwahahahahaha!

Bender records this and using the recording, they blackmail him with the tape.

Nixon agrees to the swap and Bender gets his body back. On Election Day Nixon

doesn't fair too well in the human polls, but he wins by a landslide on the robot polls primarily because now, instead of Bender's body, Nixon has a colossal and menacing robot body. Because of this he wins the election and becomes the new President and thus goes on a victory rampage in Washington D.C. in which he wrecks a part of the Whitehouse.

In this one episode of *Futurama* they satirise the American electoral system, the two main American political parties, and many of the former Presidents of the United States (Fig. 19), with Nixon receiving the brunt of the satire. In this episode the average voters in the present and the future America are referred to as drunk and stupid and the political ethics and laws (even though flawed) have never changed; the law is useless it allows a corrupt and bitter former President to run for office for the third time.



Fig.19: The caricatures of former American Presidents: from left to right: Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and Gerald Ford

The next contemporary animation was first aired on the thirteenth of August 1997; this series is known as *South Park* (Fig. 20). *South Park* features four young boys (Eric Cartman, Stan Marsh, Kyle Broslofski and Kenny Mc Cormac) from the unassuming and quiet Colorado town of South Park. Quiet, that is, until something unusual occurs. For example the earlier episode "Mecha Streisand", season 1; Barbara Streisand becomes a huge robot that tries to destroy South Park. Another example would be the episode called "South Park is gay", season 8; where crab people try to turn everyone (even the President of America) into homosexuals.

South Park emerged from a short film that the creators, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, produced; this short film was called *The spirit of Christmas* (1992, unaired).



Fig. 20: The main characters of South Park:

From left to right: Kenny Mc. Cormac, Eric Cartman, Kyle Broslofski and Stan Marsh

The style in *South Park* is very different to *The Simpsons* and *Futurama*.

South Park started off as cut-out animation; it ridiculed the animation genre because the animation used was flawed and crude at best. The colours are simple, as are the style and designs for the show, they are almost childlike, as Michael V. Tueth states:

The character of Jesus Christ in *South Park* looks like a child's drawing, and some of the minor characters become almost inhuman, with blank-featured heads that resemble eggs.³³

Even though the animation, style and the colours for *South Park* are basic the scripts are well worked and in some episodes are deeply satirical towards the American way of life.

Throughout the eight seasons aired the political and moral values of America are constantly satirised. However it is not the series that I am concerned, in

³³ Michael V. Tueth, op.cit, P. 143

the year 1999 *South Park, bigger, longer and uncut* was first released. The feature film satirises political and moral values of America in the traditional *South Park* way, i.e. with no restraint.

In the feature film, Cartman, Stan, Kyle and Kenny manage to sneak into a film that was made by the Canadian comics Terrance and Philip, the boys TV heroes. When watching the film “Asses of fire” the boys are subjected to deplorable foul language which, of course, they try to imitate. When the rest of the children of South Park hear the language the boys are using they are all amazed and so they go to see the movie.

When the parents, particularly Kyle’s mother Sheila Broslofski, discover the language the children are using thanks to the film, they are angered that such a movie was shown in America and produced in Canada. Because of this Sheila Broslofski creates a campaign that is against bad language and Canada and names it MAC; Mothers Against Canada. MAC then captures the two main stars of “Asses of Fire”, Terrance and Philip, during an appearance on the *Conan O’Brian Show* and with the help of the government holds them prisoner.

The Canadian government is not pleased with this move, but the American governments reply is not positive and furthermore they state that: America can do whatever it wants. The Canadians then decide their only course of action is to declare war on the Americans and so they bomb American movie stars and their homes. When this occurs Bill Clinton (then President of the United States) declares war on their neighbours to the north, and in a simultaneous move appoints the leader of MAC, Sheila Broslofski, secretary of defence. World War 3 is then

declared (Fig. 21) and Terrance and Philip become Canadian war criminals and are sentenced to death. When Sheila Broslofski kills both Terrance and Philip, Satan bursts through the ground and declares that his reign of tyranny for two million years will begin. However Saddam (Satan's boyfriend) has a better idea, he takes the rule of earth from Satan and forces everyone to kneel before him. When Cartman realises that he has the power to defeat Saddam (thanks to a faulty V chip which is supposed to inhibit him from uttering obscenities) he starts to do so. Saddam then looks for Satan's help, but thanks to Kenny, Satan realises that Saddam is just using him, so Satan picks up Saddam and throws him back into hell where he gets impaled on a stalagmite. Satan can't thank Kenny enough for his advice and help and so grants him one wish, Kenny, unselfishly, wishes for everything to return back to the way it was before the war started. Satan does as Kenny wishes and so America and Canada are friendly to one another again and Satan happily returns to hell.



Fig 21: America and Canada at war!

In the movie *South Park, bigger, longer and uncut* the American political system is mocked by how easily it is influenced, in this case by an extremist

organisation called MAC, also they also ridicule the way the American government and people think their country is better than everyone else. These elements are satirised crassly but effectively, as is the way of South Park, in order to receive the response they require.

It is clear from the examples I have shown that in contemporary American animation, political satire is evident in animated sitcoms like *The Simpsons* and feature films like *South Park: Bigger Longer and Uncut*.

Conclusion

After defining the concepts of caricature, stereotyping, allegory and the various forms of satire (political, carnal and graphic), I have found that they, in particular political satire, are evident today. Even though satire has been used to ridicule and mock for centuries but it is only recently that it has reached such a wide audience thanks to the innovations in communications, such as the internet, digital TV etc.

Since examining the contemporary American popular print media, primarily comic strips, I have found and shown that political satire does feature in that media. Comic strips such as *Doonesbury* and *MAD Magazine* and artists like Art Spiegelman prove that political satire is apparent and abundant in the print media. In the print media, political satire is used to ridicule and mock the political system in order to rouse a reaction from the viewers, sometimes it can be comical and humorous or serious and thought provoking.

Then after using a case study of *Family Guy* I have shown that the animated sitcom can and will be used as a satirical form. I have shown that in the series of *Family Guy* that satire is often used but most notably political satire is used. Following the inspection of Contemporary American TV animation, I have also proved that the American political: values, faults and system are ridiculed regularly using political satire. This is evident in shows such as *The Simpsons* and *Futurama* and also apparent in animated American feature films such as *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut*.

In concluding this dissertation, political satire and the media go well together, it is evident through the sources that I have shown that political satire in contemporary American TV animation and the popular media, i.e. comics, newspapers, magazines etc. does exist and will do so for many more years, as long as there are politics there will be political satire.

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