

A Campaign to Eradicate Satire and Sarcasm?

Shôn Ellerton, April 1, 2023

The world is crazy enough as it is, but now a campaign to eliminate all forms of satire and sarcasm?



Just the other day, a bit of a fight broke out in front of the Lathrop Library at Stanford University in California. It didn't make much in the way of news as, no doubt, many universities and colleges across the United States has had its fair share of protests and altercations between students and faculty with differing opinions. But what struck me was the cause of this most recent outburst. Apparently, a new campaign had been growing in strength across many of the major universities across the United States, particularly so with the Ivy League ones including Harvard, Princeton and Yale. The campaign to eradicate all forms of sarcasm and satire. I nearly fell off my seat whilst reading about this.

Digging a little further, it transpired that a splinter group had spawned from another campaign intent on coercing the government to alter the First Amendment of the Constitution, namely, to make sweeping changes to one's right of free speech. Those in this campaign comprised of those types who believe that the right to exercise free speech is dangerous and, paradoxically, a threat to democracy. We've seen much of this take place recently, especially during the very interesting findings that emerged from the so-called Twitter Files. Tit for tat dramas took place in some of the House Oversight congressional hearings in which angry senators spilled their wrath to those being interrogated. Against the former executives of Twitter in which they were accused of colluding with the government, and later, when the tables were turned, against independent journalists reporting on what they discovered at Twitter, accusing them of

exposing government secrets which could risk democracy. It's all very amusing to watch and really played out more like a series of inquisitions than anything.

Those campaigning on making changes to the Constitution grew weary knowing full well the difficulties in doing so, and therefore, took another approach. By forming another campaign to rid society of sarcasm and satire.

In one of the news reports, a woman by the name of Karen, a chubby middle 30-something white woman with round glasses and wearing an odd oversized garment littered with slogans and encrusted with sequins was shouting off a tirade of abuse to an elegantly dressed man of African American origin, say around his early twenties or so, who was vocalising his concerns that free speech is under attack and that the First Amendment needs to be vehemently protected from unbalanced and shouty ultra-progressive incels. In a very well-mannered and polished speech, he addressed the notion that the use of satire and sarcasm is an effective vehicle of making oneself heard on such subjects which are controversial without fear of being censored. Clearly, the woman, who had little in the way of any sophisticated vocabulary only to simply adorn every venomous sentence with an expletive, grew angrier and angrier until she was frothing like a rabid dog.

She was not the only one in the antagonist crowd of course. There was a legion of angry, predominantly middle-class men and women calling out the 'evils of satire' and that all material satirical in nature should be banned from all streaming services and bookshops. They were all members of the newly formed group, *The Campaign Against Sarcasm and Satire*, or CASS for short.

Another member of CASS, by the name of Tarquin, a thin gaudy looking white male of around forty years or so, was interviewed by an independent journalist near the library, where the skirmish was taking place. The question, naturally, was asked why on Earth would one want to ban sarcasm and satire. After all, what harm could it do? Now, unlike the loose-cannon behaviour Karen was exhibiting, Tarquin spoke in a coherent but uninteresting manner, although nasally at best, and explained the dangers of satire. He would have made the perfect trainspotter stereotype.

This was the reasoning as explained by Tarquin.

The advent of relatively new technologies like [ChatGPT](#), and other AI-led platforms tipped the balance in favour of establishing the control of the 'official

narrative' of the day. What may be forbidden to discuss now may be allowed to be discussed at a later date. CASS promotes the use of such AI technologies but only under the auspices of government control and centralisation. What the Twitter Files has revealed to us is that there is not a shadow of a doubt that new and upcoming AI tools could potentially be 'weaponised' against dissident and heterodox thinking.

Just for fun by the way, I typed the following phrase into ChatGPT. '*Is the Hunter Biden laptop a true story?*' The answer I got was centred on questions raised on the veracity of the story and how the Biden family accused those of spreading misinformation and generating a smear campaign.

Tarquin continued with the journalist and explained that satire and sarcasm have largely been relatively immune from the safety censorship provides us. Such outlets as found on YouTube like JP Sears channel, [AwakenWithJP](#), and many others including Russell Brand have escaped the blade of the censorious algorithmic sword through its wicked use of satire. Moreover, the subversive nature of satire is that it has a tendency to sow seeds of doubt to those who understand it posing a threat to the collective safety of groupthink and orthodoxy.

Tarquin was somewhat more upbeat when he clamoured on that many Americans have not been fully versed in the intricacies of satire but made it clear that many of those in other nations like the United Kingdom, have gone so far down the rabbit hole of conspiracy and cynicism, that, in his own words, there's not much that we can do about them. However, he posited that we still have a chance to mould the American mind and free it from the insidious attacks by satire and sarcasm.

And that starts with education in school. Gone will be the books that promote satire and sarcasm. Gone will be theatre and drama that exercises satire. Comedy is generally okay but it needs to be light-hearted and must include a laugh track, to acknowledge to the viewer that it is only a comedy and not to be taken seriously.

Our journalist then asks the question of what his thoughts are regarding classic literature centred around satire from authors such as Voltaire, Dante Alighieri and the Marquis de Sade and, of course, what about those famously satirical British shows like [Monty Python's Flying Circus](#) and [Yes, Minister](#)? Tarquin said it was a good question and something that needed to be seriously addressed. First and foremost, many of those works are not deemed too much of a threat as they are quite old and antiquated, employing such language which many simply do not

understand these days. As for some of the popular British satires, they should not be promoted by any department of education as they tend to broaden the mind opening it to the dangers of fringe thinking and alternative opinion.

Just then, an egg is thrown from amidst the crowd and splatters against the journalist. The interview with Tarquin is cut short when a dozen or so activists, all wearing masks and wearing black, recognise the journalist, a journalist who has covered many other protest-like events. But not being a journalist employed by one of the large mainstream outlets, and having the temerity and audacity to report unredacted what goes on in such events without an editorial bias, he is viciously attacked and sent off running away from the protest.

I never thought I'd see the day when satire and sarcasm is so viciously attacked. But it was a story worth telling.

Especially on April Fool's Day!