

Can Humor Save the World

By Tom Kuntzmann

The world needs humor; every situation, country, industry. They hunger that injection to curb the stress and put a new perspective on a bad situation made worse by the insane political correct mania. - Tom Kuntzmann

Laugh and world laughs with you --- Snore and you sleep alone – Anthony Burgess

Strong statements made by two strong voices. But political correctness has spiraled out of control. The present state of overindulgence in trying to be socially acceptable is stupid and over the top. It's a beautiful thing to want to respect someone's heritage or accept their way of living their own life. But when the British Medical Association, who alerted their members in 2017 that the term, "expectant mother" should be avoided because it might offend transgender people - even transgender people would say, "Hooray for that," and then while having cocktails together would add, "Man, that is some crazy change."

Or get this, school officials at a California high school sent five students home when they refused to turn their American flag tee shirts inside out. The principal was afraid of fights breaking out with Mexican students celebrating Cinco Di Mayo. I even heard about a group that protested against Santa for his Ho, Ho, Ho. The group frowned on it by saying it was frightening children and that this Santa chuckle was too close to the slang for prostitute. It's insane.

Yeah, there is some serious stuff going on. But, we're taking everything too seriously. *That should change.* We should put a microscope on our own discretion. Maybe a seven second delay function inserted into our brain that gives time to think about how serious it really is that that guy grabbed your parking spot.

How did this attitude toward social issues twist around so radically from when I was a kid? On Halloween, you could dress in a cowboy outfit, as an Indian or superhero and there was no problem. These days, some schools and civic groups want to ban these costumes because they may offend those minority groups. Ok, there may be a small point there, but even this can be looked at extreme.

Also, it seems that in the last ten years, people can't handle jokes at the office. What about those taboo subjects that had crept out of the closet in order to be ridiculed? Now, out of nowhere, those subjects have been thrown back into the dark as we remain tight-lipped and tippy toe around what we want to say. That attitude puts a clamp on honest assessment and serious debate on issues of importance. We need to spin back to a time when you could speak your mind without having to take attendance of who is listening. We need to get more **HUMOR** into our lives.

Yes, the world needs a shot of *Humor* to spin it back to a normal perspective. The syringe is Humor and the injection is *Satire*. Why satire? Satire mocks or ridicules the weaknesses or shortcomings of a society. But at its best, satire shames individuals, corporations, politicians and individuals into improvement.

Satire is a literary device used by writers that incorporate the techniques of irony, humor and exaggeration in order to critique society. And there are different types of [satire](#). By definition, *Horatian Satire* is more geared toward getting laughs and incorporates humor. But the type used by George Orwell and Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* is *Juvenalian Satire* which is used to attack individuals, politicians and corporations and expose hypocrisy. If you want to make a point using biting sarcasm and exaggeration then Juvenalian Satire is the vehicle.

But unfortunately, these days satire as used in comedy and entertainment is being scrutinized. My outrage lies in the fact that comedienne say they can't perform even at college campuses due to "the sensitive nature" of topics. Political correctness is stamping out free speech and the satire used to put straight the real issues.

In an article by comedienne [Martin Willis](#), he questions if the world is beyond satire.

"Perhaps unsurprisingly, rather than make jokes about the ludicrous state of affairs in which we live, many comedians are turning ever more to surrealism, abstraction, and straight-up stupidity to subvert our expectations."

And comedienne [Bec Hill](#) says, "comedy should either help people realize an uncomfortable truth, make the world a better place, or make people happy".

I wish I said that because that's the point.

Satire already enjoys a healthy existence and we seem to appreciate when we see it. Magazines like *The Onion*, *Mad Magazine* and Stephen Colbert has the top-rated talk show. Plenty of us watch the stand-up comedy routines on social issues, black comedy in movies and television shows that get big laughs from all of us - all races, creeds, religions, and aliens from far away universes. You can say, "Well, that's just television and actors acting". But all those skits and political statements are ripped from the headlines, real life situations. We flood comedy clubs to watch comedienne stomp on political issues and do parodies of celebrities and people in the news. And we love it. We crack up, slap our knee with tears running down our cheeks, nudge the person next to us and say, 'yeah, that person makes sense.'

But my question is: Why can't we imitate in our own reality, the comedy satire used by these comedienne to relieve us of stress related to that reality? In other words, make fun of yourself. Life can be a comedy once you change around your perspective. Because it seems like we laugh at the comedy clubs when the lights are up. When the lights go down, we can't admit we laughed at it.

And if we are in a time when everything is scrutinized, why are the comediennes that spew this belligerent humor not put on alert by the police? Couldn't they cause a riot or be hounded by groups of lawyers claiming they are libelous? Maybe they are making an accurate point and reflecting back to the way it used to be, when people tended not to be so influenced.

National Lampoon was groundbreaking for pushing the limits of taste and acceptability as it applied to everything from politics, to topical news to any American beliefs.

Episodes of *Chappelle* and *Seinfeld* in particular are still talked about today. *Seinfeld* had that great quality of combing *Affiliative humor*; humor that mostly everyone finds funny, as in everyday humor. The other vehicle was *black comedy*, which consists of humor targeting taboo subjects.

But, please stand up and give a round of applause to *Curb Your Enthusiasm* which really speaks loudly about how to live in a world where you can be outrageous and still somewhat respected. Yes, this is television and can be excused with the category of "entertainment" – but let's move on to the point.

Curb Your Enthusiasm is without question over the top. You had Larry drawing Hitler mustaches on pictures and giving a pink sewing machine to a friend's male child implying he thought the boy was gay. But a blinding statement was made on episode with Michael J. Fox, making a **self-deprecating appearance**.

In the episode, Larry is dating a piano player who invites him to a fancy restaurant/cocktail lounge where she is playing the background music and he is shushing people around him as if was Carnegie Hall. After saying hello to Michael J. Fox, he calls over to Fox and his friends to be quiet. Later when going out the door, Fox shakes his head in disgust at Larry. Larry gives him a twisted look. The piano player asks him, "what's the matter?"

"I told him to be quiet during your playing and got insulted and just shook his head at me as he left."

"That was Michael J. Fox. You know he has Parkinsons. Maybe it was a Parkinsons shake?"

"So, is he pissed or was it a Parkinsons shake?"

Now, what would life be like if we gave one month to dealing with issues as they do on *Curb Your Enthusiasm*? Would people have epiphany realizing many issues are soaked in over reaction? Would it spin humans into a new perspective to laugh at some of their predicaments and blast out your revolt in the ones that really matter? Who knows, maybe the thought is too much science fiction.

The other great vehicle for Satire is satirical editorial cartoons seen in newspapers around the world. Satirical cartoons on the economy showing people on a fast food line saying how great the new minimum wage is and then being hit with a twenty-five dollar tab for two burgers. There was one with a drawing of a shovel scripted with the words tax plan and the headline reading,

“digging us deeper in debt.” Or on the environment, with a guy standing on a Florida beach with a seashell to his ear and hearing the words, “get out.

Then again, satire didn't work too well in January 2015. Tragedy hit the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, when gunmen forced their way into the Paris offices killing 12 people including employees, a guest, a maintenance worker and later, a police officer. According to witnesses, the gunmen left the scene shouting, "*We have avenged the Prophet Muhammad...*" Experts surmise that the motive for the killing was in reference to numerous satirical cartoons printed by *Charlie Hebdo* attacking Islamic leaders and the prophet Muhammad. After the attack, Guardian cartoonist Steve Bell made this statement which rang true with many people.

"We've got to stand up for the right to take the piss out of these monsters, these idiots, these fools, these posturing maniacs who strut around in their black gear as a kind of death cult trying to frighten us all."

In conclusion, joking aside, humor will save the world; once it becomes an accepted idea. Right now, we're caught up in harassment allegations at tidal wave proportions, politically correct alertness climbing to an all-time high, the same dirty politics, prejudice is still alive, corporations continue to run America and there are still too many drugs and weapons on the street. Some things never change. But something has to change.