

## **The analysis of the use of satire in the daily show with Trevor Noah**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Various TV channels established with various talk shows stand out among other shows for presenting bitter facts in a very light-hearted way by commenting, satirizing, analyzing and criticizing in a very funny style. "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah" is a very popular comedy talk show in the United States because of its high language, witty praise, and especially the characters of "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah" criticizing various aspects of society. The aims of this study are to categorize various types of satire and reveal Trevor Noah's technique in expressing satire. This study uses a qualitative descriptive design with a sample of six episodes of The Daily Show with Trevor Noah downloaded from the official comedy center website. The data concentrated on the Satire utterances of the host of The Daily Show with Trevor Noah were analyzed using interactive analysis. The results of the analysis showed that three types of satire appeared in the event: 21 Horatian satires, 13 juvenile satires, and 16 Menippean satires. The satire that is used in the daily show has conveyed a message of criticism of someone's ideas and behavior based on what they have said and done based on events that actually happened. Sacrificial conclusions have become the most powerful and effective way of getting a message across, even today, no matter what means a satirist chooses to create their work.

**Keywords:** *Satire; Daily show with Trevor Noah; Tv show*

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## **1. Introduction**

Satire is a highly effective art form for criticizing specific human behaviors. It is very diverse, ranging from Horace's Satires to *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen to *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee* and modern Nigerian poetry (Akingbe, 2014). Satire is a genre that has, since the time of the Romans, influenced how works are interpreted and assessed based on the critique and entertainment they aim to provide (Declercq, 2018). LeBoeuf (2007 as cited in Gift, 2019) classifies the characteristics of satire into three aspects: Satire is always a criticism of some aspect of human nature, ugliness, or stupidity with the aim of making the audience view it with disrespect and, as a consequence, the potential to cause social change. The irony, which is deliberately used lightly to draw attention to the problem behavior being criticized; behavior being criticized, deconstructs itself by being absurd, exaggerated, or taken out of its usual context.

Nowadays, technologies have enabled a change in how satire is presented. Humorous television shows with Satirical imitations often occur in popular comedy shows (Peifer, 2018). As a type of entertainment-oriented political content that aims to criticize politics and reveal violations of social norms in an implicit and playful way, political satire has drawn scholarly attention in terms of whether it could play a significant role in facilitating a more engaged public (Chen, Gan, & Sun, 2017). Politicians, government policies, or entire regimes can be criticized, mocked, and exposed for their flaws through the use of political satire (Jones, 2017).

According to Chen, Gan, and Sun (2017), the most widely watched form of satirical media in the West today is satirical TV programming, such as *The Daily Show* (TDS) and *The Colbert Report*, and became the favorite source of news information for young citizens (Becker & Bode, 2018). *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* was examined in this study which has attracted audiences to critical thinking about consuming news media that contained satirical messages. The messages are needed to be comprehended by audiences to obtain the point of what is intentionally said by the host. *The Daily Show*, a reliable news source, provides critical reflection along with the facts, engaging audiences and enabling them to think for themselves (Čomić, 2019). Trevor Noah is someone with a global perspective, extremely bright, and wickedly funny that he could host the show with satire in an entertaining way (Brownstein, 2017). Moreover, TDS represents what is accepted in society, but they also highlight what is not widely acknowledged (Newman, 2010).

Through the use of irony and humor, satire aims to challenge people's perceptions and increase public awareness of current events (Burgers & Brugman, 2022). It helps people face unpleasant realities and see the world for what it is so they can change it. Satires simplify and have a moral. Both processes are contrary to the spirit of the scholarly age, though they are related but not the same. In the decades leading up to the turn of the millennium, one can count on academic research in the humanities and social sciences to present the subject matter under study as complex and nuanced (Phiddian, 2013). Therefore, by outlining the key traits and uses of political humor and satire, the researcher

explores how various studies approach this issue throughout the article. It starts by giving a general overview of humor and satire while also discussing the similarities and differences between the two genres, including how heavily they rely on common cultural norms and symbols as well as the significance of comic effect and criticism.

In an effort to address the clear gaps, this study looked at how satire was used on *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, as it provided a new way of thinking as well as the ability to assess and analyze what was being told. The context is understood in order to obtain the satirical message, which is delivered with wit and leads the audience to reflect on the situation and become aware of the truth. By understanding the context and manner in which satire is expressed, this study was effective in improving people's intellectual abilities in consuming satirical news. A satirist, he/she must be able to think critically and have a sense of humor in order to inspire people to make positive changes (Hoffman & Young, 2011). Therefore, with the explanation of the use of satire, this study aims to classify the types of satire used by Trevor Noah and reveal the technique of satire that is expressed in *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1. Definition of satire*

Satire is an art form, primarily literary, and dramatic, in which human or individual vices, follies, or shortcomings are held up to ridicule with the intention of inspiring social reform (Elliot, 2022). Critical mockery and humor have been incorporated into satire, an age-old discursive practice, in a variety of ways over the years (Condren, 2012). Due to its propensity to abuse and manipulate a variety of genres, satire can be thought of as pre-generic and parasitic (Peifer & Lee, 2019). Satire as an immediately recognizable form of comedy is a common element of everyday spoken and written interactions. It becomes a technique through which the satirist is unable to speak directly. It has been noted that satire has been widely employed as a critical tool throughout history (Murodova, 2022). Thus, it is a highly powerful and successful method for critiquing specific human behaviors.

The goal of effective satire is to shock the audience into realizing the vice and forcing it to be eliminated from the individual or society as a whole, not to cause harm or damage. In fact, the satirical acts are not to entertain or amuse but it has a moral purpose to provoke change or reform. As Swift (2016) argued that literary people employ satire to bring about improvement in a group of ideas and human behavior as it reveals the absurdity of a person or an organization as well as the disconnect between the mask and the face. Examples of satire include Jonathan Swift's book *Travel*, which makes fun of the British and people in general, Sinclair Lewis' book *Babbitt*, which details the attacks on American businessmen, and Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, which depicts the assaults on the American Air Forces.

## *2.2. Types of satire*

According to Abrams and Harpham (2015), satire is classified into two types which can be formal/direct and indirect. Formal satire is when the satirist adopts a persona that addresses the audience or a different character in the work under discussion. Two types of formal satire are distinguished by taking their names from the great Roman satirists Horace and Juvenal. The classifications are defined by the character of the first-person satiric speaker presented by the author, as well as the attitude, and tone that such a persona displays toward both the subject matter and the readers of the work.

Meanwhile, Menippean Satire is a type of indirect satire in which mental attitudes are criticized rather than societal norms or specific individuals. When using indirect satire, the author's intention is made clear by the narrative and its plot. Also, it is concerned with current and topical issues (Leymann, Lentz, & Burgers, 2022).

## *2.3. The daily show with Trevor Noah*

The Daily Show with Trevor Noah is an American news satire talk show that uses humor to amuse viewers. Making jokes about current events, politicians, and media outlets is a common way to entertain young audiences for a half-hour show (Tandoc, Lim, & Ling, 2018). It is broadcast on Comedy Central every Monday through Thursday. From 1996 to 1998, the program was officially known as The Daily Show with Craig Kilborn. From 1999 to 2015, it was known as The Daily Show with Jon Stewart. Since 2015, it has been known as The Daily Show with Trevor Noah. In fact, one of the main reasons Noah was chosen to host the Daily Show was his propensity for waxing satirical on a variety of subjects, much like Stewart did before taking the throne (Brownstein, 2017). With respect to all three tenures, The Daily Show has been on Comedy Central the longest and has garnered 24 Primetime Emmy Awards (Barton, 2016).

The Daily Show's aim is to amuse its audience, but it's interesting to note that the humor it delivers also touches on political subjects, including its political leaders. Young (2017 as cited in Nugraha, 2022) argued that the fake news sources in that TV show could be helpful to the public by serving as a gateway into actual news sources and educating the public about political issues. Therefore, The Daily Show has known as a distinct phenomenon, unlike other late-night shows, which adopt the personality of a news program and frequently incorporate more political content (Chen, Gan, & Sun, 2017).

Besides, Trevor Noah is a stand-up comedian who has won awards twice in the South African Comic's Choice Awards, as well as Best Host on "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah" in 2017 (Biography.com, 2016). Furthermore, this TV show is chosen as the subject of this study because the host, Trevor Noah, has his own language style in which the message that he delivers and expresses contains sarcasm that is related to the political situation in America, particularly after Joe Biden is elected as the next President of the United States. Furthermore, the topic of political satire was chosen because, while satire can be aggressive and offensive in the eyes of others, the underlying premise of the sarcastic text is frequently optimistic (Young, 2013).

### 3. Method

This study employed descriptive qualitative as the research design. There were six episodes of The Daily Show that analysed in this study. The six episodes were purposively chosen from 8<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 or from episodes 103 to 108 to highlight the current issues being discussed. The data was the utterances contained types of satire that are based on three classifications explained by Abrams and Harpham (2015). The data was taken from the internet [www.cc.com/shows/the-daily-show-with-trevor-noah](http://www.cc.com/shows/the-daily-show-with-trevor-noah) the official website of The Daily Show with Trevor Noah which airs on Comedy Central. Documentary technique in collecting the data was used for data collection. The documents were The Daily Show with Trevor Noah videos and their transcripts. Triangulation was used as data validation to explore and test the validity of the data. Therefore, the data acquired and tested were analyzed by applying an interactive model (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

### 4. Findings and discussion

After analyzing the data, there were 50 utterances that contained satire in The Daily Show with Trevor Noah. The data were analyzed based on types of satire with the theory presented by Abrams and Harpham. The types of satire found in The Daily Show with Trevor Noah are Horatian, Juvenalian, and Menippean. The result showed that the data represented the direct form of satire was significantly expressed by the host Trevor Noah. To give an easier display of findings, the table is presented below:

**Table 1**

Types of satire in the daily show with Trevor Noah.

Type of Satire	Episode 103		Episode 104		Episode 105		Episode 106		Episode 107		Episode 108		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Horatian	6	28.6	2	9.5	4	19	2	9.5	2	9.5	5	23.9	21	42
Juvenalian	1	7.7	0	0	1	7.7	4	30.8	5	38.5	2	15.3	13	26
Menippean	2	12.5	2	12.5	5	31.3	1	6.3	3	18.7	3	18.7	16	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that 21 utterances (42%) were identified as Horatian type, 13 utterances were Juvenalian (26%), and there were 16 utterances of Menippean (32%). The results are further elaborate in the explanation below:

#### 4.1. Horatian satire

Abraham and Harpham (2015 as cited in Salsabila & Simatupang, 2021) “In Horatian satire the speaker is an urbane, witty, and tolerant man of the world, who is moved more to wry amusement than to indignation at the spectacle of human folly, pretentiousness, and hypocrisy, and who uses a relaxed and informal language to evoke from readers a wry smile at human failings and absurdities—sometimes including his own”. This type of satire intends to focus on how to amuse people by criticizing some

social evils through soft, gentle, and light humor. For instance, the utterances below are identified as a Horatian type of satire that is found in the Daily Show with Trevor Noah.

[1]: “I feel like America's laws are like-**like a mom's handbag.**”

First, it was critical to determine whether Trevor Noah was being criticized for a single person, a group, a specific event, or humanity in general. This would pinpoint the classification of the satire, narrowing down what will be written about in the analysis.

According to the data, Trevor was being witty to liken the issue of “America’s laws” to the reliable thing “Mom’s handbag” to make it sounds gentler in criticizing. Trevor mentions that America’s laws are similar to a mother’s handbag and that everything we need is could probably found there. In this case, Trevor Noah believed something was wrong with the laws of America and it needs to be discussed.

The context of the situation was mentioned by Trevor Noah about Biden's announcement of the vaccine mandate. President Biden has announced sweeping coronavirus vaccine mandates requiring all federal workers and government contractors to be fully vaccinated. However, many people are questioning whether Biden has the authority to do so. By all means, the federal government has the power to protect workers from grave danger under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970. OSHA is in charge of enforcing the Occupational Safety and Health Act that applies to all employers in all industries. The provision, officially stated in Section 5(a) (1) of the act, serves as OSHA's mandate which requires employers to provide a safe working environment for their employees (U.S. Department of Labor). Thus, the utterance “I feel like America's laws are like a mom's handbag.” was classified as a Horatian form of satire that Trevor has a quick sense of humor to relate the laws of America as the mother's handbags. The handbag which the mother has anything she needs and the regulation that is found depend on Americans' requirements. From the utterance, it was meant that the Americans have found the law accordingly to the current situation needed vaccination for coronavirus. This form is the mildest form among others as Trevor has humorously critiqued the U.S laws.

[2]: “**...Bitcoin without untraceability is like superman without any powers.**”

In analysing the utterance that contains satire, context, and background knowledge are needed in order to understand how the satirist expressed satire and what is the satirical message understood from the utterances. Satire frequently makes allusions to current affairs or societal norms, so understanding the point requires familiarity with the subject matter on the part of the audience. In the case of data 2, Trevor criticized Bitcoin through light-hearted humor and he addressed issues with clever mockery to highlight the problem.

Bitcoin is a type of money that is completely virtual such as an online version of cash. It is designed to be untraceable which preferred payment method of drug lords and international hackers. This cryptocurrency is favored by cybercriminals because it allows for direct online payments, regardless of location. Trevor stated Bitcoin without untraceability is like superman who has lost his power. ‘Superman without any powers’ means that he is just some creep with underwear on the outside as Bitcoin was no longer safe to do any illegal payment as it was finally noticeable by the FBI.

[3]: “The United States is donating 500 million vaccines to the rest of the world. Which **seems generous until you remember that Biden can’t get anyone else in America to take them.**”

Trevor’s expression has satirically expressed the reason why The United State decided to donate vaccines to the rest of the world. Donating a million vaccines to those who are needed was kind-hearted, however donating it because you were forced was like giving your friend that old exercise bike you have just been hanging your clothes on, said Trevor in episode 104 of The Daily Show. From the illustration, Trevor sarcastically stated that the vaccine that was donated was the vaccine used for Americans, whereas many Americans refused to be vaccinated, thus, Biden had massively donated it. The utterance was delivered gently and vividly to expose the truth of being generous. By analyzing what was being told, a new way of thinking has been made to reveal the actual issue.

#### *4.2. Juvenalian satire*

Juvenalian, by contrast, employed a very different style and satiric persona. In this type of satire, the juvenile is used to criticize someone as a target by using harsh and violent language. This satire contains hatred and anger through the use of sarcasm or irony. It turns Juvenalian into a darker satire than Horation satire. “Juvenalian laughter is meant not to heal but to wound” (Holbert, Hmielowski, Jain, Lather, and Morey, 2011, p. 192). Moreover, the character in this satire has a serious moralist, a dignified style of utterance to blame form of vice and error so that it makes the reader feels angry and sad about, moral resentment or humanity’s anomalies (Abrams and Harpham, 2015). The data with Juvenalian form might explain in the data below:

[4]: “This dude is going to run for congress? He’s a dangerous extremist **who’s completely unqualified and unprepared. So, yeah, he’ll fit right in.**”

As Juvenalian satire is angrily attacking, irony was commonly used as it is a sharp remark and bitter expression of disapproval. In the data above, the irony is applied to mock the rioter which might be a good idea if the guy gets elected as Trevor said “He will

fit right in” to be on the other side when the next insurrection happened. Ironically, if the guy got elected, Trevor hoped he will face and learn how to handle the next insurrection.

The data was marked that Trevor indignantly judges the rioter according to his previous mistake. The context of the situation was explained in episode 107 aired on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the issue happened in January when the protesters stormed the U.S. Capitol hoping to overturn the 2020 presidential election. Now, one of the protesters is planning to return to the scene of the crime as an elected official. In response to the issue, Trevor stated that the protester is a dangerous extremist which unqualified to run for Congress. He is judged as an extremist and unqualified because he does not have a super solid grasp of the political process. As that guy was also admitted to entering the Capitol building on January 6<sup>th</sup> and chugging from a bottle of wine he found in a lawmaker’s office which went viral on media.

[5]: “I think we can all agree that Chrissy Teigen has been **a particularly horrible person online.**”

Anger is detected in Trevor’s utterances by judging Chrissy Teigen as an awful online person. Teigen was judged as a particularly horrible and brutal person for saying mean and nasty things on Twitter purposively to destroy others. The context has related to the utterance containing moral indignation and personal invective which are known as the features of the Juvenalian form of satire. In this case, Trevor has exposed Chrissy Teigen’s arrogance and terrible attitude with cyberbullying scandals. It is reminded that what Chrissy Teigen has done to people was human-less and people agreed to call her a horrible person online.

#### *4.3. Menippean satire*

In the indirect type of satire, the satirist uses several other literary forms apart from direct addresses to the reader. The most common form of Menippean is a fictional narrative. Menippeans are defined by inventing ridiculous or obnoxious objects of satire and their opinions by what they think, say, and do (Holman, 1985), and sometimes add satirical narrative style and comments that make the satire even more ridiculous.

[6]: “...My favorite part of this whole thing is how **Rudy Giuliani can’t even get his story straight while he's telling it.**”

Menippean satire is identified in the data above that Rudy is mocked for what he has said in the September 11<sup>th</sup> commemoration speech. September 11<sup>th</sup> is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attack on 2001 in the United States. The accident was 20 years ago when Rudy Giuliani was America's mayor and now was asked to give a speech related to the commemoration. However, the speech was unrelated in that he talked about the time he hung out with Jeffrey Epstein's alleged pedophile friend. Moreover, Trevor

ridiculously criticized Rudy that his speech went off the rails and even he could not get his story straight while he is telling it. Trevor has echoed Rudy in his story "I never once met Prince Andrew. Never! I mean, yeah, one time we hung out in my office." According to the story, Menippean form was classified to expose how Rudy was a self-contradict of his own story. He said "Never" then later he clarified himself "Yeah, one time" had met Prince Andrew once in his office. It was seen from Trevor's utterance "Rudy cannot get his story straight". Hence, the context explained Rudy has been judged as hilariously inconsistent with his words.

[7]: "Oh, you see? **Only killers laugh at "are you a killer?"** because normal people are like, "what did you call me?!"

The utterance above is satirized from the context of the peculiar response of Vladimir Putin which seems unusual. Trevor wanted to reveal normal people's reactions when were asked "are you a killer?" question. On the contrary, Putin was laughing at such judgmental questions which meant that it was not normal to be acted in such a way. Also, Trevor explained the normal people will react to the "are you a killer" question by responding like "What did you call me?!" because they are not a killer. But Putin was like "(Chuckling) I get called this all the time. No surprise (Russian accent)" In this case, Trevor is being echoic by copying Putin's accent and mimicking to get a comic effect of Putin's personality for being publicly stable. As Trevor said, Putin's laughter at "Are you a killer?" was a ridiculous answer because only killers laugh at such judgmental questions.

Among the three types of satire, Juvenalian was the least utterances compared to other types expressed by Trevor. It meant he would rather use humor to satirize than anger. Furthermore, Horatian was significantly expressed which Trevor intended to criticize with humor rather than fury. The specific type of satirical material examined in this study, however, restricts the generalizability of the findings to other satirical material, according to the researcher, various satirical presentations can each have their own particular effects. Moreover, in the adjustment of types contained satire, it is also associated with the way to convey the utterance. Trevor Noah used satire in many ways such as irony, parody, and exaggeration to criticize and satirize someone or something.

Indeed, satire was more than just a source of amusement. The informational potential of satire is known to the general public. They consume it not simply for entertainment but also to contextualize the news and learn about current events (Young, 2013). The satirical can be found in a variety of contexts, but it appears more frequently in texts that are governed by other generic rules than in the relatively small group of texts that can be labeled simply as satires (Phiddian, 2013). Many different techniques and tools have been employed over the thousands of years that satire has evolved from comedy. A component of humor can be found in both ancient and contemporary satire, making it one of the most popular and effective forms of satire (Murodova, 2022). The goal of satire, according to Holeman (2017), is to elicit an emotional response from the

audience, whether that reaction is outrage or laughter. Every satire criticizes something, and the way the satire is perceived or received can vary depending on the viewer's position on the subject matter. The ability to evaluate and analyze what was being said was one of the benefits of satire. Instead of just passively consuming information, it was a process. In this way, the satirist makes an attempt to communicate what they perceive to be true about a certain aspect of the world; whether the viewer understands this or not is entirely up to them.

In the case of *The Daily Show*, Noah satisfies the awareness instinct by giving his audience information that is outside of their experience and accomplishes the fundamental duties of journalists, such as authenticating, making sense of, and keeping watch, as described by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001). *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* embraces its place in the media landscape of today, blurring the lines between news and entertainment as Noah uses humor to communicate underlying universal truths while maintaining his subjectivity and personal values (Groel, 2020). According to the findings of this study, Trevor mostly used vividness and irony to satirize individuals. Trevor intended to expose something by utilizing exact words in order to silence an audience's objection. Trevor wanted to describe painful or absurd situations, as well as ignorant or immoral people, as clearly as possible. As a result, satirists' perspectives on the subject are usually delivered with a sharp wit that causes the audience to reflect on the situation and become aware of the truth. *The Daily Show's* ability to successfully blend news and humor is largely due to the way it simultaneously presents itself as a parody of traditional television news programs while making it abundantly clear that its primary objective is entertainment.

Satire has a significant social function, which explains why it has evolved throughout history. Throughout the development of humanity, numerous satirical genres and forms have emerged. So, all literary works, including poems, short stories, novels, and tales, can be satirical (Murodova, 2022). Context and background knowledge are needed in order to understand how the satirist expressed satire and what is the satirical message understood from the utterances. Satire frequently makes allusions to current affairs or societal norms, so understanding the point requires familiarity with the subject matter on the part of the audience. The cultural context, among other things, may have an impact on how satire is viewed or received. A satirist's goal is to enable the reader, or the viewer addressees to pick up on the satirical message that can shed light on how satire is expressed (Leymann, Lentz, & Burgers, 2022). To be effective, the satirist's message must be understood by the audience. The satire would not be effective and would not accomplish its goal in any other case.

## **5. Conclusion**

After analyzing the data, it can be concluded that, first, the utterances in *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* were analyzed in the study significantly employed the direct form of satire which Horatian and Juvenalian types were significant compared to

Menippean. Second, with regard to the second objective of the study vividness, irony, parody, and exaggeration were revealed as the satirical techniques in expressing satirical news in *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*. Also, the message that is conveyed in the utterances was criticism of one's ignorant behavior as well as according to what one has said and done. The analysis of the context in *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* shows the current issues which are being criticized by Trevor Noah and it shows the situation that is drawn in the utterances. The utterance that contained satire has become the most powerful and effective way to spread a message, even in the present time, no matter what tools a satirist chooses to use to create their work. Thus, this study was effective in improving people's intellectual abilities in consuming satirical news by understanding the context and how satire is expressed. As a satirist, critical thinking and a sense of humor are required so people could be encouraged to make positive changes.

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