

*A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in
Ireland from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for
Making Them Beneficial to the Publick*

by Jonathan Swift

1667-1745

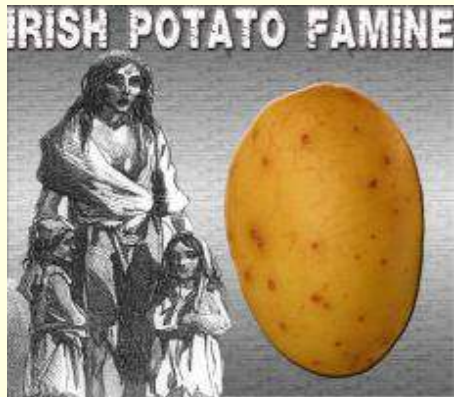


Jonathon Swift is the author of
Gulliver's Travels.

He published "A Modest Proposal"
anonymously in Ireland in 1729.

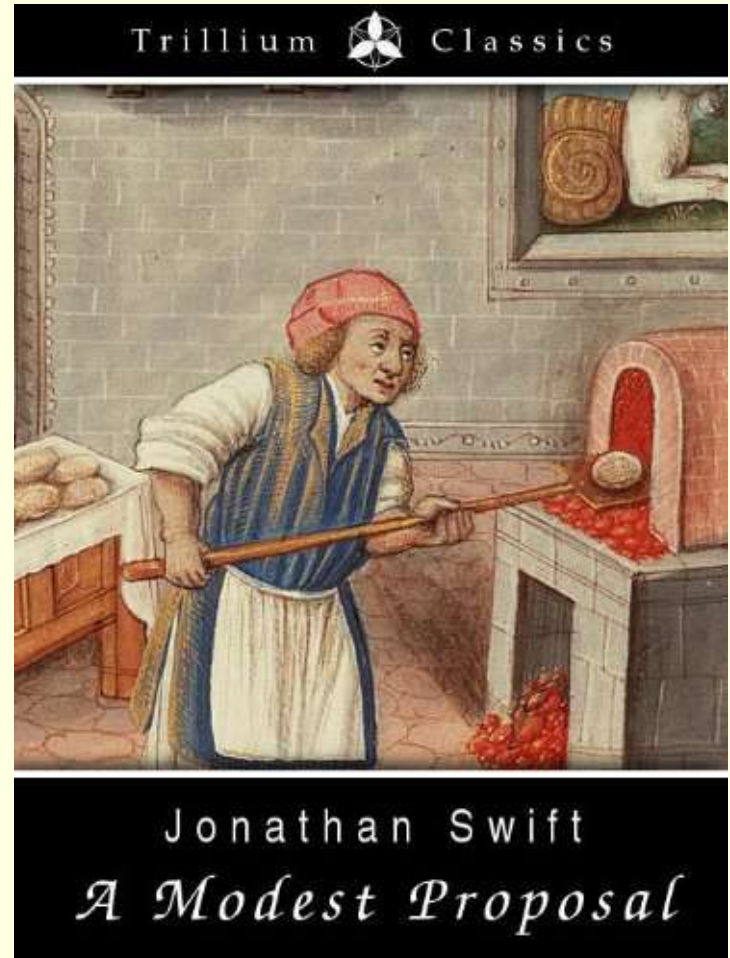
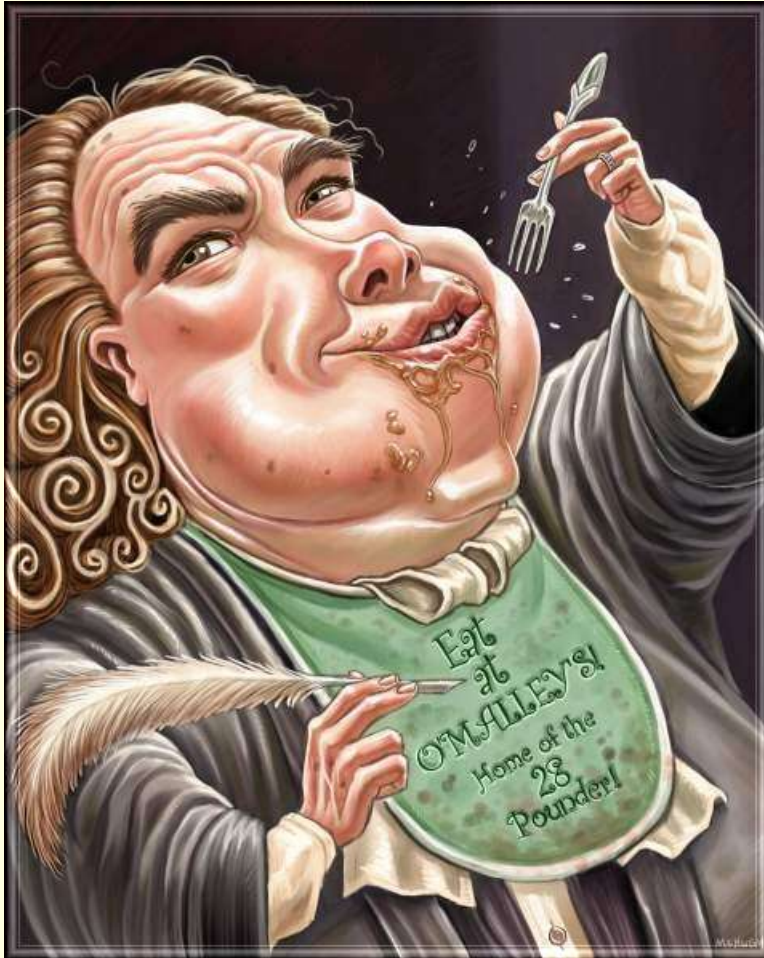
In this "proposal" Swift suggests a
solution for how to deal with all the
children living in extreme poverty in
Ireland at that time.

Ireland and the Potato Famine



A Modest Proposal

Read the essay and try to identify Swift's proposal!



A Modest Proposal:

Vocabulary

Chair: A Sedan Chair - a covered chair supported by poles, carried by two bearers.

Episcopal: To do with (here appointed by) a bishop - the adjective refers to church administration at the time Swift wrote.

Gibbet: Place where criminals are hanged.

Mandarin: Important official serving an oriental (originally Chinese) ruler, or any high official today.

Papists: Supporters of the Pope, an insulting name for Catholics.

Pretender: James Stuart, a Catholic king in Spain who pretended to (claimed) the English and Scottish thrones. He is sometimes known as the Old Pretender, while his son, Charles Edward Stuart, is known as the Young Pretender.

Shambles: Place (usually in a town) where animals are slaughtered and butchered.

Solar year: A year in the ordinary sense (as measured by the earth's going once round the sun).

A Modest Proposal:

Respond to these questions in your **Notes**:

- **Occasion:** What were the social conditions in Ireland that caused Swift to write this essay?
- **Audience:** Who was his target audience?
- **Solution:** What solution does Swift propose? How will this solution solve the problems of Ireland?
- **Satire:** At what point in the essay did you recognize that Swift's proposal is meant to be satiric? How can you tell this is satire?
- **Speaker:** What persona does Swift adopt?
- **Purpose:** What does Swift criticize about society?

Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own." –Jonathan Swift

In your notes:

What did Swift mean by this quote?

Satire is a literary device which blends humor with criticism for the purpose of instruction or the improvement of humanity.

The word satire comes from the Latin satura meaning a dish filled with mixed fruits.

ELEMENTS OF SATIRE

Satire includes the following elements:

Humor

Criticism, either general criticism of humanity or human nature or specific criticism of an individual or group

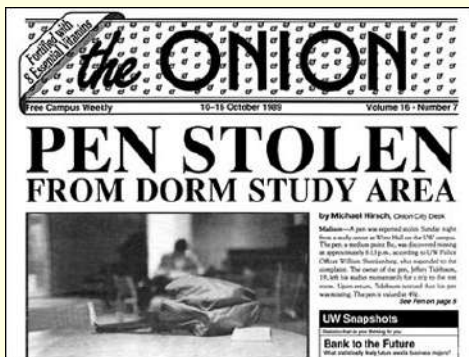
Some kind of moral voice: simply mocking or criticism is not “satire”

Irony and sarcasm

References to things that society finds taboo or disgusting (bodily functions, sexuality, etc.)

Modern Satire: *The Onion*

The Onion is an entertainment newspaper and website featuring satirical articles reporting on international, national, and local news. *The Onion's* articles comment on current events, both real and fictional. It parodies such traditional newspaper features as editorials, man-on-the-street interviews, and stock quotes on a traditional newspaper layout with an AP-style editorial voice.



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Socialites Without Borders Teach Rwandans How To Mingle

AUGUST 25, 2009 | ISSUE 45-35

KIGALI, RWANDA—In an effort to provide relief to a people devastated by civil war, genocide, and poverty, members of the humanitarian aid group Socialites Without Borders spent several hours this week teaching destitute Rwandans how to mingle.

[ENLARGE IMAGE](#)



"These poor souls, there's so much we can do to help to them," said Tinsley Rothschild, an event planner for the non-profit organization, while surveying the country's bleak and arid landscape. "Just look around, there's nothing here: no hors d'oeuvres, no towering ice sculptures, nothing. Nobody should have to live like this."

"I bet most of these people have never even seen a Bellini, let alone know how to sip one," Rothschild continued.

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Computer Company Started In Garage 30 Years Ago Now In Smaller Garage

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Modern Satire: *The Onion*

In your **Writer's Notebook**, respond to the following questions:

- What is this girl's problem?
- What is the solution proposed?
- How can you tell that this is satire?
- What does the video make fun of?



Brain Dead Teen to be Euthanized

- **Euthanize:** To kill or allow to die to prevent suffering
- **Euthanasia:** (Mercy killing) The act of putting to death to prevent suffering

<http://www.theonion.com/video/braindead-teen-only-capable-of-rolling-eyes-and-te,27225/>

Modern Satire: The Colbert Report

- American political satirist, writer, comedian, television host, and actor.
- Host of *The Colbert Report*, a satirical news show in which he portrays a conservative pundit, much like Bill O'Reilly

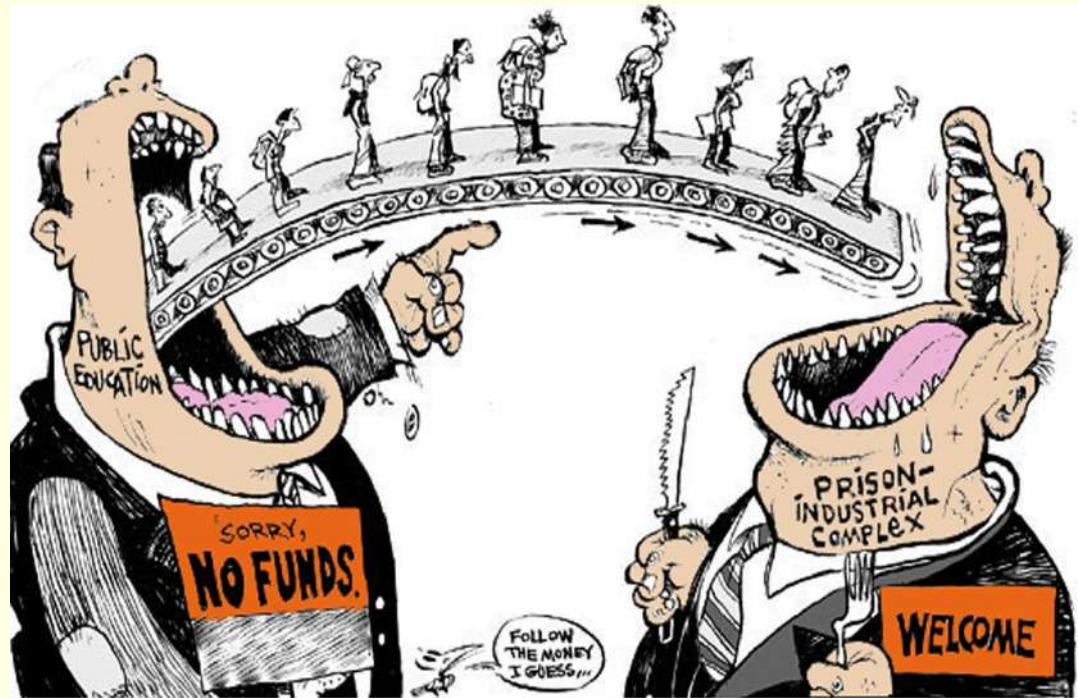
- <http://eater.com/archives/2010/12/14/colbert-on-the-trickledown-gastronomics-of-cannibalism.php>



Modern Satire: *“Make My School a Prison”*

Now, read the letter “Make My School a Prison.” In your **Writer’s Notebook**, respond to the following questions:

- What problem does the writer identify?
- What is his solution?
- How can you tell that this is satire?
- What is the writer criticizing?



How does this cartoon artist convey his message? Is this satire? Is the message effective or not?