

Noam Avrahami Humorist Study - English IV Grecko 2025

Bill Watterson worked in comic strips, a shorter medium for humor. Especially early on, this led to the employment of typical setup jokes. However, many of the best strips rely on callbacks, and the development of the characters as contrasting personalities. Many characters can at times become caricatures, satirizing points of view like selfish children, technophobes, and corporate greed. Calvin & Hobbes can get seriously philosophical, but there's always some sort of punchline at the end—even if it's some sort of irony where Calvin misses the point, or the slapstick of falling off a cliff in the wagon.

A longer medium can be found in The Onion's satirical pieces. The Onion's spoofs are effective by setting up very solid and normal structures, then modifying small parts for big effect, calling into attention how absurd the whole piece is. This means a lot of verbal irony—the whole structure works to build credibility, but the diction undermines this as seamlessly yet loudly as possible. For example in their Magnasoles article, they wrote an advertisement that repeatedly uses the words pseudoscience and pseudoscientists to constantly half-break immersion.

While both humor forms can be used for satire, The Onion is direct, with Calvin & Hobbes more sincere. The Onion takes a form to mock everything. Calvin & Hobbes is willing to ask harder questions without answering them, and follows the growth of characters that come back over and over again.

My project will be alone. I want to make a satirical speech. I think I want to announce some big horrible change to the school with justifications that sound like they could come from our MVHS/LAHS administrations. I want to make English an elective and make it so you only have 2 Freestyle classes. I will employ verbal irony, hyperbole, and potentially callbacks in a tower of references.

This is the right project for me, because I am a confident enough speaker where I can write the speech and then deliver the performance. A pitfall I'm afraid of is making it too harsh where it's not funny anymore. I need to find a way to add incongruencies like in The Onion instead of just attacking administrations. I think I'll make myself the new principal so that I can make fun of my own character.