

“The Mote in Thine Eye”: An Analysis of the Bible in Cartoons

Huw Thomas

huw.thomas@sheffield.anglican.org

ABSTRACT

The targeting of religion in editorial cartoons has become a source of controversy. Particular tensions emerged following the publication of the Danish cartoons, a set of cartoons representing the Prophet Mohammed, published in *Jyllands-Posten* in September 2005. This research analyses cartoons from a different source, the satirical magazine *Private Eye*, with an eye towards the varied treatment of religion in this publication and the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons. It focuses on the way the Bible features in *Private Eye* cartoons, and uses the semantic tool, the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), to analyse the way humour works in these cartoons, the target they aim at and the way the Bible features in the intertextual references of the reader. Analysing the targeting of such cartoons it concludes that there is a difference between the use of the Bible as a means of targeting other subject matter, as is evident in *Private Eye* examples, and the targeting within the Danish cartoons.

KEYWORDS

cartoons, editorial cartoons, humour, General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), visual metaphor, Knowledge Resources, intertextuality, script opposition, targeting, *Jyllands-Posten* controversy

Any notions that editorial cartoons¹ are simple images or “widespread view of the cartoon as straightforward medium,”² were dispelled by the response to the Danish Cartoons, published in *Jyllands-Posten* in September 2005.³ This research analyses cartoons from a different source, the satirical magazine, *Private Eye* with an eye towards the varied treatment of religion in each sample. It focuses on the way the Bible features in *Private Eye* cartoons drawn from the publication’s anniversary collection, *Private Eye: A Cartoon History*.⁴ Using a semantic tool, the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH),⁵ it identifies the way humour works in these cartoons, the target they aim at and the way the Bible features in the intertextual references of the reader.

¹ The term “editorial cartoon” is sometimes used to refer to the still image joke common to newspapers, as opposed to the animated variety. Henceforth I will use the term “cartoon.”

² Elisabeth El Refaie, “Multiliteracies: How Readers Interpret Political Cartoons” *Visual Communication* 8 (2009): 182, doi: [10.1177/1470357209102113](https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357209102113).

³ Flemming Rose, “Muhammeds Ansigt,” *Jyllands-Posten KulturWeekend*, 30 September 2005, 3.

⁴ Nick Newman, ed., *Private Eye: A Cartoon History* (London: Private Eye, 2013). *Private Eye* cartoons reproduced with permission. All cartoons are copyrighted and cannot be reproduced elsewhere.

⁵ Victor Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1985).

Religion provides rich material for cartoonists. However, when it comes to referencing Christianity, the Bible is a comparatively less prominent subject. Working on Christian references within *Los Angeles Times* cartoons, Lindsey and Heeran⁶ found that, while religion appeared in a substantive number of syndicated cartoons, biblical content was less prevalent than other aspects of religion. Surveying 65,000 cartoons the Bible was found to be the subject of just 7.1% of the sample.⁷ This research focuses on a smaller sample and therefore uses a different methodology to Lindsey and Heeran's study. Taking a smaller number of cartoons, this study undertakes a semantic analysis of them. In a reflection on the Danish cartoons controversy, Weaver noted much comment had ensued about the editorial decision in publishing them but that "there is little attempt to say anything about the way in which the debates have developed as a direct result of the semantic structure of the cartoons," a factor he suggests perpetuates "the liquid aspects of the debate."⁸ This research addresses the semantics of its sample and thus joins with other researchers in refuting the long-standing Western position that pictures merely represent.⁹ With their capacity to "express all kinds of non-literal and symbolic meanings,"¹⁰ Ulubeyli, Arslan and Kivrak posit that cartoons are artefacts whose "compressed form" makes them a means of identifying society's point of view on their subject matter.¹¹ Their study of cartoon images of workers in occupational "incidents"¹² affirmed El Refaie's insistence that the "images can also express all kinds of non-literal and symbolic meanings."¹³

Cartoons can also push boundaries. Keane suggests that cartoonists can say things politicians and journalists cannot, leaving academics and politicians "a little in awe of the freedom cartoonists enjoy".¹⁴ He observes, "humorists in general, and cartoonists in particular, have more latitude to attack established ideas."¹⁵ Cartoons offer a distinct form of critique of their subject matter. As such I draw on insights from Asad and

⁶ Donald B. Lindsey and John Heeran, "Where the Sacred Meets the Profane: Religion in the Comic Pages," *Review of Religious Research* 34 (1992): 75, doi: [10.2307/3511446](https://doi.org/10.2307/3511446).

⁷ Lindsey and Heeran, "Where the Sacred Meets the Profane," 75.

⁸ Simon Weaver, "Liquid Racism and the Danish Prophet Muhammad Cartoons," *Current Sociology* 58 (2010): 687, doi:[10.1177/0011392110372728](https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392110372728).

⁹ El Refaie, "Multiliteracies," 183.

¹⁰ El Refaie, "Multiliteracies," 183.

¹¹ Serdar Ulubeyli, Volkan Arslan and Serkan Kivrak, "A Semiotic Analysis of Cartoons about Occupational Health and Safety Issues in the Construction Workplace," *Construction Management and Economics* 33 (2015): 468, doi:[10.1080/01446193.2015.1024270](https://doi.org/10.1080/01446193.2015.1024270).

¹² Ulubeyli, Arslan and Kivrak, "Semiotic Analysis," 468.

¹³ El Refaie, "Multiliteracies," 183.

¹⁴ David Keane, "Cartoon Violence and Freedom of Expression," *Human Rights Quarterly* 30 (2008): 847, doi:[10.1353/hrq.0.0031](https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.0.0031).

¹⁵ Keane, "Cartoon Violence," 847.

Barthes agreeing that “neither the concept nor the practice of critique has a simple history”¹⁶ and ask about the cartoons controversy as an example of liberal restriction that can tell us about “liberal ideas of the *free* human.”¹⁷

This research also accepts and develops Weaver’s notion of the “structural ambiguity” of cartoons. Commenting on the Jyllands-Posten cartoons, Weaver observed that they “are an ambiguous form and there is no *one* true or correct reading of them”, with the result that their “structural ambiguity does not preclude them from producing racist readings.”¹⁸ This research uses semantic methods to clarify how open the cartoons analysed are, by using semantic concepts of script opposition and target, exploring the readings opened by these images.

How Humour Works

To deploy the semantic tools used herein there is first a need to establish their usefulness in analysing humour. Raskin’s survey of humour research provides a categorization of the field into three classes that rely on cognitive-behavioural, social-behavioural or psychoanalytical theories,¹⁹ though his approach is to regard these as angles on humour rather than mutually exclusive and contradictory.²⁰ Within the first class Raskin observes a prevalence of incongruity-based theories.²¹ This incongruity theorization proves useful as a means of interpreting cartoons, relying, as it does, on a perception of incongruity that is resolved through surprise: in verbal humour, a punch line.²² Drawing on the insights of neuroscience, Weems characterizes the process as having “the kick of the discovery”²³ observing that “what elicits laughter isn’t the content of the joke but the way our brain works through the conflict the joke elicits.”²⁴ The conflict in Figure 1²⁵ is between the usual depiction of Noah on an Ark and his use of modern technology.

¹⁶ Talal Asad, “Free Speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism,” in Talal Asad, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler and Saba Mahmood, *S. Is Critique Secular?: Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech* (Berkeley: Townsend, 2013), 48, escholarship.org/uc/item/84q9c6ft.

¹⁷ Asad, “Free speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism,” 30.

¹⁸ Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 689.

¹⁹ Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms*, 31.

²⁰ Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms*, 40.

²¹ Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms*, 33.

²² Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms*, 33.

²³ Weems, Scott, *Ha! The Science of When We Laugh and Why* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 27.

²⁴ Weems, *Ha* 39-40.

²⁵ Cartoon by Roger Latham, ‘Ararat Nav,’ *Private Eye* 1192 (31 August 2007): 14.

Morreall describes such amusement as “a reaction to something that violates a person’s normal mental patterns and normal expectations.”²⁶ His “comic vision” of life catalogues such violations to be enjoyed in the disorder, divergence and pragmatism to be found in humour²⁷ – all inherent in Figure 2, where Noah’s beloved dove is served for dinner.²⁸

Where cartoons are concerned the construction and resolution process can be furthered by the interplay between the verbal and visual.²⁹ They are bordered, to separate their distinct text.³⁰ Within this, verbal and visual mechanisms combine.³¹



Figure 1: Cartoon by Roger Latham, ‘Ararat Nav,’ *Private Eye* 1192 (31 August 2007): 14.



Figure 2: Cartoon by Nick Newman, “Noah’s Chicken Dinner” in Newman, *Private Eye: A Cartoon History*, 117.

²⁶ John Morreall, “Humor, Philosophy and Education,” *Education Philosophy and Theory* 46 (2014): 124, doi:[10.1080/00131857.2012.721735](https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2012.721735)

²⁷ John Morreall, “The Comic Vision of Life,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 54 (2014): 130–1, doi:[10.1093/aesthj/ayu005](https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayu005).

²⁸ Cartoon by Nick Newman, “Noah’s Chicken Dinner” in Newman, *Private Eye: A Cartoon History*, 117.

²⁹ Villy Tsakona, “Language and image interaction in cartoons: towards a multimodal theory of humor,” *Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (2009): 1175, doi:[10.1016/j.pragma.2008.12.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.12.003).

³⁰ El Refaie, “Multiliteracies,” 186.

³¹ Tsakona, “Language and Image,” 1176.

Tsakona's analysis of political cartoons found a predominance of ones in which such interaction involved the text, with only 12 out of 561 relying purely on image.³²

Following the research of Tsakona into Greek political cartoons³³ and Ulubeyli, Arslan and Kivrak into health and safety cartoons³⁴ this study draws on Attardo's refinement of Raskin's theories as a means of analyzing cartoons. Starting with Raskin's Semantic Script Theory of Humour,³⁵ Attardo revised the theory to become the General Theory of Verbal Humour³⁶ which analyses humorous texts by unpicking six Knowledge Resources (KRs) within the text. Two vital components of Attardo's theory for this study are, firstly, his recognition that "Even non-narrative texts develop along a story,"³⁷ a fact evident in the way single image cartoons produce a sense of narrative, and, secondly, his reframing of the traditional concept of punch line, referring to it as a "jab line," removing emphasis from a final "punch" to include non-final lines located anywhere in a text³⁸ or, in the case of a cartoon, anywhere on a text.

The six Knowledge Resources Attardo suggests can be applied to jab-lines are: 1. logical mechanisms: the logical script opposition that will be considered below, through which the reader analyses and is caught by the text; 2. the situation in which the cartoon takes place, which in Figure 1 would be Noah's Ark; 3. a target that is "got at" by the cartoon, referred to by Attardo as "the 'butt of the joke,'"³⁹ 4. the narrative strategy by which the text is organised; 5. language, as in "the exact wording of the humorous text;"⁴⁰ and 6. script opposition, involving the overlap and opposition between two semantic scripts. Three aspects of this theory require unpicking with reference to this study: the role of visual metaphor, workings of script opposition and the nature of targets in cartoons.

Visual Metaphor

In a cartoon we are not just dealing with language. The text and image interact in different ways. In Figure 2 there is no text and in Figure 1 the wording is a part of the

³² Tsakona, "Language and Image," 1175.

³³ Tsakona, "Language and Image."

³⁴ Ulubeyli, Arslan and Kivrak, "Semiotic Analysis."

³⁵ Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms*.

³⁶ Attardo, Salvatore *Humorous Texts: A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis* (New York: Moulton de Gruyer 2001), 22, doi:[10.1515/9783110887969](https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110887969).

³⁷ Attardo, *Humorous Texts*, 28.

³⁸ Attardo, *Humorous Texts*, 29.

³⁹ Attardo, *Humorous Texts*, 23.

⁴⁰ Ulubeyli, Arslan and Kivrak, "Semiotic Analysis," 471.

image, whereas Figure 3 gives an example of a traditional text and image cartoon.

Tsakona notes the need to modify our definition of the language KR when dealing with cartoons.⁴¹ The cartoon possesses a mixed code⁴² wherein the image and text can enhance or juxtapose each other⁴³ such that the words either anchor the image or are in a state of incongruity with them.⁴⁴ Figure 3⁴⁵ and Figure 4⁴⁶ respectively offer examples of each type of interaction. Even in a cartoon that contains no text, El Refaie describes



Figure 3: Cartoon by Ed McLachlan, "Goliath's Mother", *Private Eye* 471 (4 January 1980): 25.

⁴¹ Tsakona, "Language and Image," 1179.

⁴² Tsakona, "Language and Image," 1172.

⁴³ Tsakona, "Language and Image," 1177.

⁴⁴ El Refaie, "Multiliteracies," 199, see also Myers, *Greg Words in Ads* (London: Hodder, 1994), 142 on anchorage in advertising.

⁴⁵ Cartoon by Ed McLachlan, "Goliath's Mother," *Private Eye* 471 (4 January 1980): 25.

⁴⁶ Cartoon by Ray Lowry, "Rainy Day," *Private Eye* 601 (28 December 1984): 13.

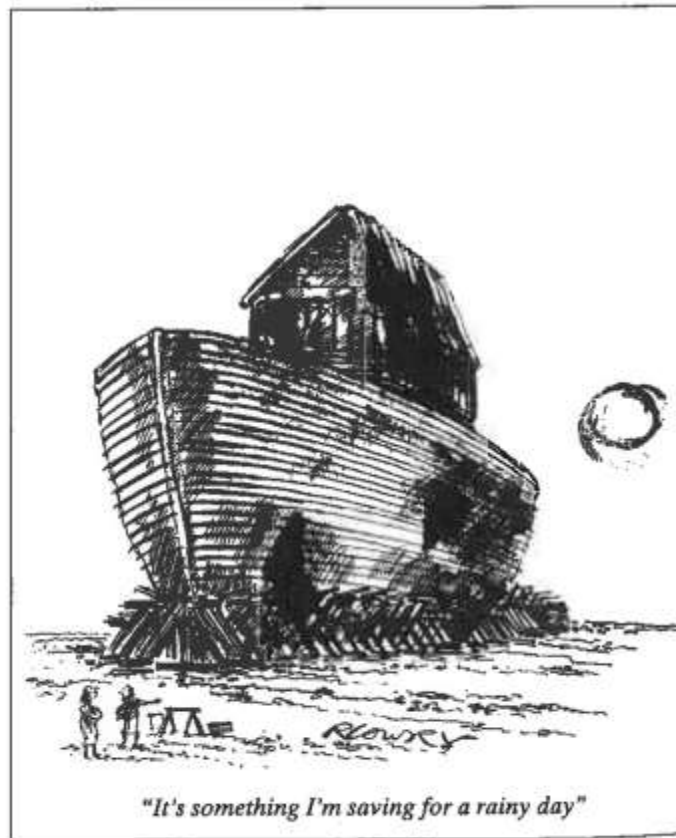


Figure 4: Cartoon by Ray Lowry, "Rainy Day,"
Private Eye 601 (28 December 1984): 13.

the image as providing a "*graphic concretization* of verbal meaning" which she describes as "very common in the political cartoon genre."⁴⁷

The images set up narrative vectors that are the "hallmark of a narrative visual 'proposition'"⁴⁸ to show movement. These can include the direction of the vision and approach between Israelites and Philistines in Figure 3 or be more marked by movement lines, such as the sweep line⁴⁹ above the flying dove in Figure 2. The reader also needs to ascribe the words to a voice.⁵⁰ This may be any of the bearded figures of Figure 3 but is probably the fleeing Israelites.

⁴⁷ El Refaie, "Multiliteracies," 196.

⁴⁸ Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 1996), 57.

⁴⁹ Robin Hall, *The Cartoonist's Workbook* (London: A&C Black, 1995), 23.

⁵⁰ El Refaie, "Multiliteracies," 196.



Figure 5: Cartoon by Steve Bell, “Major Mobile”, *Belltoons* (12 November 2013), tinyurl.com/ueky6uec.

Visual analogy is at heart of editorial cartoons,⁵¹ in particular through the place of visual metaphor. Kennedy defines metaphorical visualisation as being any depiction that occasions metaphoric thought.⁵² There is a sense in which “all signs are metaphors”⁵³ and the meaning of an image always translates into a linguistic message.⁵⁴ In editorial cartoons this involves transcoding between semiotic modes.⁵⁵ Of particular importance in this study is the way “simple cartoons frame a current topic by suggesting its likeness to an event, place or object drawn from the readers everyday life”⁵⁶ because in the analysis that follows this is the framing the biblical cartoons specifically deploy in joking about contemporary targets. Editorial cartoons, particularly political ones depict their subjects as something they are not, in order to arrive at what they are⁵⁷ in complex ways that require intertextual reference, reaching beyond “surface realization or formal

⁵¹ Walt Werner, “On Political Cartoons and Social Studies Textbooks: Visual Analogies, Intertextuality, and Cultural Memory,” *Canadian Social Studies* 38 (2004): 2.

⁵² Kennedy in Elisabeth El Refaie, “Understanding Visual Metaphor: The Example of Newspaper Cartoons,” *Visual Communication* 2 (2003): 80, doi:[10.1177/1470357203002001755](https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357203002001755).

⁵³ Kress in El Refaie, “Understanding Visual Metaphor,” 82.

⁵⁴ El Refaie, “Understanding Visual Metaphor,” 82.

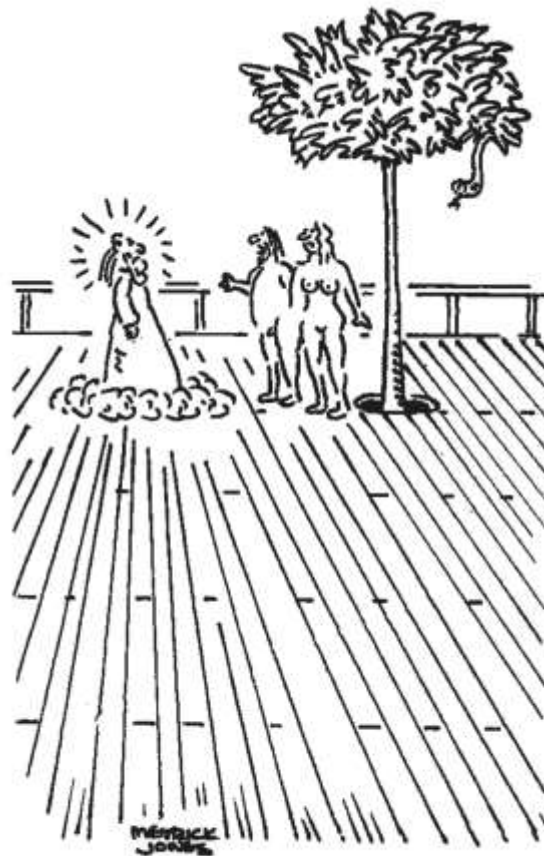
⁵⁵ Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images* 40.

⁵⁶ Werner, “On Political Cartoons,” 2.

⁵⁷ Janis Edwards in El Refaie, “Multiliteracies,” 197.

characteristics.”⁵⁸ A classic example is Bell’s depiction of Prime Minister John Major in superhero garb (e.g. Figure 5)⁵⁹ and the way this undermines any possible heroism.⁶⁰

An example of intertextual and cultural reference in biblical cartoons would be Figure 6⁶¹ wherein a trend of the time prompted by garden makeover programmes such as *Ground Force* is depicted, presenting an example of the way the “depiction of an abstract entity in visual mode is utterly impossible without the mediation of



“The serpent said that decking would give a more contemporary feel to the garden”

Figure 6: Cartoon by Simon Meyrick Jones, “The Serpent Said” *Private Eye* 1102 (19 March 2004): 7.

⁵⁸ El Refaie, “Understanding Visual Metaphor,” 78.

⁵⁹ Cartoon by Steve Bell, “Major Mobile”, *Belltoons* (12 November 2013), tinyurl.com/ueky6uec. Permission for use granted by the artist.

⁶⁰ Steve Plumb, “Politicians as Superheroes: The Subversion of Political Authority Using a Pop Cultural Icon in the Cartoons of Steve Bell,” *Media, Culture & Society* 26 (2004): 438, doi:[10.1177/0163443704042556](https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443704042556).

⁶¹ Cartoon by Simon Meyrick Jones, “The Serpent Said” *Private Eye* 1102 (19 March 2004): 7.

metaphors.”⁶² Here we have a cartoon that uses such metaphor to capture a fad or trend of its time. It is for this reason that a visual metaphor depends “on the discourse context and on the degree to which particular metaphors have become accepted as the ‘natural’ commonsensical way of representing certain meanings.”⁶³ In Figure 6 the cartoon works in so far as the Edenic reference is “natural” to the reader – in the same way a cape works for Bell’s superhero politician. This twin level of imaginary depiction referencing real-life is at the heart of much political cartooning⁶⁴ and takes a distinct turn in the biblical cartoons here discussed.

Script Opposition

Raskin originated the idea of script opposition⁶⁵ and Attardo developed it, demonstrating humour in the way scripts from different discourses overlap⁶⁶ and can be opposed,⁶⁷ such that the “the reader will then backtrack and re-evaluate the text.”⁶⁸ In Figure 6 the reference to Eden is one script but it is overlapped by the opposing script – the contemporary trend for garden decking. The Eden script is juxtaposed with the trend and the joke activates scripts that oppose each other – the greater the opposition, funnier the joke.⁶⁹ Noah with a satnav (Figure 1) also opposes normal or expected depiction with abnormal.⁷⁰ Such script oppositions are the components of cartoon humour. In cartoons the added interaction between the text and image can take the form of counterpoint, such as in Figure 6 where the image and text work together presenting the fact that Eden is decked, or contradiction,⁷¹ as in Figure 4 where the traditional impression of Noah is contradicted by his words.

Raskin outlines three script oppositions. The first is between real situations, such as a dove being received back on an ark, and unreal ones, in which it is eaten. These are further analysed to sub-categorise the actual/non-actual situation at work in humorous texts, wherein the contrast between the two is the source of humour. The reader realises what is actually going on, and the contrast with what isn’t going on proves

⁶² El Refaie, “Understanding Visual Metaphor,” 91

⁶³ El Refaie, “Understanding Visual Metaphor,” 90.

⁶⁴ El Refaie, “Multiliteracies,” 186.

⁶⁵ Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1985), 107.

⁶⁶ Attardo, *Humorous Texts*, 17.

⁶⁷ Attardo, *Humorous Texts*, 18.

⁶⁸ Attardo, *Humorous Texts*, 21.

⁶⁹ Weems, *Ha* 45.

⁷⁰ Tsakona, “Language and Image,” 1176.

⁷¹ Tsakona, “Language and Image,” 1179.

humorous.⁷² A further sub-category, normal/abnormal, opposes expectations of normality with the abnormality readers face in the course of the humorous text.⁷³

Raskin also defines a category of humour that opposes the plausible with the implausible.⁷⁴ For the purpose of this analysis we need to widen the concept of what is plausible and redefine words like “actual” and “normal” to align them with the biblical text, such that we accept a level of normality that includes talking serpents and a parted sea. A cartoon of McHenry’s⁷⁵ depicts Moses in the middle of the Red Sea holding a crossing patrol sign that reads “Stop. Children of Israel Crossing.” This is an abnormal reading of a situation presented in the Bible, which is itself an abnormal act. The cartoon pits the already somewhat implausible event of a sea parting against the cartoon’s abnormal version of this story. This may be contrasted with the writing of Paul’s letters, a plausible idea, though one placed in script opposition by the insertion of “Miss Jones.” In a Ray Lowry cartoon,⁷⁶ Paul turning to a secretary saying “Take an Epistle to the Thessalonians, Miss Jones,” is in opposition to the conventional ways in which his letter writing would be envisaged..

The *Private Eye* cartoons studied here begin with the assumption of the biblical representation of a narrative, such that the normal and abnormal script clash, when a fantastic event such as the end of the Genesis flood opposes the abnormality of Noah eating his dove (Figure 2). The analysis here isolates the actual situation of the story’s setting as one point for opposition with an alternative take on this, and the normal narration of the story as a script that opposes the cartoon’s retelling of the Bible. The decking of Eden (Figure 6) offers an example of both, where the normal narrative is opposed by an alternative lure from the serpent and the actual decked setting of the cartoon is contrasted with the traditional, but non-actual, verdant Garden.

Editorial cartoons tend to have a target, “the butt of the joke.”⁷⁷ The reader decodes the cartoon to ascertain such reference. In researching political cartoons El Refaie took three cartoons and presented them to eight participants and considered their response, finding varying levels of reference achieved with subjects depicted, such as one example in which Tony Blair was recognised but the subservient Lord Butler wasn’t.⁷⁸ Attardo suggests the broadening of this definition to include *ideological*

⁷² Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*, 111.

⁷³ Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*, 111.

⁷⁴ Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*, 111.

⁷⁵ Cartoon by Ed McHenry: “Stop Children of Israel Crossing,” *Private Eye* 320 (22 March 1974), 13.

⁷⁶ Cartoon by Ray Lowry: “Epistle to the Thessalonians...,” *Private Eye* 673 (2 October 1987), 20.

⁷⁷ Attardo, *Humorous Texts*, 23.

⁷⁸ El Refaie, “Multiliteracies,” 192.

targets.⁷⁹ An added dimension to religious cartoons is the very fact that a sacred subject is being depicted in the image. Dunkel and Hillard posit a social cognitive dimension related to divinity, with the sacred at one pole and the profane at the other pole. The mixing of the profane and the sacred increases sensitivity, as indicated by an increased desire amongst respondents to censor such work.⁸⁰

Private Eye Cartoons

This research analyses cartoons using Attardo's Knowledge Resources, but reports only the outcomes pertinent to the reflection on the logic and script opposition and target, drawing on KRs such as language where they offer insight to these three. The logical mechanisms of the cartoons analysed included:

- the anachronistic insertion of an aspect of modern life such as satnavs, garden decking or school crossing patrols, this can include cultural manners such as letter dictation;
- the alteration of the ending of a story, e.g., Noah eating the dove;
- the expectation readers bring from their knowledge of a text meeting with the cartoon's presentation, e.g., the decking of Eden;
- ironic understanding of the fuller story, e.g., two patriarchal types stood outside "Gomorrah Town Hall" questioning the wisdom of twinning with Sodom.⁸¹

Language analysis offers insights to the logic of such cartoons. One significant aspect of biblical cartoons is the repeated insertion of a modern term or turn of phrase into the biblical setting: examples such as "take a letter" or "Ararat Nav" are present in five out of fifteen examples.

In the *Private Eye: Cartoon History*, the cartoons referencing the Bible involve script oppositions with targets that include: satnavs (Figure 1); mum's intervening in children's fights (Figure 3); saving for a rainy day (Figure 4); sexual enthusiasm in old age; garden decking (Figure 6); topless women photographs displayed in a tabloid paper; anti-social Christmas lights; the conventions of school crossing patrols; office mannerisms; town twinning; decimalization; global war; PR; and conventions regarding exchange of gifts. The targets tend not to be characters or reference points within the

⁷⁹ Attardo, *Humorous Texts*, 24.

⁸⁰ Dunkel, Curtis D. and Hillard, Erin, "Blasphemy Or Art: What Art Should Be Censored and Who Wants To Censor It?," *The Journal of Psychology* 148 (2014): 13, doi:[10.1080/00223980.2012.730563](https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2012.730563).

⁸¹ Cartoon by David Austin: "Stop Children of Israel Crossing," *Private Eye* 584 (4 May 1984), 8.

biblical text, other than Noah's meal (Figure 2) where the target is the workings of the normal narrative and the logic of the actual/non-actual biblical set-up. Other possible examples of targeting of the story include Goliath's mum (Figure 3) or, as he lures her to his tent, Mrs Methuselah's complaint to a friend that "His Biblical age is 977 but sometimes he acts like a stupid 562 year old."⁸² Even here the biblical text is used to reference conventionally straightforward activities such as a roast dinner, mums stepping into fights or sexual appetite in old age.

The cartoons considered here tend to take the biblical narrative as material with which to construct a script opposition that targets a contemporary trend or social more. Weems observes: the more incongruity, the funnier the joke, giving the example of a joke that works when featuring two Inuit becoming funnier when featuring two penguins in a verbal exchange.⁸³ In these instances the fact the much-loved dove or verdant garden is set in Noah's Ark or Eden adds to the humour.

The cartoons analysed deploy the Bible as an intertextual partner in the act of targeting their joke. In his analysis of Eddie Izzard's biblical comedy Meredith observes it would be risky if no-one knew the texts⁸⁴ observing that, in comedy, laughter is "the only claim the routine can really make on meaning" and that "audiences must turn a stand-up's jokes into jokes."⁸⁵ This contrasts somewhat with the absence of the audience from Attardo's analysis,⁸⁶ yet even Attardo acknowledges a feature such as irony to be "a pragmatic phenomenon," inferred but never stated.⁸⁷ Similarly, in applying the GTVH to health and safety issues, Ulubeyli, Arslan & Kivrak observe "The purpose of semiotic analysis is not to offer a value judgment about the observed object"⁸⁸ though they acknowledge the diversity of individual readings that will be "connotations of the sign [...] not purely personal meanings, as they are determined by the codes (e.g., cultural codes) to which the interpreter has access."⁸⁹

Intertextuality involves that "relationship between a text and various languages or signifying practices of a culture and its relation to those texts."⁹⁰ In recognizing the

⁸² Cartoon by Bill Tidy: "His Biblical Age," *Private Eye* 1330 (22 December 2012), 22..

⁸³ Weems, *Ha*, 45.

⁸⁴ Meredith, "A Big Room for Poo," 193.

⁸⁵ Meredith, "A Big Room for Poo," 192.

⁸⁶ Attardo, *Humorous Texts*, 31.

⁸⁷ Attardo, *Humorous Texts*, 111

⁸⁸ Ulubeyli, Arslan and Kivrak, "Semiotic Analysis," 471.

⁸⁹ Ulubeyli, Arslan and Kivrak, "Semiotic Analysis," 471.

⁹⁰ Culler in Peter J. Leithart, "I Don't Get it: Humour and Hermeneutics," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60 (2007): 423, doi:[10.1017/S0036930607003729](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930607003729).

agency involved in creating meaning from humorous text,⁹¹ Leithart acknowledges that texts are therefore intertexts where “meaning is never fixed, but always forming or reforming.”⁹² This study contends that biblical cartoons present examples of such intertexts, wherein the script opposition is formed by their intertextual referencing. Werner observes that “Every cartoon assumes an ideal viewer who has the relevant cultural memory”⁹³ and itemises constituent elements of that memory to include both contemporary background knowledge of the matter depicted, such as a politician’s woes, and allusion to that which is referenced, such as a super-hero image.⁹⁴ Humour takes place “within a certain culture which belongs to a certain society.”⁹⁵ Therefore, intertextuality “creates an elite in-group”⁹⁶ with a particular “in” culture, culturally conditioned.

In considering biblical literacy in the light of Eddie Izzard’s *Glorious*, Meredith challenges the notion of its decline posited by surveys such as the Bible Society’s *Pass It On*,⁹⁷ observing that Izzard’s *Glorious* relies on biblical reference, and the comedy works. For Meredith, this raises the question whether there is a decline in biblical literacy or not, arguing “the situation cannot be both.”⁹⁸ Drawing on Izzard’s retelling of the Noah narrative and the need for the Ark to manage poo produced on board, Meredith observes the audiences’ understanding of the reference and suggests that they carry the story in their cultural repertoire: “like Noah, Izzard’s audience are stuck with the cultural shit.”⁹⁹

However, contra Meredith I would suggest this is not cultural shit but rather a taming of the text to become a shared in-joke for the intertextual in-group. It may be hypothesised that “cartoons will primarily portray religion and religious individuals negatively,” and in a broader study this has been proposed.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, *Private Eye’s Cartoon History* has some negative depictions of the church, such as the Bishop looking

⁹¹ Leithart, “I Don’t Get it,” 415.

⁹² Leithart, “I Don’t Get it,” 419.

⁹³ Werner, “On Political Cartoons,” 1.

⁹⁴ Werner, “On Political Cartoons,” 4.

⁹⁵ Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*, 5.

⁹⁶ Werner, “On Political Cartoons,” 40.

⁹⁷ Bible Society, *Pass It On*, (Swindon: Bible Society), tinyurl.com/y98sunud.

⁹⁸ Christopher Meredith, “A Big Room for Poo: Eddie Izzard’s Bible and the Literacy of Laughter,” in *Rethinking Biblical Literacy*, ed. Katie Edwards (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015): 191, doi:[10.5040/9780567662040.ch-009](https://doi.org/10.5040/9780567662040.ch-009).

⁹⁹ Meredith, “Big Room for Poo,” 209.

¹⁰⁰ Brian T. Kaylor, “Cartoonish Claims: Editorial Cartoon Depictions of Religion,” *Mass Communication and Society* 15 (2012): 248, doi:[10.1080/15205436.2011.566839](https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2011.566839).

at the choirboys and thinking: “God! It’s like everyone I’ve ever slept with is here.”¹⁰¹ However, in the *Cartoon History* the targets of the ones referencing the Bible are not the Bible, or even Christian religion. These cartoons tend to use the Bible as a cultural reference with which to target a more modern “butt.” As such, in these cartoons, the Bible is like the superhero. It is the shared reference: the joke then targets decking, crossing patrols and satnavs.

In his study exploring how the Bible acts in Izzard’s comedy, Meredith describes it as a site where “association and disassociation meet” creating a disquiet that “is part of what makes the Bible funny.”¹⁰² This can be seen when a grand Ark, the stuff of great tales, is incongruously saved for a rainy day. Similarly, Noah eating his dove is funnier than if it were just a couple with their pet. However, that very association/disassociation works because of the place of the Bible in the intertextual referencing of the readers, and the target in most of the cartoons studied is something other than the Bible or its religions. Similar conclusions faced Shouse and Fraley in their initial survey of religious humour, cataloguing depictions of Jesus in which “the point of the humour was not to mock Jesus himself.”¹⁰³ Here there is also a contrast between the cartoons and Meredith’s interpretation of Izzard’s humour. Meredith analyses Izzard’s focus on the problem of poo upon the ark,¹⁰⁴ drawing on Kristeva’s concept of the abject – “the border of my condition as a living being”.¹⁰⁵ Unlike the biblical narrative, Izzard highlights these taboo features of life on Noah’s ark, observing the filth and shit, details “the text cannot fully assimilate.”¹⁰⁶ Meredith cites this as an example of Kristeva’s description that “the border has become an object,”¹⁰⁷ an idea that Meredith draws upon when observing that, “In Izzard’s reading it is no longer Noah who expels, Noah is expelled.”¹⁰⁸ Whether this is true of Izzard (and this is questionable) there is a contrast to be drawn between Meredith’s description of Izzard’s comedy and the way the cartoons analysed above relate to the biblical text. These *Private Eye* cartoons do not expel their subject matter but rather include it in a somewhat “chummy” intertextual in-crowd, a move that those who seek a radical Bible that challenges society might find even more offensive.

¹⁰¹ Cartoon by Alexander Matthews: “It’s Like Everyone,” *Private Eye* 1253 (8 January 2010), 13.

¹⁰² Meredith, “Big Room for Poo,” 194.

¹⁰³ Eric Shouse and Todd Fraley, “Hater Jesus: Blasphemous Humor and Numinous Awe: (An Antidote for) Hatred in Jesus Name?,” *Journal of Media and Religion* 9 (2010): 206, doi:[10.1080/15348423.2010.521086](https://doi.org/10.1080/15348423.2010.521086).

¹⁰⁴ Meredith, “Big Room for Poo,” 198.

¹⁰⁵ Kristeva in Meredith, “Big Room for Poo,” 203.

¹⁰⁶ Meredith, “Big Room for Poo,” 204.

¹⁰⁷ Meredith, “Big Room for Poo,” 203.

¹⁰⁸ Meredith, “Big Room for Poo,” 204.

The Bible stands with the cartoons placing, in the abject position, facets of modern life such as sat navs, office manners and garden decking.

Jyllands-Posten Cartoons

Analysis of the *Private Eye* cartoons is further elucidated by a comparison with the twelve *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons published under the title “The Face of Muhammed,” on 30 September 2005. The *Jyllands-Posten* culture editor, Flemming Rose, stated: “I commissioned the cartoons in response to several incidents of self-censorship in Europe caused by widening fears and feelings of intimidation in dealing with issues related to Islam.”¹⁰⁹ The issues included an author, Kare Bluitgen, finding it hard to commission an image of the Prophet for a children’s book he was writing. Rose wrote to the Association of Danish Cartoonists inviting them “to draw Muhammad as you see him.”¹¹⁰ The twelve published examples were the total of responses received. Publication and reprinting of the cartoons caused boycotts, rioting and deaths, a story beyond the scope of this study. The cartoons published in *Jyllands-Posten* varied, including one simple image of the Prophet walking through the desert, a simple illustration offering no script opposition, whereas the most famous one, by Westegaard, shows the Prophet with a turban that is also a bomb.

In his study of contrasting ideas of blasphemy, Talal Asad notes that, in Islam, blasphemy means more than insult or offence. Asad outlines the significance of seduction in Islam and of the seriousness of blasphemy as a seduction away from faith,¹¹¹ contrasting this with liberal societies in which, as he puts it, “seduction is not merely permitted, it is positively valued,”¹¹² because a distinction is being made between seduction and force. Asad suggests this is absent from Islamic sources such as al-‘Awa, an Islamist lawyer who wrote a legal opinion on a previous case of apostasy.¹¹³ For al-‘Awa, “to seduce someone is to connive in rendering him or her unfaithful.”¹¹⁴ Asad argues that in Islam the emphasis on social practice means that the way an utterance is used has significant bearing on how it is received and he again notes al-‘Awa’s view that publishing one’s thoughts changes the character of those thoughts.¹¹⁵ Asad observes that

¹⁰⁹ Flemming Rose, “Why I Published those Cartoons,” *Washington Post*, 19 February 2006, tinyurl.com/5wvxhaev.

¹¹⁰ Rose, “Why I Published those Cartoons.”

¹¹¹ Asad, “Free Speech,” 46

¹¹² Asad, “Free Speech,” 31.

¹¹³ Asad, “Free Speech,” 39.

¹¹⁴ Al-Awa in Asad, “Free Speech,” 43.

¹¹⁵ Asad, “Free Speech,” 40.

the legal meaning of utterance is “not to be decided by its *origin* in the intention of a particular author but by its *function* in a social relation.”¹¹⁶ Unlike the Western belief that internal thoughts are what matters, this understanding would involve the author in responsibility for the impact of an utterance. The contrast Asad delineates is between blasphemy as an affront to freedom of speech or challenge of a new truth and as “something that seeks to disrupt a loving relationship”¹¹⁷ and this social dimension proves significant when exploring the difference between the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons and *Private Eye* ones.

Nazeem Goolam, writing from a legal and Muslim perspective, asserts in regards to the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons, “it was quite clear that these publications were aimed at demonising the personality and character of the Prophet.”¹¹⁸ The context for such an assertion may be found in Kaylor’s analysis of 265 cartoons depicting religion, from Cagle and Slate cartoon databases spanning the year 2005 to 2006,¹¹⁹ providing important background: “overall, 79.2% of the cartoons offered a negative depiction of religion.”¹²⁰ However, whereas in cartoons targeting Christianity, clergy and conservatives were “overwhelmingly the focus of ridicule,”¹²¹ the attention towards Islam was overwhelmingly focussed on terrorism and war.¹²² Reflecting on the *Jyllands-Posten* controversy Kaylor asks “is a cartoon of Bush putting a steeple on the White House really equal in severity to a cartoon showing Muhammed with a bomb on his head?”¹²³

Of the twelve *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons, three may be regarded as simply depictions of an individual, with at least two being depictions that, if drawn of any other religious leader, might be seen as gentle and positive. A further cartoon depicts five stick figures with a slogan about female oppression and does not use humour in the structure of the cartoon, bearing no script opposition. Of the eight remaining cartoons the script oppositions include the normal act of cartooning opposed to the image of a sweating and fearful cartoonist, depiction of the Prophet on his drawing board, with the target being the expectation of violence. Similarly, one depicts an identity parade of Jesus, Buddha and the author who sparked the cartoon quest, Kare Blutegan, along with at

¹¹⁶ Asad, “Free Speech,” 41.

¹¹⁷ Asad, “Free Speech,” 46.

¹¹⁸ Nazeem Goolam, “The Cartoon Controversy: A Note on Freedom of Expression, Hate Speech and Blasphemy,” *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa* 39 (2006): 333, [jstor.org/stable/23252640](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23252640).

¹¹⁹ Kaylor, “Cartoonish Claims,” 248.

¹²⁰ Kaylor, “Cartoonish Claims,” 250.

¹²¹ Kaylor, “Cartoonish Claims,” 256.

¹²² Kaylor, “Cartoonish Claims,” 255.

¹²³ Kaylor, “Cartoonish Claims,” 258.

least one figure who may be the Prophet. The identity parade viewer declares “Hm... I can't really recognise him” and within the parade Blutegan holds a sign that reads “Kåre’s public relations, call and get an offer.” In this the target is the very stirring of the controversy or the fact that it can be stirred.

Two others are more direct in their attack on the solicitation of the cartoons. One depicts a seventh grade child called “Mohammed” who has written in Persian letters on a chalk board: “the editorial team of *Jyllands-Posten* is a bunch of [reactionary](#) provocateurs,” the target being the editorial activity. Ironically, this cartoonist was the first to receive a death threat. Another cartoon shows Blutegan himself in a turban with an orange descending into it. In Danish, the phrase “orange in the turban” is a saying meaning a stroke of luck.¹²⁴ The script opposition comprises the expectation of a cartoon of the Prophet in opposition to the suggestion that the publicity of the controversy is just such a stroke of luck. A further example shows the Prophet holding a paper and dismissing oncoming guards with the reassurance “relax, friends, at the end of the day, it’s just a drawing by a South Jutlander infidel,” again opposing the cartoon’s actual situation with the non-actual and targeting the reaction to the cartoons.

The conclusion of this analysis is that three of the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons target the Prophet or the narrative of the Prophet’s life. In one, the normal narrative of heaven is in opposition to a surfeit of virgins, another plays with the image of the Prophet and two women wearing niqabs, in which their eyes are wide and fearful, while his are occluded by a black rectangle that is the size of their eye apertures, opposing normal to abnormal vision. In another example the normal depiction of a Prophet in a turban is in opposition to a turban depicted as a bomb, with the target here being the Prophet depicted and his religion. The turban carries the words of the Islamic *shahadah*.

Targeting

Much of the debate around the cartoon crisis has involved freedom of speech and larger societal questions. Part of the GTVH involves analysing the structure of humour and how something is targeted in the joke. In observing the above sets of cartoons, we are seeing instances of targeting and critique. Asad’s exploration of blasphemy involves an analysis of the place of critique, which he sees as both “integral to the growth of useful knowledge – and therefore of modern power” and also as “part of a process whose

¹²⁴ Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 677.

major lineaments have not been effectively reduced to skepticism.”¹²⁵ Such critique can take place in a context that is inclusive of the religious subject, as in the *Private Eye* examples or, to use Asad’s terms, reducing to scepticism. However, making such a distinction involves analysing the meaning making process going on within the cartoons, for, as Weaver cautions, overlooking interpretation of the cartoons themselves shifts the debate to “a defence of principle that attempts to position itself externally to the meanings that are created by the cartoons.”¹²⁶

Following Asad’s further suggestion that “every critical discourse has institutional conditions that define what it is, what it recognizes, what it aims at, what it is destroying – and why,”¹²⁷ the above analysis distinguishes between the *Private Eye* selection of cartoons which are incorporating the Bible to target something else, and the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons, three of which target Islam and the Prophet himself. Asad suggests the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons don’t just seek to break a taboo, but in doing so, also reinforce the “existing distinction between the paradigmatically human and candidates for inclusion in true humanity who do not as yet own their bodies, emotions and thoughts.”¹²⁸ By contrast, analysis of the *Private Eye* cartoons above finds that they do not exclude the Bible. They incorporate it into a shared, intertextual knowledge of an in crowd.

In his study of the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons Weaver deployed the concept of liquid racism, which he defined as “a racism generated by culturally ambiguous signs.”¹²⁹ The liquidity asserts itself in Weaver’s analysis, which allows four different readings of the cartoons,¹³⁰ allowing for multiple meanings to coexist. For example, Weaver draws on Westegaard’s defence of the turban/bomb cartoon in which he stated “the cartoon is not about Islam as a whole”¹³¹ and that “I [Westegaard] wanted to demonstrate that terrorists get their spiritual ammunition from Islam.”¹³² Weaver also draws on Rose’s comments about the rejection of modern, secular society by some Muslims, a view Weaver regards as stereotypical.¹³³ For Weaver, part of the liquidity of the racism at

¹²⁵ Talal Asad, “Free Speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism,” in *Is Critique Secular?: Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech*, ed. Talal Asad, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler and Saba Mahmood (Berkeley: Townsend 2013), 54, escholarship.org/uc/item/84q9c6ft.

¹²⁶ Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 686.

¹²⁷ Asad, “Free Speech,” 55.

¹²⁸ Asad, “Free Speech,” 56.

¹²⁹ Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 678.

¹³⁰ Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 680.

¹³¹ Westegaard, in Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 681.

¹³² Westegaard, in Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 681.

¹³³ Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 681.

work here lies in the differing ways the cartoons can be read, noting that “the images are ambiguous because they combine the signs of older racisms alongside those of political and social issues that are not necessarily racist.”¹³⁴ As such, the concept of target is important, for “If one takes the target to be Islamic fundamentalism, then they do have a satirical and ethical reading. It seems, then, that the targets of the cartoons are multiple, and thus, so are the ethical impacts.”¹³⁵

Such targeting might be described as “liquid targeting,” with the two different sets of cartoons evidencing the nature of such a liquidity of exclusion and stereotyping in their targets. As noted above, the *Private Eye* cartoons target away from the Bible. The *Jyllands-Posten* collection is more varied. Weaver concludes they “have an ambiguous and liquid form. It is the incongruity, in addition to the complexity of the political debates, that construct the nucleus of this liquidity.”¹³⁶ However, I would extend his critique to apply that liquidity within the *Jyllands-Posten* collection, while also acknowledging their place within a wider debate about their provenance, that also feeds into the liquidity at work here.

Cartoons relate a visual metaphor, but this takes place within a larger relationship of intertextuality. The cartoons analysed in this study both feed on and feed into that intertextual canon. In considering images in advertising, Barthes observes the viewer of advertising receives both the advert’s perceptual message, and also a cultural message.¹³⁷ He suggests that “the distinction between the literal message and the symbolic message is operational; we never encounter (at least in advertising) a literal image in a pure state”¹³⁸ but instead experience signifiers that combine to feed the rhetoric of the image¹³⁹ and naturalise it.¹⁴⁰

So, what might be the rhetoric of the *Jyllands-Posten* images? Of the eight that have a script opposition and target, two make fun of the commissioning of the images – possibly three if we include the identity parade. In suggesting the angry guards should relax, one of the cartoons, while depicting the Prophet, attacks the anticipated outcry. In these examples there could be a reading that shares the sense, to quote Mohammed in seventh grade, that the *Jyllands-Posten* team are “a bunch of reactionary provocateurs.”

¹³⁴ Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 678.

¹³⁵ Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 686.

¹³⁶ Weaver, “Liquid Racism,” 689.

¹³⁷ Barthes, Roland, “The Rhetoric of the Image” in Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 155.

¹³⁸ Barthes, “Rhetoric,” 157.

¹³⁹ Barthes, “Rhetoric,” 161.

¹⁴⁰ Barthes, “Rhetoric,” 162.

Similarly, the sweating cartoonist attacks the act of depiction, though again this cartoon shows an image of the Prophet. The cartoons that target the Prophet and two women in *niqabs*, the denuding of a stock of virgins in paradise and the turban/bomb image place the viewer in the position of seeing an opposition that targets the religion itself.

Conclusion

Analysing political cartoons, El Refaie discerns “the differentiation between a ‘literal’ image and a visual metaphor is never absolute but it will always depend on the discourse context and on the degree to which particular metaphors have become accepted as the ‘natural’ commonsensical way of representing certain meanings”¹⁴¹

The rhetoric of the discourse that contextualizes the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons was one of solicitation of images in response to an understanding they would be controversial. This study has, to some extent, foregone that controversy and sought to analyse the semantics of cartoons themselves before considering the discourse context. Analysis of script opposition and the resultant targeting within their humour suggests a contrast between the boundaries drawn and targets aimed at, a contrast between cartoons that target a religious subject and ones that include that subject in their targeting of other “butts” of their joke. The result is a contrasting pair of discourse contexts, between the gentle, almost affectionate and certainly tame use of the Bible in *Private Eye* and a series of *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons, wherein the target may include the Prophet of Islam but can also include the commissioners of the cartoon.

Westegaard suggests his bomb/turban cartoon became “the metonym for the whole controversy.”¹⁴² However, it is in the sweating cartoonist that we may find a more appropriate metonym for such cartooning and the findings of this study. That cartoon is not just a cartoon – it is a cartoon of a cartoon, a depiction of a production. As such, that production takes place with fear, the cartoonist literally looking over his shoulder. The arm around the drawing creates a boundary between the inner world of the religious cartoon’s production and publication and the other, outside the arm. The relationship between the two sides of this divide is integral to the comparison made, in this study, between the in-crowd of *Private Eye* and cartoons enclosed by an arm and fear.

¹⁴¹ El Refaie, “Understanding Visual Metaphor,” 90.

¹⁴² Westegaard, in Keane, “Cartoon Violence,” 858.

Works Cited

- Asad, Talal. "Free Speech, Blasphemy, and Secular Criticism." Pages 20–63 in *Critique Secular?: Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech*. Edited by Talal Asad, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler and Saba Mahmood. Berkeley: Townsend, 2013. escholarship.org/uc/item/84q9c6ft.
- Attardo, Salvatore. *Humorous Texts: A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis*. New York: Moulton de Gruyer, 2001. doi:[10.1515/9783110887969](https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110887969).
- Barthes, Roland. "The Rhetoric of the Image." Pages 152–163 in *Image-Music-Text* by Roland Barthes. Translated by Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- Bible Society. *Pass it on*. Swindon: Bible Society February 2014. tinyurl.com/y98sunud.
- Dunkel, Curtis D. & Erin E. Hillard, "Blasphemy or Art: What Art should be Censored and who Wants to Censor it?" *The Journal of Psychology* 148 (2014): 1–21. doi:[10.1080/00223980.2012.730563](https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2012.730563).
- El Refaie, Elisabeth. "Understanding Visual Metaphor: The Example of Newspaper Cartoons." *Visual Communication* 2 (2003): 75-95. doi:[10.1177/1470357203002001755](https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357203002001755).
- El Refaie, Elisabeth. "Multiliteracies: How Readers Interpret Political Cartoons." *Visual Communication* 8 (2009): 181–205. doi:[10.1177/1470357209102113](https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357209102113).
- Feltmate, David. "It's Funny because it's True? The Simpsons, Satire, and the Significance of Religious Humour in Popular Culture." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81.1 (2013): 222–248.
- Goolam, Nazeem. "The Cartoon Controversy: A Note on Freedom of Expression, Hate Speech and Blasphemy." *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa* 39 (2006): 333–350. [jstor.org/stable/23252640](https://www.jstor.org/stable/23252640).
- Hall, Robin. *The Cartoonists Workbook*. London: A&C Black, 1995.
- Kaylor, Brian T. "Cartoonish Claims: Editorial Cartoon Depictions of Religion." *Mass Communication and Society* 15 (2012): 245–260. doi:[10.1080/15205436.2011.566839](https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2011.566839).
- Keane, David. "Cartoon Violence and Freedom of Expression." *Human Rights Quarterly* 30.4 (2008): 845-875. doi:[10.1353/hrq.0.0031](https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.0.0031).
- Kress, Gunther & Theo van Leeuwen, Theo. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge, 1996.

- Leithart, Peter J. "I Don't Get it: Humour and Hermeneutics." *Scottish Journal of Theology*. 60 (2007): 412-425. doi:[10.1017/S0036930607003729](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930607003729).
- Lindsey, Donald B. & John Heeran. "Where the Sacred Meets the Profane: Religion in the Comic Pages." *Review of Religious Research*. 34.1 (1992): 63-77. doi:[10.2307/3511446](https://doi.org/10.2307/3511446).
- Meredith, Christopher. "A Big Room for Poo: Eddie Izzard's Bible and the Literacy of Laughter." Pages 187–212 in *Rethinking Biblical Literacy*. Edited by Katie Edwards. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015. doi:[10.5040/9780567662040.ch-009](https://doi.org/10.5040/9780567662040.ch-009).
- Morreall, John. "Humor, Philosophy and Education" *Education Philosophy and Theory*. 46 (2014): 120–131. doi:[10.1080/00131857.2012.721735](https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2012.721735).
- Morreall, John. "The Comic Vision of Life" *British Journal of Aesthetics*. 54 (2014): 125–140. doi: [10.1093/aesthj/ayu005](https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayu005).
- Myers, Greg. *Words in Ads*. London: Hodder, 1994.
- Newman, Nick. *Private Eye: A Cartoon History*. London: Private Eye, 2013.
- Plumb, Steve. "Politicians As Superheroes: The Subversion of Political Authority Using a Pop Cultural Icon in the Cartoons of Steve Bell." *Media, Culture & Society* 26 (2004): 432–439. doi:[10.1177/0163443704042556](https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443704042556).
- Raskin, Victor. *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1985.
- Rose, Flemming. "Muhammeds Ansigt." *Jyllands-Posten KulturWeekend* (30 September 2005).
- Rose, Flemming. "Why I Published those Cartoons." *Washington Post* (19 February 2006). tinyurl.com/5wvxhaev.
- Shouse, Eric & Fraley, Todd. "Hater Jesus: Blasphemous Humor and Numinous Awe: (An Antidote for) Hatred in Jesus Name?" *Journal of Media and Religion*. 9 (2010): 202–215. doi:[10.1080/15348423.2010.521086](https://doi.org/10.1080/15348423.2010.521086).
- Tsakona, Villy. "Language and Image Interaction in Cartoons: Towards a Multimodal Theory of Humour." *Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (2009): 1171–1188. doi:[10.1016/j.pragma.2008.12.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.12.003).
- Ulubeyli, Serdar, Arslan, Volkan, & Kivrak, Serkan. "A Semiotic Analysis of Cartoons about Occupational Health and Safety Issues in the Construction Workplace." *Construction Management and Economics* 33 (2015): 467–483. doi:[10.1080/01446193.2015.1024270](https://doi.org/10.1080/01446193.2015.1024270).



Weaver, Simon. "Liquid Racism and the Danish Prophet Muhammad Cartoons." *Current Sociology* 58 (2010): 675–692. doi: [10.1177/0011392110372728](https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392110372728).

Weems, Scott. *Ha! The Science of When We Laugh and Why*. New York: Basic Books, 2014.

Werner, Walt. "On Political Cartoons and Social Studies Textbooks: Visual Analogies, Intertextuality, and Cultural Memory." *Canadian Social Studies* 38 (2004): 1–11.