

THE IDEAS ISSUE:  
COMEDY

# MAKE FUN OF EVERYTHING

WHEN DID AMERICA GET SO POLITICALLY CORRECT? IT'S WHEN WE REFUSE TO MOCK A GROUP THAT WE TRULY ACT LIKE BULLIES  
BY KEEGAN-MICHAEL KEY AND JORDAN PEELE

WOULD YOU MAKE FUN OF A burn victim? Well, we did. Sort of...

We're comics. In the most recent season of our TV show, in a sketch titled "Insult Comic," a traditional stand-up comedian professes that he is "going to get everybody" in his set (the guy toward the front with big ears, the fat guy, the woman with comically large breasts). That's the phrase, isn't it, when a critic wants to praise a comedian for the fearless nature of his or her comedy? That he or she "gets everybody"? That "nobody is safe"? One of the club patrons in our sketch, however, is a wheelchair-bound burn victim. "You skipped me," he calls from the audience, with a robotic-sounding artificial larynx. "Go for it," he says, "I can take it."

But can *we*, as a society, take it anymore?

Today it seems that we live in a world of extremes. On one end of the spectrum, we have anonymous Internet trolls looking for opportunities to dole out cruelty with impunity. But in mainstream culture, it often seems we're drowning

in a sea of political correctness that lapped up on our shores a couple of decades ago and has yet to recede.

It's amazing to think how popular television shows like *All in the Family* and *Good Times* might fare today in a Hollywood pitch meeting. Films like *Blazing Saddles* and *Silver Streak* wouldn't make it past the development stage at a studio. Too edgy.

Somewhere along the line, we've forgotten the true purpose of humor: to help people cope with the fears and horrors of the world.

Sure, sometimes at *Key & Peele*, we swim in the shallow waters of pratfalls, airplane observations and simple old-school punnery. But what we strive for—and what we think more people should strive for—is deeper: to make fun of everything.

It can be scary. We don't want to lose our audience. Can we make them laugh at a sketch about slavery? Terrorism? The Holocaust?

At the same time, though, it's our duty. To *not* make fun of something is, we believe, itself a form of bullying. When



CAN YOU MAKE THE WORLD BETTER IN 140 CHARACTERS OR LESS? WE ASKED ONLINE LUMINARIES FOR THEIR BEST IDEAS. [TWEET YOUR OWN #TIMEIDEAS](#) ▶

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