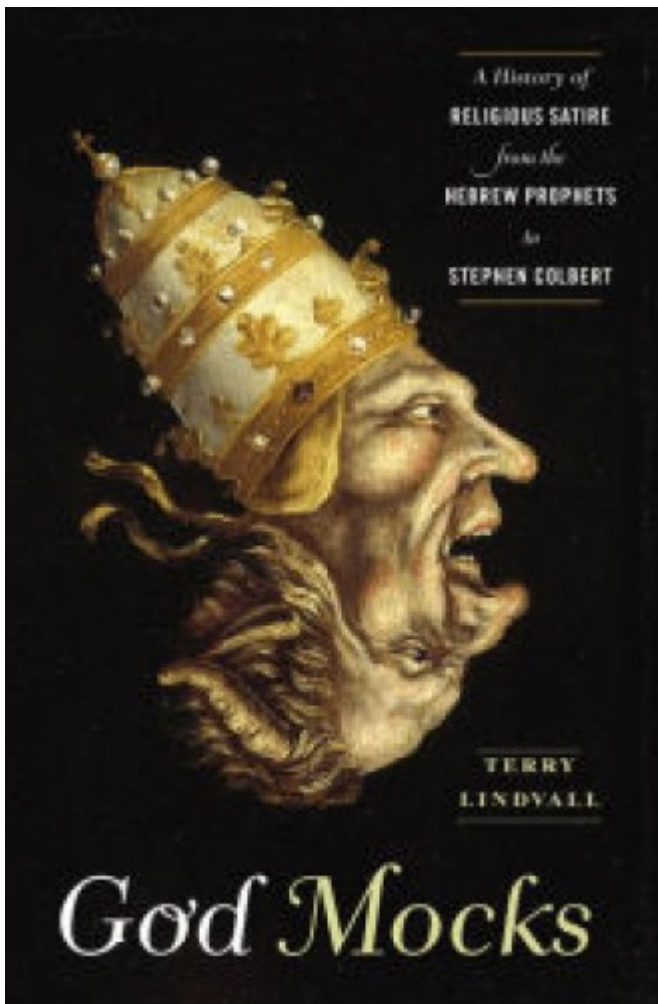


God Mocks, by Terry Lindvall

Books in the [March 16, 2016](#) issue

In Review



God Mocks

By Terry Lindvall
New York University Press

Although the title refers to divine mocking, this volume focuses primarily on the ways people mock one another around religious beliefs and practices. Tracing satire through the history of religious thought, professor and film producer Terry Lindvall

locates each mocker on two scales: from humor to rage, and from ridicule to moral purpose. Satire must be funny, but it is not mere entertainment. At its best, it also serves as social critique, as prophecy, as “a scourge of God, purifying the soul through a kind of comic mortification.” From Balaam’s ass to Erasmus to Kierkegaard to *The Onion*, Lindvall finds redemption in satire’s impulse to make us better human beings. Like the Hebrew *dabar*, which is both word and action, satire is both revelatory and sanctifying. “Satire wounds to heal. It mocks to remake and reconcile.”