

# Øvelsessæt Engelsk A STX, ny reform.

Besvar opgave 1-3 samt **enten** opgave 4A eller 4B

## Indholdsfortegnelse:

S. 1	Assignment 1
S. 2	Assignment 2
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S. 4	Assignment 4A – Fiction: Eugenia Collier, “Sweet Potato Pie”
S. 11	Assignment 4B – Non-fiction: Sacha Baron Cohen, “Remarks on Receiving ADL’s Leadership Award”

## Anvendt materiale:

1. Eugenia Collier, “Sweet Potato Pie”.  
<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:JqaDvazwjgQJ:https://www.bpi.edu/ourpages/auto/2017/10/14/55813476/Sweet%2520Potato%2520Pie-Collier.pdf+%&cd=1&hl=da&ct=clnk&gl=dk&client=safari> visited 25 November 2019  
(abridged)
2. Sacha Baron Cohen, “Remarks on Receiving ADL’s International Leadership Award”, 21 November 2019. Transcript of speech as prepared for delivery\*. Taken from:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/nov/22/sacha-baron-cohen-facebook-propaganda> visited 23 November 2019
3. Mark Zuckerberg, “Speech at Georgetown University”, 17 October 2019, from minutes 16:30 to 19:36 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MTpd7YOnyU> visited 24 November 2019
4. Transcript of minutes 16:30-19:36 from Mark Zuckerberg, “Speech at Georgetown University”
5. Podcast, Christopher Intagliata, “Artificial Intelligence Learns to Talk Back to Bigots”.  
*Scientific American*. 10 October 2019,  
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/episode/artificial-intelligence-learns-to-talk-back-to-bigots/>

## Assignment 1

Besvar både opgave a. og b. nedenfor. Brug relevant grammatisk terminologi. Skriv dine svar på dansk.

Nedenstående er et uddrag fra novellen "Sweet Potato Pie"

- a. Find tre forskellige eksempler på pronominer i teksten og skriv de sætninger, som disse pronominer indgår i. Skriv for hvert eksempel hele sætningen og marker tydeligt, hvor pronominet er.
- b. Forklar kort på baggrund af eksemplerne, hvilken type pronomen der er tale om, samt hvilket sætningsled hvert pronomen udgør i sætningen.

As far as I know, Charley never had any childhood at all. The oldest children of sharecroppers never do. Mama and Pa were shadowy figures whose voices I heard vaguely in the morning when sleep was shallow and whom I glimpsed as they left for the field before I was fully awake or as they trudged wearily into the house at night when my lids were irresistibly heavy.

They came into sharp focus only on special occasions. One such occasion was the day when the crops were in and the sharecroppers were paid. [...] On the evening of that day we waited anxiously for our parents' return. Then we would cluster around the rough wooden table. [...]

Pa would place the money on the table—gently, for it was made from the sweat of their bodies and from their children's tears. Mama would count it out in little piles, her dark face stern and, I think now, beautiful. Not with the hollow beauty of well-modeled features but with the strong radiance of one who has suffered and never yielded.

**Besvarelse:**

## Assignment 2

I nedenstående uddrag af Sacha Baron Cohens tale "Remarks on Receiving ADL's International Leadership Award" er en række ord og led understreget. Besvar opgave a., b. og c. nedenfor. Brug relevant grammatisk terminologi. Skriv dit svar på dansk.

- a. Seks eksempler på brug af hhv. adjektiver og adverbier er understreget. Find tre af hver. Forklar kort for hvert af eksemplerne, hvorfor der er brugt enten adjektiv eller adverbium.
- b. Tre eksempler på substantiver i singularis er understreget. Angiv pluralis-formen for hvert af de tre substantiver. Forklar kort for hvert af eksemplerne den pågældende regel for pluralis-dannelse.
- c. To verbalformer er understreget. Disse er eksempler på sammensatte verbalformer. Forklar kort hvilken grammatisk tid/form der er tale om, samt hvordan den dannes grammatisk.

British voters will go to the polls while online conspiracists promote the despicable theory of "great replacement" that white Christians are being deliberately replaced by Muslim immigrants. [...] And after years of YouTube videos calling climate change a "hoax", the United States is on track, a year from now, to formally withdraw from the Paris Accords. A sewer of bigotry and vile conspiracy theories that threatens democracy and our planet – this cannot possibly be what the creators of the internet had in mind.

I believe it's time for a fundamental rethink of social media and how it spreads hate, conspiracies and lies. Last month, however, Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook delivered a major speech that, not surprisingly, warned against new laws and regulations on companies like his. Well, some of these arguments are simply absurd. Let's count the ways.

First, Zuckerberg tried to portray this whole issue as "choices ... around free expression". That is ludicrous. This is not about limiting anyone's free speech. This is about giving people, including some of the most reprehensible people on earth, the biggest platform in history to reach a third of the planet. Freedom of speech is not freedom of reach. Sadly, there will always be racists, misogynists, anti-Semites and child abusers. But I think we could all agree that we should not be giving bigots and paedophiles a free platform to amplify their views and target their victims.

**Besvarelse:**

### Assignment 3

Videoklipet i denne opgave er et afsnit om kunstig intelligens fra tidsskriftet *Scientific Americans* podcast. Afsnittet er fra den 10. oktober 2019.

Besvar både opgave a. og b. nedenfor.

- a. Find og skriv i alt ti ord fra podcasten, der tilhører det semantiske felt *communication*.
- b. Skriv for hvert af de ti ord, hvilken ordklasse ordet tilhører.

Du finder talen ved at følge dette link:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/episode/artificial-intelligence-learns-to-talk-back-to-bigots/>

**Besvarelse:**

#### **Assignment 4A – fiction**

Write an analytical essay (900-1200 words) on Eugenia Collier's short story "Sweet Potato Pie".

Part of your essay must focus on the narrative technique. In addition, your essay must include an analysis of the style of the language on page 7, lines 21-34.

In your essay, you must include references to: Eugenia Collier, "Sweet Potato Pie"

# Sweet Potato Pie

Eugenia Collier

5 From up here on the fourteenth floor, my brother Charley looks like an insect scurrying among other insects. A deep feeling of love surges through me. Despite the distance, he seems to feel it, for he turns and scans the upper windows, but failing to find me, continues on his way. I watch him moving quickly—gingerly, it seems to me—down Fifth Avenue and around the corner to his shabby taxicab. In a moment he will be heading back uptown. [...]

10 As far as I know, Charley never had any childhood at all. The oldest children of sharecroppers never do. Mama and Pa were shadowy figures whose voices I heard vaguely in the morning when sleep was shallow and whom I glimpsed as they left for the field before I was fully awake or as they trudged wearily into the house at night when my lids were irresistibly heavy.

They came into sharp focus only on special occasions. One such occasion was the day when the crops were in and the sharecroppers were paid. [...] On the evening of that day we waited anxiously for our parents' return. Then we would cluster around the rough wooden table. [...]

15 Pa would place the money on the table—gently, for it was made from the sweat of their bodies and from their children's tears. Mama would count it out in little piles, her dark face stern and, I think now, beautiful. Not with the hollow beauty of well-modeled features but with the strong radiance of one who has suffered and never yielded.

20 "This for the store bill," she would mutter, making a little pile. "This for c'lection. This for a piece o'gingham..." and so on, stretching the money as tight over our collective needs as Jamie's outgrown pants were stretched over my bottom. "Well, that's the crop." She would look up at Pa at last. "It'll do." Pa's face would relax, and a general grin flitted from child to child. We would survive, at least for the present. [...]

25 My early memories of my parents are associated with special occasions. The contours of my everyday were shaped by Lil and Charley, the oldest children, who rode herd on the rest of us while Pa and Mama toiled in fields not their own. Not until years later did I realize that Lil and Charley were little more than children themselves.

30 Lil had the loudest, screechiest voice in the county [...]. It was Lil who caught and bathed us, Lil who fed us and sent us to school, Lil who punished us when we needed punishing and comforted us when we needed comforting. If her voice was loud, so was her laughter. When she laughed, everybody laughed. And when Lil sang, everybody listened.

35 Charley was taller than anybody in the world, including, I was certain, God. [...] As I grew older, Charley became more father than brother. Those days return in fragments of splintered memory: Charley's slender dark hands whittling a toy from a chunk of wood, his face thin and intense, brown as the loaves Lil baked when there was flour. Charley's quick fingers guiding a stick of charred kindling over a bit of scrap paper, making a wondrous picture take shape—Jamie's face or Alberta's rag doll or the spare figure of our bony brown dog. Charley's voice low and terrible in the dark, telling ghost stories so delightfully dreadful that later in the night the moan of the wind

through the chinks in the wall sent us scurrying to the security of Charley's pallet, Charley's sleeping form. [...]

Already laid waste by poverty, we were easy prey for ignorance and superstition, which hunted us like hawks. We sought education feverishly—and, for most of us, futilely, for the sum total of our combined energies was required for mere brute survival. Inevitably each child had to leave school and bear his share of the eternal burden.

Eventually the family's hopes for learning fastened on me, the youngest. I remember—I *think* I remember, for I could not have been more than five—one frigid day Pa, huddled on a rickety stool before the coal stove, took me on his knee and studied me gravely. I was a skinny little thing they tell me, with large, solemn eyes.

“Well, boy,” Pa said at last, “if you got to depend on your looks for what you get out'n this world, you just as well lay down right now.” His hand was rough from the plow, but gentle as it touched my cheek. “Lucky for you, you got a mind. And that's something ain't everybody got. You go to school, boy, get yourself some learning. Make something out'n yourself. Ain't nothing you can't do if you got learning.”

Charley was determined that I would break the chain of poverty, that I would “be somebody.” As we worked our small vegetable garden in the sun or pulled a bucket of brackish water from the well, Charley would tell me, “You ain gon be no poor farmer, Buddy. You gon be a teacher or maybe a doctor or a lawyer. One thing, bad as you is you ain gon be no preacher.”

I loved school with a desperate passion, which became more intense when I began to realize what a monumental struggle it was for my parents and brothers and sisters to keep me there. The cramped, dingy classroom became a battleground where I was victorious. I stayed on top of my class. With glee I out-read, out-figured, and out-spelled the country boys who mocked my poverty, calling me “the boy with eyes in the back of his head”—the “eyes” being the perpetual holes in my hand-me-down pants. [...]

I finished high school at the head of my class. For Mama and Pa and each of my brothers and sisters, my success was a personal triumph. One by one they came to me the week before commencement bringing crumpled dollar bills and coins long hoarded, muttering, “Here, Buddy, put this on your gradation clothes.” My graduation suit was the first suit that was all my own. [...]

My valedictory address was the usual idealistic, sentimental nonsense, [...] but the sight of Mama and Pa and the rest is like a lithograph burned on my memory; Lil, her round face made beautiful by her proud smile; Pa, his head held high, eyes loving and fierce; Mama radiant. Years later when her shriveled hands were finally still, my mind kept coming back to her as she was now. I believe this moment was the apex of her entire life. [...] And Charley, on the end of the row, still somehow the protector of them all. Charley, looking as if he were in the presence of something sacred.

As I made my way through the carefully rehearsed speech it was as if part of me were standing outside watching the whole thing—their proud, work-weary faces, myself wearing the suit that was their combined strength and love and hope: Lil with her lovely, low-pitched voice, Charley with the

hands of an artist, Pa and Mama with God knows what potential lost with their sweat in the fields. I realized in that moment that I wasn't necessarily the smartest—only the youngest.

And the luckiest. The war came along, and I exchanged three years of my life (including a fair amount of my blood and a great deal of pain) for the GI Bill<sup>1</sup> and a college education. Strange how  
5 time can slip by like water flowing through your fingers. One by one the changes came—the old house empty at last, the rest of us scattered; for me, marriage, graduate school, kids, a professorship, and by now a thickening waistline and thinning hair. My mind spins off the years, and I am back to this afternoon and today's Charley—still long and lean, still gentle-eyed, still my greatest fan, and still determined to keep me on the ball.

10 I didn't tell Charley I would be at a professional meeting in New York and would surely visit; he and Bea would have spent days in fixing up, and I would have had to be company. No, I would drop in on them, take them by surprise before they had a chance to stiffen up. I was anxious to see them—it had been so long. Yesterday and this morning were taken up with meetings in the posh Fifth Avenue hotel—a place we could not have dreamed in our boyhood. Late this afternoon I  
15 shook loose and headed for Harlem, hoping that Charley still came home for a few hours before his evening run. Leaving the glare and glitter of downtown, I entered the subway which lurks like the dark, inscrutable *id* beneath the surface of the city. When I emerged, I was in Harlem. [...]

I headed for Charley's apartment. Along the way I savored the panorama of Harlem—women with shopping bags trudging wearily home; little kids flitting saucily through the crowd; groups of  
20 adolescent boys striding boldly along. [...]

I mounted the steps of Charley's building—old and in need of paint, like all the rest—and pushed the button to his apartment. [...] Charley's buzzer rang. I pushed open the door and mounted the urine-scented stairs.

25 "Well, do Jesus—it's Buddy!" roared Charley as I arrived on the third floor. "Bea! Bea! Come here, girl, it's Buddy!" And somehow I was simultaneously shaking Charley's

hand, getting clapped on the back, and being buried in the fervor of Bea's gigantic hug. They swept me from the hall into their dim apartment.

30 "Lord, Buddy, what you doing here? Whyn't you tell me you was coming to New York?" His face was so lit up with pleasure that in spite of the inroads of time, he still looked like the Charley of years gone by, excited over a new litter of kittens.

"The place look a mess! Whyn't you let us know?" put in Bea, suddenly distressed.

"Looks fine to me, girl. And so do you!"

And she did. Bea is a fine-looking woman, plump and firm still, with rich brown skin and thick black hair. [...]

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<sup>1</sup> GI Bill – US Federal law which stipulates financial support for the education of army veterans.



We all sat in the warm kitchen, where Bea was preparing dinner. It felt good there. Beautiful odors mingled in the air. Charley sprawled in a chair near mine, his long arms and legs akimbo. [...]

I told them about the conference I was attending, knowing it would give them pleasure, I mentioned that I had addressed the group that morning. Charley's eyes glistened.

5 "You hear that, Bea?" he whispered. "Buddy done spoke in from of all them professors."

"Sure I hear," Bea answered briskly, stirring something that was making an aromatic steam. "I bet he weren't even scared. I bet them professors learnt something, too."

We all chuckled. "Well anyway," I said, "I hope they did."

10 We talked about a hundred different things after that—Bea's job in the school cafeteria, my Jess and the kids, our scattered family. [...]

"It sure is good to see you, Buddy. Say, look, Lil told me 'bout the cash you sent the children last winter when Jake was out of work all that time. She sure 'preciated it."

"Lord, man, as close as you and Lil stuck to me when I was a kid, I owed her that and more. Say, Bea, did I ever tell you about the time—" and we swung into the usual reminiscences.

15 They insisted that I stay for dinner. Persuading me was no hard job: fish fried golden, ham hocks and collard greens, corn bread—if I'd *tried* to leave, my feet wouldn't have taken me. It was good to sit there in Charley's kitchen, my coat and tie flung over a chair, surrounded by soul food and love.

"Say, Buddy, a couple months back I picked up a kid from your school."

20 "No stuff."

"I axed him did he know you. He say he was in your class last year."

"Did you get his name?"

"No, I didn't ax him that. Man, he told me you were the best teacher he had. He said you were one smart cat!"

25 "He told you that cause you're my brother."

"Your *brother*—I didn't tell him I was your brother. I said you was a old friend of mine."

I put my fork down and leaned over. "What you tell him *that* for?"

Charley explained patiently as he had explained things when I was a child and had missed an obvious truth. "I didn't want your students to know your brother wasn't nothing but a cab driver.

30 You *somebody*."

"You're a nut," I said gently. "You should've told that kid the truth." I wanted to say, I'm proud of you, you've got more on the ball than most people I know, I wouldn't have been anything at all except for you. But he would have been embarrassed.

35 Bea brought in the dessert—homemade sweet potato pie! "Buddy, I must of knew you were coming! I just had a mind I wanted to make some sweet potato pie."

There's nothing in this world I like better than Bea's sweet potato pie! "Lord, girl, how you expect me to eat all that?"

The slice she put before me was outrageously big—and moist and covered with a light, golden crust—I ate it all.

5 "Bea, I'm gonna have to eat and run" I said at last.

Charley guffawed. "Much as you et, I don't see how you gonna *walk*, let alone *run*." He went out to get his cab from the garage several blocks away.

Bea said, "Wait a minute, Buddy, I'm gon give you the rest of that pie to take with you."

"Great!" I'd eaten all I could hold, but my *spirit* was still hungry for sweet potato pie.

10 Bea got out some waxed paper and wrapped up the rest of the pie. "That'll do you for a snack tonight." She slipped it into a brown paper bag.

I gave her a long good-bye hug. "Bea, I love you for a lot of things. Your cooking is one of them!" We had a last comfortable laugh together. I kissed the little girls and went outside to wait for Charley, holding the bag of pie reverently.

15 In a minute Charley's ancient cab limped to the curb. I plopped into the seat next to him, and we headed downtown. Soon we were assailed by the garish lights of New York on a sultry spring night. We chatted as Charley skillfully managed the heavy traffic. I looked at his long hands on the wheel and wondered what they could have done with artists' brushes.

20 We stopped a bit down the street from my hotel. I invited him in, but he said he had to get on with his evening run. But as I opened the door to get out, he commanded in the old familiar voice, "Buddy, you wait!"

For a moment I thought my fly was open or something. "What's wrong?"

"What you got there?"

I was bewildered. "That? You mean this bag? That's a piece of sweet potato pie Bea fixed for me."

25 "You ain't going through the lobby of no big hotel carrying no brown paper bag."

"Man, you crazy! Of course I'm going—Look, Bea fixed it for me—*That's my pie*—"

Charley's eyes were miserable. "Folks in that hotel don't go through the lobby carrying no brown paper bags. That's *country*. And you can't neither. You *somebody*, Buddy. You got to be *right*. Now, gimme that bag."

30 "I want that pie Charley. I've got nothing to prove to anybody—"

I couldn't believe it. But there was no point in arguing. Foolish as it seemed to me, it was important to him.

35 "You got to look *right*, Buddy. Can't nobody look dignified carrying a brown paper bag." So, finally, thinking how tasty it would have been and how seldom I got a chance to eat anything that good, I handed over my bag of sweet potato pie. If it was that important to him—

I tried not to show my irritation. “Okay, man—take care now.” I slammed the door harder than I had intended, walked rapidly to the hotel, and entered the brilliant, crowded lobby.

5 “That Charley!” I thought. Walking slower now, I crossed the carpeted lobby toward the elevator, still thinking of my lost snack. I had to admit that of all the herd of people who jostled each other in the lobby, not one was carrying a brown paper bag. Or anything but expensive attaché cases or slick packages from exclusive shops. I suppose we all operate according to the symbols that are meaningful to us, and to Charley a brown paper bag symbolizes the humble life he thought I had left. I was *somebody*.

10 I don’t know what made me glance back, but I did. And suddenly the tears and laughter, toil and love of a lifetime burst around me like fireworks in a night sky.

For there, following a few steps behind, came Charley, proudly carrying a brown paper bag full of sweet potato pie.

## **Assignment 4B – non-fiction**

Write an analytical essay (900-1200 words) on Sacha Baron Cohen’s “Remarks on Receiving ADL’s International Leadership Award”

Part of your essay must focus on how Baron Cohen argues his case for regulating social media and on how he believes social media are used. In addition, your essay must include an analysis of the style of the language on page 12, lines 7 to 19.

In your essay, you must include references to:

- Sacha Baron Cohen’s speech
- Mark Zuckerberg, “Speech at Georgetown University”, 17 October 2019, from minutes 16:30 to 19:36 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MTpd7YOnyU>  
(transcript of Zuckerberg’s speech included page 7)

All sources must be documented.

Sacha Baron Cohen, “Remarks on Receiving ADL’s International Leadership Award” – Transcript of speech, 21 November 2019, as prepared for delivery – abridged.

Thank you, ADL, for this recognition and your work in fighting racism, hate and bigotry. And to be clear, when I say “racism, hate and bigotry” I’m not referring to the names of Stephen Miller’s Labradoodles<sup>2</sup>. [...]

5 I’ve been passionate about challenging bigotry and intolerance throughout my life. [...] As a comedian, I’ve tried to use my characters to get people to let down their guard and reveal what they actually believe, including their own prejudice.

Now, I’m not going to claim that everything I’ve done has been for a higher purpose. Yes, some of my comedy, OK probably half my comedy, has been absolutely juvenile and the other half completely puerile. [...]

10 But when Borat was able to get an entire bar in Arizona to sing “Throw the Jew down the well,” it did reveal people’s indifference to antisemitism. When – as Bruno, the gay fashion reporter from Austria – I started kissing a man in a cage fight in Arkansas, nearly starting a riot, it showed the violent potential of homophobia. And when – disguised as an ultra-woke developer – I proposed building a mosque in one rural community, prompting a resident to proudly admit, “I am racist,  
15 against Muslims” – it showed the acceptance of Islamophobia.

That’s why I appreciate the opportunity to be here with you. Today around the world, demagogues appeal to our worst instincts. [...] Democracy, which depends on shared truths, is in retreat, and autocracy, which depends on shared lies, is on the march. Hate crimes are surging, as are murderous attacks on religious and ethnic minorities.

20 What do all these dangerous trends have in common? I’m just a comedian and an actor, not a scholar. But one thing is pretty clear to me. All this hate and violence is being facilitated by a handful of internet companies that amount to the greatest propaganda machine in history.

The greatest propaganda machine in history.

25 Think about it. Facebook, YouTube and Google, Twitter and others – they reach billions of people. The algorithms these platforms depend on deliberately amplifying the type of content that keeps users engaged – stories that appeal to our baser instincts and that trigger outrage and fear. Studies show that lies spread faster than truth. [...] On the internet, everything can appear equally legitimate. [...] The rantings of a lunatic seem as credible as the findings of a Nobel prize winner. We have lost, it seems, a shared sense of the basic facts upon which democracy depends.

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Miller – American far-right-wing political activist. Senior policy adviser to Donald Trump. Labradoodle – dog breed. Cross between a Labrador and a poodle.

When I, as the wannabe gangsta Ali G, asked the astronaut Buzz Aldrin<sup>3</sup> “what woz it like to walk on de sun?” the joke worked, because we, the audience, shared the same facts. If you believe the moon landing was a hoax, the joke was not funny. [...]

5 But when, thanks to social media, conspiracies take hold, it’s easier for hate groups to recruit, easier for foreign intelligence agencies to interfere in our elections, and easier for a country like Myanmar to commit genocide against the Rohingya<sup>4</sup>.

10 It’s actually quite shocking how easy it is to turn conspiracy thinking into violence. In my last show Who is America?, I found an educated, normal guy who had held down a good job, but who, on social media, repeated many of the conspiracy theories that President Trump, using Twitter, has spread more than 1,700 times to his 67 million followers. The president even tweeted that he was considering designating Antifa – anti-fascists who march against the far right – as a terror organization.

So, I told my interviewee that, at the Women’s March in San Francisco, Antifa were plotting to put hormones into babies’ diapers in order to “make them transgender”. And he believed it.

15 I instructed him to plant small devices on three innocent people at the march and explained that when he pushed a button, he’d trigger an explosion that would kill them all. They weren’t real explosives, of course, but he thought they were. I wanted to see – would he actually do it?

20 The answer was yes. He pushed the button and thought he had actually killed three human beings. Voltaire<sup>5</sup> was right: “Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.” And social media lets authoritarians push absurdities to billions of people. [...]

25 I’m speaking up today because I believe that our pluralistic democracies are on a precipice and that the next 12 months, and the role of social media, could be determinant. British voters will go to the polls while online conspiracists promote the despicable theory of “great replacement” that white Christians are being deliberately replaced by Muslim immigrants. Americans will vote for president, while trolls and bots perpetuate the disgusting lie of a “Hispanic invasion”. And after years of YouTube videos calling climate change a “hoax”, the United States is on track, a year from now, to formally withdraw from the Paris Accords<sup>6</sup>. A sewer of bigotry and vile conspiracy theories that threatens democracy and our planet – this cannot possibly be what the creators of the internet had in mind.

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<sup>3</sup> Buzz Aldrin – American astronaut. Second man on the Moon.

<sup>4</sup> Rohingya – ethnic group in Myanmar against whom the Myanmar government perpetrated what the United Nations has called ethnic cleansing. This was supported by the Buddhist majority in Myanmar, partly as a result of inflammatory campaigns instigated by the Myanmar military on social media against the Rohingya.

<sup>5</sup> Voltaire (1694-1778) – French political philosopher. Known for his advocacy of free speech, freedom of religion and separation of Church and State.

<sup>6</sup> Paris Climate Accord – agreement from 2016 between 196 United Nations countries to limit greenhouse gas emissions in order to prevent climate change

I believe it's time for a fundamental rethink of social media and how it spreads hate, conspiracies and lies. Last month, however, Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook delivered a major speech that, not surprisingly, warned against new laws and regulations on companies like his. Well, some of these arguments are simply absurd. Let's count the ways.

5 First, Zuckerberg tried to portray this whole issue as "choices ... around free expression". That is ludicrous. This is not about limiting anyone's free speech. This is about giving people, including some of the most reprehensible people on earth, the biggest platform in history to reach a third of the planet. Freedom of speech is not freedom of reach. Sadly, there will always be racists, misogynists, anti-Semites and child abusers. But I think we could all agree that we should not be  
10 giving bigots and paedophiles a free platform to amplify their views and target their victims.

Second, Zuckerberg claimed that new limits on what's posted on social media would be to "pull back on free expression". This is utter nonsense. The first amendment<sup>7</sup> says that "Congress shall make no law" abridging freedom of speech, however, this does not apply to private businesses like Facebook. We're not asking these companies to determine the boundaries of free speech across  
15 society. We just want them to be responsible on their platforms.

If a neo-Nazi comes goose-stepping into a restaurant and starts threatening other customers and saying he wants to kill Jews, would the owner of the restaurant be required to serve him an elegant eight-course meal? Of course not! The restaurant owner has every legal right and a moral obligation to kick the Nazi out, and so do these internet companies.

20 Third, Zuckerberg seemed to equate regulation of companies like his to the actions of "the most repressive societies". Incredible. This, from one of the six people who decide what information so much of the world sees. Zuckerberg at Facebook, Sundar Pichai at Google, at its parent company Alphabet, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, Brin's ex-sister-in-law, Susan Wojcicki at YouTube and Jack Dorsey at Twitter.

25 The Silicon Six – all billionaires, all Americans – who care more about boosting their share price than about protecting democracy. This is ideological imperialism – six unelected individuals in Silicon Valley<sup>8</sup> imposing their vision on the rest of the world, unaccountable to any government and acting like they're above the reach of law. It's like we're living in the Roman Empire, and Mark Zuckerberg is Caesar. At least that would explain his haircut.

30 Here's an idea. Instead of letting the Silicon Six decide the fate of the world, let our elected representatives, voted for by the people, of every democracy in the world, have at least some say.

Fourth, Zuckerberg speaks of welcoming a "diversity of ideas", and last year he gave us an example. He said that he found posts denying the Holocaust "deeply offensive", but he didn't

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<sup>7</sup> First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States – codifies the right of US citizens to freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom to assemble peacefully.

<sup>8</sup> Silicon Valley – Southern part of the San Francisco Bay Area in Northern California. The name has become shorthand for computer and internet companies because it is home to some of the largest corporations in the world.

think Facebook should take them down “because I think there are things that different people get wrong”. One of the heads of Google once told me, incredibly, that these sites just show “both sides” of the issue. This is madness.

To quote Edward R Murrow<sup>9</sup>, one “cannot accept that there are, on every story, two equal and logical sides to an argument”. We have millions of pieces of evidence for the Holocaust – it is an historical fact. And denying it is not some random opinion. Those who deny the Holocaust aim to encourage another one.

Still, Zuckerberg says that “people should decide what is credible, not tech companies.” But at a time when two-thirds of millennials say they haven’t even heard of Auschwitz, how are they supposed to know what’s “credible”? How are they supposed to know that the lie is a lie?

There is such a thing as objective truth. Facts do exist. And if these internet companies really want to make a difference, they should hire enough monitors to actually monitor, work closely with groups like the ADL, insist on facts and purge these lies and conspiracies from their platforms.

Fifth, when discussing the difficulty of removing content, Zuckerberg asked “where do you draw the line?” Yes, drawing the line can be difficult. But here’s what he’s really saying: removing more of these lies and conspiracies is just too expensive.

These are the richest companies in the world, and they have the best engineers in the world. They could fix these problems if they wanted to. Twitter could deploy an algorithm to remove more white supremacist hate speech, but they reportedly haven’t because it would eject some very prominent politicians from their platform. Maybe that’s not a bad thing! The truth is, these companies won’t fundamentally change because their entire business model relies on generating more engagement, and nothing generates more engagement than lies, fear and outrage.

It’s time to finally call these companies what they really are – the largest publishers in history. And here’s an idea for them: abide by basic standards and practices just like newspapers, magazines and TV news do every day. We have standards and practices in television and the movies; there are certain things we cannot say or do. In England, I was told that Ali G could not curse when he appeared before 9pm. If there are standards and practices for what cinemas and television channels can show, then surely companies that publish material to billions of people should have to abide by basic standards and practices too.

Take the issue of political ads. If you pay them, Facebook will run any “political” ad you want, even if it’s a lie. And they’ll even help you micro-target those lies to their users for maximum effect. Under this twisted logic, if Facebook were around in the 1930s, it would have allowed Hitler to post 30-second ads on his “solution” to the “Jewish problem”<sup>10</sup>. So, here’s a good standard and

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<sup>9</sup> Edward R. Murrow (1908-1965) – American radio- and television journalist widely respected for his honesty and integrity in reporting the news.

<sup>10</sup> Final solution to the Jewish problem – Nazi plan for the genocide of Jews during World War II. The plan set out the system of extermination in order to make the killings as efficient as possible.



practice: Facebook, start factchecking political ads before you run them, stop micro-targeted lies immediately, and when the ads are false, give back the money and don't publish them.

Here's another good practice: slow down. Every single post doesn't need to be published immediately. Oscar Wilde once said that "we live in an age when unnecessary things are our only necessities." But is having every thought or video posted instantly online, even if it is racist or criminal or murderous, really a necessity? Of course not!

The shooter who massacred Muslims in New Zealand live-streamed his atrocity on Facebook where it then spread across the internet and was viewed likely millions of times. It was a snuff film, brought to you by social media. Why can't we have more of a delay so this trauma-inducing filth can be caught and stopped before it's posted in the first place?

Finally, Zuckerberg said that social media companies should "live up to their responsibilities", but he's totally silent about what should happen when they don't. By now it's pretty clear, they cannot be trusted to regulate themselves. As with the Industrial Revolution, it's time for regulation and legislation to curb the greed of these hi-tech robber barons.

In every other industry, a company can be held liable when their product is defective. When engines explode or seatbelts malfunction, car companies recall tens of thousands of vehicles, at a cost of billions of dollars. It only seems fair to say to Facebook, YouTube and Twitter: your product is defective, you are obliged to fix it, no matter how many moderators you need to employ.

In every other industry, you can be sued for the harm you cause. [...] But social media companies are largely protected from liability for the content their users post – no matter how indecent it is – by Section 230 of, get ready for it, the Communications Decency Act. Absurd!

Fortunately, internet companies can now be held responsible for paedophiles who use their sites to target children. I say, let's also hold these companies responsible for those who use their sites to advocate for the mass murder of children because of their race or religion. And maybe fines are not enough. Maybe it's time to tell Mark Zuckerberg and the CEOs of these companies: you already allowed one foreign power to interfere in our elections, you already facilitated one genocide in Myanmar, do it again and you go to jail.

In the end, it all comes down to what kind of world we want. In his speech, Zuckerberg said that one of his main goals is to "uphold as wide a definition of freedom of expression as possible". Yet our freedoms are not only an end in themselves, they're also the means to another end – as you say here in the US, "the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". But today these rights are threatened by hate, conspiracies and lies.

Allow me to leave you with a suggestion for a different aim for society. The ultimate aim of society should be to make sure that people are not targeted, not harassed and not murdered because of who they are, where they come from, who they love or how they pray.

If we make that our aim – if we prioritize truth over lies, tolerance over prejudice, empathy over indifference and experts over ignoramuses – then maybe, just maybe, we can stop the greatest propaganda machine in history, we can save democracy, we can still have a place for free speech and free expression, and, most importantly, my jokes will still work.

5 Thank you all very much.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

*Sacha Baron Cohen (born 1971) is a British actor, director, film producer, and comedian best known for his satirical alter egos, among others Ali G, Borat, Brüno Gerhardt and Erran Morad. In his work he uses his alter egos to interview people, attempting to entice his interviewees into betraying prejudices and double standards.*



## Transcript of Mark Zuckerberg, “Speech at Georgetown University” 17 October 2019. Minutes 16:30-19:36

People having the power to express themselves at scale is a new kind of force in the world. It is a fifth estate alongside the other power structures in our society. And, you know, people no longer have to rely on traditional gatekeepers in politics or media to make their voices heard, and that has important consequences. And I understand the concerns that people have about how tech  
5 platforms have centralized power. But I actually believe that the much bigger story is how much these platforms have decentralized power by putting it directly into people’s hands. It’s part of this amazing expansion of voice that we have experienced through law and culture and now technology as well.

So giving people a voice and broader inclusion go hand in hand, and the trend has certainly been  
10 towards us getting greater voice over time, but there is also an important counter-trend, which is that in times of social tension, our impulse is often to hold back on free expression, because we want the progress that comes from free expression, but we don’t want the tension. We saw this when Martin Luther King Jr. wrote his famous “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” where he was unconstitutionally jailed for protesting peacefully. We saw this in the efforts to shut down campus  
15 protests during the Vietnam war. We saw this way back when America was deeply polarized about its role in World War One, and the Supreme Court ruled at the time that the socialist leader Eugene Debs could be imprisoned for making an anti-war speech. In the end, all of these decisions were wrong. Pulling back on free expression wasn’t the answer, and in fact it often ends up hurting the minority views that we seek to protect.

20 Now, from where we are today it seems obvious that of course protests for civil rights or making a speech against a war should be allowed, yet this desire to suppress this expression was felt deeply by a lot of society at the time.

And today, we are in another moment of social tension. We face real issues that are going to take a long time to work through. Massive economic transitions from globalization and technology.

25 Fallout that remains from the 2008 financial crisis. Very polarized reactions to social issues and greater migration – not just here but across the EU and around the world. And many of our issues flow downstream from these changes. And in the face of these tensions once again a popular impulse is to pull back on free expression. We are at another crossroads. We can either continue to stand for free expression, understanding its messiness but believing that the long journey to  
30 greater progress requires confronting ideas that challenge us. Or we can decide that the cost is simply too great. And I am here today, because I believe that we must continue to stand for free expression.