

Literary Form – Satire

Satire is a form of comedy in which irony, humour and exaggeration are used as a way of mocking or ridiculing a certain idea, belief or concept. It is very commonly used in order to mock politicians and their ideas. This is quite commonly done in the form of sketch shows on the TV or in cartoon strips in the newspaper.

Satire can be used as a literary device and is often a technique employed by writers who wish to add a humorous sense of ridicule to their work. It is a way in which the writer can criticize the mass beliefs of the society or community at large but do so in a way which lessens offence. This is done by including a variety of other rhetorical and literary devices such as irony and exaggeration. When writing a satirical piece, the writer will likely to use a fictional character that will represent a true life person. Satire, artistic form, chiefly literary and dramatic, in which human or individual vices, follies, abuses, or shortcomings are held up to censure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony, parody, caricature, or other methods, sometimes with an intent to inspire social reform.

The great English lexicographer Samuel Johnson defined satire as “a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured,” and more elaborate definitions are rarely more satisfactory. Wherever wit (intelligence) is employed to expose something foolish or vicious to criticism, there satire exists, whether it be in song or sermon, in painting or political debate, on television or in the movies. In this sense satire is everywhere.

In literary works, satire can be **direct or indirect**. With direct satire, the narrator speaks directly to the reader. With indirect satire, the author’s intent is realized within the narrative and its story. It is found embodied in an indefinite number of literary forms that profess to convey **moral instruction** by means of laughter, ridicule, mockery. Its targets range from one of **Alexander Pope’s** dunces to all of humanity, as in *Satyr Against Mankind* (1675), by John Wilmot, 2nd earl of Rochester, from Erasmus’s attack on corruptions in the church to **Jonathan Swift’s** excoriation of all civilized institutions in *Gulliver’s Travels*.

Examples of Satire in Literature :

***The Rape of the Lock* by Alexander Pope**

***Gulliver’s Travels* by Jonathan Swift**

***Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* by Chaucer (a social satire)**

***Animal Farm* by George Orwell**