

Elements of Satire



Satire is...

- any piece of writing designed to make its reader feel critical
 - of themselves
 - of their fellow human beings
 - of institutions
 - of society as a whole



"What I called creative recycling,
the school called plagiarism."

Some Satire is
meant to make
us laugh at
human
foolishness and
weaknesses.

Some
satire is
meant to
make us
angry
about
human
vices and
crimes.



- Satire can be aimed at humanity in general, stereotyped groups (like "ambulance - chasing" lawyers or clumsy doctors), or a particular person.



- Satirists are dissatisfied with the way things are and want to make them better. However, instead of giving helpful advise, they focus what is wrong.
- Forget "BE GOOD!" Satirists make fun of selfish, mean-spirited people hoping we will see the qualities in ourselves and change.



Satirists perform an important role in society when they expose errors and absurdities that we no longer notice because of custom or familiarity.

Satirists

- like to use **exaggeration**.
 - (portraying all politicians as corrupt or all clergy as corrupt).
- expect their readers to be alert and intelligent to detect elements of satire when there is no exaggeration.

Irony

- Verbal: saying one thing but meaning another, often times the opposite of what he or she has said.
- Situational: when what actually happens is different from what is expected to happen or what is appropriate.

Elements of Satire

- Understatement: saying less than what is really meant.
 - Saying "It's a bit wet out there" during a flood.
- Sarcasm: particularly cruel or cutting irony, in which praise is often used tauntingly to indicate its opposite in meaning
 - Saying "Mr Garner's class is the most interesting class I have ever taken!"

Additional Key Terms for Satire

- **Persona**: voice or mask that an author or performer puts on for a particular purpose.
- **Tone**: the attitude a writer takes toward his or her subject, characters, or audience.
- **Connotation**: emotional associations a word suggests. **Denotation**: the dictionary definition.
- **Wit**: the ability to make lively, clever remarks in a sharp, amusing way.