

SATIRICAL ELEMENTS

PURPOSE: The satirist attempts to point out his target's deviation from what he or she considers NORMAL, sometimes with the desire or hope that the persons ridiculed will move toward the norm.

RANGES: TONE – HORATIAN ----- JUVENALIAN
Gentle bitter

ATTACK – DIRECT ----- INDIRECT
little or no ironic diction much ironic diction

TARGET – TOPICAL ----- UNIVERSAL
short-lived long-lived

Horace (b. 65 B.C, d. 8 B.C.) followed Lucilius in using hexameters to ridicule folly and bad taste, and produced the 'Sermones' (30 B.C.), two books of discourses, conversational in style, humorous and urbane, dealing with a variety of subjects. These included incidents in the life of the poet, the follies and vices of mankind and his own poetical methods. Horace is particularly admired for his ability to "ridentem dicere verum" ("to tell the truth with a smile"), and his poems usually appear to pass gentle comment on the failings of mankind, rather than dealing with these faults with malice.

Juvenal (b. A.D. 60-70) published his 16 Satires in five books in the second and third decades of the 2nd century A.D., during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian. Although Juvenal claims Horace and Lucilius as his masters, his poetry has none of their gentle humor. His Satires are notable for their bitter ironical humor, power of invective, grim epigram, sympathy with the poor and narrow-minded pessimism, whilst he attacks the rich and condemns the female sex. His linguistic register alternates violently between the elevated and the low.

(Continuum)

S A T I R E

COMEDY **IRONY**
humor without attack (encomium) attack without humor (invective)
admirable characters laughable to despicable characters pitiful to heinous characters

TECHNIQUES:

DISTORTION – A. EXAGGERATION (HYPERBOLE)
B. DIMINUTION (LITOTES)

1. Stereotyped characters (braggard soldier, januar, fop, miser, sycophant, hypocrite, the knave)
2. Chaotic setting(s)
3. Contrasts:
 - A. Grotesque and ideal
 - B. Real and ideal
 - C. Imaginary and actual words
 - D. The sublime and the ridiculous
4. Puns
5. Incogruent details
6. Burlesque
7. Ironic word choice
8. Masked narration
9. Dramatic and exceptional irony

PARTICULAR TYPES OF SATIRE:

1. Caricature 2. Parody 3. Modest Proposal 4. Imaginary Voyage 5. Beast Fable 6. Farce

ASSIGNMENT:

For each of the satirical passages below, complete the following:

1. Identify the target and purpose of the satire.
2. Identify the ranges (tone, attack, target) of the satire.
3. Identify the satirical devices the author uses.
4. Identify the type of satire used by the author; place the quotation on the Satire Continuum.

PASSAGE 1

“They dream in courtship, but in wedlock wake.”

Alexander Pope

PASSAGE 2

“Wherefore being all of one mind, we do highly resolve that government of the grafted by the grafter for the grafter shall not perish from the earth.”

Mark Twain

PASSAGE 3

“All human race would fain be wits, And millions miss for one that hits. Young’s Universal Passion, pride, Was never known to spread so wide. Say, Britain, could you ever boast Three poets in an age at most? Our chilling climate hardly bears A sprig of bays in fifty years; While every fool his claim alleges, As if it grew in common hedges. What reason can there be assigned For this perverseness in the mind? Brutes find out where their talents lie: A bear will not attempt to fly; But man we find the only creature, Who, led by folly, combats nature; Who, when she loudly cries, Forbear, With obstinacy fixes there; And, where his genius least inclines, Absurdly bends his whole designs.”

Jonathan Swift

PASSAGE 4

"How come when I'm standing in front of a full-length mirror with nothing on but socks, white socks look OK, but dark-colored socks make me look cheap and sleazy?"

This letter was passed along to me by my Research Department, Judi Smith, who attached a yellow stick-on note that says: "This is true." Judi did not say how she happens to know it's true; apparently -- and I'm sure there's a perfectly innocent explanation -- she has seen John Cog of Norfolk, Va., wearing nothing but socks.

But the point is that dark socks, as a lone fashion accessory, create a poor impression. This is a known fact that has been verified in scientific experiments wherein fashion researchers put little white socks on one set of naked laboratory rats, and dark socks on another, then exposed both groups to a panel of leading business executives such as Bill Gates, who indicated that they would be "somewhat more likely" to hire from the white-sock group, should their personnel needs ever include a rat.

What this means, men, is that if you're dressing for an important job interview, church supper, meeting with my Research Department or other occasion where you could wind up wearing nothing but socks, they should be white.”**Dave Barry**

PASSAGE 5

“NBA players had to agree to four random drug tests per year, up from the current one per year. The owners wanted more tests, but it wasn't possible because of their promise to notify players three months before each random test.” **Scott Witt**

PASSAGE 6

“In other words, a war that could destroy the global order and cast a region of the earth into chaos was discussed for about as much time as it takes Lenscrafters to make a pair of bifocals.” Quip about a one-hour meeting President Bush had with England and Spain in March 2003 about war in Iraq.

Jon Stewart