

SATIRE AND SATIRICAL DEVICES

Satirical Techniques Definitions

Satirical techniques—used to make a comment or criticism about a particular subject or character.

Exaggeration To enlarge, increase, or represent something beyond normal bounds so that it becomes ridiculous and its faults can be seen. *Caricature* is the exaggeration of a physical feature or trait. Cartoons, especially political cartoons, provide extensive examples of caricature. *Burlesque* is the ridiculous exaggeration of language. For instance, when a character who should use formal, intelligent language speaks like a fool or a character who is portrayed as uneducated uses highly sophisticated, intelligent language.

Incongruity To present things that are out of place or are absurd in relation to its surroundings. Particular techniques include oxymoron, metaphor, and irony.

Parody To imitate the techniques and/or style of some person, place, or thing in order to ridicule the original. For parody to be successful, the reader must know the original text that is being ridiculed.

Reversal To present the opposite of the normal order. Reversal can focus on the order of events, such as serving dessert before the main dish or having breakfast for dinner. Additionally, reversal can focus on hierarchical order—for instance, when a young child makes all the decisions for a family or when an administrative assistant dictates what the company president decides and does.

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SATIRE--From Fowler's *Modern English Usage*

<u>Form</u>	<u>Motive or Aim</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Method or Means</u>	<u>Audience</u>
1. humor	discovery	human nature	observation	the sympathetic
2. wit	throwing light	words and ideas	surprise	the intelligent
3. satire	amendment	morals and manners	accentuation	the self-satisfied
4. sarcasm	inflicting pain	faults and foibles	inversion	victim and bystander
5. invective	discredit	misconduct	direct statement	the public
6. irony	exclusiveness	statement of facts	mystification	an inner circle
7. cynicism	self-justification	morals	exposure of nakedness	the respectable
8. the sardonic	self-relief	adversity	pessimism	self

Satire—sarcasm, irony or wit used to ridicule or mock

Satirical styles:

1. *Direct satire* is directly stated
2. *Indirect satire* is communicated through characters in a situation

Types of Satire:

1. *Horatian*—light-hearted, intended for fun
2. *Juvenalian*—bitter, angry attacking

Satirical Devices:

1. **Irony**—the actual intent is expressed in words which carry the opposite meaning. It is lighter, less harsh in wording than sarcasm, though more cutting because of its indirectness. The ability to recognize irony is one of the surest tests of intelligence and sophistication. Irony speaks words of praise to imply blame and words of blame to imply praise. Writer is using a tongue-in-cheek style. Irony is achieved through such techniques as hyperbole and understatement.
 - A. *Verbal Irony*—simply an inversion of meaning
 - B. *Dramatic Irony*—when the words or acts of a character carry a meaning unperceived by himself but understood by the audience. The irony resides in the contrast between the meaning intended by the speaker and the added significance seen by others.
 - C. *Socratic Irony*—Socrates pretended ignorance of a subject in order to draw knowledge out of his students by a question and answer device. Socratic irony is feigning ignorance to achieve some advantage over an opponent.
 - D. *Situational Irony*—depends on a discrepancy between purpose and results (e.g., a practical joke that backfires).
2. **Travesty**—presents a serious (often religious) subject frivolously, reducing everything to its lowest level. “Trans”=over, across “vestire”=to clothe or dress; presenting a subject in a dress intended for another type of subject.
3. **Burlesque**—ridiculous exaggeration achieved through a variety of ways. For example, the sublime may be absurd, honest emotions may be turned to sentimentality. STYLE is the essential quality in burlesque. A style ordinarily dignified may be used for nonsensical matters , etc.
4. **Parody**—a composition imitating another, usually serious, piece of work designed to ridicule in nonsensical fashion an original piece of work. Parody is in literature what the caricature and cartoon are in art.
**NOTE—TRAVESTY, BURLESQUE & PARODY are similar, but travesty always makes a mockery of a serious subject, whereas burlesque and parody may do the reverse.
5. **Farce**—exciting laughter through exaggerated, improbable situations; usually contains low comedy: quarreling, fighting, coarse with, horseplay, noisy singing, boisterous conduct, trickery, clownishness, drunkenness, slap-stick.
6. **Invective**—harsh, abusive language directed against a person or cause. Invective is a vehicle, a tool of anger. Invective is the bitterest of all satire.
7. **Sarcasm**—a sharply mocking or contemptuous remark. The term came from the Greek word “sarkazein” which means “to tear flesh.”
8. **Knaves & Fools**—in comedy there are no villains and no innocent victims. Instead, there are rogues (knaves) and suckers (fools). The knave exploits someone “asking for it”. When these two interact, comic satire results. When knaves & fools meet, they expose each other.
9. **Malapropism**—a deliberate mispronunciation of a name or term with the intent of poking fun.

Examples:

Thou shalt have one God only: who
Would be at the expense of two?
No graven images may be
Worshipped, except the currency:\
Swear not at all; for thy curse
Thine enemy is none the worse:
At church on Sunday to attend
Will serve to keep the world thy friend:
Honour thy parents; that is, all
From whom advancement may befall:
Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive:
Advantage rarely comes of it:
Thou shalt not steal: an empty feat,
When it's so lucrative to cheat:
Bear not false witness; let the lie
Have time on its own wings to fly:
Thou shalt not covet, but tradition
Approves all forms of competition.
Arthur Hugh Clough--travesty example

Forgive, O Lord, my little joke on Thee
And I'll forgive Thy great big one on me.
Robert Frost

UNFORTUNATE COINCIDENCE

By the time you swear you're his,
Shivering and sighing
And he vows his passion is
Infinite, undying—
Lady, make a note of this;
One of you is lying.
Dorothy Parker

A MAN SAID TO THE UNIVERSE

A Man said to the universe:
"Sir, I exist!"
"However," replied the universe,
"The fact has not created in me
A sense of obligation."
Stephen Crane--