Definition of Satire

Satire is a technique employed by writers to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society by using humor, [irony](http://literarydevices.net/irony/), exaggeration or ridicule. It intends to improve humanity by criticizing its follies and foibles. A writer in a satire uses fictional characters, which stand for real people, to expose and condemn their corruption.

A writer may point a satire toward a person, a country or even the entire world. Usually, a satire is a comical piece of writing which makes fun of an individual or a society to expose its stupidity and shortcomings. In addition, he hopes that those he criticizes will improve their characters by overcoming their weaknesses.

Function of Satire

The role of satire is to ridicule or criticize those vices in the society, which the writer considers a threat to civilization. The writer considers it his obligation to expose these vices for the betterment of humanity. Therefore, the function of satire is not to make others laugh at persons or ideas they make fun of. It intends to warn the public and to change their opinions about the prevailing corruption/conditions in society.

Satirical Technique Definitions

The following techniques to make a comment or criticism about a particular subject or character. These are the devices writers will use when creating a piece of satire.

* **Exaggeration (Hyperbole, Overstatement):** 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 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 of the decisions for a family or when an administrative assistant dictated what the company president decides and does.

Satire Examples:

We will be looking at three different examples of satire. The first is a YouTube video and reading of a picture book by Dr. Seuss called *The Butter Battle Book*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_hRa5K4JsQ>

As we watch this video, use the space below to jot down notes…What are you noticing? How is this satire? What satire techniques does Seuss use? And—WHY…why would he write this?

*Notes:*

Closing: *What I learned today…*