

2. Neither a borrower nor a lender be,  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *Hamlet*

3. In much wisdom there is much grief: and he that increaseth  
knowledge increaseth sorrow.

—ECCLESIASTES 1.18

4. Bore: A person who talks when you wish him to listen.

—AMBROSE BIERCE, *The Devil's Dictionary*

5. Candy  
Is dandy  
But liquor  
Is quicker.

—OGDEN NASH, "Reflections on Ice-Breaking"

6. Necessity never made a good bargain.

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, *Poor Richard's Almanac*

7. Man is the only animal that blushes. Or needs to.

—MARK TWAIN, *Following the Equator, volume 1,*  
*Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar*

8. It was a delightful visit;—perfect, in being much too short.

—JANE AUSTEN, *Emma*

9. The course of true love never did run smooth.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

10. Rob had no interest in art, although he could see the necessity  
of having something on the walls.

—MARGARET ATWOOD, "Death by Landscape"

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## Satire

**Satire** is a genre of COMEDY in poetry, fiction, or drama that is directed at ridiculing human foibles and vices, such as vanity, hypocrisy, stupidity, and greed. It differs from pure comedy in that the aim is not simply to evoke laughter, but to expose and censure such faults, often with the aim of correcting them. The target of the satire may vary. In some works, it is a

particular individual, as in John Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe" (1682, 1684), directed at a contemporary playwright, Thomas Shadwell, whom Dryden depicts as fatuous and self-satisfied. Other satires target a group or set of people, such as the members of the American military establishment in Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961), or an institution, such as totalitarianism in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1946). Some satires even aim at the whole of humanity—for example, Book IV of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). That section of the novel is set on an imaginary island, which is inhabited by two radically opposed species: the brutish Yahoos, who have the outward form of human beings, and their masters, the Houyhnhnms, talking horses who embody the humane intelligence that the Yahoos entirely lack.

A useful means of categorizing satire is into "direct" and "indirect" modes of presentation. In **direct satire**, also called **formal satire**, the **FIRST-PERSON NARRATOR** addresses a specific audience, either the reader or an invented listener, whom he or she expects will sympathize with the views expressed. For example, in Lord Byron's mock epic, *Don Juan* (1824), the urbane narrator confides to the reader the amorous adventures of Don Juan, a legendary rake, in his youth; Byron depicts him as naïve and irresistibly attractive. Alexander Pope's "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" (1735) is a formal satire on members of the eighteenth-century London literary establishment, such as talentless versifiers who appeal to Pope for praise of their works, spiteful rival poets, and easily flattered patrons. In the poem, Pope represents himself as addressing his physician and friend, Dr. John Arbuthnot; he begins with a mock-desperate plea for sanctuary from such gadflies: "Shut, shut the door, good John! (fatigued I said), / Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead." Arbuthnot serves largely as the audience to the narrative, attempting to calm the indignant speaker and to mitigate his ridicule, though occasionally he, too, joins in the skewering process.

**Indirect satire**, the usual mode of ridicule in satiric **PLAYS** and works of **PROSE FICTION**, is not cast in the form of a direct address to the audience. Rather, the indictment of the characters' vices and follies is implied by simply representing their thoughts, words, and actions. Sometimes that presentation is abetted by the commentary of an **INTRUSIVE THIRD-PERSON NARRATOR**, as in William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847). The oldest known indirect satires are those of the ancient Greek playwright Aristophanes (c.450–c.385 B.C.E.), who wrote satiric depictions of Athenian society such as *The Frogs* and *The Clouds*. Other examples include Ben Jonson's satire on vanity and greed, *Volpone* (1606); Richard Brinsley Sheridan's witty exposure of licentiousness and hypocrisy in London high society, *The School for Scandal* (1777), and Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One* (1948), a clever depiction of shallowness, rapacity, and mawkish sentimentality, set at a pet cemetery in Hollywood.

Although satire began with the plays of Aristophanes, the main founders of the form were two Roman poets, Horace (68–65 B.C.E.) and Juvenal (c.65–c.135 C.E.). Each wrote a distinctive type of satire that has given its name to and inspired the two major categories of subsequent satiric works. **Horatian satire** is tolerant and urbane, indulgently mocking faults with the aim of evoking wry amusement rather than repulsion or indignation in the audience. Some examples include Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" (1712), which gently ridicules the vanity and idleness of the British upper classes in the form of a mock epic on the supposed tragedy of the lovely Belinda, a lock of whose hair is ravished by the scissors of a wicked Baron; Lord Byron's *Don Juan* (1819), mentioned above; and the Emmeline Grangerford episode in Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), in which Twain pokes fun at the preoccupation with death in the mawkish drawings and bathetic verse of an adolescent would-be poet. **Juvenalian satire**, in contrast, is harsh and censorious, bitterly condemning vices and foibles and inciting the audience to feelings of indignation and even disgust. Examples of Juvenalian satire include Samuel Johnson's "The Vanity of Human Wishes" (1749), and Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), an acerbic denunciation of the injustices of slavery. A supreme example of the form is Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" (1729), in which the author denounces the exploitation of Catholic peasants in his native Ireland by absentee British landlords, who were indifferent to the suffering they were causing and who were abetted by the apathy of the British Parliament and monarchy. Swift's NARRATOR is an imperturbably rational social commentator, who advocates combating overpopulation and hunger by what he perceives as the inspired plan of using the babies of the poor as food.

Satire has been popular throughout the history of English literature, from the ridicule of vanity, promiscuity, and impiety in Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale" and "The Pardoner's Tale" (1386–1400) to the mockery of racial, religious, and class divisions in modern-day London in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000). The great period of satire, however, was the Restoration and eighteenth century, notably in the witty heroic couplets of John Dryden and Alexander Pope, the REPARTEE among the profligate members of high society in the Restoration comedies of William Congreve, and, later in the century, of Richard Brinsley Sheridan; and the sociopolitical satires of Jonathan Swift and Samuel Johnson. In later ages, the satiric works of writers such as Lord Byron, Jane Austen, William Makepeace Thackeray, Mark Twain, and Ambrose Bierce in the nineteenth century, and George Bernard Shaw, Evelyn Waugh, Dorothy Parker, James Thurber, and Kurt Vonnegut in the twentieth have continued to sustain the vitality of the literary form.

In some cases, a satirical episode constitutes part of a longer literary work rather than makes up the whole. For example, in William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1601), the gulling of Malvolio is a satiric SUBPLOT in the midst of the ROMANTIC COMEDY. ("Gulling" is Elizabethan slang for "duping," based on antiquated bird lore that termed the gull a stupid bird.) Malvolio, the self-centered and humorless steward (head servant) to the Countess Olivia, is convinced by a counterfeit letter that the lady returns his infatuation. He attempts to court her, dressing and acting in the ridiculous styles advocated in the hoax letter. Were Malvolio a sympathetic character, genuinely in love, his inevitable rejection might excite PATHOS rather than mockery. Shakespeare assures that he is a valid satiric target, however, by showing us Malvolio's true character in scenes before he finds the letter: he curries favor with Olivia by berating the clown, prudishly refuses to tolerate the merrymaking of her guests, and, most tellingly, fantasizes not about the lady herself but about the rank and power he would achieve were she to favor him with her hand. Such faults provoke Maria, a quick-witted gentlewoman-in-waiting, into devising the diabolically clever scheme, which she justifies with satiric glee in a contemptuous description of her intended victim:

[He is nothing but] a time-pleaser; an affectioned<sup>1</sup> ass,  
 that cons state without book<sup>2</sup> and utters it by great  
 swathes; the best persuaded of himself; so crammed, as  
 he thinks, with excellencies that it is his grounds of faith<sup>3</sup>  
 that all that look on him love him; and on that vice in  
 him will my revenge find notable cause to work.

For the most part, Shakespeare's satire of Malvolio is Horatian. The tricks go too far for most modern audiences, however, when Malvolio's attempts to conform to the letter's directives establish grounds for the pranksters' charge that he has gone mad, and he is imprisoned in a dark cell. At the end, when he is freed and the truth is revealed to him, he remains incapable of either perspective or humor. Although Olivia offers him the chance for restitution, he rejects her generous offer and storms off, vowing, "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you." The overall mode of *Twelfth Night*, however, is COMIC rather than satiric; accordingly, it ends with the projected celebration of three marriages, so that the emphasis is

<sup>1</sup> Affected. *Time-pleaser*: sycophant.

<sup>2</sup> Memorizes high-flown speeches.

<sup>3</sup> Creed.



not on the satire but on the happy romantic fortunes of the main characters.  
See also IRONY.

## EXERCISE: Satire

For each of the following examples:

- State whether the satire is FORMAL (DIRECT) or INDIRECT. If it is direct, describe the nature of the audience to whom it is addressed.
- Identify the type of SATIRE that it exemplifies, HORATIAN or JUVENALIAN, and justify that choice of category.
- Explain the targets of the SATIRE: the human vice[s] or foible[s] and the person, institution, or group at which it is aimed.

1. All human things are subject to decay,  
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey.  
This Flecknoe<sup>1</sup> found, who, like Augustus, young  
Was called to empire, and had governed long;  
In prose and verse, was owned, without dispute, 5  
Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute.  
This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,  
And blest with issue of a large increase,<sup>2</sup>  
Worn out with business, did at length debate  
To settle the succession of the state; 10  
And, pondering which of all his sons was fit  
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,  
Cried: "'Tis resolved; for Nature pleads that he  
Should only rule, who most resembles me.  
Sh—<sup>3</sup> alone, of all my sons, is he 15  
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.  
The rest to some faint meaning make pretense,  
But Sh— never deviates into sense."

—JOHN DRYDEN, "Mac Flecknoe"

<sup>1</sup>Richard Flecknoe, an Irish poet Dryden considered dull.

<sup>2</sup>Children; also, Flecknoe's practice of republishing old works under new titles.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Shadwell, a playwright and rival of Dryden.

2. 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: 5  
 One of you is lying.

—DOROTHY PARKER, "Unfortunate Coincidence"

3. *In this section of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Huck, the NARRATOR, has just seen Buck Grangerford, his new friend and the son of his generous host, shoot at "a splendid young man" from the other prominent local family, the Shepherdsons. Buck's father, Col. Grangerford, clearly approves of the attack. Huck takes the first opportunity to question the other boy about the situation.*

"Did you want to kill him, Buck?"

"Well, I bet I did."

"What did he do to you?"

"Him? He never done nothing to me."

"Well, then, what did you want to kill him for?"

"Why nothing—only it's on account of the feud."

"What's a feud?"

"Why, where was you raised? Don't you know what a feud is?"

"Never heard of it before—tell me about it."

"Well," says Buck, "a feud is this way. A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man's brother kills *him*; then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the *cousins* chip in—and by and by everybody's killed off, and there ain't no more feud. But it's kind of slow, and takes a long time."

"Has this one been going on long, Buck?"

"Well I should *reckon!* it started thirty year ago, or som'ers along there. There was trouble 'bout something and then a lawsuit to settle it; and the suit went agin one of the men, and so he up and shot the man that won the suit—which he would naturally do, of course. Anybody would."

"What was the trouble about, Buck?—land?"

"I reckon maybe—I don't know."

"Well, who done the shooting?—was it a Grangerford or a Shepherdson?"

"Laws, how do *I* know? it was so long ago."

—MARK TWAIN, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

4. "next to of course god america i  
 love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh  
 say can you see by the dawn's early my  
 country 'tis of centuries come and go  
 and are no more what of it we should worry 5  
 in every language even deafanddumb  
 thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry  
 by jingo<sup>4</sup> by gee by gosh by gum  
 why talk of beauty what could be more beau-  
 tiful than these heroic happy dead 10  
 who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter  
 they did not stop to think they died instead  
 then shall the voice of liberty be mute?"  
 He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water  
 —E. E. CUMMINGS, "next to of course god america i"
5. MRS. CANDOUR My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this  
 century? Mr. Surface, what news do you hear?—though indeed it  
 is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.  
 JOSEPH SURFACE Just so, indeed, madam.  
 MRS. CANDOUR Ah, Maria! child,—what, is the whole affair off  
 between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume—the  
 town talks of nothing else.  
 MARIA I am very sorry, ma'am, the town has so little to do.  
 MRS. CANDOUR True, true, child: but there is no stopping people's  
 tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as indeed I was to learn,  
 from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady  
 Teazle have not agreed lately so well as could be wished. . . .  
 MARIA Such reports are highly scandalous.  
 MRS. CANDOUR So they are, child—shameful, shameful! But the  
 world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now who  
 would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion?  
 Yet such is the ill-nature of people, that they say her uncle  
 stopped her last week, just as she was stepping into the York  
 Diligence<sup>5</sup> with her dancing-master.  
 MARIA I'll answer for't there are no grounds for the report.  
 MRS. CANDOUR Oh, no foundation in the world, I dare swear; no  
 more, than for the story circulated last month, of Mrs. Festino's

<sup>4</sup> A mild oath; also, jingoism: extreme nationalism.

<sup>5</sup> Coach to York.

affair with Colonel Cassino;—though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

JOSEPH SURFACE The license of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

MARIA 'Tis so.—But, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

MRS. CANDOUR To be sure they are; tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers—'tis an old observation, and a very true one—but what's to be done, as I said before? how will you prevent people from talking?

—RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN, *The School for Scandal*

6. In the following scene from *Hamlet*, Polonius, the Lord Chamberlain at the court of Denmark, is attempting to discover the cause of Prince Hamlet's supposed madness. Polonius is convinced that Hamlet has gone mad because of his daughter Ophelia's rejection, done at Polonius's own command, because he feared wrongly that Hamlet was merely toying with her affections. Hamlet, who is only feigning insanity, is all too aware that Ophelia acted on her father's orders and that Polonius is spying on him in order to curry favor with the corrupt king, Hamlet's despised uncle.

POLONIUS How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET Well, God-a-mercy.

POLONIUS Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET Excellent well, you are a fishmonger.<sup>6</sup>

POLONIUS Not I, my lord.

HAMLET Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS Honest, my lord?

HAMLET Ay, sir, to be honest as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

POLONIUS That's very true, my lord.

HAMLET For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion—Have you a daughter?

POLONIUS I have, my lord.

HAMLET Let her not walk i' th' sun. Conception<sup>7</sup> is a blessing, but as your daughter may conceive—friend, look to't.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabethan slang for “pimp,” a glance at Polonius's exploitation of Ophelia.

<sup>7</sup> Thought, but also pregnancy.



POLONIUS [*Aside.*] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter. Yet he knew me not at first. 'A<sup>8</sup> said I was a fishmonger. 'A is far gone. And truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love, very near this. I'll speak to him again.— What do you read, my lord? . . .

HAMLET Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams<sup>9</sup>—all which, sir, though I most potently and powerfully believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.<sup>1</sup>

POLONIUS [*Aside.*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *Hamlet*

7. But scarce observed, the knowing and the bold  
 Fall in the general massacre of gold;  
 Wide-wasting pest! That rages unconfined,  
 And crowds with crimes the records of mankind;  
 For gold his sword the hireling ruffian draws, 5  
 For gold the hireling judge distorts the laws;  
 Wealth heaped on wealth, nor truth nor safety buys,  
 The dangers gather as the treasures rise.

—SAMUEL JOHNSON, "The Vanity of Human Wishes"

8. 26  
 Don José and the Donna Inez led  
 For some time an unhappy sort of life,  
 Wishing each other, not divorced, but dead;  
 They lived respectably as man and wife,  
 Their conduct was exceedingly well-bred, 5  
 And gave no outward signs of inward strife,  
 Until at length the smothered fire broke out,  
 And put the business past all kind of doubt.

- 27  
 For Inez called some druggists and physicians,  
 And tried to prove her loving lord was *mad*, 10

<sup>8</sup>He.

<sup>9</sup>Thighs.

<sup>1</sup>In time.

But as he had some lucid intermissions,  
 She next decided he was only *bad*;  
 Yet when they asked her for her depositions,  
 No sort of explanation could be had,  
 Save that her duty both to man and God 15  
 Required this conduct—which seemed very odd.

## 28

She kept a journal, where his faults were noted,  
 And opened certain trunks of books and letters,  
 All which might, if occasion served, be quoted;  
 And then she had all Seville for abettors, 20  
 Besides her good old grandmother (who doted);  
 The hearers of her case became repeaters,  
 Then advocates, inquisitors, and judges.  
 Some for amusement, others for old grudges.

## 29

And then this best and meekest woman bore 25  
 With such serenity her husband's woes,  
 Just as the Spartan ladies did of yore,  
 Who saw their spouses killed, and nobly chose  
 Never to say a word about them more—  
 Calmly she heard each calumny that rose, 30  
 And saw *his* agonies with such sublimity,  
 That all the world exclaimed, "What magnanimity!"

—GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON, *Don Juan*

9. In the following scene, Dennis Barlow, an Englishman employed by *The Happier Hunting Ground*, a posh pet cemetery in Hollywood, has been called to the home of the Heinkels, whose lapdog has been hit by a car. The dog belonged primarily to Mrs. Heinkel, who is sitting in the hall, drinking.

"This way," said Mr. Heinkel. "In the pantry."

The Sealyham lay on the draining board beside the sink. Dennis lifted it into the container. "Perhaps you wouldn't mind taking a hand?"

Together he and Mr. Heinkel carried their load to the wagon.

"Shall we discuss arrangements now, or would you prefer to call in the morning?"

"I'm a pretty busy man mornings," said Mr. Heinkel. "Come into the study."

There was a tray on the desk. They helped themselves to whisky.  
 "I have our brochure here setting out our service. Were you thinking of interment or incineration?"  
 "Pardon me?"  
 "Buried or burned?"  
 "Burned, I guess."  
 "I have some photographs here of various styles of urn."  
 "The best will be good enough."  
 "Would you require a niche in our columbarium or do you prefer to keep the remains at home?"  
 "What you said first."  
 "And the religious rites? We have a pastor who is always pleased to assist."  
 "Well, Mr.—?"  
 "Barlow."  
 "Mr. Barlow, we're neither of us what you might call very church-going people, but I think on an occasion like this Mrs. Heinkel would want all the comfort you can offer."  
 "Our Grade A service includes several unique features. At the moment of committal, a white dove, symbolizing the deceased's soul, is liberated over the crematorium."  
 "Yes," said Mr. Heinkel, "I reckon Mrs. Heinkel would appreciate the dove."  
 "And every anniversary a card of remembrance is mailed without further charge. It reads: *Your little Arthur is thinking of you in heaven and wagging his tail.*"  
 "That's a very beautiful thought, Mr. Barlow."  
 "Then, if you will just sign the order. . . ."  
 —EVELYN WAUGH, *The Loved One*

10. If thou beest born to strange sights,  
 Things invisible to see,  
 Ride ten thousand days and nights,  
 Till age snow white hairs on thee,  
 Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me  
 All strange wonders that befell thee,  
 And swear  
 Nowhere  
 Lives a woman true, and fair.<sup>2</sup>

5

<sup>2</sup>Beautiful.

	Novel	21
If thou find'st one. Let me know,		10
Such a pilgrimage were sweet;		
Yet do not, I would not go,		
Though at next door we might meet;		
Though she were true when you met her,		
And last till you write your letter,		15
Yet she		
Will be		
False, ere I come, to two, or three.		
—JOHN DONNE, "Song"		

## FICTION

In a broad sense, **fiction** is any narrative, whether written in verse or in prose, about invented characters and events, as opposed to an account of actual happenings. The latter category, which includes such subheadings as history and biography, is called **nonfiction**. The narrower and more common definition of fiction, however, refers to invented narratives written in prose. Fiction encompasses three major genres: the **NOVEL**, an extended narrative of varying lengths but usually long enough to warrant separate publication; the **SHORT STORY**, nearly always published in a collection of such pieces or in a magazine or journal; and the **NOVELLA**, a narrative whose length falls between those of the other two genres and which may or may not be published in an individual volume. All three genres share certain traits. They focus on a character or characters that interact in a given social **SETTING**, they are narrated from a particular **POINT OF VIEW**, and they are based on some sort of **PLOT**, a sequence of events leading to a resolution that is designed to reveal aspects of the characters. The predominant tone may be comic, tragic, satiric, or romantic.

### Novel

The **novel**, because of its greater length and scope, has much more complexity than the **SHORT STORY**. Its plot is typically more involved and multifaceted, its description of the social milieu more complete, and its depiction of characters' motives, feelings, and experiences more complex than the concise **SHORT STORY** form allows. A major forerunner of the novel is usually said to be the Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605), which recounts the adventures of a madly idealistic **PROTAGONIST** who lives under the delusion that he is a knight errant and consequently attempts to perform what he believes are chivalric deeds. Both the book's episodic