

## THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SATIRE

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**Annotation:** This article explores the nature and evolution of satire in world literature, tracing its origins from ancient Rome through the Enlightenment to modern times. It highlights satire's unique role in addressing social and political issues with humor, irony, and critique, distinguishing it from related concepts such as humor, irony, and sarcasm. The essay focuses particularly on Evelyn Waugh's mastery of satire in his short stories, demonstrating how he skillfully combines satire with parody, grotesque, and allegory to critique society without direct condemnation. Through analysis of literary techniques and examples, the article emphasizes satire's power as a thoughtful, subtle form of social criticism that engages readers by encouraging reflection rather than overt admonishment.

**Key words:** Satire, humor, irony, sarcasm, Evelyn Waugh, social criticism, parody, grotesque, allegory, literature, short stories, Jonathan Swift, Juvenal, Age of Enlightenment, literary techniques, social problems, satire evolution, satire vs sarcasm, irony in literature

Satire is a way of talking about bad things with a smile. It helps writers make fun of stupidity, injustice, or hypocrisy. Authors often use humor to show that something is wrong. It works better than just scolding someone directly. If you look at the history of literature, satire appeared a long time ago. In ancient Rome, Juvenal wrote about the vices of power. He did it with venom and anger. His work has become a model for many writers. Then new forms of satire appeared. For example, in the Age

of Enlightenment, she became smarter and more accurate. In the 18th century, Jonathan Swift wrote Gulliver's Travels. It would seem that the story is about a little man among giants. In fact, he was talking about human weaknesses. Such satire works through metaphor. The author hides the truth in fiction. But the reader understands what it's all about anyway. In the 19th century, satire became part of the realistic novel. Turgenev in Russia, Zola in France, Dickens in England used it to show social problems. They described the lives of ordinary people. Through their stories, one could see how badly society was organized. With the advent of the 20th century, satire has become even more flexible. It began to be used not only in books, but also in cinema, theater, and journalism. Writers began mixing satire with other styles. Sometimes it looked like a comedy. Sometimes it's like a dark irony.

One of these authors is Evelyn Waugh. He was not a political writer. But it's easy to find satirical features in his stories. He often laughed at the aristocracy, the church, and fashion. At the same time, he never crossed the boundaries. His satire was cold but accurate. According to Martin Stalker's research, Waugh considered himself a conservative. He believed in tradition. However, he was not afraid to laugh at those who distorted these traditions. His satire worked like a laser. She was heading straight for the target. Interestingly, Waugh did not write long satirical novels. More often than not, he chose a story. This format gave him the opportunity to be sharp and concise. He could show the whole world in a few pages and immediately express his opinion. Andrew Hughes' research shows that in Waugh's stories, satire is most often based on contrast. The characters think they're important. But in fact they are stupid or greedy. The author gives them some space. And that's enough to show their true colors. This approach makes his stories particularly interesting to analyze. They combine humor, precision, and social criticism. It's not just a joke. This is a thoughtful game with the reader. Satire in world literature has evolved from denunciation to play. From open criticism to hidden meaning. And Evelyn Waugh became one of those who brought this style to perfection. Especially in the short format.<sup>1</sup>

Satire is not just a joke. It serves a purpose. The author wants to make fun of someone or show mistakes. It can be a ruler, a rich man, or even an entire society. Humor is about fun. It lifts the mood. A joke for the sake of laughter is humor. He doesn't always talk about something important. Irony is when they say one thing and mean another. For example: "Great weather!" - if it's raining outside. Such phrases hide the true opinion. Sarcasm is a sharpness in tone. He's offensive. Maybe it's part of the irony. But it's always directed against someone. That's how you can separate these concepts. They overlap, but each has its own role. Many people confuse these words. Especially in conversation. But in literature, it's important to know the difference. Each style works in its own way. For example, satire always has a purpose. It is aimed at changing the mindset. The author is not just laughing. He wants to change something. Humor can be accidental. Sometimes the hero does something stupid, and the reader laughs. But the author wasn't planning anything serious. Irony is often based on the contrast between words and reality. It's easy to spot it in dialogues. The hero says one thing and does something completely different. Sarcasm sounds tougher. He cuts the listener. It is used to express contempt or discontent. The research of N. Likhacheva (2004) helps to understand how these styles work. She showed that satire is always social. Humor can be personal. Irony is a game. Sarcasm is a weapon. Evelyn Waugh often used irony. But she was soft. He never crossed the line. His sarcasm was accurate. He didn't hit blindly. In his stories, the characters speak beautifully, but their actions do not match their speech. That's where the irony comes in.

The satire in his prose works through comparison. It shows an ideal world. Then he slowly reveals that everything is wrong. One example is the short story "Mr. Loveday's Little Outing". The hero seems to be an important figure there. In fact, he is just an old man who is being hidden from society. The reader feels awkward. But he laughs at the same time. This is a typical satire technique. The author does not directly condemn. He lets the reader draw his own conclusion. This makes the effect stronger. This approach distinguishes satire from sarcasm. There are no direct accusations in satire. There is a hint. Interestingly, the boundaries between these phenomena are fluid.

The same phrase can be ironic, sarcastic, and even humorous. It all depends on the context. As M. Bakhtin wrote, not only the meaning of words is important in literature, but also how they sound in a situation. That is why irony is so popular in modern media. Today, people often use sarcasm on the Internet. It has become a form of communication. But in literature, it is rarely the main style. Satire, in turn, remains a tool of analysis. It helps writers to talk about issues without direct instructions. In this paper, we will distinguish between these concepts. Not because they are different in essence. It's because everyone performs their own function. Humor is uplifting. Irony plays with the truth. Sarcasm hurts. Satire is critical. Evelyn Waugh used all these forms. But he did it in such a way that they merged into a single whole. His stories are a good example of how different styles work. Satire often works together with other techniques. Sometimes she uses a parody. Sometimes it's grotesque. Or an allegory. But each of them has its own characteristics. A parody is when an author imitates another work or style. He's doing it funny on purpose. The goal is to show the weaknesses of the original through exaggeration. For example, the story *The Loved One* by Evelyn Waugh is a parody of an American funeral. The author describes rituals as advertising. This is how he criticizes the attitude towards death.<sup>2</sup>

The grotesque is a strange combination. It combines opposites: funny and scary. Or beautiful and ugly. The grotesque helps satire to be brighter. In the story *"Work Suspended"*, one character paints a picture that looks like a doodle. It's grotesque. He talks about the artist's creative crisis. Allegory is a hidden meaning. There may be symbols instead of people. For example, animals or objects. Through them, the author talks about real things. As in Anton Chekhov's novel *"The Man in the Case"*.

We can say that satire is a mirror. It only reflects not the appearance, but the character. And not every person, but the whole society. When we look in such a mirror, we may feel uncomfortable. That is why satirists often cause controversy. Society likes to be praised. But satire says the opposite. She points to hypocrisy, corruption, greed.

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Sometimes she does this through the grotesque - that is, she greatly exaggerates the features to make it clear how ugly they are. For example, in William Golding's "Lord of the Flies," the children are left alone on the island. First they try to create order. Gradually, everything turns into chaos. The author shows that even small people can repeat the mistakes of the adult world. Without masks and pretentious speeches. Satirical works often seem simple. In fact, they work on several levels. One is for laughter, the other is for reflection. Such texts can be read over and over again. You find something new every time. There is an opinion that satire does not change anything. This is incorrect. It shapes public opinion. It creates a space for criticism that is difficult to ignore. Especially if the writer knows how to be accurate and accurate. Thus, the social function of satire is not just entertainment. This is a way to influence the mass consciousness. Through an image, through a joke, through hyperbole. And that's her strength. Someone might think, "This is just a joke." But laughter often hides the truth. A satirist takes real events and remakes them in a way that makes you feel ashamed. He is not afraid to talk about things that others are uncomfortable discussing. Satire is needed to make people think. It's not always possible to say outright that someone is wrong. Then the author takes a pen and writes so that everyone understands. But at the same time, no one gets direct charges. Satire is not just about funny stories or mocking people. It is a powerful literary tool. It helps writers talk about things that others prefer to keep quiet about. But to understand how satire works, you need to understand its structure.

**Conclusion:** Satire has proven to be one of the most enduring and adaptable forms of literary expression. From ancient Rome to modern fiction, it has served as a powerful tool for exposing flaws in society, politics, and human behavior. Unlike direct criticism, satire invites readers to reflect through humor, irony, and subtle contrasts. Evelyn Waugh's work demonstrates how satire can be sharp yet restrained, combining various techniques to create layered and impactful narratives. By distinguishing satire from humor, irony, and sarcasm, we can better understand its unique function in literature—as both a mirror and a magnifying glass for the world around us. Ultimately,

satire continues to challenge, entertain, and provoke thought, proving that laughter can be a serious instrument of change.

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