

Previewing Embedded Assessment 2 and Introducing Satire

My Notes

Literary Terms

Horatian satire pokes fun at human foibles and folly with a witty, gentle, and even indulgent tone.

Juvenalian satire denounces, sometimes harshly, human vice and error in dignified and solemn tones.

Introduction to Satire

Satire is a literary genre that uses irony, wit, and sometimes sarcasm to expose humanity's vices and foibles, giving impetus to change or reform through ridicule. Types of direct **satire** include **Horatian** satire and **Juvenalian** satire, named after the Roman writers Horace and Juvenal who made the genre famous. As you read satire, look for these characteristic techniques of satiric writing:

Irony: A mode of expression that uses words (verbal irony) or events (situational irony) to convey a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation. The surprise recognition by the audience often produces a comic effect. When a text intended to be ironic is not seen as such, the effect can be disastrous. To be an effective piece of sustained irony, there must be some sort of audience tip-off through style, tone, use of clear exaggeration, or other device.

Hyperbole: Deliberate exaggeration to achieve an effect; overstatement

Litotes: A form of understatement that involves making an affirmative point by denying its opposite. Example: "The grave's a fine and private place, / But none, I think, do there embrace." Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress."

Caricature: An exaggeration or other distortion of an individual's prominent features or characteristics to the point of making that individual appear ridiculous. The term is applied more often to graphic representations than to literary ones.

Wit: Most commonly understood as clever expression—whether aggressive or harmless, that is, with or without derogatory¹ intent toward someone or something in particular. We also tend to think of wit as being characterized by a mocking or paradoxical quality, evoking laughter through apt phrasing.

Sarcasm: Intentional derision,² generally directed at another person and intended to hurt. The term comes from a Greek word meaning "to tear flesh like dogs" and signifies a cutting remark. Sarcasm usually involves obvious verbal irony, achieving its effect by jeeringly stating the opposite of what is meant so as to heighten the insult.

Ridicule: Words intended to belittle a person or idea and arouse contemptuous laughter. The goal is to condemn or criticize by making the thing, idea, or person seem laughable and ridiculous.

Parody: An imitation of a work or of an author with the idea of ridiculing the author, ideas, or work. The parodist exploits the peculiarities of an author's expression—his or her propensity to use too many parentheses, certain favorite words, or other elements of the author's style.

Invective: Speech or writing that abuses, denounces,³ or attacks. It can be directed against a person, cause, idea, or system. It employs a heavy use of negative emotive language. Example: "I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth." (Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*)

WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

Denounce, *derision*, and *derogatory* all begin with the prefix *de-*, meaning "away from or negating." The prefix is a clue to the meaning of these and many words.

Look also at the root of *denounce* (as in *announce* and *pronounce*), which is *nuntiare*, meaning "to report." With *de-*, the meaning is to report in a negative way.

¹ **derogatory** (*adj.*): showing a critical or disrespectful attitude; humiliating

² **derision** (*n.*): ridicule or mockery; an object of ridicule, a laughingstock

³ **denounces** (*v.*): condemns; publically declares to be wrong or evil