

A Short Note on Satire

Satire is a literary method, which may be used in prose, poetry and drama alike. Purpose of a satire is to reduce a subject to an object of ridicule. By doing so, it evokes in readers a sense of amusement, contempt, indignation or scorn. A satire uses laughter as a weapon against a person, a class, a society or a nation. Dryden claimed that the actual purpose of a satire was 'the amendment of vices'. Swift defines a satire as 'a sort of glass wherein beholder's do generally discover everybody's face but their own, which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it.

In the Augustan Age in English literature, writers of satire were Ben Jonson, Dryden, Pope, Jonathan Swift, Daniel Defoe. These satirist followed the Roman model of a satire developed by Horace and Juvenal. In Horatian satire, the speaker is the tolerant, urbane and amused spectator of human follies and vices. In Juvenalian satire, the speaker is a serious moralist a bitter and misanthropic temperament. Pope followed Horace in his Moral Essays, and Juvenal in his Dunciad.

The satirical poetry of the 18th century was mostly ~~adopted~~ composed in heroic couplet. It was a favourite form of the verse satirists. Heroic couplet was developed by Sir John Denham and Edmund Waller. The major verse satires of this period were The Medal, Mac Flecknoe, The Rape of the Lock, et