

CONCEPT OF SATIRE IN LITERATURE

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Good morning, today we will talk of satire, the concept of satire and satire in fiction in particular. The basic question is what is a satire and how should we differentiate, how should we critically beware of a text which contains of satire which could called be a satire. The famous poet John Dryden, he once said that the best way to differentiate any writing, whether it is a satire or not, is to know from the point of view of the intent of the author. That is what the writer, the author wants to do through a particular text which he or she has written. So the intention behind the writing defines whether it is satire or not.

Now what is satire and who is satirist. Look at the difference between the two pronunciations here. We are deviating a little but still we should know. A text is a satire, and the person who writes or the writer is called a satirist not a **satireist**. So a satirist writes satire. So what is a satire basically, satire somehow and the satirist taking along the satirist and the satire together, is a kind of writing in which the author in particular is sensitive to certain social issues and he has in his mind, he has through his own ideology and word view, a certain norm which society should follow. Norm here doesn't indicate a set of rules in particular. Norm could be translated and understood in terms of ideal which one cherishes norm could be as it indicates normalcy or norm could be a certain way of life which would prevail in general in society. So the satirist or the author he has a norm which the society follows which are established in society. He is very acutely aware of those norms and very sensitive towards those norms. And wherever he discovers, wherever he has certain sudden deviation from these norms these deviations these anomalies bothered the satirist, bothers the person, the citizen, the sensitive mind, who the satirist is all about and he writes with a name to correct those deviations. And to bring back those deviations back to the norm or normalcy or the ideal whatever it may be. So the intent which we talked about right in the beginning, intent is generated and governed by an idea of correction in the mind of the writer. So the satirist is basically doing the job of the corrective or the text the satire in another words is a corrective measure in which the intent is to correct the deviations which have taken place in general in society. We can pick up an analogy here to understand, and this is a very oft coated analogy what is satirist is doing and through this analogy we will be able to differentiate between kinds of satires also types of satires which are prevalent in society and may be since Greek times or that is ancient times you can say. Suppose there is a person who gets sick and goes to a doctor, he says that there is some problem in my arm and some pain in the elbow or somewhere. So the doctor checks him up or may be some tests or something like that but the old fashioned doctor will look at the pulse and see the certain wear and tear in the muscles. Now they are two kinds of doctor. One will say that ok, I am giving you some exercises to do, some painkillers and the pain will subside in due course of the time and these exercises will again put strength in your muscle and you will feel better may be in a

fortnight's time and nobody can correct this kind of an ailment in two days or one day or in an hour. There is a different doctor also. He says what I will do this and I will correct it for the times to come. And that he will die. He is very bitter kind of person may be sadist kind of a person, Very cruel. He says I will amputate the arm you won't feel anything after that. So the same goes with a satire also, there are two kinds of satire since antiquity, one is called the Juvenalian satire which starts with J. Juvenalian, it comes from Juvenalian, Juvenalian satire. And the other is called the horatian satire comes from horace. So these two satires horatian and Juvenalian are the two basic traits which we find in satire. One is very harsh in which may be the arms is amputated to get rid off the thing and deviation, the person again is normal in the sense although he doesn't have an arm but he feel bad about that arm. The other is Juvenalian, it is mild a satire in which may be some medication some counseling some physiotherapy is done and nothing much in the sense in way of intervention is done and again one thing should be noted here in both these cases whether it is horatian satire Juvenalian satire the intent is to correct the malady. So this is for record that there are two kinds of satires prevalent one is horatian and the other is Juvenalian. Usually what we get in literature, Juvenalian or the mild satire. One great example is may be most of you must have gone through it and most of the literature students in their masters certainly go through it, major poem which Alexander Pop wrote, *The Rape of the Lock*, it's a small incident and yet Alexander Pop is the great writer the great poet mocks the society points out certain anomaly that is the vanity a typical vaniticious kind of a way of living which the lords and ladies of his contemporary times were indulging in, he laughs at them, and get them in very mild manner he laughed at them, there is lot of irony the content of irony is thrown in, lot of humor is also thrown in here, and yet the intention of Alexander Pop in *The Rape of the Lock* is serious, is the somehow address the deviations which are taking place in society which taking society in s wrong direction altogether from the norm and through his own satire through his own poem *The Rape of the Lock*, he wants to again bring it back to the normal.

This is the example from the poetry, if we look at narratives and fictional writing in general we can go back to certain checks, which one incorporate satire, incorporate mild satire in the sense that they certainly not mocking but trying to indicate and point out the anomalies which are prevalent may be in an institution in society in a custom in society or may be a typical process in society. So how can we sum up this whole discussion till this juncture is, that are satire basically is a corrective, a satire basically of two kinds, and a satire is known by the kind of intention of the author pursues in that typical kind of a writing. Take an example of narrative which again is very common and most of people have written the Classic written by Jane Austen, what Jane Austen is doing, Jane Austen is somehow derive it by certain critics and particularly in own times critics mentioned that he only writes for marriages and may be a few couple here and there. But am I in particular of course *Pride and Prejudice* which again is a very famous novel by Jane Austen in particular, these two novels, these two narratives or fictional narratives, can be categorized as mild satire. Although the issue is marriage. But Jane Austen problematises the whole issue from the point of you of how marriage is the basic unit of society and how when we deviate from certain norms whether in the case of bride

or the groom or may be the girl or boy. For the anomalies take in if we pay attention to certain things which are uncalled for in human inter relationship. That's totally unwelcome in Jane Austen's norm of society. She is info of very matured love she doesn't give you any levy in a narratives where passions or intense passions unlike may be Charlotte Brontë or *Jane Eyre*, or may be *Wuthering Heights*, she pays more attention to mature, sober intent kind of the human relationship and in the marriage, which as a lineage, we don't know but critics have pointed out lineage which trace to Shakespeare and Shakespeare in comedy in particular as you like it is case in point where the whole romantic comedy like as you like it ends in marriages, mass marriages, 3-4 marriages are taking place. The same thing happens in Jane Austen's *Emma*, whereas the four marriages which take place in the course of the novel. One is already taken place as we entered the novel, the other one takes place in the middle which we are not aware of, the third is proposed and the final the marriage of Emma and Mr. Knightley is certainly there in the offering in the end of the novel. So the marriage basically is an issue which she problemtises, the marriage is a basic unit of society, it is the serious issue which you think and this is how she picks up the concept of marriage satirizes it how it is being derided by people. through an interplay of on the passion it indulges in, a kind of puppy love and she plays, particularly lays more stress on a character like Knightley. Emma who is vaniticious in the beginning she satirizes her character also. But there is mild irony through all through the novel you can find that nowhere Jane Austen is bitter, nowhere Jane Austen says throw the bucket out of the window. Jane Austen only hints through in direction that how a proper inter human or interpersonal relationship could be avail, how it should be approached how it should look at the whole institution of marriage and how the marriages are more and more stable, we create of society more stable towards the end of the novel what we find. So satire and the kinds of satire, types of satire, how to distinguish between satires, how may be *The Rape of Lock*, has the intent of the great poet behind it, how the lords and ladies, the kind of lives of they are living. Then one example from a fictional work that is Jane Austen, so Emma and may be finally we can move towards a satire which has larger ambit which in modern times particularly entered the fiction or the fictional genre in particular which is called a social satire. So social satire we find in novels of Dickens in which particularly we can take example of *Hard Times* of Charles Dickens where he criticizes may be an industrial or pre industrial time as town the cock town is in the particular and kind of life which people live in those small townships in pre industrial era in England moving towards industrialization or rapid industrialization, which people were living and the conditions which were prevalent, so social satires is an ambit which is larger in scope, larger social issues, how a satire is created, what is the major vehicle of satire from the point of view of the formal elements of the language. I think the major vehicle is irony, irony is a device it's a linguistic device and the simplest way of how irony can be explained, when something is said and something else if I said you are a fool then certainly you are not fool but you are very intelligent and this is an example of verbal irony for that matter verbally I tried to convey something which I don't intend yet I want the meaning that is the exactly opposite meaning is to be conveyed. But irony is not as simple, in literature it is not simple as that and particularly when a satirist is using irony or device of irony he uses a very certain form of irony and of course mild but very certain form of irony that is dramatic

irony and may be a situational irony which comes in of course while the great author somebody ask them to define irony, he said, irony is the awareness of the other case. Then what is this other case, this other case may or may not be the opposite that is it can be something else but not certainly the case in point which is being talked about. It is something else. Irony is if we want to conceptualise irony, irony is a device which generates a larger context within the milieu, you have landscape you have a situation but through irony a situation beyond the present is imagined. So it is a device which enlarges the whole literature. It enlarges the space which the immediate text occupies. In a way this contextualizing device irony if it has to be somehow correlated with satire and satirist, it is an awareness which is generated through irony of the deviations which have taken place from a standardized norms. The satire doesn't talks directly or the satirist is not talking directly of the deviations, he talks of the norms and yet the deviations are indicated at because the mode of expression talking or narration is ironical and when most of sometimes when he talking of deviations it is not merely deviations which he is talking about that is he can take his point if he hints at enough for that matter, Jane Austen's Emma, we can take as an example that at the first line which reads in Emma the novelist, that here is a girl of 21 who is rich who is handsome, handsome incidentally is typical word used for beautiful woman at that time also in Jane Austen's time so its handsome, rich and young it reads like that, the first line reads like a matrimonial and at the same time the key line, the key phrase in that first line is that who had her way rather too much that is whatever she wanted to have in life, nobody said no to her till that juncture. In a way Jane Austen is only indicating in a very mild manner the deviation which is there in Emma's character, but at the same time she is trying to paint her character distinctly by may be 21 years defining her age, by indicating her economic and social background as a rich person and handsome may be her whole character, her physiognomy which completes her character, so here is woman of 21 who is handsome, rich but ironically till now till date she had had rather too much her own way so that is the deviation which has taken place and this is where may be a little correction is intended from the point of view of satirist that if Emma remains what Emma is till the end of the novel then if she enters into some kinds or any kinds of interpersonal relationship that having too much her own way can deputize that relationship. Jane Austen as a satirist corrects this deviation and this is why sometimes when people read Emma there are papers carrying this title education of Emma Woodhouse so the whole process of the novel as Emma grows, we grow, the story grow we read that how a kind of correction is undertaken by the writer how Emma learns her lessons not the hard way but in a way in which takes part, in a way her life is being lived, in a way other people come and contact with her and gradually she learns that typical vanity which she suffers from, a typical vanity in the sense that she always think that she is always correct she is a queen of that little town of Highbury where she lived when she realizes that she is a woman, she may be a wife and she has to take or establish her house households, there and then I think the whole the concept of satire bringing back the deviation which was there in Emma's character back to the norms and in the marriage takes place. So irony here is important in the sense that till the end of the novel we the readers are aware of this that what is going on in the novel at certain juncture we are privy to the designs of the writer but the character Emma is nor or doesn't have even resemblance of what is

going on so this is the reality also. This is the reality in sense that this is what creates a sense of reality in the mind of the reader that here is a character who doesn't what she is doing, here is a character who through her own deeds or misdeeds learns about the anomalies in her own character, the deviations in her own character this is the irony. So and we know ironically if we want to define or look at Emma, Emma as people say is a novel of marriages, we know that Emma is very fond of matchmaking. The biggest irony in Emma is that Emma Woodhouse, who is known for making marriages and settlements for other people or the other couples, doesn't know how to go about her own marriage. Emma Woodhouse who is introduced right at the beginning as a very close relationship the Woodhouse and the Knightley's, she is not aware that it is Mr. Knightley Junior who is going to be a suitable groom for her towards the end of the novel.

So if we sum up, we know what a satire is, from the kind of intent of the writer possesses, we know how the deviations which are there in the norm, the intent is to bring them back to correct those deviations. We know there are two kinds of satires and so and so.

Now if you have any queries you are free to ask them and may be clarifications can be offered and the reading list will provided towards the end of the lecture.

Q. How is the satire different from Sarcasms?

A. Sarcasm the very word I think brings in mind somebody who is very bitter basically he is sarcastic, sarcastic has this tendency to be a sadist. So satire is different from sarcasm in the sense, the satirist is very rarely individual he is not hitting at an individual, he picks up certain things or issues which have larger significance. Now you may ask why we take example of Emma Woodhouse for that matter, Emma is not an individual here Emma is representative of all the young girls in a particular scenario. On the other hand sarcasm is directed towards an individual most of the time. From one individual to the other individual. Satire on the other hand, is free from this individual or personalize attacks. Satire and the satirist are doing things and having tension to create or to tackle a larger social issue and through irony through mild humor create some correction through awareness, through may be some iconoclastic method that is pricking certain balloons which people have in their minds, which take them away from the norm and move them towards deviations. So we can take one example here from another mode of socially relevant kind of expression or communication that is a caricature. A caricature is a kind of sketch where an individual anomaly is highlighted. I don't know but in our times when Mrs. Indira Gandhi use to be the Prime Minister her caricature will hint at distinguished or stand out feature in her facial expression that is her nose and she was shown because she had that dominance as a hawkish kind of her nose. So caricature also is something which is very individual, it is very personal, so what caricature is to cartoon, sarcasm is to the larger ambit of humor, irony and may be satire. I think I hope myself, I am fully clear.