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Author: R.A.

Date: September 2026.

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Section (1) Defining Satire

To define what Satire means and is I researched the subject using the following Books: (A) The Original Roget's International Thesaurus, of which I will present some of my findings. (B) Volume 26 of The Britannica Encyclopedia, and again I will report my findings. (C) I also reviewed information found in Volume 10 of the Britannica Encyclopedia (viz., "Satire"), and I again will offer my findings. On the one hand this Essay may seem over simplistic, but on the other hand it gives an uncluttered and useful insight into what Satire is and how it is used. Only after understanding what Satire means and is, can we then appreciate the work of Jonathan Swift's Satire. This said, let us follow the outline of this Essay and first discover what is said about Satire in (1) The Original Roget's International Thesaurus:

(A) To locate some general ideas of what Satire means I turned to The Original Roget's International Thesaurus (footnote 2) and looked up the word 'Satire' in its back Index pages. I was instructed to go to section 489 at the front of the Book (page 368) to discover more about "Wit and

Humor." Therefore, we discover immediately that Satire is a kind of wit and humor, and more importantly, a kind of 'sarcasm.' But what is sarcasm? To find this out I looked-up the word 'Sarcasm' (found in Section 508 of this Book, viz., page 381), and discovered the word buried under the more general term of 'Ridicule.' We can therefore say that Satire is a kind of wit or humor and it is sarcastic in nature and involves a 'ridiculing' of something or other. And 'ridiculing' itself means, amongst other things, mocking, taunting, sneering and targeting something or someone for derision. In summarizing, by thumbing through the pages of The Original Roget's International Thesaurus, we can say that Satire is a word describing the 'ridiculing' of something or other.

(B) Another reliable and highly insightful understanding of Satire can be found on page 185 in the Essay called: The Art of Literature, discovered in Volume 26 of The Britannica Encyclopedia (footnote 3). In this article it says this:

Start the quotation:

"Nearly all satirists write apologies, and nearly all the apologies project the image of the satirist as a plain, honest man, wishing harm to no worthy person but appalled at the evil he sees around him and forced by his conscience to write satire. Pope's claim is the most extravagant:

Yes, I am proud: I must be proud to see
Men not afraid of God, afraid of me:
Safe from the Bar, the Pulpit and the Throne,
Yet touched and shamed by Ridicule alone,
O Sacred Weapon! Left for Truth's defense,
Sole Dread of Folly, Vice and Insolence!

(Epilogue to the Satires, II, 208-13)

After the great age of satire, which Pope brought to a close, such pretensions would have been wholly anachronistic. Ridicule depends on shared assumption against which the deviant stands in naked relief. [The relationship between the satirist and the audience.] The satirist must have an audience that shares with him commitment to certain intellectual and moral standards that validates his attacks on the aberration. The greatest satire has been written in periods when ethical and rational norms were sufficiently powerful to attract widespread assent yet not so powerful as to compel absolute conformity- those periods when the satirist could be of his society and yet apart, could exercise a double vision."

End of Quotation.

This is an important contribution and advances our understanding as to what Satire is. For example, and as the article says, Satire involves "plain, honest men" pointing out with somewhat of a bitter jeer what most every-day people see and realize, but cannot spare the time to construct a formal remark about it. It is critical to successful Satire that there is also an intimate three-way relationship between (i) the satirist (ii) what he is jeering at, and (iii) the audience he is telling it to. For instance we all have seen, as citizens ten Government road-workers looking at a hole in the road, and getting paid double what we get paid, to do it. Now, by offering this illustration there is created a three-way relationship that is completely understood, meaning you(i) and I(ii) both know what we are sneering about(iii). The *shared* sneer lies at the heart of successful Satire, and an off-the-cuff bitter remark, shifts the satirical sneer into the lower comedy of Ridicule. Even the poem quoted in the passage above arguments the hidden satirical sneer re-cloaking itself in the more shared and general garb of Ridicule.

In this above passage is also the idea of 'double vision' and this is also critical to successful Satire. Carefully said, on the one hand, if we take the example of the ten men gathered around the hole, they all could be there for a very good reason, as we all may think, if we have time to think it. But on the other hand, the quick sneer of ridicule and the reproach that they are simply good for nothings, easily allows humanity to share in the Satirists double vision. This double-vision must be balanced perfectly with common sensibility in order that we all can appreciate both-sides-of-the-joke.

(C)The following understanding of Satire is found on page 467 of Volume 10 of the Britannica Encyclopedia (viz., "Satire") (footnote 4):

Satire, artistic form, chiefly literary and dramatic, in which human or individual vices, follies, abuses or shortcomings are led up to censure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony or other methods sometimes with an intent to bring about improvement...The 20th Century English Poet Edward Lucie Smith pointed out that however much the satirist claims to criticize from a lofty position, he may easily end up simply venting his spleen...

What is important to note in this quotation are two things: The lighter side of Satire: First, it is the vague and 'general idea' of human "vices and follies" that allows the notion of Ridicule to be softened somewhat, and the "vices and follies" of humanity to be more laughed at than sneered at; and such Satire allows a kind of shared pitying to be promoted. It is true that some designs of Satire have a less-harsh and more twinkle-in-the eye appeal, and this should be mentioned. Just think of the name of the famous drama-play called "She Stoops to Conquer". We may know nothing about the play, but the title of the play suggests and includes a shared smile about the plays possible dynamic; and this is

somewhat a sense of the lighter side of Satire. But second is this, and it is the darker side of Satire: It has been pointed out in this above remark that the Satirist may end up just "venting his spleen." In this instance the Satirist may be just spitting out a cold blend of jealousy and spite, but it would fail to have a completely *shared* three-way audience relationship, and therefore would be difficult for some to appreciate. Good Satire could be defined as an acceptable balance between three things: a caustic wit, general observation, and the careful avoidance of offence when presenting it.

I will conclude my research in to defining what Satire is by saying this: Satire is a carefully created Ridicule; a carefully created Ridicule that is mirrored or appreciated by both the person creating the Ridicule and those he is relating the Ridicule too; it is a successful three way comedic relationship. Meaning, "The satirist must have an audience that shares with him commitment to certain intellectual and moral standards that validates his attacks on the aberration." Satire is a social commentary that uses jeers, leg-pulling and mockery to create a shared understanding of the glaring stupidities of humanity. When I was at University I read a paper in a Journal about a philosopher that decided on a new grading system for farm eggs. He was given a Grant to do research on it. After returning from the farm he published his research results. His research stated that grading the eggs small, medium and large, was inefficient. And now in my part of the world, due to his research, we have eggs graded using algebraic letters. No longer do we have a small egg but rather it is a "BCC+". If we could all sneer at this unfortunate and genuine change made by a meddling philosopher, then we would all know perfectly well what Satire is.

Section (2) A Presentation of Jonathan Swift's Satire

(2) I will now reproduce a passage from Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels identifying his use of Satire. In particular I present the first three paragraphs from Chapter V of Gulliver's Travels which describes his voyage to Balnibarbi (see Footnote 1). **Start quotation:**

The author permitted to see the grand academy of Lagado. The academy largely described. The arts wherein the professors employ themselves.

This academy is not an entire single building, but a continuation of several houses on both sides of a street; which growing waste, was purchased and applied to that use. I was received very kindly by the warden, and went for many days to the academy. Every room hath in it one or more projectors: and, I believe, I could not be in fewer than 500 rooms.

The first man I saw was of a meager aspect, with sooty hands and face: his hair and beard long ragged and singed in several places. His clothes, shirt, and skin, were all of the same color: he had been eight years upon a project for extracting sun-beams out of cucumbers; which were to be put into vials, hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the air, in raw inclement summers. He told me, he did not doubt, in eight years more, that he should be able to supply the governor's gardens with sun-shine at a reasonable rate; but, he complained that his stock was low, and entreated me to give him something as an encouragement to ingenuity, especially since this had been a very dear season for cucumbers: i made him a small present, for my lord had furnished me with money on purpose, because he knew their practice of begging from all who go to see them.

I went into another chamber, but was ready to hasten back, being almost overcome with a horrible stink; my conductor pressed me forward, conjuring me in a whisper to give no offense, which would be highly resented; and therefore, I durst not so much as stop my nose. The projector of this cell was the most ancient student of the academy: his face and beard were of a pale yellow: his hands and clothes daubed with filth. When I was presented to him, he gave me a very close embrace, (a complement I could have well excused;) his employment from first coming into the academy was an operation to reduce human excrement to its original food by separating the several parts, removing the tincture which it receives from the gall, making the odor exhale, and scumming off the saliva. He had a weekly allowance from the society, of a vessel filled with human ordure, about the bigness of a Bristol barrel.

I saw another at work to calcine ice into gun-powder, who likewise shewed me a treatise he had written, concerning the malleability of fire, which he intended to publish.

This ends the quotation

Section 3: I will now offer original insights and suggestions regarding the matter.

In this section I will now offer original insights and suggestions regarding the matter of Satire but unfortunately time is short and I will only discuss the following paragraph that appears in the above quotation: **Start quote**

This academy is not an entire single building, but a continuation of several houses on both sides of a street; which growing waste, was purchased and applied to that use. I was received very kindly by the warden, and went for many days to the academy. Every room hath in it one or more projectors: and, I believe, I could not be in fewer than 500 rooms.

The first man I saw, was of a meager aspect, with sooty hands and face: his hair and beard long, ragged and singed in several places. His clothes, shirt, and skin, were all of the same color: he had been eight years upon a project for extracting sun-beams out of cucumbers; which were to be put into vials, hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the air, in raw inclement summers. He told me, he did not doubt, in eight years more, that he should be able to supply the governor's gardens with sun-shine at a reasonable rate; but, he complained that his stock was low, and intreated me to give him something as an encouragement to ingenuity, especially since this had been a very dear season for cucumbers: i made him a small present, for my lord had furnished me with money on purpose, because he knew their practice of begging from all who go to see them.

End of quote

But now let us keep in mind the three-way relationship tool and the 'double-vision' tool that the Satirists are required to use when creating Satire: First, Swift offers, if we read the above excerpt from his *Gulliver's Travels*, the very snide remark that this Academy was built on waste ground, rather than premium ground, as most Universities are. (You will find that most of the important Universities are built in the very center of the city.) This common 'double-vision' of *knowledge of where Universities are usually built* allows us to laugh at this two sided joke or Satire.

Second: what about the long description of the man who is trying to extract sunlight from cucumbers? Using 'double-vision' we can say this: On the one hand we can say that it is a ridiculous thing to do. Who would spend their life doing such a foolish thing when we are naturally surrounded by sunlight? This is the sneering laughter side of the joke. On the other hand, using the 'double-vision' of Satire Swift is criticizing, as we all sometimes do, the amounts of money and human effort squandered away by foolish governments and Universities. But let us now map onto Swift the important three-way relationship Satire mechanism, meaning this: In his criticism of the man in the Academy trying to extract sunlight from cucumbers, (i) the Satirist, namely Swift, is writing to a (ii) *generally educated audience* such as you and I, about (iii) some kind of foolishness *that we all have knowledge of* in every day encounters; and because this three-way understanding relationship holds, successful Satire obtains. But

in this above instance also note that Swift plays the honest and sensible every-day man, making his Satire even more effective.

Third: If we read this first passage again, we discover the careful use of the words black, filthy and sooty, and such things as burnt black and singed clothes, and so on, and it could just mean we must put back on our 'double-vision' spectacles in order to view the deeper meanings of his Satire. Think of it this way, on the one hand this a children's adventure story but on the other hand the book is also written for adults. In our case, let us boldly suppose it is written for adults as well, and let us boldly suppose it includes adult Satire, but if so, then we are boldly allowed to think in the following way: We all generally agree that to the everyday person the project seems ridiculous, extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, and naturally this provokes sneers and mockery. But more than this is possibly the deeper idea, an idea that is rarely mentioned, of a man with a profound cucumber obsession, whereby the cucumber is clearly of a phallic shape, and whereby he has been fondling the phallic shape for many years at time, stroking it incessantly to extract its sunlight. Is this explainable jeer ever mentioned in polite examinations of Swift's Satire? Is this is the darkest kind of adult Satire clothed in the twinkling smile of childish Ridicule?

I will now summarize my paper: The Title of this Great Book Essay is called 'Satire In Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels' and it is inspired by reading Jonathan Swift's adventure story 'Gulliver's Travels', an adventure story found in Volume 36 of the Great Books of the Western World.(see footnote 1 for complete bibliography) In this Essay I have (1) defined what Satire is; then (2) I have reproduced a passage from Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels identifying his use of Satire; then (3) I have offered my own understanding and remarks on the matter. Cicero remarked that the purpose of any kind of writing, such as this, is to ideally educate, entertain and ornament human intellect. This was my purpose as well.

Bibliography:

Footnote 1: Volume 36, 'Swift and Stern', Great Books Of The Western World, In particular Read his Gulliver's Travels, Chapter V, Page 107, "A Voyage To Balnibarbi." [These are the complete publishing details: Great Books Of The Western World. Robert Maynard Hutchins, Editor in Chief. Mortimer J. Adler, Associate Editor. William Benton, Publisher. Encyclopedia Inc., Chicago, London, Toronto. The University Of Chicago. The Great Books is published with the editorial advice of the faculties of the University Of Chicago. Copyright in the United States of America, 1952. A biography of Jonathan Swift is provided at the front of the Book.

Footnote 2: The Original Roget's International Thesaurus. Revised and Updated. The 6th Edition. Edited By Barbara Ann Kipfer, Ph.D. And Robert L. Chapman, Ph.D. Consulting Editor. HarperResource, an Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers. Copyright 2001. ISBN: 0-06-273693-0 (plain) This is a large table-top hard-backed book. There are 1248 pages in this single book.

Footnote 3: This quotation comes from the Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 23, and from the Essay entitled The Art Of Literature; and then see subsection "The Satirist, Law and Society" on page 185. These are the full publishing details: The New Encyclopedia Britannica. Volume 23. Macropaedia. Knowledge in Depth. Founded in 1768. 15th Edition, 1990. "Let knowledge grow from more to more and thus be human life enriched." The Encyclopedia Britannica is published with the editorial advice of the faculties of the University of Chicago. Library of Congress Card Catalogue Number:88-83263. Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. Mr. Robert P. Gwinn, Chairman, Board of Directors. / Mr. Peter B. Norton, President. / Mr. Philip W. Goetz, Editor In Chief. And then see the Publication Page in the front of this book.

Footnote 4: These are the full publishing details: The following understanding of Satire is found on page 467 of Volume 10 of the Britannica Encyclopedia (viz., "Satire"). The New Encyclopedia Britannica. Volume 10. Micropaedia. Knowledge in Depth. Founded in 1768. 15th Edition. 1990. "Let knowledge grow from more to more and thus be human life enriched." The Encyclopedia Britannica is published with the editorial advice of the faculties of the University of Chicago. Library of Congress Card Catalogue Number:88-83263. Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. Mr. Robert P. Gwinn, Chairman, Board of Directors. / Mr. Peter B. Norton, President. / Mr. Philip W. Goetz, Editor In Chief. And then see the Publication Page in the front of this book.