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Perhaps the most striking quality of satiric literature is its freshness, its originality of perspective. Satire rarely offers original ideas. Instead, it presents the familiar in a new form. Satirists do not offer the world new philosophies. What they do is to look at familiar conditions from a perspective that makes these conditions seem foolish, harmful, or affected. Satire jars us out of complacency into a pleasantly shocked realization that many of the values we unquestioningly accept are false. Don Quixote derides the stupidity of knights Brave New World ridicules the pretensions of science. A Modest Proposal dramatizes starvation by advocating cannibalism. None of these ideas is original. Chivalry was suspect before Cervantes, humanists objected to the claims of pure science before Aldous Huxley, and people were aware of famine before Swift. It was not the originality of the idea that made these satires popular. It was the manner of expression, the satiric method that made them interesting and entertaining. Satires are read because they are aesthetically satisfying works of art, not because they are morally wholesome or ethically instructive. They are stimulating and refreshing because with commonsense briskness they brush away illusions and secondhand opinions. With spontaneous irreverence, satire rearranges perspectives, scrambles familiar objects into incongruous juxtaposition, and speaks in a personal idiom instead of

abstract platitude. Satire exists because there is need for it. It has lived because readers appreciate a refreshing stimulus, an irreverent reminder that they live in a world of platitudinous thinking, cheap moralizing, and foolish philosophy. Satire serves to prod people into an awareness of truth, though rarely to any action on behalf of truth. Satire tends to remind people that much of what they see, hear, and read in popular media is sanctimonious, sentimental, and only partially true. Life resembles in only a slight degree the popular image of it. Soldiers rarely hold the ideals that movies attribute to them, nor do ordinary citizens devote their lives to unselfish service of humanity. Intelligent people know these things but tend to forget them when they do not hear them expressed.

讽刺文学或许讽刺文学最显著的特点是其视角的新颖性和独特性。讽刺作品很少有创造性的思想。相反，它用一种新的形式把人们熟悉的东西呈现出来。讽刺作家没有为世界贡献新的哲学。他们所做的就是采取这样一种立场来看待熟悉的环境，使得它们看上去愚蠢、有害或者造作。讽刺作品使我们排除了自满情绪，并愉快地惊叹道许多我们毫无疑问地接受的价值观是错误的。《堂吉诃德》使骑士看起来愚蠢可笑；《奇妙的新世界》嘲弄了科学的自命不凡；《温和的建议》戏剧性地提倡同类相食来消灭饥饿。所有这些观点都不是创造性的。在塞万提斯以前骑士制度就受到了怀疑，在阿尔道斯赫胥黎以前的人文主义者就反对纯科学的主张，而且在斯威夫特以前就认识了饥荒。并不是独创性的思考使这些讽刺作品变得流行，而是表达的方式、讽刺的方法手段使它们变得有趣和引人入胜。人们读讽刺作品是因为在美感上它们是令人满意的艺术作

品，而不是因为道德的完美和伦理的说教。它们有启发性、使人耳目一新是因为它们用简明的常识洗刷去了幻觉和旧的观点。讽刺作品用自然的嘲讽态度重新设置了观点，将熟悉的事物自相矛盾地置在一起。讽刺文学用自己的语言，而不是采用抽象的陈词滥调来表达。讽刺作品的存在是由于有需求。它的存在是因为读者欣赏使人耳目一新的刺激，毫不客气地提醒他们活在一个思想陈腐、道德低廉、哲学荒谬的世界里。讽刺作品有助于促进人们认识真相，虽然很少促动人们为真理而行动。它有助于提醒人们日常媒介中所见所闻所谈的许多东西是假装神圣、感情用事或半真半假。生活只在很少程度上与它流行的映像相象，战士很少有电影赋予他们的完美，一般的公民也很少奉献他们的生命为人类无私的服务。明智的人们了解这些事理，但当他们没有听到这些事理，就倾向于把它们忘掉。100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 [www.100test.com](http://www.100test.com)