

## Chapter - One

### Introduction

#### **Indictment of Academic Mores in Jane Smiley's *Moo***

Jane Smiley, in her novel *Moo*, satirizes rampant academic scenario of contemporary America demonstrating the vices and follies of university staff and students. Through omniscient narrator's comment, she reveals the thoughts, internal feelings and acts of each character, sometimes evoking humor. She uses humor, thus, not as an end in itself but to satirize the entire university staff and students. Likewise, "incongruous limitation" is there in the text, namely --burlesque. Omniscient narrator's comment embodies the burlesque quality. Thus, academic mores of university are not directly condemned and accused of, but are shown as "naked truth" to satirize entire academia by using humor, burlesque and omniscient narrative point of view.

Satire is a verbal caricature that shows a deliberately distorted image of a person, institution or society. A satirist attacks certain person, entire human, institution or society. So, the subject of satiric ridicule is known as its "butt". The satirist brings out the deformity of an institution, person or society. However, the satirist aims at constructive purpose. In Smiley's *Moo*, "butt" is Moo University, by extension, entire American academia. Since a satirist usually attacks man, her satiric ridicule also pinches at man inside the university. Distorted image of university is presented. Student and staff forget everything which is related to their field and involve in other activities which are far away from the province of education.

As an element of satire, humor is used which means to make others laugh or to amuse others. Humor helps a satirist to attack the butt easily. There is danger that if one tries to show other's weakness being so crude, one might not take it as usual and quarrel may occur. Contrarily, if one tells something by evoking humor, there is both amusement as well as attack on the deformity.

Humor can be evoked by various means. Mechanical repetition of same word, phrase or sentence creates laughter. Another means to evoke laughter is exaggeration. If a common matter is exaggerated highly, contrarily to our expectation, humor is evoked. Another prominent device is imitation. Omniscient narrator imitates other's way of speaking and it also evokes laughter. Stupidity, oddness, and absurdity also create laughter. Surprise is also a prominent device used by a satirist to create humor.

Along with humor, burlesque is another element used by a satirist which is defined as "incongruous imitation". Petty subject matters are elevated highly and elevated subjects are debased in it. Parody, travesty are kinds of burlesque. In burlesque, chanson singers, cabaret, strip-tease action and dance scenes, sexually suggestive dialogue and action can be observed.

There are two kinds of burlesque on the basis of imitation: high burlesque and low burlesque. If the form and style are high and dignified but subject is low or trivial, it is known as high burlesque. If the subject is high in status and dignity but the style and manner of treatment are low and undignified, it is known as low burlesque. In the text, there are different evidences that prove *Moo* as a burlesque novel. Smiley parodies Shakespearean comedy. Purpose is to satirize university staff and students. Another instance to show burlesque is depiction of hog. Simple hog is described in elevated style. It is exaggerated, too. One entire chapter is written

regarding hog. The hog's death is also magnified which is itself a petty subject matter. Mortal hog is sure to die but the hog's death is sentimentalized. Moreover, there are students-Kerri, Merry, Sherri and Diana-who involve in sexual activity; sometimes talk with sexually suggestive dialogue. Strip-tease and bawdy scene occur time and again. Dance and music also stand for burlesque.

Likewise, omniscient narrator finds out the secrecy prevailed in university people's mind. It explores their internal thoughts, feelings and acts. It comments on character's deformity. Moreover, it creates surprise through comment. Eccentricity, stupidity and oddness are other qualities which are shown by the omniscient narrator. It imitates the characters' way of speaking. This narrator, then, activates satire. It also embodies instances of humor and burlesque. Thus, it is to help the satirist, which explores what is distorted there; what weakness and drawbacks of the characters are and what the academic people do.

Ample examples or textual evidences can be extracted that prove *Moo* as a satire on academia. Instances of humor, burlesque and omniscient narrator's comment are helpful evidences to prove it as a satiric novel. While Timothy Monahan talks to Cecelia, he says, "She has two vaginas" (57). This odd, stupid and eccentric remark of a university professor creates humor because it is out of a general reader's expectation. Likewise, in course of conversation between Elaine Dobbs Jellinek and Dr Bo Jones, there is also creation of humor after the narrator explores latter's thought. The narrator comments, "Fundable ideas are better ideas. In this case chickens are fundable, so chickens are a better idea, you see? No, Dr. Bo thought, he did not see" (245). Similarly, for burlesque, there is bawdy scene between Helen and Ivar, "She opens her legs and lifts them backward, inviting him, but he

resists the invitation in an impossible way, like a man who has jumped off a diving board” (95).

Jane Smiley’s 1995 novel, *Moo*, follows a complicated story of academia. Among the more greedy and corrupted type that Smiley portrays are Dr. Lionel Gift, an intellectual whore who calls students “customers”. Dr. Bo Jones, who is conducting a secret experiment on an appealing boar, named Earl Butz. Mrs. Walker, bossy secretary, runs entire university. Timothy Monahan, professor of creative writing is negatively influenced by literature. He makes love with Cecelia, assistant professor of foreign language. Mary, Kerri, Diana and Sherri are students in Moo University who all have their own secrets. They come to university to spend the time but not to learn something. Furthermore, Chairman X, president of horticulture department, constantly struggles against the urge to violence. Yet, he throttles Dean of egg extension, Nils Harstad. Loraine Stroop, a paranoid loony farmer, invents a machine by which he wants to modernize the agriculture of America and thereby, wants to uplift the strata of Moo University.

This novel is divided into seventy chapters. There is no coherent plot. In chapter “Who’s in Bed with Whom”, sexual and homosexual activities are illustrated. Students like Diana and Bob Carlson, a sophomore student, are in bed together. Timothy Monahan with Cecelia and Ivar Harstad, a provost, with Helen Levy, professor of foreign language. Likewise, Mrs. Loraine Walker is accompanied by Mrs Lake, a lesbian partner. 1960’s radical Marxist Chairman X sleeps with Beth who has not time to marry her. Thus, the central characters in *Moo* are the faculty and staff of the university itself.

Regarding style of *Moo*, it shifts from chapter to chapter with some sections focusing on an individual character, some braiding together several people on a single

day, some like “Who’s in Bed with Whom” examining a particular theme across campus. She juxtaposes realist narrative with chapters comprising news, stories, creative writing exercise, rumors, memos and/or letters.

An avowed feminist, Smiley has nonetheless made clear her interest in mapping the “emotional terrain of men as well as women, children as well as parents” (Seidman 4). An entire work might unfold from a single point of view, as in a novella *Good Will*, where she assumes the first person voice of an aging Vietnam War veteran trapped by his non-desperate effort to isolate his family from the corrupting influences of the broader culture. On the other hand, she might move the reader through a kaleidoscope of perspectives, as in *Barn Blind* where each family member is accorded an independent point on the steadily unfolding tragedy of the karisons. Trend of associating her novel with Shakespeare’s is also commented by Barbara Kitt Seidman, “In *A Thousand Acres*, Smiley transplanted William Shakespeare’s *King Lear* into Iowa countryside and reimagined it as a tragedy of primal violation and unrelenting vengeance at the very heart of the American vengeance” (4).

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the clarification of the title of the thesis and discusses about the clues which show the indictment regarding academia. For this purpose, satire, with its apt elements which are used in *Moo* is discussed.

The second chapter develops theoretical modality that is to be applied in the novel. The attempt is to co-relate satire and its means through which it is activated. Such means are humor, burlesque and omniscient narrator. This chapter comprises of brief introduction of satire, satirist, humor, theories of humor and conditions under which it is evoked, burlesque, kinds of burlesque and omniscient narrator. In chapter

third, theoretical part in text is applied analytically with textual evidences. Entire thesis is concluded in compact, brief and summarized way in chapter four.

### **Critical Perspectives on *Moo***

Jane Smiley's 1995 novel, *Moo*, has received many critical appraisals since its publication. Criticism from various perspectives shows its richness and literary height. Different critics looked at *Moo* from different perspectives. Basically, the text is viewed from Foucault's notion of power and discourse, racial and feminist perspective and from narrative point of view.

Regarding Foucault's notion of power and discourse, Kathy Acker comments, "I suggest tentatively that Jane Smiley attempts to use *Moo* to change readers' ideas. It is in some sense, a political text. Its clearest social message is that information leads to power; the university, the repository of information, is a focal point of unseen power" (21).

Thus, the university is taken as sources of information which is also a centre for unseen power. Likewise, Emily Toth looks at *Moo* from racial perspective and points out the plight and painful situation of black characters in the novel, "Smiley also knows how to make us wince at professional and regional peculiarities. The two black professors, always put on the same minority concerns communities, find each other excruciating" (49).

Similarly, Dale M. Baur in *Feminist Dialogics* views that Bhaktian notion of dialogics is incomplete because *Moo* ignores gender as an self-fashioning. Thus, Baur comments:

Bhaktin's discussion of social voices in texts is incomplete in that it ignores gender as an element in self-fashioning. She scrutinizing how text formulated from within patriarchal discourse may nonetheless

suggest ways of existence that change the predominant discourse. Her method of reading would expose dissenting voices in seemingly homogenous works that outwardly appear to endorse the status quo. (9)

This above quote also indicates feministic perspective. “How text formulated from within patriarch discourse” shows the critic’s idea of feminism. In the text, negating gender is similar to negate female identity which critics oppose.

Along with above-mentioned perspective, Jane Smiley’s narrator does not remain unscathed. Ryan Simmons comments, “[. . .] the type of narrator that Smiley represents holds a gendered position. By producing narrator who is able to impose coherence upon a confusing array of narratives, Smiley is subscribing to the patriarchal convention of authorship” (41). The critic views that Jane Smiley with the help her narrator supports conventional way of patriarchal writing. She does not subvert the predominant convention.

The reviews of literature show that many scholars have interpreted this novel from different perspectives. But my stance, here, is to prove it as a satiric novel which mildly satirizes against the academic follies of the then America.

To sum up, critical perspectives on this novel, chapter division, general introduction of it, satire-as tool and humor, burlesque and omniscient narrator as its elements are introduced in short.

## Chapter -Two

### Satire

Satire is a verbal caricature that shows a deliberately distorted image of a person, institution or society for the purpose of improvement. It also can be described as the literary art of “diminishing” or “derogating” a subject. A satirist “diminishes” or “derogates” a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards its attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn or indignation. Beckson and Ganz define it as “the ridicule of a subject to point out its faults” (qtd. in Kruezer and Richard 101). Likewise, R. C. Elliott views, “At various times, satire has been used by those wishing to avoid censure for a more direct statement of their views” (101).

Satire is an artistic form which is chiefly literary and dramatic. In satire, human or individual vices, follies, abuses, or short-comings are held up to censure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony or other methods, sometimes with an intent to bring about improvement. Regarding feature of satire, Alfred Bates comments, “A very common, almost defining feature of satire is a strong vein of irony or sarcasm. Also, parody burlesque, exaggeration, juxtaposition, comparison, analogy, and double entendre are devices frequently used in satirical speech and writing” (3).

Likewise, regarding definition of satire, William J. Long in *English Literature* views it as “[. . .] is a literary work which searches out the faults of men or institution in order to hold them up to ridicule-is at best a destructive kind of criticism” (261). Similarly, G.C. Thornley and Gwyneth Roberts define satire as “a work which tries to show how foolish someone or something is. The writer of satire is satirist” (n. pag.).



Satire is also defined as “the mean between libel and flattery, which heals with morals what it hurts with wit” (Walker 11). Likewise, Sutherland James comments, “Satire, then is not an extinct dinosaur or pterodactyl, a row of yellow bones in the literary museum, but a living and lively form that has still a vital part to play in twentieth-century literature” (22).

The word ‘satire’ comes from the Latin word ‘satura’ which means ‘full’ and then, comes to mean “a mixture of full different things”(18). “Butt” is an important element for a satirist. S/he, as a satirist, “diminishes” or “derogates” the “butt” that exists outside the work itself. “Butt” refers to the thing which is satirized by the satirist. It may be “an individual or a type of person, a class, an institution, a nation, and even the entire human race” (19). Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* satirizes against entire human.

Satire has usually been justified by those who practice it as a corrective of human vices and follies. Its frequent chain is to ridicule the failing rather than the individual. Hugh Walker comments, “The trivialities and follies of learning are a favorite subject with Pope” (172). Thus, Pope demonstrating follies and trivialities of learning wants to correct the system of learning. Likewise, in the preface to *The Battle of the Books*, Swifts admits, “Satire is a sort of glass, where in beholders do generally discover everybody’s face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind reception it meets with in the world, and that so very few are offended with it” (qtd. in Walker 85).

Pretense is an important “ingredient of satire” (97). This feature overlaps between satire and irony. Sometimes, a satirist may use irony to create tension. But Roger J. Kreuz and Richard M. Roberts view, “Satire, however, does not need to use

dramatic irony to be effective. Irony is a complex rhetorical device for satire but it is not a necessary feature of satire” (106).

The tradition of satire emphasizes the meaningless, material and inessential emergence of ideas from life. Thus, Claire Colebrook in *Irony* comments, “Satire points to the meaningless conditions of speech: all those experiences that are not yet organized into concepts or ideals” (111). To begin with, one can look at how satire “debunks” all the high ideals of rational human aspiration.

Satire, indeed, has didactic and constructive purpose. Kreuz and Roberts comment, “In satire, the author of the work has become the teacher, pretending ignorance to enlighten the readers” (101). It also “requires an audience to maintain multiple representations of a text which adds a new representational level to the processing of a text” (101). Furthermore, goal of satire is to comment on a state of the world which “accomplishes this commentary implicitly” (102). It is derisive, too. It typically comments on society rather than an individual.

Object of derision, for Swift, is human nature and society. Characters who “feel that they are elevated or above the trials of common life” are frequently the objectives of satire (qtd. in Colebrook 144). Satire examines life and its inherent propensities, which displays life itself.

Displaying life, in other sense, is similar to emphasizing upon ‘man’. Eighteenth century satire also emphasizes upon “man”. Thus, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari comment on Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* as satire, “[It] is satire in two senses: first, its object is ‘man’. Second, not only does Gulliver recognize the same object across his travels--man and his bodily desires--the narrative traces the emergence of Gulliver’s ideas from his own body” (qtd. in Colebrook 149).

Since, the writer of satire is satirist, Suther Land James in *English Satire* views satirist as:

The satirist is destructive; he destroys what is already there (and what to many people appears to be functioning quite satisfactorily) and he does not necessarily offer to fill the vacuum that he has created. He is as Mr. Kenneth Tynan remarked recently of Bernard Shaw, ‘a demolition expert’. (18)

With aforementioned view of Land James, J. Long agrees and comments on what a satirist does, “A satirist is like laborers who clear away the ruins and rubbish of an old house before the architect and builders begin on a new and beautiful structure. The work may sometimes be necessary, but it rarely arouses our enthusiasm” (261).

It is satirists’ intention-to expose, or to deride, or condemn-that distinguishes him from the writer of comedy. Land James views, “I take satire, therefore, to be a department of rhetoric” (5). The writer of comedy is content to entertain and amuse, and to fashion delightful patterns out of human character and action. Where the writer of satire:

Tr[ies] to persuade man to admire or to despise to examine their habitual assumptions to face ugly facts, to look beneath the surface of things, to change sides in politics or religion, to return to the old and true, to abandon the old and outworn, to see, or think or believe whatever seems good to the writer of satire. (5)

One satirical writer may differ from another due to different “intention” one deserves. However, their commonality is their endeavor to influence the readers.

One can not be a satirist just by telling the truth. So, Land James comments, “you are a satirist when you consciously compel men to look at what they have tried to ignore” (11). Moreover, a satirist should wish to destroy their “illusions or pretences” (11). She/he should deliberately tear off the “disguise and expose the naked truth” (11).

The satirist exposes not the entire truth but “one aspect of truth not the whole man, but one side of him” (15). He is the advocate pleading a case, and to secure our agreement he is prepared to ignore much of the evidence and “exaggerates the rest” (16). The satirist proceeds characteristically by drastic simplification, by ruthlessly narrowing the area of vision by leaving out of account the greater part of what must be taken into consideration if we are to realize the totality of situation or a character. In its extreme form, “it is called caricature” (16). It is, of course, parts of the satirist’s art to conceal from us that this simplification is taking place. Regarding this John Dryden comments, “He can obtain this dominion by many different methods: by throwing dust in our eyes, by fascinating us with the verisimilitude of his presentation, by so delighting us with his wit that we never pause to question his argument” (qtd. in James 16).

On the one hand, the satirist “throws dust in our eyes”, “delights us” “and fascinates us” (16). On the other, she/he is like a magistrate. Thus, Land James comments, “The satirist, like the magistrate on the bench, is there to administer the law, to uphold the order of a civilized community; he brings men and women to the test of certain ethnical, intellectual, social, and other standards” (19).

Similarly, the satirist does not tell anything directly. Deliberately she/he distorts the situation. The satirist, for his part, is putting a case, and to put it effectively he “magnifies, diminishes, distorts, cheats: the end will always justify the means” (20). Charles Gordon, on the same basis, views, “The pleasant shock of good

satire is to see people and events portrayed in an unexpected way, contrarily to expectation” (26). However, 20<sup>th</sup> century satire relies more and more on the “indirectness of irony, innuendo, fantasy and fiction of all kinds” (20). Thus, Land James comments, “The reader has to supply the positive from the satirists negative, the desirable from the contemptible; he has to interpret the allegory, to understand significance of the symbol [ . . . ] the distortion is not in the eye of the beholder, but in the object observed” (21).

To some extent it might be said that the emphasis in modern satire has shifted from individual man to mankind. The satirist is now concerned to save the human race, either from complete extinction, or from a change so fundamental that its essential humanity should be lost. Thus, Land James holds, “As we grow more gregarious, more and more urbanized, we undoubtedly grow sillier, more subject, under the influence of mass communication and propaganda, to mass hysteria and to the stupidities and vulgarities of a mass culture” (21).

Satirist presents one thing or situation under the garb of another which may appear ridiculous in surface. The combination of jest and earnest is permanent mark of satirical writing the central method of device. On the same basis, Geoffrey Tillotson in *Pope and Human Nature* comments, “satire claims to have the merit of earnestness” (215). A satirist, though, he jokes and makes reader laugh, tries to reveal human vices and follies which, to him/her is the truth. Satirists declare that their truth is what people do want to hear. While tracing the history of satire back to the ancient time, it is found that there are two main conceptions of its purpose: one is not to cure but to wound, to punish, to destroy; and the other is to warn and cure. The first type of satirists believes that the rascality is triumphant in the world, and is pessimistic. These pessimistic satirists are also known as misanthropic satirists. So, Walker comments, “

Of the three principal works in which this misanthropic satire finds vent, two, *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the books*, third one, *Directions for making a birthday song*" (188). These misanthropic satirists look at life and find it, not tragic, not comic, but ridiculously contemptible and "nauseatingly" hateful. Gilbert Highet comments, "The misanthropic satirist believes it (evil) is rooted in man's nature and the structure of society. Nothing can eliminate or cure it, man, or the particular gang of miserable manikins, who are under his scrutiny, deserves only scorn and hatred [. . .] the satirist is close to tragedian" (235).

Humor, burlesque and omniscient narrator's point of view are the means of satire through which it is activated.

### **Humor**

One of the prominent devices a satirist uses is humor. It means to arouse laughter or to create comic situation. The origin of the word "humor" is Latin, which is used for "liquid", "fluid" or "moisture" (Rourke 119). Humor, according to Gilles Deleuze, is the art of singularities of events that are not meaningful, not structured according to logic of before and after:

There is a difficult relation, which rejects the false Platonic duality of the essence and the example. This exercise, which consists in substituting designations, monstrations, consumptions and pure destructions for significations, requires and add inspiration-which one knows how to 'descend'. What is required is humor, as opposed to the Socratic irony or to the technique of ascent. (qtd. in Colebrook 134)

Deleuze and Guattari again define humor as "the art of surface which is opposed to the old irony, the art of depth and heights" (115). Deleuze also

distinguishes between irony and satire in terms of humor, “The first way of overturning the law is ironic, where irony appears as an art of principles, of ascents towards the principles and of overturning principles. The second is humor, which is an art of consequences and descents, of suspension and falls” (116). Likewise, Deleuze insists on “humor and poetics that--far from producing the before and after of a subject who then speaks-- creates surfaces (116). In the same context, Jerome McGann comments, “Before there is the linear temporality of a subject who experiences the world in terms of before and after, within one universal history” (115). At the same level, one has to differentiate various planes such as the inside/outside of a mind and world or the various borders and territories that define organisms and communities. Again McGann views, “Humors beyond irony, or what Deleuze refers to as superior irony is the art of surfaces, the art of thinking the noises, sensations, affects and sensible singularities from which bodies are composed” (115).

Indeed, a satirist uses humor. By so doing, one can easily rebel and reconcile against the butt of the satire. Thus, Walker comments:

Clearly the very conception of the ‘humor’ promises satire. A quality even harmless or laudable in its proper proportion and just relation to other qualities becomes a weakness, or worse, when it dominates the whole man: the miser, the prodigal, the voluptuary, the swashbuckler, the zealot, may each in turn be food for satire. (116)

Humor is used not only to ridicule the deformity one deserves. Rather it is used to teach in funny manner. So, Walker views, “while humor is an invaluable ingredient in satire, only when it is combined with the spirit of criticism, with the desire to teach or with ridicule, does it become satire” (18). In terms of humor, Peter B. Hugh in *An Outline of American Literature* defines satire as “making the reader

laugh at the faults in people or ideas” (400). Deleuze and Guattari view with the same spirit co-relating satire and humor, “satire shows the ways in which we do not author ourselves, through the presentation of puns, humor, hypocrisy and stupidity” (139).

In humor, existence of vein of aggressiveness can be observed in subtler level. However, only clever scrutiny can do it. Also, there is bewildering variety of moods involved in different forms of humor including mixed or contradictory feelings. In the same context, Robert Keith Miller and Suzanne Webb comment:

By helping readers to laugh about their failures (such as the failure to say on a diet), you may help them to fail less frequently. By reminding people that failure is not unique, you can make them feel part of a larger community. Humor, thus, reconciles people to human imperfection. (120)

From above quote, it is clear that laughter is the “corrective punishment” inflicted by upon the unsocial individual. In laughter, one always has an intention to humiliate and consequently to correct one’s neighbour. Thus, purpose of humor is not only laugh at the people just for derision but to rectify their faults. Miller and Webb agree with it, “The satirist usually directs attention to the flaws of other people with the purpose of making people laugh at those flaws. The result can be funny, but it can also be cruel” (122). Thus, the object of humor is to create laughter to satirize the event or situation. Thus, it can be taken as artistic device to correct one’s “excessiveness” and to “ridicule” upon an incident and situation.

In Western history of literature, various satirists used humor to make their satire effective. So, Walker emphasizes, “the absence of humor lowers effect of any article to be satirical” (2). Swift and Byron are prominent satirists to use humor. Land



James comments on Byron regarding humor, “Byron was not a social outcast by any means and he was saved from mere bitterness by a lively sense of humor and by one or two close friends” (91). It indicates that humor for satirist is as significant as his/her true friend.

### **Theories of Humor**

There are three theories of humor:

- i. Theories of superiority and degradation
  - ii. Theories of relief of tension and free from inhibition
  - iii. Theories of strange, frustration of expectation and bisociation
- i. Theories of superiority and degradation

Throughout the ages, theories of superiority and degradation have been remaining most persistently. The laughter is in the position of superiority, and the object of laughter is in position of degradation. People laugh at that which is ridiculous and out of place. Reader or audience of the stage, if not its butt, also believes that someone or something is out of place. Regarding the same Miller and Webb remark, “The satirists assume that someone or some group has departed from behavior that is recognized as acceptable; this presumes that recognized standards exist and that the audience of a satire (if not its butt) believes in the standards that have been violated” (122).

Being out of place, in a sense, is one’s deformity at which people laugh. One should laugh “with rather than at” (120). Thus, Aristotle comments, “comedy concerns characters that have a defect” (qtd. in Miller and Webb). “Absurdity”, “oddness” and “infirmity” make us laugh. Deleuze and Guattari also agree with it:

If Samuel Beckett's (1906-89) theatre is 'absurd' it is not because life is rendered despairingly meaningless. Rather, we laugh when the order of time and explanation no longer holds. Consider a typically contradictory exchange from *Endgame*. "What time is it? The same as usual." (qtd. in Colebrook 136)

The humor of *Endgame* lies in its confusion of logic and the order of sense. Concepts are used, not just in ways that suggest an unconventional meaning, but in ways that destroys the very convention of meanings. One can not mean or say anything without "some shared order of a before and after, a sense of what is and is not" (136). Humor dissolves "high-low" distinctions. In other sense, humor descends. Likewise, people laugh at the absurd order of grammar. Beckett "disrupts the logic of if .... Then': if I don't kill that rat he'll die" (136). Beckett also explores the humor of stupidity, where concepts are used in ways that contradict their meaning: "Did you ever have an instant of happiness? Not to my knowledge" (137).

Satirist creates humor not as an end in itself but to satirize other's follies. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari comment, "we are delighted by the other body fall" (151). Humor also allows the chaos of life and difference to disrupt and elevated value. Thus, they comment on Swift's humor:

In Swift, for example, the direction of humor is clear: the focus on the body, the emergence of language from noise and nonsense, the narrative description of the particularities and desires that set themselves up as values and moralities, and finitude of 'man' who, when observed from above or below, appears as one more body, rather than a rational subject. Most importantly, instead of human nature

being a moral ground or authority, it is shown to bear a tendency towards cruelty. (qtd. in Colebrook 151)

Ridicule and derision should not only be directed against people but against ideas and institution also. As Chaucer satirizes against religious corruption of his time so is the case with Pope who satirizes Eighteenth century England. He also “hits hard at stupidity” (177). Humor finds no individual fools but foolishness in a foolish world which is, thus, tolerant.

ii. Theories of relief of tension and free from inhibition

Although Sigmund Freud is most often associated with the theories of relief of tension or release from inhibition, other philosophers like Charles Bernard Renouvier, Auguste Ienjon, and John Dewey deserve brief discussion. They regard laughter as a signal that effort has been successfully terminated. Freud believes that laughter arises when physical energy is freed from its static function of repressing the forbidden thought. In the same context, Deleuze and Guattari admit, “Humor allows all the repressed and meaningless drives of the body to disrupt sense” (151). Likewise, a joke has its origin in aggressive tendency. However, the aggressive tendency is mingled with playful repression since childhood. The mixture renders the tendency socially acceptable. This combination of playful repression mixed with aggression is also supported by Miller and Webb. They relate it to tension and comment, “Whether designed to produce belly laughs or merely to bring a twinkle of recognition to someone’s eye, humor has an element of tension within it [ . . . ] Humor always sends a double message: take me seriously, but don’t take me seriously” (120). Physical energy formerly needed to repress the aggression is liberated into laughter. The freedom from repression and freedom of thought provide an enjoyable shock which produce delightful laughter.

iii. Theories of strange and frustration of expectation and bisociation

The theory of incongruity, frustration of expectation and bisociation has been held rudely by Sir Philip Sidney who relies on incongruity. Deleuze and Guattari also comment on incongruity:

In humor, the self appears less as an organized agent or organizing subject and more as a collection of incongruous body parts. Think of the humors of the clown with outrageously large feet, or slapstick comedy where the body collides with a banana skin or entwines itself around the deckchair it attempts to assemble. (137)

As frustration of expectation, nothing makes people laugh so much as surprising disparity between what they expect and what they see. The cause of laughter is simply the sudden perception of incongruity between a concept and real objects. Thus incongruity can be observed in terms of “relevance factor” and “surprise factor”. Thus, Nancy Pogel and Paul Somers comment:

The essence of humor lies in two ingredients; the relevance factor and the surprise factor. First, something familiar (or relevant) to the audience is presented. From there, they may think they know the natural follow-through thoughts or conclusion [ . . . ] presentation of something different from the audience’s expectation, or else the natural result of interpreting the original situation in a different, less common way. (10)

According to William Makepeace Thackeray, a recent and highly encompassing theory of humor is Arthur Koestler’s theory of bisociation. This theory is about a situation in which a invariably comic when it belongs simultaneously to two

of altogether independent series of events. Such events are capable of being interpreted in two different meanings at the same time.

To create humor, mechanical repetition of same word, phrase or sentence is also, emphasized. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari comment, “The language of humor is less oriented to meaning [. . .] precisely because words are repeated as so much automatic or mechanic noise” (137). Exaggeration is another element which causes humor. It is similar to overstatement. It can be created by imitating others. Thus, Miller and Webb comment:

In his poetics Aristotle wrote that comedy-like poetry-springs from the pleasure people find in imitation. Aristotle argued that this pleasure is instinctive, [. . .] young children already delighting in imitation when they see someone mimic another person or when they mimic someone themselves. (121)

Thus, by mechanical repetition, imitation, exaggeration, surprise, oddness, absurdity, pun and paradox, humor is evoked.

### **Burlesque**

Another prominent element a satirist uses is burlesque. It is an “incongruous” imitation. It imitates the manner-the form and style-or else the subject-matter of a serious literary work or a literary genre. Relating satire and burlesque, Ann Charters, in *The Story and Its Writer*, defines satire as “A work that ridicules some aspect of human behavior by portraying it at its most extreme, distinguished from parody, which burlesques the style or content of another work or type of word” (1652).

There is debate whether burlesque is form of parody or a parody a form of burlesque. However, parody and burlesque can be thought of as imitation, intended to

“ridicule or to criticize” (qtd. in Kreuz and Richard 102). There is debate between K. Beckson and A. Ganz, and G. Highet. Beckson and Ganz view that “parody is a form of burlesque,” whereas the latter views, “burlesque is a form of parody” (102). But burlesque is coarser than parody. That is why burlesque is broader term and parody is a term within burlesque.

Burlesque is “implicit” commentary. Thus, a satirist uses it. A satirist uses burlesque as a weapon through which s/he derogates and deforms human vices and follies. So Land James views, “Burlesque has its own special virtues: it enables a satirist to strike with great force and confidence, and it leaves us in no doubt about what we are meant to think. But an extended burlesque like *Hudibras* carries with it the danger of monotony and of a resulting boredom” (43). This danger of monotony is implicit in every satirical work of any considerable length. The satirist erects an elaborate “pretence”. Burlesque as a satirical technique is open to objection. It is too indiscriminate. According to Land James:

It acts like the mud splashed up by a passing lorry on the faces and stockings of the passerby, falling alike on the just and the unjust or to use a simile, that might have appealed to Butler, it acts like grape-shot or chain shot, wounding and shattering over a wide and undefined area; whereas true satire is aimed at an object, and hits with a single bullet.

(43-44)

It is a kind of composition which imitates somebody’s style in a humorous way. Here, in this genre, grotesque exaggeration comes into play. Motive behind doing so is to ridicule. Else, treatment of a trifling subject with the gravity due a matter of great importance. It also, in theatre, means a theatrical entertainment of

broad and earthly humor which consists of comic skills and short turns and sometimes strip-tease.

Since parody is a form of burlesque, Kreuz and Roberts view, “When satire and parody function together within the same work, they achieve their unique goals independent of each other” (104). In burlesque, the entire subject is treated in a contradictory manner, “elevated” subjects are debased and “lowly” subjects are elevated,” (104). So, the burlesque stands for incongruous imitation. Regarding the same, Constance Rourke defines burlesque as “comic imitation of a serious literary or artistic form that relies on an incongruity between a subject and its treatment” (199). Burlesque is used to satirize social, religious, economic, political and academic mores.

Burlesque means “imitation”-to satirize or to “parody”. It is a style of live entertainment that encompasses pastiche, parody and wit. So, Robert C. Allen comments, “The genre traditionally encompasses a variety of acts such as dancing girls, chanson singers, comedians, mime artists and strip-tease artists all satirical and with a saucy edge” (10).

The genre often mocked such established entertainment forms as opera, Shakespearean drama, musicals and ballet. The costuming increasingly focused on forms of dress considered inappropriate for polite society. So, sexually suggestive dialogue, dance, quick-witted humors, minimal costuming, often focusing on the female form are some important features of burlesque. Today’s new burlesques has taken many forms but all have the common trait of honoring one or more of burlesque’s previous incarnations with acts including strip-tease, expensive costumes, bawdy humor, cabaret and more.

## Kinds of Burlesque

Burlesque is categorized on the basis of incongruous imitation of form and style and its subject matter. So, there are two kinds of burlesque:

**High Burlesque:** If the form and style are high and dignified but the subject is low or trivial, it is known as high burlesque, e.g. parody.

**Low burlesque:** If the subject is high in status and dignity but the style and manner of treatment are low and undignified, it is known as low burlesque, e.g. travesty.

Thus a satirist, for great confidence, uses burlesque. It not only ridicules but also evokes amusement. In Western literary history, different satirists used burlesque to attack upon social, political, religious mores.

## Omniscient Narrator

In a third-person narrative, the narrator is someone outside the story proper who refers to all the characters in the story by name, or as “he”, “she”, “they”. Here, omniscient narrative point of view is a part of it. This is a common term for the many and varied works of fiction written in accord with the convention that the narrator knows everything that needs to be known about the agents, actions and events. It has privileged access to the characters’ thoughts, feelings and motives. The narrator is free to move at will in time and place to shift from character to character. It also reports or conceals their speech, doings and states of conscious. Omniscient narrator can be divided into two types: intrusive and unintrusive.

The intrusive narrator is one who not only reports, but also comments on and evaluates the actions and motives of the characters. Sometimes, it expresses personal views about human life in general. Most works are written according to the



convention that the omniscient narrator's reports and judgments are to be taken as authoritative by the readers, and so serve to establish what counts as the true facts and values within the fictional world.

Sometimes omniscient narrator tries to be unintrusive. It also can be termed as "impersonal" or "objective" narrator. In this type, the narrator describes, reports or shows the action in dramatic scenes without introducing his own comments or judgements. Sometimes the narrator gives up even the privilege of access to inner feelings and motives.

Omniscient narrator comments on character's acts, saying and on their inner feelings and thoughts. In satire, a satirist uses this type of narration deliberately. S/he wants to ridicule an individual or an institution or some themes-political, academic, religious, economic through narrator's comment. It strikes at the prevailed deformities. Most of the time, the narrator makes the situation humorous. It becomes so, the way the narrator comments. Regarding the same, Rourke comments, "The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it" (169).

Thus, for the purpose of satire, different elements--omniscient narrator, humor and burlesque--can be used. Omniscient narrator satirizes its "butt" by commenting on what characters do, think and say. This type of narrator not only tells the story humorously but it reveals characters' secrets through comment. By repetition, exaggeration, imitation, surprise, oddness, absurdity and pun, humor can be created. But it is not as an end in itself rather it is a means to satirize. Burlesque satirizes the human follies by making parody of some genre and work. Sometimes omniscient narrator itself reveals the feature of burlesque.

## Chapter - Three

### **Satire through Humor, Burlesque, and Omniscient Narrator in Smiley's *Moo***

Jane Smiley's novel *Moo* exposes and thereby satirizes the vices and follies prevailed in contemporary American academia taking Moo University as butt of satiric ridicule. Since a satirist focuses on men, Smiley also scrutinizes the characters--students and staff--of the university. Humor, burlesque and omniscient narrator are the prominent elements to satirize polluted and deteriorating academic scenario. Use of mechanical repetition, exaggeration, imitation, eccentricity, oddness and surprise evoke humor. It is a kind of high burlesque because low and petty subject-matter is presented in lofty style. Instances that prove *Moo* as burlesque novel are depiction of hog in lofty manner covering many chapters despite its pettiness, parodying Shakespearean comedy humorously, sexually suggestive dialogue and action, strip-tease and dance scenes among and between the characters. Likewise, Omniscient narrator plays vital role to satirize academic mores by making the situation humorous and presenting burlesque features. This narrator explores the characters' internal thoughts, feelings and activities and sometimes comments upon their actions for which they themselves are ignorant.

### **Humor in Jane Smiley's *Moo***

Jane Smiley evokes humor to fulfill the purpose of satire. By presenting humorous situations, she pinches on the prevailed deformities of the characters belonging to contemporary American academia. Humor gets evoked through exaggeration and imitation, eccentricity and oddness, surprise and pun.

By presenting different instances of humor by any means, Jane Smiley, in her novel *Moo*, exposes the rampant academic scenario of the then time. In the novel,

Bob Carlson, the sophomore work study student, who has been conducting research under the guidance of Dr. Bo Jones, intends to find out how much the hog gets fattened up. For this purpose, he has maintained “sparkling new, clean, air-conditioned and profoundly well ventilated Ritz-Carlton of a room, or Earl’s business which was eating only eating and forever eating” (Smiley 4).

In this above quote, Smiley portrays the humorous situation. University student like Bob Carlson and intellectual person like Dr Bo Jones have been involving in nonsense experiment. Generally, it is not expected that a pig is kept in “air-conditioned and comfortable room and which is reared only to make it finding. Like repetition of “eating”, and “forever eating”, there are so many repeated patterns. Deliberately Jane Smiley makes some characters repeat same word, phrase or sometimes sentence. Basically, purpose of doing so is to portray characters’ deformity. There is creation of humor if same pattern occurs time and again. Moo University is going to be run by private sectors. Ivar Harstad, the provost, has been searching “resources”. He is about to get seven million “reallocation” from different “resources”. Later on, “no single donor had ever come up with seven million” (22). Now, entire university is in verge of collapse. Instead, in humorous way, Ivar bids farewell to every departments writing their names on a page:

Good-bye to Nuclear Engineering.

Good-bye to Women’s Studies.

Good-bye to Clothing Design and Fiber Science.

Good-bye to Broadcast Journalism and the university radio station.

Good-bye to Oceanography.

Good-bye to the Geological station in Colorado.

Good-bye to the university chamber orchestra.

Good-bye to every secretary hired in the last six methods.

Good-bye to Xeroxing, hello to dittoing. (22-23)

Smiley's intention, here, is to show the careless, irresponsible, selfish, and corrupted university staff. It seems humorous, whereas in deeper level, it is to satirize them. Ivar Harstad has to try his best to find out the way to improve its strata. Contrarily, he writes "good-bye" to every department of university. Likewise, Henri Bergson, a French theorist, believes, "one of the principle sources of humor is a situation in which people behave mechanically, repeating the same motion or saying the same thing" (qtd. in Miller and Webb 23). On the same basis, Dr Jellinek also learns "myriad" ways of saying "I don't know" so that he could diddle and daddle their curiosity" (Smiley 122). It is known to readers from the narrator. This repetition of "I don't know" creates humor. This phrase is repeated mechanically. Being a doctor, he learns such repeated phrase from the players.

Not only Smiley repeats at the level of word and phrase but at the level of sentence also. Since the university is agricultural one, there are two types of specialists: one belonging to agriculture and another to animal. Veterinary dean, Jellinik is challenged in his own office by an unknown person Samuels. Samuels ridiculously contacts Jellinik on phone mocking his proposal pretending that it was done by another people, "They say false pregnancy in cows isn't well enough understood. They say that PREGNANCY in cows isn't well enough understood" (123).

By repeating "They say", Samuels tries to provoke laughter which is a weapon to satirize doctor like Jellinik. He is unable to defend his proposal even in front of

simple people. Thus, university dean's position is not reliable; duty they perform is fake.

By the narrator's comment, repetition can easily be observed. In course of conversation between Dr. Bo Jones and Elaine Dobbs- Jellinik, the latter one talks of interest and says, "I'm interested in something different. I am interested in hogs" (152). He again emphasizes his "interest" regarding hog. Elaine Dobbs-Jellinik flirting with him while talking:

He said, "No, they are interested in what you do to hogs, with hogs I'm interested in who hogs are".

"Who are hogs?"

"See, now nobody knows that",

"No I meant, is that what you are interested in, who are hogs"?

"You bet".

"Oh".

"You see, you are stumped, aren't you? Give me a hog fact." (152)

In this quote, satire lies at the point that male and female staff involve in sexual activities. Yet, they talk of academic activities. Dr. Bo Jones pretends that his mind is obsessed with hog's fattening up of experiment. But in reality, he is not paying any attention toward, hog. Rather he gets intoxicated with Elaine Jellinek. He speaks in drowsy mood. Jellinik questions, "Who are hogs?" repeatedly (152). But in flirting way, he answers "you bet" (152). A general reader expects reasonable and plausible, and argumentative answer from such intellectuals. Contrarily, like teenager's flirtation, he says, "you bet".

Another instance of humor by repetition is that Timothy Monahan has sent Email to Margaret Bell, full professor of English of Moo University, about his promotion. Thus, the narrator comments, “my promotion, my promotion, my promotion rolled out in a self-absorbed donkey bray and intolerably offended his own ears” (156). On the one hand, Timothy Monahan tries to be eccentric teacher, but on the other, he “brays like a donkey” for his promotion. The word “bray” and the repetition of “my promotion” indicate the writer’s attitude to provoke humor. Moreover, the narrator provides remarkable comment, “But it had been ever thus-- my book my book my book, my story my story my story, my review, my article, my work” (156-57). Narrator’s intention here is to tell the reader that instead of being greedy, hypocrite and obsessed regarding promotion, the teacher of creative writing has to involve in academic activities-reading, writing. Frequent mechanic repetition of “my” induces laughter in the reader and through which Smiley hits upon the head of university staff.

Similarly, the narrator makes repetition while Sherri, “who had just received her mid-term grades”, talks to her mother and father (176). University student, Sherri does not speak vividly. So, the narrator mockingly emphasized:

She whined, “It’s really hard here, I wasn’t exactly prepared.”

She whined.....

She whined.....

She whined, “I am. I really AM. I thought I Sounded sorry. I tried to sound sorry” A pause, “Because I Am Sorry”

Sherri whined.....

She whined..... “I know, I’m sorry, I Am Sorry. I know, I know”

Sherri whined.....

Sherri whined, “Well I am going to do better, Okay, I promise. I PROMISE”. (177)

This word “whined” with mechanical repetition creates special effect.

Smiley’s intention, here, is to make reader laugh. In stead of “whin”, she can speak easily with humble manner, but she “whins”. Furthermore, with only one “whin”, the narrator could make do with to convey message, but it produces the word “whin” for how many times she speaks. The more she apologizes, the more she speaks loudly. So, her discrepancy in voice and context also creates humor. “I know” and “AM” indicate her high sounding speech. Thus, it seems she is not requesting rather she is threatening her parents.

Likewise, another instance of repetition is shown both by the professors and students. Chairman X, time and again, utters “you know” (162). Students like Joe and Mary repeat vulgar word “fucking” in sentences “You practically fucking decapitated me! I am sorry. I’ll sit here [. . .] You can’t fucking sit here” (252). On the same basis, Robert Keith Miller and Suzanne S. Webb comment, “Students may laugh after noticing that their professor always says” one last thing” at least twice in every class” (123).

Repetition by Chairman X indicates that the intellectual people, particularly academic ones, are unable to speak fluently. Since they do not possess quality and ability, they utter “you know”. University student Joe and Mary’s frequent utterance of “fucking” shows that students in Moo University are impertinent, undisciplined and vulgar. Superficially, it creates laughter, however, in deeper level, it satirizes Moo University, and its students and staff.

Along with repetition, humor can be provoked through exaggeration and imitation. To exaggerate any object, person or institution, the narrator may imitate others. On the same ground, the narrator imitates Nils Harstad, dean of extension while he talks to Chairman X, a radical Marxist, “Everyday, Chairman X had to endure the pleasant, reasonable voice of Dean Harstad claming him down, “say”, he would remark, “you’ve been spreading those radical ideas again. The books are there. The hort answer-line people just have to re-e-e-ad from the book” (39). In this quote, the narrator imitates Nils Harstad which is clearly shown by the word “re-e-e-ad”. Instead of “read”, he utters “re-e-e-ad”. Inwardly, the writer wants to make the readers laugh. This unusual childlike voice also indicates that Harstad opposes the idea of radical Marxism. By creating humor through imitation, Smiley satirizes both Chairman X and Harstad in such a way that reputed personalities cry as the children do.

Another instance of imitation is that Marly, who as a new comer, comes to “realtor” and tells him that she is “looking for a big traditional brick house in the best neighborhood” (78). The narrator makes the reader know “what should she expect to pay? ‘Weeeeeee’, the realtor said”, (78). This monotonous and odd voice of “realtor” shows that he can not speak clearly rather he stammers.

In addition to humor through imitation, there is creation of humor through imitation of exaggeration. Omniscient narrator itself is imitator. The characters exaggerate. Sherri’s friends complain against Timothy Monahan, English teacher and Lionel Gift, the professor of Economics. They dislike the former for being boring whereas they dislike the latter one for referring students as “customers” and entire University as “market”:



In fact, they all had the same opinion which they expressed to one another after class if they were paying all this money, then they must be customers, and if they were customers, then why was that particular English teacher bo-o-o-o-ring? [ . . . ] The fact was, she wasn't getting what she was paying for, which was-- what? She couldn't define it, exactly. But she knew this limp, irritable feeling well enough. It was the sensation of consumer dissatisfaction, it was soooooooooo annoying. (179-80)

Above quoted words "bo-o-o-o-ring" and "sooooooooo" superficially seem odd. In deeper level, these words are significant. While the university students are exaggerating issues of monotonous English class, the narrator imitates the same sound. It is to show their ineffability. Even the university students can not express the issue clearly because they are lazy, dishonest and they spent time somewhere else rather than in academic activities. On the one hand, it is their deformity and on the other, the deformity is satirized with the help of narrator. Students exaggerate the issue but they do not have vocabulary to express what they think. It also indicates the then academic follies of teachers and students. Regarding the same, Liz Mc Millen comments, "In *Moo*, Smiley turns a cool eye toward academic folly, sending up writers, economists, students, administrators, horticulturist and fund raisers" (19).

Likewise, the narrator exaggerates and imitates Diana's behavior, "she had on new leather jacket dark green, and a woolly hat that matched perfectly and these terrific black suits, and she'd been veeerrrry friendly" (343). The word "veerrrry" indicates Bob's deformity. The narrator is speaking, here, from the side of Bob Carlson about his "old girl-friend, Dianna" (343). The narrator emphasizes the

unusually spoken word “veerrrry” which is to show Bob lacking vocabulary to convey his thoughts.

Along with exaggeration through imitation, there is only exaggeration, too. Purpose of it is to provoke laughter which, ultimately, is to satirize the academic vices and follies prevailed in Moo University in particular, by extension, to satirize the entire contemporary polluted academic scenario of America. Margaret Bell is attracted towards creative writing teacher, Timothy Monahan. So, she exaggerates him:

She could feel herself soften, O death! soften because she had loved that paper herself, had felt that idea ripen so sweetly, been so proud of it, her MLA paper, and felt so overlooked after she gave it, because, of course, it turned out that there were too many papers on too many topics at too many conflicting times by too many self absorbed English professors. (134)

In this above quote, the words “so” and “too many” indicate the exaggeration. In reality, Timothy Monahan is an eccentric teacher. He only pretends to be something, but becomes nothing. “So” and “too many” also show overstatement. It satirizes the English Professor who is encircled with books, papers and topics but hardly writes anything. The word “soften” is like pun. It has two meanings: first, she is attracted towards him and feels soften to death. Next, she mediates for him “so often”.

Another instance of humor through exaggeration is that the narrator exaggerates Helen Levy, the professor of foreign language, “It was Helen in her reddest suit, red like a California poppy or an ash berry, vividly alive and full of

promise” (149). Here is incongruity between her post as professor and her style of presenting herself. A general reader expects that the professor should be mild, gentle, intellectual and well-suited. In its opposition, Helen wears “reddest suit” and looks “red like a California poppy” or “an ash berry” (149). Comparison between “California poppy” and a professor is humorous. This exaggeration with humor satirizes the professor of Moo University ridiculously. Besides, Ivar Harstad catches her for the purpose of sexual activity, “He stepped forward and looked her elbow. Her squeeze of his hand was discreet” (150). It makes the reader to despise university staff. They hardly talk of education but they involve in immoral activities. Likewise, Mary, the university student, is drug addicted one. Thus, the narrator exaggerates regarding her intoxicated condition, “Mary felt like her bed was rocking, or her head was sloshing. One or the other. One or the other. One or the other. One or the other” (177). It creates laughter due to ridiculously expressed same thing “one or the other” four times. It shows coherence with reeling of Mary’s head. It provides us the perception that she is stammering. She also feels that her bed is rocking. The university students like Mary do not do for what they are.

The narrator makes students exaggerate and the university staff as well. Dean Jellinek talks with his girlfriend, Joy, about a project. In course of conversation, it is found that he only exaggerates the word “idea”, “The idea’s good, don’t get me wrong, the idea’s great, but it’s big, Joy, it’s so big. I can’t help being daunted” (218). These words “great”, “big” and “BIG” represent the exaggeration. At this point it does not create laughter clearly. But later on, he opens the mystery of project which is “it’s a project that we both have to live with” (218). It creates laughter because idea of living together with Joy “great” “big” and “BIG” shows exaggeration of petty matter:

I can't do a project like this at work. The immersion has to be total. I have to eat, sleep and dream this project, that's where you come in, because I feel a small but decided spiritual space between us, like a crack in the tail assembly. I don't want to crash, Joy, I don't want to, I know you don't want to either. (218)

The line "I, have to eat, sleep and dream this project" demystifies the project clearly which creates laughter (218). Dean of university has the project of wooing a lady, not to meditate upon the problem of university. Thus, it satirizes the staff like that of Jellinek.

Likewise, the narrator makes the reader know that Mary exaggerates a white boy in a party. She is herself attracted towards him. The narrator comments, "Really Mary, though, I could not pick this guy out of a crowd. Average height, and average clothing, average hair style, average looks" (252-53). Through word "average" with repetition, exaggeration can be observed. It creates humor because Mary, fanatically talking of an unknown "white kid" wants even to take him out of the crowd. So, the lady students are satirized. They do not labor hard regarding education rather search for boyfriend.

Humor is provoked through eccentric and surprising facts. Bob Brown and Dr Lionel Gift, professor of Economics refer their students as "our customers" (21). Generally, in academic field, this word is not used. It portrays the Brown and Gift's idea of commodifying education. Students are taken as "customers" and entire university as "market". Those who listen it for the first time may make belly-laugh. In contrary to the reader's expectation, they refer "customers" in stead of "students". Jane Smiley attacks on the head of corrupted, greedy and hypocrite people like Brown and Gift. Similarly, Timothy Monahan, in eccentric way, tells Cecelia, "You know

she has two vaginas” (57). It is his deformity to believe in such things like having two vaginas which is absurd. A general reader laughs at this fact but the writer satirically pinches the associate professor of creative writing. In the name of creative writing, they write what they think and speak what they like. It does not matter whether it has real and plausible ground.

Another instance to show humor is that Texas billionaire Arlen Martin mocks at the academic status of professors. “How are you sir?” Ivar Harstad questions (70). Ridiculously, Martin comments, “Now don’t sir me, Dr Harstad. I know diploma and who here has a high school diploma and who here has a pee aitch dee” (70). “Pee aitch dee”, here, is mockery. Instead of PhD, Martin knows the university doctors and professors thoroughly. Consequently he is able to ridicule them. It is satire on both of them: rich people do not understand the value of education whereas educated people can not maintain their status. Thus, he mocks their academic follies.

Thus, by provoking laughter, through different instances, Smiley satirizes academic mores. Such mockery, exaggeration, exaggeration through imitation, repetition of same pattern, pun, absurdity and narrator’s comment evoke laughter. By which she pinches on their deformity which is the sole task of a satirist. It is only a means but goal is to make them improve their vices and follies.

### **Burlesque in Jane Smiley’s *Moo***

Jane Smiley, in her novel *Moo*, presents burlesque features. It is a means whereas goal is to satirize the Moo University. Prominent instances that show burlesque features are designed by imitating Shakespearean comedy, depiction of hog in lofty manner and various instances of strip-tease and dance scenes, and sexually suggestive action and dialogue.

*Moo*, as a burlesque novel, is based upon Shakespearean comedy. It has some features of it whereas some remaining features are twisted humorously. Jane Smiley parodies the setting of Shakespearean comedy. In original comedy the action “takes place in some distant far off land, and not in the familiar, everyday England” (Brown 78). But in Smiley’s portrait, the action of the character pivots round the Moo University. American university itself is the setting. No “far off” land is mentioned. Common American University, with its most of the departments, is depicted with humorous touch.

Another parodied feature is “the course of true love never did run smooth” (88). Brown comments:

Difficulties soon occur in the way of the lovers. The course of true love for each couple is crossed by separation, misunderstanding, disguises, magic and perhaps the temporary unfaithfulness of one and ladies must pass through adventures, combats and risks to final ‘lovers’ Union’. (79)

Contrary to this above quote, there are no such features. Neither separation nor union is there. Interchangeable love, flirtation, sexual and homosexual activities are rampant. It is known to the readers that none of the single couple is in consistency. Thus, the narrator comments on Sherri who said, “I heard at these parties you get two guys, or more, to every girl, and lots of different types of guys, not just fraternity guys. I heard even some foreign students come” (43).

In this quote, “You get two guys or more, to every girl” shows that there is playfulness of love and only merriment, not love (40). Not only the American students but “the foreign students come” (43). Likewise, Kerri has the similar

situation of group merriment. Thus, the narrator comments, “two beers had put her in a laughing mood, and four guys were standing near her, staring at her and laughing with her” (46). So, it is satire upon the students of Moo University. They postpone their sole activity of education and involve in taboo. Again, Cecelia is sexually attracted towards Gift and Chairman X. Eventually, she spends some time with Timothy Monahan. Diana and Bob Carlson, students of university time and again make love but their separation or reunion can not be observed throughout the novel.

Another instance which shows burlesque quality is that “Shakespearean comedy is a story of love, ending with the ringing of marriage bells” (85). But in the novel, there are weddings between Chairman X and Lady X as well as Ivar Harstad and Helen. It is known to us from the narrator that they do not face any crisis. They enjoy parties. They make love with other characters. Here, Lionel Gift makes love with Helen but gets married with Ivar Harstad. In Shakespearean comedy, love is true. However some external forces like “fate plays vital role” (80). Here, the characters themselves at their own will keep sexual relationship.

Along with parodying Shakespearean comedy, burlesque element can be observed in depiction of hog. A simple hog which is kept in “fattening up of” experiment is presented in lofty manner. Many chapters hover round the hog. The matter seems petty whereas the style is lofty. So it is a kind of high burlesque. Bob Carlson moans at hog’s death. From the narrator, the readers know that not only Bob, but his parents are also worried at the death of the hog. When Bob called his parents in search of some solace and told them about Earl, his mom said, “oh, honey I’m so sorry. I know there is nothing I can do to help, but I’ll send some cookies, how would that be after death of hog”(302). Even Bob’s mother feels herself helpless after the hog’s death which is elevated highly. Hog’s activities are described in lofty style.

Since hog is a mortal creature, it is sure to die. The narrator pathetically explains its death. It is shown that when the hog is dying, Keri is standing there. The narrator comments on what the hog did:

He looked her in the eye, and then leaned forward, as if to smell her, and then fell forward into his knees. His shooting pains focused and concentrated themselves in his left foreleg, and then exploded deep in his chest. He took a labored heaving breath, and suddenly jerked over onto his side, his whole body trembled. Keri knelt down and looked into his still shining black eyes, then ran her hands over his enormous feverish head. Hesitantly, she began to scratch his ears. He gave another great shuddering breath that froze and hovered in the cold air then he closed his eyes. (372-73)

In this above quote, death of the hog is exaggerated. The narrator identifies with the hog and explains how it dies. Hog's death is made enormous. Even a petty animal's death is explained in large scale. The writer may write "the hog is dead" but this short matter is widely exaggerated. So, it shows burlesque quality. It satirizes the student of Moo University as well as the supervisor like Bo Jones. Keri looked at it thoroughly. The more they do meaningless experiment, the more they get meaningless consequence of it. The same novel is written on "hog" experiments which is not important because more than that, such experiment is conducted in other universities, too.

Another instance which shows burlesque is strip-tease action. Strip-tease scene occurs between Bob and Diana. Regarding the same, the narrator comments:



It's just that when he slips off his jeans, well, the definition all the way down, quads, calves, ankles, even feet, well it kills her. That's what she is going to tell me others tomorrow, that his body just killed her. But she won't mention, except may be to Sherri, the long solid pressure she can see inside his briefs, which seems to represent and concentrate and present for her alone all the rest of his body. She says, "Oh, Jesus, Okay", and sits forward so that her shirt falls away from her breasts and his eyes get wide. (99)

In this above quote, strip-tease action is shown by falling of Bob's Jeans. Diana enjoys it. "It kills her" shows that she hardly controls herself (99). No sooner had she looked at naked body of Bob, her "shirt falls down" (99). Bob's eyes, as a result, get wide. This scene is depicted to show that the students even involve in sexual activities. It satirizes the behavior of Moo University students. Likewise, instance of burlesque can be viewed in vulgar scene created by Chairman X and Cecelia. They proceed ahead for sexual satisfaction. Thus, the narrator comments.

His hands came up under her sweater as she pushed her leggings smoothly down over her hips and somehow every man she had ever known came to seem by comparison to this man, who didn't look THAT WAY in any sense, hesitant, reserved, and doubtful. She closed her eyes. (119)

In this quote, readers are compelled to despise so-called Marxist thinker and high-ranking authorities, Chairman X and Professor Cecelia. It is their folly which is attacked through the use of burlesque. It is also sexually suggestive action. Before this action takes place, the narrator makes the reader know that they already had illicit relationship. So, the narrator views:

[Maybe] he just grabbed her and buried his face in that red sweater, smelled her wool and Jergens fragrance and put his arms, just as if he had a right to, around her hips. At any rate, this unorthodox greeting was followed by a momentary pause, the largeness of which sank deep into the Chairman's very flesh, and then her hands found his head and neck and back, and she was kneeling and they were kissing. (119)

The above extract embodies sexually suggestive action which is an element of burlesque. Furthermore, Chairman X repeats same activities. Only difference is that, instead of Cecelia, he keeps relation with Lady X. At the point, the narrator remarks:

As soon as she had shut the door, he had his hands under the sweater and the undershirt that she had no bra on was not a coincidence and she had hers on his face, and he was kissing her all under her ears and down her neck as he eased her unto the living room carpet and pulled off slippers, socks, corduroy slacks, and tights and shouldered them aside in heaps. [ . . . ] she was naked and sweating, a girl at the beach, her eyes closed against the glare. (160)

This burlesque piece, on the one hand, shows the repeatedly performed action "keeping his hands under the sweater" and on the other hand, Chairman X is inferior to animal. He kisses 'under her ears and down her neck" (160). Again, strip-tease action takes place between Chairman X and Cecelia, "she unbuttoned the Chairman's jeans and opened his zipper so slowly that she could feel its teeth separate one by one" (163). Here, Smiley's intention is to denounce Chairman X and Cecelia, by extension, entire university staff.

Burlesque is associated with dancing girls and music. In Dubuque house, there is party going on “Actual bands, good ones, came from Chicago and Kansas city” (41). Students like Keri, Mary, Diana and Sherri are dancing. Mary changes her dress and dances like “a parrot marching round the band” (42). Keri and Sherri’s dialogue also shows burlesque feature. “What kind is that?” Keri questions (43). Sherri answers, “The gawky kind. Besides, one of them is sure to tell my old boy friend if they see me dancing with someone else, God forbid I should flirt or kiss or, as my mother would say, throw my body around in a suggestive manner” (43). This quote indicates that these students involve in dance and they manipulate their boy friends with the style of “throwing their bodies” around. This is the satire on university students who have thorough idea of satisfying boy friend but no effort for academic activity.

Thus, Jane Smiley by using music, dance, strip tease and bawdy actions indicate burlesque quality. Moreover, she portrays the hog with lofty style and parodies the Shakespearean comedy. This burlesque novel satirizes university students and staff in such a way that they forget to do for what they are supposed to do. It is their folly and which is ridiculed with the help of burlesque. Thus, Laurie Taylor views, “but Smiley’s university is also a universe of sorts, so that her burlesque fulfills another equally important function: it holds a mirror up to us all” (3). In opposition to this, Liz. Mc Millen comments, “As several reviewers have remarked, the novel, with its large cast of characters and its doses of greed and intrigue, reads like Shakespearean comedy” (20). But it does not seem relevant after thorough reading of the novel. Due to aforementioned features, it is parody of Shakespearean comedy. On the same basis, Valerie Miner views, “Smiley’s

burlesque of academic grandiosity and gluttony and myopia is a hoot” (639).

However, these critics only claim that it is burlesque but give no evidences.

### **Omniscient Narrator in Jane Smiley’s *Moo***

Omniscient narrator plays vital role in showing academic pollution in Moo University. It reveals the characters internal thoughts, feelings and acts . It also explores about what characters do, think and say. Sometimes her narrator makes the situation humorous by exposing the follies, vices and deformities of the characters. However, the narrator is stable and neutral. Thus, Dale M. Bauer comments :

Smiley’s narrator holds onto the coherence that her characters do not; the narrator is the single most stable character in the book. At the same time, like many narrators before, *Moo*’s narrator is devoid of any particular identity, the narrator appears to hold no position in the culture she or he comments upon. (10)

Through objective comment, it makes the readers observe that Mrs. Johnson “pegged” Keri as one of the pretty but “vapid girls” (12). Such girls go to college because they didn’t have any thing else to do with their time. One can easily speculate about the quality of education in Moo University. The university is regarded as the tool of merriment. It is a satiric ridicule through narrator’s comment upon the students of contemporary America. Likewise, “Diana wondered if Mrs. Johnson had understood what was making her pregnant” (12). Unmarried students become pregnant. They are worried about their pregnancy, however, they do not even think of academic mores. Furthermore, the narrator discloses the secret of each girl Mary, Keri, Diana and Sherri. Among them Sherri’s secret is humorous and at the same time, comprises the burlesque quality. Thus, the narrator comments:

One of them was that she had let her boyfriend Darryl go all the way with her just last night, and broken up with him anyway. The second was that she had stolen her sister Patty's new rose-colored sweater which might not be discovered until mid October, if she was lucky. The third was that Mary frightened her, even though she didn't want that [ . . . ] and actually blamed on Darryl [ . . . ] somebody foreign is that she is thinking lately. (10)

In this above quote, the narrator reflects the acts of university students. Sherri's and Darryl's relation indicates burlesque quality whereas "stealing sweater" indicates childish behavior shown by her.

Along with student's behavior, the staff's activities do not remain untouched. Timothy Monahan, while teaching creative writing goes to help "a beautiful dark-haired girl" in replacing her pin and says, "Can I help you? And she was saying, "No", and he was thinking that forty-five classes in the semester were forty-five chances to make a favorable impression" (16). At this point, one can easily think that professors are not to teach but to flirt. It is satire on teachers like Timothy Monahan, who take college as medium of making "favorable impression". Likewise, Timothy's eccentricity is exposed, "he had never returned to the campus more than twelve hours before the beginning of his first class" (14). Similarly, the narrator shows what Cecelia does and how it produces erotic sense in Monahan," Cecelia stretched and yawned, touched her hair to see if the pins were falling out. The gesture lifted her breasts, which were large, and marvelously concentrated his attention on the loose white cotton of her breast" (52). This quote comprises burlesque element. It is a kind of 'bawdy' scene. Cecelia does not perform her duty well in the class. Same is the case with Timothy, too. Thus, the narrator makes Cecelia speak, "yes, and his class is

always laughing and my class is always droning” (52). They perform well about what is not related to their field but they perform nothing in field of academia.

Timothy not only flirts with Cecelia and the student but with Helen also. The narrator makes the reader know that he feels happy after he found that Helen is still sexually active. Thus, the narrator comments:

He had opened her bathroom closet and noted boxes of tampons, which meant she had gone through menopause yet, and a couple of diaphragm cases, ditto, with the additional implication that she was still sexually active. The rumors were that her sexual activity had once been various and unstinting. Tim was glad to see any evidence of sexual activity at all around the university. (53)

Despite corrupted, greedy and hypocrite characters, there is only one character who wants to improve strata of Moo University. Lorain Strop, a loony farmer, likes to do so. But after the invention of machine to modernize American agriculture, he is not given any importance. Rather he has to face various difficulties. It is suspected that “two organization the FBI and the CIA had introduced some sort of selective brain poison into his water supply in order to disable, or more probably kill him” (165). Eventually this man dies mooing like a cow being slaughtered. This incident satirizes high authority of University. It is a paradox reflected by narrator’s comment that high-ranking people do not strive for deteriorating condition of university but Loraine Strop at the cost of life does effort. Conspiracy against a “loony farmer” reveals their inhumanity. Moral, dutiful, honest and patriotic people are victimized even if they do well. In opposition to it, high-ranking people neglect deteriorating condition of an institution.

Another instance of comment is related to fashion of the boys and girls. So, the narrator satirically views, “there were girls who had shaved their heads and boys who had hair to their waists and vice-versa” (26). Again, the narrator ridicules on what Diana carries, “Diana takes the pills and carries condoms, one of which she will hand Bob, to his thrilled humiliation, in about seven minutes” (98). It shows that students never carry books and other related items but carry “pills and condoms”. Likewise, Joy “burst into tears” after she could not get “liquor at the party” (154). Bob and Diana are talking about the hog. Diana gives the hog some attribution of human kind. The narrator comments:

Diana said, “Yuck” just as if an intelligent animal like Earl couldn’t hear and understand her distaste, He grunted.

“See”, said Bob, “He’s acting very weird.”

“God, he’s so fat. I mean, look at the rolls!”

“You don’t have to insult him.”

“I don’t have to insult a pig?” she laughed. (180)

In this quote, “intelligent animal” is not appropriate combination. A hog can’t be intelligent. It is human quality which is used to create special effect that university students even give human attribute to simple animal. Along with it, Cecelia’s flirtatious nature seems ridiculous. She meditates herself sometimes for Timothy and sometimes for Chairman X. The narrator makes the reader know that “after the commencement of her passion for Chairman X, Cecelia had given up her plans to return to I. A. for Christmas” (261). She is passionate lady teacher. Chairman X superficially seems a radical Marxist thinker, but involves in sexual activity with professor inside university. Thus, the narrator comments what Cecelia thinks “or

rather, to think anything other than having sex with Chairman X. She was thinking about that “so fully and so constantly that she might as well have been having sex with him” (263). So, it satirizes both Cecelia and Chairman X who take physical satisfaction during the period of crisis of a large university. They are not worried about university. She always thinks of ‘sex’ not for her classes and academic activities.

Their negligence toward the university is also shown by large expense “university had paid” for hog’s fattening up experiment. Thus, the narrator wonderfully views:

All told, the amount the university had paid out for Dr Jones’s hog fattening experiment came to \$ 233, 876, 42. Nor had any grants come in to defray even a portion of these expenses. And the university office had been remarkably free in communicating this information to the news media. (384)

This above quote indicates that meaningless experiment without any mission and vision is conducted by Bob Carlson under the guidance of Dr Bo Jones. On the one hand, university is going to be collapsed due to slash of budget. On the other, university expends large amount of money in hog fattening up experiment. Thus, it satirizes both sophomore students and guide and those who “communicate about it to media”. In the same context Christopher Clausen views, “Jane Smiley’s much-reviewed novel *Moo*, published earlier this year, cruelly but brilliantly symbolizes the university as a hog--the subject of an eccentric professor’s research project--whose sole purpose is to get as fat as it is genetically possible for a hog to be” (2).



Here, similarity is there between meaningless hog experiment, and faculty and staff of the university. The central characters in *Moo* are the faculty and staff of the university itself, many of whom spending their time preoccupied with things far removed from their proper province of education.

Thus, Jane Smiley uses omniscient narrator to satirize academic mores. The narrator reveals what they think and feel, say and do. Basically, staff and students of university are taken under scrutiny. Sometimes, the narrator makes the situation humorous and burlesques it. Thereby, Smiley satirizes confidently by reflecting their vices and follies.

## **Chapter - Four**

### **Conclusion**

The novel analyzed, here, depicts the degrading American academic scenario and thereby satirizes the vices and follies prevailed within contemporary American academia. The novel attacks the burning and polluted academic mores with the help of humor, burlesque and omniscient narrative point of view.

In the novel, the readers are made to laugh at the loopholes of the characters. For this purpose, the writer deliberately and mechanically repeats some patterns. The characters like Ivar Harstad, Chairman X and Sherri repeat some words, phrases and sentences. This mechanical repetition makes the reader laugh. Timothy Monahan is another character who does mechanical repetition. Along with the characters, the narrator also repeats some patterns.

Similarly, humor is evoked through exaggeration. Mary, one of the students in the university, exaggerates a white boy in a party to whom she is attracted to. Jellinek, a dean and his girl friend, Joy, talk of great project which is demystified later on as the project of living together. Likewise, Helen Levy, a lady professor is exaggerated and compared to California puppy by the narrator who also exaggerates intoxicated condition of Mary by the repetition of same phrase. The narrator also exaggerates Diana's suit and her appearance. It is a kind of exaggeration by imitation. Sherri's friends also exaggerate the monotony of English and Economics class by lengthening their voice. While the characters and the narrator produce lengthening voice, it seems odd, eccentric and sometimes makes the reader surprised. Some characters like Dr. Lionel Gift, professor of economics, Timothy Monahan, professor

of creative writing, perform eccentric and odd activities by creating the situations which are beyond the expectation of the general readers.

For the purpose of satire, another element she has used is burlesque.

Depiction of hog in elevated style, parodying Shakespearean comedy, strip-tease scenes, dance and sexually suggestive dialogue and action prove it as burlesque novel.

Entire plot hovers round the creature, hog. Its feelings, thoughts, activities and even death have been highlighted despite its pettiness. To expose the absurdities existing within the university, she has twisted some features of Shakespearean comedy.

Among them the portrait of setting in familiar Moo University with many departments, rampant sexual and homosexual activities, flirtation, interchangeable love, and neither separation nor reunion, occur in the novel. There are ringing of many marriage bells which are not the outcome of true love rather they are the result of their own will not being affected by the fate and any magic. Furthermore, the strip-tease action taken place between and among the characters, like Bob Carlson and Diana, Chairman X and Cecelia, Timothy Monahan and Cecelia, attacks the then follies of academia. These characters also produce sexually suggestive dialogue and action even inside the classroom. Moreover, students like Mary, Keri, Sherri and Diana participate in different dance parties neglecting their classes and province of education.

As the next element to satirize the academic mores, she has created omniscient narrator who reveals the characters' secrecy, finds out what the characters themselves do not know. The narrator makes the situation humorous and burlesques it. The narrator provides information regarding the large expense that Dr. Bo Jones has invested in meaningless fattening up experiment. Similarly, Cecelia's thought of having sex with Chairman X is shown by the narrator. It is exposed that Diana,

instead of book, carries pills and condoms to university and provides to Bob, her boyfriend. Likewise, Timothy Monahan's feeling of happiness while he finds Helen sexually active, Diana's worry about her pregnancy and fear of its exposition, Keri, Mary and other university students attending university class not to study but to spend time, exposition of Sherry's secret of letting Darryl go wildly with her for a night and stealing her sister's new rose colored sweater provide the readers a broad space to observe vices and follies inside the academic institution.

To sum up, the novel is a satire upon the wrong-headedness of American academia which is guided by non-academic practices. Along with the use of humor burlesque and omniscient narrator, the instances and situations presented in the novel have helped to depict the academic mores prevailed in the then America.

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