

I. Contextualizing Satire in Soseki Natsume's *I am a Cat*

This research is based on satirizing on humans from a feline – a cat's perspective to expose some of the common, yet disgusting behavior of humans. Japanese writer Soseki Natsume's *I am a Cat* ridicules on the human race and their practices not to damage the dignity of humans, but to create a shock of recognition on the unusual behavior they have been performing for ages. Natsume's cat is a harsh critic on many of the common practices of humans, and especially of the treatment of humans to the animals. The cat as the mouthpiece of the writer intends to impact a positive change on academic and social practices.

The cat is the agent of the writer, and through it, he satirizes many of the irrational behaviors common in human communities. This technique makes the fiction differently interesting because a feline commenting on human behavior is lesser known practice. This technique – a feline commenting on humans' mistakes, serves as an awakening to mankind. The novel starts with a simple yet touching fact that the cat remains unnamed throughout its lifetime. The cat makes a sarcastic remark on this fact as, "I am a cat but as yet I have no name" (1). This fact remains as a guiding fact in the development of the plot of the novel. This fact compels the readers to think that even animals need a name, an identity which; however, humans have always ignored.

Humans are self claimed ruler and protector of this earth. However, in the process, humans have been excessively exploiting and denying the animals and plants from even from their' basic rights. One such trend is, unlike humans, domestic and pet animals are not given any name. It is often preferred that animals need no names; however, it is humans' perception, and who knows if animals really do not need any name or identity. It is we humans who decide so; however, the cat makes a satire of this bitter reality.

The unnamed cat is represented in the form of mouthpiece of the writer who takes a rather different way to spoof on fellow humans. The cat is only a way to shower satire on human behaviors. Despite, there being sufficient stories depicting animals in important roles prior to *I am a Cat*; there have been rare cases where the mouth piece is a feline and, it satires on humans, freely. This technique, itself seems to be a form of satire on humans in the novel. In the process, Natsume does not hesitate to lay bare many of the human behaviors as funny but, unintelligent. These claims by the writer in the form of a cat are an interesting point made in the novel.

The unnamed cat depicts various human behaviors that are unfriendly and harmful to pet animals, like it. The cat narrates those events that are adversely affecting to a feline. As such, the cat is mere an instrument to emphasize on such irresponsible activities that hurts sentiments of animals. It is usually seen that animal, and even pets, are only tools to satiate humane desires and beyond this, the animals seem to have no purpose at all. To expose this, Natsume gives special emphasis to the cat's conscious deviation from the strict literal sense of a word, or from the more commonly used form of word order or sentence construction. Natsume presents activities those are friendly and entertaining to humans but have a negative effective on the animals; this is how the novel becomes an interesting satire to read and feel.

A satire is an act intended to blame that certain act is not appropriate. However, in *I am a Cat* it is a feline that is making such observation in the novels. It narrates such activities where the cat is a victim of inhumane human's act of pleasure. In an event the cat is "caught upside down" (27) and, in other it is "slapped with a ruler" (3) to remind it for not doing a certain act. Similarly, the cat is deeply touched when it comes to know that the recently born kitten are thrown to die but the irony is abundant of food stuff are thrown each day in the house of the teacher, and also in the neighborhood, as well.

Through these activities, the cat depicts how human are using animals merely for their selfish purpose. But, the protagonist, the cat, is hopeful that soon this world will be without the man species, and then the cats will be ruling this earth. It is interesting to know that the cat says that men will not prosper forever in this world, and the doom of human is almost near. The cat makes a critical remark, “I don’t believe that the human race will prosper forever so all I have to do is to relax and wait for the time when cats will reign” (5). This satire on human race is a bitter reality taken, although observed from a feline’s perspective. It seems the cat is more than true as there have been great disasters due to this selfish attitude of human’s mean mentality and attitude.

The cat is a good orator and his skill is vibrantly found throughout the novel. From the time immemorial, animals are considered much inferior for a dignified post and status. Similarly, it is interesting to know that Aristotle uses satire as one of the good measures of oration. To be a good orator, it is required that s/he posses strong command and mastery over the use of satire. It has been one of the ancient forms of persuasive techniques to aware the listener or the opponent of his/her lacunae. Here, the unnamed cat uses this technique to make sarcastic remarks on the many of the ways of humans understanding and behavior, especially from the point of view of animals.

The cat is disliked and unwanted in the house of the English teacher, Kushami Sneaze who has reared it. However, none of the other family members like the cat. The unnamed cat roams freely in the house of its master, the school teacher. It is not liked by other family members; wife, daughter and housemaid. But the poor cat has nowhere to go and keeps sticking to their uncaring and insensitive masters. It is true that humans are wild by nature and whenever an opportunity comes, they display it in various forms. The cat is a victim to this mentality of humans.

Sadly, the two young daughters of the teacher and even the housemaid, Osan, do not like the cat. When the young girls sleep in the warmth of their bed under the warmth of a quilt, the cat is left to suffer in the cold. So, the cat likes to slip in the beds of the three years and five years old girls, but he is often caught and punished. Upon knowing that the cat has crawled in the bed, the girls cannot resist it and give a big cry. The cat narrates it, as:

The girls especially the smaller one raise an awful cry in the middle of the night and holler, 'There's that cat in here again!' At this, my weak stomached master wakes up and come in to help them. It was only the other day that he gave me a terrible whipping with a ruler for indulging in this otherwise pleasant custom. (4)

It is sad to know this treatment of humans towards domestic animals. It is a bitter reality that most animals are not provided good residential facilities, and especially during the winter or extremes of summer, they suffer slowly and silently. However, there are hardly any humans who understand their woes and internalized sufferings.

As such, the cat is a poor animal in the English teacher's house whose sentiments are hardly understood by the owners of the house and he is often neglected. In the winter it is natural for the cat to seek for warmth, and it finds it in the form of bed of the young girls. However, it is sad that the most sensible species, the humans treat an animal in an unfair manner.

Despite the fact that humans are the most sensible and intelligent beings in this planet, their attitude towards other species, and also to human is not friendly. As rightly said by English poet and novelist, John Milton, "To commit err is human" (qtd. *Paradise Lost* 1). It is almost true as no humans can be godly and to commit errors and create chaos is almost humane. However, for the cat, these are silly things that the intelligent

human beings should not be committing. As such, the comment of cat is a satire to entire human activities and way of living.

Satire, in literature, prose or verse employs to wit in the form of irony, sarcasm or outright derision to expose human wickedness and folly. It is derived from the Latin *satura*, meaning medley or mixture, and is related to the Latin adjective *satura* meaning replete. It is clear that satire does not mean to take negative aspects. But, these days, in common parlance, satire, generally seems to be imploring negativity. However, satire is a tool to depict one's mistake and weakness with an intention that the concerned will make an attempt to correct it. As such, satire is a literary manner which blends a critical attitude with humor and wit to the end that human institutions or humanity with an intention to be improved. A true satirist is conscious of the frailty of institutions of man's devising and attempts through laughter not so much to tear them down as to inspire a remodeling of the act.

The plot of the novel develops around a nameless cat, and its master, an English teacher. The cat was discovered by in a “gloomy damp place” by a student (1). The cat narrates its first encounter with a human as:

I was crying “meow, meow.” It was there that I met a human being for the first time in my life. Though I found this all out at a later date, I learned that this human being was called a Student, one of the most ferocious of the human race. I also understood that these Students sometimes catch us, cook us and then take to eating us. (1)

So, the tone of the novel is set at the very first lines of the novel. The cat which was lying somewhere in a damp and gloomy place was rescued by a student. However, the cat is sarcastic towards its rescuer, who is a student and terms him a dangerous species. As such, Natsume, through the character of cat imposes satire on human species.

One of the simple fact of humans is they are hostile to their savior or benefactors. It is seen that most people after their work is done they do not want to acknowledge the fact that they were picked and helped by some certain individual. In turn, they throw sarcastic remarks and cheap comments on them. The cat in *I am a Cat* is the representative of such human sentiments and feelings who do not want to establish the fact that they were helped. The cat was picked by the student and brought to the teacher's house where the journey of his life begins – a harsh reality of human life.

Satire has become a pervasive discursive strategy on present culture of study and its dominance has sparked debates whether it should be lauded as a vehicle for political commentaries, and whether its political function is essentially conservative or subversive. *Irony* is derived from *ironia*, a Latin word, which referred to “pretended ignorance” (source: *Students Microsoft [DVD] Encarta 2008*). It is a literary device that uses contradictory statements or situations to reveal a reality different from what appears to be true. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines satire as, “a word used to ridicule, irony and sarcasm” (492).

Similarly, satirical novel is a different concern than the particular problem of satirical fiction. In a novel, Matthew Hodgart opines, “Satire seems to require a light and closed form, and the novel is open-ended and large where satire can fit itself” (214). To support his idea, he draws a conclusion that no full length novel is likely to be satirical throughout, and indeed not one example among the classics comes to mind.

One of the other aspects of satire in *I am a Cat* is a subtle satire on the attitude of beauty, as is taken by the Japanese and the Europeans. Natsume voices the cat to speak that it is not merely Europeans have the sense of fashion and beauty but it differs from place and place and person to person. In one occasion the cat rejects the idea of Japanese and European beauty, as:

Beautiful? Did you say beautiful? Never mind – consider them as beautiful but still as beasts. When I say this, some of you might ask whether I’ve ever seen a European lady in a formal evening dress. Well, they have their bosoms uncovered, their shoulders bare and their arms naked. And they call this a formal dress! It’s outrageous. (234)

It is interesting to know that the notion of beauty differs from person to person and society to societies. So, it becomes a satire on human understanding because when one finds beauty in being scantily clad; for others, it is found in full body clothing.

The sense of beauty is universal; however, it might differ from notion to which one is grown up and nurtured. In those days in Japan (during the first decade of twentieth century), female were supposed to cover their body; whereas the European women were more liberal in the context. So, it becomes interesting to know how notion of beauty differed from person to persons, and society to societies. As such, the concept of beauty is an irony in itself.

This is because the notion of beauty for one may not apply equally to others. When in one culture to have long neck is synonymous to beauty, in other it does not. Similarly, fair skin might be determining factor of beauty for Europeans; it is not to the Asians. As such, the irony of beauty, the cat is narrating is depicted in the form of the viewers rationalization of the fact. The cat when indulged in a debate of who is beautiful does not think the notion of fashion of the European females is different to that of the Japanese.

So, satire can be found in the concept of beauty, as narrated by the cat. This notion is deep rooted in the mentality of people of varying tribes and communities who take theirs’ respective fashion and attire to be the most suitable one. This notion is once again similar to what cat terms as “And they call this a formal dress! It’s outrageous”

(234). So, it is interesting to know that there are as many trends and believes in this world, as many there are tribes and communities of people.

However, the cat is clear on one aspect that humans are enemies of the feline – cats. This is an interesting scenario to cope with. After all it is a human who is making this sarcastic remark. It becomes more satiric because a conscious human is indirectly commenting that the treatment of animals by humans is not appropriate. This is an interesting facet of the present novel, to which the present researcher has taken into consideration with a purpose of exposing humane drawbacks and lacunae.

In consideration, Natsume seems to prefer the second technique as he uses a feline to expose his feelings towards the contemporary people of his society. By exposing feline in the central character, the writer depicts the rise of respect to be shown towards the animals. Treatment towards animals is one of the bitter realities that humans are showing to them. Humans treat animals in most cruel manner which has been as if an accepted norm in our society. In the context, *I am a Cat* depicts the other side of animal feelings. As such, the novel becomes a funny tale; at the same time, a remainder to humans of their treatment towards animals.

As such, from the above discussion, it can be understood that satire can be taken into two forms; firstly, to blame by praise and secondly, to praise by blame. Both situations create comical sense as they are means to expose the boisterous nature of human being. To blame by praise is to take the opponent in direct confidence that s/he is committing follies. But, the second one, to praise by blame seems less indirect and safer in most situations. There are incidents where people do not want to acknowledge their faults and turn aggressive to which the orator might find the ‘praise by blame’ technique more suitable.

Natsume, himself being a representative of human race, is well aware of the human's mentality. As such, he and takes on the second way – to blame by praise to make a critical observation on human's treatment of animals to educate the human race. Taking a cat as the mouthpiece by Natsume is to remain on safer side to provide academic insights to human behavior.

In consideration to these ideas, the present research deals on satire to expose the mentality human follies from a feline's perspective. For the same, the first chapter 'Contextualizing Satire in Soseki Natsume's *I am a Cat*' to deal on a short introduction of 'satire' based on various theorists. Similarly, the second chapter deals on various aspects in the novel deals on satire under 'Satire and Human Follies in *I am a Cat*.' Finally, the last chapter, 'Exposition of Meanness of Humans' will depict the self-centered attitude of humans, especially towards the animals.

II. Satire and Human Follies in *I am a Cat*

Natsume's *I am a Cat* makes a mockery of superior mentality of humans. The cat claims that the humans are so spoilt that they take fun by hurting other living beings. It draws a conclusion that humans are habituated to hurt animals for their personal pleasure. The cat observes:

I have had the chance to observe them and the more I do the more I come to the conclusion they are terribly spoiled, especially the children. When they feel like it, they hold you upside down or cover your head with a bag; and at times, they throw you around or try squeezing you into a cooling range. (4)

Upon observing the behavior of the children, the cat makes a very critical observation. Today, in most families, children are given more than essential freedom and which has invited a moral dilemma in the present world.

It is important to note that all humans – children and elders are all alike. As such, there is an ideal situation for a satirist to depict this situation of lack of morality in amongst the humans. Although, satire intends always to be corrective, the satirist can guarantee only to expose vice and hypocrisy, but cannot provide certainty on its application. As such, satire is an attempt to aware not only to stop the decay of civilization but also to reverse the trend of decay and to move toward a true moral progress. It seems almost a futile attempt, at least to the cat. According to the cat, there must be a complete moral regeneration of man, and such regeneration seems virtually impossible.

Then there are academic practices found in the works and functions of Mr. Kushami's engagement in so-called literary genius. The cat's master who is a school teacher is a lazy person by nature. He likes to shut himself in his room in pretext of

carrying out some important academic affairs like creation of literature on various topics including that of religious importance and in relation to God. However, this is nothing more than a cheap farce.

The cat knows this because it has an easy access to his room when other family members do not have such privilege. The cat finds this engagement rather a satirical, as the master when being famously busy in creation of academic creation is either sleeping or lousing in the lock room. And when, Mr. Kushami comes out of the room, he boasts of acquiring knowledge on religion and the God. However, the cat finds this pride is based on very silly observation. According to the cat, creation of God is such great that a human can merely define it, as:

God made all creation so man must also be a creation of God. This, it seems, is stated in a book they call Bible. Now, in regard to human beings, they pride themselves in knowing what has happened during the past several thousand years. Though they hold God in deep wonder, it is a fact that they also seem to possess tendency of recognizing Him as the Omniscient and Omnipotent. (155)

So, it is only a pretention that man knows religion and the God. For one to know to claim to know God is impossible because, according to the cat, “. . .the skill of the Creator, who alone undertook the task of making human beings, is a greater wonder than words can express” (155).

So, when Kushami makes a pretention of being busy, he is in fact, taking help of one of the oldest forms of excuses to hide his follies and silliness. Natsume exposes this with an aim to correct the target rather than to hurt him/her though the cat. This method is very rare in literary writings that this tactic is used from an unnamed cat's perspective. The entire incidents in the novel are narrated by a pet cat, which; however seems very

ungrateful towards its master. A cat is an animal that has less understanding of the human world and mannerism, or precisely that is what we (human) have presumed to be.

I am a Cat gets into a very different approach of narrating incidents from the perspective of the cat that takes everything as its means to satire on the human's mannerism and attitude. It is no denying that humans have been the worst of species, as far as, the right to life of other species found in this world is concerned. Natsume takes this particular cat which understands the humane ways, and also their language. So, this is no ordinary cat either.

The plot of the story is centered on this nameless cat that unwittingly roams into the home of a schoolteacher, Mr. Kushami, and from there on, it tells us about his observations of his master, and every interesting and funny incidents taking place in the home. The cat explains his master's name in a sarcastic manner, as "Mr. Kushami is indeed a respectable man" (251). The teacher does not indulge with his "less educated neighbors" and so does the cat assume itself as (251). The cat does not indulge in the neighborhood, as it take itself as superior to other cats in the area. This is one of the most common forms of human nature that is found in modern people who take things for granted.

As the book opens, the unnamed feline begins with: "I am a cat. As yet I have no name. I've no idea where I was born" (1). The cat's owner is a teacher who regards the cat with indifference, so much that he has not even bothered to name his pet. Likewise, the cat has no respect for his master; for he knows that the man is a fool. The cat makes a sarcastic remark on humans, as:

As soon as he comes home from school, he shuts himself up in the study for the rest of the day; and he seldom emerges. The others in the house think that he is terribly hard-working. He himself pretends to be hard-

working. But actually he works less hard than any of them think.

Sometimes I tiptoe to his study for a peep and find him taking a snooze . .

. Teachers have it easy. If you are born a human, it's best to become a teacher. For if it's possible to sleep this much and still to be a teacher, why, even a cat could teach. (3)

Other moments illustrating the teacher's stupidity are revealed by the fact that he will reject ideas that one can understand, and instead he prefers to dwell on confusing ideas he is incapable of understanding. But as the cat admits, the teacher is not alone in this fact. "Something unignorable lurks in whatever passes our understanding, and there is something inherently noble in that which we cannot measure," he says (4).

While much of *I Am a Cat* is a criticism of academia and institutional thought, the cat also elaborates on how selfish human beings are, and for this, the cat is quite observant in what he discovers. For example, in one scene where he gets a sticky bun caught in his mouth, instead of the people around him helping to remove it, they merely laugh at the cat's efforts to dispose of it. In another scene, when a beautiful next-door neighbor cat named Tortoiseshell dies suddenly, the cat overhears her owners blame him as the culprit, believing that he was the one to get her sick. This is a sad moment, for after he overhears of Tortoiseshell's death, the cat is also reinforced with his own loneliness and the knowledge that were he to get sick, no one would go to such great lengths to protect him, much less miss him when he is gone.

In modern time, the attributed position of an individual is rendered problematic to the very post-holder; however, for his/her relative becomes a means of boisterous means. It is a sense of superiority that comes along with post especially to those people who are not in the position. The cat is an example that takes this consideration to claims its superiority over the rest of the people of the society. The cat finding that humans are

terribly spoilt is a sarcastic remark on this modern mentality of humans, who are on the claim that they are the most superior beings of this planet, and also the universe.

Through the literary device of contradictory statements and situations, Natsume wants to reveal a reality different from what appears to be true. Satire is a literary art of ridiculing a folly or vice in order to expose or correct it. It is satiric for a firehouse to burn down, or for a police station to be burglarized. The object of satire is usually some human frailty; people, institutions, ideas, and things are all fair game for satirists. For the cat, satire is more than a speech. It is a reality that comes from his experience with humans. Richard Rorty in *Contingency, Satire and Solidarity* comments that satire has to do with recognition of these diverse facts, as:

Satire, as recognition is that what we say is really not a representation of what is and that we ourselves are nothing more than our ways of speaking. Satire is theory of meaning or language: an attitude towards truth and representation defines in terms of edifying ways of speaking. It is more than a speech; it is an act within language. (10)

So, for the cat it is recognition of self within his community. This recognition is done through the use of language, so it is the value of the language that works in satire. But if we take satire as a possible speech act seriously, it is also the case that the performance of satire actually prevents. So, satire is more than mere speech or language. It is, in fact, internalized concepts on what one comments as the drawbacks of others.

Satire evokes attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation toward its faulty subject in the hope of somehow improving it. But at times, it may create counter-discourse, as, instead of the intention of creating fun and idealistic value to the intended person.

I Am a Cat is also a narration of an assortment of middle class Japanese people during the early years of twentieth century. Mr. Sneaze, the cat's master is engaged at a local grammar school. Through the depiction of superficial nature of his master, the cat comments on the ways of living of the Japanese person of the time. The cat's feelings for his master are, as:

He was a man of weak stomach so his skin was somewhat yellowish. He looked parched and inactive, yet he was a great consumer of food. . . . His family thought him to be very studious and my master also made out as if he were. But actually, he wasn't as and look into his study only to find him taking a nap. Sometimes I would find him drivelling on the book he had been reading before dozing off. (3)

As such, it is Mr. Sneaze's way of escaping from the homely affairs. It is his pretention that he is writing something of great value. However, the fact is he was simply avoiding the chores, and used to go to a nap whenever possible. It is a pompous show of what the master want to be but, simply he cannot be. This is very similar to modern trend where individuals often claim that they are busy in some matters of great concern but, such things are at bay.

The cat also makes critical observation of the people who come to its master's house. Somewhere, upon viewing the behaviors of humans, it feels that it is almost a human, at least in terms of thinking. It decides, "He's more human than feline!" (37). It is interesting to know that the cat does the thinking and observing part in the novel. He judges the family members and other people from a critical point of view, and makes sure that it is not like any one of them. This is purely a scholarly act to comment and avoid follies by taking lesson from other beings; however, when a cat does this, it is of great satire on humans.

Natsume takes an unnamed cat to expose the idiocy and irrational behavior of human nature. This nameless cat unwittingly roams into the home of a schoolteacher, and from there on, the cat tells us about his observations of his master, and the very interesting and funny characters who come to visit. The master is a perfect example of nature of many of the present day humans.

The cat finds the secret of its master. It realizes that his master is not a genius or something, but a lazy person who wants to avoid the societal responsibilities and pretends of doing something of value and respect – a literary creation. The observation of the cat is more than true as people today claim that they are superior to rest of their fellow men. The master stands as a representative figure of such person who claim that they are person of substance, but the fact is they are just boisterous and nothing more. The finds out its master locked inside the room and claim to be creating things of value and dignity. However, he is either sleeping or pretending to create some literary works that practically has no value. During one of the master's claim of being indulged in literary ventures, the cat notices his follies, as:

Nobody, then, should be so insulting as to read while lying down or to read five lines all at once with the feet stretched out. When Liu Tsung-Yuan read the works of Han T'ui-Chih, a Chinese politician and a man of letters, he always made it a rule to wash his hands and to purify them in rose water first. In reading my work, however, I would only like to ask you to be enthusiastic enough to buy your own copies; do not borrow my books from your friends. (123)

Natsume uses the cat to narrate the respect that a great man has for literary creations. Liu Tsung is one of the literary geniuses of China. It is said that he used to purify his hands and body, before he read some work of importance and value. However, the cat finds its

master a useless being, as he hardly has any respect for any such things. He is simply trying to hide his inefficiency in the name of creating a work of genius.

Soseki's literary career began in 1905, when he wrote a short story entitled *I Am a Cat* which was a great public success. He initially started to write *I Am a Cat* as a literary sketch that was against the writing tradition of the day. Although, it appeared to be a novel, it went against the style in vogue at that time. Soseki's purpose in writing differed from that of his contemporaries. Soseki explained that one of the special features of the literary sketch was that it had no story lines. *I Am a Cat* was written with no clear story lines. The direction of the story gradually deviates from its course and the content becomes darker and deeper; the story lines are tied together only by the cat, which is wandering about. The purpose of the story simply, as it seems, is to expose the absurdity of human activities, and to ridicule them.

Absurdity is related to foolishness and irrationality of an action. In modern times, it seems most of the human actions are illogical and irrational because they do not have a link with each other. The cat in Mr. Kushami house is one such that lives in total absurdity. It does not find any rational meaning to happenings around it. And, one of the bitter realities that the cat is living with is it does not have a name, an identity. Name is one of the first requirements for identity which the cat lacks right from its birth, and remains so, till it dies. Anonymity seems to be another feature of modern day is absurdity. Some remain unnamed with their name, and other without a name. The cat remains unnamed throughout its life, to which the cat has a sarcastic observation, as:

When I first come to his home, nobody but the master was nice to me.

Wherever I went, they would kick me around and I was given no other consideration. The fact that they haven't given me a name even as of

today goes to show how much they care for me. That's why I try to stay close to my master. (4)

So, there's name only for human, and for animals, it's on the condition humans give them one. However, it most often depends on whether they want it or not. Similarly, the cat is kicked around in the house, of course not by his master, Mr. Sneaze but by others because it is an unnamed little creature with no obvious advantage to anyone of them.

Name is one of the most common forms of identity of humans and animals living in this earth. It is related to dignity and value of him/her and also for animals. However, the cat does not have a name, throughout his life. This is an absurdity in which the cat is living. This is one of the features of individuals living in modern time, as they are unable to escape the tyranny of age-old hegemony of 'humans as superior to rest of the species of this planet and universe.'

Natsume's *I Am a Cat* is told in three volumes via way of a pompous, humorous, intelligent cat without a name. It is a work of great satire, it is a work of true pathos, and it is a work of insightful literature. Written during 1904-1906, if there is one thing that the book reveals, it is that human nature does not change much over the generations. While the tale is told through a cat's lens, the story is more about the humans than the cat, albeit there are passages that, for more or less, are believable within the universe Soseki has created. Given that one must accept that cats are more intelligent and knowledgeable than their human owners, the cat's observations are spot on, and despite the era in which it was written, *I Am a Cat* is both fresh and Modern, as if it had been penned yesterday.

The concept of satire has undoubtedly appeared under different names, in different ages. Little attempt has been made to trace the idea apart from the term. The term itself, after quickly shedding most of its original meaning, has steadily extended

itself from satiric and comic satire through paradoxical satire to tragic and nihilistic satire, and now encompasses all the meanings outlined above. Frequently, during this history, the use of satire has elicited intense ethical judgments, pro and con. The most influential model in the history of satire has been the Platonic Socrates. Neither Socrates nor his contemporaries, however, would have associated the word satire with modern conceptions of satire.

Satire, for Alexander Pope was more than an indication of goodness: it was the expression of a perfect way of life that aspired to others. Ethically, Satire here reversed the position, it had held in the Aristotelian school, which was viewed from the subjective angle of the individual soul rather than social angle. As a result, ironic manner was only the external expression of an individual. The manner of Satire, Pope described kept the degree of opposition between praise and blame very slight, avoiding ironic virulence or comic buffoonery. In this Pope's style of Satire, Ellen Douglas Leyburn comments:

It was a fusion of modest self-abnegation, gentle gravity, and an apparent tolerance of all things behind which hid reservations about all things. The reservations were there because for the Neo-Platonic Shaftesbury the only important reality was the spirit within, which must tolerate but not be disturbed by the immediate changes and incessant eternal conversions, revolutions of the world. (327)

He himself might often be the only audience aware of his Satire and the world might find him puzzling, but he lived disinterested and unconcerned, accommodating all appearances to his own mind and setting everything in its due light. In the age of Pope, satire was used as one of the surest weapons to expose many of the silliness that human used to pride upon.

In similar context, *I am a Cat* is interpreted where a cat is the protagonist to expose the behaviorism of so-called the most developed beings of this earth. The character of cat exposes many of the exquisites and refined raillery which belonged to his manner. By virtue of which the cat could explain the highest level of ethics and those of commonest capacities of heroism and the simpleton.

Another of the absurd features in *I am a Cat* is the cat observes the astonishing things happening around it in a ridiculous manner. In one such occasion, Meitei, one of his master's friends come to the house to claim that he is a "distinguished handsome" (192) and is finishing a thesis to impress a girl. In fact, he is simply trying to amuse the family members and there is no work of special importance, like innovative writings or research work. The fact is; he is there to satiate his taste buds on free dinner that would be served to him. He loves to eat, wherever and whenever possible. The cat narrates, Meitei's activities, as:

Enter the most handsome friend! But you'll have to excuse me. I just started eating and am not quite through, Meitei told without any hesitation and embarrassment. He finished his second receptacle soon afterwards. Then . . . the subject is hardly what the 'Nose' would choose. But, remember, that 'Nose' is worth listening to. Meitei was again talking more like himself. (192-3)

So, to eat an individual can act anything serious and decent; however, which does not exist, at all. This is very true to the fact that 'whether we (human) live to eat, or eat to live.' Meitei is certainly the first category of person, and the academy of this sarcasm is humans should option for the second option, 'live to eat.'

Meitei stands as the representation of one of the most common features of humans who are sans moral values, at least from within the core of the heart. Here, in the

form of Meitei, the cat makes a critical remark on his behavior. In fact, the cat does not provide any satire, but a bitter reality. There is no satire without this corrective purpose and the sarcastic remark of the cat to human nature is for correction of human nature.

The cat's master is no less than his friend, Meitei. When Meitei is in home, he pretends as if attending matters of serious concerns, which, of course is not the matter. Then, Meitei is not present, Mr. Kushami often locks in the room in pretext of composing literature but what he does is sleep over the table.

Most of the characters in the novel are quite ridiculous. Their priorities are all goes wrong, their thought processes were all over the place. In the background, the cat thinks itself as an intelligent being, but it is equally ridiculous. One of the cat's first expressions upon seeing a human introduces the funny part of the novel, as:

This was probably the first time I had a good look at a so-called 'human being.' What impressed me as being most strange still remains deeply imbedded in my mind: the face which should have been covered with hair was a slippery thing similar to what I now know to be a teakettle . . .

Moreover the center of student's face protruded to a great extent and from the two holes located there, he would often emit smoke. (1)

It is the first experience of the cat of seeing a human, and it is obviously bemused of what he is seeing. A cat belongs to cat-family that, besides many other features, has hairy face with whiskers all over their body. But human have a slippery face with less whiskers.

All species are different to each other, and it is no amazing that they differ in shape and size, color and look. So, when the cat narrates the look of 'so-called' human, it is making obvious sarcasm of human's nature. It is In simple terms, it indicates to another layer of meaning, intended, then said or written.

Satire is often narrated with several similar meaning words, like eunuch, sarcasm, irony, burlesques, but, of course, none of them are synonymous to each other. All these are forms of satire in literature – prose or verse that employs wit in the form of allusion, or outright derision to expose human wickedness and folly. However, irony is the conflict between two meanings, which has a dramatic structure peculiar to it. Initially one meaning, the appearance, presents itself as the obvious truth, but when the context of this meaning unfolds, in depth or in time; it discloses a conflicting meaning. The reality measured against which the first meaning now seems false or limited and in its self-assurance, blind to its own situation. Irony lies, but it does so only as a dramatic means of bringing two meanings into open conflict.

All of the characters of *I am a Cat* are extremely concerned with power and the means to obtain power. The primary vessel used for the cast of the story appears to be education. The main offender displaying this is the protagonist's friend Meitei, who speaks constantly of Greek literature, and who takes it upon himself to tell Mrs. Kushami about it, knowing that she knows nothing about Greek literature. Later on, Tofu and Dokusen attempt to prove how cultured they are by exchanging poetry; Tofu mentions his fondness of Chinese poetry as well. Dokusen takes the discourse further by mentioning that kind of poetry, in addition to saying that the haiku is only one form of poetry that the literate man must understand and create. It is this understanding and creating that gives Dokusen power. In addition the necessity to maintain power in the face of a scrutinizing society plays out in main character Kushami, whom the cat observes taking naps when in his study, instead of reading books or working.

The writer presents Kushami as an escapist human being who pretends to be busy all the time, but which is an excuse to avoid responsibilities. The depiction of Kushami is to consider the weight we put upon the so-called 'intellectuals.' A good example exists in

Kushami's study, where the public and private self are in conflict throughout the story. It is ironic that Kushami considers this study to be private, because a private space is being used and enjoyed by nearly the entire cast of the book. James Fujii notes this notion of space in the "Meiji Subject: Soseki's Neko Reconsidered," as "private space is . . . different than space found in (the earlier) Edo period" (Fujii 565). The private space Kushami granted is deeply concerned with him. In addition he does notice and enjoy this lack of private space. His frustration says no, but his stubbornness towards traditional values mean that he may not outwardly express further frustration.

The discourse of the characters opens up space. Discourse being the bridge between the public and private space is observed by Frederic Jameson in "Soseki and Western Modernization", where money is cited as an example. It exists "in a league of interpersonality rather than with what distracts from it or tears through its delicate web of relationships" (Jameson 129). As the main discourse between characters exists as various modes of power, the space itself is being manipulated by the images of power.

Another key component of power in the story is that of honor and respect. Japan has long been a society in which social hierarchy is to be preserved and adhered to. The master of the house shows respect to police officers, an ideal that is slowly becoming out of place in Japanese society at the time. Is this meant to be a noble or honorable thing to do? The cat seems to call his master foolish every chance he gets, so this may be Natsume using the cat to represent modern Japanese ways of thinking, as compared to his old-fashioned master. The cat's role in this observance and judgment is to "puncture the vanity of Kushami-sensei" acting in a way to bring dishonor to his master's laziness (Viglielmo 4).

Component of this story is most strongly satirical representation of the relationship between respect and power. It's certainly the Kaneda family and their gaudy

displays of status. Aside from their house being two stories and Western in every way possible, the master of the Kaneda house, a businessman, is actively trying to bother and annoy Kushami, and his large-nosed wife Hanako is actively belligerent towards Kushami. Although he doesn't have much respect towards businessmen, Kushami is seemingly alone in this sentiment: all of his friends remind him of the money that businessmen make, but Kushami scoffs at this, claiming that businessmen are dishonest.

At this point, it becomes obvious that the Kaneda family represents American people in the eyes of the Japanese, both physically and emotionally. The Kanedas are extravagant, shrewd, and willing to stop at almost nothing to get their way. One of the other interesting points to observe is Natsume's own disdain for teaching as Biddle observes in "The Authority of Natsume Soseki." Soseki was teaching as a means to support his family, a job that Natsume felt "did not contribute to his psychological well-being" (Biddle 403). While Natsume was being kept from his true calling, Kushami and his fickle attachment to hobbies is the opposite; he lacks a true calling due to his whimsical nature. This is in stark difference between what he sees and feels, as observed by the cat.

Similarly, the issue of female social positions in *I am a Cat* is one of the more interesting parts of the story, due to the fact that Western social positions of women were far more progressive than those in Japan, and even there were comparatively more restrictive than present days. One of the most prominent personifications of women in late Meiji-era Japan is Yukie, who is introduced late in the story. Yukie is proud of the education afforded to her, and this is demonstrated by her telling the Mrs. Of the house about the lectures she attends. In spite of the intellectual fortitude that education has granted her, Yukie falls apart instantly in a quarrel with Kushami.

Furthermore, when she reappears to give her uncle and his guest tea, she is

described as having a brighter smile after crying: a face that was all bright. The notion of fair skin as a symbol of female beauty was again prominent in Chapter eleven, when Kushami and his contemporaries are all gathered around mocking the girls of Shizuoka for having dark skin, and Kangetsu for having married one. As Kushami's blatant acts of misogyny weren't enough, Kushami then starts speaking about how the world would be better off without women, and that Kangetsu has made a great mistake in getting married.

The difficult question to answer when reading the story is, so is the cat for Japanese society or against it? It is difficult to say with certainty, because he criticizes an array of customs that the master's family follows. However, the cat makes a severe proclamation of nationalism when, on page 247, he makes it a point to say the he is 'a Japanese cat.' Although Japanese nationalism is an idea normally associated with Showa-era Japan, it is in the Meiji period that we see the foundation for a Japanese nationalist identity established. The other problem that must be addressed concerns the direction of society in *I am a Cat*. Is the country headed in the right direction? In the midst of the Russian-Japanese War, Japan was full of national pride, and their belief that the Japanese way was ultimately the will of all Asia was the rationale behind their eventual annexation of Korea. Nevertheless, the idea of knowing one's place in society does indeed exist in the book. For example, the cat mentions extravagance several times in the book, especially in respect to sleep and food. Japanese society has expectations that one does not do anything that is unnecessarily extravagant or brings an inordinate amount of attention to one's self. This helps to support the idea of the cat being supportive of Japan, as he is reinforcing its social values.

As *I am a Cat* is a satire, there is a great deal of humor in the story, as well as a lot of irony. The protagonist spends a great deal of time in the book criticizing the way

humans live, considering their ways of life to be extravagant, noting their grooming and eating habits. However, the main character also admits that his own sleeping habits are extravagant, and that he spends a great deal of time each day napping in various places around the house, usually the veranda. In addition to the ironic element of this confession, it also adds the human element to the main character as well. In spite of the use of poetry as power, it is also used in the spirit of humor. This is especially true of Meitei composing poetry about Hanako's nose.

Death is a universal phenomenon; whether for humans or animals. It is unalterable and undeniable. And, there has been a series of long debate over, if there is afterlife or not. In context, the death of the cat raises a philosophic question in the regards, on whether death is the door to peace and salvation. The irony of cat's death is it raises the same query through its narration he delivers at the mouth of death. As the cat drowns, it says:

I die.

I die and receive peace.

Peace cannot be had without dying.

Save us, merciful Buddha! Save us, merciful Buddha!

Gracious blessings,

Gracious blessings. (431)

The interesting fact of the death of cat is associated with philosophy of the death. It is an irony that death opens the door for salvation; however, which is a myth. The myth is further mystified by the claims of cat who claims "I am entering the mysterious but wonderful realm of peace!" (431). But, the most important mystery of life remains still unanswered: does death gives us peace? Is death the door to salvation?

Death is a mysterious phenomenon, and humans have always tried to find an

amicable answer to what happens after death. Natsume, though ironically, raises the same query at the death of the cat. The cat's haunting ending is similar to those meek and weak humans whose destiny is, of course six feet land; whether buried or burnt.

Another interesting event at the death of the cat is; it falls into a rain barrel which at the time was full of beer, and eventually drowns. The beer is possible symbolic of foreign influence, especially since Kushami has been drinking sake exclusively until this point. The cat – the Japanese cat – has been killed by the effects of a foreign substance. Does this mean that Natsume thought that all of Japanese society would die at the hands of foreign influence? It is possible that he was going for this angle, but it is more likely, as evidenced throughout the text that he was extolling the importance of a social consensus on what influences were beneficial to Japanese society, and which would harm it. However, these are satire to the external influence that has been engulfing the Japanese traditions and culture.

The novel told in three cantos via way of a pompous, humorous, intelligent cat without a name is a work of great satire. It is a work of true pathos, and it is a work of insightful literature. Written during 1904-1906, if there is one thing that the book reveals, it is that human nature does not change much over the generations. One such facets of human nature that has not changed over the centuries is they like to tease others. There are several reasons why this habit has passed over the generations, yet remains intact and afresh. According to the cat:

Teasing is one amusement to create stimulation, but only when the other person can be made a little angry or irritated – otherwise it wouldn't be fun. Such amusement used to be most amusing when the bored feudal lords who did not understand others. Today, teasing is especially enjoyable for the young boys and girls whose brains are so

underdeveloped that they do think about nothing . . . to use their energy.

(256)

Teasing is fun to the first party, and not the second. However, it is yet another form of satire because when individuals are bored or have nothing of value to be performed, they seek shelter in teasing. The cat is one such victim of the humans who often take them as an object of pleasure and teasing to play with. This gives pleasure to the humans; and of course, they often ignore humane feelings and sentiments.

As such, the cat has developed a negative connotation towards human world. It claims that the “human race will not prosper forever” and the only thing the cats should do is to wait for that day to come” (5). Similarly, the cat goes on to the neighborhood and claims that “it is superior” as his master is a teacher in contrast to the mason’s cat (6). However, this is what makes a satire on human being because cat is merely voice of the writer who wants to depict the lacunae of the most intelligent being – the humans. The absolute value contained in Natsume’s mind is reflected from the vision of the cat which makes another form of satire. This is a layered form of satire where the self satirizes to self, how silly the others are.

As the book opens, the unnamed feline begins with: “*I am a Cat*. As yet I have no name. I’ve no idea where I was born.” The cat’s owner is a teacher who regards the cat with indifference, so much that he has not even bothered to name his pet. Likewise, the cat has no respect for his master; for he knows that the man is a fool. As example, of his master’s foolishness, is as:

As soon as he comes home from school, he shuts himself up in the study for the rest of the day; and he seldom emerges. The others in the house think that he is terribly hard-working. He himself pretends to be hard-working. But actually he works less hard than any of them can really

think of. Sometimes I tiptoe to his study for a peep and find him taking a snooze. (3)

The cat being an unnoticed animal in the house has an access to almost every happening in the house. Through this facilitation, the cat notices how his master is, and what actually his reality is. As such, the cat again makes a comedy of teachers. He thinks the work of teaching is:

Though I am a cat myself, at times I think that the schoolteachers are very fortunate human. If I were to reborn a man, I would, without doubt become a teacher. If you can keep a job and still sleep as much as my master did, even cats could manage such a profession. This was his daily routine. (3-4)

The cat makes a ridicule of teachers, as it thinks they have it easy. If you are born a human, it's best to become a teacher. For the master all the time seek escape to his laziness in his sleep.

Other moments illustrating the teacher's stupidity are revealed by the fact that he will reject ideas that one can understand, and instead he prefers to dwell on obfuscated ideas he is incapable of understanding. But as the cat admits, the teacher is not alone in this fact. "Something unignorable lurks in whatever passes our understanding, and there is something inherently noble in that which we cannot measure," (6) the cat says.

While much of *I am a Cat* is a criticism of academia and institutional thought, the cat also elaborates on how selfish human beings are, and for this, the cat is quite observant in what he discovers. For example, in one scene where he gets a sticky bun caught in his mouth, instead of the people around him helping to remove it, they merely laugh at the cat's efforts to dispose of it. The death of next-door neighbor cat Tortoiseshell dying has a huge impression on the cat. The cat overhears the owners

blame him as the culprit, believing that it was the one to transform Tortoiseshell with disease. This is another of the human stupidity that find easy culprit to transform their mistakes to others. In fact, it is very humane to find easy victims for their follies. By nature, animals cannot do the act of 'blame game' as they are content to what they are. This is one of the greatest reasons for animals are happy to what they are.

I am a Cat has moments of great humor, but also moments of resonating pathos. The cat admits he is envious of his neighbor cats, all of whom seem to receive better treatment than he, yet he also admits that despite his envy, that he is happy someone at least is caring for another member of his species.

Then there is another twist in the novel, when the cat, at one point listen his neighbors refer to Tortoiseshell as a person rather than a cat. This hugely surprises the feline protagonist. It is amusing that a cat is compared to human; however, the cat does not seem to like this idea. The cat does not think that 'cats are like humans' and he goes as far as claiming that "the human race has to overthrown for the betterment for other species" (5). Upon knowing that the newly born kittens were thrown from one of the friend cat, the protagonist cat response that humans are threat to other animals. The incident is narrated, as:

Only the other day, four little kittens were born to Shiro. But the student who lives with the family threw all four of them into a pond behind the house on the third day. Shiro told me all this in tears and said that in order for us to fulfill parental affection and to have a happy family life, we will have to overthrow the human race. (5)

This bitter incident, is however a reality. The human are encroaching the entire ecological system of this planet and being a threat to life of entire planet. As such, when the protagonist finds one of its neighboring mates being compared with humans, it does

not like the idea. It is simply because human are in fact making a mockery of all the other animals and plants by using them as per theirs' will and wish.

However, it is interesting to note that the cat is very hopeful that all this will come to an end. It is of the opinion that "human race will not prosper forever" and it is the cats that will come to rule the entire planet. The cat is satisfied with its life, in contrast, to that of the humans. It says:

I am far more optimistic about such affairs than either of humans. I am far more optimistic about such affairs than either of them. I am satisfied only in trying to live peacefully day after day. I don't believe that the human race will prosper forever so all I have to do is to relax and wait for the time when cats will reign. (5)

The concept of cat is quite interesting to note, as it comes up with some an amazing; which however, seems partially true. It is a satire on human nature that wants to engulf the entire planet and, its inhabitants. It is true that human are being a great threat to the animals, like cats and their dignity.

However, the novel seems to overkill the enthusiasm of the readers when it comes to repeatedly revealing the stupidity of human beings. This not in defense of human species, but maybe the old axiom about a lot less being more is not the solution, but rather, a little less would have been a lot more. As such, the plot does not follow the typical concision pattern that so dominates Japanese literature. In fact, there are times when the book feels a bit verbose.

The cat is engaged in digressing its own insights and observations, be it about his own life or those humans around him. It seems the entire novel is consist of silly dialogue exchanges between his human owners that, while not without merit, did not need to be as long as they were. The cat is so rude that it does not have sense of respect

towards its masters, nor does it consider any thing that happens in the house, anything of value and dignity.

But, there lies a great level of humor in the novel. *I Am a Cat* has moments of great humor, but also moments of resonating pathos. The cat admits he is envious of his neighbor cats, all of whom seem to receive better treatment than he, yet he also admits that despite his envy, that he is happy someone at least is caring for another member of his species.

I Am a Cat does not follow the typical conscious pattern that was popular during the era. In fact, there are times when the book feels a bit pretentious. Finishing at 470 pages, while there are no moments of weak writing, there is bit of overkill when it comes to repeatedly revealing the stupidity of human beings. And the present researcher does not say this in defense of human species, but even the satire on human is not dignified and justified. In other words, the most engaging parts of is when the cat is digressing his own insights and observations, be it about his own life or those humans around him. Yet whole sections consist of silly dialogue exchanges between his human owners that, while not without merit, did not need to be as long as they were.

The cat's observations sometime is too stereotypical or exaggerated when thinking of academic elitist types, but this isn't the problem, since the speaker we are dealing with is first and foremost a feline. Secondly, we are viewing everything through the cat's perspective, so given the cat thinks little of humans as a species, of course we are not going to witness humans as they behave at their zenith, but rather how they behave in their self-serving ways.

Yet despite all this, the unnamed cat is entertaining, charming, and even lovable. One can't blame him for viewing humans the way he does, especially since they think so little of him that they've not even bothered to name him. *I Am a Cat* is a criticism of

conformity, academia, authority and humanity from a source outside selves. It has moments of great humor and moments of great insight. It is a well-composed work well worth the read, even if not perfectly composed.

Japanese literature from the Meiji era and Early Middle Showa-era had a tendency to psychoanalyze how Japan was dealing with the outside world, with no small thanks to political revolutions constantly begetting one another. The characters of *I am a Cat* are far more outspoken in the pride of their country and their lifestyle. The expression of emotion is depicted in the story through the feline-human relationship. At the time (early decades of twentieth century), when the present novel was composed Japan was in conflict with China, and the western powers. The Japanese were keeping quiet in spite of the growing frustration among the people.

Natsume is lauded as one of Japan's most accomplished authors, and the impact of *I am a Cat* cannot be overlooked in that the book captured a then-modern Japanese society in a vivid and honest manner. In a country that was still not used to being able to freely criticize the world around them, it is amazing to read, and it is a fully engaging work that makes its point easy to understand. Humorous, insightful, and at times disturbing, *I am a Cat* is an example of Japanese literature successfully blending both western and eastern literary techniques in a story designed to contrast western and eastern lifestyles; however, in a humorous manner. The fact cannot be denied that when the novel was published it was unthinkable that a cat becomes the central character and goes on to narrate the human follies and foolishness.

Mankind is fortunate in that so far its pets have not developed the ability to converse in any human tongue. The things our cats, dogs, and other domestic animals have witnessed would prove, in many cases, to be somewhat embarrassing to say the

least. We can rest relatively easy for the moment in knowing that so far, our private lives are still our own - even if we share them with other, furry forms of life.

The premise of Soseki's *I am a Cat* is that it has been written, as the title suggests, by a Japanese cat. The protagonist cat is no normal cat, as it is clear by several claims it makes on its superiority. Besides, it has come to live in the house of a teacher, and has gained a greater knowledge of intellectual achievement and analysis than other average feline. The wisdom manifested by the cat is not an anthropomorphism that causes it to take on human qualities. Instead, this cat remains every inch the feline is curious, interested in food, and always up for an adventure round the garden or the neighborhood. What makes the narrator unique is its ability to observe unmolested the trends and foibles of early twentieth century Japan, with an eye to the ironic and the ridiculous in the humans it encounters daily.

The cat relates, over the course of the novel, the trials and tribulations of his master and family, as well as their friends and neighbors in their suburban Tokyo neighborhood during the Meiji restoration from the time of the Russo-Japanese conflicts of the early 20th century. It does so with a somewhat disdainful humor and irony that one might expect from a cat but at the same time it reveals very much that it is merely an animal. For the cat throughout this novel, comes to conclusions about the rational explanations for human behavior it finds curious in ways that can only be described as being somewhat akin to the ridiculous posturings of the humans which inhabit its milieu.

In particular, the cat - perhaps speaking in part for Soseki himself - fails to see how the amount of Westernization occurring in Japan during the Meiji Restoration was doing modern Japan any good. Soseki spent a great deal of his academic career studying in England before returning to teach at university in Japan, and there is a certain dry, almost British sense of humor that permeates the cat's analysis of the Western influence

on the Land of the Rising Sun. As could be argued from the malaise which Japan has been suffering for the past 12 years, perhaps the problem has not been that Japan failed to successfully integrate Western thinking with Japanese culture, but rather as an island nation Japan, like Britain, was always going to be somewhat constricted in its achievements. For Britain, this manifested itself in conquering for itself a colonial empire; for Japan, it meant achieving wealth through industry and innovation so as to achieve an empire in fact, if not in name.

As the cat observes the beginning of what would ultimately prove the golden age and the end of traditional Japanese society, we are treated to a great deal of humor, some incredible tell-tale-telling, and a host of characters with a great deal of wit and charm. At times the novel moves rather slowly, as the teacher and his friends sit round and discuss obscure scientific theories that strike the reader as being incredibly odd or surreal - in some ways anticipating the work of various other writers. These moments are lightened by a great sense of humor, particularly at the expense of a nouveau-riche neighbor and his insufferable wife, whose large nose becomes the source of clever, repeated wisecracks and witticisms - and kudos must be given to the translator for finding a way to carry off such puns and humor in English.

By the novel's end, even the reader with less than a passing interest in Japanese culture and literature will find himself charmed and curious - indeed, like the cat - to learn more about this culture, so like that of Britain in its humor, its rigid societal interactions, and intelligence, and yet so very much its own original creation. After all, few domestic animals are more alike, and yet more individualistic, than cats themselves in nature.

Thus, the cat's perspective is the depiction of one of the unavoidable facts of human life is mere an illusion which an individual spends in search for name like Mr.

Kushami, the owner of the cat. However, it is very rare people who achieve meaning in life which; however, is again a mystery because what they achieve, is again illusion. This makes entire life of human a parody of satire because nobody can really escape from this vicious cycle of follies and irrationality.

III. Exposition of Humans' Meanness

Natsume's *I am a Cat* exposes some of the most common human follies from a feline's perspective. The novel raises the issue of humans' treatment to domestic animals, like cat in the process of depicting many of the silly acts of human being. It is beyond doubt that humans are the most sensible and developed species of this earth. But the cat through its observation of human's activities exposes the mean mentality of so-called most developed beings of this universe. The cat observes that the human race is self-centered and indifferent to minimum level of rights and facilities of other race of living beings.

The unnamed cat lives in Mr. Kushami's house which comprise of Mr. and Mrs. Kushami, two children and a house maid. The cat makes skeptic observation to the acts of his master Kushami who pretends to be indulges in literary activities inside the room; however, will be sleeping to escape the household chores. Similarly, the cat dislikes the children as they avoid it of the cozy sleep from their room. In turn, the poor cat has to sleep in an isolated cold place when the rest of the family members are having a sound sleep. These critical observations of the cat question the entire concept of humanity that the mankind claims to have.

Natsume's use of cat to expose many of the silly deeds of human is a satire in itself. Though sarcastic, many of the comments made by the cat is more than true as most humans are found to ignore the minimum of the requirements that animals are to be provided with. Humans have been so selfish that they do not accept anything that is not pleasing and beneficial to them. As such, it is seen that most pets reared by humans are only for providing entertainment to them, and once this purpose is over, they are thrown or left to die in isolation.

Besides, many of the activities that are unfriendly to cats are being performed by humans because it provides them momentary pleasure. The cat is one such victim of human follies largely because it does not speak nor can narrate its disliking. On the other hand, the humans go on performing such silly mistakes that does not suit for a rational human being. But there is no one to complain of the same to them. The perspective of cat depicts how the reckless attitude of the so-called most developed and sensible being – humans.

As such, Natsume presents the cat as the Mouthpiece to depict irresponsible and irrational academic practices of humans' towards the animals. Here, satire becomes a tool to dismantle the so-called superior attitude of humans in regards to other species in this world. Through the use of satire, Natsume exposes the mean mentality of humans' and, also advocates to developing a softer and loftier side towards the cat and other species of this universe.

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