

# Tools of the Satirist

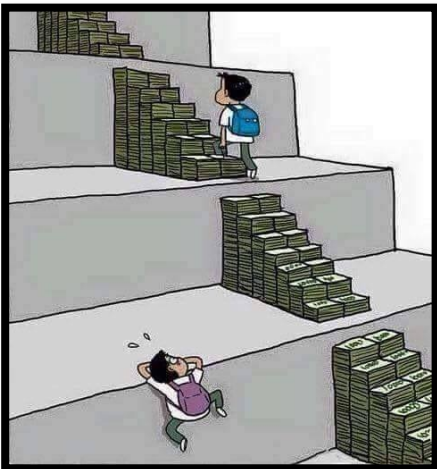
## BITING AND HARSH

**Juvenalian Satire** – is biting, bitter, and angry; it points out the corruption of human beings and institutions with contempt, using *saeva indignation*, a savage outrage based on the style of the Roman poet Juvenal. Sometimes perceived as enraged, Juvenalian satire sees the vices and follies in the world as intolerable. Juvenalian satirists use large doses of sarcasm and irony.

**Invective** – Speech or writing that abuses, denounces, or vituperates against. It can be directed against a person, cause, idea, or system. It employs a heavy use of negative emotive language.

**Diatribes** – A forceful, bitter verbal attack against someone or something.

**Sarcasm** – From the Greek meaning, “to tear flesh,” sarcasm involves bitter, caustic language that is meant to hurt or ridicule someone or something. It may use irony as a device, but not all ironic statements are sarcastic. When well done, sarcasm can be witty and insightful; when poorly done, it is simply cruel.



## MIDDLE GROUND

**Hyperbole/Exaggeration** – A figure of speech using deliberate exaggeration or overstatement. Hyperboles sometimes have a comic effect; however, a serious effect is also possible. Hyperbole often produces irony at the same time.

**Understatement** – The ironic minimizing of fact, understatement presents something as less significant than it is. The effect can frequently be humorous and emphatic. Understatement is the opposite of hyperbole.

**Verbal Irony** – Saying the opposite of what one means; when one’s words contradicts one’s meaning, thoughts, or motives.

**Parody** – A satiric imitation of a work or of an author with the idea of ridiculing the author, his ideas, or work. The parodist exploits the peculiarities of an author’s expression—his propensity to use too many parentheses, certain favorite words, etc. It may also be focused on, say, an improbable plot with too many convenient events.

**Double Entendre** – A statement that has two meanings, one of which is dirty or vulgar

**Reversal** – Presenting the opposite of the normal order (order of events or hierarchal order).

**Distortion** – changes the perspective of a condition or an event by isolation or by stressing some aspects while deemphasizing others; taking something out of its ordinary surroundings sometimes reveals its idiocy or inadequacies.

## LIGHT AND HUMOROUS

**Horatian Satire** – Is gentle, urbane, smiling; it aims to correct with broadly sympathetic laughter. Based on the Roman lyrical poet Horace, its purpose may be “to hold up a mirror” so readers can see themselves and their world honestly. The vices and follies satirized are not destructive; however, they reflect the foolishness of people, the superficiality and meaninglessness of their lives, and the bareness of their values.

**Wit** – In modern usage, wit is intellectually amusing language that surprises and delights. A witty statement is humorous, while suggesting the speaker’s verbal power in creating ingenious and perceptive remarks. Wit usually uses terse language that makes a pointed statement.

**Caricature** – A representation, especially pictorial or literary, in which the subject’s distinctive features or peculiarities are deliberately exaggerated to produce a comic or grotesque effect. Sometimes caricature can be so exaggerated that it becomes a grotesque imitation or misrepresentation.

**Incongruity** – presenting something out of place or absurd in relation to its surroundings. Oxymoron, metaphor, and irony are used a lot here.

**Pun** – a play on the meaning of words, puns can be quite useful in creating layers of meaning for a satirist.

**Malapropism** – The mistaken use of a word in place of a similar-sounding word.