

Lampoon

Definition of Lampoon

Lampoon is a form of virulent [satire](#) in [verse](#) or [prose](#), which is sometimes a malicious or unjust attack on a person, an institute, or an activity. Simply, when a writer or an artist makes fun of someone or something, by imitating the same thing in a funny way, it is called “lampooning.”

It is a more subtle and broad form of satire, which intends to ridicule in clear terms, while satire uses [comedy](#) to ridicule vices, follies, fashions, or pretensions. In fact, both terms are same. However, the first one – lampoon – is specific, while the second one – satire – is general.

Example of Lampoon in Music

Example #1: *Money* (by Pink Floyd)

“Money, get away.
Get a good job with good pay and you’re okay.
Money, it’s a gas.
Money, so they say
Is the root of all evil today.
But if you [ask](#) for a raise it’s no surprise that they’re
giving none away ...”

Pink Floyd has elaborated lampoon satirical musical album “The Dark Side of the Moon” with political and social commentary. In this song, the satire of greed for money is emphasized. Money is sardonic and biting, there reason that there is no way to think about other things.

Examples of Lampoon in Literature

Example #1: *A Modest Proposal* (by Jonathan Swift)

In *A Modest Proposal*, Swift satirizes the idea of eating infants, selling them to wealthy people so that the poor could live easily without getting involved in prostitution. Swift makes fun of the fact that, despite such grave problems, society has not done anything practically to solve it. Therefore, his pompous, modest proposal about producing a market for babies, makes the whole scenario ridiculous.

In fact, Swift shows his concern for the bad state of affairs happening in Ireland. In simple words, selling babies to wealthy people for consumption is completely bizarre, and lays emphasis on the satirical device lampoon, which is here directed against an insensitive society.

Example #2: *Mac Flecknoe* (by John Dryden)

John Dryden wrote a famous lampoon “Mac Flecknoe,” which triggered a devastating attack on Thomas Shadwell, a Whig playwright. Dryden ridiculed Shadwell’s abilities as a critic and literary artist in a way that his literary reputation suffered a lot ever since. The basis of his satire represented Shadwell as a dunce, which is a difference of opinion between Dryden and Shadwell over the quality and value of Ben Johnson’s wit. Shadwell does not see Elizabethan playwright critically, while Dryden sees Johnson lacking this quality.

Example #3: *A Collection of Miscellany Poems, Letters, &c* (by Mr. Brown)

“Thou cur, half French, half English breed,
Thou mongrel of Parnassus.”

Satirical writings of Brown are notable for crudeness rather than for wit. He was pertinacious in worrying his adversaries. He would never stop his quarrel and launch attacks again and again. He had published the above mentioned lines in his satirical and humorous verses in “A Collection of Miscellany Poems, Letters, & c,” in which he made a bitter attack against Elizabethan playwrights.

Example #4: *Huckleberry Finn* (by Mark Twain)

“Pretty soon I wanted to smoke, and asked the widow to let me. But she wouldn’t ... Here she was a-bothering about Moses, which was no kin to her, and no use to anybody, being gone, you see, yet finding a power of fault with me for doing a thing that had some good in it. And she took snuff, too; of course that was all right, because she done it herself.”

Twain lampoons on the idea of civilized society that Huck finds himself thrust into. In this example, the characters of Miss Watson and Widow Douglas prove themselves [moral](#) and religious hypocrites, as Widow would not allow Huck to smoke, however she consumes tobacco herself.

Function

The purpose of using lampoon is to emphasize absurdities and follies of a person or situation in a humorous way. Satire, as a [parody](#), plays the role of pointing out the object or person as ludicrous and serves to change the opinion of the people about it. It may take various forms from written words to jokes, drawings, television sketches, or entire productions and shows. In literature, it can be a short poem, letter, or full novel.

Lampoon is used extensively in the two most recognizable and famous satirical mediums, film and television. From advertising and news, to discussion programs; and from politics to dramas, it is everywhere. Also, it is common in music, video games, and internet using satirical cartoons, etc.