

Glossary of Literary and Rhetorical Devices

All definitions are from *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* except as noted (Murfin).

*Don Pogreba's "Thirteen Big Dawg Rhetorical Devices."

Allegory- presentation of an abstract idea through more concrete means. The typical allegory is a narrative—whether prose, verse, or drama—that has at least two levels of meaning. The first is the surface-level story line, which can be summed up by stating who did what to whom and when. Although allegories have coherent plots, their authors expect readers to recognize the existence of a second and deeper level of meaning, which may be moral, political, philosophical, or religious.... Many critics consider the allegory to be an extended metaphor....

Alliteration- The repetition of sounds in a sequence of words. Alliteration generally refers to repeated consonant sounds (often initial consonant sounds or those at the beginning of stressed syllables) but has also been used by some critics to refer to repeated vowel sounds.

Allusion- An indirect reference to a person, event, statement, or theme found in literature, the other arts, history, mythology, religion, or popular culture. An author's use of this device tends to presuppose that readers in general will possess the knowledge to recognize the allusion....

Ambiguity- The result of something being stated in such a way that its meaning cannot be definitely determined.

Amplification- Amplification refers to a literary practice wherein the writer embellishes the sentence by adding more information to it in order to increase its worth and understandability. When a plain sentence is too abrupt and fails to convey the full implications desired, amplification comes into play when the writer adds more to the structure to give it more meaning. Example: Original sentence- The thesis paper was difficult. After amplification- The thesis paper was difficult: it required extensive research, data collection, sample surveys, interviews and a lot of fieldwork ("Literary Terms").

Analogy- An analogy is a literary device that helps to establish a relationship based on similarities between two concepts or ideas. By using an analogy we can convey a new idea by using the blueprint of an old one as a basis for understanding. With a mental linkage between the two, one can create understanding regarding the new concept in a simple and succinct manner. Example: In the same way as one cannot have the rainbow without the rain, one cannot achieve success and riches without hard work ("Literary Terms").

***Anaphora-** Figure of repetition that occurs when the first word or set of words in one sentence, clause, or phrase is/are repeated at or very near the beginning of successive sentences, clauses, or phrases; repetition of the initial word(s) over successive phrases or clauses (Eidenmuller).

Anaphora occurs when the speaker repeats the same words at the start of successive sentences or clauses. It generally serves two purposes: a hammering effect that is certain to be noticed, [and] the creation of an involuntary rhythm (Pogreba).

Anastrophe- Anastrophe is a form of literary device wherein the order of the noun and the adjective in the sentence is exchanged. In standard parlance and writing the adjective comes before the noun but when one is employing an anastrophe the noun is followed by the adjective. This reversed order creates a dramatic impact and lends weight to the description offered by the adjective. Example: He spoke of times past and future, and dreamt of things to be (“Literary Terms”).

Anthropomorphism- Anthropomorphism can be understood to be the act of lending a human quality, emotion or ambition to a non-human object or being. This act of lending a human element to a non-human subject is often employed in order to endear the latter to the readers or audience and increase the level of relativity between the two while also lending character to the subject. Example: The raging storm brought with it howling winds and fierce lightning as the residents of the village looked up at the angry skies in alarm (“Literary Terms”).

***Antithesis-** A rhetorical device in which two ideas are directly opposed. For a statement to be truly antithetical, the opposing ideas must be presented in a grammatically parallel way, thus creating a perfect rhetorical balance (Murfin). The use of contrary ideas expressed in a balanced sentence. It is the juxtaposition of two words, phrases, clauses or sentences contrasted or opposed in meaning in such a way as to give emphasis to their contrasting ideas and give the effect of balance (Pogreba).

Aphorism- A concise, pointed, epigrammatic statement that purports to reveal a truth or principle. Aphorisms can be attributed to a specific person. Once a statement is so generally known that authorship is lost, it is called a proverb rather than an aphorism.... Example: “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet” (William Shakespeare).

Apostrophe - A figure of speech in which the speaker directly and often emotionally addresses a person who is dead or otherwise not physically present, an imaginary person or entity, something inhuman, or a place or concept (usually an abstract idea or ideal). The speaker addresses the object of the apostrophe as if this object were present and capable of understanding and responding.

***Apposition-** The placing side by side of two coordinate elements, the second of which serves as an explanation or modification of the first. The second element, which can be a noun or noun phrase, is called an appositive. Ex: “John Fitzgerald Kennedy, a great and good President, a friend of all people of goodwill, a believer in the dignity and equality of all human beings, a fighter for justice, an apostle of peace, has been snatched from our midst by the bullet of an assassin.” –Justice Earl Warren, *Eulogy for John F. Kennedy* (Pogreba).

Assonance- The repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds, usually in stressed syllables, followed by different consonant sounds in proximate words. Example: large—dark—are, hands—at—grasping, fate—cave (but not fate—late, because the consonants are the same, creating perfect rhyme rather than assonance).

***Asyndeton-** Leaving out a conjunction where it might have been expected to appear. Asyndeton can create emphasis, give independent force to each item, show close relationship, improve the “music” of a sentence, or create a sense of acceleration. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle said it was especially appropriate for the end of a persuasive appeal. He even ended the piece with an example of it. Ex: “That was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals’ song of it.” –F. Scott Fitzgerald (Pogreba).

Authorial Intrusion - Authorial Intrusion is an interesting literary device wherein the author penning the story, poem or prose steps away from the text and speaks out to the reader. Authorial Intrusion establishes a one to one relationship between the writer and the reader where the latter is no longer a secondary player or an indirect audience to the progress of the story but is the main subject of the author’s attention (“Literary Terms”).

Bibliomancy- As the very name itself suggests, this kind of literary device finds its roots in biblical origins. This term refers to the practice of basing a plot happening or event and anticipating the results it will have on a faction of the Bible. It involves a random selection process wherein the biblical passage is chosen as a founding stone for basing the outcome of the writing. In an overall context, not limited to just literature, bibliomancy refers to foretelling the future by turning to random portions of the Bible for guidance. Example: The Vedas serve as a tool for Bibliomancy to the Hindus while Muslims rely on the Koran (“Literary Terms”).

Caesura- A pause in a line of poetry, usually noted by a wide space in the center of a line or by two parallel vertical lines. The caesura is dictated not by meter but by natural speaking rhythm.

Catharsis – The emotional effect a tragic drama has on its audience. Aristotle introduced this term (which can mean either “purgation” or “purification” in Greek) into literary criticism in *The Poetics*. He sought to explain the feelings of exaltation or relief (rather than despondency) that playgoers commonly experience during and after the catastrophe (which invariably foregrounds suffering, defeat, and even death). Aristotle argued that while viewing such a work, the audience experiences a purging or cleansing of emotions.

Characterization- the various means by which an author describes and develops the characters in a literary work. In discussing depth and complexity of characterization, E.M. Forster makes a distinction between flat and round characters that is still in use today. He argues that flat characters are types or caricatures defined by a single idea or quality, whereas round characters have the three-dimensional complexity of real people. Characters may also be divided into static and dynamic characters. Static characters do not change significantly over the course of a work no matter what action takes place, whereas dynamic characters change (whether for better or worse) in response to circumstance and experience.

***Chiasmus-** When words or other elements are repeated with their order reversed. Chiasmus amounts to an ABBA pattern. A chiasmus need not repeat the same words in order. It can instead just consist of a structural reversal. A good chiasmus has the benefits of emphasis, euphony, and rhythm. Ex: “In peace song bury their fathers, but in war fathers bury their sons”- Croesus (Pogreba).

Conflict- A confrontation or struggle between opposing characters or forces in the plot of a narrative work, from which the action emanates and around which it revolves. Conflict is usually broken down into three major categories: physical, social, and internal or psychological conflict.

Connotation- The association(s) evoked by a word beyond its denotation, or literal meaning.

Consonance- The repetition of a final consonant sound or sounds following different vowel sounds in proximate words (made / wood). Most scholars maintain that the repetition of initial or intermediate consonant sounds, when occurring in addition to repeated final consonant sounds, also constitutes consonance (litter / letter, wade / wood).

Cosmic Irony- When situational irony is associated with the notion of fate, or a deity, manipulating events so as to “frustrate and mock” a character in a literary work, situational irony has become its near-twin, cosmic irony (Abrams).

Diction- Narrowly defined, a speaker’s (or author’s) word choice. The term may also refer to the general type or character of language used in speech or in a work of literature. In this broader sense, diction is typically divided into two components: vocabulary and syntax. By vocabulary, we mean the degree of difficulty, complexity, abstractness, formality, and currency of words used.... Syntax refers to the arrangement—the ordering, grouping, and placement—of words within a phrase, clause, or sentence.

Ekphrastic- Ekphrastic refers to a form of writing, mostly poetry, wherein the author describes another work of art, usually visual. It is used to convey the deeper symbolism of the corporeal art form by means of a separate medium. It has often been found that ekphrastic writing is rhetorical in nature and symbolic of a greater meaning. Example: A photograph of an empty landscape can convey desolation, abandon and loss. Similarly, one can convey the same sentiments and concepts by using phrases such as ‘an empty doorway’ or ‘a childless nursery’ (“Literary Terms”).

Elegy- reflective poems that lament the loss of something or someone (or loss or death more generally), although in Elizabethan times it was also used to refer to certain love poems.....In “A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London” (1946), Dylan Thomas struggles to resist the temptation to write an “elegy of innocence and youth,” concluding his poem with a stanza that is, nonetheless, eloquently elegiac in spirit and tone: “Deep with the first deal lies London’s daughter, / Robed in the long friends, / The grains beyond age, the dark veins of her mother, / Secret by the unmourning water / Of the riding Thames. / After the first death, there is no other.”

Emulation- 1. To strive to equal or excel, especially through imitation.... 2. To compete with successfully; approach or attain equality with (“Emulation”).

***Epistrophe-** When the speaker repeats the same words at the end of successive sentences or clauses. While it serves many of the same purposes of anaphora, the effect is often more subtle. It creates a cumulative effect (Pogreba).

Epithet- An adjective or phrase applied to a noun to accentuate a certain characteristic. Examples: ...Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen; blundering fool; that big ape John.

Euphony- Pleasing, harmonious sounds. Euphony is the opposite of cacophony, or discordant sounds. The pleasurable impression achieved may be due as much or more to the images invoked and escribed as it is to any inherent musicality in the sounds; terming a passage euphonious thus necessarily involves a subjective judgment.

Flashback- A scene that interrupts the present action of a narrative work to depict some earlier event—often an event that occurred before the opening scene of the work—via reverie, remembrance, dreaming, or some other mechanism.

Hyperbole- A figure of speech that uses deliberate exaggeration to achieve an effect, whether serious, comic, or ironic. Some critics refer to hyperbole as overstatement.

***Hypophora-** When the speaker asks a question and then answers it. Hypophora heightens interest by creating suspense, supplies a motive for offering the answer, creates involvement with the listener, creates empathy and a sense of dealing with the audience openly, and preempts a more forceful objection. “You ask, what is our policy? I will say it is to wage war by sea, land, and air, with all our might and all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalog of human crime. That is our policy” – Winston Churchill (Pogreba).

Imagery- A term used to refer to: (1) the actual language that a writer uses to convey a visual picture (or, most critics would add, to create or represent any sensory experience); and (2) the use of figures of speech, often to express abstract ideas in a vivid and innovative way.

Initiation Story- [Story] involving process of a young person moving from innocence to experience (or maturity) and recognizing some truth about the world. An initiation story often has a sense of ethical choice as seen in Jewett's “A White Heron.” It also involves the idea that while something is gained (knowledge), something is also lost (innocence or the state of being unaware of the dilemma that precipitates the initiation) (Campbell).

Inversion- The term ‘inversion’ refers to the practice of changing the conventional placement of words. It is a literary practice typical of the older classical poetry genre. In present day literature it is usually used for the purpose of laying emphasis this literary device is more prevalent in poetry than prose because it helps to arrange the poem in a manner that catches the attention of the reader not only with its content but also with its physical appearance; a result of the peculiar structuring. Example: “In the much known and read Paradise Lost, Milton wrote: ‘Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit / Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste / Brought Death into the World, and all our woe, / With loss of Eden, till one greater Man / Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat, / Sing Heav'nly Muse. . .’” (“Literary Terms”)

Irony- A contradiction or incongruity between appearance or expectations and reality. This disparity may be manifested in a variety of ways. A discrepancy may exist between what someone says and what he or she actually means, between what someone expects to happen and what really does happen, or between what appears to be true and what actually is true. Furthermore, the term irony may be applied to events, situations, and even structural elements of a work, not just to statements. Irony is commonly employed as a “wink” that the listener or reader is expected to notice so that he or she may be “in on the secret.”

***Juxtaposition-** Combining together two or more communicative elements so as to suppress the connections between them and emphasize the differences, thereby provoking some surprise or puzzlement at their close placement. It is often combined with other devices. Juxtaposition is often used for ironic commentary, as the placement of the two elements helps criticize/mock one of them. Juxtaposition is the single most useful, all-purpose observation for making one seem more intelligent than she really is (Pogreba).

***Litotes-** “Occurs when a speaker avoids making an affirmative claim directly and instead denies the opposite” (Farnsworth 204). The effect of litotes depends on its use. It may create a sense of understatement, aid in discretion, or enhance satire. George Orwell would warn you to use this device only when necessary. It can become clichéd and awkward. Ex: “That sword was not useless to the warrior now.” -Beowulf (Pogreba). (Note—Citation for Farnsworth quote is from Pogreba’s Power Point).

Metaphor- A figure of speech (more specifically a trope) that associates two unlike things; the representation of one thing by another.... Metaphors may be classified as direct or implied. A direct metaphor, such as “That child is a mouse” (or “He is such a doormat!”), specifies both tenor and vehicle. An implied metaphor, by contrast, mentions only the vehicle; the tenor is implied by the context of the sentence or passage. For instance, in the sentence “Last night I plowed through a book” (or “She sliced through traffic”), the tenor—the act of reading (or driving)—can be inferred.

Metonymy- A figure of speech (more specifically a trope), in which one thing is represented by another that is commonly and often physically associated with it. To refer to a writer’s handwriting as his or her “hand” is to use a metonymic figure.

Motif- A unifying element in an artistic work, especially any recurrent image, symbol, theme, character, type, subject, or narrative detail.

Negative Capability- A term coined by John Keats...to describe the capacity to be “in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.” Keats believed that few possess this ability and that most people, in their quest to categorize and rationalize every uncertain thing, distort and reduce reality instead of openly and actually perceiving it. For Keats, the great poet has to be able to accept intuitive insights for what they are, instead of trying to incorporate them systematically into some rational, explanatory scheme. Writers possessing this ability have the capability to negate their own personalities—to get outside themselves—in order to perceive reality (especially human reality) in its manifold complexity. ...Subsequent critics have developed Keats’s insight by making two other observations: first, that authors should maintain aesthetic distance from their subject matter, thereby making impersonality and some degree of objectivity possible; second, that literature should not be held to ordinary standards of morality and truth in cases where the beauty of artistic form is paramount.

Onomatopoeia- The creation or use of words that, however we explain it, sound like what they mean or, perhaps more accurately, seem to signify meaning through sound effects. The significance of an onomatopoeic word, in other words, is somehow inseparable from its pronunciation. Examples: Hiss and sizzle.

Oxymoron- A figure of speech that juxtaposes two opposite or apparently contradictory words to present an emphatic and dramatic paradox for a rhetorical purpose or effect. Example: wise fool, bittersweet, eloquent silence, painful pleasure.

Paradox- A statement that seems self-contradictory or nonsensical on the surface but that, upon closer examination, may be seen to contain an underlying truth. As a rhetorical device, paradox is used to grab the reader's attention and to direct it to a specific point or image that provokes the reader to see something in a new way.

***Paralipsis-** When the speaker describes what she will not say and so says it, or at least a bit of it. Paralipsis is used to gain credit for discretion, to enhance the force of a sentiment by not expressing it, to limit debate over a controversial utterance, or to amuse. It's usually used to express negative ideas about others, but can be used to give the impression of modesty by the speaker about positive features (Pogreba).

***Parallelism-** the deliberate similarity of structure in a pair or series of words, phrases, or sentences. It is one of the most basic and fundamental forms used in rhetoric (Pogreba).

Pathetic Fallacy- A term coined by John Ruskin...to describe the attribution of human emotions to inanimate nature [especially weather]. Ruskin used the term pejoratively, believing that such attribution was a sign of artistic weakness even though the technique could produce beautiful images. Today the term is used neutrally. [Note: used much more narrowly than personification, though the two are closely related. Pathetic Fallacy often involves weather events that reflect the action of the narrative, such as rain being associated with tears at a sad point in a story.]

Periodic Structure- In literature, the concept of a periodic structure refers to a particular placement of sentence elements such as the main clause of the sentence and/or its predicate are purposely held off and placed at the end instead of at the beginning or their conventional positions. In such placements, the crux of the sentence's meaning does not become clear to the reader until they reach the last part. While undeniably confusing at first, a periodic structure lends a flair of drama and romanticism to a sentence and is greatly used in poetry. Example: Instead of writing, "brokenhearted and forlorn she waited till the end of her days for his return" one may write, "for his return, brokenhearted and forlorn, waited she till the end of her days" ("Literary Terms").

Personification- Personification is one of the most commonly used and recognized literary devices. It refers to the practice of attaching human traits and characteristics with inanimate objects, phenomena and animals ("Literary Terms").

Plot- The arrangement and interrelation of events in a narrative work, chosen and designed to engage the reader's attention and interest (or even to arouse suspense and anxiety) while also providing the framework for the exposition of the author's message, or tem, and for other elements such as characterization, symbol, and conflict.

***Polysyndeton-** refers to the process of using conjunctions or connecting words frequently in a sentence, placed very close to one another. Opposed to the usual norm of using them sparsely, only where they are technically needed. The use of polysyndetons is primarily for adding dramatic effect as they have a strong rhetorical presence. Example: Saying “here and there and everywhere”, instead of simply saying “here, there and everywhere” (“Literary Terms”).

Portmanteau- A word coined by combining two other words, encompassing the original meanings of both component parts.... Lewis Carroll invented the term. Examples: spork (spoon+fork), Spanglish (Spanish+English), slithy (slimy+lithe), chortle (chuckle+snort)

***Prolepsis-** When a speaker anticipates an objection and then comments on it. It is distinct from hypophora because no question is asked. A hypothetical objection may be suggested and then answered, potentially leading to manipulation. “‘But there are only three hundred of us,’ you object. Three hundred, yes, but men, but armed, but Spartans, but at Thermopylae: I have never seen three hundred so numerous.” –Seneca (Pogreba).

Puns- A play on words that capitalizes on a similarity of spelling and/or pronunciation between words that have different meanings. A pun may also employ one word which has multiple meanings. Although puns have been used for serious purposes in the past (and still occasionally are), the majority have had a comic purpose since the beginning of the eighteenth century. Examples: Dylan Thomas’s well-known “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” (1952)...contains a pun. “Grave” carries the denotation of “serious” as well as a more literal reference to an actual grave (i.e., burial, death): “Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight / Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay, / Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” The 1997 cloning of a sheep named Dolly spawned countless journalistic puns, from “When Will We See Ewe Again?” to “Will There Ever Be Another Ewe?” to “Dolly’s Creators Find Wolf in Sheep’s Cloning.”

Rhyme Scheme- Poets often use rhyme to establish or intensify the rhythm of a poem and to establish the unities and divisions within a given passage or work. A poet’s rhyme scheme, or pattern of rhymes, for instance, may delineate stanzas and unify the poem as a whole through its recurrent regularity.

Rhythm & Rhyme- Rhythm is from the Greek for “flow,” a term referring to a measured flow of words and signifying the basic (though often varied) beat or pattern in language that is established by stressed syllables, unaccented syllables, and pauses. Rhyme is generally the repetition of identical vowel sounds in the stressed syllables of two or more words, as well as of all subsequent sounds after this vowel sound. When most people speak of words as rhyming they are referring to a specific type of rhyme—perfect rhyme...in which only the sounds before the first accented vowel in the rhyming words may differ. ...Rhythm is...distinguished from rhyme. Though rhythm is essential to verse, rhyme is not. Rhythm is often accompanied and intensified by rhyme, however, since rhyme accentuates the rhythmic pattern(s) of any poem.

Satire- A literary genre that uses irony, wit, and sometimes sarcasm to expose humanity's vices and foibles, giving impetus to change or reform through ridicule. The satirist reduces the vaunted worth of someone or something to its real—and decidedly lower—worth. Although satire uses comic elements, it differs from comedy in that pure comedy primarily seeks to entertain and amuse. Satire may generate laughter but essentially has a moral purpose. It is typically directed at correctable instances of folly or immorality in humanity or human institutions. Its goal is not to abuse so much as to provoke a response, ideally some kind of reform. Thus satire would not be directed at characteristics individuals cannot change.

Setting- That combination of place, historical time, and social milieu that provides the general background for the characters and plot of a literary work. The general setting of a work may differ from the specific setting of an individual scene or event; nonetheless, specific settings may be said to contribute to the overall setting.

Simile- A figure of speech (more specifically a trope) that compares two essentially unlike things by using words such as like or as to link the vehicle and the tenor. Simile is distinguished from metaphor, another trope that associates two unlike things, but without the use of a connective word. To say “That child is like a tiger” is to use a simile, whereas to say “That child is a tiger” is to use metaphor. An epic, or Homeric, simile is an extended and elaborate simile in which the vehicle is described at such length that it nearly obscures the tenor.

Stanza- A grouped set of lines in a poem, usually physically set off from other such clusters by an extra line of space. Stanzas in a given poem need not have the same rhyme scheme, and, technically speaking, rhyme need not be present for a group of lines to be called a stanza. Nonetheless, the term usually refers to line clusters that have a regular, recurrent form—that is, a constant number of lines, a constant number of feet per line, the same metrical pattern, and the same rhyme scheme.

Stream of Consciousness- A literary technique that approximates the flow (or jumble) of thoughts and sensory impressions that pass through the mind each instant. Psychological association (rather than rules of syntax or logic) determines the presence or absence, as well as the order of elements in the “stream.”...Works written by authors using this technique frequently appear to be choppy or fragmented—just as our thoughts, emotions, and sensory impressions often are. This lack of cohesion (or even coherence) in no way implies sloppiness, randomness or purposelessness on the part of the author of stream-of-consciousness fiction. It is, in fact, its author's carefully constructed creation, its sudden countercurrents and unexpected branchings designed to reveal specific characteristics of a fictional human mind.

Symbol- Something that, although it is of interest in its own right, stands for or suggests something larger and more complex—often an idea or a range or interrelated ideas, attitudes, and practices. Within a given culture, some things are understood to be symbols: the flag of the United States is an obvious example, as are the five intertwined Olympic rings. More subtle

cultural symbols might be the river as a symbol of time and the journey as a symbol of life and its manifold experiences. ...A symbol may thus be defined as a metaphor in which the vehicle—the image, activity, or concept used to represent something else—represents many related things (or tenors) or is broadly suggestive.

Synecdoche- A figure of speech (more specifically a trope) in which a part of something is used to represent the whole or, occasionally, the whole is used to represent a part. In synecdoche, the vehicle (the image used to represent something else) of the figure of speech is part of the tenor (the thing being represented). Examples: To refer to a boat as a “sail” is to use synecdoche, whereas to refer to a monarch as “the crown” is to use metonymy [see definition for metonymy above]. Other examples of synecdoche include referring to a car as “wheels” and to violins, violas, cellos, and basses in an orchestra as the “strings.” In William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* (1596), Capulet uses the phrase “two more summers” to mean “two more years.”

Syntax- The arrangement—the ordering, grouping, and placement—of words within a sentence. Some critics would extend the meaning of the term to encompass such things as the degree of complexity or fragmentation within these arrangements. ...Syntax has also been viewed as one of the two components of diction [see definition of diction above]...which may refer either to word choice or the general character of language used by a speaker or author. The sentence “I rode across the meadow,” and “Across the meadow rode I” exhibit different syntax but identical vocabulary. To replace “meadow” with “sea of grass” is to alter the vocabulary but not the syntax. And to say “Rode I across the sea of grass” is to use diction very different from “I rode across the meadow.” The combination of unusual syntax and vocabulary in the first sentence as opposed to the second is a feature that often differentiates poetic diction from that of prose.

Theme- Not simply the subject of a literary work, but rather a statement that the text seems to be making about that subject. The statement can be (and often was, in older literatures) moral, or even a moral or lesson; in more modern works, the theme may emanate from an unmoralized, or less obviously moral, perspective.

Tone- The attitude of the author toward the reader or the subject matter of a literary work. An author’s tone may be serious, playful, mocking, angry, commanding, apologetic, and so forth.

Tragedy- A serious and often somber drama, written in prose or verse, that typically ends in disaster and that focuses on a character who undergoes unexpected personal reversals. ...In the *Poetics* (c.330BCE), Aristotle defined tragedy as a dramatic imitation of a serious, complete action of some magnitude that evokes both fear and pity in the audience and thereby allows catharsis...to occur.

Unreliable Narrator- A narrator who, for some reason, cannot or does not fully comprehend the world about him or her and whose conclusions and judgments the reader thus mistrusts. An author who uses an unreliable narrator generally provides clues indicating the narrator's fallibility and expects the reader to be wary of anything that narrator reports. Some authors, however, may purposely fail to provide the reader with the means to correct the narrator's false perceptions; others even intentionally fail to give the reader adequate clues to determine whether a narrator is unreliable in the first place.

Verisimilitude- Verisimilitude tends to be based around the appearance or proximity to being real, or the truth. It was a large part of the work of Karl Popper, and can be used in a variety of different ways to describe something, as well. It is a way of implying the believability or likelihood of a theory or narrative. However, just because something can be described as having Verisimilitude does not mean that it is true, only that merely appears to or seems to be true.

Example: It can be used in a variety of ways, for example; "While some dislike the content of the novel due to its graphic nature, you cannot deny that the content certainly gives the book some Verisimilitude." An example of Verisimilitude in concept, though, could be a doubtful statement in a court of law or even a false testimonial for a restaurant. If something "seems" like it's all well and good, but you can't quite decide, then it can be said to have Verisimilitude ("Literary Terms").

Verse- When used in its broadest sense, a term referring either to poetry or to an individual poem, that is, any metrical composition....In the narrow (and perhaps most correct) sense of the word, a verse is an individual line of poetry....Some critics make a distinction between poetry and verse, noting that all poetry is verse, but that not all verse is poetry....Verse, they suggest, is notable mainly for its rhythmic and metrical form, whereas poetry is characterized by imagination, a less obvious (and more intricate) structure, and a lofty purpose.

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