A Glossary of Literary Terms

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Adventure novel. A novel where exciting events predominate over characterization and sometimes theme. Examples:

- H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*
- Baroness Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*
- Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers*
- Alexandre Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo*

Allegory. "A form of extended metaphor in which objects and persons in a narrative, either in prose or verse, are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. Many works contain allegories or are allegorical in part, but not many are entirely allegorical. A good example of a fully allegorical work is

- Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*

Alliteration. The recurrence of initial consonant sounds. The repetition is usually limited to two words.

- Ah, what a delicious day!
- Yes, I have read that little bundle of pernicious prose.
- Done well, alliteration is a satisfying sensation.

This two-word alliteration calls attention to the phrase and fixes it in the reader's mind, and so is useful for emphasis as well as art. Often, though, several words not next to each other are alliterated in a sentence. Here the use is more artistic. I shall delight to hear the ocean roar, or see the stars twinkle, in the company of men to whom Nature does not spread her volumes or utter her voice in vain. --Samuel Johnson

- Do not let such evils overwhelm you as thousands have suffered, and thousands have surmounted; but turn your thoughts with vigor to some other plan of life, and keep always in your mind, that, with due submission to providence, a man of genius has been seldom ruined but by himself. --Samuel Johnson
- I conceive therefore, as to the business of being profound, that it is with writers, as with wells; a person with good eyes may see to the bottom of the deepest, provided any water be there; and that often, when there is nothing in the world at the bottom, besides dryness and dirt, though it be but a yard and a half underground, it shall pass, however, for a wondrous deep, upon no wiser a reason than because it is wondrous dark. --Jonathan Swift

Allusion. A causal and brief reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event:

- You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first. 'Tis a word too great for any mouth of this age's size. --Shakespeare
- If you take his parking place, you can expect World War II all over again.
- Plan ahead: it wasn't raining when Noah built the ark. --Richard Cushing

Notice in these examples that the allusions are to very well known characters or events, not to obscure ones. (The best sources for allusions are literature, history, Greek myth, and the Bible.) Note also that the reference serves to explain or clarify or enhance whatever subject is under discussion, without sidetracking the reader.

Allusion can be wonderfully attractive in your writing because it can introduce a variety and energy into an otherwise limited discussion (an exciting historical adventure rises suddenly in the middle of a discussion of chemicals or some abstract argument), and it can please the reader by reminding him of a pertinent story or figure with which he is familiar, thus helping (like analogy) to explain something difficult. The instantaneous pause and reflection on the analogy refreshes and strengthens the reader's mind.

Anadiplosis. A rhetorical trope formed by repeating the last word of one phrase, clause, or sentence at or very near the beginning of the next. It can be generated in series for the sake of beauty or to give a sense of logical progression:

- Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,/ Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain. . . . --Philip Sidney

Most commonly, though, anadiplosis is used for emphasis of the repeated word or idea, since repetition has a reinforcing effect:

- They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out of cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. --Jer. 2:13
- The question next arises, How much confidence can we put in the people, when the people have elected Joe Doax?
- This treatment plant has a record of uncommon reliability, a reliability envied by every other water treatment facility on the coast.
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. --John 1:1

Notice how the main point of the sentence becomes immediately clear by repeating the same word twice in close succession. There can be no doubt about the focus of your thought when you use anadiplosis.

Analogy. The comparison of two things, which are alike in several respects, for the purpose of explaining or clarifying some unfamiliar or difficult idea or object by showing how the idea or object is similar to some familiar one. While simile and analogy often overlap, the simile is generally a more artistic likening, done briefly for effect and emphasis, while analogy serves the more practical purpose of explaining a thought process or a line of reasoning or the abstract in terms of the concrete, and may therefore be more extended.

- For answers successfully arrived at are solutions to difficulties previously discussed, and one cannot untie a knot if he is ignorant of it. --Aristotle
- You *may* abuse a tragedy, though you cannot write one. You may scold a carpenter who has made you a bad table, though you cannot make a table. It is not your trade to make tables. --Samuel Johnson
- And hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." --Mark 2:17
- He that voluntarily continues ignorance is guilty of all the crimes which ignorance produces, as to him that should extinguish the tapers of a lighthouse might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwrecks. --Samuel Johnson

Notice in these examples that the analogy is used to establish the pattern of reasoning by using a familiar or less abstract argument which the reader can understand easily and probably agree with. Some analogies simply offer an explanation for clarification rather than a substitute argument:

- Knowledge always desires increase: it is like fire, which must first be kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself. --Samuel Johnson
- The beginning of all evil temptations is inconstancy of mind, and too little trust in God. For as a ship without a guide is driven hither and thither with every storm, so an unstable man, that anon leaveth his good purpose in God, is diversely tempted. The fire proveth gold, and temptation proveth the righteous man. --Thomas a Kempis

When the matter is complex and the analogy particularly useful for explaining it, the analogy can be extended into a rather long, multiple-point comparison:

- The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. [And so forth, to the end of the chapter.] --1 Cor. 12:12 (NIV)

The importance of simile and analogy for teaching and writing cannot be overemphasized. To impress this upon you better, I would like to step aside a moment and offer two persuasive quotations:

> The country parson is full of all knowledge. They say, it is an ill mason that refuseth any stone: and there is no knowledge, but, in a skillful hand, serves either positively as it is, or else to illustrate

some other knowledge. He condescends even to the knowledge of tillage, and pastorage, and makes great use of them in teaching, because people by what they understand are best led to what they understand not. --George Herbert

To illustrate one thing by its resemblance to another has been always the most popular and efficacious art of instruction. There is indeed no other method of teaching that of which anyone is ignorant but by means of something already known; and a mind so enlarged by contemplation and enquiry that it has always many objects within its view will seldom be long without some near and familiar image through which an easy transition may be made to truths more distant and obscure. --Samuel Johnson

Anaphora. The repetition of the same word or words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences, commonly in conjunction with climax and with parallelism:

- To think on death is misery,/ To think on life it is a vanity,/ To think on the world verily it is,/ To think that here man hath no perfect bliss. --Peacham
- In books I find the dead as if they were alive; in books I foresee things to come; in books warlike affairs are set forth; from books come the forth laws of peace. --Richard de Bury
- Finally, we must consider what pleasantness of teaching there is in books, how easy, how secret! How safely we lay bare the poverty of human ignorance to books without feeling any shame! --Ibid.
- The wish of the genuine painter must be more extensive: instead of endeavoring to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations, he must endeavor to improve them by the grandeur of his ideas; instead of seeking praise, by deceiving the superficial sense of the spectator, he must strive for fame by captivating the imagination. --Sir Joshua Reynolds
- Slowly and grimly they advanced, not knowing what lay ahead, not knowing what they would find at the top of the hill, not knowing that they were so near to Disneyland.
- They are the entertainment of minds unfurnished with ideas, and therefore easily susceptible of impressions; not fixed by principles, and therefore easily following the current of fancy; not informed by experience, and consequently open to every false suggestion and partial account. --Samuel Johnson

Anaphora can be used with questions, negations, hypotheses, conclusions, and subordinating conjunctions, although care must be taken not to become affected or to sound rhetorical and bombastic. Consider these selections:

- Will he read the book? Will he learn what it has to teach him? Will he live according to what he has learned?
- Not time, not money, not laws, but willing diligence will get this done.
- If we can get the lantern lit, if we can find the main cave, and if we can see the stalagmites, I'll show you the one with the bat skeleton in it.

Adverbs and prepositions can be used for anaphora, too:

- They are masters who instruct us without rod or ferule, without angry words, without clothes or money. --Richard de Bury
- She stroked her kitty cat very softly, very slowly, very smoothly.

Antimetabole. Reversal of the order of repeated words or phrases (a loosely chiastic structure, AB-BA) to intensify the final formulation, to present alternatives, or to show contrast:

- All work and no play is as harmful to mental health as all play and no work.
- Ask not what you can do for rhetoric, but what rhetoric can do for you.

Antithesis. Establishing a clear, contrasting relationship between two ideas by joining them together or juxtaposing them, often in parallel structure. Human beings are inveterate systematizers and categorizers, so the mind has a natural love for antithesis, which creates a definite and systematic relationship between ideas:

- To err is human; to forgive, divine. --Alexander Pope
- I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil. --Romans 16:19b
- That short and easy trip made a lasting and profound change in Harold's outlook.
- That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind. --Neil Armstrong

- Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures. --Samuel Johnson

Antithesis can convey some sense of complexity in a person or idea by admitting opposite or nearly opposite truths:

- Though surprising, it is true; though frightening at first, it is really harmless.
- If we try, we might succeed; if we do not try, we cannot succeed.
- Success makes men proud; failure makes them wise.

Antithesis, because of its close juxtaposition and intentional contrast of two terms or ideas, is also very useful for making relatively fine distinctions or for clarifying differences which might be otherwise overlooked by a careless thinker or casual reader:

- In order that all men may be taught to speak truth, it is necessary that all likewise should learn to hear it. --Samuel Johnson
- The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. --Matt. 23:2-3 (RSV)
- I agree that it is legal, but my question was, Is it moral?
- The advertisement indeed *says* that these shoes are the best, but it *means* that they are equal; for in advertising "best" is a parity claim and only "better" indicates superiority.

Note also that short phrases can be made antithetical:

- Every man who proposes to grow eminent by learning should carry in his mind, at once, the difficulty of excellence and the force of industry; and remember that fame is not conferred but as the recompense of labor, and that labor, vigorously continued, has not often failed of its reward. --Samuel Johnson

Apostrophe. The direct address of a person or personified thing, either present or absent. Its most common purpose in prose is to give vent to or display intense emotion, which can no longer be held back. Thus an apostrophe often interrupts the discussion:

- O value of wisdom that fadeth not away with time, virtue ever flourishing, that cleanseth its possessor from all venom! O heavenly gift of the divine bounty, descending from the Father of lights, that thou mayest exalt the rational soul to the very heavens! Thou art the celestial nourishment of the intellect. . . . --Richard de Bury
- With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies! --Sidney
- O books who alone are liberal and free, who give to all who ask of you and enfranchise all who serve you faithfully! --Ibid.
- O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! --Luke 13:34 (NASB)

Apostrophe does not appear very often in argumentative writing because formal argument is by its nature fairly restrained and intellectual rather than emotional; but under the right circumstances an apostrophe could be useful:

- But all such reasons notwithstanding, dear reader, does not the cost in lives persuade you by itself that we must do something immediately about the situation?

Assonance. The use of similar vowel sounds repeated in successive or proximate words containing different consonants:

- A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. --Matthew 5:14b (KJV)
- Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. --Matthew 5:16 (KJV)

Blank Verse. Unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Burlesque. A work designed to ridicule a style, literary form, or subject matter either by treating the exalted in a trivial way or by discussing the trivial in exalted terms (that is, with mock dignity). Burlesque concentrates on derisive

imitation, usually in exaggerated terms. Literary genres (like the tragic drama) can be burlesqued, as can styles of sculpture, philosophical movements, schools of art, and so forth. See **Parody, Travesty**.

Caesura. A pause, metrical or rhetorical, occurring somewhere in a line of poetry. The pause may or may not be typographically indicated.

- **Canon.** In relation to literature, this term is half-seriously applied to those works generally accepted as the great ones. A battle is now being fought to change or throw out the canon for three reasons. First, the list of great books is thoroughly dominated by DWEM's (dead, white, European males), and the accusation is that women and minorities and non-Western cultural writers have been ignored. Second, there is pressure in the literary community to throw out all standards as the nihilism of the late 20th century makes itself felt in the literature departments of the universities. Scholars and professors want to choose the books they like or which reflect their own ideas, without worrying about canonicity. Third, the canon has always been determined at least in part by political considerations and personal

Chiasmus. A crossing parallelism, where the second part of a grammatical construction is balanced or paralleled by the first part, only in reverse order. Instead of an A,B structure (e.g., "learned unwillingly") paralleled by another A,B structure ("forgotten gladly"), the A,B will be followed by B,A ("gladly forgotten"). So instead of writing "What is learned unwillingly is forgotten gladly," you could write, "What is learned unwillingly is gladly forgotten." Similarly, the parallel sentence, "What is now great was at first little," could be written chiastically as, "What is now great was little at first." Here are some examples:

- He labors without complaining and without bragging rests.
- Polished in courts and hardened in the field, Renowned for conquest, and in council skilled. --Joseph Addison
- For the Lord is a Great God . . . in whose hands are the depths of the earth; the peaks of the mountains are his also. --Psalm 95:4

Chiasmus is easiest to write and yet can be made very beautiful and effective simply by moving subordinate clauses around:

- If you come to them, they are not asleep; if you ask and inquire of them, they do not withdraw themselves; they do not chide if you make mistakes; they do not laugh at you if you are ignorant. --Richard de Bury

Prepositional phrases or other modifiers can also be moved around to form chiastic structures. Sometimes the effect is rather emphatic:

- Tell me not of your many perfections; of your great modesty tell me not either.
- Just as the term "menial" does not apply to any honest labor, so no dishonest work can be called "prestigious."

At other times the effect is more subdued but still desirable. Compare the versions of these sentences, written first in chiastic and then in strictly parallel form. Which do you like better in each case?

Coming-of-age story. A type of novel where the protagonist is initiated into adulthood through knowledge, experience, or both, often by a process of disillusionment. Understanding comes after the dropping of preconceptions, a destruction of a false sense of security, or in some way the loss of innocence. Some of the shifts that take place are these:

- ignorance to knowledge
- innocence to experience
- false view of world to correct view
- idealism to realism
- immature responses to mature responses

Example:

- Jane Austen *Northanger Abbey*

Conceit. An elaborate, usually intellectually ingenious poetic comparison or image, such as an analogy or metaphor in which, say a beloved is compared to a ship, planet, etc. The comparison may be brief or extended. See **Petrarchan Conceit**. (Conceit is an old word for concept.) See John Donne's "Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," for example: "Let man's soul be a sphere, and then, in this, / The Intelligence that moves, devotion is."

Diacope. Repetition of a word or phrase after an intervening word or phrase:

- We will do it, I tell you; we will do it.
- We give thanks to Thee, O God, we give thanks . . . . --Psalm 75:1 (NASB)

End-stopped. A line that has a natural pause at the end (period, comma, etc.). For example, these lines are end stopped:

> My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun.
> Coral is far more red than her lips red. --Shakespeare

Enjambed. The running over of a sentence or thought into the next couplet or line without a pause at the end of the line; a run-on line. For example, the first two lines here are enjambed:

> Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments. Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds
> Or bends with the remover to remove. . . . --Shakespeare

Epistrophe. The repetition of the same word or words at the end of successive phrases, clauses or sentences. Epistrophe (also called *antistrophe*) is thus the counterpart to anaphora.

- Where affections bear rule, there reason is subdued, honesty is subdued, good will is subdued, and all things else that withstand evil, for ever are subdued. --Wilson
- All the night he did nothing but weep Philoclea, sigh Philoclea, and cry out Philoclea. --Philip Sidney
- You will find washing beakers helpful in passing this course, using the gas chromatograph desirable for passing this course, and studying hours on end essential for passing this course.

Epistrophe is an extremely emphatic device because of the emphasis placed on the last word in a phrase or sentence. If you have a concept you wish to stress heavily, then epistrophe might be a good construction to use. The danger lies in this device's tendency to become too rhetorical. Consider whether these are successful and effective or hollow and bombastic:

- The cars do not sell because the engineering is inferior, the quality of the materials is inferior, and the workmanship is inferior.
- The energies of mankind are often exerted in pursuit, consolidation, and enjoyment; which is to say, many men spend their lives pursuing power, consolidation power, and enjoying power.

Epithet. An adjective or adjective phrase appropriately qualifying a subject (noun) by naming a key or important characteristic of the subject, as in "laughing happiness," "sneering contempt," "untroubled sleep," "peaceful dawn," and "life-giving water." Sometimes a metaphorical epithet will be good to use, as in "lazy road," "tired landscape," "smirking billboards," "anxious apple." Aptness and brilliant effectiveness are the key considerations in choosing epithets. Be fresh, seek striking images, pay attention to connotative value.

A **transferred epithet** is an adjective modifying a noun which it cannot logically modify, yet which works because the metaphorical meaning remains clear:

- At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth of thieves and murderers. . . . --George Herbert
- Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold/ A sheep hook . . . --John Milton
- In an age of pressurized happiness, we sometimes grow insensitive to subtle joys.

The striking and unusual quality of the transferred epithet calls attention to it, and it can therefore be used to introduce emphatically an idea you plan to develop. The phrase will stay with the reader, so there is no need to repeat it, for that

would make it too obviously rhetorical and even a little annoying. Thus, if you introduce the phrase, "diluted electricity," your subsequent development ought to return to more mundane synonyms, such as "low voltage," "brownouts," and so forth. It may be best to save your transferred epithet for a space near the conclusion of the discussion where it will be not only clearer (as a synonym for previously stated and clearly understandable terms) but more effective, as a kind of final, quintessential, and yet novel conceptualization of the issue. The reader will love it.

Epizeuxis. The repetition of a word (for emphasis):

- The best way to describe this portion of South America is lush, lush, lush.
- What do you see? Wires, wires, everywhere wires.

- **Euphemism.** The substitution of a mild or less negative word or phrase for a harsh or blunt one, as in the use of "pass away" instead of "die." The basic psychology of euphemistic language is the desire to put something bad or embarrassing in a positive (or at least neutral light). Thus many terms referring to death, sex, crime, and excremental functions are euphemisms. Since the euphemism is often chosen to disguise something horrifying, it can be exploited

Flashback. A device that allows the writer to present events that happened before the time of the current narration or the current events in the fiction. Various methods can be used, including memories, dream sequences, stories or narration by characters, or even authorial sovereignty. (That is, the author might simply say, "But back in Tom's youth. . . .") Flashback is useful for exposition, to fill in the reader about a character or place, or about the background to a conflict.

Foot. The basic unit of meter consisting of a group of two or three syllables. Scanning or scansion is the process of determining the prevailing foot in a line of poetry, of determining the types and sequence of different feet.

Types of feet: U (unstressed); / (stressed syllable)

Iamb: U /
Trochee: / U
Anapest: U U /
Dactyl: / U U
Spondee: / /
Pyrrhic: U U

Frame. A narrative structure that provides a setting and exposition for the main narrative in a novel. Often, a narrator will describe where he found the manuscript of the novel or where he heard someone tell the story he is about to relate. The frame helps control the reader's perception of the work, and has been used in the past to help give credibility to the main section of the novel. Examples of novels with frames:

- Mary Shelley *Frankenstein*
- Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter*

Free verse. Verse that has neither regular rhyme nor regular meter. Free verse often uses cadences rather than uniform metrical feet.

Heroic Couplet. Two lines of rhyming iambic pentameter. Most of Alexander Pope's verse is written in heroic couplets. In fact, it is the most favored verse form of the eighteenth century. Example:

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  u    /    u   /   u   /   u     /   u    /

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill


 u  /   u  /    u   /  u  /   u   /

Appear in writing or in judging ill. . . .
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--Alexander Pope

[Note in the second line that "or" should be a stressed syllable if the meter were perfectly iambic. Iambic= a two syllable foot of one unstressed and one stressed syllable, as in the word "begin." Pentameter= five feet. Thus, iambic pentameter has ten syllables, five feet of two syllable iambs.]

Humanism. The new emphasis in the Renaissance on human culture, education and reason, sparked by a revival of interest in classical Greek and Roman literature, culture, and language. Human nature and the dignity of man were exalted and emphasis was placed on the present life as a worthy event in itself (as opposed to the medieval emphasis on the present life merely as preparation for a future life).

Humours. In medieval physiology, four liquids in the human body affecting behavior. Each humour was associated with one of the four elements of nature. In a balanced personality, no humour predominated. When a humour did predominate, it caused a particular personality. Here is a chart of the humours, the corresponding elements and personality characteristics:

- *blood*...air...hot and moist: sanguine, kindly, joyful, amorous
- *phlegm*...water...cold and moist: phlegmatic, dull, pale, cowardly
- *yellow bile*...fire...hot and dry: choleric, angry, impatient, obstinate, vengeful
- *black bile*...earth...cold and dry: melancholy, gluttonous, backward, lazy, sentimental, contemplative

The Renaissance took the doctrine of humours quite seriously--it was their model of psychology--so knowing that can help us understand the characters in the literature. Falstaff, for example, has a dominance of blood, while Hamlet seems to have an excess of black bile.

Hyperbole. Exaggeration used for emphasis. Hyperbole can be used to heighten effect, to catalyze recognition, or to create a humorous perception. Example:

- It is a maxim among these lawyers that whatever hath been done before may legally be done again: and therefore they take special care to record all the decisions formerly made against common justice and the general reason of mankind. These, under the name of precedents, they produce as authorities, to justify the most iniquitous opinions; and the judges never fail of decreeing accordingly. --Swift

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. Example:

- I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth. --Swift

Irony. A mode of expression, through words (verbal irony) or events (irony of situation), conveying a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation. A writer may say the opposite of what he means, create a reversal between expectation and its fulfillment, or give the audience knowledge that a character lacks, making the character's words have meaning to the audience not perceived by the character. In verbal irony, the writer's meaning or even his attitude may be different from what he says: "Why, no one would dare argue that there could be anything more important in choosing a college than its proximity to the beach." An example of situational irony would occur if a professional pickpocket had his own pocket picked just as he was in the act of picking someone else's pocket. The irony is generated by the surprise recognition by the audience of a reality in contrast with expectation or appearance, while another audience, victim, or character puts confidence in the appearance as reality (in this case, the pickpocket doesn't expect his own pocket to be picked). The surprise recognition by the audience often produces a comic effect, making irony often funny.

An example of dramatic irony (where the audience has knowledge that gives additional meaning to a character's words) would be when King Oedipus, who has unknowingly killed his father, says that he will banish his father's killer when he finds him.

Irony is the most common and most efficient technique of the satirist, because it is an instrument of truth, provides wit and humor, and is usually at least obliquely critical, in that it deflates, scorns, or attacks.

The ability to detect irony is sometimes heralded as a test of intelligence and sophistication. When a text intended to be ironic is not seen as such, the effect can be disastrous. Some students have taken Swift's "Modest Proposal" literally. And Defoe's contemporaries took his "Shortest Way with the Dissenters" literally and jailed him for it. To be an effective piece of sustained irony, there must be some sort of audience tip-off, through style, tone, use of clear exaggeration, or other device.

Juvenalian Satire. Harsher, more pointed, perhaps intolerant satire typified by the writings of Juvenal. Juvenalian satire often attacks particular people, sometimes thinly disguised as fictional characters. While laughter and ridicule are still weapons as with Horatian satire, the Juvenalian satirist also uses withering invective and a slashing attack. Swift is a Juvenalian satirist.

Lampoon. A crude, coarse, often bitter satire ridiculing the personal appearance or character of a person.

Literary quality. A judgment about the value of a novel as literature. At the heart of this issue is the question of what distinguishes a great or important novel from one that is less important. Certainly the feature is not that of interest or excitement, for pulp novels can be even more exciting and interesting than "great" novels. Usually, books that make us think--that offer insight into the human condition--are the ones we rank more highly than books that simply titillate us.

Metaphor. A comparison which imaginatively *identifies* one thing with another dissimilar thing, and transfers or ascribes to the first thing (the tenor or idea) some of the qualities of the second (the vehicle or image). Unlike a simile or analogy, metaphor asserts that one thing *is* another thing, not just that one is like another. Very frequently a metaphor is invoked by the *to be* verb:

- Affliction then is ours; / We are the trees whom shaking fastens more. --George Herbert
- Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life." --John 6:35
- I am the door; if anyone enters through me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. --John 10:9
- But I will sing of your strength, / In the morning I will sing of your love; / For you are my fortress, / My refuge in times of trouble. --Psalm 59:16
- Their works are worthless; / Their molten images are wind and emptiness. --Isaiah 41:29
- The name of the Lord is a strong tower; / The righteous run to it and are safe. --Proverbs 18:10
- Thus a mind that is free from passion is a very citadel; man has no stronger fortress in which to seek shelter and defy every assault. Failure to perceive this is ignorance; but to perceive it, and still not to seek its refuge, is misfortune indeed. --Marcus Aurelius
- The mind is but a barren soil; a soil which is soon exhausted and will produce no crop, or only one, unless it be continually fertilized and enriched with foreign matter. --Joshua Reynolds

Another common method of constructing a metaphor is to use the possessive, where the image is expressed as being a part of the idea, usually in the form of "the x of y":

- A writer's river of words will dry up unless it is continuously replenished by streams of new learning.
- The first beam of hope that had ever darted into his mind rekindled youth in his cheeks and doubled the lustre of his eyes. --Samuel Johnson
- The furnace of affliction had softened his heart and purified his soul.
- [I] therefore determined to gratify my predominant desire, and by drinking at the fountains of knowledge, to quench the thirst of curiosity. --Samuel Johnson
- Stand firm, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. --Eph. 6:14-17
- The most learned philosopher knew little more. He had partially unveiled the face of Nature, but her immortal lineaments were still a wonder and a mystery. . . . I had gazed upon the fortifications and impediments that seemed to keep human beings from entering the citadel of nature, and rashly and ignorantly I had repined. --Mary Shelley

In fact, there is a whole range of different degrees of direct identification between image and idea (vehicle and tenor). There is fully expressed:

- The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. --Luke 11:34

There is semi-implied:

- And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.'" --Luke 13:32

There is implied:

- . . . For thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of thy wings I sing for joy. --Psalm 63:7

And there is very implied:

- For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry? --Luke 23:31

Like simile and analogy, metaphor is a profoundly important and useful device. Aristotle says in his *Rhetoric*, "It is metaphor above all else that gives clearness, charm, and distinction to the style." And Joseph Addison says of it:

> By these allusions a truth in the understanding is as it were reflected by the imagination; we are able to see something like color and shape in a notion, and discover a scheme of thoughts traced out upon matter. And here the mind receives a great deal of satisfaction, and has two of its faculties gratified at the same time, while the fancy is busy in copying after the understanding, and transcribing ideas out of the intellectual world into the material.

So metaphor not only explains by making the abstract or unknown concrete and familiar, but it also enlivens by touching the reader's imagination. Further, it affirms one more interconnection in the unity of all things by showing a relationship between things seemingly alien to each other.

And the fact that two very unlike things can be equated or referred to in terms of one another comments upon them both. No metaphor is "just a metaphor." All have significant implications, and they must be chosen carefully, especially in regard to the connotations the vehicle (image) will transfer to the tenor. Consider, for example, the differences in meaning conveyed by these statements:

- That club is spreading like wildfire.
- That club is spreading like cancer.
- That club is really blossoming now.
- That club, in its amebic motions, is engulfing the campus.

And do you see any reason that one of these metaphors was chosen over the others?

- The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. --Luke 10:2
- The pile of dirt is high, but we do not have many shovels.
- The diamonds cover the ground, but we need more people to pick them up.

So bold and striking is metaphor that it is sometimes taken literally rather than as a comparison. (Jesus' disciples sometimes failed here--see John 4:32ff and John 6:46-60; a few religious groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses interpret such passages as Psalm 75:8 and 118:15 literally and thus see God as anthropomorphic; and even today a lot of controversy surrounds the interpretation of Matthew 26:26.) Always be careful in your own writing, therefore, to avoid possible confusion between metaphor and reality.

Metaphysical Poetry. The term *metaphysical* was applied to a style of 17th Century poetry first by John Dryden and later by Dr. Samuel Johnson because of the highly intellectual and often abstruse imagery involved.

Chief among the metaphysical poets are John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell, and Henry Vaughan. While their poetry is widely varied (the metaphysicals are not a thematic or even a structural school), there are some common characteristics:

- 1. *Argumentative structure.* The poem often engages in a debate or persuasive presentation; the poem is an intellectual exercise as well as or instead of an emotional effusion.
- 2. *Dramatic and colloquial mode of utterance.* The poem often describes a dramatic event rather than being a reverie, a thought, or contemplation. Diction is simple and usually direct, inversion is limited. The verse is occasionally rough, like speech, rather than written in perfect meter, resulting in a dominance of thought over form.
- 3. *Acute realism.* The poem often reveals a psychological analysis; images advance the argument rather than being ornamental. There is a learned style of thinking and writing; the poetry is often highly intellectual.
- 4. *Metaphysical wit.* The poem contains unexpected, even striking or shocking analogies, offering elaborate parallels between apparently dissimilar things. The analogies are drawn from widely varied fields of knowledge, not limited to traditional sources in nature or art. Analogies from science, mechanics, housekeeping, business, philosophy, astronomy, etc. are common. These "conceits" reveal a play of intellect, often resulting in puns, paradoxes, and humorous comparisons. Unlike other poetry where the metaphors usually remain in the background, here the metaphors sometimes take over the poem and control it.

Metaphysical poetry represents a revolt against the conventions of Elizabethan love poetry and especially the typical Petrarchan conceits (like rosy cheeks, eyes like stars, etc.).

Meter. The rhythmic pattern that emerges when words are arranged in such a way that their stressed and unstressed syllables fall into a more or less regular sequence; established by the regular or almost regular recurrence of similar accent patterns (called feet). See **feet** and **versification.**

Metonymy. Another form of metaphor, very similar to synecdoche (and, in fact, some rhetoricians do not distinguish between the two), in which a closely associated object is substituted for the object or idea in mind:

- The orders came directly from the White House.

In this example we know that the writer means the President issued orders, because the "White House" is quite closely associated with "President," even though it is not physically a part of him. Consider these substitutions, and notice that some are more obvious than others, but that in context all are clear:

- You cannot fight city hall.
- This land belongs to the crown.
- In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. . . . --Genesis 3:19
- Boy, I'm dying from the heat. Just look how the mercury is rising.
- The checkered flag waved and victory crossed the finish line.
- Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. --Psalm 100:1-2 (KJV)

The use of a particular metonymy makes a comment about the idea for which it has been substituted, and thereby helps to define that idea. Note how much more vivid "in the sweat of thy face" is in the third example above than "by labor" would have been. And in the fourth example, "mercury rising" has a more graphic, physical, and pictorial effect than would "temperature increasing." Attune yourself to such subtleties of language, and study the effects of connotation, suggestion, substitution, and metaphor.

Mock Epic. Treating a frivolous or minor subject seriously, especially by using the machinery and devices of the **epic** (invocations, descriptions of armor, battles, extended similes, etc.). The opposite of travesty. Examples:

- Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad*
- Alexander Pope, *Rape of the Lock*

Novel. Dare we touch this one with a ten foot pole? Of course we dare, provided that you accept the caveat that novels are so varied that any definition is likely to be inadequate to cover all of them. So here is a place to start: a novel is an

extended prose fiction narrative of 50,000 words or more, broadly realistic--concerning the everyday events of ordinary people--and concerned with character. "People in significant action" is one way of describing it.

Another definition might be "an extended, fictional prose narrative about realistic characters and events." It is a representation of life, experience, and learning. Action, discovery, and description are important elements, but the most important tends to be one or more characters--how they grow, learn, find--or don't grow, learn, or find.

Novella. A prose fiction longer than a short story but shorter than a novel. There is no standard definition of length, but since rules of thumb are sometimes handy, we might say that the short story ends at about 20,000 words, while the novel begins at about 50,000. Thus, the novella is a fictional work of about 20,000 to 50,000 words. Examples:

- Henry James, *Daisy Miller*
- Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
- Henry James, *Turn of the Screw*
- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Novel of manners. A novel focusing on and describing in detail the social customs and habits of a particular social group. Usually these conventions function as shaping or even stifling controls over the behavior of the characters. Examples:

- Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
- William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

Onomatopoeia. The use of words which in their pronunciation suggest their meaning. "Hiss," for example, when spoken is intended resemble the sound of steam or of a snake. Other examples include these: slam, buzz, screech, whirr, crush, sizzle, crunch, wring, wrench, gouge, grind, mangle, bang, blam, pow, zap, fizz, urp, roar, growl, blip, click, whimper, and, of course, snap, crackle, and pop. Note that the connection between sound and pronunciation is sometimes rather a product of imagination ("slam" and "wring" are not very good imitations). And note also that written language retains an aural quality, so that even unspoken your writing has a sound to it. Compare these sentences, for instance:

- Someone yelled, "Look out!" and I heard the skidding of tires and the horrible noise of bending metal and breaking glass.
- Someone yelled, "Look out!" and I heard a loud screech followed by a grinding, wrenching crash.

Onomatopoeia can produce a lively sentence, adding a kind of flavoring by its sound effects:

- The flies buzzing and whizzing around their ears kept them from finishing the test at the swamp.
- No one talks in these factories. Everyone is too busy. The only sounds are the snip, snip of scissors and the hum of the sewing machines.
- But I loved that old car. I never heard the incessant rattle on a rough road, or the squeakity-squeak whenever I hit a bump; and as for the squeal of the tires around every corner--well, that was *macho*.
- If you like the plop, plop, plop of a faucet at three in the morning, you will like this record.

Oxymoron. A paradox reduced to two words, usually in an adjective-noun ("eloquent silence") or adverb-adjective ("inertly strong") relationship, and is used for effect, to emphasize contrasts, incongruities, hypocrisy, or simply the complex nature of reality. Examples: *wise fool, ignorantly learned, laughing sadness, pious hate*. Some others:

- I do here make humbly bold to present them with a short account of themselves and their art. . . . --Jonathan Swift
- The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read, With loads of learned lumber in his head. . . . --Alexander Pope
- He was now sufficiently composed to order a funeral of modest magnificence, suitable at once to the rank of a Nouradin's profession, and the reputation of his wealth. --Samuel Johnson

Oxymoron can be useful when things have gone contrary to expectation, belief, desire, or assertion, or when your position is opposite to another's which you are discussing. The figure then produces an ironic contrast which shows, in your view, how something has been misunderstood or mislabeled:

- Senator Rosebud calls this a useless plan; if so, it is the most helpful useless plan we have ever enacted.
- The cost-saving program became an expensive economy.

Other oxymorons, as more or less true paradoxes, show the complexity of a situation where two apparently opposite things are true simultaneously, either literally ("desirable calamity") or imaginatively ("love precipitates delay"). Some examples other writers have used are these: scandalously nice, sublimely bad, darkness visible, cheerful pessimist, sad joy, wise fool, tender cruelty, despairing hope, freezing fire. An oxymoron should preferably be yours uniquely; do not use another's unless it is relatively obvious formulation (like "expensive economy") which anyone might think of. Also, the device is most effective when the terms are not common opposites. So, instead of "a low high point," you might try "depressed apex" or something.

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, or whatever. The parody may also be focused on, say, an improbable plot with too many convenient events. Fielding's *Shamela* is, in large part, a parody of Richardson's *Pamela*.

Persona. The person created by the author to tell a story. Whether the story is told by an omniscient narrator or by a character in it, the actual author of the work often distances himself from what is said or told by adopting a persona--a personality different from his real one. Thus, the attitudes, beliefs, and degree of understanding expressed by the narrator may not be the same as those of the actual author. Some authors, for example, use narrators who are not very bright in order to create irony.

Personification. The metaphorical representation of an animal or inanimate object as having human attributes--attributes of form, character, feelings, behavior, and so on. As the name implies, a thing or idea is treated as a person:

- The ship began to creak and protest as it struggled against the rising sea.
- We bought this house instead of the one on Maple because this one is more friendly.
- This coffee is strong enough to get up and walk away.
- Even the cypress trees rejoice over you, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, / "Since you were laid low, no tree cutter comes up against us." --Isa. 14:8

Ideas and abstractions can also be personified:

- Wisdom cries aloud in the streets; in the markets she raises her voice. . . . --Prov. 1:20
- Men say they love Virtue, but they leave her standing in the rain. --Juvenal
- Love and faithfulness meet together;
- Righteousness and peace kiss each other. --Psalm 85:10

While personification functions primarily as a device of art, it can often serve to make an abstraction clearer and more real to the reader by defining or explaining the concept in terms of everyday human action (as for example man's rejection of readily available wisdom is presented as a woman crying out to be heard but being ignored). Ideas can be brought to life through personification and objects can be given greater interest. But try always to be fresh; "winking stars" is worn out; "winking dewdrops" may be all right.

Personification of just the natural world has its own name, *fictio*. And when this natural-world personification is limited to emotion, John Ruskin called it the *pathetic fallacy*. Ruskin considered this latter to be a vice because it was so often overdone (and let this be a caution to you). We do not receive much pleasure from an overwrought vision like this:

- The angry clouds in the hateful sky cruelly spat down on the poor man who had forgotten his umbrella.

Nevertheless, humanizing a cold abstraction or even some natural phenomenon gives us a way to understand it, one more way to arrange the world in our own terms, so that we can further comprehend it. And even the so-called pathetic fallacy can sometimes be turned to advantage, when the writer sees his own feelings in the inanimate world around him:

- After two hours of political platitudes, everyone grew bored. The delegates were bored; the guests were bored; the speaker himself was bored. Even the chairs were bored.

Petrarchan Conceit. The kind of conceit (see above) used by Italian Renaissance poet Petrarch and popular in Renaissance English sonnets. Eyes like stars or the sun, hair like golden wires, lips like cherries, etc. are common examples. Oxymorons are also common, such as freezing fire, burning ice, etc.

Picaresque novel. An episodic, often autobiographical novel about a rogue or picaro (a person of low social degree) wandering around and living off his wits. The wandering hero provides the author with the opportunity to connect widely different pieces of plot, since the hero can wander into any situation. Picaresque novels tend to be satiric and filled with petty detail. Examples:

- Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*
- Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
- Henry Fielding, *Jonathan Wild*

Pseudonym. A "false name" or alias used by a writer desiring not to use his or her real name. Sometimes called a *nom de plume* or "pen name," pseudonyms have been popular for several reasons.

First, political realities might make it dangerous for the real author to admit to a work. Beatings, imprisonment, and even execution are not unheard of for authors of unpopular works.

Second, an author might have a certain type of work associated with a certain name, so that different names are used for different kinds of work. One pen name might be used for westerns, while another name would be used for science fiction.

Lastly, an author might choose a literary name that sounds more impressive or that will garner more respect than the author's real name. Examples:

- Samuel Clemens used the name Mark Twain
- Mary Ann Evans used the name George Eliot
- Jonathan Swift used the name Lemuel Gulliver (once)

Pulp fiction. Novels written for the mass market, intended to be "a good read,"--often exciting, titillating, thrilling. Historically they have been very popular but critically sneered at as being of sub-literary quality. The earliest ones were the dime novels of the nineteenth century, printed on newsprint (hence "pulp" fiction) and sold for ten cents. Westerns, stories of adventure, even the Horatio Alger novels, all were forms of pulp fiction.

Modern pulp fiction consists of the racy, sometimes soft-core pornographic novels seen everywhere on paperback racks. Examples:

- Danielle Steele
- John Le Carre

Regional novel. A novel faithful to a particular geographic region and its people, including behavior, customs, speech, and history. Examples:

- Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Thomas Hardy, *Return of the Native*

Rhyme. The similarity between syllable sounds at the end of two or more lines. Some kinds of rhyme (also spelled rime) include:

- *Couplet:* a pair of lines rhyming consecutively.
- *Eye rhyme:* words whose spellings would lead one to think that they rhymed (slough, tough, cough, bough, though, hiccough. Or: love, move, prove. Or: daughter, laughter.)
- *Feminine rhyme:* two syllable rhyme consisting of stressed syllable followed by unstressed.
- *Masculine rhyme:* similarity between terminally stressed syllables.

Ridicule. Words intended to belittle a person or idea and arouse contemptuous laughter. The goal is to condemn or criticize by making the thing, idea, or person seem laughable and ridiculous. It is one of the most powerful methods of criticism, partly because it cannot be satisfactorily answered ("Who can refute a sneer?") and partly because many people who fear nothing else--not the law, not society, not even God--fear being laughed at. (The fear of being laughed at is one of the most inhibiting forces in western civilization. It provides much of the power behind the adolescent flock urge and accounts for many of the barriers to change and adventure in the adult world.) Ridicule is, not surprisingly, a common weapon of the satirist.

Roman a clef. [French for "novel with a key," pronounced roh mahn ah clay] A novel in which historical events and actual people are written about under the disguise of fiction. Examples:

- Aphra Behn, *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*
- Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

Romance. An extended fictional prose narrative about improbable events involving characters that are quite different from ordinary people. Knights on a quest for a magic sword and aided by characters like fairies and trolls would be examples of things found in romance fiction. Examples:

- Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
- Sir Philip Sidney, *The Arcadia*

In popular use, the modern romance novel is a formulaic love story (boy meets girl, obstacles interfere, they overcome obstacles, they live happily ever after). Computer software is available for constructing these stock plots and providing stereotyped characters. Consequently, the books usually lack literary merit. Examples:

- Harlequin Romance series

Sarcasm. A form of verbal irony, expressing sneering, personal disapproval in the guise of praise. (Oddly enough, sarcastic remarks are often used between friends, perhaps as a somewhat perverse demonstration of the strength of the bond--only a good friend could say this without hurting the other's feelings, or at least without excessively damaging the relationship, since feelings are often hurt in spite of a close relationship. If you drop your lunch tray and a stranger says, "Well, that was really intelligent," that's sarcasm. If your girlfriend or boyfriend says it, that's love--I think.)

Satire. A manner of writing that mixes a critical attitude with wit and humor in an effort to improve mankind and human institutions. Ridicule, irony, exaggeration, and several other techniques are almost always present. The satirist may insert serious statements of value or desired behavior, but most often he relies on an implicit moral code, understood by his audience and paid lip service by them. The satirist's goal is to point out the hypocrisy of his target in the hope that either the target or the audience will return to a real following of the code. Thus, satire is inescapably moral even when no explicit values are promoted in the work, for the satirist works within the framework of a widely spread value system. Many of the techniques of satire are devices of comparison, to show the similarity or contrast between two things. A list of incongruous items, an oxymoron, metaphors, and so forth are examples. See "The Purpose and Method of Satire" for more information.

Sequel. A novel incorporating the same characters and often the same setting as a previous novel. Sometimes the events and situations involve a continuation of the previous novel and sometimes only the characters are the same and the events are entirely unrelated to the previous novel. When sequels result from the popularity of an original, they are often hastily written and not of the same quality as the original. Occasionally a sequel is written by an author different from that of the original novel. See *series.* Examples:

- Mark Twain, *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
- Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer Abroad*
- Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer Detective*
- Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind*
- Alexandra Ripley, *Scarlett*

Setting. The environment in which the action of a fictional work takes place. Setting includes time period (such as the 1890's), the place (such as downtown Warsaw), the historical milieu (such as during the Crimean War), as well as the

social, political, and perhaps even spiritual realities. The setting is usually established primarily through description, though narration is used also.

Simile. A direct, expressed comparison between two things essentially unlike each other, but resembling each other in at least one way. In formal prose the simile is a device both of art and explanation, comparing the unfamiliar thing (to be explained) to some familiar thing (an object, event, process, etc.) known to the reader. There is no simile in the comparison, "My car is like your car," because the two objects are not "essentially unlike" each other.

When a noun is compared to a noun, the simile is usually introduced by *like*:

- I see men, but they look like trees, walking. --Mark 8:24
- The soul in the body is like a bird in a cage.
- After such long exposure to the direct sun, the leaves of the houseplant looked like pieces of overcooked bacon.
- The princes of Judah have become like those who move a boundary; / On them I will pour out my wrath like water. --Hosea 5:10
- But I am like an olive tree / Flourishing in the house of God. . . . --Psalm 52:8
- Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. --Matthew 23:27
- They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; / . . . They will be like a well-watered garden, / And they will sorrow no more. --Jeremiah 31:12

(In these last two examples especially, notice how powerfully the thing to be described, called the tenor, is colored by the thing it is compared to, called the vehicle. Calling the scribes and Pharisees "whitewashed tombs" creates a very striking, negative image. This power is one of the advantages of the simile.)

When a verb or phrase is compared to a verb or phrase, *as* is used:

- They remained constantly attentive to their goal, as a sunflower always turns and stays focused on the sun.
- Here is your pencil and paper. I want you to compete as the greatest hero would in the race of his life.
- Often the image (the simile itself or vehicle) precedes the thing likened to it (the tenor, the thing you want to clarify or explain). In such cases, *so* usually shows the comparison:
- The grass bends with every wind; so does Harvey.
- The seas are quiet when the winds give o're;
- So calm are we when passions are no more. --Edmund Waller

But sometimes the *so* is understood rather than expressed:

- As wax melts before the fire, / May the wicked perish before God. --Psalm 68:2b

Whenever it is not immediately clear to the reader, the point of similarity between the unlike objects must be specified to avoid confusion and vagueness. Rather than say, then, that "Money is like muck [manure]," and "Fortune is like glass," a writer will show clearly *how* these very different things are like each other:

- And money is like muck, not good except it be spread. --Francis Bacon
- Fortune is like glass--the brighter the glitter, the more easily broken. --Publilius Syrus
- Like a skunk, he suffered from bad publicity for one noticeable flaw, but bore no one any ill will.

Many times the point of similarity can be expressed in just a word or two:

- The pitching mound is humped too much like a camel's back.
- Yes, he is a cute puppy, but when he grows up he will be as big as a house.
- Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance. . . . --1 Kings 4:20
- He was as lazy as Ludlam's dog, that leaned his head against a wall to bark. --Proverb

And occasionally, the simile word can be used as an adjective:

- The argument of this book uses pretzel-like logic.
- This gear has a flower-like symmetry to it.

Similes can be negative, too, asserting that two things are unlike each other in one or more respects:

- My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun. . . .--Shakespeare
- John certainly does not attack the way a Sherman tank does; but if you encourage him, he is bold enough.

Other ways to create similes include the use of comparison:

- But this truth is more obvious than the sun--here it is; look at it; its brightness blinds you.
- For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, / And smoother than oil is her speech; / But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, / Sharp as a two-edged sword. --Proverbs 5:3-4

Or the use of another comparative word is possible:

- How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.--Matt. 23:37b
- His temper reminds me of a volcano; his heart, of a rock; his personality, of sandpaper.
- His speech was smoother than butter. . . .--Psalm 55:21
- Microcomputer EPROM (Erasable, Programmable, Read- Only Memory) resembles a chalk board in that it is used for semi-permanent consultation rather than temporary storage, and shows at each glance the same information unless erased and rewritten.

So a variety of ways exists for invoking the simile. Here are a few of the possibilities:

```
x is like y         x is not like y      x is the same as y

x is more than y    x is less than y     x does y; so does z

x is similar to y   x resembles y        x is as y as z

x is y like z       x is more y than z   x is less y than z

x does y the way z does a
```

But a simile can sometimes be implied, or as it is often called, submerged. In such cases no comparative word is needed:

- The author of this poem is almost in the position of a man with dozens of tree ornaments, but with no tree to decorate. He has lots of imagery but no ideas. The "sense" he does locate is obscured; the ivy hides the building completely.
- When I think of Professor Krunk's final exam, I think of dungeons and chains and racks and primal screams.

Sonnet. A fourteen line poem, usually in iambic pentameter, with a varied rhyme scheme. The two main types of sonnet are the Petrarchan (or Italian) and the Shakespearean. The *Petrarchan Sonnet* is divided into two main sections, the octave (first eight lines) and the sestet (last six lines). The octave presents a problem or situation which is then resolved or commented on in the sestet. The most common rhyme scheme is A-B-B-A A-B-B-A C-D-E C-D-E, though there is flexibility in the sestet, such as C-D-C D-C-D.

The *Shakespearean Sonnet,* (perfected though not invented by Shakespeare), contains three quatrains and a couplet, with more rhymes (because of the greater difficulty finding rhymes in English). The most common rhyme scheme is A-B-A-B C-D-C-D E-F-E-F G-G. In Shakespeare, the couplet often undercuts the thought created in the rest of the poem.

Spenserian Stanza. A nine-line stanza, with the first eight lines in iambic pentameter and the last line in iambic hexameter (called an Alexandrine). The rhyme scheme is A-B-A-B B-C-B-C C. Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is written in Spenserian stanzas.

Style. The manner of expression of a particular writer, produced by choice of words, grammatical structures, use of literary devices, and all the possible parts of language use. Some general styles might include scientific, ornate, plain, emotive. Most writers have their own particular styles.

Subplot. A subordinate or minor collection of events in a novel or drama. Most subplots have some connection with the main plot, acting as foils to, commentary on, complications of, or support to the theme of, the main plot. Sometimes two opening subplots merge into a main plot.

Symbol. Something that is itself and yet also represents something else, like an idea. For example, a sword may be a sword and also symbolize justice. A symbol may be said to embody an idea. There are two general types of symbols: universal symbols that embody universally recognizable meanings wherever used, such as light to symbolize knowledge, a skull to symbolize death, etc., and invested symbols that are given symbolic meaning by the way an author uses them in a literary work, as the white whale becomes a symbol of evil in Moby Dick.

Synecdoche. A form of metaphor in which the part stands for the whole, the whole for a part, the genus for the species, the species for the genus, the material for the thing made, or in short, any portion, section, or main quality for the whole thing itself (or vice versa).

- Farmer Jones has tow hundred head of cattle and three hired hands.

Here we recognize that Jones also owns bodies of the cattle, and that the hired hands have bodies attached. This is a simple part-for-whole synedoche. Here are a few more:

- If I had some wheels, I'd put on my best threads and ask for Jane's hand in marriage.
- The army included two hundred horse and three hundred foot.
- It is sure hard to earn a dollar these days.
- Then the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. --Genesis 2:7
- And notice the other kinds of substitutes that can be made:
- Get in here this instant or I'll spank your body. [Whole for the part--i.e. "body" for "rear end"]
- Put Beethoven on the turntable and turn up the volume. [Composer substituted for record]
- A few hundred pounds of twenty dollar bills ought to solve that problem nicely. [Weight for amount]
- He drew his steel from his scabbard and welcomed all comers. [Material for thing made]
- Patty's hobby is exposing film; Harold's is burning up gasoline in his dune buggy. [Part for whole]
- Okay team. Get those blades back on the ice. [Part for whole]

Take care to make your synecdoche clear by choosing an important and obvious part to represent the whole. Compare:

- His pet purr was home alone and asleep.
- His pet paws [whiskers?] was home alone and asleep.

One of the easiest kinds of synecdoche to write is the substitution of the genus for the species. Here you choose the class to which the idea or thing to be expressed belongs, and use that rather than the idea or thing itself:

- There sits my animal [instead of "dog"] guarding the door to the henhouse.
- He hurled the barbed weapon [instead of "harpoon"] at the whale.

A possible problem can arise with the genus-for -species substitution because the movement is from more specific to more general; this can result in vagueness and loss of information. Note that in the example above some additional contextual information will be needed to clarify that "weapon" means "harpoon" in this case, rather than, say, "dagger" or something else. The same is true for the animal-for-dog substitution.

Perhaps a better substitution is the species for the genus--a single, specific, representative item symbolic of the whole. This form of synecdoche will usually be clearer and more effective than the other:

- A major lesson Americans need to learn is that life consists of more than cars and television sets. [Two specific items substituted for the concept of material wealth]
- Give us this day our daily bread. --Matthew 6:11

- If you still do not feel well, you'd better call up a sawbones and have him examine you.
- This program is for the little old lady in Cleveland who cannot afford to pay her heating bill.

Tone. The writer's attitude toward his readers and his subject; his mood or moral view. A writer can be formal, informal, playful, ironic, and especially, optimistic or pessimistic. While both Swift and Pope are satirizing much the same subjects, there is a profound difference in their tone.

Travesty. A work that treats a serious subject frivolously-- ridiculing the dignified. Often the tone is mock serious and heavy handed.

Understatement. Expressing an idea with less emphasis or in a lesser degree than is the actual case. The opposite of hyperbole. Understatement is employed for ironic emphasis. Example:

- Last week I saw a woman flay'd, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse. --Swift

Verisimilitude. The semblance to truth or actuality in characters or events that a novel or other fictional work possesses. To say that a work has a high degree of verisimilitude means that the work is very realistic and believable.

Versification. Generally, the structural form of a verse, as revealed by scansion. Identification of verse structure includes the name of the metrical type and the name designating number of feet:

- Monometer: 1 foot
- Dimeter: 2 feet
- Trimeter: 3 feet
- Tetrameter: 4 feet
- Pentameter: 5 feet
- Hexameter: 6 feet
- Heptameter: 7 feet
- Octameter: 8 feet
- Nonameter: 9 feet

The most common verse in English poetry is iambic pentameter. See **foot** for more information.

Zeugma. Any of several similar rhetorical devices, all involving a grammatically correct linkage (or yoking together) of two or more parts of speech by another part of speech. Thus examples of zeugmatic usage would include one subject with two (or more) verbs, a verb with tow (or more) direct objects, two (or more) subjects with one verb, and so forth. The main benefit of the linking is that it shows relationships between ideas and actions more clearly.