

GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE

ACROSTIC — Usually verse arranged in such a way as to present names or phrases or sentences when certain letters selected according to an orderly sequence are brought together to form an alphabet, a name (often that of the author, a patron, or a loved one), or some other concealed message.

AESTHETICS — Philosophical investigation into the nature of beauty and the perception of beauty, especially the arts; the theory of art or of artistic tastes.

AFFLATUS — a Latin term for poetic inspiration.

ALLEGORY — A story or visual image with a second distinct meaning partially hidden behind its literal or visible meaning. The characters in an allegory often represent abstract concepts, such as faith, innocence, or evil. An allegory may be conceived as a **METAPHOR** that is extended into a structured system. E.g. George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is an allegory of totalitarian (specifically Communistic) states.

ALLITERATION — Repetition of the same sound beginning several words in sequence.

*Let us go forth to lead the land we love. J. F. Kennedy, Inaugural

*Viri validis cum viribus luctant. Ennius

*Veni, vidi, vici. Julius Caesar

ALLUSION — An explicit or implicit reference to a fictional, mythological, or historical person, place, or event, outside the story. The narrator does not explain the nature and relevance of the allusion but relies on the reader's familiarity with the reference. Allusions enrich a story by suggesting similarities to comparable circumstances in another time or place. Explicit allusions are signaled openly by the narrator, "As Vergil said.." Such allusions are rare in the highly literate aesthetic of antiquity. Allusions can include a citation (verbatim reference to another text) or an evocation (picks up on certain words, phrases, or ideas).

AMBIGUITY — Either a faulty, vague expression, or a poetic device which deliberately uses a word or expression to signify two or more distinct references, attitudes or feelings. The word has both connotations (secondary or associated significations) and denotations (primary signification or reference).

AMOEBEAN VERSE — a poetic form in which two characters chant alternate lines, couplets, or stanzas, in competition or debate with one another.

ANACHRONISM — False assignment of an event, person, scene or language to a time when the event or thing or person did not exist.

ANACHRONY — Used to denote a discrepancy between the order in which events of the story occur and the order in which they are presented to the reader in the **PLOT**.

ANACOLUTHON — Lack of grammatical sequence; a change in the grammatical construction within the same sentence, leaving the first part broken or unfinished.

ANADIPLOSIS — ("doubling back") the rhetorical repetition of one or several words; specifically, repetition of a word that ends one clause at the beginning of the next.

ANALEPSIS — a form of **ANACHRONY** by which some of the events of a story are related at a point in the narrative after later story—events have already been recounted. AKA Flashback; Retrospection.

ANALOGY — A comparison that demonstrates the similarity or similarities between two things or concepts.

ANAPHORA — The repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses or lines.

ANASTROPHE — Transposition of normal word order; most often found in Latin in the case of prepositions and the words they control. Anastrophe is a form of hyperbaton.

ANTECEDENT SCENARIO — The pre—existing situation assumed at the start of a narrative. In poetry, this is almost always re—constructed by the reader from fragmentary evidence in the narrative.

ANTICLIMAX — An abrupt lapse from growing intensity to triviality. Where the effect is unintentionally feeble or ridiculous it is termed BATHOS.

ANTIPHRASIS — When a single word is used in a sense directly opposite to its usual meaning; the briefest form of irony.

ANTISTROPHE — Repetition of the same word or phrase at the end of successive clauses.

ANTITHESIS — The opposite. A figure of speech characterized by strongly contrasting words, sentences or ideas in a balanced or parallel construction. *E.g.* Alexander Pope:

"The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury—men may dine."

ANTONOMASIA — When a proper name is replaced by an EPITHET. *E.g.* "The Bard" for Shakespeare.

APHORISM — A short, often witty statement that contains a serious maxim, opinion, or general truth.

APORIA — A figure of speech which calls meaning into doubt, often cast in the form of an (often feigned) deadlock, or double bind, between incompatible or contradictory meanings in which the text undermines itself.

APOSIOPESIS — a form of ellipsis by which a speaker comes to an abrupt halt, seemingly overcome by passion (fear, excitement, etc.) or modesty.

APOSTROPHE — A figure of speech in which someone (usually, but not always absent), some abstract quality, or a non-existent personage is addressed as though present. *E.g.* the invocation to a muse in a Greek epic.

APPARATUS (Criticus) — a collective term for the textual notes, glossary, lists of variant readings, appendices, introductory explanations and other aids to the study of a text, provide in scholarly editions of literary works or historical documents.

ARCHAISM: use of an older or obsolete form or word.

ARCHETYPE — An image, descriptive detail, plot pattern or character type that occurs frequently in myth, literature, religion or folklore. According to Carl Jung, archetypal experiences such as birth and death form part of the "collective unconscious" that the mind inherits from its racial or cultural past. Northrop Frye is one of the best-known proponents of archetypal criticism.

ASSONANCE — repetition of the same sound in words close to each other.

ASYNDETON — lack of conjunctions between coordinate phrases, clauses, or words.

ATMOSPHERE — The mood, feeling, or quality of life in a story as conveyed by the author's choice of language and organization in describing the setting in which the speech and activity of the characters takes place. The atmosphere in which an author makes characters appear and events occur is often important in determining the tone of the particular work.

BATHOS — The effect resulting from an unsuccessful effort to achieve dignity or pathos or elevation of style; an unintentional anti-climax, dropping from the sublime to the ridiculous. If a novel or play tries to make a reader or spectator weep and succeeds only in making him or her laugh, then the result is bathos.

BLACK HUMOUR — A technique often used in literature of the absurd, in which characters cope with events and situations which are simultaneously comical, brutal, and horrifying.

BLASON or **BLAZON** — A poetic catalogue of a woman's admirable physical features.

BOWDLERIZE — to censor or expurgate from a literary work those passages considered to be indecent or blasphemous.

BRACHYLOGY — a general term for abbreviated or condensed expression, of which asyndeton and zeugma are types. Ellipse is often used synonymously. The suppressed word or phrase can usually be supplied easily from the surrounding context.

CACOPHONY — harshness or discordancy of sound; the opposite of EUPHONY.

*O Tite tute Tati tibi tanta tyranne tulisti! Ennius

CALQUE — The hyper—literal translation of the constituent parts of a foreign word that results in a NEOLOGISM. *E.g.* “Superman” is a calque of the German *Übermensch*.

CARICATURE — A grotesque representation of a person or thing that exaggerates striking or representative features for a satirical purpose.

CATACHRESIS — The misapplication of a word, or the extension of a word's meaning in a surprising but strictly illogical metaphor.

CATALOGUE VERSE — Records the names of several persons, places, or things in the form of a list.

CHARACTER — A personage in a narrative or dramatic work. Most stories contain one or more major characters and several minor characters:

DYNAMIC CHARACTER. A person who undergoes significant development or change during the story.

FLAT CHARACTER. A person with little depth or complexity, who may be described in one or two phrases.

ROUND CHARACTER. A person with a fully developed, complex (even contradictory) personality, who defies simple analysis and description.

STATIC CHARACTER. A person who remains essentially unchanged throughout the story.

CHARACTERIZATION — The methods by which writers create, reveal, or develop their characters. Writers can focus on the external reality of their characters by describing their appearance, actions, or manner of speech. They can also portray the inner reality of their characters by revealing their thoughts and feelings.

CHEVILLE – (French = “plug”) Applied to any word or phrase of little semantic importance that is used by a poet to make up the required number of syllables in a metrical verse line.

CHIASMUS — two corresponding pairs arranged not in parallels (a—b—a—b) but in inverted order (a—b—b—a); from shape of the Greek letter chi (X).

CLIMAX — Any moment of great intensity in a literary work, especially in drama.

COGNITION — The action or faculty of knowing, including sensation, perception, and conception, as distinguished from feeling and volition.

COMPARISON — The act of comparing two things by noting their similarities.

CONCEIT — An unusually far—fetched or elaborate metaphor or simile presenting a striking parallel between two very dissimilar things or situations.

CONNOTATION — The suggested or implied meaning of a word, as contrasted with its literal meaning or denotation. These additional associations may be personal (the result of individual experience) or universal (the product of the collective human experience). See DENOTATION.

CONTRAST — The act of comparing two things by noting their differences.

CONVENTION — A customary device or technique used by an artist or author as a kind of representational shorthand. Conventions include devices of composition, plot or structure, types of character, kinds of diction or style, and many others.

CRISIS — a decisive point in the plot of a play or story, upon which the outcome of the remaining action depends, and which ultimately precipitates the dénouement.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS — The systematic division of a work of literature into its various parts or elements in order to achieve a better understanding of the whole.

CRUX — A difficult or ambiguous passage in a literary work, upon which interpretation of the rest of the work depends.

DENOTATION — The literal dictionary definition of a word, apart from any emotional or intellectual association or connotation it may evoke. See CONNOTATION.

DECONSTRUCTION — A type of literary criticism, based on the ideas of French philosopher Jacques Derrida, which holds that all meaning in written and spoken language is indeterminate because words have no inherent meaning in themselves, and the meaning of a word is based on its relationship to other words. Deconstruction holds that every text has at its center an aporia, a contradiction or irreconcilable paradox, a point at which meaning breaks down completely, and attempts to show where this happens. According to J. Hillis Miller, any literary text contains irreconcilable or contradictory meanings; therefore "all reading is misreading." Your humble professor strongly disagrees with this school of criticism.

DESCRIPTION — The act of describing, in words or images, a person, thing, or scene.

DEUS EX MACHINA — (Latin) "a god from a machine." A device used in Greek plays in which a god was lowered to the stage to solve the problems of the characters. Today, the term describes any forced or improbable device used to resolve a plot.

DEVICE — An all—purpose term used to describe any literary technique deliberately employed to achieve a specific effect.

DICTION — The accurate, careful use of words in discourse. There are four levels of diction: 1) formal (academic/serious); 2) informal (relaxed but polite conversation); 3) colloquial (terms and constructions accepted within a group but not universally) 4) slang (words unacceptable in polite usage)

DIDACTIC — Having a primary purpose of teaching or instruction.

DISSONANCE — Harshness of sound and/or rhythm, either inadvertent or deliberate. The term is nearly equivalent to cacophony, but tends to denote a lack of harmony between sounds rather than the harshness of a particular sound in isolation.

DOGGEREL — clumsy verse, usually monotonously rhymed, rhythmically awkward, and often shallow in sentiment.

DOUBLE (Doppelgänger) — A character that seems to parallel, and sometimes threatens to take the place of, a/the main character. Many mystery and gothic horror stories are based on the concept of the double: in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Dr. Frankenstein creates a monster in his own image.

DRAMATIC IRONY — See IRONY

EFFIGY — A likeness, portrait, or image, most often a three—dimensional or sculptured image, as in "to burn in effigy."

EKPHRASIS — An extended and detailed literary description of any object, real or imaginary. Most commonly used to denote the description of a picture (or other tangible work of art) within a narrative; a common form of METAnarrative.

EMBLEM — An object or picture with a symbolic meaning, often representing some abstract quality. Emblems are often used as badges, representing membership in a family, group, or nation. In Renaissance emblem books, a picture with an accompanying explanatory maxim, usually expressing a moral.

ENALLAGE — Substitution of one word form for another.

END—STOPPED — A pause at which the end of a verse line coincides with the completion of a sentence, clause, or other independent unit of SYNTAX; the opposite of ENJAMBMENT, gives verse lines an appearance of self—contained sense.

ENJAMBMENT — The running over of the sense and grammatical structure from one verse line or couplet to the next without a punctuated pause; gives the poem a sense of motion and excitement.

ENVELOPE — A structural device in poetry, by which a line or stanza is repeated with identicality or with little variation so as to enclose between its two appearances the rest (or section) of the poem.

EPIC SIMILE — A simile in which the secondary subject or vehicle is developed far beyond its specific point of close parallel to the primary subject or tenor.

EPISODIC — A narrative constructed by a succession of loosely connected incidents rather than by an integrated PLOT.

EPIPHANY — A "showing forth" or sudden revelation of the true nature of a character or situation through a specific event — a word, gesture, or other action — that causes the reader to see the significance of that character or situation in a new light. James Joyce first popularized the term in modern literature.

EPISTROPHE — a rhetorical figure by which the same word or phrase is repeated at the end of successive clauses, sentences, or lines.

EPITHET — An adjective or adjective phrase used to define a characteristic quality or attribute of some person or thing.

EPIZEUXIS — A rhetorical figure by which a word is repeated for emphasis, with no other words intervening: *e.g.* "sick, sick, sick"

EUPHEMISM — substitution of an agreeable or at least non—offensive expression for one whose plainer meaning might be harsh or unpleasant.

EUPHONY — A pleasing smoothness of sound, perceived by the ease with which the words can be spoken in combination.

FETISH — Originally a charm or totem worshipped for its supernatural powers; more recently, any object with a strong irrational or emotional appeal.

FIGURA ETYMOLOGICA — when two or more different words that have the same root are used near to one another— —in the same sentence, often in the same clause. They must be different words and not just different inflections of the same word.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE — Language that is based on, or uses, figures of speech such as similes and metaphors.

FORESHADOWING — The introduction of clues early in a story to suggest or anticipate significant events that will develop later.

GROTESQUE — Characterized by bizarre distortions, especially in the exaggerated or abnormal depiction of human features.

HENDIADYS — Use of two words connected by a conjunction, instead of subordinating one to the other, to express a single complex idea. *E.g.* "*vis et manus*" for violent hands

HERMENEUTIC — Interpretive or explanatory. The HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE is a model of the process of interpretation, which begins from the problem of relating a work's parts to the work as a whole: since the parts cannot be understood without some preliminary understanding of the whole, and the whole cannot be understood without comprehending its parts, our understanding of a work must involve an anticipation of the whole that informs our view of the parts while simultaneously being modified by them.

HYPALLAGE — ("exchanging") transferred epithet; grammatical agreement of a word with another word which it does not logically qualify. More common in poetry.

**Exegi monumentum aere perennius/ regaliq; situ pyramidum altius*, Horace, Odes III.30

HYPERBATON — Separation of words which belong together, often to emphasize the first of the separated words or to create a certain image.

**Speluncam Dido dux et Troianus eandem* — Vergil, Aeneid 4.124

HYPERBOLE — Extravagant exaggeration, usually for rhetorical effect.

HYPOTACTIC — marked by the use of connecting words between clauses or sentences, explicitly showing the logical or other relationships between them; cf. PARATACTIC

HYSTERON PROTERON — ("later—earlier"): inversion of the natural sequence of events, often meant to stress the event which, though later in time, is considered the more important.

ICON — In literary criticism and the study of semiotics, an object that functions as a sign for something that it is similar to or shares features with. *E.g.* a portrait of a person, or a map of an area of land.

IDIOLECT — the particular variety of a language used by an individual speaker or writer, which may be marked by peculiarities of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

IMAGERY — The use of words or figures of speech to create a mental picture. Imagery exploits all five senses to produce a single powerful impression or to create a cluster of impressions that convey a dominant mood.

Auditory imagery appeals to the sense of hearing.

Gustatory imagery appeals to the sense of taste.

Kinetic imagery conveys a sense of motion. Sometimes called KINAESTHETIC IMAGERY.

Olfactory imagery appeals to the sense of smell.

Tactile imagery appeals to the sense of touch. Sometimes called HAPTIC IMAGERY.

Verbal imagery is created with words (often with a visual analogue — a "mental picture" is a commonly used metaphor for the operation of verbal imagery).

Visual imagery is created with pictures (often with a verbal analogue — many visual images are pictures of things representing well-known sayings or phrases).

IMPLIED READER — Denotes the hypothetical figure of the reader to whom a given work is designed to address itself; distinguished from the actual readers, who may be unable or unwilling to occupy the position of the implied reader; an aspect of READER—RESPONSE criticism.

IN MEDIAS RES — (Latin = "into the middle of things") Applied to the common technique by which a narrator begins the story at some exciting point in the middle of the action.

INDETERMINACY — Any element of a TEXT that requires the reader to decide on its meaning (in READER—RESPONSE criticism) or the principle of uncertainty invoked to deny the existence of any final or determinate meaning of a text (in DECONSTRUCTION theory). Because of their status as non-linear, declined languages, classical languages demonstrate an elevated sense of indeterminacy.

INVERSION — The reversal of the normally expected order of words.

IRONY — A term that suggests some sort of discrepancy between appearance and reality. Although irony is a broad term that can be applied to events both trivial and tragic, it depends on the ability of the reader to recognize contradictions and incongruities. Irony usually takes three forms:

Verbal Irony is speech in which what is said is the opposite to what is meant.

Dramatic Irony is a circumstance in which characters reveal their inability to understand their own situation. Dramatic irony is most effective when characters make fateful choices based on information the reader realizes is incorrect.

Situational Irony is a situation that demonstrates an incongruity between what the reader expects or presumes to be appropriate and what actually occurs.

LITOTES — A special form of understatement that is the assertion of an affirmative by negating its contrary: "He's not too bright."

MEIOSIS — A figure of speech that represents something as being less important than it really is. Used for ironic effect, this trope is more often called UNDERSTATEMENT.

META — (Greek = "after") often appended to the start of other terms in modern criticism to denote the use of an art form to critique on that art form. *E.g.* METAPOETRY — Poetry about poetry.

METALEPSIS — A trope in which one word is substituted for another, which is itself figurative; a metaphor for a metaphor. The Oxford English Dictionary cautions "(In many English examples the use appears to be vague or incorrect)." *E.g.* Marlowe's famous: "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships..." where "face" by SYNECDOCHE refers to Helen's beauty, which itself symbolizes all the causes of the Trojan War. The Oxford English Dictionary cautions "(In many English examples the use appears to be vague or incorrect)." Also used to refer to instances when the boundaries that separate distinct levels of a narrative, usually between an embedded tale and its frame story; AKA "framebreaking".

METAPHOR — In a metaphor a word or expression that normally denotes one thing is applied to a different thing, without explicitly making a comparison. In a metaphor a word or expression, which normally denotes one thing, is applied to a different thing, without explicitly making a comparison. Metaphors consist of TENOR and VEHICLE; in a metaphor like "the ship of state", the state is the TENOR and the metaphorical term "ship" is the VEHICLE.

METONYMY — A figure of speech in which a comparison is made by mentioning an object associated with another. For example, a reference to "the Crown" (in English literature, anyway) implies a connection to the head of state or the government.

MIMESIS — The property an artwork exhibits when it is understood to be reproducing an external reality or any aspect of it.

MISPRISION — Misleading or misunderstanding; specifically a kind of defensive distortion by which a poet creates a poem in reaction against another poet's powerful 'precursor' poem, and which is necessarily involved in all readers' interpretation of poetry.

MODE — An unspecified critical term usually designating broad but identifiable kind of literary method, mood, or manner that is not tied exclusively to a particular form or genre.

MYTH — A fictitious narrative usually containing supernatural beings who interact with mortal heroes and heroines, and which usually relate the origins of nations and cultures. See Northrop Frye's *The Great Code and The Critical Path* for an account of the place of myth in Western Literature. Many critics, following Frye, regard myth as a narrative whose purpose is to help explain the world as we perceive it.

NARRATEE — The imagined person whom the NARRATOR is assumed to be addressing in a given narrative. Narratees are often difficult to identify clearly, since they are not usually described or characterized explicitly.

NARRATION — The act of relating a sequence of events.

NARRATOR — One who tells, or is assumed to be telling, the story in a given narrative. It is distinguishable from both the real author and from the IMPLIED AUTHOR. Narrators vary according to the degree of participation in the story, in their characteristics (overt, with identifiable characteristics, or covert, amounting to a disembodied voice), in their reliability.

NEOLOGISM — a "new word" introduced by an author that was never been used before in that language.

OCCUPATIO or **PARALIPSIS** — Rhetorical device by which a speaker emphasizes something by pretending to pass over it; e.g. "I'll not mention my lover's numerous infidelities..."

ONOMATOPOEIA — Use of words to imitate natural sounds; accommodation of sound to sense.

*At tuba terribili sonitu tarantara dixit. Ennius

OXYMORON — Apparent paradox achieved by the juxtaposition of words which seem to contradict one another.

*Festina lente.

PARADOX — A rhetorical device making an assertion which on one level appears to be a contradiction but which on another level may be actually true.

PARALLELISM — The arrangement of similarly constructed clauses, sentences, or verse lines in a pairing or other sequence suggesting some correspondence between them.

PARAPROSDOKIAN — A surprise or unexpected ending of a phrase or series. Typical of this phenomenon is the *fulmen in clausula* — the twist—ending characteristic of epigrams

*Laudandus, ornandus, tollendus. Cicero on Octavian

PARODY — A composition that imitates the distinctive features of a serious piece of writing for comic or satiric purposes.

PARONOMASIA — Use of similar sounding words; often etymological word—play.

*Hic est sepulcrum haud pulchrum feminae pulchrae.

PASTORAL — A convention, originally of Classical poetry, which idealizes the world of the countryside and nature.

PATHETIC FALLACY — The poetic convention whereby natural phenomena, which cannot feel as humans do, are described as if they could; e.g. "the clouds will weep"

PATHOS — the emotionally moving quality or power of a literary work or of a particular passage, appealing especially to out feelings of sorrow, pity, and compassion.

PERIPHRAISIS — Circumlocution. Evasive, wordy, or indirect language. Often the basis of political speeches and advertisements.

PERSONA — The fictional mask or voice an author may adopt to tell a story.

PERSONIFICATION — A figure of speech in which an inanimate object or an abstract concept is endowed with human features: "blind justice."

PERSPECTIVE — In painting, the art or technique of presenting objects on a two dimensional surface that creates the illusion of depth or distance.

PLEONASM — Use of superfluous or redundant words, often enriching the thought.

PLOT — The pattern of events and situations in a narrative or dramatic work, as selected and arranged both to emphasize relationships between incidents and to elicit a particular kind of interest in the reader or audience.

POETICISM — A word or phrase that survives only within a tradition of poetic diction, usually an **ARCHAISM**.

POINT OF VIEW — The vantage point or perspective from which a story is told. Point of view refers to both position (the narrator's proximity to the action in time and space), and person (the narrator's character and attitude). There are four basic points of view:

Third—person omniscient: The narrator, usually assumed to be the author, tells the story. He or she can move at will through time, across space, and into the mind of each character to tell us anything we need to know to understand the story.

Third—person limited omniscient: Although the author is still the narrator, he or she gives up total omniscience and limits the point of view to the experience and perception of one character in the story. Instead of knowing everything, the reader knows only what this one character knows or is able to learn.

First—person: The author selects one of the characters in the narrative to tell the story. This character may be involved in the action or may view it from the position of an observer. This character may tell about events as they are happening or many years after they have taken place.

Objective: The author presents the external action as if it were being filmed by a movie camera. The story is presented without any attempt to comment on or interpret the characters' private thoughts or feelings. All that the reader knows about the event must be inferred from the characters' public words and deeds.

POLYPTOTON — the repetition of a word in different forms. This device is most common in declined languages such as Greek and Latin.

POLYSYNDETON — The repetition of conjunctions in a series of coordinate words, phrases, or clauses.

PRAETERITIO (=paraleipsis): pretended omission for rhetorical effect.

PROLEPSIS — A figure of speech that creates anticipation. AKA "flash—forward"; the opposite of **ANALEIPSIS**.

PROSOPOPOEIA — Either of the personification of some non—human being or idea, or of the representation of an imaginary, dead, or absent person as alive and capable of speech and hearing.

PUN — A play on words that are similar in sound but have different meanings.

REALISM — Fidelity to actuality in its representation in literature; literature that finds its subject in everyday life and manners, and its goal in portraying the actual, as opposed to **ROMANTICISM**, which strives to find the ideal.

REFLEXIVE FICTION — Fiction in which the reader is reminded directly or indirectly that the story is artifice, the creation of a writer who is consciously shaping all of the narrative elements, not reporting facts. The effect is to draw the reader into a consideration of the creative process as well as that which is created; it is an increasingly common approach in modern writing, especially in experimental fiction.

REGISTER — A term used to a variety of language used in specified kinds of social situation; there are four generally recognized stylistic registers: formal, informal, colloquial, and slang.

REPETEND — A word, phrase, or line that recurs in a poem. As distinct from a refrain, a repetend is repeated only partially or only at irregular intervals.

RHETORIC — In ancient Greece and Rome, the art of using language to persuade or influence others; in medieval scholasticism, the rules followed by a writer or speaker who wished to express him or herself eloquently; in modern common usage, speech or writing expressed in terms intended to persuade.

RODOMONTADE — a blusteringly boastful speech, or any arrogantly inflated manner of speaking or writing.

ROMANTICISM — A movement that reached its peak in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In literature its preoccupation is with the individual and his or her aspirations toward the realization of the ideal self and the creation of the ideal world; a modern corollary is the "back—to— nature" movement of the 1960s. (Not to be confused with the modern paperback "Romance").

SARCASM — A sharp, bitter, cutting remark; a kind of irony, usually in the form of words that appear to praise, but intend to insult.

SATIRE — A work of literature that ridicules vice or folly in ideas, institutions or individuals. Although a satiric work treats its subject with varying degrees of amusement and scorn, its ultimate purpose is to bring about improvement by calling attention — either directly or indirectly — to higher standards of human behavior.

SIGN — In linguistics and the branch of philosophy known as semiotics, a sign is anything, such as an object, gesture, or sound (such as a word or speech unit) that conveys a meaning.

SIMILE — An explicit comparison between two distinctly different things, using the word "like" or "as."

SLIPPAGE — A term used in Deconstructionist and Post—Modernist criticism to describe subtle shifts in meaning between different uses of a word or phrase, or within a single use as analysis probes deeper levels of meaning. Most such terms are used to mean whatever the writer chooses it to mean.

STANZA — A group of verse lines in a poem, set off by blank spaces on the printed page.

STEREOTYPE — An oversimplified character who recurs so frequently in literary works that his or her behavior has become predictable.

SUBLIME — The quality of awesome grandeur in art or nature, distinguished from the merely beautiful

SUBTEXT — Any meaning or set of meanings which are implied rather than explicitly stated in a literary work.

SURREALISM — A way of writing that involves the presentation of a super—real, dream—like world where conventions are upended and rationality is dispensed with. The spontaneous creations of the unconscious are depicted in a surrealist work through the use of fantasy and incongruous imagery.

SYLLEPSIS — Use of a word with two others, with each of which it is understood differently.

SYMBOL — A person, act, or thing that has both literal significance and additional abstract meanings. Unlike an allegory, where such things are equated with one or two abstract ideas, a symbol usually refers to several complex ideas that may radiate contradictory or ambiguous meanings. See ALLEGORY.

SYMBOLISM — The use of SYMBOLS, persons, acts, or things that have both literal significance and additional abstract meanings.

SYNAESTHESIA — A perceptual crossing over or interpretation from one sense to another. Synaesthesia was a popular part of Victorian aesthetics. For example: "As the blind man who said he supposed the colour of scarlet was like the sound of a trumpet, I suppose most persons called upon to give an account of their sensations with regard to art, must be driven to compare pictures to poems, and poems to pictures. One always feels as if they were the same" (Thackeray, *Sketches* 669). Twentieth—century critics, however, have dismissed this trope as too crude to account for the full complexity of poetic experience: "Apprehension in terms of one of the senses is described in terms of, or compared with, one of the others; this has been called synaesthesia, and is clearly sometimes effective. . . . But how such a disturbance can be of serious importance to a reader of poetry is not easy to see; or how one it to be sure when it is occurring. . . . Poe often seems excited about colours in a way that reminds one of people's reports from mescal, but then it is a Mexican drug and he probably had tried it; one cannot deduce anything very profound about poetry from that" (William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 13).

SYNCHYSIS — Interlocked word order.

**aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem* Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.139

SYNECDOCHE — A figure of speech in which a part signifies the whole or the whole signifies a part ("all hands on deck"). (A form of metonymy.)

SYNESIS — (= *constructio ad sensum*): the agreement of words according to logic, and not by the grammatical form; a kind of anacoluthon.

SYNTAX — the grammatical arrangement of words in sentences

TECHNOPAIGNIA — a highly—stylized presentation of a poem in which the layout of the poem matches its subject. E.g. "The Egg" by Simias of Rhodes

TENOR — The subject to which a metaphorical expression is applied. In a metaphor like "the ship of state", the state is the tenor and the metaphorical term "ship" is the VEHICLE.

TEXTURE — A term used in some modern criticism to designate those concrete properties of a literary work that cannot be subjected to paraphrase; applied especially to a poem's assonance, consonance, alliteration, euphony, and related effect.

THEME — The central or dominating idea in a literary work. In literature, it is the abstract concept that is made concrete through its representation in person, action, and image in the work.

TMESIS – ('cutting') the separation of the two parts of a compound word by other words.

Cere— *comminuit* –brum — Ennius

TRICOLON — Three parallel elements occurring together. Can be as simple as "circumstances and youth and death" or can include lengthy, complex phrases and/or clauses. N.B. the elements of a tricolon need not be of the same length (isocolon) and can demonstrate crescendo, where the elements are progressively lengthened, or decrescendo, where the elements are progressively shorter.

TROPE — A figure of speech or thought exhibiting a "turn" or conversion in which words are used in a way that changes their ordinary meaning. In a trope the "turn" is a transformation of meaning or understanding brought about by an apprehension of the connection between the elements of the trope.

UNDERSTATEMENT — A figure of speech that represents something as being less important than it really is. Used for ironic effect, this trope is also sometimes called MEIOSIS.

ZEUGMA — Two different words linked to a verb or an adjective that is strictly appropriate to only one of them.

**Longa tibi exsilia et vastum maris aequor arandum.* Vergil, *Aeneid*