

A Glossary of Literary Terms

SEVENTH EDITION



M. H. ABRAMS

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

HEINLE & HEINLE
—★—
THOMSON LEARNING

AUSTRALIA CANADA MEXICO SINGAPORE UNITED KINGDOM UNITED STATES

A Glossary of Literary Terms/ Seventh Edition
M. H. Abrams

Publisher: *Earl McPeck*
Acquisitions Editor: *Claire Brantley*
Developmental Editor: *Camille Adkins*
Production Editor: *James McDonald*
Project Editor: *Louise Slominsky/Lisa A. Cooper*

Compositor: *Impressions*
Product Manager: *John Meyers*
Art Director: *Sue Hart*
Text Printer: *Malloy Lithographing*
Cover Printer: *Phoenix Color Corp*

Copyright © 1999 Heinle & Heinle, a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Thomson Learning™ is a trademark used herein under license.

Printed in the United States of America.
8 9 10 06 05 04 03

For more information contact Heinle & Heinle, 25 Thomson Place, Boston, Massachusetts 02210 USA, or you can visit our Internet site at <http://www.heinle.com>

All rights reserved. No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage and retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

For permission to use material from this text or product contact us:

Tel 1-800-730-2214
Fax 1-800-730-2215
Web www.thomsonrights.com

ISBN: 0-15-505452-X,
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 98-72577

his skeptical wife, Dame Pertelote the hen, that bad dreams forebode disaster. See G. R. Owst, *Literature and the Pulpit in Medieval England* (2nd ed., 1961, chapter 4).

Many **proverbs** (short, pithy statements of widely accepted truths about everyday life) are allegorical in that the explicit statement is meant to have, by analogy or by extended reference, a general application: "a stitch in time saves nine"; "people in glass houses should not throw stones." Refer to *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, ed. W. G. Smith and F. P. Wilson (1970).

See *didactic*, *symbol* (for the distinction between allegory and symbol), and (on the fourfold allegorical interpretation of the Bible) *interpretation: typological and allegorical*. On allegory in general, consult C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (1936), chapter 2; Edwin Honig, *Dark Conceit: The Making of Allegory* (1959); Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (1964); Rosemund Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery* (1966); Michael Murrin, *The Veil of Allegory* (1969); Maureen Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory* (1979).

Alliteration is the repetition of a speech sound in a sequence of nearby words. The term is usually applied only to consonants, and only when the recurrent sound begins a word or a stressed syllable within a word. In Old English **alliterative meter**, alliteration is the principal organizing device of the verse line: the verse is unrhymed; each line is divided into two half-lines of two strong stresses by a decisive pause, or *caesura*; and at least one, and usually both, of the two stressed syllables in the first half-line alliterate with the first stressed syllable of the second half-line. (In this type of versification a vowel was considered to alliterate with any other vowel.) A number of Middle English poems, such as William Langland's *Piers Plowman* and the romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, both written in the fourteenth century, continued to use and play variations upon the old alliterative meter. (See *strong-stress meters*.) In the opening line of *Piers Plowman*, for example, all four of the stressed syllables alliterate:

In a sómer sésón, when sóft was the sónne

In later English versification, however, alliteration is used only for special stylistic effects, such as to reinforce the meaning, to link related words, or to provide tone color and enhance the palpability of enunciating the words. An example is the repetitions of the *s*, *th*, and *w* consonants in Shakespeare's Sonnet 30:

When to the sessions of sweet silent *thought*
I summon up remembrance of *things* past,
I sigh the lack of many a *thing* I sought
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste. . . .

Various other repetitions of speech sounds are identified by special terms: **Consonance** is the repetition of a sequence of two or more consonants, but with a change in the intervening vowel: live-love, lean-alone, pitter-patter. W. H. Auden's poem of the 1930s, "'O where are you going?' said reader to rider," makes prominent use of this device; the last stanza reads:

"Out of this house"—said *rider* to *reader*,
 "Yours never will"—said *farer* to *fearer*,
 "They're looking for you" said *hearer* to *horror*,
 As he left them there, as he left them there.*

Assonance is the repetition of identical or similar vowels—especially in stressed syllables—in a sequence of nearby words. Note the recurrent long *i* in the opening lines of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820):

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
 Thou foster child of silence and slow time. . . .

The richly assonantal effect at the beginning of William Collins' "Ode to Evening" (1747) is achieved by a patterned sequence of changing vowels:

If aught of oaten stop or pastoral song,
 May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy pensive ear. . . .

For a special case of the repetition of vowels and consonants in combination, see *rhyme*.

Allusion is a passing reference, without explicit identification, to a literary or historical person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage. In the Elizabethan Thomas Nashe's "Litany in Time of Plague,"

Brightness falls from the air,
 Queens have died young and fair,
 Dust hath closed Helen's eye,

the unidentified "Helen" in the last line alludes to Helen of Troy. Most allusions serve to illustrate or expand upon or enhance a subject, but some are used in order to undercut it ironically by the discrepancy between the subject and the allusion. In the lines from T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) describing a woman at her modern dressing table,

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
 Glowed on the marble,**

the *ironic* allusion, achieved by echoing Shakespeare's phrasing, is to Cleopatra's magnificent barge in *Antony and Cleopatra* (II. ii. 196 ff.):

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
 Burn'd on the water.

For discussion of a poet who makes persistent and complex use of this device, see Reuben A. Brower, *Alexander Pope: The Poetry of Allusion* (1959); see also John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (1981); and Edwin Stein, *Wordsworth's Art of Allusion* (1988).

*Lines from "O where are you going?" from *W. H. Auden: Collected Poems 1927–1957* by W. H. Auden, ed. by Edward Mendelson. Copyright ©1934 and renewed 1962 by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc., and Faber & Faber Ltd.

**Lines from "The Waste Land" from *Collected Poems 1909–1962* by T. S. Eliot, copyright 1936 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., copyright © 1964, 1963 by T. S. Eliot. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and Faber and Faber Ltd.

Since allusions are not explicitly identified, they imply a fund of knowledge that is shared by an author and the audience for whom the author writes. Most literary allusions are intended to be recognized by the generally educated readers of the author's time, but some are aimed at a special coterie. For example, in *Astrophel and Stella*, the Elizabethan *sonnet sequence*, Sir Philip Sidney's punning allusions to Lord Robert Rich, who had married the Stella of the sonnets, were identifiable only by intimates of the people concerned. (See Sonnets 24 and 37.) Some modern authors, including Joyce, Pound, and Eliot, include allusions that are very specialized, or else drawn from the author's private reading and experience, in the awareness that few if any readers will recognize them prior to the detective work of scholarly annotators. The current term *intertextuality* includes literary echoes and allusions as one of the many ways in which any text is interlinked with other texts.

Ambiguity. In ordinary usage "ambiguity" is applied to a fault in style; that is, the use of a vague or equivocal expression when what is wanted is precision and particularity of reference. Since William Empson published *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), however, the term has been widely used in criticism to identify a deliberate poetic device: the use of a single word or expression to signify two or more distinct references, or to express two or more diverse attitudes or feelings. **Multiple meaning** and **plurisignation** are alternative terms for this use of language; they have the advantage of avoiding the pejorative association with the word "ambiguity."

When Shakespeare's Cleopatra, exciting the asp to a frenzy, says (*Antony and Cleopatra*, V. ii. 306 ff.),

Come, thou mortal wretch,
With thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate
Of life at once untie. Poor venomous fool,
Be angry, and dispatch,

her speech is richly multiple in significance. For example, "mortal" means "fatal" or "death-dealing," and at the same time may signify that the asp is itself mortal, or subject to death. "Wretch" in this context serves to express both contempt and pity (Cleopatra goes on to refer to the asp as "my baby at my breast, / That sucks the nurse asleep"). And the two meanings of "dispatch"—"make haste" and "kill"—are equally relevant.

A special type of multiple meaning is conveyed by the **portmanteau word**. The term was introduced into literary criticism by Humpty Dumpty, the expert on semantics in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). He is explicating to Alice the meaning of the opening lines of "Jabberwocky":

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.

"Slithy," Humpty Dumpty explained, "means 'lithe and slimy' . . . You see it's like a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word." James Joyce exploited this device—the fusion of two or more existing words—in order to sustain the multiple levels of meaning throughout his long dream

of the immortals had had his sport with Tess"; or Tolstoy's philosophy of history at the end of *War and Peace*). Many such assertions, however, are said to be merely "implied," "suggested," or "inferred" from the narrator's choice and control of the fictional characters and plot of the narrative itself. It is often claimed that such generalizations by the narrator within a fictional work, whether expressed or implied, function as assertions that claim to be true about the world, and that they thereby relate the fictional narrative to the factual and moral world of actual experience. See John Hospers, "Implied Truths in Literature" (1960), reprinted in W. E. Kennick, ed., *Art and Philosophy* (rev., 1979).

A much-discussed topic, related to the question of an author's assertions and truth-claims in narrative fiction, is that of the role of the **beliefs** of the reader. The problem raised is the extent to which a reader's own moral, religious, and social convictions, as they coincide with or diverge from those asserted or implied in a work, determine the interpretation, acceptability, and evaluation of that work by the reader. For the history and discussions of this problem in literary criticism, see William Joseph Rooney, *The Problem of "Poetry and Belief" in Contemporary Criticism* (1949); M. H. Abrams, editor and contributor, *Literature and Belief* (1957); Walter Benn Michaels, "Saving the Text: Reference and Belief," *Modern Language Notes* 93 (1978). Many discussions of the question of belief in fiction cite S. T. Coleridge's description of the reader's attitude as a "willing suspension of disbelief."

A review of theories concerning the relevance of the criterion of truth to fiction is Monroe C. Beardsley's *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (1958), pp. 409–19. For an analysis and critique of theories of emotive language see Max Black, "Questions about Emotive Meaning," in *Language and Philosophy* (1949), chapter 9. Gerald Graff defends propositional truth in poetry in *Poetic Statement and Critical Dogma* (1970), chapter 6. In the writings of Jacques Derrida and his followers in literary criticism, the opposition truth/falsity is one of the metaphysical presuppositions of Western thought that they put to question; see *deconstruction*. For a detailed treatment of the relations of fictions to the real world, including a survey of diverse answers to this problem, see Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, *Truth, Fiction and Literature: A Philosophical Perspective* (1994).

Figurative Language is a conspicuous departure from what users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect. Figures are sometimes described as primarily poetic, but they are integral to the functioning of language and indispensable to all modes of discourse.

Most modern classifications and analyses are based on the treatment of figurative language by Aristotle and later classical rhetoricians; the fullest and most influential treatment is in the Roman Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory* (first century A.D.), Books VIII and IX. Since that time, figurative language has often been divided into two classes: (1) **Figures of thought**, or **tropes** (meaning "turns," "conversions"), in which words or phrases are used in a way that effects a conspicuous change in what we take to be their standard meaning.

The standard meaning, as opposed to its meaning in the figurative use, is called the **literal meaning**. (2) **Figures of speech**, or *rhetorical figures*, or **schemes** (from the Greek word for "form"), in which the departure from standard usage is not primarily in the meaning of the words, but in the order or syntactical pattern of the words. This distinction is not a sharp one, nor do all critics agree on its application. For convenience of exposition, however, the most commonly identified tropes are treated here, and the most commonly identified figures of speech are collected in the article *rhetorical figures*. For recent opposition to the basic distinction between the literal and the figurative, see *metaphor, theories of*.

In a **simile**, a comparison between two distinctly different things is explicitly indicated by the word "like" or "as." A simple example is Robert Burns, "O my love's like a red, red rose." The following simile from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" also specifies the feature ("green") in which icebergs are similar to emerald:

And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

For highly elaborated types of simile, see *conceit* and *epic simile*.

In a **metaphor**, a word or expression that in literal usage denotes one kind of thing is applied to a distinctly different kind of thing, without asserting a comparison. For example, if Burns had said "O my love is a red, red rose" he would have uttered, technically speaking, a metaphor instead of a simile. Here is a more complex metaphor from the poet Stephen Spender, in which he describes the eye as it perceives a landscape:

Eye, gazelle, delicate wanderer,
Drinker of horizon's fluid line.*

For the distinction between metaphor and symbol, see *symbol*.

It should be noted that in these examples we can distinguish two elements, the metaphorical term and the subject to which it is applied. In a widely adopted usage, I. A. Richards introduced the name **tenor** for the subject ("my love" in the altered line from Burns, and "eye" in Spender's lines), and the name **vehicle** for the metaphorical term itself ("rose" in Burns, and the three words "gazelle," "wanderer," and "drinker" in Spender). In an **implicit metaphor**, the tenor is not itself specified, but only implied. If one were to say, while discussing someone's death, "That reed was too frail to survive the storm of its sorrows," the situational and verbal context of the term "reed" indicates that it is the vehicle for an implicit tenor, a human being, while "storm" is the vehicle for an aspect of a specified tenor, "sorrows." Those aspects, properties, or common associations of a vehicle which, in a given context, apply to a tenor are called by Richards the **grounds** of a metaphor. (See I. A. Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 1936, chapters 5–6.)

* Lines from "Not palaces, an era's crown," from *Collected Poems, 1928-1953*, by Stephen Spender. Copyright 1934 by The Modern Library, Inc., and renewed 1962 by Stephen Spender. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc., and Faber & Faber Ltd.

All the metaphoric terms, or vehicles, cited so far have been nouns, but other parts of speech may also be used metaphorically. The metaphoric use of a verb occurs in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, V. i. 54, "How sweet the moonlight *sleeps* upon this bank"; and the metaphoric use of an adjective occurs in Andrew Marvell's "The Garden" (1681):

Annihilating all that's made
To a *green* thought in a green shade.

A **mixed metaphor** conjoins two or more obviously diverse metaphoric vehicles. When used inadvertently, without sensitivity to the possible incongruity of the vehicles, the effect can be ludicrous: "Girding up his loins, the chairman plowed through the mountainous agenda." Densely figurative poets such as Shakespeare, however, often mix metaphors in a functional way. One example is Hamlet's expression of his troubled state of mind in his *soliloquy* (III. i. 59–60), "to take arms against a sea of trouble, / And by opposing end them"; another is the complex involvement of vehicle within vehicle, applied to the process of aging, in Shakespeare's Sonnet 65:

O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wrackful siege of battering days?

A **dead metaphor** is one which, like "the leg of a table" or "the heart of the matter," has been used so long and become so common that its users have ceased to be aware of the discrepancy between vehicle and tenor. Many dead metaphors, however, are only moribund and can be brought back to life. Someone asked Groucho Marx, "Are you a man or a mouse?" He answered, "Throw me a piece of cheese and you'll find out." The recorded history of language indicates that most words that we now take to be literal were, in the distant past, metaphors.

Metaphors are essential to the functioning of language and have been the subject of copious analyses, and sharp disagreements, by rhetoricians, linguists, literary critics, and philosophers of language. For a discussion of diverse views, see the entry *metaphor, theories of*.

Some tropes, sometimes classified as species of metaphor, are more frequently and usefully given names of their own:

In **metonymy** (Greek for "a change of name") the literal term for one thing is applied to another with which it has become closely associated because of a recurrent relationship in common experience. Thus "the crown" or "the scepter" can be used to stand for a king and "Hollywood" for the film industry; "Milton" can signify the writings of Milton ("I have read all of Milton"); and typical attire can signify the male and female sexes: "doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat" (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II. iv. 6). (For the influential distinction by the linguist Roman Jakobson between the metaphoric, or "vertical," and the metonymic, or "horizontal," dimension, in application to many aspects of the functioning of language, see under *linguistics in literary criticism*.)

In **synecdoche** (Greek for "taking together"), a part of something is used to signify the whole, or (more rarely) the whole is used to signify a part. We use

the term “ten *hands*” for ten workmen, or “a hundred *sails*” for ships and, in current slang, “wheels” to stand for an automobile. In a bold use of the figure, Milton describes the corrupt and greedy clergy in “Lycidas” as “blind *mouths*.”

Another figure related to metaphor is **personification**, or in the Greek term, **prosopopeia**, in which either an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken of as though it were endowed with life or with human attributes or feelings (compare *pathetic fallacy*). Milton wrote in *Paradise Lost* (IX. 1002–3), as Adam bit into the fatal apple,

Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin.

The second stanza of Keats’ “To Autumn” finely personifies the season, autumn, as a woman carrying on the rural chores of that time of year; and in *Aurora Leigh*, I. 251–2, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

Then, land!—then, England! oh, the frosty cliffs
Looked cold upon me.

The personification of abstract terms was standard in eighteenth-century *poetic diction*, where it sometimes became a thoughtless formula. Coleridge cited an eighteenth-century ode celebrating the invention of inoculation against smallpox that began with this *apostrophe* to the personified subject of the poem:

Inoculation! heavenly Maid, descend!

See Steven Knapp, *Personification and the Sublime* (1986).

The term **kenning** denotes the recurrent use, in the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf* and poems written in other Old Germanic languages, of a descriptive phrase in place of the ordinary name for something. This type of *periphrasis*, which at times becomes a stereotyped expression, is an indication of the origin of these poems in oral tradition (see *oral formulaic poetry*). Some kennings are instances of *metonymy* (“the whale road” for the sea, and “the ring-giver” for a king); others of *synecdoche* (“the ringed prow” for a ship); still others describe salient or picturesque features of the object referred to (“foamy-necked floater” for a ship under sail, “storm of swords” for a battle).

Other departures from the standard use of words, often classified as tropes, are treated elsewhere in this *Glossary*: *aporia*, *conceit*, *epic simile*, *hyperbole*, *irony*, *litotes*, *paradox*, *periphrasis*, *pun*, *understatement*. In recent decades, especially in the *New Criticism*, *Russian formalism*, *deconstruction*, and Harold Bloom’s theory of the *anxiety of influence*, there has been a great interest in the analysis and functioning of figurative language, which was once thought to be largely the province of pedantic rhetoricians.

A clear summary of the classification of figures that was inherited from the classical past is Edward P. J. Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (3d ed., 1990). Sister Miriam Joseph’s *Shakespeare’s Use of the Arts of Language* (1947) treats the conventional analysis of figures in the Renaissance. René Wellek and Austin Warren, in *Theory of Literature* (rev., 1970), summarize, with bibliography, diverse treatments of figurative language; and Jonathan Culler,

in *Structuralist Poetics* (1975) and *The Pursuit of Signs* (1981), discusses the concern with the subject in recent critical theories.

Folklore, since the mid-nineteenth century, has been the collective name applied to sayings, verbal compositions, and social rituals that have been handed down solely, or at least primarily, by word of mouth and example rather than in written form. Folklore developed, and continues even now, in communities where few if any people can read or write. It also continues to flourish among literate populations, in the form of oral jokes, stories, and varieties of wordplay; see, for example, the collection of "urban folklore" by Alan Dundes and Carl R. Pagter, *When You're up to Your Ass in Alligators: More Urban Folklore from the Paperwork Empire* (1987). Folklore includes legends, superstitions, songs, tales, proverbs, riddles, spells, and nursery rhymes; pseudo-scientific lore about the weather, plants, and animals; customary activities at births, marriages, and deaths; and traditional dances and forms of drama which are performed on holidays or at communal gatherings. Elements of folklore have at all times entered into sophisticated written literature. For example, the choice among the three caskets in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* (II. ix.) and the superstition about a maiden's dream which is central to Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes* (1820) are both derived from folklore. Refer to A. H. Krappe, *Science of Folklore* (1930, reprinted 1974); Richard M. Dorson, ed. *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* (1972).

The following forms of folklore have been of special importance for later written literature:

Folk drama originated in primitive rites of song and dance, especially in connection with agricultural activities, which centered on vegetational deities and goddesses of fertility. Some scholars maintain that Greek *tragedy* developed from such rites, which celebrated the life, death, and rebirth of the vegetational god Dionysus. Folk dramas survive in England in such forms as the St. George play and the **mummers' play** (a "mummer" is a masked actor). Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* (Book II, chapter 5) describes the performance of a mummers' play, and a form of this drama is still performed in America in the Kentucky mountains. See Edmund K. Chambers, *The English Folk-Play* (1933).

Folk songs include love songs, Christmas carols, work songs, sea chanties, religious songs, drinking songs, children's game-songs, and many other types of lyric, as well as the narrative song, or traditional *ballad*. (See *oral formulaic poetry*.) All forms of folk song have been assiduously collected since the late eighteenth century, and have inspired many imitations by writers of lyric poetry, as well as by composers of popular songs in the twentieth century. Robert Burns collected and edited Scottish folk songs, restored or rewrote them, and imitated them in his own lyrics. His "A Red, Red Rose" and "Auld Lang Syne," for example, both derive from one or more folk songs, and his "Green Grow the Rashes, O" is a tidied-up version of a bawdy folk song. See J. C. Dick, *The Songs of Robert Burns* (1903); Cecil J. Sharp, *Folk Songs of England* (5 vols., 1908–12); and Alan Lomax, *The Folk Songs of North America* (1960).

Imagery. This term is one of the most common in criticism, and one of the most variable in meaning. Its applications range all the way from the “mental pictures” which, it is sometimes claimed, are experienced by the reader of a poem, to the totality of the components which make up a poem. Examples of this range of usage are C. Day Lewis’ statements, in his *Poetic Image* (1948), pp. 17–18, that an image “is a picture made out of words,” and that “a poem may itself be an image composed from a multiplicity of images.” Three discriminable uses of the word, however, are especially frequent; in all these senses imagery is said to make poetry *concrete*, as opposed to *abstract*:

- (1) “Imagery” (that is, “images” taken collectively) is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other work of literature, whether by literal description, by *allusion*, or in the *vehicles* (the secondary references) of its similes and metaphors. In William Wordsworth’s “She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways” (1800), the imagery in this broad sense includes the literal objects the poem refers to (for example, “untrodden ways,” “springs,” “grave”), as well as the “violet” of the metaphor and the “star” of the simile in the second stanza. The term “image” should not be taken to imply a visual reproduction of the object referred to; some readers of the passage experience visual images and some do not; and among those who do, the explicitness and details of the pictures vary greatly. Also, “imagery” in this usage includes not only visual sense qualities, but also qualities that are auditory, tactile (touch), thermal (heat and cold), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), and kinesthetic (sensations of movement). In his *In Memoriam* (1850), No. 101, for example, Tennyson’s imagery encompasses not only things that are visible, but also qualities that are smelled or heard, together with a suggestion, in the adjective “summer,” of warmth:

Unloved, that beech will gather brown, . . .
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air. . . .

- (2) Imagery is used, more narrowly, to signify only specific descriptions of visible objects and scenes, especially if the description is vivid and particularized, as in this passage from Marianne Moore’s “The Steeple-Jack”:

a sea the purple of the peacock’s neck is*
paled to greenish azure as Dürer changed
the pine tree of the Tyrol to peacock blue and guinea grey.

- (3) Commonly in recent usage, imagery signifies *figurative language*, especially the *vehicles* of metaphors and similes. Critics after the 1930s, and notably the *New Critics*, went far beyond earlier commentators in stressing imagery, in this sense, as the essential component in poetry, and as a major factor in poetic meaning, structure, and effect.

* Lines from “The Steeplejack” by Marianne Moore, from *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore*. Copyright 1951. Printed with permission from Faber & Faber.

Using the term in this third sense, Caroline Spurgeon, in *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (1935), made statistical counts of the referents of the figurative vehicles in Shakespeare, and used the results as clues to Shakespeare's personal experiences, interests, and temperament. Following the lead of several earlier critics, she also pointed out the frequent occurrence in Shakespeare's plays of image-clusters (recurrent groupings of seemingly unrelated metaphors and similes). She also presented evidence that a number of the individual plays have characteristic image *motifs* (for example, animal imagery in *King Lear*, and the figures of disease, corruption, and death in *Hamlet*); her view was that these elements established the overall tonality of a play. Many critics in the next few decades joined Spurgeon in the search for images, image clusters, and "thematic imagery" in works of literature. By some New Critics the implicit interaction of the imagery—in distinction from explicit statements by the author or the overt speeches and actions of the characters—was held to be the way that the controlling literary subject, or *theme*, worked itself out in many plays, poems, and novels. See, for example, the critical writings of G. Wilson Knight, Cleanth Brooks on *Macbeth* in *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947), chapter 2, and Robert B. Heilman, *This Great Stage: Image and Structure in "King Lear"* (1948).

H. W. Wells, *Poetic Imagery* (1924); June E. Downey, *Creative Imagination* (1929); Richard H. Fogle, *The Imagery of Keats and Shelley* (1949); Norman Friedman, "Imagery: From Sensation to Symbol," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 12 (1953); Frank Kermode, *Romantic Image* (1957).

Imagism was a poetic vogue that flourished in England, and even more vigorously in America, between the years 1912 and 1917. It was planned and exemplified by a group of English and American writers in London, partly under the influence of the poetic theory of T. E. Hulme, as a revolt against what Ezra Pound called the "rather blurry, messy . . . sentimentalistic mannerish" poetry at the turn of the century. Pound, the first leader of the movement, was soon succeeded by Amy Lowell; after that Pound sometimes referred to the movement, slightly, as "Amygism." Other leading participants, for a time, were H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), D. H. Lawrence, William Carlos Williams, John Gould Fletcher, and Richard Aldington. The Imagist proposals, as voiced by Amy Lowell in her preface to the first of three anthologies called *Some Imagist Poets* (1915–17), were for a poetry which, abandoning conventional poetic materials and versification, is free to choose any subject and to create its own rhythms, uses common speech, and presents an image or vivid sensory description that is hard, clear, and concentrated. (See *imagery*.)

The typical Imagist poem is written in *free verse* and undertakes to render as precisely and tersely as possible, and without comment or generalization, the writer's impression of a visual object or scene; often the impression is rendered by means of metaphor, or by juxtaposing, without indicating a relation, the description of one object with that of a second and diverse object. This famed example by Ezra Pound exceeds other Imagist poems in the degree of its concentration:

whether writing the poetry of love or of intense religious experience, he was above all “witty,” making ingenious use of *paradox*, *pun*, and startling parallels in simile and metaphor (see *metaphysical conceit* and *wit*). The beginnings of four of Donne’s poems will illustrate the shock tactic, the dramatic form of direct address, the rough idiom, and the rhythms of the living voice that are characteristic of his metaphysical style:

Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root . . .
For God’s sake hold your tongue, and let me love.
Busy old fool, unruly sun . . .
Batter my heart, three-personed God . . .

Some, not all, of Donne’s poetic procedures have parallels in each of his contemporaries and successors whom literary historians usually group as metaphysical poets.

These poets have had admirers in every age, but beginning with the *Neoclassic Period* of the later seventeenth century, they were by most critics and readers regarded as interesting but perversely ingenious and obscure exponents of *false wit*, until a drastic revaluation after World War I elevated Donne, and to a lesser extent Herbert and Marvell, high in the hierarchy of English poets (see *canon of literature*). This reversal owed much to H. J. C. Grierson’s *Introduction to Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century* (1912), was given strong impetus by T. S. Eliot’s essays “The Metaphysical Poets” and “Andrew Marvell” (1921), and was continued by a great number of commentators, including F. R. Leavis in England and especially the American New Critics, who tended to elevate the metaphysical style into the model of their ideal poetry of irony, paradox, and “unified sensibility.” (See *dissociation of sensibility*.) More recently, Donne has lost his exemplary status, but continues to occupy a firm position as a prominent poet in the English canon.

See George Williamson, *The Donne Tradition* (1930); F. R. Leavis, *Revaluation* (1936); Cleanth Brooks, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (1939); Rosemund Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (1947); J. E. Duncan, *The Revival of Metaphysical Poetry* (1959); Helen Gardner, ed., *John Donne: A Collection of Critical Essays* (1962). F. J. Warnke, *European Metaphysical Poetry* (1961), treats the continental vogue of this style.

Meter is the recurrence, in regular units, of a prominent feature in the sequence of speech-sounds of a language. There are four main types of meter in European languages: (1) In classical Greek and Latin, the meter was **quantitative**; that is, it was established by the relative duration of the utterance of a syllable, and consisted of a recurrent pattern of long and short syllables. (2) In French and many other Romance languages, the meter is **syllabic**, depending on the number of syllables within a line of verse, without regard to the fall of the stresses. (3) In the older Germanic languages, including Old English, the meter is **accentual**, depending on the number of stressed syllables within a line, without regard to the number of intervening unstressed syllables. (4) The

fourth type of meter, combining the features of the two preceding types, is **accentual-syllabic**, in which the metric units consist of a recurrent pattern of stresses on a recurrent number of syllables. The stress-and-syllable type has been the predominant meter of English poetry since the fourteenth century.

There is considerable dispute about the most valid way to analyze and classify English meters. This entry will begin by presenting a traditional accentual-syllabic analysis which has the virtues of being simple, widely used, and applicable to by far the greater part of English poetry from Chaucer to the present. Major departures from this stress-and-syllable meter will be described in the latter part of the entry.

In all sustained spoken English we sense a **rhythm**; that is, a recognizable though varying pattern in the beat of the **stresses**, or **accents** (the more forcefully uttered, hence louder syllables), in the stream of speech-sounds. In meter, this rhythm is structured into a recurrence of regular—that is, approximately equivalent—units of stress-pattern. Compositions written in meter are also known as **verse**.

We attend, in reading verse, to the individual **line**, which is a sequence of words printed as a separate entity on the page. The meter is determined by the pattern of stronger and weaker stresses on the syllables composing the words in the verse-line; the stronger is called the “stressed” syllable and all the weaker ones the “unstressed” syllables. (What the ear perceives as a strong stress is not an absolute quantity, but is relative to the degree of stress in the adjacent syllables.) Three major factors determine where the stresses (in the sense of the relatively stronger stresses or accents) will fall in a line of verse: (1) Most important is the “word accent” in words of more than one syllable; in the noun “áccent” itself, for example, the stress falls on the first syllable. (2) There are also many monosyllabic words in the language, and on which of these—in a sentence or a phrase—the stress will fall depends on the grammatical function of the word (we normally put stronger stress on nouns, verbs, and adjectives, for example, than on articles or prepositions), and depends also on the “rhetorical accent,” or the emphasis we give a word because we want to enhance its importance in a particular utterance. (3) Another determinant of perceived stress is the prevailing “metrical accent,” which is the beat that we have come to expect, in accordance with the stress pattern that was established earlier in the metrical composition.

If the prevailing stress pattern enforces a drastic alteration of the normal word accent, we get a **wrenched accent**. Wrenching may be the result of a lack of metrical skill; it was, however, conventional in the *folk ballad* (for example, “fair ladíe,” “far countrée”), and is sometimes deliberately used for comic effects, as in Lord Byron’s *Don Juan* (1819–24) and in the verses of Ogden Nash.

It is possible to distinguish a number of degrees of syllabic stress in English speech, but the most common and generally useful fashion of analyzing and classifying the standard English meters is “binary.” That is, we distinguish only two categories—strong stress and weak stress—and group the syllables into metric feet according to the patterning of these two degrees. A foot is the

combination of a strong stress and the associated weak stress or stresses which make up the recurrent metric unit of a line. The relatively stronger-stressed syllable is called, for short, “stressed”; the relatively weaker-stressed syllables are called “light,” or most commonly, “unstressed.”

The four standard feet distinguished in English are:

- (1) **Iambic** (the noun is “iamb”): an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

Thě cúr | fěw tólls | thě knéll | ốf pár | tĩng dáy. |

(Thomas Gray,

“Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”)

- (2) **Anapestic** (the noun is “anapest”): two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable.

Thě Ās sýr | iǎn cǎme dówn | lĩke ǎ wólf | ốn thě fórd. |

(Lord Byron,

“The Destruction of Sennacherib”)

- (3) **Trochaic** (the noun is “trochee”): a stressed followed by an unstressed syllable.

Thére thěy | áre, mý | fíf tý | mén ǎnd | wó měn. |

(Robert Browning, “One Word More”)

Most trochaic lines lack the final unstressed syllable—in the technical term, such lines are **catalectic**. So in Blake’s “The Tiger”:

Tĩ gẻr! | tí gẻr! | búrn ỉng | brĩght |

Ỉn thě | fỏ rẻst | ốf thě | nĩght. |

- (4) **Dactylic** (the noun is “dactyl”): a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables.

Éve, wĩth hẻr | bás kẻt, wǎs |

Dẻep ỉn thě | bẻlls ǎnd grǎss. |

(Ralph Hodgson, “Eve”)

Iambs and anapests, since the strong stress is at the end, are called “rising meter”; trochees and dactyls, with the strong stress at the beginning, are called “falling meter.” Iambs and trochees, having two syllables, are called “duple meter”; anapests and dactyls, having three syllables, are called “triple meter.” It should be noted that the iamb is by far the commonest English foot.

Two other feet are often distinguished by special titles, although they occur in English meter only as variants from standard feet:

Spondaic (the noun is “spondee”): two successive syllables with approximately equal strong stresses, as in each of the first two feet of this line:

Góod stróng! | thĩck stúlpẻ fýl ỉng ỉncẻnse smóke. |

(Browning, “The Bishop Orders His Tomb”)

Pyrrhic (the noun is also “pyrrhic”): a foot composed of two successive syllables with approximately equal light stresses, as in the second and fourth feet in this line:

Mý wǎy | ǐs tǒ | bǎ gín | wǐth thǎ | bǎ gín nǐng |
(Byron, *Don Juan*)

This latter term is used only infrequently. Some traditional metrists deny the existence of a true pyrrhic, on the grounds that the prevailing metrical accent—in the above instance, iambic—always imposes a slightly stronger stress on one of the two syllables.

A metric line is named according to the number of feet composing it:

monometer: one foot
dimeter: two feet
trimeter: three feet
tetrameter: four feet
pentameter: five feet
hexameter: six feet (an **Alexandrine** is a line of six iambic feet)
heptameter: seven feet (a **fourteener** is another term for a line of seven iambic feet—hence, of fourteen syllables; it tends to break into a unit of four feet followed by a unit of three feet)
octameter: eight feet

To describe the meter of a line we name (a) the predominant foot and (b) the number of feet it contains. In the illustrations above, for example, the line from Gray’s “Elegy” is “iambic pentameter,” and the line from Byron’s “The Destruction of Sennacherib” is “anapestic tetrameter.”

To **scan** a passage of verse is to go through it line by line, analyzing the component feet, and also indicating where any major pauses in the phrasing fall within a line. Here is a **scansion**, signified by conventional symbols, of the first five lines from John Keats’ *Endymion* (1818). The passage was chosen because it exemplifies a flexible and variable rather than a highly regular metrical pattern.

- (1) Ǻ thǐng | ǒf béau | tǔ ǐs | Ǻ jóy | fǒr é vǔr: |
- (2) Ǫts lóve | lǐ nǔss | ǐn créas | ǔs; // ǐt | wǐll név ǔr |
- (3) PǺss ǐn | tǒ nóth | ǐng nǔss, | // bútt stǐll | wǐll kéep |
- (4) Ǻ bów | ǔr quí | ǔt fǒr | ǔs, // ánd | Ǻ sléep |
- (5) Fúll ǒf | swǔet dréams, | ánd héalth, | ánd quí | ǔt bréath ǐng. |

The prevailing meter is iambic pentameter. As in all fluent verse, however, there are many variations upon the basic iambic foot; these are sometimes called “substitutions.” Thus:

- (1) The closing feet of lines 1, 2, and 5 end with an extra unstressed syllable, and are said to have a **feminine ending**. In lines 3 and 4, the closing feet, because they are standard iambs, end with a stressed syllable and are said to have **masculine endings**.

- (2) In lines 3 and 5, the opening iambic feet have been “inverted” to form trochees. (The initial position is the most common place for inversions in iambic verse.)
- (3) I have marked the second foot in line 2, and the third foot of line 3 and line 4, as pyrrhics (two unstressed syllables); these help to give Keats’ verses their rapid movement. This is a procedure in scansion about which metric analysts disagree: some will feel enough of a metric beat to mark all these feet as iambs; others will mark still other feet (for example, the third foot of line 1) as pyrrhics also. And some metrists prefer to use symbols measuring two degrees of strong stress, and will indicate a difference in the feet, as follows:

ĭts lŏve | ĭ ĭ néss | ĭn créas | ěs.

Notice, however, that these are differences only in nuance; analysts agree that the prevailing pulse of Keats’ versification is iambic throughout, and that despite many variations, the felt norm is of five stresses in the verse-line.

Two other elements are important in the metric movement of Keats’ passage: (1) In lines 1 and 5, the pause in the reading—which occurs naturally at the end of a sentence, clause, or other syntactic unit—coincides with the end of the line; such lines are called **end-stopped**. Lines 2 through 4, on the other hand, are called **run-on lines** (or in a term derived from the French, they exhibit **enjambment**—“a striding-over”), because the pressure of the incomplete syntactic unit toward closure carries on over the end of the verse-line. (2) When a strong phrasal pause falls within a line, as in lines 2, 3, and 4, it is called a **caesura**—indicated in the quoted passage by the conventional symbol //. The management of these internal pauses is important for giving variety and for providing expressive emphases in the long pentameter line.

To understand the use and limitations of an analysis such as this, we must realize that a prevailing metric pattern (iambic pentameter, in the passage from Keats) establishes itself as a perceived norm which controls the reader’s expectations, even though the number of lines that deviate from the norm may exceed the number that fit the norm exactly. In addition, scansion is an abstract scheme which deliberately omits notation of many aspects of the actual reading of a poem that contribute importantly to its pace, rhythm, and total impression. It does not specify, for example, whether the component words in a metric line are short words or long words, or whether the strong stresses fall on short vowels or long vowels; it does not give any indication of the *intonation*—the overall rise and fall in the pitch and loudness of the voice—which we use to bring out the meaning and rhetorical effect of these poetic lines; nor does it indicate the interplay of the metric stresses with the rhythms of the varied phrasal and clausal structures within a sustained poetic passage. Such details are omitted in order to lay bare the essential metric skeleton; that is, the pattern of the stronger and weaker stresses in the syllabic sequence of a verse-line. Moreover, an actual reading of a poem, if it is a skillful reading, will not accord mechanically with the scansion. There is a difference between the scansion, as

an abstract metrical norm, and a skilled and expressive oral reading, or **performance**, of a poem; and no two competent readers will perform the same lines in precisely the same way. But in a performance, the metric norm indicated by the scansion is sensed as an implicit understructure of pulses; in fact, the interplay of an expressive performance, sometimes with and sometimes against this underlying structural pattern, gives tension and vitality to our experience of verse.

We need to note, finally, that some kinds of versification which occur in English poetry differ from the syllable-and-stress type already described:

- (1) **Strong-stress meters or accentual verse.** In this meter, native to English and other Germanic languages, only the beat of the strong stresses counts in the scanning, while the number of intervening light syllables is highly variable. Usually there are four strong-stressed syllables in a line, whose beat is emphasized by *alliteration*. This was the meter of Old English poetry and continued to be the meter of many Middle English poems, until Chaucer and others popularized the syllable-and-stress meter. In the opening passage, for example, of *Piers Plowman* (later fourteenth century) the four strong stresses (always divided by a medial caesura) are for the most part reinforced by alliteration (see *alliterative meter*); the light syllables, which vary in number, are recessive and do not assert their individual presence:

In a sómer sésón, // whan sóft was the sónne,
I shópe me in shróudes, // as Í a shépe were,
In hábits like an héremite, // unhóly of wórkes,
Went wýde in this wórld, // wónders to hére.

Strong-stress meter survives in *folk* poetry and in traditional children's rhymes such as "Hickory, dickory, dock" and was revived as an artful literary meter by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in *Christabel* (1816), in which each line has four strong stresses but the number of syllables within a line varies from four to twelve.

What G. M. Hopkins in the later nineteenth century called his **sprung rhythm** is a variant of strong-stress meter: each foot, as he describes it, begins with a stressed syllable, which may either stand alone or be associated with from one to three (occasionally even more) light syllables. Two six-stress lines from Hopkins' "The Wreck of the *Deutschland*" indicate the variety of the rhythms in this meter, and also exemplify its most striking feature: the great weight of the strong stresses, and the frequent juxtaposition of strong stresses (*spondees*) at any point in the line. The stresses in the second line were marked in a manuscript by Hopkins himself; they indicate that in complex instances, his metric decisions may seem arbitrary:

The | sóur | scýthe | crínge, and the | bléar | sháre | cóme. |
Our | héarts' chárity's | héarth's | fire, our | thóughts' chivalry's |
thróng's | Lórd. |

(See Marcella M. Holloway, *The Prosodic Theory of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 1947.) A number of modern metrists, including T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, skillfully interweave both strong-stress and syllable-and-stress meters in some of their versification.

- (2) *Quantitative meters* in English are written in imitation of classical Greek and Latin versification, in which the metrical pattern is not determined by the stress but by the "quantity" (duration of pronunciation) of a syllable, and the foot consists of a combination of "long" and "short" syllables. Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Thomas Campion, and other Elizabethan poets experimented with this meter in English, as did Coleridge, Tennyson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Robert Bridges later on. The strong accentual character of English, however, as well as the indeterminateness of the duration of a syllable in the English language, makes it impossible to sustain a quantitative meter for any length. See Derek Attridge, *Well-Weighted Syllables: Elizabethan Verse in Classical Meters* (1974).
- (3) In *free verse* (discussed in a separate entry), the component lines have no (or only occasional) metric feet, or uniform stress-patterns.

George Saintsbury, *Historical Manual of English Prosody* (1910), and R. M. Alden, *English Verse* (1930), are well-illustrated treatments of traditional syllable-and-stress metrics. For later discussions of this and alternative metric theories see George R. Stewart, *The Technique of English Verse* (1930); Seymour Chatman, *A Theory of Meter* (1965); and W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Concept of Meter" (1959). This last essay is reprinted in W. K. Wimsatt, *Hateful Contraries* (1965), and in Harvey Gross, ed., *The Structure of Verse* (1966)—an anthology that reprints other useful essays, including Northrop Frye, "The Rhythm of Recurrence," and Yvor Winters, "The Audible Reading of Poetry." See also W. K. Wimsatt, ed., *Versification: Major Language Types* (1972); Paul Fussell, *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* (rev., 1979); John Hollander, *Rhyme's Reason: A Guide to English Verse* (1981); Anthony Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse* (1983); T. V. F. Brogan, *English Versification, 1570–1980* (1981).

Miracle Plays, Morality Plays, and Interludes are types of late-medieval drama, written in a variety of verse forms.

The **miracle play** had as its subject either a story from the Bible, or else the life and martyrdom of a saint. In the usage of some historians, however, "Miracle play" denotes only dramas based on saints' lives, and the term **mystery play**—"mystery" in the archaic sense of the "trade" conducted by each of the medieval guilds who sponsored these plays—is applied only to dramas based on the Bible.

The plays representing biblical narratives originated within the church in about the tenth century, in dramatizations of brief parts of the Latin liturgical service, called **tropes**, especially the "Quem quaeritis" ("Whom are you seeking") trope portraying the visit of the three Marys to the tomb of Christ. Gradually these evolved into complete plays which were written in English instead

Shaw, Joyce, O'Casey, Beckett, Iris Murdoch, and Seamus Heaney. And in recent decades, some of the most notable literary achievements in the English language have been written by natives of recently liberated English colonies (who are often referred to as "postcolonial authors"), including the South Africans Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer, and Athol Fugard; the West Indians V. S. Naipaul and Derek Walcott; the Nigerians Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka; and the Indian novelists R. K. Narayan and Salman Rushdie. See *postcolonial studies*.

The **Postmodern Period** is a name sometimes applied to the era after World War II (1939–45). See *modernism and postmodernism* and for recent innovations in critical theory and practice, *poststructuralism*.

Persona, Tone, and Voice. These terms, frequent in recent criticism, reflect the tendency to think of narrative and lyric works of literature as a mode of speech, or in what is now a favored term, as *discourse*. To conceive a work as an utterance suggests that there is a speaker who has determinate personal qualities, and who expresses attitudes both toward the characters and materials within the work and toward the audience to whom the work is addressed. In his *Rhetoric* (fourth century B.C.), Aristotle, followed by other Greek and Roman rhetoricians, pointed out that an orator projects in the course of his oration an *ethos*, that is, a personal character, which itself functions as a means of persuasion. For example, if the impression a speaker projects is that of a person of rectitude, intelligence, and goodwill, the audience is instinctively inclined to give credence to such a speaker's arguments. The current concern with the nature and function of the author's presence in a work of imaginative literature is related to this traditional concept, and is part of the strong rhetorical emphasis in modern criticism. (See *rhetoric*, *rhetorical criticism*, and *speech-act theory*.)

Specific applications of the terms "persona," "tone," and "voice" vary greatly and involve difficult concepts in philosophy and social psychology—concepts such as "the self," "personal identity," "role-playing," and "sincerity." This essay will merely sketch some central uses of these terms that have proved helpful in analyzing our experience of diverse works of literature.

Persona was the Latin word for the mask worn by actors in the classical theater, from which was derived the term *dramatis personae* for the list of characters who play a role in a drama, and ultimately the English word "person," a particular individual. In recent literary discussion "persona" is often applied to the first-person speaker who tells the story in a narrative poem or novel, or whose voice we hear in a lyric poem. Examples of *personae*, in this broad application, are the visionary first-person narrator of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (who in the opening passages of various books of that epic discourses at some length about himself); the Gulliver who tells us about his misadventures in *Gulliver's Travels*; the "I" who carries on most of the conversation in Alexander Pope's satiric dialogue *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*; the genial narrator of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, who pauses frequently for leisurely discourse with his reader; the speaker who talks first to himself, then to his sister,

in William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey"; the Duke who tells the emissary about his former wife in Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess"; and the fantastic "biographer" who narrates Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. Calling all such diverse speakers "personae" serves to indicate that they are all, to some degree, adapted to the generic and formal requirements and the artistic aims of a particular literary work. We need, however, to go on to make distinctions between such speakers as Jonathan Swift's Gulliver and Browning's Duke, who are entirely fictional characters very different from their authors; the narrators in Pope's *Epistle* and Fielding's *Tom Jones*, who are presented as closer to their authors, although clearly shaped to fit the roles they are designed to play in those works; and the speakers in the autobiographical passages in *Paradise Lost*, in "Tintern Abbey," and in "Ode to a Nightingale," where we are invited to attribute the voice we hear, and the sentiments it utters, to the poet in his own person.

In an influential discussion, I. A. Richards defined **tone** as the expression of a literary speaker's "attitude to his listener." "The tone of his utterance reflects . . . his sense of how he stands toward those he is addressing" (*Practical Criticism*, 1929, chapters 1 and 3). In a more complex definition, the Soviet critic Mikhail Bakhtin said that tone, or "intonation," is "oriented in two directions: with respect to the listener as ally or witness and with respect to the object of the utterance as the third, living participant whom the intonation scolds or caresses, denigrates or magnifies." ("Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art," in Bakhtin's *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique*, trans. 1976.) The sense in which the term is used in recent criticism is suggested by the phrase "tone of voice," as applied to nonliterary speech. The way we speak reveals, by subtle clues, our conception of, and attitude to, the things we are talking about, our personal relation to our auditor, and also our assumptions about the social level, intelligence, and sensitivity of that auditor. The tone of a speech can be described as critical or approving, formal or intimate, outspoken or reticent, solemn or playful, arrogant or prayerful, angry or loving, serious or ironic, condescending or obsequious, and so on through numberless possible nuances of relationship and attitude both to object and auditor. In a literary narrative, the *narratee* (the person or persons to whom the narrator addresses the story) is sometimes explicitly identified, but at other times remains an **implied auditor**, revealed only by what the narrator implicitly takes for granted as needing or not needing explanation or justification, and by the tone of the narrator's address. *Feminist critics*, for example, point out that much of the literature by male authors assumes a male readership who share the narrator's views, interests, and values. See Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader* (1978).

Some current critical uses of "tone" are broader, and coincide in reference with what other critics prefer to call "voice."

Voice, in a recently evolved usage, signifies the equivalent in imaginative literature to Aristotle's "ethos" in a speech of persuasive rhetoric, and suggests also the traditional rhetorician's concern with the importance of the physical voice in an oration. The term in criticism points to the fact that we are aware of a voice beyond the fictitious voices that speak in a work, and a persona

behind all the dramatic personae, and behind even the first-person narrator. We have the sense, that is, of a pervasive authorial presence, a determinate intelligence and moral sensibility, who has invented, ordered, and rendered all these literary characters and materials in just this way. The particular qualities of the author's ethos, or voice, in Henry Fielding's novel *Tom Jones* (1749) manifest themselves, among other things, in the fact that he has chosen to create the wise, ironic, and worldly persona who ostensibly tells the story and talks to the reader about it. The sense of a distinctive authorial presence is no less evident in the work of recent writers who, unlike Fielding, pursue a strict policy of authorial noninterference and by effacing themselves, try to give the impression that the story tells itself (see *point of view*). There is great diversity in the quality of the authorial mind, temperament, and sensibility which, by inventing, controlling, and rendering the particular fiction, pervades works—all of them "objective" or impersonal in narrative technique—such as James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Ernest Hemingway's "The Killers," and William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. For a particular emphasis on the importance of the author's implicit presence as this is sustained from work to work, see *critics of consciousness*. For a discussion of the relation between a poet's speaking voice in real life and the qualities of his or her poem, refer to Francis Berry, *Poetry and the Physical Voice* (1962).

Of the critics listed below who deal with this concept, Wayne C. Booth prefers the term **implied author** over "voice," in order better to indicate that the reader of a work of fiction has the sense not only of the timbre and tone of a speaking voice, but of a total human presence. Booth's view is that this implied author is "an ideal, literary, created version of the real man"—that is, the implied author, although related to the actual author, is nonetheless part of the total fiction, whom the author gradually brings into being in the course of his composition, and who plays an important role in the overall effect of a work on the reader. Critics such as Walter J. Ong, on the other hand, distinguish between the author's "false voice" and his "true voice," and regard the latter as the expression of the author's genuine self or identity; as they see it, for a writer to discover his true "voice" is to discover himself. All of these critics agree, however, that the sense of a convincing authorial voice and presence, whose values, beliefs, and moral vision serve implicitly as controlling forces throughout a work, helps to sway the reader to yield the imaginative consent without which a poem or novel would remain an elaborate verbal game.

Refer to Bakhtin's view of the multiplex voices in narrative fiction, in *dialogic criticism*. See Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: The Man and the Masks* (1948), which discusses Yeats' theory of a poet's "masks" or "personae," both in his life and his art; Reuben Brower, "The Speaking Voice," in *Fields of Light* (1951); Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), chapter 3; W. J. Ong, *The Barbarian Within* (1962); J. O. Perry, ed., *Approaches to the Poem* (1965)—Sec. 3, "Tone, Voice, Sensibility," includes selections from I. A. Richards, Reuben Brower, and W. J. Ong; Walter J. Slatoff, *With Respect to Readers* (1970); Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972); and Robert C. Elliott, *The Literary Persona* (1982).

the language patterns described in this entry with supreme virtuosity. He is an English master of the rhetorical figures, as Shakespeare is of tropes.

Other linguistic patterns or "schemes" that are sometimes classified as rhetorical figures are treated elsewhere in this *Glossary*; see *antithesis*, *alliteration*, *assonance*, rhetorical *climax* (under *bathos*), and *parallelism*. For concise definitions and examples of additional figures of speech which are less commonly referred to in literary analyses, see Edward P. J. Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (4th ed., 1998).

Rhyme. In English versification, standard rhyme consists of the repetition, in the rhyming words, of the last stressed vowel and of all the speech sounds following that vowel: *lâte-fâte; fóllo-w-hóllo-w*.

End rhymes, by far the most frequent type, occur at the end of a verse-line. **Internal rhymes** occur within a verse-line, as in the Victorian poet Algernon Swinburne's

Sister, my sister, O *fleet* sweet swallow.

A stanza from Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" illustrates the patterned use both of internal rhymes (within lines 1 and 3) and of an end rhyme (lines 2 and 4):

In mist or *cloud*, on mast or *shroud*,
It perched for vespers *nine*;
Whiles all the *night*, through fog-smoke *white*,
Glimmered the white moon-*shine*.

The numbered lines in the following stanza of Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" (1807) are followed by a column which, in the conventional way, marks the terminal rhyme elements by a corresponding sequence and repetition of the letters of the alphabet:

(1) Whate'er her theme, the maiden sang	a
(2) As if her song could have no <i>ending</i> ;	b
(3) I saw her singing at her work	c
(4) And o'er the sickle <i>bending</i> —	b
(5) I listened, motionless and <i>still</i> ;	d
(6) And as I mounted up the <i>hill</i> ,	d
(7) The music in my heart I <i>bore</i> ,	e
(8) Long after it was heard no <i>more</i>	e

Lines 1 and 3 do not rhyme with any other line. Both in lines 5 and 6 and lines 7 and 8 the rhyme consists of a single stressed syllable, and is called a **masculine rhyme**: *stíll-híll, bóre-móre*. In lines 2 and 4, the rhyme consists of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable, and is called a **feminine rhyme**: *éńdńg-béńdńg*.

A feminine rhyme, since it involves the repetition of two syllables, is also known as a **double rhyme**. A rhyme involving three syllables is called a **triple rhyme**; such rhymes, since they coincide with surprising patness, usually have a comic quality. In *Don Juan* (1819–24) Byron often uses triple rhymes

such as comparison–garrison, and sometimes intensifies the comic effect by permitting the pressure of the rhyme to force a distortion of the pronunciation. This maltreatment of words, called **forced rhyme**, in which the poet gives the effect of seeming to surrender helplessly to the exigencies of a difficult rhyme, has been comically exploited by the poet Ogden Nash:

Farewell, farewell, you old rhinoceros,
I'll stare at something less prepoceros.*

If the correspondence of the rhymed sounds is exact, it is called **perfect rhyme**, or else “full” or “true rhyme.” Until recently almost all English writers of serious poems have limited themselves to perfect rhymes, except for an occasional *poetic license* such as **eye-rhymes**: words whose endings are spelled alike, and in most instances were once pronounced alike, but have in the course of time acquired a different pronunciation: prove–love, daughter–laughter. Many modern poets, however, deliberately supplement perfect rhyme with **imperfect rhyme** (also known as **partial rhyme**, or else as “near rhyme,” “slant rhyme,” or “pararhyme”). This effect is fairly common in *folk poetry* such as children’s verses, and it was employed occasionally by various writers of art lyrics such as Henry Vaughan in the seventeenth, William Blake in the late eighteenth, and very frequently by Emily Dickinson in the nineteenth century. More recently, Gerard Manley Hopkins, W. B. Yeats, Wilfred Owen, and other poets have systematically exploited partial rhymes, in which the vowels are only approximate or else quite different, and occasionally even the rhymed consonants are similar rather than identical. Wilfred Owen, in 1917–18, wrote the following six-line stanza using only two sets of partial rhymes, established at the ends of the first two lines:

The centuries will burn rich loads
With which we groaned,
Whose warmth shall lull their dreamy lids,
While songs are crooned.
But they will not dream of us poor lads,
Lost in the ground.**

In his poem “The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower” (1933), Dylan Thomas uses, very effectively, such distantly approximate rhymes as (with masculine endings) trees–rose, rocks–wax, tomb–worm, and (with feminine endings) flower–destroyer–fever.

The passages quoted will illustrate some of the many effects that can be achieved by the device that has been called “making ends meet in verse”—the pleasure of the expected yet varying chime; the reinforcement of syntax and rhetorical emphasis when a strong masculine rhyme concurs with the end of a clause, sentence, or stanza; the sudden grace of movement which may be lent

*Lines from “The Rhinoceros” by Ogden Nash, from *Verses from 1929 On* by Ogden Nash. Copyright 1933 by Ogden Nash. By permission of Little, Brown and Company. Also reprinted by permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd., copyright © 1933.

**Lines from “Miners” by Wilfred Owen, from *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*. Copyright 1963 Chatto & Windos, Ltd. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

by a feminine rhyme; the broadening of the comic by a pat coincidence of sound; the haunting effect of the limited *consonance* in partial rhymes. Cunning artificers in verse make rhyme more than an auxiliary sound effect; they use it to enhance or contribute to the significance of the words. When Pope in the early eighteenth century satirized two contemporary pedants in the lines

Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel graced these ribalds,
From slashing Bentley down to piddling Tibalds,

the rhyme of "Tibalds," as W. K. Wimsatt has said, demonstrates "what it means to have a name like that," with its implication that the scholar is a graceless as his appellation. And in one of its important functions, rhyme ties individual lines into the larger pattern of a *stanza*.

See George Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody* (3 vols., 1906–10); H. C. K. Wyld, *Studies in English Rhymes* (1923); W. K. Wimsatt, "One Relation of Rhyme to Reason," in *The Verbal Icon* (1954); Donald Wesling, *The Chances of Rhyme: Device and Modernity* (1980); John Hollander, *Rhyme's Reason: A Guide to English Verse* (1981). For an analysis of the complex interrelations between sound-repetitions and meaning, see Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in his *Language and Literature* (1987).

Roman à clef (French for "novel with a key") is a work of prose fiction in which the author expects the knowing reader to identify, despite their altered names, actual people of the time. The mode was begun in seventeenth-century France with novels such as Madeleine de Scudéry's *Le Grand Cyrus* (1649–53). An English example is Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), whose characters are entertaining *caricatures* of such contemporary literary figures as Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley. A later instance is Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928), in which we find, under fictional names, well-known English people of the 1920s such as the novelist D. H. Lawrence, the critic Middleton Murry, and the right-wing political extremist Oswald Mosely.

Satire can be described as the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation. It differs from the *comic* in that comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself, while satire derides; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt that exists outside the work itself. That butt may be an individual (in "personal satire"), or a type of person, a class, an institution, a nation, or even (as in the Earl of Rochester's "A Satyr against Mankind," 1675, and much of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, 1726, especially Book IV) the entire human race. The distinction between the comic and the satiric, however, is sharp only at its extremes. Shakespeare's Falstaff is a comic creation, presented primarily for our enjoyment; the puritanical Malvolio in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is for the most part comic but has aspects of satire directed against the type of the fatuous and hypocritical Puritan; Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (1607) clearly satirizes the type of person whose cleverness—or stupidity—is put at the service of his cupidity; and John Dryden's