Rhetorical Devices

Allegory- A narrative in which abstract ideas figure as circumstances or persons, usually to enforce a moral truth.

For example, ***Fama*** in *Aeneid* 4.173-97.

Alliteration*- Repetition of the same sound, usually intitial, in two or more words. This term normally applies to consonants and accented intitial vowels.

For example, *ut te postremo donarem munere mortis/*

et mutam nequiquam adloquerer cinerem,

Catullus 101.3-4.

Anaphora*- Repetition of a word, usually at the beginning of successive clauses or phrases, for emphasis or for pathetic effect. This figure is often accompanied by asyndeton and ellipsis.

For example, *Nec silicum venae, nec*

durum in pectore ferrum, nec tibi simplicitas ordine

maior adest, Ovid, *Amores* 1.11.9-10.

Aposiopesis- An abrupt failure to complete a sentence, for rhetorical effect.

For example, *Quos ego---!, Aeneid* 1.135.

Apostrophe*- Address of an absent person or an abstraction, usually for pathetic effect.

For example, *O terque quaterque beati, Aeneid* 1.94.

Assonance- The close recurrence of similar sounds, usually used of vowels sounds.

For example, *amissos longo socios*

sermone requirunt, Aeneid 1.217.

Asyndeton*- Omission of conjunctions in a closely related series.

For example, *saevus ubi Aeacidae telo iacet Hector,*

ubi ingens/Sarpedon, ubi tot Simois correpta sub undis/

scuta virum….., Aeneid 1.99-100.

Chiasmus*- (adj., chiastic) Arrangement of words, usually adjectives and nouns, in the pattern **ABBA**.

For example, *innumeris tumidum Pythona sagittis,* Ovid, *Met.* 1.460

(adjective A ablative, adjective B accusative, noun B accusative, noun A ablative).

Ecphrasis- An apparent digression describing a place, connected at the end of the description to the main narrative by *hic* or *huc*,

For example, *et locus…., Aeneid* 1.159-70. This device is used in epic for a transition to a new scene.

Ellipsis- Omission of one or more words necessary to the sense.

For example, *Haec secum (dixit), Aeneid* 1.37.

Enjambement*- The running over of a sentence from one verse or couplet into another so that closely related words fall in different lines.

For example, *…..daret ut catenis Fatale monstrum,* Horace, *Odes* 1.37.20-21.

Here the words *Fatale monstrum*, the object of *daret*, spill into the next stanza.

Hendiadys- Use of two nouns connected by a conjunction with the meaning of one modified noun.

For example, *molemque et montes, Aeneid* 1.61.

Hysteron Proteron- Reversal of chronological order in order to put the more important idea first.

For example, *moriamur et in media arma ruamus, Aenedi* 2.353

Hyperbaton*- An unnatural rearranging of the natural word order of the sentence.

For example, *Speluncam Dido dux et Troianus eandem* 4.124, 165

Hyperbole*- Exaggeration for effect,

For example, *terram inter fluctus aperit, Aeneid* 1.107.

Interlocking Order or Synchesis*- Arrangement of pairs of words so that one word of each pair is between the words of the other (**ABAB**). This arrangement normally emphasizes the colse association of the pairs.

For example, *saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram, Aeneid* 1.4.

Irony- The use, clearly intentional or apparently unintentional (dramatic irony), of words with a meaning contrary to the situation.

For example,

Iuone secunda, Aeneid 4.45 (unintentional); *scilicet*

is superis labor est, Aeneid 4.379 (intentional).

Litotes*- An understatement for emphasis, usually an assertion of something by denying the opposite.

For example, *Salve, nec minimo puella naso,* Catullus 43.1.

Metaphor*- An implied comparison, that is, the use of a word or words suggesting a likeness between what is actually being described and something else.

For example, *remigio alarum, Aeneid* 1.301.

Metonymy*- Use of one noun in place of another closely related noun, to avoid common or prosaic words.

For example, *Cererem corruptam undis, Aeneid* 1.177.

Onomatopoeia*- (adj., onomatopoeic or onomatopoetic) Use of words whose, sound suggests the sense.

For example, *magno cum murmure montis, Aeneid* 1.55.

Oxymoron- (paradox) The use of apparently contradictory words in the same phrase. This figure is particulary Horatian.

For example, *insanientis dum sapientiae. Odes* 1.34.2.

Personification*- Treatment of inanimate objects as human.

For example, *Phaselus iile, quem videtis, hospites,/*

ait fuisse navium celerrimus, Catullus 4.12.

Pleonasm- (adj., pleonastic) use of unneccesary words.

For example, *mortales visus…reliquit,/et procul in*

tenuem ex oculis evanuit auram, Aeneid 4.277-78.

Polysyndeton*- Use of unnecessary conjunctions.

For example, *Eurusque Notusque ruunt creberque…/Africus, Aeneid* 1.85-86.

Praeteritio- Claiming to not mention or "pass over" something that one plans to say.

For example, *Obliviscor iniurias tuas, Clodia, depono memoriam doloris mei; quae abs te crudeliter in meos me absente facta sunt, neglego…, Pro Caelio,* 50.

Prolepsis- Use of a word before it is appropriate in the context. A proleptic adjective does ot apply to its noun until after the action of the verb. It is often best translated with a clause or phrase, to bring out the emphasis on the adjective.

For example, *submersasque obrue puppes, Aeneid* 1.69.

Rhetorical Question*- A question asked without the expectation of an answer.

Simile*- An expressed comparison, introduced by a word such as *similis, qualis,* or *velut(I).*

For example, *velut agimine facto, Aeneid* 1.82.

Epic similes tend to be long, to relate to nature, and to digress from the point(s) of comparison (see *Aeneid* 1.430-36).

Synecdoche- Use of the part of the whole to avoid common words or to focus attendtion on a particular part.

For example, *rotis (*for *curru)*, Ovid, *Amores,* 1.2.41.

Tmesis*- Separation of the parts of a compound word, usually for metrical convenience.

For example, *circum dea fundit, Aeneid* 1.412.

Transferred Epithet- A device of emphasis in which the poet attributes some characteristic of a thing to another thing closely associated with it.

For example, *templumque vetustum desertae/Cereris, Aeneid* 2.713-14.

Tricolon Crescens- A three-part increase of emphasis or enlargement of meaning.

For example, *Q. Metelli matrimonium…*

clarissimi ac fortissimi viri patriaeque amantissimi…Pro Caelio 34.

Zeugma- Use of a verb or adjective with two words, to only one of which it literally applies.

For example, *crudeles aras traiectaque pectora ferro nudavit, Aeneid* 1.355-56.