

Metaphor, Simile, Personification

metaphor: language that implies a relationship between two elements:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

simile: makes comparisons of two elements, but ties them together with additional words: *like* or *as*.

The torn edges of the ancient book shone yellow *as* an autumn moon.

personification: a figure of speech giving an inanimate object or abstract idea human characteristics.

Death sat in the corner thoughtfully smoking his pipe, staring at the young men and women in the pub.

archetype: in simplest form these are patterns of personality traits and characteristics found in folklore and reused and reinvented by modern writers. In Jungian terms archetypes are collectively inherited from generation to generation; ideas and patterns of thought existing in the unconscious mind of every individual.

symbol: a word or an image that signifies something other than what it represents and that even when denoting a physical, limited thing carries enlarging connotations, so that it has the reality, vivid yet ambiguous, the emotional power, and the suggestiveness of a compelling dream or an archetypal myth.

(Deutsch, Babette *Poetry Handbook: A Dictionary of Terms*, 3rd ed., New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969.)

allusion: operates as a symbol; the poet makes reference to a historical event, a passage from the Bible, to a myth, or a common allegory, or even another poet; some are more obscure than others when utilized.

Metaphors

Sylvia Plath

I'm a riddle in nine syllables,
An elephant, a ponderous house,
A melon strolling on two tendrils.
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!
This loaf's big with its yeasty rising.
Money's new-minted in this fat purse.
I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf.
I've eaten a bag of green apples,
Boarded the train there's no getting off.

literary devices

Additional Terms

Throughout the course we will discuss these elements — be sure you are familiar with their meaning and function.

rhyme: a concurrence of terminal sounds, usually at the ends of lines which usually entails identical vowel sounds or identical consonants at the end of words.

rhyme schemes: various formulas showing patterns of rhymes throughout the entire poem; a common four line formula: ABAB.

rhythm: is the internal beat in a line of poetry; deals with pauses in spoken languages and strategic stresses of words: *LWP*, p 536, has a chart detailing different meters in poetry. A majority of poems are composed with an internalized meter. The unit of measurement is called a **foot**. Depending on the complexity of the meter, the number of syllables dictates the size of the foot.

stanza: grouped lines of verse, like a prose paragraph; usually undefined, unregulated length; typical poetry genres dictate size of stanzas.

couplet is two lines of verses

tercet is three lines

quatrain is four lines

cinquain is five lines

sestet is six lines

septet is seven

octave is eight