

Stylistic analysis essay sample



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Stylistic Devices 1

IMAGERY

Simile (Vergleich): An explicit comparison between two things which are basically quite different using words such as like or as.

She walks like an angel. / I wandered lonely as a cloud. (Wordsworth)

Metaphor (Metapher): A comparison between two things which are basically quite different without using like or as. While a simile only says that one thing is like another, a metaphor says that one thing is another. (adj. metaphorical)

All the world's a stage / And all the men and women merely players ...
(Shakespeare)

Personification (Verkörperung): A kind of metaphor in which animals, plants, inanimate (leblos) objects or abstract ideas are represented as if they were human beings and possessed human qualities.

Justice is blind. / Necessity is the mother of invention (Not macht erfinderisch).

Synecdoche: A figure of speech in which a part of something stands for the whole (lat. pars pro toto) or where the whole stands for a part (lat. totum pro parte). All hands on deck. (Alle Mann an Bord) / Germany (= the German team) lost 1: 2.

Symbol (Symbol): Something concrete (like a person, object, image, word or event) that stands for something abstract or invisible.

The Cross is the symbol of Christianity. The dove (Taube) symbolizes peace/is symbolic of peace.

SOUND

Alliteration (Alliteration): The repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of neighbouring words.

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

Metre (Metrum): A regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables within a line of a poem.

Iambic metre (Jambus): An unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one (– ‘–):

The way a crow (Krähe) / Shook down on me / The dust of snow / From a hemlock tree (Frost)

Onomatopoeia (Lautmalerei): The use of words which imitate the sound they refer to. (adj. onomatopoeic) the stuttering (stottern) rifles’ rapid rattle / The cuckoo whizzed past the buzzing bees.

Rhyme (Reim): The use of words which end with the same sounds, usually at the end of lines. Tiger! Tiger! burning bright / In the forests of the night.

STRUCTURE

Anaphora (Anapher): The repetition of a word or several words at the beginning of successive (aufeinander folgend) lines, clauses or sentences. “To raise a happy, healthy, and hopeful child, it takes a family; it takes teachers; it takes clergy; it takes business people; it takes community leaders; it takes those who protect our health and safety.”

Parallelism (Parallelismus): The similarity of syntactical structure in neighbouring phrases, clauses, sentences or paragraphs.

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“ Let every nation know that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”

Triple (Trikolon): A kind of parallelism where words, phrases or sentences are arranged in groups of three (“ rule of three”).

government of the people, by the people and for the people

Stylistic Devices 2

Climax (Steigerung, Höhepunkt, Klimax): A figure of speech in which a series of words or expressions rises step by step, beginning with the least important and ending with the most important (= climactic order). The term may also be used to refer only to the last item in the series. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed (schlucken), and some few to be chewed (kauen) and digested (verdauen).

Anticlimax (Antiklimax): The sudden fall from an idea of importance or dignity (Würde) to some thing unimportant or ridiculous in comparison, especially at the end of a series. The bomb completely destroyed the cathedral, several dozen houses and my dustbin.

Enumeration [ɪnju:məˈreɪʃn] (Aufzählung): The listing of words or phrases. It can stress a certain aspect e. g. by giving a number of similar or synonymous adjectives to describe something. Many workers find their labor mechanical, boring, imprisoning, stultifying (lähmend) and repetitive.

MISCELLANEOUS

Allusion (Anspielung): A reference to a person, work of art, event etc.

Allusions require a common cultural experience shared by the writer and the reader. The Old Man and the Computer (allusion to The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway)

Euphemism (Euphemismus): Hiding the real nature of something unpleasant by using a mild or indirect term for it. (adj. euphemistic) “ He has passed away.” instead of “ He has died.” / “ the underprivileged” instead of “ the poor”

Hyperbole (Hyperbel) also overstatement: Deliberate (absichtlich) exaggeration. Its purpose is to emphasize something or to produce a humorous effect. I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.

Understatement (Untertreibung): The opposite of hyperbole; the deliberate presentation of some thing as being much less important, valuable etc. than it really is. “ These figures are a bit disappointing” instead of “... are disastrous (katastrophal).”

Irony (Ironie): Saying the opposite of what you actually mean. Do not use “ ironic” in the vague sense of “ funny/humorous”.

Teacher: “ You are absolutely the best class I’ve ever had.” Actual meaning: “ the worst class”

Satire (Satire): A kind of text which criticizes certain conditions, events or people by making them appear ridiculous. Satirical texts often make use of exaggeration, irony and sarcasm. (n. satirist, adj. satirical, v. to satirize satirisch darstellen)

Paradox (Paradoxon): A statement that seems to be self-contradictory (widersprüchlich) or opposed to common sense. On closer examination it mostly reveals some truth. (adj. paradoxical)

The child is father of the man. (Wordsworth) / It is awfully hard work doing nothing. (Oscar Wilde)

Oxymoron (Oxymoron): A condensed (komprimiert) form of paradox in which two contradictory words (mostly adjective and noun) are used together. sweet sorrow / wise fool / bittersweet / “ O hateful love! O loving hate!” (Romeo and Juliet)

Pun (Wortspiel): A play on words that have the same (or a similar) sound but different meanings. At the drunkard’s funeral, four of his friends carried the bier. (bier Totenbahre vs. beer Bier) “ Is life worth living?” – “ It depends on the liver.” (liver = sb. who lives vs. liver Leber)

Rhetorical question (rhetorische Frage): A question to which the answer is obvious and therefore not expected. In reality rhetorical questions are a kind of statement. Don’t we all love peace and hate war? / Shouldn’t we try to be friendlier towards each other?