- Questions regarding style:

1. Diction: Does the writer use word choice in a distinctive way?
2. Sentence Structure: Does the author characteristically use long or short sentences? Are there perhaps even sentence fragments?
3. Tone: What is the implied author's attitude towards the material?
4. Organization: How does the writer go about arranging the material of the story?
5. On reading one particular narrative, how would you characterize the style? Simple? Figurative? Understated? Or what, and why?
6. How has the point of view shaped or determined the style?
7. Do you think that the style is consistent? If it isn't, for instance, if there are shifts from simple sentences to highly complex ones, what do you make of the shifts?

2.8. FIGURATIVE MEANING

From **Montgomery, Martin et al. (eds.)** ***Ways of Reading*****, op. cit. pp. 127-144.**

- Figurative language is non-literal language. Certain kinds of figurative language are traditionally called **tropes**; these include metaphor, simile, metonymy and synecdoche, and verbal irony.
- **Literal** meaning is fixed (always the same, predictable and shared by speakers).
- **Metaphor**: (Greek *metaphora*: to transfer, to carry over) Word or phrase clearly out of place in a sentence, but making sense because of some similarity between it and what is being talked about. We look for the element of similarity and transfer it to the new context. E.g. Her snowy face (skin-snow). One should be attentive to the values involved in the construction and interpretation of metaphors.

  Different **parts of speech** may fulfil the function of a metaphor:

  NOUN: time is a jetplane.

  VERB: time is running out.

  ADJECTIVE: golden skin.

  ADVERB: thistles stand nakedly.

  Types of metaphors:

  CONCRETIVE: a concrete term used for an abstract thing. E.g. the burden of responsibility.

  ANIMISTIC: a term associated with animate (living) creatures used for inanimate things. E.g. the leg of a table.

HUMANIZING/ ANTHROPOMORPHIC: a term associated with human beings used for a non-human thing. E.g. the hands of the clock.

PATHETIC FALLACY (Personification): the world around reflects a person's emotions. E.g. The kettle's sad song.

EXTENDED METAPHOR: Sequence of metaphors belonging to the same **semantic field**. E.g. body-prison: dungeon, enslaved, bolts, fettered, manacles…

MIXED METAPHOR: Combination of two or more metaphors whose **vehicles** come from different and incongruous areas. E.g. Hamlet: "to take arms against a sea of troubles".

DEAD METAPHOR: A metaphor that becomes overfamiliar and ceases to be recognized as a metaphor at all. They are very frequent in **colloquial speech**. E.g. He is nuts.

- **Simile**: It also entails a similarity between two terms. There is an **explicit** textual signal of the link between the terms (like, as, etc.). E.g. The sky is like a polished mirror.
- **Metonymy**: (Greek for "a change of name"). The figurative term replaces the literal one by means of some type of association (not that of similarity): cause-effect, attribute, containment, etc. E.g. Moscow made a short statement (the leaders of the Russian federation; the leadership is based in the city). Dress can be used metonymically to stand for those who wear it: "A lot of big wigs came to the party" (important people).
- **Synecdoche**: (Greek for "taking together"). It is a subcategory of metonymy. There is a part-whole association. E.g. Farm hands (workers).
- Types of **redundancy** (saying more than is needed to convey some information)**:**

  Pleonasm: e.g. "… abandon the society of this female; or clown, thou perishest; or to thy better understanding: diest; or, to wit, I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death" (**W. Shakespeare**, *As You Like It*, **V. i.**).

  Tautology: e.g. I know what I know

  Periphrasis: E.g. "Night's candles are burned out, and jocund day/ Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops" (W. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*). (Morning is come).

  Euphemism: E.g. gone to his last rest (dead).

  Anti-euphemism: E.g. kick the bucket (die).

- Types of **Absurdity:**

  Paradox: contradictory statement. E.g. "I die, yet depart not,/ I am bound, yet soar free;/ Thou art and thou art not/ And ever shalt be!"

  Oxymoron: tragical mirth, sweet sorrow, terrible beauty.

- Types **of deception**:

  Hyperbole: exaggeration. E.g. Miranda: "Your tale, sir would cure deafness" (W. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*).

  Litotes: understatement. E.g. "It's not bad"

  Irony: double meaning. E.g. "His designs were strictly honourable, as the saying is; that is to rob a lady of her fortune by way of marriage" (H. Fielding, *Tom Jones*) (ironic contrast between the word honourable and the dishonourable conduct it is held to stand for).

  Irony is usually widespread in a text, whereas metaphors are often discrete small parts of a text. In irony we substitute on the basis of significant differences.

  SITUATIONAL IRONY: this is irony which is intended by the author, but the characters are unaware of it. There are two types of situational irony:

  DRAMATIC IRONY: the audience knows something significantly different from what the characters believe (as when, in a play, a character wears somebody else's clothes and the audience knows the real identity but other characters don't).

  STRUCTURAL IRONY: Often a text is structurally ironic because it is told by an unreliable narrator. The text sometimes uses the naive narrator as a moral centre, and her or his failure to understand the events of the novel illustrates the moral corruptness of the events. E.g. Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Apply the set of questions in the section regarding Style to the analysis of the short story "The New Dress" by **Virginia Woolf**.
2. Look for examples of figurative speech in that same story by Woolf.

Further reading:

Leech, G. (1969) *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. London: Longman.

Leech, G. & M. Short (1981) *Style in Fiction*. London: Longman.

Muecke, D.C. (1970) *Irony and the Ironic*. London: Methuen.

3. POETRY

3.1. LYRIC POETRY. NARRATIVE POETRY. DRAMATIC POETRY

In part from **Barnet, Sylvan et al. (eds.)** ***An Introduction to Literature*****, New York: Harper Collins, 1993, pp.419-453.**

- For the ancient Greeks, a **lyric** was a song accompanied by a lyre. It was short, and it usually expressed a single emotion, such as joy or sorrow. The word is now used more broadly, referring to a poem that, neither **narrative** (telling a story) nor strictly **dramatic** (spoken by different voices), is an emotional or reflective **soliloquy**.
- Whereas a narrative is set in the past, telling what happened, a lyric is set in the present, catching a speaker in a moment of expression. But a lyric can, of course, glance backward or forward. Consider the following example:

  "Careless Love"

  Love, O love, O careless love,
  You see what careless love can do.
  When I wore my apron low,
  Couldn't keep you from my do,
  Fare you well, fare you well.
  Now I wear my apron high,
  Scarce see you passin' by,
  Fare you well, fare you well.

  (Anonymous)

  This poem implies a story of desertion but the emphasis is on a present state of mind.
- Lyrics are sometimes differentiated among themselves. For example, if a lyric is melancholy or mournfully contemplative, especially if it laments a death, it may be called an **elegy**. If a lyric is rather long, elaborate, and on a lofty theme such as immortality or a hero's victory, it may be called an **ode** or a **hymn**.
- Although the lyric is often ostensibly addressed to someone (the "you" in "Careless Love"), the reader usually feels that the **speaker** is really talking to himself or herself. In "Careless Love", the speaker need not be in the presence of her man; rather, her heart is overflowing (the reader senses) and she pretends to **address** him.
- A poem is written by an author, but it is spoken by an invented speaker. The author counterfeits the speech of a person in a particular situation. Even in allegedly autobiographical poems, it may be convenient to distinguish between **author and speaker**.