

Truism

Definition of Truism

Truism is a literary device defined as a statement that is based on self-[evidence](#) or factual evidence. and is accepted as an obvious truth in a way that further proof is not considered necessary. It is also that a contradicting statement would be considered as illogical, since truism is agreed to be truth. It is mostly used as a rhetorical device in philosophy, specifically in logic.

Several statements and aphorisms are also examples of truism when they present a universally accepted opinion, and when a majority of the people agree with them. Platitudes, [clichés](#), and bromides are some truism examples.

Examples of Truism in Literature

Example #1: *Oedipus Rex* (By Sophocles)

Jocasta:

“(The oracle) told him
that it was his fate that he should die a victim
at the hands of his own son, a son to be born
of Laius and me ...”

Oedipus:

“That I was fated to lie with my mother,
and show to daylight an accursed breed
which men would not endure, and I was doomed
to be murderer of the father that begot me ...”

In this excerpt, Jocasta recollects the prophecy that the oracle mentioned to King Laius before the birth of Oedipus. In the second paragraph, Oedipus also reveals that prophecy, and hence leaves Corinth. These statements are the perfect examples of truism, where the fact is obvious and nobody can deny it.

Example #2: *Hamlet* (By William Shakespeare)

“O, that this too too solid flesh would melt
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix’d
His cannon ‘gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable, ...
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him...”

This is Hamlet’s famous [soliloquy](#), and it is a good example of truism. Hamlet was enraged at his mother for marrying his uncle after the death of the king a month previous. He is expressing his feelings of dejection for his mother’s greed.

Example #3: *Mourning Becomes Electra* (By Eugene O’Neil)

Mannon:

“He pushes his back up against the head of the bed in a half sitting position. His face, with the flickering candle light... You like the dark where you can’t see your old man of a husband, is that it ... I don’t know... This house is not my house. This is not my room nor my bed. They are empty... And you are not my wife! You are waiting for something ... You made me appear a lustful beast in my own eyes... I would feel cleaner now if I had gone to a brothel! I would feel more honor between myself and life...”

In this extract, Mannon is talking to his wife Christine, and gives self-evident statements. He talks about his wife's unfaithfulness to him. This is a truism based on accepted truth that his wife has had an affair.

Example #4: *Romeo and Juliet* (By William Shakespeare)

Prince:

“Let Romeo hence in haste,
Else, when he's found, that hour is his last.
Bear hence this body and attend our will.
Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill.”

In this excerpt, Prince is angry due to Romeo's killing of Tybalt, and says that he must leave the city. Here the statement of truism is used as he later says:

“Showing mercy to murderers would create more killers or murderers.”

Example #5: *A Tale of Two Cities* (By Charles Dickens)

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”

Here, the double meanings of the “best of times” and the “worst of times” indicate the [theme](#) of resurrection, and also indicate the [conflict](#) between England and France. These statements are expressing truism.

Function of Truism

Truism is a specific category of truth, platitude, or cliché, and is used as evidence. It is used as an agreed or intuitive truth about life, since the

not [ask](#) questions. It is also used in literature and philosophical writings where it serves an ironic purpose.