

Glossary

This glossary provides a brief but informative series of definitions associated with the key issues explored in this book. It focuses on terms that have been implicitly defined in the text, and does not include concepts or fields that have been explicitly dealt with elsewhere. A complete listing of stylistic terms would not be feasible, and has already been done by contemporary and classical rhetoricians. Teachers or researchers interested in a full description of stylistic devices might consult Richard Lanham's *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* or the website *Silva Rhetoricae*, maintained by Brigham Young University. Textbooks described in the previous chapter also include detailed definitions of grammatical terms and parts of speech.

Amplification — Amplifying discourse involves “endow[ing] it with stylistic prominence so that it acquires conceptual importance . . . and salience in the minds of the audience” (Fahnestock 390). The item amplified could be an idea, an image, or word. A range of strategies exist to amplify discourse, including diction, syntax, and simple abundance (e.g., Erasmus's *copia*). Amplification is a broad term under which the use of specific stylistic devices falls, when used to stress the importance of elements within a given text.

Alliteration — The manipulation of sonic textures in language for rhetorical or aesthetic effect is referred to as alliteration. Poets have used this strategy since antiquity in Western and Eastern oral and literate traditions. The older sophist Gorgias is identified as the first rhetorician to use alliteration. Two of the most common alliterative devices are consonance (repetition of consonant sounds) and assonance (repetition of vowel sounds). Although a frequent strategy in literary works, rhetorical texts also often demonstrate a sense of sonic texturing.

Assonance — See Alliteration.

Attic — During the classical Greek and Roman eras, orators could be described as having an “Attic” or mainland Greek style when they spoke plainly, with a minimal amount of ornamentation. An “Attic” style also referred to shorter, less complicated sentences. In *Brutus*, Cicero defines Attic against Asiatic or bombastic rhetoric, as he saw the former as appropriate for younger rhetors or passionate issues, and a hallmark of Asian rhetorical styles. Quintilian sought to complicate the easy distinction between Attic and Asiatic, asserting in Book XII of *The Orator’s Education* that many rhetors switch between restrained and expressive styles.

Asiatic — See Attic.

Cumulative Sentence — A cumulative sentence consists of a main clause that branches right with additional phrases and clauses, for example: “The car sped down the street, hitting mailboxes, knocking over trash bins, and nearly ramming a cyclist.” Classical rhetoricians traditionally prefer these sentences over periodic ones because they are more direct. Periodic sentences, by contrast, contain clauses and phrases before the main clause, for example: “Hitting mailboxes, knocking over trash bins, and nearly ramming a cyclist, the car sped down the street.” Periodic sentences are intended to create a feeling of suspense that, if not managed effectively, can lead to confusion and impatience.

Clause — A unit of language containing a subject, verb, and object. A simple sentence consists of at least one clause, whereas complex and/or compound sentences consist of more than one clause. Writers can alternate their use of clauses within and across sentences to contribute to a distinctive voice or tone in a given text, and to coordinate levels of information.

Code-Meshing — A relatively recent term introduced by Vershawn A. Young and A. Suresh Canagarajah, now used by a number of rhetoric and composition researchers. Code-meshing refers to the general use of more than one social language or register in the same text. Some debate has ensued about the necessity of a new term that synthesizes similar terms from linguistics, including code-switching or mixing (using two codes in the same speech act), lexical borrowing between languages, embedded language (stretches of untranslated discourse within another language), and loan translations (adapting a new word into a language according to its spelling and morphological conventions).

Christensen Rhetoric—Francis Christensen advocated a particular approach to stylistic dexterity in his 1967 book, *Notes Toward a New Rhetoric*, where Christensen resists the contemporaneous approach of sentence-combining that was also prominent during the late 1960s and 1970s. Instead, Christensen saw the key to effective writing in cumulative sentences and the manipulation of detail in paragraphs. For Christensen, writers need add detail and clarification to their sentences by adding successions of clauses and modifiers to their main ideas. Effective paragraphs demonstrate a writer's ability to shift smoothly between levels of generality and specificity, contributing a sense of coherence to writing that might be described as mature or graceful.

Consonance — See Alliteration.

Descriptive Grammar — While prescriptive grammars in English date back to the emergence of usage handbooks during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, descriptive grammar emerged as an alternative during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prescriptive or school grammars could be said to try to codify language into rules that are either followed or broken. In contrast, descriptive grammars seek to describe language use without making judgments about what is correct or incorrect. Most linguists take a descriptive approach; the grammatical models of English they constructed—such as transformational and functional grammar—supply writers and writing teachers with much terminology that is used to discuss stylistic decisions. If grammar is a matter of exhaustively describing the available options for formulating sentences, then style is a matter of using the language of descriptive grammar to determine the options that are appropriate for given situations.

Error — This is a loaded term with a long history that dates back to Quintilian's enumeration of barbarisms and solecisms, including misspellings and awkward sentence constructions. In the history of the English language, error became especially important during the period of standardization and the evolution of print during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Histories of rhetoric and composition acknowledge that American cultural insecurity and linguistic xenophobia played a role in creating the contemporary notion of error that culminated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century literacy crises engineered by Harvard Uni-

versity. Researchers in rhetoric and composition have challenged and redefined error at multiple points: sociolinguists point out the socially-constructed nature of error in the field's major journals in the 1950s and 1960s. Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations* thoroughly shows that errors are not random, but are instead indicative of a writer's attempts to negotiate conflicting conventions. Bruce Horner and Min-Zhan Lu further Shaughnessy's project by proposing a negotiation model for addressing errors, as opposed to simple correction. Scholarship on error in composition and second-language writing has generally sought to de-stigmatize and pluralize error.

Figures of Speech and Thought — These are rhetorical devices that were defined by classical rhetoricians as the use of language for effect. Figures are different from tropes because they do not necessarily entail metaphorical language. Figures of speech refer to uses of language that alter the expression of an idea, but are not part of structuring of an argument. In *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, paradox and oxymoron are considered figures of expression. By contrast, personification and division are considered figures of thought. Although important historically, many contemporary rhetoricians question what seems to be an ever-shifting and sometimes arbitrary system of classification. For example, paradox is technically considered a figure of expression; yet, it is not difficult to appreciate it as impacting the content as well as the form of an argument.

Imitation — In classical rhetoric, imitation was the process by which rhetors acquired their own distinctive style. They copied model passages verbatim while also translating works between Latin and Greek. Certain imitation exercises called on students to imitate the styles of famous characters or authors while supplying their own content. During the European Renaissance, students followed a similar curriculum that involved copying and translating between Greek, Latin, and English. Edward P. J. Corbett was at the forefront of a movement to revive classical imitation during the 1960s and 1970s. Corbett laid out a complete curriculum involving imitation in his textbook, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. Dialogic and postmodern interpretations of the classical canon stress imitation as an innate discursive act that all language users engage in, regardless of whether they do so as part of a formal curriculum. Writers and speakers always emulate, imitate,

and appropriate one another's speech and writing styles. Postcolonial approaches to imitation use the term "mimicry" to describe a subversive form of imitation utilized to contest power dynamics. Recent research in language difference proposed that the apparent adherence to conventions may not passively imitative but, in fact, signifies agency and decision-making that is used to reproduce dominant styles with latent or subtle contextual differences.

Levels of Style — Cicero originally created three general tiers of style: the plain, the middle, and the grand. Each level of style corresponded to a different rhetorical purpose and form of rhetoric. The plain style was appropriate for forensic rhetoric, the middle for deliberative, and the grand for epideictic. Quintilian and Augustine forwarded the three-tiered style, and Augustine adapted it for the purposes of sermonizing. Later, Hermogenes expanded the levels of style to allow rhetors more flexibility for adjusting their use of language to a wider range of rhetorical situations. Hermogenes's seven types of style became popular during the European Renaissance, given the proliferation of genres that exceeded the explanatory power of the original three tiers. Today, rhetoric and composition researchers gravitate further away from tiers and toward genre as a more useful framework for understanding the relationship between language choices and recurring rhetorical situations, such as campaign speeches, eulogies, obituaries, lectures, and op-ed pieces.

Metaphor — Aristotle originally defined metaphor as an apt transference of words from one class to another in order to render ideas more clear or vivid. Aristotle's prescriptions for metaphor stressed clarity, candor, and refrain from far-fetched comparisons. Metaphor is a broad term that can include subtypes such as similes, tropes, and figures of thought and expression. Language that is metaphorical is merely non-literal. Although many theorists discuss metaphor as a tool of ornamentation, a constructivist approach to language holds that metaphors reflect and shape users' perceptions of reality. Research in sociolinguistics and stylistics examined the ways in which widely used metaphors reveal dominant ideologies. For instance, the frequent appearance of war-like metaphors to describe sports highlights American and Western ideological associations between competition and violence.

Meter – Often used as a tool for analyzing verse, meter is a unit of measurement used to describe rhythm via a speaker or writer's use of stressed and unstressed syllables. Four main types of meter exist: anapest (two stressed, one unstressed), dactylic (one unstressed, two stressed), iambic (one unstressed, one stressed), and trochaic (one stressed, one unstressed). Meter can be measured in any form of oral or written discourse, including prose. George Saintsbury articulated a complex theory of prose meter in his 1910 book, *A History of English Prose Rhythm*, offering a variety of meters unique to prose that many theorists dismiss as somewhat convoluted and overly technical. In *A Matter of Style*, Matthew Clark doubts that a complete theory of prose rhythm is possible, and advises writers to attend to syllable variation intuitively rather than systematically.

Periodic Sentence — See Cumulative Sentence.

Progymnasmata — Classical rhetoricians in Greece and Rome based a large portion of their training on a set of fourteen preliminary exercises that bridge rhetorical and grammatical instruction and are organized by level of difficulty. Students completed the exercises in conjunction with instruction in analysis and imitation of model speeches and works of literature. The main goal was to instill in students the ability to amplify discourse to practice writing shorter works that corresponded to the parts of orations: introduction, narration, refutation, and conclusion. The exercises are described in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and *The Orator's Education*. Four extant handbooks are translated by George Kennedy in *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*.

Prescriptive Grammar — See Descriptive Grammar.

Register — Traditionally, this term is used by different sociolinguists to account for language use in different discursive situations. M. A. K. Halliday and R. Hasan's *Cohesion in English* (1976) describes register as language features used for specific purposes and tasks in recurring situations. Formal registers in public and professional settings tend to rely on standard features of a language, while casual registers are characterized by the use of slang and vernacular, and private or intimate registers may be more affected by intonation and nonverbal cues. Increasingly, research in sociolinguistics has used the term register and style interchangeably.

Rhetorical Grammar — This idea was introduced into contemporary rhetoric and composition pedagogy by Martha Kolln, who co-authored a textbook with the same name. More recently, Laura Miccicche revived rhetorical grammar as a tool to synthesize micro- and macro-level discourse, showing how language choices such as diction and syntax contribute to larger rhetorical elements. The last several decades are characterized by tension between pedagogies that privilege either form or content. Rhetorical grammar aims to dissolve the tension and articulate the relationship between style, grammar, and rhetoric.

Rhythm — See Meter.