

Rhetorical Devices

They're everywhere!

Polysyndeton

- ▶ **Pronunciation:** pol-ee-sin-di-ton
- ▶ **Definition:** The repetition of conjunctions in a series of coordinate words, phrases, or clauses.
- ▶ **Etymology:** From the Greek, "bound together".

Polysyndeton

▶ Three Examples:

- ▶ 1. He pulled the blue plastic tarp off of him and folded it and carried it out to the grocery cart and packed it and came back with their plates and some cornmeal cakes in a plastic bag and a plastic bottle of syrup." Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*. Knopf, 2006)
- ▶ 2. "Let the whitefolks have their money and power and segregation and sarcasm and big houses and schools and lawns like carpets, and books, and mostly--mostly--let them have their whiteness." (Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, 1969)
- ▶ 3. They read and studied and wrote and drilled. I laughed and played and talked and flunked.



Personification

- ▶ **Pronunciation:** per-son-uh-fi-key-shuhn
- ▶ **Definition:** Metaphorically represents an animal or inanimate object as having human attributes; such as its form, character, feelings, behavior, and so on. Ideas and abstractions can also be personified.
- ▶ **Etymology:** 1755, noun of action from personify. Sense of "embodiment of a quality in a person"

Personification

- ▶ **Three Examples:**
- ▶ 1. "Oreo: Milk's favorite cookie."
- ▶ 2. "Fear knocked on the door. Faith answered. There was no one there." (Christopher Moltisanti, The Sopranos)
- ▶ 3. The sun stretched its golden arms across the plains.



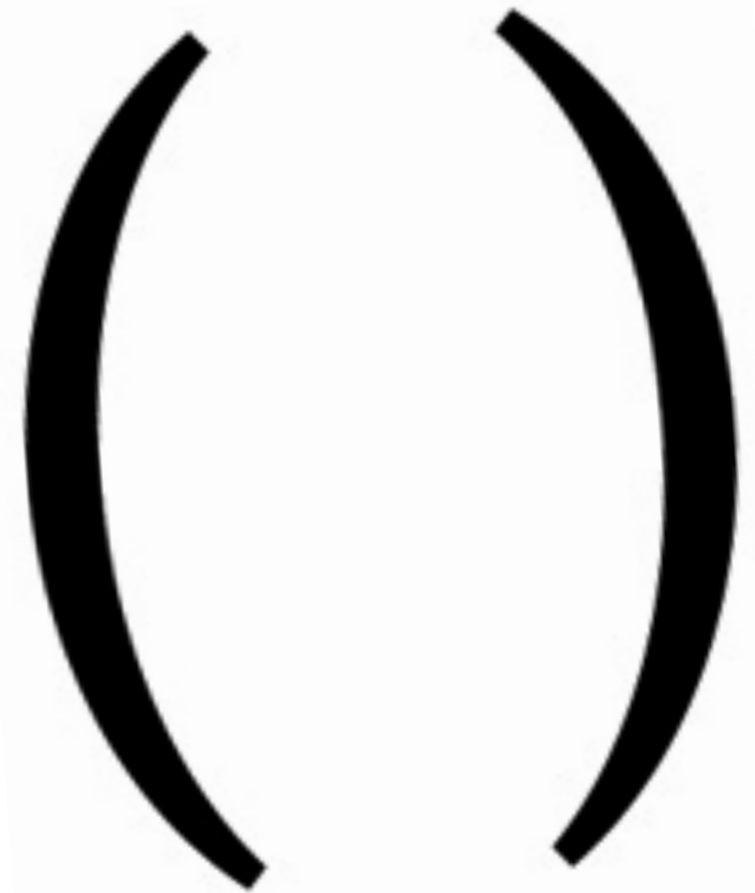
Parenthesis

- ▶ **Pronunciation:** puh-ren-thuh-sis
- ▶ **Definition:** Consists of a word, phrase, or whole sentence inserted as an aside in the middle of another sentence.
- ▶ **Etymology:** From the Latin, "to insert beside"

Parenthesis

▶ Three Examples:

- ▶ 1. "Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please. (Facts are stubborn, but statistics are more pliable.)"(Mark Twain)
- ▶ 2. Every time I try to think of a good rhetorical example, I rack my brains but--you guessed--nothing happens.
- ▶ 3. My umbrella (which is somewhat broken) can still shield the two of us from the rain.



Periphrasis

- ▶ **Pronunciation:** puh-rif-ruh-sis
- ▶ **Definition:** The substitution of many or several words where one would suffice; usually to avoid using that particular word.
- ▶ **Etymology:** From the Greek, "talking around"

Periphrasis

- ▶ **Three Examples:**
- ▶ The Big Man upstairs hears your prayers.
- ▶ 'Mustache' into 'under-nose hair crops.'
- ▶ 'Beaver' into 'the furry, paddle-tailed mammal.'



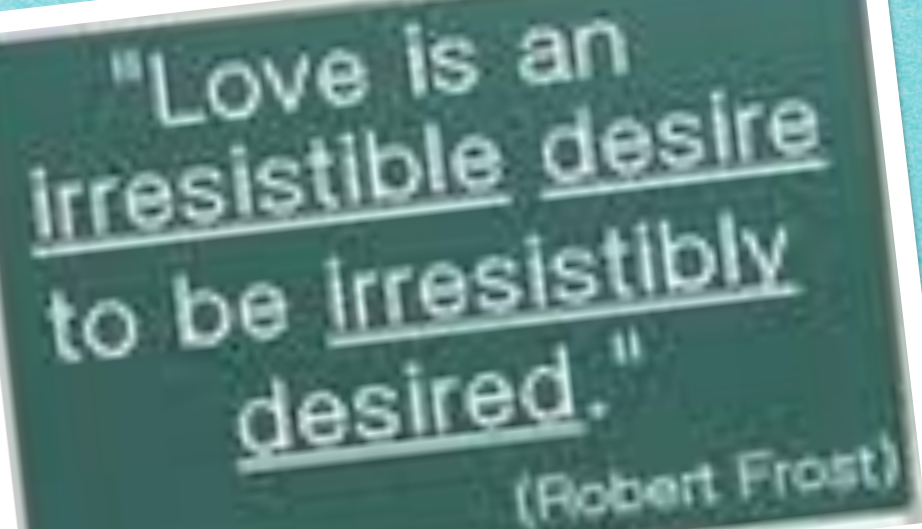
Polyptoton

- ▶ **Pronunciation:** po-LIP-ti-tun
- ▶ **Definition:** A rhetorical term for repetition of words derived from the same root but with different endings.
- ▶ **Etymology:** From the Greek, "use of the same word in different cases"

Polyptoton

▶ Three Examples:

- ▶ "To be ignorant of one's ignorance is the malady of the ignorant."
- ▶ "The things you own end up owning you."
- ▶ "You can't keep blaming yourself. Blame yourself once, then move on." (Homer Simpson)



"Love is an
irresistible desire
to be irresistibly
desired."
(Robert Frost)