Structure and Figurative Language

- Prose structure
- Poetic structure
- Analyzing structure
- Figurative language

Prose Structure

What kinds of structure do we find in prose?

Prose Structure

- Narratives  →  chronological
- Letters  →  logical (cause and effect, comparison/contrast, question and answer, illustration, evidence, etc.)
- See Klein 163-164 and Gorman 84-89 for examples.
Poetic Structure

What kinds of structure do we find in poetry?

Poetic Structure

• **Parallelism** - “rhyming ideas” in consecutive lines (most important feature).
  – Synonymous parallelism - say the same thing in different words.
  – Antithetical parallelism - say the opposite thing or a contrasting thing.
  – Synthetic parallelism - develop the thought further. (See handout 5.2.)

Poetic Structure

• Parallelism
• **Sense units** - larger units; “stanzas”
Poetic Structure

• Parallelism
• Sense units
• **Chiasm** - “X” structure in which words or incidents are presented in one order and then inverted.

Poetic Structure

• Parallelism
• Sense units
• Chiasm
• **Inclusio** - frame for story or poem that repeats the same line or idea at beginning and end.

Poetic Structure

• Parallelism
• Sense units
• Chiasm
• Inclusio
• **Ellipsis** - a word or phrase is left out in the parallel line.
Poetic Structure

• Parallelism
• Sense units
• Chiasm
• Inclusio
• Ellipsis
• **Merism** - mentioning the extremes in order to show a totality.

Analyzing Prose Structure

• Work from larger to smaller, and then back.
• Identify the natural major divisions.
• Identify the paragraphs.
• Analyze the sentences.
  – Main clause
  – Subordinate clause(s) - check connecting words
• Make a detailed outline of the passage.

Analyzing Poetic Structure

• Identify the natural divisions (oracle, psalm).
• Identify the line groupings.
  – One line = stich
  – Two lines = couplet or distich
  – Three lines = triplet or tristich
Analyzing Poetic Structure

- Identify the natural divisions (oracle, psalm).
- Identify the line groupings.
- Analyze the subparts of each line.
  - Mark them with lowercase letters (a, b, etc.)
  - See Klein 227.

Analyzing Poetic Structure

- Identify the natural divisions (oracle, psalm).
- Identify the line groupings.
- Analyze the subparts of each line.
- Describe the parallelism.
- Describe the form and content of sense units.
- Be alert to chiasm, inclusio, ellipsis, etc.
- Make a detailed outline of the content.

Analyzing Structure

- Sentence flow diagrams (Gordon Fee).
- Put subject – verb – object in columns.
- Subordinate by indentation.
- Coordinate by lining up.
- Isolate structural signals (connecting words).
- Color-code recurring words or motifs.
In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

II. In Romans 6-7, Paul answers hypothetical objections to his position in a diatribe.
A. First objection: "What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?" (6:1)
   1. Answer: "By no means!" (6:2)
   2. Explanation: We have died to sin (6:2).
   3. Illustration: We were buried and raised with Christ through baptism (6:3-10).
   4. Exhortation: Don't let sin reign; live a new life of righteousness (6:11-13).
   5. Summary: "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." (6:14)
B. Second objection: "What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace?" (6:15)

Analyze the structure...

What elements of poetic structure can you find in Isaiah 1?
Analyze the structure...

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth. Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.  

1 Tim. 3:14-16 (NRSV)

Form, Structure, and Movement

Analyze the genre/form, structure, and movement in the following passages:

1 Corinthians 15:35-58
Isaiah 1:21-31

Figurative Language

- **Literal** = standard, ordinary use of language.
- **Figurative** = departure from the standard, ordinary use of language.
- Does figurative mean not true?
- Why do people use figurative language?
Interpreting Figurative Language

What are the hazards of interpreting figurative language?

“Metaphorical”? I’ll show you metaphorical!”

Interpreting Figurative Language

• Assume language is literal unless something in the expression or its context suggests otherwise.
• Identify the figurative expression.
• Interpret the figurative expression.
• Interpret it in terms of its context.
• Don’t over-interpret it.

Types of Figurative Language

See handout 5.2.
Find the figurative language...

What examples of figurative language can you find in Isaiah 1?

• Similes
• Metaphors
• Anthropomorphism
• Apostrophe
• Personification
• Hyperbole