

Hebrew Poetry

Poetic Devices

Imagery: Word pictures

Jer. 22:19 - He will have the burial of a donkey-- dragged away and thrown outside the gates of Jerusalem."

Simile: Comparison

Hos. 13:8 - Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. Like a lion I will devour them;

Metaphor: Comparison without 'like' or 'as'

Psa. 18:2 - The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Personification: Inanimate object given human characteristics

Psa. 98:8 - Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;

Hos. 13:14 - Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction?

Hyperbole: Exaggeration

2 Sam. 1:23 - "Saul and Jonathan-- in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

Acrostic: Each verse begins with the next letter of the Heb. Alphabet

Hebrew Parallelism

Not Rhythmic Meter, Not Rhyming sounds
But rhyming meaning- Parallelism

Second line somehow reinforces the meaning of the first
Not 2 distinct thoughts

Prov. 20:1

	Wine is	a mocker
	a	b
and	beer a	brawler
	a'	b'

Amos 8:10

I will turn	your religious feasts	into mourning	A
a	b	c	
(I will turn)	and all your singing	into weeping.	A'
elliptical	b'	c'	
I will make	all of you	wear sackcloth	B
d	e	f	
	and shave your heads.		C
	g		
I will make	that time	like mourning ...	B'
d	e'	f'	
	and the end of it like a bitter day.		C'
	g'		

Types of Correspondence

Morphological- grammatical forms- e.g. same or contrasting verb types

Syntactical- Sentence structure, word order

Lexical (most common) synonyms or antonyms

Common Word pairs:

Day	Night
Heaven	Earth
Good	Evil
Righteous	Wicked
Wise	Fool
etc.	

Some pairs may say the same thing: e.g. pain and suffering

Some pairs, by saying two opposite poles, include everything in between

e.g. "from the East and from the West" = 'from everywhere'

Types of Parallelism

Synonymous- 2nd line restates same thought

Isaiah 44:22

I have swept away	your offenses	like a cloud,
a	b	c
	your sins	like the morning mist.
	b'	c'

Psalms 100:4

Enter	his gates	with thanksgiving
a	b	c
and	his courts	with praise
	b'	c'

Emblematic (Comparison) –special type of synonymous

Psalms 103:13

As	a father	has compassion	on his children,
	a	b	c
so	the LORD	has compassion	on those who fear him;
	a'	b	c'

Antithetical- 2nd line restates the opposite thought

Prov. 10:1

	A wise son brings	joy	to his father,
	a	b	c
but	a foolish son	grief	to his mother.
	-a	-b	c

Prov. 14:34

Righteousness	exalts	a nation,
a	b	c
but sin	is a disgrace	to any people.
-a	-b	c

Synthetic- 2nd line advances the thought (catch all)

Obadiah 21

Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion
to govern the mountains of Esau.
And the kingdom will be the LORD's.

Amos 1:7

I will send fire upon the walls of Gaza
a b c
that will consume her fortresses.
d e

Joel 1:4

What the locust swarm has left A
the great locusts have eaten; B
what the great locusts have left A"
the young locusts have eaten; B"
what the young locusts have left A"
other locusts have eaten. B"

