

Poetic Diction

Concepts

Alliterative rank The relative frequency with which a given word partakes of alliteration either within a given text or within the poetic corpus as a whole, coupled with its distribution across the three possible alliterative positions as well as the fourth, non-alliterative lift. The concept is discussed in detail in Cronan, “Alliterative Rank in Old English Poetry” and explained in the video on poetic diction.

Hapax legomenon A word attested only once in a given corpus (for our purposes, across all surviving Old English texts)

Metonymy Using the word for a closely related concept to refer to the actual referent, e.g. *ecg* “edge” to mean “sword” or *æsc* “ash-tree” to mean spear or ship