

Reflecting on the writer's craft

Instructions: As you explore the various techniques and strategies used by Tim Flannery, use the table below to summarise and critically reflect on your analysis. Examples to help you identify evaluative language, literary language, as well as metaphor, personification and analogy can be found after the table. Examples to help you explore the use of genre and structure can be found on a separate handout (*Here on Earth: Creating an Extended Argument*; see Activity Six).

Aspects of writer's craft: persuasive techniques	Summary of key findings from analysis	Evaluation of the role of the technique in creating an argument. Consider the role in: developing the logic of the argument and/or establishing the voice of the writer and his credibility and/or evoking an emotional response from the reader.
Genre and structure		
Evaluative language		

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Metaphor, personification and analogy		
Literary language		

Examples

(a) Evaluative language

For *Here on Earth*, fruitful analysis and discussion might occur around the strategic use of:

- Evaluative language to:
 - evoke emotional reactions, e.g. *I was **surprised** to discover* (p. 3–4); ***terrifying** Medea of Greek mythology* (p. 23);
 - judge people and their behaviour, e.g. *what has happened...when we **feeble** cogs in the mechanism of complex societies meet with superbly **competent** hunter-gatherers?* (p. 126);
 - and appreciate artefacts, phenomenon, ideas, facts and research and performances, e.g. *an **astonishing** example* (p. 67); *another **striking** aspect of the Roman empire* (p. 143).
- Source and give credibility to ideas, e.g. *The founder of sociobiology, Oxford University's Bill Hamilton* (p. 59)
- Grading of evaluations (i.e. turning the volume up and down), e.g. *The founder of sociobiology, Oxford University's Bill Hamilton, was **one of the greatest biologists who ever lived***. (p. 59); *'**superbly** competent hunter-gatherers'* (p. 126); *the **most conclusive** proof possible* (p. 154)
- High, medium and low modality (degree of probability, usuality, obligation), e.g. *'...such a treaty **must** take a holistic approach...**Perhaps** it will be administered through a future Gaian Security Council...but the children of a globalised world...**might** give it birth...'* (p. 255); *I **sometimes** wonder...* (p. 75)
- Concession (through conjunctions such as *but, however, although*) to raise an idea/point of view etc. in order to provide a contrast, challenge, dismiss or ridicule, e.g. after describing the positive qualities of the 1950s, Flannery states: *For all its gloss and glory, **however**, this was a bleak era – one in which the bomb had decided who was fittest and provided the most conclusive proof possible of the power of reductionist science.* (p. 154)

(b) Metaphor, personification and analogy

Three more significant resources that Flannery uses are:

- *Metaphor*, e.g. **The buds that became their great cultural flowerings were prone to wither**, and many of these cities were relatively short-lived. (p. 140); a virtual pollution **highway** (p. 184)
- *Personification*, e.g. the two hypotheses around which the book are centred, Earth as Medea the murdering mother (p. 22 onwards) or Earth as Gaia, the nurturing mother (p. 32 onwards)
- *Analogy*, e.g. the parallel Flannery draws between: the superorganism of colonies and human societies (Chapter 9, p. 111); the metamorphosis of a caterpillar and human transformation (p. 274).

(c) Literary language

In addition to the metaphors etc. listed above, in *Here on Earth* readers will find the use of:

- *biblical/religious language*, e.g. *Should we cross the valley of death* (p. 275); if we do not strive to love one another, and to love our planet as we love ourselves (p. 280); *heavens' performance strikes me as a beautiful and illuminating way to describe Darwin's discovery* (p. 14)
- *literary and historical sources*, e.g. *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes (p. 213); Samuel Pepys' diaries (p. 216)
- *storytelling techniques*, e.g. the almost quest-like structure of the book, as humanity enters the in-most cave in Chapter 13, followed by the (possibility of) escape in Chapter 14 onwards.
- *evocative word 'paintings'*, e.g. I can picture Charles, surrounded by his children, playing the bassoon or piano to the worms... (p. 7); After all, it's taken all of time...to make the stardust that forms all life... (p. 280).