Cosmology: The world view of a given culture. Part religion, part science, part mythology, this is the sum beliefs of a people regarding the nature and phenomena of the universe. For example, in the Finno-Ugric context, the state of the primordial universe or the methods through which creations happens make up the bulk of cosmology. In the context of a non-literate, oral culture, cosmology is propagated through performance of usually epic verse, which stores knowledge in the way that literate societies make use of libraries.

Performance: The collective aspects of oral poetry that rely on an immediate audience and allow for variations. This critical aspect of oral poetry tends to be absent from poetry meant to be read, especially silently, from a page. The performance aspect of Kalevala traditions would include the act of rune-singing, where the way the poetry is presented to an immediately present audience is of equal importance to what poetry is presented.

Repetition: Patterns in poetic texts that allow for familiarity for audience and speaker. Repetition need not simply be a verbatim restatement of a phrase or concept, but usually is more complex. This includes features such as "parallelism", whereby a poet repeats a concept in new terms. An example of this would be the introductory passages to Kalevala, wherein the "singer" says that "words are melting in my mouth, utterances dropping out, coming to my tongue, being scattered about on my teeth". Repetition also describes simpler poetic elements such as rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration.

Alliteration: Repetitions in initial consonant sounds. This is a fundamental element of Finno-Ugric oral poetics, and the basis of "poetic creativity". An example of this is the translated Kalevala line "Beloved brother, boon companion, boyhood comrade" where the "b" sound repeats and is the foundation on which the poetic line functions in performance. This is a tool for memory and for audience engagement, but also one of the major facets of "skill", whereby the best poets are capable of creating greater variances in parallel statements (i.e., a poet who can express the same idea with 4 different alliterative motifs is a more interesting poet than one who can only express an idea with 2 alliterative motifs.)