


Literature and Coping Skills
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Lecture – 14
Rhetoric and prosody – 2

Hello, everybody. I am Ajit K Mishra, your course instructor for Literature and Coping Skills. I am back again, with another lecture on rhetoric and prosody. Before I talk about today's lecture, let me give you a quick recap of what I did, in my last lecture. I talked about rhetorical prosody; I introduced those important ideas to you.


I talked about the power of link language by citing various examples. I also talked about figures of speech and their basic roles in creating conditions for us to visualize and get engaged in embodied simulations. And towards the end of my lecture, I talked about the rhetorical triangle, while focusing on the three elements of it, ethos, pathos, and logos.

I also told you how each of these elements are equally important to our understanding of the art of persuasion, and appealing. So, with that in mind, we can now move to today's proceedings, I am going to walk you through the world of figures of speech.

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**Rhetoric and
Prosody**

- Metaphor
- Personification
- Metonymy
- Synecdoche

Today, I am going to focus on metaphor, which happens to be one of the most important figures of speech. With the help of a few examples, I am going to do that for you. Then I am going to focus on another very important figure of speech that is personification. Then I am going to talk about metonymy, and then, synecdoche. And that is how I am going to walk you through today's ideas.

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Metaphor

- A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things.
- This is useful in literature for using specific images or concepts to state abstract truths.
- Laughter is the best medicine.
- She is just a late bloomer.
- Is there a black sheep in your family?
- His heart of stone surprised me.
- She has been living in a bubble.
- Time is money.

Cont.

So, when I do that, we come to the idea of metaphor. So, metaphor is in fact a figure of speech. That makes a comparison between two unlike things. If I say my friend is a tiger, I am offering the comparison between two absolutely unlike or dissimilar things, in which there is a human on one side, and there is a nonhuman or an animal on the other side. So, I am offering a comparison between a human and the animal that are very, very unlike, this similar to each other.

But when I offer this comparison, I am trying to draw some similarities between them. My friend may be as ferocious as the tiger or the lion. My friend may be as strong as the tiger and the lion. So, when I see that my friend is a tiger, or a lion, I am offering a comparison through a few similarities that I can establish so that is the reason why metaphor offers a comparison between two unlike things and metaphor is extremely useful in literature, for using specific images or

concepts to state abstract truths or abstract concepts. I have already talked about this particular aspect of metaphor, because it helps us understand abstract concepts.

At the same time, it also helps us create images, visual images, or visual imagery through words; therefore, we can call them a verbal imagery. So, they help us create verbal imagery which impacts our understanding to a great extent. So therefore, metaphors are extremely important. And that is probably one big reason why any discussion of figures of speech begins with metaphor, revolves around metaphor, and probably ends with the idea for metaphor.

So therefore, it is very important that we understand metaphor extremely well. I have used a few examples for you to understand what metaphor is all about. Laughter is the best medicine. So, laughter and medicine are being compared. They are dissimilar things, they are unlike things. But there are a few similarities. I

f you laugh a lot, that means it is working as a medicine for you, it is keeping you happy, cheerful, and it is protecting you from falling into the trap of sadness, another basic human emotion. So therefore, laughter is the best medicine. She is just a late bloomer. That means the person blooms a little late.

So, the person may be a little slow, maybe a slow learner, or maybe a slow achiever so that is how we are offering a comparison between the action of somebody and the blooming activity. Is there a black sheep in your family? We have come across this phrase black sheep, many times. Black sheep an unwanted person- is there a black sheep in your family? So, a black sheep is an unwanted person.

So, if there is an unwanted person in a family, the person is compared to a black sheep. And then his heart of stone surprised me. So, we are comparing somebody's heart with that of stone, if you are emotionally numb, you will not feel any emotion and you do not show any emotion for anybody, you may have a heart of stone.

So, which is as hard, numb, dead as stone, so therefore, I can very well compare somebody's heart, that is absolutely devoid of emotions or emotionless as a piece of stone. And then she has been living in a bubble. So, she has been living in a bubble that means there is comparison

between life and bubble. So, when you begin to live in a bubble, you are extremely, indifferent to the challenges outside.

And you are not at all bothered about anything outside. So, when the bubble bursts, you will suddenly come to face the reality, which may be extremely challenging, harsh, or even painful. So, as long as you live in a bubble, you are very, very safe, you feel protected. So, if you are living in a bubble, that means it is, it is a makeshift, it is, it is an elusive world in which you are living. So, there is a comparison between your life and illusion.

Time is money, how often we have come across this particular expression, time is money, we have grown up with this expression, in fact, and will continue to experience this expression as long as we exist. So, time is money, a time is compared with money, money is important time is also equally important. If we waste time, it will be as bad as wasting money.

So, therefore time is money. It is so precious, that you learn how to invest it, how to spend it or make use of it wisely. So, at the end of our discussion of metaphors, what exactly do we derive? The message that we can derive is that there are so many more abstract concepts are abstract ideas, for example, time.

So, there are so many complex ideas that we may not be able to talk about properly or adequately using plain, everyday language. Therefore, when it comes to using figurative language, of figures of speech, we find it easier to establish that connection. And we also find it easier to talk about what we feel about that particular concept, clearly so, that is the power of metaphor.

And that is the reason why metaphorical intelligence is one of the most sought after intelligences. So IQ, EQ, and then PQ, SQ, so many things. The world is talking about so many types of intelligence. To add to that list, metaphorical intelligence is one of the most important forms of intelligence today. So, therefore, metaphor is extremely important.

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Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Langston Hughes, "Dreams"

So, let us take a quick look at Langston Hughes. So, when I talk about Langston Hughes, this extract is taken from his poem dreams, "Hold fast to dreams. For if dreams die, life is a broken winged bird, that cannot fly. Hold fast to dreams, for when dreams go, life is a barren field filled frozen with snow." So, on two occasions here, a comparison has been offered and that comparison is very, very explicit you can see that.

In the first instance, there is a comparison between life and our bird. Life flies so, also bird, how can life fly? If you can hold fast to your dreams, life can fly smoothly. But, if you do not hold fast to your dreams, if you let your dreams die, then life cannot fly, then life will be a broken winged bird that means it has lost its wings its wings are broken now. If a bird's wings are broken, the bird cannot fly so also life.

So, in this case, we have double comparison first life has been compared with a bird and then dreams are compared with wings. So, if you have dreams, you have wings, if you do not have dreams, you do not have wings, all those wings are broken. So, therefore, a bird cannot fly with a broken pair of wings. Similarly, you cannot fly or you cannot have a good life, successful life, when your dreams are broken.



Then we move to the next segment, hold fast to dreams, for when dreams go life is a barren field frozen with snow. Now, life is compared again with a different thing. This time it is a barren field, a field that is incapable of producing anything or leading to any produce. So, if you do not have dreams in your life, it will become frozen it will become barren. So, it will be useless. It cannot lead to any meaningful activities and it will not taste success.

So, therefore it is important that we hold fast to our dreams. So, if I have to convert this message into literal language, plain simple language. All I can do is to say always hold fast to your dreams, without dreams, your life will be unsuccessful, without dreams your life will be like a barren field, it will be frozen it will be very, very unsuccessful.

That is how I can talk about the idea in a literal manner, using plain everyday language. Now you can see the difference. So, how many images are you able to see? The moment you will come across these statements, these lines. So, how many images can you see? That is amazing. So, the moment we see these images are right in front of us, the mirror neurons get fired, and we engage and that is embodied simulation.

So, it makes us engrossed, engaged with it. Through an embodied simulation, I can quickly see a bird that has a broken wing; I can quickly visualize a barren field that is frozen with snow. I can quickly visualize that so that is the power of metaphor. That is the power of figures of speech.

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Personification

- Personification is a figure of speech in which an idea or thing is given human attributes and/or feelings or is spoken of as if it were human.
- My alarm yelled at me this morning.
- I like onions, but they don't like me.
- The sign on the door insulted my intelligence.
- My phone is not cooperating with me today.
- That bus is driving too fast.
- My computer works very hard.

Cont.

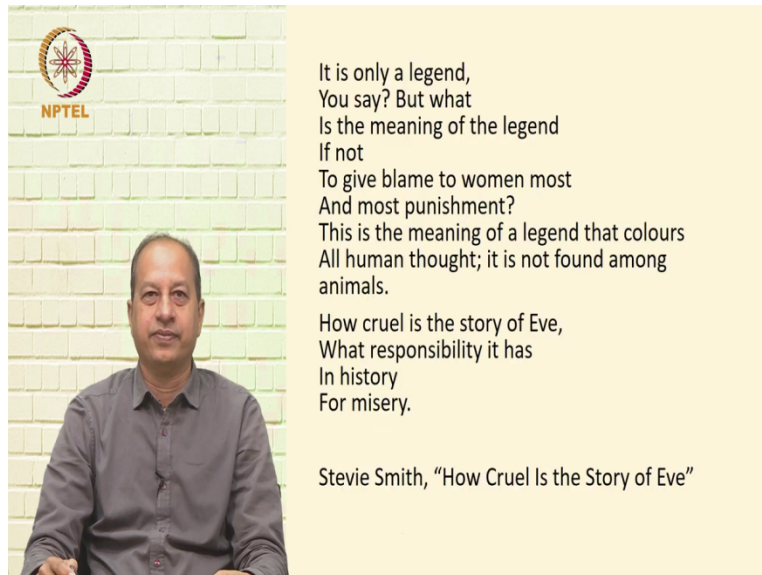
Let us take a quick look at personification. Personification, is a figure of speech, in which an idea or thing is given human attributes and feelings, or is spoken of as if it were human. I have already hinted at personification. There are a few examples, my alarm yelled at me this morning who can yell, a human can yell, a machine cannot yell. But when I say my alarm yelled at me, I am treating my alarm as a human being.

A human being that can guide me, that can take me to task when I am not serious about myself. Therefore, it yelled at me this morning. So, yelling is the result of the behavior which results from a certain type of emotional approach. Emotional experience the next I like onions, but they do not like me. So, I am making audience humans and they can like me, or dislike me. Then the sign on the door insulted my intelligence.

So, the sign is a non-human thing. It insulted me, who can insult? A human can insult my phone is not cooperating with me today. So, again the idea for human as if your phone is a human, it is not cooperating with you today. Otherwise, it generally cooperates with you. So, it is very good friend companion. So, your smartphone is your companion, good friend. The day it does not cooperate with you, you say it is not cooperating with me today. That bus is driving too fast.

So, the bus as a human is driving too fast. My computer works very hard as if it is a human being that can labor. So, my computer works very fast, hard or slow so, that is how we personify in order to create an effect in order to create a verbal image.

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It is only a legend,
You say? But what
Is the meaning of the legend
If not
To give blame to women most
And most punishment?
This is the meaning of a legend that colours
All human thought; it is not found among
animals.
How cruel is the story of Eve,
What responsibility it has
In history
For misery.

Stevie Smith, "How Cruel Is the Story of Eve"

This is an example taken from Stevie Smith "How cruel is the story of Eve?" See how we get to see personification here. "It is only a legend, you say? But what is the meaning of the legend If not, to give blame to women most and most punishment. This is the meaning of a legend that colors all human thought. It is not found among animals. How cruel is the story of Eve? What responsibility it has in history for misery."

So, the story of Eve the legend is extremely cruel. How can a story be cruel? The story is not a human. But the idea is the implication is the story is extremely cruel. So, the story has been personified, as if it has been extremely cruel to, Eve. So, how cruel is the story of if that is the power of personification?

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Metonymy

- Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one object or idea takes the place of another with which it has a close association.
- This is a method for writers to vary their expression and produce an effect for the reader
- **Hollywood** (represents associations with the movie industry)
- **Turf** (represents associations with area of residence or expertise)
- **Press** (represents associations with news organizations)
- **Coast** (represents associations with seaside, ocean area)



Cont.

We come to the idea of metonymy. Metonymy is again a figure of speech in which one object or idea takes a place of another with which it has a close association that is autonomy. So, if I say, scepter and crown. So, I am talking about the idea of kingship, because we can always visualize a king holding us captive in his hand and wearing the crown. So, the idea of kingship is derived from this expression, scepter and crown.

So, metonymy is a method for writers to vary their expression and produce an effect for the readers like any other figurative language, device or figure of speech. So, Hollywood or Bollywood, the moment we say that we actually are thinking about the movie industry. So, in this case, it is metonymy.

Turf the ground, your expertise, sometimes you can also talk about, you cannot beat me in my turf. So, you cannot beat me my expertise. Then press so, associations with news organizations, the press and coast, association with seaside ocean area and others. So, metonymy, in fact, associates one thing with the other. So, it is an association through an idea.

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And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's
pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy
nothing
A local habitation and a name.

A Midsummer Night's Dream (William
Shakespeare)

Let us take a quick look at a Metonymy, taken from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare. So, “And as imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen, turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing, a local habitation and a name.” So, what does the poet's pen turn into? The poet's pen turns things unknown, into shapes and even gives to airy nothing, a local habitation and as a power of the poet's imagination.

So, poet's pen, in fact, associates us with the idea of imagination. So, with the help of the imagination, a poet can easily turn unknown things into shapes and can give at things that do not even exist can turn those non-existing things into a local habitation and a name. That is the power of imagination. So, it is an example of metonymy.

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Synecdoche

- Synecdoche is a **figure of speech** in which a part of something is used to signify the whole, or vice-versa
- This allows for variation of expression and produces an effect for the reader
- **The White House** (signifies the U.S. president or executive branch)
- **The Pentagon** (signifies U.S. military leaders)
- **Boots on the ground** (signifies soldiers)
- **Behind bars** (signifies being in jail)



Cont.

We come to the idea of Synecdoche. Synecdoche is again a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to signify the whole or even vice-versa times. So, instead of saying, there are fifty students in the class, I can say, there are fifty heads in the class, so fifty heads, fifty persons, fifty students. So, this also allows for variation of expression and produces an effect for the reader, again the act of visualization, and embodied simulation.

So, I can say the White House is going to adopt a stringent approach. If I say the White House, the White House is not actually going to adopt that. The executives, the U.S. president, they are going to adopt that approach. So, when you say about White House, I actually mean the president. So, it is a part of the presidency thing in the United States. The Pentagon, I am talking about the US military leaders boots on the ground.

I am talking about soldiers who always have their boots on the ground. And the last one behind bars is a very popularly used expression. 'Behind bars' that means a jail, I want to send you behind the bars; that means I am going to send you to the jail. So, it is a part of the jail behind bars the bars constitute just a part of the jail, but in this case, they signify the whole thing. That is the power of synecdoche.

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I heard a Fly buzz – when I died –
The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air –
Between the Heaves of Storm –
The Eyes around – had wrung them dry –
And Breaths were gathering firm
For that last Onset – when the King
Be witnessed – in the Room –

Emily Dickinson, “I heard a Fly buzz–when I died”



Cont.

Let us take a look at an example. I heard a fly buzz when I died by Emily Dickinson. I heard a fly buzz, when I died. The stillness in the room was like the stillness in the air. Between the heavens of storm, the eye around had run them dry. And breeds we are gathering firm for that last onset. When the king is witnessed in the room, I will quickly take you through this poem once again, I heard a fly buzz when I died.

The stillness in the room was like the stillness in the air, between the heavens of storm the eyes around had run them dry, and breaths were gathering firm for that last onset, when the king be witnessed in the room. So, there is an expression in this poem that has been used as synecdoche. The eyes around so when we are thinking about the eyes, that means there must be a few people around.

So, with the help of this synecdoche, the poet has created an effect. Because there is no mention of any person, any person except the person who is death so that is the power of synecdoche, it can create the visuals so promptly, so beautifully, that we experienced this embodied simulation.

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References

- <https://literarydevices.net/>

That is how we come to our discussion of this segment. We are still doing the rhetoric and prosody the topic. And we are still left with two more lectures on rhetoric prosody. So, I hope you have liked today's lecture. And you must have found it interesting to have a look at these figures of speech, the roles they play in persuasive writing or persuasive speech. So, thank you very much for joining me.