

Literature and Coping Skills
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Lecture – 15
Rhetoric and prosody – 3



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. We have been discussing rhetoric and prosody for quite some time. And by now, I think you have developed some understanding of these complex ideas, rhetoric and prosody. In my last lecture, I talked about a few very important figures of speech, which in fact, help us communicate or present our ideas of complex or abstract understandings or experiences.

In my last lecture, I talked about metaphor with a few examples of metaphor. And I used a verse extract to talk about the power of metaphor. If you remember I talked about Langston Hughes, hold your dreams fast. So, to show how metaphor actually functions, why it is such a powerful instrument, why it contributes so greatly to the creation of verbal imagery and the role it plays in embodied simulation.

I also talked about the importance of personification while talking about a few examples of related to that idea. I also used a verse extract to talk about personification. I talked about metonymy. And its role in embodied simulation by citing a few examples, and the verse extract. Similarly, I also talked about synecdoche by citing a few examples, and then using a verse extract to talk about the power of synecdoche.

So, I walked you through these important figures of speech in our last lecture, I am going to walk you through with some other important figures of speech today. And towards the end of today's lecture, I am going to introduce you to the idea of prosody. So, that we get prepared for the next part of our discussion, the next lecture. So, let us start with today's proceedings.

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Rhetoric and Prosody



- Hyperbole
- Paradox
- Alliteration
- Prosodic features

Today, I am going to talk about an equally important figure of speech. Hyperbole is an exaggeration. So, it is an overstatement when we want to add a greater effect to something, we try to exaggerate it. That exaggeration is, in fact, an emotional activity. So, we by exaggerating, something is in fact, I mean, are in fact, stretching our imaginative workings yet further. So, that is why hyperbole plays an important role. I am also going to talk about paradox, paradox and maximum are closely associated ideas.

But I am going to focus on paradox only. And then, I am going to talk about alliteration, the role of alliteration in the production of repetitive sounds, and I will also talk about how sounds in fact, help us imagine or visualize. If you remember in my last lecture, I talked about how those images and sounds are combined to produce embodied simulation through literary experience. So, I am going to talk about alliteration as well.

I am also going to talk about prosodic features, including stress, intonation and rhythm. And I will also introduce you to the idea of stress and its importance for our well being. So, let us take a look at each of these components.

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Hyperbole

- Hyperbole is a figure of speech and literary device that creates heightened effect through deliberate exaggeration
- In rhetoric and literature, hyperbole is often used for serious, comic, or ironic effect.
- I'm so hungry that I could eat a horse.
- He feels buried under a mountain of work.
- I'm dying of thirst.
- She loves him more than life itself.
- This suitcase weighs a ton.

Cont.

We will start with the idea of hyperbole. As I have already told you hyperbole is an exaggeration. It adds that overstatement to something uttered said, are written. So, hyperbole is again, a figure of speech, and a literary device. That creates a heightened effect through deliberate excess exaggeration. So, in this case the exaggeration is deliberate. So, that the effect the intensity is heightened and the effect is reached.

So, that is the reason why writers use hyperbole. In rhetoric and literature, hyperbole is often used for serious comic or ironic effect. So, if you want to create a serious effect, you can use an exaggeration. If you want to create a comic effect, you can also use an exaggeration. So, hyperbole helps you both ways, in the creation of an exaggerated effect. So, that is why it is it is quite flexible, it is quite important.

I am going to give you a few examples, so that you can understand on your own how hyperbole functions, and how it creates an effect. I am so hungry, that I could eat a horse. If you remember I talked about I wandered lonely. And then I wandered lonely as a cloud. So, you might have understood the difference between I wandered lonely, and I wandered lonely as a cloud. So, when I say I wandered lonely as a cloud that creates a better effect that has a chance to lead to embodied simulation because it creates imagery- a verbal imagery, imagery of a cloud.

And then you can quickly imagine how a cloud floats. And you can also imagine the person's movement when the person was wandering. So, wondering of the person has a replica in the wandering of the cloud. So, that is how it is, it becomes easier for us to understand through the impact of visualization. Similarly, when it comes, come to hyperbole, we experienced similar visualizations.

Look at this statement I am so hungry, that I could eat a horse. So, if you say I am very hungry, how do you qualify the expression vary? We cannot measure that it is impossible. So, when you say I am so hungry, that I could eat a horse. Now, you are giving a picture to somebody to make sense of it. Now, somebody can if not, in exact terms. Now, somebody can quantify your hunger through an image the image of the horse.

So, your hunger gets integrated into the image of the horse and it gets quantified. Similarly, similarly, we come to this expression. He feels buried under a mountain of work. For example, somebody is working in an office and somebody is bogged down by an overload of work. So, the person can say I feel buried under overload of work. So, it would be very difficult for the person to quantify that overload.



So, if you say a mountain of work, I suddenly elicit an image in your mind, I create a mental image, a mental picture. Now, you can imagine how much work the person has. But at the same time, I must also tell you that we are talking about hyperbole, we are talking about exaggeration. So, in this case, mountain is not the right kind of picture that will quantify your overload. It is a picture to quantify you overload but it is an exaggerated picture, an exaggerated image.

So, it is very important that you understand this is not an exact quantify. It is an indicator, but it is an exaggerated indicator. So, that is it I am dying of thirst is again a hyperbolic, I am dying of thirst. The person is not necessarily dying. But the person says that I am dying of thirst. And then she loves him more than life itself. So, people say people use such expressions. I love you more than I love my life. So, this is also an exaggeration.

And this suitcase weighs a ton. A suitcase cannot weigh your ton. It may if we fill it with pieces of iron or even. Iron ore it might, I do not exactly know. But the moment I say this suitcase weighs a ton that means it is very heavy, it is extremely heavy. She loves him more than life

itself that means she loves him extremely well, too much. I am dying of thirst. That means I am extremely thirsty. So, in order to talk about something that is in the extreme, and to present a picture of how extreme it is, writers or speakers use hyperbole to intensify that particular experience, and presentation.

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I'll love you, dear, I'll love you
Till China and Africa meet,
And the river jumps over the mountain
And the salmon sing in the street.

W.H. Auden, "As I walked Out one Evening"

So, that is the power of hyperbole. So, let us take a look at a verse extract from W.H. Auden, “as I walked out one evening”, I love you, dear. I love you, till China and Africa meet. And the river jumps over the mountain, and the Salmon sing in the street, the classic example of the use of hyperbolic the entire statement is so exaggerated, so hyperbolic in nature, that we are amazed at it. I love you, till China and Africa meet, when will that happen?

That will never happen, but this person will continue to love the other. And the river jumps over the mountain. When will that happen? That will ever happen. And the Salmon sings in the street, nothing of this will ever happen. But the love will continue to that moment, when this happens, this will never happen. So, there will be no end to the love of that person. So, how does the person express his or her love for the other, the love interest? So, these are some of the finest examples that suddenly create an image in your mind and prepare you for embodied simulation. So, that is the power of hyperbole.

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Paradox

- A paradox is a statement that appears at first to be contradictory, but upon reflection then makes sense.
- Paradox allows readers to understand concepts in a different and even non-traditional way.
- Less is more
- do the thing you think you cannot do
- the enemy of my enemy is my friend
- the beginning of the end
- if you don't risk anything, you risk everything

Cont.

We now come to the idea of paradox. Paradox is everywhere we live in terms of paradoxes. Our existence is a paradox itself because it begins with birth and with death, it begins with life and end with death. So, it is a paradoxical existence, we, we take care of both life and death simultaneously. We take care of both positive and negative emotions simultaneously; we also take care of our life instincts and death instincts simultaneously.

So, it is a paradox and that is the reason why we find paradoxes everywhere, because we live in certain times, in which there is a huge gap between what we desire and what we get. So, the desirability, and the reality are absolutely opposite to each other. So, they are paradoxical in nature. So, when we come to the idea of it, a paradox is, again, it is a figure of speech, of course, it is a statement that appears, at first to be contradictory, but upon reflection, makes sense.

So, that means paradoxes, also lead to some sense making process. Most people think they do not have any role to play. They do not contribute either to the literary experience or to the embodied simulation. But that is not the idea. That is not the fact they do contribute. Because it creates such an image, image of opposites. And that is exactly where we need to derive a very important message, because it is a combination of opposites, our life, and our existence.

So, it is not about taking care of just one side, it is also about taking care of the other as well, if you remember, I talked about negative emotions that prepare us, while positive emotions

energize us, negative emotions de-energize us. But at the same time, they also prepare us. So, that is why we need to take care of paradoxes. So, paradox allows readers to understand concepts in a different and even non-traditional way.

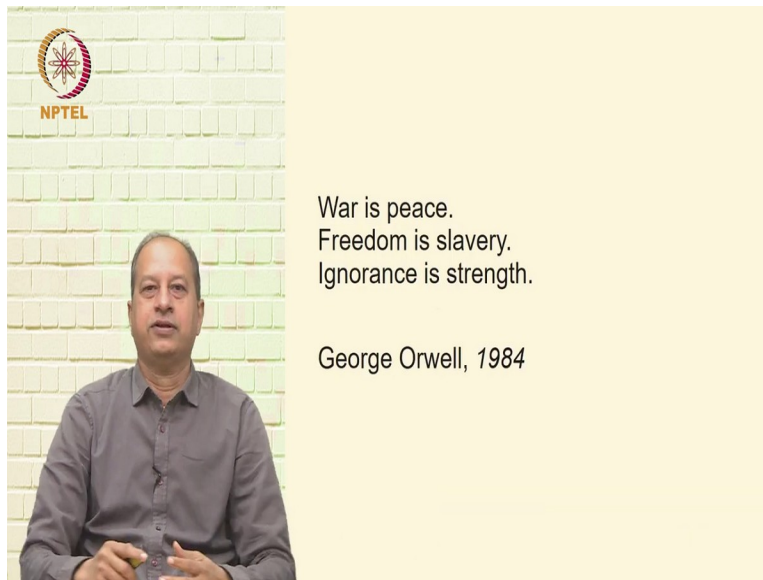
It is a non-traditional way, because paradoxes generally shock you as kind of shock therapy. So, it is important that you, you understand paradoxes in a non-traditional way. I will give you a few examples of paradox less is more, we generally come across this expression less is more. So, suddenly be taken aback, what is that how can less be more, but when you reflect on it, you can realize it has an important sense, less is more similarly, do the thing you think you cannot do.

So, motivational in nature, do the thing you think you cannot do? Motivation, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. The enemy of my enemy is my friend. That is paradoxical the beginning of the end. So, this is the beginning of the end. So, the end also has a beginning, it has a certain periodicity. So, we are pointing towards that. But the moment you look at it, how can the beginning often end be.

So, we can have a beginning and an end, they are separate entities. So, the beginning of the end- and then if you do not risk anything, you risk everything. So, when you look at these expressions, you will gradually realize that they are in fact, communicating important messages to you by engaging you in a state of or in an activity of challenge.

So, therefore, you feel like engaging. It is almost like you're solving a riddle, or taking a riddle taking a puzzle. Although, you know, it is going to be extremely difficult. You still come up and do that. So, that is the power paradox.



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This is an example taken from George Orwell, a very famous twentieth century English novelist and is very popular for his work 1984 which is treated as Dystopian work. So, war is peace? Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength two paradoxical in nature, all these expressions, how can war be peace?

When there is war there is violence, there is bloodshed? There is the loss of life? How can it be peace? Freedom is slavery? How can freedom mean slavery or vice versa? Ignorance is strength. How can ignorance be strength- when it is weakness. So, you can think about these paradoxes, and then try to make sense of them.

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Alliteration

- Alliteration is a literary device that reflects repetition in two or more nearby words of initial consonant sounds.
- rocky road
- big business
- jumping jacks
- tough talk
- money matters
- picture perfect

Cont.

That brings us to the idea of alliteration. And now we switch from visuals or verbal imagery to sounds. I have already told you all that for embedded simulation to take place is very, very important that there is a combination of the visual and the auditory elements. If that can happen, that that will work wonders. And that is one big reason why when we watch your film, that is a combination of visuals and audio, or sounds, we experience a tremendous amount of embodied simulation.

Because the sound and the visual come together to create an impact that we cannot escape. And that will definitely lead to the release of mirror neurons if the combination is proper. So, alliteration has to do with sounds. It has a counterpart which is called assonance. I have not included that here. Because I want all of you to prepare a list of all those figures of speech and then try to find out the importance of each one of them.

I want you to extend your understanding of figures of speech, so that you find yourself comfortable in the world of figurative language. So, alliteration is a literary device again, that reflects a repetition in two or more nearby words of initial consonant sounds. For example, if I say long, live, long live, so these are two words, the first sounds of each of this word is L or LA sound, long live. So, that means I am creating alliteration.



Long live if I say Twinkle, twinkle, little star. So, twinkle, twinkle, so the ta sound is repeated. That is an instance of alliteration. Rocky road the initial sounds are repeated ro ro. Therefore, it is alliteration. Big Business, jumping jacks, tough talk, money matters and picture perfect- so, all these are examples of alliteration because the initial sounds of each of these phrases are repeated.

So, they produce an alliterative effect, assonance is when there is a repetition of sounds, but not of consonant sounds, but of vowel sounds. That is the only difference between alliteration and assonance. So, it is all about the repetition of sounds. Now the question is, how does that help us? How does that affect our experience of feeling and our behavior, the repetition of sounds, when sounds are repeated, they lead to some kind of rhythm, musicality.

So, this repetition leads to some kind of proper music. And proper music is an instance is an example of form. If you remember, I talked about the longing, the human longing for form in one of my previous lectures, we all long for form. Therefore, alliteration is one such measure one such strategy that, in fact, feeds this longing, and pacifies this longing for form.

So, therefore, this musicality, and that is the reason why nursery rhymes are called so, nursery rhymes. They are called rhymes because they rhyme. And they make it comfortable for those young children to identify than that is the reason. And that is the effect of alliteration.

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And the **b**alls like pulses **b**eat;
For the sky and the **s**ea, and the **s**ea and
the **s**ky
Lay like a load on my weary eye

Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

There is an example of a verse extract taken from Coleridge; The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, some of you might have read this poem. “And the balls like pulses beat for the sky, and the sea and the sea and the sky, lay like a load on my weary eye.” So, I have used bolt marks to help you with the discovery of the alliterative sounds in the first two statements. And the balls like pulses beat for the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky.

So, ba sound is repeated in the first statement. Sa sound is repeated in the second statement. Now you can think of which sound is repeated in the third statement, I will leave you with that task. So, which sound is repeated in the third statement? So, you will be able to find it on your own.

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Prosodic Features

- Stress, Intonation, and Rhythm are prosodic features.
- **Stress:** Stress is the emphasis that falls on certain syllables and not others; the arrangement of stresses within a poem is the foundation of poetic rhythm.

- / - / - / - / - /

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,

- / - / - / - / - /

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

That brings us to the idea of prosodic features. Prosodic features I have already told you that we generally include stress, intonation, and rhythm under this category, these are the prosodic features. So, we all know how stress, intonation and rhythm are so important to the production of sound because in the absence of the right kind of stress intonation or rhythm, everything will go wrong. So, it is very important that we understand their importance, as well.

Stress is the emphasis that falls on certain syllables and not others. The arrangement of stresses within a poem is a foundation of poetic rhythm. So, if we have to ensure rhythm in poetry, we have to ensure that there is correct stress otherwise; there will be not any rhythm. So, rhythm will



miss. And in that condition, it will be very difficult for us to identify it, because it will not give us a sense of form, it will give us a sense of chaos.

Therefore, it is very, very important. I will give you a quick example of what stress is all about. But before that, if I use a word nation, so na is stressed, it has two syllables na and tion. So, nation, in this example, na is stressed and tion is not stressed, nation. Similarly, when we come across connected speech, we stress certain syllables and we do not stress the others. And this, this creates a regular pattern, which is popularly known as meter, or the metrical pattern.

And this metrical pattern in fact, attributes or significance to the verse lines. So, let us take a quick look at it, so long as men can breathe, or eyes can see. So, the slanted vertical marks are the stressed ones and those horizontal dash marks are the unstressed ones. The metrical pattern used in this example is that of I am big pentameter. That means it has ten syllables. Each in these statements and the metrical pattern is that of I am big pentameter; I am big because it consists of an unstressed syllable, and then a stressed syllable.

So, that is the, that is the pattern. So, so is not stressed, long is stressed, so long as men can breathe or eyes can see. So, long lives this, and this gives life to thee. So, we take the pitch up when it is stressed, and we bring the pitch down when it is not. So, that is the idea.

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Stress Gone Awry

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why
must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?

-G. M. Hopkins, *hou art indeed just, Lord*

Imagine if the stress pattern goes awry, goes chaotic, what will happen? How will it affect our understanding? How will it communicate a strong message to us that something is not right at the other end? I have picked a couple of examples to explain that to you. The first one is taken from G.M. Hopkins. Thou art indeed, just a lord. So, we all know this very famous poem. And just before writing this point, Hopkins was struggling with a variety of belief issues.



And he was very satisfied, or he was very dissatisfied as he was struggling with a variety of belief issues. That is exactly when he composed this poem. And this is just a verse extract from that poem. When you look at, move through the lines, you can see something that act as speed breakers. You are right, you are guessing it correctly. Thou art indeed just there is a pause, comma, Lord, comma, if I contend with thee, a greater pause, semicolon, but pause, comma, sir, comma.

So, what I plead is just there is a period why does sinners' ways prosper? Question mark, and why must disappointment all I endeavor end? Question mark. So, when you look at the entire verse extract, and once you try to read it through though it indeed just Lord, if I contend with thee but sir, you cannot move smoothly. There are so many halts, so many speed breakers, on your way that you cannot at all move smoothly.

On the other hand, when you come to the second half of this extract, you find question marks there is doubt, there is so much doubt that one cannot even move smoothly. And that is the reason why there are so many speed breakers in the form of punctuation marks, short pauses, commas, and longer pauses semicolons. So, when you read the first two lines, you will find it a very difficult task.

So, that says that the person who composed these lines was not in the right mental framework, the person I mean, that person was not experiencing the right kind of subjective wellbeing while composing this, the person was in fact struggling with some challenge. So, we can say, so what I mean to say is, when it comes to speech patterns, tapping discovering speech patterns, we can easily tell whether somebody is passing through a mental challenge or mental struggle or not. In order to do so, we need to understand these patterns, these rhythmic patterns.

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Stress Gone Awry

"My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
"Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
"What are you thinking of? What thinking?
What?
"I never know what you are thinking. Think."



-T.S. Eliot, *The Waste land*

One more example, in which the stress also goes awry. I am talking about two types of stresses here. The stress pattern and the stress caused by an emotional upheaval. So, the first type of stress is related to the pattern, the structure, the second type of stress is related to the wellbeing condition. So, if stress goes awry, you guess, that there is stress. This example is extracted from T.S. Eliot, the wasteland very popular, very famous poem, long poem.

My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad stay with me. Speak to me, why do you never speak, speak. What are you thinking of? What thinking what I never know what are you thinking think the irregular stress pattern, the irregular use of or repetition of the words all are indicative of the amount of stress the person is experiencing, while uttering these lines are these words. So, whenever, when you look at these stress patterns, you will quickly discover that it is so irregular.

So, this is one more example in which stress goes awry. The metrical stress goes awry, which is indicative of the fact that the person who is uttering these lines of words is passing through a tremendous amount of stress, is experiencing an unbearable, unmanageable stress. So, that is that is the power of prosodic features, it can make you aware. And that is exactly what this course aims to do.

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References

- <https://www.britannica.com/art/figure-of-speech>
- <https://literarydevices.net/personification>

So, that brings us to the end of today's lecture, I hope you have enjoyed the things that I talked about today. Before I talk about the upcoming lecture, let me tell you that it is always a good idea for you to be aware of all these figures of speech, so that your emotional intelligence gradually increases. So, thank you for joining me.