

Literature and Coping Skills
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Lecture – 13
Rhetoric and prosody – 1

Hello, everybody, I am Ajit K Mishra, your course instructor for Literature and Coping Skills. I am back again, with a new topic. Today I am going to talk about rhetorical prosody. But before that, I must tell you all that in my last lecture, I talked about the importance of verbal imagery for our wellbeing. So, verbal imagery plays such an important role, by inviting us encouraging us to engage with the processes that we feel like getting involved and immersed in those processes.



So, how does verbal imagery come into being? How is it created? How is it made? And once it is made, what kind of impact does it exercise on our experiences, especially literary experiences. In the experiences of those embodied simulations. So, these are some of the things that I am going to talk about in the next four lectures, including this one.

So, this is the last topic in the second module, that is, literature, imagery, and healing. So, if you remember in our first module, we talked about a variety of important things, we talked about the power of literary experience. In this module, we are talking about poetry and healing. So, this is the last topic in this unit or module. So, let us start with the plan for today's lecture.

As I have already told you, I am going to focus on rhetoric and prosody, the hallmarks of visual imagery, the hallmarks of higher order communication, the hallmarks of literary communication. So, these two play a vital role in the composition, and communication of literary works, especially poetry.


Since, we are going to focus on poetic texts, for the analysis of a variety of things, especially language elements, with a view to enhancing our understanding of the workings of literary composition, especially poetry for mental wellbeing. So, let us start with today's proceedings.

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Rhetoric and Prosody

- Rhetoric and Prosody
- The Power of Language
- Figures of Speech
- The Rhetorical Triangle



I am going to focus on rhetorical prosody what they are there components first, and then I will walk you through the other components starting with the power of language. Just to give you a recap of what I meant by a verbal imagery and wellbeing when I discussed that concept, and then I will come to figures of speech and finally, the rhetorical triangle which plays such an important role in the practices of rhetoric. So, with that, let us take a look at each of these components.

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Rhetoric and Prosody

- Rhetoric is the study of the persuasive use of language that is meant to be appealing
- To be more specific, rhetoric is the study of “figures of speech” including metaphor, simile, paradox, pun, metonym that makes language effective and persuasive
- Prosody is the study of meter, or metrical patterns of rhythm especially in poetry

Rhetoric is the study of the persuasive use of language that is meant to be appealing. So, you have by now understood that communication is an act of persuasion. If we cannot persuade, then we cannot make the person engage or immerse. In order to make a person engaged or immerse in order for these, the condition of embodied simulation to take place it is important that literally works of rhetorical works, develop the quality to persuade.

So, persuasion does not mean you will frighten scare somebody to believe in, what are you saying listen to you get engaged in whatever you are saying, that is not persuasion. Persuasion is all about doing things that will make people get immersed, engaged and involved spontaneously, without you forcing them to come forward and do this. So, that is the power of persuasion. Without persuasion, there cannot be any embodied simulation.

No mirror neurons will ever be fired. Imagine when you go to watch films, some of those films appeal, some of them persuade you, some others do not persuade you, you do not like them. After you return, you think of forgetting them as early as possible. But there are certain other movies or films that you are so moved by, so, touched by, that you would like to carry that impression that memory for a long, long time. That is the difference between persuasions and making people, go away from that particular composition or driving people or repulsing them. So, that is the power of persuasion, which I am talking about. Since, we have already discussed the role of mirror neurons especially your sensory motor activities in us and the role of embodied simulation in the reception, engagement, emotion of our simulated work like literature.

So, that we also begin to engage with those activities. And in that way, our thinking, our feeling and our behavior will also get modified. So, that is rhetoric. So, how language can be used persuasively? So, that it can appeal immediately is the focus of rhetoric. So, if I have to be more specific, rhetoric is the study of figures of speech. I will be talking about those figures of speech in detail figures of speech, including metaphor, simile, paradox, pun, metonymy, that make language effective and persuasive.

So, if you remember I talked about a verbal imagery. So, how can we convert the plain everyday literal language into a visual language? How can we attach that particular quality to plain everyday ordinary language these are the elements with the help of which we can attach that



particular quality to everyday language we can make literal, everyday plain language, figurative by using these figures. So, figures of speech play a very important role in rhetoric.

And when we come to prosody, prosody is a study of meter or metrical patterns of rhythm, especially in poetry; we have grown up listening to lullabies, listening to nursery rhymes, which are characterized by this particular quality, rhythm. They rhyme so swiftly they present rhythm in such a beautiful manner, that we are immediately attracted towards them, because the sound that is produced because of this rhythmic patterning is so sweet so appealing, that we get immediately attracted towards those compositions.

So, that is the area which prosody studies the metrical patterns. Now, when I am talking about these two aspects, figures of speech and the rhythmic elements- visual elements, and auditory elements; when we talk about rhythmic elements, we are pointing towards auditory elements. So, visual elements and auditory elements, when they are combined with finesse, the result is absolutely amazing. So, that will lead to a kind of embodied simulation.

So, in the absence of either of these, we can still experience embodied simulation. But that will not be as effective as something that we will experience when we combine these two elements, rhetoric and prosody. So, that is the reason why it is very, very important that we understand the function of rhetorical prosody, their relevance, and their importance to our understanding of this process of embodied simulation. So, let us move to the next segment.

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The Power of Language

- I wandered lonely
- I wandered lonely as a cloud
- Language: literal and figurative
- Language renders life's complex thought processes and experiences comprehensible
- Abstract words refer to concepts that cannot be directly experienced through our senses (e.g. truth, morality)
- Metaphor: bridging embodiment to abstraction

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That brings us to the idea of the power of language. We all know that language is very, very powerful, because it serves various functions. Yesterday, I talked about a very simple example, I asked you to think about life and talk about it using a few words. Whenever I ask people about it, they find it extremely difficult to talk about life. And they finally end up picking certain alternative expressions, like life is a battle life is a struggle, life is a journey, life is a voyage, life is a vacuum, anything it can be. Life is all about tears, life is about suffering.

It can be anything. So, whenever I talk about life, or any such abstract ideas, abstract concepts like truth, morality, we suddenly find it extremely difficult to talk about it using plain ordinary language. Because we think we may not be able to properly present our ideas about that particular abstract concept with the help of plain ordinary language.

Therefore, we promptly switch to figurative language of figurative speech, which makes it easier for us to talk about these abstract concepts and it is almost like you are solving a puzzle. Imagine you are solving a puzzle, what exactly are you doing? You have a few fragmented scattered pieces, which, if you arrange them properly, will complete the puzzle.

So, if I threw that task to you, the very moment I asked you to do that, you will experience some kind of anxiety in you. Because that is a task, that is a challenge, and that will probably lead to some kind of anxiety in you. So, what do you do? You will begin to, you know, visualize the entire thing, I will tell you that at the end of it you will get to see an elephant.

So, you begin by visualizing that elephant and then you tell yourself, what exactly are you going to do so that you can finally solve the puzzle and bring up that elephant or show that elephant. So, you will begin to think in visual terms or visualize it the entire process at every stage and then you will move forward. So, when it comes to language, we use that phone which is language, to communicate, to communicate our experiences, our emotions, our feelings. But most often, we find the plain ordinary language to be inadequate.

And when you use that medium that channel to present our thoughts, we feel as if will not be able to completely or properly present our feelings or experiences using the ordinary language. Therefore, we need the power of something else that will make it easier for us and that is the power of abstraction, and simplification that I talked about while talking about simulation and higher order thinking. So, that is how we can make this happen. So, let us take a look at the power of language.

Let us start with this example. I wandered lonely, if I tell you, it will be easy for you to understand there is no ambiguity, I wandered lonely. It focuses on two things, our mental state, and an action that followed that mental state, I was feeling very, very lonely. Therefore, I begin, began to wander. So, I wandered lonely, that means somebody can constitute that I must be disturbed, I was not feeling good, or well, therefore I was wandering I was wandering aimlessly and lonely. So, that is how we can construe the meaning.

But then, if you take a look at this particular expression, there is no basic difference except for an extended section, I wanted lonely as a cloud. Now, if you compare these two expressions, which of these two, according to you, helps you present your ideas in a better manner. So, when you say I wandered lonely, that is too abstract, an idea for the listener to grasp or for the listener to experience embodied simulation.

But the moment you use of figure of speech or rhetorical device, and you say, I wandered lonely as a cloud, so you are offering a comparison between two things, your state an action, and that of something else, the visual of which can quickly come to our mind, and so that we can easily make sense out of it. So, therefore, when it comes to the use of figurative language, it gives us more power to create images, pictures, for the listener, for the reader, so that they can quickly make sense of the whole thing.

So, that is the reason why as a cloud, in fact, enhances the visual quality of the second expression. In the first instance, we do not have any visual quality. And we all know that our brain has been designed in a manner so as to process of visual receptions in a much better way. So, that is how it is going to help. The next that is language is literal and figurative. So, we generally deal with two types of language. One is literal, plain, ordinary, everyday straightforward language the other is figurative.



It is not plain it is enriched by the integration of figurative language of figures of speech. So, therefore, it is not plain, it is figurative. At the same time, I must also tell you all that we need to be good at both the literal and the figurative language. And that is the reason why most top business schools globally are stressing the need of learning figurative language by the prospective leaders. They are also emphasizing the need to develop metaphorical intelligence by the prospect of leaders.

So, therefore, that is the reason why all these business schools are suddenly taking care of these elements. So, that brings us to the next idea that language renders life's complex thought processes, and experiences comprehensible. So, it comes to comprehending life's complex thought processes and experiences. Language is an instrument that helps us do so. As I have already talked about, both types of language, literal and figurative, both of them help us do this.

But when it comes to figurative language, we suddenly derive more power to express life's complex processes and experiences. So, abstract words are referred to concepts that cannot be directly experienced through our senses. For example, truth, and morality, we cannot experience them through our senses. So, we need to find certain abstract words that can directly relate us to those experiences. And that is, that is a reason why, you know, life is a journey.

So, we can easily relate to journey, the idea of journey, life is a struggle, we can easily relate to the idea of struggle, and then try to understand make sense of life. So, that is that is the power of language. Then, metaphor, which happens to be one of the most powerful figures of speech, I told you, metaphorical intelligence is such a sought after quality these days, everybody is vying for it. So, metaphor is, in fact, the instrument that bridges embodiment to abstraction. And this ultimately leads to embodied simulation. So, therefore, this is an important activity.

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- Language leads to **Embodied simulation** (a theory of social cognition – a theory of how we comprehend others' actions, basic intentions, emotions and sensations)
- Language unfolds the neural aspect of our intersubjective space and 'we-ness'
- The neurophysiological evidence of the causal relationship between sensorimotor activity and abstract language comprehension (Guan et. al.)
- Sensorimotor processing underlies and constitutes cognition
- "Talking on the phone while driving" and limited embodied simulation

Next, language leads to embodied simulation, I have already talked about it, just to return to this concept, embodied simulation we all know it is a theory of social cognition, the theory of how we comprehend others actions, their basic intentions, emotions and sensations. So, embodied simulation plays an important role in literally experience through which we comprehend others actions, in this case, the characters, their intentions, their emotions, and their sensations, and then the mirror neurons get activated, and once that happens, we will become a part of that process.

So, we engage in a process of thinking and feeling and then behaving in a certain manner. So, we can follow the footprints of that character or we can modify that we can extend that we can enrich that through our behaviors. So, it is all about embodied simulation and how does that happen? That happens through the intervention of language and especially figurative language. Language unfolds the neural aspect of our inter-subjective space and we-ness.



So, we suddenly develop that inter subjective space with the character on the other end and we at the set, and our connection is established and the witness is established. So, that is how it leads to a universalisation. On the basis of a recent research, it has been found that the neuro-physiological evidence of the causal relationship between sensory motor activity and abstract language comprehension exists.

So, therefore, this also strengthens our view that whenever we come across an abstract language, language that is not easy to understand. That is not that is not plain, ordinary straightforward.

Our sensory motor activities are also activated so that we can comprehend. And that leads to the sensory motor processing and it results in cognition, greater understanding and insight.

So, this is an example talking on the phone while driving is an example of limited embodied simulation because you are doing two things simultaneously, you are speaking to somebody at the other end, and you are driving. So, that way it reduces your embodied simulation, you cannot participate in that embodied simulation completely. So, therefore, when we are immersed in a literary text, it can be poetry, fiction, and drama. We experience complete, embodied simulation. So, that is the power of language.

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Figures of Speech



- A figure of speech is a rhetorical device, and an expressive use of language that are used to achieve a visual effect and thus communicate complex experiences vividly
- it thus has a stronger intellectual and emotional impact, is more memorable, and sometimes contributes a range and depth of association and suggestion far beyond the scope of the casual colloquial use of imagery

Cont.

That brings us to the idea of figures of speech, I will quickly walk you through these ideas. So, a figure of speech is a rhetorical device, as you know by now. And it is an expressive use of language. I talked about the expressive urge. So, the moment you find something that in fact, feeds your expressive urge, you feel excited, you feel engaged, and that is the power of figurative language or figures of speech. They give wings to your expressive urge.

So, you can achieve visual effects using these figures of speech, therefore, they are called figures, they create images, figures in the mind. And then it has, the figures of speech have a stronger intellectual and emotional impact, because they are easily memorable, and they lead to a range of associations and suggestions beyond the scope of the casual colloquial use of imagery. So, that is why figures of speech play such an important role.

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- Figures in everyday speech are formed by extending the vocabulary of what is already familiar and better known to what is less well known
- Metaphors (implied resemblances)
- simile (a comparison, usually indicated by “like” or “as”)
- Personification (speaking of an abstract quality or inanimate object as if it were a person)



Cont.

So, figures in everyday speech are formed by extending the vocabulary of what is already familiar and better known to what is less known. So, if I think I have not been able to know life well, so I can always say it has been a struggle, so I can easily switch, I can easily extend that idea to this particular thing.

If it is not better known, that will help me understand it in a better way. So, that brings us to different types of figures of speech, we can start with metaphors. Metaphors are the most important figures of speech. They are all about implied resemblances, connections. Simile, offers a comparison, usually indicated by like, or as, I wandered lonely as a cloud. So, that is an example of a simile, simile and metaphor share a lot of qualities.

So, most often people find them or place them under one category. Personification is also very, very close to our idea of metaphor or simile. So, personification is all about speaking of an abstract quality or inanimate object as if it were a person. So, if I practice personification, that means I am attributing human qualities to something that is inanimate or nonhuman.

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- metonymy (using the name of one thing for another closely related to it)
- synecdoche (use of a part to imply the whole)
- hyperbole (deliberate exaggeration for the sake of effect)
- paradox (stark opposites)
- onomatopoeia (imitation of natural sounds by words)
- litotes (an emphasis by negation)

And then we come to metonymy, in which we use the name of one thing for another closely related to it. And synecdoche, in which part stands for the whole. Hyperbole so it is a deliberate exaggeration. For the sake of an effect, we deliberately exist; exaggerate something and then paradox, stark opposites. Opposite ideas are brought together, they are yoked together. Then Onomatopoeia is the imitation of natural sounds by words.

For example, buzzing of bees, buzz is an onomatopoeic Greek word. And then litotes, which lays an emphasis by negation, falling sick is no fun. So, I am laying emphasis on not falling sick therefore I say falling sick is no fun. So, that is the tortoise. So, these are some of the most popular most widely used, figures of speech that helped us create a mental imagery that helps, that helps us constitute a visual or picture or imagery, so that we can immediately get engaged.

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The Rhetorical Triangle

- Ethos: Credibility and trustworthiness, persuasion to accept the point of view (PoV)
- Pathos: an appeal to emotion, beliefs, and values, relatable examples, mirror neurons and embodied simulation (positive emotions energize us; negative emotions prepare us)
- Logos: Language in effective persuasion, appeals directly to logic and reason

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That brings us to the idea of the rhetorical triangle. I told you at the beginning, that the rhetorical triangle is very, very important to our understanding of the idea of Rhetoric and prosody. So, it is comprised of three angles or three important aspects. The first one is ethos, which leads to the establishment of credibility and trustworthiness. For example, when you say something, why should people believe?

People believe us, when we have established that trustworthiness or credibility. So, if somebody is credible, or trustworthy, people will believe them and their point of view. And people will accept their point of view; it will be easy for such people to persuade the listeners or readers. So, if literature has to create a meaningful literary experience, embodied simulation to use our neurological phrase or term, the literary experience is more synonymous with the embodied simulation.

So, in order to engage people in an embodied simulation, it is very important that somebody becomes credible and trustworthy. So, that is ethos. That brings us to pathos. Another very important aspect of the rhetorical triangle. It is an appeal to emotion, we all know the mirror neurons get fired, beliefs and values are relatable examples.

And mirror neurons and embodied simulation. So, we all know that positive emotions energize us, they, they make us more and more creative. They make us move forward, love life, do things, strengthen our relationships. On the other hand, negative emotions, as we generally know, they make us withdraw or reject life, feel bad. They de energize us.

That is what we know about negative emotions, or emotions with negative valence. But that is not the case. The case is negative emotions are equally important. That is the power of pathos, we need to understand that negative emotions, in fact, prepare us, how? Through various challenges that they pose to us.



The challenge of fear, the challenge of anxiety, the challenge of stress and depression, all those things, sadness, even anger, they prepare us. So, it is always a good idea to look at the whole concept of positive and negative emotions from this perspective. That way, we can develop certain skills, certain coping strategies and skills.

So, that is the power of pathos. And the third is logos. Language, language plays such a significant role in effective persuasion that we cannot deny, it is important, because it appeals directly to our logic and reason. It makes something logical. Therefore, language is something that needs to be taken care of.

And when it comes to language, we have already discussed, I have told you all that there are two types of it, the literal the figurative, both are equally important for our persuasive activities or strategies. So therefore, it is very, very important that we understand this equilateral triangle, is equilateral.

You can place anything, anywhere that hardly makes it different. So, the equilateral triangle of ethos, pathos and logos in which all the three play a significant role. So, that is how it looks like, the equilateral triangle.

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References

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So, that is how we come to the end of today's lecture. I hope you have liked the things that I talked about. And these things must have enhanced your understanding of figures of speech, different types of language, the literal and the figurative, and the rhetorical strategies including ethos, pathos, and logos. So, thank you for joining me.