

**Elements of Literature and Creative Communication**  
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**Lecture - 16**  
**Elements of Poetry**

Hello again. We are in the 4th week of the course Elements of Literature and Creative Communication; to be precise, we are in the 2nd week of poetry. If you remember, last week, we discussed the origins of poetry and the subtypes of poetry. We made ourselves familiar with poetic manifestations in the early ages across the globe. I am sure you found that class very interesting.

So, today's class would be all the more interesting in a sense, and it is going to give you a kind of an insight into the magic called poetry. How? Because we are going to look at those devices and elements that empower poetry in extraordinary ways. So, for the sake of our convenience, we can call them elements of poetry.

So, during this 4th week, in this particular class, we are going to discuss various elements of poetry and how these elements give us a kind of working knowledge of the way poetry works.

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**Naturally, elements of poetry overlap with elements of literature. Here we discuss some dominant features of poetry...**

Before I tell you all, quickly note down what you are the elements of poetry. I am sure, we'll have plenty in common, for over the last two weeks, at least, we have delighted ourselves with many beautiful poems across different genres.



So, before we proceed further, I am sure you understand that we have already discussed very many other elements of literature, and some of them may correspond with elements of poetry as well. They might as well overlap here, but nothing to worry. In fact, the more, the merrier; it is going to reinforce whatever things we have already learnt in some of our previous classes. Before I begin with elements of poetry, you can mentally get prepared for what you think are the elements of poetry.

You can jot down, and later you can compare and see how many of these elements you already knew. I am sure during these four weeks, we have delighted ourselves with several poems from across the globe and from across the periods. So, based on your familiarity with these poems, if you can even jot down a couple of them, that would be really interesting. Here goes the first element of poetry:

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**RHETORICAL DEVICE/  
FIGURES OF SPEECH**

Figure of speech is a non-literal expression that is employed to create an effect. This effect can be rhetorical, such as when words are deliberately arranged to generate a poetic effect, or imagery, such as when language is used to evoke a visual image or make a concept more vivid. Because of their expressive use of language, figures of speech serve as literary devices in general. Words are utilised in ways other than their explicit definitions or conventional application scenarios.

More than 250  
**FIGURES OF  
SPEECH!**

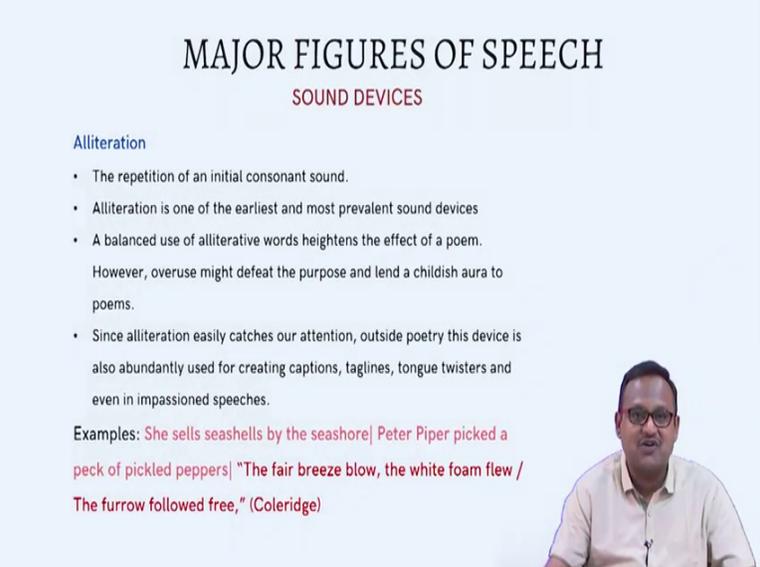
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Before that, you know, we need to know a little bit about these elements of poetry. What do we call figures of speech? Figures of speech are major elements of poetry. They have their parallels in rhetorical devices. In fact, what rhetorical devices do in our everyday communication, figures of speech do that in poetry. In other words, we are discussing the parallels between creative

communication and poetry and when we employ some of these devices in our everyday speech activities.

I am sure we would be elevating those communicative elements, those communicative aspects also into the level of poetry. So, we would be elevating our speech acts to the level of poetry. If we can implement or infuse some of these poetic devices in our everyday context; well, to give you a kind of an idea about the vastness of what we are dealing with-- we have more than 250 figures of speech in literature; obviously, we would not be able to cover all of them. What we are going to do here is cover a couple of important figures of speech and see how they add magic to poetry. In other words, we are going to go behind those devices that lend their power and elevate poetry to the level of music or even mantra occasionally.

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**MAJOR FIGURES OF SPEECH**

**SOUND DEVICES**

**Alliteration**

- The repetition of an initial consonant sound.
- Alliteration is one of the earliest and most prevalent sound devices
- A balanced use of alliterative words heightens the effect of a poem.  
However, overuse might defeat the purpose and lend a childish aura to poems.
- Since alliteration easily catches our attention, outside poetry this device is also abundantly used for creating captions, taglines, tongue twisters and even in impassioned speeches.

**Examples:** *She sells seashells by the seashore* | *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers* | *"The fair breeze blow, the white foam flew / The furrow followed free,"* (Coleridge)



Here comes our first figure of speech-- it is called alliteration. Before that, for the sake of convenience, we can subdivide figures of speech into various types. Devices can also be called sound devices. In other words, figures of speech that deal with the component of sound can be called sound devices as part of that alliteration is our first sound device.

Well, alliteration refers to that quality of poetry, wherein it lends musical effect to the lines we read. In other words, how it does by repeating an initial consonant sound. So, here this device

mimics the musicality of the language or the rhythms that exist in the language, and by repeating those sounds, it lends a kind of a musical quality to the lines we read.

Alliteration is one of the earliest used sound devices, and when we use alliteration, they enhance our experience of poetry because, as I said, they lend a musical tone to the lines we read; that is how they enhance the impact of poetry. So, it has a certain acoustic value added to the lines that we read.

Even outside poetry, this poetic device is used. As I said, many of these figures of speech correspond with rhetorical devices, and when you make use of these devices even in an everyday context. Supposing you have got a speech to give, if you can add some of these alliterative elements, it would lend your speech an extraordinary punch, an extraordinary quality.

Now, alliteration is generally used in tongue twisters as well, which is why tongue twisters are difficult to pronounce. Now, look at this well-known tongue twister- “She sells seashells by the seashore.” Look how there is a kind of repetition of the sound “sells” and “shells” at a regular interval; because of this repetition of these sounds at regular intervals, sometimes it becomes difficult for us to pronounce them, but these are extraordinary ways even to enhance our pronunciation skills also.

Or, “Peter Piper picked the peck of pickled peppers.” Now, look how the sound of “picked” the sound of “peck” adds a kind of a lilt to language and enhances our listening experience of these lines, and it is also used predominantly in poetry as well. Here is an excerpt from Coleridge’s poem “The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew. The furrow followed free.” The sound [FL] appears at constant intervals, thereby lending a musical touch to the lines that we read-- alliteration. Well, there are slight variations of alliteration as well. I will come to that in the next slide.

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# MAJOR FIGURES OF SPEECH

## SOUND DEVICES

### Assonance

- Repetition of vowels without repetition of consonants (as in stony and holy) used as an alternative to rhyme in verse.
- Assonance most often refers to the repetition of internal vowel sounds in words that may not end the same.

Examples: "Do not go gentle into that good *night*, Old *age* should burn and *rave* at close of *day*; *Rage*, *rage*, against the dying of the *light*..." (Dylan Thomas)

The woods are lovely, dark and *deep*.  
But I have promises to *keep*,  
And miles to go before I *sleep*,  
And miles to go before I *sleep*." (Robert Frost)



You can call assonance and the next consonance as part of alliteration in a certain way, but assonance is again a repetition of a sound, but here it's a vowel sound. Whatever you have heard in the case of alliteration, here all that holds well as far as the repetition of vowels is concerned.

It's a kind of an alternative to rhyme in verse as well. Look at the examples here: this poem, if you can recall, we have discussed this in detail in one of our earlier classes. Dylan Thomas' poem "Do not go gentle into that good night" --

"Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

Rage, rage, against the dying of the light."

Now, look at the sound "day", the vowel sound "rage," "age," and "day"- in all these things, there is an internal rhyme that follows. The sound of "a" that comes at certain intervals and thereby creating a kind of a musical impact. So, roughly speaking, assonance, like alliteration, is a music lending device for poetry.

Another example is from these immortal lines: "The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I have promises to keep, stopping by woods..." I am sure you will have read this poem may be in your tenth or twelfth or at some other stage. "Woods are lovely dark and deep, but I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep and miles to go before I sleep."

Look how in words "deep", "keep", "sleep"; there is a repetition of the sound "e". I am sure now you have a fair understanding of what assonance is.

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## MAJOR FIGURES OF SPEECH

SOUND DEVICES

**Consonance**

- Neighbouring words repeat the same consonant sound or sound patterns. Do not confuse with alliteration as alliteration refers specifically to the beginning sound of the word and consonance refers to any other part.
- Also used for creating captions, taglines, tongue twisters and in everyday speech.

**Examples:** "Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?"  
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.  
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each." ("The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", TS Eliot) "Nobody heard him, the dead man, / But still he lay moaning: / I was much further out than you thought / And not waving but drowning." (Stevie Smith)



Next, we go to consonance. Consonance is again a repetition of sounds, but here consonance, unlike assonance, where vowels are repeated at certain intervals, consonance is repeated at certain intervals. Generally, consonance is confused with alliteration, but what we have to keep in mind here is that alliterations refer specifically to the beginning sound of the word; you know the first sound of the word, and then how it comes at certain intervals whereas, in consonance, it's not so much at the beginning, it's towards the end of the word.

So, we have plenty of examples here say, for instance, "Shall I part my hair behind?", "Do I dare to eat a peach?" and then "beach." And in another example, we have "moaning", "waving", "drowning"—look how at certain intervals, especially towards the end of the word, it's you can call it an "n" driving one. Consonance is where towards the end of the word, that consonant repeats and thereby lends musical quality to its consonance.

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# MAJOR FIGURES OF SPEECH

## SOUND DEVICES

### Onomatopoeia

- a word which imitates the natural sounds of a thing. It creates a sound effect that mimics the thing described, making the description more evocative.
- There are different onomatopoeic words for the same sound/thing described in different languages, based on the soundscape of those languages.
- As they represent different sounds of a same thing, onomatopoeic words appear in groups. Plop, splash, gush, sprinkle, drizzle, and drip, for example, are a group that represent diverse water sounds.

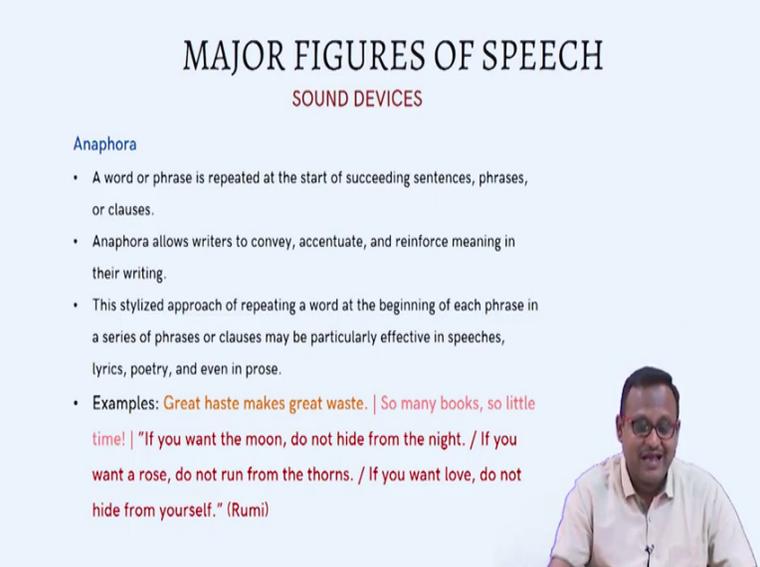
Examples: *The books fell on the table with a loud thump.* | ". . .he heard the *clack* on stone and the leaping, dropping *clicks* of a small rock falling." (Hemingway) | "There was a *rustling* that seemed like a *bustling*" (Robert Browning)



After consonance, we move on to onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia is an extraordinary sound device where the sounds that we make use of are so powerful and so evocative that they can reconstruct the meaning. In other words, the sounds are so extraordinary and so evocative that they can mimic what we describe or what the words try to describe here. Generally speaking, these words test the limit of a language. In fact, a poem that makes extensive use of onomatopoeic words is difficult to translate because these sounds are peculiar to the language in which they are used, and therefore, when you translate, you know words with similar meaning, they may not have the same sound dimension in the target language. So, these words that lend the quality of music to poetry are unique to that particular language. Therefore, while translating them, it becomes a kind of a nightmare for a translator to bring out the effect the poet has brought out in the source poem. So, they are unique to the language in which they are used. For instance, words such as you know “splash”, “gush”, “hiss”, “drizzle”, “drip”- are some words that are capable of evoking their meaning of them. So, for instance, you can say the book fell on the table with a loud thump. The sound thump clearly evokes the magnitude with which the books fell on the table. Something like that, or it can even be used, for instance, as Hemingway uses- “he heard the clack on stone and the leaping, dropping clicks of a small rock falling.” Look how beautifully the language mimics the action; the sound mimics the action here.

“There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling, rustling, bustling”, some movement of leaves and small sounds; how beautifully they evoke the image. So onomatopoeia is an extraordinary sound device.

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**MAJOR FIGURES OF SPEECH**  
SOUND DEVICES

**Anaphora**

- A word or phrase is repeated at the start of succeeding sentences, phrases, or clauses.
- Anaphora allows writers to convey, accentuate, and reinforce meaning in their writing.
- This stylized approach of repeating a word at the beginning of each phrase in a series of phrases or clauses may be particularly effective in speeches, lyrics, poetry, and even in prose.
- Examples: **Great haste makes great waste.** | **So many books, so little time!** | **"If you want the moon, do not hide from the night. / If you want a rose, do not run from the thorns. / If you want love, do not hide from yourself."** (Rumi)



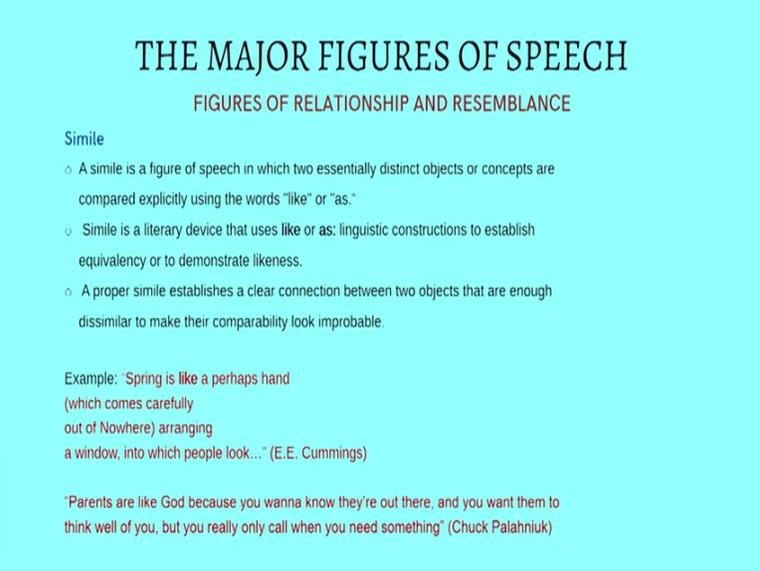
So, there is another minor sound device called anaphora. So, anaphora is a figure of speech that concerns itself with a repetition of a particular word or phrase. So, at regular intervals, you keep revisiting this string of words or phrases.

So, when they come together at such kind of regular intervals, they create a kind of an emphasis. In other words, you can say that anaphora is a literary device or a poetic device that is used in order to emphasize a point. In order to draw attention to a particular segment, you make use of it. It's a highly stylized approach as far as the repetition of a word is concerned, especially at the beginning of each phrase. And when you use it, it creates an extraordinary impact even in your regular speeches. You know, if you have listened to an extraordinary leader speaking in order to emphasize what he or she speaks, these leaders make use of anaphora.

Now, look at this- “Great haste makes great waste”. A small phrase, almost anagrammatic, here it makes use of 5 words. In 5 words, the word “great” is repeated, and thereby it draws our attention to the quantity here- “great haste makes great waste”. So, our attention is drawn toward quantity. For instance, again, in the second example as well -

“So many books, so little time”: this can be an example of another important literary device that we are going to discuss in a very short while, but look at the word “so” here. “So” again is a quantity. Now, “If you want the moon, do not hide from the night. If you want a rose, do not run from the thorns. If you want love, do not hide from yourself,” look at the string of words here- “If you want... if you want... if you want”- almost how if you want something, you need to do this. If you recall some extraordinary lines of George Bush, he says, especially during times of crisis, “If you are Americans, you are with us. If you are Americans, you do not support this. If you are Americans, you do not borrow to this ideology...”; something like this. This is how you make use of this device. Here again, you can use either a word or even a string of words in order to create that sound impact. More than that, here, the sound impact is used in order to emphasize on a particular aspect. So, it is anaphora.

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**THE MAJOR FIGURES OF SPEECH**

**FIGURES OF RELATIONSHIP AND RESEMBLANCE**

**Simile**

- A simile is a figure of speech in which two essentially distinct objects or concepts are compared explicitly using the words “like” or “as.”
- Simile is a literary device that uses like or as: linguistic constructions to establish equivalency or to demonstrate likeness.
- A proper simile establishes a clear connection between two objects that are enough dissimilar to make their comparability look improbable.

Example: “Spring is like a perhaps hand  
(which comes carefully  
out of Nowhere) arranging  
a window, into which people look...” (E.E. Cummings)

“Parents are like God because you wanna know they’re out there, and you want them to think well of you, but you really only call when you need something” (Chuck Palahniuk)

From the sound devices let us move on to figures of speech that concern themselves with relationships and resemblances. So, we are moving on to a different segment of figures of speech, and as I said, these are also rhetorical devices; there is a lot of overlap between them. As you know, rhetorical devices are those devices that are used to create an impact during your everyday conversation, especially during speeches, and figures of speeches are those devices that are used especially in poetry.

Therefore you can find overlaps depending on your usage, you call them a rhetorical device or a figure of speech. Simile is one of the most commonly used figures of speech that we come across in literature. Be it a good piece of prose or verse; we come across similes. Here, simile is used to liken one object or thing to another you are comparing.

So, in other words, this figure of speech is used for comparison. We also have other figures of speech that are used in the context of comparison, but they are slightly different. Comparison in a sense it is a straightaway comparison.

How do you know it is a straightaway comparison? Look out for words such as “like” and “as”. For example, you can say, “you are as bright as the sun.” So, you are comparing the brightness of the person with the brightness of the sun, and it’s a direct comparison because as we make use of the word as.

So, it’s a common example of a simile. Therefore, you can say that simile is a literary device; it is a literary device that makes use of words such as “like” and “as”. And here, the linguistic constructions are employed to establish equivalence; they are used to establish equivalence and demonstrate likeness, and commonality.

So, some of the common examples would include “Spring is like perhaps hand which comes carefully out of nowhere arranging a window, into which people look.” Brilliant line by E.E. Cummings; spring is likened to something here, and another example from prose is parents are like god, parents are compared to god.

In a particular aspect, which is given in the next part of the sentence, “Parents are like god because you want to know they are out there, and you want them to think well of you, but you really only call when you need something”. So, this is how simile works by establishing a kind of a linguistic equivalence between one thing and the other, you compare them; you liken them, you equate them. Here the equation between two things is achieved by employing words such “as” and “like”.

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# THE MAJOR FIGURES OF SPEECH

## FIGURES OF RELATIONSHIP AND RESEMBLANCE

### Metaphor

- An implied comparison between two dissimilar things that have something in common.
- It is a subtler comparison than simile
- Along with poetry, metaphors also occur in everyday conversations. We are so used to some of them that they are called **dead metaphors**
- **Extended metaphor**

Examples: *No man is an island| Our family is a patchwork quilt| That line of reasoning is a slippery slope*

Note the brilliantly used metaphors of fire and ice running through the following poem by Robert Frost

Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice.  
From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire.  
But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.



As opposed to simile, we have a metaphor, and metaphor is one of the rich figures of speech employed in literature and especially in poetry as well. Even in metaphor, there is a comparison, but this comparison is more subtle, or you can say it's a little more sophisticated and nuanced.

In a sense, it is not a direct comparison like a simile. Therefore, you do not find words such as “as” and “like”; instead, two dissimilar things are compared very subtly and elegantly. Therefore, you can say, for instance, “No man is an island”.

When you say, “No man is an island”, what are you comparing? You are comparing a man with an island. Well, they are not a set of words that correlate with each other unless you bring out the connection in the latter part of the sentence. Therefore, in that sense, they are not similar- man and an island are not similar.

So, you need to qualify that by adding something more. “No man is an island” is an extraordinary line by John Donne. So, here two dissimilar objects are compared, and two dissimilar objects are compared. Now, look at these remarkable lines where we find the metaphor of fire and eyes and how the poet builds these metaphors using the lines:

“Some say the world will end in fire, Some say in ice. From what I have tasted of desire, I hold with those who favor fire. But if it had to perish twice, I think I know enough of hate. To say that for destruction ice Is also great and would suffice right.”

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# THE MAJOR FIGURES OF SPEECH

## FIGURES OF RELATIONSHIP AND RESEMBLANCE

### Personification

- A concept or a thing is given human characteristics and/or feelings, or it is spoken about as if it were a person.
- Nonhuman objects are given human attributes.
- By assigning inanimate objects, animals, and even abstract ideas human behaviours and emotions, writers may give them life and motion.
- Examples: *Why is your plant pouting in the corner?* | *Rishi heard the last piece of the kebab calling his name.*

*"Because I could not stop for Death –  
He kindly stopped for me –  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –  
And Immortality."*

- "Because I could not stop for Death" by Emily Dickinson



So, these are some important poetic devices that we can keep in mind. We can go ahead and discuss one or two more figures of speech in this class. Personification is another important figure of speech. Here too, there is a comparison, but in a different way. So, personification, as the term suggests, you attribute the qualities of a person to a non-person. In other words, you humanize even those objects which are not human.

You attribute the qualities of human beings to nonhuman things like animals, flowers, or something like that. Thereby it's a way of looking at the world in the image of ourselves; these are the ways through which we consider everything around us in our own likeness.

In other words, this is a brilliant figure of speech that can foster oneness with everything that we see around us because we humanize even a chair, we humanize nature, we humanize birds, and we attribute the qualities of human beings. So, look at the examples that we have here. This is an extraordinary excerpt from a well-known poem by Emily Dickinson: "Because I could not stop for death..." how even death which is you know as merciless, it is not exactly merciless, but we consider that as merciless because it takes away those that are closest to us. So, how Emily Dickinson makes death her friend; she attributes the qualities of a fellow human being to death and calls death her friend.

"Because I could not stop for Death—

He kindly stopped for me—

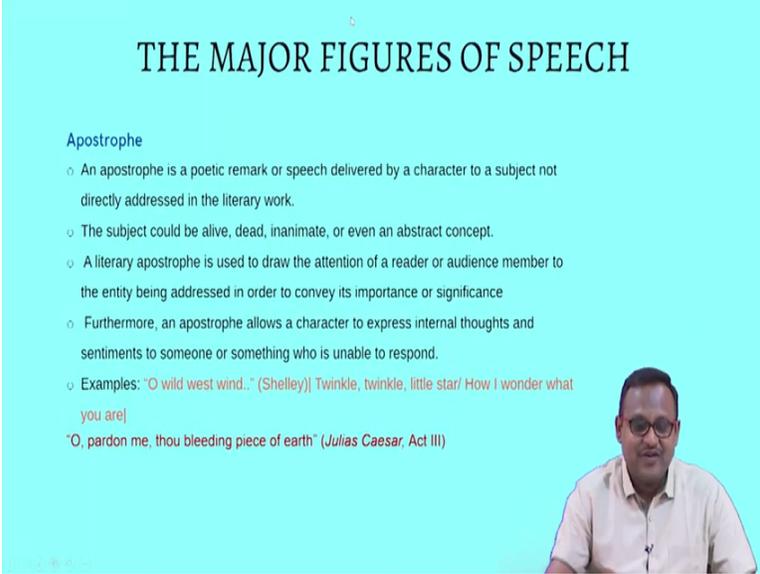
Look at this interesting choice of pronoun here. He for death.

“The Carriage held but just Ourselves—  
And immortality.”

Well, probably mortality is also humanized here. It has the poet or the poetic person and then death and immortality how all these things are humanized.

So, this is, as I said, an extraordinary literary device wherein we look at the world in our image. So, probably this is where you are reminded of you know [FL] as I imagine it, so does it become. As I imagine it, so does it become. It is a way of achieving oneness with the world around.

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**THE MAJOR FIGURES OF SPEECH**

**Apostrophe**

- An apostrophe is a poetic remark or speech delivered by a character to a subject not directly addressed in the literary work.
- The subject could be alive, dead, inanimate, or even an abstract concept.
- A literary apostrophe is used to draw the attention of a reader or audience member to the entity being addressed in order to convey its importance or significance
- Furthermore, an apostrophe allows a character to express internal thoughts and sentiments to someone or something who is unable to respond.
- Examples: "O wild west wind..." (Shelley) Twinkle, twinkle, little star/ How I wonder what you are] "O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth" (Julius Caesar, Act III)

And we have an apostrophe. An apostrophe is again a figure of speech. It may not be used as extensively as a metaphor or a personification. Nevertheless, it's an important figure of speech. Here what happens is, that the poet directly addresses a nonhuman being as if it can understand his or her feelings and emotions. So, it's not personification here, but there is an implied understanding of personification.

Because here, or you can say that it is a specialized personification addressed only in the context of speaking. So, we have a very well-known poem if you can recall, we also discussed this poem in one of our earlier classes- "Ode to West Wind". In the line "O wild west wind," the poet addresses the west wind as if he were addressing his friend.

The poet addresses nightingale as if he were addressing his friend in the poem "Ode to a Nightingale". So, especially in the odes that were written during the romantic period, they make

use of this particular literary device. There you directly address them well. When you say you address them, they may be, or they may not be alive, they may be dead, they may be even inanimate or abstract concepts; nevertheless, you address them.

And as a literary device, apostrophe also allows the poetic person to express their feelings in a free manner; it is like bearing oneself out thoroughly. So, when you address a nightingale as a friend, then you can say whatever you wish to say about that nightingale. When you start interacting with the west wind, then you can begin opening yourself up to the west wind.

So, thereby it's also used as a kind of a device wherein you can express your internal thoughts and sentiments; even when they do not respond, you assume they respond to you and go on addressing them. So, I am sure this class has given you an idea about rhetorical devices and how some rhetorical devices act as literary devices when they are used in poetry or novels.

And how they give you a kind of insight into a kind of how poetry gets its charge, how they charge up poetry through their uniqueness and things like that. I am sure in the next class we are going to discuss some more of them you know until then you can revise some of these devices probably what you can do, in order to perfect your understanding of these devices why do not you construct a short story.

Imagine you are about to narrate the story to a friend of yours, or why do not you use these devices and give a kind of a short speech and see how they lend an extraordinary power. They act as an impetus and enliven, you know. They electrify the way you give speeches and see and experience it for yourself by employing them in a speech. Until then, goodbye. See you in the next class. Bye, take care.