

FIGURES OF SPEECH

AN OVERVIEW OF DIFFERENT TYPES AND EXAMPLES

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INTRODUCTION

- **WHAT ARE ORNAMENTS TO THE BODY ARE ORNAMENTS TO LANGUAGE-BOSE & STERLING**
- **'FIGURE' > LAT. *FIGURA*, MEANING FORM OR SHAPE OF AN OBJECT > THE ART OF DECORATION OF A LANGUAGE**
- **FIGURES OF SPEECH ARE EXPRESSIONS THAT DEVIATE FROM THE STRAIGHTFORWARD USE OF WORDS TO CONVEY MEANINGS OR EFFECTS IN MORE IMAGINATIVE OR VIVID WAYS. THEY ADD BEAUTY, EMPHASIS, OR CLARITY TO LANGUAGE.**

1. BASED ON SIMILARITY

- **SIMILE: AN EXPLICIT COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO DIFFERENT THINGS USING 'LIKE' OR 'AS', 'SUCH', 'SO', 'SIMILARLY', 'RESEMBLES' ETC.**

(EX. 1. THE CHILD SHOWS THE MAN 'AS' MORNING SHOWS THE DAY

2. RED 'AS' A ROSE AS SHE,...

3. 'LIKE' A CHILD FROM THE WOMB, 'LIKE' A GHOST FROM THE TOMB, I ARISE TO UNBUILD IT AGAIN]

→ **FIGURES BASED ON SIMILARITY**

- **METAPHOR: AN IMPLIED COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO DIFFERENT THINGS WITHOUT 'LIKE' OR 'AS', 'SUCH', 'SO', 'SIMILARLY', 'RESEMBLES' ETC.**

(EX.1. CAMEL IS THE SHIP OF DESERT

2. VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE.

3. I WILL DRINK LIFE TO THE LEES.

4. THE WAVES THUNDERED ON THE OCEAN)

→ FIGURES BASED ON SIMILARITY

- **ALLEGORY: COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO DIFFERENT SUBJECTS-THE COMPARISON IS LONG AND DETAILED-A STORY WITH TWO LEVELS OF MEANING-DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ONE THING UNDER THE IMAGE OF ANOTHER. (EX. *BUNYAN'S PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*)**
- **PARABLE: A SIMPLE ALLEGORICAL STORY ILLUSTRATING A MORAL/RELIGIOUS LESSON (EX. *THE PARABLE OF A GOOD SAMARITAN*)**
- **FABLE: A SHORT FICTITIOUS STORY WITH ANIMALS AS CHARACTERS CONVEYING A MORAL (*EX.AESOP'S FABLES*)**

2. BASED ON ASSOCIATION

- **METONYMY: THE NAME OF ONE THING IS SUBSTITUTED FOR THAT OF ANOTHER WHEN THESE TWO THINGS ARE LOOSELY ASSOCIATED. (EX. PRESS>NEWSPAPER; CROWN/THRONE/SCEPTRE>MONARCHY/KINGSHIP) ↓**

1. THE SYMBOL OR SIGN FOR THE THING SYMBOLISED-THE SYMBOL OR SIGN IS USED TO MEAN THE THING SYMBOLISED-EX. HE ASCENDED THE **THRONE [SYMBOL OF **SOVEREIGNTY**]**

2. THE INSTRUMENT OR ORGAN FOR THE AGENT: EX. THE **PEN [WRITER] IS MIGHTIER THAN THE **WORD** [FIGHTER]**

3. THE EFFECT FOR THE CAUSE: EX. **GREY HAIR SHOULD BE RESPECTED [OLD AGE]**

4. CAUSE FOR THE EFFECT: EX. MOVE HIM INTO **THE SUN [SUN RAYS]**

→ **METONYMY**

5 THE CONTAINER FOR THE THING CONTAINED: EX. SOCRATES DRANK THE FATAL CUP [CONTENTS OF THE CUP, I.E. POISON]

6. THE MAKER FOR HIS WORK: EX. I AM READING SHAKESPEARE [THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE]

7. THE PLACE FOR ITS PRODUCTION: EX. THE BOOK IS MADE IN MOROCCO [LEATHER MADE IN MOROCCO]

8. THE NAME OF A PASSION FOR THE NAME OF THE OBJECT, INSPIRING IT: EX. A THING OF BEAUTY IS A JOY FOR EVER [A MATTER OF JOY]

→ FIGURES BASED ON ASSOCIATION

- **SYNECHDOCHY: ONE THING IS SUBSTITUTED FOR ANOTHER, INTIMATELY ASSOCIATED WITH IT-A MORE COMPREHENSIVE TERM IS USED FOR A LESS COMPREHENSIVE TERM OR VICE-VERSA, BUT ACTUALLY THE LESS COMPREHENSIVE OR VICE VERSA IS MEANT.**

- 1. A PART FOR THE WHOLE: EX. NEARLY **TWO HUNDRED HANDS (PERSONS)** ARE EMPLOYED IN HIS OFFICE**
- 2. THE WHOLE FOR THE PART: EX. WAKE THE **PURPLE YEAR (SPRING)**.**
- 3. A SPECIES FOR THE GENUS; EX. **SILVER AND GOLD (RICHES)** I HAVE NONE.**
- 4. THE GENUS FOR A SPECIES: DRINK, PRETTY **CREATURE (LAMB)** DRINK! (WORDSWORTH).**

→SYNECDOCHY

5. AN INDIVIDUAL FOR THE CLASS: EVERY MAN IS NOT **SOLOMON** (AS WISE AS KING SOLOMON).

6. THE MATERIAL FOR THE THING MADE: HE WAS DRESSED IN **LINEN** (LINEN CLOTHES).

7. THE ABSTRACT FOR THE CONCRETE: EX. I AM OUT OF **HUMANITY'S** REACH (MAN'S).

8. THE CONCRETE FOR THE ABSTRACT: EX. THERE IS A GOOD DEAL OF **FOX** (CUNNINGNESS) IN HIS CHARACTER.

→ FIGURES BASED ON ASSOCIATION

- **TRANSFERRED EPITHET/ HYPALLAGE: AN ADJECTIVE TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER NOUN. EX. THE SLEEPLESS PILLOW WAS PRESSED BY BOTH.**
- **ALLUSION: AN INDIRECT REFERENCE TO A PERSON, PLACE, OR EVENT. EX. OUR HANDS, AND CRY 'EUREKA', IT IS CLEAR IARCHEMEDES' 'HEUREKA'-WHEN HE FOUND OUT HOW TO TEST THE PURITY OF HIERO'S GOLD CROWN.**

3. BASED ON CONTRAST

- **ANTITHESIS: CONTRASTING WORDS OR IDEAS ARE SET AGAINST EACH OTHER IN A BALANCED FORM FOR THE SAKE OF EMPHASIS: EX. 1. IT IS A BLESSING AND NOT A CURSE; 2. YOUTH IS FULL OF PLEASURE, AGE IS FULL OF CARE; 3. TO ERR IS HUMAN, TO FORGIVE IS DIVINE.**
- **EPIGRAM: A BRIEF, WITTY STATEMENT, AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION IN LANGUAGE WHICH, BY CAUSING A ROUSES OUR ATTENTION: EX. 1. COWARDS DIE MANY TIMES BEFORE THEIR DEATH; 2. OUR SWEETEST SONGS ARE THOSE THAT TELL OF SADDEST THOUGHT.**
- **OXYMORON: JUXTAPOSITION OF TWO OPPOSITE WORDS: EX. 1. DARKNESS VISIBLE; A WAKING DREAM; 2. A LIVING DEATH**

→ FIGURES BASED ON CONTRAST

- • **CLIMAX: INCREASING ORDER OF IMPORTANCE. EX. 1. I CAME, I SAW, I CONQUER; 2. WE GRIEVED, WE SIGHED AND WE WEPT.**
- • **ANTI-CLIMAX: DESCENDING ORDER OF IMPORTANCE. EX. 1. POETS AND PIGS ARE NOT APPRECIATED UNTIL THEY ARE DEAD; 2. HE LOST HIS WIFE, HIS CHILD, HIS GOODS AND HIS DOGS.**
- • **CONDENSED SENTENCE: A SHORT, IMPACTFUL SENTENCE OF ODD IDEAS PUT TOGETHER FOR PROVOKING LAUGHTER. EX. 1. THE MUSICIAN BLEW THE PIPE AND HIS NOSE; 2. OBLIGED BY HUNGER AND THE REQUEST OF FRIENDS.**

4. BASED ON IMAGINATION

- **PERSONIFICATION: HUMAN TRAITS TO NON-HUMAN OBJECTS: INVESTING ABSTRACT IDEAS OF INANIMATE OBJECTS WITH THE ATTRIBUTES OF A LIVING BEING: EX. 1. WHEN NATURE DOTH MEET THE NOON; DEATH LAYS HIS ICY HANDS EVEN ON KINGS; 2. AUTHORITY FORGETS A DYING KING.**
- **APOSTROPHE: ADDRESSING TO A PERSON WHO IS ABSENT OR DEAD, OR TO AN INANIMATE OBJECT OR AN ABSTRACT IDEA: EX. 1. HAIL TO THEE, BLITHE SPIRIT! (SHELLEY); 2. OH SOLITUDE! WHERE ARE THE CHARMS... (COWPER); 3. MY MOTHER! WHEN I LEARNT THAT THOU WAS DEAD, ... (COWPER); 4. OH JUDGMENT! THOU ART FLED TO BRUTISH BEASTS.**
- **PATHETIC FALLACY: HUMAN FEELINGS ATTRIBUTED TO NATURE OR INANIMATE OBJECTS (ONE VARIETY OF PERSONIFICATION): EX. 1. EARTH FELT THE WOUND (MILTON); 2. HER FATE WHISPER'D BY THE GENTLE BREEZE, / AND TOLD IN SIGHS TO ALL THE TREMBLING TREES... (POPE).**

→ **FIGURES BASED ON IMAGINATION**

- **PERSONAL METAPHOR: IT CONSISTS IN THE TRANSFERENCE OF PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES TO INANIMATE OBJECTS; EX. 1. A FROWNING MOUNTAIN; 2. PRATTLING BROOK (AS A CHILD PRATTLES SO A BROOK MAKES A CEASELESS CLATTER); 3. THE ANGRY OCEAN**
- **VISION OR PROSOPOPOEIA: DESCRIBING A DREAM OR VISION: THE SPEAKER OR WRITER BRINGS TO HIS MIND SOME ABSENT OR IMAGINARY PICTURE, AND REPRESENTS IT WITH SUCH GRAPHIC REALITY AS THOUGH IT WERE ACTUALLY PRESENT TO THE SENSES: EX. 1. EVEN NOW, METHINKS, AS PONDERING HERE I STAND./ I SEE THE RURAL VIRTUES LEAVE THE LAND; 2. HARK! FORTH FROM THE ABYSS A VOICE PROCEEDS,/ ALONG LOW DISTANT MURMUR OF DREAD SOUND.**

→ **FIGURES BASED ON IMAGINATION**

- **• HYPERBOLE: EXAGGERATION FOR EFFECT; THINGS ARE REPRESENTED AS MUCH GREATER OR LESS, BETTER OR WORSE, THAN THEY REALLY ARE:**

EX. 1. TO SEE HER IS BUT TO LOVE HER,

AND LOVE BUT HER FOR EVER;

FOR NATURE MADE HER WHAT SHE IS,

AND NEVER MADE ANOTHER- BURNS;

2. I AM TIRED TO DEATH;

3. WHICH WAY I FLY IS HELL, MYSELF AM HELL

5. BASED ON INDIRECTNESS

- **• INNUENDO: AN OBLIQUE HINT OR INDIRECT SUGGESTION INSTEAD OF STATING PLAINLY; IT POINTS AT SOMETHING DAMAGING TO THE CHARACTER OR REPUTATION OF THE PERSON(S) REFERRED TO, WITHOUT MAKING ANY DIRECT CHARGE.**

EX.1. HE WAS BORN OF RICH BUT HONEST PARENTS (THE USE OF THE PARTICLE 'BUT', HERE, INSTEAD OF 'AND' SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT RICH PEOPLE ARE GENERALLY DISHONEST;

2. 'HOW DO YOU LIKE MY POEM?' YOUR HANDWRITING IS VERY GOOD.

3. THREE DOCTORS VISITED THE PATIENT TODAY, HE IS STILL ALIVE.

→ **FIGURES BASED ON INDIRECTNESS**

- **• IRONY: SAYING THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT IS MEANT:**

EX. 1. AND BRUTUS IS AN HONOURABLE MAN (WHAT BRUTUS IS NOT STATED BUT THE OPPOSITE IS MEANT.IT IS USED TO DAMAGE THE REPUTATION OF THE PERSON)

2. WITH HIS USUAL PUNCTUALITY HE ENTERED THE CLASS ROOM AFTER THE PROFESSOR HAD FINISHED ROLLCALL.

3. THE BROTHERLY LOVE OF OUR ENLARGING CHRISTIANITY IS PROVIDED BY THE MANIPULATION OF MURDER.

→ **FIGURES BASED ON INDIRECTNESS**

- **PERIPHHRASIS: USING A LONGER PHRASING- IN THIS FIGURE WE EXPRESS A THING IN A ROUND-ABOUT WAY INSTEAD OF SAYING IT DIRECTLY.**

EX. 1. MOVING ISLES OF WINTER (ICE-BERGS)

2. THE GREAT FIERCE FISH THAT THIRSTS FOR BLOOD (THE SHARK)

3. SLEEP THE SLEEP THAT KNOWS NO BREAKING (DIE)

4. THE KNIGHTLY GROWTH THAT FRINGED HIS LIPS (MOUSTACHES)

→ **FIGURES BASED ON INDIRECTNESS**

- **EUPHEMISM: A POLITE OR MILD EXPRESSION TO SOFTEN DOWN A HARSH DISAGREEABLE EXPRESSION. IT IS A WAY OF STATING SOMETHING OFFENSIVE IN A PLEASANT AND AGREEABLE WAY.**

EX. 1. LORD, BY THIS TIME HE *SMELLETH ISTINKETH*, FOR HE HATH *BEEN DEAD FOR FOUR DAYS*.

2. DISCORD FELL ON COWPER'S SOUL (BECOME MAD).

3. HE IS NOW SAFE WITH GENTLE JESUS (HE IS DEAD).

→ FIGURES BASED ON INDIRECTNESS

- **LITOTES: A STRONG AFFIRMATIVE IS SUGGESTED BY DENYING THE CONTRARY.**

EX. 1. HE IS THE CITIZEN OF *NO MEAN CITY* (DISTINGUISHED CITY)

2. THE MAN IS *NO FOOL* (WISE)

3. BYRON WAS A POET OF *NO MEAN ORDER* (HIGH ORDER)

4. HE IS *NOT UNWORTHY, NOT INGLORIOUS* SON. (WORTHY AND GLORIOUS SON)

6. BASED ON SOUND

- **PUN: A PLAY ON WORDS(SIMILAR SOUNDS, DIFFERENT MEANING): RESTS ON DUPLICITY OF SENSE UNDER UNITY OF SOUND AND IS ESSENTIALLY OF A LAUGHTER-PROVOKING NATURE: THIS IS ALSO THE FOUNDATION OF WIT.**

EX. 1. HE IS A SCIENTIST BUT HIS KNOWLEDGE ON SOUND IS NOT SOUND.

2. "NOT ON THY SOLE, BUT ON THY SOUL HARSH JEW/ THOU MAKEST THY KNIFE KEEN..."

3. LET ME GIVE LIGHT, BUT LET ME NOT BE LIGHT.

→ **FIGURES BASED ON SOUND**

- **ONOMATOPOEIA: WORDS THAT IMITATE SOUNDS: AN ARTIFICE OF LANGUAGE BY WHICH THE SOUND OF WORDS IS MADE TO REFLECT THEIR SENSE.**

EX. 1. AND NIAGRA STUNS WITH THUNDERING SOUND.

2. THE ICE CRACKED AND GROWLED, AND ROARED AND HOWLED/ LIKE NOISES IN A SWOUND.

3. THE RIVER GLIDETH AT HIS OWN SWEET WILL 9THE UNHURRIED, UNDISTURBED FLOW OF RIVER WATERS)

→ **FIGURES BASED ON SOUND**

- **ALLITERATION: ONOMOTOPOEIA BASED SOUND: REPETITION OF THE SAME CONSONANT SOUND.**

EX. 1. THE FAIR BREEZE BLEW, THE WHITE FOAM FLEW, / THE FURROW FOLLOWED FREE.

2. THE HOOLIGANS SHOULD BE FINED, / FLOGGED AND FLUNG INTO JAIL.

3. FROM COURTS, CAMPS, TO COTTAGES IT STRAYS.

→ **FIGURES BASED ON SOUND**

- **ASSONANCE: THE REPETITION OF VOWEL SOUNDS CLOSE TO ONE ANOTHER:**

EX. 1. 'O' SOUND IN 'BLESS THE LORD. ONLY SOUL. O LORD MY GOD, THOU ART VERY GREAT.'

2. MY SOUL IS ALSO SORE VEXED: BUT, THOU, O LORD, HOW LONG?

3. YET I LOVE TO HEAR THEIR WAILING, THEIR DOLEFUL RESPONSES....

→ **FIGURES BASED ON SOUND**

- **EUPHONY: WORDS HAVING SMOOTH AND PLEASANT SOUNDS ARE USED TO MAKE THE LANGUAGE MUSICAL TO EAR.**

EX. 1. MUSIC THAT GEBTLIER ON THE SPIRIT LIES/ THAN TIR'D EYELIDS UPON TIR'D EYES;/ MUSIC THAT BRINGS SWEET SLEEP/ DOWN FROM THE BLISSFUL SKIES.

→ **FIGURES BASED ON SOUND**

- **CACOPHONY: OPPOSITE OF EUPHONY; LANGUAGE WHICH SEEMS HARSH, ROUGH AND UNMUSICAL, CAUSED EITHER BY THE FAULT OF THE AUTHOR OR FOR THE SAKE OF HUMOROUS EFFECT.**

EX. 1, RATS: THEY FOUGHT THE DOGS AND KILLED THE CATS/ SPLIT OPEN THE KEGS OF SALTED SPRATS./MADE NESTS INSIDE MAN'S SUNDAY HATS.

7. BASED ON CONSTRUCTION

- **INTERROGATION OR EROTESIS: A RHETORICAL QUESTION.**

EX. 1. FOR WHO CAN THINK SUBMISSION? (MILTON)

2. SHALL WE, WHO, STRUCK THE LION, SHALL WE/PAY THE WOLF HOMAGE? (BYRON)

→ **FIGURES BASED ON CONSTRUCTION**

- **EXCLAMATION: AN EMOTIONAL STATEMENT; ABRUPT EXPRESSION OF EMOTION, THE LANGUAGE OF WISH OR CONTEMPLATION.**

EX. 1. OH THAT THOSE LIPS HAD LANGUAGE! (COWPER)

2. BUT, SHE IS IN HER GRAVE, AND OH!/THE DIFFERENCE TO ME!

→ **FIGURES BASED ON CONSTRUCTION**

- **• CHIASMUS: REVERSAL OF WORD ORDER, WHEN REPEATED OR SUBSEQUENTLY REFERRED TO IN A SENTENCE**

EX. 1. LEARN TO LIVE, AND LIVE TO LEARN.

2. FAIR IS FOUL, FOUL IS FAIR.

3. BEAUTY IS TRUTH, TRUTH BEAUTY.

→ **FIGURES BASED ON CONSTRUCTION**

- **ZEUGMA: ONE VERB IS CONNECTED WITH TWO NOUNS TO EACH OF WHICH A SEPARATE VERB SHOULD PROPERLY BE SUPPLIED.**

EX. 1. HE ATE HIS SANDWICHES AND HIS WORDS (EATING SANDWICH, AND BREAKING OF PROMISE)

2. THE MOMENT AND THE VESSEL PASSED.

3. MY FRIEND LOST HIS HAT AND HIS TEMPER.

→ **FIGURES BASED ON CONSTRUCTION**

- **HENDIADYS: TWO WORDS CONNECTED BY THE PARTICLE 'AND' AND ARE USED TO CONVEY ONE COMPLEX IDEA WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED BY A NOUN QUALIFIED BY AN ADJECTIVE.**

EX. 1. LIFE AND SUFFERANCE (SUFFERING LIFE)

2. WITH JOY AND TIDING FRAUGHT (JOYFUL TIDING).

3. HIS LOOK DREW AUDIENCE AND ATTENTION (ATTENTIVE AUDIENCE)

→ **FIGURES BASED ON CONSTRUCTION**

- **LITOTES: AN UNDERSTATEMENT: BY DENYING THE CONTRARY MORE IS INTENDED THAN IS EXPRESSED: THE EFFECT PRODUCED IS ONE OF EMPHASIS OF THE MEANING.**

EX. 1. THE MAN IS NO FOOL (WISE)

2. A CITIZEN OF NO MEAN CITY (DISTINGUISHED)

→ **FIGURES BASED ON CONSTRUCTION**

- **HYPERBATON OR INVERSION: ALTERED GRAMMATICAL WORD ORDER TO SECURE EMPHASIS.**

EX. 1. MUCH HAVE I TRAVELLED IN THE REALMS OF GOLD.

2. OUT OF SUFFERING COMES THE SERIOUS MIND.

3. SILVER AND GOLD I HAVE NONE.

4. THE TONGUE NO MAN CAN TAME.

→ **FIGURES BASED ON CONSTRUCTION**

- **• ASYNDETON: OMISSION OF CONNECTING CONJUNCTIONS.**

EX. 1. I SLIP, I SLIDE, I GLANCE.

2. I SEAL, I CANCEL. I DO WHAT I LIKE.

3. HE CAME, HE SAW, HE CONQUERED.

- **• POLYSYNDETON: USE OF MULTIPLE CONJUNCTIONS.**

EX. 1. THE HOARD AND SLEEP AND FEED AND KNOW ME NOT (TENNYSON)

2. IT CRACKED AND GROWLED AND ROARED AND HOWLED.

3. SOULS THAT HAVE TOILED, AND WROUGHT, AND THOUGHT WITH ME.

→ **FIGURES BASED ON CONSTRUCTION**

- **EPANAPHORA OR ANAPHORA: REPETITION OF AN EXPRESSION AT THE BEGINNING OF SUCCESSIVE CLAUSES OR SENTENCES.**

EX. 1. RING OUT OLD SHAPES OF FOUL DISEASE

RING OUT THE NARROWING LUST OF GOLD

RING OUT THE THOUSAND WARS OF OLD.

RING IN THE THOUSAND YEARS OF PEACE (TENNYSON)

2. AND NOW THERE CAME BOTH MIST AND SNOW

AND IT GREW WONDEROUS COLD

AND ICE, MOST HIGH, CAME FLOATING BY.....

→ **FIGURES BASED ON CONSTRUCTION**

- **EPISTROPHE: REPETITION OF WORDS AND PHRASES AT THE END OF SUCCESSIVE CLAUSES OR SENTENCES FOR THE SAKE OF GREATER VIGOUR.**

EX. 1. READING MAKETH A FULL MAN,

CONFERENCE A READY MAN,

AND WRITING AN EXACT MAN.

2. THE SAGES OF OLD WERE WRONG, THE GREAT THINKERS OF TODAY ARE WRONG; THE SCIENTISTS ARE WRONG; THE PHILOSOPHERS ARE WRONG, ALL ARE WRONG...

CONCLUSION

- **FIGURES OF SPEECH ENRICH LANGUAGE, MAKING IT MORE EXPRESSIVE AND VIVID. THEY ARE ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN BOTH LITERATURE AND EVERYDAY CONVERSATION.**