

UNIT – 5

POETIC FORMS AND DEVICES

5.1 Irony

Irony is another most commonly used figure of speech/ literary device in which words are often used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words. It may also be a situation that may end up in quite a different way than what is generally expected. In simple words, it is a difference between the appearance and the reality.

There are three kinds of irony i.e. verbal irony, situational irony and dramatic irony.

A verbal irony involves what one does not mean. When in response to a corrupt man we state, “He is an honest man!” it is a verbal irony.

A situational irony occurs when, for instance, The fire station burns down while the firemen are out on a call.

Firemen, who are responsible for the safety of others during spreading of fire are unaware of the disaster that has struck their own house.

A Dramatic Irony occurs when the characters are oblivious of the situation but the audience is not. For example, in “Romeo and Juliet”, we know much before the characters that they are going to die.

S T Coleridge in his famous poem has used this device exceptionally.

In the lines ;

“Water water everywhere,

Nor any drop to drink”

Ironically, there is water everywhere but they do not have a single drop of water to drink.

5.2 Imagery

Imagery is used as a figurative language to signify objects, actions and ideas in such a way that it appeals to our physical senses.

For example

There was dark and dim in the cave.

Here, the words “dark” and “dim” are visual images.

The soldiers were screaming and shouting on the battle field.

Here, “Screaming” and “shouting” appeal to our sense of hearing or auditory sense.

Mamta whiffed the aroma of brewed coffee.

Here, “whiff” and “aroma” evoke our sense of smell or olfactory sense.

The salesman showed white soft satin fabric.

Here, The idea of “soft” in this example appeals to our sense of touch or tactile sense.

These fresh and juicy mangoes are really sweet.

Here, “juicy” and “sweet” when associated with mangoes have an effect on our sense of taste or gustatory sense.

Examples of Imagery used in Literature

Example 1

John Keats’ in his famous ode “To the Autumn” has employed nature and auditory imagery .

“ And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;

Hedge cricket sings; and now with treble soft

The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies

The poet has used these sounds as imagery that appeal to our sense of hearing and song of autumn.

5.3 Paradox

The term Paradox is taken from the Greek word “*paradoxon*” that means contrary to expectations, existing belief or perceived opinion. Paradox is the most common figure of speech/literary device used in form of a statement in literature. It is a self-contradictory statement but may include a hidden truth. It is also used to illustrate an opinion or statement in opposite to accepted traditional ideas. A paradox is often used to make a reader think over an idea in innovative way.

Examples

Bhanu’s enemy’s friend is my enemy.

The baba proved to be a wise fool.

In literature, paradox is often used not just as a humorous statement. It can also be used to summarize the major themes of the work they are used in.

For example

George Orwell in his famous novel *Animal Farm*, has given numerous paradoxical political statements which are otherwise true.

‘All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others’.

The government in this novel claims that everyone is equal but it does not treat everyone equally.

5.4 Symbolism

A symbol is a very significant means of communication. It is a mark, sign, or word that indicates, signifies, or is understood as representing an idea, object, or relationship. It is used in the form of words, sounds, gestures, ideas or visual images and is used to convey other ideas and beliefs. For example, a red

light on a traffic crossing may be a symbol for "STOP". On a map, a green patch might represent vegetation.

Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense. Symbolism can take different forms. It is an object representing another to give it an entirely different meaning that is much deeper and more significant.

William Shakespeare in his play *As you Like It* states that

“All the world’s a stage, And all the men and women merely players;”

In these lines, Shakespeare states that ‘world’ is here symbolised as a stage and ‘men and women’ are actors who in course of their life perform different roles.

5.5 -Satire

Satire is generally used by writers to expose and criticize stupidity and corruption of an individual , society by using humor, irony, exaggeration or ridicule. Its purpose is to improve humanity by condemning its follies and foibles. A writer in a satire uses fictional characters, which stand for real people, to expose and condemn their corruption. A satire can be directed toward a person, a country or even the entire world.

We all witness cartoons in everyday newspapers, magazines, on television and other social media that criticize some actions of political figures in a comical way.

Alexander Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock* is one of the finest example of poetic satire in which Pope has satirized the upper middle class of eighteenth century England. This poem exposes the vanity of young fashionable ladies and gentlemen and the frivolity of their actions.

Satire intends to caution the community and to change their opinions about the widespread dishonesty rampant in society.

5.6 Personification

Personification is a figure of speech in which a thing, an idea or an animal is given human attributes. The non-human objects are portrayed in such a way that we feel they have the ability to act like human beings.

For example, when we say, “The sky weeps” we are giving the sky the ability to cry, which is a human quality. Thus, we can say that the sky has been personified in the given sentence.

Common Examples of Personification

Look at my car. She is a beauty, isn’t it so?

The flowers danced in the gentle breeze.

Time and tide waits for none.

The fire swallowed the entire forest.

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson employs personification in her poem “Have You Got A Brook In Your Little Heart”.

“Have you got a brook in your little heart,
Where bashful flowers blow,
And blushing birds go down to drink,
And shadows tremble so?”

The bashful flowers, blushing birds and trembling shadows are examples of personification.

5.7 Allusion

Allusion is a brief and indirect reference to a person, place, thing or idea of historical, cultural, literary or political significance. It does not describe in detail the person or thing to which it refers.

For example

Babli screamed, “Don’t act like a Romeo in front of me.” – Here, “Romeo” is a reference to Shakespeare’s Romeo, a passionate lover of Juliet, in “Romeo and Juliet”.

We find a number of allusions in Keats’s “Ode to the Grecian Urn”. For example:

“Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme”

Here “Sylvan” is a goat-like-man deity of Greek mythology.

5.8 -Hyperbole

Hyperbole points to an exaggeration of ideas for the sake of emphasis.

For example, Our friendship is as old as the hills.

Here friendship is equated with magnanimity of hills. Therefore, a hyperbole is an unreal exaggeration to emphasize the real situation.

Common Examples of Hyperbole

Wazir is as heavy as an elephant!

Tinku is dying of shame.

5.9 - Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a figure of speech/literary device in which a part of something represents the whole or it may use a whole to represent a part.

Synecdoche may also use larger groups to refer to smaller groups or vice versa. Synecdoche refers to the whole of a thing by the name of any one of its parts. For example, calling a car “wheels” is a synecdoche because a part of a car “wheels” stands for the whole car.

For example

“Teaching is my bread and butter.”

In this sentence, the word “bread” refers to food or money as in or “sole breadwinner”.

For example, In his poem “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” , S T Coleridge has used a synecdoche.

“ The Western wave was all a-flame.”

Here, ‘The Western wave’ is a synecdoche as it refers to the sea by the name of ‘wave’

5.10-Metonymy

It is a figure of speech that replaces the name of a thing with the name of something else with which it is closely associated.

Example

USA always keep a check on immigration.

Here, USA refers to the government.

The pen is mightier than the sword.

Here, Pen refers to written words and sword to physical force.

For example, In John Milton’s famous poem “Lycidas “

“But now my oar proceeds,

And listens to the herald of the sea”

The poet has used “oar” for a musical instrument made out of an oak-stalk. Thus, “oar” represents the song that the poet is composing next to the ocean.