

The Lost Art of Persuasion: A Speech

Rhetoric is best known as 'The Art of Persuasion' – it can be used in language to persuade others to do what you want, used to pick apart arguments and to analyse poetry and prose. Right, now I am pleased as punch [*punches the air*] to discuss some examples of rhetoric with you. Rhetoric...can you believe your ears? Or the two rhetorical devices I've used so far?

One being a rhetorical question which is a question you pose to your audience but do not expect an answer to, which luckily I didn't get. The second rhetorical device is a simile is where you say something is like or as something else. "We gasp [*gasps comically*] like goldfishes regurgitating algae.' This example of simile is essentially saying that people gasping resemble goldfishes throwing up their dinner. I don't consider this the most complimentary simile. Moving on swiftly! Swiftly like the wind! Thought I'd throw another one in there. So let's move on swiftly with the wind as it dashes breathlessly [*Runs forward breathlessly*] through the forest. That was an example of personification, which is when you describe an object as if it were human. [*Slows pace*] 'As trees grow up, their ego roots can show up. Their branches can sway in a downward way [*sways one arm downwards*] like people do and say things that make you want to throw up.' This personification is basically describing trees behaving like stuck up people. Essentially the trees are growing too tall for their own roots as some people get too big for their own boots. [*Moves hand upwards*]

[*Increases volume*] I'm playing a game with you! [*Points and smiles*] That personification had a slight [*drags the word slight out*] play on words. I'm referring to paronomasia which is a slight play on words or a pun. That reminds me, I considered myself a fighter in a singing competition but I could never hit the notes and I was also a tap dancer [*taps desk*] until I fell in the sink.

[*Rolls eyes*] Oh dear, I really should get to the point instead of telling you my life story... this is a serious cause for anticlimax which is when you deliberately spoil a climax by putting something unimportant at the end of it. 'The hen squawks, flapping its feathers [*flaps arms*] in a panic. Its twig-like legs pounding the ground so hard they could snap any second. The lion's hot, heavy breath is practically roasting the hen – beads of sweat emerge on its forehead. [*Increases volume and adapts to more serious tone*] The lion closes in, ready to sink his sharp, gleaming white teeth into his supper – [*Makes tone less serious and more playful*] when he gets bored and begins to chase his tail.' [*Holds one arm out and walks round in circle.*]

Yes, the lion in that anticlimax reminds me of a dear friend of mine... [*places hand on heart*] don't get me wrong, I'm not saying she's not brave or courageous – she has a heart of a lion but she's often afraid to roar with laughter. Unfortunately, I just accused my dear friend of something through omission, which is called suggestio falsi.

Blimey, forget lions! I know exactly what she'd say to my suggestio falsi: [*Speaks in exaggerated high pitched tone*] "Chloe, that joke is so old I was riding a dinosaur when I heard it!" Miserable old fossil! Heart of a lion and the mind of an extinct dinosaur – that's probably why her brain is never switched on. [*Taps head*] The only language she speaks is hyperbole. You may have noticed the deliberate exaggeration of the words used in my impersonation of her. Okay, my jokes about her may be slightly dated, but what I'm about to tell you really isn't a laughing matter. The other day my dear friend was rushed to

hospital in an earthquake [*Shakes vividly*] of anxiety and an ambulance. I'm trying to hinder her embarrassment here by using the rhetorical device syllepsis. I've used the words 'My dear' friend to cover up the two different roles she portrayed in relation to two other words and phrases. When she eventually came around the first thing she said shocked me. The nurse asked her, "What can you see?" and her response was "Rain racing onto the porch, hitting hard like rockets in a race to the glass." [*Mimics rain movement with fingers hitting desk lightly*] She wasn't making sense yet her response was so poetic and imaginative. What really shocked me was she didn't speak in her usual language of hyperbole. You may have noticed she used the rhetorical device alliteration - the repetition of initial consonants so that words stay in people's minds – it certainly worked because I've never forgotten it! [*Speaks in astonished tone*]

And speaking of rockets, that reminds me of when I had to fly a plane once. [*Increases volume*] 'Right ladies and gents, fasten your seat-belts! [*Mimics seat-belt fastening*] As unaccustomed as I am to flying these planes I am your pilot for today!' You should have seen their faces! That rhetorical device ignoratio petrified them – I was pretending I was a pilot who was unaccustomed to flying planes. One passenger even came out with, "I'm shaking [*Shakes vividly*] like a leaf about to pass away when a gust of wind lifts it off the ground." [*Mimics leaf flying with hand moving upwards*] I was like "Urm, you are about to be lifted off the ground but not by a gust of wind!" In case you didn't notice, the passenger actually used a euphemism which was 'pass away' instead of the harsher term 'die' - a mild word for one which might cause offence.

Now I have discussed the basic terms of rhetoric, we're going to take a step up to advanced rhetoric. That reminds me, I've used advanced rhetoric in a poem I've written. One line is 'I am blinded, [*Places hand over eyes*] blinded with tears, [*Removes hand from eyes and wipe away imaginary tears*] like a lover, as I am forced to face my fears, to choose just one, and abandon the other.' This is an example of asyndeton which consists of omitting conjunctions between words, phrases or clauses. In the next line of my poem I use the rhetorical device sentential verb. The next line is 'Please, don't make me do this, they emerged from the heavens and shone a light to help me see the good in this cruel cold world.' The short phrase 'Don't make me do this' is used to lend emphasis on the words proximate to the adverb.

[*Quickens pace*] Right, your brains must be about to explode [*Clasps own head and lets go quickly*] with all these examples of rhetoric so I will break off from advanced rhetoric and this speech with a nice basic rhetorical device aposiopesis which will be used to deliberately break off what I'm saying and make you supply the – [*Holds hand out to audience*]

Amber Forest

