

## Some important aspects for the analysis of political speeches

- (1) Close reading of the text, with special attention to
  - a) key words and phrases
  - b) clusters (a series of words that are related to each other in meaning)
  - c) oppositions (e.g. negative/positive; near/distant; familiar/alien)
  - d) the use of key symbols, slogans, stereotypes;
  - e) abstractions and generalizations versus the presentation of specific issues or events:
    - how are these two levels related to each other?
    - how does one level outweigh the other?
  - f) metaphors, analogies, illustrations - from what spheres of life are they drawn (e.g. nature; religion) ?
  - g) other characteristic features of style (choice of words and syntax), e.g.
    - short simple statements;
    - numerous colloquialisms and slang expressions;
    - numerous poetic and learned expressions
  - h) the use of personal pronouns (e.g. 'I', 'us', 'we', 'you', 'they' etc.) and the meaning of these pronouns in the context of the speech
  - i) patterns of identification and solidarity:
    - who is 'we' and who does the speaker refer to by 'they'?
    - what role models or heroes are being praised, what sphere of life is touched upon?

## Some stylistic devices

### (1) analogy

Analogy means resemblance in some particulars between things otherwise unlike.

Example: There is an analogy between the branches of a tree and those of a family.

Both simile and metaphor are based on analogy!

### (2) simile

A simile is a figure of speech in which two things are compared because they have something in common although they are different in all other respects. Its general purpose is to make the description more vivid and more striking.

In a simile the comparison is explicitly stated with the help of as or like.

Example: My love is like a red, red rose. (Robert Burns)

I wandered lonely as a cloud. (William Wordsworth)

Miss Amelia Jones is like a fussy old hen. (Anon.)

### (3) metaphor

A metaphor is a simile condensed: A simile says merely that one thing is like another, whereas the metaphor says that one thing is another.

The simile "Miss Amelia Jones is like a fussy old hen" becomes a metaphor if 'like' is dropped.

Example: All the world is a stage... . (Shakespeare)

Life is but a walking shadow. (Shakespeare)

The countess sailed across the room. (Anon.)

### (4) alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of a consonantal sound of two or more neighbouring words.

### (5) repetition

The repetition of words or phrases is sometimes made use of for the purpose of emphasis.

**Example:** It's his only wish, his only ambition, the only plan he pursues.

**(6) parallelism**

In parallelism two or more parts of one sentence ( sometimes of two or more sentences) are given a similar form so as to give the whole a definite pattern. This symmetry tends to produce an agreeable rhythm. It can also help to bring out the point of a paragraph - to emphasize a contrast, for example, by balancing some words or parts of speech against each other.

**Example:** *We charge him with having broken his oath, we accuse him of having given up his people, and we censure him for having violated against the articles of the Bill of Rights.*

**(7) antithesis**

As a rhetorical figure antithesis denotes the opposing of ideas by means of grammatically parallel arrangements of words, clauses or sentences so as to produce an effective contrast.

**Example:** He gave everything to those who deserved it, but he did not give anything to those who were idle.

**Application:**

- a) Blankets and mattresses hung like tongues from the windows.
- b) Bees work endlessly to produce as much honey as they can. On my trip to China I got a similar impression. Chinese people seem to be able to work without ever making a break.
- c) After life's fitful fever ...
- d) He cried out what he felt, he wrote down what he thought and he relied on what he saw.
- e) The snake was hissing secretive sounds.
- f) They were not the captives of their own doubts

