

Class 8

Figures of Style and Thought III

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More Rhetorical Figures

Isocolon

- A series of similarly structured elements having roughly the same length. A kind of parallelism.

Isocolon Example

This struggle was protracted and fierce.

Suddenly the scene has cleared, the crash and thunder has for the moment-but only for the moment-died away. A miracle of deliverance, achieved **by valor**, **by perseverance**, **by perfect discipline**, **by faultless service**, **by resource**, **by skill**, **by unconquerable fidelity**, is manifest to us all.

--Winston Churchill

Scesis Onomaton

- Figure of repetition in which a set of two or more different words having the same (or very nearly the same) meaning occurs within the same sentence; a successive series of words or phrases whose meanings are generally equivalent.

Scesis Onomaton Example

- There is no room in this country for any flag except our own. There is no room for the red flag. It is opposed to everything our government stands for. It stands for **anarchy**, **chaos**, and **ruin**. Smash it."
– Leonard Wood

Scesis Onomaton Example

- Let there be no illusions about the difficulty of forming this kind of a national community. It's **tough, difficult, not easy**. But a spirit of harmony will survive in America only if each of us remembers that we share a common destiny"
 - Barbara Jordan

Asyndeton

Figure of omission in which normally occurring conjunctions (and, or, but, for, nor, so, yet) are intentionally omitted in successive phrases, or clauses; a string of words not separated by normally occurring conjunctions.

Asyndeton

"The union survival, its very existence, sent out a signal to all Hispanics that we were fighting for our dignity, that we were challenging and overcoming injustice, that we were empowering **the least educated among us, the poorest among us**. The message was clear. If it could happen in the fields, it could happen anywhere: in the cities, in the courts, **in the city councils, in the state legislatures.**"

--Cesar Chavez

Polysyndeton

- Figure of addition and emphasis which intentionally employs a series of conjunctions (and, or, but, for, nor, so, yet) not normally found in successive words, phrases, or clauses; the deliberate and excessive use of conjunctions in successive words or clauses.

Polysyndeton Example

- "We must change that deleterious environment of the 80's, that environment which was characterized by greed and hatred and selfishness and mega-mergers and debt overhang...."

-- Barbara Jordan

Euphemismos

- Figure used to transform an unpleasant, distasteful or repulsive expression into more socially acceptable terms.
 - “That person is veracity challenged.”

Euphemismos Example

- "Some pundits said our programs would result in catastrophe. The fact is what they called 'radical' was really 'right.' What they called 'dangerous' was just 'desperately needed.'"
 - Ronald Reagan, Farewell Address

Euphemismos Example

- Now, this is about protecting our citizens. And all countries have an obligation to work together to do everything we can within the law to ensure the safety and security of our people. This is a global war on terrorism, and we work cooperatively with many nations. And we respect the sovereignty of each nation. And we have and we will continue to do so. It is their choice as to how they want to -- it is their choice in terms of how they want to participate. But in terms of renditions and talking in any specific way about it, I'm just not going to do it. I'm not going to get into talking about these issues because it could compromise things in an ongoing war on terrorism. And we're not going to do that.
 - [Press Briefing by Scott McClellan](#)

Anesis

- A figure of addition that occurs when a concluding sentence, clause, or phrase is added to a statement which purposely diminishes the effect of what has been previously stated.

Anesis Example

- "This year's space budget is three times what it was in January 1961, and it is greater than the space budget of the previous eight years combined. That budget now stands at 5 billion-400 million dollars a year -- a staggering sum, though somewhat less than we pay for cigarettes and cigars every year."

– John F. Kennedy

Rice University Address on
Space Exploration

Anesis Example

- "We are here today and have been this week for one single reason -- because the Soviet Union secretly introduced this menacing offensive military buildup into the island of Cuba while assuring the world that nothing was further from their thoughts. The argument, in its essence, of the Soviet Union is that it was not the Soviet Union which created this threat to peace by secretly installing these weapons in Cuba, but that it was the United States which created this crisis by discovering and reporting these installations. **This is the first time, I confess, that I have ever heard it said that the crime is not the burglar but the discovery of the burglar.**"
 - Adlai Stevenson, Address to the United Nations Security Council on Soviet Missiles in Cuba

Hyperbole

- Deliberate exaggeration of a person, thing, quality, event to emphasize a point external to the object of exaggeration; intentional exaggeration for rhetorical effect.

Hyperbole Example

- **"The only place where democracy comes before work is in the dictionary."** -- Ralph Nader, *2000 NAACP Address*

Hyperbole Example

- "My senior year, I received a telephone call from a gentleman by the name of Mr. Gil Brandt of the Dallas Cowboys. And he stated that the Cowboys was interested in drafting me, and I couldn't ignore it. I decided to attend the Cowboys training camp. That year, 1967, the Dallas Cowboys had 137 rookies in training camp. **Gil Brandt was signing everybody that could walk.** Only five made the team that year, and I was one of the five."
 - Larry Rayfield Wright

Metaphor

- Figure of explication occurring when a comparison made by speaking of one thing in terms of another; an implied comparison between two *different* things which share at least one attribute in common; an association between two unlike things (A vs. B) achieved by borrowing the language that refers to thing A and applying it to thing B. (not to be confused with simile)

Metaphor Example

"With this faith we will be able to transform **the jangling discords of our nation** into a **beautiful symphony of brotherhood.**"

– Martin Luther King, /
Have a Dream

Metaphor Example

- "At the dawn of spring last year, a single act of terror brought forth the long, cold winter in our hearts. The people of Oklahoma City are mourning still."
 - Al Gore, *Oklahoma Bombing Memorial Address*

Paradox

- Figure that employs an apparent contradiction which, nonetheless, evokes some measure of truth; a statement which seems at one level to be nonsensical because it moves against a normalcy. At another level, however, the figure conjures a new way of seeing or understanding, a novel meaning.
 - Example: "I don't hustle with people who are dishonest."

Paradox Example

- "Paradox has been defined as 'Truth standing on her head to attract attention.' But it must be admitted that writers, like other mendicants and mountebanks, frequently do try to attract attention. They set out conspicuously, in a single line in a play, or at the head or tail of a paragraph, remarks of this challenging kind; as when Mr. Bernard Shaw wrote: **'The Golden Rule is that there is no Golden Rule.'**; or Oscar Wilde observed: **'I can resist everything except temptation'**; or as a duller scribe (not to be named with these and now doing penance for his earlier vices in the nobler toil of celebrating the virtues of Mr. Pond) said in defense of hobbies and amateurs and general duffers like himself: **'If a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing badly.'** To these things do writers sink."
 - G.K. Chesterton, When Doctors Agree (

Oxymoron

- Figure that binds together TWO words that are ordinarily contradictory; a TWO WORD paradox; two words with contrary or apparently contradictory meanings occurring next to each other, and, which, nonetheless, evoke some measure of truth; the figure conjures a new way of seeing or understanding, a novel meaning.

Oxymoron Example

- "**Safe sex** -- now there's an oxymoron. That's like '**tactical Nuke**' or '**adult male.**'"

Aposiopesis

- Figure in which the speaker abruptly stops or falls short of completing a statement; stopping short of completing a statement.

Aposiopesis Example

- "At this juncture I want to get into -- By the way I was told to give you some advice about the media. You don't know how small I feel giving you advice, but I'll be glad to anyway since I've been asked to."
 - Rush Limbaugh, Address to the incoming House GOP Freshmen

Rhetorical Question

- Figure which asks a question, not for the purpose of further discussion, but to assert or deny an answer implicitly; a question whose answer is obvious or implied.

Rhetorical Question Example

- Can anyone look at the record of this Administration and say, "Well done"?
 - Can anyone compare the state of our economy when the Carter Administration took office with where we are today and say, "Keep up the good work"?
 - Can anyone look at our reduced standing in the world today and say, "Let's have four more years of this"?
- Ronald Reagan, 1980 Republican National Convention Acceptance Address

Rhetorical Question Example

- "It really is time to ask ourselves, 'How can we allow the rich and powerful, not only to rip off people as consumers, but to continue to rip them off as taxpayers?'"

-- Ralph Nader, 2000 NAACP
Convention Address

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