

RHETORICAL FIGURES AS COGNITIVE: A CASE STUDY OF ISOCOLON

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RhetCanada



EXAMPLE

“Two thousand years ago the proudest boast was 'Civis Romanus sum.'
Today in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is 'Ich bin ein Berliner.'”

Kennedy 1963

ISOCOLON

- other names:
rhythmic parallelism, equality, cadence, compar, syzygia, tricolon, parison
- definition:
two or more multiword sequences with identical prosodic contours
- contrast with parison, whose definition is:
two or more multiword sequences with identical syntactic structure
- endophoric iconicity:
resemblance of two or more signifiers
- exophoric iconicity (for later)
resemblance of signified and signifier

EXAMPLE

“Those who don't do anything are encouraging disgrace and violence. On the other hand, we recognize right as well as truth when we act boldly.”

REPETITION

REPETITION

- every sign "presupposes a prior acquaintance with [an] object" (Nöth 2000)
- isocolon provides a setting for the ideas in each phrase to be conceptually joined or compared (Fahnestock 2005)
- there is an analogue between neural processes and higher cognitive processes (Gregg 1984)
- psychologists have "recorded quicker recognition time for highly constrained, predictable sentences" (Fahnestock 2005)

EXAMPLE

“We do this, but they on the other hand do that;
we stay here; but they go there;
we look up, but they look down.”

Burke (1969)

REPETITION

- "you will find yourself swinging along with the succession of antitheses" (Burke 1969)
- the repetition of metre gives readers a sense of security because of its predictability (Tsur 1996)
- predictability is key to a reader's primitive need for play and participation (Burke 1969)

EXAMPLE

“Readers don't need to write but writers do need to read.”

REPETITION

- see "Birds of a feather flock conjointly (?): rhyme as reason in aphorisms" (McGlone & Tofighbakhsh 2000)

Table 1. <i>Examples of the aphorism pairs</i>	
Original version	Modified version
Extant rhyming aphorisms	
Woes unite foes.	Woes unite enemies.
What sobriety conceals, alcohol reveals.	What sobriety conceals, alcohol unmasks.
Life is mostly strife.	Life is mostly struggle.
Caution and measure will win you treasure.	Caution and measure will win you riches.
Variety prevents satiety.	Variation prevents satiety.
Extant nonrhyming aphorisms	
Fools live poor to die rich.	Fools live poor to die wealthy.
Power grows mightier with each trial.	Power grows mightier with each challenge.
Short pleasure, long repentance.	Short pleasure, long regret.
He who rides a tiger is afraid to dismount.	He who rides a tiger is afraid to get off.
Good intentions excuse ill deeds.	Good intentions excuse ill acts.

EXAMPLE

“Those who don't do anything are encouraging disgrace ~~and~~ as well as violence. On the other hand, we recognize right as well as truth when we act boldly.”

Example with medial repetition

PARALLELISM

PARALLELISM

- parallelism emphasises correspondences between two phrases (Dupriez)
- repetition (in parison) "produce[s] an impression of coordination, leveling, or similarity", "epitomize[s] a comparison" (Fahnestock 2014)
- similarity in structure of one colon highlights the features of the other colon (Lotman qtd. in Christiansen)

EXAMPLE

"As love, if love be perfect, casts out fear,
So hate, if hate be perfect, casts out fear."

Tennyson 1855

EXAMPLE

"As Caesar loved me, I weep for him;
as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it;
as he was valiant, I honour him;
but as he was ambitious, I slew him."

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 3.2.24-27

EXAMPLE

“Those who don't do anything are encouraging disgrace as well as violence. ~~On the other hand, we recognize right as well as truth~~
Those who act boldly are recognizing ~~when we act boldly.~~”

Example with medial and structural repetition

EXAMPLE

“Those who don't do anything are encouraging disgrace as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognizing right as well as truth.”

Example with medial and structural repetition

RHYTHM

RHYTHM AND EXOPHORIC ICONICITY

- rhythmic patterns provoke an "aural image of bombardment" (Bernhart 1999)
- speech itself is a "movement system" involving "energy expenditure" (ibid.)
- conversations/speech acts consist of "dialogical rhythms of turn-taking" (Brandt qtd. in Waller 2007)
- "[i]n all known languages, regular intonation patterns connect lexical items and syntactic constructions" (ibid.)
- "people have a tendency to modulate their prosody in iconic correspondence with certain meanings" (Perlman et al. 2015)
- musical metre "establishes predictive patterns that are similar to those of language" (Vuust & Roepstorff 2008)

RHYTHM AND COGNITION (GREGG)

- rhythm is fundamental to human/vertebrate development
- children do not develop speech until auditory rhythm has reached a certain speed (around age of 2)
- auditory rhythm affects stability of nervous system
- "rhythm appears to be central to levels of arousal, to emotional states, to pattern recognition, and indeed to conception and comprehension"
- "concrete events and acts are vivified by means of stylized verbal forms"
- speakers "use prosody to process word meaning" (Nygaard et al. 2009)

EXAMPLE

“Those who don't do anything are encouraging ^{shame}~~disgrace~~ as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognizing right as well as ~~truth~~.”
reality

Kennedy & Windt 1963

EXAMPLE

“Those who don't do anything are encouraging disgrace and violence. On the other hand, we recognize right as well as truth when we act boldly.”

“Those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognizing right as well as reality.”

Kennedy & Windt 1963

GAMESOURCING A RHETORICAL FIGURE ONTOLOGY

RHETFIG ONTOLOGY

RhetFig

About

Policies

People

Figure List

Sources

Repetition

Lexical

anadiplosis

Scheme

Syntactic

Position

Search Figures

The interactive graphic over to the left randomly generates figures, with their taxonomic, cognitive, and linguistic affiliations.

The blue link shows the Cognitive Affinity(ies) of the figure.

The green link shows the Linguistic Domain(s) of the figure.

The orange link shows the Taxonomic Class of the figure.

This (beta-version) site charts rhetorical figures and their interactions, largely around the chiasmic suite, figures of inverse repetition ("I meant what I said and I said what I meant—an elephant's faithful, one hundred percent" [Seuss]).

Figures are social animals, though, and often travel in packs. **Mesodiplosis**, for instance, is a figure of medial repetition with frequently accompanies chiasmic figures ("I meant what I said and I said what I meant").

Parison, a figure of syntactic repetition, is also a regular travelling companion ("I meant what I said" and "I said what I meant" have exactly the same Pronoun — Verb — Complement — Pronoun — Verb structure).

Meanwhile, **Isocolon** is a figure of prosodic repetition, and it often accompanies Parison ("I meant what I said" and "I said what I meant" have the same intonation patterns).

And then there are figures that are less predictable. They just show up for some additional effect, like **rhyme**, a figure of final syllable repetition ("I meant what I said and I said what I meant—an elephant's faithful, one hundred

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RHETFIG PRINCIPLES

Rhetorical figures

- are form/function pairings
- are polyfunctional
- work in concert with other figures and with linguistic features to achieve those functions

anadiplosis

Etymology

(Traditional) from Gk. *ana* "again" and *diploin* "to double" or *diplos* "double"

Synonyms, partial synonyms, and alternate spellings

like sentence endings and beginnings, reduplication, the redouble

Definition

The repetition of the last word or word group of one sentence at the beginning of the subsequent sentence. Anadiplosis sometimes iterates. When it does, the resulting compound figure is known as **GRADATIO**.

Example New Example

Now, women forget all those things they don't want to **remember**, and **remember** everything they don't want to forget. (Hurston 1991 [1937]:3)

Hurston, Zora Neale. 1991. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

- ☒ anadiplosis
- ☐ antimetabole
- ☐ antithesis
- ☐ mesodiplosis
- ☐ periphrasis
- ☐ ploc
- ☐ ploc 1
- ☐ ploc 2
- ☐ ploc 3
- ☐ prozeugma

RHETFIG ONTOLOGY

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- ☒ anadiplosis
- ☐ antimetabole
- ☐ antithesis
- ☐ mesodiplosis
- ☐ p
- ☐ mesodiplosis
- ☐ Repetition of the same word or word group in the middle of successive phrases or sentences.
- ☐ p
- ☐ prozeugma

https://artsresearch.uwaterloo.ca/chiasmic/display/figure_simple.php?q=mesodiplosis

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- ☐ ploc 1
- ☐ ploc 2
- ☐ ploc 3
- ☐ prozeugma

GOFIGURE (NAME TENTATIVE)

Populating a database of annotated figurative instances.

Multiple versions (≥ 3)

- 'Classroom' activity
- Free-range 'game'
- Free-range direct population

Multiple platforms (≥ 2)

- Tablets & phones
- Laptops & desktops

Common features

- Figure tutorials
- Automatic verification
- Figure portal

<anadiplosis>women forget all those things they don't want to
<A1>remember, </A1> and <A2>remember </A2> everything they don't
want to forget. </anadiplosis >

<antimetabole>women <A1>forget</A1> all those things they don't
want to <B1>remember, </B1> and <B2>remember </B2> everything
they don't want to <A2>forget</A2>. </antimetabole>

<antithesis>women <A1>forget</A1> all those things they don't want
to <B1>remember, </B1> and <B2>remember </B2> everything they
don't want to <A2>forget</A2>. </antithesis >

<mesodiplosis>women forget all those things <A1> they don't want to
</A1> remember, and remember everything <A2> they don't want to
</A2> forget. </mesodiplosis >

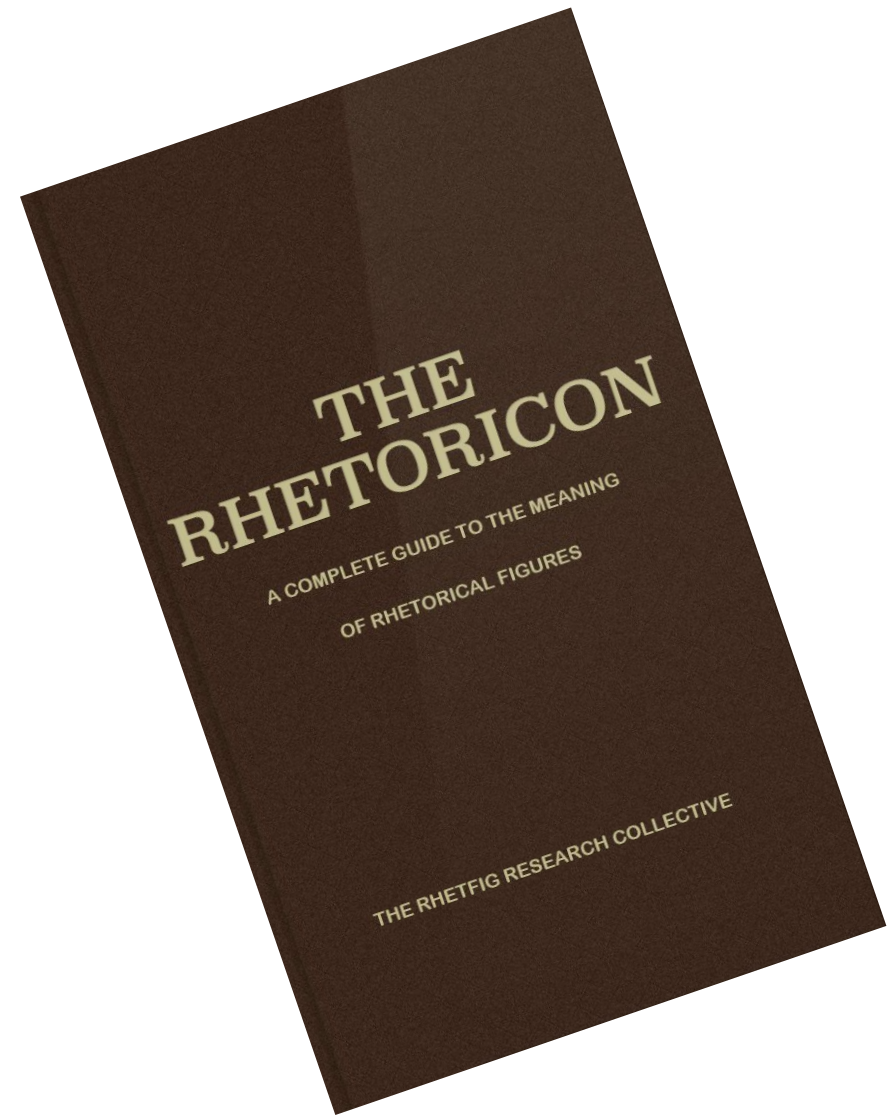
<periphrasis>women forget <A1>all those things</A1> they don't want
to remember, and remember <B1> everything</B1> they don't want to
forget. </periphrasis >

<prozeugma><A1>women </A1> forget all those things they don't want
to remember, and <A2>[women]</A2> remember everything they
don't want to forget. </prozeugma >

Etc.

PROJECT TRAJECTORIES

- Figurography
- Collocations
- Colligations
- Cooccurrence with linguistic features
- Data mining
- Argument mining
- Authorship attribution
- Forensic rhetoric
- Genre detection
- Sentiment analysis
- ...



<http://artsresearch.uwaterloo.ca/chiastic/display/>

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