

Anaphora and Antithesis Examples

Examples from "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

Example 1: "Was not Jesus an extremist in love? — 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.' Was not Amos an extremist for justice? — 'Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.' Was not Paul an extremist for the gospel of Jesus Christ? — 'I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.' Was not Martin Luther an extremist? — 'Here I stand; I can do no other so help me God.' Was not John Bunyan an extremist? — 'I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a mockery of my conscience.' Was not Abraham Lincoln an extremist? — 'This nation cannot survive half slave and half free.' Was not Thomas Jefferson an extremist? — 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'"

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

Example 2: "I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court because it is morally right, and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances because they are morally wrong."

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

Examples of Anaphora and Antithesis Across and Within Sentences

Anaphora across sentences: "Our nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age. Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly, our schools fail too many—and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet."

—Barack Obama, 2009 Inaugural Address

Antithesis across sentences: "Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust."

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

Anaphora within a sentence: "We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills."

—Winston Churchill, "We Shall Fight On The Beaches" speech

Antithesis within a sentence: "The sunlight that brought light and healing to you has brought stripes and death to me."

—Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"