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“He lay still. It was all right. The bull was gone” – Programming an “amplification” of meaning in some examples of “paratactic” sentence combinations

Fiona Rossette

1. Introduction

- 1 The following paragraph :

(1) The bull was on him as he jumped back and as he tripped on a cushion he felt the horn go into his side. He grabbed the horn with his two hands and rode backward, holding tight onto the place. The bull tossed him and he was clear. He lay still. It was all right. The bull was gone.

(E. Hemingway, ‘The Un defeated’, *The First Forty-Nine Stories*, p. 225)

features an interesting example of clause-combining : three very short clauses, each made up of three or four words follow one after the other in separate sentences. They bear no connective and fall under the focus conferred by the end of the paragraph.

- 2 The sequence is reminiscent of the famous *veni, vidi, vici*, example *par excellence* of parataxis.
- 3 Such an example stands in contrast to Hemingway’s “trademark” use of polysyndeton, his long sentences containing many clauses built around the repetition of *and*, and points to his more wide-ranging exploitation of what clause-combining has to offer. Here are two examples from other writers :

(2) (...) At the centre of Georgie’s wildness there was a calm. You could feel it in her hands. There was a competence, an authority, a seriousness. Yes, and passion. Almost despite herself she was a person of substance. He trusted her. And when he

woke in that house and she was gone he was just plain scared. Before he met her, Fox was furtive. He was cunning. He was never scared. (T. Winton, *Dirt Music*, p. 383)
 (3) If I was you, said Philomena, I'd make sure there's no more children. He don't have a job, so he don't, an' never will the way he drinks. So... no more children, Angela. Are you listening to me ?

I am Philomena.

A year later another child was born. Angela called him Malachy after his father and gave him a middle name, Gerard, after his father's brother.

The MacNamara sisters said Angela was nothing but a rabbit and they wanted nothing to do with her till she came to her senses.

Their husbands agreed. (F. McCourt, *Angela's Ashes*, p. 19)

- 4 The paragraph in (2) also ends with two short sentences (*He was cunning. He was never scared*), while (3) features a sentence of three words which constitutes a paragraph on its own (*Their husbands agreed*). In all three examples, the sentences in question appear detached from the sequences to which they nevertheless belong. We would expect them to be part of longer sentences. To a certain extent, they can be likened to the fragmented style of post-modern, minimalist prose, characterised by a certain deconstruction of the grammar of the sentence (e.g. sentences lacking a finite verb, or a subject, for which analytical-type connectives have no place). However, the sentences in (1) to (3) do conform to the model of the traditional grammatical sentence : they all contain a subject and a predicate, albeit a very concise one.
- 5 Jean-François Lyotard describes the act of sentence-combining as theoretically problematic, and the sentence break as one example of *un différend*, a locus of conflict, of altercation :

For each sentence, there is a conflict between genres of discourse, whatever the type. This conflict relates to the question : What can come after this sentence ? And this question is born out of the nothingness which "separates" this sentence from the next.

(Chaque phrase est en principe l'enjeu d'un différend entre des genres de discours, quel que soit son régime. Ce différend procède de la question : Comment l'enchaîner ? qui accompagne une phrase. Et cette question procède du néant qui « sépare » cette phrase de la suivante.)
 (Lyotard, 1983 : 200) (My translation)
- 6 Examples like (1) to (3) illustrate Lyotard's propos in that there is something problematic about the flow of the sentences. They capture the attention of the reader and can therefore be considered marked. This may be considered a literary or stylistic issue, however, these examples are worth integrating into some of the existent linguistic theory on clause combining.
- 7 In an earlier study (Rossette 2005), I discussed "expressive" meanings which can be assigned to different types of parataxis, be it within ("intra-sentential") or across sentences. While these meanings varied greatly, each appeared specific to a certain "type" of parataxis, that is, a correlation could be established between different combinations of contextual variables and the meanings that each combination engendered. In this article, I concentrate on clause-combining at sentence level, and seek to identify the fixed variables which are united and make it possible to compare examples like (1) to (3). Some would argue that (1) to (3) are *not* comparable. However, I would contend that they offer an opportunity to explore certain resources at work, and that, in both types of examples, a particular semantic program is being initiated. Of course, the linguist cannot determine every component of meaning – as de Vogüé (this volume) points out, semantics is a "fragile" field of study, and defining meaning potential at any

level can be regarded as an unthinkable endeavour. I would argue that such meaning potential moves a notch higher as soon as we move from inside to outside the sentence, and that parataxis can prove a useful tool to point to such a burgeoning of meaning.

- 8 In what follows, I first discuss the issues raised by the notion of parataxis, and the difficulty of applying it to sentence-level combining. The markedness of examples like (1) to (3) is then explained in terms of (a) the choice to insert sentence breaks between short clauses, and (b) various phenomena relating to repetition. In the last section, an attempt is made to categorise certain types of meanings which are generated. I adopt a global approach to meaning, to include not only what systemic functional linguists refer to as the ideational component (i.e. the extralinguistic) but also the interpersonal (i.e. intralinguistic), extending over what falls under the general banner of rhetorical or pragmatic effects.

2. Paratactic sentence combining ?

- 9 The comparison drawn with *veni, vici, vidi* makes it tempting to talk about parataxis or asyndeton, which I will treat as synonyms. While asyndeton appears to belong to literary terminology, designating a figure of speech (e.g. Corbett 1965 ; 1990), parataxis takes on a linguistic meaning in English in the nineteenth century, according to the Oxford dictionary, which retraces usage of the term :

The placing of propositions or clauses one after another, without indicating by connecting words the relation (of coordination or subordination) between them.
 1842 in BRANDE Dict. Sci.
 1883 B.L. GILDERSLEEVE in Amer. Joul. Philol. IV 420. Now to make hypotaxis out of parataxis we must have a joint.
 1888 W. LEAF Iliad II. 414. A good instance of primitive parataxis, two clauses being merely set side by side.
 (*The Oxford English Dictionary in 20 volumes*, 1989)

- 10 The 1883 example attests to a change in usage, with parataxis entering into opposition with hypotaxis (or subordination). In addition, "parataxis" can include other modes of clause linkage (i.e. coordination), and so the expression "asyndetic parataxis" has been coined to make clear that no connective, not even a coordinator, is used.
- 11 It could be argued that to talk about parataxis here is inappropriate for two reasons. Firstly, for most linguists, parataxis involves clause combining *within* the sentence. In a volume edited by Deléchelle (1997) and devoted to the "absence of markers" ("Absence de marques et représentation de l'absence"), all articles relate to phenomena within the sentence, mostly embedded clauses, such as relatives.
- 12 Secondly, the terms parataxis or asyndeton both suggest that something is missing. Marchello-Nizia (1992) talks about parataxis in French when "an expected and necessary item in the construction is not expressed" ("un élément de construction attendu, et nécessaire, n'est pas exprimé"). This begs the question as to whether something (i.e. a connective) is actually missing in the above examples. Sentences which forego connectives abound in written English. In fact, beginning a sentence with a connective can be considered a marked choice. By marked, I mean statistically less frequent than the unmarked counterpart, a deliberate departure from the norm by the speaker in order to achieve a particular effect.

- 13 Table 1 below presents results of a previous study (Rossette 2003). In a corpus of editorials and essays (approximately 20 000 words), less than 20 % of sentences begin with a connective. Connectives appear mainly in “within contexts”, realising clause combining within the sentence. This is particularly the case for the coordinating and subordinating conjunctions ; conversely, conjuncts (e.g. *however, therefore*) show a preference for sentence-initial position, although they only feature in 5 % of such contexts. 65 % of sentences begin directly with the grammatical subject, as do those under examination in (1) to (3). The most common type of fronted element in sentence-initial position is the adverbial expressing circumstance. While these figures are not based on a literary corpus, it can be assumed that conjuncts would feature even less outside the argumentative, analytical prose which characterises editorials and essays.

Table 1 : Modes of clause-linkage within and between sentences

	“Within” contexts	Sentence-initial
Clause beginning directly with the grammatical subject	36 %	65 %
Coordinating conjunction	36 %	9 %
Subordinating conjunction	42 %	< 0,5 %
Conjunct	2 %	5 %
Adverbial	5 %	13 %

- 14 The problem can be approached from another angle, and it can be posited that the clause combining in examples (1) to (3) is underscored by relations that would generally be marked by a connective. In (1), Hemingway relates the sequence of actions of the bull fight one after the other, linking them via *and* when the clause combining falls within the sentence. In contrast, a temporal relation of succession cannot be identified between the last three sentences. *He lay still* provides a description of the scene, *It was all right* an evaluation (to be attributed to the narrator and/or character), while the final sentence provides a post-posed justification for this evaluation : *The bull was gone*. At a pinch, the coordinator *for* could introduce this final sentence, but would produce an even more marked effect (*for* is the only causal conjunction which shows a preference for sentence-initial position, but even then, proportionally-speaking it is rare) :

(1') He lay still. It was all right. For the bull was gone.

- 15 The use of *and* in (2) would be less problematic, signalling the end of the list of the character's traits (*furtive ; cunning ; never scared*) :

(2') Before he met her, Fox was furtive. He was cunning. And he was never scared.

- 16 In (3), *and* could also mark succession or logical consequence (i.e. The MacNamara sisters said something and then their husbands agreed), but appears just as marked and as pregnant with meaning as the original :

(3') The MacNamara sisters said Angela was nothing but a rabbit and they wanted nothing to do with her till she came to her senses.
And their husbands agreed.

- 17 It is therefore necessary to look elsewhere in order to justify the marked effect identified in sequences (1) to (3).

3. Clauses “promoted” to sentence status

3.1. Maximising the meaning potential

- 18 Another variable which makes the sentences comparable to the *veni, vidi, vici* sequence is their concision. Three or four words, of which only one or two are lexical, is low compared to average lexical density in written discourse (four to six lexical items per clause, according to Halliday and Martin (1993)). It can be postulated that such concision is what first and foremost attracts the reader’s attention. In this case, the marked choice is primarily one of placing short clauses in separate sentences – in other words, of “upgrading” to individual sentence status clauses that one would expect to find linked within the same sentence. The issue is therefore what comes with this new status– that is, of what makes a *sentence* different from a *clause*.
- 19 While the clause is a unit in grammar and is defined in syntactic terms, the sentence is not as easy to define. Instead, it is part of a textual unit, relating to the latter in a non-structural way: as Halliday and Hasan (1976 : 2) note, “we shall not expect to find the same kind of STRUCTURAL integration among the parts of a text as we find among the parts of a sentence or clause”. Halliday and Hasan’s hallmark work offers a description of what makes sentences “hang together” within a text, which includes the category of Conjunction, or use of connectives. This category is “based on the assumption that there are in the linguistic system forms of systematic relationships between sentences” (Halliday & Hasan 1976 : 320) and the authors identify four main types: additive, adversative, temporal and causal. Each of these has an “external” variant, situated on the extralinguistic plane, and an “internal” strain, involving relations which are “inherent in the communication process, in the forms of interaction between speaker and hearer” (Halliday and Hasan 1976 : 241).
- 20 Halliday and Hasan’s typology stops at relations marked by connectives. To systematise both explicit and implicit relations between sentences, a broader approach has proven necessary, such as that adopted by Mann, Matthiessen and Thompson in their Rhetorical Structure Theory, or that of Winter, who distinguishes between “Matching” and “Sequence” relations. Matthiessen and Thompson (1988 : 286) evoke “scale-sensitive relations” to distinguish between external relations, which are typically local, and internal relations, which are situated at a more global level of the text. In more recent work, Matthiessen (2002) has underlined the different nature of sentence-level relations as opposed to clause-level ones, talking about a “division of labour principle”, or a “cline.” In other words, relations coinciding with sentence boundaries are different in kind to those situated between clauses within the sentence. Van Dijk draws a similar contrast between “pragmatic” uses of connectives, which “are often signalled by sentence-initial position in independent new sentences, whereas the semantic use of the connectives may also be interclausal” (van Dijk, 1979 : 112). While clause-combining within the sentence gives rise to relations which are closer to the grammatical end of the cline (i.e. “structural” relations), it can be posited that the progression between sentences is underscored by more interpersonal, expressive meanings, bordering on the rhetorical

or poetic, for which the meaning potential is open-ended. Promoting a (short) clause to the status of sentence therefore increases its meaning potential.

3.2. Informational prominence and "suspended" sentences

- 21 Meaning potential is also compounded by the focus conferred by the sentence break. Matthiessen (2002 : 272) notes that the cline which distinguishes different levels of textual relations is also "one of informational prominence and density." Indeed, the sentence boundary is marked by the full stop, which signals finality and is iconic of the pause in spoken discourse. If Hemingway's paragraph were read out loud, the reader would be expected to stop and pause between each of the last three sentences. These breaks equate with the "dramatic pauses" fostered in theatrical performance or public speaking, which serve to emphasise what has just been said.
- 22 The full stop is also iconic of the separation between information units. In this respect, Demanueli (1987) compares it with the comma, which creates a blurring of frontiers ("un fondu"). Unlike the comma, or other intra-sentential marks, the full stop denotes a weaker link between clauses (Quirk *et al* 1985 ; Fayol 1997). In (1), the units of information do not lead naturally on one from the other : the reader cannot gather from *He lay still* that all will be well. We are tempted to see a miss-matching of two incongruous elements, and to talk here about juxtaposition — a near-synonym for asyndeton or parataxis, which dictionary definitions link to the notion of contrast.
- 23 Example (1) can be compared with another action scene, that of a horse race, which culminates in a very long sentence made up of a series of coordinated clauses :
- (4) (...) Kzar came on faster than I'd ever seen anything in my life and pulled up on Kircubbin that was going fast as any black horse could go with the jock flogging hell out of him with the gad and they were right dead neck and neck for a second but Kzar seemed going about twice as fast with those great jumps and that head out – but it was while they were neck and neck that they passed the winning post and when the numbers went up in the slots the first was 2 and that meant that Kircubbin had won. (Hemingway, 'My Old Man', p. 190-91– end of paragraph)
- 24 The repeated coordination creates an acceleration, imitating the speed and even the confusion surrounding the end of the race which is being narrated. In contrast, the last sentences in (1) slow the text down and freeze the action : *He lay still. It was all right. The bull was gone*. They coincide with a crucial moment in the narrative : *The bull tossed him and he was clear* — the matador is clear of the bull, but it is not clear whether he has escaped unscathed. The following sentence suggests reason for concern – *He lay still* (perhaps still due to injury) — and the sentence break injects suspense, before the outcome is made clear : *It was all right*. The suspense is lost if the three clauses are part of the same sentence : *He lay still, it was all right, the bull was gone*. Conversely, the repetition of several pauses within very few words slows the text down. In so doing, silence is as it were "manufactured", and makes the substance of each sentence "resonate".
- 25 E. Auerbach (1968 : 124) describes such pauses "which force us to stop and think." Here, not only the content of the sentence is emphasised, but the locus of signification is stretched out : meaning is "injected" between the sentences, even though it is merely suggested, as it remains opaque and it is up to the reader to read between the lines.
- 26 Example (2) (*He was cunning. He was never scared*) can be analysed along the same lines. Unlike the equivalent *He was cunning and never scared* or *He was cunning ; he was never scared*

, placing the clauses in two separate sentences suggests that (a) they are each worthy of emphasis and (b) they should be considered independently — the second character trait is not inherent in the first. The reader is "stopped in his tracks", just before the end of the paragraph. Indeed, informational prominence is increased by the paragraph-final position, due to the absence of text immediately to the right. In reading out loud, there is a pause not only before but also after the clause. The meaning potential of the sentences at the end of examples (1) and (2) is stronger than that of a short sentence mid-paragraph, as in the following opening sequence to a novel, in which an ambulance arrives at a death scene. The longer sentences stand in contrast to the short one, *I don't say a thing*, which is therefore emphasised, but in a less profound way :

(5) We come sweeping up the tree-lined boulevard with siren and lights and when the GPS urges us to make the next left we take it so fast that all the gear slams and sways inside the vehicle. I don't say a thing. Down the dark suburban street, I can see the house lit like a cruise ship. (T. Winton, *Breath*, p. 1 – first paragraph)

- 27 The clause can be promoted a notch higher in the textual macrostructure when it occupies a paragraph on its own, as in (3). The meaning potential is magnified yet again. The double paragraph break acts like a signal to the reader to search for extra meaning between the lines, such as the resignation of the husbands, or the fact that they would not dare to contradict their wives. Humour is created, as the reader imagines the power the Irish wives have on their husbands, and this would be lost if the sentence boundaries were different and a mid-sentence coordinator introduced (e.g. *The MacNamara sisters said Angela was nothing but a rabbit and they wanted nothing to do with her till she came to her senses, and their husbands agreed.*) In the original version, it is impossible to put into words exactly what is left unsaid ; the meaning is deliberately opaque. Similarly, in (6), the narration of an episode of a cycling race introduces paragraph breaks in front of two sentences, with the second marked by its concision :

(6) It was still a long haul to the finish, and I was concerned Zulle would catch me.
 But I maintained my rhythm.
 I glanced over my shoulder, half expecting to see Zulle on my wheel.
 No one was there.
 I faced forward again. Now I could see the finish line— it was all uphill the rest of the way. I drove toward the peak.

(L. Armstrong & S. Jenkins, *It's not about the bike*, p. 242-3)

- 28 Suspense is created in this action scene, akin to Hemingway's description of the end of the bull fight. The paragraph breaks coincide with a crucial moment of the race, just before the finish, as the narrator realises (and therefore the reader) that he can win. Moreover, a relation of counter-expectation can be identified, ingrained in the lexis itself (*half expecting*), which would typically be marked by an adversative connector (*I glanced over my shoulder, half expecting to see Zulle on my wheel, but no one was there*). In the original, time stands still. Due to the sentence boundary and paragraph break, the clause *No one was there* is itself suspended textually. It appears disconnected. In fact, all the sentences discussed thus far can be described as suspended sentences. And the play-on-words can be pursued further, as meaning is hereby deferred or postponed ; it is itself "suspended" — an expression coined by Barthes :

[...] To make meaning is very easy, mass culture does this all day long ; to suspend meaning is a far more complicated endeavour ; it is, as it were, an "art" [...]
 (faire du sens est très facile, toute la culture de masse en élabore à longueur de journée ; suspendre le sens est déjà une entreprise infiniment plus compliquée,

c'est, si l'on veut, un « art »)
(Barthes, *Essais critiques*, p. 269) (my translation)

- 29 In summary, the sentence break confers informational prominence, and denotes a weak link, or a new discursive beginning, between the clauses which are therefore "suspended". This allows for the "injection" of meaning at the sentence boundary, meaning which cannot be put into words and which is as it were deferred.

4. Repetition

- 30 The suspension, or disconnection, denoted by the sentence/paragraph break, is at odds with a high degree of continuity at the semantic level, which makes it tempting to group the sentences together to form a unit. The sentences clearly *are* linked in that they all boast cohesive ties belonging mainly to the cohesive category Reference, as defined by Halliday and Hasan, which includes all forms of direct anaphora, and also to the category of Lexical Cohesion. These ties are underlined below. For example, in (1), the construction is akin to a chiasmus, with sentences (b) and (d) carrying over each of the grammatical subjects in sentence (a) respectively (*the bull* > *he* > *he* > *the bull*). In (2), the pronoun *he* appears over two sentences, referring back to the proper noun *Fox* in subject position in sentence (a). In (3), the possessive article *their* establishes a link with *The MacNamara sisters*, in the previous sentence. And in (6), the adverb *there* refers back to the situation mentioned previously (*over my wheel*).

(1) The bull tossed him and he was clear(a). He lay still(b). It was all right(c). The bull was gone(d).

(2) Before he met her, Fox was furtive(a). He was cunning(b). He was never scared (c).

(3) [...] The MacNamara sisters said Angela was nothing but a rabbit and they wanted nothing to do with her till she came to her senses.

Their husbands agreed.

(6) I glanced over my shoulder, half expecting to see Zulle on my wheel. No one was there.

- 31 It is worth noting that repetition is a feature that Ruppli (1989) identifies as a contextual element when juxtaposition is chosen over coordination within the sentence in French, and the same applies in English. In this, the examples discussed here bear a close resemblance to intra-sentential parataxis.

- 32 With the exception of the last example, the anaphora or lexical repetition appear in subject position. The repetition can continue up to and include the lexical verb, as in the following extract, again from Hemingway :

(7) (...) There were so many good-looking young girls. Most of them had their hair cut short. When he went away only little girls wore their hair like that or girls that were fast. They all wore sweaters and shirt waists with round Dutch collars. It was a pattern. He liked to look at them from the front porch as they walked on the other side of the street. He liked to watch them walking under the shade of the trees. He liked the round Dutch collars above their sweaters. He liked their silk stockings and flat shoes. He liked their bobbed hair and the way they walked.

When he was in town their appeal to him was not very strong. (...) (Hemingway, "Soldier's Home", p. 141)

- 33 If the clauses are longer here, the mode of linkage for the final sentence is marked in that *and* would be expected in final position, to signal the end of the list. The pronoun *he*,

followed by the verb *liked*, is repeated over five sentences, with variation in the second half of the sentence. In (8), repetition in the final sentence extends even further :

(8) But more than shame he felt cold, hollow fear in him. The fear was still there like a cold slimy hollow in all the emptiness where once his confidence had been and it made him feel sick. It was still there with him now.

(E. Hemingway, 'The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber', p. 11)

- 34 While the progression between sentences (a) and (b) is linear (*hollow fear* > *the fear*), anaphora links sentences (b) and (c) (*The fear* > *It*). The meaning of the last two sentences is very similar, the only variant being the addition of the adverb *now*, which introduces a certain immediateness. Thanks to this adverb, the previous sentence is as it were "revitalised" or updated. In addition, the last sentence is more concise, and it summarises the previous one. Meaning is re-elaborated. The effect is one of culmination, to drive home the permanent nature of the fear being described.
- 35 Sequence (8) magnifies a mechanism at work in the other examples. Hoey and Winter (1986 : 126) note that "[w]riters fabricate continuity when the material itself does not provide it." Here, the concentration of sentence breaks over such short segments of text gives the impression that the discontinuity is artificial, or contrived. Discontinuity is fabricated while the material provides continuity.
- 36 At the same time, the continuity is of a specific type : beginnings of sentences are repeated. Instead of flowing from one to the next, as in linear progression (such as in the passage from *hollow fear* to *the fear* in the first sentences of (8), whereby an element in the second half of the first clause becomes the subject of the second clause), each sentence marks "back to square one." The effect is of a discourse that is not advancing as quickly as the sentence breaks give credit for. I am not saying that it is unusual for two consecutive sentences to begin with the same subject, or for cohesive ties to appear in subject position – on the contrary, these are typical phenomena in text-making. What is unusual here is their repeated usage in combination with the other variables which have been identified. Halliday (1994 : 274) observes that text is founded on a "tension" resulting out of the interplay between information which is new and that which is not new. Here, there is a tension between the new discursive beginnings marked by the sentence breaks, and the fact that informationally, the text is stalling. This tension is another factor which contributes to the markedness of the sequences.

5. Paratactic in terms of general disconnectedness

- 37 The question remains as to whether these examples qualify as parataxis. It is true that more sentences in English begin directly with the grammatical subject than with another item. It is also true that for the examples under discussion, a connective is not always available, and so it cannot be claimed that "something is missing". The marked nature of the sequences can principally be attributed to the artificial status of the sentence breaks, between concise clauses which recycle information. Parataxis is a useful term at hand to refer to such "contrived disconnectedness", and it is in this general sense that it appears in the title of this article. The term also underlines the ambivalence of disconnected segments which nevertheless form an identifiable unit. For the couplets or ternary sequences, there is the temptation to group them together, and to talk about paratactic units.

- 38 This said, the disconnectedness is definitely underscored by the absence of connective. Inserting one when this is possible results in a notable change, in terms of connectedness, and also in terms of meaning potential. "Amplification" is a feature of asyndeton for Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, book III, 1414a). The literary critic P. Elbow (2000 : 309) notes that there is "more energy", "more drama" in unconnected sentences. In addition, it can be posited that the absence of connective, or any fronted item (adverbial, disjunct, vocative, etc.), allows for a direct entry into the ideational (extra-linguistic) part of the clause, which therefore receives more informational prominence.
- 39 One component of meaning cannot be put into words. Unlike parataxis within the sentence, indicative of a certain immediateness/directness (the implicit relation can easily be recovered), these sentences mark a certain distancing: the speaker holds something back; meaning is kept at a distance from the reader. However, another component of meaning can be analysed in terms of various rhetorical effects.

6. Rhetorical effects

- 40 If the clause-combining under examination acts to suspend a certain component of meaning, challenging for example Halliday and Hasan's "systematic relationships" that hold between sentences, it is possible to systematise to a certain extent another component of meaning, that falling under the rhetorical banner. In this case, the paradigm can only be open-ended. I will limit the discussion here to four specific effects: dramatic, joyous/epic, ominous, and humoristic. The heightened drama and suspense already identified in the now familiar *He lay still. It was all right. The bull was gone*, as well as in the narration of the cycling race in (6), is typical of "action" sequences. Example (9) is taken from a newspaper article and relates the end of the 400-metre race at the Olympics:

(9) Cathy Freeman hits the line. The crowd is roaring. She has run the race of her life.

(*The Australian*, 26/09/2000)

- 41 Unlike other examples, this sequence appears at the beginning of a paragraph (the first of the article). However, again, the clauses are short, and a cohesive tie links the subject of the first sentence to that of the third via anaphora (*Cathy Freeman > She*). The actions of the first two sentences are focused on separately, to create a "frozen" moment, compared for example to intrasentential subordination (*The crowd is roaring as Cathy Freeman hits the line*). (The juxtaposition of the three present tenses of English provides a gem for language teachers). At the same time, the action in each sentence is particularly dynamic. The final sentence, in (9) does not contain an action but a commentary: *She has won the race of her life*. Here, the sentence break underlines the feat, and produces an epic tone, also emblematic of action scenes and sports commentary. This said, no exclamation marks appear, and the tone is not one of overt joy but is restrained. Punctuation is minimalist, just as the sentence structure is simplistic. None of the examples feature the first person, or other marks of subjectivity. Indeed, the contrived disconnectedness appears to go hand-in-hand with minimal involvement by the speaker. In this way, the reader does not go through the filter of the speaker and has direct access to the scenes, which appear more realistic.

- 42 In contrast, the tone is solemn in (2) : *He was cunning. He was never scared.* The suspended sentences emphasise the consequences of the girlfriend's departure. Similarly, the suspended couplet in (10) introduces uneasiness :

(10) On the beach something flashed. At four o'clock in the morning it was probably just a gull, but it gave a girl a start. It was darker now than it had been all night ; she couldn't see a thing.
Sea air misted on her skin. The chill burned her scalp.
Georgie wasn't a morning person but as a shiftworker she'd seen more than her share of dawns. (...)
(T. Winton, *Dirt Music*, 5)

- 43 Something has caught the attention of the main character, Georgie, in the middle of the night. Mystery couples with uneasiness, suggested in the first paragraph (*it gave the girl a start ; darker now than it had been all night*), and pursued in the suspended couplet, particularly in *lexus chill* and *burn* (*The chill burned her scalp*). The meaning left unsaid between the clauses heightens the mystery, and introduces an ominous streak. Similar examples are found in thrillers and crime novels. For example, Agatha Christie often ends a paragraph with a suspended sentence (e.g. *The revolver was still missing*).

The effect can also be much lighter, as in this extract of a travel novel which lists the positive aspects of life in Australia :

(11) (...) Their cities are safe and clean and nearly always built on water. They have a society that is prosperous, well ordered and instinctively egalitarian. The food is excellent. The beer is cold. The sun nearly always shines. There is coffee on every corner. Rupert Murdoch no longer lives there. Life doesn't get much better than this.
(B. Bryson, *Down Under*, 24)

- 44 A series of short sentences begins with *The food is excellent* and ends with *Rupert Murdoch no longer lives there*. The passage is humorous as the author is able to slip in his dislike of Rupert Murdoch, which comes last in the list, receives end-focus, and therefore appears more important than anything else. Moreover, it is placed just before the conclusion *Life doesn't get much better than this*, which makes clear the equation "no Murdoch = a better life". These last two sentences form the punch-line. Humour borders on irony in (3) (*Their husbands agreed*), as in the suspended paragraph below (coinciding with the end of the chapter). Two families that have nothing in common find themselves sharing a house. The early stage of their cohabitation is thus related :

(12) The evenings were the most difficult because there was only one bathroom in the house and twelve people to be washed. Then there were children shouting and complaining and the halls were full of dark looks.
There was an uneasiness about the whole place. The Lambs sat around their table on fruit crates and stools eating the food that Oriel cooked on the gas ring by the bucket they had for a sink. Sometimes in the quiet before a meal, when Lester Lamb tumbled quickly and uncomfortably through Grace, the house went quiet enough so they could plainly hear the crack of wood in the stove across the corridor. No one looked up. They'd just go on with their eyes grimly shut until the old man got through his halfhearted thanks so they could eat and talk and fill the space that seemed to loom at them from all about. Across the way the Pickles family ate their chops and mashed spud quietly and it often looked as though they cowered at the cattle noises from across the hall. It was like an invasion had taken place. Sam Pickles shook Worcestershire sauce about and tried to be jolly, but the others brooded, sculpted their potato, raised an eyebrow.
It went on for weeks.
(T. Winton, *Cloudstreet*, p. 50)

45 The sentence/paragraph break in front of *It went on for weeks* appears to draw out the duration of time even further. There is irony, and a sense of the ridiculous in the stubborn determination of each family to ignore the other while living in such close proximity.

46 These different effects pose the question of their variation. In other words, what makes one paratactic combination dramatic, while another is ominous, and another is humorous? The effect produced depends on the text type (e.g. action scene, passage of introspection, thriller, (light) travel literature). It also depends on the lexis, on the material itself, due to its prominence (e.g. "scared" or "chill" versus "race of her life").

To finish, example (13) features paratactic sentences which contribute to the lyricism of the passage. A man is living the life of a recluse on a remote part of the Western Australian coast :

(13) Dark falls. The air quivers. He oils his eyes and feels the sound in his throat. Feels every living thing, each heating, cooling form lean in on him. His skin crawls with things that were and with those pending. They hang there in the steady note of his song, in his matted hair, in the oil on his cheeks, and when he opens his eyes the quoll is right by him on the rock. Its black eyes shine and it carries moonsplashes in its ruddy fur even as it withdraws into the dark crevices to watch him. He feels himself within himself. There's nothing left of him now but shimmering presence. This pressing in of things. He knows he lives and that the world lives in him. And for him and beside him. Because and despite and regardless of him. A breeze shivers the fig. The rock swallows the quoll. He sings. He's sung. (T. Winton, *Dirt Music*, 451)

47 A couplet of paratactic sentences appears not only at the end of the paragraph (*He sings. He's sung*) but also at the beginning (*Dark falls. The air quivers*). The clause-combining forms a chiasmus ; together, the couplets frame the paragraph. The syntax of the intermediate sentences is minimalist. When finite verbs appear, they are in the present. Some sentences contain no grammatical subject (e.g. *Feels every living thing...*) or simply a noun phrase (*This pressing in of things*) or an adverbial (*Because and despite and regardless of him*). In these cases, the sentence break separates out syntactically dependent units, which each obtain individual informational focus. They constitute other examples of contrived sentence breaks.

48 The passage suggests a merging of the natural world with the inner world/conscience of the man, and the two become indistinguishable. This is mirrored in the grammar of the clauses. Traditional categories are transgressed. For example, nature is personified (*the air quivers*) ; the verb *shiver* is used transitively (*A breeze shivers the fig*). The four final sentences form a paratactic unit which accentuates the lyricism. They contain direct anaphora, recycling material introduced previously (*the rock ; the quoll ; he*). The first two sentences pertain to the natural world, involving flora (*fig*), fauna (*the quoll*), the mineral world (*rock*) and the elements (*a breeze*). The fauna is swallowed up by the mineral world. The last two sentences are shorter and pertain to the man ; they are identical with the exception of the change intense. The contracted form of the final sentence (*He's sung*) is ambiguous, underlying a perfect (*he has sung*), but also suggesting a passive (even if ungrammatical) : *he is sung*, either to present the man in a non-agentive role, or to imply the meaning "he is praised". Meaning escapes us here, not only that which lies between the sentences, but that which is located within the final clause.

Conclusion

- 49 In this article, the notion of parataxis is applied to clause combining between sentences. While some would consider the phenomena that are addressed as literary or stylistic rather than linguistic, the discussion serves to illustrate the meaning potential when certain contextual variables are combined. These variables are not grammatical but textual, and involve aspects as diverse as clause length and lexical density, punctuation and paragraphing, and cohesion.
- 50 To this list can be added genre and lexis: the nature of the text (e.g. action scenes, passages of introspection), together with its semantic field, determine the rhetorical effects engendered by a combination of the above variables. Of course, such a conclusion could be made at any level of linguistic analysis, but the influence of genre is compounded once we move from the grammar of the clause to that of clause combining. Martin (1992: 269) takes for example (cross-clausal and cross-sentence) connectives, which he describes as highly genre-sensitive, and "a useful place to start whenever the structure of whole texts is under consideration and an interpretation of their relationship to ideology, genre and register is what is required".
- 51 The particular type of "suspended sentence" or "contrived disconnectedness" described here is specific to literature, obviously because it fosters stylistic variation, but also because it gives free reign to the types of effects produced (e.g. dramatic, ominous, ironic, lyrical). It is also exploited (perhaps imitated) in other text types, such as sports commentary or biography. Interestingly, none of the examples are in the first person, and there are no direct marks of subjectivity; the narrator as it were withdraws, or "takes a back seat". Certain effects —particularly irony — may be considered a direct result of such distancing.
- 52 A paradigm of relations between sentences cannot be identified or systematised to the same extent as intra-sentential relations. Relations between sentences make up the "open-ended" part of the cline defined by Matthiessen. The paratactic sentence combining described here is primarily motivated by the desire to transfer meaning potential to another level, that which falls under the general category of rhetorical effects. Tension is created due to the discrepancy between the informational prominence conferred by sentence status, and the short clauses which recycle the lexis instead of adding new material to the text. This as it were "frees up" the meaning potential, which is relocated not so much *within* but *between* the clauses, or the signs.
- 53 At the same time, a certain component of meaning cannot be put into words; it escapes analysis, proof that meaning potential goes beyond what a marker or a signifier can denote. This is suggested via the pause attached to the sentence break, akin to dramatic pauses in speech, and also via the concision of the clauses, with a minimum of signifiers making for maximum signification. In fact, it can be claimed that the semantic program being initiated aims precisely at producing an amplification of meaning, and at making the reader more conscious of the burgeoning nature of it.

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ABSTRACTS

Parataxis is a notion which generally applies to clause combining within the sentence. This article broaches the question of whether it can be applied between sentences. Certain sequences of sentences can be likened to the famous *veni, vidi, vici* as they involve a similar association of contextual variables, such as concision and repetition. At the same time, the specificity of the sentence break needs to be accounted for, in terms of informational focus and the types of meanings which are produced. Parataxis equates with what is described here as a "contrived disconnectedness" between sentences. It is analysed here as one of the parameters, or fixed variables, which contribute to a specific semantic program. The objective of such a program is actually to amplify the meaning potential of the space between the sentences.

La parataxe est un phénomène identifié en général au niveau de l'enchaînement des propositions à l'intérieur de l'énoncé. Cet article a pour but de voir si elle peut s'appliquer au niveau de l'enchaînement des énoncés eux-mêmes. En effet, on relève des séquences d'énoncés qui ressemblent à certains égards à l'exemple *veni, vidi, vici*, car elles associent les mêmes variables contextuelles, telles que la concision ou la répétition. Cela dit, la spécificité du statut de l'énoncé

doit être prise en compte, à la fois du point de vue de sa valeur informative, mais également par rapport au type de signification qu'engendre son enchaînement. La parataxe correspond à ce qui est décrit ici comme une « discontinuité forcée » (*contrived disconnectedness*). Elle constitue l'une des variables fixes qui créent une « formule » ou un programme sémantique qui se laisse s'appréhender. Ce dernier s'apparente plutôt à un effet rhétorique, qui consiste à « amplifier » véritablement le potentiel de signification de l'espace entre deux énoncés.

INDEX

Mots-clés: cohésion, enchaînement de propositions, implicite, parataxe, ponctuation, style, texte

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