

Just as phrases are not accidental aggregates of words and sentences not accidental, haphazard sequences of phrases – both can be analysed in terms of patterns –, texts (whether spoken or written) also display a form of «grammar» : in order to cohere into a «text» or meaningful «conversation», a piece of spoken or written communication must display patterns of cohesion. At the *microstructural* level, cohesive devices link text segments (phrases, clauses, sentences) by means of different kinds of ties (lexical, grammatical, logical) to give the text its overall unity:

Ex.: *David Webb walked through the National Airport terminal and out the automatic doors onto the crowded platform. He studied the signs and proceeded along the walkway leading to the Short Term Parking area. According to plan, he was to go to the farthest aisle on the right, turn left, and continue down the row of parked cars until he saw a metallic grey Pontiac LeMans with an ornamental crucifix suspended from the rearview mirror. A man would be in the driver's seat wearing a white cap, the window lowered. Webb was to approach him and say «the flight was very smooth». If the man removed his cap and started the engine, David was to climb in the backseat. Nothing more would be said.*

Nothing more was said. (Robert Ludlum: *The Bourne Ultimatum*, p.40)

This text is given its cohesion through recourse to a number of devices :

Unity of time is achieved via tense : narrative in simple past, ref. to instructions with *would* or *was to + inf.*, final return to narrative in «nothing was said», which also confirms that all the instructions were successfully followed.

Unity of space (the airport : marked by lexical chains, progressive lexical subordination, and frequently by identification (partly dependent on background world knowledge): look at the frequency of definite *the*. The step technique (in both space and time) allows to follow Webb's movement from his entrance until his departure.

Unity of person (achieved via lexical and anaphoric pronominal (i.e. gramm.) reference): the theme remains David Webb, and the rheme is constituted by what he does or must do.

These devices signal to the reader how a particular piece of text -whether a paragraph, an interruption or an answer- fits into the total discourse, and thus causes it to cohere with what precedes and/or follows in a number of ways. Of course, links (another name for cohesive devices) may be introduced at the beginning and the end of paragraphs, and may actually be part of topic and clincher sentences. But restricting these ties to initial sentences (or worse, to initial adverbials) only reflects a stereotyped view of texture which ignores the “organic” nature of many texts. A first point to be observed is that cohesive links prevail not only between paragraphs (the term is here to be understood in a wide sense, covering speech as well as writing), but between sentences as well. Just as words combine into clauses and clauses into sentences, paragraphs are not constituted of unrelated sentences which have been thrown together without any apparent tie or other structuring principle ; and *a fortiori*, larger texts are not mere collages of unrelated paragraphs, even though the cohesion between them, and the means to achieve it, are many and varied.

VI. A few Examples for Analysis

1. "... As far as I'm concerned, whatever the country does is right. It may not be so smart sometimes, but none of us need to play judge and condemn it. That's treason. ... You and I just don't know enough facts to criticise the top men. They know what they're doing. Leave the big decisions to them". – D.W. Augsburger: *The Love Fight*.

Comm.: Although some of the sentences (notably by virtue of their *A is B* structure) assume the external shape of reports, the utterance clearly qualifies as a judgment (i.e. reflection of an individual's personal values and opinions): this becomes even clearer if one raises the issue of the verification (truth value) of the statements. Yet the opinions are forwarded with great straightforwardness, with the sentential tone of aphorisms, a style which at the same time underscores the speaker's directive intent.

The opinions voiced seem to partake of a double two-valued orientation: on the one hand the polarity *right vs. wrong* with its concomitant judgment *patriotism vs. treason*, and on the other the binary contrast between "we", i.e. small, ignorant and insignificant citizens, and "they", the "big shots", the "top men". The values associated with these polarities are reinforced by means of affective connotations or built-in judgments (e.g. "treason", "play judge", "condemn", "big" and "top". The "top men" seem to benefit from an aura of knowledge and competence which calls for respect, but it takes only little study to realise that no extensional evidence is offered for this status. We are apparently dealing with a stereotyped, personal meaning at the intensional (concept) level.

This two-valued mode of thought, which Hayakawa brands as the hallmark of a closed mind, is however redeemed at three points: 1) the opening words, which draw attention to the fact that we are dealing with opinion, not fact; 2) the relativising of the top men's competence ("it may not be so smart sometimes"), which, however, is ignored, or put into perspective by 3) the speaker's confession of his own ignorance (in which, incidentally, he cunningly involves his addressee ("you and I")).

The speaker's confusion of the two-valued "maps" (signifiants) *we / they*, *wrong / right* and *patriotism / treason* (which, apart from a similar structure, have no necessary link between them, but which seem to be extensions of the potentially fallacious argument that "access to the *facts* equals possession of the *truth*") leads to a "territory" (signifié) which shows more resemblance with absolutist, dictatorial systems than with democracy. Operating at a more practical, lower level of abstraction might have drawn the speaker's attention to, say, errors or injustice perpetrated by rulers or governments, and the citizens' right and duty to question the "top men".

2. “The earth was good. The whole surface of it was beautiful in an high degree. To make it more agreeable, He clothed the universal face with pleasant green. He adorned it with flowers of every hue, and with shrubs and trees of every kind. And every part was fertile as well as beautiful; it was no way deformed by rough or ragged rocks; it did not shock the view with horrid precipices, huge chasms, or dreary caverns; with deep, impassable morasses, or deserts of barren sand. (...) As to the internal parts of the earth, even to this day, we have scarce any knowledge of them (...) But, however this was, we are sure all things were disposed therein with the most perfect order and harmony. Hence there were no agitations within the bowels of the globe, no violent convulsions, no concussions of the earth, no earthquakes; but all was unmoved as the pillars of heaven! There were then no such things as eruptions of fire; there were no volcanoes, or burning mountains (...). There were rivers sufficient to water the earth, and make it very plenteous. These answered all the purposes of convenience and pleasure by liquid lapse of murmuring stream; to which were added gentle, genial showers, with salutary mists and exhalations. But there were no putrid lakes, no turbid or stagnating waters. The element of air was then always serene, and always friendly to man. It contained no frightful meteor, no unwholesome vapours, no poisonous exhalations. There were no tempests, but only cool and gentle breezes, fanning both man and beast, and wafting the fragrant odours on their silent wings. The sun, the fountain of fire, of this great world both eye and soul, was situated at the most exact distance from the earth, so as to yield a sufficient quantity of heat (neither too little nor too much) to every part of it. There was no violent winter, or sultry summer; no extreme, either of heat or cold. No soil was burned up by the solar heat; none uninhabitable through the want of it. Thus earth, water, air, and fire, all conspired together to the welfare and pleasure of man!”

C.: The text is carefully structured into a topic statement, a long development, and a clincher sentence. The development, in turn, is structured content-wise (the four elements); within each of these units, the information is arranged according to the «balance» principle, in which affirmative and negative SVC or SVA clauses alternate. This alternance of positive and negative statements, split into short “intonation” units by means of commas, also gives the text a dynamic rhythm. The same alternance appears at the lexical level : the NP’s are constituted of simple, but often picturesque «physical» substantives, qualified by adjectives with highly positive / negative connotations. They form noun-phrases which today sound like somewhat antiquated clichés, but which at the time of production may have given the texts a suggestive, attractive character. The impression is confirmed by the metaphors (“clothed in green, fountains of fire”). The vocabulary is varied and somewhat old-fashionedly formal (“the wafting of fragrant odours”, “liquid lapse of murmuring stream” -- nobody would still say that today unless they tried to sound “literary” or funny !) and there is one suggestion (“an high degree”) that pronunciation is not quite the present-day standard either. The capital H in “He” suggests (although it is only one isolated clue) that the referent may be religious rather than human. This might be the “Creator” of all the things described, but the results of the creation are described in impersonal terms (there was...) or passives (were disposed...). This suggests that the focus of meaning may be more on the ultimate effect (the earth) than on creation as a process. Finally, we must note the overwhelming use of the simple past, which suggests that whatever is described may no longer be the case at the time of speaking.

On the basis of these observations, we may now voice a careful hypothesis. We are dealing with a somewhat older text, perhaps in the religious register. It sounds fairly formal and therefore “written”, but the careful rhythmic arrangements (as well as the absence of interactive devices) suggest it may be written to be spoken as a monologue. We might, then, be dealing with a sermon which tries to make a point — like the beauty of the original earth, and the suggestion that that this idyllic, ideal beauty belongs to the past, that it has now been spoilt by humans, by industry, by poor environmental management, or whatever. This is done rather successfully by «slanting» the information in such a way that the positive impressions are conveyed in affirmative sentences, and the unfavourable connotations confined to negative clauses. (Actually, the text is an excerpt from an 18th-century sermon).

3. HOW TO MAKE AN OMELETTE WITHOUT BREAKING EGGS.

Every time I open a magazine devoted to food technology I get a sinking feeling in the pit of the stomach. Each new revolutionary breakthrough seems more ominous than the last. They've just discovered that you can get a finer, more uniform crumb in the bun by adding 0.5 per cent sodium-stearoyl-2-lactate. They've worked out, too, that acetylated monoglycerides make dry base toppings taste and look more like whipped cream than ever before. And they've developed a «flavour modifier» so that standard artificial sweeteners based on saccharins and cyclamates can be made to contain a ribonucleotide, or ribonucleoside, or their deoxy analogues.

I hope these preservatives, surfactants, anti-oxidants, emulsifiers, stabilisers, sequestrants, moisteners, colouring agents, non-nutritive sweeteners, anti-caking agents, thickeners, thinners, and bleaching agents are doing us a power of good because we're going to digest more of them in the future, not less. Increasingly the major food corporations are placing pressure on caterers and the housewife to give up old-fashioned raw materials and accept the factory prepared substitute. (...) The appeal of all these products is their low cost, and labour-saving economy. As F. H. James, a catering executive, observed the other day, «We in the catering trade are becoming grocers, in business to buy, sell, and make a profit». Perhaps the most formidable development is the careful conditioning of the customer to accept what he is given. By controlling supply the food specialist can control demand. By the subtle use of television he can gradually persuade the viewer that the factory substitute is in every way superior to the natural product. Children begin to pine for *instant* mashed potato and to reject «boring old homemade» mashed potato.

With a significant part of British industry in the hands of the Americans it is obvious that any «progress» on the food front in the States will soon be introduced in Britain — our fate tomorrow is theirs today. Even a simple dish like an omelette no longer has to be trusted to the kitchen staff - it comes direct from the factory as a homogenised frozen disc, and when needed it is placed in the oven where it sets as it melts.

A.: Relevant points to be noted :

- The apparent paradox in the title (title of a recipe + pun on a proverb + physical unlikelihood)
Result : first hint at non-literal reading.
- Mixture of styles : scientific and economic vocabulary + everyday, colloquial tenor
Result : Disparaging representation on artificial products in food industry (= slanting);
Social criticism of financial interest-based food industry / U.S.A.
- Built-in judgments, reinforced by accumulation of abstruse product names
- Irony (=...) reinforced by punctuation («progress», *instant*)
- Two-valued orientation artificial / healthy
- Contrast *I + We / They + It* : corresponds to contrast *Emotional / Technical*
- “We” used to suggest author / reader solidarity.
- Negative affective connotations and value judgments (“ominous”, “fate”)
- Hence : “loaded” text seeking to convince (= modality).

4. «Already they have begun hauling in out of the wide darkening spaces of the countryside - from all directions, an endless converging of cavalcades over the dust-hazed parking field, old school buses enameled now in candy-bright tints, heaving and wheezing in one after another. (...) Matrons in spun-glass bouffants and rhinestone butterfly spectacles, (...) their men in pastel leisure suits with binocular cases slung over their shoulders, all moving in little murmurous rills and shoals everywhere over the grass with a sedate briskness - a continuous unloading under the high white flare of the stadium lights like some systematic unpacking of population out of the far comfortable deeps, the Swiss-cupboard kitchens and pine-paneled dens, the dishwasher hums and color-TV luminescences, of Inner America. They are still filling the stands, brimming on up to the last top tiers, on up to the very edge of the empty dimming sky, with faint scattered waftings of sweet perfume, soap, Aqua-Velva, pizza and fried chicken from the supper tables they have just left, toothpaste, Juicy Fruit gum, like a mingling pleasant incense tinged the chill blue evening.» - Marshall Frady

A possible answer :

The text appears as descriptive, and hence as representative, but (not unlike text 8 in the yellow pages) not as essentially so — the choice of terms, and even the structure, suggest that the description does not seek to give an objective account.

The whole text consists of three sentences, with the second sentence (Matrons ...) a kind of apposition to the cataphoric “They” in sentence one and the anaphoric “They” in sentence three. The complexity of the sentences is made up by a number of non-finite clauses which contribute to the «heaping up» of details, mainly of a sensory nature (visual, olfactive, gustative, movement). While most of these descriptive terms are not, strictly speaking, fraught with built-in judgments, they do add up to an overall impression which suggests :

1. Movement : first the heavy, laborious movement of the buses; then the “sedate brisk” movement of the people concentrating towards the stadium, from darkness to light.
2. People. These are not dealt with as individuals, but treated collectively as one group, well-to-do but ageing, comfort-minded middle-class. This is not the typical crowd that will attend the major sports events or rock concerts; the suggestion, then, is that something else is on. The text as reprinted here does not say what, but it is clearly not something that attracts passionate crowds, although the event has enough appeal to draw droves of people away from their “comfortable deeps” and “color-tv screens”, and even fosters a certain impatience (Already...).

The result, then, is a picture that seems to poke mild fun (not scathing social satire) at the people planning to attend an event, suggesting (esp. by lexical items which, taken together, conjure up an image of comfort and affluence) but not stating their possibly narrow-minded petit-bourgeois, materialistic, self-righteous mentality; and thereby, perhaps, reflecting a critical attitude towards what is to take place inside the stadium (actually, a famous evangelist coming to preach: the title of the article was *Billy Graham: A Parable of American Righteousness*).

- P.S. *Spun-glass bouffants* : des coiffures gonflées, dures comme de la fibre de verre (à cause de la laque).
Rhinestone butterfly spectacles : des lunettes en forme de papillon, décorées de brillants (fausses pierres précieuses): very “fifties”.