

- Choudhury, Indranath (2010). "Towards an Indian theory of Translation", *Indian Literature* 259, 2010, pp.113-123
- Dev, Amiya and Sisir Kumar Das, eds.(1989). *Comparative Literature: Theory and Practice*. Shimla: IAS.
- Lefevere, Andre (1984). "That Structure in the Dialect of Men Interpreted", *Comparative Criticism* 6, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.87-109
- Lefevere, Andre (1995). "Introduction: Comparative Literature and Translation" in *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 47, No. 1, pp 1-10.
- Pollock, Sheldon (2003). *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*. New Delhi: Oxford UP.
- Ramakrishnan, E. V. (2011) *Locating Indian Literature: Texts, Traditions and Translation*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, pp. 23-36
- Singh, Gurbhagat (1991). *Differential Multilogue: Comparative Literature and National Literatures*. Delhi: Ajanta Publications, pp. 11-19.
- Spivak, Gayatri (2003). "Planetarity", *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia UP. pp. 71-102.



Labyrinth

An International Refereed Journal of Postmodern Studies

CALL FOR PAPERS

ISSN 0976-0814

ABSTRACTED & INDEXED AT
LITERARY REFERENCE CENTRE PLUS | EBSCO HOST, USA

Published Quarterly in Jan/Apr/Jul/Oct

The journal publishes research articles or creative writings of its MEMBERS ONLY.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:

October Issue (Vol.6/No.4) : 11/08/2015

January Issue (Vol.7/No.1) : 10/10/2015

SUBSCRIPTION (Institutions & Individuals):

INDIA : ₹ 1800/- (FOUR Issues)

FOREIGN : US\$ 125/- (FOUR Issues)

A Dream Surpassing all Structural Boundaries - A Spectral view of The Slave's Dream through the Prism of Parataxis and Hypotaxis

- Priyanka Dey

Abstract: M. A. K. Halliday believes that language is a social semiotic system. Every sound, word, structure an individual uses reflects the situational context influencing his psychological built and hence his linguistic choices to make meaning. H. G. Longfellow, the white skinned American poet, is world famous for his prodigious talent of artful exploitation of these linguistic devices to achieve his desired goal. The philanthropist poet's benign heart thus when comes to know about the slave trading in Africa and about the inhuman torture of the white Europeans on them he applies his weapon to raise a protest against this vandalism and compose the Poems on Slavery with eight poems. The slave's dream is perhaps one of the best of the lot where the poet makes a profound philosophical teaching of the single origin of mankind and celebrates the invincible power of the soul. How the poem surpasses all the physical, structural domains and etherealizes into the blissful spiritual domain of eternal peace through the central use of parataxis and hypotaxis is investigated in the present paper.

Keywords: systemic functional linguistics, formal grammar, clause, parataxis, hypotaxis.

Introduction:

FANBOYS (such as *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) have always been suggested to be avoided as much as possible in regards to good writing. These conjunctions along with the subordinating ones (such as *that, accordingly, moreover, in fact, since* etc) are often considered to backlash and deter the spontaneous flow of any written composition. And this notion that, 'Of all the parts of speech, the conjunctions are the most unfriendly to vivacity.' (Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 395) is as old as the saying of the 18th century rhetorician George Campbell. However, Locke believed that the connectives provides the reader with the author's own key to the relation of the materials and bring the entire composition under focus. Hence he writes:

The word whereby [the mind] signifies what connexion it gives to the several affirmations and negations, that it unites in one continued reasoning or narration, are generally called *particles*: and it is in the right use of these that more particularly consists the clearness and beauty of a good style. To think well, it is not enough that a man has ideas clear and distinct in his thoughts, nor that he observes the agreement or disagreement of some of them; but he must think in train, and observe

the dependence of his thoughts and reasonings upon one another. And to express well such methodical and rational thoughts, he must have words to show what connexion, restriction, distinction, opposition, emphasis, &c., he gives to each respective *part* of his discourse. To mistake in any of these, is to puzzle instead of informing his hearer: and therefore it is, that those words which are not truly by themselves the names of any ideas are of such constant and indispensable use in language, and do much contribute to men's well expressing themselves. (Locke, 1894, 98-99)

In *The slave's dream* we observe Longfellow is also influenced by the same kind of thinking and hence he exploits this very device the best to squeeze out that quintessential fragrance ensconced in the ultimate freedom from life and death through the painful carnal struggle of the invincibly dreaming soul of the African slave who breathes his last in his dream thereby immortalizing his moment of joy.

Parataxis and Hypotaxis:

It was Curme who traces the history of the modern use of subordination and connection i.e. hypotaxis from a primitive stage of communication, in which related propositions were laid side by side indicating a relationship generally discerned by the reader as parataxis (Curme, 1931, 170). 'Taxis' technically means interdependency of clauses. In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) the technical term 'clause' is equal to what is called 'sentence' in the formal grammar. In SFL (Halliday, 2005, 262) clause complex is but a part of clause. Eggins (2004, 255-256) calls "single clause units (sentence of only one clause)" itself clause simplex. Clause or clause simplex while is equivalent to simple sentence in formal grammar, clause complex is identical with complex sentence. Basically, clause in Systemic Functional Linguistics is a grammatical unit which consists of three main components – process, participants and circumstance. *Process* refers to the verb in formal grammar, *participant* the subject or object and *circumstance* equals complements. In SFL the parts of a clause are in accordance with the types of process (i.e. material, relational, verbal, behavioural, existential). The criteria used in grouping the process are syntax and semantics. These criteria distinguish one process from the others. Type of process determines the kinds of experience in a clause and as determinant of participant that is tied up by the process. Parataxis and hypotaxis being the relation between two like elements of equal status (one initiating and other continuing) and unequal relation between a dependent element and its dominant (the element on which it is dependent) respectively play a vital role in creating varied stylistic effects in the text foregrounding the thought of the writer. The distinction between parataxis and hypotaxis has developed therefore as a powerful grammatical strategy for guiding the rhetorical development of the text. The selection between parataxis and hypotaxis characterizes every relation between two clauses within a clause complex whose formation often involves a combination of paratactic and

hypotactic structures. Hence in this paper an attempt is made to see how successfully Longfellow can exploit them (hypotaxis and parataxis) to project his protest against slave trading creating the expected milieu of wretchedness and agony through the slave's dream.

In SFL language study is linked to four basic components-

- (1) language as a text and system,
- (2) language as sound, writing and wording,
- (3) language as structure- configurations of its parts, and
- (4) language as source-choices among alternatives.

In addition to this, there are also five dimensions in language and their ordering principles-

- (1) structure (syntagmatic order),
- (2) system (paradigmatic order),
- (3) stratification,
- (4) instantiation, and
- (5) metafunction

(see also Halliday, 2004, 20-30; Eggins 1994, 201-202; Eggins 2004, 203; Teich 1999, 19-20; Martin, 1992, 4; Halliday, 2005, 22)

Here in our current concern *The slave's dream* we will try to see how these basic components help to study the meaning generating language of the poem with special focus on the joining of the clauses achieved sometimes by using comma, sometimes by 'and', at times by subordinating conjunctions like 'for' and sometimes by the frequent semicolons and other punctuation marks.

Images through the prism of Paratactic and Hypotactic constructions:

Just as in *Ode on a Grecian Urn* art freezes the moment of ecstasy perpetually so does here the 'dream' in this poem where all the intense desires and aspirations of the slave spread their unbound wings in all their colourful hues thereby transcending his physical death to psychical eternal bliss. How this apparently painful death of the relentlessly tortured slave of a colonized country metamorphoses into real freedom and escape into his world of unbattered love, peace and sovereignty is best sensed through the pertinent use of but the connectives namely 'and'. In fact, it is the hypotactic constructions contrasted with the statistically calculated use of paratactic constructions that emerge as the fittest colour in drawing the best layout of the slave's otherwise invisible dream. It infuses in it the kind of palpability which could hardly have been possible through any other structural device. The use of polysyndeton enables the poet to sketch out the poem structurally in a way that with the slave the readers too begin to live in that dream thereby becoming a direct eyewitness to all those images the fettered body envisages and enjoys. The stanza below (L12- L16) fully built on parataxis makes the poem appears as an album of photographs where images of vast stretch of his native Africa, 'lordly' flowing Niger, the 'palm-trees', 'tinkling caravans',

'mountain-road', his 'dark-eyed queen' his loving children kissing him and holding him by 'the hand' march in a parade, and reading the poem is like majestically journeying through a tension-free land where fear and sorrow has never tread on-

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain-road.
He once more saw his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand!-

Apart from having a series of images another quite general feature of a dream is it often has no sharp beginning or end. It is just like a trance in which man remains for a certain period of time as a result of his being intense or passionate subconscious thinking of something which can be a place or a person, or some food i.e. anything and everything catering to his interest. This abruptness of a dream is very masterly represented through a sudden beginning of the poem without providing any proper physical introduction to the case (/slave) and marvelously connecting it to the next line or sentence with a mere comma or a semicolon-

Beside the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.

Moreover, in a dream the facts and happenings often do not follow any specific chronological order of the practical life. So, often there are flash backs in dreams. This poem also very rightly tries to capture this stream of subconscious state by presenting the mental images or processes of the slave. Though titled *The slave's dream* the poem starts not with or about the dream, rather with the depiction of the present condition of the slave and that too in a reverse order- place (where he lay), posture (i.e. lying), manner (with 'sickle in his hand'), and finally his physical description ('bare breast' and hair 'matted' and 'buried in the sand') breaking the normal order of any such character presentation that generally begins with the physical attributes and then gradually proceeds through the description of manners to the described's place of belonging. Along with this we also notice following the protocol of a true experience of dream in the poem all his thoughts flash upon the slave's mind in a disjointed manner - just now we see 'once more a King he strode', enjoying the time with his children and queen, in the very next moment shedding tears in pain-

A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
at one moment so calm and composed-

They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand! -
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand.
and the next so disturbed and restless-
And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's bank;

The poem actually is a very subtle narration of the inhuman physical and mental torture that the Africans endured in their own native land in the hands of the ruthless so called civilized white Europeans. It tells the story of how the white made them toil even harder than the famished buffaloes ploughing restless under the scorching heat of the day and the bleeding donkeys dragging luggage in the dark, cold, bleak of the night. And what allured these blood mongers to come and capture the land was the natural richness of Africa. Its mines of gold and diamond charmed them and beckoned them to intrude into and empower the land of wild beauty through the brutal treatment of the natives. While the slave in the poem represents the wretched Africans, his kingly gait, 'lordly' flowing Niger reflects the past rich and independent Africa. To delineate this utter destruction of humanity both ways to the tortured African aborigines and the blood drunk, to portray the contrasting states before and after empowerment Longfellow uses antithetically train of imageries mirroring the follow up of the events in the then shackled South Africa and coordinates all of them together only by the sheer use of conjunctions. Thus 'gold' the symbol of wealth and richness is soon followed by 'chains' the sign of slavery and poverty-

His bridle-reins were golden chains,
he sets the vibrant spectacle 'red flamingos' resounding those bright days of independence against the 'blood-red flag' symbolizing the germination of the future freedom movement-
Before him, like blood-red flag,
The bright flamingos flew;

It reveals his intimidated heart which fails to experience any delight even at a genuinely charming sight, situational compulsion to see no hope for life even in the 'blood-red' colour of the flamingos, rather envisage death and blood of enslaved Africans like him staining the flag red. Thus in search of the light of freedom he runs 'From morn till night' where grows the 'tamarind' trees, runs in search of little light of homely peace 'Till he saw the roofs of the Caffre huts,/And the ocean rose to the view.' But all that his unquenched pessimistic heart could hear in the dark day of his life is the river-horse, the lion's roar and the awe-inspiring shrill cry of hyena-creatures ever relished and feasted on the human blood. These poles asunder images brilliantly linked by coordinating and subordinating conjunctions develop in the mind of the reader a type of expectation which would not have been possible otherwise. The reader without any knowledge of his own gets involved in the process, and with the slave seeks

escape from this stifling slavery and intolerable torture through but the 'dream'-

And, it passed like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.
The forests with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

Punctuating the Clauses:

The poem *The slave's dream* is indeed a contemplation- a reflective poem where a slave in his dream contemplates on his previous free state in independent Africa and the present fearful chained status of his country as well as himself, and this unbroken flow of memory is achieved through the deliberate avoidance of full stops. In their place as a sign of coordination comma and semi-colon have been used. Statistics show in the poem there are 48 lines and in these forty-eight lines only eight full stops have been used. Exclamation sign is also found to be used but its number is a very meager one- only two, though used in two major positions and plays a very vital role to enhance the status of the poem as a 'dream'. One dash is also seen to be used. But the two major punctuation marks which impart the poem a sense of completion here are comma and semi-colon. Total twenty four commas and nine semi-colons have been used-

Punctuation Mark	Line Number	Total Count
Full stop	L4, L6, L12, L18, L24, L30,L36,L42.	08
Exclamatory sign	L16,L48.	02
Comma	L1, L5, L15, L21, L23, L25,L27,L28,L29,L31, L32, L35, L37, L39, L40, L43,L45.	Used to join Lines-17 [Throughout the poem-24 (including those used to join phrases in a line)]
Semi-colon	L2, L8, L10, L14, L20, L26,L34,L38,L44.	09
Dash	L16	01

These commas suggest that the clauses are separate but intrinsically related. Besides, it also mildly emphasizes the second clause or the contrast between them. The comma used in between the independent clauses not joined by 'and', as we see in L15, makes the bond between them even stronger and the clauses being short and similar in form adds to the effect. The comma helps to keep the separateness of the clauses

distinct thereby making the picture even more prominent. The semicolons, functionally more like the period, not only helps the poet to avoid the self-conscious monotonous rhythm, at the same time helps to overcome the choppiness thereby engendering a feeling of continuity-an inherent quality of dream. The dash though used only once also play a very vital role like the twice used exclamatory sign. While the exclamatory sign infuses in the poem a startling effect or a shock or expresses an exulting state, the dash used together with exclamatory sign in L16 calls attention to the meaningful hesitation as well as a delay between the clauses and strongly emphasizes the second clause compounded with another in L18-

They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand! -
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand.

So though convention and instinctive logic insist that the main clauses of a compound sentence should be separated with some form of punctuation, ordinarily comma, however, the other alternatives should also not be overlooked or ignored. As a matter of fact as writes Winston Weathers, 'the comma-dash-semicolon-colon-period' should indeed be considered 'as a spectrum of increasingly emphatic separators. The choice of which is not a matter of eenie, meenie, minie, moe. They separate increasingly complete thoughts and represent increasingly apparent vocal breaks.' (1978, 327)

Delayed appearance of Finite verb:

Presentation of this stream of thought has been more strengthened by placing the finite verb at the end. Moreover, to instill in the poem the proper atmosphere of dream-like fragmentariness, produce the effect of thoughts floating around sometimes linking words like **with** (e.g. - L2), **to** (e.g.- L12) have also deliberately not been used-

Beside the ungathered rice he lay,
L2 (With) His sickle in his hand;
And heard the tinkling caravans
L12 (To) Descend the mountain-road.

The reason behind this is finite verb while limits the action or the flow (here thought) likewise its absence just does the opposite - it promotes the flow of the stream of consciousness in the slave's mind. If we make a study of the total number of clauses we see that the sum of finite clause used in the poem is 34.

From L1-L10 continuing to L12 seven finite clauses Longfellow uses, but the striking thing is that in almost all of them the verb appears at the last which creates a sense of continuity, fluidity, an expectation of reaching the cherished end while at the same time it foregrounds the idea of the poet heightening the desired effects.

Line Number	Number of Sentences
L1-L2	1. Beside the ungathered rice he lay, / (With) His sickle in his hand;
L3	2. His breast was bare,
L3-L4	3. his matted hair / Was buried in the sand.
L5-L6	4. Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep, / He saw his Native Land.
L7-L8	5. Wide through the landscape of his dreams / The lordly Niger flowed;
L9-L10	6. Beneath the palm trees on the plain / Once more a king he strode;
(cont.) L11-L12	And heard the tinkling caravans / (To) Descend the mountain-road.

From the above chart we can clearly see that out of six sentences only the second sentence 'His breast was bare' follows the normal SVO pattern of English with the Subject initiating the sentence and its finite verb placed next to it. Through this the poet actually promotes a kind of suspension of the conclusion which is a characteristic of the periodic sentence. This style of patterning the sentences while evokes a sense of fragmentariness of the thoughts in a dream it also shows with strategic subtlety a clear syntactical relationship that the clauses bear with each other. It very neatly brings out the poet's intention, his deep rooted dislike towards those whites rejoicing the practice of butchery of humane attributes, of mankind. And it is found that each of these sentences as well as their inherent thoughts is joined with the other verb behind finite clauses with a remarkable use of 'and', 'again', comma and semicolon. Through this parataxis Longfellow here actually achieves a pattern of thought that has fully been worked out, whose power relationships has carefully been determined, and whose timing has been climactically ordered. However, an interesting feature to note in the poem *The slave's dream* is that in the poem the poet nowhere follows same type of sentence patterning though periodic sentence remains the dominant one. This variety is enforced through but the conjunctions which enable the poet to add a special flavor to the composition as a whole besides binding all the apparently strayed fragments of thoughts together. The poet with great tactics after every certain interval of a chain of periodic sentences introduces short loose sentences striking a sharp contrast to the followed type. This alternate use of periodic and loose sentence not only breaks the monotony but also fosters the dreaming quality of the poem- it veils the planned mind set and finished working on the thought of the poet with a (slave's) mind in the process of thinking rather than having already completely ordered its thinking. It's a difficult task indeed! That when the readers are about to come to some proper conclusion about the working of the poet's mind, his immediate encounter with a contrasting sentence type bringing in an array of divergent images shatters away instantly all his expectation. This forceful suspension of belief and inculcation of

dilemma reaches the height mainly as the popping up loose finite clauses are being joined with the others by the linking words and punctuation marks (here in bold)-

L 15	They clasped his neck , they kissed his cheeks ,
L 16	They held him by the hand! -
L 17	A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
L 18	And fell into the sand.
L 19	And then at furious speed he rode
L 20	Along the Niger's bank ;
L 21	His bridle-reins were golden chains ,
L 22	And , with a martial clank,
L 23	At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
L 24	Smiting his stallion's flank.

Conclusion: The poem actually is telling not what the slave is doing but what he dreams, what he imagines- the injustice of slavery and his freedom from all structural bondages is perhaps recorded in the last five clauses -

He did not feel the driver's whip, | Nor the burning heat of the day; |
 For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep, | And his lifeless body lay |
 A worn-out fetter, that the soul | Had broken and thrown away!

Actually this is a historical phenomenon as a part of the whole world although really happening in a continent and spreading to another. So the vastness of the tyranny knows no bound and really it creeps into the beast of the Europeans and continues as enormous infection. Hence the term 'bloody flag' used in the poem applies not only to the whites tormenting the Africans but to the whole lot of global covets. The picture of the poem particularly through dream woven with hypotaxis and parataxis is not confined to a spot but it ever increases. Thus the inexplicable suffering, torture and misery overcast the entire civilization thereby commiserating empathy in the minds of those least human souls as the poet who truly becomes lachrymose. Although meager in number there were some who rose against this inhuman slave trading and preached for its salvation. Hence came up such abolitionist preachers and activists like Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman and abolitionist song writers like George W. Clark; came up personalities like William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Stowe with their verses promoting anti-slavery movement and protest novels like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Thus the crave for the lost freedom, the voice of remonstrance once raised by the victimized women Phillis Wheatley, Hannah More and the like further gains strength through this type of poems of Longfellow and it fuels the moving wheel of anti slavery movement so that its cry against segregation and discrimination echoes