
*THE most important text to cultivate an erratological approach to writing.*

I

Options!—conventional and not.

Any number of grammars are available to us at any moment as writers—yet we tend to restrict ourselves to one: “good” grammar, i.e. Grammar A. Writing that uses other grammars is “bad” or “creative”—and therefore liable to be corrected as *erroneous* or ignored as *exceptional.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar A</th>
<th>Grammar B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the well-made box</td>
<td>many different containers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consistency [homogeneity]</td>
<td>variegation [heterogeneity]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diachronicity/chronology,</td>
<td>synchronicity, non-linearity</td>
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<tr>
<td>linearity</td>
<td>beginning in medias res, open-endedness</td>
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<tr>
<td>beginning, middle and end</td>
<td>“non-logical” order, discontinuity</td>
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<tr>
<td>logical order, continuity</td>
<td>ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[clarity]</td>
<td>flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>[rigidity]</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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II

Grammar B has been relegated to fiction and poetry—but has sometimes been used in lieu of Grammar A (Sterne, Blake, Whitman, Lawrence, Stein, the postmodernists: Barth, Barthelme, Brautigan, Burroughs, etc, who used montage, pastiche, linguistic generation, and supersaturation), in particular, since the arrival of New Journalism.

Why use Grammar B?

a. It makes writing more complete to have access to the “contraries” of style (and presumably enlivens Grammar B [→ Grammar C]), and

b. it is representationally more adequate or responsive to our reality, discontinuous/fragmentary, various, “democratic” (unhierarchical) and relativistic.

III

1. Crot (fragment)

*metastasis:* rapid transition, according to Fritz Senn, a.k.a. *transmotionem,* the “flitting figure” (actually, it is passing over something quickly or turning an insult, etc., against your opponent [a.k.a. *antistrephon,* a species of *anticategoria* or *tu quoque/* *accusatio adversa,* *translatio in adversarium*]); *epitrochasmus:* a rapid succession of statements
→ the fragmentation and egalitarianism of contemporary experience, i.e. no teleological metanarrative

2. Labyrinthine Sentence

[cf. *epanalepsis*, an “echo sound,” a.k.a. resumption/repetition or, to be more precise, the textual repetition of the same part of a word or phrase, e.g., “A lie begets a lie”—vs *paliloga*: the repetition of a word or phrase with no intervening words (a.k.a. *epizeuxis*, *iteratio*)]

→ circularity or the complexity, confusion or prolixity of contemporary experience

Sentence Fragment

→ concentration/ipseity or dynamism or the atomism of contemporary experience

3. List

*enumeratio* (a figure of amplification, in which a subject is divided, detailing parts, causes, effects, or consequences to make a point, cf. *paradeigma* [examples > generalisation]), catalogue.

→ values, egalitarianism (hierarchy)


→ ambivalence, multi-interpretability

5. Repetition/Repetend/Refrain

*epinome* = refrain—or *antistrophe*, if there is a semantic shift [cf. *paliloga* above]

cf. *anaphora* and *epiphora*.

→ (+) movement, throb of life, (-) recurrence

IV

[See also: non sequitur, mixed metaphor—and linguistic (and topographical) variegation.]

6. Synchronicity

→ the here-and-now, presentism
Grammar A is diachronic/chronological. Grammar B uses: simultaneity (double voice, list, scrambling, presentism), recurrence (repetition/repetend/refrain), circularity (the labyrinthine sentence, structural epanalepsis), the present tense and transitional and relating words (so, therefore, thus, then → non sequiturs).

7. Collage/Montage

Collage: a composition made by arranging and pasting materials/objects on a surface, often with unifying lines and color [“gluing”].

Montage: a composition made by juxtaposing or superimposing many pictures or designs; it is often three-dimensional; in photography, it can be multi-dimensional [“mounting”].

→ synthesis; multigenre, citationality; fact/fiction

In Grammar B, heterogeneous elements (e.g. multiple materials, forms, genres or media) are often patched together into a whole (cf. cut-up), thus revealing what seems inconsistent in its parts to be consistent as a whole. It is, in effect, higher-level citationality.

V

[See also: anacoluthon (“inconsistent”; shifting grammatical construction halfway through, e.g. “The subject of the lecture was—I didn’t really understand it”), anastrophe (“turning back,” inversion; changing word order for effect, especially shifting the order of one word, e.g. “The helmsman steered; the ship moved on; yet never a breeze up blew” = a form of hyperbaton, “overstepping,” a.k.a. tranpositio: “this I must see,” i.e. disrupting or inverting word order for effect), amphibole (“ambiguity”; ambiguous grammar creating equivocal meaning, e.g. “Used cars for sale: Why go elsewhere to be cheated? Come here first!”), etc.]

Compositions in Grammar B often begin in medias res and are usually open-ended, even circular. Often they are short and/or single in focus; larger examples often break down into parts, each “grammatically” distinct.

Nonetheless, they adhere to certain principles:

a. they are internally “grammatically” consistent or holistic, that is,

b. they exhibit a certain rationale or logic, however “illogical,” though

c. that logic often encompasses variation/variegation.

d. They involve a tacit “social” contract with the reader about which of their devices are conventional and which are experimental.

Using Grammar B seems to put less distance between invention and composition than does Grammar A (almost as if we have an ucs resistance to translating our ideas using Grammar A).
While Grammar B may lose you readers, it will gain you others.

VI

Grammar B is already practised broadly in our writing, literary and otherwise.

Both grammars are part of a stylistic repertoire: the old argument that one must learn Grammar A first is misled—in fact, Grammar B is probably primary or fundamental, and Grammar A a reduction for special purposes. Nonetheless, because academia etc has inculcated Grammar A one ends up teaching Grammar B; this process is one of recovery or “restoration.”

VII

Let the research material determine the style of its presentation [substance → style].

Teach the alternate grammar (B) or (the survival of alternate) grammars alongside the traditional (or main) grammar (A), revealing the virtues of one by comparison with the other.

Identify this or that feature as belonging to one style or another, i.e. a system of identification that opens the writer to the possibilities of a given speech situation [openness and “open-mindedness,” i.e. charity] is better than a system of correction that aims to eliminate error [closure (and “close-mindedness,” presumably)].

Writing is largely a matter of convention.

The real issue is therefore rhetorical, i.e. how the conventions are manipulated to suit the speech situation [think ethos, logos, pathos and kairos]:

a. organisation and arrangement,
b. appropriateness, and
c. logic.