

## The Stylistic Significance of Christensen's Cumulative Sentence

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The task of this paper is to deepen our understanding and enrich our appreciation of the stylistic significance or aesthetic effect of the cumulative sentence in literary text.<sup>1</sup> Significance here means not only the language chosen that is best adapted to the writer's idea or intent but also the cohesive meaning of the sentence in relation to the total context as a reflection of the writer's specific perceptions or evaluations.

In general, style is the purposeful choice of language to achieve a specific aim and calculated effects. But language is complex. It performs different functions: referential, persuasive, emotive, etc. It also specifies an infinite array of possibilities: semantic, syntactic, phonological, graphological, metaphorical, etc. Considering the numerous variables, our choices may not adequately serve our specific purpose.

Myriads of concepts on style are quite metaphysical and impressionistic, abounding in such labels as "flowing," "masculine," "artificial," "dignified," "poetic," etc. Many theories cannot adequately cover the whole ground, for example: monism and dualism. Flaubert represents the Monist's view: "It is like body and soul: form and content to me are one."<sup>2</sup> From this point of view, form cannot be divorced from its meaning. Then it is impossible to change the diction or to alter the phrasing of a statement. This view finds its solid ground in poetry.

On the other hand, the dualist holds that syntactic variations can derive from the same content through transformational rules. For example, Richard Ohmann states, "To put the problem more concretely, the idea of style implies that words on a page might have been different, or differently arranged, without a corresponding difference in substance."<sup>3</sup> This stand is not entirely tenable because a text which is metaphorical, ironical, or ambiguous cannot be paraphrased without distortion of meaning. Syntactic variation can only account for part of the workings of language.

Therefore, the intricacy of language calls for a multilevel approach: pluralism. For example, Halliday distinguishes between ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. Through the "ideational" function, "the speaker or writer embodies in language his