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INTERTWINED CLAUSES: A HYPOTACTIC ILLUSION

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Abstract: In this paper, I intend to deconstruct the idea that there is in the Language, from its Latin aspect, a certain relationship of clauses according to which the relative pronoun would be limited to acting as nothing more than a connecting element in the clause that it heads, being a component of the so-called “subordinate” clause to this one, which configures the perception that there would be a certain *interweaving* between the clauses involved, conventionally called *intertwined clauses*. In an attempt to deconstruct this idea, I oppose the traditional Grammaticography, and I rely on the analysis I propose for the arrangement of those sentences, as well as assume, theoretically, the validity of (re)attributing a certain semantic complexion to what grammatical tradition understands as *integrating conjunction* (the “conjunction” that “integrates” the clause “subordinate” to the relative) and to the *relative pronoun* itself, elements traditionally considered “grammatical words”, in themselves “empty of meaning”; the denial of this consideration serves me as the basis of what I propose. Fundamentally, I remove the “subordination *versus* coordination” dichotomy from the analysis by postulating the ancestry of **parataxis** as sufficient for the appreciation of the ontogenesis of Language and, particularly here, for the revision of what is perceived as interweaving because it is not perceived as a paratactic apposition.

Keywords: “intertwined clauses”; Syntax; parataxis.

The supposedly intricate relational nature of what have conventionally been called *intertwined clauses* can already be assumed by their modes of definition:

(...) uma construção particular do relativo latino [e do relativo português] como conectivo subordinativo: trata-se de caso de entrelaçamento sintático, em que o relativo serve de conectivo na oração que ele introduz e funciona como constituinte em uma oração subordinada à relativa (...) (LOHNER, 2022, p. 120).

In the vernacular environment¹, I use here an example taken from Lohner (*idem*, p. 122), which is also present in Bechara (1970 [1960], p. 149) and is also part of the set of phrasal ready-made sentences in the Portuguese language:

“Não faças a outrem o que não queres que te façam.”
 (“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”),

a formulation for which the relative pronoun is intended to play a purely connective role in the sentence headed by it — *que não queres* —, connecting that sentence to the syntactic node (always antecedent in Romance languages) represented here by the demonstrative pronoun *o*²,

(não faças a outrem

/)

o

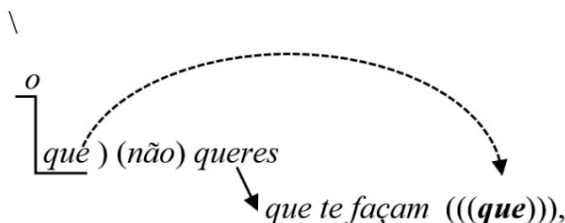
que não queres,

1. of Lusophone tradition, the context in which this text was conceived

2. I am opposed to the analysis proposed by Pinkster (2021, p. 515), according to his “autonomous relative” model, carefully explained by Lohner (2022; see footnotes 9 and 13).

giving to the relative pronoun the status of “constituent” only in the sentence that is understood to be “subordinate” to the relative (also “subordinate”) clause and which here is the direct objective sentence of *queres* — *que te façam* —,

(*não façás a outrem*



in which the relative plays a syntactic function, namely the function of direct object of *façam*. So there would be a sentence called “subordinate” to the sentence called “main” and another sentence called “subordinate”, now “subordinate” to that “subordinate”; in other words, there would be a *restrictive relative* — or “adjective” — “subordinate” and a *direct objective noun* “subordinate”, observing that the phonological and phonetic coincidence between the two occurrences of *que* (“that”) would be a case of homonymy, now a *relative pronoun*, now an “integrating conjunction”³. We would thus have an entity *que*, a relative pronoun, schizophrenically divided between a completely non-semantic action, a kind of mechanical link between clauses, and an acting in which this entity does not reappear segmentally but fulfills a syntactic-semantic role, and then we would have another entity *que*, an “integrating conjunction”⁴, also completely non-semantic, another kind of mechanical link between clauses, now “integrating” the next one as it links it to the previous clause or interconnecting both as it “integrates” one of them.

I intend to deconstruct this description, not in order to construct a more economic one — I believe that economics should interest economists and capital accumulators more than linguists — but in order to propose an interpretation of the phenomenon, one which restores its very nature as a phenomenon, one that may in fact have been processed by the mind of an inaugural speaker, a human speaker capable of dealing with exclusively intelligible algorithms, not the demigod-speaker that seems to me to be forcible to conceive so it is possible to conceive a linguistic entity that is segmentally present in an *expression of behavior*, that is, a *clause*, this one linked to the previous one by such entity, in which the same entity means nothing, and in the next expression of behavior it will mean *in absentia*.

It is quite true that our minds deal with highly complex relationships and that it seems not to bother with the complexity that exists, or supposedly exists, in what one considers to be the interweaving of clauses, in which nothing seems to remain:

3. Note the use of quotation marks to indicate that I disagree with the metalanguage used there, for I disagree with the conception of the phenomenon that was then named, as will be seen below.

What we call “integrating conjunction” (“conjunção integrante”) recurrently heads the so-called “subordinate” noun clauses in Portuguese (as well as in Romance languages), with the possibility of being omitted, according to stylistic intention. In contrast, in English, it does not always recur, as distinct sentence formulations are used, by means of the use of the infinitive, for example in “I want you to come” or “She told you not to do it” (for the infinitive’s function as such, that is, as a noun, see Alonso Júnior, 2023, *passim*). I propose that this fluctuation in itself points to the paratactic apposition on which I will discuss.

4. See the previous footnote.

(...) os falantes não pensam rotineiramente sobre sua própria língua, eles apenas a usam. É oportuno lembrar que Bakhtin (1986:95)⁵ chamou a atenção para o fato de que o falante não tem consciência da materialidade do sistema. A língua materna é formada só de idéias, só de emoções, pois, segundo ele_[7], “não são palavras [o] que pronunciamos ou escutamos, mas verdades ou mentiras, coisas boas ou más, importantes ou triviais, agradáveis ou desagradáveis”. (...) A consciência da materialidade do sistema seria, a propósito, um ruído forte na comunicação que a impediria de realizar-se. (FERREIRA NETTO, 2001, p. 26-7);

(...) a consciência lingüística dos sujeitos falantes não tem o que fazer com a forma lingüística enquanto tal, nem com a própria língua como tal (...) (BAKHTIN, 2006, p. 96);

A palavra da língua *nativa* (...) não é habitualmente percebida como uma palavra carregada de todas aquelas categorias que ela engendrou na reflexão lingüística e que engendrava na reflexão filosófico-religiosa da antiguidade. A palavra nativa é percebida como um irmão, como uma roupa familiar, ou melhor, como a atmosfera na qual habitualmente se vive e se respira. Ela não apresenta nenhum mistério. (...) (*idem*, p. 102).

Thus, on the contrary, outside the baroque analytical understanding I mentioned above, those sentences seem to flow. They seem to flow, and they do so, perhaps not because we have learned to withstand the snail drawn by the supposed interweaving, but because we must process the parts according to the semantic weight that they necessarily carry, contrary to the grammaticographic tradition that postulates the existence of “grammatical words” and, on the contrary, well in line with

(...) uma interpretação que re-substancializa a plenitude das “palavras gramaticais”, re-atribuindo-lhes um peso *tático*, em lugar de “hipotático” (...) é exatamente essa re-atribuição de densidade, espécie de autonomia substantiva, o que permite lançar um olhar ontogênico àquelas palavras e a quaisquer outras que possam comportar certo “isto” substancial (...),

a theoretical undertaking, present in Alonso Júnior (2023, p. 724), in which, more than positioning myself against the interlacing, I try to neutralize the importance traditionally given to the pair “subordination *versus* coordination”, namely the traditional consideration of an ontological truth tacitly attributed to hypotaxis. One can also find in Alonso Júnior (2002, *passim*) my painstaking attempt to stand against this tradition, an effort focused precisely on the (re)attribution of a certain semantic density to the relative pronoun and the consequent proposition of the ontogenic relationship that may have been established between the syntactic node and the relative or so-called “adjective” clause, a satisfactory relationship of ontogenesis that would have initiated what came to be categorized as subordination because it came to be perceived as such, overlapping hypotaxis with a primeval parataxis.

(...) La syntaxe de **subordination** représente un état de la langue relativement récent, instituant, entre des propositions à l'origine autonomes, des rapports comparables à ceux qui se sont établis dans la syntaxe du nom (...).

Le latin laisse entrevoir encore dans certains tours l'ancienne autonomie des propositions: des constructions comme *caue cadas* “prends garde de tomber”, *uolo facias* “je veux que tu fasses” signifiaient proprement “prends garde, tu pourrais tomber”, “fais-le, je le veux”. Les subjonctifs *cadas*, *facias* se justifiaient par eux-mêmes comme marquant la possibilité ou la volonté, et

5. BAKHTIN, M. (1986). *Marxismo e Filosofia da Linguagem: os problemas fundamentais do método sociológico na ciência da linguagem* (M. Lahud & Y. Frateschi Vieira, Trans.; 3. ed.). São Paulo: Hucitec. (Original work published 1929-1930.) (See the edition cited here in References.)

ils étaient simplement juxtaposés. De cet état, qui est celui de la **parataxe** (gr. παρατάσσειν “placer auprès”), il subsiste des traces dans des formules; et la langue parlée ne s’en est jamais entièrement départie. (ERNOUT; THOMAS, 1972 [1951], p. 291)

Thus, when we listen to the formulation

não faças a outrem o que não queres que te façam,

spoken according to the actual phonetics of its syntax, or when we read it, reproducing the same phonetics, it is quite certain that we understand the message being conveyed and then captured in its fluency; we understand what we are advised not to do because we know, or think we know, what we don’t want to be done to us; we understand the semantics of the formulation, because we have grasped the substance of the substantial elements of the message — and because we know something about our own interiority — but we wouldn’t understand the syntax that might be there, and we certainly wouldn’t have been able to formulate it if it were in fact a syntax in which the elements were intertwined in the way of a snail, an unavoidable design if one doesn’t get around the requirement of subordination, if one doesn’t get around the supposed indispensability of the hypotactic model.

Note that there is not, in this study, the following discontinued construction

não faças a outrem
 \
o
 |
que não queres,

in which the relative pronoun performs the syntactic function of direct object of *queres*, and is therefore a constituent of the clause in which it is “physically” located, with a solution of continuity in relation to the previous construction and the same solution of the supposed intertwining. What one finds in

não faças a outrem
 \
o
 |
que não queres
 ↘
que te façam

is

*que te façam **que** ∴ fazerem-te **que***

as the direct object of *queres*, **que** being the direct object of *façam ∴ fazerem*, within the sentence, without it needing to appear “physically” there.

Given that the dichotomy of “subordination *versus* coordination” is inescapable in its hypotactic foundation, the design according to which the clause

que não queres

is subordinate to the clause

não faças a outrem o (“aquilo”: “that”, demonstrative)

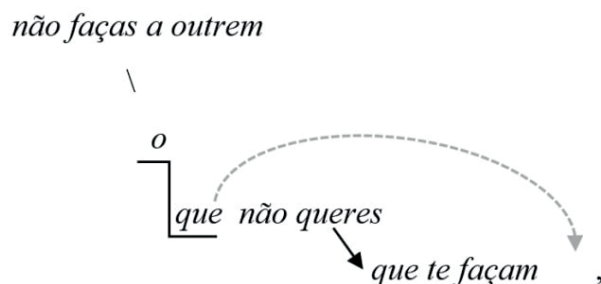
and the clause

que te façam

is subordinate to the clause

que não queres

is also inescapable, which then configures the snail-like design, in which the relative pronoun seems to jump from the place where it acted as a non semantic link and, like a “atleta acéfalo” (“brainless athlete”: see ALONSO JÚNIOR, 2002, p. 14), rushes to another place to say something, even if it doesn’t get there:



a deconstructible athleticism to the extent of the (re)semanticization that I propose for the pronoun, as well as for the so-called “conjunction”, subsuming both to a dense semantic load, and dense with a pronominal-demonstrative content, according to the drawing

não faças a outrem o : *que* = “isso” (“that”, demonstrative) *não queres que te façam*,

não faças a outrem o : *que* = “isso” (“that”, demonstrative) *não queres que* = “isto” (“this”, demonstrative) : *te façam*,

não faças a outrem “aquilo” (“that”, demonstrative) : “isso” (“that”, demonstrative)
não queres que = “isto” (“this”, demonstrative) : *te façam*,

não faças a outrem “aquilo” (“that”, demonstrative) : “isso” (“that”, demonstrative)
não queres “isto” (“this”, demonstrative) : *te façam*,

Não faças a outrem “aquilo” (“that”, demonstrative) . “Isso” (“That”, demonstrative)
não queres “isto” (“this”, demonstrative) : *te façam* . ,

Não faças a outrem o = “aquilo” (“that”, demonstrative) . *Que* = “Isso” (“That”, demonstrative)
não queres que = “isto” (“this”, demonstrative) : *te façam* . ,

Não faças a outrem o . Que não queres que = “isto” (“this”, demonstrative) : te façam. ,

Não faças a outrem o . **Que** não queres **que** : te façam. ,

Não faças a outrem “tal coisa” (“such thing”) . “Qual coisa” (“Which thing”) não queres **que** : te façam. ,

“Não faças a outrem ‘aquilo’ (‘that’, demonstrative). Não queres ‘isto’ (‘this’, demonstrative): façam-te ‘aquilo’ (‘that’, demonstrative).”,

Não faças a outrem o . Não queres **que** : te façam **que**. ,

Não faças a outrem o . **Que** não queres **que** : te façam . ,



in which I propose a **paratactic apposition** between the recognizably demonstrative pronoun *o*, “that”, and the pronoun that *re-lates* it in the continuity of the formulation, that is, that *re-lates* it to this continuity, (re)attributing to this *re-lator*, *re-lating*, *re-lative* pronoun, the nature of its demonstrative action, thus having a paratactic apposition between two pronouns with a demonstrative content, in which **I propose *que* (“that”) as an apposition of *o*** (see the interpretation and analysis proposal I develop in Alonso Júnior, 2023, *passim*); on an equal footnote, I also propose a **paratactic apposition** between the so-called “integrating conjunction”, *que* (“that”⁶), and the continuity of the formulation, (re)attributing to this “conjunction” the nature of its then demonstrative action and therefore considered “conjunctive”, to which I now propose to append the continuity of the orational formulation that makes its intended content explicit. In other words, **I propose as an apposition of *que* the formulation of the behavior that gives it its semantic-pragmatic content**, according to “a paratática aposição à substância *que* da expressão do conteúdo que lhe preencherá discursivamente a generalidade” (“the paratactic apposition to the substance *que* of the expression of the content that will discursively fill its generality”: ALONSO JÚNIOR, *idem*, p. 727; see the interpretation and proposed analysis I develop *ibi*, *passim*). Note that I postulate a certain mirroring relationship between the action of the relative pronoun and the action of the so-called “integrating conjunction”, as if one, in the Romance sphere, looked anaphorically at the “this” already-said and the other looked cataphorically at the “this” yet-to-be-said, both acting as spatial-phrasal pointers, both acting, therefore, as **demonstratives**, and it is this semantic (re)densification that allows the paratactic apposition, in which one density is consistent with the other:

(...) a afinidade entre as substantividades pares é o que ocasiona a paratática aposição de uma à outra, propriamente como um **aposto parataticamente justaposto**, em que uma substantividade acolhe aquela que se lhe apõe, e essa substantividade, acolhedora, ali se mantém, subjacente, nem subordinante nem subordinada, numa ontogênica *taxe*, não “hipotaxe” (...) (ALONSO JÚNIOR, 2023, p. 797).

This coadunation, which I postulate in an ontogenic, primal, archaeological sense, removes the dichotomy of “subordination *versus* coordination”, demolishes the assumption of hierarchy, dismantling the then supposed snail-like relationships of “intertwined clauses”, relationships that are frankly alien to a linguistic processing with a minimum of iconicity to make it credible.

6. See footnote 3.

What I call the “ontogenic, primal, archaeological sense”, represented above by means of

“o :”, “*que* = ‘isso’ (‘that’, demonstrative)”, “*que* = ‘isto’ (‘this’, demonstrative) :”,

may sound strange for a perspective that insists on being contemporary, like a gaze that doesn’t give up on both the synchrony in which we find ourselves and recent past synchronies. However, in different synchronicities in which the Romance languages were called Latin, there is ample evidence of uses of the relative pronoun endowed with the “**certaine autonomie**” spoken of by Ernout and Thomas (1972 [1951], p. 333; the bold is theirs) and which, more than relative autonomy, seems to bring that pronoun closer to the demonstrative pronoun itself, inter-identifying these “two” pronouns in terms of the syntactic action that points to phrasal elements rather than taking them up:

“(…) *minime probabili more turpe erat docere quod honestum erat discere* (…)”

(SÉNÈQUE LE RHÉTEUR, 1932),

in which discontinuously there isn't

(*docere*) ***quod honestum erat*** / (*docere*) ***quod erat honestum*** ,

“(to teach that [element]) **that was licit**”,

just as discontinuously there wasn't

(*não faça*s a outrem o) ***que não queres*** ;

there was

(*não faça*s a outrem o) *que não queres* ***que te façam*** ,

just as there is here

(*docere*) ***quod honestum erat discere*** / (*docere*) ***quod erat honestum discere*** ,

“(to teach that [element]) that **was licit to learn**”,

for which reason, having understood the relationships, I do not consider I presuppose the intertwining given by the analysis

[*minime probabili more*]

[*turpe erat*]

[*docere* (*id*)]

[***quod***

[*honestum erat*]

discere (((***quod***)))),

[*reproachful habit,*]
 [*it was fowl*]
 [*to teach that (element)*]
 [**that**
 [*was licit*]
to learn (((that)))],

but I propose the syntactic-ontogenic intellection given by the interpretation

[*minime probabili more*]
 [*turpe erat*]
 [*docere quod*]
 [**quod** *discere*]
 [*honestum erat*],

[*reproachful habit,*]
 [*it was fowl*]
 [*to teach **that** (demonstrative)*]
 [**that** (demonstrative) *to learn*]
 [*was licit*],

Reproachful habit,
it was fowl
*to teach **that** (demonstrative).*
*(That =) **That** (demonstrative) to learn*
was licit.,

Reproachful habit,
it was fowl
*to teach **that** (demonstrative).*
***That** (demonstrative)*
was licit to learn.,

in which *quod* plays the double functions of an recognizably demonstrative *id*, which the widest tradition points out as “elliptical”, and of a properly relative *quod* that I (re)densify in its equally demonstrative power: I **densify** it as my proposition and I **re-densify** it in the recognition of a **phoric potency** already present in its nature. Now, the sense of that “elliptical” being is the sense of parataxis, in which the elements come closer together in the spatiality of the sentence, according to a lateral approach, not a vertical one, discarding the idea of “hierarchy”, which is unnecessary for the establishment of the relationships:

*to teach **that** (demonstrative)*
 /
*to learn “**that**” = “that” (demonstrative)*
was licit ,

docere quod
/
discere quod
erat honestum ,

to the equivalence of

to teach that (already known as demonstrative) : *that* (already considered as a relative pronoun) = “that” (demonstrative) *was licit to learn*,

to teach that (already known as demonstrative) : *that* (already considered as a relative pronoun) = “that” (demonstrative) *was licit that* (considered “integrating conjunction”) = “this” (demonstrative) : *it was learnt*,

to teach “that” (already known as demonstrative) : “that” (demonstrative) *was licit that* (considered “integrating conjunction”) = “this” (demonstrative) : *it was learnt*,

to teach “that” (already known as demonstrative) : “that” (demonstrative) *was licit “this”* (demonstrative) : *it was learnt*,

It was fowl to teach “that” (already known as demonstrative) . “That” (demonstrative) *was licit “this”* : *to be learnt* . ,

It was fowl to teach that (already known as demonstrative) . *That* = “That” (demonstrative) *was licit that* = “this” (demonstrative) : *it was learnt* . ,

It was fowl to teach that . *That was licit that* = “this” (demonstrative) : *it was learnt* . ,

It was fowl to teach that . *That was licit that* : *it was learnt* . ,

It was fowl to teach “such thing” . “Which thing” *was licit that* : *it was learnt* . ,

“It was fowl to teach ‘that’ (demonstrative). It was licit ‘this’: to learn ‘that’ (demonstrative).”,

It was fowl to teach that . *It was licit that* : *it was learnt that* . ,

It was fowl to teach that . *That was licit that* : *it was learnt* .



As another side of the same coin, one rescues the original semantic density of what has come to be categorized as “conjunction” for being perceived as a connecting element, an *integrating* “conjunction” of a new clause, making it *integral*, *whole*, just as the *relating-relative*, as such, has come to be perceived as a *connector-connective* element, so that it could also be called a “conjunction” and an “integrating conjunction” because it, too, makes the new clause *integral*, *whole*.

Both phrasal pointers, relative pronoun and “integrating conjunction”, then share the **demonstrative** character that I intend, as well as sharing the hypotaxizing perception that has been thrown at them, attributing to them a certain semantic-syntactic slippage that would turn

them from textual demonstratives into orational connectors⁷; note that the phoric demonstration, precisely by demonstrating elements of the text, acts in favor of textual *cohesion* as the elements that demonstrate, while pointing, articulate those pointed out in the textual game and therefore produce *connection*. Now, **this textual connection seems to have provided the sensation of a phrasal connection**, and this grammaticalizes the elements that demonstrate into elements that connect as it removes their demonstrative semantics, according to the understanding launched there, but this understanding, which comes from that sensation, cannot remove from the linguistic entity the totality of what composed it. This is why I propose that both the relative pronoun and the “integrating conjunction” maintain their pronominal-demonstrative nature, and that maintaining the semantic density present in this nature is what allows the hypotactic imposition to be removed: it is therefore in maintaining that demonstrative “that” and “this” that I propose to base the permanence of the formative parataxis. See Alonso Júnior (2002, p. 54), following Ernout and Thomas (1972 [1951]):

A propósito específico do pronome relativo [Ernout e Thomas] asseveram (*idem*, 138):

“(…) D’une manière générale, le relatif latin, par sa forme pleine et bien marquée, préservait, beaucoup mieux que celui du grec, son autonomie syntaxique vis-à-vis de l’antécédent.”

“Forme pleine et bien marquée” e “autonomie syntaxique” do pronome relativo aqui se fazem funcionar como argumentos em favor do conteúdo pretendido para o pronome. Esse “conteúdo”, por sua vez (...), “preenche” a proposta de não-subordinação da oração.

Aqui, evocar a parataxe não é forçar anacronismo em análise; não é transplantar antigo “estágio” lingüístico para apreciação realizada hoje. É recuo àquele “estágio” como veículo para reencontrar linhas do aqui requerido “sentido sintático”; é observar o que “foi” para, com isso, tentar caracterizar melhor o que se acredita “ser” agora, pressupondo-se que valha essa relação, independentemente da ação do tempo, que (...) modifica, descora, mas não destrói aquele sentido.

Insisting on that “sentido sintático” (“syntactic sense”) is an argumentative expedient that serves me well — and that’s why I’m repeating it here, evoking my own discourse (ALONSO JÚNIOR, 2002) — for the defense of a fundamental and founding parataxis, because it is a requirement that parataxis must be based on essential elements, sufficient for minimal expression, necessarily dense with “sentido” (“sense”); that “sentido” (“sense”) is essentially a “sentido sintático” (“syntactic sense”), properly a “sentido” (“sense”) in syntactic engendering, a certain *ratio* that rules out any proposition of brainless automatism: it is in the semantic weight concentrated there that the “sentido sintático” (“syntactic sense”) is anchored, that “autonomie syntaxique” in which the relationships are made whole among the elements and are not scattered in a non semantic interweaving.

(...) La proposition relative se trouvant dans une dépendance très faible par rapport à la principale, le mode y était à l’origine presque aussi libre que dans une phrase indépendante.
(...) (ERNOUT; THOMAS, 1972 [1951], p. 334):

7. “(...) L’indo-européen ne paraît pas avoir possédé un pronom strictement affecté à la fonction relative, et les langues historiques se sont procuré cet outil syntaxique en affectant à la fonction relative des pronoms le plus souvent anaphoriques (gr. ὅς, ἡ [sic: ἦ], ὅ (...)) (...)” (MONTEIL, 1970, p. 226)

this “quasi-free” character of the verbal mode used in relative “subordination” indeed implies the semantic-syntactic density I’m aiming for, corresponding to the “autonomie syntaxique” of integral relations and rejecting the general understanding that Language is governed by the “subordination-coordination” pair, according to the traditionally accepted hierarchical model. What underpins the “quasi-freedom” of autonomy is the ontogenic freedom of parataxis, which doesn’t need to formulate “subordinative” snails because it self-formulates in side-by-side relations, according to the maintenance of primeval semantic information, which is the foundation of Language.

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