

Concord school as above the heads of ordinary mortals, I remember being greatly interested both in the papers read and in the informal remarks which followed."¹

The fault in this sentence is that words which would make the connection of thought clear are omitted. To connect the second clause with the first, we might say, "my observation leads me to a different conclusion; for I was, I remember, greatly interested," etc.

Such are some of the ways in which the principle of unity in a sentence may be violated. To illustrate all the varieties of error that fall under this head would take much more space than is at our command; for sins against unity spring from confusion of thought, and confusion of thought has many forms.

Lack of unity caused by confusion of thought.

SECTION V.

KINDS OF SENTENCES.

The principles which govern the choice, the number, and the arrangement of words apply to every sentence, whatever its length or its structure.

In our day, although we occasionally see a sentence of only two or three words and occasionally one of two hundred, extremely SHORT and extremely LONG SENTENCES are rare. Often the distinction between the two is so slight that a change in punctuation, phraseology, or arrangement suffices to put material that is scattered through several sentences into one, or material that is stretched through one sentence into several. When the difference is merely a matter of punctuation, and still

Short or long sentences?

¹ Student's theme.

more when it is a matter of substance, the choice between short and long sentences depends partly on the nature of the subject-matter and partly on the character of the persons addressed. To recommend the use of short sentences almost exclusively, as some writers do, is to look at the subject from but one point of view. The opposite point of view was taken by Coleridge:—

"I can never so far sacrifice my judgment to the desire of being immediately popular, as to cast my sentences in the French moulds, or affect a style which an ancient critic would have deemed purposely invented for persons troubled with the asthma to read, and for those to comprehend who labour under the more pitiable asthma of a short-witted intellect. . . . It is true that these short and unconnected sentences are easily and instantly understood: but it is equally true, that wanting all the cement of thought as well as of style, all the connections, and (if you will forgive so trivial a metaphor) all the *hooks-and-eyes* of the memory, they are as easily forgotten: or rather, it is scarcely possible that they should be remembered. Nor is it less true, that those who confine their reading to such books dwarf their own faculties, and finally reduce their understandings to a deplorable imbecility. . . . Like idle morning visitors, the brisk and breathless periods hurry in and hurry off in quick and profitless succession; each indeed for the moments of its stay prevents the pain of vacancy, while it indulges the love of sloth; but all together they leave the mistress of the house (the soul I mean) flat and exhausted, incapable of attending to her own concerns, and unfitted for the conversation of more rational guests."¹

Since Coleridge wrote, the number of writers addicted to short sentences has increased with the increase in the number of readers impatient of delay, eager to grasp at a part of an idea and less and less disposed to use their minds in the effort to understand a long sentence that presents the idea as a whole. Short sentences are,

¹ Coleridge: *The Friend*, vol. i. essay iii.

indeed, in such favor at present that there is little need of setting forth the objections to excessive length. Very few writers of English indulge in sentences like those condemned by De Quincey in the following passages:—

“Every German regards a sentence in the light of a package, and a package not for the mail-coach but for the waggon, into which his privilege is to crowd as much as he possibly can. Having framed a sentence, therefore, he next proceeds to *pack* it, which is effected partly by unwieldy tails and codicils, but chiefly by enormous parenthetical involutions. All qualifications, limitations, exceptions, illustrations, are stuffed and violently rammed into the bowels of the principal proposition. That all this equipage of accessaries is not so arranged as to assist its own orderly development no more occurs to a German as any fault than that in a package of shawls or of carpets the colours and patterns are not fully displayed. To him it is sufficient that they are *there*. And Mr. Kant, when he has succeeded in packing up a sentence which covers three close-printed octavo pages, stops to draw his breath with the air of one who looks back upon some brilliant and meritorious performance.”¹

“Kant was a great man, but he was obtuse and deaf as an antediluvian boulder with regard to language and its capacities. He has sentences which have been measured by a carpenter, and some of them run two feet eight by six inches. Now, a sentence with that enormous span is fit only for the use of a megatherium or a pre-Adamite. Parts so remote as the beginning and the end of such a sentence can have no sensible relation to each other.”²

The truth is that a short sentence is better for some purposes, a long sentence for others. In books for children short sentences are a necessity; in a narrative, when rapidity is required, they are often effective. In a description, and sometimes in a narrative, long sentences are of use in grouping details which are to make a single

¹ De Quincey: *Essay on Rhetoric*. ² *Ibid.*: *Essay on Language*.

impression; in an exposition or an argument addressed to mature minds they are often serviceable, especially when a writer wishes to bring a number of particulars under one head.¹ In a short sentence, it is comparatively easy to avoid obscurity, weakness, and clumsiness, and to keep one point of view; in a long sentence, it is comparatively easy to show the relation with the context.

In unbroken succession, short sentences distract or confuse the reader, long sentences fatigue him. A skilful writer alternates long with short, using the former, for the most part, to unfold his thought, the latter to enforce it. This is what Burke does in a passage quoted for another purpose.² After putting a strain upon the reader's attention by a long sentence, a skilful writer relaxes it by a short one. This is what Daniel Webster does in the following passage:—

“VENERABLE MEN! you have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives, that you might behold this joyous day. You are now where you stood fifty years ago, this very hour, with your brothers and your neighbors, shoulder to shoulder, in the strife for your country. Behold, how altered! The same heavens are indeed over your heads; the same ocean rolls at your feet; but all else how changed! You hear now no roar of hostile cannon, you see no mixed volumes of smoke and flame rising from burning Charlestown. The ground strewed with the dead and the dying; the impetuous charge; the steady and successful repulse; the loud call to repeated assault; the summoning of all that is manly to repeated resistance; a thousand bosoms freely and fearlessly bared in an instant to whatever of terror there may be in war and death;—all these you have witnessed, but you witness them no more. All is peace.”³

¹ See page 212.

² See pages 150, 151.

³ Daniel Webster: Address delivered at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument, June 17, 1825.

Another example is from Cardinal Newman:—

“And then again, the first time the mind comes across the arguments and speculations of unbelievers, and feels what a novel light they cast upon what he has hitherto accounted sacred; and still more, if it gives in to them and embraces them, and throws off as so much prejudice what it has hitherto held, and, as if waking from a dream, begins to realize to its imagination that there is now no such thing as law and the transgression of law, that sin is a phantom, and punishment a bugbear, that it is free to sin, free to enjoy the world and the flesh; and still further, when it does enjoy them, and reflects that it may think and hold just what it will, that ‘the world is all before it where to choose,’ and what system to build up as its own private persuasion; when this torrent of wilful thoughts rushes over and inundates it, who will deny that the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or what the mind takes for knowledge, has made it one of the gods, with a sense of expansion and elevation, — an intoxication in reality, still, so far as the subjective state of the mind goes, an illumination? Hence the fanaticism of individuals or nations, who suddenly cast off their Maker.”¹

SENTENCES are either PERIODIC or LOOSE. The periodic sentence is so framed that the meaning is suspended till the end; the loose sentence is so framed that it may be brought to a grammatical close at one or more points before the end. For examples of the periodic sentence, or period, in its perfection, we must go to languages in which greater freedom in arrangement is allowed than is possible in English.

“An inflected language,” says Professor Greenough, “generally has a tendency to arrange ideas in such a manner that the main predicate is withheld until all the modifications have been given, and the whole thought with all its details is thus presented at once in an organized body.

¹ Cardinal Newman: *The Idea of a University; University Teaching, Knowledge viewed in Relation to Learning.*

“The following is an example of this sort taken from the Latin, which is especially fond of this form:—

LATIN.

“Quod autem summae benevolentiae est quae mea erga illum omnibus semper nota fuit, ut vix C. Marcello optimo et amantissimo fratri praeter eum quidem cederem nemini cum id sollicitudine cura labore tam diu praestiterim quam diu est de illius salute dubitatum certe hoc tempore magnis curis molestiis doloribus liberatus praestare debeo.”¹

ENGLISH.

“But as to this proof of great good will towards him [i. e. the speaking for him], a good will that on my part has always been known to everybody, so much so that I hardly yielded the palm even to his most excellent and affectionate brother Caius Marcellus, and except him certainly to nobody, having shown this proof of good will (I say) in my own anxiety, distress, and trial, all the time when there was a question of his preservation, certainly the same proof at this time when I am relieved from my great anxieties and troubles I am bound to show.

“A sentence in this form is called a period, by which is meant that the thought is included in a circuit or enclosure, instead of straggling off without limit. This form of presentation, which is called the periodic style, is not necessarily artistic, or even artificial, but is simply the reduction to a syntactic form of the details and modifications which a speaker without art naturally inserts in parentheses and digressions. This reduction is accomplished by the use of words which, though they were not originally connectives, gradually came to be felt as such, and ultimately became such grammatically.

“The origin of the periodic sentence may be seen if we give in a popular fashion a thought presented in the periodic form by Milton, whose writings abound in periods. The original is first given, and then the same substance — with the same order of ideas but without any suggestion of periodic structure — in

¹ Cicero: *Oratio pro M. Marcello*, xi. xxxiv.

the form which it would take in the mouth of an unlettered storyteller:—

“Meanwhile the new-baptized, who yet remained
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly called
Jesus, Messiah, Son of God, declared,
And on that high authority had believed,
And with him talked, and with him lodged — I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others, though in Holy Writ not named —
Now missing him, their joy so lately found,
So lately found and so abruptly gone,
Began to doubt.”¹

“Meanwhile these men that had just been baptized and had stayed on at the Jordan with the Baptist and seen the man they’d just heard expressly called Jesus declared Messiah, Son of God — and of course on such high authority they’d believed in him and they’d talked with him and stayed in the house with him — I mean Andrew and Simon — they got to be pretty famous afterwards, — with some more, — their names don’t appear in the book though, — well, all of a sudden he was gone again, — and so of course they began to doubt.”²

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English sentences were, to a great extent, framed upon Latin models. An example may be taken from a sermon delivered more than two hundred years ago:—

“How generally men, with most³ unanimous consent, are devoted to profit, as to the immediate scope of their designs and aim of their doings, if with the slightest attention we view what is acted on this theatre of human affairs, we cannot but discern.”⁴

The argument against the use of long sentences framed

¹ Milton: *Paradise Regained*, book ii. line 1.

² Professor J. B. Greenough, in a letter to the author.

³ See pages 158, 159.

⁴ Opening sentence of Dr. Barrow’s sermon on “The Profitableness of Godliness.” Quoted in Austin Phelps’s “*Theory of Preaching*,” lect. xvii.

upon the model of Latin periods is forcibly stated by De Quincey, an author who sometimes produced sentences such as he condemns:—

“Those who are not accustomed to watch the effects of composition upon the feelings, or have had little experience in voluminous reading pursued for weeks, would scarcely imagine how much of downright physical exhaustion is produced by what is technically called the *periodic* style of writing: it is not the length, the *ἀπεραντολογία*, the paralytic flux of words, — it is not even the cumbersome involution of parts within parts, — separately considered, that bears so heavily upon the attention. It is the suspense, the holding-on of the mind until what is called the *ἀπόδοσις*, or coming round of the sentence commences; this it is which wears out the faculty of attention. A sentence, for example, begins with a series of *ifs*, perhaps a dozen lines are occupied with expanding the conditions under which something is affirmed or denied: here you cannot dismiss and have done with the ideas as you go along, for as yet all is hypothetic; all is suspended in air. The conditions are not fully to be understood until you are acquainted with the dependency; you must give a separate attention to each clause of this complex hypothesis, and yet, having done *that* by a painful effort, you have done nothing at all; for you must exercise a reacting attention through the corresponding latter section, in order to follow out its relations to all parts of the hypothesis which sustains it. In fact, under the rude yet also artificial character of newspaper¹ style, each separate monster period is a vast arch,² which, not receiving its keystone, not being locked into self-supporting cohesion, until you nearly reach its close, imposes of necessity upon the unhappy reader all the *onus* of its ponderous weight through the main process of its construction.”³

The difference between periodic and loose sentences in every-day English is shown by the following examples:—

¹ This is by no means a characteristic weakness of American newspapers.

² Query as to the merit of this figure.

³ De Quincey: *Essay on Style*.

LOOSE.

This was forbidden by taste, as well as by judgment.

He kept himself alive with the fish he caught, or with the goats he shot.

The world is not eternal, nor is it the work of chance.

He looked cold and was cold.

This disposition saves him from offending his opponents, and also from alienating his supporters.

His actions were frequently blamed; but his character was above reproach.

His word may be as good as his bond, but we have still to ask how good his bond is.

He can talk when there's anybody worth talking to.

I shall not vote for this measure unless it is clearly constitutional.

What is flour worth in gold, if it costs \$10 a barrel in silver?

These examples are enough to show the difference in short sentences between the loose and the periodic form. In some of them the periodic form seems preferable to the loose, in others the loose to the periodic. Sometimes the best form is that which is neither wholly loose nor wholly periodic.

"We came to our journey's end, at last, with no small difficulty, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and bad weather."

PERIODIC.

This was forbidden both by taste and by judgment.

He kept himself alive either with the fish he caught, or with the goats he shot.

The world is neither eternal nor the work of chance.

He not only looked cold, but was cold.

This disposition saves him on the one hand from offending his opponents, on the other hand from alienating his supporters.

Though his actions were frequently blamed, his character was above reproach.

Granting that his word is as good as his bond, we have still to ask how good his bond is.

When there's anybody worth talking to, he can talk.

Unless this measure is clearly constitutional, I shall not vote for it.

If flour costs \$10 a barrel in silver, what is it worth in gold?

"At last, with no small difficulty, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and bad weather, we came to our journey's end."

The loose form of this sentence is objectionable because it is so very loose that it might end at any one of the five commas; the periodic form is objectionable because, long before the enumeration of the qualifying circumstances is finished, the reader becomes impatient to learn what the fact is that requires so much introduction. We may escape the disadvantages of the loose form, and diminish those of the periodic, by placing a portion of the predicate in the midst of the qualifying circumstances:—

"At last, after much fatigue, through deep roads and bad weather, we came, with no small difficulty, to our journey's end."¹

"At last, with no small difficulty, and after much fatigue, we came, through deep roads and bad weather, to our journey's end."²

Still further to illustrate the distinction between periodic and loose sentences, an effective example of each kind may be quoted:—

"In the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the clouds and storms had come, when the gay sensuous pagan life was gone, when men were not living by the senses and understanding, when they were looking for the speedy coming of Antichrist, there appeared in Italy, to the north of Rome, in the beautiful Umbrian country at the foot of the Apennines, a figure of the most magical power and charm, St. Francis."³

"The only other wish on my part is that the ground shall be called 'The Soldier's Field,' and marked with a stone bearing the names of some dear friends,—alumni of the University, and noble gentlemen,—who gave freely and eagerly all that they had or hoped for, to their country and to their fellowmen in the hour of great need—the war of 1861 to 1865 in defence of the Republic."⁴

¹ Whately: *Elements of Rhetoric*, part iii. chap. ii. sect. xii.

² Herbert Spencer: *The Philosophy of Style*. Which of these two forms is the better? See page 183.

³ Matthew Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*; Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment.

⁴ Letter of Henry L. Higginson to the President and Fellows of Harvard College, June 5, 1890.

For a thorough study of the advantages and the disadvantages of loose and of periodic sentences, it would be necessary to compare passages from good writers at greater length than is practicable in this book. Such a comparison would show that authors whose style has the freedom and ease of familiar conversation prefer loose sentences, and that those whose style is more formal and rhetorical prefer periodic. It would show, too, that writers of the first class diversify their pages by an occasional period, and those of the second by an occasional loose sentence.

The only other kind of sentence to be considered is the **BALANCED SENTENCE**, — that is, the sentence in which the words and phrases of one part correspond in form and in position with those of another part. Balanced sentences. The balance is greater or less according as this correspondence is more or less exact, and according as it extends to a larger or a smaller part of the sentence. Balanced sentences often contain antithetical words or clauses; but even when they do not, their advantages and disadvantages are similar to those of antithesis.¹ Dr. Johnson's well-known parallel between Dryden and Pope is full of balanced sentences. It ends as follows: —

"If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight."²

Other examples of balanced sentences are: —

"The stars that fall on the earth are not stars of eternal light; they are not our hope; they are not our guidance; they often blight, they never purify."³

¹ See pages 188-192.

² Johnson: Lives of the Poets; Pope.

³ Landor: Conversations, Fourth Series; Dante and Gemma Donati.

"It is not easy to count the stately churches and palaces that were reduced to a smoking ruin, to value the merchandise that perished in the trading streets, or to number the families that were involved in the common destruction."¹

"Our poor work may perish; but thine shall endure! This monument may moulder away; the solid ground it rests upon may sink down to a level with the sea; but thy memory shall not fail!"²

"So that, although St. Bernard journeys all day by the lake of Geneva, and asks at evening 'where it is,' and Byron learns by it 'to love earth only for its earthly sake,'³ it does not follow that Byron, hating men, was the worse for loving the earth, nor that St. Bernard, loving men, was the better or wiser for being blind to it."⁴

"*By-Ends.* Why they after their head-strong manner, conclude that it is duty to rush on their Journey all weathers, and I am for waiting for Wind and Tide. They are for hazarding all for God at a clap, and I am for taking all advantages to secure my Life and Estate. They are for holding their notions, though all other men are against them; but I am for Religion in what, and so far as the times and my safety will bear it. They are for Religion when in Rags and Contempt; but I am for him when he walks in his Golden Slippers in the Sun-shine, and with applause."⁵

These examples are enough to show how the balanced structure brings out the meaning of a sentence by emphasizing the contrast between opposing views, or between two sides of a thought. When not carried to excess, the balanced structure is agreeable to the ear, is a help to the memory, and gives emphasis to each of the balanced expressions: when carried to excess, it produces upon the reader the monotonous effect of rhythm without its charm; and it may lead to a sacrifice of strict truth.

¹ Edward Gibbon: The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chap. lx.

² Daniel Webster: Address delivered at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument, June 17, 1825.

³ Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, canto iii. stanza lxxi.

⁴ Ruskin: Modern Painters, vol. iii. part iv. chap xvii.

⁵ John Bunyan: The Pilgrim's Progress, part i.

From what has been said, it is evident that no one kind of sentence is preferable to another. To hold either that short sentences are better than long, or that periodic sentences are better than loose, is to impose on a writer an artificial restraint which is almost sure to cramp his individuality and to injure his style. Each kind of sentence has its place. Each kind a master of the art of expression uses according to his needs. Possessing all available means, he chooses the right means at the right moment and uses them in the right way. One of the secrets, if not the one secret, of good writing lies in the perfect adaptation of means to end.

Were there space, it would be easy to show that the practice of good writers conforms to these principles. All that can be done here is to give three examples:—

“The Americans have many virtues, but they have not Faith and Hope. I know no two words whose meaning is more lost sight of. We use these words as if they were as obsolete as *Selah* and *Amen*. And yet they have the broadest meaning, and the most cogent application to Boston in this year. The Americans have little faith. They rely on the power of a dollar; they are deaf to a sentiment. They think you may talk the north wind down as easily as raise society; and no class more faithless than the scholars or intellectual men. Now if I talk with a sincere wise man, and my friend, with a poet, with a conscientious youth who is still under the dominion of his own wild thoughts, and not yet harnessed in the team of society to drag with us all in the ruts of custom, I see at once how paltry is all this generation of unbelievers, and what a house of cards their institutions are, and I see what one brave man, what one great thought executed might effect.”¹

“In the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the clouds and storms had come, when the gay sensuous pagan life was gone,

¹ Emerson: *Man the Reformer*. This paragraph shows that even Emerson, who is addicted to short sentences, feels now and then the necessity of introducing a long one.

when men were not living by the senses and understanding, when they were looking for the speedy coming of Antichrist, there appeared in Italy, to the north of Rome, in the beautiful Umbrian country at the foot of the Apennines, a figure of the most magical power and charm, St. Francis. His century is, I think, the most interesting in the history of Christianity after its primitive age; more interesting than even the century of the Reformation; and one of the chief figures, perhaps the very chief, to which this interest attaches itself, is St. Francis. And why? Because of the profound popular instinct which enabled him, more than any man since the primitive age, to fit religion for popular use. He brought religion to the people. He founded the most popular body of ministers of religion that has ever existed in the Church. He transformed monachism by uprooting the stationary monk, delivering him from the bondage of property and sending him, as a mendicant friar, to be a stranger and sojourner, not in the wilderness, but in the most crowded haunts of men, to console them and to do them good. This popular instinct of his is at the bottom of his famous marriage with poverty. Poverty and suffering are the condition of the people, the multitude, the immense majority of mankind; and it was towards this *people* that his soul yearned. ‘He listens,’ it was said of him, ‘to those to whom God himself will not listen.’”¹

“As far as I am acquainted with modern architecture, I am aware of no streets which, in simplicity and manliness of style, or general breadth and brightness of effect, equal those of the New Town of Edinburgh. But yet I am well persuaded that as you traverse those streets, your feelings of pleasure and pride in them are much complicated with those which are excited entirely by the surrounding scenery. As you walk up or down George Street, for instance, do you not look eagerly for every opening to the north and south, which lets in the lustre of the Firth of Forth, or the rugged outline of the Castle Rock? Take away the sea-waves, and the dark basalt, and I fear you would find little to interest you in George Street by itself. Now I remember a city, more nobly placed than even your Edinburgh, which, instead of the valley that you have now filled by lines of railroad, has a broad

¹ Matthew Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*; Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment.

and rushing river of blue water sweeping through the heart of it; which, for the dark and solitary rock that bears your castle, has an amphitheatre of cliffs crested with cypresses and olive; which, for the two masses of Arthur's Seat and the ranges of the Pentlands, has a chain of blue mountains higher than the haughtiest peaks of your Highlands; and which, for your far-away Ben Ledi and Ben More, has the great central chain of the St. Gothard Alps: and yet, as you go out of the gates, and walk in the suburban streets of that city — I mean Verona — the eye never seeks to rest on that external scenery, however gorgeous; it does not look for the gaps between the houses, as you do here; it may for a few moments follow the broken line of the great Alpine battlements; but it is only where they form a background for other battlements, built by the hand of man. There is no necessity felt to dwell on the blue river or the burning hills. The heart and eye have enough to do in the streets of the city itself; they are contented there; nay, they sometimes turn from the natural scenery, as if too savage and solitary, to dwell with a deeper interest on the palace walls that cast their shade upon the streets, and the crowd of towers that rise out of that shadow into the depth of the sky."¹

SECTION VI.

PARAGRAPHS.

The usefulness of division by PARAGRAPHS as a mere mechanical device is apparent to every one who has tried to read pages of print or of manuscript that are unbroken, or that are broken into many small fragments. The unbroken text tires the eye in one way; the text too frequently broken, in another.

If the sole use of paragraphs were to rest the eye, as a speaker's changes of tone rest the ear, there would be little difficulty in determining their length or their structure;

¹ Ruskin: Lectures on Architecture and Painting, delivered at Edinburgh in November, 1853, lecture i.

ure; but if their main function is to mark changes in thought, and thus help the reader to follow a writer step by step, puzzling questions as to their length or their structure must sometimes arise.

Paragraphs are to sentences what sentences are to words. A paragraph, like a sentence, should be a unit in substance and in expression, and should be developed with clearness, with force, and with ease.

To secure clearness in a paragraph, a writer should suggest in the first sentence the main idea of the paragraph and the point of view from which it is to be considered, or should at least indicate the ^{Clearness.} direction in which the thought is to move; and he should arrange his sentences in logical order, so that each shall contribute to the development of the idea which is expressed by the paragraph as a whole, and shall occupy the place in which it can be clearly understood both in itself and in its relations to the rest of the paragraph. If a sentence can be put in one place as well as in another, there is a defect somewhere, and usually a defect of such gravity that it cannot be remedied unless the sentence, if not the paragraph, is recast.

"We may take the opportunity," writes De Quincey, "of noticing what it is that constitutes the peculiar and characterizing circumstance in Burke's manner of composition. It is this: that under his treatment every truth, be it what it may, every thesis of a sentence, *grows* in the very act of unfolding it. . . . whatever may have been the preconception, it receives a new determination or inflexion at every clause of the sentence. . . . Hence, whilst a writer of Dr. Johnson's class seems only to look back upon his thoughts, Burke looks forward, and does in fact advance and change his own station concurrently with the advance of the sentences."¹

¹ De Quincey: Essay on Rhetoric, note.