Some Interlocking Concerns which Govern Participant Reference in Narrative

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1. Introduction

My excuse for adding another article on participant reference in narrative to the already excellent and extensive literature on the subject (Grimes 1995, Givón 1983, Kim 1994, and others) is to suggest that there are some interlocking concerns which have not adequately been disentangled, described, and correlated in this ongoing discussion. One such set of correlations has to do with three variables: the resources of a given language which are available for participant reference; the ranking of participants so referenced in given stories; and the particular operations all lumped together under the general rubric participant reference. The interlocking of these three factors characterizes any and all participant references within a narrative so that each variable, actualized in a given value is found jointly with values of the other two variables. Any given instance of participant reference in any story within any language can be described in terms of values of the three variables. The data thus marshalled and organized can then make possible generalizations regarding participant reference in a given text in a given language. With the additions of further texts in the language a theory of participant reference for narrative text can be formulated for that language—subject to correction or expansion in the light of further texts which can be more quickly scanned than the texts used for the original theory building.

But a second concern to be further correlated with participant reference according to the three variables posited, is the presence of word order variation within the clause and sentence—those matters in the general area of highlighting, topicalizing, and focus. It is by no means clear what these various terms mean but they are relevant here as attempts to verbalize ways
in which word-order shifts and associated modifications further affect participant reference and thematicity. These latter concerns lead into a still more comprehensive correlation, that of relating storyline salience and dominance (mainly verb-related, Longacre 1989b) to the essentially nominal concerns which occupy us in this paper.

2. Three Variables in Participant Reference

2.1. Participant Reference Resources

The first such variable compels us to set out the resources of a given language for participant identification, to recognize a possible hierarchical arrangement among them, and to recognize that this arrangement gives us a set of values which can be used. While ultimately such an inventory of language resources must be carried out in reference to narrative text in individual text languages, I attempt here to set down some broad categories which have been suggested and say what can be said in terms of universals and tendencies. I suggest the following hierarchy arranged according to decreasing explicitness of reference:

(1) Nouns (including proper names) accompanied by qualifiers which range all the way from indefinite/definite articles, adjectives, and relative clauses—all within the noun phrase—to further information ranging beyond the noun phrase and found in separate ensuing sentences

(2) Nouns (including proper names) without any such qualifiers beyond the definite article (which represents a special concern, e.g., in English and Greek)

(3) Surrogate nouns, especially kinship, occupation, and role
   (a) as substitutes for (1) and (2)
   (b) as the highest level of participant reference within a given narrative

(4) Pronominal elements
   (a) Pronouns proper
   (b) Deictics

(5) Affixal elements
   (a) Subject affixes on verbs
(b) Object affixes (or subject-object combinations) on verbs
(c) Switch reference affixes on verbs
(d) Possessor affixes on nouns
(6) Null reference, where conventions of usage make such reference unambiguous

An attempt to compile such a list can be relatively universal in regard to levels 1-3 above. Considerable language specific variation is encountered, however, on levels 4 and 5. On level 4 systems of pronouns and deictics may differ greatly from language to language. To begin with, pronouns may mark person only, or person and number, or person, number and gender. Even person categories can differ, e.g., in regard to inclusive and exclusive first person plural and in regard to the possible marking of an obviative or fourth person. There is the further complication encountered when a language apparently has several parallel sets of pronouns whose usage cannot be readily explained and where an adequate explanation must take account of such discourse-pragmatic concerns as agency hierarchy (Silverstein 1976), honorifics, and the like. In a typical Philippine language there are three sets of pronouns to mark person number agentive categories according to (a) what is focused in the verb morphology, (b) what is out of focus, and (c) what is made local topic (Barlaan 1986). In some West African languages there is a distinction between logophoric and non-logophoric pronouns according to whether the subject within a quoted sentence has the same or different subject from the framing sentence found outside the quoted material (Weisemann 1985).

The parameters involved in deictic systems typically are based on proximity to the speaker (or speaker-hearer), but other very specific categories may enter in such as up-river versus down-river, towards the ocean versus away from the ocean, and up-hill versus down-hill. In these further categories we see a reflection of the geographic environment of the speakers of the language, whether a river people, an ocean-side of island people, or a hill-country people. The use of deictic categories in connected context is often characterized by the selection of one category to function anaphorically.

Affixal elements, level 5, can mark subject and object in a straightforward way or may simply indicate a person number category involved in the action represented in the verb. In the latter case, the precise reference of
the indicated person, etc., category may have to do with the function of further affixes in the word string. Sometimes, as in Algonquian and Mixe (Lyon 1967), agency hierarchy is involved. Furthermore, a given affix may indicate an interplay of two persons, e.g., first person acting on second person, as in Totonac (Reid et al. 1968) and Zoquean (Wonderly, 1951) of Mesoamerica. When the verbs of a language are marked for switch reference, i.e., for same of different subject in a sequence of clauses, a narrative can proceed without an explicit subject for an indeterminate stretch in the case of the former and can use the latter simply to indicate the other participant involved in the context—again, without the use of an explicit subject (Longacre 1972, 1983). Possessive affixes on nouns, provide, of course, a further marking in regard to a participant even if the latter is off-stage when an item possessed by him/her is indicated.

Null or zero anaphora, level 6, is typical of such languages as Japanese and Korean where, once a participant is established as subject in a local span of text, e.g., a paragraph, he/she continues as the unnamed subject participant until a new participant is established by the overt use of a noun.

As a summary comment, it needs to be noted that pronouns used for running anaphoric reference in text constitute a trait which is especially characteristic of Indo-European languages. As already stated, certain languages of Asia employ null reference while chaining languages such as are found on the island of New Guinea and much of South America rely heavily on switch-reference affixes for routine participant tracking—operation T in 2.3. below. So characteristically Indo-European is the very notion of *pronoun* as a stand-in or place-holder for a noun that we could wish for a more neutral term such a *generic noun* to use in preference to *pronoun*, but the latter term with all its institutionalized Indo-European bias is apparently here to stay and is enshrined in certain contemporary theories of grammar.

2.2. Ranking of Participants

The important distinction here is between major participants, minor participants, and props.

A. Major participants are relevant, for the most part, to the entire story. Here we can customarily distinguish a central versus non-central
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major participant.
1. Central (protagonist)
2. Non-central
   a. Antagonist
   b. Helpers of 1 or 2 above that figure prominently in the whole story: otherwise they are best considered under the next main category
B. Minor participants, whose role is restricted and do not act throughout the story
C. Props
   1. Human
   2. Animate non-human
   3. Inanimate
   4. Natural forces

In implementing the above classification, care must be exercised in several regards. One problem arises from the presence of embedded narratives where a minor participant in the embedding, i.e., the matrix story is nevertheless central in the embedded discourse which expounds a given episode of the matrix story. In such circumstances, major and minor participants are defined according to the level of embedding. The problems encountered in defining props is similar to the problems involved in defining the category of instrument in defining notional case or role relations. Props are typically things which are used by agents in the carrying out of actions (Longacre 1983b, especially chapter 4). Here the inanimate prop, category 3 above, is prototypical. But people can use other people for their own ends, thus subverting their humanity and reducing them to tools (e.g., slaves or prostitutes), hence category 1 above is needed. Animals, e.g., horses and cattle, figure as props in category 2. What all three categories have in common is that those so classified do not act as voluntary agents in their own right. Category 4 is more problematic. Natural forces may be helpful or unhelpful, or may be simply a foil against which actions are carried out. On the other hand, a natural force often patterns as the antagonist of a story: cold, flood, or fire and a person’s struggle in such circumstances: a woman abandoned and facing childbirth alone: a man or woman’s struggle against disease: or against the results of an impairing accident.
A further difficulty lies in the attempt to use the often useful terms protagonist and antagonist. The former is typically used when the central participant is dominant or struggling against odds to become dominant, and when he/she is respectable or at least imitable in certain respects, so that in some contexts the protagonist may be the champion. But what of the anti-hero or complete idiot? The former may come out on top in a story which denies the values of a culture: from this point of view it has an "immoral" ending. The latter may end up as foolish as he began with everyone tricking him and outwitting him (J. and S. George 1990). Three separate parameters are involved here: centrality versus non-centrality, dominance versus non-dominance, and embodiment of cultural values versus a denial of them. Probably, therefore, the three main categories A, B, and C, indicated here, are the most useful in narrative analysis, but the use of protagonist versus antagonist is often justified provided that one uses them knowledgeably.

2.3. The Operations of Participant Reference

The particular operations involved under the general rubric "participant reference" can be represented summarily as follows: the indexing letters are chosen for their mnemonic value.

M: first Mention within a story
I: Integration into the story as central to the whole narrative or to some embedded narrative
T: routine Tracking (characteristic of the storyline but not confined to it)
R: Reinstatement/restaging of a participant that has been offstage
C: Confrontation and/or role change (i.e., a flip in dominance patterns)
L: marking of Locally contrastive/thematic status
E: an intrusive narrator Evaluation or comment

[Texts in some languages may employ X, Exit of participant from the story]

In commenting on the above: M applies to either a central or non-central participant. In the case of central participant, M characteristically merges into I, the integration of the participant as central to the narrative. A story may, however, not especially mark the central participant as such in the earlier parts of the story and leave the reader to find out who is central as the story progresses towards its climax (e.g., Crane 1957). With a non-cen-
tral participant the first mention is followed by T, routine tracking, when the participant is major but not central. In the case of a minor participant, the first mention may sometimes be the last mention or T may follow. Storyline clauses commonly reflect T routine tracking. The participant operations R, C, L and E either characterize the storyline at peak or are non-storyline. Thus, R as staging, albeit restaging, and L typically occur in the paragraph setting. E, as author evaluation, is at considerable distance from the storyline. Operation C, the portrayal of a confrontation, most characteristically emerges as a modification of participant reference from that found in routine tracking in storyline clauses. The portrayal of a confrontation may resort to a conspiracy of means in which modification of participant reference is only one factor among several. These concerns lead into the high-level correlation of storyline schemes and participant reference referred to at the beginning of this article.

3. Ordered Triplets as a Descriptive Device

In the above section, three variables were posited. A description of the precise function of any given reference to a participant or prop within a story may be given as an ordered triplet in which the first position gives the symbol which represents the participant reference resource used in making the reference: the second position gives the symbol which represents rank of the participant/prop which is indicated in the reference: and the third position gives the symbol for the particular participant reference operation which is involved at that point. In this section I give ten such ordered triplets with explanation and illustration.

(1) {1.A1.M}
(2) {3.B.M}
(3) {2.A1.I}
(4) {4a.A1.T}
(5) {3.A2a.T}
(6) {6.A1.T}
(7) {2.A1.C}
(8) {3.A2.C}
(9) {4b.C3.L}
(10) {2.A1.E}
The ordered triplet \{1.A1.M\} indicates a noun (or proper noun) with qualifiers used in reference to the central participant on first mention in the story. This is a quite regular way of introducing central participants on first mention in stories in many languages and cultures around the world. Thus, a story with "Dan" as central participant could typically introduce him in some such fashion as follows.

Example 1

Dan Wiggins, a man of 45 years when I first met him, had worked for my great uncle for some twenty years. He was respectability and responsibility personified.

The ordered triplet \{3.B.M\} indicates a surrogate noun (typically kinship, occupation, or role) used in reference to a minor participant on first mention within a story.

Example 2

On getting to the motel, the night clerk had us register and insisted that we pay for the room in advance.

Somewhat characteristic of minor participants referred to by surrogate nouns is the presence of the definite article in English. Considerations of script predictability lead us to expect a night clerk at a hotel when someone arrives late at night. His presence is assumed even on first mention and he is never formally introduced into the text (cf. Larry Jones 1983).

The ordered triplet \{2.A1.I\} indicates the use of a noun referring to the central participant when integrating him as central into the story. This is standard usage in Biblical Hebrew. The central participant is first mentioned at level one of participant reference resources: then he/she is referred to by noun once or twice more to establish that participant unambiguously as central. This is illustrated at several places in the Joseph story (Gen 37 and 39–46) where various participants are thus established as central in the main story and in the embedded narratives that constitute episodes of the main story (Longacre 1989, chap. 6). For a possible similar structuring in Korean, see Hwang 1987.

Both the ordered triplets \{4a.A1.T\} and \{3.A2a.T\} reflect usage in Guambiano, a Chibchan language of Columbia (data from Thomas Branks). In a two participant story with protagonist and antagonist, the
protagonist is routinely tracked by the third person pronoun as indicated in the first ordered triplet above while the antagonist is tracked by a noun, typically a surrogate noun, as indicated in the second ordered triplet above. Thus, in a story of cattle rustling in the Andean highlands, the central participant and protagonist, the owner of the animals, is 'he', while the other major participant, the antagonist, is regularly referred by a role noun, 'the thief'. On obtaining an alternate version of the story which changes the viewpoint by making the thief the protagonist and the cattle owner the antagonist—a version of the story such as we might get from a sympathetic relative of the cattle thief—the thief is now referred to as 'he' and the antagonist from this point of view is now 'the owner of the cattle' or simply 'the owner'. The Guambiano usage, according to which the central participant and he only is tracked by pronoun, is quite distinct from that of a language where the central participant is routinely tracked by verb affix or by zero anaphora.

The ordered triplet \{6.A1.T\} indicates routine tracking of a central participant by zero anaphora as in Korean and Japanese. While this is not standard usage in English, it does occur in what we might call American English postcard style. Note Example 3:

Example 3
Arrived here yesterday. Am having a grand time. Slept in until 11:00 A.M. this morning and had breakfast in bed. Caught a sword-fish yesterday.

Love, Harry.

The ordered triplet \{2.A1.C\} indicates a noun (without qualifiers) used in reference to the central participant (protagonist) at a point of role change, or any sort of fateful confrontation. In depicting such a confrontation the other central participant (antagonist) is characteristically also referred to by noun in many languages. The noun is often a surrogate noun as indicated in the ordered triplet \{3.A2a.C\}. This pattern of participant reference for protagonist and antagonist in confrontation is well illustrated in the Hebrew text of the story of David and Goliath (Samuel 17:41-50). In this account, the protagonist is consistently called by his proper name David, and the antagonist is consistently termed 'the Philistine' (surrogate noun of role) all through the struggle. Neither is referred to only by the
agreement affix on the verb or by pronoun—until verse 51 where the Philis­
tine champion is “reduced” to a pronoun by having his head chopped off! So runs the report of the military exploit which brought David much fame and eventually led to his becoming king. The fateful interview of Joseph and Pharaoh in Genesis 41:15-36 has the identical structure: the protagon­
ist is referred to by his name Joseph and the antagonist (or at least the second central participant of this part of the story) is referred to by his title ‘Pharaoh’. So runs the account of the interview which resulted in Joseph’s meteoric rise from prison to grand vizier of Egypt. Example 4 below for English is not essentially different.

Example 4
This time, however, John stood his ground. The school bully walked warily about him for ten long seconds. Suddenly, John gave him a shove. The bully fell down but was soon back on his feet in a flash. John was clearly in trouble!

The ordered triplet {4b.C3.L} indicates a pronominal element (in this case deictic) used in a section of text where a prop has locally contrastive status.

Example 5
The first gladiator had the conventional arms of a Roman soldier. The second, however, was armed with a net and a trident. But these were all he needed to confront, stalk, ensnare, and kill his adversary.

The ordered triplet {2.A1.E} indicates the use of a noun in referring to the central participant in a narrator evaluation.

Example 6
But Rudolph was too clever to be deceived by such a transparent strategem.

Thus, in a language where routine tracking (operation T) proceeds by any level of participant reference resources from level 4 to 6, it is typical that an intrusive narrator evaluation will revert to 2 or 3. Example 6 illus­
trated this for reversion to level 2: example 7 illustrates this for level 3.

Example 7
But, as I recall it, a typical Maine farmer is not that easily deceived!
4. Generalizing from Ordered Triplets to Systematic Statements

Characterizing every participant reference in a text as an ordered triplet provides a bank of data which facilitates generalizations regarding participant reference in that text—with possible extension to other texts with a view towards formulating a theory of participant reference in narrative text in that language.

Thus, on the basis of four Konda (Dravidian) narratives, Jacob and Susan George (Longacre 1990, 111-113) made a preliminary statement of participant reference in Konda narrative. The first paragraph of their summary runs as follows:

In all four narratives we see that minor participants and the props are referred to by nouns after the first mention of them occurs in the stories. Among the major participants the protagonists are mentioned the first time by nouns (or noun phrases) with or without qualifiers. Routine trackings proceed via verb suffixes. Once a major participant is established as the hero of the story or as the dominant participant ... he requires a pronoun to reference him. In the case of antagonists, they are referred to by nouns throughout. If the antagonist undergoes a role change ... he/she merits a pronoun. If the antagonist is a natural force, it will be referred to by a noun.

This introductory paragraph gives general observations regarding the use of noun, pronoun, and verb suffixes in reference to major participants, minor participants, and props as far as the operations M, I, and T are concerned. Further paragraphs give additional detail concerning the first two operations and the use of indefinite numerals and deictics. The social status of a participant, king or commoner, is cited as a further complication. Operations R and C are systematically covered in regard to the use of surrogate nouns ('the king') and pronouns—as mentioned in the paragraph quoted above. Finally, the reader is offered a tabulation (p. 112) in which references to major participants in the four tales are plotted in regard to the various operations and the language resources employed. Special attention is given to the peculiar use of pronouns in Konda as sort of reward for the participants achievement (making this almost a subtle kind of author evaluation [REL]).

Such initial sketches need, of course, to be rounded out, and even corrected at specific points wherever a broader data base makes possible more ef-
5. Word Order Shifts which Involve Participant Reference

In describing narrative structure in any language, the analyst customarily encounters word order shifts, or to put it more carefully, variation in the order of the main constituents of the clause. To speak of shifts in constituent ordering implies the assumption of a basic order. If a language employs word order as a grammatical device, then departures from grammatical word order are easily detectable and cannot fail but to have communicative importance. This holds true for such subject–verb–object languages as English, or certain verb-subject–object languages of Mesoamerica such as Trique, and some Asian languages of subject–object–verb structure. If, on the other hand, word order is primarily a matter of pragmatic strategies (witness the Functional Sentence Perspective of the Prague school as applied to certain Slavic languages), then we do well not to speak of word order shifts so much as word order variations which we proceed to study, classify, and functionally analyze. In this article I do not consider languages with only pragmatic ordering of constituents: rather I discuss here narrative structures in languages where word order is at least partially relevant to grammar.

Before discussing these narrative word-order shifts as such, I first mention below certain order-preserving transformations in English which have no place in narrative structure proper but which pragmatically adapt a proposition to fit the needs of certain non-narrative contexts. When such transformations do occur in narrative they occur not in the framework of the narrative but in non-narrative material embedded within the narrative framework. All these modifications of simple proposition-asserting clauses can be termed clause extensions. I present these structures to demonstrate that there are sizeable areas of English structure that are not much used in narrative. I also want to open the question as to whether languages that do not have such transformations may in effect be using word order variation to accomplish some of the same non-narrative ends. It would therefore follow that certain word–order shifts in such languages have limited or null function in narrative. Consider the following set of sentences:
(1) John stole the automobile.
(2) Now, did John steal the automobile?
(3) (a) What John stole was an automobile.
(b) John was the one who stole the automobile.
(4) It was John who stole the automobile.
(5) There was, e.g., John's theft of an automobile.
(6) As for John, he stole an automobile.

Of these six sentences, only sentence (1) patterns in a straightforward way as a "narrative" sentence, i.e., as a sentence on the storyline of some narrative: it simply reports a happening. All the other sentences essentially are explanatory-expository (Linda Jones 1971, chapter 6). Sentence (2) might raise the question of John's having committed the theft in, e.g., a judicial inquiry. Sentence (3a) assumes as a common speaker-hearer assumption that John committed a theft and identifies the thing stolen as an automobile. Sentence (3b) assumes as a speaker-hearer assumption that an automobile-theft has been committed and puts the finger on John. Sentence (4) is similar and can involve contrastive pointing: "It was John (not Tom or Edward)". Sentence (5) cites John's theft in what is probably a catalogue of his misdeeds. Sentence (6), cataloguing perhaps the misdeeds of a gang, identifies John's part as consisting in the theft of an automobile. Of all these sentences, only the first simply answers the question "What happened?" This is not to deny that any and all the sentences (2) to (6) above can occur within the bounds of a story, if they occur, however, they are at some distance from the storyline itself and are found in non-narrative embedded material, i.e., in explanation, evaluation, or in reported speech.

5.1. Word Order Shifts in an SVO (subject-verb-object) Language

S. Thompson (1978) describes English as a strongly SVO language where word order has mainly a grammatical function. As evidence of this, she cites how even in such transformations as those cited in the six sentences above, the SVO order is kept, thus enabling us to characterize these transformations as "structure preserving". Even meteorological clauses such as "it's raining" insert a dummy "it" to fill the expected subject slot even though the real-world correlate of "it" is problematical. Thompson mentions three departures from the SVO order as typical of English:
Topicalization, directional verb preposing, and right dislocation.

Topicalization (and the sometimes distinguished left dislocation) name a participant or prop which is singled out for special mention in limited context—in its own sentence or as well as in a sentence or two following. It could almost be characterized as a “sentence topic” (Longacre 1968, 2). A sentence such as Tompson cites “Scrambled eggs I can’t stand to look at in the morning” is very similar to sentence (6) above. The sentence that Thompson cites is obviously non-narrative. But what about such examples as “The murderer he pardoned: the pick-pocket he summarily sentenced to death”. Assuming that this sentence is part of an ongoing story and without information as to the participant ranking of the two criminals who are mentioned, there is something in the nature of a summary disposal in the mention of the two. Probably here we have operation L, marking of locally contrastive status, rather than T, routine tracking in storyline clauses.

Directional verb preposing is often found at a great moment of a story, i.e., a climax or a denouement. Such departure from normal order to location-verb-subject is illustrated by the denouement of the English folktale, The Three Little Pigs: “Into the pot fell the wolf with a big splash”. This construction is pragmatically fitting when an unexpected development takes place—the wolf had expected to kill the pig but instead the pig brings about the death of the wolf. Consider also the further example: “Into the room walked the man that we all supposed to be dead”. Here we find operation C, confrontation of role change.

Right dislocation can be effectively used to append an author evaluation to a storyline clause: indeed this seems to fit Thompson’s example: “He nearly ran over me, that crazy bum”. Here operation E, an intrusive author evaluation, is exemplified in the right dislocated phrase (if the context should prove to be narrative, e.g., an informal account of an experience).

5.2. Word Order Shifts in VSO Languages

Doris Payne (1990) and Longacre (1995) have considered departures from canonical order verb-subject-object in strongly VSO languages. Somewhat earlier (1978) Simon Dik had noted the fact, immediately evident to anyone who studies such a language, that a formula (X)VSO can be posit-
ed to summarize left shifts of any normally post-verb constituent. This formula captures the generalization that any one- and customarily only one-constituent can be rotated to the fore for special purposes. Payne calls Dik’s X the Pragmatically Marked Constituent, PMC for short. In some 50 carefully written and lucid pages (189–238) she describes the functions of the PMC in Yagua, an indigenous language of Peru. Some of the uses refer to the interplay of dialogue relations. Uses that occur in the narrative framework are contrast, counterexpectation, restatement, and added detail restatement. The first two possibly reflect what I term operation L, marking of locally contrastive/thematic status. The latter two belong to what Payne herself calls “a communicatively marked event” which, judging by certain of her examples, I interpret as being similar to my operation C, confrontation and/or role change.

My study (Longacre 1995) was directed at three languages, Trique (Mesoamerica), Biblical Hebrew (ancient Near East), and Jur–Luwo (Sudan), all of which are strongly VSO. My results are not startlingly different from Payne’s for Yagua.

5.3. Word Order Shifts in SOV Languages

On superficial examination it could be posited that just as we have an (X)VSO structure in verb-initial languages we can expect to find an SOV (X) structure in verb-final languages. We could label the X in the latter a pragmatically marked constituent just as we so labelled the X in the former. But the structures are not simply mirror-image reversals. Most SOV languages are more conservative about shifting to post-verb position than are VSO languages about shifting to pre-verb. But current research is beginning to document pragmatic uses of post-verb position in some languages of this typology. To be sure, in some SOV languages any element beyond the verb is simply an “afterthought” to be edited out in the next printout by putting it into its correct pre-verb position. But other such languages have systematic uses for a noun phrase in post-verb position, thus making it a pragmatically significant position. Thus S. Herring (1994) reports uses of post-verb position as antitopic and for emphasis in Tamil. I have yet to look at her results in the light of the apparatus contained in Sec. 2 above.
I close this paper with reference to a South American language, Cayapa, for which Neil Weibe supplied me data in 1975. In Cayapa, a folktale frequently presents two major participants, a protagonist and an antagonist: the former is smaller and apparently powerless while the latter is large and powerful. One such story features the snail versus the jaguar. The latter challenges the former to a combat. In the early part of the story the snail is regularly tracked by the noun ‘snail’ in post-verb position, while the jaguar is tracked by the noun ‘jaguar’ in normal pre-verb position. Towards the end of the story the roles are reversed— and so are the positions within the sentence, i.e., ‘jaguar’ now appears in post-verb position and ‘snail’ occurs in the normal pre-verb position. All this can be tracked well in terms of my three coordinates in Sec. 2. In particular it is the crucial operation of C, confrontation and role reversal, that is in evidence here. In depicting a conflict, it is the non-dominant participant that is right-shifted to the post-verb position in a given part of the story.

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