Appositions as fragments?

**Background.** Döring (2014:111) proposes that all parentheticals are underlyingly CPs and that those parentheticals which appear subsentential on the surface are derived from elliptical clauses whose remnant escapes ellipsis by undergoing A'-movement to a syntactic position that dominates the ellipsis site (see 1, from idib.:115, in which elided material is enclosed in chevrons and in which CP₂ is syntactically unconnected to CP₁). In this respect, she equates parentheticals to fragments (ibid.), as understood in Merchant (2004).

(1) \[ [CP₁ anchor clause part 1] \cdots [CP₂ [parenthetical]₁ \langle \ldots t₁ \ldots \rangle] \cdots [anchor clause part 2] \]

**My aim** is to demonstrate that, when they exhibit ellipsis, a class of appositions known as **reformulative appositions** (RAs) cannot be equated with fragments. This entails that Döring’s hypothesis is incorrect, and supports the conclusion reached in Griffiths (2015b) that the myriad elliptical operations operative in the at-issue domain are also operative in the conventionally-implied, parenthetical domain (cf. AnderBois 2014).

RAs function to provide an alternative and often more informative referent for the referent (2a) or concept (2b) that their anchor denotes. (In the following representations, anchors are boldfaced and RAs are italicised.) RAs are characterised by their ability to host discourse particles or phrases that refer to the RA *qua* its property of being a spoken/written/signed string (i.e., *that is (to say)*, or *rather*), etc.) (Burton-Roberts 1975).

(2) a. **The Big Apple**, i.e. *New York*, is a wonderful city.
   b. John regularly **confusticates**, that is to say *perplexes*, his students.

**Supporting evidence** for my claim comes from many sources, two of which I list here. Firstly, prepositions can be omitted from German RAs (3). RAs are unlike fragments and sluices in this respect, which must pied-pipe prepositions in German (4) (Merchant 2001).

(3) Peter hat **mit jemandem**, (mit) **einem Jamaikaner**, gesprochen.
   Peter has with someone.DAT with a.DAT Jamaican spoken.

(4) Sie hat mit jemandem geredet, aber ich weiß nicht *(mit) wem
   She has with someone.DAT spoken, but I know not with who.DAT

Secondly, syntactic constituents that cannot be utilised as fragments, such as attributive adjectives, verbs, and prepositions, make for acceptable RAs (compare 2b and 5 with 6).

(5) a. The **chief**, or **main**, problem is the military.
   b. The wind blows **abaft**, or **behind**, the boat.

(6) a. A: I’ve been told that John combobulates his students.
   B: * No, confusticates.
   b. A: I heard that our least-pressing problem is the military.
   B: * No, main.
   c. A: The captain reckons that the wind blows astern the boat.
   B: * No, abaft.

**RAs as coordinands.** It appears that RAs are syntactically coordinated with their anchors at the lowest possible level. In other words, RAs are not necessarily CPs, and are not syntactically isolated from their host clauses, contrary to Döring’s claims. Evidence for this position comes from observations related to c-command, A'-movement, RNR, and presupposition projection. For instance, across-the-board movement (7) and RNR (8) are
observed in RA constructions. These operations are incorrectly predicted to be precluded by Döring’s analysis, which treats parenthetical and host clauses as syntactically unconnected.

(7) [Which country]₁ to you hate the motorways of t₁, or as the Americans say the highways of t₁, the most?  
(8) The Spartans were t₁ – or were deemed to be t₁ – [a fierce race of warriors]₁.

**Ellipsis in RAs.** The coordination analysis outlined above extends to subclausal RAs that are not linearly adjacent to their anchors (9).

(9) That he’l¹l be fired – the cleaner, that is to say – seems really unfair.  
(10) [&P [That he’ll be fired] &⁶ – [that] the cleaner <will be fired>] – seems really unfair.

I claim that, while these constructions do exhibit ellipsis (10), these RAs cannot be equated with fragments (contra Döring 2014). Instead, they should be equated with remnants of stripping (Hankamer & Sag 1976). Among other things, this is because the ellipsis that applies in RAs such as (9) obeys the ‘no-embedding’ constraint, which prohibits ellipsis in clauses embedded within coordinands (11). The effect of this constraint is also observed in regular stripping constructions (12), but not in fragments (13) (Griffiths 2015a, Weir 2014).

(11) I think he’s a good candidate, (*I think) Donny <is a good candidate>.  
(12) I think Ken is a fool, and (*I think) Bill <is a fool>, too.  
(13) A: Who will they hire?  
   B: (I reckon) Kerry. She was the best candidate.

**Conclusion.** Evidence suggests that RAs can be coordinands of any phrasal type. If RAs exhibit discourse-given material, they may display ellipsis. Because RAs are coordinands, the elliptical operations permitted within them are of the ‘coordinative’ type (stripping (11), VP-ellipsis (14), pseudogapping (15), etc.) and not of the ‘subordinative’ type that derives sluices and fragments. These data provide evidence against Döring’s claim that parentheticals that appear subsentential on the surface should be equated with fragments. They show instead that parentheticals are as heterogeneous as at-issue utterances with respect to ellipsis.

(14) That he’ll be late – that Godot will <be late> – is hardly surprising.  
(15) That he hasn’t read it – that Tony hasn’t <read> the play – is very unprofessional.

**References**