

## A SENTENTIAL INVARIANT \*

The notion of invariance, as envisaged here in relation to the expressive goal, presupposes that of linguistic change as a setting for the range of the conditions of its materializing.

In that a rational grammar is obviously a system and everything in it must by definition hold together in a totality encompassing from a typologically consistent framework to the merest minutiae. When the means are unrestrictedly available the intuition of linguistic conduciveness viewed as optimally unimpeded would entail an instant expediency operating the system in a grammatical continuum. Such a state is approximated by the categorial lability of English, and here the grasp of a changing goal will devolve, with its sparing morphology, on syntactic resourcefulness.

Where paradigmatic consequences attendant on syntagmatic *Umstrukturierungen*<sup>1</sup> are few and far between and while permanence is tacitly but overwhelmingly there for all to see, to play against it the insight that is afforded by change should give a dynamic view of a living system enriching itself, not merely by inventorial additions, but a refinement of its processual capabilities. If permanence has been so sweepingly asserted to be an essential principle as to negate change when this is theoretically stultified, as it is by the impli-

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\* This paper was written under the auspices of the Vice-Rectoría de Investigación, Universidad de Concepción, Chile.

<sup>1</sup> G. Bech, «Syntagmatische Unstrukturierungen mit paradigmatischen Konsequenzen» (scil. in the verbal system of Indoeuropean), *Bulletin du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague*, 1967-8, p. 248. In this spirit one such recent accession should be added to the list of English anomalous finites — where would «druthers» (noted in Webster) have originated if not in «drather»?

cations of the insoluble dilemma that comes of positing models able to predict beyond experience but unable to vouch for eventual reality, it will be fitting for the pursuit in hand to turn the regard on features not as they are fixed but as they may be unstable.

The point to be tackled was suggested by the unimpeded intelligence observed to attend constructions like one occurring in the following passage: «Thinking these thoughts, which grew more and more dispersed and vague as she came near him, when he roused himself at sight of her and smiled as if pleased, she forgot them altogether and asked, «Would you like to dance?» «How flattering», he said, «of course!» As they swayed together a measure or two; then moved into step, he folded her into his arms with sudden warmth<sup>2</sup>.» When read closely, «folded her into his arms» is perceived to do violence to the literal import of the words: the object and the instrument of the action are transposed and it would be hard to tell in this case whether «one need not know the lexical meanings of words but he must know the form classes to which the words belong»<sup>3</sup> or whether «the function of each word in the sentence turns foremost on its meaning»<sup>4</sup>.

At any rate, the wording is centuries old. Shakespeare's Richard II would «descend and fold her in our arms», and like Plautus's *caruitne febris te heri*, it is an instance of the rhetorical figure of hypallage by which the syntactic relationships between the terms of a proposition are interchanged so that their natural relation is reversed.

Mere attribution by indirection is common as in «About the high bare rooms, with their rotten dry floors and musty walls, rats galloped in the darkness, in the morning their dirt lay fresh on the mildewed sacks and the unit's cat stretched her paws and got a weak and lazy thrill from sniffing it»<sup>5</sup>, where «lazy» is dislodged from experiencer to experience. To speak of a «grateful fire» is of such common occurrence and of such old standing that it can be

<sup>2</sup> Katherine Anne Porter, *Ship of Fools*, Boston, Little Brown, 1962, p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> C. C. Fries, *The Structure of English*, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1952, p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> L. Morsbach, «Prinzipielles zur modernen Syntaxforschung» in *Probleme der Englischen Sprache und Kultur (Festschrift Hoops, ed. W. Keller)*, Heidelberg, Winter, 1925, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> Alun Lewis.

said to instance an epitheton. However, of an explorer suffering the agonies of thirst and understandably welcoming even the faintest indication of the proximity of water, when this is revealed by the croaking of frogs only a man in such circumstances could write of the godsent inducement to stray from his route toward the pond thus divined in the wilderness — and straying from its inveterate aura of melancholy — as the «joyful cry of frogs»<sup>6</sup>:

It is the speed of associations with which the lip or the pen fail to catch up that are responsible for deviations from the ordinary run of composition. The capacity for carrying its message adequately despite its vagaries is a unique trait of natural language as it musters its finite resources to cope with ever changing situations and circumstances. Permeated by figures of speech, these alone set it beyond the reach of logic and make for enlivened expression.

A more conscious as well as more trivial result is attained in the direction of variety by the plain replacement of lexical items selected from a given field when the stepped up turnover of mass communications addressed to a militant literacy puts a premium on novelty meant to spare tedious repetitions. The blunted attention of captive reader or listener necessitates a continual shift of emphasis where words have become devalued because of an overuse that in a short time sucks them dry of appeal.

In catering for a readership impatient of the propriety of plain words in simple contexts, repetition is sidestepped by the facile recourse to less familiar words, as in «I can't believe it. I knew he had a bad chest, but the heart to go like that, I can't credit it». Or, from an improbable housemaid told «they are silly to say that» to rejoin: «Silly, no error»<sup>7</sup>.

Even lexicographic sanction will be found to have been extended to reaching for «own» to supplant «have», and when trite, to shifting to «possess»: «he had owned frequent professional occasion to study artistic characters»; «he had come to own a facility in hazardous improvisation»; «she was the owner of a sufficiently acute and observant mind, and she revealed herself this morning as possessing precisely this»<sup>8</sup>. Just as «give the table a hit» is superseded by «hit

<sup>6</sup> Munro Park.

<sup>7</sup> V. S. Pritchett; Anthony Powell.

<sup>8</sup> J. I. M. Stewart.

the table a whack», the semantic insubstantiality of the verb in «make a curtsey», as used v. gr. by Pepys, is improved by the one in «drop a curtsey», also already current at the end of the seventeenth century.

Improving on «make» in «try an experiment» has had an unexpected result. The dictionaries define «try» as 'to test the effect or operation of; to use, apply or practise tentatively or by way of experiment'. As an example they add «try an experiment» and this is redefined as 'make an experiment, do something in order to see what will come of it', whereby the actual train of the development has been perverted. Comparably, when the commonplace «give» is credited with the meaning 'to express a wish' and the purported illustration is «I gave him good day», the word is being assigned and adhoc acceptance on the sole basis of its locutionary occurrence. For «dip» in «these little fish pass up along the banks in countless millions, and the people of the neighborhood are in the habit of dipping them out of the water with hand nets»<sup>9</sup> the adhoc definition borrows from the context (reach down and lift out something from a liquid) and is strained to govern the original object, in this case the net, by implication.

There are, of course, altogether legitimate replacements like the discarding of «ripe» in «more likely to affect adolescents than men of mature age» to avoid suggesting the stock «ripe old age».

The opposite attitude to that of blurring the semantic contours of a word by radiation from its specific application is its centripetal focussing. Against the standard «heave a sigh» is found «breathed a sigh of relief» or, in disparagement, «blew a sigh»<sup>10</sup>.

Within the bounds set by consistency, variation favoured not only by the vastness of the lexicon but by freedom of derivation is a factor of expedient change with statutory significance jointly with word creation and the laxity of the boundaries of the parts of speech. Thus «he could not get the truth out of her, he could not shake it out of her»; «he had lost money on the few occasions that one of his leading ladies had seduced a production of Hamlet out of him»; «his idea was that I should come down here

<sup>9</sup> J. T. Cunningham.

<sup>10</sup> H. G. Wells.

and make myself agreeable to this man and Delilah the memoirs out of him somehow»<sup>11</sup>. Proper names are «the most economical of all words inasmuch as they make a very small demand on the eloquence of the speaker» (as well as on the effort of the listener)<sup>12</sup>.

A comparably high definition is expressed by an adnominal clause «with the individualizing definite article»<sup>13</sup>; but also by the article alone in phrases including such words as «heart», «money», «where-withal», «time or inclination», when voided by ellipsis of a defining infinitive, or when by the accretion of usage the headword has come to embody an overtly missing increment. Where the defining clause is detached by punctuation in «you and I appear to be in the same boat. Starting our lives again. Except you have the advantage. You're younger», it is simply left out in «admittedly, I had the advantage, as girls who are prepared to scream always have»<sup>14</sup>. «Advantage» has gained by default. This is as nothing to the functionality increased with the shedding of desinences in a class that can be as highly inflected as the verb is: at opposite poles of denotation are the Lithuanian *asaros lýte lyjo* as against «the flood-gates of her soul poured from her eyes» or the use to be discussed presently.

The recurrently fashioned integrity of collocations is another field of instability, since the progressive commitment of all wordings as they unfold leads here more than elsewhere to semantic noise outside of aposiopesis, relying on discountable redundancy, or the exercise of stylistic creativity as it departs from the ordinary so as to enhance expressiveness. It will, before syntax proper is involved and much less morphology (*saxo cere comminuit brum*), manipulate collocative locutions of the myriad represented by «laugh out of court», «touch and go», «fly a sortie», «weigh anchor», «tie one's tie». It is refreshing to read «at long last», «for the sake no doubt of peace and quiet», «dog of a certain sort is always eating dog»<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> John Cheever; John O'Hara; Agatha Christie.

<sup>12</sup> A. H. Gardiner, *The Theory of Proper Names*, Oxford, University Press, 1954, p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> H. Poutsma, *A Grammar of Late Modern English*, II 1a, Groningen, Noordhoff, 1914, p. 532.

<sup>14</sup> Louis Auchincloss; Nicholas Monsarrat.

<sup>15</sup> Sarah Gainham; Rebecca West.

Structurally speaking, there has been an interpolation between the constituents of additional matter. But the collocation may in turn ring the changes round a fixed nucleus. The quasi-null referent in «you know this thing has taken it out of me». The literal «dreaming helped to drain the hell out of those days» passes, via the intensive «fanned hell out of the air to clear the smoke out» on to the stock «when my dad catches me he will leather hell out of me». Or even to «you must know French perfectly. It annoys hell out of me that I don't know any» and the formally contradictory «the international set, they impressed hell out of my missus»<sup>16</sup>.

Functionally speaking it is of vital significance over and above the formal vicissitudes, that the expression should have subsisted, have kept in being. The replacement of lexical components has a syntactic counterpart in the kneading of constituents to assume an altered relationship that does not impair the whole. Its instability is as good as shift and this spells motion, a design that captures it will be a dynamic one, and if it is a productive device, best of all.

A hypallage can mold any of the various constructionally possible shapes by subverting them. It is in consequence not infrequent. Nevertheless, one form of which less than half a dozen cases have come to hand has the structure represented in Louis Auchincloss's

I think you might do your mother the  
favor of not chasing lawyers after her<sup>17</sup>.

From the type instanced earlier by «folded her into his arms», not a rare one (v. gr. «cupped her face in his hands»), this differs in the place of the true object, in the instrumentality, and in causation. Several quotations fashioned identically are included by Jespersen in his section dealing with parts of the body acting as «instrumental objects». He rests for this designation on the Old English *blóde swétan* and the use of an instrumental case in Russian with «throw», which should be no more relevant than the Old Norse, or the Spanish

<sup>16</sup> John Marquand; Louis Auchincloss; John Salinger; Sean O'Faolain; John Updike; John O'Hara.

<sup>17</sup> Louis Auchincloss, *The Great World of Timothy Colt*, New York, Fawcett, 1965, p. 207.

*apuntar con el dedo* as against «point a finger». Poutsma offers no explanation of similar instances quoted<sup>18</sup>.

There undoubtedly is an object in Jespersen's «he slapped a cane against his legs» as shown by «a cane slapped against one's legs incessantly will splinter». And it is an instrument as well, shown by «one's legs slapped against hard enough with a cane will smart». But whereas there is no objection to «lawyers chased after mothers must make no bones of it», «mothers chased after with lawyers» is not so, and not only because it departs too radically from the ready association in, say, «burglars chased after with dogs», but because the lawyers would appear as comitative, or be turned into subjects in «chased after by lawyers».

However, in «a lighter was put to the invalid's cigarette so that he could draw» i. e. «put so as to touch the invalid's cigarette», «touched» can be substituted for «put» as used in J. F. Powers's

touched the lighter on the dashboard to  
his cigarette<sup>19</sup>.

It should be noted that the successive definitions of its meaning as 'to bring into contact, bring to touch, cause to be briefly in contact with' are in fact an itemization of the causative process.

To accept «touch» and «chase» as causatives disagrees with theoreticians limiting this function to «walk a horse» and the like, a «very restricted class» of verbs. In this view «he knew how to make the smoke come out of his nose» (in a anthologized story) is not causative in the englished to «blow smoke through his nose», that is, 'cause', 'force', or ultimately 'drive', that unaccredited embodiment of causatives: «they must labor beyond their strength. He had driven them mercilessly, as he had driven himself, as he had driven the peons and the horses, because there was no choice in the matter»<sup>20</sup>.

A morphological restriction there certainly is to surviving metaphoric causatives, as in «he fitted the pieces of the doll together

<sup>18</sup> O. Jespersen, *A Modern English Grammar*, III, Copenhagen, Munksgaard, 1949, § 12.4; Poutsma, *op. cit.*, II 2 (1926), p. 72.

<sup>19</sup> J. F. Powers, «Prince of Darkness» in *Best Short Stories of 1947*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1947, p. 313.

<sup>20</sup> Mary McCarhy.

and, holding its little hands, set it on his knee to roll a cigarette. It is like my little sister. She sits on my knee also». But this aspect is generally unmarked, and this to the point of indifference: «no one knew better than these two how the underlings were not to be trusted. They had been tried many times in sudden crises but no stress had brought to light any man whom they would have honored by working as remorselessly as they worked themselves». Objective and reflexive are on the face of it equally likely here<sup>21</sup>.

Swahili is very definite in its categorization of the causative, having a specific suffix to form «light» from «burn», «load», from «bear», and so «bend», «fill» and «hoist», and it distinguishes two meanings of «wake» and of «let». But the lack of this does not detract from causation in English, even though «fell» is perceptually no more than laying an axe to a tree, hacking at it, or even going at it with a purpose, with the subsequent process of falling remaining implicit in the background of the hacker's awareness of the gravity and momentum that will bring about the natural result. Beyond Bally's «English goes furthest with its host of verbs which can be unconstrainedly transitive or intransitive», Poutsma states the causative use of intransitives to be «peculiarly English», a very free use too<sup>22</sup>. If «chase» has in the present instance taken on the meaning expressly given by the Swahili *kufuasa*, to send after, form *kufuata*, to go after, «chase» is the causative of «why didn't you go up to London after him?» and of «to hang around the pool room a while and then go chasing after some women»<sup>23</sup>.

The mind's view of a tree being felled by an axe — or of a lawyer being chased by a fretful daughter — is picturable, but this cannot be said of John Le Carré's

He was walking toward them, smoothing a  
comb through his hair<sup>24</sup>.

As manifestly as a comb has to be the instrument, on the other hand the goal of the action, the hair, is the goal of an instrumen-

<sup>21</sup> Truman Capote; Rudyard Kipling.

<sup>22</sup> C. Bally, *Linguistique Générale et Linguistique Française*, Berne, Francke, 1950, p. 168; Poutsma, *op. cit.*, II 2, p. 68.

<sup>23</sup> Hugh Walpole; Erskine Caldwell.

<sup>24</sup> John Le Carré, *The Looking Glass War*, New York, Coward McCann, 1965, p. 186.



talized action. In the structuring of «chasing lawyers after her» the usual «tempted to go chasing after hīm» is no doubt a prop, but this is hardly the case with «she took his comb and pulled it through her rumpled hair» or «the ran his stubby fingers through his sandy hair» in the face of «smoothed a comb»<sup>25</sup>.

Truman Capote, writing about how «it had not been easy when the music came through the dark» is not satisfied with a workaday «put» for «he put a pillow over his head» nor even with «pressed it» nor «grabbed and clapped it over his head» but improves on it incomparably with

stuffed a pillow over his head<sup>26</sup>.

Only when the psychological moment is allowed into the picture does the time come for a proper understanding, and then the head and not the pillow emerges as the goal of the action and a psychological object. The action leapfrogs beyond the instrumental object. The verb is plitransitive. Though infrequent, and not indiscriminately viable, it is not limited to the somatic: two of Jespersen's examples instrumentalize articles of apparel that extrapolate the body. The body is yet the likeliest field, and «dig one's heels in the ground», «bite one's teeth into an apple» are commonplace where «splash a brush at the canvas» would not be. Graham Greene's «her voice bulldozed all opposition» could have been «she bulldozed her voice through all opposition»<sup>27</sup>.

Although somatic, there is an additional feature emerging in the elucidation of Auchincloss's plitransitive

«With you!» She sat up straight and caught  
her fingers to her mouth<sup>28</sup>.

It is necessary to adduce first, the consideration that the construction under examination is a token of youthfulness in the language. Cervantes has an identical construction in *detuvo las riendas a*

<sup>25</sup> Compton Mackenzie; Louis Auchincloss; John Marquand.

<sup>26</sup> Truman Capote, *Selected Writings of Truman Capote*, New York, Random House, 1963, p. 95.

<sup>27</sup> Graham Greene, *The collected Short Stories*, London, The Bodley Head, 1967, p. 49.

<sup>28</sup> Louis Auchincloss, *Portrait in Brownstone*, New York, Dell, 1969, p. 266.

*Rocinante*, which Cuervo thought incorrect, and is not risked in half a dozen English translations. Skelton has «checking Rozinante with the bridle», others have «checked» or «reined in Rozinante» or simply «drew rein», and Motteux «stopped awhile at a distance from the gate». Maturity supervening on freshness without withering it calls for the more pregnant use of resources.

Although subordinate to perspicuity, the brevity which is a fundamental of aptness, and which may be attained by striving after expressive objectivity, is to be found perhaps at its best in the language used for the reasoning of a geometrical proposition. In a train of events, mental or physical, much could be said for a selection of the salient features (though proving an impossible analytical simultaneity) to be touched upon in as graded an order as feasible. One such instance is «it was a legend that when the parrot got loose and flew up into a tree he had simply talked to it from below and it came down». This naïvely, serially coordinated relation of the events gives the impression that the writer wishes to discount idiom or might be affecting not to know the standard turn in «some of the movements of his face were very attractive; his father used to say that he could charm a bird out of a tree». The way in which motion is implied without the benefit of a verb, deserving of a treatment by itself, is a feature of mature integration<sup>29</sup>.

As much cannot be said of the failed attempt to combine a temporal with a concessive circumstance in «although at times when I have been troubled by the news, I have always had the feeling that things would be worked out»<sup>30</sup>, i. e. 'although I have been troubled at times, when this has happened...'. But a standard Greek idiom can handle two propositions simultaneously as in ἐγὼ οὖν τὸν ἐκ ποίας πόλεως στρατηγὸν προσδοκῶ ταῦτα πράξειν; 'am I to expect that some strategist of what nation will accomplish this?'<sup>31</sup>. Again, the type «drayhaul» or «breastfeed» has no doubt been reckoned with by Lees, as, though grudgingly, does Marchand<sup>32</sup>; more-

<sup>29</sup> Mary Roberts Rinehart; Saul Bellow.

<sup>30</sup> John Galsworthy.

<sup>31</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis* 3.1.14.

<sup>32</sup> R. B. Lees, *The Grammar of English Nominalizations*, The Hague, Mouton, 1960; H. Marchand, *Categories and Types of Present-day English Word Formation*, Wiesbaden, Harassowitz, 1960, 2.37.4.

over the omission of a dictionary definition of «bottlefeed» paired with the latter in the body of an illustration is proof of the acceptability that makes «lawyer-chased mothers» and «combsmoothed hair» not implausible, analogically to ἀνδρηλατέω, to banish, a morphologically turned 'to man-drive'.

Now, «her eyes grew round with fear and she lifted a hand to her mouth» is neat and orderly, but «caught her fingers to her mouth» succeeds in capping the visual impression with the emotional touch of «caught her breath». Lexical extension by metaphor has combined with syntactic diversification by rhetorical virtuosity past the verge of syntax which, until appropriated to common usage, is the fringe of style. This it is forever aspiring to, or perhaps more properly, is continually curbing. And then the order of words in a sentence, as speakers of a free-ordered language are in a position to appreciate, goes beyond mere style: it subtends the sum of its syntactic productivity.

Resolutionist syntagmatics will have its say regarding the difficulties of fitting sentential aggregates with its molds, but no single process among those examined could be credited with originating the plutransitive construction which, however, appropriates something from each of them.

If Isaac Newton's injunction is still to be heeded, «in this philosophy particular propositions are inferred from the phaenomena and afterwards rendered general by induction». And strictly within the bounds of a wary observational linguistics, while hypallage is the name given to an overt result, patterns generally are perceived to show a deep-seated capacity for undergoing modifications of form while the inherent import remains unaltered.

The concern with the duality implicit in the apprehension of a whole by way of its discrete structuring posits the delivery — or rejection — of expressions being pivoted and inalienably dependent on their outer (or to go by Glinz their inner)<sup>33</sup> form, whether functional (v. gr. the participle in «what nonsense it is about Shakespeare not being an acting dramatist!») or positional pure and simple (as in «this was the end of that to her far from perfect day»).

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<sup>33</sup> H. Glinz, *Die Innere Form des Deutschen*, Berne, Francke, 1968.

However, the syntax of an utterance has been experimentally besides commonsensically proved subservient to the meaning apprehended by extracting the purportive essence, with the incidental grammar driven into the background. There is in this a similarity in kind with the *modus operandi* of the art critic who «took no notes, feeling that he would rather make a mistake now and then than spoil his whole pleasure in looking at a fine collection of paintings. When the original has been since destroyed, a description by Hazlitt is a possession; otherwise I do not know that an eloquent, and possibly in details inaccurate, description, is of much service. It is the same with descriptions of places in poetry — they are usullay failures the moment they descend to the particular details. Wordsworth can describe a glen, but not Glencoe»<sup>34</sup>. The poets's words will not have been prompted by a diagrammatic sketch of Glencoe. Nor will the reader's image be that of a diagram. Every detail must be there, but subserve.

If a felicitous expression is the crown of a viability that is buttressed by clarity, precision, and brevity, «over» is preferable to «clapped a pillow so as to cover, smother, stuff his head» — making way too for the double felicity of «stuffed a pillow».

There may be investigative possibilites here of a subliminal echoic factor as in the ellipsis quizzed by Abbot in Shakespeare's «Love, loving not itself, none other can», or in the more venturesome «her smile is like sunlight going off an Italian valley, but when you tell her to, she can't»<sup>35</sup>. «Fold», too, may have echoed «hold in one's arms».

In «send lawyers chasing after her», «after» is not only briefer but makes «chasing» redundant, when it is freed to slotstitute in «chasing lawyers after her». «To stuff pillows» and «to chase lawyers» are routinely phrased formations. On the face of it, «to smooth a comb» could not stand, for the object is inapposite. Unless, that is, it is placed in an already extant plutransitive frame to accommodate it, a construction permitting, within a combinatorial range, a categorization of sorts. But assuredly an emergence like that of «caught her breath» to be superimposed on «caught her fingers» could never

<sup>34</sup> Augustine Birrell.

<sup>35</sup> E. A. Abbott, *A Shakespeare Grammar*, London, Macmillan, 1901, § 387; John Galsworthy.

be predetermined: the mere contemplation of the likelihood of such an occurrence would be «horrifying» (a word used in all earnestness by no lesser men than Warren Weaver and A. A. Hill when confronted by linguistic combinatorial possibilities)<sup>36</sup>.

A more sharply focussed intention, a more rigorous constructibility, more involved sentences or periods, all of these breed in the long run, with the help of a higher literacy and faster turnover, a knowledgeableness creating an expertise that gains for linguistic configurations an ascendancy over details, so that locutional constituency can be far flung without jeopardising the identification of associative elements.

A sentence defined as a string of words observing given features of order, agreement, government and such, is a reference by indirection to notions juxtaposed, combined, and synthesized of which the words are the symbols. It is in the synthesis that invariance within a type is envisioned, to wit, the persistence of a sentential meaning through alterations which affect its formal conveyance in various ways.

If on the one hand there are countless notions of a complexity too great, or often too elemental, to be expressed, and although it is often possible to express a given meaning as from different purviews, on the other hand there is a flexibility in the syntax — as there is a lexical choice — that allows of a considerable latitude in the key features without a disruption of the sense to the extent of solecism. The sense is garnered as the eye or the ear skim the content words, framing an extensive categorial convertibility which, by negating explicitness, makes intellection dependent on ever more widely and tenuously connected bearings.

Factors at work in the direction of a fixed order of words in the sentence are discernible early in the history of language, the foremost being the tendency to mirror in its buildup mentally associated notions not only by bringing them together short fusing them — *nocturna uersate manu uersate diurna* — but by favoring

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<sup>36</sup> In W. Locke and A. D. Booth, *Machine Translation of Languages*, Cambridge, The Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1955, p. 21, and *Word* 17, 1962, p. 5. Predictive techniques have been explored for the physically quantifiable components of speech by J. D. Markel and A. H. Gray, *Linear prediction of speech*, Heidelberg, Springer, 1976.

a set sentence structure — «Romulus founded Rome» out of the classic six possible permutations, or the type Behaghel showed to be prevalent in enumerative collocations where the weightier word gravitates toward the endposition — *clam, ui, aut precario; lock, stock, and barrel; una campana sonaba lenta, pausada, melancólica* — and which have led to the misquoting of the Gospel as *uia, uita, ueritas* for reasons lying in the deep grounds of prosody, themselves the reasons for their stabilization and resilience. They are conspicuously absent from the faithful *ic eom weg, and sóthfæstness, and lif*.

More generally, the intelligence of linguistic signals riding the crest of a garbled message under circumstances of productive, channel, or masking noise, very much in the way of unwittingly programmed visual superpositions, is wholly attuned to the mind's great capacity for oblivion, so that memory is selective and rests on a mass of forgotten incidentals which would otherwise clutter all mental life.

That a surprising scope of deformation does not succeed in adulterating the overall import or experimentally altered constituent elements, but also up to a point when regiminal ties of their assembling are strained without a purportive covariance of the manifest thanks to an undefined principle of discourse synthesis which, as Comrie puts it (in words no less valid for a stylistic than for his diachronic motivation of a reanalysis by speakers of Quechua), has «sufficient force to overcome formal criteria that directly contradict the new analysis»<sup>37</sup>.

In the degree that a linguistic conclusion is fashioned to be cast in the molds of exact science, of mathematics, or of logic, at variance with the lineaments of this «odd calculus»<sup>38</sup>, it will lack finality so long as the more accessible aspects of language are weighted and micro- rather than macrosystems are favoured.

Not only does a descent to componential levels impair the semantic integrity of a sentential aggregate (when individual behaviour becomes haphazard and unforeseeable and makes for the indeter-

<sup>37</sup> B. Comrie, «On the basis of syntactic reanalysis», *Buffalo Papers in Linguistics* 1, 1979, p. 98.

<sup>38</sup> M. Joos, «Description of Language Design», *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 22, 1952, p. 701.

minability bred of a multiple lability feedback), but with the state of the whole destroyed the coordination of the collective behaviour of its parts can no longer be grasped or seized.

Now, motion is admittedly harder to grasp than quiescence: long after a millennium elapsed was the thread of Heraclitus picked up. The successive stages of a modern so called dynamic demonstration of Pappus' theorem have to be intuitively serialized. Analysis can be satisfyingly rational; synthesis has to rely heavily on intuition.

That a synthesis follows on the grasp — if this be not redundant — of an entirety, seems obvious enough from the sole consideration of the differences in word order observed in different languages, if not the differences admissible within each of themselves. Or of the misapprehension due to premature consolidation, as witness «Scarce any woman could have written the poem, and no man, for a man who had had experience enough to paint such sentiments so well would not have had warmth enough». This is corrected when the passage, even though detrimentally to a perfect balance, is ended (as it actually does but for the precipitancy) «a man would not have warmth enough left»<sup>39</sup>.

«To stuff a pillow» or «to stuff his head» were all one. «Chase» is a variant of «after» with the added vividness of «chasing lawyers» by comparison with «sending lawyers». The vividness is likewise in the verbalizing of the breach in «breaking someone through» rather than «pushing him». Better yet the *apo koinou*

his anger had broken him through her complex  
defense<sup>40</sup>.

There is a stylistic component beyond not only a mere permutation but even beyond the shift of logical weighting that is found, for example, in a passive versus an active construction. A permutation pure and simple, besides, would not account for the directives, much less for their being substituted for the instrumental «with», which is instrumental not only semantically but also in the functional sense that signals the downgrading of the verb from a typologically

<sup>39</sup> Horace Walpole.

<sup>40</sup> George P. Elliot, «Miss Cudahy», *Prize Stories of 1955* (Ed. P. Engle), New York, Doubleday, 1955, p. 124.

after causative, «slapping with a cane» against «slapping it», causing it to slap.

«Through» could be claimed by «breack», but there is no discernibly assessable relation between «through» and «smoothing». As an element outstanding that would remain to be accounted for, namely the emergence of the preposition relating the second object of the plutransitive verbs, why not postulate the transmutation of a deleted instrumental «with» into an «after», «over», or «through», and read «a comb through» as an interjected absolute nominative: «smoothing — a comb through — his hair?» Or if there be a scientific urge to be sopped, why not just base this non-superficial aspect on the operation of a convenient neural-submechanism, and predict the identification of the relevant cerebral mesh?

Whatever the yield of analysis, it is overridden by the fact that «smoothing a comb through one's hair» is taken in stride in the reading, and the conclusion is forced that the utterance is an indivisible whole which integrates the components untethered. The sense of the differently — and deviantly — consociated parts is invariant over and above their partial assembling. An analytic «smoothing one's hair by driving a comb through it» is observed to be replicated in the plutransitive by a factor that mediates the semantic invariance beyond the ostensible heteromorphism.

M. BERTENS CHARNLEY



## THE CONCEPT OF MAN AS «HOMO LOQUENS» IN THE SPANISH RENAISSANCE

Until comparatively recent times, most educated Europeans viewed the structure of the universe in terms of what has come to be known as the Great Chain of Being, a concept whose genesis and development has been described in a classic work by A. O. Lovejoy<sup>1</sup>. Lovejoy traces the emergence of the concept in the basic Platonic division of the universe into two realms of otherworldliness and thisworldiness; its transformation in Aristotle into the idea of a hierarchy, a *scala naturae*, according to the degree of perfection possessed by each created thing; the adoption, articulation, and propagation of this system by the Neoplatonists; and how, in short, the Chain of Being became one of the great commonplaces of Western thought from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century, pervading many diverse realms of scholarship.

Thinkers in Classical times already concerned themselves with differences of rank in created nature, and the criteria governing their establishment, and we can discern in many of the statements of scholars the germs of what were later to become major problems when the notion of the Chain of Being was elaborated more fully. The varying degrees of development reached by offspring at birth led Aristotle in his *Generation of Animals* to establish eleven grades of being, with man at the top and the zoophytes at the bottom<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1957.

<sup>2</sup> *Generation of Animals*, with an English translation by A. L. Peck, London/Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1943, rev. 1953, 732a25-733b16.