

Traditional Grammar and Corpus Linguistics
‘With Critical Notes’¹

David A Reibel, Tübingen (Germany) & York (UK)

Epigrammata

¶ Ask, and it shall be given you;
seek, and ye shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
For everyone that asketh receiveth;
and he that seeketh findeth;
and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.
Jesus, *Sermon on the Mount*
Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-10

I shall only remark here, how easily men take upon trust,
how willingly they are satisfied with, and how confidently
they repeat after others, false explanations of what they do
not understand.²

¹ This is a corrected, revised, and augmented text of the original published version, which appeared in Gerbig & Mason 2008:129-155, especially prepared for colleagues and friends.

This account of the method of Traditional Grammar is offered to Mike Stubbs in recognition of his contribution to the methodology of present-day linguistics, and to the study of the English Language.

² John Horne Tooke (1736-1812). *EPIEA IITEPOENTA* [*Épea Pteróenta* (‘winged words’)]. *Or, The Diversions of Purley*. London, 1786-1805. Two Parts [Volumes]. Cited from: Part I, Chapter V ‘and’ III, ‘Etymology of the English Conjunctions: *AND*.’ [Tooke derives *and* from the verb ‘to add’.]

Tooke here criticizes Lowth for stating that: ‘THE Conjunction connects or *joins together* Sentences; so as out of two to make one Sentence.’ (1762:92)

Tooke points out that in the sentence, *John and Jane are a handsome couple*, the individual noun phrases *John* or *Jane* cannot each appear alone with the predicate, *is a couple*: ‘Is John a couple? Is Jane a couple?’ He gives other examples as well. He cites in support the Latin examples in the *nota* added (1714) by Jacobus Perizonius né Voerbroek (1651-1715) to the edition by Gaspar Scioppius (1576-1649) of the *Minerva sive de causis linguae latinae* (1562) of Franciscus Sanctius Brocensis (1523-1601). Tooke cites the examples adduced by Perizonius to refute Sanctius’ assertion also that conjunction results from syllepsis of two sentences: *Emi librum .x*

*Dans les champs de l'observation,
le hasard ne favorise que les esprits préparés.*

‘In the field of observation, chance favours only the prepared minds.’

Freely: ‘In the empirical sciences, only prepared minds are favoured by chance discoveries.’

— Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), French chemist and biologist. Address given on the inauguration of the Faculty of Science, University of Lille, 7 December 1854.

Sat. 16 [June 1770]— ... In the afternoon I looked over Dr. Priestley’s *English Grammar*. I wonder he would publish it after Bishop Lowth’s.³

Preface. In this little *jeu d’esprit*, I defend Robert Lowth against the oft-levelled charges of lack of grammatical competence and acumen, arbitrariness, and disregard for usage; above all, for his

.drachmis et .iv. obolis. Saulus et Paulus sunt iidem. This particular construction was known also to such grammarians as Apolonius Discolus and George Oliver Curme (1860-1948) (*Grammar of the English Language*, Part III, *Syntax*, 1931), and is today termed ‘phrasal conjunction’, rediscovered as if for the first time at the beginning of the heyday of the first era of generative-transformational grammar in the mid 1960s.

³ *The Journal of The Rev. John Wesley* (1703-1791). Edited by The Rev Nehemiah Curnock (1840-1915). Standard Edition. Eight Volumes. London: Charles H. Kelly, 1909-1916. Volume V, 1914:370. The reference is to: Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) 1761. *The Rudiments of English Grammar; adapted to the Use of Schools. With Observations on Style*. London: Printed for R. Griffiths.

Wesley is probably reading a copy of the ‘much expanded’ second edition of 1768. By the English Presbyterian minister, schoolmaster, controversial religious writer, chemist and physicist, and polymath. Wesley does not seem to have noticed, nor does it matter, that Priestley’s work was published a year before Lowth’s. The significance of Wesley’s remark is that Priestley’s grammar, while much praised by present-day students of the history of English traditional school grammar, from Lowth on, for his support of the primacy of usage over putatively arbitrary rules, is otherwise very conventional in content and lacks the comprehensiveness and originality of Lowth’s, as Wesley seems to have observed.

desire to ‘regulate’ the language, *ie* set up rules for it (*cf* Latin *regula* ‘rule’), to prescribe English usage by arbitrary rules, which would at the same time proscribe errors.⁴

⁴ The best compilation that I know is by Pullum 1974, in what was originally one of three essays completed in the academic year 1970-1971 as part of the requirements for the three-term course, ‘History of the English Language’ *aka* ‘HEL’, in the Department of Language, now Department of Language and Linguistic Science, University of York (UK).

The task was to take a good, representative traditional grammar from R. C. Alston’s reprint series, *English Linguistics 1600-1800*, and to compare it with the compilation made earlier of typical strictures about such grammars and their authors in characteristic textbooks of the History-and-Structure of English type.

I forbear to quote from Pullum’s article lest readers inadvertently conclude that I concur in the strictures enumerated there.

In a bizarre example of attributing to Lowth not only prescriptive and proscriptive practices but also the ability to dictate the course of development of the grammatical usage of a whole generation of Standard English speakers and writers and their descendants, he is credited with having introduced into English the rule that ‘two negatives make a positive’. (For a good example of multiple negation in OE see example 12.) The *locus* is usually given as the first edition of the *English Grammar* (1762), and a reference to the section on the Adverb in the Section on Words (Morphology, or Etymology), where it does not ever appear, with inaccurate page references (1762:90-91).

In the first edition, and then repeated in later editions as an introductory statement to the now extended text, all Lowth has is the laconic: ‘ADVERBS have no Government.’ (1762:126). There are no illustrative ‘critical notes’.

In fact, the rule was added in *The Second Edition, Corrected*, in the section on ‘Sentences’ (or syntax), in the passage dealing with Adverbs (1763:138-140).

Two Negatives in English destroy one another, or are equivalent to an Affirmative: as,

“Nor did they *not* perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or [*sic*] the fierce pains *not* feel.”
Milton, P. L. i. 335[-136]. (1762:139-140)

There are two further examples from Shakespeare, and two further examples from Richard Bentley (1662-1742) in later editions.

Lindley Murray, in his version of this rule (Rule XVI) of Syntax in his *English Grammar*, in order to make the import of the rule and the example from Milton crystal clear, adds the gloss: ‘that is, “they did perceive him.” ’

This suggests very strongly that those critics who give this rule and this reference have not looked into the 1762 or any other edition of Lowth’s *Grammar*.

I have gone into this at some length in order to point out that Pullum is the only person known to me among several generations of linguists who has actually studied in depth Lowth’s *English Grammar*.

In fact, it is a commonplace of Logic, one of the Seven Liberal Arts of the

He is shown as highly competent in the field of grammar and literature, and displays considerable originality, ingenuity and skill in the fashioning and application of his grammatical rules. Far from imposing a Latinate grammar on English, he sought to eliminate, among other constructions, the non-native Latinisms, imported into English during the English Renaissance (1550-1660), that, as he thought, rightly or wrongly, disfigured the language, especially of the earlier generation of post-Restoration writers, even the most eminent. He also judged improper those native English syntactic forms that violated the principles of Strict Construction. In this regard he represented the 18thC purist view of English that replaced the looser construction of this and earlier generations with a more refined, more construable prose. Samuel Johnson epitomizes this carefully crafted new prose style, based on the periodic sentence.

Lowth is far from perfect, and neither is his *A Short Introduction to English Grammar: With Critical Notes* (1762), but most present-day critics, from the depths of their abysmal ignorance of what Lowth actually says and does, and their *a priori* prejudices and lack of analytical understanding, write about myths and inventions of their own,⁵ instead of studying Lowth's life and

Scholastic curriculum, that *duplex negatio affirmat*, 'double negation affirms'. It is quite ancient and is found in logical systems throughout the ages, including in texts in Sanskrit, which has double negation. See Mates 1961:31-32; 95.

Multiple negation had in fact already virtually disappeared from educated (literate) English by 1600 (Queen Elizabeth's letters show only a few traces), beginning with the English Renaissance (1550-1660), possibly in translating legal texts from Latin into English, in order to avoid potential ambiguity. See Prothero 1913. But this seems to have begun as a natural process, not motivated by the force of observing arbitrary grammatical strictures.

Wittgenstein commented (*Philosophische Grammatik* (1969); *Philosophical Grammar* (1974), both Oxford, Blackwell, *passim*) that the formula, $\sim\sim P \supset P$; or: $\sim(\sim P) \supset P$, is not in fact a rule of logic or grammar at all, but merely a consequence of the behaviour (interaction) of symbols such as \sim , P , and \supset .

⁵ A pair of complementary assertions often forms part of the uninformed critiques of so-called traditional grammarians. The first is that they studied writing instead of speech. So, as it turns out, has nearly everybody else. It is sufficient to look at the vast majority of descriptive English grammars, whether by linguists or textbook writers, to see that there are virtually no English grammars written on the basis of speech alone or in part, except perhaps Fries 1952, where it is hardly noticeable, or the grammars of English by Quirk et al., which use the corpus of tagged spoken texts from the Survey of English Usage in the English Department of University College,

works for what they represented to the scholars and educated classes of his day, who regarded him highly as a respected officer of the Church and a distinguished man of letters.

Among the many practitioners of Corpus Linguistics, the name of Robert Lowth (1710-1787) is not likely to be mentioned. But he followed the old-fashioned time-honoured method of collecting examples from a body of literature, probably on file slips made from marginal pencil-markings on the pages of his daily reading-matter, as did Samuel Johnson for his *Dictionary* (1754). ‘His temper was generally cheerful, though sometimes irritated by the vexations of office, and the disappointments and provocations of a life of literary popularity. It is said that, like George Stevens and Professor Porson, he never read a book, without a pen or pencil in his hand.’ (Hall 1834:40-41)⁶

London.

The second is that they did not even examine the language, but rather some incorporeal idealized abstraction of their own invention, failing to describe even the actual usage of the written form. This may be true of the vast majority of modern scientific studies of English grammar, where the data so often consist of non-attested arbitrarily constructed examples made up *ad hoc* for illustrative purposes, often called ‘intuitive data’, but which might better be called *sentoids*.

However, it is sufficient to look at the long line of compendious English grammars, often referred to, rather admiringly or affectionately, bordering on the patronizing, as ‘scholarly traditional grammars’, from Fiedler and Sachs (1861-1877), Mätzner (1880-1885), Koch (1878-1891), Poutsma (1914-1929), Kruisinga (1925), Kruisinga and Erades (1935; 1953-1967), Jespersen (1909-1949), Zandvoort (1957 ff.), to Curme (1931;1935), et multi al. (see McKay 1984, which is not complete) to see that the natural practice of these grammarians was to use a vast corpus of classified citations from literature, sometimes newspapers and other writing. Certainly H. W. Fowler’s *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (1926) is devoted entirely to real examples, classified and analyzed in detail, from newspapers and other printed sources. And of course Lindley Murray’s *English Grammar* (1795 ff.), based on Lowth’s *Short Introduction*, is well-illustrated with edited quotations of good and bad usage from numerous good and bad writers that he took over from Lowth and supplemented with others. Nor does Murray consider only the Standard English of the educated writer. His *Exercises* are mainly instances of improper (ungrammatical) usage from the ‘lower orders’, what were commonly called ‘low expressions’.

The only English grammar to examine non-standard English in detail is Fries *American English Grammar. The Grammatical Structure of Present-Day American English with especial Reference to Social Differences or Class Dialects* (1940), based on the corpus of correspondence from the First World War in the US War Office in Washington, DC.

⁶ ‘Introductory Memoir’ (pp 1-42), pp 40-41. George Alexander Stevens (1710-1784), English novelist and humorist; Richard Porson (1759-1808), Greek classical

Thus the compilation of ‘improprieties’ or ‘inaccuracies’ (Preface, 1762:viii) in his *English Grammar* was based just as surely on an open-ended random corpus of texts as any similar present-day compilation,⁷ with this important distinctive difference: Lowth had already formulated the general conclusions to be drawn from the examples in his corpus before he ever started on this enterprise. As he says in the ‘Preface’ to the *Short Introduction*:

The principal design of a Grammar of any Language is to teach us to express ourselves with propriety [‘1. Accuracy; justness.’ (Johnson)] in that Language, and to enable us to judge of every phrase and form of construction, whether it be right or not. The plain way of doing this, is to lay down rules, and to illustrate them by examples. But besides shewing what is right, the matter may be further explained by pointing out what is wrong.⁸ (1762:x)

scholar and regius professor of Greek at Cambridge (1792), one of the founders of modern classical scholarship; renowned for his remarkable memory and facility of recall. His ms. Greek hand is the basis of all present-day Greek typography.

⁷ It would be pointless to assemble a finite corpus and study that, as one cannot be sure that the relevant instance will be represented. It would be equally pointless to use a promiscuous or random, putatively representative selection or assembly from all the writers of the day. All that inferior writers could contribute is that they are ignorant of grammar, by definition. Lowth believed that it is sufficient to show the state of the language if one uses the language of ‘some of our best writers’. These are men such as Bentley, Clarendon, Tillotson, Swift, and others, all greatly admired writers of their day. The thought behind this is that the educated gentleman and scholar, the ‘man of taste’, embodies the best and most cultivated form of polite society: in manners, morals, taste, the arts and sciences, religion, politics, and, of course, in language. If the English language, as it is written by ‘some of our best writers’, is not ruled by grammar, then the language is indeed in need of those rules that will ensure that the language is so ruled, in other words, so that it does not, as Swift says, ‘offend against every part of Grammar.’ Lowth’s sources are therefore selected both to illustrate the present state of the language, and to illustrate the application of the rules designed to bring that language into conformity with the precepts of grammar. Lowth’s discussion of this point, like the other matters that he considers in his *Preface*, is admirably clear.

⁸ Lowth may have initially come across a different version of the idea of showing the application of a rule by showing not only its application (‘what is right’) but also its misapplication (‘what is wrong’) when he was a scholar at Winchester College from 1722 until he went up to New College, Oxford in 1729. He must have used the exercises in Latin composition by translating sentences from English into Latin by

In his typical way, when he was commissioned to write this grammar,⁹ he saw at once that there was a gap in the coverage of all previous works,

John Clark(e) (1687-1734). An early edition is entitled *An Introduction to the Making [composition] of Latin*, etc, 3rd edition, 1721, by John Clarke [*sic*].

In three A3 pages of hand-written notes about the curriculum ('Business at Winton. College 1756-1757') compiled in c1800. amid the plethora of Greek and Latin authors and the repeated 'Grammar' (this would be Lilly's *Latin Grammar*) of a skeleton timetable, the name 'Clark' appears once. There are also numerous large ms C's in the right margin, indicating Clark's exercises. (This information is due to Suzanne Foster, Winchester College Archivist.)

In the *Exercises*, the English sentences and a Latin vocabulary are arranged in parallel columns, English and Latin, under various rules of grammar and longer texts. The English sentence is provided with a parallel string of Latin words in the adjacent column in their dictionary entry form in approximately correct order with which to make a Latin sentence. The Latin words must be converted into the correct inflectional form required by the Latin construction. An earlier work (details omitted) with this design, from which Clark must have got the pattern, was published in 1706 by Nathan (*aka* Nathaniel) Bailey (*d* 1742), better known as the author of *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1721).

Both Clark and Bayley are mentioned on the synoptic title-page to the 1750 edition of *A New Grammar: Being the most Easy Guide to Speaking and Writing The English Language Properly and Correctly* ... (1745), which went through at least thirty-four editions to 1800, by Ann Fisher (1719-1778), maiden name of Mrs Thomas Stack, wife of the Newcastle printer Thomas Stack: '[Part] IV. Syntax, or the Order of Construction; which shews how to join Words aright, in a Sentence or Sentences together. To which are added, [Chap. IV. & V, 5½ pp] Exercises of Bad English [under all the Rules of Syntax, as recommended by the author of the before mentioned Letter (the introduction, signed 'A. B.': 'Anselm Bayly?)], In the Manner of Clark's and Bailey's Examples for the Latin, to prove [test] our Concord by' (1750:127).

Fisher states in a footnote on the first page of Chapter IV: 'Some of these Examples we set right, lest the learner, expecting them always wrong, should alter them by Guess.' This observation must have been made by an experienced teacher.

Cf this entry from Chap. V, 'Promiscuous Exercises: or, examples under all the Rules': 'Thou and me is both accused of the same Fault. (1750:129)

⁹ Whether Lowth was 'commissioned' to write this grammar, or merely presented or was presented with the proposition, is immaterial. The facts are that the publisher Robert Dodsley (1703-1764), of humble origins, but who was nevertheless accepted and respected by his betters in breeding and education, had a major hand in its genesis and publication. It could well have been his initiative that led to Lowth's authorship. The correspondence on this between Lowth et al. is to be found in Tierney 1988. This work unfortunately ends with Robert's death. There must be more from Lowth in the subsequent correspondence with Robert's brother James (1724-1797), his successor, but this has yet to be published. See also Straus 1910 for details of publishing history. See also Solomon 1996.

and came up with a new, novel plan on which to base the new section on syntax, which he entitles ‘Sentences’, a treatment of the faults of English along with the facts.

Thus the corpus consists virtually exclusively of ‘improprieties’.¹⁰ How are ‘improprieties’ to be identified? They cannot come from the lower orders, who do not speak or write standard English, nor from writers known to write in an out-dated style, full of archaisms and similar constructions that have been superseded, nor from those whose writing is said to contain ‘inaccuracies’, *ie* grammatical solecisms. So the corpus is composed of instances from reputable writers who nevertheless, he says, quoting Swift, “offended against every part of Grammar.” (1762:ii)

The second part of the procedure was to find a grammatical meta-rule according to which the appropriate ‘Rules’ might be ‘laid down’. For this we need go no further than Lowth’s definition of ‘Sentence’, at the beginning of the section on ‘Sentences’, or syntax:

A SENTENCE is an assemblage of words, expressed in proper form, and ranged in proper order, and concurring to make a complete sense. (1762:94)

To understand all this, we need to have recourse to Johnson’s *Dictionary*, which gives the 18thC senses of the key words.¹¹ It should be remembered that the largest grammatical unit recognized from antiquity down to Lowth’s day was the *period*, or ‘periodic sentence’, the universally practised classical sentence-form, from Greek *períodos*, ‘meandering road’ — not a bad description of the feeling one has when making one’s way through one of the longer instances. Here are other senses of ‘Sentence’ from Johnson:

¹⁰ Perhaps it would be more precise to designate the works from which he took these examples the ‘hypercorpus’, and the improprieties (also the illustrative correct ones) the ‘hypocorpus’.

¹¹ Trying to retrieve this information from the *OED* is futile, because all the data have been pooled, leading to a kind of muddy-brown mass of information (not unlike what you get if you mix together all the colours of the paint-box) from which all the relevant chronological information has been removed except the dates of the citations. It might make more sense to list them chronologically by birth date of the author. What would be required is a *variorum* dictionary, giving the senses as found in an historical succession of dictionaries. Illustrative quotations from texts contemporary with the dictionaries would then have far more illustrative power.

1. Determination or decision, as of a judge, civil or criminal.
2. It is usually spoken of condemnation pronounced by the judge; doom.
3. A maxim; an axiom, generally moral.
4. A short paragraph; a period in writing.

As in most dictionaries, looking up the meaning of the key terms in a definition can only lead to circularity, as in this from Johnson's list of senses of 'Period':

7. A complete sentence, from one full stop to another.

This is true enough, as long as one knows where and how to place the 'full stops'. Thus Lowth's definition of 'sentence', taken as a whole, must be considered wholly new and original, and, as far as can be determined, not paralleled or repeated by subsequent traditional definitions.¹²

The next two members of the definition, 'expressed in proper form, and ranged in proper order', probably come from Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* ('Principles of Oratory'), Book VIII, Chapter ii, § 23, in his definition of *perspicuitas* 'perspicuity', 'clarity': *propria verba, rectus ordo*. It is clear from the discussion that follows in the *Institutio* that Quintilian is thinking of *propria verba* as 'appropriate diction', and *rectus ordo* as 'straightforward arrangement'. Lowth has split the sense of *propria verba*, first, into 'assemblage': '1. A collection: a number of individuals brought together.' (Johnson); that is, not a mere fortuitous, random selection or collection; and second, into 'expressed in proper form'. 'Form' must mean 'grammatical form', and 'proper', '6. Exact; accurate; just.' (Johnson). So the words must have the correct grammatical or morphological form required by the construction. *Rectus ordo* now means 'ranged (lined up) in grammatically correct order'. Cf 'To Range. 2. To be placed in order; to be ranked properly..' 'To Rank. 3. To arrange methodically.' (Johnson). So Lowth has taken Quintilian's terms and given them new senses.

Finally, the words must 'concur to make a complete sense.'¹³ This is usually misunderstood both by later critics of traditional grammar as

¹² On this point see Fries 1952, Chapter II, What is a Sentence?, which discusses a multitude of attempts by 'traditional' grammarians to define 'Sentence'.

¹³ Cf the following, Rule XXII, the last rule of 'Syntax', from Murray's *English Grammar* (1795):

well as by its practitioners as meaning that a ‘sentence’ is *any* assemblage of words that makes complete sense. Or else that in order to make complete sense it must be a grammatically complete sentence. Or that a grammatically complete sentence makes complete sense. This would be Johnson’s tenth and last sense of ‘sense’: ‘Meaning; import.’. But Lowth means *grammatical* sense: cognate parts of cognate constructions within a sentence must have constituent parts that concur. Forms of words that fulfil identical functions within cognate constituents of sentences cannot have their grammatical form determined locally, but must agree with each other in their grammatical — morphological and syntactic — features across unbounded dependencies. This leads to the principle which I have called ‘Strict Construction’, which has very wide-spread applicability.

For example, suppose we have a general rule that if a pronoun is the grammatical subject or part of the grammatical subject of a sentence, *ie* of the verb, it must be in the nominative case. Expressions such as ‘Us adults are going to have a party’ is ungrammatical because ‘us’, which is part of the subject of the verb, is in the objective and not the subjective case of the first person plural personal pronoun *we* in English. It is not

ALL the parts of a sentence should correspond to each other: a regular and dependent construction, throughout, should be carefully preserved. The following sentence is therefore inaccurate: [Example of improper construction omitted.]

This is as far as I know the first clear statement of the principle of Strict Construction. The difficulty in applying the rule as seen by Lowth’s and Murray’s contemporaries is well expressed in the following note from West 1953/1996:

This rule, as Murray admits, ‘may be considered as comprehending all the preceding ones’, but he justifies its inclusion by giving a large number of examples which he hopes will ‘afford some useful direction, and serve as a principle to prove [test] the propriety or impropriety of many modes of expression, which the less general rules cannot determine.’ These examples make up the rest of the observations on this rule. It was quoted by John Kigan (*Remarks on the Practice of Grammarians ...* 1823:88) as showing Murray’s consciousness of the inadequacy of his own rules; and Kigan also criticises its vagueness. ‘How to resolve or divide a sentence into those parts that should thus correspond’, he says, ‘or, in what this regular and dependent construction consists, he [Murray] has not shown. So that after the drudgery of committing these rules to memory, and our endeavours to digest them, we are obliged to learn the true construction of a sentence from a long continued attention to the practical use of words.’

permitted to select the form locally, say by some rule that says that only when the pronoun is in absolute subject position directly before the verb *must* it be in the nominative and not the objective case. Both versions of English grammar agree that it must be: ‘We are going to have a party’. No one says ‘us are’.

By the same rule, such expressions as ‘Him and me / Me and him went’; ‘Me and my brother / My brother and me are twins’ — found in all forms of non-standard English, not treated by Lowth or other traditional grammarians until later in the 19thC; *cf* the later use of the term ‘low expression’ — are by the meta-rule of Strict Construction disallowed in Standard English. The rule of local determination says that neither *him* nor *me* is in *absolute* subject position; the grammatical subject in direct construction with the verb is the superordinate NP dominating the conjoined *him-and-me*, etc.¹⁴

Having set up his criteria and found his texts,¹⁵ Lowth now has to set about writing his grammar. Of the many criticisms levelled at earlier traditional grammarians, none is more critical or crucial than the assertion that they had no qualifications for the job. But Lowth was a

¹⁴ What Lowth is offering is only the definition of and the procedure for establishing grammatical propriety. It is not a recipe for defining Standard English, as he has already taken the decision to collect his data from reputable writers with a reputation for ‘accuracy’: grammatical propriety. It had to wait for George Campbell’s *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) for the additional criteria of Standard English to be established. See Book II, ‘The Foundations and Essential Properties of Elocution’, of the doctrine of ‘reputable, national, and present use ... which gives law to language’

Nothing, however, is always as it seems. In Chapter III, ‘Of Grammatical Purity’, Section I, ‘The Barbarism’; Section II, ‘The Solecism’; Section III, ‘The Impropropriety’, Campbell shows how any use that violates the purity of the language by containing any one of these three faults, is improper:

The barbarism is an offence against etymology [morphology], the solecism against syntax, the impropropriety against lexicography [diction; choice of/proper words]. (1776:190)

This summary statement is sufficient to show that the putative primacy of use (usage) is, in the view of the normative grammarian, in fact subject to the laws of grammar.

¹⁵ It is notable that virtually all Lowth’s texts come from the previous generation of post-Restoration authors. Many historians of English literature say that there was a distinct change in English style around 1700. A compilation of the authors represented and the number of instances of improper usage from each cited by Lowth in his ‘Critical Notes’ shows that Swift is quoted far more than any other writer. See footnote 22 below.

‘classic’: a man learned in languages: Latin, Greek, Hebrew. From 1741 to 1750, he was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, a post that was awarded on the candidate’s ‘Latinity’ — being well-versed in the Latin Language — as much as for any other form of learning. Lowth gave his *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (Latin 1753; English 1787), with the requisite Ciceronian style that has been independently judged by three Latinists at the University of York to be very good and typical.

In Lecture XIX,¹⁶ ‘The Prophetic Poetry is Sententious’ (‘Sententious. 2. Comprising sentences.’ Johnson), he finds the solution that had evaded all previous attempts to find the structural basis of the Hebrew poetry of the Hebrew Bible. First he asserts that the basic unit is a sentence, and that it is parallelism of sentences and the (often contrasting) parallelism of their import that is the basic principle.¹⁷ Without so much as a warning, he now uses the technical term ‘sentence’ in its present-day sense.

Poetica sententiarum Compositio maximam partem constat
in æqualitate, ac similitudine quadam, sive parallelismo,
membrorum cujusque periodi, ita ut in duobus plerumque membris

¹⁶ A more fully developed version of Lowth’s proposal will be found in the ‘Preliminary Dissertation’ to his *Isaiah. A New Translation* (1778:x-xxxiv). Finding the metrical basis of Hebrew poetry was considered essential especially to the translating of the Psalms. There was some considerable correspondence on this matter in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in the 1740s, complete with pointed Hebrew examples, which Lowth would as a matter of course have read. Lowth saw at once that the metrical basis of the Psalms and the other poetical books and passages of Hebrew Scripture could not be reconstructed because the original pronunciation of Biblical Hebrew had been irretrievably lost.

The first obstacle, Lowth says (pp liii-lvi), is that the punctuated (pointed) Masoretic text of the Hebrew Scriptures is not itself the text, but rather ‘in effect an Interpretation of the Hebrew Text’, what ‘may be considered their [the Jews’] Translation of the Old Testament’ (p liv). Equally unreliable is the Latin *Vulgate*, despite the high authority accorded to it by the Catholic Church. It too is a translation (of the Hebrew text). Any translation made from it, no matter how carefully, is ‘a Translation of a Translation’ (pp lv-lvi).

So his Oxford ‘Lectures’ could be considered, like his *Short Introduction*, his proposed solution to a generally recognized problem.

¹⁷ This has misled some enthusiastic but not very closely observant students of Biblical poetry, who later corrected their view, to say that it is *semantic* parallelism, which had in fact been noted before. It is the ‘sententious’ nature of the poetry that is Lowth’s real discovery, whatever later embellishments have flowed from it.

res rebus, verbis verba, quasi demensa et paria respondeant. Quae res multos quidem gradus habet, multam varietatem; ut alias accuratior et apertior, alias solutior et obscurior sit: ejus autem Tres omnino videntur esse Species. (*Prælectio XIX*, ‘Poesin Prophetica esse Sententiosam’, 1753:p 180)

The poetical make up of the sentences consists chiefly in a certain equality, resemblance, or parallelism, between the members [clauses] of each period [complete sentence]; such that in two lines things for the most part correspond to things, and words to words, as if fitted to each other by rule or measure. This parallelism has much variety and many gradations; it is sometimes more accurate and manifest, sometimes looser and less clear: there seem to be in all three kinds of it [parallelism] [DAR after Lowth-Gregory.¹⁸ Enumeration and analysis with examples of the three kinds of parallelism omitted.]

In discussing the first species of the three forms of parallelism that he identifies, the synonymous parallelism (Lowth 1753:180; Lowth-Gregory 1787.II:35; the other two are the antithetical parallelism, and the synthetic or constructive parallelism), Lowth observes:

Saepe deest aliquid in posteriore membro, e priore repetendum ad explendam sententiam, [...] (Lowth 1753:185)

‘There is frequently something wanting in the latter [second] member [clause], which must be supplied from the former [first

¹⁸ Cf Gregory’s wordy paraphrases with many superfluous interpolations, as shown by the three different types of bracket below:

The poetical conformation [*ie Conformatio (sic); sc Compositio*] of the sentences {, which has been so often alluded to as characteristic of the Hebrew poetry,} consists chiefly in a certain quality, resemblance, or parallelism, { between the members [clauses] of each period [complete sentence]; so that in two lines (or members of the same period)} things for the most part shall answer to things, and words to words, as if fitted to each other {by a kind of rule or measure}. This parallelism has much variety and many gradations; it is sometimes more accurate and manifest, sometimes more vague and obscure: it may however, on the whole, be said to consist of three species. [Elucidation of species of parallelism omitted.]

‘member’ or clause] to complete the sentence [sense and/or clause]:

“Kings shall see him and shall rise up:
“Princes [GAP], and they shall worship him;” [Isaiah XLIX.7]
(Lowth-Gregory 1787.II:41)

In other words, to complete the ‘sentence’ (Latin *sententia*) or ‘sense’ (NB equivocation), the VP of the first line, ‘shall see him and rise up’, — just two words in the Hebrew — must be interpolated into the second line after (or perhaps before) the subject NP ‘Princes’, filling the ‘gap’. It may fairly be said that Lowth discovered gapping, a distinction in the various mechanisms for shortening consecutive conjoined constituents by deleting repeated terms or constituents, generally credited to Hudson 1976; see also van Oirsouw 1987. In fact, most traditional grammars say something about this process, albeit usually in very general terms.

Lowth is less interested in the grammatical generalization than he is in accounting for the role that it plays in the structure of successive lines of Hebrew poetry.

Asymmetrical Conjunction

The best way to illustrate Lowth’s method is to present one of his collections of instances of an improper construction, and to set the reader the task of setting up a rule of grammar which, on the face of it, seems an unexceptionably linguistic commonplace, but which can at the same time be used to exclude the assembled instances as violations of it, and, therefore, as ‘improper’, or ungrammatical.

The ‘data’ are an assemblage of Lowth’s own compilations,¹⁹ taken from various editions of his *English Grammar*. His square brackets, or ‘Crotchets’, as he calls them, enclose the elided word, which he has supplied. Biographical and bibliographical information has been added in parentheses or square brackets by DAR as well as occasional editorial clarification.

¹⁹ It would be an interesting exercise to try to construct an algorithm for finding these constructions in any finite corpus. There are many reasons for thinking that this is in fact impossible, because of the infinite variety of the long-range dependencies involved. Even looking for *and-which* constructions conjoined to preceding adjectival phrases etc requires hand-sorting of the finds into hits and misses. Even then, potential candidates would fall through the net because the relative pronoun will have been elided, leaving only the *and* behind.

As you read through examples 1 to 11, try your hand at formulating the rule that Lowth formulated and which excludes these expressions or constructions from the canon of grammatical sentences or constructions of English. Formulate also an alternative rule that allows them.

1. Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance, and [who] hath preserved you in the great danger of Childbirth:—Liturgy. [*The Book of Common Prayer* (1662); revised edition of the Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549; 1552), where this originates. ‘The Thanksgiving of women after Childbirth, commonly called, the Churching of Woman.’]

2. If the calm, in which he was born, and [which] lasted so long, had continued. Henry Hyde, second earl of Clarendon (1638-1709), *Life* (1668-1670; 1672 ff.; published 1759), p 43.

3. The Remonstrance which he had lately received from the House of Commons, and [which] was dispersed throughout the Kingdom. Clarendon, *Hist.* (1702-1704) Vol. I. p 366. 8^{vo}.

4. These we have extracted from an Historian of undoubted credit, a reverend bishop, the learned Paulus Jovius; and [they] are the same that were practised under the pontificate of Leo X. Pope (1688-1744), *Works*, Vol. VI, p 201.

5. A cloud gathering in the North; which we have helped to raise, and [which] may quickly break in a storm upon our heads. Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), *Conduct of the Allies* (1711).

6. A man, whose inclinations led him to be corrupt, and [who] had great abilities to manage and multiply and defend his corruptions. [Swift,] *Gulliver* (1726), Part I. Chapt. vi.

7. My Master likewise mentioned another quality, which his servants had discovered in many Yahoos, and [which] to him was wholly unaccountable. *Gulliver*, Part IV, Chap. vii.

8. This I filled with the feathers of birds I had taken with springes [snares] made of horse hairs, and [which] were excellent food. *Ibid.* Chap x.

9. Osyrus, whom the Grecians call Dionysius, and [who] is the same with Bacchus. Swift, *Mechan, Oper. of the Spirit*, Sect ii (1704).

Two further examples were added in some edition later than The Second Edition, Corrected (1763):

10. Which Homer might without a blush rehearse,
And [which] leaves a doubtful palm to Virgil's verse.
Dryden (1631-1700), *Fables* (1700), Dedication.

[‘The “Fables” again show Dryden’s energy of thought and language undiminished by age.’ Article on Dryden by Sir Leslie Stephen (1832-1904) in *DNB* (1888).]

11. Will martial flames for ever fire thy mind,
And [will it, thy mind,] never, never be to heav'n resign'd?
[Pope,] *Odyssey*, xii. 145.

What would be the first step? Most likely to sort the examples into different *classes* of construction, with a brief piece of observational analysis. They all seem to involve pairs of conjoined sentences or clauses, with an elided subject in the second clause whose antecedent is some kind of object, sometimes preposed, in the first clause.

Class 1. A subject RelPn in the second clause is coreferential with an object NP in object position in the first clause: Exs. 1, 11. The two examples are otherwise distinct in construction.²⁰

Class 2. A subject NP in the second clause is coreferential with a fronted object NP in the first clause: Ex. 4.

Pairs of Conjoined Relative Clauses:

Class 3. The subject RelPn in the second RelCl is coreferential with the object RelPn in the first RelCl: Exs. 3, 5, 7, 8 (with elided object RelPn in the first RelCl), 9, 10.

Class 4. A subject RelPn in the second RelCl is coreferential with a RelPn in a PrepPh in the first RelCl: Ex. 2.

²⁰ The elision of a subject NP or Pn in the second of two conjoined clauses where the antecedent is not the subject of the first clause is also allowed in earlier forms of English; see Ohlander 1938 and Burnley 1983.

Class 5. A subject RelPn in the second RelCl is coreferential with the possessive RelPn *whose* in the subject NP of the first RelCl: Ex. 6.

Here is what Lowth says about Ex. 1 in his ‘Critical Note’ (footnote) (1762:122-123):

The Verb *hath preserved* hath here no Nominative Case; for it cannot be properly supplied by the preceding word *God*, which is in the Objective Case. It ought to be, “*And He hath preserved you;*” or rather, “*and to preserve you.*”²¹ Some of our best Writers have frequently fallen into this [Swift is represented many times], which I take to be no small inaccuracy: ... [Here follow the examples above.]

By the term ‘supplied’, Lowth means no more than that the gap or missing or elided portion of the expression as it stands is to be filled with morpho-syntactically *identical* cognate terms (copies) from the preceding cognate constituents of the overall construction. But this, as he points out, is impossible, because the gap in the second member of the construction requires a term with different morpho-syntactic features from those of its cognate term in the first member.

‘Cognate’ is to be understood in the appropriate sense: ‘coreferential’ and/or ‘structurally parallel’. Examples 1 and 11 require only that they be coreferential; the others that they be both coreferential and structurally parallel, that is, initial in their syntactic category. But in all of these cases, the principle of Strict Construction has been violated: Morpho-syntactic features of gaps cannot be specified only locally, but must agree with those of their antecedents. The only solution is to restore the elided elements supplied by Lowth in his ‘Crotchets’, that is, supplying them with their overt local morpho-syntactic features,

²¹ The second emendation preserves the parallelism. A colleague in the Department of Mathematics at the University of York, with a keen interest in language, when shown Lowth’s example, made the same suggestions, and with the same reasoning.

The method of correcting or reinterpreting unconstruable or ‘faulty’ construction by rearranging the words into a syntactically new or different, acceptable form, as if that were what was originally or ought to have been intended, is a common procedure among amateur linguists, who sometimes tend to treat the original almost as if it were a misprint. This is what might be called the ‘patch-up’ procedure of construing.

obviating illegally supplying (copying) them from their antecedents with the wrong morpho-syntactic features.²²

A diverse range of grammarians have claimed that these constructions are nevertheless indeed ungrammatical, despite the fact that they have been in English ever since OE times. Their tendency to appear almost at random in a wide variety of historical texts is however well documented. (See Visser 1963-1973.²³) Example 12 is from the story of Cædmon in the OE Bede (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*). While it is not of the asymmetrical type, it does show the elision of the relative pronoun in the second of two conjoined relative clauses. Further, the number on the gapped relative pronoun is determined locally, singular instead of plural, unlike its antecedent. Relating how Cædmon employed his gift of poetry, the following statement appears:

²² When DAR was on his way to the University of California, San Diego, to give a talk on just this topic, he was asked what he was going to talk about by a person with no special expertise in English Grammar. When given the expressions, ‘The man we invited to dinner, but didn’t come’ vs ‘The man who came to dinner but we didn’t invite’, they immediately exclaimed, ‘Oh, I see — the second is ungrammatical.’

On an earlier occasion, while waiting for a taxi at the railway station on our way to a meeting, DAR was asked by another waiting colleague what he was working on at the moment. When he produced the same pair of contrasting expressions, his interlocutor retorted, ‘They’re both ungrammatical.’ DAR rejoined: ‘Have you ever read any Swift?’ The retort was swift and sharp: ‘Oh. — Swift!’

The very wide-spread idea is that in earlier forms of English, anything is possible, and we are not obliged to take notice of it.

As a distinguished colleague of mine once remarked when I showed him a distorted relative-clause construction that he had produced during his presentation: ‘I don’t think linguists should have to analyse sentences like these.’

²³ Visser’s analytical compilation surveys not only an amazing range of structures (not just verbs), but also includes thousands of examples from OE to PDE classified under the various constructions. It includes a large percentage of material—construction-types and examples—that otherwise would remain forever in oblivion in the linguistic record. There are also very useful bibliographies at the beginning of each volume (c72½ pp in all) of English grammars etc listed chronologically from the beginnings on down to the recent present (1972). The Index to each volume, which lists both individual lexical items and a selection of constructions, is very useful if not fully comprehensive enough for all purposes, nor does the very full list of Contents to each volume always provide fool-proof guidance. However, a classified ‘corpus’ of this size and scope is inestimably superior to a mere collection of texts, no matter how large.

12. Ond he forþon næfre noht leasunge ne idles leoþes wyrcean ne meahte, ac efne þa an þa [*neuter plural*] ðe to æfæstnisse belumpon [*plural*], ond [GAP; supply *ðæt ðe* “that which (=PDE *what*): *singular*] his þa æfæstan tungan gedeofanade [*singular*] singan.²⁴

13. ‘And he for this reason [he had not been taught poetry but had received it as a divine gift] never could compose any falsehoods or idle songs, but those alone which pertained to piety, and [GAP] suited his pious tongue to sing.’

That this is an original OE creation is shown by the Latin original, which is different in construction:

14. Unde nihil umquam frivoli et supervacui poematis facere potuit, sed ea [*plural*] tantummodo quae [*plural*] ad religionem pertinent [*plural*] religiosam eius linguam decebant [*plural*].

15. Whence he never could compose anything (of) frivolous or vain poetry, but only those [things] which pertained to religion were suitable for his pious tongue.

Where the Latin has two conjoined clauses, the second incorporating a relative clause, the OE splits the second clause into two relative clauses.²⁵

What is the explanation for this strange state of affairs? The disharmonious case relationships and the asymmetry of the types demands some analysis. In what follows, a very simple form of constituent structure is used heuristically and a configurational pattern is

²⁴ This example is due to Bruce Mitchell, who also supplied references to a number of other instances of symmetrical and asymmetrical conjunction of this type in OE.

²⁵ Cf this PDE example:

In this context, granting concessions over Cyprus, which the EU is set to demand, but [*which*] would be incendiary to the nationalists, may be practically impossible. [Deleted object relative pronoun in second relative clause restored.]

(Ankara’s EU project is in danger of collapse. *The Independent*, Europe, Analysis, by Daniel Howden, Wednesday 24 May 2006 p 18f)

posited as the explanation, without case relationships being relevant. The level we attempt to attain is Chomsky's Observational Adequacy.

Let us assume that every time a constituent is preposed to the left of a sentence, a new superordinate sentence node is created, with a gap left behind where the moved constituent comes from, thus:²⁶

16. The man S[(whom) S[we invited [GAP] to dinner]]
< the man S[we invited the man to dinner]

No. 16. shows that when the object NP *the man* is moved to the left, the S-node dominating S[we invited the man to dinner] is expanded into another superordinate S-node with S[whom > the man dominating the lower S-node that now contains a gap: S[we invited [GAP] to dinner].

Let us call each type of S-node a 'projection (of S)'.²⁷

An independent or else lowest S-node that does not dominate any other S-node whether or not it is dominated by another S-node is a *minimal projection*. A superordinate node that dominates an S-node and is not dominated by another S-node is a *maximal projection*. S-nodes that dominate S-nodes and in turn are dominated by S-nodes are *intermediate projections*. In this way chains of minimal, intermediate, and maximal projections of S can be built up. (Intermediate projections do not play a role in this analysis.)

Now, in the expression, *the man didn't come*, the S-node dominating it is a minimal projection of S, because it does not dominate any other S-node.

Gapping of the second relative pronoun in a pair of conjoined relative clauses occurs when an antecedent relative pronoun invades the

²⁶ As should be obvious, this proposal has purely heuristic validity. It is not a new theory of constituent structure, but an analytical device to make the configurational and long-range relationship of constituents transparent, without arbitrary *ad hoc* disfiguring theoretically-motivated notational conventions of no empirical value.

For an extended application of this method of representation, see the bracketed P-marker at the end of footnote 33, which can easily be converted into any other notation more acceptable to the reader.

²⁷ The distinctions drawn here between the types of projection are probably what Chomsky has termed an 'epiphenomenon'. It is the automatic consequence of the operation of the rules of iterative left-dislocation. The parser automatically recognizes the type of projection from the syntactic configuration.

second of two conjoined S-nodes looking for a coreferential node to delete. It is a kind of search-and-destroy mission. But it can only destroy coreferential nodes that are in parallel or cognate positions in configurationally similar S-nodes.

These conditions are met in the first, acceptable construction, *The man we invited to dinner but didn't come*.

The head NP of the whole NP, *the man*, has a pair of conjoined relative clauses dominated by an S-node, as a post-modifier. Restoring the elided preposed object relative pronoun in the first relative clause, we have *the man whom we invited [GAP] to dinner*. *Whom we invited [GAP] to dinner* is a maximal projection. It has the structure:

17. S[whom S[we invited to dinner]].

Now the *whom* sets off on its search-and-destroy mission in the second, conjoined relative clause *who didn't come*, which is a minimal projection. It is a maximal projection only by default, because it does not dominate any other S-nodes. The object relative pronoun *whom* can destroy the subject relative pronoun *who* in the second relative clause because they are both initial in their syntactic category and are coreferential. The fact that *who didn't come* is not a maximal projection (except by default) is irrelevant: the pronouns are in the same initial position with no superordinate S-node. If this laborious deduction is correct, it confirms that a configurational account is acceptable.

Now compare this with the situation in the ungrammatical *the man who came to dinner but [GAP] we didn't invite [GAP]*. The first relative clause is, as we have stated, a minimal projection. It is a maximal projection only by default, because it does not dominate another S-node. The subject relative pronoun *who* in the first relative clause now sets off on its search-and-destroy mission, looking for a coreferential subject relative pronoun in a minimal projection of S in the second relative clause S[whom S[we didn't invite [GAP] to dinner] in a minimal projection of S. The only candidate for a minimal projection of S is [we didn't invite [GAP] to dinner] which has as its subject *we*, not *who*. The *who* and the *we* are not coreferential, and the *who* cannot destroy the *we*. The mission is aborted. There seems to be a meta-rule that only one search-and-destroy mission is allowed. If not, then the *who* could continue its search in the superordinate S-node, S[whom S[...]] and successfully destroy the accusative *whom* without any further conditions, because this syntactic process does not seem to be sensitive to case-relationships.

The crucial difference between the permitted and the proscribed constructions is their configurational difference. Now all this may seem arbitrary and *ad hoc*, but it has at least Formal Adequacy, the level below Observational Adequacy: it works. It makes use of very simple geometrical configurations that are not sensitive to case, agreement, or government relations, but only to positional, that is, configurational, relationships.²⁸

For Lowth, it is the syntactic relations and the case relations that matter. The orphaned [GAP] in the second relative clause could not find a cognate relative pronoun in the first relative clause, so the construction was improper.²⁹

Lowth did not give a complete account of the phenomenon, but must be credited with its initial discovery. He was interested only in showing that perfectly unobjectionable self-evident rules of English grammar could be set up that, using his definition of Sentence and the Principles of Strict Construction, could eliminate faults in the construction of English sentences.

²⁸ It remains to be seen what generality this proposed solution contains. Not discussed here are all the other possible configurations of head NP and dependent relative clause which are far more various than the type dealt with here, following Lowth. Whether the configurational rule offered here has any wider validity remains for the time being uninvestigated.

²⁹ When I gave a talk on this subject at the Neuphilologische Fakultät at Tübingen, Uwe Mönnich commented that his grandfather used to use this permitted English-type of conjunction in German, and he had often wondered about it. It now seems to have died out in favour of a more construable alternative: *der Mann, den wir zum Abendessen eingeladen hatten, der aber nicht erschien*. And vice versa....

The very strong sense of case in German does not like local determination of case, although it is sometimes found, as in the following newspaper example: *Viele Firmen wurden in die [accusative singular GAP] oder an den Rand der Pleite [genitive singular] getrieben*. ‘Many firms were driven into or to the brink of bankruptcy.’

Local case determination seems to be permissible if the shared item has the same form, as in: *Wenn sich der Mann überlegte [takes the dative of sich] und endlich entschieden [takes the accusative of sich] hatte, ...* ‘When the man had reflected and finally decided, ...’ This example is quoted from a late 19thC book by an author who styles himself *Der Sprachwart*, ‘The Guardian of Language’ (cf *Torwart* ‘goalkeeper’), who condemns it on the grounds that the single *sich*, which he says quite rightly is dative by its initial position with *überlegt*, cannot supply the missing accusative gapped *sich* required by *entscheiden*. Independently of Lowth, and using only the principle of Strict Construction, he comes to the same conclusion, and with the same reasoning.

Given his complete body of data, collected initially quite randomly, and asked to classify them into fault-types and to provide English grammatical rules that would judge the acceptable cases to be acceptable, and to show the fault in the faulty ones, there are very few today who could accomplish this task.

casus pendens & nominativus pendens

Whereas the first type of construction proscribed by Lowth is a naturally occurring English construction-type found throughout the known history of the English language, the second construction, known as *casus pendens* or *nominativus pendens* ('dangling case' or 'dangling nominative'), is one of those Latinisms that Lowth considered improper in English because it did not construe according to the interpretation of grammaticality or 'propriety' dictated by the principle of Strict Construction. Lowth does not offer any definition of this phenomenon, or name it as such, because he was focusing on the facts of English and their interpretation according to the precepts and principles that he was using.³⁰

The dangling nominatives in the two first examples offered by Lowth under the first rule that would disallow them, are indicated by his italics. Very briefly, whereas all the other cases (genitive, dative, accusative, ablative) are *governed* cases, the nominative is the *ungoverned* case. It is not governed, but governs. Here are Lowth's instances (1762:123-124):

1. *Which rule*, if it had been observed, a Neighbouring Prince would have wanted a great deal of that incense, which hath been offered up to him by his adorers.

Francis Atterbury (1662-1732), Vol. I. Sermon I. [1762:124]

In some later edition, this additional example was added:

2. We have no better materials to compound the Priesthood of, than the mass of Mankind: *which*, corrupted as it is, those who

³⁰ This is typical of his approach in all his work: not to engage in sterile explication of the obvious or to refer to the work of others as if treating their views instead of expounding his own. His straightforward expository style suits this mode of presentation very well, and lends it an authority and force that Lowth's argument might otherwise not possess.

receive holy Orders must have some vices to leave behind them, when they enter into the Church.

Swift, Sentiments of a Church of Englandman [with respect to Religion and Government] (1708)

The following two examples are cited as improper in the Critical Note (footnote) under the rule for the case of the relative pronoun which has the same form as the Latin rule, but applies equally to English (1762:134-136).

3. “*Who*, instead of going about doing good, *they* are perpetually intent upon doing mischief.” John Tillotson (1630-1694), Archbishop of Canterbury (1691-1694), [*Works.*] Vol. I. Sermon 18 [1762:135].³¹

Lowth’s analysis reads: ‘The Nominative Case *they* in this sentence is superfluous; it was expressed before in the Relative *who*.

Also added in some later edition:

4. Commend me to an argument, *that*, like a Flail, there’s no Fence [sc. defence] against *it*.” Richard Bentley (1662-1742), Dissert. on Euripides’s Epistles, Sect. i.

Lowth’s analysis reads: ‘If *that* be designed for [intended as] a Relative, it ought to be *which*, governed by the preposition *against*, and *it* is superfluous: thus, “*against which* there is no fence:” but if *that* be a Conjunction, it ought to be in the preceding member, “*such an Argument[,] [that].*” ’ (1791:122)

The following is from Lowth’s own prose (italics added):

5. *The longer_i* [Hebrew verses], though *they_j* admit of every sort of Parallelism, yet belonging for the most part to the last class, that of Constructive Parallels, I shall treat of *them_k* in this place, and endeavour to explain the nature, and to point out the marks of them, as fully and exactly as I can. (*Isaiah. A New Translation* (1778), ‘Preliminary Dissertation’)

³¹ ‘[Tillotson] was perhaps the only primate who took first rank in his day as a preacher, ...’ (Article on Tillotson by Alexander Gordon (1841-1931) in *DNB.*) (1898)

The subscript indices i, j, k identify the relevant noun phrase *The longer* and the anaphoric pronouns *they* and *them* referring back to it. The preposed object *The longer* is pleonastically repeated in the resumptive pronoun *them*. It is evident that the noun phrase *The longer* has been moved from object position after the prepositional verb *treat of* and placed in initial position at the front of the sentence, focusing attention on it as it picks up the previous argument. This is a common feature of the syntax and pragmatics of the functional sentence perspective of English style. However, this noun phrase should have left a gap after its governing verb, but this position has been filled with the resumptive, or pleonastic, pronoun *them*, leaving the noun phrase *The longer* dangling at the front of the sentence, a *casus pendens*, ie an accusative without a governing verb.

In addition, the pair of conjoined infinitive phrases, ‘to explain the nature, and to point out the marks of them’, with their shared constituent, ‘of them’, is felt by some grammarians or rhetoricians to lack ‘grace and beauty’ at best, and to be ‘improper’, or ungrammatical, at worst.

After perusing these examples and deciding on their fault and what rule might be proposed to solve the problem of proscribing them which is at the same time an unexceptionable rule of English grammar, you may read footnote 32.

The pleonastic resumptive pronoun is superfluous; the accusative has already been expressed at the beginning of the construction, to which the object NP has been moved. If the pleonastic resumptive pronoun is retained then the initial accusative is a *dangling case* without a governing verb, and the pleonastic object $them_k$ must be removed.

That these constructions originate as a Latinism is clearly expressed in the trenchant critique by Anselm Bayly 1772. There Bayly provides a running commentary, mostly in the form of quibbles, on Lowth’s *English Grammar*. His critique is interesting as an example of an older idea of the standard of English, and for his ingenious and well-meaning, if often incoherent or even inept or wrong-headed analytical proposals, which give some insight into how not only English but also

³² Every Nominative Case, except the Case Absolute [one use of the ablative case in Latin, but Lowth says it should be the nominative case in English (presumably because it is ungoverned)], and when an address is made to a Person [vocative], belongs to [governs] some verb, either expressed or implied; ... (Lowth 1762:123-124)

That the nominative governs the verb and not vice versa is shown by the agreement between the person and number on the verb with that of its nominative case, or subject.

classical texts must have been construed in order to make sense out of what were for the scholars of that time inexplicable vagaries of the syntax of the classical languages compared to English. Here is Bayly's passage on the *nominativus / casus pendens*, where he jumps in at the deep end with quotations from Cicero:

“Labour to put an end to this horrid war; *which* if it can be accomplished, you will do eminent service to your country, and gain immortal honour yourself; I have been waiting with daily expectation of receiving messengers from you with letters, *who* if *they* come, I shall then be able to judge how to act: *which if they* should be written every one—” [See Bayly's Latin originals below.] In these sentences the relatives *which* and *who* are certainly the nominatives before the verbs *can be accomplished*, *come*, *be written*, not *it*, *they*, which are redundant. This manner of expression, though very common, the author of the short introduction [Lowth] judges to be improper, from a supposition, that *it* and *they* being the nominatives, *which* and *who* are left by themselves without a verb; but I should apprehend he will be of another opinion upon reflection, that this form of expression is purely Grecian and Roman, frequently used by Cicero:* And if the phrase is neat and correct in Greek and Latin without a pleonasm, certainly that figure cannot make it improper and mean in English. The elegance of the expression at least will appear from the flatness of the correction. [With the dangling nominatives removed:] “If it or this can be accomplished—If they come”—The Latin form, if it must be excluded by the decisive authority of this literal grammarian [!], may be expressed by other turns rather than that proposed; “which, if it can be accomplished, will bring eminent service to your country, and immortal honour to yourself—So soon as they come, I shall be able”—“Which rule, had it been observed, would have taken from a neighbouring prince a great deal of that incense, which hath been offered up to him by his adorers.” Short Introd. [1762:]124.
(Bayly 1772:82-83)

[Footnote to p 82:] **Quod si erit factum*, et rempublicam divino beneficio affeceris, et ipse æternam gloriam consequere. Cicero Planc. Fam. 10 4. Nos quotidie tabellarios vestros expectamus; *qui si venerint*, fortasse certiores quid nobis faciendum sit. Fam. 14. 22.

Bayly does not mention that the relatives *quod* and *qui* have been moved (extraposed) to the left out of the clauses within which they originate. This is impossible in English, and explains the resumptive pleonastic pronouns: the clauses would not construe without them.³³

The internal evidence is that Bayly's linguistic intuitions are at least a generation behind Lowth's. He does not see that in Latin, unlike in English, one can move an item like the subjects *quod* 'which' and *qui* 'who' out of their clauses to the left of the complementizer or connective *si* 'if'. The inflection on the verb in the clauses out of which the *quod* and the *qui* have been moved serves the function of the overt subject. Why does Bayly not see this?

³³ This Latinism — extraposed constituents out of relative clauses, to the left of the RelPn— occasionally appears in English Renaissance verse and prose. I have not found any discussion of it in Lowth or any contemporary grammarian. Cf this example from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, Act 2, Scene 3, 19-22:

[Musician] (sings)
 Hark, hark, the lark at heaven gate sings,
 And Phoebus gins arise,
 His steeds to water at those springs
 On chaliced flowers that lies, ...

The construction of the NP in the final PrepPh is:

PrepPh[at NP[those springs
 RelCl[S[PrepPh[On chaliced flowers]PrepPh]S
 S[that lies PrepPh[GAP]PrepPh]S]RelCl]NP]PrePh

It should be clear that the PrepPh 'on chaliced flowers' has been extraposed out of the RelCl to the left of the RelPn 'that', creating an additional S-node, and leaving a GAP behind.

Annotated Bibliography

Bayly, Anselm (*d* 1794). 1772. *A Plain and Complete Grammar of the English Language; to which is prefixed The English Accedence: with Remarks and Observations on a Short Introduction to English Grammar* [Lowth 1762]. London: Printed by G. Bigg.

Burnley, John David (1941-2001). 1983. *A Guide to Chaucer's Language*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Educational Ltd. The Language of Literature; Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press. OUP paperback edition 1994. Since 1989 titled: *The Language of Chaucer*.

Campbell, George (1719-1796). 1776. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Two Volumes. London & Edinburgh: W. Strahan; T. Cadell; W. Creech.

Fries, Charles Carpenter (1887-1967). 1952. *The Structure of English. An Introduction to the Construction of English Sentences*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc.

Gazdar, Gerald James Michael (*b* 1950); Klein, Ewan; Pullum, Geoffrey Keith (*b* 1945); Sag, Ivan A.. 1985. *Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gerbig, Andrea; Mason, Oliver (eds.). 2008. *Language, People, Numbers. Corpus Linguistics and Society*. [*Festschrift* for Michael W. ('Mike') Stubbs, 'On the occasion of [his] 60th birthday.]. Amsterdam; New York: Editions Rodopi B.V. Language and Computers: Studies in Practical Linguistics No 64.

Hall, The Rev Peter (1802-1849). 1834. *Sermons, and Other Remains, of Robert Lowth, D.D. ...* London: J. G. & F. Rivington.

Hudson, Richard A. 1976. 'Conjunction Reduction, Gapping, and Right-Node Raising.' *Language* 52:535-562. ['Right-Node Raising' is also better called 'Shared Constituent Construction'.]

Lowth, Robert. 1753. *De Sacra Poesi Hebræorum Prælectiones*. Oxonii: e Typographeo Clarendoniano. Reprinted with Introduction by D. A. Reibel, 1995.

—. 1762. *A Short Introduction to English Grammar: With Critical Notes*. London: A. Millar and R. and J. Dodsley.

—. 1763. *A Short Introduction to English Grammar: With Critical Notes*. The Second Edition, Corrected. London: A. Millar and R. and J. Dodsley. Reprinted with introduction by D. A. Reibel, 1995.

—. 1778. *Isaiah. A New Translation*. London: J. Dodsley and T. Cadell. Reprinted with Introduction by D. A. Reibel, 1995.

—. 1787. *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*. English Translation by George Gregory, D.D. (1754-1808). Two Volumes. London: J. Johnson. Reprinted in Lowth 1995.

—. [1995]. *Robert Lowth. The Major Works*. David A Reibel (ed.). London: [and Bristol] Routledge/Thoemmes Press. [Enumeration of volume titles omitted.]

McKay, John C. 1984. *A Guide to Germanic Reference Grammars. The Modern Standard Languages*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science. Series V. Library and Information Sources in Linguistics. Volume 15.

Mates, Benson (b 1919). 1961. *Stoic Philosophy*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press; London, England: Cambridge University Press. University of California Publications in Philosophy. 1953. Second Printing (with new Preface).

Oirsouw, Robert R. van. 1987. *The Syntax of Coordination*. London; New York; Sidney: Croom Helm,. Croom Helm Linguistics Series.

Ohlander, Urban. 1938. *Studies in Coordinate Expressions in Middle English*. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup; London: Williams & Northgate, Ltd.; Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard—Ejnar Munksgaard. Lund Studies in English V.

Prothero, Sir George Walter (1848-1922), edited by. 1913 *Select Statutes and other Constitutional Documents illustrative of the Reign of Elizabeth and James I*. Fourth Edition. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. Earlier editions 1894; 1898; 1907.

Queen Elizabeth (1533-1603; reigned 1558-1603); James VI (1566-1625), King of Scotland from 1567, later James I of England (reigned 1603-1625)

Has a 108-page historical Introduction, followed by a wide variety of legal and other texts, a very few in Latin: Statutes; Parliamentary Proceedings; legal proceedings, including the trial in 1586 of Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587); petitions, letters; extracts from political writers; ecclesiastical documents and extracts from ecclesiastical writers; and so forth; c257 documents; 483 pp of texts in all; 17½-page Index and Glossary.

The language has been thoroughly modernized in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and so forth, possibly with a little restructuring as well. The texts are sometimes curtailed in the interests of conciseness, and repetitious or redundant phraseology replaced by elisions ('...'), with very little if any loss of philological interest.

The documents are almost all written in periodic sentences of breath-taking length, a Latinism that persisted into the Restoration. As far as can be determined, the negative constructions follow the PDE pattern; there are no traces of the earlier ME negative particle *ne*, or of the constructions in which it was found.

Pullum, Geoffrey Keith (*b* 1945). 1974. 'Lowth's Grammar: A Re-Evaluation.' *Linguistics: An International Review* 137:63-78. The Hague; Paris: Mouton.

Solomon, Harry M. 1996. *The Rise of Robert Dodsley: Creating the New Age of Print*. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press.

Without Tierney 1998, this work would have been impossible. 'Study of the great 18th century bookseller, publisher, playwright & poet at a time of change in literary patronage from wealthy [and noble] individuals to booksellers.' (This reference and annotation due to Eric Stevens, *English Literature*, Catalogue 213, London, September 2000, item 116.)

Not only had the class of patrons been reversed, so had the method of patronage: whereas formerly authors solicited patrons, now publishers (sometimes) solicited authors, as well as having proposals laid before them. There may have been a measure of both in the case of Lowth's *Short Introduction*.

Straus, Ralph (1882-1950). 1910. *Robert Dodsley (1703-1764): Poet, Publisher and Playwright*. London: John Lane; New York: John Lane Co.

Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Ingrid. 2000. Robert Dodsley and the Genesis of Lowth's Short Introduction to English Grammar. *Historiographia Linguistica*. Volume XXVII, No. 1:23-36.

Tierney, James E. (ed.). 1988. *The Correspondence of Robert Dodsley, 1733-1764*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History.

Visser, Fredericus Theodorus (1886-?). 1963-1973. *An Historical Syntax of the English Language*. Three Parts in Four Volumes. Part One. Syntactical Units with One Verb. 1963. Part Two. Syntactical Units with One Verb (continued). 1966. Part Three. First Half—Syntactical Units with Two or more Verbs. 1969. Part Three. Second Half—Syntactical Units with Two or more Verbs. 1973. Leiden: E. J. Brill. 2470 pp in all.

West, Colin Eaton (1924-1998). 1953/1996. *Lindley Murray — Grammarian*. Leeds University MA Thesis, 1953. Reprinted in: D. A. Reibel (ed.). 1996. *Lindley Murray. The Educational Works*. London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press. [Enumeration of volume titles omitted.]

This edition edited from the original typescript by C. E. West.