

**The Frozenness of Pseudoclefts –
Towards an Inequality-based Syntax**

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1 A first observation

In some dialects, undeleted pseudoclefts, such as the sentences in (1a), are possible. They contrast with the universally acceptable type of (deleted) pseudocleft shown in (1b), which I propose to derive from [the remote structure which also underlies] (1a), via the deletion of the redundant overstruck words:

- (1) a. %What they should try is they should try Geritol.
b. What they should try is ~~they should try~~ Geritol.

In many more dialects (perhaps even in most), if the verb of the question clause is do, undeleted pseudos like (2a) are possible.

- (2) a. What they should do is they should pat the cat.
b. What they should do is ~~they should~~ pat the cat.

I call the analysis which derives the b-sentences from the a-ones “t bisentential analysis,” because in the source sentences, the main verb of the pseudocleft is sandwiched between two visible clauses. As far as I can see, however, nothing in what I will say below will depend on the correctness of this analysis, for I am after other game.¹

It turns out, namely, that there is a systematic difference between the deleted and undeleted variants of pseudoclefts: the undeleted versions are syntactically and even morphologically far drabber than are their deleted descendants. We can see the tip of this iceberg in (3) and (4) below, which show the “frozenness” of the undeleted pseudos vis à vis the deleted ones, with respect to Subject Verb Inversion and negation.²

- (3) a. *Is what they should try they should try Geritol?
b. Is what they should try Geritol?
(4) a. *What they should try is not they should try Geritol.
b. What they should try is not Geritol.

The phenomenon of frozenness in and around pseudoclefts was first noted by Higgins (op. cit., Chapter 6), who formulated a principle of “inviolability,” which follows: “A Specificational pseudo-cleft sentence is ‘inviolable’, in the sense that none of its constituents can be deleted or moved.” (p. 306) The present paper

should be seen as an attempt at fine-tuning this fundamental understanding. The short form of my work could be summed up succinctly: we need to squish Higgins' notion of inviolability. (The term "squish" means something like "gradient," or "fuzzy" – cf. Ross (1973b, 1974a, b) for more details)

Higgins observes that even for some forms of deleted pseudoclefts, there are no questions (Higgins, op. cit., p. 302) or negations (ibid, p. 321). The ungrammaticality of (3a) and (4a) would be accounted for if they were also to be analyzed as being forms of pseudoclefts, and thus subject to the inviolability principle. However, even among deleted pseudoclefts, not all pseudos behave identically with respect to the same processes. If we consider negation, for example, though it is true that the full word not can be inserted into (1) [repeated for convenience as (5a)] and into (2b), producing (5b),

- (5) a. What they should try is not Geritol.
 b. What they should do is not pat the cat.

I find, if I try to contract not to n't, that the latter sentence is distinctly less palatable than the former.

- (6) a. What they should try isn't Geritol.
 ≥ b. ?What they should do isn't pat the cat.

When one opens the box that arises out of the difference between (5) and (6) a huge and dazzlingly complex structure emerges. It is this structure that it is the work of this paper to make an initial exploration of.

Let me insert a brief comment about grammaticality judgements. What I plan to do in this paper and henceforth is to prefix each sentence with two kinds of evaluations: the first is my own assessment (seasoned with the results of asking around as much as possible) as to the acceptability of the sentence, as against a standard. But I will also prefix a sentence with an inequality sign – "≥" (or "≤"). Actually, as will appear as we proceed, it is a bit misleading to say that the "≥" symbol is a prefix – really, it is a betweenfix. It will always link the grammaticalities of two sentences, in the way which I describe immediately below. The interpretation of "≥" in (6) is straightforward: I am making the claim that there are three types of speakers' judgements with respect to these sentences: three possible groups of what we might call "grammaticality dialects." These are described in (7): the three in (7a) - (7c) are possible – but not the fourth in (7d).

- (7) a. Some speakers may find both of the sentences in (6) completely grammatical.
 b. Some speakers may find both of the sentences in (6) completely ungrammatical.

- c. Some speakers may find (6a) better than (6b), by only a bit, or by a lot, or by anything in between.
- d. No speakers may find (6b) better than (6a).

I am not saying that it is uninteresting to attempt a finer-grained analysis and to search for explanations as to why speakers fall into these three groups, or if two speakers are both in group (6c), why one hears a huge difference and the other only a tiny one. I am suggesting that we leave such matters for the future that we try to free ourselves from the huge data bogs in which we have been wallowing for decades, when we become enmired in competing statements of the form, “well, for me,”

However, do not take me to be claiming that there are no dialect differences – for some speakers find (8) fine and others find it unthinkable.

(8) Brent may can help you.

I do assert, however, that whatever a subpopulation of speakers feels about (8) – how their evaluations cluster around one or more means – is of less interest than trying to find, with respect to other sentences, such as (9),

(9) Brent might could help you.

how their acceptabilities are related to that of (8). In fact, I believe the correct inequality judgement here to be that shown in (10):

(10) (9) ≥ (8)

That is, I have come to feel that the so-called “double modal dialect” is not a monolith – that there is a spectrum, a rainbow of possibilities, around the double modal constructions, and that some people are further into it than others. And that the first job of one who wishes to describe the facts is to get the inequality right. After that (Herculean/Sisyphusian?) task has been completed, we will have time to look at things with a higher resolution.

Let no one think that the decision to focus on what we might call “inequality data,” or perhaps, to use a term familiar from several long traditions to wit, “implicational data,” is something to do around the edges of “pure” syntax (whatever that might be); that for the core, we will continue with business as usual. No. One of the purposes of this paper is to show that a construction which is the subject of a number of stirring debates in the most formal theoretical circles (cf. Heycock and Kroch (1998), den Dikken, Meinunger and Wilder (1998), Schlenker (2000) and Williams (1997) for recent discussion of some of the issues) – our very own pseudocleft – manifests exactly such a rainbow face.

I want, in short, to show that “the pseudocleft construction” is as much a misnomer as is “the double modal dialect.” In both cases, I think it can be seen that we are dealing with squishy, fuzzy, gradient entities. Which is no copout, claim too vague to be tested. On the contrary, as will emerge below, with respect to the pseudocleft family of constructions, there are limitless ways in which falsify the implicational analysis, to which I now turn.

2 A proposed implicational hierarchy of pseudoclefts

In the bisentential analysis, how are the two clauses in the copular sandwich related to each other? I would like to claim that the wh-clause is a question, and that what follows it in remote structure is the clause which answers this question. I take my lead for the first of these claims, that the wh-clause is a question, from the fundamental insights due to Bob Faraci (cf. Faraci (1971)). While all of the four arguments that Faraci advances for this claim can now be challenged, there is another argument that I know of that seems to me unanswerable, as of now, at least.

One point on which I believe all syntacticians are in agreement is the proposal that any (English) clause which contains two wh-words is a question and not a free relative. There is an interesting fact about the answers to multiple wh-questions in English: if there are n question words in the question, $n \geq 2$, then the answer must have at least two n-tuples in it – a single one sounds odd. If $n = 1$, a single answer is fine:

- (11) a. What did Michele order?
b. Michele ordered moussaka.

But as soon as we ask (12a), we find (11b) to be only the beginning of a satisfactory answer – such as (12b):

- (12) a. Who ordered what?
b. Michele ordered moussaka, and Yannis ordered spanakopita.

There are at least two languages that I have heard of – Malay and Japanese – which can accept as answers to (12a) such single n-tuples as (11b). However, since I do not know what causes languages to vary on this issue, I will not be further concerned with this wonderful topic in this paper. I mention the multiple n-tuple issue only because of its relevance for the sentence which I am heading for the construction of – a pseudocleft which has a multiple wh-question and answer. The sentence which could answer such a multiple wh-question would have to be coordinate, and, in order for it to be accepted by the largest number of speakers, if it is to be an undeleted pseudocleft, the questioned verb would have to be do.

A sentence that meets all of these requirements is (13):

- (13) %Who ordered what was Michele ordered moussaka, and
Yannis (ordered) spanakopita.

from the existence of some speakers who accept which I conclude that pseudoclefts – at least some of them – must start with embedded questions. I will, therefore, from now on, speak of the two sentences that flank the copula as the remote structure of pseudoclefts as question and answer, respectively. A term for the “family of the pseudocleft construction,” to call it something or other that resembles what George Lakoff refers to as “a radial category,” (cf. Lakoff (1986) though it seems to impose stronger implicational orderings than do such categories, if I understand them correctly), is outlined in part in (14):

(14) **An implicational hierarchy of pseudocleft foci**

There are (at least) the following seven types of pseudocleft sentences ordered with respect to the kind of answer (or focus) that they manifest after their copula. The earlier in the sequence a sentence type comes, the “stronger” it is, in any given context – the more syntactic load it can bear and the more flak it can take. That is, it must be the case for any construction c that grammaticality inequalities with respect to pseudoclefts appearing in c are of the form Type m ≥ Type n, where m < n in the ordering below.

- a. Type 1. The **answer** (to the question) is a lexical NP:
What I had is **a book.**
- b. Type 2. The **answer** is a complement clause:
What I thought is **that you were a jerk.**
- c. Type 3. The **answer** is a volitional verb phrase:
What I did is **(to) pat the cat.**
- d. Type 4. The **answer** is a predicate nominal or an adjective phrase:
What I am is **[a pro wrestler / proud of you].**
- e. Type 5. The **answer** is an undeleted sentence, the deep object of c:
What I did is **[I patted the cat].**
- f. Type 6. The **answer** is an undeleted sentence, the deep argument of c, any verb other than do:
What I had is **[I had a book].**
- g. Type 7. The **answer** is in the subject of an inverted undeleted sentence:
[I had a book] is **[what I had].**

I will now proceed to investigate a number of constructions of English, examining them with an eye to seeing whether the fundamental inequalities in (14) can be maintained. Before I do, however, one brief preview: the implicational hierarchy of (14) is not only intended to govern the degree to which every construction in English accepts pseudoclefts – I mean it also to make typological predictions. That is, no language can manifest pseudoclefts of Type i without also manifesting those of all Type j, i < j. The number of languages

which I can check this prediction is at present woefully small; I will return them after we first consider the data that we can discover among the constructions of English.

3 How regular (copular) sentences behave

In order to understand in what ways pseudocleft sentences are restricted in their syntactic turnings, let us take a look at the number of degrees of linguistic freedom that a simple copular sentence has, so that we will have something as a baseline. For our everyday sentence, let us use Max is a Martian.

In A, we see that our sentence can show up in three tenses (which is that space permits me to examine here), that it can be negated, that it can show as a subject or object complement of various types of predicates, and that it can show up even in tenseless that-clauses or after the one English verb whose complement must appear in the subjunctive. In B, I have assembled a clutch of 17 likely-looking syntactic processes to send our sentence through, and from these tests it emerges unscathed, just as we would have hoped.

A. Tenses, negation, types of complement

- (15)
- a. Max [is / was / will be] a Martian.
 - b. Max is not a Martian. \geq [*A Martian he is not.*]
 - ci. They think that Max is a Martian.
 - cii. That Max is a Martian is unusual.
 - di. I would hate it for Max to be a Martian.
 - dii. For Max to be a Martian would be unusual.
 - ei. I don't like Max being a Martian.
 - eii. Max being a Martian was unusual.
 - f. Max's being a Martian has caused pandemonium in LA.
 - g. That Max be a Martian is mandatory for state funding.
 - h. I wish that Max were a Martian.

B. Processes

- (16)
- a. Subject-Verb Inversion:
Is Max a Martian? \geq Never was Max a Martian.
 - b. Raising: I believe Max to be a Martian.
 - c. Richard: It [looks / sounds / feels] like Max is a Martian. \ddot{Y}
Max [looks / sounds / feels] like he's a Martian.
 - d. To Be Then Not To Be:
Max seems (to be) a charming Martian.
With Max (being) a Martian, . . .
 - e. Sure-ing: It is sure that Max is a Martian. \rightarrow
Max [sure is / is sure] a Martian.

- f. Subjunctive if-Zap: If Max were a Martian, he could sell a few dozen of his eyes. → Were Max a Martian, he could . . .
- g. Coordination
- i. Conjunction Reduction: Max is a Martian and Al is a Martian → Max and Al are Martians.
 - ii. Respectively: Max and Sandra are Martian and Venusian, respectively.
 - iii. Right Node Raising: Max was a Martian, and Al will be a Martian. → Max was, and Al will be, a Martian.
 - iv. Gapping: Max is a Martian, and Sandra (~~is~~) a Venusian.
- h. Rippings and Copyings
- i. Clefting: It is Max [that / who] is a Martian.
 - ii. Heavy NP Shift:
I believe all of your nephews to be Martians. →
I believe to be Martians all of your nephews.
 - iii. Though-Preposing: Though Max is a Martian, he plays chess well. → Martian though Max is, he plays chess well.
 - iv. VP Preposing: They said that Max might be a Martian, and he may be a Martian. → They said that Max might be a Martian, and [be a Martian]_{VP} he may.
 - v. Left Dislocation(s)
Max is a Martian. → Max, he is a Martian.
Max is a Martian. → A Martian, Max is that.
 - vi. Right Dislocation(s)
Max is a Martian. → He is a Martian, Max.
Max is a Martian. → Max is that – a Martian.
- i. Anaphora
- i. VP Deletion Max is a Martian, and Sally is too.
 - ii. Modifiability Max is [a Martian]_i, [which]_i he
by appositive has always wanted to be.
clause

4 How pseudocleft copular sentences (mis)behave

In this section, I will systematically replace our Martianness example with seven types of pseudoclefts from the implicational ordering in (14), commenting on particular examples only briefly, in case it seems called for. With some exceptions, the seven types worsen in the way (14) predicts that they should, we will see.

4.1 Tenses, negation, types of complement

We start our investigation of frozenness with a look at the extent to which pseudoclefts permit a variety of tenses (cf. Higgins' excellent discussion of the topic (Higgins, op. cit., p. 310ff.)). In general, changing the tense of a sentence seems to impose a relatively small processing load on the speaker, for most of the 21 sentences which result from crossing the 7 types of pseudoclefts of (14) with past, present, and future tense are grammatical. The present tense seems to always be possible; I have found no ungrammatical pseudocleft whose defect seemed to be traceable to the use of a present-tense copula. And the other favored case is for the tense of the copula to be the same as that of the verb of the clause from which the wh-word that heads the question part of the pseudocleft has been extracted. Nonetheless, we see that this latter rule of tense concord breaks down below, (17a.4.iii). For me, type 4 pseudoclefts cannot have a future tense copula. This unexplained ungrammaticality I have prefixed with a large "OW!," which is intended to call attention to the fact that it (and others like it, to follow) is a counterexample to the implicational hierarchy in (14). This is so, because (17a.4.iii) is less grammatical than the corresponding future tense version of a pseudocleft of a more restricted kind – Type 5. Other than this case, the other 20 sentences in (17a) have grammaticalities that are in line with the prediction of (14).

(17) a. Tenses

- | | | | | |
|-----|----|------|-------------------|---|
| | 1. | i. | What I had | [was / is / will be] a book. |
| | | ii. | What I have | [*was / is / will be] a book. |
| | | iii. | What I will have | [*was / is / will be] a book. |
| ≥ | 2. | i. | What I thought | [was / is / *will be] that you were a jerk |
| | | ii. | What I think | [*was / is / ?will be] that you were a jerk |
| | | iii. | What I will think | [*was / is / will be] that you were a jerk |
| ≥ | 3. | i. | What I did | [was / is / *will be] (to) pat the cat. |
| | | ii. | What I do | [*was / is / ?will be] (to) pat the cat. |
| | | iii. | What I will do | [*was / is / will be] *(to) pat the cat. |
| ≥ | 4. | i. | What I was | [was / is / *will be] proud of you. |
| | | ii. | What I am | [*was / is / *will be] proud of you. |
| OW! | | iii. | What I will be | [*was / is / *will be] proud of you. |
| ≥ | 5. | i. | What I did | [was / is / *will be] I patted the cat. |
| | | ii. | What I do | [*was / is / *will be] I pat the cat. |
| | | iii. | What I will do | [*was / is / ?will be] I will pat the cat. |
| ≥ | 6. | i. | What I had | [was / is / *will be] I had a book. |
| | | ii. | What I have | [*was / is / *will be] I have a book. |

- iii. What I will have [*was / is /??will be] I will have a book
- ≥
- 7. i. I had a book [was / is / *will be] what I had.
 - ii. I have a book [*was / is / *will be] what I have.
 - iii. I will have a book [*was / is /?*will be] what I will have

Moving now to the case of negation (I have continued to vary tense, addition), with respect to the first four types of pseudoclefts, the deleted ones, the picture is virtually unchanged from that which we have just examined in (17). But as soon as we try negating an undeleted pseudocleft, we run into a stone wall. This is our first clear taste of frozenness.

Note also that the rule which produces (under I have no idea what pragmatic conditions) sentences like A Martian Max is not, though it can still apply to Type 1 pseudoclefts (cf. (17b.1.iv)), is solidly excluded for all other types.

(17) b. Negation

- 1. i. What I had [was not / is not / ?will not be] a book.
 - ii. What I have [*was not / is not / ?will not be] a book.
 - iii. What I will have [*was not / is not / will not be] a book.
 - iv. A book what I had was not.
- ≥
- 2. i. What I thought [was not / is not / *will not be] that you were a jerk.
 - ii. What I think [*was not / is not / will not be] that you were a jerk.
 - iii. What I will think [*was not / is not / will not be] that you were a jerk.
 - iv. *That you were a jerk what I thought was not.
- ≥
- 3. i. What I did [was not / is not / *will not be] [to pat the cat]
 - ii. What I do [*was not / is not / *will not be] [to pat the cat]
 - iii. What I am doing [*was not / is not / *will not be] [patting the cat].
 - iv. What I will do [*was not / is not / will not be] [to pat the cat].
- *(To) pat the cat what I did was not.³
- ≥
- 4. i. What I was [was not / is not / *will not be] proud of you.
 - ii. What I am [*was not / is not / *will not be] proud of you.
 - iii. What I will be [*was not / is not /??will not be] proud of you.

- iv. *Proud of you what I was is not.
- ≥ 5. i. What I did [*was not / *is not / *will not be]
[I patted the cat].
- ii. What I do [*was not / *is not / *will not be]
[I pat the cat].
- iii. What I will do [*was not / *is not / *will not be]
[I will pat the cat].
- iv. **I patted the cat what I did was not.
- ≥ 6. i. What I had [*was not / *is not / *will not be]
[I had a book].
- ii. What I have [*was not / *is not / *will not be]
[I have a book].
- iii. What I will have [*was not / *is not / *will not be]
[I will have a book].
- iv. **I had a book what I had was not.
- ≥ 7. i. I had a book [*was not / *is not / *will not be]
what I had.
- ii. I have a book [was not / *is not / *will not be]
what I have.
- iii. I will have a book [*was not / *is not / *will not be]
what I will have.
- iv. **What I had I had a book was not.

We proceed now to examine what happens when the seven types pseudoclefts appear with various types of complementizers. It will readily seen that as the complements move from being sentential, like that-clauses towards being more noun-like complements, whose verb ends in -ing (for discussion of how types of complements in English form a squish of nounine cf. Ross (1973b)), it becomes ever more impossible for pseudoclefts to be embedded inside them. In short: the prototypical pseudocleft is found only in main clauses.

- (17) c. **That S**
- ci. 1. They think that what I had was a book.
- ≥ 2. They think that what I thought was that you were a jerk.
- ≥ 3. They think that what I did was (to) pat the cat.
- ≥ 4. They think that what I was then was proud of you.
- ≥ 5. ?They think that what I did was I patted the cat.
- ≥ 6. ??They think that what I had was I had a book.
- ≥ 7. ?*They think that I had a book is what I had.

- cii. 1. That what I had was a book was unusual.
- ≥ 2. That what I thought was that you were a jerk was unusual
- ≥ 3. That what I did was (to) pat the cat was unusual.
- ≥ 4. ??That what I was then was proud of you was unusual.
- ≥ 5. ?*That what I did was I patted the cat was unusual.
- ≥ 6. *That what I had was I had a book was unusual.
- ≥ 7. *That I had a book was what I had was unusual.

(17) d. For NP to V + X

- di. 1. They hated it for what I had to be a book.
- ≥ 2. ??They hated it for what I thought to be that you were a jerk
- ≥ 3. ?*They hated it for what I did to be *(to) pat the cat.
- ≥ 4. ?*They hated it for what I was then to be proud of you.
- ≥ 5. *They hated it for what I did to be I patted the cat.
- ≥ 6. *They hated it for what I had to be I had a book.
- ≥ 7. **They hated it for I had a book to be what I had.

- dii. 1. For what I had to be a book was unusual.
- ≥ 2. ?For what I thought to be that you were a jerk was unusual
- ≥ 3. ?For what I did to be (to) pat the cat was unusual.
- ≥ 4. ??For what I was then to be proud of you was unusual.
- ≥ 5. *For what I did to be I patted the cat was unusual.
- ≥ 6. *For what I had to be I had a book was unusual.
- ≥ 7. **For I had a book to be what I had was unusual.

> e. NP Ving + X

- ei. 1. ?*They hated what I had being a book.
- ≥ 2. *They hated what I thought being that you were a jerk.
- ≥ 3. *They hated what I did being **(to) pat the cat.
- ≥ 4. *They hated what I was then being proud of you.
- ≥ 5. *They hated what I did being I patted the cat.
- ≥ 6. *They hated what I had being I had a book.
- >> 7. **They hated I had a book being what I had.

- eii. 1. ?*What I had being a book was unusual.
- ≥ 2. ?*What I thought being that you were a jerk was unusual.
- ≥ 3. ?*What I did being **(to) pat the cat was unusual.
- ≥ 4. **What I was then being proud of you was unusual.
- ≥ 5. **What I did being I patted the cat was unusual.
- ≥ 6. **What I had being I had a book was unusual.
- >> 7. **I had a book being what I had was unusual.

>>> f. *NP's Ving + X [All are flamboyantly terrible]

- 1. *What I had's being a book was unusual.

- ≥ *They hated what I had's being a book .
- ≥ 2. **What I thought's being that you were a jerk was unusual.
- ≥ **They hated what I thought's being that you were a jerk.
- ≥ 3. **What I did's being *(to) pat the cat was unusual.
- ≥ **They hated what I did's being *(to) pat the cat.
- ≥ 4. ***What I was then's being proud of you was unusual.
- ≥ 5. ***What I did's being I patted the cat was unusual.
- ≥ 6. ***What I had's being I had a book was unusual.
- ≥ 7. ***[I had a book]'s being what I had was unusual.

(17) g. Tenseless -that-clauses⁴

- gi. 1. They insist that what I have be a book.
- ≥ 2. They insist that what I think be that you were a jerk.
- ≥ 3. ?They insist that what I do be *(to) pat the cat.
- > 4. They insist that what I [*am / ??be] now be proud of you.
- > 5. **They insist that what I do be I pat the cat.
- ≥ 6. **They insist that what I have be I have a book.
- ≥ 7. **They insist that I have a book be what I have.
- gii. 1. That what I have be a book is necessary.
- ≥ 2. That what I think be that you were a jerk is necessary.
- ≥ 3. ??That what I do be *(to) pat the cat is necessary.
- > 4. That what I [*am / ??be] now be proud of you is necessary.
- > 5. **That what I do be I pat the cat is necessary.
- ≥ 6. **That what I have be I have a book is necessary.
- ≥ 7. **That I have a book be what I have is necessary.

(17) h. Subjunctive clauses⁵

- 1. I wish that what I [had had / had] were a book.
- ≥ 2. ??I wish that what I [had thought / thought] were that you were a jerk.
- ≥ 3. ??I wish that what I [had done / ?*did] were *(to) pat the cat.
- ≥ 4. I wish that what I [*had been / *were / ?*was] then were proud of you.
- > 5. *I wish that [what I had done] had been I (had) patted the cat.
- ≥ 6. **I wish that [what I (had) had] had been I had (had) a book.
- >> 7. **I wish that [I (had) had a book] had been what I had (had)

2 Processes

We will now proceed to look at some of the syntactic transformations which normal copular sentences can undergo. All of them will come a cropper when they try to apply to pseudoclefts, some of them faster than others, for reasons that I will hazard a guess at the reason for at the end of the paper.

- (18) a. Subject-Verb Inversion
1. Was what I had a book?
[??Never / ??Only when I was on duty] was what I had a book?
 - ≥ 2. ??Was what you thought that I was a meathead?
[*Never / ?*Only when I was on duty] was what I thought that you were a jerk.
 - ≥ 3. ?*Was what you did *(to) pat the cat?
[*Never / *Only when I was on duty] was what I did *(to) pat the cat.
 - pat ≥ 4. **Was what you were then proud of me?
[**Never / **Only when I was on duty] was what I was then proud of you.
 - > 5. ***Was what I did I patted the cat?
 - ≥ 6. ***Was what I had I had a book?
 - >> 7. ***Was I had a book what I had?

It is interesting to note how much worse are the sentences in which the inversion is triggered by a proposed negative constituent. I do not believe that this accelerated worsening can be blamed on the presence of the negative alone, for the rate of decay here is much faster than we observed in the uninverted negatives in (17b) above. I do not know what to attribute this difference in speed of deterioration to.

We will now take up one of the pillars of interclausal syntax – Raising. For me, the worsening begins to be noticeable by Type 3, and accelerates thereafter. Here, we find our second unexpectedly good sentence, in (18b). For an analysis of pseudoclefts under which this result is not a surprise, see Williams (1983, 1997), a bold proposal which I do not have the space to comment on in detail in this paper.

- (18) b. Raising
1. What you had then seems to have been a book.
They believe what you had then to have been a book.
 - ≥ 2. What you thought then seems to have been that I was a jerk.
They believe what you thought then to have been that I was a jerk.
 - a ≥ 3. ?What I did then seems to have been *(to) pat the cat.
?They believe what I did then to have been *(to) pat the cat.
 - ≥ 4. ??What he was then seems to have been proud of us.
*They believe what he was then to have been proud of us.
 - ≥ 5. **What you did then seems to have been you patted the cat.
**They believe what you did then to have been you patted the cat.
 - ≥ 6. **What you had then seems to have been you had a book.

- **They believe what you had then to have been you had a book.
- OW! ≥ 7. I had a book seems to have been what I had.
 ***They believe I had a book to have been what I had.

The next rule, a close relative of Raising, copies the embedded subject or complement clause onto the subject of the matrix clause of the four perceptual verbs seem, look, sound, and feel. For a detailed investigation of this rule, see Rogers (1974). For our present purposes, it is enough to note that the rule begins to balk at pseudos faster than does Raising. The first thing that one might suggest by way of explanation – a hypothesis to the effect that the unhappiness in (18c) are due to the pronoun it referring to the wh-clause – seems unlikely to pan out, because such pronominal reference seems unexceptionable in these questions, such as What you did then was ?(to) pat the cat, wasn't it?

- (18) c. Richard
1. It looks like what you had then was a book. fi
 ?What you had then looks like it was a book.
 - ≥ 2. ??What you thought then looks like it was that I was a jerk.
 - ≥ 3. ??What you did then looks like it was *(to) pat the cat.
 - > 4. *What she was then looks like it was proud of you.
 - > 5. *What you had looks like it was you had a book.
 - ≥ 6. *What you did looks like it was you patted the cat.
 - > 7. **You had a book looks like it was what you had.

The next process to examine is one which applies after Raising, deleting the non-finite form of the copula under by me poorly understood conditions.

- (18) di. To Be Then Not To Be
1. I found what I had bought (to be) a vilely lascivious guidebook.
 - ≥ 2. I found what he thought *(to be) that he was divine.
 - ≥ 3. ??I found what he did *(to be) to yawn as a signal to his henchmen.
 - ≥ 4. *I found what he had been (to have been) fond of the cooper.
 - ≥ 5. *I found what he did then (to have been) he winked to Marth.
 - ≥ 6. *I found what I had bought (to be) I had bought eel.
 - ≥ 7. *I found I had a book (to be) what I had.
- dii.
1. I remember what I had as ?(being) a book.
 - ≥ 2. ?I remember what I thought as *(being) that you were a jackass.
 - ≥ 3. ??I remember what I was doing as (*being) patting the cat.
 - ≥ 4. *I remember what I was then as (*being) proud of you.

- > 5. **I remember what I was doing as (*being) I was patting the cat.
 - ≥ 6. **I remember what I had as (*being) I had a book.
 - > 7. ***I remember I had a book as (being) what I had.
- >> diii.
- 1. With what I had *(being) a book, I mellowed.
 - ≥ 2. With what I thought **(being) that you were a jackass, I mellowed.
 - ≥ 3. With what I did ****(being) *(to) pat the cat, I mellowed.
 - ≥ 4. With what I was ****(being) proud of you, I mellowed.
 - ≥ 5. With what I did ****(being) I patted the cat, I mellowed.
 - ≥ 6. With that I had ****(being) a book, I mellowed.
 - > 7. With I had a book *****(being) what I had, I mellowed.

The next process that I would like to mention reminds one of Raising, a involves the adjective sure, an adjective which governs Raising, so one is tempt to look for a transformational source in that direction. Nonetheless, there seem to be a distinct difference in meaning between the two first sentences below, so do not advance the first as a source for the second. The construction taunts with a challenging question as to its origin. I cite it here because it also manifest frozenness, though not without a hiccup: the relative goodness of (18e.7).

- (18) e. Sure-ing
- 1. (It is sure that what I had was a book.) fi
What I had [sure was / ?*was sure] a book.
 - ≥ 2. What I thought [??sure was / *was sure] that you were a jackass.
 - ≥ 3. What I did [??sure was / *was sure] **(to) pat the cat.
 - ≥ 4. What I was then [**sure was / **was sure] proud of you.
 - ≥ 5. What I did [**sure was / **was sure] I patted the cat.
 - ≥ 6. What I had [**sure was / **was sure] I had a book.
 - OW! ≥ 7. I had a book [?sure was / ?was sure] what I had.

The next rule seems to present fewer mysteries as to what is going on. Counterfactual conditionals in whose protasis the tensed verb is were, had, should, and perhaps for some speakers could and even might can replace the tensed verb with these auxiliary verbs, as in If your aunt had a mustache, she would be your uncle. fi Had your aunt a mustache, she would be your uncle. The rule goes to strike rather rapidly with pseudos.

- (18) f. Subjunctive if-Zap
- 1. If what I had were a book, I would be a happy camper. fi
Were what I had a book, I would be a happy camper.

- ≥ 2. ??Were what I thought that you were a doofus, I would be a happy camper.
- ≥ 3. ??Were what I had done *(to) pat the cat, I would be a happy camper.
- ≥ 4. *Were what I had been then proud of you, I would be a happy camper.
- > 5. **Were what I did I patted the cat, I would be a happy camper.
- ≥ 6. **Were what I had I had a book, I would be a happy camper.
- > 7. ***Were I had a book what I had, I would be a happy camper.

(18) g. **Coordination**

We come now to four processes which involve coordinate clauses. The first two of these seem to occasion relatively slight departures from grammaticality, while the last two are quite outspoken (outwritten?) in their informedness.

(18) gi. Conjunction Reduction

- 1. What I had was a book and what I got was a book.
→ What I had and what I got were books.
What I had was a book and what I had was a hook.
→ What I had was a book and a hook.
- ≥ 2. What I thought was that you were a doofus and what Ted thought was that you were a doofus. →
What I thought and what Ted thought was that you were a doofus.
What I thought was that you were a doofus and that I was brilliant.
- ≥ 3. What I did and what Sally did was (to) pat the cat.
What I did was (to) pat the cat and (to) feed the fish.
- OW! ≥ 4. ?What I was then and what Tina has been since May was proud of you.
What I was then was proud of you and envious of Tex.
- < 5. What I did and what Sally did was we patted the cat.
What I did was I patted the cat and I fed the fish.
- ≥ 6. What I had and what Sally had was we had books.
What I had was I had a book and I had a hook.
- ≥ 7. ?I had a book and I had a hook was what I had.
?We had books was what I had and what Sally had.

(18) gii. Respectively

- 1. What I had was a book and what Al had was a hook. →
What I had and what Al had was a book and a hook, respectively.

- ≥ 2. What I thought and what Al thought was that you were a dwid and that you were a brain, respectively.
- ≥ 3. What I did and what Al did was (to) pat the cat and (to) feed the fish, respectively.
- ≥ 4. ?What I was then and what Al was then was happy and sad respectively.
- > 5. What I did was I patted the cat and what Al did was he fed the fish. → ?What I did and what Al did was I patted the cat and he fed the fish, respectively.
- ≥ 6. What I had was I had a book and what Al had was he had hook. → ?What I had and what Al had was I had a book and he had a hook, respectively.
- ≥ 7. I had a book was what I had, and Al had a hook was what he had. → ?*I had a book and Al had a hook was what I had and what he had, respectively.

(18) giii. Right Node Raising

- 1. What I had was a book, and what Al had may have been a book.
What I had was, and what Al had may have been, a book.
- ≥ 2. What I thought was that you were a wonk, and what Betty thought may have been that you were a wonk.
→ ?What I thought was, and what Betty thought may have been, that you were a wonk.
- ≥ 3. What I did was (to) pat the cat, and what Harold did may have been ??(to) pat the cat. fi
??What I did was, and what Harold did may have been, *(to) pat the cat.
- ≥ 4. ??What I was then was proud of you, and what Zack may have been afterwards may have been proud of you. →
*What I was then was, and what Zack may have been afterwards may have been, proud of you.
- ≥ 5. What I did on Thursday was I patted the cat, and what I may have done on Friday may have been I patted the cat.
→
OW! ?*What I did on Thursday was, and what I may have done on Friday may have been, I patted the cat.
- ≥ 6. ??What I had on Thursday was I had a book, and what I may have had on Friday may have been I had a book. →
*What I had on Thursday was, and what I may have had on Friday may have been, I had a book.
- > 7. *I had a book was on Thursday what I had, and I had a TV was on Friday what I had. →

**I had a book was on Thursday, and I had a TV was on Friday, what I had.

(18) giv. Gapping

1. What I had was a book and what Al had was a hook.
→ ?What I had was a book and what Al had ___ a hook.
- > 2. What I thought was that you were a jerk and what Al thought was that you were a brain. →
*What I thought was that you were a jerk and what Al thought ___ that you were a brain.
- ≥ 3. What I did was (to) pat the cat, and what Al did was (to) feed the fish. →
*What I did was (to) pat the cat, and what Al did ___
?(to) feed the fish.
- ≥ 4. **What I was then was happy, and what Al was then was sad.
**What I was then was happy, and what Al was then ___ sad.
- > 5. **What I did was I patted the cat, and what Al did ___ he fed the fish.
- ≥ 6. **What I had was I had a book, and what Al had ___ he had a hook.
- >> 7. ***I had a book was what I had, and Al had a hook ___ what he had.

(18) h. Rippings and Copyings

We turn now to rules which have the effect of reordering constituents pseudoclefts, and find that these occasion some of the most violent plummeting of grammaticality. Some are so far out (say, (18hiii.7)) that it is probably or possible to understand where they are trying to have come from after a couple semesters of syntax.

hi. Clefting

1. It is what [*I / OK: I] had that was a book.⁶ >>
2. *It is what [I / I] thought that you were a jerk.
- ≥ 3. *It is what [I / I] did that was (to) pat the cat.
- ≥ 4. *It is what [I / I] was that was proud of you.
- >> 5. **It is what [I / I] did that was I patted the cat.
- ≥ 6. **It is what [I / I] had that was I had a book.
- >>> 7. ***It is I had a book that is what [I / I] had.

hii. Heavy NP Shift

1. They believe what I had then to have been a book._{fi}
??They believe to have been a book what I had then.

- >> 2. They believe what you thought then to have been that I was a jerk. → **They believe to have been that I was a jerk what you thought then.
- ≥ 3. ?They believe what I did then to have been *(to) pat the cat.
They believe to have been **(to) pat the cat what I did then.
- ≥ 4. (*They believe what he was then to have been proud of us. → ***They believe to have been proud of us what he was then.)
- > 5. (**They believe what you did then to have been you patted the cat. →
***They believe to have been you patted the cat what you did then.)
- ≥ 6. (**They believe what you had then to have been you had a book. →
***They believe to have been you had a book what you had then.)
- > 7. (***)They believe I had a book to have been what I had. →
****They believe to have been what I had I had a book.)

(18) hiii. Though-Preposing

- 1. Though what I had was a book, I was content. →
?*(A) book though what I had was, I was content.
- > 2. Though what I thought was that you were a jerk, I was content. →
**That you were a jerk though what I thought was, I was content.
- ≥ 3. Though what I did was (to) pat the cat, I was content. → ***(To) pat the cat though what I did was, I was content.
- ≥ 4. Though what I was then was proud of you, I was content. →
**Proud of you though what I was then was, I was content.
- >> 5. (??Though what I did was I patted the cat, I was content.
fi
***I patted the cat though what I did was, I was content.)
- ≥ 6. (??Though what I had was I had a book, I was content. →
***I had a book though what I had was, I was content.)
- >> 7. (**Though I had a book was what I had, I was content. →
****What I had though I had a book was, I was content.

(18) hiv. VP Preposing

1. They say that what I have [is a book]_{VP}, and what I have may [be a book]_{VP}. →
*They say that what I have is a book, and [be a book]_{VP} what I have may.
- >> 2. They say that what I think [is that you were a jerk]_{VP}, and what I think may [be that you were a jerk]_{VP}. → ***They say that what I think [is that you were a jerk]_{VP}, and [be that you were a jerk]_{VP} what I think may.
- ≥ 3. They say that what I do [is (to) pat the cat]_{VP}, and what I do may [be (to) pat the cat]_{VP}. →
***They say that what I do [is (to) pat the cat]_{VP}, and [be (to) pat the cat]_{VP} what I do may.
- ≥ 4. They say that what I am now [is proud of you]_{VP}, and what I am now may [be proud of you]_{VP}. →
***They say that what I am now [is proud of you]_{VP}, and [be proud of you]_{VP} what I am now may.
- >> 5. (**They say that what I do [is I pat the cat]_{VP}, and what I do may [be I pat the cat]_{VP}. →
***They say that what I do [is I pat the cat]_{VP}, and [be I pat the cat]_{VP} what I do may.)
- ≥ 6. (**They say that what I have [is I have a book]_{VP}, and what I have may [be I have a book]_{VP}. →
****They say that what I have is I have a book, and [be I have a book]_{VP} what I have may.)
- > 7. (**They say that I have a book [is what I have]_{VP}, and I have a book may [be what I have]_{VP}. →
****They say that I have a book [is what I have]_{VP}, and [be what I have]_{VP} I have a book may.)

(18) hv. Left Dislocation(s) [(good ol') Left Dislocation leaves behind weak definite pronouns you, I, we, she, he, it, and they, while Le Deictic Dislocation leaves behind either that, or sometimes this.]

1. What I had is a book. → What I had, [that / ??it] is a book.
- >> 2. What I thought was that you were a jerk. →
What I thought, [??that / *it] was that you were a jerk.

- ≥ 3. What I did was (to) pat the cat. →
What I did, [??that / *it] was *(to) pat the cat.
- ≥ 4. What I was then was proud of you. → What I was
then, [??that / *it] was proud of you.
- >> 5. What I did was I patted the cat. → What I did,
[*that / **it] was I patted the cat.
- ≥ 6. What I had is I had a book. → What I had, [*that /
**it] is I had a book.
- OW! ≥ 7. I had a book is what I had. → I had a book – [that
/ **it] is what I had.

(18) hvi. Right Dislocation(s) [(good ol') Right Dislocation leaves behind weak definite pronouns you, I, we, she, he, it, and they, while Right Deic Dislocation leaves behind either that, or sometimes this.]

- >> 1. What I had is a book. → [It / ??That] is a book, what I had
- >> 2. What I thought was that you were a jerk. →
[*It / *that] was that you were a jerk – what I thought.
- ≥ 3. What I did was (to) pat the cat → [**It / **That]
was (to) pat the cat – what I did.
- ≥ 4. What I was then was proud of you. → [**It /
**That] was proud of you – what I was then.
- >> 5. What I did was I patted the cat. → [***It /
***That] was I patted the cat – what I did.
- ≥ 6. What I had is I had a book. → [***It / ***That] is
I had a book – what I had.
- ≥ 7. I had a book is what I had. → [***It / ***That]
is what I had – I had a book.

(18) i. Anaphora

i. VP Deletion

- >> 1. What I had is a book, and what Sally had also is.
- >> 2. *What I thought on Monday was that you were a
bozo, and what Sally thought then also was.
- ≥ 3. *What I did yesterday was (to) pat the cat, and what
Sally did then also was.
- ≥ 4. *What I was yesterday was proud of you, and what
Sally was then also was.
- > 5. **What I did yesterday was I patted the cat, and what
Sally did then also was.
- ≥ 6. **What I had is I had a book, and what Sally had also
is.

- > 7. ***I had a book is what I had then, and I had a hook also is.
- ii. 1. *What Max had was a book

In sum, when we run the implicational hierarchy of (14) through reasonable number of constructions and processes in English, we find that it holds up pretty well. Encouraged, we move on to look at typological parallels.

5 A tentative cross-linguistic implicational hierarchy³

The tiny sample of languages that I have been able to check to date seems suggest that the hierarchy in (14) may hold up across languages. In particular what I have found thus far is the following:

- (19) a. There are languages which only manifest Type 1 pseudoclefts. (Russian)
- b. There are languages which only manifest Type 1 and Type 2 pseudoclefts. (Finnish and Greek)
- c. There are languages which only manifest Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3 pseudoclefts (Japanese, Argentinian and Uruguayan Spanish, and many speakers of German)
- d. There are languages which only manifest Type 1, Type 2, Type 3, and Type 4 pseudoclefts (some speakers of German, and the most conservative English dialects, which allow no undelet structures)
- e. There are languages which only manifest Type 1, Type 2, Type 3, Type 4, and Type 5 pseudoclefts (Brazilian Portuguese, and perhaps the largest group of English dialects?)
- f. There are languages which manifest Types 1 – 6: at present, I only know this to be the case for some speakers of English.

A major problem confronting anyone who wishes to claim that some sort of implicational hierarchy is at work for all types of pseudoclefts is the matter of pseudoclefted adverbials. The types which most languages allow some of are locatives, directionals, and, less popularly, various kinds of time-link adverbials. The problem centers around the fact that such adverbials are almost always expressible as prepositional phrases, and in some cases, also as bare NPs [*(in(to)) the sea, (at) home, (on) Saturday, (for) six weeks, all (through the night), etc.] It would be restful to be able to claim that while cleft sentences can yank out either NP's or any [sic] kind of PP's (some examples appears in (20)),

- (20) a. **Clefting**
NP-focus

- i. It was Boston [where > ?*that >> *(in) which] there were no tornadoes reported.
 - ii. It was January [when / that >> *(in) which] this report was due.
 - iii. It was six weeks [that / *when / **how long / *(for) which] we worked in Reading.]
 - iv. It was the beautiful weather [that I was thinking *(of) / of which I was thinking].
 - v. *It was the beautiful weather [that we stayed home despite / despite which we stayed home].
- b. PP-focus
- i. It was in Boston [?where ≤ that] there were no tornadoes reported.
 - ii. It was in January [?when / that] that this report was due.
 - iii. It was for six weeks [that / *when / *(for) which] we worked in Reading.
 - iv. ?It was of the beautiful weather [that / *(of) which] I was thinking.
 - v. *It was despite the beautiful weather that we stayed home.

pseudoclefts can only have NP's after the copula (cf. (21)):

- (21) a. **Pseudoclefting**
NP-focus
- i. Where there were no tornadoes reported was Boston.
 - ii. When this report was due was January.
 - iii. [(For) how long] we worked in Reading was six weeks.
 - iv. [What I was thinking of / ?Of what I was thinking] was the beautiful weather.
 - v. *What we stayed home despite was the beautiful weather.
- b. PP-focus
- i. Where there were no tornadoes reported was in Boston.
 - ii. When this report was due was in January.
 - iii. ?How long we worked in Reading was for six weeks.
 - iv. ?Of what I was thinking was of the beautiful weather.
 - v. (forget it)

From (21b), however, we see that for English, nothing that easy is going to be workable, and the crosslinguistic situation is just as muddy. Some languages appear to completely exclude PP's as pseudocleft foci, while others, like English, let some through.

I believe that it may be possible to sustain the following implication universal:

(22) **The Best Foci are NP's**

Pseudoclefts prefer NP's to PP's as their foci [= as their answers clefts accept either (though languages may exist in which it is only NP which can be clefted). In any language in which a PP of some type can be pseudoclefted, that same type may also be clefted, though not the reverse. [Thus (20b.iii) \geq (21b.iii) and (20b.iv) \gg (21b.iv)]

However, here is not the place to look carefully into the validity of all some part of (22), and so I have not included adverbials in the hierarchy in (1). On the basis of English facts, I would have liked to place adverbials between Type 1 and Type 2, but Finnish and Greek have Type 2 pseudos, though they allow no adverbial foci. It may well be that the hierarchy will be able to survive their inclusion, but that is a matter that must await future research.

6 Why Types 1 through 4 might be ordered as they are

Up to now, I have presented an oversimplified picture of the facts, in order to make some of the lines of exposition clearer. I have said that "Type 1 pseudoclefts are NP's which have a lexical noun as the head of the focus (the answer). But as soon as we start to vary the kinds of determiners that these head nouns can show up with, we find there to be startling differences between them with respect to how they flow through some of the constructions that we have been looking at. Let us begin by seeing how the four answer NP's in the pseudoclefts of (23) fare with respect to embedding in for-to complements [cf. (24)], or unclefted Subject Verb Inversion [cf. (25)], or while Richarding [cf. (26)].

- (23) a. What they're reading is several books about China.
b. What they're reading is many books about China.
c. What they're reading is every book about China.
d. What they love to read is any book about China.
- (24) a. I hate it for what they're reading to be several books about China.
 \geq b. ?I hate it for what they're reading to be many books about China.
 \geq c. ?I hate it for what they're reading to be every book about China.
 \geq d. ??I hate it for what they love to read to be any book about China.
- (25) a. ?Is what they're reading several books about China?
 \geq b. ??Is what they're reading many books about China?
 \geq c. ??Is what they're reading every book about China?
 \geq d. ?*Is what they love to read any book about China?

- (26) a. ?What they're reading looks like it's several books about China.
 ≥ b. ??What they're reading looks like it's many books about China.
 ≥ c. ?*What they're reading looks like it's every book about China.
 ≥ d. ?*What they love to read looks like it's any book about China.

I have tried to order the four determiners in (23) so that the inequality that I propose there will hold up for all speakers of English. I am, however, dubious that I have succeeded – the contrasts seem extremely subtle, and I may be fooling myself in thinking that there are any between many and every. Nonetheless, it seems clear enough that between (24a) and (26d), there are significant differences. And this will suffice for the point I am concerned with illustrating here – that there is no monolithic “Type 1” pseudocleft. Rather, how robust a pseudocleft with a lexical NP in its focus position will be will depend on such factors as definiteness and specificity, with non-specific indefinites being constructionally (and presumably typologically as well, though here I have no data to back up this hypothesis) some of the weakest.

Perhaps the weakest of all will be those of the logical form “(x) ~” – an example would be (27):

- (27) What they found was no significant variation.

If we try putting this through some paces, the results are quite sharp:

- (28) a. *I hate it for what we found to be no significant variation.
 b. ?*Was what they found no significant variation?
 c. *What they found looks like it's no significant variation.

I do not have enough data now to determine which of the two properties, definiteness and specificity – is the more fundamental. But let us assume, as a working hypothesis, that among “Type 1” pseudos, those whose foci refer to the best will be the strongest. The question that I would like to raise now is: is there an analog to reference that we can point to, with a view to ordering the other three of the first four types of (14)? It does seem intuitively correct to me to claim that that-clauses refer better than do what I will call “action clauses” – those that are the deep objects of the full verb do – the second, always tenseless, do of (29):

- (29) What we didn't do is look under the bed.

In Ross (1972), I argue that all volitional predicates should derive from clauses embedded under this verb do – thus we looked under the bed would come from something like we did [we look under the bed]. I will not rehearse the

arguments here. The question before us here is: can it be claimed that the action clauses are less referential than are the that-clauses of Type 2?

Before we can attempt an answer here, we must repair another oversimplification that I am guilty of: “Type 2” is as poor a monolith as is “Type 1.” I think the pseudoclefts whose foci are that-clauses should be broken down into two or more subclasses, going from stronger to weaker as shown in (30):

- (30) a. Complements of factives: emotive predicates such as amaze, angry, baffle, dumbfound, glad, hate, (dis)like, love, regret, resent, sad, sorry, surprise, terrify, upset, worry, etc., or non-emotive predicates, such as acknowledge, attest, concede, discover, find out, grant, learn, realize, verify, etc.
- b. Complements of non-factives: predicates such as afraid, assume, believe, fear, feel, figure, figger, guess, hope, imagine, reckon, suppose, think, etc.

Let us first try running these two types of complement-taking verbs through the three environments in (24) - (26).

- (31) a. ?I hate it for what they regretted to be that they lost their luggage.
≥ b. ??I hate it for what they guessed to be that they lost their luggage.
- (32) a. ?Is what they regretted that they lost their luggage?
≥ b. ??Is what they guessed that they lost their luggage?
- (33) a. What they regretted looks like it's that they lost their luggage.
≥ b. ??What they guessed looks like it's that they lost their luggage.

It seems to me that pseudoclefted factive clauses have a better survival rate than do non-factive clauses. I wonder if this connects with the fact that it is almost always possible to pronominalize factive complements with it (e. g., M was a Martian, but Janice never realized [that Max was a Martian / it]), while this type of pronominalization is generally impossible for non-factives (cf. *Sanc may not be a Martian, and Gus fears it).

Another phenomenon which separates factives and non-factives is the possibility of using the proform so: only (a small subset of the) non-factives can use this. A short list of some of the so-able predicates appears in (34):

- (34) afraid, assume, believe, fear, feel, figure, figger, guess, hope, imagine, know, reckon, suppose, think

I mention these two pronominalization facts on a long shot; I am still casting around for something like definiteness and specificity in the world complements. I speculate that some such link may emerge from the following line of thought.

Let us compare the readings of a factive and a non-factive, with respect to what I called “sloppy identity.” (Cf. Ross (1986), Chapter 5)

- (35) a. Marcia regretted that Bill loved her, but Alice didn't regret it.
 [it = that Bill loved Marcia, ≠ that Bill loved Alice]
 b. Marcia hopes that Bill loves her, but Alice doesn't hope so.
 [so = that Bill loves Marcia, or = that Bill loves Alice]

I am wondering whether perhaps this latter, “sloppy” reading of (35b) reading which depends on the formation of the open sentence “λ(x) [x hopes [th Bill loves x]],” might be said to be analogous to the twin nominal concepts definiteness and specificity. To venture a term, I propose, hesitantly, the following definition:

- (36) Open sentences are *sententially indefinite* and *sententially non-specific*.

It has long been known that there are connections between nominal definiteness and the possibility of formation of open sentences. An example would be the contrasts we find in (37):

- (37) a. Nobody bought [a ≥ ?the ≥ ?Janet's > *this very] picture of himself.
 b. Nobody bought [∅ > ??the (*five)] pictures of himself.

I do not suggest that I understand the basis for even many of the differences in acceptability that we see in these sentences, only that it seems that definiteness at least, and probably specificity in addition, are in some way involved in blocking the coreference between nobody and the following bound pronoun.

I mention in passing that these same factors are involved in the complement domain of polarity items, as we see by replacing himself with the notorious any:

- (38) a. Nobody bought [a ≥ ??the ≥ ??Janet's > *this very] picture of any stork.
 b. Nobody bought [∅ > ??the (*five)] pictures of any storks.

Let us return to the question that this section is devoted to: why should “Type 2” be stronger than “Type 3”? The guess that I hazard here is that the deep clausal objects of the action-clause verb do are obligatorily (parts of) open sentences, in that their subjects must be the same as the subject of do. That is, it is like such verbs as condescend, manage, avoid, etc., whose subject must be the same as the (agentive) subject of their complements. This is not the case for the that-clauses of “Type 2,” which can be as sententially definite/specific as they want.

However, they can also be open sentences, as we see in (39);

(39) Nobody_i said that he_i was unpopular.

So let us see how a pseudocleft like (39), which has a clause containing a bound variable as its object, compares with (40), whose object clause is sentential definite/specific (since it contains no bound pronouns), with respect to how the two flow through the constructions and processes which form the nucleus of the study.

(40) Nobody said that Terence was unpopular.

We might as well start with the three contexts of (24)-(26):

- (41) a. I hate it for what nobody said to be that Terence was unpopular.
≥ b. ?I hate it for what nobody_i said to be that he_i was unpopular.
- (42) a. ?Is what nobody said that Terence was unpopular?
≥ b. ??Is what nobody_i said that he_i was unpopular?
- (43) a. ??What nobody said looks like it's that Terence was unpopular.
≥ b. *What nobody_i said looks like it's that he_i was unpopular.

And for good measure, let's throw in:

- (44) a. I wish that what nobody said had been that Terence was unpopular.
≥ b. ?I wish that what nobody_i said had been that he_i was unpopular.

I think that though the effect of manifesting a bound pronoun in the focus of a pseudocleft may be small, it is often, as here, detectable.

The only grammatical fact that I can point to which might provide a basis for Type 4 foci – namely, adjectives and predicate nominals – being less strongly preferred than the first three types in (14) has to do with the distribution of the abstract focus and I would say sentential – pronoun *it*. As we have seen above, factive complements can be referred to by *it*, and the same is true for actions. Under the analysis proposed in Ross (1972), the remote structure of a sentence such as (45a) will be that suggested in (45b), a structure which meets the structural conditions for the rule of Sentence Deletion discussed in Ross (op. cit.) (or any interpretive analog, a rule which, starting from a remote structure in which there was an antecedent, would seek a clausal antecedent for *it* to refer to), thus allowing the derivation of (45c) from (45a) [= (45b)]:

- (45) a. He only pats the cat when I tell him to pat the cat.

- b. He only does [he pat the cat]_i when I tell him to do [he pat t cat]_i.
- c. He only does [he pat the cat]_i when I tell him to do [it]_i.

Under the analysis of adjectives which I suggested in Ross (1969), the copula be is a complement-taking verb, like the do in whose object clause action clauses must appear. Thus the remote structure of (46a) would be (46b) which we would thus expect to be able to convert into (46c).

- (46) a. He is only polite when I tell him to be polite.
- b. He is only [he polite]_i when I tell him to be [he polite]_i.
- c. *He is only [he polite]_i when I tell him to be [it]_i.

It is generally impossible in English to use it to refer to an adjective⁷; wonder if this fact can be parlayed into a typologically based argument to the effect that adjective-clause objects of be are less referential than are the objects of other complement-taking predicates. This would require that other languages conform to the typological implicational hierarchy shown in (47):

- (47) a. Neuter pronominal referring to non-actional complements
- ≥ b. Neuter pronominal referring to actions
- ≥ c. Neuter pronominal referring to properties

Any such hypothesis will have to await further research.

To conclude the speculative remarks of this section, I think that one might view the prospect of generalizing the notion of definiteness and specificity which seem to be of relevance for Type 1 pseudoclefts as having perhaps some promise; but that as of the present, there is no solid explanation for the ordering of even the first four elements of (14).

7 Why some constructions and processes go bad quicker

In the data from English that I have presented in (17) and (18) above, it will have been noted that as we proceeded through the seven types of (14), some constructions and processes, like the respectively-construction, in (18gii), slid gradually into the night, while others, like (18hiv), VP Prepositional produced huge stars instantly. Why should that be the case?

Here too, it seems that we can hazard a cautious guess, this one based on the output of the process or rule which operates to produce a derived structure. In (48), below, I will divide the contexts that we have watched the types of pseudoclefts flow through into five large groups, according to how early in the hierarchy of (14) the context manifests a serious problem. Thus the leftmost column in (48), which is headed by “*@1,” a notation which means “(serious ungrammaticality begins to show up for Type 1 pseudoclefts) – these are the most

restricted contexts. The rightmost column is headed by “*@5,” which means that for the contexts below it, no (serious) ungrammaticalities are encountered under Type 5.

(48) *@1 *@2 *@3 *@4 *@5
Though (18hiii) SVI (18a) Conjunction
VP Prep.(18hiv) Subj. If-Zap (18f) Reduction (18gi)
A O be Be O A respectively (18g11)
Heavy NP(18hii)
Be A O

To Be Then Not Gapping (18giv)
(18di) > (18dii)
>> (18diii)
No verb be No verb be

Clefting (18hi) Richard (18c) Raising (18b)
<- No subject NP ->

RNR (18gii)
Subjunctives (17i)

Less<-	Sententiality	->	More
<u>Ving</u> (17f)	<u>for + to</u> (17e) Subjunctives (17i)		Tenseless <u>that</u> (17h) <u>that S</u> in subject (17dii)
			<u>that S</u> in object (17di)

The sense that I would like to try to make out of this display is the following:

(49) **The pseudocleft family of constructions**
The more a surface string has a parse of the form NPoid + is + NPoid, the stronger it will be, the higher it will rank in the implicational hierarchy of (14).

The term “NPoid” in (49) denotes a family of phrases (yes, in the domain of constituents too, familial considerations are relevant). NPoids are not or

card-carrying endocentric NP's such as the tusk but also exocentric ones like the tusk with various kinds of complements, so-called "VP"s when these follow do, adjectival phrases, adverbial phrases (including certain adverbial subordinate clauses), and even some objects of auxiliaries. And where else in the grammar will such ragtag band of irregulars play a role? Of what utility is such a family?

(50)

What NPoids are and do

Anything that can be clefted, pseudoclefted, topicalized, (left or right) (deictic) dislocated; anything that can be replaced by that (and sometimes by this) or by the which that introduces sentential appositives (such as Maureen left, which was a shame; Ellie will help you, which I won't; They wanted to hammer my fender flat, which already was, etc.); and anything that can have variables deleted before and after it, in rules such as Gapping, Equative Deletion (the rule that does the striking through in such sentences as She gave something odd to me: she gave a pickled onion to me.), and so on.

It is clear that NPoid centers around true-blue NP's, good ol' lexical nouns and their satellites, but it is not limited to such nominal Goody-Goody Two-shoes. And it should also be clear that there are many types of constituents which are not NPoids – like verbs, prepositions, particles, and S's. It may not be clear that NPoid is a colossal promissory note; what is required to remove its emptiness is nothing less than a complete theory of squishy syntax, which is something that has been the apple of my grammarian's eye for many a year. One of the first encounters I had with this beast was reported on in Ross (1973a), which attempted to show that for idioms of the form take a tack on, keep track of, and pay heed it makes sense to posit a squish of fakeness for the noun-like objects of the verbs. The faker they are, the fewer nominal behaviors they manifest.

I see the first four elements in the hierarchy of (14) as another attempt to order phrase types with respect to their nominality. I have suggested above that they diminish in referentiality, surely a prototypical property of NP's.

In mentioning these two hierarchies in the same breath, I should not be taken to be asserting that the idiom chunks of Ross (1973a) and the four types in (14) can be neatly arranged as points on a linear continuum (though it is not impossible that that is the case). That would be a fantastic stroke of luck. Rather, I think that there are a number of different dimensions (I have no idea how many) which can each order (some of) the NPoids from closer to a nominal center to further away from it. To name just a few of these dimensions, I believe it likely to be the case that NP's with determiners are closer to the center than are those with none; that definites are closer than are indefinites; that specific NPs are more central than are non-specifics; that count nouns are more central than are mass nouns, etc. etc. etc. And clearly, defective NP's (such as measure phrases, predicate nominals, and chômeurized NP's) are further from the center.

than are purebred NP's – cf. Ross (1995). But a general formulation, a set squishes of NPoidness, has eluded me thus far.

Let us return now to (49), which represents my attempt to cast Higgins' inviolability condition in a more gradient form. We have seen that strict speaking, Higgins' condition is too restrictive: the stronger types in (14) survive some movements and deletions of various kinds, but not others. Which kinds are the most forbidden?

The three highest rules under *@1 in the top left corner of (48) all have the effect of reordering the subject of a pseudocleft (the **Q**uestion) and the object of the copula (the **A**nswer). Thus the **Q . . . A** order which we observe in the remote structure of pseudos changes into an order in which **A** precedes **Q**, and which the copula which deeply separates these two NPoids either precedes or follows both of them. This **AQ** deviation from the template in (49) seems to produce glaring ungrammaticalities, regardless of whether the copula precedes or follows the two NPoids, or follows them. We will see presently, though, that it is not the inverted order itself that leads to badness.

We also note that two other rules which have the effect of removing the copula from between the NPoids, to place it directly before them, (named Subject-Verb Inversion and Subjunctive if-Zap), also causes severe problems – the two rules directly below *@2.

Let us pause for a moment to note the possibility of a further significant inequality: compare the two sets of sentences in (51) and (52).

- (51) a. What they did was to pat the cat → (via SVI)
b. ?*Was what they did to pat the cat?
c. What they do might be to pat the cat. → (via SVI)
d. ??Might what they do be to pat the cat?
- (52) a. If what they did were to pat the cat, I would sleep easy.
b. ??Were what they did to pat the cat, I would sleep easy.
c. If what they had done then had been to pat the cat, I would have slept easy.
d. ?Had what they had done then been to pat the cat, I would have slept easy.

My impression is that the d-sentences here may be slightly better than the b-ones. If this sentiment is shared widely enough, it may be that while the use of a tensed or a non-finite copula to have separating the two NPoids in a pseudocleft is a tensed or a non-finite one, such as the be of ??(51d) or the been of ??(52d) is significantly more reminiscent of the template in (49) than are sentences in which nothing intervenes between **Q** and **A**. This question awaits future research.

Thus it seems to be in general of considerable importance that the two NPoids somehow be kept from being contiguous. Let us now examine the differences between three processes which all result in this contiguity – the ones under the first line in (48). Why should it be that Gapping causes less trouble

than do the processes under the *@1? My tentative answer derives from the fact noted in connection with (17c) – (17f) above, that the family of pseudocleft constructions prefers to appear in main clauses. That is, it is in main clauses that the largest variety of the types of pseudoclefts that we see in (14) can be found.

One of the morphological properties of main clause verbs is that they are overwhelmingly tensed. There are, to be sure, in many languages, exceptions to this rule in main clauses which appear with non-finite verbs, like those in (53),

- (53) a. Oh, to be in Newark, now that Motorola's there!
 b. My brother-in-law working?!
 c. Not to worry.

but typical main clauses are finite. And so are typical pseudoclefts, as we see in (17c) – (17f). In other words, to insert a pseudocleft construction into a non-finite context is to weaken it. While scholars of varying theoretical persuasions might posit differing sources for the sentences of (18di) – (18diii), some seeing the first two as arising via Raising, others as small clauses, all would agree that they are non-finite, and that typically, Gapping works on finite clauses. Thus what is interesting about these three copula-less constructions in (48) is that it is Gapping that is less inviolable, in Higgins' terms, than are the other two.

But this was an accident of the data that I presented, because it is possible to gap in non-finite clauses, as we see in (54).

- (54) For Max to be a Martian and Sue (~~to be~~) a Venusian was a shock.

As soon as we use this non-finite context to gap with, and run through some of the clauses that were used to evaluate the costs of gapping in (18giv), we find clear worse results: cf. (55).

- (55) a. For what I had to be a book and what Al had ??(to be) a hook was a shock.
 ≥ b. For what I thought to be that you were a jerk and what Al thought *(to be) that you were a brain was a shock.
 ≥ c. For what I did to be to pat the cat, and what Al did *(to be) to feed the dog was a shock.
 Etc.

Thus we see that the apparent difference in the three copula-less constructions in (48) were epiphenomenal – they arose only because the gapping that had been used as a basis for comparison had occurred in tensed clauses. The reason that the constructions of (18di) – (18diii) are worse than the gappings in (18giv) is that the former sentences are bad for two reasons: first, their copula has been deleted, and second, they are in non-finite contexts. In short, doubly bad is worse than singly bad: ungrammaticality is cumulative. This is a no

trivial matter, to which I will return below. For now, I will merely observe that appears that the badness caused by having contiguous NPoids of the form **A Q** or **be A Q** is greater than that caused by producing the contiguity by merely removing the intervening copula.

There is one outstanding issue which connects to the template in (49) that requires more discussion than I have space for here. For there is a class of emphatic sentences that I have left out of consideration in this preliminary report. Compare the sentences of (14a) – (14e) above with those in (56).

- (56)
- a. A book is what I had.
 - b. That you were a jerk is what I thought.
 - c. [To pat the cat \geq Pat the cat] is what I did.
 - d. [A pro wrestler / Proud of you] is what I am.
 - e. I patted the cat is what I did.

I believe that there is a rule, Copula Switch, which converts the sentences in (14) into their correspondents in (56). The rule would presumably be necessary in any case, for such non-emphatic copular sentences as those in (57):

- (57)
- a. Your intervention was crucial.
 - b. Crucial was your intervention.
 - c. The first vote was at four PM.
 - d. At four PM was the first vote.

I postulate the existence of such a rule with a good deal of diffidence, for there are many differences between these order variants, pragmatic and otherwise, indeed there are between (14) and (56). It is an area in which the data are complex that I am not at all sure whether there are several rules of inversion, only one, or none at all, which last is a position adopted by some. I propose to leave all these analytic options in the air for now. I bring them up only in order to make one point: if any of the sentences in (56) is derived from the corresponding sentence in (14), this would fly in the face of Higgins's condition of inviolability.

But not so for the condition in (49). For the output of any rule like Copula Switch is like its input. The NPoids are non-contiguous, and there is a copula between them. The whole thrust of the above discussion about the possible causes of the differences between the severity of the ungrammaticality due to contraventions of Higgins' inviolability condition has been to try to trace the levels of ungrammaticality to features of the output configuration. Copula Switch does not make anything that the template in (49) would prohibit.

What remains to be done is to compare each of the example sentences above with its copula-switched counterpart, to see what generalities emerge – whether **Q be A** order is in general better or worse than the corresponding **A be Q** order. Edwin Williams (op. cit.) notes that the ungrammaticality which I have

attributed to Raising vanishes when the “inverted” order is compared with it (I enclose “inverted” in quotes, because for Williams, the derivation proceeds in the other direction). Compare (18b.4), which I repeat below as (58a) for convenience, with the “inverted” (58b):

- (58) a. ??What he was then seems to have been proud of us.[= (18b.4)]
 b. Proud of us seems to have been what he was then.

While I have not carried out this comparison between the two orders systematically, I have noticed cases where the “inverted” order is not (much) improved. Two quick examples: compare *(18c.4), repeated as (59a), with the “inverted” (59b); and *(18f.4), repeated as (60a), with its “copula-switched” (60b),

- (59) a. *What she was then looks like it was proud of you.
 [= (18c.4)]
 b. *Proud of you looks like it was what she was then.
 (60) a. *Were what I had been then proud of you, I would be a happy camper.
 b. ?*Were proud of you what I had been then, I would be a happy camper.

Let me sum up this section. I have suggested that we should modify Higgins’s condition of inviolability in the squishy way indicated in (14), and that we must look for explanations as to why some kinds of movement and deletion processes engender more serious violations than do others. In particular, if there are one or more rules like Copula Switch, a possibility that seems to have been left open as of this writing, then all theories of pseudoclefts need some way of accounting for why such rules, even though they effect two movements (possibly a simultaneous substitution, in such syntaxes as would condone such operations), do not run afoul of the inviolability condition. And even if it should prove to be the case that there is no rule interchanging the NPoids, we still have to go beyond Higgins’ initial formulation, to specify which transformational deformations produce the biggest stars. And (49), or something like it, may be playing a role in this decision.

8 A mechanism

What kind of formal machinery will we need to make anything resembling the tale I have been weaving above come true? Here, I would like to revisit a Gold Oldie. In Ross (1987), I suggested that all theories of grammar that I was aware of were missing a trick. Namely, what we syntacticians have collectively been doing is agreeing that sentences should be sorted into two basic bins: the Perfectly Well-formed and the Variably Bad. We then have made distinctions within the latter group, with the help of prefixes, such as “?” “??,” “?*,” “*,” “**,” etc

I have no beef with these latter distinctions, hard though they may be use in practice. My complaint has to do with the former group. I feel that we should draw as many distinctions among those sentences that are all OK in isolation as we do among those that are all flawed to one degree or another. Ross (op. cit.), I suggested that we should say that two sentences can both be well-formed in isolation, but can differ in viability. What such a distinction comes down to is the claim that for any two sentences, A and B, if A is more viable than B (for this, I will use the shorthand notation “ $A \geq B$ ”), then the result of subjecting both A and B to the same syntactic processes will never result in B being more grammatical than A.

A quick example should serve to clarify this point: (61a) \geq (61b) \geq (61c) (cf. Ross (1974b) for discussion of these cases).

- (61) a. There is a bird in the fridge.
- b. There exist counterexamples.
- c. There is the problem with counterfactuals.

To see that these three sentences differ in viability, we need only question them and negate them:

- (62) a. Is there a bird in the fridge?
- \geq b. ?Do there exist counterexamples?
- \geq c. ??Is there the problem with counterfactuals?

- (63) a. There is not a bird in the fridge.
- \geq b. ?There do not exist counterexamples.
- \geq c. *There isn't the problem with counterfactuals.

In Ross (1987), I suggested the following mechanism to deal with viability. Let us give each sentence a viability prefix, P, $0 \leq P \leq 100$, where if P is 50 or less, the sentence it prefixes will be heard as ungrammatical to various degrees (say, “?” ≤ 40 , “??” ≤ 30 , “?*” ≤ 20 , “**” ≤ 10 , “***” = 0), and if P is between 51 and 100, it will be given various degrees of syntactic well-being.

There must be a calculus of viability. The contrasts between (61) a and (62) and (63) indicate that both Subject-Verb Inversion and negation must decrement the viability of sentences in which they appear. I believe that the decrement for negation is greater than that for Subject-Verb Inversion – whether this hunch can be maintained or not requires much study, and is in any case irrelevant for our purposes here. I mention the matter only to point out that it will of course be the case that processes will differ with respect to how much they affect viability, and in what direction. I suspect that some processes may augment viability; one interesting area which will bear much cogitation is the phenomenon I refer to as generic grease. There are a number of processes which

only work for generic NP's, and crash for specific ones – an example is provided by the Middle:

- (64) a. [Any sophomore / Fred] can readily translate this computer manual into Gothic.
 b. This computer manual translates readily into Gothic for [any sophomore / >> *Fred]

It should be clear that all of the above suggestions are hopeless programmatic. I have no stake in how viabilities are represented, to say nothing of how the operations of decrementing and augmenting them are to be carried out. My purpose in Ross (1987) was simply to call to the attention of the community of Ordinary Working Grammarians (especially to the Suborder of Data Fetishists) that viability is the name of the game. Nothing less will suffice. (Un)grammaticality is cumulative. When a sentence undergoes a number of processes, each of them may leave fingerprints, and we need a mechanism subtle enough to register such facts, to add, or compound, each of the component badnesses that the processes may result in.

In passing, I note that it is not only in the collective lap of syntacticians and semanticists, and their ilk that the problem of cumulative crumminess falls. Ordinary Working Phonologists are going to have cognate headaches. For there are phonological inequalities which parallel semantactic ones. Thus if we wish to release a final voiceless stop (e. g., “nit,” [nIt] or [nIt-]), it is easier to do it after a vowel than after an [r] than after an [l]: boat- > abort- > bolt-. Further, it is easier to do it after [t] than after [p] than after [k]: sit- > sip- > ?sick-. What then will be the unreleasability of the final [k] of dark? Less than that of do more than that of bulk, somehow a compound of the two factors I have pulled out of the invigoratingly recalcitrant bog of phenomena here. And demonstrating that Ordinary Working Morphologists have the compounding virus as bad as any of us is fish-in-barrel-shooting: for morphological processes are not merely productive or not, they are scintillatingly variably so. And when we stir into the same word the dwindling productivity of the irregular past {-t} (thus dreamed, dreamt, learned > ?learnt, spilled >>> *spilt) and the general unwillingness of ness to attach to compound words, we arrive at things like ?*undreamtofness whose well- or ill-formedness can only be seen as existing in some space defined by these two vectors. Extending this kind of squishy thinking into the swamps of semantics and pragmatics is left as an exercise for the interested reader.

It is not surprising that my suggestion in 1987 was unconvincing. The facts on which I based my surmise were fewer, more self-contradictory, thornier than those I have presented here. The news was bad: syntax with viability orders of magnitude more difficult than without it. And I had not at that time come to the conclusion that I have advanced above: that the first thing Ordinary Working Grammarians should attempt is to get the inequalities right.

As I will argue below, it is only when one uses viability and inequalities that important insights like Higgins' about inviolability can be formulated in their full generality.

But even if those problems had not stood in the way, the lack of uptake of the banner of viability should not have surprised anyone. For it merely continues the decades of disregard of the same message that arose from the work of one of the subtlest and most profoundly insightful students of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics – Dwight Bolinger. For Dwight was always picking away at sentences, finding ways to worsen or better them. It has been said, perhaps by Robert Lowell?, that a poet is someone who can take a poem and make it better. I suggest an equal but opposite definition for a grammarian. A grammarian is someone who can take a sentence and make it worse.

Indeed, I would like to suggest that what it is that we learn when we are an apprentice as syntacticians is precisely the ability to sense viability distinct from that between “perfectly well-formed” sentences. We come to be able to intuit that a clause will not survive passivization, or reflexivization, or that while here forward pronominalization is possible, backwards would not be

I think, too, that an ear for viability differences is a *sine qua non* for writing well. The great poet or novelist knows how to tweak the finest shades of usage into freshness, into the memorable. It is my hope that a collaborative of grammarians with an ear for literature and writers with a penchant for messing around with structure will emerge, and will start to explore the *terra incognita* of the calculus of viability. Roman Jakobson said why, too long ago: “A linguist deaf to the poetic functions of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistics are equally flagrant anachronisms.” (Jakobson (1960))

Be all of this as it may. What should have become clear by now is that the differences in (14) are differences of viability. For most speakers of English the differences in (14a) – (14d) are inaudible in isolation, but when we move to different languages, as we saw in (19), we see that one language's viability is another language's typology.

9 Universality

I said in §1 above that this analysis is eminently falsifiable. Let me now briefly show how.

(65) Particularity = Universality

Constraints on language-particular constructions and processes, on the one hand, and cross-linguistic implicational hierarchies, on the other, grow out of each other. Particularity (cf. Becker (1996) for this term) recapitulates universality.

What this means is that, *mutatis mutandis*, all of the inequalities I have asserted above are valid in all languages. There are unimaginably many *mutanda* to reckon with here; I will try to indicate below some of what (65) is supposed

capture. But before I do, let me comment briefly on an uncomfortable coordinating phrase which I have been forced to use many times in the course of this paper.

Constructions and processes. I know of no cover term. The first conjunct seems more like a noun than like a verb, while the second seems to have the opposite affiliation. It has not been for very long that linguists who work on the vast terrains north of morphology (I need another cover term here, I think “syntactician-semanticist-pragmaticist-discourse-analyst”) have realized the necessity for “recognizing” constructions (as when one country “recognizes” a new government in another country in which there has been a revolution). The granting of autonomy to constructions, by the north-of-morphologist community, has a couple of sources, as I see it. The first grows out of work on constructive grammar that started in the 80’s, led by Chuck Fillmore and Paul Kay, a strand of thought that is carefully and insightfully chronicled and elaborated on in Goldfield (1995). The second goes back further, but in a way that I do not feel that I survive well enough to present an overview of. A key phrase here comes from the brilliant, pioneering work of Pete Becker – prior text (cf. Becker (1996)).

Prior text is the linguistic world that we were born into, the language that we do not make up fresh, but repeat. It is an unruly and irresponsible collage of sentences, phrases and words from such unlikely bedfellows as the Bible, Malcolm X, Shakespeare, Pepsi Cola ads, John F. Kennedy, nursery rhymes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, sports cheers, the Stones, the Declaration of Independence, proverbs, you name it. Who knows why some part of this assemblage makes it into the dictionary or Bartlett’s, and another does not? It is like a soup of linguistic free radicals, swimming around, jostling up against one another recombinantly, looking for any game in town.

One of my favorite examples of Pete Becker’s is the Shakespearean graduate-linguistics-studentile *An example, an example, my dissertation for an example*. This is what Pete gives us an unforgettable Javanese phrase for *djarwa dhosok*. *Djarwa* is “language,” and *dhosok* is “pushing.” (cf. Becker, 1996, 55) If we use “an example, an example, . . .,” in part, in Pete’s words, we are “speaking the past,” and in part we are “speaking the present.” We have pushed Shakespeare into our present. We have stolen from him a pattern: *an X, an X, and Y for an X*. We plug in our own X and Y, for any part of our life which presents itself to us (better: which we choose to imbue) with the requisite urgency.

There are several huge literatures which connect with prior text – it is intimately related to what Andy Pawley calls “lexicalized sentences” (cf. Pawley (1986)), and also to what is known in literary circles as intertextuality. Prior text is the compost out of which grammaticalization sprouts. For grammaticalization good starting points are Bybee, Pagliuca, and Perkins (1994), Givón (1999), Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer (1991), Hopper (1988, 1996, 1997), and Hopper and Traugott (1993). I will not try to trace the complex interconnections which link these fields and “pure” linguistics (as if it would even be good if some surgery which separated “them” could be devised). That is a whole not-for-profit enterprise, and I must fare on, ever on! I will leave the not merely terminologic

but noetic problem of uniting construction and process, of seeing “them” in oneness, with an insight of Rosália Dutra’s (personal communication): these are complementary aspects of one “thing” (I speak here of complementarity as we have learned to think of it from the work of Niels Bohr and the other quantum physicists), as are synchrony and diachrony. Constructions are nounier, more towards the synchrony take on this “being,” and processes are verbier, more towards the diachrony take thereon.

But let us return to the prior complementarity, that “between” particular and universality. Let us examine a few of the kinds of implications of (6); some are listed in (66).

- (66) a. Negation should always get in the way of processes and constructions, especially for pseudoclefting, of course, but generally well (cf. Givón op. cit. Chapter 2). That is, we should never be surprised to find some construction working better in affirmative than in negative sentences. Mostly, of course, this negational decrementing is so small that it falls below the threshold of perceptibility. When such decrementing does surface, our job is to register how much (and to look for explanation for it being as much as it is, rather than more, or less). But we will not register surprise for any process / construction which works better negatively than affirmatively.
- b. Ditto for tense, and mood, and aspect, in languages that have sufficient morphological categories. Constructions / processes should always suffice when they occur / apply in the context of any one of these categories which is not central (or unmarked). This is what explains the various unacceptabilities of (17h) and (17i).
- c. When it comes to embedding, to check the inequalities involving that S ≥ for NP to V + X ≥ NP Ving + X, it is obvious that we cannot expect to find more than one way of forming non-finite complements in every language. The prediction here should thus be that pseudoclefts in any language should be better when embedded in finite contexts than in non-finite ones. If there should be two ways of doing non-finite complementation in some other language, and one of the ways seems more nouny than the other, the pseudocleft construction in that language in question should be worse in the nounier environment than the less nouny one.
- d. My impression is that appearing in an environment in which questioning is going on always decrements viability, even if there is no use of any process which results in an order which is specific to questioning. So if we listen to a Type 4 pseudocleft in an embedded question, thus one in which there is no use of Subject-Verb Inversion, we may still hear a reduction in viability: compare (i) with (ii) below.

- (i) What Stillgestanden was then might have been hostile, because of having been passed over for promotion.
- ≥ (ii) ??I wonder why what Stillgestanden was then was hostile.

I see no reason to think that Higgins's notion of the inviolability pseudoclefts, when suitably squishified, should hold only for English. I will therefore assume that in addition to the expected viability decrease for questions, which we have just seen in the contrast of (i) and (ii), if a language reorders any constituent in the formation of questions, the reordering should also occasion an additional viability decrement.

e. With respect to Raising, we should expect a loss in viability, and if a language has two Raising-like processes, one of which leaves an auxiliary pronoun, as Richard does, we should expect that such a process should produce an output less viable than a Raising which leaves no visible proform. I venture this guess on the basis of the small number of verbs which allow Richard to function in English, and the small number of languages that I have encountered in which anything like Richard manifested. It seems evident that Raising is more central than Richard.

f. With respect to the process or processes (or their construction analogues) which delete the copula of non-finite clauses after Raising has been applied (cf. (18di) and (18dii)), we should expect that this deletion will decrement viability from whatever level has resulted after Raising has been applied, in line with our assumption that pseudos are inviolable. Gappi, too, in any language which manifests it, should decrement viability, for the same reason.

Given the extent of my ignorance as to how pseudoclefts function cross-linguistically, the above speculations are all painfully rash. And though a language which furnished surprises for any of the "predictions" of (66), to dignify these hunches excessively with this word, would disconfirm the inequality-based account of frozenness that I am selling here, such facts would not be as bad a body blow to my hypothesis as would the kind that I describe in (67) below.

- (67) For any process / construction in any language, if any one of the types of pseudocleft in (14), call it Type i , is grammatical (or viable) to degree x , then any other Type of pseudocleft, say Type j , such that $j \leq i$, must be of equal or greater grammaticality (viability) in the construction process in question.

That is, just as any language which manifests one type of pseudocleft, say Type i , without also manifesting all other types, say Type j , $j \leq i$, would constitute a direct and damaging counterexample to the implicational hierarchy in (14), so will any individual process / construction. And of course, we do not lack for such lethal counterevidence, even in English, as the various "OW!"s that we ha

seen above attest. My current inclination, however, is not to give up (14), since the overwhelming majority of the examples in more than twenty construction processes is in line with (67).

10 How to work unequally

A few words are in order about what it might mean to base syntactic work inequalities like those that we have examined above. Perhaps the easiest way to speak about why I see such a move as being necessary is to consider what means to prefix a sentence with some symbol that designates its level of grammaticality – say “?”.

The first thing to realize is that a sentence is a point in n-space – a space no one knows how many dimensions. Sentences can be (too) wordy or not, (too) nominal or not, the pronouns they contain can have clear references or not; if a sentence has been passivized, the verb of the passivized clause may undergo the process readily or not [cf. Merv was talked to about cheating > ??Cheating was talked about to Merv.]; if there is a that-clause whose that has been deleted, this may have happened in an environment favorable to such deletions or not [cf. has been reported (*by the press) ~~that~~ he takes bribes.], and so on, for as many distinctions as one wants to enumerate. To say that a sentence has a “?” is a little bit like saying a student has a B- average, for the 14 courses that she or he is taking. It may be true, but it may not be as revealing as would be a list of the grades for each subject.

What syntactic inequalities can do, if used correctly, is to take a step towards this latter kind of specificity. What we must find is pairs of sentences which differ along only one dimension. It is obviously of no interest to compare a sentence with one “?” to one with two, unless the cause of the difference has been controlled for (as is of course the case with every well-crafted syntax paper). We are looking for syntactic minimal pairs. If $A \geq B$, and if A has undergone the same set of rules, and B has undergone the same set of rules, and one more in addition, we know where we are: the extra rule has caused a decrement in viability.

But the rules here may not be only the usual rules of generative grammar. What should we say in the case of (68)?

- (68) a. Harrington has a toupee.
b. Harrington does not have a toupee.

In traditional grammar, it would be said that (68b) “is the negative of” (68a). But what should we say in the case of the relationships among the sentences in (69)?

- (69) a. Harrington visited some temples.
b. Harrington did not visit any temples.
c. Harrington visited no temples.
d. Harrington did not visit some temples.

Perhaps a majority of grammarians might concur in calling (69b) “the negative of (69a),” but they might not be sleeping so easy as in the case of (68). And in the case of the relationship between (70a) and (70b), I don’t think that grammarians would feel much like calling the latter sentence the anything whatever of the former one.

- (70) a. Harrington had a toupee.
b. Harrington never had a toupee.

The intuition here is that the difference between the two sentences is not a minimal one – that as in the case of (71), there are multiple processes involved in connecting the sentences in question.

- (71) a. Harrington sprayed catsup on the wall.
b. The wall, it was sprayed by Harrington with catsup.

I do not raise these issues because I have studied them in depth and have come to hold firm opinions about them. Rather, I feel myself to be a rank amateur in this new way of thinking, and mention these matters in the hope of starting some discussion of them among us ordinary workers.

I will close this most programmatic of sections with two brief comments in summation. The first is that the move from using, as the primary data for syntax, sentences with various types of prefixes, to using inequalities of the form $A \geq B$ is a move from studying isolated data points to one of studying vector inequalities (when we find relevant ones) are relational; they help us to see the center.

The second point is that as far as I can see, they are as theory-neutral as anything I can dream up. You can continue to do minimalism, arboreal grammar, relational grammar, lexical-functional grammar, GPSG, you can be a functionalist or formalist or any mix conceivable thereof, inequalities don’t care. If you are interested in the syntactic center of language, a center which I would suggest being one of the few things which perhaps almost any linguist since Trubetzkoy and Jakobson can agree on the existence of, working unequally may lead you towards, and make possible the formulation of, important insights within your particular framework.

11 In short

Where have we been, what have we seen? I have argued that Higgin’s fundamental notion of the inviolability of pseudoclefts must be revised, to take into account the implicational hierarchy presented in (14). More important than any details of any particular analysis, I have reraised on high the banner of viability, supported this time with a new conception of the nature of syntactic data (and of course, of the data of phonology, morphology, and everything else).

I said at the outset that this paper should be viewed as a fine-tuning of Roger Higgins' foundational discovery. In a theory without viability, we would have to say that inviolability is both right and wrong. It is right because it says that Subject-Verb Inversion leads to ungrammaticality, which it does in the case of (72),

- (72) a. What Odilon is now is testy.
b. ?*Is what Odilon is now testy?

but which it doesn't in the case of (73):

- (73) a. What Odilon was reading is a plumber's manual.
b. ?Is what Odilon was reading a plumber's manual.

No one likes to be right sometimes and wrong others; we can spare Higgins the fate if we see these cases through viability goggles. Let us say that (73a) has a viability of 90, and that (72a) has a viability of 60. If we say that the process Subject-Verb Inversion has the effect of subtracting 30 (a "solution" reeking of fudge, but let it go, let it go, for now), we will end up with the resultant viability of 60 for (73b), and 30 for (72b). Yes, I know, this doesn't score a bull's eye, but (73b) should be around 40 and not as high as 60, but you see the general direction.

Not enough detailed work has been done on the calculus of viability for me to be able to decide whether decrements should work by subtraction, whether they should be multiplicative, or should perform some other, more complex, numerical function, but to me, this is a technical problem. Granting the need for a lot of tough, detailed work in the viability trenches, I think it is fair to say that adding the bifocal perspective of viability and inequality to one's theory may augment it to the extent that Roger Higgins can be seen to have been just plain right. The great syntacticians are fabulous worseners, with Dwight Bolinger being perhaps the subtlest of them all. I tell students that they must learn to Shoot for the Stars. This *-shooting leads to the discovery of the structural sinews upon which individual examples float, in the space of many dimensions, all of which are tied, at one end, to a Center, and which lead implicationally away from it. I have not used the term "markedness" to date in our reflections, but of course it is everywhere behind and beyond them, as Talmy Givón has so long and so forcefully articulated. Of course Type 1 is less marked than is Type 2, of course what is more viable is less marked.

Just as today's grammaticalized construction (say the ne . . . pas negation of French) was yesterday's process (cf. Hopper and Traugott (1993) for detail) so today's metaphor is tomorrow's etymological mystery. Always, always, whenever we speak, we say ourselves in mores and lesses, as we negotiate the ever newnesses of any particular conversation we find ourselves in. As John Dewey first said, and as Pete Becker has revived for us all, language is not a thing that we have, it is a verb that we do, together, particularly, shaped to each moment.

And when we language, we are norteados, as they say in Brasil – we are “northed” by the pull of the pole of the Center of grammar, viability is the universal gravity which links all constructions, all processes, together, which makes possible the play, the Dance, which it is the Ordinary Worker Grammarian’s delight to trace.

Several decades ago, Elan Dresher, thinking to pull the legs of a few visible linguists on the scene, me among them, made up a number of books. The one I was said to have written, A Linguist’s Book of Counterexamples, El described as follows: “This innovative work, consisting solely of number sentences of varying degrees of grammaticality, demonstrates conclusively that syntax, as we know it, is impossible. With an introduction by The Perfect Master, Maharaj Ji.” Unfortunately, reality imitates art, and Dresher’s beautiful parody has become with this paper mere precognition. To be sure, I have not hewed rigidly enough to his ideal of presenting commentaryless examples, no one is perfect. And I have found no Master willing to introduce this work. But as horseshoes, close is good enough.

It is not exactly that syntax as we know it is not possible, it is that beautiful as that known kind is, there is a subtler, richer, and I think deeper kind which I see now as being within reach, perhaps. I hope you will join me in trying to.

Thanks

I have been trying to figure out how (pseudo)clefts work for about thirty five years. During this time, I have been helped beyond measure by a circle of friends too big to number here, though I will give it a try. This help has come in the form of counterexamples, better ideas than those I had mooted, the example of lives permeated by a love and respect for language, and above all, humungous quantities of patience and friendship. I doubt that any of you who I will try to name can know in how many ways you have made this work possible. So thanks go to:

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And finally, two friends who have taught me more than I know to teach about not only language, but about all that includes it: Paul Postal, and Rosária Dutra, always Rosália.

Notes

1. I continue to advocate the bisentential analysis, despite the lethally cogent counterarguments to it that Roger Higgins raises (cf. Higgins (1979), Chapter, §3). That the objections must be met by any bisententialist is clear, and I intend to undertake this formidable task elsewhere (Ross (in preparation)). I am not at all sure that I will succeed non-pyrrhical because of the overwhelming depth and rigor of Higgins' work, which is where all students of the construction must begin. For further arguments in favor of the bisentential analysis, cf. Schlenker (2000) and den Dikken, Meinunger and Wilder (1998).

2. The first use of the term “freeze” with respect to pseudoclefts appears in an important article by Peter Culicover (cf. Culicover (1977)). Though he does mention, marginally, the problem that will be the focus of my paper, citing Higgins (1979) for the original observations, his paper is concerned with a class of restrictions on extractions from the focus of pseudoclefts, a problem which is not immediately relevant to the focal concerns of my paper. I will thus not be further concerned directly with his analysis here.

3. We see here for the first time a difference between an infinitive with to and without do when these appear in the answer of a pseudocleft whose verb is do. This contrast is pervasive, but I do not have the space here to look into it seriously.

4. Tenseless Contagion – which produces sentences in which not only the copula is tenseless, but which allows tenseless forms to invade the wh-clause – is perhaps possible. An example of this rare type would be They insist that what he have be a book. The phenomenon of finding in the wh-clause tense or auxiliary elements which might have been expected to have limited themselves to the appearing with the copula is discussed insightfully under the term “transparency” by Higgins (cf. Higgins, p. 323).

5. Subjunctive Contagion – subjunctive forms inside the wh-clause – is possible. It is stronger with past subjunctives than with the “present” subjunctive were. An example would be wish that what I [?were reading / had read] were a novel. Cf. footnote 4 above.

6. For some reason, the contrastive stress on I (or perhaps some other element of the y clause) seems absolutely mandatory here. I have no understanding of this fact, to put it mildly.

7. There are rare non-finite contexts, as Dwight Bolinger has pointed out to me (personal communication), in which such anaphoric linkages are possible:

Parents always want one to be [polite]_i, but being it_i can be a darn headache.

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