History of Linguistic Thought and Contemporary Linguistics

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Introduction

The history of linguistics and of linguistic thought in general is not only a valuable venture *per se,* but it also inspires the problems and methodology of contemporary research in linguistics as well as in the philosophy of language. This collection of essays was gathered in view of both the intrinsic and extrinsic importance of the history of linguistic thought. We do not take an *a priori* stand in the debate built around Noam Chomsky's *Cartesian Linguistics* and the interpretation generative linguists give to some periods and trends of the history of linguistic thought. We believe that this reference to conceptions of the past as prefigurations of contemporary epistemologies and linguistic theories at least has the advantage of having considerably instigated the interest for the history of linguistic thought. We therefore refrain from developing *a priori* a theory on the relevance of the history of linguistic thought for contemporary linguistics and on the importance of the interpretation of this history in light of contemporary linguistic conceptions. We prefer to adopt the liberal and pragmatic attitude characteristic of those who accept good things regardless of where they come from, without attaching too much importance to the original specialty in which the protagonists of the discussion are working. Rather than discussing the possibility of mutual fertilization in principle, the debate has to be directed towards points of detail, without exclusiveness. This attitude is, moreover, reflected in the content of this book. This book is not only intended for linguists and philosophers, working as researchers in the history of their disciplines or as researchers in the present state of the linguistic and language philosophical domain, but it was also written by a similarly 'heterogeneous' group of contributors. I hope that this may have increased the vivacity of the confrontation and the importance of the venture.

In this collection, thirty five essays have been presented, of which only five have been published, for the most part in journals of limited distribution. Indeed, I asked many authors to write a new study for this volume and thus received thirty five unpublished papers. The remaining five papers are reproduced here, in an altered and adapted form, because of their importance in the field. I would like to emphasize that this book is, therefore, not a "Reader" in the usual sense, but rather a collection of original research. The contributors were also given the freedom to deal with the topic in which they were interested; the content of the book was consequently not preplanned. Only after receiving the different papers could a chronological classification be applied.

In addition, the *Index of Names* is meant to make it easy for the reader to look up the special points of interest. One of the important and interesting aspects of the book is, in my opinion, that some authors and periods which until now seldom had the floor, retain the center of interest here: I am thinking, for example, of Leibniz' theory of language which is discussed in three papers, and of the logic and language theory of the Middle Ages which was treated by six authors. In addition to the chronological sections, the heading *Aims and Methods of the Historiography of Linguistic Thought* subsumes two papers of a rather methodological orientation, which are not concentrated on one single period of the history; under the heading *Through the History of Linguistic Thought,* there are three papers which give a wide thematical survey and which are not chronologically determined. The obviously heterogeneous aspect of the contents of this book were deliberately intended. I hope that the quality of the investigative work represented here will be appreciated and that it will make possible and encourage further research in the history of linguistic thought.

June, 1974

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An Early Plea for a Relational Treatment of Verbs and Prepositions:
John Fearn's Anti-Tooke (1824/27)

After some 150 years of silence John Fearn's grammatical *opus magnum* has been brought again to the attention of linguists and grammarians: in 1972 there appeared a facsimile reprint of this work together with a biobibliographical introduction[1], in 1973 a first attempt was made to comment on Fearn's *Anti-Tooke* from a modern linguistic viewpoint.[2]

This paper is not meant to evaluate the controversy between Fearn and John Horne Tooke whose *Diversions of Purley* (1798/1805) gave rise to Fearn's *Anti-Tooke*[3], nor is it our aim to discuss Fearn's overall philosophical and grammatical theories and the historical circumstances under which his work was carried out[4]; instead we shall concentrate our interest on Fearn's conceptions of the nature of the category of Relation, its overall importance for his grammatical theory and its special relevance for his theory of verbs and prepositions.

According to Fearn's conceptions the systems underlying the language of science (e. g. algebraical notation) and ordinary language share in a certain respect two essential kinds of signs, namely "Signs of Subjects or Quantities, and Signs of Operations between these Subjects or Quantities" (6). In Fearn's view however, "the Philosopher of Grammar has nothing to do with those *Signs of Subjects*, in Ordinary Language, which may be called *Quantities*, and whose Signs are called NOUNS, any farther than to ascertain and lay down their *general grammatical* characters and accidents . . ." (6). This means, on the one hand, that Fearn wants to exclude the tasks of the lexicographer from the domain of philosophical grammar, insofar as the peculiarities of the

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[1] John Fearn, *Anti-Tooke; or an Analysis of the Principles and Structure of Language, exemplified in the English Tongue.* Facsimile reprint of the London edition 1824—1927 with an introduction by Brigitte Asbach-Schnitker and a preface by Herbert E. Brekle. *Grammatica universalis* 7.₁ + 7.₂. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1972. (Quotations from Fearn refer to the first volume of this edition.)

[2] B. Asbach-Schnitker, *A Linguistic Commentary on John Fearn's "Anti-Tooke" (1824/27).* Linguistische Arbeiten 4. Tübingen 1973.

[3] See Asbach-Schnitker 1973, 23 f. for a short discussion of the matter.

[4] See Asbach-Schnitker 1973, chapters 1—3, where informations of this sort can be found.

conceptual structure of nouns pertaining to the lexicon of a particular language are concerned: "the whole business of *definition of particular Nouns* must be left to the Logician, the Natural Philosopher, the Natural Historian, and the Philosopher of every department, the *Philosopher of Language alone except-ed* ..." (7); on the other hand, Fearn regards it as being the business of the "philosophically-minded grammarian" to investigate the various grammatical and semantic categories of nouns and noun-phrases insofar as these are con-ditioned by the different "signs of operations" that *relate* such nouns, in order to yield complete propositions of various types. Consequently Fearn states that "it is the province of the latter [i. e. the "Philosopher of Language"] to determine ... the nature of ALL THE DIFFERENT SIGNS OF OPERA-TIONS BETWEEN the Nouns of Ordinary Language; beyond which, his proper research, as a Grammarian, neither does nor can extend." (7). With this Fearn comes to the main theme of his grammatical theory, namely the over-riding relevance of the category of *relation* for an adequate description of the semantic structure of sentences, or more precisely, of the role which verbs and prepositions play in constituting the propositonal structure of sentences.

In order to explain his premise that verbs and prepositions are — in natural languages — the sole and most important representatives of relations constitut-ing together with nouns and noun-phrases the syntactic and semantic unity of a proposition, Fearn draws the attention to the structure of the common "alge-braical" or arithmetical "language". He observes "that *Every Sign of an Ope-ration* in Algebra, must have a *Sign of Some Quantity* on EACH side of it; between which Two Signs of Quantities the Sign of an Operation serves as a *Bridge of Logical Connection* ..." (9). In applying this model to "ordinary language" he states that — although verbs "are the acknowledged Signs of Actions" (*ibid.*) — in "accredited Grammar ... EVEN IN THE CASE OF THOSE VERBS WHICH DO take a Noun of Quantitiy on Each side, the Verbs in question ARE NOT BRIDGES OF GRAMMATICAL CONNEC-TION between the Two Nouns which they divide." (*ibid.*) It is clear that with this statement Fearn opposes the classical doctrine of the all-pervading sub-ject-predicate structure supposed to hold for every proposition or sentence representing it. Fearn complains at some length of the categorial inadequacy of traditional grammar, insofar most of the grammarians before him did not recognize the relevance of the category of Relation for the description of the propositional structure of linguistic utterances. Fearn's blame does not only fall on grammarians, he likewise attacks those logicians who followed Aristot-le's Subject-Predicate logic: "Grammarians have plunged themselves into a vast abyss of error, which the Logicians have prepared for them" (48). Consequently Fearn's postulate advocates a "NEW LOGIC, before it is possible to erect a new STRUCTURE OF GRAMMAR." (11). What Fearn did was not to establish a "new Logic", he, tried rather, to consistently apply the notion of relation — taken over from Algebra — to the description of

the structure of propositions; he delineates the consequences of his approach in the following way — at the same time it becomes clear that he strives toward describing the *semantic* structure of sentences: "I consider [that] the *Signs of Operations* in Ordinary Language may be explained, as expressing the Various Relations between the Subjects signified [sic] by its Nouns, with as much definiteness and precision (allowing for the difference of Subjects) as is effected by the *corresponding* Signs in Algebraical Notation . . ." (15). In favour of the "correspondence" or model-theoretical relationship that exists between the two systems of Algebra and ordinary language, Fearn adduces the fact that although the system of algebraical analysis is written in symbols, "it is READ in *Words,* And the Theorems of Geometry are BOTH *read and written* in Ordinary Language, Both which facts must have been impossible, if the Signs of Operations in Ordinary Language were not *capable of admitting* an interpretation as perfectly significant of the Relations to be expressed in the Sciences of Algebra and Geometry, as can be said of the *Symbols* employed in those Sciences." (16 f).

From this it follows for Fearn "that the Two Systems in question are only One and the Same Thing" (17); he objects, however, vehemently and with a number of quite remarkable arguments to the doctrine put forward by some logicians of his time — e. g. Condillac[5] — that a language or notation is the same thing as a science itself. Fearn's arguments sound familiar today; he draws a neat distinction between the syntactical well-formedness of the formulae of an "analytical method" that guarantee at the same time the truth of the resulting propositions, and the sentences of ordinary language that are neutral as to truth or falsehood:

> "1. A *Science or Analytical Method* consists in a Rule; by the Observing of which, *One Truth,* or *Series of Truths,* OF RELATION, *results in the indication of* ANOTHER, as a necessary conclusion, drawn by the Mind, from the premises.
>
> 2. But a *Language* is NOT A RULE regarding *Any Truth,* or *Series of Truths,* or *Any Deduction or Consequence* whatever, *out of its own peculiar grammatical construction.* It has *no election for Truth,* more than for *Falsehood:* Nor can it be *better arranged* in the signification of either of these, than in the expression of *the grossest absurdity, or downright nonsense.* To say that *Color,* or *Sound,* loves Virtue; is just es *good Language,* as to say that *Men,* or *Women,* love Virtue." (21).

It seems as if Fearn with this last statement is on the same level as Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (1957) with regard to the syntactical well-formedness of sentences. Later on Fearn modifies this extreme standpoint; as can be seen from the following quotation he requires that sentences, in order

[5] For Condillac's *La langue des calculs* (1798) see the edition by G. Klaus, Berlin 1959 in the series *Philosophische Studientexte.*

to be grammatically well-formed, must be capable of some interpretation in one of the "possible worlds"[6]:

> " ... every Sentence, Proposition, or Speech whatever, must exhibit, ... an example of TWO *Most Distinct and Different Systems of Laws:* that is, it must exhibit, first, the LAWS of MERE GRAMMA-TICAL connection: And, distinctly from this, it must display the Laws either of, *Some Rational* Connection of Ideas, or of *Some Truth,* or *Some Fiction,* or *Some Concatenation or Other of Ideas,* EXTRA GRAMMATICAL." (39)

This last enumeration of "extra-grammatical laws" seems to indicate with sufficient precision that Fearn's ideas were not too far away from the basic postulate of a Montague grammar, namely, that syntactically well-formed strings of linguistically interpretable symbols must also allow for some seman-tic-pragmatic interpretation in one or another "possible world". This, again, seems to amount to a similar postulate that an adequate grammar of a natural language should guarantee a sort of "categorical correctness" (cf. the scholastic problem of the *cappa categorica*) of the strings generated by such a grammar.

Before he comes to develop his theory of the essentially relational status of verbs and prepositions Fearn enters into a lengthy discussion on the nature of the category of relation itself. When stating that "the real nature of this Category has been misapprehended to a most profound and surprising degree; and this, with an undeviating uniformity of opinion, which has presented no dissentient voice" (52) Fearn was — historically speaking — not very far from truth.[7] Fearn developed his ideas on the *"Generic Structure of Relation* (which, in other words, means the *Generic Logical Structure of Things in the Universe*) as forming *The Primary Object of the Logician and the Foundation of Language"* (55) in the form of a dialogue (54—91). With the help of examples drawn from ordinary life as well as from Geometry Fearn succeeds in con-vincing his fictitious opponent that *"the Universe* is made up of what may be called *Logical Clusters,* containing THREE THINGS EACH — namely — *Two related Subjects* and a RELATION OR LINK OF CONNECTION interposed between them . . ." (62). In modern words, Fearn decides the case of relation in favour of their externality against the internal conception of relation which considers "relation" as being so to speak embedded in two related subjects.[8] Thus Fearn distinguishes clearly between "relation" as the *"Abstract* Name of the thing: Its proper *Concrete* Name is RELATING." (65) and "relativeness" as an attribute of two related subjects; this makes it clear that Fearn is pleading for the autonomy of the category "relation" with respect to the arguments or, as Fearn has it "the co-agents", of a relation. What Fearn calls "logical clusters" made up of "three things each" is nothing

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[6] Cf. R. Montague 1970.
[7] See Asbach-Schnitker 1973, 25 ff. for some hints as to this question.
[8] See Asbach-Schnitker 1973, 28 f. for supplementary information.

else than a synonym for "propositional functions" in the sense of Russell and Whitehead. In the same vein as the authors of the *Principia Mathematica* Fearn also vehemently denies the possibility that relational structures can be reduced to subject-predicate structures[9] without there being left any trace of the original relational predicate.

This is not the place for a thorough discussion of Fearn's conceptions of "relational logic"; the foregoing remarks are merely intended to show that the author of *Anti-Tooke* did arrive at certain results in discussing this certainly most important category, whose fruitfulness for linguistic descriptions will be shown in its application to the proposition-constituting status of verbs and prepositions in the next section.

Fearn dedicates the lengthy second chapter (92—261) of the first volume of his treatise to an explanation of the linguistic status of verbs. Before approaching the central topic of this chapter Fearn clarifies again the "Object of the PHILOSOPHICAL Grammarian" (98); the following quotation makes abundantly clear that he considers it the main task of a philosophical or theoretical linguist to devise a powerful and theoretically, as well as empirically adequate, general grammatical theory:

> "It is the Object of the PHILOSOPHICAL Grammarian to ascertain and delineate the Real Principles and Structure of Language, *as founded on the General Principles of Logical Connection between those Subjects, or Objects, in the Universe, of which Language is the Mark or Signature.*
>
> Upon the other hand, it is the business of a writer of VERNACULAR Grammar to APPLY the Principles of Philosophical Grammar, to the EXPLANATION and IMPROVEMENT of the genius of particular Languages.
>
> In other words, I suggest, that the Science of Philosophical Grammar *(when once it shall be erected)* must bear a relativeness to the Various Grammars of Particular Languages, in some sort analogous to that which Geometry holds with respect to the Art of Building, . . ." (98 f.).

It is on the basis of this general statement that Fearn undertakes an analysis of the different parts of speech and of their different connecting principles. We shall not deal here with Fearn's numerous critical and sometimes polemical discussions of the various grammatical doctrines of earlier or contemporary grammarians, instead we shall concentrate on working out Fearn's own and to some extent truly original theory of verbs and prepositions as the main relational elements of propositions as expressed by sentences of "ordinary language".

Fearn starts his extensive discussion of the grammatical status of verbs by laying down "the Fundamental Maxim of Grammar that *Every Verb in*

[9] See *PM*, 32, 18 ff.
[10] See Asbach-Schnitker 1973, 62 ff.

Language must have an ACCUSATIVE, *as well as a Nominative Case*". (112)
This means on the one hand that Fearn considers verbs as two-place predicates,
on the other hand that these relational predicates take as arguments different
noun-phrases according to their case-relationship. With regard to the term
"noun" Fearn's terminology is somewhat idiosyncratic; for him "nouns"
viewed as items of a lexicon do not function as "parts of speech" unless they
enter into a specific syntactic construction with articles, adjectives and the
like in order to form "syntactical nouns", i .e. a constituent of a sentence that
would nowadays be considered as a noun-phrase. In the second volume of
his *Anti-Tooke* (152—236) Fearn has a special chapter on "nouns"; this is,
however, not the place to discuss this part of his grammatical theory.[10] The
following quotations — taken from his chapter on the verb — may suffice to
show Fearn's general evalutation of the function of "nouns" resp. noun-phrases:

> "Any Noun, or Word whatever, therefore, when it is not viewed in
> connection with other Words, ... must be regarded like a Type
> distributed in the Box of the Compositor: It is *No "Part of Speech"*;
> *technically so called;* but is *Merely a Mass of Lingual Material,*
> *shaped and adapted to be employe*d as a Part of Speech ... Upon the
> other hand, When Any word whatever is TAKEN INTO COMPO-
> SITION, *and is made to stand for the Sign of a* RELATED SUB-
> JECT, (which is only another Name for an AGENT) it receives in
> that moment, and by that act, a *Grammatical Life*, and *becomes* a
> PART (i. e. a *Special* Part) of SPEECH — a *Grammatical or Syn-*
> *tactical Noun* ... what is called a NOUN SUBSTANTIVE." (113)

Fearn goes on to explain that the consequence of the function of a "noun
substantive" or noun-phrase as an "agent" or a "relative subject" is that a
verb must be the sign of an "ACTION *or* RELATION *between* ANY TWO
Relative Subjects." (113) A verb for Fearn is therefore "a VERBAL LINK
which connects Some TWO CO-*Agents* together, in Any Case of Action or
Relation." (113)

Having laid down these postulates the author of *Anti-Tooke* becomes
immediately aware of the problem how to reconcile the case of the so-called
"intransitive verbs" like *to sleep, to walk*, etc. with his axiom that every verb
is essentially of a relational nature. It would take too much space to represent
and discuss in detail the various motivations and justifications put forward by
our author in order to make his eventual solution of this problem seem accept-
able. As an intermediary step in his line of arguments he proposes to show
"that *Every Major Verb*, in logical Strictness, demands a *So-called Preposition*
between it and the Noun to which it is annexed; insomuch, that, whenever it
is not so expressed, the Sentence is *elliptical* and Some Preposition ought to
be understood." (118) This, however, seems to contradict his previous postu-
late of the essentially relational nature of a verb, because of the conflict that
would arise if two relational predicates — a verb *and* a preposition — occurred

within *one* simple sentence. Fearn tries to find his way out of this *impasse* with the help of two important corollary postulates: firstly, by means of what he calls the "Principle of Alternation", and secondly, by declaring that, from the view-point of the logico-semantical structure of a proposition, the so-called prepositions are essentially nothing else than verbs, insofar they, too, are of a relational nature.[11]

By his "Principle of Alternation" Fearn means that, given certain conditions, a verb may function alternatively as a verb or as a noun:

> "... EVERY VERB, in a Sentence in which there are more Verbs
> than One intervening between Any Two Primary Nouns Substan-
> tive [i. e. noun phrases]; whether such Verb be reputed as a *Princi-
> pal*, an *Auxiliary*, or a *So-called Preposition;* must serve, in that
> Sentence, ALTERNATELY, AS VERB *and* AS NOUN." (119)

At this point the suggestion may be ventured that this so-called "alter-nation" may plausibly be interpreted as depending on the application of certain transformational operations on some given propositional structure and leading to a syntactic surface structure in which the traditional identification of the "parts of speech" as to auxiliary verbs, main verbs, and prepositions is made possible. That this interpretation of Fearn's "Principle of Alternation" is not altogether unjustified from Fearn's own standpoint can be seen from his own generalizing statement:

> "The Principle of Alternation of a Verb in a Sentence is, indeed, of
> so high and important a Nature, that it might well be called the
> *Axis* upon which All Language turns: For it operates throughout
> the whole of Speech, almost continually; and can submit to no
> exception." (120)

That Fearn does make an explicit distinction between the logico-semantic structure of a sentence and its syntactic surface structure can be seen clearly from his treatment of sentences with so-called "intransitive verbs".[12] Before we come to discuss Fearn's analysis of several sentence types as to the role of verbs and prepositions therein, some further explanation of his theoretical groundwork seems to be called for.

In the second section of chapter 2 ("OF Verbs") Fearn argues for "the universal neutrality of verbs" (136 ff.) By this he intends to refute the claim of traditional grammar that verbs may be either active, passive, or neuter. His

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[11] Fearn has two lengthy chapters on prepositions or, as he calls them "minor verbs": I, 262—365; II, 1—151. A more detailed discussion of the status of prepositions as "minor verbs" will be postponed to a later section of this paper. See also Asbach-Schnitker 1973, 52 ff. for some comments on Fearn's treatment of prepositions; she shows e. g. by means of a quotation from Becker/Arms (1969, 1): "prepositions share many basic features with verbs" that Fearn's approach is, at least in principle, compatible with present-day doctrines stemming from so-called "generative semanticists".

[12] See on this point also Asbach-Schnitker 1973, 33 f.

argument runs as follows; if we agree that "VERBS *are the Signs of* ACTIONS" (136), i. e. that verbs are signs of relations[13], and if we accept it as "a self-evident truth, of the most obvious kind, that an Action, considered in itself, cannot be Active" (136) then the signs of actions or relations cannot be active. Thus, according to Fearn, verbs represent relations that are neutral as to the categories "activity" or "passivity"; the role of "agent" or "patient" is instead ascribed to the subjects or noun-phrases serving as arguments for the respective relation. From this it becomes clear that Fearn neatly distinguishes between the logical status of "syntactical nouns" or noun-phrases as "subjects" or arguments of some relation and their status as the bearers of semantic roles such as "agent" or "patient".[14] Fearn concludes the second section of his chapter "On Verbs" with the statement "that ACTIVITY (and PASSIVITY also) does not and cannot belong to VERBS. Activity and Passivity are Attributes of NOUNS ONLY . . ." (152).

In this connection it may be pointed out that Fearn also denies the legitimacy of what is called the "passive voice" by traditional grammarians within the scope of a philosophically oriented grammar. Fearn regards "passive" or "active sentences" as a grammatical absurdity because in his opinion. "VOICE is an Attribute of an AGENT, and NOT OF AN ACTION ... Voice is an Attribute of the MIND ..." (165). This seems to imply that for Fearn grammatical "voice" is a pragmatic category, insofar as some speaker decides according to his varying communicative intentions whether he will say "Peter wrote the letter" or "the letter was written by Peter". Since Fearn has not to say much on such problems, further discussions of pragmatic aspects of sentences — even nowadays the status of such categories as "topic", "focus" etc. is not too well understood — are out of place here.

The third section of his chapter "On Verbs" brings us to the core of Fearn's conceptions of the function of verbs and prepositions within the propositional structure of simple sentences. Fearn starts with a defense against a possible objection, namely "that Language was not made for *Logicians;* but was invented, in great part, for the purpose of marking and signifying the Moral intercourse between human beings. Hence, perhaps, it may be said, that we are not to make Verbs conform to the Abstract Nature of Relation; but, ought to leave Relations (i. E. the *Causes of Language)* to shift for themselves, and to continue to uphold the supposed Nature of Verbs in the existing ab-

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[13] For Fearn the terms *action* and *relation* are synonyms; that this is so can be seen in many passages of his text; cf. e. g. "ACTION IS SOME LINK OF CONNECTION BETWEEN *Two Related Subjects;* and *is the Thing that* MAKES *Two* RELATIVE *Subjects* ..." (147).

[14] Cf. Fearn's own wording: "... EITHER, or BOTH, the Co-Agents ["arguments"] of an Action MAY ALSO be PATIENTS OR SUFFERERS *from that Same Action.* But, along with this, it is to be widely distinguished, that the being a SUFFERER is a vastly different Thing from being a FOLLOWING CO-AGENT, of Any Action ..." (144).

surdity of their doctrine, since it is convenient for the purposes of life or of mankind." (153) To this objection Fearn replies that "the logical proofs which have been in the foregoing articles laid down, that Verbs are Signs which are neither formed to represent, nor capable of representing, Actions in that particular view of them called *Moral*, but are necessarily constructed to signify Action in its complete nature and aspect, present no objection, nor obstacle whatever, to our signifying a *Moral*, or *Any Other Partial* View of Action: Which we can signify, most simply and beautifully, by a Logical Sign belonging to a very different Part of Speech . . ." (154) It can be assumed that these signs signifying "moral actions" belong to the domain of sentence-modalities (auxiliaries, adverbs).[15] In order to describe with some degree of adequacy the propositional structure of sentences (with the exclusion of modal and tense aspects) Fearn posits three categories needed for a division of the objects of speech:

> "1. It is frequently necessary to signify *Action itself*, properly so called. And the expression of this demands, at the same time, the signification of *both the Co-Agents* of that Action." (155)

With this our author seems to point to sentences such as "He writes letters" and, possibly, to nominalizations of sentences such as "His writing of letters" necessary for the construction of more complex and abstract propositions.

> "2. It is frequently necessary to signify the *peculiar* STATE of the *Leading Co-Agent* of an Action, without introducing any expression of the state of the Following Co-Agent. And this demands the signification of *One Only of the Co-Agents* of that Action." (155)

What is intended hereby are presumably such constructions as "Peter is writing" on the side of elliptical sentences and "teacher", "trainer" etc. on the side of constructions derived by word-formation processes (this latter type of constructions is not found in Fearn's subsequent analyses of particular examples. Indeed, as was shown earlier, Fearn does not deal at all with problems of word-formation; he would rather regard this domain of language as belonging to the lexicon and, consequently, as not falling under the jurisdiction of the "philosophical grammarian").

> "3. It is frequently necessary to signify the *peculiar* STATE of the *Following Co-Agent* of an Action, without introducing any expression of the Leading Co-Agent. And this, also, demands the signification of *One Only* of the Co-Agents of that Action." (155)

Under this third category, constructions like "The letter is written" or "The letter is being written" would fall on the side of sentence construction,

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[15] See Asbach-Schnitker 1973, 45—51 for a short discussion of Fearn's conceptions of various modal expressions.

and cases like "trainee" in the domain of word-formation (see the *caveat* on
Fearn's negligence of word-formation above).

Before going on to explain the relevance and necessity of these three cate-
gories for the analysis of the structure of the propositional kernel of sentences,
Fearn again points out that a "noun substantive" or noun-phrase may have
among its constituting elements articles, "definitives", and adjectives; such
noun-phrases function as a "co-agent", i. e. as arguments of relational predi-
cates as represented by verbs and prepositions.

Among the three above-mentioned categories only one is considered as
a *"Natural Object"* (156), "such as *can exist in that form and complexion*
which we ever signify by Words". (156) This object — according to Fearn —
is an "Action, considered together with its Two Co-Agents, . . . And the signi-
fication of *this* Object has been fully provided for by the *Verb* . . ." (156 f.).
This would mean that for Fearn relational predicates are fundamental to the
constitution of the propositional structure of sentences; consequently he con-
siders the other two categories as "artifical" or derived. Noun-phrases in their
function as "co-agents" are formed "by the *Abstractive Faculty of the Mind,*
parting off, in idea, a certain portion of the Natural Object [i. e. "relational
predicates"] first described". (157) What now follows is a very important step
in Fearn's analysis of the status of relational predicates as constitutive ele-
ments of propositions; his idea is to "divide" relational structures into
"departments", so that we can "contemplate Either of the Co-Agents *as being
in a* CERTAIN STATE with *respect* to the Action, without taking into this
Complex Idea the Other Co-Agent . . ." (157). In other words, Fearn proposes
to "break up" a propositional function of the form $R(x,y)$ into a sequence of
two partial functions of the Form $P_1(x,R)$ and $P_2(y,R)$, where P_1 and P_2
represent relational predicates which may occur in natural languages in the
form of prepositions[16].

In order to make this approach consonant with the principles of relational
logic, Fearn has to divest the main verb of a sentence from its primary
function, i. e. that of relating two "co-agents" or noun-phrase arguments. As
a consequence of this he declares the predicate "strike" in "Peter strikes
Richard" to be a "Noun of Action" which is placed "as a Bridge between Two
Nouns Substantive or Piers of Language." (157) It is, admittedly, somewhat
difficult to catch Fearn's intentions on this point. As I see it, Fearn wants, on
the one hand, to retain the relational function of a predicate like "strike" in
describing the propositional structure of the sentence "Peter strikes Richard",
on the other hand, he regards the same predicate in sentences like "Peter
strikes" or "Peter is stricken" as a "noun of action" which must, necessarily, be
related to "Peter" by means of some other relational predicate. He tries to
explain the peculiar propositional structure of the last-mentioned sentences by

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[16] See Brekle 1970 for a similar approach towards an analysis of propositional
structures in the domain of word-formation.

stating that in "Peter strikes" or "Peter is stricken" there is "NO ACTION expressed; but only an ENERGY or STATE *of Peter,* with respect to an Action; and here, therefore, we have *No Bridge* between Two Co-Agents; but have Some Energy or Quality, which may be compared to an ARM or GIBBET, projecting out from PETER, and signified as belonging to, or supported by, HIM ALONE." (158) Nevertheless Fearn recognizes those "signs of gibbets" or intransitive verb constructions as having a relational internal structure. As will be shown immediately, Fearn's method of analyzing such constructions comes very near to what is nowadays called "tranformations" of certain underlying structures into surface structures. He considers the verb-phrase of such sentences as "Peter strikes", "He went in", "He looked pale" etc. as an *"Abbreviated Sign of Several Words ... the Expedient or Principle* by which this very useful end has been effected, has been merely that of ASSOCIATED POSITION, with respect to some Other Word to which it is annexed." (159) "Abbreviated Signs" of several words such as "strikes", "went in", "looked pale" are — according to Fearn *"Not an* IMMEDIATE *Sign of a Thought* or *Thoughts;* but is an *immediate Sign* of a PARCEL OF SIGNS". (162) These "signs of signs" Fearn calls "adverbs": "An Adverb ... is, in a *two-fold* sense, an *Artificial* Part of Speech; first, because it is only a Sign of *Signs;* and, secondly, because the Abstracted Parcel of Objects signified by Any One of these Signs cannot exist in nature, unattached to an Action and a Following Co-Agent". (162 f.).

The seemingly absurd identification of intransitive verb constructions with "adverbs" is easily resolved and acquires even some justification when we look into Fearn's following explanations:

> ". . either a *Preposition,* an *Adjective,* or a *So-called Substantive Noun (as these Words are rated by Grammarians)* may become an ADVERB by POSITION.
> As, for example, when we say, *"He went* IN", — „*He looked* PALE", *"He stood* FATHER", which expressions mean "He went *to an* INNER PLACE" — "He was *of a Pale Color"* i. e. *"in a Pale State"* — "He stood *in the Office or Relative State of Father".* (159 f.)

Fearn's idea clearly is to analyze the verb-phrase of the first three sentences — which he considers as "adverbs by position", i. e. constituents regarded as "syntactical adverbs" — into prepositional phrases which can be regarded as indicating the underlying logico-semantic structures of the respective parts of sentences. For Fearn "two facts will be immediately evident" (160) from what has just been said, namely that

> "by analogy of this Expedient or Principle, *Words called* VERBS may serve as ADVERBS BY POSITION; and, that, by thus employing them, we shall (as I before hinted), most simply and beautifully

express or signify the *peculiar* STATE of either a *Leading* or a *Following Co-Agent*, with respect to Any Action". (160)

Thus, by means of a surface structure verb-phrase functioning as an "adverb by position" and expressing the relational structure of a prepositional phrase Fearn is in a position to declare that "when we say *"Peter strikes"*; the Word *"Strikes"* becomes an ADVERB by Position, and it means *"Peter exists in a Striking* STATE, while it excludes the Sign and Signification of the *Object* which he strikes, and thereby excludes a proper or complete signification of the *Action itself* of striking". (160) By this "method of conversion", i. e. by applying certain transformational operations, Fearn's approach intends to "rationally *contradistinguish Any Co-Agent when viewed by itself,* from the *Same Co-Agent when it is viewed together with the Action itself and the Other Co-Agent concerned"*. (160 f.) From this "breaking up" of a complete relational proposition into one or two state-denoting ones follows the "Necessary and Universal Principle of Grammar, that, whenever the *Name of an Action* is annexed or apposited to a *Nominative,* without Any Accusative Noun being annexed to the Farther side of the former; the *Name of Action so situated is* NOT A VERB, *but an* ADVERB. (161) Such an Adverb represents its propositional structure "at least, a So-called Preposition and a Noun in the Objective Case with its Article taken together". (161)

With this statement that an adverb consists of a preposition and a noun-phrase "in the Objective Case", i. e. a noun-phrase functioning as argument of the second domain of a relational predicate (preposition) we come to another important feature of Fearn's theory of verbs and prepositions. He considers prepositions in their function as relational predicates as being identical to verbs:

> " ... we are to observe, that a Name of Action employed thus Adverbially becomes *More (Much More)* than a Verb: because it will be shown at large that *Every So-called Preposition is a* VERB ..."
> (161)

Fearn's arguments for this identification cannot be fully discussed here — as was mentioned earlier he has in the first and second volume of his *Anti-Tooke* two lengthy chapters on this subject[17] — the following comments and quotations should, however, suffice to show that Fearn's idea of the identical logico-semantic function of verbs and prepositions (he calls them "minor verbs") does represent — at least to some degree — an interesting solution for the analysis of certain strata of the structure of propositions.

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[17] See Asbach-Schnitker 1973, 52 ff. for a preliminary discussion of Fearn's sometimes confused views on the nature of prepositions; these two chapters are especially difficult to evaluate because it is in this place that Fearn sets out to criticize vehemently the theory of prepositions advanced by his opponent Horne-Tooke in his *Diversions of Purley.*

He insists again on the derived character of so-called "adverbs by position" when saying that "although it constitutes a Part of Speech very different from the Sign of either a *Related Subject* or a *Relation*, yet in its construction, the Generic Structure of the Category of Relatives and Relation can never be defeated, or violated . . ." (162)

In order to demonstrate the relational function of prepositions — shared by true verbs — he uses the following example together with an — at first sight — somewhat artificially sounding paraphrase. The apparent artificiality of the paraphrase disappears if it is taken as an expression made up of theoretical terms belonging to a "meta-language" with which the propositional structure of ordinary language sentences is made explicit. Fearn's simple example is: "I write". Consonant with his just-mentioned principle that "write" is an "adverb by position" and that it must therefore be analyzed as a prepositional phrase, he paraphrases "write" in this example as *"in or inning* A WRITING STATE" (162) so that the whole expression would now be "I inning a writing state" with "I" as the "leading co-agent" "inning" as the "verb" serving in its normal relational function, and "writing state" as the "following co-agent". He explains this paraphrasing or — roughly speaking — transformational process in the following way:

> ". . . the Word — *in or inning* — being the *Name of an Action* — BECOMES A VERB by being placed between the *express Nominative* "I" and the *involved Accusative* "A WRITING STATE". 162)[18].

Being a "Philosophical Grammarian" Fearn goes on to generalize his analysis of prepositions as verbs:

> "Whensoever Any One of the Essential Parts of Speech is found to be *Out of its Natural Position* in its association with other Words, *that is out of the Natural Stucture of Language, as demonstrated in these analyses;* it is a *mark of its being employed* ADVERBIALLY. (163)

In the following sentences — used by Fearn as further examples to show the applicability of this principle — "the *So-called Preposition, Verb, Noun,* and *Adjective* (being out of their Natural Association and Position with respect to the Other Words in the Sentence) become ADVERBS". (163):

> "He *stalks* ON,
> He *rehearses,*
> He *plays* RICHARD,
> He looks FAINT". (163)

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[18] In the case of *in* or *inning* Fearn is not satisfied with his demonstration of the relative theoretical adequacy of its identification with the function of a verb; he also offers "*etymological* evidence, that the Word — INN — was once a current VERB *in our Language*" (166).

[19] The reader is again referred to Asbach-Schnitker's M. A. thesis (1973) for a first linguistic overview of the various aspects of Fearn's *Anti-Tooke.*

It is evident from the sheer bulk of Fearn's *Anti-Tooke* — some 800 pages — that a thorough linguistic commentary on his theoretical conceptions of the status of verbs and prepositions within the logico-semantic propositional structure of sentences alone would require itself a lengthy monograph. Practically nothing has been said on the other sections of Fearn's chapters "Of Verbs" and "Of minor verbs, by Grammarians called prepositions" where he treats extensively of a number of important problems connected with these categories: Fearn has sections on "the Principle and the Act of Assertion" (*A.—T.* I, ch. II, Sect. IV), on "So-called participles, and of Tense, Mode, Voice, Number, and Person" (Sect. VI); in ch. III of the first volume which extends into the second volume he discusses very thoroughly and critically earlier theories of the nature of prepositions (especially, of course, those advanced by the "Purleian Philosopher"), in the later sections of ch. III Fearn also enters into extensive diachronic speculations on the supposed historical origins of English prepositions[19].

It has been the aim of the foregoing first rough attempt of a close reading of several of Fearn's passages on his grammatical theory in general and his ideas on the role of verbs and prepositions as constitutive elements of propositions underlying sentences of ordinary English to show that early in the last century the author of *Anti-Tooke* made a quite serious effort to construct a grammatical theory aiming especially at a thorough description of the various propositional structures underlying sentences of ordinary language. Our account of Fearn's theory of verbs and prepositions was not meant to be overly critical — it must be admitted that Fearn is not always systematic and that sometimes he is carried away by idiosyncratic speculations — nevertheless it might be found useful by present-day linguists to have a second closer look into the vast body of Fearn's linguistic *opus magnum*, and that not only for historical reasons.

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