

Discourse Pragmatics and Cleft Sentences in English

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- b. A woman realtor makes very good sense. Women know more about kitchens than men. By and large, **#it's the house that the woman buys**. Most men, in my experience, let the wife decide.

In Chapter 2, the discourse-pragmatic notions which are crucial to this dissertation ('topic-comment', 'cognitive status', and 'accent') are introduced and defined. Also introduced is a set of universal principles (the 'topic familiarity principle', the 'given-before-new principle' and 'first-things-first principle') proposed in Gundel (1985, 1988) to govern discourse pragmatic notions and their interaction with syntactic structure

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the structure of English clefts, with emphasis placed on their character as a subclass of copular sentences. While I accept the traditional view that the copula and cleft pronoun make no crucial contribution to the final truth conditions of a cleft sentence, I argue that the copula and the cleft pronoun are both critically involved in the mapping from syntactic form to semantic and pragmatic interpretation.

In Chapter 3, I suggest that Partee's (1986) analysis of the distinction between 'specificational pseudoclefts,' such as (5a), and 'predicational pseudoclefts,' such as (5b), can be insightfully extended to clefts.

- (5) a. What John is is a nuisance to himself.
b. What John is is a nuisance to him.

As an alternative to the traditional view which distinguishes two copulas, Partee suggests that there is only a single copula, which takes one referential argument and one predicative argument, but in either order. The specificational pseudocleft can then be analyzed as taking a predicative subject and a referential complement, i.e. as simply the inverse of the predicational pseudocleft, which takes a referential subject and a predicative complement.

I propose that specificational clefts, like (3a) above, have a semantic inverse in the class of 'predicational clefts', identified in Ball 1977. Thus, the predicational cleft in (6a) is paraphrased not by the simple sentence obtained through inserting the clefted constituent into the 'gap' of the cleft clause—i.e. (6b), but rather by the predicational copular sentence in (6c)

- (6) a. **It was an odd televised ceremony that I watched from my living room**, and a touching one...[Goodman, 1985, Keeping in Touch, p.194]
b. **I watched an odd televised ceremony from my living room**, and a touching one.
c. **The televised ceremony that I watched from my living room was an odd one**, and a touching one.

The copula in clefts thus plays its usual compositional role as a reversible linking verb signalling that the predicative argument should be applied to the referential argument, regardless of linear order. I

suggest further that the commonly noted quantifier and predicate constraints on permissible clefted constituents can be profitably analyzed as semantic constraints, since the post-copular argument of a specificational sentence must be semantically ‘referential,’ instead of ‘quantificational’ like the one in (7a), or ‘predicative’ like the one in (7b).

- (7) a. ?It is someone who buys the house.
b. ?It is angry that I am.

An advantage to adopting Partee’s framework is that pragmatically sensitive exceptions to these semantic constraints can be attributed to ‘type-shifting’: a quantificational or predicative expression may indeed be felicitously clefted, but only in contexts which support a referential construal.

In Chapter 4, it is argued that the cleft pronoun is a predicative pronoun co-specifying the predicate denoted by the cleft clause, an adaptation of the view of Bolinger 1972 and Gundel 1977 that the cleft ‘expletive’ has referential content. Cleft pronouns convey the same range of deictic information that referential pronouns do, and vary in form in colloquial discourse, depending on the cognitive status of the predicate denoted by the cleft clause, giving rise to the ‘th-clefts’ of Bolinger 1972 and Ball 1977. For example:

- (8) MK: There IS something that happened here that you might not know about.
NH: Fred Lukermann resigned.
MK: Oh, that’s right — you talked to Karen.
NH: No, **this was Jeanette who told me** — I talked to her last Sunday.
[telephone conversation, 10/89]
- (9) NH: That’s the reason I don’t want to go to Miami.
BP: Wasn’t **that somewhere in southern Florida where they thought those people got AIDS from bug bites** — getting bit a hundred times a night or something, because the place was so roach infested?
[conversation, 2/89]

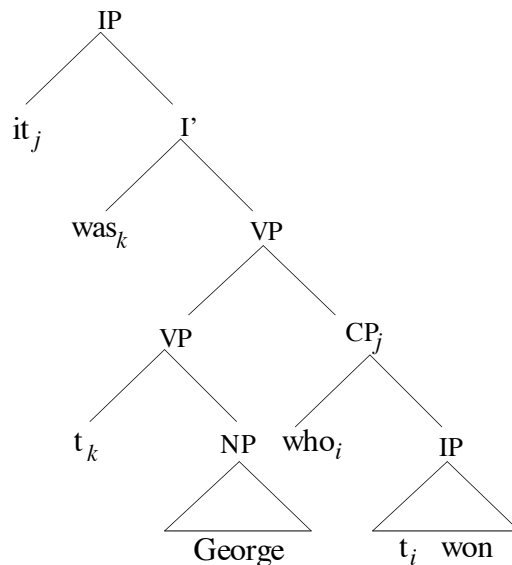
The discourse context of the *this*-cleft in (8) supports the speaker’s assumption that the addressee is consciously aware of the information denoted by the cleft clause—i.e. that someone told the speaker that Fred Lukermann resigned. In contrast, the speaker of the *that*-cleft in (9) only expects the addressee to be familiar with the proposition denoted by the cleft clause but not necessarily to be consciously aware of it at the time of utterance.

The cleft pronoun is invariant when it denotes a predicate, as in (10), but agrees in number with the clefted constituent when it denotes an entity, as in (11), giving further support to the hypothesis that clefts exhibit the specificational-predicational distinction characteristic of copular sentences in general:

- (10) A: But it goes much further than Vietnam — it's general antimilitarism.
 B: **That was our right-wingers who got us into that** you see.
 [Geluykens, 1983, C13]
- (11) BP: It may be that fanatical Muslims are even more stupid than fanatical Christians.
 EM: But **these are students who are rioting!**
 [conversation, 2/14/189]

After arguing that the cleft clause is syntactically just a relative clause, and that the clefted constituent forms a constituent with the cleft clause, I suggest the syntactic analysis in (12), which encodes by coindexing the morphological dependence of the cleft pronoun on the cognitive status of the cleft clause:

(12)



In Chapters 5 and 6, the discussion shifts to the discourse function of clefts. Examples are drawn from a corpus of 700 tokens of cleft sentences from a variety of spoken and written discourse genres. Chapter 5 examines ‘topic-clause’ clefts, which exhibit prosodic prominence only on the clefted constituent:

- (13) JM: I want to ask this question: Why is this agreement so bad? I ask you.
 JG: Because our whole intention was to bring some form of democracy there; our intention was to make the Sandinistas cry uncle. **It is the contras who have cried uncle.** [McLaughlin Group-3/25/88]

The consistently activated status of the cleft-clause in such clefts supports the conclusion of Gundel 1985 that sentence-final topics generally are necessarily activated. The possibility of entirely omitting the cleft clause when the denoted topic is not only activated but already in the focus of the addressee’s attention gives rise to the class of ‘truncated clefts.’

- (14) Haven't you been wondering who the dickens put them in that watermelon? Of course you have; but you might have known **it was Janet**, because no one else would have done it.

[Rex Stout, *The Hand in the Glove*, p. 271]

I also show that a cleft clause frequently expresses information which is not directly activated but is judged to be easily accessible to the addressee through predictable patterns of inference. Such 'indirectly activated' cleft clauses exhibit secondary, topic accent or are left unaccented:

- (15) Beginning at the top of the list, I went along the landing and tapped at Ruskin's door. **When it was opened, it was Webber who stood there.** We stared at each other for a moment, both of us taken aback.

[Lucille Kallen, *The Piano Bird*, p. 95]

- (16) Eggs go up ten cents a dozen and they act like **it's us that raised 'em.**

[Studs Terkel, *Working*, p. 548, *Neighborhood Merchants*]

The peculiar nature of negation in clefts is also examined. Negation is found to have narrow scope over only the clefted constituent, and also has the character of metalinguistic negation (Horn 1985):

- (17) **It's not California but all society that weighs risks unevenly.**

[editorial, *The New York Times*, 10/22/89]

Rectification is found to be nearly always explicit in clefts, and to fit one of four basic patterns, exemplified in (17) and (18):

- (18) JM: Because the situation is in dire shape.
 MK: But **it's not the contras that are making it dire shape.**
 JM: Right.
 MK: **It's their own regime.**

[McLaughlin Group]

Finally, a class of *it*-subject copular sentences containing a sentential complement but lacking a cleft clause is examined and assigned the label 'sentential-focus clefts' on the basis of pragmatic similarities shared with full clefts:

- (19) **It isn't that it's unstable. It's just that it's warped.**

[Store owner to employee, pointing at a display beam, 10/89]

In Chapter 6, the discussion turns to 'comment-clause' clefts, which exhibit primary accent on the cleft clause instead of the clefted constituent, as in (20):

- (20) And of course, we've only got his version of the niece and the nurse — and he obviously had what the Scotch call ta'en a scunner at the nurse. We mustn't lose sight of her, by the way. She was the last person to be with the old lady before her death, and **it was she who administered that injection.**

‘Yes, yes—but the injection had nothing to do with it. If anything’s clear, that is.’ [Sayers, 1927, *Unnatural Death*, p. 17]

The well known distinction of Prince 1978 between ‘stressed focus’ and ‘informative presupposition’ clefts is criticized on the grounds that familiar but unactivated cleft clauses receive primary sentence accent but cannot be characterized as ‘informative.’

It is hypothesized that comment-clause clefts are used to answer multiple *wh*-questions. Thus, the cleft in (21) answers the double question, ‘who did what?’, and the cleft in (22) answers the double ‘reclamatory’ question (Bolinger 1989), ‘who owes whom money?’.

- (21) It was the President, in a rare departure from the diplomacy of caution, who initiated the successful Panama invasion **It was also Bush who came up with the ideas of having an early, informal Malta summit with Gorbachev and a second round of troop cuts in Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall.**

[M. Dowd and T.L. Friedman, *The fabulous Bush and Baker Boys*, *The New York Times Magazine*, 5/6/90, p. 64]

- (22) MA: You all owe me money.
 NH: Oh. I told everyone that they owed DUANE money.
 MA: **It’s Duane who owes ME money.**

[conversation, 11/86]

Comment-clause clefts of the ‘emphatic continuation’ type, such as (21), maintain the focus of attention on the referent of the clefted constituent, while ‘vice-versa’ clefts, such as (22), reverse the roles of two constituents of an activated proposition.

Comment-clause clefts can also be used to attract the attention of the addressee to the information in the cleft clause, as a device for signalling the beginning or end of a discourse segment.

- (23) [BEGINNING A NEWS REPORT] **It was less than a week ago that U.S. troops in Panama surrounded the Vatican embassy.** Shades of *déjà vu* — U.S. troops are once again surrounding a Latin American embassy, this time in in Peru. [Public radio announcer, WSKG, 1/8/90]
- (24) With this, then, we have covered all the properties of NP sentence-topics which were discussed in the previous sections... Nevertheless, these are, obviously, not the only conditions, and applied to the actual discourse, they will not always identify the topic correctly. **It is within the area of specifying the conditions on the selection function that much empirical work is still needed.** [END OF ARTICLE]

[Reinhart 1981]

The hypothesis that comment-clause clefts provide answers to multiple questions suggests that the restriction of comment-clause clefts to subject NP’s and sentential adverbials (Prince 1978) should be analyzed as an instance of the ‘superiority’ constraint characteristic of multiple questions in general:

- (25) a. Who did what?
b. *What did who do?

The quasi-topical nature of the initial clefted constituent also follows from the multiple-focus analysis, given the assumption that the clefted constituent expresses the 'sorting key' of the answer in the sense of Kuno 1982, as does the fronted *wh*-word of a multiple question. The overall function of clefts in general, then, is simply to highlight the answer to a relevant question.

Chapter 2

Discourse-Pragmatic Preliminaries

In this chapter, I introduce the discourse-pragmatic notions which are important for the analysis of clefts. The lack of a unified terminology in the field makes explicit discussion of definitions and assumptions especially important. The empirical claims of competing approaches must be teased out and compared directly.

2.1 Topic and comment.

2.1.1 DEFINITIONS

The discourse-pragmatic distinction most central to the discussion of clefts is the distinction between topic and comment. I follow Gundel (1985, 1988) in defining ‘topic’ and ‘comment’ as shown in (1) and (2):

- (1) **Topic** [Gundel 1988]
An entity, E, is the topic of a sentence, S, iff, in using S, the speaker intends to increase the addressee’s knowledge about, request information about or otherwise get the addressee to act with respect to E.

- (2) **Comment** [Gundel 1988]
A predication, P, is the comment of a sentence, S, iff, in using S the speaker intends P to be assessed relative to the topic of S.

There are two senses in which the topic-comment relation is relevant to semantics. First, the topic is defined here not as a linguistic expression, but as semantic ‘entity.’¹ Secondly, the semantic evaluation of sentences in context is assumed to depend in part on their topic-comment structure.²

¹A couple of clarifications concerning the term ‘entity’ are in order. First, topics are not entities ‘out in the world,’ but rather representations in the speech participants’ mental models of the world. Second, the term ‘entity’ is intended only to indicate the semantic nature of topics, not to indicate restrictions on this semantic nature. I would argue that a semantic entity of any logical type which is mentally representable and may be referred to by a pro-form is a potential topic (i.e. not necessarily entities only of ‘type e’). For precedents of the notion of entity=discourse referent=discourse entity=file card, see Karttunen (1974), Webber (1978), and, for explicit discussion of terminology, Heim (1982: 283-285). For type theory, see, e.g. Chierchia 1984.

²This second assumption is perhaps brought out more clearly in the alternative definition of topic as ‘the domain within which the predication holds’ (Chafe 1976, Haiman 1978). For arguments that topic-comment structure (or, equivalently, presupposition-focus structure) affects the determination of truth conditions, see e.g. Strawson 1963, Scall, Hajič ova and Beněš ová 1973, Dretske 1972, and Rooth 1985.

Precedents for the topic-comment distinction can be traced through various grammatical traditions back at least to the nineteenth century. Forerunners include the Hungarian grammarian, Brassai (1860, 1863-65), who distinguished between *Inchoativum* and *Bulke* (cf. Kiss 1987), and the French grammarian, Henri Weil 1878. German grammarians³ developed the notion of ‘psychological subject’ of the sentence, which was defined in von der Gabelenz 1891 as ‘the idea which appears first in the consciousness of the speaker...what makes him think and what he wants the hearer to think of,’ and in Paul 1909 as ‘the idea or group of ideas that is first present in the mind of the speaker.’ Lipps 1893 defined the complementary ‘logical predicate’ of a sentence as the element which bears the highest stress and which expresses something new. Paul 1909 defined the ‘psychological predicate’ as ‘the most important member of the sentence, that which it is the aim of the sentence to communicate and which therefore carries the highest stress.’

The Prague School grammarian Mathesius (1929, 1939) distinguished the ‘starting point of the utterance’ (*vychodiste*), ‘that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation and from which the speaker proceeds,’ from the ‘core of the utterance’ (*jádro*), ‘what the speaker states about, or in regard to, the starting point of the utterance.’⁴ Of various developments within the Prague School, the approach of Sgall, Hajičová and Benešová 1973 most clearly overlaps with the approach taken here. Sgall et. al distinguish between the ‘topic’ (or ‘contextually-bound segment’) and the ‘focus’ (or ‘contextually-unbound segment’).

I would like to claim that there are three criterial characteristics of the topic-comment notion. Equivalent variants all involve some correlate of the connection of the topic to the discourse context, of the prosodic prominence of the comment, and of the assessment relation between topic and comment. Any of the three characteristics may form the basis of a particular formulation of the definition. Aboutness definitions (Sgall, Hajičová and Benešová 1973, Gundel 1974, Reinhart 1982) emphasize the contextual connection; focus-based definitions (Chomsky 1971) emphasize the prosodic prominence characteristic, and domain-restriction definitions (Dahl 1974, Haiman 1978, Partee 1989) emphasize the assessment characteristic.

2.1.2 TOPIC TESTS.

Contrary to what has often been assumed, neither syntactic subjecthood nor sentence initial position is necessary for topic status. While the topic of a sentence is frequently expressed as the syntactic subject⁵ (and the subject is perhaps the ‘unmarked’ topic), this is not always the case. In

³These citations are from Chapter 1 of Gundel 1974.

⁴Daneš 1974 notes that Mathesius 1942 employed the terms *základ* (‘foundation’) and *téma* (‘theme’), defined as that which ‘is being spoken about in the sentence.’ Gundel 1974 notes that Mathesius 1928 employed the English terms, *theme* and *enunciation*. She attributes the first employment of the terms *topic* and *comment* to Hockett 1958.

⁵i.e. the argument with which the verb agrees.

(3b), for example, it is the direct object rather than the subject which refers to what the utterance is intuitively about—the Cuban emigrés.

- (3) JM: a. In 1980, 125,000 Cubans emigrated to the US in what is known as the Mariel boat-lift.
 b. And Jimmy Carter emBRACed **them**.
 c. A number of the emigrés are so-called ‘undesirables’ whom Castro unloaded from his prisons and mental hospitals on boats to Florida...
 [The McLaughlin Group, 11/27/87]

Example (3b) also shows that topics need not appear in sentence-initial position. This characteristic of the notion of ‘topic’ clearly distinguishes it from Halliday’s (1967, 1985) notion of ‘theme,’ defined as ‘that element which comes first in the clause’.⁶

The claim that what a sentence is ‘about’ somehow corresponds to the question which elicits the sentence as its answer has a long history. For example, according to Lipps 1893, ‘we recognize the subject and predicate in the sentence when we ask the question to which the sentence gives an answer. That which is given in the question is the subject; that which the question demands an answer to is the predicate.’⁷

Stout 1902 expressed similar views on the nature of subject and predicate:⁸

The subject is that product of previous thinking which forms the immediate basis and starting-point of further development. The further development is the predicate. Sentences are in the process of thinking what steps are in the process of walking. The foot on which the weight of the body rests corresponds to the subject. The foot which is moved forward in order to occupy new ground corresponds to the predicate.... All answers to questions are, as such, predicates, and all predicates may be regarded as answers to possible questions. If the statement ‘I am hungry’ be a reply to the question, ‘Who is hungry?’ then ‘I’ is the predicate. If it be an answer to the question, ‘Is there anything amiss with you?’ then ‘hungry’ is the predicate. If the question is, ‘Are you really hungry?’ then ‘am’ is the predicate. Every fresh step in a train of thought may be regarded as an answer to a question. The subject is, so to speak, the formulation of the question; the predication is the answer.

This characteristic of topics has been exploited for use as a criterion for determining the topic of a given utterance in a given context in the ‘question test,’ explicitly formulated in Sgall, Hajč ova and Beneš ová 1973; Gundel 1974; Reinhart 1982: To determine the topic of a given utterance, one need simply determine the question that the utterance is used to answer in the context—the topical

⁶See Firbas 1964 for criticism of the views of Travnicek 1961 who, like Halliday, defines ‘theme’ in terms of sentence-initial position. Note that Halliday’s (e.g. 1985: 39) position is that the theme in English may be structurally identified as the element in initial position, but is defined in functional terms as ‘the element which serves as the point of departure of the message.’

⁷Cited in Gundel (1974: 21).

⁸Cited in Jespersen (1921: 146), and Gundel (1974: 14-15).

elements are those elements of the utterance which are also contained in the question.⁹ For example, the question-answer sequence in (4) supports the analysis of the Cuban emigrés as the topic of (3b):

- (4) Q: What happened with the Cuban emigrés?
A: Jimmy Carter embraced them.

The connection between sentence comment and locus of prosodic prominence has been noted at least since Lipps 1893 and Paul 1909. It is generally agreed that primary sentence stress (accent, prominence) falls somewhere on the part of the sentence expressing the comment. The location of primary prosodic prominence may thus be used as a positive test for comment status, although application of this test is complicated in practice by the potential for secondary prosodic peaks to occur on both topic elements and comment elements, and also for multiple primary prosodic peaks to occur on comment elements (for further discussion, see §2.5 below).

Although there is no single position within the simple sentence which is reserved exclusively for topics, the adjunct positions to the left and right of the simple sentence have been characterized in Gundel 1985 as ‘syntactic topic’ positions which ARE reserved for topics:¹⁰

- (5) **Syntactic Topic:** A constituent, C, is the syntactic topic of some sentence, S₁, iff C is immediately dominated by S₁ and C is adjoined to the left or right of some sentence S₂ which is also immediately dominated by S₁. [Gundel 1985]

Syntactic tests for topichood have been proposed by various authors. Thus, Kuno 1972 and Gundel 1974 propose the ‘speaking of’ and ‘as for’ tests to identify the sentence topic, and Reinhart 1982 proposes the related ‘said-about’ test. The aptness of (6a)-(6c) as paraphrases of (3b), for example, shows that all three tests support the analysis of the Cuban emigrés as the topic of (3b):

- (6) a. Speaking of the Cuban emigrés, Jimmy Carter embraced them.
b. As for the Cuban emigrés, Jimmy Carter embraced them.
c. He said about the Cuban emigrés that Jimmy Carter embraced them.

Since these tests have occasionally been misunderstood as substitution tests (e.g. by Ward 1985 and Smith 1985), it must be emphasized that syntactic paraphrases with identical topic-comment structures may still have different conditions of use.

2.2 Cognitive Status

⁹The notion of ‘natural response’ plays the role of the eliciting question in the presupposition-focus of Chomsky 1971.

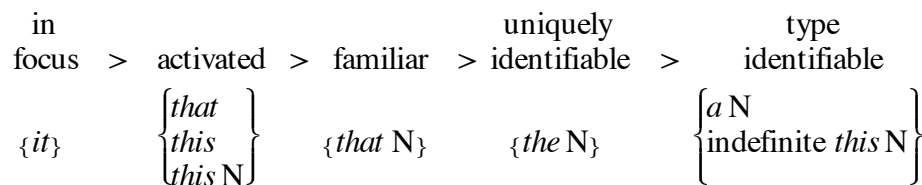
¹⁰Note that Gundel does not intend her definition to include cases in which the ‘preposed’ constituent bears primary accent. That is, she intends to characterize left dislocations, right dislocations, ‘double-subjects’, and topic-topicalizations, but not focus-topicalizations as topic+comment constructions (cf. Gundel 1974, 1985, 1988).

Though it is generally agreed that the topic of a sentence is in some sense ‘given’ or ‘presupposed’ with respect to the comment, attempts both to define ‘givenness’ and to define the relationship between givenness and topicality have proved controversial. To avoid confusion, a clear distinction must be made between two basic senses of ‘givenness.’ It is a definitional characteristic of the topic-comment relation that the topic of a sentence is ‘given’ relative to the comment. This ‘relational’ sense of ‘givenness’ has sometimes been confused with a second, ‘referential’, sense of ‘givenness’ whereby speakers expect their addressees to be familiar to a greater or lesser extent with the different elements entering into the compositional meaning of the utterance.¹¹

Before turning to a discussion of how the two senses of givenness are related, I will briefly elaborate on the second, ‘referential’ sense of givenness. In the past two decades, it has come to be recognized that ‘givenness’ in the referential sense is itself a nonunitary concept, and that there are a number of equally legitimate senses in which linguistic expressions may be referentially ‘given.’ These different senses are intuitively definable in terms of assumptions speakers make concerning the cognitive status of the intended referents for their addressees — i.e. assumptions about the extent to which the addressee is currently thinking about the referent, and about the particular component of memory that the addressee will need to search to successfully gain access to a representation of the referent.¹²

Building on previous work by Gundel (1978a,b; 1985), Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski propose that there are five linguistically-significant cognitive statuses, which are implicationaly related as shown in the Givenness Hierarchy in (7):

(7) **Givenness Hierarchy** [Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1988, 1989, 1990]



¹¹See Gundel (1978, 1985, 1988) for more discussion of these two basic senses of givenness, and note that Kuno 1972, Sgall, Hajič ova and Beneš ová 1973, and Lambrecht 1985 explicitly emphasize this same point.

¹²The notion of ‘cognitive state’ or ‘status’ may be traced back to Chafe (1976: 27-28): ‘Not only do people’s minds contain a large store of knowledge, they are also at any one moment in certain temporary states with relation to the knowledge. For example, a person may be ‘thinking of’ a certain small part of it. Language functions effectively only if the speaker takes account of such states in the mind of the person he is talking to. It is only, for example, when the speaker adjusts what he says to what he assumes the addressee is thinking of at the moment that his message will be readily assimilated by the addressee.’

The Givenness Hierarchy encodes the claim that the five statuses are systematically correlated with appropriate choice of different forms of referring expression in English.¹³ Each particular cognitive status constitutes a necessary condition for felicitous use of the form associated with it on the hierarchy and also of any form to its left, and a sufficient condition for use of the form associated with it on the hierarchy and of any form to its right.¹⁴

Consider for example, the conditions under which the sentences in (9) may be appropriately used in the linguistic context of (8):

- (8) I couldn't sleep last night.
- (9) a. **A/this dog** (next door) kept me awake.
 b. **The dog** next door kept me awake.
 c. **That dog** (next door) kept me awake.
 d. **This dog/this/that** kept me awake again.
 e. **It** kept me awake.

Felicitous use of the indefinite article or indefinite determiner *this* as in (9a) requires only that the addressee know the meaning of the word *dog*, i.e. that the addressee be able to identify the type (i.e. class, kind) of entity to which the intended referent belongs. Use of the definite article, as in (9b), requires in addition that the speaker is justified in assuming the addressee to be able to uniquely identify the particular referent concerned, perhaps through inference. The distal demonstrative determiner in (9c) is even more restrictive, in that it may be appropriately used only when the speaker can assume the addressee to have some prior familiarity with the particular dog under discussion, if only to know from prior conversation that the speaker's neighbor has a dog. Use of the proximal demonstrative determiner or one of the demonstrative pronouns, as in (9d), requires

¹³It was argued in Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1990 that the Givenness Hierarchy has cross-linguistic significance as the basis for an insightful characterization of the use of different forms of referring expression (including zero pronominals and zero determiners) in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and Spanish.

¹⁴Many researchers have recognized the existence of multiple degrees or types of givenness. See especially, Kuno 1972, 1973 ('temporary' versus 'permanent registry of discourse'); Sgall, Hajičová and Benešová 1973 ('stock of shared knowledge' with an 'activated subset'), Chafe 1974, 1976 ('given' versus 'new'); Allerton 1978 ('given', 'semi-given', 'semi-new', and 'new'), Prince 1981 ('evoked', 'unused', 'inferable', 'brand-new'); Brown and Yule 1983 ('current given' versus 'displaced given'); Heim 1982 ('prominent' versus 'familiar'); Culicover and Rochemont 1983 and Rochemont 1986 ('contextually-construable'); Lambrecht 1985 ('active', 'semi-active' or 'accessible', 'inactive', 'unidentifiable'). Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1989 criticize previous approaches for failing to recognize an adequate number of distinctions (e.g. Prince's notion of 'evoked' covers both 'in focus' and 'activated'; Rochemont's notion of c-construable covers at least 'in focus', 'activated' and 'familiar'), for failing to adequately recognize the implication relation holding between the statuses (e.g. Prince's notion of 'evoked' does not imply 'unused', and for conflating givenness and inferability (i.e. we argue that 'inferable' is not so much a separate cognitive status, as a means for an entity to acquire a cognitive status).

further that the dog is activated in the immediate discourse context (i.e. available in or easily accessible to the addressee's awareness), either linguistically, by virtue of recent discussion, or extralinguistically, by virtue of physical presence in the speech situation. Finally, use of an unaccented pronoun, as in (9e), is maximally restricted in English in requiring not only that the dog is activated, but that it is in focus, i.e. the addressee's attention is already fixed on the dog in question.¹⁵

In the present work, I will assume that the linguistic relevance of the five cognitive statuses has been adequately demonstrated¹⁶, and will concentrate on extending the account to show that distinctions in cognitive status are relevant for clausal as well as noun phrase reference, in particular for the type of clausal reference involved in the use of cleft sentences. Thus, I assume that speakers are sensitive to the accessibility for the addressee of the propositions denoted by sentences and the predicates denoted by relative clauses as well as the accessibility of noun phrase referents.

2.3 The topic familiarity condition.

Returning now to the sense in which the topic of a sentence is 'given', I adopt the 'topic familiarity condition' proposed in Gundel (1985, 1988) and given in (10) below:

- (10) TOPIC-FAMILIARITY CONDITION
An entity, E, can successfully serve as a topic, T, iff, both speaker and addressee have previous knowledge of or familiarity with E.

This principle accounts for the judgments in (11), according to which definite and generic indefinite but not specific indefinite expressions may appear as syntactic topics:

¹⁵At issue in the distinction between activated and in-focus is the distinction between accented and unaccented pronouns, whether demonstrative or nondemonstrative. As discussed in Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1990, in-focus referents may also be encoded via zero anaphora to the extent allowed in the particular language. See Gundel 1980 and Kamayama 1985 for more discussion of cross-linguistic parallels between zero and unaccented pronouns.

¹⁶In the articles cited above and in ongoing work, we develop a more elaborate account of how the entailment relationship between these five statuses is pragmatically exploited in conjunction with the two parts of Grice's (1967) maxim of quantity to constrain selection in cases where necessary conditions for use of more than one form are met. The first part, 'be as informative as necessary,' pressures speakers to use the highest possible (i.e. leftmost) form on the hierarchy, while the second part, 'be no more informative than necessary,' pressures speakers to use the lowest possible (i.e. rightmost) form. Clashes between these conflicting tendencies result in the generation of conversational implicatures and special effects (e.g. the focus shift implicature associated with stressed pronouns and demonstratives, the novelty implicature associated with indefinite articles, the signal to search long-term memory associated with 'reminder' *that*, and the emotional overtones of certain demonstrative expressions).

- (11) a. The/that printer we looked at, I decided to buy it.
 b. A printer, I decided to buy one.
 c. #A printer, I decided to buy it.

The Topic Familiarity Condition lies behind the observation made for a large number of languages that topic expressions must be either definite or generic. Kuno 1973 makes this claim for morphologically marked topics in Japanese, cf. (12), and Li and Thompson 1981 make it for syntactic topics in Mandarin Chinese, cf. (13):

- (12) a. John wa watakusi no tomodati desu.
 TOP I GEN friend is
 ‘Speaking of John, he is my friend.’
 b. Kuzirawa honyuu-doobutu desu.
 whale TOP mammal is
 ‘Speaking of whales, they are mammals.’
 c. *Dareka wa byookidesu.
 somebody TOP sick is
 ‘Speaking of somebody, he is sick.’
- (13) a. nei zhi gouwo yijing kanguo le
 that CL dogI already see EXPCRS
 ‘That dog I have already seen’
 b. gou woyijing kanguo le
 dog I already see EXP CRS
 ‘The dog I have already seen/Dogs (generic) I have already seen’
 c. *yi zhi gou wo yijing kanguo le
 one CL dog I already see EXPCRS
 ‘A dog I have already seen.’

Gundel claims, crucially, that even though familiarity is necessary for topicality, it is not sufficient.¹⁷ It is perfectly possible for a comment to contain information which is not only familiar but also activated or even in-focus. The latter occurs routinely in the answers to alternative questions, as in example (14).¹⁸

¹⁷Thus Fries’s 1983 criticism that Gundel 1974 represents a ‘combining approach’ to Mathesius’s definition of theme-rheme structure by identifying the notions of topic and given information in contrast to the ‘separating’ approach of Halliday, which he advocates, is unfounded.

¹⁸This example is taken from Kuno 1972, who employs the term ‘old information’ (‘predictable’) for what I am calling the ‘relational’ (topic-comment) sense of givenness, and the term ‘anaphoric’ (already present in the ‘registry of discourse’) for the ‘referential’ (cognitive status) sense.

In making essentially the same point as Kuno and Gundel, Reinhart 1982 cites example (i), arguing that the ‘newness’ of comments cannot be defined purely on the basis of the referents denoted.

(14) Q: Among John, Mary, and Tom, who is the oldest?

A: Tó m is the oldest.

Reinhart 1982 diverges from Gundel in arguing that givenness is not even necessary for topic status. She cites example (15a), which contains a specific indefinite subject expressing, in her view, what the sentence is intuitively ‘about’, as verified by the ‘said about’ paraphrase in (15b):

(15) a. When she was five years old, a child of my acquaintance announced a theory that she was inhabited by rabbits.

[The New York Times, cited in Carden 1982]

b. He told us about a child of his acquaintance that when she was five years old, she announced a theory that she was inhabited by rabbits.

Reinhart concludes that only ‘pragmatic referentiality’ is necessary for topichood, rather than any sense of ‘old-information’ status.¹⁹

Prince 1984, 1985, Ward 1985, and Ward & Prince 1986 also give examples of left-dislocated and topicalized specific indefinite phrases, such as those in (16):²⁰

(i) Q: Who did Felix praise?

A: Felix praised HIMSELF

Selkirk 1984 discusses another class of examples demonstrating that referential givenness is not sufficient for topic status. She concludes on the basis of question-answer sequences such as those illustrated in (15) that ‘focused’ phrases — i.e. the VP here — may contain ‘old information’ — i.e. the direct object in (ii-b) and the indirect object in (iii-b).

(ii) a. What did Jane do next?

b. She sent her book to MARY.

(iii) a. What did Jane do next?

b. She sent her SKETCHES to the publisher

In (ii-b) and (iii-b), the entire verb phrase is used to express the comment, and thus is ‘new’ in the relational sense, but the verb phrase contains elements which are assumed by the speaker to be ‘activated’ and which are thus ‘given’ in the referential sense. For an explicit suggestion that Selkirk’s ‘old information’ is related to referential ‘familiarity’ in the sense of Heim 1982 (i.e. ‘activation’), see Rooth (1985: 18-25). Rooth suggests that a non-embedded focus expresses newness in a ‘pragmatic’ (i.e., relational) sense, while an embedded focus expresses newness in a ‘semantic’ (i.e., referential) sense.

¹⁹As noted by Gundel 1985, however, a simple referentiality condition is too weak since it fails to account for the unacceptability of (11c) above, even when the indefinite expression is ‘referential’ in the sense of Fodor and Sag 1982 — i.e. when the speaker has a ‘particular entity in mind.’

²⁰Reinhart argues that example (15a) fails Gundel’s ‘as for’ test due to special conditions which prohibit left-dislocation of both specific and non-specific indefinites. If the sentence is rephrased to be appropriate in a more colloquial register, however, dislocation of the specific indefinite subject is perfectly appropriate:

(i) This kid I know, when she was five years old, she thought there were rabbits living in her body.

- (16) a. An old preacher down there, they augured under the grave where his father was buried. [Terkel 1974: 44; cited in Prince 1984: 216]
- b. Once when we went to Big Bear and we caught a lot of fish and Suzie Kathy and Betty went to a park and me, my mom and dad went fishing. And this guy his fishing pole fell down in the water and he had to go down and get it.
[Carterette & Jones 1974:134; cited in Prince 1984: 222]
- c. Several of these questions I will try to answer — but, let me emphasize, from a personal rather than a general viewpoint.
[Nixon 1972, cited in Ward and Prince 1986]

It is worth noting that specific indefinite syntactic topics are not limited to English. As shown in (17) and (18), specific indefinite expressions in Korean and Hmong may be morphologically marked as topics:²¹

- (17) Korean (Lee 1987: 18-19)
 ɔ̄ ce ne-ka manna-n salam-in mikuk -e
 yesterday I-NOM met-ATTR person-TOP America-LOC
 o-n ci sam nyɔ̄ ntø -s' -ninte
 come-ATTR since three year became-PAST -CIRCUM
 acikto uncɔ̄ n -il mos ha-n -te
 yet driving-ACC not do-NPST QUOT
 ‘A man I met yesterday (TOP) has been in America for three years, but (he said) he cannot drive yet.’
- (18) Hmong (Fuller 1988: 57)
 Ib... co... neeg... tuaj tshiab (mas) kuvxav
 one GRP person come new TOP I want
 tau ib co pab kuv.
 get oneGRP help me
 ‘[From] a group of people [who] just arrived. (TOP), I want to get some people to help me.’

While recognizing the existence of such counterexamples to the topic familiarity principle, Gundel 1985 argues that they can be treated as motivated suspensions of the principle for particular rhetorical effects, noting in support of this claim that such indefinite topics are necessarily anchored in a familiar element, that they don’t occur felicitously in questions and imperatives, and that their distribution is restricted to particular discourse genres.²² It may be the case that suspension of the

²¹Gundel (1985: 90, note 1) mentions that examples like Reinhart’s, involving the initial sentence of a newspaper story (and where the expression at issue appears in subject position in English), may also receive the morphological topic marker *wa* in Japanese.

²²Gundel presents and discusses but then provisionally rejects, the weaker ‘topic identifiability’ condition shown in (i):

topic familiarity principle is permitted only if the speaker presents sufficient information for the addressee to construct a representation specific enough to support evaluation of the overall proposition and storage of it in memory.

2.4 All comment sentences.

Since topics for Gundel are cognitive-pragmatic entities rather than linguistic expressions, she is able to assume that sentences can have topics which are not linguistically expressed. This assumption is advantageous because it makes possible the general claim that every sentence has a topic, even existential or presentational statements like those in (19):

- (19) a. Q: What's wrong?
 A: There's a fly in my soup.
- b. A: What happened?
 B: Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Since it is possible to semantically evaluate such sentences (i.e. to assign them truth values on particular occasions of utterance), they too should be viewed as having topics. Gundel 1974 suggests that 'all comment' utterances should be viewed as making assertions about what is or is not the case at a particular location in space and time — and hence as responsive to questions of the form '(then) what happened (there)?'²³ I would like to present here an additional argument in favor of Gundel's (1974, 1985) analysis of the topic of an 'all comment' sentences as a spatial-temporal index.²⁴

Kuno (1972, 1973) presents a well-known discussion of the uses of the Japanese topic marker *wa* and nominative marker *ga* which are illustrated in (20):

-
- (i) TOPIC IDENTIFIABILITY CONDITION
 An expression, E, can successfully refer to a topic, T, iff E is of a form that allows the addressee to uniquely identify T.

Note, however, that even the status 'uniquely identifiable' won't cover the examples pointed out by Reinhart and Prince, which are indefinite and thus not 'uniquely identifiable' in the sense of the Givenness Hierarchy.

²³Existential and presentational sentences have received a number of labels in the discourse-pragmatic and syntactic literature: e.g. 'thetic' (Kuroda 1972, Babby 1980, Sasse 1987, Lambrecht 1987), 'neutral description' (Kuno 1972, 1973), 'focus-only' (e.g. Chomsky 1971, Wilson and Sperber 1979), 'news' (Schmerling 1976), 'topicless' (Reinhart 1982), 'presentational' (Hetzron 1977, Rochemont 1978, 1986, Gueron 1980, Safir 1985), and 'event-reporting' (Lambrecht 1986).

²⁴Such a topic could be viewed as expressed by the finite tense operator.

- (20) a. **thematic**
 John **wa** gakusei desu
 student is
 ‘Speaking of John, he is a student.’
- b. **contrastive**
 Amewahutte imasu ga...
 rain falling is but
 ‘It is raining, but...’
- c. **neutral description**
 A**me**ga hutte imasu
 rain falling is
 ‘It is raining.’
- d. **exhaustive listing**
 John **ga** gakusei desu
 student is
 ‘(Of all the people under discussion) John (and only John) is a student.’
 ‘It is John that is a student.’

Kuroda 1965, 1972 had previously observed that the readings referred to by Kuno as ‘neutral description’ readings are not available for stative sentences. Thus the *ga*-marked subject of (21b) has only an ‘exhaustive listing’ reading:²⁵

- (21) a. Hito wa doobuto de aru.
 ‘Man is an animal.’
- b. Hito ga doobuto de aru.
 ‘It is man that is an animal.’

I would like to argue here that this effect may be derived pragmatically, given the assumptions in (22):

- (22) a. The spatio-temporal index of an event-reporting sentence can serve as its topic.
 b. Sentences containing stative predicates denote states-of-affairs rather than events, and thus cannot be ‘about’ the spatio-temporal index of an event.
 c. *ga*-marking in Japanese signals non-topicality.
 d. Every sentence has a topic.

Note that (21a) is simply a generic sentence whose topic is ‘man.’ That is (21a) is interpreted predictably as a predication ‘about’ the denotation of its *wa*-marked subject. The topic of (21b), on the other hand, cannot be interpreted as a predication ‘about’ the denotation of its subject since the

²⁵This effect is labeled the ‘obligatory focus’ effect in Ogihara 1987.

subject is marked with *ga*. (21b) also cannot be ‘about’ its spatiotemporal index since *doobuto de aru* is a stative predicate, and stative predicates cannot be used to report events. Thus (21b) cannot be construed either as a topic-comment sentence (answering the question ‘what is man?’), or as an all-comment sentence (answering the question ‘what happened?’). But (21b), like every sentence, must have a topic. The sole remaining alternative is for (21b) to be construed as a comment-topic sentence (i.e. as answering the question ‘which species is an animal?’). But this is just the ‘exhaustive-listing’ reading.

Since the syntactic subject of a sentence will be assumed by the addressee to express the topic in the absence of contextual evidence to indicate the contrary, we might hypothesize that the function of *ga*-marking in Japanese is to signal precisely that a syntactic subject does NOT express the topic of the sentence. I will argue later that the function of clefting in English is likewise to signal the non-topical status of the clefted constituent..

2.5 Prosodic prominence.

2.5.1 PITCH ACCENT.

Recall that one consequence of the topic-comment notion assumed here is that the prosodic center of the sentence is always contained in the comment. I will assume the approach to the assignment of primary and secondary sentence accent which was first formulated in Gundel 1978.²⁶ Primary sentence accent — or ‘comment accent’ — always falls somewhere within the comment of the sentence, typically on the last NP if there is an NP in the comment, as per Gundel’s rule shown in (23):

- (23) Assign comment accent to the final NP in the comment if there is one; otherwise, to the final element.

Notice that this rule correctly predicts that comment accent will fall on the preverbal NP subject of an all-comment intransitive sentence instead of on the verb.²⁷

²⁶See Gundel 1985 for more discussion. I use the term ‘accent’ instead of the term ‘stress’ for prosodic prominence at the sentential level, as has become standard in recent years (e.g. Selkirk 1984; Rochemont 1986; Bolinger 1986, 1989). For consistency I have replaced Gundel’s term ‘stress’ with ‘accent’ in the definitions given below in (23) and (26).

²⁷The only exception I am aware of to the rule that primary accent always falls on some element within the comment is in constituent questions, where it is possible for the prosodic peak to fall on the final element in the body of a question even when the initial question word clearly functions as the sole non-activated element in the sentence, as in the example in (i) from Rochemont 1986:

- (i) A: I finally gave into my desire to splurge and went out and bought something new today.
B: Oh, really? What did you BUY?

- (24) A: What's going on in here?
 B: A shipment of BOOKS has arrived.

When relevant, I will indicate the characteristic prominence and falling pitch contour associated with comment accent by large capital letters, as in the question-answer example in (25):

- (25) Q: What about the cheese, who bought it?
 A: MARY bought the cheese.

Sentence prosody is also sensitive to the cognitive status of the sentence topic. While it is often the case that topics are completely unaccented, especially in cases of topic continuation, speakers also have the option of placing a secondary accent on the topic in cases of topic shift, contrast, and emphasis. Adopting Gundel's rule shown in (26), I will refer to the secondary prominence and rising intonation pattern associated with unactivated and contrastive topics as 'topic accent':

- (26) Assign topic accent to unactivated and contrastive topics²⁸

When relevant, I will indicate topic accent by small capital letters, as in (27), where the cheese is (part of) the topic, but in answering the question, the speaker chooses to contrast two different types of cheese:

While I accept Rochemont's explanation that the inherently focused nature of question words allows speakers to forego prominently accenting them, I would analyze the accents that occur in the body of such questions as topic accents, and claim that a comment accent still falls on the *wh*-word, albeit only a weak one. Note that Bolinger (1986: 96) analyzes Culicover and Rochemont's (1983) version of this example as containing two accents: an accent of information on *what* and an accent of interest on *buy*. Culicover and Rochemont (1983: 139-140) analyze it as containing secondary accent on *what*, and provide some discussion of the pragmatic effects associated with accenting only *what*, as well as with accenting *what* and *buy* equally.

However, contrary to the predictions of both Culicover and Rochemont 1983 and Rochemont 1986, I find it more natural to accent the main verb when this does not coincide with the final lexical element. Thus, while Rochemont (p. 26) prefers the accent pattern in (B2) over that in (B1), I have the opposite judgment.

- (ii) A: John went to England to buy something for Mary.
 B1: What did John BUY for Mary?
 B2: What did John buy for MARY?

See Zacharski 1990 for more discussion of pragmatic constraints on accent assignment in English.

²⁸There may also be syntactic reasons for accenting a topic — e.g. if it comes at the end of a prefinal clause or major phrase, as shown by the discussion of Rochemont 1986. Thus, though it seems natural to leave an activated VP unaccented in a simple sentence as in (ii), it seems natural to accent it if the comment subject is extraposed as in (iii):

- (i) Who appeared at her doorstep?
 (ii) A man she had not seen in YEARS appeared at her doorstep.
 (iii) There appeared at her DOORSTEP, a man she had not seen in YEARS.

- (27) Q: What about the cheese, who bought it?
 A: MARY bought the BLUE, but SUSAN bought the BRIE.

Gundel cites Jackendoff (1972: 261-262) as the primary precedent for her distinction between comment accent and topic accent. Jackendoff distinguishes two sentence accents, which he terms A-accent and B-accent²⁹, and which he explicitly relates to question-answer pairs. Jackendoff's examples in (20) show that an item receiving a B-accent is repeated from the question, while the item receiving the A-accent answers the question. Notice that the questions which Jackendoff selects are explicitly 'aboutness' questions:

- (28) a. A: Well, what about FRED? What did HE eat?
 B: FRED ate the BEANS.
 B A
- b. A: Well, what about the BEANS? Who ate THEM?
 B: FRED ate the BEANS.
 A B

Indeed, in the following passage, Jackendoff explicitly relates the distinction between B-accent and A-accent to the distinction between topic and comment

This interpretation of pitch accents bears on the traditional notions of topic and comment. In many simple sentences, the stress and intonation contours divide the sentence exhaustively into two foci, the subject and the predicate, with a B pitch accent on the former, and an A accent on the latter.

Jackendoff also points out that sentence-initial adjuncts such as those in (29) typically receive B-accent, which is of course consistent with their analysis as topics:³⁰

- (29) a. BAGELS, I don't like to EAT.³¹
 B A
- b. At six O'CLOCK, FRED walked in
 B A

²⁹Jackendoff selected these terms in apparent analogy with the notions of A-accent and B-accent introduced by Bolinger. However, as Pierrehumbert (1980) points out, and will be seen below, the two sets of notions do not correspond.

³⁰Jackendoff also discusses cases of questions containing single B-accent, and analyzes them as double focus constructions.

³¹Note that the inverse accent pattern is also possible on this same string of words (cf. Gundel's 1974 notion of focus topicalization, and Prince's 1985 notion of focus preposing):

- Q: Which pastries don't you like to eat?
 A: Well, BAGELS I don't like to EAT.
 A B

- c. Of all the people I've ever MET you are undoubtedly the UGLIEST
- B A

Pierrehumbert 1980 presents a phonetic redefinition of Jackendoff's unitary notion of sentence accent. She distinguishes two basic tones (L and H), and characterizes the notion often referred to as 'sentence stress' as particular configurations of a pitch-accent (notated L* or H*), phrase accent (notated L- or H-) and boundary tone (notated L% or H%). The intonation contours associated with intonation units can thus be characterized as resulting from the autosegmental spreading of particular configurations of accent and boundary tones. Referring to the examples in (30), she identifies the configuration H*L-L% with Jackendoff's A accent, and the configuration H*L-H* with Jackendoff's B-accent (p .25):

- (30) a. A: What about Anna? Who did she come with?
 B: Anna % came with Manny
 | |
 H*L-H% H*L-L%
- b. A: What about Manny? Who came with her?
 B: Anna % came with Manny
 | |
 H*L-L% H*L-H%

As a simple mnemonic for remembering the distinction between the two configurations, Pierrehumbert suggests associating them respectively with the labels 'Answer' and 'Background.' This mnemonic is consistent with the analysis of A as the comment accent and B as the topic accent.

Ladd (1980) describes the effect of a placing a fall-rise accent on a topical element of an answer to the question in (31):

- (31) [context: discussion of who ate the various leftovers after a big potluck dinner]
- A: I know who ate the cabbage, but what about the beans?
- B: a. FRED ate the beans.
 b. FRED ate the BEANS.

The lack of prosodic emphasis on *the beans* in (31A) has the effect of relating this phrase to the immediately preceding sentence, so that 'the force of his answer is something like *Fred is the one who did what you were talking about.*' In accenting the phrase in (32b), on the other hand, the speaker 'anchors his reply in the larger context of the discourse, which is about who ate the various leftovers...he says something more like: *As for the beans, in their capacity as one of the leftover dishes under discussion, Fred is the one who ate them.*' Ladd's description is consistent with the analysis of the fall-rise contour as a topic accent. But membership in an activated set is only one reason for accenting a topic—a new or reactivated topic will also be accented.

Finally, Bolinger (e.g. 1958, 1986, 1988) has emphasized more than anyone else the complexity and multiplicity of constraints on intonation patterns. Using still another system of notation, Bolinger (1986: 436. n. 3) states that ‘AC profiles are quite regularly associated with themes, in whichever order.’ One of the functions of the AC profile identified by Bolinger (1986: 182) is ‘theme particularization’ as in (32):

- (32) a. What happened? What happened to my brother?
 Your bróther broke his lég Your bróther broke his lég.
 AC A AC A
- b. Why do you use a hammer? Why do you use a hammer?
 With a hámmer it’s éasy It’s éasy with a hámmer.
 AC A AC A

Further discussion of the phonetic interpretation of primary and secondary accent is beyond the scope of this thesis. I rely on my own intuitions of primary and secondary prominence, and assume that these intuitions will prove to be grounded in phonetic reality.³² I will reiterate here simply that the comment always receives an accent, and the topic receives an accent if there is some reason to draw attention to it, but the topic accent is always a secondary accent.

2.5.2 FOCUS-PRESUPPOSITION.

We saw in example (3) above that the topic of a sentence is not always expressed by the syntactic subject. Kuroda 1972 points out additionally that the topic of a sentence is not always expressed as a single, continuous syntactic constituent. The answer in (33), for example, is ‘about’ both John and Bill.

- (33) Q: What happened then with John and Bill?
 A: John persuaded Bill to be examined by the doctor.

Interactions of topic-comment structure with syntactic structure have been extensively explored in recent years by generative grammarians who have built on Chomsky’s (1971) distinction between ‘focus’ and ‘presupposition.’ Chomsky defines the ‘focus’ (i.e. comment) of an utterance as one of the constituents which contains the intonational center. The ‘presupposition’ (i.e. topic) is derived

³²To summarize how Gundel’s 1978 distinction between comment stress and topic stress maps onto other prosodic distinctions which have recently been proposed, I will simply note the corresponding terms: Bolinger 1986, 1989 (profile A versus profile AC); Halliday 1967, 1985 (Tone 1 versus Tone 4); Jackendoff 1972 (A-accent versus B-accent); Bing 1979 (A versus A-rise contour); Ladd 1980 (fall versus fall-rise accent); Pierrehumbert 1980 (H*L-L% versus H*L-H% tune); Gussenhoven 1983 (addition versus selection).

by replacing the focus with a variable. In order for one utterance to constitute a ‘natural response’ to another utterance, the presuppositions of the two utterances must match.³³

Jackendoff 1972 uses the question-answer pair in (34) to illustrate Chomsky’s point that focus and presupposition must be determined at surface structure. The underlined focused constituent in the surface-structure question in (34a) fails to form a constituent both in the assumed deep structure shown in (35a), and in the extraposed input to the ‘*tough*-movement’ transformation shown in (35b):

- (34) a. Q: Is twelve-tone music easy to play on a KRUMMHORN?
 b. A: No, twelve-tone music isn’t even easy to SING.
- (35) a. [[Δ play twelve-tone music on a krummhorn] is easy]
 b. [it is easy [Δ play twelve-tone music on a krummhorn]]

However, Jackendoff overlooks the fact that *tough* -movement is an optional transformation, and that a natural question-answer pair can be constructed with the same focus-presupposition structure as in the above pair, but in which *tough*-movement has NOT applied:

- (36) a. Q: Is it easy to play twelve-tone music on a KRUMMHORN?
 b. A: No, it isn’t even easy to SING twelve-tone music.

In (36a), the focused elements fail to form a constituent at surface structure as well as at deep structure.

As Gundel 1974 points out, the account of focus and presupposition developed in Chomsky 1971 and Jackendoff 1972 crucially relies on the unfounded assumption that the focus of a sentence always constitutes a syntactically continuous constituent (or set of constituents in the case of multiple foci). Consider, for example, the question-answer pair in (37a-b). (37b) contains the discontinuous comment shown in bold-face in (37c), and has the syntactic structure represented roughly in (37d):

- (37) a. What did John do with the PICTURE I gave him?
 b. He hung it on the WALL.
 c. He **hung it on the WALL**.
 d. [S he [+past] [VP hung it [PP on [NP the [N WALL]]]]]

³³I assume, with Gundel (e.g. 1974, 1985), that Chomsky’s presupposition-focus distinction and Gundel’s topic-comment distinction are intended as definitions of the same phenomena, though from somewhat different perspectives.

The traditional account (e.g. Chomsky 1971, Jackendoff 1972, Wilson and Sperber 1979, Sperber and Wilson 1986) would predict that any of the constituents dominating the accented word can be selected as focus, and thus that (37b) can have any of the presuppositions shown in (38):

- (38) a. N focus He hung it on the something.
 b. NP focus He hung it on something
 c. PP focus He hung it somewhere.
 d. VP focus He did something.
 e. S focus Something happened.

The traditional account would thus predict that (37b) can function as a natural response to any of the questions shown in (39):

- (39) a. He hung it on the WHAT?
 b. On what did John hang the PICTURE I gave him?
 c. Where did John hang the PICTURE I gave him?
 d. What did John do THEN?
 e. What happened THEN?

Notice that question (37a), which actually elicits (37b) as its answer, does not appear in the list in (39). Proponents of the traditional account might perhaps claim that (38d) defines the presupposition shared by the question and answer in (37) — i.e. that the entire VP constitutes the focus in (37b). Note, however, that question (37a) does not presuppose simply that ‘John did something.’ If it did, the responses in (40) would be felicitous, but they aren’t: the direct object NP cannot be excluded from the presupposition.

- (40) a. He jumped out the WINDOW
 b. He sent flowers to his MOTHER.
 c. He wrote a letter to the MAYOR.
 d. He CHUCKLED randomly.
 e. He burst into FLAME.

Note also that the statements in (41) are also natural responses to (37a), i.e. that naturalness is preserved when V and PP are varied. The V and the PP must thus be included in the focus and not in the presupposition:

- (41) a. He dropped it out the WINDOW.
 b. He threw it in the RIVER.

- c. He flushed it down the TOILET.
- d. He fed it to his DOG.
- e. He sent it to his MOTHER.

The conclusion seems inescapable that the traditional generative account cannot account for these data.

More recent generative accounts of focus-assignment can possibly avoid this criticism. Both Selkirk 1984 and Rochemont 1986 propose more elaborate rules of focus propagation, which allow focused phrases to contain unfocused elements when such elements constitute ‘old information’ (Selkirk) or are ‘c-construable’ (Rochemont). Thus, (42b) and (42c) are predicted to be natural responses to question (42a) even when the indirect object in (42b) or the direct object in (42c) is left unfocused.

- (42) a. What did Jane do next?
 b. She sent her SKETCHES to the publisher.
 c. She sent her book to MARY.

Both Selkirk and Rochemont allow phrasal nodes to inherit focus from complements of their heads, but only Rochemont allows heads to inherit focus from their arguments. For the sentence in (37b), Selkirk’s rules³⁴ permit focus to be propagated to all the bold faced nodes shown in (43):

- (43) [IP he [I' [I +past] [VP [V hung] [NP it] [PP [P on] [NP the [N WALL]]]]]]]

Selkirk thus predicts that the entire VP will be assigned focus, though this focused VP will contain an ‘old information’ direct object. Though this solution correctly allows (37b) to be generated in response to (37a), it still does not adequately constrain the notion of ‘natural response’, since it predicts incorrectly that the responses in (40) are also natural responses to (37a).

Rochemont’s rules, on the other hand, permit the head V in (37b) to inherit focus from the PP and *not* transmit focus to the VP, as shown in (44):³⁵

³⁴Selkirk’s phrasal focus rule: A constituent may be a focus if (i) or (ii) (or both) is true:

- (i) The constituent that is its head is a focus.
- (ii) A constituent contained within it that is an argument of the head is a focus.

³⁵Rochemont’s optional rules of focus assignment:

- (i) If α is [+focus] and α is X^0 , then X^n is [+focus]
- (ii) If α is [+focus] and α is an argument of X^0 contained in X^n , then X^0 is [+focus]
- (iii) If X^0 is [+focus] and α is an adjunct of X^0 , then α is [+focus]

(44) [IP he [I' [I +past] [VP [v hung] [NP it] [PP [P on] [NP the [N WALL]]]]]]

Since Rochemont permits the assignment of a genuinely discontinuous focus, he thus solves the discontinuous focus problem.

2.6. Word order principles

I will adopt Gundel's (1985, 1988) proposal that a pair of independent but sometimes conflicting principles universally regulates the order in which a syntactic topic with a particular cognitive status is expressed relative to its associated comment:

(45) **Given Before New Principle**
State what is given before what is new in relation to it.³⁶

First Things First Principle
Provide the most important information first.

The often-alluded to cross-linguistic tendency for the topic (theme, old information) to precede the comment (rheme, new information) follows from the Given Before New Principle since, by definition, the topic is 'given' in relation to the comment. Bolinger's (1954) illustration of this principle for Spanish is shown in (46), and Lambrecht's (1987) illustration of it for Italian is shown in (47):³⁷

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|--|
| (46) | a. | Quien canta?
Canta JUÁN. | 'Who's singing?'
'JUAN'S singing.' |
| | b. | Qué hace Juan?
Juan CANTA. | 'What is Juan doing?'
'Juan's SINGING.' |
| (47) | a. | What happened?
Mi si è rotta la MACCINA. | 'My CAR broke down.' |
| | b. | What happened to your car? | |

³⁶Notice that Gundel is using the term 'given' in the topic-comment (relational) rather than the cognitive status (referential) sense here. For precedents see, e.g., Mathesius, 1928; Bolinger 1954; Li and Thompson 1976.

³⁷It has been sometimes claimed, however, that the topic of a sentence regularly follows the comment in some languages, as in example (ib) from Nandi (Creider and Creider 1979):

- | | | |
|-----|----|--|
| (i) | a. | Where is Kibet going? |
| | b. | wê:nti: ká:psápIt kipe:t
going Kapsabet Kibet
'Kibet is going to Kapsabet' |

I suspect, however, that this pattern is typical only for activated topics, i.e. it is consistent with the First Things First Principle.

La macchina si è ROTTA. ‘My car broke DOWN.’

However, it follows from Gundel’s First Things First Principle that the topic can felicitously follow the comment if the topic is less ‘important’ than the comment. If we make the further assumptions, (i) that an already activated topic is relatively less important than the associated comment and (ii) that an unactivated topic is equally or more important than the associated comment, it follows that a topic can only be expressed in sentence-final position if it is activated.³⁸ This ‘activation constraint’ on right-adjoined topics follows from the interaction of the two principles. That is, it is only when a topic is ALREADY under discussion that it is less important than the comment and can therefore follow it. Put in processing terms, comprehension is not impeded by delayed expression of the topic in such cases, since there is no need for the speaker to draw the addressee’s attention towards the topic. The preceding argument is summarized in the table in (48):³⁹

(48)	GIVEN-NEW t,T < C	FIRST-FIRST T,C < t	ADDITIVE INTERACTION	PREDICTED OCCURRENCE
tC	+	-	o	yes
TC	+	o	+	yes
Ct	-	+	o	yes
CT	-	o	-	no

Gundel’s word order principles are supported by the cognitive status of left-dislocated as opposed to right-dislocated topics, and non-inverted as opposed to inverted pseudocleft clauses. Thus, it is generally recognized (cf. Gundel 1985, Barnes 1985, Lambrecht 1986) that left-dislocation is typically used to introduce a topic which is not currently activated in the discourse context, as in (49a), or to re-introduce a topic whose activation-status has faded, as in (49b):

- (49) a. JM: During the debate, Dole said that, if elected, he would freeze all government spending. Haig said that he would take steps to cut waste in defense spending. Robertson and duPont said again that they would not support the INF treaty. Kemp said that tax breaks for the oil industry were a good idea. And Bush called upon all his GOP rivals to make public their income tax returns for the last 10 years. **As for the key Iran-contra issue on which the debate had been expected to pivot**, did George Bush effectively put the Iran question to rest with his performance on Friday night?

[McLaughlin Group, 1/9/88]

³⁸See also Givon’s (1989: 222-225) argument in favor of replacing the traditional assumptions that ‘topics precede comments,’ ‘theme precedes rheme,’ ‘old information precedes new information’ and ‘the subject more naturally precedes the verb’ in favor of the principle: ‘Attend first to the most urgent task’— ‘A communicative task in discourse is more urgent if the speaker deems it to be either less predictable (‘less accessible’) to the hearer, or more important.’

³⁹In the chart, ‘t’ denotes activated topic, ‘T’ denotes unactivated topic, C denotes comment; ‘+’ means the particular principle is satisfied, ‘-’ means it is violated, ‘o’ means it is trivially satisfied.

- b. JG: **That poll in the Boston Herald that you took so seriously**, I don't suspect it's taken very seriously by the James Bakers and Lee Atwaters of this world. I think Dukakis will carry Massachusetts by an easy 10 points.
[McLaughlin Group, 9/2/88]

A right-dislocated topic, on the other hand, is always activated, as in example (50):

- (50) PB: I'll tell you, but they have a point, **the Likud Party**, and they believe if they give it up, what you're going to have is Yasser Arafat, in effect, as governor of the West Bank. And so they have an argument in that sense. I think it's valid they're concerned.
[McLaughlin Group, 12/26/87]

In Hedberg (1988, 1989) I argued that a sentence-initial, pseudocleft clause always expresses the sentence topic.⁴⁰ Pseudoclefts are typically used to open a relevant new sub-topic, as in (51), or to return to a still-relevant topic after a digression or turn-switch, as in (52):

- (51) JM: Well, let's get to the question of the snub, why Dukakis did not tell Jackson before. We've discussed this before. Do you have any insights into that?
BB: Yes, I think it was just an oversight. I—those things happen.
JM: I'm talking about the Bentsen notification.
BB: Yes, exactly. Mike Dukakis doesn't play the political game naturally. And it was not at the top of his list. Now, **what's really interesting is the way he handled Jackson after that**. He was biding his time, and Jackson finally had to come to him on Tuesday...
[McLaughlin Group, 7/22/88]
- (52) JM: What must George Bush accomplish at the convention?
EC: ... Michael Dukakis received the opening kickoff, and he scored a touchdown at his convention. Now **what George Bush has to do, now that it's his turn with the ball, is put some points on the scoreboard**. And if I can deliver that football metaphor, he can speak to the common man. He's got to emerge from Reagan's shadow and draw the differences between himself and Dukakis in the sharpest possible terms. And he's got to, you know, criticize Dukakis. **THAT'S what he's got to do**.
[McLaughlin Group, 8/12/88]

⁴⁰In further support of this claim, note that a pseudocleft clause in Japanese (see Oghara 1987) is marked with the topic-marker *wa*, as in (i), and that a pseudocleft clause in French (see Barnes 1988) is left-dislocated, as in (ii):

- (i) Kitigai-na no wa John-da
crazy NOM TOP -is
'the one who is crazy is John.'
- (ii) ce qui marche très bien en hiver, c'est le couscous
that which marches very well in winter, it's the couscous
'What works very well in winter is couscous.'

On the other hand, a sentence-final, ‘inverted’ pseudocleft clause is typically used to express the comment rather than the topic of the sentence, as in example (53) below:

- (53) [talking about Dukakis and anti-abortion hecklers]
 MK: Yeah, at some point, if they keep that heckling stuff up, there will be a sympathy reaction, as there was in the case of Geraldine Ferraro.
 FB: No, no— not on that issue.
 MK: Oh, no, yes, there was. uh-uh— wait a minute. Now look—look, if they start disrupting speeches all the time, it will cease to be the story, and the crowds will—
 JG: **That’s what happened with Jimmy CARter in ‘76.** In ‘76 it got so bad that there was a backlash.
 [McLaughlin Group, 9/9/88]

An inverted pseudo-cleft clause may also be used to express a sentence topic, but only if the topic is already activated.⁴¹ Thus, an inverted pseudocleft may be used to re-express an already activated topic of a current discourse segment, as in the final sentence of (52) above and in example (54) below.⁴²

- (54) Just a minute. Let me talk to you. It’s a protectionist bill. There are terrible things in this bill. **The stuff that the administration has embraced is what’s miserable.** And if—I think what they’re going to do is there’s going to be a second bill passed without the plant closing provision....
 [RN, McLaughlin Group 4/29/88]

2.7 Discourse topic

In discussing the relation of an utterance to its surrounding context, some authors (e.g. Reinhart 1982, Barnes 1985) develop a second notion of ‘discourse topic.’ Rather than making a categorical distinction between ‘sentence topic’ and ‘discourse topic,’ however, I view them as intrinsically related: by virtue of encoding what the sentence is about, the topic also encodes what the discourse is about at the point the sentence is uttered. Because answering a question sometimes involves asking and answering one or more subordinate questions, topical questions may be embedded inside each other. It is possible, then, for a discourse as a whole to end up structured into multiple levels of hierarchically organized topics and subtopics. It seems useful to identify the notion

⁴¹More specifically, 87 out of 114 inverted pseudo-clefts in my newspaper column corpus (76%), and 103 out of 153 of inverted pseudo-clefts in my television discussion corpus (67%), functioned as topic+comment rather than as comment + (activated) topic constructions.

⁴²Note that the cleft clause of a topic+comment inverted pseudocleft bears primary, comment accent, while the cleft clause of a comment+topic inverted pseudocleft either bears secondary, topic accent, or is left unaccented.

of ‘discourse topic’ with the superordinate questions, or, in other words, to simply view the ‘sentence topic’ as the lowest level of ‘discourse topic.’⁴³

The main issue raised in the dialogue in (55), for example, is the impact of the week’s events on the presidential race. But in order to address this topic, speaker JG has to address two sub-issues, ‘the INF thing’ and ‘the Iran-Contra thing,’ each of which he introduces as a left-adjoined syntactic topic:

(55) JM: With Ronald Reagan at his side, Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole this week announced his support for the intermediate-range nuclear forces treaty.
[videotape]

Even more heat was turned up on Bush later this week when a memo was released by the Iran-contra investigators—remember them?—which showed that Bush supported the arms for hostages initiative earlier.

[videotape] What impact will this week’s events have on the two-man race—I think it’s fair to say that, Jack—between Bush and Dole?

JG: Well, the events of this week in particular, probably not very much. **The INF thing, the fact that Dole gets to stand with the President,** it’s a big deal here, and it’s not going to make a big deal—

JM: A non-starter.

JG: It’s not going to be a big thing in Iowa.

JM: A non-starter.

JG: I wouldn’t say a non-starter, but not a big deal.

JM: Okay.

JG: **The other thing, the Iran-Contra thing,** I think we have to wait and see. The Vice President is having a fundamental problem with the Iran-Contra issue. He is trying to have it both ways. He’s saying, on the one hand, he is on the President’s side; he’s involved with everything. He’s saying, on the other hand, ‘I was off that day.’ You know, that’s what he’s saying essentially about the Iran-Contra thing. He’s going to have to reconcile that, and reconcile it in a way that is convincing, because otherwise the other candidates, like Al Haig, will pick him to pieces on it. [McLaughlin Group, 12/18/87]

⁴³For compatible approaches to sentence topic and discourse topic, see Keenan and Schieffelin 1976, Carlson 1983, Van Oosten 1987. For approaches to discourse topic that don’t incorporate a clearly compatible approach to sentence topic, see van Dijk 1977, Givon 1983.

Chapter 3

The Cleft Copula and Clefted Constituent

In this chapter and the following one, I examine the structure of clefts. The primary issue to be addressed is the nature of each of the four structural components of cleft sentences, as shown in (1), and how the four components are related:

(1)	cleft pronoun	+	copula	+	clefted constituent	+	cleft clause
	It		is		beans		that I like

In the first section of this chapter, I present an overview of two previous approaches to the structure of clefts, which differ in the extent to which clefts are viewed as a subclass of copular sentences. The remaining sections focus more closely on the cleft copula, the clefted constituent, and the relation between them. In support of the analysis of clefts as copular sentences, I will argue that clefts, like other copular sentences, exhibit predicational as well as specificational interpretations, and that semantic constraints on permissible clefted constituents follow from their status as complements of the copula. In Chapter 4, I discuss the nature of the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause, and how all four components are related.

3.1 Two approaches to the structure of clefts.

One way to look at the structure of clefts is to take seriously the surface form of each component and assume that they function in clefts exactly as they do in other constructions: i.e. that the cleft pronoun, like pronouns in general, is a referring expression, that the copula plays the role it plays in other copular sentences, that the clefted constituent is a predicate complement, and that the cleft clause is a restrictive relative clause, as summarized in (2):

(2)	PRONOUN	+	COPULA	+	PREDICATE COMPLEMENT	+	RELATIVE CLAUSE
-----	---------	---	--------	---	-------------------------	---	--------------------

Another way to look at clefts is to assume that nothing is what it seems: the cleft pronoun is just a dummy pronoun; the copula is just a dummy verb, the clefted constituent is really the subject of the sentence, and the cleft clause is really the predicate, as summarized in (3):

(3)	DUMMY SUBJECT	+	DUMMY VERB	+	SUBJECT	+	PREDICATE
-----	---------------	---	------------	---	---------	---	-----------

Part of what makes clefts interesting is the difficulty of deciding which way to go.

By the time Otto Jespersen coined the term ‘cleft-sentence’ in Volume VII of *Modern English Grammar* (1949), he had already proposed two distinct analyses of their structure. The unresolved

conflict between Jespersen's two analyses is reflected in the competition between two general approaches to the structure of clefts in contemporary generative grammar. The problem is that both senses of the word *cleave* seem applicable to cleft sentences: they are 'cleft' into two parts, but the two parts 'cleave' together¹ both semantically and syntactically.

3.1.1 THE EXTRAPOSITION APPROACH.

In Volume III of *Modern English Grammar* (1927), Jespersen argued informally in favor of one analysis of clefts, which he later labeled the 'transposition analysis' and rejected. On this analysis, cleft sentences are viewed as a subclass of copular sentences: the clefted constituent is a predicate complement and the cleft clause is a relative clause discontinuously modifying the cleft-pronoun. In *Analytic Syntax* (1937), he formalized this earlier analysis as follows²:

- (4) **Jespersen 1927**
 S* V P 2*(S₂^c V) it₁ is the wife [who decides]₁

The transposition analysis had precedents in the traditional analysis of the cleft clause as a 'subject clause.' According to Fowler and Fowler 1919, for example, 'the *that* clause, supplemented by *it*, gives us the subject of a predication,' while 'the predication answers an imaginary question, recorded distinctly in the relative': 'What do you want?' 'It (the thing) that I want is money'/'it is money that I want.' Similarly, Curme 1931: 'It has become common to make any noun, adverb, or adverbial phrase or clause emphatic by converting it into an emphatic predicate introduced by *it is* (or *was*) and followed by the subject of the sentence in the form of a subject clause.'

Halvorsen 1978 points out the similarity between Jespersen's transposition analysis and transformational analyses of the 1970's that treat clefts as extraposed variants of pseudoclefts. The constituent structures assumed by some primary proponents are shown in (5)³: These analyses closely resemble Jespersen's transposition analysis in assuming the clefted constituent to be a predicate complement, and the cleft clause to be associated with the cleft pronoun. Clefts and pseudo-

¹Websters New Collegiate Dictionary: ¹cleave [ME *clevien*, fr. OE *clifian*]: to adhere firmly and closely or loyally and unwaveringly. ²cleave [ME *cleven*, fr. OE *cle:ofan*]: *vt* 1: to divide by or as if by a cutting blow... *vi* 1: to split esp. along the grain...

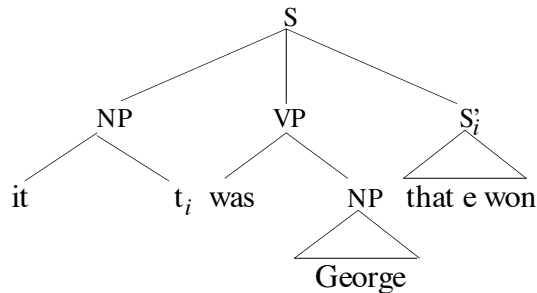
²S= Subject; V = Verb (finite); P = Predicative; 2 = Secondary; ** = words standing apart, but belonging together; and S₂ = a second subject; ^c = connective (serving to connect a clause with the principal part of the sentence, conjunction, relative pronoun, etc.).

³For the sake of comparison, I have used a uniform notation in the transformational analysis trees. I have used traditional category labels, and have assumed coindexed traces (t) and empty categories (e), to reveal (respectively) the movement and deletion operations of the earlier framework.

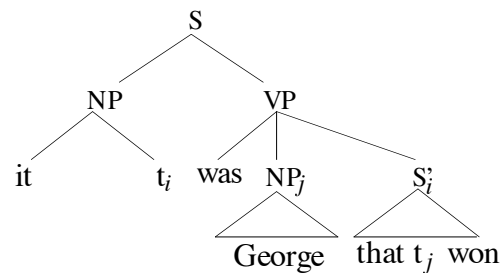
clefts are assumed to have a common basis, and cleft sentences in general are viewed as a subclass of copular constructions.⁴

(5)

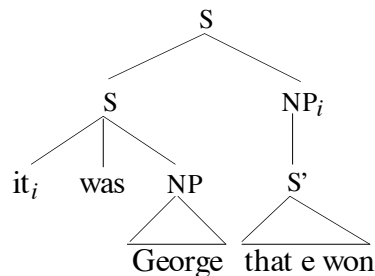
**A. Akmajian 1970;
Bolinger 1972; Wirth 1978**



B. Emonds 1976



C. Gundel 1977



The individual proposals differ in various ways: (i) Is the clefted constituent extracted from the cleft clause and placed in predicate position by transformational rule (Akmajian, Emonds), or is it base-generated in its surface position (Bolinger, Gundel, Halvorsen, Wirth)? (ii) Does the cleft clause start out as a headless, free relative (Akmajian, Gundel, Halvorsen), or as a modifier of a pronominal head (Bolinger, Emonds, Wirth)? (iii) Is the cleft pronoun a semantically-inert expletive (Akmajian, Emonds, Halvorsen, Wirth), or does it refer (Bolinger, Gundel)? (iv) Is the rule that extraposes the cleft clause peculiar to clefts (Akmajian, Halvorsen, Wirth), or an application of a more general rule, such as extraposition-from-NP (Bolinger), sentential-subject extraposition (Emonds), or right-dislocation (Gundel)? (v) Does the cleft clause form a surface constituent with VP (Emonds), or only with S (Akmajian, Bolinger, Gundel, Wirth)?

⁴Akmajian 1970 actually proposed a dual-source analysis for pseudoclefts, whereby the clefted constituent is either base-generated in predicate complement position or transformationally extracted from the underlying embedded S. I won't be concerned here with the 'classical era' controversy between advocates of deletion (Bach and Peters 1968; Ross 1972), extraction (Chomsky 1970; Schachter 1973, Hankamer 1974; Pinkham and Hankamer 1975; Emonds 1976), and base-generation (Higgins 1973; Gundel 1977; Wirth 1978) analyses of clefts and pseudoclefts. A fourth classic approach to pseudoclefts was the 'indirect question analysis' of Faraci 1971 and Harries 1972. For discussion see the cited sources, and for overviews see Halvorsen 1978 and Delahunty 1982.

3.1.2 THE EXPLETIVE APPROACH.

Jespersen 1937 rejected his earlier transposition analysis in favor of treating cleft sentences as syntactically identical to their unclefted counterparts—except for the ‘intercalation’ of the cleft pronoun, copula, and relative complementizer, now viewed as expletive elements which are ‘extraposed’ relative to the sentence proper. He formalized this analysis as follows⁵:

- (6) **Jespersen 1937**
 [sv] S [3^c] V [it is] the wife [who] decides

Again, there is perhaps some precedent in earlier work. For example, Poutsma 1904: ‘To engage the hearer’s or reader’s attention for what is considered most worthy of his interest, there is the artificial expedient of placing the word-group *it is* or *it was* before the most prominent word in the sentence.’ Similarly, Kruisinga 1911: ‘It is usually explained that the introductory *it is* serves to emphasize some element of the sentence. But it must be considered that the same result could often be obtained by giving front position to the word group without any *it is*.’

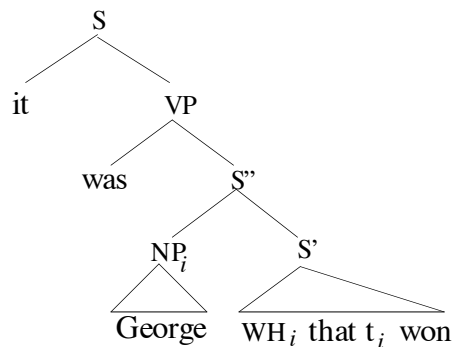
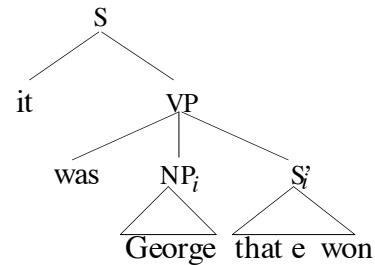
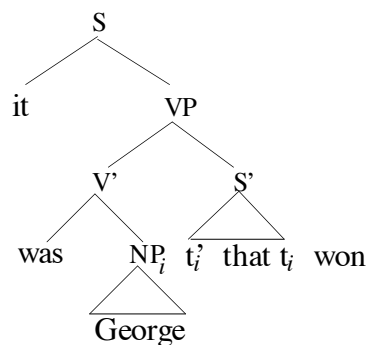
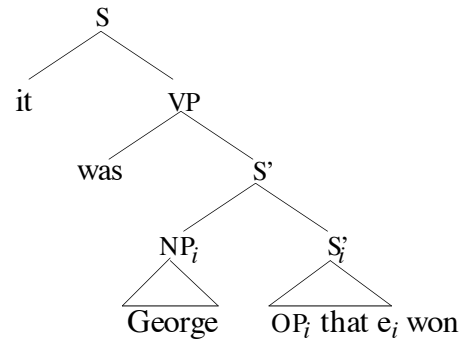
In the generative tradition, beginning with Chomsky 1977, the extraposition analysis was suddenly abandoned in favor of an approach more similar to Jespersen’s intercalation analysis,⁶ resulting in proposed surface structures such as those shown in (7).⁷ These analyses have in common their treatment of the cleft pronoun and copula as expletive elements which serve to syntactically introduce the clefted constituent but play no essential role in the interpretation of the sentence. The clefted constituent is no longer viewed as the main predicator, but merely as a preposed argument of the cleft clause.

⁵s= ‘Lesser’ subject; v = ‘Lesser’ verb (separated from the main verb); 3 = Tertiary; [] = extraposition or apposition.

⁶Delahunty 1982 explicitly makes this connection. Halvorsen likens extraction analyses of clefts (cf. note 4 above) to Jespersen’s intercalation analysis. Lees 1963 proposed an early transformational version of the expletive analysis in the Syntactic Structures framework: ‘An appropriate constituent is selected, to it is appended the WH-morpheme, this augmented constituent is brought out to the beginning of the sentence, and then the sentence is introduced by a main clause consisting of *it+be* plus the originally chosen nominal or adverbial constituent. Afterward, the ordinary rules for WH-morphophonemics in Relative Clauses can apply...’

⁷Again I have used a uniform notation for the sake of comparison. Coindexing is assumed to be assigned either under predication or by movement. See below for discussion of individual proposals.

(7)

D. Chomsky 1977**E. Williams 1980
Delahunty 1982****F. Rochemont 1986****G. Heggie 1988**

When he proposed his transposition analysis in 1927, Jespersen argued against assuming that the cleft relative clause takes the clefted constituent as its head, on the grounds that restrictive relative clauses are not ordinarily headed by proper names and definite pronouns. While the more recent generative analyses all assume the cleft clause to be directly predicated of the clefted constituent without mediation by the copula, none of them assume that the cleft clause is simply a relative clause restrictively modifying the clefted constituent. Various mechanisms are proposed to accomplish the predication.

Chomsky 1977 proposed that the clefted constituent is base-generated in an S'-adjoined 'topic' position, which is coindexed with the gap in the S' via the same 'predication rule' that links relative clauses to their associated heads. He assumes there to be a single structural configuration common to relative clause, cleft, topicalization and left dislocation structures, attributing any differ-

ences to surface interpretive rules peculiar to each structure.⁸ Delahunty 1982 proposes that predication takes place solely at a compositional level of ‘Logical Form’ — the cleft clause translates as a function (lambda abstract) which takes the translation of the clefted constituent as its argument.⁹ Williams 1980 and Heggie 1988 assume that the clefted constituent and cleft clause are coindexed at surface structure by a general predication rule, which results in their respective interpretation as subject and predicate. Williams and Delahunty analyze the clefted constituent and cleft clause as subconstituents of the VP,¹⁰ while Heggie analyzes them as subconstituents of a small clause.

The focus of Chomsky’s 1977 examination of clefts was on arguing that the syntactic relationship holding between the clefted constituent and the gap in the cleft clause observes general constraints on *wh*-movement. Thus, (8b) shows that the relation obeys the ‘complex NP’ constraint, and (8c) shows that it obeys the ‘*wh*-island’ constraint (Ross 1967).

- (8) a. It is this book that I asked Bill to get his students to read.
 b. *It is this book that I accept the argument that John should read.
 c. *It is this book that I wonder who read.

This relation is captured in more recent generative analyses by means of an operator-variable relation postulated to hold between the relative pronoun (or empty operator) and the gap. The operator is assumed to have undergone movement from its D-structure position, leaving behind a coindexed trace in the position of the gap.¹¹ The clefted constituent is assumed to be locally associated with the operator through some version of the predication relation proposed by Chomsky. Rochemont

⁸See Chomsky 1977: 94-97). Cf. also Pinkham and Hankamer 1975, Culicover 1977 and Rochemont 1986 for discussion of syntactic parallels between topicalized and clefted constituents, and Delahunty 1982 for discussion of differences. A traditional precedent for this view may perhaps be read into the Kruisinga passage quoted above.

⁹That is, ‘ $\lambda x.won(x)$ (George)’. A very similar analysis is offered by Gazdar, Klein, Pullum and Sag (1985) in a Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar framework. See also Atlas and Levinson’s (1981) translation of ‘It was John that Mary kissed’ as $\lambda x.x = George (\gamma y.won(y))$, i.e. ‘a group of individuals that won is identical to George.’ Note that for Atlas and Levinson, exhaustiveness is built into the semantic representation of clefts by means of ‘=’, so that a cleft sentence entails the corresponding simple sentence, but not vice-versa.

¹⁰But for different reasons. For Williams a predicate must mutually c-command its associated subject. Delahunty argues on the basis of concerns of structure-preservation, that they are generated under the VP by independently-motivated phrase structure rules.

¹¹It is generally assumed that this movement is subject to the subjacency constraint, and that the trace is subject to the ECP. Note that Chomsky (1977) argued that adverbial clefts such as (i) must have a source different from that of argument clefts, since the adverbial may be construed only within the matrix sentence:

- (i) It was out of spite that I ordered the students to refuse to hand in their assignments.

This difference could be viewed as just another instance of the complement-noncomplement (subject and adjunct) asymmetry regulated by the ECP (cf. Huang 1982), a constraint which also obtains in *wh*-questions:

- (ii) Why did you order the students to refuse to hand in their assignments?

1986 proposes that the clefted constituent is moved from its D-structure position in the cleft clause through the cleft clause COMP, and into a syntactic focus position adjacent to the copula.¹²

In sum, the syntactic structure of clefts is currently assumed to involve both an operator-variable relation, and a predication relation. Although the analyses within which these relations have been explicitly formulated fall within the expletive approach to the structure of clefts, these relations are not incompatible with the earlier extraposition approach. The operator-variable relation characterizing the internal structure of the cleft clause can be viewed to be a consequence of its relative clause nature; and the predication relation holding between the clefted constituent and the cleft clause operator can be viewed to be a consequence of the copular structure of the sentence as a whole.

In the remainder of this chapter, I focus on an examination of the copula and the clefted constituent, returning in Chapter 4 to an examination of the cleft pronoun, the cleft clause, and the relation between them.

3.2 The specificational-predicational distinction.

One way in which the extraposition approach to the structure of clefts differs from the expletive approach is in assuming the copula to play exactly the same role in the interpretation of clefts as it does in the interpretation of pseudoclefts and unclefted copular constructions. Expletive analyses, on the other hand, typically assume that the copula, like the subject pronoun, plays no role in the interpretation of the cleft sentence. On Delahunty's approach, for example, semantic interpretation is complete as soon as the function denoted by the cleft clause is applied to the translation of the clefted constituent — i.e., there is nothing left for the copula and the cleft pronoun to do. Delahunty assigns them a null translation, 'Ø', and a null compositional role: the function-application interpretation function f in (9a) is bypassed in favor of the vacuous interpretation function g in (9b).

- (9) a. $f(A,b) = A(b) = (b)A$ [A, an abstract; and b, a sister of A]
 b. $g(E,Ø) = E$ [E, an expression of LF;
 Ø, a null expression]

The interpretation of the sentence 'It was Bill that kissed Mary,' proceeds as follows:

- (10) a. kissed $K(x,y) = \lambda y[K(x,y)]$
 b. Mary: m
 c. kissed Mary: $f(\lambda y[K(x,y)], m) = \lambda y[K(x,y)](m) =$
 $K(x,m) = \lambda x [K(x,m)]$
 d. that Ø

¹²Rochemont offers independent motivation for this analysis from Hungarian and Aghem.

e.	that kissed Mary	$g(\lambda x[K(x,m)], \emptyset) = \lambda x[K(x,m)]$
f.	Bill:	b
g.	Bill that kissed Mary:	$f(\lambda x[K(x,m)], b) = (b) \lambda x [K(x,m)] = K(b,m)$
h.	was:	\emptyset
i.	was Bill that kissed Mary:	$g(K(b,m), \emptyset) = K(b,m)$
j.	it:	\emptyset
k.	it was Bill that kissed Mary:	$g(K(b,m), \emptyset) = K(b,m)$

Delahunty's assignment of identical interpretations to the sentences in (11) ensures that he captures the mutual entailment relationship between them.

- (11) a. It is Bill that kissed Mary. $K(b,m)$
 b. Bill kissed Mary. $K(b,m)$

It is incumbent upon any analysis of cleft sentences to capture this characteristic of 'semantic connectedness.' If clefts are to be treated as having the same truth conditions as their nonclefted counterparts, it is necessary to assume that the copula makes no independent contribution to truth conditional meaning.

Though Delahunty assumes that clefts have the same truth-conditions as their unclefted counterparts, he does not assume that they are synonymous in the broadest sense. Rather, he follows Halvorsen 1978 in associating with clefts an existential and an exhaustiveness implicature which are lacking in their unclefted counterparts. The cleft pronoun, cleft copula, and relative complementizer can thus be viewed as playing the pragmatic role of signalling these implicatures.

But do we want to assume that the copula is semantically invisible to such an extent that it has only a vacuous role to play in the mapping between syntactic structure and semantic interpretation? An alternative might be to assume that even if the copula is semantically transparent it is not semantically inert — i.e. that it plays a nontrivial role in the compositional process even though its ultimate effect on truth-conditions is vacuous.

3.2.1 THE COPULA.

Just what is the copula? Philosophers have traditionally distinguished two copulas: the 'be of predication' and the 'be of identity.'¹³ Ambiguities involving the copula rose to prominence in generative linguistics with the distinction first made in Akmajian 1970b between 'predicational' and 'specificational' pseudoclefts. Higgins 1973 extended the classification to account for all copular

¹³There is third traditional verb 'to be' which is not considered a copula. This 'be of existence' is used intransitively, as in: 'I think, therefore I am,' and 'There is a fly in my soup.'

sentences, and added two more subclasses to Akmajian's pair: 'identificational' and 'identity.' Higgins' typology of copular sentences, shown in (12), includes his semantic characterizations of their arguments. Examples are shown in (13):¹⁴

(12)	Type	Subject	Predicate
a.	<u>Predicational</u>	Referential	Predicational
b.	<u>Specificational</u>	Superscriptional	Specificational
c.	<u>Identificational</u>	Referential	Identificational
d.	<u>Identity</u>	Referential	Referential

(13)	a.	<u>Predicational</u> That thing is heavy. That woman is Mayor of Cambridge.
	b.	<u>Specificational</u> What I don't like about John is his tie. The only girl who helps us on Friday is Mary Gray.
	c.	<u>Identificational</u> That is Joe Smith. That is the Mayor of Cambridge. The girl who helped us on Fridays is Mary Gray.
	d.	<u>Identity</u> The morning star is the evening star Cicero is Tully.

Other analysts subsume the three non-predicational classes under a more general class, ending up with a two-way classification of copular sentence types which is essentially equivalent to that implied by the dichotomy of copulas of the philosophical tradition, though the terminology varies: e.g. 'equative' versus 'nonequative' (Bolinger 1972), 'identifying' versus 'attributive' (Gundel 1977), 'identificational' versus 'characterizational' (Kuno and Wongkhomthong 1981), and 'equative' versus 'predicational' (Safir 1982). Chierchia 1984 follows the philosophical tradition in distinguishing a '*be* of predication', which links a referential expression with a predicate, and a '*be* of identity', which links two referential expressions.¹⁵

¹⁴Higgins presents the chart in (12) on p. 264. I have modelled my summary of Higgins' typology on the summary given in Heggie (1988:4-5), taking the examples in (13) directly out of Higgins.

¹⁵Ball 1978 and Declerck 1988 distinguish all four of Higgins' subtypes. Heggie 1988 proposes a somewhat different reduction of Higgins' typology. She views specificational sentences as inverted variants of basic predicational sentences; and views 'identificational' and 'identity' sentences as basic predicational sentences in which the predicate has raised into the VP-adjunct, 'constructional focus' position of Rochemont 1986. She ends up, then, with a trichotomy of S-structure sentence types derived from a common predicational base. Unified accounts of all copular sentences are also proposed in Williams 1983 and Partee 1986, 1987. I will turn to a discussion of these proposals in §3.2.3 below.

3.2.2 PREDICATIONAL-SPECIFICATIONAL AMBIGUITIES.

A diverse set of copular sentences has been characterized in the literature as ambiguous between a predicational and a specificational interpretation. For purposes of developing an intuitive understanding of the distinction, it is useful to attempt a classification of this set into subtypes, according to the aspect of their meaning that the ambiguity seems to turn on:

- (14) Coordination
- a. What we saw in the park was a man and a woman. (Higgins)
 - b. What I bought is a German Shepherd and a St. Bernard (Gundel)
 - c. What I need is a car and a boat. (DeClerck)
- (15) Temporal, Aspectual, Modal
- a. The one who got the job was my wife. (Gundel)
 - b. Her last show was a Broadway hit. (Gundel)
 - c. What I bought was a tadpole. (Culicover)
 - d. What I don't eat is food for the dog. (Akmajian)
 - e. What John doesn't want is to be left alone. (Halvorsen)
- (16) Locational
- a. Where John is living is in San Francisco. (Culicover)
 - b. Where he lives is on the other side of the ocean. (Partee)
 - c. The place where I found John was in the garden. (Akmajian)
- (17) Subject attribution
- a. What John was doing was making Sara laugh. (Partee)
 - b. What he told us was the answer. (Akmajian)
 - c. What I heard was an explosion. (Gundel)
- (18) Speaker attribution
- a. What he threw away was a valuable piece of equipment. (Akmajian)
 - b. What I drew was a piece of trash. (Akmajian)
 - c. What she's eating is garbage. (Ball)
 - d. What he wants his next wife to be is fascinating. (Akmajian)

- (19) Indirect question
- a. What Henry whispered to Nancy is a military secret. (Gundel)
 - b. What the general is discussing is classified information. (Ball)
 - c. What John is is important. (Higgins)

The specificational-predicational distinction is not without problems. For one thing it is not always clear that the intuitive meaning difference involved in the specificational-predicational distinction is really semantic in nature since the two ‘readings’ sometimes entail each other, as in the examples in (20):

- (20) a. What I heard was an explosion. (Gundel)
- b. Where he lives is on the other side of ocean. (Partee)

Even when the two readings are truth-conditionally distinct, the difference is generally attributable to some semantic factor independent of the copula, such as a lexical ambiguity, as in (21):

- (21) Nixon’s peace plan is a bomb. (Higgins)

Similarly, what the difference in truth conditions of (15c) comes down to is whether the property of ‘being a tadpole’ characterizes the animal at the interval during which John bought it (the specificational reading) or at some prior interval (the predicational reading). To the extent that there is a semantic ambiguity here, it seems to depend on the interpretation of tense rather than on the interpretation of the copula. The temporal, aspectual and modal examples can easily be disambiguated by making their indexical parameters explicit:

- (22) a. What John bought used to be a tadpole.
- b. What I don’t eat becomes food for the dog.
- c. What John doesn’t want should be left alone.

The conjunction examples in (14) are perhaps similarly reduceable to an independent ambiguity involving indefinite term conjunction as opposed to common noun (property) conjunction. The latter interpretation is restricted primarily to predicate complements, though it seems vaguely present in noncopular sentences, at least when the conjunction is contrastively stressed:

- (23) a. I bought a German Shepherd AND a St. Bernard.
- b. John saw a man AND a woman in the park.
- c. I need a car AND a boat.

Note also that Akmajian’s example in (18a) seems to have two ‘predicational’ readings, in addition to the specificational one. The speaker could be characterizing the piece of equipment as

valuable either at the time it was thrown away, or at some prior time. The former interpretation can be obtained from the unclefted counterpart when the adjective is stressed:

- (24) a. He threw away a VALUABLE piece of equipment.
b. He threw away a valuable piece of EQUIPMENT.

As a further complication, the examples in (19) have an indirect question reading in addition to or instead of a predicational reading.¹⁶ This is the reading obtained unambiguously in (25a):

- (25) a. What pharaoh built the pyramids is a mystery. (Halvorsen)
b. What Henry whispered to Nancy is a military secret. (Gundel)
c. What the general is discussing is classified information. (Ball)

Gundel's (1977) example in (25b) has both an indirect question reading and a predicational reading, but seems to lack the specificational reading, due to the absence of tense-concord between the matrix clause and the cleft clause. Ball's (1978) example in (25c) has all three readings. If the general is discussing an arms-for-hostages deal which the speaker is asserting to be classified information, we have the predicational reading; if the topic of discussion is classified information per se, we have the specificational reading; and finally, if the government has withheld the topic of the general's discussion for security reasons, we have the indirect question reading.

In spite of the problems and complications just mentioned, I will assume from here on that the specificational-predicational distinction is adequately motivated.

3.2.3 SYNTACTIC CORRELATES.

It is well known that the specificational-predicational distinction has certain syntactic correlates. In particular, only specificational sentences exhibit what Higgins' 1973 referred to as 'syntactic connectedness.' Post-copular reflexive and reciprocal pronouns, for example, are permitted only in specificational sentences. The sentences in (12), then, are necessarily specificational with a reflexive pronoun in the complement, but necessarily predicational with a (bound) non-reflexive pronoun:

- (26) a. What John is is important to himself/him. (Higgins, Williams)
b. What John is is a nuisance to himself/him. (Partee)
c. His favorite hobby is preventing himself/him from sleeping. (Higgins)
d. John's dream is to better himself/*him. (Halvorsen)

¹⁶Higgins 1973 suggests that the 'indirect question' sentences can perhaps be classified with 'predicational' sentences, but he doesn't want to take a stand on whether the subject in such cases is 'referential' or not.

Secondly, post-copular negative polarity items with subject-internal negative operators are licensed only in specificational sentences:

- (27) a. What I don't have is any money.
 b. I have *any/some money
 c. What John hasn't done is leave yet/*already. (Halvorsen)
 d. John has left *yet/already. (Halvorsen)

Thirdly, the order of the phrases can be reversed with no change of meaning only in specificational sentences. The two pronouns in (27a) are thus obligatorily disjoint, and (27b)-(27f) do not have the predicational reading of their counterparts in (14)-(19), though the post-copular phrase can be understood predicatively as defining the subject:

- (27) a. *Amusing them_i is what they_i're doing.
 b. Amusing each other is what they're doing.
 c. Food for the dog is what I don't eat.
 d. A man and a woman was what John saw in the park.
 e. A military secret is what the Vice President is discussing.
 f. A bomb is Nixon's peace plan.

Fourthly, only specificational sentences allow neuter reference to people. The examples in (28) accordingly lack a predicational reading:

- (28) a. What you need is a good wife, which you don't have. (Kuno)
 b. What he wants to marry is an actress. (Higgins)

Finally, only predicational sentences allow auxiliary reduction (Kaisse 1979):

- (29) a. What he said's not significant.
 b. What they're doing's amusing them.
 c. *What they're doing's amusing each other.
 d. *What he's asking's whether there's any beer.

The existence of such syntactic correlates, of course, lends further support to the view that the specificational-predicational distinction is linguistically significant.

3.2.4 CHARACTERIZING THE DISTINCTION.

While it is uncontroversial that there is some sort of asymmetry between the two phrases of specificational sentence in that one of the phrases is somehow more abstract or less referential than the

other phrase, there has been little consensus on how to characterize the more abstract phrase. I turn next to a review of the major proposals. To simplify the discussion, I will ignore the fact that specificational sentences are reversible and assume for the rest of this section that the more abstract phrase always occurs in subject position.

Higgins 1973 assumed that specificational subjects have a semantic status peculiar to specificational sentences. He labelled this status ‘superscriptional,’ and characterized it as analogous to the heading of a list. Others have attempted to characterize this ‘superscriptional’ status in terms of the independently motivated attributive/referential, *de dicto/de re*, or predicative/referential distinctions. I turn now to a discussion of each of these attempts.

3.2.4.1 The attributive/referential distinction.

Gundel 1977 notes that superscriptional phrases are always used ‘attributively’ in Donnellan’s (1966) sense. However, the specificational-predicational distinction cannot be completely reduced to the attributive-referential distinction, as is clear from the example Donnellan originally offered in illustration of his distinction. The subject of (30a) can be used either attributively or referentially, but the sentence is predicational in either case:¹⁷

- (30) a. Smith’s murderer is insane.
- b. Smith’s murderer is a lunatic.
- c. Smith’s murderer is Jones.

When the postcopular adjective is replaced by a synonymous indefinite noun phrase, as in (30b), the resulting sentence has all three interpretations; and when it is replaced by a proper name, as in (30c), the specificational reading predominates.

- (31) a. referential + predicative (predicational)
- b. attributive + predicative (predicational)
- c. attributive + referential (specificational)

While it is clear from the summarization in (31) that the predicational/specificational distinction can’t be reduced to the referential/attributional distinction, it still appears possible to characterize the distinction in these terms, without introducing new terms such as ‘superscriptional.’

¹⁷Higgins (1973: 269-270) and DeClerck (1988: 61) make similar points. Note that Gundel claimed that attributive status is necessary for superscriptional readings, but not sufficient. Higgins (1973: 268-269) raises the objection that in using a noun phrase superscriptionally a speaker typically knows the identity of the referent, but to use a noun phrase attributively is precisely NOT to know the identity of the referent. As he himself points out, however, it isn’t clear from Donnellan’s discussion that a noun phrase can be used attributively only if the speaker lacks acquaintance with the referent. The knowledge state of the addressee is surely relevant, and also the type of speech act being performed (e.g. whether the utterance constitutes an assertion or a question).

3.2.4.2 The de dicto/de re distinction.

Halvorsen 1978 suggests that the specificational-predicational distinction can be at least partially reduced to the de dicto-de re ambiguity that arises in intensional contexts (i.e. only on the de re construal of 'John wants a unicorn' is the speaker committed to the existence of unicorns). He assumes the existence of both a predicational copula and a specificational copula, distinguished on the basis of whether the subject is interpreted at the level of individuals or at the level of properties-of-sets.¹⁸ After appropriate reductions have been made, two distinct readings result for a sentence like (32):

- (32) What John wants is a trunnion. (two readings)
- | | | | |
|-----|--------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| i. | e | e | predicational & de re specificational |
| ii. | <s,<<e,t>,t> | e | de dicto specificational |

(32) is true on its predicational reading if John stands in the want-relation to some individual which is a trunnion, and is true on its de dicto specificational reading if John stands in the want-relation to some property of sets which is identical to the property of all sets containing a trunnion. The de re specificational reading is truth-conditionally non-distinct from the predicational reading.

A purely extensional sentence like (33) has only a single truth-conditionally distinct reading, despite the fact that it could be used to answer two distinct questions.

- (33) What John threw away was a trunnion. (one reading)
- | | | | |
|----|---|---|---------------------------------|
| i. | e | e | predicational & specificational |
|----|---|---|---------------------------------|

Halvorsen argues that the discourse difference should not be associated with the pseudocleft construction per se because the unclefted variants, under equivalent assignments of primary stress, can be used in the same situations:

- (34) a. What is a trunnion?
 b. What John threw AWAY was a trunnion.
 c. John threw AWAY a trunnion
- (35) a. What was it that John threw away?

¹⁸Halvorsen's (1978:77) predicational copula is exactly the copula proposed by Montague: $\lambda P \lambda x P \{ \lambda y [x = y] \}$ (except for certain type adjustments—i.e. the replacement of <s,e> with e throughout, as per Bennett 1974. Note that Montague's copula takes a generalized quantifier as a complement — this enables an account to be given for predication sentences with nominal complements by reducing them, in effect, to their identity counterparts, but predication sentences with adjectival predicates are left unaccounted for, (cf. Dowty, Wall and Peters 1981; Chierchia 1984). Halvorsen does not alleviate this shortcoming, of course, since he adopts Montague's copula as his predicational copula without essential modification. Halvorsen's specificational copula also takes a generalized quantifier as a complement (which 'goes in for the P'), and is translated as follows: $\lambda P \lambda Q [P=Q]$. The two copulas differ only with regard to the intensionality of the subject term (which 'goes in for the x' in the extensional predicational case and is thus of type e, and 'goes in for the Q' in the intensional specificational case and is thus of type <s,<<e,t>,t>>).

- b. What John threw away was a TRUNNION.
- c. John threw away a TRUNNION.

When the postcopular expression is an indefinite plural NP or a plural AP, the predicational reading is truth-conditionally distinct from the de re specificational reading. Three distinct readings are possible when there is both an intensional verb in the subject clause and a plural post-copular NP:¹⁹

- (36) What John wants is a man and a woman. (3 readings)
- i. predicational:
 $\exists x[\text{want}^e(j, \lambda PP(x)) \wedge \exists y[\text{man}^e(y) \wedge y=x] \wedge \exists y[\text{woman}^e(y) \wedge y=x]]$
 - ii. de re specificational
 $\exists x[\text{man}^e(x) \wedge \exists Q [\text{want}^e(j, Q) \wedge [\lambda PP(x) = Q]]] \wedge$
 $\exists y[\text{woman}^e(y) \wedge \exists P [\text{want}^e(j, P) \wedge [\lambda PP(y) = P]]]$
 - iii. de dicto specificational
 $\text{want}^e(j, \lambda P[\exists x[\text{man}^e(x) \wedge P(x)] \wedge \exists y[\text{woman}^e(y) \wedge P(y)]])$

Against the claim implicit in Halvorsen's analysis that predicational sentences are necessarily de re, it should be pointed out that de dicto copular sentences can have predicational as well as specificational interpretations:

- (37) a. What I need is a car and a boat. (DeClerck)
 b. What Jane wants is a lover and a coauthor.

Thus, Jane in (37b) might simply wish that both attributes could be embodied in a single person, without believing that such a person exists.²⁰

Morover, while the referential/attributional distinction can be easily extended to distinguish specific from non-specific indefinites, the de dicto/de re characterization cannot.²¹ This extension is needed to distinguish two interpretations of the predicational sentence in (38a). The subject is non-specific when the sentence is continued as in (38b), but is specific when the sentence is continued as in (38c):²²

¹⁹That is, either (i) there exists something which John wants, which is both a man and a woman (i.e. a hermaphrodite); or (ii) there exists a man that John wants, and there exists a woman that John wants; or (iii) John wants a man, and John wants a woman (who may or may not exist in the actual world).

²⁰Note the appropriate use of a neuter relative pronoun to refer to an intensional person in (37a), indicating that the generalization discussed above in relation to (28) is applicable only at the extensional level.

²¹I am grateful to Jeanette Gundel for pointing this out to me.

²²I am assuming Fodor and Sag's (1982) definition of 'specificity' — the speaker has a particular entity in mind. The de dicto/de re distinction applies to noun phrases which occur in the scope of an intensional operator such as a propositional attitude verb (e.g. *want*, *believe*) or a modal adverb (e.g. *necessarily*), the specific-nonspecific distinction

- (38) a. One of my father's uncles is a professor.
 b. One of my father's uncles is a professor, but I don't know which one.
 c. One of my father's uncles is a professor. I met him yesterday.

In any case, it is clear from the summary in (39) that Halvorsen's analysis does not permit the specificational-predicational distinction to be completely reduced to the de dicto/de re distinction:

- (39) a. de re + predicative²³ (predicational)
 b. de re + referential (specificational)
 c. de dicto + referential (specificational)

3.2.4.3 The predicative/referential distinction.

I have attributed to both Gundel and Halvorsen the assumption that the specificational post-copular phrase is referential in specificational sentences and predicative in predicational sentences. This difference in complement interpretation was pointed out explicitly already in Akmajian 1970, using the terms 'referential' versus 'non-referential' as defined in Kuno 1970. Williams 1983 suggests that the referential/predicative distinction can also be applied to distinguish the subjects of predicational and specificational sentences.

Partee (1986, 1987) adopts a version of Williams' suggestion, and labels it the 'uniform *be* theory,' because it eliminates the need to distinguish two copulas. She assumes simply that the copula is subcategorized to take one referential and one predicative argument, with the proviso that the arguments may occur in either order. Thus she assigns to the copula the (vacuous) logical translation in (40):²⁴

- (40) $\lambda P\lambda x[P(x)]$

The predicational-specificational distinction can be completely reduced under this analysis, which clearly has the virtue of extreme simplicity:

- (41) a. referential + predicative (predicational)
 b. predicative + referential (specificational)

applies to indefinite noun phrases, and the attributive/referential distinction applies to definite noun phrases. It seems reasonable to assume that at least the latter two distinctions can be collapsed along the lines of Barwise and Perry's 1982 distinction between 'value-loaded' (specific, referential, de re) and 'value-free' (nonspecific, attributive, de dicto) interpretations.

²³Recall from footnote 18 that Halvorsen adopts Montague's 'identity' analysis of the 'predicational' copula, which is applicable to predicative NP's, but not to predicative adjectives.

²⁴Note that Partee is temporarily ignoring intensionality in order to simplify the exposition of her approach.

Note that the analysis of relative clauses as predicative expressions is uncontroversial. In Montague semantics, relative clauses are generally translated as lambda abstracts, lambda abstraction being precisely a device for deriving predicates from sentences.²⁵

Partee develops her analysis of the copula in the context of developing a type-shifting approach to the interpretation of noun phrases. Since a formal presentation of the type-shifting framework is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I present only an outline of the formal apparatus in Appendix 1. The most important feature of the framework for my purposes is Partee’s suggestion that the traditional distinction between referential, predicative, and quantificational noun phrases can be captured formally by allowing noun phrases to be translated either as individuals (type e), or as predicates (type $\langle e, t \rangle$), or as generalized quantifiers (type $\langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$), with further constraints imposed by particular contexts and by general principles of type-shifting.

I will argue in the next section that clefts as well as pseudoclefts and simple copular sentences exhibit the predicational-specificational distinction. In §3.4 and §3.5, I will argue that Partee’s analysis of the post-copular specificational constituent as referential can be exploited to explain the frequently noted constraints against clefting predicative and quantificational expressions, and will provisionally suggest a type-shifting explanation for some frequently noted apparent counterexamples to these constraints. Finally, I will argue in the first section of Chapter 4 that the morphological form of the cleft pronoun depends in part on whether the sentence receives a predicational or specificational interpretation. The existence of these consequences, if correct, of course lends support to Partee’s analysis of the copula.

²⁵Thus, Montague’s (1973) translation rule for nominals containing a relative clause:

T3: If $\zeta \in P_{CN}$, $\Phi \in P_t$, and ζ, Φ translate into ζ', Φ' respectively, then $F_{3,n}(\zeta, \Phi)$ translates into $\lambda x_n [\zeta' (x_n) \wedge \Phi']$

See Partee, ter Meulen, and Wall (1990: 355-358) for discussion of the use of lambda abstraction in describing the semantics of restrictive relative clauses, and Higgins (1976: 191) for an early proposal to incorporate a lambda operator into the semantics of pseudoclefts. Geach 1962 also viewed relative clauses as predicational expressions: ‘in ‘Jim broke the bank...’ and ‘The man who broke the bank...died in misery,’ we have two occurrences of the same *predicable*, but only in the first sentence is it actually a *predicate* attached to the *subject* ‘Jim’.’ (p. 24). Note also that Williams 1980 assumes that the index on a predicate should be interpreted as a lambda operator.

3.3 Predicational Clefts.

It has generally been assumed that the specificational-predicational distinction is applicable to pseudoclefts, but not also to clefts.²⁶ Thus, the cleft counterparts of the ambiguous pseudoclefts in the previous section, show a characteristic lack of ambiguity. The examples in (42) have only the specificational interpretation:

- (42) a. It was a man and a woman that we saw in the park.
 b. It was a tadpole that I bought.
 c. It's on the other side of the ocean that he lives.
 d. It's food for the dog that I don't eat.
 e. It's fascinating that he wants his next wife to be.
 f. It was a piece of trash that I drew.
 g. *It's important to him_i that John_i is.

A few researchers have nevertheless suggested that certain clefts have predicational instead of specificational interpretations. Thus, Ball (1977, 1978) suggests that a cleft can be interpreted predicationally when the clefted constituent is 'an indefinite NP of the form DET ADJ N,' as in the examples in (43):

- (43) a. Gee, it's **a nice dress** you're wearing.
 b. It sure is **a fast car** you drive.
 c. It's **a subtle distinction** you're making.
 d. It was **a simple and uneventful life** that Schubert lived.
 [NYTimes 3/19/78]

DeClerck 1988 also notes that the cleft in (44a) can be paraphrased as shown in (44b):²⁷

- (44) a. Was it an INTERESTING meeting that you went to last night?
 b. Was the meeting that you went to last night INTERESTING?

²⁶For example, Akmajian 1970, Hankamer 1973, Higgins 1973, Gundel 1977, Halvorsen 1978, Heggie 1988.

²⁷An early reference is Curme (1931:11): 'where the emphatic predicate in a sentence containing a subject clause is a noun denoting a person we always employ anticipatory *it* when the desire is to identify [as in (i)], but when the desire is to describe, we may say [ii] with Shakespeare, ...or now more commonly replace *it* by a personal pronoun that can indicate gender and number [as in (iii)]:

- (i) It was my twó bróthers who did it
 (ii) It is a góod divíne that follows his own instructions [Merchant of Venice]
 (iii) He is a góod divíne who follows his own instructions.

If Partee's analysis of the copula is correct, and if cleft sentences are a subclass of copular sentences, it follows that clefts should have predicational as well as specificational interpretations. The existence of predicational clefts would thus provide strong support for Partee's analysis of the copula as a reversible linking verb which selects a referential argument and predicative argument in either linear order. It would also indicate that the cleft copula plays an active role in the semantic interpretation of clefts.

In the remainder of this section, I will argue that particular subclasses of clefts do indeed have predicational rather than specificational interpretations. Further evidence that the specificational-predicational distinction is operative in clefts will be presented in §4.1 of the next chapter.

3.3.1 PLAUSIBLE CANDIDATES.

Attested candidates for predicational status are easily discovered, both specific, as in (45), and generic, as in (46):

- (45) a. 'It's **a very dangerous situation** we've got ourselves into,' he said.
[Minneapolis Star and Tribune, op-ed page, 5/29/87]
- b. I've been bit once already by a German shepherd. And that was something. It was really scary. It was **an outside meter** the woman had. I read the gas meter and was walking back out and heard a woman yell. I turned around and this German shepherd was coming at me.
[Prince 1978, 894; Meter reader in Terkel, 366]
- c. 'I'm a victim,' said Christopher Hagman, a freshman from Tampa, Fla., who was moved from his Bradley room. 'It was just **little things** going on, and they're just blowing them out of proportion. If the university thought their lives were threatened, I think they should have moved them.'
[NYTimes, 6/3/90, p. 43]
- d. 'But surely it was Perry that Bingley saw in the wood?' Burden had asked. 'How can it have been? Confused as Bingley was, he was sure the man he saw was walking back from Thatto Yale, not going towards it...'
'It was **a grey-haired man** he saw,' Burden insisted.
'But was it? He came to see us in the first place because his niece told him he ought to. He had seen a man walking...'
[Rendall, Speaker of Mandarin, p. 207]
- e. But it is **a revised Kennedy** they believe in, a pacifist Kennedy all but indistinguishable from William Jennings Bryan.
[Yoder, Minneapolis Star & Tribune, 10/13/87]
- f. But never in my memory has a leader called war itself "civilized."... Perhaps war was civilized in the studio lots of Hollywood, in the rules and restraints operating over screenwriters. But... Was it **civilized war** that took the lives of 58,000 Americans in Vietnam?
[Goodman, p. 103]

- (46) a. It is **an odd bedside manner** that can be improved by reading Heidegger.
[The NYTimes Book Review, 1/7/90]
- b. VOYAGER includes a generation component, and one of our initial issues was how to deal with its output. Clearly it would be **a poor sort of interactive system** that did not allow for ordinary anaphoric and definite reference to entities introduced in the course of the conversation.
[Answers and Questions, Processing Messages and Queries, C.N. Ball et al. Proceedings, Speech and Natural Language Workshop, DARPA, 1989, p. 63.]
- c. It's **the middle-class parent** who can afford to be the PTA president, go on field trips, tutor in classrooms, be a fundraiser, serve on committees and do all the other things that parent volunteers do.
[Minneapolis Star and Tribune]

Predicative clefts containing the adjectives *odd* or *rare* seem to be especially common:

- (47) a. It was certainly **an odd fate** that brought Jim Ullstone, Marcel and myself together in the same car next morning, on the short journey into Chode, to attend the inquest on the body of Hugo Ullstone.
[Mary Fitt, Death and the Pleasant Voices, p. 154]
- b. It was **an odd and engaging problem** the boy had dropped so casually into his lap.
[Tey, Daughter of Time]
- (48) a. It is **a rare nursing home** that has staff well-enough trained to sense and interpret the psycho-dynamics that may trigger patient despair to the point of wishing to die.
[Minneapolis Star and Tribune]
- b. Less than a decade ago it was **a rare novel** that sold 100,000 copies in hardcover.
[The New York Times, 5/20/90]
- c. It's **a rare day** when a five-block walk does not include a couple of heart-in-the-throat incidents. [Minneapolis Star and Tribune, op-edpage, 8/10/87]
- e. Even so, it was **a rare year** in which more than 1,000 whales were killed.
[cited in Ball 1989, Whale Rescue Project letter 10/85]

The examples in (48) are especially interesting because *rare* is an adjective with quantificational force. The predicational cleft in (49a), which is a paraphrase of simple quantificational sentences in (49b) and (49c), can be used to get around the quantifier constraint (to be discussed in section 3.4) that makes (49d) less acceptable:

- (49) a. It's **a rare man** who walks to work.
- b. **Few men** walk to work.
- c. **A man rarely** walks to work.
- d. **It's few men** who walk to work.

3.3.2 TESTS FOR PREDICATIONAL STATUS.

The hypothesis that the cleft sentences in section 3.3.1 are predicational is supported by the observation that at least some such clefts are paraphrased more closely by simple predicational copular sentences than by the sentences obtained by inserting the clefted constituent into the 'gap' of the cleft clause. Thus, the clefts in the (a) examples of (50)-(52) are more accurately paraphrased by their (b) counterparts than by their (c) counterparts:

- (50) a. It was **an odd televised ceremony** that I watched from my living room, and a touching one, marking the difficult transition the Carrs had made from couple to family, formally introducing a child into the world.
[Goodman, p. 194]
- b. The televised ceremony that I watched from my living room was an odd one, and a touching one.
- c. I watched an odd televised ceremony from my living room, and a touching one.
- (51) a. It is **a rare conductor of any status today** who cannot hold several posts simultaneously if he wishes.
[Minneapolis Star and Tribune, op-ed page, 9/17/87]
- b. The conductor who cannot hold several posts simultaneously if he wishes is rare.
- c. A rare conductor of any status today cannot hold several posts simultaneously if he wishes.
- (52) a. It is **an inconsistent logic** that argues that punishment for discrimination in one program of an institution should be applied to the entire institution but cannot see that federal funds to family-planning groups that engage in abortion do indeed support these abortions, even if the funds may not have been spent on the abortions themselves.
[Minneapolis Star and Tribune, op-ed page, 8/8/87]
- b. The logic that argues that punishment for discrimination in one program of an institution should be applied to the entire institution but cannot see... is an inconsistent one.
- c. An inconsistent logic argues that punishment for discrimination in one program of an institution should be applied to the entire institution but cannot see...

DeClerck 1988 suggests a second test for predicational status. He points out that the pseudocleft counterpart to the cleft in (53a) is unambiguously predicative.

- (53) a. It was certainly no **IDIOT** who wrote this.
- b. The one who wrote this was certainly no idiot.

This test can be applied most successfully when the clefted constituent consists of an unmodified noun phrase, as in (54) and (55).²⁸ The unacceptability of the inverted pseudoclefts in (54c) and (55c) is consistent with an unambiguously predicational analysis of their pseudocleft counterparts.

- (54) a. **It was no Bonel, no lord of a northern manor, she had married**, but an honest craftsman of Shrewsbury.
[Peters, Monk's Hood]
- b. The one she married was no Bonel, no lord of a northern manor, but an honest craftsman of Shrewsbury.
- c. ??No Bonel, no lord of the northern manor, was the one she married, but an honest craftsman of Shrewsbury.
- (55) a. K: Did you know that Mark Trail about a year or so ago quit smoking a pipe because some kid wrote in o'course to the author and said 'he shouldn't be smoking a pipe, blah-blah' y'know, all that...
M: That was on account-o'-because he supposed to be out in the woods and you shouldn't be smoking out there.
K: Well, also it's just a role model for kids, y'know. **But it was a KID who wrote him and told him that.**
[Frederickson tapes]
- b. Well, also it's just a role model for kids, y'know. But the one who wrote him and told him that was a kid.
- c. ??A kid was the one who wrote him and told him that.

The cleft in (56) can perhaps be viewed as subtly ambiguous, with the ambiguity retained in the pseudocleft in (56b), but lost in the inverted pseudocleft in (56c):

- (56) a. The lamp burned by the side of a wooden table or bench that looked to him like a bed provided for his own night's rest. He went over to it, lifted off the painted silk cloth which covered it and looked down upon the Marquise of Tai. **It was a sarcophagus that he had uncovered**, set in a burial chamber.
[Ruth Rendall, Speaker of Mandarin, p. 12]
- b. The lamp burned by the side of a wooden table or bench that looked to him like a bed provided for his own night's rest. He went over to it, lifted off the painted silk cloth which covered it and looked down upon the Marquise of Tai. What he had uncovered was a sarcophagus, set in a burial chamber.
- c. A sarcophagus was what he had uncovered, set in a burial chamber.

²⁸Ball (1977, 1978) suggests that clefts have a predicational reading 'just in case the focus is an indefinite NP of the form DET ADJ N.' Notice however, that (46c) above and (62b) below have definite articles, and that (54a)- (57a) below are good candidates for predicational status, but don't contain adjectives. Thus, the important information conveyed by the cleft in (55a), for example, is that the letter-writer has the property of being a kid, i.e. the cleft answers the question, 'what kind of person was the person that wrote to him?' instead of, 'who wrote to him?'

Similarly, the cleft in (57a) might be viewed not as specifying ‘what we have here’ as a country, but rather predicating of Canada the property of being a country. Again the difference is perhaps too subtle to be easily detectable.

- (57) a. I’m not going to sit back and for a shopping list from Quebec. I’m not going to wait for Quebec to finish its process and present a list for the new federalism — because **it’s a country we have here**, and all of Canada is involved.
[Brian Mulroney, quoted in the Vancouver Sun, 7/30/90, p. 1]
- b. I’m not going to sit back and for a shopping list from Quebec. I’m not going to wait for Quebec to finish its process and present a list for the new federalism. What we have here is a country, and all of Canada is involved.
- c. A country is what we have here, and all of Canada is involved.

Finally, it could be argued that the cleft in (58), originally discussed in Prince 1978, is really a predicational cleft, since the clefted constituent is an indefinite noun phrase and thus a candidate for predicative status.²⁹

- (58) We do have a train problem, goin’ from here to the assembly plant. I cross one set of tracks twice, then two other sets of tracks once each. Long freight trains, going from Chicago to Gary. I have waited as high as ten, twelve minutes. Then you’re late.
If I see a train crossing, I keep going. **It’s a game you’re playing.** Watch the stoplight, catch this light at a certain time and you got the next light. But if there’s a train there, I take off down Cicero Avenue, watching the crossings.
[Utility man in Terkel, 233; c.f. Prince 1978, 894]

3.3.3 PROVERBIAL CLEFTS AND IDIOMS.

Extensive discussion in the literature has been devoted to the analysis of proverbial clefts, such as those in (59).³⁰ I follow Ball 1977 and Declerck 1988 in analyzing these as a subclass of predicational clefts.

- (59) a. It’s a poor heart that never rejoices.
b. It’s a long road that has no turning.
c. It’s an ill wind that blows no good.
d. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions.

²⁹Carlson 1983 concludes that this example is ‘not a cleft sentence at all, but an ordinary predicative sentence whose subject refers to the preceding sentence and whose predicate complement is a noun modified by a relative clause.’

³⁰Jespersen, Ball (1977, 1978, 1989), Delahunty 1981, Carlson 1983, DeClerck 1988.

There is some disagreement in the literature over how to ‘best’ paraphrase a proverbial cleft. The sentences in (60a-e) have all been proposed at one time or another as paraphrases of (59a), starting with Jespersen’s (1937) suggestion in (60a):

- (60) a. The heart that never rejoices is poor
 b. The heart that never rejoices is a poor heart
 c. A heart that never rejoices is a poor heart
 d. If a heart never rejoices, it is a poor heart
 e. A/the heart is poor that never rejoices
 f. A poor heart never rejoices.

Delahunty 1982 argues in favor of (60b) over (60a) on the grounds that there is ‘an ambiguity about (59a) which is not available in (60a), but he doesn’t say what the ambiguity amounts to. DeClerck 1988 argues in favor of (60d) against both (60b) and (60c) and Borkin 1984 suggests the paraphrase in (60e). This dispute is not important—each of the sentences in (60a-e) has a reading identical to that of (59a). Even (60f) can be used as a paraphrase when given proper intonation (i.e. with a falling accent on ‘poor’ and a falling-rising accent on ‘rejoices’). What’s crucial is that proverbial clefts are universal statements.

The dialogue in (61) shows the proverbial cleft of (59a) in actual (albeit fictional) use:

- (61) The other smiled a little grimly.
 ‘I’ll tell you about it with pleasure if it won’t bore you. It just happens to be a case in point, that’s all.’
 ‘On *my* side of the argument,’ said the man called Peter, with triumph. ‘Do carry on. Have something to drink. **It’s a poor heart that never rejoices.** And begin right at the beginning, if you will, please...’
 [Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unnatural Death*, p. 5]

A final peculiarity of predicational clefts is that they seem to be able to split up idioms:

- (62) a. ‘It’s sort of **an arbitrary line** that you’re drawing.’
 [Prince 1978, 895; D.C., 1/77]
 b. ‘It’s obvious that I’m a woman and enjoy being a woman. I’m not overly provocative, either. It’s **the thin, good-nigger line** that I have to toe.’
 [Prince 1978, 895, Writer/producer in Terkel, 105]

3.4 The quantifier constraint.

I argued in the previous section that clefts, like pseudoclefts and simple copular sentences, can be predicationally as well as specificationally interpreted. This conclusion strongly supports analyses that explicitly treat cleft sentences as a subclass of copular sentences. I will argue next that the frequently noted but elusive prohibitions against specificationally clefting quantificational and predicative expressions follows directly from any analysis incorporating the more general constraint that the clefted constituent is semantically referential. I will advocate Partee's particular analysis on the grounds that her overall type-shifting framework provides the basis for a principled explanation of apparent exceptions to the constraints. The principal challenge will be to explain why pseudoclefts seem to lack the constraints in question. The discussion in this section will focus on the quantifier constraint; discussion of the predicate constraint will resume in §3.5.

Observe first that a wide variety of noun phrases are acceptable as specificational clefted constituents: pronouns and proper names as in (63a), definite descriptions as in (63b), specific indefinites as in (63c), generics as in (63d), or cardinal partitives as in (63e):

- (63) a. It was **she/Jane** who found the body.
- b. It was **this/that/the woman** who found the body.
- c. It was **a (certain)/this (one) woman in my class** who found the body.
- d. It is never **the victim** who finds the body.
- e. It was **one/two of the students in my class** who found the body.

It has often been assumed, however, that quantified noun phrases cannot be clefted. Lees 1963: 380, for example, offers the negative judgments in (64), Gundel (1974:135,139) offers those in (65), and Delahunty (1981:80) offers those in (66):

- (64) a. *It was **no man** who helped.
- b. *It was **every man** who helped.
- c. *It was **neither man** who helped.
- (65) a. *It was **something** that John saw.
- b. *It was **no one** who hit Bill.
- c. *It was **few people** who voted for George.
- d. *It was **many blackbirds** that were in the pie.
- e. *It's **any cheese** that I don't want.

- (66) a. It is **most women** that I like.
 b. It is **some women** that I like.
 c. It is **any fish** that you can keep
 d. It was **each part** that John examined carefully.

3.4.1 A TYPE-SHIFTING SOLUTION.

If we adopt Partee's assumptions, first, that the post-copular argument of a specificational sentence must be referential (i.e. of semantic type e) and second, that the semantic type of quantificational noun phrases is $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$, the prohibition against clefted quantified expressions in specificational clefts follows directly. One advantage to adopting Partee's particular approach is that it would seem to permit a principled treatment of purported counterexamples to the quantifier constraint: A quantificational expression is acceptable just in case it can be construed as referential through the operation of type-shifting principles (c.f. §3.2.4 and Appendix 1 for discussion).

Thus, although a bare quantifier clefted constituent seems just as unacceptable in (67a) as in (66a) and (66b), the partitive quantifier in (67b) is perfectly acceptable:

- (67) a. Do you think it was **someone** who killed him?
 b. 'Do you think it was **someone in this house** who killed him?' I pressed her. 'Or was it an accident — some tramp or poacher?'
 [Mary Fitt, *Death and the Pleasant Voices*, p. 96]

When the quantifier ranges over a limited background set expressed explicitly in the partitive complement, the quantified expression as a whole is acceptably clefted. Quantified expressions also seem acceptable when the background set is activated only contextually, as in (68b):³¹

- (68) a. It was **few arrows** that hit the target.
 [Rochemont 1986]

³¹Partee 1987 (n. 21) notes that 'Sometimes 'most men' seems to have an e -type reading paraphrasable as 'a group containing most men'; this seems even easier to get with 'most of the men.' This observation would seem to qualify her observation (p. 132) that 'there remain NPs for which none of our operations provide e -type readings; these, not surprisingly, are the ones traditionally thought of as most clearly 'quantificational': *no man, no men, at most one man, few men, not every man, most men*.'

I would suggest that whenever the background set of a 'quantificational' NP (or its individual members?) is sufficiently activated in the context, it can be construed referentially (distributively?). In support of the analysis of at least some partitive expressions as referential, notice that such expressions can support subsequent reference with a (plural) personal pronoun:

- (i) Q: Which of the students complained?
 A: MOST of the students complained. They thought the test was too hard.

- b. We shot off our entire stock of arrows and had a wonderful time, though it was **few arrows** that hit the target.

However, (68b) is probably a predicational cleft, paraphrasable as the quantificational sentence in (69a), or the predicational sentence in (69b), but not as the pseudocleft in (69c) or (69d). Rather, (68b) is comparable to the clefts in (70), which were analyzed as predicational clefts in section 3.3 above.

- (69) a. **Few** arrows hit the target.
 b. The arrows that hit the target were **few**.
 c. *What hit the target was **few arrows**.
 d. ***Few arrows** was/were what hit the target.
- (70) a. Less than a decade ago it was **a rare novel** that sold 100,000 copies in hardcover.
 [The New York Times, 5/20/90]
 b. It was certainly **no idiot** who wrote this.
 [DeClerck 1988]

Quantified expressions also seem acceptable in negative clefts like the ones in (71):³²

- (71) a. It's not **every man** who makes his own meals.
 [Carlson 1985]
 b. It is not **every artist** who is allowed to go into the most important museum of modern art in the world, select the art in it that defines his modern artistic heritage and his esthetic beliefs, install it in one of the museum's galleries, and set one of his own paintings in the center so that it seems to conduct all the other works, or hover over them like a bird, or stand over them with raised hands like a priest.
 [The New York Times, 6/24/90, p. H33]
 (c) It's **not just one person** that's hurt. It's usually four or five.
 [Terkel, p. 51, cf. Prince (1978: 896)]

3.4.2 PSEUDOCLEFTS.

It is generally assumed that a cleft sentence and its corresponding pseudocleft share a large number of characteristics. For example, according to Akmajian (1970a), clefts and their pseudoclefts counterparts are 'synonymous, share the same presuppositions, answer the same questions, and in general...can be used interchangeably.' Although Akmajian's last assumption has generally been aban-

³² Cf. also Higginbotham's (1987) judgments below:

- (i) Was it an/*every Irish poem John recited.
 (ii) Was it every IRISH poem that John recited?
 (iii) It is everything that I respect that John is.
 (iv) What you drank was lots of/*little water.

done, his first three assumptions are still generally accepted. Thus, each of the pseudocleft sentences in (72) is associated with the cleft paraphrase shown in (73):

- (72) a. What John bought was a car.
 b. Where I saw John was in Boston.
 c. When John left was at three o'clock.
 d. Why John did that was to irritate me.
 e. How John did that was by standing on a ladder.
- (73) a. It was a car that John bought
 b. It was in Boston that I saw John
 c. It was at three o'clock that John left.
 d. It was to irritate me that John did that.
 e. It was by standing on a ladder that John did that.

The extraposition approach to the structure of clefts discussed in section 3.1. above is predicated, of course, on just this similarity.

While there are indeed similarities between clefts and pseudoclefts, such as the requirement that only one element can be clefted (which is what makes clefts and pseudoclefts useful as tests of 'constituency'), there are also differences between them, many of which involve constraints on permissible clefted constituents. Examples (74)-(76) show, for example, that verb phrases and predicate nominals and adjectives are more resistant to clefting than to pseudoclefting, a matter to which I shall return in §3.5.

- (74) a. What John did was move to Seattle.
 b. ?*It was move to Seattle that John did.
- (75) a. What John is is the football coach.
 b. ?*It's the football coach that John is.
- (76) a. What John is is happy.
 b. ?*It's happy that John is.

Gundel (1977: 554) observes that negative polarity items are more acceptable in the pseudocleft in (77a) than its cleft counterpart in (77b):³³

³³Gundel 1974 (p. 139, note 3) credits Stanley Peters for this observation. Halvorsen 1978 notes it also with respect to the following contrast:

- (i) What John couldn't find was any problems to put on his midterm exam.
 (ii) *It was any problems to put on his midterm exam that John couldn't find.

- (77) a. What we don't need is any eggs
b. *It's any eggs that we don't need.

Halvorsen 1978 observes additionally that 'floating quantifiers' are more acceptable in pseudoclefts than in clefts, as illustrated in (78). (Note, however, that this latter restriction could be subsumed under the prohibition against clefting verb phrases.)

- (78) a. What the boys did was all take a bath.
b. *It was all take a bath that the boys did.

In fact, quantificational expressions in general might seem more acceptable as pseudoclefted constituents than as clefted constituents. Thus, the cleft sentence in (79b) is perhaps more dubious than its pseudocleft counterpart in (79a), which was deemed acceptable in Wilson 1975:

- (79) a. What your generalization proves is precisely nothing. [Wilson 1975]
b. ?It's precisely nothing that your generalization proves.

However, since the inverted pseudoclefts in (80) seem neither better nor worse than their cleft counterparts in (77)-(79), I suggest that the difference in the relative order of clefted constituent and cleft clause is responsible for the divergence, rather than some inherent difference between clefts and (inverted or non-inverted) pseudoclefts:

- (80) a. Precisely nothing is what your generalization proves.
b. Any eggs is what we don't need.
c. Any problems to put on his midterm exam was what John couldn't find.

It may be the case that the discrepancy arises from the applicability of the activation constraint on sentence-final topics (cf. § 2.6) to clefts and inverted pseudoclefts but not to pseudoclefts. It is only because pseudoclefts supply their own context, in effect, by the time the quantifier is processed, that they seem more acceptable in isolation.³⁴

³⁴It has sometimes been suggested that the quantifier constraint can be explained as resulting from failure of the existential or exhaustiveness presuppositions/implicatures associated with clefts to be met. I believe that Partee's type-shifting approach subsumes these explanations by building the relevant conditions into the type-specific translations of the various forms of NP. (See Appendix I for details.) Note also that even if failure of an existential presupposition can successfully account for the oddity of (76b), what about its acceptable pseudocleft counterpart in (76a)?

3.5 The predicate constraint.

Like the quantificational expressions just discussed, it has often been claimed that predicate nominals and predicate adjectives are resistant to clefting:³⁵

- (81) a. *It is **the president** who John is. [Lees 1963: 380]
 b. *It was **nice** that she seemed. [Bolinger 1972b: 28;]
 c. *It's **the football coach** that John is. [Emonds 1976: 140]
 d. *It's **very unhappy** that Bill is. [Emonds 1976:133;140]
 e. *It's **dark** that he likes his study. [Emonds 1976:133]
 f. *It's **easy to please** that John is. [Gundel 1977:554]

In an early attempt to provide a syntactic explanation for this predicate constraint, Emonds (1976:140-141), suggested that this constraint supports Akmajian's derivation of the cleft clause from a deep structure relative clause internal to the subject NP, 'for it is known that predicate nominative NPs cannot generally be relativized, except when the relative clause modifies a predicate nominative.' Emonds is referring here to the constraint shown in (82a), which was formulated in Kuno 1970 and Chiba 1974 to account for the contrast between (82b) and (presumably) (82c):³⁶

- (82) a. An NP to be relativized and the antecedent NP must be identically specified for referentiality.
 b. *The football coach that John is lost the game.
 c. John is not the coach that he used to be.

Emonds' proposal is thus that (81c) is unacceptable because the referentiality of the antecedent NP is incompatible with the nonreferentiality of the relativized NP, as sketched in (83b), assuming his deletion analysis of relativization:

- (83) a. *It is the football coach that John is.
 b. [it [that John is ~~the football coach~~] is the football coach.
 [+ref] [-ref]

I suggest that a semantic explanation can be constructed in the spirit of Emonds' syntactic explanation, but based on the more general Referentiality Condition (RC) formulated in (84), from which the predicate constraint directly follows:

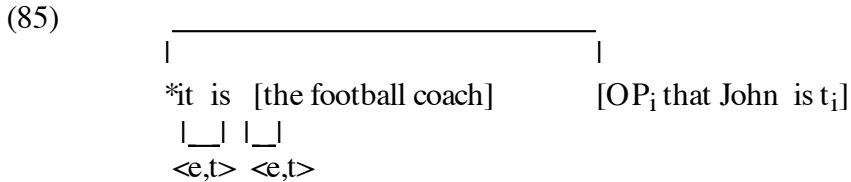
- (84) RC: Only referential expressions may be specificationally clefted.

³⁵See DeClerck 1988 for extensive references.

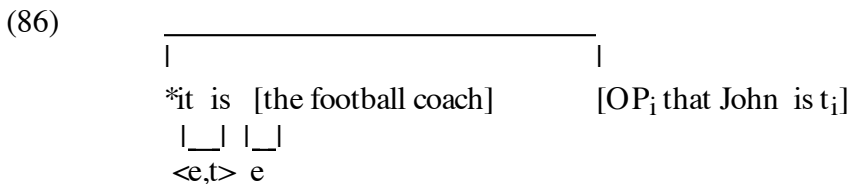
³⁶See Delahunty 1982 for more discussion.

3.5.1 A SEMANTIC SOLUTION.

As discussed in §3.4.1, the Referentiality Condition follows directly from Partee’s analysis of the copula. Since the clefted constituent must denote an entity of type *e* to serve as the referential argument of the specificational copula, predicative expressions should in general be inadmissible. The configuration in (85) thus correctly fails to be admitted:³⁷



Given the type-shifting framework, however, we would expect clefting to be exceptionally possible if a type-shifting operation is available which can map a predicative expressions onto a referential one, resulting in the admissible configuration shown in (86):



In support of the type-shifting analysis, note that it has sometimes been observed that exceptions to the predicate constraint seem to be licensed in particular contexts. In fact, Akmajian 1970 declined to take a stance on the issue of the cleftability of predicate adjectives due to his conflicting judgments on the examples in (87):

- (87) a. *It is **tall** that John is.
 b. It’s **idiotic** that John always manages to be.

Some researchers have suggested that the predicate constraint is pragmatic in nature. Thus, Bolinger 1972a suggests that unacceptable predicate clefts fail to satisfy the existential condition associated generally with clefts.³⁸ If a cleft-clause internal argument is expressed with a full noun

³⁷It is immaterial here whether the predicative argument of the specificational cleft is assumed to be the cleft pronoun in conjunction with the cleft clause (as I will argue in Chapter 4), or the cleft clause alone. What’s important is that the post-copular argument of a specificational cleft is necessarily referential.

³⁸It is generally accepted that cleft sentences such as the one in (i) can only be used in contexts which support the ‘existential’ implication expressed in (ii), and the ‘uniqueness’ or ‘exhaustiveness’ implication expressed in (iii):

- (i) It is the woman who decides.
- (ii) Someone decides.
- (iii) Nobody other than the woman decides

phrase as in (88a) instead of a pronoun as in (88b), ‘it is unlikely to relate to a situation that is presupposed’:

- (88) a. ?It was **black** that he drank his coffee.
 b. It was **black** that he drank it.

Bolinger suggests also that clefted predicates tend to be more acceptable in questions, like (89a), and negative sentences, like (89b), than in assertions because denials and questions are ‘apt to be based on prior affirmations’. DeClerck 1988 similarly notes the acceptability of degree questions like (89c):

- (89) a. Is it **black** that you take it, or with cream and sugar?
 b. It was never **truly ambitious** that I expected him to be.
 c. How **pretty** is it that she looks?

Delahunty 1981 notes a similar contrast between the sentences in (90).

- (90) a. ?It is **clever** that John is.
 b. It isn’t just **clever** that Fred is, he’s also politically very savvy.

Delahunty suggests that clefted predicates are unacceptable only in contexts which fail to support the uniqueness implicature associated with clefts. If the implicature is ‘cancelled’ as in (90b) or (91), or is ‘reduced or eliminated’ as in (92), clefted predicates are perfectly acceptable.

- (91) a. It is not **unhappy** that Bill is, just obsessive.
 b. It isn’t **very unhappy** that Bill is, just slightly so.
 (92) a. It is **raw** that Fred usually eats his meat.
 b. It is **nude** that Sandy most likes to swim.
 c. It is **a good cook** that I most want to become.
 d. It is **happy** that Bill most wants to be.

It appears possible to formalize these pragmatic explanations in the type-shifting framework by exploiting the IOTA type-shifting operation (see Appendix 1), which maps expressions of type $\langle e, t \rangle$ to expressions of type e . We would predict, then, that clefting of basic predicative expressions should be permissible in contexts which support an IOTA construal, i.e. when existence and uniqueness conditions are met.

I will not here take a stand on the issue of whether these implications should be viewed as semantic or pragmatic presuppositions, conventional implicatures, generalized conversational implicatures, or entailments (c.f. Wilson 1975, Karttunen and Peters 1979, Halvorsen 1978, Delahunty 1981, Atlas and Levinson 1981, Horn 1981, and §5.1.1 below for discussion). What’s crucial here is that the implication can be suspended or cancelled in particular contexts.

A second type-shifting operation mapping expressions of type $\langle e,t \rangle$ onto expressions of type e is Chierchia's NOM operation (i.e. 'nominalization'). Partee 1986 illustrates the use of this latter operation in the interpretation of pseudoclefted predicate adjectives:³⁹

- (93) a. What John is is unusual
 b. $\lambda y[\text{PRED}(y)(j)]$ (NOM(unusual'))

Since precisely the same type-shifting operations are in principle applicable to clefted constituents as to pseudoclefted constituents, I conclude, then, that clefted predicates should not be treated as ungrammatical or anomalous, but rather simply as context-dependent.

The dialogue (94) exhibits an attested example of a specificational, predicate-adjective cleft:

- (94) 'What's wrong with Jammy?'
 '...He's practicing to be a dictator. You begin with the expression.'
 'No, you don't... You begin with the hair.'
 'And an arm movement. Arms are very important. Look at Napoleon. Never been more than a corporal if he hadn't thought up that arm-on-chest business. Pregnant, you know.'
'If it's pregnant Jammy is, he'd better have the idea in the office, not here. I don't think the child's going to be a pleasant sight.'
 [Josephine Tey, *A Shilling for Candles*: 168]

3.5.2 A SYNTACTIC SOLUTION.

A recent syntactic account of the predicate constraint in a Government and Binding framework is offered in Heggie 1988. To account for the restrictions illustrated in (95), Heggie introduces the 'Null Operator Generalization,' (NOG) shown in (96), which effectively restricts clefting to expressions which constitute 'minimally satisfied theta grids,' from which 'all obligatory theta roles have been appropriately projected.'

- (95) a. *It is **green** that her eyes are.
 b. *It's **a good shot** that I find him.
 c. *It's **silly** that she beat him.

³⁹Note that example (93a) is ambiguous between the specificational reading in (93b) and the following predicational reading: unusual'(IOTA(x)(PRED(x)(j))). For discussion of these formulations of both interpretations, see Partee (1986:362).

- d. *It was **stealing my money** that she caught him.
- e. *It's **blown up that ship** that the French should not have.
- f. *It's **finally** that he came into a fortune.

(96) NOG:

A null operator must constitute a minimally satisfied theta-grid.

Heggie's basic claim is that items which have an external theta role to assign cannot be clefted (e.g. VP, AdvP, AP, and predicate NP):

A clefted element which has a theta role to assign will correspond in the clause predicated of it to a null operator which must fulfill its function as a theta role assigner. Since, however, null operators can never assign theta roles, it follows that their distribution will be restricted to the class of elements which are not theta-role assigners, i.e. those elements in which all theta-roles have been appropriately discharged.

[p. 245]

Since null operators do not assign theta roles, Heggie predicts that the theta-criterion will be violated if the subject of a null predicate, e.g. *her eyes* in (97a), fails to obtain a theta-role from some other source:

- (97) a. DS: it is [[green] [that [her eyes] are OP]]
- b. LF: it is [[green]₁ [OP₁ that [her eyes] are t₁]]

Heggie's Null Operator Generalization and the Referentiality Condition stated in (84) above appear to be co-extensive since both constraints restrict clefted constituents to saturated expressions. A closer look reveals, however, that the Null Operator Generalization is in some cases redundant, in other cases overly restrictive, and in still other cases not restrictive enough. Problems arise for a syntactic account like Heggie's when the previously-discussed exceptions to the predicate constraint are considered.

Like Bolinger and Delahunty, Heggie (p. 206) recognizes that predicates may be felicitously clefted in 'contrastive' or 'emphatic' contexts, as in (98b) as compared to (98a):⁴⁰

- (98) a. i What color are her eyes?
- ii *It's **green** that her eyes are.
- b. i Are her eyes green?
- ii Yes, it's **SUPER green** that her eyes are.
- iii No, it's **BLUE** that her eyes are, not GREEN.

⁴⁰I have added the contextual questions to illustrate what I believe to be Heggie's point.

To account for these exceptions, she introduces a distinction between ‘syntactic’ and ‘metalinguistic’ clefts, claiming that while the former need to obey syntactic constraints on case and theta-assignment, the latter constitute a ‘pure focus’ phenomenon which need only satisfy the ‘R-binding’ relation which associates nonrestrictive relative clauses with their heads at LF’:

An adjective cannot be clefted on a simple informational reading, but can be if it is being contrasted or emphasized in some way, i.e., if the material is already given in the discourse.... In other words, it is not clear in these examples whether we can still claim there to be a variable in the embedded clause as the value in question is known at the time of the utterance, i.e. the presupposition is complete. If this is the case, then what of the so-called ‘clefted’ constituent? This material is in fact part of an S-structure instantiation of an LF focus schema.

Recall that the structure assumed for clefts involves a CP adjoined structure which allows for theta-role and Case assignment to the element adjoined to CP. However, in instances where no Case or theta-role assignment is possible because the variable position is not an argument position, then the assumed structure takes on the characteristics of a pure focus phenomena. I will call this kind of cleft a ‘metalinguistic’ cleft, following the terminology of Horn (1985). These clefts do not obey sentential constraints, but instead display the properties of metalinguistic contexts.

Apparently, then, unlike what happens in the unclefted sentence in (99a), the subject of the cleft clause in (100a), i.e. *Jammy* (cf. (94)) will not receive a theta-role from the predicate, *pregnant*, at its LF representation in (100b), but only at its LF’ representation in (100c):

- (99) a. Jammy is pregnant.
 b. LF: [Jammy₁ is [t₁ pregnant₁]]
- (100) a. It’s pregnant that Jammy is.⁴¹
 b. LF: [it is [pregnant₁ [OP₁ that Jammy is t₁]]
 c. LF’: [it is [pregnant₁ [OP₁ that Jammy₁ is t₁]]

The primary problem with this account is that it renders the Null-Operator Generalization redundant, since any cleft exhibiting primary prosodic prominence on the clefted constituent is ‘metalinguistic’ in the sense that the material in the cleft clause is required to be already activated in the discourse context. If the R-binding mechanism is available for clefted predicates, why not permit

⁴¹Note the necessity for Heggie of analyzing exceptions to the predicate constraint as ‘metalinguistic’ clefts. In (i) and (ii) she must assume that *Bill* already has a theta-role, and thus need not be assigned one by the null operator:

- (i) a. How tall is it that Bill is?
 b. e e is [[how tall] [that e e is [Bill [OP]]]]
- (ii) a. How much of an idiot is it that John considers Bill?
 b. e e is [[how much of an idiot] [that John e considers [Bill [OP]]]]

it to apply in all such cases, and eliminate the Null Operator Generalization entirely? How the mechanism is supposed to work is also not spelled out: which material is it which is ‘given in the discourse’ and ‘already known’ in a metalinguistic cleft? It surely can’t be the ‘value to the variable’ like Heggie suggests—if the addressee already knew what the value was, it wouldn’t be necessary to utter the cleft at all. The clefted constituent may perfectly well be ‘given’ in the referential sense (i.e. activated) but ‘new’ in the relational sense (i.e. comment)—c.f. §2.2 above.

3.5.3 SECONDARY PREDICATES.

An interesting prediction of Heggie’s analysis concerns the cleftability of secondary predicates. It follows from her account that a predicate with a theta-role to assign as in (101) and (102) cannot itself be clefted,⁴² but a predicate phrase containing a PRO subject as in (103) can be clefted since it thereby constitutes a ‘minimally satisfied theta-grid.’ A predicate which itself receives a theta-role from the verb (and thus does not assign one), as in (104), can also be clefted:

- (101) a. *It’s **flat** that they hammered the nail.
 b. *It was **clean** that John picked the bone.
 [cf. Chomsky 1988]
 c. *It was **tough** that Bill cooked the meat
 d. DS: it is [[flat] [that they [hammered [the nail] [OP]]]]
 e. SS: it is [[flat]₁ [OP₁ that they [hammered [the nail] t₁]]]
- (102) a. *It is **a fool** that John considers Mary.
 b. *It’s **mellow** that Bill thinks Susan.
 c. *It’s **off this ship** that the captain expects that jerk.
 d. DS: it is [[a fool] [that John [considers [[Mary] OP]]] ⁴³
 e. LF: it is [[a fool]₁ [OP₁ that John [considers [[Mary] t₁]]]
- (103) a. It is **raw** that Bill usually likes his meat.
 b. It’s **drunk** that John sounds intelligent.
 c. It’s **naked** that John appears slim.

⁴²Heggie assumes that in (101), the VP-internal NP receives a theta role from the resultative predicate ‘in conjunction with the matrix verb.’ while in (102), the VP-internal NP receives a theta role from the small clause predicate alone.

⁴³Note that the examples in (102) seem better when the copula is added, as in (i) and (ii) below:

- (i) It’s a fool that John considers Mary to be.
 (ii) It’s mellow that Bill thinks Susan is.
 (iii) It’s off this ship that the captain expects that jerk to be.

- d. DS: it is [[PRO raw] [that Bill [likes [his meat] [OP]]]]
 e. LF: it is [[PRO₂ raw]₁ [OP₁ that Bill [likes [his meat]₂] t₁]]]

(104) a. It's **blue** that they painted the house.

b. It was **pea green** that he painted his boat.
 [Pinkham and Hankamer 1975]

c. It's **dark green** that we've painted the kitchen.
 [Quirk and Greenbaum 1973]

d. DS: it is [[blue] [that they [painted [the house] [OP]]]]

e. SS: it is [[blue]₁ [OP₁ that they [painted [the house] t₁]]]]

I would predict, on the other hand, that acceptability should covary with the accessibility of the individual correlate of the property (i.e. the output of NOM or IOTA) in the discourse context.⁴⁴

3.5.4 PSEUDOCLEFTS.

Heggie predicts that clefted predicates should always be acceptable in pseudoclefts like (105), since, unlike null operators, overt wh-operators do assign theta roles.

(105) a. What Bill is is **tall**.

b. DS: [Bill is what] is tall⁴⁵

c. LF: [what₁ Bill₁ is t₁] is tall₁

This prediction appears to be correct. Predicates do indeed seem more acceptable in specificational pseudoclefts than in clefts, e.g. (18d), (26a,b), (34b) above and (106a) below:

(106) a. What he is is stupid. [Gundel 1977]

b. *It's stupid that he is. [Gundel 1977]

c. Stupid is what John is.

To maintain the general analysis of copular sentences which I have been advocating, it is necessary to assume that the apparent difference in acceptability of clefted and pseudoclefted predicates results from pragmatic constraints on type-shifting. It must be easier, for some reason, to construe pseudoclefted than clefted predicates as referential. Further exploration of what this reason might be, however, I will have to leave to future research.

⁴⁴See Bouldin 1990 for a potentially-relevant, Categorical Grammar approach to what I am calling secondary predicates.

⁴⁵For the sake of exposition, I am greatly oversimplifying Heggie's detailed analysis:

(i) DS: [IP e [I' e [VP is [CP [AP tall] [CP[IP e [I' e [VP is [AP[NP Bill] [APwhat]]]]]]]]]]]

(ii) SS: [CP[CP4What₁[IP Bill₁ [I' is₂[VP₂ [AP t₁ t₁]] [C' is₃ [IP tall₁ [I' t₃ [VP t₃ [t₁ t₁]]]]]]]]]]]

To summarize, Heggie comes essentially to the same conclusions as I do with regard to the predicate constraint —i.e. that predicative expressions cannot in general be clefted. She has to introduce a mysterious distinction between ‘metalinguistic’ and ‘syntactic’ clefts to account for contextually licensed exceptions, however, while I rely on the independently motivated mechanism of type-shifting. The analysis suggested here also accounts for the quantificational constraint and for the existence of predicational clefts, neither of which follow from Heggie’s analysis.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Heggie does note (p. 218) that ‘clefts share with non-restrictive relative clauses as opposed to restrictive relative clauses ...the inability to fully support quantifiers in head position’:

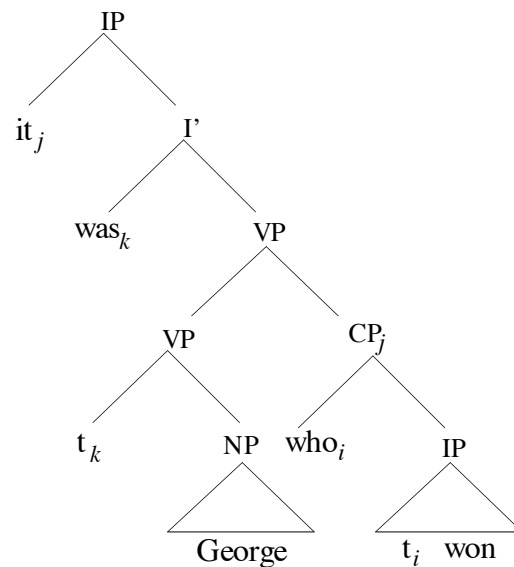
- (i) *It’s nobody that could come to the party.
- (ii) *Nobody, who could come to the party...
- (iii) Nobody who was invited could come to the party.

Chapter 4

The Cleft Pronoun and Cleft Clause

This chapter focuses on the nature of the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause, and on the syntactic relation that holds between the four subcomponents of the cleft construction. It will be argued (1) that the cleft pronoun has referential status; (2) that the cleft clause is a relative clause; (3) that the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause function as a discontinuous constituent at the level serving as input to pragmatic interpretation; and (4) that the clefted constituent and the cleft clause form a syntactic constituent. I will suggest, finally, that all four of these requirements are satisfied by assuming a structure along the lines of (1) as the S-structure representation of the cleft construction:

(1)



4.1 The cleft pronoun

Although most analysts consider the cleft subject pronoun to be an expletive, dummy pronoun which is a mere grammatical filler with no semantic content, this view has occasionally been challenged. Thus, Bolinger 1972b takes the position that the cleft pronoun has 'low information but not vague reference,' and Gundel 1977 proposes that the cleft pronoun makes 'pronominal reference to the topic of the sentence.' Borkin 1984 adopts the view that the initial *it* 'suggests the already known existence of a referent,' with the proviso that the intended referent is generally 'clarified' only in conjunction with the information expressed in the cleft clause. The purpose of this section is to present evidence in favor of the view that the cleft pronoun has semantic content.

4.1.1 TH-CLEFTS

As support for his referentiality thesis, Bolinger points to the existence of clefts with pronouns other than *it* as subject (*that, the stuff, this, they, those, these, and we*), such as those in (2), concluding that, ‘in view of this range of possibilities, no special status can be conceded to *it*, beyond the fact that it is unadulterated ‘identity,’ uncommitted to number, person, or semantic content.’

- (2) a. What are you so upset about? — It’s (that’s, the stuff’s) MY money you’re spending!
 b. What difference does a little dispute make now and then? — ‘OK, but this was with his BOSS that he was having the argument.’

Other linguists have recognized the existence of *th*-clefts without drawing the conclusion that the cleft pronoun has referential content. Jenkins 1975 notes the similarity of *that*-clefts such as (3b) both to the *it*-cleft such as (3a) and to *there*-clefts such as (3c). He argues that additional similarities between *there*-clefts and existential-*there* sentences such as (3d) support the derivation of the latter as an instance of the former.

- (3) a. It’s Bill Smith (who is) standing on the corner.
 b. That’s Bill Smith (who is) standing on the corner.
 c. There’s Bill Smith standing on the corner.
 d. There’s a man standing on the corner.

Wirth 1978 also recognizes the existence of *th*-clefts, treating the cleft pronoun as the determiner of a subject noun phrase containing an empty head noun restrictively modified by the extraposed relative (cleft) clause, and viewing the cleft pronoun *it* as a pronominal allomorph of the definite determiner *the*—essentially the position that I will be arguing for below.

By far the most extensive discussion of *th*-clefts is given by Ball 1977, 1978. Ball coined the term ‘*th*-cleft’ to refer to clefts containing pronouns other than *it* (i.e. *this, that, these, those, they*), and argued that *th*-clefts and *it*-clefts share all syntactic and semantic properties and thus constitute a syntactically unified class. As Ball points out, the *th*-clefts in (4), like the *it*-clefts in (5), exhibit the alternation between specificational (in the (a) examples) and predicational (in the (b) examples) interpretations that was discussed in Chapter 3:

- (4) a. But **this is Ethel Schuster we’re talking about**, not Jeanette.
 [Telephone conversation, 7/89]
 b. Make no mistake, **that was not a grudge that Nancy Reagan was holding** as she chatted about Donald T. Regan in a recent radio interview....
 [The New York Times, 10/22/89, E7]

- (5) a. **It was the maid he asked**, not the landlady.
[Knox, *The Footsteps at the Lock*, p. 136]
- b. Because **it's a country that we have here**, and all of Canada is involved.
[B. Mulroney, *The Vancouver Sun*, 7/30/90]

In what sense can the cleft subject pronoun be said to be referential? I suggest we take the neuter form of the pronoun as a clue. Although neuter pronominals cannot ordinarily be used to refer to people—cf. (6a)—they may be so used in identification sentences, as in (6b):

- (6) a. I ran into John at the supermarket. **He/*it/*this/*that** was buying food for a party.
- b. A: Who is **it/this/that**?
B: **It/this/that** is my brother-in-law, John Smith.

Neuter demonstrative pronouns can also be used to refer to people in 'caricature' sentences, which are used to assert that the referent has a certain characteristic property:

- (7) a. [Did Bush put the speculation to rest about his involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal?] ...George Bush did it again last night. I mean, **this is a man who is the Harold Lloyd of American politics**. He finds himself out on perches, hanging onto the hand of a clock on top of a New York building, and somehow he clammers back in. I guess the question I have is, how does he get up there?
[Mark Shields, *The McLaughlin Group*, 1/9/88]
- b. [Was Howard Baker a good choice to replace Regan as Reagan's Chief of Staff?] ...I think he's a great choice. The fundamental problem of the President is going to be dealing with Congress. **This is a man who can negotiate, who understands conciliation, who's got probity and understands what is correct and prudent, and what is crazy in this administration**. We need some settling down, Fred. [Morton Kondracke, *The McLaughlin Group*, 2/28/87]

The pronouns in both (6b) and (7) are clearly referential in some sense, though in neither case do they have quite the character of the ordinary pronoun in (6a). The speaker expects the addressee to realize who is being referred to, but does not expect the addressee to be already familiar with all relevant properties of the referent—the point of the utterance is to inform the addressee of one such property. Note also that both identification and caricature sentences, like clefts, are copular sentences; and, more specifically, copular sentences of the predicational subtype:

- (8) a. This is a man who can negotiate.
e <e,t>
- b. This is my brother, Bill.
e <e,t>

I suggest that the predicational cleft pronouns in (4b) and (5b) are also neuter referential pronouns (of type e). Furthermore, if we adopt the proposal of Williams and Partee that the referential and

predicative arguments of the copula can occur in either order (for discussion see section 4.1, and Chapter 3 above), we can view the specificational cleft pronouns in (4a) and (5a) simply as predicative pronouns (of type $\langle e, t \rangle$). Both referential (e-type) and predicative ($\langle e, t \rangle$ -type) pronouns are ‘referential’ in the broad sense of specifying a referent in the universe of discourse.

4.1.2 TH-CLEFTS AND COGNITIVE STATUS

The predicate denoted by the cleft clause of an *it*-cleft or *th*-cleft can have any cognitive status appropriate to definite expressions in general, as the examples of *th*-clefts from natural discourse in (9)-(21) below show. The predicate denoted by the cleft pronoun + cleft clause is speaker activated in (9)-(12), addressee activated in (13)-(14), extralinguistically activated in (15)-(17), and familiar but not activated in (18)-(21):

Speaker activated:

- (9) M: There IS something that happened here that you might not know about.
 N: Fred Lukermann resigned.
 M: Oh, that’s right — you talked to Karen.
 N: No, **this was JeanETTE who told me**—I talked to her last Sunday.
 [telephone conversation; 10/89]
- (10) K: Michael asked me last FALL to teach 1005.
 N: Oh?
 K: I mean, **this was the beginning of fall QUARter when he asked me.**
 [conversation, 12/31/89]
- (11) I wasn’t surprised by the massacre in China. [pause]
This is not IOWA we’re talking about. — This is a DIFFERENT SOCIETY.
 [Eric Severeid, interview on CSPAN by Brian Lamb, 12/31/89]
- (12) NF: ...And then, one morning, about three or four or five mornings before I was due to get out, I was lying in bed and someone, one of, one my fellow soldiers came by and and shook my bed and said, Come on Fredzo, get up... and the Sergeant himself said, ‘Leave him alone, he’s too short.’
 KF: Hmm.
 NF: I mean, the, **that was the platoon sergeant that said that.** I call that a pretty good guy.
 [Frederickson tapes, Christmas 1988]

Addressee activated:

- (13) NH: I fly to Michigan on Thursday and come back late on Friday. But I have to leave again on Saturday already

Mom: **When IS that on THURSDAY that you GO?**

NH: 2:25 [telephone conversation, 2/14/89]

- (14) [Reading the address on an envelope]

Mom: 'Okabena, Iowa' (laughs)

Neil: Does it—is that what it says?

Mom: Yeah.

Neil: Oh boy.

Mom: 'Minnesota 56161.'

Dad: **Who is that who wrote that, that put Iowa on it?**

Neil: Okabena, Iowa.

Mom: Homer, Homer York; Homer.

Dad: Oh.

[Frederickson Tapes, Christmas 1976]

Extralinguistically activated

- (15) They react sharply, though, to the suggestion that they are mercenaries. **'That's the French flag you see flying over there,'** Pierre Dufour, a former legionnaire, pointed out. 'This is part of the French Army. In any event, dating back to the Crusades, foreigners have always fought under different flags in Europe.'

[New York Times, 5/9/90, A4, 'Are Glory Days at an End for the Foreign Legion?']

- (16) RZ: Oh, **that was the gaRAGE I saw first.**

[conversation, 7/20/90, i.e. not the house]

- (17) 'Pardon me, sir,' he said. 'If you can spare a few moments, I'd like a word with you.'

Popple turned quickly and then smiled, holding out his hand. 'Captain Vachell, isn't it? Of course, if there's any way at all I can help, I'll do it. **This is a terrible thing that's happened, terrible.'**

[Elsbeth Huxley, Murder at Government House, p. 83]

Familiar but not activated.

- (18) K: [answering phone] Linguistics.

N: Hi!

K: Hi!

N: **Was that a sign or a plaque that was on that bridge?**

- K: Wow! Uh. . a sign or a plaque. . .I would say it was. . a sign. . that's a good question. I'd say it's a plaque cause a sign is too ambiguous. A plaque has to be attached to the building. And this was, attached to the bridge. I'd say a plaque is more specific. [telephone conversation, 6/8/89]
- (19) ... 'My good friend and parishioner Botts Tempe told me about it. He was catching for the over-forties when the call came in.'
 'Oh, **that was your picnic he was at.**' The comment was surprised out of her, and she regretted it immediately....
 [Dead in the Scrub, B.J. Oliphant]
- (20) ...Mr. and Mrs. Nev Barnes. She bakes bread and pies and sells them, and he snitches some of the proceeds and buys hooch from a bootlegger named Henrietta..."
 '**Was that her bread at breakfast?**
 'Yes. Salt-rising. You ate four slices.'
 [Death of a Dude, Rex Stout]
- (21) NH: That's the reason I don't want to go to Miami!
 BP: Yeah. Wasn't **that somewhere in Southern Florida where they thought those people got AIDS from bug bites** — getting bit a hundred times a night or something, because the place was so roach infested?
 [conversation, 2/89]

4.1.3 A PRAGMATIC CO-OCCURRENCE CONSTRAINT

It is important to notice, however, that choice of cleft pronoun is not entirely free. The substitutions in (22) show that there is a pragmatic asymmetry between *this*-clefts and *that*-clefts. *This*-clefts can be appropriately used only if the predicate denoted by the cleft clause is activated, while *that*-clefts require merely that the predicate be familiar:

- (22) a. Wasn't **it/#this/that** somewhere in Southern Florida **where they thought those people got AIDS from bug bites...**?
- b. Was **it/#this/that** a sign or a plaque **that was on that bridge**?
- c. Oh, **it/#this/that** was your picnic **he was at**.
- d. Was **it/#this/that** her bread **at breakfast**?

Cleft pronouns thus conform to the general pragmatic constraints on the use of different forms of referring expression which are encoded in the Givenness Hierarchy, repeated in (23) from Chapter 2:

(23) **Givenness Hierarchy**

in focus	>	activated	>	familiar	>	uniquely identifiable	>	type identifiable
{ <i>it</i> }		{ <i>that</i> <i>this</i> <i>this N</i> }		{ <i>that N</i> }		{ <i>the N</i> }		{ <i>a N</i> indefinite <i>this N</i> }

Crucially, however, cleft pronouns are subject to the necessary conditions associated with the determiners rather than the pronominals. For example, in (18) above, the cleft pronoun meets necessary conditions for determiner *that*, but not for pronominal *that*, since its referent is familiar but not activated. The information encoded in the cleft clause supplements the deictic information encoded in the cleft pronoun in precisely the way that the nominal information in a noun phrase supplements the deictic information encoded in the determiner. The cleft pronoun thus seems to function more like a determiner co-specifying the predicate denoted by the cleft clause than like a pronominal referring independently to the predicate.

Note also the relative lack of restriction on *it* as a cleft pronoun: the predicate denoted by the cleft clause may have any cognitive status allowable in clefts in general. The pronoun and the cleft clause taken together can thus be seen to have the referential properties of full noun phrases with definite articles (i.e. *the N* in the Givenness Hierarchy).¹ This observation lends further support to the hypothesis that the cleft pronoun and cleft clause function as a discontinuous constituent.

The infelicity which results from the substitution of a proximal pronoun for a distal pronoun when the referent fails to be included in the ‘speaker’s context space,’ as in (24), shows that cleft pronouns also obey the ‘speaker activation condition’ on proximal demonstratives, discussed in Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1989.²

¹Cf. the proposal of Wirth 1978 that the cleft pronoun *it* is the pronominal allomorph of the definite determiner *the*, and also the proposal of MacClaran 1982 that corresponding demonstrative determiners and pronominals are allomorphs. The more recent proposal of Abney 1987 that the determiner is the head of the noun phrase (the ‘DP hypothesis’)—and can hence appear either with or without a complement—is clearly also relevant.

²The ‘speaker activation condition’ accounts for the inappropriateness of using a proximal demonstrative to access a referent that is not construable as included in the ‘speaker’s context space’, as in (i):

- (i) A: Have you seen the neighbor’s new dog?
 B: Yes, and **that/??this dog** kept me awake all night.

Motivated exceptions include clarification questions and shared discourse topics.

- (24) a. **It/#these/those** are my cigarettes **you got there** buddy.
[Ball 1978]
- b. **It/?these/those** are not independent, parallel assumptions **that you're discussing**.
[Ball 1978]

The speaker-activation condition is sometimes obscured, however, by the fact that many addressee-activated *th*-clefts are clarification questions. It is generally the case that a proximal demonstrative can be felicitously used to refer to an addressee-activated referent as a signal that the speaker's contribution is not intended as an interruption, as illustrated in (25a). Substitution of a proximal pronoun for the attested distal pronoun in (25b) would thus transform the utterance into a clarification question like the addressee-activated *this*-cleft in (25c):

- (25) a. Mom: Is **this** your truck?
Neil: No, the beat-up old lousy van I have to drive.
[Frederickson Tapes, New Year's Eve 1975]
- b. When is **it/this/that** on Thursday **that you go**?
- c. A: Ray and Chris are both Psych majors, and she's marrying one.
N: **This** is Chris **you're talking about**, right?
A: Yeah. [Frederickson Tapes, New Year's Eve 1975]

Substitution of a distal for a proximal cleft pronoun can also result in infelicity, perhaps because such a substitution would generate the conversational implicature that the speaker considers the referent to be exclusive to his/her own context space:

- (26) a. I wasn't surprised by the massacre in China. **It/this/#that's** not Iowa **we're talking about**. *It/this/#that's* a different society.
- b. A: Oh that's right—you talked to Karen.
B: No **it/this/?that** was Jeanette **who told me**—I talked to her last Sunday.
- c. A: It may be that fanatical Muslims are even more stupid than fanatical Christians.
B: But **?it/these/?those** are students **who are rioting**.

4.1.4 SPECIFICATIONAL AND PREDICATIONAL *TH*-CLEFTS

Ball 1977 argues that *th*-clefts as well as *it*-clefts exhibit the specificational-predicational distinction. She argues further that in *th*-clefts with plural clefted constituents, the distinction is morphologically encoded in the form of the cleft pronoun. In specificational clefts, the cleft pronoun is invariant with respect to person and number features of the clefted constituent—it is always third-person and singular:

- (27) a. **It's the contras** who have cried uncle.
[McLaughlin Group, 3/25/88]
- b. **This** is not **language teaching problems** that we're talking about.
[Ball 1978]
- c. **This** is **Ford and Kissinger** we're dealing with, not two boy scouts.
[Ball 1978]
- d. **That** was **Mom and me** that, and other people who laughed about 'glossy balls.'
[Frederickson tapes]
- e. **That** was **two chicken dinners** I ordered, not two shrimp boats.
[Ball 1978]
- f. **That** was **our right-wingers** who got us into that you see.
[Geluykens 1983]

In predicational *th*-clefts, on the other hand, the cleft pronoun agrees in person and number with the clefted constituent—and is thus morphologically plural if the clefted constituent is plural. This can be seen in examples (28)-(32), which exhibit all the characteristics of predicational clefts identified earlier in §3.3—i.e., the clefted constituents are indefinite and/or contain contain adjectives bearing primary accent:

- (28) Yeah, I have the same concern about whether we're getting the straight dope from these sleazeballs, these Iranian nuts who — **They're just fanatics** who are holding him. If they're concerned about the guy, why don't they let him go, rather than insisting on 100 hostages.
[JG, McLaughlin group, 3/27/87]
- (29) BP: It may be that fanatical Muslims are even more stupid than fanatical Christians.
EM: But **these** are **STUdents** who are rioting.
[Conversation, looking at a newspaper photograph, 2/14/89]

The examples in (30) involve non-demonstrative cleft pronouns. As would be predicted, all of the *they*-clefts in the data can be independently identified as predicational:

- (30) a. **They** were **the saddest little letters** you wrote me.
[Ball 1978]
- b. Thus **they** have to be **surface segments** that they're talking about.
[Ball 1978]
- c. **They** are **royal horses** you are catching. Let them go.
[Ball 1978]
- d. **They** were **English hands** that dragged him up to the tree of shame.
[Ball 1978]
- e. **We** are **erstwhile friends and néighbors** who are fighting with each other.
[Bolinger 1972b]

The examples in (31) contain plural proximal demonstrative cleft pronouns, and those in (32) contain plural distal ones. Again the clefted constituents are indefinite and/or contain accented adjectives:

- (31) a. **These** aren't **floor samples** that you're saving on, but the best seats in the house.
[Ball 1978]
- b. **These** are **serious charges** that you're making.
[Ball 1978]
- c. No, **these** aren't **human beings** one deals with on Saturday nights.
[Ball 1978]
- d. **These** are **serious grammatical problems** that he's touching there.
[Ball 1978]
- (32) a. Seeing is believing! **Those** are **real eyeglasses** that Mickey is wearing.
[Ball 1978]
- b. **Those** are not **independent, parallel assumptions** that you're discussing.
[Ball 1978]
- c. **Those** are **my cigarettes** you got there, buddy.
[Ball 1978]
- d. **Those** were **T-tests** he was requesting.
[Ball 1978]
- e. **Those** were **Varick's pearls** about her neck.
[Ball 1978]

In sum, the morphological alternation exhibited by the cleft pronouns of plural *th*-clefts constitutes strong evidence in support of the hypothesis that the specificational/predicational distinction is applicable to clefts as well as to pseudoclefts,³ which in turn supports the hypothesis that the cleft pronoun has referential content.⁴

4.1.5 EXPLETIVE PRONOUNS MORE GENERALLY

It is interesting to note that *th*-clefts are not confined solely to English. Examples from German are shown in (33), and examples from Dutch are shown in (34):⁵

³The restriction of person-number agreement to predicational cleft pronouns is consistent with their analysis as individual-level (type e) referring expressions. (cf. also the discussion in Heggie 1988 about the lack of agreement features in French clitics which denote propositions—i.e., propositions are invariantly referred to with the third person singular clitic pronoun *le*.)

⁴It would be interesting to explore the 'deictic harmony' displayed across the cleft sentence as a whole, in order to explain the strong correlations which evidently exist between proximal/distal cleft pronoun, non-past/past tense copula, and activated/familiar cleft clause (as well as correlations between activated/familiar status of the cleft clause and non-past/past tense or first/non-first person status of the cleft clause itself).

⁵The examples are taken from Smits 1989, who notes concerning German clefts that 'instead of expletive *es* the demonstrative pronoun *das* can be used in its deictic sense when the focus is a NP,' and about Dutch clefts that 'instead

- (33) a. **es** war der Chef der diesen Wagen gekauft hat
it was the boss who this car bought has
'it was the boss who bought this car.'
- b. **das** bin ich, den du dort am Rande siehst
that am I, whom you there at edge see
'that am I whom you see there at the edge.'
- (34) a. **het** was mijnbroer die Marie op heterdaad betrapte
it was my brother whom Marie [redhanded caught]
'it was my brother whom Marie caught redhanded.'
- b. **dat** was zijn vrouw die ik net aan de telefoon had.
that was his wife whom I just now on telephone had
'that was his wife whom I had on the telephone just now.'

Sentential subject extraposition constructions in English can also occasionally contain a demonstrative subject pronoun instead of *it* :

- (35) ... he said, 'We don't like slant-eyed Eskimo bastards around here.' Funny thing, him saying that. Until I was about twenty I always thought our eyes were the proper shape...
- However, with this guy I wasn't taking.
'**That's odd you don't like slant-eyed Eskimo bastards,**' I said. 'I don't object to tall, skinny half-breed bastards.'
- [Scott Young, *Murder in a Cold Climate*, p. 82]

It is worth noting, however, that expletive *it* cannot always be replaced with a demonstrative. Demonstrative pronouns are impossible as subjects of 'weather' and 'raising-verb' sentences in any context:

- (36) a. It/*this/*that is raining this evening in Ithaca, Elmira and Cortland.
b. It/*this/*that appears that Cuomo will run for a third term as Governor.

Expletive cleft subjects also pattern differently from raising and weather verb subjects in (standard) French and Russian. Thus, the masculine singular pronoun *il* is used in weather and raising-verb sentences in French, while the demonstrative pronoun *ce* is used in clefts:

- (37) a. Il/*ce neige
it/*that snows
'It's snowing'
- b. il/*ce me semble que tu as tort.
it/*that to.me seems that you have wrong
'It seems to me that you are wrong.'

of expletive *het* the demonstrative pronoun *dat* ... can be used in its deictic sense when the focus is a NP, especially a person.'

- c. *il/c'est un livre que je vois.
 *it/that's a book that I saw
 It was a book that I saw.

A similar pattern is found in Russian. Weather and raising-verb sentences obligatorily lack an overt subject, whereas clefts contain the demonstrative pronoun *eto*:⁶

- (38) a. (**eto*) morozit
 (that) is-freezing
 '(It is) freezing'
- b. (**eto*) kazetsjacto on usel
 (that) seems that he left
 '(It) seems that he left'
- c. *eto* Ivana javidel
 that Ivan+acc I saw
 'that/it (was) Ivan I saw.'

I conclude that the pragmatic properties of *th*-clefts support the hypothesis that the cleft pronoun has a critical role to play in the interpretation of clefts, and that the cleft pronoun and cleft clause function as a unit during pragmatic interpretation. *Th*-clefts also provide additional support for the hypothesis that clefts, like other copular sentences, have predicational as well as specificational interpretations.

4.2 The cleft clause

This section presents arguments in favor of the hypothesis that the cleft clause is structurally a relative clause, a view which I defend against traditional as well as contemporary attacks. Cross-linguistic evidence is cited which suggests that the structural similarity of relative and cleft clauses is universal in scope.

4.2.1 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CLEFT AND RELATIVE CLAUSES

The examples in (39) show that cleft clauses and restrictive relative clauses are structurally very similar: both contain a 'gap,' both permit an identical range of complementizers, and both permit ' pied piping':⁷

- (39) a. It was the man \emptyset /**that/who/whom** I saw first.⁸

⁶The Russian examples are taken from Gundel 1977. The Russian copula is not expressed in the present tense.

⁷Note, however, that Rochemont 1986 argues that pied piping is less generally acceptable in clefts than in ordinary relative clauses.

- The man **Ø/that/who/whom** I saw first won the race.
- b. It was the book **Ø/that/which** I read first.
The book **Ø/that/which** I read first was about horses.
- c. It was the young man **whose** dog died last summer.
The young man **whose** dog died last summer is still upset.
- d. It was the red folder **in which** we found the clue.
The red folder **in which** we found the clue was in my office.

The similarity between cleft clauses and relative clauses is not restricted to English.⁹ In languages which have distinct complementizers for introducing relative clauses and sentential complements, it always seems to be the relative complementizer which is used in cleft clauses. This is true, for example, in Swedish, Irish, and Arabic, as shown respectively in (40)-(42):^{10,11}

- (40) a. jag såg den lampan **som** Anders köpte i Umeå
'I saw the lamp that Anders bought in Umea.'

⁸Delahunty notes dialectal variation in the choice of wh- complementizer in clefts in English. Some dialects accept *who* (e.g. that of Heggie 1988) only in subject clefts, while others accept *who(m)* in object clefts as well. Some nonstandard dialectal features are the use of *what* as cleft complementizer in Irish and Scottish dialects, as in (i) and (ii) from Delahunty 1982:131, and the lack of a complementizer even in subject clefts as in (iii) and (iv) from *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club*, by Dorothy Sayers (24, 38):

- (i) It was a falling tree what killed him.
(ii) It was the accident what upset him.
(iii) It was Weston was at the door all morning, my lord.
(iv) It was a gentleman spoke to me.

⁹See also Schachter 1973 for discussion of similarities between focus constructions and relative clauses in several languages.

¹⁰The Swedish data come from Smits 1989 (pp. 429, 433), the Irish data from McCloskey 1979 (p. 110), and Chung and McCloskey 1987 (218, 222). The Arabic data comes from Maher Bahloul (personal communication), who points out that only NP clefts of this sort are possible. Data from Smits 1989 (p. 56) indicates that the Zurich dialect of Swiss German consistently uses *wo* (< 'where') in relatives, but *daz* ('that') in sentential complements, as shown in (i), but no data on clefts is presented:

- (i) der ankx̄ [wo de göti aakee hǣt [daz mer em no gon ǣse]] hǣt gruuzig k̄smökxt
the butter that the g.f. claimed has that one it still could eat has horrible smelled
'the butter that my godfather claimed that one could still eat it smelled horrible.'

¹¹Rizzi 1987 (ch. 2: 60) discusses the phenomenon of distinct relative and sentential complementizers, mentioning also Hebrew relative *ʔasher* versus sentential *ʔhe*. He suggests that such relative complementizers exhibit agreement either with their specifiers or with the head NP of the relative clause. Although he doesn't discuss clefts in this context, the cleft facts are clearly relevant.

- b. det var denna rock **som** han köptel
'It was this coat that he bought.'
- c. Ingrid sade **att** det var denna rock som han köpte
'Ingrid said that it was this coat that he bought.'
- (41) a. Is é Seán **aL** thigeann 'na bhaile
Copula him COMP come home
'It's John that comes home.'
- b. an bhean **aL** chuir isteach air ...
the woman COMP put in on-it
'the woman that applied for it...'
- c. Dúirt sé **go** dtiocfadh sé
said he COMP would.come he
'He said that he would come.'
- (42) a. ?inna dzan huwa **?alladhi**: xaraja
FOCUS John.ACC he.NOM who.3M left
'It was John who left.'
- b. ?ar-rajulu **?alladhi**: xaraja...
DEF-man.NOM who.3M left
'the man who left...'
- c. dhannat nansi **?anna** dzan xaraja
thought.FEM Nancy that John.acleft
'Nancy thought that John left.'

In Cakchiquel, as in other Mayan languages, clefts, relative clauses, and wh-questions require a special 'focus antipassive' verb stem and agreement pattern when the 'gap' corresponds to a transitive subject.¹²

- (43) a. ya riox-ri ri **s - qu - cap - o** rie
Cop we-dem Rel Asp-1pAbs- catch-Foc.ap them
'It was we who caught them.'
- b. riox ri **s - qu - cap - o** **rie**
we Rel Asp-1pAbs- catch-foc.ap them
'we who caught them...'
- c. rIt s - Ø - a -bix ci riox **s - e - qa - cap** rie
you Asp-3sAbs-2sErg-say that we Asp-3pAbs-1pErg-catch them
'You said that we caught them.'

¹²For discussion, see Hedberg 1989.

4.2.2 JESPERSEN'S ARGUMENTS

Despite such clear similarities, analysts have sometimes denied that cleft clauses are relative clauses. Thus, in arguing against his earlier 'transposition' analysis, Jespersen 1937 suggests that the introductory *that* in clefts is a subordinating conjunction rather than a relativizer.¹³ As evidence he notes that adverbial clefts in Danish use the sentential complementizer rather than the relative complementizer, and in 'Vulgar Danish' the sentential complementizer is used even in NP-clefts:

- (44) a. Det er her slaget (**at**) skal stå.
 'It is here (that) he must come'
 b. Når var det (**at**) han døde?
 'When was it (that) he died?'
 c. Det var Jens **at** jeg saa.
 'It was Jens that I saw'

Examples from Smits 1989 confirm this observation for PP and sentential adjunct clefts in Danish (45) and for PP clefts in Norwegian (46). In Swedish (47), *som* is used instead of *att*, but there is a preference for no complementizer at all:

- (45) a. det var over droningen, (**at**)/***som** han skrev en bog
 'it was about the queen that he wrote a book.'
 b. det var fordi at musikken var så høj, (**at**)/***som** han ringede til politiet.
 'It was because the music was so loud that he called the police.'
- (46) a. det var om Etiopia **at**/***som** han skrev en bok
 'It was about Ethiopia that he wrote a book.'
 b. det var på kjøkkenet **at**/***som** Tarald bygde et skip
 'It was in the kitchen that Tarald built a ship'
- (47) a. det var om Etiopien **som** Pelle skrev en bok.
 'It was about Ethiopia that Pelle wrote a boot.'
 b. det var i köket (**som**) Anders byggde en båt
 'It was in the kitchen that Anders built a boat.'

Although these facts are certainly very interesting, they show only that NP clefts and oblique clefts are not structurally indistinguishable. This is clear already from the fact that some languages permit only NP-clefts (e.g. Arabic, cf. footnote 10 above). The Scandinavian data in (45)-(47) shows that

¹³Jespersen 1947: 'Is *that* (*que*) a relative word, or is it the same 'conjunction' that we have in *I think that he died here*, *Je crois qu'il mourut ici* ?

complementizer choice in oblique clefts is subject to dialectal variation. However, we cannot draw conclusions about NP clefts from instabilities exhibited only by oblique clefts.

4.2.3 GENERATIVISTS' ARGUMENTS

Recent generative accounts of clefts have also denied relative-clause status to the cleft clause. Delahunty 1982, Rochemont 1986, and Heggie 1988 assume *that* to be the basic complementizer in clefts, with *wh*-complementizers inserted only stylistically, by 'analogy' with relative clauses.¹⁴

Delahunty argues that the existence of *that*-complementizer clefts with no *wh*-complementizer counterparts supports the analysis of *that*-complementizers as basic in clefts. This argument is unconvincing, however, given that CP's, AP's, AdvP's, and PP's are not ordinarily modified by relative clauses as NP's are, there is no reason to expect that non-NP clefts should display the full range of complementizer choice open to NP relatives and clefts. (It would make more sense to view non-NP clefts as peripheral analogs of NP clefts, rather than the other way around.)

Delahunty and Rochemont claim additionally that *where* and *when* are not permitted as complementizers in clefts. They note the existence of *where*- and *when*-clause copular sentences such as those in (48a) which, unlike clefts, lack *that*-clause (48b) and simple sentence counterparts (48d) and permit preposing of the *wh*-clause (48c).¹⁵ I would add that such sentences also lack pseudocleft counterparts (48e).

- (48) a. It was March/sunny when we arrived.
 b. *It was March/sunny that we arrived.
 c. When we arrived, it was March/sunny.
 d. *We arrived March/sunny.
 e. *When we arrived was March/sunny.

But it cannot be concluded from the existence of a class of adverbial-clause sentences which are not clefts, that no adverbial-clause sentences are clefts. Even if the *when*-clause sentence in (49a) is not a cleft, those in (50a)-(52a) do fit the paradigm associated with clefts.

¹⁴Note that this is a crucial assumption for Rochemont 1986 since on his analysis, the clefted constituent is moved from its D-structure position inside the cleft clause first into COMP and then into post-copular 'contrastive focus' position, leaving behind an intermediate trace in COMP. For Delahunty and Heggie, cleft clauses, like relative clauses, contain an empty operator which is moved into COMP at S-structure. Heggie makes crucial use of the proposal that the cleft operator is empty to account for syntactic differences between clefts and pseudoclefts (cf. the discussion in Chapter 3 of Heggie's Null Operator Generalization).

¹⁵Delahunty and Rochemont note that some post-copular elements (e.g. *late*) may appear in both the cleft and the non-cleft paradigms. Cf. also Quirk and Greenbaum 1972, p. 416: 'A *wh*-pronoun cannot be used at all in cleft sentences where the focal element is an adverbial.'

- (49) a. It was still only three when he awoke and he knew he wouldn't get any more sleep that night. [Ruth Rendall, Speaker of Mandarin, p. 37]
- b. *It was still only three that he awoke
- c. When he awoke, it was still only three.
- d. *He awoke still only three.
- e. *When he awoke was still only three.
- (50) a. Michael asked me last fall to teach 1005...I mean **THIS was the beginning of fall QUARter when he asked me.**
[KS, 12/31/89]
- b. THIS was the beginning of fall QUARter that he asked me.
- c. When he asked me, it/*this was the beginning of fall quarter.
- d. He asked me at the beginning of fall quarter.
- e. When he asked me was the beginning of fall quarter.
- (51) a. A: When is it heavily used?..
B: I think — as Nip pointed out earlier on — it's June when the pressure is on for the examination.
A: **It's the summer term when you're really stuck.**
C: Yes, it is, yes, yes.
[Geluykens 1983, C48]
- b. It's the summer term that you're really stuck.
- c. When you're really stuck, it's the summer term.
- d. You're really stuck in the summer term.
- e. When you're really stuck is the summer term.
- (52) a. A: Now where did I hear that from?
B: Probably me on the phone was it. **It was the day AFTER when I RANG,** and we... [Geluykens, 1983, C4]
- b. It was the day AFTER that I RANG
- c. When I rang, it was the day after.
- d. I rang the day after.
- e. When I rang was the day after.

The *where*-clause sentences in (53) and (54) also fit the pattern of true cleft sentences.

- (53) a. **It is here where the hearty French established a settlement along the frothy St. Lawrence River** and survived the first relentless winter.
[Insight Guide to Canada, p. 15]
- b. It is here that the hearty French established a settlement along the frothy St. Lawrence River
- c. *?Where the hearty French established a settlement along the frothy St. Lawrence River, it was here.
- d. The hearty French established a settlement here along the frothy St. Lawrence River
- e. Where the hearty French established a settlement along the frothy St. Lawrence River was here.
- (54) a. **Yet it is precisely on this point where Ahlquist and I must part company.**
[Minneapolis Star and Tribune, Op-ed page, 8/22/87]
- b. Yet it is precisely on this point that Ahlquist and I must part company.
- c. *?Where Ahlquist and I must part company, it is precisely on this point.
- d. Where Ahquist and I must part company is precisely on this point.
- e. Ahlquist and I must part company precisely on this point.

Moreover, it is difficult to see how the Delahunty/Rochemont/Heggie analysis could be extended to account for genitive clefts with the complementizer *whose* in a non-ad hoc way, since these do not permit the use of *that* :

- (55) a. It was the criminal division of the Justice Department **whose bungled investigation of Watergate** led to the call for a special prosecutor in the first place.
[Minneapolis Star and Tribune, Op-ed page, 8/25/87]
- b. *It was the criminal division of the Justice Department **that's** bungled investigation of Watergate led to the call for a special prosecutor in the first place.
- c. It was Captain Grant **whose men** sang for the queen.
[Smits 1989: 301]
- d. It is the mayors **whose income** the government is trying to lower now.
[Smits 1989: 301]
- e. It was Van Buren **whose legacy** has caused every vice president to rail at the unfairness of his political fate.
[Haynes Johnson, Mpls Star & Trib, 2/16/88]

I conclude, therefore, contrary to Delahunty, Rochemont and Heggie, that cleft clauses and relative clauses exhibit exactly the same range of complementizers. This makes it possible to abandon the rather mysterious suggestion that the appearance of overt *wh*-operators in clefts is due to a special stylistic mechanism that operates on clefts by analogy with relative clauses. I adopt

instead the far simpler hypothesis that cleft clauses are just relative clauses, as suggested by the cross-linguistic similarities between cleft and relative clauses discussed in §4.2.1 above.¹⁶

4.3 The relation between the cleft pronoun and cleft clause

I concluded in §4.1 that the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause function as a unit during pragmatic interpretation. In this section I will present and attempt to rebut arguments which have been raised against the hypothesis that the cleft pronoun and cleft clause constitute a syntactically discontinuous unit. Recall from §3.1 that the most commonly proposed version of what I termed the ‘extraposition approach’ to the structure of clefts views the relation which holds between the cleft clause and the cleft pronoun to be identical to the relation which holds between an extraposed relative clause and its head NP. A second version, proposed in Gundel 1977, views the relation which holds between the cleft clause and the cleft pronoun to be identical to the relation which holds between a right-dislocated constituent and its pronominal antecedent.¹⁷

Jespersen 1937 levels against his own earlier ‘transposition’ analysis the criticism that clefts in languages such as Italian lack an overtly expressed cleft pronoun:

- (56) quando é un santo che parla, é il Signore che lo fa parlare
 ‘When it is a saint that speaks, it is God that makes him speak.’

However, as Halvorsen (1978:25) notes, ‘this objection would presumably seem less important to a transformational linguist. A transformational linguist would permit the presence of an underlying *it* which would function as head for the relative clause.’ Gundel 1977 views the lack of a cleft pronoun in null subject languages as support for her right-dislocation analysis of clefts, since lack of an overt pronominal antecedent for the right-dislocated topic is a general characteristic of right-dislocation in such languages.

A second objection against the extraposition analysis is leveled by Ball 1977, who argues that non-extraposed restrictive relative clauses headed by pronouns are limited to archaic proverbs, as in (57).

- (57) a. **He who hesitates** is lost.

¹⁶Delahunty claims that cleft clauses are essentially distinct from relative clauses in Irish, since the indirect relative strategy, with a resumptive pronoun and the complementizer *aN* is unavailable in clefts. McCloskey 1979, on which Delahunty bases his claim, is neutral with respect to this issue. Kari Swingle informs me that she believes the indirect as well as direct strategy to be available in Irish clefts. In any case, the similarities between cleft and relative clauses in Irish outweigh any differences, and thus Irish fails to support Delahunty’s conclusion that cleft clauses and relative clauses are distinct.

¹⁷I am not concerned here with the issue of whether such syntactic relations should be encoded in the grammar procedurally by means of movement rules or purely declaratively by principles of surface structure interpretation.

- b. **He who lives by the sword**, dies by the sword.
- c. Let **he who is without sin among you** cast the first stone.

While it is certainly true that relative clauses are only marginally headed by personal pronouns in English, they are quite commonly headed by plural demonstrative pronouns, as in (58):

- (58) It has great potential value for **those who must read technical documents**.
[message from electronic news group]

Moreover, restrictive relative clauses can be headed by plural personal pronouns in Irish (McCloskey 1979: 23), as in (59), and in Japanese, even by singular definite pronouns (Fukui 1986:205), as in (60):

- (59) **Sibh-se aL tá tinn**, gabhaigi 'na bhaile
you(pl) COMP are sick go home
'Those of you who are sick, go home.'
- (60) Tokyo-no biru-no okuzyoo kara mita
-Gen building-Gen top from (I) saw
Haree-suisei-wa smog-no tame bonyariot
Halley's Comet-Top smog-Gen due.to faintly
nigotte ita ga, **Okinawa-no Naha-de mita**
blurred wasbut Gen -in (I) saw
sore-wa yozora-ni kukkirito kagayaite-ita.
it-Top night.sky-in vividly shining was.

'Halley's Comet that (I) saw from the top of a building in Tokyo was blurred by the smog, but it that (I) saw in Naha City in Okinawa was vividly shining in the night sky.'

Thirdly, Jespersen takes the absence of 'comma' intonation and pause between the clefted constituent and the cleft clause as evidence against an extraposition analysis. However, there is also no prosodic break before extraposed sentential subjects or extraposed relative clauses:¹⁸

¹⁸This criticism has perhaps been more justifiably raised against Gundel's 1977 right-dislocated pseudocleft analysis of clefts—since right-dislocated constituents are often preceded by a pause. Gundel 1977 accounts for the lack of a prosodic break in clefts with a reduction rule applying only to clefts. In defense of her analysis, note that Lambrecht 1981 distinguishes two types of right-dislocation structures: unplanned 'afterthoughts', which are preceded by a prosodic break; and planned 'antitopics', which are not preceded by a break. Cleft clauses may then function as 'antitopics.'

Gundel's analysis has also been criticized (e.g. in Carlson 1983) on the grounds that right-dislocated pseudoclefts and clefts have different discourse functions. However Gundel's point is that the two constructions have identical topic-comment structures — not that they are functionally identical in every respect. Perhaps confusion has arisen on this point because right-dislocated pseudoclefts seem generally to be predicational rather than specificational, at least in the examples from my data:

- (i) Maybe you're thinking, this is elistist, what that man's saying.
[public radio pledge drive, 10/22/89, WSKG]

- (61) a. It's unfortunate that Republicans keep winning the elections.
 b. Nobody would drink instant coffee who knew anything about espresso.
 [Reinhart 1980]

Fourthly, Jespersen points out that cleft clauses but not extraposed relative clauses may lack overt complementizers — compare (62b) and (63b):¹⁹

- (62) a. It was the Colonel who I was looking for.
 b. It was the Colonel I was looking for.
 [Jespersen 1947]
 c. *It who I was looking for was the Colonel.
- (63) a. A man was living here who the police were looking for.
 b. *A man was living here the police were looking for.
 c. A man who the police were looking for was living here.

However, this difference could result from clashing discourse conditions on ellipted complementizers and extraposed relative clauses. It may be the case that complementizer omission is subject to a general constraint requiring elliptical material to be contextually recoverable (i.e. to be activated). In contrast, extraposed relative clauses, unlike cleft clauses, are always unactivated (c.f. Huck and Na 1990). Consistent with this hypothesis is Prince's (1978) observation that the complementizer cannot be omitted in a cleft clause that bears primary accent (which is typically unactivated.).

Finally, Jespersen objects that 'the almost universal agreement with regard to person and number of the verb in the relative clause with the immediate antecedent points in the same direction, i.e. against the transposition theory.' I would counter, however, that the universality of such agreement patterns is not entirely clear. Whether or not the verb of a subject-gap cleft clause agrees with the clefted constituent varies dialectally, and depends in part on the assignment of nominative case to the clefted constituent. Thus, Akmajian 1970 identifies the three dialects of American English illustrated in (64), which differ primarily in the morphological case associated with a pronominal clefted constituent. Dialect I requires non-nominative case on all clefted constituents; Dialect II requires nominative case when the clefted constituent denotes the subject of the cleft clause; and Dialect III displays a mixture of the two strategies.

- (64) I. i. It's me who is/*am responsible.
 ii. It's I who *am/*is responsible.

(ii) I think that's exactly right, what Bob says — he's got a themeless campaign.
 [PB, The McLaughlin Group, 2/19/88]

(iii) But that was a big mistake, what we saw, this business of apologizing, saying it was bureaucrats.
 [MK, The McLaughlin Group]

¹⁹Ball 1977 objects also that extraposition would be obligatory in clefts, but optional in non-clefts—compare (62c) and (63c).

- iii. It's me/*I who you saw.
- iv. It's you and me/*I who are/*is responsible.
- II. i. It's me who *is/*am responsible.
- ii. It's I who am/*is responsible.
- iii. It's I/*me who you saw.
- iv. It's you and I/*me who are/*is responsible.
- III. i. It's me who is/*am responsible.
- ii. It's I who am/*is responsible.
- iii. It's me/*I who you saw.
- iv. It's you and me/I who are/*is responsible.

The verb of a subject-gap cleft clause always agrees in number with the clefted constituent, but only agrees with it in person if the clefted constituent is nominative. Akmajian argues that the person-agreement system of Dialect I supports his extraposition analysis since the verb of the cleft clause can here be viewed as agreeing with the cleft pronoun instead of the clefted constituent.

In Middle English also the verb of the cleft clause agreed with the cleft pronoun, while the copula agreed with the clefted constituent, as shown in (65a). A similar pattern can be seen in Modern German in (65b) and Dutch in (65c):²⁰

- (65) a. It am I that loveth so hote Emilye the brighte.
 loves-3.sg
- b. Ich bin es der immer die Rechnungen bezahlt
I am it who always the bills pays-3.sg.
'I am it who always pays the bills'
- c. Ik ben het die haar al die bloemen stuurt
I am it who here all those flowers sends-3sg.
'I am it who sends all those flowers'

Extensive dialectal variation in the morphological case of the clefted constituent is dramatically displayed in the modern Scandinavian languages. Compare the possibilities available in Danish (66a), Norwegian (66b), and Swedish (66c).²¹

- (66) a. Det var ***jeg/mig** som købte den jakke
It was *I/me that bought this coat
'It was me that bought this coat.'

²⁰The Middle English example is from Chaucer, quoted in Jespersen. The German and Dutch examples are from Smits 1989.

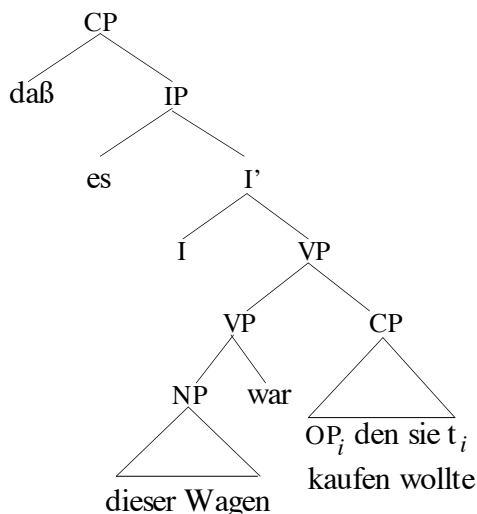
²¹The Scandinavian examples are from Smits 1989. Note that the Scandinavian languages don't exhibit subject-verb agreement.

- b. Det var **jeg/meg** som kjøpte denne frakken
 It was I/me that bought this coat
 'It was I/me that bought this coat..'
- c. Det var **jag/*meg** som köpte denna rock
 It was I/*me that bought this coat
 'It was I that bought this coat.'

Positive evidence in favor of the cleft clause as an extraposed relative clause can be found in the Scandinavian languages. Smits 1989 observes that the cleft clause must follow the finite verb in subordinate clefts in German and Dutch. Since the verb ordinarily appears in final position in subordinate clauses, the postverbal cleft clause must occupy an extraposition position. The example (67a) is an example from German, to which I would assign the structure in (67b):

- (67) a. Jutta sagt daß es dieser Wagen war den sie
 says that it this car was which she
 kaufen wollte
 to.buy wanted
 'J. says that it was this car that she wanted to buy.'

b.



Note further that the syntactic similarity between the initial pseudocleft clause and the final cleft clause is even more pronounced in Icelandic than it is in English:

- (68) a. **Það** var Olafur/Olaf **sem María sá** (Smits 1989:347)
 that was Olaf-NOM/OLAF-AC that Maria saw
 'It was Olaf that Maria saw.'
- b. **Það sem María sá** var Olafur/*Olaf (Smits 1989: 348)
 that that Maria saw was Olaf-NOM/OLAF-ACC

‘The one that Maria saw was Olaf.’

I have argued in this section that the arguments which have been advanced in the literature against the extraposition analysis of clefts are not compelling. Having argued in §4.1 that the cleft pronoun and cleft clause function as a unit in pragmatic interpretation, I conclude, therefore, that the relation holding between the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause should be encoded in the syntactic analysis of clefts—in other words, that the expletive approach to cleft structure should be abandoned in favor of the extraposition approach.

4.4 The relation between the clefted constituent and cleft clause

In this section, I present arguments that the clefted constituent and the cleft clause function syntactically as a unit—more specifically, that the cleft clause is a subconstituent of the VP. Delahunty 1982 presents five constituency arguments in support of the hypothesis that the cleft clause is a subconstituent of the verb phrase. The clefted constituent and cleft clause act as a unit with respect to VP-deletion (69a), right-node-raising (69b), parenthetical formation (69c), VP-conjunction (69d), and VP-preposing (69e):

- (69) a. I said that it should have been Bill who negotiated the new contract, and it should have been.
- b. It could have been—and it should have been—Bill who negotiated the new contract.
- c. It must have been, in my opinion, the cyanide that did it.
- d. It must have been Fred that kissed Mary but Bill that left with her.
- e. I said that it was Bill that argued the case and Bill that argued the case it was.

Delahunty observes that his VP-preposing example is of dubious acceptability. Since more acceptable examples can be constructed, however, as shown by the equally acceptable status of (70a) and (70b), I conclude that VP-preposing is indeed permissible in clefts, and thus that the cleft clause is indeed a constituent of the verb phrase:

- (70) a. I said it would be a conservative who’d win, and a conservative who won it certainly was.
- b. I said that I would finish by September, and finish by September I did.

It is worth pointing out that the first four constructions Delahunty evokes do not entirely exclude extraposed relative clauses and right-dislocated phrases with subject antecedents from appearing in the position filled by the cleft clause in clefts:

- (71) **Extraposed relatives:**

- a. A man came in with blond hair, and a woman did with brown hair.
[Culicover and Rochemont 1990]
- b. Nobody would—and nobody could— drink instant coffee who knew anything about espresso.
[c.f. Reinhart 1980]
- c. Nobody would ever, in my opinion, drink instant coffee, who knew anything about espresso.
- d. Nobody could drink instant coffee and enjoy it, who knew anything about espresso.
- e. *I said a candidate would win who had charisma, and win who had charisma, a candidate did.

(72) **Right-dislocated phrases:**

- a. I said that he should have negotiated the new contract, Bill I mean, and he should have.
- b. I could have — and I should have — told him about it immediately, the phone call.
- c. It might, I suppose, have caused her death, the cyanide I mean.
- d. They're looking for a fight, the Gophers, and won't rest until they've found one.
- e. ?*We predicted that they'd win, and win, the Republicans, they did.

The ungrammaticality of (71e) and the extreme awkwardness of (72e), as compared to (70a) leads me to conclude, however, that the relation which holds between the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause is not identical to the relation which holds between an extraposed relative clause and its NP head, or between a right-dislocated phrase and its antecedent pronoun, though all three relations have a great deal in common.²²

4.5 The syntactic structure of clefts

In the preceding chapter I argued that the copula plays the same semantic role in clefts that it plays in copular sentences in general since clefts, like other copular sentences, have predicational as well as specificational interpretations. In §4.1, I argued that the cleft pronoun is pragmatically contentful and varies in form depending on the cognitive status of the information expressed in the cleft clause;

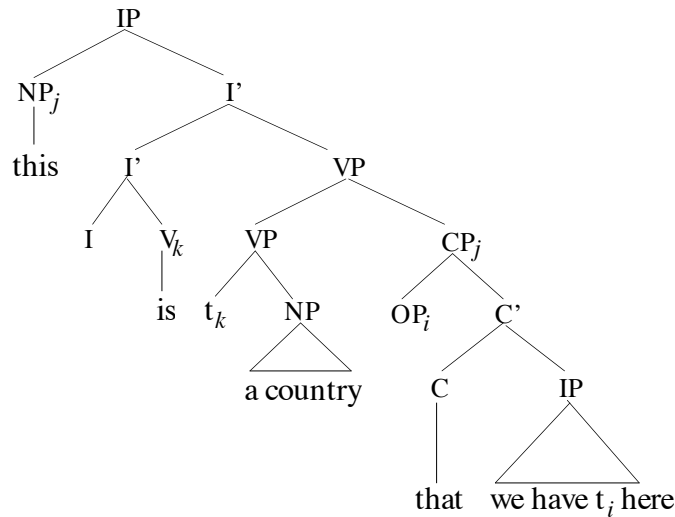
²²Note also that the clefted constituent alone can be preposed:

- (i) I said that it was Bill who believed that the Earth is flat and Bill it was who believed it.
[Delahunty 1982:101]
- (ii) Then it was that Nigel stood on the edge of the lock, and began a one-sided conversation with the lifeless figure in the canoe.
[Footsteps at the Lock, p. 117]

and secondly, that the cleft pronoun is morphologically invariant in specificational clefts, while in predicational clefts, it agrees with the clefted constituent at least in number and sometimes also in gender and person. In §4.2, I argued that the cleft clause is structurally a relative clause, which functions as a unit with the clefted constituent for purposes of VP-preposing, but functions as a unit with the cleft pronoun for purposes of semantic and pragmatic interpretation.

I propose, therefore, that the syntactic structure of clefts should be viewed along the lines of the structure shown in (71):

(71)



I would claim that the structure in (71) is compatible with either a specificational or a predicational interpretation. If the postcopular NP is interpreted referentially, the sentence is interpreted specifically, and the subject pronoun is morphologically invariant. If the postcopular NP is interpreted predicatively, the sentence is interpreted predicationally, and the subject pronoun agrees with the clefted constituent at least in number and sometimes in gender and person.

I assume that the internal structure proposed for the cleft clause would be uncontroversially accepted as the internal structure of a restrictive relative clause. As discussed in §4.2, my proposal differs from recent generative proposals for the structure of clefts in viewing the presence of an overt *wh*-operator in a cleft clause to be a full-fledged alternative to an overt *that*-complementizer, just as it is in ordinary relative clauses. Since I assume that predication is mediated by the copula, I don't need to adopt any special mechanism to directly associate the clefted constituent with the missing argument of the cleft clause, though some sort of mechanism may be needed to accommodate agreement and case-marking relations that are found to hold between the clefted constituent and the

verb of the cleft clause. I adopt without modification current assumptions concerning V-to-I movement of the copula (c.f. Pollock 1989),²³

The most original, and least developed, aspect of the proposed structure is the coindexation of the cleft pronoun and cleft clause. It is not necessary, of course, to assume that the cleft clause is generated inside the subject NP and then moved to the end of the sentence. The cleft clause can instead be generated directly in VP-adjunct position, as long as it is coindexed with the cleft pronoun, or otherwise associated with it, at the level of representation which serves as input to full pragmatic interpretation. There are various theoretical avenues to explore in making this relation explicit. A purely semantic account might be adopted along the lines of Wittenburg's (1987) proposal for extraposition-from-NP in discourse representation theory, or a syntactic account might be adopted along the lines of Culicover and Rochemont's (1990) analysis of extraposition-from-NP involving their 'Complement Principle.' It might also be possible to extend to clefts, Chomsky's (1988) proposal that a 'Principle of Full Interpretation' forces the post-copular NP in an existential *there* sentence, and the sentence sentential subject in an extraposition sentence, to raise and adjoin to the expletive subject pronoun at LF. Finally, it would be intriguing to investigate the implications of Abney's (1987) 'DP hypothesis' for encoding the functional parallels between determiners and expletives which were discussed in §4.1.3. above. Exploration of these alternatives, however, must be left for future research.

²³Note that the copula is not preposed with the clefted constituent and cleft clause in VP-preposing examples such as (68a). Though I have presented examples only of clefted NP's and AP's, I assume that clefted PP's and adverbs and CP's can also be accommodated. It would also be possible to assume that the cleft pronoun, the cleft clause, the cleft complementizer, the operator and the gap all receive the same index: the pronoun and the clause by the expletive-associate relation, the clausal (CP) node with its head C by feature percolation, C with the operator by specifier-head agreement, and the operator with the gap by the operator-variable relation.

Chapter 5

Topic-Clause Clefts

In the next two chapters, the discussion shifts from the structure of clefts to their function. The claim will be defended that two pragmatic subtypes of clefts can be distinguished: a ‘topic-clause’ cleft, as in (1), in which the cleft clause expresses the topic, and a comment-clause cleft, as in (2), in which the cleft clause expresses part of the comment.

- (1) JM: I want to ask this question: Why is this agreement so bad? I ask you.
JG: Because our whole intention was to bring some form of democracy there; our intention was to make the Sandinistas cry uncle. **It is the contras who have cried uncle.** [McLaughlin Group-3/25/88]
- (2) ‘Just so. And of course, we’ve only got his version of the niece and the nurse—and he obviously had what the Scotch call ta’en a scunner at the nurse. We mustn’t lose sight of her, by the way. She was the last person to be with the old lady before her death, and **it was she who administered that injection.**’
‘Yes, yes—but the injection had nothing to do with it. If anything’s clear, that is.’ [Sayers, 1927, *Unnatural Death*, p. 17]

Thus, (1) is intuitively ‘about’ the information expressed in the cleft clause—who it was who cried uncle, while (2) is intuitively about the referent of the clefted constituent—the nurse.

The most obvious structural difference between the two types of cleft is that primary accent falls on the clefted constituent in topic-clause clefts, but on the cleft clause in comment-clause clefts. The intonation contour of the topic-clause cleft in (1) is shown in (3). The primary falling accent on the first syllable of *contras* is followed by a gradual descent in pitch to the end of the sentence:

- (3) it is the CONtras who have cried uncle

A likely intonation contour for the comment-clause cleft in (2) is shown in (4). A secondary fall-rise accent on *she* is followed by low-pitch up to the primary falling accent on *injection*.¹

- (4) it was SHE who administered that inJECTION

One important discourse-pragmatic issue concerns the topic-comment structure of clefts. Some researchers have viewed the cleft clause as expressing the topic of the cleft, while others have viewed the clefted constituent as expressing the topic. My answer here, supported by topic tests as

¹We will see in Chapter 6 that the clefted constituent of a comment-clause cleft sometimes lacks an accent altogether, and sometimes receives a second falling accent. The difference between topic-clause and comment-clause clefts is most consistently signalled by the prosodic-marking on the cleft clause. Comment-clauses always receive a primary falling accent, while topic-clauses receive a secondary accent, usually a fall-rise, or are left unaccented.

well as the data I have collected, will be that both views are correct, though for different types of clefts. In §5.1, I argue that the unaccented or secondarily-accented clauses of clefts such as that in (1) express the sentence topic. In Chapter 6, I argue that the clefted constituent in clefts with primary accent on the cleft clause, such as (2), sometimes express the sentence topic.

A second important discourse-pragmatic issue concerns the cognitive status of the cleft clause. I address the cognitive status of topic cleft-clauses in §5.1, again postponing discussion of comment cleft-clauses until Chapter 6. In §5.2, I examine some pragmatic characteristics of the clefted constituent in topic-clause clefts, focusing on the claim that the clefted constituent is necessarily contrastive. In §5.3, I examine some pragmatic characteristics of two special of topic-clause clefts: negative clefts and sentential focus clefts.

The analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6 is based on a corpus of 700 natural tokens drawn from several genres of discourse, both spoken and written. The spoken sources included transcripts of casual conversations, transcripts and videotapes of a televised public affairs discussion program (*The McLaughlin Group*, PBS), and Studs Terkel's *Working*. The written sources included primarily syndicated newspaper columns, mystery novels, and historical narratives. A more detailed, though still brief, description of the corpus is presented in Appendix 2.

5.1 Discourse-pragmatic characteristics of the cleft clause

The hypothesis that the cleft clause in (1) expresses the sentence topic is supported by the observation that it passes the question test for topic status, as shown in (5).²

- (5) Q: But who actually has cried uncle?
A: It is the CONtras who have cried uncle.

That the cleft clause also passes Gundel's 'as for' test and Reinhart's 'said about' test is shown, respectively, in (6a) and (6b):

- (6) a. Our intention was to make the Sandinistas cry uncle. As for who has in fact cried uncle, it is the CONtras.
b. Germond said about who has in fact cried uncle that it is the CONtras.

Gundel 1974 invokes the topic tests to show that the accented clefted constituent in (7a) is *not* the topic. The judgments in (7b) and (7c) show that it fails both the question test and the 'as for' test:³

²Topic tests were introduced in §2.1.2

³It is crucial, of course, that primary accent is placed on the clefted constituent in Gundel's examples. The same point can be made about the cleft in (1):

(i) Our intention was to make the Sandinistas cry uncle. #As for the contras, it is THEY who have cried uncle.

- (7) a. It was ARCHie who rejected the proposal
 b. Q: What about Archie?
 A: *It was ARCHie who rejected the proposal.
 c. *About Archie, it was HE who rejected the proposal.

It can thus be concluded that the topic of (1) is expressed by the cleft clause, while the comment is expressed by the clefted constituent (and copula).

It was argued in Chapter 2, following Gundel 1988, that the two general principles in (8) universally regulate the relationship between cognitive status and word order:

- (8) a. **Given Before New Principle**
 State what is given before what is new in relation to it.
 b. **First Things First Principle**
 Provide the most important information first.

Since the topic of a sentence is by definition ‘given’ in relation to the comment, topic-clause clefts necessarily violate the Given Before New Principle and are thus predicted to be appropriately used only when sanctioned by the First Things First Principle. The topic can be less important than the comment, Gundel argues, only if the topic has ‘already been established in previous discourse’, or, in other words, if it is activated.

While the topic-clause may be directly activated as in (1), where it repeats the immediately preceding predicate, it is frequently the case that the clause is related only indirectly to the preceding context, through reformulation or through inference. The conditions under which speakers consider a clausal topic to be directly or indirectly activated are investigated in detail in §5.1.2 and §5.1.3. I turn first to a review of previous analyses of the cognitive status of the topic cleft-clause.

5.1.1 PREVIOUS APPROACHES

Early accounts pointed out the status of (unaccented) cleft clauses as presupposed and/or given, with no finer distinctions made as to the particular type of givenness involved. The focus was on accounting for differences between clefts (and pseudoclefts) and ordinary sentences. More recent analyses (e.g., Prince 1978, Gundel 1985) attempt to determine the particular type of givenness, observing that clefts and pseudoclefts are not always interchangeable in discourse contexts. The recent focus has thus been on uncovering differences between clefts and pseudoclefts. However, these accounts make conflicting claims and predictions, which need to be empirically investigated. In §5.1.2 and §5.1.3, I argue that my data support Gundel’s claim that the clause in topic-clause clefts is activated, though I develop a more finely tuned analysis concerning subtypes of givenness, e.g., ‘in focus’ as opposed to ‘directly activated’ and ‘indirectly activated.’

5.1.1.1 Functional approaches

While it is generally agreed that the information expressed in a cleft clause is in some sense ‘given,’ there has been a lack of consensus concerning the type of givenness involved. Halliday 1967 views the cleft clause as ‘given’ in the sense of ‘treated as recoverable.’ He assigns this status to any expression in a ‘tone unit’ which follows the accented word.⁴ An expression that is ‘given’ in Halliday’s sense would seem, thus, to always be ‘activated’ in Gundel’s sense.

The ‘given’ status of the cleft clause is associated with the use of clefts to express contrast in Quirk & Greenbaum 1972 and Chafe 1976. Chafe suggests that to appropriately use the ‘contrastive’ sentences in (9), the ‘background knowledge’ that someone made the hamburgers has to be at least ‘quasi-given’—i.e. there must be ‘at least a pretense on the speaker’s part that givenness applies.’

- (9) a. It was RONALD who made the hamburgers.
 b. The one who made the hamburgers was RONALD.
 c. RONALD made the hamburgers.

Chafe adopts an ‘activation’ sense of ‘given information,’ defining it as ‘knowledge which the speaker assumes to be in the consciousness of the addressee at the time of utterance.’

Clark and Haviland 1977 characterize the information expressed in a cleft clause as information which ‘the speaker believes the listener already knows and accepts as true.’ Since knowledge and belief are not dependent on the immediate discourse context, this characterization captures the weaker notion of ‘familiar’—as opposed to ‘activated’—information.⁵

5.1.1.2 Prince’s Approach

Prince 1978 distinguishes two ways in which the information expressed in the cleft-clause of a cleft or pseudocleft can relate to the discourse context. Information is ‘given’ (i.e. activated) which ‘the cooperative speaker may assume to be appropriately in the hearer’s consciousness,’ while information is ‘known’ (i.e. identifiable) which ‘the speaker represents as being factual and as already known to certain persons (often not including the hearer).’ Prince claims that pseudoclefts and ‘stressed-focus’⁶ clefts are subject to different appropriateness conditions. While the information in a

⁴Note that for Halliday, the ‘thematic’ system governing the selection of theme and rheme, constitutes an independent component of grammar from the ‘information’ system governing the distribution of ‘given’ and ‘new’ information and the placement of ‘focus’ (and thus, accent) within the latter. He evokes relations of ‘markedness’ both to regulate the choice of alternatives within particular subsystems and to regulate the interaction between different subsystems. While it is ‘unmarked’ in non-cleft sentences for focus to fall on the rheme, it is unmarked in clefts for focus to fall on the ‘theme’ (Halliday 1985: 280-281).

⁵Cf. the distinction made in Prince 1985 between ‘Chafe-given shared knowledge’ (i.e. ‘activated’) and ‘Clark-given shared knowledge’ (i.e. ‘familiar’).

⁶Prince distinguishes ‘stressed-focus’ clefts, with primary accent on the clefted constituent (i.e. topic-clause clefts) from ‘informative-presupposition’ clefts, with primary accent on the cleft clause (i.e. comment-clause clefts).

pseudocleft clause must be ‘given,’ the information in an unaccented cleft clause need only be ‘known.’ Prince thus associates a strong, activation condition with pseudoclefts but not with clefts, precisely the inverse of the claim that I’m advancing.

Prince offers the discourse segments in (10) as evidence that the information expressed in a ‘stressed-focus’ cleft clause need not be ‘assumed to be in the hearer’s mind’:

- (10) a. ‘I’ve been bit once already by a German shepherd. It was really scary. **It was an outside meter the woman had.** I read the gas meter and was walking back out ...’ [Meter reader in Terkel, 366; Prince’s 33b]
- b. ‘So I learned to sew books. They’re really good books. **It’s just the covers that are rotten.**’ [Bookbindeyr in Terkel, 409; Prince’s 38a]

Prince claims that a pseudocleft would be inappropriate in (10) because it would imply ‘with no justification’ that the addressee was thinking about the information expressed in the cleft clause:⁷

- (11) a. I’ve been bit once already by a German shepherd. It was really scary. **#What the woman had was an outside meter.** I read it and was walking back out.
- b. So I learned to sew books. They’re really good books. **#What’s rotten is just the covers.**

Prince claims, in addition, that the inappropriateness of discourse-initial pseudoclefts, as in (12), is due to violation of the ‘givenness’ constraint on pseudoclefts:^{8,9}

⁷If (10a) is a predicational cleft meaning roughly, ‘the woman’s meter was an outside one,’ as suggested in Chapter 3, the pseudocleft in (11a) may not really be a paraphrase. (11b) actually seems fine to me. Prince’s other examples of non-‘given’ cleft clauses seem irrelevant to the point she is trying to make: that is, (i) seems most appropriately pronounced with primary accent on the cleft clause and hence is an ‘informative-presupposition’ cleft, while (ii) is either not a cleft at all, or else is predicational (cf. §3.3):

- (i) Mmm. — Aren’t those good? It was only sheer will power that kept me from eating twelve every night.
[Prince 1978, 33c]
- (ii) If I see a train crossing, I keep going. It’s a game you’re playing. Watch the stoplight.
[Prince 1978, 33a; Terkel, Utility Man]

⁸##’ denotes a discourse-initial context; #’ denotes inappropriateness.

⁹Except in settings where the addressee can be predicted to be already thinking about the information in the cleft clause, as in (i):

- (i) ##What we have set as our goal is the grammatical capacity of children — a part of their linguistic competence.
[Klima & Bellugi-Klima 1969, Prince 1978, ex. 14]

It is not so clear, however, that the contents of the cleft clause of the discourse-initial pseudocleft in (ii) can be analyzed as ‘appropriately in the hearer’s consciousness’:

- (ii) ##What is new and notable in New York City’s unprecedented building boom is that all previous legal, moral and esthetic restraints have been thrown to the winds, or more accurately, to the developers, in grateful consideration of contributions to the tax base and the political purse.
[Architecture Review, The New York Times, 3/22/87, p. 1H]

- (12) ?## Hi! What I've heard about is your work.

It has been pointed out, however, that the cleft-counterpart of the pseudocleft in (13) is also inappropriate:¹⁰

- (13) ?## Hi! It's your work that I've heard about.

This observation deflects the force of Prince's claim that stressed-focus clefts are more weakly constrained than pseudoclefts. Evidence advanced by Gundel in support of the inverse claim will be discussed immediately below.¹¹

5.1.1.3 Gundel's approach

Gundel 1974, 1977 claims that clefts have the same topic-comment organization as right-dislocated sentences in that both constructions are used to express the sentence topic in clause-final position. She proposes that clefts should be transformationally derived as reduced, right-dislocated pseudoclefts, so that (14c) is derived from the structure underlying (11a), via the intermediate stage underlying (14b):¹²

- (14) a. Where we spent our vacation was San Francisco.
 b. It was San Francisco, where we spent our vacation.
 c. It was San Francisco where/that we spent our vacation.

She notes that the topic in both constructions can be omitted when it is 'easily predicted from the context,' as in (15):

- (15) a. I guess you're leaving for New York soon. Yes, it's on Saturday (that I'm leaving).
 b. I guess Bill's sister will be here. Yes, she's coming on Saturday (Bill's sister).

The example in (iii) shows that even an inverted pseudocleft can be used (albeit awkwardly) to open a discourse:

- (iii) ##Things that glow in the night was what was frightening the members of the Tompkins County Board of Representatives Tuesday Night.
 ['Radio-active', The Ithaca Times, 7/12/90, p. 5]

¹⁰E.g. Rochemont 1986, DeClerck 1988.

¹¹Note that it isn't clear that Prince continues to support her 1978 claim that pseudocleft clauses are more restricted than 'stressed focus' cleft clauses. Prince 1985 seems to claim that the information expressed in both stressed focus cleft and pseudocleft clauses is 'Chafe-given shared knowledge' ('taken by the speaker to be currently in the hearer's consciousness') as opposed to 'Clark-given shared knowledge' ('taken by the speaker to be part of the hearer's general knowledge-store'). Similarly, Prince 1986 characterizes the information expressed in both pseudocleft and stressed-focus cleft clauses as 'salient shared knowledge,' as opposed to the information in 'informative presupposition' clefts. The point of the latter type of cleft is 'precisely to inform the reader of the 'presupposed' information.'

¹²Givon 1979 suggests that clefts evolve diachronically from right-dislocated, 'afterthought' constructions, though he presents no evidence of such development having taken place.

Gundel 1985 notes the universal correlation of new, not yet established topics with sentence-initial position, and old, already activated topics with sentence-final position. This correlation is shown in Gundel 1988 to derive from the word-order principles given in (8) above. She thus predicts that the discourse distribution of pseudoclefts is more weakly constrained than that of topic-clause clefts, since the sentence-initial pseudocleft clause need not be activated.¹³

As noted above, this prediction directly contradicts Prince's (1978) claim that (stressed-focus) clefts are more weakly constrained than pseudoclefts. Gundel's (1985) examples in (16) and (17) support her position over that of Prince:

- (16) a. [BEGINNING OF A LECTURE] What I would like to talk about today is conversational implicature.
 b. [BEGINNING OF A LECTURE] #It's conversational implicature that I would like to talk about today.
- (17) a. How can I get this spot out the rug?
 b. What my mother always uses is VINEGAR.
 c. #It's VINEGAR that my mother always uses.

However, the content of the clause in topic-clause clefts is not always directly activated by the immediate discourse context. This raises the issue of precisely which types of departures from immediate context are permitted in topic-clause clefts. Specifically, what distinguishes the inference needed to interpret the appropriate (10b), from the one needed to interpret the inappropriate (17c)? I will return to this issue of 'indirect activation' in §5.1.3 below.

5.1.1.4 Presuppositional approaches

The cleft construction is a paradigmatic 'presupposition-inducing' construction. It is generally assumed that the 'existential' implication derived by replacing the variable of the cleft clause with a general term (e.g. 'something,' 'someone') is pragmatic in nature, since it can be suspended or defeated in contexts such as those in (18):

- (18) a. You believe that Mary kissed somebody in this room. But **it wasn't Joe that she kissed**, and it wasn't Rita, and clearly it wasn't Bill, and there hasn't been anybody else here. Therefore, Mary didn't kiss anybody in this room.
 [Halvorsen 1978; variants in Keenan 1971, Gazdar 1979, Levinson 1983]

¹³Gundel's word-order principles were introduced in §2.6. Gundel 1985 distinguishes clefts, such as (i), with primary accent on the clefted constituent, from clefts, such as (ii), with primary accent on the cleft clause. She assumes the cleft clause to express the topic only in the former case.

- (i) Was it my mother who called?
 (ii) Wasn't it just yesterday that he said the troops would be out in a few days?

- b. **It wasn't Mirabelle who swallowed your hand-grenade**, because I have it right here in my hand. [Wilson 1975]
- c. **It wasn't Oakland OR San Francisco that won**—the game was called OFF because of the EARTHquake.
- d. **It isn't JOHN that shot MARY**. It's MARY that shot JOHN.
[Ball and Prince 1978]
- e. **If it wasn't an apple that John ate**, then John ate nothing.
[Delahunty 1981]
- f. **It'll either be JOHN who gets a raise or NOBODY** will.

The class of contexts permitting the existential implication to be suspended is apparently identical to the class of contexts permitting suspension of other standard types of 'presupposition,' e.g. factive complements. Thus, the cleft clause in (18a) is semantically subordinate to the intensional 'belief' operator of the preceding sentence; the clefts in (18b)-(18d) can be analyzed as instances of 'metalinguistic negation' (c.f. Horn 1989); and (18e) and (18f) are variants of the conditional and disjunctive presupposition 'filters' of Karttunen 1974.¹⁴

The systematic nature of the contexts which trigger suspension supports the analysis of the 'existential condition' as a 'conventional implicature' (Karttunen and Peters 1979; Halvorsen 1978), a 'potential presupposition' (Gazdar 1979), a 'first background entailment' (Wilson and Sperber 1979), or a 'generalized conversational implicature.' Since detailed evaluation of these alternatives is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I will simply note here, following Gundel 1985, that the presuppositional character of topic cleft-clauses follows directly from the familiarity condition on topics (c.f. §2.3).¹⁵

A presuppositional approach to clefts is also developed in Chomsky's (1971) analysis of the cleft clause as sharing the 'presupposition' of the utterance to which the cleft is a 'natural response.' I claimed in §2.5.2 that Chomsky's notion of 'presupposition' is essentially equivalent to Gundel's notion of 'topic.' In the absence of a more elaborated analysis of the relation between presupposition and discourse context, however, Chomsky's notion fails to encode the distinction between activated and unactivated topics.

Rochemont 1986 develops an elaboration of Chomsky's notion of presupposition and applies it explicitly to clefts. Rochemont's 'cleft focus principle' shown in (19) encodes the claim

¹⁴See also in relation to (18a), the related notion of 'modal subordination' developed in discourse-representation theory by Roberts 1987; and also Gazdar 1979. For (18b), cf. the presupposition 'plugs' of Karttunen 1974. Note that (18e) is a contrapositive variant of Karttunen's conditional filter, and (18f) fits only the symmetric variant of the disjunction filter. Cf. Karttunen 1974, Karttunen and Peters 1979 for discussion. The presuppositional status of clefts will be discussed again below in §5.3 and §6.1.2 and §6.2.2.

¹⁵To the extent that unfamiliar comment-clauses (c.f. §6.1.1) are also presuppositional, however, an independent conventional association of some sort will need to be assumed.

that a clefted constituent (or one of its subparts¹⁶) functions as a ‘contrastive focus,’ as defined as in (20):

- (19) A cleft focus must receive a contrastive focus interpretation.
- (20) An expression **P** is a contrastive focus in a discourse *D*, $D = \{P_1, \dots, P_n\}$, if, and only if,
- i. **P** is an expression in P_i , and
 - ii. If \mathbf{P}/P_i is the result of extracting **P** from P_i , then \mathbf{P}/P_i is directly c-construable, and P_i is not directly c-construable.

It follows from (19) and (20) that the cleft clause will always be directly c-construable, and that the cleft as a whole will never be directly c-construable. The formal definition of ‘directly c-construable’ is shown in (21):

- (21) An expression **P** is directly c-construable in a discourse *D* if, and only if:
- i. **P** has a semantic antecedent **P'** in *D*, or
 - ii. the intended antecedent of **P** in *D* has been brought to the attention of the participants in *D*.

A string **P** has a semantic antecedent in a discourse *D*, $D = \{P_1, \dots, P_n\}$ if, and only if, there is a prior and readily available string **P'** in *D*, such that the uttering of **P'** either formally or informally entails¹⁷ the mention of **P**.

A string that is prior and readily available in a discourse is one which has been recently uttered in the current and ongoing discourse, or one uttered in a separate discourse event that has taken place at some point in the relatively recent past and is being recalled to the audience’s attention by the speaker, who begins the current discourse as a continuation of this prior discourse event.

Notice that Rochemont’s definition is broad enough to allow speakers to resume the topic of a previous discussion in an unaccented cleft-clause. This seems correct, as does his analysis of the success of such utterances as depending on conversational implicature. The cleft in (22), for example, succeeded in reactivating a question that had been left unresolved a month earlier.

¹⁶That is, the clefted constituent contains at least the cleft focus, but may also contain presupposed material.

¹⁷Rochemont’s notion of ‘informal entailment’ seems to be equivalent to the notion ‘indirectly activated.’ (c.f. §5.3 below).

- (22) Hi. I'm just back from my lunch with Jeanette. Guess what? **It was Greg Ward who invited her to tour Bell Labs.**
[E-mail message, RZ to NH, 7/9/90]

While it is perhaps doubtful that the cleft clause in (22) would have lacked accent altogether had it been spoken aloud, it easily might have if the previous discussion had taken place more recently than a month prior to speech time.

Rochemont's definition also correctly predicts that the information expressed in the cleft clause may be extralinguistically activated, as in (23):

- (23) [The telephone rings. The speaker leaves to answer it, and calls from the next room] **It's Gary calling.** [Frederickson tapes]

Rochemont thus appears to be in agreement with the position assumed here, also argued for by Gundel, that topic cleft-clauses are directly or indirectly activated.¹⁸

5.1.2 DIRECT ACTIVATION

In this section, I discuss clefts with clausal content which is directly activated in the discourse context. Different degrees of activation can be distinguished—the clausal content may be 'in focus' as well as 'activated,' and the clausal content may be displaced instead of immediately activated.

5.1.2.1 Immediate activation

It is occasionally the case that the content of a cleft clause is directly activated in the immediately prior discourse, as in (24)-(25) from spoken television discussions, (26) from a casual conversation, (27) from a spoken narrative, (28)-(29) from written newspaper columns, (30) from an academic text; and (31)-(32) from conversations in mystery novels:

- (24) JM: I want to ask this question: Why is this agreement so bad? I ask you.
JG: Because our whole intention was to bring some form of democracy there; our intention was to make the Sandinistas cry uncle. **It is the contras who have cried uncle.**
[McLaughlin Group, 3/25/88]
- (25) BB: Wait a minute. Mike Dukakis did not mention the name 'George Bush' once. **It's the others who are doing it.**
[McLaughlin Group, 7/88]
- (26) A: Somebody had said no.
B: Not yet.

¹⁸It is not clear, however, whether Rochemont assumes that all cleft clauses are activated (c-construable). He suggests in a footnote that Prince's 'informative-presupposition' clefts should be analyzed as containing two contrastive foci. I will return to this suggestion in chapter 6.

- A: He didn't say who it was.
- C: The one who—
- A: There was one firm which said no too.
- C: **It was Gulbenkian who said no.**
[Geluykens 1983, C25]
- (27) Now it's permissible for nice women to wear wigs, eyelashes, and false fingernails.
Before **it was the harder looking women that wore them.**
[Terkel, p. 76, airline stewardess]
- (28) I was right. The next question was a clue: 'Is it true that men often ask for the divorce?'
'Well, yes,' I answered. 'Sometimes husbands ask for a divorce and sometimes wives do. It seems to go both ways. Isn't that true in Japan as well?'
The reply came immediately and virtually in unison. 'Oh, no,' they said. '**Here it's always the woman who asks for a divorce.** And the man is always shocked.'
[S. Engram, 'Japanese women less content with the traditional wifely role,' Minneapolis Star and Tribune.]
- (29) As far as I can tell, not one of the new breed of midlife beauties is going to make their peers feel good about themselves. **It's Rosemary Clooney in a muumuu who makes them feel good.** What Loren, Fonda, Welch, etc., have done is to raise the threshold of self-hate faster than the age span
[Goodman, p. 168]
- (30) I will argue in chapter 11 that ADs differ from one another in their syntactic and semantic properties. In particular, for some ADs, deep and not surface constituent structure is relevant, while for others **it is surface and not deep structure that is relevant.**
[McCawley, 1988, The Syntactic Phenomena of English, p. 62]
- (31) Then, when I had done all they asked, and he had come to depend on me — as might have been expected — they decided that this would never do, either. Or rather **it was Ursula who decided**, and she talked Jim into it.
[Fitt, Death and the Pleasant Voices, p. 60]
- (32) As centres of ceremonial activity, houses had ritual significance and were given sacred names. **It was really the house site rather than the building that was sacred**, and so buildings could be extended, rebuilt, or enlarged into complexes containing several separate structure, which would all be known by the same house name.
[People of the Totem, p. 30]

The examples in (24)-(32) can all be pronounced with a complete absence of prosodic prominence on the cleft clause.

5.1.2.2 Truncated clefts

If the content of a cleft clause is not only within reach of the addressee's awareness (i.e. activated), but at the center of attention (i.e. in focus), the cleft-clause may be omitted. Examples from the data of such 'truncated clefts' are shown in (33)-(41):¹⁹

- (33) N: I'm groggy, too.
 a. You have various reasons to be groggy, Neil.
 b. Yeah. (yawning) Well, **it's the medicine.**
 [Frederickson tapes, 1988]
- (34) A: You mean, in other words, in the business of the staff-student relations, it's not the staff who are making a very poor business.
 a. No no, **it's the students** by and large.
 [Geluykens 1983, C50]
- (35) A: Oh, I've read that.
 a. It's lovely, isn't it?
 b. Must have been yours that I read, I think, unless **it was John's.**
 [Geluykens 1983, C34]
- (36) What we do you can never learn out of a book. You could never learn to run a hoist or a tower crane by reading. **It's experience and common sense.**
 [Terkel, p. 50, heavy equipment operator]
- (37) As far as standin' there, I'm not tired. **It's when I'm roaming around tryin' to catch a shoplifter.**
 [Terkel, p. 376, supermarket checker]
- (38) Oh, every muscle aches in my body. **It's my legs and feet, ankles and so forth.**
 [Terkel, p. 269, cabdriver]
- (39) Haven't you been wondering who the dickens put them in that watermelon? Of course you have; but you might have known **it was Janet**, because no one else would have done it.
 [Stout, The Hand in the Glove, p. 271]
- (40) After the preliminaries were completed, and the Coroner had explained to the jury what they were there for and how serious a matter it was, he proceeded to call witnesses. My heart beat fast, for I had thought that as the discoverer of the body I would be the first to be called; but to my surprise, **it was Marcel.** He stepped forward, neat, dark, debonair...
 [Fitt, Death and the Pleasant Voices, p. 156]
- (41) A couple of generations ago, wealth was measured in material like indoor plumbing or a matching set of silverware. When I was a kid, **it was a television set or a single-family home.**
 [Goodman, p. 40]

¹⁹Some of the understood predicates in these examples are 'indirectly' rather than 'directly' in focus: e.g. (33) and (36). C.f. the claim made in Gundel, Hedberg, and Zacharski 1989 that 'inferrability' is not a separate cognitive status, but a means whereby an entity can acquire a cognitive status.

The set of options open to the answerer of a constituent question, of course, exceeds the simple option of responding with a full cleft or with a truncated cleft. The answer can also be expressed with a simple sentence, or with just a sentence fragment, as shown in (42). The latter three options are all exemplified in example (43):

(42) Who called?

- a. It was JOHN who called.
- b. It was JOHN.
- c. JOHN called.
- d. John.

(43) JM: We've got to get out. The exit question is this: Going into Super Tuesday, who is going to be the frontrunner in the Republican party's presidential candidates? Pat.

PB: **It'll be either Bush or Bush and somebody else.**

RN: On Super Tuesday, as you go into that, **Robert J. Dole will be the frontrunner.**

JM: Jack.

JG: I agree with that.

JM: Dole? Mort.

MK: **Bob Dole.**

JM: Pat's right. **It's Bush.** We'll be right back.

[McLaughlin Group, 11/20/87]

Sometimes the content of the cleft clause is syntactically too deeply embedded in an immediately preceding sentence to be recoverable from a truncated cleft. That is, the content of the clause is activated, but not in focus, and therefore cannot be omitted, as seems to be case in (44)-(46):²⁰

(44) Presently I found my practice dropping away from me, and discovered I was getting known as 'the man who practically accused that charming Miss So-and-so of murder.' **Sometimes it was the niece I was supposed to be accusing. Sometimes it was 'that nice Nurse — not the flighty one who was dismissed, the other one, you know.'** Another version was, that I had tried to get the nurse into trouble because I resented the dismissal of my fiancée.

[Sayers, *Unnatural Death*, p. 14]

²⁰Note the analogy here with the interpretation of noun-phrases such as Gundel, et al's (1989) example in (i):

- (i) Sears delivered new siding to my neighbors with the Bull Mastiff. That/#it's the dog that bit Mary Ben.'

As in the cleft case, the intended referent is activated (which is why it can be accessed with a pronominal demonstrative) but is too deeply embedded in the preceding sentence to be in focus (which is why it can't be accessed with the unstressed pronoun *it*). See §2.2 above for discussion of these different statuses.

- (45) ‘...I wonder whether the constableness just happened to be vacant, or whether it was a French appointment because Henry wanted him out of England.’
 ‘I bet it was the other way around and **it was Tyrell who wanted to get out of England**. If I were being ruled by Henry VII, I’d sure prefer to be ruled by remote control.’ [Tey, *The Daughter of Time*, p. 184]
- (46) A: It can’t be limited by the time factor (...)
 B: Well, **it’s money you know that limits you**.
 [Geluykens 1983, C9]

5.1.2.3 Reactivation

It is sometimes necessary or useful for a speaker to repeat the content of the cleft clause in order to reactivate it, to refocus the addressee’s attention on it after the distraction of one or more intervening propositions. Omission of the cleft clause in (47)-(52) would presumably disrupt processing:

- (47) At Millington Bridge, for example, he asked all sorts of questions about the Burtells — how long they stayed and whether they saw much of each other and so on. **It was the maid he asked**, not the landlady.
 [Knox, *the Footsteps at the Lock*, p. 136]
- (48) Greenfield told her we were going to need her assistance, and she came to life like a parched petunia that’s finally been watered.
 ‘I’m ready,’ she said, ‘but if it involves climbing a tree, I’ll need help.’ God knows what she thought we were planning.
‘It’s your voice we need. And your intelligence.’ he said.
 [Kallen, *the Piano Bird*, p. 143]
- (49) Vinald brought all this out very glibly but he couldn’t conceal a terrible underlying nervousness. He was afraid of something, and his fear was mounting. Wexford and Burden saw him at home, not in the shop, and Pandora came into the room while they were talking. **Was it for her that he was afraid?**
 [Rendall, *Speaker of Mandarin*, p. 151]
- (50) A: What is it about literature that you find so attractive?
 B: Because literature is in some cases the product of the imagination isn’t it and of men’s minds, and it is the imagination and the mind of man that I’m interested in. I think one must know the mind of man....[5 intonation units]... Yes but it’s not just imagination, **it’s the character of men and the actions of men that I’m interested in**.
 [Geluykens 1983, C45]
- (51) I wasn’t on duty that day, my lord. I was kindly given permission to attend the ceremony at the Cenotaph. Very grand sight, it was, too, my lord. Mrs. Rogers was greatly moved.’
 ‘Oh, of course, Rogers — I was forgetting. Naturally, you would be there. So you didn’t see the General to say goodbye, as it were. Still, it wouldn’t have done to miss the Cenotaph. Matthews took your duty over, I suppose.’

'No, my lord. Matthews is laid up with 'flu, I am sorry to say. **It was Weston was at the door all morning, my lord.**'

'Weston? Who's he?'

'He's new, my lord. [Sayers, Murder at the Bellona Club, p. 24]

- (52) Yet the Dorset are not the direct ancestors of the Inuit...[9 sentences] The Thule adapted, they broke into smaller groups and became more nomadic. **It is these people who are called the Inuit.**

[Insight Guide to Canada, p. 91]

When a reactivated cleft clause contrasts with an intervening proposition, it is likely to carry a fall-rise topic accent when spoken aloud, as in (53)-(55):

- (53) JM: Some people think that Reagan's administration is at its lowest ebb, its nadir. Do you agree, Eleanor?

EC: Absolutely not. The Reagan-Baker Administration is in fine shape. It's the BuCHAnan Administration that's having **PROBLEMS**. The moderates took a few rounds in the chest, but now they have staggered back to gain control of the battlefield. [McLaughlin Group, 11/13/87]

- (54) So Grant was established behind the little tower of cheap editions at the end of the counter, and found the morning passing not so slowly as he had feared. Humanity, even after all his years in the force, still had a lively interest in Grant's eyes — except in moments of depression — and interest proved plentiful. **It was Williams, watching a very ordinary small town street, who was bored**. He welcomed the half-hour of conversation behind the books when Grant went to lunch, and went back reluctantly to the frowsy room above the saloon...

[Tey, A Shilling for Candles, p. 199]

- (55) In the final analysis, though, condoms are used by men. Even when women are persuaded to or frightened into buying them, **it's men who wear condoms**.

[Goodman, Minneapolis Star and Tribune, 3/9/87]

5.1.2.4 Implied activation

Finally, speakers sometimes seem to exploit the opportunity to summarize or reformulate activated information, or to make explicit an implicit assumption, as in (56)-(58):

- (56) '...The President lied to the American people when he stated that congressional inaction prevented the enactment of this. . . legislation.' Waxman said. **It was the President who obstructed the passage of this crucial bill...**

[Philadelphia Bulletin, 10/8/76, p. 2; Prince 1978, ex. 36a.]

- (57) 'The woman's got no more sense than a hen. No — don't you go, Sheila — I won't have you carrying coal.'

'Nonsense,' said his wife, rather acidly. 'What a hypocrite you are, George. **It's only because there's somebody here that you're so chivalrous all at once.**'

[Sayers, Murder at the Bellona Club, 50]

- (58) JM: Did any — did you take note that Hart was immediately sued by XEROX for \$10,000? But I thought **it was BIDEN who used Xerox** (laughter).
[McLaughlin Group-12/31/87]

5.1.3 INDIRECT ACTIVATION

While it is now widely recognized that information can be treated as activated which is not actually present in, or entailed by, the immediate linguistic context, the study of inferencing in natural discourse has in general concentrated on the interpretation of noun phrases rather than clauses.²¹ As far as I know, no previous attempt has been made to classify the inferences associated with unaccented cleft-clauses in actual discourse. Clark 1977, however, identifies four types of clause-level natural ‘bridging inferences’ — ‘reasons for, causes of, consequents to, or concurrences of previously mentioned events or states’ — and uses clefts to exemplify the first two types:

- (59) a. John had a suit on. It was Jane who told him to wear it.
b. John had a suit on. It was Jane he hoped to impress.

In particular, as mentioned above, it remains a puzzle as to what distinguishes the acceptable cleft clause in (60) from the unacceptable cleft clause in (61):

- (60) So I learned to sew books. They’re really good books. **It’s just the COVERS that are rotten.**
[Bookbinder in Terkel, 409; Prince’s 38a]
- (61) A: How can I get this spot out the rug?
B: **#It’s VINEGAR that my mother always uses.**
[from Gundel 1985]

In attempting to classify the indirectly-activated cleft-clauses in my corpus on the basis of the type of bridging inference required, I have provisionally identified three subclasses. I have labeled these subclasses, ‘causal antecedent,’ ‘causal consequent,’ and ‘superlative,’ and now present them each in turn.

5.1.3.1. Causal antecedent

As suggested by Clark, topic-clause clefts are frequently used to present a motivational or causal antecedent of an activated event or state-of-affairs. It seems likely that the cleft clauses in (62)-(70), for example, would be unaccented or only secondarily accented when spoken aloud:

- (62) JM: Is there any credit that accrues to either political party? Clearly, according to this group, **it’s the United States Congress and Jim Wright, and and Bob uh the-**

²¹See, for example, Clark and Haviland 1974, Prince 1981, Erku and Gundel 1987. See Ward 1985 for a classification of natural inferences related to proposed constituents., and Prince 1978, Brown and Yule 1983 for pseudocleft clauses.

the Majority — Bob Byrd, the Majority Leader in the House— in the—in the Senate, who are responsible for this agreement.

[McLaughlin Group, 3/25/88]

- (63) They don't have to be animals. **It's the whole system that makes 'em animals.** Everybody goes on strike, they want more money...
[Terkel, p. 308, car salesman]
- (64) When prices go up, people come in the store and they throw the items on the counter and they blame us. Eggs go up ten cents a dozen and they act like **it's us that raised them.** Actually, we make two cents on a gallon of milk. You can't tell them that...
[Terkel, p. 548, neighborhood merchant]
- (65) The body of Hugo Ullstone—the real Hugo—was found lying in the shrubbery next morning.
It was I who found him. After a restless night...
[Fitt, Death and the Pleasant Voices, p. 78]
- (66) What my son signed was his will...I had gone there to remonstrate with him, to make sure that he knew about the child, knew whether it was his, to ask what he intended. **It was the presence of the tramp that gave me the idea.** You see I had the necessary two witnesses.
[James, A Taste for Death, p. 451]
- (67) 'I never should have taken the job to begin with. I don't like witnesses. I've never had them before.' He spoke with difficulty and had to stop frequently. **It was his damned money that convinced me.** I didn't like the job from the start...'
[St. James, April Thirtieth, p. 207]
- (68) Was the first gentleman still moving in his bedroom when the second gentleman came upstairs? Ah she'd have to ask the girl that, **it was Lizzy took the second gentleman upstairs.**
[The Footsteps at the Lock, p. 111]
- (69) 'I know this man! It's Mao Yuan, the Carpenter! Last week he came to my house to repair a table!'
'Where did he live?' the judge asked quickly.
'That I don't know, Your Honour,' Wang replied, 'but I'll ask my house steward, **it was he who called him.**'
[Van Gulik, the Chinese Lake Murders, p. 87]
- (70) A couple of days later, I was called in the office and they said I was holding a conversation with a passenger. **It was one of the passengers wrote this in.** Passengers can write you up.
[Terkel, Working, p. 278, busdriver]

5.1.3.2 Causal consequent

Topic-clause clefts are also frequently used to present a causal consequent to an activated event or state-of-affairs, as in (71) and (72):

- (71) At nine o'clock, I was thinking of calling up the household at Lady Dormer's to ask when he was to be expected home, when the 'phone rang.'
 'At nine exactly?'
 'About nine. I might have been a little later, but not more than a quarter-past at latest. **It was a gentleman spoke to me.** He said: 'Is that General Fentiman's flat?' I said, 'Yes, who is it, please?...'
 [Murder at the Bellona Club, p. 38]
- (72) 'His inheritance? Was he the eldest son, then?'
 'No. Barnabas was the eldest, but he was killed at Waterloo and left no family. then there was a second son, Roger, but he died of smallpox as a child. Simon was the third son.'
'Then it was the fourth son who took the estate?'
 'Yes, Frederick. He was Henry's Dawson's father. They tried, of course, to find out what became of Simon, but in those days it was very difficult, you understand, to get information from foreign places, and Simon had quite disappeared. So they had to pass him over.'
 [Sayers, Unnatural Death, p. 127]

It is particularly common in mystery novels for clefts to be used to highlight the role of an unexpected participant in an expected event. In (73), for example, the expectation that a knock at a door will be answered is fulfilled; but the expectation that the apartment's inhabitant will answer the knock is violated:

- (73) Beginning at the top of the list, I went along the landing and tapped at Ruskin's door. **When it was opened, it was Webber who stood there.** We stared at each other for a moment, both of us taken aback.
 [Lucille Kallen, The Piano Bird, p. 95]
- (74) Barbara Berowne had tears brimming her eyes, a frustrated child. She cried:
 'Why did he do it? How did you make him?'
But it was to Dalglish that Lady Ursula turned as if it were he who was owed the answer. She said...
 [James, A Taste for Death, p. 451]
- (75) 'Newspaper persons,' said Lady Isobel, as one might say 'burglars.' 'Frightful people! One of them actually tried to creep into my house.'
 'But you're going to admit the press on Sunday,' Thomas objected. 'What's all the fuss about?'
It was Kent who answered, with his barking laugh...
 [Peters, The Murders of Richard III, p. 37]

5.1.3.3 Superlative implicature

Finally, it is frequently the case, as in (76)- (80), that the information expressed in a topic cleft-clause constitutes a superlative restriction on a directly activated proposition. Note the typical presence of the word 'most' or 'best':

- (76) M: This is brandy. I want to make some brandy balls.
 G: Well, you might as well just keep it, I don't really want it.
 M: I thought it was something that you LIKed, better than m-, other things?
 G: That?
 M: Oh, **it's cognac you like the best.**
 G: Cognac? Well, I haven't had that for a long long time.
 [Frederickson tapes, 1988]
- (77) Illumination was flooding over him in great waves. Each point of light touched off a myriad others. Now a date was lit up, and now a sentence. The relief in his mind would have been overwhelming, had it not been for that nagging central uncertainty. **It was the portrait that worried him most.** Painted as a record, painted to recall beloved features — thrust face to the wall and covered with dust. [Sayers, *Murder at the Bellona Club*, 162]
- (78) *Stormy Monday* is more than its neo-film-noir plot, Janet Maslin said in the *The Times*. Though the film tells its story very well, she said, 'it isn't the plot for which this film will be remembered. **It's the haunting, deeply evocative mood that's most impressive.**' The waterfront setting, she said, 'could easily have grown claustrophobic if it had not been filmed with so much feeling and skill. [Video review, Sunday New York Times, 1/8/89]
- (79) The people here who would have the most to gain by fulfillment of the Central American peace plan are not very optimistic. Of course, Nicaraguans in general would gain. **But it is the opposition leaders and human-rights advocates who are going to be the key players.** Most are less openly cynical than Dr. Emilio Alvarez Montalban, a widely respected, elderly ophthalmologist who is a conservative leader. [Flora Lewis, *Minneapolis Star & Tribune*, 2/13/88]
- (80) Despite this terrestrial abundance, **it was the plentiful supply of fish and shellfish available along the coasts and in the rivers that drew the most attention**, and these are the areas in which Aboriginal settlements were concentrated. [Times Atlas, p. 48]

I have adopted the label 'superlative implicature' for the inference required to understand clefts of this type because they seem to fit the characteristics associated with generalized conversational implicatures which rely on Grice's second Maxim of Quantity ('don't give more information than necessary'), such as the inference from 'if' to 'if and only if'.²²

²²C.f. Levinson 1983, Horn 1989, for Quantity implicatures, and Ward 1985, Hirschberg 1985, Prince 1985, for discussion of pragmatically salient scales.

5.1.3.4 Clefts versus pseudoclefts

Recall from §5.1. the disagreement between Prince 1978 and Gundel 1985 concerning differences between the cognitive status required for felicitous use of pseudoclefts as compared to topic-clause clefts. As additional support for Gundel's position that topic-clause clefts are contextually more constrained than pseudoclefts, note that the indirectly activated clefts in this section always seem to be replaceable with pseudoclefts, as shown in (81)-(86):²³

- (81) I stuck to dinosaurs. **What grabbed my attention was their size and fate**, I suppose. Children tend to equate the huge with the powerful.
- (82) What my son signed was his will...I had gone there to remonstrate with him, to make sure that he knew about the child, knew whether it was his, to ask what he intended. **What gave me the idea was the presence of the tramp**. You see I had the necessary two witnesses
- (83) I never should have taken the job to begin with. I don't like witnesses. I've never had them before. **What convinced me was his damned money**. I didn't like the job from the start.
- (84) 'But you're going to admit the press on Sunday,' Thomas objected. 'What's all the fuss about?'
The one who answered was Kent, with his barking laugh...
- (85) The relief in his mind would have been overwhelming had it not been for that nagging central uncertainty. **What worried him most was the portrait**.
- (86) It isn't the plot for which this film will be remembered. **What's most impressive is the haunting, deeply evocative mood**.

The pseudocleft substitutes are sometimes slightly awkward, however, as if the use of a pseudocleft suggests that the speaker is shifting the topic. As suggested in §2.6., (noninverted) pseudoclefts are 'topic-marking' constructions—they introduce a topic and then comment upon it. Clefts, on the other hand, are 'focus-marking' constructions—they provide a comment on an already-activated

²³Of course other pragmatic conditions on the use of pseudoclefts must be met, such as the requirement that a pseudocleft containing an activated clefted constituent must be inverted (cf. DeClerck 1988):

- (i) Ah she'd have to ask the girl that. Lizzy was the one who took the second gentleman upstairs.
(ii) #Ah she'd have to ask the girl that. The one who took the gentleman upstairs was Lizzy.

As Prince 1978 points out, agreement difficulties arise in the pseudocleft counterparts of certain clefts, e.g. (iii):

- (iii) Eggs go up ten cents a dozen and they act like the ?ones/?one who raised them ?were/?was us.

Sometimes a predicational reading can be avoided by using a cleft instead of a pseudocleft:

- (iv) The one who spoke to me was a gentleman.

There are doubtless other factors as well. See Declerck 1988 for some discussion.

topic. In other words, while a pseudocleft is used both to ask and answer a question,²⁴ a cleft is used simply to answer one.

5.2 Discourse-pragmatic characteristics of the clefted constituent

In this section I turn to a discussion of some pragmatic characteristics of the clefted constituent in topic-clause clefts. In §5.2.1, I briefly discuss the topic-comment status of the clefted constituent, and in §5.2.2 address the issue of the extent to which the clefted constituent can be said to express ‘contrast.’

5.2.1 CLEFTED CONSTITUENT AS COMMENT

The topic tests were evoked in §5.1 to establish that unaccented or weakly accented cleft clause expresses the topic of the cleft as a whole, and that the clefted constituent in such clefts (along with the copula) expresses the comment. It has sometimes been assumed, however, that the clefted constituent rather than the cleft clause expresses what the cleft is ‘about’ in all clefts, even clefts bearing primary accent on the clefted constituent. The most prominent advocate of this position is Halliday 1967, who holds that the clefted-constituent expresses the ‘theme’ (‘what is being talked about, the point of departure for the clause as a message’, p. 212) in virtue of its role as ‘initial clause-level participant’. As Gundel (1974, 1977) points out, however, strict association of topic with initial position leads to ‘some highly implausible conclusions’ involving sentence-initial modal adverbs, imperatives, question-words and quantified subjects, as well as clefts. (See Sgall 1987:179 for a similar criticism.)

DeClerck (1983:9) cites eleven other linguists as having ‘pointed out’ that ‘the focal item of a cleft is generally the ‘theme’ of the sentence’ (i.e. what the sentence is about). However, this characterization is quite misleading. Thus, though Chomsky (1965: 221) does suggest in a footnote that the ‘topic of the sentence’ might be structurally defined as the ‘leftmost NP that is immediately dominated by S in the surface structure and that is, furthermore, a major category,’ and adds that this will make the clefted constituent the topic in a cleft sentence, he offers no functional definition of ‘topic.’ Others (e.g. Grimes 1976 and Allerton 1978) simply adopt Halliday’s notion of ‘theme.’ Quirk and Greenbaum (1972, 1973) characterize the cleft as ‘a special construction which gives both thematic and focal prominence to a particular element of the clause.’ Givon 1979 mentions his earlier view that the clefted constituent is simultaneously ‘thematic’ and ‘assertive.’

Kuno (1976:443, n. 10) does say ‘Since island constraints also apply to focus transformations (Yiddish Movement, Wh-Q Movement, and It-Clefting), it is necessary to generalize the Thematic Constraint for Relative Clauses to cover these cases as well. It seems that syntactically marked focus

²⁴Cf. Carlson’s 1983 remark that a pseudocleft is a question-answer dialogue condensed into a single sentence.

also requires that the rest of the sentence be a meaningful predication about it.’ Kuno seems to be using ‘aboutness’ in a semantic sense here: i.e. the predicate denoted by the cleft clause must be semantically compatible with the argument denoted by the clefted constituent.

5.2.2 CONTRAST

Clefts have long been associated with the notion of ‘contrast’. An emphatic, attention-drawing, or contrast-marking function of the clefted constituent was frequently noted even by traditional grammarians, as shown by the quotes in (87).

- (87) a. When we try to define the effect of the introductory phrase, the best way to distinguish it from simple front-position of a sentence-element is to consider it as serving to identify as well as emphasize. This identifying function of *it is* is sometimes very apparent; it also explains why the construction can be conveniently used when a **contrast** must be expressed.
[Kruisinga 1911]
- b. A cleaving of a sentence by means of *it is* ... serves to single out one particular element of the sentence and very often, by directing attention to it and bringing it, as it were, into focus, to mark a **contrast**.
[Jespersen, 1949]

Grammarians of various theoretical persuasions continue to espouse such views:

- (88) a. The cleft sentence unambiguously marks the focus of information in written English, where intonation is absent. The highlighted element has the full implication of **contrastive focus**.
[Quirk and Greenbaum 1972]
- b. An additional way that **contrastiveness** may be expressed is with the use of a so-called cleft sentence.
[Chafe 1976]
- c. A cleft focus must receive a **contrastive focus** interpretation.
[Rochemont 1986]

Because the notion of ‘contrast’ is notoriously resistant to precise characterization, I will lay out some of the more prominent issues in §5.2.2.1 before turning to the use of clefts to express contrast in §5.2.2.2.

5.2.2.1 The nature of contrast

There has been disagreement in the literature on the issue of whether ‘contrast’ is phonetically definable. Chafe 1976 suggests that the ‘heightened emotional commitment’ typical of contrastive contexts results in more intense and higher pitched accents. Bolinger (e.g. 1961, 1986, 1989) argues convincingly that heightened intensity and pitch in emotional is equally typical of accents which are not interpreted contrastively: ‘it is the same as other highlighting by means of pitch accent, though it

leans to the extremes of the scale.’ He illustrates by showing that one and the same sentence can be used to induce either a contrastive a non-contrastive interpretation, depending on the context:

- (89) a. I suppose your back aches. — You’re wrong. My héad aches.
 b. You’re looking depressed. What’s the matter? — My héad aches.²⁵

Chafe and Bolinger also disagree on the more fundamental question of whether contrastive utterances can be non-arbitrarily distinguished from noncontrastive ones. Chafe 1976 claims that in using the contrastive sentences of (90), the speaker assumes both an awareness by the addressee of the ‘background knowledge’ that someone made the hamburgers, and that a ‘limited number of candidates is available in the addressee’s mind’ to fill the role of hamburger-maker:

- (90) a. RONALD made the hamburgers
 b. It was RONALD who made the hamburgers
 c. The one who made the hamburgers was RONALD.

Chafe suggests further that the exclusion of alternative candidates can always be made explicit by the insertion of a phrase such as *rather than, instead of, not X*.²⁶

Bolinger 1961 takes the position that the distinction between contrastive and merely new information is gradient rather than qualitative:²⁷

²⁵Note that Chafe actually claims that phrase-final falling pitch obliterates the distinctiveness of contrastive accent but a double-focus utterance will exhibit the distinction on the first focused syllable, e.g. on *Alice* in (ic) as opposed to (ib):

- (i) a. What happened at the meeting?
 b. They elected ALice PRESident.
 c. They elected HENry TREASurer, and the elected ALice PRESident.

Bolinger(1986:91-95) counters that the optionality of such accents makes it ‘hard to claim that there is any special requirement of making them stand out accentually.’

²⁶Compare Quirk and Greenbaum’s 1972 tripartite characterization of ‘contrast’: ‘The rest of the clause is taken as given, and a contrast is inferred with other items which might have filled the focal position in the sentence. ...An implied negative can be made explicit.’

²⁷Lambrecht 1985 supports Bolinger’s position: ‘This gradient approach to contrastiveness has the advantage of allowing for clear and for less clear instances of contrastiveness, and it accounts for our intuition that the clearest instances are those in which a contrastive focus explicitly contradicts a stated or predicted alternative.’ Rochemont 1986 implicitly adopts Chafe’s ‘background knowledge’ criterion in the c-construability (i.e. activation) condition on which his definition of ‘contrastive focus’ is based. That Rochemont would likely reject Chafe’s ‘limited set’ component, however, is clear from his explicit denial of any significant correlation between ‘contrastive focus’ (in his sense) and ‘disputational’ use

In a broad sense every semantic peak is contrastive. Clearly in *Let's have a picnic*, coming as a suggestion out of the blue, there is no specific contrast with dinner party, but there is a contrast between picnicking and anything else the group might do. As the alternatives are narrowed down, we get closer to what we think of as contrastive accent.

To illustrate, he offers the question-answer pairs in (91)-(93) as falling along a gradient from relatively non-contrastive to relatively contrastive:

- (91) a. Where'll we have it?
 b. Let's have it in the PARK.
- (92) a. Can we all go?
 b. No, JOHN can't.
- (93) a. Bring some wieners.
 b. I don't LIKE wieners. I want HAMburgers.

Despite the persuasiveness of Bolinger's arguments, it does seem worthwhile to explore the issue of the extent to which cleft focus is strongly contrastive in Chafe's sense of selection from a limited as opposed to unlimited set of alternatives, especially given the frequency with which linguists have attributed an explicitly contrastive function to clefts. It is also noteworthy that Kuno 1982 has independently claimed that a seemingly identical distinction between 'multiple choice focus' and 'fill-in-the blanks focus' is syntactically significant in Japanese.²⁸

One final issue concerns the possibility for topics as well as comments to be 'contrastive.' Recall that Gundel 1978 claims that topics are accented when they are new or contrastive—thus she does not view topicality as incompatible with contrastiveness. On the other hand, Dik et al. 1981 view 'contrast' as implying 'assertive focus' and thus analyzes all four terms in a double contrast sequence like (94) as 'assertive foci'.

²⁸Specifically, Kuno (1982) claims that in Japanese, 'multiple-choice' but not 'fill-in-the blanks' foci can escape the requirement that a focus immediately precede the question or negative morpheme that has it in its scope. Question (i) is thus less acceptable than (ii) because it is less plausibly construed as a 'multiple-choice question':

- (i) ??Kimi wa 1960-nen ni umareta ka?
 you TOP year in be-born Q
 'Were you born in 1960?'
- (ii) Kimi wa kyoo gakkoo ni kuruma de kita ka?
 you TOP today school to car by came Q
 'Did you come to school today by car?'

Carlson 1983 makes a similar distinction between the 'rhematic rheme' of a statement which answers a 'search' question, and the 'thematic rheme' of a statement which answers an 'alternative' question.

- (94) a. What did John and Mary buy?
 b. JOHN bought a BIKE, but MARY bought a MOPED.

Hannay 1983 disagrees, concluding instead that the subjects in (94b), which are indeed ‘given’ in the question, should be viewed as ‘contrastive topics.’ Lambrecht 1981 similarly concludes that ‘topic status and contrastive status do not exclude each other’ in that syntactically-marked, left-dislocated topics in French can be contrastive, as in (95b):²⁹

- (95) a. Qu’est-ce que tu vas donner à Pierre et à Marie?
 What.is-it that you-are going to.give to Pierre and to Marie?
 ‘What are you going to give to Pierre and Marie?’
 b. **À Pierre**, j-ui-donnerai un livre;
 To Pierre, I-to.him-will.give a book;
à Marie j-ui-offrirai des fleurs
 to Marie I-to.her-will offer some flowers
 ‘To Pierre, I’ll give a book, and to Marie I’ll offer flowers.’

Finally, Shibatani (1990:264-265) argues that Kuno’s 1973 distinction between the ‘thematic *wa*’ of (96a) and the ‘contrastive *wa*’ of (96b) in Japanese should be collapsed.

- (96) a. **John wa** gakusei desu
 TOP student is
 ‘John is a student.’
 b. **Ame wa** hutteiru ga **yuki wa** hutteinai
 rain TOP raining but snow TOP raining-NEG
 ‘Rain is falling, but snow isn’t falling.’

He concludes instead that ‘*wa* separates an entity from the rest of things and has the effect of making an emphatic judgment’ and that ‘one and the same *wa* has the effect of emphasizing the contrast when the discourse environment provides a background for contrast.’

Of interest also is Carlson’s 1983 treatment of preposed topics as ‘rhematic themes’ and preposed foci as ‘thematic rhemes’, and his suggestion that ‘contrastiveness’ be identified with such ‘functional bivalence.’ He apparently considers preposed foci to be ‘thematic’ in that they represent

²⁹The glosses and free translations in (95) are my own (—NAH). I believe that the ‘topicalized’ English translations are pragmatically equivalent to the (case-marked) ‘left-dislocated’ French originals, though I don’t have the space to argue explicitly for this conclusion here. Note that Barnes 1985 takes Lambrecht’s conclusion still further: ‘...I would like to emphasize here...the close relation that exists between the functions of contrast and topic-shift. In fact, contrastive LDs could be seen as simply a special case of topic-shift. To underline the relatedness of these two functions, I prefer to use the term *comparative*...Many LDs which introduce a new topic can be described as comparative in function due to the nature of topic development in free conversation. That is, the new topic is usually related in some way to the previous topic...’ Thus, it seems that a contrastiveness gradient can be defined for topics as well as foci.

the selection of an answer to an already-established choice question — the alternatives are thus already present in the discourse context. It is not clear, however, that preposed foci are necessarily strongly contrastive. For example, no such limited set of alternatives would seem to be available in the common use of focus preposing to mention the name of a person being discussed, as in (97):³⁰

- (97) I'd never seen the bloke before—**Claydon his name is**, a seedy sort of customer.'
[E.C.R. Lorac, *Murder by Matchlight*, p. 45]

5.2.2.2 The contrastive nature of clefts

We have seen that cleft clauses in topic-clause clefts are indeed activated, as predicted by Gundel's word order principles. This activation constraint guarantees that Chafe's 'quasi-given' background component of contrastiveness (and Rochemont's 'cleft focus principle') will be met. To evaluate the contrastiveness claim, it remains to determine the extent to which the entity denoted by clefted constituent is selected from a limited set of alternatives.

Bolinger 1986 maintains his previous position, using clefts to illustrate the continuum between relatively-limited and relatively-unlimited sets of alternatives:³¹

- (98) If cleft sentences are to be the proof of contrastivity, then every sentence that answers an interrogative-word question is contrastive, because all can be converted to cleft. While given an appropriate context, any one of [99a-c] could imply a choice within a limited set, none does so necessarily. In an example like [99d], the 'set' is an infinity: the hearer has no way of predicting what range of activities the answer may refer to.... Accent does very often, perhaps most of the time, zero in or focus on something, but it is only incidental whether the item is part of a limited or an unlimited set.
- (99) a. Why did you slap her? —(It was) because I felt like it (that I did it).
b. What are you going to use the whip for? —(It is) to beat my chimpanzee (that I am going to use it).
c. Where does Jennie live? —(It's) in Baskerville (that she lives).
d. What are you going to do? —(It's) write a letter (that I'm going to do).

Borkin (1984:126-127) offers the examples in (100)-(103) as illustration of a contrast gradient for clefts: 'the less limited the set of alternatives, and the less attention directed by the

³⁰Carlson's view that all preposed constituents are more or less thematic, is similar to Ward's 1985 claim that all preposed constituents, whether foci or not, function as 'backward-looking-centers'. However, Ward avoids the problem posed by (97) for Carlson, since for Ward, the name represents the 'value' of a salient (i.e. inferrable) 'attribute' (i.e. the 'name') of an evoked entity (cf. Ward 1985: 137-138).

³¹Note, however, that accessibility of an eliciting question does not automatically guarantee the appropriateness of clefting the answer (though clefted answers may be more typical in a language like Sinhala that marks focus morphologically—Lelwala Sumangala, personal communication). Bolinger no doubt intends the locution 'given the appropriate context' to have empirical content, and would probably agree that a speaker would not select the cleft option without pragmatic motivation.

author/speaker to the uniqueness of the proffered completer, or to the nature and limits of the range of alternatives, the less contrastive is the effect of cleft structure.’

- (100) Andre Fontaine states...that the British shelled Damascus in 1975 in an attempt to drive French troops out of the city. This is simply not true. **It was the French who shelled the city...**
[Manchester -Guardian Weekly 119:15, 10/8/78, p. 2; Borkin’s 11]
- (101) Among the butterworts some enzymes...are secreted by the stalked glands whose sticky exudate captures the insect prey, but **it the stalkless glands at the surface that furnish the main outflow of digestive fluid.**
[Scientific American, 2/78, p. 112; Borkin’s 12]
- (102) Finally the membrane is plunged into another solvent, such as water, that rapidly precipitates all of the remaining polymer. **It is this quenching that forms the pores in the membrane**, as the rapid precipitation leads to the clumping or coagulation of the polymer.
[Scientific American, 7/78, p. 112; Borkin’s 13]
- (103) This type of decision-making is difficult to reproduce in a computer program because it relies heavily on human judgment. **It is this difficulty, however, that makes the programming of poker an attractive problem to computer scientists.**
[Scientific American, 7/78, p. 144; Borkin’s 14]

Note that the cleft clause becomes progressively less activated and progressively more likely to receive an accent as the set of alternatives to the clefted constituent becomes less limited. Thus, in (100) the cleft clause is directly activated and preferably unaccented; in (101) and (102) the cleft clause is indirectly activated (respectively, of the ‘superlative’ and ‘consequence’ types) and preferably receives a secondary accent; while in (103) the cleft-clause is truly ‘informative’ and preferably receives a primary accent.

A similar gradient can be constructed from my mystery novel corpus. The clefted constituent of (104)-(106) constitutes a choice among a set of only two alternatives:

- (104) And **it was he**, not Miss Wharton, **who would be waiting on the towpath.**
[James, A Taste for Death, p. 413]
- (105) Texture’s the easy part; **it’s applying the oil smoothly that I find tricky.**
[James, A Taste for Death, p. 354]
- (106) It had, he guessed, been difficult for her to decide what should suitably be offered, alcohol or tea. She had decided on tea and she was right; as far as he was concerned, **it was tea they needed.**
[James, A Taste for Death, p. 493]

Examples (107) and (108) present a selection of an unexpected participant from a larger set, consisting of three members in (107) and five members in (108):

- (107) He turned to Lady Ursula, ‘I should like to speak to Miss Matlock, too, please.’
It was Sarah Berowne who went across to the fireplace and tugged at the bell.
 [James, *A Taste for Death*, p. 443]
- (108) Barbara Berowne had tears brimming her eyes, a frustrated child. She cried:
 ‘Why did he do it? How did you make him?’
But it was to Dalglish that Lady Ursula turned as if it were he who was owed
 the answer... [James, *A Taste for Death*, p. 451]

Examples (109)-(111) represent a choice among a progressively less specifiable but still limited set of alternatives. Thus, (109) represents a seemingly arbitrary selection from a set of five just-listed guests at a reception; (110), a selection from an unactivated set of household members; and (111), a selection from a large unactivated set of the character’s acquaintances.

- (109) **It was Alan Skully who was the first to leave.**
 [James, *A Taste for Death*, p. 493]
- (110) **It was Sarah Berowne who let them in.**
 [James, *A Taste for Death*, p. 442]
- (111) **It was Barbara of course who had told him.**
 [James, *A Taste for Death*, p. 59]

I conclude that the primary indicator of intuitively ‘contrastive’ status is the activation status of the cleft clause rather than the size of the set of alternatives to the clefted constituent.

5.3 Special subtypes

I now turn to a discussion of the pragmatic properties of special subclasses of topic-clause clefts: negative clefts and ‘sentential-focus’ clefts.

5.3.1 NEGATIVE CLEFTS

In this section I briefly address some issues pertaining to negative clefts in particular. First I argue that cleft matrix negation can be of the ‘metalinguistic’ rather than the ‘descriptive’ type (Horn 1989), and then discuss the distribution of different ‘rectification’ types in the corpus of natural examples.

5.3.1.1 Metalinguistic negation

Halvorsen 1978 concludes that affirmative clefts entail the sentence obtained by replacing the gap in the cleft clause with the clefted constituent, so that (112a) entails (112b):³²

³²Halvorsen actually takes the stronger position that (112a) and (112b) are mutually entailing, i.e. express the same proposition.

- (112) a. It was John that Mary kissed.
 b. Mary kissed John.

Halvorsen also analyzes negative clefts as entailing the negation of the sentence obtained by the same procedure, so that (113a) entails (113b).

- (113) a. It wasn't John that Mary kissed.
 b. Mary didn't kiss John.

He concludes that a negative cleft which also contains a negative cleft clause should entail the affirmative counterpart of the negative sentence obtained by inserting the clefted constituent into the cleft clause. He claims, thus, that (114a) entails (114b).

- (114) a. It wasn't John who Mary didn't kiss.
 b. Mary kissed John.

Halvorsen admits to feeling some doubt as to whether this latter prediction is correct since the relevant intuitions are difficult to grasp. The natural discourse examples in (115) and (116) suggest, however, that the prediction is incorrect, and that cleft negation has (or at least, can have) the character of 'metalinguistic negation' in the sense of Horn (1989):

- (115) ...Even with respect to risk, Californians cover the spectrum. A law passed by popular ballot in 1986 requires warning labels on any food whose ingredients have a 1-in-100,000 chance of causing cancer. Yet, as Tuesday's tremor hammered home, tens of thousands could be killed in the truly major earthquake that might strike at any time.
 [4 paragraphs of examples of Californians' inconsistent responses to risk]
 It's **not California** but all society that weighs risks unequally. Radiation from nuclear power plant accidents is feared too much. Radon seeping into basements is probably feared too little....

[The New York Times, 10/22/89]

- (116) I had so many doubts about my work. I'd think, Oh God, the doctor doesn't see what I'm doing as important. I finally learned it didn't matter what he thought... Now I find it exciting, more important than the other matters. I see it as a kind of thing missing in a lot of people's lives. **It wasn't the people higher up who didn't recognize the importance of our work.** It was *I* who didn't recognize it.

[Terkel, Occupational Therapist, p. 645]

Thus, the editorialist in (115) had already established that Californians 'weigh risks unevenly,' and therefore cannot be taken to endorse the proposition that California does not weigh risks unevenly. In fact, under a 'descriptive negation' interpretation, the cleft in (115) would entail a contradiction, since California is part of society. Similarly, it is unlikely that the speaker of the cleft in (116) would endorse the proposition that her superiors do recognize the importance of her work.

5.3.1.2 Rectification

A second interesting property of the negative clefts in my corpus is that explicit ‘rectification’ (c.f. Horn 1989) virtually always takes place. (See Table 3 in Appendix 2 for the distribution). Explicit rectification is sometimes made by means of a ‘but’ phrase conjoined either to the clefted constituent or to the cleft as a whole, as in (117)-(121):

- (117) He says **it’s PROBABLY not just HIM** but a LOT of people have been messed up.
[Geluykens 1983, C27]
- (118) But this week, Jim and Tammy Bakker said through their lawyer that **it was not a sex and blackmail scandal that led them to their resignation**, but the threat of a hostile takeover of PTL, a quote-unquote diabolical plot by another TV evangelist, Jimmy Swaggart.
[McLaughlin Group, 3/27/89]
- (119) **But it is not Griese I am really after**, but the person who hired him.
[B. St. James, April Thirtieth, p. 177]
- (120) **It was not the merits of the issues in the hearings that hurt Bork**, they say, but the expensive advertising by his opponents.
[A. Lewis, Was Bork a threat to liberty?, 10/9/87]
- (121) **It was not the bell that trapped the Inuit** but the unscrupulous intentions of the bell ringer. [Insight Guide to Canada, p. 96]

Rectification is most often made with a truncated cleft, as in (122)-(126):

- (122) MK: But it’s not the contras that are making it dire shape.
JM: Right.
MK: It’s their own regime.
[McLaughlin Group]
- (123) When the plant first opened, **it wasn’t young people they drew from**. It was people who had been in the community, who gave up jobs to come to GM because it was new.
[Terkel, Local Union President, p. 258]
- (124) **It’s not Lady Ursula who’s dead**, Father. It’s her son.
[James, A Taste for Death, p. 183]
- (125) **So it wasn’t the predictable public noises that struck me**. It was the undertone. [Goodman, Keeping door open for women, 4/3/87]
- (126) **But it isn’t volcanoes that have made a name for the Northwest**. Mostly it’s the rain. [Insight Guide to Pacific Northwest, p. 17]

Rectification is sometimes made with an entire clause, as in examples (127)-(132):

- (127) Jobs are not big enough for people. **It’s not just the assembly line worker whose job is too small for his spirit**, you know? A job like mine, if you really put your spirit into it, you would sabotage it immediately.
[Terkel, Editor, p. 675]

- (128) But in fact **it's not for that reason that I dislike him.** He did his very utmost to treat me as if I were dirt.
[St. James, April Thirtieth, p. 56]
- (129) **It was not only on the Upper River, or in the neighbourhood of Oxford, that the search went on.** Photography has made it possible for us all, wherever we are, to join in the criminal hunt...
[The Footsteps at the Lock, p. 95]
- (130) But **it's not only men who are affected by the macho image.** Many women do not cry.
[Self magazine, 7/89]
- (131) **'But it wasn't just Swaggart's flock that asked 'Why? Why?' as they found out the details—**the motel strip he cruised regularly, the \$13-an-hour motel room where he is said to have paid a prostitute to perform pornographic acts, all in the shadow of a billboard that reads, 'Your Eternity is at Stake.' The most cynical and secular people I know seemed somewhat bewildered.
[Goodman, Minneapolis Star and Tribune]
- (132) But **it wasn't only people from Tuskaloosa and Detroit who were swept away by this image of the Pacific Northwest.** Northwesterners, themselves, revelled in the romantic picture of their land and promoted the region as an exclusive place for only for a chosen few.
[Insight Guide to the Pacific Northwest, p. 46]

Finally, rectification need not be explicit. Examples such as (133) -(135), in which the expected rectification is clearly recognized by the addressee, suggest that rectification is strongly implicated even when it is not explicit:

- (133) '...Philip Rohan as Lord Hastings — yes, but he could play any part. He's a gifted actor. He has a beautiful voice.'
'It wasn't his voice you were admiring,' said Thomas.
[Peters, The Murders of Richard III, p. 43]
- (134) 'Aren't you being a little sudden in your scepticism?'
'Oh it wasn't this that shook me.'
'What then?'
'A little affair called the Boston Massacre....'
[Tey, The Daughter of Time, p. 100]
- (135) 'Don't trouble yourself.'
'It's not you that's makin' me busy.'
'Yes, the Inspector did rather complicate things, coming so early and needing to talk to all of us.'
Millie gestured with her knife for emphasis. 'It's a wonder a Yard man hasn't learned his manners...'
[Hawkes & Manso, The Shadow of the Moth, p. 171]

Implicated rectification is sometimes used as a rhetorical device, to dramatically close a discourse as in (136)-(138):

- (136) **It is not only in Berlin that ugly walls and once impassable barriers are tumbling down in a world bright with change.**
[Time, 'Breakthrough in Virginia,' 11/20/89]
- (137) **And it isn't just one congregation in Louisiana that speaks in tongues that sound strange to outsiders.**
[Goodman, 3/1/88]
- (138) **But watching her performance in these three years, it occurred to that it isn't just presidents who can grow in office.**
[Goodman, p. 61]

The only apparent exception to the generalization that negative clefts are always contextually rectified is the class of 'not until' temporal clefts. Such clefts are typically used to mark a transition across a discontinuous interval of time, to express an unexpectedly non-immediate occurrence of an expected event, as in (139)-(143):

- (139) I would read all these things in the papers about Cesar Chavez and I would denounce him... The grape boycott didn't affect me much because I was in lettuce. **It wasn't until Chavez came to Salinas, where I was working in the fields, that I saw what a beautiful man he was.** I went to this rally....
[Terkel, Farm Worker, p. 37]
- (140) All my life I planned to be a teacher. **It wasn't until late in college, my senior year, that I realized what the public school system was like.** A little town in the mountains is one thing...
[Terkel, Editor, p. 676]

(141)³³

This Bridge
Was Designed in 1830
By ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL
(1806)-(1859)
Construction began in 1836 but was
Interrupted in 1843 Through Lack of
Funds. **It was not until 1854 five years
after Brunel's death that the Bridge
was completed as a Monument to
his fame,** the chains used being those
from the Hungerford Bridge designed
and erected by him in 1843

- (142) Workers wanted a fairer share than they thought they'd been getting from their bosses. They believed unionization could help restore the foundations of U.S. industry after the Depression. **But it wasn't until the United States entered World War II that industry again felt really secure.**

³³Plaque on Clifton Suspension Bridge, Bristol, England. I am grateful to Karen Frederickson for bringing this plaque to my attention.

[Insight Guide to the Pacific Northwest , p. 44]

- (143) The Hudson’s Bay Company established a post at Bella Coola in 1869, but **it wasn’t until 1894 and the arrival of a Norwegian reverend and his people** that settlement of Bella Coola Valley began in earnest.

[British Columbia Handbook, p. 290]

This class can perhaps be analyzed as another class of implicated rectification. A cleft is used to explicitly deny the assumption, consistent with (or even suggested by) the preceding context, that the denoted event never did occur. Use of the cleft generates the implicature (if not entailment) that the event denoted in the cleft clause did indeed occur during the interval denoted by the clefted constituent, just as in (144):³⁴

- (144) The man who was the cause of all this day’s insanity was sitting on his cot in his cell, his head buried in his hands. He didn’t even look up when his door was unlocked and the chief inspector entered. **It was only when he heard Blanc’s voice that he jerked bolt upright.**

[St. James, April Thirtieth, p. 111]

5.3.2 SENTENTIAL-FOCUS CLEFTS

I turn now to a discussion of an interesting construction consisting minimally of an *it*-subject, a copula and a sentential complement, as in (145):

- (145) **It’s not that it’s unstable. It’s just that it’s warped.**

[Store owner to employee pointing out a problem with display beam, 10/89]

This class of sentence shares several structural and functional properties with ordinary truncated clefts like the one in (146), suggesting that these too should be analyzed as clefts.

- (146) M: I LOVE winter. You know why I love winter?
K: We get to see birdins—I mean squirrel tracks.

³⁴I am assuming that the (a) sentences in (i)-(iii) entail the corresponding (b) sentences, and conventionally implicate (presuppose) the (c) sentences, but may entail them as well.

- (i) a. Only John left.
- b. Nobody other than John left.
- c. John left.
- (ii) a. Not only John left
- b. Somebody other than John left
- c. John left.
- (iii) a. Not until August did she finish her dissertation
- b. She didn’t finish her dissertation before August.
- c. She finished her dissertation during August.

- M: [We don't have to cut grass. And grass and grass and grass!
 K: [Oh. There's that, yeah.
 M: And **it isn't just ME cutting grass. HE doesn't have to cut grass.** HE doesn't have to cut grass, HE doesn't have to cut grass.
 [Frederickson tapes]

Delahunty 1981 analyzes sentences of this type as sentential-focus clefts, partly on the grounds that the cleft clause is sometimes expressed, as in (147):^{35,36}

- (147) I wonder if **it was that they hadn't room enough for them up in the house that they put them out here in the woods?**
 [Somerville and Ross, 1894 p. 272]

Horn 1989 also analyzes these sentences as sentential-focus clefts. He concludes from the examples in (148) that the negation in such sentences is (or at least can be) of the metalinguistic type (i.e. 'whether or not a proposition is true is irrelevant to its negation'):³⁷

- (148) a. It's not that she's rich and beautiful— although, as heiresses go, she is quite lovely/in fact she's just a plain country girl}— it's that her heart is pure.
 b. It's not that I don't want to go— {although I don't/in fact I'd love to/I hadn't really made up my mind one way or the other}— it's just that I've made plans to clean my bathtub.

Further examples from my own data are shown in (149)-(152):

- (149) **It isn't that the average working guy is dumb.** He's tired, that's all.
 [Terkel, p. 5, steelworker]
 (150) **It's not that I want to be persecuted. It's simply that I know I'm vegetating and being paid to do exactly that.**
 [Terkel, p. 677, editor]
 (151) I think most guys who hold up cabdrivers are junkies. They can't control themselves. **It's not that they're malicious people, it's just that they've got**

³⁵Delahunty 1981 generates the clefted constituent and cleft clause as sisters under the VP, predicting in general that only combinations generated by the VP rule of Jackendoff 1977 will be allowed. Since the VP rule never allows more than one subcategorized-for sentential complement, he predicts accurately that sentential-focus clefts will exist only when the (optionally expressed) cleft clause is an adverbial adjunct clause.

³⁶Halliday 1967 says of this class of clefts, that 'the predication is itself the theme, as in *it isn't that I don't want to, it must be that he's out of town*; here the theme is simply 'positive' or 'negative' together with whatever mood, tense and modality may be incorporated in it.'

³⁷See also an earlier discussion by Kempson (1986: 86), who characterizes the negative morpheme not as a 'falsity operator' but rather as a 'pragmatic operator' that is 'indifferent to the truth value of its complementizer.'

- (i) It's not that Mark ate three biscuits — {though he did /in fact he didn't}. It's that I'm too tired to cook breakfast.

this habit and they're desperate. It's fear. It's fear that results in a lot of cabdrivers passing up black people. This includes black drivers.

[Terkel, p. 272, cabdriver]

- (152) He came to the surface an hour later, vaguely puzzled and ill at ease. **It was not that the matter surprised him;** the facts were very much what he had expected them to be. **It was that this was not how he had expected Sir Thomas to write.**

[Tey, Daughter of Time, p. 67]

Sometimes the sentential complement opens with a *because* instead of a *that*-complementizer:

- (153) I don't think they want to be doctors or lawyers. **It's not because they don't know. It's that they have no expectations.**

[Terkel, p. 638, alternative school teacher]

- (154) If I don't sell X amount of cars today, I've gotta look for another job. **It's not because they're bad people, but they're in business.** If you got a bad egg, you get rid of it.

[Terkel, p. 307, car salesman]

- (155) Oh come on. Dole is off the hook on the INF issue. He's behind the treaty now, and I think he's helped himself. Bush did not help himself. **It wasn't that Bush was just UNHAPPY about the President appearing with Dole. He was APOPLECTIC about it,** and it brought out that pity streak in Bush that you know so well, John.

[Fred Barnes, McLaughlin Group, 12/18/87]

The occasional explicit coreferentiality of the pronoun with a preceding definite description, as in (156)-(158), lends further support to the hypothesis of Chapter 4 that cleft pronouns are referential.³⁸

- (156) You don't understand what that means, John. **The problem is not that it's a complicated ISSue. It's how does he perform in the opinion of PEOPLe?** Does he come over as strong?...

[Robert Novak, McLaughlin Group, 1/9/88]

- (157) JM: Many Americans think that the media have gone too far in their coverage of the private lives of public figures. ...68 percent of those polled think that the press was overly intrusive in reporting Gary Hart's extramarital affair.... Have the media overstepped their boundaries? R.

RN: No, **I don't believe that's the problem at all,** John. I think **it's just that the ordinary people hate the media.** They hate big, rich people like you who lord it over them, who are arrogant, who are domineering (laughter).

[McLaughlin Group, 11/20/87]

- (158) Some years it was seriously suggested that Tennessee Williams's talents as a playwright had been compromised by the necessity, forced on him by society, to

³⁸Heggie (1988:227) views the *it* in sentences such as those in (i) as a referential subject referring to 'the problem' or 'the fact,' and thus unlike the cleft pronoun, which she views as a non-referential expletive:

- (i) a. It's that there is seldom any reason for doing it.
b. It's that time is a-wasting and I don't know the answer!

translate his essentially homosexual view of the world into heterosexual terms acceptable to Broadway audiences.

The point wasn't that Williams's female characters were disguised men. It was that his plays would have been finer, more universal, if his view of the relations between men and women had not been limited by his own biases.

Williams was certainly biased...

[The New York Times, 6/24/90, H19]

To summarize, all of the clefts discussed in this chapter are pronounced with a single primary accent on the clefted constituent. The cleft clause is either entirely unaccented—when immediately activated; secondarily accented—when less immediately activated; or omitted altogether—when in focus. Activation in all three cases may be indirect as well as direct. In the next chapter, I turn to an examination of clefts bearing primary accent on the cleft.

Chapter 6

Comment-Clause Clefts

In this chapter, I examine the discourse-pragmatic characteristics of clefts with primary accent on the cleft clause. One question to be explored is whether both the clefted constituent and the cleft clause function to express part of the comment in these constructions, or whether the clefted constituent expresses the topic. Since activated status is consistent with topic status, the referents of activated clefted constituents of comment-clause clefts are eligible for analysis as topics, though they could also be included in the comment. The clefts in (1) and (2) below are convincing candidates for topic+comment status:

- (1) a. And of course, we've only got his version of the niece and the nurse
b. —and he obviously had what the Scotch call ta'en a scunner at the nurse.
c. We mustn't lose sight of her, by the way.
d. She was the last person to be with the old lady before her death,
e. and **it was she who administered that injection.**'
f. 'Yes, yes — but the injection had nothing to do with it .
g. If anything's clear, that is.'

[Sayers, 1927, *Unnatural Death*, p. 17]

The referent of the clefted constituent in (1e), the nurse, is introduced into the conversation in (1a), retained in (1b), pronominalized in (1c), and appears well-established as a topic in (1d). The cleft in (1e) continues to be intuitively 'about' the nurse.

In (2), the cleft is again uttered as the second member of a two-member sequence, and is again intuitively 'about' the referent of the clefted constituent.

- (2) The nice child had sent over for the patient in the course of the morning a dozen fresh eggs taken from the Steynes nests that very hour. Grant thought how typical it was of her to send fresh eggs, and not the conventional flowers or fruit. 'I hope she didn't get into any trouble for giving me food that time?' Tisdall asked. He always talked as if the occurrences of the last week were many years away; the days in the attic had been a lifetime to him.
'On the contrary. She saved your neck and my reputation. **It was she who found your overcoat.** No, I can't tell you about it now. You're supposed not to talk or be talked to.'

[Tey, 1936, *A Shilling for Candles*, p. 224]

In §6.1, I examine the cognitive status of comment-clauses, and argue that Prince's (1978) characterization of accented cleft clauses as 'informative' fails to account for cases in which the

content is assumed to be familiar to the addressee. I adopt instead the view of Gundel 1985 that the content of an accented cleft clause is ‘interpreted as part of the comment.’ I also examine the class of ‘vice-versa’ clefts. In §6.2, I verify that the clefted constituents in (1) and (2) satisfy the tests for topic status introduced in Chapter 2, explore the use of clefted sentence topics for ‘emphatic repetition,’ and the use of the focus operators *also* and *even* in comment-clause clefts. Finally, in §6.3, I explore the use of comment-clause clefts to mark transitions between higher-order segments of discourse. I close by considering a general analysis of comment-clause clefts as providing answers to multiple questions.

6.1 Discourse-pragmatic properties of the cleft clause

In this section I give an overview of competing approaches to the pragmatic characterization of clefts with primary accent on the cleft clause. I argue that Gundel’s characterization of accented cleft clauses as expressing part of the comment is preferable to Prince’s characterization of them as ‘informative’ since it is newness in the relational (i.e. comment) sense rather than newness in the referential (i.e. unfamiliar) sense (c.f. §2.2) which is relevant here. I then turn to the ‘vice-versa’ subclass of comment-clause clefts, and analyze them as double focus constructions.

6.1.1 COGNITIVE STATUS

The best known and still one of the most extensive discussions of clefts with primary accent on the cleft clause is that of Prince 1978.¹ Recall from the previous chapter that Prince distinguishes two types of clefts: ‘stressed-focus’ clefts which contain primary accent on the clefted constituent, and

¹For subsequent discussion, see especially Geluykens 1983, Borkin 1984, Van Oosten 1986, and DeClerck 1983, 1988. DeClerck cites an early mention of comment-clause clefts in Erades 1962. Erades notes an exceptional lack of ‘extra-strong stress and extra-high intonation’ on the clefted constituent of the discourse-initial cleft in (i), and the non-omissibility of *that*:

- (i) It was in 1886 that Lewin published the first systematic study of the cactus.

Since, furthermore, ‘the assertion is not stoutly maintained against an opposed school of thought, nor does it link up the sentence with anything preceding,’ Erades concludes that ‘this is a different type of sentence. *Was* is not a copula here, but a notional verb meaning ‘happened’, ‘occurred’, ‘took place’.

Kantor 1976 mentions (ii) as a ‘funny cleft’, with ‘old information’ in the clefted constituent and ‘new information’ in the cleft clause, and suggests that it is used to shift the ‘topic’ from ‘January’ to ‘the girls at school.’

- (ii) But the weekends January spent with her father in New York, she only saw a handsome man who lived to please her. It was because of these weekends that January discouraged all attempts at any ‘buddy-buddy’ relationships with the girls at school. Having a buddy-buddy meant holiday dinners...

‘informative-presupposition’ clefts which contain primary accent on the cleft clause. She notes that only subject-NP’s and sentence adverbials appear as clefted constituents in the ‘informative presupposition’ clefts of her data, that the cleft clause complementizer is not deletable, and also that the clefted constituent is typically ‘short and anaphoric.’²

Prince 1978 characterizes ‘informative-presupposition’ clefts as ‘mark[ing] a piece of information as fact, known to some people although not yet known to the intended hearer’.³ Prince 1986 maintains her earlier distinction between two types of clefts, stating that ‘informative presupposition’ clefts ‘cannot be said to mark an OP [open proposition] as shared knowledge in the discourse; their point, in fact, is precisely to inform the reader of the ‘presupposed’ information.’ In the following subsection I will evaluate Prince’s description of clefts with primary accent on the cleft clause as ‘informative’ in light of my own data.

Although Prince characterizes the primary-accented clauses of her data as ‘informative,’ my data indicate that clefts whose clauses carry primary accent can also contain information which is familiar. Speakers sometimes use comment-clause clefts to signal that the information expressed in the cleft clause is familiar, but not activated, and thus that the addressee should retrieve it from long-term memory. In other words, such clefts have a reminder function analogous to that of distal demonstrative phrases (c.f. §2.2).

Occasionally the proposition expressed by the cleft construction as a whole is familiar to the addressee (not just the information expressed in the cleft clause).⁴ This is so in example (1) above, and in (3)-(5) below:

- (3) [p. 78]...It was under one of the rhododendron’s that I found him, beside and just off the main path...
- [p. 173] ...‘I mean,’ I ran on cheerfully, ‘since that first evening when you arrived, and you both went off together towards the rhododendrons.’ **It struck me that it was a rhododendron bush under which Hugo’s body had been found**, and that the word would always have a sinister sound in my ears...
- [Death and the Pleasant Voices]

²DeClerck 1988 divides Prince’s ‘informative presupposition’ clefts into two subclasses, depending on the activation status of the clefted constituent, thus distinguishing ‘unaccented- anaphoric-focus’ clefts in which the clefted constituent is activated and ‘weakly’ accented, from ‘discontinuous’ clefts in which the clefted constituent is unactivated and ‘normally’ accented. Besides the obvious consequence that only a ‘discontinuous’ cleft can be used to open a discourse, he suggests, but doesn’t explicitly argue, that the clefted constituent (and possibly cleft-clause) of ‘discontinuous’ clefts is more likely to continue to be discussed, and that the cleft clause information is ‘new’ in both types, but is ‘represented as old’ in ‘unaccented-anaphoric-focus’ clefts.

³Prince presumably intends the class of knowers to properly include the speaker, but to exclude the addressee.

⁴Note that it is not clear from Prince’s 1978 discussion whether she intends that the proposition expressed by the cleft as a whole is ‘known,’ or just the proposition obtained by replacing the ‘gap’ in the cleft clause with a general term.

- (4) **Wasn't it just yesterday that he said the troops would be out in a few days?**

[Gundel 1985, conversation overheard, October 26, 1983]

- (5) [BEGINNING A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE]

It was 30 years ago that Richard Nixon melted under the glare of the hot lights and turned television debates into an integral part of North American election campaigns.

Ever since Nixon blew the presidency to John Kennedy on that sweltering summer night, underdogs have seen debates as a means of exposing the favorite and...

[Mike Trickey, 'TV debate likely to turn election heat up in Ontario,' The Vancouver Sun, 8/18/90, B3]

The point here is to remind the addressee of relevant information which the addressee already knows; the clause is accented because it is not activated. The referent of the clefted constituent is often activated in such cases—e.g. (3)—but isn't necessarily so—e.g. (4) and (5). When the clefted constituent is activated, it is likely to express the topic of the sentence, as in (3), which is indeed intuitively about rhododendrons. When it is unactivated, as in (4) and (5), it more likely expresses part of the comment. The topic of (4) could thus be the referent of the pronoun in the cleft clause (i.e. Reagan), and (5) could be analyzed as an all-comment sentence.⁵

It is more frequently the case, however, that a speaker assumes only the information expressed in the cleft clause to be familiar to the addressee. The writer of the clefts in (6) and (7) probably expects the reader to remember the historic flight from Saigon in 1975 and to be familiar with the fact that well-known German leaders built ships, but not to know all the details, such as the embassy from which the flight took place or the port in which the ships were constructed:

- (6) ...When the Americans built a new embassy in Saigon, Lansdale had the opening postponed because his acquaintances among the capital's astrologers had warned him the planned day was inauspicious. The advice didn't help. **It was from this embassy that the U.S. helicopters ignominiously fled in 1975.**

But Lansdale was the sort of man to appreciate that fate, in Vietnam, was simply against him.##

[Mark Frankland, Predecessor makes North look like an amateur operator, 3/5/87]

⁵Though if we assume the topic of an 'all-comment' sentence to be a spatio-temporal index as suggested in §2.4, the topics of (4) and (5) could be analyzed as the familiar but unactivated temporal index denoted by the clefted constituent.

- (7) They've been building ships in Gdansk for over 400 years. **It was in this Baltic port that the Kaiser constructed his cruisers and Hitler built his U-boats.** But since 1970, when 28 workers were killed during food riots nearby, the Lenin shipyard...has also been something of a shrine...

[D. Margolick, 'Lech's American Angel,' The New York Times Magazine, 10/8/89, p. 30]

Finally, the general proposition associated with the presumably accented cleft clause in (8) is again unactivated in the discourse context—though the speaker seems to expect the addressee to be familiar with it. (Note the apparent attempt by the President to deny the familiarity implicature; and the decision of the columnist to report this attempt.)

- (8) Question: 'Mr. President, I don't think it's still clear just what Israel's role was in all this... We do understand that the Israelis sent a shipment in 1985 and there's also reports that **it was the Israeli**s that contacted your administration and **suggested that you make contact with Iran.** Could you explain what the Israeli role was here?'

Reagan: 'No, because we, as I say, have nothing to do with other countries or their shipment of arms or doing what they're doing...'

[Stephen E. Winn, 'What Reagan says he said']

Recognizing that the information denoted in a comment cleft clause may have a variety of cognitive statuses helps clarify the status of certain examples in the literature whose existing classification is problematic. Declerck 1984 includes the cleft in (9) in his class of 'contrastive' clefts, presumably because the information in the cleft clause does not fit his description ('new but represented as old') of the information status of the cleft clause of his 'unstressed anaphoric-focus' class, without recognizing that it more closely fits the prosodic characteristics of the latter class:

- (9) I asked her what was the matter with John and she answered that **it was he who had been the victim of the robbery.**

Similarly, Prince 1978 includes the cleft in (10) in her class of 'inferable' stressed-focus clefts, without recognizing that primary accent most likely falls on the word *twelve* in the cleft clause:

- (10) Mmm [eating a piece of fudge] — Aren't those good? **It was only sheer will power that kept me eating twelve every night.**⁶

⁶Note that the conclusion of Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1989 that 'inferability' is not so much a separate cognitive status, as a means by which an entity can attain a cognitive status, seems to hold for propositions as well as noun phrase referents—the inferable proposition associated with the accented cleft clause in (10) seems to have the status 'uniquely identifiable' rather than 'activated'.

There are some clefts containing familiar cleft clauses which seem to fall on the borderline between comment-clause and topic-clause clefts. The point of using a cleft in certain circumstances is to reactivate a previous topic which had been left unsettled in order to settle it, sometimes after a considerable intervening period of time. For example, the cleft in (11) was used to answer a question which had been raised and abandoned a month earlier (about an event which had taken place three years before that):

- (11) Hi! I'm back from my lunch with Jeanette. Guess what? **It was Greg Ward who invited her to tour Bell Labs.** She drove out with Greg, and Julia Hirschberg met them and gave her the tour.

[E-mail message, RZ to NH, 7/9/90]

It seems to me that a speaker could accent both the clefted constituent and the cleft clause in uttering (11), which would indicate that it should be analyzed as a comment-clause cleft. It is perhaps more likely, however, that the speaker would accent only the clefted constituent, which would indicate that it should be analyzed as a topic-clause cleft. The existence of such borderline cases is to be expected, given the general fuzzy character of the border between activated and familiar information, i.e. speakers can choose whether to treat particular items of information as activated or as merely familiar to the addressee.

The clefts from a mystery novel in (12) serve a similar function. The author, narrating from the detective's point of view, uses a cleft in (12a) to express the detective's realization that an activated piece of information provides the resolution to an important puzzle. The author also uses a cleft in (12b) to express, this time through direct dialogue, confirmation of the same realization by one of the characters:

- (12) a. '...Discrediting members of the present administration is probably more a matter of occasional duty than enjoyment. I imagine Garrod chose Paul Berowne for personal rather than political reasons. Sarah dislikes more than her papa's party.' **So it had been Garrod who had sent the poison pen message to Ackroyd and the gossip writers of the nationals.** Well, he had always been Dalglish's most likely suspect for that particular mischief.

[P.D. James, *A Taste for Death*, p. 343]

- b. ... She thought: I need to know, I need to know everything. I have to face the truth. She said:

'And **it was you who sent that poison pen note to Daddy and to *The Paternoster Review***? Doesn't it seem rather petty even to you, the people's revolutionary...'

[P.D. James, *A Taste for Death*, p. 382]

Again, though it seems that a speaker could place primary accent on the cleft clause, it is also possible that the clefted constituent could receive an accent. Note, however, that the conclusion that the

information in the cleft clauses of (11) and (12) is familiar instead of activated is supported by the possibility of felicitously replacing the direct-dialogue cleft pronouns with distal, but not with proximal, demonstratives:⁷

- (13) a. It/#this/that was Greg Ward who invited her to tour Bell Labs.
 b. So it/#this/that was you who sent the poison pen note to Daddy and to *The Paternoster Review*.

Note that the unclefted counterpart of (11) might wrongly suggest that a new invitation had been issued (given the absence of prosodic information):

- (14) I'm back from lunch with Jeanette. Guess what? Greg Ward invited Jeanette to tour Bell Labs.

In another interesting class of borderline cases, a syntactic topic, adjoined to the left of a cleft construction, activates a familiar entity sufficiently to permit familiar associated information to be expressed in an unaccented cleft clause:

- (15) About Gorbachev—at least you know that **it's HIM that's BRILLiant**, and NOT his adVISors.'
 [Kari Swingle, conversation, 12/31/90]
- (16) a. That girl now, the nurse, the one who killed herself. **If it was Berowne's child she had aborted**, that couldn't have been easy for him to live with.
 [James, *A Taste for Death*, p. 277]
- b. 'What is this?' Grafman lit a cigarillo impatiently. 'You said it was about Thea. What do you know about Thea? Who are you anyway? You're no investor, right? What then, some kind of detective? I thought there was something phony about you. **And that business with Persky's suitcase, was it you who got hold of that stuff?** What's your—'
 [Kallen, *The Piano Bird*]

In sum, despite the existence of borderline cases, I conclude that clefts which are accented on the cleft clause can be used to 'remind' as well as to 'inform.' The characterization of such constructions as 'comment-clause' clefts is thus more appropriate than Princes's characterization of them as 'informative-presupposition' clefts.

⁷See § 4.1 for discussion of *th*-clefts.

6.1.2 VICE VERSA CLEFTS

An interesting subclass of comment-clause clefts was introduced into the literature in Ball and Prince 1978, who discuss the example in (17):

(17) It's not John that shot Mary. It's Mary that shot John.

Ball and Prince point out that clefts such as the first cleft in (17) constitute exceptions to the general requirement that the cleft clause is presupposed, since the speaker is not committed to the truth of the proposition derived by replacing the variable in the cleft clause with a general term, i.e. that someone shot Mary. Note, however, that the speaker does believe the *addressee* to be committed to this proposition.⁸

Carlson 1983 notes the 'intriguing example' (from Shakespeare) in (18), and characterizes it as 'a double question with a unique pair presupposition', 'who has lost (and) what?.'

(18) It is not I who who have lost the Athenians. It is the Athenians who have lost me.

This description aptly characterizes the examples in (19)-(27) from my own data:

(19) MA: You all owe me money.
 NH: Oh. I told everyone that they owed DUANE money.
 MA: **It's Duane who owes ME money.**
 [conversation, 11/86]

⁸Prince and Ball point out that the presupposition associated with a pseudocleft clause cannot be suspended in the manner of (17):

(i) #The one who shot Mary wasn't John. The one who shot John was Mary.

Note that this difference cannot be due simply to the differing relative order of clefted constituent and cleft clause in clefts and pseudoclefts, since the presupposition also cannot be suspended when the pseudocleft is inverted :

(ii) A: So do you think John will be arrested for shooting Mary?
 B: You've got it all wrong. #John wasn't the one who shot Mary.
 Mary was the one who shot John.

I suggest that this difference lends further support to a syntactic analysis of clefts, like that proposed in Chapter 4, in which the negation-operator *c*-commands the cleft clause.

- (20) Wimsey: Mr. Borne. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting.
How can I help you?
- Borne: I think **it's I who can help you.**
[Strong Poison, PBS series, 6/22/89]
- (21) You cast another bewildered look at the books around you (or, rather: **it was the books that looked at you**, with the bewildered gaze of dogs who, from their cages in the city pound, see a former companion go off on the leash of his master, come to rescue him), and out you went.
[Italo Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, p. 1979]
- (22) 'He didn't go down to the river alone that night, did he?' In fact, Lauren had every reason to suppose that Russell had gone down to the river with Sandy Grayson.
'No I don't think he did,' said Tracy.
'And someone else was following?' Laura suggested.
'Yes, perhaps,' said Tracy noncommittally.
Was it Tracy who followed Russell and Sandy? **Or was it Sandy who followed Russell and Tracy?** And how did Dora Carpenter fit in?
[Death of a Harvard Freshman: 97-99]
- (23) 'Your pardon, brother!' said a respectful voice at Cadfael's back. 'No one told me there was a messenger here from Shrewsbury.'
Cadfael turned, startled, to take a look at the abbey's steward here; a layman, a lawman, young enough to be deferential to his employers, mature enough to be in command of his own province.
'**It's I who should ask your pardon,**' said Cadfael, 'for walking in upon you without ceremony. Truth to tell, I have no errand here, but being in the neighbourhood I was curious to see our new manor.'
[Peters, *Monks' Hood*, p. 166]
- (24) The photon gives up part of its energy to the electron, and the transaction is observed as a slight decrease in the frequency (or increase in the wavelength) of the radiation. Inverse Compton scattering is observed when a photon encounters a high-energy electron. Then **it is the electron that loses energy to the photon.**
[Scientific American, 8/77:38; Borkin's 19]
- (25) '...I must fly. I'm late as it is. I've been lunching at the Blague, and so many people came up to talk that I couldn't get away as early as I meant to.'
'I hope your host was impressed,' Grant said, with a glance at the hat.
'Oh, yes. She knows about hats. She took one look and said, 'Jacques Tous, I take it.'
'She!' said Grant surprised.
'Yes. Madeleine March. And **it was I who was giving her luncheon.** Don't look so astonished: it isn't tactful...'
[Tey, *The Daughter of Time*, p. 23]

(26) C: And it's much better in mathematics than it is in grammar I think

A: but **it's us that lifted it from them**, not vice versa.

[Geluykens 1983, C26]

(27) Anna: So, what's the case you're working on?

Robert: Nothing I need bother you with now. **It's you who called me**,
remember? [General Hospital, ABC, 6/21/89]

The clefts in (19)-(22) respectively answer the activated double questions shown in (28); those in (23)-(25) answer the reactivated questions in (29); and (26)-(27) answer the indirectly activated questions in (30):

(28) a. Who owes whom money?

b. Who can help whom?

c. Who looked at whom?

d. Who followed Russell and whom?

(29) a. Who should ask whose pardon?

b. What loses energy to what?

c. Who was giving whom luncheon?

(30) a. Who called whom?

b. Who lifted it from whom?

The analysis of 'vice-versa' clefts⁹ as answering double questions raises the issue of the extent to which vice-versa clefts share structural characteristics with multiple questions. It is generally agreed, for example, that multiple questions are subject to the 'Superiority Condition' (Chomsky 1973),¹⁰ illustrated by the oddity of the multiple questions in (31):

(31) a. ??who does who owe money?

b. ??Who did who call?

The oddity of the corresponding vice-versa clefts in (32) suggests that vice-versa clefts are constrained by the same condition:

⁹I owe the term 'vice versa cleft' to Cathy Ball.

¹⁰The Superiority Condition is formulated by Lasnik and Uriagereka 1988 as follows: 'If a construction has two sources of *Wh*-movement, and one is superior to the other (in the sense of 'higher' in the tree), then *Wh*-movement must pick the superior one.'

- (32) a. A: You all owe me money.
 B: Oh. I told everyone that they owed Duane money.
 A: ??It's to ME that DUANE owes money.
- b. A: So, what's the case you're working on?
 B: Nothing I need bother you with now. ??It was ME who YOU called, remember?

I will suggest in §6.4 below that it might be possible to extend this conclusion to all comment-clause clefts.

6.2 Discourse-Pragmatic Properties of the Clefted Constituent

I turn now to some discourse pragmatic properties of the clefted constituent in comment-clause clefts. Gundel 1985 leaves open the question of whether clefts with primary accent on the cleft clause are all-comment sentences (c.f. §2.4), or whether the clefted constituent can express the topic of the sentence. I present tentative evidence in this section that the clefted constituent in some comment-clause clefts does indeed express the topic, though I will reconsider this conclusion in §6.4. After examining the extent to which the relevant clefted constituents satisfy necessary conditions for topic status, I discuss two subtypes of comment-clause clefts that contain clefted constituents which are good candidates for topic status: emphatic repetition clefts and clefts restricted by the focus adverbials *also* and *even*.

6.2.1 CLEFTED CONSTITUENTS AS TOPICS

In this section, I verify that the clefted constituents in the clefts in (1) and (2) above satisfy the tests for topic status that were introduced in Chapter 2. Note that the clefts in (1) and (2) above satisfy prosodic conditions (c.f. §2.5) for topic-comment sequences since they are most appropriately pronounced in their given contexts with a fall-rise secondary accent on the clefted constituent and a falling primary accent on the cleft clause:

- (33) a. It was SHE who administered that inJEction.
 b. It was SHE who found your OVercoat.

This intonation pattern is actually attested and transcribed in examples from Geluykens' 1983 cleft corpus:¹¹

- (34) Well she must have known about it # and . it was "llSHE_{FR} who at'tempted to 'burn the BOOKS_F #and dellstroy the EVIDENCE_F
[Geluykens 1983, C19]
- (35) It was "JOHNNY_{FR} that 'stole her MONEY_F while we were away in France, I think, wasn't it?
[Geluykens 1983, C41]
- (36) because literature is in some cases the product of imagination, isn't it, and of men's minds, and it is the im'agination and the "MIND_{RF} of MAN_R that I'm "INTERESTED_F 'in.
[Geluykens 1983, C45]

Other examples from Geluykens' corpus exhibit falling pitch on the prosodic nucleus of the cleft clause and an unaccented clefted constituent:

- (37) ...though Sir Garnet was marvellous that he'd done it all you see. So this was a mysterious phrase which I knew perfectly well what it meant, it meant that everything was tidy you see # but it was ll he who EXPLAINED_F #what it "MEANT_F#.
[Geluykens 1938, C12]
- (38) a: Did you meet Fuller?
b: Yes, # it was ll he who INVITED_F me #- and it was a very pleasant day.
[Geluykens 1983, C22]
- (39) James, it was no good, you didn't tell me to sell out # it was ll I who said I WANTED_{RF} to 'sell 'out#.
[Geluykens 1983, 20]

It has not gone unnoticed in the literature that the prosodic center of a cleft sentence sometimes falls on the cleft clause instead of on the clefted constituent.¹² For example, Halliday

¹¹For typographical purposes, I have replaced the pitch contour arrows in Geluykens' examples with subscripts: F, for 'falling,' RF for 'rise-fall,' and FR for 'fall-rise,' etc., and have capitalized the accented words identified by Geluykens.

¹²A couple of brief mentions have also appeared in footnotes. Chomsky 1971 notes the clefts in (i) as illustrating the superimposition by 'special grammatical processes of a poorly understood sort' of 'contrastive' or 'expressive' prosodic features on 'normal' intonation contours.

(i) Is it John who writes POETRY?/Is it John who WRITES poetry?/It ISN'T John who writes poetry.

Schmerling 1971 (cited in Prince 1978) notes the clefts in (ii) and (iii) as counterexamples to her claim that cleft clauses are destressed and presupposed, characterizing them as 'used for rhetorical effect':

(iii) Was it John who broke the window? — No, but it was John who paid for it.

1967 offers the cleft in (40) to illustrate the ‘marked’ pattern of ‘given’ clefted constituent and ‘new’ cleft clause:

- (40) What utter confusion! — Yeah. but I’m not going to complain to anyone. — I should hope not. **It’s you who were to blame.**

More recently, Bolinger 1986 remarks that ‘clefting is basically independent of accent.’ Though he views clefting as a syntactic focusing device which ‘attracts the accent as a rule,’ he notes that the ‘syntactic focus’ is regularly deaccented in contexts of ‘repetition’ such as (41), where ‘the only new and interesting item in the reply is the fact of writing’:

- (41) What does John have to do with the affair of the letter? — **It was John who wróte the letter.**

The analysis of the clefted constituents of (1) and (2) above as sentence topics is supported by the observation that they contain information repeated from the questions which elicit their containing clefts as answers:

- (42) a. A: Why must we not lose sight of the nurse?
 B: She was the last person to be with the old lady before her death, and it was she who administered that inJEction.
- b. A: How did Erica save my neck and your reputation?
 B: It was she who found your OVercoat.

The clefted constituents thus pass the ‘question test’ for topicality.¹³ The paraphrases in (43) and (44) show that they also pass Gundel’s ‘as for’ test and Reinhart’s ‘said about’ test:

- (43) a. As for why we mustn’t lose sight of the nurse, she was the last person to be with the old lady before her death, and it was she who administered that inJEction.
 b. As for how Erica saved your neck and my reputation, it was she who found your OVercoat.
- (44) a. Wimsey said about why he and Parker shouldn’t lose sight of the nurse, that she had been the last person to be with the old lady before her death, and that it was she who had administered the inJEction.
 b. Grant said about how Erica had saved Tisdall’s neck and his own reputation, that it was she who found Tisdall’s OVercoat.

(iv) The lack of patriotism I see today is appalling. It was Stephen Decatur who said, ‘Our country, right or wrong.’

¹³See Chapter 1 for discussion.

An early forerunner of the question-test was used by Fowler and Fowler 1919 in distinguishing a subtype of the ‘it...that’ construction, exemplified in (45a-b), which they characterize as an ‘artificial perversion’ of the prescriptively correct usage of the clefted constituent to answer a question echoed by the cleft clause in the passage quoted in (46):

- (45) a. It was in this spring, too, that the plague broke out.
 b. Accordingly, it was with much concern that I presently received a note informing me of his departure.
- (46) In [45a] the true question and answer in the circumstances would be, not, as the sentence falsely implies, ‘When did the plague break out?’ ‘That too happened in this spring’, but ‘Were there any other notable events in this spring?’ ‘Yes: the plague broke out’. Impressiveness is given to the announcement by the fiction that the reader is waiting for whatever may turn up in the history of this spring. In [45b] we go still further: the implied question ‘What were your feelings on receiving a (not *the*) note...?’ could not possibly be asked; the information that alone could prompt it is only given in the *that* clause.

More recently Hannay 1983 also comes to the conclusion that a clefted constituent sometimes expresses the ‘topic’ rather than the ‘focus’ of a cleft sentence, as in (47) and (48):

- (47) a. What happened in London?
 b. It was there that I met my first wife
- (48) a. 1963 will surely go down in the history books.
 b. It was in that year that Kennedy was assassinated, for instance.

In sum, both prosodic considerations and the topic tests support the conclusion that the clefted constituent of a comment-clause can express the sentence topic.

6.2.2 METALINGUISTIC OPERATORS: *ALSO* AND *EVEN*

It is interesting to note that comment-clause clefts provide a systematic class of counterexamples to the claim made in Horn 1969 that ‘clefting, like *only*, specifies uniqueness, while *even* and *also* presuppose non-uniqueness and thus cannot be clefted.’

- (49) a. It’s only Muriel who voted for Hubert.
 b. *It’s even Muriel who voted for Hubert.
 c. *It’s also Muriel who voted for Hubert

Attested counterexamples to Horn's constraint against restricting the clefted constituent with *also* are actually quite frequent. It can surely be no coincidence that all such examples are independently analyzable as comment-clause clefts with activated clefted constituents, as in (50)-(56):

- (50) The rate of fatal heart attacks among middle-aged men increased steadily until the late 1960's, at which point it leveled off and soon began to decline. Not coincidentally, it was about that time that large numbers of men wised up to the harmfulness of cigarettes. **It was also in the late 60's that more healthful foods—specifically, foods low in cholesterol and saturated fat—began to invade American kitchens.** Since then, the average cholesterol level of adult males has fallen... [Jane E. Brody, 'America's Health: An Assessment,' *The New York Times Magazine*, 10/8/89, p. 42]
- (51) It was the President, in a rare departure from the diplomacy of caution, who initiated the successful Panama invasion. **It was also Bush who came up with the ideas of having an early, informal Malta summit with Gorbachev and a second round of troop cuts in Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall.** But it was Baker who subtly turned the Malta summit from the informal, 'putting our feet up' chat initially envisaged by the President into a platform for the United States to demonstrate through a 16-point initiative that it was prepared to help Gorbachev. [M. Dowd and T.L. Friedman, 'The Fabulous Bush and Baker Boys,' *The New York Times Magazine*, 5/6/90, p. 64]
- (52) Rough location work is nothing new for Sheen. When he was young, the family traveled to location with his father, actor Martin Sheen. They spent 16 months in the Philippines... Ten years later, Charlie Sheen found himself back in the Phillipines... as the star of... *Platoon*. The terrain and environmental elements... are very similar to Vietnam, including 120 degree heat by 8 a.m., blood-thirsty bugs and an impenetrable jungle. And to make matters worse, the Marcos government had just been toppled three days before the filming party arrived...
It was also location work that gave Sheen his first acting break. He was nine and his dad was filming *The Execution of Private Slovik*... [Jane Ammeson, 'Intensity fuels Charlie Sheen's On-screen Presence,' *COMPASS Readings*, Northwest Airlines Magazine, July 1990, p. 69]
- (53) These amusements were more common in the winter when inclement weather kept people indoors, and served to while away the long evenings between other social engagements. **It was at this time of year also that the major villages were continuously occupied and ceremonies took place.** As centres of ceremonial activity houses had ritual significance and were given sacred names... [People of the Totem]
- (54) Ironically, if it was the United States that appeared to be stalling the negotiations by making last-minute demands, **it was also Lee Thomas, the Environmental Protection Agency administrator, who took the lead in the talks a year ago** when he called for a 95 percent phase-out of the man-made chemicals. [Minneapolis Star & Tribune, 9/26/87]
- (55) **It was in this spring, too, that the plague broke out.**

[Fowler and Fowler 1919, p. 104, ex. 15]

- (56) **It was also during these centuries that a vast internal migration (mostly by the Galla) from the south northwards took place**, a process no less momentous than the Amhara expansion southwards during the last part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.
[Challenge, p. 39, Prince 1978, ex. 41c]

Clefts in which the clefted constituent is restricted by *even* are also felicitous in appropriately contextualized comment-clause clefts with emphatically repeated clefted constituents, as in the constructed example shown in (57):

- (57) A: Why do you think John is the murderer?
B: Because it's John who the victim was blackmailing. It's John who was heard to threaten him. It's John who lacks an alibi. It's John whose fingerprints were on the murder weapon. **And it's even John who inherits the money!**

The only example in my corpus of a clefted constituent restricted by *even* is the topic-clause cleft shown in (58) from a mystery novel. It may be significant that this example is a predicational cleft (cf. §3.3).

- (58) Wexford and Mr. Sung looked through the wooden grille at the great deep rectangular burial shaft and Mr. Sung quoted almost verbatim a considerable chunk from *Fodor's Guide to the People's Republic of China*. He had a retentive memory and seemed to believe that Wexford, because he couldn't decipher ideographs, was unable to read his own language. **It was even Wexford's Fodor's he was quoting from**, artlessly borrowed the night before. Wexford didn't listen. [Rendall, Speaker of Mandarin, p. 4]

Note that *even* has scope over both the clefted constituent and the cleft clause in (58) (i.e. = 'It was even the case that it was Wexford's *Fodor's* he was quoting from').

In sum, felicitous restriction of the clefted constituent with *even* or *also* is diagnostic of clefts of the comment-clause type, and supports not only the distinction between comment-clause and topic-clause clefts, but the analysis of the clefted constituent as sometimes expressing the topic of the cleft sentence.¹⁴

¹⁴Gundel 1974 reports that 'focus' adverbials in Russian are also sensitive to the distinction between topic and comment. On the basis of examples such as those in (i) and (ii), Gundel concludes, '*Takže* is used if the constituent within the scope of 'also' is the comment. *Tože* is used if the constituent within the scope of 'also' is the topic.'

- (i) Ja v_zjal v biblioteke zurnal. Ja v_zjal tam ta_kže knigu.
I took in library magazine. I took there also book.
'I took a magazine out of the library. I also took out a book

It may also be possible to conclude more generally, that the exhaustiveness implication associated with clefts (cf. Halvorsen 1978, Atlas and Levinson 1981, Horn 1982 for discussion), can be cancelled in comment-clause clefts like (59) and (60), but not in topic-clause clefts.

- (59) It was in that article, among other places, that Bork expressed his support for California's anti-open-housing referendum and his belief that it was only 'political speech' which deserved First Amendment protection.
[David S. Broder, 'The need to be sure on Bork', 9/20/87]
- (60) It was Lansdale as much as anyone who established Diem in power.
[Mark Frankland, Predecessor makes North look like an amateur operator, 3/5/87]

Note, however, that Horn 1981 cites examples provided by Ellen Prince of apparently cancelled exhaustiveness implications which appear to be analyzable as topic-clause clefts:

- (61) He was just a burned-out little man with tired eyes and a drained smile, who had a gift that was too big for his soul, and it was the gift that killed him, as much as anything. [Silverberg, Stochastic Man]
- (62) Do you know, it was me that caused the trouble, mostly, though two of them most bravely backed me up.
[Sayers, Strong Poison]
- (63) It's the ideas that count, not just the way we write them.
[Richard Smaby, lecture]¹⁵

6.2.3 EMPHATIC REPETITION CLEFTS

It will be demonstrated in this section that comment-clause clefts are also used to maintain the addressee's attention on the referent of an already activated clefted constituent, as a means of emphasizing its importance as a discourse topic, as, for example, in (64):

- (64) 'The Member for Hertfordshire North East, despite his fascist tendencies, is a notable liberal when it comes to women's rights. But perhaps women should beware; proximity to this elegant baronet can be lethal. His first wife was killed in a car accident; he was driving. Theresa Nolan, who nursed his mother and slept in his house, killed herself after an abortion. **It was he who knew where to**

-
- (ii) Ja vzjal v biblioteke zurnal. Anna tože vzjela zurnal.
I took in library magazine. Anna also took magazine.
I took a magazine out of the library. Anna also took out a magazine.

¹⁵It should be noted that Horn refrains from committing himself to the position that (61)-(63) are instances of implicature cancellation, though this position is consistent with his analysis of the exhaustiveness condition as a generalized conversational implicature, as opposed to an entailment (Atlas and Levinson 1981), or conventional implicature (Halvorsen 1978).

find the body. The naked body of Diana Travers, h_is domestic servant, was found drowned at his wife's Thames-side birthday party, a party at which h_e was expected to be present. Once is private tragedy, twice is bad luck, three times looks like carelessness.'

[P.D. James, *A Taste for Death*, p. 21]

In clefts of this type, there is a very strong tendency for the cleft pronoun and copula to be dropped in the non-initial clefts of the sequence, as in (65)-(69) below.

- (65) At a podium or on the House floor, h_er searing wit can vaporize an opponent in the 15 seconds suitable for a sound bite: **it was s_he who labeled Reagan 'the Teflon President,' she who called defense contractors 'the welfare queens of the 80's'** Behind the scenes s_he does a surprising amount of homework and displays a shrewd, even lethal political savvy. Over the years s_he has helped bump not one, but two, chairmen of the House Armed Services Committee.

[Ferraro, 'The Prime of Pat Schroeder', the *New York Times Magazine*, 7/1/90, p. 14]

- (66) The little woman in the blue trouser suit came into the restaurant car and hesitated for a moment before making for the table where the two married couples sat. The barrister jumped up and pulled out a chair for h_er. And then Wexford understood **it was s_he he had seen. It was s_he who had been coming down the corridor when he turned away from the window, s_he who, while his eyes were closed, had vanished into her own compartment.** S_he too was a small slight creature, s_he too was dressed in a dark-coloured pair of trousers and a jacket, and though h_er feet had certainly never been subjected to binding, they were not much bigger than a child's and they too were encased in the black Chinese slippers on sale everywhere....

[Rendall, *Speaker of Mandarin*]

Perhaps the elision in (67) can be analyzed as simply a case of verb phrase coordination.¹⁶ In any case, it is not surprising that only material which the speaker/writer assumes to be already in the focus of the addressee's attention can be elided since Kuno 1975 has proposed that precisely this condition regulates the felicity of Gapping:¹⁷

- (67) 'And yet,' he went on doggedly, 'with a cross section of the entire national population available for the purpose, **It was y_ou who had to be the last known person to see the murdered woman alive. And y_ou who had to discover the body.** He was briefly silent, contemplating my talent for prevailing against the odds. 'How did y_ou manage to overlook being apprehended with the murder weapon in y_our hand?

[Kallen, 1984, *The Piano Bird*]

¹⁶Assuming, for example, a syntactic analysis like the one suggested in Chapter 3, which treats the clefted constituent and cleft clause as subconstituents of a verb phrase out of which the copula has been raised.

¹⁷See Prince 1985, 1988 for further discussion.

Unlike (65)-(67), the information expressed in the cleft clause of (68) is most likely assumed by the writer to be unfamiliar to the reader, while the contents of the cleft clause in (69) could be either informative or familiar:

- (68) Moreover, though a widow and childless, Mrs. Coolman was a mother by adoption. Her young protégé, Edward Farris, had been orphaned in infancy; **it was she who had given him a home and provided for his education; she who had secured him an excellent commercial post; she who, soon afterwards, had insisted upon his resigning that post in order to live at Brimley House as her secretary and dance attendance upon her declining years.** It was assumed as a matter of course by her friends, and perhaps by Farris himself, that her adopted son would also be her adopted heir.

[Knox, *The Footsteps at the Lock*, p.145]

- (69) Just what is Canada?
It is a question that each traveler brings to this nation, and it is a question that has no single answer. Canada is a delightful labyrinth of cultures and customs, of peaceful coexistence and political squabbles....
It is here where the hearty French established a settlement along the frothy St. Lawrence River and survived the first relentless winter. It is here that the first bewildered European immigrants wondered how they would ever be able to thrive in such an unruly land; here where the British Loyalists fled from American revolutionaries; here where provinces separated by great distances and differences joined to form one nation.
There is much to discover in this vastness. Canada's immensity is daunting but not uninviting....

[Insight Guide to Canada, p. 15]

Full noun phrases as well as pronouns can occur as emphatically repeated clefted constituents of comment-clause clefts:

- (70) But one cannot help wondering—as Mr. Rusk must have done a hundred times—what Marshall would have done in a similar situation. We don't have to look very far to find out, for as Mr. Rusk himself indicates, **it was Marshall who rushed to get World War II over with before it destroyed the institutions of American democracy; it was Marshall who concluded that the United States should not fight to try to save the biggest domino of all, Chiang Kaishek's China.**

[Gaddis, 'Dean Rusk's Personal Truce,' *The New York Times Book Review*, 7/1/90, p. 3]

- (71) 'At least I've discovered where the reverend and sainted Sir Thomas More got his account of Richard.'
'Yes? Where?'
'From one John Morton.'...
'So that was the horse's mouth!' she said.

‘That was the horse’s mouth. **And it is on that account of Richard that all the later ones were built. It is on that story that Holinshed fashioned his history, and on that story that Shakespeare fashioned his character.’**

‘So it is the version of someone who hated Richard...’

[Tey, *Daughter of Time*, 93]

- (72) She had always been a little afraid of her grandmother ... **It was her father who had always come first with her, in her childhood and afterwards. It was her father who had been the more supportive when she had left Cambridge at the end of her first year and had gone to a London polytechnic to study photography.** How much had she really cared about her mother’s anguish when the infatuation with Barbara became obvious?

[Rendall, *A Taste for Death*, p. 247]

- (73) So it was **Bredon alone who went over to Oxford, Bredon alone, though armed with a note from Leyland, who went into Mr. Wickstead’s well-known boot-shop**, and demanded whether Mr. Nigel Burtell was a customer; whether, if so, they had any record of his size.

[Knox, *The Footsteps at the Lock*, p. 219]

Examples (74) and (75) show that the topic expressed in the clefted constituent can be ‘comparative’ as well as ‘continuing’.¹⁸

- (74) The words confirmed what Dalgliesh had suspected, **that it was Musgrave whose family had always voted Tory and who would find any other allegiance unthinkable, the general who had come to his political philosophy by a process of thought and intellectual commitment.**

[Rendall, *A Taste for Death*]

- (75) The women who went were almost all married. But it was husbands who were captured by the glowing descriptions of the West, wives who were skeptical. Husbands who thought of what could be gained; wives who thought of what would be lost. [Goodman, ‘The uprooted II,’ p. 231]

Examples (76)-(78) are rhetorically the most complex of my examples, exhibiting a combination of continuation and comparison, in a rhetorically dramatic triple assertion:¹⁹

- (76) Virginia has always been in the forefront of racial change. **It was at Jamestown in 1619 that the first shipload of captive Africans later destined for slavery disembarked. It was at Appomattox in 1865 that the Confederacy surrendered. It was in Virginia in the 1950s that men who fancied themselves learned penned some of the last erudite-sounding but morally bankrupt justifications for segregation. And it will be in Richmond on Jan.**

¹⁸Cf. Keenan and Schieffelin 1976 for the notion of ‘continuing’ topic, and Lambrecht 1981 and Barnes 1986 for the notion of ‘comparative’ topic.

¹⁹Note that many of the examples from this section are from syndicated columns by Ellen Goodman. See Scott and Klumpp 1984 for an interesting discussion of the centrality of comparison in Goodman’s rhetorical strategy.

13 that there will be a black hand on the Bible when Lawrence Douglas Wilder is sworn in as Virginia's 73rd Governor. It is not only in Berlin that ugly walls and once impassable barriers are tumbling down in a world bright with change.## [Laurence I. Barrett and Don Winbush, 'Breakthrough in Virginia,' Time, 11/20/89]

- (77) Not every community, courtroom, or jury today accepts this simple standard of justice. But ten years ago, five years ago, even three years ago, these women might not have even dared press charges.

It was the change of climate which enabled, even encouraged, the women to come forward. It was the change of attitude which framed the arguments in the courtroom. It was the change of consciousness that infiltrated the jury chambers. [Goodman, 'If she says no', p. 326]

- (78) The second was the power of her own conscience. **It was her sense of duty that sent Eleanor Roosevelt to the mining communities and pockets of Depression poverty. It was her sense of righteousness that forced Eleanor Roosevelt to place her seat between the black and white aisles of a segregated southern conference in 1939. It was her sense of justice that pushed a Declaration of Human rights through the United Nations in 1948.** She couldn't see a problem without asking: 'Can't something be done?'

[Goodman, 'A battered little girl named Eleanor Roosevelt,' p. 57]

6.3 The rhetorical function of clefts

In this section, I turn to the use of clefts to mark transitions between rhetorically-significant segments of discourse.²⁰

6.3.1. DISCOURSE-INITIAL CLEFTS

Van Oosten 1986 notes that three of the four discourse-initial clefts discussed by Prince involve a time reference, and concludes from this that, at least when dealing with historical events, they function 'to link the reader with the material. The writer takes one aspect of where he or she imagines the reader to be and links that with the following material—the passage. One obvious way to do this is to link the material up with the reader's present location in time.' This is often the case in my data as well, as in (79)-(82):²¹

²⁰Van Oosten 1986 makes a basic distinction between 'unique-referent' clefts, which 'emphasize the identity of the referent, about which there was some question, either rhetorically or in fact', and 'topic-regulating' clefts, which 'pick out the focus of attention at points where it might get lost.' She distinguishes five subtypes of 'topic-regulating' clefts, based on whether they are used to 'introduce a passage', to 'launch from the introduction of an article into the main body', to 'return from a tangent', to 'give the relevance of tangential information in the presupposition', or to 'give the next step in the discussion.'

²¹Carlson 1983 states that it is not required 'that the question [expressed by the cleft clause] itself be familiar to the audience. To the contrary, a cleft sentence can actually be used to suggest it as a topic worthy of attention. In fact, clefts

- (79) [BEGINNING A RADIO NEWS STORY]
It was less than a week ago that U.S. troops in Panama surrounded the Vatican embassy. Shades of *déjà vu* — U.S. troops are again surrounding a Latin American embassy — this time in Peru.
 [Public radio announcer, WSKG, 1/8/90]
- (80) [BEGINNING AN INTRODUCTION TO A RADIO VARIETY SHOW ACT]
It was thirty-one years ago, on Sunday, that HANK WILLIAMS died...
 [Garrison Keillor, The American Radio Company
 of the Air, National Public Radio, 1/6/90]
- (81) [BEGINNING A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE]
It was on 42nd Street yesterday that Brian Wilkerson stumbled upon the first 1990 Census form he had ever seen. Ignoring the sign above the Census Bureau's table that said he could 'Be Counted Here in 3 Minutes,' he plopped down on the sidewalk to examine it for nearly half an hour...
 [Mireya Navarro, 'Census Takes to the Streets to Seek the Uncounted,'
 The New York Times, 7/1/90, p. 24]
- (82) [BEGINNING A NEWS MAGAZINE ARTICLE]
Was it only last year that financier Henry Kravis and his partners borrowed a whopping \$28 billion to buy RJR Nabisco in the biggest leveraged buyout in history? It seems like an age—namely, the age of excessive debt. Now, only 17 months later, the landscape is littered with casualties of overborrowing...
 [Newsweek, 7/2/90, p. 38]

Comment-clause clefts can be used to link the material of the discourse up with something that the addressee is familiar with, such as a famous person, as in (83) and (84), national group as in (85), novel as in (86), or even a well-known aphorism as in (87):

- (83) [BEGINNING A LINGUISTICS BOOK]
It was Sapir, the great American linguist, who said: 'It must be obvious to anyone who has thought about the question at all, or who has felt something of the spirit of a foreign language, that there is such a thing as a basic plan, a certain cut, to each language.' This is undoubtedly true, but it is quite another matter to draw out the basic plan, and describe the cut of a language to those who are ignorant of it.
 [David Greene, *The Irish Language*, p. 5, 1966]

have an important function as rhetorical openings of literary texts.' Lambrecht 1985 treats discourse-initial clefts as cases of 'pragmatic accommodation' in the sense of Lewis 1979: 'By the very act of using the sentence which required the said presupposition, the speaker in fact created this presupposition and made it available as a background for his assertion. The reason the speaker exploited a lacking presupposition in this way is rhetorical...it is obviously more elegant.' DeClerck 1988 states that 'discontinuous clefts are often used to emphasize rather than identify.'

- (84) [BEGINNING AN INTRODUCTION TO A MUSICAL NUMBER]
It was Johannes Brahms who suggested to his friend Anton Dvorak that he compose a piece on... Dvorak wrote Slavonic Dances...
 [Public radio announcer, WSKG, 7/12/90]
- (85) [BEGINNING A STORY ON BACK OF RESTAURANT WINE LIST]
It was the Greeks who first made wine, around 1500 BC. They then took this unique art to all the corners of the ancient world, including Italy, Spain, Russia, and, in about 600 BC, France...
 [liquor menu from 'It's Greek to Me' restaurant, Minneapolis]
- (86) [BEGINNING A BOOK REVIEW]
I suppose it was *The World According to Garp*, back in the late 1970s, that kicked off the run of ballyhooed narratives purporting to represent us aging baby-boomers as savvy, tasteful folks who once, long ago, entertained—well, you know—certain 'opinions,' maybe even got involved in (you know) a cause or two, but who have not learned to settle down with self-deprecatory humor to the complex, mature work of living out and up our personal lives...²² [Fred Pfeil, review of 'Local Deities', by Agnes Bushell, *The Nation*, p. 210, 2/12/90]
- (87) [BEGINNING A NEWSPAPER OP-ED COLUMN]
It's not only the generals who are a war behind. Officials, politicians and policy makers just as often are trying to win some battle long ago lost. Exactly this lay behind the Iran-contra affair...
 [William Pfaff, *Present policy, bygone battles*, 7/18/87]

As Prince 1978 observes, the information expressed in discourse-initial clefts often serves as background material, which is 'subordinate in importance (in terms of what the discourse is about) to what follows.' The cleft is used essentially as a transition device. It is also natural to anchor the description of a thing or situation to its historical point of origin, as in (88)-(91):

- (88) [BEGINNING A BACKGROUND STORY FOR A TV NEWS SPECIAL REPORT]
It was the death of a Chinese leader five weeks ago that gave birth to the student movement. ...Hu Yaobang...
 [John Lawrence, '23 days,' ABC news special, 'Worlds in Turmoil', 6/4/89]
- (89) [BEGINNING THE PREFACE TO A LINGUISTICS FESTSCHRIFT]

²²The cleft clause in (86) contains sixty-five words (including the complementizer). Prince 1978 notes the greater average length of the cleft clause in clefts as compared to pseudoclefts (she gives an example of a cleft clause containing forty-five words). The extreme length supports the analysis of such clauses as informative or unfamiliar, since, as Prince points out, Grice's submaxim of Manner ('Be brief—avoid unnecessary prolixity') enjoins an utterer to use as few words as possible in referring to familiar things.

The ironic tone of the cleft in (86) is characteristic of discourse-initial clefts. Writers seem to be self-conscious about initiating their text with a cleft.

It was in the course of 1980 that it dawned upon several friends and colleagues of Manfred Bierwisch that a half century had passed since his birth in 1930. Manfred's youthful appearance had prevented a timely appreciation of this fact, and these friends and colleagues are, therefore, not at all embarrassed to be presenting him, almost a year late, with a Festschrift which will leave a trace of this noteworthy occasion in the archives of linguistics.

[Crossing the Boundaries in Linguistics, Klein and Levelt, eds. 1981.]

(90) [BEGINNING A MYSTERY NOVEL]

It was in the month of Boedromion in the waning of the third full moon after the summer solstice that the terrible deed was done that was to have so long and arduous a consequence. The day before it happened I had troubles enough—not that one would say such a thing lest the gods hear and laugh. But so it was... [Margaret Doody, Aristotle Detective]

(91) [BEGINNING AN ORCHID DISPLAY INFORMATION SHEET]

It was the suggestion of the Ithaca Garden Club and the encouragement of the Society for the Humanities that led Cornell Plantations, the botanical garden of the University, to propose to the Class of 1952 this project of restoration to celebrate their 35th reunion. An additional generous contribution of many beautiful plants in flower this June came from orchid grower Bill Starke, Class of 1932, to honor the Class of 1952.

['The Class of 1952 Orchid Collection, A.D. White House, Cornell University]

Sometimes the discourse-initial cleft is the first sentence of a dramatic triple-sequence, as in (92) and (93):

(92) [BEGINNING A NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL]

It was Col. Mike Snell who first told the press that his boys had found fifty pounds of cocaine hidden in a freezer in Manuel Noriega's house. Gen. Maxwell Thurman later upgraded the haul to fifty kilos. Now, buried on the inside pages of the papers comes an admission by the Pentagon that the substance in question was not cocaine at all, but tamales wrapped in banana leaves.

['Not so Hot Tamales,' The Nation, p. 1, 2/12/90]

(93) [BEGINNING A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE]

It was a doctor who advised Wandalee Basore to start smoking back in the 1940s. He thought it would help her relax and aid digestion. Another doctor suggested she stop smoking in the 1950s, because it could possibly harm the baby she was carrying. Now every doctor in America says she should quit.

['Hard-core smokers still think they can dodge the bullet,' The Ithaca Journal, 4/14/90]

The cleft in (94) also dramatically draws attention to the information in the cleft clause:

(94) [BEGINNING A NEWSPAPER ART REVIEW]

It is not every artist who is allowed to go into the most important museum of modern art in the world, select the art in it that defines his modern artistic heritage and his esthetic beliefs, install it in one of the museum's galleries, and set one of his own paintings in the center so that it seems to conduct all the other works, or hover over them like a bird, or stand over them with raised hands like a priest.

This is what the abstract painter Ellsworth Kelly has done in 'Ellsworth Kelly: Fragmentation and the Single Form,' the second Artist's Choice exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art....

[Michael Brenson, 'Ellsworth Kelly Loads the Dice at the Modern,' The New York Times, 6/24/90, H33]

The clefts in (95)-(97) are used as a rhetorical device to open a mystery novel 'in media res':

(95) [BEGINNING A MYSTERY NOVEL]

It was jealousy that kept David from sleeping, drove him from a touseled bed out of the dark and silent boardinghouse to walk the streets. He had so long lived with his jealousy, however, that the usual images and words, with their direct and obvious impact on the heart, no longer came to the surface of his mind. It was now just the Situation.

[Patricia Highsmith, This Sweet Sickness]

(96) [BEGINNING A MYSTERY NOVEL]

It was the silence that woke her, the absolute stillness of the late night that pulled her from a dreary sleep. There had been steps, soft and furtive. But now there was nothing. That's what she heard. Quiet. A lock of gray hair hanging in her face, she blinked, her aged eyes sucking in the faint glow of the nightlight. It was the middle of the night and she understood. Someone was in her bedroom.

[R.D. Zimmerman, Mind-Scream]

(97) [BEGINNING A MYSTERY NOVEL]

It wasn't until she realized someone was following her that Hana Shaner thought her idea might be dangerous. She paused, listening. There it was again. Soft, furtive footsteps echoing against the restored buildings of center city...

[Roma Greth, ...Now You Don't]

The *that*-clefts in (98) and (99) are used with a similar effect as the opening sentences of newspaper articles:

- (98) [BEGINNING OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLE]
That wasn't his newspaper Frank Reginek heard rustling as he ate breakfast in his St. Paul home. It was rats in his pipes.

'I'd sit there reading the paper and then I'd hear them. It was like they were trying to scratch right through,' said Reginek, of 1631 E. Hoyt Ave. 'There's been quite a bit of scratching over the last couple months.'

[‘Work on St. Paul sewers drives rats to the surface,’ Star Tribune of the Twin Cities, 1/89]

- (99) [BEGINNING OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLE]
 Make no mistake, **that was not a grudge that Nancy Reagan was holding as she chatted about Donald T. Regan in a recent radio interview.** Mrs. Reagan, who was discussing her book, ‘My Turn: The Memoirs of Nancy Reagan,’ which is to be published this month, said she ‘tried very hard not to be vindictive’ when writing about certain top Presidential aides with whom she was not particularly friendly.

[‘Still Miffed?’, New York Times, 10/22/89, E7]

6.3.2 DISCOURSE-SEGMENT LINKING

Comment-clause clefts are also used to mark a transition from one segment of discourse to the next. By formulating the proposition in the form of a cleft, the attention of the addressee is drawn to the proposition or to one of its components, implicating its importance. In (100) and (101), the clefted constituent reiterates the topic of the preceding segment, while the cleft clause introduces an informative succeeding topic of non-obvious relevance. Such clefts are thus used as devices for generating relevance implicatures, signalling that the preceding segment is subordinate to the succeeding segment at a higher level of discourse organization:

- (100) A friend of mine, prone to misplacing her keys and the names of colleagues, marks this weakness with some offhand remark about it being a symptom of early Alzheimer's... The woman has seen this disease rob others in her circle of their memory, and then their ability to reason and then their lives. If each of us focuses on some future dread, hers comes with a name.

Not surprisingly, **it was this friend who pointed out the article.** A biochemist has announced a new blood test that may diagnose Alzheimer's in its early stages, that may be used in the future to identify healthy people who are at risk. Would you, she asks, want to know?...

[Ellen Goodman, ‘If science knows fate, must we?]

- (101) The federal government is dealing with AIDS as if the virus was a problem that didn't travel along interstate highways and was none of its business. **It's this lethal national inertia in the face of the most devastating epidemic of the late 20th century that finally prompted one congressman to strike out on his own.**

Gerry Studds, D-Mass., has begun to treat his constituents like foreigners — in the best way. The 268,000 households in his congressional district are about to receive the first mass mailing of the 'Surgeon General's Report on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.'

[Ellen Goodman, 'Using the frank to counteract lethal national infigting on AIDS,' 5/25/87]

The referents of the indefinite (or indefinitely modified) clefted constituents in (102)-(104) are not only unactivated, but unfamiliar:

- (102) The Indians of the coast have always lived quietly and harmoniously here, even after they were 'discovered' by the famous Captain Cook in 1793. **It was a Scotsman, Simon Fraser, who having adopted Canada as his home, dedicated his life to exploring and developing the richness of British Columbia.** Fraser traveled up the smaller of the region's two important rivers, named it the Fraser River, and established it as a major fur-trading route.
- [Insight Guide to Canada, p. 227]
- (103) For some time the English had been transporting convicts to the American colonies. This was no longer possible since America was fighting for her independence from England. British jails and rotten hulks were crammed to the point of suffocation with men, women, and children. **It was Sir Joseph Banks, an English scientist, who suggested that the good climate and rich vegetation of Botany Bay could provide a settlement for the convicts without costing the English too much money.** The First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay on January 1788 with convict passengers. Between 1788 and 1868 almost 160,000 convicts were sent from England.
- [Aussie History, story from menu of 'The Pub Down Under', Minneapolis]
- (104) **It was either an Irish mystic or poet, and it's usually one or the other, who said that a friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and plays back the words when you forget how they go.** This weekend, with St. Valentine reminding loved ones to love, some homage is due for friends who befriend....

[Colman McCarthy, For a friend who is a woman, 2/14/87]

Clefted adverbials are also frequently used to mark discourse-segment transitions, as in (105)-(108).²³ Again the clefted constituent expresses the sole activated element of the proposition:

²³Note the similarities between this class of clefts and sentences which look like clefts but contain adverbial complementizers:

- (105) **It was then that the telephone began ringing.** Barbara Berowne gave a gasp and glanced from the instrument to Dalglish with something very like fear.
[James, *A Taste for Death*, p. 453]
- (106) **It was at this point that their conversation was interrupted by Mr. Quirk.** How long he might have been listening to them was not apparent; he moved softly over the grass...
[*The Footsteps at the Lock*, p. 107]
- (107) ...Wexford fought his way out of the dream and awoke with a cry... He drank some water and put out the light.
It was on the following day that he first saw the woman with the bound feet.
[Ruth Rendall, *Speaker of Mandarin*, last sentence, ch. 1]
- (108) The electroweak theory successfully predicts the scattering pattern when electrons interact with protons, with W bosons, and with particles called neutrinos. The theory runs into trouble, however, when it tries to predict the interaction of W bosons with one another...
It is here that the Higgs Boson enters as a saviour. The Higgs boson couples with the W bosons in such a way that the probability of scattering falls within allowable limits: a certain fixed value between 0 and 1....
[Veltman, *Scientific American*, July 1989]

6.3.3 DISCOURSE-FINAL CLEFTS

It is fairly common to find clefts appearing at the ends of sections and chapters in expository written texts to present what Borkin (1984: 130) refers to as ‘forward-looking metacommentary’ in the cleft clause. The clefts in (109) and (110), for example, simultaneously mark the closure of the discourse segments in which they appear, and direct attention to the subsequent discourse segment:

-
- (i) It was Thursday 5 September and he was about to leave his office to drive to Bramshill Police College to begin a series of lectures to the Senior Command Course when the call came through from the private office.
[P.D. James, *A Taste for Death*, first sentence, ch. 3]
- (ii) It was nearing mid-December before the dour manservant Aelfric came again to the herb-gardens for kitchens herbs for his mistress. By that time, he was a figure familiar enough to fade into the daily pattern...
[Ellis Peters, *Monks Hood*, first sentence, ch. 2]

Whether some or all such sentences should be analyzed as clefts is not immediately clear. See §4.2.3 above for some discussion.

- (109) We will be content to leave this analysis in its present form, providing a revised and more complete representation...in Chapter 3, where we take into account certain observations and arguments of Selkirk... First we turn to a fuller account of the interpretation of focus... **It is this topic which occupies our attention in Chapter 2.** [Rochemont 1986, *Focus and Generative Grammar*, p. 36, end of chapter 1]
- (110) The deductive device is also at the centre of spontaneous nondemonstrative inference: it is a major source of assumptions, and its processes affect the strength of both the initial and final theses of the deductions it performs. **It is to these aspects of inference that we now turn.**
[Sperber & Wilson 1986, *Relevance*, p. 108, end of section 6, chapter 2]

Prince 1978 reports this type of cleft to be very frequent in her data, occurring in spoken as well as written discourse, e.g. (111):

- (111) **It's with great honor and pleasure that I announce Hilary Putnam.**
[graduate student, University of Pennsylvania, 4/1/77; Prince's 49b]

Prince suggests that such clefts function to indicate deference or politeness in that 'the authors remove themselves as subject (and potential theme); at the same time, they seem to present their act of turning as an inescapable, external fact—not as their own choice,' and 'we again find the speaker playing down his own role in the event, subordinating it and himself in the situation as in the syntactic structure.'

In (109)-(111), the material expressed in the cleft clause is pure metalinguistic commentary, but it is also possible for discourse-final cleft clauses to contain substantive information, as in (112), where the author closes an article by pointing out suggestions for further research:

- (112) With this, then, we have covered all the properties of NP sentence-topics which were discussed in the previous sections... Nevertheless, these are, obviously, not the only conditions, and applied to the actual discourse, they will not always identify the topic correctly. **It is within the area of specifying the conditions on the selection function that much empirical work is still needed.**
[Reinhart, 1981, final sentence]

In (113)-(115) the element denoted by clefted constituent is immediately activated and the cleft clause is used to state its importance for the overall discourse:

- (113) ...The one final point I wish to stress is the importance of studying these and all other sentence constructions in discourse, since **it is only there that their communicative functions can be observed.**
[Prince 1978, final sentence]

- (114) Nearly all the extant artifacts date from the nineteenth century. Earlier examples have decayed...From the 1800s we also have the first-hand account of native customs made by observers before white influences caused many changes. **It is this period which accordingly gives us the best picture of the culture and society of the northwest coast Indians.**

[People of the Totem, p. 23, end of chapter 1]

- (115) ...The main thesis of this book is that an act of ostension carries a guarantee of relevance, and that this fact—which will call the principle of relevance—makes manifest the intention behind the ostension. We believe that **it is this principle of relevance that is needed to make the inferential model of communication explanatory.**

[Sperber & Wilson, Relevance, p. 50, end of section 9, chapter 1: Relevance and Ostension]

In (116), the clefted constituent is contrastively related to the immediately preceding topic—a return is made to the previous topic ‘world religions’ after discussion of its counterpart, ‘tribal religions.’

- (116) In addition, there are the tribal religions which never lasted as world religions. The Greek pantheon... Celts... Egyptian Goddess Isis... In the end all these died out, although they have sometimes influenced the religions which superseded them, and their cult-practices sometimes survive today in other religions. **It was the world religions which in the end provided the bonds that linked together areas of the world previously separate.##**

[The Times Atlas of World History, ‘The religious bonds of Eurasia to AD 500,’ p. 73, end of chapter]

In the cleft in (117), it is again the clefted constituent rather than the cleft clause which reactivates the topic of the article as a whole (i.e. ‘grammatical implications’). The cleft clause follows directly from the immediately preceding sentence.

- (117) ...It was argued, however, that many of the nonlinguistic beliefs and intentions of speakers must be dealt with in grammatical study...The beliefs themselves must not be, or else perspicuous grammars become impossible to construct, but the links between beliefs and message forms constitute part of the subject matter of grammar in even the narrowest sense. **It is grammatical implications that provide the linkage.##**

[Larry Hutchinson, ‘Nonlinguistic beliefs in linguistics,’ p. 135, end of article]

To summarize, in (112)-(117), the cleft functions rhetorically to tie the loose strands of the discourse into a tidy knot—an effective closing device.

6.4 Concluding remarks

In section 6.1.2, I argued that ‘vice-versa’ clefts can be insightfully analyzed as providing answers to multiple constituent questions, so that (118a), for example, is analyzed as answering the question in (118b):

- (118) a. It’s YOU who called ME.
 b. Who called who?

I observed further that vice-versa clefts, like multiple questions seem to obey the Superiority Condition of Chomsky 1973. Thus, both the vice-versa cleft in (119a) and the multiple question in (119b) are relatively less acceptable than their counterparts in (118):

- (119) a. ?It’s ME who YOU called.
 b. ?Who did who call?

The comment-clause clefts in my data confirm the intriguing observation made in Prince 1978 that only subjects and sentence-adverbials appear as clefted constituents in comment-clause (Prince’s ‘informative-presupposition’) clefts. It is tempting to extend the analysis of vice-versa clefts as answering multiple questions to all comment-clause clefts, and derive Prince’s observation from the Superiority Condition.

Earlier in this chapter I raised the issue of the extent to which clefted constituents in comment-clause clefts like (120) function to express the topic of the sentence.

- (120) And of course, we’ve only got his version of the niece and the nurse — and he obviously had what the Scotch call ta’en a scunner at the nurse. We mustn’t lose sight of her, by the way. She was the last person to be with the old lady before her death, and **it was she who administered that injection.** ‘Yes, yes — but the injection had nothing to do with it. If anything’s clear, that is.’
 [Sayers, 1927, Unnatural Death, p. 17]

I concluded there that the clefted constituents in the cleft in (120) does indeed pass tests for topic status. In particular, it passes the question-test, as shown in (121):

- (121) A: Why must we not lose sight of the nurse?
 B: She was the last person to be with the old lady before her death, and it was SHE who administered that inJECTION.

I adopted the view in §2.7 that topical questions can be hierarchically embedded inside each other. This suggests the possibility that the referent of the clefted constituent in (120) is functioning not as

a sentence-topic but as a discourse topic, so that a more fine-grained question-test would reveal a dialogue-structure similar to (122):

- (122) A: Why do you say we must not lose sight of the nurse?
 B: Well, who was the last person to be with the old lady before her death?
 A: The nurse.
 B: And who administered that injection?
 A: She did.

The speaker of the cleft in (120) might be seen to have in mind, then, at a higher level, the multiple question shown in (123):

- (123) Who did what?

Hierarchical rhetorical structuring is more transparently characteristic of the highly-planned discourses which employ emphatic continuation clefts, as in (124):

- (124) a. If Quebec business has a cardinal, it's Claude Castonguay, who has enrolled his distinguished presence, social conscience and political smarts in the mainstream causes of French Canada's evolution for the past three decades...
It was Castonguay, now 61, who provided much of the intellectual fodder for Jean Lesage's Quiet Revolution and the social reforms that led Pierre Trudeau into federal politics. It was Castonguay who persuaded Bourassa to reject the Victoria Charter in 1971, arguing that Canada's Constitution should not be patriated unless Quebec was granted full powers over social policy. It was Castonguay who six months ago formed the Association in Favour of Meech Lake, which mobilized more than a thousand of the province's business leaders into a last-ditch effort to help bring Quebec into the Constitution. And it will be Castonguay who will play a pivotal role in the coming negotiations between Canada and Quebec....

[Peter C. Newman, 'A new, confident spirit of independence', Maclean's, 8/13/90, p. 43]

- b. Who provided intellectual fodder...? — Castonguay!
 Who persuaded Bourassa to ...? — Castonguay!!
 Who formed the Association...? — Castonguay!!!
 Who will play a pivotal role...? — Castonguay!!!!
- c. Who did what?

Even discourse-initial clefts can be seen as providing answers to multiple questions, so that (125a), for example, answers the question in (125b):

- (125) a. [BEGINNING OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLE] **It was 30 years ago that Richard Nixon melted under the glare of the hot lights and turned television debates into an integral part of North American election campaigns.**
- b. What happened and when?

Note finally that subjects and sentence-adverbials, especially when activated, are highly likely to function as sentence topics. An important function of comment-clause clefting may then be to mark an activated subject or sentence-adverbial as a non-topic. In sum, if comment-clause clefts provide answers to multiple questions and topic-clause clefts provide answers to single questions, the overall function of clefts in general is simply to highlight the answer to a relevant question.

Appendix 1

Type-Shifting

Since a formal exposition of type-shifting theory is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I offer here only a brief sketch of the principle components, as presented in Partee 1987.¹ The general motivation is roughly that Montague's 'one category: one type' restriction can be loosened to allow a single syntactic category to correspond to a family of semantic types. Partee suggests that the traditional distinction between referential, predicative, and quantificational noun phrases can be captured formally by allowing noun phrases to be interpreted, respectively, as individuals (type e), predicates (type $\langle e, t \rangle$), or generalized quantifiers (type $\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$). She suggests specifically that particular types of referring expression can receive the translations shown in (i):

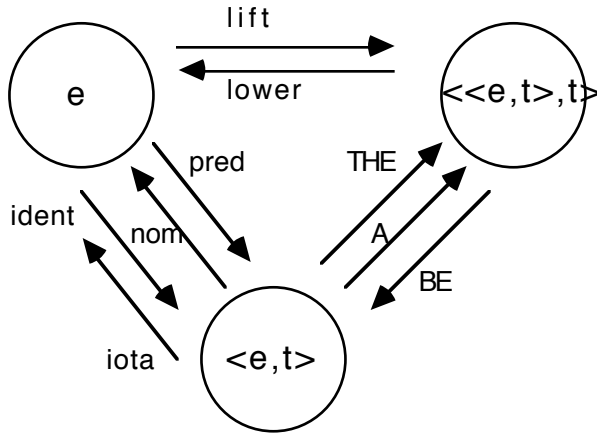
(i)	NP	TRANSLATION	TYPE
a.	John	MG: $\lambda P[P(j)]$	$\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$
		j	e
b.	he _n	MG: $\lambda P[P(x_n)]$	$\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$
		x_n	e
c.	every man	MG: $\lambda P[\forall x[\text{man}'(x) \rightarrow P(x)]]$	$\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$
d.	the man	MG: $\lambda P[\exists x[\forall y[\text{man}'(y) \leftrightarrow y = x] \& P(x)]]$	$\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$
		i. $\iota x[\text{man}'(x)]$	e
		ii. $\lambda x[\text{man}'(x) \& \forall y[\text{man}'(y) \leftrightarrow y = x]]$	$\langle e, t \rangle$
e.	a man	MG: $\lambda P[\exists x[\text{man}'(x) \& P(x)]]$	$\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$
		i. man'	$\langle e, t \rangle$
		ii. Kamp-Heim: x_i	e
		cond: $\text{man}'(x_i), x_i$ "new"	
f.	dogs ²	i. Chierchia: $\wedge \text{dog}'$	e
		ii. Carlson, in effect: $\lambda P[P \wedge \text{dog}']$	$\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$
		iii. dog'	$\langle e, t \rangle$

¹See especially Partee and Rooth 1983 on type-shifting and the semantics of noun phrase coordination, and Partee 1986 on type-shifting and the semantics of pseudoclefts.

²For expository purposes, Partee defines an extensional subfragment of English, but notes that intensionality is crucially involved in Chierchia's treatment of generics.

Partee formulates the type-shifting principles assumed to represent natural mapping operations between the three type domains as shown in (ii), along with the definitions shown in (iii):

(ii)



(iii)	LIFT:	$j \rightarrow \lambda P[P(j)]$	total; injective
	LOWER:	maps a principal ultrafilter onto its generator $LOWER(LIFT(j)) = j$	partial; surjective
	IDENT:	$j \in \lambda x[x = j]$	total; injective
	IOTA:	$P \rightarrow \iota x[P(x)]$ $IOTA(IDENT(j)) = j$	partial; surjective
	NOM:	$P \rightarrow \wedge P$ (Chierchia)	almost total; injective
	PRED:	$x \rightarrow \vee P$ (Chierchia) $PRED(NOM(P)) = P$	partial; surjective

Appendix 2

Description of the corpus

Part I of this Appendix lists the sources from which the 701 full cleft tokens (with cleft clause expressed) were collected. Only tokens which were systematically collected are summarized. Interesting isolated tokens were also collected, but are not included in the summary. Part II presents tables classifying the tokens into subtypes on the basis of various criteria.

Part I. SOURCES.

A. Spoken sources.

- 20 Casual conversations recorded by Neil Frederickson and Karen Frederickson, and transcribed by Karen Frederickson. (Mostly conversations taking place among siblings and parents during holiday reunions at the parents' home.)

New Years Eve, 1975
 Christmas 1976 (cassette I and II)
 June 6, 1987 (side 1, cassette I)
 July 4, 1987 (side 2, cassette I)
 July 4, 1987 (cassette II)
 Christmas 1987 (cassette I)

- 9 McLaughlin Group, videotaped discussions by political columnists and reporters on public affairs. Transcripts were obtained from the Federal News Service. 36 half-hour episodes aired on PBS on the following dates:

1987: 2/28, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27, 10/31, 11/14, 11/21, 11/28, 12/12, 12/19, 12/26,
 1988: 1/2, 1/9, 1/23, 2/20, 2/27, 3/1, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/30, 5/7, 5/21, 6/4, 6/18,
 7/16, 7/23, 7/30, 8/6, 8/13, 8/20, 8/27, 9/3, 9/10.

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- 48 Geluykens, Ronald. 1984. Focus phenomena in English: an empirical investigation into cleft and pseudo-cleft sentences. *Antwerp Papers in Linguistics* 36. Examples of clefts from spontaneous conversations, collected, transcribed, and analyzed prosodically in Svartvik and Quirk 1980, *Survey of English Usage*.
- 33 Terkel, Studs. 1972. *Working*. New York: Ballantine Books (1985).

Total: 110

B. Mystery Novels.

- 28 Fitt, Mary. 1946/1984. *Death and the Pleasant Voices*. New York: Dover.
- 5 Hawkes, Ellen and Peter Manso. *The Shadow of the Moth*.
- 82 James, P. D. 1986. *A Taste for Death*. Warner Books.
- 9 Kallen, Lucille. *The Piano Bird*.
- 65 Knox, Ronald A. 1928/1983. *The Footsteps at the Lock*. New York: Dover.
- 39 Peters, Ellis. 1980. *Monk's Hood*. New York: Fawcett Crest.
- 13 Peters, Elizabeth. *The Murders of Richard III*.
- 31 Rendall, Ruth. *Speaker of Mandarin*.
- 13 Sayers, Dorothy. *Unnatural Death*.
- 14 Sayers, Dorothy. *Murder at the Bellona Club*.
- 7 Silver, Victoria. *Death of a Harvard Freshman*.
- 21 St. James, Bernard. 1978. *April Thirtieth*. Toronto: Raven House.
- 11 Tey, Josephine. *A Shilling for Candles*.
- 23 Tey, Josephine. *The Daughter of Time*.

Total: 361

C. Newspaper Columns.

- 58 Goodman, Ellen. 1985. *Keeping in Touch*. New York: Fawcett.
- 82 Syndicated opinion columns, *Minneapolis Star and Tribune* (*Star and Tribune of the Twin Cities*), 1987-1988.

Total: 140

D. Historical Narratives.

- 58 New York Times Atlas of World History. (Text portions)
- 16 Cunningham, Hilary, ed. 1988. Canada. Insight Guide Series. Singapore: APA. (Part I)
- 11 Freeburg, Janie and Diana Ackland, eds. 1988. The Pacific Northwest. Insight Guides Series. Singapore: APA. (Part I-II)
- 5 Bancroft-Hunt, Norman and Werner Forman. 1978. People of the Totem: The Indians of the Pacific Northwest. University of Oklahoma Press. (Page1-48)

Total: 90

Grand Total: 701

Part II. DISTRIBUTION.

Table 1. General Speech Act Type.

	Statement		Question		SOURCE
	Aff	Neg	Aff	Neg	TOTAL
Spoken	72	16	20	2	110
Mysteries	266	35	58	2	361
Newspapers	103	28	9	0	140
History	74	16	0	0	90
TYPE TOTAL	515	95	87	4	701

Table 2. Cognitive Status of Cleft Clause.

	Spoken Sources					Mystery Novels				
	Aff	Neg	Qu	TOTAL	%	Aff	Neg	Qu	TOTAL	%
Activated	17	3	4	24	22	44	11	11	66	18
Reactivated	13	5	4	22	20	35	11	12	58	16
Cause	13	3	3	19	17	34	5	18	57	16
Consequence	4	3	0	7	6.5	48	6	5	64	17
Superlative	5	0	2	7	6.5	14	0	2	16	4
Familiar	9	2	9	20	18	40	0	7	47	13
Informative	11	0	0	11	10	51	3	4	58	16
TOTAL	72	16	22	110	100%	266	36	59	361	100%

	Newspaper Columns					Historical Texts				
	Aff	Neg	Qu	TOTAL	%	Aff	Neg	Qu	TOTAL	%
Activated	5	2	0	7	5	2	0	0	2	2
Reactivated	14	7	0	21	15	6	2	0	8	9
Cause	19	7	2	28	20	7	1	0	8	9
Consequence	6	2	0	8	6	6	6	0	12	13
Superlative	8	0	0	8	6	8	0	0	8	9
Familiar	29	7	7	43	30	35	6	0	41	46
Informative	25	0	0	25	18	10	1	0	11	12
TOTAL	106	25	9	140	100%	74	16	0	90	100%

Table 3. Rectification Type, Negative Clefts.

	but	it's	S	...	(¬until)	TOTAL
Spoken	2	6	2	4	3	17
Mysteries	5	11	3	9	9	37
Newspapers	4	7	8	5	4	28
History	2	0	2	0	13	17
TOTAL	13	24	15	18	29	99

Table 4. Qualifiers, Negative Clefts.

	¬until	¬just	¬only	¬	Total NEG	%¬Until
Spoken	3	4	0	10	17	18
Mysteries	9	0	1	27	37	24
Newspapers	4	12	4	8	28	14
History	13	0	2	2	17	76
TOTAL	29	16	7	47	99	29

Table 5. Subtypes, questions:

	Spoken	Mystery	Newspaper	History
Indirect wh-question	1	4	2	0
Free relative clause	2	1	4	0
Wh-question	8	17	0	0
Alternative question	1	3	0	0
Yes-no question	4	17	3	0
Confirmation question	6	17	0	0
TOTAL	22	59	9	0

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