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OPTIONAL VS RADICAL RE-ANALYSIS: MECHANISMS OF SYNTACTIC CHANGE
Review of: David W. Lightfoot, *Principles of diachronic syntax*

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0. Introduction

With this book Lightfoot (henceforth L.) has made a very important and lucid contribution to the study of diachronic syntax. Its importance lies first and foremost in the fact that he develops a (hitherto sadly lacking) sound methodology for the study of syntactic change. L.'s view of what constitutes (non-arbitrary) syntactic change and what causes it (see section 1 below) is very plausible and the more convincing when compared with other theories of syntactic change, the methodological weaknesses of which he exposes unerringly. Less convincing are some of the analyses of syntactic change\(^1\) that L. proposes in support of his theory, in that they are sometimes unnecessarily complicated and not always in accordance with existing data. In his search for changes occurring simultaneously – simultaneity plays a crucial role in L.'s argumentation – L. often overlooks the existence of data that occur too early for his convenience. Notwithstanding such deficiencies, we maintain that *Principles of Diachronic Syntax* shows true methodological discernment and is therefore of great theoretical importance. The book will, we expect, give a real impetus to research in the field of syntactic change.

In this article we shall give an outline of L.'s views as to how one should and how one should not interpret syntactic change (L.'s chapters 1, 3 and 7). We shall then present the reader with L.'s analysis of the development of

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\(^1\) For text of footnotes see p. 341ff.
modal verbs in English (L.’s chapter 2), which is exemplary because it illustrates very clearly his views concerning the principles responsible for syntactic change and represents his strongest case in support of them. In the subsequent sections we shall deal with L.’s analyses of quantifiers, of to-infinitives and of constructions involving NP Preposing (L.’s chapters 4, 5 and 6) arguing that our interpretation of the data leads to conclusions that differ from his. We shall end the article with an evaluation of L.’s theory seen in the light of our adjustments to his analyses.

1.1. Lightfoot’s theory of change

L.’s theory of change is straightforward and convincing in its simplicity. The theory of grammar – not to be confused with a theory of change – which he adopts is (a version of) the Extended Standard Theory, a theory which assumes that human beings are genetically endowed with the knowledge of what constitutes a possible grammar for natural languages, which knowledge enables them to acquire their language on the basis of relatively few and degenerate data. L. proposes that this theory include his so-called Transparency Principle, a principle that characterizes the limits of tolerable derivational complexity or, in other words, a principle that dictates that derivations must be minimally complex. L. argues that changes are partly due to chance factors (if all changes followed in some necessary way from grammatical principles “… genetically related languages would be uniform and differences could not develop in the course of time”, p. 374) but that, if the number of changes accumulates to a degree such that the Transparency Principle is violated, the child, endowed with this principle, will be forced to re-analyse its data in such a way that the intolerable opacity is eliminated.

The following example serves to indicate what such a re-analysis would involve (for a detailed discussion of L.’s analysis of this case and our own, see section 5.3). In Old English (OE) the basic word order pattern was S(subject)-O(object)-V(erb), with sentential complements always following the verb. Another characteristic of OE was that subjects were not obligatory in constructions with so-called ‘impersonal’ verbs. These subject-less constructions could have the following form: NP-V-sentential complement, in OE analysable as OVO (the second object being a ‘causative’ object, cf. Visser 1963/73: 19–23). In the late 12th century, cf. Canale (1978), the English word order pattern changed to SVO and subjects had by that time become obligatory. A child having arrived at this knowledge (on the basis of sentences it has been exposed to) would be hard put to it to analyse the
above-mentioned NP-V-sentential complement string in the same way as earlier generations; there is unequivocal evidence that the string was re-analysed as SVO (cf. L.: 234ff; see section 5.3.2 for our explanation that no semantic change was involved).

Such a re-analysis, involving no change in the actual surface structure, only in the structural description assigned to it, involving, that is, a change in the grammar, represents what Andersen (1973) calls an 'abductive' innovation. The opportunity to come to abductive conclusions is obviously reserved to the language learner, for which reason L. views language acquisition "... as a major locus of historical innovation ..." (p. 375). Essential to such an explanation of change is, of course, the insight that each language learning generation creates its own grammar on the basis of the sentences in its experience. In his search for the simplest possible grammar, the language learner will, in order to solve a certain local opacity problem, construct a grammar that is different from that of its model (and he may even slightly modify the output as long as mutual comprehensibility is not endangered). Taking it, as L. does, that "... grammars practise therapy rather than prophylaxis..." (p. 149) such a change may cause a(n unforeseen) complication elsewhere in the grammar which in its turn may lead to other re-analyses in later generations. This means that grammars may change quite drastically from one generation to another, the only restrictions on possible changes being, L. claims, that the resulting grammar meet the requirements imposed by the theory of grammar (since the theory of grammar characterizes 'possible' grammars of human languages) and that the communicability between generations be preserved (i.e. radical changes in the grammar are only allowed provided that they effect no drastic changes in the output; cf. sections 2, 5.3 and 5.4, for examples of such radical changes meeting this requirement). L. argues that beyond the restrictions imposed by the theory of grammar there are no formal restrictions on possible changes and his theory of change simply consists of the following statements (pp. 149-50):

(a) communicability must be preserved between generations;
(b) grammars practise therapy rather than prophylaxis;
(c) less highly-valued grammars are liable to re-analysis;
(d) certain therapeutic changes are more likely than others.

Attempting to formally delimit possible changes, one should therefore concentrate on the theory of grammar (including the Transparency Principle); explanations for changes must, in short, be derived mainly from the theory of grammar. Actual changes will, in their turn, shed light on the correctness of the theory of grammar. Thus L. has provided "... a methodology for
making grammatical theories responsible to historical change. The point at which re-analysis occurs enables one to see the limits to grammars at work, causing re-structurings as the limits are breached, and permits one to formulate a Transparency Principle which characterizes the load which may be born by the derivational processes. Under this … approach, research on diachronic change is fully integrated with work on grammatical theory in general” (p. 154).

In his foreword L. points out that, apart from the fact that his approach provides novel explanations for causes of change as well as a means of evaluating different theories of grammar, it has another merit not mentioned so far. L.’s view of syntactic change enables one to give a singulary account of simultaneous but superficially unrelated changes. Thus a simple change in the base rules, introducing modals no longer as verbs but as a separate category ‘modal’ generated in between Tense and VP, can be held responsible for the simultaneous disappearance in English in the 16th century of four constructions involving non-finite modals: after the re-analysis non-finite modals can no longer occur (for a detailed discussion, see section 2). The re-analysis, L. argues, was triggered by the Transparency Principle, modals having, as the result of a number of piecemeal changes, grown too exceptional in their syntactic behaviour to remain analysable as verbs. A theory that deals with English modals as verbs with a defective paradigm can neither explain why the above changes took place nor why they occurred simultaneously. It goes without saying that a theory that cannot provide an explanation is inferior to one that can. Other analyses of L.’s show, however, that there is the danger of arguing the wrong way round; in his eagerness to account for superficially unrelated changes by means of a single change in the grammar, L. ‘discovers’ more simultaneity than is actually warranted by the data. We shall return to this point in our concluding section.

1.2. The work of other linguists on syntactic change

Neither the more distant nor the more recent past, L. argues, has yielded very much insightful work on syntactic change. In the more distant past the neogrammarians, lacking any concept of ‘abstract formal grammar’, could not, comparing as they did sentences rather than grammars of various language stages, be expected to do more than classify (however thoroughly) the differences; they could not even begin to look for causes of change. In the recent past a fair amount of work on syntactic change has been done within the framework of transformational grammar, but within versions
of it that were so loosely constrained that various accounts of changes were available within one and the same theory without there being a principled way to choose between the alternatives. If insight is to be gained in the causes of syntactic change, it is imperative that research be conducted within the framework of a theory that is sufficiently restrictive to allow of, at best, one possible grammar of a stage of a given language. A comparison of the grammars of (ideally) adjacent stages of a language will then yield a straightforward picture of the formal differences between the grammars. Only on the basis of such knowledge can one attempt to explain the changes that have taken place. L.’s reason then for taking up diachronic study, in spite of such pre-theoretical disadvantages as there being no useful legacy from the neogrammarians (as there is with respect to phonological change) and the limited availability and diverse nature of historical data, is the growing emphasis in transformational circles on restricting the theory of grammar.

The indeterminacy inherent in a loose theory of grammar is due to what L. calls “a lack of sound methodology”. Another such methodological error concerns a tendency to decide in favour of certain properties of a grammar of an earlier stage of a language on the basis of properties of that of a later stage. We found a good example of this in Hausmann (1974), who argues that, because in New English (NE) there is, according to him, one rule of do-insertion accounting for both NE substitute do (e.g. Mary arrived late, as she always does) and NE periphrastic do (e.g. Mary didn’t arrive late, Did Mary arrive late? etc.) and because OE exhibits constructions with substitute do, the same rule of do-insertion must have featured in the grammar of OE. He is then forced to tackle the question of why OE has no constructions with periphrastic do. Had he investigated the grammar of OE without bias, he might have come to the (we feel much more warranted) conclusion that his first assumption (that there is one rule in NE accounting for the two types of do) was false and that the standardization of periphrastic do was due to some other change in the grammar. The account that Hausmann proposes for the emergence of periphrastic do, in terms of rule re-ordering and a change in the conditions on a transformation, though it does take care of the facts, is complicated and has no explanatory value whatsoever. One should, to conclude the discussion of this point, always “… recognize that while one theory of grammar must be presupposed, the particular grammars of OE, ME, NE, etc., must be written independently and then be compared only after the formulation” (L.: 34).

This leads us to another, most crucial, methodological error, “… an apparent confusion between the roles of a particular grammar, a theory of
grammar and a theory of change” (L.: 34). A particular grammar predicts which sentences of a language at a particular stage are possible sentences; it is constructed by the generation speaking the language of that stage during the period of language acquisition, on the basis of the linguistic environment that generation is exposed to. A theory of grammar predicts the ways in which grammars may change; it defines the upper limits of change. A theory of change predicts the ways in which adjacent grammars may change; it defines the lower limits of change. Traugott (1969) speaks of a 'diachronic grammar' which, as she envisages it, should provide rules to relate the grammars of particular stages to one another. Not only is the term 'diachronic grammar' an obvious misnomer, the whole notion of “... rules accounting for diachronic relatedness between grammatical systems ...” (Traugott 1965: 413) is a misapprehension since such rules do not represent any reality: grammars are by definition discontinuous entities. People have no knowledge of grammars other than the one they have internalized themselves. Such rules as Traugott had in mind are presumably to be understood as part of her theory of change, but since the statement that, for instance, this or that re-ordering took place at some stage, provides no insight into the cause of the change, formulating such rules appears to be a useless exercise.

The confusion of many generativists of “... the explanation of a change with its mere characterization” (L.: 365) is also partly responsible for their not paying due attention to analogy as an explanatory principle of change. Bloomfield (1933) explained the occurrence of new sentences in terms of analogous sentence patterns. However, such an approach leaves unexplained the fact that not all analogical extensions of existing patterns are possible new sentences, the reason for this being that Bloomfield’s generalization is defined solely in terms of surface patterns, not in terms of formal, abstract grammar. Due to this and to the fact that the early generative theory of grammar, being very loose, hardly imposed any limit on how complex a derivation could be, attention shifted to the development of formal, abstract grammars, away from surface patterns and with it from analogical processes. Once one realises, however, that the native speaker recognizes a new item as a possible sentence because it is generated by the grammar he has internalized, the notion of analogical extension is no longer vacuous – if, that is, one also assumes a restrictive theory of grammar; only such a theory, which requires minimally complex derivations, predicts the necessity for re-analysis and with it the possibility that the form chosen is that of analogical extension. Having discussed various other approaches with respect to analogy, L. therefore arrives at the conclusion that analogical processes play an extensive
role in language change; they do not actually cause a re-analysis to take place (this is due to the Transparency Principle) but may decide the form a change will take. The change of impersonal-to-personal construction briefly sketched in section 1.1 is an illustration of this: the impersonal construction was re-analysed along the lines of the existing SVO pattern. Re-analysis need not necessarily be an analogical process, however, as is exemplified by the introduction of the new category ‘modal auxiliary’ in 16th-century English. Since there is no saying when a change will follow analogical lines or not, nor what form an analogical extension will take, analogy should be regarded as a pre-theoretical concept, governing language acquisition and therefore governing historical change. This view of analogy is persuasive in light of the central role of abductive reasoning in the child’s grammar construction: it is not surprising that the child, when forced to re-analyse, will often make use – if possible – of already familiarized patterns.

For the same reason the view of certain language typologists (a leading exponent of this approach is Charles Li, e.g. Li 1975) that there are independent diachronic universals which ‘steer’ languages towards a typologically ‘consistent’ stage, is most implausible. The idea of typological consistency is based on Greenberg’s (1966) word order universals, an example of which, given by L. on p. 387, is Greenberg’s universal 16: “In languages with dominant order VSO, an inflected auxiliary always precedes the main verb. In languages with dominant order SOV, an inflected auxiliary always follows the main verb”. According to certain language typologists languages changing from VSO to SOV word order exhibit parallel developments because of this diachronic universal steering them. Apart from various practical problems connected with this theory – for instance, the divergent developments of certain Proto-Indo-European daughter languages as opposed to parallel developments of others – it is methodologically unsound: “... positing a typological shift does not constitute an explanation for the various changes. Languages are learned and grammars constructed by the individuals of each generation. They do not have racial memories such that they know in some sense that their language has been gradually developing from, say, a SOV and towards a SVO type, and that it must continue along that path. After all, if there were a prescribed hierarchy of changes to be performed, how could a child, confronted with a language exactly half-way along this hierarchy, know whether the language was changing from type $x$ to type $y$ or vice versa?” (L.: 391). Individual changes should, L. continues, be explained in terms of a variety of interacting factors (e.g. earlier changes, the Transparency Principle, perceptual mechanisms, extra-grammatical
phenomena such as stylistic innovations, foreign influences, etc.), and such implicational universals as are exceptionless, should follow from the theory of grammar. The above-mentioned universal could, for instance, follow from a restriction on the base rules: a specifier may precede its head (auxiliary = specifier V) only if the complement follows it (object = complement V) or vice versa. From this it would follow that a language with Aux-V order would also have Det-N order (determiner = specifier N) and that a change from V-Aux to Aux-V would go hand in hand with a change from N-Det to Det-N. Summarizing, we can conclude that in the typological approach mere observational statements concerning parallel historical developments were simply elevated to the status of universal laws. In L.’s approach such observations, on the other hand, are seen for what they are, i.e. as useful pieces of information, on the basis of which further insight concerning the correct restrictive principles imposed by the theory of grammar may be gained.

Though in the above much of what L. has to say about syntactic change has not been gone into, we trust that we have said enough to make the reader realise the basic soundness of L.’s approach as opposed to the undeniable fallacies of certain other theories of ‘change’.

2. English modals

2.1. Modern English modals

In chapter 2, L. presents what he calls his ‘paradigm case’: the introduction of the syntactic category ‘modal’ in the English language of around 1500. L. argues (unlike Ross 1969) that it is necessary to set up a category ‘modal’ for the grammar of NE, whereas for the OE and Middle English (ME) periods there is no need to postulate such a modal category. Ross claims that NE modal auxiliaries belong to the same major category as verbs, and are introduced into initial structures the same way other verbs are. L. disagrees with Ross’ analysis for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the NE modals lack many of the syntactic properties of verbs – this in contrast to the OE/ME ‘ancestors’ of the modals. In order to account for the irregular behaviour of NE modals, Ross needs to introduce the feature [+Aux], which distinguishes NE modals from other verbs. One might argue (Ross only deals with present-day modals) that this feature was absent in the grammars of OE and ME, in order to account for the fact that in those
days the modals exhibited the same syntactic behaviour as verbs. In this way one cannot, however, explain why certain syntactic properties of the modals were affected by the new feature rather than other ones; why should, in other words, this feature have ruled out all and only the non-finite modal forms? Nor can, in this analysis, the simultaneous disappearance of these forms be seen as anything other than accidental, because none of these changes follow automatically once the new feature has emerged. In L.’s approach, the Transparency Principle triggers the re-analysis of modals once they carry too many exception features and this re-analysis predicts both that it is the non-finite forms that disappear and that they disappear simultaneously (for details, cf. section 2.2).

Thirdly, Ross claims that such an analysis as his can capture important generalizations. His claims are extensively discussed by L., who argues convincingly that Ross’ arguments are faulty and that there is no reason to maintain that NE modals are best analysed as verbs (cf. pp. 81–92).

2.2. The history of English modals

With reference to the OE and ME pre-modals (i.e. the verbs later re-analysed as modals) L. notes that they have all the syntactic properties of verbs: “They have full person-number paradigms (undergoing Number Agreement) and behave like verbs with respect to Negative Placement and Inversion. They can occur adjacent to each other in series, and in infinitives and gerunds ... They can occur with normal complementation types and many can take surface direct objects” (p. 98). In the course of time a number of changes (accidental, as far as L. can tell) occurred which caused the pre-modals to become isolated as a group. These changes (listed below), though occurring independently of one another, can all be seen to contribute to the final re-structuring of the pre-modals into a separate category.3

(i) the pre-modals lost the ability to take direct objects; there is for instance no NE modal equivalent for OE

ac God ... cann ... eowere heortan
‘but God knows your hearts’ (Ælfric Hom., Pope 1967: 534)

(ii) the pre-modals are the only survivors of the OE class of preterite-present verbs, one of whose distinguishing characteristics was their lack of the third person singular present tense ending; the other members of this class in OE, e.g. witan ‘to know’, munan ‘to think’, were lost, with the result that the pre-modals stood apart as a group
(iii) the past tense forms of the pre-modals developed new meanings which had nothing to do with past time reference (e.g. *he might do it* does not mean 'he was permitted to do it')

(iv) the development of the *to*-infinitive with almost all verbs except the pre-modals

By about 1500 all these changes had taken effect, with the result that the pre-modals required a number of exception features within the V-category.

At this stage, four simultaneous changes took place, in that (L.: 110) the old pre-modals could no longer occur:

(i) in infinitival constructions (last instance 1565);
(ii) with *-ing* affixes (last instance 1556);
(iii) in constructions in which two modals occur side by side (last instance 1532);
(iv) with *have* and an *-en* affix (last instance 1528).

The conclusion to be drawn, L. argues, is that the number of exception features due to the earlier changes had exceeded the limits of derivational complexity set by the Transparency Principle. Forced to reduce the intolerable opacity, the new generation abduced the separate syntactic category 'modal'. Before this re-analysis Tense had been analysed as a feature on the first verb, there being no justification for a separate 'auxiliary' constituent. Along with the re-interpretation of the pre-modals as non-verbs, Tense was re-analysed as a separate initial constituent, generated with the modals under the node 'Aux'. The re-analysis can be summarized by the following fragments of grammars, (i) before and (ii) after the re-analysis:

(i) \[ S \rightarrow NP \ VP \]  
(ii) \[ S \rightarrow NP \ Aux \ VP \]
\[ Aux \rightarrow T \ (M) \]

The four simultaneous changes listed above follow automatically from this re-analysis: modals can, once grammar (ii) has become a fact, only occur in finite form and must be followed by a verb (i.e. no adjacent modals).

L.'s analysis, moreover, provides an explanation for three other changes (listed below), which, though not likewise following automatically from the re-analysis, occurred round about the same time:

(v) a change in the rule of Negative Placement, and with it the standardization of periphrastic *do* in negative clauses not containing other auxiliaries;
(vi) parallel changes with respect to the rule of Subject-Verb Inversion;
(vii) the introduction of 'quasi-modals' such as *be going to, have to, be able to*. Change (v) and (vi), L. argues, prevented the outputs from before and those
from after the pre-modal re-analysis from getting so different as to create possible confusion. The structural description of both rules, which in OE and ME crucially referred to V, changed after the modals had been re-analysed as a separate category, in that the rules became sensitive to Aux rather than V. If these changes had not taken place, the standardization of periphrastic do in negative and inverted constructions would be inexplicable; stranded Tense, which results when these rules become sensitive to Aux, explains the necessity for periphrastic do. Moreover, if these changes had not taken place, surface structures like the following would have existed side by side for a while:

(1a) Can John read the book?
(1b) Read John can the book
(2a) John cannot read the book
(2b) John can read not the book

(1a) and (2a) were regular before the modal re-analysis: the first verb was inverted and followed by not respectively. After the re-analysis, speakers, regarding read rather than can as the first verb, would, on applying the old versions of Subject-Verb Inversion and Negative Placement, have come up with (1b) and (2b). Such a difference in output results apparently endangered communicability. Change (vii) shows that the lack of non-finite modals was felt as too much of a restriction on the expressive power of the language; a new set of semantically equivalent verbs is created to make up for the syntactic deficiencies of the modals, be going to for shall/will, have to for must, be able to for can etc.

Summarizing, we can conclude that it is L.’s view of grammar, which does not rule out changes in the base rules and therefore allows of radical re-structurings, that permits one to explain the above seven changes as a chain of related events. A Ross-type analysis, on the other hand, leaves no room for this set of changes “... to be treated as anything other than an incredible accident” (L.: 113).

3. English quantifiers

In his section on the English quantifiers (pp. 168–86), L. seeks to establish that the quantifiers have undergone a category change as a result of the working of the Transparency Principle. This case is different from that of the modals since the quantifiers themselves have not radically altered. L. proposes
that the quantifiers in OE are best analysed as members of the syntactic category of adjectives. After the OE period the distribution of adjectives and their syntactic properties began to change whereas the characteristics and the distribution of the quantifiers did not, with the result that the quantifiers became isolated as a group and formed a new category.

Below, a detailed discussion of the quantifiers in OE will follow and evidence will be presented to show that quantifiers are best considered to constitute a separate category in OE already. It will be shown that it is extremely difficult to remain open-minded with regard to certain data when attempting to prove the feasibility of a theory. We are of the opinion that L. in his analysis of the OE quantifiers was led astray in this way. He was perhaps also misled by the fact that most grammarians of OE do indeed classify the quantifiers as adjectives. This, however, has only been done for practical reasons, which involve the teaching of OE, since quantifiers in morphological respects behave (almost) exactly like adjectives and since distributional aspects are hardly or not at all considered in these grammars.

3.1.

L.'s research is mainly based on the data collected by Anita Carlson (Carlson 1976) in her M.A. thesis. When one compares these two treatments it is illuminating to observe that in many instances L. is much less careful when presenting his findings than Carlson; where Carlson is often rather tentative, L. is much more absolute. This difference in presentation is interesting because we believe that the case of the quantifiers as presented by L. is not nearly as persuasive as that of the modals with respect to the working of the Transparency Principle.

Let us consider the evidence given. In order to establish that adjectives and quantifiers belong to the same syntactic category in OE, it has to be determined that they have similar distributional and morphological characteristics. L. adduces that quantifiers and adjectives could "... freely [our italics] occupy the same slots" (p. 169) in OE. He gives six different patterns in which both adjectives and quantifiers could occur in the same positions: (a) preceding the modified noun (Carlson's type all boys), (b) predeterminer (all the boys), (c) postnominal (the boys all), (d) with a modified noun in the genitive case (all of the boys), (e) floating (the boys were all), (f) nominal.

As far as (a) is concerned, this is still a common position for quantifiers and adjectives in NE, therefore as such not of importance. It is noted, however, that the OE quantifiers were subject to fewer restrictions than
the NE ones, which made them look more like adjectives. For instance, *manig* ‘many’ and *alc* ‘each’ could occur both before singular and plural nouns.7 L. does not note that quantifiers differ already in OE from adjectives in this position in that they always have to appear first when more than one adjective is involved. This should preferably be dealt with by syntactic rather than semantic rules.

With respect to (b) and (c), comparing the statements concerning these two positions made by L: and Carlson, we read in L. (p. 170), “... *most* [our italics] adjectives were free to occur before a determiner and some normally did so” and about (c), “Again, this is a common position for OE adjectives”. Carlson has a much weaker statement, “... although in NE only quantifiers occur in predeterminer position, in OE there are several other types of adjectives that can occupy this position” (p. 22) and “The postnominal position of quantifiers in OE is a possible position for other adjectives as well as for quantifiers” (p. 27).

There are in fact only three types of ‘adjectives’ in OE which commonly occupy these two positions: adjectives ending in -*weard* (cf. NE toward), possessive pronouns and numerals.8 All three types are in fact more than a little suspect.

The explanation for the exceptional positions the adjectives in -*weard* can take is to be found in the fact that these adjectives must have had more of an adverbial than an adjectival character to start with.9 It can be shown that the adjectives in -*weard* only occur in these unusual positions when they have retained their adverbial quality, i.e. when they convey ‘direction’;10 they occur in the normal adjectival slot when the adverbial sense of direction is not present.11

Both Carlson and L. accept that possessive pronouns should be treated as adjectives. L. even takes it for granted without discussion (p. 170). Carlson (p. 23ff) gives two reasons for treating them as adjectives: (1) most of them are declined exactly like adjectives with the exception of the forms of the third person (*his, hiere, hiera*); these remain undeclined, which Carlson links up with invariable adjectives like *jela* ‘many’ and *unrim* (this is in fact a noun meaning ‘a countless number’);12 (2) the possessive pronouns can co-occur with the determiner *se*, so should not be categorized as determiners (no co-occurrence restrictions – involving extra cost for the grammar – are necessary).

However, many objections can be found to classifying possessives as adjectives. (i) Possessive pronouns are not declined *exactly* like adjectives because they possess only the ‘strong’ declension, whereas *all* other
adjectives can have both 'strong' and 'weak' forms, and because the third person remains undeclined. (ii) Possessive pronouns, like demonstrative pronouns (i.e. the OE determiners), can trigger strong/weak form distinctions which other adjectives cannot. (iii) It is possible (although very rare) for possessive pronouns to co-occur with *se*, but in this case, too, restrictions would be necessary because, when possessives co-occur with *se*, they always occupy the unusual adjective position (i.e. before the determiner) and never the far more usual adjectival slot between determiner and noun.\(^{14}\)

Moreover, it may well be the case that the co-occurrence of possessive pronouns and determiners (*se* etc.) is restricted to some rather special cases which could all be otherwise accounted for. Quirk and Wrenn (1955:89) for instance note that in *mine brōþro þā lēofan* 'my brother the dear' (or for that matter *hæleþ min se lēofa* 'hero my the dear',\(^ {15}\) *on sele þam hēan* 'in hall the high', Carlson's examples on p. 22) the adjective should possibly be interpreted as a noun in apposition.

The other constructions in which a possessive and a determiner co-occur (*min se lēofa* (*lēofesta*) *frēond* 'my the dear (dearest) friend'; Carlson, p. 23) are discussed by Mustanoja (1960:298–9) in connection with the type *oon the beste knyght*. He notes that the characteristic feature in these two constructions is "... the isolation of an attribute or other defining word from the noun or noun group by means of an intervening element. This isolation has the effect of bringing out into relief the idea expressed by the attribute, i.e., of making this word and the whole group more emphatic". He further states that this peculiar arrangement is found in many other languages and that it is found in NE in such types as all the world, half a bottle, too long a story, what a night.\(^ {16}\) It should be noted moreover that in OE and in ME the adjective very often has the superlative form.\(^ {17}\) These exceptional types in NE are not base-generated positions but will probably have to be covered by stylistic rules; the same applies to the OE constructions.

It is interesting to observe too that, in spite of the fact that both L. and Carlson treat the possessives as adjectives, they both use the possessives in some of their examples as if they had classified them as determiners. In order to prove that adjectives could occur predeterminally, for instance, the following examples are given: *mid deore mine sweorde* 'with dear my sword'\(^ {18}\) and *of inneweardre his heortan* 'from within his heart' (L.: 170; Carlson: 22).\(^ {19}\)

The numerals are the third type of adjectives occurring before the determiner. This use, however, is restricted to only one case, i.e. where
numerals appear before an adjective in the superlative. This type (oon the beste knyght) has been discussed above and should, we think, be left out of account.

One might also question whether numerals should be looked upon as adjectives at all. Morphologically they are not like adjectives. Also, the numerals do not follow the development of other, 'true' adjectives; in fact, they develop partly like the quantifiers: in NE they can still be used substantively (I'd like two) and with a modified noun in the genitive (Two of his books got burned).

If we discount these three types of adjectives, there are still a few cases left where adjectives occur predeterminally or postnominally. L. (p. 170) quotes some ME examples from Laȝamon's Brut of the type mid sele þan kinge 'with good the king'. These examples are found in Mossé (1952: 123). Mossé states that these are undoubtedly a survival from OE and he refers to his own OE Handbook (Mossé 1945: 168), where we find that this construction is found "exceptionnellement en poésie". We advise great caution in using cases which are restricted to poetry as evidence, especially when word order is concerned. Similarly, examples of postnominal adjectives should not be taken into account because this position is commonly used only in OE poetry and not in prose.

Type (d) does not seem to present a very strong case. Carlson (p. 28) mentions that genitive constructions could be found after comparative and superlative adjectives (which would already be a severe restriction), but she does not give any examples, nor does Kellner (1892: 108-9), from whom she has taken the evidence. Genitive constructions are of course found after numerals, but we have questioned the true adjectival status of numerals above. L. (p. 171) gives an example of a genitive following the positive form of the adjective, i.e. the tall of the Romans but he has no references to any OE examples.

There are even greater difficulties involving type (e). L. (p. 171) states that both quantifiers and adjectives could 'float' off their NP in OE. However, he gives no examples of floating adjectives, nor does Carlson (p. 30). We cannot think of a single floating adjective in OE where the adjective is not a subject or object complement, i.e. where it clearly modifies the NP in question. Quantifiers, whether floating or not, always act as modifiers. Consider the following example where all modifies the subject NP and where brave is the subject complement: the boys were all brave in the last war. Brave clearly is not a modifier of the subject NP since the brave boys were all in the last war has a different meaning. All the boys were brave in the last war, however, is not different from our first example. The conclusion must
be that only quantifiers float in OE, ME and NE; adjectives do not float, they either modify the *immediately following* NP or they have other grammatical functions.

This is probably the reason why another analysis is suggested (L.: 171), in which the floating quantifier is in fact an adverb (the adverbial adjective commonly occupies the same position as the floating quantifier in OE). It is indeed possible sometimes to interpret *eall* 'all' adverbially, but it is not true that "... an adjective ... with any oblique case ending can be used adverbially" (p. 179).\(^{24}\) Moreover, it should be noted that in almost all cases floating *eall* *does* agree in case, number and gender with the NP, and it seems therefore that the adjectival interpretation is preferable.\(^{25}\) With other floating quantifiers like *ba* 'both' an adverbial interpretation seems altogether impossible. Here too there is agreement between NP and floating quantifier.\(^{26}\)

This analysis strongly suggests that the OE quantifiers were in fact already a separate category, because only quantifiers could occur in types (d) and (e) and only quantifiers could occur in types (b) and (c) in prose.\(^{27}\)

The changes discussed by L. (p. 179) which lead to re-analysis can now be shown to be invalid because those slots which could no longer be freely occupied by adjectives, were never in fact occupied by adjectives at all. There is only one exception: adjectives can no longer freely occur as substantives. However, this can be differently explained. Strang (1970: 300–1) states that adjectives "... as long as they remained highly inflected ... were free to act as heads". In other words, when inflections are gradually lost, adjectives begin to lose this property. Quantifiers can still occur as heads, but this is nothing to be surprised about because they belong to a separate category, as we have just shown.

This also means that the changes which are the result of re-analysis (L.: 180–1) must likewise be invalid. This creates no problems for our analysis, however, because almost all these changes are in fact no different from the changes leading up to re-analysis.\(^{28}\) Only changes (i), (ii) and (iii),

(i) *all* and *both* first appear with *of* partitives,
(ii) last occurrences of determiner–pre-quantifier–noun (the term 'pre-quantifiers' in L. refers to those adjectives which were in ME re-analysed as quantifiers),
(iii) last occurrences of multiple pre-quantifiers in sequence, need still to be discussed. We can give no explanation for the appearance of *of-partitives* with *all* and *both*; in L.'s analysis this is neatly explained. (ii), however, we cannot take very seriously because this position was already extremely unusual in OE and ME (as admitted by L., p. 173), and also
because there are a few quantifiers in NE which can still occur in this slot, e.g. the examples given by L. in note 1 (p. 173); another example would be the few trees etc. The same applies to (iii). L. only adduces examples with both and some other quantifier. Again it is possible to find quantifiers in sequence in NE, e.g., every few years, many more books, some few (more) books, several more people etc.

In connection with the re-analysis, L. mentions some other changes which pre-quantifiers seem to undergo: "... in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the pre-quantifiers occur with the -s genitive, as if they are being treated as nouns" and "Also at this time the pre-quantifiers begin to occur alone after a preposition, another position characteristic of a noun" (p. 180). It can easily be shown that both these positions already occurred in OE. Looking at random we soon found an example of each construction: -s genitive in ponne ic winde sceal ... swelgan of SUMES\(^{29}\) bosme 'then I must swallow the breath from the bosom of someone' (Whitelock 1967: 171) and after a preposition, ond on ÆLCRE bið ān æætel 'and on each will be a book-marker' (Whitelock 1967: 7).

More interesting is the change which entails that "... from the end of the sixteenth century postposing of the quantifier is obligatory over a pronoun ... While all, both and each were adjectives, one would expect them to occur pre- and postnominally, giving we all and all we, since at that time normal adjectives could occur in both positions" (L.: 183). This is truly an interesting change, but it cannot really be connected with the re-analysis of adjectival pre-quantifiers into quantifiers because adjectives, with the exception of pre-quantifiers, do not normally occur before or after personal pronouns in OE. This only shows that the quantifiers were different from adjectives already in OE. Why the construction alle we disappeared remains a problem; it is likely to be connected with the appearance of the new construction all of us so that alle we became redundant.

Finally, L. remarks (p. 184) that prior to re-analysis one found the construction here elces riht hand 'their each other's right hand' (see his examples under (28)). After re-analysis quantifiers have to precede determiners resulting in the obsolescence of these constructions. This change, however, may also be related to another change. All the quantifiers in this position, i.e. after the determiner, are in fact genitives. We have seen that it was normal in OE and ME for the genitive to stand between determiner and noun (see note 14). Since also at this time it became normal for the genitive to follow the noun in an of-construction, it should not be surprising that constructions like here elces hand also disappeared.
4. The English infinitive

In chapter 4, L. gives another example of a category change: the *to*-infinitive, which was originally a NP, "... lost its NP status as a result of a category change predictable by the Transparency Principle" (p. 186). L. proposes this change in the status of the *to*-infinitive in order to explain the rather remarkable fact that constructions containing *for NP to V* appear "... consistently about 200 years later than the corresponding *for to V* forms" (p. 187). Below, we intend to discuss two important elements in L.'s analysis of this category change which, we believe, weaken his argument: the evidence he gives in order to prove the NP status of the OE and early ME *to*-infinitive and the consequent change to VP status; secondly, the fact that he links the emergence of the *for NP to V* construction *exclusively* with the existence and disappearance of the earlier *for to V* forms.

4.1.

In order to prove that the grammatical status of the *to*-infinitive changed in ME, L. compares the nominal properties of the *to*-infinitive before the re-analysis with those after. He lists twelve properties characteristic of NPs and applies these to the OE and ME *to*-infinitive. The first five properties mentioned are not "... diagnostics for NP status since they hold also for ... VP's" (p. 191). He notes, moreover, that in another way they are also of little interest since these properties still hold for NE *to*-infinitives.

Property (f) is of interest: "... the bare infinitive had all the usual inflectional endings prehistorically. These endings gradually dwindled until at the time of the re-analysis they had all been dropped" (p. 192). It is true that in Primitive Germanic various case endings were still used, but already in Primitive OE there were only two case endings left, the nominative/accusative form, usually called the uninflected infinitive, and the dative form, mainly used after the preposition *tō*. Callaway (1913:2) notes, moreover, that even after *tō* the *un*inflected infinitive occurs and sometimes also the other way round, i.e. the *inflected* infinitive used without the preposition *tō*. He also shows that the two infinitives are not always differentiated in their use: "... the analogical influence is at times strongly at work" (p. 24). This holds even more for the ME period. The dative ending of the *to*-infinitive only occasionally appears; it has become a kind of fossil. The use of either the bare infinitive or the *to*-infinitive (with or without dative ending) is in many cases haphazard. This shows that the nominal endings of the infinitive
already began to lose their functional role in OE; they cannot be looked upon as relevant indicators of a nominal status of the to-infinitive in the period under discussion.

Properties (g), (h), (i) (p. 192), i.e. the use of the infinitive after adjectival modifiers (g), articles and demonstratives (h) and possessive modifiers (i), do not occur. These properties, in fact, would have been the strongest claim the infinitive could have to NP status.34

Property (j) (to-infinitives can be preceded by prepositions) presents a strong case for NP status. The difficulty here, however, is that scholars assume that these constructions did not occur in OE.35 Another obstacle is that both Visser and L. give some very late instances of this construction,36 which the grammar could not really generate after the re-analysis had taken place.37

The last two properties put forward by L. are their occurrence in passive constructions as in hēo wæs on mōde ohrynyc frum drincan ‘she was affected in (her) mind from (to) drink’ (k) and in cleft constructions hit wæs drincan þe ic forfite ‘it was (to) drink that I needed’ (l) (p. 193). The examples given here are invented by L. drawing, as he says, “... on [his] own intuitions” (p. 190).38 Using our own intuitions we would say that it is much more likely that OE in this case would make use of a verbal noun in -ung (see L.’s made-up examples on p. 191). Moreover, as we have shown above, the infinitive did not occur after a preposition in OE and only rarely in ME (see notes 35 and 37), which makes example (k) extremely improbable.

According to L. ((35), p. 194), the transition from the NP status of the infinitive to the VP status is marked by six simultaneous surface changes. Four of these changes we have discussed above (pertaining to properties (f), (j), (k), (l)). L. remarks that these four properties all become obsolete simultaneously, but, as shown, we have questioned exactly these four properties. The only two valid changes left,

(a) the rise of [for NP to V...], i.e. the emergence of constructions like the following, he brought it with him for us to see,

(b) the obsolescence of for to V..., i.e. the disappearance of it is good for to go constructions,

involve the ‘for’ constructions themselves, which turns the whole argument into rather a circular one.

In order to give further evidence that the for to V and for NP to V constructions differ in that the first to V is a noun and the second a verb, L. gives a number of examples of both types and shows that in the for to V examples (29), p. 187) it is possible to substitute for to V or to V39 for a clear case of a NP in NE, whereas this is not possible for the for NP to V
types ((30), p. 187–8). This is certainly correct, but the possibility of substitution does not prove that the infinitives in (29) are in fact NPs. One can just as easily replace the (for) to V’s by to-infinitives in NE, as the following table will show:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lightfoot (29)</th>
<th>Lightfoot (31)</th>
<th>our substitutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) for to go is necessary</td>
<td>scepticism is necessary</td>
<td>to be sceptical is necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) it is good for to go</td>
<td>it is good, scepticism</td>
<td>it is good to be sceptical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) it grieves me for to go</td>
<td>it grieves me, scepticism</td>
<td>it grieves me to be sceptical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) that stood in aunter for to die they hadde nat space for to eat</td>
<td>that stood in aunter for death</td>
<td>they had no space to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) the king did it for to have sibbe the king did it for bad reasons</td>
<td>the king did it for bad reasons</td>
<td>the king did it to have peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) this is a fouler theft than for to breke a chichre this is a fouler theft than that of the crown jewels</td>
<td>this is a fouler theft than that of the crown jewels</td>
<td>this is a fouler theft than to steal the crown jewels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) he taketh of nought else kepe but for to fille his bagges he takes nothing else to keep except for warmth in the night</td>
<td>he takes nothing else to keep except for warmth in the night</td>
<td>he pays heed to nothing else except to fill his bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) for to say the sothe ye have done marvellously for peace of mind, you have done marvellously</td>
<td>for peace of mind, you have done marvellously</td>
<td>to say the truth, you have done marvellously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) hir olde usage as for t’honour hir goddes</td>
<td>hir old usage as for honouring hir gods</td>
<td>their old usage to honour their gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j) the principle of their vocatiion is for to defende the faith the principle of their vocation is to protect wildlife</td>
<td>the principle of their vocation is the protection of wildlife</td>
<td>the principle of their vocation is to protect wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k) there was nothing able for to shake me there was nothing (suit)able for analysis</td>
<td>there was nothing (suit)able for analysis</td>
<td>there was nothing (suit)able to analyse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(l) the king ... sende for to hine finde the king sent for him</td>
<td>the king sent for him</td>
<td>the king sent out (messengers) to find him</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our substitution for (f) is perhaps a doubtful one, and so possibly is (i). However, we regard our own substitutions for (b) and (c) as preferable to L.’s substitutions: the latter seem to us clear cases of righthand dislocation and therefore they represent a syntactic structure that differs from both the OE example and our NE substitution. As for L.’s substitutions for (e) and (l) (see notes) and for (g), (h), (i), these are, we feel, not really adequate. Notice too that in our substitions there is no ‘systematic equivocation’ of for (cf. note 39); in all cases for to V is replaced by to V, which shows that for is an infinitival marker and not a preposition.

A stronger argument against the NP status of the (for) to V constructions in (29) is that in one construction the (for) to V cannot possibly be
replaced by a NP. This example ((29)a(ii)) has been left out of the substitution table (31) in L.:

(1) I for to go is necessary

According to L.’s analysis of the constructions in (29) this clause should have either of the two following structures:

(a) [s[s NP P NP s] VP s]
(b) [s[s NP NP s] VP s]

Both are highly unlikely. L.’s remark about this type later on (p. 196) seems to imply that he also considers this type to be different from the others of (29): “... the sentential subject of *is necessary* consists itself of a subject (necessarily in the nominative case here) and an *infinitival verb*” (our italics). It looks as if L. prefers to designate *for to go* a VP rather than a NP.

1.2. The emergence of the ‘for NP to V’ construction

As already noted above, the change from NP status to VP status of the infinitive was only relevant in so far as it could explain the emergence of the *for NP to V* construction and the obsolescence of the *for to V* type. We have just shown that it is unlikely that the *for to V* construction was a NP in ME. This means that we will have to look for other solutions to explain the emergence of the *for NP to V* constructions. This brings us back to the second weakness we detected in L.’s analysis, i.e. that he links the rise of the *for NP to V* construction exclusively with the existence and disappearance of the *for to V* construction. We claim that the *for to V* infinitive is just an alternative form of the *to*-infinitive and that the emergence of the *for NP to V* construction is not related to the disappearance of the *for to V* construction (as we have seen – note 30 – they even occur side by side for some time). We do not deny, however, that the later disappearance of the *for to* infinitives may be in some way connected with the new *for NP to V* construction.

Before we give our suggestion for the appearance of the *for NP to V* construction, let us first consider the ‘ancestry’ of this construction. The *for NP to V* construction is at first found only after expressions like *it is necessary, it is good, it is a great shame* etc. In OE two constructions were possible after these expressions:
The examples of (2) show the use of a dative followed by a *paet* clause. Notice that the dative is repeated in the nominative case in the subclause. In the examples of (3) the *paet* clause is replaced by an infinitive.

In ME constructions *that* clauses are still found after these expressions, but never in combination with a dative in the main clause: the person/thing affected is only mentioned (in the nominative case) in the subclause (for examples see (4)). The OE type represented in (3) is very frequent in ME (see (5)). Notice that in ME it is no longer possible to distinguish a clear dative, especially in the case of a non-pronominal NP (see (5c)). Out of type (3) a new construction developed in ME, in which the dative case is replaced by a prepositional phrase with *for* (see (6)). *For* had never been used in a benefactive sense in OE.49

(4a) thanne is it bettre that thou suffre than bigynne ...
‘then it is better that you suffer than that you begin ...’ (Chaucer, C.T., Robinson (Rob.): 174)

(4b) yit were it betere that I were youre wyf
‘yet it would be better if I were your wife’ (Chaucer, LGW, Rob.: 512)

(5a) that thee (OBLIQUE) is bettre hold thy tonge
‘that it is better for you to hold your tongue’ (Chaucer, C.T., Rob.: 174)

(5b) inoh iss me (OBL) to lufenn God
‘it is enough for me to love God’ (Orm, Visser (V.): 955)

(5c) it is good and resonable men to haue chirches in mesure
‘it is good and reasonable for men to have enough churches’ (Wyclif, V.: 964)

(6) it were bettre for yow to lese so muchel good of youre owene
‘it would be better for you to lose so much of your own goods’ (Chaucer, C.T., Rob.: 187)
Beside the development of a new construction with *for* in ME, there are other differences between the OE and ME constructions, concerning word order. Notice that in ME the benefactive usually immediately precedes the infinitive (the exception is (5a)). It always precedes the infinitive when there is a subject (usually *it*).\textsuperscript{50} in OE the benefactive is not normally followed by the infinitive (see (3)). This is due to a difference in underlying word order between OE and ME. OE is a SOV language and would therefore have the following underlying structure for e.g. (3b) (assuming S to be base generated in post position, cf. L.: 203):

![Fig. 1.](image)

English word order changed in the late 12th century from SOV to SVO (cf. Canale 1978), therefore the underlying structure for the ME example (6) would be:

![Fig. 2.](image)

In OE the dative NP was separated from the infinitival complement by the main verb. Because of that the string is only analysable as follows:

\[
\text{NP NP V [S PRO NP V]}
\]
i.e. the infinitival subject is PRO. The for NP in ME, however, is adjacent to the infinitival verb. Since for was analysable as either a preposition or a complementizer, the ME for NP to V construction is analysable in two ways, either as in (i) or as in (ii) below:

(i) NP V for NP [s [s PRO to VP]]
(ii) NP V [s for [s NP to VP]]

The rise of this ‘new’ for NP to V construction can therefore be explained in terms of this structural ambiguity.51

Notice that this twofold analysis is likewise available for SVO constructions in which the benefactive is not preceded by for; example (5c) above is therefore analysable as:

it is good ... [s men to have churches...]

Once SVO had settled, one could, in other words, expect sentential strings like NP to VP to occur. Assuming that the for to infinitive is simply a (less frequent) alternative of the to infinitive (cf. note 47), we can now straightforwardly account for the early, 14th-century occurrence of I for to go is necessary,52 L.’s second example in column (29), which remains a mystery in an analysis that claims that to V immediately preceded by for must have NP status.

It is perhaps not coincidental that we find earlier examples of the NP (for) to V is necessary type than the for NP to V is necessary type. If it is true that the above analysis (ii) became possible after the change from SOV to SVO, when benefactive for was not yet obligatory, then it is very likely that people would have used the construction with for more naturally for analysis (i) and less readily for analysis (ii), where the benefactive element is less obvious; in the latter case the NP is more closely associated with the infinitive than with the main verb. Later, when benefactive for had become obligatory, for NP to V constructions analysed according to (ii) became more frequent.

It seems that at that stage the for to infinitive started to disappear. Once benefactive for had become obligatory, one would expect many sentences like (7) to occur:

(7) hit becomep for clerkus christ for to seruen (Langland, Piers Plowm., V.:968)
but in fact not many are found. It seems that two for's so close together were 'too much of a good thing', and that therefore the second for, as part of the infinitive, had to disappear.

5. NP Preposing

One of the changes in the grammar of LME-ENE postulated by L. concerns the introduction of the rule of NP Preposing into the transformational component. NP Preposing, cf. Chomsky (1976), accounts for the derivation of a number of different construction-types in NE. It moves a NP to the left and is structure preserving; the following structural description can therefore be assumed:

(1) NP Preposing
   \[ \text{np } X \text{ NP } \rightarrow \text{ 3 2 e} \]

where the lower case noun phrase indicates a lexically empty NP and where e denotes the trace left behind by the NP that is preposed.

L. argues that there is no evidence for the existence of this rule in the grammar of English before the period of LME-ENE. He posits the emergence of the rule in order to be able to explain the simultaneous development of a number of different construction-types, some of which survive into NE with NP Preposing playing a crucial role in their derivation. L. has no explanation for the emergence of the rule as such – it is certainly not triggered by the Transparency Principle, though once it has been established, it is utilized, according to L., to solve certain opacity problems – and the argument for the introduction of the rule at some stage hinges on the simultaneity of the development of the various construction-types connected by NP Preposing. L. holds the rule responsible for the development of

(i) non-lexical passives;
(ii) intraposition constructions;
(iii) 'personal' constructions;
(iv) subject-to-subject raising constructions.

L. himself admits "... that the relevant dates are not as spectacularly uniform as with the English modals ...", adding that NP Preposing is the best solution he knows for relating these phenomena (p. 304).

In the following we shall go into the history of the above types in some (greater or lesser) detail. We shall confront the reader with data of which the
dates of occurrence are clearly in conflict with L.'s proposal in that, for instance, certain non-lexical passives and certain intraposition constructions occur freely in OE. We shall also argue that the development of the 'personal' constructions should not be explained in terms of NP Preposing, but that it should be seen as an example of abductive change resulting solely from the SOV-to-SVO word order change dated by Canale (1978) in the late 12th century, the abductive change being triggered by the Transparency Principle. We shall conclude that the existence of NP Preposing in the grammar of OE is, contrary to L.'s claims, well-motivated and that the gradually increasing utilization of this rule in the history of English is partly due to the SOV-to-SVO change and partly due to the Transparency Principle, i.e. when NP Preposing can promote transparency, it is utilized.

5.1. Passive constructions

5.1.1. Sentential passives

L. claims that such passive constructions as existed in OE through (E)ME were not derived transformationally but should be accounted for in terms of lexical redundancy rules. His arguments are partly based on Wasow (1977), who develops criteria for distinguishing between transformational rules and lexical redundancy rules. On the basis of these criteria, with which we shall assume the reader to be acquainted and the general correctness of which we do not wish to argue here, Wasow concludes that English has two sources for passives, a lexical source and a transformational source. L. proposes to explain this overlap from a historical point of view. He claims that there is no rule of NP Preposing, the source of transformational passives, in the grammar of English before the period of LME. In such an account typically transformational passives such as indirect passives (e.g. he was given e, a book), non-local passives (e.g. he was expected e, to win), complex verb passives (e.g. Johni was found fault with ei) and prepositional passives (e.g. the matter, was looked into e,) predictably do not occur earlier than the 15th-16th centuries; NP Preposing, L. argues, had emerged by then and transformational passives are to be expected from then on. L. discusses a number of problem cases, i.e. passives that seem like transformational passives and occur earlier than is possible given L.'s proposal, and suggests alternative analyses to explain these apparent problem cases away. Since we shall give evidence in the following sections that NP Preposing did play a role in the grammar of OE, there is no obvious need for us to decide whether or not we find these alternatives convincing. We shall, on the other hand,
have to offer an account for the absence of such sentential passives as we agree did not occur in OE. We shall return to this matter in section 5.1.3.

5.1.2. Passive nominalizations

L. points out that, although the basic word order pattern in OE is SOV, “At all stages of English the ‘object’ of NPs has been generated postnominally, i.e. the destruction of Rome, even in the SOV period” (p. 302). Since passive nominalizations require a movement analysis, the evidence of the non-existence of NP Preposing in OE and (E)ME depends crucially on the non-occurrence of passive nominalizations in OE and (E)ME. This state of affairs is only too easily falsified, however. L. maintains that passive nominalizations occur only from LME onwards (p. 302), but curiously enough this statement is directly followed by his remark that the earliest example he knows of, *to Cristes slege* ‘to the slaying of Christ’, is from Ælfric, whose writings date from the late 10th, very early 11th century, so hardly LME. It is, moreover, easy to find much earlier examples. Sprockel (1973:132) gives examples from the earlier part of the Parker Chronicle, i.e. late 9th or very early 10th century, e.g. *Miercna ege* ‘out of fear for the Mercians’, *wælstowe gewald* ‘control over the battlefield’, *for Godes lufan* ‘out of love for God’. Sprockel (same page) also gives examples from a later, but still definitely OE part of the Parker Chronicle, e.g. *Engla waldend* ‘ruler of the English’, *waldendes lof* ‘praise of the ruler’. Wülfing (1894/7: 45) mentions an example from Bede (early 10th century): *on fæmenna lof* ‘in praise of women’ and one from Orosius (10th century): *pæt fifte wæs hyra nytena cwealm* ‘the fifth was the killing of their animals’. From this data we may safely conclude that the claim that there is no motivation for the rule of NP Preposing in OE is not tenable.

5.1.3. An alternative analysis

If it is not the LME emergence of NP Preposing that can be held responsible for the development of indirect passives, complex verb passives and prepositional passives (the question of non-local passives will be gone into in section 5.4) we are still stuck with the problem of accounting for the rise of such passives. Since Modern Dutch is like OE in that (i) it has SOV word order (cf. Koster 1975) and (ii) it does not allow for any of the above three passive constructions, and since the passives in question begin to develop fairly soon after the SOV-to-SVO word order change in English (cf. notes 54 and 56), a simple solution in terms of this word order change seems to present itself. Van Riemsdijk (1978:218ff) argues convincingly that the
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different passivization possibilities in Dutch and NE are due to their having different word order patterns. He argues that NP Preposing in passive constructions can only move a NP that is adjacent to the verb\(^57\) and, following Chomsky (1974), assumes an optional rule of re-analysis that has the effect of re-labeling, at the level of lexical insertion, a verb and adjacent constituent as ‘V’, provided that the string of words making up this ‘V’ is listed in the lexicon as a semantic unit. The following examples in Van Riemsdijk’s representation will serve to illustrate how the rule works and what can or cannot be regarded as a semantic unit.

(2a) np must be \(\text{[v looked v]} \text{[pp after [np babies np] pp]}\)
(2b) np must be \(\text{[v \{v looked v\} [pp after v] [np babies np] pp]}\)
(2c) babies, must be \(\text{[v \{v looked v\} [pp after v] [np ei np] pp]}\)

(3a) np was \(\text{[v set v]} \text{[np fire np] [pp to [np the house np] pp]}\)
(3b) np was \(\text{[v \{v set v\} [np fire np] [pp to v] [np the house np] pp]}\)
(3c) the house, was \(\text{[v \{v set v\} [np fire np] [pp to v] [np ei np] pp]}\)

(4a) np was \(\text{[v travelled v]} \text{[pp with [np John np] pp]}\)
(4b) np was \(\text{[v \{v travelled v\} [pp with v] [np John np] pp]}\)
(4c) \text{*John, was \{v \{v travelled v\} [pp with v] [np ei np] pp}\)

In the above examples the a-cases represent base generated structures, from which the b-cases are derived through the application of the lexical re-analysis rule; this derivation is permissible for cases (2) and (3): such combinations as look after and set fire to can be reasonably claimed to constitute semantic units and re-analysis can apply. Travel with, on the other hand, will not be listed as a semantic unit, therefore re-analysis cannot apply, (4b) cannot be derived and (4c) is correctly predicted to be ungrammatical.\(^{58}\)

Since contiguity is a necessary condition for re-analysis, it follows that languages that are SOV and prepositional, as are Modern Dutch and OE, cannot have re-analysis of V and P because the only strings that can be generated by the base rules are of the following type: P-NP-V, i.e. no contiguity of P and V. Thus the following (correct) predictions are made for Dutch:

(5a) geen aandacht werd aan zijn opmerking besteed\(^59\)
   ‘no attention was paid to his remark’
(5b) *zijn opmerking werd geen aandacht aan besteed
   ‘his remark was not paid any attention to’
(6) *de kinderen worden voor gezorgd door een buurvrouw
   ‘the children are looked after by a neighbour’
We assume the OE congeners of (5b) and (6) to be ungrammatical as well, since no grammatical cases of this kind have been attested. In note 57 we have suggested an explanation for the absence of indirect passives in OE and Modern Dutch. Direct OE passives are recorded by Visser, e.g.

(7) us ys cild  accesned
    us is  child born
    'a child has been born to us' (Ælfric, V.: 2142)
(8) us ys sunu forgiven
    us is son  given
    'we have been given a son' (Ælfric, V.: 2143)

Visser records no OE examples of complex verb passives like our Dutch example (5a), he only records examples (both the preposition stranding type and the 'direct object' type) as occurring from the 14th century onwards. We have no explanation to offer here except that many complex verb expressions do not seem to have existed in OE, cf. OE heorcian 'give heed to'.

The conclusion we feel we may draw at this stage is that our account is superior to an account that leaves the non-occurrence in OE of the above-mentioned cases unaccounted for (cf. Lieber 1979).

5.2. Intraposition

L. convincingly argues (p. 204) that so-called split construction such as the following:

the King's son of England

can only be derived by means of Intraposition from

np son (of) the King of England

Intraposition, a term used for mnemonic purposes, is in fact a case of NP Preposing: the NP the King is moved by this rule into the base generated empty position to its left, as illustrated in

the King's son e, of England

L. claims that such constructions became possible only after the emergence of NP Preposing, i.e. in LME. He offers some suggestions for the later
disappearance of constructions like these which we shall not go into here. L.'s claim is not tenable, however, since the construction does exist in OE and EME. Shores (1971:168) states that in classical OE the genitive constituent was frequently separated by the governing word in the following way: Ælfredes godsum cyninges ‘King Alfred’s godson’. Shores also gives a number of similar EME examples from the Peterborough Chronicle, 12th century): Æs Casere wif of Sexlande ‘the emperor of Saxony’s wife’, Æs eorles sunu of Angeow ‘the count of Anjou’s son’, Æ kinges dohter Henries ‘King Henry’s daughter’. Wülfling (1894/7: 51) also remarks ‘1st der Genetiv mit einer Apposition verbunden, so steht dies von ihm getrennt: Æs kyninges Æawe Bosiriþis’ ‘King Bosiriþis’ custom’ (from Orosius, 10th century). Sprockel (1973:134) makes a similar observation: ‘If a headword is modified by two genitives, one of which stands in apposition with the other, the headword is usually placed after the first’, e.g. Ælfredes sweostor cyninges ‘King Alfred’s sister’ (from the Parker Chronicle, 10th century).

Now it may of course be possible that this data can be explained in terms other than NP Preposing, but in the absence of such an alternative, we assume this data to be confirmation of the claim that NP Preposing was part of the grammar of OE.

5.3. Impersonal constructions

Van der Gaaf (1904: 2) characterizes the change from so-called ‘impersonal’ constructions to personal constructions as follows: ‘... in O.E. and early M.E. there were a certain number of verbs ... which governed a noun or pronoun in the dative or accusative and ... in late M.E. the relation between these verbs and the noun and pronouns so governed, became reversed, so that the former came to be governed by the latter, which became the subject of the sentence’. Butler (1975) (cf. L.:233) distinguishes four types of OE impersonal constructions:

(i) without a complement, hine hungred ‘he is hungry’
(ii) with a ‘causative object’, usually in the genitive, Æeah Ææt fole [sic] Æyrste Æere lare ‘although that people thirsted for knowledge’ or with a prepositional phrase, menn scaman for misdeedan, ‘men [sic] are ashamed because of misdeeds’
(iii) with a that clause, or
(iv) with an infinitival complement.

L.’s account of the disappearance from 16th-century English of this impersonal construction is partly based on his assumption that the rule of NP
Preposing only entered the grammar at the stage of LME. If that assumption is not tenable – as is evidenced by the data given in the above sections on passive nominalizations and split constructions – an alternative explanation must be found for the facts concerning the impersonal construction.

5.3.1. Lightfoot's analysis

In this section we shall only deal with L.'s proposals concerning syntactic change. In the section following this one, we shall go into the question of whether or not there was concomitant semantic change as well.

L.'s analysis is heavily based on Jespersen's (MEG III 11.2) examples illustrating the impersonal-to-personal change, which are the following:

(9a) þam cynge licodon peran
(9b) the king liceden peares
(9c) the king liked pears
(9d) he liked pears

Sentence (9a), it is claimed, must be analysed as an example of OVS word order, because of the agreement between the NP peran and the verb (both plural). In (9b) the object NP the king has lost its (dative) case, but the verb still has its plural ending. Because of the loss of inflections on nouns (no case marker) and verbs (no difference between singular and plural), (9c) can be either analysed as having OVS or as having SVO word order. By the time SVO had become the established word order, a SVO analysis of (9c) is the more likely one, and the occurrence of sentences like (9d) confirms that the change from impersonal to personal has become a fact.

The following is a rough sketch of L.'s proposals. OE canonical word order being SOV, (9a) cannot be base generated. L. proposes that NP Postposing moves the subject NP into rightmost position as follows:

\[(10) \quad \text{peran} \quad \text{þam} \quad \text{cygne} \quad \text{licodon} \quad \text{peran} \]

the result of this operation being structure (9a). There is one problem with this analysis. L.'s theory of grammar incorporates trace theory; this theory says, roughly, that movement rules leave behind a trace in the position from which they move a node; only if this node c-commands its trace can the latter be properly bound; surface structures containing a trace that is not properly
bound are ungrammatical (cf. Fiengo 1977). The result of the application of NP Postposing on structure (10), i.e. (11):

(11) ti ḷam cynge licodon peran;

represents a case in which the trace, \( t_i \), is not properly bound by the NP that has been moved, peran. Moreover, there are other objections to be made against L.'s proposals concerning sentence (9b), which he analyses as an example of OVS structure (still) occurring at the time when English word order has changed to SVO. L. claims therefore that the underlying structure of (9b) is as follows:

(12) peares liceden the king

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
S & V & O \\
\end{array}
\]

In order for (9b) to be derived, first NP Postposing must apply, moving the NP peares into final position, the result being:

(13) ti liceden the king peares;

The second step involves NP Preposing, which applies to (12) and moves the NP the king into the now vacated subject-position, yielding:

(14) the kingj liceden tj peares;

Two of the objections we have against this analysis are actually pointed out by L. himself, when he says "In fact, there may be a problem, insofar as there is no empty NP position for the first movement; this might suffice to disbar permutational processes under the usual requirements for structure-preservation" (p. 238) and that such a derivation "... would be opaque to the language learner, and difficult to figure out". He cannot be said to make any serious attempt at meeting such difficulties when he continues "However, the derivation may have been possible; such a preposing rule was available at this time".

5.3.2. An alternative

In the above we have discarded the possibility of either NP Preposing (cf. sections 5.1.2 and 5.2 for empirical and note 62 for theoretical arguments) or NP Postposing (cf. note 61) having played a part in the loss of the OE
impersonal construction. In this section we shall present counter-evidence to the claim – which lies at the heart of L.’s argument – that OE verbs such as lician and pyncan underwent a reversal in their meaning at some stage in ME. The first verb, it is commonly assumed, changed from ‘cause pleasure to’ to ‘derive pleasure from’, the second from ‘seem’ to ‘think’. Before presenting the reader with the relevant data, we shall first have to address the question what exactly it is that constitutes an impersonal construction, because this is in fact where L.’s opinions and ours diverge. Crucial for L.’s account is his characterization of impersonal verbs as verbs that “… could occur without surface subjects in the normal position” (italics ours) as well as his proposal to “… gloss over the distinction whether there is truly no surface subject (rains) or no subject in the normal position (seems that Fred left) …” (p. 229). We hold the view that the impersonal construction must be characterized as a construction without a syntactic subject (cf. also Visser 1963/73: 19–25) and that the meaning of the verb as used in the (OE and ME) impersonal construction is the converse of its meaning in constructions with a syntactic subject. Our data, we feel, speaks for itself:

(15) his is min se leofa Sunu, on þæm me (DAT) wel licode
this is my the beloved Son, in whom me well liked
‘this is my beloved Son, in whom I took great pleasure’ (Blick. Horn., Visser (V.): p. 21)

(16) on þæm me (DAT) wel gelicæþ
‘in whom me well likes
‘in whom I take great pleasure’ (OE Gospel, V.: p. 24)

(17) ne þe (DAT) on þinum selegescotum swiðe licaþ
nor you in your dwelling very likes
‘nor do you take great pleasure in your dwelling’ (Paris Ps., Bessenger: 742)

In the above examples we have glossed lician as ‘like’ and ‘take pleasure in’; ‘please’ is, in view of the syntactic structure exhibited, not a possible candidate here. The reverse is the case in the following examples. Notice that examples (15) and (19)–(20) are from the same text.

(18) þam wife (DAT) þa word (PLU) wel licodon (PLU)
the woman the words much pleased
‘the words pleased the woman very much’ (Beowulf, van der Gaaf (vdG.): 7)

(19) hl ... genaman þēs folces (GEN) þē (PLU) ... him selost licodon (PLU)
they took of the people what them most pleased
‘they took from the people those things that pleased them most’ (Blick. Hom., vdG.: 8)

(20) æghwylc man (NOM) þurh gode dæda Gode lician sceal
every man through good deeds God please must
‘every man must please God through good deeds’ (Blick. Hom., B&T: 637)
From these examples it is clear that the two meanings must have existed side by side from OE times onwards. Chaucer still uses *like* in both senses, cf.:

(21) the angel seyde, God liketh thy requeste
   ‘the angel said, God likes your request’ (Cant. Tales, Robinson (Rob.): 210)
(22) it liketh to youre fader and to me that I yow wedde
   ‘it pleases your father and me that I marry you’ (Cant. Tales, Rob.: 104-5)

The following example, again from Chaucer, very nicely illustrates the change that must have taken place:

(23) for certes, lord, so wel us liketh (3SING) yow (OBJ) and al youre werk and evere han (PLUR) doon, that...
   ‘for certainly, lord, we so much like you and all your actions and always have done so, that...’ (Cant. Tales, Rob.: 102)

*us liketh yow and al youre werk* seems a straightforward example of the old, subjectless, impersonal construction but from the way the sentence continues it becomes clear that *us* is to be construed as a subject, in spite of its objective form and of the singular form of the verb. Apparently the fact that subjects have become obligatory and that SVO has become the canonical word order is of overriding importance. L. argues convincingly to the same effect except that he suggests that *us* is base generated in post verbal position with NP Preposing being responsible for its surface position. Our analysis is the more transparent of the two, an OVO construction is re-analysed as SVO, the verb retaining its original meaning of ‘like’. This re-analysis must also be held responsible for the disappearance of the ‘please’ interpretation as it became more and more difficult, due to the loss of verbal and nominal inflections, to keep the two constructions apart. As far as *pyncan* is concerned, there is unequivocal evidence that already in OE this verb is interpretable both as ‘seem’ and as ‘think’, ‘consider’, although hardly any mention is made of the latter meaning. Crucial evidence is provided by cases in which *pyncan* is used in the passive, which suggests that the complement of *pyncan* in certain cases must have been analysed as direct object. Consider the following data:

(24) þa Finnas, him þuhte, ond þa Beormas sprecon neah an gepeode
     the Laplanders, him thought, and the Biarmians spoke nearly one language
     ‘the Laplanders, he thought, and the Biarmians spoke almost the same language’
     (Alfred’s Oros., Wyatt 1919: 13)
(25) ďu hi to deapē, gif ďe (DAT) gedafen ķince (SUBJ SING)
condemn you them to death, if you fitting think
‘condemn them to death, if you think fit’ (Exon., B&T: 1085)
(26) ķince ďe (DAT) miht ďu libban
thinks you can you live
‘do you think you can live?’ (Bede, B&T: 1085)

These are examples of *pyncan* in the impersonal construction, i.e. without a syntactic subject. The following data shows that the interpretation of ‘think’ or ‘consider’ must have been available in OE:

(27) se leoma ... wās swīpe lang gehuht suð east scinende
the light was very long thought south east shining
‘the light which shone from it towards the south east was considered to be very long’
(A.S. Chron., Plummer 1892:233)
(28) ďær biō swīpe micel and swīpe mære on wuldra se ķe ľast biō geduht on ķam
there is very much and very great in glory he who least is thought in this life wunigende
life living
‘there, he who is considered least while living in this life is very much honoured’
(Ælfric, Hom., Pope 1967: 446)
(29) ľam cyng (DAT) wās gehuht swilce he of ylde to iuguðe gewænd ware
the king was thought as if he from old age to youth turned was
‘in the eyes of the king it was as if he had changed from an old man into a young one’
(Apol. of Tyre, Wyatt 1962: 31)

In (27)–(29) the direct object clause of the impersonal construction has become the subject of the passive construction. Notice that in (29) the dative NP is retained in the passive. The following data shows that *pyncan* must have had the meaning of ‘seem’ when used in a non-impersonal construction:

(30) lytel ŕuhtic ic leoda (GEN) bearnun (DAT)
small seemed I men children
‘I seemed small to the children of man’ (Exon., B&T: 1085)
(31) ne ŕuhtic he him ne ľinnon swa fæger swa he utan ŕuhtic
nor seemed he him not inside as fair as he outside seemed
‘and he did not seem to him so fair within as he outwardly seemed’ (Bt., B&T: 1085)
(32) hie ... ķam ... were (DAT) geonge ŕuhton (PLUR) men
they the man young seemed men
‘they seemed young men to the man’ (Genesis, B&T: 1085)

(30)–(32) all are (non-passive) constructions with a surface subject and the only possible interpretation of *pyncan* in these cases is ‘seem’. With respect
to *pyncan* we can draw the same conclusion as we did for *lician*. The OVO construction, with the verb meaning ‘think’, is re-analysed as an SVO construction. An example analogous to (23) for *lician* is provided by L. on p. 234:

(33) ase oft ase ich am ishriuen, euer me þuncheð me unshriuen

as often as I am shriven, ever me thinks me unshriven

‘how ever often I am shriven, I always think myself not shriven’ (Ancrene Riwle)

The ‘seem’ interpretation of *pyncan* disappears because it cannot continue to exist side by side with the ‘think’ interpretation once the syntactic differences between the two constructions have disappeared.

In this section (for more details see Fischer and van der Leek, forthcoming), we have argued that the only change involved in the loss of the OE impersonal construction concerns the re-analysis of OVO as SVO constructions, which can be said to have been triggered by the Transparency Principle. Neither NP Postposing nor NP Preposing needs to be invoked to explain the change, nor need any semantic change be postulated.

### 5.4. Subject-to-Subject Raising

Subject-to-Subject Raising (henceforth SR) constructions such as (35) are derived by means of NP Preposing from underlying structures such as (34):

(34) np happened they to meet

(35) theyi happened ei to meet

L. claims that the SR construction was a late ME development. One argument that he brings forward, from Traugott (1972), runs as follows. Certain OE constructions are open to either a SR analysis or a sentential subject analysis. That is to say, an OE structure like (36) could be either analysed as indicated in (37a), i.e. as a SR construction, or as indicated in (37b), i.e. as a construction with a (reduced) sentential complement that follows the main verb, functioning as its subject (the glosses are L.’s, p. 300):

(36) ne gehyncð þē (DAT) svele gewin noht lustbære

not seems to-you such a battle not agreeable

(37a) ne gehyncð þē NP[swele gewin] [s ei lustbære]

(37b) ne gehyncð þē [s swele gewin lustbære]
Other parallel constructions, it is argued, necessarily require a reduced sentential subject analysis, cf.:

(38) þonne þuhte (SING) eow [s þas tida (PLUR) beteran]
    then seemed to-you the times better

The point is that in (38) the NP þas tida, being plural, cannot be the subject of þuhte, which is singular; therefore a SR analysis for (38) is out of the question. The conclusion that is drawn on the basis of these examples is that the reduced sentential subject analysis suffices for all OE cases. If, however, this line of arguing holds water, OE must also allow for a SR analysis, as is clear from the following example (cf. also our examples (30), (31) and (32) in the above section):

(39) ealle (him) brimu (PLUR) blodige þuhton (PLUR)
    all (to him) seas bloody seemed
    ‘all the seas seemed bloody (to him)’ (Exod., B&T: 1085)

However this may be, there are other problems with L.’s analysis concerning the development of structures like (35).

First of all it is not very clear what L. means when he states (p. 300) that “The development of John happened to leave was part of the demise of the impersonal verbs …” unless all he means is that the SR construction could not have arisen if the impersonal construction had not ‘demised’. Secondly, it is hard to accept L.’s argument (p. 300) that “… if John happened to leave results from the application of NP Preposing, John must be moved not from the dative position but from the subject of the lower clause [italics ours]. Crucial evidence exists in sentences where the dative and embedded subject are not co-referential…” as in the following examples (L.’s glosses, p. 301):

(40) þa gelamp him þæt his lif wearð geendod
    then happened him that his life was ended
(41) me þyncheð þæt me fæder nið no whit felle
    it seems to me that my father is not (a bit cruel)
(42) it chaunced him that… the scholars picked a quarrel unto his servauntes

L.’s point seems to be that if preposing of the dative had been responsible for the development of structures like (35), one should also have expected structures like the following:

(43) *he happened that his life was ended
If we follow this line of argument, however, there seems to be no explanation for the fact that the following sentence is equally unacceptable (cf. example (42)):

(44) *the scholars happened to him to pick a quarrel with his servants

Moreover, L. cannot account for the LME occurrence of sentences like:

(45) and after she happed she died (La Tour Landry, vG: 123)

The subject of happed cannot be the result of SR, therefore it must have developed from the original dative.

There seems, moreover, to be no ME evidence showing that happen ever occurred in sentences where the dative and the subject of the complement clause are not co-referential, i.e. there is not, as far as we know, a ME parallel of (40)–(42) with the verb happen; in all cases there is either an infinitive complement whose subject is controlled by the dative, cf.:

(46) it hapnyt Robert the king to pass till god

‘it befell King Robert to pass to God’ (Barbour’s Bruce, vG: 17)

or there is a tensed complement whose subject is co-referential with the dative, cf.:

(47) hit happed her on a derke night, she fell into a welle

‘it befell her on a dark night she fell into a well’ (La Tour Landry, vG: 18)

There is another piece of evidence that makes it reasonable to assume that re-analysis of the dative NP as subject is involved in the development of SR constructions, that is the co-occurrence in one and the same text of an example of the SR construction and an example of a dative NP in subject position and an infinitival complement, cf. (48) and (49) respectively:

(48) miche harme hapnit to falle on aither part (Destr. of Troy, vG: 27)

(49) there hym happyt to here of his harme first (Destr. of Troy, vG: 17)

In (48) miche harme cannot be interpreted as an ‘experiencer’, therefore it cannot have been a dative NP, (48) therefore is an unquestionable example of the SR construction. It seems reasonable therefore that (49) is analysed as a SR construction, along with (48).
The above leads us to the conclusion that SR constructions with happen developed in two separate, though simultaneous, steps:

(i) along with other impersonals the dative NP is re-analysed as subject;
(ii) because of (i), happen, originally a control verb, is re-analysed as a SR verb.

Step (ii) is a necessary consequence of step (i) if one assumes that the meaning of happen does not permit an object interpretation of the complement clause (in this respect happen differs from the ‘pure’ OE impersonal verbs discussed in the previous section; this is not surprising seeing that happen is a 13th-century Scandinavian loan word). Once the dative has become re-analysed as surface subject, the complement clause must be re-analysed as a SR complement: otherwise one would have to assume that happen had two underlying (and surface) subjects. This re-analysis, then, involved a change in strict subcategorization for happen: before the change, happen selected a (dative) object as well as a subject complement, after the change only a subject complement. This change, naturally, went hand in hand with a slight shift in meaning from ‘befall’ (semantically a two-place predicate) to ‘chance’ (semantically a one-place predicate). This change in interpretation is, we feel, confirmed by the fact that one comes across many ME examples with happen + dative NP followed by a clause with die (or a synonymous expression) as main verb, e.g. our example (46). Death can befall one, but the interpretation of death as a chance occurrence appears to be incongruous, and this explains why NE happen is not normally used in such contexts. Our example (45), and after she happed she died, is most interesting in that it represents a transitional stage: the original dative has become the subject, but the verb, not yet re-analysed as a SR verb, seems to have retained its original meaning of ‘befall’. We feel this corroborates our hypothesis that steps (i) and (ii) are separate, though logically connected (example (45) is the only one of its sort that we know of) steps in the development of SR constructions.

6. Conclusion

In the above we have pointed out a number of serious drawbacks with respect to the analyses presented by L. He assumes differences between the grammars of OE/ME and NE which are, in view of existing data, highly dubious (e.g. the adjectival status of quantifiers until the 16th century, the NP status of infinitives until the 16th century). He has to simply postulate the
emergence of the rule of NP Preposing, not being able to offer any explanation for such a drastic innovation. L. makes no principled distinction between simultaneous changes that necessarily follow from a grammar change and those which happen to follow from it (e.g. the impersonals versus the non-lexical passives). The crucial notion ‘simultaneity’ is treated with such liberality (L. talks of ‘rough simultaneity’, p. 304, or ‘relatively clean’ data, p. 194) that it tends to lose its credibility.

All this is due to the fact that L. is only interested in explaining changes in terms of the Transparency Principle. His proposals concerning re-analysis have in common that (1) a number of piecemeal, arbitrary changes lead up to re-analysis; (2) re-analysis is necessary because it eliminates intolerable opacity; (3) a set of simultaneous but apparently unrelated changes is symptomatic for each re-analysis. (1)–(3), one is given to understand, are defining properties illustrating L.’s view of “… linguistic change progressing as a function of chance and necessity” (p. viii).

In this view, we conclude, changes are either arbitrary or necessary; for this reason L. assumes that one has not explained a change unless one has shown it to be a necessary change, cf. p. 281: “... a set of simultaneous changes in the distribution of passive expressions in English has been accounted for in terms of some formal machinery within the EST. In this case, claims have been made about the proper formulation of the changes but not about why the change took place”.

One should, however, recognize that there are also changes which are neither arbitrary nor necessary; such changes are predictable in the sense that one can foretell that, if certain conditions are met, the change may take place, not that it will take place. Such changes result from the fact that, due to some other change, certain surface structures allow of more than one syntactic analysis whereas in an earlier stage they did not. Such changes do not have the effect of reducing opacity; on the contrary, it can be said that in this manner optimal advantage is taken of the possibilities provided by the (theory of) grammar.

The rise of the for NP to V... construction and of the complex verb and prepositional passives represent, we claim, cases of this type of change (we shall call it ‘optional re-analysis’ as opposed to L.’s ‘radical re-analysis’). Optional re-analysis has the following properties: (1) certain unrelated changes create syntactic ambiguity; (2) re-analysis then applies optionally; (3) new surface patterns arise on the basis of possibilities opened up by this re-analysis. The for NP to V... development may serve as an illustration:
(1) SOV → SVO; benefactive for is introduced;
(2) NP V for NP [s [\text{PRO to V}...]] is optionally re-analysed as NP V [s for [s NP to V...]];
(3) Constructions like for John to get away with it is intolerable arise.

On the basis of this and similar re-analyses that we have presented in the preceding sections, we tentatively conclude that
(i) the disappearance of constructions is likely to be due to radical re-analysis;
(ii) the (gradual) emergence of new constructions in the language is likely to be due to optional re-analysis.

Not only will the language learner choose the simplest possible grammar, he will also tend to exhaust the possibilities offered to him.

Notes

1 We shall not discuss L.'s analyses which deal with other languages than English since we are not competent to judge these. Though there is much to be said about L.'s proposals concerning the development of Wh-movement in English, we shall leave it to others to deal with these.
2 As L. points out on p. 137, it may not be necessary to postulate a Transparency Principle as an independent principle of grammar, that is, "... it may be possible to regard the principle as a specific consequence of a general evaluation measure ... the child learning the language will pick the simplest grammar consistent with the data". Since L. continues to speak of an independent Transparency Principle throughout the rest of his book, we shall do the same here.
3 L. mentions one other change here, the introduction of a special rule feature for epistemic modals; we find his proposal highly dubious, believing that he has created a problem that does not exist if one accepts NP Preposing as being part of the grammar of OE.
4 Cf. L., p. 83ff concerning the categorial status of aspectual have and progressive be.
'M' is to be interpreted as dominating only one modal auxiliary.
5 Carlson (p. 14) more carefully speaks about instances of overlapping.
6 See Carlson, pp. 16-7.
7 The example L. gives is incorrectly quoted from Carlson, ælc wunde hit gehælæp 'each wounds it heals' (L., p. 170) should of course read ælce wunde ... otherwise it still does not look like the desired plural (ælc = singular, ælce = plural).
8 It cannot be accidental that these three types are exceptional in that they can occur in both unusual positions. That Carlson and, less obviously, L. use these three groups twice to prove that adjectives in general can occupy quantifier slots is rather a weak point in their argumentation.
9 Most of these adjectives are formations consisting of an adverb, in(ne), tó midden, ūte, forþ, ufe etc. and the preposition weard. In OE they can all be used in their adjectival form (so without an adverbial ending) as adverbs with the exception of tóweard, but this can be used as a preposition.
10 Examples can be freely found. The following are taken from Bosworth and Toller and from Whitelock (1967):
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inneweard: tō inneweardum ðām wēstene (B&T) ‘towards the middle of the waste land’; ðā com of inneweardre ðāre byrigenne swā mycel swētnesse stencg (B&T) ‘from within the fortress came an odour of such great sweetness’;
úteward: ðīi miila fram ðæm mīdan útewardum (B&T) ‘4 miles from the outside of the estuary’;
norþeweard: and tōemnes þæm lande norþeweardum (Whitelock: 19) ‘in a northern direction’. It should be noted that the sense of direction is also implied by the use of prepositions like tō, of, fram, tōemnes.

It is interesting that in these cases the OE adjectives can also be translated by a NE adjective. This is hardly possible with the examples in note 10.

It is rather unfortunate that she takes these two examples of undeclined adjectives because these two adjectives (if they are adjectives) look very much like quantifiers and we do not yet know that quantifiers are also adjectives.

The only exceptions are comparative forms of the adjective and ordinal numerals.

Kellner (1892: 138) gives two examples where the possessive pronoun does occur here (se heora cyning ‘the their king’, seo heora iugod ‘the their youth’, seo hire gebyrd ‘the her birth’), but only with forms of the third person. These are in fact genitive forms, and it is very usual for genitive forms to stand in between determiner and noun in OE and ME. For example, se hellwara cyning ‘the of the inhabitants of hell king’ (Whitelock: 14), seet þæm seoþon geara mīdan hungre ‘in the seven years’ great famine’ (Orosius I,10) and in ME þe beres deþ ‘the bear’s death’ (Manning, Handlyng Synne, 1.4128).

L. (p. 170) gives the example hæleþ min se leofa freond ‘hero my the dear friend’ without any reference. This rather looks like a contamination of two of Carlson’s examples, i.e. hæleþ min se leofa ‘hero my the dear’ (p. 22) and min se leofa freond ‘my the dear friend’ (p. 23).

It would be surprising for any grammarian of NE to accept these examples as normal adjectival slots. We think this should not be done for OE or ME either.

See e.g. the examples in Mustanoja (1960: 197) with oon and Kellner (1892: 138).

This type will be discussed below.

See also examples (5b, f, g) on p. 173.

They have no distinction between ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ forms. All numerals higher than three are usually uninflcted when used attributively, see Quirk and Wrenn (1955: 37).

In fact in two examples (a and c on p. 174), L. uses numerals as if they were quantifiers: boþe two serves as evidence that pre-quantifiers in OE and ME could occur adjacent to each other.

In that case we could also use NE poetry to show that adjectives do still occur postnominally. We have picked out three examples, one from Hopkins (The Escorial 7. ll. 7-8) and two from Wordsworth (The Prelude Bk I, ll. 14-6; 44):

Wherin beneath the cornice, horsemen rode
With form divine, a fiery chivalry

With a heart
Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty,
I look about,

.... nor wanting punctual service high
Excluding of course the three suspect types mentioned above and cases where more than one adjective was involved. In those cases one or two adjectives could follow the NP (see Quirk and Wrenn 1955: 88).

Oblique forms of call which could also be used adverbially are only eal(l), ealles, sometimes ealle, but that is nearly always accompanied by mid.

Examples where call can only be adjectival are:
- ond (be) dā bēc be fullan ealle geliornod hæfdon (Whitelock (Wh.): 6) 'and (who) had fully learned all the books'
- hie hie wendon ealla (Wh.: 6) 'they translated them all'

Other examples where they agree in gender, number and case with the NP:
- ðæt land was eall gebun (Wh.: 18) 'that land was all cultivated'
- hit is eal weste (Wh.: 17) 'it lies all waste'

E.g. the example given by Carlson

hīs feallād hēgen on ōnne hītt (sic) (p. 30) 'they fall both in a well'

also,
- ond þā hergas wēron þā gegaderode hēgen... (Wh.: 37) 'and when the armies were both assembled'

Bennett (1979:848) also questions "... whether the OE pre-quantifiers really shared all the distributional characteristics of adjectives". He mentions specifically that most pre-quantifiers (with the exception of few, much and many (in inverted order)) could not occur in predicative function.

This also weakens the case of the quantifiers. With the modals, the changes before and after re-analysis were clearly different.

L. (p. 180) also has examples of quantifiers which in OE could never have an -s, e.g. boths. This should not surprise us, because it was usual also for nouns to acquire an -s genitive in spite of the fact that the original OE form did not have one.

In fact the lag between the two constructions is not "... consistently about 200 years". E.g. type (29)c (p. 187) it is necessary a man for to go is found between 1300 and 1380, whereas (30)c it is necessary for a man to go first appears in 1385. The same applies to (29)i, the for to V construction is found between 1374 and 1590, and the corresponding for NP to V construction, (30)i, is first found in 1380. It is also important to note that the two constructions in most cases are used side by side for a considerable time.

See Calaway 1913: 2.
See Wright 1908: 250–1; Callaway 1913: 2.
See Kellner 1895: 1–24. Consider the following examples taken from Chaucer's Tale of Melibee (Robinson 1957); each pair shows that one and the same verb can be followed by either a to-infinitive or a bare infinitive:

1. ... and beden hym ful ofte his wordes for to abregge (p. 169)
   ... and biddeth hym do synne (p. 180)
2. ... ye ne oghte nat... youreself to destroye (p. 168)
   wherefore us oghte... have patience (p. 168)
3. this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir housbonde for to wepe and crie (p. 168)
   thou hast suffred hem entre in to thyn herte... (p. 178)
4. and therefore yow is bettre to hyde youre counsell... (p. 172)
   this is to seyn, that thee is bettre holde thy tonge... (p. 174)

The so-called 'gerund', with which L. compares the to-infinitive and which is generally accepted to be a NP, does have these three properties. Cf. also another Germanic language
like Dutch, where the infinitive does occur with all three properties (examples of type (i) are hard to find but do exist):

(g) een keer hard schreeuwen doet een mens goed
one time hard shout (INF) does a man good
‘to shout out loud now and then does a man good’

(h) het huilen staat me nader dan het lachen
the cry (INF) stands me closer than the laugh (INF)
‘I’m nearer to crying than to laughing’

(i) haar verspringen stelt niet veel voor
her far jump (INF) amounts not much
‘her long jump does not amount to much’

35 Cf. Callaway (1913: 78) who notes: “Aside from the inflected infinitive made up of the preposition to plus a dative of the verbal noun in -ne, which we regard as a unit ... I have found no clear case of an infinitive used as the object of a preposition”. The few instances Callaway has found can all be otherwise explained. The most frequent occurrence is after butan, which Callaway interprets as a conjunctive adverb. It is notable that in NE the to-infinitive still occurs in a similar position i.e. after but and except (see Jespersen vol. V, pp. 214–7). Visser (p. 1031ff) states that in OE the idiom (i.e. the to-infinitive after prepositions) does not seem to occur; the very earliest examples are found from 1200 onwards.

36 L. (p. 192) has examples dated 1879 (iv), 1724 (v), 1834 (vi), 1678 (vii).

37 L. (p. 194, and note) explains these away as a few “tenacious idioms”, but gives no evidence that they should be looked upon as idioms. He states further that this construction seems to him to be finished as a productive process by the date given (c. 1550). One might well wonder whether it ever was a productive process: Visser (p. 1031) states that the construction “... never seems to have achieved the status of established idiom, except with for” (for to go etc.).

38 L. says in fact “his own intuitions about ME” (our italics). Presumably, he means OE, since his examples are clearly older than ME.

39 L. remarks that in the examples of (29) for behaves in an equivocal manner in that sometimes for to V is replaced by a NP (for is here an infinitive marker), sometimes by a PP (where for is a preposition).

40 We have taken another example belonging to the same type from Visser (p. 986) because L.’s example is rather obscure out of context, as indeed his substitution shows.

41 for clearly has a different function here from the other examples. It expresses ‘purpose’. This meaning is quite lost in L.’s substitution.

42 Most of the examples which fall under this type in Visser (p. 1026) have an infinitive before and after than. In those cases an infinitive would certainly be correct in NE, e.g.:
   bettre it is to dye of bitter deeth than for to liuen in swich wise
   ‘it is better to die a bitter death than to live on in this way’

43 to take keep is a ME idiom meaning ‘to pay heed/attention to’. We thought it correct to translate the idiom in our substitution rather than take it over literally; this results, as can be seen from L.’s substitution, in a completely different construction.

44 According to Visser (p. 987) from which the example is taken as for has to be taken together; it has an explanatory function. Our substitution is not perfect, but neither is L.’s.

45 L.’s substitution results in a quite different construction. In ME it was not unusual to leave out the ‘personal’ object after verbs like senden.

46 For righthand dislocation see Ross (1967).
This is the opinion of most scholars (e.g. Kerkhof 1966:49). In a study by Quirk and Svartvik (1970) investigating the differences in usage of the various infinitives in Chaucer, the data makes clear that the for to-infinitive is used less often than the to-infinitive, but that it can be used in all the grammatical functions (slots) in which the to-infinitive is used (see especially their tables 2 and 3).

These expressions are often called 'semi-impersonals'. For more examples see Stoffel 1894: 60. Mustanoja (1960: 383) also mentions that for NP to V constructions are first found after 'impersonal expressions'.

See OED s.v. for, senses 13 and 17.

In ME it becomes more and more difficult to have an empty subject (see also section 5.3.2). Consequently there are many more examples of (5c) than of (5a).

Zandvoort (1949) notices with reference to Dutch (which is a SOV language like OE) that only analysis (i) is possible and not (ii). He suggests that the second analysis came to be available in English because in English with its very strict word order, the for + NP element always precedes the VP, whereas in Dutch voor + NP can occupy various positions in the clause. Zandvoort's suggestion is essentially correct; we believe that the difference between Dutch and English is due to the difference in underlying word order.

Our account only explains the possible occurrence of NP for to go is necessary, it does not explain the nominative case of the NP.

There are in English two passive congers for many complex constructions, e.g. (ii) and (iii) for (i) (cf. note 59 with regard to (ii)):

(i) many politicians found fault with Carter's proposals
(ii) fault was found e; with Carter's proposals by many politicians
(iii) Carter's proposals were found fault with e; by many politicians

Wasow (1977: 345) regards Carter's proposals in (i) as the direct object of the lexical verb find fault with, so (iii) in his view is an example of a lexical passive. L. (p. 267ff) argues that the data resulting from the application of Wasow's criteria evidences that either form of the passive must be subsumed under a transformational rule.

Lieber (1979: 671–2) points out that Visser mentions a considerable number of 14th-century complex verb passives and prepositional passives (and even one 13th-century example of the latter), and that both types gradually increase in number from then on. She argues that this gradual increase need not reflect an actual increase in usage in spoken language and suggests reasons why the constructions may have occurred less frequently in earlier manuscripts (for instance that the constructions gradually lost their colloquial status). What she suggests, in fact, is that the total absence of the constructions in OE manuscripts need not mean that the constructions were not in usage in OE spoken language. While we agree that the 13th- and 14th-century data recorded by Visser must not be left unaccounted for (as is the case in L.'s analysis) we maintain that the absolute non-occurrence of similar data for OE should preferably not be left unaccounted for either.

Lightfoot (1979b) has arrived at the same conclusions and now argues that all passives, both in OE and in NE, must be regarded as transformational passives.

There are a few exceptions to this, the best known example being:

(i) de reizigers worden verzocht uit te stappen
   'the travellers are requested to alight'

However, such a construction only occurs when the direct object is a non-finite Š. This non-finite Š cannot occur in initial position in the passive construction:

(ii) *uit te stappen wordt de reizigers verzocht
to alight is the travellers requested
Instead of (ii) there are two passive alternatives:

(iii) de reizigers wordt verzocht uit te stappen
the travellers is requested to alight

(iv) er wordt de reizigers verzocht uit te stappen
there is the travellers requested to alight

We suggest that constructions like (i) have developed as a result of a re-analysis of the following OVS construction as SVO – the O (here in fact an indirect object) being singular here makes such a re-analysis possible:

(v) de reiziger werd verzocht uit te stappen
‘the traveller was requested to alight’

Notice that a case like (i) is an isolated case and should not lead to the conclusion that such passivization cases are ‘on the rise’, cf.:

(vi) *hij werd verteld zich kalm te houden
    he was told to keep quiet

(vii) hem werd verteld zich kalm te houden
    him was told to keep quiet

(viii) er werd hem verteld zich kalm te houden
    there was him told to keep quiet

As far as OE is concerned, Lieber (1979: 686) claims that “The indirect passive was therefore a possible, albeit rare construction from earliest OE times ...”, ‘therefore’ because of the following data:

(ix) he cus6 6st he haten wss
    ‘he spoke that which he was commanded’ (Alfred, Bede, Visser (V.): 2144)

(x) ic eom forgifen fram þam ælmihtigan gode ... eow to gefjingienne
    ‘I am given from the Almighty God ... to conciliate you’ (Ælfric, Sts Lives, V.: 2144)

(xi) swa ic eom forgifen from þam ælmihtigan gode nu þissere byrig
    ‘so I am given from the Almighty God now this town’ (Ælfric, Sts Lives, V.: 2136)

(xii) he was isevan Arthur to haldan to ʒisle
    ‘he was given Arthur to hold hostage’ (Layamon 21935 (sic.))

We should like to question Lieber’s conclusion. It must be pointed out that hatan in (ix) also occurs with the accusative, and (ix) may therefore be an example of a direct passive. (x), it is interesting to note, represents a case like the above Dutch example (i) and is possibly explainable in similar terms. We cannot explain (xi): it may have been formed on analogy of (x). (xii) is the first undubitable case of an indirect passive, but not an OE case (Layamon is one of the earliest extensive EME texts extant). In section 5.1.3. we shall argue that the innovative passives can be explained solely in terms of the SOV-to-SVO word order change. If, as Canale (1978) argues, this change came about in the late 12th century, (xii) can be regarded as a very early example following from this word order change.

57 This adjacency requirement also accounts for the absence of indirect passives in OE and Dutch: in SOV languages the indirect object is separated from the verb by the direct object, so the indirect object cannot undergo NP Preposing.

58 Weinberg and Hornstein (1980), unlike van Riemsdijk (1978), claim that all cases of preposition stranding in NE, i.e. NP Preposing case and Wh-movement cases, should be dealt with in a uniform way. They argue (i) that preposition stranding can only be the result of re-analysis and (ii) that re-analysis can only take place within VP. However, the following data
(from van Riemsdijk 1978: 145) shows that preposition stranding resulting from Wh-movement cannot be explained in terms of re-analysis:

(i) *His mother is travelled with by John
(ii) Who did John's mother travel with?

Weinberg and Hornstein can account for the ungrammaticality of (i): the with phrase is not part of the VP. This analysis wrongly predicts the ungrammaticality of (ii), however.

For reasons irrelevant here (5a) is much better if Er insertion, the Dutch equivalent of There Insertion applies to it, yielding:

(i) Er werd geen aandacht aan zijn opmerking besteed


L. has informed us (personal communication) that if the NP peran (unlike L.'s original proposal, cf. p. 238) is attached to S, the trace is bound because it is then c-commanded by peran. This position is not tenable however, because the trace will then receive nominative case and therefore undergo variable insertion, the result being a variable that is not bound by a quantifier (cf. Chomsky 1980). It is our opinion that cases of postposition like Jespersen's (which he appears to have made up himself, but we have found other instances) should be dealt with by stylistic rules.

This constitutes a violation of the Trace Erasure Principle, proposed by Dresher and Hornstein (1979).

Bosworth & Toller and van der Gaafl only provide the NE translation ‘please’ for lician and ‘seem’ for hyncan. Jember et al. is the only dictionary providing two meanings for lician (‘please’ and ‘like’); for hyncan they only give ‘seem’.

Notice that the analysis we presented in section 5.3.2 can straightforwardly account for both (38) and (39) without an appeal to either the SR or the reduced sentential subject solution (neither of which is very convincing in any case). (38) can be regarded as an instance of the subjectless impersonal construction, pas tida being an object and beteran a (base generated) object complement. (39) can only be seen as a personal construction, with ealle brimu the subject and blodige the (base generated) subject complement.

Since constructions like (44) are possible with seem, cf.:

(i) My father seems to me to be not at all cruel

it seems to follow that the development of happen and seem SR constructions cannot have run parallel. For a discussion of the development of cases of these, cf. Fischer and van der Leek (forthcoming).

Happen is derived from the noun hap, a Scandinavian loanword (cf. vdG: 17) occurring in ME from the 13th century onwards.

In the same text one also comes across Extrapolation constructions with happen, e.g.:

(i) yf it happen hym to have Any hynde lady ... (Destr. of Troy, vdG.: 17)

but notice that here the dative NP, hym, follows the verb.

It is interesting to observe that there is one development of seem in English (a Somerset dialect, cf. vdG.: 137-8) in which only step (i) was followed. In this dialect seem means ‘think’ and has an object clause, e.g.:

(i) I zim you 'ax too much for they beest (vdG.: 138)

We assume that Standard English seem constructions, like e.g.:

(ii) they seem to be intelligent

developed along the same lines as similar happen constructions (see Fischer and van der Leek, forthcoming).
The interpretation of 'befall' survives into NE constructions such as:

(i) What has happened to you?

with the original dative retained.

A case like:

(i) they happened to die on the same day

is no counterexample: it is by chance, not that they died, but that they died on the same day.

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